

081. The Conquest of Makkah Part 6

Today, we will conclude the Conquest of Makkah by discussing the benefits, morals, and fiqh that we can derive from the event. But before we get to that, let us wrap up some of the incidents that we haven't yet discussed. Of those who have converted after the Conquest, we have one or two people left:

(Cont.) More Conversions

5. Ummi Hani' bint Abi Talib

Ummi Hani' bint Abi Talib (أم هانئ بنت أبي طالب) was a female cousin of the Prophet ﷺ, one of the daughters of Abu Talib, and a full sister of Ali RA. She obviously knows the Prophet ﷺ since his childhood, but she has remained upon her faith until the Conquest of Makkah.

The story we will discuss is not related to her conversion itself, but it's interesting for a number of reasons. Her in-laws had a problem with Ali RA. So during the Conquest, they were worried Ali RA might exact revenge, and so they wanted to flee. But they had nowhere to go. So they sent a message to Ummi Hani' —since she is the full sister of Ali RA— and said, "Can you protect us from Ali?" So they went to her house, and she locked the door on Ali RA and allowed the two to remain. When Ali RA found out about this, he became enraged, "How dare you come between me and them?" and he threatened to harm them. So Ummi Hani', who was already a Muslim at the time, went directly to the Prophet ﷺ the next morning. And because she was a cousin, she was let into the chambers.

The Prophet ﷺ was taking a ghusl, and his daughter Fatima RA was standing with a cloth shielding him.^[1] The Prophet ﷺ said, "Who is this?" She said, "This is Ummi Hani'." So he lowered the curtain to see her, and —this is his cousin, so— he said, "Welcome, Ummi Hani' [after so many years]." And she told him the whole story with Ali RA, and the Prophet ﷺ said, "We shall protect anybody whom you want to protect."

This story is interesting for two reasons:

i) As we have said many times: Protection (aman) can be given by anyone in the ummah — man, woman, child, elder, slave, etc. Everybody has the right to give personal protection [see [episode 62](#)].^[2]

¹ Of course, there were no separate showers or facilities in Arabia at the time; so if someone wanted to take a shower, you would typically get someone to hold a curtain, as in this situation.

² And subhan'Allah, it's such a lax and open law that is unprecedented.

ii) There is a fiqh point: Ummi Hani' said, after the Prophet ﷺ finished his bath, "I saw him pray 8 rak'at of Salat al-Duha³." And this is the only hadith that mentions the Prophet ﷺ praying Salat al-Duha, even though it was a regular habit of his. The only narration we have of the Prophet ﷺ himself praying and how many rak'at he prayed, is this one. Recall the general time of Salat al-Duha is after Shuruq (شروق - after the sun has risen 1m length), and it lasts all the way until right before Zuhr by 5-10 minutes. So the time frame is at least 3½ - 5½ hours, depending on the time of the year. And our Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith, "The best time to pray (Duha) is when the heat begins to strike you," i.e., 11:30 AM or so. And you can pray 2, 4, 6, or 8 rak'at. In one hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said that Allah SWT said, "Whoever prays 4 rak'at at the beginning of the day, I will suffice him for the rest of the day." So 4 is the minimum of perfection; and of course, 2 is the minimum that constitutes Salat al-Duha; and 8 is what the Prophet ﷺ would typically pray.

So this hadith is interesting because it is the only hadith that we learn about the Salat al-Duha of the Prophet ﷺ.

6. Abdullah ibn al-Zab'ari

The final conversion story that we will discuss involves the official poet of the Quraysh, Abdullah ibn al-Zab'ari (عبد الله بن الزبيري) from the tribe of Banu Sahm (بنو سهم). He would be the one who wrote poems against Islam and the Muslims before Badr, after Badr, before Uhud, after Uhud, etc. He was the one who had a one-on-one with Hassan ibn Thabit — he would write, Hassan would reply; he would write, Hassan would reply; and so on, back and forth. He was the one that, when a poem came from him, the Prophet ﷺ would say to Hassan, "Go and respond. And Jibril is with you." He lived a very quiet life other than poetry, so we don't have much incidents about him.

As for his acceptance of Islam: When the Prophet ﷺ conquered Makkah, Abdullah ibn al-Zab'ari fled to Najran, because he did not feel comfortable being around the Muslims and the Prophet ﷺ. When he fled, Hassan ibn Thabit gloated and he wrote a page-long poem, as recorded in Ibn Ishaq, which is the most scathing personal attack against Ibn al-Zab'ari, that he is a coward who fled, etc. It's a very harsh poem. (And obviously, poetry was the height of propaganda at this time.) When Ibn al-Zab'ari hears this, he feels depressed because he agrees with everything that is said; and he decides to really think about the contents of the Message of Islam.

Eventually, within the next few days, he decides to convert to Islam from within Najran. And he starts packing his belongings. His cousin says, "Where are you going?" He says, "I have decided to accept Islam." His cousin says, "We have come all the way here, and now you are going to abandon me all alone?" Ibn al-Zab'ari responds, "Why should I not convert? Why should I remain with this strange tribe? Should I not go back to my own kith and kin, my own cousin (the Prophet ﷺ)? He is the best of all mankind. Why should I not go back to my own abode and house?" So he decides to come back.

³ Salat al-Duha (صلاة الضحى) - the Duha Prayer.

The Prophet ﷺ is sitting with the sahaba in front of the Ka'bah, and in the distance, they see a figure coming. The Prophet ﷺ says, "That is Ibn al-Zab'ari; and I see from him the nur of Iman." Subhan'Allah. And so when he comes, no one says anything. And before the Prophet ﷺ says anything, Ibn al-Zab'ari says, "Assalamu'alayka, ya Rasulallah" and he says the shahada. And he says, "All praise be to Allah who guided me to Islam. I was your enemy for so long. And I incited (through poetry) against you"—his language is pregnant with meaning; it's so profound even when you listen to the translation:—"I rode on horses and traveled on camels and walked on foot to oppose you, and I even fled to Najran to avoid you. But Allah still wanted good for me"—you sense genuine Islam here—"And I have now come to you as a Muslim. Allah has caused me to realize how ignorant I was, worshiping that which cannot think, worshiping a stone that we sacrifice to, we venerate; but it doesn't even realize it is being worshiped. All praise be to Allah for having guided me to Islam." So the Prophet ﷺ welcomed his Islam, and he told him, "Islam wipes away all [the bad] that you have done in the past."

For the rest of his life, Ibn al-Zab'ari composed poem after poem in praise of Islam and the Prophet ﷺ as an expiation for what he had done. The scholars, such as al-Qurtubi and others, said, "He wrote much poetry for the Prophet ﷺ after his Islam, and through it, he canceled the evil that he had done before Islam. And he was a great poet." And it's narrated as well that after one poem that he recited in front of the Prophet ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ took off his cloak and gifted it to him — an honor that he ﷺ rarely gave to anyone.^[4]

19 Days in Makkah: Where Did the Prophet ﷺ Stay?

The Prophet ﷺ remained in Makkah for, some reports say 15, some say 19, some say 20, days. Ibn Hisham says 15; al-Tabari says 20; but Bukhari says 19, so we will stick with 19.

The question came up, whose house would the Prophet ﷺ occupy? Ali RA wanted to regain the house he and the Prophet ﷺ grew up in — the house of Abu Talib, Ali's own house. So he said, "Ya Rasulallah, aren't you going to go back to our house?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "And did Aqil leave any property for us to live in?" Now, pause here; we need to explain what is this reference to.^[5]

Abu Talib died a mushrik, and he had many sons. Of course, his eldest was Talib; and after him was Aqil. When the Prophet ﷺ was in Makkah, these two did not embrace Islam, unlike their younger brothers Ali and Ja'far. And because Talib and Aqil were not Muslim when Abu Talib died, they inherited their father's house.^[6] What this means is —and from this, we derive a fiqh benefit—: The mushrik is inherited by mushriks; and Muslims don't inherit from mushriks. And the Prophet ﷺ approved of this, as he said in a hadith: "لا يرث"

⁴ Side note: For some reason that we don't understand, much of Ibn al-Zab'ari's poetry has been lost, unlike the poetry of Hassan which has been preserved. Maybe because Ibn al-Zab'ari lived in Makkah, and Hassan was in Madinah. Allah knows best.

⁵ Side note: As for the house of Khadija, Allah knows best, but people had taken it over after the Prophet ﷺ left.

⁶ As for Ja'far and Ali, they did not get anything.

المسلم الكافر، ولا الكافر المسلم (A Muslim cannot be the heir of a kafir, nor can a kafir be the heir of a Muslim)" [Sahih Bukhari].

And after the Prophet ﷺ Migrated to Madinah, Talib (the eldest) died, and Aqil decided to sell all the property. Now at the Conquest, Ali wants the house back, but it doesn't belong to Aqil anymore (who by the way has converted at the Conquest). Aqil has sold it — and it was a legitimate transaction, so the Prophet ﷺ has no right to then confiscate that property back.

So what does the Prophet ﷺ do? He does not have a house to stay in, so he sets up a tent in his own city of Makkah for the next 19 days. And the place he chooses is the famous mini-valley close to the Ka'bah called [al-Hujun](#).^[7] Al-Hujun is very symbolic. It was the place where the Quraysh gathered together to sign the treaty / pact to boycott the Banu Hashim [see [episode 18](#)] — and this was the worst the Quraysh ever did. So no doubt, there is an element of symbolism here — look at how Allah tests people and then blesses them. Allah AWJ tested the Prophet ﷺ through what happened at al-Hujun, and now He blesses him ﷺ to live in al-Hujun as the conqueror of Makkah. Allah AWJ demonstrated His perfect justice. This place was where the worst atrocity the Quraysh ever committed occurred, and now at the same place, our Prophet ﷺ is being given the greatest honor.

19 Days in Makkah: Praying Qasr

The Prophet ﷺ lived in Makkah for 19 days, and during this period, he prayed all the prayers in the Haram. And more interestingly, throughout these 19 days, he did qasr^[8], but he didn't do jama'^[9]. We will discuss the fiqh of this later.

19 Days in Makkah: Points of Benefit From the Sermons of the Prophet ﷺ

During these 19 days, the Prophet ﷺ did numerous short sermons where he taught the people of Makkah the basics of Islam and any fiqh they needed to know. We have many hadiths from this period, most of which deal with teaching new Muslims the rulings of Islam. We will summarize some of the things the Prophet ﷺ taught:

1) He reinstated the sanctity of Makkah. He wanted everyone to understand how holy Makkah is. And one of the first speeches he gave —perhaps even on the day of the Conquest if not the next day (Allah knows best)— is that he gathered the people and said, "O people, Allah has made Makkah sacred the day that He created the heavens and the earth, and it shall remain sacred until the Day of Judgment. It is not allowed for any believer who believes in Allah and the Last Day to shed any blood (human or animal) in the Haram. And it is not allowed for people to pluck the leaves. Makkah was never halal (nonsacred)

⁷ And still to this day, the Makkans know where this is.

⁸ Qasr (قصر) - shortening every four-rak'ah salah into two rak'at.

⁹ Jama' (جمع) - [combining salahs](#).

before me, nor shall it be halal after me. And even for me, it was made halal just for 'an hour' of the day"—Allah SWT lifted the sanctity of the Haram just for 'one hour' for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to conquer Makkah—"And now it has returned to its sanctity as it was before. So if somebody says, 'But the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم fought in Makkah,' you respond back to him, 'Allah has made it halal for the Prophet, and He has not made it halal for you.'" So he صلى الله عليه وسلم is emphasizing to the people of Makkah the extreme sanctity of the city of Makkah.^[10] And Allah says in the Quran, "...Whoever **intends** to deviate by doing wrong in it [in the Sacred Mosque], We will cause them to taste a painful punishment" [Quran, 22:25].^[11]

2) Also, of the things the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم decreed as well, as recorded in Sahih Bukhari, is: "Allah and His Messenger forbid you from selling alcohol, and selling carcasses, and selling idols." Now, where did this thing come about from? — Of course, every house in Makkah had idols and alcohol. In fact, the people of Makkah had a very lucrative business: They would take any wood / stone, carve an idol out of it, paint it, and sell it to the people who came from outside. And why would people buy from them? Because they consider an idol from Makkah to be prestigious. And because it was considered prestigious, it would go for a higher market value, and so the people of Makkah had a very highly profitable business selling these idols to the pagan hujjaj and the Bedouins. But then, recall, on the first day of the Conquest, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم forbade shirk — no more idol worship. So then what did the people of Makkah do? They began selling off any remaining idols to get rid of them. Hence now comes the prohibition of selling the idols as well. They have to now literally smash the idols and pour the alcohol into the streets. And this is a standard principle of fiqh now: "That which is haram to use and benefit from, it is also haram to sell to others"—we get this principle from the Conquest of Makkah.^[12]

3) Another prohibition was that of zawaj al-mut'ah (زواج المتعة). Now, this is a controversial issue between the Sunni and the Shia groups. From the perspective of Sunni Islam, there is almost an ijma' that mut'ah is not allowed. Scholars differ over when it was prohibited. Imam al-Nawawi and others say it was allowed twice and prohibited twice: It used to be halal, then made haram in the Battle of Khaybar, then made halal again, and then made haram again in the Conquest of Makkah. Ibn al-Qayyim and others are very much opposed to this opinion; they say, "No. It was only made haram once in the Conquest of Makkah." In any case, by and large, the standard Sunni position is that it's haram. As for non-Sunni groups, they don't accept these prohibitions and say it's halal.

4) Of the fiqh we learn from the Conquest is the famous ruling in Islam that, in your will, you are only allowed to leave $\frac{1}{3}$ of your money outside of the people whom Allah has allocated shares to. In Islamic law, you have to give your money according to the fractions in the Quran [4:11-14]. What about a friend, distant uncle, cousin, benefactor, et al.? We all

¹⁰ And that's why some of the sahaba would go to such great lengths that even if a pigeon landed on their belongings or on them, they would not even shoo it away out of fear that they are disturbing the creation of Allah in the Haram.

¹¹ Note: Generally, intending to do wrong does not necessitate a punishment, unless the person acts upon it. But the Sacred Mosque is unique in that intending to sin in it is sufficient to bring punishment from Allah, unless the person repents.

¹² Note: There are some minor exceptions, e.g., silk — you can sell it to others because it's halal for the women. But generally speaking, if an item is impermissible to use, it is also impermissible to acquire or sell.

know the maximum we can give is $\frac{1}{3}$ — and we learn this from the Conquest of Makkah: Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas fell seriously ill and he thought he was on his deathbed, so he said, "Ya Rasulallah, Allah has blessed me with lots of money, and I only have two daughters. So what if I give $\frac{2}{3}$ of my wealth to people that I want to?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "No, too much." Then he said, "How about $\frac{1}{2}$?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "No, too much." So Sa'd said, "How about $\frac{1}{3}$?" And the Prophet ﷺ said, "Okay, $\frac{1}{3}$. But even $\frac{1}{3}$, you are pushing it." Then he ﷺ said, "Were you to leave your descendants / heirs rich, it is better than leaving them poor and having to beg others for help." Meaning these are your daughters and family, so it's better to be generous with them rather than other people. So from this hadith, we learn the famous ruling that you are only allowed to give a maximum of $\frac{1}{3}$ to people outside of the list mentioned in verse [4:11-14] of the Quran.

5) Another fiqh point involves an incident that we are all familiar with: One of the women of the Banu Makhzum was caught stealing. And so the people of her tribe spoke to Usama ibn Zayd, the Beloved of the Prophet ﷺ^[13] —because they knew the Prophet ﷺ had a soft spot for him— and said, "Why don't you suggest to the Prophet ﷺ to forgive this lady? She is a noble lady from amongst us. So let the punishment go." So Usama entered in and asked the Prophet ﷺ, "Ya Rasulallah, she is a very noble lady. Why don't you just forgive her and let her go?" At this, the Prophet ﷺ became enraged, "You want to intercede when it comes to the boundary from the boundaries of Allah? Wallahi, if my own daughter committed theft, I would not forgive her."^[14] And the Prophet ﷺ called all of the people of Makkah and gave this khutbah: "If my own daughter Fatima bint Muhammad committed a crime, I would establish the punishment on her." And Aisha RA narrates that the Makhzumi lady, after the punishment was done, would regularly visit Aisha RA, and she would petition the Prophet ﷺ for favors; and Aisha RA would raise her petitions to the Prophet ﷺ to grant her her requests.^[15]

6) Another fiqh ruling. There was the case of a child that was born in dubious circumstances, i.e., an affair was alleged. There was a married couple, a child was born, and someone alleged, "This child is mine." (It's worth noting that both parties are famous Muslims, and this all occurred before Islam. And as we know, Islam forgives all previous sins, so we don't think bad of them.) The two people involved were Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas and Abdullah ibn Zum'a (عبد الله بن زمعة). Abdullah ibn Zum'a was married to the lady who gave birth, and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas said, "This child is mine." And now that they conquer Makkah, the child is a young boy, and they are contesting over who should have custody of the child. So the Prophet ﷺ gave the famous verdict that every student of fiqh studies, "The child is to the bed it was born on"—meaning any time a child is born, we shall assume without question that the child belongs to the parents who are married. We don't delve into rumors and whatnot. We simply base it on the verdict of who is married. So even if someone says something, we don't pry and probe — we try to cover up faults and sins, and we

¹³ Usama was born in the Prophet's ﷺ house, and the Prophet ﷺ loved him immensely so much so that he was called Hibbu Rasulillah (حب رسول الله - The Beloved of the Messenger of Allah).

¹⁴ Meaning Islam doesn't operate this way, that the rich and famous get off the hook, and only the poor and lowly are punished. No.

¹⁵ And this shows us that in Islam, once the punishment has been done, once a person has been punished, they are not treated like a criminal for the rest of their life.

assume children belong to parents who are married — and we don't question it. (And if someone is proven to be an adulterer, they will be punished accordingly.)

The Entire Arabian Peninsula Embraces Islam

One of the main effects of the Conquest of Makkah is the embracing of Islam of the entire Arabian Peninsula. Note Arabia was disunited before this point in time — each tribe had its own mini-city and province. So the Conquest of Makkah was taken as a symbolic conquest of the central nervous system of Arabia. Many books of tafsir and hadith and seerah document that the tribes who did not get involved in the conflict between the Quraysh and the Prophet ﷺ were waiting to see who would win. Al-Qurtubi and others explicitly mention this: "The other tribes were waiting to see what happens. If the Prophet ﷺ eventually conquers Makkah, this is an indication for them that there is no stopping him ﷺ, and they must embrace Islam. One of them even remarked, 'Allah had protected Makkah from the [People of the Elephant](#). So if Allah allows this man (the Prophet ﷺ) to conquer it, it must show he is a prophet.'" So there was a theological symbolism given by the Arabs to the Conquest of Makkah.

The entire Arabian Peninsula is subservient to the city of Makkah when it comes to holiness. There's no competition. Everybody considers Makkah to be the bastion of their race — their fathers, Ibrahim and Ismail AS, had associations with Makkah. So the Conquest of Makkah translated for the Arabs as the victory of Islam over paganism. Therefore, when the Prophet ﷺ conquered Makkah, neutral tribes began sending delegations —beginning from now, all the way until the death of the Prophet ﷺ — informing him ﷺ that they had converted to Islam. This is exactly what Allah says in the Quran, "And you [O Prophet] see the people embracing Allah's Way in crowds" [Quran, 110:2].

Therefore with the Conquest of Makkah, the Arab tribes, one by one embraced Islam. This is a very interesting point: The Prophet ﷺ did not fight over 90% of the Arabs of his time. He only fought the Quraysh and their allies. How about central Arabia? Southern? Far north? Eastern and western provinces? Nothing. There is no direct battle. How did they embrace Islam? See, this was the wisdom of choosing the grandson of Abdul Muttalib to be the prophet. Subhan'Allah. This is the true wisdom of choosing someone with the most impeccable lineage. You cannot compete with the grandson of Abdul Muttalib; you cannot compete with someone born and raised in Makkah; with someone who has the victory of the Ka'bah. As Allah says, "Allah knows best where to place His Message" [Quran, 6:124]. "Allah selects messengers from both angels and people, for Allah is truly All-Hearing, All-Seeing" [Quran, 22:75]. So Allah chose our Prophet ﷺ for a reason. Of the most obvious reasons: his lineage, his city, and his circumstance. He is coming from the best of the best, he is coming from the cream of the crop, he is coming from the holiest of all cities. And now he comes back to his own city — he is not conquering a strange land.^[16]

¹⁶ That's another point here. Imagine how the Arabs would have felt if another tribe conquered Makkah. But our Prophet ﷺ is from Makkah, and he conquers his own city, which happens to be the holiest city on earth. So the Arabs all agreed to this.

Now with this Conquest, this is when the people began to embrace Islam. And from this point onward, there is a non-stop trickle of tribes sending delegations. Insha'Allah, we will discuss the Year of Delegations in future episodes [see episodes 94-96]. What is the Year of Delegations? The 9th year of the Hijrah^[17]. Why is it called this? Because every second, third day, a new delegation arrived saying they had embraced Islam. No army, no fighting; it's just literally people are realizing this is the Truth.

It's truly an amazing miracle that paganism is wiped away from the entire Arabian Peninsula within just 25 years of Islam coming.

Surah al-Nasr: The Beginning of the End

Of course, Surah al-Nasr is a surah about the Conquest. And later on, many years later, in the khilafa of Umar ibn al-Khattab RA, Umar would have a senior meeting with the elder sahaba —Ansar and Qureshi— and the youngest person to be admitted to the meeting was Ibn Abbas, the cousin of the Prophet ﷺ, who was around 15-16 years old. Some of the elder sahaba objected to Ibn Abbas's admittance and said to Umar, "Ya Amir al-Mu'minin, we have sons older than him and you don't allow them to come to this gathering. Why are you allowing this man to come?" Ibn Abbas narrates the hadith, and it's in Bukhari: Ibn Abbas says, "One day, Umar called me — and I thought he called me just to test me. And when all the people were gathered, he asked the sahaba in the gathering, 'Can you explain to me إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ... (i.e., Surat al-Nasr)?'"^[18]

One sahabi said, "Allah is saying when He blesses you, thank Him." Another said something else generic. Then Umar RA turned to Ibn Abbas and said, "Now you interpret it." Ibn Abbas said —and he narrates this in the first person—: "They (the elders) have not spoken correctly. Rather, Allah is informing the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that when Makkah is conquered, your time on earth is about to come to an end. So prepare to meet Allah by increasing your worship and seeking His forgiveness. Verily, Allah is ever Accepting of Repentance." Umar RA said, "This is the only knowledge I have of the Surah," i.e., "You have spoken all that I know." (And with this, Umar RA made the point to the elders that this is why Ibn Abbas is admitted — because he has profound knowledge in tafsir; he is an intelligent young man.)

¹⁷ See [episode 94](#).

¹⁸ And of course, Surah al-Nasr [110] is:

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

1. When Allah's [ultimate] help comes and the victory [over Makkah is achieved],

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا

2. And you [O Prophet] see the people embracing Allah's Way in crowds,

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

3. Then glorify the praises of your Lord and seek His forgiveness, for certainly He is ever Accepting of Repentance.

So, in fact, Surah al-Nasr is the beginning of the end. It tells us for the very first time that death for the Prophet ﷺ is close by. He has reached his pinnacle, he has achieved the Conquest of Makkah, and now there is a short time left. This shows us the importance of the Conquest — quite literally, the Conquest is the pinnacle. The Prophet ﷺ reached the highest point with the Conquest, and now he just has to wrap up a few last things before Allah will cause his mission on earth to come to an end. And as we know, barely 2 years after this, our Prophet ﷺ passed away.

Also, from this Surah, we see that Allah SWT is telling the Prophet ﷺ —despite who he is— to prepare for His meeting with extra worship and extra istighfar. How about us then? Are we ready to meet our Lord? The best human being is being told, "Prepare for death by worshiping extra and asking forgiveness," so we as well had better take a lesson and heed, and increase in our worship and istighfar.

19 Days in Makkah: Destroying Major Idols

What else did the Prophet ﷺ do during these 19 days? He sent a number of mini-expeditions around Makkah to invite the neighboring tribes to Islam and destroy the major centers of idolatry. There were two types of idols: (i) The personal, home idol, and then (ii) the big, public, temple idol that people go to. As for the idols in the homes, the Prophet ﷺ gives a general command, "Everyone destroy your own idols; get rid of them." As for the temple idols, the Prophet ﷺ sent the sahaba to get rid of them. And he sent Khalid ibn al-Walid to destroy al-Uzza, the idol mentioned in the Quran [53:19]. He also sent a group to destroy Manat [idol mentioned in Quran, 53:20] and others.

It's reported that when Khalid arrived at the temple of al-Uzza, he came across the custodians of the idols, and when they saw Khalid coming, one of them flung an ax around the neck of al-Uzza and said, "O Uzza! You protect yourself! I have to flee!" and they all left. And of course, al-Uzza didn't do anything, so Khalid destroyed al-Uzza.

So within the span of a few days, all of the idols in the vicinity of the Hejaz were destroyed.

All of this greatness was marred by a mini-tragedy done by one of the Companions:

The Mistake of Khalid ibn al-Walid RA

All of the greatness was marred by a mini-tragedy done by one of the Companions. And this, by the way, shows us that no matter how much greatness you have, there is no perfection in this world. Humans are always prone to errors and mistakes. This was the greatest time in Islam, but still, something trivial happened that marred it. And the mistake was made by Khalid ibn al-Walid. Now recall, Khalid is a brand new Muslim — he converted

just before the Conquest and so right now he doesn't know much fiqh. So he makes a very serious mistake.

Khalid was sent on several expeditions, and he had a checklist of tribes to go to. One of the items on the checklist was to go to the tribe of the Banu Jadhimah (بنو جذيمة) to invite them to Islam. But Khalid had a personal history with the tribe of Banu Jadhimah. In the days of Jahiliyyah, this tribe had killed his uncle. So when Khalid appeared with an army behind him, the Banu Jadhimah assumed he had come to exact revenge. So a group of them took out their swords and led an attack. And this led Khalid to attack back.

But other members of the Banu Jadhimah understood what was going on (that Khalid hadn't come for revenge), and they announced their submission to Islam. And in our religion, if a person does this—even if he is your enemy, even if he announces it on the battlefield^[19]— you need to stop your attack then and there. You cannot touch a hair on his head if he proclaims to be a Muslim.^[20] Now Khalid didn't know any of this; he was a brand new Muslim. So when a group attacked, he attacked back, and he attacked according to the customs of Jahiliyyah, which is no mercy — he killed a lot of innocent people. And he ordered the other sahaba to attack with him, but they refused. Amongst them were Abdullah ibn Umar and Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf — they disobeyed their leader.^[21] And Khalid got irritated at them, that, "I am your commander!" But Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf didn't budge, "No, I will not attack." And upon this, Khalid gave Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf a vile curse.

Another cause of confusion appears to be that, the tribe of Banu Jadhimah did not say the appropriate and usual phrase. They didn't say, "Aslamna^[22]," rather, they said, "Saba'na^[23]!" Recall, the Arabs would consider the new religion of Islam to be Sabianism (Sabi'un / صابئون). So when somebody embraced Islam, they would incorrectly say, "Saba'ta^[24]!" And this is what the people of Banu Jadhimah said, "Saba'na (We have embraced Sabianism)!" Now the senior Companions understood the reference and didn't attack them. But Khalid ibn al-Walid did not take this into account; he didn't understand, so he ended up killing the innocents.

Immediately, news reached back to the Prophet ﷺ — and this hadith is in Bukhari: The first thing the Prophet ﷺ did was he stood up, faced the Ka'bah, raised his hands, and said, "O Allah, I absolve any responsibility from what Khalid has done," i.e., "I didn't command him to do that." And the Prophet ﷺ immediately sent Ali RA to resolve the issue. He gave Ali ibn Abi Talib a large amount of wealth to resolve the blood money. So Ali RA went, and he gave very generously to each family, and he apologized on behalf of the Prophet ﷺ. When Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf came back, he complained to the Prophet ﷺ.

¹⁹ i.e., even if you could say his intention is questionable.

²⁰ We know the story of Usama ibn Zayd when he killed someone who had said the shahada [see [episode 78](#)]. The Prophet ﷺ got very angry at Usama and said, "Did you open up his heart?" i.e., "You don't have the right to question his intention even if the shahada was said on the battlefield."

²¹ In Islam, you only obey your leader if he commands you that which is allowed.

²² Aslamna (أسلمنا) - We have embraced Islam.

²³ Saba'na (صابتنا) - We have embraced Sabianism.

²⁴ Saba'ta (صابت) - You have embraced Sabianism.

about what Khalid had done and said (and he mentioned the vile curse said to him). In response, the Prophet ﷺ gave the beautiful hadith:

"Do Not Curse My Companions"

In response, the Prophet ﷺ gave the beautiful hadith: "Do not curse my Companions, for if any of you were to spend gold equal to [the Mountain of] Uhud in charity, it would not equal a handful of [what] one of them [would give], or even half of that" [Sahih Bukhari].

Who is this hadith being said to? Khalid ibn al-Walid, i.e., another Companion. Khalid is being told, "You had better not curse the senior Companions. If you were to give a mountain of gold, it wouldn't be equal to half of what they give." If this is being said to Khalid, then where do **we** stand on that scale? No doubt, Khalid is a brand new Muslim right now, but we all know who he would eventually become — one of the most respected sahaba. So Khalid's status itself is way up there. Yet, even he was being told, "You can never reach the level of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, et al." So where do we stand? The context of this hadith makes us respect the sahaba —especially the senior sahaba— even more.

Ta'if

As we said, the Prophet ﷺ remained in Makkah for around 19 days. The main point here is that he ﷺ consolidated the immediate vicinity. But there was one major center left and that was Ta'if. Ta'if was the city that expelled him ﷺ, tortured him, and pelted him with stones; it was the city he had the opportunity to destroy but chose to forgive [see [episode 20](#)].

Now, Ta'if could not be attacked with an army. Even though the Prophet ﷺ had 12,000 men, Ta'if was a difficult city to attack because it's on the top of a mountain — it's on a plateau. So it's difficult to get there. And even once you are there, they have a thick fortress, and they have rainfall, plenty of water, vegetation, etc. — they can last out a siege. And the Muslims haven't yet developed a way to get past a fortress. They don't have the mechanisms / weapons to destroy thick walls. Recall in Khaybar, they literally had to wait it out — and it worked because they could cut off the supplies. But with Ta'if, they could not do this.

We will discuss what happened with Ta'if in the future episodes. For now, we will conclude with more fiqh benefits from the Conquest of Makkah, and one main theological benefit:

Fiqh Benefits From the Event of the Conquest of Makkah

Fiqh Benefits:

1) We learn that it's allowed to break your fast during Ramadan for a legitimate reason. The Prophet ﷺ and the sahaba left Madinah and they broke their fast [see [episode 78](#)]. It was Ramadan, and it was the 8th year of the Hijrah —and Ramadan was made obligatory in the 2nd year, so now it's an established farida— but still, all of them broke their fast. So we learn from this that you are allowed to break your fast in a travel.

2) Traveling begins outside of your home city, not outside of your home. Where did the Prophet ﷺ and the sahaba break their fast? Outside Madinah fully [see [episode 78](#)].

3) For Salat al-Duha, 8 rak'at is the perfection.^[25]

4) It's recommended for the musafir^[26] to pray all 4-rak'ah prayers as 2 rak'at (i.e., do qasr). This is strongly encouraged. How do we know? The Prophet ﷺ was in the holiest of holy places where every single prayer is equivalent to 100,000 prayers elsewhere, but he still prayed 4-rak'ah salahs as 2.^[27] Qasr for the traveler is an established sunnah.

5) Q: For how long is qasr allowed?

A: Very simplistically, the Malikis, Shafi'is, and Hanbalis say 4 days — so if you know you will stay for more than 4 days (or 21 [fard] salahs in Hanbali), you cannot do qasr. The Hanafi position says 15 days. There's no problem sticking with these mainstream positions, but it's interesting to note that Ibn Taymiyyah and others held a view that there is no time limit — they say it goes back to your own psychological state of affairs whether you are a legitimate traveler or semi-settled-in [see episodes [91](#) & [92](#)]. [Further reading: [The Definition of "Travel" \(safar\) According to Islamic Law, by Dr. Yasir Qadhi](#)]

6) When a couple converts to Islam, their marriage contract remains valid regardless of who converts first for a period of time. In the Conquest of Makkah, there were a number of men embracing Islam, and then their wives after them. Also the wives first, and then husbands a few weeks later — the classic examples are Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahal and Safwan ibn Umayyah (recall they fled Makkah^[28]; so their wives who remained in Makkah converted first). And when they came back to Makkah and embraced Islam a few weeks later (or a month later in Safwan's case), they were not asked to do a new nikah ceremony — no new mahr or new witnesses. This shows us that when a person converts to Islam, a time frame^[29]

²⁵ But it's nafil, so 2, 4, or 6 is fine. 8 rak'at is the sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

²⁶ Musafir (مسافر) - traveler.

²⁷ Side note: The Prophet ﷺ was the imam, so of course he could do this. As for us, when we go to the Haram, we pray behind the imam — so we will follow the imam and pray the 4 full rak'at. But say, if we miss the congregational prayer, then we are strongly encouraged to pray qasr as visitors. If you are praying by yourself, the 4 rak'at all become 2 — even in the Haram.

²⁸ See episodes [79](#) & [80](#).

²⁹ The length of the iddah period.

is given for the other spouse to convert^[30], and if that other spouse converts within the given period, their marriage contract that was non-Islamic automatically becomes an Islamic contract, and they need not do a new nikah. [See also: [episode 62](#): the Story of Abu al-As ibn al-Rabi'.]

7) Women are allowed to take money from their husbands without their knowledge if it's done for a legitimate reason / cause, e.g., the husband is being extra stingy. Islam allows the wife to take the husband's money if the needs of the family are not being met. The hadith of Hind demonstrates this [see [episode 80](#)].

8) When an item is haram, it's also haram to sell it.

9) It is mustahabb for a person —an elderly man / woman— who has completely white hair to dye their hair. We learn this from Abu Quhafa's conversion story [see [episode 80](#)].

10) The permissibility of visiting and entering Makkah without ihram. But there is a bit of a controversy among the scholars. Some scholars say it was only for the Prophet ﷺ — because they say going to Makkah and not doing Umrah or Hajj is not befitting. And we understand this sentiment. But at the same time, think of those people whose businesses involve Makkah. For example, taxi drivers or fruit sellers. Think of them. (Don't think of us in the West. Indeed, it would be a big shame if one of us were to go to Makkah for *any* reason and not do Umrah and tawaf. It's honestly pathetic.) But for someone who goes to Makkah 5x a day or 5x a week, they can use this incident of the Conquest to say that it's not mandatory to do tawaf and Umrah every time you enter Makkah; it's not mandatory to wear ihram. Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ was wearing the armor when he entered Makkah [see [episode 79](#)].

11) Again, this is a bit of a controversy, but some scholars derived from the Conquest of Makkah that breaking one condition of a treaty is tantamount to breaking the entire treaty. How did the Prophet ﷺ conquer Makkah? The Quraysh broke one clause of the Treaty of Hdaybiyyah [see [episode 76](#)].

Theological Benefit From the Event of the Conquest of Makkah

The theological benefit is pretty obvious: In the end, victory will always be on the side of the Truth. "Surely, the ultimate outcome belongs [only] to the righteous" [Quran, 11:49]. Allah says in the Quran, "Allah has decreed, 'I and My messengers will certainly prevail.' Surely, Allah is All-Powerful, Almighty" [Quran, 58:21]. The Conquest of Makkah clearly shows the Power of Allah — and we as Muslims truly believe it was a miracle from Allah. For the Prophet ﷺ to come back after being expelled and conquer the capital of Arabia without a war, and then for this Conquest to spark the embracing of Islam of the entire Arabian Peninsula, it was truly a miracle and a divine gift from Allah. It demonstrates that when you are patient, when you persevere, when you do not falter in the Path of Allah, eventually, Allah will reward you with victory. Our Prophet ﷺ demonstrates this — the ups and the

³⁰ But do note there is an ikhtilaf on the length of the iddah period.

downs. You must suffer in the Path of Allah before you get the reward. Even the prophets have to put in the effort. You have to stand up and strive. You have to do what you can. You have to show Allah your dedication and determination. And you will suffer. Indeed, how much has our Prophet ﷺ suffered? He went through so much torture, persecution, death of loved ones, wars, etc. But in the end, when you put in the sweat and the toil and the effort, Allah SWT never causes the efforts of the righteous to go unrewarded. And we see this in the Conquest of Makkah. After all of the difficult years, our Prophet ﷺ is rewarded with the greatest victory imaginable.

082. Battle of Hunayn Part 1

"Wasn't There Anybody That Had Mercy in His Heart to Stop This?"

Recall we discussed Khalid's mistake [see [episode 81](#)]. There is another tragedy that took place which we didn't mention, and it was very interesting because it shows the soft spot of the Prophet ﷺ. Of the little incidents that took place, one of the prisoners of war executed by Khalid was a young man who begged a sahabi to take him to the women's side, so the sahabi agreed; and there, the young man talked to his betrothed and versified a beautiful love poem for her, as mentioned in Ibn Ishaq. And she in return wailed and gave back a love poem. And as he was executed, she took him, and he died in her arms. (Obviously, again, this was not something the Prophet ﷺ commanded. Khalid made ijtilah, and he was criticized — and the compensation was paid.) When the Prophet ﷺ heard this story, he became enraged even more, and said, "Wasn't there anybody that had mercy in his heart to stop Khalid from doing this?"

It's interesting that the Prophet ﷺ had a soft spot and tenderness for romanticism, for the romantic poetry that was versified between the two.

Thaqif Wants War

Getting back to Makkah: Recall the Prophet ﷺ camped there for 19 days. And in one of those days, news came that a large army was gathering outside of Makkah. Who is now going to attack? The only large city within attacking distance from Makkah is Ta'if. And indeed, it's them. And if you recall, the tribe name of Ta'if is Thaqif; and their idol is al-Lat; and the Thaqif and the Quraysh have been competing for centuries and have a love-hate relationship. So now that the Quraysh have been defeated, the Thaqif come to their aid. They want to now fight the Muslims. Why did they want to fight? Some scholars have said the Thaqif assumed that the Prophet ﷺ was going to attack them rather than Makkah. But this opinion seems to be a bit of a stretch — because why would the Prophet ﷺ attack the citadel of Ta'if? Rather, what seems to be the case is that the tribe of Thaqif understood that the Conquest of Makkah meant the end of idolatry: "If we don't take Makkah back, idolatry will be gone." Also, they wanted to gain control of the Ka'bah. So they had two intentions:

1) They want to protect paganism. They realize that with Makkah conquered, there is no stopping monotheism from spreading.

2) The Quraysh have been vanquished, so they wanted to become the new custodians of the Ka'bah.

So the tribe of Thaqif began sending out emissaries to every single pagan tribe in the vicinity. And it is amazing that with every battle, the number of the pagan army increases exponentially. Never had the Arabs united the way they united in the last 10 years. We see this constantly: First in Uhud, then in Ahzab, and now in the Battle of Hunayn (which is going

to happen right now) — each time, the numbers grow. And the Battle of Hunayn was the largest gathering of pagan Arabs in the history of Arabia.

So Thaqif sent out as many emissaries as they could; and eventually, over 20,000 pagans gathered together under the banner of Thaqif. Thaqif was the largest, and the second largest was the Hawazin. (And there were plenty more tribes, which we will not mention because it will get confusing.) And to be simplistic, the Thaqif comprised of the people living in the city of Ta'if; and the Hawazin were the Bedouins who lived around Ta'if. These were the two largest, and they together formed around 10,000.

Back-and-Forth Between Abdullah ibn Abi Hadrat and Umar al-Khattab

The Prophet ﷺ obviously heard rumors that things were taking place. So he sent a relatively new convert, Abdullah ibn Abi Hadrat (عبد الله بن أبي حضرت), to intermix with the people of Ta'if, pretending that he was walking along with them, and gather information. He comes back and informs that, "Never have I seen this many people"—and he tells the Muslims of their armory / weaponry. Now, as we mentioned before, the people of Ta'if had a natural advantage: They lived on a plateau and were naturally protected. And because of this, generally speaking, they were also, masha'Allah tabarak'Allah, better fed — they had access to rainwater, vegetation, and fruits. And they had also built fortresses around their city. And they were known to be good fighters.

So Abdullah ibn Abi Hadrat informs the Prophet ﷺ about what is happening. And what does the Prophet ﷺ do? As always, he calls the senior Companions —Abu Bakr, Umar, et al.— and he says, "What should we do?" The senior Companions are shocked and taken aback. They just conquered Makkah —it's a happy time— and suddenly there is war. So there was confusion, silence, and sudden concern.

Umar RA said, "Perhaps Abdullah is wrong." At this, Abdullah became enraged; he said, "Perhaps if you think I am wrong, don't forget you thought someone better than me was wrong too." So he prodded back at Umar RA, saying, "You were once a kafir and you once thought the Prophet ﷺ was wrong." So Umar RA became enraged and he complained to the Prophet ﷺ — and the Prophet ﷺ responded, "Indeed, O Umar, you were misguided, and Allah guided you to Islam."

This small incident shows the humanity of the sahaba. They were not perfect. You will never find any society that doesn't have differences and minor arguments. In Allah's wisdom, He demonstrated for us this reality of human nature and imperfection even within the most perfect generation.

And we also learn the wisdom of the Prophet ﷺ. He just calmed the situation down and didn't take sides.

Muslims' Preparations

The Prophet ﷺ realized there would be war, so he asked help from the new Makkan converts. There were around 2,000 men in Makkah in addition to the 10,000 who came from Madinah. Therefore, some of the big names of Makkah —some of whom weren't even Muslim— participated in the Battle of Hunayn.^[31] Of those who fought was Safwan ibn Umayyah the son of Umayyah ibn Khalaf. Right now he isn't a Muslim [see [episode 80](#)]. But he has lots of weapons and armor; so the Prophet ﷺ goes to him and asks for the armor, "I need your armor; I'm going to fight in Hunayn." Safwan said, "Are you confiscating it from me, or are you asking me to lend you?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "I'm asking you for a loan that I guarantee I will pay back," meaning, "I am going to borrow it, and if anything is damaged or harmed, you will get something equivalent or the price of it back."^[32] He ﷺ also went to Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harb and borrowed armor from him; and also from Hakim ibn Hizam. All of this was borrowed and it was all later paid back.

Marching to Ta'if

The Prophet ﷺ left Makkah on the 6th of Shawwal. As we said, the Prophet ﷺ stayed in Makkah for 19 days, as reported in Bukhari — other scholars and sources say 10, some say 2 weeks, etc., but we will stick with 19. For those who said less than 19, they say he ﷺ left Makkah on the 28th of Ramadan; but we will stick with Bukhari, so we say he ﷺ left on the 6th of Shawwal, and arrived in Hunayn on the 10th. There were around 12,000 people — 10,000 sahaba, and 2,000 from Makkah most of whom are Muslims but not all. They arrived in a valley in Hunayn. Why Hunayn and not Ta'if? Because the people of Ta'if had already camped in that region.

Clash of the Young With the Old

The people [on the side] of Ta'if numbered around 20,000, and their chieftain was a newly elected young man by the name of Malik ibn Awf al-Nasri (مالك بن عوف النصري) — a 30-year-old. This is his first major battle, and an interesting thing happens, which is very common in all cultures and civilizations, and that is the clash of the young with the old. It's mentioned in the books of seerah that one of the oldest most senior noblemen of Ta'if, Durayd ibn al-Sima (دريد بن الصمة), was brought to the battle for the people to get his blessings. He is an old guard; he has fought in so many battles; so the army wanted the blessings of his presence, and also his wisdom. Note he was blind. So when he was brought

³¹ There is a controversy among scholars as to whether non-Muslims can fight on the side of Muslims in an Islamic war: And this incident suggests yes, they can.

³² This, by the way, shows us the fiqh principle: When you borrow something from somebody, you are responsible for it. If something happens to it in your possession, Islamic law requires that you pay back the damage.

to the battlefield, he said, "I can sense there are women and children, and there are animals here — who has commanded all of them to come to the battle?" And he is told, "The new chieftain, Malik ibn Awf." So he says, "Bring Malik ibn Awf to me."

And he tells Malik, "Why is it that I can hear the babies crying, the goats bleating, and the mules braying? Why have you brought the entire civilization of Thaqif here?" Malik says, "I have brought them because I want every man to have his family and property behind him so that he fights the best fight possible." But Durayd severely rebuked him and told him it was a foolish move, "Your women, children, and goats won't help you win the war — a man who will lose is not going to win merely because his family is behind him. Rather, winning requires men with swords." Durayd then asked for particular subtribes that were known for warfare and intelligence. But he was told that all of those subtribes he named, they didn't show up. So he realized those tribes knew that what Malik was doing was unwise. So he said, "They have done the right thing. Had this truly been a day of honor and glory, these people would never have abandoned this plain that you are in. And I advise you as well to go back, O Malik, rather than fight. And if you are not going to listen to me, at least take the precious eggs of Thaqif (meaning the women, children, etc.), and bring them back to the fortress, for their presence in this battle will not help you. If you win, you will go back and enjoy their company; if you lose, at least they will be safe back home." This is a very sensible suggestion; and the people of Thaqif began contemplating, "This is a very wise decision. Maybe we should listen to him." But Malik mocks Durayd and says, "You have lost the plot. You don't understand what's going on. Just go back to your old people's home and leave the battle to us." And when Malik saw the people were still not fully sure whose side to take, he said to his people, "Wallahi, if you don't listen to me, in front of you I will take my sword and kill myself!" So with this emotional blackmail, the people of Thaqif were quieted down, and they kept their families and flocks on the battlefield.

Truly, this is the age-old problem between youthful ignorance & zeal vs. elderly wisdom & maturity. Every society faces this issue.

The Danger of Pride / Overconfidence

In any case, the Muslims exited Makkah. And note, never up until this time the Muslim army numbered 12,000. It's a massive amount. Now the pagans were 20,000 of course, but the Muslims had so much weaponry and artillery, and never had they had the number of horses and camels that one of them remarked, "How can we possibly be destroyed when we are 12,000?" The news reached the Prophet ﷺ that, "There is a Muslim boasting," so the Prophet ﷺ immediately responded back, "Do not say this, for verily, there was a prophet from amongst the prophets who looked at his army and got puffed up — and as he was looking [at the army], Allah SWT sent a disease / pestilence (some type of calamity), and right then and there the army was destroyed without meeting the enemy on the battlefield." Of course, the Prophet ﷺ is trying to show us the problem of pride and arrogance. Never assume you are the best, or that you are undefeatable. Look at how the Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah [see [episode 79](#)] — his head was bowed down all the way to the camel's back.

So the Prophet ﷺ became worried that this arrogance was spreading. Allah talks about this in Surah al-Tawba [9:25]:

وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كُنُوزُكُمْ فَلَمْ تَتَعَنَ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ

"On the Day of Hunayn^[33], when your quantity deceived you (i.e., you felt arrogant), all of your quantity was not able to help you. And the earth, despite the fact that it is so vast, felt very narrow and constrained for you" [see Quran, 9:25]. [We will discuss what the verse means later — see the next episode.]

So the Prophet ﷺ rebuked them and said, "You should not feel arrogant walking into the battlefield."

The Hadith of the Hanging Tree

One of the reasons some Muslims were feeling arrogant was because they were brand new Muslims who had just accepted Islam. This is shown in a long, interesting hadith that happens on their way to Hunayn, as narrated in Tirmidhi, Musnad Imam Ahmad, and Ibn Ishaq. It's the famous hadith of Abu Waqid al-Laythi (أبو واقد الليثي). He is a brand new convert who has just converted one week ago. And Abu Waqid narrated this hadith, and it's called "the Hadith of the Hanging Tree." Abu Waqid says, "When we were on our way to Hunayn, we passed by a tree called Dhat Anwat (ذات أنواط - the Hanging Tree). This tree was magnificent, lush, and green, so the Quraysh would make a festival around this tree. And every year, they would go to it, sacrifice animals (they made the tree into an idol), and they would hang their weapons on this tree for good luck to help them in battle."

So the Muslims passed by this tree, and Abu Waqid al-Laythi said, "O Messenger of Allah! Why don't you make for us a hanging tree just as they have the Hanging Tree?"—he wants a good luck charm. Our Prophet ﷺ said, "Subhan'Allah! I swear by the One in whose Hands is my soul, you have said exactly like the Children of Israel said to Moses when they said..."

يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ

"O Moses, make for us a god just as they have gods" [Quran, 7:138].

We all know the story where Allah saved the Children of Israel at the Red Sea. And when Allah brought them across the sea, they came upon a nation that was worshiping idols. So they said to Musa, "Make for us an idol like they have idols." And Musa AS became angry with them. Of course, this is in the Quran.

So the Prophet ﷺ said, "Subhan'Allah! You are asking me exactly what the Bani Israel asked from Musa AS," and he ﷺ quotes the Quran, and quotes what Musa AS said,

³³ Side note: Subhan'Allah, Hunayn is mentioned explicitly in the Quran. Only two battles are mentioned by name in the Quran: Badr and Hunayn. (The word Ahzab also occurs, but it refers to the confederates; and not to the name of the battle.)

that, "You are an ignorant people." And he says, "Wallahi, this is the custom (this is decreed) that you will follow the pathways of those before you."

This is the famous Incident of Dhat Anwat, and it has many theological benefits:

Theological Benefits From the Incident of the Hanging Tree

This incident has many theological benefits. Of them:

1) The issue of good luck charms: The prohibition of wearing something that you think is blessed or holy, or doing something that you think will bring about good or save you from evil. Obviously, any Muslim who understands "la ilaha illaLlah" will understand that only Allah has the power to help, and only Allah has the power to protect. That is the whole point of "la ilaha illaLlah (there is no god besides Allah)," and "la hawla wa la quwwata illa biLlah (nothing can change, and there is no power, except by the will of Allah)." To ascribe such power to other than Allah is to ascribe another god besides Allah. If you say, "I have a good luck charm," "I have a good luck tree," "I have a special ring that I wear," "I have a gemstone that will protect me," etc., you are ascribing to another entity the power to help or preserve or protect or cure or give you good luck. So in Islam, we don't believe in any such superstitious rituals or paganistic customs, e.g., black cats crossing, Friday the 13th, knocking on wood, or upside down horseshoes. But unfortunately, some Muslims have their own symbols as well, such as ta'wiz with weird symbols, the panjtan pak, the turquoise eye that they believe would protect them from al-ayn^[34], etc. — these are all a type of paganism. It's in essence a type of idol — you are giving your hope, servitude, and tawakkul in that thing besides Allah, and if something happens to that thing, you get worried, "Who will protect us?"—it becomes a bad omen now.^[35]

³⁴ Al-ayn (العين) - the evil eye.

³⁵ Point of note: The Quran cannot be equated with a ta'wiz. Why? Because the Quran is the Uncreated Speech of Allah. It's an attribute of Allah. It's not separate from Allah. We can seek protection through the Quran. So when we are scared, we recite the Quran and expect it to benefit us. When we are in trouble, we recite the Quran. Therefore, to have a physical copy / verse of the Quran in your house / somewhere, it can never be shirk. But some scholars have said it is not befitting the dignity of the Quran to be used as a talisman / amulet physically; and it should be used / said verbally. It's not shirk and can never be, but the issue is showing respect to the Quran. If you for example have the Quran in the glove compartment in the car, it cannot be shirk; but is it dignified to throw the Quran into the glove compartment with some spare pencils and loose change? Not really. The Quran is a mighty Book [Quran, 41:41] — so some scholars have said it's not befitting to treat it in this regard. And others have said if it's done properly with the right intention, then it is halal. Note the controversy is over is it showing respect to the Quran or not, and it's not over is it halal or haram. Similarly, if someone writes Ayat al-Kursi and folds it into a small pouch and makes it a ta'wiz, the question isn't "is it haram / shirk?" rather, the question is "is it befitting to have the Quran dangling from your neck?" What will you do when you have to go to the bathroom? Is it befitting? What will you do if you have relations with your spouse? So the question is, is it showing dignity to the Quran? So we should be careful because the Quran must be treated as a holy Book. And we put it high on the shelf and we show respect to it. If you put it on the wall for barakah, we say the same thing — it's not wrong as long as you are showing proper respect.

Therefore, this hadith demonstrates clearly that believing in superstitions and evil omens is no joke — they are shirk. The Prophet ﷺ swore by Allah that Abu Waqid said exactly what the Children of Israel said, even though Abu Waqid didn't explicitly ask for another "god" like the Children of Israel did — the words are different, but the essence and meaning is the same; so the Prophet ﷺ is swearing by Allah they are the same.

2) Another thing we learn is that at times of amazement, we should say an Islamic phrase — being vulgar is not of the etiquette of Islam, and it should be avoided. When the Prophet ﷺ heard something astonishing to him, when he heard essentially "Let's do shirk," did he utter a curse word? No. He said, "Subhan'Allah." So phrases like "subhan'Allah," "Allahu'akbar," "alhamdulillah," should be incorporated into our vocabulary. Here we have the Prophet ﷺ teaching us the best of manners.

3) Abu Waqid al-Laythi asked for blatant shirk, but was he considered a mushrik? No. Our Prophet ﷺ pronounced a verdict on his saying, and not on him. This is a very important distinction the average Muslim needs to learn to make. A person committing shirk doesn't necessarily become a mushrik. A person committing kufr doesn't necessarily become a kafir. A person committing bid'ah^[36] doesn't necessarily become a mubtadi'^[37]. There are conditions that have to be met and excuses that have to be removed — and this is the job of the scholars; not the laymen. It's not the lay Muslim's job to start pronouncing kafir, mushrik, mubtadi'. A Muslim might commit an action of kufr but not be a kafir. And this is proven by the hadith of Abu Waqid. Abu Waqid is literally asking for shirk as defined by the Prophet ﷺ, but he was not pronounced mushrik. Why? Because of ignorance — he doesn't understand Islam right now. He thinks, "Okay, I've left paganism, I can't worship that tree we used to revere as pagans, but maybe Islam can give me another special tree." So the Prophet ﷺ gives him the excuse of ignorance. And this clearly shows us a person might commit an act of kufr / shirk and not necessarily be considered a kafir / mushrik. And this is especially true in our day and age. Muslims are so ignorant of their own religion that they will do the most bizarre things in the name of Islam. So we need to teach them with wisdom; not pronounce verdicts on them.

4) This incident demonstrates the manifestation of the prophecy of our Prophet ﷺ. As we know, our Prophet ﷺ prophesied that we (i.e., the ummah) will follow the ways of the people before us. As he ﷺ said in a hadith^[38]: "You will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, span by span and cubit by cubit (i.e., inch by inch), so much so that even if they entered a hole of a mastigure, you would follow them." And the sahaba asked, "O Messenger of Allah! [Do you mean] the Jews and the Christians?" He ﷺ said, "Whom else?" (Side note: What is prohibited is to abandon our theology and rituals, and to take theology and rituals from other religions. Whereas to take culture and science from others is not prohibited.)

³⁶ Bid'ah (بدعة) - [religious] innovation.

³⁷ Mubtadi' (مبتدع) - innovator in religion / heretic.

³⁸ <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7320>

Muslims Camp at Hunayn

So the Muslims reached the camps at night, and they prayed Salat al-Isha — this is outside of Hunayn. One of the Companions volunteered to guard the camps overnight, and the Prophet ﷺ gave him the good news of Jannah. Another group came back reporting the large quantity of camels and sheep of the enemy, and they said even their women, children, and property were there too. This worried some of the Muslims because when you have all the property, animals, etc., this shows immense confidence — and this is what the young Thaqafi chieftain wanted. But the Prophet ﷺ smiled and said, "Tomorrow, this will be the ghanima that we will take, insha'Allahu ta'ala." This shows us two things: (i) Optimism — it's a part of Islam to always be optimistic and to think the best of what will happen, and (ii) whenever you say something about the future, you must say "insha'Allah."

Thaqif & Hawazin's Devious Tactics

Now, what happened? Hunayn was of course Thaqif's territory, so they knew it inside out. And what they had done was that they planned devious and intelligent tactics. They selected a valley that the people of Makkah would have to cross to get to the other side, and they stationed at the end of that valley a small contingent from Hawazin that was fully battle-prepared so that the Muslims would think, "This is where we must attack"; however, the tribes of Thaqif and Hawazin stationed groups of archers in the mountains on top to the left and right — they stationed multiple groups of archers throughout the entire length of the mountains. So the goal is that the Muslims be lured into the valley, and once they are inside, the contingent of Hawazin will pretend to be defeated, causing more Muslims to rush in, and when all the Muslims are in between the mountains, the real attack will be launched which is twofold:

1) Archers from the top — hundreds of archers showering volley after volley onto the entire Muslim army and they cannot do anything;

2) The actual army of 20,000 would charge forward into the valley to kill the Muslims.

And this was exactly what happened as they planned it down to the dot:

The Battle of Hunayn

The Muslims rushed forward, the initial Hawazin contingent pretended to be defeated and scattered away, this made the Muslims happy, so they rushed all forward, and then when the bulk of the Muslim army was between the pass, the signal was given — there was a loud noise; and instantly, volleys of arrows start coming in from everywhere. And the main Hawazin and Thaqif army charged in, and the Muslims panicked. And this is exactly what Allah mentions in the Quran:

وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُّدْبِرِينَ

"The earth became narrow for you despite its vastness, and all of you turned and fled" [see Quran, 9:25].

So the Muslims turned and fled en masse. Hundreds just running for their lives with no care for anyone else. This was compounded by many things:

- 1) Many of these were brand new Muslims — some of them were not even Muslim;
- 2) The attack was such a surprise they had no idea it was coming;

3) The problem with arrows is that they just come out of nowhere, and by the time you see it, it's too late to deflect it; especially when you have people firing from the top, it's almost impossible to deflect;

4) Because of the sheer quantity of the Muslims (12,000), the bulk of them did not have the proper helmets and armor to defend themselves against the arrows.

So everybody started to panic, and people began to rush helter-skelter to find any type of shade or covering to protect them from the onslaught of the arrows. And the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was almost left unguarded. Of course, he did not flee; he was on his mule — and it was as if everyone was fleeing around him. So the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم stood up on his mount and began to call out loudly, "Come to me! I am the Messenger of Allah! I am Muhammad the son of Abdullah!" With him صلى الله عليه وسلم were Abu Bakr, Umar, Ali, and some of the Quraysh, e.g., Abbas —and Abbas was known to be a man with a loud voice— so he صلى الله عليه وسلم said to Abbas, "O uncle, call out to so-and-so"—and he mentioned name after name after name. "Call out to the people of Ridwan (the people of Hudaybiyyah)!"—they were the first on the list, showing their status and level of Iman [see [episode 65](#)]. Then he صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Call out to the Ansar!"—and he mentioned tribe after tribe, "O Banu Sulaym!" "O so-and-so!" And Ibn Ishaq mentions that as each tribe was mentioned, it's as if they awoke from a slumber and realized, "What are we doing fleeing like this?!" so they all began going back to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, and they responded by saying, "Here we respond to your call, O Messenger of Allah!" And the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself kept on raising his voice and said those famous lines, "أنا النبي لا كذب، أنا ابن عبد المطلب (I am the Prophet, there is no lie about this! I am the son [grandson] of Abdul Muttalib!)" This is very interesting; he صلى الله عليه وسلم combines between religion and tribalism.

Tangent: Is Nationalism Halal?

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "I am the Prophet, there is no lie about this. I am the son [grandson] of Abdul Muttalib." This clearly shows he صلى الله عليه وسلم is invoking both Islamic loyalties and tribal loyalties. Because, who are the people around him? They are new Muslims from the Quraysh (and some aren't even Muslims yet at the time, e.g., Safwan ibn Umayyah), and they will most likely respond to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم being the grandson of Abdul Muttalib rather than him being the Messenger of Allah. In our times, tribalism is almost gone and is replaced with nationalism. And this incident shows us that nationalism (the equivalent of tribalism) can

be used for good purposes if used properly. Some people in our time have gone to an extreme and say nationalism is haram or whatnot. But no. Not all types of nationalism are haram. Rather, if used properly, any type of sentiment can be used for good. And this is demonstrated here in the incident of Hunayn. The Prophet ﷺ is invoking, 'Who am I? My grandfather was Abdul Muttalib.' Now, we all know that in Islam, it doesn't matter who your father or grandfather is — we all know that on the Day of Judgment, it's not going to help you. But in this world, it might. Invoking it for a legitimate cause is fine.

This also shows us there is nothing haram in having a generic pride in your heritage or ancestry as long as that pride is within the pride of Islam (i.e., it should never be more than the pride of Islam). After all, who is Abdul Muttalib? The greatest Arab who ever lived in Jahiliyyah. The most prestigious and beloved man — every single Arab knows and loves him for all that he did [see [episode 5](#)]. And who is the Prophet ﷺ? The son of the most beloved son of Abdul Muttalib. And the Prophet ﷺ himself was the most beloved grandson to Abdul Muttalib. So now he brings back that lineage, and there is nothing wrong with this.

Iman of the New Converts

And of those who didn't flee and remained along with the immediate sahaba like Abu Bakr, Umar, et al., was the Prophet's ﷺ first cousin, Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith ibn Abdul Muttalib. It's narrated that the Prophet ﷺ looked around trying to see who was around him, and there was a man in armor holding onto the stirrup of the mule. So he ﷺ said, "Who is this?" Abu Sufyan said, "Ya Rasulallah, I am the son of your mother (i.e., grandmother)." — As we mentioned, he begged the Prophet ﷺ to forgive him [see [episode 78](#)], and this incident now proves his Iman. And he was of those who called the people and the Quraysh back to the places.

Contrastingly, we see the weakness of faith of some of the people who have newly embraced Islam (and recall not every Qureshi is a Muslim at this point in time). Of those was the brother of Safwan ibn Umayyah, and also Safwan ibn Umayyah himself — the two sons of Umayyah. When the Muslims began to flee, the brother of Safwan said, "Good. Today, the magic spell will be broken," meaning the Prophet ﷺ, whom they accused of being a magician, would lose in battle. To this, Safwan replied, "Shut up! May Allah destroy all of your teeth (may you never speak again)! For by Allah, I would rather be ruled by a Qureshi than by a Hawazini!" Meaning what? Pure tribalism. Nothing to do with Islam or him ﷺ being the Messenger of Allah. Now we see why the Prophet ﷺ said, "I am the son of Abdul Muttalib." This is the mindset he ﷺ is dealing with. And even the other main Abu Sufyan (ibn Harb) seems to have expressed some satisfaction at what is happening. This clearly demonstrates that not all of the new converts had fully converted.

Interesting Arabic Phrases

We learn of an interesting phrase here that Safwan said to his brother, "فض الله فاك" (May God destroy all of your teeth)," i.e., "May you never speak again." However, the very

common opposite expression in our days is a play on this, which is, "لا فضل فوك" (May God never destroy your teeth)," i.e., "May you always speak eloquently."

Another phrase from this incident—which is common in the Arabic language, the first people to ever say it was the Prophet ﷺ, and people use it to this day—is, "الآن حمي الوطيس" (Now the real fight begins)^[39], i.e., when the fight is getting to the main serious part. The Prophet ﷺ is the first Arab to ever say this expression. When did he say it? When the sahaba came around him and fought back. He said, "Now the battle will begin!" From that time up until now, it's a common saying the Arabs use.

When the sahaba came running back, this roused up the army, and the Prophet ﷺ stood up again and took a symbolic handful of dust, threw it toward [the direction of] the tribe of Thaqif, and said, "شاهت الوجوه" (May the faces be disfigured)," i.e., "May you all be vanquished." And it is said this was a miracle as well (just like in Badr), and it blinded the enemy, and the entire group of archers could not fire after this. And the Prophet ﷺ began praying and making du'a, and the Muslims surged forward, and that was when the tide changed.

³⁹ Side note: "الوطيس" (al-Watis)" is one of the things they would call the tribe of Thaqif and Hawazin. This is one of the nicknames of that tribe.

083. Battle of Hunayn Part 2

Recap

Recall we started talking about the Battle of Hunayn which was a battle between the Muslims and the tribes of Thaqif and Hawazin (plus smaller tribes). The Thaqif is the tribe of Ta'if, and the Hawazin is the Bedouin tribe outside of Ta'if. How many were on the side of the mushrikun? Around 20,000. And the Muslims were around 12,000. And for the first time in their lives, the Muslims felt overconfident, so much so that one of them remarked, "How can we possibly be destroyed." And the Prophet ﷺ told them, "Be careful, for there was a prophet who said this, and in front of his eyes Allah took his army away from him." Nonetheless, the damage had been done and the Muslims walked into a trap. In that trap, they started running helter-skelter and they began running from the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ himself, however, stood his ground and did not flee. He remained firm. And around him were the elite of the sahaba: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, his uncle Abbas, and some of the Ansar.

(Cont.) The Battle of Hunayn

And slowly but surely, as the Prophet ﷺ called out, the sahaba gathered around him, and more and more people continued to come back. Especially when Abbas began calling them name by name, tribe by tribe. We also said that at this stage, the Prophet ﷺ took a handful of dust / stones, and he threw it in the direction of the mushrikun, which affected their eyesight and allowed the sahaba to congregate again. This is what Allah mentions in the Quran, in Surah al-Tawba verses 25-26, that He helped the Muslims:

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُّدْبِرِينَ
ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۚ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ

"Indeed Allah has given you [believers] victory on many battlefields, even at the Battle of Hunayn when you took pride in your great numbers, but they proved of no advantage to you. The earth, despite its vastness, seemed to close in on you, then you turned back in retreat. Then Allah sent down His reassurance (i.e., peace) upon His Messenger and the believers, and sent down forces you could not see, and punished those who disbelieved. Such was the reward of the disbelievers" [Quran, 9:25-26].

Notice Allah mentions "Hunayn" explicitly in the Quran. On that day, the sahaba were "impressed with their own numbers" — but they were of no use. And the vast earth seemed "constrained, and you turned your back and fled." — So in one verse, Allah describes in vivid detail the first phase of the Battle of Hunayn.

And after this, Allah sent "His reassurance," i.e., His sakina, i.e., His peace. And Allah "sent an army you could not see," i.e., once again, the angels helped the believers. And it's reported that a number of Muslims and non-Muslims saw these angels come down. Of them

is Jubayr ibn Mut'im (who at this time is a Muslim), the son of Mut'im ibn Adi. He narrates: "When the two armies met, I saw a large black cloud come down from the heavens and disperse among the people like ants." So he said he saw this very dense cloud that spread everywhere. And then Jubayr says he realized these are the angels coming to help the believers.

The Story of Shayba ibn Uthman

There is also an interesting story mentioned in Ibn Ishaq, and that is the story of a third / fourth cousin of the Prophet ﷺ, and this is Shayba ibn Uthman (شيبعة بن عثمان) from the Banu Abd al-Dar, one of the sister tribes of the Banu Hashim. His father, Uthman ibn Abi Talha (عثمان بن أبي طلحة), was one of those killed in the Battle of Uhud on the side of the pagans. And Shayba has just accepted Islam at the Conquest, and his heart is still angry and bitter that his father died at Uhud at the hands of the Muslims. So when he saw all the sahaba fleeing and the Prophet ﷺ was alone, immediately he thought, "Let me get revenge for the death of my father!" So he took his spear and began galloping toward the back of the Prophet ﷺ hoping that he could kill him in the chaos. But — he narrates: "Out of nowhere, a light came, and it was about to burn me. And it was so bright I had to cover my eyes." The Prophet ﷺ turned around —and he must have seen what was happening; either he saw the angels and the light, or he saw Shayba going berserk— he ﷺ raised his hands and made du'a to Allah, "O Allah, cause shaytan to depart from the heart of Shayba. O Allah, guide Shayba. O Allah, guide Shayba. O Allah, guide Shayba." At this —Shayba narrates— immediately, Iman entered his heart, and he joined fighting with the Prophet ﷺ against the tribe of Thaqif and Hawazin. And he lived a pious life after this. Subhan'Allah, it is amazing that one second he was trying to kill the Prophet ﷺ, and the next second his heart was full of Iman and he was fighting with the Muslims.

The Mushriks Flee Helter-Skelter

Eventually, when the Muslims gathered around the Prophet ﷺ —we don't have much details, but the books of seerah say the same thing, which is that:— the tribes of Thaqif and Hawazin fled. It appears the tribes of Thaqif and Hawazin were relying entirely on that one tactic. They only had plan A which was to shower the Muslims with arrows and let them flee. It appears they didn't have a plan B. So when plan A failed and the Muslims gathered again and charged forward, the mushriks fled helter-skelter. It appears they did not have any other backup plan. And the Prophet ﷺ commanded the sahaba to pursue them to the valleys and mountains. Why? Because they are 20,000 — they will eventually congregate if left alone. So after the Battle of Hunayn, there is a long list of mini-expeditions: 200 sahaba were sent in one direction, 300 sent in another, and so on.

So the Battle of Hunayn ended at Hunayn, but several mini-skirmishes followed. In them, some of the famous sahaba were injured and killed. Of them is the uncle of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari:

The Martyrdom of the Uncle of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari RA

A javelin was struck into the uncle of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, and his nephew Abu Musa came to him and saw the javelin sticking out of his uncle's chest. So Abu Musa says to his uncle, "Tell me who has killed you!" His uncle points to someone, so Abu Musa then and there attacks this man viciously, slaughters him, comes back, and says, "I have taken care of him. Now what can I do to help you?" His uncle says, "Take the javelin out," so he does this. But the blood is too much it's obvious he is going to die. So then his uncle says, "Go and tell the Prophet ﷺ what happened, that I died in this manner. And give him my salam, and ask him to make du'a for me."

So it was a beautiful ending. And Abu Musa comes back to the Prophet ﷺ and tells him in vivid detail what happened and how his uncle died. The Prophet ﷺ was lying in his tent at this time; and when he heard Abu Musa's uncle ask for du'a, he ﷺ asked for water, did wudu, and then stood up and raised his hands as high as he could (to the point that his armpits could be seen), and then he made du'a: "O Allah, forgive the sins of Abu Amir (أبو عامر), and raise his ranks among the Illiyin (العليين)"—it's a beautiful du'a, so when Abu Musa heard all of this, he said, "Ya Rasulallah, for me as well." And so the Prophet ﷺ made du'a for Abu Musa as well, "O Allah, forgive him his sins, and cause him to enter a good abode on the Day of Judgment."

And Abu Musa's son Abu Burdah (أبو بردة) —who was one of the famous scholars of the tabi'un in Madinah (d. 103 AH)— was very proud of this hadith, that the Prophet ﷺ made du'a for his father and granduncle.

Noncombatants Should Not Be Killed

It's also reported that in the aftermath, when the Thaqif and Hawazin had run away, the Prophet ﷺ was walking on the battlefield and he saw that a woman had been killed.

So he said, "It was not right for her to have been killed (i.e., this should not have happened)," and he said, "Who did this?" And he was told that it was Khalid ibn al-Walid. So he said, "Go and catch Khalid ibn al-Walid before he goes forward.^[40] And tell him that he is not to kill any more women, children, or servants / elderly (i.e., those who are not fighting — civilians)."

This is the famous hadith and ruling used in all of the books of fiqh to show that the Prophet ﷺ clearly forbade the killing of noncombatants.

⁴⁰ i.e., Khalid had been sent on another expedition, so the Prophet ﷺ is saying: Go and catch him before he goes further.

Skirmishes

So what happened to the people of Thaqif and Hawazin? As we said, they fled to many different places, and a number of mini-battles took place. And by and large, almost all of these skirmishes were successful (meaning the Muslims won). But the tribe of Thaqif did not flee into the wilderness — they fled back to Ta'if. Along with whoever was in that direction, they fled back to the city of Ta'if. And so that was where the Prophet ﷺ turned to next. (And perhaps, the second largest group, they fled to a place called [Awtas](#) [أوطاس]. And there was another battle there with some casualties, but overall, the Muslims were victorious.)

Victory Comes From Allah SWT

The biggest lesson from the actual Battle of Hunayn is that, no matter how prepared you are, if you don't have Iman and thiqah^[41] and tawakkul in Allah, it's not going to help you. If you rely on yourself and your own preparation, you set yourself up for failure. Never were the sahaba this many, and never did they have as many weapons, arrows, and armor; they were never as well equipped; they had never been as well rested^[42] — yet this was the cause of their downfall.

Therefore, this shows us victory comes from Allah, and not from us. No matter what you do, your heart must have full tawakkul that Allah will take care of you; not your preparation.

And eventually, Allah did give the Muslims victory when they responded to the call of the Prophet ﷺ.

Ghanima

The battle brought forth the largest ghanima the Muslims had ever conquered up until this point. Because when all of these tribes came, they made a massive mistake of bringing all of their families, animals, and property with them — the elder chieftain told them this was a foolish move, but the younger chieftain was adamant [see [episode 82](#)]. And so it is estimated that at least 6,000 prisoners of war were taken —that is a **massive** amount— and over 24,000 camels, and over 40,000 goats. In our time, this is tens of millions of dollars. It's a fortune the likes of which the Muslims had never seen. And the Prophet ﷺ gathered together all of these spoils of war in a valley called [Ji'ranah](#) (جعرانة).

⁴¹ Thiqah (ثقة) - reliance.

⁴² They have been in Makkah for 19 days and have eaten to their full.

Shayma the Foster Sister of the Prophet ﷺ

It is narrated in Ibn Ishaq that when the prisoners of war were being led in, one of the ladies started screaming and shouting, "How dare you treat me like this?! Don't you know I am the sister of your own companion?!" They said, "What do you mean?" She said, "I am his (Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ) foster sister!" So the sahaba were shocked and told the Prophet ﷺ what happened. And the Prophet ﷺ told them to bring her to him.

When she came, she said to the Prophet ﷺ, "I am Shayma." He said, "How do I know you are Shayma?" — Remember, he hasn't seen her for 56 years (he is now 60 years old). So she said, "I still have the mark on my back that you bit me one time when I was carrying you [as a baby]."

At this, the Prophet ﷺ laughed and realized this was indeed Shayma. So he said to her, "I have two choices for you: Either you stay with us and we shall treat you honorably, or I shall gift you and you can go back to your tribe." And Shayma chose the latter option.

And it's not known whether she accepted Islam.

Halimah and Her Husband, the Foster Parents of the Prophet ﷺ

In al-Bayhaqi and other books, we learn of an even more interesting narration (though this narration is weaker): It's said Shayma brought her mother and father, i.e., Halimah and her husband (the Prophet's ﷺ foster parents). And this is not impossible — Halimah would have been around 80 by now, so it's reasonable. And it's said when Halimah came, the Prophet ﷺ stood up for her, took off his own shawl and laid it on the ground for her.^[43] And he honored her immensely and gave her many gifts.

Did she accept Islam or not, the narration does not say.

Trick Question: "Which Is the Battle That All of the Khulafa al-Rashidun Were Wounded In?"

In the Battle of Hunayn, only four people died, but many were wounded. And of those who were wounded, interestingly enough —and this is a trick question— which is the battle that all of the Khulafa al-Rashidun were wounded in? It is the Battle of Hunayn: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali RA, they were all wounded in the Battle of Hunayn. And all four of them stood by the Prophet ﷺ.

⁴³ It's the highest honor possible that you take off your own shawl and put it on the ground.

Parallels Between the Battle of Badr and Hunayn

The Battle of Badr and the Battle of Hunayn are the only two battles mentioned by name in the Quran [see Quran, 3:123 & 9:25].

And there are so many parallels between the Battle of Badr and Hunayn. (We could give a 20-minute tangent just about the parallels, but we are not going to, because insha'Allah, each one of you can think about them.) The main parallel is that both of them were amazing victories: Badr was an unparalleled spiritual victory, and Hunayn was an unparalleled financial victory. And in both, Allah sent angels down; and in both, the Muslims tried their best and then ultimately Allah helped them and gave them victory.

The Siege of Ta'if

The prisoners of war and ghanima were kept at Ji'ranah, and the Prophet ﷺ put armed guards to protect all of this. He then made his way to Ta'if. Generally speaking, the scholars of seerah combine two incidents in one: The Battle of Hunayn and the Hisar of Ta'if⁴⁴ — there was a battle in the fields of Hunayn, and then from there, literally, the Prophet ﷺ marched on to Ta'if and laid siege to the city. They are two separate incidents, but since they occur back to back and since the enemy is common, you always find both lumped together. So much so that scholars have differed, "Should we count these two as one?"

It is worth noting that Ta'if was not a battle; it was a siege. And the Muslims arrived during the last week of Shawwal.

Remember, Ta'if is a city nestled in the mountains. And it's a beautiful city. There is no semblance of desert in Ta'if — it's a green, luscious place. They have natural water, luscious fruits, grapes, etc. It's not like the barren valley of Makkah. And the people of Ta'if always competed with the people of Makkah. And they felt themselves superior. But they didn't have the one thing the Makkans had, and that is the Ka'bah. They cannot compete with the Ka'bah. But they did compete with wealth, finance, and fortification. They had fortified their city with massive walls. And they also had built instruments to defend against any attack, e.g., they had things on the tops of the walls to throw down (burning oil, arrows, etc.). You won't find this in any other city in Arabia. And they had stocked supplies for almost a year inside their city. On top of this, they have running water. So they could last a long time in their city. And it's clear this was a long-term strategy in place; they were preparing to attack the Prophet ﷺ for many months.

The Prophet ﷺ from Makkah (i.e., even before the Battle of Hunayn took place), when he heard of the people of Thaqif and Hawazin attacking, he sent 2-3 sahaba to another tribe, including Urwah ibn Mas'ud and Ghaylan ibn Salama (غيلان بن سلمة), to the tribe of Jurash (جرش), in order to learn specific instruments of war that the Muslims had never

⁴⁴ Hisar al-Ta'if (حصار الطائف) - the Siege of Ta'if.

used before. Of them was the catapult. And the first Muslim to use a catapult was the Prophet ﷺ himself. And by the way, subhan'Allah, what does this show us? This shows us the immense preparation and foresight of the Prophet ﷺ — that in Makkah he was already thinking, "I may have to lay siege to Ta'if." And this is exactly what happened.

And so when he arrives at Ta'if, those sahaba have come back with the knowledge of how to build a catapult and battering rams to break down doors / walls. And the third thing they learned was how to form a testudo (i.e., the tortoise formation — a type of shield wall formation used in battles) — the army walks under large shields to get to the siege wall. So they learned three new things:

1. Catapult
2. Large battering ram
3. Testudo

So right outside Ta'if, for the first time ever, a catapult was built by the Muslims. Initially, the sahaba camped at a certain area, but they were showered with volleys of arrows, so the Prophet ﷺ told them to go to another location^[45], and at this place, the Prophet ﷺ began the actual siege. The sahaba tried a number of things: On one occasion, they used the testudo to come close to the walls, but the burning oil still got through and it burned many of them; so they fled from under the shield, but lo and behold, then the showers of arrows came, and a number of people died. So the Muslims grew a little bit desperate: What is to be done now? How do you attack a city with thick walls? What can you do? The battering rams did not work; the catapults caused some damage but they did not cause the doors to open.

So they just waited out there. The Prophet ﷺ suggested, "Let us leave the people of Ta'if for now and come back at another time." But some of the Muslims were adamant and said, "Ya Rasulallah, will we leave them now when we are so close?"—the sahaba had tasted the victory of Makkah and Hunayn; they were on a roll and wanted to finish the job. So when the Prophet ﷺ saw the sahaba wanted to stay, he allowed them to stay.

Burning of Lands and Produce

And the Muslims resorted to a tactic allowed in Islam under extreme circumstances. And that is they started burning the lands, crops, and produce outside the city walls. Now, burning land means you cannot grow on it for decades. You are ruining it for a very long time. But the Muslims were desperate, so they were forced into doing this. And when the people of Ta'if saw this, they started begging from the rooftops, "We ask you by Allah and by our kinship and by our rights of neighborhood, don't do this!"—because it was more difficult for them than the loss of life; this is their livelihood for generations to come. And when they

⁴⁵ And this location, by the way, later became the site of the first mosque in Ta'if. And to this day, that masjid is the main masjid of the city of Ta'if — it's called the [Masjid of Abdullah ibn Abbas](#). These days, that masjid is inside the city because the city has expanded; but when the Prophet ﷺ camped, the location was obviously outside the city.

begged in this manner, the Prophet ﷺ relented and forbade the sahaba from burning any more agricultural produce.

Siege Concluded

The Prophet ﷺ also made an announcement to the people of Ta'if, "Anybody who comes and joins us shall be protected; any slave who leaves and joins us, you will automatically be free." So, many slaves joined the Muslim army — in the middle of the night, they snuck outside, converted, and joined the Muslims. And in the course of the next few days, perhaps two dozen or more came down to join the Muslims; but by and large, the city of Ta'if remained the same.

The Muslims really did not know what to do; another mini-massacre took place from the showering of arrows, and the sahaba became demoralized. And so for the second time, the Prophet ﷺ says, "Let us go on." And this time, they quietly agreed.

How Long Did the Prophet ﷺ Stay Outside Ta'if?

How long did the Prophet ﷺ stay outside Ta'if? There are so many different opinions: Some say 20 days, some say 30 days, some say 40 days, and some say 2 weeks. Allah knows best, but what seems to make the most sense if you look at the entire narrative of the seerah is that it was less than 2 weeks (11 or 12 or 13 days).

The Prophet ﷺ Makes Du'a for Thaqif

Before the Muslims left Ta'if, the sahaba said to the Prophet ﷺ, "Ya Rasulallah, make du'a against Thaqif." So the Prophet ﷺ raised his hands —and everyone raised their hands with him— but instead of making du'a against them, he ﷺ made du'a for them, "O Allah, guide the people of Thaqif. O Allah, bring the people of Thaqif to us."

The Muslims then returned to Ji'ranah where the ghanima was.

Lessons From the Siege of Ta'if

From this incident, we learn:

1) The importance of shura. Our Prophet ﷺ wanted to leave, but when he saw the younger sahaba wanting to stay, he allowed them to stay. This shows us a wise leader never forces his decision onto others.

2) It shows us the sahaba should have listened to the Prophet ﷺ the first time. Ultimately, the Prophet ﷺ knows best.

3) It also shows us the mercy of the Prophet ﷺ for the people of Tha'if — he made du'a for them. (And subhan'Allah, Allah answered his du'a.) This shows us the goal of Islam is not vengeance and blood; it is mercy and guidance. If anyone deserves to be killed, it is Tha'if [see episode 20]; but still, the Prophet ﷺ is hopeful, "O Allah, guide them to Islam."

4) Of the greatest lessons that is very profound is we learn that this world is never a world of ultimate victory. Look at our Prophet ﷺ: In his greatest moment of glory, he does not get Ta'if. He has won Makkah, you would expect Ta'if is just icing on the cake. But no, this world is a world of tests — it's not going to be a bed of roses. It's a world of trials and tribulations. You won't get one thing after another. You're going to get some, and you're going to get deprived of others. Even in his moment of glory, our Prophet ﷺ was shown that you are not going to get everything. And he had to suffer: The Siege of Ta'if had at least 4x the number of casualties than Hunayn. And the Prophet ﷺ did not win over Ta'if. Therefore, if this is the case with the Prophet ﷺ —that he won some and lost some— how about us? Will everything be easy for us? No. Also, just because you might lose one, it doesn't mean Allah is angry with you. It just means this is life. This is how Allah tests you.

5) We also see that the Prophet ﷺ does not have an issue learning sciences and technology from anybody. He sent the sahaba to a faraway tribe to learn this knowledge (building a catapult, etc.). Knowledge is universal; and any beneficial knowledge, we should take. Islam is not anti-science or anti-technology — whatever is of benefit, we will take it as long as it does not conflict with our theology.

6) We also learn the importance of psychological warfare: (i) The Prophet ﷺ called out to the noblemen and slaves of Ta'if, "Come and we will protect you!" "Come and we will free you!" (ii) The issue of burning the crops and produce — even though the Prophet ﷺ relented in the end, this incident shows us the asl^[46] is that it is allowed under extreme circumstances.

Incentives to Convert

Let us return to Ji'ranah where the Prophet ﷺ went back to, where all the spoils of war were. In front of him were literally tens of millions worth of treasure. Thousands of camels, goats, weapons, etc. The Prophet ﷺ camped at Ji'ranah and waited for more than a week. So since the actual Battle of Hunayn started, around 20-25 days have passed. What was he waiting for? He was waiting for the tribe of Hawazin to come back and negotiate a settlement for their property and families. At the end of the day, this is their women and children. And he wanted the Hawazin to come and accept Islam — and if they did, everything would be returned back to them. Subhan'Allah.

⁴⁶ Asl (أصل) - basic ruling.

And obviously, everyone will want Islam if he will get his wife and children back — there's nobody that will say, "Khalas, I'm not going to be a Muslim — you can keep my wife and kids and money." And when he takes the money and family and he has to 'pretend' to be a Muslim, then what is going to happen? Eventually, Islam will enter his heart. This is the difference between Islam and others. We will give that Truth —as long as it's not coerced— with whatever incentive is necessary, because once that incentive is taken and Islam is tasted, eventually, Islam will become beloved to that person. (And this is the reality that we see around us as well — the phenomenon of marriage conversion is common: Initially, the person accepts Islam just for marriage purposes, but eventually, his / her Islam becomes very strong. Also, never has a group been persuaded into a faith and then they have retained that faith for generations as a society, except for Islam. And subhan'Allah, missionary work in Muslim lands has been, by and large, an utter and dismal failure. In large segments of the Muslim world, there has never been mass conversion away from Islam. Ultimately, the true religion will enter the heart; and Islam is true.)

So the Prophet ﷺ patiently waited for nearly a month for the people of Hawazin to come back. And this, by the way, has occurred before as well with the Banu al-Mustaliq when the Prophet ﷺ married Juwayriyya RA [see [episode 54](#)] — the entire tribe became Muslim, so they went back with all their property and belongings, and carried on like normal except they were now Muslims. So the Prophet ﷺ wanted the same thing to happen to the Hawazin.

Distribution of Ghanima

However, the Hawazin do not come back, and now the Muslims are eager, "Where is my share?" According to Islamic law —and the rules of ghanima are relatively complicated— it's said this type of ghanima that is left behind, it's up to the ruler to decide what to do with it [see also: [episode 53](#)]. So the ghanima of someone who has been killed has its own rulings, and the ghanima left behind in the camps has separate rulings. And the tens of millions left behind that are now in Ji'ranah are of the latter type. So the soldiers do not have any guaranteed share of it, and it's up to the Prophet ﷺ to decide. And what did he do? He began to give the largest gifts that had ever been seen in Islam to specific people. One by one by name, choosing them. Ibn Ishaq lists up to a dozen people, most of whom were from the Quraysh, including Abu Sufyan ibn Harb: The Prophet ﷺ gave him 100 camels at a time when most of the people of Makkah didn't even have a single camel. And having a single camel is a huge deal — it means you are upper middle class. Yet the Prophet ﷺ gave Abu Sufyan 100 camels, which is a fortune. And he gave Safwan ibn Umayyah —the one who's still not a Muslim and has a four-month grace period— 100 camels as well. From the tribe of Ghatafan, [Uyaynah ibn Hisn](#), who was one of the coarse Bedouins but has a massive tribe behind him, got 100 camels as well. From the tribe of Tamim up in Najd, al-Aqra' ibn Habis (الأقرع بن حابس) got 100 camels as well. And so on and so forth. And he ﷺ gave large gifts to Muawiyah the son of Abu Sufyan, and to the full brother of Abu Jahal, al-Harith ibn Hisham. So basically, many of the dignitaries of the Quraysh go back with fortunes. Perhaps up to 60-70 people were given massive fortunes. And all of the Muhajirun as well were given some of the shares (but not as big as 100 camels). The one group that was left completely untouched was the Ansar:

The Status of the Ansar

The one group that was left completely untouched was the Ansar. Not a single penny, out of the big share, was given to them. (Note: But out of the regular, smaller share, that is a different story). And human nature kicked in, so some of the younger sahaba of the Ansar began murmuring (the narrations clearly mention it was the younger ones).

They say, "When there is war, we are told to come, but when there is booty and money, we are nowhere to be found." Another said, "May Allah forgive Rasulullah, he gives to the Quraysh and leaves us, even as our swords are still dripping with their blood." So it's human nature; money is money — you see people getting fortunes and you think they are enemies of Allah, and yet they go with the fortune but you are left with nothing — so the younger sahaba murmured. Until finally, Sa'd ibn Ubadah, the senior of the Ansar, kindly requested an audience with the Prophet ﷺ to talk to the Ansar — and he hinted that there were problems within the group. The Prophet ﷺ asks him, "Where do you find yourself?" Sa'd says, "I am one of my people." (Subhan'Allah, deep down inside, he also has that desire; he is a human — but he does not complain. He goes to the Prophet ﷺ to solve the problem and not to complain. This shows us the Iman of Sa'd.)

So the Prophet ﷺ tells him, "Bring all of the Ansar, and make sure no one is in the tent except the Ansar."

So they crammed until there was *no* space at all. And people are outside listening in from the Ansar. And the Prophet ﷺ gave one of the most powerful, moving lectures ever to the Ansar. Full of praise of the Ansar. One of the most powerful lectures in the seerah. He said, "If all of mankind were to go in one direction and the Ansar in another, I would go with the Ansar." And he said, "Were it not for the Hijrah, I would be from the Ansar." And then he said, "I give to some people because I fear for their greed and desires; and I don't give to others because I trust what Allah has given in their hearts^[47] is more than what I can give them." And he continued, "The Quraysh is still new to Islam, and I wish to comfort them by bringing them close to me." And he said, "O Allah, have mercy on the Ansar, and the children of the Ansar, and the children of the children of the Ansar." And he said at the end a line that shook them to their core and the room began to cry until their beards were wet; he said, "Are you not happy that people go back with sheep and camels and goats, but you go back home with the Messenger of Allah?"

So they began to cry so much and said, "We are content with Islam and you, ya Rasulullah!" And the Prophet ﷺ calmed them down.

This incident really shows us the status of the Ansar. The Prophet ﷺ didn't give them a single penny: Why? Because what Allah had given them was more precious than money. And that is why there is a hadith, "Loving the Ansar is a part of Iman, and hating the Ansar is a sign of nifaq."

⁴⁷ i.e., the fortune of Iman.

Generosity Will Sway the Heart

So the Prophet ﷺ took care of the muallafati qulubuhum (مؤلفة قلوبهم). Muallafati qulubuhum are those whose hearts you need to bring close — there are those people whom money sways them. And Safwan ibn Umayyah is a prime example. This is when he converted to Islam. Right now when the Prophet ﷺ gives him 100 camels. Because he realizes it's not possible for the Prophet ﷺ to be a man of this world, i.e., a man who wants this world.^[48] Safwan later said, "Wallahi, the Prophet ﷺ was the most despised to me. But he continued to give and give and give until he became the most beloved to me." It's human nature that such generosity will sway the heart.

"Ya Rasulallah, I Will Never Ask Anybody for Any Money After This"

Hakim ibn Hizam, who converted at the Conquest of Makkah, also got a mini-fortune. And this is free money, so he said, "Give me some more," and the Prophet ﷺ gave it. And again he said, "Give me some more," so the Prophet ﷺ gave him some more. Three times this happened. And the fourth time, the Prophet ﷺ said, "O Hakim, this money is sweet, luscious, and green. And whoever takes it with an open and generous heart, Allah will give him blessings. But whoever takes it wanting more out of greed, this is like the one who eats and is never satisfied (an Arabic saying which means the one who keeps on wanting and never is satisfied with what he has). Allah will put you in charge to see what you are doing with your money," meaning every money you have, you have to answer for on the Day of Judgment. We are accountable for everything. When Hakim heard this, he said, "Ya Rasulallah, I will never ask anybody for any money after this." And subhan'Allah, for the rest of his life —and he lived a long life (d. 54 AH)— he never once asked anybody for anything. This hadith really shook him.

Bedouins Convert For Money

And it was at this time that the converts began flooding in from the Bedouin tribes. Why? Because people just wanted money, money, money. That's why they were converting. And we have at least 6 or 7 incidents of people asking for money. Of them is the chieftain of the Bedouin who comes and grabs the Prophet ﷺ by the collar, yanks his collar, and says, "Give me some of this money that you are giving to others." So the Prophet ﷺ smiled and said [to the sahaba in charge of distributing], "Give him some."

In one occasion, the Prophet ﷺ was surrounded by Bedouins begging for money until his back was against a thorny bush, and his upper garment became stuck. This was at

⁴⁸ And subhan'Allah, by the time the Prophet ﷺ was done handing out fortune after fortune, not one single penny went into his pocket — it's humanly impossible for anybody to live like this. It's a sign that he is a true prophet.

the very end when the money had all been finished. And understandably, our Prophet ﷺ became slightly frustrated and said, "Return my garment to me, for wallahi, if I had as many camels as the shrubs around us, you would have found me to give the last one of them to you. I would not keep anything for myself, and you would have found me to be a generous person, not stingy or miserly."

It is also here the famous incident occurs:

The Beginning of Ultra-Fanaticism

It is also here the famous incident occurs —which is a theological tangent— where the beginnings of ultra-fanaticism / kharijite-mentality come into play. This is when a man with a straggly beard and large forehead came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "Ya Muhammad.^[49] Be fair in this money," meaning, "You are not giving me as much as I deserve." The Prophet ﷺ responded, "Woe to you. Who will be just if I am not just on this earth?" But the man said, "This is a distribution that you are not doing for the sake of Allah." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Will you not trust me when the One who is in the heavens trusts me?" After this, the man basically harshly walked away — and this is truly kufr, which is why Umar asked to execute him. But the Prophet ﷺ refused and said, "Woe to me if the people start saying I kill my own Companions." And then he ﷺ said the famous statement, "From his ilk will come a group of people that will recite the Quran but it will not leave their throats (i.e., they won't understand what they recite). And you will think their salah is better than your salah, and their zakat is better than your zakat, and their actions of worship are better than your actions of worship; yet they will leave Islam like an arrow leaves the target once it has hit it." And he ﷺ said, "These people are the worst of people"—and in one version, the word "khawarij" is used (but Allah knows best if this version is sahih or not). In any case, the name kharijites eventually was called to them —and these were the ultra-fanatics— and we still have them around to this day, where quite literally they will kill innocent people and yet they still pray tahajjud and read the Quran and whatnot. Killing people is no issue to them, but they are very careful with the food they eat and whatnot. [Meaning they limit religiosity only to rituals, and they have no respect for the sanctity of human life. Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak [عبد الله بن المبارك] [d. 181 AH] said, "It is dangerous when a person has religion but not character, because that means they are either hypocrites or they have misunderstood the religion — otherwise, what they know of the religion would rectify their character."] So it's a fanatic mentality — and many of us are aware of these types of people (or some of us have dealt with them in the past). And the Prophet ﷺ said these types of people will continue to exist until the Day of Judgment — and the man was the prototype; he literally thinks he is more righteous than the Prophet ﷺ. He thinks he is holier than Rasulullah, saying, "You aren't just in handing out money; I can do a better job." Think about that. And that's exactly the type of mentality that exists in the ultra-fanatics of our times.

One of the interesting things: When the Bedouins come to the Prophet ﷺ and they are harsh with him, sometimes he ﷺ is gentle with them and other times he ﷺ is slightly irritated, but he ﷺ never gets genuinely angry. But when this guy came, he ﷺ did. Why?

⁴⁹ You do not address the Prophet ﷺ by his first name, but the man did.

Because it's not just rudeness anymore; it's theological now — you cannot challenge the status of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. You cannot accuse him of not being sincere. It's not personal anymore; it's theological. The line was crossed. The Bedouin comes, yanks him ﷺ, and says, "Give me money" — okay — the Prophet ﷺ knows this is just greed, so he overlooked it and was gentle. The Bedouins surrounded him and asked, "Money! Money! Money!" he got a little irritated and said, "If I had, I would give" — but still nothing really major. But then this guy comes and accuses him ﷺ of basically not being a just prophet — you cannot allow this to go. When the status and sanctity of the Prophet ﷺ is challenged, you cannot overlook it. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Woe to you. If I am not going to be just, who is going to be just in this world?"—he is not defending himself; he is defending the wisdom of Allah SWT choosing him to be a prophet. It's not a personal issue — it's an issue of Allah choosing an appropriate person to be His Messenger. When you challenge the Prophet's ﷺ status, you are challenging Allah's wisdom. And this is why the Prophet ﷺ says, "The one in the heavens has trusted me, will you not trust me?" And notice when Umar RA said, "Let me execute him" —yes, the Prophet ﷺ forbade Umar from doing this, but— did he ﷺ defend the man's honor by saying, "He has some good in him," etc.? No. So why was he not executed? For the greater good of the community (i.e., maslaha). Not because he had any legitimate excuse. Recall Hatib [see episode 77], when he sent the letter to the Quraysh before the Conquest, the Prophet ﷺ defended him and said, "He was a Badri," etc. But this man, the Prophet ﷺ did not defend him at all — because he had crossed the line, which is to mock the maqam al-nubuwwah^[50]. Challenging the maqam al-nubuwwah is something that cannot emanate from the heart of even the slightest bit of Iman.

Maslaha in Islam

Notice the reason the Prophet ﷺ didn't execute the man, what was it for? For the PR of the ummah. There are some amongst us who say, "I don't care what anybody says!" But this incident clearly shows the concept of PR exists in our religion — you have to think of the broader image. This is exactly what the Prophet ﷺ said, "Let not the people say I kill my own Companions." In our religion, there is something called maslaha: the greater good of the community. So sometimes, a good course of action is avoided for the greater good of the community. Indeed, perhaps this man's penalty was death, but for the greater good of the community, the Prophet ﷺ overlooked it. Because those who spread rumors will say, "He kills his own people"—they will misinterpret it or twist it.

There are many evidences of maslaha. Another famous example is that, after this, when the Prophet ﷺ returns to Makkah, he ﷺ complains to Aisha RA that the Quraysh have not built the Ka'bah upon the proper foundation [it was supposed to be a rectangle, not a square — see [episode 9](#)], so he said, "Look at what your people have done." Aisha RA replied, "Why don't you just rebuild it upon the foundation of Ibrahim (rectangular)?" But the Prophet ﷺ said, "Because your people are brand new Muslims — Iman is still fresh. So destroying the Ka'bah and rebuilding it will be difficult for them." This is called maslaha. And because the Prophet ﷺ left it, it remained that way for 14 centuries — except for 9 years in the time of Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr who rebuilt it on the foundations of Ibrahim AS [64 AH],

⁵⁰ Maqam al-nubuwwah (مقام النبوة) - status of prophethood.

until Hajjaj ibn Yusuf broke it down and rebuilt it into a square [73 AH]. And when the next khalifa came, he asked Imam Malik, "Should I break it down and bring it back as according to the hadith?" But Imam Malik said, "No. I don't want the Ka'bah to become a toy for the khalifas that they come along and do what they want with it." This is the fiqh of Imam Malik: Ideally, it should be a rectangle upon the foundations of Ibrahim AS —this is what the Prophet ﷺ wanted— but he realized it would cause too much fitna, so he just let it be. This is also maslaha. [See also: [episode 55](#).]

The Hawazin Finally Come to Embrace Islam

As we said, the Prophet ﷺ waited for the Hawazin to come for nearly a month, but they didn't come; so eventually, he ﷺ distributed everything. But lo and behold, after everything had been distributed, they came and embraced Islam hoping it was still not too late to get all their property and wealth back. The Prophet ﷺ said, "It's too late now. But choose between your wealth and your families; let's see what I can do for you." They said, "Of course our families." So the Prophet ﷺ said, "Okay, this is what we will do: After Salat al-Zuhr tomorrow, you will stand up in front of all of the people and ask to have your families given back to you. And ask intercession from me for the Muslims."

Explanation: The prisoners of war have now been taken by the sahaba, and their ransom is worth a lot of money. So the Prophet ﷺ is saying to the Hawazin to choose one out of wealth and families since he can't ask the sahaba to give everything back; and the Hawazin obviously choose their families. And the goal is to get the families released without any money, but that is a lot of money to give up. So the Prophet ﷺ is basically saying to the Hawazin, "Let's try to rely on the generosity of the Muslims"—he doesn't want to force the sahaba because they did wait, so it's fair and square. So now he ﷺ says to the Hawazin, "After Salat al-Zuhr tomorrow, stand up and ask, 'Ya Rasulallah, we ask you to be our intercessor for all of the Muslims to give our families back. And O Muslims, you as well intercede with Rasulallah to give our families back.'"

So they did as they were told. And the Prophet ﷺ stood up and said, "As for the prisoners in the Banu Abdul Muttalib (i.e., my tribe), I am in charge of them. So all of them are yours. Take them." This of course is a sign to the other leaders to stand up and start giving their prisoners up as well. And this is exactly what happened. Every one of the Quraysh leaders stood up and said, "As for the ones in mine, they are for you, ya Rasulallah."

So each tribe gives up their prisoners, except for some new Muslim Bedouin tribes. They said, "No, we won't give them for free; you can purchase them from us." So the Prophet ﷺ said, "Okay, I will take charge of this. I don't have money now, but as soon as the next wealth comes, you will have the first share." And so all of the families were returned back to the Hawazin. Most tribes gave the families back for free, but some Bedouin tribes wanted money, so the Prophet ﷺ took care of that, so in the end, the Hawazin got all their families back (and not their property / wealth).

Performing Umrah

On the way back to Makkah from Ta'if, when the Prophet ﷺ is camped at Ji'ranah, this is where he wears his ihram. He then made his way back to Makkah and did Umrah for the third time in his life. We consider the Prophet ﷺ to have done four Umrahs in his lifetime. Three real, one reward only:

i) As for the reward-only Umrah, it's the Umrah of Hudaibiyyah — he ﷺ didn't physically do it, but Allah gave him the reward [see explanation in [episode 72](#)].

ii) The second is Umrah al-Qada [the next year after Hudaibiyyah — see episode 72].

iii) Then the third is this Umrah from Ji'ranah.^[51]

iv) The fourth and final Umrah is the one he did in the Hajj [see episode 100] — he did a Hajj al-Qiran (i.e., he did Umrah and Hajj together in one ihram).

So the Prophet ﷺ did four Umrahs in total (one of them is reward only).

And the sunnah is to do Umrah when you enter Makkah [i.e., do only one Umrah per entry to Makkah], and not to go to Makkah and do multiple Umrahs. Our Prophet ﷺ and the senior sahaba never did multiple Umrahs at once, unlike what some of us do in our times (they go to Tan'im and come back and so on). But is it wrong to do multiple Umrahs at once? No, it's not wrong. Is it haram? No, it's not haram. Is it bid'ah? No, it's not bid'ah. But the ultimate sunnah is to do Umrah only once when you enter Makkah.

One final point: Eventually, the tribe of Thaqif accepted Islam the next year, as we will discuss [see [episode 95](#)].

⁵¹ And notice, when the Prophet ﷺ conquered Makkah, he did not do Umrah. Why? Because he came as a military conqueror — and even all the sahaba were wearing full armor. So for 19 days, he did not do an Umrah — he did lots of tawaf and lots of nafl, but no Umrah. He went to Hunayn, went to Ta'if, came back to Ji'ranah, distributed the booty, and only then did he go back to Makkah wearing the ihram and did Umrah.

084. Conversion of Ka'b ibn Zuhayr

We will continue from post Conquest of Makkah. What happened in the remaining months of the 8th year of Hijrah? The first interesting incident occurred around 2 weeks after the Prophet ﷺ returned from Makkah and came back to Madinah, and that is the Islam of the single most famous poet in the entire Arabian Peninsula — in fact, he was most likely the greatest poet alive at the time. We have already mentioned that by now the poets of the Quraysh had either been executed or accepted Islam. The role and nature of poets were propaganda machines, so they were considered the worst, and thus were executed at the Conquest. But some of them repented and accepted Islam and therefore were forgiven.

Conversion of Ka'b ibn Zuhayr

The premier and most renowned poet of all Arabs at the time was Ka'b ibn Zuhayr (كعب بن زهير). He is the son of Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma (زهير بن أبي سلمى) — Zuhayr himself was one of the authors of the Seven Hanging Poems; he was amongst the greatest poets in Jahiliyyah times, and he died before the coming of Islam. But his son Ka'b was alive, and he had animosity against Muslims, so he wrote poetry and satire against the Muslims. Eventually, his brother accepted Islam, so he got angrier until he crossed the line that you do not cross — he began talking about Muslim women. And he used vulgar words and went to a level that is not acceptable. By the way, he is not of the Quraysh — he has never seen the Prophet ﷺ or been to Madinah. He is from the northern tribe of Muzayna. His brother, after the Conquest of Makkah, wrote him a heartwarming letter telling him, "Flee this land if you value your life, or else convert to Islam and seek forgiveness for if you repent, the Prophet ﷺ always accepts the repentance of those who repent." So even though Ka'b had done the worst possible thing at the time which is to write poetry against the Prophet ﷺ and Muslims, his own Muslim brother still had care and love for him and told him to convert.

So Ka'b thought for a long time, and he realized that in fact, he didn't believe in idol worship, and so he realized he does actually want to convert to Islam. So he came to Madinah, and no one recognized him in terms of face —in terms of name everyone knows him, but not face— so he enters Madinah and he spends the night at the house of a distant relative who knew him, and he told the relative to keep the matter a secret. After Salat al-Fajr, he came to the masjid, and he approached the Prophet ﷺ — he put his hand in the Prophet's ﷺ hand and he said, "Ka'b ibn Zuhayr is seeking your protection, repenting for what he has done and accepting Islam, will you accept?" i.e., he is pretending to be a messenger. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes." Then Ka'b said, "I am Ka'b ibn Zuhayr." As soon as he said this, one of the Ansar stood up to basically execute him on the spot, but the Prophet ﷺ said, "Let him be, for he has come repenting and accepting Islam." Then Ka'b said, "May I recite for you a poem?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Go ahead." And Ka'b recited a poem that is called in the classical seerah books the Poem of Banat Su'ad (بانة سعاد) — but later scholars call it the Qasidat al-Burda^[52].

⁵² Qasidat al-Burda (قصيدة البردة) - Poem of the Cloak.

It is worth mentioning that there are two Qasidat al-Burdas:

i) The original Qasidat al-Burda which is this one. It is said that when Ka'b recited this poem, the Prophet ﷺ took off his cloak and gave it to him. That is the highest possible honor you can give to a poet, that you take off your own shawl and give it to him. So this is the original Burda which hardly anyone reads because it is in deep classical Arabic.

ii) There is another poem commonly called Qasidat al-Burda: the Qasidat al-Burda of al-Busiri (البوصيري), and this is the famous al-Burda commonly known today. Al-Busiri was a poet of the 7th century Hijrah — he was a medieval poet. The reason why he is famously known to all cultures is because al-Busiri claims he saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream, and he recited this poem to him in his dream, and the Prophet ﷺ in his dream took off his cloak and gave it to him.^[53]

Nonetheless, we are discussing the original Qasidat al-Burda of Ka'b ibn Zuhayr. It's a 2-page poem upon the methodology / style of classical Arabic poetry. And it begins as all classical Arabic poetry does which is with a love story, which is a metaphor — it's not literal. Banat Su'ad roughly means "Su'ad Left Me"—the girl is Su'ad, she leaves the man; and the poetry goes on. We are interested in the last third of the poem which consists of praises for the Prophet ﷺ, and it's very beautiful. It's very deep Arabic and it's almost impossible for an average Arab speaker to translate without immense help:

أُنْبِئْتُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَوْعَدَنِي *** وَالْعَفْوُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ مَأْمُولُ
مَهْلًا هَدَاكَ الَّذِي أَعْطَاكَ نَافِلَةً *** أَلْقُرْآنَ فِيهَا مَوَاعِيظٌ وَتَفْصِيلُ
لَا تَأْخُذْنِي بِأَقْوَالِ الْوُشَاةِ وَلَمْ *** أُذْنِبْ وَقَدْ كَثُرَتْ فِيَّ الْأَقَاوِيلُ
لَقَدْ أَقْوَمُ مَقَامًا لَوْ يَقْوَمُ بِهِ *** أَرَى وَأَسْمَعُ مَا لَمْ يَسْمَعِ الْفَيْلُ
لَظَلَّ يِرْعُدُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ مِنْ *** الرَّسُولِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ تَنْوِيلُ
حَتَّى وَصَعْتُ يَمِينِي لَا أَنْزَعُهُ *** فِي كَفِّ ذِي نَعَمَاتٍ قَيْلُهُ الْقَيْلُ
لِذَاكَ أَهْيَبُ عِنْدِي إِذْ أَكَلَّمَهُ *** وَقِيلَ إِنَّكَ مَنْسُوبٌ وَمَسْئُولُ
مِنْ خَادِرٍ مِنْ لُبُوثِ الْأَسَدِ مَسْكَنُهُ *** مِنْ بَطْنِ عَثْرٍ غَيْلٌ دُونَهُ غَيْلُ
يَعْدُو فَيُلْحِمُ ضِرْبَ غَامِئِينَ عَيْشُهُمَا *** لَحْمٌ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مَعْفُورٌ خَرَادِيلُ
إِذَا يُسَاوِرُ قِرْنًا لَا يَحِلُّ لَهُ *** أَنْ يَنْتَرِكَ الْقِرْنَ إِلَّا وَهْوَ مَعْلُولُ
مِنْهُ تَظَلُّ سَبَاغُ الْجَوْضَامِزَةِ *** وَلَا تَمْشِي بَوَادِيهِ الْأَرَاغِيلُ
وَلَا يَزَالُ بَوَادِيهِ أَخُو ثِقَةٍ *** مُطْرَحَ الْبِزِّ وَالذَّرْسَانَ مَأْكُولُ
إِنَّ الرَّسُولَ لَسَيْفٌ يُسْتَضَاءُ بِهِ *** مُهَنْدٌ مِنْ سَيُوفِ اللَّهِ مَسْئُولُ
فِي فِتْيَةٍ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ قَالَ قَائِلُهُمْ *** بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ لَمَّا أَسْلَمُوا زُؤُلُوا
زَالُوا فَمَا زَالَ أَنْكَاسٌ وَلَا كُشْفٌ *** عِنْدَ اللَّقَاءِ وَلَا مَيْلٌ مَعَاذِيلُ
شَمُّ الْعَرَانِينَ أَبْطَالُ لُبُوسُهُمْ *** مِنْ نَسْجِ دَاوُدَ فِي الْهَيْجَا سَرَابِيلُ
بِيضٌ سَوَابِغٌ قَدْ شُكَّتْ لَهَا حَلَقٌ *** كَأَنَّهَا حَلَقُ الْقَفْعَاءِ مَجْدُولُ
يَمْشُونَ مَشْيَ الْجِمَالِ الزُّهْرُ يَعْصِمُهُمْ *** ضَرْبٌ إِذَا عَرَدَ السُّودُ التَّنَابِيلُ
لَا يَفْرَحُونَ إِذَا نَالَتْ رِمَاحُهُمْ *** قَوْمًا وَلَيْسُوا مَجَازِبِعًا إِذَا نِيلُوا
لَا يَقَعُ الطَّعْنُ إِلَّا فِي نُحُورِهِمْ * وَمَا لَهُمْ عَنْ حِيَاضِ الْمَوْتِ تَهْلِيلُ

⁵³ This is obviously only coming from the author, so no doubt it raises questions.

36. I was told God's Messenger had threatened me,
but from God's Messenger pardon is hoped.
37. Go easy, and let Him be your guide who gave to you
the gift of the Quran in which is warnings and discernment!
38. Do not hold me to account for what my slanderers have said,
for, however great the lies against me, I'm not as guilty as they are claiming!
39. I stood where I saw and heard what would have made
the mighty elephant, had it stood in my stead,
40. quake with fear unless the Messenger of God,
by God's leave, granted it protection,
41. until I placed my right hand, without contending,
in the hand of an avenger, his word the word.
42. He is more dreaded by me when I speak to him
and I am told, "You will be questioned and must answer,"
43. then a lion, snapping and rapacious,
its lair in Aththar's hollow, thicket within thicket,
44. who in the morning feeds flesh to two lion whelps
that live on human flesh, flung in the dust in chunks,
45. who when it assaults its match is not permitted
to leave its match unnotched,
46. for whom the braying onager falls silent,
in whose wadi no hunters stalk their prey,
47. in whose wadi lies an honest man, his weapons and torn clothes
flung in the dust, his flesh devoured.
48. The Messenger is surely a sword from whose flash light is sought,
one of the swords of God, an Indian blade unsheathed,
49. in a band of Qureshis whose spokesman said to them in Makkah's hollow
when they submitted to Islam, "Depart!"
50. they departed, but no weaklings departed with them,
none who flee the battle, none unsteady in the saddle, none unarmed.
51. Haughty, high-nosed champions, who on battle day
don shirts of David's weave,

52. white, ample, their rings interlocking
as if they were the qaf'a plant's interlocking rings.

53. They walk as the white camels walk when kept in check by blows,
while the stunted black ones go astray.

54. Neither jubilant when their spears strike down a tribe,
nor distraught when they are struck,

55. the spear does not pierce them except in the throat,
nor do they shrink from death's water troughs.

The one phrase that is the most famous is when he says, "The Messenger is surely a sword from whose flash light is sought." And notice Ka'b compared the Prophet ﷺ to an unsheathed sword from Hind / India.^[54] Why an Indian sword? Because Indian swords were the best swords in 7th century Arabia — it was the pinnacle of perfection.

The Prophet ﷺ was so moved by this poem that he gave Ka'b his own shawl. The Prophet ﷺ also said to him, "O Ka'b, you have harmed the Ansar with your tongue, so now praise them." So Ka'b wrote beautiful poetry about the Ansar.

And Umar's favorite poet was Ka'b — he would quote Ka'b all the time.

So Ka'b basically died a Muslim and he was the most famous poet of his era and he accepted Islam at the hands of the Prophet ﷺ.

Conquering Smaller Tribes Around Makkah

What else happened during the last few months of the 8th year of the Hijrah? After the Conquest of Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ began conquering the smaller tribes around Makkah that were semi-independent. He sends small expeditions to each of these tribes.

Putting Bureaucracy in Place

The Prophet ﷺ also chooses leaders and zakat collectors and teachers to send across Arabia. Sometimes he will send a governor; other times he will send a teacher to teach the Quran, sunnah, and salah; other times he will send a zakat collector to collect the zakat and jizya; and sometimes the same person will do multiple jobs. However, we will gloss over this chapter since there is no need to mention all of the names and who went where. The point is that for the first time, we see the Islamic state being organized and politicized. There is a bureaucracy put in place by the Prophet ﷺ.

⁵⁴ Which by the way is the only real praise for the Pakistani / Indian / Bengali ethnicity in the seerah.

Destroying Smaller Idols

Also, the Prophet ﷺ sent a number of expeditions to destroy the smaller idols. The larger idols had been destroyed, but smaller tribes still worshiped smaller idols. So for the next year, he sent expeditions to do this. He sent Tufayl ibn Amr (طفيل بن عمرو) to a tribe in Yemen that worshiped an idol called Dhi al-Kaffayn (ذي الكفين) which belonged to the tribe of Daws^[55]. They had a massive idol called Dhi al-Kaffayn, and they even built a massive structure they called the ka'bah to compete with the Ka'bah in Makkah. So the Prophet ﷺ sent Tufayl ibn Amr with 400 people to get rid of this structure. And Tufayl said, "Ya Rasulallah, I have a problem riding a horse — I always fall off." So the Prophet ﷺ made du'a for him, "Ya Allah, make him firm," and thenceforth, he never fell off a horse ever again. So he went and burned down the massive temple which had the idol Dhi al-Kaffayn in it.

The Prophet ﷺ also sent Jarir ibn Abdillah to Dhi al-Khalasa (ذي الخلسة). This was another idol that was worshiped in Yemen. He ﷺ said, "Will you not get rid of Dhi al-Khalasa for me?"—meaning he isn't at peace knowing these idols are being worshiped in Arabia, and he did not want idolatry to be especially in the Arabian Peninsula. And this is what Allah reveals in the first few verses of Surah al-Tawba which is going to be sent down in a few months, which basically says: From now on, no mushriks should be in the Arabian Peninsula.

Conversion of Adi ibn Hatim

The Prophet ﷺ also sent Ali ibn Ali Talib to the tribe of Tayy (طيء), which is now in the city of Ha'il (حائل) in Saudi Arabia. The famous person of Tayy is Hatim al-Ta'i (حاتم الطائي), and he is well known in pre-Islam for being the most generous person. He is considered to be the pinnacle of generosity. His son, Adi ibn Hatim (عدي بن حاتم) is to become a famous sahabi. His father Hatim is known by every single Arab — he is a legend and fable. It's said he would feed all of his guests — when strangers would come, they would be treated like kings. And it is well known that no one was known for their generosity more than Hatim al-Ta'i. He died, and his son Adi ibn Hatim was in charge, and Adi clearly did not have the same traits and characteristics as his father: When he heard the Muslims were conquering lands, he decided he wanted an escape route, so he prepared camels in case he needed to flee and abandon his people. And this is exactly what happened: He is the chieftain so he stationed various people to keep watch, and when he was told the Muslims were coming, he literally abandoned his people and fled with his wife, children, and wealth, to northern Arabia close to the Roman empire. Adi ibn Hatim had already converted to Christianity, so he had a good relationship with the Roman emperor. So he fled with his family there, and he was living a comfortable life for a while.

⁵⁵ The tribe in which Abu Hurairah is from.

Now the Muslims under Ali ibn Abi Talib conquers the tribe of Tayy and destroys the massive idol. They bring back some prisoners of war and lo and behold, one of the women demands an audience with the Prophet ﷺ. She says she is the daughter of Hatim al-Ta'i, so this is a big deal — she is the daughter of the most famous Arab in terms of generosity. She says, "You should free me; I am the daughter of so-and-so. Be generous with me and Allah will be generous with you" — so the Prophet ﷺ agrees, he frees her, gives her a camel, gives her some wealth, and tells her to go wherever she wants. She finds out her brother, the chieftain, is up north, so she goes to him. And she rebukes him and gets angry at him; she then says, "Why don't you go back to Muhammad, go down to him, because there are two possibilities:

1. Either he is a prophet
2. Or he is a king

If he is a prophet, you might as well convert; if he is a king, you might as well go to him and win some favor from him." She understands the situation — and the fact that she mentions he could be a prophet shows she thinks he could be a true prophet.

Adi ibn Hatim narrates this story in the first person as he is telling a tabi' in Kufa^[56] — he narrates: "There was no one who was more despised to me than the Prophet ﷺ. But I said to myself (after my sister talked to me), 'Let me go and meet him (ﷺ). If he is speaking the truth, I shall listen to him directly; if not, it won't harm me.'" So Adi makes his way to Madinah — this is at the end of the 8th year, some say the beginning of the 9th. When he arrived in Madinah, some of the guys recognized him and began shouting, "This is Adi ibn Hatim!" He is a famous guy since his father is Hatim al-Ta'i; so people gather around him and they take him to the Prophet ﷺ. It's worth noting that he walked into Madinah without any protection — there was a sense of, "No one will hurt me, I'm the son of Hatim"—and he is correct; he does have this honor.

The Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Ya Adi, aslim tuslim (يا عدي، أسلم تسلم) - O Adi, accept Islam, you shall be safe)," but Adi said, "I already have a good religion"—at the time, both the Jews and Christians felt superior to the pagans —and they were— so it's as if he is saying, "Why would I want to embrace your faith? I'm not a pagan. You should preach to the pagans. I already have a religion and civilization." So the Prophet ﷺ repeated, "O Adi, accept Islam, you shall be safe." But Adi repeated his answer. Then the Prophet ﷺ said again to accept Islam but Adi repeated his answer.

Then the Prophet ﷺ said, "O Adi, I know your religion better than you know your religion," meaning, "I know Christianity — I know the Message of Jesus better than you." And to demonstrate this, he ﷺ said, "Are you not the leader of your people?" Adi said, "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Do you not take ¼ of their income in taxes?" Adi said, "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ said, "And do you not know your own religion forbids you from doing this?"

⁵⁶ Side notes & tangent: He eventually dies in Kufa, and he is one of the longest-living sahaba ever; he died at the age of 120. That is incredible. He lived a very long life: He saw the killing of Uthman, and he fought with Ali in the Battle of Siffin. Because of this, even the Shia respect him immensely. The Shia only respect a handful of sahaba, Adi being one of them. As for us, we respect all the sahaba.

This is a very powerful dawah scene that shows the knowledge of the Prophet ﷺ. He is showing, "You aren't even following what you know to be Christianity." And Adi narrates: "I became embarrassed, and I knew he was a prophet"—because the very fact that he just immediately picked on his hypocrisy. And the Prophet ﷺ then held him by his hand and took him to his ﷺ house. On the way to his house, an old lady with a toddler stopped him ﷺ for something, so the Prophet ﷺ stopped and continued talking to her until her need was taken care of.

Adi says to himself, "This man is not a king — for him to stop when he has me (and he knows my rank and privilege)... he is not a king." Adi continues: "Then we arrived at the Prophet's ﷺ house, and he took out an old worn mat, laid it on the floor and told me to sit on it. But I was embarrassed since this was the only mat in the room; if I sat on it, he would not have anything to sit on. So I said, 'No, rather you sit.' But he insisted, 'No, you will sit.' So I sat down on the mat, and the Prophet ﷺ sat on the sand." This is in the Prophet's ﷺ house.

Adi continues: "He ﷺ then said to me, 'Do you know of any god besides Allah?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'Do you know any who is more mighty and powerful than Allah?' I said, 'No.' Then he said, 'Verily, the Jews earned the wrath [of Allah] on them, and the Christians are misguided.' Then he said, 'Perhaps you are not accepting Islam because of the state of the people around me?'—meaning poverty and political weakness. Adi is after all a Christian and has contacts with the Roman emperor, so he is living a life of luxury in a premier civilization; and now he comes and sees the Muslims of Madinah who at this stage still do not have that civilization. So the Prophet ﷺ said, "Have you heard of [a city called] al-Hirah (الحيرة)? Verily it's only a matter of time before a lady will leave al-Hirah wanting to do tawaf in Makkah [without any company] and she will fear nothing but Allah. And it's only a matter of time before the treasures of Kisra will be distributed amongst us." At this, Adi said, "Kisra ibn Hormuz^[57] [the Emperor of the Persian Empire]?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes, Kisra ibn Hormuz. And it's only a matter of time before a person will go around the streets of Madinah asking for someone to take sadaqa, and he will not find a single person to take it."

And when narrating this hadith, Adi says, "Wallahi, I have seen two of these three things." What has he seen? (i) The political stability, the peace and security of the Muslims, i.e., from the faraway land of al-Hirah a woman could go all the way to Makkah with no fear. (ii) The wealth of the ummah. And Adi says, "I was of those who opened the treasures of Kisra ibn Hormuz^[58]," i.e., he participated in the battle against the Persian Empire. Then he said, "As for the third, I know it is going to happen [i.e., it is only a matter of time]"—and it happened in the time of Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz (عمر بن عبد العزيز) [reigned 99-101 AH] — he secured the entire financial affairs of the Umayyad empire to such an extent that there were no poor people to accept sadaqa or zakat.^[59]

After this deep conversation, Adi embraced Islam at the hands of the Prophet ﷺ.

⁵⁷ Kisra ibn Hormuz (كسرى بن هرمز) - Khosrow the son of Hormizd.

⁵⁸ Side note: To this day, if you go to the site of Ctesiphon, you see huge pillars which belonged to the palace of Kisra.

⁵⁹ Side note: We also know from other ahadith that this will happen again during the time of the Mahdi — that no one will need any zakat or sadaqa.

Lessons From the Story of the Conversion of Adi ibn Hatim

We learn many things from this story:

1) Look at the manners of the Prophet ﷺ — his humility and humbleness. This is what opened up Adi's heart.

2) Notice as well the Prophet ﷺ then opened up the theological angle, simple and to the point — of them, he said:

i) "I know your religion better than you." And wallahi, we as Muslims can use this as well. We can say, "We are following the teachings of Jesus better than you are. Jesus was a practicing Jew living his life according to the Torah: he never ate pig, never drank alcohol, he was circumcised, he prayed and fasted. Who amongst humanity still does all these and believes in Jesus? Only us Muslims."

ii) The Prophet ﷺ then asked rhetorical questions, "Do you know of any god besides Allah?" "Do you know any who is more mighty and powerful than Allah?" to which any person of religion will say no — this is human fitrah. If the person is sincere and he is a believer in a god, he will say no. And by saying no, he has basically acknowledged "la ilaha illaLlah (there is no god besides Allah)"—not by saying the kalimah, but at least by concept.

iii) After making Adi affirm "la ilaha illaLlah," the Prophet ﷺ then told him why Islam is better than the other two Abrahamic religions, "The Jews earned the wrath [of Allah] on them, and the Christians are misguided."

iv) Once the Prophet ﷺ realizes that he understands him, he jumps to the impeding factors of why Adi is not a Muslim. He says, basically, "Perhaps you are judging Islam by our sociopolitical status?" And this is so relevant today: How many are the people that know the theological premise of Islam is very logical, but when they look all around them —Boko Haram, the backwardness, the education levels, etc.— they are turned off by these factors? Adi had the same problem right here, and the Prophet ﷺ is telling him: You are worried about money? We will get all the money in the world. You are worried about political stability? A lady from al-Hirah...so on and so forth; and he countered each one of these 'arguments.' In our times as well, therefore, there is nothing wrong with mentioning the realities of our history, that Islam was the leading contender in science and technology for ~1,400 years.^[60]

⁶⁰ Side note: The reason we say this is because ultimately, we have two extremes among our ummah, as usual: [i] One extreme who considers science, algebra, alchemy, medicine, etc., to be the main emphasis of dawah [which is wrong — the main point of our dawah is theology, and we should not have this inferiority complex and pretend that Islam is all about science], and [ii] those who say our dawah is only through tawhid and we should never mention anything about the glory of Islamic civilization [and this is also wrong — here we find the Prophet ﷺ doing dawah through sociopolitical incentives].

3) Also from the story of Adi, we find how culturally aware and psychologically sensitive the Prophet ﷺ was. He judged and read Adi so quickly, until finally, Adi found nothing to stop him from accepting Islam.

Shall Good Nonbelievers Be Rewarded in the Hereafter?

After his conversion, Adi visited the Prophet ﷺ multiple times, and during one of these visits, he asked a very important question. This hadith is in Ibn Hibban and it is hasan. He said, "Ya Rasulallah, my father used to be good with his relatives, and be generous to his people, and do this and do that. Shall he be rewarded?" So Hatim al-Ta'i, the most generous of all Arabs, the legend of hospitality, is being asked about. And the Prophet ﷺ responds in a profound statement: "Your father desired something and he got what he desired." And that is the hadith. What did he desire? Fame / prestige / love. And he got it to the level that 14 centuries later to this day the Arab world still knows of Hatim al-Ta'i. He was generous and he wanted something, and he got it. Allah says, "Whoever desires the Hereafter **and strives for it accordingly**, and is a [true] believer, it is they whose striving will be appreciated" [Quran, 17:19]. It's very simple: When a person does not do good for the sake of Allah, why should Allah reward him? It's very clear — nothing illogical at all. Let him get his reward for whatever he did it for, and he shall get it. And they have gotten it. People love and respect them; they become legends in this dunya. But in the akhira? We leave their affairs to Allah.

This is Adi ibn Hatim; he lived a full life before and after Islam, and died in 67 AH at 120 years old.

Updates on the Personal Life of the Prophet ﷺ

In this year as well, some interesting things happened in the personal life of the Prophet ﷺ. There was a marriage, divorce, death, and birth all in the house of the Prophet

ﷺ.

Marriage to Fatima bint al-Dahhak That Didn't Last Long

Marriage and divorce: It's one of the most bizarre stories, and frankly, it's inexplicable. We will mention it here because we don't want to be accused of not mentioning something that is well known. What happened is the Prophet ﷺ proposed to a lady by the name of Fatima bint al-Dahhak (فاطمة بنت الضحاك) from the tribe of Kulab (كلاب).^[61] When the Prophet ﷺ entered upon her on the night of the marriage, she for some reason said, "I seek Allah's

⁶¹ Side note: There is an ikhtilaf about her name, there are at least 6 or 7 opinions.

refuge from you." The Prophet ﷺ said, "You have sought refuge in One who is very great. Go back to your family." So the Prophet ﷺ married her but the marriage was not consummated.

Why did this occur? It is unclear — and frankly, you just do not record these personal things. Even in your own household, things like these are not recorded. Why did she say what she said? There are multiple theories: Ibn Hajar suggests she was mentally unwell. Others say this was a plot some of her jealous relatives told her, that, "When the Prophet ﷺ comes in, this is what you are supposed to say," and she was ignorant in this regard, she didn't understand its implication, so she just said what she was told to say.

Whatever the case might be, clearly, Allah did not will that she become one of our Mothers, and this is how it was averted away. Later on, she would say, "How unfortunate am I that I chose this dunya over the Prophet ﷺ"—she regretted it until she died.

It's worth noting that this incident shows us it is allowed to divorce in an indirect language (كناية / kinaya). The Prophet ﷺ did not want to use the word "divorce," so he simply said, "Go back to your house / family" — and that was divorce.

This incident also shows that the myth that the Prophet ﷺ never divorced is not true.

Stigmas Attached to the Word "Divorce" Have to Be Gone

Unfortunately, there is a stigma in the Muslim community attached to the very notion of divorce, that "divorce is inherently evil," "anybody who undergoes it must be bad," etc. — but this stigma has no basis in the Quran or Sunnah whatsoever. It is amazing this stigma even exists.

The Prophet ﷺ himself divorced; and this wasn't the only divorce. He ﷺ divorced Hafsa too — but when she was in her iddah, Jibril AS came down and said to him ﷺ, "Allah commands you to take her back, for she is sawwama qawwama, and she shall be your wife in Jannah" — so he took her back.

So the stigma we as a culture have for divorce is completely wrong. Sometimes couples just don't get along, but khalas, that's not the end of the world, and it doesn't mean one of them is bad. Sometimes personalities don't match up. We already discussed Zayd and Zaynab. They were both great Companions, but they just did not get along. Sometimes it's better for the couple to move on.

The Death of Zaynab bint Muhammad RA

The Death of Zaynab bint Muhammad, the eldest daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, in the 8th Hijrah. She was born 10 years before the dawah, so she is now around 31. What was the cause of her death? She fell down from the camel during the Hijrah [see episode 41],

and she never fully recovered from the bleeding. For 8 years, she was in some pain until she passed away.

We know that 3 of the 4 daughters of the Prophet ﷺ died in his lifetime: Zaynab^[62], Ruqayyah, and Ummi Kulthum. The order of death was Ruqayyah, Zaynab, and then Ummi Kulthum. And Fatima died 6 months after the Prophet's ﷺ death.

The Birth of Ibrahim ibn Muhammad RA

Birth: As for the birth, the Prophet's ﷺ son Ibrahim was born, who will [die in the 9th year of the Hijrah](#).

⁶² Side note: Recall Zaynab's husband was Abu al-As ibn al-Rabi'. And at Fajr, Zaynab shouted out, "I have given him protection!" [see episode 62].

085. Miracles of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Today, we will discuss some of the miracles of the Prophet ﷺ. The word miracle in Arabic is mu'jiza (معجزة).

The Definition of Mu'jiza

What is a mu'jiza? The word comes from the Arabic "ajaza (عجز)" which means to be weak and incapable.^[63] Why would the word miracle come from the same root as weak? Because a mu'jiza is something that the rest of mankind is too weak and incapable to reproduce. The scholars have given a definition of a miracle, and that is an occurrence beyond the typical occurrences men are accustomed to — something that is beyond the natural order, i.e., supernatural; and it occurs at the hands of somebody who claims to be a prophet in order to prove the claim of his prophethood.

The Purpose of Mu'jiza

What is the purpose of a mu'jiza? We just defined it. It's to prove that a particular human has been sent by Allah. And it's the sunnah of Allah that He has sent prophets with miracles — no prophet has ever come without miracles. It's a part of being a prophet that you have miracles to show the people.

But is it the only sign you are a prophet? No. A miracle is but one of the proofs of a prophet. To say a miracle is the only proof of prophethood means everyone who converts must have converted because of a miracle. But is that the case? Did Abu Bakr see a miracle to convert? Did Ali? No. The majority of converts did not see miracles to convert. To this day, most Muslims who converted have not seen any mu'jiza. So clearly, a mu'jiza is one of the ways to prove prophethood, but there are other ways as well, including the character of the prophets, their truthfulness, their lifestyles, and the content of their Message.

Now, the Quran mentions that miracles do not help arrogant people. Who do they help?

1. People who already believe — it increases their Iman.
2. People who are open-minded, genuine, and sincere — it works for them.

Those who are arrogant, it doesn't matter what you do; they will never believe. Allah mentions in the Quran the arrogance of the pagans of the Quraysh, e.g., in Surah al-Isra, verses 90-93:

⁶³ Side note: And this is why the old person in Arabic is called "ajuz (عجوز)."

وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا

17:90. And they say, "We will not believe you until you break open for us from the ground a spring.

أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجَّرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا

17:91. Or [until] you have a garden of palm trees and grapes and make rivers gush forth within them in force [and abundance].

أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَنَا بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا

17:92. Or you make the heaven fall upon us in fragments as you have claimed or you bring Allah and the angels before [us].

أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرَفٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرُفَيْكَ حَتَّىٰ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نُّقْرُوهُ ۗ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَسُولًا

17:93. Or you have a house of gold or you ascend into the sky. And [even then], we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book we may read." Say, "Exalted is my Lord! Was I ever but a human Messenger?"

And in Surah al-Hijr, verses 14 & 15:

وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ

15:14. And [even] if We opened to them a gate from the heaven and they continued therein to ascend,

لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكَّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَّسْحُورُونَ

15:15. they would say, "Our eyes have only been dazzled. Rather, we are a people affected by magic."

Why do we begin by mentioning these verses? Because we need to realize that even though for us the miracles we will discuss today are complete proofs of the prophethood of our Prophet ﷺ and we will say, "How can anyone deny them?" but Allah has already said it doesn't matter what you do, some people won't believe — their hearts are deaf, dumb, and blind. In Surah al-An'am verse 111, He SWT said:

وَلَوْ أَنَّنَا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ

6:111. And even if We had sent down to them the angels [with the Message] and the dead spoke to them [of it] and We gathered together every [created] thing in front of them, they would not believe unless Allah should will. But most of them, [of that], are ignorant.

And Sh. YQ has heard with his own two ears —and anybody who has debated with an atheist knows— that in their arrogance, some people will even demand, "Show us God Himself." Allah SWT says in Surah al-Furqan, verse 21:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ نَرَىٰ رَبَّنَا ۗ لَقَدْ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْا عُتُوًّا كَبِيرًا

25:21. And those who do not expect the meeting with Us say, "Why were not angels sent down to us, or [why] do we [not] see our Lord?" They have certainly been carried away by their arrogance and have entirely exceeded all limits.

They have no desire to meet Allah really; they aren't sincere; they don't really care about religion; they demand to see God just in order to win arguments. Allah says, "They have certainly been carried away by their arrogance." If the miracles around them are not causing them to believe, why do they think anything else would cause them to believe?

So from all of this, we gain a simple fact that some people won't believe no matter what you do. A lot of people ask, "Why weren't the Quraysh shown more miracles?" The answer is because they still would not have believed. And Allah in His wisdom does not play games [see Quran, 21:16-17]. Once, the Quraysh asked the Prophet ﷺ to turn the mountain into gold, and they said if he did, they would believe in him; so the Prophet ﷺ asked Allah, and Allah responded: 'If you want, I can turn it into gold, but once I do, they only have the option to believe or else they are gone (i.e., they will be destroyed)'—because Allah does not play games. And this means if they don't get the miracle, Allah will give them some more chances — and so in his wisdom, the Prophet ﷺ chose this option.

We began like this to illustrate why most of the miracles happened in front of the sahaba, and only a few happened in front of the Quraysh. It's a mercy from Allah that the disbelievers weren't shown too many miracles, because too much arrogance means Allah's destruction. Out of mercy, Allah showed them a few miracles enough to know that the Prophet ﷺ is a true prophet, and then He gave them respite and some time — until the Battle of Badr, until the Battle of Uhud, until the Battle of Khandaq, and so on, until finally the Conquest of Makkah — they either had this option or that option.^[64]

How Many Miracles Was the Prophet ﷺ Given?

The miracles of the Prophet ﷺ have been the subject of special books written; the most important of these are the books called *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah*^[65]. Two of the more famous of these books are: (i) *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah* by Abu Nuaym al-Asbahani (أبو نعيم الأصبهاني) (d. 430 AH), and (ii) *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah* by al-Bayhaqi (d. 458 AH) from Iran who wrote the most famous book about the miracles of the Prophet ﷺ and it's recently been published in 12 volumes.

How many miracles was the Prophet ﷺ given? Imam al-Bayhaqi who is the foremost authority says there are over 1,000 miracles documented in the life and the sunan of the Prophet ﷺ.

Later on, al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar (d. 852 AH), the master of hadith, quotes Imam al-Nawawi (d. 676 AH) as saying there are authentically narrated more than 1,200 miracles from our Prophet ﷺ. But do realize these are only talking about specific ahadith and incidents (e.g., splitting of the moon, the water coming from his hands), and the fact of the matter is every single statement and action that has ever happened to the Prophet ﷺ is a type of miracle — his existence, his conduct, his mannerisms, his methodology, his whole

⁶⁴ i.e., see miracles or meet destruction.

⁶⁵ *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah* (دلائل النبوة) - the Proofs of Prophethood.

life, is a miracle, as the famous Andalusian scholar Ibn Hazm (d. 456 AH) said, "If our Nabi ﷺ had not been given any miracle other than the miracle of his own life (i.e., his seerah), that would have been sufficient to prove that he is a prophet from Allah"—and wallahi, this is true.

And since it is not possible to go through all 1,200+ miracles in one lecture, we will instead categorize the miracles into 10 categories.^[66] And do realize each of these categories has hundreds of examples:

1. Miracles That Occurred With Inanimate Objects

That is, miracles that occurred with rocks, stones, etc. Of these are:

1) The famous hadith in Sahih Bukhari in which the Prophet ﷺ said, "I still recognize the stone that used to say salam to me every time I passed by it in Makkah before my prophethood" [see [episode 10](#)].

2) Ibn Mas'ud said, "One time, we heard the food that the Prophet ﷺ put into his mouth saying tasbih"—reported in Sahih Bukhari.

3) Abu Dharr al-Ghifari narrated, "I was in a gathering with Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, and others; and the Prophet ﷺ took a group of pebbles in his hand and we all heard the stones praising Allah. The Prophet ﷺ passed these stones to Abu Bakr and they continued praising and we all heard. The Prophet ﷺ took it back, gave it to Umar and they continued praising and we all heard. The Prophet ﷺ took it back, gave it to Uthman and they continued praising and we all heard. All of us heard this. Then after the Prophet ﷺ left and we took those stones, nobody could hear anything from them"—reported in al-Tabarani's al-Mu'jam al-Awsat (المعجم الأوسط). The point is everything praises Allah but we just can't hear them [see Quran, 17:44] — and it's as if by the Prophet ﷺ picking up the stones, the barrier between us and those rocks was lifted, so the sahaba could hear what the stones were always doing. And when he put them down and left, the barrier returned back to where it was.

4) It's narrated in the Musnad of Imam Ahmad that once, the Prophet ﷺ was giving dawah to one of the leaders of the Banu Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah (بنو عامر بن صعصعة), and he said, "Do you want to see a miracle?" The chieftain said, "Yes." So the Prophet ﷺ said, "Look at that grove of date palms and call out to that small tree to come." So the chieftain said, "O baby palm tree, come!" And the sahabi narrates that the tree came crawling all the way until it stood in front of the chieftain. Then the Prophet ﷺ said, "Go back," and the tree went back until it resumed its original post. And the chieftain converted on the spot and said, "I shall never disbelieve in anything that comes from you after this." This shows us the purpose of miracles. This man was open-minded — he was shown a miracle and he converted on the spot. The leaders of the Quraysh on the other hand, it doesn't matter what the Prophet ﷺ showed them, they would not have converted.

⁶⁶ Do note this is not comprehensive; there are more than these 10.

5) Jabir ibn Abdillah reports in Abu Dawud and Musnad Imam Ahmad, "Once, we went on a military expedition, and the Prophet ﷺ took me to help him relieve himself"—meaning help protect him ﷺ, carry the water, etc. So the Prophet ﷺ went out, but he could not find anything to cover himself with, until he saw in a valley two shrubs on either side. Jabir says, "He went to one of the shrubs, held onto it, and said, 'Follow me by the permission of Allah,' and the shrub started following behind him along the ground." Then the Prophet ﷺ went to the other shrub and said again, "Follow me by the permission of Allah," and he began walking away from Jabir, both shrubs in his hand, and they walked with him, until finally, the Prophet ﷺ merged the two together and said, "Stick together by the permission of Allah," and the two of them stuck together and the Prophet ﷺ relieved himself. Then after this, Jabir says, "When the Prophet ﷺ started walking towards me, I saw the two shrubs return to their original places." Note this was a miracle not done to demonstrate anything — just done so the Prophet ﷺ could cover himself.

6) Of course, the most famous in this category is the crying of the trunk of the tree of the Prophet ﷺ [see [episode 30](#)]. The entire Masjid of the Prophet ﷺ —jam-packed with over 1,000 people— witnessed this great miracle. When the Prophet's ﷺ Masjid was originally built, the sahaba had to cut down trees, and they left one of the stumps so the Prophet ﷺ could deliver the khutbah from it. Eventually, money came in and so one sahabi recommended a custom pulpit carved out with three steps be built. So the Prophet ﷺ agreed, and one of the ladies of the Ansar had a servant trained in the art of carpentry, so the servant was commissioned and he built a pulpit. And the new pulpit was placed in the middle of the Masjid.^[67] And the very first day the Prophet ﷺ gave a khutbah from the new pulpit —and this is reported in Bukhari and Muslim and it is mutawatir— the sahaba said, "We began hearing a noise like the crying of a baby camel — and we found the source of the noise was the stump, so the Prophet ﷺ stopped the khutbah, came down from the new minbar, hugged the stump, and he patted it until it stopped crying." And then —it's said in one version— he ﷺ said, "If I had not patted and stopped it, it would have cried all the way until the Day of Judgment." And he then commanded the tree be uprooted and buried underneath the new minbar (where it is to this day). Whenever Hasan al-Basri would recite this hadith, he would begin to cry, because, he would say, "A tree cried because it missed the Prophet ﷺ and the knowledge he spread, how about us and our hearts then? Should we not cry as well for not having had the opportunity to hear our Prophet ﷺ?"

2. Miracles Dealing With Animals

1) Of them is the hadith of Sahih Bukhari that in Khaybar, when the Prophet ﷺ put in his mouth the shoulder blade of a lamb given by a Jew, he said to the sahaba, "Everyone, stop eating. The shoulder of the lamb has told me that it has been poisoned," i.e., the lamb spoke to the Prophet ﷺ [see [episode 68](#)].

⁶⁷ Side note: Before this time, the stump-pulpit was towards one of the sides of the masjid. Because you cannot decide where the tree is.

2) Reported by Abu Dawud: Once, the Prophet ﷺ was riding on a camel with Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Talib. And Abdullah reports, "I was with the Prophet ﷺ on a camel and we entered one of the gardens of the Ansar. There was another camel there who came up to the Prophet ﷺ and started making its noises, and tears began to come from its eyes. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Where is the master of this camel?' A young Ansari came and said, 'I am its owner.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Do you not fear Allah with regards to these creatures that do not speak? For verily, it has complained to me that you do not feed it properly, and you beat it and overwork it.'"

3) In an even more bizarre incident narrated in the Musnad of Imam Ahmad, a group of Ansar came complaining that their camel had gone mad, and they begged the Prophet ﷺ to help them out, so the Prophet ﷺ went to the pen and entered it alone. They said, "Ya Rasulallah, this camel is as mad as a dog with rabies. We fear he will attack and harm you." But the Prophet ﷺ said, "I have no danger from him." So the Prophet ﷺ entered the pen and walked towards the camel. And when the camel saw who it was, it lowered its forehead as if it was prostrating. The Prophet ﷺ rubbed its head, picked it up, and took it back where it should be, and it was normal after that. And after this, the sahaba said, "O Messenger of Allah, this was an animal that prostrated to you who cannot even speak; surely, it is more befitting for us to prostrate to you?" But the Prophet ﷺ said, "Do not do so, for it is not allowed for any human to prostrate to another human."

4) We also did the story of Suraqa ibn Malik when he tried to capture the Prophet ﷺ but his horse would not proceed when it saw the Prophet ﷺ. It stopped right then and there and Suraqa fell off of it. And every time Suraqa tried to proceed, the horse would stop and Suraqa would keep on falling off. Three times until finally he realized it was beyond his control [see [episode 27](#)].

5) In the Musnad of Imam Ahmad and the Musannaf (مصنف) of Ibn Abi Shaybah (ابن أبي شيبه) (d. 235 AH) it's narrated that the Prophet ﷺ was sitting in his Masjid, and all of a sudden a camel came running in, made its way directly to the Prophet ﷺ, put its head in his lap, and it began making noises and crying. In front of all the sahaba this happened. And the Prophet ﷺ said, "Go and find the owner of this camel, for it has a story to tell." In those days, people recognized each other's animals and knew their owners, so the sahaba found the owner and said, "What is the matter with your camel? For verily, it went to the Prophet ﷺ and he is saying it has a story to tell." But the owner became frustrated and said, "What is the problem? There is no problem. We worked the camel and when it stopped working properly, we used it to carry water, then when it couldn't even do this, last night we decided to slaughter it and distribute the meat amongst us." When the Prophet ﷺ heard the news, he said, "Then either gift me the camel or allow me to buy it," and so the owner gave the camel. In other words, the camel just didn't want to die, so the Prophet ﷺ was merciful he made an exception and did not allow them to kill this one camel.

3. Miracles Dealing With Food and Water

Perhaps this is the largest section of miracles in terms of the sheer quantity of narrations. So many times the Prophet ﷺ made a small quantity of food feed a large quantity of people, and a small quantity of water take care of a large quantity of people.

1) Of the most salient examples is at the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, when the Muslims ran out of water, the Prophet ﷺ put his hands in whatever water remained and he then took his hands out, and from between his fingers, water began to flow like a fountain. And people did wudu and washed themselves. In another version, Anas ibn Malik said, "Over 300 people did wudu from the water coming from between the fingers of the Prophet ﷺ." Imam al-Qurtubi commented: The miracle of the water coming from the hands of the Prophet ﷺ is even more miraculous than the miracle of Musa AS causing water to gush from a rock, because occasionally water does come from a rock^[68], but never does water gush from flesh and bones.

2) In the Battle of Tabuk, a small quantity of food sufficed an entire army [see [episode 92](#)].

3) In the incident of the Hijrah, the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr passed by an old lady whose animal could not produce milk, but when the Prophet ﷺ made du'a, the udders filled up and overflowed [see [episode 28](#)]. Of course, this first happened with Halimah, his foster mother: All of a sudden her camels and goats started giving milk [see [episode 7](#)]. And in the early stage of Makkan dawah as well, a similar miracle happened in front of Ibn Mas'ud RA [see [episode 11](#)].

4) Perhaps the most famous incident in this category is that of Khandaq [see [episode 58](#)]. When the Prophet ﷺ was digging the trench with the sahaba, Jabir ibn Abdillah came home to his wife and said, "O my wife, I have heard the voice of the Prophet ﷺ weak (i.e., he is hungry). What do we have? Whatever we have, we must give him." And she said there was an old (or small) goat and some flour, so he told her to prepare them. This would have fed only around 5 people, so when Jabir went back to the trench, he *whispered* to the Prophet ﷺ, "I have something prepared." But then, in one version, it's said the Prophet ﷺ stood up and announced to the entire trench, "O people of the trench, Jabir has a walima (feast) prepared for you!" and everyone was overjoyed because they were all hungry and tired. Then the Prophet ﷺ told Jabir, "Make sure your wife does not put the bread inside the oven or cook the meat until I come." And when he ﷺ came, he spat into the dough, kneaded it with his own hands, and he helped put the dish into the furnace. And then in batches the entire army of 1,400 people came, and they ate, and they left. And when they left, there was more food than in the beginning. This is of the barakah witnessed by thousands of people in Madinah.

⁶⁸ Even though it's a small quantity — and Musa AS made it a large quantity.

4. Protection That Allah Gave to the Prophet ﷺ

That is, out of nowhere, the Prophet ﷺ was protected with miraculous intervention. And we see this throughout the entire seerah. How many times was he protected out of nowhere? There are just countless incidents to list. Of them:

1) The entire Hijrah [see [episode 27](#)]: (i) On the night when he left his house, (ii) when they were walking to Madinah and the Prophet ﷺ was looking up in Ghari Thawr and Abu Bakr was trembling but they were saved, (iii) the story of Suraqa ibn Malik; etc.

2) The praying in front of the Ka'bah [see [episode 15](#)]: Abu Jahal boasted to his peers he would humiliate the Prophet ﷺ by putting his foot on the neck of the Prophet ﷺ while he ﷺ was in sajdah, but when he came forward to do this, he began walking backward in fear. And when he was asked why, he said he saw between him and the Prophet ﷺ a pit of fire and there were wings hovering above it. Later the Prophet ﷺ told the sahaba that the fire (seen by Abu Jahal) was brought by the angels.

3) The Battle of Badr: 300 not-so-well-armed Muslims against 1,000 strong of well-armed Quraysh.

4) The windstorm during the Battle of Khandaq [see [episode 60](#)].

5) In fact every single battle, even Uhud — it could be a loss, but Allah still protected the life and persona of the Prophet ﷺ even though he was injured [see [episode 49](#)].

5. Knowledge of the Unseen Given to the Prophet ﷺ

Question: Did our Prophet ﷺ have Ilm al-Ghayb^[69]? The response to this is: First we need to know there are two types of Ilm al-Ghayb:

A) Knowledge that only Allah has and nobody else has. An example is the five knowledges that only Allah has: (i) no one knows when someone will die; (ii) where they will die; (iii) when the wombs will give; (iv) what the wombs will give; (v) when is the Day of Judgment — and there are more.

B) There is also relative Ilm al-Ghayb some of which might be given to the prophets. Allah SWT says in the Quran, "[Allah is the] Knower of the unseen, disclosing none of it to anyone, except Messengers of His choice. Then He appoints angel-guards before and behind them" [see Quran, 72:26-27].

So did the Prophet ﷺ have Ilm al-Ghayb? The answer is: The ultimate Ilm al-Ghayb, no; but some, yes by the permission of Allah. After all, did the Prophet ﷺ not see Jibril

⁶⁹ Ilm al-Ghayb (علم الغيب) - Knowledge of the Unseen.

AS? Did he not see the heavens and Jannah and Jahannam? So no doubt he had some of the Ilm al-Ghayb — but not all. Allah says, "And none knows the forces of your Lord except He" [see Quran, 74:31], and in another verse, "Say [to them], 'I have no power to benefit or protect myself except by the Will of Allah. If I had known the ghayb, I would have benefited myself enormously and no harm would have ever touched me. I am only a warner and deliverer of good news for those who believe'" [see Quran, 7:188]. So very clearly, the Prophet ﷺ is being told to announce that he doesn't have the ultimate Ilm al-Ghayb.

So what did the Prophet ﷺ know that he told us of the Ilm al-Ghayb? Many examples; of them:

1) The day that Najashi died — he died in Abyssinia and the Prophet ﷺ was in Madinah: One day, the sahaba woke up and an announcement was made, "Come to the Masjid!" and then the Prophet ﷺ said, "One of your brothers in the faraway land of Abyssinia —the Najashi— has died; he was a righteous man and we shall pray janazah for him." And lo and behold, months later, the news came that indeed Najashi had died on that very day and that very hour the Prophet ﷺ made the announcement [see [episode 17](#)].

2) When the Prophet ﷺ came back from al-Isra wal-Mi'raj, one of the Quraysh who had been to Jerusalem tested him, "If you really have been to Jerusalem, then can you describe it for me? Tell me what doors go where, etc." and obviously, the Prophet ﷺ went at night and he couldn't see everything, and why would he pay attention to such details anyway, and there was no way he remembers everything after a short visit, so he became terrified —more terrified than he had ever become— that he might not be able to answer all the questions, until he saw Jibril AS raise up the Bayt al-Maqdis in front of his eyes and he could see it as they were asking the questions. And there was not a single question they asked except that the Bayt al-Maqdis was turned this way and that way, and he could see and respond based upon the question [see [episode 23](#)].

3) The Battle of Mu'tah — right when the three leaders died in Mu'tah, the Prophet ﷺ described it in Madinah in real-time. And Anas said, "The Prophet ﷺ told us about the deaths of Zayd, Ja'far, and Ibn Rawahah before the news reached us." And it's proven to them a week later when the news came [see [episode 73](#)].

4) Also we have the famous incident when one of the governors of the Sassanid Empire, Badhan, sent two spies to Madinah pretending to be messengers: They arrived and the Prophet ﷺ recognized them to be spies, so he didn't even look at their letter and said, "Come back the next day." They came back the next day and he ﷺ said, "Go back to your lord and tell him my Lord has killed his lord"—and it turned out that was the same day Khosrow the emperor of the Sassanid Empire had been assassinated. When the two found out that what the Prophet ﷺ said was true, they accepted Islam [see [episode 71](#)].

All of these are Knowledge of the Unseen.

6. Prophecies of the Future

Even though we can say this is part of the Knowledge of the Unseen, but because it is kind of separate, we made it a category in and of itself. And once again, quite literally, we have over 150 (up to 350) prophecies of the Prophet ﷺ. The foremost of these are the signs of the Day of Judgment — indeed, every single sign of the Day of Judgment said by the Prophet ﷺ is a prophecy of the future.

And of other examples are:

1) The most prominent prophecy was that whilst in Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ prophesied the conquest of the Arabian Peninsula, which seemed impossible at the time. And then when in Madinah, he prophesied further conquests: Yemen, Busra, Sham, Bayt al-Maqdis, Egypt, Persian Empire, Constantinople, Hind, etc. And as we know, history proved these lands were indeed conquered as foretold by the Prophet ﷺ.

2) In the middle of the desert when not a single Muslim knew anything about the art of building ships, the Prophet ﷺ prophesied that there would be a Muslim naval force within the lifetime of the sahaba. At this, the aunt of Anas ibn Malik, Ummi Haram bint Milhan (أم حرام بنت ملحان) said, "Ya Rasulallah, make du'a that I am in that force and I die in it." He ﷺ said, "You will be amongst them." And what happened? In the reign of Muawiyah, Muawiyah made some naval forces^[70], and he used these forces in expeditions, and Ummi Haram was in these expeditions, and in one of the far islands they went to, she fell off her horse and cracked her skull and died there. And the sahaba buried her there, and later on, people built a masjid beside her grave which still to this day is the famous masjid in Cyprus. To this day, there is the masjid of Ummi Haram.

3) One of the more interesting ones reported in Ibn Asakir: The famous sahabi Abdullah ibn Busr (عبد الله بن بسر) who was one of the last sahaba to die^[71], he narrates in Damascus as an old man, "When I was a young child, the Prophet ﷺ visited my parent's house, and I remember my father gave him a worn-out rug to sit on. And my father asked my mother, 'Is there any food?' My mother said, 'Yes, we have hais^[72],' so my mother sent me with the hais and I presented it to the both of them (meaning his father and the Prophet ﷺ), and the Prophet ﷺ turned to look at me, rubbed his hand on my head and said, 'This child shall live for a century.' And I was a young child so I said, 'How much is a century?' The Prophet ﷺ said, '100 years.'" And Abdullah ibn Busr is narrating this hadith in Damascus and he is now 95 years old. And in exactly 5 years after this when he was exactly 100, he passed away while in the act of wudu. Subhan'Allah.

⁷⁰ Side note: Uthman had some as well.

⁷¹ He died in 88 AH.

⁷² Hais (حيس) - biscuit / cookie / dried cake — they would grind up some dates and mix with flour.

7. The Healing of the Prophet ﷺ

There are again numerous reported incidents of this happening in the life of the Prophet ﷺ.

1) In the Battle of Uhud, Qatada was one of the 9 people who guarded the Prophet ﷺ — he was the one who stood guard outside the cave and used his own body to protect the Prophet ﷺ against stray arrows, and one of the arrows came right into his eyes and his eye fell out, and when the Prophet ﷺ saw this, he made a special du'a and said, "O Allah, your servant has sacrificed his own face for mine, so return his eye to him even better than it was," and Qatada said that immediately, the eye healed and it became the sharper of his two eyes [see [episode 49](#)].

2) And we have the famous incident of Ali ibn Abi Talib on the day of Khaybar, when after 10 days of battling, the Prophet ﷺ prophesied, "Tomorrow at Salat al-Fajr, I will hand the banner to someone whom Allah and His Messenger love, and Allah will grant us victory at his hands," and the next day after Fajr, he asked, "Where is Ali?" They said, "He is suffering from eye problems," so the Prophet ﷺ called him, he was brought with his eyes closed, and the Prophet ﷺ spat in his eyes and made du'a and then and there his eyes were fixed [see [episode 68](#)].

3) There is another incident, of a boy who had been born deaf and dumb, and the Prophet ﷺ made du'a over him and right then and there he became normal after living for 7-8 years in that state.

Again, these are just some of the examples.

8. Immediate Responses to His Du'a

These are du'as being answered instantly as soon as he ﷺ made it.

1) The most famous example reported in every book of hadith: The people of Madinah were suffering a drought for many months, and in the middle of a Friday khutbah, a man came and said, "Ya Rasulallah, we have not had rain for months and our crops are withering, our animals are dying, and our children are starving. Make du'a to Allah that He sends rain," and Anas narrates, "Wallahi, we had not seen the whiff of a cloud for months, but as the Prophet ﷺ raised his hands, we saw a dense, thick cloud come from the back of the mountain of Madinah, it came racing forward, and before the Prophet's ﷺ hands had reached his side, we heard the pitter-patter of rain on the roof, and when we went back home, we had to rush back so not to get drenched. And wallahi, we did not see the sun for an entire week." And the next week in the middle of the khutbah, the same man or another man came and said, "Ya Rasulallah, our crops are over-flooded, our children are drowning, and our animals are swimming around. Make du'a to Allah to stop the rain," and so the Prophet ﷺ said, "O Allah, send the rain around and not on us," and he ﷺ pointed to the

sky, and wherever he pointed, the clouds parted and the sun came out. And again, this miracle took place in front of the entire city of Madinah. Numerous narrations and hundreds of eyewitnesses.

2) The conversion of the mother of Abu Hurairah — Abu Hurairah was a Yemeni and after he Migrated to Madinah, he sent a message to his mother to also come so he could take care of her. He used to live in [the Suffa](#), so when his mother came to Madinah, he had to get an apartment or a house for her to live in. And his mother was very hurt that Abu Hurairah had left the religion of their forefathers and accepted Islam, so she was always cursing Islam and saying bad things about the Prophet ﷺ. So one day, Abu Hurairah came crying to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "Ya Rasulallah, my mother has said too much about you and I cannot take it — make du'a that Allah guides her." So the Prophet ﷺ raised his hands then and there and said, "O Allah, guide the mother of Abu Hurairah." Then Abu Hurairah goes back, but before he enters the house, his mother says, "Do not enter. I am taking a bath"—that was the bath (ghusl) of Islam. And as soon as he comes into the house, she says the shahada.

9. Stories of the Previous Prophets

Now, how is this a miracle? For many reasons. First and foremost, one needs to realize how uneducated Arabia was at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Consider in our time for example the people living in the jungles of Brazil — would they know the histories of medieval Europe? Of course not. Imagine you came across a civilization cut off from all others and they somehow know about all other civilizations. Such was the case with the Prophet ﷺ. Even the names of the Judeo-Christian prophets were not known to the Arabs — and why should they know the story of Joseph, Isaac, et al., when that branch was completely irrelevant to them? Yes, they preserved the traditions of Abraham and Ishmael, but Isaac's branch was completely irrelevant to them. And that is why during Makkan seerah, the Quraysh in their attempt to 'expose' the Prophet ﷺ, when they went to Yathrib and said to the Jews, "Give us some test quiz questions," one of the questions given was, "Ask him (the Prophet ﷺ) about Joseph and his brothers"—because unless through a divine revelation, there was no way an unlettered shepherd living in the middle of the desert would know these stories [see [episode 14](#)]. There wasn't a single library in the entire Hejaz, and in the whole city of Makkah there were less than 10 people who could read and write, and even if they could, there was no bible to read if they could even acquire it — yet in the middle of all this, the Prophet ﷺ begins telling the detailed stories of Adam (Adam) AS, Nuh (Noah) AS, Ishaq (Isaac) AS, Ya'qub (Jacob) AS, Yusuf (Joseph) AS, Musa (Moses) AS, Isa (Jesus) AS, et al. Allah says, "This is one of the stories of the unseen, which We reveal to you [O Prophet]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this" [Quran, 11:49].

Of the most interesting tangible evidences is that the Quran preserves some stories of Jesus Christ that are not found in the New Testament to this day, yet were discovered recently in sources outside the New Testament:

1) All of us as Muslims know the story of Jesus speaking from his mother's cradle [see Quran, 3:46], but most of us are not aware that this story is simply not found in the New Testament — none of the gospels have it.

2) Also, the Quran mentions on two occasions the story of Jesus and the clay bird, i.e., he blew into it and it became a real bird [5:110] [3:49]. Again, this story is not mentioned in the canonical Christian gospels, and for the longest time Christians ridiculed Muslims because of this, "Look at these Muslims, they have these weird and bizarre stories."

But around 70 years ago in Egypt, an interesting monastery was discovered in the desert. In it was the body of a monk from the 3rd century CE. And the body of the monk belonged to a lost sect of Christianity. And in the coffin were scrolls —multiple scrolls— and these scrolls contained gospels that are beyond the four canonical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). As we know, Constantine and others got rid of all other gospels besides these four, so this in Egypt was one of the most significant discoveries of the 20th century. One of these gospels was the Gospel of St. Thomas (now available on Amazon), and in it, we have both of the aforementioned stories: the story of Jesus speaking as a baby and the story of the bird being brought to life.

It is remarkable that for 13 centuries, these stories were unknown to any Christian community. Only now are Christians discovering these stories, which we Muslims have always known because they have always been in the Quran. This is clearly a miracle of the Prophet ﷺ.

10. Miscellaneous (Everything Else)

1) One of the miracles in this category is perhaps one of the Prophet's ﷺ greatest miracles, which is the splitting of the moon in half, which occurred in the very early Makkan phase. This is one of the few miracles that the Quraysh [challenged](#) and the Prophet ﷺ performed. The Quraysh challenged him, and he said, "If I were to split the moon in half, would you believe in me?" and they all said yes. Then as we all know —and the Quran is explicit— the moon was split, and the mountain of Safa was in between the two halves of the moon. Ibn Kathir said, "This incident has been narrated by numerous chains, and even if we didn't have any chain, the Quran is explicit enough:

اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ

54:1. The Hour draws near; the moon is split in two."

And Imam Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi (أبو سليمان الخطابي) (d. 388 AH) writes, "The splitting of the moon is one of the greatest miracles ever that cannot be compared to the miracles of any prophet because it occurred in the celestial skies outside of this earth that we are accustomed to, inaccessible to us [mortals]. Hence it was an even greater miracle than other miracles."

2) And we also have the personal miracle given just for the Prophet ﷺ, and that is the miracle of [al-Mi'raj](#). As for al-Isra, he somewhat proved it [to the rest of us] by talking

about Bayt al-Maqdis to the Quraysh; but as for al-Mi'raj, we just have to believe it happened — it was a personal miracle just for him صلى الله عليه وسلم. A mu'jiza just for him to console him after the death of Khadija RA and Abu Talib, after going through the rejection of Ta'if. It was the lowest of the low in his life صلى الله عليه وسلم, so Allah blessed him with the highest of the high.

3) And then of course there is the greatest and ultimate miracle we still use to this day, which is the Quran. This miracle eclipses all other miracles, and it is more than all the other miracles combined — infinitely more. Why do we say this? The simplest point is that all the other miracles we have mentioned, we did not witness them —they happened in front of other groups and we just believe they happened— whereas the Quran, it is still amongst us right now — and that is why it is called the eternal miracle. It is the only miracle we can say to a non-Muslim, "Here is the Quran, read this Book and listen to its recitation. This is how you will know that our religion is true." It is the only miracle that has no time / space constraints. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Every single prophet has been given miracles because of which his people have believed in him; as for me, the only miracle Allah gave me is the wahy that He has sent down to me." Subhan'Allah. As we have seen, clearly, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was given thousands of miracles. But the miracle of the Quran is so bright it eclipses all other miracles he said it is his only miracle — it is as if all other miracles become meaningless in front of this one miracle. And he صلى الله عليه وسلم also said, "And because of this wahy, I hope to have the largest number of followers on the Day of Judgment"—this hadith is in Sahih Bukhari, and it demonstrates that the Quran is the ultimate timeless miracle that we can use when we give dawah.

086. Recap & Lessons from Hunayn & Ta'if

We will recap the Battle of Hunayn and the Siege of Ta'if, and then derive the main points of benefit from the incidents.

Recap

Recall we discussed in length the Conquest of Makkah which occurred Ramadan 8th Hijrah. We mentioned that one of the most important products of the Conquest is that the entirety of the Quraysh converted to Islam; some of them immediately, others it took a while, such as Safwan ibn Umayyah, Suhayl ibn Amr, et al. [see [episode 80](#)]. After the Conquest, the Prophet ﷺ also destroyed all the idols in the neighboring tribes. He then heard of an offensive by the tribe of Thaqif who had allied with their cousins Hawazin — two tribes that rivaled the Quraysh in Makkah. The two tribes decided they would launch an offensive, so the Prophet ﷺ decided he would engage with them in war. And so the Ansar, Muhajirun, and all the new converts from Makkah, engaged in the Battle of Hunayn [see episode 82].

Initially, the Muslims —especially the new converts— fled and ran away, but the Prophet ﷺ and the senior sahaba remained until the counter-offensive was launched. And the Battle of Hunayn was a resounding success. And the tribe of Hawazin, their men fled and left all their women, property, and belongings on the battlefield. And large segments of Thaqif as well — recall the younger, overzealous commander said, "Bring all the women and children," and the elder said, "That's foolish." But the younger commander insisted, and he commanded everyone to bring everything with them to the battlefield [see [episode 82](#)]. Thus when the men fled back to Ta'if, all that was left behind was taken as war booty by the Muslims. It was a very foolish move for them, but it turned out to be a great advantage for the Muslims — the booty was the largest ghanima received in the history of the seerah.

We also mentioned that the Prophet ﷺ laid siege to the city of Ta'if, but it was not successful, so the Prophet ﷺ returned to Makkah, and he said, "Allah will guide them to Islam (sooner or later)." And indeed, in the 9th year of the Hijrah, they converted [see [episode 95](#)].

Points of Benefit From the Battle of Hunayn and the Siege of Ta'if

Let us go back and derive some benefits from the Battle of Hunayn and the Siege of Ta'if:

1. Do not neglect the primary cause of victory. What is the primary cause of victory? Trust in Allah. As Allah says:

إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ

"If Allah helps you, nobody can conquer you" [see Quran, 3:160].

And what does Allah say in the Quran about who [some of] the Muslims put their trust in on the Day of Hunayn? Allah says, "On the Day of Hunayn, you took pride in your great numbers. But they proved of no advantage to you" [see Quran, 9:25]. Therefore, we learn from this a very important point of tawhid: Our tawakkul has to be in Allah —the Musabbib al-Asbab^[73]— and not in the sabab^[74] itself. If our tawakkul is put in the cause, this is a type of shirk. It's called minor shirk, generally, and there are many examples: For example, if you have an alarm system in your house and you turn it on and think, "Khalas, the alarm system will protect me"—this isn't great shirk that makes you a mushrik; you're not worshiping the alarm system; **but** it's hidden / minor shirk — your tawakkul is in that alarm system. But does this mean we shouldn't turn the alarm on? Obviously, not. We turn the alarm on; but we must put our tawakkul in Allah SWT. Similarly, if you are sick and you go to the doctor, your tawakkul has to be in Allah. Yes, you realize Allah has given the doctor the tools and knowledge you don't have, so you have to go to the doctor; but your tawakkul has to be in Allah. Because it is Allah who brings the shifa^[75]; not the doctor or the medicine in itself. So your tawakkul has to be in the Musabbib al-Asbab; not the sabab.

So in all affairs of life, you must put your tawakkul in Allah; your job, your degree, your education, your qualifications — all of this is a sabab which Allah has given to you; so if you put your tawakkul in it, this is a type of shirk. Which could be major shirk if you deny Allah SWT. If a person denies Allah and says, "This is all from me," this is major shirk. For example, the story in Surah Kahf about the man with the two gardens: His brother said, "This is from Allah," but the man said, "No, this is from me" [see Quran, 18:32-44]. And similarly Qarun; he said, "I was the businessman who managed to get the money" [see Quran, 28:76-84] — so he is a kafir, because he made himself the cause, and he neglected the One Who Causes the Cause. The one who eliminates Allah and says, "I am the cause," this is major shirk and kufr. Insha'Allah, among Muslims this is not possible. But some still fall victim to minor shirk — they don't deny Allah, but they put their tawakkul in other than Him. And this is exactly what happened on the Day of Hunayn. They put their tawakkul in their cause, and they almost failed had Allah not helped them.

It's important to note that there are two types of causes: Physical cause and spiritual cause. A physical cause is a cause that humanity understands and believes in regardless of religion. For example, medicine, job, education, strength, etc. A spiritual cause is a cause that is supernatural. We as Muslims have our spiritual causes through du'a, Quran, etc. All of these are spiritual. Now, a spiritual cause, if it is legitimate, can you put your trust in that spiritual cause? Can your heart be attached (ta'alluq / تعلق) to that spiritual cause? We said your heart should not have tawakkul and attachment to any physical cause, e.g., a doctor. Okay — but can your heart be attached to a spiritual cause? The answer is yes. Because by definition, it is connected with Allah. To have your heart attached to Allah through a spiritual cause is tawhid. And to have your heart attached to a physical cause goes against tawhid. We learn this from the Incident of Hunayn, that we don't put our trust in physical causes. Now, of course, physical causes are necessary, in that, Allah created them to be causes: The famous hadith of, "Tie your camel, and then put your trust in Allah"—this is the basis of actions. So no doubt, we put our trust in Allah; but we need to do the physical causes

⁷³ The Musabbib al-Asbab (مسبب الأسباب) - the One Who Causes the Cause.

⁷⁴ Sabab (سبب) - cause.

⁷⁵ Shifa (شفاء) - cure.

necessary. So we go to the doctor, install an alarm system, do a degree to get a job, etc., and as we do all this, we attach our hearts to Allah. We put our tawakkul in Allah while we do these physical causes.

2. Another important point of theology we learn is: We excuse people even for major shirk and kufr if it is done out of ignorance. If a person is genuinely ignorant and they say they are Muslim and believe they are Muslim but fall into blatant shirk and kufr and they don't even know it is shirk and kufr, it is possible that Allah will forgive them, because they are jahil^[76]. We learn this from the hadith of Abu Waqid [see [episode 82](#)]: As the Muslims left Makkah for Hunayn, they saw the tree on which the pagans used to hang their weapons for 'good luck.' So Abu Waqid al-Laythi who just converted one week prior and doesn't know anything, he asks the Prophet ﷺ, "Can't you make for us Dhat Anwat (the Hanging Tree, i.e., good luck charm) like the pagans have Dhat Anwat?"—and this is major kufr; he is asking for another god besides Allah; and indeed, the Prophet ﷺ said this is major shirk; he said, "I swear by Allah, you have asked me exactly what Bani Israel asked Musa AS"—and what Bani Israel asked was major shirk [see Quran, 7:138]; **BUT** did the Prophet ﷺ say to Abu Waqid, "Repeat your shahada again because you have become a kafir"? No. Why? Because he is a brand new Muslim and is ignorant.

This is very important because now we are living in a time when we hear such strange views even amongst Muslims who are born into Islam but are raised in foreign lands and they don't know even the basics of the religion and they come forth sometimes with blatant kufr. The most obvious example is the notion that, "Anyone who is good will go to Paradise; it doesn't matter what you believe. You can be agnostic, atheist, idol worshiper, Jew, Christian, anything — if you are a good person, you will go to Jannah." This is a common notion of our times. But to say this is kufr akbar. Why? Because it goes against the kalimah: It goes against "la ilaha illaLlah (there is no god besides Allah)" — because you are saying in fact there are gods that can be worshiped besides Allah. And it also goes against "Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah (Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah)" — because you are saying someone who denies "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" will go to Jannah. So it goes against both the kalimahs. You have negated your kalimah when you say, "All paths lead to Jannah." And yet, if you were to ask and do a survey —May Allah protect us, but even in our own communities— you will hear some people, sometimes even Muslims, especially teenagers, say, "Oh yes, if you are good, you will go to Jannah regardless of your religion." And to this, we say, no. In Islam, you have to be good both theologically and action-wise [see Quran, 18:107].

BUT at the same time —and here's the point— we shouldn't pronounce the verdict of kafir on these teenagers. Because they are ignorant. They don't know any better. So insha'Allah, the Muslims of them, they will be forgiven because there is "asl al-Iman" in their heart.

What is asl al-Iman (أصل الإيمان)? Asl al-Iman means you want to submit to Allah and His Messenger. Meaning these people, insha'Allah, they have Iman in their hearts and they want

⁷⁶ Jahil (جاهل) - ignorant.

to submit to Allah. But they are ignorant. So, such a person who believes himself to be a Muslim, then commits a major mistake such as kufr and shirk but is ignorant, that person will not be held accountable for their ignorance. Rather, they must be taught and educated.^[77]

Another example is the issue of sexual orientation. Some young Muslims of our time say, "What's the big deal if somebody has this orientation or that? Let them do that." But we say, "No. To say it is okay is like saying it's okay to drink alcohol. And to say it's okay to drink alcohol is kufr."^[78] But again, at the same time, just like how the Prophet ﷺ dealt with Abu Waqid al-Laythi, we shouldn't pronounce verdicts of kafir on these people; rather, we must deal with them in a gentle manner and with wisdom.

3. Even the best of people can be swayed by worldly desires: Desire for wealth, power, and ambition. It's not in and of itself a sign of weak Iman to have desires of this world and be swayed by them. But the true Iman comes when you are reminded to keep it in check: When someone reminds you, or when you are shown the truth, can you put yourself in check? And we see this even in Prophet Yusuf AS: The Quran explicitly says, "He would have desired her" [see Quran, 12:24] — so we learn that it is not in and of itself haram to have desires of this world. But what did Yusuf AS do with that desire? Did he pursue it? No. As the verse says: A sign from Allah SWT kept Yusuf's AS desire in check, and thus he turned away from the woman [see Quran, 12:24] — and this is Iman. Similarly, in the Battle of Hunayn, what happened with the Ansar? When the Ansar felt somehow the Prophet ﷺ had not done justice to them after they got nothing from the ghanima, they said something that really demonstrated how disappointed they were with the Prophet ﷺ [see [episode 83](#)]. But the fact that they had waswasa doesn't mean they didn't have Iman. Allah SWT says in the Quran regarding the sahaba, "You are the best community ever raised for humanity" [see Quran, 3:110]; and we find in so many ahadith the Prophet ﷺ praising the Ansar. Thus we learn that to have an inclination, in and of itself, is not a sign of lack of faith or weak faith. But what did the sahaba do with the inclination? Did they succumb to it and utter statements of kufr or snatch away some of the ghanima without the Prophet's ﷺ permission? No. When the Prophet ﷺ gave them the moving lecture, they kept their inclination in check. When they were reminded, they remembered — and this is Iman. As the Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith, "The believer, when he is reminded, he remembers."

4. We see again and again the Prophet ﷺ is dealing with people according to their backgrounds, personalities, and levels:

i) Look at how he dealt with the Ansar. He didn't give them a penny, and he gave all of the fortunes to the new converts [see [episode 83](#)].

⁷⁷ Side note: The opposite of asl al-Iman is "asl al-Kufr [أصل الكفر]," which means you don't want to submit to Allah.

⁷⁸ Note: Drinking alcohol is not kufr in itself, but to say it's okay to drink alcohol **is** kufr; i.e., to legitimize haram is kufr.

ii) Look at how he dealt with the Quraysh on the battlefield when they fled. He used a war slogan never used before or after the incident. He said, "I am the Prophet, there is no denying this. And I am the son of Abdul Muttalib" [see [episode 82](#)]. He called upon his lineage — he had never done this in any other war. This is what you call the master of human psychology. Now, as we know, Islam teaches us that being proud of who your father / grandfather is has the potential to become something of Jahiliyyah; and yet, here, what is happening at Hunayn? Is the Prophet ﷺ contradicting himself? No. He isn't being proud of his lineage. Rather, he is saying a factual statement — he was using on that battlefield something that needed to be used with the new converts from the Quraysh (and also the non-Muslims like Safwan ibn Umayyah). The one thing that would unite the army, especially having non-Muslims in their ranks, was the fact that the Prophet ﷺ was the grandson of their legendary chieftain. And in our times, the same thing can be applied to, for example, nationalism. There is nothing inherently wrong with ascribing yourself to a certain land, region, culture, etc. No doubt, if it is used improperly, it can become kufr and sin. But if it is used properly, it is fine. Notice the Prophet ﷺ mentioned "I am the Prophet" first, and only mentioned "I am the son of Abdul Muttalib" after — he mentioned his Islamic identity first. Thus if we don't make our national identity more important than our Islamic identity, it is fine.

iii) Look at how the Prophet ﷺ dealt with the Bedouins. He dealt with them in a different way. He did not give the average Bedouins what he gave the chieftains of the Quraysh. He just gave them tokens (until everything was finished)^[79] [see [episode 83](#)].

So our religion teaches us common sense: We treat people according to their backgrounds. There is a hadith in Sahih Muslim narrated by Aisha RA, "Our Prophet ﷺ commanded us to treat people according to their level."

5. Also, we see the issue of making du'a for vs. against people. We have this common misconception among some Muslims in our time that you are never allowed to make du'a against somebody. But this is completely wrong. Of the evidences are:

i) When the sahaba finished the Siege of Ta'if, they begged the Prophet ﷺ to make du'a against Thaqif [see [episode 83](#)].

ii) When Salat al-Asr was missed during the Battle of Khandaq, the Prophet ﷺ made du'a against the ahzab [see [episode 59](#)].

iii) When a carcass was thrown on the Prophet ﷺ, he made du'a explicitly by name against the group of Qureshis who did it [see [episode 15](#)] (and every one of them died at Badr).

iv) When the 70 sahaba were killed, the Prophet ﷺ made du'a for a whole month against those who did it [see [episode 51](#)].

⁷⁹ And he didn't keep a penny for himself.

v & vi) Didn't Musa AS make du'a against Pharaoh? [see Quran, 10:88]. Didn't Nuh AS make du'a against his own people? [see Quran, 71:26].^[80]

No doubt, the general rule is to make du'a for, but sometimes it is healthy and necessary to make du'a against.

In our time, there are many tyrants, e.g., the modern pharaoh in Syria — is it not Islamic to make du'a against him? Wallahi, it is. Now, if somebody were to make du'a for him and say, "O Allah, guide this person"—is that wrong? No, that's not wrong; it is permissible. But after all that he has done, if somebody were to make du'a against him, that is also permissible; in fact, that is the more logical thing to do. The point is it is not un-Islamic to make du'a against someone who has wronged you or others. This notion in our times, that we cannot make du'a against someone, is wrong. In fact, there are many ahadith about the du'a of the oppressed — and the contexts indicate that they are about making du'a against a **Muslim** who has done wrong to you. If a Muslim had confiscated, embezzled, stolen your money, dishonored you, or slandered you, then Islamically and Quranically, you can make du'a against him by name. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The du'a of the one who is wronged, there is no hijab (barrier) between him and Allah." Which means you **can** make du'a against even a Muslim. How about a tyrant then? Of course we can make du'a against such people. Thus if someone makes du'a against them by saying, "O Allah, destroy these people," this is fine and is from the sunnah.

That being said, what did the Prophet ﷺ do with Thaqif? He made du'a for them. Thus we learn that the general rule is to be merciful. Still, however, you can be strict if necessary.

6. Wisdom in dealing with past offenses. Should you punish people for past offenses / crimes or forgive them? We have in the Battle of Hunayn a major crime, and that is the Muslims fled the battlefield. This is a major crime. In fact, the Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith, "Seven are the deadly sins. One of them is to turn away and flee on the battlefield." And these groups of new Muslims did exactly this. It's a major sin. And therefore, Ummi Sulaym, one of the famous sahabiyat, when they all fled, she in fact jumped off her own animal, ran to the Prophet ﷺ and pulled out a hand dagger^[81] —and the sahaba looked at her and said, "What are you doing? What will you do with that?"— she said, "If anyone comes, I will shove it in his stomach"; and when the battle was eventually won, her anger burst out and she said, "Ya Rasulallah, execute all those cowards," i.e., the new converts who fled. And the Prophet ﷺ said, "O Ummi Sulaym, Allah AWJ took care of us. He defended us, and everything is fine." Meaning, "Yes, they did a sin, but what shall we do? Kill a 1,000 people?" So here we find wisdom in dealing with offenses. It's a major offense, but what will you gain

⁸⁰ Side note: No doubt, Ibrahim and Isa AS made du'a for their people (because they had tender hearts), but the instances of Nuh and Musa AS making du'a against their people are also there, which shows it's not haram to make du'a against someone. And in one hadith, the Prophet ﷺ likened the tender nature of Abu Bakr RA to that of Ibrahim and Isa AS; and the harsh nature of Umar RA to that of Nuh and Musa AS [see [episode 40](#)].

⁸¹ Note: Amongst the small group of men protecting the Prophet ﷺ, Ummi Sulaym was also there.

by mass retribution? It's no use crying over spilled milk, as the saying goes. This shows us the wisdom of the Prophet ﷺ.

7. We see this over and over again: The Prophet ﷺ uses not just physical means, not just spiritual means, but psychological means as well — which shows us you need to understand the human psyche. A leader cannot be a leader unless he knows how to deal with the human situation and the human psyche. And there are so many examples of this:

i) In the Battle of Hunayn, when the Hawazin came to Ji'ranah to embrace Islam and to have their families back (who had been distributed as prisoners of war to the Muslims), what did the Prophet ﷺ tell the Hawazin? He said, "This is what we will do: After Salat al-Zuhr tomorrow, you will stand up in front of all of the people (i.e., the sahaba) and ask to have your families given back to you (for free, if possible)," i.e., "Let's try to rely on the generosity of the Muslims" [see [episode 83](#)]. Notice the psychology here. He ﷺ said, "After Salah." Why after salah? Because after salah, you feel righteous and pious, and thus more generous. So it's the best time.

ii) Also in the same incident, notice the Prophet ﷺ didn't command the sahaba to give the prisoners back; rather, he used emotional appeal. Why does he not want to force the sahaba? Because it's their right — they just got handed a lot of prisoners, which is their prerogative; so to tell them point-blank to hand them back is going to be painful.

iii) Also in the same incident, recall when the Hawazin made the appeal, the first to stand up was none other than the Prophet ﷺ himself; and he said, "As for the prisoners in the Banu Abdul Muttalib (i.e., my tribe), I am in charge of them. So all of them are yours. Take them." This is of course a sign to the other leaders to stand up and start giving their prisoners up as well. And that is exactly what happened.

iv) The type of generosity shown by the Prophet ﷺ captured the hearts of the muallafati qulubuhum [see [episode 83](#)]. We didn't mention the following story in episode 83 because we didn't have time: When the Hawazin accepted Islam, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Where is your leader Malik ibn Awf al-Nasri?"^[82] They said, "He managed to get into Ta'if." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Go tell him that if he comes to me as a Muslim, I shall return his family and property, plus give him 100 camels." When Malik heard this... it was a no-brainer because he had lost everything: family, wealth, tribe, etc. Now he is being told that if he comes back as a Muslim, not only will he get it all back, but he will basically become a multi-millionaire. It's a no-brainer — there's no life to live without your family, property, and tribe. After all, he is the chieftain. What will you do without a tribe to lead? So he has no choice, he comes to the Prophet ﷺ, accepts Islam, and the Prophet ﷺ reinstates him as the tribal leader. The very person who instigated the entire attack against the Muslims, the Prophet ﷺ reinstates him as the leader. And Malik ibn Awf al-Nasri, he then versified some

⁸² Malik ibn Awf al-Nasri is the same leader who insisted on bringing the women and children to the battlefield against the advice of the elder. And he was the main leader who instigated the attack, led the attack, had the tactic of showering the Muslims with arrows in the overpass, etc.

lines of poetry basically saying the Prophet ﷺ is truly a prophet — because he ﷺ did not have to do this, yet he did; he fulfilled his promise. So Malik said there is no doubt he is a true prophet. When you see someone giving millions away and not keeping a penny for himself, what does this show? Sincerity and truthfulness. This is why al-Aqra' ibn Habis, the other chieftain, said, "I have just come from a man who doesn't care about poverty! Wallahi, this man is a prophet, for no king would do what he has done!"

v) As a general rule, the Prophet ﷺ tried to find local leaders / previous leaders within a tribe to lead, rather than put leaders from outside. Look at Malik ibn Awf; the Prophet ﷺ reinstated him as the leader. Why? Because it's human nature that you respect someone from within your own ranks as a leader — you won't respect an outsider to the same level. Also, who better to rule than someone who has already ruled? Malik ibn Awf knows how to rule his own people: He knows the people in charge, the elites he will need, etc. So he is handed back his power.

8. The issue of the prisoners of war — which brings up the controversial issue of slavery in early Islam and in Islamic law. This is a very hot topic that obviously critics of Islam —and even Muslims that don't know the shariah— question about. Many young Muslims say, "What does our religion say about slavery? How do we read the Quran and hadith and seerah when it talks about slavery?" This is a very long topic in and of itself.

The first thing we need to mention here is that we don't like to use the term "slavery." Because it is historically loaded. When we use the term, instantly we get images of American slavery; and this has huge negative connotations. American slavery was the worst manifestation of slavery in human history. Even the ancient Romans treated their slaves better. This is a historical fact that everybody acknowledges. The way slavery existed especially in America was really the worst. And when we use the term slavery, that sort of imagery comes up; whereas that never existed in the history of Islam. So we will use "ubudiyya (عبودية)" or "riq (رق)" or something of this nature instead, which is the Arabic connotation.

We will look at the issue of riq in the context of two times: Firstly, what did Islam do; and secondly, in our times with the ethical laws and the banning of slavery in the modern world.

Now, we need to understand that during the Prophet's ﷺ times, slavery / riq / ubudiyya was a universal practice — no culture or society had banned it, ever. Every society —Roman, Greek, Chinese, Indian, etc.— practiced it. And amidst the rampant practice around the globe, Islam was the first and the only civilization to come and give a set of laws about ubudiyya and dealing with abds; to have checks and balances put into place. Of those laws were:

i) Restricting where your abd (عبد) comes from — Islam only allowed one source: Prisoners of war who are not ransomed.

— Every other civilization allowed people to capture free people from other lands and then sell them (as what happened in America). They would go into some land, take someone, force him into slavery, and then bring him as a slave. Islam however forbade this. Islam only allowed Muslims to take prisoners of war who are not ransomed as abds: After a legitimate war took place (a state fights another state), there are thousands of prisoners; so what is to be done if nobody is paying their ransom? You cannot just set them free; they will come back and retaliate. So you take them as abds. [See also: [episode 54](#).]

ii) Legislated proper treatment.

— This, again, was unheard of in any other civilization and culture. There are numerous ahadith about treating abds in a humane manner. Every civilization allowed masters to do what they pleased with their slaves, but Islam said no; rather, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Your abds are your brothers, and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats, and dress him of what he wears.^[83] Do not ask them (abds) to do things beyond their capacity (power), and if you do so, then help them."

iii) Islam legislated the freeing of abds through so many avenues.

— Such as the penalty for breaking your oath, committing zihar (ظهار), or having intercourse with your wife during the day of Ramadan; one of the ways to pay the penalty for these is to free an abd [see Quran, 5:89 & 58:2-4] [see Sahih Bukhari, [Book 51, Hadith 34](#)]. In fact, Islam legislated zakat money for abds — one of the 8 categories of zakat is for [freeing] abds [see Quran, 9:60]. This is not something to be taken lightly. In fact, not only zakat and penalty; freeing an abd is one of the highest virtues in Islam: There are chapters written —even in the book we are reading on a daily basis, which is Imam al-Nawawi's Riyad al-Salihin^[84]— on the virtues of freeing an abd or an ama^[85]. Allah gives so much reward to those who free abds, so much so that Aisha RA and others used to look for abds to free. Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ said one of the ways to free yourself from Hellfire is to free an abd [see Sahih Muslim, [Book 20, Hadith 26](#)].

iv) It created a legal framework that incorporates the treatment of abds and amas, but it doesn't require their existence.

— That is, Islam doesn't require riq or slavery. If we eliminate the entire institution of riq, the Islamic shariah is still perfectly intact. Therefore, in our times when there is no slavery, Islamic law is still full and valid, and it doesn't need their existence. And this is an amazing point in our opinion, which clearly demonstrates that Allah AWJ intended for riq to be something that is not necessary and required. If it's there, Islam has laws for it; but if it's not — no problem, the Islamic framework still stands. And that's why we don't know of a single scholar or alim who is calling for a return of riq.

⁸³ And that's why in Islam, there were many instances where you could not tell the abd from the master.

⁸⁴ Riyad al-Salihin (رياض الصالحين) - the Meadows of the Righteous.

⁸⁵ Ama (أمة) - female abd.

v) If you have a relation with an ama, then she must be only yours, and you cannot lend her to other people.

— Having relations with amas is, again, something that all societies and cultures did. It's not something Islam came with. There are plenty of references in the Old and New Testaments about it. However, previous cultures did not have any rules; in many cultures, including pre-Islamic Arabian culture, you could lend your ama to other people, *astaghfirullah*. So of course what happened was you would hire her out to other people for a night. And the Quran references this practice and makes it clear that it's completely haram [see Quran, 24:33]. So the Quran came and legislated things even in this regard.

vi) A child born of relation with an ama is considered to be a free child.

— In Jahiliyyah days, children born from relations with amas were considered to be, sometimes, slaves; whereas in Islam, the child born of such a union is considered to be the same as a free child. That's why Ismail AS and Ishaq AS are both equal in the eyes of the shariah of Allah SWT (even though Ismail's mother Hajar was a slave). And in fact, if we look at our own history, we will see that the majority of the khulafa were born of amas. And that's a huge thing to say. The majority of the Abbasids and the Uthmanids were actually children of amas — showing the lineage from their mother's side was not something that brought a negative stigma to them.

vii) If a child is born of such a union, the ama is upgraded to become an "umm al-walad (أم الولد)."

— And the books of fiqh have a chapter called "the Chapter of Umm al-Walad." What is umm al-walad? Umm al-walad is a special category of ama, in that, after the child is born, you cannot sell her to anybody else or transfer ownership; and she becomes free on the death of the child's father.

No doubt, slavery is a difficult topic for some of us, especially the young minds, to grasp; but it needs to be said and explained, because we come across the instances of abds and amas so many times in the seerah. In the modern world that we live in, however, we don't have to deal with it anymore — Allah AWJ legislated something that in the time and context was the most humane possible, and everything seemed to work toward eliminating this institution; and now that it is eliminated, we don't have to call for its return.

And *riq* was abolished in Muslim lands from 1870 onward. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, there were abolition movements as there were in Europe as well, and there was opposition to them just like there was in Europe as well. In the beginning, many Muslim clerics opposed the abolishment, but eventually, it's been eliminated.^[86] [For the discussion on Maria al-Qibtiyya, see [episode 97](#).]

⁸⁶ Note: Even in the seerah of the Prophet ﷺ, notice how many times abds were freed. And the Prophet ﷺ himself never had a personal slave-khadim (خادم - servant); every abd he had, he would free. But a number of them attached themselves to him after being freed, and they volunteered their services to him ﷺ.

The bottom line is slavery was the reality of the world at the time, and our religion came and legislated it and made it far more humane than any other civilization.^[87] In fact, no other civilization even had laws for slavery.

The Results of the Battle of Hunayn and the Siege of Ta'if

What were the results of Hunayn and Ta'if?

1. A clear victory of the Prophet ﷺ in the entire region of Hejaz — even though Ta'if was still not Muslim, it was a small island of shirk in the ocean of tawhid. Otherwise, the entire Hejaz region had converted to Islam.

2. Public idolatry had been eliminated. Yes, Ta'if is still pagan within their castle, but just within a few months, they will also embrace Islam [see [episode 95](#)].

3. The Battle of Hunayn was the very last battle between Islam and shirk. After this, it's gone. After this, never did the Prophet ﷺ and the sahaba fight against the mushrikun of Arabia. The next battles will be against Rome, Persia, etc. As for shirk in Arabia, Hunayn was the final domino — Conquest of Makkah, then Hunayn, and that's it, Arab idolatry ceased to exist within less than a year. This is one of the biggest miracles of the seerah itself: Arabia was a land of idolatry, and within 22 years of the Prophet ﷺ receiving prophethood, it ceased to exist. Completely gone. This was a miracle no human could bring about — Our Lord brought about complete wiping of shirk in the Arabian Peninsula.

4. The entire Quraysh tribe converted to Islam.^[88]

With this, central Arabia has been conquered. The only major province of Arabia left is the northern province.^[89] The major battle left will be with the people of north (however, Allah willed they will not actually fight) [see episodes 87-92: The Battle of Tabuk].

⁸⁷ And by the way, every book of classical fiqh has a chapter on ahkam al-riq (أحكام الرق - rules of riq). You can go and read about those chapters for historical purposes, if you want to.

⁸⁸ Note: There are references of perhaps 1 or 2 or 3 of the Quraysh fled to Rome or other places; but all of the elites that remained, they had converted.

⁸⁹ As for south, they are not idolaters; they are the people of Yemen which eventually will be conquered in a peaceful way as well; not much bloodshed.

087. Battle of Tabuk 1

Before we move on to the Battle of Tabuk, we will discuss what happened in the 6 months between the Siege of Ta'if and the Battle of Tabuk.

Religious Freedom in Islam

There were around 7 or 8 mini-expeditions between the Siege of Ta'if and the Battle of Tabuk. The Prophet ﷺ did not participate, but he sent the sahaba to neighboring tribes and lands, and the main purposes of these expeditions were to destroy large idols, public idols, and to bring the tribes into Islam. For example, the more famous ones involved the sending of Tufayl ibn Amr to destroy the idol of Dhi al-Kaffayn, and Ali ibn Abi Talib to destroy a large idol called al-Fuls (الفلس).

Now, in these modern days, we have some Muslim vigilante groups destroying the sacred sites of other religions and their idols, and they use these incidents from the seerah as evidence to justify their acts. So here we must explain two things:

1. The Prophet ﷺ only did this after he established his political authority in the land. In other words, he isn't destroying Dhi al-Kaffayn, al-Fuls, al-Uzza, etc., until he has political authority. He only did this after the Conquest of Makkah and after the Battle of Hunayn when central Arabia was his completely (and he is now expanding to all of Arabia).

2. And there is another issue as well. What do our scholars say about the freedom of other religions to worship in an Islamic state? The fact of the matter is there has been a controversy from the very beginning of Islam amongst the tabi'un and tabi' al-tabi'un. By unanimous consensus, Jews and Christians (i.e., the Ahl al-Kitab / People of the Book) can practice their faith in an Islamic state — this is well known; the Quran is explicit on this, and ahadith are mentioned about this as well; there is no ikhtilaf at all. The question comes how about paganistic religions? We have had ikhtilaf on this issue since the beginning of time. By almost unanimous consensus, idolatry is not allowed in the Arabian Peninsula.^[90] How about worshiping idols outside of the Arabian Peninsula? Would an Islamic state tolerate that? The four madhhabs have differed on this issue. Some say you can only take as citizens^[91] the Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. The reason the Zoroastrians are included is because when Umar RA conquered Persia, he said to the Muslims, "Treat them (Zoroastrians) like you treat Jews and Christians." So they were treated like them in terms of jizya and letting them practice their faith in their temples. And from this, some scholars have said that only Zoroastrians can be treated like the Ahl al-Kitab, and not other pagans.

However, there is always an opposing view, and the most famous madhhab championing it strenuously is the Hanafi madhhab which says you make qiyas on all the

⁹⁰ Side note: And this was perhaps the greatest success of the Prophet ﷺ. He permanently got rid of idolatry among the Arabs. To this day, you don't really have idolaters among the Arabs. This is the success of Islam. Subhan'Allah.

⁹¹ i.e., those who qualify to pay jizya.

religions. They say why stop only at Zoroastrians [when they don't even believe in our God]? It's worth noting that Jews and Christians believe in our God — the Quran is explicit about this; Allah says talking about the Ahl al-Kitab: "Do not argue with the People of the Book unless gracefully, except with those of them who act wrongfully. And say, 'We believe in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to you. Our God and your God is One. And to Him we submit'" [see Quran, 29:46].^[92] Whereas Zoroastrians, do they have the same God as us? No. They have Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, the god of good and the god of evil — they have two ultimate divinities; and they don't believe in any prophets we believe in. Yet by unanimous consensus, they are treated like Ahl al-Kitab. Therefore from this, the Hanafi madhhab and some riwayat in Maliki and Hanbali madhhab say all paganistic religions outside the Arabian Peninsula have the same exception.^[93]

So based on this, the opinion that pretty much all of the khulafa had acted upon in the history of Islam is that they extended this tolerance to every minority religion as long as that minority was civil (i.e., they didn't go murdering, they didn't go on a rampage, etc.). And by the way, this is why we have the most bizarre religions to this day in places of the Muslim world, e.g., the Alawis — we don't view them as Muslims, but our khulafa let them be until they themselves became violent — only then the khulafa attacked them. And in our time, we have the Yazidis of Iraq. They have existed for around 1000 years in the heartland of the Abbasid Caliphate, yet they were and are left alone and allowed to do what they are doing. And look at the Mughal Dynasty; the majority of the inhabitants were Hindu, yet the khalifa allowed them to be as they were as long as they kept their shirk in their temples — and this is the standard Hanafi position.

Thus from all of this, it is evident that what is not allowed is for the pagans to practice their shirk publicly. As long as they keep their worship in their places of worship, the ummah tolerates their belief —just as we always have— and lay Muslims shouldn't abuse / misuse the aforementioned instance from the seerah to justify the act of destroying the sacred sites of other religions.

Names Given to the Expedition

Now we move on to the Battle of Tabuk. What are the names of this battle, why did it take place, and when did it take place?

There are two primary names given, both mentioned in the hadith, and one referenced in the Quran:

⁹² Side note: Any Muslim who denies this —and there are many ignorant Muslims who deny this— has not even read the Quran.

⁹³ Side note: They didn't allow this exception in the Arabian Peninsula because the Arabian Peninsula has a status that the other lands do not have: The Prophet ﷺ said on his deathbed, "لأخرجن اليهود والنصارى من جزيرة العرب حتى لا أدع إلا مسلماً"—meaning, in the Arabian Peninsula, you cannot have two religions flourishing. You can have other religions in small communities and whatnot, but not in public and flourishing.

1. Ghazwa Tabuk

As for the most prominent name, it is Ghazwa Tabuk (غزوة تبوك). Why Tabuk? Because the Muslim army was quite literally saved at Tabuk. Mu'adh ibn Jabal reports, "We went on the expedition with the Prophet ﷺ in the year of Ghazwa Tabuk and we combined our prayers until we came close, then the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Tomorrow, you shall arrive at the spring of Tabuk, and you shall arrive there at the hot time of the day; [but] make sure you do not touch its water until I get there.'" The sahaba had run out of water, they were extremely thirsty and they thought they were about to die; and when they arrived at Tabuk the next day, they saw a small slither of water. Mu'adh narrates: "We saw a small slither of water, and we saw two men from our camp already there having preceded us. The Prophet ﷺ asked them, 'Have you touched its water?' They said, 'Yes.' So the Prophet ﷺ became angry at them and he said what Allah wanted him to say.^[94]" Then the Prophet ﷺ commanded the sahaba to gather any and all water in one place — and Mu'adh narrates: "Then the Prophet ﷺ washed his hands and face in that water, and then the water started to gush out until all the army (of 20,000) drank from it." So because of this incident (where the army was quite literally saved at Tabuk), the expedition became called the Expedition of Tabuk.^[95]

2. Jaysh al-Ussrah

The second main name of the expedition is Jaysh al-Ussrah^[96] (the Army of Great Difficulty). This is the more common name used amongst the sahaba. Imam al-Bukhari, in his Sahih al-Bukhari, when he talks about the book of seerah, when he gets to the chapter of the Battle of Tabuk, he said, "Ghazwa Tabuk — and It Is the Ussrah (Difficulty)" — so he has both names in the chapter heading.

Why was the expedition of Tabuk called the Difficult Expedition? Wasn't every battle of the Prophet ﷺ difficult? Yes, indeed, every battle of the Prophet ﷺ was difficult; but the Battle of Tabuk was difficult in ways that none of the other battles were. Even though no actual battle took place in this expedition^[97], what happened was so harsh the sahaba even almost died maybe multiple times. Why?

⁹⁴ Mu'adh did not quote what the Prophet ﷺ said. Why? Because of adab. You just cover it up because the Prophet ﷺ said some harsh phrases. We should know the Prophet ﷺ rebuked them, but we don't need to know the words used.

⁹⁵ Tangent: There is a hadith in Sahih Muslim wherein the Prophet ﷺ said, "O Mu'adh, it's only a matter of time, if you live long enough, you will see this very land will become a land of greenery and gardens." When the Prophet ﷺ said this, Tabuk was in the middle of a desert and no one lived there; but today, it's the largest city in Northern Arabia. It has a population of more than 500,000, and it's indeed a land of greenery, exactly as the Prophet ﷺ prophesied. Subhan'Allah. And it's said that the very oasis that the Prophet ﷺ allegedly drank from, it is still green, and water is still there. And it's also said that there is a masjid there called [Masjid Rasulullah](#). (It's worth mentioning, however, that the masjid wasn't built by the Prophet ﷺ despite its name.)

⁹⁶ Jaysh al-Ussrah (جيش العسرة) - the Army of Great Difficulty.

⁹⁷ i.e., there was no clash of swords.

1. It is not easy to manage a large army. And the army that the Muslims gathered for the Battle of Tabuk was the largest army Arabia had seen in its entire history — 20,000 men.^[98] Why would having a large army be difficult? Obviously, problems with resources, logistics, food, and water.

2. Ghazwa Tabuk took place in late July — so it is the hottest time of the year when temperatures rise to 110 °F. You simply cannot function.^[99]

3. Also, Ghazwa Tabuk is the furthest distance ever traveled by a Muslim army led by the Prophet ﷺ — that is, ~650 km northwest from Madinah.

4. It was psychologically hard for the Muslims to leave Madinah during this season, because going to Tabuk and back would have taken at least a month — and August is harvest season. If they went to Tabuk, they would not be able to harvest the crops. We need to realize that most people for most of their lives, before the era of modern jobs, did not know how much they would make every month.^[100] And there were certain seasons in which you stored up food and rations for multiple years. And the #1 season was harvest season in August. And even if you didn't own a farm, it was still the best season for money. Why? Laborers — people were hired to do things. So for the entire agrarian society of Madinah, the harvest season was the paycheck for the year — it's their best source of income. But now, they are basically being told, "Leave everything, we have to go to Tabuk and then we will come back at the end of August."

And indeed, it turned out to be too large an army to handle. The army eventually ran out of rations, and they even ran out of water. And it's narrated that Umar RA was asked by Ibn Abbas and others, "Tell us about the Expedition of Difficulty. What happened?" So Umar RA narrated, "We left with the Prophet ﷺ to Tabuk in extremely hot weather, and we reached a place where we felt so thirsty 'we thought our throats would collapse' (an Arabic expression meaning 'we thought we would die'). And people went out in search of water, but they came back even more thirsty. Some people sacrificed their camels in order to squeeze the water out of the sack of the camel.^[101] Until finally, Abu Bakr pleaded with the Prophet ﷺ, 'Ya Rasulallah, make du'a for us.'" So the Prophet ﷺ said, "If you wish," and he raised his hands. And Umar RA narrates that the Prophet's ﷺ hands did not come down until the sky began to pour with rain. And the sahaba were able to fill all of their canisters and containers with that rainwater.

⁹⁸ Side note: Of course, we need to be a bit careful with the numbers here. It is human nature to exaggerate numbers — we have a tendency to inflate the numbers if it's on our side. So when someone says 20,000, we take it with the understanding that, "Okay, it means a large number, but it doesn't have to be exactly 20,000." Realistically, 20,000 seems too big for that time and place. But nonetheless, it's the largest expedition ever mounted by the Prophet ﷺ.

⁹⁹ And that is why people in those regions do not and cannot work between Zuhr and Asr. They just stay inside, and they work again after Asr.

¹⁰⁰ We are accustomed to something called the salary —and wallahi, this is a blessing from Allah— but the majority of humanity for most of its existence lived day to day, week to week, not knowing how much they would earn each month.

¹⁰¹ Subhan'Allah, they were so desperate they killed their camels to get any water they could. Now, when you kill your camel, that means you have to walk the entire way back. But they still decided to kill the camel.

Tangent: One Should Not Rely on Miracles

Now, this incident shows us a very interesting thing: The Prophet ﷺ did not rely on miracles. He saw the sahaba at the very verge of death, yet he didn't ask Allah for miracles until Abu Bakr prodded him, "Ya Rasulallah, please make du'a." — Why?

Because the Prophet ﷺ wants to show us that you can't just rely on miracles; rather, you have to struggle to achieve your goals. And this is the reality throughout the seerah: Badr, Uhud, Ahzab, etc. — yes, miracles did come, but not at the beginning; they came at the very end after struggle and sacrifice.^[102]

(Cont.) 2. Jaysh al-Usrah

So for all of these reasons (i.e., the 4 reasons we mentioned), the expedition was called the Difficult Expedition (Jaysh al-Usrah). Allah references this in the Quran:

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ

"Allah has certainly turned in mercy to the Prophet as well as the Muhajirun and the Ansar who stood by him in the time of difficulty..." [9:117].

So Allah called it "the time of difficulty," and that is what Tabuk is called. Qatada the Student of Ibn Abbas commentates on this verse and says, "This verse refers to the Battle of Tabuk — they (the Muslims) left towards Syria in the blazing summer, and they were tested severely, so much so it's mentioned that two or more people were rationed one date per day." Subhan'Allah. "And they would split that date amongst themselves, and then they would take the date pit and suck on it one after the other to get some taste."

Therefore, the two primary names of this expedition are: (i) Ghazwa Tabuk, and (ii) Jaysh al-Usrah, the Army of Difficulty.

When Did the Expedition Take Place?

When did this take place? The month of Rajab in the 9th year of the Hijrah. Exactly 6 months after the Siege of Ta'if. And if you calculate this out, it's basically late July / early August — so we understand why it would be so hot.

¹⁰² And in this, insha'Allah, there is another lesson for us as well: Even though our miracles might not be as blatant [and wallahi, the true believers who follow the path of the Prophet ﷺ will see mini-miracles in their personal lives], but if we put in the struggle and effort, Allah will bless us in the end.

Why Did the Expedition Take Place?

Why did this ghazwa take place? What were the causes? Sh. YQ mentions that he himself hasn't found a clear, satisfactory answer, but he has reached a conclusion that he will share later.

What are some of the reasons mentioned by the classical scholars of seerah?

1. This opinion is outright bizarre and we can dismiss immediately: Ibn Asakir (famous historian) reports —and this report is mentioned by al-Baghawi and Ibn Kathir— that, "The Jews enticed the Prophet ﷺ to go up to Syria; they said to him, 'If you are a true prophet, you must go to al-Sham because it's the land of the prophets and it's the land of Judgment Day.'" So according to this report, the Jews wanted to get rid of the Prophet ﷺ and wanted to send him on a wild-goose chase in Syria so that he abandons Madinah, so that they could get rid of the Muslims. According to this report, this is why Allah revealed in the Quran Surat al-Isra verse 76:

وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوكَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوكَ مِنْهَا وَإِذَا لَا يَلْبَثُونَ خِلافَكَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

"They tried their best and they almost succeeded in getting rid of you from the land, but if they were to succeed, then they themselves would only last for a short while (before Allah destroys them)" [17:76].

So this verse, it is said by Ibn Asakir and others, was revealed because the Jews tried to trick the Prophet ﷺ and tried to send him up north to Syria.

But this first opinion simply cannot be true, for multiple reasons. Firstly, there were no Jews left in Madinah; they had all been expelled or converted to Islam. Secondly, can you imagine the Prophet ﷺ just listening to a blatant trick like this? It doesn't make any sense. Lastly, Surat al-Isra is a Makki surah, so how can it refer to Ghazwa Tabuk?

2. Another reason, given by Nur al-Din al-Haythami (نور الدين الهيثمي) (d. 807 AH) in his *Majma' al-Zawa'id* (مجمع الزوائد), is that the Romans were sending an expedition to battle the Muslims, so the Prophet ﷺ went up north to battle them. According to this narration, the chieftain of the Ghassanid Arabs^[103] sent a message to the Caesar of Rome saying they wanted to attack Madinah — or according to another report, he sent a false message saying, "Muhammad is dead," and he told the Caesar to send an army so that they could attack Madinah. So according to this report, 40,000 Roman troops were sent down, and the Prophet ﷺ went up north to battle them. But we are a bit skeptical of this opinion because (i) firstly, this particular narration does not seem to be authentic in terms of isnad; and (ii) secondly, it's really inconceivable to imagine the Romans sending 40,000 troops to battle the

¹⁰³ The Christian Arabs up north that had a very cozy relationship with the Caesar of Rome.

Arabs, because they didn't care about the Arabs — the Arabs posed no threat to them. And if they wanted to conquer the Arabs, they could have done it at any time over the last few years.

3. Another report given is that the Ghassanids themselves were the targets and not the Romans; and it's said there was a threat that the Ghassanids would attack Madinah. There seems to be some basis to the validity of this. For example, Umar RA narrates that when the Prophet ﷺ took a month off from his wives^[104], Umar's co-worker / friend came rushing to him and said, "Something has happened!" To which, Umar RA jumped up and said, "Has the king of the Ghassanids attacked yet?!" The man said, "No! Something worse! The Prophet ﷺ has divorced all his wives!"—(of course the man was wrong, the Prophet ﷺ didn't divorce them, he basically just separated for a month; but) the point here is: Umar RA was worried about the Ghassanids attacking. We have also seen in the past that the Ghassanids have caused issues, so perhaps this is a legitimate reason. But the question needs to be asked: Why the month of July? The Ghassanids would not attack in July; it's too hot for anybody.

4. There is also a claim that the Prophet ﷺ wanted to get revenge for Mu'tah, the death of Ja'far, and other massacres that happened up north that involved the Ghassanids. But once again, the question is why now? This can wait until January. Why in July?

This leaves us with one logical answer, and that is:

5. It was a command from Allah to test the believers. There doesn't seem to be an immediate threat, neither from the Romans nor the Ghassanids; so what appears to be the case —and Allah knows best— is that this whole expedition was a test from Allah. It was a direct commandment from Allah that could not be disobeyed, so the Prophet ﷺ told the sahaba, "You have to go and fight," and there was no questioning. And perhaps there is some evidence for this in the Quran — Ibn Kathir and al-Baghawi have an opinion similar to this, and they based this on Surat al-Tawba verse 123:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

"O you who have believed, fight those surrounding you of the disbelievers and let them find in you harshness. And know that Allah is with the righteous" [9:123].

Al-Tabari, the earliest mufassir, says this verse was the verse that commanded the Prophet ﷺ to fight the neighboring Arabs, and once he was done, to turn his attention up north to the Romans. So this is in Surat al-Tawba —all of which was revealed pretty much in

¹⁰⁴ There was a marital dispute happening, so the Prophet ﷺ cut off from his wives for a month and lived in the masjid — he did this because the Mothers of the Believers demanded bigger houses, more money, etc. [see [episode 98](#)].

Ghazwa Tabuk— and the Prophet ﷺ understood from it that "Allah is commanding me to go up north now that I have secured all of central Arabia." There was no other threat left in Arabia other than the Ghassanids because of their connection with the Romans. So the Prophet ﷺ understood this and went north.

What adds to the credibility of this interpretation is that al-Waqidi mentions that the Prophet ﷺ sent out messengers to the neighboring tribes, even to Makkah, requesting them to send all able-bodied men to fight with him. And he did not hide where he was going, unlike every other battle. Everyone knew what was going on. This is not a surprise attack. This is an all-out military expedition.

And what adds even more to this interpretation is if you read Surat al-Tawba, you will notice that never is the command for jihad and qital been given so bluntly as it is in this Surah; and as we know, this Surah is all about Ghazwa Tabuk. Allah is commanding qital in this Surah in a manner not found anywhere else in the Quran.^[105] For example:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ انْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ اتَّقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ۚ أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ ۚ فَمَا مَتَاعُ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

"O you who have believed, what is [the matter] with you that, when you are told to go forth in the cause of Allah, you adhere heavily to the earth? Are you satisfied with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But what is the enjoyment of worldly life compared to the Hereafter except a [very] little" [9:38].

إِلَّا تَتَّقُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ شَيْئًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"If you do not go forth, He will punish you with a painful punishment and will replace you with another people, and you will not harm Him at all. And Allah is over all things competent" [9:39].

That's very strict — Allah is saying you **have** to go. And also in the same Surah:

انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

"Go forth, whether light or heavy, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the cause of Allah. That is better for you, if you only knew" [9:41].

Meaning whether you are heavily armed or not armed at all, go forth. And also, Allah says about the munafiqun:

لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا قَاصِدًا لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَكِنْ بَعَدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السُّفَهَاءُ ۚ وَسِيحِلُّونَ بِاللَّهِ لَوْ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ يُهْلِكُونَ
أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

"Had it been an easy gain and a moderate trip, the hypocrites would have followed you, but distant to them was the journey. And they will swear by Allah, 'If we were able, we would have gone forth with you,' destroying themselves [through false oaths], and Allah knows that indeed they are liars" [9:42].

If you look at all of these verses, you will notice the bluntness of encouraging people to do qital and jihad that is not found in any other surah.

¹⁰⁵ And that's why this Surah is also called Surat al-Qital (سورة القتال).

Thus, in Sh. Yasir Qadhi's opinion —and Allah knows best— the primary reason for Ghazwa Tabuk was not because of something physical in the world, not because of Ghassan or the Romans, rather, it was because Allah told the sahaba to; because Allah wanted to put them through a test.

Why did Allah want to test them? Many reasons: To raise their ranks, to test their Iman, and also to prepare them for the future expeditions after the death of the Prophet ﷺ. And indeed, Tabuk was the final ghazwa. That was it. Khalas. Right after it, the Prophet ﷺ went to do his final Hajj, he fell ill, and we will come to the end of the seerah. Then what happened? The khilafa of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, then the Umayyads, and so on. So it's as if Ghazwa Tabuk was a test for the sahaba — so that if they passed it, they could then move on to do bigger things for the ummah. (This is Sh. YQ's two cents; take it or leave it.) And as we will see, the sahaba passed this test with flying colors.

And in Sh. YQ's opinion, this is why the Prophet ﷺ called out for all of the sahaba to come, i.e., it was fard ayn (فرض عين) for every single healthy male to participate in Ghazwa Tabuk. The only individuals excused were those who were genuinely sick or had very extenuating circumstances. What other battle was it that every single able-bodied Muslim from around Madinah —even from Makkah— had to participate? So it is clear to Sh. YQ —and Allah knows best— that this expedition was a test for all the sahaba so that when they passed it, they would have the faith, courage, confidence, and Iman to go on and expand the ummah.

Collecting Funds

When the Prophet ﷺ understood the need for having the expedition, the first thing he did was he began to collect the funds for it. He would stand on the minbar and encourage people to give whatever they could — he gave beautiful encouragements: "Whoever finances the Jaysh al-Ushrah, he shall be given Jannah." Subhan'Allah. And so the sahaba donated whatever they could — somebody would give a bag of gold, somebody would give some coins, etc., until the piles began to form in the masjid.

The Famous Story of the Generosity of Uthman ibn Affan RA

The sahaba donated whatever they could — and of course, the lion's share came from Uthman ibn Affan RA — it just so happened that around 100 camels of his had returned from an expedition up north, thus when he heard this hadith above, he donated all that money in the thousands of gold coins. And so the Prophet ﷺ had in front of him all this pile of gold just from Uthman, and he began flipping this coin around in his hands saying, "Wallahi, whatever Uthman does after today, it will not harm him." Subhan'Allah. (Tangent: This hadith is in Bukhari and Muslim, and Ibn Abbas used it to defend Uthman against the neo-kharijites

[much later on, in 35 AH] — he basically said to them, "Whatever your fabricated complaints are, don't you know that your own Rasulallah ﷺ said that whatever Uthman does will not harm him? If he said this, then who are you to complain?")

The Famous Story of the Competition Between Abu Bakr RA and Umar RA

Also over here, the famous story of Abu Bakr and Umar's competition took place.

It is a story narrated in the Sunan of al-Tirmidhi that the Prophet ﷺ stood up and continued to ask for charity until Umar RA thought, "Today is the day I can beat Abu Bakr," and so he went back home and brought half of his money to give in charity.

Realize, money back then was a very scarce commodity. You did not know when the next batch of income would come. There was no monthly salary (the concept of a salary is very modern). For the sahaba, money was very erratic. They might get one dinar today, nothing for weeks, and then suddenly a hundred dinars one day, and so on.

So the fact that Umar RA gave half his money is extraordinary. Even for us, to give half our money—even though we have a constant income stream—is difficult to imagine. For Umar, it's a different level.

So Umar RA brought forth half of his money, and when the Prophet ﷺ saw this money, he asked, "O Umar, what have you left for your family?" Umar ibn al-Khattab said, "I have left a similar amount."

Then Abu Bakr arrived with his money; and the Prophet ﷺ asked him, "What did you leave for your family?" Abu Bakr al-Siddiq said, "I left them Allah and His Messenger," i.e., no money; only tawakkul in Allah. At this, Umar said to himself, "I can never compete with Abu Bakr again after this," i.e., "No way I can compete with this type of tawakkul."

(Cont.) Collecting Funds

The Prophet ﷺ gathered more money for this expedition than in any other expedition.

And subhan'Allah, there is a beautiful point here: Just 6 months ago, he had at his disposal the ghanima of Hunayn and Ta'if, but he used it all in the Way of Allah, and nothing was left in his own pocket or the treasury. This was his ﷺ methodology. He did not leave anything for himself — he gave it all away.

So more financing was needed for Ghazwa Tabuk.

The Phrase "Wallahi" as an Expression vs. as a Qasam: The Story of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari RA

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari narrates that his tribe sent him to the Prophet ﷺ to collect camels for the expedition of Tabuk. He recounts, "I arrived and I didn't realize that the Prophet ﷺ was in an angry state.^[106] So I asked him [for camels] —and he ﷺ did not have anything— and he ﷺ said, 'Wallahi, I will not give you anything to travel upon.' So I returned distressed. I did not know that he was angry from something else; I thought I might have done something wrong and he was angry at me." So Abu Musa went back and told his tribe that the Prophet ﷺ said such-and-such. Then —Abu Musa narrates—: "Barely had any time passed when Bilal came and said, 'The Prophet ﷺ is calling you.'" So Abu Musa came; and the Prophet ﷺ said, "Take these two camels, and these two, and these two (6 total) — I have just purchased them from Sa'd"—some money had come, so he ﷺ purchased six camels, and he gave them to Abu Musa.

We learn from this incident that when you give an oath and you don't mean it, the oath is not considered valid. As we are all aware, when we use the phrase "wallahi," sometimes we use it as an expression and sometimes we use it as a genuine qasam^[107], and it's obvious from the context when is the two. For example, if somebody asks you, "You wanna go and eat over here?" and you say, "Wallahi, I don't wanna go there, brother," it's obvious from the context that you don't mean it; you don't mean to swear by Allah that you are never going to go there — it's just an expression; whereas in a serious state, if somebody accuses you of lying and you say, "Wallahi, I am not lying," it's obvious that you mean it. And Allah says in the Quran, "Allah will not call you to account for your thoughtless oaths, but He will hold you accountable for deliberate oaths" [5:89]. The Prophet ﷺ is a human, and sometimes things happen that perturb him and make him angry (غضبان), and sometimes he will take it out in a manner that people don't understand (in this case Abu Musa), so he said an oath, "Wallahi, I will not give you anything to travel upon" — but later he gave 6 camels to Abu Musa despite this oath, and this made Abu Musa so confuse he took his tribesmen and asked the Prophet ﷺ for clarifications whether they could take the camels. And it was explained to them that yes, they could — initially, the Prophet ﷺ did not have any money, so he said what he said, but then the money came, so the camels were purchased and given to them.

¹⁰⁶ Side note: Why was the Prophet ﷺ angry? Most likely, it was because of what was happening with the hypocrites, which we will discuss in future episodes.

¹⁰⁷ Qasam (قسم) - oath.

088. Battle of Tabuk 2

We are still discussing the Battle of Tabuk, and it is in fact the final battle of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. A lot of Quran came down, in fact basically the entire Surat al-Tawba came down because of the Battle of Tabuk.^[108] Recall we mentioned that the battle is not an actual battle, it's an expedition — no fighting took place. But so many interesting stories happened during this expedition.

Today, we will discuss one of the most popular stories of the seerah, and that is the story of Ka'b ibn Malik and what happened to him during the Battle of Tabuk. It's truly a lesson for each and every one of us about how to make up for sins that we have committed. Obviously, it's a story that has been heard by many, but every time you read it and refresh your memory, it still hits you. It's such a soft and beautiful story, so one never gets tired of reading it. Therefore today, we will spend the whole lecture on this story (and possibly half of the next lecture too).

Who is Ka'b ibn Malik RA?

He is one of the earliest converts of the Ansar, from the tribe of Banu Salama.

Recall we mentioned that the Banu Salama lived around Masjid al-Qiblatayn [see [episode 34](#)], and they wanted to move closer to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in central Madinah, but the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "O Banu Salama, stay where you are — Allah will record your footsteps [i.e., Allah will reward you for each step that you take to come to the Masjid of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم]," so they remained where they were; and some scholars say the verses at the start of Surah Ya-Sin are a reference to the Banu Salama.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ ۚ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ

"Indeed, it is We who bring the dead to life **and record what they have put forth and what they left behind**, and all things We have enumerated in a clear register" [36:12].

So Ka'b is from this tribe.

He converted to Islam before the Hijrah, so he is one of the few Ansar to have the honor of converting before the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم Emigrated, and he in fact took part in the Bay'at al-Aqaba [see [episode 25](#)]. So he is of the elites of the Ansar.

And the story of his repentance is mentioned in every book of hadith. In Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, we have three-page narrations from him in the first person. He himself narrated it in the first person — and because of this, we have emotional / personal and intricate details. This story, along with the story of Aisha [see episodes [55](#) & [56](#)], always hit home because they are both narrated in vivid detail in the first person:

¹⁰⁸ So we will have a lot of discussion about this [see [episode 93](#)].

The Story of Ka'b ibn Malik RA (Sahih Muslim Version—The Book of Repentance)

Ibn Shihab reported that Abd al-Rahman ibn Abdillah ibn Ka'b ibn Malik (عبد الرحمن بن عبد الله بن مالك) informed him that Abdullah ibn Ka'b, who served as the guide of Ka'b ibn Malik as he became blind, he heard Ka'b ibn Malik narrate the story of his remaining behind the Prophet ﷺ from the Expedition of Tabuk. Ka'b ibn Malik said:

"I never remained behind the Prophet ﷺ from any expedition which he undertook except the Expedition of Tabuk and that of Badr. So far as the Battle of Badr is concerned, nobody was admonished for remaining behind as the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims set out [not for war, but rather] to waylay the caravan of the Quraysh; but it was Allah who made them confront their enemies without their intention [to do so] [see Quran, 8:7]. I had the honor to be with the Prophet ﷺ on the Night of Aqaba when we pledged our allegiance to Islam, and it was more dear to me than the Battle of Badr, although Badr was more popular amongst people as compared with that (Aqaba). And this is my story of remaining back from the Prophet ﷺ on the occasion of the Expedition of Tabuk: I was never stronger or better off than when I stayed behind from that expedition — by Allah, I had never had two mounts at the same time as I had at the time of that expedition. The Prophet ﷺ set out for this expedition in an extremely hot season; the journey was long and the land [which he and his army had to cover] was waterless and he had to confront a large army, so he informed the Muslims about the actual situation [that they had to face], so that they should adequately equip themselves for this expedition, and he also told them the destination where he intended to go. And the Muslims who accompanied the Prophet ﷺ at that time were large in numbers, but there was no proper record of them." Ka'b [further] said: "Any man who intended to absent themselves were under the impression that they could easily conceal themselves [and thus remain undetected] as long as there was no revelation from Allah AWJ [exposing them]. And the Prophet ﷺ set out on an expedition when the fruits were ripe and the shades [of their trees] were so sweet. I had a weakness for them and it was during this season that the Prophet ﷺ made preparations and the Muslims too along with him. I also set out in the morning so that I could make preparations along with them, but I would come back and not do anything and say to myself: 'I can do that when I want to.' And I went on doing this (postponing my preparations) until people were about to depart and it was in the morning that the Prophet ﷺ set out and the Muslims too along with him — but I made no preparations. I went early in the morning and came back, but I made no decision. I continued to do so until they (the Muslims) hastened and covered a good deal of distance. And I thought of riding and catching up with them. I wish I had done that, but perhaps it was not destined for me. After the departure of the Prophet ﷺ, as I went out amongst people, I was shocked to find that I did not find anyone like me except people who were labeled as hypocrites or the people whom Allah granted exemption because of their incapacity. And the Prophet ﷺ took no notice of me until he had reached Tabuk. [And one day, as he ﷺ was sitting amongst the people in Tabuk,] he said: 'What has happened to Ka'b ibn Malik?' A man from Banu Salama said: 'Ya Rasulallah, [the beauty of] his cloak and his appreciation of his properties have allured him and he was thus detained.' Mu'adh ibn Jabal said: 'What a bad thing you have said! Ya Rasulallah, by Allah, we know nothing but good about him (Ka'b).' The Prophet ﷺ, however, kept quiet. It was during that time that he [ﷺ] saw a person [in

the distance], dressed in white, breaking the mirage. Thereupon, the Prophet ﷺ said: 'May he be Abu Khaythama,' and, lo, it was Abu Khaythama al-Ansari (أبو خيثمة الأنصاري) and he was that person who gave a sa'^[109] of dates [in charity] and was scoffed at by the hypocrites." Ka'b ibn Malik [further] said: "When the news reached me that the Prophet ﷺ was on his way back from Tabuk, I was greatly perturbed. I thought of fabricating false stories and asked myself how I would save myself from his anger the following day. In this regard, I sought the help / advice of every prudent man from amongst my people, but when it was said to me that the Prophet ﷺ was about to arrive, all the false ideas disappeared [from my mind] and I came to the conclusion that nothing could save me but the telling of truth, so I decided to speak the truth and it was in the morning that the Prophet ﷺ arrived [in Madinah]. And it was his habit that as he came back from a journey, he first went to the mosque and observed two rak'at of nafl prayer [as a mark of gratitude] and then sat amongst people. And as he did that, those who had remained behind him began to put forward their excuses and take an oath before him and they were more than eighty people. The Prophet ﷺ accepted their excuses on the face of them and accepted their allegiance and sought forgiveness for them and left their secrets (intentions) to Allah. Then I presented myself to him [ﷺ]. I greeted him and he smiled, and there was a tinge of anger in that. He [ﷺ] said to me: 'Come forward.' I went forward until I sat in front of him. He said to me: 'What kept you behind? Had you not purchased a mount?' I said: 'Ya Rasulallah, by Allah, if I were sitting in front of any other person from this whole world, I would have been able to wiggle my way out in front of him and save myself from his anger on one pretext. And I have been bestowed the power of speaking fluently and eloquently, but, by Allah, I am fully aware of the fact that if I were to put forward before you a false excuse to please you today, Allah would definitely [expose me and] provoke your wrath upon me [in the near future]; and if I speak the truth [today], though you will get angry because of it, I hope that Allah will make its end well, and, by Allah, there is no valid excuse for me. By Allah, I had never been stronger or wealthier than I was when I remained behind you (failed to join the expedition).' Thereupon, the Prophet ﷺ said: 'As for this man, he has spoken the truth. Get up [and leave, O Ka'b,] until Allah gives a decision in your case.' So I left, and some people of Banu Salama followed me, and they said to me: 'By Allah, we never saw you committing a sin prior to this. You, however, failed to offer an excuse to the Prophet ﷺ as the others who did not join him have offered. The du'a of the Prophet ﷺ to Allah to forgive you would have been sufficient for you.' By Allah, they continued to incite me until I thought of going back to the Prophet ﷺ and contradicting myself. Then I said to them: 'Has anyone else also met the same fate [as me]?' They said: 'Yes, two people have met the same fate as has fallen to you and they have made the same statement as you have made, and the same verdict has been delivered in their case as it has been delivered in your case.' I said: 'Who are they?' They said: 'Murara ibn al-Rabi' al-Amri (مرارة بن الربيع العمري) and Hilal ibn Umayyah al-Waqifi (هلال بن أمية الواقفي).' They made a mention of these two pious people to me who had participated in the Battle of Badr and there was an example for me in them. So I did not change my mind when they mentioned these two people to me. The Prophet ﷺ forbade all the Muslims to talk with three of us from amongst those who had stayed behind him. So we kept away from the people, and the people's attitude towards us changed so much that it appeared to me that I was a foreigner in my own land. We spent fifty nights in this state and my two friends confined themselves within their houses and spent [most of the] time weeping, but as I was young and strong amongst them, I got out [of my house], participated in congregational

¹⁰⁹ Sa' (صاع) - basically 1 kg or so.

prayers, roam about in the marketplaces; but none spoke to me. I came to the Prophet ﷺ as he sat [amongst people] after the prayer, greeted him, and asked myself whether his lips stirred in response to my greetings [or not]. Then I observed prayer close to him and looked at him with stealing glances; and when I focused on my prayer, he would look at me, but when I cast a glance at him, he would turn his face away from me. And when the harsh treatment of the Muslims towards me lasted long, I walked until I climbed the wall of the garden of Abu Qatada —he was my cousin— and I had the greatest love for him. I greeted him but, by Allah, he did not respond to my greetings. I said to him: 'O Abu Qatada, I adjure you by Allah! Aren't you well aware of the fact that I love Allah and His Messenger ﷺ?' But he kept quiet. So I adjured him again. But he kept quiet. I again adjured him, whereupon he said: 'Allah and His Messenger know it better.' My eyes began to shed tears and I turned away and climbed back over the wall. And as I was walking in the marketplace of Madinah, I saw a Nabataean from amongst the Nabataeans of al-Sham, who had come to sell foodgrains in Madinah, saying, 'Who will show me where Ka'b ibn Malik is?' The people started to point me out to him, and he came to me and gave me a letter from the King of Ghassan, and as I was a scribe (i.e., I was literate), I read that letter and it was written like this: 'Amma ba'd^[110]; it has been conveyed to us that your friend (the Prophet ﷺ) has treated you harshly, and Allah would not allow you to live at a place where you are inferior and your rights are lost, so join us and we will console you.' As I read that letter, I said [to myself]: 'This is also a sort of a test,' so I burned it in the oven. When out of the fifty days, forty days had passed and the Prophet ﷺ received no revelation, there came the messenger of the Prophet ﷺ to me and said: 'Verily, the Prophet ﷺ has commanded you to remain separate from your wife.' I said: 'Should I divorce her or what should I do?' He said: 'No, but only remain separate from her and do not come near her.' And the same message was sent to my companions. I said to my wife: 'You better go to your parents and stay there with them until Allah gives the decision in my case.' The wife of Hilal ibn Umayyah came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: 'Ya Rasulallah, Hilal ibn Umayyah is an old man with no servant. Do you disapprove of my serving him?' He said: 'No, but he should not come near you.' She said: 'By Allah, he has no such desire. By Allah, he spends his time weeping from that day [his case began] until today.' Some of the members of my family said to me: 'Will you also seek permission from the Prophet ﷺ in regards to your wife? For he has granted permission to the wife of Hilal ibn Umayyah to serve him.' I said: 'I will not ask the permission of the Prophet ﷺ regarding her, for I do not know what the Prophet ﷺ would say if I asked him to permit her [to serve me] while I am a young man.' It was in this state I spent ten more nights, and thus fifty nights were completed starting from the time when the people were prohibited from talking to us. Then I prayed Fajr on the morning of the fiftieth night on the roof of one of our houses, and while I was sitting in the manner that Allah AWJ described us [in Quran, 9:118] —i.e., my very soul seemed straitened to me and even the earth seemed narrow to me despite its vastness— there I heard the voice of one who had ascended Sal' / Sala^[111] saying at the top of his voice: 'O Ka'b ibn Malik, there is glad tidings for you!' I fell into prostration realizing that relief had come. The Prophet ﷺ had informed the people of the acceptance of our repentance by Allah as he offered the Fajr prayer. So the people went on to give us glad tidings and some of them went to my friends in order to give them the glad tidings; one man came to me galloping on his horse, and another man from the tribe of Aslam (أسلم) came rushing to me and he stood up on top of the mountain and

¹¹⁰ Amma ba'd (أما بعد) - to proceed.

¹¹¹ Sal' / Sala' (سَلْع) - Mount Sela.

shouted. The man's voice was swifter than the horse. When the one whose voice I heard giving me the glad tidings came to me, I took off my garments and dressed him with them because of his bringing good news to me, and, by Allah, I owned no other garments than them on that day. Then I borrowed two garments, and dressed myself in them, and I set out to go to the Prophet ﷺ, and on my way, the people started receiving me in batches, congratulating me on Allah's acceptance of my repentance, saying, 'We congratulate you on Allah's acceptance of your repentance!' [I moved on] until I came to the mosque and the Prophet ﷺ had been sitting there amongst people. Talha ibn Ubaydillah got up and rushed towards me and he shook hands with me and congratulated me, and, by Allah, no person stood up [to congratulate me] from amongst the Muhajirun except him." ([The sub-narrator said] Ka'b said that he never forgot [this good gesture of] Talha.) Ka'b [further] said: "When I greeted the Prophet ﷺ, his face became bright with joy, and he said: 'Be happy and rejoice, for this is the best day you have ever had since the day your mother gave birth to you!' I said: 'Ya Rasulallah, is this acceptance of repentance from you or from Allah?' He said: 'No, [it is not from me,] it is from Allah,' and it was common with the Prophet ﷺ that as he was happy, his face brightened up and it looked like a part of the moon and it was from this that we recognized it (his delight). As I sat before him, I said: 'Ya Rasulallah, as part of my repentance, I will give up [all] my wealth as sadaqa for the sake of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.' Thereupon, the Prophet ﷺ said: 'Keep some property with you as it is better for you.' I said: 'I shall keep with me that part [of my property] which fell to my lot on [the occasion of the Expedition of] Khaybar.' I said: 'Ya Rasulallah, Allah saved me because I spoke the truth; so as part of my repentance, I shall speak nothing but the truth so long as I live.'" Ka'b said [to the sub-narrator]: "By Allah, I do not know of anyone amongst the Muslims whom Allah tested with truthfulness in speech—from the time I said that [promise] to the Prophet ﷺ until today— more than me; [but] by Allah, I have not intentionally told a lie from the time I said that to the Prophet ﷺ until today, and I hope that Allah will save me for the rest of my life. And Allah AWJ revealed these verses: 'Allah has certainly turned in mercy to the Prophet as well as the Muhajirun and the Ansar who stood by him in the time of difficulty (i.e., the Expedition of Tabuk), after the hearts of a group of them had almost faltered. He then accepted their repentance. Surely He is Ever Gracious and Most Merciful to them. And [Allah has also turned in mercy to] the three who were left behind, [whose guilt distressed them] until the earth, despite its vastness, seemed to close in on them, and their souls were torn in anguish.' And this revelation reached up to the [words]: 'O believers! Be mindful of Allah and be with the truthful' [9:117-119]." Ka'b said: "By Allah, since Allah directed me to Islam, there has been no blessing more significant for me than this truth of mine which I spoke to the Prophet ﷺ, and if I were to tell a lie, I would have been ruined as were ruined those who told lies; for in regards to those who told lies, Allah used harshest words used for anyone as He descended revelation [and the words of Allah are]: 'When you return, they will swear to you by Allah so that you may leave them alone. So leave them alone—they are truly evil. Hell will be their home as a reward for what they have committed. They will swear to you in order to please you. And even if you are pleased with them, Allah will never be pleased with the fasiqs' [9:95-96]." Ka'b said: "The matter of us three was deferred as compared with those who took an oath in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ, and he accepted their allegiance and sought forgiveness for them. The Prophet ﷺ deferred our case until Allah decided concerning it. [And it was Allah AWJ who gave decisions in our case]. Hence, Allah said, 'And [Allah has also turned in mercy to] the three who were left behind'; and this [phrase, 'the three who were left behind'] does not mean that we remained back from the expedition [even though we did remain back; but] rather, this implies that he

[صلى الله عليه وسلم] kept our matter behind those who swore an oath and apologized to him, from whom he accepted that."

A similar report was narrated by al-Zuhri with the same chain of narrators.

The Story of Ka'b ibn Malik RA (With Sh. YQ's Commentary)

Abdullah ibn Ka'b ibn Malik, one of Ka'b's sons who became his (Ka'b's) guide when he became blind later on in life, said, "I heard my father narrate the story of the Ghazwa of Tabuk that he failed to take part in. He said: 'I never remained behind in any ghazwa that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم fought, except Ghazwa Tabuk and Ghazwa Badr. But as for Badr, nobody criticized anyone for not participating, because it was not meant to be a war; it was just a search for the caravans of the Quraysh — and then the Muslims met their enemy' [see Quran, 8:7]." So Ka'b begins by saying he never remained behind in any ghazwa except Tabuk and Badr; and he says as for Badr, nobody was criticized for remaining behind because it was not a fight in the beginning, rather, it was simply a raid of the caravan of Abu Sufyan [see episodes [35](#) & [36](#)]. And then he said, "I witnessed the night of the Bay'at al-Aqaba with the Prophet of Allah when we pledged our Islam; and to me, that is more precious than Badr, and I would not substitute that for Badr even though Badr is more popular amongst the people than the Bay'at al-Aqaba."

So this is the first paragraph of the hadith, and it's so profound, so full of meaning; let's digest it bit by bit. Firstly, what we found really interesting here is the fact that his own son is narrating the story in such vivid detail. We all know how awkward it is to tell our sons of our own mistakes. But wallahi, this is the best tarbiya^[112] imaginable, because you are teaching your son by example. The fact that Ka'b is telling his son, "I remained behind," and then about all of the punishments that came, it's amazing. As a parent, you always try to hide your faults from your children; but here is Ka'b telling his son everything. Why? To give him the lessons and morals to benefit from. It's worth noting that the lesson is not in the mistake, but in how to correct that mistake.

Also, we see here an interesting psychology of the [legitimate] pride of the sahaba.^[113] The sahaba have their CVs in their mind. And by the way, we learn this from Abu Bakr, Umar, and other sahaba as well — once in a while, they list I did this and I did that. This is natural that you feel happy about your service to Islam. So Ka'b mentions, "I never remained behind in any battle, and I witnessed Aqaba. And for me, that makes up for Badr. Even though among the people, Badr is more popular, but for me, Aqaba is more precious." Why is it more precious? Because Aqaba was smaller — only 72 people participated. And also because in Aqaba, the Muslims converted before meeting the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم — so it's a big honor. Therefore, he said, "I would never substitute Aqaba for Badr." So notice in his mind he is thinking of all the good that he has done. So the question to all of us is: When was the last time we sat down and thought, "What good have I done in this life for the akhira?"—this

¹¹² Tarbiya (تربية) - education / upbringing / moral cultivation / character building / mentoring.

¹¹³ Arrogance is haram, but pride in doing a legitimate thing is not haram, e.g., you should feel proud of being a Muslim, meaning "Alhamdulillah, Allah has given me Islam."

is called Muhasabat al-Nafs (محاسبة النفس) and it is a sign of Islam. You think about what positives you have done. We see this in the seerah and in the lives of the sahaba constantly. They are preparing and increasing their resume for the akhira. Here are the sahaba thinking, "What have I done for the sake of Allah?"

We also see over here that Ka'b is setting up the stage for making an excuse for his later mistake by mentioning the positives he has done. Everyone makes mistakes; but he is saying, "Overall, look at my resume — I participated in every battle, the Pledge of Aqaba, etc."—he mentions his good points. And indeed, this is authentic human nature. Judging someone based on just one mistake is wrong. The scholars say that if a righteous person makes a mistake, it's not the same as when an evil person makes a mistake over and over again. History and habit play a big role in passing judgment on somebody in this world, and even in the Next. If a pious man slips up and he repents, he is dealt with some laxity.

Ka'b goes on in the story, "As for the Battle of Tabuk and what happened to me, I was never more physically fit or wealthier than right before that battle." So he is saying that he had no excuse for not participating. "By Allah, I had never owned two camels before this point, but at the Battle of Tabuk, I had two camels."

Now, the two legitimate reasons for not participating in Tabuk are (i) if you are disabled, old, sick, etc., or (ii) if you don't have any money. In those days, the battles were self-financed. So if you didn't have a camel or any money, you simply could not go. But, Ka'b says, "I had no excuse. I was strong and wealthy." And he also said he had two camels.^[114]

Ka'b goes on: "Whenever the Prophet ﷺ wanted to undertake an expedition, he would always hide his intention (i.e., making it appear as if he was going to a different area) until it was time for the battle." This hiding of intention is of the tactics of war for surprise attacks — which, by the way, is a norm throughout all of the battles of the world. However, when it came to Tabuk, the Prophet ﷺ announced his intention. Why? 4 reasons, as K'ab said: "The Prophet ﷺ set out for this expedition in (i) extremely hot season, (ii) the journey was long, (iii) the land [which he and his army had to cover] was waterless, and (iv) he had to confront a large army. So he informed the Muslims about the actual situation [they had to face], so that they should adequately equip themselves for this expedition."

And as we mentioned last week, this ghazwa was fard ayn on every single capable Muslim. It was a major sin not to go because the Prophet ﷺ was commanding the sahaba that they had to go. Thus every single able-bodied man had to go.

Ka'b continues: "The Prophet ﷺ announced to the Muslims clearly their destination so that they might prepare for the ghazwa. And the number of people who accompanied the Prophet ﷺ was so numerous that they could not be listed in any kitab / book / diwan / register"—he says the number was so large that it couldn't fit a register. As we said, in the

¹¹⁴ And notice as well that owning a camel was a big deal for the sahaba, which shows their poverty. The average sahaba did not own a single camel. Even the Prophet ﷺ did not own a camel up until the Hijrah. Owning a camel, which was the bare minimum to go around, was a luxury for them. And this shows us the poverty of the sahaba in early Islam. — And the money started pouring in in the next generation.

history of the seerah, the Battle of Tabuk was the largest number of soldiers marching behind the Prophet ﷺ.

Ka'b continues: "Any man who intended to be absent assumed that the matter would remain hidden, unless Allah revealed it through wahy"—meaning the numbers were so much that if someone missed out, no one would notice. But there was the fear that Allah would expose them.

He goes on: "The Prophet ﷺ went to this ghazwa at the time when the fruits had ripened and the shade was so sweet. And I was more eager for those two than the ghazwa. And the Prophet ﷺ and the sahaba continued to prepare for the battle. And I started to go out myself to prepare — but every day, I would come back without doing anything." Around 10 days were given for preparation; and every day, people went to the marketplace to buy stuff for the journey, for their families, and they needed to find people who would look after their crops, etc.; you have to arrange your affairs, and the sahaba were busy doing this; and Ka'b said, every day, he would go out with his to-do-list, but one thing leads to another, and he would come back home without doing anything.

And he said, "Every day, I would say to myself that I can do it the next day, no big deal. And I kept on delaying until finally, the people got ready to depart, and the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims left the next morning." They left right after Salat al-Fajr. "And I had not done anything for the preparations. And I said to myself, 'Okay, I'll do it today or tomorrow, and then I'll catch up to them.'" Remember, there are ~20,000 people marching, so the march will be extremely slow. Therefore, a single rider would not have any problem catching up to them in a day or two.

Ka'b continues: "However, the day they left went by and I did nothing. And the next day as well, I did nothing. How I wish I had done something back then." So he is telling his son how much he regrets not doing anything. After two days, the opportunity is gone; you cannot catch up to the army. And this truly shows us the evils of procrastination; of delaying. This shows us the evils of delaying that which you can do now for tomorrow. This issue of taswif¹¹⁵, subhan'Allah, if you look at the text of the Quran and Sunnah, you will find that it's all action-based when it comes to Iman. Allah says, "And hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord" [Quran, 3:133], and, "Stand up and [go] warn [the people]" [Quran, 74:2], etc. And what does Musa AS say when he went to Mount Sinai? "And I have hastened to You, my Lord, so You will be pleased" [Quran, 20:84]. And the whole Quran is full of these action items and verbs. Therefore, he who does not have a zeal for action has a deficiency in Iman. Procrastination is from shaytan. Ibn al-Jawzi says, "Procrastination is the most important weapon of shaytan; he uses it for everything." Ibn al-Qayyim says, "Every time a door of good opens up in front of you, the doors of 'perhaps' and 'soon' also open up to compete with it"—meaning shaytan tempts you with, "Do I really need to do this? What if I did that instead?" and "Don't do it now; do it in a while." And we learn from Ka'b's story the dangers of procrastination. Ka'b did not intend to stay behind; but shaytan continued to cause him to procrastinate until it was too late and he realized he could not do anything.

¹¹⁵ Taswif (تسويف) - procrastination.

Ka'b goes on: "Such was the case with me. Until they departed and the expedition was completely missed by me. After the departure of the Prophet ﷺ, whenever I went outside and walked amongst the remaining people, it grieved me that I could see no one left in the city except one who was known for his hypocrisy, or one who was infirm and weak so Allah had excused him."

Then he says, "The Prophet ﷺ did not remember me until they reached Tabuk." There is a difference of opinion, but it's said the Prophet ﷺ camped at Tabuk for 10 to 19 days. And in that time, he ﷺ remembered Ka'b and said, "Where is Ka'b?" And a man from the Banu Salama (Ka'b's tribe) said, "Ya Rasulallah, his two garments, and his looking at his property, have kept him back"—meaning he is saying his fine clothes and cushions and sofas have kept him back, i.e., he is saying he preferred this dunya. At this, Mu'adh ibn Jabal said, "Woe to you! Why are you saying this? Wallahi, I only know Ka'b to be a good man." It's interesting to note that we don't know the name of the man who criticized Ka'b, but the one who praised him, we know — Mu'adh ibn Jabal. Think about it. Do you not think Ka'b knows who criticized him? Of course he does; it's someone from his own tribe. But when it comes to narrating the story, he simply says, "One of the people of the Banu Salama." Subhan'Allah — how many times in the seerah have we seen this adab of the sahaba? To overlook bad things. Just simply not mentioning it. And if you have to mention, to keep it anonymous. The Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith, "Whoever defends the honor of his brother in his absence, Allah will defend his face from the Fire of Hell."^[116]

Also, notice the Prophet ﷺ is monitoring the sahaba — he eventually notices that Ka'b is missing.

Ka'b continues, "Then the Prophet ﷺ saw someone in the distance breaking the mirage, and he [ﷺ] said, 'Let it be Abu Khaythama,' and lo and behold, it was Abu Khaythama [coming to join the army]." He was late because initially, he didn't have the money to go. When the Prophet ﷺ was calling for donations in Madinah, all Abu Khaythama had was a handful of dates, which he donated. And some of the munafiqun were in the masjid; they made fun of this donation from Abu Khaythama and said, "What will these dates do to finance the entire army?" At this, Allah revealed in the Quran, "[There are] those who slander [some of] the believers for donating liberally, and mock others for giving only the little they can afford. Allah will throw their mockery back at them, and they will suffer a painful punishment" [9:79], i.e., Allah criticized the munafiqun and praised Abu Khaythama. Subhan'Allah. And eventually, he managed to get a camel way after the Prophet ﷺ was gone, and single-handedly, he rode to Tabuk. And the Prophet ﷺ wanted him so bad that when he saw a single rider in the distance, out of all the people left behind, he said, "Let it be Abu Khaythama!" And lo and behold, it was him.

Eventually, the Prophet ﷺ comes back to Madinah.

Ka'b continues, "When I heard that the Prophet ﷺ was on his way back, my concerns deepened, and my mind went to every single excuse I could think of, saying to myself, 'What can I say to avoid the anger of the Prophet ﷺ when he returns?' And I took

¹¹⁶ So isn't it sad that the culture we live in our time is the exact opposite? There are shows and magazines dedicated to gossip.

the advice of the senior members of my tribe. But when I found out that the Prophet ﷺ had returned, all of these false excuses disappeared from my mind. And I knew I could never come out of this problem with any false statement. So I made a decision that I would confess and say the truth." This shows us the reality of Iman. The mu'min might fall into a mistake, but he doesn't remain in that mistake. This is also clearly seen in the story of Adam and Iblis. Both made a mistake; one asked Allah for forgiveness, the other persisted in his mistake. Iman, yes it can slip —nobody is perfect— but it will cause you to rise up and ask for forgiveness. This also shows us that nothing will save you from a mistake other than genuine sincerity to Allah. Our Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith, "Feeling guilty is the essence of tawba." And when do you feel guilty? When you acknowledge that you made a mistake. Feeling guilty is the essence of repentance — without it, there is no repentance.

So Ka'b tells the story: "It was in the morning that the Prophet ﷺ arrived [in Madinah]. And as was his habit whenever he would come back from a journey, he first went to the mosque and observed two rak'at of nafl prayer [as a mark of gratitude] and then he sat amongst people. And as he did that, those of us who remained behind all came in a long line to offer our excuses." And Ka'b said that those in line were more than 80 in number. So out of the entire city, only 80+ adult males remained without a legitimate excuse.^[117] And the bulk of the 80 were hypocrites. This shows us that only a very small number of the males in Madinah were actually hypocrites. Out of over 4,000, just around 70-80 were hypocrites. And they all lined up and gave their excuses. And they begged the Prophet ﷺ to ask Allah for forgiveness. The Prophet ﷺ accepted those excuses, and he left their secrets to Allah.

Now, we notice the following things from these narrations:

1. The neglected sunnah to pray two rak'at when one returns to their city. Whenever the Prophet ﷺ returned, the first thing he would do was pray two rak'at in his masjid.

2. An interesting point which we will come back to [in [episode 93](#)], but for now we will just zoom over because Ka'b's narration does not mention this: Of the verses revealed during this time was verse 43 of Surat al-Tawba in which the Prophet ﷺ was mildly chastised by Allah for forgiving the munafiqun:

عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذْنَبْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعَنَّ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صدَّقُوا وَتَعَلَّمَ الكاذِبِينَ

"Allah will forgive you [O Prophet!] [But] why did you accept all of their excuses? You should have waited until you test those who have told the truth against those who have lied" [Quran, 9:43].

This shows us over and over again that the Prophet ﷺ did practice his own ijtiḥad [see episodes 38, 40, 58, 63, 64, 66]. And this is one of the instances in which Allah rebuked his ijtiḥad. It was obvious that the hypocrites were lying, but the Prophet ﷺ, with his tender heart, accepted their excuses. And therefore, Allah SWT revealed verse [9:43].

Ka'b continued: "Then it was my turn. And when I came up to him [ﷺ], he smiled at me the way that an angry man smiles." When you are angry and irritated at someone, you

¹¹⁷ Those who had legitimate excuses were not lining up since they had already told the Prophet ﷺ.

would scowl — but the Prophet ﷺ is not like this. He still smiled despite his anger. And the fact that he is angry at Ka'b is a positive sign, because it shows that he is disappointed in him; whereas for the munafiqun, he isn't even angry, because what they did was expected from them. It shows that Ka'b had a higher standard in his eyes ﷺ. Then he ﷺ said, "What is your excuse, O Ka'b? Did you not have good health? Did you not purchase a camel?"—and again, this is amazing; it shows that the Prophet ﷺ is monitoring all the sahaba. Ka'b said, "Wallahi, ya Rasulallah, if I were sitting in front of any other person from this whole world, I would have been able to wiggle my way out in front of him and avoid getting his anger. By Allah, I have been bestowed the power of speaking fluently and eloquently; but if I were to tell you a lie today to please you, Allah would expose me and make you angry at me tomorrow. But if I tell you the truth, even though you might be angry at me today, I can hope that Allah will forgive me. Ya Rasulallah, I swear by Allah, I have no excuse. I have never been healthier, stronger, or wealthier than right before the Battle of Tabuk." Upon this, the Prophet ﷺ said, "As for this man, he has spoken the truth"—and this shows that he ﷺ knew that the hypocrites were lying. Then he ﷺ said, "So stand up [and leave, O Ka'b], and Allah will decide your fate."

One of the most profound points here really is the issue of tawhid; of the maqam-Allah vs. maqam-nabi-ﷺ. Clearly, we have this here. And this distinction is especially essential when we look at certain groups out there and the way they view huquq^[118]-Allah vs. huquq-nabi-ﷺ; especially the Sufi and Barelvi groups. Here we have Ka'b ibn Malik. And what is he saying to the Prophet ﷺ? He says, "Ya Rasulallah, if I were to tell you a lie today to please you, Allah would expose me and make you angry at me tomorrow. But if I tell you the truth, even though you might be angry at me today, I can hope that Allah will forgive me." Clearly, Ka'b understands the kalimah, "La ilaha illaLlah, Muhammad-ur-Rasulallah," that it is Allah's pleasure he needs to seek; that even if he manages to convince the Prophet ﷺ, Allah is not going to be happy with him if he lies. But if he is truthful and repentant to Allah, Allah will forgive him eventually. Imagine that. And subhan'Allah, these days, so many groups have reversed the order, and they quite literally say the Prophet ﷺ is in charge of who goes to Jannah and Jahannam; and they give him ﷺ so many powers and whatnot — but this is not from our religion. No doubt, the Prophet ﷺ is the greatest human being; but he is not divine. We don't worship him; we worship his Creator and Sender. Ka'b understands this point, and he summarizes tawhid in this small incident.

Ka'b then walked away. And as he was walking away, a group from his tribe gathered around him and followed him home and said, "O Ka'b, you were a good man up until today (i.e., you were one of our best men). Why didn't you join the others (the hypocrites) with their excuses? Surely, you could have joined the rest of them. And the Prophet ﷺ would have asked for your forgiveness. And that would have been sufficient for the forgiveness of your sin!"

And Ka'b says his tribesmen continued to pester him and tell him to go back until he was almost going to.^[119] But he asked them, "Did anyone else in that long line also say they have no excuse?" They said, "Yes, there were two people: Murara ibn al-Rabi' al-Amri and Hilal ibn Umayyah al-Waqifi."

¹¹⁸ Huquq (حقوق) - rights.

¹¹⁹ Notice here the effects of those who are not very righteous.

Ka'b narrates, "Wallahi, they mentioned to me two people of Iman and taqwa, the both of whom had attended the Battle of Badr. So I said, 'If they are in this position, then I will stay with them rather than with the munafiqun.'" This shows us the importance of righteous companionship; and also the importance of quality over quantity. 80 plus gave their baloney excuses while just two others confessed; yet those two are worth more than the 80 plus combined — which shows us truth is not judged by numbers / quantity. It's by quality.

Ka'b goes on and says, "The Prophet ﷺ forbade all of the Muslims to interact with the three of us out of those who remained behind in the ghazwa." Notice the munafiqun did not get any punishment in this world. They are simply overlooked in this world, and their Punishment will await in the Hereafter. This shows us the wisdom of worldly punishments. And this applies not just to the Islamic state punishments of the hudud, but to any pain and suffering that the believers go through in this world. The believer understands that every punishment, pain, and suffering he goes through in this world will eliminate the Punishment, Pain, and Suffering in the Next world. That is why, as in Ka'b's case, the believers are the ones who are punished. And as for the munafiqun, they got away scot-free.

Ka'b says, "The command came down that nobody was to interact with us or speak with us until Allah allowed them to do so. So we kept away from the people. And the people's attitude towards us changed so much that it appeared to me as if I was a foreigner / stranger in my own land. And the world, despite its vastness, became a constricted place for me." Subhan'Allah, we all know how much it hurts if just one of our loved ones does not speak to us. So imagine if all of our loved ones, friends, and acquaintances, they begin boycotting you. Wherever you go, nobody can look at you or speak to you. Imagine how you would feel. And this is what happened to Ka'b, Murara, and Hilal.^[120]

Also notice, it's amazing that in the whole city of Madinah, not a single person disobeyed the Prophet ﷺ. They were told not to speak to the three people, and they obeyed. There is no police force monitoring you, there is no secret NSA checking you, but when the Prophet ﷺ said don't, they-listened-and-they-obeyed. The whole city obeyed. This type of obedience can only come from Iman.

Ka'b said, "We remained in this condition for 50 nights. As for my other two companions, Murara and Hilal, they locked themselves in their houses and did not interact with the people, because it was too painful for them. And they wept day and night about their situation. But as for me, I was the youngest and the most outgoing of them, so I would intentionally walk in the marketplace, and I would witness the salawat with the Prophet ﷺ. But no one would look at me or talk to me. And I would go daily to the Prophet ﷺ and

¹²⁰ Side note: And this is why abandonment of a person is in fact an Islamic discipline. The Quran [4:34] says when the spouses are having a major problem and the one of them is not listening, one of the mechanisms you can use to discipline them is to abandon them in their bed, that, "Okay, I'm not going to speak to you." It's a tool you use to basically get the message across. Now of course, the general rule is that it is not allowed to abandon somebody for more than three days due to a personal dispute. However, in an Islamic land, the khalifa could issue a punishment for a particular person if there is a need to do so — and this is called "ta'zir [تعزير]" or "discretionary punishment." And forsaking one's spouse in their bed is one of the mechanisms of discretionary punishment.

greet him in front of everyone. And I would wonder whether his lips would move in response. But I wouldn't see anything." Imagine that pain when the Prophet ﷺ himself is ignoring you.

And Ka'b says when he would pray salah, he would pray close to the Prophet ﷺ, and he would look at him ﷺ stealthily. And when he was focused on his salah, the Prophet ﷺ would look at him; but when he would look at the Prophet ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ would turn his face / eyes away. Meaning Ka'b wanted attention, and he was monitoring whether the Prophet ﷺ was seeing him. And indeed, he was. So from this, we can see that even the Prophet ﷺ himself wanted forgiveness for Ka'b.

Ka'b said, "When the harsh treatment of the Muslims towards me lasted long, I felt so exasperated that I finally went to my best friend / cousin Abu Qatada. I went to his house, jumped over the wall of the garden, and my cousin Abu Qatada was sitting there. And I said salam to him. But wallahi, he didn't even respond to me." Ka'b is so desperate for human contact that he goes to his best friend. But even he ignores him.

Then Ka'b says to Abu Qatada, "I ask you by Allah. Don't you know me to be a Muslim who loves Allah and His Messenger?" Abu Qatada didn't even look at him. So Ka'b asks again. And again, there is no response. For the third time, Ka'b is begging and pleading. So Abu Qatada just answers in the air, "Allah and His Messenger know best"—he doesn't answer him because he cannot; so he just answers into the air and says a factual statement that is true in every circumstance, "Allah and His Messenger know best." Then Ka'b says his tears began bursting forth, and he left Abu Qatada's house. We cannot even imagine his pain. For 50 days no one even speaks to you, including your best friend. And of course, this was the punishment — this was the expiation for his action.

Then Ka'b said that in the last few days when he was walking in the marketplace, "I saw a Nabati^[121] from the Nabatis of al-Sham who had come down to Madinah to sell his grain. And the Nabati was asking around as he was selling the grain, 'Who can tell me where is Ka'b ibn Malik?' And the people pointed, 'That is Ka'b ibn Malik,' so he came to me, and he said, 'I have a letter for you from the King of Ghassan.'" Recall the Battle of Tabuk was against the Ghassanids, and the Prophet ﷺ had just come back from trying to fight them (but he didn't, because they fled). And this narration from Ka'b clearly shows that the Ghassanids had spies in Madinah, and they were reporting what was going on. And of the reports was that, "One of the elites of the Ansar has been abandoned" — so within the 50 days, the spies went back and reported, and the king sent a letter to Ka'b.

And the letter says, "Amma ba'd (to proceed). I have been informed that your friend (the Prophet ﷺ) has treated you coldly. And Allah would not allow you to live in a place where you are inferior and your rights are lost. Join us and we will console you and make you happy." Now why would the King of Ghassan want to reach out to Ka'b ibn Malik? For many reasons: (i) To break the ranks and brotherhood of the Muslims. (ii) It's a matter of pride, that, 'I have one of yours.' (iii) To learn the inner mechanisms and dynamics of the Muslims, i.e., source of information. America, Russia, and so many countries do this all the time. You want to have the informants and the confidants come over. It's about prestige and

¹²¹ Nabati (نبطي) - Nabataean / Christian from up north.

inflicting wounds. Indeed, how embarrassing is it when an ambassador of a country defects over. So the King of the Ghassanids wants this elite sahabi. So he sends him an offer.

But, Ka'b said, "As soon as I read the letter, I said to myself, 'This is also of the tests,' and I immediately took it to my oven and burned it." Now, this is so beautiful. It's one thing to pass the test —for which you need Iman— but it's another thing to recognize that "this is a test" —for which you need knowledge—. Ka'b understands why this is happening to him. Isn't that amazing? And that is not just Iman. Iman will let you pass the test —and you need Iman to pass the test from Allah SWT— but knowledge will help you understand the dynamics of what is happening and recognize a test as a test. And that helps you to pass the test as well. We see this here: Ka'b understands precisely what is going on and says, "Allah SWT is testing me even more with this issue, and I'm not going to fall for this trap." And this shows us no doubt Iman is important, but knowledge is also important. And the best combination is true Iman with genuine knowledge put together.

Then Ka'b says: "40 days out of the 50 days went by. And then, on the 40th day, a messenger came from the Prophet ﷺ and said, 'O Ka'b, the Prophet ﷺ is commanding you to leave your wife.' So I said immediately, 'Should I divorce her or what should I do?' The messenger said, 'No, don't divorce. Just remain separate from her and don't come near her.'" So Ka'b sent his wife to her parents' house. Again, we see, wallahi, it's amazing: After 40 days, a command comes that is so painful —boycotting of even the wife—; yet as soon as the command comes, Ka'b doesn't say, "Why? For how long?" Rather, he says, "Divorce or what?"—meaning he wants to jump at the command of the Prophet ﷺ and obey. Look at the Iman.

[Murara and Hilal also got the same command from the Prophet ﷺ to remain separate from their wives.]

Then Ka'b said, "I found out that the wife of Hilal went to the Prophet ﷺ to ask if she could take care of Hilal, because he was an old man. And the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Yes, but do not sleep with him.' So she said, 'Ya Rasulallah, ever since your command has come, he has had no need of me. He has been stuck to the wall for 40 days, crying,'" i.e., the physical relations will not happen. Subhan'Allah, for 40 days, he has just been crying — no sense of anything other than repentance.

Then some of the women of Ka'b's extended family came to Ka'b and said, "Why don't you as well go and get permission?" But Ka'b said, "What am I going to say as an excuse in front of the Prophet ﷺ? I am the youngest of them. No, I am not going to do that." So Ka'b ibn Malik refused to do this. And then a further ten days went by. And we will have to stop right here at the cliffhanger.

[To be continued...]

089. Story of Ka'b b. Malik

(Cont.) The Story of Ka'b ibn Malik RA (With Sh. YQ's Commentary)

We continue the story of Ka'b ibn Malik from [episode 88](#). As we said, he was one of the three people who were honest enough to say, "Ya Rasulallah, I swear by Allah, I have no excuse." Then the Prophet ﷺ told the people of Madinah that the three should be boycotted. 40 days went by and the command came that they should remain separate from their wives, so their wives were sent to their parents' house, except for Hilal's wife, she asked the Prophet ﷺ, "Ya Rasulallah, Hilal ibn Umayyah is an old man with no servant. Do you disapprove of my serving him?" and the Prophet ﷺ said, "No, but he should not come near you," so she remained. Some of the members of Ka'b's family said to Ka'b, "Will you also seek permission from the Prophet ﷺ in regards to your wife?" but Ka'b said, "I will not ask the permission of the Prophet ﷺ regarding her, for I do not know what the Prophet ﷺ would say if I asked him to permit her [to serve me] while I am a young man."

He continued: "It was in this state I spent ten more nights, and thus fifty nights were completed starting from the time when the people were prohibited from talking to us. Then I prayed Fajr on the morning of the fiftieth night on the roof of one of our houses, and while I was sitting in the manner that Allah AWJ described us [in Quran, 9:118] —i.e., my soul seemed straitened to me, and even the earth seemed narrow to me despite its vastness— there I heard the voice of somebody who had gone to the top of Jabal al-Sela^[122], crying out at the top of his voice, 'Ya Ka'b ibn Malik, be happy!' As soon as I heard this, I fell down in sajdah realizing Allah's help had come"—after Salat al-Fajr, the Prophet ﷺ announced to the people that Allah had forgiven Ka'b, Murara, and Hilal.

Ka'b said, "The people came to congratulate us; some people rushed out to my two companions. And a horseman came galloping towards me in haste, but the man on the mountain, his voice reached me first. The one who came on the horse, he came to convey me in person, and I was so happy I gifted him the clothes on my back, and that was all I had at the time." This shows us the genuine love that the sahaba had for each other, so much so that when they heard that Allah had forgiven the three Companions, they rushed to them to congratulate them. They genuinely wanted good for each other and they weren't even from the same tribe.

And Ka'b was so happy he gifted the clothes on his back, and that was the only clothes he had at the time. This shows the poverty of the sahaba. Wallahi, if one of us were to be gifted somebody's used shirt / kurta / thobe, we would be insulted. But the sahaba were so poor that being gifted a used thobe was a big deal. As we know, most of the sahaba only had one garment. Even our Prophet ﷺ, typically, he only had two garments.

Then he said, "I did not have any other garment, so I had to knock on my neighbor's door and borrow a garment from him to go to the Prophet ﷺ." This literally shows us that

¹²² The mountain that you see when you exit the Masjid al-Nabawi.

in these 50 days, his house wealth was completely gone. He didn't even have clothes to wear.

And he continued, "I rushed to the masjid, and the people began to receive me in batches — wherever I went, they would congratulate me on Allah's acceptance of my repentance. And when I entered the Masjid of the Prophet ﷺ, I saw the Prophet ﷺ and all the people around him"—this shows us this was a festival for all of the sahaba. Wallahi, imagine this — what does it have to do with the rest of the sahaba that Allah has forgiven these three people? But when you have that type of ukhuwwah^[123] and love, when your brother has been saved, you feel you have been saved. So the whole community is rejoicing and celebrating.

Ka'b said, "I saw the Prophet ﷺ in the middle of the masjid, and Talha ibn Ubaydillah stood up to rush to greet me, and he shook hands with me and congratulated me. By Allah, out of all the Muhajirun, he was the only one who did this, and I will never forget this gesture from him." Subhan'Allah, one act of goodwill changes a person's heart for the rest of his life. Just a smile, a handshake, a word of comfort; it does the world of good at times of distress. When is Ka'b narrating this? 40 years after it happened, yet he remembers that Talha stood up.

Then he said, "I greeted the Prophet ﷺ, and his face became bright with joy like the full moon. Whenever the Prophet ﷺ was happy, his face became like the full moon." And the Prophet ﷺ said to Ka'b, "Be happy and be given the glad tidings, for you have been given the best news since the day your mother gave birth to you!" Ka'b said, "O Messenger of Allah, is this [forgiveness] from you or from Allah?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "No, [it is not from me,] it is from Allah"—and this shows us again as we discussed in the previous episode, the clear distinction that the sahaba made between the status of Allah AWJ and the status of the Prophet ﷺ.

Then Ka'b narrates that when he sat in front of the Prophet ﷺ, he said, "Ya Rasulallah, because Allah has accepted my repentance, I will give up all my possessions fi sabilillah." We learn from this that when something good happens to us —e.g., if we get a raise or we graduate— we should give charity to thank Allah. This is something that is established from our tradition.

But notice Ka'b said, "All my possessions." To this, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Keep some of your wealth with you. That is better for you." This shows us that we shouldn't act on raw emotion. We have to think wisely. Ka'b is so happy he thinks he should give everything up; but here we have the wisdom of the Prophet ﷺ basically saying, "No, calm down, keep some of your wealth with you and your family." Now, if somebody were to say, "But don't we know from our tradition that some of the sahaba, such as Abu Bakr, gave everything fi sabilillah, leaving nothing at all at home?" how do we respond to this? The response is easy: "That is why he was Abu Bakr," i.e., none of the other sahaba, not even Umar, did that. We have not and will not reach the level of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr knew what he was doing, but as for us, it's foolish to give all our money away to the poor, and then make our own family poor. It is not of the teachings of Islam that we neglect the needs of our own family. As we

¹²³ Ukhuwwah (أخوة) - brotherhood.

see here, the Prophet ﷺ told Ka'b to keep sufficiently for his family, and then give the rest fi sabiliLlah. And Ka'b said, "Very well, I shall keep [for my family] my share of Khaybar."

Then he says to him ﷺ, "Ya Rasulallah, Allah has saved me by telling the truth, so as a part of my tawba, I promise never to tell any lie as long as I live"—so he makes a promise to Allah SWT. Then as he narrates this story, he tells his son, "Wallahi, I don't know any Muslim whom Allah tested more with truthfulness in speech than me; but wallahi, I haven't told a lie intentionally since the day I made that promise until today. And I hope Allah will save me for the remaining of my days." We can assume he narrated this story when he was around 75 years old, which means he hasn't told a lie for ~40 years — but subhan'Allah, out of humbleness, he is saying, "May Allah protect me for the remainder of my life"—what a beautiful humbleness that is shown here. Also notice he said, "I never intentionally told a lie"—even in this, we see his humility and caution, in that, he is thinking maybe he told a lie by mistake.

Ka'b goes on and says, "Allah revealed the verses in the Quran that:

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

9:117. Allah has certainly turned in mercy to the Prophet as well as the Muhajirun and the Ansar who stood by him in the time of difficulty, after the hearts of a group of them had almost faltered. He then accepted their repentance. Surely, He is Ever Gracious and Most Merciful to them.

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خُلِفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَن لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

9:118. And [Allah has also turned in mercy to] the three who were left behind, [whose guilt distressed them] until the earth, despite its vastness, seemed to close in on them, and their souls were torn in anguish. They knew there was no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them in mercy so that they might repent. Surely, Allah [alone] is the Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

9:119. O believers! Be mindful of Allah and be with the truthful."

Then Ka'b said, "Wallahi, since Allah directed me to Islam, He has never blessed me with anything more significant than this truth I spoke to the Prophet ﷺ —, because if I had lied, I would have been destroyed like the hypocrites — because Allah described the hypocrites with the worst descriptions He ever used for anybody"—and he quoted Surat al-Tawba, verses 95 & 96—"They shall swear to you by Allah when you come back [to Madinah, that they have an excuse,] just so that you turn away from them. So [O Prophet,] turn away from them. They are filthy, and they shall be in the Fire of Hell as a Punishment for what they do. They will swear to you in order to please you. And even if you are pleased with them, Allah will never be pleased with the fasiq people."

Notice once again, Ka'b is attributing good to Allah; he said, "Wallahi, since Allah directed me to Islam, He has never blessed me with anything more significant than this truth I spoke to the Prophet ﷺ." This is the difference between the Muslim and the non-Muslim.

The Muslim attributes all good to Allah, whereas the one who doesn't believe in Allah, he attributes the good to himself.

Then Ka'b said, "We, the three people, were the ones who gave no excuse to the Prophet ﷺ, unlike the others. As for us, the Prophet ﷺ suspended our case until Allah's decision came down concerning it, and this is the reference in the Quran (9:118): 'And the three who were left behind'"—so Ka'b is explaining verse 118; he is doing the tafsir of the verse. He is saying that the word خَلْفُوا is commonly misinterpreted as "the three who had remained behind," and the correct interpretation is "the three whom the Prophet ﷺ kept their verdict behind the verdict for the others," i.e., their verdict was deferred / suspended / delayed as compared with the verdict for the munafiqun, and they were told to wait until Allah's decision is revealed, and thus they were in limbo. As for the munafiqun, they were not in limbo because the Prophet ﷺ [outwardly] accepted their excuse [and left their inward affairs to Allah]. So the correct translation is "the three upon whom the verdict was suspended," or "the three who were in suspension," or "the three who were left behind," and **NOT** "the three who had remained behind," because the reference isn't them remaining behind in the ghazwa, but rather, it's the fact that the Prophet ﷺ did not make a decision about them.

More About Ka'b ibn Malik RA

Ka'b was amongst the 2-3 most famous poets of Madinah. Hassan ibn Thabit, his poetry is more famous to us because he specialized in a genre of poetry we are more comfortable / happy with, i.e., attacking the Quraysh; but Ka'b ibn Malik's poetry was not of the attacking type, his genre was of enticing the Muslims to be more brave and steadfast in the battlefield. And he is amongst the same group of elite poets as Hassan ibn Thabit.

Also, recall Ka'b ibn Malik was the one who substituted his armor for the armor of the Prophet ﷺ in the Battle of Uhud so that the enemy would think he was the Prophet ﷺ and target him; and indeed, a lot of the mushrikun thought he was the Prophet ﷺ from the distance, so they targeted and attacked him; and as a result, he was wounded 11 different times through spears and arrows [see [episode 49](#)].

This is Ka'b ibn Malik. He lived a long life throughout the period of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, and he eventually died in the reign of Muawiyah at the age of 77. And from the books of seerah (and from the long hadith we discussed), we know he became blind in his old age.

It's worth noting that the hadith of his repentance is muttafaq alayh —found in Sahih Bukhari and Muslim— and also reported in Ibn Ishaq and al-Tabari. And it's interesting to note that Imam Bukhari puts the hadith in the Chapter of Maghazi (expeditions led by the Prophet ﷺ), but Imam Muslim puts it in the Chapter of Tawba (repentance). The hadith is beautiful because it makes us optimistic about repentance.

Points of Benefit From the Story of Ka'b ibn Malik RA

In addition to the benefits that we derived throughout the narration, let us discuss some more benefits from different angles:

1. The permissibility of narrating the stories of the sinners who repent. E.g., if a singer repents and becomes a qari of the Quran, or an actress repents and starts wearing the hijab — these are all permissible to narrate. Some of the stricter scholars frown upon these stories and say, "Why are you quoting the stories of the sinners? Stick with the Quran and Sunnah," but we say, no doubt, nothing can compete with the Quran and Sunnah, but the Quran and Sunnah allow us to occasionally narrate these type of stories. And we like to hear such stories because it gives us hope of Allah's forgiveness, and it's something we can relate to, because these are people who live amongst us. Stricter scholars say these stories should not be related, and they have valid arguments for this position; however, one can mitigate them with some simple conditions, e.g., by keeping the stories of these modern repenters in perspective — don't base all our hopes on them; and realize that they are just as human as everybody else.

2. We learn the permissibility to narrate your achievements without boasting. The evidence is when Ka'b listed out at the beginning of the narration that he witnessed the Bay'at al-Aqaba and participated in every single ghazwa except Badr and Tabuk. He told his son his entire CV. There is nothing wrong with telling someone the good that Allah has blessed you with, as long as your intention is not boasting (and that's something you have to monitor; nobody else can monitor it). And Allah says in the Quran, "As for the blessings that Allah has given you, tell the people of them" [Quran, 93:11]. So you are allowed to tell somebody of a positive that you have done in order to encourage them. For example, to say, "Alhamdulillah, I have memorized Surat al-Baqarah"—if you are saying this to get praise (and Allah knows your intention), then your ajr is gone; however, if you are doing it to encourage the person to say, "If I can do it, you can do it," then this is permissible. Also, we must be careful to be factual and not exaggerate. Ka'b said, "I participated in all the ghazawat except Badr and Tabuk"—he made sure he was being factual.

3. No matter how noble your past is, it doesn't mean your future will be noble. If you look at Ka'b's CV before Tabuk, who would have imagined he would disobey a direct command of the Prophet ﷺ? He was one of 70+ sahaba who gave the bay'ah at Aqaba — this is the elite of the Ansar; and he was the one who took the armor of the Prophet ﷺ in the Battle of Uhud and endured 11 different attacks. So who would have imagined this might happen? And subhan'Allah, we have in the du'a of Ibrahim AS enough of this warning: As he was building the Ka'bah, he made the du'a, "O Allah, make sure my children and I never worship idols"—look at what he was scared of. No matter what your past is, your future, nobody knows; so you should always be humble about your future.

4. It's permissible to narrate one's sins to others **IF** there is a moral. (We must cover up the sins of others, but as for our own sins, we have the right to narrate them **IF** there is a moral.) But be careful, because if there is no moral and we narrate them to boast, then we are bringing Allah's wrath — our Prophet ﷺ said, "All of my ummah shall be forgiven

except those who boast about their sins." It is unfortunate therefore that this is so common in our days, that people are boasting, "I was with so-and-so," "I drank so-and-so," "I did this and that"—this is a complete lack of Iman. If however, someone says, "Yes, I used to drink alcohol, but then Allah guided me," and then he warns the people, then this is permissible, as we learn from the hadith of Ka'b.

5. We see the sacrifice of the sahaba and the obedience that they had to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Imagine 20,000 obeying the call of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, giving up their agriculture, and walking in the July heat in the desert from Madinah all the way to Tabuk. And how many remained behind? Just 3 (of the sahaba). What is the obedience rate? $100 - (3/20,000) * 100$, so 99.99%, subhan'Allah. When the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Go forth," the whole ummah went forth. This shows us the Iman that the sahaba had.

6. We also see again that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم took adequate precautions. Because it was such a difficult journey in the case of Tabuk, he told the Muslims exactly where they were going. He gave them time to prepare; he told them to arrange their matters for their family and agriculture before they went. This shows us the reality of the difficulty of Tabuk and the reality of preparing fi sabilillah. It is foolish to go forth in any endeavor—whether it's a battle or anything, without any preparations—and say, "Allah will take care of me." No. Rather, Allah will take care of you when you (i) take care of yourself, and **then** (ii) put your trust in Him. This is precisely what the sahaba did.

7. Also notice—as our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said—feeling guilty is the essence of tawba. This whole hadith, we can sense how guilty Ka'b felt, especially the phrase that he says to his son, "How I wish I prepared and made it with them." Notice he is saying this 40 years later, yet still in his heart—even though he knows he is forgiven—he is telling his son, "How I wish I prepared and made it with them." This is the sign of genuine tawba—you feel guilty for your sins.

8. Also we see the dangers of delaying and procrastinating and being lazy. The mu'min is not lazy. Every time we feel like postponing something for tomorrow, we must remember the story of Ka'b. Days went by and he kept on saying, "Yes, tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow," until finally, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم left, and he said, "Okay, today I'll do it," but today also nothing, then the next day the same thing, and after that, it was too late. So don't delay—we must act immediately.

9. The simplest and most profound lesson is the importance of telling the truth. In Sahih Bukhari and Muslim, it is narrated that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "I oblige upon you the command of speaking the truth, because speaking the truth leads to piety (bir / بر), and piety leads to Jannah. And a man continues to speak the truth until Allah writes him as a siddiq. And I warn you against lying, for lying leads to evilness (fujur / فجور), and evilness leads to Jahannam. And a person continues to lie until Allah writes him as a liar."

So we must always speak the truth. Our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would speak the truth even when he was joking [see [episode 2](#)]. And that's why once, when he told a sahabi to write down everything that he says and the sahabi said, "But sometimes you joke with us, ya Rasulallah," he صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Write, because I swear by the One in whose Hands is my ruh, that nothing comes from this [tongue] except the truth." He صلى الله عليه وسلم never said a lie.

10. Making excuses for not doing good deeds is a sign of hypocrisy. The munafiqun just made excuses — and the Quran mentions this many times, e.g., [9:94]. So making excuses for not doing good deeds is not a good sign; it's not a sign of Iman.

11. Pleasing Allah will eventually make Allah make mankind pleased with you; and pleasing mankind at the expense of Allah, you will lose both. Ka'b said, "Ya Rasulallah, I am fully aware of the fact that if I were to put forward before you a false excuse to please you today, Allah would definitely [expose me and] provoke your wrath upon me [in the near future]; and if I speak the truth [today], though you will get angry because of it, I hope that Allah will make its end well." And the Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith in Musnad Imam Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi, "Whoever seeks the pleasure of Allah even if it means getting the people angry at him, [he] shall gain both the pleasure of Allah and the people. And whoever gains the pleasure of the people by displeasing Allah, [he] shall never gain the pleasure of Allah or the people." There are times when speaking the truth and standing up alone is very difficult—it's so much easier to go with the flow— but in the story of Ka'b, we learn that he became beloved to Allah and His Messenger and to all of us because he prioritized the pleasure of Allah. In contrast, look at the munafiqun — they are despised by Allah and His Messenger, and by us to this day.

12. We also see the importance of following righteous people at times of doubt. If you are confused, look to what pious people are doing. When Ka'b's tribesmen continued to incite him and he was confused, he took examples from the two pious people who shared his fate, Murara and Hilal. He said, "My people continued to incite me until I thought of going back to the Prophet ﷺ and contradicting myself; but when they made a mention of these two pious people to me who had participated in the Battle of Badr, there was an example for me in them; so I did not change my mind." Thus at times of difficulty and doubt, we must turn to the people of knowledge and Iman and taqwa. See what they are doing and then follow them.

13. It is the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ that no matter what it looked like outwardly, he judged people by what they said, and he left their inner affairs to Allah SWT. Everyone knew the hypocrites were lying. When Ka'b admitted to the Prophet ﷺ that he had no excuse, the Prophet ﷺ said, "As for this man, he has spoken the truth," which means he knew the others were lying. But he accepted their excuses outwardly, and he left their inner affairs to Allah SWT. If this is the case of the Prophet ﷺ, how about us? We must leave people's intentions to Allah. And this leads us to the next point:

14. Yes, it is true that we leave intentions to Allah, but it is not un-Islamic to have a perception of a person who has a bad reputation, without verbalizing that perception. Clearly, the Prophet ﷺ and the sahaba knew the hypocrites were lying; but did they verbalize it? No. So there is nothing wrong with having an opinion in your heart, but —unless you are at the court of law in which case you have to say something— you don't actually pronounce a verdict, and you leave their inner affairs to Allah SWT. You judge them by the outer, especially if they swear by Allah. There is a famous hadith in Bukhari and Muslim where the Prophet ﷺ said, "Isa AS once saw a man steal, so he said to the man, 'Why did you steal?' The man said, 'Wallahi, I didn't steal.' So Isa AS said, '[You swore by Allah, so] I will believe in Allah, and disbelieve in what my eyes saw'"—meaning, "If you are going to

mention Allah's name, let me take my statement back and leave your affair to Allah." It is important to note, however, that of course, you cannot use this in a court of law. This is adab; just being polite.

15. We also learn that if you have a tuhma^[124] in your heart about your fellow brother, you must have a frank conversation / dialogue with him. When Ka'b came to the Prophet ﷺ, he knew the Prophet ﷺ was angry, and what did the Prophet ﷺ say? "Didn't you have a camel?" He ﷺ asked a frank question and let Ka'b tell his side of the story. In Ka'b's case, of course, he admitted that he had no excuse — but wallahi, how many times have we confronted someone with a fact, only to realize after hearing the other side that the 'fact' was actually wrong. So if you want to cleanse your heart of the tuhma and want to have a good opinion of your brother, have a frank conversation with him.

16. Also we learn —and this is a constant throughout the seerah— the Prophet ﷺ is just a human. He cannot forgive your sins, he doesn't know the ultimate Ilm al-Ghayb, and he does not control Jannah and Nar. Anyone who studies the seerah simply cannot hold this extremist view [that he can do all these]. Thus the notion that some Muslims have that, "The Prophet ﷺ is a medium of tawassul in our du'a to get to Allah" — this is completely wrong. The sahaba interacted with him directly, but even they did not put him on the pedestal that some of our extreme Sufi / Barelvi brethren put him on. It was not possible for the sahaba to hold these views because they saw him and his life. We see this in Ka'b's story when he said, "[Is this forgiveness from you or from Allah?](#)"

17. We also see that eloquence can be very dangerous. There are so many evidences for this. The Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith in Bukhari, "Some speech is almost like magic." It means just like magic can make things appear and disappear, similarly, speech can turn black into white, make the good appear evil, etc. As Ka'b said, "I have been bestowed the power of speaking fluently and eloquently," i.e., "If I wanted to, I could have manipulated" — but he feared Allah, so he spoke the truth. And the Prophet ﷺ said in another hadith in Bukhari, "You come to me with your disputes [about property], and perhaps some of you are more persuasive in arguing your case than the other one [so I might find myself leaning toward the eloquent one even if he is lying]. But let him realize that if I [wrongly] give the verdict in his favor [at the expense of the right of the other one, then] what I'm giving to him is actually a piece of Jahannam"—meaning, that lying person might convince you, might even convince the Prophet ﷺ, but you can never lie to Allah. This hadith shows that speech can be very persuasive. And it's so true today: We see how each group is justifying what they are doing. How the extremists, how Israel, how the U.S. and its foreign policy, etc., are justifying what they are doing. It's so easy to manipulate the minds of people. This is what the Prophet ﷺ warned us against.

18. Being harsh is sometimes needed. And again, we see this throughout the seerah. The image that we have of the Prophet ﷺ that "he always forgave," is good, but not true. You cannot run a civilization and be a leader where everything is always forgiven. There has to be a balance. Anyone who says otherwise does not know anything about politics. And that's why the religion that preaches "always turn the other cheek" and "always forgive" has never followed it in its own history; because —yes, such philosophy might work in your

¹²⁴ Tuhma (تُهْمَة) - accusation.

personal life, but— it will never work at a societal level. This is the reality. So the Prophet ﷺ demonstrated the ultimate reality, which is that the general rule is indeed kindness and forgiveness, but you must sometimes take a stand — as in the case of him ﷺ with Ka'b.

19. Every pain and suffering, Allah uses it to cleanse us of our sins. Thus with the right intention and attitude, every pain is to our advantage on the Day of Judgment. So every time something happens that is painful, have a positive attitude and think of the story of Ka'b.

20. It is of the etiquette of the Quran and Sunnah that we indicate certain activities in implied wording. When the wives of Ka'b, Murara, and Hilal were told not to "go close" to their husbands, explicit language was not used. And the Prophet ﷺ said to the wife of Hilal, "Make sure he doesn't come close to you"—and the implied meaning was understood, so there was no need to be explicit. And this is of the etiquette of the Muslim. And this is the etiquette of the Quran. E.g., Allah says, "When one of you comes from the restroom" [4:43], i.e., Allah doesn't mention what happened in the restroom. And in the same verse, He SWT further says, "When you touch women" [4:43], and the reference is understood. If however the situation is called for, then yes, you are allowed to be explicit. And we have cases where the Prophet ﷺ was very explicit in certain narrations.

21. The general rule of Allah is that victory comes at the darkest hour, at the lowest point of desperation. If you wait to that point, then insha'Allah, victory shall come. As K'ab said, the relief came when "my soul seemed straitened to me, and even the earth seemed narrow to me despite its vastness." Just like when you feel you can't take it anymore, the relief comes. So the mu'min is always patient and aware that victory is around the corner.

Fiqh Benefits From the Story of Ka'b ibn Malik RA

Fiqh benefits:

1. The permissibility of non-Muslims entering Makkah and Madinah for a legitimate reason. And this is in contrast to popular opinion; most of us believe that non-Muslims can **never** enter Makkah and Madinah — but this is not true. The majority opinion that has been acted upon for most of Islamic history is that non-Muslims can enter Makkah / Madinah.^[125] And we learn this permissibility from the story of Ka'b. The Nabati was a Christian and he entered Madinah to deliver the letter from the King of Ghassan; and he was buying and selling in the city. And this gives another fiqh benefit:

2. You can buy and sell from people of other faiths.

3. The permissibility of entering a semi-private property as long as one is sure that the owner of the property would not mind him entering such an area. The reference here is of course Ka'b entering his cousin Abu Qatada's garden. Ka'b said he "jumped over the wall."

¹²⁵ Side note: Except now in the modern era, they don't allow this anymore, even though it still happens — but they just don't tell us it's happening. E.g., the umbrellas of the Haram in Madinah were designed and installed by Germans. So in reality, they are still allowed.

While this may not be common in our current homes, in many Muslim lands, it was and still is customary to have a lawn, opening, or front room with an unlocked door, allowing friends and relatives to enter freely. And the friends and relatives understand not to go beyond certain areas, such as behind curtains. This practice still exists in some societies. In some cultures, the veranda is open after Salat al-Asr until Maghrib, allowing friends to walk in without prior notice, where they will find tea and company. Abu Qatada's garden was such a semi-private space, and he was aware and allowed Ka'b to enter without knocking. So if somebody says, "How could Ka'b have done this?" we say, because it's understood that this was not the inner house; but rather, it was a place where Abu Qatada would not mind Ka'b coming in uninvited.

4. The sajdah al-shukr^[126] (prostration of thanksgiving). The [practice of] sajdah al-shukr is never explicitly mentioned in a verbal hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, i.e., there is no such hadith that says, "When something good happens to you, fall down in sajdah" — but the concept is mentioned in the Quran [38:24] and Sunnah. Here we have the story of Ka'b; he is on his rooftop, and as soon as he hears the good news, he falls into sajdah. This shows us it's Sunnah to do this, even though the Prophet ﷺ never directly commanded it in any hadith. And this sajdah does not need wudu. You fall into sajdah in any state you are in. Do you have to say "Allahu'akbar"? Minor difference of opinion, but better to just say it.

5. It is permissible to shout out good news to the whole community. Good news is not like bad news; you can make it public. We have the man screaming the good news of the acceptance of Ka'b tawba from the mountaintops.

6. It's permissible to stand up and greet someone for a legitimate reason as long as it's not a habitual act. We learn this from Talha ibn Ubaydillah who stood up to greet Ka'b. Some of our brothers are very strict in this regard and say, "I will never stand up for anybody, because the Prophet ﷺ forbade it." We say, no doubt, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever loves it that people stand up for him, let him be prepared for his seat in Jahannam"—yes, this is authentic, but —as the saying goes— a little knowledge is a dangerous thing; there is another hadith in Sahih Bukhari that says the Prophet ﷺ stood up to greet his daughter when she entered the house out of the joy of seeing her; and similarly, when Sa'd ibn Mu'adh was coming after the Battle of the Banu Qurayza, the Prophet ﷺ told the Ansar, "Stand up to greet your leader" [see [episode 61](#)]; we have so many references of standing up [see also: [episode 67](#)]. So when are we allowed to stand up? Al-Shawkani and others have written booklets on this. You are not allowed to stand up when the person has made it a culture or a habit that people stand up in his presence.^[127] However, occasionally, you are allowed to, e.g., if you haven't seen someone for a long time and he is coming back from a journey, then you can stand up and greet him — this is totally halal.

¹²⁶ Sajdat al-shukr (سجدة الشكر) - prostration of thanksgiving.

¹²⁷ Side note: If you are forced to stand up by law, such as in the court of law, then it's fine, so long as you hate it in your heart and realize that it should not be done voluntarily for a person who takes it as a habit to be done in his presence — you have no option, otherwise you will be thrown into jail for contempt.

The Battle of Tabuk is the final battle of the Prophet ﷺ, and so many incidents took place during this expedition. We will discuss Tabuk for at least three more episodes.

090. Battle of Tabuk 3

So we discussed the story of Ka'b ibn Malik. We now move on to other incidents. Recall again the Battle of Tabuk really isn't a battle since no fighting took place. Rather, it is a series of mini-incidents from which we derive lessons and benefits. And for this ghazwa, we cannot go completely chronological, because the affair of the hypocrites who remained in Madinah, i.e., their building of Masjid al-Dirar, is happening simultaneously with the expedition.

So today, let us go back to Madinah where the Prophet ﷺ is calling for donations before he sets out to Tabuk. There are many stories given about the sahaba who donated, about the generosity that was shown, along with the problems and sarcasm of the hypocrites.

The Famous Story of the Competition Between Abu Bakr RA and Umar RA

We begin with the very famous incident of the competition between Abu Bakr and Umar.

It is a story narrated in the Sunan of al-Tirmidhi that the Prophet ﷺ stood up and continued to ask for charity until Umar RA thought, "Today is the day I can beat Abu Bakr," and so he went back home and brought half of his money to give in charity.

Realize, money back then was a very scarce commodity. You did not know when the next batch of income would come. There was no monthly salary (the concept of a salary is very modern). For the sahaba, money was very erratic. They might get one dinar today, nothing for weeks, and then suddenly a hundred dinars one day, and so on.

So the fact that Umar RA gave half his money is extraordinary. Even for us, to give half our money—even though we have a constant income stream—is difficult to imagine. For Umar, it's a different level.

So Umar RA brought forth half of his money, and when the Prophet ﷺ saw this money, he asked, "O Umar, what have you left for your family?" Umar ibn al-Khattab said, "I have left a similar amount."

Then Abu Bakr arrived with his money, and the Prophet ﷺ asked him, "What did you leave for your family?" Abu Bakr al-Siddiq said, "I left them Allah and His Messenger," i.e., no money; only tawakkul in Allah.

At this, Umar said to himself, "I can never compete with Abu Bakr again after this," i.e., "No way I can compete with this type of tawakkul."

Points of Benefit From the Story of the Competition

Of the benefits we can derive:

1. The main one is the fact that the sahaba are competing with each other to do good deeds. This is something that unfortunately, by and large, has been lost amongst the Muslims. The sahaba are monitoring how much someone is praying, fasting, giving, etc., and they want to win the race in the Eyes of Allah, that, "No one will beat me to that place in Jannah!" And this is something we do for the dunya —in our job, education, etc.— but unfortunately, when it comes to Islamic affairs, we do the minimum. The sahaba were the opposite — and this is proven in many narrations. In one hadith, the Muhajirun were complaining to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, that, "Ya Rasulallah, the Ansar fast as we fast, pray as we pray, but they give sadaqa — and we don't have anything to give [in sadaqa]!"—the Muhajirun are monitoring; and this shows that the sahaba raced to do good deeds. And in fact, Allah SWT literally commands us to "race" in doing good deeds. The word sabiqu^[128] (race) is used when it comes to racing to Jannah:

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

"Race toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believed in Allah and His Messengers. That is the bounty of Allah which He gives to whom He wills, and Allah is the Possessor of great bounty" [Quran, 57:21].

And when it comes to the matters of this world, the word sabiqu is not used, e.g., Allah says in the Quran in Surat al-Jumu'ah:

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ

"And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah" [62:10] — the word intashiru^[129] (disperse) is used, i.e., don't race, just walk away gently and seek Allah's sustenance.

2. We also see the concern of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم for the women and children of the sahaba, that they too need money. When Umar brings his share, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم asks, "What did you leave for your family?"—he صلى الله عليه وسلم is worried about the family. And this shows that we are not asked to donate above our means. The priority is the family. No doubt, Abu Bakr RA did something only he can do,^[130] but it most definitely is not something we are encouraged to do. The Quran [25:67] tells us that when we give, we should give between the two: not being stingy, and not being over-extravagant. If our Iman was that of Abu Bakr, then it's a different story — but we can never reach that level. His story motivates us, but we have to realize that it's not something Islam dictates for us to do.

¹²⁸ Sabiqu (سابقوا) - (verb, imperative) race.

¹²⁹ Intashiru (انتشروا) - (verb, imperative) disperse.

¹³⁰ And this is something that goes back to Abu Bakr's Iman (and indeed, it's something even Umar RA did not do).

The Generosity of Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf RA

Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf gave 200 uqiyas (200 bushels) of grain in sadaqa in the Battle of Tabuk. And this is a very good amount. What is interesting is, as we all know, Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf came with nothing to Madinah. He just had the clothes on his back. And now, within 8 years, subhan'Allah, he has reached the level of a very rich person. [And he is still one of the Ashara Mubasharun.] Thus, this shows us that having money is a positive if you are someone like Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf. Having money is a blessing from Allah *if* you are a generous person. There is nothing wrong in Islam with being a multimillionaire *if* you are a generous person. Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf is the role model for this. How did he get 200 uqiyas of grain? Buying, selling, and trading — we all know his story [see [episode 32](#)].

The Famous Story of the Generosity of Uthman ibn Affan RA

The story of Uthman ibn Affan is also narrated in many books of hadith and seerah. The Battle of Tabuk coincided with the return of one of Uthman's caravans from Syria. That is, he had financed an entire caravan to Syria, and when the Prophet ﷺ was calling for the donation for the Battle of Tabuk, that was the time the caravan returned. And Uthman decided to sell the entire caravan —lock, stock, and barrel— including the goods, saddles, and camels; and he got around 1,000 gold coins — and that is a fortune at any time, but especially at that time.^[131] And he didn't have a bag to carry, so he walked to the masjid with the gold coins being carried in his thobe. And he then pours them in front of the Prophet ﷺ and says, "This is fi sabilillah." And the Prophet ﷺ begins looking at the huge pile of gold coins, flipping them around, and says, "Wallahi, whatever Ibn Affan does after today, it will not affect him (i.e., he has earned Jannah with this)."^[132]

In another version of this incident, it's said that the Prophet ﷺ was giving a khutbah and he was encouraging people to give, so Uthman stood up and said, "I shall give 100 camels and all that they carry on them." Then the Prophet ﷺ continued to ask, and Uthman stood up again and said, "I shall give 200 camels and all that is on them." Then the Prophet ﷺ continued exhorting until finally, Uthman said, "I shall give 300 camels and all that is on them." At this, the Prophet ﷺ came down from the minbar and said, "Uthman has no sin after what he has done today."

So what appears to be the case is that Uthman had announced that he would do this^[133] before the caravans returned [as we mentioned in the second version of the

¹³¹ Even in our time, it would be more than half a million dollars.

¹³² Side note: This statement of the Prophet ﷺ was used by Uthman ibn Affan around 30 years later when the neo-kharijites surrounded his house demanding the most trivial matters. One of the things he said in response to them was, "Do you not know that the Prophet ﷺ himself said when I gave the money for the Jaysh al-Ushrah [Army of Difficulty] that whatever I do will not harm me?"

¹³³ i.e., give 300 camels and all that is on them.

narration], and when the caravans returned, he brought it^[134] to the Prophet ﷺ [as we mentioned in the first version of the narration].

Mocking of the Hypocrites

On the flip side, we have the mocking of the hypocrites. Firstly, the hypocrites gave nothing at all to fund the expedition, and on top of this, they mocked those who gave. And they would mock anything that was given, either by publicly saying something, or by nudging and winking at each other. They would say, "Oh, this guy gave so much, but he is just showing off; he is not doing it for the sake of Allah." Or they would ridicule someone who gave a small amount, "What is this amount going to do?" And Allah exposed the hypocrites in the Quran in a severe manner — He SWT said, "[There are] those who slander [some of] the believers for donating liberally and mock others for giving only the little they can afford. Allah will throw their mockery back at them, and they will suffer a painful punishment" [Quran, 9:79].

Al-Tabari mentions the story of this verse [9:79], that the Prophet ﷺ was calling for donations daily, so one of the Ansar decided to give something. So the Ansari man spent the entire night in labor, pulling water and selling it the next day — it's the cheapest thing you can do. And this whole night's work earned him just two handfuls of dates. So he came with these dates the next day to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "Ya Rasulallah, here is one handful of dates for you. (And the other handful is to feed my family.)" At this, one of the munafiqun stood up and mocked him, "Do you think Allah needs this quantity of dates?" Another said, "You are more in need of this quantity than anyone else!" i.e., you are so poor you need it more than anyone. This sahabi felt very hurt that the munafiqun publicly mocked his whole night of work. So this is when Allah revealed, "Allah will throw their mockery back at them, and they will suffer a painful punishment" [Quran, 9:79].

Excuses That the Hypocrites Gave to Not Participate

The munafiqun not only didn't participate in the fundraising, but they also gave excuses —before and after the battle— for not participating in the expedition. They gave bizarre stories as excuses. The Prophet ﷺ asked one of the friends of Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul named al-Jad ibn Qays (الجد بن قيس), "O Jad, are you not interested in going to fight the Romans?" Jad said, "O Messenger of Allah, can you please excuse me? For by Allah, my people know that I have a weakness for women, and I am worried that if I see the women of the Bani al-Asfar^[135], I will not have any patience." What a flimsy excuse. So the Prophet ﷺ just turned away from him. And Allah SWT revealed in the Quran, "There are some of them who say, 'Exempt me and do not expose me to temptation.' They have already fallen into temptation. And Hell will surely engulf the disbelievers" [Quran, 9:49].

¹³⁴ i.e., the wealth that he promised.

¹³⁵ Bani al-Asfar (بني الأصفر) - the Romans.

Surat al-Tawba is full of references to the munafiqun. In verses 81 & 82, Allah SWT says, "Those [hypocrites] who remained behind rejoiced for doing so in defiance of the Messenger of Allah, and hated [the prospect of] striving with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. They said [to one another], 'Do not march forth in the heat.' Say, [O Prophet,] 'The Fire of Hell is far hotter!' If only they could comprehend! So let them laugh a little — they will weep much as a reward for what they have committed" [9:81-82]. Very powerful verses.

In verse 42, He SWT says, "Had it been a near [i.e., easy] gain and the journey was easy, they would have followed you; but the distance seemed too long for them. And they will swear by Allah, 'Had we been able, we would have certainly joined you.' They are ruining themselves. And Allah knows that they are surely lying" [9:42].

Contrast this to the sahaba who were called the Bakka'un:

Those Who Got the Ajr of Tabuk Without Physically Participating

There were some among the sahaba who were called the Bakka'un^[136] (the Criers). Why were they called the Bakka'un? Because even though they were eager to participate, they had neither the means to give money nor the personal possession of a camel to go. The Prophet ﷺ ran out of money to purchase camels for everybody, so groups were left behind without any camels. And they kept on waiting to the very end. And some of these were relatives of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari; and some were the later Muhajirun, e.g., Irbad ibn Sariya (عرباض بن سارية). So this group (of around 7 people) to the very end were not able to purchase camels. And this is recorded in the Quran, "Nor [is there any blame on] those who came to you [O Prophet] for mounts, then when you said, 'I can find no mounts for you,' they left with eyes overflowing with tears out of grief that they had nothing to contribute" [Quran, 9:92].

Allah SWT says they were حزنا (sad); contrast this to the munafiqun who فرح المخلفون — rejoiced for remaining behind [9:81]. Look at the difference of Iman. Some were overjoyed with a false excuse, others were crying with a legitimate excuse. Subhan'Allah.

And when Allah revealed in the Quran the verses that defended the sahabi who gave a handful, one of the sahaba —his name was Ulba ibn Zayd (عليه بن زيد)— stood up, and he had nothing at all, so he said, "Ya Rasulallah, I have no money to give you, but I give you my honor and dignity, that in the Way of Allah, I will defend you against those people who are irritating you (i.e., the munafiqun)." And the Prophet ﷺ said, "I have accepted your charity." This shows us the eagerness of the sahaba, that even that which was non-monetary, they gave.

With regards to these sahaba —Ulba and the other Bakka'un— it's narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said at Tabuk, "There are people in Madinah such that you have not traveled even a step or gone through any valley except that they have accompanied you and they will

¹³⁶ The Bakka'un (البكاؤون) - the Criers.

get the reward as you." The sahaba asked, "Ya Rasulallah, even while they are in Madinah?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Even while they are in Madinah"—because they had a legitimate excuse. This is a beautiful hadith that demonstrates the benefits of having a sincere intention.

The Reward of Deeds Depends Upon the Intentions

Having the correct, sincere intention, e.g., "If I had a million dollars, I would do such-and-such," you don't lose anything, and in fact, we learn from another narration that anybody who makes such intention, Allah will write for him one hasana^[137]. Thus we should make positive intentions constantly. With regards to the Bakka'un, their intention was so strong that the entire reward of the whole journey of the army of Tabuk, they got it while they were sitting at home in Madinah.

We also have the story of Wathila ibn al-Asqa' (وائلة بن الأسقع). He had neither money nor camel, so he kept on going to the marketplace every day, saying, "Who is going to allow me to come with him on the expedition?" And for whatever reason, he was not chosen. Whoever had a camel, basically they chose other people. So finally, on the last day before the expedition departed, he said, "Who will take me, and I will give him my share of the ghanima!"

Pause here.

Remember, the Muslim army at the time was not composed of paid people. For those who participated, there are rulings of fiqh for how much ghanima they get, and it's essential for their livelihood. For the Battle of Khaybar, the sahaba got ghanima that gave them wealth for the rest of their lives. So participating in battles had monetary gain too — and there is nothing wrong with this. No doubt, you must have 100% ikhlas when it comes to intention for doing a good deed for the sake of Allah vs. for the praise of the people — if you mix sincerity with the people's praise, it ruins the sincerity of the act —you cannot mix a good deed for the sake of Allah and for the praise of the people—; but you can, however, mix a good deed for the sake of Allah and for some monetary benefit for yourself. This is not shirk at all. In fact, it is 100% halal. There are 1001 examples: (i) The Quran teacher — he cannot teach Quran 10 hours a day without getting a stipend; (ii) the Islamic studies teacher; (iii) the imam of the masjid; (iv) the Hajj businessman who organizes travels to Makkah — these people spend months preparing the package, so of course, they need a profit. So these people combine an act of worship with worldly monetary niyyah, and by unanimous consensus, this is absolutely fine — and we thank Allah for this, or else, we would not have had much of what we need to have; we would not have anybody working in the religious field. The Quran [2:198] explicitly allows it, and the Prophet ﷺ himself said, "The best income anyone can ever earn is for teaching the Quran" [Bukhari].

¹³⁷ Hasana (حسنة) - good deed.

The Sincerity of the Companion of Wathila RA

The rules state that the one who is going (i.e., taking part in an expedition) on a camel that is shared by someone else will get one share [of the ghanima], and the owner of the animal gets three shares (or two in some madhahib). So according to this rule, Wathila is supposed to receive one share of the ghanima — but now he is saying, "Who will take me, and I will give him my percentage!" One of the elders of the Ansar heard Wathila, so he said to him, "We will take turns riding [my camel], and we will share the meals together," and Wathila agreed to this, "Yes, I agree to this," so he went to Tabuk with this Ansari.

[Note: Even though no fighting took place in the Incident of Tabuk, the Muslims still earned some booty (we will explain this later), and Wathila got a herd of camels.]

Wathila narrates, "I traveled with my best companion I ever had, and Allah gave us booty — some camels were given to me as my share of booty, so I brought them to the Ansari [as promised]. He came out and sat on the rear part of the saddle of one of the camels [that I got as booty], and he said, 'Bring them (the camels) back,' then he said, 'Bring them forward' (you bring camels back and forth to see if they are good camels). Then he said, 'Your camels are very gentle (i.e., good).' I said, 'These are not my camels, these are your camels — the share that I promised you.' But he (the Ansari) said, 'Oh my dear nephew, go [ahead] and take your camels, for I didn't intend this.'" Subhan'Allah, this shows us the Iman and sincerity of the sahaba.

The Story of Abu Khaythama al-Ansari RA

We also have the story of Abu Khaythama al-Ansari, and this story shows us that even the sahaba had to struggle sometimes, and some of them took more struggle than others. Ka'b ibn Malik, we discussed his story in depth and saw how he had to struggle and suffer; Abu Khaythama almost got to the level of Ka'b, almost didn't leave Madinah — the same thing happened; he delayed and delayed until finally, the Prophet ﷺ departed. But then when he (Abu Khaythama) went back to his home, entered his garden, and saw that his wife had prepared for him a rug under the date palms, had sprinkled some water on the rug, and had prepared for him some food — upon seeing all of these, he said to himself, "What am I doing here? I am here in this pleasure while the Prophet ﷺ is in the heat?! Wallahi, I am not even going to sit down." So right then and there, he rushed out to catch up with the Prophet ﷺ. And a few days later at Tabuk, when the Prophet ﷺ saw a lone rider racing in the distance, he ﷺ said, "May it be Abu Khaythama" — and lo and behold, it turned out to be him. The Prophet ﷺ knew that Abu Khaythama wasn't a munafiq and it was hurting him ﷺ that he was not in the army.^[138] When Abu Khaythama came, the Prophet ﷺ asked him, "Why were you delayed?" Abu Khaythama told him the whole story and the Prophet ﷺ said, "Woe to you, Abu Khaythama (i.e., you just saved yourself)!"—this shows us the tough love of the Prophet ﷺ. He is gently rebuking Abu Khaythama, basically

¹³⁸ And this, by the way, again shows us that the Prophet ﷺ was monitoring the sahaba.

saying, "I'm happy you are here, but realize that was a very close call!" And this shows us the fine balance of our Prophet ﷺ.

[Transcriber's note: In [episode 88](#), we related a different version of Abu Khaythama's story.]

The Story of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari RA

Another famous story is that of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (أبو ذر الغفاري) — the famous narrator of hadith. Abu Dharr seems to have had an issue with his camel. Either his camel was on loan to someone, or it fell sick. He was supposed to go, and it was his intention to go, but his camel wasn't there, so he was delayed. But after a few days, he decided to just take the stuff that was supposed to be on the back of his camel, he put it on his own back, and he started walking from Madinah all the way non-stop to catch up with the army.

After 2-3 days, he caught up. And when the sahaba saw a lone figure — a man walking in the distance— they were astonished, "Who is this man walking with his backpack [without a mount]?! " The Prophet ﷺ said, "Let it be Abu Dharr!" And lo and behold, it was Abu Dharr RA. Then as Abu Dharr was walking toward the army, the Prophet ﷺ said to the sahaba around him, "May Allah have mercy upon Abu Dharr. He is walking by himself, he will die by himself, and he will be resurrected by himself." And this is exactly what happened with Abu Dharr RA:

Abu Dharr RA is a very interesting sahabi. In [Sahih Muslim](#), it's reported that once, he said to the Prophet ﷺ, "O Messenger of Allah, will you not appoint me to a public office?" The Prophet ﷺ stroked his shoulder with his hand and said, "O Abu Dharr, you are weak. And authority is a trust; and on the Day of Judgment, it is a cause of humiliation and remorse except for one who fulfills its obligations and [properly] discharges the duties attendant thereon." In another hadith, he ﷺ said to him, "O Abu Dharr! I would not like to have gold equal to [Mount] Uhud for me, unless nothing of it, not even a single dinar remains of it with me for more than one day or three days, except that single dinar which I will keep for repaying debts. I will spend all of it among Allah's slaves like this and like this and like this. O Abu Dharr! Those who have much wealth [in this world] will be the least rewarded [in the Hereafter] except those who do like this and like this (i.e., spend their money in charity)" [[Sahih Bukhari](#)]. So later on, after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, when the money began to flow in and the sahaba began to build larger buildings, Abu Dharr confronted them about this. And this led to so many complaints from the sahaba, so much so that the khalifa at the time, Uthman ibn Affan RA, asked Abu Dharr RA to leave Madinah — and Abu Dharr agreed, so he took his wife and servant and they just went to live in the desert by themselves.

And Ibn Sa'd reports that many years later, in the khilafa of Ali ibn Abi Talib RA, Abu Dharr's wife began to cry when Abu Dharr was on his deathbed. He asked her, "Why are you crying?" She said, "Because I don't even have cloth to shroud you, or the power to bury you." Abu Dharr said, "Do not cry, for I heard the Prophet ﷺ say one day when we were sitting with a group of people, 'One of you will die all alone, yet a group of believers will pray

over him.' And every other Companion in that sitting has passed away, and they were not in this condition (i.e., none of them died all alone) — and I'm the only one left in the wilderness. So when I die, take my body and go sit on the path; somebody will come." His wife said, "Why would anyone come? It isn't Hajj season." Abu Dharr said, "Do as I say, go on the path — for wallahi, neither am I lying, nor was I lied to." And he passed away, and his wife did as she was told. And lo and behold, almost instantly, a massive caravan —and among them were Ibn Mas'ud RA and Ammar ibn Yasir RA— rode out of nowhere, and they (the caravan) saw on the side of the road a dead body, an old lady, and a young servant shouting, "Stop! Stop! Help me bury a Muslim!" So one of the people in the caravan asked, "Who is this (whose body is this)?" The servant said, "This is Abu Dharr, the Companion of the Prophet ﷺ." At this, Ibn Mas'ud began to cry and said, "The Prophet ﷺ has spoken the truth." And the people gave their own garments for the kafan of Abu Dharr, they prayed janazah in the middle of the desert, and then they buried him.

The Incident of Masjid al-Dirar (Masjid of Harm)

Recall the hypocrites gave excuses not to go, and they didn't donate even a penny. They gave all sorts of flimsy excuses, and the Prophet ﷺ accepted all of them, so much so that Allah mildly chastised him ﷺ, "Allah has forgiven you [O Prophet! But] why did you give them permission [to stay behind] before those who told the truth were distinguished from those who were lying?" [Quran, 9:43]. So when the situation became tense and these verses were revealed, the hypocrites decided to build their own masjid so that they would have full freedom to do as they please, and so that they could speak and preach without any 'harassment' from the true believers.

And they had the audacity to collect funds to build their masjid even while the Prophet ﷺ was asking for funds for the Expedition of Tabuk. They didn't give a penny for Tabuk, yet they got the funds to build their own false masjid. They gave excuses to not go forth in the battle, and they built their own masjid even *before* the Prophet ﷺ left for Tabuk. And the masjid itself was within walking distance from [Masjid Quba](#).

In the books of tafsir —Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, etc.— there is another reason given for them building their masjid: It was one final attempt from the hypocrites to try to counter the Message of the Prophet ﷺ. The leader who orchestrated it was not Ibn Salul, but rather, his friend [Abu Amir al-Rahib](#) (Abu Amir the Monk). He was one of the elites of the Aws and one of the few elders alive after the Battle of Bu'ath^[139]. When the Prophet ﷺ Migrated, some of the elders who were supposed to become a leader [that is, of Yathrib] felt that their popularity was taken away [by the Prophet ﷺ] — the main person was Ibn Salul, and the other was Abu Amir al-Rahib. Note Abu Amir was called "the Monk" because in pre-Islam, he had converted to Christianity, and he was very respected amongst the people of Yathrib.

When the Prophet ﷺ invited him to Islam, he rejected it, and after the Battle of Badr when all his people gave their allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ, he fled to Makkah. And recall,

¹³⁹ The civil war between the Aws and the Khazraj which took place before the Hijrah of the Prophet ﷺ where many elders died.

before the Battle of Uhud, Abu Amir told the Quraysh, "Just let me speak before the battle, and you will see that all of them (the Aws) will listen to me" [see [episode 47](#)]. But to his surprise, none of the Aws listened to him, so he came back to the Quraysh humiliated. And when he realized he couldn't even be in Makkah, he left for Rome and managed to get into the circles of the Caesar. And this is not unrealistic: here is an Arab who speaks fluent Arabic, who is willing to tell you the inner mechanisms of other lands. So Abu Amir makes his way up into the circle of the Caesar, and he writes to Ibn Salul in Madinah and tells him, "Make for me a base in Madinah, and allow me access to the people," i.e., it's a revolt. Honestly, it's bizarre. He is way too late in the game — but it is desperation, that he wants to regain his power in Madinah. And his plan was to have a footing in Madinah, and then send in the Romans to take over the city. When Ibn Salul got his letter, that was when he decided to open up a new masjid which would be the headquarters of this new revolt, which we Muslims call Masjid al-Dirar (مسجد الضرار) which means the Destructive Masjid, the Evil Masjid, as called by Allah in the Quran.

And by the way, the Prophet ﷺ made du'a against Abu Amir, that, "May you die a stranger," and this is exactly what happened — he died in Rome with no family or friends around him.

So Ibn Salul constructs the masjid —walking distance from Masjid Quba— and as a token of utmost disrespect, he asks the Prophet ﷺ, "Why don't you come bless our masjid? Come and pray two rak'at in it." But the Prophet ﷺ felt very uncomfortable because of the whole idea of Ibn Salul building a masjid at this time when the Muslims needed the funds — he ﷺ asked them, "Why did you build the masjid?" They said, "Ya Rasulallah, we have weak people. And if it rains, the masjid will just be right there in our neighborhood"—as if Masjid Quba wasn't there. So the Prophet ﷺ simply said in his gentleness, "We are busy now preparing for travel. Insha'Allah, when I come back [from Tabuk]." He ﷺ didn't say yes — he said, "If Allah wills."

The masjid was in operation for around a month, but the Prophet ﷺ never prayed there. The hypocrites opened it before Tabuk — and then on the way back from Tabuk, Allah revealed to the Prophet ﷺ Surat al-Tawba verse 107 to 109:

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا لِّمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَيَحْلِفُنَّ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ يَنْهَدُ عَنْهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

"And [there are] those [hypocrites] who took for themselves a mosque for causing **harm and disbelief and division among the believers** and as a **station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before**. And they will surely swear, "We intended only the best." And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars" [9:107].

لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَّمَسْجِدٌ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ

"Do not stand [for prayer] within it, ever. A mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. Within it are men who love to purify themselves; and Allah loves those who purify themselves" [9:108].

أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٍ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

"Then is one who laid the foundation of his building on righteousness [with fear] from Allah and [seeking] His approval better or one who laid the foundation of his building on the edge of a bank about to collapse, so it collapsed with him into the fire of Hell? And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people" [9:109].

In these verses, Allah calls the masjid the masjid of:

1. ضِرَارًا - Harm

2. كُفْرًا - Disbelief

3. وَتَفْرِيفًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ - Dividing the believers — When there is Masjid Quba right there, there is no need to make this masjid

4. وَإِرْصَادًا لِّمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ - Secret ambush for someone who has already waged war against Allah and His Messenger (reference is Abu Amir)

When Jibril AS came down with these verses on the way back from Tabuk, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded Ammar ibn Yasir and other sahaba to destroy the masjid and burn it to the ground because it is a masjid of kufr, pain, suffering, etc.

And this was one of the final stances between the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the hypocrites.^[140]

So Tabuk ended the aspirations of the hypocrites — after this, they did nothing.

And it's worth noting that from this, we learn that even a masjid, if it's built for the wrong reasons, can become a masjid of evil and harm.

Allah calls the masjid built by the munafiqun a masjid of harm built upon kufr.

And our Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was prohibited from praying in it, and eventually, he was prohibited from praying for them at all.

Masjid Built Upon Taqwa

Now, notice Allah said in this series of verses, "The masjid that was built upon taqwa from the very first day has more right that you stand on that masjid. In it are people who love to purify themselves" [Quran, 9:108]. So, which masjid is Allah referring to? There are three opinions:

¹⁴⁰ And we will come to **the** final stance in a few months: The last straw was when Ibn Salud died and Allah says don't even ask for forgiveness for them [see Quran, 9:80].

1. Masjid Quba — this is narrated in a hadith in Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi: When verse [9:108] was revealed, the people of Quba were asked, "Why did Allah praise you in a manner that He doesn't praise us: 'Within it are men who love to purify themselves'?" The people of Quba said —and this hadith is mentioned in the Chapter of Istinja' (استنجاء)—: "We have a habit that we always use water when we wash ourselves."^[141]

2. Masjid of the Prophet ﷺ. There is a hadith in Musnad Imam Ahmad where two sahaba were arguing in the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ about which masjid Allah was referring to in verse [9:108]. Is it Masjid Quba, or is it the Masjid of the Prophet ﷺ? So they took their matter to the Prophet ﷺ right then and there, and the Prophet ﷺ swore by Allah and said, "It is this masjid right here (Masjid al-Nabawi)." And this hadith is authentic.

3. It is a generic verse; meaning every masjid built with taqwa is better than Masjid al-Dirar. And this is the correct opinion — and it incorporates both of the previous opinions within it, that both Masjid Quba and the Masjid of the Prophet ﷺ are built upon taqwa.

It Is Possible for Another Masjid to Also Become a Type of Masjid Dirar, But...

The Masjid al-Dirar was destroyed, and the Prophet ﷺ never even entered or came close to it.

Masjid al-Dirar is a reality, and we firmly believe that it is possible for another masjid to become a type of masjid dirar. However, it is worth mentioning that a masjid does not become a masjid dirar simply because some people in your community disagree with some uncles in the community and break away and build another masjid. Breaking away from a group of people does not make you a kafir, whereas breaking away from the Prophet ﷺ is a huge deal. If some groups of people disagree with you sincerely on particular views, and they go build another masjid, and they have another scholar they follow, that is okay, that's their right; and we shouldn't call that masjid the masjid of dirar. We have to be very careful in this regard. It is possible that a masjid can become a type of masjid dirar, but we leave that verdict to Allah. For us to call somebody's masjid the masjid of dirar would mean to go and torch that masjid down — you are implying that it's a masjid of kufr. Are you really going to accuse them of being hypocrites and kuffar? This [attitude] is arrogant, dangerous, and un-Islamic. Let them go and build their masjid — and if it is sincere, it will flourish; if not, Allah will expose them.

¹⁴¹ Side note: This hadith is what the fiqh of istinja' is based on. In our culture, we are accustomed to using water —and indeed, a lota next to the toilet is a giveaway sign of a Muslim house; and for us, we cannot imagine using the restroom without water— but we must realize that actually, all of the madhahib are in unanimous consensus that you do not have to use water for istinja'. Not that we should stop using water; it's a great habit to use water — but we must realize that using water for istinja' is not a requirement. And realize that water was scarce back then and it was not possible for every society to use water for cleansing. So it is allowed in the shariah to use dry material, e.g., toilet paper, leaves, or stones. It's worth mentioning, however, that by unanimous consensus, it's better to use water.