

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Apostle of Mercy

By Qazi Fazlullah

In today's world when the Muslims have lost their leadership role due to their disunity, the enemies and opponents of Islam have launched a virulent propaganda

against the Muslims that they are cruel, barbaric, terrorists, uncivilized, ignorant and that Islam was spread by the sword. They have a powerful electronic media and resources to propagate whatever they wish, while we the Muslims due to our disunity and lack of means can neither counter nor defend ourselves. In a few cases when an attempt is made to set the records straight, the style is timid and the tone is apologetic.

The words “Islam” and “Eiman” are so dear to every Muslim. The literal meaning of the word “Islam” is to provide peace. The literal meaning of the word “Eiman” is to provide security. Allah (SWT) has many attributes. One of His attributes is “Salam” which means total or perfect peace. The Holy Prophet had the title “Rahmatun Lil Alameen” which means mercy of mankind. Can a Deen (religion) built on the foundations of such kind of words be militant, hostile, and brutal? Of course not. Allah (SWT) loves peace. He sent an apostle, Muhammad (SAS), who preached peace and practiced as well.

Holy Prophet (SAS) before getting the message

Even before getting the message the holy Prophet (SAS) was a man of superb human qualities. He was called Al- Sidiq (the truthful) and Al- Amin (the honest and trustworthy). He earned the above titles because he always spoke the truth, and he was honest and trustworthy in his dealings and transactions. The non-Muslims who study the Seerah (biography) of the Holy Prophet cannot help but to acknowledge his qualities. As an apostle of Allah, he could not be but a man of moral excellence. No one could point a finger at him for his moral shortcomings because he had none.

Harbi Fujjar

History tells us that the tribal warfare was a way of life of the Arabs. They engaged in battles that never ended because the objective was to take revenge and not to resolve the issue. One such battle was known as the battle of Fujjar. It was the most memorable and the most dreadful. It was fought between the tribes of Quraish and the tribes of Qais. The Holy Prophet had to take part in that battle because it was a question of honor for the whole family. Also the Quraish were on the right. However his role was passive. He did not attack anyone. He only shielded his uncles from the arrows that were shot at them. He was only 15 years old at that time, yet he was very gentle and sober. The battle was called the Battle of Fujjar because it was fought during the month or months in which according to the Arab customs fighting was prohibited. It was a see saw battle in which no party could achieve a clear victory. The death toll was excessively heavy and many families were destroyed. That prompted some peace loving individuals to bring about reforms in their outlook and practices. This led to the signing of a pact known as Hilful Fudhul. The Holy Prophet played an active role in the movement that resulted in that pact which in fact consisted of an oath taken by the participants to rise in support of the oppressed and against the cruelty of the oppressor. The Holy Prophet used to say that the pact was more precious to him than a herd of red camels (measure of wealth at that time).

Rebuilding of the Ka'bah

When the Prophet (SAS) was 35 years of age, the Quraish planned to wreck the Ka'bah as it was damaged by floods and rebuild it. When they raised the walls and the

time came to install “Hijr-i- Aswad”, the sacred black stone, a serious dispute arose which had the potential of erupting into a fierce fight. The stone is of great religious importance and every tribe wanted to have the honor of installing it. Umayya Ben Mughirah Al- Makhzumi, the oldest among the Quraish came up with a proposal to settle the dispute. He suggested that the earliest visitor to the Ka’bah on the following morning should be accepted as the arbitrator. The following morning, all the Quraish chiefs rushed to the Ka’bah only to find someone already there. They screamed with joy because he was Mohammad (SAS). They knew he was honest, impartial, and trustworthy. That day they found out that he was also humble and a man of wisdom. He spread a sheet of cloth, placed the holy stone on it, and asked all the chiefs to hold the corners of the sheet and lift it up. When the stone was brought alongside the designated wall, he himself took it and placed it in its proper position. This was an indication from Allah (SWT). Just as the young Mohammad (SAS) wisely and peacefully completed the construction of the Ka’bah, so too, as the Apostle of Allah (SWT), he will be the medium for the perfection of the religion of peace- Islam.

After getting the Message

After getting the message Muhammad (SAS) kept his teaching and preaching confined to private assemblies and select gatherings for at least three years. When commanded by Allah (SWT), he came out publicly with His message. The Quraish did not accept Him as the apostle of Allah (SWT) nor did they accept His message. In fact they took measures to nip his preaching in the bud. He and his companions were subjected to immense tyranny and brutality; however he did not retaliate or curse his

foes. Even when his and his companions' sufferings reached unbearable limits, he endured the pains with patience and counseled his companions to persevere and remain steadfast. Finally, Allah (SWT) commanded them to migrate to Madina. The atmosphere in Madina was quite different and conducive to the spread of Islam. At the same time, the environment was multi-ethnic, as there lived in the city the Jews, the idolaters, and the believers. Peaceful living was possible only through harmonious coexistence. Consequently, The Holy Prophet drew up an agreement and invited the three communities to subscribe to it. The agreement was the first of its kind in the history of Madina and was known as Misaq e Madina. It had the following clauses: All communities signing the agreement would form a common nationality. The Muslims, the Jews, and all other signatories are free to profess their own religion and perform their own religious ceremonies. Nobody would interfere in the religious activities of others. If a third party (enemies) attacked any of the signatories, others would defend them with their combined forces. Each party would be responsible for their part of the state expenditure. None of the signatories should come into alliance, agreement, treaty etc. with the Quraish. No one shall commit crimes to the prejudice of the other. Madina shall be sacred and inviolable for all the signatories joined now or to join in the future. All signatories are bound to defend Madina in their respective zones. Individual and personal offense of trivial nature of any non-Muslim would be treated as such and no general liability would fall on his community. The wronged party would be aided and the oppressed one should be protected. Muhammad (SAS) as president/chief of the republic would be the highest authority to resolve disputes and his decision will be the final. The Holy Prophet realized that the security and prosperity of Madina lied in

peace which could only be achieved through political harmony among all the tribes and communities living in the region. He therefore entered into peace treaties with many tribes including three prominent tribes of the Jews. Those tribes lived in the outskirts of Madina and were known as Banu Qainuqa, Banu Nadhir, and Banu Quraidha. The Jews in general were a dominant segment of the population of the greater Madina. They were landlords, artisans, blacksmiths, and goldsmiths. They were moneylenders and controlled the economy of the region. They possessed the Holy Taurah and had scholars among them. Due to these reasons they were held in high esteem. Banu Qainuqa, in particular, was recognized as a tribe of brave warriors who possessed a substantial quantity of weaponry. Yet the Jews showed no resistance to the formation of an Islamic State in Madina with the Holy Prophet as its "President". Nevertheless, they were harboring grudge and hostility against the Muslims. In fact, the Jews and the Munafiqeen (hypocrites) of Madina started to plot, scheme, and connive against the Muslims from the very first day of the peace treaties. Abdullah Ibni Ubai was a known hypocrite who was supposed to be crowned as the President of Madina before the migration of the Prophet (SAS). He received a message from the people of Makkah to either expel the Prophet (SAS) from Madina or face the consequences. His response was affirmative and cooperative. When the Prophet (SAS) learned about his ill intentions, he called him and asked him to be thoughtful and sensible and not to poison the atmosphere. At the moment he gave up the idea but in one way or the other he remained busy planning and plotting in cahoots with either the Makkans or the Jews. Abdullah Ibni Ubai belonged to the tribe of Khazraj. The chief of the tribe, Sa'ad Ibni Muaz took a trip to Makkah to perform Umrah and was a guest of Umaiya Ibni

Khalaf. Abu Jahal saw him and right away issued a threat that he would have killed him (because of Mohammad (SAS) if he were not a guest of Umaiya. Sa'ad quickly retorted that such an act would risk the safety of caravans passing by Madina.

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The Quraish also sent a threatening note to the Muslims that they would all be put to death. Some attempts were made to even kill the Prophet (SAS). Therefore the Sahaba used to guard his house. Some tribes who lived near the commercial routes took offensive steps to join Makkans conspiracies. The Prophet (SAS) was forced to launch military missions against those tribes. The conspiracies, intrigues, and scheming culminated into full-fledged preparations by the Quraish to invade Madina. In the ensuing battle that took place at Badr, a place in the outskirts of Madina, the Muslims successfully defended themselves and defeated the better equipped Makkan army. Without going into the details of the battle of Badr, let us field the virulent and prejudicial propaganda that Muhammad (SAS) expelled or killed the Jews even though they had a covenant with them. The actual events narrate a different story. It was their contemptuous behavior, insulting remarks, and incessant conspiracies that lead to confrontations with the Muslims.

Banu Qainuqa

The Jews of the tribe of Banu Qainuqa were proud of their martial traditions. They acted arrogantly and verbally assaulted the Muslims. The Holy Prophet tried to calm them down by appealing to them to be sensible and rational. His appeal fell on

their deaf ears; instead they taunted the Holy Prophet that they were not like the inexperienced Quraish who got mauled at Badr. This was a declaration of war on the part of Banu Qainuqa, but the Holy Prophet asked his people to exercise restraint and remain calm and patient. The Jews interpreted the patience of the Muslims as weakness and lack of will. Consequently they became even more aggressive and obnoxious. One day a Jewish goldsmith misbehaved with a Muslim lady by pulling her dress and exposing her in public. A Muslim who happened to appear on the scene flew into rage and killed the Jew. The Jews in retaliation killed the man. The bereaved Muslim family lodged a strong protest with the Holy Prophet who was distressed. Before He could take appropriate action, Abdullah Ibni Ubai, a Muslim by words but a friend of the Jews by deeds, intervened to negotiate a resolution of the problem. A deal was made whereby Banu Qainuqa handed over their weapons and left Madina.

Banu Nadhir

After Banu Qainuqa this Jewish tribe started to show its true colors by entering into hostile alliances with the Quraish and the hypocrites of Madina against the Muslims. Once the Prophet went to see them on an official business, while He was having a conference with them in the shade of a wall of a house, a Jew by the name of Amr Ibni Hajash climbed up the roof of the house to drop a huge rock on the Prophet to kill him. The Prophet (SAS) was informed by Jibreel (AS) of the evil intention of Banu Nadhir just in time for him to leave for Madinah. However He did not take any action against their treachery. In the interest of peace, he invited them to renew the peace treaty. They refused. The Holy Prophet was left with no choice but to take a strong

action against them. He ordered them to leave Madina since they had violated the treaty. Once again, Abdullah Ibni Ubai played a role of an ally to Bani Nadhir and encouraged them not to surrender to the evacuation orders of Prophet Mohammad (SAS). He assured them that Banu Quraidha would stand by their side and that he himself would come to their help with 2000 strong men. Neither Banu Quraidha nor Abdullah Ibni Ubai came to help Banu Nadhir. The Prophet took a military action and besieged their forts. The stage of siege prolonged because the enemy had the cover of tall, thick palm trees. Some of the trees were cut down and Banu Nadhir surrendered. The Kindness of the Holy Prophet showed forth. He allowed them to leave Madina safely taking with them all they could carry on their camels. Some of them went to Khaibar and settled there, while others went to Syria. A few of them even embraced Islam.

Banu Quraidha

These Jews renewed their treaty and remained in Madina. But their scheming and plotting with the Quraish and against the Muslims did not abate. By the fifth year of Hijrah, most of the Arab tribes began to feel jittery over the growing strength of the Islamic State of Madina under the leadership of Mohammad (SAS). They combined their forces and under the supreme command of Abu Sufyan, the Makkan Chief, they started their march towards Madina. The Jews of Banu Quraidha declared their alliance with the invading army. The Holy Prophet reminded them of the obligations of their treaty. They defiantly replied that they knew not Mohammad (SAS) nor of any treaty. Their strategy was to attack the Muslims from the rear (stabbing them in the

back), while the Muslims would be defending against the onslaught of a huge army of 10,000 or more soldiers. However the tables were turned against them; the invading army was badly defeated. It was a great victory however the Holy Prophet instead of basking in the glory of the victory, correctly decided to resolve the Banu Quraidha issue once and for all. They had amassed a huge arsenal consisting of 1,500 swords, 2,000 spears, 300 armors, and 500 shields. Yet they did not have the courage to face the Muslim Army. They communicated to the Holy Prophet that Sa'ad Bin Mua'adh, one of their old time allies be appointed as an arbitrator and whatever he decided in the light of the Taurah would be acceptable to them. The Holy Prophet agreed. He gave his decision that all the able-bodied males be killed, their women and children be taken as prisoners and their wealth be divided as booty. The decision was totally in conformance with the Taurah, therefore it was enforced.

The Treaty of Hudaibia

In the sixth year of Hijrah, in the month of Dhal Qa'adah, the Holy Prophet had an inspiration to perform Umrah. The inspiration of a Prophet is of the nature of wahi. If it implies a commandment, it must be obeyed. However it seemed almost impossible to implement the inspiration because of the animosity that the Quraish harbored against the Muslims. They had suffered humiliating defeats in their military expeditions that lead them to build a wall of hatred against the Muslims. As a result, the Muslims were barred from performing Hajj or Umrah. Nevertheless, the Prophet Hood demanded that the inspiration must be followed. Accordingly, He declared his intention to go for Umrah and started to make preparation for the journey. Some 1400/1500 of his

companions got ready to follow him. The blessed caravan set off from Madina in the beginning of Dhul Qa'adah in the sixth year of Hijrah. The whole Arabia was utterly amazed at the daring step of Muhammad (SAS) that he was leading his caravan right into the stronghold of his bloodthirsty enemies, the Quraish. People also noticed that the intentions of the followers of Muhammad (SAS) were purely religious; they were wearing Ahrams, bearing no arms, and had sacrificial camels with them. Besides Dhul Qa'adah was a haram (sacred) month in which fighting according to the Arab traditions was prohibited. The Quraish found themselves in a quandary as to how they should deal with the developing situation. They did not want to stop the Muslims from performing Umrah as that would tantamount to their monopoly on the Ka'bah and that could arouse a clamor of protest by the Arabs in general. They were also afraid that allowing them to perform Umrah would reflect their weakness. Ultimately, they succumbed to their arrogance, false sense of honor, and hatred, and decided to stop the caravan at any cost. Two hundred cavalymen were readied and Khalid Ibni Waleed was given the charge to intercept the caravan. The strategy was to provoke the Muslims into fighting. However the Holy Prophet (SAS) was only interested to perform Umrah and did not want any confrontation. Wisely He changed his course following a rugged rocky trail that took them to Hudaibia, a town outside Makkah, where He set up his camp. Chiefs of different tribes and emissaries of the Quraish came to talk to the Holy Prophet to know his intentions. They were all fully convinced that the Holy Prophet (SAS) and his companions had come only for Umrah. In the meantime, the Quraish continued to provoke the Muslims by launching ambushes at night and surprise attacks during the daytime. The Holy Prophet decided to send an

emissary of his own to talk to the Quraish chiefs. Uthman (RA) was chosen for the mission since he belonged to Banu Umayya and had strong tribal ties in Makkah. An inordinate delay in his return raised concern in the camp and worried the Holy Prophet (SAS). A rumor that Uthman (RA) was killed made a tense situation even worse. The Holy Prophet gathered his companions under a tree and took a solemn pledge from them to avenge the death of Uthman (RA). The pledge is known as the Bayat Ridwan and referred to in the Holy Quran in Surah Al Fatha. However, the rumor turned out to be only a rumor. Uthman (RA) returned accompanied by an emissary of the Quraish, Suhail bin Amr, who was leading a delegation. The Holy Prophet was offered to negotiate the situation for a peaceful resolution, which he readily accepted. The negotiations resulted in the formulation of a treaty that came to be known as the Treaty of Hudaibia. Some disagreements arose when the terms of the treaty were being written up. The Holy Prophet wanted to start writing with the words: In the name of Allah, the most kind (Rahman) and the most merciful (Rahim). Suhail bin Amr objected to the words Rahman and Rahim. Without making an issue out of it, the Holy Prophet ordered Ali (RA), who was writing the treaty, to erase the words. Another objection was raised on the sentence, "This is the treaty accepted by Muhammad the Messenger of Allah." Suhail argued that if the Quraish had accepted him as the Messenger, there would be no need for the treaty. Magnanimously, the Holy Prophet told Ali (RA) to remove those words. However Ali (RA) love and devotion for the Prophet would not allow him to do that. Therefore, the Holy Prophet himself erased those words. Even though he had no personal ego, his prophet hood was one of the themes of the message that he preached for thirteen years in Makkah, and for which he was

victimized and brutalized by the Quraish. He could have insisted to keep those words because the strength and truth were on his side, while the Quraish were fully aware of their weaknesses, yet to him the peace treaty was just too important. The major terms of the treaty were as follows:

1. The war shall remain suspended for ten years and no party, overtly, shall act in a hostile manner against the other.
2. If anyone from the Quraish goes over to Muhammad without his guardian's permission, he must be sent back to the Quraish, but if a follower of Muhammad escapes to Makkah, he will not be returned.
3. Every Arab tribe shall have the freedom to enter into an alliance with any of the party to the treaty.
4. Muhammad and his companions shall go back this year and may return the following year and stay in Makkah for three days. They shall not bring any arms with them except swords that are inside their sheaths.

The companions of the Holy Prophet were outraged at the signing of the treaty which they viewed as clearly biased in favor of the Quraish. They thought that clauses (2) and (4) were humiliating. The appearance of Abu Jundal, son of Suhail Bin Amr, the emissary, on the scene shook the Muslims. He was tied with chains and his face was swollen and bruised. He had embraced Islam and was being punished for giving up the religion of his forefathers. He made a heartfelt appeal to the Muslims to take him with them. His father, Suhail Bin Amr, immediately reminded the Holy Prophet of the terms of the treaty that had just been signed. The Holy Prophet honored the treaty

and complied with its terms. Abu Jundal was returned to his guardians, while the Muslims boiled with rage. Hardly two years had gone by when the Quraish violated the treaty. They in alliance with Banu Bakr, attacked and massacred the people of Banu Khuza'a, who were the allies of the Muslims. The Holy Prophet was extremely upset when he received the dismal news. He wrote to the Quraish giving them the option to accept one of the following three conditions:

1. Pay blood money to the victims.
2. Terminate your alliance with Banu Bakr.
3. Declare the Treaty of Hudaibia null and void.

The Quraish accepted the third condition and the treaty was revoked. Free from the obligation of the treaty, the Holy Prophet decided to return to Makkah, the city in which he was born, where the Ka'ba built by his great grandfather, Ibrahim (AS) existed, and where from he and his companions were banished. The Quraish knew what was coming but they had no resistance to offer. The city of Makkah was captured without any battle. The first thing he did as a conqueror was that he declared general amnesty and forgave even those who had tortured him, mutilated the bodies of his friends and relatives, and caused untold miseries to the Muslims. Allah (SWT) sent Muhammad (SAS) as a mercy to mankind. The Messenger of Islam was merciful and peace loving in words and deeds. Even when forced to fight, his message was peace. He was the pro pounder of the ethics of war that his soldiers had strict orders to follow: Fight in the name of Allah (SWT) only. Fight those who fight you. Do not exceed the limits nor commit treachery. Never deform corpses. Do not kill women, children, and

old men. Do not kill the wounded, the captive or the fleeing enemy soldier. Abstain from cutting trees. Do not destroy crops. Properties and belongings of the people of a conquered city are forbidden for you. If you need something, buy it. It is so unfortunate that the Messenger of Peace had to deal with people who did not understand the language of peace. They were so used to war that they must have misunderstood peace as a weakness of the Muslims or a danger to their very existence. Even after more than 1400 years, the world of today does not seem to have changed much in many ways. Might is still right, violence gets noticed, while the appeals for peace usually falls on deaf ears.