

******* PASSING AWAY OF THE PROPHET *******

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******* IN THE NAME OF GOD *******

Near dawn on Friday the seventeenth of Rabi al-Awal (of the Elephant year) the Prophet Mohammed was born, fifty-three years before the migration. Abdulla Bin Abdul Mottaleb, his father, died before his birth, and Aamina his mother, passed away six years later, leaving Mohammed a child of six an orphan. The absence of his parents transferred him to the temporary care of his grand father, Abdul Mottaleb. He was one of those few among the Arabs of that time who were gestant with virtue and who had a cultivated conduct besides being one of the chieftains of Mecca. Abdul Mottaleb lavished his care upon his grandson but only to die and leave him after three years. Mohammed was a child of eight years when his grandfather died. At the approach of death Abudl Mottaleb entrusted his son, Abu Taleb, (Ali's father) with the care of Mohammed. The guardianship of Abu Taleb enfolded Mohammed. Abu Taleb was Mohammed's staunchest supporter particularly when he became the Prophet. In the propagation of Islam and the protection of the Prophet's life, Abu Taleb played a major part.

At the age of twenty-five Mohammed married Khadija who was then in her fortieth year, a widow of untold wealth. Of course it was her desire and Mohammed complied with her wish. In spite of such a difference of age, their marriage went ahead in ease and understanding. Mohammed's conduct was so good and fair, that he soon ensured his wife's satisfaction.

Mohammed was in his fortieth year when he became a prophet. In the fifth year of his prophet-hood a daughter Zahra, was born to him by Khadija. The events of (SHE'AB ABITALEB) took place after six years of his prophethood. Those events could be briefed thus. In those days the members of the Prophet's family were out-numbered by the Quraish, Likewise those who had believed in Mohammed. Since they had no strength they were under the protection of Abu Taleb. The Quraish tribe used to haunt them with every possible torture. The people of Mecca boycotted them. They did not sell anything to them, and if by chance anyone happened to help them by providing food he was exposing

himself to a great danger. It was an ordeal for the believers in those days. The historians have narrated like this:

“The idol worshippers, the pagans-the enemies of the Prophet became aware that for Muslims, Habasha (Ethiopia) had become a safe haven (because the Prophet had instructed the Muslims to migrate to Habasha to rid themselves of the atrocities of the pagans.) The Muslims who migrated there were in safety and protection. At Mecca, Muslims were under the care of Abu Taleb and Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet and a brave one of that age. As such, the pagans could not torture the Muslims as they wished in order to hinder the spread of the religion. Therefore, they held a conference where all gathered. An unanimous resolution was passed that Mohammed should be killed. And an agreement was signed to the effect that they should have no truce or any transaction with any of the children of Hashim and Abdul Mottaleb and that constant pressure should be exercised on them. Upon receiving news of such a resolution Abu Taleb gathered all the members of his family and took them along with Mohammed to a cave called Shaib and placed watching posts at both sides. He used to ask his son, Ali, to steep in the place of Mohammed so that if any were to be killed he should be Al and not Muhammad. Ah did this. Hamza too used to give watch with his sword. This ordeal continued for three tong years. For the Prophet and all his associates it was a period of great travail and hardship. Children used to cry from hunger. Some times a brave person would secretly bring some provisions to the cave. But the need was so hard and so pressing that such rare help fell far short of demand. Eventually a little at a time the pagans themselves loosened the grip ignoring the covenant. Contrition took them when the desired results were not obtained. Now the Prophet and his associates with their woman folk and children came out of the cave where they had lived a confined and painful life for three years. This event of Shaib took place in the sixth year of his prophethood and continued till the ninth year.”

It was in the tenth year of his prophethood (that is three years before his migration to Madina) he lost two of his great supporters - his Uncle Abu Taleb and his wife Khadija. As long as Abu Taleb was alive the pagans of Mecca could not torture him. Now the Prophet saw himself exposed to hazard. On the other hand a group of people of Madina had concluded a covenant with him to help him if he came to Madina. Therefore, the Prophet left Mecca and migrated to Madina in the thirteenth year of his prophethood (12th of Rabi al-Awal). He was then in his fifty-third years. This event of the Prophet's migration marked the beginning of the Islamic calendar according to Ali's proposal to the second caliph. And so it is to this day of ours.

The Prophet lived ten years after the migration. Each of those years is full of important event both historical and religious. One should go through authentic history books to read the details of the events.

Some of them we will mention here. In the period Islam spread far and wide.

The whole Arab peninsula came into its fold. At the approach the tenth year the Prophet performed his last pilgrimage, known as “HAJ AL-WIDA”. It was on his way back to Madina the event of Ghadeer took place.

The prophet was returning to Madina after the Ghadeer ceremonies. It was not long after that he became sick and death neared.

Historians and scholars of great repute have narrated the events that took place during the last weeks of the Prophet's life. We brief them here:

The Prophet had returned from his last pilgrimage His health was fast sinking. He used to address his companions, which he did so often before. He admonished them of mischief and warned them to be aware. He laid much stress upon adhering to his way and his traditions. He advised them with a great concern to avoid playing with the religion of God that is to add thereon or to reduce there in at one's pleasure. He instructed them time and again to obey the members of his family that is Ali and his sons who were the Imams. He warned them to not turn back upon his household members - that is Ali and his sons. He held the yoke upon their necks by this warning which he repeated to them time and again: “O, Men! From amidst you I shall be going soon. But I shall question you on the Day of Judgment as to what you did with my two great things, the Book of God and my household members...” “Be careful of your behavior with them. My family and the Book of God shall not separate from each other till they return back to me at the Fountain of KOWTHAR. Do not forget that Ali Bin Abi Taleb is my successor.” These words he repeated over and over in his meetings.

Another event is that of Mama Bin Zaid. The Prophet made Mama Commander of the army and ordered the people to join his regiment and obey his orders. He was to lead the army to battle with Rome where his (Mama's) father had been martyred. In this assignment the Prophet seemed to have desired the vacancy of those he feared would oppose with the caliphate of Ali. At the time of his death he wished for them not to be present in Madina. But things did not go as the Prophet has wished because they did not obey him and they did not go. Mama remained awaiting for them to join the regiment. The Prophet was greatly hurt by their disobedience to him. As his illness increased the Prophet went to the graveyard of Bakhee. Ali Bin Abi Taleb assisted him as he held his hand. The companions too followed him. In the grave yard the Prophet said: “Peace be upon you, O, dwellers of graves. You are happy. You have taken refuge in the graves. You need not fear for mischief. The graves here rescued you. But mischief is ahead and threatens the people twinkling like stars in the darkness of night.” Then he stood long amidst the graves. Prayed for God to bless them, and then returned to his house leaning upon Ali. The Prophet stayed at home for three days. After three days he came out and went to the mosque. He had tied his head with a cloth. (In Arabic it is termed ASABE). He had placed his right hand on the shoulders of Ali and his left hand on the shoul-

ders of Fazi Bin Abbas. He went on the pulpit; sat there; after a while of rest spoke thus: "O, People! I shall leave you soon. Whoever has any thing with me may come to me now and here. O, People, there exists no link between man and God except that of his own deeds; and obedience to God is the only medium. Let no one claim to be resurrected without a deed. Let no one desire the pleasure of God without obedience to Him. I swear upon God who has chosen me as His Messenger that there is no rescue from the punishment without doing good and with the Mercy of God. I myself shall be put to severe punishment if I do a sin..." Then he came down from the pulpit. He prayed there in the gathering. He returned to his house. His condition continued to worsen. His companions kept coming to see him. Whoever endeared the Prophet cried for his death, which was now certain? The Prophet called Ali near at the time of death. He disclosed to him his will and made to him his last recommendations. When death approached he told Ali: "Now the command of God has reached" put my head in your skirt, turn my face to the direction of QIBLA (the mosque in Mecca), you yourself wash me and enfold me in the shroud, and pray on my coffin yourself; ant seeks help from God in all the things..." The Prophet closed his eyes and died. Ali put a covering over the prophet's body. Then began his job with Fazl Bin Abbas to give the ritual last bath to the Prophet. Then he stood alone and prayed on the coffin. Some of the Prophet's companions were not there at this critical moment. They had left Ali alone with the corpse of the Prophet. They had gone to claim a successor to the Prophet and to take that succession themselves. Ali came out of the house and announced to the people; (the Prophet - alive or dead - is our guardian. The people may now go in groups and perform prayers over him.) The people rushed. Group after group entered the house and left. At the time of burial Ali entered into the grave, placed the coffin inside, opened the shroud and placed the Prophet's face upon the dust. Then he closed the grave and covered it with earth.

The death occurred on Monday 28th of the month of Safer, 11th of Hijra. The Prophet's buried in his yard where he died. Madina is now a spot of pilgrimage for all Muslims.

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