# Seerah

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# Ramadan 2023 Seerah Series

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# The Life of Prophet Muhammed (s) (Seerah)

#### What is Seerah?

- In the Arabic language the word seerah comes from saara yaseeru.
- Linguistically it means to travel or to be on a journey.
- When we're talking about someone's seerah we're talking about that person's journey through life. You are talking about the person's birth, the events surrounding it, his life and his death, and you are also studying the manners and characteristics of that person.
- In modern times we still call it seerah, like a resume is called a seerah or seerah dhaatihi in the Arabic language.
- In Islamic sciences, seerah means the study of the life, or the biography, of the Prophet Mohammed (s), the last and final prophet and messenger of Allah (swt).

# Why is Seerah Important?

- "Of course I love him!" this is the answer of any Muslim when asked, "Do you love the Prophet (s)", but do we really *know* him (s)?
- When you love someone, you want to know everything about them. The more you know, the more your love develops
- Mohammed (s) was a perfect model as a human being in each and we can learn so much from every aspect of his life.
- He was:
  - o a political leader,
  - o military leader,
  - o an imam,
  - o a father,
  - o a husband.

Allah says in Surah Al-Ahzab verse 21:

The Messenger of God is an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in God and the Last Day and remember Him often.

Abdul Haleem Translation. Qur'an 33:21

# Seerah educates us about the meaning of the Qur'an

• Without the complete knowledge of the *seerah* we could not understand the Book of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). The Qur'an in some ways depends on the *seerah* for its full explanation or meaning.

• It sheds light on why the verse was revealed and the context of the revelation. In order to get a full understanding of the Qur'an we need to get a full understanding of the seerah as well.

Studying the seerah raises our hopes and lifts our spirits

• We get to see real life examples of what the people before us went through and the victory they achieved. Studying the *seerah* is one of the greatest ways to increase our optimism for the future.

Allah says in Surah Hud verse 120

So [Muhammad], We have told you the stories of the prophets to make your heart firm and in these accounts truth has come to you, as well as lessons and reminders for the believers.

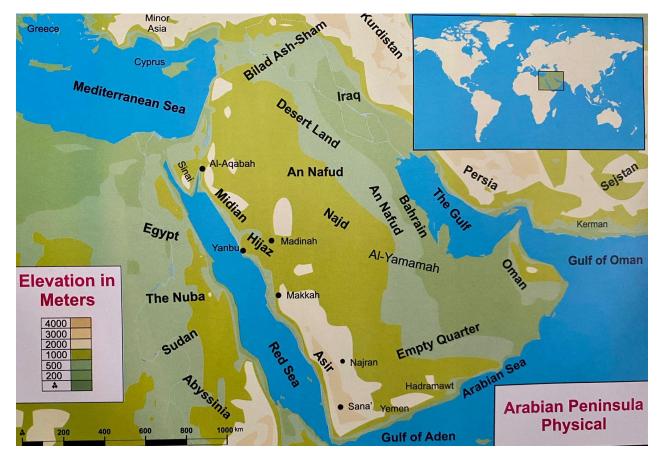
Abdul Haleem Translation Ouran 11:120

#### Difference between Seerah and Hadith

If Seerah is defined as the life or way the Prophet (SAW) lived, then what is the difference between Seerah and Hadith or even the Sunnah?

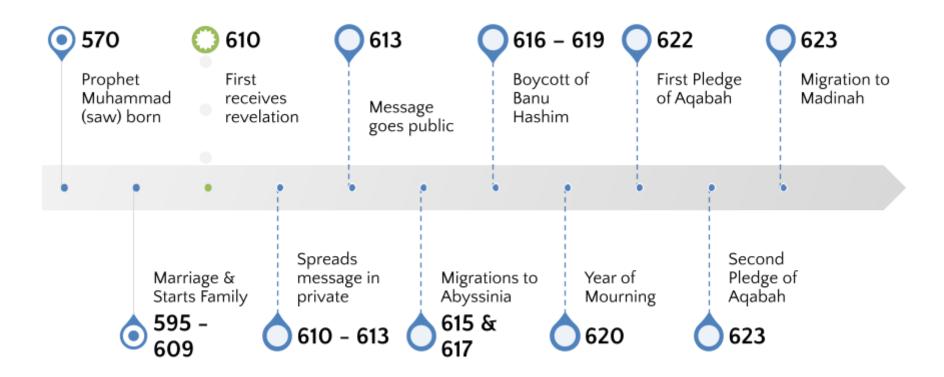
- The Seerah is a collection of narrations about the people and events surrounding the Prophet (SAW) arranged in chronological order.
- The amount of rigor put into authenticating and analyzing the chains and narrators of an incident or event that is found in the Seerah is far lower than when a narration is used in the Sunnah or Hadith.
- Only the top of the top narrations, namely Sahih or Hasan are used in the books of Hadith and Sunnah.
- As for Seerah this is not the case, the narrations used include all the authentic and acceptable ones, along with ones with weaknesses.
- Since we use weaker narrations in Seerah, we can not use the seerah as evidence to support rulings and beliefs found in figh (Islamic Jurisprudence) or ageedah (Islamic Belief).

# Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia

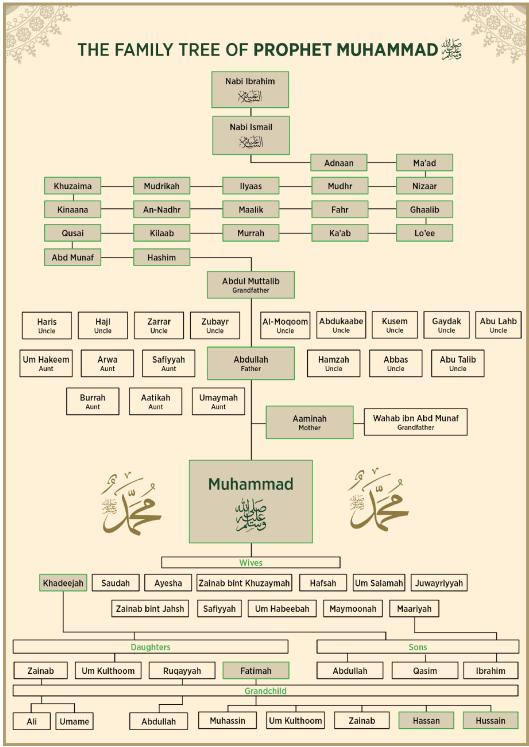


Map from "Atlas on the Prophet's Biography" Compiled by Dr Shawqi Abu Khalil Published by Darussalam

# Meccan Timeline



# Lineage of the Holy Prophet (s)



https://thewiseword.co.uk/the-lineage-of-the-prophet/

# Ancestors of Muhammad (s):

- Muhammad (s) is a descendant of Ibrahim (aS).
- Hashim was a rich merchant who traded with Syria. He died in 510 CE.

#### Abdul Muttalib:

- Chief of Banu Hashim.
- Re-discovered the well of Zam-Zam.
- He was the custodian of Kaaba and was responsible for providing pilgrims with food.
- Met with King Abraha when he intended to destroy the Ka'bah in the Year of the Elephant

## Birth of Muhammad (s) and his childhood:

- Muhammad (s)'s father, Abdullah, died on a commercial mission to Syria. He was buried in Yathrib, only 25 years old.
- Four months after Abdullah's death, Muhammad (s)'s mother Amina gave birth to Muhammad (s) on Monday 12 Rabiul-Awwal, 30 August 570 CE (some say it was 571 CE the year of the Elephant).
- Since his birth till reaching the age of five, Muhammad (s) lived with a nursemaid named Halima Sadia of the Bedouin tribe of Banu Saad.
- When Muhammad (s) was playing while in the care of Halima Sadia, Jibreel came and took
  him away, split open his chest and took out his heart. Jibreel then took a lump out of
  Muhammad's heart and said, 'This is your portion of Satan.' Next, he washed his heart with
  zamzam water. After that Muhammad's heart was joined together and put back in his chest.
- After this incident the family returned Muhammad (s) to his family
- Muhammad (s)'s mother died on the way during their trip to Yathrib. His nurse, Umme Aiman, brought him back and put him in the custody of Abdul Muttalib.
- Abdul Muttalib, 90 years old, died after two years. Muhammad (s) passed into the custody of his uncle, Abu Talib. Muhammad (s) tended the sheep and goats of his uncle and others.

# Boyhood and Youth of Muhammad (s):

- Abu Talib was a perfume and cloth merchant.
- At the age of 12, Muhammad (s) accompanied his uncle on a trade trip of many months to Syria.
- On the way, a Christian hermit named Bahira predicted the prophethood of Muhammad (s).

# Marriage with Khadija (rA):

- Khadija bint Khuwalid was one of the richest women in Makkah.
- At the time of marriage, Muhammad (s) was 25, Khadija was 40.

## Incident of Hajr-Aswad (The Black Stone):

- In 605 CE, Kaaba was rebuilt.
- The tribe leaders arguing about who should return the Black Stone to its place.
- Muhammad (s) arbitrated and came up with a solution that pleased everyone.

# Bestowing of Prophethood on Muhammad (s):

- Cave of Hira is located in Mount Hira, now called Jabl-Noor.
- Muhammad (s) meditated in this cave and prayed to the God of his ancestor and prophet, Ibrahim (aS).
- As time passed by, Muhammad (s)'s every dream at night became true in the coming morning. This was one of the signs of the coming prophethood.
- One night in 610 CE, Muhammad (s) received the first revelation from Allah (swt).
- At this time, Muhammad (s) was in his 40th year.
- Muhammad (s) was meditating in the cave when the angel Jibrail came to him holding a piece of silk brocade with some words written on it. The angel told Muhammad (s) to 'read'. When Muhammad (s) told him that he could not read, Jibrail embraced him and asked the same question. This happened three times. Then, Jibrail helped Muhammad (s) recite the Surah al-Alaq (The Embryo):

1Read! In the name of your Lord who created: 2 He created man from a clinging form. 3Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One 4 who taught by [means of] the pen, 5 who taught man what he did not know.

- This incident unnerved the Prophet (s), who returned home and said to Khadija (rA) that he feared for himself, and that maybe he was possessed by a spirit. Khadija (rA) consoled him.
- That night, Khadija (rA) slept very uneasily, mumbling prayers and keeping watch. Next morning, Khadija (rA) took Muhammad (s) to her Christian elderly cousin Waraqa bin Naufal, who was a 'hanif'.
- Waraqa confirmed that the angel that came to Muhammad (s) was the same one that had come to Musa (aS). He further stated that if he was a younger man, he would join the true religion of Muhammad (s) however he died shortly after they met.

# Types of people who joined Islam:

- Young people who belonged to the junior cadre of Quraish.
- Those who could not hope to rise to prosperity and riches in the capitalistic environment of the mercantile and competitive Makkah. They belonged either to the poor or the impoverished clans of the Quraish or belonged to those families of the clan which had

been thrown into the background of social success, economic riches and political influence by their rival families which had captured wealth and power.

- Slaves, outcasts and the clients (mawlas) of various tribes and clans.
- Thus, Islam was not a clash between 'haves' and 'have-nots', rather a clash between 'haves' and 'lesser haves'.

#### First secret converts:

- For first 3 years, Muhammad (s) preached secretly. Islam won about 40 converts in all.
- Some of the first converts (peace be upon them):
  - o Khadija
  - Abu Bakr
  - o Ali ibn Abi Talib
  - o Umm Ayman
  - Zaid bin Harith
  - Lubaba bint al-Harith
  - Saad bin Abi Waqqas
  - o Zubair bin al-Awwam
  - Uthman bin Affan

- Talha ibn Ubayd-Allah
- o Abdur Rehman bin Auf
- o Bilal ibn Ribah
- o Abdullah ibn Masud
- Yasir ibn Amir
- Ammar ibn Yasir
- Abu Dhar al-Ghifari
- Khabbab ibn al-Arat
- Sohaib al-Rumi

# Public Preaching (613-16 CE):

- Three years after the first revelation, Muhammad (s) received his second revelation, signaling the start of public preaching:
- Muhammad (s)'s gathering of all the clans of the Quraish on Safa; Abu Lahab (the Prophet's uncle)'s evil and angry words; the crowd disperses; meeting unsuccessful.
- Allah revealed Surah 111 related to Abu Lahab who opposed the Prophet



تَبَّتْ يَدَاْ اَبِيْ لَهَبٍ وَّ تَبَّلُ ١ مَا اَغْلَى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ٢ سَيَصْلَى نَارًا ذَاتَ لَبَتْ يَدَاْ اَبِيْ لَهَبٍ صَلَّى نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ صَلَّى وَاهْرَا تُهُ طُحَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ٤ فِي جِيْدِهَا حَبْلُ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ ٥

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

1May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined! May he be ruined too! 2 Neither his wealth nor his gains will help him: 3 he will burn in the Flaming Fire—— a 4 and so will his wife, the firewood-carrier,b 5 with a palm-fibre rope around her neck.

Abdul Haleem Translation Surah Masad number 111

- After, Muhammad (s) invited his own kinsmen to dinner; he asked who would help him; only Ali (rA) gets up and joins the Prophet. This meeting also unsuccessful. At this meeting Muhammad (s) said to his guests:
  - "No Arab has offered to his nation more precious advantages than those I bring you. I offer you happiness in this world and the life to come. Who among you will aid me in this task?"
- Undeterred, Muhammad (s) entered the house of Al-Arqam (one of the first Muslims). This house was situated near Kaaba and many pilgrims passed near it.
- For next 4 years, Muhammad (s) preached from the House of Al-Arqam. This house is also called the House of Islam. During this period, as many as 200 hundred people were converted.

#### Conversion of Hamza (rA)

He was the uncle of Muhammad (s). He was fond of hunting and when he returned from it
one day, Abu Jahl's slave girl told him how cruelly Abu Jahl had hurt and wounded
Muhammad (s). Infuriated because of his love for the Prophet (s), he upbraided Abu Jahl
and challenged him to do his worst. Then, he went to the house of Al-Arqam and became a
Muslim.

#### Conversion of Umar (rA):

• By 6th year of Prophethood, Umar bin Khitab (rA), chief of Banu Adi, was one of the worst enemies of Islam. One day, he was in the Kaaba discussing the rising Muslim influence when he decided to murder the Holy Prophet (s). On his way to the house of Al-Arqam, he met Saad bin Abi Waqqas, who informed him that Umar (rA)'s own sister Fatima (rA) and her husband had accepted Islam. Enraged, Umar (rA) went to his sister's house, where he found both of them reading the Quran. Even after hitting her violently on the face so hard that it started bleeding, she told Umar (rA) that she would follow Muhammad (s) no matter what he did. Touched, Umar (rA) asked her to read a few verses of the Holy Quran to him. They read Surah Ta-Ha and struck by the beauty of the Holy Quran, Umar (rA) went to the house of Al-Arqam and immediately entered the fold of Islam. The Muslims were so overjoyed by the entry of so powerful a man into Islam that their victory cry was heard across Makkah.

# بِسْمِ اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

طُهٰ ٦٠ مَا اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْـقُرْانَ لِتَشْقَى ٢٠ إِلَّا تَذْكِرَةً لِّمَنْ يَّخْشَى ٣٣ تَنْزِيْلًا مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ وَالسَّمَاوَتِ الْعُلَى ٤٠ اَلرَّحْمَانُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَاى ٥ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ

# الثَّرٰى ٦ وَإِنْ تَجْهَرْ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَاَخْفَى ٧ اللهُ لَا اللهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَنُولُ مَا أَللهُ لَا اللهَ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى ٨

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy
1Ta Haa

2 It was not to distress you [Prophet] that We sent down the Quran to you, 3but as a reminder for those who hold God in awe, 4 a revelation from the One who created the earth and the high heaven, 5 the Lord of Mercy, established on the throne. 6Everything in the heavens and on earth, everything between them, everything beneath the soil, belongs to Him. 7Whatever you may say aloud, He knows what you keep secret and what is even more hidden. 8God—there is no god but Him—the most excellent names belong to Him.

Abdul Haleem Translation, Surah 20:1-8

# Opposition of the Ouraish

### Introduction:

- During the first 3 years of preaching, there was no opposition from the Quraish because preaching was in secret.
- At first, people made quips about Muhammad (s) who had 'brought news from the Heavens'.
- Main persecutors were Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab and his wife, Abu Sufyan, Walid bin Mughaira and Atba bin Rabi.

# Causes of Opposition

- Quraish respected their ancestors and were ready to die for them and their beliefs. Thus, they did not want to leave the 360 idols that their ancestors had worshipped. When Muhammad (s) told them that their ancestors were in grave trouble because of polygamy and idol-worship, the Quraish grew violent.
- Even though Quraish believed in prophets, they suspected that Muhammad (s) only sought glory and power for himself by becoming the King of Arabia through religion.
- Embracing Islam meant discarding the practices of drinking, adultery, gambling, murder and plunder for which the Qureshi were not ready.
- The class conscious rich Quraish could not reconcile with the slogan of equality of all humans raised by Muhammad (s).
- If Islam ruled, the high and the low, the master and the slave, the rich and the poor, black and white all would be on equal footing.
- If Islam was allowed to expand, the present Makkan rulers would no doubt have to relinquish their rule. They had an intense fear of power shifting from their hands into the hands of the Muslims. That is why the ruling tribes were the most hostile towards Islam.
- Banu Umayya could not bear that anybody from Banu Hashim, the tribe to which the Holy Prophet (s) belonged, should have supremacy on them. They were also of the view that the Holy Quran should have been sent to someone who possessed wealth and authority in Makkah.

## The Persecutions:

The first and most to suffer at the hands of the Quraish were the converted slaves. They
were beaten, roasted on hot desert sand, laid on their backs on burning coals, tortured and
kept enclosed for days in dark, small rooms. Some were even butchered in cold blood.

<u>Slave</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	
Bilal (rA)	Made to lie on his back in chains on the scorching desert sands by his master.	

Yasir (rA), Sumiya (rA) and their son Ammar (rA).	Yasir (rA) and Sumiya (rA) were tortured to death while their son was treated with utmost cruelty.	
Khabbab (rA)	Treated with cruelty and barbarity.	

- As regards their own clansmen and kinsmen, the prosecutors were milder but more organized. Each Quraishite family was responsible for punishing its men and women.
   Usman (rA) bin Affan and Zubair bin al-Awwam (rA) were tortured by their uncles while Saad ibn al-Waqqas (rA) was tortured by his relatives.
- Muhammad (s) was tortured psychologically and physically:
  - People who had called him "the truthful" and "the trustworthy" tried to defame his character by openly calling him a liar.
  - Men and women threw rubbish on him as he was walking on the street and strew his path with thorns.
  - Once, when Muhammad (s) was praying in the Kaaba, a wicked Quraishite threw a camel's innards on him as he was prostrating before Allah.
  - The Quraish tried to tempt him to stop preaching Islam. They sent Utba bin Rabia with the following lures of wealth, kingship or choosing any beautiful bride
- However, the Prophet recited the beginning of Surah Fussilat (Surah 41) Utba bin Rabia went back impressed and told the Quraish that it was best for them that they did not attack
- Muhammad (s) anymore because if he succeeded in his 'plan', Muhammad (s) would only
  pave the way for their future lordship over Arabia, and if he failed, it would cost them
  nothing.
- Next, the Quraish asked Abu Talib to restrain his nephew or give him up to them. The aged man asked Muhammad (s) not to bring disaster on his family and his clan, the Banu Hashim. Muhammad (s) replied:

"Oh my uncle! If they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left to force me to renounce my work, verily I would not desist therefrom, until God made manifest His cause, or I perished in the attempt."

# Migration to Abbysinia (615 CE & 617 CE)

- When the persecution became unbearable, the Prophet received command that some of his followers should migrate to Abbysinia.
- Abbysinia (present day Ethiopia) had a kind-hearted Christian king named Najashi or Negus.
- First migration (including Usman (rA) bin Affan and his wife Ruqayya (rA)) took place in 615 CE
- Quraish immediately dispatched a delegation to Negus with gifts. The Quraish had a long-standing trade relations with Abbysinia.
- The Quraish demanded the immediate return of the fugitive Muslims.
- When Jafar (rA) explained the principles of Islam to the king reciting Surah Maryam(Surah 19), Negus refused to hand the Muslims over to the Quraish.

• Encouraged by this success, another party of Muslims left for Abbysinia in 616 CE. This is known as the Second Migration to Abbysinia:

# Boycott of Banu Hashim (616-619 CE)

- Alarmed at the escape of the Muslims from their clutches, the Quraish suspected that Muhammad (s) was planning an invasion of Makkah with Negus, not unlike the invasion of Abrahah in 570 CE.
- Knowing that they could not harm Muhammad (s) much as he was under the protection of his clan, Bani Hashim, they agreed to boycott the entire clan.
- All the clans of the Quraish agreed not to intermarry with Banu Hashim, nor to sell or trade with them.
- This agreement was signed and hung in the Kaaba.
- Excommunicated, the clan retired to the rock-bound property of Abu Talib on the outskirts of Makkah called Shi'b Abi Talib.
- Only Abu Lahab did not join the Bani Hashim in their exile.
- The clan lived in impoverishment and near starvation except for the holy months when no enmity was allowed.
- When Muhammad (s) tried to preach Islam at the fair of Ukaz, Abu Lahab would start shouting profanities at him. Foreigners dispersed when they saw that Muhammad (s) didn't have support among his own relatives.
- Thus Islam's progress came to a total standstill during this period.
- After three years of seeing the Bani Hashim suffer, the rest of the Makkans were touched by their deplorable condition.
- Zubair bin Abi Umayya led the way to end the boycott.
- When the door of Kaaba was opened, the Quraish saw that the agreement had been eaten by termites, except the name of Allah. They saw this as a sign from Allah (swt) and lifted the boycott.

# The Year of Mourning 620 CE

- In 619 CE, Abu Talib and Khadija (rA) died.
- Khadija (rA) died at the age of 63.
- Muhammad (s) was struck by grief. He later said that when nobody believed in his mission, Khadija (rA) believed him, when he was friendless, she befriended him and when he was helpless, she helped him.
- Abu Talib's death was a severe blow to Muhammad (s). He lost his only support amongst the hostile Quraish.

## Visit to Taif 620 CE

• Ten years had passed since Muhammad (s) brought the Message of Allah to the Quraish. However, they still remained adamant and refused to change.

- Taif is an oasis city near Makkah. At that time, it was something of a resort for the rich people of Arabia, with lush gardens and lavish display of wealth.
- Muhammad (s) journeyed with Zaid bin Harith (rA) to Taif.
- The rich people of Taif were too busy in their worship of Lat to listen to Muhammad (s). The
  hooligans and rabble of Taif threw stones at Muhammad (s) and so seriously wounded him
  that his shoes were caked with blood. He escaped once again from the vicious clutches of
  a barbaric people.

# The Night Journey & Ascension (Isra' and Mi'raj) 620 CE

- After the Year of Mourning the Prophet (s) received a gift from Allah (saw)
- The Prophet (s) was transported from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, from where he (s) ascended to heaven on a white beast call al-Buraq
- The Messenger of Allah (saw) arrived in the holy city of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) where he met the other Prophets of Allah
- Ascended to the heavens
- The Ummah received the gift of Salah

# Spread of Islam to Madinah

#### City of Yathrib:

- Yathrib is a city located 300 miles to the north of Makkah, on the route to Syria, in the north-west corner of Hijaz.
- There were three tribes of Jews settled in Madina, Banu Nazir, Banu Qunayqa and Banu Qurayza.
- Jews threatened the idol-worshipping Aus and Khazraj that soon they would have a Jewish prophet and then, they would vanquish their enemies.
- Aus and Khizraj soon dominated the Jews and took away some of their property. However, the two tribes started fighting each other.
- In 616 CE, the more numerous Khazraj lost the Battle of Bu'ath and lost their date orchards and there was horrendous destruction of life and property.
- Just like Makkah, Madina lacked a real ruler. Wars between the Aus and Khazraj were getting too frequent, and were destroying precious resources and property.

#### First conversion of Yathribites 621 CE:

- In the 11th year of prophethood, hearing of a prophet in Makkah, six people from the Yathribite tribe of Khazraj came to Muhammad (s) during the pilgrimage season.
- They saw that Muhammad (s) was indeed the prophet that the Jews thought would come from among them. They seized the opportunity and accepted Islam.
- Muhammad (s) sent Mus'ab bin Umair (rA) with them to assist the preaching of Islam.

## First Pledge of Aqabah 622 CE:

- In the 12th year of prophethood, twelve people came from Yathrib and accepted Islam.
- These Muslims helped spread Islam in the city of Yathrib.

## Second Pledge of Aqabah 623 CE:

- In the 13th year of prophethood, seventy five people came from Yathrib to take the usual pledge.
- Islam began to spread very rapidly after this.

# Hijrah 623 CE:

- Allah (swt) gave Muhammad (s) the command to migrate to Madina.
- Family after family left, until only Muhammad (s), Abu Bakr (rA), Ali (rA) and their families were left behind.
- Upon finding this out, Quraish held a meeting in Dar-un-Nadwa on whether the Holy Prophet (s) should be exiled, imprisoned for life or killed. On Abu Lahab's recommendation, they decided that a young man from every tribe should murder Muhammad (s) in the coming morning.
- During the night, Muhammad (s) was informed by Allah of the Quraish's deadly plans:

Remember [Prophet] when the disbelievers plotted to take you captive, kill, or expel you. They schemed and so did God: He is the best of schemers.

Abdul Haleem Translation, Surah 8 Verse 30

- After putting Ali (rA) in his own bed, Muhammad (s) left Makkah with Abu Bakr (rA) and looked his last on the city of his birth for many years to come.
- The baffled and enraged Quraish found Ali (rA) on the bed instead of Muhammad (s) in the morning.
- A massive search was undertaken, with the orders to the effect that Muhammad (s) was to be captured dead or alive. The Quraish set a huge reward of 100 camels on the capture of Muhammad (s).
- Muhammad (s) and his companion hid in a cave in Mount Saur for three days and nights.
- Muhammad (s) arrived at Quba, a village 3 miles from Yathrib, on 8th of Rabi-ul-Awwal. Later, Ali (rA) also joined them.
- Here, Muhammad (s) constructed the first mosque ever built on the face of the earth. He took part in the construction himself.
- The Holy Prophet (s) stayed in Quba for 14 days.

- Muhammad (s) left for Yathrib on a Friday. On the way, he said his prayers in the house of Bani Salim. He also delivered his first Friday sermon there.
- The Prophet (s) was greeted with joy and reverence in Yathrib.
- At the spot where his camel had stopped, the Masjid-e-Nabwi was later built. This plot belonged to two orphan boys, and they were paid the due price of the land.
- During the construction of the mosque, Muhammad (s) stayed in the house of Abu Ayub Ansari (rA).
- The city was renamed Madinat-un-Nabi, later shortened to Madina.