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SEERAH PART 6

The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered Migrations to Abyssinia and Quraish's abhorrent actions towards the Prophet (ﷺ)

Migration to Abyssinia

As the Quraish's persecution of new Muslims intensified, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) permitted them to migrate. The Prophet (ﷺ) chose Abyssinia

(modern-day Ethiopia) for its just ruler, King Negus. In the 5th year of Prophethood, a group of twelve men and four women secretly left Makkah at night, traveling to the port near present-day Jeddah. They boarded two boats to Abyssinia, including Uthman ibn Affan and his wife Ruqayyah (رضي الله عنهما), a daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ). The Quraish learned of their departure too late to intercept them.

In Ramadan of the same year, the Prophet (ﷺ) recited Surah Al-Najm loudly in the holy sanctuary amidst many Quraish. Despite their efforts to avoid hearing the Quran—often drowning it out with noise—they were caught off guard. The surah's eloquence overwhelmed them, and when the Prophet (ﷺ) prostrated at its end, the idol-worshippers instinctively followed. Those absent later criticized this group, who offered excuses for their unintended act. Misleading news reached Abyssinia, suggesting the Quraish had embraced Islam, prompting the migrants to return. Nearing Makkah, they learned the truth; some turned back, while others proceeded.

As conditions worsened, the Prophet (ﷺ) allowed a second migration. Despite the Quraish's vigilance, nearly a hundred men and women escaped to Abyssinia. The Quraish sent Amr ibn al-'As and Abdullah ibn Abi Rabi'ah (both later Muslims, رضي الله عنهما) to persuade Negus to expel the migrants. Negus, a fair ruler, sought the Muslims' perspective.

Jafar ibn Abi Talib (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet's cousin, spoke for the group, vividly describing their pre-Islamic state:

- Worshipping idols
- Consuming dead animals
- Engaging in obscene behavior and speech
- Neglecting kinship ties
- Mistreating neighbors

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- Allowing the strong to exploit the weak
- Shedding blood unlawfully
- Slandering chaste women

He explained that Islam prohibited these acts and that they knew the Prophet (ﷺ) as truthful, trustworthy, and chaste. Jafar outlined the Prophet's (ﷺ) teachings:

- Worshipping Allah alone
- Abandoning ancestral polytheism
- Upholding truthfulness
- Honoring trusts
- Maintaining family ties
- Treating neighbors kindly
- Performing prayer, giving charity, and fasting

At Negus's request, Jafar recited the opening verses of Surah Maryam. Moved, Negus declared, "These words and those revealed to Jesus seem to radiate from the same source." He granted the Muslims permission to stay peacefully in his kingdom.

Quraish's Hostility Towards the Prophet (ﷺ)

Despite failing to break the new Muslims through brutal verbal and physical abuse, some Quraish plotted to assassinate the Prophet (ﷺ). His open practice and preaching of Islam, coupled with many converts fleeing to Abyssinia, made him a vulnerable target.

Utaibah, a son of Abu Lahab, attacked the Prophet (ﷺ), tearing his shirt and attempting to spit on him, though missing his face. The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) to send one of His creatures against Utaibah. While traveling to Syria, Utaibah camped at Al-Zarqa, where a lion stalked their group. Fearing the Prophet's

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prayer, Utaibah exclaimed, "By Allah, this beast will devour me as Muhammad foretold!" The lion killed only him, sparing others. In Arabic, "dog" can also denote a lion.

Abu Jahl, a vehement enemy of Islam, planned to crush the Prophet's (ﷺ) head with a stone during prostration, heedless of retaliation from the Prophet's tribe. His allies encouraged him. As the Prophet (ﷺ) prostrated, Abu Jahl approached with the stone but retreated, trembling, and dropped it. He described a fearsome camel with sharp fangs blocking his path. The Prophet (ﷺ) later clarified, "That was Jibreel (عليه السلام). Had Abu Jahl advanced, Jibreel would have killed him."

In another incident, Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'aid pressed his foot on the Prophet's (ﷺ) neck during prostration, having previously thrown camel intestines on him in prayer. On another occasion, Uqbah, with other polytheists, strangled the Prophet (ﷺ) with a cloth. Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) intervened, shouting, "Would you kill a man for saying, 'My Lord is Allah'?" The mob then attacked Abu Bakr, beating him until his face and head were covered in blood.

End of Part 6