The Prophetic Biography:

The Meccan Period

Lesson 10



- Mecca was no longer suitable or safe for the Muslims.
- In Mecca, the message of Islam was falling upon deaf ears, and it became clear that Quraysh was hell bent on fighting the Prophet to the death.
- In addition to safety concerns, the Prophet also did not have the freedom to propagate his message. The message of Islam was universal and by remaining in Mecca, he would be depriving others from hearing the word of God.
- Muslims were also at their breaking point. The Prophet was sensing that many of his followers could not bear any more suffering in Mecca.

Why Medina?

- Its geographic proximity allows the Prophet and his followers to keep a close eye on the activities of Quraysh.
- Medina gave leverage to Muslims against Quraysh. The Syrian trading routes pass by Medina.
- Many of the residents of Medina had embraced Islam.
- Medina offered religious freedom.

Geography of Medina:

- It is surrounded to the south, east, and west by large tracts of volcanic rock known as *harrah*.
- The only open road into Medina was from the north, between Mount Uḥud and the western ḥarrah. From other directions the city was guarded against attack.
- The three Jewish tribes (Naḍīr, Qurayṣah, and Qaynuqāʿ) lived along the eastern ḥarrah within fortifications.

- The Aws also lived with them and had an alliance with the Qurayzah.
 Yathrib originally referred to this area, but later came to refer to the entire area within the harrāt
- The Khazraj occupied the central and western portions of this area. The Khazraj were 3 times more numerous than the Aws.
- The best farm land was in the northwest portion of this area between the western *ḥarrah* and Mount Uḥud and in the southeast at Qubā

- Religion in Medina
- The Aws and Khazraj were almost exclusively pagan and followed the same religion as the Quraysh in Mecca. Manāt was especially dear to them.
- Why did the Jews not influence them:
 - they were not interested in proselytizing
 - Judaism was seen as a foreign religion whereas paganism was seen as indigenous

- The Economy of Medina:
- Medina did not take part in the annual trade expeditions
- Medina's economy was primarily agriculture, especially dates
- There was an abundance of water and fertile land which gave Medina a greater potential for development than Mecca, but it was largely untapped

Why was Medina untapped?

- partly because accessing underground water required digging wells which was hard in the volcanic rock
- the Jews had grabbed the best land. Their wealth led them to hoard, price gouge, and indulge in usury

- Abu Salamah and Umm Salamah (both from Makhzūm) had returned from Abyssinia and faced persecution from their clan.
- After the first aqabah pledge, they decide to emigrate to Medina, but Umm Salamah's family bar her from leaving, and then Abu Salamah's family takes their son Salamah from her.
- Abu Salamah leaves, while Umm Salamah remains in house arrest for a year until she is finally allowed to take her son back and join her husband

 After the second aqabah pledge, the Prophet orders the Muslims of Mecca to flee to Medina, saying,

"God has provided you with brothers and homes in which you will be safe."

- The pact of brotherhood that we are familiar with is actually the second pact which was initiated when the Prophet arrived in Medina.
- The first pact of brotherhood was established by the Prophet in Mecca to strengthen the bonds of Muslims.
- The hijrah to Medina was permanent, unlike the hijrah to Abyssinia which was temporary. The pact of brotherhood make it psychologically easier to endure that drastic change.

- Prophet assigned the emigrants a brother and paired them together as protectors of one another.
- He paired Hamza with Zayd ibn Haritha.
- He paired Abu Bakr with Omar
- He paired Uthman ibn Affan with Abdul Rahman
- He paired Bilal with Ubaydah ibn Al-Harith (cousin of the Prophet from his father's side)

- Ibn Hishām records many of the the struggle of many companions to escape Mecca:
 - Ayyash ibn Abi Rabi'a al-Makhzumi was tricked by Abu Jahl into returning tp Mecca at which they bound him and placed him under house arrest.
 - Şuhayb who was Byzantine and had done well for himself in Mecca was
 prevented from leaving with his wealth, so he gave up his wealth in exchange
 for safe passage out of Mecca. When they Prophet learned of this he
 exclaimed, "Şuhayb struck a profitable deal! Şuhayb struck a profitable deal!"

- Hamza stayed with As'ad ibn Zurarah
- The bachelors stayed with Kulthūm ibn Hidam who was also a bachelor
- All leave (except for those under house arrest), and only the Prophet, Imam Ali and Abu Bakr remain.

Regarding those who were barred from leaving, the following 4:97-98 was revealed:

"Those whose souls the angels take who have wronged themselves, the angels will ask them, "What were you into?" They will reply, "We were oppressed in the place we lived." The angels will ask, "Was God's earth not vast enough for you to emigrate to another place?" They will wind up in hell, and what a terrible place to wind up."

إِلَّا ٱلْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ ٱلرِّجَالِ وَٱلنِّسَاءِ وَٱلْوِلْدَٰنِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا

"Not so those men, women, and children who were truly oppressed, who could not fend for themselves and could not find a way out."

- The elders of Quraysh met in Dar al-Nadwah to decide what to do with the Prophet.
- Abu Jahal says:

"O Quraysh! Nobody among the Arabs is more beloved to God than we. We are the people of God. Arabs come to us twice a year and honor us. Here in the sanctuary of God, no one dares touch us. We were always like this until Muḥammad ibn Abdillah grew up in our midst. We used to call him al-Amīn for his righteousness and surety and truthfulness.

"Then he came into his prime, and we honored him, and then he claimed that he was the messenger of God and that news from the sky comes to him. He called us idiots, denounced our gods, corrupted our youth, and created rifts in our society, and he believed that our elders who had died are in fire. Nothing he said was more heinous than this.

Now I have an idea to deal with him."

- He proposes that they choose an assassin to kill him; others propose house arrest, and banishment. Iblīs shows them how each of these solutions is insufficient. He then proposes that one man from each clan kill him together so that Bani Hashim has no allies to help them retaliate.
- According the Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, it is Abū Jahl himself who had the idea of assassinating him altogether
- Interestingly they were willing to observe the Hāshimī's right to blood money. They were willing to pay 10 times what was normally due.

يا علي، ان الروح هبط علي يخبرني أن قريش اجتمعت على المكر بي وقتلي، وانه أوحي إلى عن ربي عز وجل أن أهجر دار قومي وأن أنطلق إلى غار ثور تحت ليلتي، وإنه أمرني أن آمرك بالمبيت على مضجعي لتخفي بمبيتك عليه أثري، فما أنت صانع؟

 Gabriel exposes the plot to the Prophet and tells him to command Imam Ali to lie in his bed as a decoy so that the Prophet may escape.
 Imam Ali's response is:

أو تسلمن بمبيتي هناك يا نبي الله؟ قال: نعم. فتبسم علي ضاحكا وأهوى إلى الأرض ساجدا شكرا لما أنبأه رسول الله به من سلامته،

"And will you remain safe by me sleeping in your place? When the Prophet said yes, he smiled and prostrated on the ground in gratitude that the Prophet could escape.

When darkness sets in, the assassins surround the Prophet's house.
 He bids Ali farewell and recites the verse 36:9 as he escapes unnoticed:

"And We have put before them a barrier and behind them a barrier and covered them, so they do not see."

• Ali lies in his place as the assassins make their move at midnight. Before they can kill him, he alerts them of his identity. They capture him and imprison him for a while and then let him go.

"And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking the pleasure of God. And God is kind to [His] servants." Quran 2:207

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُتْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ ٱللَّهُ وَٱللَّهُ خَيْرُ ٱلْمَاكِرِينَ

"And [remember, O Muhammad], when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or evict you [from Makkah]. But they plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners." Quran 8:30

- Imam Ali's main tasks are to return all the trusts that had been deposited with the Prophet and to bring the "Fawāṭim" (Fāṭimah his wife, Fāṭimah his mother, and Fāṭimah bint al- Zubayr) and any other Hāshimī that had been left behind including Umm Ayman.
- The Quraysh offer 100 camels to anyone who brings Muhammad back to Mecca.

- Why was Abu Bakr with the Prophet?
- This is one of the mysteries of the seerah and our scholars have tried to come to a conclusion based on the analysis of some reports:
 - 1. When he discovered that Imam Ali was in the bed of the Prophet, he asked where the Prophet was, and the Imam said he was near the wells of Maymoona (vague answer)
 - 2. It was a pure coincidence, and the Prophet took him with him.

قال ابن إسحاق: ولم يعلم فيما بلغني ، بخروج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أحد ، حين خرج ، إلا علي بن أبي طالب ، وأبو بكر الصديق ، وآل أبي بكر . أما علي فإن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم - فيما بلغني - أخبره بخروجه ، وأمره أن يتخلف بعده بمكة ، حتى يؤدي عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الودائع ، التي كانت عنده للناس ،

Ibn Ishaq states: "No one knew about the Prophet's escape from Mecca other than Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abu Bakr and the family of Abu Bakr. As for Ali, the Prophet informed him and commanded him to remain behind so that he could return the trusts that the people would deposit with him."

• Ibn Ishaq reports:

فأتاهم آت ممن لم يكن معهم ، فقال : ما تنتظرون هاهنا ؟ قالوا : محمدا ؛ قال : خيبكم الله قد والله خرج عليكم محمد ، ثم ما ترك منكم رجلا إلا وقد وضع على رأسه ترابا ، وانطلق لحاجته ، أفما ترون ما بكم ؟

[As the assassins surrounded the Prophet's house] someone can to them who was not one of them and asked: "What are you waiting for?" They said: "Muhammad". He said: "By God he has escaped! And he has not left a single one of you without having dirt on your head. Do you not see?! What is the matter with you?!

قال: فوضع كل رجل منهم يده على رأسه ، فإذا عليه تراب ، ثم جعلوا يتطلعون فيرون عليا على الفراش متسجيا ببرد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، فيقولون: والله إن هذا لمحمد نائما ، عليه برده . فلم يبرحوا كذلك حتى أصبحوا فقام على رضى الله عنه عن الفراش

"So every man placed his hand on his head and found it covered with dirt...."

- Rather than taking the usual northern route to Medina, the Prophet travels 5 miles south of Mecca to a cave in Mount Thawr.
- One of the search parties ascends Mount Thawr and approaches the cave where the Prophet and Abu Bakr are hiding.
- Their presence goes unnoticed thanks to a freshly spun spider web over the mouth of the cave and a nesting dove perched overhead, lending the area a deserted and undisturbed appearance.
- Near the cave of Thawr the Prophet asks a shepherd to guide them to Medina in secrecy.

حَدَّثَنَا عَفَّانُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا هَمَّامٌ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا ثَابِتٌ، عَنْ أَنَس، أَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ، حَدَّثَهُ قَالَ قُلْتُ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ فِي الْغَارِ وَقَالَ مَرَّةً وَنَحْنُ فِي الْغَارِ لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ نَظَرَ إِلَى قَدَمَيْهِ لَأَبْصَرَنَا تَحْتَ قَدَمَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ فِي الْغَارِ وَقَالَ مَرَّةً وَنَحْنُ فِي الْغَارِ لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَهُمْ نَظَرَ إِلَى قَدَمَيْهِ لَأَبْصَرَنَا تَحْتَ قَدَمَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ فِي الْغَارِ وَقَالَ مَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ مَا ظَنَّكَ بِاثْنَيْنِ اللهُ ثَالِثُهُمَا.

"I said to the Prophet when he was in the cave - on one occasion he said: When we were in the cave -: If one of them looks at his feet, he will see us beneath his feet. He said: `O Abu Bakr, what do you think of two, of whom Allah is the third?`

Source: Sahih Al-Bukhari

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ ٱللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ ٱثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي ٱلْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَلَح بِهِ ۖ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ ٱللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَ بِهِ ۖ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهُ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ ٱللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَ فَرُوا ٱلسُّقْلَىٰ وَكَلِمَةُ ٱللّهِ هِيَ ٱلْعُلْيَا وَٱللّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ فَرُوا ٱلسُّقْلَىٰ وَكَلِمَةُ ٱللّهِ هِيَ ٱلْعُلْيَا وَٱللّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

"If you will not help him, God certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion: Grieve not, surely God is with us. So God sent down His tranquillity upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved; and the word of God, that is the highest; and God is Mighty, Wise." Quran 9:40

- Why is this verse not a virtue of Abu Bakr?
- 1. The expression of ثَانِىَ اَتْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِى الْغَارِ is only a reference to the number of people in the cave. Being physically present with the Prophet in a place is not a sign of distinction. Many verses highlight that the hypocrites were often sitting with the Prophet.
- 2. The Prophet called Abu Bakr his "companion". This also does not denote merit because the Quran employs the term companion for both disbelievers and believers.

"O [my] two companions of prison, are separate lords better or God, the One, the Prevailing?" Quran 12:39

"His companion said to him while he was conversing with him, "Have you disbelieved in He who created you from dust and then from a sperm-drop and then proportioned you [as] a man?" Quran 18:37

"Then be patient for the decision of your Lord, [O Muhammad], and be not like the companion of the fish when he called out while he was distressed." Quran 68:48

- 3. Why did the Prophet say to Abu Bakr: لَا تَحْزَنُ "Don't grieve..." Normally you would tell someone not to fear in such a situation. This could indicate that Abu Bakr knew that the disbelievers wouldn't kill him. He wasn't afraid. He was grieving over something that he lost or missed.
- 4. The Prophet's statement: God is with us is not a merit for Abu Bakr because God is with everyone. The pronouns "us" could be a reference to the Prophet himself.

- 5. The verse clearly states that only one person in the cave received tranquility from God.
- The context indicates that it was only the Prophet who received tranquility and it was denied to Abu Bakr. The Quran in other verses highlights that God sends down "tranquility" upon the Prophet and believers during moments of great hardship:

"When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts zealous ignorance of the time of ignorance. But God sent down His tranquillity upon His Messenger and upon the believers..." Quran 48: 26

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ ٱللهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَخُلِكَ جَزَآءُ ٱلْكَافِرِينَ

"Then God sent down His tranquillity upon His Messenger and upon the believers and sent down soldier's, angels whom you did not see and punished those who disbelieved. And that is the recompense of the disbelievers." Quran 9:26

هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنزَلَ ٱلسَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوٓا إِيمَانًا مَّعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَبِلَهِ جُنُودُ ٱلسَّمَاوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَ لِيمًا حَكِيمًا

"It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith. And to God belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth, and ever is God Knowing and Wise." Quran 48:4

وَ كَانَ خُرُوجُ رَسُولِ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) مِنْ مَكَّةَ فِي أَوَّلِ بَوْمٍ مِنْ رَبِيعٍ الْأَوَّلِ وَ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْمَبْعَثِ الْمَبْعَثِ الْمَبْعَثِ الْخَمِيسِ مِنْ سَنَةِ ثَلَاثَ عَشْرَةَ مِنَ الْمَبْعَثِ

When Imam Al-Sajjad was asked about the hijrah, he said:

"And the departure of Messenger of God from Mecca was during the first of the Rabi-ul-Awwal, and that was the day of Thursday in the 13 year AB

وَ قَدِمَ الْمَدِينَةَ لِاثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ لَيْلَةً خَلَتْ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَبِيعِ الْأُوَّلِ مَعَ زَوَالِ الشَّمْسِ فَنَزَلَ بِقُبَا فَصلَّى الظُّهْرَ رَكْعَتَيْنِ وَ الْعَصْرَ رَكْعَتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَزَلْ مُقِيماً يَنْتَظِرُ عَلِيّاً (عليه السلام) يُصلِّي الْخَمْسَ صلَوَاتٍ رَكْعَتَيْنِ وَ كَانَ نَازِلًا عَلَى عَمْرِو بْنِ عَوْفٍ فَأَقَامَ عِنْدَهُمْ بِضْعَةَ عَشَرَ يَوْماً صَلَوَاتٍ رَكْعَتَيْنِ وَ كَانَ نَازِلًا عَلَى عَمْرِو بْنِ عَوْفٍ فَأَقَامَ عِنْدَهُمْ بِضْعَةَ عَشَرَ يَوْماً

and he arrived at the outskirts of Medina after twelve nights from the Month of Rabbi Ul-Awwal with the sun reaching its zenith. So he descended at Quba, and prayed dhuhr two units, and asr two units. Then he remained there awaiting Ali. He prayed five prayers of two units, two units. And he stayed at (the house of) Amr ibn Awf for about ten days"

يَقُولُونَ لَهُ أَ تُقِيمُ عِنْدَنَا فَنَتَّخِذَ لَكَ مَنْزِلًا وَ مَسْجِداً فَيَقُولُ لَا إِنِّي أَنْتَظِرُ عَلِيَّ بْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ وَ قَدْ أَمَرْتُهُ أَنْ يَلْحَقَنِي وَ لَسْتُ مُسْتَوْطِناً مَنْزِلًا حَتَّى يَقْدَمَ عَلِيٌّ وَ مَا أَسْرَعَهُ إِنْ شَاءَ الله

"They were saying to him: 'Stay with us, so we will build for you a house and a Masjid'. So he said; 'No. I am awaiting Ali ibn Abi Talib, and have ordered him to meet me, and will not settle in a house until Ali comes, and he will not be long, God willing.

فَقَالَ سَعِيدُ بْنُ الْمُسَيَّبِ لِعَلِيّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ (عليه السلام) جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ كَانَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) إلى قُبَا فَنَزَلَ وآله) حِينَ أَقْبَلَ إِلَى الله عليه وآله) إلى قُبَا فَنَزَلَ بِهِمْ يَنْتَظِرُ قُدُومَ عَلِيّ (عليه السلام) فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ انْهَضْ بِنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَإِنَّ الْقَوْمَ قَدْ فَرِحُوا بِقَدُومِكَ وَهُمْ بِهِمْ يَنْتَظِرُ قُدُومَ عَلَيْكَ إِلَيْهِمْ فَانْطَلِقْ بِنَا وَ لَا تَقُمْ هَاهُنَا تَنْتَظِرُ عَلِيّاً فَمَا أَظُنّهُ يَقْدَمُ عَلَيْكَ إِلَى شَهْرٍ

Sa'id ibn Musayyib asked:

Abu Bakr was with the Messenger of God when he arrived in Medina. So when did he separate from him?'

The Imam said: 'Abu Bakr was with him when the Messenger of God proceeded to Quba, and he decided to wait for Ali. So Abu Bakr said to him, 'Come with us to Medina, for the people would rejoice at your arrival there and are eager to welcome you. So come with us and do not stay over here waiting for Ali, from what I can see, it would take him a month to come to you.'

فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) كَلَّا مَا أَسْرَعَهُ وَ لَسْتُ أَرِيمُ حَتَّى يَقْدَمَ ابْنُ عَمِّى وَ أَجِي فِي اللهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ أَحَبُّ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي إِلَيَّ فَقَدْ وَقَانِي بِنَفْسِهِ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَالَ فَغَضِبَ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَ اللهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي إِلَيَّ فَقَدْ وَقَانِي بِنَفْسِهِ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَالَ فَغَضِبَ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَ اللهَ عَلَى مَنْ ذَلِكَ مَنْ ذَلِكَ مَسْدُ لِعَلِي إِعليه السلام) وَ كَانَ ذَلِكَ أَوَّلَ عَدَاوَةٍ بَدَتْ مِنْهُ لِرَسُولِ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) فَانْطَلَقَ الله عليه وآله) فَانْطَلَقَ مَتْ مَلْ الله عليه وآله) بِقُبَا يَنْتَظِرُ عَلِيّاً مَا الله عليه وآله وَ تَخَلَّفَ رَسُولُ الله عليه وآله) بِقُبَا يَنْتَظِرُ عَلِيّاً

So the Messenger of God said to him: 'Never! He will not be long, and I will not move until my cousin, and my brother for the sake of God, and the most beloved to me of my Family comes over, for he saved me from the polytheists by being in my place'. He said; 'So Abu Bakr was angry and was disgusted by it, and envy for Ali entered into him due to that, and that was the first enmity initiated from him to the Messenger of God with regards to Ali, and the first of his opposition to the Messenger of God. So he went until he entered Medina, and left the Messenger of God at Quba waiting for Ali."