

Hudaibiyah Agreement (628 CE)

In the sixth year of the *Hijrah* (هجرة), the Prophet ﷺ announced his intention to pay a visit to *al-Ka'bah* in *Makkah* for a short pilgrimage (*Umrah* عمرة). He set out with 1400 of his followers who were under strict orders not to carry any weapons, except their traveller's swords.

The *Quraish* of *Makkah* knew full well that the only purpose of the Prophet's visit was for pilgrimage, but how could they let the Muslims enter *Makkah* when they had not been able to enter *Madinah*? The Muslims, they decided, must be stopped.

Plans were put in hand. The top generals — *Khālid* and *'Ikrimah* خالد وعكرمة — were alerted to be ready with their armies to stop the Prophet ﷺ and his followers from entering *Makkah*.

The Muslims continued their journey to *Makkah* until they had reached a place called *Hudaibiyah* الحُدَيْبِيَّة. Steps were taken to find out what sort of mood the *Quraish* were in; it was clear they were in no mood to let the Muslims into *Makkah*, they were in the mood for a battle.

The *Quraish* on their part gathered information about the strength and armoury of the Muslims and realised they had come for no other purpose than the pilgrimage to *al-Ka'bah*. Envoys were sent from each side. The Prophet ﷺ made his intentions crystal clear to the *Quraish* through his envoy but the *Quraish* misbehaved with the Muslim envoy and threatened the Muslims. The patience of the Muslims was put to a severe test. They could teach the *Quraish* a good lesson even with their traveller's swords, but Allāh's Prophet ﷺ ordered them to show extreme restraint.

The *Quraish* were determined not to allow the Muslims into *Makkah* for the pilgrimage that year. They made it an issue of prestige and pride. It was humiliating for the Muslims, but what could they do? Allāh's messenger was their leader and all his steps were guided by Allāh, so they had to be followed.

Eventually, after intense negotiations, an agreement between the *Quraish* and the Prophet ﷺ was signed. This agreement is the *Hudaibiyah* agreement.

The terms of the agreement were:

The terms of the agreement were apparently against the Muslims, but they eventually turned out to be favourable for them. Later events proved beyond doubt that the agreement gave rare opportunities to Muslims to gain decisive victory.

The Muslims were disheartened but they were soon given the news of victory by Allāh. It was revealed: "Surely we have granted you a clear victory." (48:1)

We might wonder in what way was this one-sided treaty a victory? The treaty eased the long years of tension and made possible communication between the two parties. The *Makkans* could now come to *Madinah* and stay with the Muslims; this provided an opportunity for the Muslims to influence the stone-heartedness of the *Makkans*. In fact, during the years that followed the *Hudaibiyah* treaty, the number of new Muslims increased dramatically. *Khālid bin al-Walīd* (خالد بن الوليد) who later became the most famous general in Islamic history, and *'Amr bin al-'As* (عمر بن العاص) the conqueror of Egypt, became Muslims during this time.

The treaty proved beyond doubt that the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims stood for peace. It also paved the way for the escape of the detained Muslims in *Makkah*, as the extradition clause was later dropped on the initiative of the *Makkans*.

The *Hudaibiyah* agreement also opened the way to the conquest of *Makkah* in 630 CE — the eighth year of *Hijrah*.

During the years that followed the *Hudaibiyah* treaty, the Prophet ﷺ sent emissaries to the *Roman Emperor*, the *Persian Emperor*, the ruler of Egypt, the King of Abyssinia, the chiefs of *ash-Shām* and other leaders, inviting them to accept Islam.