

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْوُلْدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

Allah Almighty, in Whose Name we begin, The Most Compassionate,

The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah Almighty, Countless Peace and Blessings be upon
His Beloved Messenger – *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* – his family & his
companions – *may Allah be pleased with them all*

Hercules Learns about the Holy Prophet

It was the 6th year of Hijrah when the treaty of Hudaibiyah was signed. It was agreed that there will be no war or aggression between the Meccans and the Muslims. In this way, the entire Arab region was a place where no battles were taking place. Trade caravans could go and come wherever that wanted to. The Muslims took full advantage of this.

In fact, it was at this time that the message of Islam spread to all parts of the region and even outside Arabia. The Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - sent letters to various leaders in the region to accept Islam. The Roman Empire was considered as the super power of its era. In fact, very recently, it had defeated the Persian Empire and once again gained a stronghold in the region.

The Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - sent a letter to the Emperor of Rome. His name was Hercules. The historians say that he was originally from Greece.

The letter was sent with Hadrat Sayyiduna Dahiyah bin Khalifah Kalbi - *may Allah be pleased with him* – who was from the famous tribe of the Banu Kalb. It is reported that he was extremely handsome and even Jibra'eel Ameen appeared in his appearance on a few occasions.

At that time, Hercules had come to Baitul Muqaddas from Hums. What was his purpose of coming here, this we will find out later.

Bear in mind that since the Persians and the Romans considered each other as super powers, there were always wars between them. In fact, attacking each and then enslaving the subjects of each other was a common practise among them.

The actual seat of power of the Romans was in Italy. The area under Hercules was actually a principle state of the Romans. The Romans had also captured parts of Syria prior to 64 B.C. and their rule continued for a long time. Bear in mind that the Romans were also idol-worshippers. However, later on, one of their rulers named Constantine accepted Christianity.

They were also divided into two religions, those who were in Constantinople were idol-worshippers and those who were in Rome were Roman Catholics. As for the Persian Empire, it was a government which was filled with intrigue, internal strife, jealousy and all round misery. There were major internal battles going on for power and wealth. After losing the battle against the Romans, the ruler of Persia, namely Khusroe Pervez, was killed by his son, Sherowiyah, and he became the supreme leader Persia. Khusroe was a very evil and despicable person and he had torn up the letter of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*.

In fact, his objection was that, how was it that the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - had written his name before Khusroe's name. This was the depth of their ignorance and Jahaalat. When the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - heard what this idiot had done with his letter, he mentioned to

the blessed Ashaab that this person had actually torn up his own kingdom. By now everyone is aware that this is what happened a few years later.

The peace accord between the Persians and Romans were signed with the condition that the Persians surrender the land captured from the Romans and they also return a cross which the Romans claimed that Jesus (Nabi 'Isa – *peace be upon him*) was crucified on. This is the reason that the Emperor had left Hums and come to Baitul Muqaddas to give thanks for this victory. History also claims that that Emperor ruled the Byzantine Empire from 610 to 641. When the Persians reached Baitul Muqaddas in the year 614, they had nearly destroyed the entire city.

This is when it is reported that they had taken this so-called original cross and taken it to Madaa'in. The news of the defeat of the Romans is also mentioned in Surah Rum. In fact, this was also one of the news of the Unseen which is to be found in the Qur'an. In 624, the Romans finally defeated the Persians and this is also the time when the Muslims were celebrating victory at the Battle of Badr. It is reported that the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - sent a letter to Hercules either in 628 or 629.

As we have said, this was considered a time of peace and hence, Abu Sufyan was urged by the Meccans to prepare a trade caravan as the trade of the Meccans were badly affected through their hostility with the Muslims. Abu Sufyan prepared the caravan and he was to be the leader of this caravan. It is said that every person in Mecca had some share in this caravan.

It is mentioned that when the letter of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - reached Heracles, at that moment, the Meccan caravan had reached the city of Ghazzah in Palestine and had camped there.

When Heracles received this letter, he displayed great respect for it. It is said that he kissed the letter, placed sweet fragrance on it and placed it in a leather pouch. The majority of people are under the impression that the letter of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - which is found in the Istanbul Museum is actually this same letter. It is also mentioned that he displayed great respect for Hadrat Sayyiduna Dahiyah Kalbi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - and gave him plenty of

gifts and presents. Heracles also commanded his soldiers to make sure that as long as this person is in the city, he should be well protected.

Heracles then called a meeting of his top advisers and asked them to go and search the market place for another Arab, preferably from the Quraish Tribe who might be in the city at that moment. He wanted to question this person on the actual character of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. They managed to find Abu Sufyan and his band of travellers. They were then presented in the court of Heracles within the Baitul Muqaddas.

The court of Heracles was finely decorated and there were senior government officials that were also present. Many of them were also fluent in Arabic. However, Heracles adopted the policy of using a translator. Heracles was sitting on his throne and on his head was his royal crown. He asked these people to step forward and also inquired from them who was the closest family to this person who was claiming Prophethood. Obviously, Abu Sufyan stepped forward and when he was questioned about his relationship with the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - he replied that the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - was the son of his own blood uncle.

The conversation between the both.

Heracles then ordered that the rest of the Arab delegation step back and only Abu Sufyan was to come forward. The translator was also told to inform the rest of the delegation that certain questions would be asked to Abu Sufyan and if they felt that he was speaking a lie, they should immediately correct this. Abu Sufyan admits, "I swear by Allah! If I was not afraid that people would call me a liar, I would have certainly spoken lies against the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - at that moment."

In other words, this also proves that in every generation, the famous and influential have always considered speaking the truth as a noble attribute. In fact, lies was considered a most evil attribute. Abu Sufyan also mentions that he knew that if he spoke any lie, his own companions would refute him. However, since Abu Sufyan considered himself as a true leader, he did not have the intention of speaking a lie. Abu Sufyan also knew that if he returned home after he spoke lies, his own people would publicly call him a liar.

The interview then began.

Heracles asked him, “What is the family lineage of this Prophet?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “His family lineage is the most excellent.”

Heracles asked, “Did someone prior to him also laid claim to being a Prophet?”

Abu Sufyan replied that no one prior to him had made this claim.

Heracles asked, “Was there ever a king among his ancestors?”

Abu Sufyan replied that no, there were no kings among the ancestors of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*.

Heracles asked Abu Sufyan whether the rich and famous had accepted his message or the poor and weak.

Abu Sufyan replied that that poor and weak had accepted the message of Islam.

Heracles asked, “Are his followers increasing or decreasing?”

Abu Sufyan replied that the Muslims were increasing every minute.

Heracles asked, “Have there been people who had accepted his message and then gone against it?”

Abu Sufyan replied that none of his followers had gone against his message.

Heracles asked, “Whatever he has claimed, were there any moments in the past where he was accused of speaking lies?”

Abu Sufyan replied that the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - was never ever accused of speaking lies.

Heracles asked, “Has he ever broken his promises or oaths?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “At this time, there is a pact and agreement between us and I do not know what will happen in the future.” Abu Sufyan mentioned that he could not find a place to add another word in this regard.

Heracles asked whether there had been wars between both and what was the result of these battles.

Abu Sufyan replied that at times, they won and at times, he won.

Heracles then asked him to explain what the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - calls to.

Abu Sufyan replied, “He says that we should worship only One Creator Who is Allah. We should never associate any partners with Him. We should also refrain from the false beliefs and practises of our forefathers. He also teaches to be kind to family, he invites towards worship, towards piety and towards goodness.”

The effect of this conversation on Heracles.

After he had spoken to Abu Sufyan, Heracles turned to his interpreter and said, “I want you to make it plain to this person (Abu Sufyan) that I had asked him about the family lineage of this Prophet and he admitted that indeed he comes from the most noble of family lineage. There is also no doubt that it has always been a fact that a Prophet comes from the most eminent of families.

“I asked him whether anyone among them had made this claim and he said that no one previously had made this claim. In fact, if there was anyone who had made this claim previously, I would been under the impression that this person was trying to impersonate someone else before him.

“I asked him whether there were any kings among his ancestors and he admitted that there were no kings in his family before. If there were kings, then I would have been under the impression that perhaps this person wanted to reclaim his throne.

“I asked him whether this person was ever accused of lying previously, and he admitted that no, he had never been accused of lying. Therefore, if this person cannot be accused of lying against people, how can he be accused of lying against Allah Almighty?

“I asked him whether the powerful follow him or the weak and he admitted that the weak and poor follow this Prophet. This has always been the case with the Prophet that it mostly the weak and poor who follow him.

“I asked him whether people who accept the new religion leave this new religion and he admitted that none of these people have left the new religion. There is no doubt that when belief is impressed and accepted in the heart of someone, he never turns away.

“I asked him whether he goes against his promise or oath and he admitted that this person never goes against his oath or promise. This is certainly the quality of a Prophet who never goes against his promise or oath.

“I asked him about which this Prophet calls to and he admitted that he calls to the worship One Creator and toward good behaviour.

“If this is what has been admitted by this person, then very soon, this person will even become the owner of the ground below my feet. I knew that there was a Prophet who would arrive in later years, however, I did not know that he would arrive among you people. If I knew that I would reach him, I would certainly meet him and if I am present in front of him, I would certainly wash his blessed feet.”

After this, Heracles called for the letter and read it himself. After he had completed this letter, there were murmurs in the court. Abu Sufyan mentions, “Heracles then ordered us to leave the court and when we came outside, I mentioned to my companions that indeed the influence of the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - had reached great heights and even the Romans are afraid of him. From that moment onwards, I realised that the religion of Islam would certainly prevail over all

other religions until Allah Almighty also opened my heart and I accepted the message of Islam.” (Sahih Bukhari Shareef, Fathul Bari)

As we mentioned earlier, the Emperor of Rome also handed a lot of presents and gifts to Hadrat Sayyiduna Dahiyah Kalbi - *may Allah be pleased with him* - but on his way back to Madina Shareef, he was ambushed and all of these presents were captured by the Bani Jazzaam. When the Holy Prophet - *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* - heard about this, he sent a battalion of five hundred men under the command of Hadrat Sayyiduna Zaid bin Haaritha - *may Allah be pleased with him* - who finally crushed the power of this clan. (A Raheeq Al Makhtum)