

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
(1789 A.D.)

VERSUS

THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION
(609 - 632 A.D.)

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It is by sheer coincidence that the date of the French Revolution this year has fallen on the same date i.e. 14th August, as that of the Islamic Revolution fourteen hundred years ago on the occasion of the Last Haj Pilgrimage performed by the Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Both these occasions mark the inception of an era of Fundamental Rights of Man with the solemn declaration of Liberty, Equality, Justice and Fraternity.

The French Revolution has caught the imagination of the world specially the Western World, and France has accordingly commemorated the Bicentennial of the Revolution on this date, and about forty countries have participated in the celebration.

The episode of the French Revolution occurred with the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789 A. D. when its gates were burst open by the furious mob of the French nation, heralding a period of liberty with slogans of equality, fraternity and justice which went up in jubilation of the freedom acquired by the nation from the the freedom of the monarchist regime, and the feudal order of government then prevailing.

"It was the best of time and it was the worst of time" observed Charles Dickens about this Revolution. For withal the enjoyment in

exuberation of the freedom and liberty so attained, the fury of the mob was roused and knew no bounds, and a reign of terror ensued. The leaders of the revolution like Rousseau, Robespierre, Danton, Voltaire etc., took the reins of government in their hands, and played havoc with the lives of the King and Queen, and all other functionaries of the monarchist regime who were taken captive and beheaded mercilessly. The voracious guillotine was set up in Parisian Square and began to chop the heads of the ruling junta indiscriminately and mercilessly. The gory revolution then reigned supreme, and no quarter was given to any one associated with or suspected of alliance with the monarchist regime. Even some of the revolutionary leaders fell victim to the insatiable guillotine. It is estimated that throughout France, some 35000 people died on the scaffold. However, the crusade of equality, fraternity and justice did not last long, and was succeeded by the Napoleonic regime of absolute despotism. And only the revolutionary concept of democracy remained to be emulated by the generations which followed.

The Islamic Revolution :

Fourteen hundred years ago, however, a far greater and more lasting Revolution had taken place for the uplift and emancipation of mankind from bondage of sin and all social evils that hamper man to attain his goal of freedom and salvation for good till the end of time. It was the Advent of Islam 609 A.D. to 632 A.D. that ushered in an era of Equality, Fraternity and Justice in the annals of humanity.

The Islamic Revolution started with the first Revelation from On High conveyed by the archangel Gabriel to the Holy Prophet, Mohammad (Peace be upon him), in the cave of Hira on the night of 609 A.D. in the month of Ramazan. The Angel spoke to the Holy Prophet thus – "Read in the name of thy Lord, who created man

from a clot. Read, and thy Lord is most generous, who taught (man to write with the pen). He taught man what he knew not" (96: 1-5). In spite of the Holy Prophet's plea of his inability to read, the Angel made him to read the above revelation by hugging him. The Holy Prophet then realized for the first time that the heavy responsibility of Prophethood was placed on his shoulders and that he had been entrusted with the stupendous charge of human reformation. And thus the era of Islamic Revolution was inducted on 609 A.D.

The term 'revolution' is generally associated with a violent and radical disturbance in the social fabric of a country or a nation. But this was not so in the case of the Islamic revolution, which took place by peaceful means in the course of twenty three years. The change was brought about in the outlook of man, and the task of regeneration and reformation was accomplished through persuasion, indoctrination and conviction in the Truth of Faith, that is, the Religion of Islam. The conversion of the people from the prevalent idolatry to Islam was slow and acrimonious in the process, but the converts were so firm in their faith that they were prepared to undergo the severest afflictions perpetrated by the unbelievers, who had by now stood up in opposition to the new religion as they termed Islam. It is related that the believers were subjected to most inhuman persecutions, the account of which is so shocking to relate as to raise the hair on end, and send spasms of horror, but it speaks volumes for the conviction of the believers, who suffered these persecutions without flinching or retraction from the faith they had embraced. Oh – for the horrors of persecution, which however, failed absolutely to shake the faith of the believer converts. But despite all this persecution, Islam made progress and a number of believers gathered round the Holy Prophet in support of the religion Islam. But this did suit the inimical intentions of their persecutors so that the believers had to resort to migration in the first instance to their neighbouring Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia for asylum. Even this was not enough, till the Muslims left with the

Holy Prophet (PBUH) had no option but to migrate to Madinah and the historic event of the Flight took place when the Holy Prophet himself accompanied by his faithful companion, Abu Bakar, took to flight to Madinah by traversing a distance of about three hundred miles of a desolate country on camel back.

The Flight of the Holy Prophet from Makkah to Madina stands as a landmark and holds a paramount importance in the history of Islam. In fact this event is looked upon as the new birth of Islam, when Islam received a new phase of life which ultimately brought about the triumph of Islam. Thus the Muslim calendar dates not from the first call in the cave of Hira, but from the time of Prophet's Flight, which took place in the fourteenth year of the call. After leaving Makkah secretly at night, and undergoing severe hardships of refuge in the cave of Saur, the Holy Prophet accomplished the journey to Madina in eight days accompanied by Abu Bakar, and arrived there on the 12th of Rabi I corresponding to June 28, A.D. 622; which thus marks the beginning of the Islamic Calendar. On arrival, the Holy Prophet first stopped at Quba in the outskirts of Madina, where a mosque was built, a mosque which is still called the Mosque of Quba. After stay here for a few days, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) proceeded to Madina proper where he finally settled till the end of his life.

The first thing the Holy Prophet (PBUH) did on his arrival at Madina was the formation of a community of Muslim brotherhood by knitting the migrant Muslims with the resident Madina Muslims in a bond of brotherhood so closely as beyond any blood-kinship so that the emigrant Muslims equally shared the property and monetary possessions of the Medinite Muslims. It was a unique brotherhood which the world has ever witnessed. Next he addressed himself to the entire population of Madina, which consisted of a number of clans and tribes of Arabs, who were mostly Jews, a number of whom had turned Muslims on the arrival of the Holy

Prophet (PBUH). These tribes were always at war with each other, and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) knit them in bond friendship under a Treaty, known as the treaty of Madina. Under the terms of the Treaty, they were welded together to keep peace, to freely observe their religious obligations and to help each other in case of any attack from outside through inimical excursions. The steps taken by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) were undoubtedly conducive to peace in Madina, but this was not to the liking of the evil designs of the Makkan opposition and their allies, who wanted to extirpate Muslims altogether. So they began to send expeditions from time to time to create trouble for the Muslims, and finally rose up in arms, and marched with a big army on Madina to engage the small number of Muslims in Madina in battle and destroy them completely. This led to the first battle at Badar in the outskirts of Madina, which in spite of the unequipped small band of Muslims resulted in defeat and complete route of the Makka opposition army. However, the Makkan opposition did not rest content, and subsequent to their defeat at Badar, they engaged the Madina Muslims in a series of battles at Uhad, and in the battle of Ahzab or the battle of the Ditch, in which the Muslims entrenched themselves in Madina by digging a ditch around the town. The siege lasted about a month, and the besieged Muslims underwent considerable hardships. The Makkan army finally launched an attack but could not succeed due to the intervening ditch. And finally they suffered defeat, first in duel battles, with Muslims; lastly as if Divine Aid had come to the help of the Muslims, the forces of nature caused havoc in the enemy camp in the form of a deadly severe storm which lashed upon their camp with a devastating fury which they could hardly withstand and had to flee in complete disarray.

The Truce of Hudaibiya

The Truce of Hudaibiya or Bait-e-Rizwan also called the 'Truce under the Tree', marks a most critical period in the history of Islam, but was, in fact, a victory for Islam.

The battle of Ahzab had established the fact that Islam was supported by the Divine Hand. The Quraish had done their utmost in two successive battles Badar and Uhad, but could do little harm to Islam. The various Beduin tribes, too had exerted themselves severally, but had failed to shake the firm foothold of Islam. The hypocrites and the Jews sought in vain to undermine Islam from within. At last, Quraish, Beduins, hypocrites and Jews made a combined attempt against Islam, but failed. This was the final struggle, and never thereafter did the enemy gather courage to assail Madina. These are historical facts, admitted alike by friend and foe, yet the cry is raised that Islam owes its propagation to the instrumentality of the sword. The facts recorded on pages of history point exactly to the reverse. The Truth remains that Islam spread not by the sword, but in spite of the sword. The sword fell on the Faith from all sides, but instead of destroying it, it helped as it were to spread it.

How the Truce of Hudaibiya turned into victory for Islam is nothing short of a miracle. How it came about – it happened thus - About a year had elapsed since the battle of Ahzab when the Prophet saw in a vision that he, with his companions, was performing the pilgrimage at Kabah. It was thought that the Quraish as well as Beduins, were at last impressed with Islam's inherent strength. It was also thought that they might likewise be impressed with its truth, and would not therefore, offer resistance to Muslims performing the pilgrimage. Besides, the pilgrimage to Kabah was a privilege never denied ever to the worst of enemies. There was thus no reason why the Quraish should stand in the way of Muslims. Consequently in the year 6 A.H. the Holy Prophet (PBUH) with about 1400 companions, started on an 'Umrah' to Makkah. By way of precaution, lest their motive should be misunderstood, it was strictly forbidden to carry arms, except a sheathed sword which in those days was almost a part of every day dress no matter how peaceful the state. Taking sacrificial animals with them as usual, they set out for Makkah. On approaching the

vicinity of the town, however, they found the Quraish ready to offer armed resistance. Budail, the Chief of the tribe of Khuzaah, not a Muslim but well disposed towards Islam, brought this intelligence to the Prophet (PBUH) who sent him back to tell the Quraish that the Muslims, had come to perform the pilgrimage and not fight. The Quraish, it was also proposed, might conclude peace with them for a certain period. Having sent this word to the Quraish, the Muslims, halted at the famous Hudaibiya a day's journey from Makkah.

Despite all possible allowances, the negotiations finally ended in fiasco. The emissaries of peace, sent to Quraish were maltreated, and finally when Usman was commissioned to negotiate, he was arrested and kept in custody. The Muslims had, thus, every reason to believe that the Quraish were bent upon fighting. It was a critical situation. The Muslims were practically unarmed and much smaller in number than the Quraish enemies, who had every advantage on their side. But when all negotiations had failed, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) called upon his companions to pledge themselves afresh that they would fight to the very last man in defence of their faith. Under a certain tree close by, the pledge was cheerfully taken. In the history of Islam, this goes by the name Baita-e-Rizwan, i.e., pledge to fight to death in the cause of Islam.

The Muslims' resolve to shed the last drop of their blood in the defence of their faith, brought the Quraish to their senses. Their past experience made them realize what such a resolve meant. Unarmed though the Muslims were, and numerically weak besides, the Quraish could foresee that disaster was in store for them should battle be joined. Thus chastened in spirits, they deputed one Suhail Amr to resume peace negotiations. A Truce was drawn up by restoring a state of peace between the two parties for a period of ten years. The main clauses of the treaty, though unfavourable to Muslims, were however, agreed upon as follows:

- (1) the Muslims shall this year return without performing the pilgrimage;
- (2) next year they may come, but shall not stay at Makkah longer than three days;
- (3) they shall not take with them any of the Muslims already living in Makkah, but, on the other hand they shall not stand in the way of any one from among themselves should he wish to remain to live at Makkah;
- (4) Should any of the Makkan go over to Madina, the Muslims shall hand him over to the Makkans, but if any of the Madinite Muslims should rejoin the Makkans, the latter shall not restore him to the Muslims;
- (5) The Arab tribes shall be at liberty to enter into alliance with whichever party they choose.

Obviously these terms were extremely distasteful to the Muslims, but out of regard for the Prophet's attitude, they kept quiet. Meanwhile Abut Jandal the son of Suhail appeared on the scene. He had embraced Islam at Makkah, and the Quraish tortured him on that account. At last, he managed to escape from the hands of his persecutors, and had now come to Muslim Camp expecting, of course to find a warm welcome there. He showed the scars of his torture to the Muslims, in order to be taken to Madina to join the Muslim brotherhood there. The Prophet (PBUH) was moved and tried to secure an exception to the fourth term of the agreement in favour of Abu Jandal. But Sohail was adamant, so the Prophet (PBUH) had to yield.

In brief, the Muslims felt much troubled on account of Abu Jandal, but they could do nothing about it. The Prophet (PBUH) observed that it was a crucial test of the Muslims word of honour

and they must accept it at all costs. He also consoled Abu Jandal, telling him that Allah would surely open a way for him.

On his return to Madinah, however, the Prophet (PBUH) received the Divine Revelation, "Surely We have given thee clear victory . . .". Chap. 48. So far every body was smarting under the humiliating terms of the treaty, but now the Chapter of al-Fatah (the victory) was on lips. That the truce of Hudaibiya also turned out to the triumph of Islam is borne out by the fact that on the occasion of his advance on Makkah about a year and a half later, the Prophet (PBUH) was accompanied by 10,000 comrades instead of the 1400 which was the number at the time of this truce. How to account for this remarkable rise in the number of Muslims. The fact is that the state of warfare which had so far prevailed between Muslims and non-Muslims had created a wide gulf between them. For the first time since the inception of Islamic movement, the gulf was bridged over for a considerable length of time by the Truce of Hudaibiya. This afforded non-Muslims an occasion calmly to ponder over the inherent virtues of Islam. Prior to this, the Arabs were bent upon the destruction of Islam. Now that the barrier was removed and normal intercourse with Muslims had been resumed, they were in a position carefully to study the morals and manners of Muslims. They came to understand for themselves that he neither favoured cutting asunder blood-ties nor was he a mischief – monger as they had supposed. The nobility of his nature and the beauty of his morals were now revealed to them. They realized that they had been the dupes of mis-presentation and that the Prophet's (PBUH) character was far above what had been depicted to them. Thus impressed with the sublimity of the Prophet's (PBUH) ideals, and the purity of his comrades lives, a large number of them joined the brotherhood of Islam. Thus the words of the Divine Revelation, which the Prophet (PBUH) had received on his way from Hudaibiya found fulfillment. "That Allah may rectify for thee that which has gone before of the faults attributed to thee, and that

which remains behind". Chap. 48:2. The fault imputed to him through malice were all removed, and his glorious personality was unveiled once more in all richness of its beauty. The words "that which remains behind" also contain a promise for the future, namely, any accusation brought against him at any future time announce the prophetic words: "shall not be allowed to stand, but shall similarly be washed away". One has only to watch the daily changing angle of vision of Europe towards the Prophet (PBUH) to appreciate the truth of this portion of the verse. The ugly caricature of his character that has been so far drawn, either through misconception or misrepresentation, is undergoing a marked change. Europe is now awakening to the nobility and purity of his character. General recognition of the true sublimity of the Prophet's (PBUH) life is bound to come, sooner or later, as foretold in the Quran.

That such harsh terms of the Truce of Hudaibiya should have been accepted by the Prophet (PBUH) was not without a set Divine purpose. The incident is eloquent testimony to the fact that warfare was held in abhorrence by him. There is little doubt that the Muslims regarded the terms of the Truce as derogatory to their faith and insisted on rejecting them. They had pledged to fight to the last man to vindicate the honour of Islam. In spite of this, with the slightest indication on the part of the enemy towards peace, the Prophet (PBUH) welcomed it with open arms. The Muslims had not been defeated, but the terms of the Treaty seemed to treat them as the vanquished party, yet the Prophet (PBUH) accepted them. It is a conclusive testimony to show how peace-loving the Prophet (PBUH) was. On the other hand, with a situation like this, the progress of Islam should have come, as a matter of course, to a stand still. But is it not remarkable that, on the contrary Islamic light spreads during this period at a tenfold pace. What is the one logical conclusion? Only that the intrinsic worth of Islam outweighs by far

the prospects of all tortures. The charm and beauty of Islam make its lover disregard all pains its acceptance may entail. Sufferings and afflictions sink into insignificance before the power and beauty of Truth. Here is another occasion for the critic to ponder. Should he call this the spreading of Islam by the sword or the spreading of Islam inspite of the enemy's sword.

Utbah, is another example of a daring convert to Islam, who was tortured no less ruthlessly by the Quraish and got a chance to decamp to Madina. But two envoys of the Quraish followed close upon his heels and demanded his extradition according to the truce of Hudaibiya. Like Abu Jandal, he also was advised by the Prophet (PBUH) to return to Makkah. Here again, the Prophet (PBUH), in accordance with his code of honour, showed a marvellous regard for his word, and did not shirk from strictly observing the terms of the pledge, and handed over Utbah to the Makkans. It is, however, another story of the firmness of Utbah's faith, how he escaped from the clutches of his Makkan captors, and settled at a place outside Makkah, but a sort of neutral zone which eventually formed into a fairly big settlement of Muslim refugees from Makkah, who were not subject to the terms of the truce of Hudaibiya. The growing strength of this settlement finally alarmed the Makkans on account of their command of the trade route of the Makkans, who then thoughts it expedient to withdraw the relevant clause from the term of the truce of Hydaibiyah.

That the truce of Hudaibiya was indeed a signal triumph of Islam is amply borne out by subsequent events. The numerical strength of the Muslims waxed manifold. Conquerors of fame, such as Khalid and Amr-ibn-As who as were once the pride of the enemy's ranks, now rallied to the standard of Islam. Peace thus achieved what no victory on the battle field, however, great, could have accomplished. The growing strength of the Muslims now led

the Prophet to expand the scope of Islam to the whole of Arabia and beyond its confines to the domains of the foreign sovereigns like Caesar of Rome, Chosroes of Persia, Negus of Abyssinia by sending emissaries of peace.

The Conquest of Makkah:

The conquest of Makkah is the greatest landmark in the spread of Islam in the whole of Arabia.

It was in sequence of contravention of certain terms of the truce of Hudaibiya on the part of the Quraish of Makkah, that the Prophet (PBUH) had to make preparations to proceed on an expedition against Makkah in order to uphold the terms of the Truce, which had been declared null and void by the Quraish. At last, at the head of ten thousand righteous followers the Prophet (PBUH) set out for Makkah on the tenth of Ramzan 8 A.H. This was also in fulfillment of Moses prophecy, when he said: "He came with ten thousand of Holy ones". (Deut. 33.2). The object with which these ten thousand soldiers gathered round the Prophet's banner was not conquest and blood-shed but the establishment of righteousness even though at the expense of their own blood. They encamped at Marral Zahran, a day's journey from Makkah. The strategy of the Prophet (PBUH) to avoid blood-shed is indicated by his directions to every member of the whole body of Muslims to kindle his own fire so as to impress the Quraish with the numerical strength of the Muslim force and thus obviate armed resistance and consequent blood-shed. Accordingly the Makkans surrendered without resistance.

The conquest of Makkah which meant the conquest of entire Arabia was thus accomplished peacefully without shedding any blood. The first to be presented to the Prophet (PBUH) was Abu Sufyan, his arch-enemy, now head of the enemy who had done his

utmost to extirpate Islam, who was surprisingly granted pardon by the magnanimity of the Great Mind, the Holy Prophet (PBUH). And now convinced of the final triumph of Islam inspite of its want of resources, and above all by the generous forgiveness of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the heart which had remained sealed against Islam for twenty long years, now opened to the Truth of Islam, and Abu Sufyan embraced the faith.

Abu Sufyan now hastened back to inform his people, the Makkans that complete surrender was the best course, apprising them at the same time of the general amnesty of the Prophet (PBUH), guaranteeing safety to all those who should enter Abu Sufyan's house or close the doors of their own houses or enter the Kabah. It may be realized by the enemies stigmatizing Islam as a religion of the sword that conversion to Islam formed no part of the conditions of amnesty. At last the Muslim army advanced under leadership of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) from various directions. But mark the advance of the Conqueror to Makkah and the Kabah at the head of the Ten thousands of Holy ones in fulfillment of Moses prophetic words (Deut. 33.2). It is not the march of a temporal Conqueror holding his head haughtily on his subjugated enemies. But mark him as bowing his head low on the camel's back in all humility and prayer of thanks giving to his Lord, the Almighty Allah, who granted him this victory.

Then the Prophet (PBUH) proceeded towards the Kabah and the Sacred House which was an emblem of the Unity of God, and would be now purified of the idols. As he touched each idol with his stick he recited this verse of the Holy Quran revealed long since: "Say the Truth has come and falsehood has vanished, verily falsehood is but evanescent". (17: 84) Never since has an image or an idol found its way into the holy precincts of that house, dedicated to the Unity of God. Then he turned to the "place of Abraham", and offered his prayers there. Uthman ibn Tallah, the Key-holder of the

Kabah was then sent for, the house was opened and entering therein, the Prophet (PBUH) offered prayers again. The key was then returned to Uthman with the words that the charge of the Sanctuary would ever remain with him and his descendents.

On accomplishing the purification of Kabah from the worship of idols, the Prophet (PBUH) delivered a sermon urging the Unity of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Thereafter he addressed a special gathering of the Quraish. They were before him subjugated in the capacity of offenders. What tortures had they not inflicted upon him and the Muslim companions! The very recollection of the most fantastic forms of persecution sends a shudder into one heart. Again their tyranny had not been confined only to the soil of Makkah; they had pursued the Muslims wherever they fled to take shelter. Repeated attacks had been led against Madina to crush them. So heinous was the guilt of the Makkans now ranged before the Prophet (PBUH) for justice and retribution malicious, vindictive, destroyers of the fundamental rights of man, oppressors of the innocent, the Makkans deserved the most exemplary punishment under the best human law. The most civilized way of dealing with offences of this nature is to mete out exemplary punishment to the main offenders by putting them to sword, and the rest accomplices to be reduced to a state of abject servility. This has been the treatment never accorded to the vanquished foe by the victors, and the same is the method of dealing with a subjugated people even today, under most civilized governments; not withstanding all such implications, the subjugated Quraish had an implicit faith in the noble and merciful nature of the Prophet (PBUH). They never expected harsh treatment at his hands. So when the Prophet (PBUH) asked them what treatment they expected from him, they replied: "Thou art a noble brother, and the son of a noble brother". They were not unfamiliar with the generosity of the Prophet (PBUH). But the treatment he accorded them exceeded even their expectations. "This day", he said, "there is

no reproof against you". (What a coincidence! these were the very words, which were uttered by the Prophet Joseph when when his brothers stood before him in heinous guilt). What generosity to say nothing of punishment, they were exempted even from reproach for their black crimes. Not even a pledge as to their future behaviour was demanded from them. Even the worst offenders were not punished. Ikrimah, Abu Jahl's son, who had attacked Khalid's detachment at the time of entry into Makkah fled for his life elsewhere, but when his wife came to the Prophet (PBUH) in great distress, and asked forgiveness on behalf of her husband, he was granted pardon. To Wahshi, murderer of Hamza, the Prophet's (PBUH) uncle, and Hindah, who, had chewed his liver, was extended this generous clemency. Habbar, who had stoned the Prophet's daughter while on her way from Makkah to Madina so badly that the injuries led ultimately to her death, was also forgiven. World history fails to produce the like of the Prophet's (PBUH) generous forgiveness to such arch-enemies, on such high scale.

Makkah was conquered, but a far greater conquest was accomplished by the general amnesty granted to the denizens of the town. It captured the hearts of the people. This final scene of Islamic magnanimity disarmed all opposition. Makkans witnessed with their own eyes how all those Divine promises held out to Muslims, when the latter were yet groaning under tortures of their enemies, had at last come true. This furnished conclusive testimony to the righteousness of the cause, and removed whatever doubt was still lurking in their hearts. In brief all opposition vanished. The Truth of Islam went deep into the Makkans hearts. They entered the fold of Islam in flocks. The Prophet (PBUH) seated himself on a spur of Mount Safa to receive them into the Muslim brotherhood. Males were followed by females, who also embraced the faith in large numbers. All these conversions were spontaneous.

There was not a single instance of conversion by force. There were some who did not still accept Islam, but not the slightest molestation was caused to them on that account. They still clung to their own idolatrous creed, but Muslims treated them kindly. Friendly relations existed between them – so much so that they fought shoulder to shoulder with Muslims in the ensuing battle of Hunain. The conquest of Makkah is a conclusive refutation of the charge that Islam was ever propagated at the point of sword, for could there have been a more favourable opportunity for such conversion. Not a single instance of compulsion, however, can be pointed out. Even the worst critic of Islam like Muir has confessed on this point.

Thus the conquest of Makkah resulted in complete triumph of Islam and it spread fast in the whole of Arabia. Yet there were certain tribes such as Hawazin occupying the slopes to the East of Makkah who were still stirring the Beduin tribes to rise against Islam and with the fall of Makkah were planning to strike a blow at Islam. They gathered a large army, and assembled at the valley of Hunain to attack the Muslims. The Prophet (PBUH) was now in a position to gather a large army of about twelve thousand. However, as they marched towards Hunain, the Muslims were placed in a disadvantageous position as they had to pass through the valley which had been already occupied by the Hawazin archers on the surrounding hills and the Muslims had to face showers of arrows which poured down upon them from all sides. The Muslim army could hardly face the brunt of the onslaught and had to retreat which caused confusion throughout the Muslim army. The Prophet (PBUH) with a few of his companions, was left entirely exposed to the advancing hosts of the enemy, but he firmly kept to his dangerous post with marvellous equanimity, and shouted repeatedly at the top of his voice. Abbas who was accompanying him also called out with his stentorian voice to the Muslims hosts who in response, rallied to the Prophet (PBUH) from all sides, and fell upon the advancing foe with such fury that the latter could hardly keep their

ground, and took to flight, taking shelter in Taif their stronghold, which was besieged and finally given up on terms of peace. Thus ended the last of the battles with the Arab tribes who in course of time also embraced Islam, and joined the Muslim brotherhood.

After the conquest of Makkah, and settling matters resulting from the attack by Hawazin and the besiege of Taif, the Prophet (PBUH) left Makkah to return to Madinah about the close of the year 8 A.H.

The conquest of Makkah had crushed all opposition of Islam, and an era of peace had now set in over the whole of Arabia. This led to the general spread of Islam, which gained allegiance by leaps and bounds. Although Makkah was not the temporal capital of the peninsula, it commanded the spiritual allegiance of the whole of Arabia. Consequently, when after the fall of Makkah, the inhabitants of the town joined the Muslim brotherhood in large numbers it had a marvellous effect on the general populace of Arabia. The truth of Islam became manifest, with the result that people began to join Islam in large numbers. This is the reason why in the years 9 and 10 A.H. Islam spread all over Arabia. This period is remarkable on account of general acceptance of Islam, when tribe after tribe declared its adherence, and Islam made progress by leaps and bounds. Deputations began to pour into Madinah from every part, and were received by the Prophet (PBUH) with great honour into the fold of Islam. Thus in the first half of this very year, delegations from far-off places like Yemen, Hazarmaut, Bahrain, Uman and the Syrian and Persian borders called at Madina. It may be specially noted that never was a military expedition sent to any of these places whence these expeditions came, which is positive proof that the acceptance of Islam by all these deputations was on voluntary basis. The fact remains that religious freedom and peace have ever favoured and will ever favour the spread of Islam.

At last after dealing with some internal troubles like that of the Hypocrites, all opposition external as well as internal, had been swept away, and the whole of Arabia had been converted to Islam in the course of two years, and there was only one religion – Islam – throughout the vast Arabian Peninsula. The cry of Allah-o-Akbar resounded on all sides. Marvellous and miraculous phenomenon had taken place with Allah's aid. Thus as soon as the state of warfare was over, it took the Prophet (PBUH) with Divine Aid but two brief years not only to bring the whole of Arabia under the banner of Islam, but at the same time to work a mighty transformation, sweeping away all corruption, and uplifting the nation to the loftiest heights of spirituality.

*The Farewell Pilgrimage and the
Conferment of the Charter of justice,
Freedom, Equality and Fraternity to the whole mankind.*

The entire country, as observed, had joined Islam in the year 10 A. H. when the Prophet in person set out on Pilgrimage which was his last Pilgrimage. As many as 1,24,000 persons from various corners of Arabia assembled on this occasion without a single polytheist among them. The very spot where the Prophet (PBUH) was, at the beginning of his mission, discarded and rejected, was now the scene of marvelous devotion to him. To whichever side he turned his eye, he saw hosts of devoted friends. What an inspiring manifestation of Divine Power!

But whereas the Prophet (PBUH) saw this remarkable sight of the final triumph of Truth, he was at the same time given to understand (by Divine intuition) that his mission on earth had been fulfilled. His efforts had been crowned with such success as had never fallen nor will ever fall to the lot of another man. Thus the time had come when he should retire from this earthly life, the grand object of which had been accomplished. On the one hand, the

whole of Arabia had embraced Islam, while on other, religion itself had attained its highest point of perfection. "This day", the Divine word came to tell him, "have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour to you" (15:3). All the religious requirements of man had been provided for in the Holy Quran. This would now be the one fountain of Divine knowledge at which humanity would drink for all time to come. No doubt, no better occasion, could have been chosen to proclaim the momentous and happy news of the perfection of religion. This was an assembly which had met there for the sole object of Divine glorification, cutting asunder all worldly ties for the time being. This was a congregation where human equality ruled supreme, where no mark of distinction between king and peasant was to be noticed, where all met as brethren to do homage to their Lord on High, and where every heart was filled with Divine Awe.

The Sermon on the Mount (Arafat)

Mounted on the back of his camel, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) delivered a most remarkable sermon to the people assembled all around him on the Mount Arafat. The words that fell from his lips were repeated aloud in order to reach the farthest ends of the vast assembly. Every Arabian tribe and clan was represented on this occasion, and thus the message was conveyed throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula – and later on the whole world at large.

The message, which comprises a comprehensive charter of Freedom, Equality, Justice and Fraternity, runs thus:

"O people! lend an attentive ear to my words; for I know not whether I shall ever hereafter have the opportunity to meet you here". Then he proceeded as follows :

"Do you know what day it is today? This is the Yaum-ul-Nahar or the sacred day of sacrifice. Do you know which month is this? This is the sacred month. Do you know what place is this? This is the sacred town. So I apprise you that your lives, your properties and your honour must be as sacred to one another as this day in this sacred month in this sacred town. Let those present take this message to those absent. You are about to meet your Lord who will call you to account for your deeds.

"This day all sums of interest are remitted, including that of Abbas ibn Abdal-Muttalib. This day, retaliation for all murders committed in the days of ignorance is cancelled and foremost of all, the murderer of Rabi-ibn-Harith, is forgiven.

"O people! this day Satan has despaired of re-establishing his power in this land of yours. But should you obey him even in what may seem to you trifling, it will be a matter of pleasure for him. So you must beware of him in the matter of your faith.

"Then, O my people! you have certain rights over your wives, and so have your wives over youThey are the trust of God in your hands. So you must treat them with all kindness . . . and as regards your slaves, see that you give them to eat of what you yourselves eat, and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves".

"O people! listen to what I say and take it to heart. You must know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are all equal (you enjoy/equal rights and have similar obligations). You are all members of one common brotherhood. It is forbidden for any of you to take from his brother save what the later should willingly give. Do not tyrannies over your people (do not usurp their rights)".

Then the Prophet cried at the top of his voice. "O Lord: I have delivered Thy Message", and the valley resounded with the reply from the myriads of human throats with one accord. "Aye that you hast". No doubt the message was sublime but the zeal with which it was delivered was no less so. Here is another Sermon on the Mount in the history of the world, grander and more comprehensive than the one delivered six hundred year earlier by Jesus Christ, the Prophet of Israel, who at the same time prophesied about the Advent of the Holy Prophet, Mohammad, (PBUH), thus: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all Truth". (John 16:12, 13). Thus it is Mohammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the greatest and the last of the Prophets, who brought the religion of Islam which laid down the basis of a lasting peace in the whole world; and the transformation of the world so brought about by him is admittedly unparalleled in the history of the world. History cannot show any other reformer who wrought so wonderful and complete transformation in so large a scale within so short a time as the Islamic Revolution.