

The Historic Victory of Islam Over The Christians of Najran: Mubahalalah:

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Abstract: The 24th of Dhul Hijjah was chosen for "Mubahalalah". Muhammad Rasulullah(S) ordered that in a field outside Madinah a thin black "Aba" (men's dress, open in front) be used as a shade between two trees. The Christian Cardinal, Head of the Roman Church in Hijaz and religious hierarchy of Najran stood in orderly ranks on one side of the field, and on the other side, Muhammad Rasulullah (S), together with Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as), Sayyidah Fatimah (as), Al Imam al-Hasan (as) and Al Imam al-Husayn (as) came from the direction of Madinah towards the shade. Along this path, Rasulullah (S), holding the hand of Ali (as), Hasan (as) and Husayn (as) walked in front with Fatimah (as) behind them (Majm'a al-Bay'an). With such divine simplicity and pristine grandeur, they reached the shade and stood below the "Aba. Muhammad Rasulullah(S) argued and afterwards recited the "Ayah Tathir" and addressed his Ahl al Bait (as): "I will invoke La'anah - malediction for them and you say A'ameen." Upon observing Muhammad Rasulullah's (S) unusual form of offering Dua, the learned Christian Pontif and clergy lost their self-confidence and could not stand against Muhammad (S) and his Ahl al-Bait (as) - Household. Therefore, they accepted paying the "Jaziyah" and offered to give in to peace. On behalf of Muhammad Rasulullah (S), Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) signed a peace treaty with the Christians. The Christians were to annually offer twelve thousand exquisite clothes, a thousand Mithqal of gold, and some other items to practice their faith under the umbrella of Islam. On the basis of the "Ayah Mubahalalah", Sunni interpreters, such as Baydawi, and many hundreds regard Ali (as), Fatimah (as), Hasan (as) and Husayn (as) superior to all other people and argue that Hasan (as) and Husayn (as) are the sons of Rasulullah (S), as he showed. The term "Anfusina" in the "Ayah Mubahalalah" proves the unity of the heart and soul of Muhammad (S) and Ali (as). Rasulullah(S) stated: "Ali is of me and I am of Ali." ("Fadail al-Khamsah" 343/1). The "Mubahalalah Tradition" has been recounted in different books of "Sirah" and history with various wordings. These include those of Tirmidhi (Sahih, 166/2) which quotes Saad ibn Abi Waqqas as follows: "When the Ayah Mubahalalah was recited, Rasulullah (S) summoned Ali (as), Fatimah (as), Hasan (as), and Husayn (as) and said: O Allah! These are my Ahl al Bait – the Members of my Household." This tradition has been narrated by Hakim Nishaburi in "Al-Mustadrak" 150/3 and Bayhaqi in "Sunan" 63/7. Hakim regards this tradition as authentic. This event declared clearly the status of Ahl al-Bayt (as), proving their Ismah and closeness to Rasulullah (S).

Keywords: Mubahalalah, Najran, Rasulullah (S), Ahl al-Bayt, Al Imam al-Hasan, Al Imam al-Husayn, Sayyidah Fatimah, Amir al-Mumineen Ali, Qur'an, Jizyah, Interfaith Dialogue, Christianity, Daw'ah, Nafs al-Rasul

1. Conquest of Makkah and Dawah to Nations:

After the peaceful conquest of Makkah, where not a drop of blood was shed, even the strongest enemies of Islam entered its fold. Rasulallah (S) declared to them: "Antum ut-Tulaqa" (You are the freed ones, your crimes are forgiven). From Madinah, Rasulallah (S) openly spread the mission of Daw'ah, inviting non-Muslims to Islam. His letters were sent to emperors, kings, and tribal leaders. Among those invited were the Cardinal and Christians of Najran, a fertile territory situated in the northern highlands of Yemen, about 20 KM from Sanaa. Najran was a well-developed region with around 70,000 Christians living in seventy-three towns. They had once been idol-worshippers like the Arabs, but a Christian priest named Femeon converted them to Christianity. Najran soon became a powerful Christian centre. They built a magnificent church known as Al-Kabah al-Najran, where they prayed and made offerings. The wealth generated from offerings reached nearly 200,000 dinars annually, supporting the priests and scholars of the church.

2. The Invitation of Rasulallah (S):

In the 10th year of Hijrah (10 A.H.), Rasulallah (S) sent a message to the Christians of Najran: Accept Islam through the Dawah or, live peacefully under the protection of Muslims by paying Jizyah, a Tax for non-Muslims in the Islamic State. The Cardinal of Najran, Abu Haris bin Alqama, upon receiving the letter, gathered the clergy and intellectuals of Najran to decide their response. Fanatics among them were enraged at the message, but the Bishop advised caution. He reminded them of the growing strength of Islam and encouraged finding a peaceful solution instead of war. It was decided to send a delegation to Madinah for dialogue.

3. The Special Delegation of the Christians of Najran Arrives in Madinah

The delegation of sixty Christians of Najran headed by:

Al-Aqib (also known as Abdul-Masih): One of the political leaders, considered a strategist and negotiator.

As-Sayyid (also known as Al-Ayham): A scholar and leader in journeys and social gatherings.

Abu Harithah bin 'Alqamah: The Cardinal, a top religious leader of the delegation.

Zayd, Qays, Yazid: Other members of the delegation mentioned by name.

Shurahbil: A figure from the delegation who engaged in religious discussions with Muhammad Rasulallah (S) before the Mubalahah.

Abdullah Ibn Shurahbil: Another member of the delegation involved in the discussions.

Jabbar Ibn Qays: Part of the delegation who discussed religious matters with Muhammad Rasulallah (S).

These individuals were part of a larger delegation that came to Madinah to dispute with the Muslims, a confrontation that ultimately led to the Nabawi proposal of Mubalahah to resolve their differing views on the nature of Isa (Jesus).

Other notable Bishops,

When they entered Masjid al-Nabawi, they were dressed in silken robes with golden ornaments and crosses. Muhammad Rasulallah (S) turned away in disapproval. They left the Masjid confused and asked companions why they were ignored. The companions consulted Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as), who explained that Muhammad Rasulallah (S) disliked ostentation. He

advised them to dress simply. When the delegation returned in plain attire, Muhammad Rasulullah (S) welcomed them with respect.

4. The Dialogue on Nabi Isa (as):

Discussions began on the true status of Nabi Isa (as).

The Christians argued:

'Isa (as) performed miracles, such as reviving the dead, curing the blind, and creating birds from clay.

He was born without a father, hence he must be divine and the Son of God.

They believed in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Muhammad Rasulullah (S) responded by reciting the Ayah:

"The likeness of 'Isa before Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be', and he was." (Qur'an 3:59)

He explained that Adam (as) was created without father or mother, yet no one called him the Son of Allah. Similarly, the miraculous birth of Isa (as) did not make him divine. Despite these logical arguments, the Christians remained firm on their beliefs.

5. The Ayah of Mubalahah:

At this stage, the Ayah of Mubalahah came:

"Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves. Then let us pray earnestly and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars." (Qur'an 3:61)

This was a divine command for both parties to confront one another by calling their families, then invoking Allah's curse upon the liars. The word Mubalahah is derived from the root verb Bahala, which means 'to curse', while the noun al-Bahl can mean either 'the curse' or a scarcity of water. The word Mubalahah can also mean 'withdrawing mercy from one who lies or engages in falsehood'. The act of Mubalahah (mutual imprecation, Laanah - curse) thus involves swearing a conditional curse, for instance, may I be cursed if..., together with a purifying oath.

As a last resort, Mubalahah remains a lawful option to resolve disputes in Fiqh. Based on this view, it was not necessary for the parties to be more than two people so that the plural pronouns could be used in the Ayah, because according to the above opinion, the plural pronoun meant that through mutual cursing the wrong party would be uprooted completely. Exegetes, narrators and historical reports unanimously maintain that Rasulullah (S) took no one else to Mubalahah except for Ali (as), Fatimah (as), al-Hasan (as) and al-Husayn (as), so the souls were two [Muhammad(S) and Ali (as)], the "women" was one (Fatimah (as)), and the sons were two al-Hasan (as) and al-Husayn (as), through which the divine order was fulfilled. Also, other Ayaah are found in the Qur'an which refer to one person while the verbal reference is plural, such as the Ayah Zihar in Qur'an 58.

6. The Decision of Mubalahah and the Procession of Ahl al-Bayt (as)

The Christian delegation asked for one day to decide. Their Cardinal, Abu Haris, advised them:

"If Muhammad comes with his companions and tribesmen, you may accept the challenge. But if he comes only with his family, know that he is truthful, and do not enter into Mubalahah."

Muhammad Rasulullah (S) chose a place near Madinah. Preparations were made by Bab al-

Abwab of Rasulullah (S), Sayyiduna Salman al-Farsi (ra), and many Muhajireen and Ans'ar gathered to witness the event. On 24th Dhul-Hijjah, Rasulullah (S) came out with his family in a small procession:

*Al Imam al-Husayn (as) in his arms,
Al Imam al-Hasan (as) holding his hand,
Sayyidah Fatimah (as) walking behind,
Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) following her.*

This group of five - Al-Khamsat al-Athar (The Five Pure Ones), proceeded with Rasulullah (S) to the field of Mubalah. Rasulullah (S) sat on his knees for Mubalah. Then Sayyid and 'Aqib asked their sons for Mubalah. Abu Haritha said:

"I swear to God that he has sat like Anbiya used to sit for Mubalah" and returned. Sayyid asked him:

"Where do you go?!"

Abu Haritha answered:

"If Muhammad (s) was not right, he would not dare to come for Mubalah like this, and if he (S) engages in Mubalah with us, even one Christian will not remain alive before this year finishes!"

In another narration, he said:

"I see such resplendent faces that if they ask God to pull out a mountain, it will be pulled out. So, do not engage in Mubalah; otherwise, you will be dead, and not even one Christian will remain alive."

Abu Haritha came to Rasulullah (S) and said:

Then, Rasulullah (S) made peace with them with the condition that they pay two thousand robes every year, which every robe was forty dirhams, and also the condition that if Yemen engages in a war, they lend thirty shields, thirty spears and thirty horses to Muslims and Rasulullah (S) is responsible for returning them. This way, Rasulullah (S) wrote the peace treaty, and the delegation returned. Later, Rasulullah (S) said:

"I swear to Allah, who my soul is in His grasp, that death of the people of Najran had become close and if they engaged in Mubalah with me, they surely would turn into monkeys and pigs and their whole land would burn and they would burn and Allah would destroy all the people of Najran, and even birds would not remain on their trees and all Christians would die in less than a year."

Shortly after the delegation returned to Najran, Sayyid and 'Aqib came to Rasulullah (S) with gifts and converted to Islam.

7. The Fear of the Christians

When the Christian leaders saw Rasulullah (S) bringing only his closest family, they were astonished. Abu Haris declared:

"These are such shining faces that if they prayed for a mountain to move, it would surely move. Do not proceed with Mubalah, or we will all be destroyed."

Another leader, Karz ibn Alqama, said:

"This is surely the Prophet foretold in our scriptures. Whoever has opposed prophets in Mubalah before was destroyed. Look at the signs of destruction already appearing around us."

Fearing divine punishment, they withdrew and requested peace.

8. The Peace Agreement

The Christians agreed to pay Jizyah in return for protection under the Islamic State. Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) drafted the agreement:

Najran would pay 2,000 garments annually, half in Safar and half in Rajab.

In case of war, they would provide 30 horses, 30 camels, and 30 coats of mail.

Their lives, property, and places of worship would be protected by Allah and His Prophet.

They had to abandon usury, failing which Rasulullah (S) would not guarantee protection.

This treaty displayed the justice of Islam.

The Spiritual Significance of Mubalah

This event established the unique status of Ahl al-Bayt (as):

Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Husayn (as) were declared as the "Sons" of Rasulullah (S).

Sayyidah Fatimah (as) was chosen as the only woman to represent Islam, proving her unmatched rank. Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) was taken as Nafs al-Rasul (the self of Rasulullah).

Had there been others equal in truth and purity, Rasulullah (S) would have brought them too. But only these four were chosen, showing their supreme excellence.

9. Conclusion

In addition to Shi'i Tafasir, Sunni Tafasir such as al-Zamakhshari, Fakhruddin al-Razi, al-Baydawi, etc. also admitted that the word "Abna'ana" (our sons) in this Ayah refers to Al Imam al-Hasan (as) and Al Imam al-Husayn (as) and the word "Nisa'ana" (our women) refers to Sayyidah Fatima (as) and the word "Anfusana" (our souls) refers to Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as); thus, these four people together with Rasulullah (S) make the Ahl al-Kisa' (Companions of the Cloak), and according to al-Zamakhshari and Fakhruddin al-Razi, in addition to this ayah, the Tathir Ayah (Qur'an 33:33) was revealed, following that Ayah to respect them more and to cleanse them, any error.

The event of Mubalah was a turning point in Islamic history. It established:

The truthfulness of Islam,

The recognition of Rasulullah (S) as the final Rasul,

The elevated position of Ahl al-Bayt, who were divinely chosen to represent Islam,

This victory was not achieved by swords but by truth, purity, and divine authority.

Through Mubalah, the Qur'an declared to the world that Hasan and Husayn are the sons of Rasulullah (S), Fatimah is the greatest of women, and Ali is the self of Rasulullah. Together, they are the Ahl al-Kisa' (People of the Cloak), whose status remains unmatched in Islam.

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