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# The First Revelation and the Period of Persecution by Meccans

İlk Vahiy ve İřkence Dönemi

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### Abstract

In a list of the greatest times of transformation and breaking moments in human history, the events whose main components are religion and religious arguments will be the first ones that come to mind. Accepting the birth of Jesus as a direct religious event as the beginning of the Gregorian calendar or the effects of the geographical, political, economic, cultural and technological processes of the geography included in the scope of the crusades in the Middle Ages are just two of the examples that can be given to make the proposition meaningful.

In this study, we will focus on one of the most important religious moments in the history of the world, the beginning of the last messages of Allah to humanity, and analyze what happened after. Thus, we will try to understand the feeling of the Prophet who addresses the divine message, the methods he uses to fulfill his prophetic mission, the reactions of people who were addressed revelation, the violent side of man and the effort to solve problems with violence. The study is a contribution in terms of bringing a new perspective to the narrations about the first revelation and the events after revelation in Islamic historical sources. Additionally, descriptive and analytical methods are used in accordance with the subject of the study.

**Keywords:** History of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, revelation, Meccans, persecution.

### Öz

İnsanlık tarihinin en büyük dönüşüm zamanları ve kırılma anlarına dair yapılacak bir listede, ana bileşeni din ve dinî argümanlar olan olaylar ilk sıraların değişmez akla gelenleri olacaktır. Doğrudan dinî bir olay olarak Hz. İsa'nın doğumunun gregorian takvim için başlangıç kabul edilmesi veya Orta Çağ'da gerçekleşen haclı seferlerinin kapsama alanında yer alan coğrafyanın dini, siyasi, ekonomik, kültürel ve teknolojik süreçlerine etkileri ifade edilen önermenin anlamlı hale gelmesi için verilebilecek örneklerden sadece ikisidir. Biz de bu çalışmada dünya tarihindeki en önemli dini anlardan birisine, Allah'ın insanlığa son uyarısının başlangıcına odaklanıp sonrasında yaşananları tahlil edeceğiz. Böylece ilahi mesaja muhatap olan bir peygamberin hissiyatını, peygamberlik görevini yerine getirmek için kullandığı metodları, vahye muhatap olan insanların reaksiyonlarını, insanın şiddete meyyal tarafını ve sorunları şiddetle çözme çabasını anlamaya çalışacağız.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İslam Tarihi, Hz. Muhammed, İlk Vahiy, Mekkeliler, İşkence

## Introduction

Allah has not left man alone after He created him. Through the prophets He reminded people of his goal, his purpose for life, and the limits of his power. However, with the ability to act contrary to the commandments and prohibitions of Allah, which are proof of freedom of will, and with the mind that has managed to legitimize this attitude in the most beautiful way, man has managed to religion his interests instead of obeying what was revealed to him through the prophets. Allah has also sent numerous prophets to people as an opportunity to remember his essence and to shape his life in this direction. But the cycle, which mankind constantly violates, was supposed to stop somewhere. Otherwise, the world venture of mankind would continue in this way and man's duty as a successor in the earth would lose its meaning. In about six centuries after the birth of Jesus, Allah has once again sent Muhammad (pbuh) as a warner reminding people who he is, why he was created, the meaning of life, the limits of his power and strength, as well as a bearer of glad tidings for those who heed his warnings, provided that this sending is the last.

Mecca, in the middle of the Arabian Peninsula, where there is no agriculture<sup>[1]</sup>, where life is shaped around trade in the shadow of religion, was the venue of this latest intervention of Allah. If a photo of Mecca was taken, the first thing that would attract attention would be that religion determines the main axis of city life. The Holy Kaabah, built by Abraham and his son Ishmael, was the center of attraction around which life took place. The Meccans did not hesitate to use the sanctity that their city had for their own interest and benefits. For this purpose, the process that started with an idol in Mecca resulted in the fact that many of the Arab tribes brought their idol/god to Mecca and the Kaabah turned into a "pantheon". Over time, it became a principle for Meccans to "adopt everyone's faith in order to be together with everyone" and as a result of this approach, the Kaabah was made the center of faith tourism. So paganism had become an important source of income for the Meccans.

This established system continued to strengthen in favor of the Quraysh Tribe of Mecca after the event which was recorded in the sources as "The Year of Elephant" and in which Allah protected His Sacred House with His own hand. Although they had no intervention in the process, the Quraysh, who turned what was happening into an opportunity for them, was described as "the neighbors of the house of Allah", "the people of Allah". Thus, their reputation on the Arabian Peninsula has become even stronger, they have

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[1] *The Qur'an*, trans. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Ibrāhīm 14/37.

become a group maintained by an inviolable and divine power, as well as an indisputable power.<sup>[2]</sup>

In addition, after this period, opposing the Quraysh and fighting with them began to be considered sufficient to earn the wrath of Allah. This belief gave the Quraysh many privileges, especially the right to trade freely. On the one hand, the Quraysh traded freely and prospered, and on the other hand, they turned Kaabah into a pantheon and established new rules for visiting it, which they made the common religious center of the peninsula. All of these rules were aimed at making the Quraysh richer and more distinguished than other tribes.

The continuity of the concessions obtained depended on the preservation of the established order, and therefore a system closed to discussion in all spheres of life operated in Mecca. Thus, everyone lived in strict accordance with their role in the system. When the administrative system of Mecca is examined, it is seen that it is based on a great balance policy. The administrative structure was based on opening up space for everyone. The areas of the tribes, their tasks and what they could do were determined by strict boundaries.

#### A. The First Revelation - The First Command

Although the beginning of the revelation took place in 610, it can be said that the process for the Prophet Muhammad began some time ago.<sup>[3]</sup> In that time, which can be defined as “the training period for revelation”, Muhammad’s (pbuh) outlook on life, his lifestyle, his attitude changed and almost gained a new character. Faithful dreams are the basis of change. Later, according to Aisha, all of the Prophet Muhammad’s dreams came true like the light. In other words, the clarity of his dreams while he was asleep made him like seclusion.<sup>[4]</sup>

The reflection of the change in Muhammad’s (pbuh) mind that he felt on social life corresponded to seclusion. The Cave of Ḥirā’, where his grandfather Abdul-muttalib used to retreat from time to time, was chosen as a place of seclusion, and while the calendars show the month of Ramadan in 610, the Angel of Revelation, Gabriel, revealed the first five verses of Sūrat al-‘Alaḳ, which contains the first commandments of Islam.<sup>[5]</sup> It is noteworthy that the dialogue that is narrated

[2] For detail information see Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq Ibn Yasār b. Khiyār, *Kitāb al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1978), 61-67; Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitāb al-Arabi, 1990), 1/63-71; Muḥammad Ibn Sa’d Ibn Manī’ al-Hashimī, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* (Cairo: Maktab al-Khanji, 2001), 1/60-74; ‘Aḥmad ibn Yahyā ibn Jābir ibn Dāwūd al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2001), 1/75-76.

[3] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī*, 129; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/264-265; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/125-130; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1/116; Abū Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-Rusūl wa al-Mulūk*, (Cairo: Dar al-Maarif, 1968) 2/298.

[4] al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2/298; see also İbrahim Sarıçam, *Hız. Muhammed ve Evrensel Mesajı* (Ankara: DİB Yayınları, 2002), 83.

[5] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/265-266; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/164-167; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1/116-117; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2/298-305.

to have taken place between Gabriel and Muhammad (pbuh) during revealing of the first revelation. When Gabriel ordered him to “Read”, Muhammad (pbuh) responded meaningfully by saying “I do not know how to read!” Muhammad’s (pbuh) response shows that he was consciously and restrainedly dealing with Gabriel. With the first message of the five verses of Sūrat al-‘Alaq, Allah has reminded people of himself for the last time and permanently.<sup>[6]</sup>

The first revelation was an unexpected development for the Prophet Muhammad. After he went home due to the effects of what he had experienced, he asked his wife to cover him up as with still quaking heart. This may suggest that his awe level was increased. When he calmed down and his pulse normalized, he told his wife what he had seen and heard. Whereupon, Khadija said: “Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you; You keep good relations with your relative and kin, tell the truth, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones.” By these words and her reassurances strengthened the heart of the Prophet.<sup>[7]</sup> These words also summarize why Khadija married Muhammad (pbuh).

On the one hand, the fact that he wants to be covered up, and on the other hand, that he is talking to Khadija shows that the Prophet’s mind is working in many ways. Trying to put what he was going through in his mind and discussing a much deeper topic in his heart, he asked Khadija: “Who believes in me?” In the face of this question, which expressed the expectation of receiving support, Khadija declared that she would always support and believe, even if no one believed him.<sup>[8]</sup> Her response motivated Muhammad (pbuh) very much that he has never left Khadija out of his mind at any time in his life.

The first revealed verses have important clues about how the new era will take shape. The first address to the Prophet is “Read!” Immediately after that, it explains how to read it with the phrase “*In the name of your Lord the Creator*”. The later verses say, Allah created man from a clinging substance, He is the most Generous who taught by the pen, and taught humanity what they knew not. These five verses includes the difference between a person who knows his essence and his creator and a person who forgets that he was created and that he was taught by Allah what he knew not, and who thinks that he has power by thinking that he has value for himself.<sup>[9]</sup>

While Muhammad (pbuh) was trying to internalize what he saw and heard, Khadija also looked for someone who could explain what her husband had

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[6] al-‘Alaq 96/1-5.

[7] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī*, 131; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/269; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/164-165; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1/116; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2/298-301.

[8] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/269.

[9] al-‘Alaq 96/1-5.

told her. The person Khadīja consulted with him was Waraqah b. Nawfal her uncle's son. This old man was a wise person who had knowledge of Judaism and Christianity and read the holy books of these religions. Waraqah who listened carefully to what was said, told that there had come unto Muhammad (pbuh) the greatest Nāmūs, Archangel Gabriel, and Muhammad (pbuh) is the Prophet of these people. In the following days Waraqah met with Muhammad (pbuh). After listening to him, he said: "Verily an angel has come to you, even it also came to the Prophet Moses. You will be denied, persecuted, and expelled from your homeland. Besides, there will be a war on you. If I reach those days, I will help the religion of Allah."<sup>[10]</sup> Waraqah gave the good news that what Muhammad (pbuh) experienced through first revelation was prophetic signs and eliminated the confusion he was in. However, with the history of the past nations and the knowledge gained from the lives of the prophets, he caused another surprise by saying that Muhammad's (pbuh) community would deny him, would not believe him, and would drive him out of Mecca.

It is certain that a new stage had begun for Muhammad (pbuh) with the first revelation. But in that time, the Prophet Muhammad was faced with an extremely important problem, which is the lack of knowledge of method. Because he was aware of the role he was undertaking, but he did not know what to do, where to start, how to follow a way and a method about this mission. In other words, thoughts about the method of role were preoccupying the Prophet's mentality. At this point, Allah informed him about the method he would use and gave directions about the way he should follow.

The subject will become clear when the first verses of Sūrat al-Muddaththir, which follow the first commandment, Sūrat al-Alaq, are examined. In these verses the Prophet was commanded to arise and warn the people, to keep away from idols, and to proclaim the greatness of Allah in the world. After that, he was asked to avoid from all kinds of moral-material uncleanness and to explain Islam without any hesitation, fear, and doubt, reminding that he should ultimately be patient for the sake of his Lord.<sup>[11]</sup>

## 1. The Period of Invitation and the First Muslims: A Secret Invitation or a Private Invitation?

In the history of Islam, chronologically, it is difficult to determine the time between the first revelation and the Prophet's speech on Safa Hill, where he spread the message of Islam to the general public. Based on the information

[10] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī*, 132-133; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/269-272; Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/164-166; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1/117-118; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 2/302-303.

[11] al-Muddaththir 73/1-7.

about this period, it is not easy to follow the historical process. Because there are few names that witnessed the period, and these persons were interested in facts, instead of events. Such reasons make it difficult to determine. Since it is the priority choice to record the narrations instead of making a fiction when it is desired to write down the events, it becomes very complicated to follow the chronology of the events. This, unfortunately, leads to a number of misidentifications in the perception of the early years of Islam. The expression “secret invitation”, which is used in the sources for the early period of calling to Islam (da’wah),<sup>[12]</sup> is the product of such an identification error.

Whether secretly invitation to Islam can be qualified is a matter that should be considered. In this context, it is necessary to focus on the process of accepting Islam by two names and to examine some of the verses, recorded as the beginning of the public invitation, that were revealed before 214th verse of of Sūrat al-Shu‘arā’. Because they give some details about understanding the structure of the first period of Islamic invitation.

The names that should be mentioned in the processes of accepting Islam are Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and Amr b. Abasa who is of Yemeni origin. Abū Dharr lived in a village near Mecca. One day he became aware of a person who said that idols were useless in Mecca and invited the Meccans to the unity of Allah. Abū Dharr, who already does not believe in idols from a religious point of view and is in search of them, thought that this person in Mecca might be the name that could answer the questions he had in mind. Afterwards, he sent his brother Unays to this city to investigate the authenticity of the news he heard, the status of the person who said he was a prophet, and the nature of the words he told. Then he asked his brother to inform him.<sup>[13]</sup>

Unays stayed in Mecca long enough and made observations. He turned to his brother and conveyed his impressions to him. According to Unays, Abū Dharr should have gone to Mecca and got to know this person. Because the person who is said to be a prophet was inviting the unity of Allah and calling people to goodness. Moreover, he was a person of good morals in character. However, the Meccans called him a poet, soothsayer, and magician. They also hated this person and treated him badly.<sup>[14]</sup>

He went to Mecca to see Muhammad (pbuh) for the information he had received from his brother and waited for him around the Kaaba. Because a person who receives a message from Allah should most likely have been in the Kaaba. During his waiting, he went through many events. But one of

[12] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/295; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/168; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1/131-132; Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2/306.

[13] Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 4/205-206.

[14] Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 4/206.

them provides us with extremely important information from the point of view of our topic.<sup>[15]</sup>

Abū Dharr, who was examining the Kaabah and its surroundings, thought that he had finally found someone to whom he could ask him to the person he was looking for, and questioned if he knew the man who said he was a prophet. However, the response that Abū Dharr received was not as he expected. This person informed the Meccans by saying out loud that he was one of the Muslims, and the Meccans took out their anger at Muhammad from Abū Dharr and beat him severely.<sup>[16]</sup>

Abū Dharr did not abandon his cause due to the attack of the Meccans. After a while, he found the Prophet Muhammad, talked with him, and accepted Islam. Although there is no clear information in the sources about how many people were Muslims at that time, it was narrated that he was the fourth or fifth Muslim.<sup>[17]</sup>

The second name that should be mentioned is Amr b. Abasa from Yemen. While he was on a quest to fill the void in his faith, he heard that a person in Mecca did not worship idols and called on people to worship Allah, who is one. After that, he left Yemen and came to Mecca in no time. After meeting with Muhammad (pbuh), he became a Muslim. According to Amr, when he became a Muslim, only Abū Bakr and Bilāl al-Ḥabashī were Muslims.<sup>[18]</sup>

Considering the accepting of Islam by two names, one Bedouin (*badawī*) and the other Yemeni, it is clear that narratives about the early period of Islamic history should be reevaluated. The fact that both names were narrated among the first Muslims shows that the knowledge of Islam had already crossed borders of Mecca when the number of Muslims very few, no more than a handful of people. Moreover, Unays' expressions that Meccans described Muhammad (pbuh) as poet, soothsayer, and magician, and the rejection of Amr's request to stay in Mecca shows that even when the number of Muslims was only a few people, the Meccans started to speak out against Muhammad (pbuh) and did not hesitate to use physical violence from the first period. Briefly, the narrations tell us that the Meccans became aware of the new religion in a very short time and reacted to this religion very quickly, as well as positioned themselves over the contrast.

The transmission of the history of revelation is also supportive of these narratives. It is known that the communication between Muhammad (pbuh)

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[15] Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 4/206.

[16] Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 4/206-207.

[17] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī*, 141-142; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 4/207-208; For more on this topic see aslo Nurullah Yazar, *Hiz. Ebu Zer*: (İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 2020).

[18] Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqāt al-kabīr*, 4/207-208.



and Gabriel was cut off for a while after the first revelation. This period was called *Fatrat al-Wahy*, cessation of revelation, in Islamic history.<sup>[19]</sup> However, there are disputes about its duration. In that period Meccans said that his Lord had left Muhammad, He was offended by him. These words deeply hurt the Prophet. Meanwhile, Gabriel appeared and came back to him revealing *Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā*. This *Sūrat* comforted Prophet. Because in the verses of *Sūrat Allah* has said: “Your Lord has not abandoned you, nor has He become hateful ‘of you!’”<sup>[20]</sup> In the next verses it has been said: “Did He not find you as an orphan then sheltered you? Did He not find you unguided then guided you? And did He not find you needy then satisfied your needs?”<sup>[21]</sup> Actually, these verses summarize the life of the Prophet up to that moment and the following verses, “So do not oppress the orphan, nor repulse the beggar, and proclaim the blessings of your Lord.” shows his method in calling people to Islam. Shows his method in calling people to Islam.<sup>[22]</sup>

The following verses, which are accepted among revealed the first revealed verses, also supports that even before the public call of Islam began, the Meccans were aware of the new religion and the prophetic discourse of Muhammad (pbuh).<sup>[23]</sup> These verses are as follows: “By the grace of your Lord, you are not insane.<sup>[24]</sup> Soon you and the pagans will see, which of you is mad.<sup>[25]</sup> So do not give in to the deniers.<sup>[26]</sup> Be patient ‘O Prophet’ with what they say, and depart from them courteously.<sup>[27]</sup> Then turned his back ‘on the truth’ and acted arrogantly, saying, this ‘Quran’ is nothing but magic from the ancients. This is no more than the word of a man.<sup>[28]</sup>

It seems that what happened in *Ḥirā’* was shared with other people along with *Waraqah* and found a place on the agenda of Mecca. Mecca is the religious and commercial center of its geography. In a city that has strong ties to every part of the Arabian Peninsula and where communication channels are always open, it should not be strange that an event can reach everywhere very quickly. In short, the Meccans were aware of the existence of Islam. But

[19] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī*, 135; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawiyya*, 1/275; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/168; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1/120; Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2/306.

[20] *al-Ḍuḥā* 93/3.

[21] *al-Ḍuḥā* 93/6-8.

[22] *al-Ḍuḥā* 93/9-11.

[23] Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/166; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1/119-122; Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2/303-304.

[24] *al-Qalam* 68/2.

[25] *al-Qalam* 68/5-6.

[26] *al-Qalam* 68/8.

[27] *al-Qalam* 73/10.

[28] *al-Muddaththir* 74/23-25.

being informed and having content are separate things. This is the reason for dividing invitation of Islam into two separate time periods. The Meccans were aware of what was happening in their city. However, they have not yet been informed about the content. The fact remains that anyone could access this information.

These information show us that there has never been a time when the invitation to Islam was carried out secretly in early days. It is not the right approach for a person to define the subjects that he does not have control over as confidential. The lack of information on matters that only concern the addressees of the event does not make an issue secret. This makes the situation private and closed. For this reason, it would be more meaningful to define the starting days of the invitation as “private invitation period” or “personal invitation period” rather than “secret invitation period”. It is not a secret invitation to Islam, but it is the concealment of being a Muslim. Because in a society where there is no individual’s name within the framework of tribalism and *‘aṣabiyya*, a person must act together with his tribe. Acting together also includes belief. A person who does not share the faith of his tribe will not have belonging to his tribe. It is also impossible for a person to exist in Mecca without belonging.

Actually, the Prophet Muhammad did not declare his invitation to Islam, did not formalize it, and did not spread it to the general public. By acting in that way, he prevented the formation of a collective reaction of Quraysh in Mecca against him, Islam, and Muslims. This gave the first Muslims an important time to internalize Islam and shape their lives around the Islamic thought. Although there is no restriction on being aware of the existence of Islam, the content of Islam was shared by the Prophet primarily with his family and close friends. It is quite natural for a person to share what he has been through, what he has experienced, or what he has with his relatives and those whom he finds close. But this is also a very risky choice. Those who most accurately describe the character, personality, attitude, view of life of an individual are his family and sincere friends. In fact, the most difficult people for a person to convince are his parents. Because of that reason, the first indicator of a person’s reliability is the reactions and words of his family and friends who have known him for many years.

A person who convinces his family and gets their support will feel both psychologically strong and will not be in the position of a person who does not even receive support from his family. The unconditional acceptance of Muhammad’s (pbuh) prophethood by his family is an extremely important mirror of his personality. After his family, it is time for open-minded people who can understand the meaning of the Islamic message to be invited to the

unity of Allah. At this point, the call to Islam is made by establishing a peer to peer communication. With the established communications, the names invited by the Prophet to Islam have largely accepted the new religion, which indicates the success of the Prophet in analyzing people correctly.

## 2. The Period of Invitation: General/Public Invitation

Although it became clear from the reported verses which method the Prophet Muhammad should follow, there was no information about the first step to be taken to explain *Tawhīd* to Meccans with a stereotypical mind that even the Kaabah does not make sense in their minds or hearts. After all, taking the first step correctly would also determine the progress of the next process. In this regard, Allah stepped in once again and determined another step that his last representative would take.

The message of Islam, which started with the method of individual invitation, in a private circle, spread to the general public with the addresses of “*So proclaim that which thou art commanded, and withdraw from the idolaters.*”<sup>[29]</sup> and “*And warn the nearest people of your clan.*”<sup>[30]</sup> The venture of Islam has moved to a new stage with the guidance of the revealed verses. The Prophet Muhammad, who determined the method of invitation with the guidance of Allah, adopted a general style of expression instead of explaining Islam to the person, and kept all the Meccan people informed about Islam and continued the message of Islam publicly.<sup>[31]</sup>

Firstly, the Prophet Muhammad explained the content of the religion of Islam to his clan, the Hāshimites.<sup>[32]</sup> Considering the social relations of Mecca, which are based on tribal belonging, it becomes clear why it is important to get the support of his. Therefore, it is very common for the Prophet to start from his own tribe.

The Prophet organized a feast to explain the content of Islam to his clan. While he was going to convey the religion of Islam, his uncle Abu Lahab did not give him a chance to speak and he made atmosphere very reactionary. As a result of this act, those who attended the meal left without saying anything to the Prophet. Although Abu Lahab’s attitude upsets Muhammad (pbuh), it does not deviate him from his goal. A few days later, the Prophet once again gathers his relatives together, and this time he announced his prophecy and

[29] al-Hijr 15/94.

[30] al-Shu‘arā’ 26/214.

[31] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sira wa al-Maghāzī*, 145-148; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/295; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/168-169; Balādhuri, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1/132.

[32] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/295; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/169; Balādhuri, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1/134.

invites his relatives to the religion of Allah. In this way, the message of Islam is explained to everyone.<sup>[33]</sup>

After the Prophet's invitation to Islam, Abū Ṭālib, who was the head of the Hāshimites, said that he would continue to protect his nephew, whom he had raised since the age of eight and witnessed every moment of his life, even though he did not give up on the religion of his ancestors. On the other hand, Abu Lahab maintained his usual negative attitude, insulted Muhammad and tried to prevent him, and provoked his relatives against him. However, Abū Ṭālib spoke once more and reiterated his support for his nephew. The fact that Abū Ṭālib was on the side of the Prophet caused his tribe to support him even if they did not believe in Islam.<sup>[34]</sup>

The second target audience of the Prophet Muhammad who informed his relatives about the content of Islam, was other Meccans. Gathering the elders and notables of the city on Ṣafā hill, which is used as a venue for the announcement of an important issue related to the city, the Prophet said, "If I told you that there is an army behind this mountain, would you believe me?" The Meccans who were there said together, "Yes, we would believe it. Because we have never seen you lie."<sup>[35]</sup> At this point, we see that the first subject of the Islamic message is the Prophet Muhammad himself. While spreading the message of Islam to the general public, the Prophet primarily took the opinion of the society about himself. Thus, he tried to reinforce the value of the word with the value of the speaker. This method of the Prophet Muhammad also reveals his place in the Islamic religion. He is not a passive sender of the revelation process, but rather an active and effective part of it. In order for the revelation to find value, he revealed himself, his past, his personality, and his value in society. This style is extremely important for understanding the position of the revelation and Prophet along with revelation.

It is grossly unfair to see the Prophet Muhammad as a means of communication, to attribute everything that has happened directly to the divine will, to ignore the personality, character, preferences, and most importantly, the efforts of the prophet. By saying "Who will believe me?" he played an active role in the acceptance of revelation by people he devoted his whole life to.

After the Meccans' emphasis on truthfulness, the Prophet Muhammad said, "Then I inform you that you will suffer a great punishment... Allah has ordered me to warn my closest relative. Unless you say, 'There is no god but

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[33] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī*, 145-148; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, 1/169; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1/131; see also Muhammad Hossein Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. Ismail Ragi A. Al-Faruki (USA: American Trust Publications, 2014), 80.

[34] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/297-299; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/170.

[35] Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/169; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1/136-137.

Allah!’ I will not be of any use to you in this world or in the hereafter.” As soon as the Prophet Muhammad had finished his words, his uncle Abu Lahab, who followed him almost step by step, said, “Did you call us for this?, and then he insulted the Prophet. Thus, he became the first person to openly oppose and react to the message of Islam and the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh).<sup>[36]</sup> Allah has not left unanswered the person who insulted His Prophet, and has revealed Sūrat al-Tabbat.<sup>[37]</sup>

### 3. The First Example of the Relation Between Islam and Space: Dār al-Arqām

The first Muslims preferred to perform their worship in secluded places at the beginning of the Islamic invitation. During this period, the place for meeting, praying and learning about the faith was the house of Arqām b. Abu’l-Arqām, who had converted to Islam when he was only 17-18 years old. His house, called Dār al-Arqām in Islamic history, had been the most important center of Muhammad’s prophetic mission.<sup>[38]</sup>

Arqām’s house provided Muslims with the opportunity to act in several ways without attracting attention to themselves. The first point is that it was located near the Kaaba and on the east of Safa Hill. In other words, it was located near the center of Mecca. The fact that Muslims gathered in the house of Arqām in the daily mobility of city life did not attract the attention of the polytheists. The second point is that the tribe that reacted the most to the message of Islam and the person of the Prophet Muhammad was the Banū Makhzūm and Arqām was a member of this clan. Because Arqām did not openly declare that he was a Muslim, it was not thought that his house could be the center of such activity. For this reason, Muslims used Arqām’s house comfortably.<sup>[39]</sup>

The Prophet was meeting with Muslims in this house, conveying the verses of the Qur’an, explaining Islam, worshiping together, making speeches to keep their faith alive. As a result of the activities carried out in Arqām’s house, which became a gathering and training center, many people converted to Islam. The house of Arqām has taken such a big place in the minds of Muslims that on the

[36] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sira wa al-Maghāzī*, 156; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/169; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1/137-139.

[37] “In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful. The Power of Abu Lahab will perish, and he will perish. His wealth and gains will not save him. He shall roast at a flaming fire, And his wife, the carrier of firewood Will have upon her neck a rope of palm-fibre” (al-Tabbat 111/1-5); See also Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sira wa al-Maghāzī*, 156; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/69; Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1/137-139.

[38] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/287; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/223.

[39] Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/224-225.

dates of the first Muslims' acceptance of Islam, markers such as "before the Messenger of Allah entered Dār al-Arqām", "while in Dār al-Arqām" or "After Dār al-Arqām" were used.<sup>[40]</sup>

When the Meccans became aware of the nature of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad began to convey the message of Islam openly to everyone. Although none of the oligarchs of Mecca responded positively to Muhammad's (pbuh) call to Islam, there were those from every segment of society and tribe residing in Mecca who responded positively to the message of Islam. Every positive answer given in favor of Islam meant an increase in the danger of Islam for the Meccan mushriks. The growth of the danger brought with it the growth of the reactions.

## B. The Reasons for the Reactions of Meccans to Islam

First of all, it should be stated that the Meccans were people who created an original economic, religious and cultural structure in their city, at the center of which was the Kaabah, which they supported with a polytheistic belief system, and had their own laws and institutions. In the minds of these people, Islam was perceived as a threat to the belief system, tribal structure, social order and economic system that had been prevalent in the city where an accepted order had been living for centuries. Acceptance of Islam made it necessary for the Meccans to redesign their entire way of life. This new way of life did not suit the outstanding and elite group of Mecca. This was the main basis for their opposition to the Prophet Muhammad and the religion he brought.<sup>[41]</sup> In the following sub-titles, the structure that the Meccans want to protect can be examined.

### 1. The Reflex of Preserving the Social Structure

The most important discourse of the Prophet Muhammad for the society was that people should be equal in the sight of Allah. This discourse had opened social structure of Mecca up for discussion. In the sight of Allah being equal in the context of creation and putting the principle of justice at the foundation of social dynamics were issues that the defenders of the established system had difficulty accepting.

In Mecca, on the other hand, the main elements were the *'aşabiyya* and the idols at the center of the belief system. From this point of view, the most

[40] Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/224-225.

[41] About the issues that Islam has changed the psychological and sociological, theological and economic values of Polytheists, see. Eyup Baş, *Son Peygamber Hz. Muhammed* (Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2020), 47; see also. W. Montgomery Watt, *Hz. Muhammed Mekke'de*, trans. Rami Ayas-Azmi Yüksek (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1986) 60-87.

dangerous rhetoric of the Prophet Muhammad for the defenders of the Meccan system had been the consciousness of the ummah, which he replaced with *‘aşabiyya*, and the belief in *Tawḥīd*, saying that idolatry would not benefit.<sup>[42]</sup>

In fact, it is understandable that the sharpest reactions to the Prophet Muhammad came from the clans of Umayyads and the Makhzumids who took the highest advantage of the *‘aşabiyya* system. For members of these tribes, the discussion of the system in a sense meant questioning their existence and authority. The system established as a result of long struggles and serving its own interests was the most important value that needed to be defended and maintained.

One of the areas of the social structure that should be protected for the Meccans was the knowledge of the past. The Meccans gave importance to the customs and traditions inherited from their ancestors. For the Meccans, everything they inherited from their ancestors was true. Because this inheritance gave them dignity, prestige, privileges, and money. Because of what they had, paganism was a value that must be protected, and the religion of their ancestors was also considered the most correct religion.<sup>[43]</sup> Therefore, when they were invited to Islam and said, “*Come to what Allah has revealed (the Qur’an) and to the Prophet!*” they answered, “*The religion on which we found our fathers is sufficient for us.*”<sup>[44]</sup> Again, when it was said, “Follow what Allah has revealed!” they replied, “*No, we follow the (path) on which we found our forefathers!*”<sup>[45]</sup>

## 2. Trade

The most important elements for trade are road safety, regional stability and trust. In cases where these three elements are damaged, the merchant refrains from offering his product. This leads to the deterioration of trade market balances. The Meccans saw the Prophet as a person who disrupted the order of the city and thought that Islam would damage Mecca’s trade along with its social structure.

The Meccans, who traded in the north-south direction, brought their people to their towns in the region and earned income from buying and selling at fairs. In this sense, the economy of Mecca was dependent on foreign revenues. However, they had gone so far in trade that they had also made religion an element of commerce.

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[42] al-Anbiyā’ 21/98-100.

[43] Sariçam, *Hz. Muhammed’in Evrensel Mesajı*, 97; See also, Maxime Rodinson, *Hazreti Muhammed*, trans. Attila Tokatlı (İstanbul, 1994), 90.

[44] al-Mā’ida 5/104.

[45] al-Baqara 2/170.

By allowing pagan Arab tribes to place their idols in the Kaaba, which has been considered Sacred for thousands of years, they have made the Kaaba the center of faith of every tribe in the region. The idols placed in the Kaaba were connecting people from all over the peninsula with Mecca through faith tourism. Those who visited Mecca to worship their gods made an economic contribution to this city. This was the main reason why there were hundreds of idols in the Kaaba. The Quraysh thought that Islam would undermine the religious privilege they had and damage their commercial activities.

If they believed in a God, they would have lost all the gods they had placed in the Kaaba and ascribed glory to them, and of course the economic gains that these gods provided to the city would be lost, thus they would suffer financial loss.

Hundreds of idols that would serve the system in Mecca were acceptable gods for the Meccans. However, a single god who would disrupt the functioning of the system and change the order was the biggest enemy for them. The mushriqs of Quraysh were concerned that the religious superiority and commercial interests they had achieved in the eyes of all the Arab tribes would be taken away by the fall of paganism.

### 3. Tribal Rivalry

Tribal rivalry also played a role in the Meccans' opposition to the new religion. In Mecca, powerful and authoritarian tribes were using the same arguments when they were fighting each other. That means the reward for a favor was a favor and the reward for a feast was a feast. But the prophethood was different from all this, it embodied a force that could not be put on the same level of reciprocity. In this sense, the phenomenon of the Prophet had the power to reshape the system in Mecca. When Abū Jahl, one of the biggest opponents of Islamic, was asked about Muhammad (pbuh), he stated that he was a truthful person, but he said, "We competed with Banū 'Abd Manāf in everything to attain status and nobility. They fed people, so we also fed people. They gave charity, so we also gave charity. They looked after people; so did we. We did these until we became equal. And now they say, 'A prophet has come from us who receives revelations from the sky.' How can we possibly be able to compete with this? By Allah, we will never believe in him and we will never accept his message!"<sup>[46]</sup>

It seems that Abū Jahl evaluated the issue of prophecy within the framework of the rivalry between the Banū Makhzūm and the Banū Hāshim, and he regarded accepting the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh) as accepting the superiority of the Banū Hāshim.

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[46] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/320.



#### 4. The Elitist Approach

The idea of nobility based on lineage is also one of the reasons for opposition. The Prophet was not a person who could be a prophet in the eyes of the Meccans. Because he was neither the richest, nor the most aristocratic, nor the bravest, nor the strongest in Mecca. In their view, someone who did not have these qualifications could not be a leader, he should not be. In short, the elite of Mecca did not consider the Prophet on their level, in other words, they did not consider him worthy of the prophecy.

According to them, if someone was to become a prophet, he should only be among the leader of Mecca or the leader of Taif. Because they associated the value of the word with the position of the speaker. Thus, in their mind, the prophet should have been a rich or powerful person. Indeed, these thoughts show that they understand prophecy as leadership.<sup>[47]</sup>

The Meccans thought that if they accepted Islam and acted according to the directions of the Prophet, they would lose their privilege. The idols, which were the source of this privilege, and the existing belief system had provided them with glory, reputation, and economic power. Having these understandings was their way of life. Even if they were interested in the message of Islam the thought that they would lose what they had with Islam was pushing them to resist the Prophet and his invitation.

Additionally, in this adopted lifestyle, everyone accepted their role and led a life appropriate to their position in society, while Islam rejected this situation. However, Islam brought to mind questioning the functioning of system. Such a questioning was a threat to those who worked in favor of the system, but it was a hope for those who were offended by the system and this hope became is the greatest fear for the status quo. The beginning of change is the feeling of satisfaction felt by dreams. In order to dream, it is necessary to think first. By asking, *“Do you not reason?”*<sup>[48]</sup> *“Do you not consider?”*<sup>[49]</sup>, *“Would you pay no heed?”*<sup>[50]</sup>, Islam has called people to think about the situation they are in. The increase in the positive responses to the call fed the fear of the Meccans, and as the fear grew, the speed of the reaction against the new religion increased.

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[47] The Qur'an refers to their expectation about prophethood. In the verses of Sūrat al-Zukhruf it was explained as follows, *“They say, ‘Why was this Qur’ān not revealed on a great man from (either of) the two towns?’ Is it they who allocate the mercy of your Lord? We have allocated among them their livelihood in the worldly life, and have raised some of them over others in ranks, so that some of them may put some others to work. And the mercy of your Lord is much better than what they accumulate.”* (al-Zukhruf 43/31-32).

[48] al-Baqara 2/44.

[49] Yūnus 10/16.

[50] al-Mu'minūn 23/85.

### C. The Reactions of Meccans to Public Invitation (Dawah)

The religion conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad has taken concepts such as Allah, human, society, nobility, and superiority completely different from known definitions. The new approach led to the fact that the political, economic, and religious structure of Mecca began to be discussed. This situation attracted the reactions of the opponents of Islam in Mecca. Reactions can be evaluated in two parts as reactions to the Prophet Muhammad and reactions to other Muslims. The dimensions of these reactions expanded in parallel with the spread of Islam and took place in several stages in itself.

#### 1. Reactions to the Prophet Muhammad

The first way that the Meccans used method that never got old: an attempt to make a person look worthless with lies and slander. The Meccans initially saw the Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) message as a transitory situation and the individual discourse of a simple person. However, with the increase in the number of people who believe in him, they have applied the method we mentioned a little earlier.

Firstly, they mocked the Prophet by saying, "The nephew of Abū Ṭālib who claims to have received revelation from heaven!"<sup>[51]</sup> In the next stage, this time they claimed that the Prophet was not mentally healthy.<sup>[52]</sup> The Prophet Muhammad's response to these words was very clear that is "I have lived among you for years before it. Have you, then, no sense?"<sup>[53]</sup>

In the process, ridicule has been replaced by emotional pressure. The Meccans had accused the Prophet Muhammad of lying and described him as a poet, soothsayer,<sup>[54]</sup> magician, and insane.<sup>[55]</sup> With the baseless claims their aim was to create a social perception by damaging the trust in him. It was to direct people's view of the Prophet and, most importantly, the message of Islam through this perception. In other words, it was to discredit the Prophet's reputation in the sight of people's perception. So, they aimed to make people move away from the religion he described and the lifestyle he expressed.<sup>[56]</sup>

Emotional violence affected the Prophet Muhammad so much that Allah intervened and protected His Prophet. He also responded to the strategy of

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[51] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sira wa al-Maghāzī*, 151; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/199; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1/131.

[52] *Al-Qalam* 68/51.

[53] *Yūnus* 10/16.

[54] *al-Ḥāqqa* 69/41-42.

[55] *al-Dhāriyāt* 51/52.

[56] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sira wa al-Maghāzī*, 151-152; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/302-303; see also Adem Apak, *Anahatlarıyla İslam Tarihi I* (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2018), 44.

the Meccans by rejecting all the allegations raised, as well as he described those who caused these baseless claims with the most severe expressions and informed them that they would end badly. In this way, He prevented a polemic between the Prophet and the Meccans by holding His Prophet from answering them, as well as protecting the Prophet mentally and spiritually, not allowing what was said to affect him, and giving the Meccans the necessary answer in a way they could understand.

The Qur'an describes the Meccans in negative terms and informs them of their future state. It was deciphering the conversations between them. When they met those who believe, even though they said, "We believe!" they were saying among themselves, "We are making fun of them." Because of that reason, The Qur'an condemned them. This was a disgrace to the Meccans. A group that saw itself as an elite, noble, powerful, capable, and dominant of everything, were faced with a group they could not dominate, an event they could not manage, and a process they could no manage. As their plans and moves did not benefit them, the number of the opposing side increased day by day. At that time, The Qur'an, in its rhetoric, was always undermining the authority of those who considered themselves to be the elite.

The rhetoric of Qur'an made the Meccans anxious as well as helpless. Hereby the Meccans who made international agreements and guided the commercial and religious life of the peninsula were desperate for the position of the Prophet Muhammad and the style of the Qur'an.

One of the emotional violence suffered by the Prophet was carried out through his daughters, which we can see as the most sensitive point of a father. The daughters of the Prophet, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum, were engaged to Abu Lahab's two sons. Abu Lahab and his wife broke off the engagement by insulting the Prophet and his daughters severely, just to upset him.<sup>[57]</sup>

As a result of all their efforts, the Meccans did not get results from emotional violence and changed their methods. This time, with physical violence, they tried to dissuade the Prophet Muhammad from his invitation. At this point, they used various methods, such as placing thorns on the roads through which he passed, trying to drown him, and placing entrails of camel on his shoulders.<sup>[58]</sup> However, they have not achieved their desired goals.

When the Meccans realized that they could not achieve their goals through the Prophet Muhammad, they also targeted the Qur'an. The Meccans sometimes disliked the statements of the Qur'an and said, "Either bring us another Qur'an from this one or change it." The answer of the Prophet was, "*It is not*

[57] Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 10/36-39.

[58] al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 1/147.

*possible for me to make changes in it on my own. I follow nothing but what is revealed to me.”*<sup>[59]</sup>

Later, the Meccans said, *“We shall never believe in you unless you cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth. Or you have a garden of date palms and grapes, then you bring forth rivers from their midst in abundance. Or you cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you claimed, or you bring Allah and angels before us face to face. Or you have a house made of gold. Or you ascend to the sky, and we will not believe in your ascension unless you send down to us a book we may read.”*<sup>[60]</sup>

Allah has warned people through the prophets He has appointed many times, and He has helped His prophets in a way that makes people helpless. Moses crossed the Red Sea<sup>[61]</sup> and Jesus raised the dead by Allah’s will.<sup>[62]</sup> These are situations that leave people helpless. Allah has not provided His last Prophet with support that will only make the other side helpless at that moment, but He has given him such support that all of humanity will not be able to bring its like until the day of Resurrection. It was miracle that is the Qur’an. He asked His prophet to address those who expect extraordinary things from him in the following way, *“I proclaim the Glory of my Lord. I am nothing but human, a messenger.”*<sup>[63]</sup> This was the enough answer for their requests.

The Meccans were doing their best and trying every possible way to prevent the message of Islam from reaching large masses. In the early period, the main way of inviting people to Islam was to read verses of the Qur’an. The Prophet also went to the Kaabah, where people were crowded, and read the Qur’an here and kept people informed of the commandments of Allah. Whenever the Prophet recited the Qur’an, the Meccans tried to prevent people from hearing the signs of Allah by raising their voices or making various noises. The 26th verse of Surah al-Fussilat refers to this event.<sup>[64]</sup> Against those who tried to suppress the Prophet’s voice, he tried to make people hear by reading the Qur’an aloud. However, Allah warned him about this issue and informed him that he should not behave in this way, as well as he should protect his dignity, not being too loud in his prayer, or too quiet, but seeking a middle way.<sup>[65]</sup>

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[59] Yūnus 10/15.

[60] al-Isrā’ 17/90-93.

[61] al-Baqara 2/50.

[62] al-Ma’ida 5/110.

[63] al-Isrā’ 17/93.

[64] Fuṣṣilat 41/26.

[65] al-Isrā’ 17/110.

## 2. Pressure

The lack of an authority accepted by everyone in Mecca left the Meccans indecisive in their attitude towards the Prophet Muhammad and the Islamic invitation. The solution found by the Meccans was to neutralize the Prophet by his tribe. In this context, they appealed to Abū Ṭālib, who was the leader of the Banū Hāshim, and asked him to prevent Muhammad (pbuh) from preaching new religion. This request, which seemed very simple and ordinary, contained the idea of interfering in the internal affairs of a tribe. When Abū Ṭālib resisted in any way with his nephew, it would be as if he was ruling his tribe at the request of someone else, as well as someone else who was a rival.

Therefore, Abū Ṭālib, who knew very well the consequences of accepting the Quraysh's request, and enough experience to realize that once he began to lead his tribe according to someone else's demands, then he would not be seen as a leader. Because those who made a request for a tribal member could make a request for the duties carried out by the Banū Hāshim. The process, which began with a tribal member being prevented from talking to people, could eventually have resulted in the losing effectiveness of Hāshimites in Mecca. Hereby Abū Ṭālib, for whatever reason, did not welcome someone else's attraction in the internal affairs of his tribe, but he put it through with pleasant language and a conciliatory answer, without making it a matter of issue.<sup>[66]</sup>

The Meccans, who did not get the result from their first attempt, turned to Abū Ṭālib once again when they saw that the converting to Islam were continuing. For this reason, they said that they could not stand the Prophet Muhammad's words, either to dissuade him from his mission or to stop patronizing him, otherwise they would turn against him. Abū Ṭālib, who was between his community and his nephew, decisively asked the Prophet Muhammad to give up his message. He, thinking that his uncle has stopped protecting him, said a little sadly, "O my uncle, by Allah, if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left on condition that I abandon this cause, before Allah has made it victorious, or I perish therein, I would not abandon it." Abū Ṭālib, who was extremely impressed by the sincerity of his nephew, said that he would protect him in all circumstances and at all times.<sup>[67]</sup>

The Meccans, who also did not get any results from this attempt, came to Abū Ṭālib for the third time. Umara, the son of Walid b. Mughira, was also with them and they offered exchange the Prophet with him, keeping him as his son instead of the Prophet Muhammad and surrendering Muhammad

[66] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawiyya*, 1/298; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/181; *al-Ṭabarī, Ta'riḫ*, 2/323.

[67] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī*, 154; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawiyya*, 1/298-299; *al-Ṭabarī, Ta'riḫ*, 2/323.

(pbuh) to them that they can kill him. Upon this offer, Abū Ṭālib's answer was, "Swear by Allah that you have indeed spoken the evil. Do you mean that I should hand over my son to you so that you can kill him and will give me your son in exchange so that I take care of him! I swear by Allah that if I do so, I would be but an evil man."<sup>[68]</sup>

### 3. The Demands of Meccans for Reconciliation

It often happens that human life is built on two definitions such as friend-enemy, beautiful-ugly or good-evil. The main factor determining whether to be on the positive or negative side in this determination is not similarities, but power struggles. When a person feels strong and thinks that the situation he is dealing with will not be a problem for him, he defines it positively. When he sees it a threat to himself, his identification becomes different, returns to negative.

So, the changed definition affects the reaction shown. Situations that are initially unresponsive and ignored can turn into a threat perception over time. The perception of a threat to a person is a condition that needs to be quickly intervened and eliminated, as it will lead to feelings such as anxiety, uncertainty, fear, obscurity, and worry. What to do if the threat, despite everything, turns into a bigger problem day by day and cannot be eliminated? The answer to the question can be found in the new method that the Meccans used after they failed to achieve the end result, despite all their oppression and torment against the Prophet Muhammad.

Although the Meccans tried all kinds of violence, they could not dissuade him from steadfastness in their mission. They could not prevent him from telling Islam, then they started to implement the strategy under the name of reconciliation against the Prophet Muhammad. That is to say, "if you cannot destroy it, be with it". The main goal of this strategy was to make Muhammad a part of the established system. Thus, Muhammad (pbuh), who was isolated, ostracized, condemned, and tried to be destroyed, had become a focus of power for the Meccans and indirectly the person they were trying to reconcile with.

The Meccans used the method, they knew best, to negotiation and an agreement. After all, they were a powerful tribe and community who had connected the peninsula with agreements called *Īlāf* and built its own trade routes, as well as convinced successfully the Eastern Roman emperor, one of the most powerful figures of the era. Now they could have also convinced him. As a result of this approach, they personally met with the Prophet himself and presented him with a number of offers.

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[68] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/299-300; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, 1/171-172; *al-Ṭabarī*, *Tārīkh*, 2/326-327.

Their first offerings were an office, goods, and women.<sup>[69]</sup> Because they thought that a person would most desire nobility, wealth, or women. We can say that this offer also reflects the general character of the Meccans. The Meccans were offering Muhammad (pbuh) whatever they considered valuable to them. A Muslim attitude, in fact, a human attitude, is to appreciate what they have.

The offer was prepared to address the most basic desires and weaknesses of a person, and it was not an offer that could be rejected immediately. As a result, if Muhammad (pbuh) accepted the offer, he would suddenly become the most respected, richest, and most powerful person in Mecca. However, the Prophet did not heed any of these offers and gave Muslims an extremely important example of what kind of mission they should have.<sup>[70]</sup> In this context, acting with a plan, compromising values, hiding the character changes and transforms a person. A new personality and character, on the other hand, means a new person and new goals.

When the Meccans did not get any results from these offers, they offered an alliance and wanted the Prophet to change his side. Their suggestion that time was that both sides worship what each other worships. Upon this suggestion, which is a clear indication that faith is a mean and the main thing is benefit in the mind of Meccans, Sūrat al-Kāfirūn was revealed, and it has been decisively emphasized that *Tawḥīd* and *shirk* cannot coexist at the same time.<sup>[71]</sup>

#### 4. The Spread of Oppression in General

When the Meccans realized that the Prophet Muhammad would not compromise his mission, they increased the pressure and violence and started targeting all Muslims. Therefore, Muslims did not have the security of life and property in their own cities. The Quraysh considered the faith of the other side to be the enemy. Instead of recognizing, understanding and making sense of it, they were looking for a way to destroy faith and trying in every way to dissuade believers. In this context, they were trying to find a way to turn every Muslim away from their religion, adopting an attitude appropriate to his social status. For example, when they found out that an elite member of a powerful tribe was a Muslim, they tried to dissuade him from Islam with the rhetoric they had developed based on nobility, reputation, customs, and adherence to tradition. When they learnt that a merchant was a Muslim, they preferred economic pressure. When they heard that one of the Mawali or slaves was a Muslim, they were not afraid to commit physical violence. Already, the slaves

[69] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī*, 197-202; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/293-295.

[70] Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra wa al-Maghāzī*, 198; bn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/326.

[71] al-Kāfirūn 109/1-6.

and the Muslims, who had no one to protect them, were the most affected by the suffering of the Meccans. The mother of ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, Sumayya, and his father, Yāsir, lost their lives due to torture of *Mushriqs* and then they became the first martyrs of Islam.<sup>[72]</sup>

When it is understood that the Meccans devalue some of the people with their definitions of nobility and impose meaning on principles such as justice, equality, freedom in their own interests, it becomes clear why the believers maintain their position despite such torment. Islam has provided people with a way of life and has not forced anyone to accept it or not. Although Muslims adopted a lifestyle of their own free will, those who did not adopt this lifestyle oppressed and tormented them. In a sense, the Meccans tried to take the right to design life into their own hands. They saw in themselves the authority to determine the content of all kinds of issues such as social, religious, economic, even personal topics. Thus, they expected those other than themselves to obey what was offered. From one point of view, one group in Mecca, considered itself the main subject, and they saw others as the object that complements them.

Muslims have been subjected to persecution because of their faith. They could not live their own truths and beliefs in their own homeland. This was exactly the situation for the Muslims in Mecca. The increasing pressure and violence against the Muslims and their inability to stop these injustices have led them to seek a different solution point. At this point, the solution that the Prophet Muhammad found was to temporarily resettle at least some of the Muslims in a place where they could be comfortable.

## Conclusion

The first revelation that took place in the cave of Ḥirā’ in Mecca through the Archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad was the beginning of the last warning of Allah in order to ensure the return of mankind to the essence. Thus, Allah revealed to His Prophet that the world is finite and declared that man that the world is finite and declared that man should recognize his creator and stand always on a straight path.

When the first six years of Islamic history are examined, it is seen that more than one actor is included as the main figure. Naturally, the Prophet Muhammad is the most prominent actor. Everything was taking shape around him and in accordance with his message. It seems that the message of the Prophet Muhammad divided the Meccans into two groups: those who

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[72] For detailed information about the torture of the Quraysh against Muslims during the reign of Mecca, see Ibn Ishāq, *al-Siyar wa al-Maghāzī*, 189-203; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyya*, 1/344-347; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 1/178-222.



fundamentally accept and believe and those who reject and oppose. Among those who accept and believe, it is possible to see people of all statuses and all age groups of society. Those who refuse and oppose to the invitation of the Prophet were the richest and the most elite of Mecca. Also, it is seen that none of those who consider themselves as the elite of Mecca accept Islam. For these names, Islam is the greatest threat, and Muhammad (pbuh) is the greatest enemy. The main reason why they do not accept Islam is that Islam and their interests do not coincide.

Another group during this period is those who do not accept Islam as a faith, but do not turn their oppositions into hostility. A significant part of the Prophet Muhammad's tribe, Banū Hāshim, a moderate group of Meccans takes part in this group.

There is another figure, which can only be seen when viewed in three dimensions. It is Allah, who follows the process of His Prophet's mission, guides Muhammad (pbuh) when necessary, gives hope to Muslims from time to time and renews their faith, and in some cases responds to the untruthful accusations of the Meccans with the most severe expressions.

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