From Uhud to Qasiyoon

An English translation of travelogue:
Uhud Say Qasiyoon Tak

Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria

Rabee' Ul Awwal 1406, January 1986

فرنگیوں کو عطا خاکِ سُوریا نے کیا

نبیّ عفّت و غم خواری و کم آزاری

صِلہ فرنگ سے آیا ہے سُوریا کے لئے

مے و قمار و ہجومِ زنانِ بازی

The land of Syria bestowed upon the Western world

The chaste Prophet, offering solace, utterly harmless

The return received from the Western world to Syria is

Liquor, gambling and a throng of loose women

From Uhud to Qasiyoon[1]

In 1956, this lowly one's respected father Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi' Sahab (may his secret be sanctified) had travelled to Syria. My heart yearned to see Syria since them. Syria was the land of Prophets (peace be upon them). The Noble Quran has praised its sanctity and blessings at numerous places. Unforgettable events from Islamic history since the time of Hazrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) are linked to it. Whichever resident of Syria I met, I found him all praise for his land. And I also found a glimpse of the beauty of Syria in their appearance and character. Therefore it would perhaps not be an exaggeration if I were to say that after the Haramain Shareefain, the place I wanted to see the most was Syria.

This year in Rabee' Ul Awwal, the Islamic Fiqh Council's annual conference was to take place in Jeddah. I had already planned to visit Syria after the conference. My nephew Maulvi Ameen Ashraf Sahab (may Allah keep him safe) (who is an officer in the High Court of Madinah Munawwarah) expressed his desire to accompany this lowly one on this trip. Respected brother Qari Basheer Ahmad Sahab was already ready for this, and shortly before the start of this trip, my niece's husband Maulvi Ata ur-Rahman Sahab (who is a Saudi national) got ready to accompany us. All of them were of the opinion that this trip should be made by road. Maulvi Ata ur-Rahman Sahab had recently bought a new car so it was decided to use this car for the trip. In this manner a mini caravan was formed with whom this trip proved to be rather interesting and enjoyable.

This was the first day of 1986, i.e. 1st of January. We departed Madinah Tayyibah at 7:30am and, passing by the Western side of Mount Uhud, got on the highway leading to Syria. This highway passes by Khaybar, Madain Salih and Tabook to the north of Madinah Tayyibah, before reaching the border of Jordan.

After leaving Madinah Tayyibah, rocky dunes can be seen extending on both sides of the road till far. This was the route the desert-dwelling Arab caravans used to take to Syria. The Noble Messenger ﷺ would himself have passed by this route at least four times; twice before being appointed as a Prophet, for journeys to Syria; one time when he was proceeding for the assault on Khaybar; and one time at the occasion of the Battle of Tabook. These rocky mounds would have glimpsed upon the most sacred personalities of human history, through whose beauty the world adorned itself; they would have had the honour of kissing the feet of the Leader of the Two Worlds ﷺ and his devoted companions. The mind's eye was carried away gazing at the caravans of those liberators of humanity, and their horses and camels, forging ahead among those mountains and valleys. And these imaginations overshadowed any desires for sightseeing by tingeing this trip with emotions of devotion, love and reverence.

After an uninterrupted journey of about three hours, signs of a large village loomed before us. My companions told me that this was Khaybar. The modern city of Khaybar is situated on the main road itself, but one needs to go off the main road slightly to visit the ancient city of Khaybar. Besides me, all

[1] Qasiyoon: The mountain which cradles the city of Damascus.

my companions had visited Khaybar before, so I had no difficulty visiting the places I desired to see. We detoured off the main highway and within a few miles reached the ancient city of Khaybar. This city is located amongst dense date gardens, and its uneven streets narrate tales of antiquity. Crossing semi-paved streets, we reached the foot of the bastion of a dilapidated fort. This fort has existed since the blessed era of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. Previously, people could climb atop the bastion and enter the fort but now it has become extremely rickety due to decay. It is therefore not permitted to climb into it now.

Khaybar

Khaybar was actually a vast and fertile area comprising of numerous forts. It is said that it was founded by a person from amongst the Amaliqa whose name was Khaybar Bin Qaniah, and this area thus got its name from him[1]. Some people have said that "Khaybar" means "fort" in Hebrew language, and since a fort was constructed here, this place became known as "Khaybar". More forts were constructed here later, which were known by the names of Naa'im, Qamoos, Nataut, Qasaarah, al-Wateeh and as-Salaalam, and therefore this whole region was also called "Khayaabir" (plural of Khaybar)[2].

During the blessed era of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, Jews controlled this entire area. Various Jewish families had established their own mini states within various forts. These people would continuously plot against Muslims after the migration of the Noble Messenger ﷺ to Madinah. Among the Jews residing in Madinah Tayyibah, when the tribe of Banu Nadeer were expelled due to breaking their treaties, they also settled here in Khaybar and began spinning webs of machinations against the Noble Messenger ﷺ. Several tribes of the Arabs had bore down upon Madinah Tayyibah during the Battle of Trench. The Jews of Khaybar played a big hand in this. Since these people were quite wealthy and possessed rather formidable military defenses, Khaybar had become the biggest foe of Islam. It had spawned threats after threat for Madinah Tayyibah, and it was not possible to mitigate this except through a decisive assault.

During the Treaty of Hudaibiya, when the Noble Messenger ﷺ and the Sahaba were forced to return back without performing Umrah, the hearts of the Muslims were emotionally and psychologically hurt. At that time the Noble Quran had given glad tidings that (as a result of their patience and restraint) Allah Ta'ala will soon bestow another land upon them. It was the land of Khaybar that was meant there.

Consequently in Muharram 7H, about one-and-a-half month after returning from Hudaibiya, the Noble Messenger ﷺ departed for the conquest of Khaybar with the Muslim army. It comes in narrations that it was Asr time when he ﷺ arrived near Khaybar at a place called Sahba. When he proceeded from here the buildings of Khaybar loomed ahead. He ﷺ stopped the army and made this supplication:

أَللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ وَخَيْرَ أَهْلِهَا وَخَيْرَ مَا فِيهَا ، وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ أَهْلِهَا وَشَرِّ مَا فِيهَا

[1] Mu'jam Mas'tajam lil-Bakri, Page 523, Volume 1
[2] Mu'jam ul-Buldaan lil-Hamawi, Page 409, Volume 7

“Oh Allah! We ask you for the goodness of this city, its inhabitants and whatever it contains, and we seek your refuge from the evil of this city, its inhabitants and whatever it contains.”

The narrator (of this Hadith) says that it was the normal practice of the Noble Messenger ﷺ that he would make this supplication whenever he would enter a new city.

The next morning, the Noble Messenger ﷺ attacked the fort Na’im of Khaybar. Hazrat Mahmood Bin Maslama (may Allah be pleased with him) fought valiantly in this assault, but at one point a Jew threw a millstone on him from the top of the fort, as a result of which he was martyred. However, the fort was conquered soon after. Thereafter several forts fell one after the other, but the fiercest battle took place at the fort of Qamoos. We were standing at the foot of this very fort.

This fort was considered the most well-fortified fort of Khaybar, and the enemy had also heavily deployed its military strength to protect it. The siege of this fort lasted about twenty days. The Noble Messenger ﷺ deputed several Sahaba one after the other to attack it, but it could not be captured and all of them returned unsuccessful. Finally, one day he ﷺ said that I will hand the flag tomorrow to such a person who loves Allah and His Messenger ﷺ and whom Allah and His Messenger ﷺ love. And InshaAllah Allah will grant us victory at his hands.

Everyone wondered as to who would be granted this great blessing. The Sahaba spent that night in anxious and expectant wait. The next morning the Noble Messenger ﷺ called for Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and handed the flag to him. People were surprised at this choice because Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) had been suffering from pain in his eyes until then, and in some narrations it is mentioned that Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “O Messenger of Allah ﷺ! Due to my eye pain I cannot see even my own feet.” The Noble Messenger ﷺ applied his blessed saliva on his eyes and supplicated. His eye pain instantly disappeared, and Hazrat Ali proceeded with the flag and planted it in front of the fort.

The famous Jewish wrestler Marhab advanced towards him for a duel while chanting *Rijz* poetry. During the combat Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) struck his sword on his head and his head split into two. And as foretold by the Noble Messenger ﷺ, the fort was conquered at his hands.

It is the same fort about which the fable of tearing out its door is popularly known among people as “Dar-e-Khaybar”. According to this fable, Hazrat Ali lost his shield during the combat so he tore out the door of the fort and used it as a shield. But this narration is extremely weak and completely unreliable, and the Muhaddithin (Hadith experts) have strongly rejected it.

The enemy lost their spirit when Qamoos was conquered. Thereafter the forts of Wateeh and Salalam fell without a fight, and the Jews surrendered and offered peace.

Today this fort is made of small decrepit stones and is situated atop a hill. Its bastion meanders till far, and a few ancient buildings can also be seen. It is popularly known among the locals here that there has been very little modification in its construction since ancient times.

A brick enclosure features in the middle of the fort. One can glimpse inside through a window. It is famously known among the locals that this is the spot where the commandment prohibiting donkey meat was announced. The Sahaba had placed their pots over a flame with donkey meat being cooked,

but when they heard the announcement prohibiting its consumption they overturned their pots and threw away their contents. Details of this incident are mentioned in the books of Hadith.

If this is true about the enclosure, then it lends evidence that this is indeed the fort of Qamoos, because the incident of prohibition of donkey meat and the pots being overturned is narrated as occurring after the capture of the fort of Qamoos.

In front of the fort, numerous narrow tracks meander till far, flanked by walls of small date-gardens. These date-gardens now appear deserted and desolate, but they still contain innumerable date-trees. In the midst of these date-gardens is a smallish stream which, after some distance, transforms into a big lake. This lake is famously known as "'Ayn Ali" here. People drink its water with great zeal and enthusiasm, and its water is indeed rather cool, clean and sweet. But this lowly one could not find any reason for this lake being named after Hazrat Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). Abdullah al-Bakri has mentioned a spring near the fort of Marhab which used to be called "Qismat ul-Malaaikah"[1], but he has not mentioned any connection of this spring with Hazrat Ali. And Allah knows the best.

We stayed in desolate date-gardens and the ancient city of Khaybar for a short while. Thereafter we headed back to the main road. After travelling a few kilometers from the ancient city of Khaybar, a mountain loomed towards our right. This mountain is famously believed to be "Sadd us-Sahbaa", i.e. the place where the Noble Messenger ﷺ spent the evening before attacking Khaybar, and later when returning from Khaybar to Madinah Tayyibah it was here that he married the Mother of the Believers Hazrat Safiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her).

Hazrat Safiyyah was the daughter of Huyayy Bin Akhtab, the chief of Banu Nadeer, and the wife of Kinana, the leader of Fort Qamoos. Shortly before the Noble Messenger ﷺ attacked Khaybar, one night she saw a dream that a moon rose from Yathrib (Madinah) and fell in her lap. When she narrated this dream to her husband, he gave her a hard slap on the face saying: "You dream of marrying the king of Yathrib."[2] Shortly after this incident the Noble Messenger ﷺ captured Fort Qamoos. Kinana was killed in that battle and Hazrat Safiyya was arrested as a prisoner of war. The noble Sahaba submitted to the Noble Messenger ﷺ saying: "She is the daughter of a chieftain and the wife of a leader. It would be more appropriate for her to be your slave girl than anyone else's." The Noble Messenger ﷺ called her and said: "If you wish to remain on the religion you are following you may do so. We will not force you to leave it. But if you choose Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, then that would be better for you." At this Hazrat Safiyya accepted Islam.[3] He then said: "If you wish, we will emancipate you and send you to your family so you can return to them. And if you wish, I will emancipate you and marry you." Hazrat Safiyya chose the second proposal[4], and she thus attained the honour of becoming the blessed wife of the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

The Noble Messenger ﷺ stayed at this place called Sahba for three days. It was also here that the *Walima* (wedding banquet) of his marriage to Hazrat Safiyya was convened. It was a Walima of its own kind. A leather tablecloth was spread out and Hazrat Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) was

---

[1] Mu'jam Masta'ajam, Page 522, Volume 1
[2] Ar-Rawd ul-'Anf lis-Suhaily, Page 240, Volume 2, printed in Multan
[3] Maghaazi al-Waqidi, Page 674, Volume 2
[4] Musnad Ahmad Bin Hanbal, Volume 3, Page 138 Marwiyyaat Anas Ba Dheel Qissah Hajjaj Bin 'Alaat, and Tareekh al-Khamees lid-Diyaar Bakri, Page 57, Volume 2

instructed to announce that whoever possesses whatever food should bring it. Someone brought dates, someone brought cottage cheese, someone brought Saweeq (ground, dry-roasted barley flour), while someone else brought Ghee. When some dishes were gathered in this manner, everyone sat together to eat, with neither meat nor bread served.
(Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

After passing by Sahba, we returned to the road which meets the highway leading to Syria. On our way, we saw a vast enclosure built on the right side of an ascent. My companions told that these were the graves of the martyrs of Khaybar. We got down here for a while and presented our *Salams* (greetings of peace) in the service of those faithful martyrs. Traditions indicate that about twenty Sahaba were martyred in Khaybar.

One of those martyrs was Aswad the Shepherd (may Allah be pleased with him). After accepting Islam, he did not get to pray even a single prayer but according to the glad tidings of the Noble Messenger ﷺ he went straight to Paradise. His story is as follows. He was a shepherd residing in Khaybar who would be hired to graze goats. When the Noble Messenger ﷺ besieged Khaybar, one day Hazrat Aswad asked the inhabitants of the fort as to why they were preparing for war. They replied that we are facing a person who claims to be a Prophet. He thought to himself that he should meet him. Consequently, one day he went out of the fort to graze the goats when he saw the army of the Noble Messenger ﷺ encamped outside. He went straight to the Noble Messenger ﷺ and asked him about Islam. He ﷺ informed him about the basic teachings of Islam and the love of Islam entered his heart. He asked: "What will I get if I were to accept Islam." He ﷺ replied: "Paradise!" He said: "I am dark complexioned and ugly and my body stinks. Will I still be worthy of Paradise if I accept Islam?" He ﷺ replied: "Yes! Allah Ta'ala will bestow beauty upon you, and your body odour will be transformed into fragrance."

Hearing this, Aswad the Shepherd accepted Islam and submitted: "These goats have been entrusted to me. What should I do with them?" He ﷺ replied: "Drive them back towards the fort." He therefore drove the goats towards the fort until they went inside. Thereafter Aswad the Shepherd took part in the Jihad of Khaybar. After the war, when the martyrs were brought before the Noble Messenger ﷺ, the body of Aswad the Shepherd was also presented. When the Noble Messenger ﷺ saw his body, he averted his face for a while. When the noble Sahaba asked for the reason of this action, he replied: "He is now with two maidens from the maidens of Jannah. Allah Ta'ala has beautified his face and has made his body fragrant." When remembering him, the noble Sahaba used to say: "He is such an inhabitant of Paradise who has not even prayed a single prayer for Allah, but has gone straight to Paradise."[1]

After presenting ourselves at the graves of the noble martyrs, we restarted our journey and after a while reached the highway which leads to Tabook and Syria. From Madinah Tayyibah until Khaybar, mountains and hills loomed on both sides of the road till far, but from here onwards a bleak and barren desert extended into the horizon. As far as the eyes could see, neither a house could be seen nor a hill, nor a tree, a bush, any greenery or water; just the bare, desolate desert in which no signs of life could be made out till far. This kind of desert extends from Khaybar to Tabook, rather it continues for hundreds of kilometers into Jordan, making it about eight to nine hundred kilometers long in total. It is called "*Sahra an-Nufood*" (Nufood Desert), and I have never before in my life crossed such a long desert by road.

---

[1] 'Uyoon ul-Athar, Li ibn Sayyid un-Naas, Page 184, Volume 3

I was thinking to myself that our journey is during the pleasant winter season. We have a brand new comfortable and air-conditioned car available for our trip. Alhamdulillah we have sufficient food and other necessities for the journey. A magnificent highway is spread beneath us to travel upon, and Maulvi Ata ur-Rahman Sahab is racing the car at 120 to 150 kilometers per hour but we still do not feel any bumps. And Alhamdulillah we were comforted with the thought that InshaAllah we will reach Tabook by evening.

But it was this very bleak and barren and nauseating desert with apocalyptic sirocco winds raging havoc, in which the sky seems to emit fiery showers of fire and the earth spews out flames, without a road, car or any shelter from the heat. It was in such scorching heat that the Leader of the Two Worlds ﷺ and his faithful Sahaba crossed this savage desert, in which one cannot even glimpse a single leaf of a bush as far as the eyes can see, by travelling on horses and camels for more than two continuous weeks for the Battle of Tabook. And when the Muslim army had advanced ahead while Hazrat Abu Dhar Ghifari (may Allah be pleased with him) was left behind, he actually proceeded on foot to attain the blessings of participating in this Jihad.

Allahu Akbar! Today just the thought of the surreal levels of determination of those blessed souls, their undeterrable courage and utter disregard for bodily needs of rest and relaxation makes one sweat. May Allah be pleased with them and may He make them pleased with Him.

After continuing on this highway for some time a turn appeared heading to the right. I came to know that a road from here leads to Madain Salih (peace be upon him) which is located at only a few miles from here. This was the city of Hazrat Salih (peace be upon him) where the people of Thamud used to live amidst their architectural wonders. Later, as a result of their rejecting Hazrat Salih (peace be upon him) and continuously disobeying him, a terrifying punishment descended upon them. The ruins of their city can still be seen here, and from among our companions Qari Basheer Ahmad Sahab and Ata ur-Rahman Sahab have seen them before. They report that signs of their houses constructed in mountains can still be seen today. One opinion among our companions was to visit these ruins, but we did not find the courage to undertake a planned visit to such a place where the punishment of Allah had descended. I had read in narrations that when the Noble Messenger ﷺ passed by these ruins on his way to Tabook he draped a cloth over his face, made his she-camel run faster and instructed the Sahaba not to enter any of their houses, nor to drink the water available there, nor to use it for *Wudu* (ablution). And whoever had mistakenly or unknowingly collected water from here or had kneaded dough using it, were commanded to throw the water and to feed the dough to the camels, and to proceed from there with their heads bowed down. (Sahih Bukhari and Fath ul-Bari, Page 268, Volume 6)

It is learned from this action of the Noble Messenger ﷺ that one should pass by those places where Allah's punishment had descended with *Istighfar* (asking for one's forgiveness from Allah). God knows what spiritually poisonous effects may be lurking in the aura of these places, to save us from which he ﷺ adopted those actions.

In Tayma

Anyway! We did not head for this punished city and continued our journey on the highway leading to Tabook. After travelling nonstop until about 2-2:30pm we reached the city of Tayma. We stopped here to pray Zuhr and had lunch at a Turkish restaurant.

Tayma is also an ancient city. Its name has remained unchanged since the blessed era of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. Here as well Jews lived in large numbers. When the Noble Messenger ﷺ had conquered Khaybar and Wadi al-Qura, the Jews residing here voluntarily accepted to pay Jizya. In this manner this region came under the command of the Noble Messenger ﷺ via peace treaty, and he ﷺ appointed Hazrat Yazeed Bin Abi Sufyan (may Allah be pleased with him) as its Governor.[1] The famous Arab tribe of Banu Tayy (whose member Hatim Tai is famous) were settled not far from Tayma[2]. The famous Jewish chieftain Samaw'al Bin 'Aadiyaa's fort was also located here[3], whose poetry features in Deewaan Hamasa.

After the conquest of Khaybar the Jews of Khaybar requested the Noble Messenger ﷺ to lease their lands to them. The Noble Messenger ﷺ accepted this request. As a result, the Jews would harvest the produce and half of the earnings would go to the Muslims. This agreement continued after the demise of the Noble Messenger ﷺ during the caliphate of Hazrat Siddiq al-Akbar and the initial period of the caliphate of Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). However, their innate underhanded machinations continued to reveal their true colours at various points of time. Until one day Hazrat Abdullah Bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) visited Khaybar to tend to his lands when the Jews assaulted him during the night, as a result of which his hand and foot were fractured. At that point Hazrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), after discussing the matter with the noble Sahaba, decided to terminate the lease agreement with the Jews of Khaybar and expelled them therefrom. At that point, they settled in Tayma.[4]

The weather was intensely cold in Tayma. The time of Asr had approached by the time we finished lunch. We therefore prayed Asr in a Masjid here, but when I did *Wudu* (ablution) the water was so cold that my hands and feet felt numb.

We resumed our journey after Asr and the vast expanse of the desert extending into the horizon also returned. Now Maulvi Ameen Ashraf (may Allah keep him safe) was driving the car. We were aiming to somehow make it to Tabook by evening. The road was clear, so there were no obstacles to driving at speed. Consequently, just when we observed the sun disappearing below the horizon, buildings of the city of Tabook also loomed before us. And with the grace of Allah we prayed Maghrib in Tabook itself.

One Night in Tabook

We reached Tabook at Maghrib time. We had planned to spend that night in Tabook itself. Our companion respected Qari Basheer Ahmad Sahab had booked a room in a neat and clean hotel in the central shopping district here. We were utterly drained from the full day's journey, so we felt quite relieved when we reached the cozy hotel room. But the mind's eye was fixated with the thought that while we felt so exhausted with just a day's journey in a cozy and splendid car, the Leader of the Two Worlds ﷺ and his companions had crossed this bleak and barren desert on camels during the scorching summer.

---

[1] 'Uyoon al-Athar, Page 188, Volume 2
[2] Fath ul-Bari, Page 240, Volume 5
[3] Mu'jam ul-Buldaan Lil-Hamawi, Page 67, Volume 2
[4] Sahih Bukhari, Kitab ush-Shuroot, together with Fath ul-Bari, Page 240, Volume 5

چہ نسبت خاک را با عالمِ پاک

What association does dust possess with the Realm of the Pure?

The cold here was much more intense than in Madinah Munawwarah. After performing *Wudu* (ablution) at Isha time, we headed for that sacred Masjid which has been built over the place where the Noble Messenger ﷺ had encamped. This Masjid was at some distance from the hotel so we had to go by car. Alhamdulillah we prayed Isha prayer in that Masjid. It is quite spacious and grand today, but a square marking in its roof in the middle of its hall denotes the actual place where the Noble Messenger's ﷺ blessed tent was erected during his stay in Tabook.

Today Tabook is a modern city and despite its small size it is quite beautiful, resplendent and well-furnished with modern amenities. But during the era of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, it was just a small city. A spring of water located here was called Tabook, from which this city took its name. Among all the journeys of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, perhaps the journey for the Battle of Tabook was the most arduous. The need for this journey arose because in the year 9H the Christians of Arabia wrote a letter to the Roman emperor Heraclius, saying that Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ had (*Ma'adh Allah*) passed away and that people were dying of hunger, and therefore this was a golden opportunity to attack Arabia. When this news reached Heraclius, he immediately commanded for preparations, and a mighty army of forty thousand men was prepared[1].

Meanwhile some Nabatean merchants were visiting Madinah Munawwarah to sell olives. They informed the Muslims that Heraclius has prepared a mighty army to attack you, the vanguard of which has already reached Balqa, and Heraclius has even paid his army the entire year's salary.[2] When the Noble Messenger ﷺ heard this news, he decided to personally undertake the journey to Tabook and ordered the Sahaba to prepare for the same.

That time was extremely testing for the Sahaba. An impending battle with such a superpower of the time as Rome; the scorching summer in the deserts of Arabia when the sky seems to emits fiery showers of fire and the earth spews out flames; a journey of about eight hundred kilometers, which passes through savage deserts; insufficient conveyances; impoverished finances, and this was the time of ripening of dates in Madinah Munawwarah. In other words, this was the time they would reap the fruits of the entire year's laborious efforts in the form of ripened dates. The entire year's finances depended on this. Leaving Madinah Munawwarah in this state was equivalent to inviting further financial difficulties.

But such was the mettle of the Noble Messenger ﷺ and his utterly devoted Sahaba, and only they possessed such unshakable spirit and valour, that they made it through all those challenges and became ready for that patience-testing journey. Several miracles of the Noble Messenger ﷺ were witnessed during this journey, and he finally encamped at that place in Tabook where this Masjid is built today.

---

[1] Mu'jam uz-Zawaid, Page 191, Volume 6, with reference to Mu'jam Tabarani and Fath ul-Bari, Page 85, Volume 8
[2] Tabaqaat Ibn Sa'd, Page 119, Volume 2

The Noble Messenger ﷺ stayed in Tabook for twenty days but no one from Heraclius's army came to face them. Apparently no battle took place, but his ﷺ coming here with so many sacrifices opened a new chapter of Islamic conquests. The enemies were instilled with awe of Muslims and nearby tribes voluntarily came and submitted themselves. The rulers of the Levant areas of Jarba, Adhruh and Aylah personally presented themselves in the service of the Noble Messenger ﷺ and proposed a peace treaty and agreed to pay Jizya. The Noble Messenger ﷺ gave them a written peace treaty.

From here, the Noble Messenger ﷺ dispatched Hazrat Khalid Bin Waleed (may Allah be pleased with him) along with a cavalry of four hundred men to Doomat ul-Jandal. Doomat ul-Jandal was also under Heraclius's control and its ruler Ukaydir had been appointed by the King of Rome. While sending Hazrat Khalid Bin Waleed, the Noble Messenger ﷺ said to him: "When you reach Doomat ul-Jandal, you will find its ruler Ukaydir hunting. Do not kill him. Rather arrest him and bring him to me." Therefore when Hazrat Khalid Bin Waleed approached the fort of Doomat ul-Jandal, Ukaydir was sitting with his wife at the roof terrace of his fort under the moonlit summer night sky, listening to music. An oryx (wild cow) rubbing its horns with his fort's gate suddenly caught his attention. Ukaydar hastened down his fort, along with his brother and some others, mounted a horse and galloped in its pursuit. From the other side, Hazrat Khalid Bin Waleed confronted him. Ukaydir's brother Hassaan was killed and Hazrat Khalid arrested Ukaydir and brought him to the Noble Messenger ﷺ. Ukaydir offered peace by offering two thousand camels, eight hundred horses, four hundred armours and four hundred spears[1]. And agreed to live under Muslim rule by paying Jizya.

When we reached this Masjid, which the locals of Tabook call Masjid un-Nabi (Mosque of the Prophet ﷺ), all these events of the Battle of Tabook overshadowed my thoughts, and just the thought of them infused me with a surreal feeling of pleasure and delight. اللّٰهم صلّ علي سيّدنا ومولانا مُحمّد النبي الأمي وعلى آله واصحابه وبارك وسلّم

After Isha prayer, we went to a Pakistani restaurant for dinner. A Saudi military barracks is located at some distance from Tabook, and a good number of Pakistani army troops are residing here since a long time. Therefore Tabook is oft-visited by Pakistanis, and consequently numerous Pakistani restaurants are also available here. The restaurant we visited was also owned by a Pakistani and its owner was a friend of our companion Qari Basheer Ahmad Sahab. He invited us for dinner and had specialty Pakistani dishes warmly prepared for us. After the long day's fatigue, we feasted upon them with much appetite. After dinner, we went for a short walk and then soon went to bed.

The next morning (2nd of January 1986), we had a brief breakfast immediately after Fajr and thereafter proceeded for the next leg of our journey. Jordan's border is located at about a hundred kilometers from here. Through his rejuvenated driving, Maulvi Ata ur-Rahman Sahab traversed this distance quite fast. Saudi Arabia's border city of Halat Ammar is located in this direction. Customs and Immigration posts are located here. There wasn't much traffic in the early morning, so we made it through these procedures in a short time. When we returned to our vehicles, we exited Saudi Arabia and entered

[1] 'Uyoon ul-Athar, Li Ibn Sayyid an-Naas, Pages 282 and 283

Jordan soon. We had to undergo Customs and Immigration procedures once again at Jordan's border posts at Mudawwara. It took slightly longer here. By the time we departed from here it was already ten.

Having travelled a few feet from Saudi Arabia, the world had changed; people wore different clothes, talked differently, the way roads and buildings were constructed was different. There was a marked difference in everything. Though the road from Madinah Munawwarah to Halat Ammar was not so wide, it was very smooth and splendid. It felt as if our car swiftly swam over it. However, after entering Jordan the road was dilapidated, so the journey lost pace and became relatively more exhausting. The road was being repaired every here and there, so we had to travel down semi-paved diversions every now and then. Amman is located at a distance of about two hundred kilometers from the border and this entire distance comprises of dry deserts and boulders. After travelling some distance, we saw hills from which phosphorous or white stone was being extracted. But this route was utterly bereft of any greenery. We drove for almost three hours on this road. Small villages and cities passed by on the way. Signs of Jordan's capital Amman finally loomed before us at around 1 in the afternoon.

In Amman

We did not know our way in Amman, so asked around and arrived at a hotel and spent the night there. It was a short winter day. By the time we finished Zuhr prayer and lunch, it was already Asr time. After Asr prayer I wanted to visit a famous bookstore here called "Dar ul-Basheer". I also wanted to get the addresses of some friends from there. After leaving the hotel, we asked around and finally reached "Dar ul-Basheer". This bookstore is located in a radiant district of Amman called "Abdali", and is a magnificent center for the publication and sale of Arabic books. I also got the address of a Syrian scholar Shaikh Wahbi Sulaiman from here. Someone from the bookstore accompanied us and took us to Shaikh Wahbi Sulaiman. Our meeting lasted about half an hour and we exchanged thoughts on a few matters.

We returned to the hotel thereafter. In those days, Dr Ehsan Rasheed Sahab was the Ambassador of Pakistan in Jordan. He was also an ex-Vice Chancellor of Karachi University. I had talked to him on phone at Asr time, and at his wish dinner was planned at his house. He sent a car to pick us at half-past-seven in the evening and we reached his house around eight. After dinner we had long conversations with him till late. We learned many things about the state of affairs in Jordan and returned to our hotel around eleven at night.

The next day was Friday and we wished to visit notable sites in Amman and its neighbouring areas. May Allah Ta'ala reward the Ambassador of Pakistan Dr Ehsan Rasheed Sahab, who sent his private secretary Malik Afzal Sahab as our guide. He arrived at our hotel early in the morning.

Roman Stadium

When we came down our hotel rooms, my nephew Maulvi Ameen Ashraf (may Allah keep him safe) brought our attention to an ancient stadium built right next to the hotel. When we arrived near it, it became clear that this must be the ruins of a building which predates the era of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, and which is built in the same architectural design as the sports stadiums of today. Malik Afzal Sahab informed us that this was a stadium built during the times of the Roman empire, and which was used to

hold the famous Olympic games of those times. Stadiums were first built in those times. “Stadium” is actually a Latin adaptation of a Greek word. In Latin, a “Stade” was a measure of distance which was equivalent to approximately 606 feet. This was considered the standard length for running competitions in those days, and since the grounds constructed to hold such competitions were one “stade” long, they were named “Stadium”s. This name was initially only applied to grounds where running competitions were held, but since competitions of other sports were also convened in those days, all such grounds where sports competitions were held began being called “Stadium”.[1] At the same time, terraced stair-like seats were also constructed for spectators.

The stadium before us was constructed along the same design. Its terraced seats have survived the ravages of time, and it also features separate seating arrangements for members of the royal family. Though the building now stands desolate, and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has preserved it purely as a tourist attraction, these desolate ruins nevertheless tell intriguing tales of the luxuries and pleasures enjoyed by the Roman Empire. And if one possesses an eye that takes lessons, the irrefutable reality of “كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ”[2] can be seen inscribed on each and every brick of the building. How many an embodiment of grandeur and majesty spent timeless hours here applauding in pleasure. But how short were those moments of luxury and pleasure? And in comparison, how long has been the era spent in death and nonexistence? And there is no end to it even in the time to come:

بس نامور کہ زیر زمیں دفن کردہ اند

خاکش چناں بخورد کمز و استخواں نماند

خیرے کن اے فلان و غنیمت شمار عمر

زاں پیشتر کہ بانگ بر آید فلاں نماند

Many a famous one has been buried under the earth,

Without a sign of their existence remaining on the earth,

O You! Do good deeds and treasure time,

Before it is announced, “so-and-so is no more”

We departed under the guidance of Malik Afzal Sahab. The towns and graves of some Prophets (peace be upon them) and Sahaba (may Allah be pleased with them) are located around Amman. Additionally, several historical sites are also located here. The program I had in mind was to visit these places.

Our car meandered through various beautiful roads of Amman. Amman is the capital of Jordan and is nestled amongst more than a dozen mountains. Seven of those mountains are relatively bigger and more prominent, and divide the city into seven big districts. Due to the city being built over mountains

---

[1] Encyclopedia Brittanica, Page 272, Volume 21, Entry titled “Stadium”

[2] Translator: “Everyone on it (the earth) has to perish”, Surah Rahman 55:26

and their valleys, its terrain features numerous ascents and descents, and the city has acquired a peculiar beauty as a result of this. Another unique feature of this city is that almost every building has been constructed with stone of the same colour. This is a grayish white stone which is extracted from within Jordan itself, and it is used in most buildings constructed. Due to this, a captivating uniformity of colour is observed in the city.

Amman city is thousands of years old. It is said that it dates back to Hazrat Lut (peace be upon him), and that it carries the same name since then. The region in which Amman is situated was called Balqa. This was a division of the Roman Empire and Amman was its capital. It is therefore also called “Amman ul-Balqa” (Amman of Balqa), and this is its name mentioned in Hadith as well. I had read in books that the city is quite green and verdant, but I did not find the city so green at this time. However, the neighbouring areas were quite fertile and lush.