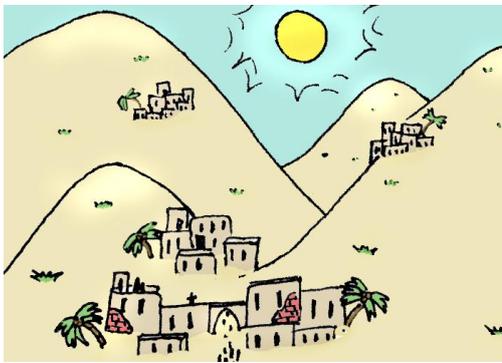


MEDINA

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) faced great hardship whilst propagating the message of Islam. The people of Mecca subjected him and his followers to great pain and suffering. The situation ultimately became so dire that Allah commanded the Prophet (pbuh) to leave Mecca and migrate elsewhere. This led to migration of the Prophet and his community of followers to the blessed town of Medina, then known as *Yathrib*. Let us briefly chart the history of the migration and learn some interesting facts about the town of Medina.

What we know as Medina today was called *Yathrib* in ancient Arabia. Its name was changed to Medina in honour of the Holy Prophet, when it was re-named *Medina-tul-Nabwi* (the city of the Prophet) after the Prophet migrated there. Medina is a very old town that lies about two hundred miles north of Mecca. It is a valley dotted with hills. In the Prophet's time, people lived there in villages. Each tribe had his own village, its own fort. The predominant religious communities in Medina were the Jews and pagans. It was customary for the Prophet to make contact with groups that travelled to Mecca for the annual pilgrimage. The Prophet would use this opportunity to spread the message of Islam.



These groups would travel back to their towns and take the teachings of Islam with them. This became a very important tool for the spread of Islam.



On one such occasion, the Prophet (pbuh) met a small party of pilgrims who had travelled to Mecca from the town of Medina. When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) gave them the message of Islam, they became convinced of its truth and told the Prophet (pbuh) that they would carry this message back to their fellow townsmen of Medina. The next year, more people came from followers was sent to Medina for this purpose. This became a great tool for the spread of Islam in Medina,

and proof of that came in the next season of pilgrimage, when a large group comprising of seventy men and two women arrived in Mecca to see the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and learn more about Islam. This group met the Prophet and expressed their wish to take the Muslims and provide them a secure home in their own city, Medina. They also showed their willingness to make their city a host for the Prophet (pbuh) and provide him with shelter and protection. They promised to protect the Prophet with their lives and assured everyone that they understood the heavy responsibility that they were willing to take on. Thus these townsmen and women of Medina opened their arms to receive the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and their wishes were granted when the Prophet (pbuh) decided that the Muslims of Mecca would migrate to Medina. Many Muslims migrated to Medina after this in order to rid themselves of the persecution and suffering that they had long suffered in Mecca. For his own self, the Prophet (pbuh) decided to postpone the migratory journey until he received God's command to do so.

ENTERING MEDINA

Eight days after leaving Mecca, the party of two arrived at Medina safely. A Jew saw a party dressed in white entering Medina and shouted: "O people of Arabia, there comes the man you have been waiting to see". That man was the Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (pbuh). He was welcomed with cries of Allah-o-Akbar. Big crowds rushed to welcome him. Wild with joy, the people showered their love on the Prophet of God. *Yathrib* had become *Madina-tul-Nabi*, the city of the Prophet.

MIGRATION TO MEDINA

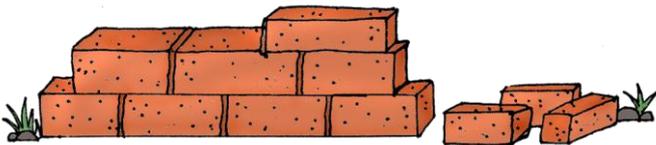
When the Prophet received the divine instruction to depart from Mecca, he set off for Medina along with his trusted and loved friend and companion, Hadhrat Abu Bakr. At the moment of departure the Holy Prophet turned his face in the direction of Mecca and said, 'Mecca, thou art dearer to me than all other places; but thy people would not let me dwell on in thee.'

The migratory journey to Medina was riddled with danger as the *Quraish* started to search for the Prophet (pbuh). When they learnt of his escape from Mecca, they announced a large award of great wealth for anyone who would bring him back to them, dead or alive. Many people started to look for him in the hope of winning the award. But Allah protected Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his companion against every harm.

TASKS UNDERTAKEN IN MEDINA BY THE HOLY PROPHET (PBUH):

BUILDING A MOSQUE

The first concern of the Holy Prophet was the construction of the mosque. He laid the foundation stone himself. His companions worked as builders and labourers. The Holy Prophet himself also occasionally shared in their work. This mosque is known as *Masjid-e-Nabwi*, the Prophet's mosque.



BUILDING TIES OF BROTHERHOOD

Muslims of Medina came to be known as *Ansars* (helpers) and the migrants came to be known as *Muhajirs* (refugees). The Prophet formed bonds of brotherhood between the two groups as one *Ansar* and one *Muhajir* were made brothers. This helped to integrate the refugee Muslims into the social system of Medina and very soon they became self-sufficient. It was the wisdom of the Prophet and the kindness of the *Ansars* that helped to achieve this. It was the birth of an exemplary Muslim society.



A PACT WITH THE JEWS AND OTHER TRIBES OF MEDINA

The Prophet (pbuh) made a pact with the tribes of Medina which allowed people of all tribes and religions to live together peacefully whilst enjoying freedom of faith. This pact was made in writing and served as a Constitution for Medina. A society, with its origins in Islamic ideology, was given birth to in this manner. Islam began to flourish in the peaceful community that took shape as a result of the fairness, sense of justice, and peaceful teachings of the true message of Allah.



Though Medina was a peaceful time for Islam, it was also a time of battles and wars which the Muslims had to fight in order to defend themselves. People of Mecca were unhappy with the success of Islam in Medina and they waged war against the Muslims of Medina after some time.

To this date, Medina is of special importance to all Muslims. During Hajj, many pilgrims travel to Medina in order to see and experience the city of the Prophet: *Medina-tul-Nabwi*. The grave of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is also within the confines of this same mosque and so it holds a unique status for all Muslims.