SAMPLE

Hudaybiyyah: The Treaty That Opened Hearts

The Clear Victory (48:1)

Aira Aurora

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Introduction

The Treaty of Hudaybiyyah is one of the most significant events in the Quranic narrative, not because of its drama but because of its consequences. The Quran describes it as a "clear victory" (fathan mubina, 48:1), a description that puzzled the Prophet's companions at the time but that history vindicated. The treaty was not a military victory; it was a diplomatic agreement that appeared to concede ground to the opposition. Yet the Quran called it a victory, and the years that followed proved that it was.

The treaty was concluded in the sixth year after the Hijrah, when the Prophet Muhammad and approximately 1,400 companions set out from Madinah to perform Umrah (the lesser pilgrimage) in Makkah. The Quraysh, who controlled Makkah, prevented them from entering. After days of negotiation, a treaty was agreed upon: the Muslims would return to Madinah without performing Umrah that year, but they would be allowed to return the following year. The treaty also included a ten-year ceasefire and provisions for tribal alliances.

The Quran's designation of this event as a "clear victory" is itself a theological statement. The victory is not defined by military conquest or territorial expansion but by the opening of hearts. The treaty created a period of peace during which the message of Islam could spread without the obstacle of warfare. In the two years between the treaty and the conquest of Makkah, more people accepted Islam than in all the years of conflict combined. The victory was not the treaty itself but the peace that the treaty enabled.

This book examines the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah as narrated in the Quran, focusing on Surah Al-Fath (48), which was revealed in connection with the treaty. The book explores the context, the negotiation, the terms, the pledge, and the lessons of this pivotal event. The treaty is a model of how peace, even when it requires difficult concessions, can produce greater victories than warfare. The lessons of Hudaybiyyah speak to every generation and every situation where faith and diplomacy intersect.

Chapter 1: The Context of the Treaty

By the sixth year after the Hijrah, the Muslim community in Madinah had survived the trials of the early years. They had won at Badr, suffered at Uhud, and prevailed at the Battle of the Trench (Khandaq). The community was established, the constitution of Madinah was functioning, and the message was spreading. But the relationship with the Quraysh of Makkah remained unresolved. The Quraysh had driven the Muslims from their homes, confiscated their property, and waged war against them. The Muslims had defended themselves but had not returned to Makkah.

The Prophet saw a dream in which he was entering Makkah, performing the Umrah, and shaving his head. He shared the dream with his companions, and they prepared for the journey. The dream was interpreted as a divine promise that they would enter Makkah, but the manner of the entry was not specified. The companions understood it as imminent victory — they would enter Makkah as conquerors. The Quran would later clarify that the entry would be peaceful, but at the time, the expectations were different.

Surah Al-Fath (48), revealed in connection with the treaty, provides the Quranic framework for understanding the event. The surah begins: "Indeed, We have given you a clear victory — that Allah may forgive for you what preceded of your sin and what will follow and complete His favor upon you and guide you to a straight path" (48:1-2). The victory is described as a means of forgiveness and guidance, not as a military achievement. The framing establishes the Quranic perspective: the event is significant not for what it accomplishes politically but for what it accomplishes spiritually.

The surah continues: "And it is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith" (48:4). The tranquility (sakinah) is the divine gift that descended upon the believers during the event. The gift is not an external achievement but an internal state — the calm that comes from trusting Allah's plan, even when the plan appears to contradict human expectations.

The Prophet's dream of entering Makkah was the catalyst for the journey. The Quran does not narrate the dream directly in Surah Al-Fath, but it is well established in the prophetic tradition and is referenced in the Quranic statement: "Allah has certainly fulfilled His promise to you when you were killing them by His permission, until [the time] when you lost courage and disputed and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you desire" (3:152, referring to a different event but establishing the principle of divine promise). The dream was a promise, and the treaty was the fulfillment, but the form of

the fulfillment was different from what the companions expected.

The dream and its fulfillment teach a Quranic principle: divine promises are always fulfilled, but the manner of fulfillment may differ from human expectation. The companions expected to enter Makkah immediately and perform Umrah. The divine promise was that they would enter Makkah, but the entry would be through a treaty, not through conquest. The delay was not a denial; it was a different path to the same destination. The principle teaches the believer to trust the promise without dictating the path, because the path is chosen by the One who made the promise.

The Quran establishes a clear principle of non-aggression: "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not commit aggression. Indeed, Allah does not like the aggressors" (2:190). The verse, revealed in the context of the ongoing conflict between the Muslims and the Quraysh, establishes that military action is permitted only in response to aggression, not as an initiative. The principle is central to understanding the journey to Hudaybiyyah: the Muslims were not going to fight; they were going to worship. If the Quraysh attacked them, they would defend themselves. But they would not initiate hostilities.

The principle of non-aggression shaped the entire event. The Muslims who traveled to Hudaybiyyah did not go as an army but as pilgrims. They did not carry weapons of war but the garments of devotion. The intention was not to conquer Makkah but to worship in it. The non-aggressive posture was not a tactical maneuver but a Quranic principle, and the principle was vindicated by the outcome: the event that began as a peaceful pilgrimage ended as a peace treaty, and the peace treaty produced a greater victory than any military campaign could have achieved.

The Quran establishes sacred months during which warfare is prohibited: "They ask you about the sacred month: fighting in it. Say: Fighting in it is a great sin" (2:217). The journey to Hudaybiyyah took place during one of these sacred months, which further emphasized the non-military nature of the expedition. The Quraysh, who were also bound by the tradition of the sacred months, found themselves in a position where attacking the Muslims would violate a custom that they themselves respected. The sacred months provided a framework of protection that the Muslims leveraged through their timing.

The intersection of the sacred months and the pilgrimage intention created a powerful moral claim. The Muslims were traveling in a sacred month, with peaceful intentions, to perform a sacred ritual, in a sacred direction. The multiple layers of sacredness made the Quraysh's prevention of the pilgrimage a violation not merely of the Muslims' rights but of the sacred order itself. The

Quran's critique of the Quraysh in Surah Al-Fath draws on this multi-layered violation: "They are the ones who disbelieved and prevented you from al-Masjid al-Haram while the offering was prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice" (48:25).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aira Aurora is an independent researcher and writer specializing in Quranic studies. Her work focuses on close reading of the Quranic text, exploring its themes, narratives, and moral framework with attention to both the original Arabic and the broader human context.

The NurOne master series is her primary project -- a multi-sub-series exploration of the Quran covering prophets, people, places, events, lessons, commands, signs, the unseen, the hereafter, and everyday life. Each book is a close reading of the Quranic verses on a specific topic, presented in clear, accessible language.

Her work is published under the pen name Aira Aurora.

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The Treaty of Hudaybiyyah stands as one of the most profound demonstrations of the Quranic principle that apparent defeat can be real victory, and that the path to success may run through the territory of concession and patience. The treaty that the companions found difficult to accept became the foundation of the greatest expansion of Islam in its history. The lesson endures: the believer who trusts the divine plan, even when the plan appears to contradict immediate perception, will ultimately see the plan vindicated, and the vindication will be more complete than any human strategy could have produced.

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