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The Jewish Perspectives on Islam during the Historical Epoch of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

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ABSTRACT

Prophet Muhammad was sent to this world by giving the true and last religion so that the people who will come until the Day of Judgment may be guided. After the prophet-hood, when the Prophet migrated to Medina by the order of Allah, the Jews did not like his arrival. The Jews believed that the last prophet Muhammad would appear among the Jews, while Allah sent his last prophet to the Arabs, which made the attitude of the Jews very harsh towards Muhammad (PBUH) and his followers. They did not miss any opportunity to humiliate and defame the Islam and Muslims, even the Jews tried to kill the Prophet several times to stop the spread of Islam. In this article, the behavior of the Jews towards Islam and its followers in the era of Muhammad (PBUH) is described in the light of the Qur'an and Hadith in order to estimate the mentality of the Jews and their hatred and enmity against the Muslims, which will also help in understanding the conspiracies of the Jews in this era.

Keywords: Aws, Jews, Jihad, Khazraj, Quraysh, Religion, Torah, Yathrib.*Corresponding Author: **Jamil Akhtar** (jamil.uei@pu.edu.pk)

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Introduction

God Almighty sent His Messenger Muhammad, with guidance and true religion, to proclaim it over all religion. The Messenger of God began his jihad by preaching in Mecca, and for a period of time, only a few people believed in him, while he has to face the stubbornness, harm and arrogance of Quraysh, so he was allowed by Allah Almighty to migrate to Medina (Yathrib) where people welcomed him and rejoiced. Before his migration to Medina, the Islam had already entered there by Aws and Khazraj's tribes who were later called the Ansar, and who supported the Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) and his religion, and God honored Islam at their hands, and who sacrificed their lives for the religion and for the rise of the word of Allah Almighty. In Medina, there was another group of residents who did not like the arrival of Prophet (PBUH), and their attitude towards Islam was nothing but the position of rejection and egotism, and arrogance for the truth, and this group was the tribes of the Jews spread in Medina and its environs, such as Khaybar, Fadak, Taima. The Jews were the people of the Book, and they saw themselves above the pagan Arabs, and they often heard that a prophet would emerge, and they would follow him, so they were waiting for him. And when God sent His Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) among the Arabs to all humanity, this group was the first to disbelieve in him, as Quran says:

“Although they used to pray for victory ‘by means of the Prophet’ over the polytheists, when there came to them a Book from Allah which they recognized, confirming the Scripture they had ‘in their hands’, they rejected it. So may Allah’s condemnation be upon the disbelievers.”⁽¹⁾

When the Prophet (PBUH) preached them, it only increased them in hate and aversion to the way of God, even the Messenger of God's peaceful treatment with them increased their arrogance. They did not have the ability to confront Islam openly, because of their weakness, cowardice and depravity, they took the scheme of plots and tricks to vibrate the confidence of Muslims in themselves and their religion, and to eliminate Islam for which they had nothing in their hearts except anger and hatred. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Qur'an warns in many places about the morals of the Jews, their bad behavior, and the corruption of their intentions and actions, whether with their previous prophets or in their confrontation with

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 2: 89

Islam and Muslims after that. The Holy Qur'an included a statement of those images that speak of them as a manifestation of their reality in front of Muslims so that they consider them when dealing with them, and this will become clear through a review of some of the situations that occurred among Muslims and the Jews in the era of Prophet (PBUH), and to get to know those people, and their relationship with the Arabs before Islam, and with the Muslims after him, it is necessary to know about their conditions, and the reason for their coming to the Arabian Peninsula, and their residence there, and then what happened after the Prophet migrated to Medina, all these points will be discussed in this article.

2. The Status and Condition of the Jews in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam:

The Jews were the people of the Book, while the Arabs, before Islam, did not have a book like them, and from this perspective their viewpoint about other tribes of the Arabian Peninsula was based on arrogance and egotism, and they were proud of the knowledge they carried in their hearts, but they did not benefit from it, as Allah Almighty says:

“The example of those who were entrusted with ‘observing’ the Torah but failed to do so, is that of a donkey carrying books. How evil is the example of those who reject Allah’s signs! For Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.”⁽¹⁾

When interpreting these verses, Ibn Kathir says, Allah Almighty says dispraising the Jews who were given the Torah and carried it to follow it practically and then did not act upon it, are like a donkey carrying books, i.e. like a donkey that if it carries books without knowing what is in it. The book that they were given to him they memorized verbally but did not understand it nor act according to it, rather they interpreted it and distorted it and changed it.⁽²⁾ The Jews did not memorize the Torah, and did not act according to it, it clears the situation in which the Jews were at that time, and it was not limited to the arrogance and egotism, but rather, they were seeking victory over those who disbelieved that a prophet would be resurrected and that they would be the first to believe in him and follow him, God Almighty says:

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 62: 5

⁽²⁾ Ismail bin Umar bin Kathir, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Beirut: Dar Tayyaba for Printing and Distribution, 1999), 4/364

“Although they used to pray for victory ‘by means of the Prophet’ over the polytheists, when there came to them a Book from Allah which they recognized, confirming the Scripture they had ‘in their hands’, they rejected it. So may Allah’s condemnation be upon the disbelievers.”⁽¹⁾

Ibn Ishaq narrated: “The Jews were seeking victory over the Aws and Khazraj tribes about the Messenger of God before his prophet-hood, but when God sent him from the Arabs, they disbelieved in him and denied what they used to say about him. Muadh bin Jabal said to them: O Jews, fear God and embrace Islam. You used to seek victory over Muhammad, and tell us that he will be sent by God with so and so characteristics. One of the Jews, Salam bin Mashkam said: He did not bring to us anything that we know and what we used to tell you. God condemned them saying: “When there came to them a Book from Allah which they recognized, confirming the Scripture they had ‘in their hands...”⁽²⁾

3. Reasons for the presence of Jews in the Arabian Peninsula:

These Jews had lived in the city for a long time, and historians have mentioned several reasons for their presence. Al-Samhoudi cited several narrations in this regard, saying that the reason for Jews’ descent into the Hijaz was that the king of the Romans when he conquered over bani Israel and the Levant, they feared him and acted to be kind to him. They asked him to honor them by coming to their tribe. When he came, they killed him and his companions and then fled until they reached the Hijaz and settled there.⁽³⁾ He cited another narration about the reason for their coming, in which he says: “Abu Hurairah (R.A) said, I was informed that when bani Israel were divided and humiliated they dispersed. They used to find Muhammad (PBUH) admired and mentioned in their book that he will appear in some of these Arab villages having Palm trees, and when they came out of the land of the Levant, they were passing through each of those Arab villages between the Levant and Yemen, finding such kind of village and they found that it is Yathrib (Medina). A group of them started to live

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 2: 89

⁽²⁾ Ibn e Hisham, Seerah ibn e Hisham (Makkah Al-Mukarramah: Al-Faisaliah Library, 1980), v. 1, p. 547

⁽³⁾ Al-Samhoudi, Nur Uddin Ali bin Abdullah, Wafaa al-Wafa Bi-Akhbar Dar al-Mustafa (Egypt: Al-Adab Press, 1326 AH), p. 112.

there with the hope to meet Muhammad and follow him. They accepted Muhammad (PBUH) as Allah's prophet but they died before his prophethood. They always advised their descendants to follow him when he came and those of their sons who met him recognized him and disbelieved in him while they knew him. ⁽¹⁾ Dr. Jawad Ali comments on these two narrations, saying: "There is nothing in this news that would lead us to exclude it, as flee of the Jews to the heights of the Hijaz and their entry into the Hijaz was very easy. The land was one which was connected, the roads were open and paved, and there was no obstacle preventing Jews or non-Jews from entering the Hijaz. And at that time the Jews were afraid, fleeing themselves from terror, so they were looking for the nearest refuge to them that would protect them from the persecution of the king of Babylon, and the nearest safe place to them was the Hijaz". ⁽²⁾ Some of the narrations explaining the entry of the bani Israel into the Arabian Peninsula go back to an era older than this, that is, at the time of Moses (A.S). ⁽³⁾

4. Jews' attempts to provoke Disputes between the Tribes in Medina:

These Jews tried to provoke disputes between the tribes in Medina, especially between the Aws and the Khazraj, to the extent that they had a major role in the outbreak of wars between them, and the Jews themselves were in a state of disintegration from the lack of cohesion, which indicates that some of their tribes have allied with the Aws and others have allied with the Khazraj, and there was fierce fighting between them and bloodshed, as Holy Qur'an illustrated this situation. The Almighty says:

"And 'remember' when We took your covenant that you would neither shed each other's blood nor expel each other from their homes, you gave your pledge and bore witness. But here you are, killing each other and expelling some of your people from their homes, aiding one another in sin and aggression; and when those 'expelled' come to you as captives, you still ransom them—though expelling them was unlawful for you. Do you believe in some of the Scripture and reject the rest? Is there any reward for those who do so among you other than disgrace in this worldly life and being

⁽¹⁾ Wafaa al-Wafa Bi-Akhbar Dar al-Mustafa, 112,

⁽²⁾ Dr. Jawad Ali, al-Mufassal in the History of the Arabs before Islam (Beirut: Dar Al-Ilm for Millions, second edition, 1978 AD), v. 6, p. 518

⁽³⁾ Wafaa al-Wafa Bi-Akhbar Dar al-Mustafa, 110-111

subjected to the harshest punishment on the Day of Judgment? For Allah is never unaware of what you do.”⁽¹⁾

Ibn Jarir says, explaining these two verses: “Ibn Abbas (R.A) said: Then you are these people who kill yourselves and expel a group of you from their homes, demonstrating against them in sin and aggression against the people of polytheism, until you shed their blood with them and expel them from their homes with them.” He said, God warns them of their actions, and it is forbidden for them in the Torah to shed their blood. They were supposed to ransom their captives, so they were two parties, a group of them from Banu Qaynuqa, allies of the Khazraj and second group Banu al-Nadir, and Qurayzah, allies of the Aws, and if there was a war between the Aws and the Khazraj, the Banu Qaynuqa came out with the Khazraj, and Banu al-Nadir and Qurayza came out with the Aws. Each of the two groups used to support his allies against his brothers until they shed their blood among themselves, while they have the knowledge of Torah explaining their rights and obligations. from it what is upon them and their money. The Aws and the Khazraj tribes were polytheistic people who worship idols, they do not know Paradise, Hell, Resurrection, Book, Forbidden, or what is permitted. And when the war ended, they ransomed their captives, confirming what was in the Torah, and they took it from each other. Banu Qaynuqa’ ransoms what of their captives were in the hands of the Aws, and Al-Nadir and Qurayza ransoms what were in the hands of the Khazraj among them.⁽²⁾

This act indicates their distance from abiding by the texts of the Torah and this is from a religious point of view, as for economically, they had a great role in this field, as they owned fertile agricultural lands, and worked in industry. The Banu Qaynuqa was famous for its trade, and they had a market with their name, one of the most famous markets in the city in the pre-Islamic era and in early Islam. The Jews used to deal with usury with other tribes neighboring them, and usury was a manifestation of economic life for the Jews in Yathrib before the Prophet came to it. All of these previous signs explain the situation in which Yathrib and its inhabitants among the Arabs and Jews were before Islam spread there, as Allah Almighty says:

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 2: 84-85

⁽²⁾ Muhamad bin Jarir al-Tabari, *Tafsir Ibn Jarir* (Beirut: Dar al-Maarifa for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 1989), 1/314

“When there came to them a Book from Allah which they recognized, they rejected it. So may Allah’s condemnation be upon the disbelievers.” ⁽¹⁾

5. The Hostility of the Jews to Muhammad (PBUH) after knowing that he is the Prophet:

The Jews knew that the Prophet Muhammad was a prophet sent by Allah Almighty to rid people of polytheism and to command them to worship Allah Alone, as Quran says:

“Those We have given the Scripture recognize this ‘Prophet’ as they recognize their own children. Yet a group of them hides the truth knowingly.” ⁽²⁾

Ibn Kathir says: “The Almighty tells that the scholars of the Ahl-e-Kitab know the correctness of what the Messenger brought to them as one of them knows his son, and the Arabs used to set an example of the correctness of something with these words. ⁽³⁾ Allah Almighty says:

“They are’ the ones who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whose description they find in their Torah and the Gospel.” ⁽⁴⁾

Ibn Kathir says: “And these are the attributes of Muhammad (PBUH) in the books of the prophets, preaching their nations about his prophet-hood and ordering them to follow him, and his attributes are still in their books, known to their scholars and rabbis”. ⁽⁵⁾ The Jews in Medinah knew that the Prophet was the Messenger of God, and the Seal of the Prophets, and that he came only with the true religion for all people, but this knowledge was not to guide them to the truth, but on the contrary, they were the first to hostile to him, and harbored evil for him and for Islam and Muslims, as it is clearly mentioned in the saying of Hazrat Safiya (R.A). ⁽⁶⁾ This enmity stems from hatred of Islam and envy of Muslims, for this envy prevented

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 2: 89

⁽²⁾ Quran, 2: 146

⁽³⁾ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 1/194

⁽⁴⁾ Quran, 7: 157

⁽⁵⁾ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 2/251

⁽⁶⁾ Seerah ibn e Hisham, 1/519

them from believing in the Prophet and following the religion of Islam, also trying to turn Muslims away from embracing and accepting it. The Almighty says:

“Many among the People of the Book wish they could turn you ‘believers’ back to disbelief because of their envy, after the truth has been made clear to them.” ⁽¹⁾

Ibn Kathir said that Hayy bin Akhtab and Abu Yasir bin Akhtab were among the most envious of the Arabs, when God chose Muhammad (PBH) as His Messenger, and they were striving to turn people away from Islam as much as they could, so God revealed in them the above mentioned verse. Their enmity was not limited to the Prophet, and to Islam only, but it went beyond that to hostility to Muslims, even if he was one of the Jewish rabbis and their scholars. This is highlighted with the viewpoint of Abdullah bin Salam, who spoke about his conversion to Islam, saying: When I heard the arrival of the Messenger of God (PBUH) while he was in a deserted land, so I came to the Prophet and said: I am asking you about three things that only a Prophet knows. When Prophet (PBUH) answered his questions, he said, “I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that you are the Messenger of Allah, O Messenger of God: The Jews are a slandered people, and if they knew of my Islam before you asked them, they would deceive me.” So when the Jews came he hid himself and the Prophet started to ask them, how did you find Abdullah bin Salam? They said, he is a good person and the son of our best, he is our master and the son of our master. Prophet asked, do you think he can embrace Islam? They said, God will save him to do so. Abdullah bin Salam came out and said: I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. The Jews started to say, you are worst among us and the son of our worst. Abdullah bin Salam said, this is what I was afraid of, O Messenger of Allah. ⁽²⁾

It becomes clear through the comparison between the attitude of the Jews towards Abdullah bin Salam before he embraced Islam and after he embraced Islam, the view with which they viewed the religion and the Muslims who followed it. The conversion of a slave of God to him was a reason for their hostility to him after he was in their view the best and most knowledgeable of them. Praise and honor lead to derogation and slander in moments, which indicates that these people are only governed by their

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 2: 109

⁽²⁾ Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari (Egypt: Dar Tuq al-Nijat, 1422H), 8/209.

belief that is rooted in their souls, regardless of its correctness or corruption, as they did not hesitate to launch accusations against Abdullah bin Salam because of his conversion to Islam, which shows the position of the Jews towards Islam and the Muslims, and they were not satisfied with that, but they often tried to destroy Islam by various means, and they did not hesitate for a moment in implementing tricks and plots against it and plotting plans for this goal.

The Prophet's relationship with them begins after his migration to Medina, when he signed a treaty with them. The Jews did not pact with the Messenger of God except for their own personal benefit. They were in a situation that required them to accept the treaty outwardly, so that they could plot and plan it from inside, yet they committed treachery, betrayal and breaking the covenant with the Messenger of Allah, and the Holy Qur'an has told about this reprehensible trait of Jews, the Almighty says:

"Why is it that every time they make a covenant, a group of them casts it aside? In fact, most of them do not believe." ⁽¹⁾

Treachery and breaking pledges are among their qualities that are always inherent to them. The Talmud forbids them to fulfill and be fair with others, and even imposes on them the commitment of false oaths if it leads to the acquisition of non-Jews' money, so making and breaking pledges is according to the interest and benefit that this covenant brings on them, and in their violation of their covenants with the Messenger of God a great impact represented in his war against them, and their expulsion from Medina. Before that, none of them dared to start a war against the Muslims, yet they did not lack the means that would help them achieve their goals, and that was by machinations and elaborate secret planning, and the truth is that whoever looks at the texts of the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah will find that they clarify what is going on inside them. Allah Almighty has made clear the root upon which these people build their view of others. Allah Almighty says:

"The Jews and the Christians each say, we are the children of Allah and His most beloved!" ⁽²⁾

They claimed that they are the sons of God, and that He has given them an absolute preference over the worlds, and for that reason they were arrogant and refused to follow the religion of Islam, thinking that they were more

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 2: 100

⁽²⁾ Quran, 5: 18

deserving of people following them than that they follow anyone else. Ibn Ishaq said, Abu Salloba Al-Fatiuni said to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), O Muhammad, you have not brought us anything that we know, and God has not sent down a verse to you, so we follow you for it. ⁽¹⁾

6. Methods of Jews in Medina to confront Islam and Muslims:

The Messenger's attempts with the Jews to convert to Islam did not find an echo in their souls, with their knowledge of the truth. They answered the Messenger when he called them to Islam and guidance, saying: "Rather, we follow, O Muhammad, what we found our forefathers upon, for they were more knowledgeable and better than us". ⁽²⁾ Their arrogance and arrogance prevented them from accepting the truth and made them hostile to the Prophet and Islam, and plotted against them in various ways, such as:

- 1) Confuse the Muslims with their religion
- 2) Sowing the seeds of discord and conflict among the Muslim groups
- 3) Treachery and breach of covenants
- 4) Mocking and Harming the Messenger of Allah

6.1) Confuse the Muslims with their Religion:

The Jews sought as much as they could to confuse the Muslims with their religion, skeptical and suspicious, for they used to ask many questions, thinking that they would make the Messenger of Allah incapable and unable to answer. They also took advantage of every occasion that the Muslims believed to have a smell of suspicion, trying to provoke it and attach themselves to its causes, such as what happened when the qiblah was turned, and likewise when the she-camel of the Messenger of God went astray. Some of the examples are as following:

a) Dressing up the truth with falsehood:

The Jews always tried to plant the seeds of doubt in the souls of Muslims. Ibn Ishaq narrates that some of them said to one another: "Come, we believe in what was revealed to Muhammad and his companions in the morning, and we disbelieve in it in the evening, until we confuse them with their religion, so that they may do as we do and leave their religion, but Quran revealed it saying:

"O People of the Book! Why do you mix the truth with falsehood and hide the truth knowingly? A group among the People of the Book said 'to one another', 'Believe in what has been revealed to

⁽¹⁾ Seerah ibn e Hisham, 1/548

⁽²⁾ Seerah ibn e Hisham, 1/552

the believers in the morning and reject it in the evening, so they may abandon their faith. And only believe those who follow your religion.” Say, ‘O Prophet,’ “Surely, ‘the only’ true guidance is Allah’s guidance.” ‘They also said,’ “Do not believe that someone will receive ‘revealed’ knowledge similar to yours or argue against you before your Lord.” Say, ‘O Prophet,’ “Indeed, all bounty is in the Hands of Allah—He grants it to whoever He wills. And Allah is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing.” ⁽¹⁾

Ibn Kathir says in his interpretation of these verses: “This was their plan to confuse the weak people the about their religion, which is that they bought a contract among themselves to show faith at the beginning of the day, and to pray the morning prayer with the Muslims. And when the day comes, they return to their religion, so that the ignorant people will say, “Returning them to their religion is only informing them of a shortcoming and a flaw in the religion of the Muslims.” That is why they said, “May they return”. ⁽²⁾ Zaid bin al-Lusait, one of the Banu Qaynuqa tribe, said when the Messenger of God’s camel went astray: “Muhammad claims that the news of heaven comes to him while he does not know where his she-camel is.” The Prophet responded: “someone said, Muhammad claims that the news of heaven comes to him, and he does not know where his she-camel is? And by God, I only know what God has taught me, and God has guided me to that my camel is in this hilly area. A tree has trapped it with its reins, so Muslim men went and found her where the Messenger of God said and as he described.” ⁽³⁾ In these stories there are indications of the truthfulness of the Messenger of God, and that he only knows what God has taught him, for he is a human being who is revealed to him from his Lord, even if the Jews tried to tempt the Muslims with their statement, but God repelled their plot against them and these facts did not increase the Muslims except with faith, certainty and belief.

b) Jews’ frequent arguments with the Messenger of Allah:

The Jews often asked the Messenger of Allah for things they thought that if they did not fulfill them, they would put him into embarrassment. Once Rafi’ bin Huraymala, one of the Jews, said: “O Muhammad, if you are the Messenger of God as you say, then say God to speak to us until we hear

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 3: 71-73

⁽²⁾ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 1/487

⁽³⁾ Seerah ibn e Hisham, 1/527

from his words. ⁽¹⁾ The purpose of his request was the stubbornness and embarrassment of the Messenger of God (PBUH). Quran says:

“Those who have no knowledge say, “If only Allah would speak to us or a sign would come to us!” The same was said by those who came before. Their hearts are all alike. Indeed, We have made the signs clear for people of sure faith.” ⁽²⁾

Rather, they asked him to send down to them a book from heaven, ordering them to believe the Messenger in what he brought from his God. God Almighty says:

“The People of the Book demand that you ‘O Prophet’ bring down for them a revelation in writing from heaven. They demanded what is even greater than this from Moses, saying, “Make Allah visible to us!” So a thunderbolt struck them for their wrongdoing.” ⁽³⁾

Ibn Kathir narrates on the authority of Ibn Juraij saying: “They asked him to send down to them scrolls from God written to so-and-so and so-and-so, by believing in what he brought them, and they said it only on the basis of obstinacy, stubbornness, blasphemy and atheism”.⁽⁴⁾ The Jews frequently asked, argued, and debated with the Messenger of God, trying to tempt the Muslims, and planting seeds of doubt and suspicion in their hearts, hoping that the Messenger of God would not answer them until they made it clear to the Muslims that he was unable to answer them, and that they were the only ones who had knowledge and the book. One of the questions they asked from the Messenger of God is mentioned in Sahih al-Bukhari, Abdullah bin Masood (R.A) said: While I was with the Prophet in a plow and he was reclining on a tree, when the Jews passed by, and some of them said to one another, ask him about the soul. The Prophet did not reply to them immediately, I realized that God’s message is being revealed, and when he received God’s revelation, he said:

⁽¹⁾ Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 1/214

⁽²⁾ Quran, 2: 118

⁽³⁾ Quran, 4: 153

⁽⁴⁾ Quran, 2: 89

“They ask you ‘O Prophet’ about the spirit. Say, ‘Its nature is known only to my Lord, and you ‘O humanity’ have been given but little knowledge.”⁽¹⁾

Once, they asked him about the creation of God, as Ibn Ishaq said that a group of Jews came to the Messenger of God and said: O Muhammad, this is God who created the creation, so who created God? So the Messenger of God became angry until his color became dark, Gabriel came to him and calmed him down, then God revealed the answer to what they asked him about by saying:

“Say, ‘O Prophet,’ ‘He is Allah—One ‘and Indivisible’; Allah—the Sustainer ‘needed by all’. He has never had offspring, nor was He born. And there is none comparable to Him.”⁽²⁾

Such kind of narrations clearly shows the extent of the stubbornness of the Jews in accepting the truth and the different reasons for evading covenants and treaties. Sometimes, they promised the Prophet PBUH if he answered them, they would believe in him and follow him, but they did not do that. The Jews were most obstinate and arrogant in their questions to the Messenger, not in the search of truth to follow it.

6.2) Sowing the seeds of discord and disagreement among the groups of Muslims:

Islam entered in Medina, and the Muslims became a majority not to be underestimated, and there was no house left in Medina where the light of Islam did not enter. On the other hand, there were many groups that did not embrace Islam, the vast majority of which were Jews. These Jews have nothing but hatred and disgust for Islam and its followers. They did their best to create motives for discord and disagreement among the Muslim groups.

The Muslims who truly embraced Islam, the Jews sought to turn them against each other because they saw their cohesion, and that is whenever they found any appropriate opportunity. Therefore, the nature of the role of the Jews towards Muslims is manifested in two things:

- a) Striving to pit Muslims against each other
- b) Formation of hypocrites’ category in Medina

a) Striving to pit Muslims against each other:

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 17: 85

⁽²⁾ Quran, 112: 1-4

The Aws and Khazraj before the advent of Islam, and before God granted them the light of Islam, were in division, scattering and strife, and the Jews used to fuel this conflict between the two tribes, and supply it as much as they could with the factors of igniting wars, and when Islam entered in Medina and hearts met, the souls consolidated, and the Aws and Khazraj became united by a word, they became bound by the bond of Islam, and became one cohesive force, after they were warring tribes. The Jews became angry because in their decisions they wished for the demise of this religion, and they sought to destroy it, and since it was difficult for them to confront the Muslims while they were a harmonious and interconnected force. They have nothing except to disturb the internal front of the Muslims, and to strike this unity and harmony, so they endeavored as much as they could to incite the Muslims against each other, to drive a wedge between them, to remind them of what they were upon before Islam and to incite them to take revenge to make it easier for them to penetrate the Muslim solidity, and to destroy Islam from inside. But God Almighty protected Islam and Muslims from the machinations of the Jews, and the Muslims returned to their senses after the Messenger made it clear to them that this was a claim/call of ignorance, as Quran says:

“They wish to extinguish Allah’s light with their mouths, but Allah will ‘certainly’ perfect His light, even to the dismay of the disbelievers.”⁽¹⁾

b) Formation of hypocrites’ category in Medina:

There was a group of people in Medina who did not embrace Islam, and when they witnessed the victory of the Muslims at Badr, that brilliant victory while the Muslims were few, they realized that the Muslims had become a force not to be underestimated, and that it would be better for them not to take the position of the enemy, and to keep pace with the Muslims and condemn their religion. So that they would not be in the face of this growing and increasing force, so they showed their Islam hypocritically, and some Jews followed them in this falsehood and embraced Islam apparently, while concealing the hatred and anger against Islam in their heart. Some Jews leaders succeeded in making those the Islam did not enter in their hearts a vanguard tool in their hands, which they use to implement their plots against Islam and its true followers. The hypocrites used to form an internal front whose mission was to undermine the pillars of Islam, by exploiting the events that were exposed to Muslims and trying to

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 61: 8

exaggerate them. The Holy Qur'an shows the extent of the link between the hypocrites and the Jews in Surat Al-Baqarah. The Almighty says:

"When they meet the believers they say, "We believe." But when alone with their evil associates they say, "We are definitely with you; we were only mocking." (1)

Ibn Kathir explains the meaning of "their devils" by saying: Their leaders and their chiefs among the rabbis of the Jews and the heads of the polytheists and the hypocrites. (2) The previous verse clarifies the extent of the link between the hypocrites and the Jews, and shows the role of the Jews in forming the hypocritical sects. Undoubtedly, hypocrisy is something that the Jews have become accustomed to since ancient times. If they overpower themselves and become unable to confront, then the trait of hypocrisy emerges as a means to save them from what they are in and help them to orchestrate plots and plans, and the Talmud urges that, considering hypocrisy a necessary matter for the Jew so that he can live according to what he loves, and in the manner that he is satisfied with. The Rabbi Beshai declares, Hypocrisy is permissible and that a Jew person can be polite with an infidel and falsely claim his love if he fears harm will reach him". (3) So it is not surprising that the Jews used hypocrisy with the Muslims at that time, so they formed the sect known as the hypocrites, whose role was great in many of the events that happened to the Muslims later on under the guidance of the Jews who were unable to penetrate directly into the ranks of the Muslims, so they began directing the events from a distance, through the hypocrites who were headed by Abdullah bin Abi bin Salul.

6.3) Treachery and Betrayal:

The character of the Jews during their history was characterized by a clear trait, namely treachery, betrayal, and breach of covenants, and the texts of the Talmud had an impact, as it recommends its followers among the Jews to break covenants and treaties. The Holy Qur'an confirmed this fact as well, and in the early days of Islam their treachery and breach of the covenant with the Prophet (PBUH) had serious consequence, the most important of which was the evacuation of the Messenger of God from

(1) Quran, 2: 14

(2) Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 1/72

(3) Al-Kanz al-Marsood fi Qawaid Talmud, translated by: Dr. Youssef Nasrallah (Damascus: Dar Al-Qalam, 1987), 77

Medina and its surroundings, and the first who broke his covenant with the Messenger of God was Banu Qaynuqa.

a) Banu Qaynuqa' breached their covenant with the Messenger of God (PBUH):

The tribe of Banu Qaynuqa' was one of the three major Jewish tribes in Medina, and the Messenger of God had taken a covenant with them when he came to Medina, but the Jews are a people of treachery and deceitfulness who hide in themselves hatred and revulsion for Islam. This appears from their response to him when he called them to Islam. So, when they found an opportunity to break their covenant, they did not hesitate for a moment to break it.

b) Banu al-Nadir breached their covenant with the Messenger of God (PBUH):

The reason why the Messenger of God fought the Banu al-Nadir was their treachery, and their intention to kill him (PBUH).

c) The role of the Jews in allying the tribes against the Muslims:

When a group of the Jews of Banu al-Nadir went to Khaybar, it did not stay long in silence and meekness. Rather, it began preparing for another chapter of abuse against Islam and Muslims. This is the practice of the Jews, who do not finish one plot until they begin to weave another. Ibn Ishaq says, it was from the incident of Al-Khandaq that a group of Jews, including Salam bin Abi Al-Haqiq Al-Nadari, Hayy bin Akhtab Al-Nadari, Kinana bin Abi Al-Haqiq Al-Nadari, Hudha bin Qais Al-Waeli, and Abu Ammar Al-Waeli, were among a group of Banu Al-Nadir, and a group of Bani Wael and they were the ones who brought the parties against the Messenger of God – they went out until they came to the Quraysh of Mecca, so they called them to war the Messenger of God, and they said, we will be with you against him until we uproot him, so Quraysh said to them, O Jews, you are the first people of the book, and the knowledge of what we and Muhammad have, is our religion better or his? They said: Your religion is better than his, and you are more deserving of the truth than he.”⁽¹⁾ So these people gathered and went to Medina and besieged it, which forced the Muslims to dig a big trench. Meanwhile, the situation of Muslims reaches a great deal of distress and suffering. The Almighty says:

“Remember’ when they came at you from east and west, I when your eyes grew wild ‘in horror’ and your hearts jumped into your throats, and you entertained ‘conflicting’ thoughts about Allah.

⁽¹⁾ Seerah ibn e Hisham, 2/214

Then and there the believers were put to the test, and were violently shaken.” ⁽¹⁾

In these difficult moments, Muslims were informed that the Banu Qurayza have broken their covenant with them. When the Messenger of God was informed, he sent Saad bin Muadh bin Al-Nu'man, who was at that time the leader of Al-Aws, and Saad bin Ubadah bin Dalim, who was at that time the leader of Al-Khazraj, and said: Go and see, what we have heard about these people is true or not? If it is true, then inform me in code words, and if they are faithful to what is between us and them, then declare it to the people. They went out until they came to them, and found them to be the vilest of what had reached them about them. When they told them that the Messenger of God has sent them towards them, they said, who is the Messenger of God? There is no covenant between us and Muhammad. ⁽²⁾ Then the Messenger of God besieged them for twenty-five nights and they were defeated.

6.4) Mocking and Harming the Messenger of God:

The Jews had hatred for the Messenger of God since they knew about him that he was a prophet sent to the worlds, and he was not among them, as they had hoped. They used to come to the Prophet (PBUH) and pretend to greet him, while praying for death as Hazrat Ayesha narrated. ⁽³⁾ God Almighty exposed them when they used to say to the Messenger: “Ra’na (راينا),” which was taken from the (الرحمة), and they want to insult the Prophet. God Almighty says:

“Some Jews take words out of context and say, “We listen and we disobey,” “Hear! May you never hear,” and “Râ’ina!” [Herd us!]—*playing with words and discrediting the faith.”* ⁽⁴⁾

The attempts of the Jews to harm the Prophet (PBUH) did not stop at this point. Rather, they tried to kill him, and God Almighty saved him. One of the attempts made to kill and eliminate him was when he (PBUH) went to Banu al-Nadir. They said to each other, you will not find Muhammad closer to it, so who will appear on this house and throw a rock at him? Amr bin

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 33: 10-11

⁽²⁾ Seerah ibn e Hisham, 2/357

⁽³⁾ Sahih Bukhari, 1/551.

⁽⁴⁾ Quran, 4: 46

Jahash bin Kaab said, "I will do it." The Messenger of God was informed about their plan by God, so he turned away from them, Quran says:

"O believers! Remember Allah's favour upon you: when a people sought to harm you, but He held their hands back from you. Be mindful of Allah. And in Allah let the believers put their trust." ⁽¹⁾

Another attempt when they poisoned him, Zainab bint Al-Harith, the wife of Salam bin Mashkam, gave him a roasted sheep. She asked which part of the sheep is dearer to the Messenger of God. She was told he likes arm parts, so she added a lot of poison in it, then poisoned the rest of the sheep, then she brought it to him. ⁽²⁾ The story of magic comes as another attempt by the Jews to harm the Messenger of God (PBUH) as Hazrat Ayesha narrated that the Messenger of God was bewitched by a man from Banu Zuraiq called Labayd ibn al-Asam. ⁽³⁾ Among the attempts to harm the Messenger of God is the incident of al-Ifk ⁽⁴⁾ which highlighted the hidden role of Jews. So, the story of this falsification came as a test for the Muslims and a test from God Almighty to his Prophet. Its impact on them was so great that an altercation occurred between the Aws and the Khazraj, almost reaching the point of fighting. At the hands of Abdullah bin Abi bin Salul the Jews succeeded in exploiting this matter, but God Almighty protected the Muslims and protected his Prophet.

7. Conclusion:

The Jews settled in the Arabian Peninsula for a long period of time, during which they were able to have great economic and social influence, and they were Ahl-e-Kitab (the people of the book) and they knew that a prophet would be sent and hoped that he would be among them. Therefore, their view about the tribes around them was based on arrogant and proud of their gender and their knowledge. Therefore, it was not strange for them to have that attitude towards the Prophet Muhammad. This is the situation that is present in his

⁽¹⁾ Quran, 5: 11

⁽²⁾ Seerah ibn e Hisham, 2/337-338

⁽³⁾ Sahih Bukhari, 10/272

⁽⁴⁾ Seerah ibn e Hisham, 2/297-302

encounter since the first moment, and this enmity increases more and more, the more they believe in the truth of his prophecy. Nothing repels them except the envy and hatred that fills their minds against him and against the Arabs because the Prophet was sent among them for warning the worlds. This situation is represented in multiple forms of hostility, mostly focused on the following (1) Suspicion of Muslims in their religion and beliefs (2) Acting on the unity of the Muslims and mutual understanding. These two things were repeated in all the roles that Muslims had with the Jews, whether they adhered to their religion or pretended to be Islam after that.