The Prophet in Madina (622–632)

The founding of the community in Madina, the Constitution and the mosque, the battles of Badr, Uhud and the Trench, the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, the conquest of Makka, the Farewell Pilgrimage and the Prophet's death.

Founding the community in Madina

On arrival in **Madina** (formerly Yathrib) in **622** the Prophet (pbuh) took several steps to build a **united community** (*ummah*):

- **The mosque.** He built the **Prophet's Mosque (Masjid an-Nabawi)** on land next to the house of **Abu Ayyub al-Ansari**, with his own house beside it. It served as a place of **prayer, learning, community meetings, and government**.
- **Brotherhood (*mu'akhat*).** He paired each **Emigrant (Muhajir)** from Makka with a **Helper (Ansar)** of Madina, who shared property and homes. This reduced the poverty of the migrants and ended old tribal divisions between **Aws and Khazraj**.
- **The Constitution of Madina.** A written agreement between the **Muslims (Emigrants and Helpers), the Jewish tribes and other groups** that:
  - made them **one community** for defence and security (with each keeping its own religion);
  - guaranteed **freedom of religion** and **protection for Jews** who kept the agreement;
  - required all to **defend Madina** against attack;
  - made the Prophet (pbuh) the **final authority** in disputes.
- **Economy.** He set up a **market** free from tax and abuse, and began **zakat** and other social duties.
- **Change of qibla (624).** After about 16–17 months the direction of prayer changed from **Jerusalem to the Ka'bah** in Makka (Sura 2:144).
- **Adhan.** The call to prayer began (the Companion **Bilal** was the first muezzin).

More about the first year

- **The mosque.** The Prophet's camel **Qaswa** was left to choose where to stop ("let her go, she is under orders") and knelt on land belonging to two orphans, which the Prophet bought. He stayed with **Abu Ayyub al-Ansari** while it was built, and worked on it himself.
- **The call to prayer.** The Companions suggested a horn, bells, a fire or drums, but the Prophet rejected them as the customs of other faiths. **Abdullah ibn Zayd** reported a dream of the words of the call, and the Prophet taught them to **Bilal**, who had a loud and beautiful voice.

Note Academy

- **Brotherhood.** The Muslims were told that "the believers are brothers" (49:10). Each Emigrant was paired with a Helper who shared his home and goods; **Abdur Rahman ibn Awf**, offered half of his Ansari brother's wealth, asked only to be shown the market and soon became a successful trader. The Prophet took **Ali** as his own brother.
- **The Constitution of Madina** had about **47 clauses** in two parts, one for the Muslims (Emigrants and Helpers) and one for the Jews. Muslims, Jews and others living there formed **one community**; each group kept its **religion**; they would **help one another** against attack and not fight each other; a **common fund** would pay ransom and blood money; the Quraysh were not to be given help; and the Prophet was the **final judge**. The town was renamed *Madinat an-Nabi* ("the city of the Prophet").
- **Background.** The Aws and Khazraj had fought each other for years and were about to make **Abdullah ibn Ubayy** their king; the arrival of the Prophet ended this. Three Jewish tribes (the Qaynuqa, Nadir and Qurayzah) and some Christians also lived there.

Conflict with the Makkans

The Quraysh had taken the property of the Emigrants and still wanted to destroy the Muslim community, so a series of battles followed.

Event	Date	What happened	Result and importance
Battle of Badr	**Ramadan, 2 AH (624)**	About **313** poorly armed Muslims met about **1,000** Makkans near the wells of Badr	A great Muslim **victory**: many Quraysh leaders (including Abu Jahl) died, prisoners were taken and the Muslims gained **confidence and respect**. Prisoners who could read were freed if each taught ten Muslim children
Battle of Uhud	**Shawwal, 3 AH (625)**	About **3,000** Makkans under **Abu Sufyan** attacked with **cavalry** led by **Khalid ibn al-Walid**. The Prophet (pbuh) posted **50 archers** on a hill to guard the Muslim rear	At first the Muslims were winning, but most **archers left their posts** for the spoils. Khalid attacked from the rear. **70 Muslims died**, including **Hamzah**, and the Prophet (pbuh) was wounded. The lesson: **obedience and discipline** are essential
Battle of the Trench (Khandaq)	**Shawwal, 5 AH (627)**	About **10,000** Quraysh and allied tribes besieged Madina. On the advice of **Salman al-Farisi**, the Muslims dug a **trench** on the open side of the city	The attackers could not cross, the siege failed after about **a month** in bad weather and the allies went home. The Jewish tribe **Banu Qurayzah** was found to have broken the Constitution by siding with the enemy and was dealt with afterwards

Note Academy

The battles in more detail

Badr (17 Ramadan, 2 AH).

- The Muslims set out to intercept a Makkan caravan led by **Abu Sufyan**. He escaped by another road and asked the Quraysh to turn back, but **Abu Jahl** insisted on fighting, so the army met at Badr.
- The Muslims had about **313 men with two horses and about seventy camels**; the Makkans had about a thousand with some two hundred horses.
- The Prophet consulted his Companions and **prayed all night**. The Qur'an says God sent angels (8:9) and rain that made the sand firm (8:11). The champions **Hamzah, Ali and Ubaydah** won the first duels. The Prophet threw a handful of dust at the enemy (8:17).
- About **70 Makkans were killed**, including Abu Jahl, and about 70 captured. Only about **14 Muslims** died.
- Prisoners were freed on ransom. Those who could read and write were freed if **each taught ten Muslim children**, and the poor were freed without payment. The Prophet's uncle **Abbas** was among the prisoners.
- **Lessons for leaders:** courage, trust in God rather than numbers, consultation, leading from the front, not starting the fight and treating prisoners kindly.

Uhud (Shawwal, 3 AH).

- The Quraysh wanted revenge for Badr. About **3,000** marched, and some of the Jewish poets encouraged them.
- The Prophet preferred to defend Madina, but most Companions wanted to meet the enemy outside. Just before the battle **Abdullah ibn Ubayy** withdrew with about 300 men, leaving about 700.
- The **50 archers** under **Abdullah ibn Jubayr** held the hill. Early on the Muslims were winning, but most archers left their posts for the spoils, and **Khalid ibn al-Walid** attacked from behind.
- **Mus'ab ibn Umayr**, who looked like the Prophet, was killed, and a rumour spread that the Prophet was dead. **Ka'b ibn Malik** called out that he was alive. The Prophet was wounded in the face and lost a tooth.
- About **70 Muslims died**, including **Hamzah**, who was killed by **Wahshi** and mutilated by **Hind**. Abu Sufyan challenged the Muslims to meet again at Badr the next year.
- The Qur'an says that the Muslims had been close to victory until they disobeyed (3:152). **Lesson:** success depends on **obeying the Prophet** and keeping discipline.

The Trench (Shawwal, 5 AH).

- The exiled **Banu Nadir** persuaded the Quraysh, the Ghatafan and others to form a confederacy of about **10,000**. For this the battle is also called **al-Ahzab** ("the allies").
- **Salman al-Farisi** advised a trench. About 3,000 Muslims dug it in about **twenty days**, with the Prophet working beside them, often hungry.

Note Academy

- The siege lasted **about a month**. **Amr ibn Abd Wudd**, a famous fighter who crossed a narrow point, was killed by Ali. The hypocrites asked to leave (33:13). The Prophet used a Muslim convert, **Nu'aym ibn Mas'ud**, to spread distrust among the allies. Then cold wind and storms (33:9) scattered them.
- **Banu Qurayzah** had broken their agreement. After a siege of about 25 days they accepted the judgement of **Sa'd ibn Mu'adh**, who ruled that the men be executed.
- **Lessons:** the leader shares the work, consults, and plans well.

Dealings with Jewish tribes. The **Banu Qaynuqa** (624), the **Banu Nadir** (625) and the **Banu Qurayzah** (627) were in turn accused of breaking the agreement with the Muslims and **expelled or punished**. Jews who kept to the agreement were protected.

The Jewish tribes and the hypocrites

- **Qaynuqa (2 AH).** A dispute began when a Muslim woman was insulted in their market and a Muslim who defended her was killed. After a siege of about fifteen days they were exiled.
- **Nadir (4 AH).** They were accused of plotting to kill the Prophet when he visited them over blood money. After a siege of about two weeks they left with what they could carry.
- **The hypocrites (*munafiqun*)** under **Abdullah ibn Ubayy** pretended to be Muslims but withdrew at Uhud, tried to leave at the Trench and refused to give at Tabuk. When he died the Prophet still prayed for him.
- The Prophet **traded with the Jews, borrowed from them and settled their disputes**. When a Jewish creditor roughly demanded repayment and Umar scolded him, the Prophet had him paid more than he was owed.

The Treaty of Hudaybiyyah (6 AH / 628)

- The Prophet (pbuh) set out with about **1,400** unarmed pilgrims to perform **Umrah** at Makka. The Quraysh stopped them at **Hudaybiyyah**, outside the city.
- After negotiation (with **Suhayl ibn Amr**) a **ten-year truce** was agreed. Terms: the Muslims would **return that year** and could come in **the next** for Umrah; each side would not fight; a Makkan who joined the Muslims without his guardian's permission would be returned, but not the other way round; tribes could ally with either side.
- Some Muslims thought the terms **unfair**, but the Qur'an (Sura 48) called it a "**clear victory**". The truce gave **peace**, so Islam **spread quickly** and people could meet the Muslims; the Quraysh had in effect **recognised** the Muslim state.

More about Hudaybiyyah

- The Prophet had a **dream** that he would enter the Sacred Mosque (48:27). The pilgrims wore the *ihram* and so could not fight. When envoys were delayed and **Uthman**, who had gone to talk, was

Note Academy

rumoured killed, the Companions pledged under a tree to stand firm, the **Pledge of Ridwan** (48:18). The Quraysh then sent **Suhayl ibn Amr**.

- In addition to the terms above, the Muslims would **stay in Makka for three days** when they returned next year, and Makkans could pass through Muslim lands to Syria. **Umar** and others disliked the terms, but **Abu Bakr** calmed them.
- When **Ali** wrote "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate" and "Muhammad, the Messenger of God", Suhayl objected, and the Prophet had the words changed to "In your name, O God" and "Muhammad son of Abdullah". The Prophet then **sent back Abu Jandal**, Suhayl's son, who arrived in chains and begged for refuge, keeping the treaty. The Muslims then sacrificed their animals and shaved their heads, and 48:1 called it a "clear victory".
- **What does this teach about keeping promises?** The Prophet kept his word even when it was hard and before the document was complete, and treaties must be honoured.

Spreading the message

- **Letters to rulers (about 628–629).** The Prophet (pbuh) sent letters inviting the **Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, the Persian king Khosrow, the Negus of Abyssinia, the ruler of Egypt (al-Muqawqis)** and others to Islam. The replies varied, but this showed Islam was a **universal message**.
- **Khaybar (7 AH, 628–629).** The Muslims defeated the Jewish fortress oasis of **Khaybar**, a base of hostile tribes, after which they paid a share of the produce.
- **Mu'tah (8 AH, 629).** A battle against a Byzantine force in Syria in which three Muslim commanders (including **Zayd ibn Harithah** and **Ja'far**) died; **Khalid ibn al-Walid** (now a Muslim) saved the army.

Letters, Khaybar and Mu'tah

- **Letters.** After Hudaybiyyah the Prophet used a silver seal reading "Muhammad, Messenger of God" and sent envoys with letters. **Heraclius** (through Dihyah) questioned **Abu Sufyan** about the Prophet and was impressed, but did not accept Islam. **al-Muqawqis** of Egypt sent gifts, including **Maria**. **Khosrow** of Persia tore up the letter. The **Negus** accepted Islam, and the ruler of **Oman** accepted peacefully. The governor of **Bahrain** accepted. The Ghassanid ruler was angry.
- **Khaybar (7 AH).** The oasis was a base for plots against Madina. About **1,600** Muslims marched there. The fort of **al-Qamus** held out until **Ali** defeated its champion **Marhab**. The Jews were allowed to stay and cultivate the land for **half the harvest**.
- **Mu'tah (8 AH).** The envoy **al-Harith ibn Umayr** was killed by a Ghassanid governor, so about **3,000** men marched. The commanders **Zayd ibn Harithah, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib** and **Abdullah ibn Rawahah** were each killed in turn. **Khalid ibn al-Walid** took command, changed the order of the army and withdrew in good order, so the Muslims returned with few losses.

The conquest of Makka (8 AH / 630)

- The Quraysh and their allies broke the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah by attacking a tribe allied to the Muslims.

Note Academy

- The Prophet (pbuh) marched on Makka with about **10,000** men. **Abu Sufyan** accepted Islam, and the city **surrendered with almost no fighting**.
- The Prophet (pbuh) gave a **general amnesty**: "Go, you are free." He **forgave** his enemies, cleared the Ka'bah of **idols**, and the Quraysh accepted Islam.
- Afterwards the Muslims won the **Battle of Hunayn** against the **Hawazin and Thaqif** tribes and besieged **Ta'if**.
- **Importance:** it was the **peaceful end of the long conflict** and showed his **forgiveness**; all Arabia soon accepted Islam.

The conquest of Makka and Hunayn in more detail

- **The cause.** The **Banu Bakr** (allies of the Quraysh) attacked the **Khuza'ah** (allies of the Muslims) with the Quraysh's help. The Prophet offered three options: pay blood money, break with the Banu Bakr, or declare the treaty cancelled. The Quraysh chose to cancel it. **Abu Sufyan** then tried to renew it, asking even his daughter **Umm Habibah** (the Prophet's wife) and the leading Companions, but failed.
- **The march.** About **10,000** men marched in secret in **Ramadan 8 AH**, lighting many campfires at night. **Abu Sufyan** went out to scout, was brought to the Prophet and accepted Islam. The Prophet announced that anyone who stayed at home, entered the Ka'bah or took refuge in Abu Sufyan's house would be safe.
- **The entry.** The army entered in four groups with orders not to fight unless attacked. Only **Khalid's** group met resistance. The Prophet circled the Ka'bah and removed its idols (about **360**), saying "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished" (17:81). At Safa he asked the Quraysh what they expected, and then quoted **Yusuf's** words to his brothers (12:92): "No blame on you today." He stayed in Makka about **19 days** to arrange its government.
- **What can Muslims learn?** Power was used with forgiveness and not revenge: **Abu Sufyan, Wahshi, Hind and Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl** were forgiven.
- **Hunayn.** About **12,000** Muslims (including 2,000 new converts) set out against the **Hawazin and Thaqif**. Some boasted of their numbers (9:25). They were ambushed in the valley and many fled. The Prophet called "I am the Prophet, I am no liar; I am the son of Abd al-Muttalib" and the Companions returned and won. Many captives and animals were taken, and later released after the people of **Ta'if** accepted Islam.

Tabuk and the Year of Delegations (9 AH)

In 630 the Prophet (pbuh) led about **30,000** men to **Tabuk** on the Syrian border against a rumoured Byzantine army. It was a hard march in great heat; no battle occurred, but it showed Muslim strength. The next year was the **Year of Delegations**, when tribes from all over Arabia sent representatives to accept Islam.

Note Academy

More about Tabuk

- The Byzantines were gathering on the border. It was **summer, a time of drought**, and the dates were ripening, so many found the journey hard. The hypocrites made excuses (9:81).
- Many Muslims gave generously: **Abu Bakr** gave all he had, **Umar** half, **Uthman** about **900 camels, 100 horses and 1,000 gold coins**, and women gave their jewellery.
- **Ali** was left in charge of Madina. The Prophet told him: "Are you not content to be to me as Harun was to Musa, except that there is no prophet after me?" Shi'a Muslims stress this as a sign of Ali's position.
- About **30,000** men reached Tabuk in Rajab 9 AH. The Byzantines withdrew without fighting. The Prophet made **treaties with Christian tribes** on the frontier, who paid jizya and received protection, and returned after about twenty days. The hypocrites plotted against him on the way back (9:74). This was his **last military expedition**.
- **What can Muslims learn?** Prefer peace, fight only in defence, and show unity and strength.

The Farewell Pilgrimage and the Prophet's death

- **Farewell Pilgrimage (10 AH / 632).** The Prophet (pbuh) performed the Hajj with a large crowd and gave his **Farewell Sermon** at **Arafat**. He stressed that **life and property are sacred**, all **interest** (usury) and old blood-feuds were cancelled, **women have rights** and men should treat them well, **all Muslims are brothers** and **equal** ("no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, nor a white person to a black person, except in piety"), and that he left the **Qur'an and his Sunnah** as guidance. Sura 5:3 ("This day I have perfected your religion for you") was revealed.
- **Death (11 AH / 632).** After a brief illness he died in **Madina** on **12 Rabi' al-Awwal 11 AH** (June 632), in the house of **Aishah**, aged about **63**. **Abu Bakr** calmed the grieving Companions by saying that those who worshipped Muhammad should know that Muhammad is dead, but those who worshipped God should know that God is alive and never dies. He was buried in Aishah's room (now part of the Prophet's Mosque).

More about the last days

- **The Farewell Sermon** was given on **9 Dhu'l-Hijjah** to a very large crowd (some accounts say over a hundred thousand). It also told them to keep the five prayers, fast in Ramadan, pay zakat and perform Hajj; it forbade **interest** and told them to treat **slaves** well ("feed them as you feed yourselves"); it said "no prophet or new faith will come after me"; and it ended with "Let those who are present tell those who are absent" and "O God, bear witness."
- The Prophet then sent **Usamah ibn Zayd** on an expedition to Syria and appointed collectors of zakat. About two months after the pilgrimage he fell ill with fever and headache. Over about two weeks he asked permission of his wives to be nursed in **Aishah's** room and had **Abu Bakr** lead the prayers.
- On his last day he came to the mosque and prayed behind Abu Bakr, told the Muslims to be good to the Ansar, to keep the prayers and to treat women and servants well, and warned against worshipping

Note Academy

graves. He died on **Monday 12 Rabi' al-Awwal 11 AH (8 June 632)**. The Companions were stunned. **Umar** said he would not let anyone say that he had died, and **Abu Bakr** then recited: "Muhammad is only a messenger; many messengers have passed away before him" (3:144).

- He was buried in the room where he died. **Ali** and his uncle **Abbas** were among those who lowered him into the grave.

Pattern of the Madinan years: community-building (mosque, brotherhood, Constitution) → defence (Badr, Uhud, Trench) → peace and growth (Hudaybiyyah) → forgiveness and victory (conquest of Makka) → completion (Farewell Pilgrimage).

TRY IT

Describe the main events of the Prophet's life (pbuh) in Madina. How successful was the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah?

Outline. Mosque, brotherhood, Constitution; Badr, Uhud, Trench; Hudaybiyyah; letters; conquest of Makka and amnesty; Farewell Pilgrimage; death. *Hudaybiyyah:* seemed to favour the Quraysh and some Muslims were unhappy, but it brought a 10-year truce, recognition of the Muslim state, spread of Islam (the Qur'an called it a clear victory) and led to the peaceful conquest of Makka.

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