

# New look to Mecca and Qoraish from the death of Qosay-ibn-Kallab to emergence of Islam

Rahim Mousavi

Department of History, Andimeshk Branch, Islamic Azad University, Andimeshk, Iran

*Corresponding author:* Rahim Mousavi

**ABSTRACT:** Mecca is a city located in Hejaz region in Saudi Arabia. It has especial religious and business importance long before emergence of Islam. Main citizens of this city, who were called Qoraish, could introduce themselves as superior citizens of Saudi Arabia peninsula exploiting this special situation. They used both religious tool of Mecca (religious position) and material tool (commercial position) and achieved supremacy and priority to Arabs.

**Keywords:** Mecca, Qoraish, Qosay-ibn-Kallab, emergence of Islam.

## INTRODUCTION

Quraish is an ethnic in Arab which not only are honored before emergence of Islam between peninsula Arabs and respected by other Arabs but also it has preserved its position after emergence of Islam. Because the origin for supremacy of Quraish is in pre-Islam era, it is necessary to study the trend of forming power for Quraish during this era. Importance of Qoraish as an influential Arab ethnicity is not concealed from previous and present historians and it is studied in numerous works, even briefly. In the information of these works, which an excerpt of it is presented here, although gradual empowering of Qoraish is considered but its main results and importance of business and visit is not compared during history of Jaheli ear. This evaluation shows how Qoraish power extends and what its nature is. This study tries to present a summary of empowering Qoraish, importance of it and weaknesses of its political system and hidden corners in business and religion.

### *Sons of Qosai*

Based on the report in which all degrees of Qosai have been transferred to Abd-ol-dar, sons of Qosai have always respected wills of their late father and have no conflicts about degrees while Abdemanaf was superior to other brothers. But conflict has occurred during life of their sons. There is not much information about Qosai's sons' era.

### *Hashim and his brother's era*

Abdemanaf has sons named Abdeshams, Nufel, Amro, Abuamru. Although the oldest was Abdeshams but Amro, who has later reputed as Hashim, was heir of his father. In this time there were conflicts between sons of Abdemanaf and sons of Abd-ol-dar about posts. After reveling this conflict every ?? of Qoraish supported one group; therefore, two groups were formed which were established in two agreements or Halaf: Bani-Asad-ibn-abdoloza, Bani-Zohre, Bani-tim and Bani-Hareth joined Abdeshams, superior of Bani Abdemanaf and after gathering near Kaba, they put their hands in a vessel full of perfume and their agreement was known as Halaf Al-Motayebin (agreement of those with good fragrance). Bani-Shams, Bani-Jam, Bani-Odai and Bani-Makhzoom joined Abdol-dar and put their hands to a vessel full of blood next to Kaba and their agreement was called Half Alahlaf or Hoqate-aldam. Bani Amer and Bani-Mohareb were neutral (Zargari, 1999).

Quality of these agreements i.e. an agreement with perfume and an agreement with blood showed financial ability and aristocracy nature of Bani Abdemanaf. After establishing these agreements two parties were prepared for war but finally they reach to peace and according to peace conditions providing water and medical services and leadership devoted to Bani-Abdemanaf and medical services was devoted to Bani Abdol-dar while supervising Dar-

al-Nadveh was shared (ibid). Hashim was the first who created summer and winter business travels for Qoraish and moved their business beyond Mecca. Before that, Qoraish bought goods from merchants and visitors who came to Mecca and sold it to nearby Arabs or they transact in Akkaz market near Mecca (Ali,1980).

Hashim and his brothers was first who signed agreements with other governments. Hashim agreed with Rome kings in Sham and Qassanis for trade with Sham. Abdeshams agreed with Najashi, ruler of Ethiopia, Nufel agreed with kings of Iran and Motaleb agreed with rulers of Yemen for trade; therefore, business of Qoraish was extended to other countries for the first time (Zaryab, 1991). Some stories say that Hashim has transacted with Ankara (Ibn-sa'd, 2001).

In explaining causes of this problem we should say that travel of old merchants to Mecca was reduced or stopped and Qoraish could replace them without any problem but what it causes was and what has happened for old business in an interval between Qosai and Hashim. A brief look at Yemen events answers our questions. This era is concurrent with crisis, wars and Ethiopia's attack to Yemen. Therefore, we can conclude that Hashim was alive in 525 (A.D) which is the year of Ethiopia's attack to Yemen and after that he could extend trade to other countries. Trade by Qoraish was an essential revolution in economy of Mecca, after that wealth of Qoraish was increased and because Arab considered wealth as one of indicators of honor, their respect was increased and they gained financial respect in addition to religious respect.

Hashim has post of providing water and medical services and managed both of them very well. It was said that Abdeshams was poor with many children and traveled always but Hashim was rich so the posts have reached him one of the events of this era was famine in Mecca that Hashim has brought bread on the back of camels from Sham and there he has slaughtered camels and cook their meat and by dipping pieces of bread in it satisfied people, therefore, he had called Hashim (one who make pieces).

Qoraish must carry goods through numerous tribes. These tribes were accustomed to plunder and Qoraish must defend goods. Because Qoraish has not considerable military forces they were forced to give some of profits to heads of these tribes or carried their goods free and agreed not attach their caravans. Therefore, they provided secure ways for trade. Perhaps Qoraish has learnt this from previous merchants and because these tribes were loyal we can conclude that these agreements were not strange for them and they have such relations with previous merchants.

In Hashim's time, Omaye, son of Abdeshams and nephew of Hashim tries to gain respect as Hashim but he failed and some had blamed him. Omaye asked Hashim for a verdict to show their superiority. Hashim has accepted this suggestion with this condition that loser give 50 camels to Mecca and exiled ten years. Omaye agreed and both went to priest of Bani-Khozae. Priest stated that Hashim is superior and Omaye was forced to slaughter camels and Sham for ten years. This was the beginning of competition between Bani-Hashim and Bani-Omaye.

Hashim has married a girl from Bani-Najar in his travel to Sham. His children were a girl and a boy with white hair so he had called Shaybe-al-hamd. Hashim died in his travel to Gaza while his wife and children were in Yasreb. Hashim has determined his brother Motaleb as his successor (Zargari Nejad,1999). Qoraish has called Mottaleb as Fayz because of his generosity and he was responsible for providing water and medical services after Hashim (Ibn-sa'd,1960).

Qoraish had relied on Motaleb and he was one of the wise men. He never drink wine and was first who went to Hara cave for worship and gave food to poor in Ramazan. He went to mountain to seek privacy and think greatness of God. He considered oppression a great sin and circumambulated very much (Ali, 1980).

Mottaleb invited his children to leave oppression and select ethical goods; inhibits them from bad works and put away idols in his last years of life and confirmed that God is unit and established traditions which most of them are in Quran like loyalty to Nazr, forbidding wine and adultery and naked circumambulation. He determined 100 camels as Diae and prophet had confirmed it although it was 10 camels before (Ali, 1980). After death of Hashim Qoraish feared decline of trade but Abdeshams went near Najashi for re-agreement. Nufel went to Iraq and agreed with Iranian. Shayba has grown up. Motaleb found him. A man from Tahame was passing Medina and saw boys who were shooting. There was a boy among them who said: I'm son of Hashim. I'm son of Batha's king. That man asked him who are you. He told I'm Shaybe, son of Hashim. That man went to Mecca and informed Motaleb and admired intelligence and beauty of Shayba (ibid). Motaleb went to Yasreb and brought his nephew to Mecca. Because people of Mecca didn't know that Shaybe is nephew of Motaleb thought that he is servant of him; therefore, they called him Abdolmotaleb (Zargari nejad, 1999).

Motaleb died in one of his travels in Yemen. His sons joined Hashim sons and considered as Bani-Hashim.

### ***Qoraish and Abdolmottaleb before Am-ol-Fil (year of elephant)***

After death of Motalleb, providing water, medical services and leadership of Bani-Hashim reached to Abdolmottaleb. Although some evidences show that Nufel has died before Motalleb there are other evidences that Nufel was alive after death of Motalleb and disputed about a piece of land with Abdolmottaleb and he take back it with the help of his maternal relatives. Abdolmottaleb has not influence of his ancestors in Qoraish and reports of his solitude and opposition and mockery of Qoraish during excavating Zamzam well confirm this. Stories say that he saw in a dream that he must excavate a Zamzam well in certain place and give water to pilgrims. He excavated this well in spite of Qoraish opposition. He has not excavated long that he reached previous well and find a treasure. Jerhamian has thrown this treasure to well when they were escaping Mecca. Then he continued to reach water. Zamzam is one of the oldest well of Mecca and it was the first well in Mecca which was excavated by Ismail. But it was filled by passing time or by flood. As Quran has referred to the place of Zamzam under feet of Ismail this story may be remained in the mind of people and Abdolmottaleb has found this well using their information. Perhaps the story of dream was added later or Abdolmottaleb has said so because Qoraish opposed excavating well in that place. But finding treasure is by chance and this seems natural because when people are escaping they cannot carry much wealth and try to hide treasures from enemies. This treasure was two gazalles, seven swords and five long chain mails. Qoraish disputed with Abdolmottaleb for owning Zamzam because they thought it belongs to their ancestor Ismail. They agreed with drawing lots' gazalles were drawn for Kaba, swords and chest mails to Abdolmottaleb and nothing for Qoraish. Abdolmottaleb gave his share to Kaba and decorated Kaba with it (zaryab, 1991). This creates reputation for Abdolmottaleb in Qoraish and Khozae made agreement with him and because this agreement was with his name not his tribe this indicated his credit. This agreement was established because Bani-Omaye and Bani-Nufel made an agreement against Bani-Hashim.

This influence of Abdolmottaleb was in the time that leaders of some tribes were wealthy because of tribe and claimed superiority and Abdolmottaleb was not the richest of Qoraish and there were people in Mecca wealthier than him, but he was master of his tribe and responsible for providing water, medical services and Zamzam. Abdolmottaleb excavated Zamzam with his son and because no one has helped him from Qoraish he took a vow that if God bestows him 10 sons he will sacrifice one of them. When he had ten sons, he drawn a lot to choose one of them. Abdullah was selected which was his beloved son. Abdolmottaleb took knife and went with Abdullah to sacrifice him. Qoraish went to him to prevent an undesired tradition in tribe. Abdolmottaleb insisted and Qoraish suggested him to pay compensation . Abdolmottaleb had drawn lots between Abdullah and 100 camels that camels were selected. He repeated it three times and every time camels were selected. So he sacrifices 100 camels.

There was a report from sacrificing boys during Bani-Omaye era that Marvan was ruler of Medina and a woman had take vow to sacrifice his son. Scholars could not give a Fatwa but Marvan said Nazr must not include disobedience of God. Therefore, Arabs were familiar with sacrificing their children although it was very rare and they considered act of Abdolmottaleb as an undesirable act.

But the most important event for Qoraish before Islam was attack of Ethiopians with the leadership of Abrahe. Abrahe was commander of Ethiopia army who has conquered Yemen. He wanted to turn Saudi Arabia to Christian religion; therefore, he decided to ruin Kaba which was the center of idols. Because Ethiopians were united with Romans reaching to west-southern borders of Iran and imposing pressure on Sassanid kings (enemy of Rome) was other motivation f Abrahe).

Abrahe approached Mecca with his army which has one or more elephants and because of this it is called army of elephants. Qoraish evacuated Mecca because they could not fight. Abdolmottaleb went near Abrahe and asked him give back his camels. Abrahe asked him why he did not ask to save Kaba, he answered that owner of that house will protect it and he is only owner of camels. He took back camels but elephant army was attacked by birds that thrown stones and killed them. Flood was reported after this stone throwing (Ibn Asir,1980). Some historians mention other causes like outbreak of diseases or Iranian's attack or volcano as a cause for returning Ethiopians. Others say that reminder of this army lived near Mecca or two of them were present in Mecca and they were blind. This year was called yeal of Elephant (Um-ol-Fil) which was 570 or 571 A.D (Ramyar, 2006).

Qoraish after Um-ol-Fil

After this event Qoraish gained more respect and Arabs said that Qoraish are servants of God and life near house of God protects them against any danger. Qoraish gathered and told we are sons of Abraham and servants of God and residents of Mecca. None of Arabs are same as us. We must unit and never consider things outside Kaba as respected as things inside it and increase order of our Kaba. After that they left going to Arafah which was one of the rituals of Hajj because it was outside of Kaba. They decided to protect their religion strongly. One of other customs was that if one of Arabs near Kaba had a baby they give same rights of themselves to this child. By this custom, Kanane, Khozae and Amer mixed with Qoraish which are called Homs (Ibn-Sa'd, 1960). They said that some works are not suitable for Qoraish men; they must not live in usual tents and must live in leather tents

(Ibn-Asir, 1960). It seems that they want give dignity and aristocracy to Qoraish. They told those who come for pilgrimage must not bring food and clothes from outside. They must wear special clothes of Qoraish and if they had not this clothes men must circumambulate naked and women with bra or if they used their clothes they must take away it after circumambulation (ibid). This condition was an attempt for economic growth of Mecca. This was power of Qoraish in pre-Islam era. Abdolmotaleb who was first to worship in Hara and feeding the poor in Ramazan had died after some years. Because his hair was white from childhood he was the first among Qoraish who has colored his hair black. There is no account about his financial activities and he was not wealthy at the end of life and financial condition of his sons confirms this.

After his death, his posts reached to Abutalib. In fact after his death leadership and influence was transferred to Bani-Omaye because they were very wealthy. In Abdolmotaleb time Qoraish became wealthy by trade and had complete influence in Mecca especially in Bani-Abdemanaf leadership was for Hareb-Ibn-Omaye-Ibn-Abdolshams-Ibn-Abdolmanaf who gave food to people and directed tribes and built a place for gusts in Mecca and gave food to everyone comes there.

In this time Fojjar wars and Helf-al-fozol agreement were occurred. Fojjar wars are four wars and because they occurred in Haram months, they called Fojjar. Qoraish presented only in fourth war. Hayre king had sent goods with a caravan to Akkaz market and give responsibility to a man from Havazen called Orveh. His competitor, who was previously companion of Hare-Ibn-Omaye and then expelled, killed Orveh in the way and has fled; When Qoraish and Kannane heard news and went from Akkaz to Mecca not encountering reaction of Havazen. But Havazen was informed and attacked Qoraish. In this war every tribe of Qoraish had an independent commander and this shows political condition of Mecca that they had not required integrity of a city or ethnic.

Because foreign people who carry goods to Mecca had no supporter sometimes they had oppressed and Qoraish was forced to provide security for these people. A special event provided this opportunity. Ase-Ibn-vael took goods of a man from Bani-Zobaid but did not pay its cost. That man complained to Ahlaf agreement members but no one helped him. He went to the top of Abuqobays Mountain and shouted for help. As a result, members of Helf-al-Motayyebin were gathered in the house of Abdullah-Ibn-Jadan who was one of the rich people in Mecca and agreed to help oppresses and take their rights from oppressors (Zaryab, 1991). Influence of Bani-Hashim was decreased in this time because they were poor and wealth was an important factor for superiority between Arabs. Abutalib has not inherited anything from his father because Abdolmotaleb was not wealthy at the end of life. We must consider that Bani-Hashim had posts which need costs without any profit. Abutalib, who was poor, borrowed 10000 dirham from his brother, Abbass, and consumed that for this purpose but because he could not pay back his debt he delegated his posts to Abbass. But he was still poor; therefore, he was forced to give his sons, Ali and Jafar, to Abbass and his nephew, Mohammad, because he could not provide their maintenance.

### ***Qoraish distinguishing features***

Qoraish were very clever and eloquent. They learned many things by communicating with other tribes. They were merchants and made profits. They have prejudice about their religion. They left war because they didn't like captivity and plunder. They were healthy and beautiful. They learned many things about other cultures and civilizations through travel. They learned writing from Hayre. They purified their language. They were most eloquent Arabs and poets submit their poems to them. They were relied on their political power which includes patience, kindness, good language and bribe. Their trade was with other countries, Arabs and they participate in different markets. Their reputation was not military (ibid).

Because world was divided into two military bases (Rome and Iran), Qoraish who were merchants monitored events between Iran, Rome, Yemen and Ethiopia and this is clear from Sure Rome. Qoraish took something from those who come to Mecca which was known as right of Qoraish and according to that part of clothes or sacrifices was for Qoraish. Considering these taxes shows that this tax was not one-tenth tax from Jerham to Qosai era but it is tax of pilgrims and it was natural because trade was in the hands of Qoraish not merchants passing through Mecca.

It seems that regulations in Mecca in Jaheli era was like government regulations but there were not any government in Mecca and regulations were orders of wealth people which were followed. Their unwritten law was this: our fathers had a custom and we follow it.

There was Dar-al-Nadveh in Mecca. Its members must have 40 years old because Arab considered 40 as perfection age. But Abujahl became member in 30 years old because he was wise and Hakim-Ibn-Hizam in 15 years old. But Dar-al-Nadvah was not binding and wealthy people could ignore it and they acted as they wish because there was no consensus in most cases.

Therefore, there was no central government in Mecca. There was no ruler in Mecca; there was no unit leader, commander or police. In fact, Mecca was a village consisting from different tribes and it was managed by opinion of tribes' leader and people have no opposition.

One of the weaknesses in political system of Qoraish is lack of unity and integrity. Mecca was a set of tribes which lived together and although they had higher civilization than other Arabs, but they were semi-wild comparing civilized countries. Concentration of Qoraish power which was clear in the time of Qosai was declined after his death and power was divided; therefore, new posts were created and divided between leaders of tribes and this shows decentralization policy of Qoraish.

Their society was weak in religious beliefs. Discrete and inconsistent beliefs without any holy book or religious leader could not integrate society in the time of crisis and this is clear from their non-resisting against Muslims in war. Although they had more strict beliefs than other Arabs according to evidences not believing idolatry was gradually seen among Arabs and this tendency was stronger in more developed society of Mecca. This shows decline of idolatry and it is one of weaknesses in Jaheli era.

### CONCLUSION

In spite of this account that one of basis for respect of Qoraish was their attributions to Ismail but we cannot accept this because half of Arabs claim that they are attributed to Ismail and this is not a factor for superiority of Qoraish. It could be claimed that respect for Qoraish was due to two religious and financial factors. Their religious respect is related to their residence near Ka'ba and maintaining it. Second factor, which is their financial respect, is also related to Mecca. Wealth was considered as an indicator of credit and respect for Arabs in Jaheli era. Mecca was located on the way of trade; from the time of Hashim travel of old merchants was stopped and Qoraish has took the role of merchants; they organized business travels by making contracts with other nations and Arabs and they gained wealth. This process significantly increases respect and superiority of Qoraish as the wealthier tribe of Arabs. Therefore; Qoraish has everything from Mecca.

By comparative study of religious and financial aspects of respect for Qoraish we can say that they have religious respect among Arabs and this was enhanced by Elephant event and the era after this attack sees the highest religious respect of Qoraish. Their wealth was increased by emerging Hashim and developing trade and continued until emergence of Islam. An era after Um-al-Fil was flourishing time for Qoraish.

Although emergence of Islam was a serious threat for superiority of Qoraish and they had structural weaknesses including lack of integrated political system and reliable ideology but they had influenced Arabs so that their influence was not fade away by short-term government of prophet and it was presented in other form after the death of prophet.

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