

# “WHERE IS ETHIOPIA?”

Where is Ethiopia, about which we heard the name a lot after a group of muslims took refuge out of Mecca? Who ruled the country? What does its economy depend on? What's its religious belief? How are the relations with the two then-superpowers of the world: Byzantine and Persia? Our correspondents have made a survey about most wondered questions of Ethiopia.

*Continue reading on page 3.*



# SİYER GAZETESİ

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## MUSLIMS TOOK REFUGE IN ETHIOPIA

**A group of 15 muslims took refuge in Ethiopia in order to get out of oppression and force of pagans from Mecca. The pagans who got informed about the Hijra, sent a follower behind the refugees ,yet couldn't catch up with them.**



Refugees leaving Mecca secretly at midnight, moved in small groups not to be recognised and met in Jiddah by the Red Sea. According to what we have been informed about is that after arriving Şuaybe Port in three days journey, the refugees passed the Red Sea by two different ships and stepped on African coast.

### DESTINATION: ETHIOPIA

After the details appeared It has been clarified out that the destination of refugees was Aksum, the management center of Ethiopia.

*Continue reading on page 2.*

## DARE TO DEATH THREATS

A group of youngsters, who are members of remarked families in Quraysh, refuged in Ethiopia infuriating pagans in Mecca.

Ubey b. Halef, a renowned pagan, threatened the Messenger of Allah in the Kaaba the previous week. He insulted the Messenger of Allah saying: "O Mohammad! I have a horse. I feed him maize a sixteen-measure everyday. A day will come that I murder you when on his back."

Ubey's disrespectful attempt of a startle wasn't left unmatched.

*Continue reading on page 2.*



## UMMU ZER

### ALLAH'S OFFER IS BROAD

It has been five years since he became the prophet. Mecca has become an unbearable place for the muslims. There has been countless Oppression, force and violence. The believers see persecution even from their own tribes and brothers, are being exposed to violence as well. Muslim slaves are being exposed to violence as they never had before. Even the free and the noble are being exposed to fight on streets. Muslims can not live in Mecca anymore, can not even breath. The young oppressed under such torture are going to the desert and trying to find out isolated areas to pray to the Creator. Even the prophet can not pray in the Kaaba without being disturbed. Verses of Qur'an advise the believers to be patient, heralding that the helper of the patient is Allah.

*Continue reading on page 2.*

## UMMU ZER

### ALLAH'S OFFER IS BROAD

The Lord is the helper of those who have migrated from their homeland after persecution, and who have persisted their efforts and showed patience afterwards. Now after all the things done, your Lord is surely so forgiving and merciful. (En Nahl 110)

The Messenger of Allah is looking for a way out and trying to save the believers. Especially in Mecca, Mecca's young people whose Eman rights have been abolished by their tribes to make them not to live in safety and maintain their commercial and social lives are in a very difficult condition. The Eman right means a kind of citizenship and security in the city of Mecca. For anyone who doesn't have the Eman right, there is no safety of life and property in Mecca and even anywhere in Arab Peninsula. Although slaves may be subjected to torture and persecution by their owners, they can be considered to have security to some degree as no one other than their masters can touch them. However, the muslims whose Eman right has been taken away and who have been excluded by their tribes and their families have no social rights in Mecca. This has made muslims even have a more difficult situation. The messenger of Allah said to his companions whose Eman and citizenship rights had been removed. "You may spread over the Earth. Allah will bring you together for sure. In a sense, he offered them to come out of Mecca until the conditions would improve there. Then the companions asked "Where shall we go?" After consulting his closest companion, the Messenger of Allah said "Go to Ethiopia.

There is a fair ruler there who doesn't persecute his people. That's a country of righteousness. Stay there until Allah shows you a convenience." Ethiopia is perhaps the only place to be migrated regarding the current circumstances. The other Arab tribes can't dare to oppose the Quraysh for the sake of accepting Muslims. That's why, the place to be migrated should be both outside the Arabian peninsula and an easy-to-reach region. Ethiopia is a country which we have been trading with, maintaining various relationships with and getting acquainted with since before now. Nejashi, who is currently in charge, is a ruler of truth. He is an administrator who is known for his mercy and doesn't oppress his people.

The religion of Ethiopia is Christianity. The fact that Ethiopia has a belief based on revelation can also be a hope for a favorable environment for believers regarding pagan beliefs of Meccan pagans. Nejashi may exhibit a fair attitude to the refugees who has been persecuted by the pagans and whose rights have been taken away because of their beliefs. Upon the request of the Messenger of Allah, the group consisting of eleven men and four women, under the leadership of Osman b. Maz, suddenly set off in groups of two at night. We are in the month of Rejep as you know.

The refugees tried to ensure that they would not be attacked by the anti-Islamists, just in case by sneaking out in a month which is forbidden by religion. However, the pagans of Mecca went after the muhajirs as soon as they got the information of their immigration but they returned with their hands empty. What this migration towards Ethiopia would bring is uncertain for Mecca and Muslims but this wave of immigration will have profound impacts in Mecca. The persecution is going on and its volume is increasing day by day. Even if there are fifteen people, the migration of Muslims and the idea of Islam's spreading or having fans in other towns has almost driven pagans in Mecca mad.

They are behaving Muslims worse than it used to be. The fact that almost all of the immigrants belong to the leading families of the Quraysh slapped their face the truth- they are not weak but powerful. Islam is so strong that the youngsters, children, siblings left everything behind for the sake of their faith without any benefit. This commitment greatly bothered Mecca leaders.

There is no doubt that these young people who have been persecuted for their beliefs and who have left their homeland, will lead to new debates in Ethiopia. Muslims are expecting positive news about how their migrating brothers have been welcomed in Ethiopia and perhaps for a second wave of immigration.

# MUSLIMS TOOK REFUGE IN ETHIOPIA

Believers asked the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) where to go and he answered: 'Go to Ethiopia'. After his speech, it is understood that the Prophet Mohammed determined the direction of Muslims as Ethiopia. As Ethiopia was a renowned trade region for people from Mecca and the country was located on a migration route which was frequently used by trade caravans, muslims might have easily travelled to Ethiopia unobtrusively. It is thought that Pagans were very lately aware of the migration of muslims for this reason. It is stated that people from Mecca learned the migration from a merchant who came to the Shuaybe Harbor and told about Qurayshies.

### There Are Interesting People Among the Refugee

After people heard about the migration, they wondered the people migrating to Ethiopia. Details became clear shortly. According to the information obtained by our correspondents, the refugee caravan is composed of 11 men and 4 women. There are some important people among them. Most of the immigrants are composed of youngsters from the distinguished and important families.

There are wealthy people among the muhajirs including Osman and Ebu Huzeyfe from Umeyyes, trade men including Abdurrahman b. Avf and ones like Mus'ab b. Umeyr who are very important for their families and live a life of luxury.

### The Daughter of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) Is Among the Refugees

Rukiyye, the daughter of the Prophet Mohammed, is also among the refugees with her husband Osman b. Affan. Moreover, she is not the only woman in the group.

### Here is the list of Refugees

Osman bin Affan and his wife Rukiye, Ebu Huzeyfe bin Utbe and his wife Sehle bint-i Suheyl, Zubeyr bin el-Avvam, Musab bin Umeyr, Abdurrahman bin Avf, Ebu Seleme bin Abduleded and his wife Ummu Seleme bint-i Ebi Umeyye, Osman bin Maz'un, Amir bin Rabia, and his wife Leyla bin-ti Ebi Hasme, Ebu Sebre bin Ebi Ruhm, Suheyl bin Beyda ve Hatib b. Amr.

### Darlings of Quraysh are on the Migration Route

Reviewing the refugee list included in the migration to Ethiopia, we can see that they are distinguished people among their tribes, not the ones who are exposed to torture such as Amir b. Fuheyre, Habbab b. Eret, Bilal-i Habeshi etc. This may be considered that the migration to Ethiopia has a different aim and characteristic. It is seen that muslims from each tribe in Quraysh participate in this migration to Ethiopia.

Especially sons of important families such as Mahzums, Amirs and Umeyyes who oppose to Islam and make pressure on muslims migrated. It assessed that such young people who suffer from pressure by their families migrate as they have lost their right of protection.

### The Reason of the Migration was Loss of the Protection of Right

According to the tribe system the right of protection is the most important principle. One who loses his right of the protection may be exposed to any kind of torture unless he finds a protection from another tribe and also may lose a fundamental right. Especially these families who showed hostility towards Islam abolish the right of protection which is one of the legal and social structure of Mecca for muslim youth. Afterwards, muslims who are exposed to any kind of threats had to migrate to Ethiopia.

### What will happen now?

Upon these developments, it is greatly wondered what pagans will do. Ethiopia is a strong and important partner for pagans. For this reason, pagans are disturbed that dissident muslims come into this country and create a tarnishing image of Mecca. Besides, this is really surprising for Qurayshians that youth of distinguished families migrated by leaving everything behind and this migration could not be prevented.

While discussing that the migration to Ethiopia will constitute a milestone for Mecca and muslims there are numerous questions which are wondered:

What will be the attitude of Dar'un-Nedve and Qurayshian pagans towards these latest developments?

Will this migration initiated to Ethiopia continue?

The key question which may answer all these questions is:

How will muslim refugees be welcomed by muslim refugees in Ethiopia?

## DARE TO DEATH THREATS



Using his power to do injustice and oppress the weak and unprotected, Ubey thought that he would intimidate the Messenger of Allah with his threats. But the response of the Messenger to Ubey was extremely heavy. "O Ubey! I hope I kill you when you're on that horse". Ubey b. Halef was shocked by the answer. According to what was reported by the witnesses, Ubey who turned pale by the brave and uncompromising answer of the Messenger didn't know what to say and had to leave the Kaaba.

# WHERE IS ETHIOPIA?

**It's one of the oldest settlements in the world. Coastlining the Red Sea, the country hosts masses of immigration waves throughout the history due to its geographical location.**

Just as Persian kings are called "Kisra", Ethiopian kings are titled "Nejashi". The word means "emperor" in Ethiopian language. Ashame, the throne holder, is known as a just and religious emperor. Because of these positive traits, it is known that the Messenger led muslims to Ethiopia.

## A destiny far-fetched from Arabia to the throne

A fact known about Nejashi Ashame is that he spent his days of principdom in Arabia. Ashame was sent to Bedir, as a slave sold to Arabian merchants by his despot uncle for six hundred drachmas, when he was a child heir to the throne. He shepherded the camels of Damra tribe. After years, Ashame, taken from Medina, was put to the throne after a political chaos. The incident made him a renowned figure in the region. It is considered that Ashame's fame affected the Messenger's decision to choose Ethiopia as the land of immigration.

## Relations between Ethiopia and Arabian Peninsula

A well-grounded commercial, political and religious affairs are present between Ethiopia and Arabian Peninsula.

People of Mecca had commercial relations with the region for ages. Being on the commercial arteries, Mecca held the opportunity to interact with several countries including Ethiopia.

Additionally, owning spice merchandise single-handedly, Ethiopia played a significant role in commerce. The arteries of spice road goes through Hedjaz. So, there is a tight commercial relationship between Ethiopia and Mecca.

## Advanced Commerce in the South and North

There is active naval commerce relationship present between and Ethiopia and Hedjaz. Ethiopia, through the Adulis port, sends ships to India to sell emerald, incense, ivory and purchases Indian products. Ships departing from this port, as they can reach where Basra Bay and the Euphrates meets, naturally holds the opportunity of transferring precious African products throughout Arabian Peninsula. Therefore, they provide for both Southern and Northern commerce. That is, they sell their products on both seas and lands through spice roads and Adulis port. Since Mecca is the most intense commercial region in the Arabian Peninsula, Ethiopia maintains its northern commercial activities especially with Mecca.

## Ilafs for Quraysh: Commercial Immunity Agreements

The most explicit example of commercial relationship between Ethiopia and Mecca is what then called an "ilaf" which is essentially a commercial immunity agreement. In 467, I. Leon, the Byzantine Emperor at the time, allowed Hashim the son of Kusay b. Kilab, who is the grandfather of Messenger of Allah and who is also considered to be the founder of Mecca Polis State, to take his commercial caravans to Syria. He also sent a letter to Nejashi recommending Hashim. In the letter, the emperor asked Nejashi to let the mobility of the caravans between Ethiopia and Mecca. With the reference of I. Leon, a commercial immunity agreement was reached and signed between Abd-Shems the other son of Kusay and Nejashi resulting in a solid commercial bond. The brothers of Hashim who are Muttalip and Nevel reached a capitulation agreement with Yemen and Iran in order. Thus, Quraysh had the privilege of the right for free commercial activity with the countries surrounding itself. It started to send commercial caravans to Damascus in summertime, Yemen and Ethiopia in wintertime thanks to the agreements. Quraysh still maintains these commercial ties.

E.g. Grains are transferred from Ethiopia to Jeddah to end up in Mecca and the people of Mecca send their caravans to Jeddah to transport the goods two times a year. Therefore, Quraysh maintains its dominant position in the region.

## Byzantine's Religious and Political Effect in Ethiopia

As for the religious matters relating to Ethiopia, one must utter as follows: About 300 years back in time, Ethiopians experienced a great deal of religious conversion. Before that, they were pagans just as Mecca people were. However, Ethiopians adopted Christianity in Nejashi Ezana period with the Byzantine's influence and conversion to Christianity. Hence, Byzantine reached even a greater influence in the region.

## Occupation of Yemen

Such a heavy influence of Byzantine on Ethiopia affected the destiny of Yemen in the Southern of the arabian Peninsula. Yemen, which was once a pagan of the pagans, converted to Judaism led by Zu-Nuvas. However, being in affairs with newly converted Ethiopia, Yemeni people had started to convert to Christianity. Necran region had become a centre for Christian conversion. Consequently, rivalry between two religions became hostility in a blink in the Southern Arabia. In October 523 Jewish King Zu-Nuvas began slaughtering masses lest they could be influenced by Byzantine through its increasing dominance in religion in Necran, Ethiopia. Having arrested those Christians, he had them either executed or slaved. Those slave Christians had been offered conversion to Judaism and those who rejected conversion was murdered in what they called "Uhdud", which is essentially a pit full of intense fire. The horrific events finally called for military intervention of Byzantine and Ethiopia to Yemen.

Justin the first, the Byzantine emperor, sent a letter to Nejashi asking for intervention to Yemen as Ethiopia was considered as the representative government of Christians in the region. Byzantine, through Ethiopia, was able to maintain its relations with Arabian tribes and the peninsula.

Following the emperor's request, Nejashi moved Ethiopian troops to the region. Ethiopian hegemony in Yemen, which is still present, started in 523-525 with this occupation. Such dominance in Southern Arabia extended relations between Ethiopia and Arabian tribes.

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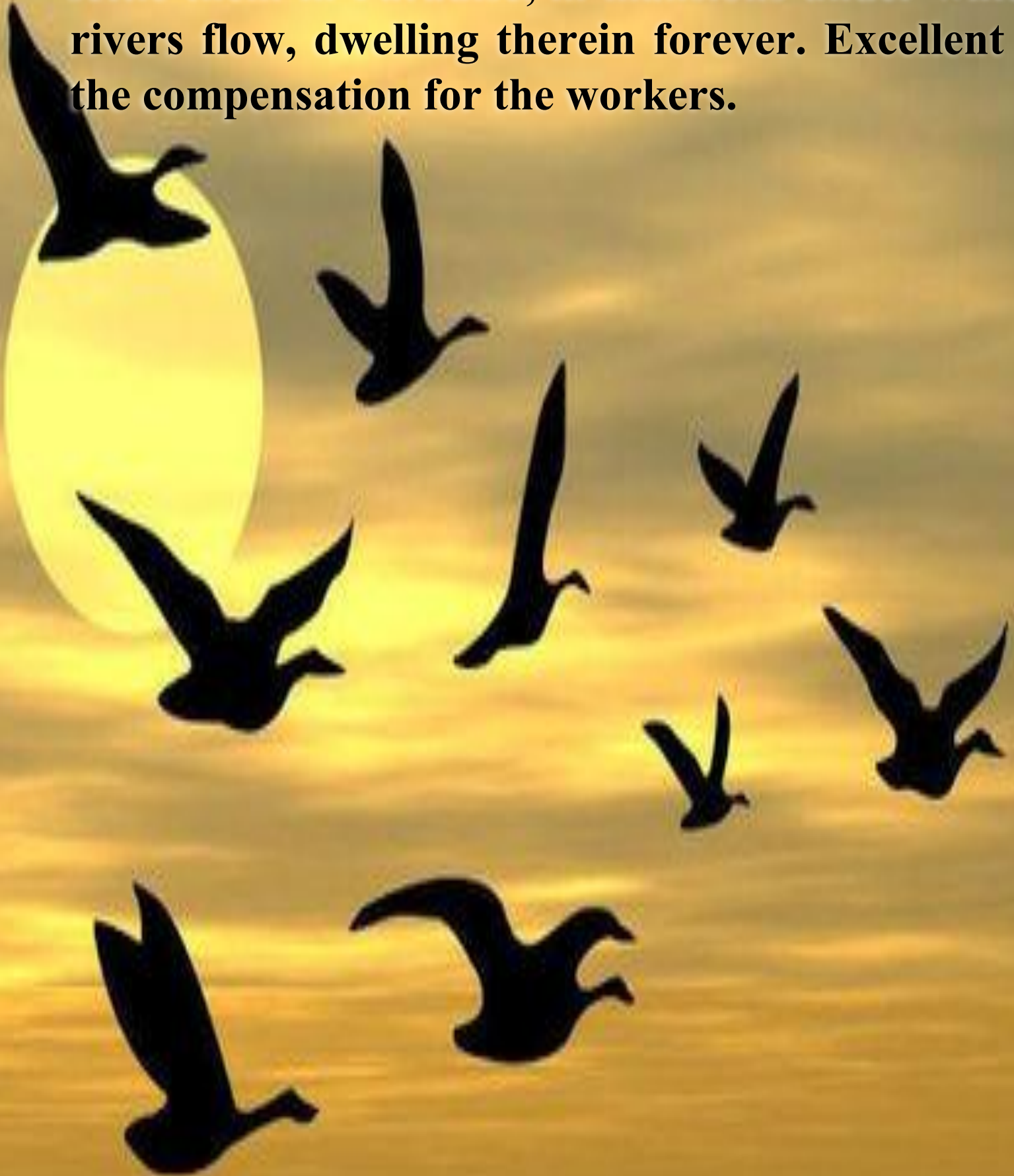
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**“O My servants who have believed: My earth is vast, so worship Me alone. Every soul will taste death. Then to Us you will be returned. Those who believe and work righteousness—We will settle them in Paradise, in mansions under which rivers flow, dwelling therein forever. Excellent is the compensation for the workers.**



**Those who endure patiently, and in their Lord they trust. How many a creature there is that does not carry its provision? Allah provides for them, and for you. He is the Hearer, the Knowledgeable.**

**(al-Ankabut, 29/56-60)**