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Narratives Of The Veracious Vol. 2

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This text is the first volume of a collection of anecdotes about prominent personalities, some well-known and others unknown, both Muslim and non-Muslim, but mainly about the Holy Prophet (S) and the A'imma of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). These serve to guide us on the wisdom, morality and ethics that we should carry in our day-to-day affairs.

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The composing errors are not corrected.

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Foreword

Murtadha Mutahhari, the author of this work, was born on 2nd February, 1919 in Fariman, a town in the north-eastern Iranian province of Khurasan, and was assassinated by the pseudo-Islamic group Furqan, on 2nd May 1979, about three months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Having studied advanced literature, philosophy, Islamic jurisprudence and other Islamic fields in the religious city of Qum, Martyr Murtadha Mutahhari began teaching philosophy and religious sciences at Tehran University. He played a significant role in illuminating the minds of people from different walks of society, particularly university students.

Subsequently, his political activity against the Shah dynasty resulted in his imprisonment by the SAVAK many times, as well as prohibition of him teaching at university.

By compiling more than forty works, mostly in the domain of philosophy and Islamic sociology, he can truly be considered as one of the outstanding forerunners of the revival of Islamic thought in the contemporary world.

The late Leader of the Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini (May Almighty Allah shower His peace and blessings upon his soul) said on the occasion of his martyrdom, *“I have lost a very dear son.”*

Narratives of the Veracious, ‘Dastan Rastan’, is not a philosophical text, nor an analysis. Rather, it is a series of narratives extracted, not only from Islamic traditions, but also from diverse historical books that relate anecdotes about prominent personalities, some well-known and others unknown, both Muslim and non-Muslim.

The martyred author's purpose, as he has explained in the introduction of the Persian edition, was to contribute to guidance and moral education by relating instructive narratives, reiterated them in plain language, rendering it accessible to the expert and lay person alike.

Ethics is a fundamental field in Islam to which this work refers and transmits authentic accounts.

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ

“And We made them leaders guiding (the people) by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds, and the establishing prayer, and the giving of alms, and they were worshippers of Us (alone).” (Surah Al-Anbiya, 21:73).

Among the many works of Ayatullah Martyr Murtadha Mutahhari are:

1. Society and History
2. An Introduction to the Islamic World Outlook (7 Volumes)
3. Man and Faith
4. The System of Feminism in Islam
5. Divine Aid in Human Life
6. The Martyr
7. A Recognition of Islamic Sciences (3 volumes)
8. Islam and Iran (A Historical Study of Mutual Services), and many others.

In recognizing the importance of the work by Martyr Murtadha Mutahhari, the ICRO wishes to publish this book with the hope of strengthening unity among the Muslim brotherhood, as well as with other communities.

**Department of Translation and Publication,
Islamic Culture and Relations Organization**

Story 76: Son Of Hatam

Before the advent of Islam and the establishment of the Islamic Government in the Arabian Peninsula, the feudal system reigned over the Arabian Society. Each tribe had a separate chief, the Arabs' used to obey their chiefs and pay tax and tribute to them. Among the lords and feudals of Arabs, the generous Hatam Tai was one of the well-known chiefs and was counted as the head and chief of Tay Tribe.

After Hatam, his son Adi succeeded him. Tay tribe submitted to his rule. Under the title of tax and tribute, Adi took annually a quarter of everyone's revenue. The rule of Adi coincided with the era of the Holy Prophet (S) and the expansion of Islam.

The people of Tay tribe were pagans, but Adi himself was a Christian, not exposing his own belief to his tribe.

After being converted to Islam and acquainted with the liberating principles of Islam, the people were willy-nilly emancipated of the yoke of chiefs who had hitherto imposed their obedience upon them.

Owing to this fact, Adi Ibn Hatam, like the other Arab chiefs and lords, considered Islam as the greatest menace for himself and became an enemy of the Holy Prophet (S).

Anyhow, the die was cast, people were embracing Islam in groups. Islam and Muslim affairs were flourishing day by day.

Adi knew very well that a day would come that the Muslims would come over and overthrow his power and kingdom. Therefore, he ordered his special steward, a slave, to keep the strong and light-footed camels ready beside his camp and inform him immediately as soon as he saw the Muslim army approaching towards them.

One day the slave came to him and said: *"Take whatever decision you wish to, for the Muslims army is just round about."*

Adi ordered his slave to make the camels ready, mounted his family on them, loaded all transportable items and escaped towards Syria where the inhabitants were Christians adhering to his own religion.

Due to precipitation, Adi forgot to take his sister, Safana with him, and she was left behind.

Adi had escaped before the Muslim army arrived and Safana was captured and brought along with the other captives to Madinah. The story of Adi's escape was also related to the Holy Prophet (S). There was an enclosure beside the Mosque of Madinah whose walls were short where the captives were sheltered.

One day, when the Holy Prophet (S) was passing by the enclosure to enter the Mosque, Safana, who was an eloquent and intelligent woman, moved from her place, stood up and said: *"My father passed away, my guardian went into hiding, be gracious to me, may God be gracious to you!"*

The Holy Prophet (S) asked her: *"Who is your guardian?"*

She said: *"Adi Ibn Hatam."*

The Prophet (S) said: *"The one who escaped from God and His Prophet!?"* On saying these words, the Holy Prophet (S) left her immediately.

Next day, when the Holy Prophet (S) was passing from there, Safana stood up, repeated the same words that she had said the day before, and heard the same reply. Once again, her request remained ineffective.

The third day, when the Prophet (S) was about to pass from the same way, Safana decided to keep silent since she had lost hope of her request being accepted, but a young man moving behind the Holy Prophet (S) made signs to her to stand up and reiterate her demand.

Thus, she rose and repeated her words: *“My father passed away, my guardian went into hiding, be gracious to me, May God be gracious to you!”*

The Holy Prophet (S) said: *“All right, I am waiting to find some reliable persons so that I will send you with them. If you find such persons who have come to Madinah, inform me!”*

Safana asked the people: *“Who was the young man walking behind the Prophet (S) and making signs to me to rise and repeat my demand?”*

They said: *“He was 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a).”*

After a few days. Safana informed the Prophet (S) of the arrival of a reliable group of her own tribe in Madinah and asked him (S) to send her with them. The Holy Prophet (S) gave her a new dress, an amount of money for her expenses and an animal for riding. She set out towards Syria along with the group to meet her brother.

As soon as Safana saw her brother Adi, she began reproaching him and said: *“You brought your wife and children along with you and forgot me. I was the souvenir of your father?!”*

Adi apologized to her.

Since Safana was an intelligent woman, Adi always consulted her about his own business. He asked: *“In your opinion what is advisable to my interest, since you have seen Muhammad from nearby? Shall I go to him and join him or stay aloof from him?”*

Safana replied: *“In my opinion it will be better for you to join him. If he is a true Prophet of God, what a great prosperity and dignity for you! If he is not a Prophet and looks for kingdom, you will not be dishonoured there, for your personality which you have among the people of Yaman, and since Yaman is not too much far from Madinah, you will not lose your dignity and honour as well.”*

Adi admired her viewpoint, he decided to go to Madinah in order to observe the Prophet's conduct minutely and see if he was a real Prophet. He would follow him like a member of the Muslim community, and if he was an ordinary man looking for kingdom and having the worldly ambitions, he would co-operate with him to the extent of their common benefits.

When the Holy Prophet (S) was in the Mosque of Madinah, Adi entered and saluted to Prophet (S).

The Holy Prophet (S) asked: *“Who are you?”*

“I am Adi, the son of Hatam.”

The Prophet (S) respected him and took him to his house.

On their way a decrepit, skinny woman intercepted the Prophet (S) and began asking questions. It lasted some time and the Prophet (S) answered the questions with kindness and patience.

Adi said to himself: *“This is the first sign of the character of this man indicating that he is a Prophet. The tyrants and the opportunists do not have such a nature and a humour to reply to an old and miserable woman's questions with so much patience and kindness.”*

On entering the Prophet's (S) house, Adi found it to be very simple and without finery. There was nothing but a mattress which showed that the Prophet (S) used to sit on it. The Prophet (S) spread it for Adi. Adi insisted that the Prophet (S) should sit on the mattress, but the Prophet (S) refused.

Adi sat on the mattress while the Prophet (S) was sitting on the ground. Adi said to himself: *“This is the second sign of the character of this man indicating the Prophet's ethics, not that of the kings.”*

The Prophet (S) turned the face to him and said: *“Your religion was not a Rukoussi?”*¹

Adi replied: *“Yes!”*

The Holy Prophet (S) asked: *“Then why and upon what justification did you take off a quarter of the people's revenue which is not permissible in your religion?!”*

Adi, who had dissimulated his religious faith from all people even his closest relatives, was surprised by the Prophet's (S) words. He thought: *“This is the third sign indicating that this man is a Prophet.”*

Then the Holy Prophet (S) said: *“You look at the actual poverty and indigence of the Muslims; you see that they are poor in comparison to the other nations; you also observe that they are surrounded by multitude of enemies and have no security of their lives and properties, you find that they have no power in their hands but in the hands of other people. I swear by Allah that it will not last long when such a vast wealth will come to them that there will be no poor among them. By Allah that their enemies will be vanquished and such a perfect security will exist that a woman will be able to travel all alone from Iraq to Hijaz while nobody will pester her. I swear by Allah that the time is near when the white palaces of Babylonia will come under the authority of the Muslims.”*

Adi embraced Islam with perfect faith and immaculate intention and remained faithful till the end of his life. He survived for many years after the Holy Prophet (S) and recollected the words of the Holy Prophet (S) of his first meeting with him (S). He also remembered his forecasts about the future of the Muslims.

He used to say: *“I swear by Allah that I survived to see the white palaces of Babylonia being conquered by the Muslims and the security being established to such an extent that a woman could travel all alone from Iraq to Hijaz, without being pestered by anybody. I swear by Allah that I am sure a day will come when there will be no poor among the Muslims.”*²

Notes

1. “Rukoussi religion” was one of the sects in Christianity. (Sirah Ibn Hisham).
2. Sirah Ibn Hisham. v. 2. p. 578 - 580. The events of the Tenth year of Hijrah.

Story 77: Perspicacity Test

In the end not a single student was able to give an exact reply to the question which the eminent teacher had asked. Everyone proposed an answer, but none could win the teacher's approval.

Such was the question that the Holy Prophet (S) had stated before his Companions: *"Among the tenets of belief, which one is the most basic of all?"*

One said: *"salat,"* prayer.

The Prophet (S) said: *"No!"*

Another: *"Zakar"* alms giving.

The Messenger of Allah said: *"No!"*

The third: Fasting.

The Prophet (S): *"No!"*

The fourth: *"Hajj and Umrah!"* Pilgrimage and voluntary pilgrimage to Ka'bah.

The Holy Prophet (S): *"No!"*

The last one: *"Jihad"* the Holy War.

The Prophet (S): *"Not even that!"*

At last, all answers given by the assembly did not satisfy the Holy Prophet (S), then the Holy Prophet (S) himself said: *"All those tenets mentioned by you are exalted acts, full of virtues, but none of them is the one which I have in mind. The most basic tenet of belief is to have love for the sake of Allah and to hate for the sake of Him."*¹

Note

1. Usul al-Kafi v. 2. p. 25. Wasa'il v. 2. p. 497.

Story 78: Juwaybir And Zulfa

How beautiful it would be if you marry and take a wife, establish a family and end the lonely life so that you would be satisfied with a woman, and she would be of help to you in your needs, both in this world and in the hereafter.

“O Messenger of Allah! Neither I have wealth nor possess good and handsome personality, nor do I have a noble descent or lineage. Thus, who is prepared to give me his daughter? Moreover, no one would select me as a husband and to be my wife as I am poor, short, black and ugly?”

“O Juwaybir! Allah has changed the individual's value through Islam. Many people were respected in the time of “Jahiliyyah” pre-Islamic era, and Islam brought them down, many people were despised and degraded, but Islam elevated their status. Allah with the establishment of Islam abolished the vanity of the age of “Jahiliyyah”, Ignorance and the pride relative to the familial lineage. Henceforth, people irrespective of their colour black or white, their origin Qurayshite or non-Qurayshite, Arab or non-Arab, are all equal: no-one is superior to another but through piety and obedience to Allah. I consider the one among the Muslims to be better than you, whose virtues and deeds will be better. At present, obey as I order you!”

Such was the words exchanged between Juwaybir and the Holy Prophet (S) who came to visit the Companions of “Saffa”.

Juwaybir was a native of Yammama, where he heard about the popularity and the reputation of Islam and the advent of the Seal of Prophets. Although he was indigent, black and short, he was intelligent, truth-seeking, and self-willed. On hearing the fame of Islam, he came directly to Madinah in order to observe closely the current circumstances.

It did not last long that he embraced Islam and was counted as one of the Muslims. Since he had no money to meet his expenses, nor did he have a house to lodge in, he was temporarily settled in the Mosque by the Prophet's (S) orders.

Eventually there were some other new converted Muslims to Islam in Madinah who were poor and indigent like Juwaybir living in the Mosque by the Holy Prophet's (S) permission. It was revealed unto the Prophet (S) that the Mosque was not any more a residential place, and it became necessary to transfer them somewhere else.

The Messenger of Allah (S) chose a site outside the Mosque, made a shelter for them, and shifted the homeless there. The place was named “Saffa”, and its inhabitants, the poor and the strange, were called the “Companions of Saffa”. The Holy Prophet (S) and his Companions kept watching over their lives and needs.

One day, when the Holy Prophet (S) had come to visit them, his eyes were casted over Juwaybir. He thought to bring him out of this situation and make him marry. Juwaybir never thought or imagined that a day would come to have a wife, house and a peaceful life since he was well acquainted with his own situation that that was why when the Holy Prophet (S) suggested him to marry, he said surprisingly: *“Is it possible for any woman to have a conjugal life with me!”*

But the Holy Prophet (S) promptly informed him of his mistake and explained the changes made in the social conditions in Islam. After making

him courageous and fully confident, the Holy Prophet (S) gave an order to him to go directly to the house of “Ziad Ibn Lubaid” and ask for his daughter’s hand “Zulfa” in marriage.

Ziad Ibn Lubaid was counted among the richest and respectable inhabitants of Madinah and his tribe had a great consideration for him. When Juwaybir arrived in his house his relatives, tribes and a group of men surrounded him.

After taking a seat, Juwaybir paused for a moment then raised his head and said to Ziad: *“I have brought a message from the Holy Prophet (S) for you, should I tell you confidentially or publicly?”*

“The Prophet’s (S) message is an honour to me. Of course, you’d better tell it publicly.”

“The Holy Prophet (S) has sent me to ask your daughter’s hand for myself.”

“Did the Holy Prophet (S) personally talk to you about this suggestion?”

“I say nothing on my own authority, all know me. I am not a man to lie.”

“It is strange! It is not our tradition to give our daughters in marriage to the others but to the persons of equal status from our own tribe. Go back, I will personally go to the Holy Prophet (S) and talk to him about the matter.”

Juwaybir stood up and then left the house, murmuring on his way: *“I swear by Allah what the Holy Qur’an teaches and what the prophecy of Muhammad is alter, differs from what Ziad says.”*

All those who were nearby heard the words which Juwaybir was murmuring.

Zulfa, Ziad’s lovely daughter well-known for her beauty and charm, heard his words. She came to her father to inquire about the incident.

She said: *“Father who was this man and what was he murmuring about and what did he mean by that?”*

“This man came to ask your hand in marriage pretending that the Holy Prophet (S) had sent him.”

“And if the Holy Prophet (S) had truly sent him, thus your refusal may be considered as a rebellion against the Prophet’s (S) order.”

“In your opinion what shall I do?”

“My opinion is that you should make him return immediately before he reaches the presence of the Holy Prophet (S), therefore go to the Holy Prophet (S) personally and enquire into the matter?”

Then Ziad made Juwaybir return back to his house with respect and he personally hurried to the attendance of the Holy Prophet (S). As soon as he saw the Prophet (S), he said: *“O Messenger of Allah! Juwaybir came to my house and brought such a message from you. I would like to inform you that our current custom and tradition is such: We give our daughters in marriage only to the persons of equal status with us from our tribesmen who are all your Companions and of the helpers (Ansar).”*

“O Ziad! Juwaybir is a faithful believer. Those dignities which you are talking about have been abolished nowadays. A man mumin - Muslim believer - is equal in dignity to a woman mumin.”

Ziad came back home and went directly to his daughter, Zulfa, and related to her all the incident which took place.

Zulfa said: *“In my opinion, do not refuse the Prophet’s (S) proposal. The question is concerning to me. Whoever Juwaybir may be, I should be pleased, since the Messenger of Allah (S) is pleased with this matter, so do I.”*

Ziad married Zulfa to Juwaybir, paid her dowry from his own wealth and offered the bride a good trousseau. And they asked Juwaybir: *“Have you thought about a dwelling place where to take the bride?”*

He said: *“In fact, I never thought a day would come when I will have a wife and a domestic life. Suddenly the Holy Prophet (S) came, proposed that to me and sent me to Ziad's house.”*

Ziad arranged a house equipped with complete furniture, prepared two suitable suits of clothes for the bridegroom and shifted the bride to that house along with complete ornaments, jewellery, perfume and dresses. The night fell, Juwaybir did not know the address of the new house provided for him. He was guided to the new house and instructed to the bridal-chamber.

He made a glance at the new house, all those properties and such a beautiful bride, suddenly he remembered his past. He said to himself, *“When I entered this city. I was a poor man and a stranger and I had nothing, neither wealth nor beauty, nor familial lineage, nor relatives. Allah bestowed upon me all these bounties through Islam. As a matter of fact, it is Islam engendering in people such transformations which are beyond anyone's imagination. How grateful I must be to Allah!”*

He felt a strong sentiment of satisfaction and gratitude in his spirit regarding the Almighty Allah, went in a corner of the room and began reciting the Holy Qur'an and praying to Allah.

Suddenly, he realized that it was dawn. When he heard the call of the morning prayer, he made a vow to fast that day to express gratitude to Allah.

When women came to visit Zulfa, they found her untouched and a virgin, it became obvious that Juwaybir did not approach Zulfa. They kept the matter hidden from Ziad. Two nights and two days passed in the same manner while Juwaybir was fasting during the day and reciting the Holy Qur'an and praying throughout the night.

Little by little it came to the mind of the bride's family that Juwaybir was not in need of a woman or probably he is impotent.

At last, they exposed the matter to Ziad. Ziad informed the Holy Prophet (S) of the case. The Holy Prophet (S) called Juwaybir and asked: *“Don't you have any desire for a woman?”*

“Why not, this desire is incidentally intensive for me.”

“Then why did you not approach your bride?”

“O Messenger of Allah! On entering that house and finding myself amid with all those bounties, I thought how great the Almighty Allah is and has granted His blessings to me, an insignificant creature. So, I felt a state of gratitude and servitude towards Him. I said to myself: “It is essential to pray in order to offer Him gratitude before doing anything else. Tonight, I shall go to my wife.”

The Holy Prophet (S) informed Ziad of the incident. Juwaybir and Zulfa accomplished their marriage and lived a most happy life. Later on, a holy Islamic war *“jihad”* occurred. Juwaybir took part in it with the same zeal and enthusiasm and was martyred under the banner of Islam.

After his martyrdom, there was no woman in the city having so many woers as Zulfa had, and they were ready to spend lot of money for her.¹

Note

1. Al-Kafi, v. 5. p. 34.

Story 79: A Recommendation

A man very earnestly insisted the Holy Prophet (S) to tell him some words of recommendation.

The Holy Prophet (S) said: *“Are you going to apply what I tell you?”*

“Yes, O Messenger of Allah!”

“Are you going to apply what I tell you?”

“Yes, O Messenger of Allah!”

“Are you going to apply what I tell you?”

“Yes, O Messenger of Allah!”

After making him promise three times and drawing his attention to the importance of the question, the Holy Prophet (S) said: *“Whenever you decide to do something, first of all, think about and contemplate its effect, consequence, and result; if you foresee that the consequence and result is all right, follow it, if it ends up in astray and corruption, renounce your decision!”*¹

Note

1. Wasa'il, v. 2, p. 457.

Story 80: An Unexpected Decision

To his surprise, Harun al-Rashid was informed that Safwan, the caravaner, had sold all of his camels, and some other measures should be taken for the transport of his camps and equipments on the journey to the Hajj pilgrimage.

Starting to think deeply on the subject, he said to himself: *“After making an agreement with the Caliph to assume the responsibility for the transport of the equipments to the Hajj pilgrimage, simultaneous sale of all camels of the caravan by Safwan, is not a normal case. Thus, it was likely that the sale of camels had connection with the agreement made between both of them.”*

He summoned Safwan and said: *“I heard that you had sold all of your caravan camels?”*

“Yes, O commander of believers!”

“What for?”

“I am gone old and inapt to work, unable to undertake the affairs and my children seemed not to be preoccupied with it, I came to a conclusion it would be better for me to sell them.”

“Tell me the truth! Why did you sell them?”

“It was only this and nothing else that I had already informed you.”

“But, I know why you sold them! Musa Ibn Ja'far certainly came to know about the agreement made between us, about the transportation of the camps and equipments, he refrained you from doing this work and ordered you to sell all the camels. This is the reason of your sudden decision!”

Then Harun said in a rude tone and angry voice: *“Safwan! If it was not because of our past and previous long friendship, I would have beheaded you!”*

Harun had imagined the right view of the things. Although Safwan was counted as one of the close relatives of the Caliphate system and had a long-lasting relation with the governmental system, particularly with the Caliph, personally, he was also counted as one of the devoted partisans, Companions and followers of *“Ahl ul-Bayt ('a),”* the Prophet's Family.

After having made an agreement with Harun regarding the transportation of the equipments to Hajj pilgrimage, one day he met Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far ('a).

The Imam ('a) told him, *“Safwan! Regarding you, everything is satisfactory except one thing.”*

“What is that? O descendant of the Messenger of Allah”

“The fact is that you have hired out your camels to this man”

“O descendant of the Messenger of Allah! I have not hired them out for an unlawful journey! Harun is about to go to Hajj Pilgrimage to Makkah, in addition to that, I am not accompanying them, rather, I will send some of my workers and servants.”

“Safwan! I would like to ask you a question!”

“Let me know! O descendant of the Messenger of Allah!”

“You have hired out your camels to him so that you take your rent in the end; he will definitely take your camels and you will wait till he pays you your rent, won't you!”

“Yes! O descendant of the Messenger of Allah!”

“Don't you wish that Harun would be alive and pay the amount due to you?”

“Of course! O descendant of the Messenger of Allah!”

“Whoever is desirous of seeing the oppressors subsist, under what-so-ever pretext it may be, will be considered as one of them. And it is well evident that whoever is counted among the oppressors will go to the Hell-Fire.”

After this meeting with the Imam ('a), Safwan decided to sell all of his camels although he guessed it would probably cost him his life.¹

Note

1. Safinat ul-Bihar. v. 2, matter “zulm”.

Story 81: Divinely Favoured Money

'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) was missioned by the Holy Prophet (S) to go to the market and purchase a shirt for him (S). He ('a) went to the market and purchased a shirt for twelve dirhams.

The Holy Prophet (S) asked: *“How much did you pay for it?”*

“Twelve dirhams.”

“I do not like it so much! I would like to have a cheaper one. If the seller is ready to take it back, please return it?”

“I don't know, O Messenger of Allah!”

“Go and see whether he agrees to take it back or not?”

'Ali ('a) took the shirt with him, returned to the market and asked the seller: *“The Holy Prophet (S) wants a shirt of a cheaper price than this. Are you ready to pay back our money and take back your shirt?”*

The seller accepted it. 'Ali ('a) took the money and came to the Holy Prophet (S). Then they both went towards the market.

On the way the Prophet's (S) saw a slave-girl who was crying, *“Why are you crying!?”*

“My master gave me four dirhams and sent me to the market for shopping; I don't know how the money got lost. At present, I am scared to go back home.”

The Holy Prophet (S) gave her four dirhams from those twelve dirhams and said: *“Buy what you want and go back home!”*

Then he (S) went towards the market, purchased a shirt for four dirhams and put it on.

On his return, he (S) saw a naked man, immediately he took off his shirt and gave it to him.

He (S), returned to the market, purchased another shirt for four dirhams, put it on and took the way towards his house. On the way, he (S) saw the same slave-girl sitting, puzzled, embarrassed and perplexed.

He (S) asked: *“Why did you not go back home?”*

“O Messenger of Allah! It is too late; I am afraid they might beat me, for I have slightly delayed.”

“Let's go together. Show me the way of your house! I will intercede for you with them so that they may not bother you.”

The Holy Prophet (S) accompanied the slave-girl. As they reached the house, the girl said: *“This is the house.”*

The Holy Prophet (S) said in a high voice from behind the door: *“O people of the house, Salamun alaykum, peace be upon you,”*

He (S) did not get any reply.

Thus he (S) said again, yet there was no reply.

For the third time, he (S) saluted, they replied: *“As-salamu alaykum, O Messenger of Allah, wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh.”*

“Why did you not reply for the first time; didn't you hear my voice?”

“Of course, yes, we heard your voice the first time and came to know that it was you!”

“Then what was the reason for your delay?”

“O Messenger of Allah! We loved to hear your voice “salam” again and again. Your “Salam” is peace, blessing and grace for our house.”

“This slave-girl of yours was delayed. I came here to ask you not to pester her.”

“O Messenger of Allah! Because of your gracious visit, this slave-girl is free from now on.”

The Holy Prophet (S) said: *“Thanks to Almighty Allah, how blessed these twelve dirhams were which, became the dress of two naked persons and a slave-girl got emancipated.”*¹

Note

1. Bihar ul-Anwar, v. 6; Al-Khisal: 271/1, h. 13.

Story 82: High Cost Of Provisions

In Madinah, the price of wheat and bread increased day by day. All the people were seized by dread and anxiety. Those who had not procured their annual provisions strove to do their best in obtaining that; those who had provided it took care of preserving it. There were also some people whom the indigence had compelled them to buy their foodstuffs from market every day.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) asked Ma'tab, his steward: *“Do we have wheat in reserve this year?”*

“Yes! O descendant of the Messenger of Allah! We have a quantity of wheat in stock which will suffice us for many months.”

“Take it to the market, put it at the disposal of people, and sell it.”

“O descendant of the Messenger of Allah! Wheat is scarce in Madinah. If we sell it, it will be impossible for us to buy it again.”

“What I say I meant it, take out all the wheat and put at the people’s disposal.”

Ma'tab obeyed the Imam’s ('a) order, sold the Wheat and reported the result to the Imam ('a).

“From now onwards purchase the bread of the family from the market daily,” ordered the Imam ('a), *“because the bread which is baked in my home must not differ from the bread which the mass of people consume for the time being. Our bread, henceforth must contain half wheat and half barely. Praise be to Almighty Allah, I have the capacity to maintain my family in the best manner with the wheat until the end of the year; however, I do not do that, for I would like to respect the principle of the “measurement of subsistence” before Allah.¹*

Note

1. Bihar Al-Anwar, Vol 11, p. 121.

Story 83: Evacuation Of Public Bath

The despotic manners of Ummayyad and Abbasside Caliphs had influenced the other walks of society. The people were gradually forgetting the simple mode of life, human and fraternal relation established by Islam; and the Holy Prophet's (S), Imam 'Ali's ('a) and the best Companions' morals and conducts were effaced from their memories.

People were accustomed to the despotic Caliphs' behaviours to such an extent that they did not consider these customs ugly any more.

One day Imam al-Sadiq ('a) went to the public bath. According to the custom practised about the honourable men and great personalities in those days the public bath's owner asked: "*Let me evacuate the public bath for you!*"

The Imam ('a) said: "*No, it is not necessary.*"

"*Why?*"

The Imam replied: "*The pious believer does not bother for these things*"¹

Note

1. Bihar ul-Anwar. v. 11, p. 117.

Story 84: Pinch For Water Shortage

Having reigned over Syria about sixteen years as a governor, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufian paved the way for his Caliphate without exposing his plan to anyone. He took advantage of the least chance for what he had in mind. The question of Uthman's murder was the best pretext for him to rebel against the central government and expose his purpose to become the Caliph.

In fact, during the lifetime of Uthman, he did not give any favourable reply to his appeal and supplication and closed his eyes towards his imploration; he awaited Uthman's murder so that he could use it as a pretext for his plot.

Uthman was killed; and Mu'awiyah looked immediately for exploiting the situation for his purpose. On the other side, after the murder of Uthman, the people surrounded Imam 'Ali ('a) who refused to shoulder the burden of Caliphate; they paid allegiance to him ('a). Realizing that the Caliphate responsibility was officially directed to him, 'Ali ('a) accepted it; and his official nomination was announced in Madinah - the capital and the Caliph's palace, in those days.

All the provinces of the Islamic vast territory of that time submitted to his obedience with the exception of Syria which was under the control of Mu'awiyah. He refused to obey the central government's order and accused it of giving refuge to Uthman's assassins. Thus he made himself ready to declare Syria's independence and mobilized a large number of army from the Syrians.

After putting an end to the rebellion of Jamal "*the companions of camel*", 'Ali ('a) turned towards Mu'awiyah. He ('a) exchanged a number of letters in correspondence with him, but Imam 'Ali's ('a) letters did not make any effect on Mu'awiyah's blunted conscience. Both adversarial parties commenced to advance towards each other with a large number of army.

Abul A'war Salma led the way of Mu'awiyah's army with a group of advanced guard and Malik al-Ashtar an-Nakhai was on the move with a group of Imam 'Ali's ('a) soldiers as the detachment and advanced guard. The two groups of detachment met by the side of Euphrates.

Malik al-Ashtar had not received Imam 'Ali's ('a) permission to commence the war: Abul A'war launched a violent attack in order to frighten the adversary. His assault was repulsed by Malik and his companions, and the Syrians were strongly driven back.

In order to complicate the adverse position from the other means, Abul A'war managed to reach the "*Sharia*" a steep slope by the side of Euphrates where the two adversaries were benefited by the water supply. He ordered his lancers and marksmen to protect that area and prevent Malik and his companions from having the access to the water.

It did not last long that Mu'awiyah personally arrived with his army, a great number of soldiers, and was pleased with Abul A'war's initiative.

To be quite assured of the position, Mu'awiyah increased a number of soldiers to Abul A'war's men. Imam 'Ali's ('a) companions remained in difficult straits of water shortage. The Syrians were delighted to meet this chance, and Mu'awiyah expressed happily: "*This is the first victory.*" It was only 'Amr Ibn As, the special assistant and counsellor of Mu'awiyah who objected to this measure.

On the other side, Imam 'Ali ('a) arrived and became aware of the incident. He ('a) sent Sa'saat, one of his great companions, with a letter, mentioning: *"We came here, but we wish that the war might be avoided, and that the fratricide would not occur among the Muslims. We hope to solve the problems by negotiations, but I came to see that, before anything else, you and your partisans have used the arms; in addition to that, you have prevented my companions from reaching the water. Therefore, issue an order so that they may renounce their actions till the negotiation will be initiated. It is quite obvious that I will fear nothing if you are pleased with nothing else but the war."*

Mu'awiyah received the letter, he deliberated with his counsellors about the matter. The general opinion was to take advantage of this chance and not to pay attention to the letter.

It was only 'Amr Ibn As, who had a different point of view; he said: *"You are all making a mistake. Having no intention to launch the initiatives to start war and shed blood, 'Ali ('a) and his companions have kept quiet at the moment, and by this letter, they wanted to dissuade you from your initiatives as well. Do not imagine them retreating if you do not take an appropriate action concerning the letter and if you let them suffer water shortages; in that case they will take the sword, not desisting from taking a severe action till they make you move away from the Euphrates in humiliation."*

But the majority of counsellors were of the opinion that being hard pressed for lack of water, would make the enemy succumb and put to flight. Mu'awiyah's personal opinion was the same. This counsel came to an end. Sa'saah came to Mu'awiyah to receive the answer of the letter. Mu'awiyah who wanted to find a way to evade the reply said: *"Later on I will reply to your letter."* But, in the meanwhile, he issued an order to the soldiers who were guarding the water to be entirely watchful and prevent all Imam 'Ali's ('a) soldiers from running away.

Imam 'Ali ('a) became very annoyed with the course of event which suppressed absolutely all the hopes of good intention in the adverse camp and did not let any means subsist to resolve the problems through the bilateral negotiations. He ('a) saw no solution but to resort to force and take the arms.

Standing in front of his army, he ('a) addressed them in a short sermon but exciting and sensational; here is what he ('a) expressed: *"They are asking you morsels of battle and waged the oppression. They are like the hungry who are searching for food, demanding war, shedding blood and restricting you from using water. So you should select one of the two choices; there is not a third one in front of you; either you remain in ignominy and the lowest position or drench your sword with their dirty blood and quench your thirst with the pure water. Real life is in the victory though you lose your life, while the real death is in the life of subjugation though you gain your life. Mu'awiyah is leading a misfortunate group of insurgents and has kept them in ignorance and unawareness, so that they have made their bosoms the targets of death."*

This exciting sermon provoked a strange motion in the minds of Imam's soldiers and made their blood boil. They were ready to combat. They managed a heavy attack, made the enemy move back to a far distance, and took hold of the "river".

'Amr Ibn As, whose anticipation was correct, arrived and said to Mu'awiyah *“what are you going to do if 'Ali and his army make reprisals at present and take actions against you just as you did against them? Can you recapture the Euphrates?”*

Mu'awiyah said: *“In your opinion, how is 'Ali going to behave with us now!?”*

He replied: *“In my opinion, he will not retaliate and not pinch us for water shortage. 'Ali has not come to do such things.”*

From the other side, having driven Mu'awiyah's partisans away from the river, the Imam's army demanded 'Ali ('a) to authorize them to prevent Mu'awiyah's soldiers from drawing the water.

The Imam ('a) said: *“Do not prevent them from the water. I do not resort to such an initiative which arises from the ignorant ones. I would like to make use of this chance for initiating the negotiations based on the Book of Allah. If accepted my propositions and good intentions, it will be much better, and if not, I will fight against them and defend them bravely, but not by preventing them from the water. I will never initiate such a measurement and never press anyone to suffer the water shortage.”*

No sooner did the night fall than both 'Ali's ('a) and Mu'awiyah's armies drew the water that day, and nobody bothered Mu'awiyah's soldiers.¹

Note

1. Commentary on Nahj al-Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid. Sermon 51. v. 1. p. 410-418.

Story 85: Complaint Against Fate

Mufazil Ibn Qays was involved in the difficulties of life. Poverty, indigence, debts and daily expenses made him torment a lot. One day, he launched a long complaint in the presence of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) and began mentioning his misfortune in details: *“I have such an amount of debts and I do not know how to repay it. Having such an amount of daily expenses, I do not have any source of revenue, I became miserable, I am confused, I am dazzled, every open door is closed before me....”*.

In conclusion he asked the Imam ('a) to pray for him and demand the Almighty Allah to solve the crux of his problem.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) asked a servant-girl who was there: *“Fetch the bag full of gold coins which Mansur has sent to us.”*

The small servant-girl brought immediately the bag full of gold coins. Then the Imam ('a) said to Mufazil Ibn Qays: *“This bag contains four hundred dinars which will help you to survive.”*

“This is not my intention, what I mentioned in your presence is to ask you to say a 'Dua', prayer in my favour.”

The Imam ('a) replied “All right! I will pray for you, but let me remind you about this point: Do not expose your misfortune and difficulties before the people. Its first effect is to be presented that you are defeated in the arena of existence. Thus you lose your dignity and degrade your personality and respect.¹

Note

1. Bihar ul-Anwar. v. 11, p. 114

Story 86: Teacher's Reproof

One night Sayyid Jawad 'Amuli, the renowned jurisconsult and the author of the book "*Miftahul Karamah*", was busy eating dinner when he heard a knock at the door.

Running quickly towards the door, he came to understand that it was the servant of his teacher, Sayyid Mahdi Bahrul 'Ulum.

The servant said: "*His honourable teacher summons you immediately. Sitting at the dining-table, he shall not touch the food till you go to him.*"

There was no time to delay; without finishing his food, Sayyid Jawad hurried up to Sayyid Bahrul 'Ulum's house.

As soon as he saw Sayyid Jawad, Sayyid Bahrul 'Ulum protested loudly with an unprecedented anger and great sorrow: "*Sayyid Jawad! Don't you fear Allah! Do you not feel ashamed before Allah!?*"

Immersed in great perplexity, Sayyid Jawad wondered what had occurred and what event had taken place! For it was the first time he was reproached by his teacher in such a manner. The more he exerted his mind, the less he could find out the reason.

Helplessly he asked: "*Your honourable teacher! Could you please explain what my fault was?*"

The teacher said: "*So and so person, your neighbour and his family, has not been able to attain rice and wheat since seven days; during this period of time, he passed his days by buying the dates in credit from grocery at the end of the lane.*

Today, when he went to procure the dates, before having uttered a word the grocer said: "Your debts have already increased!" On hearing these words, he felt ashamed to demand again in credit and came back home empty-handed; tonight, he and his family have got nothing for dinner."

Sayyid Jawad said: "*I swear by Allah, I was not in the picture. Had I known, I would have supplied his needs.*"

His teacher said: "*That is why I am roaring with anger; after all, why did you not inquire about the situation of your neighbour? And why did they pass seven days in this state without your knowing of them? For if you knew about their needs and did not take any action, you would not be basically a Muslim, but a Jew.*

Sayyid Jawad said: "*Tell me what I should do at present?*"

"My servant will carry this big tray full of food, and you will go with him to the man's house. The servant will place this tray in front of the entrance door of that man and will come back; but you knock at the door and request him to have dinner with you tonight; also take this money and put it under their carpet or mat; apologize to him for having failed to do your duties, as a neighbour. Leave the tray there and come back. I will not eat my dinner and will be waiting for your return until you inform me of that pious man."

The servant held the big tray full of different types of delicious food and set out along with Sayyid Jawad. They arrived at the entrance door; the servant kept the tray and returned, and Sayyid Jawad entered the house after seeking permission.

The owner of the house, after listening to his apology and his request, began to eat. After taking a morsel of food he found it delicious, but he felt

that the food was not cooked in Sayyid Jawad's house for Sayyid Jawad was an Arab.

Immediately he stopped eating and said: *“This food is not cooked by an Arab, therefore it has not been brought from your house, so we will not touch it till you tell me where this food has come from.”*

The man's guess was absolutely right; the food was cooked in Bahrul 'Ulum's house, he and his family were Persian by origin, from Burujird. Sayyid Jawad insisted on his eating, but he refused and said: *“If you don't say, I will not touch it.”*

Sayyid Jawad had no other alternative than to tell the whole story from the beginning to the end.

After hearing the incident, that man started eating the food. But amazingly, he said: *“I have never exposed my secret to anyone, hiding it from my closest neighbours; I do not know how Sayyid came to know of it.”*¹

“The gnostic on the way did not confide Divine secret to anyone”

“I am in bewilderment, whence the tavern keeper heard it?”

Note

1. Al-Kuna wa al-Alqab, Muhaddith al-Qummi, v. 2, p. 62.

Story 87: Breaking A Fast

Anas Ibn Malik was a servant at the Holy Prophet's (S) home for years, and he was proud of that until the last day of the Prophet's (S) life. He was familiar more than anyone else to his personal habits and character and knew how a simple and informal life he (S) was having in daily food and dress.

When the Holy Prophet (S) used to fast in the month of Ramadan, all his food for breaking fast at dusk and before dawn consisted of some milk or syrup and crumbled bread in broth.

At times this simple food was separately prepared for the evening and for the dawn, and he was content with only once a day and observed a fast.

As usual, one evening Anas Ibn Malik had prepared some milk or something else for the Holy Prophet (S) to break his fast, but the Holy Prophet (S) did not come back home at the time of breaking the fast. The night was quietly getting on but he (S) did not return.

Persuaded that the Holy Prophet (S) agreeing to the request of certain companions, had broken his fast with them, Anas Ibn Malik ate all the food whatever he had prepared for the Holy Prophet (S).

It did not take a long time that the Holy Prophet (S) returned home. Anas Ibn Malik asked one of the Companions, "*Where did the Holy Prophet (S) break his fast?*"

He replied: "*He has not broken his fast yet, certain preoccupations occurred and made him delay.*"

Anas became ashamed and bashful for what he had done since the night had fallen and it was impossible for him to prepare the meals once again.

He thought that the Holy Prophet (S) would ask him to offer something to eat: then he would present his excuses. From the other side, the Holy Prophet (S) came to know what had happened. Therefore he (S) did not ask for food and slept hungry.

Anas said: "*As long as the Holy Prophet (S) remained alive, he (S) never mentioned the incident of that night and ignored it.*"¹

Note

1. Kuhl Al-Basar Fi Sirat Sayyid Al-Bashar, Muhaddith al-Qummi, p. 67.

Story 88: Apprentice Of The Draper

The apprentice of the draper was unaware of what trap had been laid before him. He did not know that this beautiful and dignified woman who was frequently coming into the shop under the pretext of purchasing, had fallen in love with him, and her heart was filled with a deluge of love, passion and desire.

One day, the same woman came to the shop, ordering to separate a large amount of materials. Then, under the excuse of not being able to carry them and not having money with her, she said: *“Give the materials to this youngster so that he can carry them to my house and fetch the money.”*

Earlier she had prepared the house for her purpose, and there was nobody in except a few private maids of hers. Muhammad Ibn Sirin, who was still a teenager, smart and handsome, shouldered the material and went along with the woman. As he entered the house, the door was closed behind. He was guided to a pompous room, and he awaited for the lady to receive the material and pay the money as soon as possible.

The expectation lasted for quite a long time. After some time, the curtains were drawn up. The lady came out, well-dressed, and in full make-up entered the room in a coquettish behaviour.

In a short instance, Ibn Sirin understood what trap had been laid. He thought to make the lady change her mind by preaching, advising or begging her, but he found all in vain. Explaining to him about her fervent love, she said: *“I was not the purchaser of your material but the purchaser of you!”*

Ibn Sirin began preaching and advising her and spoke about the Day of Resurrection and fear of the Almighty Allah, but there was no effect on her heart; he begged her, but it was of no use. She said: *“There is no other alternative, you have to fulfil my desire.”* As she saw Ibn Sirin insisting on her not to do so, she threatened him: *“If you do not respect my love and make me happy, I will shout and say that this youngster has a bad intention towards me; then it is obvious what will happen to you!”*

Ibn Sirin was so scared that all the hairs of his body stood erect. On one side, faith, belief, and piety commanded him to preserve his own chastity. On the other side, his refusal of that woman's desire could cost him his life, honour, and prestige. He did not see any remedy but to show his obedience.

Suddenly a trick flicked in his mind; he thought! *“There is only one way left for me. I must do something that her love will change to hatred so that she herself might leave me alone, and I could preserve my chastity from any kind of polluted vices. I will have to tolerate the visible pollution for an instance.”*

Thus he went out under the pretext of easing nature-call in toilet, came back with the polluted appearance and went towards the woman. As she saw him in that condition, she frowned and without any hesitation threw him away from her house.¹

Note

1. Al-Kuna wa al-Alqab, Muhaddith al-Qummi, v. 1. p. 313.

Story 89: Anarchic Constellation

Although Abdul Malik Ibn A'yun, brother of Zararat Ibn A'yun, was one of the narrators of the prophetic traditions, he had a firm belief in the principles of astrology and the influence of aspects of stars. He had collected a lot of books on this field and referred to them. Whatever decision he wanted to make and whatever work he wished to do, at first, he began referring to the astrological books and made the calculation to see, what was the stars position.

Gradually he was accustomed to this practice which made him suspicious to such an extent that he would refer to astrology in all circumstances. Day by day, he felt that this matter had paralyzed his life and his suspicion increased and that if he continues to attach to the auspicious and the inauspicious hours and days as well as the lucky and unlucky fortune and so on, the order of his life would overturn.

He did not find in himself such a power to oppose or to be indifferent towards it. However, he always envied the conditions of people who kept themselves busy doing their own affairs and trusting them in the Almighty Allah and never thinking of such things.

One day, he exposed his state to Imam al-Sadiq ('a), saying: *"I am involved in the astronomical horoscope of which I can not get rid."*

To his surprise, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said in reply: *"Do you believe in such things and practise them?"*

"Yes, O descendant of the Messenger of Allah"

"I order you to go and burn all those books immediately"

The Imam's ('a) order made him courageous; he went and burnt all the books and got rid of them.¹

Note

1. Wasa'il, v. 2. p. 181.

Story 90: Astrologer

Riding on the horses, the Commander of believers, Imam 'Ali ('a) and his army set for Nahrawan. Suddenly, one of the heads of his Companions arrived, accompanied with a man, and said: *“O Commander of believers! This man is an astrologer, he has something to say to you!”*

The astrologer: *“O Commander of believers! Do not move at this hour. Wait for a while! At lease, let two or three hours of the day pass before departing!”*

The Imam ('a) asked: *“What for?”*

The astrologer replied: *“Because the position of the stars indicates that whoever starts on the way at this moment will be defeated by his enemy and will sustain a heavy loss for himself and his Companions, but if you depart at the time that I have indicated, you will gain the victory and will attain your goal.”*

Imam 'Ali ('a) said: *“This mare of mine is pregnant. Can you tell me her colt is male or female?”*

The astrologer: *“If I do a calculation. I will be able to say that.”*

Imam 'Ali ('a): *“You are telling a lie. You won't be able to do so! The Holy Qur'an says: “No one except Allah is aware of unseen. Only Allah knows what He has created in the womb.” Muhammad (S), the Messenger of Allah, did not pretend what you are pretending: do you affirm your being informed of what all is happening and do you know at what moment the good luck and bad luck arrives? Thus, if someone has confidence on you with this pretending and perfect science, he will not be in need of Allah.”*

Then he ('a) addressed the assembly: *“Take care to follow these things which lead you to divination and to pretention of prophecy. The diviner is like a sorcerer: a sorcerer is the same as an infidel and an infidel is in the Fire (Hell).”*

Turning his face towards the sky, he ('a) recited some words of prayer relative to the confidence and reliance on the Almighty Allah, then he ('a) looked at the astrologer and said: *“We will oppose your prescription deliberately and we will set out just now.”*

Imam 'Ali ('a) issued an immediate order to depart and move towards the enemy. The victory and success achieved in this war by Imam 'Ali ('a) was easier than any other of his earlier wars.¹

Note

1. Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon 77; Wasa'il. v. 2, p. 181.

Story 91: Resolving Of Difficulties

Safwan was sitting in the assembly of Imam al-Sadiq ('a), all of a sudden, a Makkan arrived in the assembly and exposed the problem facing him. It appeared that it was a financial problem and the matter was on the dead line.

Imam ('a) ordered Safwan: *“Immediately go and help your religious brother in his problem.”*

Safwan went and, after easing his difficulty, came back successful.

The Imam ('a) asked: *“What happened?”*

He replied: *“It was Allah Who solved the problem.”*

The Imam ('a): *“Know that the same apparently insignificant request which you have granted with spending a little time of yours is more favourable and charitable than seven circumambulation of Ka'bah.”*

Then Imam al-Sadiq ('a) added: *“Having a problem, a man came to Imam al-Hasan ('a) and asked for help. Imam al-Hasan ('a) put on his shoes immediately and went along with him. On the way, they saw Husayn Ibn 'Ali ('a) while he ('a) was busy praying.*

Imam al-Hasan ('a) asked that man: “Why didn't you see Imam al-Husayn ('a) and neglected him.”

He replied: *“First I wanted to go to him ('a) and to ask his help but I was informed that he ('a) had stayed in the Mosque for prayers and meditation. This was the excuse for which I did not disturb him.”*

Imam al-Hasan ('a) said: *“However, if he had the chance to render help to you in needs, it would be better for him than to be in spiritual retirement for one month.”¹*

Note

1. Al-Kafi. v. 2, p. 198.

Story 92: Who Is More Pious

One of the Imam al-Sadiq's ('a) Companions, who was always attending the lessons and teachings of the Imam ('a) and usually frequented the friend's assembly, was not being seen for some time.

One day Imam al-Sadiq ('a) asked his companions and friends: *"In fact, where is so-and-so who is not being seen since a long time?"*

"O descendant of the Messenger of Allah! He has recently become poor and indigent."

"And what is he doing now?"

"Nothing. He is sitting at home and dedicating all of his time in prayers."

"Then how is he managing his own life affairs?"

"One of his friends is responsible of his expenses."

"I swear by Allah! This friend of his is in a more pious stage than him."¹

Note

1. Wasa'il. v. 2. p. 529.

Story 93: Alexander And Diogenes

Alexander, the Macedonian king, was chosen as a commander-in-chief of Greece to lead the army against Iran; people from all walks of society came to congratulate him. But Diogenes, the famous wise man of Greece, who was living in Corinth, did not pay the least attention towards him.

Alexander went personally to see him. Counted as one of the Greek wise man, whose slogan was the sobriety, magnanimity, independence and moderation in life, Diogenes was lying on the ground under the bright day sunshine.

Finding out that a numerous group of people were coming towards him, he rose a little and fixed his eyes on Alexander who was advancing with ostentation. He did not differentiate him from an ordinary person coming to see him while respecting the mottos and principles of magnanimity and freedom. Alexander saluted him and asked if he had any type of request.

Diogenes replied: *“I have only one request from you, that is, I was benefiting the bright sunlight, and you came and prevented me from the same, so please move a little bit on the other side!”*

These words seemed very silly and insignificant in the eyes of Alexander's accompanists. They thought how foolish the man was for not having benefited from such a big chance!

But Alexander, who felt in contempt before the magnanimity of temper and loftiness of nature of Diogenes, was immersed in thought.

After making his way, he said to his accompanists who were mocking the philosopher: *“As a matter of fact, if I were not Alexander, I would have desired to be Diogenes.”*¹

Note

1. "History of Science" Author: George Sarten. Translated by Ahmad Aram, p. 525.

Story 94: King And The Sage

On his way to Khurassan, through every city where Nasir ud-Din Shah passed, the people from different walks of society usually came to welcome him on his visit and say farewell on his departure, and they used to accompany him till the door.

When he reached Sabziwar, all the inhabitants went to welcome and visit him. The only person, who under the pretext of reclusion and retirement, refrained to welcome him was Hajj Mulla Hadi Sabziwari, the renowned sage, philosopher and gnostic.

On the other side, the only person that Shah, on the way to Khurasan, had in mind to visit personally was this man who had become famous and popular little by little throughout Iran and the students from all the corners of the country rushed towards him to attend his lessons. There was a great theological center founded in Sabziwar.

Tired of all those receptions, visits, homages and flatteries, Shah, the king, decided to go personally to see the Sage.

He was told: *"the Sage knows neither the king nor ministers."*

The Shah replied: *"But Shah knows the Sage."*

The Sage was informed of the incident; an appointment was fixed. One day, it was noon, Shah went to the Sage's house accompanied by only one of his servants. The house was very humble, furnished with very simple chattels.

While debating with the Sage, Shah said: *"For each and every blessing of Allah, thanks must be offered; blessing of knowledge is to teach and guide the others; blessing of wealth is to assist the needy; blessing of kingdom is, of course, to solve the people's problems. Thus I would like you to demand something from me so that I get a chance to fulfil it."*

The Sage: *"I have no request to make; I don't want anything from you!"*

The Shah: *"I heard that you possess a cultivating land. If you permit me, I will give orders for exempting it from the tax."*

The Sage said: *"The governmental tax office has fixed a certain amount of money to be collected from each city; its system does not get in accord with the partial changes. If I am exempted from paying tax in this city, the same amount of tax will be collected in excess from the other citizens so as to complete the target fixed as tax which must be collected in Sabziwar. The Shah, while giving reduction or exempting me from paying the tax, may impose a burden on the orphans and widows. In addition to this, the government having its duties to preserve the people's lives and properties, has its expenses which must be fulfilled. Therefore, we are ready to pay this tax with pleasure and satisfaction."*

The Shah said: *"I am desirous to take food in your presence today and eat along with you from your daily food. So give order to bring your lunch."*

Without moving from his place, the Sage shouted: *"Bring my food."*

It was immediately served, there were some loaves of bread, some spoons, a bowl of butter-milk and salt on a wooden plank which was placed before the Sage and the Shah.

The Sage said: *"Eat! Be sure that the bread is Halal (Islamically lawful), clean because it is the product of my own toil."*

Eating a spoon of it, the Shah found that he was not accustomed to such food, which was uneatable by him. So he asked the Sage to permit him to wrap up a few loaves of bread in his handkerchief and take them with him as a blessed gift. After some time the Shah left the Sage's house in a different world full of a boundless surprise and amazement.¹

Note

1. Rihanatul Adab, v. 2. p. 157, 158 under the title of Sabziwari.

Story 95: “Tawhid” Monotheism Of Mufadhdhal

After having performed his “Asr” afternoon prayer in the Prophet's Mosque, Mufadhdhal Ibn 'Umar Ja'fi went and sat in between the Holy Prophet's (S) “*Minbar*” pulpit and his holiness' shrine; a series of thoughts submerged him gradually; his thoughts revolved round the greatness and the magnificent, celestial personality of the Messenger of Allah.

His admiration increased more and more when he meditated about his holiness. He said to himself: “*Despite the homage and glorification shown towards the high position of this unexampled personality, yet his esteem status is further lofty; what the people perceived of his dignity, greatness, and virtues is very little when compared to what they failed to perceive.*”

Mufadhdhal was lost in these thoughts when Ibn Abi al-Awja, the famous materialistic, arrived and sat in a corner. It did not last long that one of Ibn Abi al-'Awja's friends, a co-thinker, arrived, sat beside him, and began to discuss with him.

It was the beginning of the Abbasside dynasty, in those days, which corresponded to a period of Islamic cultural transformations. The Muslims had founded certain General Knowledge Centers and had translated or were translating books in philosophical and scientific fields from Greek, Persian and Indian language. The schools of thought, philosophy and theologian branches had come into existence; the era was of confrontation with opinions and convictions.

The Abbassides respected the freedom of thoughts to such an extent that it did not run into collusion with politics. The non-Muslim scholars and even the atheists and materialists known as “*zandiqah*” dualism, freely expressed their opinions, used to get together at times near the Ka'bah, “*Al-Masjidul-Haram*”, in Makkah or in the Holy Prophet's Mosque beside the Prophet's Shrine, “*Masjidun-Nabi*”, in Madinah and kept on exchanging their views. Ibn Abi al-'Awja was in one of this group.

That day, Ibn Abi al-'Awja and his comrade entered the Holy Prophet's Mosque at an interval of a short period and began to converse with each other, but they were not so far from Mufadhdhal that he could not hear them. The first words, incidentally, reached Mufadhdhal's ears concerned the question upon which he meditated was regarding the Holy Prophet (S).

He said to his comrade: “*It is to the surprise that this man's (the Holy Prophet's [s]) success reached its zenith. He (S) reached such a high rank that nobody could attain higher than this!*”

His comrade replied: “*A genius, he (S) pretended to be in touch with the source of universal cause, manifesting the strange and extraordinary things which confounded the spirits. Sages, men of letters, orators, and eloquents, found themselves incompetent before him (S) and embraced his call. Later on, the strata of society, group by group, came to him and believed in him (S). His (S) position reached such an extent that his name associated with the name of Moses ('a) who was said to be missioned by Him.*”

Henceforth, his name is mentioned in the daily five times prayer call “*Adhan*” in all cities and villages even beyond the seas, deserts and mountains. One can hear everywhere the call of “*Ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah,*” i.e. “*I testify that Muhammad is the apostle of*

Allah.” The name of this man is mentioned both in the “Adhan” and “Iqamah” “before commencing of the prayers”. Thus he (S) will never be forgotten.”

Ibn Abi al-'Awja said: “Let us not discuss about Muhammad, I have not yet succeeded in resolving the enigma of this man's personality. However, it is better to follow the discussion around the first cause and the origin of existence of being, on which Muhammad had founded the basis of his religion.”

Then Ibn Abi al-'Awja began to discuss around his materialistic conviction based upon the non-existence of any Divine measure and decree, the self-subsistence of nature and its pre-eternity and post-eternity which existed and will come to exist.

When his speech reached this point. Mufadhhdhal could not stop bursting out of anger and shouted with great indignation: “O enemy of Allah! Do you deny your Creator and Guardian, Who has created you in the best figure!? It is useless to go far! Meditate on yourself, life, existence, intellectual faculties, and on your aspect so that you can perceive the signs and the manifestations of the state of creatures...”

Ibn Abi al-'Awja who was not acquainted with Mufadhhdhal asked: “Who are you? And to which school of thought do you belong? If you are of those “Mutakallimun” dialecticians, let's discuss about the theological principles; if you have really the reasonable arguments to present, we will follow you, and if you are not of the people of scholastic theology, I have nothing to tell you. But if you are of Ja'far Ibn Muhammad's ('a) Companions, he ('a) never speaks to us in such a manner. Although he ('a) hears us saying things deeper than the one you have heard; he ('a) was never seen to lose his temper or ill-treat us. He ('a) never becomes angry nor abuses us. He ('a) listens to us most patiently and with utmost dignity, waiting till we express whatever we have in our heart until our last word. While we are stating our problems and arguments, he ('a) is so quiet and calm, listening to us with utmost attention, that we imagine he ('a) has submitted to our thought. When he ('a) begins to answer us, he ('a) does it kindly and puts us in such a difficult dilemma, with his short and full-reasoning words, that we cannot find any way of escape. If you are one of his Companions, speak as he ('a) does!”

Hot-headed and very annoyed, Mufadhhdhal left the Mosque. He thought: “What an affliction the world of Islam is involved in! The situation has reached such an extent that materialistic and atheists sit in the Prophet's Mosque and deny heedlessly everything! He went directly to Imam al-Sadiq's ('a) house.

The Imam ('a) asked: “Mufadhhdhal! “Why are you so angry? What has happened?”

Mufadhhdhal said: “O descendant of the Messenger of Allah! At the moment I was in the Prophet's Mosque when two atheists came and sat near me; I overheard their discussion regarding the denial of Allah and the Holy Prophet (S) which made me inflamed. They said such and such words, to which I answered them in this manner.”

The Imam ('a) said: “Don't worry. From tomorrow come and see me. I will give you a series of course on 'Tawhid' monotheism. I will converse with you

so much about the Divine Wisdom relative to creation and existence in different domains, regarding the living creatures and inert beings, the birds and herbivores, edibles and non-edibles, vegetables and so on that it suffices you and all the students who are after the realities and make the materialists and atheists immersed in amazement. So I will be waiting for you tomorrow.”

Mufadhhdhal became very happy and joyful and took leave from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a).

He said to himself: *“That is strange! My annoyance of today led to a blissful consequence.”*

That night, he could not sleep. He was expecting every moment to see the sun rise so that he can rush up to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a). It seemed that, that night was longer than any of the other nights.

Early morning, he went to Imam's ('a) house. After taking the permission, he entered the house. He sat down by the Imam's ('a) permission. Then the Imam ('a) moved towards a room where he ('a) received the private persons.

Being familiar with the character of Mufadhhdhal, the Imam ('a) said: *“I suppose you did not sleep last night, and you were impatient to see the dawn and to come here!”*

Mufaz.al: *“Yes! It is so as you say.”*

The Imam ('a) said: *“O Mufadhhdhal! Allah has priority over all the beings. He is the First and the Last of the creatures...”*

Mufadhhdhal said: *“O descendant of the Messenger of Allah! Do you allow me to write down whatever you say, pen and paper is ready.”*

The Imam ('a) said: *“There is no objection, do write!”*

For four days in succession and in four long sessions, which lasted at least from early morning to noon, the Imam ('a) inculcated the Monotheism lessons, while Mufadhhdhal was writing down all of them.

These hand writings became a complete and extensive treatise. The book is given the title of *“Tawhid of Mufadhhdhal”*, which we have at our disposal and is counted among the most complete text relative to the Wisdom of the Creation, which is the product of this incident and these four long sessions.¹

Note

1. Bihar ul-Anwar, v. 3, p. 57-151.

Story 96: The Camel Abatement

The Muslims had an interest in horse-race, camel-race, shooting and the like. Because in Islam it is a tradition for all soldiers to learn the necessary actions benefiting their skill.

In addition to that, the Holy Prophet (S), who was the leader of the Islamic society took part practically in such races, and this measurement of his, constituted the best encouragement for the Muslims, particularly the youth, to become familiar with the military techniques.

As long as this Islamic tradition was customary, and the leaders of Islam encouraged practically the Muslims in this domain, the spirit of bravery and moral heroism would be preserved in the Islamic society. The Holy Prophet (S) used to ride the horse and sometimes the camel, participating personally in the race. He (S) had a camel famed for its aptitude, outdistancing all the camels in the race.

Gradually, this thought came to the mind of some simple-minded that since the camel belongs to the Holy Prophet (S), that is why it overtakes all the others, and consequently, it is impossible to find a camel in the whole world to be equal to it. Till a day a nomadic bedouin arrived in Madinah with his camel, pretending that he was ready to compete with the Holy Prophet's (S) camel in the race.

The Holy Prophet's (S) companions with peace of mind rushed out of the city for watching this interesting race, especially as the Holy Prophet (S) had personally undertaken to ride his camel. The Holy Prophet (S) and the Bedouin set in motion their camels towards the spectators from a place determined earlier.

A strange excitement seized on the spectator, contrary to the general expectation, the bedouin's camel overtopped the Prophet's camel. The Muslims who held the especial conviction about the Holy Prophet's camel became very annoyed. This incident was contrary to their expectations, they knitted their brows.

The Holy Prophet (S) said to them: *“There is nothing to worry about; my camel outpaced all other camels, it boasted and became haughty, saying to itself that there was no camel better than it. But the Divine way of treatment commands that there will always be one stronger than another, and after every ascent there will succeed a descent, pride will go to a fall and all kinds of haughtiness will be broken off.”*

In this manner, the Holy Prophet (S) expressing a wise saying informed them of their errors.¹

Note

1. Al-Wasa'il, v. 2, p. 472.

Story 97: A Thirsty Christian

Travelling through the distance between Makkah and Madinah, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) accompanied with his well-known servant, Musadif, saw a man who had thrown himself on a trunk of tree, his situation was not extraordinary.

The Imam ('a) said to Musadif: *“Let's go towards this man. He may be feeble of thirst.”*

Musadif said: *“Yes”*.

By the order of Imam ('a), Musadif dismounted his horse and offered him water. It was obvious of the stranger's appearance, aspect, and dress that he was not a Muslim but a Christian.

When they both went out of there, Musadif asked the Imam ('a) a question that is: *“Is it permissible to give alms to the Christian?”*

The Imam ('a) replied: *“In case of need, such as the present situation, yes.”*¹

Note

1. Wasa'il, v. 2, p. 50.

Story 98: 'Ali's ('A) Guests

A man with his son entered Imam 'Ali's ('a) house as his guests. The Imam ('a) made them sit respectfully in the place of honour, and he ('a) took his seat opposite them. It was time for meals, and the food was served.

After they finished eating, Qanbar, the well-known Imam 'Ali's ('a) servant, brought a towel, basin and a ewer for washing the guests' hands. The Imam ('a) took the ewer from Qanbar and went near to wash the guests' hands. The guest drew back his hands and said: *“It is not possible that I stretch my hands so that you wash them.”*

'Ali ('a) said: *“Here is your brother in faith and your resemblance in creation, without any distinction he is eager to serve you and in turn Allah will recompensate. Why do you want to prevent a good action?”*

Once again, the man refused it, but 'Ali ('a) put him under an oath to accept and said: *“I would like to attain the honour of serving my faithful brother in Islam; do not oppose me!”*

The guest complied with it shamefully.

'Ali ('a) said: *“I request you to let me wash your hands thoroughly as Qanbar wanted to wash your hands. So, do not feel ashamed, and put all formalities aside.”*

When 'Ali ('a) finished washing his guest's hands, he ('a) said to his own honourable son, Muhammad Ibn Hanafia: *“Wash his son's hands. As I am your father, I washed the father's hands, and you wash the son's hands. If his father had not been here, and only his son was our guest, I would have washed his hands myself. But Allah loves to see that when a father and a son are present in one place, father enjoys a privilege and a priority.”*

Muhammad, by the order of his father, stood up and washed the hands of the guest's son.

While narrating this event, Imam 'Askari ('a) said: *“A real and faithful Shi'i must behave so.”*¹

Note

1. Bihar ul-Anwar, v. 9, p. 598.

Story 99: The Lepers

In Madinah a few persons were affected by leprosy. The inhabitants of Madinah kept aloof from those afflicted who were not only suffering physically from their own disease but also from the aversion of the others spiritually.

Since they came to understand that the others feel repugnant to them, they were sitting together and discussing the matter.

One day, while they were eating the food together, 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn Zain ul-'Abidin ('a) was passing nearby them; they invited the Imam ('a) to have the meal with them at their dining-table.

Apologizing to them, the Imam ('a) said: *"I am fasting today, otherwise I would have alighted my mount and shared the food with you. But I request you to be my guests on so and so date."* Saying these words, he ('a) took his way.

The Imam ('a) went home and issued an order to cook an excellent and delicious food. As he ('a) was expecting, the guests arrived on the time fixed. A respectable dining-table was stretched for them, and the Imam ('a) had his own food with them around the same dining-table.¹

Note

1. Wasa'il, v. 2, p. 457.

Story 100: Ibn Siyabah

Abdul Rahman Ibn Siyabah Kufi (originally from Kufah) was still a youngster when his father passed away. He was under pressure. On one side he had lost his father and on the other side unemployment and indigence had made his sensible spirit suffer.

One day while he was sitting at home, somebody knocked at the door. He was one of his father's friends, coming to offer his sympathy and condolence to him.

He asked: *“Did your father leave any capital for you?”*

“No.”

“Take these one thousand dirhams, but endeavour to make use of it as a capital, and spend the profits of it.” Saying these words, he left him from the entrance door.

Abdul Rahman, content and happy, went to his mother, showed her the pouch of money and related the incident.

According to the recommendation of his father's friend, he thought of starting trade, and without postponement to the next day, he exchanged the money with goods. He found a shop for himself to start his trade. It did not take long that his trade and business flourished.

Checking his accounts, he found that he had managed his daily affairs and a large amount of money had been added to his capital money. He thought of performing the ritual Hajj, he consulted with his mother.

The mother said: *“First of all, go to your father's friend, thank him for his help, return back his one thousand dirhams which were a blessing in our life, and then go to Makkah.”*

Abdul Rahman went to that man, putting a pouch containing one thousand dirhams before him and said: *“Here is your money.”*

The man thought that Abdul Rahman considered the amount of money to be a little and that is why he was returning it to him, thus he said: *“If this amount of money is not sufficient, may I add something more for you?”*

Abdul Rahman said: *“No. It is not little, but it was an extremely blessed money. Since I have made a capital of my own by this money, I am no more in need of this amount. I came to return this money back and also express my gratitude and thanks to you, particularly, at present as I am about to make the Pilgrimage to Makkah that is the reason, I would like to return back your money.”*

Abdul Rahman said these words to his father's friend, left the house and set out for Hajj.

After performing the rites of Hajj, he came back to Madinah and went to the presence of Imam al-Sadiq ('a). A multitude of people had gathered together at the Imam's ('a) house. A youngster, Abdul Rahman, sat behind all the people, watching going back and forth of people as well as their questions and the Imam's ('a) answers.

When a number of people went away, and a few of them were left in the Imam's ('a) presence, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) made a sign to him to come nearer and asked him: *“Do you have any request?”*

He said: *“I am Abdul Rahman, son of Siyabah Kufi Bijli.”*

“How is your father?”

“My father passed away.”

“Oh! Oh! May Allah bless his soul”

“Did you inherit something from your father?”

“No. Nothing has been left from him.”

“Then, how did you manage to make a pilgrimage to Makkah?”

“The incident is as follows: After the demise of my father, we were in distress. On one side, his sudden death, and on the other side, we were weighed down with indigence and disturbance till the day when one of my father's friends brought me one thousand dirhams. While offering his condolence, he told me to invest that money; I did what he said, and owing to the profit gained, I made the pilgrimage to Makkah”

When Abdul Rahman reached this point, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) interrupted him and said: *“Tell me what did, you do with the one thousand dirhams of your father's friend?”*

“According to my mother's advice, before departure, I paid his money back.”

“Well-done! For the time being, would you like me to give an advice to you?”

“May I be ransomed for you, of course!”

“Be always honest and loyal, because the honest and loyal person is the partner of the property of the others.”¹

Note

1. Safinat ul-Bihar, v. 2, Chapter, Abd.

Story 101: Judge's Guest

A man, as an ordinary guest, came to Imam 'Ali's ('a) house. He was his holiness' guest for several days, but not ordinary invited, having something in his heart that he had not divulged it at first.

As a matter of fact, this man had a dispute with someone else, waiting for the person to come in the presence of Imam 'Ali ('a) so that he can take an action against him. One day he unveiled the case and raised the petition.

'Ali ('a) asked: *“Then, for the time being, you are a petitioner. Aren't you?”*

The man said in reply: *“Yes, O leader of the believers.”*

The Imam ('a) said: *“I beg your pardon! From today onwards, I cannot welcome you at my home as a guest. Because the Holy Prophet (S) says: “When a complaint is lodged before a judge, the judge has no right to invite one of the two belligerents, unless both adversaries were present at invitation.”¹*

Note

1. Wasa'il. v. 3. p. 395.

Story 102: Grocer's Words

When 'Ali Ibn Musa al-Reza ('a) was summoned to Khorassan by Ma'mun, and was made to accept by force and pressure, the position of the Crown Prince under constraint and with particular condition, Imam Reza's ('a) brother, Zaid ul-Nar, was also in Khorassan.

Zaid had the desire to be a Caliph and provoked a revolt in Madinah, which made Ma'mun angry and furious against him. But Ma'mun's political policy in those days required to preserve the dignity and honour of Imam Reza ('a), so he renounced to imprison or kill his brother.

Once while Imam Reza ('a) was delivering a lecture in a public assembly where a great deal of people were attending, Zaid had drawn the attention of certain number of people of the assembly towards himself by expressing beautifully and eloquently about the virtues of the descendants of the Holy Prophet (S) regarding their exceptional conditions and repeated continually: *"We are from such a family..., we belong to so and so family...."*

The Imam ('a) heard what Zaid had said. Suddenly, he made an acute look and angrily shouted *"O Zaid!"* which held the attention of his brother and the members of the assembly; *"O Zaid! The grocer's sayings of Kufah deluded you into believing that you do not stop talking about them to the people. How can you utter such words? What you heard about the progeny of Fatimah ('a), that Allah has preserved them from the Fire of Hell, concerns the direct children of Fatimah ('a), that is, Hasan ('a), Husayn ('a) and their two sisters. If such is the case what you say that the descendants of Fatimah ('a) have an exceptional situation and are prosperous and will be saved, so then you are more respectful and dearer than your father, Musa Ibn Ja'far ('a) near Allah; because he ('a) obeyed Allah's commandments in this world, used to fast in the days and pray in the nights, while you are disobeying His Commands. Therefore, according to your sayings, you and your father ('a) are both alike and both of you are prosperous and will be saved. Then you have taken more advantage than him ('a) that is because Musa Ibn Ja'far ('a) became fortunate by his action and you also treasure without toil and any action. 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn Zain ul-'Abidin ('a) said: "The benefactor among us, the Prophet's household, will be rewarded twice, and the male factor among us will be recompensed double chastisement just as the Holy Qur'an has stipulated about the Holy Prophet's (S) wives. Because the one among our family who engages in good action in fact is engaged in two actions: He does one good action like the others on one hand and preserves the prestige and honour of the Holy Prophet (S) on the other hand. With regard to the one who commits a sin, he also commits two sins: on one side he commits a bad action like the others, and on the other side he disgraces the honour and prestige of the Holy Prophet (S)."*

Immediately he ('a) turned towards Hasan Ibn Musa Washa al-Baghdadi originated from Iraq, who was present in the assembly, and said: *"How do the Iraqi people read this Qur'anic verse? Innahu Laysa min ahlik innahu 'amalun khayr us-salihin"*

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ

Surely he is not of your family; surely he is (the doer of) other than good deeds (Surah Hud, 11:46).

He replied: *“O descendant of the Holy Prophet! As usual some people recite it: “Innahu 'amalun ghayr us-salihin”¹ Some others, not believing that Allah may subject the Holy Prophet's (S) son to His wrath and rage, recite the verse: “Innahu 'amalu ghayri as-salihin”² They pretend that he, the son of Nuh, was not the real descendant of Nuh, and that Allah said to Nuh: “Nuh! He is not of your descendance; if he were, I would save him for your sake.”*“

The Imam ('a) said: “It is not so at all; he was the real son of Nuh and of Nuh's descendance. But, since he disobeyed Allah's Commands, his spiritual tie was broken off. Nuh was said: “This child of yours is not virtuous; therefore, he cannot be situated in the rank of the pious men.” Now, it concerns to our family. The essence of affairs is the spiritual tie, excellence of action and the obedience of Allah's commandments. Whoever obeys Allah is ours, from the Holy Prophet's (S) family, even if he has no blood or physical tie with us, and whoever is a sinner is not of ours, even if he is the real offspring of Fatimah Zahra ('a). You who have no blood relationship with us, are of ours if you are benefactor and submitted to Allah's commands.”³

Notes

1. Means: “This son of yours, is an unbeliever.”
2. Means: “He is a son of a bad man, but not your son.”
3. Bihar ul-Anwar, vol 10, p. 65.

Story 103: Old Man And Children

An old man was busy doing his Wudu' statutory ablution, but he was not performing it in a correct manner. The children, Imam al-Hasan ('a) and Imam al-Husayn ('a) were watching the old man doing his Wudu' statutory ablution. There was no reason to hesitate, for it is incumbent to teach the religious questions and guide the ignorant.

It was necessary to make the old man familiar with the correct Wudu' statutory ablution. Nevertheless, if he was directly said to correct his Wudu', perhaps it would make him annoyed and he might have a bitter memory of Wudu' forever. In addition to that, who knows, perhaps he feels humiliated by this notification, becomes obstinate and never yields to the act of worship.

The two children, having meditated upon the way to call indirectly the old man's attention to correct his mistake, began to debate in such a manner that the old man could hear them.

One said: *"My Wudu' is more perfect than yours."*

The other one replied: *"My Wudu' is better than yours."*

The boys came to an agreement to perform their 'Wudu' in the presence of the old man so that he would arbitrate between them.

As agreed, they performed their Wudu' perfectly and correctly under his supervision. The old man realized how the correct Wudu' must be performed. He came to know intuitively the intention of the two boys and was firmly affected by their genuine kindness, intelligence and sagacity.

He said: The Wudu' statutory ablution done by you both is correct and complete. I am the ignorant old, who do not know to perform correct Wudu'. I am grateful that you made me admonished for the solicitude that you show to the community of your grandfather."¹

Note

1. Bihar ul-Anwar, v. 10. p. 89.

Story 104: S'ad's Message

The tumultuous and painful experience of Uhud came to an end. Although the Muslims, by a heavy attack and generous combat, had made the group of pagan braves of Quraysh crumble and be compelled to take flight, it did not take a long time that the negligence and desistance of a certain number of Muslim soldiers caused the situation to be overturned, the Muslims were subjected to a sudden attack, and a great number of Muslims got killed.

If it had not been the Holy Prophet's (S) personal resistance as well as a few others, the Muslims would have entirely been defeated. But in the end, they managed to assemble their forces and check the final defeat.

The cause which made the Muslims lose their morals was the false rumour spread about the Holy Prophet's (S) martyrdom. This rumour weakened the moral of Muslim soldiers and encouraged the Qurayshite pagans in return. But as soon as the Qurayshites came to understand that the rumour was false and the Holy Prophet (S) was still alive, they were satisfied with the acquired victory and set out for Makkah.

Among the Muslims, a certain number were killed; a certain injured, strewn the ground, and a large number of them terrified, scattered here and there. A small group were left around the Holy Prophet (S). The injured fallen on the ground as well as those who were dispersed, or taken flight, knew nothing of the result of the event, nor did they know whether the Holy Prophet (S) was alive or not?

In the meantime, one of the Muslims in flight passed by one of the injured named S'ad Ibn Rabi'a' who had received twelve wounds. He told him: *"As I have heard, the Holy Prophet (S) has been killed!"*

S'ad said in reply: *"But God of Muhammad (S) is alive and never dies. Why are you waiting and not defending your religion? Our duty was not only to defend the personality of Muhammad, if he was killed, the case would come to an end, but it was also the question of defending our religion, Islam, which will subsist forever."*

From the other side, the Holy Prophet (S) mentioned the names of his Companions one by one so as to know who was alive and who was dead, who was injured and curable and who was not. He (S) asked: *"who is voluntary to bring me an exact news from S'ad Ibn Rabi'a'?"*

One of Ansar (Helpers) said: *"I am ready to do so."*

The man (Ansar) went and found S'ad among the corpse of the martyred ones, but he had the last breath of life. He told him: *"The Holy Prophet (S) sent me to enquire about you and to see whether you are alive or not?"*

S'ad said: *"Give my "Salam" regards to the Holy Prophet (S) and inform him that S'ad counts among the dead, for he has only a few moments of his life left and he is breathing his last. Tell him (S) from my side: May Allah bestow upon you the best rewards deserving of a Prophet."*

Then he added: *"Convey the following message to Ansar (Helpers) and also to the Holy Prophet's (S) Companions. Inform them that S'ad said: You do not have any pretext near Allah if your Prophet (S) meets with misfortunes, while you are still alive."*

No sooner had the man of Ansar taken a few steps far from S'ad Ibn Rabi'a', then S'ad took his last breath and passed away.¹

Note

1. The commentary of Ibn Abi al-Hadid. v. 3. p. 574 Sirah Ibn Hisham. v. 2. p. 94.

Story 105: The Granted Prayer

“O my Allah! Do not make me return among my family.” Hind, wife of 'Amr Ibn al-Jamuh, heard this sentence from her husband when he equipped himself with armour and was about to set out for participating in the battle of Uhud.

This was the first time that 'Amr Ibn al-Jamuh took part in the Holy War “*jihad*” with the other Muslims. Since he was lame - limping very badly - he had not participated in the Holy War before.

According to the explicit text of the Holy Qur'an, jihad is not incumbent upon the blind, lame and the sick persons. Although he did not take part personally in the Holy War, his four lion-hearted sons were always present in attendance of the Holy Prophet (S). Therefore, no one had the opinion and expectance that 'Amr, religiously exempted from war, particularly sending his four brave sons to war, would take the arms and join the soldiers.

As 'Amr's relatives became aware of his decision, they came to hold him back, saying: *“Firstly, you are exempted according to the religious law; secondly you have four sons, brave soldiers who always move along with the Holy Prophet (S). Therefore, it is not essential that you also attend the combat!”*

He said in reply: *“Since my sons aspire to the eternal prosperity and perpetual paradise, I do desire the same. It is strange that they go and access to the honour of being martyred whereas I am sitting home beside you. It is absolutely impossible!”*

But his relatives did not leave him alone and came one after another, now and then, to visit him so as to dissuade him from his decision.

'Amr, to get rid of them, called in the Holy Prophet (S) himself: *“O Messenger of Allah! My family members like to imprison me at home and prevent me from participating in the Holy War in the way of Allah. I swear by Allah, I am desirous of entering paradise with this lame foot.”*

“O 'Amr! You have a legal excuse. Allah exempted you. Jihad is not incumbent on you.”

“O Messenger of Allah! I know it very well; however, it is not incumbent on me, still....”

The Holy Prophet (S) said: *“Do not oppose him. Let him go, he aspires to the martyrdom. May Allah grant it to him.”*

Among the most touching scenes of Uhud was the spectacle of 'Amr's fighting. He, with his lame foot, made an attack in the midst of the enemy and shouted: *I am desirous of paradise.*” One of his sons was backing him and both of them fought so eagerly that they were martyred.

After the war ended, many women of Madinah went out of the city to be informed closely of the events, particularly because of the startling news reached Madinah. 'A'ishah, the Holy Prophet's wife was among them. When she went a little bit away from the city, she saw Hind, 'Amr Ibn Jamuh's wife who had loaded a camel with three dead bodies drawing the bridle of the camel towards Madinah.

A'ishah asked her: *“What is the news?”*

“All praise belongs to Allah! The Holy Prophet (S) is alive. Since he (S) is safe and sound, there is no pain for us. The other news, Allah threw back the infidels with their rage....”

“Whose dead bodies are these?”

“These are of my brother, my son and my husband.”

“Where are you carrying them to?”

“I am carrying them to Madinah to bury them.”

Saying these words. Hind drew the bridle of the camel towards Madinah but the camel followed her quite painfully and finally lay down.

A'ishah said: *“The load of camel is heavy. It cannot pull it.”*

Hind replied: *“It is not so, this camel is extremely strong. Usually it is transporting the burden of two camels easily. There must be another reason.”*

Once again she made the camel move, but as she wanted to ride the camel towards Madinah, it knelt down again. However, when she turned the camel towards Uhud, it started to speed up. It was a strange situation in Hind's eyes. The animal is not ready to go towards Madinah, but ready to return towards Uhud. She thought there might be a secret behind that.

Drawing the camel's bridle and the bodies carried on the camel, Hind came back to Uhud, went in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) and said: *“O Messenger of Allah. It is a strange event which I saw. I had loaded the camel with these dead bodies in order to carry them to Madinah and bury them, but when I wanted to ride it towards Madinah, the camel did not obey me, while I turned its way towards Uhud, it followed me tractably. Why?”*

The Holy Prophet (S) said: *“Did your husband say anything while leaving for Uhud?”*

“O Messenger of Allah! After he had made his own way towards Uhud, I heard these words from him: “O my Allah! Do not make me return among my family.”

“This is the reason and nothing else. The sincere prayer of this martyr has been accepted. Allah does not want this dead body to be returned. Among you, Ansar, there are some individuals whose prayer will be granted if they ask Allah something. Your husband, 'Amr Ibn al-Jamuh, is one of them.”

All the three dead bodies were buried in Uhud in presence of the Holy Prophet (S) who turned the face towards Hind and said: *“These three persons will be together in the hereafter.”*

Hind asked: *“O Messenger of Allah! Pray to the Almighty Allah that I do join them.”*¹

Note

1. The commentary of Ibn Abi al-Hadid, v. 3, p. 566.

Story 106: Abolition Of The Benefit Of Clergy

The Muslims, who had emigrated from Makkah to Abysina as a result of torture and persecution made by Quraysh, were expecting the new outcome from Makkah and its inhabitants every day.

Although they and their fellow believers, the pioneers of Monotheism and Justice, were in a small minority in comparison with the multitude of opponents, that is to say, the followers of idolatry and the partisans of the current social order, they were, however, sure that their fellow-believers would increase in number, and their opponents would decrease day by day.

Moreover, they were not disappointed that all Qurayshites would soon remove the veil of negligence, and find the way of their mental development and benefits, renounce the idolators like them, and would follow the way of Muslims.

In that region of Abysina where they stayed, there was incidentally a rumour saying that all Qurayshites had changed their conviction as well as their system of life and embraced Islam. Although this news was not officially confirmed, the faith and great hopes of Muslims in the expansion and victory of Islam made a group of them set out for Makkah without waiting for the authenticity of this rumour from the official authorities.

One of them was Uthman Ibn Mazun, the well-known Companion, who was considerably respected by the Holy Prophet (S) and by all the Muslims.

In the vicinity of Makkah, Uthman came to understand that the case was false, and, Qurayshites, on the contrary, have increased the torture and persecution of Muslims. He could neither advance nor retreat; it was not easy for him to return back to Abyssinia as it was too far. On the other side, entering Makkah meant to be submitting to torture.

At last a thought came to his mind that is to make use of the usual and current custom practiced among Arabs, and protect himself under the aegis of one of the influential Qurayshite personage. According to the current habits of Arab Society, if someone demanded some other person to grant him his “*protection*” that is to say to give him asylum and protect him, the latter would grant him “*protection*” and protect him at the risk of his life.

It was a Shame for Arab people to refuse the request of “*protection*” for anyone, even for an enemy, and fail to protect him after offering him his “*protection*.”

Uthman arrived in Makkah at midnight and went directly towards Walid Ibn Mughayrah Makhzumi's house, one of the rich influential and distinguished personalities of Qurayshites, and demanded him his “*protection*”. Walid accepted and granted him his “*protection*”.

The next day, when the notable Qurayshites assembled together at the Sacred Mosque “*Al-Masjidul Haram*”, Walid came along with Uthman Ibn Mazun and announced officially that, since then Uthman was under his aegis and whoever disturbed him, was considered as his disturbance.

The Qurayshites who respected the “*protection*” granted by Walid, did not disturb Uthman anymore, and Uthman also acquired an inviolable protection, moving freely on the street and participating like one of the Qurayshites in their assembly.

In the meantime, they did not neglect a while to persecute and torture all the other Muslims. This situation profoundly harassed Uthman. He could not tolerate, to see his friends in difficulty and himself in tranquility. One day he thought: *“It is not fair to enjoy tranquility under the aegis of a polytheist while my fellow believers and brothers in religion are submitted to the torture and persecution.”*

He came to Walid Ibn Mughayrah and said: *“I am grateful to you for having granted me your protection and protected me till date, but from now on, I would like to leave your 'protection' and join my friends and brothers in Islam. Whatever happens to them, let it come down on me too.”*

“My dear cousin, perhaps you did not enjoy my protection, perhaps it was not a good one.”

“No, I am not dissatisfied in this regard, since now onwards I would like to survive under the aegis of the Almighty Allah!”

“Since you have decided so, come to the Sacred Mosque al-Masjidul Haram, like the very first day when I took you over there and announced your guardianship in the public assembly of Qurayshites, and announce your withdrawal from my protection officially in presence of them.”

“All right, I have no objection.”

Walid and Uthman went together to the Sacred Mosque Masjidul Haram, when all the Qurayshite chiefs were present, Walid declared: *“May all of you know that Uthman has come to announce his withdrawal from my protection.”*

Uthman said: *“Whatever he says is correct, for this reason I have come here, in addition to this, during the period when I was under the aegis of Walid, he protected me very well and I have no objection in this regard. The main cause of leaving his patronage is I do not like to consider anyone else as my protector rather than the Almighty Allah.”*

In this manner, the patronage given to Uthman came to an end and the protection granted to him till that day was abolished. But Uthman took part in the assembly of Quraysh just as the previous days as if nothing had happened in his life.

It so happened, the same day, Labid Ibn Rabi'ah, the famous and well-known poet among Arabs, came to Makkah to recite his newly versified ode, which was counted one of the masterpiece of poetry in the pre-Islamic era of Arabs.

His Ode Begins With This Verse: *“كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا خِلاَ اللّٰهَ باطلٌ”* means *“everything is vain and null, except the Almighty Allah, the absolute truth is the Holy essence of the Oneness.”*

The Holy Prophet (S) said about this verse: *“This is the rightest poem which an Arab has composed.”*

Labid entered the assembly of Qurayshites, and it was agreed that he would recite his poem. The audience were all attentive to listen the new masterpiece composed poem. Labid started to recite the poem in a manner full of vanity and pride.

As soon as he recited: *“ألا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا خِلاَ اللّٰهَ باطلٌ”* Uthman Ibn Mazun who was sitting near by, did not allow him to recite the second verse and said

as a token of approval, *“Well done! You said the truth, such is the truth. Everything is vain and null, except the Almighty Allah.”*

Labid recited the second verse: *“وَكُلُّ نَعِيمٍ لَامِحَالَةٌ زَائِلٌ”* means: *“every blessing is inevitably mortal and perishable.”*

Uthman shouted: *“But here you told a lie! All the Divine blessings are not mortal; it only applies to the worldly blessings; the Divine blessings of the hereafter are all durable and perpetual.”*

All audience of the assembly stared at Uthman Ibn Mazun, this bold and impudent man. Nobody expected a man like Uthman Ibn Mazun, who was under the aegis of someone else till an hour before and had no material security nor vital immunity as well as his fellow believers live under the torture, so boldly express his opinion in an assembly held by the Qurayshite heads and notables and a poet with such a great personality as Labid Ibn Rabi'ah had assisted from afar to present his literatural masterpiece.

The audience said to Labid: *“Repeat your poem!”*

Labid recited again: *“أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا خَلَا اللَّهَ بَاطِلٌ”*.

Uthman said: *“That is right; that is all right!”*

As Labid recited: *“وَكُلُّ نَعِيمٍ لَامِحَالَةٌ زَائِلٌ”*

Uthman shouted: *“That is a lie; it is not such; the blessings of the hereafter are not imperishable.”*

This time, Labid, became annoyed more than anyone else and shouted: *“O people of Qurayshite! By God, previously it was not like this in your assembly! Such type of people, bold and impolite are in between you! What happened that such persons are found among you?”*

In order to calm down Labid and make him continue to recite his poem, one of the audience said: *“Do not get annoyed with this man's words; he is a crazy man; he is not alone. There are a certain number of them, a crazy group in this city who are of the same belief. They abjured our religion and embraced another faith for themselves.”*

Uthman replied the person who made this complaint, in such a sharp tone, that he could not tolerate Uthman reply, stood up and slapped Uthman in his face so hardly that one of his eyes became bruised.

One of the members of assembly said: *“O Uthman! You were not grateful; you were under the aegis of an honourable man. If you had stayed under the shelter of Walid Ibn Muqhayrah, your eye would not have been in such a condition at present.”*

Uthman replied: *“The shelter of the Almighty Allah is more reliable and honourable than the shelter of any other. Regarding my eye, please come to know that my other eye is also desirous to attain this honour which this eye of mine has already attained.”*

This time Walid Ibn Muqhayrah came forward personally and said: *“O Uthman! I am still ready to renew my patronage.”*

Uthman replied: *“But I have decided not to be under the patronage of anybody accept the Almighty Allah.”¹*

Note

1. Usd al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat al-Sahabah, v. 3, p. 385, 386. Sirah Ibn Hisham, v. 1, p. 364, 370.

Story 107: Debutant Slogan

The rumours reached from Makkah and articulated now and then among the tribe of Banu Ghaffar and had drawn the curious and investigating nature of Abu Dharr who was desirous to be aware of the nature of the events which took place in Makkah. But he could not comprehend anything from the diverse and disordered rumours which he had heard from the intermediate individuals.

What he was sure about was the fact that the new words had come into existence in Makkah, and the inhabitants of Makkah were seriously active to suppress the same. But what were those words? And why were Makkans opposing that? Nobody knew anything about it.

His brother was about to set out for Makkah. He said to him: *“According to the latest news and the public sayings, a man has appeared in Makkah, and has brought new words which he claims that these words have been revealed to him by Allah. Since you are leaving for Makkah, investigate closely the affairs and bring me the correct news.”*

The days passed while he was waiting for his brother's arrival. When he returned, Abu Dharr asked him: *“Well what is the latest news and what is the matter all about?”*

He said in reply: *“According to the investigation made by me, he is a man calling the people to the good ethics and has brought the words which do not resemble the poems.”*

Abu Dharr said: *“I hope you would have done a thorough investigation. What you have done is not sufficient. However, I must personally go and investigate the matter.”*

Abu Dharr put some provisions in a knapsack, carried it on his shoulder and proceeded directly towards Makkah. He decided to meet the man who has brought the new words at any cost and hear his words from his own mouth. But he did not know him nor dared to ask anybody about him.

The environment of Makkah was full of fear and terror. Abu Dharr, without addressing anybody, pricked up his ears to the gossips and whispers of the people and was eager to find a sign of this person. The center of information and events was the Sacred Mosque *“al-Masjidul Haram”*.

Abu Dharr came with his knapsack to the Sacred Mosque. He passed the whole day without obtaining any indication. At a late hour of the night, since he was tired, he lay down over there to take rest. It did not take long that he saw a young man pass nearby him. The young man scrutinized him from head to foot, while passing by him and taking his own way.

The young man's look seemed to be full of sense to Abu Dharr. It occurred to him that this young man was perhaps worthy of being informed of his secret. He started to follow him but did not dare to express anything and returned to his place.

The next day, he passed the whole day in investigation at the Sacred Mosque, but he could not find any indication of his desired personality. The night fell, and he lay down at the same place.

Exactly at the same hour of the night, the same young man appeared, came forward and respectfully told Abu Dharr: *“Has not the time come for you to come to your own house and spend the night there?”*

Saying these words, he took Abu Dharr with him to his house. Abu Dharr was his guest that night, but he refrained from exposing his secret to him. The young man did not ask him anything.

Early morning, Abu Dharr bade farewell to the young man and came back to the Sacred Mosque, looking for the one he was after. The day passed, and he could not realize anything from the diverse words spoken by the people. The night fell, and at the same hour of the night, the young man came again and took Abu Dharr along with him to his house. But this time the young man broke the silence and asked: *“Is it possible for you to tell me why you have come to this city?”*

“If you promise to help me out I will tell you.”

“I promise to help you out in your matter and will never refrain from it.”

“In fact, it is sometime that I heard the people of my tribe talk about a man in Makkah. They say that this man has brought some words and has claimed that these words have been revealed to him by Allah. This is the reason that I have personally come to meet him and make an inquiry about his affairs. Firstly, what is your opinion about him? Secondly, could you tell me where to find him?”

“Be sure that he is on the right path, and whatever he says is revealed by Allah. Early morning I will take you to him. But as you know if the inhabitants of this city come to know that I lead you to him, our lives will be at stake. Tomorrow morning, I will move a little ahead of you, and as for you; follow me, keep a little distance from me and see carefully where I go; I am aware of the environments and if I see any danger, I will stop and bend down like someone who empties a container. Be aware of this sign of the danger and move far away from me. But if it does not happen anything and there is no danger, follow me wherever I go.”

The next morning, the young man who was nobody else but 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a), left the house and made the way while Abu Dharr was following him. Fortunately, they did not face any danger. 'Ali ('a) brought Abu Dharr to the Holy Prophet's (S) house.

Abu Dharr was busy meditating on the Prophet's (S) behaviour and sayings and listening in to the Qur'anic verses. No sooner was the second meeting held than Abu Dharr embraced Islam heartfully and willingly. He gave a pledge to the Holy Prophet (S) not to fear any blame for the sake of Allah and to say the truth even in the portent of bitter circumstances.

The Holy Prophet (S) said to him: *“Presently go back to your tribe and invite your people to Islam until you receive further instruction from me.”*

Abu Dharr said: *“All right! But I swear by Allah, before leaving this city, I will go among these people and give evidence with loud voice in favour of Islam, I don't care about the consequences whatever may come out.”*

Abu Dharr went out, reached the center of the city of Makkah, the Sacred Mosque, and started shouting among the Qurayshite assembly:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

It means: *“I testify that there is no god but Allah; I testify that Muhammad is His servant and Apostle.”*

The inhabitants of Makkah, on hearing this slogan, and without giving him an opportunity to explain, fell upon this man whom they did not know at all. If Abbas Ibn Abd ul Mutalib had not interrupted, nothing would have been remained from Abu Dharr.

Abbas said to the Makkans: *“This man belongs to the tribe of Banu Ghaffar. The commercial road of Qurayshites, from Makkah to Syria and vice versa passed through the territory of his tribe. Don't you think if you kill a man of this tribe you will no longer be able to traverse through their region safe and sound?”*

Abu Dharr was saved from the Qurayshites, but his heart was not fully satisfied. He thought of repeating this slogan for the second time and to let the Qurayshites hear what they disliked. He wanted to make them accustomed with this slogan.

The next day, he came again and repeated the same slogan as per the previous day. The Qurayshites attacked him once again and by the intervention of Abbas Ibn Abdul Mutalib, he was saved.

After this incident, as per the order of the Holy Prophet (S), Abu Dharr went back among his own tribe and started teaching, propagating and guiding them. When the Holy Prophet (S) emigrated from Makkah to Madinah, Abu Dharr also came to Madinah where he stayed until death overcame him.

He always preserved his frankness which cost him his exile first to Syria and then to an area outside of Madinah, named *“Rabazah “*. *It happened in the era of Uthman, the 3rd Caliph. During his exile in “Rabazah” he died all alone.*

The Holy Prophet (S) had said about him: *“May Allah bless Abu Dharr, he who lives alone, dies alone and will be resurrected alone.”*¹

Note

1. Usd al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat al-Sahabah, v. 1. p. 301 and v. 5. p. 186. Al-Ghadir p. 314

Story 108: In The Audience Of Rustam

With an immense army and equipped with heavy ammunition, Rustam Farukhzad entered “Qadissiah” so as to crush the Muslims who had inflicted a heavy defeat on Iranians before. The Muslims had advanced up to the environs of Qadissiah under the commandship of s’ad Ibn Waqas who had appointed a group of soldiers to precede the army under the title of “vanguard.” The head of this group was a man named Zuhrah Ibn Abdullah.

After a night passed in Qadissiah, Rustam sat astride his horse to watch the enemy's position closely. Riding on the horse to a hill-top where it looked down upon the Muslim camp, he stopped a moment observing their situation. It was evident that neither the number nor the ammunition of the Muslims was anything to cause the fear. But, however, he was inspired that fighting against those people would not be a favourable issue.

The same night, he invited Zuhrah Ibn Abdullah and proposed him to make peace, but on condition that the army of enemy would receive an amount of money and return to the place where they came from.

With pride and arrogance which was specific to him, he said: “*You were our neighbour and we did good towards you, You were enjoying our donation and we were defending you when you were in danger. The history is a witness of whatever I say.*”

When Rustam came to this point. Zuhrah said: “*Whatever you mentioned about the past is correct, but you must realize that the time has changed. We are not those people who are after the world and its objects. We have neglected the worldly objects and are following those of the hereafter. Previously, we were such as you said until the day when Allah raised upon us His Prophet (S). He (S) called us to obey the One God, we embraced his religion. The Almighty Allah revealed to his Prophet (S) that if his disciples remain in a firm faith in what has been revealed to him (S), Allah will grant them the sovereignty over the other people and nations. Whoever adheres to this religion will become dearer, whoever infringes it, will become despised and helpless.*”

Rustam said: “*Is it possible to explain some more about your religion?*”

“*There are two pillars and principles constituting the religion. The testimony of the Unity, Oneness of the Almighty Allah and the testimony of the Prophethood of Muhammad (S) and the Divine origin of his message.*”

“*There is nothing wrong with this, it is good, and what more?*”

“*The emancipation of Allah's servants from the slavery of the human beings who are their fellow-creatures.*”

“*This is also good, and what else?*”

“*People all were born from one father and one mother, all are the descendants of Adam and Eve, and they are brothers and sisters.*”

“*That is also very good! Well, if we accept all these things, will you return back?*”

“*Yes, I swear by Allah, we will never set a foot in your territory unless for doing business or essential affairs of the kind. We do not have any other intention than what I have mentioned.*”

“*You are telling the truth, but there is a problem in these affairs! Since the era of Ardashir, we, Iranians, adopted a tradition which became vogue and*

customary among us which is incompatible with your religion. In fact, as a rule, the inferior walks of society such as farmers and workers have no right to change their professions and engage in another job. If they or their children are supposed to have the right to change their professions or social class and rise to the rank of aristocrats, they will overstep the bounds and try to pick a quarrel with the members of superiors, the grandes and nobles. Therefore, it would be better that a farmer's child knows that he should be a farmer and not more and a blacksmith's child also knows that he has no other choice but to be a blacksmith and so on....”

“But we need the betterment of the people and for the people. We cannot differentiate among the classes like your belief. We are convinced to obey the Orders of the Almighty Allah about those inferior classes. As I said, according to our belief, all the people are created from the same father and mother and are equal and are brothers. We always stick to our duties to behave in a polite manner with others and if we are obliged to our duties well, and if they do not, it would not harm us. Fulfilling one's duty procures the immunity.”

After completing his words, Zuhrah Ibn Abdullah left him. Rustam gathered the chiefs of his army and repeated the words of this Muslim person to them. But they didn't consider it. Rustam sent a message to S'ad Ibn Waqas to send an official representative for negotiation with him. S'ad wanted to appoint a delegation for this responsibility but Rab'i Ibn Amer, who was present in this assembly, did not deem it advisable and said: *“The Iranians have a peculiar mentality. If a delegation is sent to them, they will consider it as their importance and will guess that we have given more attention to them and have sent a delegation. Therefore, it will suffice that you choose only one man as our representative and send him.”* Rab'i was chosen for this responsibility.

On the other side, Rustam was informed of the representative of S'ad Ibn Waqas. He deliberated the matter with his chancellors how to debate with the representative of the Muslims. They unanimously agreed that they should not pay attention to him, and they should pretend that they do not care for Muslims and the Muslims are nothing in front of them.

In order to manifest the Iranian glory and ostentation, Rustam ordered for a golden throne to be placed and he settled down on it. Magnificent carpets were spread, and brocaded pillows were placed. The representative of Muslims', mounted on a horse, sheathed the sword in a used scabbard and spear tied with a strap of leather, arrived. At a glance, he understood that these ornaments and protocol were aimed to impress him.

In return, to make them realize that the Muslims do not take care of this glory and these kinds of ostentation, but they are after other objectives, he whipped his horse without any hesitation and entered the pavilion of Rustam while riding on his horse.

The officials asked him to alight from the horse, but he refused and went riding on the horse near the throne of Rustom and dismounted. He pierced one of the brocaded pillows with his spear and tied up the bridle of his horse in it, intentionally putting on an old rag of horsecloth on his shoulder as a cloak. He was asked to submit his arms and then to approach Rustam. But he refused and said: *“I do not deliver my arms; you had demanded us for a*

representative, and I have come in this style. If you are not content, I will return.”

Rustam said: *“Let him come as he wishes.”*

With equanimity and a particular dignity, while taking small steps, making use of his spear as a walking stick and tearing intentionally the carpets, Rab’i Ibn Amer came close to the throne of Rustam. Before sitting he removed the carpet and sat down on the ground. They asked him: *“Why did you not sit on the carpet?”*

He replied: *“We are not pleased to sit on these trimmings.”*

The especial translator of Rustam asked him: *“What have you come for?”*

He said in reply: *“The Almighty Allah has sent us and appointed us to liberate His creatures from the difficulties and misfortunes, save the people submitted to the oppression, despotism and the other religions and bring them under the aegis of Islamic equity. We present the religion of the Almighty Allah based on these principles to the other nations. If they embrace it, they will live happily and fortunately under the shadow of this religion. And if they oppose to it, we will fight them, either we will be killed and enter the paradise or we will gain victory over the enemy.”*

“Well, I understood what you say. Now it is possible to postpone your decision so that we will think over it and see what decision we can make.”

“There is no objection, how many days do you require, one or two days?”

“One or two days is not sufficient; we must write the letter to our heads and superiors; they will consult together and make a decision.”

Rab’i, who had understood their plan and knew that the question was to procrastinate the case, said in reply: *“According to the tradition narrated from our Prophet (S) and practised by our leaders, a deferment more than three-days is not permissible in such circumstances. I will give you a three-day grace period so that you may choose one of these three options: Either to embrace Islam, in this case we will go back where we came from; thus your territory will be returned to you with all its riches because we have not coveted your territory and wealth, or to accept to pay head-tax “Jizyah “, or to be ready for war.”*

“It seems that you yourself are the commander-in-chief, making the resolution in this respect.”

“No, I am one of the ordinary men, but Muslims are like the organs of a body; they are all one, if the smallest among them gives patronage to someone, it is as if all of them have given him shelter; all the Muslims respect their promises and pacts.”

After this interview, Rustam, who had been strongly impressed, conferred with the chiefs of his army about the Muslim affairs and asked them: *“Now what do you think about them? Have you ever heard in your life a statement more exalted, indisputable and clarified than that of this man? At present, what is your opinion?”*

“It is impossible that we adhere to the religion of this dog! Didn't you see how an old worn-out garment he had put on?”

“It is none of your business with his garment? Look at the thought and the words. Consider the action and manner.”

But Rustam's remarks did not make them persuaded. They were so steeped in pride that they could not realize the clear evidence. Rustam found that no one was of his opinion and thought in his manner.

After a series of negotiation with the Muslim delegation as well as consultation with the chiefs of his army, he did not find a solution. He was prepared for combat and subjected to such a heavy defeat that the history has recorded little of the sort. He lost his own life for the sake of pig-headedness of the others.¹

Note

1. Al-Kamil Ibn al-Athir, v. 2, p. 319, 321. The events of 14th H.

Story 109: Absence From Bed

The Holy Prophet (S) was fifty-five years old when he married a young girl named 'A'ishah. Khadijah was his first wife who had married twice before him (S) and was fifteen years elder than the Prophet (S). This marriage took place when he (S) was twenty-five years and Khadijah forty years old, she was his (S) unique wife in the Holy Prophet's (S) house giving birth to many children and passed away at the age of sixty-five.

After the death of Khadijah, the Holy Prophet (S) married a widow called Sudah; then he (S) married 'A'ishah who was a young virgin and came directly from her father's house to the Holy Prophet's (S) house. After her, although the Holy Prophet (S) took numerous wives, but none of them was a virgin, all widows, mostly stricken in years and occasionally having children.

'A'ishah always boasted near the Holy Prophet's (S) wives and used to say: *"I am the only woman who had no any relation other than the Prophet (S)."* She was also proud of her beauty; these two things had made her proud and the Holy Prophet (S) sad.

'A'ishah expected from the Holy Prophet not to pay attention to another woman except her. It is natural for a man like the Holy Prophet (S) to live with the old women deprived of beauty, despite having a young and beautiful wife, presents nothing but suffering, deprivation and disappointment, particularly when he wants to respect the right and the turn of each with attention and perfect justice.

But the numerous marriages of the Holy Prophet (S) were based on the social and political interests of Islam in his days, not on other basis; he (S) paid no attention to such things, and from that time till the end of his life, about ten years, he chose many wives, women who were not having any protection, or their husbands had attained martyrdom or for some other reasons they lacked the guardianship.

Another question which sometimes made 'A'ishah annoyed was that the Holy Prophet (S) never remained in bed for the whole night. He (S) rather passed one-third or half part of the night, at times even more, praying, reciting the Holy Qur'an or repenting.

One night when the Holy Prophet (S) came to spend the night with 'A'ishah, he put his garment and shoes at the foot of his bed and then went to bed. After a while, thinking that 'A'ishah had slept, he (S) moved in a gentle manner, put his shoes on, opened the door very quietly and then closed it and went out.

'A'ishah was still awake and was watching all the incident which seemed to her very strange. She knew that the Holy Prophet (S) would get out of the bed and pray in a corner of the room. It was unprecedented to her to see the Holy Prophet (S) go out of the room in her turn.

She thought! *"I must know where the Holy Prophet (S) goes. He might go and pass the night with another wife. Is it possible for the Prophet (S) to do so and go to the other house in my turn? Either, his other wives were in a possession of youth and beauty! Or he had a house full of the beautiful women! But he has not done such and only he has gathered around himself a handful of old women and widows. Any how I must find out where he is going in this hour of the night so early whereas I am still awake?"*

'A'ishah immediately put her dress on and followed the Holy Prophet (S) by keeping a distance in-between. She saw him (S) go straight towards Baqi - a place near Madinah where it has been devoted as the cemetery by the order of the Holy Prophet (S). He (S) went and stopped there, while 'A'ishah followed him (S) and hid herself in a corner.

She saw the Holy Prophet (S) raise his hands three times towards the sky and then made his way. 'A'ishah took the same way; the Prophet (S) speeded up and so did she. He (S) started running, and so did she behind him (S). Then the Holy Prophet (S) made his way towards the house, and 'A'ishah, before the Prophet (S) reached the house, came quickly and went to bed.

When the Prophet (S) entered the house, he (S) heard her bated breath. He asked: *"O 'A'ishah! Why are you panting like a horse which has galloped?"*

"Nothing! O Messenger of Allah!"

"Tell me the truth, if not, Allah will not let me be in ignorance."

"May my father and mother be your ransom, I was still awake when you went out, I wanted to know where you were going at that hour of the night. I followed you from afar distance, watching you during all that time"

"The silhouette which I perceived on my return, it was you!"

"Yes! O Messenger of Allah!"

Gently tapping on 'A'ishah's back with his fist, the Holy Prophet (S) said: *"Did you think that Allah and His Messenger do injustice to you and grant your right to others!"*

'A'ishah said: *"O Messenger of Allah! Whatever the people do in silence, Allah knows and informs you of it?"*

The Holy Prophet (S) said: *"Of course, yes. I went to Baqi' this night, because Gabriel, the Divine Angel, came and told me to come out so that he could hide his call from you. I replied him without your knowledge. Thinking that you fell asleep, I did not want to wake you and to inform you of my being alone for hearing the Divine revelation. Moreover, I was afraid of you to get frightened; that was the reason I went quietly out of the house. The Angel of Allah ordered me to go to Baqi' and ask the Divine Blessings for the buried."*

'A'ishah said: *"O Messenger of Allah! If I want to ask forgiveness for them, what shall I say?"*

The Holy Prophet (S): *"Say, "Assalamu ala ahli ad-diar min al-mu'minin wa al-muslimin wa yarhamullahu al-mustaqdimina mina wa al-musta'khirin fa inna insha allahu la lahiqun."* Means: *"Peace be upon the Muslims and believers' inhabitants of the eternal abode. May Allah have mercy on you. We shall rejoin you by the Will of Allah."*¹

Note

1. Masnad of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v. 6, p. 221.

Story 110: The Agenda

After the murder of Uthman and the foundation of a favourable way for a revolution, no one was a candidate for the Caliphate except 'Ali ('a). People came to swear allegiance to him ('a) in groups.

The second day of allegiance, 'Ali ('a) ascended the pulpit, and after having praised the Almighty Allah, greeting the seal of Prophets and giving a series of exhortations, continued his speech as follows: *“O people! After the demise of the Holy Prophet (S), you people chose Abu Bakr as a Caliph, and he appointed Umar as his successor; Umar entrusted the nomination of Caliphate to a consultative committee; the result of that committee led to the selection of Uthman as a Caliph. Uthman treated in such a manner that you protested him. At last, he was besieged in his house and assassinated.*

However, you called upon me and swore allegiance to me willingly. I am an ordinary man from among you and like you. Whatever is your share, it is mine also, and what is incumbent on you, it is incumbent upon me too. Allah opened this door between you and the people of Qiblah. Discord flew back like the shreds of dark night. The one who can assume the charge of Caliphate that is, he must be strong minded, patient, perspicacious and sage.

My duty is to make you return to the conduct and the manners of the Holy Prophet (S). What I promise I will fulfill, provided that you act firmly and steadfastly, and, of course, we should beseech the Almighty Allah to help us. Know that I am with respect to the Holy Prophet (S) after his demise just as I was in his lifetime. Observe the discipline and the obedience. Do what I tell you. If you see something strange and unacceptable, do not precipitate to refuse it. I do not initiate anything unless I feel my duty towards it and have a justification near the Almighty Allah.

Allah, Clairvoyance, is aware of everything. I have not natural inclination for taking charge of Caliphate, for I have heard the Holy Prophet (S) say: “Whoever takes the reins of community after me will be kept on the Straight Path “Sirat” on the day of judgement; angels will expose his reckoning account before him. If he was just and equitable, Allah would save him for this equity and fairness, but regarding the oppressor on the Straight Path “Sirat”, he would be shaken in such a manner that each of his organs would flow open, and then he would be thrown into the Hell. Since you have unanimously elected me Caliph, it was impossible for me to skirt it.”

Then He ('a) made a glance at the right and the left of the pulpit, looking on the crowd of the people, he ('a) continued his speech: *“O people! At present, I announce about those people who have filled their pockets with that of the others as well as of the public treasury, gained property and lands, made the stream flow in them, mounted the thoroughbred horses, bought the beautiful and delicate slave-girls, and plunged in the worldly pleasure, if I check them tomorrow, take from them whatever things they have illegally gained and let them have their exact share and not more than what they deserved, they must not come to me and complain that 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib has beguiled us.*

I explicitly announce today that I will abolish all the prerogatives, even the privilege of having been the companionship of the Holy Prophet (S) and having served Islam. Whoever had the chance of being the Holy Prophet's (S)

Companion and serving Islam will be his reward by the Almighty Allah. Today, those brilliant precedences are not the reason that we will discriminate between them and the others. Whoever responds to the call of Truth, embrace our religion and face to our "Qiblah", we will recognize the privilege equal to the first Muslims.

You are the servants of the Almighty Allah, and all the wealth belongs to Him; therefore it must be equally distributed among you. No one has superiority over someone else in this regard. However, be present tomorrow, for there is some undistributed property available in the public treasury which should be apportioned."

The next day, the people came and assembled. 'Ali ('a) also came there. The content of public treasury was equally apportioned, and each received three dinars.

A man said: *"O 'Ali do you give me three dinars whereas you give three dinars to my servant who was a slave till yesterday?"*

'Ali ('a) said: *"That is what you saw."*

A group of them such as Talhah, Zubayr, Abdullah Ibn Umar, Said Ibn As and Marwan Ibn Hakam, who had been accustomed to the prerogative and the discrimination practised previously, refused to take their shares and left the Mosque.

The following day, when the people gathered together in the Mosque, this group was also present, but they sat together in a corner far from others and began whispering and consulting. After a while, they designated Walid Ibn Aqaba among them and sent him to 'Ali ('a).

Walid came to 'Ali ('a) and said: *"O Abul Hasan! First of all, you know better that none of us sitting here is pleased with you for your precedences in wars between Muslims and pagans. You have at least killed one or two persons from each of our family, for example my father was killed by you in the battle of Badr. However, we can relinquish this case under two conditions and to swear allegiance with you; you must accept these two conditions!*

The First: You hark back to your words of yesterday that you do not engage yourself in the past nor to make retroactive. Bygones are bygones; whoever has gained the wealth during the previous Caliphs' periods let them have it. Do not indulge yourself by knowing how! You, watch yourself not to be embezzled in your rule.

The Second: You submit to us the murderers of Uthman, so that we retaliate them. Moreover, if we meet no security from your part, we will be obliged to leave you alone and proceed towards Syria and join Mu'awiyah!"

'Ali ('a) said in reply: *"I have no responsibility for the blood shed done in the wars between Muslims and pagans, for those wars were not of the personal ones', rather they were, 'truth against the false.' If you have a complaint, you shall protest from the false side against the truth, not against me.*

Regarding the rights flouted in the past, I have legal rights to return back them to their holders. It is not in my power to grant or renounce them. About the murderers of Uthman! Had I come to the conclusion, that it is an Islamic duty for me to punish them, I would have done it yesterday and never delayed it for today."

After hearing these replies, Walid went out and reported the matter to his friends. They came to understand that 'Ali was inflexible. Since then, they began to make intrigue and provoke troubles.

A group of Imam 'Ali's ('a) partisans came to him ('a) and said: “*This group will soon raise the murder of Uthman as a pretext and set up a riot while the murder of Uthman is just a pretext. The main cause of these people is the equality which you have established between them and the new Muslims like Iranians and others. If you preserve their privileges and renew your decision, the riot will be subsided.*”

Knowing that a great number of his Companions may object against such an insistence on respecting equality, the following day 'Ali ('a) came to the Mosque, his sword in the shoulder-belt, dressed in two simple pieces of cloth, one tied on the girdle and the other flapped on his shoulder.

He ('a) stood on the pulpit, while leaning on his bow, began to address the people: “*We thank Allah, Who is our object of worship. His manifested and unseen blessings are our portion. All His gifts and blessings are the favours and graces without which we have in ourselves no deserts nor autonomy. For He shall examine us whether we are grateful toward Him or ungrateful. The most eminent of the people in view of Allah is the one who obeys Him, follows the Prophet's (S) tradition more and better and keep alive the Book of Allah in a best position.*

We do not have any privilege for anyone over anyone else except for his obedience to Allah and the Prophet (S). This is the Book of Allah between you and me, and the clear conduct and tradition of your Prophet (S) which you are well aware of.”

Then he ('a) recited this noble verse of the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O people! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honorable of you with Allah is that [one] who fears Allah. Indeed, Allah is Omniscient, All-Aware. (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13).

After delivering this sermon, it became decisive and certain for friend and foe that the decision made by Imam 'Ali ('a) was categorical. Every individual of them came to know his own duty; the one who wanted to remain faithful to him ('a) remained such, and the one who could not adhere to such a program, either kept aloof such as Abdullah Ibn Umar or made themselves ready to fight and shed the blood like Talhah, Zubayr and Marwan.¹

Note

1. The commentary of Ibn Abi al-Hadid, v. 2, p. 271, 273 on the sermon number 90 of Nahj al-Balaghah.

Story 111: Asleep Or Awake?

That night Habah Ibn 'Arani and Nauf al-Bakali slept in the courtyard of the residence of the Caliph in Kufah.

After the mid-night, they saw Imam 'Ali ('a), “*The Commander of believers*”, coming out slowly from his residence, entering the courtyard, in an unusual state, incapable to keep his balance, bending downwards and leaning against the wall, advancing slowly step by step while murmuring the last verses (190-194) of the chapter of 'The Family of Imran':

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاجْتِلاَفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

“*Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are signs for the possessors of intellects.*” (Surah ‘Ali-Imran, 3:190).

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا

بِاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

“*Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and meditate on the creation of the heavens and the earth, (seriously saying) 'Our Lord! You have not created (all) this in vain! Glory be to you! Save us then from the torment of the Fire'.*” (Surah ‘Ali-Imran, 3:191).

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَجْتَهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ

“*Our Lord! Anyone You cause to enter the (Hell) Fire, surely You have put him to disgrace; and the unjust will have no helpers.*” (Surah ‘Ali-Imran, 3:192).

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّفْنَا مَعَ

الْأَبْرَارِ

“*Our Lord! Verily we have heard (the invitation of) a Crier calling to the faith, saying: 'Believe in your Lord!' So we did believe. 'Our Lord! Forgive us therefore our sins, and cover of us our evil deeds, and make us die with the righteous'.*” (Surah ‘Ali-Imran, 3:193).

رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

“*Our Lord! And grant us what You have promised us through Your Messengers, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection. Verily You do not break any promise.*” (Surah ‘Ali-Imran, 3:194).

No sooner did he ('a) end the recitation of verses then again he ('a) began to repeat them. He ('a) repeated and recited these verses many times; it seemed that he ('a) was not in a normal status.

Habah and Nauf both were lying down on their beds, contemplating on this strange incident. Habah, stupified, stared at him ('a) while Nauf was not able to keep hold of his tears and wept steadily.

'Ali ('a) reached where Habah was lying down and asked him: “*Are you asleep or awake?*”

Habah replied: “*Yes! I am awake, O Commander of believers! Since you fear Allah to such an extent, woe be upon us, the unfortunates!*”

The Commander of believers, 'Ali ('a), closing his eyes, began to weep; then he ('a) said: “*O Habah! One day we all will appear in presence of Allah,*

while none of our deeds will be hidden from Him. He is closer to me and you than our jugular vein. Nothing can interpose between us and Allah.”

On addressing Nauf, he ('a) asked: “Are you asleep.”

Nauf replied: “No! O Commander of believers! I am awake, shedding tears since a long time.”

'Ali ('a): “O Nauf! If you weep too much today for the fear of Allah, tomorrow on the day of judgement, your eyes will be refreshed. O Nauf! Each drop of tear shed from the fear of Allah will extinguish the seas of Fire. O Nauf! No one has higher rank and degree than the one who weeps for the fear of Allah and loves for His sake. O Nauf! The one who loves Allah and loves what he loves for the sake of Allah, and prefers nothing else except the love of Allah, and the one who hates what he hates for the sake of Him receives nothing of this enmity but the goodness. When you reach such an extent of degree, you will perceive perfectly the reality of belief.”

He ('a) then exhorted Habah and Nauf for a while; then his last words were as follows: “Fear Allah. I am reminding you of that.”

He ('a) left both of them alone while continuing his prayers: “My Allah! I wish I knew, when I forget You, whether You abandon me or You still pay attention to me? I wish I knew how my condition would be by You in such a state of my long sleep and of my negligence in praising You?”

Habah and Nauf narrated that He ('a) did not stop being in the same state till dawn.¹

Note

1. Bihar al-Anwar, v. 9, p. 589.

Story 112: Dower Of Blood

The battle of Siffayn was about to come to an end and lead up to the final defeat of the Syrian army that the stratagem of 'Amr Ibn As, prevented their failure and put an end to the war. As a matter of fact, when he felt that they would be driven to a decisive defeat, he ordered that the Holy Qur'an be brandished on the spears as a token that they were ready to choose the Divine Book as an arbitrator between them and the other side.

All the perspicacious individuals among the Companions of Imam 'Ali ('a) knew that it was a blunder trick to interrupt the military operation for preventing their defeat. Because before the result of the war arrived at such a position, all the propositions previously made by Imam 'Ali ('a) were not accepted by them.

Unfortunately, a group of harebrained and superficial people, without respecting the military discipline or waiting for the order of the commander-in-chief of the army, interrupted the military operation, and not only were they satisfied with this action, but they also came to the Imam 'Ali ('a) and asked him ('a) with great opponent to issue promptly an order to stop the total hostility on the warfront. They were convinced that if someone combated in that condition, he would combat with the Holy Qur'an!

'Ali ('a) said: *“Don't be duped by their behaviour which is nothing else but a deceit. The Holy Qur'an commands us to continue fighting. They are not ready to comply with the Holy Qur'an. Our difference is nothing but to comply with Qur'an. At present they have resorted to this stratagem while we are at victory, and about to succeed and uproot them.”*

They replied: *“Since they pretend officially to be ready to take the Holy Qur'an as an arbiter between them and us, it is not permissible for us to fight against them. From now onwards, fighting with them is considered as fighting with the Holy Qur'an. If you don't issue an order promptly to stop the war, we will put you down to pieces!!!”*

It was useless to resist. A profound schism was created. If 'Ali ('a) persisted in his position, the events would wind up in a worse manner for the benefit of enemy and for his own defeat. Thus, he ('a) ordered the soldiers to put an end temporarily the hostility and to abandon the warfront.

'Amr Ibn As and Mu'awiyah, ascertaining that their plot had succeeded, were happy to see that they hit the centre of the target and the discord and dissension had occurred among the Imam 'Ali's ('a) Companions.

Neither Mu'awiyah nor 'Amr Ibn As, nor any other farsighted politicians could imagine that this small incident would become a starting point of creation of an ideology or a mode of thought particularly on the Islamic religious questions as well as the establishment of a dangerous group which would create disturbances even for Mu'awiyah and Caliphs like him in future.

Such a sect and a doctrine was created and founded after the rebellious of the army of the Imam 'Ali ('a) under the title of Khawarij, Seceders, opposed the continuation of war with an unboundedly stubborn and despotic and submitted to the arbitration. It was agreed that representatives would be appointed from both the parties and would gather together and arbitrate the case on the basis of the Holy Qur'an.

'Amr Ibn As was appointed by Mu'awiyah, 'Ali ('a) wanted to appoint Abdullah Ibn Abbas as 'Amr Ibn As counterpart, but the seceders intervened and opposed him ('a) under the pretext that the arbitrator should be impartial. Since Abdullah Ibn Abbas was the partisan and relative of Imam 'Ali ('a), they nominated an unqualified person.

The arbitration was concluded ineffective with another trick played by 'Amr Ibn As without a real agreement was made.

The proceedings of arbitration were shaped so ridiculously which lost its serious dimension to such an extent that it did not issue the most insignificant social effect both for Mu'awiyah and 'Amr Ibn As.

All the advantage which they both took of this incident was to have stopped the continuation of war and created discord in between the Companions of Imam 'Ali ('a). Moreover, they got a sufficient chance to refresh their forces and think about their other activities.

On the other side, when the “*Khawarij*,” Seceders realized that all those previous steps related to the proposition of arbitration as well as the erection of the Holy Qur'an on the spears was nothing but a stratagem, they found to have made a mistake but they interpreted this error by pretending that man basically would have the right, neither to govern nor to arbitrate and the governorship only due to Allah and the arbitrator is His Book. They wanted to neutralize their previous error but they entered a way which made them commit a great and dangerous error.

Their first mistake was merely of military and political. (the military error, how great it may be, concerns to a limited time and place and it is retrievable), but their second mistake was an ideological error and an erroneous philosophy in social questions of Islam, menacing the principles of Islam and being irretrievable.

The seceders, according to this mode of thought, had initiated a slogan, that is “*لا حكم إلا لله*” which means “*verdict is only that of Allah and no one has the right to govern the people.*”

'Ali ('a) said: “*This is a right sentence which is used for the wrong purpose. Verdict means law, lawmaking lies only with Allah and with those whom Allah has given permission. The purpose of seceders by saying this sentence is that the function of governance is only for Allah. In fact the human society needs, in any case, a ruler, manager or an executor of law.*”

Later on, the seceders were compelled to modify their conviction. Considering the acceptance of arbitration of any other person than Allah had been a sin which they had committed, they repented and demanded that Imam 'Ali ('a), who had, in return, submitted to the arbitration should repent too.

Imam 'Ali ('a) said in reply: “*The armistice and reason to the arbitration was an error: you were responsible for the same, but not I. Regarding the arbitration, if you say it was an absolute error and not permissible, I will never admit it.*”

The seceders followed their conviction and mode of thought and excommunicated Imam 'Ali ('a) who had considered the arbitration permissible. Gradually they developed their religious conviction and formed

a new religious sect which was different from other Muslims in numerous questions.

The manifest characteristic of their doctrine was based on the superficiality and coarseness. They considered the principle of enjoining right conduct. "*Amr bil ma'ruf*" devoid of any conditions and pretended that they should fight fearlessly and dauntlessly. As far as the seceders were contented to express their conviction. 'Ali ('a) did not oppose them for excommunicating him ('a), paid their rights from the public treasury and generously granted them leave to express freely their conviction. But from the very day when they rose officially in rebellion under the pretext of enjoining right conduct and forbidding to do evil "*Nahy anil munkar*". Imam 'Ali ('a) issued order for their suppression.

They fought against 'Ali ('a) in Nahrawan where he ('a) defeated them severely. In fact the seceders were apparently 'the believed and pious people' which made the combat against them very difficult.

On the confession of their friend and foe, they were the people who spoke the truth and never told a lie, speaking with utter frankness, practicing the religion and many of them had the sign of prostration on the forefronts. They recited the Holy Qur'an regularly, prayed and supplicated throughout the nights. But they were very ignorant of their deeds. They presented Islam in a very strict, rigid and spiritless form.

Few persons were able to make ready to fight against such people and shed their blood. If it had not been the illustrious and exceptional personality of Imam 'Ali ('a), the soldiers would not have fought against them.

'Ali ('a) considered the war against the seceders as one of his great honours: he ('a) says: "*It was I who have put out the eye of revolt. No one except me dared to advance towards it.*"¹

It was like that and nothing more. It was only 'Ali ('a) who paid no attention to their camouflaged appearance and saintly aspects and considered them as the most dangerous enemies of religion despite all the aspects of devotion and piety of theirs. 'Ali ('a) knew that if this philosophy and the mode of thought, which would naturally find a great number of partisans among the masses, took root in the world of Islam, the latter would become involved in such a dogma and stratification that it would dry up this tree at the roots.

According to Imam 'Ali ('a), the combat against seceders was not a combat against a few thousands of individuals but rather a combat against a mental rigidity, ignorant inferences and an erroneous philosophy in the domain of social questions of Islam. Who, except 'Ali ('a) had the ability to engage in the combat in such a front.

The battle of Nahrawan imposed a violent stroke on the seceders such that they could not pave a way as it was accepted in the world of Islam. The combat which Imam 'Ali conducted against them was the best document for the next Caliphs to consider the jihad holy war legal and necessary. But the survivors of seceders did not give up their activities.

Three of them gathered together in Makkah, reviewing, according to their illusion, the situation of the world of Islam. They were of the opinion: All the misery and misfortune of the world of Islam were imputed to three persons, 'Ali, Mu'awiyah and 'Amr Ibn As.

In the beginning, they were the soldiers of 'Ali ('a) and Mu'awiyah and 'Amr Ibn As were also the same persons whose political use and military stratagem had provoked a constitution of such a dangerous and stauntless sect.

These three persons named Abdul Rahman Ibn Muljam, Bark Ibn Abdullah and 'Amr Ibn Bakr al-Tamimi concluded a pact and took an oath to kill all the three persons being the heads of the Muslims, as per their decision the nineteenth day of the month of Ramazan was fixed for this act.

Abdul Rahman was nominated for the murder of Imam 'Ali ('a). Bark Ibn Abdullah for the murder of Mu'awiyah and 'Amr Ibn Bakr was appointed to kill 'Amr Ibn As. They parted from each other by making this pact and resolution. They set out for their mission in different ways.

Abdul Rahman went towards Kufah, the seat of Caliphate of Imam 'Ali ('a). Bark Ibn Abdullah towards Syria, the capital of Mu'awiyah's government, and 'Amr Ibn Bakr made his way towards Egypt, where 'Amr Ibn As was governing.

Two of them were not able to achieve an important task. Bark Ibn Abdullah, being charged of killing Mu'awiyah, managed to inflict a blow on his buttocks, in the same night of nineteenth of Ramazan, the wound was cured by medicine.

'Amr Ibn Bakr who was supposed to kill 'Amr Ibn As did not know him personally. Incidentally, 'Amr Ibn As, was ill and did not go to the Mosque that day. He sent Kharijat Ibn Huzayfah on his behalf, taking him for 'Amr Ibn As, 'Amr Ibn Bakr inflicted a blow and killed Kharijat Ibn Huzayfah. Later on, he came to know that he had killed someone else other than 'Amr Ibn As.

The only one who managed to put his intention in practice was Abdul Rahman Ibn Muljam. Abdul Rahman arrived in Kufah without expressing his intention and opinion to anyone. He was not stable and determined in his decision and objective. He changed his mind again and again, keeping in view the great personality of Imam 'Ali ('a), how cruel and savage it will be for him to kill the Imam ('a).

However, the events which contributed to save Mu'awiyah in Syria and 'Amr Ibn As in Egypt turned to another shape in Iraq, and an incident caused Abdul Rahman Ibn Muljam to be serious in his resolution. Without intervention of such an incident, Abdul Rahman would have totally abandoned his dangerous decision, it was a question of love of a woman.

One day, going to visit one of his fellow party members, Abdul Rahman got acquainted with Qutam, the daughter of a seceder who had been killed in Nahrawan. Qutam was extremely beautiful and attractive.

Abdul Rahman felt in love with her at first sight and forgot the pact of Makkah. He decided to live with her happily throughout his life and forgot entirely his intention. He asked for her hand and she accepted it too. When the dowry was supposed to be fixed, apart from the conditions mentioned, she asked something which made Abdul Rahman stupefied.

Qutam said: *“My dowry consists of three thousand dirhams, a male-slave, a female-slave and the blood of ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib!!!”*

Abdul Rahman said in reply: *“I will provide for you all of them, money, a male-slave and a female-slave but it is not an easy task to kill ‘Ali. Don't you*

like to live with me? How could I raise my hand against 'Ali and kill him and then escape safe and sound?"

Qutam replied: *"Whatever I have mentioned as my dowry it will be the same. If it is impossible to kill 'Ali in the battle field, one can surprise him during his prayers. If you made an escape safe and sound, we will live happily together for the whole of our lives, and if you are killed, you will have a better and higher reward from Allah. Moreover, I can associate other persons with you so that you may not be alone!"*

Trapped deeply in Qutam's love, the rebellious love which drew him once more towards the same course of events which had conducted him previously his rancour and vengeance, Abdul Rahman revealed his secret for the first time and said: *"As a matter of fact, I escaped from this city, and at present I have returned here to do nothing except to kill 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib."*

Qutam was very delighted at these words. She met a man named Wardan whom she disposed to accompany Abdul Rahman Ibn Muljam.

Regarding Abdul Rahman Ibn Muljam, one day, he met one of his fellow party members, Shabib Ibn Bajah, in whom he had full confidence and said to him: *"Are you ready to collaborate with him in a case which will have the honour in this world and the hereafter?"*

"What is the case in hand?"

"The murder of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib."

"May Allah kill you! The murder of 'Ali? A man who has served Islam right from the beginning?"

"Yes! Is it not that he became infidel by complying with the arbitration? Whatever his previous Islamic records may be! Furthermore, in the battle of Nahrawan, he killed our pious and devoured brothers; therefore, according to the Divine law, we can kill him and retaliate!!"

"How is it possible to raise a hand against him?"

"It is very easy, we will be on the watch in the Mosque and as he comes there for the morning prayer, we will attack him with the swords dissimulated under our garments and will kill him."

Abdul Rahman repeated this several times until Shabib accepted and associated with him. He then took him to Qutam at the Mosque of Kufah where she was under a tent retiring for prayer and introduced him to her.

Qutam said: *"Very well! Wardan will also accompany you. The night when you decide, first come to see me!"*

Abdul Rahman waited till Friday night, nineteenth (or seventeenth) of Ramazan, the date which was fixed with his associates of Makkah. As decided, that night he and Shabib went to Qutam who tied a piece of silk cloth with her own hands around their chests. Wardan was also present. These three persons took their seat near the door through which Imam 'Ali ('a) used to enter the Mosque.

It was a vigil night for praying. They began to pray and worship like the other Muslims. In order to put the people in a false scent, these three individuals, having a storm in their heart, pretended as if they were prostrating, without showing the least signs of tiredness which provoked the astonishment of the observers.

On the other side, 'Ali ('a) had organized a particular program for himself in the month of Ramazan. He ('a) broke the fast every evening in one of his sons' or daughters' house. His dinner never exceeded three morsels of food. His children insisted that he might eat more, but he said to them: *"I would like to be hungry when I meet Allah."* He repeated this many times, *"According to the signs that the Holy Prophet (S) has informed me, the time is near when my white beard is tinged with the blood of my head."*

That night 'Ali ('a) was the guest of his daughter, Umm Kulthum. More than any other night, the signs of expectation and emotion were visible in him. When others went to bed, he went to his place of prayer, engaged himself in worshipping.

Before dawn, Imam al-Hasan ('a) his elder son came to him ('a), 'Ali ('a) said: *"My son! I did not sleep the whole night, and disturbed in sleep all family members by my prayers, because it is the Friday night, coincided with the night of Qadr 'Night of Destiny,' while I was sitting suddenly a slight slumber took me, the Holy Prophet (S) appeared in my dream. I said: 'O Messenger of Allah! I have suffered a lot with your people!'"*

The Holy Prophet (S) replied: 'Curse them!' I cursed them; and this was my curse: 'My Lord! Take me away from them as soon as possible and unite me with the better ones. Send them someone that they deserve, the one who is worse for them.'

At this moment, Muadhhdhin 'One who makes a call for prayer' announced the time of morning prayer. 'Ali ('a) moved towards the Mosque. There were a few ducks in the Imam's ('a) house belonging to the children. The ducks began to snuffle. One of the members of family wanted to make them silent, but 'Ali ('a) said: *"Don't let them be tranquil; they are singing the mourning melody."*

On the other side, Abdul Rahman and his accompanists were impatiently waiting for Imam 'Ali's ('a) arrival. No one was aware of their secret except Qutam and Ash'as Ibn Qays who was a man of bad character, detested the equitable conducts of Imam 'Ali ('a) and had good relation with Mu'awiyah.

Suddenly an incident took place, it was nearby that their plan would have been exposed, but another incident prevented it. Ash'as approached Abdul Rahman and said: *"It is almost dawn, if the day breaks, you will be scandalized, make haste in your decision!"*

Hujr Ibn Adi, one of the intimate and devoted Companions of Imam 'Ali ('a), who had recently returned from the journey, probably an official mission, and his horse was in front of the Mosque, wanted to present a report to Imam 'Ali ('a), overheard the mysterious code-words of Ash'as which he told to Abdul Rahman and guessed that it be a bad scheme.

Hujr, after having heard Ash'as saying these words, insulted him and went out of the Mosque hastily towards Imam 'Ali's ('a) house so that he would reach him and inform about the danger. But Imam 'Ali ('a) came to the Mosque through another way. Although his children and Companions had requested him ('a) several times to permit them to appoint a bodyguard, 'Ali ('a) did not permitted them to do so. He ('a) used to move all alone, the very day the demand was reiterated, yet it was refused.

Ali ('a) entered the Mosque, stood in the “*Mihrab*” prayer niche, started his prayers and said: “*O people! Get ready for prayer! Get ready for prayer!*”

Suddenly at that moment, two swords sparkling in the darkness one after another, and the shout of “*الحكم لله يا علي لا لك*” means: “*O Ali! Verdict is only of Allah not of you!*” shocked everyone.

It was Shabib who stroke the first blow, but it ran against the wall and did not work. Abdul Rahman stroke the second blow hitting 'Ali's ('a) vertex.

On his part, Hujr Ibn Adi hastily made his way to the Mosque, but when he reached there, the people were crying: “*The Commander of believers is martyred, the Commander of believers is martyred.*”

Immediately, after having been struck by the sword, Imam ('a) said the following words: “*I swear by the Lord of Ka'bah that I have been delivered,*” then he ('a) added: “*Don't let this man escape!*”

Abdul Rahman, Shabib and Wardan managed to escape from the Mosque. Wardan was not identified because he didn't come forward. While escaping, Shabib was caught by one of the Imam 'Ali's ('a) Companions who seized Shabib's sword and sat on his chest so as to kill him.

The people were coming in groups, fearing that he would be taken in place of Shabib and be killed in his place, he stood up and Shabib escaped and made his way towards his house where his cousin arrived and found that Shabib had taken part in the assassination of the Imam ('a). He immediately fetched his sword and without any delay killed him.

About Abdul Rahman, he was caught by the people and brought towards the Mosque, with tied arms. The people were so furious and indignant that they wished to slash his body into pieces with their teeth the very moment they got him in their hands.

'Ali ('a) said: “*Bring Abdul Rahman near me!*”

When he was brought, the Imam ('a) said: “*Did I not act benevolently towards you?*”

He replied: “*Yes! You did!*”

The Imam ('a) said: “*Then why did you commit this?*”

He said: “*Anyhow, I have smeared this sword with poison for forty mornings, and I prayed to Allah that the worst creatures of Him would be killed with it.*”

The Imam ('a): “*Your prayer is granted, because you will soon be killed with this sword.*”

Then 'Ali ('a) turned his face towards his relatives and Companions who were around his bed and said: “*Descendants of Abdul Mutalib! You should not shed blood of people and accuse some individuals of being accomplice under the pretext of my murder or something else.*”

He said to his son Imam al-Hasan ('a): “*My son! If I survive. I know how to behave with this man but if I die, you must not strike him more than one stroke, for he has struck me only once. Avoid mutilating him! Do not dismember his ears, nose or tongue, for I have heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying: “Avoid mutilating even though it might be a rabid dog! Act moderately towards the captive “Ibn Muljam” and take care of his food and comfort!”*”

By the order of Imam al-Hasan ('a), Ibn Asir, medical practitioner and well-known specialist, came to examine Imam 'Ali ('a). After examining him ('a), he said: *“Since the sword was smeared with poison which damaged the brain, the treatment is of no effect.”*

From the moment when Imam 'Ali ('a) was injured until his ('a) death, it lasted less than forty-eight hours but Imam 'Ali ('a) did not lose this chance nor neglect to give advice and to admonish.

He ('a) made testament in twenty articles written as follows:

“In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful - This is what ‘Ali, the son of Abi Talib, makes his last will. 'Ali testifies to the Unity of the Oneness of Allah and bears witness that Muhammad (S) is the creature and Apostle of Allah, Who has sent him (S) to prevail His religion upon the other religions. Verily, my prayer, my religious practices, my life and my death is due to Him and for Him. He has no associate. I have been ordered to this, and I have already submitted to Him.

Hasan, my son! I recommend you, my children, all members of the family, and whoever is able to read this written note, I recommend and advise them as follows:

1. *Never forget the Divine piety, endeavour to remain faithful to the religion of Allah until your last breath.*

2. *Hold tightly to the cable of Allah, all of you together, be united and allied on the basis of belief and knowledge of Allah, do not separate from each other, for the Holy Prophet (S) said: “Reconciliation among the people is superior to the prayer and perpetual fasting, what makes the religion obliterate are the discord and the corruption.”*

3. *Do not forget those who are related to you by blood, practise the familial relations, for it makes the man's accounting easy near Allah.*

4. *Keep Allah in view regarding orphans, don't let them starve and be guardianless.*

5. *Keep Allah in view in the matter of your neighbours, the Holy Prophet (S) went on recommending in their favour till we thought he (S) would allow them a share in inheritance.*

6. *Keep Allah in view in the matter of the Holy Qur'an. May no one excel you in acting upon it.*

7. *Keep Allah in view in the matter of prayer, for it is the pillar of your religion.*

8. *Keep Allah in view in the matter of Ka'bah, Allah's House, may it not be abandoned. If it becomes so, you won't be spared, and the others will make you become their prey.*

9. *Keep Allah in view in the matter of 'jihad' the holy war in the way of Allah, do not refrain from your property and life in this way.*

10. *Keep Allah in view in the matter of Alms giving, the alms will extinguish the Fire of Divine Wrath.*

11. *Keep Allah in view in the matter of the descendants of the Holy Prophet (S), they may not be oppressed.*

12. *Keep Allah in view in the matter of the Holy Prophet's (S) Companions, the Holy Prophet (S) recommended for them.*

13. Keep Allah in view in the matter of the poor and indigent, make them share with you in life.

14. Keep Allah in view in the matter of the slaves, for this case was the last recommendation of the Holy Prophet (S).

15. Do your utmost to achieve the satisfaction of Allah and do not pay attention to the peoples' words.

16. Behave towards the people with kindness and pleasure just as the Holy Qur'an has enjoined.

17. Do not forget to enjoin good and forbid evil, lest the mischievous and the vile get position over you and oppress you, then if the good of yours pray, their prayers will not be granted.

18. It is incumbent upon you to increase good and friendly relations among yourselves: do act benevolently with each other. Avoid turning away from one another and severing mutual relations.

19. Perform the beneficial actions together and avoid collaborating with the sins, evil doings and things which engender the annoyance and enmity.

20. Fear Allah, for his chastisement is severe.

May Allah preserve all of you under the aegis of His protection and bestow upon the Prophet's people, His favour so that they preserve your honour and that of the Holy Prophet (S). I entrust you all with Allah. May the peace and the salutation of Allah, be upon you all."

After this testament no one heard 'Ali ('a) saying anything but:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

'There is no god but Allah', till he ('a) passed away.²

Notes

1. Nahj al-Balaghah: Sermon no. 91.

2. Maqatil al-Talabyan, p. 28 - 44. Kamal Ibn Athir, v. 3. p. 194 - 197. Muruj al-Dhab. Masudi, v. 2, p. 40 - 44. Usd al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat al-Sahabah, v. 4. Bihar, v. 9.

Story 113: What Happened To Your Sons?

After the martyrdom of Imam 'Ali ('a) and the absolute domination of Mu'awiyah over the Islamic Caliphate, the inevitable violence occurred between him and the most intimate Companions of 'Ali ('a).

Mu'awiyah made an effort to make them confess that they had not only gained anything in the friendship and obedience to their Imam 'Ali ('a) but they also had undeniably lost in this way what all they had possessed. He aspired to hear one of them express his regret and remorse, but this aspiration of his was never fulfilled.

The Companions of Imam 'Ali ('a), after his ('a) martyrdom, realized more his eminence and personality than before. That is why they manifested their courage, bravery and frankness for his cause, love and protection of his school of thought much more than they had sacrificed their lives during his lifetime.

Sometimes it happened that the effort made by Mu'awiyah resulted in reverse and he and his close relatives were greatly impressed with the sentiments and convictions held by the followers of Imam 'Ali ('a).

One of the sincere, self-sacrificing and perspicacious Companions was Adi Ibn Hatim al-Tai, head of the great tribe of Tay. He had many sons. He himself, his sons and all the members of his tribe were devoted soldiers of Imam 'Ali ('a). Three sons of his named Turayf, Turfah and Zayd were martyred in the battle of Siffin attending Imam 'Ali's ('a) army.

Years passed, after the event of Siffin and the martyrdom of Imam 'Ali ('a), Mu'awiyah became the Caliph. Unfortunately under some circumstances, Adi Ibn Hatim had to face Mu'awiyah. In order to make Adi recollect in a bitter manner and to make him confess the great loss that he had attained for the obedience he had paid towards 'Ali ('a), Mu'awiyah said: *“What happened to your sons: Turayf, Turfah and Zayd?”*

Adi: *“They attained martyrdom in Siffin in front of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a).”*

Mu'awiyah: *“He did not deal fairly with you!”*

Adi: *“Why?”*

Mu'awiyah: *“Because he pushed your sons forward so that they got killed, while preserving his own sons behind the war front.”*

Adi: *“It was I who did not deal fairly with him!”*

Mu'awiyah: *“What for?”*

Adi: *“Because he ('a) attained martyrdom while I am still alive. I should have sacrificed my life during his lifetime.”*

When Mu'awiyah came to understand that his purpose was not attainable, and he also willed to hear the virtues and attributes of 'Ali ('a) from the mouth of his close associates, those who lived with him ('a) day and night, he demanded Adi to explain 'Ali's qualifications just as he had closely observed.

Adi said in reply: *“Excuse me from that!”*

Mu'awiyah: *“It is inevitable; you have to tell me!”*

Adi: *“I swear by Allah; 'Ali ('a) was extremely clear-sighted and mighty, talking with justice and decisiveness, knowledge and wisdom was gushing from him. He ('a) was disgusted with gaudy ornaments of life, familiarized with night and nocturnal loneliness. He ('a) was inexhaustibly shedding tears and incessantly reflecting. In private, he ('a) was taking himself into account,*

repenting for his past. He ('a) was pleased with plain and short garments as well as a plain and simple life like the poor people.

When he ('a) was among us, he ('a) was like one of ours. He ('a) acquiesced in what we demanded him, and if we went to his presence, he ('a) was so dignified that we did not dare to speak before him, and he ('a) had such a greatness that we were not able to gaze at him. While he ('a) was smiling, his teeth appeared like a string of pearls. He ('a) respected the pious and religious people and had affection towards the poor.

Neither the strong feared him to be ill-treated nor the weak, despaired of his justice. I swear by Allah, one night, I saw him, with my own eyes standing up in the 'Mihrab' prayer niche, and when the darkness of night enveloped all over, his tears trickled down his cheeks and beard. He ('a) was writhing as if stung by a snake and wailing as if overtaken by a calamity. Still it seems to me that I am hearing his voice addressed to the world: "O world! Why do you present yourself to me? Keep away from me and try to deceive someone else; you will never get a chance with me. I have divorced you thrice¹ and it is irrevocable to refer to you. Your rejoicing is insignificant and your importance is nothing. Alas! Alas! Little of the provisions, the long way and few Companions."

When Adi's words reached this point, Mu'awiyah began involuntarily shedding tears. He dried his tears with the sleeve and said: *"May Allah bless Abul Hasan. He was just as you have mentioned. Tell me at present how you feel with his separation?"*

Adi: *"Like the mother whose beloved child is decapitated in her lap."*

Mu'awiyah: *"Do you ever forget him?"*

Adi: *"It is impossible that the lapse of time lets me forget him!"²*

Notes

1. If a woman is divorced three times, she can not remarry her husband unless she fulfils certain conditions mentioned in the Islamic law.

2. Al-Kuna wa al-Alqab, v. 2, p. 105.

Story 114: The Teacher's Advice

After ascending the imperial throne in the year forty-first Hijrah, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufian decided to make of 'Ali ('a), with the help of mass media and creation of the hostile slogan, the most contemptible man all over the Islamic world of those days.

He implemented all different means of propaganda. On one hand, he prevented the divulgence of the virtues of Imam 'Ali ('a) by using the sword and bayonet and did not let anyone open his mouth to call to mind a tradition or a narration in his favour, on the other hand, he hired certain opportunists with exorbitant amount of money so as to forge some prophetic traditions against Imam 'Ali ('a).

But all that did not suffice to quench Mu'awiyah's thirst, he used to say: *"I must act in a way that the children will grow up in rancour towards 'Ali and the old will die in animosity against 'Ali."*

The last idea which came to his mind was to make malediction and execration of Imam 'Ali ('a) a popular and religious slogan in all over the vast Islamic territory. He still ordered that the malediction of 'Ali ('a) be concluded to the Friday Sermon over the pulpits of Mosques. This order was put in practice.

After Mu'awiyah, the other Ummayyad Caliphs followed his idea so as to humiliate to extremes the descendants of the Imam ('a) and to extirpate forever the aspiration of Islamic Caliphate from their hearts. The generations who were born from that time onwards fell into the habit of this slogan and unconsciously repeated it.

This habit had such an effect upon the poor and simple minded that, once, a man intercepted Hajaj by complaining so: *"My family expelled me and named me 'Ali. I ask you to help me and change my name!!"*

Hajaj changed his name and said: *"Seeing that you have chosen a good means (abhorrence towards 'Ali) for asking help. I will entrust you with so-and-so position. Go and undertake it!"*

The propaganda and the slogans had made their effect. But who knew that a small incident would abolish effects of the propaganda over which the usurpers had laboured for half-century and the truth would be unveiled from behind so many thick curtains.

Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, of the Ummayyad clan, was busy playing with the children of his age when he was a child. As usual, the key-word and the old story of his playmates was the malediction of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib. The children, busy playing, laughing and leaping about, repeated the malediction of Imam 'Ali under the small pretext!!

Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz also joined with them hand in hand, acting in concert. At the same time, his teacher who was a pious, religious and clairvoyant man, incidentally passed by them. He heard with his own ears his beloved student curse 'Ali. But the teacher did not say anything, made his own way and went to the Mosque. The time was creeping so that they would attend the class. Umar went to the Mosque to attend the class.

Fixing his eyes on Umar, the teacher began to pray and long-lasting his prayer. Umar felt that the prayer was a pretext and the question was concerning to something else. There might be a matter of an offense. He

waited till his teacher achieved his prayer. After the prayer, the teacher looked at him with great indignation.

Umar asked: *“Could you please explain the cause of your offense?”*

“My son! Have you cursed 'Ali today?”

“Yes!”

“Since when you have come to understand that Allah, after being satisfied with the people of Badr, may flare up at them and they must be worthy of cursing.”

“Was 'Ali counted among the people of Badr?”

“To whom then belongs Badr and its glory? Does it not exclusively belong to 'Ali?”

“I shall promise not to repeat these words anymore.”

“Take an oath!”

“I swear.”

This child fulfilled his promise and oath. He had in mind the logical and amicable words of his teacher, and from that day he never uttered the malediction of 'Ali but the anathema of 'Ali always reached his ears in the market, streets and from the pulpits of the Mosques. He saw the people all uttering that as habitual words.

It lasted for many years until another incident drew his attention and changed his mind entirely, his father was the governor of Madinah. According to the prevalent tradition, his father was performing the Friday-prayer, delivering the Friday-prayer sermon before the prayer and concluding his sermon with the malediction and blasphemy of 'Ali ('a) in conformity with the habit established by Ummayyads.

To his surprise. Umar noticed that his father, while delivering the sermon, spoke eloquently on different subjects and expressed himself easily and elaborately but when he came to curse 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a), he started stammering while uttering these words. He thought that his father had hidden something in his heart which had made him unable to express it and had influenced inevitably on his way of speaking.

One day, he put the matter before his father, asking him: *“Dear father! I have noticed when you start delivering your speech, you elaborate it with an infinite eloquence in all the subjects, but when you come to the conclusion concerning the malediction of this man, it seems that you lose your ability and start stammering.”*

“My son! Have you noticed it?”

“Yes father! That is absolutely obvious in your speeches.”

“Dear son! I am content to tell you that if these people sitting at the foot of my pulpit know what your father knows about the virtues of this man, they will desert us and will follow his descendants.”

Umar who has borne in his mind the words of his teacher since his childhood and heard officially this confession of his father was severely impressed. He pledged his words before Allah to annihilate this hideous and baleful habit which was the vestige of the dark days of the reign of Mu'awiyah if he acquires the power one day.

The year ninety-nine of Hijrah arrived. From the time when Mu'awiyah had made this ugly habit widespread, sixty years elapsed. In those days

Sulayman Ibn Abdul Malik was the Caliph who fell seriously ill. Aware of being at the pang of death, he designated Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz as his successor for some certain interests though according to his father's last testament he was supposed to designate his brother, Yazid Ibn Abdul Malik, as the Crown Prince.

Sulayman died, his testament was read in the Mosque and it raised the surprise of all. When Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, sitting at the bottom of assembly, heard the testament made in his name, he said:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

“.....'Verily we belong to Allah, and certainly unto Him shall we return'.” (Surah Al-Baqarah, 19:156).

Then a number of people held his armpit and seated him on the pulpit, and the people swore allegiance at his hand with their own free will.

One of the first measures taken by Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz was the prohibition of malediction of 'Ali ('a). He issued an order that, instead of the anathema of 'Ali ('a), in the sermon of Friday-prayer, the following noble verse be recited:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

“Verily, Allah enjoins justice and kindness (to others) and giving (the right of) the kindred, and forbids lewdness, and evil and insolence; He admonishes you so that you might remember.” (Surah An-Nahl, 16:90).

Poets and orators praised this measure of Umar's too much and immortalized his name.¹

Note

1. The commentary of Ibn Abil Hadid, v. 2, p. 464. Al-Kamil of Ibn Asir, v. 4, p. 154.

Story 115: Rights Of The Muslim Brother

'Abdul 'Ala, the son of 'Ayun, set out from Kufah for Madinah. Friends and followers of Imam al-Sadiq ('a) in Kufah took this opportunity to write many imperative questions and handed them over to Abdul 'Ala so that he would bring them back the answers given by the Imam ('a).

They also asked him to inquire orally about a particular question relative to the rights which a Muslim had upon another Muslim from the legal point of view and bring his reply too.

Abdul 'Ala arrived in Madinah and went to the presence of the Imam ('a). He handed the written questions to the Imam ('a) and brought up the oral problem. But contrary to his expectation, the Imam ('a) replied to all of the questions with exception of the latter. 'Abd ul 'Ala did not say anything that day and went off.

The next day, the Imam ('a) did not say anything about the question. When Abdul 'Ala was about to leave Madinah, he went to the Imam ('a) to bid farewell. He thought to expose again his question; thus he said: *“O descendant of the Messenger of Allah! You have not replied to my question yet.”*

The Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said: *“I did not answer to it intentionally.”*

“Why?”

“Because I fear to tell the truth and you do not carry it out and then leave the religion of Allah!”

The Imam ('a) continued his words and said: *“In fact, among the most difficult duties facing the creatures of Allah, there are three of them:*

Firstly, respecting the justice and equity between himself and the others to such an extent that he behaves towards his Muslim brother just as he likes to see the others behave towards him.

Secondly, not refusing his property with the Muslim brothers in giving them a hand.

Thirdly, remembering Allah in all circumstances. I do not mean by that to go on repeating “Subhana Allah”¹ or “Al-hamdu lil-Lah”² unceasingly, but I would like to say that one should be in such an attitude that if he faces an illegal action (Haram), while the remembrance of Allah always being in his heart, will prevent him from committing it.³

Notes

1. Glory be to Allah.
2. Praise belongs to Allah.
3. Usul al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 170.

Story 116: A Mother's Rights

Although his father, mother and all relatives were Christians and even he himself was of that religion, Zakariya, the son of Ibrahim from some time ago felt an inclination towards Islam. His soul and conscious called him to Islam. In the end, contrary to the wish of his father, mother and relatives, he embraced Islam and submitted to the Islamic principles.

The time of "Hajj" pilgrimage to Makkah arrived. The young Zakariya left Kufah for setting out for Makkah. On the way, he went to Imam al-Sadiq ('a) in Madinah, and narrated him ('a) about his conversion and the Imam ('a) asked him: "Which aspect of Islam drew your attention?"

He replied: "The least I can say is that the following words of the Almighty Allah in the Holy Qur'an addressing the Holy Prophet (S) is applicable to me:

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحاً مِنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُوراً تَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

"And thus We have sent to you a Revelation of Our Command [the Holy Qur'an]. You knew not what the Book is, nor what the faith. But We have made it [the Qur'an] a Light wherewith We guide whosoever of Our slaves We will. And verily, you [O Muhammad] are indeed guiding [people] to the Straight Path." (Surah Al-Shura, 42:52).

The Imam ('a) said: "I certify it; Allah has guided you."

The Imam said thrice: "O Allah! Be his Guide!"

Then he ('a) added: "My son! At present, ask me whatever question that you wish."

The young man said: "My parents and family are all Christians; my mother is blind. I am frequently associated with them at the dining-table. What is my duty in this case?"

The Imam ('a): "Do they consume pork?"

The young man: "No! O descendant of the Messenger of Allah! They never touch pork."

The Imam ('a): "Nothing oppose to your relation with them."

And he ('a) added: "Take care of your mother! Act benevolently towards her while she is alive. When she dies, do not deliver her corpse to anyone else. Take personal responsibility of her funeral procession. Do not let anybody come to know that you met me here. I will come to Makkah and by the grace of Allah, we will meet each other in Mina."

In Mina, the young man went to Imam al-Sadiq ('a). There was a strange crowd around the Imam ('a). The people like the children who surround their teacher were continuously and without cease putting on their questions which they brought along with them and were receiving their answers promptly.

The pilgrimage time came to an end and the young man returned to Kufah. He had in mind the Imam's recommendation, began to devote himself to his mother and did not stop an instant treating his mother kindly. He fed her, combed her hairs and changed her dress with his own hands. This sudden change noticed in the behaviour of her son surprised the mother, particularly after his return from Makkah.

One day, she asked: "Dear son! When you had our religious belief, and we both were of one faith, you did not treat me so kindly? What happened to

you! At present although we both are not having the same faith and religion, you are more affectionate towards me than you were before?"

"My dear mother! A man of the descendants of our Holy Prophet (S) commanded me to do so."

"Is the man himself a Prophet!"

"No, he is not the Prophet but he is the son of the Prophet."

"I believe my son, that he is a Prophet too, for such recommendations are made by nobody else except the Prophets."

"No mother! Be sure that he is not the Prophet; he is the son of the Prophet. Basically, after our Prophet there will be no other Prophet born on this earth."

"My dear son! Your religion is a very good religion, it is better than all the religions. Present me your religion!"

The young man stated "*Shahadatayn*" the testimony of faith to his mother, she then became a Muslim by reciting the *Shahadatayn*. The young man taught his blind mother the canonical prayer. After having learnt it, she performed the Zuhr, noon, 'Asr, afternoon prayers, she could do her evening maghrib and Isha, night prayers too. In the night, her condition of health suddenly changed; she felt ill and confined to bed.

She called her son and said: "*My dear son! Teach me once more those words that you have taught me before.*"

The young man taught her again the "*Shahadatayn*" and the other principles of Islam, that is to say, the belief in Prophet, angels, the Divine Book, and the day of the judgement. The mother uttered all that under the title of testimony and confession and then breathed her last.

In the morning, the Muslims came for her funeral and ablution. It was her son, Zakariya, who performed the funeral prayer and buried her with his own hands.¹

Note

1. Usul al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 160, 161.

Story 117: In The Presence Of Scholar

A man from “*Ansar*” the helpers came to the Holy Prophet (S) and asked him: “*O Messenger of Allah! If it happens to me to choose either to attend the funeral and burial ceremonies of a corpse or to take part in a literary circle which benefits us, and there will be no other opportunity to participate in both, for participation in either of them deprives me of the other, which one of those two will you advise me to take part in?*”

The Holy Prophet (S) said in reply: “*If there are some other people accompanying the corpse and burying it, attend the literary circle. In fact, the participation in a literary circle is better than the presence in one thousand funerals, visit of one thousand ill, worship of one thousand nights, fasting of one thousand days, giving the alms of one thousand dirhams, performance of one thousand obligatory “Hajj” and unobligatory “Jihad”.* There is no comparison between this and the attendance in the presence of a scholar. Don't you know that the Almighty Allah is obeyed by knowledge, and He is worshipped by the knowledge? The goodness of this world and the hereafter is coupled with knowledge just as the evil of the world and that of the hereafter is coupled with it.”¹

Note

1. Bihar ul-Anwar, v. 1, p. 204.

Story 118: Hisham And Tawus Yamani

In the era of his Caliphate, Hisham Ibn Abdul Malik, the Ummayyad Caliph, arrived in Makkah for the pilgrimage. He ordered that one of those who had observed the time of the Holy Prophet (S) and had the honour of being in his company with his holiness be brought to him so that he would question him about those days. He was told that none of the Holy Prophet's (S) Companions had remained alive and all had been deceased.

Hisham said: *"Summon then one of the "Tabi'in"- disciples of the Companions - so that I could benefit from him."*

Tawus Yamani was brought to him. On entering, Tawus took his shoes off before Hisham on the carpet, and when he saluted, instead of saying, according to the usage, *"As-salamu alayk, O Commander of believers!"* he contented to say *"As-salamu alayk."*

In other words, he did not call him by *"O Commander of believers"* and sat immediately before him, not waiting for his permission, while one should stand before the Caliph as usual till he personally authorized him to sit. Furthermore, in order to enquire about his health, he said: *"Hisham! How are you?"*

Hisham, inflamed with anger by his behaviour, said to him: *"How dare you behave in my presence in such a manner?"*

"What have I done?"

"What have you done?!!! Why did you take off your shoes in front of me? And why did you not address me under the title of "Commander of believers"? And why did you sit before obtaining my permission? And why did you enquire about my health in an insulting manner?"

"If I took off my shoes before you, it is because I am taking them off every day five times before the Almighty Allah, and He never gets angry with me. If I did not designate you as "Amir" (Commander of believers), it is because you are not really a Commander of all believers, there are many people of the belief who are not pleased with your authority and government. When I called you by your name it is also because Allah calls His Prophets by name, and addresses Himself to them in the Holy Qur'an by saying "O Dawud", "O Yahya" or "O Isa" without being interpreting this address as an insult to the position of the Prophets. On the contrary, Allah has mentioned Abu Lahab by his nickname not his name in the Qur'an. And if I sat before you without obtaining permission, it is because I heard the Commander of believers, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) say: "If you want to see a man of the people of Fire, look at the one who is sitting while the people are standing before him.""

When Tawus said these words, Hisham asked Tawus to admonish him.

Tawus said: "I heard the Commander of believers, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a), say that there are snakes and scorpions in the Hell, extremely big, responsible to sting a Commander who does not behave justly among the people."

No sooner had Tawus completed these words than he came out quickly and went off.¹

Note

1. Safinat ul Bihar, ch. Tawus, v. 2, p. 95.

Story 119: Retirement

He was an old man who had worked hard during his prime, but he had nothing in deposit. In the end, he became blind, infirm, and old. His present condition did not allow him to have a way of earning, except begging. He stood in the corner of a street and used to beg; the people felt pity on him by giving a very small amount as alms. He was bitterly surviving by the least daily bread.

One day, when the Commander of believers, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a), passed through that street and saw him, he ('a) decided to inquire about the situation of the old man so as to find out what had befallen upon this man, whether he had any children to look after him or not, and think about a solution so that this old man could live honourably without being compelled to beg.

The people who knew the old man came and testified that he was a Christian, having worked in his youth and now that he has lost his eye-sight and become incapable to work and not having anything as deposits or savings, he naturally began to beg.

'Ali ('a) said: *“What a shame! As long as he had the ability to do work, you made him work, and at present you have left him alone! His past indicates that he has worked and has given services. Thus, it is the responsibility of the government and the community to look after him as long as he is alive. Go and fix monthly an amount of money, as a pension from the public treasury so that he can survive.”*¹

Note

1. Wasa'il, v. 2, p. 425.

Story 120: Even A Slave Merchant

The fervent love and affection of a man, who was an olive oil seller, towards the Holy Prophet (S) was famous for all people. They knew that he liked the Holy Prophet (S) from the bottom of his heart, and if he did not see his holiness even a day, he would become impatient.

Before going to start his daily affairs, first he inclined his way towards the Mosque, the Holy Prophet's (S) house or the place where the Prophet (S) used to be. He approached the Holy Prophet (S) under any pretext, upon seeing the Holy Prophet (S) he felt fresh and obtained energy, then he used to set out for attending his daily business.

Sometimes, when people surrounded the Holy Prophet (S), he used to stretch out his neck from the back of the crowd so as to make a glance at the Holy Prophet's (S) face. One day, the Holy Prophet (S) noticed that he was trying to see him from behind the crowd. The Holy Prophet (S) stretched his neck a bit high so that the man could see him easily.

That day, as usual, after having a glance at the Holy Prophet (S), the man set out for his own business, but after some time he came back. The Holy Prophet (S), noticing that he had come for the second time, made a sign to him to come nearer. He came forward and took his seat beside him (S).

The Holy Prophet (S) said: *“Today, it is something different from the previous days; daily you used to come and see me once, and then you used to go and attend your business, but today, you came back for the second time. Why?”*

He replied: *“O Messenger of Allah! In fact, my love and affection towards you increased in my heart so much that I was not able to go to work, that is the reason which compelled me to return.”*

The Holy Prophet (S) prayed for him. He went back, but he was not seen any more; days passed without any news of that man. The Holy Prophet (S) inquired his Companions about his farewell. All of them replied that they had not seen him for quite a long time.

The Holy Prophet (S) set out to gather information of that man and see what had happened to him. He (S) along with a group of his Companions went to the market where olive oil was sold. Upon reaching his shop, they saw that it was closed and there was nobody in. They inquired his farewell of his neighbours.

They replied: *“O Messenger of Allah! He died a few days ago.”*

They added: *“He was a trustworthy and truthful man, but he had a bad habit!”*

The Holy Prophet (S) said: *“What type of bad habit?”*

They said: *“He did not refrain himself from doing some bad actions; for example, he used to chase the women.”*

The Holy Prophet (S): *“May Allah bless him and shower His favour on him. He had such an affection for me that Allah would bless him even if he had been the slave merchant.”¹*

Note

1. Ruzatul Kafi, p. 77.

Story 121: Cucumber Seller

In the second century of Hijrah, divorcing woman thrice in one sitting was a question deliberated by the religious authorities. Many of the scholars and Islamic jurisprudents of those days believed that divorcing three times in a sitting without any return from both sides was valid. But the Shi'i scholars and jurisprudents, the disciples of the eminent Imams ('a), considered such a divorce null and void.

They said: *“Divorcing a woman thrice is valid in case it happens in three sittings, that is to say, a man divorces his wife and then revokes it; he divorces her again, and he revokes it again. Then for the third time when he divorces his wife, under this condition the right of revocation in waiting term (Oddah) is deprived of him.*

Even after the expiration of the waiting term he has no right to remarry to her unless the formalities of “Muhailil “ - the thrice divorced woman marry to another man - are carried out; that is they cohabit and then either they divorce, or death separates them from each other.

Once in Kufah, a man divorced his wife thrice in one sitting, and then he became remorseful of his action because he loved her. It was only an insignificant misunderstanding causing them to decide to separate from each other. The woman loved her husband too, they both started to look for an expedient. They consulted the Shi'i scholars about this question.

Unanimously, the answer given by the scholars was that divorcing three times in one sitting was null and void. Presently they both are legally married and according to the Islamic Law this marriage is valid. But on the other hand, the common people following their schools and jurisprudents considered this divorce valid, and bewared them of having mutual relationship.

A strange problem had been developed, it was a question of licit or illicit of their own matrimonial relations. They were desirous to continue their mutual life as before, yet they were anxious that if the divorce might be valid, their relations would be illicit and their future children would be illegitimate.

The man decided to act according to the Shi'i scholars' legal opinion. Considering the divorce null and void, however, his wife proposed him to inquire personally from Imam al-Sadiq ('a) about this question so that she could calm down.

At that time Imam al-Sadiq ('a) lived in the ancient city of Hirah close to Kufah. It was sometime that Safah, the Abbasside Caliph, had summoned him ('a) and apprehended him from leaving the city. No one was allowed to meet him ('a) nor able to speak with him ('a).

He made several plans and tried in several ways to gain access to see the Imam ('a), but he failed. One day, standing close to the Imam's ('a) custody and deeply reflecting on the matter how to enter the Imam's ('a) place, all of a sudden, he saw a villager from the neighbourhood of Kufah selling cucumber with a tray full of them on head shouting “cucumber! cucumber!”

At the sight of that villager, a thought struck like a flash through his mind. He approached him and asked: “What is the price for all of these cucumbers?”

“Only one dirham!”

“Take it, here is one dirham!”

Then he demanded the villager to lend him his garment for a while and promised him to return it soon. The villager agreed with it; he put it on and took a glance from his head to the feet; he had resembled like a real villager. Putting the tray of cucumbers on his head, he began shouting: *“cucumber! cucumber!”*

While shouting as if he was selling the cucumbers, he made his way towards the place where Imam al-Sadiq ('a) was living. When he reached before the Imam's ('a) residence, a servant came out and called him: *“O cucumber seller! Come here!”*

Without realization of the guards, he easily approached the Imam ('a).

The Imam ('a) said: *“Well done! You made a good plan! Tell me now what you want to ask?”*

He said: *“O descendant of the Messenger of Allah! I have divorced my wife thrice in one sitting. Although I have asked the Shi'i scholars about it, and they have unanimously considered it null and void, my wife is not satisfied yet. She says: “Unless you go and ask the Imam ('a) and get an answer from him ('a), I will not accept it.” This is the reason I have approached you by this trick so that I get my answer from you personally.”*

The Imam ('a): *“Go and be sure that the divorce is null and void, and you both are legitimate husband and wife with each other.”¹*

Note

1. Bihar al-Anwar, v. 11, p. 154.

Story 122: The Testimony Of Umm 'Ala

In Madinah, the Muslims constituted two groups in aggregate: The original inhabitants and those who had emigrated from outside Madinah for the occasion of the Holy Prophet's (S) emigration. The latter were called 'Muhajirin' the Emigrants and the former, 'Ansar', the Helpers.

Having left their country, house, properties and at times their wives and children, and having dedicated themselves in their own fervour, the emigrants had neither homes, nor any means of subsistence. That was the main reason the 'Ansar' Helpers welcomed their brothers in religion with endless generosity. It was not the question of the guests or hosts but a question of the solidarity and friendly relationship. The 'Ansar' Helpers considered them as associates to their property and preferred them.

Uthman Ibn Mazun, one of the emigrants came from Makkah, lived in one of the Ansar's house. He fell ill; the persons living in the house, particularly Umm 'Ala Ansari, who was a pious woman and counted among those who had sworn allegiance at the Holy Prophet's (S) hand from the very day, whole heartedly nursed him. But his disease was aggravated day by day and finally he died.

The members of the house were entirely aware of the strong belief and the practice of Uthman Ibn Mazun. They had understood that he was a pious Muslim. Moreover, they had also measured the affection felt by the Holy Prophet (S) towards him. These two authentic indications sufficed for every ordinary individual to testify that Uthman was one of the people of Paradise.

While they were busy arranging his burial ceremonies, the Holy Prophet (S) arrived. Umm 'Ala turned the face towards Uthman's corpse and said: *"May Allah bless you, O Uthman! Presently I testify that Allah admitted you in His kingdom."*

No sooner had these words come out of her mouth than the Holy Prophet (S) said: *"How did you come to know that Allah had admitted him in His kingdom?"*

Umm 'Ala: 'O Messenger of Allah, I just said like that, otherwise I don't know anything."

The Holy Prophet (S): *"Uthman left for a world where all the things would be unveiled before him. It is obvious that I wish him a prosperous and good fate. But I should tell you that I, as a Prophet, never express such a statement about myself as well as anyone else."*

Since then, Umm 'Ala did not express her opinion about anyone. If she was asked to give her opinion about a deceased, she was satisfied by saying: *"At the moment, only Allah knows his condition."*

A few days from the death of Uthman, Umm 'Ala dreamt that Uthman possessed a stream of water. She narrated her dream to the Holy Prophet (S) who said to her: *"The stream of water represents his actions which is continually flowing."*¹

Note

1. Al-Bukhari, v. 9, p. 48.

Story 123: “Adhan” Prayer Call At Midnight

During the Ummayyad Caliphate, only the Arabs ruled over the totality of vast Islamic territory and took power in their own hands. But in the time of Abbasside Caliphate, the Iranian took hold of power and laid hands upon all the official positions.

Although the Abbasside Caliphs were Arabs, they were not pleased with the Arabs. Their policy was based on pushing Arabs aside and making the Iranians accede to power. They opposed even the spread of the Arabic language in certain Iranian cities. This policy continued till the era of Ma'mun.¹ After Ma'mun's death, his brother, Mu'tasim, succeeded him.

Ma'mun and Mu'tasim were not born from one mother. They were step-brothers. Ma'mun's mother was an Iranian and that of Mu'tasim, a Turkish. That was the reason the Iranians who held the important positions were not pleased with Mu'tasim's Caliphate, and they were desirous to make Abbas, the son of Ma'mun, ascend the throne.

Mu'tasim was fully aware of this case and always feared that his nephew, Abbas Ibn Ma'mun, would rise in rebellion with the support of Iranians and put an end to his rule. That's why he planned to kill Abbas and check the infiltration of the Iranians, Abbas partisans. He imprisoned Abbas where he died.

To prevent the infiltration of the Iranians, he planned to pave the way for the others so as to succeed the Iranians. To this end, he made a large number of people from Turkistan and Transoxiana, his mother's compatriots, to Emigrate to Baghdad, the capital of the Caliphate and entrusted them the direction of affairs. It did not take long that the Turks took the reins of government, and their power exceeded the Iranians' and Arabs' as well.

Having confidence in the Turks, he paved the way for them day by day, therefore in a short time they became the only applicants for the positions in the Islamic government. The Turks were all Muslims. They had learnt the Arabic language and were faithful to Islam.

Since it did not take a long time from their adherence to the Islamic civilization up to their acquisition of power, they were not familiar with the principles, rules and regulations of the Islamic civilization, contrary to Iranians who had possessed a cultural background, well versed in the Islamic principles, rules and morals, the Islamic habits, and were counted as the precursors of the supporters of Islam.

When Iranians had the reign of the affairs, all the Muslims were pleased with them. But the Turks behaved so savagely from the very day of their infiltration and access to the power that they made all the people angry and displeased.

While mounted on their horses, the Turkish soldiers strutted and paraded in the streets and alleys of Baghdad without paying any attention that there might be someone in the passages. Therefore, it happened frequently that they trod on the pedestrians, women, children, the old and infirm with the hooves of their horses.

People were so harassed that they demanded Mu'tasim to change the capital from Baghdad to the other city. They pointed out if he did not transfer the capital, they would wage a war against him.

Mu'tasim said in reply: *"By which forces are you going to fight against me while I have eighty thousand armoured soldiers at my disposal."*

They said: *"With the arrows of midnight, that is to say, we will fight against you with imprecation of midnight."*

After the exchange of these words between them, Mu'tasim acquiesced in their demand and transferred the capital from Baghdad to Samarra.

After Mu'tasim, in the era of Wasiq, Mutawakil, Muntasir and some other Caliphs, the Turks had practically control over the affairs, and the Caliphs were their subordinate, a few Abbasside Caliphs tried to make an end of their power, but they did not succeed.

One of the Abbasside Caliphs, al-Mu'atazid, put the affairs in good order and reduced their influence as far as possible. During the period of Mu'atazid, an old merchant to whom one of the chiefs of army owed a large amount of money did not manage to receive his due. He was compelled to resort to the Caliph, but whenever he went to the court, he had no access to the Caliph, for the gatekeepers and the servants prevented him from entering.

Disappointed, the poor merchant did not manage to think expedient till a day when a person guided him to a tailor in the Tuesday-market and told him that that tailor could solve his problem. The old merchant went to the tailor. The tailor ordered the military man to pay back his due, he paid the due without any hesitation.

This incident made the merchant wondered and surprised. He asked the tailor with much importunity: 'What makes these people who do not pay attention to anyone obey your order?'

The tailor said: *"I have a story to tell you. One day while I was crossing the street, a beautiful woman passed through there at the same time. One of the Turkish officers, who was drunk came out of his house and viewed the passers-by, by chance he saw this woman, and he madly hugged her in front of the people and dragged her into his house."*

The poor woman began shouting imploringly: "O people! Help! Help me! Come to my rescue! I am not of those women who do the specified work. I am a woman of honour. My husband has taken an oath that if I spend a night outside the house, he will divorce me. I will be ruined!" But no one dared to come forward.

However, I went forward and implored the officer to let the woman go away, but he beat violently on my head with a cudgel in his hand which broke my skull and took the woman in.

I gathered some people, and we went together to the door of that officer, asking him to let the woman be free. Suddenly, he came out along with a group of servants, fell upon us and started beating us.

The crowd was dispersed, and I also went back home, without stopping thinking an instant about the poor woman. I thought if that woman remained in the officer's house till morning, her matrimonial life would be ruined forever, and she could never be back home. I kept awake reflecting till midnight when a plan took shape in my mind. I thought: *"This night, since the man is drunk, he has no idea of the time, if he hears the prayer-call "Adhan" at present, he will think that the day is just dawning and will let the woman go away. Therefore, she can reach her home before the midnight."*

Immediately I headed towards the Mosque and from the minaret started the prayer-call “*Adhan*”. Meanwhile, I was keeping a watch on the streets and alleys to see whether that woman would be rescued or not. Suddenly, I saw a regiment of soldiers, on horseback and on foot, rushed to the street and all inquired about the person who was calling the “*Adhan*” prayer-call.

Although I was bitterly frightened, I introduced myself to them, saying that it was I who called the “*Adhan*” prayer-call. They asked me to come down from the minaret because the Caliph has summoned me.

I was taken to the Caliph's palace. I saw the Caliph anxiously waiting for me. He asked me: “*Why did you call the “Adhan” Prayer-call at this hour of night?*”

I began narrating the incident from the beginning to end. Immediately, he ordered that that officer along with the woman be brought to his presence. After a brief investigation, he ordered the execution of the officer. He sent the woman back home to her husband, insisting that her husband should not reprimand her and take care of her too, for the Caliph was sure of her innocence.”

Then Mu'atazid ordered me to implement this initiative whenever I encountered such injustices, assuring that he would attend to that. Thus, this news diffused widely among the people. Since then, they feared and respected me. That is why when I ordered this officer to repay his due, he obeyed my order immediately.²

Notes

1. One of the trials and tribulations provoked by the Umayyad and Abbasside statesmen as well as the other governors of the Islamic countries for the world of Islam was to stir up the tribal and racial fanaticism.

As we know, Islam declared war against this kind of fanaticism contrived to suppress it, and managed to unite miraculously the different nations, tribes and races of Arabs, Iranians, Turks, Romans, Indians etc, under the standard of one thought and belief.

Islam crystalized the highest and noblest hope of human beings by applying the following Qur'anic principle:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

“O people! We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honourable of you with Allah is that [one] who fears Allah. Indeed, Allah is Omniscient, All-Aware.” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13).

But the Umayyad, Abbasside and the other ambitious governors rekindled this fire and put “nationalism” in circulation. It is remarkable to mention that the same statesmen and governors who are the prime movers of these stupid sentiments take no interest in it and laugh at the feeble-minded caught in their trap.

In the history of Islam, there are two lines keeping close together: the light and the dark, the ugly and the fair; from one hand, the gloomy fanaticism and racism set ablaze by the political machinery and the relevant centers, and from the other hand, the fraternal and friendly sentiments among the diverse people of different tribes, nations, races, colour, languages prevailed in the scientific, cultural centers as well as in the theological centres, religious places, Mosques, the prayer places and the common centers of the Muslims.

However, despite all the stratagems made by the political machineries in order to create discord and diversity among the Muslims, the clergymen and spirituality of Islam predominated over them. The white and black, Arabs and Iranians, Turks and Indians kept

close together in the theological centers, the lines of the prayers and religious mobilization and the other assemblies turned the face towards each other's as brothers.

Recently, during two or three centuries, the occidental colonizers put in execution the means of vast plans and excessive financial investment to implement their program of racial fanaticism and nationalism in the Islamic countries. Unfortunately, they have succeeded in their plot in a great extent and have engaged the Islamic nations in commercial matters while having pillaged their spiritual and material capitals without any apprehension.

How many books have been written in this regard by the incompetent or treacherous hands of individuals, and how many positions and posts have been offered to the people in compensation of their services.

Nowadays, it is incumbent on every Muslim to open his eyes, endeavour on his past to annihilate the factors of discord created by the present and the past mal-intentioned politicians and must not follow these kinds of superstitions and delusions. A Muslim must know that the nationalism and tribalism is neither the source of dignity and honour nor of the shame and disgrace.

2. Zahrul Islam, v. 1, p. 32.

Story 124: Complaint Lodged Against The Husband

In the days of his Caliphate, 'Ali ('a) assumed personally, the investigation of the complaint, and never entrusted the same to someone else. During the very hot days when people usually took rest in their houses, at noon the mid-day, 'Ali ('a) was sitting in the shadow of a wall outside the Caliph's residence in case anyone had a complaint to lodge, he could submit it to 'Ali ('a) without any problem or intermediary. He ('a) sometimes went round the streets and alleys, observing and keeping a close eye on the situation of public.

One of the overheated days, he ('a), tired and sweating, returned to the Caliph's residence when he saw a woman standing before the door. As she saw 'Ali ('a), she came forward and said: *"I have a complaint to lodge. My husband has done injustice to me; he has turned me out of the house. In addition to that he has threatened me that if I return back home, he will also beat me. At present I have come here to plead for justice."*

'Ali ('a): *"You, servant of Allah! It is too hot just now. Please wait! After noon when the weather becomes a little better, if Allah wills, I will come with you and settle your problem."*

The woman: *"If my absence from home lasts long, I fear that his anger would increase and he would pester me."*

'Ali ('a) bent down his head for an instance and then raised his head while murmuring these words: *"No! By Allah! It must not be delayed to respond to the complaint of oppressed. It is necessary to do justice for the oppressed against the oppressor, and eliminate the fear of oppressor from the heart of oppressed so that the oppressed can stand bravely and fearlessly against the oppressor and demand his own rights."*

'Ali ('a): *"Tell me where do you reside?"*

The woman: *"In such and such a place."*

'Ali ('a): *"Let's go!"*

'Ali ('a) went along with the woman just up to the threshold of her house, stood in front of the door and shouted loudly: *"People of the house! سلامون عليكم Peace be upon you!"*

A young man who was the husband of the same woman came out. He did not recognize 'Ali ('a), he noticed a man of about sixty-year-old accompany his wife. He came to know that his wife had brought this person to protect her and to intercede with him in her favour but he did not say anything.

'Ali ('a): *"This lady, your wife, has a complaint to lodge against you. She says: you have done injustice to her and turned her out of the house. In addition to that you have threatened to beat her, I have come to tell you to fear Allah and act benevolently towards her."*

The young man: *"It is none of your business whether I treat her well or bad! Yes! I have threatened to beat her. But since she has brought you here and you are talking on behalf of her. I will make her burn alive."*

'Ali ('a) flared up at his insolence, putting his hand on the sword hilt and drew it out of the scabbard. Then he ('a) said: *"I am admonishing you, bidding for good and forbidding to do evil but you are responding me in such*

a manner. You frankly say to me that you will make her burn alive. You think that the life is beyond limits to such an extent.”

On raising his voice, Imam 'Ali ('a) was mobbed by a crowd of passers-by from the surroundings, and every one coming forward saluted him respectfully and said: *“As-salamun alaykum ya Amir al-Mu'minin, peace be upon you, O Commander of believers!”*

The arrogant young man recognised to whom he was facing. To be put out of countenance, he apologized profusely and said: *“O Commander of believers! Pardon me! I confess myself to be guilty. From now on, I promise to be obedient to my wife. Whatever she orders, I will obey her.”*

'Ali ('a) turned towards the woman and said: *“Now go to your home, but take care of your behavior, do not act in such a manner which makes him react like this!”*¹

Note

1. Bihar al-Anwar. v. 9. p. 598.

Story 125: Housework

After their marriage and establishment of a matrimonial life, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) and Fatimah Zahra ('a) held counsel with the Holy Prophet (S) regarding the organization and distribution of housework. They said: "*O Messenger of Allah! We would like to take counsel with you about the organization and distribution of housework.*"

The Holy Prophet (S) charged 'Ali ('a) with the external affairs outside the house and Zahra ('a) with the internal affairs inside the house.

Both 'Ali ('a) and Zahra ('a) were satisfied and happy that they had made the Holy Prophet (S) intervene in their private life and that the Holy Prophet (S) had also welcomed their proposition with a particular kindness and gentleness and had given his viewpoint.

Zahra ('a), in particular, manifested much happiness, for the Holy Prophet (S) had dispensed her with the internal affairs. She used to say: "*I am infinitely content that the Holy Prophet (S) exempted me from dealing with the men.*"

From that time, 'Ali ('a) was responsible to the tasks such as drawing water from the well, providing the food, fuel and the purchase from the market.

As for Zahra ('a), she had the duties to grind the wheat and barley, to bake bread, to cook, to wash and to clean the house.

However, 'Ali ('a) gave a hand to his wife in the house work whenever he was free. One day, the Holy Prophet (S) came to their house and saw them working together.

He (S) asked: "*Anyone of you who are tired can take rest so that I can take his place?*"

'Ali ('a) said in reply: "*O Messenger of Allah! Zahra is tired.*"

The Holy Prophet (S) made Zahra take rest while he (S) continued the work.

On the other hand, Zahra ('a) shouldered external burdens whenever 'Ali ('a) was called to take part in "*Jihad*", the holy war or to make journey. Such was the organization going on, 'Ali ('a) and Zahra ('a) were both carrying out their duties without feeling a need of a servant till the day when the children were born in this modest, small, clean and calm house. In this condition, the work and labour done by Zahra ('a) had naturally been enhanced.

Taking compassion on his dear wife, finding that the maintenance of house and the work in the kitchen had filled with smoke and covered with dust her garments and dresses as well as her hands had been blistered by having worked with the manual mill, and the water-bouget cord had traced on her chest because of carrying the water from the remote place, Imam 'Ali ('a) proposed his beloved wife to go to the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) and ask for a servant.

Zahra ('a) agreed with her husband and went to the Prophet's (S) house. Incidentally at that moment there were a group of Muslims sitting at the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) and busy talking. She ('a) could not expose her request out of modesty at the assembly and returned home.

The Holy Prophet's (S) attention was drawn towards the coming of Zahra ('a). He (S) found out that Zahra ('a) had something to tell him, and since the situation was inappropriate, she went back to her house.

The next day, early morning, the Holy Prophet (S) went to their house. 'Ali ('a) and Zahra ('a) were present at home. The Holy Prophet (S), after saying As-salamun alaykum and getting the answer of Alaykum as-salam O Messenger of Allah, entered the house.

The Holy Prophet (S) asked Zahra: *“You came to see me yesterday and then returned. You surely had a request! Tell me!”*

'Ali ('a) said in reply: *“O Messenger of Allah! If you permit me I will tell why Zahra came to you. I have sent her to you, for I found that the housework had increased and I felt pity for her, on observing that the maintenance of house and the work in the kitchen had filled with smoke and covered with dust her clothes, and her hands had been blistered by having worked with the manual mill, and the water-bouget cord had made a mark on her chest. That is why I told her to go in your presence so that you would provide a servant for us to help Zahra.”*

The Holy Prophet (S) did not want to see the standard of living of his and of his beloved's be superior to those of the poor people living in the community and having very little facilities, for Madinah was steeped in poverty and indigence, particularly, a certain number of *“Muhajirin”* Emigrants, had a very hard conditions to survive.

On the other hand, he (S) was acquainted with the mentality of his own daughter, Zahra; he (S) knew that how much she was in love with the morals of worship and remembrance of the Almighty Allah which enhanced in her the energy and eagerness. Thus he (S) said: *“Would you like me to teach you something better than all of that?”*

“Please do so! O Messenger of Allah!”

“Whenever you want to sleep, do not forget to say thirty-three times “Subhana Allah” Glory be to Allah, thirty-three times “Alhamdulillah” Praise be to Allah and thirty-four times “Allahu Akbar” Allah is great. The effect created in your spirit by saying these words is greater than that of the servant's to help you in your housework.”

Zahra ('a) repeated happily and vivaciously three times: *“I am pleased with what Allah and His Prophet (S) are pleased with.”*¹

Note

1. Bihar, v. 10, p. 24-25.

Lexicon Of Proper Names And Arabic Terms

Abdul Malik ibn Marwan: Umayyad Caliph, son of Marwan ibn Hakam who reigned from 65 to 86 Hijrah.

Abu Ali ibn Sina: Avicenna, Iranian physician, writer, philosopher (980-1037).

Abu Bakr: First of four caliphs who are called 'the rightly guided caliphs'.

Abu Dharr: A close companion of the Prophet (S).

Abu Hanifa: Theologian, jurispudent, born in Kufah (696-767). The Hanafi School refers to him.

Abu Talib: Uncle of the Holy Prophet (S), Imam Ali's ('a) father, died three years before Hijrah.

Ahlul Bayt: 'The people of house', the Prophet's family.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal: Theologian, jurispudent (780-855). Hanbali school refers to him.

A'ishah: The Holy Prophet's (S) wife, the daughter of Abu Bakr.

Ali ibn Abi Talib: First Imam, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law; the first who embraced Islam after the Prophet; the fourth Caliph of those who were named 'the rightly guided caliphs'; martyred in 40 Hijrah at Kufah Mosque.

Ali ibn ul-Husayn Zainul Abidin: The fourth Imam (37-95 H).

Al-Muatazid: Abbasid Caliph.

Amir ul-Mu'minin: 'Commander of the Faithful'; title attributed to Imam Ali ('a) (and at times given to the other Caliphs).

Ansar: 'The Helpers'; the inhabitants of Madinah who helped the Holy Prophet (S) ever since the emigration from Makkah to Madinah.

Asr: The afternoon; The Asr prayer is the third of five daily prayers.

Baqir: Title of the fifth Imam Muhammad ibn Ali ('a).

Bilal: A black slave emancipated by the Holy Prophet (S). He was one of the first Muslims and the first Mu'azin (the one who calls to prayer).

Dawud: Prophet David.

Demosthenes: The greatest Athenian orator. His political speeches are largely taken up with the cause of Greek liberty against the pretensions of Philip II of Macedon, whom he attacked in the Philippi. (384-322 BC)

Du'a: Prayer, supplication

Eid: Festival of Islamic calendar

Ibn Ishaq: Son of Isaac

Fatimah: The Holy Prophet's (S) daughter from Khadijah; wife of Imam Ali ('a); mother of Imam Hasan and Husayn ('a)

Fatwa: Religious decree passed by Islamic jurispudent.

Ghazali: One of the greatest Islamic scholars, originally from Tus in Iran (1058-1111 H).

Ghusl: Major ritual bathing.

Hadi: 'The Guide'; title of Imam Ali al-Naqi, the tenth Imam.

Hadith: The traditions of the Prophet and Imams.

Haram: Sanctuary (in this context, the Sanctuary of Makkah).

Hasan: The second Imam, son of Ali ('a) and Fatimah ('a).

Hisham ibn Abdul Malik: Umayyad Caliph, died in 125 H.

Hijaz: Region of Arabia, along the Red sea where Makkah and Madinah are situated.

Husayn ibn Ali: The third Imam, son of Ali ('a) and Fatimah ('a).

Ihram: State of ritual consecration; pilgrim's garment.

Isa: Prophet Jesus Christ, son of Mary.

Isha: Evening; the prayer of Isha is the last prayer of five daily prayers.

Imam: Leader, guide, custodian

Jabir: Close companion of the prophet.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad: The sixth Imam; title: al-Sadiq (83-148 H).

Jahiliyah: Ignorance; this term refers to the social culture of pre-Islamic Arabia, the period of paganism.

Jihad: Holy struggle; war in the way of Allah.

Ka'bah: The House of Allah; situated in Makkah; called 'Baytullah al-Haram'; constructed by Prophet Ibrahim ('a).

Kaffarah: Religious expiation.

Katib: Scribe

Kazim: Title of Musa ibn Ja'far, the seventh Imam (128-183 H).

Khadijah: The wife of the Holy Prophet (S); the first woman to accept Islam; died three years before Hijrah.

Luqman: A sage whose name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an; chapter 32 is named after him.

Madinat ul-Nabi: The Prophet's city, Madinah.

Maghrib: Dusk; the prayer of Maghrib is the fourth of five daily prayers.

Mahdi ibn Mansur: Abbasid Caliph; father of Harun al-Rashid (158-169 H).

Malik ibn Anas: Theologian, jurist (714-798 CE); Maliki school refers to him.

Malik Ashtar Nakhai: Close companion of Imam Ali ('a); well-known for his courage; he was poisoned on the way to Egypt by Mu'awiyah.

Ma'mun: Abbasid Caliph who reigned from 198-218 H.

Mansur Dawaniqi: Abbasid Caliph; reigned from 136-158 H.

Maryam: Mary, mother of Jesus Christ ('a).

Mina: Valley near Makkah; pilgrims have to perform certain rites of the pilgrimage in the plain of Mina.

Minbar: Pulpit; mosque pulpit.

Miqdad: A companion of the Holy Prophet (S).

Mu'awiyah: A bloodthirsty Umayyad Caliph; founder of the Umayyad dynasty; he waged war against the fourth Caliph, Ali ('a), and poisoned Imam Hasan ('a); his son is responsible for the massacre of Karbala.

Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Husayn: The fifth Imam; his title is 'al-Baqir' (57-114 H).

Al-Mutawakkil: Abbasid Caliph; he reigned from 233-247 H.

Negus: Also called Najashi; King of Abyssinia at the time of the Holy Prophet (S).

Nahrawan: Battle provoked by the Khawarij (Seceders) in 38 H against Imam Ali ('a).

Naynawa: Nineveh, located east of the Tigris, opposite Mosul.

Naishabur: City in north-east of Iran, 120 km from Mashhad.

Qibla: The direction faced in prayer, towards Makkah.

Quraysh: Aristocratic tribe in Makkah to which the Holy Prophet (S) belonged; the violently opposed the Holy Prophet (S) and persecuted his companions.

Rak'at: Bowing; part of the sequence of prayer.

Rastan: Plural of 'rast' which means true, right, verity, just, but also loyal, veracious.

Al-Ridha': Title of Musa ibn Ja'far, the eighth Imam.

Salman: One of the closest companions of the Holy Prophet (S) called Salman Al-Farsi (The Persian) because of his origin.

Shafi'i: Theologian jurisprudent (767-820CE) to whom the school of Shafi'i refers.

Siffin: Battle imposed on Imam Ali ('a) by Mu'awiyah; occurred in the frontier between Iraq and Syria; lasted one and half years.

Sulayman: Prophet Solomon ('a), son of Prophet David ('a).

Talhah: Companion of the Prophet who revolted against Imam Ali ('a).

Ta'qib: Zikr or du'a (supplications) following the prayer.

Uhud: Battle between Muslims and pagans of Makkah; occurred in the 3rd Hijrah.

Umar ibn Abdul Aziz: Umayyad Caliph, who reigned from 99-101 H.

Umar ibn Khattab: Second Caliph of 'the rightly guided Caliphs'.

Uthman: Third Caliph of 'the rightly guided Caliphs'.

Umm Salamah: One of the wives of the Holy Prophet (S).

Wuqyeh: A measure equal to 213 grams

Wajeb: Religious obligation

Walid: Umayyad Caliph; son of Abdul Malik ibn Marwan.

Wudhu': Ritual ablution done before performing the daily prayers.

Yahya: John (the Baptist)

Yunus ibn Mata: Prophet Jonah ('a), Hebrew Prophet.

Yusuf: Prophet Joseph ('a), son of Prophet Jacob ('a).

Zakat: Alms tax, almsgiving, poor-due

Zakaria: Prophet Zachariah, Hebrew prophet (6 BC).

Zain ul-Abidin: Title of the fourth Imam.

Zikr: Liturgical glorification of Allah.

Zubair: Companion of the Holy Prophet (S); he revolted against Imam Ali ('a) with Talhah and A'ishah and imposed the battle of Jamal on him ('a).

Zuhr: Noon, mid-day; the prayer of zuhr is the second prayer of the five daily prayers.

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