

The First Slogan

News leaking now and then from Mecca to the tribe of Bani Ghefar had attracted the mind of Abi Zar, a man of an inquisitive nature. He wanted to reach to the depth of those developments in Mecca, but the distorted news occasionally obtained from the individuals, were not making any sense to him. The only definite thing known to him was that a new voice has arisen in Mecca, and the Meccans were striving hard to silence it. But what was that new voice and why the Meccans were opposing it? These were the questions which remained unanswered. His brother was going to Mecca. He told him, "People tell me that a man has appeared in Mecca and has brought some new talks, and claim they have been revealed unto him from God. Since you are going to Mecca, investigate into the same; and bring me the correct information."

Days passed; he eagerly waited for his brother; when he came back, Abu Dharr asked him: "What is the news, and how the things stand there?" "So far as I could gather he is a man who invites people towards good morals. He has also brought some talk which is not poetry."

"I had wanted you to make a more thorough investigation. This much information is not enough for my purpose. Better I should go there personally to find out the truth:"

He put up some provision on his back and straight away came to Mecca. He was determined to meet the man who had brought the new talks and to hear the words from his own mouth. But he neither knew him nor thought it prudent to enquire about him from someone else. The atmosphere in Mecca was tense with oppression and intimidation. Without making his intention known to anyone, he was looking in all directions, listening to the gossip of the people around him hoping that it might provide him a 'clue.' The Masjidul Haram was the centre of news and events. Hence he came there with his baggage on the back. The day turned into night, but he could find no clue. Night passed a little; he stretched himself there. Soon after a young man passed nearby. He looked at Abu Dharr with searching eyes, and went away. His glance seemed to him very meaningful. It occurred to him that perhaps that young man was the right person to divulge his secret to. He followed him but came back not daring to speak to him.

Next day also he sat whole day in Masjidul Haram alert looking to every possible clue; but in vain. The

night befell and he again stretched on the same spot. The same youth appeared again and respectfully said, "Has the time not come for you to come to your house and spend the night there?" Saying this he took him to his house. Abu Dharr did not divulge his secret that night, nor did the youth ask him. Early morning Abu Dharr said good-bye to him and came to the mosque after his pursuit. That day also turned into night and he could not make out anything from the talks of the people. The young man again appeared and took him to his house; but this time he broke the silence:

"Can you tell me why you have come to this city?"

"I shall tell you if you promise to help me"

"I promise I shall do my best to help you" "The fact is that we have been hearing among our tribes that a man has appeared in Mecca and has brought some talks claiming the same to be revealed unto him from God. I have come so that I may see him and may investigate about him. Firstly, tell me what do you believe about him? Secondly, can you guide me to him?"

"Rest assured he is on right and what he says is from God. I shall take you to him in the morning. But as you are aware if these people came to know about it your life as well as mine will be in danger. Tomorrow morning I shall walk ahead and you follow me at a distance. If I will see any danger I shall stand and bow towards the earth like a man emptying a pot; then you must be off. If there is no danger you will follow me where-ever I go".

Next morning the youth who was none else than Ali appeared from his house, Abu Dharr following him. Fortunately the way was clear and they reached the house of the prophet safely.

He made a thorough study of the manners of the Prophet and also listened to the verses of the Qur'an. Not much time has passed that he embraced Islam very enthusiastically. He made a covenant with the Prophet that he would not listen to any reproach in the way of Allah during his whole life and would speak truth even though it might be bitter for some tastes.

The Prophet said: "Now go back to your tribes and invite them towards Islam till you receive my next order" He said, "Very well; but before leaving this city I shall go before these people and will announce before them the slogan of Islam, come what may."

He went straight to the heart of the City, i.e. the Mosque and cried before the congregation of Quraish:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

"(I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is His Servant and Messenger)."

Hearing this slogan from the stranger, Meccans rushed at him immediately and had Abbas son of Abdul

Muttalib not come to his rescue they would have torn him to pieces. Abbas said, "This man is from the tribe of Ghefar, and the trade caravan of Quraish plying between Mecca and Syria passes through their lands. Don't you think if you kill one of their men, you will never again be allowed to pass through their land safely?"

Abu Dharr was rescued from their hands. However, he was not satisfied. He said, "Once again I shall repeat this slogan. Let these people hear what they don't like to hear at all. If they hear it again and again they will become used to it."

So, next day he repeated the same slogan. Again the people attacked him and Abbas who was present there saved him from their atrocities.

After that, according to the order of the Prophet, he returned home and started preaching Islam among his tribe. When the Prophet migrated to Medina, Abu Dharr too went to him and remained in Medina almost to the end of his life. He was extremely frank and owing to this virtuous attributes he was exiled during the Caliphate of Othman, first to Syria and later at a place named Rabza near Medina. There he died a lonely death. The Prophet had said about him

"May God bless Abu Dharr! he will live alone, will die alone and shall be brought up alone on the Day of Resurrection."

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