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## Chapter 4: The Consultative Body of Quraysh

"I understand that one morning the son of your slave girl Summaya got up and, as a result of a miracle of Muhammad found himself a master and a chief like freemen and other masters. Rather, as I have been given to understand, he considered himself to be higher than and superior to all other chiefs.

This man has built 'Ka'ba' in his house with a mehr'ab (a place for offering prayers) in it. Of course, previously such a momentous precedent existed among the Sabi'in and nowadays the son of Sumayya has performed this task.

This man is no longer 'Ammar bin Sumayya but has adopted the title of 'Abul Yaqzin' (The Vigilant).

These days he has become the friend of the Almighty Lord! The same Lord who has manifested Himself in his Ka'ba and radiates in his mehrab, hears his words, and gives inspiration to him. Anyhow, these two (the Lord and His slave) are friends of each other. To my mind if Abu Huzayfa is brought to life again he will consider himself like a beggar before this man.

I am not aware whether in that event this son of the slavegirl would agree to talk with his former master, and whether he would admit him in his presence, or whether. he would turn away his face from him in the same manner in which he turns it away from the chiefs of Quraysh and treats them to be inferior, or whether he would despise him in the same manner in which he turns his face away from the respectable and high-ranking men of Quraysh, whom he treats with scorn, and considers them worse than slaves and slave girls".

These were the words which Abu Sufyan bin Sakhr bin Harb bin Umayya spoke to Abu Jahl 'Amr bin Hisham, the dictator of Bani Makhzum. Without affording Abu Jahl an opportunity to speak he himself spoke on with great excitement: "Would that we too had a strong slave like 'Ammar whom we could send to Muhammad and his Allah as an intermediary and when all paths were closed to us he might have

proved to be like a bridge for us and the doors might not have been closed for us to return. How lucky you are O Abul Hakam! You are under the protection of the son and husband of Sumayya, and you are safe from all sides. But we shall not enjoy security under the rule of the slaves”.

Abu Jahl, whose kuniya (patronymic appellation) was Abul Hakam, said: "I feel that your attention is confined to the slaves and the bondmen and you forget the share of freemen as we are. If our slave 'Ammar has constructed a Ka'ba and a mehr'ab in his house my cousin Arqam, too, has, as compared with him, made his house situated in safa, the 'house of Islam' and it is in this house that as a result of the activities of Muhammad, the Ka'ba has now been abandoned and the people turn away their faces from it and pay attention to Syria. Furthermore, the position of Darun Nadwa, the house of Qusayy, our noble ancestor, has deteriorated! Why are you disappointed, broken hearted and dejected?"

Are you not hopeful of intercession by Abu Huzayfa Hashim bin 'Utba, brother of Hind, Abdullah bin Sahim, and 'Uthman bin 'Affan? All of them are competent to intercede for you before Muhammad, as and when the conditions of Batha are turned upside down!"

Anyhow, the notables of Quraysh had assembled in Hajar and were very much worried on account of the influence of the Holy Prophet (S) and the spreading of his invitation among the white skinned and the red skinned persons. This was due to the fact that as the invitation of the Prophet (S) spread, Makkah became divided into two sections and the aristocrat class were worried on account of the end of their luxurious life, their exploitation of the people, and their superiority over others.

The names of the distinguished personalities of this group have been recorded as under:

Walid bin Mughira, the elder of Makhzum tribe and his nephew, the dictator 'Amr bin Hisham, 'Utba and Shayba, the two sons of Tabi'a bin Abd Shams, Abu Sufyan bin Harb bin Umayya, Nazr bin Harth, the standard bearer of Bani Abudud Oar, Aswadbin Muttalib bin Hashim, Abu Lahab bin Abdul Muttalib, Abdullah bin Abu Mayya, Abu Amr As bin wa'il, Nabiyya and Maniyya, the two sons of Hajaj Sahmi, Umayya bin Khalaf Jumahi and 'Uqba bin Abu Mu'it.

As soon as the conversation of Sakhr and 'Amr came to an end 'Uqba said to them: "You two are quarrelling with each other like two warriors. It might be said that all of us have assembled here to act as the witnesses and judges of the quickness of your apprehension and the acuteness of your minds! I swear by what I believe to be sacred that if you don't check the contacts of Muhammad with the people he will make them rule over you and will make the rogues the masters of your elders! Then all of you will be obliged to become humble before him and he is the person who will not allow preference of the white over the black, of the masters over their slaves and of the wealthy over the poor.”

He added: "When we sit together we feel that none is superior to you two persons and other persons at

the helm of affairs amongst Quraysh in the matter of eloquence, wit, manner of conversation and debate, but in spite of this as soon as Muhammad arrives in our gathering, all of us tremble with fear and our most stubborn persons are reduced to hopeless perplexity before him!"

Umayya bin Khalaf said to Abu Hanzala (Abu Sufyan) and Abul Hakam: "Now that the affairs of Muhammad have assumed such dimensions in the eyes of our elders and he has created differences in our community, and he ridicules our gods, you should no longer find fault with a freeman or be rude towards a slave, because the son of Mughira and the son of Rabi'a look on Muhammad and his innovations with great respect.

Abu Khalid bin Walid who was sitting in the centre of the assembly was leaning comfortably on a pillow and was hearing these discussions with a smile on his lips. When the reproach of Khalaf reached this stage, he (i.e. Walid) crossed his legs and said, without the smile disappearing from his face: "O son of Khalaf! What talent do you see in the person of your own slave, Bilal bin Raba? Do you think that the efforts of Bilal for becoming free from the clutches of the son of Khalaf and his getting rid of his slavery is more important than the injustice and violence committed by the son of Khalaf against Muhammad?"

My Qurayshi brethren! you renounce the establishment of truth and indulge in bias. If you behave towards your slaves and slave girls humanly and are just to them, they will never leave you and will have no grudge against you. However, while dealing with them you forget one point and don't keep in mind the fact that they too are human beings like you and possess eyes, ears and tongues like you and also possess intellects like you to understand the meanings of greatness and nobleness just as your intellects do. If at the time of their becoming your slaves you had not forgotten this simple fact they would have been friendly with you.

However, after having forgotten this point they too don't have any affection for you and if they obey you apparently they are annoyed with you at heart, and this is the very thing which makes them revolt against you. And when Muhammad showed them love and kindness they also planned to achieve freedom so that they might be free and acquire respect. Hence, you should reproach yourselves and get annoyed with you rather than with them!

This is what I feel about these helpless persons and as no stranger is present in our assembly I state this fact openly and believe that it is necessary for you to review your own position. Now as regards the things ascribed to me by the son of Khalaf I shall tell you the truth if you so desire. As all of you are aware the position enjoyed by the father and uncle of Muhammad in the eyes of Quraysh is not equalled by anyone and I must also say that the position and esteem enjoyed by Muhammad alone is much higher than that which they enjoy.

You have been under the impression that Muhammad is a poet, a soothsayer, a magician or an insane

person. However, when he contacts the people the falsity of this thinking is abundantly proved. And it is due to the falsity of these very thoughts that the supporters of the Prophet (S) gain strength and become hostile to you. It is in this respect that your action results in profit for him and helps him instead of being harmful to him.

It is due to keeping these facts in view that whatever you ascribe to Muhammad is contrary to my assessment. And if I oppose you in this matter it is because you should adopt a sensible policy in fighting against Muhammad, and should judge the standard of the strength of your adversary. I swear that whatever I have heard from Muhammad is very interesting and pleasant and whatever I see in him is worth confirmation”.

Umayya bin Khalaf wanted to say something but 'Uqba stopped him and said: "Abu Khalid has said the final word and whatever he has said is correct. My views are identical with his. I see in Muhammad the same thing which he has seen and what the son of Khalaf says does not impress me, and I am not prepared to change my opinion. Previously also I advised my people saying: "Leave this man alone and remain neutral". I said this because I was sure that what I heard from him would impress the Arabs and thought that if he was victorious one day his government would be our government and the glory acquired by him would be our glory. In that case we would be the luckiest people. But the reply which my hearers gave me was that the magician had bewitched me, whereas I swear that he is not a magician but says things which we had never heard before".

The fox of Quraysh, Nazr bin Harith, said: "O Qurayshites! You are faced with a great danger which it will not be possible for you to combat later! During the days when Muhammad was young he was considered by you to be the most respectable, the most truthful and the most honest one. Now that grey hairs have appeared, and he has passed the stage of youth, and has become mature and has called you to believe in His Prophethood, you call him a liar!

He contended with you in the presence of all, and before you commenced hostilities against him a few years back, you had yourselves become subservient to him. Many years earlier i .e .from the very days you confirmed his honesty and truthfulness you provided the proof for your acknowledging him your master. You say Muhammad is a magician. However, I swear that he is not a magician. We have seen the magicians and are aware of their activities. Muhammad is not a magician and his actions do not resemble magic.

You say he is a soothsayer, but that too is not correct; we have seen the soothsayers and have heard their rhyming words. The words of Muhammad do not resemble those of the soothsayers. You say that he is a poet. We know the technique of poetry and can very well understand the rhythms and metres of various poets. The words of Muhammad do not resemble poetry. You say that he is insane. We have observed different types of insanity. The actions and the words of Muhammad do not resemble those of the insane persons.

O Quraysh! A calamity has befallen you; you can neither ward it off, nor can you combat with it. You have no alternative left but to adopt the path of anyone of the two elders of Quraysh (Abu Khalid bin Walid or Abu Walid).”

At this moment Abu Jahl broke the silence and said: "You are always quarrelling with one another regarding Muhammad and every one of you considers himself to be more knowledgeable about him than others. You should know that the event related with him has shaken us terribly. One night I found myself in such a condition that I could not have a wink of sleep. Then I realized that a mysterious agent had overpowered me and controlled me in such a way that it might be said that his fingertips were squeezing my back and shoulders and were taking me wherever he liked. Then I reached the pillar of the house where Muhammad offers his prayers and there I heard his voice.

That night I perceived sorcery of magic which changed the places of senses into sight. I considered as if wine was going through my mouth into my body and then I was in a state of intoxication which ran throughout my body. However, the prayers of Muhammad were not like this. This wine entered my body through the ears and was then dispersed in its different parts.

During that night I was thrown, on account of that prayer, into an ecstasy which, I had never experienced in any wine. Do you wonder? That night Muhammad kept me captivated with the strings of his prayers till dawn. As light spread his eyes fell on me. It might be said that before him I had been adjudged to pay a penalty .In the circumstances I feared disgrace and stepped back. When I was returning I met a man who faced me with a drawn sword. I said to myself: "O 'Amr! May your mother mourn your death! Now Quraysh are in search of you!" Then I realized that the man was Abu Hanzala and another man who was standing behind him was Akhnas bin Shariq Saqafi. These two persons were watching me.

When I came to know that the agitation and trembling, which had overpowered me, had affected these two persons also, and they too had been bewitched by the magic of Muhammad and intoxicated by his wine, my fear diminished. Then we recommended to one another that we would not go that way again, because, otherwise we would also become an example and a specimen of those fools who followed Muhammad! In spite of this I lost self-control during the next night also and felt that a mysterious agent was pulling me towards itself and dragging me to the place where Muhammad was offering his prayers and I could hear his voice.

This time also I felt that I was becoming intoxicated by his wine and it gave me a hilarity which is not provided by wine or by victory. And when I came to my senses again at dawn I met those two persons. We advised one another that we should abandon the idea of coming there again, and then parted.

I don't conceal the fact that this incident was repeated during the third night also. I met my two

companions as I had met them twice before and we repeated our resolve. I didn't meet the two persons again and do testify now that they heard what I had heard and also perceived what I had perceived.

If we have gathered here to say what we have in our hearts about Muhammad it is the same what we have already said. However; as all of us have assembled here for something else we must think about some remedy.”

Abu Sufyan laughed and said: "O Abul Hakam! It is good that you have reminded me, because, I had forgotten what I had felt earlier.”

Abu Jahl said: "Were you absent and have arrived just now? I had already spoken to you earlier about what you have heard now.”

Abu Sufyan said: "I swear by your own life that I was present here and heard your expressive remarks and perceived everything with my ears and eyes. However, I have a question to ask you; why we have assembled here and what is your opinion about what you have heard?"

Abu Jahl said: "Let me first know your views about what you have heard.”

Abu Sufyan replied: "Only a small part of what I have heard is intelligible, and most of these things are simply confusing and I cannot follow what they all mean.”

Abu Jahl said: "My view regarding what I have heard about Muhammad is this: We were the rivals of the family of Abd Manaf. They pulled the people to themselves and we pulled them to ourselves. They burdened the shoulders of the people and we also did the same thing. They gave things to the people and we too gave them things. We were going side by side with each other till the stage came when they said: 'A Prophet has risen from amongst us to whom revelations come from the heavens'. How can we accept such a claim? I swear by god that we shall never express belief in him and shall never testify to his claim.”

Abu Sufyan said: "O Abul Hakam! You hold a wonderfully good opinion. Don't talk about Abd Manaf. Let us discuss Bani Hashim, The dispute and rivalry between us and Bani Hashim was not about chief ship. The fact is that they sowed the seed and made imposition and we also did the same. And as soon as we became almost equal to them in the field of competition they said: The Prophet is from amongst us. How can we accept this thing? I swear by god that we shall never express faith in their Prophet and shall never acknowledge him as such.”

Abu Lahab said: "This is not the point. I preferred you to his family and as all of you are aware the antecedents, preference, family ties, nobility and the large number of the supporters of this family are

quite tangible and evident. In the circumstances don't make a distinction between Hashimis and Makhzumis or Umayyads, and even if you make such a distinction don't make it in respect of Abu Talib and his brothers and sons and their supporters, but fight against Muhammad and be aware that although I am his uncle I am with you. He is the man who has found fault with our beliefs, has abused our gods, and insulted our forefathers. In short none has treated his community and tribe so badly as Muhammad has treated us.”

Then 'Aas bin Wa'il said: “What a strange thing Abu Lahab has said! Did we not excuse your nephew? We placed everything we had at his disposal and relinquished absolute master ship in his favour. We went to the chief of Bani Hashim and the elder of Makkah, Abu Talib, and requested him to act as intercessor and mediator and to tell Muhammad that we were prepared to give him whatever he desired provided that he shouldn't abuse our gods and ancestors. Our request didn't, however, produce any result and he continued to pursue his own path and said: "I swear by Allah that even if they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand I will not give up my mission till I die.”

After having said this he threatened us and checked our business and means of livelihood and destroyed our influence. In the circumstances who can accuse us if we rise against him, forestall his actions and punish him?"

Abu Lahab said: "O Abu 'Amr! May your family and kinsfolk live for ever! Do you think that my severity with regard to my nephew has been lesser than yours? Or do you think that I have shown more forbearance towards him than you have shown? I desire success for you so that you may check the success of Muhammad and deprive him of the help and cooperation of his kinsmen so that it may be easier for you to fight against him.”

Abu Jahl said: "If you lend me support and protect me from harm and torture from Bani Hashim I shall kill Muhammad and help you get rid of him.”

'As said: "I don't agree with this view, because killing Muhammad will create an unprecedented disorder and trouble. We have acquired the habit of not being severe to one another and not going to the extreme severity in the matter of conversation or discussion, not to talk of killing one another. Especially as regards the murder of Muhammad I must say that even if all of us agree on this issue we shall not be able to accomplish this task and that all the persons present in this assembly must lose their lives. O Abul Hakam! Do you imagine that Bani Abdul Muttalib will sit still and allow that one from amongst them whom they expect to be victorious in the near future should be done away with so easily? No doubt, they will not allow this to happen. In the circumstances we must think about some other remedy because the murder of Muhammad will prove very costly for Makkah and will cause great havoc and widespread disaster.”

Walid said: "The view expressed by Abu 'Amr is sensible and he is quite right in saying that we should allow Muhammad to do whatever he likes. We should, however, refrain from killing him."

Abu Jahl said: "Dear uncle! Give your final decision and think of a plan to solve this problem so that we may act upon it and get rid of this dilemma."

Walid who was thinking deeply drew his hand on his beard and said: "Combat the actions of Muhammad with hooliganism and noise and say that Muhammad is a magician and practises sorcery. Treat him contemptuously and belittle him. And in case you wish to humiliate and ridicule him you should feign ignorance of his Qur'an and shouldn't listen to it nor allow others to hear it. And if by chance someone else or you yourself happen to hear it find fault with it by whatever means possible and say that its contents are incoherent and confusing and a source of perplexity. Also say that you are unable to understand what it means.

Leave the body of Muhammad intact, but injure his soul as much as possible and in case you are not successful by these means get hold of his slaves and allies and those who have become his followers, and persecute them.

It is in this way that you can defend your gods and preserve your traditions and customs. In that event Bani Hashim who are besieged in their shi'b (mountain pass) will not find it possible to create any disturbance and how much so ever they are provoked they will not achieve any result."

Abu Jahl said: "Leave the task of torturing the slaves and the silly persons to me. You will then see what happens to the family of Sumayya tomorrow".

'Uqba bin Abi Mu'it said: "Leave the mimicry of Muhammad's way of walking to me. I shall make people die of laughter."

Abu Sufyan said: "I have heard that Muhammad has learnt the Qur'an from a person named Rajmin, a resident of Yamama, and he is a man who has no parallel in feigning excessive godliness and fabricating superstitions."

Harth bin Nazr said: "When the persons whom Muhammad has gathered round himself get dispersed from his sides I shall amuse them in another manner. I shall narrate to them the stories which I heard at 'Hira' stories which are like those of Rustum and Isfandyir, and the tales of ancient Iran. I shall then show them whether I am a more eloquent orator or Muhammad and whether my words are better of his!"

'Uqba said: "Tell Muhammad that if he is a Prophet and his claim is correct he should either remove the

mountains encircling Makkah, level the uneven lands like those of Iraq and make two rivers like the Tigris and the Euphrates run in them, or convert this mountain into gold so that we may be relieved of the difficulties and hardships of journeying for purposes of trade; or make our dead ancestors rise from dust, so that we may ask them whether what Muhammad says is true or false and whether it is right or wrong. And if it may be too much to raise all our ancestors we shall be satisfied if he raises only one of, them namely Qusayy, because he was a truthful old man. And if he declines to meet this request ask him that he should make heaps (of stones) fall on our heads from the sky, or, as he claims, we may become involved in painful torture.”

From that day onwards unprecedented pressures and restrictions were imposed upon Islam and the Muslims.

As soon as the Prophet (S) came out of his house dust and garbage were thrown on his head. Every slave or free man who approached him teased and ridiculed him and mimicked his way of talking and walking. And although the atmosphere of Makkah had become dark and gloomy for him it did not diminish anything from his mirth, activity and efforts.

He continued preaching and propagating Islam .He went to those silly persons with perfect cheerfulness, pointed out their follies and mistakes and opened their eyes and ears. And as soon as the day ended, the night came and the stars began to shine he returned home fatigued and exhausted. He had to endure such hardships as had not been endured by any previous Prophet.

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