

Chapter 7: Such is the World

On that very day the Holy Prophet (S) came out of Darul Islam. It was an extremely hot day. The desert of Makkah was as hot as a furnace.

The Holy Prophet (S) was walking unconcernedly with measured steps and with his special peace of mind, dignity and cheerfulness till he reached a particular point and saw that a hug fire had been lit up there and its flames were spreading on all sides, and near it some reservoirs of water had also been prepared. He also saw a group of archers holding arrows in their hands and another group holding torches whose flames were spreading everywhere.

These two groups were sitting in a circle in an extensive enclosure and a comprehensive zone had come into existence by the sides of water and fire.

The Prophet (S) approached the gathering directly with perfect peace of mind. Then he crossed the circle of those gathered there and stepped into the vast area. His eyes then fell on two old persons and a young man who was lying on the earth with naked bodies in the space between fire and water and whose feet had been tied up tightly with ropes. Even worse than that, the executioners had placed heavy stones on their chests and were subjecting them to severe torture. One was pricking their bodies with the point of the spear and the other was branding them with fire.

Abu Jahl was watching these people and was giving continuous orders for tormenting those helpless persons. He was telling them that one of the following three things could ensure their deliverance: (i) Abusing Muhammad;

ii) Abandoning Muhammad's religion;

(iii) Reverting to Lat and Uzza.

The persons who had been arrested were not prepared to submit, but became all the more firm in their

belief. They abused Lat and Uzza with perfect steadfastness and mentioned the names of Allah and His Prophet (S) respectfully. As a result of their firmness Abu Jahl became severer and tortured them even more.

When these oppressed persons observed that the Holy Prophet (S) had come to that area as a mark of sympathy with them their love for him increased and their faith became more solid. 'Ammar's parents began praising the Prophet. As regards 'Ammar himself, he, with a soul abounding with faith and perfect peace of mind, considered the torture to be something insignificant. He reassured the Prophet (S) and said: "Of course, the world is such."

The Prophet (S) knelt by the head of every one of these afflicted persons and said with great kindness and love: "O members of the family of Yasir! Be patient. You have been promised Paradise." He also turned his face to the sky and said: "O Lord! Forgive the family of Yasir. I have done whatever I could."

The Holy Prophet (S) sat by the side of these helpless persons and sympathized with them as long as it was possible and expedient. Then he stood up to attend to other matters relating to Islam, and said good bye to them with complete patience and firmness. The pain and grief which he felt on seeing the condition of these helpless persons had no lesser effect on him than that of the melted iron with which their bodies were being branded.

As soon as the Holy Prophet (S) left them, Abu Jahl's madness reached its peak and his anger was aggravated. He then ordered them to abuse Muhammad, to dissociate them from his religion, and to turn to Lat and Uzza. Quite contrary to the expectations of Abu Jahl the perseverance and steadfastness of the poor oppressed persons continued to increase every moment.

It is not known what factor and cause excited Abu Jahl after departure of the Prophet (S) and increased his anger. It is possible that the kindness of the Prophet (S) and his praying for these zealous and brave persons, which made them more steadfast, became the cause of Abu Jahl's savagery. Or it might be due to the resistance offered by these heroes to the torture and their indifference to the torments to which they were being subjected, or it was due to their showing indifference to Abu Jahl and insulting him and abusing the gods of the polytheists.

In any case the real cause of this attitude of Abu Jahl is not known to us. However, what is an admitted fact is that Abu Jahl became quite mad after the departure of the Prophet (S) and gave orders that the three persons might be flogged. He also gave orders that the stones might be removed from their chests and then their heads and faces were hit. Thereafter he ordered that the points of the spears might be thrust into their bodies and they might also be branded.

When the executioners could not achieve their object and became helpless before the fortitude of the

oppressed ones, Abu Jahl ordered that the use of iron tools and branding implements and whips might be stopped and the poor oppressed ones might be drowned in water.

When the members of Yasir's family were immersed in water and they raised their heads out of it, they uttered praise of Allah and blessings to the Holy Prophet (S) and also spoke ironically of Lat and Uzza and abused Abu Jahl. At that time the severity of Abu Jahl knew no bound, and he ceased to be in his normal disposition. At that time he stretched his hands towards war implements and used them against Sumayya and Yasir. He persisted in this abominable act to such an extent that it ended in the death of the old man.

After killing Yasir, Abu Jahl extended his sinful hand to do away with his wife. Thus these good, devoted and faithful couple were recognized to be the first martyrs of Islam and the pioneers of the caravan of Paradise. Yasir and his faithful and pious wife departed for eternal Paradise and chose their abode in the neighbourhood of the 'Superior Companion'.

However, 'Ammar survived. He grappled with hard ships and sufferings and left behind himself, in the brilliant pages of history, his name in the form of an immortal hero and became an example of supreme self-sacrifice and specimen of true faith. After the death of his parents he always remained the victim of Abu Jahl's oppression, and that sinful man took pleasure in teasing him, and tortured him as much as he could, and kept him in prison.

In short Abu Jahl continued the so called fight of the cat and the mouse as far as it was possible for him. Eventually however, the affairs of these two opponents ended in that the perseverance and steadfastness of 'Ammar in his faith and his bearing the tortures and whipping of Abu Jahl, tormented the soul of Abu Jahl more than it tormented the body of 'Ammar.

This state of affairs aggravated the enmity and grudge of Abu Jahl and he continued his oppression in a more savage manner. Notwithstanding all this, however, 'Ammar remained steadfast and firm in his faith.

Whenever Abu Jahl tortured 'Ammar the Holy Prophet (S) went to see him as a mark of sympathy. He placed his head in his own lap, became the companion of his loneliness and prayed for the alleviation of his suffering and pain, saying: "O fire! Be cool and harmless for 'Ammar in the same manner in which you became cool and harmless for Ibrahim." 'Ammar felt the coolness of this prayer in his heart and it increased his firmness and steadfastness.

Once the burning of iron, the flames of fire and the pressure of water became so painful to 'Ammar that he did not know what the Prophet (S) was saying. Hence, after having suffered torture at the hands of Abu Jahl he went to the Holy Prophet (S) with a grieved face, a broken heart and weeping eyes. The Prophet (S) inquired: "What is the matter with you?"

‘Ammar said: "O Prophet of Allah! I have brought a bad news and it is that the enemies did not spare me till I was compelled to praise their gods and to say unbecoming words about you".

The Holy Prophet (S) asked: "What is the condition of your heart and what are you feeling?"

‘Ammar replied: "My heart is abounding with faith and satisfaction."

The Holy Prophet (S) said: "If they compel you to do so again repeat the same method." Thereafter the following verse was revealed about ‘Ammar:

(There shall be grievous punishment for him) who disbelieves in Allah after believing in Him; other than him who is forced (to recant outwardly) but whose heart is firm in his faith. But those who open their bosom to disbelief shall incur the wrath of Allah and suffer a terrible punishment. (Surah al-Nahl, 16: 106)

‘Ammar could not get rid of Abu Jahl except by migrating to Ethiopia. Hence, he joined the second caravan of the migrants who were proceeding to that country and lived there peacefully till he came over to Madina along with others after the Holy Prophet's migration to that city.

From that day onwards the signs of the steadfastness, firmness of faith, and good conduct of ‘Ammar reflected in such a way that the Prophet (S) said: "You will be killed by a rebellious group"; and also added: "Ammar is an embodiment of faith." On another occasion he said: "Whoever is inimical to ‘Ammar is like one who is inimical to Allah and whoever bears grudge against him is like one who entertains ill will and grudge against Allah." He also called ‘Ammar pure and pious.

A'isha says that from amongst all the good qualities and virtues possessed by the companions of the Prophet (S) there is not even one good quality which is not found in ‘Ammar and she heard the Prophet (S) saying: "Ammar is one of those four persons whom Paradise is keen to see. The first of them is ‘Ali and the remaining ones are ‘Ammar! Salman Farsi and Bilal bin Raba".

Huzayfa Yamani was asked about the 'true Imam' in connection with the disturbance related to ‘Uthman while he (Huzayfa) was at death's door; he replied: "Find out the son of Sumayya, because he is the person who will not forsake truth till he dies." It is also said that Husayfa added: "I have heard these words from the Holy Prophet."

‘Ammar offered prayers facing two Qiblahs and migrated twice, and was one of those who took the Allegiance of Rizwan and participated in the Battles of Badr and Uhud as well as in the Battle of the Ditch. He saw all the actions of the Holy Prophet (S) and in most of the battles one of the standards

used to be in his hand. He witnessed the war of 'Radda' i.e. apostasy during the time of Abu Bakr. He was the Governor of Kufa during the time of 'Umar and one of the shrewdest opponents of 'Uthman. Later in the Battles of Jamal and Siffin he was one of the standard bearers of Imam 'Ali. 'Ammar is one of those persons who have been recognized to be the sources of knowledge and hadith, and Ibn Abbas, Abu Musa Ash'ari, Abdullah bin Ja'far, Abul As Khuza'i, Abu Tufayl and many 'Tabein' (followers of the companions of the Prophet) have quoted traditions from him.

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