



A Beautiful
String
of incidents
in the **Life** of..



HOLY
PROPHET

Chapter 1

Preface

History, when divested of the historians' bias and prejudice, is a beautiful string of incidents and events, which speak a thousand tongues. When we study the history of early Islamic era, we are able to gain an insight into the society to which the message of Islam was preached, the circumstances which then prevailed, and the reciprocal responses of the leaders and the led.

From Seeratun-Nabi by Ibn Hisham we have selected twenty-four interesting stories. These stories, when interwoven into a single fabric, form a colourful backdrop against which the era just before and after the Prophet (s.a.w.) can be clearly visualised. We hope the readers will be able to glean more than one message from each story; and for those who wish to prepare their analytic treatments of Islamic subjects, there will be relevance in more than one way.

We hope to serialise the subject, with sections from the lives of our Aimma (A.S.). May Allah accept our efforts, Amin.

SECRETARIAT

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Chapter 2

Too Late!

Abu Basir A'asha was one of the great poets of the pre-Islamic era. One of his poems known as "LAMIYYA" is classified among the ten great epics of Arabia. In his famous eulogy of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) he says:

"Whenever you halt to rest at the door of the son of Hashim, you feel relaxed, and are blessed with his magnanimity...

From him comes charity you cannot miss, and the benefit. And what you gain today, is not refused tomorrow."

A'asha decided to come to Makkah and embrace Islam. On his way, he met his old friends from the tribe of Quraysh. They asked him about his intentions, and when they learnt that A'asha, the great poet, wished to become a Muslim, they were disturbed.

One of them said: "A'asha, do you know that Muhammad has forbidden fornication and adultery?"

A'asha replied: "That does not deter me, for I have never been a desolate person."

The other said: "Yes, but he has also forbidden wine and all alcohol drinks."

A'asha paused, and then said: "Ah! I am fond of drinking, and I don't think I am ready to renounce that habit. So, this year let me continue drinking to my content, and I shall go next year to become a Muslim.

A'asha returned, and died the same year.

Chapter 3

Not Even For a Mountain of Gold

When the early Muslims were subjected to ill treatment and persecution, 83 of them migrated to Ethiopia, led by Ja'far bin Abu Talib. The infidels of Makkah learnt that the Muslims were having a comfortable refuge in Ethiopia. They sent a delegation comprising of Amr bin Al-Aas and Abdullah bin Rabia to Negus, the King of Ethiopia, loaded with invaluable gifts for the king and his ministers, and with a mission to seek repatriation of the Muslims.

After having presented the gifts, they approached the King. At his court, Negus was told by Amr bin Al-Aas that the Muslims believed in a Prophet who spoke derogatorily about Jesus. Turning to Ja'far bin Abu Talib, Negus enquired:

'What do you say about Jesus?'

Ja'far recited the verse from Surah An-Nisa (171):

"The Messiah, Jesus Son of Mary, was Allah's apostle and His word, which He cast to Mary, and a spirit from Him."

Negus picked a piece of wood from the ground and said: "By God, Jesus was not a bit higher than what you have said, not higher than even the measure of this piece." And then he turned to Amr bin Al-Aas and said:

"I am not going to harm them, even if I were given a mountain of gold. Take away all the gifts you have brought, for God did not receive any bribe from me when He blessed me with this kingdom, nor did He pay any heed to what others said about me when He decided to raise me to this status."

Chapter 4

Allegiance of Women

Abdur Rahman bin Ka'b bin Malik used to lead his blind father to Jumu'a prayers regularly. Everytime his father heard Adhan on Friday, he would say: 'May Allah bless As'ad bin Zurarah.' This continued for many years, till one day Abdur-Rahman asked:

"Father, why do you remember As'ad and pray for him at Jumu'a prayers?"

His father said: "My son, the first person to establish and lead us all in Jumu'a prayers in Madinah was As'ad. At the time, the Prophet was still in Makkah, and forty of us used to assemble at the foot of the mountain and pray. "As'ad bin Zurarah was among those twelve who secretly accepted Islam one year before Hijrah at the mountain road to Mina, and pledged loyalty to the Prophet (S.A.W.W.) on the following terms:

- To worship no other god but Allah;
- To commit neither theft nor adultery nor child-murder;
- To utter no monstrous falsehoods,
- To bring forth no illegitimate offspring
- And not to disobey in matters just or reasonable.

This allegiance is called the "allegiance of women", because of two reasons. First, it does not include a pledge for Jihad, and secondly, the same pledge was taken from those ladies who embraced Islam. At the time when the secret pledge was made the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) was in Makkah, and Jihad had not yet been ordained.

Chapter 5

Manat - the Idol Which Could Not Fend For Itself

Amru bin Jamuh was a respectable elder of the tribe called Banu Salimah. While many young men from this tribe accepted Islam, the old man remained an idolater, worshipping his own wooden deity called "Manat". The boys would stealthily enter his temple at night, pick up the idol and throw it into a dirty pit in their location.

Every morning, Amru would come out of the temple in a frantic search of his god, and reinstate it after washing it and sprinkling upon it some perfume. "I do not know who does this to you", he would say. "If I ever lay my hands on him, I will punish him severely."

At last, Amru got fed up. One morning, after he had washed and imbued the idol with a sweet scent, he took his sword and hanged it around its neck. "I have failed to find the culprits", he said. "You will be able to defend yourself now, I hope."

Next day Amru found the idol tied to a dead dog in a nearby pit. A flash of awareness overcame him, and a flame of truth was lit in his bosom. "How can I worship these baubles which cannot fend for themselves?", he murmured.

He accepted Islam the same day. Amru bin Jamuh is one of the companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.W.) martyred in the battle of Ohud. May peace be upon him.

Chapter 6

Muslim and Martyr - All in Less Than a Day!

Aswad was a humble slave of the Jews at Khaiber, tending their sheep. On one of the days when the forts of Khaiber were besieged by the army of Islam, he came to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and said: "Muhammad, teach me Islam."

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) welcomed him and explained to him the fundamentals. Aswad accepted Islam immediately. Thereafter he said:

"I am employed by the Jews as a shepherd, and these sheep have been placed in my trust. What shall I do with them?"

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) said: "Arrange the flock towards the fort, and they will lead themselves to their masters."

Aswad picked up some sand and sprinkled it over the heads of the sheep, said: "Go back to where you belong, for I am no more your companion." And the sheep ran towards the fort as if someone directed them.

Then Aswad joined the army of Islam to fight the same Jews who had employed him. A heavy stone fell upon him and killed him.

Thus, Aswad became a martyr before he had an opportunity to offer a single prayer of the day.

The Brave and Dedicated Women of Islam

Hind, the daughter of Amru bin Haram, was steadily advancing from Ohud towards Madinah. She walked by the side of the camel upon which lay dead bodies of her husband Amru bin Jamuh, her son and her brother.

On her way, she met some women who were going towards Ohud to find out the result of the battle.

One asked: "O Hind, where are you going?"

"To Madinah, to bury my husband, my brother and my son", she said.

One of the wives of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) who was among them asked:

"What news do you have from Ohud?"

"Well, I know that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) is safe and well. Whatever befalls us is immaterial as long as he, peace be upon him, is protected. Allah has blessed us with martyrdom, and the infidels will soon retreat in total disappointment."

Such were the brave and dedicated women of Islam. Peace be upon them.

Abu Sufyan - Father or Unclean Idolator!

Seventeen months after the truce of "Hudaibiyya", the Quraysh of Makkah violated the terms and attacked the people of Khuza'ah, killing 23 men.

A representative of Khuza'ah came to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) to report the matter saying: "They attacked us at Watir in the darkness of the night while we slept, and killed us while we bowed and prostrated in prayers."

When Abu Sufyan came to know that a complaint had been lodged with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.), he feared reprisals. He wanted no further confrontation, so he rushed to Madinah on a lone mission to meet the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and to request him to continue with the truce.

As he entered Madinah, he thought it prudent to go to his daughter, Ummu Habibah, the wife of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.). Just as he tried to sit on the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.W.) mattress, Ummu Habibah rose and folded it up, not allowing him to sit on it. Abu Sufyan said:

"I do not know whether the mattress is unfit for me or I am unfit for it?"

With great calm and composure, Ummu Habibah replied:

"Father, this mattress belongs to the Messenger of Allah, and I would not like to see an unclean idolater profane it."

Abu Sufyan was shocked out of his wits. He said: "You have indeed become a strange woman after having left my house."

Chapter 9

Do Not Harm the Feelings of Your Guest!

Abu Jahl was an inveterate enemy of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.). At his hand, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) suffered severe persecution and humiliation. In the Battle of Badr, there were 850 foot soldiers and 100 horses in command of Abu Jahl.

After his death, his son Ikramah fled from Makkah to Yemen leaving his wife behind. His wife, Ummu Hakim converted to Islam, sought amnesty for her husband, and set out to Yemen. She brought him back to Makkah where Ikramah later accepted Islam.

But just as he was approaching Makkah, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) instructed his companions: "When Ikramah arrives, do not speak ill of his father. Do not harm his feelings, for he is our guest."

Chapter 10

No Compromise

The people of Banu Thaqeef lived in Taif, and were known for their arrogance and opposition to Islam. However, when they saw Islam had gained a firm foothold and that people from all over Makkah and Madinah were steadily entering the fold of Islam, they decided to send a delegation to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) for discussion.

Six men from Thaqeef came to Madinah. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) welcomed them and ordered for a special tent to be erected near the Mosque to ensure their comfortable accommodation. Khalid bin Saeed bin Aas was appointed to wait upon them. Meals came from the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.W.) house, but the delegation would not eat until Khalid ate first, to be sure that the food was not poisoned.

During the discussions, which lasted for several days, the representatives of Thaqeef said: "O Muhammad, we have two proposals to make. After having embraced Islam, we should be allowed to maintain the temple of "Lat", our idol, for three years. The other proposal is that we should be exempted from Salaat, the daily prayers."

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) turned down both the proposals and said: "The temple of the idol cannot be, allowed to remain even for a day."

"Then do not force us to desecrate our temples by our own hands, and do not make Salaat obligatory upon us", they made a last plea.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) said: "You will not be forced to desecrate your temples or break your idols by your own hands. But there will be no exemption from Salaat. A religion without Salaat (daily prayers) has no good in it."

Chapter 11

Pay Ransom Money or Teach Ten

After the Battle of Badr, captives were taken to Madinah. Amongst them were Abbas, son of Abdul Muttalib and Aqil bin Abu Talib.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) ordered that each captive be released against payment of ransom money. It ranged between 1000 to 4000 dirhams, according to the wealth of the captive.

Abbas said: "O Muhammad, if I were to pay the ransom for myself and my nephew, I will be reduced to a beggar."

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) answered: "What about all the gold you confided to your wife when you departed with the Makkahn army?" No one knew about the transaction except Abbas, so he was surprised. He immediately accepted Islam.

Then the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) announced: "I know there are some who are genuinely poor. For them there is another option. Any one who teaches 10 boys of Madinah how to read and write shall be released."

Zaid bin Thabit was one of those who became an educated scribe under this arrangement.

Chapter 12

The Guard in Prayer

Jabir bin Abdullah says that in the Battle of Dhat-urRuqa' the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) asked his companions to rest for the night on a plain surrounded by the mountains.

"Who will volunteer to guard us tonight?" the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) asked.

Immediately, two companions, namely Ammar bin Yathir and Abbad bin Bishr came forward and volunteered to stand guard while the army of Islam slept.

As they stationed themselves at a strategic spot on the terrain, Abbad said: "Let us divide the night, I shall keep the vigil in the first half, and you in the second." So Ammar slept while Abbad remained vigilant, engaged in nightly prayers. In the middle of his prayers, an enemy soldier stealthily came near and shot an arrow, which hit Abbad. He pulled out the arrow and continued his prayers. Another arrow hit him causing a further injury. Abbad pulled it out again and remained steadfast. When the third arrow wounded him further, Abbad hastily bowed down in prostration to complete his prayers. He awakened Ammar and related to him what had transpired.

Ammar began to tend his wounds and wipe off blood from his body, then asked: "Why did you not wake me when you were first hit?"

Abbad said: "I was in my prayers and I did not feel like abandoning my communication with Allah. When I felt terribly weakened by the third blow, I bowed down to complete my prayers. Had it not been for the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.W.) order to stand guard, I would not have disturbed your sleep."

Chapter 13

Abudhar's Thirst

In the expedition of Tabuk, some Muslims contrived excuses for not accompanying the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.). Others, who had joined in reluctantly, had deserted after having gone with the expedition for some distance.

Abudhar Ghiffari was with the expedition, but the animal he rode could not stand the blazing sun of the desert. He trailed behind, his animal plodding forward at a slow pace, till at last he had to abandon the animal and walk.

Someone said: "O Prophet, Abudhar has deserted us." The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) answered: "Allah's Will be done. If Abudhar wishes to be with us he will soon appear."

Abudhar set forth to reach the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) but the scorching heat of the desert worked against him. As he persisted, he came to an oasis. He tasted the water and found it cold and sweet.

"You cannot quench your thirst while the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) might be thirsty," He said to himself, and filled his waterskin. At last, he drew near and the companions not recognising him from far informed the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) that someone was approaching.

"Perhaps it is Abudhar", the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) said.

Abudhar collapsed near the feet of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) totally spent and tired by the heat and the thirst. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) ordered: "Give him some water".

Abudhar said: "I have water with me"."Then why did you not drink?" the

Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) demanded.

"Because I found it sweet and cold; and I thought that the Messenger of Allah should drink it first, before I do."

Chapter 14

In the Company of the Noblest of Mankind

Among the slaves brought in from Syria by Hakim bin Hizam bin Khuwailid, there was a young boy of eight whose name was Zaid bin Haritha. Hakim gave him away to his aunt, Khadija binte Khuwailid, the wife of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.).

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.), who at that time was only 28 years old and married to Khadija for 3 years, saw the young boy and was moved by his plight.

"His parents must be driven mad at the disappearance of this young lad," he thought. He requested Khadija to give Zaid away to him, and she acceded.

When Zaid became the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.W.) ward, he was freed from the bondage. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) declared him free, but the young boy had no intention to return. So he remained as a son to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.), deeply attached to him.

Zaid's father came to Makkah, searching for his son. When he learnt that Zaid was with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.), he came to persuade him to return.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) said: "He is a free man, and has a right to decide for himself."

Zaid opted to stay with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and requested his father to grant him permission.

"You are in the company of the noblest of mankind," he said, and returned to Syria greatly pleased and satisfied.

Chapter 15

As for the Ka'aba, - It Has its Own Master

Abraha, a Christian warrior from Ethiopia invaded Makkah, causing destruction and plundering hundreds of camels, which belonged to the Quraysh. He had come, he said, to demolish the Ka'aba.

Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.), leaning on the door of Ka'aba prayed aloud: "Defend, O Allah, Your own home, and suffer not the Cross to triumph over Ka'aba.."

Then he came to the raiding army of Abraha, and sought to be admitted to his presence. Abraha knew that Abdul Muttalib was a man of honour and integrity, greatly respected in Makkah. He welcomed him and granted him a special audience.

Abdul Muttalib said: "I have come to complain that your soldiers have plundered my camels. I want them returned to me." Upon hearing this, Abraha retorted: "You have fallen in my estimation. I thought you had come to petition for the safety and protection of Ka'aba, you are simply interested in your possessions!"

Abdul Muttalib said: "I have come to ask for that which I own. As for Ka'aba, it has its own Master Who will definitely protect it."

The words of Abdul Muttalib were prophetic. Holy Quran describes the ignominious defeat of Abraha and his army:

"Have you not considered how your Sustainer dealt with the army of the Elephant? Did He not foil their stratagem, and send against them a flock of birds, which pelted them with clay-stones? So that they became like plants cropped by cattle."

Chapter 16

Allow Me to Weep!

After the stunning defeat in Badr, there was a bitter pang of shame and despair everywhere in Makkah. Abu Sufyan gave the stern advice:

"Weep not for your slain, mourn not their loss, for if you do so, it will ease your wrath and diminish your enmity toward Muhammad and his fellows."

Then he took a solemn vow:

"As for me, I will touch no oil, neither approach my wife until I shall have gone forth to fight Muhammad."

People chided Abu Sufyan's wife Hind for not mourning over her father, uncle and brother who were all killed at Badr. She said: "I will not weep till you wage another war against Muhammad. If tears would wipe the grief from my heart, I too would weep, but that is not the case with Hind." Then not to be outdone by her husband, she pledged that she would not use oil, nor approach her marital couch until an avenging army from Makkah was on the march.

One night, an aged father, by the name of Aswad bin Muttalib bin Asad bin Abdul Uzza, who had lost his 3 sons, heard the sound of weeping. He asked his servant to investigate if the Quraysh had begun to wail for their dead. "Grief is consuming me, and I would like to weep over my sons," he said.

The servant returned to inform him that it was only a woman who was mourning for her strayed camel. The man said: "Is she allowed to weep for her camel and for it banish sleep from her eyes? Allow me to weep -

over Badr, over my Aqueel and Harith, the brave soldiers of Quraysh."

Chapter 17

A Sharing Society

Few months after the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) had arrived in Madinah, he asked the Ansars of Madinah to take up the Muhajirin from Makkah as their brothers. "Become brothers for the pleasure of Allah, and pair yourselves," he said. Every one of the 45 immigrants was connected into brotherly accord with 45 men of Madinah. If an Ansar was a businessman he took an immigrant as equal partner in his trade, in case of his being a farmer, half his land he gave to his brother from Makkah; till the system grew so common that when a man from Madinah died, his immigrant brother was included among the heirs.

But the noble Makkans were loath to take undue advantage of their hosts. Abdur Rahman bin Auf, for example, became a brother to Sa'ad bin Rabi', and Sa'ad offered him half of what he owned. He declined the offer with thanks and only asked the way to the market place, where he soon started a small business independently. Gibbon gives the account in the following words:

"To eradicate the seed of jealousy, Muhammad judiciously coupled his principal followers with rights and obligations of brethren, and when Ali found himself without a peer, the Prophet tenderly declared that he would be the companion and brother of the noble youth. The expedient was crowned with success; the holy fraternity was respected in peace and war, and the two parties vied with each other in a generous emulation of courage and fidelity."

Chapter 18

The First Constitution

The Jews in Madinah had a decided voice in many matters. They would enter into alliance with the tribes of Aus and Khazraj and take sides in their inter-tribal wars. Though Arabs by descent, they formed a distant unit by reason of their adoption of Judaism.

The two principle tribes of the Jews, Banu Nadhir and Banu Quraidha, sided with Khazraj and Aus respectively.

When the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) entered Madinah, most of the Aus and Khazraj had already embraced Islam. He, therefore, contracted a pact with the Jews and formally laid a firm foundation of an Islamic state. It was an instrument, which could be termed the first Constitution of an Islamic state creating a political undertaking between the Muslim and non-Muslim. The terms were:

- The Muslims and the Jews would live in peace as a single community;
- The contracting parties could keep to their own faiths and enjoy freedom of worship;
- In the event of war with a third party, each one was to help the other - provided always that the latter was the aggrieved and not the aggressor;
- If the City of Madinah was attacked, both parties had to defend it;
- In giving the peace terms to the enemy, the other party would be consulted;
- Madinah was to be considered holy and sacred by both and all bloodshed within its boundaries was prohibited;
- The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) would be the final arbitrator in all matters of discipline;

The signatories of the contract would treat each other with respect

- goodwill.

The Jews set their seals gladly to the document.

Chapter 19

Who Can Save You Now?

In the third year after Hijrah, a tribe of Banu Tha'laba and its allies were preparing to attack Madinah. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) set out to confront them, but as he entered the precincts of Nukhail, the enemies retreated to their hiding place behind the mountains.

Suddenly it began to pour. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) removed his wet clothes and spread them over a tree for drying. Waiting for his clothes to dry, he took respite under a tree. An enemy by the name of Du'shoor, thought that this was an opportune time to attack the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) unawares, so he crept forward and leapt with an open sword. "Muhammad, say who can save you from my sword now!"

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) without losing his calm, said, with a firm, resounding voice: "ALLAH!"

And just as the words fell from the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.W.) lips, an unseen power seemed to overwhelm and seize the attacker. He trembled and the sword fell off his hands. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) rose instantly, held the sword and turned to Du'shoor: "Tell me now who is there to deliver you from my sword?"

Du'shoor said: "None".

And suddenly he realised that this incident was revealing to him the great Truth. Allah was the Creator, the Sustainer and to Him turned everything in human life. Life and death both are ordained by Allah. So he exclaimed:

"I testify that there is no god but Allah, and you, Muhammad, are indeed His Messenger."

Then he went back to his people to preach Islam and teach them the creed.

Qur'an describes this encounter in the following words:

"O believers! Remember the favour which Allah bestowed upon you. Remember when a group sought to harm you, He restrained their hands; guard yourselves in fear of Allah. In Allah let the faithful put their Trust." (Al-Maidah: V II)

The Jews set their seals gladly to the document.

Chapter 20

History Repeats Itself

Harith bin Malik says that before the advent of Islam, the Quraysh used to worship a huge tree, which they called "Dhatu Anwat". Every year, they would travel a long distance to visit that tree, submissively hang their weapons on its twigs, offer sacrifices and stay near that tree for one full day.

One day, when we were in the company of our Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) advancing to Hunayn, we came across a huge, green lote tree. The memory of our past practice was still fresh in our minds, so we said: "O Prophet! let us have a tree, like the Quraysh have, the same Dhatu Anwat to hang our weapons upon it and to offer our homage.

The Prophet said: "Allahu Akbar! By God, you have uttered the same words as uttered by the people of Moses when they saw idolaters zealously prostrating before their idols: "Make us a God like their gods"; and Moses replied: "You are indeed an ignorant people. The religion which these idolaters follow is doomed and all their works are vain."

Then the Prophet said: "This was the way of the people in the past, and it seems that this story will repeat itself among you."

Chapter 21

Abu Lahab - Bitter and Humiliated

ABU LAHAB, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) was his sworn enemy. In the early days of Islam, whenever the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) came to the market place to proclaim Oneness of Allah and denounce idolatry, Abu Lahab would follow him and announce: "O people! This young man is an impostor, do not listen to him."

In the battle of Badr, he decided to stay behind while other veterans joined the army to fight the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.). He was anxious of the outcome of the battle and would ask anyone who would come from the vicinity of Madinah if he had any news. At last when Abu Sufyan, returned, crest fallen and ashamed, Abu Lahab enquired: "Tell me what happened, for no doubt you have the reliable news."

Abu Sufyan related how his army of Makkans suffered a shameful defeat, and how the great veterans of Quraysh fell, one after the other. "Believe me, it was an effortless surrender. We seemed to be at their command, submitting our necks for slaughter and our hands for being taken prisoners. And I do not blame the Quraysh. By God! We saw white robed soldiers on black horses fill the place, and none of us could stand against their onslaught."

Abu Lahab was overtaken by grief; he began to cry and wail. Sitting next to him was a slave called ABU RAFE' who was known for his leaning towards Islam. In a fit of uncontrolled anger, Abu Lahab slapped him on the face; and then there was a commotion in which a lady, Ummul Fadhl, hit Abu Lahab on his head.

Abu Lahab entered his house, bitter and humiliated; and within seven days thereafter, died a miserable death.

Chapter 22

What Reward for My Good Deeds?

Sa'sa' bin Najiya of Bani Tamim was a man of great virtue. His grandson FARAZDAQ was a renowned poet of Islam, and in one of his eulogies, describing heroic deeds of his grandfather he says:

"My grandfather is the one who prevented mothers burying their newborn girls, and he gave new life to the babies... ..".

Sa'sa' himself relates a beautiful story of his first encounter with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.). He says: "I came to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and he immediately invited me to Islam. After listening to what he said, I accepted. Then he taught me certain verses from the Qur'an. I said: "O Messenger of Allah! Will Allah accept and reward my good deeds performed in the past?" He asked; "What are these good deeds?"

"I related to him an incident in which I saved a new born girl from being buried alive. I had to offer a heavy price everytime I saved an infant, and that way I was able to rescue more than three hundred."

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) smiled and expressed his delight. "This is indeed a good deed; Allah has graciously rewarded you by blessing you with Islam."

Chapter 23

The Pillar of Abu Lababah

In spite of the document of peace between the Muslims and Jews, the Jews of BANU QURADHAH did not abandon their intrigues. In the 5th year of Hijrah they were still planning to render a final blow to Islam. When the army of Islam surrounded their fort and they had no alternative but to surrender, they asked the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) to send Abu Lababah for negotiations.

When the Jews met Abu Lababah, they began to weep and wail over their plight. "Will Muhammad spare us if we give ourselves up?", they asked. Abu Lababah said, "Yes". But then he made a sign by placing his fingers over his neck, indicating that they would be killed.

As he returned, Abu Lababah felt guilty of having betrayed the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.). Instead of going to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) he went to the Mosque, and with deep remorse and repentance, tied himself to a pillar. "I shall not get out of here, till I know that Allah has forgiven my sin", he said to himself.

When the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) learnt of this, he said: "Had he come to me seeking forgiveness, I would have forgiven. But he has chosen to seek forgiveness the way he wants, so I shall wait until Allah reveals His pleasure." Abu Lababah stayed there the whole night.

And then the verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) indicating that Abu Lababah had been pardoned. Ummu Salmah, the wife of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) gave him the good news, but he refused to untie himself. "I will wait till the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) will release me from here."

With a smile on his lips, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) came near him

and gently untied him.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"The others who have confessed their sins; their good works had been intermingled with evil. Perchance Allah WILL turn to them in mercy. He is Forgiving and Merciful." (At-Tauba, Verse I03)

The pillar of Abu Lababah is still today a famous place in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.).

Chapter 24

The Greedy and The Deserters of Ohud

In the Battle of Ohud, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) ordered some archers to picket the rear defile of the mountain. "Do not move from here in any circumstances for the enemy might strike from behind these narrow passages." However, when the archers saw that the enemy was retreating, they thought the battle was over. They deserted their places and busied themselves collecting the spoils of war. This eagerness turned the tide against the Muslims.

Khalid bin Walid, the commander of the infidel cavalry, effected a charge and killed the small guard of 10 men. He then furiously advanced from the rear, killing Mosaib bin Omair, and causing a great confusion among Muslims. A voice rang on the mountain of Ohud declaring that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) was dead, and this further demoralised them. Many companions like Omar bin Khattab, Osman bin Affan and Abu Obeidah took to flight.

Anas bin Nadhr having seen those deserters said: "What makes you run away" They said: "The Holy Prophet is no more. He has been killed." Anas said: "What is value of your lives if the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has died. Let us fight for his cause". Anas fought alone and was martyred.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) had been wounded. The Battle ended in confusion, with the infidels having returned to Makkah in a belief that the Muslims were routed. At that time, he inquired about Sa'd bin Rabi'. "Is he alive or dead? Go and find him"; he ordered the handful of faithfuls who were by his side.

Sa'd bin Rabi' had suffered multiple wounds, and had fallen. When they found him, he was breathing his last. His last words were "Peace be

upon Muhammad for he fulfilled his duty. If he is alive, give him my Sa-
laam. And if he is dead, Allah is ever Alive. Continue to fight for His
cause".

Chapter 25

Hilful Fudhul - The League of Justice

Makkah was a busy commercial centre where caravans from far and wide came to sell their wares. But the influential and rich men of Makkah used to cheat the poor traders, sometimes committing frightful outrages.

Once a trader from BANU ZUBAID sold his commodity to Aas bin Wail, and received no payment. When all persuasions failed, he went to several well-known traders seeking their help but none responded. So he climbed the heights of ABU QUBAIS and exclaimed: "Help this oppressed poor trader who has been robbed in the city of Makkah." The famous couplet he recited was:

"O men, come to the aid of an oppressed who has been robbed of his property, right in the centre of Makkah, away from his own people. Virtue is indeed for him whose dignity is complete, there is no dignity or virtue for him who wears two dresses of deceit and perfidy."

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) was then a young man of 20, and his heart bled at the sight of this helpless man. Immediately a league was formed, binding its members by an oath to secure justice for the helpless. This was called "Hilful Fudhul", a league that took oath to intervene for those who were subjected to oppression and injustice in any deal. Among the elders of Quraysh, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) was the youngest member, chosen for his truthfulness and propriety.

Later, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) used to tell his companions: "It was a league I loved to join, and Islam has lent it further strength."

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IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION
IGNORANCE IS A CHOICE

*"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer,
let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

Imam Ali (as)