

Chapter 1

Introduction

From that day when Muhammad (PBUH) left Mecca after thirteen years of anguish and continuous struggle and went to Medina, he knew that the period of weakness and concealment of Islam had ended and that he must, with the help of his loyal and valiant followers, lay the foundation of a civilisation with the glory of an Islamic organization, and construct the basis of his political regime in the way which God desired.

At this time, to the east of the peninsula, the King of Iran had a splendid palace and sumptuous court in which thousands of female slaves, and thousands of enslaved people and servants, had been appointed to perform the ceremonial duties there, and the product of the labor of the miserable and hard-working people was spent in order to maintain that system.

To the north of Arabia, also, Heraclitus was rising to prominence with his frightening regime and sumptuous empire. It could be said that the things which were the most striking in these two large countries were these palaces which reached towards the sky, for the exclusive enjoyment of the rulers, and that art, literature, war, the collection of taxes, design and invention, were all undertaken so that the royal and imperial ceremonies could be held in the greatest splendor possible.

But as to the Prophet of Islam, as soon as he entered Medina, he built a mosque and his humble house beside it. The door to his house opened from inside the mosque. Until the end of his life, when Islamic rule was established throughout Arabia, he did not change his lifestyle.

He was the absolute ruler of a country and he ate barley bread. He would sit with the poor upon the ground at their meal just like a humble slave. He would ride a donkey bareback and, most of the time, he would

sit another person behind him.

This method of ruling by the ruler was to show the difference between his regime and the monarchic regimes of Iran and the Roman Empire. The people could see with their own eyes that a new regime and a young organization had come into being, between two aristocratic bases, in which there was no difference between ruler and ruled, commander and commanded, master and slave, and that all stood in one rank upon the threshold of God and justice.

The founder of this regime passed away and, with the dispossession of 'Ali and political manoeuvres, the first brick in the wall of the Caliphate was laid crooked. Abu Bakr then designated 'Umar as his successor, and the second blow was dealt to the Islamic regime.

Even though 'Umar and Abu Bakr were themselves the cause of this deviation, the political organization of Islam was established upon the basic principles which the Prophet laid down: simplicity, equality, and the fair distribution of wealth and prevention of its concentration, just as it had been previously.

'Umar also left and 'Uthman, this incompetent, pseudo-religious old man, took over the reins of rulership, and the instability which had come into being in the foundation of Islamic rule became so strong that the infrastructure of Muhammad (PBUH) was immediately destroyed. During 'Uthman's rule, the Caliphate was changed into a monarchy and the mud homes of the Islamic rulers were changed into king's palaces; simplicity changed into the splendid ceremony of the court of Mu'

anxious and terrified. The future of Islam was black, to his mind, and appeared to be frightful, but he still saw that, at any rate, the caravan of Islam still progressed on its main course and even though an important rightful claim was being disregarded, the Islamic system had not been torn apart. Even though he was incensed and boiling with indignation, he put the seal of silence on his lips. When the regime of 'Uthman dominated Islam, the humiliated working masses and the helpless were suppressed under the heels of usurers, slave merchants, the wealthy, and aristocrats who were coming and going in the courts of 'Uthman and Mu'awiyah. Class differences and the concentration of wealth were revived; Islam, threatened with a great danger, was changed from the situation of the Prophet and the simplicity and unpretentiousness of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, who were living like average people or even like the poor and needy. Thousands of Dinars were spent to build a Green Palace for the Islamic governor Mu'awiyah and a regime was established which was like a king's court.

Abu Bakr, in order to earn his living, had milked the goats of a Jewish woman, yet now a necklace belonging to the wife of 'Uthman, the Prophet's caliph, was worth a third of the taxes from Africa! 'Umar, because of one horse, took to court a boy who misused his father's position, and his father (who was one of his leading commanders), because they tried to steal a horse by force, whereas 'Uthman had made Marwan Hakam, (that is, a person who the Prophet had exiled), his consultant and had given the district of Khaybar and the taxes from the north of Africa, part and parcel, to him!

capital, wealth, gold and silver which you have hoarded must be equally divided among all Muslims. Everyone must share in the others' benefits in the economic and ethical system of Islam, in all blessings of life." But 'Uthman saw Islam in ceremonies, external show and the pretence of piety and sanctity. He did not believe that religion should interfere with the poverty of the majority and the opulence of the minority. Abu Dhar, who had begun the struggle for the development of Islamic equality, would not be pacified and would not let the enemy be pacified, either...

Whenever I think about the wonderful life of Abu Dhar and I see his worship of God, I recall Pascal. Pascal says, "The heart has reasoning powers which the intellect does not attain. The heart bears witness to God's existence, not the intellect; faith comes in this way." Abu Dhar says, "In this unbounded existence, I have found signs by which I have been guided to God. There is no hope that the intellect will reach His Essence through discussion and analysis because He is greater than any of that, and there is no possibility of encompassing Him." Abu Dhar, just like Pascal, believed in God, knew God through the heart, and he had worshipped God for three years before he met the Prophet.

When he was speaking of capitalism and the hoarding of wealth and he was strongly defending the wretched, and when he was turning against the aristocrats and the palace-dwellers of Damascus and Medina, he resembles an extreme socialist like Proudhon, but the truth is that Abu Dhar is one thing and Pascal and Proudhon are different. Abu Dhar knew God; from that day on, he never stopped upon God's Way; not for a moment did he weaken in thought or action. Neither does

was made to deviate from its main purpose, and that the real leaders of Islam were also aware of this? Then what did Islam do? What results were attained from all those sacrifices and struggles of the Prophet and his God-worshipping, brave followers? If it had military victories, they do not deserve to be considered important in the way we look at religion, in particular since these victories were gained through the Bani Umayyid and Bani 'Abbas sultans and people like them, and did not have a real and direct relationship with the truths of Islam.

This opinion on this point is at least correct in some degree, and we must not conceive this expansionism, these military victories and the Islamic empire's power, to be the goal of Islam, nor believe them to be among the great results of this movement. If we look at Islam in the way in which we must look at religion, this problem will not only be solved, but also we will marvel at the glorious results, progress and victories of Islam.

Religion is the only factor which has a duty towards the universal elevation of creation, obliging humanity to progress and ascend, and just as there was some stimulant that transformed the inanimate into a plant and the plant into an animal and an animal into a human being, so to find completion, religion is also a reason for the continuation of this amazing story of creation, and it also carries the human being to the final stage which he or she must reach, allows the human spirit to fly to the highest summits of the loftiness of gnosis and humanness, and even elevates one beyond that desert and puts one above time and place. Thus one can use this commentary to show that religion is the instigator, stimulant and impetus for the human being to move up the ladder of transformation

on the threshold of the gods of gold and of coercion. But this time we see that this very aristocracy-worshipper History is going to the worn tents, to the destroyed mud houses of the African slaves, to the nameless, barefooted people of the Arabian desert, to unknown and unimportant people like Abu Dhar, a man from the Ghifar tribe, Salman, a homeless man from Iran, and Bilal, a cheap slave. History records their lives, one by one, with great greed and envy. With the highest of honors, it offers them to future generations of humanity. And it must also be asked why, and as of when, this pharaoh-seeker, royal court-dweller, History became so humble.

Thus, in order to assess the results which the Islamic movement has achieved, one must not look at the victories in Asia and Africa and in the lands in southern Europe. Rather, one must become aware of the progress that this movement made in the depths of the thoughts, brains, hearts and souls of a limited group of its followers. The victories which Islam had in causing the changes and new directions in the souls of these people appear more splendid, more extensive and more wonderful to those people who place greater value on truth and humanness than on power and extraterrestrial military domination. The Islamic victories in the history of places like Rome and Iran and in the fate of expansionists like Ghengis Khan, Dara, Napoleon, and others like these 'famous brainless', are not exceptional, but restructuring an unknown desert-dweller and half-savage like Jundab ibn Junadah into an Abu Dhar Ghifari is unique in any ideology or movement. If the result of Islam was no more than educating these four or five human beings like Abu Dhar, Salman, Ammar Yas

More amazing than this is that, in general, people who were considered to be leaders of the Islamic Revolution continued to support truth and even sacrifice themselves for it, during the time of the rule of Abu Bakr and his successor, when Ali, the leader of the Shi'ites, was humiliated and his rightful claim was disregarded. It can be said with certainty that because of their struggles with the regime and because of their efforts, pure Islam was delivered into the hands of History. They helped humanity attain the source of truths and wisdom, in spite of the desires of the hypocrites and the ambitious, because of their struggles and brave resistance to the changes in the Islamic regime.

Abu Dhar is one of these exceptional people, one of those leaders and liberated saviours longed for by mankind today. From the time when the system created a severe crisis in the world of economics, making economics the most sensitive issue of life and the basis of everything, his opinions have found greater importance and today, once again, they recreate those scenes in Damascus and Medina. He who gathered the humiliated and the needy around him, rallying them against usury, money-worshippers, gold gatherers and aristocrats, has now caused the Muslims of the world to listen to his heart-warming words and opinions; his fiery rhetoric. It is as if they see him in distant history with their own eyes; he who gathered the oppressed and wretched in the mosque, rightfully inciting them against the inhabitants of the Green Palace and against the regime of 'Uthman, cries out, "And there are those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the Way of God... " (9:34).

"O Mu'awiyah! If you are building this palace with your own money, it is extravagance, and if with the money of the people, it is treason."</

Chapter 2

Part One

In the prevailing darkness of the night of oppression, the dawn was under the influence of the rising of another sun; the world, in a silence before the storm; and history, in contemplation of a great rebellion against the earthly gods and their shadows and signs-the gods of heaven: multi-theism.

In the depths of the consciences upon which falls the shadow of 'Divine Will' and in the concealment of primordial natures, which seemingly are related to the essence of being, indescribable and strange changes began to appear, just like the enigmatic sense of scent of wild birds, who perceive a storm's coming and, hurriedly, migrate from their land; or, like the mysterious instinct of alert horses who arise before the occurrence of an earthquake, rend apart the bridle and leave the master's house, saddleless, riderless, heading for the desert, lonely spirits sense that there is something in the air, something great! Sometimes a person is a world, and sometimes an individual is a society!

And Jundab, the son of Junadah, a bedouin Arab from Ghifar, a poverty stricken tribe from Rabadhah, a wilderness between Makkah and Madi-nah, along the way of the Quraysh commercial caravans and pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, with brazen men, fearless before customs, rules and laws, and, as a result, in the eyes of one who lives in the refuge of these arrangements and systems and prospers from its blessings and

commercial caravans, reckless, who do not even hold the four forbidden months in respect. They also disturb the security ruling the peninsula during these four months. When the commercial caravans, which are in motion between Rome, Makkah and Iran, under the protection of religion during these months of pilgrimage, pass the place of danger of Rabadhah, they once again see the Ghifar, swords above their heads, flying at them from their place of ambush.

The people of Ghifar, these poor, sinful, wicked people, instead of extending their hands like a beggar's bowl to the commercial caravans, offer their swords to the masters!

The son of Junadah is one of these and this is why later when he becomes Abu Dhar, "He is perplexed by a hungry person who has no bread in his house; why does he not arise from among the people, his sword unsheathed and rebel."

Jundab, the son of Junadah, like every Ghifari man, knows that in a system of tyranny, every law and rule, custom and ethic, order and security is a guard of tyranny, and obeying it, ignorance. But he took a step-the last step, going further than any other, he knew that here the ruling religion has such a role, and obeying it, kufr.

And an idol? What is this? One night when the tribe had gone on a pilgrimage to Manat, the Ghifar idol, and with the ard

The sound of stone hitting stone and ... then nothing. Returning in salvation towards the Absolute, being all at once released from the chains, bonds and shackles which seemingly had been wound around his soul for centuries, he suddenly sensed that he had, alone and unknown, left a deep well and a narrow and dark cave in which he had been imprisoned from the beginning of creation. He looked at the wilderness, a shoreless expanse; to the horizons, distant, extensive and heaven! full of glory, beautiful, deep and mysterious ... it was as if he had seen them, and could see them, for the first time.

Through faith and certainty, he had attained release and a void and now, little by little, new edges of faith and certainty but clear, large, deep, conscious, that which he himself chooses!

Under the rain of thought which incessantly grows stronger and stronger, he sensed that springs open to him in the dark, dry and thirsty inner desert and now, 'the sound of the steps of water!' and every moment, faster and faster; it rises high and higher and acquires all of his inner self; he is filled by it. In the painful inflammation and anguishing ardency of a birth, alone in the world, a shadow alone in the desert, in the night, under the conversant sky of the desert, all of his existence addressed to 'Him!', he suddenly falls upon the dust, head in prostration upon the earth and the sound of impatient, ancient complexes came undone, crying!

And this was the first real prayer of Abu Dhar. "Three years before I met the Prophet of God, I prayed to God."

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change social unity into conflict and discord and family solidarity into dispersion and hostility, listen to his words, grasp his message and give him [Abu Dhar] a report.

Anis came to Makkah. He did not find the man. No one pointed out this nameless, placeless stranger to him. Hopelessly, he searched through the city. He heard nothing other than abuse, ridicule, aversion and hatred about this man. Every place, mosque, bazaar, and person, in particular, 'respectable people', 'reputable personalities', 'the big shots of religion and the world' and also 'believing worshippers and religiously prejudiced', 'the believers in Abraham's traditions and the house of Abraham!' repeated similar words and rumors about him, which reached the level of concatenations.

"He is crazy; a magician. The allure of his words is not the magnetism of revelation; it is magic; it is not the beauty of truth, it is poetry; he does not receive his words from Gabriel; his words are not his own either; a foreign scholar intimates what he should say; he gets them from a Christian monk, an Iranian scholar; he is a calamity who has descended upon the ummah of Abraham; he throws the honor of the mosque, the sacredness of the House of God, the tradition of the pilgrimage, the worship of the gods, the genuineness of ethics, the respect of families and all of the honors and values of our ancestors to the winds."

We do not know how long this visit took. Even if history had told us, we would not know, for at these moments, time does not work. That which we know is that the son of Junadah descended into the house of Arqam and was lost there. No one knows where he went. He never left the house of Arqam. Jundab ibn Junadah left and suddenly, beside the Ka'bah, upon the summit of Safa, from the hiding place of revelation, the morning horizon of Islam, a visage arose, kindled by the dawn, it stopped for a moment. With two eyes which were filled with the flame of the fire of the desert, he hurriedly turned upon the mountainous walls of the valley of Makkah and held his look upon the idols of the Ka'bah.

Dhar, knew the extent to which he thought about the freedom of slaves and satiating the hungry. He assigned a slave, "Take this bag of gold to Abu Dhar and if you succeed in having him take it, you are free ! " The slave went to Abu Dhar. Abu Dhar refused and the slave insisted, cried and begged and the answer of Abu Dhar was only, "No! " Finally he said, "O Abu Dhar, may God bless you. Take this money because my freedom is in giving this money to you." Abu Dhar, without hesitation, said, "Yea. But my enslavement is in taking this money from you!"

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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)