

The Year of Anguish and Bereavement - The death of Khadijatul-Kubra رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا and Abu Taalib

Merely a few days after emerging from Shi‘b Abi Taalib, in the month of Ramadhaan or Shawwaal in the tenth year of prophethood, Abu Taalib passed away and just three or five days after this, Hadhrat Khadijatul-Kubra رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا also departed from this world.

When Abu Taalib was about to breathe his last, Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ drew close to him. Abu Jahal and ‘Abdullah bin Umayyah were also present at his bedside. Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ pleaded with him: “O uncle! Say *Laa Ilaaha Illallahu* once only so that I may have some basis to intercede on your behalf before Allah Ta’ala.” Alarmed by this probability, Abu Jahal and ‘Abdullah bin Umayyah exclaimed: “O Abu Taalib! Do you wish to renounce the creed of ‘Abdul Muttalib?”

Abu Taalib refused to utter *Laa Ilaaha Illallahu* and the very last words to leave his tongue were “*‘Alaa Millati ‘Abdil Muttalib*. In other words, I am committed to the creed of ‘Abdul Muttalib.”

Abu Taalib died saying this but Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ pledged, “I will continue to make dua of forgiveness for Him as long as Allah Ta’ala does not prohibit me.” Upon this the following verse was revealed:

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولِي قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ

الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٣﴾

“It is not permissible for the Prophet and the believers to seek forgiveness for the disbelievers even if they are relatives when it is evident to them that they are inmates of hell. (In other words, they died in disbelief.)” [Surah Taubah verse 113]

The following verse was also revealed in this regard:

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ

“You are unable to guide whom you wish but Allah guides whomsoever he chooses to.” [Surah Qasas verse 56]

Hadhrat ‘Abbaas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ relates: “I asked Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, ‘Of what benefit were you to your uncle? After all, he was your benefactor and he provided you his unstinting support.’ Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied: ‘He is up to his ankles in the fire. Had I failed to intercede on his behalf, he would have been in the midst of the fire of Jahannam.’”

Note: ‘Allamah Suhayli says: “Abu Taalib was fully immersed in supporting and assisting Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Only his feet (so to say) were ensnared in the creed of ‘Abdul Muttalib. This is why only his feet were enveloped by the divine chastisement (as mentioned above).”

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّثْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

“O our Lord! Dispense upon us patience and secure our feet and assist us against the disbelieving nation.”

Hadhrat Ali رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates: “When Abu Taalib died, I notified Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: ‘O Prophet of Allah! Your deviated uncle has died.’ Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ responded: ‘Go and bury him.’ I submitted: ‘He died a Mushrik.’ Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: ‘All the same, go and bury him.’”

According to another narration, when Hadhrat Ali رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ reappeared before Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ on his return from burying Abu Taalib, Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ instructed him to take a bath. This is why the jurists and ‘Ulama maintain that it is preferable to take a bath after administering the Ghusl and burial of a disbeliever.

Journey to Taaif for the Propagation of Islam

Following the departure of Abu Taalib from this world, Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was left with no apparent benefactor and supporter and after the demise of Hadhrat Khadijah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, he was left with no sympathiser and comforter. This is why, at the end of Shawwaal in the tenth year of prophethood, strained by the heavy-handedness of the Quraysh of Makkah, Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ decided to journey to Taaif. Perhaps, he reflected, these inhabitants would embrace the divine guidance of Allah Ta’ala and turn out to be the supporters and benefactors of this Deen. Accompanied by Zaid Bin Haarisah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ set out for Taaif.

Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ presented Islam to ‘Abdiyaalil, Mas’ood and Habib – three brothers who were the chieftains of that area. Instead of lending an ear to the words of truth, they responded in an awfully ruthless manner. One of them remarked: “Did Allah Ta’ala commission you as a prophet to rip apart the curtains of the K‘abah?” Another mockingly commented: “Could Allah Ta’ala not choose someone else for His prophethood?” The third brother bellowed: “By Allah! I absolutely refuse to speak to you! If you have truly been commissioned as a divine messenger, it is terribly dangerous to defy you. (This foolish man failed to understand that ridiculing and poking fun at a prophet is even more dangerous than that.) If you are not the Prophet of Allah, then you neither merit my attention nor are you worth our consideration.”

He then incited the immoral vagrants and other uncouth youngsters to hurl stones at him and poke fun at him. These heartless inhabitants lobbed so many stones upon his blessed body that they gravely wounded him. Whenever Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was overwhelmed by his injuries and forced to sit down, these unfortunate souls would seize him by the arm and force him to stand up again for another spell of stone throwing and mockery.

Zaid bin Haarisah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, who also went along on this journey, selflessly tried to protect Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ by bodily shielding him from the barrage of stones. This left him with serious head injuries whilst Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ suffered serious injuries to his (body and) legs so much so that blood streamed down his legs (into his shoes).

On his return from Taaif, Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ decided to take a breath under a tree in the garden of ‘Utbah bin Rabi’ah and Shaybah bin Rabi’ah. As he sat down, he humbly expressed his helplessness before Allah Ta’ala by offering the following dua:

اللَّهُمَّ إِلَيْكَ أَشْكُو ضَعْفَ قُوَّتِي وَقِلَّةَ حِيلَتِي وَهَوَانِي عَلَى النَّاسِ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ أَنْتَ رَبُّ
الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ إِلَى مَنْ تَكَلَّمْتَنِي إِلَى عَدُوِّ بَعِيدٍ يَنْجَهُمَنِي أَمْ إِلَى صَدِيقٍ قَرِيبٍ مَلَكَتَهُ أَمْرِي إِنْ
لَمْ تَكُنْ غَضَبَانًا عَلَيَّ فَلَا أَبَالِي غَيْرَ أَنْ عَافَيْتَكَ أَوْسَعُ لِي أَعُوذُ بِنُورِ وَجْهِكَ الَّذِي أَشْرَقَتْ
لَهُ الظُّلُمَاتُ وَصَلَحَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ مِنْ أَنْ تُنَزَلَ بِي غَضَبِكَ أَوْ يَحِلَّ بِي سَخَطُكَ
وَلَكَ الْعُتْبَى حَتَّى تَرْضَى وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِكَ

“O Allah! Only to You do I complain of my infirmity, my inadequate strategies and of my humiliation before the people. O most merciful of the merciful! You are the Lord of the weak and helpless. To whom do You consign me? Would You condemn me to an impolite and ill-tempered

enemy who will enrage me or would You consign me to a close friend to whom You would entrust my affairs? If You are not angry with me, I am not concerned in the least but Your protection and safety is more accommodating and pleasant to me. I seek refuge with the Noor (radiance) of Your being that has brightened the darkness and the radiance upon which the affairs of this world and the hereafter depend, with the medium of this radiance I seek Your refuge, O Allah, from Your wrath descending upon me or from Your fury being unleashed over me. And only to You (do I wish to express my lamentations) until You are content. There is no power (to repel evil) nor might (to do good) but only that which You have decreed.”

The status of prophethood would have sufficed for the acceptance of duas because every prophet is a Mustajaabud-D‘awaat (one whose duas are promptly accepted by Allah Ta‘ala). However, at this moment, apart from the attribute of prophethood, a pitiable condition of adversity, victimisation, alienation and Musaaferat (a state of travelling) further complemented this condition of acceptance of duas. Allah Ta‘ala says:

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ

“Who is the one who would respond to (the duas) of the person afflicted by adversity when he calls unto Him, and He removes evil.”

Furthermore, in regards to a traveller and an oppressed person, both of them are clearly and independently mentioned in the Hadith that their duas are indisputably accepted.

بترس از آه مظلوماں کہ ہنگام دعا کردن

اجابت از در حق بہر استقبال می آید

“Beware the sigh of the oppressed for the gates of acceptance readily welcomes his dua in the Divine Court of Allah Ta‘ala.”

You can very well imagine the duas of a personage of such noble character who besides being a divine messenger is also a victim of adversity, oppression, alienated and travelling on a journey. Such a dua barely left his lips when the doors of acceptance were flung open.

The same ‘Utbah and Shaybah, whose hearts were harder than stone, turned soft when they caught sight of Rasulullah’s ﷺ sad and pitiable condition. The blood of their kinship and the veins of their patriotism surged forth (in their concern for his welfare). They charged their slave ‘Addaas to fill a tray with grapes and take it to the man sitting in the garden. They instructed him to request the man to partake of it. ‘Addaas brought the tray to Rasulullah ﷺ and placed it before him. Rasulullah ﷺ recited *Bismillah* and commenced eating. ‘Addaas commented: “By Allah! Nobody in that city has ever expressed such words.” Rasulullah ﷺ asked: “Where are you from and what religion do you follow?” ‘Addaas replied: “I am a resident of the city of Nenwaa and I am a Christian by faith.” Rasulullah ﷺ enquired: “Is this the same Nenwaa where the devout servant of Allah, Yunus bin Matta lived?” Taken aback, ‘Addaas responded: “What knowledge do you have about Yunus bin Matta?” Rasulullah ﷺ replied: “He was my brother, a Messenger and I am also a Messenger.” ‘Addaas kissed Rasulullah ﷺ on his forehead, hands and legs and submitted: “I bear testimony that you are the slave and messenger of Allah.” When ‘Addaas returned to ‘Utbah and Shaybah, they reproached him for kissing Rasulullah ﷺ on his hands and feet. They also warned him: “Make sure this man does not deviate you from your religion. Your religion is far better than his religion.”

Hakeem bin Hizaam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates: “When ‘Utbah and Shaybah were all primed to take part in the battle of Badr with the Quraysh of Makkah, ‘Addaas grasped their feet and beseeched: “By Allah! This man is the Messenger of Allah. These people are being drawn to their annihilation.”

‘Addaas was busy weeping when ‘Aas bin Shaybah happened to pass by. He asked ‘Addaas why he was weeping so profusely. ‘Addaas replied: “I am shedding tears over my two masters who are on their way to do battle with the Messenger of Allah.” ‘Aas bin Shaybah enquired: “Is he really the Messenger of Allah?” ‘Addaas replied: “Certainly, by Allah! He has been commissioned as a messenger of Allah to the entire world.”

Hadhrat ‘Aa’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا narrates: “I once asked Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ if he ever encountered a day more gruelling than the day of Uhud. Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied: “Well, the rigorous ordeals I suffered at the hands of your people, were trials I had somehow endured, but the most punishing day to me was the day I presented myself before the sons of ‘Abdiyaalil (at Taaif). I returned from them dreadfully disillusioned and dejected. I recovered somewhat as I reached a place called Qarn Al-Tha’aalib when all of a sudden I raised my head and caught sight of a cloud sheltering me. Jibraa’eel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who was also within the cloud called out to me: “Allah is well-aware of the response of your people. Allah has presently despatched to you Malakul-Jibaal (the angel of the mountains). You may bid him to do as you instruct.” Presently, the angel in charge of the mountains greeted me with Salaam and said: “O Muhammad! Allah has sent me to you. I am Malakul-Jibaal (the angel in charge of the mountains). The mountains are in my control. You may instruct me to do as you prefer. If you instruct me, I will combine these two mountains (on either side of Makkah and Taaif) and crush everyone within them.” Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ responded: “No, I cherish hope that Allah Ta’ala will create from their very own descendants, people who will worship Him alone without ascribing any partners unto Him.”

Note: In spite of their ruthless brutalities, this personification of mercy unto mankind, this embodiment of affection did not make dua for their annihilation because even though these people may not embrace Islam, their descendants may comprise of obedient, sincere and devoted servants of Allah Ta’ala.

Return from Taaif and Attendance of the Jinn

On his return from Taaif, Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ spent a few days in a place called Nakhlah. As Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was performing Salaah one night, seven Jinnaat of Naseebayn happened to pass by. They stood listening to his recitation of the Qur-aan for a little while and departed. Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was totally unaware of their appearance until the following verses were revealed:

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۖ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنصِتُوا ۚ فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنزِلَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَى طَرِيقِ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ يَا قَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَمَنْ لَا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٦٩﴾

“And remember the time when We directed towards you a group of Jinn listening attentively to the (recitation of) the Qur-aan. When they turned up before him, they said (to one another): ‘Remain silent (and listen to his words).’ And when it was concluded (by the termination of the Salaah), they returned to their people warning (them). They said: ‘O Our People! We have heard (the recitation) of a book revealed after Musa that endorses the previous books and it guides towards the truth and towards the right path. O our People! Respond to the caller of Allah and believe in him; Allah will forgive your sins and deliver you from a grievous punishment. And he who does not respond to the caller of Allah, he is unable to flee in the earth and he will have no

supporter besides Him (Allah). Such people are in clear misguidance.” [Surah Ahqaaf verses 29-32]

As they approached Makkah, Hadhrat Zaid bin Haarisah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ asked: “How will you enter Makkah when the inhabitants of Makkah had forcefully ousted you from the city?” Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied: “O Zaid! Allah Ta’ala will surely bring about some solution from this predicament. Allah Ta’ala Himself is the supporter and guardian of His Deen. Certainly He will grant His messenger dominance over everyone else.”

When Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ reached the cave of Hira, he dispatched a message to Akhnas bin Shareeq asking whether he could enter Makkah under his (Akhnas’) protection. Akhnas responded: “Since I am an ally of the Quraysh, I am unable to afford you this protection.” Thereafter Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ sent the same message to Suhail bin ‘Amr. He replied: “The Banu ‘Aamir are unable to offer protection in defiance of Banu K‘ab.” Finally Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ sent a message to Mut‘im bin ‘Adi appealing to him whether he could enter Makkah under his protection. Mut‘im accepted this appeal. He then drew his sons and people of his clan together and instructed them to assemble fully armed at the door of the Haram. He declared to them: “I have offered Muhammad my protection.” Saying this, he himself mounted his camel and headed for the Haram. As he reached the door of the Haram, he proclaimed: “O people of the Quraysh! I have offered Muhammad my protection. None of you should interfere with him.”

Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then entered the Haram. After kissing the Hajr-e-Aswad (the black stone) he performed Tawaaf of the K‘abah followed by two Rakaats of Salaah. He then returned home. Mut‘im and his sons had actually taken Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ into their personal protection.

It was due to this demonstration of his goodwill, Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, in regards to the captives of Badr, said:

لَوْ كَانَ الْمُطْعِمُ بْنُ عَدِيٍّ حَيًّا ثُمَّ كَلَّمَنِي فِي هَؤُلَاءِ النَّتْنَى لَتَرَكْتُهُمْ لَهُ

“If Mut‘im bin ‘Adi was alive today and he spoke to me about these (spiritually) filthy people, I would have released all of them in consideration of him.”