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Chapter 10: The Obstacles on the Way and the Tortures Inflicted by the Quraysh

From the very day the Holy Prophet of Islam started his public propagation of Islam, the Quraysh chiefs resorted to any means to silence him.

As usual, they first began with attempts to lure him and tried hard to get him interested in wealth, status, and other material benefits that they promised to give him if he submitted to their ungodly will, and, after realizing that this method was of no use in their dealing with him, they attempted to threaten and then to torment and torture him.

Thus a new stage – an exceedingly troublesome phase –started in the blessed life of the Holy Prophet of Islam. The enemies of Islam, who had well understood that the triumph and rule of Islam would surely put an end to their law of the sword, tyrannies, and exploitation of the deprived people, launched their combat against the Holy Prophet of Islam most brutally and ruthlessly, discarding all moral and humane principles – if they had any – and taking up the arms of rancour and cruelty so that they could hamper the spread of Islam and guard the interests of the Quraysh chiefs and men of power.

Of course it cannot be denied that one of the reasons for the opposition of the people of that age to the perfect faith of the Holy Prophet of Islam was their intellectual immaturity. But from the very day the Quraysh tribe heard that the Holy Prophet of Islam called the idols and wooden and stone statues they worshipped valueless and useless, they exhibited the utmost enmity and opposition toward Islam. The Prophet asked the people, 'What do you want with these lifeless objects?.' They were even more enraged when the Prophet denounced the wooden and stone idols of the Quraysh left to them by their ancestors, which they regarded among their ancient glories.

On the other hand, the divine teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam were inconsistent with the interests of the oppressive class of the chiefs of the Quraysh who wanted to continue exploiting the poor people and possessing innumerable slaves, as well as with the interests and inhumane desires of the usurers who wished to amass wealth at the expense of the deprived class of their society.

It goes without saying that in an environment where no divine law is obeyed and no human right is respected, the strong will forcibly violate the honour, property, and chastity of the defenceless people, and so the new faith – Islam – which severely opposed and fought this wrong social system, enraged those whose interests and selfish considerations were endangered.

Such notorious people as Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan, Abu Lahab, Aswad ibn Abd Yaghwan, `As ibn Wail, `Utbah and Shaybah, Walid ibn Maghirah, and `Aqibah ibn Abi Ma'ayyat were among the leaders of the opponents of Islam.

Cruel, false accusations, physical torment, foul language, economic and financial pressure and boycotts were among the inhumane methods used by the Quraysh chiefs against the Prophet and his faithful companions.

Here some examples of the offences and torments which the enemies of Islam inflicted upon the Holy Prophet are mentioned:

- 1. One day a number of Quraysh gave the uterus of a sheep to their servants to throw at the blessed face and head of the Prophet. They obeyed their brutal master, thus making the Prophet rather sad. 1
- **2.** Tariq Maharibi has narrated, `I saw the Holy Prophet saying in a loud voice to the people, "O people! Say there is no god but God so you would find salvation".

`He urged the people to submit to Islam and become monotheists while Abu Lahab followed him step by step and threw stones at him injuring him so that his feet were covered with blood, but the Holy Prophet continued to guide the people and show them the path of eternal salvation and prosperity. Abu Lahab cried out, "People! This man is a liar. Do not listen to him"." 2

3. In addition, the Holy Prophet of Islam, as well as his loyal friends and those who had newly adopted Islam, were most severely tortured and tormented by the infidels.

One day, the Holy Prophet of Islam observed 'Ammar Yasir and his family being- tortured by the enemies of Islam. Addressing-`Ammar and his faithful family, he said, `I give you, 'Ammar's family, the good tidings that Paradise will be your eternal abode'. 3

Ibn Athir has written, 'Ammar and his parents suffered severe tortures from the idol worshippers. The idol worshippers forced them out of their house in the hot burning weather and tortured them under the burning rays of the sun, inflicting the most unbearable tortures upon them so that they would leave the faith.'

Sumayyah, 'Ammar's mother, was the first woman martyr of Islam, killed by a blow from Abu Jahl's weapon. Yasir, 'Ammar's father, too, died under the torture of the infidels. 'Ammar himself was most cruelly tortured by the enemies of Islam but resorted to dissimulation and thus saved his own life.4

4. Bilal, an Ethiopian slave, was among the Prophet's most faithful followers, and, because of his faith in Islam, his ruthless master brutally tortured him. At midday when it is scorching hot, his master would make Bilal lie down on the burning hot desert pebbles and sand and put a large and heavy stone on his chest to force him to stop obeying the Holy Prophet of Islam and to worship their idols instead of worshipping the One God.

Bilal resisted all his threats and tortures most bravely and admirably and responded just by repeating the word `Ahad' (One), meaning `God is One and Peerless and I will never become an idol worshipper'. 5

Unfortunately, there is no room in such a relatively small book to narrate in detail all the sad stories of the Muslims of early Islam. Thus we content ourselves with observing that the enemies of Islam resorted to any means at their disposal in their fight against Islam and the Muslims, some of which were:

Economic struggle: The Quraysh had started a fierce economic struggle against the Prophet and his followers. One of the inhumane weapons they used against the Muslims was economic pressure and boycott of any sort of transactions with the Muslims.

Psychological warfare: Prohibiting of marriage with Muslims, cutting off all relations with them from the Quraysh, and accusing the Holy Prophet of Islam of witchcraft, telling lies, and the like were psychological tactics meant to break down the resistance and perserverance of the first Muslims.

Physical torment and torture: Another anti-human method of fighting the new movement and its adherents used by the Quraysh was physical torture of the Muslims, which resulted in the martyrdom of a number of faithful Muslims at the beginning of Islam.

In spite of all the brutal methods that the infidel Quraysh utilized in their struggles against Islam, the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, Islam advanced and the Prophet continued to urge the people to go the right way. Islam and the Muslims continued their efforts and struggles.

To maintain their faith in Islam, the Muslims underwent extremely severe torture, sufferings, and hardships and showed admirable resistance in following this honorable path.

A careful and just survey of the conditions of the Muslims at the beginning of Islam reveals the significant fact that, unlike the picture the enemies of Islam have always tried to present, Islam, this holiest of faith, has not been promoted at the point of the bayonet or by the sword, but for 13 years, the Holy Prophet of Islam and the faithful Muslims tolerated the tortures, torments, and swords of the infidels and the idol worshippers to promote this divine religion revealed by God for their salvation.

- 1. A'lam Alwari, new edition, p.57.
- 2. Manaqib Vol. 1, p.51.
- 3. A'lam Alwari, p.58.
- 4. Kamil, Vol. 2, pp.66-67.
- 5. Ibid.

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