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The battle of Nahrawan with all its hardships ended finally

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

It had been so bitter and full of painful events, much more than the battles of Jamal and Siffeen. After that, Ameerul Mo'minin, Ali ibn abi Talib (a.s.) with his small group of followers returned to Kufa. When he entered the city, (or some say: the day after he returned), he went directly to the mosque of Kufa, and before the masses of people, he began his sermon by saying, "O people! It was I, who cut the roots of sedition and rebellion! Something that no one had been able to do, but I did it! Even though the waves of darkness turned to a great storm and its difficulty increased more and more. So, before losing me, ask me about whatsoever that you wish to know! I swear by Allah in Whose Hand my soul rests, that if you wish to ask me about everything that will happen in these days to come until the Resurrection Day, I will answer them all! Or ask me about some specific or unknown groups which shall direct hundreds of persons in the right path, or on the contrary, mislead them, alas! I will tell you who is their leader, where they will set up their camp and which one of them shall die..."

After the sermon, some people stood up and asked him some questions. Among the masses of people, there was a sad looking Jewish man. He listened patiently to the words of Imam Ali (a.s.) and he was most surprised about that strange pretension. He knew that this strange request was so important "ask me before losing me" that if somebody should happen to talk about it, he should be either a Prophet or a Prophet's successor. He was deeply drowned in his thoughts. He then went to his lonely room to think better. He was one of the great Jewish Rabbis; a famous man and a most wise Rabbi in the whole Arab Peninsula. A few days ago, he had arrived in disguise to Kufa, and had taken a room for himself in a small inn. He searched for a man with some specific characteristics and features that he had found in Moses' Torah and the Gospel of Jesus.

That day, when he saw Imam Ali (a.s.) for the first time, he felt that he had known this man for many years. When he heard the words of Imam Ali (a.s.), a strange impression came into his heart. People around him told him that Imam Ali (a.s.) was the fourth caliph of the Muslims. However, some other groups of men thought that he was the right caliph and the very first Imam and the successor of the last Prophet (S).

This Jewish man knew about Muhammad son of Abdullah as the holy Prophet of Islam. He had also had heard some great things about a brave man who had never turned his back to any war, and never escaped from any violent combat; a man who had always stood by the Prophet (S) and was known as his dearest “brother”. He had heard about all the events that had happened after the advent of Islam. Nevertheless, up to now, he had never been able to see Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, or Ali ibn Abi Talib for that matter. Finally, he saw Ali (a.s.) that day and heard his words... even though for a short time, but it was still enough to heal the old wounds of his soul and answer all his complex and unanswered questions, that which his thirsty heart and mind had formed helplessly for too long...

On the other hand, he could not accept easily that this man was the “one”; the same man that he had always called inside the labyrinth of his thoughts and heart, the “one” that he had prayed Allah to find and meet one day in the world. When he stood near one of the walls of Kufa and looked at the blue sky, he whispered to himself: “Maybe it is truly him that I had envisioned for so many years? How many nights did he steal from my sleep and substituted it with extraordinary dreams!”

On the other hand, he eagerly wanted to satisfy himself that he had found him finally! He said to himself: “It is not right! I should not accept those feelings and satisfy myself! My mind tells me something else. I should examine and test him more carefully. According to my calculations, he should answer correctly to all of my questions. When he shall answer me correctly and prove himself as a worthy man, then I will know for sure. I am one of the noble men of the Jewish tribes, and I know everything that is to know about the Torah and the Gospel of Jesus! If I die like an ignorant man, anybody who believes in me, in my own tribe, will die like me, and in the hereafter, I shall face a serious problem. I think it is better not to anticipate the events and put my faith on this man. I should be more patient and find a good occasion to ask him about all my unanswered questions. I think this is a good idea, and then my heart will accept the truth at last...”

For a moment, he felt the heat of the sun on his face. He did not know for how long he had been staying like that on that place, so he went to wash his face and hands.

People were scattered in the streets that were near the mosque here and there, but now they were all ready to perform their prayer. After a few minutes, there was nobody there. He drank some water and washed his face. He heard the voice of the muezzin reciting: “Allaho Akbar!” That unknown voice, affected his whole body and soul amazingly.

An unknown willingness and enthusiasm took him to the first row of prayers. He wanted to be sure about

that.

The voice belonged to him... To Ali ibn Abi Talib. He stood in the back and gazed to his side, but he was afraid to go further. Many more thoughts and the sunlight made him tired, frustrated, so he returned near the pool, and immersed his head completely into the water.

After a few minutes, without thinking any further, he walked to the main gate of the mosque. Now, he visited the mosque of Kufa and knew that it was the best place for him to ask for his questions just among the common people. He came into the mosque.

A few days later, the Jewish man began going to the mosque and frequenting these men to find a suitable moment to ask his demands from Ali (a.s.). Each time without any appropriate result, he returned empty-handed to his hostel, because Ali (a.s.) did not come to the mosque, or he himself was not in a good mood; or he was not able to find a suitable time to offer his questions. Days and nights passed and he was bothered with depression and a fatigue of mind.

That very night was very different from the previous nights. Since the beginning of the night, he felt a bizarre emotion in his heart. A strange feeling was forming inside his being, which made him impatient. He could not eat or drink, and the bird of his thoughts had flown away and the curtain of sleep was pulled away from his eyes.

He looked at the sky and stars all the night. He was waiting for the sun to rise in order to go to the mosque. Waiting was the only thing he could do! It was truly unbearable for him.

At the earliest moments of the new day, he got out and began walking in the street. A cool and smooth breeze was whispering into his ears, and touching lightly the skin of his face. He did not look at his left or right, for nobody was there.

He did not know what he was doing in the street. He did not know from which direction he should go toward the mosque. For a short time, he began thinking, but he could not concentrate his mind to remember anything, so he chose a path by chance, while drowned in his thoughts, until he saw the earthen walls of the mosque.

The sun was rising and the weather was getting hotter. In that season, the nights of Kufa were cool and the days were hot. He touched the walls of the mosque. It was still cool by the night's breeze. He chose to relax for a little while in the shade of the same wall, and so he sat there. He took his knees with his arms and embraced them thoughtfully, gazing at the blue sky of Kufa, which filled his eyes with its beauty and gave him a sense of calmness and serenity. He tried to collect his thoughts and give them some order. At the height of exasperation, he whispered to himself: "How tired I am! How my patience has come to its end! O, Allah! The All-Powerful! Help me!"

Without knowing the reason, he suddenly raised his head and gazed at the principal portal of the

mosque. He tried in vain to concentrate his thoughts. Maybe his condition was due to his sleepless nights, his inward agitation, and the condition in which he saw himself for some time now. He did not know why he had come there to sit down on the ground. He could not find any reasonable explanation for his actions and behavior. He began to think about the recent days.

A smile appeared slowly on his face, and his eyes began to shine. He got up quickly and entered the mosque. He rested his arm on the entry door to look around. Some men were sitting on the ground. Some others were sitting under the shade, made of the palm frond, or were offering their prayers. Some others were leaning against the wall and taking a nap.

Doves were flying here and there, some others trying to quench their thirst from the water of the great basin situated in the middle of the court of the mosque.

He suddenly felt pain in his temples. He closed his eyes. It appeared to him that he was hearing a long whistling in his head. He remembered this strange statement, "Ask me whatever you wish to ask from me, before it gets too late..."

He got this certainty that on that same day, he could fulfill his deepest wish and get near Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). The day he had waited so long for its coming had finally come! And, suddenly, he knew the reason of his torment and inward excitement; it was because he was going to see that strange man once again! Then he could ask him all those bothering questions that were so important to him. He knew that he was nearing a great spiritual test, and he was very much worried and fearful about what were to happen to him! If per chance he could not receive his answers, then what would he do?! He already saw himself in great desperation with all doors of the world closed before him. He knew he was not allowed to advance too much in his desperation before his Creator. But what if he was to receive all his answers at last?

He was going to see all his desires fulfilled in this world... and what excellent end, was truly waiting for him!

He felt a new force inside him. Full of energy, he entered the mosque. He reached the eastern wall which was situated exactly in front of the principal door and sat down in the shade. Now, he only had to wait.

The sun then went high and the shade of the wall decreased. Under the shadow in front of the mosque, a group of men gathered and they began talking with each other. The Jewish man went to a column and sat down near it.

He asked a man nearby, "Will your lord come today?"

The man answered in affirmative.

From that moment on, a liquid fire flowed in his veins and he could not bear this agonizing waiting

anymore! He could not keep himself serene and calm. He gathered his clothes and got up. He sat down once again for a while and again got up. He could not let himself stand up, because he would have lost his place otherwise. He needed his place most urgently, because it was very near to the pulpit of the Commander of the Believers. He needed to be there to be able to ask his questions, and to receive clear, precise, definite answers. He did not want to converse with the man who sat near him on his right. He only wanted to fly high to reach another spiritual realm.

Hot rays of the sun reached him under the palm-frond shade which protected the people from the blinding brightness of the morning sun.

He put his head against the wooden column when he suddenly heard a rumor. Suddenly, men got to their feet as if by a common accord. He did the same without knowing the reason. He turned his head and suddenly saw Ali ibn Abi Talib who was coming to ward them, very simply attired. A deep dignity and an inner majesty enveloped all his persona. He had a sword on his side, and his clothes were very simple. He had put on sandals made of the fibers of palm trees.

The Jewish man, who could not endure this anymore, felt his knees tremble. He got pale and was forced to lean on the column that was behind him.

Ali passed among the men, sat down on the ground, and faced the public.

That day, the intimate friends of Ali were as follows; Asbagh ibn Nabatah, Komeyl ibn Ziyad, Meytham at-Tammar, and Habib ibn Mudhahir. They sat close to their master showing him great respect. A moment passed in silence, and then there were questions from the people all around. There were also men having come from other cities looking forward to receive answers to their theological questions, or concerning problems of their everyday life. Some others had come there to seek justice, and they really were stupefied by the fair judgment of Ali ibn abi Talib (a.s.).

The Jewish man was amazed. He looked for an instant at Ali (a.s.), and the next instant, at those men. He had not yet had an opportunity to ask his own questions. Then, he did not have the necessary courage for this. Time passed quickly, but he could not let that precious time to go by.

He moved himself a bit, and then collected his inward power to give himself the courage to stand up. With this act, he provoked the stupefaction of the men who were close to him. But then again, he did not know what kind of demand to make to Ali. It seemed to him that he had forgotten everything! With great difficulty, he dampened his lips, and with a trembling voice he said, "If you permit me, I wish to ask you some questions!"

The tone of his voice and his foreign accent made the men turn their heads towards him. Ali with a paternal look gazed at him and declared, "Offer your demands please!"

The man raised his head and fixed Ali's face. He then lowered his eyes and looked at Ali's feet. With a

mixture of modesty and hesitation he announced, "... But no body can answer my questions except if they are answered by a Prophet or by the successor of a Prophet..."

Maybe he had said it, just to have a confirmation... Who knows?

Ali (a.s.), with an affectionate gaze, repeated with a celestial voice, "Offer your demands...come now! Ask whatever you want to know." After this cordial tone, all the particles of the man's being were enveloped by these two things; the voice of the Commander of the Believers and its warm vibration! They put an end to all his agitations and uncertainties. All the windows of his spirit and heart opened up suddenly, and he saw himself completely enveloped and braced by the waves of a sea of goodness and paternal kindness.

The Jewish man regained force and suddenly all his questions came forth to his tongue. He had control over his mind. It appeared to him most strange that he could feel this way, but he let this thought go away, and he concentrated on the questions that he was going to ask from the Commander of the Believers.

He coughed and, with a great serenity that was new to him said, "I have read in the Torah that after the election of each Prophet, Allah the Almighty, by way of His Revelation, makes his Messenger choose a man among his intimates to be his successor and to maintain justice after his death. The Prophet then makes him swear that he might be able to put them in execution. I have also heard that Allah the Almighty, during the life of this Prophet and after his death, sends down all kinds of sufferings and calamities on his successor. Thus, I wanted to know that if they really have to endure trials during the Prophet's lifetime and after his death, and what shall be their own ends ...?"

Imam Ali (a.s.) replied, "I swear by Him Who has opened the sea for the children of Israel and Who has revealed the Torah to Prophet Moses, that I shall answer all your questions! But if there shall be answers to which you will have to respond, will you do that?"

"Oh yes, I will!"

The men, who were there, saw themselves getting more stretched, because new comers had come into the mosque, and they were searching for some place near those, who were already there, to sit down.

Nobody had ever asked such a question. It appeared to them as a very good, refreshing novelty to them! In fact, there were even intimates of Ali ibn Abi Talib, who had never heard of such demands.

The Commander of the Believers got to his feet and sat on the pulpit. He began his speech by saying, "Allah the Almighty, during the Prophet's lifetime, puts to trial the successor of this Prophet for seven times... To test in fact, his faith and obedience... Then after the death of this Prophet, Allah once again, puts this successor to trial for seven times to come to see how far his patience and submission will go, and when these torments and sufferings reach their end, Allah grants him the great honor of becoming a

Martyr. Thus, he could join the Prophet and reach the absolute Bliss.”

The man said, “You have said that Allah grants them the great honor of becoming Martyrs. Thus, they could join the Prophets and reach the absolute Bliss. You have answered correctly, O Commander of the Believers! Now, can you tell me how many times have you ever been put on trial yourself by Allah the Almighty, either during Muhammad’s lifetime (S), or after his decease, and how shall your end be?”

Imam Ali (a.s.) got up calmly, came close to the man and said to him, “Come... get up, so that I could answer you in private.”

By the manner that Ali (a.s.) behaved, and by the answer he had given to him, he showed his desire to take him to some other place to be able to talk to him in private, and to make him some confidences without the presence of the others.

At this moment, some of Ali’s enemies, who had had a grudge against him, for such a long time, objected with high cries and shouts and said, “O, Commander of the Believers! Take us with you!”

Ali (a.s.) replied, “I am afraid that you could not bear my words.”

“Why is it so?”

“Because of the many bad deeds that some of you have committed.”

Soon after, one of Imam Ali’s companions got up and with great modesty said, “O, Commander of the Believers! Favor us too! Tell us, your companions and those who wish you well, about these sufferings and calamities! I swear by Allah, that apart from you, we do not know another successor to our Prophet, and we are very well aware of this fact. We know perfectly that Allah, after Muhammad, will not send another Prophet. Thus, we confess that fact by obeying you. We know that it is a moral duty and a religious prescription, which is done after the obedience that we had offered to our great Prophet.”

After this humble request, Imam Ali (a.s.) sat on his pulpit. Those who had got up, sat down again, and all men were ready to listen to Imam Ali’s reply.

The Commander of the Believers, after praising Allah and thanking the Divine Blessings, turned to the Jewish man and said to him, “When the Prophet was alive, Allah put me on trial on seven occasions, but I do not want to appear proud or self-conceited. However, you shall see that in each occasion. I have always been absolutely obedient toward the Messenger of Allah (S).”

The Jewish man asked him respectfully, “May I ask on which occasions?”

Imam Ali (a.s.) recounted his sufferings and calamities in two parts, and each one was divided in seven stages. The first one was during the time in which the Prophet (S) lived, and the other part after the Prophet (S) had left for the better world. That is from the time in which there was a house near the

Ka'aba, until that sad dawn when the mosque of Kufa became bloody and Ali (a.s.), before his soul was taken up to its Creator, sighed by saying, "I have won, by the Lord of Kaaba!"

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