

CHAPTER FIVE

Concerning The Death Of The Prophet, Upon him peace

Abu Bakr the close companion

A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) said, 'The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) instructed us to wash him from seven vessels from seven wells. This we did, and he found some relief, going outside and leading the people in prayer. He asked for forgiveness for the people of Uhud and prayed for them. He advised us to treat the Ansar (Helpers) well, saying, "To precede, O company of Emigrants! Truly you are rising to a position of superiority, while the Ansars will rise no higher than the circumstances in which they are today. The Ansar are my people to whom I had resort, so honour whomsoever amongst them is honourable"-meaning: those among them who act righteously-"and pardon their wrongdoers." Then he said, "A servant has been given the choice between this world and what is with Allah. He has chosen the latter."

'At this, Abu Bakr wept (Allah be pleased with him) thinking that he meant himself. And the Prophet said (upon him peace) "Be in less haste, Abu Bakr! Close up these street doors of the Mosque, except the door of Abu Bakr, for truly, I know of no man who has been more worthy of companionship than he".¹

Miswak a great Sunnah

A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) said, "He passed away in my house, on my day, between my chest and throat. And at death Allah joined my saliva to his. For when my brother Abd al-Rahman entered carrying a Miswak in his hand, he (the Prophet) began to look at it, and I knew that it pleased him, so I said: "Shall I bring it to you?" Yes, he nodded, so I handed it to him. He put it into his mouth, but it was too hard for him. "Shall I soften it for you?" I asked. Yes, he nodded, so I made it soft. And by him there lay a leather vessel containing water into which he started dipping his hand, saying, "No deity is there except Allah! Truly death has agonies!" then he lifted up his hand and said, "The Highest Companion! The Highest Companion!" and I said, "So by Allah!, he will not prefer us".²

Final advice

Sa'id ibn Abd Allah related the following from his father: 'When the Ansars saw that The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) was increasingly burdened they encircled the Mosque. Al-Abbas, Allah be pleased with him, went inside to the Prophet (upon him peace) and told him of their position and their sympathy. Then al-Fadl entered, and appraised him likewise, and Ali (Allah be pleased with him), who did the same. He stretched out his hand and said, "Here," so they grasped it. "What say you?" he asked, and they replied, "We fear that you shall die." And their women wailed at their men folk's gathering around the Prophet, upon him peace.

'Then The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) arose, and went outside leaning upon Ali and al-fadl, with al-Abbas in front. His head was bandaged and his feet dragged along the ground, but he gained the pulpit and sat down upon its lowest step. The people collected around him.

'He praised and glorified Allah, and then said, "O people! I have heard that you fear I shall die, as though you considered death to be something odious. What is it that you resent in the death of your Prophet? Has not my death-notice already been given you; have not

¹ The closing of the doors, mentioned elsewhere in the Traditions in Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar and Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba is discussed by Imam Suyuti who quotes Ibn Hajar's opinion to the effect that by making this gesture the Prophet was designation Abu Bakr as the first successor to his temporal authority.

² Bukhari, Riqaq

yourselves already been given your death-notices? Was any Prophet of those that were sent before me made everlasting that I might also be granted eternal life? No, I shall go to join my Lord, as shall you all. I advise you to act kindly towards the First Emigrants, and to them I counsel mutual favour, for truly Allah (The Exalted) has said, *By the time of the beloved (Prophet). Undoubtedly, man is necessarily in loss. but those who believe...*³ He recited (the chapter) to its end, and then continued, "Affairs run by the leave of Allah. Never permit the (inherent) slowness of something to encourage you to try hastening it, for truly, Allah (The Exalted) hastens not by reason of the haste of anyone. Whoever seeks to overthrow Allah, Allah shall overthrow him, and whoever seeks to deceive Him will be deceived by Him. If you turn away, will you work corruption in the earth and sever your family ties? I counsel you to honour the Ansars, for they it was *who made ready the land and the faith before you came.*⁴ Be good to them, for did they not share with you half their crops and make room for you in their houses? Did they not prefer you over themselves, although theirs was a greater need? Thus whoever is given authority to judge between two men, let him accept from the virtuous amongst their number and deal kindly with their wrongdoers. Do not prefer anyone over them.

"I am preceding you, but you shall join me. Our meeting is at the Pool, my Pool whose breadth exceeds the distance which is between Bostra of Syria and Sana' of Yemen. Into it from the spout of al-Kawthar pours water which is whiter than milk, softer than foam and sweeter than honey; whosoever drinks of it shall never thirst again. Pearls are its pebbles; musk is its bed. Whosoever is deprived of it tomorrow at the Standing Place is deprived of all good. Therefore, let him who is desirous of meeting me there tomorrow restrain his tongue and hand from all except what is meet."

The funeral procedure

Ibn Masud (Allah be pleased with him) related that The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) said to Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) 'Ask me your question, O Abu Bakr!' 'O Messenger of Allah! (upon him peace) he replied. 'The time has drawn near! 'The time has drawn near', he said, 'and is almost come.' 'What is with Allah shall surely gladden you, O Prophet of Allah,' he said. 'But would that I could know the place of our return!' And he told him, 'To Allah, and to the *Lote Tree of the Boundary, then the Garden of the Refuge, the Highest Paradise, the Most fulfilling prize, the Highest Companion, good fortune and the life made pleasant.*' 'O Prophet of Allah!' he said. 'Who shall take charge of washing you?' 'Men from the closest of the people of my household,' he replied. 'In what shall we shroud you?' he asked. 'In these clothes of mine, and a Yemenite cloak, and bound white cloth.' He replied. 'How are we to pray over you?' he asked. And we wept, and he wept with us, and then said; 'Gently now! May Allah forgive you, and reward you on behalf of your Prophet well. When you wash and shroud me, set me on my bed in my house here at the side of my grave, then depart from me for an hour, for the first to pray for me will be Allah (The Exalted): It is *He who sends blessings on you and His angels too.*⁵

'Then He will give the angels leave to pray for me. The first of Allah's creatures to enter and pray for me shall be Gabriel, then Michael, Israfil and the Angel of Death, together with a great host; then the angels in their sum, may Allah bless them all. Then you: enter in groups and pray for me in groups, one group at a time, and offer your salutations. Injure me not with excessive praise, or shouting or moaning. Let the Imam commence, then the people of my household, the nearest first, and then the companies of women and children.'

³ Surah AL-Asr; Surah No: 103; Verse: 1-3

⁵ Surah Al-Ahzab; Surah No: 33 Verse :43

'Who shall set your grave?' he asked, and he replied, 'Groups of the people of my household, first the closest, with many angels, whom you cannot see but who see you. Arise, and act on my behalf towards those who shall come after me'.⁶

Abu Bakr leads the prayer

Abd Allah ibn Zam'a said, 'Bilal came at the beginning of Rabi al-Awwal and delivered the Adhan. The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) said, "Instruct Abu Bakr to lead the people in prayer". So I went out, but could see no-one in the surrounding area of the door except Umar, who was with a group of people which did not include Abu Bakr. "Arise Umar!" I said, "and lead the people in prayer." So Umar got up, but when he declared, "Allahu Akbar," being a man of stentorian voice, he was heard by The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) who said three times, "Where is Abu Bakr? Allah and the Muslims refuse this! Command Abu Bakr to lead the prayer!"

The Angels enter

'And A'isha said, Allah be pleased with her, "O Messenger of Allah! Abu Bakr is a man whose heart is delicate; whenever he stands in for you he is overcome with tears." But he said, "You are indeed the female companions of Joseph! Enjoin Abu Bakr to lead the prayer!"⁷

And so it was that Abu Bakr led a prayer after the one which Umar had already said. And Umar used to say to Abd Allah ibn Zam'a ever afterwards, 'Amazed you! What was that you did to me? By Allah, had I not thought that The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) had given you instructions I would not have done what I did.'

And A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) said, 'When the day the Messenger of Allah's death came, the people saw an improvement in him at the day's beginning, and the men went apart from him to their homes and tasks rejoicing, leaving him with the women. While we were there in a state of hope and joyfulness the likes

of which we had never known. And then the Prophet of Allah said, "Go out, away from me; this Angel seeks leave to enter". At this, everyone but myself left the house. His head had been in my lap, but now he sat up and I retired to one side of the room. He communed with the Angel at length, and then summoned me and returned his head to my lap, bidding the women enter. "I did not sense that was Gabriel, upon him be peace," I said. "Indeed, A'isha," he replied. "That was the Angel of Death, who came to me and said, 'I am sent by Allah, The Exalted, Who has commanded me not to enter your house without your consent. So if you should withhold it from me I shall go back, but should you give it me, then shall I enter. And He has enjoined me not to take your soul until you instruct me; what, then, might your instructions be?' 'Hold back from me', I said, 'until Gabriel has come to me, for this is his hour'."

And A'isha (continued, and) said, 'So we came into the presence of a matter for which we had neither answer nor opinion. We were downcast; it was as if we had been struck by a calamity about which we could do nothing. Not one of the people of the Household spoke because of their awe in the face of this affair and because of a fear which filled our depths. At his hour, Gabriel came (I felt his presence) and gave his greeting. The people of the Household left, and he entered saying, "Allah, The Exalted, gives you His greetings, and asks how you are, although He knows better than you your condition; yet He desires to increase you in dignity and honour, and to render your dignity and honour greater than that of all creatures, that this may be a Sunnah for your Ummah." "I am in pain," he said. And the Angel replied, "Be glad, for Allah (The Exalted) has willed to bring you to that

⁶ Al-Bazzar, al-Musnad

⁷ Bukhari, Anbiya

which He has made ready for you." "O Gabriel," he said. "The Angel of Death asked for permission to enter!" and he told him of what has transpired. And Gabriel said, "O Muhammad! (upon him peace) Your Lord longs for you! Has not given you to know His purpose for you? No, by Allah, never has the Angel of Death sought permission of anyone, no more than is his permission to be sought at any time. It is only that you Lord is making perfect your honour while He longs for you." "Then do not leave until he comes," he said.

News to Fatima

'Then he allowed the women to enter, and said, "Fatima, draw near." She leaned over him and he whispered in her ear. When raised her head again she was weeping, and could not bear to speak. Then he said again, "Bring you head close," and she leaned over him while he whispered something to her. Then she raised her head, and was smiling, unable to speak. What we saw in her was something most astonishing. Afterwards we questioned her about what had happened, and she said, "He told me, 'Today I shall die,' so I wept; then he said, 'I have prayed to Allah to let you be the first of my family to join me, and to set you with me,' so I smiled."⁸

The Prophet's death

'Then she brought her two sons close by him. Then the Angel of death came, greeted him, and asked leave to enter. He granted it him, and the Angel said, "What are your instructions, O Muhammad? (upon him peace)" "Take me now to my Lord," he said. "Yes indeed," he responded, "on this day of yours. Truly you're Lord for you. He has not paused over any man as He has paused over you, nor has He ever forbidden me to enter without permission upon anyone else. But now, your hour is come." And he went out. The came Gabriel, who said, "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah! This is the final time I shall ever descend to the earth. Revelation is folded up, the world is folded up, and I had on the earth no business except with you. Upon it now I have no purpose except being present with you, after which I shall remain in my place. No! By He Who sent Muhammad (upon him peace) with the truth, there is no-one in the house able to change one word of what I have said. He will never be sent again despite the greatness of the discourse concerning him which shall be heard, and despite our affection and sympathy."

'I got up and went to the Prophet (upon him peace) to put his head between my breast, and clutched onto his chest. He began to swoon until he was overcome. His forehead was pouring forth sweat in a way that I have never seen from any man; I took to wiping away this sweat, and never had I found the scent of anything to be sweeter than it. I would say to him when he came round, "May my father and mother be your ransom, and myself and all my family! How your forehead perspires!" and he said, "O A'isha, the soul of the believer departs with his sweat, while that of the unbeliever departs through his jaws like that of the donkey." At this, we were afraid, and sent for our families.

'The first man to come not having seen him was my brother, (Abd al-Rahman ibn Abu Bakr) whom my father had sent. But The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) died before the arrival of anyone. For Allah held them back from him, as He had now set him in the charge of Gabriel and Michael. And when he passed out came he took to saying, "Rather, the Highest Companion!" as though the choice had been restored to him. And he would say whenever he was able to speak, "The Prayer! The Prayer! You shall always hold together as long as you pray together. The Prayer! The Prayer!" He commended it until he passed away, saying, "The Prayer! The Prayer!"⁹ (Inna Lillahi Wa-inna Ilayhi Rajioon)

⁸ Al-Bazzar, al-Musnad

⁹ Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir

And A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) said, 'The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) died between the afternoon and midday.'

The state of people

A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) said, when The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) died, the people were thunderstruck, and great wailing rose up, as the angels covered him with a garment of mine. The people differed amongst themselves: some denied his death, others were struck dumb and did not speak for a long while, whereas others became restless and talk nonsense without meaning. Others retained their reason, but there were still others who were unable even to walk. Umar ibn al-Khattab was among those who denied his death; Ali was one of those unable to walk, while Uthman was of those who has been struck dumb.

'then Umar went out to the people and declared, "The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) has not died! Allah (The Exalted) shall most certainly bring him back. May hands and feet be struck from those hypocrites who desire the Messenger of Allah's death (upon him peace). For Allah (The Exalted) has only taken him for a meeting, as He did for Musa, and he shall yet come to you." And according to another account he said, "O people! Restrain your tongues from speaking (like this) of The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) for truly he has not passed away. By Allah, I shall attack with this sword of mine anyone who says that The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) has died!"

There was no-one among the Muslims in a state comparable to that of Abu Bakr and al-Abbas, for Allah (The Exalted) had gifted them both with guidance and good sense. The people paid attention to the speech of Abu Bakr alone until al-Abbas came and said, "By Allah, besides Whom is no other deity! The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) has tasted death. While still among you he had declared, 'Undoubtedly, you are to die, and they are to die. Then on the Day of Resurrection you will dispute before your Lord'.¹⁰

'The news came to Abu Bakr while he was in the quarter of Banu'l-Harith ibn al-Khazraj¹¹. He came, and entered of presence of the Messenger of Allah (upon him peace). He looked at him, then leaned over him and kissed him. Then he said, "May my father and mother be your ransom, O Messenger of Allah! Never was it Allah's will to make you taste death twice. Indeed, by Allah, The Messenger of Allah (upon him peace) has passed away." Then he went out to the people and said, "O people! Whoever has worshipped Muhammad (upon him peace) (let him know that) Muhammad (upon him peace) has died. But whoever has worshipped the Lord of Muhammad (upon him peace) (then let him know that) He is Alive, and does not die. For Allah (The Exalted) has said, *Muhammad (upon him peace) is only a Messenger. There have been many other Messengers before him. Will you then, if he departs or be slain, turn your heels?*"¹² And it was as though the people had never heard this verse before that day'.

Poetry by Shaykh Ahmad Raza Khan

Ambiya KoBhi Azal Aani He

Maghar Esi Ke Fakat Aani He

Phir Usi Aan Ke Bad Unki Hayat

Masal Sabik Wahi Jismani He

¹⁰ Surah Al-Zumar; Surah No: 39; Verse: 30-31

¹¹ A tribe of Madinah

¹² Surah Ale-Imran; Surah No: 3; Verse: 144

Ruh To Sabki He Zinda Unka Jism Pur Noor Bhi Ruhani He

Aur Who Ki Ruh Ho Kitnihi Lateef Unke Ijzaam Ki Kab Sani He

Pawo Kis Khak Pe Rakde Woh Bhi Ruh He Pakhe Noorani He

Uski Azwaj Ko Jaiz He Nikkah Uska Tarka Bate Jofani He

Ye He Hayyi Abadi Un Ko Raza Sadq Wada Qaza Mani p92 2nd part