

DEVOTED COMPANIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Holy Companions (May Allah be pleased with Him), that is, the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are those great personalities of the world, who are superior to and greater than anyone except the Prophets and Messengers of Allah (peace be upon him). By their achievements they earned the pleasure of Allah and His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).

When we read the life histories of the Holy Companions, we feel a longing to follow their example. We feel an urge to be firm in our beliefs and to establish the faith of Islam. We believe that had not Allah created those wonderful people; our religion would not have come to us in its pristine form. Allah had caused those noble Companions of our Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to safeguard our religion. Next to the lives of the Apostles of Allah (peace be upon him). It is the lives of these sages which serve as the best models for us.

The manner in which the Holy Companions went forward with the Islamic movement, the sacrifices which they made in support of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), and the zeal and enthusiasm with which they worked for spreading the message of Islam, carry a good lesson for all human beings of the world, specially the Muslims. For a long time now there has been a feeling that the life-stories of those torch-bearers of Islam should be presented to our children and young persons, boys and girls, for correcting the ills of our present society. This book is intended to fulfill this need and it is hoped that it will be of benefit to our young generation and shall impart especially to them desirable training on the Islamic way of life. May Allah accept this work and reward us in the hereafter

Mail Khairabadi

HADRAT SALMAN FARSI

(Allah be pleased with him)

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was once sitting with his follower in his Mosque. A stranger enter the mosque and coming over to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "I understand that you are a holy and pious-person. Some of your followers are homeless and destitute. I have some alms for them. I think none else deserves better than you people. Kindly accept these alms". The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) looked at him and asked him to give the alms to his followers. He then said to his followers to eat, but he himself did not eat anything from it. The stranger took notice of it and went away. Next day again he returned with some more articles of food and presenting them he said, "You did not accept the charity yesterday. Kindly accept this as a gift from me."

Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted the gift cheerfully; he took some of it himself and distributed the rest amongst the others. The stranger, in the meantime, had been trying to catch a glimpse of the Holy Prophet's (peace be upon him) shoulders. May it be a chance or else the cloth from the shoulders of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) fell down and exposed an embossed mark equal in size to a rupee between his shoulders. The stranger stooped down and kissed the mark in reverence. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him to come forward. When he sat in front of him, he called for his followers and companions and then asked the stranger to introduce himself to all present over there. The stranger narrated his story thus:

O pious people! My name is Moaaba. I come from a village known as Jee near Isphan, a famous city of Iran. My father was a big landlord. He was very fond of farming and carried on his favorite pursuit on large scale. He loved me so much that he used to adorn me like girls and never allowed me to go out side the house. He was a follower of Zoroaster and worshipped the holy fire. He would teach me how to worship the fire and follow the doctrines of Zoroastrian religion. Being a very obedient son I also listened to my father very intently and would worship the holy fire with great devotion. From the very childhood I was consider one those sac priests who never allowed the holy fire to be extinguished for a single moment.

One day my father was busy in repairing our house and as such he could not go out for his usual round of the fields. I was quite grown up then and often went out of the house alone. So I sent to look after the crops. On the way I saw a church where some Christians had gather to say their prayers. I stopped over there and looked on. The manner in which the Christians were offering their devotions appealed me very much. I felt that their religion than ours. I then asked those Christians as to where the center of their religion was. They told me that it was in Syria. As it was getting near evening I came back home after noting the address of their Center. My father enquires from me why I had bee so late and that where had I been till then. I said, "On my way home I saw some people offering prayers in a church. Their manner of worship appealed me so much that I remained there till sunset". My father told me that their religion was not better than Zoarastrian. I insisted that their religion was far better than ours.

My reply alarmed my father lest I should change my religion. So he forbade me to go our of the house. But I used to visit the church secretly. When my father came to know of it he was much annoyed and confined me within the house. While in confinement my restlessness

increased and I sent a word to the Christians that they should inform me if any caravan was to leave to Syria.

By the grace of Allah, soon after some traders happened to pass through our village. They were going to Syria. As soon as I heard the news I managed somehow to get myself out from the confinement and joined the Caravan and reached Syria.

I made enquires from the people there about the grand priest. They gave me the address, where I met him and told my story. I changed my religion. After conversion I began to remain in attendance on the grand priest. While in his company it was revealed to me that he was a very bad man. He exhorted others to do good deeds but he never practiced what he preached. He collected charity from the people for the poor and the needy persons and usurped all of it for his personal use. Whatever he could save, he kept it under lock and key. Thus he soon got seven pails filled with gold and silver. Seeing his greed I was disgusted. Many a time I thought of telling the people all about it. But I could not dare to do so because of the personality and the influence of the grand priest. When he died I disclosed his secret. The people searched his house and recovered the pails filled with wealth. In retaliation the Christians hanged his dead body and stoned it.

After his death another clergyman was appointed in his place. He was really a pious man. He used to worship day and night. I developed deep attachment with him. I told him my story and began to serve him. He was also pleased with me and confided in me. When he was about to die I told him that I had been with him for so long and he had always been very kind to me. Now that he was preparing for his last journey I begged for his advice as to what I should do and to whom I should go after him. He said that he was not aware of any Christian who followed the teachings of the holy Christ in its true spirit. The Christians had modified the teaching of Christ. They had abandoned the principles which they found inconvenient to observe. He however pointed out a person in Mosul who had the real knowledge of the teaching of Christ, and advised me to see him.

After the death of that kind clergyman I reached Mosul; searched for the clergyman about whom I was told, and narrated the whole story to him. He was kind enough to accommodate me. He too was really a pious man. I learned much from him. Alas! After a few days he also passed away. Before his death he gave me, on my request the address of another priest of Naseebain. I then went to that clergyman of Naseebain, and found him to be the most pious of all clergymen, but death soon overtook him also. I then went according to his advice to the Grand Bishop of Amooria. When he was also about to die I said to him, "I have been following every person about whom I thought that he could be my guide, but alas I have not been able to reach the destination. According to a poet, I go for a little while with every passer-by taking him as my guide. But I actually do not recognize my real guide."

He said "O son! Should I tell you that there is none in this world who none followed the path of righteousness?" How can one know the true religion when its very sources (The old and New Testament) have been polluted? But the time is approaching when the Prophet about whom you have read in the Holy Bible is about to appear. That prophet will rise from the deserts of Arabia and He will revive the religion of Ibrahim. He will be there in the land of date palms. You will recognize him by the fact that he will accept only gifts and not take charity. There will be an embossed mark equal to the size of a rupee between his both shoulders on his back I, therefore, advise you to go to him. You will find peace and blessings with him only."

After the death of the Grand Bishop, I remained stationed there. Whenever a Caravan arrived there I enquire about their destination. Fortunately some traders from Arabia came there and I joined them. These Arabs, however, deceived me. They enslaved me and sold me to his cousin and he took me to Medina. When I caught sight of the cluster of the date palms my excitement knew no bounds and I began to make enquires about the new Prophet. But no one could tell anything.

One day I was working in the garden of my master. I had climbed up a date tree and was engaged in pruning it. My master was sitting beneath. Some one came there and referring to a tribe he said, "Curse befall the people of that tribe. All of them have gather round a person who has come from Mecca. They call him the Prophet."

As soon as I heard him say so my legs began to tremble and my body shook with emotion. Had I not taken hold of myself and climbed down the tree I would surely have fallen on the ground. I was so excited that I could not control myself and without caring for the consequences I asked the stranger what he was saying. On hearing this, my master slapped me on my face and rebuked me, "How does it concern you. Mind your own job." I kept quite but I was uneasy at heart. I had some eatables which I brought to you yesterday and offer to you as charity. You did not accept the charity for yourself and distributed it among your companions. One of the predictions of the grand Bishop of Amooria had come true. I could sleep throughout the night yesterday. As soon as I got the chance again I brought some more food to you today as a gift which you accepted. You yourself took something from it and gave rest to others also. The second prediction of the Bishop had also proved to be true. Then I wanted to verify the mark between your shoulders which I did just now as you saw. I am convinced that you are the Prophet I was told about. Thank God I attained my desire. The fact is that he, who seeks, does find".

This long tale which was a true story was applauded by everybody who heard it. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was also pleased. This true story strengthened the conviction of the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) named this seeker of truth as Salman and now Moaaba became Hadrat Salman (Allah be pleased with him).

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was very anxious about the bondage of Hadrat Salman (Allah be pleased with him). He said, "Pay off your ransom to your master and secure freedom." Salman mentioned this to his master, a Jew. The matter was settled for three hundred date trees and forty auqqias (Arab weight for gold and silver) of gold. How could a slave manage to pay such a large ransom! And what a salve! A homeless wanderer who could not stay at one place permanently. He kept on changing places now and then. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), a blessing for all appealed Muslims to help Muslim brother. The Muslims who were the pioneers of the Islamic Movement for times to come represented in their character true spirit of brotherhood and deep love and affection for their fellow Muslims. They could not tolerate the slavery of any Muslim and could not bear to see any Muslim in distress. Thus all of them contributed the date palms one, two or four each. They quickly collected three hundred trees. The Holy Prophet accompanied by all the Muslims went to the Jew's garden planted the trees, and dressed the earth. One of the conditions of the Jew was thus fulfilled. The other condition was to provide the required quantity of gold. When Allah wills to save His slaves from the test then there is no hurdle. The same day some gold was seized in a battle. This was nearly equal in weight to a hen's egg. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) gave away all that gold to Salman. It was found to weigh forty auqqias as if Allah had sent that gold only for Salman.

Salman (Allah be pleased with him) thus paid the ransom and got rid of the slavery of the Jew and came straight to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and passed the rest of his life with him! On his arrival amongst the Muslims a very interesting controversy started. The question was whether Salman was a Muhajir or an Ansari? Both groups advanced arguments in favour of their claim in order to include Salman among themselves. The Muhajirs said that Salman left his home and hearth, parents and his country in search of truth. He wanders from country to country until Allah made him successful in achieving his goal. So he was a Muhajir in the true sense. The Ansars claimed that Salman had settled in Medina before embracing Islam and he adopted Islam during stay in Medina. So he was an Ansari. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) listened to this controversy with great interest and offer thanks to Allah for the feeling of brotherhood amongst the Muslims. He said, "Salman is one of the members of my family," He then tied him to Abu Durda a renowned companion, in fraternal bond. When Hadrat Salman (Allah be pleased with him) embraced Islam the battles of Badr and Uhud had already been over and so he had no chance to participate in them. But he fought in all the rest of the battles along with other Muslims with great valour. On many occasions his expert advice on the strategy and planning of war led the Muslims to victory.

After his conversion to Islam, Hadrat Salman (Allah be pleased with him) had the chance to take part for the first time in the battle of Trench. In this war the whole Arabia had made a concerted onslaught on Medina with a huge army in order to crush the new Islamic movement. In Medina there was neither a fortress nor any defense wall round the city as was usual those days. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) called meeting of all the Muslims for consultation. Hadrat Salman had seen the wars fought in Iran and was well aware of many military tactics. He said, "It is not safe to face this huge army in the open field, we should protect the city of Medina by digging deep trenches around it."

This strategy was favor by all and adopted. The Arabs were unaware of this tactic. Seeing the trenches they were perplexed and could not think of any way to overcome it. They besieged the city for a few days and then retreated unsuccessful. Thus Allah saved Islam and elevated the positions of a newly converted Muslims, Salman Farsi, in the eyes of the rest of the Muslims.

The revolutionary movement of Islam benefited from the counsels of Salman in each and every battle fought for the cause of Islam. During the caliphates of Hadrat Abu Bakr and Hadrat Umar Farooq (Allah be pleased with him) when the Arabs invaded Iran. Both Caliphs availed of his counsels. He did not only give advice but also accompanied the holy warriors to all the fronts where his presence was needed. Before making an attack Salman used to present to the enemy the doctrines of Islam in a beautiful way. Only when the enemy refused to be convinced by discourse, he used force. For example, we quote his address at the time of the siege of Qasre Irani. Addressing the besieged Persians in the fortress he tried to convince them on the doctrines and the principles of Islam and said, "I was your fellow countryman but Allah bestowed honour on me through Islam. O my brothers! You have no way out but to submit before Muslims. I advice you that you embrace Islam and become our brethren. Join us and you will enjoy all the rights of Muslims. You will be governed by the same law which governs the Muslims". This speech is quite a long one. He deliver such speeches three days consecutively. When the Iranians did not concede he conquer the fort by force.

Apart from the military talent, Hadrat Salman (Allah be pleased with him) was an example of a beautiful combination of knowledge, character and fear of Allah, it is evident from details of his early life that he understood Zoroastrianism and Christianity full well. And

even when he followed those religions he did not believe in a creed without acting upon it. When he embraced Islam he became the most perfect model of Islam. In order to understand the principles and the practices of Islam he remained a constant of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). Ummul Momeneen (mother of the faithful) Hadrat Ayesha (Allah be pleased with her) once said:

“Salman used to sit with the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) so late that we (the holy wives) fear lest our position of the night might also be consumed in the sitting”.

It is obvious that no one can realize the depth of the knowledge and understanding of a person who received education in religion from the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) with such care and devotion. All the Companions of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) acknowledged his knowledge and understanding. Some of them regarded him equal to Hakim Luqman in knowledge and wisdom. All of them agreed that apart from Zoroastrianism he had perfect knowledge of the earlier scriptures (Old and New Testaments) and the last divine book (the Holy Qur’an). Further, Salman had not only a theoretical but practical knowledge also of both the religions. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, “Salman is full of knowledge”.

Besides his knowledge, Salman's practical life also won him a distinguished position amongst the devoted companions of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). He followed, in the letter and spirit, every word and action of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). In the last moments of his life, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) did even a sum of four dinars to remain in his house and for them distributed amount the poor. Hadrat Salman also followed the precedent of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) in the matter of wealth and belongings. He had no house. So long as the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) he did not have a house of his own. Somebody said, “Should I build a house for you”. He said, “I do not need it”. The man however insisted and said, “I shall make it as you wish”. Hadrat Salman said, “May I know how?” He said, “It will be such a small house, that if one stands with his head will touch the ceiling, and when he lies down his feet will touch the walls”. Hadrat Salman agreed to a house of such dimensions.

Having heard from the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) that one's belongings should not be exceed than that of a traveler, he acted upon it throughout his life. Hadrat Saab bin Abi Waqqas portrayed his life thus:

“Hadrat Salman was sick. I went to see him. He began to weep. I asked him what for was he weeping and said,” The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) departed from this world, pleased with you. You will meet him again on the Hauz-i-Kausur (a fountain in paradise). You will also meet there with your other departed friends”.

He said, “By Allah. I am not afraid of death. Neither have I any desire for the world. What I lament for is, that I had promised the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) that my belongings would not be more than those of a traveler but now I find so many snakes around me”.

Saad bin Abi Waqqas then said that his entire belongings, which he called snakes, consisted of a large bowl, trough and a basin.

This happened just before his death. Even at the time when the Caliph appointed his the Governor of Medina, he led such a simple life that observes took him to be an ordinary laborer.

Once a person who mistook him for a labourer asked him to carry his luggage. He carried the weight on his shoulders and went along with him. When some of the passerby, who recognized him, saw him carrying the load, they saluted him and offered their services to carry the burden. The owner of the luggage was much ashamed and began to apologize. Hadrat Salman insisted, "I shall carry this load to your house. I cannot afford to lose the reward of my intention".

During this period of his Governorship, one of his friends came to see him. He found that Hadrat Salman was kneading the flour. He asked where the servant had gone. Salman replied, "He has gone out for some other work. I do not like to burden him with two responsibilities."

As Governor, Hadrat Salman received a salary of five thousand Dinars. He ruled over thirty thousand persons but his own condition was that he possessed only one long shirt in which he gathered dry wood. He used one half of it as his bed and the other half as a cover. He distributed the whole salary amongst the poor and the needy. For himself he used to weave mats and give away one-third of his earnings from this occupation too, by way of alms; one-third he reserved for his family and the rest he gave away to the students of Hadith of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him).

Despite this simplicity he hated his life of abstinence. His brother in Islam, Hadrat Abu Durda was also endowed with the virtues of piety and fear of Allah. Hadrat Salman used to visit him often and one day he found the wife of Hadrat Abu Durda in shabby condition (i.e. clad in very ordinary clothes and without any make up etc.). He said, "Why have you made yourself so?" She said, "For whom should I adorn myself?" your brother does not care for all these things. He offers prayers throughout the night and observes fast during the day"! Meanwhile Hadrat Abu Durda came in. he greeted Hadrat Salman and after enquiring about his health he asked his wife to serve the meal. She complied and he requested Hadrat Salman to take meals. He himself sat aloof as he was observing fast. Salman said, "I shall not eat unless you join me". At last he succeeded in getting his fast broken. Then he stayed with him at night also. When his brother got up for his usual prayers, he stopped him and said:

"You no doubt owe duty to your Allah, but your eyes too have some right on you. You keep fasts and pray in the night but enjoy sleep as well as it is also imperative for you."

When Hadrat Abu Durda argued in his defense, he presented the case in the morning before the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said to Abu Durda "Salman understands, Islam better than you'.

On account of these qualities, Hadrat Salman was held in great esteem by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) as well as by all of his Companions. Hadrat Umar Farooq (Allah be pleased with him) offered him so much respect that whenever Hadrat Salman visited him he offered his own seat to him. Hadrat Siddiq Akbar (Allah be pleased with him) could never forget the incidence when once Abu Sufyan passed along with some other persons by Hadrat Suhaib, Hadrat Bilal, Hadrat Salman (all be pleased with them) and these three persons said, "No sword of Allah has yet touched the neck of His enemy, Abu Sufyan!" Hadrat Abu Bakr said, "Why do you talk so impertinently about the chief of Quraish"

Afterwards he complained of it to the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) too. He said, "You perhaps antagonized them, and you know, to displease them is to displease Allah." Hadrat

Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) very much ashamed and at once rushed to beg pardon from those pious persons.

How did Salman Farsi achieve this position in Islam? It is evident from this discourse that he left his home and hearth, parents and relations, his country and his people in search of truth. When he found the truth he learnt its teachings and molded his life according to tenets. He held the Will of Allah and his Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) supreme at every stage of his life. He did not forsake simplicity taught by Islam in his everyday life. He did not part with it even when he was appointed as a governor. There are many lessons in the life of Hadrat Salman Farsi (Allah be pleased with him) for the workers of the Islamic movement all over the world whether they are in the preliminary stage or at the final stage of forming a state based on the principles of Islam. May Allah give us the strength and foresight to follow the footsteps of these great Muslims? Amen!