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No. 28**

**Distinguished Companions  
of the Prophet (SAWS)**

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## FOREWORD

It is a distressing fact that most of the Muslims lack proper understanding about the universal relevance of the Qur'anic Message, which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) for the guidance of all mankind. There is considerable misapprehension too about Islam and the Message of the Qur'an in the minds of Non-Muslims. The **Indian School of Excellence Trust (INDSET)** is making an humble endeavour through a series of monographs on Islam and Qur'an to project the image of Islam in its proper perspective and to explain the significance of the Qur'anic Message in a scientific and systematic way.

This monograph is being presented in the backdrop of the intense debate about Islamic terrorism in the world fora and media. Common Muslims are deeply concerned with the growing tendency of its linkage to Islam even by the mainstream media. It gives an impression that there is an attempt to demonise Islam just because some stateless entities, perusing their own demonist agenda, are using Islamic terminologies to attract funds and innocent youth.

The purpose of this monograph is not to justify the so called Jihad launched by self-styled warriors of God (*Mujahideen*), rightly called as terrorists, but to expose the

falsehood spread about Islam. Islamic teachings have nothing to do with this type of Jihad which has neither a sanction nor any justification under Islamic *Shari'yah*.

Unfortunately, certain issues concerning Muslim dominated areas, like Palestine, left unresolved by International institutions, for whatever reasons, have increasingly agitated the minds of Muslims in general and the impressionable youth among them in particular. The explosion of mass media, particularly the electronic media, has added fuel to fire by bringing the visuals of the sufferings people, mostly Muslims, by news hungry channels in the living rooms the world over. Added to this, are the un-ending competitive debates that have cleverly mixed up news and views with selective use of visuals in line with the policies of their respective patrons. The net result of all this is ruthless bombardment of people with subjective material, with catchy and screaming headlines, directly affecting their lifestyles and thought processes. In a way public innocence is lost for good.

The terrorising images seen on the TV screens are enough to move any sensitive person. Muslims, unlike other religious communities, have a very strong sense of belonging to each other irrespective of their nationalities. The spirit of *Ummah* has survived despite many ups and down during the last fourteen centuries with no sign of decline. In fact the bond is growing stronger in the face of unjust blitz on Islam, thanks to the modern means of mass communications, travel and tourism.

The real time graphic display of ugly scenes of bloodletting of common people on the streets, including children and women, at the hands of well-armed and powerful, not only hurt the sentiments but also generate a strong sense of frustration and anger. The apparent failure of the 'Islamic' states, some overflowing with riches, to solve the pestering problems and alleviate the sufferings of the innocent has let down and disappointed the *Ummah*. This sense of frustration and helplessness is easily exploitable by the unscrupulous pseudo warriors – the terrorists.

It is most unfair to demonise a whole community of billion plus for the inhuman acts of a few self-appointed guardians and protectors of Islam. How and when they came into existence and from where and how they get funds, weapons, explosives and training is also well known to the well informed. However, it is beyond the scope of this monograph to go into those details.

In view of the above, it becomes imperative to understand the true concept of Jihad in Islam, which has a well-documented history spread over fourteen centuries. Jihad stands for a sincere effort to present and stress the compassionate character of Islam. It implies struggle against evil temptations in one's own life. It also implies helping the old, particularly parents, the handicapped, the poor, the needy and the destitute. It involves armed struggle to prevent aggression, oppression and tyranny. Fighting is also allowed in Jihad if existence of Islam, lives and property of Muslims are threatened by an enemy or a Muslim country is invaded by a foreign power. However

fighting should be confined to the area of combat and with combatants only, (Surah Al-Baqarah 2: verse 190). All the battles fought by the Prophet (SAWS) were in self-defence. Jihad cannot be used as an instrument to provoke conflict and open new frontiers of war. The so called *Mujahedeen's* concept of Jihad betrays the true spirit of Jihad and violates the Qur'anic injunctions revealed in Chapter 5 verse 33.

We hope that this monograph will set the record right so far as Islam and terror is concerned.

We conclude with a prayer to Allah (SWT) to graciously bless our efforts with success (*Aameen*).

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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## CHAPTER - 1

### INTRODUCTION

Prophet Muhammad (SAWS)<sup>1</sup>, the last in the line of prophets ordained by Allah (SWT)<sup>2</sup> for the guidance of mankind, appeared on the horizon of world history at a time when it was riddled with corrupted religions reduced to sets of ceremonies and rituals subservient to the ruling classes and so-called higher castes. Noble values like humility, righteousness, piety, charity and justice were rare in the societies of even the developed civilizations. Vicious attributes such as greed, exploitation, selfishness, vanity and rule of 'might is right' had become the norm. With no authentic divine scriptures to fall back, the self-serving religious authorities had a field day in exploiting and misguiding the common people, and always siding with the mighty, rich and the privileged.

The society was divided and subdivided on considerations of birth, caste, colour, wealth and authority. The sole aim of the elite duly supported by compliant clergy was to perpetuate the undue advantages usurped by them. Ironically the clergy appeared to have been more enthusiastic in this vicious machination.

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1. 'SAWS' stands for *Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wo Sallam*, meaning 'May the Blessing of Allah and Peace be upon him'.

2. 'SWT' stand for *Subhanahu Wo Ta'la* meaning 'Pure and Most Exalted'.

The bedrock of any society is the individual whose moral health is reflected in the quality of the society. When decay sets in this entity, the spiritual character and the moral fabric of the society get malignant. Allah (SWT), the Creator and nourisher, did not leave His master creation - the human being - without clear guidance for fulfillment of its role in this life. In fact each and every creation has a role and the assigned 'way' to fulfill it: *"Our Lord is He Who gave each creation its form and nature, and further gave (it) guidance."* (Taha; 20:50)

The divine guidance was provided to the mankind through appointed Messengers from the very beginning of human life that was appropriate and relevant to the changing needs of the developing social structure. The time was ripe and stage set for creation of an ideal society: *"You are the best of people, evolved for mankind enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah..."* (Ale-Imran; 3:110), comprising ideal men: *"We have indeed created man in the best of molds."* (At-Tein; 95:4)

The world witnessed epoch making events following the promulgation of Muhammad (SAWS) as the Messenger of Allah (SWT) in 620 A.D. He was declared: *"...The Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets..."* (Al-Ahzaab; 33:40) He was bestowed the unique honour thus: *"We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures."* (Al-Anbia; 21:107) Through him the mankind was blessed with the divine guidance in its final and perfected form: *"...this day have I perfected your religion for you,*

*completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion...."* (Al-Ma'eda; 5:3) The message containing divine guidance itself was defined as: *"Verily We have revealed the Book to thee in truth, for mankind..."* (Al-Zumar; 39:41); and: *"Verily this is no less than a Message to (all) the Worlds."* (At-Takweer; 81:27)

Within a span of just 23 years, Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) remolded the vice-ridden pagan society of Arabs, relegated and despised by Byzantine and Persian empires, the super powers of world at that time. Under the Divine Guidance, he and his companions presented to the world, now developed enough in trade and travel to spread knowledge from one part of the world to the other, a new social order based on true faith, excellence of personal character, just and equitable governance without discrimination of birth, colour and creed, at peace with itself and with those of other faiths. The utopian idea of an exemplary social order took concrete shape and became a fact in the annals of history.

There were many Muslims who were privileged to be the part of this ideal society led by the Prophet (SAWS). All of them are designated Raziallah 'Anhum (Allah is pleased with them). But there were some who had the unique honour of being given the glad tidings, in their lifetime itself, that they would be rewarded with eternal life in Heavenly abode (Jannah) after this earthly life. *"The vanguard (of Islam) the first of those who forsook (their homes) and of those who gave them aid and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds well pleased is Allah*

*with them as are they with him: for them hath He prepared gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever: that is the supreme felicity."* (Tawbah; 9:100)

These honoured persons, worthy of emulation, were the following Ten Blessed Companions (*'Ashrah al-Mubashshirah*) of the Prophet (SAWS):

1. Abu Bakr (Siddique) bin Abu Qahafa (RA)<sup>3</sup>
2. 'Umar (Farooq) bin Khattab (RA)
3. 'Usman bin 'Affan (RA)
4. Ali bin Abu Talib (RA)
5. Abu 'Ubaidah bin Jarrah (RA)
6. Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas (RA)
7. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA)
8. Talha bin 'Ubaidullah (RA)
9. Zubair bin al-'Awam (RA)
10. Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA)

Of these ten, the first four rose to become Khulafah (Rulers) after the Prophet (SAWS). Their short biographies are covered in a separate Monograph (#27). Brief biographies of the remaining six are covered in this monograph.

It is disturbing to note that history as a subject of study has taken a back seat these days when the ruling deity seems to be science and technology. While granting the importance to science and technology its due place in

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3. 'RA' stands for *Raziallah 'Anhu* or *'Anha* or *Anhuma*, meaning 'May Allah (SWT) be Pleased with Him or Her or Them.

the enhancement of quality of life, the importance of history, which shapes the destiny of mankind, cannot be overlooked. It is like travelling in the wilderness without a road map. Our journey of life will become directionless and future progress will be jeopardised if the divine values are relegated to the back seat as is the case at present.

The real benefits of the progress in the field of science and technology will not reach the mankind at large without social peace and harmony. There cannot be any real progress without peace. Without peace and harmony even the progress and achievements in the field of science and technology may become harmful. The world is witnessing how technology is feeding the ambitions of a few misguided but powerful elements in the world to the detriment of the world peace and order by placing the monstrous tools of destruction.

In order to ensure peaceful social order it is imperative to guarantee right to life, property and honour to each and every individual of the human society. For this to happen, majority of the people in any social group must bear and uphold high moral character that must reflect in all walks of life in general and in the governance in particular. This is the area of morality - an idea that has remained with the mankind ever since its creation long before even the dawn of science and technology. This has been embedded in the very mold of humankind since its creation: "*...I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit...*" (Al-Hijr; 15:29)

Study of divine scriptures and life and deeds of people who influenced social behaviour to raise it to the highest level will be extremely helpful in understanding the ultimate mission of life and self-motivation for enhancing our own moral character. Prophets of Allah (SWT) fall in the highest and very special category of such people. After them are the worthy companions who joined hands with them to create the exemplary social order and whose example continues to influence, till today, minds of the common people.

It is encouraging to note that more and more Muslims and non-Muslims are now showing interest in knowing about distinguished personalities of Islam. This is a welcome trend, which needs to be appreciated, encouraged and facilitated by providing authentic, objective and reader-friendly literature. This monograph is an humble effort in presenting to the readers such information in respect of the distinguished companions of the Prophet (SAWS), excluding the four pious and Rightly Guided Caliphs (*Khulafah ar-Rashideen*).

NOTE: While narrating the life and works of the selected distinguished companions, references are inevitably made to various battles, which were thrust upon the fledgling Muslim community and in which they fought shoulder to shoulder with the Prophet (SAWS). These are not covered in all their dimensions in this monograph. Those who are keen to know in detail about these battles may find Monograph # 13 under the title 'Battles by the Prophet (SAWS)' very interesting and satisfying.

## CHAPTER - 2

### ABU 'UBAIDAH BIN AL-JARRAH (RA)

#### Family Background:

Abu 'Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (RA) was born in 584 AD. His actual name is 'Aamer but became well-known with his name Abu 'Ubaidah after his son 'Ubaidah as per the custom in Arabs. Similarly, though his father's name is 'Abdullah he came to be known after his grandfather's name al-Jarrah, which was not uncommon, particularly if someone lost his father at a very young age like the Prophet (SAWS) himself who was many a times called Ibni 'Abdul Muttalib after his grandfather's name. Another reason could be the fact that he had himself killed his father in the battle of Badr.

His father 'Abdullah bin Al-Jarrah and mother bint Ghanam belonged to the tribe of Banu Fahr, a branch of the tribe of Quraish. Fahr was the common ancestor of both the Prophet (SAWS) and Abu 'Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah (RA). According to a tradition Quraish was the title of Fahr.

Like others middle class Quraish youngsters, Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) also grew up in the open climate of desert learning martial arts like horse riding, archery, musketry etc. As he grew in age he took up trade and commerce to earn his livelihood.



By nature he was a pious and an honest person. He preferred company of good people. He was very close to Abu Bakr (RA).

### **Conversion to Islam:**

Initially propagation of Islam was restricted to close confidants of the Prophets (SAWS). Abu Bakr (RA) was the first among the friends of the Prophet (SAWS) who accepted Islam without hesitation and loss of time. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) too accepted Islam due the influence of Abu Bakr (RA) at the age of 29 years. He thus joined the selected and group, forming the vanguard of Muslims disregarding the uncertainties lying ahead and forsaking the security of comfort of normal life.

### **Migration (*Hijrah*):**

As was the case with everyone who accepted Islam, Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) faced heavy odds and suffered all the miseries heaped upon him by the pagan Quraish. They left no stone unturned to torture, insult and humiliate. He remained steadfast bearing pain and sorrow with exemplary forbearance. In every trial and test he remained firm and constant in his faith in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAWS).

However, with the ever-increasing intensity of persecution and torture, it became difficult for the Muslims to sustain. More than anyone else, the Prophet

(SAWS) knew very well and shared their agony. The neighbouring African country Ethiopia, ruled by a kind-hearted Christian king was the nearest place where the troubled Muslims could find a place of honour and peace. The Prophet (SAWS) felt it prudent to allow the willing Muslims to migrate to Ethiopia. Many Muslims including Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) migrated with heavy heart. Quite a few of them remained there for as long as 12 years and joined the Muslims brothers in Madinah in 7 A.H. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) returned to Makkah with some other companions just before the migration of the Prophet (SAWS) to Yathrib, which, from then on, became to be known as Madinat-un Nabi or Madinat-ul Munawwarah or simply Madinah.

With the intensification of persecution the tempo of preaching of Islam too picked up and the message of Islam began to spread beyond the borders of Makkah. Annual gathering of people during the Hajj season became a very convenient and effective means of preaching. People from Yathrib (over 400 Km to the north of Makkah), who used to visit Makkah on yearly pilgrimage of Hajj, heard the Prophet (SAWS) and got attracted towards Islam. When they came to know about the persecution of the Prophet (SAWS) and the Muslims at large at the hands of their own kith and kin, they felt sorry at their plight. They empathised with them and offered to host the Prophet (SAWS) and his followers if they so desired. The Prophet (SAWS) and his key companions decided to accept the offer even though it was a hard

decision to make, as it is never easy to uproot from own land.

On the advice of the Prophet (SAWS) Muslims began migrating in small numbers, many of them left quietly to escape the attention of Makkan pagans who did not like Muslims slipping away like this and did everything to prevent it.

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) left with the first batch of Muslims and stayed in a place called Quba in the outskirts of Yathrib. The Prophet (SAWS) also stayed there for few days when he migrated from Makkah. When the Prophet (SAWS) moved to Yathrib he too accompanied him.

In order to take care of the day-to-day needs of the migrants who had moved to Yathrib leaving their homes and livelihood behind in Makkah, depending purely on the Mercy of Allah (SWT). The Prophet (SAWS) devised a unique method to redress this urgent problem invoking the concept of brotherhood in Islam, loyalty and spirit of sacrifice in the cause of Islam on the part of Muslims of Yathrib. He allocated one migrant with a local Muslim and declared them as brothers. Likewise he tied all the migrants in the bond of brotherhood with the local Muslims thus solving the urgent economic problem facing the migrants. Perhaps there is no such example in the history where serious problems of barehanded and helpless migrants distressed by long period of harsh persecution were taken care of in such a simple yet so effective and humane manner. As subsequent events

proved, the local Muslims, designated as Ansaar (helpers), treated the distressed Muslims of Makkah, designated Mohajireen, more than their real brothers. They not only fulfilled all their day-to-day needs but also shared their lands and properties equally.

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was united with Abu Talha (RA), who was step father of Anas (RA) who was in personal service of the Prophet (SAWS) just as other Mohajirs were united with local Muslims as an immediate solution to the day to day survival needs.

### **Battle of Badr:**

Pagans of Makkah had not taken lightly the migration of Muslims from Makkah to Madinah. They took it as an affront to their honour. They not only intensified the persecution of the remaining Muslims but also applied pressure, persuasion and threat to Muslims of Yathrib who had sheltered the migrant Muslims with dire consequences. They had even planned to kill the Prophet (SAWS), but he escaped miraculously by putting his cousin Ali as decoy in his bed on the night the attack was planned.

Pagan Quraish did not take all these developments lightly. Frustrated and angry, they declared war a number of times, on Muslims of Madinah. Muslims of Madinah were thus forced to fight a number of battles to defend themselves against the attack of the pagan of Makkah. At this stage Allah (SWT) accorded permission to

resort to violence in retaliation: *"To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged..."* (Al-Hajj; 22:39)

This was first pitched battle between well-armed, well-prepared 950 strong pagans Quraish bent upon eliminating the growing band of Muslims who had managed to escape from Makkah. On the other hand, Muslim force comprised of a mere 313 poorly armed men with hardly any mounts, except that they were fighting in the cause of Islam and banked on the support from Allah (SWT). The battle was fought on 17 Ramadan, 2 A.H at a place called Badr on the route to Makkah.

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was among those who took to field at Badr where the first armed combat took place between the pagan Quraish and Muslims of Madinah. Both the forces comprised of near and dear relatives on the opposite side. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was facing his own father.

During the battle Abu 'Ubaidah realised that his father was constantly targeting the Prophet (SAWS). He kept a close eye on him to make sure that he does no harm to the Prophet (SAWS). It so happened that they themselves came face to face. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was determined to protect the Prophet (SAWS) and his father was bent upon killing him. The encounter of pagan father and a Muslim son ended in son sacrificing his father setting an example for the future generations that when it comes to choosing between the call of duty towards the

cause of Islam blood relations do not matter. This unique commitment of true believers is recorded in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *"You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, loving those who resist Allah and His Apostle, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred..."* (Al-Mujadilah; 58:22)

### **Battle of Uhad:**

This battle was fought at the foothills of Mount Uhad, a short distance away from Madinah in 626 AD. The defeated pagans of Makkah returned to avenge the humiliating defeat at Badr earlier. The Prophet (SAWS), anticipating it, had taken preparatory steps to meet the challenge. Not only the preparations were better this time but also the tactics employed by the Prophet (SAWS) were shrewd. As a result Muslims scored a swift victory causing disarray among the attacking enemy despite being outnumbered 700:3,000 and huge advantage in arms and mounts. However a lapse on the part of a small contingent of archers, posted to guard a pass in the rear flank, turned victory into almost a defeat.

Khalid bin Waleed (RA) (a brilliant warrior who had not yet accepted Islam) picked up the unexpected opportunity thrown up by the haste indiscretion of the archers. He led his mounted troops through the unguarded pass and attacked the disorganised Muslims taking them by surprise even as they were gleefully busy

in collecting war booty. Dismayed at this unexpected development they tried to regroup. The bloodthirsty enemy surrounded the Prophet (SAWS) inflicting personal injuries upon him. He fell in a ditch and got momentarily obscured from his companions. A strong rumour spread that he had become a war casualty. The panic-stricken Muslim force took to their heels.

The Prophet (SAWS) himself suffered injuries on his face. Iron rings of his armour were found embedded in his cheeks. Their removal without aggravating the injury and causing too much pain was proving problematic in the absence of proper tools and expertise. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) got a brilliant idea. He simply used his own teeth as tools for extraction. The task proved to be too hard but he did not give up. In the process he lost two of his own teeth. But he was happy that he was able to provide comfort to the beloved Prophet (SAWS) for which loss of two teeth and resulting pain was but a small sacrifice.

### **Battle of Khandaq (Trenches):**

This was the third battle between attacking pagans of Makkah and Muslims of Madinah. It took place in the 5<sup>th</sup> year AH. It is also called the Battle of Ahzaab (Tribes) as the pagans had mobilised all friendly tribes comprising 12,000 combatants for this battle in a desperate bid of finally avenging the successive defeats at the hands of Muslims. They were particularly piqued at the losses suffered in Battle of Uhad, which they had almost won.

As the name of the battle suggests it was fought across a man-made trench dug around Madinah at strategic locations. There was, perhaps, no other way to face this large and well equipped force with merely 3,000 men. It was something unique in war tactics of those times, no such obstacle was laid to hold attacking force on foot or mount!

The idea came from Salman Farsi (RA) of Persia (called Faaras in those days, now called Iran) who had converted from Zoroastrianism to Islam. Digging a long and deep trench to fortify Madinah against the attacking enemy was a stupendous task demanding exceptional tenacity, energy and motivation. It goes to the credit of the Prophet (SAWS) that he led his forces from the front taking active part in the digging work shoulder to shoulder with others. Even then Muslim defenders were stretched to the limit and even developed self-doubt. But tenacity and morale of a core group of companions motivated the rest and the battle was finally won with divine intervention in the form of a severe storm disrupting the pagans who had laid the siege.

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was in the forefront in this battle.

It was a tough job and tested the physical and moral fibre of the Muslim. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) not only remained steadfast throughout this battle, but also joined the Prophet (SAWS) when he took on the tribe of Banu Quraizah to teach a lesson to them. They had betrayed the Muslims by not taking the field against the attackers as



per the terms of covenant of Madinah. In fact they had conspired to turn over the city and its Muslims inhabitants to the enemy if it won the battle.

***Ba'yet-ur Ridhwaan:***

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was also among those who set upon first pilgrimage to Makkah in response to a call by the Prophet (SAWS) who saw a dream that he was performing Hajj with his colleagues. However, the Muslim pilgrims who were un-armed and carrying the sacrificial animals were prevented from performing 'Umrah, the minor pilgrimage, by the hostile Quraish well outside the city limits at a place called Hudaibiyah.

'Usman (RA) was deputed to negotiate with the Quraish for peaceful performance of pilgrimage which was never denied to anyone as a matter of tradition. When he did not return even after a considerable period of time, it was rumoured that 'Usman (RA) has been killed. As a result a tense situation was created. After due consultations, it was decided to resist pagan Quraish even in disarmed condition. This was a critical decision affecting the life and death for all involved. The Prophet (SAWS) did not want to drag those who were not obliged to get involved. So he decided to obtain a pledge from the willing. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was among those who readily pledged to fight if it comes to it. This special pledge is called 'Ba'yet-ur Ridhwaan' meaning pledge of consent, which also had the consent of Allah (SWT): *"Verily those who plight their fealty to thee do no less*

*than plight their fealty to Allah; the Hand of Allah is over their hands..."* (Al-Fath; 48:10)

### **Battle of Khaibar:**

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) remained committed and active participant in all the battles that were fought never shirking the duty in the cause of Islam. He fought with courage and valour in the battle of Khaibar, which took place almost immediately after the truce of Hudaibiyah against well-fortified Jewish tribes whose treachery and violation of covenants had become dangerous. Despite heavy fortification the Jews were defeated following a fierce battle in which Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) displayed conspicuous bravery.

### **Other Missions:**

Following the battle of Khaibar an urgent pre-emptive expedition had to be undertaken against the tribe of Qaza'ah who were secretly planning to attack Madinah. A force of 300 fighters was despatched under 'Amaru bin 'Aas (RA). He occupied a place called Silasal near a water source and sent reconnaissance missions to gather information about the enemy. When he came to know that the enemy had distinct advantage, he sent a word to the Prophet (SAWS) for re-enforcement. Accepting the request, the Prophet (SAWS) sent a re-enforcement of 200 fighters under the command of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA), which included Abu Bakr (RA) and 'Umar (RA) under his

command, which is a proof of his standing as a military commander.

On arrival of this re-enforcement, 'Amaru bin 'Aas (RA) desired that he be given the command of the entire force. Disregarding his senior status as a military commander, Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) readily agreed and fought with vigour and valour under his command resulting in the defeat of the enemy after a fierce fight. When the Prophet (SAWS) came to know of the noble gesture of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) for a larger cause, he praised him invoking the blessings of Allah (SWT).

In the year 8 AH, when the Prophet (SAWS) came to know of the war-like preparation of the tribe of Juhainah, he deputed Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) with a force of 300 fighters to quell the hostile tribe. Distinguished companions like Abu Bakr (RA) and 'Umar (RA) were again included in this force too. This force was also assigned an additional task of keeping an eye on the trade caravan of the pagans of Makkah using this route. They ran out of food supplies forcing them to consume leaves of local plants for survival in the absence of replenishments. The ordeal was soon cut short by the grace of Allah (SWT) when a huge fish ran ashore serving as food for the entire force for over a fortnight. The fish was so big that a camel could pass under the arch made the rib bones.

After successful completion of the mission the force returned safely and enthusiastically shared their experience of hardships and the miraculous provision

from Allah (SWT) in the form of the huge fish. The Prophet (SAWS) praised the fish meat as a gift of Allah (SWT) and wished he could have it. Hearing this, one of the members, who had some of it left with him, immediately offered it to the Prophet (SAWS) who relished.

### **Capture of Makkah:**

The command and leadership qualities of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) may be judged by his appointment as a commander of the armoured section of the force during this crucial campaign. It was an important part of the force of over ten thousand Muslims, lead personally by the Prophet (SAWS), to finally take Makkah, just after two years of the truce of Hudaibiyah compelled by repeated violations of the truce by pagan Quraish, who gave up without offering any resistance. The sheer number of Muslim force that was multiplied many times over by deceptive tactics employed overawed them.

Immediately after the grand success at Makkah, another battle was thrust upon the Muslims at a place called Hunain. They were taken by surprise by a vicious ambush mounted by the enemy in a valley. They suffered temporary setback and casualties. The Prophet (SAWS) again rose to the occasion and rallied his force with daring leadership. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was in the forefront as usual fighting shoulder to shoulder with other tenacious Muslims. The situation was soon stabilised and the enemy defeated with heavy losses.

After securing Makkah and the surrounding the Prophet (SAWS) turned to Ta'if in order to rid it of idols. A siege was laid around it, which lasted for over three weeks before it fell. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was one of the key members of this force.

### **Non-combat Duties:**

The most significant non-combat duties performed by Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was his deputation to Najraan for collection of Khiraj (Tribute Money). Najran was a small but well to do state whose people were Arab Christians. Consequent to the fall of Makkah a delegation comprising heads of important tribes visited Madinah to negotiate a peace treaty with the Prophet (SAWS). They were well received and treated with honour. Impressed by the treatment they readily accepted suzerainty of Islamic State of Madinah in return to their freedom to profess own religion (Christianity), which was conceded by the Prophet (SAWS). While leaving for home they requested the Prophet to depute an honest official to receive the Khiraj. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was nominated by the Prophet (SAWS) saying that he was sending one of the most honest persons and called him Ameen-ul Ummah (trustworthy of the community). Sometime after his return from Najran with the Khiraj, he was again, deputed to Bahrain whose people had opted to join the state on condition of Jiziah<sup>4</sup> from its healthy adult non-

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<sup>4</sup>. *Jiziah* is a small tax levied on able bodied earning members of a non-Muslim citizens by the Islamic state in lieu of full responsibility of

Muslims. This shows the high esteem in which Abu 'Ubaidah was held by the Prophet (SAWS).

The happiest and the most fulfilling event in the life of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was to accompany the Prophet (SAWS) on pilgrimage of Hajj which proved to be the first and last for the Prophet (SAWS) and hence called *Hajjat-ul Wida'* (The Farewell Hajj).

### **After the Prophet (SAWS):**

The greatest grief in the life of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was passing away of the Prophet (SAWS) in 10 AH. Though overtaken by extreme grief, he showed presence of mind and sense of responsibility in joining the effort to elect the successor to the Prophet (SAWS). With the spread of the news of passing away of the Prophet (SAWS), a vacuum was created at the very top, which needed to be filled urgently if creeping sense uncertainty amongst the people was to be arrested.

Ansaar, the original habitants of Madinah gathered at their usual place of meeting, which was the big house belonging to Banu Sa'eedah, to take stock of the situation and plan future course of action in election/nomination of the successor (*Khalifah*). When the news of this development reached, Abu Bakr (RA) and 'Umar (RA), decided to join the confabulation. They took Abu

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the protection of their lives, properties and honour and also exemption from military duties.

'Ubaidah (RA) with them knowing his stature and ability to handle delicate situations.

During the exchange of views it emerged that the Ansaar were keen to having *Khalifah* from among them. The Mohajirs (Quraish of Makkah) were not agreeable to this suggestion. Speeches and counter speeches were delivered in support of contesting claims to succession and soon a state of stalemate was reached. Noting the tense situation and surcharged atmosphere Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) addressed the Ansaar thus: "O brothers Ansaar, you are the first supporters of Islam and helped its cause. Now be not the ones to cause create rift." This simple and direct appeal to Ansaar had its impact whereupon some of the seniors among them expressed their support for *Khalifah* from Quraish of Makkah. At this stage Abu Bakr (RA) who was listening carefully to all the speakers got up and gave an emotional speech: "Ansaar and Mohajirs both have made many sacrifices for the cause of Islam and both have very high position. But the Quraish of Makkah will not accept anyone other than the one from them to be their leader and *Khalifah*. 'Umar (RA) and Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) are present here elect one of them as your leader and *Khalifah*." Hearing this they both said: "In your presence we cannot accept the heavy responsibility of *Khalifah*." Saying this they came forward and performed Ba'yet (putting their hands on the hand of Abu Bakr (RA) as a symbol of their acceptance): "You are our leader. You are the most suitable among us and the Prophet (SAWS) used to keep you very close." This settled the issue and those who were present also performed Ba'yet at the hand of

Abu Bakr (RA) thus electing him as the first *Khalifah* of Muslims.

The critical role played by Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) at this crucial juncture is self-evident. He continued to work for the preservation of the nascent Islamic State, which was threatened by rebellions from various quarters who were nursing their own ambitions. Abu Bakr (RA) formed groups of fighters under command of capable commanders and used them as rapid action forces to quell the rebellions and thus save the state from disintegration. Abu 'Ubaidah was in the forefront of these expeditions.

The passing away of the Prophet (SAWS) did not only encourage the suspect Arab tribes but also emboldened the neighbouring states of Syria under the Roman Empire and Iraq under the Persian Empire. Romans were the followers of Christianity and the Persian adhered to Zoroastrian religion. The Asian part of the European Roman Empire was called Byzantine. Both were nursing a grouse against the fast spreading Islam and the emergence of a new state in the neighbour-hood posing challenge to their supremacy and faith.

After successfully dealing with the rebellion of Arabs, Abu Bakr (RA) turned his attention to safeguard his state from the two superpowers that had resorted to creating some mischief or the other to de-stabilise the new state. He formed five strong combat groups to deal with the situation. He despatched one group to take care of the Persians occupying the Arab land of Iraq and sent four



columns to deal with the stronger Byzantine. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was the commander one of these four columns which was assigned the task of tackling Himas. Other columns were assigned Palestine (under 'Amaru bin 'Aas (RA)), Jordan (under Shurah'beel bin Hasanah (RA)) and Capital city of Damascus [Yazid bin Abu Sufiyan (RA)], which were all under Byzantine. Foreseeing the possibility of cooperation and joint operation, Abu Bakr (RA) appointed Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) as overall commander of all four columns if and when such a contingency may arise. Otherwise they were independent to carry out respective tasks.

It is worth noting here the special regards Abu Bakr (RA) had for Abu 'Ubaidah (RA). As per the tradition set by the Prophet (SAWS), Abu Bakr (RA) accompanied each column well outside the city limits to see it off. Accordingly he accompanied the column of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) also. Before returning, he advised him thus: "O Abu 'Ubaidah be a fighter and die death of a martyr. May Allah (SWT) hand over your book of deeds in your right hand and let your eyes remain soothed both in this world and the hereafter. By Allah (SWT), I do hope that you are among those who fear Allah (SWT) most and had no heart in this world; those who sought only the pleasure of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) has done a great favour to you that you are leading a force in a fight against idol worshipping enemies. So those who are deniers of Allah (SWT) or join other with Him and worship false gods, fight against them all."

In reply Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) said: "O *Khalifah* of the Messenger of Allah (SAWS), may blessings of Allah (SWT) be upon you. Your status you hold in Islam, the way you gave company to the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) and did good to him, I stand witness to it. You fought against those who had abandoned the religion after the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) till you regained control over them. We stand witness to the fact that you are kind to the believers and hard on deniers. If I become pious, it will be by the blessings and grace of Allah (SWT), and if I go astray, my prayer will be that may Allah (SWT) establish me on the path of guidance. You have right over us that we present ourselves to you whenever you give a call, and carry out whatever task is assigned."

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) had barely reached Syria crossing the valley of Qura he came across a town called Ma'ab. People of the town came to resist but suffered defeat in the beginning of the encounter and retreated back to the safety of their town. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) decided to lay siege. Soon the residents surrendered laying down their arms. This was his first independent successful campaign.

From the time Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) entered Syria he was constantly getting intelligence reports that Byzantine had already made all preparations and despatched a huge force to Syria with heavy arms and plenty of provisions. The small and poorly armed contingent of Muslims under Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was no match to the mighty and well-armed Byzantine forces. He decided to stay put and

camped at a place called Jabiyah. From there he sent a report to Abu Bakr (RA) about the latest developments.

As soon as Abu Bakr (RA) received the report he not only rushed re-enforcements from Madinah but also directed Khalid Bin Waleed (RA), who was engaged in war with Persians in Iraq, to move to the Syrian front in aid of Abu Ubaidah (RA) with half of his troops. Similarly he directed 'Amaru bin 'Aas (RA), Yazid bin Abu Sufiyan (RA) and Shurah'beel bin Hasanah (RA) to rush to re-enforce the contingent of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) and fight the Byzantine as one force under the over-all command of Khalid bin Waleed (RA). He advanced and reached a place called Ajnadain where Byzantine stopped them. Soon the battle was joined and fought fiercely. Byzantine fought valiantly but lost to the enthusiastic Muslim force, suffering heavy casualties including loss of two senior commanders.

Damascus is the main city of Syria and its capital. After the fall of Ajnadain the Muslim army proceeded to take the capital city under the overall command of Khalid bin Waleed (RA). Though Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was the commander in charge for this campaign, he accepted the command of Khalid bin Waleed (RA) without hesitation displaying humility in character and loyalty to *Khalifah*. He fought under Khalid bin Waleed until Damascus was not taken over.

A siege was laid. Sporadic clashes went on for some time without any tangible outcome. However, the

Byzantine themselves offered a golden opportunity. Khalid bin Waleed (RA) came to know that almost the entire population inside the besieged fort is celebrating the birth of baby boy in the family of the ruler. Careful reconnaissance revealed the guards positioned on the rampart of the fort have also joined the celebrations and got intoxicated. Khalid bin Waleed (RA) with a small contingent climbed the fort and threw open its gates. Muslims forces that were pre-positioned at every entry point rushed in. The Byzantine troops who came across Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) laid down the arms and surrender seeking protection. As he advanced further with his troops he came across Khalid bin Waleed (RA) who was still fighting with remnants of Byzantine troops. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) informed him that he has already taken surrender from the Byzantine commanders and promised protection to their lives and properties and requested him to stop fighting. Khalid bin Waleed (RA), though overall commander of Muslim troops readily agreed and ceased fighting.

Another interesting episode that is worth mentioning here to dispel the malicious propaganda that Muslims fought for the sake of war booties and bring out the Islamic concept of war, as also the piety of character of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA). This should. Just when the flag of Islam was hoisted on the fort of Damascus, news was received by Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) that a large Byzantine force is preparing for war at a place called Baisaan in Jordan. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) advanced towards it and camped at a place called Fa'hl. Though Byzantine had the

advantage of number and equipment, they wanted to avoid a fight have already come to know about the successes scored by the Muslims. The Byzantine commander came to negotiate with Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) and offered cash tribute on behalf of all the residents at the rate of two gold coins per head for withdrawal of Muslim troops. To this, Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) replied: "Muslim do not fight for material gains but establishing peace and justice for all." He demanded a peaceful surrender, which was not accepted to the Byzantine commander. In the ensuing battle, that proved to be hard on Muslim troops against a far superior force except their belief in the righteousness of the cause, moral and zeal. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) saved many a grave situations moving from front to front exhorting his troops to be steadfast. After a ferocious battle the Muslims won and took control of the strong fort of Damascus.

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) proved his mettle as a shrewd commander and tactician in the battle of Lazaqiah, which was a strong fort and well manned. The siege continued for a long period with no sign of its falling. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) thought of a plan to dodge the enemy. He lifted the siege and moved away giving the impression of abandonment of mission. Whereas he dug a number of secret hideouts a distance away before withdrawing further. The Byzantine fell in the trap and threw open the gates of the strong fort assuming all was clear. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) secretly moved his troops at night and occupied the hideouts without any knowledge of enemy. Following morning he launched a sudden attack on the

fort taking the enemy by surprise and had no option but to surrender.

With the news of Muslims victories after victories the Byzantine were compelled to think seriously to meet the increasingly threatening challenge. For the first time not only elite troops were mustered under experienced commanders at a coastal town Antakiah, but the religious leaders of all hue were also roped in to arouse religious passions of the troops and brand the confrontation as Christianity v Islam. Muslims were getting regular updates on the latest developments having won the hearts and minds of the local people by their compassion, humility and justice.

In a tactical move it was decided to withdraw all contingents of Muslim troops from various cities and town in Syria, ask for more re-enforcements from Madinah to give a credible response to the large Byzantine force. They even returned the Jiziah collected from a large non-Muslim population (mostly Christians) on the plea that Islamic government is not entitled to take Jiziah if it is not in a position to run their government and safeguard the life and property of the people. This had a very positive impact on all sections of society for they had only known high-handed exploitative regimes so far. Thus the sympathies and loyalties of local population were assured to Muslims precluding the possibility of sabotage or rebellion from the areas vacated by them.

On the other hand, despite a large and well-armed force of over two hundred thousand with religious fervour whipped up, Byzantine were still keen to avoid a hot war. They attempted to lure the Muslims with monetary inducements. Muslims did not fall prey to this as their fight was neither against Christianity nor for money. They were there because of the hostile moves by the Byzantine themselves, who were threatening to wipe out the nascent Islamic state. The popularity and spread of Islamic governance was posing a serious threat to their hegemony.

Ultimately the battle was joined on the banks of river Yarmuk. The combined strength of Muslim army was not more than thousand, was no match to the Byzantine army, which also had the advantage of superior arms. Though outnumbered and ill equipped, Muslims fought valiantly and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. After a seesaw battle the Byzantine were routed and forced to retreat haphazardly. Their supreme commander fled to Constantinople along with other senior generals abandoning the battle as lost. The valour, tenacity and fierceness of the opponents took the enemy by surprise. The Byzantine generals that their armies were fighting as professionals to earn livelihood, whereas the Muslims appeared to be fighting for a cause as a people possessed with the notion that they would be either victors or be martyrs for the cause, which assure them a place in heaven! When a soldier is charged with such ideology, he is hardly stoppable, neither by overwhelming number nor by superior armament.

After mopping up the operations at Yarmuk, Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) returned to Hama and Khalid bin Waleed (RA) returned to Qansareen which was another big town of Syria. It fell after weak resistance with the people there opting to accept subordination and protection of Muslim rule.

Abu Ubaidah (RA) left a small contingent at Hama and proceeded to Antakiah, which was the main headquarter in Syria where the Byzantine rulers used to stay during his visits. The people shut their fort and tried to hold back advancing Muslim troops but soon lost the will when they found under siege with all routes of supplies blocked. With the capture of Antakiah, all surrounding towns and villages fell without fight and amalgamated into Muslim state.

### **Siege of *Bait al-Maqdas*:**

Muslim forces successfully secured entire Syria including Palestine from the Roman occupation, Bait al-Maqdas and Qaisariah. After Antakiah, Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) turned his attention towards Bait al-Maqdas in Jerusalem, which was besieged by 'Amaru bin 'Aas (RA). Bait al-Maqdas was an important ancient historical town. It was sacred not only to Jews, Christians, but also to Muslims being their Qiblah Awwal (First direction for offering Salah) before the direction was changed towards *Bait-ul Haraam* (Sacred Ka'bah) in Makkat-ul Mukarramah. Also because the Prophet (SAWS) was raised Heaven-



wards from here on the occasion of his night journey called Me'raj. For Jews and Christians it is sacred because graves of many prophets from Ibrahim (AS) (Abraham) to 'Isa (AS) (Christ), who preached here, are in and around this holy place.

The people of Jerusalem remained behind the closed doors till they lost hope of siege being lifted. They decided to surrender after negotiating a face saving deal. They insisted that they would offer surrender only to the *Khalifah* personally in view of the special status of Jerusalem.

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) rose to the occasion in true spirit of Islam to never turn down offer peace, decided to inform *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) and wait for his response. 'Umar (RA) after due consultations decided to proceed to Jerusalem to accept its surrender.

The first journey over such a long distance from Madinah by a *Khalifah* of Islam proved to be not only momentous, but also a shining example of fair dealing, mutual respect and simplicity without the usual pomp and show. He was received at a place called Jabiyah just short of Jerusalem by senior commanders together with senior emissaries of Jerusalem to extend a hearty welcome.

*Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) decided to camp at Jabiyah for a few days during which the Christian leaders of Jerusalem met him and declared their willingness to be part of Islamic state enjoying all privileges and protection

to their life, property and honour. They wished to remain on their own faith on payment of customary Jiziah.

With the terms of agreement finalised and accepted by both parties, *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* left for Jerusalem where Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) with Christian leaders received him at the gates with due honours and protocol and lead him in the sacred city. He evoked interest to visit the place where the Prophet (SAWS) had lead the Salah attended by all previous prophets that was referred to as Masjid al-Aqsa. Then he was shown around the main Church. While he was still going around the Church it was time for a prayer. He was offered to perform Salah in the Church itself. *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* declined the offer politely. Noting the disappointment on the face of the head-priest of the Church, he explained that he feared later Muslims, on account of his performing the Salah inside it, might convert the Church into a Masjid. It not only satisfied the priest but the forethought and wisdom was also well taken and appreciated by all.

It is worth mentioning here a few incidents, which throw light on the true creed of Islam. Seeing *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* dressed in simple and old dress, some of the Muslims present at the gates of Jerusalem requested him to put on good dress and ride a horse otherwise the people of Jerusalem will carry a poor impression. Rejecting the request, 'Umar (RA) said: "The honour bestowed upon by Allah (SWT) is because of Islam."

On another occasion he crossed a water channel bare feet. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) said: "O Ameer-ul Mu'mineen, Christians here will be greatly surprised seeing you crossing the channel like this." *Khalifah 'Umar* RA replied: "O Abu 'Ubaidah! Alas someone else had said this. Don't you know that none was more lowly people than us in the world but Allah (SWT) honoured us through Islam? Remember, if you try seek honour other than the honour bestowed by Islam, Allah (SWT) will make you lowly again."

During his stay in Jerusalem, *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) was invited for meals by almost all Muslim leaders except Abu 'Ubaidah (RA). When enquired about the reason Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) said: "O Ameer-ul Mu'mineen! I did not invite because I feared you might not shed tears after coming to my place." *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) enquired: "So what? You do call me one day." Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) agreed and invited him for a meal one day after that, which was accepted by *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA). When he entered the tent of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA), he found nothing other than a thick blanket used on horseback. As for food, a few dry pieces of bread were kept in chamber. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) offered them with salt to Ameer al-Mu'mineen with earthen cup with water. The sight brought tears in the eyes of *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA). He hugged Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) and said: "You are my brother. There is none who has not tasted good of this world except you." At this, Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) said: "Ameer al-Mu'mineen, this is why I did not invite you lest you will feel sad."

### **Governorship of Syria:**

After the annexation of Jerusalem in the Islamic state the entire Syria was free from Roman rule. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was appointed its governor. He set upon reforming the administration and improved the quality of governance to prove himself as an excellent governor also. His first priority as governor after maintaining peace was to establish a network of schools to impart Qur'anic education where companions of the Prophet (SAWS) gave lessons. During his tenure, Hejaz was struck with severe famine. *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* wrote to all the governors for expeditious supply of food grains. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) despatched post haste four thousand camel load of food grains to Madinah al-Munawwarah.

In 17 A.H Byzantine made one more attempt to take Hims with great preparation. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA), in order to counter the move, gathered troops from different parts of Syria, and also wrote to *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* for additional troops, who sent four thousand mounted troops. In the ensuing battle, the Byzantine strongly supported by Roman Empire, could not succeed in pressing their advantage of number and superior arms in the face of the tenacious Muslims who fought with their usual zeal and valour.

### **Plague of 'Imwas:**

In 18 A.H a severe epidemic broke out in Iraq and Syria and spread fast to engulf a large part of the country.

When he came to know, *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) decided to personally supervise the relief and rescue. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) and senior commanders met him at a place called Sargh. When *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) advised him to move out of the area with his troops to a safe place, he declined to abandon his seat of governance in the face of such emergency. *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) made one more attempt to get Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) out of the afflicted country by asking him to meet him in Madinat al-Munawwarah. Knowing the purpose behind this call, Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) once again declined to leave his headquarters. *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) then advised him to at least move to a healthier place, which he accepted out of respect for him and moved to place called Jabiyah.

### **Death:**

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) fell ill soon after reaching Jabiyah. When he realised that he was not going to survive more, he called Ma'az bin Jabal (RA). Appointing him as his successor he exhorted people from his deathbed to be steadfast in Salah and payment of *Zakaat*, fasting and performance of Hajj. He appealed Muslims to remain united and love each other. He advised them to shun the worldly pursuits as Allah (SWT) has mandated death and none would live forever. He reminded that the best among people was one who obeyed Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAWS) the most and performed pious deeds.

He died at the age of 58 years.

After making arrangements for funeral rites of Abu 'Ubaidah (RA), Ma'az bin Jabal (RA) addressed the people thus: "O Muslims! You have been afflicted by the departure of a person who was soft-hearted, most affectionate on Muslims, their well-wisher, who never harboured any ill-will towards anyone, the most fearful of Allah (SWT), free from all defects and pious. You should all pray Allah (SWT) for the mercy and forgiveness for him. By Allah (SWT) none like him will be your leader." He led the Salaat-ul Janazah and supervised the burial of one of the tallest personalities of Islam.

### **Personal Details:**

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was slim and tall with striking and pleasant personality. Humble, affable and friendly meeting him was always a refreshing experience. He was extremely courteous, quiet and bashful by nature. Yet in a tough situation he would become very serious and alert.

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was an extremely trustworthy and honest person for which he was awarded the title of Amin al-Ummah (Custodian of Muslim community) by the Prophet (SAWS).

He was an extremely pious person who led a very simple life. Initially he earned his livelihood from trade, but once the fighting began he left it and survived on whatever came his way in distribution of war booties. Even then he used to help the needy, spending anything

that he considered excess to his needs. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was devoted to the cause of Islam.

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was extremely mindful of non-Muslim subject under him. By his graceful manners and magnanimity, he won over all Christians living in Syria and Palestine.

Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was one of the eminently suitable persons to become *Khalifah* after the death of the Prophet (SAWS). But he hastened the election of Abu Bakr (RA) as *Khalifah* without wasting time to prevent a void and likely destabilisation in government. Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) was one of the earliest persons to accept Islam. In fact he became a Muslim only a day after Abu Bakr (RA) who was the first among the men outside the family of the Prophet (SAWS). It was through Abu Bakr that he became a Muslim as he took him, Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf, 'Usman bin Mazun and Arqam bin Abu al-Arqam (RA) to the Prophet (SAWS) where they embraced Islam. He also had the distinction of being one of those who had taken special do or die pledge just before the truce of Hudaibiyah. This was later called Ba'yet-ul-Ridhwaan that is mentioned with approval and appreciation in the Holy Qur'an: "*Verily those who plight their fealty to thee do no less than plight their fealty to Allah; The Hand of Allah is over their hands...*" (Al-Fat-h; 48:10)

## CHAPTER - 3

### SA'AD BIN ABI WAQQAS (RA)

#### Family Background:

Exact date or year of birth of Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas (RA) is not known. It is believed that he was born between 590 and 595 A.D. He was given the name Sa'ad by his father, and according to some, his full name was Sa'ad Waqqas because of that his father is called Abi Waqqas (father of Waqqas). It is a common tradition in Arabs to call a person as 'father of so and so' after the name of the eldest. The Prophet (SAWS) is also remembered as Abul Qasim (father of Qasim), Qasim being the name of his first son who, however, did not live long. Abi and Abu have the same meaning – father.

His father was Malik, but he was commonly called as Abu Waqqas Malik. He was related to the Prophet (SAWS) in fifth generation. He died before the advent of Islam. His mother's name is Hamna daughter of Sufiyan



was also related to the Prophet (SAWS) in fourth generation.

### **Life in Makkah:**

Sa'ad (RA) grew up in Makkah like others middle class Quraish youngsters learning martial arts like horse riding, archery, musketry etc. By sixteen years of age he earned good reputation as brave, pious and sober person.

### **Conversion to Islam:**

Sa'ad (RA) is among those who accepted Islam within days of its propagation thus joining the select band of **Assabiqoon al-Awwaloon**. He was about 17 or 19 years of age at the time.

His acceptance of Islam led to sever displeasure of his mother who was strict in following traditional religion of Makkah. She even resorted to fast to force him to forsake Islam and revert. But young Sa'ad would not. He remained steadfast despite being very close and extremely respectful to her. He tried his best to convince her but she would not relent. Ultimately when her deteriorating condition became critical his younger brother somehow persuaded to take water at least. Perhaps it was on this occasion that these verses were revealed: *"But if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have not knowledge, obey them not..."* (Luqman; 21:15)

Though young, Sa'ad (RA) was so steadfast in following the joined other Muslims who used to offer prayers secretly for fear of harassment and harm. Once a group of non-Muslim caught him with others offering prayers and began humiliating and beating them. Since there was no permission to retaliate, the Muslims tolerated to the extent possible and restrained from retaliation. But a stage came when Sa'ad (RA) could tolerate no more and retaliated with a big bone piece and injured the non-Muslim grievously. This was the first case of bloodshed for the sake of faith.

In the sixth year of Islam when the pagan Quraish pronounced total social boycott of the Prophet (SAWS) and his clan (Banu Hashim) forcing them to take refuge in a nearby rocky valley, Sa'ad (RA), though not part of that clan voluntarily joined them in solidarity in the process suffering great hardship for over two years. They had survived on dry leaves of trees and even their roots. Finding nothing to eat, he himself had to take a dry piece of camel skin with water after washing, roasting and grinding it. Thus he became one of the few extremely committed and loyal companions of the Prophet (SAWS).

### **Migration (*Hijrah*):**

As was the case with everyone who then accepted Islam, Sa'ad (RA) also suffered torture, insult, violence and pain at the hands of the pagan Quraish with exemplary patience. In every trial and test, he remained firm and remained steadfast with complete faith in Allah (SWT) and

His Messenger (SAWS). Under such trying circumstances permission was granted for migration to Ethiopia to escape unbearable persecution. As a result many decided to migrate. Sa'ad (RA) did not choose to remain in Makkah in the company of the Prophet (SAWS).

People from Yathrib used to visit Makkah on annual pilgrimage of Hajj where the Prophet (SAWS) used to preach Islam. They used to hear from the Jews about the arrival of a new prophet. They were touched by the message of Islam and got attracted towards it. Small batches of them started accepting Islam and taking pledge on the hand of the Prophet (SAWS).

Seeing the stiff opposition from the Quraish they volunteered to play host to the Prophet (SAWS) and his companions. The Prophet (SAWS) after consulting his key companions accepted the offer and migrate to Yathrib. Once permitted other Muslims also began move out of Makkah quietly to avoid confrontation with the Makkan pagans who were hell bent on destroying the new religion.

Sa'ad (RA), with his younger brother 'Umair (RA) who was just 14 year old, also migrated to Madinah. They stayed with their brother 'Atabah who was already there having fled from Makkah to escape revenge of blood. He had killed a person in some dispute. Though he had not accepted Islam but accommodated his younger brothers willingly.

Life in Madinah proved to be much comfortable for the Muslims due to open hearted and generous gestures of the neo Muslims. Yet the Makkan Muslim could not take things easy. The Prophet (SAWS) advised Muslims to always remain armed. He himself had narrowly escaped the plan of murder in Makkah. His life was under threat. Therefore, someone or the other used to be present near him to maintain a 24x7 vigil. By temperament Sa'ad (RA) was eminently suited for the task, and hence he was mostly found around the Prophet (SAWS) duly armed to meet any contingency. For this devotional service he earned the title of Rajul us-Saleh (good man).

In view of the prevailing hostility and uncertainty about the intentions and plans of pagan Quraish, the Prophet (SAWS) organised armed patrol parties to fan out of Madinah to be on the lookout for pagan Quraish and keep watch on their movements. By now Muslims were granted permission to resort to armed resistance as a last resort.

Being small in number, these patrol parties were exposed to dangers of getting in number involved in unequal fights as the Quraish moved in large caravan with sufficient arms to safeguard the merchandise from highway robbers. Further these parties moved self-contained with no possibilities of getting replenishments. On many occasions they had to make do with tree leaves etc. having got delayed compelled by emerging situations.

Young and enthusiastic, Sa'ad (RA) always volunteered to join these reconnaissance parties whenever these were sent out. He earned the distinction of shooting the first arrow in the cause of Islam when the patrol party of about seventy mounted troops, under command 'Ubaidullah bin Harith (RA), came across a big caravan of pagan Quraish with many armed troops on guard duty. However, the caravan escaped without giving a fight because of his bold action that proved to be timely and effective. In view of his ability for combat, Sa'ad (RA) was also given command of a small reconnaissance patrol of 20 mounted troops to look out for movement of Quraish around a place called Kharar.

### **Battle of Badr:**

As mentioned earlier, this was first pitched battle between and Muslims. Sa'ad (RA) was in the small force of poorly armed Muslims facing an overwhelming force of pagans who were better prepared and armed. His young brother 'Umair (RA) who had managed to escape the attention of the Prophet (SAWS) when he was inspecting the troops and disallowing enthusiastic but young children who were keen to join, was by his side in the battlefield.

Sa'ad (RA) distinguished himself in the battle by fighting fearlessly. He killed the famous warrior Sa'eed bin Aas and took charge of his special quality sword called Zul Katifah and showed it to the Prophet (SAWS). Since the permission for taking charge of the arms and

other material belong to the enemy was not given yet, the Prophet (SAWS) asked him to put it back from where he had taken. Sa'ad (RA) obeyed but felt sorry on losing a coveted souvenir. Shortly thereafter, the verses granting the permission were revealed, whereupon the Prophet (SAWS) permitted him to take back the coveted sword. He also captured three enemy soldiers single-handed

Unfortunately, young 'Umair (RA) was not so lucky. In a deadly bout with another renowned warrior 'Amru bin Abdu of Quraish he got overpowered and martyred, thus fulfilling his desire to become martyr for the cause of Islam. When Sa'ad (RA) came to know of his beloved brother's martyrdom he simply recited: **'Inna lillahi wo inna ilaihi raji'oon'** (to Allah we belong and to Him is our return). (Baqarah; 2:156)

### **Battle of Uhad:**

As mentioned in the previous chapter the Muslims army suffered a setback due to negligence on the part of a small contingent posted at the mountain pass to guard the rear flank that was left open. During the most trying period when the Prophet (SAWS) himself was rumoured to have died, Sa'ad (RA) was among those who had gathered around the injured Prophet (SAWS) to protect him from any further harm. His mastery in sharp shooting could not have come more handy than on this occasion. He kept at bay enemy from approaching anywhere near the Prophet (SAWS) who was himself handing over arrows to

him urging him to keep it up, such was his speed of shooting.

However, his own brother 'Atabah bin Waqqas, who had remain pagan and was fighting from their side managed to inflict an injury scoring direct hit by a stone. Though he had welcomed his younger brothers and taken care of them following their migration, his wickedness enraged Sa'ad RA to such an extent that he remained thirsty of blood till he died as a pagan.

#### **Other Battles:**

Sa'ad (RA) took part in all other battles i.e. battles of Khandaq, Khaibar, conquest of Makkah, battle of Hunain, siege of Ta'if and so on, with the usual zeal and commitment. He was also among those who had the honour of Ba'yet-ur *Ridhwaan* at Hudaibiyah to fight till the last man. He participated in the long and arduous campaign of Tabuk, undertaken in peak summer to pre-empt the aggressive moves of Byzantine rulers at the behest of Roman Empire.

#### ***Hajj al-Akbar:***

Sa'ad (RA) was among the most celebrated of the pilgrimage that was undertaken by the Prophet (SAWS) after the return from Tabuk. He fell ill after reaching Makkah. The Prophet (SAWS) went to enquire about his health. His condition had deteriorated so much so that Sa'ad (RA) lost hope of recovery and survival. He thought

of disposal of his wealth. He had one daughter. He sought permission from The Prophet (SAWS): "O Messenger of Allah! I am quite a rich person and I have one daughter. If you permit I wish to donate two thirds of my wealth for the cause of Islam leaving one third to my daughter." The Prophet (SAWS) said: "No." Again Sa'ad (RA) said: "If not two thirds, then shall I donate half of it?" The Prophet (SAWS) did not accord his consent and said: "No." Then Sa'ad (RA) said: "Then shall I donate one third?" The Prophet (SAWS) said: "Even one third is too much. It is better you leave your survivors with wealth rather than poor so that they beg from people. You will be rewarded for whatever you spend for the pleasure of Allah even if it is for feeding your wife. Even that will be rewarded." Thereafter Sa'ad (RA) said with tearful eyes: "O Messenger of Allah I am dying in Makkah which I had left for the sake of Allah." The Prophet (SAWS) put his hand on his forehead and caressed his face and also stomach and then supplicated: "O Allah cure Sa'ad and fulfill his migration."

It is also said that he had called for the famous physician, Harith bin Kaldah from Ta'if who belonged to the tribe of Thaqeef for the treatment of Sa'ad (RA). When he came, the Prophet (SAWS) told him to treat Sa'ad (RA). He inspected Sa'ad (RA) and told: "There is nothing serious," and suggested a treatment. Sa'ad (RA) became all right within a few days. Sa'ad (RA) never forgot to recall the soothing effect when the Prophet (SAWS) put his hand on his body.



About three months after the return from the Hajj pilgrimage the Prophet (SAWS) fell ill and left for heavenly abode leaving a multitude of Muslims crying with grief. Sa'ad (RA), like other companions, bowed before the inevitable and bore the grief with great equanimity. He vowed to follow the example of the Prophet (SAWS) throughout the remaining life.

### **During the period of *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA):**

Sa'ad (RA) was among those who hastened to pledge on the hands of Abu Bakr (RA) as first *Khalifah* to pre-empt possible destabilisation after the passing away of the Prophet (SAWS). The subsequent events proved it as explained in previous chapter. Sa'ad (RA) was in the forefront in quelling the rebellions and consolidating the Islamic state.

Once peace was restored, *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) turned his attention to the affairs of governance. Appointment of capable and dependable governors was crucial. They were responsible to settle disputes and guide in matters of religion. Collection of *Zakaat*, and donations was a critical responsibility. In fact this was the first thing, which was opposed by many tribes after the passing away of the Prophet (SAWS). Sa'ad (RA) was appointed governor of Najad where Banu Hawazan, a famous tribe, was dominant. Sa'ad (RA) performed his duties with distinction maintaining peace and harmony which helped the tribe to prosper and progress.

Byzantine in the north was in occupation of Syria, and Persia on northeast was occupying Iraq. Both these lands were primarily Arab lands that were appropriated by force. These super powers of the time, which used to be at loggerhead against each other, turned their attention to deal with the rapidly consolidating state much against their hope of its collapse. *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) had brilliantly forestalled such a possibility by bold and timely actions. Foreseeing their intentions, he gave a call for general mobilisation and formed five combat groups to deal with the challenge of the belligerent states.

Muslims, however, faced armies which were better equipped, better trained and better experienced in the art of warfare. On the face of it they were far superior to Muslims who did not possess any of these essential qualities, except one, i.e., unshakable commitment to cause. Each soldier of Islam was charged with the passion of doing or dying in the way of Allah (SWT). The Islamic State had to be saved and protected at all costs.

Permission for *Qitaal*, i.e., armed struggle to defend Muslims was given with the promise of *Jannah* for whoever lost his life, became a martyr. What else a true Muslim would wish! The battlefield witnessed Muslim soldiers chasing death and the opposing soldiers running away from it!

The Muslim army made good progress by winning and taking one city after the other. Persians gave good fight but could not withstand the onslaught. At this

juncture, when further intrusions were being planned, Khalid bin Waleed (RA) was ordered to take half of the force under his command and rush to Syrian front where Abu Ubaidah (RA) was locked in a fierce battle against the Byzantine taking heavy casualties.

Persians saw an opportunity of regrouping and launching a massive attack on the Muslim army. The redoubtable Rustum was appointed Prime Minister and given the task of making necessary preparation for a final showdown with Muslims. He began the preparation for was in right earnest. Muthna bin Harisah (RA) appreciated the emerging situation and decided to apprise *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) personally and obtain his counsel and reinforcements. When he reached Madinah he found the *Khalifah* seriously ill. Yet on getting briefed, he called 'Umar (RA), who was nominated to succeed him, to do the needful. Soon after *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) breathed his last 'Umar (RA) took charge as second *Khalifah*.

#### **During the period of *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA):**

*Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) sent back Muthna bin Harisah (RA) advising him to make a tactical withdrawal and wait for the reinforcement. Muslims were stretched fully and mustering additional troops was posing serious problems. Ultimately reinforcement was made ready and despatched under young and brave Abu 'Ubaid (RA). After some spectacular successes the Muslims forces met the main force of Persia under an able and experienced general Bahman. He confronted the Muslims who had crossed

river Euphrates but had not advanced sufficiently to organise themselves in the battlefield. The enemy very shrewdly destroyed the bridge to block backward movement by Muslim army. As a result they were routed badly suffering heavy casualties. Muthna bin Harisah (RA) ordered the bridge to be repaired immediately and he took personal charge of a brave section of soldiers to stop the advancing Persians keen to press home the advantage. But the contingent led under the command of Muthna bin Harisah (RA) blocked and blunted every attempt and ensured that the remaining force crosses back safely. This epic battle is called the battle of Jisr (bridge).

*Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* was very sorry when he came to know of this reverse in the battlefield and heavy casualties. He arranged reinforcement and dispatched it under the command of Jarir bin 'Abdullah (RA). Persians also regrouped and organised an army of over a hundred thousand soldiers, which also included elephants. Compared to this Muslim army was no match in every respect except the morale. In the ensuing battle, which was fought on the banks of Euphrates at a place called Bawaib, Muslims fought valiantly completely disregarding personal safety. Ultimately the Muslims inflicted such heavy casualties on the Persians that battle was won by the Muslims at surprisingly low casualty.

The matter did not rest here. Loss of a major part of Iraq was not acceptable to Persians. In fact the defeat at Bawaib resurrected their national spirit and patriotic fervour. Muthna bin Harisah (RA) was keeping the

*Khalifah* well apprised of these developments. *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) advised him to pull back his forces and camp at a safe and secure place and wait for his further orders.

### **Appointment as Commander of Muslim Force:**

*Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) renewed call for general mobilisation to meet the deteriorating situation on the battlefronts. Sa'ad (RA) also contributed handsomely by send a contingent of over three thousand well-organised troops. *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) was overwhelmed by the spirit of Muslims at large. He concentrated the troops gathered from different parts of the sate outside Madinah for organising and preparing them for war. He decided to lead the newly organised force personally. Senior companions of the Prophet (SAWS), however, advised him to stay in the capital. It was argued that he would be able to exercise better command and control and react effectively to meet developing situations. He saw the point and decided to appoint a competent commander to lead this force. After due consultations and deliberations to identify the right person, the name of Sa'ad bin Harisah (RA) was accepted on the suggestion of Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA), a prominent companion of the Prophet (SAWS). Accordingly he was recalled and given the coveted honour of commanding troops in war. He was personally briefed by the *Khalifah* on various key points before departing from Madinah. Word was also sent to Muthna (RA) that a strong reinforcement is on the way under the command of Sa'ad (RA).

Sa'ad (RA) marched out of Madinah and camped at a place called Tho'labah gathering other reinforcements and carrying out necessary integration of contingents arriving from different places. Another contingent of over four thousand troops was sent from Madinah. Thus the strength of his army reached over twenty thousand. He got busy with training and preparation for war.

Meantime Muthna (RA) fell seriously ill because of the severe injuries suffered during the battle of Jisr, where he had held the superior Iranian force covering the orderly withdrawal of Muslims across the bridge. He was keen to pass on the invaluable experience he had gained while facing the Persians. Without wasting time, he sent a message to Sa'ad (RA) covering various points particularly emphasising to avoid rushing inside enemy territory till victory was achieved. He soon died of the injuries and became a martyr. Sa'ad (RA) felt extremely sad on hearing the news of his demise. He sent a report to the *Khalifah* keeping him abreast with the latest developments.

Demise of Muthna (RA) was particularly sad for his wife Salmah (RA), who was left without support. Sa'ad (RA) decided to marry her to alleviate her grief and provide support.

On the advice of the *Khalifah*, Sa'ad (RA) moved from Tho'labah to Qadisiyyah, a very fertile and pleasant place climatically, which was gateway to Persia. On the way he came across a Persian post at 'Azeb; which fled in

the face of large Muslim force abandoning large cache of arms and equipment.

### **Appointment of Rustum as Prime Minister:**

Meanwhile Persians decided to appoint the Prime Minister Rustum as commander of over sixty thousand strong elite force that was specially organised to deal with the advancing Muslim force. He marched out of capital and camped at a place called Saabaat to regroup. Here contingents from other parts of the country joined to ultimately make a force of over one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers eager to demonstrate their might to the Muslims, though they had tasted defeat at their hands and knew their metal. Rustum knew this weakness of his force and began planning operation in such a way that the overwhelming show of strength scares the Muslims forcing them to withdraw without a battle.

Sa'ad (RA) was keeping himself abreast of all the latest developments and keeping the *Khalifah* also well informed for his guidance. *Khalifah* `Umar (RA) advised him to keep faith in Allah (SWT) and do not be afraid. He also advised him to send a delegation of selected people to the king of Persia to invite him to Islam, which may dissuade them from war. Otherwise the burden of starting war will be on them.

### **Muslim Delegation:**

Accordingly Sa'ad (RA) selected fourteen eminent Muslims noted for their wisdom, bravery, oratory and impressive personality. No'man bin Muqarran (RA) was appointed the head of the delegation. They were dressed in simple traditional Arab dress, carried now arms and rode saddle less horses. When they entered the city, people were amazed to see such ordinary people forming the ambassadorial delegation.

The Persian king set up a magnificent royal court to receive the delegation. He enquired through an interpreter the reason for the invading his country. No'man (RA) replied thus: "O king! We were a perverted people indulged in the worst vices of the world. Allah (SWT) took mercy upon us and sent his messenger who took us away from wickedness and exhorted for piety. He taught us to worship one Allah (SWT) instead of idols and gave us good tidings of success in the hereafter. We accepted him and invited various tribes of Arabs to Islam and they joined us. Plunder and loot is not our aim. If you do not join others with Allah (SWT) and accept One Allah (SWT) and his true messenger then we shall return leaving only the Book of Allah (SWT) with you. If this is not acceptable to you then accept our protection in lieu of Jiziah<sup>5</sup>. If that is not acceptable, then the sword will settle the issue."

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<sup>5</sup>. *Jiziah* is a token tax payable by able-bodied adult non-Muslim subject of Islamic State for the entitlement of all rights and privileges on par with Muslim subject and exemption of military duty.



The king got angry and shouted at the delegation: "You snake and lizard eaters, hungry and naked people wish to loot our country? The time has come to punish you severely and kick and throw out of the country in disgrace. However, the maximum I can do for you is to send you back with your camels laden with grain and dates and appoint a kind hearted governor over you people who will take good care of your comfort. If you wish anything more than this then you will get nothing but a humiliating death and disgrace."

Qais bin Zararah (RA), member of the delegation replied: "O king! We Arab are respectable people. Your hateful talk is worthy of reply. We accept that we were wicked people. But Allah graced us with his messenger. That pious soul guided us to the right path. We wish to fill your hearts also with the light of this guidance. Better accept Islam, or it is Jiziah (come under Islamic rule) or sword. The king flew into rage and yelled: "If it was permissible to kill the ambassadors none of you would have returned alive. O looters of others' countries, you will only get this mud." Saying this he sent for mud and dust and threw at the delegation. One of the delegates collected the mud in a cloth and all of them returned happily. They offered congratulations to their commander Sa'ad (RA) saying that the enemy has handed over his land in the form of mud and Inshallah we will capture it.

### **Battle of Qadisiyyah:**

Ultimately the battle was joined at Qadisiyyah. Unfortunately Sa'ad (RA) fell ill. He was not able to ride a horse or move on foot. Though he was rendered immobile he still decided to direct the battle from an elevated place. For effective command on the field he appointed Khalid bin 'Urfatah (RA).

On the very first day the intensity of battle can be judged by the number of casualties suffered by both sides. Muslims suffered over five hundred martyred against thousands of Iranians. On the second day the advantage was with Muslims mainly due to exceptional show of horsemanship by Abu Mahjan (RA) who came out of prison cell only to participate in the battle. He was serving jail for the offence of drinking. He was able to see the battlefield from his prison cell. Seeing the precarious situation he had come out with permission and took the battlefield. When Sa'ad (RA) came to know of it condoned his punishment and freed him on the promise that he will never touch wine. He remained steadfast and never drank again.

On the third day, as the battle was in progress Sa'ad (RA) observed the elephant with the Iranians were a big advantage. He directed that the leading elephants be blinded or somehow their tusk be injured so that they go wild and cause disorder in the ranks of the enemy. Despite the danger involved, Muslims soldiers did succeed in injuring two elephants and the outcome was

exactly as Sa'ad (RA) had visualised. The injured beasts got out of control thereby creating disorder and confusion. This led to demoralisation in the enemy ranks. Meanwhile their commander in chief Rustum was killed which proved to be the decisive factor. The Muslims won the battle.

Sa'ad (RA) consolidated the gains of the battle and declared, according to the direction of *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)*. Peace prevailed for the local population who experienced the new style of governance. Apart from regrouping and recouping, Sa'ad (RA) paid special attention to governance of the area won over by Muslims as he realised the local population will judge them by their deeds. Impressed by the good conduct and fair dealings by Muslims in general and officials in particular, people voluntarily and happily joined the ranks of Muslims.

### **Conquest of Madiyen:**

After two months of rest Sa'ad (RA) was ready to carry forward the mission. He first took the ancient city of Babylonia before marching on the regional capital city of Madiyen. It was a stronghold of Persians, which was well fortified and manned heavily by elite troops. It had the advantage of a river bisecting it. The main stronghold was on the eastern side, which could not be attacked easily because of the river.

Sa'ad (RA) first deputed his nephew Hashim bin 'Atabah (RA) to take the western part of the city. He

succeeded in taking it after an intense battle in which many Iranians perished including a tiger that was the mascot of their army. Sa'ad (RA) and Salman Farsi (RA), who was an Iranian himself, surveyed the battlefield to work out a suitable strategy to attack the main city across the river. The river was in spate and very dangerous to cross. All the boats were withdrawn to the far bank and all bridges demolished converting the river into a formidable obstacle.

After due consultations, it was decided to launch an attack across the river that will be a big surprise to the enemy. The strategy proved successful. Seeing the daring and unbelievable feat of the Muslim army the enemy was surprised and demoralised. Though the Persians did offer tough resistance but ultimately lost the battle. The prominent dignitaries and people abandoned the regional capital which was easily occupied by Sa'ad (RA). The war booty itself proved to be a boon the fighters. The whole of Iraq was now free from Persian rule and joined the Muslim state.

Sa'ad (RA) sent a detailed report to *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) and requested for further orders regarding further advance into the heartland of Persia. 'Umar (RA) congratulated Sa'ad (RA) and his troops for the magnificent victory. He did not order further advance stating that it was not the creed of Islam to expand and attack neighbours without cause. It was enough that the Persians were pushed back from the Arab lands into their own territories.

### **Governorship of Iraq:**

Sa'ad (RA) was appointed the governor of Iraq with the direction to hold a population census and survey of lands for proper administration. Spare lands were distributed among the local people who were willing to cultivate and utilise them. Law and order and judiciary were established. Business and markets were regulated. Common people appreciated these people friendly measure. In an unprecedented display of enthusiasm hordes of people began embracing Islam to join the Ummah and reap the rich harvest in this and in the life in the hereafter. Sa'ad (RA) proved to be not only brilliant general but also displayed exceptional talent as an able administrator and astute leader. During his rule, Iraq enjoyed peace and progressed by leaps and bounds.

### **New City of Kufah:**

The climate of Madiyen did not suit the Arabs. Sa'ad (RA) noticed that the people are losing their robustness and becoming weak. He reported the matter to *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* for his information and suitable guidance. *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* suggested him to select a suitable place within Iraq with good healthy climate and abundant water supply and shift his capital from Madiyen.

Sa'ad (RA) selected the place and set up a new city called Kufah. To begin with he built a mosque followed by government buildings and the rest of the infrastructure for

common public and troops. When Kufah was ready and occupied, Sa'ad (RA) shifted his headquarters to rule from there. He paid special attention to the welfare of military personnel. They were well-organised, trained and kept battle ready to take to the field at short notice. They were paid regularly and trained vigorously.

### **Relinquishment of Governorship:**

*Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* received complaints from people of Kufah. He got the complaints investigated independently and invariably found them to be trivial or frivolous. But the phenomenon indicated that the best interest of the state will be served by relieving Sa'ad (RA) from the duties of governorship. Sa'ad (RA) relinquished his post willingly without the slightest hesitation or rancour.

### **Death of *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)*:**

*Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* was attacked and grievously injured by a Persian slave Abu Lulu. Despite best treatment he did not survive long and succumbed to the injuries. Realising his end was imminent, he appointed a committee of six eminent companions who were competent and capable to shoulder the heavy responsibility of *Khalifah* after due consideration. Sa'ad (RA) was one of them. In the backdrop of the circumstances leading to relieving of Sa'ad (RA) from the governorship of Kufah, he spoke of him thus: "I did not relieve him (Sa'ad (RA)) from the post of governorship

because of negligence of his duties or distrust. Sa'ad (RA) will rightfully deserve to be *Khalifah*, if elected. If he is not elected, then whoever is elected should seek his counsel." However, Sa'ad (RA) himself requested that he may not be considered for the honour. When 'Usman (RA) was elected by consensus, he was one of the first companions to pledge his loyalty to the new *Khalifah*.

### **Re-appointment as Governor of Kufah:**

On assumption of duties of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) re-appointed Sa'ad (RA) governor of Kufah. Sa'ad (RA) once again performed his duties diligently and earned accolade from one and all. He served for three years with distinction. However differences cropped up between him and 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA) who was in charge of Bait-ul Maal. He requested *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) to relieve him of the governorship of Kufah explaining the reasons in detail. *Khalifah* 'Usman RA appreciated his straightforward request and relieved him of the post.

### **Life of Retirement:**

Sa'ad (RA) retired to his farm in a pleasant valley called 'Aqeeq' about 10 miles on the outskirts of Madinah to lead a quiet and peaceful life. He kept away from all political activities. He spent thirty long years during which period many events causing breach of peace and harmony occurred. He visited Madinah when *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) was put under siege by rebels. He tried his best to dissuade them from precipitating the matters but

to no avail. He pledged his loyalty to Ali (RA) when he was elected *Khalifah* after the martyrdom of 'Usman (RA). But he kept away from subsequent developments of strife and factional fights. He even preferred to graze his camels than to take sides and get involved. Whenever he was prompted to get involved he used to ask: "I will not get involved in fighting till you show me the sword which had eyes, tongue and lips to pronounce so and so is a kafir (un-believer) and so and so is mo'min (believer)." Once his son 'Umar came to him and said: "O father! You are grazing camels and goats here in jungle when people are striving to gain power. Is your keeping away justified?" He got so annoyed at this that he banged him on his chest and said: "Keep quiet... I have heard from the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) that Allah (SWT) loves the pious servants who remain anonymous."

### **Death:**

Sa'ad (RA) passed away of old age in 55 AH. His last wish was that he be buried in the clothes he wore during the battle of Badr and his grave must be lined with raw bricks only. When his body was brought to Madinah for burial, there were unprecedented scenes of grief in the streets. The mourners of this brave son included the Umm-ul Mu'mineen 'Ayesha (RA) and Umm-e Salmah (RA) who were still alive. They requested that his Janazah be brought in the Masjid un-Nabi for Salaat-ul Janazah so that they could also join from their rooms. When objections were raised from certain quarters, 'Ayesha (RA) promptly reminded that the Prophet (SAWS) had done so



in the case of Suhail bin Baiza' (RA). Accordingly he was brought to Masjid-un Nabi and after the Salaat-ul Janazah, he was laid to rest in Jannat-ul Baqie'.

### **Personal Details:**

Sa'ad (RA) was short, wiry and strongly built person with a prominent nose. He had very strong hands with thick fingers.

Sa'ad (RA) earned his livelihood by selling bows and arrows, which he used to make himself. He had developed this skill when he was still a boy. His product was famous for good quality that attracted customers from far off places. This was his main occupation before migration to Madinah.

After Hijrah he took to cultivation in partnership with his Ansari brothers. Once the armed struggle began, he took part in almost all the battles with zeal and vigour. As a reward he was given a piece of land in the valley of 'Aqeeq and a house in Madinah. His share of war booty was such that he paid five thousand Dirham towards *Zakaat* in his last year. He had large herds of camels and goats apart of two mansions in Kufah and 'Aqeeq (Valley).

Sa'ad (RA) was an extremely learned man. His knowledge of Qur'an and Hadith was second to none. Recitation of Qur'an was his regular routine. His style of recitation was so good that the listeners used to be moved. He was often seen shedding tears during recitations. He

was also instrumental in conveying Ahadith. He conveyed 215 Ahadith. *Khalifah* 'Umar had such a trust in him that he used to accept the Ahadith narrated by him without hesitation. Sa'ad (RA) himself was very particular about authenticity and accuracy of the narrations. He never hesitated to enquire from others in the event of slightest doubt.

From the childhood Sa'ad (RA) was blessed with pious nature and excellent manners. Logical and open-minded by nature, he lost no time in accepting Islam. He possessed élan and self-esteem and never compromised on principles. His mother was displeased at his acceptance of Islam. She even threatened to fast till he reverted back to the religion of forefathers but he did not budge and refused to accede to her demand.

With the growing influence of Islam, the Quraish imposed a boycott of Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib. Though not affected by the boycott, Sa'ad (RA) joined them to share their hardship for over three years. He could not think of enjoying comforts of Makkah when the Prophet (SAWS) and his family members suffering hardship of boycott.

Sa'ad (RA) never accepted any gift from anyone during his tenures as governor of Madiyen or Kufah. His humility and contentment help him steer clear of the unpleasant developments after the martyrdom of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA).

Sa'ad (RA) was very kind-hearted yet very brave. He was seen crying inconsolably on demise of his dear friend Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA). Yet his exploits in the battlefield were legend when it came to defend Islam. He was very generous and compassionate person ever ready to extend a helping hand to anyone who needed it. He donated liberally for good cause.

No wonder Sa'ad (RA) was one of the ten extremely privileged Muslims to be blessed with the glad tidings of Jannah in the lifetime itself.

## CHAPTER - 4

### ABDUR RAHMAN BIN 'AUF (RA)

#### **Family Background:**

According to well-known sources Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was born in Makkah in the year 581 AD - ten years before the birth of the Prophet (SAWS). His original name was 'Abd-e 'Umaru or Abdul Ka'bah. It was changed to Abdur Rahman after his acceptance of Islam.

His father 'Auf bin 'Abd-e 'Auf and mother Shufa' belonged to the sub-tribe of Banu Zahra. Mother of the Prophet (SAWS) also belonged to Banu Zahra.

His father died before the advent of Islam. His mother accepted Islam as soon as she came to know about its teachings even though open preaching had not yet commenced. Thus she belongs to the elite title - 'Assabiqoon al-Awwaloon' (first among the first) of Muslim Ummah.

#### **Conversion to Islam:**

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was 30 years old when the message of Islam reached him through Abu Bakr (RA) who was actively inviting people to Islam, though not publicly. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) is one

of the earliest (13<sup>th</sup> according to some) to accept Islam readily during this period which lasted three years. When he presented himself before the Prophet (SAWS) he was very pleased. He also changed his pre-Islamic name of Abdul Ka'bah to Abdur Rahman.

### **Life in Makkah:**

The Prophet (SAWS) began public preaching of Islam in the fourth year. This created a furor in the Makkan society. Opposition to the message of Islam came from the kith and kin itself. Initially persuasive methods were used to wean away the Prophet (SAWS) from Islam. Failing in their efforts with the Prophet (SAWS) the opponents turned to individual Muslims with a call to renounce Islam and return to the religion of idol worship of the forefathers. But that also did not cut much ice. As a result pagans of Makkah became vengeful and started coercive methods to intimidate the neo-Muslims. Poor and indigent were targeted with ferocity. Soon the conditions in Makkah became unbearable for many.

### **Migration (*Hijrah*):**

Seeing the predicament of the neo Muslims, the Prophet (SAWS) permitted them to migrate to Ethiopia, a neighbour country just across the Red Sea ruled by kind hearted Negus who followed Christianity. Abdur

Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was among the one hundred odd Muslims who decided to migrate.

The migrants lived in Ethiopia in peace and harmony. Most of them remained there and returned to Madinah directly. Some of them however returned to Makkah soon and moved to Madinah on the advice of the Prophet (SAWS). Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was one of them and became guest of Sa'ad bin Rabie' (RA) initially.

As an interim arrangement, Mohajireen and Ansaar were bound in the bond of brotherhood that took care of urgent problem of lodging and boarding. In the true spirit of brotherhood, the Ansaar willingly offered to share their properties to help their Ansaar brothers to establish themselves economically.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was offered an equal share in the property by his Ansaar brother Sa'ad bin Rabie' (RA). He thanked him for the kind offer but declined to share the property. He requested Sa'ad bin Rabie' (RA) to familiarise him with the local market so that he could start trading in cheese and butter oil in which he was well experienced. His efforts were blessed and his business picked up by leaps and bounds.

### **Battle of Badr:**

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) took part in this battle fighting shoulder to shoulder with others. He faced a very difficult situation during this battle. At the time of

leaving Makkah Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) had made an agreement with a pagan friend (friendship dating back to pre-Islamic days) Umayyah bin Khalaf, a bitter enemy of Islam, that they will protect each other as and when either of them visited Makkah or Madinah for business.

Umayyah bin Khalaf and his son Ali were on the battlefield with the pagans. With the death of Abu Jahal, the worst enemy of Islam, pagans took to heels. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) narrates: "When pagans were running away chaotically after the defeat, I found two abandoned armours. As I picked these up I heard Umayyah bin Khalaf calling me; 'O Ibni 'Auf come to me and save from the Muslims, you will gain more than those armours.' I threw away the armours and rushed to help Umayyah bin Khalaf and his son. As I was leading them to safety, Bilal (RA) saw us and shouted; 'O helpers of Allah and His Messenger this leader of pagans is escaping away.' Hearing this Muslims rushed towards us. I pleaded them to spare Umayyah bin Khalaf and his son as they are already under my custody but none paid heed. They threw Umayyah bin Khalaf onto the ground. I fell upon him to protect. But Ansari Habab bin Mazar (RA) cut off his nose with his sword. Umayyah bin Khalaf then asked me to leave him alone.' Thereupon he and his son were killed."

Umayyah bin Khalaf was a notorious mischief monger. Bilal (RA) was his slave whom he tortured and treated him cruelly for no other reason than accepting Islam. Therefore, when Bilal (RA) saw him escaping in the

battle, he could not tolerate it. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA), mindful of his pledge with Umayyah bin Khalaf, did his best to protect him but the situation was such that he became helpless. The mischief monger reaped what he had sowed.

Another incident which Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) used to recall his uncle, a leader of the pagan and the worst enemy of the Prophet (SAWS), was killed by two Ansaar brothers Ma'az and Mu'awwiz (RA) during the battle. "I was standing in the line of defence with two young men either side of me. One of them coolly enquired; 'Uncle please show us Abu Jahal.' I said; 'What will you do to him.' He said; 'I have promised Allah (SWT) that I would kill him or get killed.' The other young man also said enthusiastically; 'We want to kill Abu Jahal because he uses abusive language against our Prophet (SAWS).' I felt very happy standing between the two brave young Muslims. As soon as I pointed out Abu Jahal to them, they swooped upon him attacking with swords. They left him only when he fell down taking him as dead. But he had some life left in him. Seeing this 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA) severed his head from his body. When the Prophet (SAWS) heard about the incident he said that Pharaoh of the Ummah was killed that day."

### **Battle of Uhad:**

The defeat at Badr spurred the pagans to return with greater vigour and preparation to avenge the unexpected and humiliating defeat. At this critical juncture,



when the Prophet (SAWS) was surrounded by pagan bent upon killing him, a valiant band of companions provided a human shield warding off all the attacks taking them on their own bodies, displaying unparalleled love and affection towards their leader. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was one of them. He suffered 21 wounds on his body one of them was so severe that he limped during the rest of his life.

A soul-stirring incident took place in this battle. Sa'ad bin Rabie' (RA), Ansaar brother of Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA), one of the eminent and able companions who were among the first batch who had accepted Islam. When the Prophet (SAWS) did not see him when order was restored, he asked others to find his whereabouts. Uba'e bin Ka'b (RA) volunteered and began searching him all over even among the dead bodies lying scattered in the field. He was calling his name repeatedly asking him to respond wherever he might be. Sa'ad bin Rabie' (RA) was hidden under a heap of dead bodies injured grievously. Hearing the voice of Uba'e bin Ka'b (RA) he gathered his strength and replied haltingly: "Convey my Salaam to the Prophet (SAWS) and tell my Ansaar brothers that if the Prophet (SAWS) is killed at the hands of pagan, anyone of them surviving after that will not be able to face Allah (SWT), and no excuse will be heard, as we had pledged to sacrifice ourselves to protect him. I have fulfilled my pledge today." With these words he breathed his last.

**Battle of Khandaq (Trench):**

This was the third battle between attacking pagans of Makkah and Muslims of Madinah. It took place in the 5<sup>th</sup> year A.H. It is also called the Battle of Ahzaab as the pagans had mobilised all friendly tribes for this battle in a desperate bid of finally avenging the successive defeats at the hands of Muslims. They were particularly piqued at the losses suffered in Battle of Uhad, which they had almost won.

As the name of the battle suggests it was fought across a man-made trench dug around Madinah at strategic locations. It was something unique in war tactics of those times. The task was stupendous and demanded exceptional tenacity, energy and motivation. It goes to the credit of the Prophet (SAWS) that he led his forces from the front taking active part in the digging work shoulder to shoulder with others. Even then Muslim defenders were stretched to the limit and even developed self-doubt. But tenacity and morale of a core group of companions motivated the rest and the battle was finally won with divine intervention in the form of a severe storm disrupting the pagans who had laid the siege. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was among those who not only remained steadfast in the face of sever trial of mind and body but also set personal example motivating others.

### **Mission of Dumat-ul Jandal:**

Dumat al Jandal is situated on the north-western border of Arabia on the route to Syria. Its population had accepted Christianity under the influence of Byzantine ruler of Syria. For reasons best known to them they began interfering with the safe movement of the caravans of Muslim traders harassing and looting them. Banu Kalb was the dominant tribe among the habitants of that area.

In the year 7 AH, after the successful end of the Battle of Trench, the Prophet (SAWS) decided to send a force with the mission to deal with this intolerable situation. He selected Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA), being a trader himself, to lead a force of seven hundred troops. At the time of departure, he removed the 'Amama (head gear) of Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) and tied it again in a particular style and advised him to tie it that way. Then he advised him thus: "Bismillah! March in the service of Allah (SWT) and deal with the people indulging in deeds of mischief. But do not deceive and betray anyone, or harm any child, female, elderly or the sick. On reaching Dumat-ul Jandal, first invite people of Banu Kalb to Islam or at least refrain from their nefarious activities. If they accept, it is well and good. Otherwise fight with them."

As advised, Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) invited people of Banu Kalb to Islam in a decent and appealing way. First day there was no positive effect on them. Not losing patience, he did the same on the second day. They were reluctant to forsake the faith of their forefathers.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) did not lose heart. He again invited them to the fold of Islam, the religion of truth, emphasising the benefit and advantages both in this life and the hereafter. The head of Banu Kalb was impressed by the sincerity and decency of Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) and accepted Islam. That opened the floodgates and the entire tribe and even others accepted Islam willingly.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) sent the happy news to the Prophet (SAWS) who was very much pleased. He sent back a word to Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) advising him to marry the daughter of Asbagh, the head of Banu Kalb. Accordingly he proposed and married his daughter and returned to Madinah with her.

### **Victory of Makkah:**

Makkan pagans surrendered to the Prophet (SAWS) in 8 AH ending the long drawn vengeful enmity between the kith and kin divided bitterly for no other reason but faith. Abdur Rahman bin Auf (RA) was among the ten thousand strong well-armed contingent lead by the Prophet (SAWS).

There was no blood shed because of brilliant tactics employed by the Prophet (SAWS) which demoralised the besieged pagans of Makkah. Adopting the policy of humility in victory, the Prophet (SAWS) granted general amnesty to all. The pagans were taken by surprised with the spirit of forget and forgive by their own beloved son whom they had persecuted unjustly for all these years.

They lost no time in abandoning polytheism willing and unconditionally embracing the Prophet of Islam enthusiastically. The Prophet (SAWS) decided to stay in Makkah for a while to cleanse the Ka'bah, the House of Allah (SWT) of hundreds of idols before returning to Madinah. It may sound odd that he should continue to live in Madinah, but hindsight it was a farsighted and wise decision. The sanctity, equanimity, and peace of Bait al-Haraam would have been very difficult to maintain if it were to be the seat of government also.

### **Battle of Hunain:**

Even as the Prophet (SAWS) was busy sorting out various issues in Makkah before returning to Madinah, Banu Sa'ad, Banu Hwazan and some other tribes of Najad were preparing to mount an attack on Makkah. Pre-empting their move, the Prophet (SAWS) gathered a force of twelve thousand fighters and led them personally to deal with them. A battle ensued at a place called Hunain. The large strength caused a sense of overconfidence in the Muslims who were ambushed in a valley. But the situation was not allowed to go out of hand by the Prophet (SAWS) who once again displayed brilliant field tactics to stabilise the situation the inflicted a crushing defeat. With this the entire Najad was under the banner of Islam. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was part of this force fighting with his usual valour and tenacity.

### **Expedition to Tabuk:**

In the year 9 A.H some traders coming from Syria informed the people of Madinah that preparations are under way to attack Madinah under the orders of the king of Rome. Syria was part of the Byzantine that was part of Roman Empire whose southern borders met the northern borders of Islamic State of Arabia. When the news was conveyed to the Prophet (SAWS), he decided to prevent any ingress by the Byzantine into the boundaries of Arabia. For this it was necessary to meet the attacking force at the border itself. Tabuk, a border town of Arabia in the extreme north, at a distance of 686 km from Madinah, was chosen for the purpose of camping in wait to pre-empt possibility of any surprise move from the enemy.

A general call was given to all able-bodied Muslims to prepare for the expedition. Soon tribes from surrounding areas arrived in Madinah. With the local people, a large contingent was ready for action. The number of willing fighters was so large that logistics of providing arms and rides became a serious problem. On exhortations from the Prophet (SAWS) to contribute for the war, effort brought in plenty of money, provisions and even jewelry from the ladies. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) surrendered half of his entire possessions for the purpose.

Ultimately a contingent of thirty thousand fighters was organised with the Prophet (SAWS) himself as its commander. The summer was harsher than usual when

the force set forth for Tabuk due to a drought that year. Their journey proved to be a long and arduous haul full of hardships aggravated by hot winds and paucity of water. The tenacity and determination of the Muslims under the inspiring command and leadership of the Prophet (SAWS) proved decisive. The Byzantine rulers of Syria were taken by surprise, when the Muslim fighters reached Tabuk much earlier than expected time. This feat had had its impact. The Byzantine forces gave up their aggressive ideas and withdrew quietly. The Prophet (SAWS) and his troops camped in Tabuk for about a month and then returned leaving positive impression on the population of Tabuk and surroundings.

### **First Islamic Hajj:**

In the year 9 AH, the Prophet (SAWS) despatched a group of three hundred companions to Makkah for performing the Hajj according to Islamic rites. This was first such Hajj and hence bore great significance. A declaration was also made on this occasion that henceforth no Pagan polytheist would be allowed to visit Makkah. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) had the honour of being included in this contingent.

The Prophet (SAWS) himself performed his first Hajj in 10 AH with a very large contingent. Over a one hundred thousand pilgrims participated in this Hajj which is referred to *Hajjat-ul Wida'*, as he did not survive long thereafter and left for the heavenly abode. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was again part of this large congregation.

**Period of *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA):**

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was among those companions who rushed to pledge their loyalty to Abu Bakr (RA) as soon as he was elected *Khalifah* to succeed the Prophet (SAWS). Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) played key role in stabilising the volatile situation. He was frequently consulted on all major issues. He was his right hand man in repelling the attack of renegades on Makkah.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) had the honour of being appointed the leader of the pilgrims of the first Hajj by *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) during his period. According to some he was again appointed leader of pilgrims next year's Hajj also.

The rule of Abu Bakr (RA) proved to be short one as he passed away after just over two years. He appointed 'Umar (RA) as his successor. Abdur Rahman bin Auf (RA) was once again among the first to pledge his loyalty to the newly appointed *Khalifah*.

**Period of *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA):**

Like Abu Bakr (RA), *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) too valued the counsel of Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) and included him in his council of consultants. He was again appointed leader of the pilgrims by 'Umar (RA) in the first year of his rule as he was not able to perform the Hajj.



**Iraqi Campaign:** Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was known for his wise opinions. In the year 14 AH, when it was decided to raid Iraq in the face of repeated provocative activities, *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) decided to lead the force personally appointing 'Ali (RA) to hold the charge in Madinah during his absence. He included Talha, Zubair and Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) in the campaign as commanders. But Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) politely advised the *Khalifah* not to take risk at this early stage when his presence in Madinah would be more effective in overall direction of the battle with timely reinforcements. Others companions also agreed with this suggestion. Again when the question of appointing the commander cropped up, Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) suggested the name of Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas (RA) that was accepted unanimously. Thus the expedition to Iraq was very ably led by Sa'ad (RA).

**Campaign of Nahawand:** A similar situation arose on the occasion of the campaign of Nahawand which *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) wished to lead. He was once again advised by Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) and others to stay back at Madinah and coordinate from there. Accordingly, No'man bin Muqarran (RA) was given the command. The campaign was a grand success. It also fetched large quantity of war booty. *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) ordered the booty to be deposited in Masjid al-Nabi temporarily and appointed among others Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) as custodian.

**Treatment of Persian Zoroastrians (Majoosis):** People of Persia were fire-worshippers. When they came under the Islamic state, a doubt arose in the mind of *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) about their status for categorising them among the non-Muslim subject of the Islamic State. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) solved the problem by quoting the Prophet (SAWS) that they were to be treated on par with 'People of Book' like Christians and Jews and given the status of *Zimmis* (protected by state).

**Outbreak of Plague in Syria:** In the year 18 AH plague broke out in Syria where large numbers of Muslim troops were camping after the successful conquest. Many of them fell victim to the epidemic. When *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) came to know of it he became restless and desired to visit them. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) promptly reminded him of the advice of the Prophet (SAWS) for such occasions: "When you hear of epidemic in an area do not go there, if the epidemic breaks out at a place where you are then to not run away from there." (This was a simple but effective method of isolation to prevent the epidemic spreading further). Hearing this *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) changed his mind and returned to Madinah.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was with *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) when he performed his last Hajj in the year 23 AH. During his stay there *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) heard a rumour that so and so has announced that he would pledge loyalty to so and so after the death of 'Umar (RA). Whereupon *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) thought of delivering a public sermon to warn people to be aware of false

rumours. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) advised him against it on the plea that there were all sorts of people assembled in Makkah during Hajj who may carry own version of the rumour to their respective places triggering all kinds of rumours which will be difficult to control. *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) agreed to the suggestion.

### **Martyrdom of *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA):**

Tragedy struck the Islamic state in the year 24 AH when the most glorious period of the Khilafat-e Rashidah was suddenly cut short. *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) was attacked and severely injured by a Persian slave, Abu Lulu, belonging to Mughairah bin Shu'bah (RA) while he was leading Salaat al-Fajr in Masjid an-Nabi. People ran after the assailant to apprehend him. He inflicted grievous injuries on many worshippers to escape. But realising he had no chance of escape, committed suicide with the same weapon thus ruining the chances of finding the real culprits.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) seeing *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) unable to stand stepped forward to support him but he collapsed. He then completed the remaining Salah with brief recitation and hurried to attend to the injured *Khalifah* with others.

The wounds proved to be very serious worsening his condition day by day. When his condition became very critical, he was requested to nominate his successor. He gave the names of the following six companions whom he

considered fully competent and capable of succeeding him:

1. Ali bin Abi Talib (RA)
2. 'Usman bin 'Affan (RA)
3. Talha bin 'Ubaidullah (RA)
4. Zubair bin Al'awam (RA)
5. Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA)
6. Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas (RA)

After this *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) exhorted his would-be successor to treat Mohajirs and Ansaar and common Muslims fairly, fulfill obligation towards them and treat them honourably. He also advised them to take particular care of the Zimmis. Soon after this he passed away.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) continued to lead the prayers in Masjid an-Nabi till the election of next *Khalifah*. He was also among those who lowered the mortal remains of the *Khalifah* in the grave that was prepared next to that of *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) in the same room where the Prophet (SAWS) was buried.

#### **Election of Successor to *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA):**

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) played very important role in the election of successor to *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA). Soon after the initial meetings between the six nominated companions, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas, Zubair bin Al'awam and Talha bin 'Ubaidullah (RA) withdrew their

names. Hearing this, Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) also withdrew leaving Ali bin Abi Talib and 'Usman bin 'Affan (RA) in the field.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) met Ali and 'Usman (RA) separately seeking their consent to his efforts in election of *Khalifah*. They readily offered their consent remembering his contribution to the cause of Islam as also his wise counselling that was valued by *Khalifah* Abu Bakr and 'Umar (RA). He was also respected for his negotiating skills in difficult situations.

After consulting senior companions, Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) called a meeting in Masjid an-Nabi which was attended by all the important personalities including Ali and 'Usman (RA). He addressed the gathering briefly highlighting the role and importance of the office of *Khalifah* and the examples left by Abu Bakr and 'Umar (RA). He then announced the name of Usman (RA) and pledged his loyalty. Others followed suit and thus 'Usman bin 'Affan (RA) became the third *Khalifah* of the Islamic State of Madinah.

### **The Period of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA):**

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) lived for several years during the period of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA). Like earlier *Khulafah*, Abu Bakr and 'Umar (RA), *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) held Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) in high esteem and never hesitated in obtaining his counsel in all the important issues of governance.

The first six years of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) passed peacefully. Thereafter, an atmosphere of intrigue and suspicion developed and vitiated the harmony. Disheartened and disappointed, Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) kept himself away from these unsavoury events and led a quiet and peaceful life in his later years.

### **Death:**

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) passed away after a brief illness on 11 September, 652 AD (01 Safar, 31 AH) at the age of 72 years. He was buried in Jannat al-Baqie' after the Salaat al-Janazah led by Zubair (RA). His death of Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) left many people grieving including very senior and well-known companions. Ali (RA) said: "Oh Abdur Rahman! You got the good period and escaped the bad days." Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas (RA) expressed his grief thus: "Oh a mountain has passed away, a mountain has passed away."

### **Personal Details:**

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was blessed with an attractive personality. The only blemish was the slight limp because of severe injury he suffered in the battle of Uhad. Though very rich, He did not like fine clothes or rich food. However, because of a skin problem he was permitted by the Prophet (SAWS) to wear silken shirts much against his personal preference for ordinary clothes.

As stated earlier, his profession was trade and commerce. He was a very successful trader who was blessed with plentiful income. He was perhaps the richest amongst the companions of the Prophet (SAWS). Later he took to agriculture in which too he was blessed with plenty. It is to his credit that he was also one of the few whose material contribution in the cause of Islam became legendary in his lifetime. It appeared his earnings increased with the spending in the cause of Islam.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was an extremely learned person because of his intimate company he kept with the Prophet (SAWS) and the Khulafah. But he was careful in narrating Ahadith (traditions). He never hesitated to learn from anyone more knowledgeable than him in a particular field without bothering about the person's social status or age.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) had a large family. One of his wives Umm-e-Habibah (RA) was sister of Zainab bint Hajash (RA), one of the wives of the Prophet (SAWS). One of his sons, Abu Salamah was among the leading Ulema (scholars) among the Tabi'in (successors of companions). Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) took good care of his family and brought them up with love and affection.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was a pious man fearful of accountability in the hereafter. He was particularly concerned about his wealth and used to say: "I am afraid excess of wealth may not harm me in

hereafter." He used to exhort his children to spend liberally in the cause of Islam. Once, while breaking the fast of Ramadan he was reminded of the old days when Muslims were poor: "Mus'ab bin 'Umair (AS), who was nobler than me, did not get a full length cloth to cover his body when martyred. If feet were covered his head remained open and if the head was covered his feet will get exposed. Now the world is at our feet. We are afraid whether we have been rewarded for good deeds in the world itself instead of in the hereafter?" He was always humble in his attitude and affable in his manners and graceful in speech. He was always ready to reach out to those who needed his helping hand. Poor, indigent, destitute, widows and the needy looked up to him with great expectations, which were hardly belied.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was not only blessed with plenty of wealth but also with exceptional generosity and magnanimity. He was ever willing to contribute for the cause of Islam. Once he sold his land for forty thousand Dinars and distributed the proceeds amongst the needy poor and indigent of Madinah. On another occasion, he provided five hundred horses for the Muslim warriors who did not possess them. He also gave away five hundred and again one thousand five hundred camels in the way of Allah (SWT). On two occasions, at the behest of the Prophet (SAWS), he spent forty thousand Dinars and freed thirty slaves in one day for the sake of Allah (SWT). He presented four hundred Dinars to each of the survivors of battle of Badr. He donated fifty thousand



Dinars and one thousand horses to be distributed to the deserving people.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was very courageous both morally and physically. He showed his moral courage by accepting Islam when it was least popular and only invited the wrath from all sides. Neo-Muslims faced humiliation, insult and even torture. He faced all ups and downs with great equanimity and remained steadfast in the face of extremely trying times. He migrated with the first batch to Ethiopia but returned. He remained with the Prophet (SAWS) when the entire tribe of Banu Hashim was boycotted and expelled from Makkah. He bid farewell to Makkah for good with others and settled down in Madinah after Hijrah. The losses he suffered in business, the only source of his income at that time, due to these upheavals may well be imagined. But he took all these in his stride displaying exceptional sense of sacrifice and perseverance.

Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) was among those companions who made a point to be available to the Prophet (SAWS) at all times. They sacrificed their comfort, wealth and family to serve the requirements of their leader.

## CHAPTER - 5

### TALHA BIN 'UBAIDULLAH (RA)

#### Family Background:

Talha bin 'Ubaidullah (RA) was born in the year 595 A.D. The family named him Talha. He was later known as Abu Muhammad also after the name of his son Muhammad according to the prevailing custom of the Arab society. His father's name is Ubaidullah belonging to the small tribe of Banu Tayem, which however held important portfolio of justice for arbitration of the cases involving murders with powers to decide the method of execution of sentence. 'Ubaidullah died before the dawn of Islam.

His mother Sabah (RA) was daughter of Abdullah of Yamani tribe of Hazrami that had settled in Makkah long ago with the tribe of Banu Umabah. She accepted Islam overcoming initial resistance that did not last long. She lived a long life and died in the period of *Khalifah* 'Usman bin 'Affan (RA).

Talha (RA) belonged to a well to do family and was brought up with love and affection. He was among the few who were literate in Makkah. He became orphan at an early age. He took up family business and travelled extensively.

**Conversion to Islam:**

Talha (RA) was 16 years old when the message of Islam reached him through Abu Bakr (RA) who was inviting people to Islam privately during early period. Talha (RA) accepted Islam readily.

Interestingly he was in Basra on a business trip, where he met a Christian monk who was eager to meet anyone coming from Makkah. The monk enquired if a person by the name of Ahmad had appeared in Makkah. When asked who was Ahmad, the monk replied that according to their scriptures the time had come when Ahmad bin 'Abdullah bin Abdul Muttalib would appear as the last Apostle of God. He advised Talha (RA) to meet him immediately on his return to Makkah.

On his return, Talha (RA) enquired if something significant had taken place in his absence. He was informed that Muhammad bin Abdullah had proclaimed Islam and Abu Bakr (RA) had already accepted it. He met Abu Bakr (RA) to confirm it. He confirmed his acceptance of Islam and advised him too to do the same. Talha (RA) narrated him about his meeting with the Christian monk in Basra. Abu Bakr (RA) was very pleased to know it. He took Talha (RA) to the Prophet (SAWS) where he made a formal request: "O Apostle of Allah! Let me join your religion." The Prophet (SAWS) agreed and thus Talha (RA) joined the ranks of early Muslims.

**Life in Makkah:**

The Quraish of Makkah used to get infuriated whenever they came to know of anyone accepting Islam more so with the young and poor among them. They were astounded by the acceptance of Islam by young Talha (RA). The one who was most dismayed and unhappy was his mother. She had hoped that he would one day be a leader in his community because of his noble character and outstanding capabilities.

Some of the Quraish, anxious and despaired, went to Talha (RA) as soon as they could to wean him away from his new religion but found him firm and unshakable as a rock. When they failed gentle persuasive methods to achieve their aim, they resorted to persecution and violence.

Mas'ud bin Kharash (RA) narrated an incident involving Talha (RA) thus: "While we were busy in Sa'ee between Safa and Marwah, there appeared a crowd of people pushing a young man whose hands were tied behind his back. As they rushed behind him, they rained down blows on his head. In the crowd was an old woman who lashed him repeatedly and shouted abuses at him. I asked: 'What is the matter with this young man?' 'He is Talha bin 'Ubaidullah (RA). He has given up his religion and now follows Muhammad (SAWS) of Banu Hashim.'

‘And who is the woman behind him?’ I asked. ‘She is as-Sabah bint al-Hazrami, the young man’s mother,’ they said.”

In another incident Abu Bakr (RA) and he were tied together with a rope by his angry uncle ‘Usman bin ‘Ubaidullah and beat them up severely with a mindless and violent mob of Makkah in an unsuccessful attempt to force them to renounce Islam. He bore the torture manfully and remained firm. The shared experience Talha (RA) and Abu Bakr (RA) brought them closer. They were subjected to similar treatment again by the ‘Lion of Quraish’ Nawfal bin Khawled. But they remained firm and steadfast forcing the torturers to abandon their atrocious pursuit and let them alone.

Talha (RA) continued with his trading activities. He also took keen interest in Islamic teachings and other activities, always spending his spare time in the company of the Prophet (SAWS). He grew in stature with the passage of time. He continued to bear the pain and suffering with other Muslim brothers displaying great patience and perseverance.

### **Migration (Hijrah):**

Talha (RA) was away from Makkah on a business trip to Syria when the epoch making migration took place. It so happened that while Talha (RA) was on his way back to Makkah, the Prophet (SAWS) and Abu Bakr (RA) were on their way to Madinah. Talha (RA) informed them how

the people of Madinah were excited and keenly awaiting arrival of the Prophet (SAWS). He gifted fresh Syrian cloth to them from his merchandise and continued his journey to Makkah.

On reaching Makkah he came to know that his mother who was staunch enemy of Islam had also accepted Islam. He quickly wound up his business in Makkah and left for Madinah with his mother Sabah (RA). Like other migrants Talha (RA) too made Madinah as his new permanent place of residence.

### **Life in Madinah:**

On arrival in Madinah Asad bin Zararah (RA) hosted Talha (RA) and his mother in his house till permanent arrangements were made for them. When the Prophet (SAWS) paired up Ansaar and Mohajirs (migrants) in brotherly relations to overcome urgent needs of lodging and boarding of Mohajirs, Talha (RA) was paired up with Uba'e bin Ka'b (RA) who was one of the noble Ansaar with good knowledge in religion.

### **Battle Badr:**

Talha (RA) was not present in Madinah when battle of Badr took place. He was deputed on an important task by the Prophet (SAWS). By the time he returned to Madinah the battle was over. He always regretted having missed the opportunity to take part in the first battle that was fought for the cause of Islam.

**Battle of Uhad:**

As mentioned earlier, the Prophet (SAWS) fell in a ditch and got momentarily obscured from his companions. A strong rumour got spread that he had become a war casualty. The panic-stricken Muslim force took to their heels. At this critical juncture, a valiant band of companions provided a human shield holding the attackers at bay. They took the blows on their own bodies suffering personal injuries. This was an unparalleled display of love and affection towards their leader. Talha (RA) was among those who suffered serious injuries disregarding personal safety.

In the process, quite a few sacrificed their lives. Whenever Prophet (SAWS) called for help Talha (RA) responded; "I am here O Prophet of Allah." Suddenly he realised that he was the only person left with the Prophet (SAWS). He fought the attacking enemy like a man possessed.

When the ferocity of enemy attacks subsided, the Prophet (SAWS) decided to climb a nearby vantage point to rally the demoralised and disorganised force. Being injured and with heavy armour on his body he found it difficult to climb. Realising this, Talha (RA), forgetting about his own injuries immediately took him on his back and carried him to the high ground. Pleased at such an exemplary act, he declared: "Talha is assured of *Jannah*."

The Prophet (SAWS) gave a call to the retreating Muslims reminding them of their mission. Finding that the Prophet (SAWS) was very much alive, Muslims regrouped and attacked the enemy with renewed vigour and valour inflicting heavy casualties. It was the turn of the enemy to get surprised. Seeing the Prophet (SAWS) alive and in control, they lost heart and chose to retreat remembering the fate they met at Badr.

Talha (RA) had suffered more than seventy wounds in this battle; one of them paralysed his arm for life. The Prophet (SAWS) used to refer him thus: "This is not Talha, he is Khair (goodness personified)." Abu Bakr (RA) used to say: "Really speaking the day of Uhad belonged to Talha (RA)." And Umar (RA) used to call his thus: "O Talha, O man of Uhad, O master of Uhad etc."

### **Battle of Khandaq (Trench):**

This was the last attempt by the pagan Quraish to eliminate the Prophet (SAWS) and the now rapidly expanding community of committed Muslims gaining in confidence and moral after two surprising victories. It was fought around Madinah that was defended by a system of trenches, which checkmated enemy plans. This was perhaps the toughest battle fought by Muslims. Not only was it a tough task to dig trenches, but also to man those repulsing repeated attacks over an extended period of weeks. Talha (RA) was among those who proved their personal endurance and remained steadfast till ultimately



the enemy was forced to lift the siege the return to Makkah empty handed.

### ***Ba'yet-ur Ridhwaan:***

The details of the events leading to special pledge 'Ba'yet al-Ridhwaan' and the peace treaty have been explained in Chapter 1. Talha (RA) was among those who pledged to fight without hesitation.

### **Capture of Makkah:**

Talha (RA) took part in the siege of Makkah that was laid to capture Makkah to remove the source of trouble and danger to peace. Pagan Quraish never honoured the treaty of peace that was signed at Hudaibiyah even though it was perceived to be heavily tilted in their favour. Faced with a large force of well-armed Muslims led brilliantly by the Prophet (SAWS) better sense prevailed over them leading to peaceful surrender.

### **Battle of Hunain:**

Talha (RA) joined the expeditionary force sent after Banu Sa'ad Banu Hwazan and some other tribes of Najad who did not surrender with Quraish of Makkah. A fierce battle ensued at Hunain. Talha (RA) again displayed his commitment by fighting with his usual valour and tenacity.

**March to Tabuk:**

As described the pre-emptive expedition undertaken by the Prophet (SAWS), proved to be a real test of character for his companions. The climate was harsh with summer at its peak. It was also a harvesting season which is eagerly awaited by date farming that was the main source of earning for majority of the Madinite. Talha (RA) was among those distinguished companions who not only joined the expedition enthusiastically in response to a general mobilisation but also contributed very liberally.

***Hajjat-ul Wida':***

The Prophet (SAWS) performed his first and last Hajj in 10<sup>th</sup> Hijrah with a very large contingent comprising over one hundred thousand pilgrims. Talha (RA) was among those lucky Muslims who performed the Hajj which is referred to Hajjat al-Wida', as the Prophet (SAWS) left for the heavenly abode shortly after it.

**Period of *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA):**

Talha (RA) was among those who pledge loyalty to Abu Bakr (RA) when he was elected as first *Khalifah* without hesitation. With the departure of the Prophet (SAWS) many tribes, who had accepted Islam and pledged their loyalty more out of a compulsion of times than conviction of heart, revolted and broke away. Their main grouse was against the compulsory payment of *Zakaat* -

one of the four mandates of Islam. Some individuals even claimed to be prophets.

*Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) was immediately faced with the tough challenge to deal with such a volatile situation and stabilise the volatile situation after the Prophet (SAWS). Any leniency shown towards anyone or exemption granted to anyone obliged to pay *Zakaat*, would have caused irreversible damage to the creed of Islam. True to the creed of Islamic way of governance, the *Khalifah* immediately established a consultative council comprising eminent companions. Talha (RA) was among those respected companions who had the honour of being included in the council. On his part, Talha (RA) too was never found wanting in rendering honest and considered views to the *Khalifah* as and when the necessity arose.

#### **Period of *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA):**

*Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) fell seriously ill. Realising that the inevitable moment was drawing closer by each passing he nominated Umar (RA) to be the next *Khalifah* after him. Talha (RA) was among the first senior companions who pledged loyalty to *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) facilitating a smooth changeover.

*Khalifah* 'Umar (RA), though reputed to be too rigid and spontaneous, was in fact a person with courage of conviction, sound knowledge and excellent administrative abilities. His boldness in action during various crises had influenced his choice by *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) which was

fully supported by majority of the senior companions. On his part, *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* proved to be a right choice by his able governance which saw the spread of Islam far beyond the boundaries of Arab lands and rise of the Islamic state as a power to be respected. He continued with the policy of consultation and consensus followed by *Khalifah Abu Bakr (RA)*. Talha (RA) was again included in the advisory council. He again served with same commitment and enthusiasm. He supported the *Khalifah* wholeheartedly and rendered his best counsel in the affairs of the state.

#### **Role in succession to *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)*:**

The true status of Talha (RA) came to fore when *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)*, finding the time running out for him as a result of grievous injury he suffered, included him in the panel of six eminent companions he considered worthy of taking the coveted but challenging duties of *Khalifah*. Perhaps he did not have enough time to make his own choice with due deliberation and consultations.

Death visited *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* soon leaving a void at the top. Wise and farsighted, Talha (RA) sensed the criticality of the situation. He quickly withdrew his name from the panel with a view to quickening the process of succession to the seat of *Khalifah*. This highlights the sense of commitment and selflessness of Talha (RA).

Having withdrawn from the panel, Talha (RA) strived hard to ensure the most acceptable companion succeeds *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) whose tenure was remarkable in more than one ways. Ultimately 'Usman (RA) emerged as the most acceptable successor. As usual, Talha (RA) was among the first to give his pledge to the new *Khalifah*.

#### **Period of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA):**

Life of Talha (RA) was almost eventless during the reign of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA). He spent his time in Islamic pursuits such as learning and preaching. However, in 35 AH he became active in the affairs of governance when he came to know of the rebellious activities of some groups in Kufah, Basra and Egypt. Though he had difference of opinion on certain matters of governance with *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA), he felt it prudent to intervene in the larger interest of peace and harmony. He advised the *Khalifah* to enquire into the causes of these activities through eminent companions of the Prophet (SAWS). *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) appreciated his initiative and accepted his wise advice.

'Ammar bin Yasir, Osama bin Zaid, Abdullah bin 'Umar and Mohammad bin Muslamah (RA) were deputed to visit the places personally to investigate and ascertain the grievances/causes of dissent among the people and to report back with recommendations to address the grievances, if any. Accordingly they reported back to *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) with their report. Unfortunately the rebels did not wait for the outcome of the sensible

initiative and converged on Madinah with the intention of forcing their demands using tactics of intimidation.

The rebels made an unsuccessful attempt to win over Ali, Zubair and Talha (RA) on their side. They were rudely disappointed when their attempts met with rebuke and advice to resist from anti-government activities. Undeterred, they went ahead with their nefarious designs and surrounded house of the *Khalifah*.

Talha (RA) rushed to dissuade the rebels from their unacceptable actions, to lift the siege and discuss their problems in a peaceful manner. The rebels did not pay heed to his sincere advice. But he did not give up and kept visiting them repeatedly to persuade them to adopt a peaceful path for redress of grievances, if any.

On one such occasion, *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) appeared in the balcony of his house and addressed the people calling by name the eminent companions of the Prophet (SAWS) one by one. Talha (RA) acknowledged his call. The *Khalifah* reminded the gathering about his services in the cause of Islam as also their public recognition and appreciation by the Prophet (SAWS). Talha (RA) testified loudly; "Absolutely right. You have indeed rendered many distinctive services in the cause of Islam for which Allah (SWT) bestowed honour and high status among the Muslims." Unfortunately the rebels were unmoved and remained stubborn. Talha (RA) was deeply disappointed.

Talha (RA) deputed his son to join other young volunteers to guard the house of the *Khalifah* and to foil any attempt by the rebels to force entry. The *Khalifah*, however, had issued very clear instructions to them that they will not indulge in fighting under any circumstances.

The siege of the house continued for forty days. Ultimately the rebels gained entry through the back wall and killed the *Khalifah* in cold blood – perhaps a foreboding event in the history of Islam thereafter. This was the first ever murder of a Muslim by the Muslims.

On hearing the devastating news Talha (RA) was extremely sad and frustrated. He cursed the rebels even after he was informed that the rebels were sorry and feeling ashamed of their dastardly deed.

#### **Period of *Khalifah* 'Ali (RA):**

Ali (RA) was elected as *Khalifah* unanimously. Talha (RA) was also among those who pledged their support. But he did not fail to note that 'Ali (RA) had not only accepted the pledge of the very people who had taken part in plotting and killing of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) but also gave them employment in the armed forces.

Talha (RA) joined with other senior Muslims and urged *Khalifah* 'Ali (RA) to apprehend the killers of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) and punish them according to the Shari'ah. They reminded him that their pledge was with the understanding that justice will be done. *Khalifah* 'Ali (RA)

explained the practical difficulties in tracing the real killers from among the large number of the people involved, particularly under the prevailing disturbed conditions following an unimaginable tragedy and major crime. He promised to do the needful once normalcy returned.

The atrocious incident, of cold blooded murder of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA), shocked the conscience of the people as the news spread far and wide. An acute sense of ire and indignation overtook the Ummah. There was a clamour for justice as per Shari'ah at the earliest without realising the practical difficulties faced by the *Khalifah*. Unfortunately, the delay gave rise to the impression that *Khalifah* 'Ali (RA) was not serious in the matter. This led to suspicion and agitation in the minds of large segments of Muslim population.

#### **Martyrdom of Talha (RA):**

Sensing the aggravating situation, Talha (RA) and Zubair (RA) proceeded to Makkah to hold consultations with Umm-ul Mu'mineen 'Ayesha (RA). She was returning to Madinah after performing Hajj when she came to know the shocking incident in Madinah during her absence. She was very distressed and disappointed. She decided to stay away from Madinah and returned to Makkah.

Talha (RA) and Zubair (RA) met 'Ayesha (RA) and briefed her about the deteriorating situation prevailing in Madinah. With slow pace of investigation and in dealing



with the horrible crime, the social environment of Madinah deteriorated. In order to prevent further aggravation, it was decided to mobilise people and launch a movement to restore order in Madinah.

Unfortunately the events took a different direction resulting in first war, called 'Camel War' between two groups of Muslims - the companions on of the Prophet (SAWS). Talha (RA) got caught in the cross shooting of arrows and was killed thus earning the dubious distinction of the first victim of the unfortunate war - an injustice to the illustrious son of Ummah.

#### **Personal Attributes:**

Talha (RA) was wirily built with broad shoulders though of slightly short stature. He preferred good clothes but ate simple food. He was generous, kind-hearted and humble by nature. No needy person even returned empty handed from his house. Food used to be spread for all at his house. Scores of people used to eat with him.

He willingly contributed his wealth for the cause of Islam in peace and in time of war. Once he purchased a well and threw a feast to Muslims, which pleased the Prophet (SAWS). He said: "Talha you are really very generous person." Once he distributed seven lakh Dirham that he had received from a party. Similarly he distributed the entire sale proceeds of one of his properties. He contributed so much for the expedition of Tabuk that the Prophet (SAWS) praised and called him 'Generous'.

Talha (RA) was an extremely devoted Muslim with sound knowledge of religion. But he refrained from narrating the sayings of the Prophet (SAWS). There are very few Ahadith that are attributed to him. He was a man absolute integrity and extremely dependable.

Talha (RA) had many sources of income, business being the main source. He continued commercial activities even after migration but also took up agriculture.

Talha (RA) married a number of times and was blessed with four daughters and eleven sons. His eldest son Muhammad was martyred with his father in the same unfortunate war. He treated his family members with love and affection.

Talha (RA) was very well known for his bravery. He took part in battles fearlessly and displayed conspicuous courage on the battlefield at the most difficult moments. In the battle of Uhad he was one of those few companions who protected the Prophet (SAWS) from the fierce attacks of the enemy. Similarly, during the critical time in battle of Hunain, when most of the fighters were caught in utter confusion by sudden ambush by the enemy, he remained firmly with the Prophet (SAWS).

## CHAPTER - 5

### ZUBAIR BIN AL'AWAAM (RA)

#### **Family Background:**

Zubair (RA) was born approximately 28 years before Hijrah. The family named him Zubair, which was appreciated by the Prophet (SAWS). He was later known as Abu 'Abdullah after the name of his elder son 'Abdullah as per the tribal custom of Arabs.

Zubair (RA) belonged to Banu Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza branch of the Quraish. This tribe was responsible for organising consultative assembly of Quraish as and when need arose for consultations. Khadijah bint Khowailed (RA), first wife of the Prophet (SAWS) also belonged to this branch of Quraish. She was real sister of his father.

Zubair (RA) lost his father, 'Awwaam bin Khowailed, in his childhood. He died before Islam was proclaimed. His mother's name was Safiah bint 'Abdul Muttalib who was grandfather of the Prophet (SAWS). Thus Zubair (RA) was cousin of the Prophet (SAWS).

Zubair (RA) was brought up by his mother who was an able and gifted lady. She groomed him into a man of character and made him a brave soldier who fought with valour in all the battles and took part in the cause of

Islam. She was one of the early converts to Islam and migrated to Madinah with other Muslims. She died at the age of 73 during the period of *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)*.

### **Conversion to Islam:**

Zubair (RA) converted to Islam with his aunt Safiah (RA) as soon as the Prophet (SAWS) started preaching openly. He was just 15 year old at that time. Even before the advent of Islam, Zubair (RA) loved his cousin Muhammad for his pleasing manners, righteousness, integrity and many other excellent qualities. The bond strengthened further after he was appointed apostle of Allah (SWT).

### **Life in Makkah:**

Like many other converts, Zubair (RA) too suffered torture and humiliation even from own kith and kin. Even his beloved uncle Nofil bin Khowailed turned hostile as soon as he came to know of his conversion to Islam. He used all kinds of innovative methods to torture him physically and mentally to force Zubair (RA) to abandon Islam but to no avail. Zubair (RA) remained steadfast in his new faith and suffered his uncle's cruelties with patience and forbearance.

### **First Migration:**

When the torture and humiliation heaped upon the newly converted Muslims reached its zenith and

unbearable, the Prophet (SAWS) allowed the willing Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia), which was ruled by a kind hearted ruler Negus (Najashi). Disheartened with the torture and humiliation from his own uncle, Zubair (RA) decided to migrate.

Within a few months a rumour was spread that the infidels of Makkah have accepted Islam. The migrants in Ethiopia were overjoyed and barring a few most of them returned to Makkah. Zubair (RA) was one of them. However, the rumour turned out to be false. But they did not like to return decided to seek protection of willing tribal leaders to enter Makkah. Zubair (RA) was taken in protection by Zam'ah bin Aswad.

### **Second Migration:**

The Muslims who did not have protection of any tribal leader continued to suffer with greater intensity. This was not acceptable to those who enjoyed the protection. Thus, another migration to Ethiopia took place. Apart from suffering Muslims those enjoying the protection also returned to Ethiopia. Zubair (RA) was among them.

Of the migrants some remained in Ethiopia till the battle of Khaibar whereas some returned in 7<sup>th</sup> year after Islam, hearing that things had improved in Makkah. Zubair (RA) was among them. He took up trading for earning his livelihood. This was also the time when he got

married to Asma' (RA), the elder daughter of Abu Bakr (RA).

### **Third Migration (*Hijrah*):**

Zubair (RA) was away in Syria on business trip when general permission was given to the Muslims of Makkah to migrate to Yathrib in the north where significant number of people had converted to Islam. On his return journey he met the Prophet (SAWS) and Abu Bakr (RA) who were on their way to Yathrib. Out of love and respect he presented them some clothes that he was carrying and proceeded to Makkah to wind up his business and join them in Yathrib. They were dressed in those clothes while entering Yathrib.

Zubair (RA) left for Yathrib very soon accompanied with his mother Safiah (RA) and wife Asma' (RA) after winding up his business and discharging his obligations.

### **Life in Madinah:**

Zubair (RA) was 28 year old at the time of his migration to Yathrib that came to be known as Madinat-un-Nabi or simply Madinah after the arrival of the Prophet (SAWS) who adopted it as his second hometown and did not return to Makkah for permanent residence even after it came under the rule of Islam in 8 AH. So was the case with many migrants including Zubair (RA) who spent rest of his life in Madinah?

When the Prophet (SAWS) established brotherly relations between Ansaar and Mohajirs (migrants), Zubair (RA) became brother of Salmah bin Salamah Ansari (RA) who enjoyed high social status like Zubair (RA) himself.

There is an interesting anecdote connected with the birth of a son to Zubair (RA) who was named Abdullah by the Prophet (SAWS). Jealous of the growing bond between the Mohajirs and Ansaar, the Jews of Madinah had spread a rumour that because of a curse the Mohajirs will not be blessed with children. It so happened that there was no birth among the Mohajirs for almost a year till Abdullah was born. This happy event proved their rumour false and brought joy worthy of celebration.

### **Battlefield Deeds:**

Zubair (RA) had the distinction of taking part in all the battles that were fought under the command of the Prophet (SAWS) when permission was accorded by Allah (SWT) to defend the Muslim community from the unprovoked attacks and assaults on peace loving Muslims by the pagan Quraish who did not behave kindly to the new found peace and security in Madinah.

**Battle of Badr:** During the fierce battle a well-known warrior of Quraish climbed a mound and challenged Muslims for individual dual which was quite customary those days. Zubair (RA) was standing next to the Prophet (SAWS) who ordered him to accept the challenge. Zubair

(RA) immediately engaged the challenger in hand to hand combat and brought him down the mound and killed. At this, another warrior of Quraish who was fully protected with personal armour except the eyes attacked Zubair (RA) who used his lance to pierce his eye with such a force and accuracy that it had to be extracted with great force as a result the lance itself got twisted. The Prophet (SAWS) was so pleased with the personal bravery and skill of Zubair (RA) that he obtained that twisted lance as a souvenir. It remained as such with the ruling *Khalifah* till 'Usman (RA). After his martyrdom it came in the possession of his son Abdullah bin Zubair (RA).

**Battle of Uhad:** The Prophet (SAWS), who was the prime target of Quraish pagans, was stranded with just a handful of brave companions. Zubair (RA) was among those who protected him facing grave danger disregarding personal safety and took many a blows on his body. He was also among those who went in pursuit of retreating enemy despite many injuries suffered during the battle and while protecting the Prophet (SAWS).

**Battle of Trench:** Madinah was fortified by a system of trenches covering all likely approaches and were too wide to be jumped across by even horses. Archers were posted to disrupt attempts to cross them by attackers. Confronted with new tactics of defence a reputed warrior threw a challenge for a personal showdown. Zubair (RA), as keen as ever for such individual bouts, immediately accepted the challenge. He attacked the challenger with sword saying: 'I am the one who is always ready for protection



the Prophet (SAWS).’ He brought down the challenger cutting him into two with one powerful stroke of his sword.

***Ba’yet-ur Rizwaan:*** Zubair (RA) was among the first to come forward readily taking the pledge with élan and enthusiasm that led to everyone taking the pledge in a soul stirring scene.

**Khaibar Campaign:** This was the first campaign in which women also were permitted to take part. Safiah (RA), mother of Zubair (RA), was also among them. One day, Ali (RA) launched a decisive attack on the fort. Marjeb came out enthusiastically chanting moral raising poems. He was killed in no time by Ali (RA). This brought his brother Yasir in the field. He was a big person, strongly built with good reputation of personal bravery. Zubair (RA) came out to face him. He was appearing to be no match to him so much so that his mother, Safiah (RA) became nervous and pleaded with the Prophet (SAWS): “O Messenger of Allah my beloved son will be killed.” But the Prophet (SAWS) was confident that Zubair (RA) will prevail due to his superior skill. He reassured her saying: “No, Insha Allah he will kill the enemy.” Zubair (RA) did not take long to kill Yasir which actually led to the fall of the strong fort.

**Capture of Makkah:** Zubair (RA) was assigned the coveted duty of carrying the standard of the Prophet (SAWS). He had the rare honour of the Prophet (SAWS)

wiping his dust and sweat laden face at the end of the operation.

**Battle of Hunain:** Zubair (RA) fought tenaciously with other companions to protect the Prophet (SAWS) from any harm when Muslim forces were taken by surprise in the valley of Hunain.

**March to Tabuk:** The distance, the harvesting season, harsh climate and the expenses involved in the expedition bore upon many who were keen to escape from it. While many excused themselves, Zubair (RA) was among those distinguished companions who did not hesitate for a moment and joined the expedition with his usual enthusiasm contributing materially too.

**Period of *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA):**

Zubair (RA) preferred a quiet life after the sad demise of the Prophet (SAWS) without showing much interest in the affairs of the newly established state. He was among those who pledge loyalty to *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) to succeed the Prophet (SAWS) without any hesitation or reservation.

**Period of *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA):**

Zubair (RA) was among the first senior companions who lost no time in pledging their loyalty to *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) who was nominated to succeed by *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA).

During the reign of *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) the threatening postures of mighty Persian and Byzantine empires grew serious to be ignored further. *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) decided to meet the challenges boldly. After due consultations with his senior colleagues, he launched armed struggle against them. Muslims rose to the occasion contributing with men and material for the holy war.

Zubair (RA) could not remain aloof any more. With the permission of the *Khalifah* he too joined the war effort with funds and joined the troops despatched to quell the threat from Byzantine in Syria. He fought many battles shoulder to shoulder with others in all the battles there. His role in the tough battle of Yarmuk was noteworthy.

After the successful campaign in Syria *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) despatched four contingents of one thousand each under the command of Zubair (RA) and others in response to an urgent request from 'Amru bin al-'Aas (RA) who was now clearing the enemy from neighbouring Egypt.

Zubair (RA) was appointed overall commander of this force which reduced the strong of fort of Qasr-e Shama' by bold tactics taking the well-entrenched enemy by surprise.

'Amru (RA) assigned yet another tough task to Zubair (RA) with Muslamah (RA) to take the enemy stronghold of Alexandria which was accomplished with aplomb.

### **Nomination in the Panel of Successors:**

*Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) was grievously injured by a Persian slave, Abu Lulu. Sensing arrival of the inevitable moment, 'Umar (RA) nominated six eminent companions of the Prophet (SAWS) whom he considered equally suitable to succeed him. Zubair (RA) was one of them.

Zubair (RA) humbly withdrew his name in favour of Ali (RA) whom he considered to be better qualified than him thus facilitating easy and quick succession. Likewise, others too withdrew leaving 'Usman, Ali and Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (RA) in the field. Abdur Rahman (RA) too announced his intention to withdraw. He was then requested to facilitate final selection. After due deliberation and consultations he announced the name of 'Usman (RA) as successor to *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA).

### **Period of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA):**

After eventual election of 'Usman (RA) as third *Khalifah*, Zubair (RA) withdrew himself from the hustle and bustle of political and social life and led a quiet life for most of the time pursuing theological studies. However, events of 35 AH disturbed his quiet way of life when, like many senior companions, he too attempted to reconcile

the differences which had led to rebellion in Kufah, Basra and Egypt.

Sensing threat to the life of the *Khalifah*, Zubair (RA) deputed his son 'Abdullah (RA) to remain on guard and vigilant to foil any attempt by the people who had laid a siege. But destiny wished otherwise. The unfortunate events ultimately resulted in Ummat al-Muslimeen suffering the ignominy of the first cold blooded murder of the head of the glorious Islamic state. True to the prophetic words of the beleaguered *Khalifah*, the Ummah never regained its élan, once the sword - the Islamic symbol of protection of human rights - was unsheathed for spilling the blood of the person who had earned the title of *Zun-Noorain* having had the distinction of marrying two daughters of the Prophet (SAWS).

Zubair (RA) had the distinction of leading the funeral prayer of the slain *Khalifah*.

### **Period of *Khalifah* 'Ali (RA):**

Zubair (RA) was quick to pledge his loyalty to Ali (RA) once he was elected as *Khalifah* by majority of the people which, unfortunately included some of the rebels who had participated in the siege and murder of *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA). It, later, proved to be a major embarrassment to the new *Khalifah* and unrest in the people who were pressing for justice. Zubair (RA) and other senior companions of the Prophet (SAWS) attempted to resolve the crisis without success.

**Martyrdom:**

Perhaps the most unfortunate event after the unjust murder of the *Khalifah* was the loss of unity in the Ummah itself. The subsequent events proved that the divided loyalties became endemic penetrating the political, social, and even religious matters of Muslims. The most undesirable thing in Islam occurred when two factions of the Ummah took the battle field indulging in killing among themselves.

Though the battle did not last long but it left deep wounds that did not heal easily leaving ugly scars on the persona of the Ummah forever. Like Talha (RA) and others, Zubair (RA) also found himself fighting against the duly elected *Khalifah*. He was soon dejected and left the field in disgust. He decided to go back to Madinah and return to his quiet way of life.

On the way, Zubair (RA) was met by 'Umru bin Jarmooz who accompanied him in his journey. He cunningly assassinated Zubair (RA) while he was offering Salaat-uz Zuhar. That was the sad end of a glorious life that had picked up the sword and taken to field in the cause of Islam killing many an enemies in personal encounters and protection of the Prophet (SAWS) on many critical occasions, displaying valour, personal courage and disregard to his personal safety.

Later, 'Umru the killer was himself condemned with a curse for Hell-fire when he met *Khalifah* Ali (RA) and bragged about his deed, perhaps expecting appreciation and rewards. He even presented the sword of Zubair (RA) to 'Ali (RA). The *Khalifah* was profound in his grief. Pointing to the sword he sighed; "This is the sword that has killed and chased many an attackers of the Prophet (SAWS). O killer of the son of Safiah (RA)! 'glad tidings' of Hell to you."

### **Personal Details:**

Zubair (RA) bore an attractive personality. He was a tall and slim person with wheatish complexion, light beard and long hair. Zubair (RA) led a simple life that reflected in his way of dressing and food habits. However, because of a skin problem he was specially permitted by the Prophet (SAWS) to wear silk. He preferred to possess good quality weapons. One of his swords bore a silver handle.

Zubair (RA) married several times, many of them were from the companions of the Prophet (SAWS). He had four wives at the time of his death. He was blessed with nine daughters and nine sons. His sons earned good name for their father and themselves. Notable among them are 'Abdullah RA, 'Urwah, Manzar and Musa'b.

Like most of the Quraish, he pursued trade and commerce as a profession. He was blessed with sound business sense that made him a successful business man.

He faced hard times after migration from Makkah but soon recovered to earn handsome income. Apart from business, his source of income was his share of war booties. He also took to agriculture on the lands which he was awarded from time to time, and also purchased by him. Zubair (RA) became very rich but never took to vanity and extravagance. He spent liberally in the cause of Islam and charity.

Zubair (RA) was extremely cautious in religious matters. He never said nor did anything that was remotely suspect in authenticity. Less than forty sayings of the Prophet (SAWS) are attributed to him. When asked about it by his son 'Abdullah (RA) he replied to him that he is fearful of the saying of the Prophet (SAWS) that anyone who attributed anything falsely to him, he must prepare for Hell as his abode.

Zubair (RA) was blessed with the rare gift of sense of sacrifice. He was quick to withdraw from the panel of the worthy companions selected by *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)* to succeed him. One touching incident took place in the battlefield of Uhad when his beloved uncle Hamzah (RA) was killed. Zubair (RA) was given by his mother two pieces of shroud cloth with which he wished to wrap his uncle's dead body. But seeing a dead body of one of the Ansaar companion he readily parted with one to shroud him.

Personal courage of Zubair (RA) was legendary. He never ever flinched even for a moment when faced



with most dangerous moments. His display of personal courage was exemplary during the battles of Uhad and Hunain when Muslims suffered unexpected reverses and loss of moral momentarily even leaving the Prophet (SAWS) at the mercy of enemy. His performance during the apparent uneven battle of Yarmuk against the Byzantine was such that *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) counted him among those whom he equated equal to more than thousand mounted soldiers. Zubair (RA) was known for his horsemanship. He so expert in the art of riding that he always preferred to fight mounted on horse.

Zubair (RA) was extremely honest and trustworthy. People never thought second time in putting their precious things and wealth with him for safe custody. Integrity and truthfulness was one of the most oft repeated exhortations to his children. People even trusted him to take care of their wealth and families. He treated the entrusted wealth as a loan with all its bindings. His children returned more than 22 lakhs Dirhams upon his death treating the entrusted wealth as loan just as advised by their father.

Zubair (RA) was very generous by nature. His contributions for the sake of Islam were second to none. No one ever returned from him empty handed. He used to spend all the income earned by his slave force in charity without keeping even a single Dirham.

Zubair (RA) loved the Prophet (SAWS) more than anything in his life. He always remained at his disposal

for any task or mission. Though he was otherwise related to the Prophet (SAWS), his love because of faith was dominant. He remained close at hand in battles he fought with him from Badr to Tabuk. He performed all the tasks assigned to him, whether in war or peace, with aplomb and pride disregarding its nature. The Prophet (SAWS) also affectionately reciprocated the love and loyalty of Zubair (RA). He always referred to him as 'my companion' (Hawari). He was assigned the honour of carrying the standard of the Prophet (SAWS) in most of the battles. No wonder that he was included in the ten most honoured companions who were given the glad tiding of Heaven in this life itself.

## CHAPTER - 7

### SA'EEB BIN ZAID (RA)

#### **Family Background:**

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) was born to Zaid bin 'Amru bin Nofil and Fatimah bint Ba'jah thirty years before Hijrah sometime in 591/592 AD. He was named Sa'eed. His family belonged to the tribe of Banu 'Adi, which was a branch of the tribe of Quraish, which was held in high esteem amongst all the tribes of Quraish. It was entrusted two very important portfolios-emissaries of Quraish and ruling authority for inter-se-status of different branches of Quraish. He was connected to the Prophet (SAWS) in ninth generations earlier. He was brother-in-law and cousin of *Khalifah 'Umar (RA)*.

His father Zaid bins 'Amru bin Nofil was few among those Arabs who never subscribed to the faith of polytheism. He was a die-hard monotheist, hated all pagan beliefs and rituals, never worshipped idols and exhorted others to abandon idol worship and filthy rituals and deeds. He never ate the meat of animals sacrificed in the name of idols. He considered flesh of dead animals and blood as prohibited. Because of these the pagan Arabs became his enemy and left no chance of harming him, so much so that he left Makkah and took up residence in a place called Kharar about 125 miles to the north.

His mother Fatimah bint Ba'jah belonged to the famous tribe of Banu Khuza'ah, which was settled in the planes of Hijaz between the mountain ranges and Red Sea. She too followed monotheism. It was because of the influence of good up-brining training of parents that Sa'eed and his sister 'Atiqah accepted Islam without hesitation upon its proclamation.

He was married to Fatimah bint Khattab just before the proclamation of Islam.

### **Conversion to Islam:**

Initially Islam was not propagated openly due to hostility of other members of the tribe of Quraish. The Prophet SAWS used to invite only such people whom he considered suitable on account of their religious orientation. Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) is among them. He and his wife converted to Islam without delay and hesitation. Initially because of the stiff opposition and hardships Muslims did not pray openly nor met in public places. A house near Mt. Safa belonging to Arqam (RA), which was considered safe, was selected for this purpose. The house was known as '*Dar al Arqam*'.

### **Role in Conversion of 'Umar (RA) to Islam:**

'Umar RA was the chief of the tribe of Banu 'Adi. He did not accept Islam for six years. Not only he remained in the fold of his forefathers' religion but also promptly punished those relatives and slaves who

accepted Islam. He did not spare his own sister Fatimah (RA) and brother-in-law Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA). But all of a sudden he accepted Islam following an incident involving them.

Being one of the stiff opponents of Islam, 'Umar (RA) decided to put an end to the great nuisance which divided the society and caused disruptions in almost all families. One day he drew his sword and proceeded to kill the Prophet (SAWS) and finish the cause once and for all. Finding him in such agitated mood Na'im bin Abdullah (RA), one of the members of his tribe, enquired as to where he was going in such angry mood. 'Umar (RA) replied that he intended to kill the person who has brought a new religion befooling us and finding faults with our religion and insulted our idols. Na'im bin Abdullah (RA) had already accepted Islam. He got worried about his intentions. He said to him, "O 'Umar you are mistaken. If you succeeded in killing Muhammad (SAWS) do you think his tribe 'Abd Manaf will leave you alive to move freely on this earth?" To this 'Umar replied that he was not afraid of anyone.

Then Na'im informed him that the religion of Muhammad (SAWS) has already entered his house. 'Umar (RA) asked; "How?" Na'im (RA) told him; "Don't you know that your sister and her husband have accepted Islam?" Hearing this 'Umar (RA) changed his course and reached his sister's house. At that time Khabbab bin Arath (RA) was teaching Surah Taha from a small book containing Qur'anic verses revealed till then. Her husband

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) was also there. When 'Umar (RA) knocked the door Khabbab bin Arath (RA) hid himself in a room and Fatimah bin Khattab (RA) hid the book. 'Umar (RA) had already heard the recitation. He said to his sister and her husband; "What is that you were reading just now?" They replied; "Did you know or hear anything?" 'Umar (RA) said; "No, I have heard. I have come to know that you both have abandoned the faith of your forefathers." Then he caught hold of Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) by his long hair, banged him to the ground and began thrashing him. His sister Fatimah bin Khattab (RA) intervened to protect her husband. 'Umar (RA) did not spare her either. He thrashed her so severely that her head got injured and began bleeding profusely.

Then both husband and wife said; "Yes we have accepted Islam and put our faith in Allah and His Messenger. Do whatever you wish to, but we cannot leave the true religion of Allah." Seeing his sister bleeding his anger subsided. He felt ashamed and kept quiet for a while and then said; "Ok show me whatever you were reading." Fatimah bin Khattab said; "We are afraid you will destroy it." 'Umar (RA) swore by his idols and said; "No, I will not destroy but return it after reading." Fatimah bint Khattab (RA) said; "We were reading the word of Allah. Only those who are clean can touch it.

Unless you take bath you cannot touch it." 'Umar (RA) asked for water and took bath. Fatimah bint Khattab (RA) then handed over the book to him. He began reading Surah Taha. He had read hardly a few verses when his

body shook and he said at once; "What a wonderful scripture is this!" Hearing this Khabbab (RA) came out of the room and said with great enthusiasm; "O 'Umar! Congratulations the prayer of the Prophet (SAWS) has been accepted in your favour. Only yesterday I had heard him pray, "O Allah! strengthen Islam either by Abu Hakam bin Hisham (Abu Jahal) or 'Umar bin Khattab". So, O 'Umar come towards Allah come towards Allah." 'Umar (RA) said; "Take me to Muhammad (SAWS)." Khabbab bin Arath (RA) informed him that the Prophet (SAWS) was in Dar al-Arqam with his companions.

'Umar (RA) with his sword tied to his waist straightaway reached Dar al-Arqam and knocked at the door. One of the companions of the Prophet (SAWS) peeped out and found 'Umar standing. He informed the Prophet (SAWS); "O Messenger of Allah 'Umar is standing outside with a sword. Don't know with what intention he has come." Hamzah (RA), the brave uncle of the Prophet (SAWS), who had accepted Islam only three days before, thundered; "Let him come in. It is alright if he has come with good intention, otherwise I will behead him with his own sword."

The Prophet (SAWS) allowed 'Umar (RA) to come in. When he entered the room, the Prophet clutched his outer garment and pulled it hard and said; "O son of Khattab with what intention you have come here." 'Umar (RA) said; "O Messenger of Allah! I have come to repose faith in Allah and His Messenger." Whereupon, the Prophet (SAWS) said loudly; "Allahu Akbar." Thus 'Umar

(RA) came into the fold of Islam and rose to become the second *Khalifah* (ruler) of Islamic State and left an indelible mark of excellence in governance that remains unmatched.

### **Migration (*Hijrah*):**

The Makkan society practised a very strong tribal order to the extent that none from other tribes could harm or harass anyone without the fear of severe and prompt retaliation. With 'Umar (RA) joining the ranks of Muslims Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) got respite and led comparatively peaceful life. But other Muslims without such tribal links faced continued harassment, which increased in intensity day by day.

On the advice of the Prophet (SAWS), Muslims began migrating in small numbers. Many of them left quietly to escape the attention of Makkan pagans who did not like Muslims slipping away like this and did everything to prevent it.

But 'Umar (RA) was not one of those. He decided to leave Makkah openly. Along with about 20 companions he challenged the pagan Makkan that he was leaving Makkah forever with relatives and friends. Anyone who desired to leave his progeny orphaned was welcome to resist outside Makkah. Needless to say none dared to face him. Included in these brave group was Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) also.



**Life in Madinah:**

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) became brother of Rafe'y bin Malik (RA) who had taken lead over others in accepting Islam and was first to invite the Prophet (SAWS) to move over to Yathrib for peaceful life and effective propagation of Islam.

**Battlefield Deeds:**

The first major war between the Makkan and Muslims took place in the second year after the migration at a place called Badr. Thereafter a series of wars and skirmishes took place in which Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) took part personally. He displayed exemplary valour and bravery in fighting. He took particular care to protect the Prophet (SAWS) whenever he saw danger to his person. It was no easy task to take care of a person in the heat of the battles of those days which were mostly hand to hand attacks on each other to kill the opponent, especially against larger forces that were well armed and seething with revenge when Muslims were not only small in number but also ill equipped.

Even after the death of the Prophet (SAWS) Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) continued to participate in the wars, which were continuing against the Byzantine in Syria. Through his courageous handling of awkward situations, on many occasions, he changed adversity into victory. Appreciating his potential, *Khalifah* Abu Bakr (RA) entrusted him the honour of commanding a mounted section in the battle of

Ajnadain where the Muslim armies were facing Byzantine armies four times their number. Byzantine dominated the field within a short time after the commencement of battle. Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) intervened with the mounted force under his command with ferocity inflicting heavy casualties on the Byzantine forcing them to retreat. He even pursued them up to their camp long distance and occupied it. Besides killing over three thousand Byzantine soldiers, the Muslims got good amount of war booty. For this display of courage and presence of mind he was entrusted with the command of mounted force in all future battles.

#### **Governorship of Damascus:**

After the conquest of Damascus, Abu 'Ubaidah (RA) appointed Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) as its governor. He accepted the post but got bored very soon as he was missing the action in the battlefield. He was back on the battlefield till the whole of Syria was conquered. He then retired to Madinah and led a quiet life.

#### **Martyrdom of *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA):**

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) was by the side of *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) during his last moments along with Abdullah bin 'Umar and Abdullah bin Abbas (RA). He had fallen victim to a murderous attack by a Persian slave and injured grievously.

Sensing the gravity of the situation, Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) suggested to *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) to nominate his successor whom the people will accept without hesitation. Accepting the wise suggestion, *Khalifah 'Umar* (RA) nominated six companions, whom he considered worthy and capable of shouldering the responsibility of a *Khalifah* of the rapidly expanding Islamic State. 'Umar (RA) deliberately did not include Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA), because he was related to him. He was however made an observer to oversee the smooth election of the next *Khalifah*.

#### **Life during *Khalifah 'Usman* (RA):**

Of the six nominated 'Usman (RA) succeeded to be the third *Khalifah* of Islamic State facing a formidable challenge thrown up by sudden departure of an exemplary ruler. Despite his sagacity and stature, he faced many trying situations resulting unfortunate incidents and many ups and downs. Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) kept away from all these happenings. Later he took up residence at Kufah where also he remained aloof from various incidents.

#### **Martyrdom of *Khalifah 'Usman* (RA):**

In 35 A.D 'Usman (RA) was martyred by a group of rebels. Hearing this Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) went to the Jame' Masjid of Kufah and addressed people; "O men! By Allah I found myself tied to pillars with my sisters by 'Umar (RA) for having accepted Islam. He was not a Muslim then. By the treatment you people (being

Muslims) have given to 'Usman (RA), bursting of 'Uhad would be justified."

After this sad incident he left Kufah, returned to Madinah but spent his remaining life in quiet seclusion till his death.

### **Death:**

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) lived on his farm in valley of Aqeeq near Madinah. He died there in 50 Hijrah. According to some, he died in 51 Hijrah and in 52 Hijrah according to some others. His mortal remains were brought to Madinah by his relative Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA). Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas (RA) gave him bath and Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA) performed the Salaat al-Janazah. He was buried in Jannat al-Baqie where *Khalifah* 'Usman (RA) was also buried.

### **Personal Details:**

Not much is found about his personality except that he was a tall person of light brown complexion and long thick hair. He was married to Fatimah bint Khattab (RA) [sister of 'Umar (RA)]. He later married others from whom all he had fourteen sons and twenty daughters.

His main source of income was a pension of 5,000 dirham per month granted to him by *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) in consideration of his exemplary deeds on the battlefields in the cause of Islam. It is also believed that he was

allotted a farm in the valley of Aqeeq, from which he earned some income. 'Usman (RA) is said to have allotted him a farm in Iraq also for similar reasons.

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) had embraced Islam in the very beginning and was a very keen learner of Qur'an. In early days he used to take lessons secretly from Khabbab bin Arath (RA). He may have also taken lessons from the Prophet (SAWS) himself at later stage.

Though he lived a long life but hardly narrated sayings of the Prophet (SAWS). Hence there are only a few narrations from him in the books of Ahadith.

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) was blessed with piety. He hated evil, right from his childhood. As mentioned earlier, his father Zaid was follower of the religion of Ibrahim (AS), which was monotheistic. He brought up his son in the same mold as a result he never liked idol worship. Therefore, when the Prophet (SAWS) called people to Islam, though still very young, he accepted it immediately.

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) loved Islam and adopted it in his life in letter and spirit and nothing could keep him away from it. His devotion enabled him to prevail upon *Khalifah* 'Umar (RA) to accept Islam. He did not hesitate for a moment when time arrived to leave home town of Makkah and migrate to Madinah.

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) was attached to the Prophet (SAWS) very dearly. He loved and adored him. This made him remain alert and extremely watchful of personal safety of the Prophet (SAWS) during the battles. He was always in the forefront and kept a constant vigil and ensured that no harm was done to him.

Sa'eed bin Zaid (RA) spent most of his time in worship and remembrance of Allah (SWT). He never approached anything that, he feared, will incur disapproval of the Prophet (SAWS) who was his sole role model.