Islamic movement to remain stationary. Islam today is exposed to a similar fate in all places and may any delay or shortcoming on the part of the Islamic movement to take the necessary steps will inevitably be to the detriment of Islam itself.

CHAPTER TWO

* SUFFERING IN THE LIFE OF THE DA'WAH AND THE DĀ'IYAH

Suffering is well-nigh an inescapable phenomenon for the Islamic movement of old and new, the reason being that Islam is a call to rebel. It is a call to rebel against the institutions of Jāhilī life in all its forms and shapes: against the customs of Jāhilīyyah against the thoughts of Jāhilīyyah and against the regimes and legislations of Jāhilīyyah. This characteristic, which distinguishes Islam, has made the Islamic movement more susceptible to suffering and, as a consequence, suffering in it has taken on a special significance which is not shared by any other sectarians or political movement.

Suffering is a Training and a Purging

Suffering is one of the most important factors of character building and selection in Islam. Theoretic training may have no value as long as it is not accompanied by hardship and trial. Likewise, the human preference for safety and aviodance of

* The Arabic word used here is mihnah محنة which means trial, test, ordeal, hardship, suffering etc.
(Translator)

danger many times requires confrontation with difficulties and adversities before immunity and strength could be developed, which would enable men to resist these turns of fortune.

Even faith is in need of suffering to probe its depths and measure its extents. Thus it is strong, firm faith which stands out in times of hardship. But weak faith is quickly exposed and overcome by suffering. Allah's words are true:

> "Of mankind is he who saith: We believe in Allah, but, if he be made to suffer for the sake of Allah, he mistaketh the persecution of mankind for Allah's punishment; and then, if victory cometh from thy Lord, will says: Lo! We were with you (all the while). Is not Allah but aware of what is in the bosoms of (His) creatures?
> "Verily Allah knoweth those who believe, and verily He knoweth the hypocrites."
>
> (Qurān 29:10-11)

Thus every calim must have its proof and faith is a claim which needs proof. Steadfastness in times of hardship is a manifestation of faith and it is also the proof of its existence and its firmness.

> "Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they say, we believe, and will not be tested with affliction?"
> "Lo! We tested those who were before them, thus Allah knoweth those who are sincere, and knoweth those who are feign."
>
> (Qurān 29:2-3)

Glimpses of the Suffering of the Prophets

Thus was the decree of Allah: that the truth should be in eternal conflict with falsehood, and everytime a ray of light emerges, the forces of darkness gather to extinguish it.

> "And when the slave of Allah stood up in prayer to Him, they crowded on him, almost stifling. Say (unto them, O Muhammad): I pray unto Allah only and ascribe unto Him no partner."
>
> (Qurān 72:19-20)

> "Fain would they put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light however much the disbelievers are averse."
>
> (Qurān 61:8)

Since the beginning of creation and the first of prophets, since the birth of good and evil, the struggle between the two has been violent and frighful. But the reality which keeps on recurring and which appears clear is that truth is always victorious and falsehood ever fading.

> "And verily Our word went forth of old unto Our bondmen sent (to warn) that they verily would be helped, and that Our host, they verily would be the victors."
>
> (Qurān 37:171-173)

Suffering in the Life of Abraham

The suffering which Abraham, the friend of Allah, had to undergo was only an episode in the

struggle which stretched across the centuries and had its roots in the depth of history. It emphasized the fact that the upholders of truth are always victorious and the upholders of falsehood bound to be vanquished.

Abraham grew up in a Jāhilī society, which disbelieved in all values and transgressed the laws of Allah. But his pure nature refused to flow with the tide, or be led by public opinion, or submit to the existing order of things. Abraham determined to resist Jāhilīyyah and fight it at all cost.

And suffering began in the life of this individual, who was devoid of any weapons. He had the truth alone to defend him. He announced to the society his belief in Allah and his disbelief in the gods they worshipped.

> "He said: see now that which ye worship, ye and your forefathers! Lo! they are (all) enemy unto me, save the Lord of the Worlds."
>
> (Qurān 26:75-77)

It is worthwhile for the Dā'iyah – every dā'iyah – to stop here for a while, reflecting upon the magnitude of the faith which had engulfed Abraham's heart: a lone man, without followers or supporters, weaponless and powerless, rejected even by his own relatives and parents. But how could truth bow to falsehood, or retreat in the face of threats and menaces?

Abraham's suffering intensifies. He is thrown into the fire and he submits willingly to the decree of Allah and prepares to meet it. From above

comes the call of Allah and the tested prophet listens to it in the heat of the blazing fire:

> "O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham!"
> "And they wished to set a snare for Him, but We made them the greater losers."
> "And We rescured him and Lot (and brought them) to the land which We have blessed for (all) peoples."
>
> (Qurān 21:69-71)

The tale of suffering faced by the father of the prophets continued to unfold, painting for the upholders of truth pictures of manliness and heroism. In the end, Allah declared him to be amongst His chosen and purified messengers.

> "And who forsaketh the religion of Abraham save him who befooleth himself? Verily We chose him in the world, and lo! in the Hereafter he is among the righteous."
>
> (Qurān 2:130)

Suffering in the Life of Moses

Moses' life was only a chain of pains and sorrows. In fact, suffering accompanied Moses as a baby when he was tossed about by the waves and engulfed in darkness. He felt it as he grew into ripe youthfulness and was pursued by the wrath of Pharaoh. His suffering doubled when, on the one hand, he became the target of Pharaoh's vengeance and, on the other, his own people grieved him with their offensiveness and foolishness.

"the injustice of close ones is more painful to a man than the blow of a sharpened sword."

Moses therefore had to repel Pharaoh's blows with one hand, and escape the snares of his people with the other. And this, I swear, is the worst kind of suffering.

A movement may be able to resist the most dangerous of external threats if its internal ranks are strong and united, but what can it do when internally it is divided and collapsing?

Moses was the man who undertook the responsibility of leading a people who were made subservient and docile by the oppression of the Pharaohs and the tyranny of despots. He was also sent with the responsibility of calling Pharaoh to the worship of Allah when he was at the peak of his power-drunkenness.

"Lo! Pharaoh exalted himself in the earth and made his people castes. A tribe among them he oppressed, killing their sons and sparing their women. Lo! he was of those who work oppression."

(Qurān 28:4)

Moses presses on, bearing all the burdens, trusting in Allah alone, confident of His help. On one occasion of human weakness Moses feels the pangs of fear inside of him as he is in the thick of the battle face to face with Pharaoh, his magicians and his henchmen. But heaven soon relieves him with help and fills his heart with faith and calm.

"And Moses conceives a fear in his mind. We said fear not! Lo! thou art the higher. Throw that which is in thy right hand! It will eat up that which they have made. Lo! that which they made is but a wizard's artifice, and a wizard shall not be successful to whatever point (of skill) he may attain."

(Qurān 20:67-69)

How many a hindrance arose to block Moses' path and close all exists but they quickly disappeared in front of determination and faith! The blessed march continued to blaze its trail across history in confidence and resoluteness.

How many an attempt did Qārūn make to beguile the people with his wealth and lure them away from Moses and his call! How often he tried to purchase their consciences and slander Moses with false accusations! But Allah was going to expose these secrets, and deliver Moses from these trials with more strength and resistance.

The Qurān ends the story of Moses and Pharaoh thus:

"And warnings came in truth the house of Pharaoh. "Who denied Our revelations, everyone. Therefore we grasped them with the grasp of the Mighty, the Powerful.

"Are your disbelievers better than those or have ye some immunity in the scriptures?

"Or say they: we are a host victorious?

"The hosts will all be routed and will turn and flee. "Nay, but the Hour (of Doom) is their

appointed tryst, "And the Hour will be more wretched and more bitter (than their earthly failure)."

(Qurān 54:41-46)

Suffering in the Life of Jesus

There is no doubt that Jesus had a vast reserve of patience and toleration. The harsh circumstances, the numerous plots, and the continous suffering which he went through are enough proofs of the greatness of his personality.

One of the things which made his circumstances even harsher was the variety of doubts raised concerning his birth, coupled with the stubbornness and rebelliousness his Da'wah met with. To judge the extent reached by this stubbornness and rebelliousness, it is sufficient to see that the vast amount of miracles which Jesus performed could not attract the amount of people or unite them as would be expected.

But Jesus did not give up or step back, nor did he even contemplate such a thing. He believed firmly that he was a prophet and that he had the duty to convey the message clearly. He was good-natured and clement, and he never let his enemies' foolishness push him to use force or adopt any of the unbelievers' methods.

One day he passed with his disciples by a village and he called the villagers to the guidance, reminding them of Allah and the Last Day. Their only respons was to abuse and swear at him but all

he did was to reply with a kind word and leave the place. When his disciples asked him about it he said: "averyone spends out of what he has."

When you listen to his teachings you can easily feel the greatness of his faith, his tenderness, his lofty character and all the other noble qualities which adorned his personality. He would often say to his disciples:

> "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
> "Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
>
> (Matthew, 5:11-12)

The Jews tries to belittle the effect of his Da'wah and hide the news of him from the people. But their efforts were aborted: the truth is manifest and Allah knocks the life out of falsehood by pitting the truth at it.

When the upholders of falsehood had tried all means and failed, there came a man to them, called Judas Iscariot, and he guided them to the hiding-place of Jesus and his disciples. But Jesus had known already of the conspiracy against him and he knew that Jewish spies were looking out of him. He took refuge with some of his disciples in a garden with the intention of spending the night.

During the night the Jews found out where he was and surrounded the place in wait for zero hour

when they would move in on him and execute their devilish plan.

As for Jesus, the spirit of Allah, he was being protected by Allah. So when the people made a move to get him, Allah's power caused him to disappear from their sight. Instead of him, they caught another man who strongly resembled him and whom Allah made speechless to protest. Thus the people did not know that the man they crucified was no other than Judas Iscariot, whom Allah caused to fall into his own snare. They killed him, thinking that they were killing Jesus, son of Mary.

> "....They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them; and lo! those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain. "But Allah took him up unto Himself. Allah is ever Mighty, Wise."
>
> (Qurān 4:157-158)

The Suffering of Islam in the Era of Prophethood

The suffering which Islam faced during this period was no less fierce than what the previous messages and messengers encountered. In fact, it might be more than any of them.

Islam has been a revolution against Jāhiliyyah from the first day: a revolution whose objective was to destroy the bases on which the Jāhilī society stood.

It is not in the nature of Islam to compromise with the corrupt environment or attempt to patch over the bad spots. Islam does not accept half-or quarter-solutions. It rejects compromise and patchwork. Its policy is to demolish and rebuild: demolition of Jāhilīyyah with all its sectors, and the erection of Islam with all its requirements.

Now, if this is the nature of the Da'wah which Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah undertook, then it is obvious that the powers of Jāhilīyyah would unite and defend their existence to their last breath. In fact, the pagans reached an underscribable extent in their defiance and war on Islam.

The War of Nerves

The forces of Jāhilīyyah developed various techniques of waging war on the prophet. They invented new means to strike at Islam and they rallied all their strength to impede the progress of the Qurānic march.

Firstly, they applied a mean psychological method aimed at shattering the prophet's nerves and destroying his high moral caurage. To this end they made violent attacks of scorn and ridicule upon him, and the Qurān replied to them in more than one passage.

> "And they say; We will not put faith in thee till thou cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us; "Or thou have a garden of date-palms and grapes and cause rivers to gush forth therein abundantly; "Or thou cause the heaven

to fall upon us piecemeal, as thou hast pretended, or bring Allah and the angels as a warrant; "Or thou have a house of gold; or thou ascend up into heaven, and even then we will put no faith in thine ascension till thou bring down for us a book that we can read."

(Qurān 17:90-93)

When these mean methods failed, the idolaters resorted to the invention of slanders and accusations against the prophet, and they spread them in all quarters to undermine the trust in him and block people from Allah's path.

Many a time they fabricated lies against him whom only yesterday they called trustworthy, and accused him of what he was not guilty of. How often they aimed their arrows and spears at the heart of the growing Islamic movement.

"Verily they have plotted their plot, and their plot is with Allah though their plot were one whereby the mountains should be moved."

(Qurān 14:46)

But in spite of its fierceness and harshness, the suffering only increased Muhammad in firmness and determination: firmness in dealing with the challenge, whatever be its magnitude, and determination to press on, whatever be the sacrifice.

One day, Al-Wālid ibn Al-Mughirah, a leader and tyrant of Jāhilīyyah, said:

"O assembly of Quraish, the season of pilgrimage is here and the Arab delegations will soon

arrive. They have heard of this affair concerning Muhammad. So let us come to one opinion about him, and do not differ among yourselves lest one of you belie the other."

They said,

"We'll say he is a soothsayer."

He said,

"No, by God, he is not a soothsayer. We have seen soothsayers and this is not like their mutterings or rhymes."

They said,

"We'll say he's possessed by a Jinn."

He said,

"He's not possessed. We've seen cases of possession but this is not like their strangulation, or quivering, or murmuring."

They said,

"We'll say he's a poet."

He said,

"He's not a poet. We know all kinds of poetry and this is not like it."

then he continued,

"the closest thing you can say about him is that he's a magician. He says a magical formula, and he causes division with it between two brothers, between husband and wife, and between a man and his clan."

Having agreed upon this they departed.

About Al-Wālid, Allah revealed some verses threatening him, so that he and others like him in all ages may take heed. Allah says:

> "Nay! For lo! he hath been stubborn to Our revelations. "On him I shall impose a fearful doom..."
>
> (Qurān 74:16-30)

Moreover, the Qur'an shows a number of scenes from Jāhilīyyah's challenge to the Islamic movement during the prophet's time.

> "Or say they: (he is) a poet, (one) for we may expect the accident of time?
> "Say (unto them): Expect (your fill)! Lo! I am with you among the expectant.
> "Do their minds command them to do this, or are they an outrageous folk?
> "Or say they: he hath invented it? Nay, but they will not believe.
> "Then let them produce speech the like thereof, if they are truthful."
>
> (Qurān 52:30-34)

Exposure, Injury and Assassination Attempts

The Meccan tyrants were not content with inventing lies and slanders against Islam and the Muslims. They were bold enough – time and time again – to attempt physical attacks on the prophet of Islam.

They were frustrated with the war of nerves and propaganda so they resorted to physical war on

the callers to Islam. Their malice exploded in them and they lit the fire of enmity and hatred everywhere to slake their thirst for revenge on those who had left the religion of their forefathers and disbelieved in Hubal and Al-Lāt.

One day the Meccan leaders got together and talked about Muhammad and his open challenge to their sanctities. They said:

> "We have not seen the like of this man who is testing our patience. He has disgraced our dreams, broken up society, and cursed our gods. We have been very patient with him. He has called our forefathers fools and found faults with our religion. He has destroyed our society."

While they were like that the messenger of Allah passed by them and they jumped on him as one man. They surrounded him from all sides, shouting,

> "Is it you who say so and so?"

The prophet replied with confidence and dignity:

> "Yes, it is I who say so."

He said it plainly and it was a blow to their pride and tyrannical air. Who knows what they did to him that day? When Abu Bakr found him they had almost beaten him to death. He rushed to defend him, saying:

> "Would you kill a man because he says his Lord is Allah?"

When all their attempts were frustrated, they held a conference in their clubhouse. The Muslims had already started their migration to Medina so they thought that is was an excellent opportunity to get rid of Muhammad in the absence of his companions.

When their plot was laid Allah caused it to be exposed.

> "And when those who disbelieve plot against thee (O Muhammad) to wound thee fatally, or to kill thee or to drive thee forth; they plot, but Allah (also) plotteth; and Allah is the best of plotters."
>
> (Qurān 8:30)

In the aftermath of the hijrah to Medina and Islam's victory over Jāhilīyyah in the Battle of Badr, Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah hired 'Umayr ibn Wahb secretly to go to Medina and assassinate the prophet and, in return, Ṣafwān would pray off his debts and take care of his children.

'Umayr arrived in Medina, sword at his waist. He entered the Masjid, where the prophet was. When the prophet saw him he said,

> "Come close, O'Umayr."

'Umayr approached and said,

> "May your morning be pleasant."

This was their way of greeting in Jāhilīyyah. The prophet said,

> "Allah has blessed us with a greeting better than yours, O 'Umayr – salaam – the greeting of the inhabitants of Paradise."

'Umayr said,

> "By God, O Muhammad, I am new to that."

The prophet said,

> "What brings you here, O 'Umayr?"
>
> "I have come for that prisoner in your hands, so be kind to him."
>
> "So why the sword around your waist?"
>
> "To hell with swords! What good did they do us?"
>
> "Tell me the truth. Why did you come?"
>
> "That's all I came for."

"No," said the prophet. "You and Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah sat in the club discussing the Meccans who were killed in Badr. You said, 'if not for my debts and children I would go out and kill Muhammad.' So Ṣafwān promised to take care of your debts and children if you would kill me for him. But Allah has come between you and that."

"I bear witness that you are the messenger of Allah," exclaimed 'Umayr. "O messenger of Allah, we used to call you a liar when you said that you received revelation from heaven. This is a matter which nobody excepting myself and Ṣafwān knew about. By Allah, I am sure that

only Allah could have told you about it. So praise be to Allah, Who has guided me to Islam, and brought me here." Then he declared the Shahādah.

Suffering in the Lives of the Companions

In the era of prophethood the Du'āt of Islam were subjected to the cruelest forms of torture and pain. Their only sin was that they believed in Allah and disbelieved in Ṭaghūt, and their crime was that they responded to the call of heaven and rose above the rabble.

This alone was enough to arouse the spite in the idolaters' hearts, make them lose their reason and drive them to maltreat the believers without mercy or respite.

The suffering was not restricted to one group or class of believers. It affected them all: men and women, young and old, freemen and slaves. Ibn Ishāq says:

> "Indeed the idolaters atacked all those who accepted Islam and followed the messenger of Allah. Every clan pounced upon the believers within it, confined them and tortured them with blows, hunger, thirst and the extreme heat of the Meccan desert."

Bilāl's Suffering

Bilal used to be dragged out into the midday heat by Umayyah ibn Khalaf and thrown unto the

open sand. A huge rock would be placed on his chest and Umayyah would threaten him, saying,

> "You'll remain like this until you die, or disbelieve in Muhammad, or worship Al-Lāt and Al-'Uzzā.

But Bilāl would only repeat the eternal Islamic call: One, One.

The Suffering of Yāsir's Family

Yasir's family – father, mother and children – used to be dragged out by Banū Makhzūm and tortuned in the scorching heat of Mecca and their bodies would be branded with red-hot iron.

Yāsir, the father, was too old to bear the torture. He succumbed and died. Sumayyah, the mother, spoke rudely to Abū Jahl and this enemy of Allah pierced her with a spear. She was the first Muslim to be martyred.

The Suffering of 'Uthmān ibn Maẓ'ūn

When 'Uthmān saw the pain and torture his brothers in faith were subjected to while he moved about freely under the protection of Al-Walīd ibn Al-Mughīrah, he said:

> "By Allah, it is a great defect within me to have the protection of one of those idolaters."

He went to Al-Walid and relieved him of his promise of protection, saying,

> "After today I would not like to seek anybody's protection besides Allah's."

He then addressed the idolaters in a manner which annoyed them and Lubayd ibn Rabī'ah got up and punched his eye, which turned black and blue. Al-Walīd who was looking on, said,

"By God, O nephew of mine, your eye was not in need of this. You were under strong protection."

'Uthman replied,

"Nay, By Allah, my good eye, needs the same treatment for Allah's pleasure. I am under the protection of One who is more powerful than yourself, O Walīd."

Then he chanted these lines of poetry:

If my eye for the Lord's pleasure, was struck by a disbeliever's hands, who has strayed from the guidance. Then the Beneficient compensated it with His blessing, And whoever the Beneficient is pleased with, O people, is fortunate. Though you say, I have erred and am foolish. To follow the way of the messenger, Muhammad, All I want by that is Allah, and the Truth is our religion, In spite of who attacks or oppresses us.

Thus did the band of believers continue to push their way forward without fear of any obstacle and offering up martyr after martyr in the path of Allah. The days rolled by, as bleak as ever, and more suffering was heaped upon them.

But they freed themselves of slavery to this world and its desires, and they could find ni happiness save in obedience to Allah, and they saw Jihād as the means to achieve martyrdom and a gateway to Allah's paradise and pleasure.

"Jubilant (are they) because of that which Allah hath bestowed upon them of His bounty rejoicing for the sake of those who have not joined them, but are left behind: that there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. They rejoice because of favour from Allah and kindness, and that Allah wasteth not the wage of the believers."

(Qurān 3:170-171)

A Sample of the Martyrs of Islam in the Prophetic Era

Many an example did the prophetic era witness of staunch heroes who enriched history and the human race. We need only choose one of them – Khubayb ibn Adī – to see what effect faith had on the gearts of these people.

Khubayb was captured on his way from Medina to 'Udal and Al-Qārrah, where he was sent on a Da'wah mission by the prophet. The bandits took him to Mecca and sold him to Ḥujr ibn Abī Ihāb, of the Banū Tamīm tribe, who had lost his father in Badr and would kill him in revenge.

On the day appointed for his execution, the idolaters carried him to At-Tan'im, a place east of Mecca, to crucify him. He said to them:

"Will you let me pray two Rak'ah?"

They agreed and he did so. When he finished he turned to the people and said.

"By Allah, I would have prayed longer but you might think I am doing so to postpone death."

As he was being raised unto the wood, the idolaters said:

"Give up Islam and well release you."

He said,

"No, by Allah, I would not love to give up Islam for all that the world contains."

"Give it up, O Khubayb."

"No, I will never."

"By Al-Lāt, if you don't we'll kill you."

"My being killed for Allah's pleasure is very little."

They turned his face away from the Qiblah, and he said:

"If you turn my face away from the Qiblah, then Allah says, 'Wherever you turn there you'll find the face of Allah.'"

Then he said,

"O Allah, I see only the face of an enemy. O Allah there is no-one here to convey my salaam to your messenger, so you convey it for me."

The prophet was at that time amongst his companions in Medina. Suddenly his attention was drawn away, then he said:

"That was Jibrīl. He was conveying salaam to me from Khubayb."

Forty of the idolaters approached Khubayb, spears in their hands. They said:

"This is the one who killed your fathers in Badr."

Khubayb said,

"O Allah, we have conveyed the message of Your messenger. So convey to him what is being done to us. O Allah, encircle their numbers, and kill everyone of them without exception."

At this point, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān, who was amongst them, threw himself to the ground in fear of Khubayb's supplication; Hakīm ibn Ḥazām fled and Jubayr ibn Mut'im hid himself.

When the spears began to tear at his body, he turned to the Qiblah, and said:

"Praise be to Allah whi has turned my face to the Qiblah which He chose for Himself, for His messenger and for the believers."

Then he turned to the people and recited these famous verses of his:

The allies have gathered around me and incited their tribes and everyone whom they could gather,
They have gathered their sons and womenfold and brought them near a tall, formidable tree-trunk.
To Allah I complain of my estrangement then my agony and all that the allies have gathered for my slaughter.
O Master of the Throne, grant me patience for what they intend to do me.
They have cut my flesh into pieces and my hopes are gone
And they have given me the choice of Kufr or death
And my eyes are weeping but not in despair
And why should I beware of death when I have to die?
But I do fear the torment of a blazing fire
And that for the pleasure of Allah, and if He wills,
He would bless the torn up limbs of my corpse.
So I care not if I am killed a Muslim
On what side, in Allah's way, I fall.

The enemies of Allah continued to tear his body to pieces with their spears but he did not cease saying,

"There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger," until he breathed his last, and his pure soul flew upwards to complain to Allah of the injustice of the oppressors.

Suffering in the Life of the Tābi'īn

The Ṣahabāh passed away and their disciples took their places. In this period of history we see new kinds of suffering. In this stage forces from within and without support each other to destroy Islam, and power falls into the hands of oppressive tyrants who treat the believers most callously.

Al-Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf

In the year 75 A.H. Al-Hajjāj becomes ruler of Iraq and this Islamic country witnesses black days in his reign. Just like any other tyrant, all his efforts are directed to subjugating the people to his dictatorship and establishing his authority even at the expense of their lives.

Al-Hajjāj was a trial and tribulation for Islam and the Muslims. He sullied Islam by claiming to be one of its followers, and he insulted the faith by asserting his authority in its name. He silenced all voices and bared his sword on anybody who refused to submit to him.

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr

It is a law of nature that for every tyrant Allah raises up men who have no fear of tyranny. He fashions them in a special way and gives them endless courage to defend His Path.

One such man was Sa'īd ibn Jubayr. He was one of those whose aim was not to follow their desires, who considered the wordly life as being of little value and who dedicated themselves to Allah.

When Al-Hajjāj decided to kill him he sent soldiers to fetch him. As he entered Al-Hajjāj asked him his name. He replied:

"Sa'id ibn Jubayr."

Al-Hajjaj said:

"No. You're Shaqī ibn Kusayr."*

"My mother knew my name better than you."

"You and your mother are unfortunate."

"Someone else, and not you, is aware of the unsean."

"I'll change your world into a blazing fire."

"If I knew you could do that I would take you as my god."

"Then what do you say about Muhammad?"

"Prophet of mercy and imām of guidance, peace be upon him."

"What's the matter with you that you don't laugh?"

"How can one laugh who is created from clay, while clay is consumed by fire?"

"So why do we laugh then?"

"The hearts are not alike."

* Al-Hajāj is punning with his name in order to ridicule him Literally, Sa'id means "fortunate" and Jubayr means "mended" while Shaqī means "unfortunate" and Kusayr means "broken".

Al-Hajjāj thought of another way to subdue and tempt him. He ordered gold, wealth, pearls and rubies to be heaped in front of him. But how could these temptations find a way into a heart occupied by the love of Allah and indifference to worldly things?

Sa'īd said,

"If you have collected these things to ransom yourself from the frightfulness of the Day of Judgement then you have made a mistake. A single shock will make a nursing mother forget the baby she is suckling. And there is no good in something accummulated to satisfy worldly desires excepting that which is pure and wholesome."

Al-Hajjāj then ordered music to be played, trumpets to be blown and drums to be beaten. Sa'id wept.

Al-Hajjāj said,

"What make you weep? Is it the joy?"

"No, it is the sadness. The trumpets reminded me of a great day when trumpets will be blown. The drums come from a tree which was cut down without just cause and the strings are the interesting of sheep who will be raised with you on the Day of Judgement."

"Woe be upon you, O Sa'id."

"Woe be upon the person who is removed from heaven and placed in hell."

"Choose, O Sa'id, in what manner you want me to kill you."

"Choose for yourself, Hajjāj. By Allah, in whatever way you kill me, Allah will kill you in the same way on the Day of Judgement."

"Do you want me to forgive you?"

"If there is any forgiveness then let it be from Allah.
As for you, there will be no amnesty or excuse for you."

"Take him away and kill him!"

When they took him out of the door he laughed. Al-Hajjāj was informed of this and he ordered him back. He said,

"What made you laugh?"

"I was surprised at your boldness with Allah and Allah's clemency with you."

"Kill him!"

"I have turned my face to the One Who created the heaven and the earth with a pure nature and I am not one of the idolaters."

"Tie him away from the Qiblah."

"Wherever you turn, there you'll find the face of Allah."

"Throw him on his face."

"From it We created you and into it We return you and from it We shall raise you up again."

"Slay him!"

"Well, I bear witness that there is no god but Allah Who is alone and has no partner, and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger. Take this from me until you meet me on the Day of Judgement."

Then Sa'id called on Allah, saying,

"O Allah, do not let him kill anyone after me?

Then they killed him and fifteen days after that Al-Hajjāj died.

Suffering Between Yesterday and Today

Thus were revealed the features of the struggle between truth and falsehood as history unrolled. It is a single picture with a number of scenes – the times and the personalities change but the reality remains the same.

It is the picture of the supremacy of faith in all times and the sovereignty of truth in all ages... models of manhood moulded by the ideology of Islam. It is the unique production of the prophetic school in every epoch – the flame of life, the elixir of life.

This religion of the Islam has proved conclusively by the fruitfulness of its long history that it has the unique capacity of creating manliness and valour in its people.

Hasan Al-Banna, the Leader and the Martyr

In the beginning of the 20th century the Islamic Ummah was honoured with the appearance of

one of its hereos in the modern age – a man called Hasan Al-Bannā,

Hasan Al-Bannā was born in a society ruled by a clique of landlords. Innovation and superstition were widespread in it. It was a society which contained all the characteristics, customs and traditions of pre-islamic Jāhilīyyah. This society was ravaged by British colonialism, which destroyed its moral and material strength. In such a society, Hasan Al-Banna raised a resounding cry which awoke the sleepers, drew the attention of the negligent and stirred the feelings of the believers.

The echoes of this cry reverberated in all corners and was responded to by hundreds of people of different nationalities. Soon it was proclaimed as a worldwide Islamic movement.

Nevertheless, Hasan Al-Bannā was ever-vigilant of the trials and sufferings time had in store for the movement. From the inception, he would prepare the Du'āt to face all eventualities. he would intimate to them in his private and public lectures that "the world will unite to overpower you: they will attack your means of sustenance, and the prisons will open their doors to welcome you and give you refuge."

One day he addressed them, saying:

"Assuredly ye will be tried in your property and in your persons, and ye will hear much wrong from those who were given the Scripture before you, and from the idolaters. But if ye

persevers and ward off (evil), then that is of the steadfast heart of things."

(Qurān 3:186)

This is the Law of Allah concerning the vanguard of the Da'wah, those who believe in it and those who strive for it. Allah tests them in their persons, food and children as well as by injury, plots, false accusations, lies and attacks from their rivals and opposers and from those who have little understanding of the reality of the message.

"Thou wilt not find for Allah's way of treatment any substitute, nor wilt thou find for Allah's way of treatment aught of power to change."

(Qurān 35:43)

Allah never sent a prophet or messenger without goodness, and guidance, and the straight path, to lead mankind out of the darknesses into the light by the permission of their Lord, unto the Path of the Mighty, the Owner of Praise.

This is what Noah brought, and what Abraham was sent with, and what Moses called unto, and what Jesus proclaimed. Muhammad preached the self-same realities too. May Allah's peace and blessing be on them all.

That is the law of Allah which never changes,

"Even so have We appointed unto every prophet an opponent from among the guilty; but Allah sufficeth for a Guide and Helper."

(Qurān 25:31)

In one of his informal gathering with the Ikhwān, Hasan Al-Bannā said to them:

"Our leader 'Umar came to me in a dream warning me at the top of his voice, 'you'll be killed, O Hasan!' I awoke and praised Allah then slept again. He came a second time saying the same thing. Then I got up and prayed Tahajjud until the dawn."

Or course, the enemies of Islam had hardly felt the strength and threat of the Islamic movement on their existence than they began scorching it with the fire of their plots and malice.

And on the 12th February 1949, King Farouk's henchmen executed their terrible crime on the orders of the British. Hasan Al-Bannā was killed in broad daylight and in the widest street of Cairo by the bullet of the tyrants and imperialists. He died at a time when the Islamic Ummah was most in need of him and others like him.

The Vanguards of the Da'wah Pay the Price

The suffering of the Du'āt intensifies. The leadership of the Ummah gets into the hands of tyrannical rulers who oppress the believers: they kill the men and make the women widows, and they maltreat them in the most abominable ways.

But it is only right for the Da'wah to pay the price – and pay it generously with blood, victims and martyrs. It is not wortly of a group of people to give up once they understood the responsibility

before undertaking it and estimated the consequences before making the move.

Plots were hatched against Islam from both within and without. The forces of the East and West were mobilised to destroy it, and for that purpose men, property, tongues, pens, book and broadcasting stations were recruited.

The pioneers of Jāhiliyyah fear only Islam's threat on their leadership. They realise that the victory of the Islamic movement would mean the uncovering of their plots and schemes and, consequently, their removal from the scene of deception and misguidance.

In the manner of Hasan Al-Bannā a series of martyrs followed one another. Troops of Mujahideen marched past, shaking the thrones of the tyrants and sending tremors through the hearts of the oppressors.

In the same manner passed away the scholars and jurist, 'Abdul Qādir 'Audah, author of "The Penal Code in Islam," lofty in his faith and faithful to Islam.

In the same manner passed away the pioneer of modern Islamic thought, Sayyid Qutb, author of "In the Shade of the Quran" and "Milestones," leaving behind him the echo of his wonderful Qasidah like the wedding song of a new martyr.

"My brother, if you shed tears for me
And wet my grave with them in humality,
Then light the candle for them with my remains
And march with them toward eternal glory.

My brother, if I die we'll meet our loved ones
For the gardens of my Lord are prepared for us,
And their birds have fluttered around us,
So blessed are we in the homes of eternity.
My brother, the armies of darkness will be swept away,
And there will shine in the world a new dawn.
So let your soul go after its desires
You will see the dawn staring at us from afar."

It is a single path which is filled with the footprints of martyrs. It is a single desire which burns in the hearts of the believers: "Death in the way of Allah is our highest aspiration."

How Can We Face Suffering?

The islamic movement needs to be stabilised, since it is groaning under these pressures and challenges. It must, therefore, move on sure guidance and not let its march be swayed by emotions and feelings.

The Islamic movement is called upon to face this open war on Islam and the Muslims by proper moulding of its youth and adults and by complete preparation. Then it must carefully plan every step it takes.

The Islamic movement of today must imbed in the minds of its good elements and Du'āt the spirit of spending and sacrifice by placing before them, from time to time, responsibilities and missions which will in time accustom them to boldness,

sacrifice and initiative and which will uproot from them the qualities of weakness, fear and defeatism.

The Islamic movement is called upon to take into consideration, in the fields of training and moulding, the heavy responsibilities which await the 'Da'wah and its workers. It should adopt that path which would prepare them for a life of struggle, cohesiveness and jihad, while keeping them away those things which would attract them to a life of ease and passiveness.

Islam in this stage is in need of those elements who are mobile, bold and ripe. As for those elements who are sluggish and dimwitted, they are not up to the standard to be able to participate in the battle which Islam is waging at present.

So let the capable elements come forward to take up the responsibility, and let the fit elements come into the battlefield.

The messenger of Allah spoke the truth when he said:

> "May Allah shower His mercy on the man who knows his limits and stops there."