

`Amr ibn Hisham: Abu Jahl (part 1) **“The Pharaoh of this Ummah”**

Abu Jahl, Amr ibn Hisham was from the nobles of Quraysh; the same tribe as the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). He was the flag bearer of disbelief and hatred towards Islam and Muslims. His hatred and enmity as to such an extent that the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) gave him the title of: ‘THE PHARAOH OF THIS UMMAH’. Let us look deeper into the life of this man and see what made from those who went astray.

Son of a Very Generous and Hospitable Nobleman

He was the son of Hisham ibn Mughirah who was known as being one of the most generous and respected elders of the Quraysh tribe. He was from the Banu Makhzum family and had great name and fame in all of Arabia for his generosity and hospitality of guests. He was also from amongst those elders to whom people turned to for solving issues and deciding their affairs. He was so respected and honored that the day of his death was made a public day of mourning and remembrance.

It was from in this generous and noble household that Abu Jahl was born and raised. And it was from this source that he picked up some of the characteristics of generosity and giving. But unfortunately, his motive for generosity and giving was a bit different. He wished to be the talk of the town and gain a position and status amongst the people. He wished that people should point to his direction and admire and praise him saying, ‘This is the great nobleman of Quraysh!’

The Hospitality of Abu Jahl

Two people from the tribe of Banu Sulaym narrate an incident regarding the hospitality of Abu Jahl. They say we were travelers to Makkah and had no food or provisions with them. They could not seem to find any inn or place to eat or stay. When they entered the Haram, they noticed groups of people coming and going to the same direction. They asked as to where all the people were going to. So the people replied that they were all headed to have meals. So the two men from Banu Sulaym followed the crowd in hope of food. They reached a large property with a big, luxurious house. The house had two great doors in the entrance and inside there was a man sitting on a bed with a cane in his hand, directing the people and inviting them in. There were wide table spreads stretched out with meat and fresh bread on them. They ate to their fill until they just could not eat any more. When they were leaving the house, they saw many camels for loading at the door, so they asked what the camels were there for. They were told that the camels were for delivering more meat and bread at the order of the master. So they asked who the master of the house was. They were told that he was, `Amr ibn Hisham: ABU JAHL.

Story Behind the Name

Abu Jahl means 'father of ignorance'. But the question is how he got the name and what the story behind this title is. It was well-known amongst the idolaters of Quraysh that Abu Jahl had the title of ABUL-HAKAM, the father of wisdom. This was what he was referred to in the special assemblies of the senior and elders of his tribe. The rule of these private assemblies was that a person had to be at least forty years old to be allowed to attend. But Abul-Hakam was already attending these assemblies when he was hardly thirty-years old! This was only because of his deep wisdom, intelligence and understanding. Due to this, the elders of Quraysh trusted his opinion

and relied on him as an elite member of their assembly.

But when Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was chosen as the Messenger of Allah and sent to guide his people and the world from darkness to light, he became known as Abu Jahl: the father of ignorance.

This title was given to him by the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) due to his hatred, enmity and cruelty towards the message of Islam and the Muslims. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) disliked that a good title should be given to a wicked person and an evil title should be given to righteous person.

The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, "It is only Allah who is the possessor of infinite wisdom and justice (and no one else is entitled to this name). To Him returns the final decision of all affairs." (Abu Da'ud)

The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) also said, "He who calls Abu Jahl (the father of ignorance) – Abul-Hakam (father of wisdom), then he has made a serious mistake. He should seek forgiveness from Allah for this." (Ansabul-Ashraaf)

- **We learn from all of this that name and fame for the sake of worldly benefit and reputation is an evil quality that Allah dislikes.**
- **We learn that all actions should be done for the sake of Allah.**
- **We learn that wicked deeds deprives us having a good name.**
- **We learn that wealth and nobility cannot benefit us if we do not have faith and righteousness.**

