

Death and Burial of the Holy Prophet

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In Sahih Muslim, there is a famous tradition narrated by Ibn 'Abbas saying: Three days before the Prophet's death, 'Umar ibn alKhattab and other companions were present by his side. The Prophet said, "Now let me write something for you whereby you shall not go astray after me." 'Umar said, "The Prophet is overcome by illness; you have the Qur'an, the Book of Allah, which is sufficient for us.

'Umar's statement caused a furor among those present. Some were saying that the Prophet's command should be obeyed so that he might write whatever he desired to write for their guidance. Others sided with 'Umar. When the tension and uproar intensified, the Prophet said, "Get away from me!" Therefore, Ibn 'Abbas used to say, "It was a miserable, absolutely miserable, occurrence that the conflict of opinion and noise made by the people came in the way of the Prophet's writing a will and, because of it, the Prophet could not leave behind what he wanted to put on paper."

Sa'eed ibn Jubayr's narrative is thus recorded in Sahih Bukhari: Ibn 'Abbas said, "What a miserable day it was that Thursday!," and he wept so bitterly that the pebbles lying there became wet with his tears. Then he continued, When on a Thursday, the Prophet's sickness intensified, he said, 'Get me the things to write with so that I may write something by which you may never be misguided after me.' People differed and quarreled over the matter, although quarreling in the presence of the Prophet was unseemly. People said that the Prophet was talking in delirium. The Prophet cried out, 'Go away from me! I am more sound than you are.'"

It is stated in Rawdatul-ahbab that the Prophet said to Fatimah, "Bring your sons to me." Fatimah brought Hasan and Husain to the Prophet. Both of them greeted the Prophet, sat by his side and wept at witnessing the agony of the Prophet in such a manner that the people who saw them weeping could not hold their tears. Hasan rested his face upon the Prophet's face and Husain rested his head upon the Prophet's chest.

The Prophet opened his eyes and kissed his grandsons lovingly, enjoining the people to love and respect them. In another tradition, it is stated that the companions who were present there, having seen Hasan and Husain weep, wept so loudly that the Prophet himself could not hold his tears at their grief. Then he said, "Call my beloved brother 'Ali to me." 'Ali came in and sat near the head of the Prophet. When the Prophet lifted his head, 'Ali moved to the side and,

holding the Prophet's head, he rested it, on his own lap. The Prophet then said: "O 'Ali! I have taken a certain amount from so and so Jew for the expenditure on Usamah's army. See that you repay it. And, O 'Ali! You will be the first person to reach me at the heavenly reservoir of al-Kawthar. You will also be given a lot of trouble after my death. You should bear it patiently and when you see that the people prefer the lust of this world, you should prefer the hereafter."

The following is quoted in Khassa' is of Nasa' i from Ummu Salamah: "By Allah, the closest person [to the Prophet] at the time of the Prophet's death was 'Ali. Early on the morning of the day when he was going to die, the Prophet called 'Ali who had been sent out on some errand. He asked for 'Ali three times before his return. However, 'Ali came before sunrise. So, thinking that the Prophet needed some privacy with 'Ali, we came out. I was the last to be out; therefore, I sat closer to the door than the other women. I saw that 'Ali lowered his head towards the Prophet and the Prophet kept whispering into his ears (for sometime).

Therefore, 'Ali is the only person who was near the Prophet till the last."

Al-Hakim, moreover, remarks in his Mustadrak that:

"the Prophet kept confiding in 'Ali till the time of his death. Then he breathed his last."

Ibn al-Wardi points out that the persons who were responsible for giving the Prophet his funeral bath were:

"Ali, Abbas, Fadhl Qutham, Usamah and Shaqran. Abbas, Fadhl and Qutham turned the body.

Usamah and Shaqran poured water, and Ali washed the body."

Tarikh al-Khamis adds the following:

"Abbas, Fadhl and Qutham turned the body from one side to the other as Usamah and Shaqran poured water over it. All of them were blind-folded."

Ibn Sa'd narrates the following in his Tabaqat:

"Ali narrated that the Prophet had so enjoined that if anyone except himself (Ali) had given him the funeral bath, he would have gone blind."

'Abdul-Barr, in his book Al-Isti'ab, quotes 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas as saying: "Ali had four such exceptional honors to his credit as none of us had:

- Of all the Arabs and non-Arabs, he was the first to have the distinction of saying prayers with the Prophet
- In all the battles in which he participated, he alone held the Prophet's banner in his hand
- When people fled from the battle-fields leaving the Prophet alone, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib stood firmly by the Prophet's side
- Ali is the only person who gave the Prophet his funeral bath and lowered him in his grave.

Both Abul-Fida' and Ibn al-Wardi indicate that the Prophet died on Monday and was buried the next day, i.e. Tuesday. And in one tradition, it is said that he was buried in the night between Tuesday and Wednesday. This appears to be more factual. But according to some others, he was not buried for three days after his death.

In Tarikh-al-Khamis, however, it is mentioned that Muhammad ibn Ishaq stated the following:

"The Prophet died on Monday and was buried on the night of Wednesday."

Estimating his age, Abul-Fida' writes:

"Although there is a difference of opinion about the Prophet's age, yet calculated from famous traditions, he appears to have lived for 63 years."

The Holy Prophet departed from this world on the 28th of Safar, 11 A.H. Thus ended the life of the Final Prophet sent.

**as a witness and a bringer of glad tidings, a warner and a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and a lamp that gives light (Qur'an, 33:45-46)
the one who was sent as a mercy and blessing to mankind (Qur'an, 21:10)**

He left the temporal world, but the message he brought to mankind is eternal.

Now has come unto you light from Allah and a clear book whereby Allah guides him who seeks His pleasure unto the paths of peace. He brings them out of the darkness into the light by His decree and guides them unto a straight path. (Qur'an, 5:16)

A Book which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad!) so that you may thereby bring forth mankind from darkness unto the light, by the permission of their Lord, unto the path of Him, the Exalted in power, the One worthy of all praise. (Qur'an, 14:2)

O people! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord which is a healing for what is in the breasts, and a guidance and mercy for the believers. (Qur'an, 10:57)

Accept what the Messenger gives you and stay away from whatever he forbids you. (Qur'an, 59:7)