



THE ENDURANCE OF HAZRAT BILAAAL

Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh

Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was the Abyssinian slave of Umayya ibn Khalaf, one of the most violent of the polytheists. Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) had a heart of pure light, but Umayya ibn Khalaf was an implacable enemy of Islam and of the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

The time came when Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) received the blessing of faith. Umayya ibn Khalaf found out about it, so he started taking his slave out into the desert and subjecting him to appalling tortures in the hope of forcing him to abandon the religion of Islam. He would make Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) lie down on the blazing hot sand at the time when the sun was at its height, pile heavy stones on top of him and beat him with a spiked club. As if this was not enough, he would not even stop at kicking his feet and beating him to the point of exhaustion, but went on to stick thorns in his blessed body till blood oozed from the wounds.

In spite of all this, the only sound uttered by Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) were the names of his loved ones, "Ya Ahad! Ya Ahmad!" The heart of the venerable Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was so full of their love and affection that the pricking of the thorns and the severity of the beating did nothing to diminish his ardent faith. Quite the contrary, the more diabolical his suffering, the more painful his agony, the greater was his love and affection towards the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and the stronger his faith became. Despite such monstrous cruelty and torment, Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) never once yielded to Ibn Khalaf, for he had sworn to sacrifice body and soul in the cause of the Truth and for the sake of the love of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

As for the unbelieving Umayya, every day he would bury Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) in the sand saying, "You black slave, unless you give up this religion of Islam, I am going to treat you to beatings far worse than this; I'll handle you so roughly that I may end up killing you." Those cries of, "O One! O Ahmad!" made Umayya ibn Khalaf lose all self-control. But one day those cries of his Beloveds reached the ears of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), who happened to be passing by. Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) walked closer to where the sound was coming from and saw that Umayya's slave, though worn out by the torture of his heartless master, was consoling himself by persistently pronouncing the noble names of Allah and His Blessed Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Tears sprang to his blessed eyes. This servant of Allah was being cruelly tortured by his master, and all because he was uttering the name of Allah and His Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Not long afterwards, Hazrat Abu Bakr had occasion to pass that way again. The sight of yet another beating session, and the sorrowful groans of "Ya Ahad! Ya Ahmad!" were more than he could bear. He came running to Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and said, "O Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Bilaal is consumed with the fire of your love. The polytheists have tortured him, flayed his bare body with thorny branches and left him bleeding all over. Yet while the treacherous Umayya is beating him, the blessed Bilaal says nothing but "Allah is One; the Messenger is Ahmad". Submitting to the divine decree, he endures that agony with patience and trust. We must buy Bilaal and pay his master any price he may ask, for we must save him at all costs."

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) then said, "O Abu Bakr, act as my agent and pay half the price on my behalf, I shall owe you the money. Go now and purchase Bilaal." Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) responded at once, "In this matter I shall spend whatever I can." He went straight to Umayya's house and knocked at his door. As soon as the unbelieving tyrant appeared, the venerable Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) lashed him with his tongue saying, "You enemy of Allah, why do you inflict such beatings on this innocent man of Allah, Bilaal? You enemy of Allah, what kind of envy and animosity is this? What kind of enmity is this? You are beating a friend of Allah, yet if you had faith, sincerity and respect even for your own religion your conscience would not let you be so cruel to a person true to his beliefs. You would have some compassion for him. But it is well known that you have no loyalty even to your own religion, no faith in your own idols." The cruel Umayya merely replied, "Since you have so much compassion, would you buy this slave if I offered to sell him to you?" Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) said, "If you will sell me this Sultan you disparagingly call a slave, I shall make numerous prostrations of gratitude to Allah."

Now, Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) had a slave who was very handsome and strong, but whose heart was sour and his disposition mean. He offered Umayya an exchange and brought this slave to show him. It struck Umayya ibn Khalaf as odd that Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) should be so willing to part with this handsome slave, who was obviously a strong worker, so he demanded a sum of money in addition. Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) therefore paid out two hundred pieces of silver along with the handsome slave. Having purchased Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), he then emancipated him from slavery for the Pleasure of Allah.

As Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) was leaving with Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), he heard Umayya laughing behind his back as if he thought he had cheated him. He turned and asked, "What reason have you to laugh like that?" But Umayya went on laughing as he said, "You have swapped this fine fellow for an ugly brute who is not worth two cents in my opinion, and you've paid me cash into the bargain. I've cheated you right down the line, that is why I'm laughing." To this, Siddiq-e-Akbar (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) replied, "You stupid fool! Just like a child you have swapped a precious jewel for a couple of walnuts. I do not look at his outward appearance. I look at his essence, at the reality of him. You can see only his shape and colour, his external form. But I would gladly give all I possess to ransom Bilaal, for he is in truth a matchless jewel, a priceless gem. His worth and value are known only to Allah and His Beloved Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). In short, no amount of money could represent his true price. When you look at it like that, I got Bilaal from you very cheaply. To Allah be Praise, that this honour should fall to my lot." Crushed by these words, the unbelieving Umayya sighed, "Alas! What have I done? If only I had asked for more money or goods!"

Taking Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) by the hand, Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) led him joyfully into the presence of the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Rescued from the prison of pain, Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) had reached the beauty of Allah Ta'ala's Beloved Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). No words can describe the pure delight in which he was immersed, now that he had attained the radiant presence of the Beloved of Almighty Allah and won the attention of the greatest of creation, the bearer of the Divine Message, our Beloved Master Muhammad Mustafa (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) showered Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) with affection because of the service he had performed. "O Abu Bakr," he said, "As I told you I will owe you the money for Bilaal's ransom." But Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) replied, "O Beloved

Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Bilaal and I are slaves at your court. One of your slaves bought another of your slaves and set him, who was longing for your beauty, free. As for this servant of yours, I have no wish whatsoever to be liberated from your service.”

Subhaanallah! What love the Blessed Sahaabah had for Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that they would sacrifice anything for his sake!

We learn from this incident that no matter how much calamities we are faced with, if we endure them with patience, we will definitely earn the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and His Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), and our reward will be beyond comprehension. We also learn that no matter what we are faced with, we should never compromise our love for Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to follow in the footsteps of Hazrat Bilaal (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) and to endure calamities with patience, and may He in His Infinite Mercy make us the slaves of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Ameen.

[Compiled from Irshad: Wisdom of a Sufi Master by Shaikh Muzaffer Al Jerrahi]