Tragedy of Thursday; The Pen and Paper Incident

Every Muslims loves the Prophet (SAW) in their own way, with various emotional levels. Some will kill in order to protect the Prophet's honor and some will take out过程ions.

When cartoons published by Prophet (SAW) were published in Scandinavia, I remember the people in Pakistan showed their anger and disgust by damaging public property and taking out processions, shouting anti-Denmark slogans. This was their dislike, their disgust, their show of love for the Prophet (SAW), their dissociation from the cartoons, their Tabbara against those who disrespected the Prophet (SAW).

Yet when Shias show their disgust towards the people who disrespected the Prophet (SAW) during his very life time, Shias are highly criticized. Why I ask? Were the people around the Prophet (sahabis) allowed to disrespect the Prophet (SAW) or are the Shias not allowed to love the Prophet?

Maybe because the name of a highly Sunni-revered personality comes up in this list of such criticism, Sunnis are reluctant to discuss the issue of the Pen and Paper, more appropriately known as the Tragedy of Thursday.

To protect Umer, Sunnis

- Try to find faults in the Narration
- Try to prove the traditions are weak
- Try to defend the intentions of Umer
- Try to blame other companions other than Umer

Which traditions do i speak about?

Sa‘d b. Jubair reported that Ibn ‘Abbas said: Thursday, (and then said): What is this Thursday? He then wept so much that his tears moistened the pebbles. I said: Ibn ‘Abbas, what is (significant) about Thursday? He (Ibn ‘Abbas) said: The illness of Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) took a serious turn (on this day), and he said: Come to me, so that I should write for you a document that you may not go astray after me. They (the Companions around him) disputed, and it is not meet to dispute in the presence of the Apostle. They said: How is lie (Allah’s Apostle)? Has he lost his consciousness? Try to learn from him (this point). He (the Holy Prophet) said: Leave me. I am better in the state (than the one in which you are engaged). I make a will about three things: Turn out the polytheists from the territory of Arabia; show hospitality to the (foreign) delegations as I used to show them hospitality. He (the narrator) said: He (Ibn Abbas) kept silent on the third point, or he (the narrator) said: But I forgot that.
Sahih Muslim, Book 13, Hadith 4014

Sa‘d b. Jubair reported from Ibn Abbas that he said: Thursday, and what about Thursday? Then tears began to flow until I saw them on his cheeks as it they were the strings of pearls. He (the narrator) said that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: Bring me a shoulder blade and ink-pot (or tablet and inkpot), so that I write for you a document (by following which) you would never go astray. They said: Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) in the state of unconsciousness.
Sahih Muslim, Book 13, Hadith 4015

Ibn Abbas reported:.... Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) said: Come, I may write for you a document; you would not go astray after that. Thereupon Umar said: Verily Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) is deeply afflicted with pain. You have the Qur'an with you. The Book of Allah is sufficient for us. Those who were present in the house differed. Some of them said: Bring him (the writing material) so that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) may write a document for you and you would never go astray after him And some among them said what 'Umar had (already) said. When they indulged in nonsense and began to dispute in the presence of Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him), he said: Get up (and go away) 'Ubaidullah said: Ibn Abbas used to say: There was a heavy loss, indeed a heavy loss, that, due to their dispute and noise. Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) could not write (or dictate) the document for them.
Sahih Muslim, Book 13, Hadith 4016

Narrated Said bin Jubair: Ibn 'Abbas said, "Thursday! What (great thing) took place on Thursday!" Then he started weeping till his tears wetted the gravels of the ground . Then he said, "On Thursday the illness of Allah's Apostle was aggravated and he said, "Fetch me writing materials so that I may have something written to you after which you will never go astray." The people (present there) differed in this matter and people should not differ before a prophet. They said, "Allah's Apostle is seriously sick." The Prophet said, "Let me alone, as the state in which I am now, is better than what you are calling me for." The Prophet on his death-bed, gave three orders saying, "Expel the pagans from the Arabian Peninsula,
respect and give gifts to the foreign delegates as you have seen me dealing with them." I forgot the third (order)"

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, Hadith 288

Narrated Said bin Jubair: that he heard Ibn 'Abbas saying, "Thursday! And you know not what Thursday is? After that Ibn 'Abbas wept till the stones on the ground were soaked with his tears. On that I asked Ibn 'Abbas, "What is (about) Thursday?"

He said, "When the condition (i.e. health) of Allah's Apostle deteriorated, he said, 'Bring me a bone of scapula, so that I may write something for you after which you will never go astray.' The people differed in their opinions although it was improper to differ in front of a prophet. They said, 'What is wrong with him? Do you think he is delirious? Ask him (to understand his state).' So they went to the Prophet and asked him again. The Prophet replied, 'Leave me, for my present state is better than what you are asking me to do.' ....... Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 53, Hadith 393

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: Thursday! And how great that Thursday was! The ailment of Allah's Apostle became worse (on Thursday) and he said, 'fetch me something so that I may write to you something after which you will never go astray.' The people (present there) differed in this matter, and it was not right to differ before a prophet. Some said, 'What is wrong with him? (Do you think ) he is delirious (seriously ill)? Ask him (to understand his state ).' So they went to the Prophet and asked him again. The Prophet said, "Leave me, for my present state is better than what you call me for." ....... Sahih Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 59, Hadith 716

Narrated 'Ubaidullah bin 'Abdullah: Ibn Abbas said, "When Allah's Apostle was on his deathbed and there were some men in the house, he said, 'Come near, I will write for you something after which you will not go astray.' Some of them ( i.e. his companions) said, 'Allah's Apostle is seriously ill and you have the (Holy) Quran. Allah's Book is sufficient for us.' So the people in the house differed and started disputing. Some of them said, 'Give him writing material so that he may write for you something after which you will not go astray.' while the others said the other way round. So when their talk and differences increased, Allah's Apostle said, "Get up." Ibn Abbas used to say, "No doubt, it was very unfortunate (a great disaster) that Allah's Apostle was prevented from writing for them that writing because of their differences and noise." Sahih Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 59, Hadith 717

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: When the time of the death of the Prophet approached while there were some men in the house, and among them was 'Umar bin Al-Khattab, the Prophet said, "Come near let me write for you a writing after which you will never go astray." 'Umar said, "The Prophet is seriously ill, and you have the Quran, so Allah's Book is sufficient for us." The people in the house differed and disputed. Some of them said, 'Come near so that Allah's Apostle may write for you a writing after which you will not go astray," while some of them said what 'Umar said. When they made much noise and differed greatly before the Prophet, he said to them, "Go away and leave me." Ibn 'Abbas used to say, "It was a great disaster that their difference and noise prevented Allah's Apostle from writing that writing for them.

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 92, Hadith 468

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: When Allah's Apostle was on his death-bed and in the house there were some people among whom was 'Umar bin Al-Khattab, the Prophet said, "Come, let me write for you a statement after which you will not go astray." 'Umar said, "The Prophet is seriously ill and you have the Qur'an; so the Book of Allah is enough for us." The people present in the house differed and quarrelled. Some said "Go near so that the Prophet may write for you a statement after which you will not go astray," while the others said as Umar said. When they caused a hue and cry before the Prophet, Allah's Apostle said, "Go away!" Narrated 'Ubaidullah: Ibn 'Abbas used to say, "It was very unfortunate that Allah's Apostle was prevented from writing that statement for them because of their disagreement and noise."

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 70, Hadith 573

- Ibn 'Abbas cries while telling the narration and declares it a tragedy
- Prophet (SAW) wanted to write something for the Ummah before his death, something which if followed will never lead the Ummah astray
- Some Companions around the Prophet decline the query of the Prophet (SAW) declaring that Quran is sufficient for them and the three things the Prophet (SAW) feel necessary are infact worthless
- Some Companions around the Prophet at this time think that the Prophet (SAW) asked for something to write only because he is unwell/delirious/unconscious
- It is Umer who raises the issue of Prophet being ill/delirious and it was he who claimed that they don’t require the Prophet's will as Quran is sufficient for them
- Some Companions agreed with Umer's claim while some thought that the Prophet (SAW) should not be denied due to his high and divine status
- The Companions start to quarrel infront of the Prophet
- The Prophet (SAW) tells them to leave him/his company and points to the fact that his condition is not what certain companions blamed him for
- The Prophet indeed wrote down or told three things but each traditions fails to narrate the third point of the Prophet's will
On a Thursday, just three days before the demise of Prophet (PBUH&HF), the Messenger of Allah asked for pen and paper in order to state his last will. Major Sunni sources including Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim mentioned that an opposition group among the companions whose leader was Umar, accused prophet of talking non sense (May Allah protect us) in order to prevent this writing. They questioned the rationality of Prophet to discredit his will.

I will not interpret the above incident as of now. Because i want you to ponder over the facts, over the events which happened on that Thursday, and your love and reverence for Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

However, i will like to shed light on some of the Verses of Quran.

**And (O Muhammad) do not drive away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, they desire only His favor;** neither are you answerable for any reckoning of theirs, nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours, **so that you should drive them away and thus be of the unjust.**

Quran [6:52]

**Do they not reflect that their companion has not unsoundness in mind;** he is only a plain warner

Quran [7:184]

**O you who believe! obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn back from Him while you hear.**

Quran [8:20]

**Surely (as for) those who speak evil things of Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world and the here after, and He has prepared for them a chastisement bringing disgrace.**

Quran [33:57]

**O you who believe! be not forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing. O you who believe! do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak loud to one another, lest your deeds became null while you do not perceive.** Surely those who lower their voices before Allah's Messenger are they whose hearts Allah has proved for guarding (against evil); they shall have forgiveness and a great reward.

(As for) those who call out to you (Muhammad) from behind the private chambers, surely most of them do not understand. And if they wait patiently until you come out to them, it would certainly be better for them, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Quran [49:1-5]

I swear by the star when it goes down. **Your companion does not err, nor does he (Muhammad) go astray; Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed,**

Quran [53:1-4]

We can read from the Quran that it gives us clear directions regarding our attitude towards Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

- Prophet Muhammad (SAW) should not expel or drive away sincere people from around him who are believers and who want to learn and be nearer to Allah. If the Prophet (SAW) drives away such people, he will be one of the unjust
- Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has been labeled as a mad man by the pagans. Quran testifies that Prophet (SAW) has no unsoundness in his mind.
- The believers are told to obey Allah and his Messenger under all circumstances
- Speaking evil things or ill about the Prophet (SAW) will invite the punishment of the fire
- No one should be forward in the presence of Prophet (SAW), no one should give his own opinion over the opinion of Prophet (SAW)
- No one should raise his voice over the voice of Prophet (SAW), no one should raise his voice infront of the Prophet (SAW), because such actions will nullify the previous deeds of the person
- The Prophet (SAW) does not err, whatever he speaks is not his desire but is a part of a revelation revealed to him

Before going back to the event of that Thursday, i will like to add footnotes of certain respected Sunni scholars.

"To trouble Allah" implies two things: That Allah should be disobeyed, that an attitude of disbelief and shirk and atheism be adopted with regard to Him, and that things made unlawful by Him be made lawful; **and that His**
This is the foremost and basic demand of the Faith. If the person who regards Allah as his Lord and accepts Allah's Messenger as his guide and leader, is true in his belief, he can never have the attitude that he should give his own opinion and view precedence over the decision of Allah and His Messenger, or should adopt an independent opinion in the matters, and pass his own judgments without caring to find out whether Allah and His Messenger have given any guidance in those matters or not, and if they have given it, what it is. That is why it has been said "O believers, do not go `in advance' of Allah and His Messenger. " That is, "Do not go ahead of them, but follow behind: Do not precede them, but be subordinate to them. " This Command is, in its application and effect, a step further to verse 36 of Al-Ahzab. There it was said: "It does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their decision in a matter, they should exercise an Option in that matter of theirs", and here it is said that the believers should not decide their matters themselves by their own initiative, but should look for guidance in Allah's Book and His Prophet's Sunnah concerning those matters. If ever you adopted an attitude of independence as against Allah and His Messenger, or gave priority to your own opinion and view over their Command, you should know that you have to deal with that God Who is hearing whatever you utter and is even aware of your secret intentions.

This is the etiquette that was taught to the people who sat among the audience of the Holy Prophet or came to visit him. Its intention was that the believers should treat the Holy Prophet with the highest respect and reverence when visiting him and talking to him. Nobody should raise his voice louder than his: the people should not be unmindful of the fact that they are addressing the Messenger of Allah, and not a common man, or a person of equal rank; therefore, there should be a marked difference between one's tone of conversation with the common people and one's tone of conversation with the Holy Prophet, and no one should talk to him in a voice louder than his. This shows what high position the person of the Holy Prophet occupies in Islam. No one beside the Holy Prophet, whatever his rank and status, has a position that unmannerly behavior towards him should deserve in the sight of Allah the same punishment which is, in fact, the punishment for disbelief. In respect of ordinary people it is at the most a sort of rudeness, an uncivilized conduct, but in respect of the Holy Prophet a little lack of reverence is such a grave sin as can destroy all the services of one's lifetime. For the reverence of the Holy Prophet is indeed reverence of that God Who has sent him as His Messenger and lack of reverence for him amounts to lack of reverence to God Himself.

That is, "Only those people give due reverence to the Messenger of Allah, who have passed successfully through the tests and trials set by Allah and proved by their steadfastness that their hearts indeed possess taqva (piety). " From this it follows automatically that the heart which is devoid of reverence for the Holy Prophet is, in fact, devoid of taqva, and a person's raising his voice louder than the Holy Prophet's is not only an uncivilized act outwardly but also a sign of the absence of tagva in his heart.

That is, everyone is personally responsible for his deeds, whether good or bad. The Prophet (peace he on him) is told that he will neither have to explain to God the conduct of the converts nor will the latter be required to explain his conduct. They can neither usurp his good deeds, nor transfer their own misdeeds to his account. There is, therefore, no reason for the Prophet (peace be on him) to alienate those who approach him as seekers after Truth.

(And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and evening seeking His Face.) meaning, (The Prophet) should not turn away those who have these qualities, instead make them your companions and associates.

Thus we agree that any one who raises his voice infront of the Prophet (SAW), either during a conversation with each other, or with the Prophet, is a sign of lack of piety in one's heart. The act of calling the Prophet (SAW) insane, speaking loudly/quarrelling with him or infront of him, giving your own opinion over the commands of the Prophet (SAW), are highly criticizable acts, and will be done by people only if they lack piety in their hearts. Furthermore, such actions will displease Allah himself and invite his wrath, irrespective of who the person is. We believe the Prophet was Just. The Prophet is not
allowed to tell people around him to leave him if they are God fearing with clean intentions for guidance. The Prophet tells the people around his deathbed to leave him which proves what? Use your imagination.

We must note that the actions which displeased the Prophet (SAW) should earn our disgust as well. For me, speaking loudly in front of the Prophet or calling him unwell/unconscious/delirious or denying him his will, is sufficient to disassociate myself from the people and companions involved in this tragic event. But as Umer's name shows up again and again in many narrations, which forces the people to justify this tragedy of Thursday, I had to put down certain verses of Quran which would tell people regarding the fate of those who are told by the Prophet (SAW) to leave him (SAW).

So Omar said, “Pain had taken over the Prophet peace be upon him.” Omar meant that the Prophet peace be upon him was tired, therefore, do not increase his pain and leave him alone. Then someone (The scholars said that this person might be a newcomer to Islam) said in a questioning form, “What is wrong with him? Is he hallucinating?” Meaning, is he aware of what he is talking about or had the fever affected him? It is widely known that prophets could be sick, and that does not slander in their infallibility. Anyhow, the person who asked the question did a mistake. He thought that involuntary speech due to fever is applicable to the Messenger of Allah as it is applicable to the rest of the people. He was wrong, definitely.

http://ansar.org/english/faq14.htm

The hardcore Sunni website provides with a lame excuse in order to defend Umer's disrespect of the Prophet. You must note from the narrations that it was Umer who gave his opinion over the Prophet's command telling him that Quran was sufficient for them and they did not require any further sources of guidance. This also led to a division amongst the companions, some sided with Umer's opinion while some supported the Prophet's decision.

It is funny to note how the author claims that Umer was only worried about the health of the Prophet and wanted the people not to disturb the Prophet. Did he not know that the Prophet of Allah says only what is revealed to him (SAW), and did he not know that the Prophet of Allah knew his own condition better? And did Umer not know that the Quran alone was in fact insufficient for them which is why the Prophet (SAW) wanted to give them further instructions.

The author however puts the bulk of the blame on a supposedly new comer to Islam. I do not see where did he get the idea from. However, this proves more that not all Companions of Prophet (SAW) were good and sincere to him, and also equal in knowledge and wisdom amongst each other.

I need not say anything more. The love for Prophet (SAW) amongst all Muslims is an important part of faith. This love will make me dislike the people involved in troubling the Prophet (SAW) during that Thursday, while to you, the actions of certain companions may seem defendable.

However, if we are pleased with the people who troubled the Prophet (SAW), then I cannot say about the love and respect you have for Prophet (SAW), for the merit and rank of Companions is nothing without the Prophet. If our loyalty is more towards the companions because we have been taught that way since our childhood, then I say we must verify our approach towards Islam.