

The Explanation of the Sermon of Imam Sajjad (A.S.) in Damascus

<"xml encoding="UTF-8?">

In the foregoing pages we have reproduced the sermon delivered by Imam Sajjad in Damascus. Every word of that, sermon confirms the frankness, bravery and spiritual greatness of the Imam and incidentally the value and necessity of such sermons and speeches delivered in the circumstances then prevailing become clear. It has also become evident that these sermons and addresses were not such that they should have been delivered as a consequence of sentiments, spiritual uneasiness and pressure of hardships.

Whatever the men and women of Ahlul Bayt said during the journey, which culminated in their martyrdom and captivity, and has been recorded in history, consists of speeches which were delivered, as and when it was appropriate and necessary, in accordance with a minute and properly chalked out plan. Just as Imam Husayn knew well as to what he was doing and where he was going and what the result of his activities would be, other members of the Holy Prophet's family also possessed perfect insight, and whenever they felt it necessary to speak they ignored all their mental sufferings and depressions, and revealed the realities in such away that it was no longer possible to tamper with them. It is, however, certain that at that time most of the people were not aware of the importance of their speeches and the depth of their object. Very often they thought about this very sermon of the fourth Imam that a bereaved person was crying and lamenting as his sentiments had been aroused and with the passage of time he would become calm and forget all that he was saying.

However, history not only recorded the sermon delivered by the fourth Imam but also recorded the words and poetic verses of Yazid and handed them over to the posterity, and placed them side by side with each other so that on one page of history the people should read that Imam Sajjad said in the city of Damascus with great dignity: "I am the son of Makkah and Mina. I am the son of Zamzam and Safa. I am the son of the Prophet of Allah ", and on the next page of history they should find that Yazid said: "There was nothing like revelation or prophet hood. On this pretext Bani Hashim wished to befool the people and to rule over them". Indeed, even if Yazid did not fear Allah and did not feel ashamed before the Holy Prophet why did he not fear the power of history and why was he not afraid that whatever he was saying would be recorded?

Individuals come in the world and depart and the nations are dislocated. However, the rise and

fall of the nations and the change in governments does not affect history. It continues to occupy its place and carefully supervises the good and evil deeds of the individuals and the traffic of the nations. It does not confuse the account of one person with that of another and does not make anyone responsible for another's sin.

The Holy Qur'an says: Those are a people who have passed away. Theirs is that which they earned, and yours is that which you earn. You will not be asked of what they used to do. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:134)

History records the behavior of the people to maintain accounts in this world and the angels write them for accountability in the Hereafter.

In the second part of the speech delivered by lady Zaynab, daughter of Imam Ali in Damascus, (its first part has already been dealt with in the foregoing pages), she warned Yazid firstly of the accountability in the Hereafter and secondly of the accountability before history and the world. It was in this very part that she said to him: "O Yazid! On the day when Allah will be the judge and Prophet Muhammad will plead for justice and your limbs will give evidence against you, your father, who made you dominate the Muslims, will receive the punishment due to him. On that day it will become known what reward the oppressors get and whose place is worse and whose party is humble. (O enemy of Allah and O enemy of the son of the Prophet of Allah I swear by Allah that I consider you quite mean and incorrigible.

However, what can I do? Our eyes weep and our bosoms burn and our martyrs cannot come to life by reproaching or reprimanding you.

Our Husayn has been killed and the partisans of Satan take us to the fools and take from Allah's wealth remuneration for showing disrespect to Allah. Our blood trickles from their hands and our flesh falls from their mouths and the pure bodies of our martyrs have been placed at the disposal of the wolves and the rapacious animals of the jungle. If you think that you stand to gain today by killing us, you will suffer for it on the Day of Judgment. It will be the day on which you will possess nothing except your deeds. It will be the day on which you will shout at the son of Marja-na and he will shout at you. It will be the day on which you and your followers will quarrel with one another by the side of the scale of Divine Justice. It will be the day on which you will learn that the best provision which your father made for you was that you should kill the descendants of the Prophet of Allah. I swear by Allah that I do not fear anyone except Him and do not complain before anyone else".

So far the daughter of Imam Ali warned Yazid of Divine punishment and accountability on the Day of Judgment. Then she invited his attention to his being accountable to history and told him that even if he did not fear Allah and did not believe in the Day of Judgment or had lost his

faith on account of his sins, he should fear history that would disgrace him. It was with this object in view that the daughter of Ali said: "O Yazid! Practice deceit, pursue your vicious plans and do whatever you can. I swear by Allah that the stain of disgrace which has been stamped on your name owing to the treatment meted out by you to us cannot be obliterated and this ignominy can never be converted to goodness".

The daughter of lady Fatima Zahra invited the attention of Yazid to the might of history and warned him against shame and disgrace. However, Yazid who, it might be said, had lost intelligence did not benefit from lady Zaynab's words and could not foresee the future of history. On this occasion the following tradition of the Holy Prophet quoted by Suyuti in his book Jami'us Saghir was applicable to Yazid: "When Allah wishes to execute His Decree He takes away intelligence from the intelligent people so that He may do with them what He likes. And, when what He wills is accomplished, He restores their intelligence to them and then they regret very much what they have done". If Yazid had not been deprived of his intelligence he should have realized that after killing the son of the Prophet of Allah and his near ones, it would not be possible for him to rule the Muslims and to ignore this great Islamic tragedy. And even if he could not understand this fact he should have at least so much sense that he should not have attacked the very basis of Islam in his poetic verses and should not have announced openly his decision to take revenge upon the children of the Prophet of Allah and should not have denied the Divine revelation and the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Lady Zaynab, the daughter of Fatima Zahra concluded her speech with thanks to Allah and said: "Allah be thanked Who ended the task of the chiefs of the young men of Paradise with benevolence and made Paradise their resting place. I pray to Allah that He may raise their ranks and shower His blessings on them, for Allah is Almighty, All-Powerful". It was this very speech which obliged Yazid to pretend I disgust for Ibn Ziyad and to curse him. It has been written that while sending the Ahlul Bayt to Madina Yazid called Imam Sajjad and said to him: "May Allah curse the son of Marja-na. By Allah, if I had met your father I would have agreed to whatever he had suggested and asked for, and would not have allowed, as far as possible, that he should have been killed. However, whatever has happened had been destined. I wish that you may write to me from Madina for all your requirements". Yazid did not say this to seek Divine pleasure. He was grateful to Ibn Ziyad that he had killed Imam Husayn and his companions and in reply to his letter seeking instructions about the Ahlul Bayt who had been made prisoners he (Yazid) had himself written that they should be sent to Syria. Yazid's cursing Ibn Ziyad had only a political tinge, and was the outcome of the pressure of public thinking.

The sermon delivered by Imam Sajjad in Syria and the Qur'anic verses recited by him in the bazaar in reply to a Syrian and whatever else the Ahlul Bayt said produced their result. So much so that the martyrdom of Imam Husayn was mourned first of all in Damascus, the capital of the caliphate, and in the caliph's own house. The Syrian women also came to know the true facts about the tragedy of Karbala. Perhaps the month of Muharram of the year 61 A.H. had not yet come to an end when the news of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn reached various Islamic regions and their inhabitants became aware of most of the events that had taken place. When the storm and thunder of the caliphate subsided the people came to their senses, felt grieved on account of what had happened and reproached themselves for their unpardonable negligence in helping the Imam and supporting Truth. Gradually the same correct view was adopted as had prompted the people of Kufa to invite the Imam before his martyrdom. Later, they realized their mistake and decided to make amends for it, although the loss of an Imam like Husayn bin Ali, the grandson of the Holy Prophet, was irreparable and wailing and regret could not make amends for it. Mu'awiya had said: " After Ali bin Abi Talib the world has become barren and cannot produce a son like him". Indeed it is so and another Ali cannot be born. Similarly it is Impossible to produce an Imam like Husayn, because there must be pure and sacred parents like his to give birth to a son like him. Every loss can be made good sooner or later, but how can the loss of such sublime personalities be compensated

Source: "A Probe into the History of Ashura" By: Dr. Ibrahim Ayati