

(Shahadat or Martyrdom of Imam Zeynel Abidin (as

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Allah (SWT) says in His Noble Qur'an: "Allah's wish is but to remove uncleanness far from you, O folk of the Household, and cleanse you with a though cleansing" (33:33). One of those Members of the House is Imam Ali bin Al-Hussein (as) known as Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) whose martyrdom anniversary is on the 25th of Muharram.

Imam Al-Sajjad (as) or Imam Sayyid al-Sajideen (as), another nickname of his meaning the one who prostrates, dedicated all his life to Allah, Islam and all human beings. He lived as a youth with his father, Imam Al-Hussein (as), and his uncle Imam Al-Hassan (as), and witnessed all the events that preceded Karbala, and became aware of the problems of the Muslim Ummah (community) and its suffering from injustice and tyranny.

Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) then lived the tragedy of Karbala, but he was so sick that he could not take part in the actual fighting perhaps due to Allah's (SWT) wisdom. On the day of Ashura (10th Muharram 61 AH) he lost his father, his relatives and companions in one of the most dramatic tragedies that one can ever encounter.

After the martyrdom of Imam Al-Hussein (as), the survival of Islam depended on Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) and that also at a tender age of around 22 years. He had a very hard job of letting the world know the mission of Imam Al-Hussein (as) and exposing the evil intentions of Yazid and the Bani Umayyah. He had to keep the message of Islam alive and save it from being confused by the evil Bani Umayyah.

Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) was extraordinary patient, for he accepted Allah's (SWT) will, being the faithful believer he was. Then he lived the second tragedy immediately following the tragedy of Karbala when he was taken with his sisters and aunts and the rest of the companions' wives and daughters as prisoners, in an unprecedented act in the history of internal Muslim fights. We know, for example, that when Imam Ali (as) won the battle of the Camel (Jung-e-Jamal), he sent all the women who were with the Prophet's wife, Aisha, back to Medina with all due respect. But that was the first time in Islam to take Muslim prisoners, and not any Muslims, but women and men of the noblest origin not only in descent but in their piety and values, as those embodied by Syeda Zainab (sa) and Imam Ali bin Al-Hussien (as).

Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) was taken to Al-Sham, where he delivered an important speech in which he exposed Yazid ibn Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan and silenced him. He was able to emphasize the values and reasons for Imam Al-Hussein's (as) revolution through several

methods, for he, like all the Imams who followed him, wanted to let this revolution inspire people in all times and places to revolt against oppression and deviation.

To quote one incidence, Yazid ibn Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan asked one of his employed preachers to go on the pulpit (Mimber) of the Mosque and abused Imam Ali (as) and his family. When the preacher finished his lecture, Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) turned to him and said, "Be ashamed of yourself, you evil speaker. With your words you have displeased Allah (SWT) so as to please people". Then Imam (as) asked Yazid to let him talk to the people. Yazid refused to do so. The people of Syria, however, forced Yazid to allow the Imam to go on the Mimber.

Once on the Mimber, Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) first praised Allah (SWT) and His Holy Prophet (saw). After that the Imam gave along and very powerful speech letting the Syrians know the great position of Imam Al-Hussein (as) to Allah (SWT), and how evil Yazid and his family were.

Part of the speech is summarized below:

"O listeners Allah has given us (Ahlul Bayt) six things which no one else has. He has given us special Wisdom, Patience, Dignity, Power of speech, Courage and Respect. He gave us special benefit of belonging to the family of his Prophet. To us belong Hamza and Jafar. To us belong Asadullah (The lion of Allah, Imam Ali (as)). To us belongs the leader of the youths of paradise (Imam Al-Hassan (as) and Imam Al-Hussein (as)).

"Those who know me. Those who do not, then know that I am the son of Makkah and Mina. I am the son of Zamzam and Safa. I am the son of he who gave Zakat to the poor. I am the son of the best of those who have ever put on Ihram and performed ceremonies of Hajj. I am the son of he who was taken on the night journey from house of Allah to the Mosque of Aqsa and then to Meraj. I am the son of he who was taken around by Gabriel, Jibril to the Lote-tree of the boundary (Sidratul Muntaha). Piety and Generosity of Imam Zeynel Abidin (as). I am the son of Muhammad Mustafa (saw). I am the son of Ali Al-Murtaza (as) who fought the polytheists in the battle till they submitted to Islam and fought in the presence of the Prophet until his sword was broken and to whom Zulfikar was given. I am the son of he who had the honour to migrate twice in Islam. I am the son of Fatima the best women of the world..."

The effect of the speech was so powerful that everybody in the Mosque began to weep and to blame Yazid. Yazid was afraid that if Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) continued his speech, there would be a revolution and revolt. At the same time Yazid could not stop the Imam and get him down from the Mimber. He therefore ordered a "Muazzin" to give Azaan, knowing that this would automatically cut the Imam's speech. But he underestimated the Imam's bravery and intelligence. Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) stopped his speech but did not get down from the

Mimber. When the Muazzin said "Allahu Akbar" the Imam testified Allah's greatness. When the Muazzin said, "Ash hadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah ", the Imam stopped the Muazzin from going any further. He then turned to Yazid and asked him. "Tell me O Yazid, was Muhammad (saw) is your grandfather or mine? If you say he was your grandfather it will be an open lie and if you say he was my grandfather then why have you killed his son and imprisoned his family? Why have you killed my father and brought his women and children to this city as prisoners?"

Yazid ibn Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan (la) had no reply to give.

The effect of this was to turn Syrians against Yazid. Everyone of them now found out about

Yazid's crimes that he had committed against the Holy Prophet (saw) and his family. They began to blame him and ask for the release of Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) and the womenfolk of the house of the Holy Prophet (saw).

Yazid had to free Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) out of fear of his own rulership, therefore, Imam (as) was still not completely safe from his evil designs even upon reaching back to Madina. Once in Madina, Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) gathered the people and told them the horrifying stories of Karbala and informed them that his father Imam Al-Hassan (as) and his companions were martyred and his family members were made prisoners and were taken from one city to another (Karbala, Kufa, Al-Sham) and branded as traitors.

Day in and day out, people used to go to Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) and present condolence and hear the events of Karbala. Once a visitor named Noman came to Imam (as) and asked him which was the most difficult time he had to face and Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) cried for a long time and said three times, "As-Shaam, As-Shaam, As-Shaam". Another visitor asked him as to how long would he continue mourning and crying? For that he replied that Prophet Yaqoob (as) had 12 sons and only one of them (Prophet Yusuf (as)) got lost and he know that he was still alive but he continued crying until the pupils of his eyes became white and his back got bent - I had seen 18 members of my family being slaughtered around me in a single day and you ask me as to how long I would continue mourning.

Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) did not sink in the memory of the tragedy to the extent that he forgot about his responsibilities towards the Islamic world. What is being told by some narrators of Ashura is untrue: Imam did not spent all his life crying for the death of his father. He only cried when he saw that crying would provide a window of opportunity to make people become more adherent to the cause.

On the contrary, he was patient as any one could be, for the Members of the House are the role models in patience and in overcoming grief. Historians tell us that most scientists and thinkers of that time were among his students. Thus it could be said that he was the teacher of Islamic

culture. He also left us his supplications that represent a moving spiritual social and moral Islamic course. If we read his supplication whether the Sahifa-e-Sajjadia or the others, we find out that those who read them will come out by a general cultural Islamic course that covers all basis Islamic principles and concepts.

Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) and Jihad with character (Akhlaq)

Jihad with character (Akhlaq) As a reaction people of Madina revolted against Yazid, after hearing the horrifying stories of Karbala from Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) in the year 64 AH. The people of Medina removed Yazid's governor from his post of governorship in Medina, Fearing for their lives, the Bani Umayyah started running away from Medina. Marwan bin Hakam had a large family of women and children and could not run away for his life unless he could find someone who would agree to house his women and children. Marwan bin Hakam approached several people including Abdullah ibn Umar bin Khattab but all refused to help him. Finally Marwan bin Hakam turned to Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) for help.

Marwan bin Hakam was enemy number one of the Holy Prophet (saw) and his family. As a matter of fact, the Holy Prophet (saw) had ordered Marwan and his father Hakam bin Aas to leave Medina as unwanted persons. It is the same Marwan who had fought against Imam Ali (as) in the battle of the Camel (Jung-e-Jamal). Marwan also was one of those who prevented Imam Al-Hassan (as) to be buried next to his grandfather's grave. Again, it was Marwan who had told Walid, the Governor of Medina in 60 AH to force "Bayah" from Imam Al-Hussein (as) in the court or to cut-off his head if he refused.

Despite all this, Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) agreed to help Marwan bin Hakam without any hesitation. Marwan's family stayed with the Imam in Imam's house for as long as they wished. Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) then arranged for them to go to where Marwan was. In fact, Imam's house was open for anyone who came seeking for protection at this time.

Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) and importance of recommended (Nawafil) prayers

Once Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) was in the middle of his prayer when his cloak rolled down from his shoulder but he remained unconscious about it. When he finished his prayer one of his companions asked: 'Oh son of the Holy Prophet (saw)! While you were offering prayer your clock rolled down but you did not pay attention to it.'

Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) replied: 'Woe upon you! Do you know in front of whom I was standing? Such awareness prevented me from paying attention towards my cloak. Don't you understand that a servant's prayer is accepted only to the extent he pays attention towards Almighty Allah (SWT) during his prayer?'

The companion commented: Oh son of the Holy Prophet (saw), Therefore, on this basis we all

are going to be doomed?

Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) replied: No! If you offer recommended (Nawafil) prayers, Almighty Allah (SWT) through them will treat your obligatory (Wajib) prayers as completed.

Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) and Namaz-e-Ghufayla prayer

Namaz-e-Ghufayla prayer Once a man after the tragedy of Karbala came into the presence of Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) and Syeda Zainab (sa) and said, Ya Imam, I am one of those who involve in the killing of your father in Karbala and I wished to be forgiven, hence advice, what I suppose to do to be forgiven? Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) thought about it and replied, to pray Namaz-e-Ghufayla prayer.

This man was very happy after hearing the advice from Imam and left. Syeda Zainab (sa) observing this, asked Imam Zeynel Abidin (as), how can such a great sin be forgiven? Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) replied, it cannot, and Allah (SWT) will make it such that this man won't have the ability (Tawfiq) ever to perform this Namaz-e-Ghufayla prayer.

When Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) was asked once: How did you wake up this morning he replied: I woke up with eight things I am asked to do: Allah (SWT) wants me to perform the religious duties, Holy Prophet (saw) wants me to adhere to his sayings and traditions (Sunnah), my children want me to provide for them, my psyche wants its desires fulfilled, Satan wants me to follow him, the two angels want me to perform good deeds, the angel of death wants my spirit and the grave wants my body.

Piety and Generosity of Imam Zeynel Abidin (as)

The narrator says that one day he saw Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) in such a way that the straps of his sandals were broken, due to which he was walking with a lot of difficulty. The narrator asked him, "O son of the Messenger of Allah! Why don't you buy a new pair of shoes?" He replied, "Whatever amount I save for it, before I could purchase it some needy person comes with a request and I give it to him." The narrator said, "Please permit me to buy you a pair of shoes." Just then a beggar came and requested the Imam for something. Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) said to the narrator, "Give him whatever you had intended to spend for buying me a pair of shoes. This person is more deserving of it. If I had the money, I would myself have fulfilled his need."

Abdullah Damishqi says, "One day I went to Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) and found him patching his cloak. I had come with 5000 Dirhams as Khums money and I presented it to the Imam and said, 'Master, it is my desire that you take some money from this amount and buy yourself a new cloak, your cloak has become very old.' Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) said, Keep the money here and announce in Medina that whoever is in need may come to me in the Prophet's

mosque. I made the announcement according to his directions and very soon people converged in hordes. Imam Zeynel Abidin (as) distributed all the money and I was left
".astounded