

Sermon of Lady Zainab in the Court of Yazid

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Now we propose to study the sermon of lady Zaynab which she delivered in the court of Yazid and which is recorded in a book written in the third century A.H. [1]

Yazid recited the blasphemous poetic verses of Abdullah bin Zab'ari Sahmi which he had composed while he was an unbeliever and also added some poetic verses of his own and said openly that he wanted to take revenge upon the descendants of Muhammad because Muhammad and his companions had killed his polytheist ancestors.

Zaynab, the daughter of Ali rose and began speaking. She added a new chapter to the history of the Caliphate of Yazid which covered a period of three years and a few months, and said: "O Yazid! Allah and His Prophet have said that committing sins and considering the signs of Allah to be false is ridiculing them", i.e. deny the sign of Allah today and hold them in derision and have become happy, and recite poetic verses on account of the martyrdom of the children of the Holy Prophet just as the polytheists of Makkah became happy and sang songs because of the martyrdom of some Muslims in the Battle of Uhud, and talk about taking revenge upon the Holy Prophet.

This is how you become like them and how you have reached this stage? You have reached this stage because you have committed too many sins. Whoever treads the path of sin and persists in committing sins will, according to the verdict of the Qur'an, deny the signs of Allah one day and eventually will ridicule them and then deserve Divine punishment.

She added: "O Yazid! Do you think that we have become humble and despicable owing to the martyrdom of our people and our own captivity? As you have blocked all the paths for us, and we have been made captives and are being taken from one place to another, do you think that Allah has taken away his blessings from us?

Do you think that by killing the godly persons you have become great and respectable and the Almighty looks at you with special grace and kindness? For this reason and on account of this wrong thinking you have become elated and arrogant. You have become boastful because you have seen that the matters have taken a turn in your favour. You have, however, forgotten what Allah says: The disbelievers must not think that Our respite is for their good We only give them time to let them increase their sins. For them there will be a humiliating torment." (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 178)

Then lady Zaynab reminded Yazid that on the day of the conquest of Makkah which took place

in 8 A.H. the Holy Prophet did favor to all the men and women of Makkah and set them free. Yazid himself was a descendant of those very freed persons. His father Mu'awiya, his grandfather Abu Sufyan and Mu'awiya's mother were among those who were set free at the time of the conquest of Makkah. on that day the Holy Prophet very magnanimously set all of them free irrespective of what they had done in the past and said: "Go, for all of you are free". In the second part of her speech the daughter of Imam Ali made the conquest of Makkah her topic and said: "O son of the freed ones! Is it justice that you keep your women and slave-girls in seclusion but have made the helpless daughters of the Holy Prophet ride on swift camels and given them in the hands of their enemies so that they may take them from one city to another".

Then she said: "Why shouldn't Yazid be spiteful against us, it is he, who looks at us with hostility. You say with perfect intrepidity and without imagining that you are committing a sin: 'I wish that my ancestors who were killed in Badr had been present here today'. Then you strike Imam Husayn in his teeth with a stick in your hand! Why shouldn't you be like this, although you have done what you wanted to do and have pulled out the roots of piety and virtue! You have shed the blood of the sons of the Holy Prophet and have hidden the brilliant stars on the earth from amongst the descendants of Abdul Muttalib under the clouds of oppression and injustice. However, you shall go before Allah soon. You shall meet your ancestors and shall also be taken to their place. At that time you will wish that you had been blind and dumb and had not said that it was a day of rejoicing for your ancestors".

At this stage the daughter of Imam Ali prayed to Allah and said: "O Lord! Procure our right and take revenge upon those who have oppressed us". Then she turned to Yazid and said: "By Allah you have pulled off your skin and cut off your flesh. You will soon go before the Prophet of Allah and will see with your own eyes that his children are in Paradise. It will be the day when Allah will deliver the descendants of the Holy Prophet from the state of being scattered and will bring all of them together in Paradise. This is the promise which Allah has made in the Holy Qur'an. He says: Do not think of those who are slain for the cause of Allah as dead. They are alive with their Lord and receive sustenance from Him. (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 169)

O Yazid! On the day when Allah will be the Judge and Muhammad will be the petitioner, and your limbs will give evidence against you, your father, who made you the ruler of the Muslims, will receive His punishment. On that day it will become known what reward the oppressors earn, whose position is worse and whose party is more humble. O enemy of Allah and O son of the enemy of Allah! I swear by Allah that I consider you to be humble and not fit even to be reprimanded and reproached.

But what am I to do? Our eyes are shedding tears, our hearts are burning, and our martyrs cannot come to life by our reprimanding and reproaching you. My Husayn has been killed and the partisans of Satan are taking us to the fools so that they may get their reward for insulting

Allah. Our blood is dripping from their hands and our flesh is falling down from their mouths. The sacred bodies of the martyrs have been placed at the disposal of the wolves and other carnivorous animals of the jungle. If you have gained something today by shedding blood, you will certainly be a loser on the Day of Judgment. On that day nothing but your deeds will count. On that day you will curse Ibn Marjāna and he will curse you. On that day you and your followers will quarrel with one another by the side of the Divine scale of Justice. On that day you will see that the best provision which your father made for you was that he enabled you to kill the children of the Prophet of Allah.

I swear by Allah that I do not fear anyone except Him and do not complain to anyone else. You may employ your deceit and cunning efforts, but I swear by Allah that the shame and disgrace which you have earned by the treatment meted out to us cannot be eradicated". The daughter of Fatima Zahra ended her speech with offering thanks to Allah. She said: "I thank Allah Who has concluded the task of the chiefs of the youths of Paradise with prosperity and forgiveness and accommodated them in Paradise. I pray to Allah that He may elevate their ranks and favor them more with His kindness, for Allah is Omnipotent

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.(.Balāghatun Nisa', Abul Fazl Ahmad bin Abi Tahir, (208- 280 A.H [1]