Maytham al-Tammar: The Faithful Companion of Imam Ali ((A.S

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Imam Ali bought Maytham as a slave and then freed him. He asked him what his name was;"Salim", he said:"But I heard the Prophet saying that your true name was Maytham"."He was correct and you are also correct. My true name is Maytham".

Then stay with the name mentioned by the Holy Prophet and give up the other name".

Imam Ali bought and freed him, but he put a bond of love around his neck so that he remained with him up to the last moment of his life. Even death could not break this bond.

Maytham was a wonderful man. With his remarkable ability he gradually secured an honourable position among the companions of Imam Ali. He became aware of the realities and could understand their fine distinctions. He had great love for Imam Ali. He was as fond of him as a thirsty plant is of rain. He took his inspiration from Imam Ali. With him he lived and in him he remained fully absorbed. Imam Ali was the light of his heart and the rejoicing of his soul; and he was not willing to lose this rejoicing even to gain all the wealth of the whole world.

One day Imam Ali said to Maytham "After my death you will be hanged. A spear will be thrust into your body. On the third day your beard will be stained with the blood of your nose and mouth. You will be hanged beside the house of Amr ibn Hurayth along with nine others. The gallows on which you will be hanged will be the shortest. Come along I'll show you the date-palm from the branches of which you will be ultimately hanged". And then he showed Maytham the tree.

Years passed. Imam Ali was martyred. The Umayyads gained power over the people. Maytham went out from time to time to look at the tree; offered his prayers and spoke to it thus "Tree, may Allah bless you! I have been created for you and you are growing for me".

In the year of his martyrdom Maytham had the honour of visiting Ka'bah, the House of Allah. There, he met Umme Salama, the Mother of the Faithful.

I've often heard your name from the Holy Prophet", she said. "He recommended you to Ali", she added.

Maytham asked about Imam Husayn and learnt that he had left the city.

Convey my regards to him", he said, "and tell him that it will not be long before he and I see each other in the presence of our Lord"

Umme Salama ordered perfume to be brought. She applied it to the beard of Maytham. Then

she said to him. "Before long your beard will be painted with your own blood" (because of your love for the Prophet and his progeny).

Maytham then went to Kufah, where Ibn Ziyad's agents arrested him. When he was produced before Ibn Ziyad, the following dialogue took place between them.

Ibn Ziyad "Where is your Allah?"

Maytham "He is lying in wait for the oppressors, and you are one of them".

Ibn Ziyad 'What did your master Ali say about me and you? "

Maytham "He said that you will hang me along with nine others, and my gollows will be shorter than those of others".

Ibn Ziyad "I would like to go against what your master said and kill you in some other way".

Maytham "How can you? He learnt that from the Prophet and the Prophet learnt it from Allah. Can you go against Allah? I even know the place of my martyrdom. I also know that I am the first Muslim in whose mouth a bridlebit will be laid".

Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad was enraged. He ordered that for the time being Maytham might be taken back to prison. It was in this very prison that Maytham gave Mukhtar Thaqafı the good news of his release, and said "In revenging for the Doyen of the Martyrs you will kill Ibn Ziyad". And so it was.

Anyhow, at last Maytham was taken to the place where he was to make supreme sacrifice; to the place of his spiritual rise; the place from which he was to soar to the greatest heights of human spirituality. He was hanged beside the house of Amr ibn Hurayth from the tree that he already knew. The people gathered round him, and on the gallows he found a good opportunity to tell them of the virtues of Imam Ali.

He spoke and moved the hearts of the people. He made them acquainted with the truth. Ibn Ziyad was informed that Maytham was defaming him whereupon he ordered him to be gagged so that he might not utter a word further.

As Imam Ali had foretold, a spear was thrust into Maytham's body.

Allabu Akbar", he cried.

At the end of the third day the blood from his mouth and nose flowed down and coloured his beard. May peace of Allah be upon him !1

Note

1. Al-Irshad by Shaykh Mufid, p. 152