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Chapter 55: The Prophet Mourning for His Son

"Dear Ibrahim! We can't do anything for you. Divine Will can't be changed. Your father's eyes shed tears, and his heart is sad and grieved for your death. However, I will not say anything which may invite the wrath of Allah. If there had not been the true and certain promise of Allah that we too shall come after you, I would have wept more and become more grieved at the separation from you".¹

These sentences were uttered by the Prophet of Islam while mourning for his dear son Ibrahim, who was breathing his last in the lap of his kind father. The Prophet had fixed his kind lips on the rosy face of his son and bade him goodbye with a very sad face and a heavy heart and at the same time with full submission to the Will of Allah.

Love for one's off-spring is one of the purest and most sublime manifestations of human spirit and is a sign of health and purity of one's soul.

The Prophet used to say: "Be gentle to your children and display kind sentiments for them."² Furthermore, kindness and love for children was one of his most pleasing attributes.³

During the past years the Prophet had been faced with the death of three sons named Qasim, Tahir and Tayyib⁴ and three daughters named Zaynab, Ruqayyah and Umme Kulsum and had been deeply grieved on this account. After their death his only surviving child and the souvenir of his esteemed wife Khadijah was Fatimah.

In 6 A.H. the Prophet sent ambassadors to foreign countries including Egypt. He sent a letter to the ruler of Egypt inviting him to accept Islam. Although he did not apparently give a positive reply to the Prophet's call, he sent him a respectful reply along with some presents including a slave-girl named Marya.

This slave-girl later acquired the honour of becoming the Prophet's wife and gave birth to his son Ibrahim, who was loved very much by him. The birth of Ibrahim diminished to some extent the unpleasant effects caused by the death of his six children, and provided him consolation. However, to

his great sorrow Ibrahim also passed away after eighteen months.

The Prophet had gone out of the house on some business when he came to know about the critical condition of his child. He returned home, took the child from his mother's lap, and while signs of uneasiness were apparent from his face, he uttered the sentences quoted before.

The mourning of the Prophet for his son is a sign of his human sentiments, which continued even after the death of the child, and manifestation of sentiments and expression of grief was a sign of his kind nature, which showed itself involuntarily throughout his life. As regards his not uttering anything against the pleasure of Allah, was a sign of his faith and resignation to the Divine Will, which none can escape.

Baseless Objection

Abdur Rahman bin Awf, who belonged to a family of the Ansar, was surprised to see the Prophet shedding tears. He objected to it saying: "You have been restraining us from weeping for the dead. How is it that you are now shedding tears at the death of your son? "

The objector was not only not aware of the sublime basic principle of Islam but was also ignorant of the spirit and special sentiments with which the Almighty has endowed human beings. All human instincts have been created for particular purposes and it is necessary that everyone of them should manifest itself at its proper time and place.

A person who is not moved by the death of his near ones, whose heart does not move, whose eyes do not shed tears, in short, who does not display any reaction on account of being separated from them is nothing more than a stone, and should not be called a human being.

However, a delicate and appreciable point deserves attention here for although this objection was baseless, it tells us that complete freedom and perfect democracy existed in the newly formed society of the Muslims at that time, so that a person could pick up courage to comment upon the action of his absolute ruler with perfect freedom and without any fear or awe and could also get a reply.

The Prophet replied: "I have never said that you should not weep on the death of your dear ones, because it is a sign of kindness and pity and a person whose heart is not moved for others does not become entitled to the blessings of Allah.⁵ I have said that you should not make excessive lamentations on the death of your near ones and neither utter indecent or objectionable words nor tear your dress out of too much grief".⁶

As directed by the Prophet the Commander of the Faithful washed the dead body of Ibrahim and shrouded him. Then the Prophet and some of his companions escorted the funeral party and buried the child in the Baqi' graveyard.⁷

The Prophet looked into the grave of Ibrahim and saw a pit in a corner thereof. In order to level it he sat

down on the ground, smoothed the surface of the grave with his own hands, and uttered this sentence: "Whenever anyone of you does a job he should endeavour to do it in a solid way".

Campaign Against Superstitions

Solar eclipse took place on the day Ibrahim passed away. Some persons, who were ignorant of the laws of nature, thought that the sun had been eclipsed on account of the death of Ibrahim. Although this thinking was absolutely baseless, it could apparently be beneficial for the Prophet. In case, therefore, he had been an ordinary and a worldly leader he could very well confirm this view and thus prove his own magnificence and greatness.

However, as opposed to this thinking, he mounted the pulpit and informed the people of the factual position. He said: "O People! Be it known to you that the sun and the moon are the signs of the Power of Allah. They move in a particular course which Allah has prescribed for them according to the laws of nature. They are not eclipsed on account of the death or birth of anyone. It is your duty, at the time of solar eclipse, to offer prayers".⁸

As opposed to many people, who not only interpret facts in their own favour but also take advantage of the ignorance and superstitious thinking of the people, he did not conceal facts and did not try to profit from the ignorance of the people.

If he had endorsed this false thinking on that day he could not have been able to signalize himself and claim to be the eternal leader of mankind and the representative and the chosen one of Allah during the present age when astronomy has taken long strides and the reasons for the solar and lunar eclipses have become clearly known to mankind.

His law and call are not for Arabs alone and are not confined to any time and space. If he is the leader of those, who lived in earlier ages, he is also the Prophet of the space age and of the period of the discovery of the secrets of nature. On whatever subject he has spoken, his words are so sound and firm that the recent scientific upheavals, which have disproved many of the theories of the past scholars, have not been able to find even one weak point in his statements.

1. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 34 and Bihar, vol. XXII, page 157.

2. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXIII, page 114.

3. Muhajjatul Baydhah, vol. III, page 366.

4. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 166. However, some Shi'ah scholars have stated that he had only two male children from Khadijah. (Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 151-new edition).

5. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 151.

6. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 348.

7. Biharul Anwar, vol. XXII, page 156). According to Halabi the washing and shrouding of the Prophet's son, Ibrahim was performed by Fadl, the son of the Prophet's uncle Abbas.

8. al-Muhasin, page 313 and Seerah-i Halabi, page 348.

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