

Kufa

When the daughters of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) entered Kufa, the city's residents gathered to see them, so Umm Kulthum shouted at them, “O people of Kufa! Do not you have any sense of shame before Allah and His Messenger so you look at the ladies of the Prophet (S)?”¹

One of Kufa's women came to them and saw their condition for which even a most bitter enemy would feel sorry. She asked them what captives they were, and she was told: “We are captives belonging to the Progeny of Muhammad (S).”²

The people of Kufa kept doling out dates, walnuts and bread to the children, whereupon Umm Kulthum, that is, Zainab al-Kubra, shouted at them that they were prohibited from accepting charity. She threw away what had been given to those children.³

O father of Hasan!

She overlooks and in the slumber she delights

Now only with her hand can Zainab cover her face

O father of Hasan!

Are you pleased with your women in captivity,

As Banu Harb's women in their chambers veiled with grace?

Does your side on the bed find comfort and ease,

While your daughters on the camels to Syria are brought?

Do you find life pleasing when your wise ladies are uncovered?

Whenever they cry, with lashes they are whipped.

To the east they are once taken by the mean gangs,

And once towards the land of shame are taken, to the west.

None to protect them as they cross every plain,

None heeds their complaints when they complain.

Their voices were lost and their hearts melted,

Their breath by grief is almost snatched away.

Amazed am I about one who thinks of fate
And contemplates upon it and wonders alone:
A fornicator turns about on his throne,
As Husayn on the ground is left unburied,
And his head is on a lance openly carried,
And with the crown is crowned the son of a whore.
For three days did Husayn stay unburied or more.
One's body is to cruel elements left exposed
As the other covers his with silk and with gold...4

Zainab's Speech

The daughter of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) explained to people Ibn Ziyad's villainy and meanness in a speech which she delivered to them. She signaled to the large crowd to calm down. They did, standing as if birds were resting on their heads.

Nothing could quieten the commotion nor silence the numerous voices other than the divine dignity and the magnificence of Muhammad (S) that crowned the wise lady who descended from his Progeny (S).

When Zainab daughter of 'Ali ('a) signaled to people to calm down, they did. They stood speechless and motionless, and even the bells of their animals stopped ringing. It was then that she, calm and composed and with courage reminiscent of that of [her revered father] Hayder ('a), addressed them saying:

"All Praise is due to Allah Peace and blessings be upon my [grand]father Muhammad (S) and upon his good and righteous Progeny ('a). May the resounding [of this calamity] never stops. Your similitude is one who unspins what is already spun out of the desire to violate [a trust]. You make religion a source of your income..."

Is there anyone among you one who is not a boaster of what he does not have, a charger of debauchery, a conceited liar, a man of grudge without any justification, one submissive like bondmaids, an instigator, a pasture of what is not wholesome, a reciter of a story to someone buried?

Truly bad is that which your souls have committed. You have reaped the Wrath of Allah, remaining in the chastisement for eternity. Do you really cry and sob? By Allah, you should then cry a great deal and laugh very little, for you have earned nothing but shame and infamy, and you shall never be able to wash it away, and how could you do so?

The descendant of the Bearer of the Last Message (S), the very essence of the Message, the source of your security and the beacon of your guidance, the refuge of the righteous from among you, the one who

saves you from calamity, the Master of the Youths of Paradise... is killed. O how horrible is the sin that you bear...!

Miserable you are and renegades from the path of righteousness; may you be distanced and crushed. The effort is rendered futile, the toil is ruined, the deal is lost, and you earned nothing but Wrath from Allah and from His Messenger (S).

You are doomed with servitude and humiliation. Woe unto you, O Kufians! Do you know whose heart you have burned, what a "feat" you have laboured, what blood you have shed, and what sanctity you have violated?

You have done a most monstrous deed, something for which the heavens are about to split asunder and so is the earth, and for which the mountains crumble. You have done something most uncanny, most defaced, as much as the fill of the earth and of the sky.

*Do you wonder why the sky rains blood? Surely the torment of the hereafter is a greater chastisement, and they shall not be helped. Let no respite elate you, for rushing does not speed it up, nor does it fear the loss of the opportunity for revenge. Your Lord is waiting in ambush for you."*⁵

Imam al-Sajjad ('a) said to her, "*That is enough, O aunt, for you are, Praise to Allah, a learned lady whom none taught, one who comprehends without being made to do so.*"⁶

The wise lady discontinued her speech. The crowd which had been brainwashed by lies and by greed stood stunned. Her statements caused many to wake up and the minds to listen to reason. Her speech had the greatest effect on people's hearts, so they realized the magnanimity of what they had committed; now they did not know what to do.

From the *wasi* did she inherit wisdom
Particularly hers in its beauty and oratory.
Whenever she expounds you would believe
From oratory she derives her treasures.
Or like a sword in the hand of a valiant she may be
With it he defended and won victory.
Or that she leads a whole regiment of hosts
And drives from facts' hosts a crowd.
Or in the Imamate's woods a lioness
For her roaring even heads bow down.
Or she is the tumultuous ocean whose waves
Crushed one another in knowledge, might and dignity.
Or from the Lord's Wrath lightning ensues

From which Harb's clan could not escape.
Or that Hayder on his steed wipes out
The hosts of misguidance one after another.
Or the summit of the pulpit embraced him,
So for the *Shari'a* did he ignite a light.
Or in wisdom has the wise lady
of Hashim shattered blindness greatly.⁷

Fatima, Daughter of Al-Husayn ('a) delivers a Speech

Fatima, al-Husayn's daughter,⁸ delivered a speech saying,

“All Praise is due to Allah, as much as the number of the sands and of the stones, as much as the 'Arsh weighs up to the ground. I praise Him, believe in Him, and rely upon Him, and I testify that there is no god other than Allah, the One and Only God, there is no partner with Him, and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, and that his offspring have been slaughtered by the Euphrates river neither on account of blood revenge nor out of dispute over inheritance.

Lord! I seek refuge with You against telling a lie about You and against saying anything contrary to what

You have revealed of taking many a covenant regarding the vicegerency of 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib ('a), the man whose right is confiscated and who was killed without having committed a sin, just as his son was only yesterday killed, at one of the houses of Allah, the most Exalted One, at the hands of those who give Islam nothing but lip service.

Destruction may afflict their heads that did not ward off from him any injustice as long as he lived nor at his death, till Allah Almighty took his soul to Him while his essence was praised, his dealing with others was commendable, his merits were well known, and his beliefs well admitted by everyone. Never did he ever accept anyone's blame nor the criticism of any critic in doing what is right.

Lord! You guided him to Islam even when he was a child and praised his virtues when he grew up. Never did he ever cease enjoining others to follow Your Path and that of Your Messenger (S). He always paid no heed to the riches of this world. He always desired the hereafter, a man who carried out jihad for Your Cause.

With him were You pleased, so You chose him and guided him to a Straight Path. O people of Kufa! O people of treachery, of betrayal and conceit! We are members of a Household tried on your account by Allah, afflicted by you.

He made our dealing with you good, and He entrusted His knowledge to us, and He bestowed upon us its comprehension; so, we are the bastion of His knowledge, understanding and wisdom, and His Arguments on the earth which He created for the good of His servants!

Allah bestowed upon us His blessings and greatly honoured us with His Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his Progeny, favouring us over many of those whom He created.

Yet you called us liars and apostates, and in your eyes you deemed killing us as lawful, and so is looting our possessions, as if we were the offspring of the Turks or of Kabul, just as you killed our grandfather in the past. Your swords drip with our blood, the blood of Ahl al-Bayt, out of past animosity.

Thus have your eyes been cooled, and thus have your hearts been elated, telling lies about Allah and out of evil plans which you hatched, while Allah is the very best of planners. So do not be carried away with your excitement because of our blood that you have spilled or our wealth that you have snatched away, for what has befallen us is truly a great tragedy and a momentous calamity

“In a Book even before We created them; surely this is easy for Allah, so that you may not be grieved because of what you missed nor feel happy because of what you acquired, and Allah does not love anyone who is conceited, boastful” (Qur’an, 57:23).

May you be ruined! Expect to be cursed and to be tormented, for it seems as though it has already befallen you, and more and more signs of Wrath are on their way to you from the heavens till He makes you taste of the chastisement and make some of you taste of the might of others, then on the Day of Judgment shall you all remain for eternity in the painful torment on account of the injustice with which you have treated us; the curse of Allah be upon the oppressors.

Woe unto you! Do you know what hand you have stabbed, what soul found fighting us agreeable? Rather, by what feet did you walk towards us with the intention to fight us? Your hearts became hardened, and Allah sealed your hearts, your hearing, and your vision, and Satan inspired to you and dictated, placing a veil over your eyes, so you can never be guided.

Destruction is your lot, O people of Kufa! What a legacy of the Prophet (S) is standing before you, and what blood revenge will he seek from you on account of your enmity towards his brother, ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib (‘a), my grandfather, and towards his good and righteous offspring, yet you even brag about it saying:

We killed ‘Ali and the sons of ‘Ali,
With Indian swords and spears,
And we placed their women in captivity
Like the Turks! We crushed them with severity.

May stones and pebbles fill your mouths! You brag about killing people whom Allah chose and purified with a perfect purification and from whom He kept away all abomination. Suppress it, then, and squat just as your fathers did, for each will get the rewards of what he earns and will be punished for what he committed.

You envied us, woe unto you, for what Allah, the most Exalted One, favoured and preferred us. Such is Allah's favour: He bestows His favours upon whomsoever He pleases, and surely with Allah are great favours. For whoever Allah does not make a noor, he shall have no noor at all.”

Voices were raised with weeping and wailing, and they said to her, “Enough, enough, O daughter of the pure ones, for you have burnt our hearts and necks,” so she took to silence.

Umm Kulthum Speaks Out

Umm Kulthum⁹ said,

“Silence, O people of Kufa! Your men murder us, while your women mourn us! The judge between us and you is Allah on the Day of Final Judgment. O people of Kufa! Horrible, indeed, is what you have committed. Why did you betray Husayn? Why did you kill him, loot his wealth, then take his women captive? May you be ruined, and may you be crushed!

Woe unto you! Do you know what adversities have befallen you and what a burden of sins you have placed on your backs? Do you know what blood you have shed and what honourable ladies you have afflicted, what children you have orphaned, and what wealth you have looted?

You killed the best of men after the Prophet (S), so mercy was removed from your hearts! Surely Allah's party shall be the winner, whereas the party of Satan shall be the loser.”

People burst in tears, women pulled their hair in grief and beat their faces and cheeks, crying and wailing, and there were more tearful eyes that day than anyone could ever recall.

al-Sajjad (‘a) Delivers a Speech

‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn (‘a) was brought on a lean camel. Chains were placed on his neck, and he was handcuffed. Both sides of his neck were bleeding. He was repeating these verses:

O nation of evil, may your quarter never tastes of water!

O nation that never honoured in our regard our Grandfather!
Should we and the Messenger of Allah meet
On the Judgment Day, how would you then plead?
On bare beasts of burden have you
Transported us, as if we never put up a creed for you!

He signaled to people to be silent. Once they were silent, he praised Allah and glorified Him and saluted the Prophet (S). Then he said,

“O people! Whoever recognizes me knows me, and whoever does not, let me tell him that I am ‘Ali son of al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib (‘a). I am the son of the man whose sanctity has been violated, whose wealth has been plundered, whose children have been seized.

I am the son of the one who has been slaughtered by the Euphrates neither out of blood revenge nor on account of an inheritance. I am the son of the one killed in the worst manner. This suffices me to be proud. O people!

I plead to you in the Name of Allah: Do you not know that you wrote my father then deceived him? Did you not grant him your covenant, your promise, and your allegiance, then you fought him? May you be ruined for what you have committed against your own souls, and out of your corrupt views!

Through what eyes will you look at the Messenger of Allah (S) when he says to you, “You killed my Progeny, violated my sanctity, so you do not belong to my nation”?”

Loud cries rose, and they said to each other, “You have perished, yet you are not aware of it.” Then he (‘a), said, *“May Allah have mercy on anyone who acts upon my advice, who safeguards my legacy with regard to Allah, His Messenger (S), and his Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), for we have in the Messenger of Allah (S) a good example of conduct to emulate.”*

They all said, “We, O son of the Messenger of Allah, hear and obey, and we shall safeguard your trust. We shall not turn away from you, nor shall we disobey you; so, order us, may Allah have mercy on you, for we shall fight when you fight, and we shall seek peace when you do so; we dissociate ourselves from whoever oppressed you and dealt unjustly with you.”

He (‘a), said, *“Far, far away it is from you to do so, O people of treachery and conniving! You are separated from what you desire. Do you want to come to me as you did to my father saying, ‘No, by the Lord of all those [angels] that ascend and descend’?!”*

*The wound is yet to heal. My father was killed only yesterday, and so were his Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), and the loss inflicted upon the Messenger of Allah (S), upon my father (‘a), and upon my family is yet to be forgotten. Its pain, by Allah, is between both of these [sides] and its bitterness is between my throat and palate. Its choke is resting in my very chest.”*¹⁰

Wait, O Banu Harb, for what we have gone through
 Is seen by the Lord of Heavens who well knows all.
 It is as if on Judgment Day I see Ahmad
 Before the messengers comes rolling up his sleeves
 And to you shall he say: Woe unto you!
 My sanctity did you violate
 And your swords drank of my blood,
 Do you know what blood you on the ground spilled?
 Or which ladies you took to captivity?
 Is it just that you safeguard your girls
 And leave my free ladies taken captive like the Daylams?
 And should you make water for the wild beasts permissible
 While my children because of thirst are on fire?
 O by Allah! If the hosts of unbelievers
 Had ever vanquished my offspring,
 They would never have committed such great injustice.
 O how Muhammad will feel when you have
 Stabbed the necks and slit the throats?
 Such is your reward for me so
 How soon you were untrue
 To the trust with regard to my daughter
 And with regard to my brother?¹¹

1. Muhammad Jawad Shubbar, *Al-Dam'ah al-Sakibah*, p. 364.

2. Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*, p. 84. Ibn Tawus, *Al-Luhuf*, p. 81.

3. Sayyid Ka'im al-Rashti al-Ha'iri, *Asrar al-Shohada*, p. 477. Radiyy ad-Din al-Qazwini, *Tazallum al-Zahra'*, p. 150.

4. Excerpted from a poem in praise of al-Husayn ('a) by Shaikh Hassun al-Hilli who died in 1305 A.H./1888 A.D. as we are told on p. 155, Vol. 2, of *Shu'ara' al-Hilla*.

5. This speech is compiled from the writings of Shaikh al-Tusi in his *Amali* as well as that of his son, from *Al-Luhuf* of Ibn Tawus,, Ibn Nama, Ibn Shahr Ashub, and from al-Tabarsi's book *Al-Ihtijaj*.

6. al-Tabarsi, *Al-Ihtijaj*, p. 166 (Najaf's edition).

7. Excerpted from a poem by the 'Allama Mirza Muhammad 'Ali al-Urdabadi in praise of the wise lady Zainab, peace be upon her.

8. Fatima daughter of al-Husayn ('a), was a great personality. She enjoys a great status in the creed. Her father, the Master of Martyrs, testifies to this fact. When al-Hasan II approached him asking him for the hand of either of his two daughters, he ('a), as we are told on p. 202 of *Nur al-Absar*, said to him, "I choose for you Fatima, for she, more than anyone else, is like my mother Fatima daughter of the Messenger of Allah". As far as the creed is concerned, she stays awake all night long offering prayers, and the daytime she spends fasting. In beauty, she looks like the huris with large lovely eyes." On p. 442, Vol. 12, of Ibn Hajar's book titled *Tahthib al-Tahthib*, she is said to have narrated hadith from her father, brother Zaynul-'Abidin, aunt Zainab, Ibn 'Abbas, and Asma' daughter of 'Umays. Her sons, 'Abdullah, Ibrahim, and

Husayn, and her daughter, Umm Ja'far, offspring of al-Hasan II, quote her hadith. Abul-Miqdam quotes her hadith through his mother.

Zuhayr Ibn Mu'awiyah quotes her hadith through his mother. On p. 425 of Khulasat Tahthib al-Kamal, it is stated that the authors of the sunan books, including al-Tirmithi, Abu Dawud, and al-Nasa'i, have all quoted her ahadith. So does the author of Musnad 'Ali. Ibn Majah al-Qazwini does likewise. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani says, "She is mentioned in the book of funerals in Bukhari's Sahih, and Ibn Hibban holds her reliable, adding that she died in 110 A.H./729 A.D." So do both authors, al-Yafi'i, on p. 234, Vol. 1, of his book Mir'at al-Jinan, and Ibn al-'Imad, on p. 39, Vol. 1, of his book Shatharat. Based on what Ibn Hajar says in his book Tahthib al-Tahthib, she must have lived for almost ninety years, placing her year of birth at about 30 A.H./651 A.D.

Hence, she must have been almost thirty years old during the Battle of al-Taff. She died seven years before her sister Sukayna. On p. 35, Vol. 4, of Ibn al-Athir's book Al-Kamil, and also according to p. 267, Vol. 6, of al-Tabari's Tarikh, Fatima was older than her sister Sukayna. On p. 18 of Tahqiq al-Nusra ila Ma'alim Dar al-Hijra by Abu Bakr Ibn al-Husayn Ibn 'Umar al-Maraghi (d. 816 A.H./1414 A.D.), one of the signs of her lofty status with Allah is that when al-Walid Ibn 'Abd al-Malik ordered to house the chambers within the parameters of the Mosque, Fatima daughter of al-Husayn ('a) went out to al-Harra where she had a house built for her. Then she ordered a well to be dug up; a mountain stone appeared in it, and she was informed of it.

She made her ablution then sprinkled the leftover water on it. After that, it was not difficult at all to dig that well. People used to seek blessings through the use of its water, calling it "Zamzam". On p. 474, Vol. 8, of Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat (Sadir's edition), Fatima daughter of al-Husayn ('a) used to use knots on a string as her rosary bead. In the manuscript of my book Naqd al-Tarikh, I cited the historians who claimed that she married a follower of 'Othman, proving that Muhammad al-Dibaj [her fabricated husband] was a fictitious character created by the pens of those who follow al-Zubayr.

9. In several places of this book have we pointed out the fact that Umm Kulthum is the wise lady Zainab, and the following statements are excerpted from her speech quoted above. We are repeating it only following in the tradition of other narrators of this epic.

10. All these speeches are mentioned by Ibn Tawus in his book Al-Luhuf and by Ibn Nama in his book Muthir al-Ahzan.

11. These verses were composed by al-Hajj Muhammad Ri'za al-Azri and published on p. 445 (Najaf: Al-Adab Press) of Riyad al-Madh wa al-Ratha'.

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