

Chapter 31: History is Very Powerful

We have already said that the speeches and addresses of the Ahlul Bayt remained prescribed and were free from distortion. They have been recorded in books and documents and have reached us through reliable sources.

Today it is possible to narrate the event of Karbala in detail by means of the speeches which Imam Husayn and the Ahlul Bayt delivered in Makkah and on their way from the Hijaz to Iraq and at Karbala, Kufa, Syria and Madina, by means of the replies given by them to the questions asked by various persons, by means of the epic verses recited by the Imam himself and his companions before the enemy on the day of Ashura and which are recorded and preserved in reliable resources, and by means of the letters which were exchanged between the Imam and the people of Kufa and Basra as well as the letter written by Yazid to Ibn Ziyad and the letters written by Ibn Ziyad and Umar bin Sad to Ibn Ziyad and the letters by Ibn Ziyad to the Governor of Madina, all of which are recorded in reliable history books and will reach the hands of future generations and remain safe for ever. In the presence of these sources there remains no need for any other source or document for the compilation of the history of Ashura.

When Yazid wrote a letter to Ibn Ziyad appointing him the Governor of Kufa and Basra, he also wrote to him about Muslim bin Aqil saying: "I understand that Muslim has come to Kufa to create differences between the Muslims". And when Muslim was arrested and brought before Ibn Ziyad the latter said to him harshly "a son of Aqil! The people of this city were living in peace and then you came and created differences between them and made them bitter enemies of one another".

It was the same thing which Yazid had written about Muslim, and Ibn Ziyad did not add anything to it and repeated it to Muslim and this too was recorded in history. Muslim said in reply: "It is not so. I have not come to this city of my own accord and have also not come to disturb the people and to create differences and discord between them. On the contrary it is evident from the letters written by them to us that your father Ziyad killed their good persons, and shed their blood, and behaved towards them like unjust persons and the tyrants. We have, therefore, come to establish justice and to invite the people to obey the commands of the Holy Qur'an".

Evidently how could it be possible that what Yazid and Ibn Ziyad wrote and said should have found its

place in history whereas the brief reply given by Muslim wherein he pointed out the mal-administration during the rule of Ziyad, who was one of the tyrants of Iraq, should have been omitted from history and none should have heard it or written about it? In that event the future generations would have remained unaware of it and would have believed that Muslim was seditious, cruel, mischievous, and one, who created differences between the people and this was not possible. Yazid could kill the Imam and his companions, and could also make his Ahlul Bayt prisoners. He could not, however, alter the verdict of history and create for himself a place in it other than that which he possesses.

In order to inform the people formally about the tragedy of Karbala Ibn Ziyad went to the Jame'i Masjid of Kufa and said such things that if he had not done so Husayn bin Ali would have been mentioned in the history of Islam as a liar. In the presence of a few thousand Iraqi Muslims he mounted the pulpit of the Jame'i Masjid of Kufa and said: "Allah be thanked that he made truth and the truthful victorious and helped the Commander of the Faithful Yazid and his party, and killed the liar son of the liar i.e. Husayn bin Ali and his supporters".

Truly speaking if history had favored Ibn Ziyad at this stage to some extent he would not have been given a reply in that assembly and by the side of that very pulpit. It was possible that this speech, which was delivered in the Masjid of the Muslims and before the Muslims by the ruler of the Muslims, might have created doubts in the minds of some persons for some time, and it might have been thought, although by persons lacking intelligence and the spirit of investigation that maybe that was the reality and those persons were telling the truth and the man who had mounted the pulpit and was thanking Allah for this occurrence so firmly in His own House was right, and it appeared that it was really good that Husayn bin Ali had been killed.

However, before even one person had left the Masjid, a Muslim was courageous enough to give a reply to that foolish remark and it was recorded in history. Shaykh Mufid and Tabari write that before Ubaydullah ended his speech Abdullah bin Afif Azadi Ghamidi rose from his place. (When the nonsense talk of Ibn Ziyad crossed the limits) Abdullah sprang up from his place and said: "O Ibn Marjana! Liar, son of the liar is you, your father, and he who has sent you as ruler of Iraq, and his father. Do you pretend to advocate truthfulness after killing the children of the Holy Prophet?"

Ibn Ziyad, who imagined that he ruled over history as well, said: "Bring him before me". There was a tumult and what this enlightened man had said could no longer be ignored. This brave person sacrificed his life for the sake of his truthful words and was sent to the gallows under the orders of Ibn Ziyad. However, his words recorded his name in the history of Ashura with his blood.

When Ibn Ziyad looked at the sacred head of the Imam, he laughed and struck a stick, which he held in his hand, on the teeth of the Imam Zayd bin Arqam, a companion of the Holy Prophet who was then very old turned towards Ibn Ziyad and said: "Keep your stick off these two lips for I swear by Allah besides whom there is no god that I have seen innumerable times that the Holy Prophet placed his lips on these lips".

He uttered these words and began to weep and lament. Perhaps Ibn Ziyad was under the impression that a person might be a Muslim and might also kill the children of the Holy Prophet, he might consider the guardians of Islam to be liars and still remain a Muslim and he might shed the blood of the dear ones of Islam and still appear as a Muslim in the history of Islam.

1. He was one of the supporters of Imam Ali. He lost his left eye in the Battle of the Camel and also lost his right eye in the Battle of Siffin and thus became blind. He used to come to the Masjid Kufa every day in the morning where he remained busy in prayers and supplications and returned home at night.

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