BEAUTIES OF ASHOURA

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Abstract: Hazrat Zaynab answering Ibn Ziyad who said, “how did you judge what God had done with your brother and your family?” replied, “ ما رایت الا جمیلا” [i. e. I see just beauties.]

Our discussion is about beauties of Ashoura or as it has been said the white dimension of it. That stage which its actors were imam Husayn and his companionship. That dimension which is lighted, clear and full of meaning. Imam Husayn in the dark scene of Ashoura is that oppressed one who is slaughtered; but in the illuminated side of this scene is a warrior who is everlasting alive one whom should be followed and set as a role model.

Key words: *Ashoura, sacrifice, devotion*

In the evening of Tasoa (the night before Ashoura), when the army of Omar ibn Sad was preparing to fight with imam Hussein, the imam asked his brother to go towards them and asked for more time so that they could pray and talk to God. Historians have said imam and his companions in the eve of

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Ashura prayed and recited the Koran, engaged in supplications; whispers of their worship reached ears similar to honey bee's. In the midday of Ashura, imam Husayn requested cease fire for a short time to say their prayers. The enemies did not agree to stop war for a short time, even one of them said your prayers would not be accepted. Finally imam stood up to say his prayer among the arrows thrown at him.

Ashoura is the day of Husayn virtues. If it was not Ashoura, some of his virtues would be undiscovered. It is possible to make a list from those virtues just revealed in Ashora day including patience, satisfaction, trust in God, bravery, perseverance, self-confidence, and liberty.

Though imam's companions and relatives were murdered, he did not lose his patience and perseverance. One of the witnesses of that tragic event said I swear by God, I have never seen the one who was being surrounded by enemies and whose companions and relatives are murdered but he still remained as brave as Husayn. Even when the neck of his baby was cut in two by an arrow, he said, "هون علی ما نزل بی انه بعین الله which means whatever of calamity pouring on me, as I am at the presence of God (and He sees), is tolerable and easy for me. " A person can say this sentence who finds God as a witness and believes that there is a Day of Judgment.

As the holy Prophet had Meraj (ascending to the skies to meet God), and Ghadir Day was the day for imam Ali to reach perfection, Ashoura was a day for imam Husayn to ascend to skies. But at this time, not only he himself but also his companions experienced this Meraj. They saw death in front of themselves but they ignored it. They did not hesitate in their battle. It is narrated that in the morning of Ashora day, Burayr ibn Khuzair cracked jokes. Abdul Rahman said, "Why are you joking? Now is not a good time to joke." Borayr said, my relatives assert that I did not like jokes when I was young, let alone now, but the heaven which is in front of us makes me so fresh.

Describing companions of Prophet, Imam Ali said their battle was wisely: حملوا بصائرهم علی اسیافهم. Those who followed imam Husayn to Karbala, put their steps on this way wisely and realized that what a dangerous way is in front of them. Imam Husayn did not deceive or allured anyone. He explicitly told them the dangers ahead. Hearing martyrdom of his companions in Kofa, imam Husayn did not hide this matter, but said openly, terrible news came to us and that is the murder of Moslim ibn Aghil, Hani ibn Orveh and Abdullah ibn Yaghtor. Our followers left us alone, so anyone who wants to return, do return, return doubtlessly that there remains no contract between us. After announcing

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this, some who joined them and were greedy for wealth and position returned. But those who did not leave Imam Husayn alone, were the chosen one; those who entered the battle wisely.

None of imam Husayn's companions joined the enemies. But in contrast, a group of the opponents joined imam. And some other ones had this in their mind but it did not come true. The usual trend is at the time of hardship people join more powerful side specially when they are sure they are going to be killed. But his companions were ready to be slaughtered and did not join the enemies.

Let me explain clearly that even imam Husayn asked his companions to take advantage of darkness and left his army and saved their life. One of the splendid points of Ashoura is this. In return for this magnanimity of imam Husayn, his companions behaved manly and did not accept to leave him. The rumor which says a group of his companions left him that night is doubtful. He told his companions in the night before Ashoura, اِنّی قَدْ رَأیتُ [اَذِنْتُ] لَکُمْ فَانْطَلِقُوا جَمیعاً فِی حِلّ، لَیسَ عَلیکُمْ مِنّی ذِمامٌ، هذا لَیلٌ قَدْ غَشِیَکُم فَاتَّخِذُوهُ جَمَلاً I let you go all and I am satisfied. There is no right of me on you. Now, the night casted on every where, so mount on you camels (and go).

In return for this behavior, his companions also stayed there. Brothers of Moslem ibn Aghil said, "May God make the life after you ugly (worthless)." Mohammad ibn Bashir said, "Wild animals eat me alive if I leave you." Also Saeed ibn Abdullah swore God and said, " if I knew I'll be killed, then I'll be given life again, then I am burned again and my dust will wiped out by wind, and this will happen to me 70 times, still I do not leave you. " Zohayr ibn Ghayn said, " I swear God I like to be killed a thousand times and then come to life and again be killed, if I know my death save your life and the life of youth of your family. "

It was clear that imam's companions came to devote their life and do not left him. But look at the ignorance of their enemies; for example, Shemr, one of the enemies, approached imam and said, the sons of our sister (the children of Ommul Banin, from Bani Kalab tribe, who were Abulfazl, Jafar, and Uthman) are in our custody. But they not only did not accept, but also cursed Shemr and said you gave us shelter while the son of the Prophet of God is not safe?

While imam Husayn was searching for those who could help him but at the same time he did not accept every one. He was careful that lest one of his companions owned people. Therefore,

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he selected an agent to go among his companions and announced on behalf of imam that, لايُقاتِلُ مَعَى رَجلٌ عَلَيهِ دَينٌ.. .. فَانّى سَمِعتُ رَسولَ الله ـ صلّى الله عليه و سلّم ـ يَقُولُ: مَنْ ماتَ وَ عَلَيهِ دَينٌ أُخِذَ مِنْ حَسَناتِهِ يَوم الْقِيامَهِ which means if anyone owns someone, he shouldn't join me in this war, I have heard from the Prophet who said, anyone who died but he owned people, in the resurrection day, his good deeds will be deduced. Or in another tradition, one person stood up and said, my wife has accepted to pay my debts. Imam said, what about her Nafaghe? Also in another tradition, one of the companions of imam said, I owe someone. Imam said, anyone who owes, shouldn't come with me.

In the day of Ashoura, some companions of imam Husayn preceded other ones and did not let any one of Bani Hashim go to the battle field before them. The relatives of imam also went to the battle field before imam, to delay the time of martyrdom of imam. From imam family, the first one who asked permission to go to the battle field was Ali Akbar. The oldest son of imam whose face and behavior were very similar to Prophet. One of the shining point of Ashoura is this point that imam, first, devoted his own son and he is the first martyr of his family. When Ali Akbar was asking permission, imam gave permission immediately, but when the son of his brother, Qasim ibn Hassan, wanted permission, imam did not accept until he pleaded again and again and finally got the permission.

Whatever we writes of brevity of Imam Husayn and his companions in the day of Ashoura is less. Of course, there is a misunderstanding here which causes historical distortions. Some thought that brevity is when one can alone kill several people in war, so they exaggerated about the number of killed one in Omar ibn Sad army. But the truth is brevity is a psychological power and ability to risk, fight and not to be sure of victory.

Of course, the army of imam Husayn had power and strength. It has been written a lot in this regard, but it is better to narrate from the enemies: Omar ibn Hajjaj in the day of Ashoura, when he saw the brevity of companions of imam Husayn, asked his soldiers not to go for one to one fight but throw stones on them. He told his soldiers, "oh naïve people! Do you know who this one you are fighting with is? They are the best fighters. "

One of the soldiers of Omar ibn Saad told about imam Husayn companions: a group has attacked us holding swords, like wild lions. They won't accept any shelter from us nor are interested in wealth.

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In Islam, it is haram to wage a war and it is forbidden to talk someone into starting a battle. Imam Husayn did not start war. When the soldiers of Horr surrounded him in Karbala, Zohayr ibn Ghain offered imam Husayn to start the war because it was less complicated in comparison to what expected them. But imam answered, ما كُنتُ لَاَبْدَاَهُم بِالْقِتالِ which means I do not start war.

In the day of Ashoura, Shemr approached tents of imam Husayn and cursed him. Moslem ibn Osajeh insisted to be ordered to shot Shemr dead. He said, my shooting is always fine and this bad man is one of the greatest oppressors. But imam answered, لاتَرمِهْ فَاِنّی اَکرَهُ اَنْ اَبدَاَهُمْ which means do not throw an arrow that I don't want to start the war.

Compare his behavior with what Omar ibn Saad and his army did in the day of Ashoura. Omar put an arrow in the bow and threw it while he was saying, «اِشْهَدوا اَنّی اَوّلُ مَنْ رَمی which means be witness that I was the first one who threw an arrow.

Moslem ibn Aghil, the deputy of imam Husayn in Kofa, also was very moral; he avoided assassination of Obaydullah ibn Ziyad, and in this way observed ethical codes even for enemies. The story was like this: Moslem stayed in the house of Hani ibn Orva and Sharik ibn Avar, who was a great, famous and sick person, was there at the same time. Ibn Ziyad decided to visit him and Sharik wanted to take advantage, so he asked Moslem this bad man was going to visit me tonight. When he sat down, you came out of the other room suddenly and killed him. Then you could go to the palace of Kofa with ease. And if I got better, I would go to Basra and would take control of there. You could feel secure then.

But Moslem avoided killing him. When ibn Ziyad left there, Sharik asked Moslem why didn't you kill him? Moslem said, because it is narrated from Prophet that he prohibits all of assassination. Hani said if you had killed him, in fact, you had killed a kafir, a bad, and a treacherous person. The truth is if Moslem had killed ibn Ziyad, and conquered Kofa, the route of history would change. Imam Husayn entered there, and Moslem sat in the seat of ibn Ziyad. Whatever happened after that could not be as moving as what happened in Ashoura. But the deputy of imam Husayn, Moslem, who was similar to his name a real Moslem, did not want to reach his goal through immoral means.

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