

Appendix I: Arrival of Jabir and Atiyya in Karbala

Shaykh Tusi writes in his book entitled *Misbahul Mutahajjid* that 20th of the month of Safar is the day on which Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari a companion of the Holy Prophet came from Madina to Karbala to pay homage to the sacred grave of Imam Husayn and he was the first person who performed homage to the grave of the Imam.

Homage of Imam Husayn on that day is recommended and it is this very homage that is called *Ziyuratul Arba'in*. Shaykh Tusi appears to say that Jabir left Madina with the object of paying homage to the sacred grave of Imam Husayn and arrived at Karbala on the 20th day of Safar and not that he reached Karbala after forty days of the martyrdom of the Imam by chance.

It is not unlikely that it was so, because after the arrival of Ahlul Bayt in Kufa Ibn Ziyad immediately dispatched Abdul Malik bin Abil Harith Salami from Iraq to the Hijaz so that he might arrive in Madina as early as possible and inform Amr bin Sa'id bin As Amavi, the Governor of Madina, about the martyrdom of the Imam and his companions and Abdul Malik proceeded to Madina at once, reached there after a few days, and formally conveyed the news of the martyrdom of the Imam to the governor.

In that case it is possible that on hearing about the tragedy of the martyrdom of the Imam and Bani Hashim and the companions of the Imam, Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari, who according to some narration had lost both of his eyes by that time, might have departed from Madina with the intention of paying homage to the graves of Imam Husayn and his devoted friends, who bravely met martyrdom, and might have arrived in Karbala on the 20th of safar i.e. that is exactly forty days after the martyrdom of the Imam and the tradition of the *Ziyartal Arba'in* of the Imam was commenced by him.

Jabir did not perform this journey alone and had with him a companion who was younger than him and at the same time very learned and respectable. Owing to ignorance some persons have called this great man the slave of Jabir. In fact he enjoyed a high position which has been misrepresented in many religious circles like many other realities. This great man was Atiyya bin Sad bin Junada Awfi Kufi who

was a distinguished *Tabie'* (i.e. the companion of the companion of the Holy Prophet). Atiyya, though not a companion of the Holy Prophet had seen many of his companions like Abdullah Ibn Abbas and acquired knowledge from them.

Tabari, writes in his book entitled *Muntakhab Zaylul Muzayyal* that Atiyya bin Sad bin Junada belonged to the Judaila family of the tribe known as Qays and his patronymic appellation was Abdul Hasan. Thereafter he narrates that Sad bin Junada i.e. the father of Atiyya came to Imam Ali in Kufa and said: 'O Commander of the Faithful! Allah has given me a son. Kindly propose his name". Ali said: "He is the atiyya i.e. gift of Allah". In this sentence Ali also proposed his name and he was named Atiyya.

Tabari continues to say about Atiyya that in 81 A.H. he fought against Hajjaj bin Yusuf Thaqafi, the well-known tyrant Governor of Iraq, in the company of Abdur Rahman bin Muhammad bin Ashath. After Abdur Rahman was killed in 85 A.H. Atiyya ran away to Iran. Hajjaj wrote to Muhammad bin Qasim Thaqafi to summon Atiyya and ask him to curse Ali and, in the event of his refusal to do so, to slash him four hundred times and to shave his head and beard.

Muhammad summoned Atiyya and read over Hajjaj's letter to him so that he might choose one of the two alternatives. Atiyya declined to curse Ali and did not do it and had consequently to agree that four hundred lashes might be struck on him and his head and beard might be shaved according to Hajjaj's orders.

When Qutayba bin Muslim became the Governor of Khurasan Atiyya migrated to that place and continued to stay on there till the time when Umar bin Habira became the Governor of Iraq. Atiyya wrote a letter to him seeking permission to return to Iraq. Umar accorded him permission and he went to Kufa and continued to reside there till he died in 111 A.H. Then Tabari writes that Atiyya quoted many traditions and is reliable.

The aforesaid event has also been narrated on the same lines in the sixth volume of *Tabaqat-i Ibn Sad* and it has been added that Atiyya's mother was Roman slave-girl.

Besides being one of the narrators of traditions and a Muslim Mujahid Atiyya was a great commentator of the Holy Qur'an and he wrote a commentary on it in five volumes. As reported in *Balaghatun Nisa* he quoted the speech of lady Fatima Zahra about Fadak from Abdullah Mahz i.e. Abdullah bin Hasan bin Hasan whose father was Hasan Muthanna, son of Imam Hasan and whose mother was Fatima, daughter of Imam Husayn. Atiyya remained a pupil of Ibn Abbas for some time and attended his lectures on exegesis.

He himself says: "I had three courses of the exegesis of the Qur'an and seventy courses of the reciting of the Qur'an with Ibn Abbas". It means that Ibn Abbas gave two kinds of instruction, one of which consisted of exegesis of the Qur'an and the other of reciting the Qur'an, and Atiyya attended three courses of the former and seventy of the latter.

Holy Qur'an, the Key to Success

The above narration relating to Atiyya shows how great an importance the companions of the Prophet of Allah and the Tabi'in attached to the exegesis and reciting of the Qur'an and how fond they were of acquiring knowledge in this behalf. They knew very well that the glory of the Muslims and their prosperity in this world and in the Hereafter lies under the protection of the Qur'an and it has been revealed so that the Muslims may always recite it and reflect upon its contents. Furthermore, they should learn the meaning of the Qur'an from the Prophet of Allah and should also become acquainted with them themselves and ponder over them.

In the following Qur'anic verse the Muslims have been asked to do two things: Firstly they should learn the meanings and the interpretation of the Qur'an from the Holy Prophet, and secondly they themselves should endeavor to understand it and ponder over its contents. The Almighty Allah says: We have revealed to you the Qur'an that you may explain to the people that which has been revealed for them, so that perhaps they may reflect. (Surah al-Nahl, 16:44)

This verse means that the people are required to perform two things regarding the Holy Qur'an. Firstly they should learn and commit to memory the explanations provided by the Prophet of Allah and should understand by means of his remarks that which needs explanation. It does not, however, mean that an explanation by the Holy Prophet is needed also in respect of those verses which are explicit and clear. Help of explanation by the Holy Prophet is needed in respect of only those verses which are difficult to understand and must be explained in detail, because different persons interpret them differently.

The second duty of the Muslims with regard to the Qur'an is that they themselves should also endeavor to profit by it and utilize their intellect to understand it. To say that the Prophet of Allah may recite the Qur'an before the Muslims and explain it to them does not mean that the Muslims should deprive themselves of understanding the Qur'an and should have asked the Prophet of Allah as to what he understood from the verse:

Allah commands (people) to maintain justice, kindness, and proper relation. (Surah al-Nahl, 16:90)

The meaning of such verses are so clear that every person even with a smattering of Arabic language can profit from them and be guided by them and none will understand from this verse anything except that Allah has ordered the people to be just, not to be oppressive, to do good and be kind to their relatives. Similarly when verses like these were recited before the Muslims:

Woe be to the deceivers: those who when they take demand it in full, but if they measure to them or weigh for them, give less. Do such men not consider that they will be raised again to an awful Day -the day when people will be brought before the Lord of the worlds? (Surah al-Mutaffifin, 83: 1-6)

they could not say that they did not understand their meaning and should, therefore, go and request the Prophet of Allah to explain the same to them.

The Holy Qur'an contains such clear and explicit verses that the Muslims may read them, ponder over their import and obtain the best code of life. Whenever these verses or their translations are read over to some one he understands that Allah is warning those who weigh or measure less when they sell out something. They give to the people lesser than their right, but take their own right in full from them. Allah says that it appears that these people do not believe in the Day of Judgment, when all human beings will stand before Him for the accountability of their deeds.

The Holy Qur'an is the Book from which all the Muslims should benefit and seek guidance and should consider it to be the best remedy for their spiritual and moral ailments. Of course, there are some verses which are difficult to understand and even the great scholars are unable to understand their correct meaning. In the case of such verses, therefore, there is no alternative but to resort to the remarks and explanations of the Prophet of Allah and the Holy Imams. However, all the verses of the Qur'an are not like this, for most of its verses are clear and explicit and intelligible to the people.

In many verses of the Qur'an the phrase, 'O people! Or the phrase, 'O you who believe! occurs. The meaning of such phrases is that in the Holy Qur'an at some places the entire mankind is addressed, and at some places the believers, the unbelievers, and the hypocrites are addressed. The Heavenly Book is for the entire mankind. Islam too is a religion for the entire mankind. Of course, some persons have embraced it and acknowledge it to be the true religion and others have not embraced it and do not acknowledge it to be true.

If some persons do not believe in Allah and have not expressed faith in Him it does not mean that we should say that Allah is the Lord of only the pious and godly people He is the Lord of all the beings which exist or can possibly come into existence and of all the human beings of the world whether believers or unbelievers.

The Holy Prophet is also the Messenger of Allah for the entire mankind including those who believe in him as well as those who do not believe in him. The Qur'an is also a Book which has been revealed for the entire mankind and addresses all the human beings including those who consider it a Divine Book as well as those who do not believe in it on account of ignorance or obstinacy.

Same is the case with Imam Ali and eleven other Imams who have been the Imams and leaders of the entire mankind and the Proof of Allah during the respective periods of their Imamate. They are the Imams of those who believe in their Imamate as well as of those who, for some reason or other, do not believe in it.

Hence, to think that the Qur'an is incomprehensible to the common people and is a sacred Book, which should be kept in our houses only for the sake of felicity and blessings and even if it is read it should be read to earn spiritual reward and that it is not necessary to understand it and act upon it nor to become

strong spiritually and morally, is a baseless thinking contrary to the Qur'an and religion.

This attitude deprives the Muslims from reflecting upon the verses of the Qur'an so that they may not get an opportunity to become acquainted with it, to understand it, to take lessons from it and consequently to increase their faith by reading and hearing its verses. The Almighty Allah has desired His slaves to ponder over the contents of the Qur'an. He says:

Do they not ponder over the Qur'an or are their hearts still locked? (Surah Muhammad, 47: 24)

It is not possible for anyone to recognize Allah and benefit from the teachings of the Qur'an and make it his guide in his life in this world and in the Hereafter without pondering over its contents and understanding it. In the preface to the Tafsir (exegesis) entitled Majmaul Bayan the late Aminul Islam quotes a tradition of the Holy Prophet that can help us in understanding this point.

That tradition is as follows: The Holy Prophet said: "After reckoning has taken place on the Day of Judgment it will be said to the man of the Qur'an i.e. one who believed in the Qur'an and recited and understood it: "Read the Qur'an and ascend as you read it. Now also read the Qur'an in the same way in which you recited it correctly, slowly, regularly and in good order in the world, and read it as well as pondered over it properly, because your halting-place and residence in Paradise is the same where you arrive at the time of reciting the last verse". This tradition should be understood to mean that in Paradise only that person who has recited the Qur'an in this world and ascends from one spiritual and moral position to another by reading each verse, will recite the Qur'an verse after verse and acquire higher position according to the number of the verses.

In the Hereafter none will acquire a position and ascend to a higher rank unless he has acquired a position here and attains to amoral and spiritual rank. Allah has given the Holy Qur'an to the Muslims so that they may consider it to be a pure and sacred Book, ponder over it and benefit from it.

The Muslims should develop more interest and familiarity with the Holy Qur'an than any other book. They should read it with the intention of acting according to its commands.

What a good thing it will be if every Muslim reads a few verses of the Holy Qur'an with this intention, and ponders over them. If he does not know Arabic he should at least study its translation in his own language and acquire blessing from the word of Allah for which no other speech can be substituted. If he reads ten verses to gain spiritual reward he should also read one verse for his spiritual and moral training.

In fact the spirit of spiritual reward is that very good impression, which the reading of the Qur'an makes on the soul of man, and if the reading of the Qur'an or performance of any other good deed makes no impression on his soul it will be meaningless to say that any such act carries spiritual reward. You should determine to read a few verses of the Qur'an every day and also to understand their meanings, as far as possible. At present even the educated persons are afraid of Arabic and of understanding the

Qur'an.

However, one can get rid of this fear very easily. Man is afraid so long as he does not know and does not understand. However, if you get acquainted with the Qur'an and its meanings and develop the habit of benefiting from its teachings and wisdom, you will enjoy reading it. You should, therefore, read the Holy Qur'an and should consider it matchless. Read a few verses of the Qur'an every day, fixing their number according to your own convenience, and try to understand their meanings as far as possible.

If you cannot yet follow the Arabic text of these verses, read their translation along with them and compare it with the Arabic text. And when possible talk with the members of your family about the verses which you read. It is not proper for a Muslim to keep aloof from reading and understanding the Qur'an.

The Almighty Allah has revealed the Qur'an so that the Muslims of the world may get acquainted with it, read it and understand it, obey its commands and develop moral virtues and become free from moral vices through their love for this Heavenly Book. The acquisition of spiritual reward from reading the Qur'an does not also mean anything except that it should reform us and purify our soul.

If you do good deed and Allah gives you spiritual reward, it means that as a result of that deed your soul is elevated to a higher degree and takes a step forward towards perfection. In other words something is added to your self. So long as a good deed does not add anything to the personality of man from the moral viewpoint it is meaningless to say that it carries spiritual reward.

Similarly so long as a bad deed does not reduce something from the personality of man and does not make him inferior as compare with what he is, it will be meaningless to say that he has committed a sin. The deeds which carry spiritual reward are those, which, if performed with good intention, make a good impression on man, increase the purity of his mind, keep good morals alive in his self, and eliminate bad morals from it. As regards sinful deeds they are those, which, if done intentionally, make a bad impression on man, tarnish his soul, aggravate his bad morals, and weaken his good ones, gradually eliminating them totally.

Reading of the Qur'an is a praiseworthy act, provided that it increases goodness in man, reduces his evil deeds, strengthens his good morals or eliminates the bad habits in him.

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