

Chapter 21: Negative Attitude towards the Tragedy of Karbala

Imam Husayn rose for the sake of a sublime object. It was not his object that Yazid should cease to wield authority and instead of him he himself should come at the helm of affairs. In other words he had no personal grudge against Yazid. He supported truth in whatever shape it made its appearance and opposed falsehood whether it was headed by Yazid or someone else.

These seventy two persons, whose number becomes seventy three with the addition of the Imam himself, rose so that religion might continue to live in history, and if it had not been so they would not have achieved the result from their grand sacrifice. They did not rise so that their sins might be forgiven. Their case was quite different from those who commit sins throughout their lives. They were different from those persons who accumulate wealth by unlawful means and then purify themselves by paying a visit to Karbala or Makkah.

They even endow a part of this unlawful wealth so that Allah may over-look the balance amount. These seventy two persons were mostly neither sinners nor debtors. The leader of this movement was the infallible Imam and had not committed any sin throughout his life. The young men of the Bani Hashim family were pious persons and enjoyed an impeccable position. The companions of the Imam were also distinguished persons of their time in the matter of piety.

Did the martyrs, as many persons imagine, met martyrdom so that they might become a haven for the sinners of the ummah? In other words if the Muslims or Shi'ah before the martyrdom of Imam Husayn committed sins with anxiety and concern they may feel relieved, commit sins with impunity, deceive the people in any manner they like and may not feel any fear of accountability before Allah and of Divine punishment, because Imam Husayn was martyred to intercede for the sinners.

The Imam met martyrdom so that the sins of the ummah might be forgiven. The people committed sins in the past and will continue to commit sins in future and the Imam made atonement for their sins. Jesus was crucified and the Christian sinners were relieved. Imam Husayn was also killed and guaranteed the

salvation of the sinners of the ummah!

We seek refuge in Allah! This explanation and this way of thinking which may perhaps be preferred by most of the common people is exactly opposed to the real object of the Imam in this movement. He rose so that the people might fear Allah more, be on their guard more from the consequences of sin, which they have to endure in this world and in the Hereafter and pay more attention to the performance of their religious duties. He rose to eliminate sin, to restrain the people from doing unlawful things and to revive the spirit of piety in their hearts.

He rose to enjoin the people to do good and to restrain them from evil, to forestall corruption and sins, to strengthen the fear of Allah in their hearts and to draw their attention to Him so that the teachings provided by the Holy Qur'an might be put into practice in the Muslim ummah. Consequently it should be a nation which does not tell lies, does not commit treachery, is honest in whatever it does, is brave and courageous, does not worship anyone except Allah, does not submit to anything except truth, and does not tolerate anything except law and reasonable words.

The Imam was not killed so that he might tell the people: After my martyrdom there is no need to tell the truth, to be honest, to worship, to acquire lawful property, to refrain from unlawful acts and to have regard for the rights of the people¹.

The Imam did not say: 'I have been killed so that my supporters may remain immune from inconveniences and commit sins throughout their lives with perfect peace of mind'. This way of thinking is shameful for the Muslims and pains the sacred souls of the martyrs, who laid down their lives struggling in the path of Allah against sin and impiety. It is not at all possible that a man should be distant from Allah and close to the Imam, and may displease Allah and please the Imam; and may set aside a part of his sins for the Imam so that Allah may not call him to account.

Those people who think on these lines not only betray Islam and the spirit of the movement of Imam Husayn but it may be said that with the capital of the martyrdom of the Imam they have set up an organization of their own against the things declared lawful and unlawful by Allah and the reward and punishment prescribed by Him.

How unlucky is the Muslim, who does not offer prayers or observe fast or respect the rights of the people or does unlawful things or earns his livelihood by means of usury or other unlawful occupations, and then imagines happily that he is a disciple of Imam Husayn. Such a Muslim should be asked: "Why do you claim to be a disciple of Imam Husayn when neither you like his deeds nor he liked yours? He spoke the truth and you tell lies. He was honest and you commit treachery.

He asked for extension of time during the night of Ashura so that he might spend that night in offering prayers, supplications, asking Divine forgiveness and reciting the Qur'an, whereas your nights are spent mostly in committing sins and doing undesirable things. He sacrificed in the path of Allah everything which he possessed whereas you cannot dispense with even a small coin for the sake of Allah.

Many persons claim to be the disciples of Imam Husayn and this is due to the fact that they have not recognized him properly and think that they can win his favor by means of usual homages, greetings and compliments. They are exactly like most of the persons who await the appearance of the Imam of the time and do not know that the appearance of the Imam is not profitable for them and the Imam of their imagination will not appear at all, as the Imam who will appear will not distribute money and posts among his disciples.

A person who has a true concept of Prophethood and Imamate does not get involved in such errors and does not attribute anything to the Prophet and Imam opposed to the Divine organization. He knows that the greatness of the Prophet and the Imam is based on obedience to Allah and one cannot benefit from the Prophet and the Imam except through obedience to the Almighty.

In spite of all the hardships on the day of Ashura and the fact that the enemies did not agree to postpone fighting for a few moments for the performance of prayers, Imam Husayn offered noon prayers in congregation while fighting was still in progress and made two of his companions namely Zuhayr bin Qayn Bajali and Sa'id bin Abdullah Hanafi stand before him so that they might counteract the attacks of the enemies and enable the Imam to offer his prayers. How can such an Imam be willing that instead of offering prayers one may simply mourn his martyrdom and abandon necessary duties relying on his intercession and favor and commit unlawful acts?

Mourning for the Imam should make the people understand religion. It should bring them nearer to Allah and keep them away from sin. It should make them love religion all the more and revive the spirit of monotheism in them. They should realize that the gatherings held to mourn the martyrdom of Imam Husayn can please Allah and become the means of reward in the Hereafter only when they take place within the limits of obedience to the Almighty Allah and do not consist of falsehood and unlawful acts, because Allah cannot be worshipped by means of sin, and unlawful things cannot be made the basis of worship.

It is so, because Allah accepts only that act which is performed within the limits of piety. It reforms human soul and takes him to a higher spiritual stage. It is not possible that a good deed is done and it has no effect on the soul of man. It is the effect of a good deed which appears in the shape of spiritual reward in the Hereafter and unless a deed has a good effect on human soul it is meaningless to say that it carries spiritual reward.

Similarly unless a deed has bad effect on human soul it is meaningless to say that it carries punishment in the Hereafter. Those persons who apparently do good deeds, but do not have the least effect on their souls and do not reform them are sadly mistaken. They remain at the same spiritual stage and still think that they have acquired abundant spiritual reward.

Good deeds should provide food for spiritual faculties to man and should improve and reform his inner self. They should eradicate base, motives from their mind and should develop good morals in their place

and strengthen them. In case good deeds do not produce good effects it should be concluded that the deeds in question were not really good and were not performed properly. For it so happens very often that, contrary to what is imagined, such deeds have bad effects on human soul.

Allah says:

Whoever desires to meet his Lord should strive to do good deeds. (Surah al-Kahf, 18: 110).

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