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The Victory of Truth - Damascus

When they reached the outskirts of Damascus they were made to halt. Yazid was informed of their arrival and he fixed a date for their entry into the city.

On the morning of the appointed day, the members of the family of the Holy Prophet [s.a.w.] were led into Damascus. They were tied with ropes and herded together like goats. If anyone stumbled she was whipped. The city streets had been decorated and the sound of music filled the air. People came out in throngs wearing festive clothes and rejoiced when they saw the procession, preceded as always by the heads of the martyrs. Bearing themselves with dignity and self-respect, the prisoners were paraded through Damascus. Zaynab [a.s.] even cast aside the offerings of food that some of them out of compassion offered them.

The son of an enemy of the Prophet [s.a.w.] who had waged war with Imam Ali [a.s.] was among the crowds. When he saw Imam Zayn ul-Abidin [a.s.] he jeeringly asked him who was now victorious. In reply the Imam said: "If you wish to find out who has been victorious, do so when it is time for prayer and the Adhan and Iqamat are recited."

In this manner the captives were paraded until the afternoon when they reached the palace of Yazid. There he was seated on his throne and was much pleased when he saw the forty-four bound captives arrive. The head of Husayn was then brought to him on a golden tray. He struck the Imam's teeth with his stick and said: "O Husayn! You have paid the price of your revolt."

When Zaynab [a.s.] and her companions saw this show of arrogance they burst into tears and there were many present who were ashamed. But Yazid carried on gloating over his victory. He said to his subjects: "My ancestors who were killed at Badr have been avenged today. Now it is clear that the Bani Hashim had just staged a play to gain power and there was never any divine revelation."

Zaynab [a.s.] however was not afraid. She drew herself up and boldly said for all to hear: "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds and blessings on my grandfather, the Chief of divine prophets."
"O Yazid, Allah says, and his word is true, that:

'Then evil was the end of those who did evil because they rejected the communications of Allah and used to mock them' [***30: 10***]***."***

"O Yazid, do you believe that you have succeeded in closing the sky and the earth for us and that we have become your captives just because we have been brought before you in a row and that you have secured control over us? Do you believe that we have been afflicted with insult and dishonour by Allah and that you have been given honour and respect by Him?

You have become boastful of this apparent victory that you have secured and you have started feeling jubilant and proud over this prestige and honour. You think that you have achieved worldly good, that your affairs have become stabilised and our rule has fallen into your hands. Wait for a while. Do not be so joyful. Have you forgotten Allah's saying:

'The unbelievers should not carry the impression that the time allowed to them by us is good for them. Surely we give them time so that they may increase their evil deeds, and eventually they will be given insulting chastisement' [***3: 178***]***."***

"O son of freed slaves, is this your justice that you keep your own daughters and slave maids veiled while the daughters of the Prophet of Allah are being paraded from place to place exposed."

"You have dishonoured us by unveiling our faces. Your men take us from town to town where all sorts of people, whether they be residents of the hills or of riversides have been looking at us."

"The near as well as the remote ones, the poor as well as the rich, the low as well as the high – all casting their glances at us while our position is such that there is no male relative of ours to render us help or support."

"O Yazid, whatever you have done proves your revolt against Allah and your denial of His Prophet [s.a.w.] and of the Book and Sunnah that the Holy Prophet [s.a.w.] brought from Allah. Your deeds should not cause amazement because one whose ancestors chewed the livers of the martyrs, whose flesh grew up on virtuous people, who fought against the Chief of divine prophets, who mobilised parties for fighting against him and drew swords against him, should conspicuously excel all Arabs in unbelief, sinfulness, excesses, and enmity against Allah and His Prophet [s.a.w.]."

"Remember that the evil deeds and sinful actions that you have committed are the result of unbelief and old rancour you bear because of your ancestors who were killed in Badr."

"One who cast his glance of enmity, malice and rancour upon us does not lag behind in practising enmity against us. He proves his unbelief, declares it with his tongue and jubilantly proclaims: 'I have killed the sons of the Prophet [s.a.w.] of Allah and made his progeny captive,' and wishes that his ancestors had lived to see his achievement and to have exclaimed, 'O Yazid, may your hands not lose their strength, you have wreaked good vengeance on our behalf.'"

"O Yazid, you are striking the lips of Imam Husayn with your stick in front of this crowd while these very lips used to be kissed by the Prophet [s.a.w.] of Allah, and yet your face reflects pleasure and happiness."

"By my life, by killing the chief of youths of Paradise, the son of the chief of Arabs (Ali [a.s.]) and the shining sun of the progeny of Abd ul-Muttalib, you have deepened our wound and uprooted us completely."

"By killing Husayn ibn Ali [a.s.] you have gained nearness to the state of your unbelieving ancestors. You proclaim your deed with pride and if they were to see you they would approve of your action and pray that Allah may not paralyse your arms."

"O Yazid! If you had heart enough to take account of your nefarious deeds, you yourself would surely wish your arms to be paralysed and severed from your elbow and you would wish that your parents had not given birth to you because you would know that Allah has become displeased with you. Allah, Grant us our rights. Avenge those who have oppressed us."

"O Yazid! you did what you wished, but remember that you have cut your own skin and your own flesh to pieces. Soon you will be brought before the Holy Prophet. You will be overburdened with the weight of your sins committed by shedding the blood of his progeny and by dishonouring his family. The place to which you will be taken will be before all the members of his family. The oppressed will be avenged and the enemies will be punished."

"O Yazid ! It is not seeming for you to swell with joy after slaying the Prophet's progeny.

'Reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive and are provided sustenance from their Lord; rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His grace' [***3: 169-170***]***."***

"Allah is sufficient to deal with you. The Messenger of Allah is your antagonist and Hadrat Jibra'il is our support and help against you."

"Those who have made you the head of state and burdened the Muslims with your leadership will soon find out what awaits them. The end of all tyrants is agony."

"O Yazid. I speak not to you thus to warn you of the severe chastisement in store for you so that you should be regretful for you are one of those whose hearts are hardened, souls are rebellious and whose bodies are busy in Allah's disobedience while they are under the curse of the Prophet of Allah. You are from among those in whose heart Shaytan has made his abode and has been breeding young ones."

"How amazing it is that the virtuous people, sons of the divine prophets and vicegerents are killed at the hands of liberated slaves, evil-doers and sinners. Our blood is shed by their hands and our flesh serves as food for them. We feel grieved for those whose bodies are lying unshrouded and unburied in the battlefield, wounded with arrows."

"O Yazid, if you consider our defeat as your achievement then you will have to pay its price."

"Allah commits not injustice to His servants. Our reliance is on Allah. He alone is our Relief and place of Protection, and in Him alone do we repose our hope."

"You may contrive and try however much you can. By Him who honoured us with revelation, the Book and Prophethood, you cannot achieve our status, nor reach our position, nor can you effect our mention, nor remove from yourself that shame and dishonour that is now your lot because of perpetrating excess and oppression on us. Your word now is weak and your days are counted. Beware of the day when the announcer would announce the curse of Allah on the oppressors and the unjust."

"Praise be to Allah who gave good end to His friends and granted them success in their aims, and thereafter called them back to His Mercy, Pleasure and Bliss, while you hurled yourself into evil and mischief by committing injustice against them. We pray to Allah to favour us with full recompense through them and grant us the good of Khilafat and Imamat. Surely Allah is Kind and the Most Merciful over His creatures."

Among the gathering was a red haired Syrian who saw Fatima Kubra, daughter of Imam Husayn and asked Yazid to give her to him. When the girl heard this she clung to Zaynab [a.s.] and started to weep. She feared that now after the loss of her father she was to be made a slave girl.

Zaynab [a.s.] was not afraid. She turned to Yazid and told him that he had neither right nor authority to give the young girl away like that, at which he bristled, retorting that he could do so.

Zaynab [a.s.] riposted, "You are abusing me because of your authority and power." At this Yazid was shamed into silence. To the Syrian she said: "My the curse of Allah be upon you. May hell be your eternal abode. May your eyes be blinded and your limbs paralysed." Immediately paralysis gripped the man and he fell to the ground dead.

Yazid was so enraged with Zaynab bold defiance of his authority that he might have ordered her killed had not Abdullah ibn Umar ibn Aas intervened and begged that no notice be taken of her harsh words since she had suffered much grief and hardship and was broken-hearted.

Imam Zayn ul-Abidin [a.s.] would also have suffered death at the hands of Yazid on account of his fearless speech, had not Zaynab [a.s.] saved his life by begging Yazid to slay her also along with the boy. Yazid was moved by her love for the boy and spared his life. But death nevertheless took its toll. Sakina, daughter of Imam Husayn, died in captivity in Damascus at the age of four and was buried there.

Through Zaynab's bold and fearless speeches and from the word that spread as a result of their journey, people came to know of the events of Karbala and their hearts were stirred. The continued captivity and humiliation of the family of the Prophet of Allah was bringing their cause to the attention of an ever

increasing number of people. Word came to Yazid that there was turmoil and unrest in the realm and he decided to release the captives.

When it seemed to him that the Ahl ul-Bayt had been adequately humiliated, and upon the urgings of certain people who were alert to the public's growing dissension upon learning the truth, Yazid sent for Imam Zayn ul-Abidin [a.s.]. He informed him of his impending release and asked if he wished for anything. The youth said he would have to consult his aunt Zaynab [a.s.].

Arrangements were made and she arrived, properly veiled. She asked, "O Yazid, since the day our leader and our chief Husayn was butchered we have not had any opportunity to mourn for him."

A large house was therefore provided for them in the residential sector of Damascus and here Zaynab [a.s.] held her first gathering for the mourning and remembrance (majlis-e-aza) of Imam Husayn. The women of the Quraysh and Bani Hashim arrived clad in black, with their heads uncovered, weeping wretchedly.

Imam Zayn ul-Abidin [a.s.] sat on the carpet of Imam Husayn and then Zaynab [a.s.] told the women of Syria what had befallen them. They shed tears and mourned. They had not known about the events of Karbala and Kufa, but when they went home they told their menfolk.

Gradually illusions of Yazid's good intentions were dispelled. It was fear of revolt that caused Yazid to release the members of the family of the Holy Prophet [s.a.w.].

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