

The Effects of the Words of Imam SajjÁd (Ýa) and the Lady Zaynab in Syria

The words of Imam SajjÁd (Ýa) and the Lady Zaynab had quite an effect on the people of Syria; things reached the point that YazÐd would even position Imam SajjÁd (Ýa) at his dinner table in order to side step some of the anger of the masses.[1] He also gave permission for Zaynab and the other HÁshimÐ women to mourn for Imam Íusayn (Ýa), and Zaynab organized mourning ceremonies for a period of seven days. Syrian women began to attend these ceremonies and things reached the point where the people were about to attack YazÐd in his palace and kill him; for this reason, YazÐd ended up stopping the ceremonies from taking place.[2] After YazÐd realized the situation, he began to shift the blame to Ibn ZiyÁd and he would accuse him of committing this atrocity.

SuyÙÔÐ, a famous historian from amongst the Ahl al-Sunnah, has written that: YazÐd initially became happy when he heard the news that Imam Íusayn (Ýa) and his family had been killed. Yet, with the passing of time, he realized how angry the Muslims were and so he stopped expressing his happiness; in spite of this, the people remained angry at him and detested what he had done.[3] ÓabarÐ has also narrated: YazÐd would curse the son of Marjanah (Ibn ZiyÁd) and he would say: Ibn ZiyÁd turned the hatred of the Muslims against me with the killing of Íusayn and he planted the seeds of this animosity in their hearts. The people consider this an evil action and thus they consider me an enemy.[4]

Without a doubt, this change in stance of Yazids was due to the words of Imam SajjÁd (Ýa) and the Lady Zaynab, who had exposed him for who and what he was. Through their words, the people had been awakened to the reality of the caliphate and YazÐd's hatred had taken root in their hearts. If it wasn't for what had taken place in the palace, YazÐd would have never taken this secondary position; it was simply a means of protecting his caliphate and his power. It is also interesting to note that Ibn ZiyÁd and the other people responsible were never punished by YazÐd and they retained their official posts; this shows that YazÐd's words were simply a means of protecting himself, as so many other tyrants have done in the past.[5]

The effects of the words of Imam SajjÁd (Ýa) and the Lady Zaynab can also be seen by the words of YazÐd as the captives were about to be released and sent towards Medina. Before they were to leave, YazÐd sought Imam SajjÁd (Ýa) and he said that would grant him three of his wishes, just as he had promised beforehand. The Imam (Ýa) said: My first request is to see the face of my master Íusayn (Ýa) once again in order to seek blessings from him and say goodbye. My second request is that everything that has been taken from us be returned. My third request is that if you wish to kill me, send someone with these women so they can be accompanied until they reach (Medina). YazÐd did not accept the first request of the Imam (Ýa) but he said in regards to the second request: We will give you in exchange for what we have taken an amount several times that. In regards to your third request, we will not kill you and no one but yourself will accompany these women to Medina.

The Imam (Ýa) said: We have no need of your money and you should keep it for yourself. My request was that you return what was taken from us, for amongst them was a spinning wheel, veil, necklace, and dress that belonged to the Lady FÁÔimah (Ýa)[6]. YazÐd then ordered that the plundered items should be returned and he added two hundred dinars to the items. Imam SajjÁd (Ýa) took the two hundred dinars and distributed them all to the poor.[7]

It has likewise been narrated that when the caravan began to move from Syria, YazÐd ordered that the camel litters (in which the riders would sit) be decorated and a great sum of money be given to the family of Imam Íusayn (Ýa). YazÐd then told Umm KulthÛm that he was giving this money in lieu of the calamity that had taken place for them. Umm KulthÛm responded and said: Oh YazÐd, how shameless and disgraceful you are! You murdered my brother and my family and you are giving me this money in place of them?[8]

These narrations show how the people of Syria had turned against YazÐd and he saw himself as having been defeated in what had taken place; due to this, he tried his best to show an outer pretence of friendship and love towards the family of Imam Íusayn (Ýa) in order to cool the people's anger. The family of Imam Íusayn (Ýa) refused to back down from their position and this issue remained in the minds of the Syrians, making Syria a much less stable place for their caliphate.

In a narration, it has been reported that: When the caravan was ready to leave, YazÐd sought out ÝAID ibn al-Íusayn (Ýa) and said to him: May God curse the son of MarjÁnah. If I had been with Íusayn, I would have given him whatever he asked for and I would have prevented his killing at any cost, even if several of my children were killed due to this. Unfortunately, the divine decree took place in the way that you yourself saw; in any case, when you arrive in your hometown, write to me for anything you need and I will give it to you.[9]

There is no doubt that these words of YazÐd did not arise from his own regret at what had taken place. History has shown us that after the events of Karbala, the political and social conditions of Syria changed in such a way that YazÐd feared the destruction of his caliphate and rule; this change came about only through the sermons of Imam SajjÁd (Ýa) and the Lady Zaynab where the society of Syria was awakened in regards to the reality and true nature of YazÐd.[10]

Peinevesht:

[1] BiÁAr al-anwÁr, vol. 45, p. 143.

[2] Nafas al-mahmÛm, p. 262.

[3] TÁrÐkh al-khulafÁÐ, p. 232: (فَسُرَّ بِقَتْلِهِمْ أَوْلَاءٌ، ثُمَّ نَدِمَ لَمَّا مَقَتَهُ الْمُسْلِمُونَ)
(على ذلك، وأبغضه الناس وحق لهم أن يبغضوه)

[4] TÁrÐkh al-ÔabarÐ, vol. 4, p. 389: « فَبَغَّضَنِي بِقَتْلِهِ إِلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَ زَرَعَ لِي فِي
قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ، فَبَغَّضَنِي الْبَرُّ وَالْفَاجِرُ بِمَا اسْتَعْظَمَ النَّاسُ مِنْ قَتْلِي
«حُسَيْنًا»

[5] Ibn KathÐr is a staunch scholar of the Ahl al-Sunnah group who would typically justify the crimes of MuÝÁwÐyah and YazÐd...

[6] «لأن فيه معزل فاطمة بنت محمد، ومقتعتها، وقلاذتها، وقميصها...»

[7] MalhÛf (LuhÛf), p. 224.

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