

Commemoration of Pain An Experience for Self-transcendence

There are, in the history of every individual and community, memories of attitudes and incidents that are painful either due to a mistake or misconduct or a potential evil by an evil drive.

It may not be logical and wise to only remember or commemorate what is pleasant in our past life in order to enjoy its memory. Rather, if we did so, it would be more logical and wise to look into the details of the pleasant incident seeking the reasons and the means that enable someone to do good not only for themselves, but also for the general welfare.

With the same level of wisdom and logic we should not remember the pain, in order to imitate it and give it a different form so as to serve our temporal personal interests, but rather, to discern the reasons behind it and renounce the reasons of evil in ourselves and in others with an objective to overcome them in order that they may not turn into traps of new forms in which we fall and cause pain to others.

We may remember a dear person and celebrate the occasion. We commemorate Jesus' birthday, for example and celebrate it for it is the birth of salvation. We also remember the Passions of Jesus to condemn evil in ourselves, humans, and renounce blind prejudice to what we regard holy; a prejudice that, when we walk in its footsteps, would eventually lead us

to injustice, elimination of the other and the perpetration of the most vicious crimes against humanity.

It was envy, malice and prejudice to what the pontiffs viewed as sacred, that led man to kill Jesus the innocent.

We joyfully remember the Passion of Jesus because he gave himself away for our sake, sinful as we are. By embracing pain, he taught us free sacrifice, and also through his forgiveness for his assassins, he taught us to love the sinner and forgive him for he is but the prodigal son who through sacrifice and forgiveness may repent and return back to the house of love.

In July and August of every year our Chaldean Syriac Assyrian people commemorate two recent and very painful anniversaries, i.e., **Suriya and Sumeil** .

We are not here to highlight the causes behind the two incidents and draw a picture of the atrocity of the two incidents against innocent people, children, women, men and oldmen who had no sin other than their difference from the perpetrators in religion and nationality.

We recall the two crimes for two reasons:

- to condemn blind prejudice (any prejudice) that led and has been leading some to commit the most ugly crimes against man, i.e. the nationalist and religious prejudice, greed for power and wealth and,
- to use it for evil.

In our condemnation of prejudice with its accompanying crimes against the innocent, we have to be just and impartial. We should condemn ourselves first before we do that to others. We have to avoid covering up those whom we take as our ideals, but who have otherwise committed crimes against humanity.

Many pan Arab nationalists, for example, (in Iraq , Syria and other Arab countries) have viewed Saddam Hussein as a nationalist symbol, for he has been held as a nationalist leader; it was he who held in esteem the name of pan Arabism (in their view). But, they failed, however, to recall how many crimes he committed against the Iraqi people, Iraq neighbours and humanity.

Thus, for some, he turns into an example to what they strive for, and hence they glorify him overlooking his mistakes. However, this very symbol for others is but an example of evil (written by the fire of his mistakes).

In our judgments, therefore, we have to appeal to reason and conscience.

It is neither logical, wise nor humane to glorify my grandfather who unjustly wronged others for my sake. If I wished to justly glorify ideals and example, then I have to glorify all the good deeds and condemn all evil ones perpetrated by that certain example or ideal against others.

In retrospect, if Saddam Hussein had some good deeds (as in the view of his followers), then his bad deeds were too great to be outweighed by the good ones; for his deeds were unjust and deadly for others.

Let us view our symbols through their deeds and works and then glorify what is good in them for man. And let us, at the same time, condemn what is evil and bad. That is what wisdom and logic mean.

Let us be genuine humanitarians in our reasoning, feelings and deeds.

Finally, we recall our graceful martyrs including women, children, men and old men, those who were put to torture and

killed for no offense. Let us learn from them perseverance, mercy, forgiveness and sacrifice for man's welfare.

Glory and immortality to our graceful martyrs and all the graceful martyrs in the world.