

Days From My Life

Zainab Al-Ghazali

Translated by
A.R. Kidwai

Hindustan Publications, Delhi

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Publisher's Note

We are bringing out, for the first time, the English translation of Zainab al-Ghazali's "Ayyam min Hayati," originally written in Arabic, which vividly describes the oppressive and inhuman acts committed by diabolical forces. The book records the agonising experience of the famous Ikhwan leader, Zainab al-Ghazali, which, it is hoped, should be an excitant for all Champions of the Truth. May Allah make the book, a useful guide to readers.

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In Dedication To

- The Noble Souls who spent their life in gaining their Creator's pleasure and in this state reached Him;
- The Holy Blood which was spilled so that it may inspire future generation lest they may forget their duties.
- The Martyrs who strived for Islam in accordance with Allah's command and sacrificed even their precious lives in this Cause. Thus they proved themselves not only as the devout Servants of Allah in the earth but also earned success and glory in the Hereafter.
- The persons who prayed to Allah for an increase in Faith and relied on His help.
- The Youth who did not budge in the face of hardships. Opposition and antagonism could not deter them from their path.
- My Husband who remained my supporter till his last breath. Even in the difficult times he continued supporting me and in the same state he left for his heavenly abode.
- All Muslims of both the East and the West to whom my autobiography is presented as a gift. I pray to Allah for the acceptance of my venture and for making it useful to everyone. May Our Lord pardon us for our sin, keep up steadfast and grant us ascendancy over non-believers.

Zainab al-Ghazali

Preface

Often did I think of recording an account of my life. Nonetheless, I never thought of it worth— attempting hence the plan could not materialise. However, the importance of such a work dawned on me when my brothers and sisters associated with the Islamic movement drew my attention towards its significance. I, therefore, took it up as a religious duty to record the events which I witnessed while the Islamic Movement had an encounter with atheistic forces in both the East and the West. These diabolical forces aimed at not-only hampering the truth but also at annihilating all those who stood for the truth. Nonetheless, the intrepid champions of the truth declared it unequivocally that both the Quran and Sunnah have been rendered inoperative whereas they must be operative in the country. And the Muslim Ummah has to canalise all its talents in the service of Islam so as to highlight the values of Tauheed, gnosis and to establish a society steeped in God-fearingness. Such a move would also result in putting an end once for all to all such customs which prevent one from attaining proximity to Allah and mislead one to wrong paths. They mislead people so as to make them subservient. Only when one follows the true path, the past glory of the days of the Prophet's *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* Companions would be restored. The real success of the inhabitants of the world lies in upholding the Islamic Movement. The dingy prison cells, brutal modes of punishments and floggings have always boosted up the morale of those engaged in the Cause of Islam.

Those who strove for the path of the truth have undergone similar persecution. Since the gods of the day could not dissuade them from pursuing the right path, punishments today can hardly make any difference. One may, however, carry the fortress by logical arguments. These

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having gone blind on possessing power can inflict all sorts of punishments but they cannot mislead the righteous person.

The right path is the one shown by Allah and His messengers. Wrong paths are many and devil misleads people in thousand and one ways. The Quran rightly points out that the right path is only one which should be followed whereas the other paths are to be avoided so that one may not miss the right path. Today the deliverance of the humankind lies in following the right path and in adhering to the Quran and Sunnah.

Even in the prevalent conditions I foresee the success in that the Ummah has united in countering the atheistic forces. I find the success very close and do hope that the Ummah would perform the assigned role. I hardly feel worried about the passage of time, for in the history of nations and movements time is not so important. What is more important is the fact how far we avoid the pitfalls and perceive the truth.

We do believe we are following the right path and one who joins our mission would add to the constructive work. We should not neglect our duties. Nor should we fall back. We know that all those fighting for the truth are doomed to imprisonment for their opposition to evil. In compliance with the wish of my bretheren I therefore present an account of my life. Reference to certain events, no doubt, call for courage. Nonetheless we should remember it well that hell stands for all modes of torture while Islam is synonymous with obedience.

I hope Allah would help me record my account which would guide those endowed with Iman. Ours should be the right Path. I am firmly convinced that the Message delivered by all Prophets culminated in the Mission of the Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam*. Those ready to bear with hardships in the cause of the truth assemble under the Banner of the Quran and Sunnah by Allah's will. We have been launching the Islamic Movement

with the conviction that we would bear with all trials, for Allah has acquired the life and property of Muslims in lieu of Heavens. Those who are slain in Allah's cause attain Martyrdom. It has been Allah's command preached to us by both the Quran and the Bible.

We convey "Salam" to all Martyrs with the conviction that all of us are on the right path. "Salam" also to all of them who have an idea of goodness in them. It is quite possible that Allah may guide them.

Zainab al Ghazali

CHAPTER I

Jamal Abdul Nasser Hated Me

One evening in February, 1964 as I was returning home by car, another car coming from the opposite direction collided against mine. I sustained injuries and lost consciousness. I just heard some one talking out my name. When I regained consciousness I found myself in the police hospital surrounded by my husband and relatives and some workers of Islamic Movement. All of them looked worried. As I opened the eyes I thanked Allah and asked them of the accident but again I fell unconscious. On recovery I found myself in the company of doctors and nurses taking me to X-ray room. I recalled the event and heard my husband saying, "Thank Allah that you have been saved." I asked after the car driver and was told that he was also well and was hospitalised. Later on, I learnt that he had the brain injury. The X-ray report revealed that my thigh bone had been fractured. I was taken to Mazhar Aashoor Hospital where Dr. Muhammad Abdullah, the bone specialist, operated on me for three and half hours. This operation saved me from further complications. As the days passed, I learnt that the accident conspiracy had been hatched by the intelligence department of Nasser. Their aim was to kill

me. Later reports and events confirmed their evil designs. A group of Muslim youth lead by Brother Abdul Fattah Abduhu Ismail used to visit me every evening. However, on learning the details about the government conspiracy I requested them to curtail their visits but they did not relent.

A few days later the secretary of the Muslim Women Organisation came to put up a file to me, for I happened to be its President. At that time my husband and my teacher's wife were also present. I noticed that my husband tried to refrain the Secretary from presenting me the file. It came as a shock to me and when I asked him of the reason for so doing, he justified it on the ground of medical advice. The doctor examined me and advised me not to attend to any work. My husband later told me that the file did not contain any important papers. I however protested and told that my business was only to put my signature. He was, however, firm in his stand. When I sought the doctor's permission to do some work while in bed, he also refused. This roused my suspicion and I smelt something foul. I realised that the manner in which my husband, secretary and other visitors talked to me smacked of something wrong. One evening when the secretary came to me I sternly asked him to tell me the news in presence of my husband. As I took the file to read, my husband appealed to me to remain calm and show perseverance. The file contained the official order banning the Muslim Women Organisation headed by me. The secretary said, "It must naturally hurt you." I replied, "Alhamdulillah! But the government does not have any right to ban an Islamic organisation." He replied, "No one has the courage to convey it to the government. We tried our hardest but Nasser is bent on taking this action. He personally dislikes you. He does not even want that anyone should mention your name to him. If someone inadvertently takes your name, he is provoked to fury and abruptly ends his meeting."

I replied, "Thanks Allah that he fears me and is jealous

of me whereas I am angry with him on account of my love for Allah. His hostility would inspire us to persist in our call to right path. We can easily give up our lives in the cause of Tauheed and thus attain Martyrdom. Jamal Abdul Nasser has no right whatsoever to disband the Muslim Women organisation, for Allah has asked Muslims to remain united and no one should act against Allah's Will. The secretary, with tears in his eyes, said, "O respectable lady! We do hope from Allah that your organisation would not be disbanded." While looking in different directions he said that perhaps the conversation was being taped. Then we had our conversation in a low sound. He told me, "O Zainab! By Allah I earnestly request you to sign the paper. If you sign the paper, the ban on your organisation would be held null and void." When I looked at the paper, which I was asked to sign, I found that it was the application form for enrolling myself in the Socialist Union. I told him in no uncertain terms, "By Allah I would never sign such a paper which binds me to recognise and support the evil headship of Nasser. Nasser is the same fellow who contrived the assassination of Abdul Qadir Audah and his associates. His hands are stained with the blood of monotheists. He is hostile to Allah and Muslims. Instead of flattering to him I would prefer the disbanding of the Muslim Women's Organisation. The secretary was all tears and asked me to drop the matter. I concluded the conversation thus: "I would sign the paper in no circumstances, for it entails an agreement with diabolical forces which is something impossible for me to do. Allah's will is supreme." Thus the days in hospital passed and I was discharged subject to a regular medical check up.

Socialist Union and Myself

The secretary who used to visit me every evening once told that the decision to ban the Muslim women centre has been withheld. I was surprised to know and asked him what accounted for it. He said that perhaps it was done in order

to have some negotiations with me. The Secretary used to present necessary files to me and while taking bed-rest I supervised the functioning of the Muslim Women Centre. By the time I returned to hospital for the removal of plaster, Imam Syed Qutub had been released from prison. He came to enquire after me the next day along with some Ikhwan members. Once I received by registered mail a letter containing the following particulars:

Arab Socialist Union
Freedom-Socialism-Unity

Name:
Zainab al Ghazali al Jubeli alias Zainab al-Ghazali

Position/Profession:
President Muslim Women Organisation

Unit:
al Basateen-al-Aaza

Tehseel:
New Egypt

District:
Cairo

I received the letter by mail along with the details how Egypt entered into agreement with Russia in 1964. It reminded me of the days when we enjoyed freedom which ended the day we had the military coup. As my medical treatment was over I returned home. I used to receive regularly, invitations to the Socialist Union meeting. I, however, decided to sleep over the matter. After a few days the doctor allowed me to go ahead with my routine work. In that period I used to carry a walking stick.

One morning while I was in the Muslim Women Centre the telephone bell rang. The secretary told me that some one from the Socialist Union wanted to speak to me. I greeted him with Salam which was reciprocated. Then I asked him what business he had with me. He asked whether I would lead the reception to Abdul Nasser at the airport hosted by the Muslim Women Executive members. I told him it is Allah's will which is supreme. He said, "O.K. We will send vehicles, should a large number of women like to join the reception." I just said thanks and the conversation came to an end. After two or three days I again received a call from the Socialist Union. A lady was asking me why I had refused to join the reception at the Airport. I told her that all the members of the Muslim Women Centre abide by Islamic norms hence it would not be possible for us to go to such a public place. She asked what I meant and added that perhaps I was not willing to cooperate. She asked me whether I had consulted other members of the Centre before taking this decision. I told her, "Since I am not personally convinced about the suitability and propriety of this move, how could I persuade others?" She insisted on her question, "Are not you willing to cooperate with us?" I answered, "We are bound in all our acts by the Quran and Sunnah. We do cooperate but on the basis of goodness and piety, as ordered by Allah," I told her also that telephonic conversation about such matters would serve no purpose. At this she invited me to come to the office of the Socialist Union in Abideen so that we could understand each other. I, however, regretted to do so on health grounds and requested her to visit the Muslim Women Centre. She then asked me to meet her at her house and asked whether I was a member of the Socialist Union. To this I replied that I happen to be a member of the Muslim Women Organisation. Thus our conversation came to an end. After a week the secretary presented to me a registered letter dated 15th September, 1964 containing the government order no. 132

of 16th February, 1964 which was the ban order on our organisation.

No to the Diabolical Forces

On September 15, 1964 the executive of the Muslim Women Centre held an emergency meeting, for we had received the ban order that day. The executive resolved to accept the order or to give its belongings to the other organisation, for the other organisation had parted company with us before Nasser's coup and joined Nasser soon after the revolution. The executive decided also to convene a meeting of all members within twenty-four hours. This emergency meeting of the general body also turned down the ban order and resolved to move to the court.

We appointed Abdullah Washwan our advocate to plead the case. The organisation sent letters by registered mail and telegrams to the President, Home Minister and Deputy Home Minister and its copies to the Press about our refusal to abide by the ban order. We made it plain that our organisation, established in 1936, had not come into being as a puppet of the Home Ministry. Our aims has been to call all to the Quran and Sunnah. Ours is Allah patron, of Whose Shariah we intend to implement.

Jamal Abdul Nasser passed the ban order in hot haste. The same was his behaviour in banning indefinitely the organ of Muslim Women, of which I was the editor. The hired agents of the diabolical forces ransacked the Muslim Women Centre and displaced one hundred and twenty orphans boarding there, for they were sponsored by the Muslim Women Organisation.

I take pride in stating that not a single member of our organisation was there when Nasser's agents stormed into our centre. Though they had asked me to be present there, I refused flatly to do so. The same was the stance of other members. As a result, they took charge of all our assets from the paid secretary who was not authorised to do so. I

quote here the statement issued by the organisation of which copies were sent to the President, Home Minister and the press. "Muslim Women Organisation was founded in 1936 with the express objective of preaching Allah's Dawah and of training the Muslim Ummah in a fashion which might help it restore its past glory. Sovereignty is for Allah and no secularist Muslim ruler has the right to rule over Muslims. The aim of Muslim Women Organisation is to preach Islam and to train an army of youth, women and the old which could help bring about the establishment of Allah's rule on Allah's earth. We refuse to accept the ban order on the Muslim Women Centre. The President who publicly preaches secularism has no right to rule over us. Nor is his ministry entitled to pass such an order. The Islamic Dawah is not synonymous with some worldly assets which may be forfeited by a government opposed to the Muslim Ummah, the Prophet *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* and Allah. The state can no doubt forfeit our worldly belongings but it cannot certainly shear us of our faith. Ours is the Message of Islam. We stand for Tawheed with the objective of calling everyone to believe in and strive for Allah until the Islamic state is established.

What are We to do?

Soon after the ban, the members of the Organisation used to flock to my house asking me what to do next. Muslim women adopted a markable attitude in the heyday of Nasser's reign in 1964, though many had become turncoats. Many there were who not only supported the unjust ruler but used to issue religious decrees in his favour and thus deified him. We came across a few 'Islamic' journal that surpassed one another in obliging the diabolical forces. Even our favourite journal, "al-Azhar" started acting as a tool in the hands of hypocrites and supported the forces of evil. There were, however, some noble souls who did not give in and clung to Islam. Adherence to Islam is the real thing.

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Muslim Women also kept their hands off the attempts to adopt a lenient attitude and they took up the Cause of the Truth at a time when many religious leaders used to avoid saying the truth lest they should lose their material privileges and positions. Women did not, however, act in such a fashion. For earning Allah's pleasure they expressed their view frankly even in those hardtimes. They paid no attention to the fact that their frank avowals could incur wrath of the state. The members of the organisation met me regularly which was a great solace to me. To me they were my whole being. On the foundation day of our Organisation I had pledged to lead my life for Allah. In large groups women came to me and renewed their pledge to lead their life for the Truth. They agreed on my proposal to hold religious meeting in house which would familiarise women with the fundamentals of Islam. Nonetheless, the diabolical government came to know of our such meetings and the women who hosted these meetings were threatened dire consequences and made to vow that such meetings would not be held in future. We were thus again forced to confine our activities at a personal level.

Bargaining and Betrayal

The officials of Nasser's intelligence agencies used to visit me and made offers regarding the lifting of ban on our Organisation on such conditions which could incur my ruin in the Hereafter. For example, they proposed to bring out the journal under my editorship and to pay me 300 Jayiniha every month on the condition that I would have no control over the contents of the journal. I turned down this offer of the intelligence department. I made it plain that if the journal reappears, I should be given full control. Another offer they made was to restore the centre and to sanction a grant of 20,000 jayiniha every year on the condition that the Centre should function as an organ of the Socialist Union. I told them in no uncertain terms that all our activities are

for the Cause of Islam. We would not be misled. Nor would we allow others to be misled by forces that use Islam as a source of their livelihood. My reply infuriated them. Yet they did not give up in their attempts to lure me. I was surprised to find them making such offers but soon I learnt that they intended to misled us.

The Night Visitors

One evening while I was at home three persons came to meet me. When I saw them in the drawing room I saw them dressed as Arabs. As I asked them of the purpose of their visit they told they were Syrians coming from Saudi Arabia and intend to spend their short vacation in Cairo. As stated by them, they had met in Saudi Arabia, Saeed Ramadhan, Shaikh Mustafa Alam, Kamil Shareef, Mohammad Usmavi and Fathi Khauli- the Ikhwan leaders who had left Egypt to avoid persecution. These Ikhwan leaders had sent us regards and directed them to join Ikhwan hence they had come to me to receive the directives.

They talked at length about Jamal Abdul Nasser and Ikhwan and how Nasser persecuted Ikhwans. They referred also to the 1954 incident and the Martydom of Abdul Qadir Audah and his associates. They told they were ready to revolt against Nasser's regime and to assassinate Nasser and that their plan had been approved by Kamil Shareef, Usmavi, Ramadhan and Khauli. When they asked me to express my views on the plan, I told that I had learnt of this plan for first time hence I cannot make any comment. They took leave and promised to come in future to discuss in detail, the plan. At this point I categorically told them: (i) I do not know anything about such an organisation within Ikhwans. The Ikhwan organisation has already been banned by the government; (ii) I cannot discuss such matters with Murshid, for our relations are based on the Ideals of Islamic brotherhood and love; (iii) That Nasser should be assassinated has not occurred to any of us. You should better

return to your country and gain some more Islamic training.

On hearing this they resumed their seats and other said, "Perhaps the sister Zainab is not convinced; Has anyone other than Nasser destroyed the country?" I replied, "In my opinion Ikhwan does not stand for Nasser's assassination." I asked them to tell me their names. While introducing themselves as Abdul Shafi, Abdul Haq, Abdul Jaleel Isa and Abdur Rahman Khaleel they were faltering. Since "Abdul" figured in the name of all of them I felt amused. I advised them to return their home before the Nasser intelligence department might nab them. One of them said, "O Zainab! You have every right to doubt our integrity. But soon you would know our identity." Then they went away. In the evening I related my encounter with the fake Syrian visitors to Abdul Fattah Ismail who had come to meet me.

Everyone Happened to be Ahmad Rasikh

Even before two weeks had passed since the Syrians visited me, one person named Ahmad Rasikh came to meet me. He introduced himself as an intelligence official. He enquired me of my conversation with the Syrians. I explained, "I am sure those Syrians were not the real Ikhwan. It is childish on your part to play such tricks. You have already forfeited our journal and banned the Centre. What else do you want?" The officer asked me questions about Jamalof and Jamalfa. I told him that they were atheists and they took pride in their association with the forces of evil. He interrupted me by saying that they all were Muslims. I replied that such is not the conduct of Muslims. They are the ones whose hearts are sealed and who pay no attention to the call. They are given to their fanciful world. May Allah Guide Them And Accept Their repentance.

Two days later a state vehicle stopped at my house from which alighted a young man clad in grey suit. I was sit-

ting in my balcony at that time. He greeted me with Salam and I requested him to sit in the visitor's room. He introduced himself as Ahmad Rasikh an official in the intelligence department. I looked at him searchingly, for a few days earlier another person with the same name and same credentials had come to me. Moreover, I was summoned to the office of the Home Ministry to meet Ahmad Rasikh. He also conceded the point that he was the third person bearing the name of Ahmad Rasikh who had met me.

Three Personalities Bearing Same Name

I stared at him, for I found it difficult to believe that all the persons in the intelligence department should bear the same name. He read my mind and asked why I was so surprised to meet him or whether he had come to me at an odd hour. I tried to switch over to another topic and assured him that the doors of my house were always open to visitors, no matter what time they visited. I, however, told him that I would relate to him an interesting episode which I read in "al-Ahram."

A few years ago the king and the queen of Holland visited the English king. The queen of Holland by chance saw a dog moving about in the reception room of the palace. The moment she saw her she lost interest in the conversation and set her eyes on it and a few moments later she embraced the dog and started kissing her violently. Then she passed on the dog to her husband while murmuring something in his ears. The king also behaved in the same manner. The hosts were amazed to see all this. They were shocked to see tears in the queen's eyes as she returned the dog. The queen had embraced the dog as if it was her own child. Even at the dinner table she clung the dog to her lap. The British queen expressed her regrets that since the dog belonged to the princess who loved it much, they could not present the dog to them as a gift. The queen of Holland finally disclosed that she believes in transmigration of soul.

