

## Al-Husayn on the Taff Day

These are the guidelines that the father of ‘Abdullah, al-Husayn (‘a), followed on the *Taff* Day. He did not order his men to start the war despite the persistence of his foes in adhering to misguidance and in fighting him with all their might and means.

They, in fact, went as far as prohibiting him, his family and companions from drinking the water regarding which the one who brought the divine *Shari’a*, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, said, “All people have an equal right to water and (their animals to) pasture.”

Imam Husayn (‘a), by doing so, wanted to establish his argument against his foes. He stood to address that multitude that had been immersed in misguidance in order to explain his argument. He first acquainted them with the loss of this vanishing world by anyone who threw himself in its lap; it would not bring him anything but disappointment.

Then he resorted to reminding them of his status with the Prophet of Islam (S), testifying to himself and to his brother al-Hasan (‘a) that they were the masters of the youths of Paradise, let alone the testimony to this fact given by the one who does not speak out of his own desires but was guided by the divine *wahy*: such a testimony is the criterion for distinguishing right from wrong.

Then he reminded them of the fact that had they had anything with him that belonged to them, he would have given it back to them. Finally, he raised a copy of the Holy Qur’an over his head and invited them to accept its arbitration.

When all these precious pieces of advice fell on deaf ears, and when it became quite clear to him that they insisted on their misguidance and stubbornness, opting to act against the commandments of Allah Almighty and His Messenger (S), he unveiled the curtain from the ‘Alawide pride according to which he grew up.

He removed the curtain from the feeling of disdain to anyone who refused to abide by the commandments of Allah and His Messenger (S). It is such disdain that he and other offspring descending from ‘Ali (‘a) used to study day and night and round which their meetings revolved. It is then

that he, peace of Allah be upon him, said,

*The da'iyy and the son of the da'iyy required us to choose one of two: either to let his men draw their swords against us, or we accept humiliation and submission to his authority. It is far from us to accept humiliation; Allah rejects that we, His Messenger, or the faithful should ever submit to humiliation. These are [the fruit of] good and pure chambers, men of dignity and souls too proud to prefer obedience to a mean and lowly person over death in honour and in dignity. Let it be known that I shall fight with this family although our number is small, and despite the betrayal of those who promised to support us.*

How could he to a lowly one his submission wield?

Only to Allah did he ever submit and yield:

Mightier than the shield is his will,

Before lances thirsty for blood, eager to kill,

To him will every *hafiz* refer at will,

To one big as the world and greater still,

One who insisted to live only in dignity,

To sacrifice and personify such struggle for eternity. [1](#)

Such are the commandments of the purified *Shari'a*, and such are its injunctions regarding inviting people to righteousness, and to rise to close the door against falsehood. Just as it mandated *jihad* against those who promote misguidance as well as the polytheists, it likewise exempted from such *jihad* the children, the invalid, the blind, the elderly, the women, and the adults who did not obtain the permission of their parents to participate in *jihad*.

But the show of force at the *Taff* violated its greatest canon, permitting even what was not previously permitted in order to serve the interests and the mysteries that are beyond the reach of men's comprehension. Such was the most oppressed martyr ('a), informed by his grandfather, the supreme saviour (S), and by his own father, the *wasi* ('a).

Al-Husayn ('a) did not bring about a new Sunnah in *jihad*; rather, it was no more than a divine lesson fixed by the most sacred tablet in the world of perfection, one limited to a particular circumstance and to a specific place, one received by Gabriel, the trusted archangel ('a), who then conveyed to the one who was loved and chosen by Allah, namely Muhammad (S), the one who conveyed the divine message and who in turn entrusted it to his grandson the Master of Martyrs ('a).

All the unusual events that took place during that bloody encounter, whose essence cannot be comprehended by men were things whereby the Master, Praise to Him, bestowed upon His *wali* and *Hujjah*, Abu 'Abdullah, al-Husayn ('a).

It is to these same traditions that the martyr of Kufa, Muslim Ibn 'Aqil, adhered. He was, indeed, distinguished from all others by his knowledge, deeds, an abundance of wisdom and divine faculties that his position as deputy of the Imam, the *Hujjah*, required.<sup>2</sup> He suffered from acute thirst to the extent that he was permitted to drink even what was *najis*.

Both Ibn 'Aqil and the moon of the Hashemites [Abul-Fadl, al-'Abbas, Imam Husayn's brother] drank the same milk and graduated from the same school of Imamate and infallibility. They, therefore, earned a testimony from the Infallible Imams ('a) in the sincerity of intention through their readiness to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the creed.

Such testimony qualified them to serve as role models in their good deeds. Just as Muslim did not taste water till he died of thirst, so was the case with the father of al-Fadl, al-'Abbas, who shook the ranks of the enemy till he finally had access to the water.

Knowing the extent of thirst of the Master of Martyrs and that of the Prophet's ladies and of the children who descended from Fatima ('a), he did not see in the *Shari'a*, which he had learned from his father, the *wasi*, and from both of his brothers who were Imams whether they stood or sat<sup>3</sup>, according to the Prophet's words, any provision for him to drink out of concern for the thirst of the *Hujjah* of his time even with a little thereof. But alas! Destiny stood between him and the achievement of his desire.

He did not taste of the Euphrates following his example,

Taking his water straight to the tent.

He found no provision in the creed to quench

His thirst while his brother was burning with thirst.

He derives his deed from the *Shari'a*

And due to his unshaken conviction,

Like al-Husayn who controlled the water source

Just to be told that his tents were being looted,

So he threw water away, sensing the gravity

Of the situation, enthused with zeal,

So al-'Abbas followed his example as he

Breathed his last in honour, his zeal fiery.

Abu 'Abdullah, al-Husayn ('a), rose with that small group of the elderly and the children, with infants and women, in contrast with those who were not apprehensive in regard to conscience or kinship, being determined to eradicate the Prophet's family and relatives.

But the line followed by the martyr of the *Taff*, the one whose extent cannot be realized, nor can the minds comprehend its deep meaning, acquainted the succeeding generations that came across this epic, the like of which history has never witnessed, with the deeds committed by those tyrants whose

fathers did not accept Islam, when they pretended to have done so, except out of fear of Islam's sword.

Abu 'Abdullah ('a) achieved the objective when the clouds of doubt were dispelled by the light of his shining revolution and the calls of his ladies, the calls that confused and upset the minds that became the subject of all meetings, of what those tyrants and their ancestors had committed of shame and infamy.

- [1.](#) Excerpted from a poem in praise of al-Husayn ('a) by Sayyid Hayder al-Hilli, may Allah have mercy on his soul.
- [2.](#) Muslim Ibn 'Aqil was deputy of Imam Husayn ('a), who was the Hujjah of his time. The reader must not misread this statement to imply that Muslim Ibn 'Aqil was the deputy of al-Hujjah, al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance. N. Tr.
- [3.](#) al-Irbili, Kashf al-Ghumma, p. 159, where al-Husayn ('a) is discussed.

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.al-islam.org/maqatal-al-husayn-sayyid-abd-al-razzaq-al-muqarram/al-husayn-taff-day#comment-0>