

## Al-Husayn's Prior Knowledge of His Martyrdom

What we have stated clarifies that reason; the *Shari'a* condones one's walking to his death when doing so serves a common interest greater than that of his own life, such as the continuity of the creed or of the *Shari'a*, or to bring to life a certain fact, an objective which cannot be realized in any other way, such as the case with regard to al-Husayn ('a) taking such an amazing stand, thus reciting to the multitude a white tablet which generations and epochs have been reciting ever since.

Through his holy uprising, Imam Husayn ('a) acquainted present and future nations with what the Umayyads did and with who discarded and violated the sacred laws of the *Shari'a*. Nations have learned lessons from the courage demonstrated by the most oppressed one ('a), that they should welcome death with open arms, that they should sacrifice their all in order to support the call propagated by Muhammad (S) and learn from it lofty lessons.

They learned how to persist in defending their principles, and to sacrifice everything precious in order to liberate themselves from the claws of oppression.

Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani rejects the notion that it is despondency that causes one to attack a thousand men knowing that he has no chance of survival or of defeating the enemy by so doing, saying that such an action is not suicide because there is a benefit in it for the Muslims: it strengthens their determination and provides them with a shot in the arm that rejuvenates their energy and determination to defend their principles and to die in dignity. [1](#)

Abu Abdullah, al-Husayn ('a), by the same token, surpasses everyone else in doing so when he defied the large multitude that had sunk in falsehood. He, it is true, caused the death of his holy self as well as that of pure ones from among his family and followers.

He exposed the offspring of the Messenger of Allah (S) to plundering and captivity, yet he inscribed upon the face of time with words of *noor* the truth about his uprising and the falsehood of all the allegations propagated by his foe that had deviated from the canons of truth and became immersed in oppression.

He is, therefore, the true victor, and whoever challenged him drowned in the sea of misguidance and was one who violated the Islamic laws drawn by the one who conveyed the Divine Message (S).

I truly wonder about one who says that al-Husayn ('a) was counting on the support of the people of Kufa. Such an individual has surely missed the mark. Even if we surrender and say that al-Husayn ('a) did not have a general knowledge of what was, what is, and what will be, how could he have not been informed by his grandfather (S) and his *wali*, his own father, of the events that would happen to him, and that he would be killed in the land of Karbala' after being denied access to water, accompanied by his kinsfolk and followers and would all face a sure death?

Is he not the one who informed Umm Salamah of his own martyrdom when she expressed to him apprehension of his trip?

The reason for it is that the truthful and the trustworthy one, who never said anything out of his own inclination (S), had already informed him of his being killed in the land of Karbala' after being prohibited from drinking water.

Among what al-Husayn ('a) had said to her was: *"I know the day on which I will be killed and the time when I will be killed. And I know who among my Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and followers will be killed. Do you think that you know what I do not? Do you think that I can escape death? If I do not die today, I will tomorrow."*

He said to his brother, 'Umar al-Atraf, *"My father had informed me that my resting place will neighbour that of his own. Do you think that you know what I do not?"* To his brother Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya he said, *"Allah has decreed to see me murdered and the women taken captive."*

To Ibn al-Zubayr he said, *"Had I hidden in a hole in these ravines, they would have hunted me out and killed me."* To 'Abdullah Ibn Ja'far he said, *"I saw the Messenger of Allah (S) in a vision ordering me to do something which I am going to do."*

When they were at a mountain pass, he said to his companions, *"I see myself being killed, for I saw in a vision dogs mauling me, and the most wild among them was spotted."* When 'Amr Ibn Lawthan suggested to him to stay away from Kufa becoming fully informed of its people's intentions, he ('a) said, *"I am not ignorant of their views, but the will of Allah is never over-ruled. As soon as they invite me, they will take out the blood clot in me."*

He made many such explicit and implicit statements in Medina, in Mecca, and on the way to Kufa, statements that you will read in this book in their entirety. They all testify that he ('a), was fully aware of his being killed on the day with which he was familiar and in the land of Karbala'.

So, can anyone doubt this fact if he reads his sermon in Mecca when he wanted to travel from there to

Iraq? In that sermon, he said, *“I can see my limbs being cut to pieces by wild beasts in an area between al-Nawawees<sup>2</sup> and Karbala’, so they will fill with my body empty stomachs and starved pouches; there is no way to avert an event already decreed.”*

All these answers to those who asked al-Husayn (‘a) to wait or to go somewhere else prove that the Master of Martyrs was knowledgeable of what was going to happen to him, and that he knew the intentions of the people of Kufa. But it is a divine mystery that concerned only him, and so that his cries for help and support on the Day of *Taff*, before and after the war, would be an argument against that unlucky multitude of people.

Yet he did not inform each and every person who objected to his march to Kufa of all what he knew due to his knowledge that the facts were not to be revealed just to anyone. People vary in their capacity to absorb, and their goals vary, too. It is for this reason that the Imam (‘a) responded to each person according to his level of absorption, to his conditions, and to what his knowledge and mentality could bear.

The knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) is laborious and inaccessible; it cannot be tolerated except by a messenger prophet, an angel near to Allah, or a believer whose heart Allah tested with conviction.

<sup>1</sup>. al-Jassas, *Ahkam al-Qur’an*, Vol. 1, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup>. A well-known area where there was a Christian cemetery.

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