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Home > The Uprising of Ashura and Responses to Doubts > Crying > Crying while Mourning for Imam al-Husayn > 12. The generation that came after the Prophet's companions cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

Crying while Mourning for Imam al-Husayn

When we refer to history and *hadith*, we can see that the Holy Prophet (S), his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as), his companions, the generation that came just after the Prophet's (S) death, and great men of the Islamic *ummah* all cried when mourning over Imam al-Husayn (as). We now will narrate some examples from Sunni sources:

1. The Prophet (S) cried mourning for Imam al-Husayn (as)

'A'ishah recounted, "Al-Husayn ibn 'Ali came into the house while revelation was being given to the Noble Prophet (S). He grabbed the Prophet's waist and climbed up on his back and started playing. The Archangel Jibra'il (Gabriel) said to the Holy Prophet, 'O Muhammad! Verily, soon it will be that your *ummah* will create sedition and conspiracy after you and kill this child of yours.' Then, Gabriel stretched his fist out and brought out clay which he gave to the Noble Prophet (S). He said, 'It is in this land where your child will be killed. A land called "Taff".'

When the Archangel Gabriel left, the Prophet of Allah joined his companions. He still had the clay in his hands. Among them were Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Ali, Hadhayfah, 'Ammar and Abu Dharr. The Holy Prophet (S) started crying.

They asked, 'Why are you crying, O Prophet of Allah?' He answered, 'Gabriel has told me that my child al-Husayn will surely be killed in a land called Taff. He brought clay for me from that land. He also informed me that al-Husayn will be buried in that same place'."1

2. Imam 'Ali (as) cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

Ibn 'Asakir narrates that Najja said, "Imam 'Ali (as) and I started off on a journey. When we reached the valley of Naynawa, which is on the way to Siffin, Imam 'Ali (as) gave out a loud cry and said, 'O Aba 'Abd Allah! Bear patiently near the River Euphrates, O Aba 'Abd Allah!' Najja says he asked Imam 'Ali

(as) why he had said this. Imam 'Ali replied, 'One day, I visited the Noble Prophet and found him shedding tears.

I asked, 'O Prophet of Allah! Has anyone made you angry? Why are you crying?' The Holy Prophet answered, 'A few moments ago, the Archangel Gabriel was here. He informed me that al-Husayn will be killed next to the River Euphrates'."

Najja recounts, "Imam 'Ali (as) said to me, 'Do you want me to give you a part of the soil on which al-Husayn will be killed? Do you want to smell it?' I said, 'Yes.' Then, he stretched his hand out and gave me a handful of the soil. I could not control myself, and hence my tears fell."2

3. Imam al-Sajjad (as) cried in mourning for Imam al-Husayn (as)

On his own chain of transmission, Ibn 'Asakir narrates that Ja'far ibn Muhammad (as) said, "It was asked of 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) why he used to cry so much for Imam al-Husayn (as).

He answered, 'Do not reproach me, because when Jacob (Ya'qub) lost one of his children, he cried so much that his eyes became white, and yet he knew that his child was alive and had not died, but I saw fourteen of my family members slaughtered in one morning. Do you want the sorrow and pain which I feel for them to leave my heart?"3

4. Imam al-Sadiq (as) cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

On his chain of transmission, Abu al-Faraj Isfahani recounts that Isma'il Tamimi said, "I was with Aba 'Abd Allah Ja'far ibn Muhammad when his servant asked for permission to allow the poet Sayyid Humayri to enter.

The Imam (as) gave him permission to enter. The Imam's family went behind a curtain and Sayyid Humayri came in. When he entered, he greeted Imam al-Sadiq (as) and went to sit in a corner. Imam al-Sadiq (as) asked him to recite some poetry. Sayyid Humayri recited the following poem of lamentation for Imam al-HuuHsayn,

وإذا مررتَ بقبرِهِ فأطلُّ بهِ وقفَ المطيّةُ
وابك المطهّرَ للمطهّرِ والمطهّرةِ النقيّةُ
كبكاءِ معولةٍ أتتْ يوماً لواحدِها المنيّةُ

Humayri says, "I saw the tears of Ja'far ibn Muhammad flowing on the sides of his cheeks, and loud voices of wailing were heard in the Imam's house, to such an extent that Imam al-Sadiq (as) asked them to control themselves. Everyone obeyed and they became guiet..."4

5. Ibn 'Abbas cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

Sibt ibn Jawzi narrates, "After al-Husayn got killed, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas constantly cried for him until his eyes became blind."5

6. Anas ibn Malik cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

Al-Qunduzi al-Hanafi says, "When the blessed head of Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali was brought to Ibn Ziyad, he put it in a basin and started hitting the Imam's teeth with a wooden stick in his hand while saying, 'I have never seen teeth this beautiful.' Anas was in his company, and he started crying and said, 'Of all the people, al-Husayn is the one who resembles the Holy Prophet most'."6

7. Zayd ibn Arqam cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

Ibn Abi al-Dunya' recounts a *hadith* that Zayd ibn Arqam was in the presence of Ibn Ziyad. He said to him, "Take your wooden stick away, I swear upon Allah! I have countless times seen the Prophet of Allah kiss those two lips." Then, Zayd ibn Arqam started crying. 7

8. Umm Salamah cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

When Umm Salamah was told that Imam al-Husayn (as) had been killed, she said, "Have they really done this? May Allah fill their graves with fire!" Then, she broke down and cried so much that she passed out.8

9. Hasan ibn Abi al-Hasan Basri cried for al-Husayn (as)

Zuhri says, "When al-Hasan Basri was informed that Imam al-Husayn (as) had been killed, he cried so much that his cheeks got wet with tears. Then, he said, 'May the people who have killed the son of their

10. Rabi' ibn Khuthaym cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

One of the people among the *tabi'in* who mourned for Imam al–Husayn's (as) suffering was Rabi' ibn Khuthaym. Sibt ibn Jawzi narrates, "When Rabi' was informed that Imam al–Husayn (as) had been killed, he cried and said, 'They have killed youths whom the Prophet loved to look at, used to feed with his own hands, and sat on his knees'."10

11. The people of Kufah cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

When the caravan of captives reached Kufah, all the people came to see the womenfolk of the Prophet's Household. Sounds of crying and wailing rose high. The women and men of Kufah, while yelling and rending their collars, cried for the captives. 11

12. The generation that came after the Prophet's companions cried for Imam al-Husayn (as)

'A'ishah bint al-Shati says, "The year 65 AH had not yet arrived when the loud cries of the *tawwabin* were heard, 'O blood of al-Husayn!' [*ya al-tharat al-Husayn!*] These cries sent a quake under the feet of Bani Umayyah. The people of Kufah picked up their weapons and went towards the grave of al-Husayn (as) while reciting this verse of the Qur'an along the way,

'... therefore turn to your Creator (penitently) and slay yourselves, that will be better for you with your Creator.'12

When they reached the tomb of Imam al–Husayn (as), they all yelled and cried out. The people had never before been seen to cry as much as they did on that day. They stayed there for twenty four hours..."13

- 1. Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 11, pp. 29–30; Tadhkirah al-Huffaz, vol. 2, p. 164; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 5, p. 364; Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 176; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 3, p. 342.
- 2. Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, trans. Imam al-Husayn (as), p 238; Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 300; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 1, p. 58; Al-Muʻjam al-Kabir, vol. 2, p. 105.
- 3. Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, trans. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (as), p. 56; Hiliyah al-Awliya', vol. 3, p. 138.
- 4. Al-Aghani, vol. 7, p. 240.
- 5. Tadhkirah al-Khawass, p. 152.
- 6. Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, p. 389, as narrated by al-Tirmidhi.
- 7. Usd al-Ghabah, vol. 2, p. 21; Siyr A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 3, p. 315; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 434.

- 8. Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, p. 196.
- 9. Tadhkirah al-Khawass, p. 265; Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 3, p. 227; Al-Muʻjam al-Kabir, vol. 3, p. 127.
- 10. Tadhkirah al-Khawass, p. 268.
- 11. Dr. 'A'ishah bint al-Shati, Mawsu'ah Al al-Nabi (s), p. 734.
- 12. Surat al-Baqarah 2:54.
- 13. Mawsu'ah Al al-Nabi (s), p. 764; Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 451.

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