

Day Nine

In the eve preceding Thursday, on Muharram 9, 61 A.H/October 12, 680 A.D., Ibn Sa'd stood up and called upon his army to attack al-Husayn ('a) who was sitting in front of his tent leaning on his sword. Heaviness descended upon him and he saw, by way of a fleeting vision, the Messenger of Allah (S) saying, "Shortly you will join us!"

Zainab, his sister, heard the men's voices, so she said to her brother, "The enemy is getting close to us." Al-Husayn ('a) said to his brother al-'Abbas, "*Ride, may I be your sacrifice¹, so that you may meet them. Ask them about the reason why they had come and about what they want.*"

Al-'Abbas set out escorted by twenty men, including Zuhayr and Habib, on horseback. He asked them, and their answer was: "An order from the *Amir* (governor) came that we should make you an offer either to surrender to his authority or we shall fight you." Al-'Abbas ('a) went back to inform al-Husayn ('a) as his escorting party stood to admonish those folks.

Habib Ibn Muzahir said to them, "By Allah! The worst people in the sight of Allah tomorrow [in the hereafter] are those who come to Him after having killed the offspring of His Prophet, his Progeny, his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), the worshippers of this land who offer *tahajjud* in the pre-dawn and remember Allah quite often." 'Izrah Ibn Qays said to him, "You can keep on lauding yourself as long as you like."

Zuhayr said to him, "O 'Izrah! Allah has already lauded and guided my soul! So, fear Allah, O 'Izrah, for I am only admonishing you. I plead to you in the Name of Allah, O 'Izrah, not to be among those who support the people of misguidance in killing the pure souls."

'Izrah then said, "O Zuhayr! You are not in our regard as one of the Shi'as of Ahl al-Bayt but a man who thought the opposite of their thinking." Zuhayr said, "Do you not conclude, having seen where I stand with their regard, that I am one of such Shi'as?"

By Allah! I never wrote him a letter, nor sent him a messenger, nor promised to support him, but a meeting with him on a highway tied me to him; so, when I saw his face, I remembered the Messenger of

Allah (S) and his status with him and came to know what a crime his enemy wants to commit. It was then that I decided to support him, to be in his party, and to defend him with my life because you yourselves have discarded your duty to the Messenger of Allah (S).”

Al-’Abbas informed his brother Abu ‘Abdullah of what those folks were up to. Al-Husayn (‘a) said, “Go back to them and ask them to give us this evening as a respite till tomorrow so that we may pray to our Lord, supplicate to Him, and seek His forgiveness, for He knows how much I love prayers, the recitation of His Book, the abundance of invocations, and the seeking of His forgiveness.”

Al-’Abbas went back and negotiated an evening’s respite. Ibn Sa’d stood up and asked his companions what they thought. ‘Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj said, “Glory to Allah! Even if they had been from Daylam and made such a request, you ought to have granted it to them.”

Qays Ibn al-Ash’ath said, “Grant them what they ask, for by my life, he [al-Husayn] shall fight you tomorrow.” Ibn Sa’d said, “By Allah! If I was sure that he would fight me tomorrow, I would not then postpone it till tomorrow!”

Then he sent the following message to al-Husayn (‘a): “We have postponed fighting you till tomorrow. If you surrender, we shall send you to the governor [‘Ubaydullah] Ibn Ziyad, but if you refuse, we shall not leave you alone.”²

Umayyah strayed from the goal
When swords met to do battle.
They wanted to drive an unyoked horse
Like one subjugated in yoke.
And in their hand they wanted him to be
Servile, though the father of lions he may be.
Unattainable, it seems, to ‘Umar to subdue
The Prophet's son, the pure, the sublime.
Umayyah aimed to attain what they could
So they paid no heed to what they ought and should.
They eyed the mirage with an eye,
Towards glory surely sly,
And slanted, and was seduced,
Ignorance its soul induced.
The ignorant only temptation produced.³

¹. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 137. ‘Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Fattal al-Naishapuri, Rawdat al-Wa’izin, p. 157. al-Mufid, Al-Irshad. Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya, Vol. 8, p. 176. The implication of this golden statement is not hidden, an implication that defies reason. How could he soar to the zenith of the truth that comes from a holy one? It is fathomed only by a discreet

critic. Do not be misled, dear reader, into thinking that this statement is insignificant especially after the Imam (‘a), reciting the ziyarat of the martyrs, had said, “By both of my parts, you have proven your good mettle, and good is the land wherein you are buried.”

The Imam (‘a), by doing so, is not actually the one who is addressing them. He was actually teaching this text to Safwan, the camel lessor, admonishing him to address them thus. The incident, as narrated by the mentor al-Tusi in Misbah al-Mutahajjid says that Safwan had sought Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (‘a) to perform the pilgrimage (ziyarat) to the shrine of Imam al-Husayn (‘a) and to teach him what he should do and say. Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) said to him, “O Safwan! Fast for three days before you start your trip..., etc.”

Then he continued to say, “When you reach al-Ha’ir, say: Allahu Akbar!” Then the Imam continued to describe the ritual to him till he said, “Then exit out of the door next to the feet of ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn (‘a); face the martyrs and say: ‘Assalamo Alaikom, O friends of Allah..., etc.”

[2.](#) al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 337.

[3.](#) These verses are from a poem by al-Ka’bi, may Allah have mercy on his soul.

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