

Imam Husayn (a.s.) sets out on his Journey

Al Husyan, the blessings of God be on him, set out from Mecca to Iraq on the day of Muslim's (attempted) rising in Kufa, that is the day of Tarwiya, after staying in Mecca for the rest of Shaban, the month of Rmadhan, Shawwal and Dhu al Qada and eight days of Dhu- al-Hijja in the year 60 A.H. (680). During his stay in Mecca, peace be on him, a number of Hijazis and Basrans had gathered around him, joining themselves to his household and his retainers (mawali).

When he determined on journeying to Iraq, he made the circumbulation of the (sacred) House and the ritual running between al-Safa and al-Marwa. Then he left the state of consecration (for the pilgrimage) (after) he had performed the lesser pilgrimage (umra) because he was not able to perform the greater pilgrimage (hajj). Through fear of being apprehended in Mecca, and being taken to Yazid Ibn Muiawiya, he, peace be on him, had set out early with his House, his sons and those of his Shia who had joined him.

(As it has been reported to us:) News of Muslim's (capture and death) had not yet reached him because (it had only happened) on the day he set out.

(It is reported that al-Farazdaq, the poet, said:) I made the pilgrimage with my mother in the year 60 A.H. (680). I was driving her camel when I entered the sanctuary. (There) I met al- Husayn Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them, leaving Mecca accompanied by (some men carrying) swords and shields.

"Whose caravan is this?" I asked.

"Al Husayn Ibn 'Ali's, peace be on them," was the reply. So I went up and greeted him.

"May God grant you your request and (fulfil) your hope in what you want, by my father and mother, son of the Apostle of God," I said to him. *"But what is making you hurry away from the pilgrimage?"* *"If I did not hurry away, I would be apprehended,"* he replied.

Then he asked me, *"Who are you?"* *"An Arab,"* I answered and he did not question me (about myself) any further.

“Tell me about the people you have left behind you,” he asked.

“You have asked a good (question),” I answered. “The hearts of the people are with you but their swords are against you. The decision comes from Heaven and God does what he wishes.”

“You have spoken truly of the affair belonging to God,” he replied.

“Every day He (is involved) in (every) matter” (55:29)

“If fate sends down what we like and are pleased with, we praise God for His blessings. He is the One from Whom help should be sought in order to give thanks to Him. However, although fate may frustrate (our) hopes, yet He does not destroy (the souls of) those whose intention is the truth and whose hearts are pious.”

“True, God brings you what you wish for (ultimately) and guards you against what you are threatened by,” I said. Then I asked him about matters concerning vows and pilgrimage rites. He told me about them and then moved his mount off, saying farewell, and so we parted.

When al Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on them, left Mecca, Yahya Ibn Said Ibn al-‘As met him with a group (of men). They had been sent to him by ‘Amr Ibn Said.

“Come back from where you are going,” they ordered. But he refused (to obey) them and continued. The two groups came to blows and hit at each other with whips. However al Husayn and his followers resisted fiercely. Al Husayn continued until he got to al- Tanim. There he met a camel-train which had come from Yemen. He hired from its people (additional) camels for himself and his followers to ride.

Then he said to the owners (of the camels), *“Whoever (of you) wants to come with us to Iraq, we will pay his hire and enjoy his company and whoever wants to leave some way along the road we will pay his hire for the distance he has travelled.”*

Some of the people went with him but others refused. Abd Allah Ibn Jafar sent his sons, Awn and Muhammad, after him, and he wrote a letter to him which he gave to them. In it, he said:

I ask you before God (to return) if you have set out when you see my letter. For I am very concerned because the direction in which you are heading will have within it your destruction, and the extirpation of your House. If you are destroyed today, the light of the land will be extinguished; for you are the (standard) of those who are rightly-guided and the hope of the believers.

Do not hurry on your journey as I am following this letter.

Greetings.

Abd Allah, then went to ‘Amr Ibn Sad and asked him to write to al Husayn (offering him) a guarantee of security, and (promising) to favour him, so that he would return from where he was going. Amr Ibn Said

wrote a letter in which he offered him favour and a guarantee of security for himself. He dispatched it with his brother Yahya Ibn Said. Yahya Ibn Said went after him (as did) Abd Allah after dispatching his sons. The two handed ('Amr's) letter to him and strove (to persuade) him to return.

"I have seen the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, in my sleep," answered (al Husayn), "and he ordered me (to do) what I am carrying out."

"What was that vision?" they both asked.

"I have not told anyone of it," he answered, "and I am not going to tell anyone until I meet my Lord, the Mighty and Exalted."

When 'Abd Allah Ibn Ja'far despaired of (persuading) him, he told his sons, Awn and Muhammad, to stay with him, to go with him and to struggle on behalf of him. He returned with Yahya Ibn Sa'id to Mecca.

Al Husayn, peace be on him, pressed on swiftly and directly towards Iraq until he reached Dhat' Irq.

When Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad had learnt of the journey of al- Husayn, peace be on him, from Mecca to Kufa, he had sent al- Husayn Ibn Numayr, the commander of the bodyguard (shurta), to station himself at al-Qadisiyya and to set up a (protective) link of cavalry between the area of al-Qadisiyya to Khaffan and the area of al-Qadisiyya to al-Qutqutaniyya. He informed the men that al- Husayn was heading for Iraq.

When al Husayn, peace be on him, reached al-Hajiz (a hill above) Batn al-Rumma, he sent Qays Ibn Mushir al Saydawi – some say it was his brother-in-nurture, Abd Allah Ibn Yuqtur to Kufa. For he, peace be upon him, had not yet learnt the news of (the fate of) Ibn 'Aqil.

He sent a letter with him:

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate From al Husayn Ibn 'Ali To his brother believers and Muslims, Greetings to you, I praise God before you, other than Whom there is no deity. Muslim Ibn Aqil's letter came to me, informing me of your sound judgement and the agreement of your leaders to support us, and to seek our rights. I have asked God to make your actions good and reward you with the greatest reward. I set out to you from Mecca on 8th of Dhu al-Hijja, the Day of Tarwiya. When my messenger reaches you, be urgent and purposeful in your affairs, for I am coming to you within the (next few) days.

Greeting and the mercy and blessings of God.

Muslim had written to al Husayn seventeen days before he was killed and the Kufans had written to him:

Here you have a hundred thousand swords. Do not delay.

Qays Ibn Mushir went towards Kufa with the letter. However, when he reached al-Qadisiyya, al Husayn

Ibn Numayr apprehended him and sent him to Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad.

“Go up on the pulpit,” Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad ordered him, “and curse the liar, al Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on him” Qays went up on the pulpit and praised and glorified God. Then he said, “People, this man, al Husayn Ibn ‘Ali the best of God’s creatures, the son of Fatima, the daughter of the Apostle, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, (is nearby). I am his messenger to you. Answer him.”

Then he cursed Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad and his father and prayed for forgiveness for ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib and blessed him. 'Ubayd Allah ordered him to be thrown from the top of the palace. They threw him and he was smashed to pieces.

(It is (also) reported:) He fell on the ground in chains and his bones were crushed and there only remained to him his last breath. A man called 'Abd al- Malik Ibn 'Umayr al-Lakhmi came to him and cut his throat. When he was told that that had been a shameful (thing to do) and he was blamed for it, he said, *“I wanted to relieve him (of his suffering).”* Kitab al Irshad

– Shaykh al Mufid

Translated by I.K.A Howard

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