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## Imam Husayn (a.s.)'s intention of proceeding towards Iraq from Makkah

(Irshad) Muslim bin Aqeel (a.s.)'s uprising in Kufa occurred on the eighth of the month of Zilhajj 60 A.H., while he was martyred on the day of Arafah i.e. the ninth of Zilhajj. Imam Husayn (a.s.) left for Iraq on the day of Tarwiyah i.e. eight of Zilhajj, the day of Muslim's uprising. When Imam was in Makkah, a group of the people of Hijaz and Basra joined him, his family and clientele.

When Imam intended going towards Iraq, he circumambulated the Ka'bah and walked (Sa'ee) between Safa and Marwah, then he removed the pilgrim's garb (Ehram) and declared it to be a lesser pilgrimage (Umrah). He could not halt to complete the major Pilgrimage (Hajj), for he feared lest he might be arrested in Makkah and taken as captive to Yazid.

(Malhoof) It is related that on the day of Tarwiyah (eight of Zilhajj), 'Amr bin Sa'eed bin As entered Makkah with a huge army. Yazid had ordered him that if he confronted Imam Husayn (a.s.) he should attack him, and if possible, to kill him. Thus Imam left Makkah on the same day.

Ibn Abbas relates that I saw Imam Husayn (a.s.) standing near the door of the Ka'bah with Jibra'eel's hand in his, before he left for Iraq. Jibra'eel was calling out,

*"Hasten to offer allegiance to (the Proof of) Allah, the Mighty, the Glorified."*

(Malhoof) Furthermore it is related that when Imam Husayn (a.s.) intended going towards Iraq, he stood up and delivered the following sermon:

*"Praise be to Allah! By Allah's will only! There is no power but with Allah! And Blessings of Allah be upon His Messenger! Verily death is bound with the sons of Adam as a necklace around the neck of a maiden. How I desire and long to meet my Ancestors similar to (Prophet) Ya'qoob (a.s.), who was desirous of meeting (Prophet) Yusuf (a.s.). Verily I proceed towards the place of my martyrdom, which*

*has been selected for me. It is as if I see the wolves of the desert (of Bani Umayyah) separating each part of my body between Nawawees and Karbala, and filling their empty bellies and utricles. There is no escape from that which has been written down by the pen of destiny, and the pleasure of our Household (Ahlul Bayt) lies in the pleasure of Allah. Verily we will endure His trials and secure the reward due for the forbearing ones. The cord of the Prophet (S) and his child cannot be separated from him, but will all be united together with him near the Right (Allah). Thereby his (the Prophet's) eyes will be cooled due to us and thus Allah will fulfill what He has promised through them. Then whoever desires to lay down his life for us and strive in the way of Allah, should come out with us, for I shall be leaving tomorrow morning, Allah willing."*

Our Master, the Traditionist Mirza Noori, in his book Nafsur Rahman says that Nawawees is a graveyard of the Christians, where presently the grave of Hurr bin Yazid ar Riyahi stands in the north western side of the town. As regards Karbala, it is a piece of land on the bank of a stream which flows from the western direction towards the city and passing besides the grave of Ibn Hamza. There are some gardens and fields in it, while the town is in between them.

(Malhoof) It is related that on the night of the day in which Imam Husayn (a.s.) left Makkah, Muhammad bin Hanafiyah came to his presence and said, "O dear brother! You are very well aware as to who these people of Kufa are. They committed treachery with your father (Imam Ali) and brother (Imam Hasan), and I fear that they might do the same with you. If you deem fit, do stay here, for you are the most respected and safe herein." Imam replied,

*"O brother! I fear lest Yazid bin Mu'awiyah assault me unawares in the Sacred Sanctuary (Haram) itself, and thus the sanctity of the Sacred Sanctuary and the House of Allah would be spoilt due to me."*

Ibn Hanafiyah said, "Then go to Yemen if you fear this, or go away into the corner of the desert, where you would be safe and no one would be able to lay their hands on you." Imam replied that he would think over the proposal.

When it dawned, Imam prepared to go and the news reached Muhammad bin Hanafiyah. He came and caught hold of the reins of his camel, on which the Imam was mounted and said, "O my brother! Had you not promised me that you would consider my desire, then why do you leave in such haste"? Imam replied,

*"After you left, the Holy Prophet (S) came to me and said: O Husayn! Hasten towards Iraq, for Allah desires to see you martyred."*

Muhammad bin Hanafiyah said, "Verily we are Allah's and verily unto Him shall we return." Then Muhammad continued, "Then what is the need of taking these women along with you in such a state"? He replied,

*"The Prophet told me that Allah desires to see them in captivity."*

Then he greeted Muhammad and left.

The question put forward by Hamza bin Humran to Imam Ja'far as Sadiq (a.s.) regarding Muhammad bin Hanafiyah's keeping aloof, and Imam's reply thereat, has already been related in another place in the Section 3 "Discourse of Allamah Majlisi in Biharul Anwar" of Chapter 2 in this book.

Imam Ja'far as Sadiq (a.s.) says that,

*"When Husayn bin Ali (a.s.) intended to go towards Iraq, he handed over his books and testimony to Umm Salama (a.s.) as a trust, and when Imam Ali Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) returned back, Umm Salama handed over the same to him."*

Mas'oodi writes in his Isbatul Wasiyyah, that when Imam Husayn (a.s.) intended to go to Kufa after writing a letter to the Kufans, and before dispatching Muslim bin Aqeel (a.s.) to Kufa, Umm Salama (a.s.) came up to him and said, "I remind you not to go (there)." Imam asked her the reason, to which she replied, "I have heard the Prophet of Allah (S) say that 'my son Husayn will be martyred in Iraq' and he handed over to me a bottle filled with earth, which I have preserved with me and (often) inspect it." Imam replied,

*"O dear mother! I shall be compelled to die. There is no refuge from what has been decreed, and there is no other alternative for death. I myself know the day, time and the place where I shall be martyred, then I identify the spot of my martyrdom besides the mausoleum where I shall be buried, as I recognize you. Then if you desire, I would show you my burial place and that of the ones to be martyred along with me."*

Umm Salama replied that she desired doing so. Imam Husayn (a.s.) uttered the name of Allah and the ground (of Karbala) arose and he showed her the burial place of himself and others. Then he took some earth from it and told her to mix it with the former one (given to her by the Prophet). Then he said,

*"I shall be martyred on the tenth (of Muharram) after the Zuhri Prayers. Salutations upon you O dear mother! We are pleased with you."*<sup>1</sup>

Umm Salama preserved his report and awaited the tenth (Ashura').

Mas'oodi, in his Murujuz Zahab writes that when Imam Husayn (a.s.) decided to go towards Iraq, Abdullah bin Abbas came to his presence and said, "O cousin! I have heard that you intend going towards Iraq, while the people therein are treacherous and quarrelsome. Do not make haste, and if you desire, fight these tyrants. And if you do not wish to reside in Makkah, then go to Yemen, for it is located in a corner and you possess numerous friends and brothers therein. Then halt there and dispatch your envoys across and write to the Kufans and your followers in Iraq, that they might depose their commanders from there. And if they succeed in deposing them, and there remains no one to quarrel with you, only then you enter therein, for I do not trust them. And if they do not do so, remain where you

are and wait for Allah's command, for there are numerous forts and valleys in Yemen."

Hearing this Imam said,

*"O cousin! I know that genuinely you are my well wisher and are sympathetic towards me, but Muslim bin Aqeel has written to me that the Kufans have sworn the oath of allegiance to me, and have united to support me, hence I have finally decided to go there."*

Abdullah said, "You have tested the Kufans twice. These are the very people who had been supporting your father and brother, while tomorrow they might be among your murderers siding their commander. Then if you go towards them and Ubaydullah bin Ziyad is informed about it, he will send them to revolt against you. And the people who have written to you inviting you there, will turn into your worst enemies. Then if you disapprove my words, do not take the women and children along with you. For by Allah! I fear lest you might be killed as Usman was murdered, while his women and children were beholding."

Imam replied to Ibn Abbas,

*"By Allah! I hold it dear to be killed in any other place, rather than spoil the sanctity of the Ka'bah because of me (by being murdered herein)."*

Then Ibn Abbas lost all hope to persuade him and arose and left. Then he went to Abdullah bin Zubayr and recited the following couplet: "O Lark! You have got a vacant place, then lay your eggs and raise your voice, your seat is empty, strike your beak on the ground wherever you desire, then Husayn is going towards Iraq and is leaving behind Hijaz for you."

When Abdullah bin Zubayr heard that Imam is going to Kufa (he was delighted). He was restless and aggrieved with Imam's presence in Makkah, for the people therein did not consider him equal to Imam Husayn (a.s.), hence there was no greater news for him than that Imam was leaving Makkah. Then he came to Imam and said, "O Aba Abdillah! What have you decided? I fear Allah by not fighting against their cruelties and their disrespect towards Allah's virtuous slaves."

Imam Husayn (a.s.) replied,

*"I have decided to go to Kufa."*

Ibn Zubayr said, "May Allah grant you success! If I had friends like you, I would have refused going there." He feared lest Imam would accuse him for it hence said, "Then if you stay back here and invite me and the people of Hijaz to swear the allegiance at your hands, we shall agree to it and will hasten towards you, for you are more worthy of the Caliphate than Yazid and his father."<sup>2</sup>

Abu Bakr bin Haris bin Hisham came to the presence of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and said, "Verily relation (with you) demands that I should be merciful to you, and I do not know how you consider me in terms of being your well-wisher."

Imam replied,

*“O Abu Bakr! You are not a deceiver.”*

Abu Bakr said, “Your father was more able and people were more desirous of him and considered him. They were more obedient and subservient to him. They rallied around him in large numbers when he marched towards Mu’awiyah, except the people of Syria, while he was more powerful than Mu’awiyah. Even then they betrayed him and became a burden upon him with their lust for the world. Then they made him swallow anger, and they disobeyed him until the matter reached such that he went towards the Grandeur and Pleasure of Allah. Then they did the same to your brother, as your father, and you were a witness to all this.

Yet now you desire to go towards those who had revolted against your father and brother and oppressed them? Then you like to fight along with them against the Syrians, the Iraqis and the one who has prepared himself and is more powerful, while people fear him and wish for his success? Then if he receives news that you are proceeding towards him, he might bribe them, and verily they are desirous of this world. Then those very people who have promised to assist you will be ready to fight you, and those very people who claim to love you will leave you devoid of helpers and will go to their aid. Then remember Allah in respect of yourself.”

Imam Husayn (a.s.) replied,

*“O Cousin! May Allah reward you favorably! You have advised me sincerely. But Allah’s Decree shall surely occur.”*

Abu Bakr said, “O Aba Abdillah! I give you to Allah’s refuge.”

It is written in Tareekh of Tabari that Azdi says, that Abu Jabbab Yahya bin Abu Hayyah relates from Adi bin Hurmala Asadi, who relates from Abdullah bin Salim and Mazri bin Mashma’il Asadi. They said that, “We went to Makkah from Kufa to perform the Haj, until we entered Makkah on the day of Tarwiyah (8th Zilhajj). We saw Imam Husayn (a.s.) and Abdullah bin Zubayr at the time of Zuhr, standing between the Ka’bah and Hajarul Aswad. We went towards them and heard Ibn Zubayr telling Imam Husayn (a.s.) that, “You may reside here if you desire so and be in charge. We are your supporters, helpers, your well-wishers and your obedient ones.”

Imam replied,

*“My father had told me that the blood of a man will be shed unjustly here, and I do not desire to be that man.”<sup>3</sup>*

Ibn Zubayr continued, “Then halt here and leave the matter to me. For I shall obey you and will not deceive.”

Imam replied,

*“I do not desire to do so.”*

Then they started speaking in a whisper among themselves until we heard people calling out to hasten towards Mina at the time of Zuhr. Then we saw that Imam Husayn (a.s.) started circumambulating the Ka’bah, then he performed the Sa’ee between Safa and Marwah, and cut some of his hair. Then he ended his Umrah and left towards Kufa, while we went to Mina with other people.

Sibt ibn Jawzi in his Tazkiratul Khawas, writes that when Muhammad bin Hanafiyah received news of the departure of Imam Husayn (a.s.) towards Kufa, he was performing the ablutions, and a jar was kept in front of him. He wept profusely until the jar became full of his tears. Then there was none in Makkah who was not grieved and afflicted by his departure, for they had tried their best to dissuade him from doing so. Then he recited the following couplets: “I will depart, for there is no shame in death for a young man, whenever he intends (to do what is) right and he strives like a Muslim, who has soothed righteous men through (the sacrifice of) his life, who has scattered the accursed and opposed the criminals. If I live, I will not regret (what I have done), and if I die, I will not suffer. Let it be enough for you to live in humiliation and be reviled.”

Then he recited the following verse of the Qur’an:

***“And the behest of Allah is a Decree, irrevocable.” (Surah al-Ahzaab, 33:38)***

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1. The devotion and love of Umm Salama (a.s.) for the Household (Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)) of the Prophet is apparent from the above incident. Her reverence of the true Vicegerent of the Prophet and the Imam of the age is renowned since her support of Imam Ali (a.s.). Abul Fida in his Tareekh says that before leaving Madina (towards Basra for the battle of Jamal), Imam Ali (a.s.) called on Umm Salama, one of the widows of the Prophet, and bade her farewell.

Umm Salama said to him, “In the name of Allah! I deliver you into His Protection. By His Power and His Majesty, you alone are with the truth, and all your enemies are in error. If it were not the command of Allah to the wives of His Prophet to stay at home, I would have accompanied you in this campaign.” She had a son named Umar bin Abi Salama, by her first marriage, whom she offered to him saying, “He is my only child. He is all that I have in this world. I offer him to you. He will, if necessary, sacrifice his life for you.” (Tabari, Ibn Khaldoon, A’asam Kufi.) The words of Imam Husayn (a.s.) in the above narration that “We are pleased with you” elucidates that she was one of those who had earned the pleasure of the Allah and His Proof (Hujjah).

2. A martyr’s motivation is different from that of ordinary people. His logic is that of a devout reformer and a zealous gnostic. If the two logics, viz. the logic of an earnest reformer and the logic of a zealous Gnostic are put together, the result becomes the motivation of a martyr. People like Abdullah bin Abbas and Muhammad bin Hanafiyah tried to dissuade him from going towards Kufa. Their argument was that his action was not logical. They were right in their own way. It was not in conformity with their logic, which was the logic of worldly wise men.

But Imam had a higher logic. His logic was that of a martyr which is beyond the comprehension of ordinary men while theirs was based on the consideration of personal interests and political gains. From their point of view, Imam’s action was not discreet and prudent at all. Abdullah bin Abbas made a proposal which was politically very sound. It has been the usual

practice of clever people to use others as their tools. They push others forward and remain behind themselves. If others succeed, they take full advantage of their success, otherwise they lose nothing.

3. Imam Ali (a.s.)'s prediction of the murder of Abdullah bin Zubayr proved accurate. Abdullah bin Zubayr, after many years, took refuge in Makkah. Yazid sent an army to Makkah which laid siege to it. The Ka'bah was catapulted with stones and then set on fire. Once again Ibn Zubayr was attacked and the Ka'bah was catapulted during the reign of Abdul Malik bin Marwan's rule. Ibn Zubayr was eventually killed in Makkah by Hajjaj bin Yusuf. Here, Imam Husayn (a.s.) is telling Abdullah bin Zubayr of his inevitable fate.

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