

The Martyrdom Of Al-Husayn (as)

Al-Husayn (as) Advances Towards the Battlefield

When [only] three or four people had remained with al-Husayn (as), he called for a pair of dazzling Yemeni trousers (*sarawil*). He tore them [and put them on], so that he should not have them plundered [after his martyrdom].^{1,2}

He waited for a good part of the day. Whenever someone from the people came to him, he would go away, disliking to take up the responsibility of killing him and [to shoulder] the great sin.

Malik bin al-Nusair [al-Baddi al-Kindi]³ came to him and struck his head with [his] sword. It cut through the hood he was wearing and reached his head. He started bleeding and the hood was filled with blood. Al-Husayn (as) said to Malik: “May you not eat or drink with [your hand]. May Allah resurrect you with the oppressors!”

[Al-Husayn (as)] then threw away the hood and called for a cap. He wore it and surrounded it with a turban.^{4,5}

So he had the cloth tied [over the hood which was made of black silk]. He put on a shirt⁶ [or] a cloak of made of silken material, while his hair was dyed. [Al-Husayn (as)] fought like a brave knight, guarding against the [arrows], availing the weak points [of the enemy] and attacking the cavalry fiercely.⁷

[Meanwhile,] Shamir bin Dhi al-Jaushan advanced with around ten foot soldiers from among the Kufan army towards the tent of al-Husayn (as), inside which there was his load and family. [Seeing this, al-Husayn (as) began] walking towards [the tent], but [the people] came between him and the tents. So al-Husayn (as) said: “Woe upon you! If you have no religion and do not fear the Day of Resurrection, then be free men of noble descent in this world! Protect my tent and family from your rabble and ignorant men!”

Ibn Dhi al-Jaushan said: “You are granted that O son of Fatimah!” and proceeded towards him with the

foot soldiers. [At this] al-Husayn (as) began attacking them and they would disperse from him.⁸

'Abdullah bin 'Ammar al-Bariqi⁹ says: "The foot soldiers that were on his right and left side launched an assault on him. He thus attacked those who were on his right such that they were frightened [and retreated]. [He then attacked] those on the left and they [also] were terrified. By Allah, I have never seen a broken [and a wounded] person, whose children, kinsmen and companions had been slain, so tranquil, more resolute and more courageous than him. By Allah, I have not seen his like, neither before him, nor after him. Indeed, the foot soldiers were fleeing from his right and left as goats would flee [and scatter] from a wolf."

As 'Umar bin Sa'd drew closer to al-Husayn (as), his sister Zainab, daughter of Fatimah, came out and said: "O 'Umar bin Sa'd! Is Abu 'Abdillah being killed while you [stand by and] watch?! So he turned away his face from her¹⁰. It is just as if I am seeing the tears of 'Umar running down his cheeks and beard!"¹¹

[Meanwhile,] al-Husayn (as) was attacking the cavalry and saying: "Are you inciting one another to kill me! By Allah, you are not going to kill any servant of Allah after me whose killing will incur more wrath upon you than [killing] me. By Allah, I anticipate that Allah shall honour me by disgracing you, and shall take vengeance on you from where you do not perceive¹². By Allah, if you kill me, Allah will cause you to fight one another and to shed your blood. Then he will not leave you until he doubles for you the severe punishment."¹³

Thereafter, Shamir bin Dhi al-Jaushan advanced towards al-Husayn (as) with the foot soldiers. Among them were Sinan bin Anas al-Nakha'i, Khauliy bin Yazid al-Asbahi¹⁴, Salih bin Wahab al-Yazani, Qash'am bin Amr al- Ju'fi and 'Abd al-Rahman al-Ju'fi.¹⁵ Shamir bin Dhi al-Jaushan began inciting them [against Husein (as)], so they completely encircled [al-Husayn (as)].

A boy¹⁶ from among his household came out towards al-Husayn (as). Al-Husayn (as) said to his sister, Zainab bint 'Ali: "Stop him." So she held him in order to stop him, but he refused [to take notice of her] and determinedly advanced towards al-Husayn (as).

Bahr bin Ka'b rushed towards al-Husayn (as) with [his] sword. The young lad said [to him]: "O son of an impure woman! Are you [trying to] kill my uncle?!" [Bahr] struck at him with [his] sword. The boy tried to fend off [the blow] with his arm, but the sword cut through [his arm] to the skin [on the other side]. The boy cried out: "O my mother!"

Al-Husayn (as) took hold of him and embraced him. He said: "My nephew, be patient on what has come to you, and anticipate in this the best [from Allah], for Allah will unite you with your righteous ancestors, the Messenger of Allah, 'Ali bin Abi Talib, Hamzah and Hasan bin 'Ali.¹⁷ May Allah bless them all. O Allah, withhold rain from them and deprive them of the blessings of the earth. O Allah, if you are going to give them comfort till a time, then divide them into factions and make them sects following different ways. Let their rulers never be pleased with them. They summoned us so that they might support us,

[but] they became hostile to us and killed us.”¹⁸

He waited for a large part of the day. Had the people wished to kill him, they could have done so. But [they were hesitant in killing him such that] each of them would take refuge in the other and a group among them would wish that the other group may spare it [the great sin]. Then Shamir shouted at the people: “Woe onto you! Why are you waiting for the man?! Kill him! May your mothers be deprived of you!” So he was attacked from every side.

The Martyrdom of al-Husayn (as)

Zur’ah bin Sharik al-Tamimi struck him on his palm¹⁹ and struck [another blow] on his shoulder. Thus, he would [try to] stand, but would fall prostrate on his noble face. In such a condition, Sinan bin Anas al-Nakha’i stabbed him with a spear such that he (as) fell [to the ground]. No one would get closer to al-Husayn (as) except that Sinan bin Anas would charge on him, fearing that the head of [al-Husayn (as)] may fall in the hands of someone else. He then bent down, slaughtered him and separated his head.²⁰ Thereafter, he handed [the head] to Khauliy bin Yazid [al-Asbahi].

Al-Husayn (as) was plundered of all that was on him. Qais bin al-Ash’ath²¹ took his plush, while Ishaq bin Haiwah al-Hadhrami his shirt²². A man from the Banu Nahshal took his sword. His slippers were taken by Aswad [al-Audi] and Bahr bin Ka’b took his trousers²³, leaving him uncovered.²⁴

^{1.} Al-Tabari (5:451): “Some of his companions said to him: ‘You better wear a tabban (short dress) under [the trouser].’ He said: ‘That is the garment of humiliation. It does not befit me to wear it.’ When he was killed, Bahr bin Ka’b plundered [the trouser] from him. Abu Mikhraf says: “Amru bin Shu’ayb narrated to me from Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Rahman that the hands of Bahr bin Ka’b used to sprinkle drops of water in winter, and they would become dry in the summer as if they were sticks.”

^{2.} Al-Tabari (5:451): “[Abu Mikhraf says:] ‘Sulaiman bin Abi Rashid related to me from Humaid bin Muslim that...’ See also al-Irshad (pg.241).

^{3.} Al-Tabari: He was the messenger of Ibn Ziyad who brought his letter to Hurr bin Yazid while he was on the way, [instructing him] to force al-Husayn (as) to halt. (5:408)

^{4.} Al-Tabari (5:448): The hood was made of silk. Al-Kindi came [to the body of the Imam (as) and] plundered it. When he went back with it to his family, he started washing off the blood from it. His wife saw him doing that and she understood [the matter]. So she said: ‘Do you bring into my house that which you have plundered from the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (S)?! Take it out from me!’ The friends of Malik say that he continued to remain poor with it [as a result his action] until he died.” Al-Mufid has also related this report in al-Irshad (pg.241). He refers to Malik as ‘Ibn al-Yasr’ instead of Ibn al-Nusair. According to Majma’ al-Bahrain, the hood (al-barnas) was a long cap made of cotton. It was worn by Christian monks and was later adopted by Muslim ascetics during the early period of Islam.

^{5.} Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani narrates in al-Maqatil (pg.78; Najaf edition) from Abu Mikhraf who said: “Hisham reports from Qasim bin al-Asbagh bin Nubatah on the authority of his father, Muhammad bin Sa’ib, that: ‘Someone who happened to see al-Husayn (as) in his camp has related to me that: ‘When the army of [al-Husayn (as)] was overpowered, he whipped his horse and set off towards the dam, trying to reach the Euphrates. A man from the Banu Aban bin Darim said: ‘Woe upon you! Prevent him from reaching the water!’ So the people chased him and came between him and the Euphrates. The man from the Banu Darim took an arrow [and shot it at him] which lodged in his throat. Al-Husayn pulled out the arrow and held his hand below his throat. Both his palms were filled with blood and then he said: ‘O Allah! I complain to you about what is being done to the son of the daughter of your Prophet. O Allah, afflict him with thirst!’”

Qasim bin Asbagh says: "Indeed I have seen him, by his side there were jugs of milk and pitchers of water. The water was being cooled for him and sweetened with sugar. He would say: 'Woe onto you! Give me water to drink. I am dying of thirst!' So they would give him the jug or the pitcher and he would have some from it. The moment he removed it from his lips and the satisfaction would go away, he would [again] say: 'Woe upon you! Give me a drink! I am dying of thirst!' By Allah, it was not long before his belly bursted like the bursting of the stomach of a camel."

Al-Tabari (5:449–450): "Hisham says: "Amru bin Shamir related to me from Jabir al-Ju'fi who said: 'Al-Husayn (as) was thirsty. When his thirst became severe, he drew near [the Euphrates] to drink from its water. So Husayn bin Tamim shot an arrow at him which lodged in his mouth. [Al-Husayn (as)] began collecting the blood from his mouth and throwing it to the sky. He said: 'O Allah, take account of them, destroy them entirely and do not leave a single of them on the earth.'"(5:449–450). In (5:447–448) [the chain of narration of this report appears as such:] "[Abu Mikhnaf says:] 'Sulaiman bin Abi Rashid related to me from Humaid bin Muslim that..."

[6.](#) Al-Tabari (5:452): "[Abu Mikhnaf says:] 'Saq'ab bin Zuhair has narrated to me from Humaid bin Muslim that..."

[7.](#) Al-Tabari (5:452): "[Abu Mikhnaf reports] on the authority of al-Hajjaj from 'Abdullah bin 'Ammar al-Bariqi who said..."

[8.](#) Al-Tabari (5:450): "Abu Mikhnaf reports..." See also Maqatil al-Talibiyyin (pg.79).

[9.](#) Al-Tabari (5:565): He is the person who gave an account of the order of the Commander of the Faithful ['Ali (as)] –as he was advancing towards Siffin in the year 26 H– that a bridge be built over the Euphrates.

[10.](#) See also al-Irshad (pg.242; Najaf edition).

[11.](#) Al-Tabari (5:451): "[Abu Mikhnaf reports] from 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Ammar al-Bariqi, who narrated from Hajjaj that..."

Al-Mufid has narrated the report in al-Irshad (pg.241) from Humaid bin Muslim.

[12.](#) The prayer of the Imam (as) was answered. Thus came Mukhtar and sent Abu 'Umrah to 'Umar bin Sa'd, ordering him to bring Ibn Sa'd to him. Abu 'Umrah came to 'Umar and said: "The governor is summoning you." As 'Umar stood up, he was tripped by his garment. So Abu 'Umrah struck him with [his] sword and killed him. Then he put his head under his cloak, [went to Mukhtar,] and placed it before him!

Hafs bin 'Umar bin Sa'd was sitting with Mukhtar. So Mukhtar asked him: "Do you know this head?" Hafs recited the verse: 'Indeed we belong to Allah and to Him do we indeed return', and said: "Yes, and life is worthless after him!" Mukhtar said: "But you [too] are not going to live after him." He then ordered him to be killed and he was killed. His head was then put with that of his father. (See al-Tabari: 6:61).

[13.](#) Al-Tabari (5:452): "[Abu Mikhnaf says:] 'Saq'ab bin Zuhair narrated to me from Humaid bin Muslim that..."

[14.](#) Al-Tabari (6:59): Mukhtar had sent Ma'adh bin Hani' bin 'Adiyy al-Kindi –the nephew of Hujr bin 'Adiyy, and Abu 'Amarah –the head of his bodyguards, in pursuit of him. Khauliyy hid himself near the exit [of his house]. So Ma'adh ordered Abu 'Amarah to search for him in the house. As they were entering the house, his wife came out to them. They said to her: "Where is your husband? She replied: "I do not know" and pointed towards the exit. So they entered [the house] and found him [at its exit], with a basket made of date palm leaves on his head. They took him out and burnt him.

[15.](#) Al-Tabari: He was among those who gave witness against Hujr bin 'Adiyy al-Kindi (5:270). He was in command of the Madhhij and Asad in the army of 'Umar bin Sa'd on the day of 'Ashura'(5:422).

[16.](#) According to Shaikh al-Mufid in al-Irshad (pg.241), he was 'Abdullah bin al-Hasan. There are indications [also] that support this view. It has been mentioned earlier that Harmalah bin Kahil was the one who shot an arrow at him which killed him. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani also has narrated this incident –at this particular point of the event of Karbala' – in al-Maqatil (pg.77; Najaf edition), from Abu Mikhnaf who reported from Sulaiman bin Abi Rashid, who related from Humaid bin Muslim.

[17.](#) Al-Tabari (5:450): "Abu Mikhnaf says in a report..." See also Maqatil al-Talibiyyin (pg.77; Najaf edition). He narrated it from Humaid bin Muslim on the authority of Sulaiman bin Abi Rashid.

[18.](#) Al-Tabari (5:451): "[Abu Mikhnaf says:] 'Sulaiman bin Abi Rashid has narrated to me from Humaid bin Muslim who said..." See al-Irshad (pg.241).

[19.](#) It was his left shoulder according to al-Irshad (pg.242) and Tadhkirat al-Khawass (pg.253). 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Muqarram narrates this report in al-Maqatil (pg.16) from the book al-Ithaf bi-Hubb al-Ashraf.

[20.](#) Ibn al-Jawzi mentions five different views concerning the assassin of the Imam (as) and [ultimately] prefers that it was Sinan. He then narrates that [one day] Sinan entered upon Hajjaj, so he asked him: "Are you the killer of al-Husayn?" "Yes", he replied. Hajjaj said: "Good news to you, as you will never be with him in the same abode." The people said that

Hajjaj has never been heard saying a better word than this!" Ibn al-Jawzi further says: "[After the martyrdom of al-Husayn (as)], people counted [the number of wounds] on his body and found that he was stabbed 33 times and 34 sword strikes [were evident on his body]. And they found on his clothes that he was shot 120 arrows."

21. Al-Tabari (5:453): "[Abu Mikhnaf says:] 'Saq'ab bin Zuhair narrated to me from Humaid bin Muslim that..."

22. Al-Tabari (5:455): "[Abu Mikhnaf reports:] 'Sulaiman bin Abi Rashid has related to me from Humaid bin Muslim..."

23. Al-Tabari (5:452): "[Abu Mikhnaf says:] 'Saq'ab bin Zuhair has narrated to me from Humaid bin Muslim that..."

24. Al-Tabari (5:451): "[Abu Mikhnaf reports:] 'Sulaiman bin Abi Rashid related to me from Humaid bin Muslim, who said..."

Sibt al-Jawzi has clearly stated this fact in al-Tadhkirah (pg.253) saying: "They plundered all that was on him, even his trousers which was taken by Bahr bin Ka'b al-Tamimi." Al-Mufid mentions this in al-Irshad (pg.241&242) adding that: "After this, the two hands of Bahr bin Ka'b, may Allah curse him, used to become so dry in the summer that they were like sticks, and then soaking wet in the winter such that they sprinkled blood and pus, until Allah destroyed him."

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