

The Question of Marching With the Family

Al-Husayn ('a) transported his family [from Medina] to Iraq knowing that he and all those in his company would be killed. Why? He knew beforehand that his murder would be in vain if no eloquent tongues and determined persons acquainted the nation with the misguidance of Maysun's son and with the oppression of Marjana's son who attacked the pure progeny of the Prophet (S), and without the refutation of the *bid'as* which they had introduced in the sacred *Shari'a*.

The Father of the Oppressed realized that the theologians were apprehensive of pretending to denounce the oppressive authority to which they surrendered. He was also informed of the imprisonment of many of them.

He concluded that even the greatest among them would not be able to expose the horror of what such authority was committing. What happened to Ibn 'Afif al-Azdi underscores this reality which any clear conscience supports.

The Father of the Oppressed also knew that the ladies who were born in the Message were used to persevere during the time of calamity and when facing hardships, and difficulties, with hearts more firm than the mountains. They did not neglect, even under the most adverse of situations, to expose to the public the lies and falsehood resulting from what those misleading rulers were promoting as well as their ultimate goal of undermining the creed.

They rose with their Imam who sacrificed himself for the sake of the right creed only to bring the *Shari'a* of his grandfather, the Prophet (S), back to life.

Even while their hearts were on fire on account of the tragedy, and even when calamities plunged them into the deepest depression, the wise ladies belonging to the family of the Prophet (S) were largely prepared for revenge and for defending the sanctity of the creed.

Among them is [Zainab] the wise lady and daughter of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a), peace of Allah be upon her, who was not deterred by captivity or by the humiliation of exile, or by losing dear ones, or even by her enemy rejoicing at her misfortune, or by the wailing of the widows, the cries of the children, the moaning of the sick.

She often spoke out her mind to those ruffians even when she was between their claws and fangs, without stuttering a bit, hurling words like thunderbolts at their assembly. She, for example, stood before Marjana's son, the ill-begotten tyrant, the defenseless lady that she was, having none with her to protect her nor any of her family's men except the Imam's *wali* [Zain al-‘Abidin] who was exhausted by sickness, in addition to women seeking refuge in her shadow, complaining, weeping, and children filled with the pain of thirst, and young ladies severely beset, while the severed head of the Imam (‘a) and those of his supporters and kinsfolk were all in front of her as the limbs were left in the desert for the sun to incinerate.

Even a single one of such calamities would overpower and shatter the mind of anyone.

Yet the daughter of Hayder (‘a) maintained a great deal of self-restraint and self-composure, so she delivered her speech as though she had been her father, a speech which was more forceful than the fiercest arrow, rendering the son of Marjana speechless as she said,

“These are people whom Allah decreed to be killed; so they came out welcoming their destiny. Allah will gather you and them, and arguments will be lodged against you, and you will be disputed; so, see whose lot will be the crack of the fire, may your mother lose you, O son of Marjana.”

She made it clear for those who were unaware of his malice and meanness that he would never be able to wash away the shame and infamy of what he had committed. She baffled the minds and amazed everyone when she delivered another speech at Kufa's cemetery where people were confused, weeping, not knowing what to do.

Said she, “How can the shame and infamy of their killing the son of the Prophet, the substance of the Message, and the Master of the Youths of Paradise, ever be washed away from them? May their endeavour be rendered futile! May their hands perish! May their bargain be a loss, and may they be exposed to shame in the hereafter! Surely Allah's retribution is greater, had they only known.”

Having finished her speech, she was succeeded by [her younger niece] Fatima daughter of al-Husayn (‘a) who spoke eloquently while remaining unruffled, calm [the child that she was]. Her speech acted like spears that pierced the hearts.

People could not help raising their voice as they wept, and they came to realize the extent of the tragedy and the pain it inflicted. They said to her, “Suffices you what you have said, O daughter of the pure ones, for you have certainly burnt our hearts and slit our throats!”

She hardly finished when Umm Kulthum, Zainab daughter of ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib (‘a), spoke [again]. Zainab described the horror which those misled people had committed, whereupon everyone present wailed and cried, and nobody had ever witnessed more crying and weeping.¹

One wonders whether anyone can deliver a speech under such a most grave situation, when one is surrounded by the swords of the oppressors, no matter how strong his tribe may be. Yet who else besides the daughters of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) could publicly expose the sins committed by the son of Hind and the son of Marjana?

Heavy burdens were placed on the tongues, and fear filled everyone's heart.

Yet all of this is looked upon as abominable had its benefits only been worldly and its motives the doing of one's insinuating self. But if it benefits the religion, such as clearing the faith introduced by the Messenger of Allah (S) from any falsehood that those adversaries had attached to it, there will be no ugliness in it according to reason and custom, and it is supported by the *Shari'a*.

Allah has exempted women from waging *jihad* and confronting the enemies, and Allah Almighty has required them to stay at home.

Yet such is the case when a confrontation like this is undertaken by the men. But when such an obligation is removed from them in a confrontational way from which they should refrain, the foundations of the *Shari'a* will be undermined, and the sacrifice of those elite ones will be cleared from any falsehood, women will then be required to do just that.

It is for this reason that the Head of the Women of the World, Fatima al-Zahra', peace be upon her, stood to defend Allah's supreme caliphate after the oath of allegiance had been sworn to someone else other than to the master of *was'is* [her husband, Imam ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (‘a), who was thus forcibly distanced from the political process], so she delivered a speech at the Mosque of the Prophet (S) which was very eloquent and which was witnessed by a large crowd of the Muhajirun and the Ansar.

But al-Husayn (‘a) had already been informed by his grandfather, al-Amin (S), that those folks, although they would have attained their goal, and although they would go to extremes in their villainy, they would not harm the women.

This is clear from a statement made by al-Husayn (‘a) in which he said to those women at the final farewell hour, "Put on your outer mantles and get ready for the test, and be informed that Allah will protect and safeguard you, and that He will save you from the evil of your adversaries and render the outcome of your cause righteousness.

He will torment your adversaries with all norms of torture, and He will compensate you for going through such a calamity with numerous types of blessings and graces. So, do not complain, and do not utter that which may demean your status.”

We can say all of this even if the master of the martyrs (‘a) had not been the Imam. But in the case of submitting to the encompassing knowledge of the Imam, the knowledge of what was and of what will be, and his marching as directed by the best realistic interests, and his being infallible in everything he says and does, and it is the truth which cannot be refuted that we are bound to submit that all the divine wisdom he undertook and the divine interests are beyond any doubt..., we have to do nothing but to believe in all his actions without being bound by reason to know the interests served thereby. The same can be said about anything with which adults are obligated.

The servants of Allah are not required except to submit and surrender to their Lord without knowing the underlying motives behind what He orders them to do. The same case is applicable to the slaves with their masters. Reason does not require a slave to do anything more than obeying his master whenever the latter bids or forbids him.

1. Read the text of these three speeches in a later part of this book where the subject of martyrdom is discussed.

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