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## The Seventh Day

On the seventh day, the siege around the Master of Martyrs (‘a) and those with him intensified, and they were blocked completely from reaching the water. Their water supply had already depleted, so each one of them had to deal with the flames of the thirst on his or her own.

Naturally, the children were moaning on account of the pain of thirst. Some of them were pleading for water while others were trying anything they could think of to quench their thirst.

All of this was taking place before the eyes of Abu ‘Abdullah and the honourable ones of his family and companions. But what could he have done since swords and lances stood between them and the water? Yet the man who quite often served water to the thirsty could not tolerate that condition any longer.

Should the daughters of Fatima ever be in pain  
And against the pain of thirst to him complain  
With sighs high as the current of the Euphrates?  
Had he sought al-Majarra river to quench his thirst,  
It would surely have raised itself and done so first,  
It would have turned its current into a ladder to reach  
Had Double-Horns closed it against him,  
His determination would have surely undermined it.  
In his left hand is a watering bag,  
In his right hand a trained sword,  
Like a cloud he aimed to reach Fatima's offspring,  
But the foe was certain to stone him with everything... 1

At that juncture, al-Husayn (‘a) assigned his brother al-‘Abbas to shoulder this responsibility. The latter had already been burning with the desire to do just that. Al-Husayn (‘a) asked him to bring water for the ladies and the children, giving him command over a detachment of twenty men each carrying a water bag.

They went to the Euphrates at night paying no attention to those who were charged with guarding the watering place. After all, they were in the company of the lion of Muhammad's Progeny ('a). Nafi' Ibn Hilal al-Jamli advanced, so 'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj shouted at him to identify himself.

He said to him, "We came to drink of this water from which you have prohibited us." "Drink then and cool your eyes," said he, "but do not carry of it to al-Husayn." Nafi' said, "No, by Allah, I shall never drink one drop while al-Husayn and the Ahl al-Bayt with him and their supporters are thirsty."

He then called upon his companions to fill their water bags. It was then that those under the command of Ibn al-Hajjaj attacked them. Some of them kept watering their bags anyway while others were defending them headed by the one who grew up in the very lap of Hayderi bravery, namely Abul-Fadhl, al-'Abbas.

They brought the water while none of their enemies could even contemplate getting near them out of fear of that same brave hero. The ladies and the children, hence, were able to quench their thirst.<sup>2</sup>

We cannot overlook the fact that the amount of water brought to them was very little. What could that quantity do to a band that numbered more than a hundred and fifty men, women, and children, or maybe even two hundred, all parched by thirst, drinking no more than once? Soon thirst returned to them; so, to Allah and to His Messenger is one's complaint.

If the Pool's Waterer on the Day of Gathering be Hayder,  
Then the Waterer of the thirsty at Karbala' is Abul-Fadl.  
Yet the heart of people's waterer on the Day of Gathering  
Is cooled, whereas this one's heart with the heat boils.  
I stood by the water of the Euphrates and I still have been  
Telling it, though others are better in speech than I:  
"Why do you flow – may you not – and tended one day  
"To wash your own shame!  
"Have not the livers of Muhammad's Progeny flame-dried?  
"They were not cooled by water or by rain.  
"You ought to fold your branches and cause them to wither  
"Out of grief and shame of their withered lips."  
Said the Euphrates: "Listen, if you will, to what I say,  
"Accept my excuse, and do not increase your blame.  
"What you see are my tears when  
"Wailing after them became my affair."  
May Allah reward on their behalf their uncle Abul-Fadl,  
O should only you have seen Abul-Fadl!  
He was a sword crafted by 'Ali in his right hand,

So his cub needed no polishing at all.  
When Prophet Muhammad's sons are counted,  
Among their brothers he will surely be numbered.  
Never have I seen one thirsty around the water,  
Without drinking of it though his heart is on fire.  
His concern was only loyalty; few can be seen like that,  
Few can be so loyal to their loved ones.  
By your severed right hand do I swear,  
And by your left one, the gatherer of all,  
By your perseverance in defending the Prophet's son  
At Karbala', though terrifying,  
Something my mind cannot comprehend:  
He proved loyal to you not knowing  
Whether losing you terrified him  
Or whether the 'Arsh was by fates subverted.  
Brother! You were both my shield and my sword  
Yet I lost both: No shield do I now hold  
Nor even my own sword...3

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1. These lines are excerpted from a poem by Sayyid Ja'far al-Hilli, may Allah fill his grave with noor.

2. Maqatal Muhammad Ibn Abu Talib. According to this report, their seeking water must have taken place on the seventh day which may explain why the seventh day is dedicated to the memory of al-'Abbas. According to p. 95, majlis 3, of as-Saduq's Amali, Imam al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali ('a) dispatched his son 'Ali al-Akbar with thirty horsemen and twenty footmen to fetch water.

3. Excerpted from a poem by Shaikh Muhsin Abul-Habb al-Ha'iri, may Allah have mercy on his soul.

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