

Departing from Karbala'

When Ibn Sa'd sent the heads to Kufa, he remained with the army till the time of *zawal* on the eleventh day [of Muharram].

He gathered those killed from his army and performed the funeral prayers for them then buried them, leaving the corpses of the Master of the Youths of Paradise and the fragrant flower of the most honourable Prophet ('a) and those of his Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and companions unwashed, without shrouds, unburied,¹ exposed to the wind and to the wild beasts of the desert.

On the dust, bare, should he remain?

None to mourn him except his women?

Which folks were not touched by his corpse?

Which hearts did not mourn him?²

After the time of *zawal*, Ibn Sa'd left for Kufa with the women, the children, the bondmaids, and the surviving families of al-Husayn's companions.

They included twenty women³ whom they mounted on camels without saddles as was the custom then with Turks or Romans taken captive, although they belonged to the best of all prophets (S). With them was al-Sajjad, 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn ('a), who was twenty-three years old.⁴

He was placed on a lean camel without a saddle, and he was worn out by sickness.⁵ His son [later Imam] al-Baqir,⁶ who was two years and a few months old,⁷ accompanied him. Among the children of Imam al-Hasan ('a) taken captive were: Zayd, 'Amr, and Hasan II.

The latter was captured after he had killed seventeen men. He received eighteen wounds, and his right arm had been cut off. Asma' Ibn Kharijah al-Fizari intervened to get him freed because his mother was also Fizari, so Ibn Sa'd let her husband take him.⁸

With them was 'Uqbah Ibn Sam'an, a slave of al-Rubab, al-Husayn's wife. When Ibn Ziyad came to know that that man was al-Rubab's slave, he released him.

Ibn Ziyad was informed that al-Muraqqa' Ibn Thumama al-Asadi had scattered his arrows around then fled to his tribe where he sought and received protection, he ordered him to be banished to al-Zara.⁹

How did the modest ladies receive the night
After being "vanquished," and in defense of the camp died?
Do you see them to captivity surrendering
Or against their wish did their protectors depart?
They departed after their strength was crushed
And after the blows took their toll.
In the blood of martyrdom did they build a throne
One none before them ever built.
Stunned after that by the steeds assaulting,
Where are the men of honour to defend?
The ladies screamed and sought help
From their slain men in slumber,
And from the captives besides every valiant one
A free lady fell pleading for help,
And so did every girl...
They complained from the whips giving them pain.
Have ever suiters sought the help from the slain?
They feebly fall down from the animals' backs, perturbed,
Whenever the she-camels are by the *hadis*¹⁰ disturbed.¹¹

The ladies pleaded thus: "For the love of Allah! Please take us to those killed." When they saw how they had lost their limbs, how the spears had drank of their blood, and how the horses had trampled upon them, they screamed and beat their faces in anguish.¹²

Zainab cried out, "O Muhammad! Here is Husayn in the desert covered with blood, his limbs cut off! Here are your daughters taken captive and your offspring slaughtered!" These words caused friends and foes alike to weep,¹³ even the horses' tears ran on their hooves.¹⁴

Then she put her hands under his sacred body and lifted it as she supplicated saying, "O Lord! Do accept this sacrifice from us."¹⁵

This stand demonstrates to us the fact that Zainab was then elevated to the height of sacred responsibility, that of holding a holy covenant, that she would henceforth carry out a sacred revival like the one started by her brother, al-Husayn ('a), while keeping the difference in mind.

Once al-Husayn ('a) carried out his responsibility through his martyrdom, the wise lady, Zainab, started

her duty that included presenting the sacrifice to the Mighty Lord and promoting his cause. Then she, peace of Allah be upon her, shouldered her other responsibilities. This should not be discounted outrightly, for their *noor* is one and the same, and so is the substance.

She and al-Husayn share their complain
Fate decided that they should.
One fell to the swords and to their pain
And the other by life's agonies taken captive. 16

Sukayna¹⁷ hugged the body of her father al-Husayn ('a) and kept telling him how she had heard him saying:

O my Shi'as! Whenever of water you drink
Never from mentioning my name should you shrink.
And whenever you are a stranger on a sojourn,
Or see a martyr, me should you remember and mourn. 18

Only a number of them could collectively remove her from his corpse, forcefully dragging her away. 19

An orphan girl with being orphaned startled
Her heart is filled with pain,
Like a bird by an eagle chased,
One whose nest is assaulted.
A cry she let out when the horsemen assaulted
Her, though orphaned, so she now is more startled,
And to the one lying on the burning sands she went
Pouring over him from her eyes a river she wept.
She fell upon al-Husayn's body so he kept
To his chest taking her between a right and a left.
She seeks refuge with him, having lost her headscarf,
And it was hard for him to see her without it;
He would not have left their whips cause her to seek help
With her father's body when, from him,
She was forcibly removed. 20

When 'Ali son of al-Husayn ('a) looked at his slaughtered family and noticed how al-Zahra' was in a

condition which the heavens deplored and for which the earth would split and the mountains crumble, he felt greatly grieved and worried.

When Zainab al-Kubra, daughter of 'Ali ('a),²¹ read his face, she felt upset on his account and took to consoling him and admonishing him to be patient although even the mountains could not match him in his patience and fortitude. Among what she said to him is the following:

“Why do I see you pleading for death, O the legacy of my grandfather, of my father and brothers? By Allah, this is something which Allah had divulged to your grandfather (S) and to your father ('a).

Allah took a covenant from people whom you do not know, the mighty ones on this land, and who are known to the people of the heavens, that they would gather these severed parts and wounded corpses and bury them, then shall they set up on this *Taff* a banner for the grave of your father, the Master of Martyrs ('a), the traces of which shall never be obliterated, nor shall it ever be wiped out so long as there is day and night.

And the leaders of apostasy and the promoters of misguidance shall try their best to obliterate and efface it, yet it shall get more and more lofty instead.”²²

To Allah do I complain about the patience of Zainab the pure
How many a tribulation did she have to endure?
From the calamities and from the pain
From pains, from which death is welcome, she did suffer.
She witnessed the men of dignity from her people of honour
On the ground slaughtered in a row without cover:
The winds on their corpses freely blow,
The beasts over their bodies come and go.
Her people's chief lying slain she saw,
To them did the folks' swords deal many a blow.
She saw heads on the lances carried
And corpses with only sands shrouded.
She saw an infant with an arrow waned
And children after their father orphaned.
She saw the enemies gleeful, with their misery pleased,
She saw how with her brother they dealt every foul deed.²³

Zajr Ibn Qays came to them and shouted at them to leave as he kept whipping them. Others surrounded them and mounted them on camel humps.²⁴

Zainab the wise rode her own she-camel. She recollected the days of lofty honour and inviolable prestige, guarded by fierce and honourable lions of 'Abd al-Muttalib's offspring, surrounded by anxious swords and polished spears. And she was surrounded by servants who would not enter without her permission.

None like her prestige in the morning was
Nor like her condition on the after-noon.
Where is she going? To what fate?
What is her refuge and what is her aim?
On whose shoulder should she lean
When she was conveyed, and her cameleer rebukes,
And Shimr is her cameleer?
O Muhammad! Light the house for Zainab so
Even in the night none can see her shadow.
How I wish on the *Taff* your eyes saw
Your daughters' ornaments to looters did go.
Their ears torn, either slain or widowed,
Moaning like camels that lost their young.
To Allah do I complain and say:
Allah help him how he was bereaved,
And suddenly both prestige and men deceased.
No loss by death is to them a cause of complain
Except it was done by those who were not humane,
And with humiliation they were treated,
They received the night in a condition that
Before it you would stand and feel awfully,
If only you stand to think about it carefully.²⁵

1. al-Khawarizmi, *Maqatal al-Husayn*, Vol. 2, p. 39.

2. These verses were composed by the 'Allama Shaikh Muhammad Taqi al-Jawahiri.

3. Shaikh 'Abbas al-Qummi, *Nafs al-Mahmum*, p. 204. On p. 234, Vol. 2, of al-Nawari's book *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il* (first edition), Shaikh al-Mufid and Sayyid Ibn Tawus both cite Imam as-Sadiq ('a) saying that he ('a), had prayed two rak'ats at al-Qa'im, a place on the highway leading to al-Ghari (Najaf), then said, "Here was the head of my grandfather al-Husayn ('a) placed when they went to Karbala' then carried it to 'Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad." Then the Imam ('a) recited a supplication to be recited following the prayer saying, "This place is called al-Hanana."

4. *Mis'ab al-Zubayri*, *Nasab Quraish*, p. 58.

5. Ibn Tawus, *Al-Iqbal*, p. 54.

6. al-Qazwini, *Riyad al-Ahzan*, p. 49. al-Mas'udi, *Ithbat al-Wasiyya*, p. 143.

7. al-Mas'udi, *Ithbat al-Wasiyya*, p. 143 (Najaf edition). According to p. 203, Vol. 1, of Abul-Fida's *Tarikh*, Vol. 1, p. 203, he

was three years old.

8. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 10, in a chapter discussing the offspring of Imam al-Hasan ('a). According to p. 28 of Is'af al-Raghibin, commenting on a footnote in Nur al-Absar, and also according to p. 8 of Al-Luhuf (of Ibn Tawus,), he treated him at Kufa, and when he healed, he transported him to Medina.

9. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 261. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 4, p. 33. According to p. 367, Vol. 4, of Yaqut al-Hamawi's Mu'jam al-Buldan, al-Zara is a village in Bahrain, and there is another in West Tripoli as well as another in the upper Delta of the Nile. According to p. 692, Vol. 2, of al-Bikri's book Al-Mu'jam mimma Ista'jam, it is a place in the Bahrain area where wars waged by al-Nu'man Ibn al-Munthir, who was nicknamed al-Gharur [the conceited one], battled al-Aswaris.

It also is a city in Persia where a duel took place between al-Bara' Ibn Malik and the city's satrap; al-Bara' killed the latter and cut his hand off. He took his belt and both bracelets the value of which was thirty thousand [dinars]. 'Umar [Ibn al-Khattab] took the khums of the loot, and that was the first time in the history of Islam when a loot was taxed by 1/5 [and delivered to the caliph].

On p. 10, Vol. 4, of his book Al-Kamil, Ibn al-Athir says that Ibn Ziyad threatened to banish the people of Kufa [who refused to fight al-Husayn] to Oman's Zara. Also on p. 86, Vol. 8, where the events of the year 321 A.H./933 A.D. are discussed, it is stated that 'Ali Ibn Yaliq ordered Mu'awiyah and his son Yazid to be cursed from the pulpits in Baghdad, whereupon the Sunnis were outraged. There, al-Barbahari, a Hanbalite, used to stir trouble; he ran away from 'Ali Ibn Yaliq. The latter captured al-Barbahari's followers and shipped them in a boat to Oman.

It appears from the latter account that Zara is a place in Oman. On p. 256 of Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal, Ibn Ziyad banished al-Muraqqa' to al-Zabada where the latter stayed till Yazid's death and Ibn Ziyad's escape to Syria. Al-Muraqqa', therefore, left it and went back to Kufa. On p. 9, Vol. 8, of Nashwar al-Muhadara by al-Tanukhi, the judge, it is stated that Muhammad al-Muhallabi banished Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Hashimi to Oman in a boat because of something which he had done which angered him.

10. The hadis are men who, in the vanguards of caravans, sing for the camels to maintain their pace.

11. These verses were composed by the trusted authority Shaikh 'Abd al-Mahdi Matar al-Najafi.

12. Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 41. Ibn Tawus, Al-Luhuf, p. 74. al-Khawarizmi, Maqal al-Husayn, Vol. 2, p. 39. al-Turayhi, Maqal al-Husayn, p. 332.

13. al-Maqrizi, Khutat, Vol. 2, p. 280. According to the authors of both Maqal al-Husayn and Al-Luhuf, the mourning was even on a much larger scale.

14. al-Khawarizmi, Maqal al-Husayn, Vol. 2, p. 39. al-Turayhi, Al-Muntakhab, p. 332.

15. Shaikh Muhammad Baqir al-Birjandi al-Safi, Al-Kibrit al-Ahmar, Vol. 3, p. 13, citing Al-Tiraz al-Muthahhab.

16. Excerpted from a poem by the authority Mirza Muhammad 'Ali al-Urdjadi, may Allah fill his mausoleum with light.

17. According to p. 163, Vol. 1, of al-Nawawi's Tahthib al-Asma', p. 58, Vol. 1, of al-Manawi's book Al-Kawakib al-Durriyya, p. 160 of al-Shibliji's Nur al-Absar, and Ibn Khallikan's Wafayat al-A'yan, where the author details her biography, Sukayna daughter of al-Husayn ('a) died on a Thursday, Rabi' I 5, 117 A.H./April 8, 735 A.D. According to Abul-Hasan al-'Amri's book Al-Mujdi and to al-Tabarsi's book l'lam al-Wara, p. 127, where the biographies of the offspring of Imam al-Hasan ('a) are discussed.

According to p. 163, Vol. 12, of Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani's book Al-Aghani, she married her cousin, 'Abdullah Ibn al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib ('a), who was killed during the Battle of al-Taff. She did not bear any children by him. But the author of l'lam al-Wara says that he was killed before her marriage, that during the Battle of al-Taff, she was a little more than ten years old, and that she was born before the death [martyrdom] of her uncle Imam al-Hasan ('a). The statement in her honour made by the Master of Martyrs ('a), "Sukayna is overcome by deep contemplation upon Allah," as is recorded by al-Sabban in his book Is'af al-Raghibin, clearly outlines for us the status his daughter occupied in the sacred canons of Islam's Shari'a. You are referred to the second edition of my book Lady Sukayna.

18. These verses are recorded on p. 376 of the Indian edition of Misbah al-Kaf'ami.

19. al-Qazwini, Tazallum al-Zahra', p. 135.
20. Excerpted from a poem by the 'Allama Shaikh 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Fartusi.
21. Zainab, titled "al-Kubra," is the daughter of Fatima al-Zahra' ('a). She is identified as such by al-Tabari on p. 89, Vol. 6, of his Tarikh and by Ibn al-Athir on p. 158, Vol. 3, of his book Al-Kamil. In his book Al-Ma'arif, Ibn Qutaybah says, "Zainab al-Kubra daughter of Fatima ('a) was the wife of 'Abdullah Ibn Ja'far. She gave birth to a number of sons."
22. Ibn Qawlawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, p. 361, chapter 88, virtues of Karbala' and merits of visiting the gravesite of al-Husayn ('a).
23. This poem by the authority Ayatullah Shaikh Hadi Kashif al-Ghiṣā', may Allah sanctify him, is recorded in full on p. 61 of Al-Maqbala al-Husayniyya.
24. al-Qazwini, Tazallum al-Zahra', p. 177.
25. Excerpted from a poem by the trusted authority Shaikh Muhammad Tahir who belongs to the family of the sect's faqih, Shaikh Radi, may Allah sanctify him.

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