Imam Hussain’s Martyrdom in the Day of Ashura

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At forenoon of the tenth of Muharram when the heat of the sun started scorching the earth, Imam Hussain (A.S.), his household and companions began to feel the severity of thirst. The enemy was adamant not to give them access to the water of the River Euphrates out of Jahili'ite enmities and Badri'ite grudges. Therefore, Abo Abdullah Al-Imam Hussain (A.S.), feeling the strain of thirst, mounted his horse and opened the leaves of Al-Qur'an over his head and stood in front of the belligerent camp and shouted, "The Book of Allah and the Sunnah (tradition) of my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah are the arbiters between you and me". He then made them bear witness on his pure soul and that he was wearing the coat of arms of the Prophet (P.), his buckler and his turban.

They said that his statement was true. He then asked them what made them decide on fighting him. Their answer was that it was out of obedience to the Emir Obaidullah bin Ziyad. He then delivered this sermon:

Imam Hussain’s Sermon

"May grief and evil befall you, you wretched bunch! You distressfully called upon us to come to your rescue and when we responded fully, you unsheathed your swords against and pushed us unto the fire which we set alight for our enemy as well as yours. You, therefore, played into the hands of your enemy against your masters (the friends of God). Without justice the enemy administered amongst you and without hope you placed in them. Woe unto you! You abandon us while the sword is still blemished, oneself is collected, and the mind is yet to be made up. Yet, you rushed like the creeping bird and fell over yourselves like butterflies crowding on a flower; then you wrecked it; to hell with you! Oh you slaves of the bondmaid! Ahzab outlanders, forsakers of the Book [of Allah], distorters of facts, bunch of evil, blow of Satan, extinguishers of norms! Woe unto you! Have you chosen to support those, and let us down? Yes, by the Almighty this emanates from an old intrinsic treachery, fed to your origins and handed down to you; therefore, you are like a malignant fruit - distressing to look at and sickening when eaten."

"The illegitimate and the son of the Illegitimate (Ubaidallah son of Ziyad)has left us but two choices, either resorting to the sword or capitulating. How preposterous! Humiliation is not our cup of tea! Allah shall never let this happen to us; so shall His Messenger, the believers, and chaste and pure laps and proud souls. For the sake of these values we would rather die in an

hour and not submit to the ignobles. Hence my march leading this family albeit meagre in ".number and deserted by would-be supporters

Is there any amongst Man to help us ?

He then shouted, "Is there anyone who can come to our rescue? Is there anyone who can protect the sanctity of the family of Allah's Apostle?" The screaming and crying of women could be heard as a result of his plea.

One by one the companions of Imam Hussain (A.S.) (A.S.) asked for permission to meet in combat with the enemy bidding him farewell, saying, "Peace be with you Oh Aba Abdillah!"; he answered. "Peace be with you; we will follow", reciting, "...so of them is he who accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed the least". (33:23)

Then the two Jabiri cousins, Saif bin al-Harith bin Sari' and Malik bin Abid bin Sari' emerged crying and asked for permission to fight. Imam Hussain (A.S.) asked them, "What makes you cry? I am hopeful that you will after a very short time have peace of mind and tranquillity". They answered, "We are not crying for ourselves, but for you. We can see that you are beleaguered, and we have no power to be of any good to you". Imam Hussain (A.S.) thanked them. They fought till death.

Al-Hur bin Yazid ar-Riyahi attacked the enemy troops killing over forty of them. When his horse got wounded he fought them on foot and fell to the ground. Imam Hussain (A.S.) stood over him wiping away soil and blood which was oozing from his face, saying, "Congratulations oh you Hur! You are Hur (free) as your mother named you". He passed away.

Muslim bin Awsajah assaulted the enemy and fought very bravely. Amr bin al-Hajjaj and a band of his companions counter attacked the camp of Imam Hussain (A.S.) from the direction of the Euphrates. When the two belligerent forces clashed and the dust settled, Muslim bin Awsajah was found fallen but still with a spark of life.

Imam Hussain (A.S.) and Habib bin Mudhahir walked towards him. Imam Hussain (A.S.) said to him, "May Allah have mercy on you oh Muslim!" and recited, " ... so of them is he who accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed the least". (33:23)

Habib bin Mudhahir approached him and said, "God knows how sorry I am that you will die, Oh Muslim! the good news is that you will go to heaven". Muslim replied in a faint voice, "May Allah bring good news to you

Habib added, "If I am not absolutely sure that I will follow in your footsteps I would have asked you to let me know of your will". Muslim answered, "I urge you to take care of this", pointing to Imam Hussain (A.S.), "You should sacrifice your life protecting him".Habib said to him, "Feel

serene and be confident about that". He gave up the ghost to its Creator.

When the followers of Ibn Sa’d knew of the death of Muslim bin Awsajah they shouted in elation. Shibth bin Rib'ii said to those who were around him, "May your mothers be bereaved. You are killing yourselves with your own hands and bring humiliation to yourselves Do you rejoice at the death of Muslim? He has credit in the service of Muslims. I saw him at the battle of Azerbaijan killing six atheists before the horsemen of the Muslim army had the chance to re-group.

Amr bin Al-Hajjaj attacked the right flank of Imam Hussain's (A.S.) camp. The remaining combatants withstood their ground, falling on their knees, aiming their arrows at the enemy. Thus, forcing the horses of the enemy to refrain from forging ahead. When they resumed their attack they came under a hail of arrows from Imam Hussain’s (A.S.) followers causing many casualties among their ranks.

Shimr bin Thi al-Jawshan took on the left flank of Imam Hussain's (A.S.) camp. The combatants proved to be as steadfast as their companions in the right flank. The result was complete failure of the enemy to break through the solid defences of Imam Hussain (A.S.) troops.

Among those who remained alive at this stage of the battle was Wahab bin Abdullah Al-Kalbi who was with his mother and wife. His mother urged him to come out and support the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah. He answered, "0 mother! I will do my best". He came out chanting these sonnets.

"You better deny me not as I am the son of Al-Kalbi. You will see me and how fatal my blows are. How my assault and campaign seeking my revenge and that of my companions. I repulse the attack in the wake of the attack. For my struggle in the battlefield is not a playing matter."

Then he attacked the enemy killing some and wounding others, returning to his mother, saying to her, "Are you satisfied with my deed?" She answered. "Never!unless you are killed before Imam Hussain (A.S.) ".

His wife intervened asking him, "I put you to oath by the Almighty! Do not bereave me by getting killed". His mother said to him, "Do not pay attention to what she says; go back and carry on fighting in front of the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah; you will be worthy of his grandfather’s intercession on the Day of Judgement". He resumed combat, killing nineteen horsemen and twelve infantry troopers. He lost both his arms and was killed. May his soul rest in peace.

His wife walked towards his body and sat near his head, wiping away blood and saying. "Congratulations; for you are guaranteed a place in heaven; I pray to the Almighty to bestow it

on me to make me join you". Shimr was very angry at the spectacle. He dispatched his servant to kill her; he dealt a fatal blow to her head with a truncheon; she died instantly. She was the first women among the companions of Imam Hussain (A.S.) to be killed.

The enemy chopped off Wahab's head hurling it towards the tents of Imam Hussain (A.S.); his mother hugged it and wiped the blood off his face. She then was seen holding a tent pole and heading towards the enemy.Ima m Hussain (A.S.) prevented her from engaging in combat saying, "Go back. May Allah have mercy on you. You are relieved of jihad (holy war)". She returned uttering, "Oh Lord! do not frustrate my hope". Imam Hussain (A.S.) said to her, "Allah will not do so".

Shimr attacked the tent of Imam Hussain (A.S.) using his spear threatening to set it ablaze. The ladies inside the tent fled screaming and were in a distraught state. Imam Hussain (A.S.) called on him, "Oh you son of ThilJawshan! Are you calling for my house to be burned while my family are inside? May Allah burn you in hell fire."

ShibathIbn Rib'i said to Shimr, "You have become a source of fright to women!. I have never come across a deed nor a stance worse than yours". He felt ashamed and withdrew.

The Killing of Al-Abbas and his Brothers

When Abbas saw the death toll mounting amongst members of his family, he said to his brothers, Abdullah, 0thman and Ja'far, "0 Sons of my mother! Go forth to meet the enemy so that I may bear witness that you kept your covenant with Allah and His Apostle". He turned to Abdullah who was older than Othman and said to him, "Come forward, brother, so that I may witness your martyrdom and thus be considered (by God)". So, they all fought in the presence of their brother, Al-Abbas till they were killed.

Al-Abbas reached the tether of his patience not to follow in the footsteps of his brethren and companions, especially when he could see that "The proof of the Time", Imam Hussain is getting increasingly beleaguered, his supply root cut, the screams of women and the crying of children, who were thirsty, filled his ears. He, therefore, asked his brother to allow him to meet the enemy in combat. Since Abbas was the most valued asset,Imam Hussain(A.S.) cherished because the enemy are wary of his attack and fearful of his courage, and the women feel safe and secure so long as they saw the standard hoisted, Imam Hussain did not wish to part company with him and said, "0 Brother! You are the bearer of my flag".

Abbas replied, "I am sick and tired of these hypocrites, and I want to exact my revenge on them". Imam Hussain (A.S.) ordered him to ask them for water for the children. Abbas approached the enemy, preached and warned them of the wrath of the Almighty but to no avail! He shouted as high as he could, "0 son of Sa’d! This is Hussain the son of the daughter of the

Prophet. You have killed members of his family and companions."

"All what is left are his womenfolk and children who are thirsty. Quench their thirst with water for they may die of it". He, nevertheless, was pleading with them to let Imam Hussain and what was left of his household to leave Hijaz for the land of the Romans or the Indians. His words found sympathy with some of the crowd so much so that they cried. But ash-Shimr shouted, "0 son of Abu Turab (one of Imam Ali's titles)! Even if the whole of the earth's surface were awash and we were in control, we would have never allowed you access to it, unless you pledge allegiance to Yazid."!!!

Abbas returned to his brother Imam Hussain (A.S.) to advise him how the enemy were adamant not to give them water. In the meantime, he heard the children crying of thirst. He could not take it anymore; his Hashimite ardour left him no room for manoeuver nor more forbearance, He took the skin water container with the intention of bringing water. He was surrounded by some 4,000 troops who shot at him with their arrows. He did not fear their multitudes. The standard hoisted over his head, He started attacking them causing them to flee in front of him. His gallantry used to remind them of his father, Imam Ali who used to annihilate brave and formidable foes in the battlefield. Thus, they did not stand their ground in the face of his determined and ferocious attacks. He managed to reach the waterline of the River Euphrates with fortitude.

He took a handful of water to drink whereupon he remembered the thirst of Imam Hussain and those who were with him. He threw the water away choosing not to drink out of empathy with his kinship.

He filled in the skin container with water, mounted his horse, and aimed towards the camp. Enemy soldiers cut him off, upon which he engaged them; he managed to fend them off and gained a leeway.

Zaid bin ar-Raqqad al-Juhai was laying in wait for him behind a tree. Helped by Hakim bin at-Tufail as-Sanbasi, he hit him on his right arm and severed it. He was indifferent about his right arm, forging ahead to deliver the water to Imam Hussain's children and household. Hakim in the meantime was still laying in wait for him behind a tree. When Abbas got passed him, Hakim dealt him a sword blow on his left arm and severed it. Taking advantage of his weakened state, the rest of the troops took heart and swooped down upon him. They rained him with arrows from every direction; one arrow hit the water container and punctured it, spilling its contents; another hit him in the chest. A man hit him with a pole on the head, crushing his skull. Thereupon he fell to the ground calling, "0 Aba Abdillah! Farewell". Imam Hussain rushed to him only to find him aimless, his forehead ruptured, an arrow embedded into the eye, the brain

strewn on the shoulders, the colours and water container beside him.Imam Hussain's face showed signs of despondency Throwing himself down upon him, sobbing and saying, "Now is the time my backbone broke; I can see no way out, and my enemy is rejoicing at my misfortune".

Despondent, sorrowful, weeping, wiping his tears with hit shin sleeves, Imam Hussain(A.S.) returned to his camp only to see that the enemy soldiers had already invaded it. He appealed to the crowd, "Is there not one from amongst you who can respond to our cry for help? Who can grant us a safe haven?.. Is there not a seeker of right who can lend support to us? Is there not one, who is wary of hell fire, who can protect us?" Sukaina approached and asked him about her uncle.

He told her that he had been killed! Zainab overheard him and screamed, "0 Our Abbas! What a loss!" The women started crying and Imam Hussain joined them saying, "We are at a loss after your demise!"

Imam Hussain (A.S.) in the Battlefield

After he had buried the baby, he met in duel with many a man who never stood a chance of emerging alive. He then charged the enemy troops who did not stand their ground in the face of his attacks.

Thereupon Omar bin Sa'd yelled at the crowd, "Mind! He is the son of the exterminator of the Arabs. Set upon him from every direction." They rained him with 4,000 arrows. The soldiers cut him off his camp. He shouted, "0 followers of Abu Sufyan! If you are godless and you do not dread the Day of Judgement be free in this world and recall your ancestry if you claim to be Arab".

Shimr exclaimed, "What are you saying, son of Fatimah?"Imam Hussain (A.S.) replied, "I am the one who is fighting you, and the women are not at fault. So long as I am alive, forbid your insolent thugs from harassing my inviolable".

Shimr acceded to his request, whereupon the enemy soldiers targeted him. A fierce fighting raged. Since he was very thirsty, he attacked the flank of the army which was sealing off the River Euphrates. He managed to disperse them and make his way to the river. Once he was in the water, he extended his hand to drink. A caller shouted, "Do you enjoy drinking water whilst the integrity of your family is being violated?" He let the water spill from his hands without drinking, and returned to the tents.

Imam Hussain (A.S.) bade his family farewell for the second time and ordered them to show forbearance saying, "Get ready for affliction, and be reassured that Allah is your protector; He will guard you against the evil of the enemy, turn your mishap into good, chastise your enemy

with all sorts of torment, and compensate you for this tragedy with a plethora of bounties and dignity. So do not complain, and do not utter that which may degrade your lofty prestige".

Imam Hussain (A.S.) turned to his daughter Sukaina who was standing aloof, crying and lamenting. He stood by her showing sympathy and solace.

Omar bin Sa'd yelled, "Woe unto you! Attack him while he is busy with himself and his family. By the Almighty! Once he is free neither your right nor your left flanks would be more lucky." They swooped on him, raining him with arrows which were so abundant that they lodged in to the tent ropes; some found their way to the women's mantles, startling and causing them to cry and enter the tent; they looked at Hussain in the expectation that he might do something. Imam Hussain (A.S.) attacked the enemy like a roaring lion, No sooner he could engage anyone he left him dead. He received many wounds all over his body mainly as a result of arrows.

He returned to his position, repeating the saying, "There is neither power nor strength save by God Almighty". He asked for water, Shimr answered, "You are not going to taste it until you enter hell fire!" Another one called him, "0 Hussain! Can you not see the waters of the River Euphrates flow, glittering like the belly of a snake? You are not going to drink from it till you die of thirst". Imam Hussain invoked God, "0 Lord! Let him die of thirst". It was then reported that the man used to ask for water, once he drank, the water gushed out of his mouth. He continued thus until he perished of thirst.

Abu al-Hutoof al-Ju'fi shot Imam Hussain with an arrow which lodged into his forehead,Imam Hussain (A.S.) took it off causing the blood to stream down his face, whereupon he said, "0 Lord! You are witnessing the transgression against me by Your sinful creatures. 0 Lord! Do not let anyone of them get away with it. Kill them all and do not let anyone of them live on the face of the earth. Never forgive them their trespasses."

He shouted, "0 Bunch of evil! Shame on you. What bad guardians of the household of the Prophet you turned out to be. Since there is no man of my band left, you are not going to be deterred from killing anyone after me, for killing me would make it a forgone conclusion. By God! I hope that Allah bestow on me martyrdom, and avenge my death whence you do not expect."

Al-Hosein said, "How is he going to exact revenge on us?" Imam Hussain said, "He will sow enmity amongst you, shed your blood, and pour down punishment upon you, pouring it in abundance".

As he was weakened, he paused to rest. A man hurled him with a stone hitting him on the head causing the blood to stream down his face. He took out a piece of cloth to wipe the blood from

his face, whereupon another archer aimed at him with a three-pronged arrow; it lodged into his chest in the area of the heart. He said, "In the name of Allah, by Allah, and following the path of the Apostle of Allah". He then raised his head towards the sky and said, "0 Lord! You know full well that they are killing a man there is not on the face of the earth, a son of the daughter of the Prophet, save him!!".

He pulled out the arrow causing the blood to gush out. He put his band underneath the gaping wound. When it was filled with blood he threw it towards the sky and said, "My only solace is that what has befallen me is in the way of Allah". It was reported that not a single drop of that blood fell down. He filled it again. This time be stained his head, face, and beard with it saying, "I want to meet Allah and my grandfather in this state - splattered with blood".

Since losing blood weakened his body, he sat on the ground hardly lifting his head, whereupon Malik bin an-Nisr approached him, called him names, and hit him with his sword on his head which was covered with a Burnoose. The Burnoose was drenched with blood. He took of the Burnoose, wrapped his turban on the cap and said, "May Allah deprive you of eating with your right hand, and gather you [on the Day of Judgement] with the oppressors".

After a short while the enemy troops came back to Imam Hussain who was still in a sitting position for he was overcome by the severity of his wounds. Abdullah Ibn al-Hassan, an eleven-year-old boy looked towards his uncle only to see him surrounded by the enemy. He rushed towards his uncle after he managed to break free from his aunt, Zainab, when he arrived at the scene near his uncle; Bahr bin Ka'b descended his sword to hit Imam Hussain. The boy yelled at him, "0 son of the bad woman! Are you dealing a blow to my uncle?" He hit the boy who lift his arm to protect his head causing it to be severed. The boy shouted, "0 uncle!" and fell into his uncle's lap. Imam Hussain (A.S.) embraced him and said, "0 nephew! Be patient at what has befallen you and consider it as a blessing for Allah, the Exalted will reunite you with your noble ancestors". He then raised his hands in supplication and said, "0 Lord! If You had granted them enjoyment for a while, cause them to divide among themselves, disperse them into sects following different ways, do not let the rulers be pleased with them for they called on us so that they may be among our partisans, instead they transgressed against and killed us". Harmalah released an arrow towards the boy, whilst he was in his uncle's lap, and slew him.

Imam Hussain (A.S.), fatally wounded, was left lying for a considerable time. What prevented them from finishing him off sooner was the fact that every tribe was relying on the other to do the job i.e. each tribe hated to be seen as the one which killed Hussain.

Shimr yelled, "Why are you standing idly by? The man is critically wounded. Attack and finish

him off".

Zar'aIbn Shareek hit him on the shoulder blade; al-Hosein shot him in the mouth; another hit him on the shoulder, SinanIbn Anas lodged his spear in the area of the collarbone, then in his chest; he also shot him with an arrow in the throat, Saleh bin Wahab stabbed him in the loin. Hilal bin Nafi' was reported as saying, "I was standing near Hussain as he was on the brink of dying. By God, I never saw a person getting killed with own blood all over his body in a better state than Hussain. His face was exuding with light and awe! I was so overwhelmed by the radiance of his face that I refrained from contemplating killing him! He asked for water; they ."did not give him any to drink

Imam Hussain's (A.S.)Martyrdom on the Plains of Karbala

One from amongst the crowd said to him, "You are not going to drink water until you enter hell fire, whereupon you can drink from its boiling water". Imam Hussain (A.S.) replied, "I do not enter hell fire, but enter unto my grandfather, the Apostle of God and stay with him in his own house (in the seat of honour with a most powerful King) and complain to him of that which you have done to me and your transgression against me". All were very furious at his remarks as if Allah did not instil a grain of mercy in their hearts.

When his condition deteriorated, he raised his eyes towards the sky in supplication and said:"0 Lord! You are mighty in Prowess, the Supreme, the Possessor of every greatness and glory, not in need of the creation, having mastery over everything; Your mercy is high, Truthful in your promise, Giver of bounty and favour; You are close to those who invoke You; encompassing all Your creation; You accept repentance from those who repent, capable of exacting Your will, Having full knowledge of what You are after, Thankful when thanked, remembering when remembered. I invoke You as I am in dire need, ask You as I am poor! I seek refuge in You for I am fearful, weep for I am grieved; I rely on Your succour for I am weak; I put my trust in You alone. 0 Lord! You are the Arbiter between our folk and ourselves for they trespassed against us, let us down, betrayed us, and killed us not with-standing our kinship to Your Prophet whom You chose for delivering the Message and made the repository of revelation. Alleviate our predicament and relieve our suffering for You are the Most Merciful".

"Forbearance with what You have destined is our solace, 0 Lord! There is no god but You. You are the Deliverer of the distressed. I have no God save You. Surely, You are the only Refuge for those who are without one."

"There is no other one to worship apart from You. Forbearance with that which you have resolved is our consolation. 0 Lord! You are the Everlasting. 0 Lord! You are the Resurrector of the dead. 0 Lord! You are Watching over every soul and what it did. Adjudge between me and

them for You are the best of judges".

Imam Hussain's (A.S.) horse started roaming around him and staining its forehead with his blood, whereupon Ibn Sa'd yelled saying, "Stop the horse as it is a thoroughbred of the horses of the Apostle of Allah." A company of horsemen surrounded him. He started galloping and kicking with his forelegs killing some men and horses. Ibn Sa'd ordered the soldiers to leave the horse and to see what it was going to do. When the horse calmed down and felt secure enough, it went back to Imam Hussain's (A.S.) blessed body staining its forehead with his blood, smelling him, and neighing loudly. Imam Abu Ja'fer al-Baqir was quoted as saying, "The horse was saying: What an injustice was done to the grandson of the Prophet by his own Ummah (community)."

The horse, still neighing, then headed towards camp. Once it was there, the women saw the horse stained with blood and its saddle twisted; they came out from their tents spreading their hair! unveiling their faces, beating their cheeks, screaming, seeing their glory vanish, and spontaneously taking to the place where Imam Hussain (A.S.) fell and died, headed by Lady Zainab who was wailing. On arriving at the scene, she put her hand under his body raising it to the level of her breast where she left the body to rest. She said, "0 Lord! Accept this sacrifice from us".

In the meantime Omar bin Sa'd with a group of soldiers were approaching the scene as Imam Hussain (A.S.) was at the point of death. Zainab shouted at him, "O Omar! Abu Abdillah is being killed and you are standing watching him perish?!" He turned his face away from her with his tears streaming down his beard.

She said, "Woe unto you! Is there not amongst you a Muslim?!" Nobody replied! Thereupon Ibn Sa'd ordered the crowd, "Descend upon him and administer the mercy shots to him". Shimr initiated the attack; he kicked him, sat on his chest, got hold of his blessed beard, dealt 12 .sword blows to his body, and finally beheaded him