(Along with Imam Husain (AS), From Medina to Karbala (4

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As we said yesterday, Imam Husain (AS) left Mecca and at Tan'im he met a caravan which carried luxury goods and royal robes and gowns. It was a destined for Damascus for the tyrant Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah from his governor at Yemen.

The Imam ordered that all the cargo of the caravan be taken and given to the poor people. He said, "Who is to have this luxury while poor people starve?" Then, he announced to the people and to the workers on the caravan, "Whoever wants to come with us, is welcome, and whoever wants his wages, we will give him his pay, and whoever wants to leave is free to leave." The Imam and his followers took none of the silk robes and royal gowns woven with gold thread. Those who wanted their pay received their portion and the rest was immediately given to poor people.

At the place called Safah, the Imam met a person on the way to Mecca for the Hajj pilgrimage. The man came closer and asked, "Whose caravan is this?" And he was informed that it was the caravan of Imam Husain (AS). He was the famous Arabic poet Farazdaq and he warmly greeted the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). The Imam asked him of the attitude of the Kufa, and he answered, "Their hearts are with you, but their swords are with the Omayyads. Imam said, "You spoke the truth, and everything is up to God. He does what He wishes, and we ask help only from Him."

At the place called Dhat al-Irq, Imam Husain (AS) halted and set up camp, and here he met Bishr Ibn Ghalib. The Imam wrote a letter to his cousin Muslim Ibn Aqil and gave it to Qays Ibn Mashar al-Saydawi to take to Kufa and deliver it to him. In it he wrote, "O people of Kufa! I have received the letter of Muslim Ibn Aqil stating that you have gathered to help us and ask for our rights. I ask Almighty God to reward you for this action. For this reason, I left Mecca on Thursday the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah. When my messenger arrives, be united until I reach Kufa in a few days."

When Qays Ibn Mashar al-Saydawi reached al-Qadisiyyah, Ibn Ziyad's forces captured him. When they tried to search him, he tore the letter apart. He was brought to the governor's castle in Kufa, where he was asked by Ibn Ziyad to go on the pulpit and curse Imam Husain, Imam Hasan and the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (peace upon them). Qays went on the pulpit and sent the blessings of God upon Imam Ali, Imam Hasan, and Imam Husain (peace upon them). Qays instead cursed Ibn Ziyad and his father and the Ommayads. Ibn Ziyad

ordered for him to be thrown from the top of the castle. He fell and was martyred.

The next stop for Imam Husain (AS) was Zaroud. Here Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn al-Bajali had also camped and was coming from the opposite direction. He did not like the Imam and did not want to set camp near him, but, because there was water at Zaroud, he had no other choice. At mealtime, a messenger of the Imam came to him and said that the grandson of the Prophet wanted to meet him. Zuhayr hesitated to reply but his wife, Dilham, told him to go to the Imam and see what he wants. Zuhayr went to him and immediately came back to his people with a happy face. He ordered to take his camp closer to the Imam's camp and told his wife, "Go join your family, I do not want any of you to be harmed in any way because of me." Then, he faced his people again and said, "Whoever wants to help the grandson of the Messenger of God should come with me. Otherwise, goodbye!" Zuhayr revealed a conversation he had several years ago with the Prophet's famous Iranian companion, Salman Farsi. He said, "We went with Salman in Balanjar. Salman told me 'When you reach Imam Husain (AS) and are able to help him and fight on his side, you should be more than happy to." His wife said, "Whatever you decide, I go with your decision. Please remember me on the Day of Judgment with Imam Husain's grandfather." Also at Zaroud the news of the murder of the martyrdom in Kufa of Muslim Ibn Aqil and Hani Ibn Urwah reached the Imam. The Imam was deeply upset and many times said, "God bless them." He and other people cried with the sad news, the ladies wailed, and the whole camp was in mourning.

At the next halting place called Tha'labiyya, someone came and asked Imam Husan (AS), about the ayah of the holy Qur'an where God says: 'The day when we shall call all people by their leader.'

The Imam replied, "A leader who calls to guidance and people obey his call and a leader who calls to misguidance and others follow him. One leads to heaven and the other leads to hell."

At Zubalah, the news reached the Imam that Abdullah Ibn Yaqtar, his second messenger to Kufa, was martyred. When he was captured he was sent to Ibn Ziyad, and Ibn Ziyad ordered him to go to the pulpit and curse the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt. Abdullah showed his willingness to do so, but when he went up he said, "O, people! I am the messenger of Husain, the son of Fatemah, to help him against Ibn Ziyad the son of the (base woman) Marjanah. Ibn Ziyad ordered him to be toppled from the top of the castle. He fell and broke most of his bones, but he was still able to talk. A man named Lakhmi, one of Ibn Ziyad's soldiers, came and cut off his head. After this news, the Imam announced, "Anyone who has joined this caravan for any purpose other than dying for this cause should leave now." And people left him except for those who chose to stay, his family, and his companions.

That was all for today, tomorrow we will continue the rest of the Imam's journey towards Karbala.