

A UNIVERSAL MESSAGE **FROM THE BATTLE FIELD OF KERBALA**

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According to the historical account of Maqatal-e-Khawarizmi (v.2 -p.33), when Imam Husain (a.s) was, on the day of Ashura, engrossed in an intermittent attack over his enemies inflicting bloody wounds and killing many of them, suddenly out of cowardice the enemy turned their attention and headed towards the Imam's camp. This they did in order to disturb him mentally and deviate his attention from them. And in so doing, they became an obstacle between him and the place where the Imam's women and children were camped, upon whom then enemy then were aiming an attack.

It was at this grim moment that the Imam, raising his voice loudly, admonished them saying:

“Oh the followers of Abi Sufyan (i.e. the Omayyads)! If you have no religion and fear not the Day of Resurrection, then at least be free- minded in your worldly affairs. And if you consider yourselves worthy of noble origin of Arabs, as you do then why not think of it and preserve the human dignity”

Hearing these words, Shimr, the cruel assassin, retorted:

“What is it that you say, Oh Husain?”

The Imam in reply said:

“I am the one engaged in fighting with you. These women folk are innocent. Hence withhold your criminal action and molest not my family members.”

Shimr responded saying:

“You have this right, Oh the son of Fatima”

He then called back his army and stopped them from further advance to Husain's camp saying:

“By my own life, he (Husain) also possesses nobility and honour”.

The foregoing words of the Imam, though outwardly point to a specific moment on the day of Ashura addressed to the Yazid's army men, when they cowardly turned to attack the Imam's camp, yet they contain a universal message to mankind.

The moral lesson therein conveyed is that if people at any time in any part of the world are not bound with or do not practice any religious laws, they should at least abide by the natural laws of decency and humanity and not to resort to barbaric actions.

Islam, providing complete code of conduct, has in fact clearly prohibited to exceed limits and trample upon the right of others. In matters of fighting defensive wars against most ferocious enemies, it has prescribed limits and mutual rights.

In Sura Baqrah V.190, the Holy Qur'an says:

“And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not like those who exceed the limits.”

The words of the Imam also exhort people the world over to be truly free-minded and maintain personal dignity in not to sink low under worldly temptations, be they for power or wealth.

But alas! Did the enemy, maintain the dignity and standards of humanity? No, certainly not.

No sooner the Imam was slain and he attained martyrdom, the enemy rushed to his camp setting it on fire, looting then innocent women and children of their jewellery and head-covers, to the extent of forcefully snatching the ear rings from young girls and forcing down the sick son of the martyred Imam to the ground.

This heart-rending episode has and will always remain fresh to remind us of the universal message of the martyred Imam.