

Martyrdom as Victory
A Study of the Incidents of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una
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Abstract

In the incidents of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una, a group of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) companions achieved martyrdom. This martyrdom represented a victory for the divine prophetic mission—not in its immediate sense but through its alignment with the Qur'anic vision of reaching the purest forms of guidance and admonishment. It illustrates the triumph of life through death, or victory through martyrdom.

Understanding martyrdom as an enduring victory extending from this world to the hereafter, and from temporary life to eternal life, is achieved when the heart firmly resides in the cornerstone of faith, clinging steadfastly to the firm handle of divine truth. The martyrdom of Imam Hussein ibn Ali (peace be upon him) at Karbala exemplifies this vision, grounded in the concepts of perpetual giving and eternal victory through enlightened and guiding martyrdom.

The divine prophetic message could not have been effectively conveyed or endured on earth without the path of the martyrs in the incidents of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una. The treachery of disbelievers persists across times and places,

necessitating acts of martyrdom to confront and ultimately extinguish falsehood. This represents the eternal path and the enduring lesson of sacrifice.

The Qur'anic meaning derived from the verses on martyrdom, as discussed in this study, culminates in the verse of the Covenant (Bay'ah). Here, God proclaims the purchase of believers' lives and wealth in exchange for Paradise, emphasizing the promise of a life characterized by ongoing and lasting victory.

Introduction

This study examines the incidents of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una, where a select group of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) companions were martyred. These noble individuals sacrificed their lives for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, achieving martyrdom for the cause they served. Their ultimate fate, far from being a defeat, represented a triumph. Their martyrdom embodied a dual victory: a worldly, immediate success and an eternal, spiritual triumph.

The research is divided into four main sections, each addressing the central theme articulated in the title:

Martyrdom as a victory devoid of defeat.

The contextual examples of the martyrs of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una.

The duality of defeat and victory.

The Qur'anic interpretation of martyrdom.

The study concludes with a summary of its findings.

Martyrdom as Victory

True victory is not confined to achieving material, immediate goals. Instead, it lies in the enduring realization of the intended meanings behind such objectives. The permanence of these meanings in the hearts of people transcends the temporary nature of physical achievements, such as bodily sensations or material possessions. Victory gains value only when its fruits endure, representing a continuity of meanings and their lasting manifestation. Hence, martyrdom is a profound expression of victory, as it transcends material success, embodying permanence and purpose.

The Qur'an affirms that those martyred in the path of Allah are not truly dead; they are granted eternal life by their Lord, as expressed in the verse:

"Do not think of those who are slain in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision" (Aal-Imran: 169).

Similarly, the Qur'anic principle of retribution (qisas) is described as a source of life:

“And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O people of understanding, that you may become righteous” (Al-Baqarah: 179).

Retribution, therefore, is not merely physical punishment; it signifies a broader meaning that endures in its moral and educational impact on society.

Martyrdom represents an enduring and multifaceted triumph. The martyr transcends their physical senses, rises above bodily limitations, and epitomizes a higher human ideal—the martyr becomes both a witness and a testimony to divine values. Martyrdom is thus a timeless stance of the heart, soul, and elevated self. It resonates differently in every context, serving as a lesson, an example, and an embodiment of eternal principles for generations to come.

The deeper meanings of martyrdom revolve around four interconnected elements:

Meaning: Martyrdom signifies the permanence of values and truths that transcend material existence.

Purpose: It affirms unwavering faith and a deep spiritual connection to divine truths.

Others: Martyrdom serves as the ultimate form of guidance, offering lessons and setting an example for others.

Victory: Martyrdom itself becomes the essence of victory, regardless of the immediate material outcome, as it plants seeds of eternal impact.

In the incident of Al-Raji', six of the Prophet's companions attained martyrdom, embodying the complete essence of victory in the four aspects mentioned. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) had sent them to educate others about Islam, responding to a request for guidance. Their mission represented a continuation of the Prophet's divine message. Despite the betrayal they faced, their sacrifice became a lasting victory. The message they carried reached its intended audience after subsequent events, underscoring the eternal nature of their mission.

For instance, Zayd ibn Al-Dathina demonstrated the divine dimension of martyrdom in his final moments. When Abu Sufyan questioned him, asking if he would prefer to be with his family while Muhammad (peace be upon him and his Household) suffered

in his place, Zayd replied:

“By Allah, I would not wish for Muhammad to be harmed by so much as a thorn, even if I were with my family.”

Abu Sufyan remarked, “I have never seen anyone love another as Muhammad’s companions love him.” Zayd was then executed by Abu Sufyan’s orders.¹

This stance illustrates the dual dimensions of martyrdom: a divine relationship rooted in prophethood and a human confrontation that serves to guide and educate. The martyrs stood firm for the sake of Allah and the benefit of humanity, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire and endure.

The concept of victory through martyrdom was realized after the martyrdom of the Prophet’s companions in the incidents of Al-Raji’ and Bi’r Ma’una. The miracles that followed their sacrifices affirmed this truth more powerfully than words ever could. A striking example is the story of Khubaib ibn Adi, one of the martyrs of Al-Raji’.

When the Quraysh brought Khubaib to Al-Tan’im to crucify him on a wooden cross, he requested permission to perform two units of prayer (rak’ahs). They granted his request. After completing his prayer, he turned to them and said:

“By Allah, if you would not accuse me of prolonging it out of fear of death, I would have prayed more.”

When they crucified him, they deliberately positioned him away from the direction of the Qibla. Yet, each time they turned his body, he would miraculously realign himself toward the Qibla. This continued until they gave up, unable to prevent him from facing it. Later, when they attempted to retrieve his body from the cross, the earth enveloped him, and they were unable to locate him.^{2 3}

The martyrdom of the companions in the incidents of Al-Raji’ and Bi’r Ma’una signified a realized victory. The objectives they pursued were accomplished not only in their own era but also for generations to come, extending until Allah wills. This

1 Ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifat al-Safwa*, vol. 1, p. 619.

2 Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *Al-ISabah fi Ma’rifat al-Sahabah*, vol. 2, p. 419.

3 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr al-Qurtubi, *Al-Isti‘ab fi Asma’ al-ASHab*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, 1910), p. 431.

accomplishment and success are embodied in what they taught from the Qur'an and in their steadfastness during their martyrdoms in both incidents. Their sacrifices illustrate several key aspects:

The companions remained steadfast in fulfilling the mission entrusted to them by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household). Their unwavering commitment serves as a lasting lesson on earth and an eternal truth in the heavens.

They set a precedent of steadfastness as a stance, faith as a creed, and the path to the hereafter as a life methodology. This is exemplified by Haram ibn Milhan, who, upon being treacherously martyred, proclaimed, "By the Lord of the Kaaba, I have triumphed!"^{4 5}

Khubaib ibn Adi established the practice of performing two units of prayer (rak'ahs) before execution. As historians have noted, "He was the first to pray two rak'ahs before his execution, and he established this tradition for others facing death."⁶

The martyrs demonstrated how to engage with enemies without compromising their faith. For instance, Asim ibn Thabit, Murthad ibn Abi Murthad, and Khalid ibn Al-Bukayr rejected the disbelievers' false promises of safety, declaring, "We do not accept a covenant or pledge from a polytheist." They fought until martyrdom, while their companions who accepted the enemy's guarantees (Abdullah ibn Tariq, Khubaib ibn Adi, and Zayd ibn Al-Dathina) were betrayed and killed, affirming the wisdom of Asim and his companions in refusing the disbelievers' pledges.

The martyrs fully embodied their mission of spreading Islamic teachings and guiding

4 Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Naysaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, ed. Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi), in reference to the events of al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'unah.

5 Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, ed. Mustafa al-Dhahabi (Dar al-Hadith), in reference to the events of al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'unah.

6 Al-Barr, vol. 1, p. 431.

people in faith.^{7 8 9} The martyrs of Bi'r Ma'una aimed to educate others about the religion and its principles, while the martyrs of Al-Raji' sought to teach the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions. Both missions served a unified Islamic purpose: to convey the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, exposing the reality of polytheism and its followers.

The lives and sacrifices of the six martyrs of Al-Raji' and the seventy reciters of Bi'r Ma'una reveal a profound and eternal connection to their faith. From their stance toward disbelievers to their approach in confrontation and their unwavering adherence to their beliefs and devotion to their Prophet, their martyrdom exemplifies an enduring life tied to representing Allah's religion and His Prophet's tradition. This representation is not rooted in transient worldly interests but in lasting principles.

Their martyrdom serves as a greater testimony to the meaning of victory than their earthly lives ever could. They purchased victory through death and sold defeat through life, setting an eternal example of triumph in faith and sacrifice.

2. The Martyrs of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una

The martyrs of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una shared a common purpose: educating people about the religion of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household). The one who commanded their mission was none other than the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household), who neither speaks nor acts out of personal desire, but rather in accordance with divine revelation. Whether the command was established through a Qur'anic text recited and worshipped by believers or through the Prophet's instructions, it reflects the prophetic foresight, which considers the past, present, and future.

This foresight invites us to reconsider the duality of victory and defeat, transcending the notion of defeat. The paradigm shifts to the duality of victory and mar-

⁷ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, ed. Muṣṭafa al-Saqqa et al. (Cairo, Egypt: Maṭba'at al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladuh, 1036 AH), vol. 4, pp. 122–128.

⁸ Al-Naysaburi, as reported regarding the events of al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'unah.

⁹ Al-Bukhari, as reported regarding the events of al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'unah.

tyrdom, where both concepts converge into a singular implicit meaning: victory. Martyrdom represents an immediate, elevated victory in the sight of Allah, while worldly victory may be limited to temporary, material success. In light of this understanding, victory through martyrdom is the truest form of triumph, and martyrdom itself is the greatest victory.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household) sent the companions—those who would become the martyrs of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una—not to defeat, but to eternal victory. Their mission was aimed at enduring significance rather than temporary outcomes. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household) would not have repeated the act of sending companions into a mission fraught with such immense danger unless the result was certain to be success—whether through conveying the message, teaching the religion, and spreading the Sunnah, or through pure martyrdom for Allah's sake.

Martyrdom, in this sense, may even precede the goals of the mission itself, as it represents an ultimate dedication to Allah and a form of absolution. The act of sending companions to educate others about Allah's religion aligns closely with sending them to fight in defense of the same faith. However, education takes precedence as a justification for people and as a profound means of guidance toward divine truth.

The incidents of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una were therefore part of the same divine mission, aimed at the same goal. Historians have repeatedly mentioned that in the month of Safar, during the fourth year of Hijra, a group from 'Adal and Qarah approached the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household), requesting that he send companions to teach them about Islam. In response, the Prophet sent six of his companions: Asim ibn Thabit, Khubaib ibn Adi, Zayd ibn Al-Dathina, Murthad ibn Abi Murthad, Khalid ibn Al-Bukayr, and Abdullah ibn Tariq.

Upon reaching Al-Raji', the disbelievers betrayed them, killing three and capturing the remaining three, who were later sold to the Quraysh. These captives were subsequently

executed and crucified by the Quraysh as vengeance for their losses at Badr.^{10 11}

Their martyrdom was not a defeat but a victory, as it affirmed their steadfastness in truth and their eternal connection to divine principles. Their sacrifice became a testimony of triumph over the disbelievers and a source of inspiration for their followers. Their lives reflect the Qur’anic verse:

“Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur’an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment” (At-Tawbah: 111).

Their dedication to Allah meant that they gave up their wealth, lives, and families for His sake. Their death at the hands of their enemies was not an end but a transition to eternal life—a form of perpetual victory with no death thereafter. Their connection to truth remains everlasting, and their martyrdom represents the clearest, most luminous path to triumph and enlightenment.

The Betrayal at Bi’r Ma’una

The treachery that befell the martyrs of Al-Raji’ was tragically mirrored in the incident of Bi’r Ma’una, where a group of the Prophet’s companions, known as the reciters (Qurra), were similarly betrayed. This incident is recounted in Sahih Muslim, as narrated by Anas:

A group of people approached the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household) and requested that he send men to teach them the Qur’an and the Sunnah. In response, the Prophet sent seventy men from the Ansar, known for their dedication to worship and knowledge. These men were referred to as the reciters (Qurra) of their time. They would collect firewood by day and pray at

¹⁰ Ibn Hisham, vol. 4, pp. 122–128.

¹¹ Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Ṭabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1987), vol. 4, pp. 209–211.

night. The Prophet appointed Haram ibn Milhan as their leader.

When they reached Bi'r Ma'una, located about 160 kilometers from Medina, they were betrayed by Amir ibn Al-Tufayl. Haram ibn Milhan, accompanied by two other companions—one of whom was lame—approached Amir and his people. Haram instructed the other two to stay nearby, saying:

“Remain close. If they grant me safety, you will be safe as well. But if they kill me, return to inform our companions.”

Haram then approached the group and began speaking to them. However, they signaled to one of their men, who approached Haram from behind and stabbed him. As Haram fell, he smeared his blood on his face and head, proclaiming:

“By the Lord of the Kaaba, I have triumphed!”

The attackers then turned on the rest of the group, killing them all except for the lame man, who managed to climb a mountain and escape. Among the survivors was Amr ibn Umayyah Al-Damri, who was captured but later released by Amir ibn Al-Tufayl upon learning that Amr was from the tribe of Mudar.¹²

The martyrdom of the reciters at Bi'r Ma'una was not a defeat; it was a profound triumph. Through their sacrifice, they conveyed the deeper meaning of life—a meaning not fleeting or transient, but eternal. Their martyrdom represented a victory over the impermanence of worldly life, as they infused their mission with timeless significance. Their blood became the foundation of a legacy, and their actions sustained the continuity of the Prophetic message, as they taught the Qur'an and Sunnah to others. In this way, their martyrdom became an extension of the Qur'anic message itself, embodying one of the most eloquent representations of life in the Prophetic tradition.

The Qur'an itself illuminated their sacrifice with unequivocal truth, as reflected in the verse:

“And do not think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision, rejoicing in what Allah has

¹² Muslim Abu al-Husayn ibn al-Hajjaj ibn Muslim al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *Al-Jami' al-Sahih* (Sahih Muslim), n.d. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 1961), vol. 4.

bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them—that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.” (Aal-Imran: 169–170).^{13 14 15}

Most commentators agree that this verse refers to the martyrs of Bi’r Ma’una. The Qur’an explicitly declares that they are not dead but alive, sustained by their Lord. Their death in the cause of Allah granted them eternal life, a state of provision, and joyous anticipation for those who would follow in their path. The verse negates the notion of death and deprivation, affirming instead their divine sustenance, joy, and connection with others who share their cause.

This negation of mortality to affirm life, denial of deprivation to affirm divine provision, and elimination of fear and grief to affirm joy and glad tidings—all emphasize the eternal nature of their triumph. Their martyrdom is not an end but a continuation of their connection to themselves, their Lord, and the faithful who follow in their footsteps. This connection is enduring, beneficial, and deeply rooted in the legacy they left behind—a legacy that remains steadfast on earth and in the hearts of believers.

The martyrs of Bi’r Ma’una, by their unwavering commitment and sacrifice, illuminated the eternal bond between faith, life, and divine purpose. Their martyrdom serves as a timeless example of victory, transcending worldly limitations and inspiring generations with its radiant truth.

The Prophet Muhammad’s (peace and blessings be upon him and his Household) position regarding the dispatch of the companions to Bi’r Ma’una bears a resemblance to Prophet Jacob’s (peace be upon him) concern when he sent Joseph with his brothers. When the group requested that the Prophet send companions to teach them about the religion of Allah and the Sunnah, he expressed his concern, saying: “I fear for them from the people of Najd.”

¹³ Ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, annotated and edited by Muhammad Husayn Shams al-Din (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah).

¹⁴ Ibn Mas‘ud al-Baghawi, *Tafsir al-Baghawi*, verified and hadiths referenced by Muhammad ‘Abdullah al-Nimr, ‘Awwad Humayd, and Sulayman Muslim (Dar Ṭayyibah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi‘).

¹⁵ Al-Ṭabarsi, *Majma‘ al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an* (Dar al-‘Ulum).

However, Abu Bara' assured him:

"I will grant them my protection. Send them so they may call people to your mission."¹⁶

Despite the Prophet's fears of treachery, he ultimately agreed, though his apprehension proved justified when betrayal did occur. Yet, this betrayal did not signify defeat. Instead, it affirmed the Prophet's wisdom in framing their mission within the duality of victory and martyrdom, where their ultimate state pointed to the enduring victory embedded within their martyrdom.

The miracles that followed their sacrifice revealed the continuous nature of this victory. Among these was the miracle of Amir ibn Fuhaira, who was martyred during the incident. His status with Allah was so elevated that Amir ibn Al-Tufayl, the betrayer, later remarked:

"When Ibn Fuhaira was killed, I saw him being raised between the heavens and the earth until I could see the sky beneath him."¹⁷

When the news of their martyrdom reached the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), he said:

"This is the doing of Abu Bara'. I had been reluctant and apprehensive about this."

The news deeply affected Abu Bara', who carried guilt for his role in the incident. In response, his son Rabia ibn Abu Bara' sought vengeance by attacking Amir ibn Al-Tufayl, killing him with a spear strike.¹⁸

The Prophet's concern for his companions in the mission to Bi'r Ma'una mirrors the caution of Prophet Jacob regarding his son Joseph. When Jacob's sons asked him to send Joseph with them to play and enjoy himself, they betrayed him and cast him into the well. This betrayal is vividly depicted in the Qur'an:

"They said, 'O our father, why do you not entrust us with Joseph while we are indeed his well-wishers? Send him with us tomorrow that he may eat well and play. And indeed, we will be his guardians.' He said, 'Indeed, it saddens me that you should take

¹⁶ Al-Baghawi.

¹⁷ Al-Baghawi.

¹⁸ Al-Baghawi.

him away, and I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are unaware.’ They said, ‘If a wolf should eat him while we are a strong clan, then we would indeed be losers.’ So when they took him away and agreed to put him into the bottom of the well, We inspired to him, ‘You will surely inform them [someday] about this affair of theirs while they do not perceive.’” (Yusuf: 11–16).

Jacob’s apprehension for Joseph stemmed from his awareness of what would happen. Despite this, he exercised patience, entrusting the matter to Allah, as he expressed later:

“I only complain of my suffering and my sorrow to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know” (Yusuf: 86).

This knowledge is reiterated when the bearer of glad tidings brought Joseph’s shirt:

“And when the bearer of good tidings arrived, he cast it over his face, and he returned [once again] seeing. He said, ‘Did I not tell you that I know from Allah that which you do not know?’” (Yusuf: 96).

Jacob’s fear for Joseph arose from his insight into the future, which allowed him to foresee events through divine revelation. Yet, he remained patient and submitted to Allah’s will, knowing that the ultimate outcome was in His hands. His fatherly affection flowed naturally, culminating in the restoration of his sight with Joseph’s shirt.

Similarly, the Prophet’s apprehension for his companions stemmed from his prophetic foresight. When the people of Najd requested companions to teach them about Islam, the Prophet expressed his concern, saying:

“I fear for them from the people of Najd.”

However, his concern was tempered by his prophetic knowledge of the ultimate triumph. His fear was not of defeat but of the treachery that awaited his companions. This treachery, in his view, would transform into a victory—martyrdom’s triumph over temporal life and its attainment of eternal life for the martyrs. The Prophet foresaw that their sacrifice would contribute to the enduring vitality of the Qur’anic message, which he perceived through divine revelation.

The Prophet's concern also reflected his profound compassion for his companions, akin to the paternal affection of a father. This prophetic compassion emanated from the assurance of divine victory promised to him. While the Prophet knew this victory with certainty, his companions held a faith-based conviction of its inevitability.

3. The Duality of Defeat and Victory

The duality of defeat and victory is often understood through a material lens, focusing on immediate outcomes. However, when viewed through the lens of principles and values, this duality shifts to martyrdom and denial. The Qur'anic perspective, as illuminated in the verse:

"Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment" (At-Tawbah: 111).

This verse encapsulates the concept of martyrdom as victory. Believers rejoice in their transaction with Allah, which affirms their unwavering stance on truth and their rejection of denial and falsehood. Martyrdom signifies a lasting acknowledgment of the divine purpose, while denial represents defeat, even if it appears to yield material gains. The believer, as a witness to truth, stands in opposition to the denier, who embodies falsehood.

Thus, there can be no defeat for the bearer of truth as long as they remain steadfast, and no true victory for deniers who reject an enduring truth that benefits humanity. Even if deniers achieve temporary material success, it is ultimately a defeat, as it lacks enduring meaning and purpose.

The divine purchase of believers' lives and wealth reflects an ongoing victory, grounded in the unity of God (tawhid) and the unwavering commitment of believers to this truth. The term "purchase" in this verse symbolizes an eternal triumph, as be-

lievers rejoice in their covenant with Allah.

The verse's numeric designation, 111, carries symbolic significance. It reflects the oneness of Allah, the irrevocability of the transaction, and the certainty of victory. It also highlights the futility of denial, no matter its forms or manifestations.

The surah's title, At-Tawbah (Repentance), reinforces this theme. It calls believers to a sincere return to Allah:

"O you who have believed, repent to Allah with sincere repentance. Perhaps your Lord will remove from you your misdeeds and admit you into gardens beneath which rivers flow. On the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him, their light will proceed before them and on their right; they will say, 'Our Lord, perfect for us our light and forgive us. Indeed, You are over all things competent.'" (At-Tahrim: 8).

Repentance leads to purification and triumph, granting believers eternal rewards and affirming their purchase of truth over falsehood.

Victory is realized in martyrdom, which embodies a comprehensive attainment of divine favor. In contrast, denial represents the ultimate loss, as it signifies rejection of Allah's oneness and falls into the depths of defeat. This denial—manifested in polytheism and rejection of divine truth—offers no hope of redemption or intercession, as affirmed in:

"Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin." (An-Nisa: 48).

Thus, there is no victory in polytheism, and no defeat in martyrdom. Faith in Allah and adherence to His truth inherently lead to victory, as this faith aligns with the very essence of truth and its eternal flow. The following lessons may be concluded:

- Martyrdom represents an enduring triumph that radiates truth, regardless of whether it achieves immediate worldly objectives. The very act of martyrdom serves as a perpetual proclamation of truth, embodying victory in its purest form.

- The martyrdoms in Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una have left a lasting impression, inspiring faith and resilience in people. These sacrifices resonate deeply, achieving complete victory in meaning and purpose, leading to Allah's divine acceptance

- The martyrdoms in these incidents serve as evidence of victory itself, where for believers, victory and martyrdom are synonymous in their ultimate outcome. However, martyrdom holds a superior status because of the profound stance it represents. This is further reinforced by the miracles and extraordinary events surrounding these sacrifices, as emphasized by historians and commentators alike. The verse on martyrdom is a declaration of life, transcending temporal concerns and affirming its eternal nature. The transition from martyrdom to eternal life is a miracle of faith and a testament to its fruitful impact on earth. This verse underscores life's continuity in its eternal, otherworldly form rather than its temporary, worldly preoccupations. The verse employs the conjunction "but" to contrast worldly perceptions with divine truth, as seen in: "And do not think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead, but, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision." (Aal-Imran: 169). The verse begins with a negation ("do not think") to refute the notion of death for believers, concluding with the affirmation of their victory and eternal life: "But they are alive, receiving provision from their Lord." This transition emphasizes that the victory of martyrdom is a matter of spiritual contemplation, beyond mere physical or material understanding.

4. The Qur'anic Meaning

The Qur'anic meaning represents an all-encompassing divine vision that integrates and affirms all meanings conveyed by Allah's discourse. It is universal, eternal, and perpetual, guiding action and speech toward truth. It transcends whims, resists fragmentation through disagreement, and remains steadfast on earth, benefiting all creation. It elevates actions when aligned with righteousness and shapes speech when intended to persuade. It reaches the richness of pure belief but remains inaccessible to materialistic interpretations devoid of spiritual understanding.

The Qur'anic meaning harmonizes language with its latent possibilities, offering a breadth of interpretations that resonate with hearts capable of comprehension. It is not constrained by the limitations of those who struggle to grasp its depths. Instead, it thrives as a vast field of possibilities, accessible through diverse readings. It persists across time and encompasses all dimensions of existence. It inspires creation and manifests divine will. It responds to sincere hearts and clear insight. The more hearts reflect on it, the more its meanings renew and multiply.

Even when linked to specific historical contexts, its meanings remain eternal, granting timeless significance to those contexts. This is evident in the incidents of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una, which may appear as defeats from a material perspective. Yet, through the Qur'anic lens, they emerge as victories for the believers. These sacrifices represent the fulfillment of divine justice, exemplifying victory through martyrdom and the attainment of divine approval.

This perspective is explicitly affirmed in the verse on martyrs:

“And do not think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead, but they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision, rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them—that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. They receive good tidings of favor from Al-

lah and bounty and that Allah does not allow the reward of believers to be lost.” (Aal-Imran: 169–171).

The revelation of the verses on martyrs during the incident of the martyrs of Bi'r Ma'una, according to commentators^{19 20 21}, conveys a Qur'anic understanding of victory that is unlike the commonly held material perspective. Martyrdom, as expressed in these verses, is the highest and most honored degree of victory. It signifies a life without death, eternal and unbroken, and sustenance that is neither withheld nor diminished. This eternal life is accompanied by continuous joy tied to Allah's pleasure and divine favor, an abundant grace so profound that those who experience it wish for others who remain behind to join them through the same path of martyrdom. Their presence is free from fear and sorrow, enriched by glad tidings of Allah's blessings and grace, standing firm before divine justice where no reward of the believers is ever lost.

In all these aspects, martyrdom embodies meanings of victory that bridge this world with the hereafter, death with eternal life, and faith with its ultimate fulfillment in the afterlife. This perspective explains the victory achieved by the martyrs of Bi'r Ma'una and Al-Raji', especially through the miracles connected with their martyrdom and the statements made by them in their final moments. For instance, Haram ibn Milhan declared as he was martyred:

“By the Lord of the Kaaba, I have triumphed!”²²

Such miracles and statements signify transcendence over death itself, demonstrating that martyrdom, in its essence, is the greatest form of victory.

The three Qur'anic verses on martyrs present their sacrifice as the ultimate form of life—life in its ideal, desired state. This is a type of victory that cannot be achieved

¹⁹ Al-Ṭabarsi, vol. 1, p. 187.

²⁰ Al-Baghawi.

²¹ Al-Dimashqi.

²² Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, ed. Muṣṭafa al-Dhahabi (Dar al-Hadith), as reported regarding the martyrs of al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'unah.

by material triumph, which is confined to a specific time and place. Instead, martyrdom represents an eternal and comprehensive victory, illuminating the full meaning of sacrifice through the most complete lens of divine truth.

The miracles and implications of the martyrs' sacrifice underscore that martyrdom is not merely a reaction to the temporal defeat of the enemy in "the time and place of the event." It transcends this to become a perpetual and luminous source of meaning and inspiration.

Conclusion

In the incidents of Bi'r Ma'una and Al-Raji', a select group of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) companions achieved martyrdom. This martyrdom was not a defeat in the conventional sense but a triumph for the divine Prophetic mission. It represented the realization of the Qur'anic message through the purest means of guidance, advice, and enlightenment—a journey that culminates in life through death, or victory through martyrdom.

Understanding martyrdom as a victory extending from this world to the eternal realm, from temporary life to everlasting existence, becomes evident when the heart remains steadfast in faith, clinging firmly to the unbreakable bond with divine truth. The martyrdom of Imam Hussein ibn Ali (peace be upon him) at Karbala exemplifies this vision, built upon the principles of enduring sacrifice and perpetual victory through enlightened and guided martyrdom.

The divine and compassionate message of Islam could not have reached humanity with lasting benefit without the sacrifices of the martyrs in the incidents of Al-Raji' and Bi'r Ma'una. The treachery of disbelievers is a recurring reality across times and places, necessitating acts of martyrdom to confront and obliterate falsehood. This martyrdom becomes the enduring path and the eternal lesson.

The Qur'anic meaning derived from the verses on martyrs, as explored in this study, culminates in the Verse of the Covenant (Bay'ah), where Allah declares His purchase of the believers' lives and wealth in exchange for Paradise.

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