

اللَّهُمَّ  
الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ



# Uprising Of Husayn

A combination of two lectures delivered by  
Ayatollah khamenei  
on Imam Husayn' uprising

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One of the main topics that *Ayatollah Khamenei* pays attention towards in an exemplary, meticulous and analytical manner is Islamic history. His recollection of events in Islamic history are laid out in an attractive and organized manner alongside precise analysis, practical points and in accordance with the needs of the day.

Along with the holistic understanding of the lives of the Aa'ima, he is also expert in the specifics of their lives which can be seen in his unique and precise analysis.

Studying the greatest stand taken in history, the stand of Aba Abdullah, is something which has been looked at by numerous scholars of Islam from many different angles. In these studies, especially in contemporary times, the reason for the stand of Imam Husayn is a discussion that has kept the minds of many great thinkers busy. They have presented different opinions on this discussion.

The Supreme Leader has stated that hundreds of lessons can be derived from the movement of Imam Husayn that can help in the upbringing of a society, and each of these lessons can be subjects in and of themselves. However, he himself states that you can see there is one primary lesson that we can learn in front of which all the other lessons seem secondary. That lesson can be summarized by asking the question: Why did Imam Husayn rise up?

The analysis that he presents of the reason behind the stand of Imam Husayn is so eloquent, well reasoned, logical and practical that the decision was made to turn this discussion into a small book with the title of “The Husayni Revolution”. This compilation comprises of two speeches he had given in 1982 and 1984.

The first speech was given on 1982/10/26 with gray color and the second was given on 1984/10/12 with black color.

## **In the name of God the Merciful, the Beneficent**

Regarding the historical and eventful incidents of Muharram, it is reasonably fitting to discuss today's debate on the imminent and unforgettable uprising of Imam Abu 'Abdallah and to converse a bit more about this exceptional historical event, which neither before nor afterwards, even till now, there has been no incident with that same great and influential effect upon the world. And, the fact is that all aspects of this incredible incident are not yet clear to people around the world. For Muslims, this incident is still unknown, even to our own people who know Husayn (P.B.U.H.) very well. The story of Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) is among one of the traditions of our nation; and, it has not been separated from our people for centuries, even though this incident is not entirely clear to our people. Despite this, with the public's awareness, and especially from the revolutionary movement of recent years, over

the past twenty years, new and important talks—thanks be to God—have been made on ‘Ashura’. Thinkers, scholars, writers, and those who looked at the incident with foresight and care stated that much of the obscurity was removed from the incident, yet there is still room for debate.

While almost one thousand and four hundred years have passed, since the incident of ‘Ashura,’ this incident—in our history and perhaps throughout human history—is still the biggest and most significant one being sealed by sacrifice and blood. Perhaps, throughout history, after the incident of ‘Ashura, we can barely find a movement, an uprising, or a bloody incident that has not been exemplified by the humanitarian aspirations and objectives of the ‘Ashura incident. Unlike events that emerge as a massive wave during their initial occurrence, yet, as time passes, this wave becomes weaker and smoother: the wave of ‘Ashura becomes more prominent and more fervent than ever since its inception, from year to year and from decade to decade.

The issue that matters to us here is to comprehend the purpose of this incident, and the concept of this movement and uprising appropriately; because, we believe—that is also the truth—that the Islamic Revolution in Iran was inspired and led by this incident. Once the Imam

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Khomeini said that Muharram was the month in which blood gained victory over the sword and that Muharram. It is a fact that we consider the Islamic Revolution in Iran benefited from the blessings and exultations of 'Ashura.

Then, after what we did, after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, we were inspired by the uprising of Husayn bin 'Ali, the Master of Martyrs<sup>1</sup>, in dealing with the world powers and in the face of repressive and destructive policies. Our youth came to the battlefield with the love of Husayn (P.B.U.H.) and with the remembrance of Husayn (P.B.U.H.); and, the Islamic Revolution, with all its difficulties and jaggedness, has come to this day and after this, God willing, it will continue. Therefore, we need to understand the incident precisely.

The incident of Karbala can be explained in two ways: one is the explanation of events. The explanation of events contains many messages during his long throbbing lifetime after Hasan bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) – which lasted ten years: how Imam Husayn lived, how he coped, what letters were written to him, what he wrote in response and how he reacted after Yazid came to power. Once he departed from Medina; the events that happened there when he reached Mecca; what events occurred thereafter he left Mecca; what happened at every settlement: they are all expressions

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1. Sayyid al-Shuhada

of 'Ashura's story. This is usually stated in this manner and it, in itself, carries a lot of messages and expressions; furthermore, it should be spoken in detail if it is supposed to be expressed, and we do not seek to go into detail on the matter.

The other way is to sum up the events of Karbala, to recapitulate all those events and speeches, from which we can distinguish and recognize why the Master of Martyrs (P.B.U.H.) rose up.

I would provide an earlier introduction and after that introduction, we get into the meaning of the Karbala incident. The basis of a government among divine religions is quite different from the perspective which Mammonists, domineers, and abusers recognize a government. The Mammonists regard government as the absolute rule over the people and the provision of their own lusts. It does not matter: whether those were the rulers who enjoyed prudence, competence as well as ingenuity, and left a good name—of having supremacy and magnificence—in history; or even those who have been mistakenly acknowledged as fair and just ones; or either those kings and sultans who were not even known for their supremacy, ingenuity and authority—they were indeed the delicate and vulnerable ones; or the renegades in face of invasions and hardships over time; all of them were partners in a way that they had

utilized and exploited the rule over the people, as a means for their own convenience, enjoyment, pleasures, and tribulations. The same is true today in the world: when one is installed in high office, he feels like he reached a comfortable and easy life. In the world, except in some exceptional cases, it can be said that this matter is still true.

However, in religious traditions, and in Islam, the government refers to an obligation and a duty, or a rigorous and dangerous mission: it stands for shouldering the heaviest burden of social duties. It does not mean that the person, who rises to power seeks something for himself, deems the servants of God paralyzed in the grip of his authority, or attempts to trap them; or that he keeps God's grace on his own intriguing, luxurious, and pleasant tablecloth and enjoys it: it does not mean that. Therefore, what is said, in the custom of all worldly authorities such as monarchy, domination, and sovereignty, is labeled as the Imamate in Islamic terms—a caliphate of God—it means to administer and govern the affairs of the people. That is, there is even a reference to such a duty in regards to governance; the Prophet of Islam formed the greatest movement in regards to social governance coupled with the lives of the people, which was to save people from the rule of tyrants; thus, guiding them to God's servitude under his administration, the umbrella of his Imamate, and divine

leadership: “is the calling to the obedience to God the Mighty and Majestic from the obedience to the servants of God.”<sup>1</sup> As it is stated in the narration of Imam Baqir: the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) saved the people from the obedience and servitude to the servants, human beings—who, themselves, were the servants and bondsmen of God yet spuriously captured other people into slavery—and took them under the umbrella of the divine authority, in which there were the highest freedom and dignity for the human life.

As soon as the divine arch-prophets including our great Prophet, were appointed, they, indeed, designed a new way of living for humans. They sought to implement—during their own lives or within their own lives—all great aspects and prospects that such a life required if they could achieve divine power<sup>2</sup>. Henceforth, if anyone assumes that the divine prophets just rose to admonish people, they are mistaken. The prophets were not just appointed for admonishing, teaching lessons, and refreshing minds: these duties were but a few assigned to the divine prophets as part of their responsibilities. The general and overarching mission of the prophets’ was to aid in the development of a new society: a new and innovative realm, built upon divine rules.

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1. Al-Kafi (Vol. 5, Ch.1, H.4).

2. Ref. the establishment of divine government or divine state

The conflicts of the prophets' arose because of this mission: if their mission was only for admonishment, many conflicts would not have occurred. Clearly, as a result of their responsibilities, you can understand how so many of the divine prophets were martyred; how they were entangled in sufferings—throughout their lives; and why they had frequent encounters with the sultans, rulers, and potentates of the past. The prophets wanted to rid the governments' wounds of infectious, corrupt rulers; creating a new world in which divine commandments, divine principals, and divine guidance would make up the dominant framework. Consequently, the prophets were drawn into conflict, warfare, and strife with the rulers of their time, in many cases. A verse from the Holy Qur'an refers to such incidences: "How many a prophet there has been with whom a multitude of godly men fought."<sup>1</sup> That is, how many prophets have existed, whereby whom, alongside such prophets, a large number of devout men fought against tyrants? There is a narration that Abraham was the first among the prophets to take up a sword and fight.

Unfortunately, the divine prophets' history is unavailable to us. There are distorted chronicles: like accounts from the Torah, many of which are incomplete; furthermore,

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1. Sura 3, Aali- Imraan, Aya 146.

there are narrations that have been quoted, verbally and orally, which are not reliable. There are a number of narrations regarded as correct: received from the Holy Household of the Prophet (P.B.U.T.); yet, they do not reveal all aspects of the prophets' lives. "The first to fight for the cause of God was Abraham"<sup>1</sup>: this narration is a traditional one that states the first one to fight for God's cause was Abraham. Before Moses; before Solomon; before David; and before all the prophets whom we have heard the banging of their war drums: Abraham had fought. The Prophet Lott, apparently the nephew of Abraham was one of his commanders, stated that Abraham hoisted a flag in the name of God, handing it to him—to fight. Thus, if our Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was drawn into a conflict, war, or some strife: it would be due his mission; if the Prophet's only mission, while in Mecca, had been to admonish the people no one would have quarreled with him. "O' People! Do not worship other gods, do not coerce": they would have listened to him; however, they would have continued to coerce others and likewise worship other gods.

It was just like the many who admonished at a time of tyranny<sup>2</sup>, asking the people to join in the observance of morality; yet, neither the tyrannical nor the tyrants

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1. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 11, Ch.3, H.1).

2. Ref. Pahlavi era (1925–1979)

harbored any feelings of sadness, worry and anxiety: they did not feel alarmed. When should one feel alarmed? The minute that an administration comes into existence and its government, by which, has a tyrant that sits as its head, and smaller tyrannies serve as their henchmen: such an administration is a false—it must change. What does change in this administration mean? That the tyrants leave, the great tyrant departs; and all the routes and channels, heaping the material and spiritual avails into the pockets of the tyrants, are sealed: this is the meaning of a new government. The old government must be dissolved; that is to say, these things should be done. That is why, once the tyrants feel that there is a danger to them, they start to fight against the people. Same as it was during the Islamic Revolution in Iran; so, you see that the tyrannical regime<sup>1</sup> to any extent was more insensitive towards the Imam Khomeini and his movement, why? Because other organizations, which were allegedly fighting, did not speak out against the Shah, and tyranny, and the corrupted government; verily, they complained about specific issues; or expressed concern over a particular government task. Nevertheless, once the regime saw that the Imam and those following him, that great religious, spiritual, and popular movement, were equipped against the Shah: they became

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1. Ref. Mohammad Reza Shah's era (1941–1979)

disparaging towards the Shah and highly motivated. It became more and more of an issue for them: and this is the reality that exists in many parts of the world today.

Well, now as an introduction, I say these things, which are some generalities that you should keep in mind. At that point, the prophets were appointed to make such a new world; as the Prophet of Islam came, was appointed, and created a new world. The government of this new world was beyond the rule of the tyrannical world. On that day, in no place on earth, was there no such rule as what the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) created. Neither the conditions of governance, nor the prevailing conditions in the world, nor the relationship between the ruler and people in the world, were similar to the city of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.)<sup>1</sup>; one, to any extent, was in a way and the latter was quite different. Neither was its economy like the economy that existed in the world. Everywhere on earth theories have surfaced for making money and improving the economy, the flow of cash in a country and commerce, and I do not know... for land and capital, and for similar issues or in some similar manner. However, the Prophet of Islam behaved in a way that there was nothing, in the world, comparable to the quality of the Prophet's economy. Neither the people's relations, with each other, nor social

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1. i.e. Yathrib Madinah or Madinat al-Nabi.

relations, in the Prophet's community, were similar to other communities around the world: it was not typical. It was a place where nothing like it or similar to it existed, within any of the social dimensions, on earth. There was no such thing on the planet until the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had arrived to create such a world.

All dimensions of this society were laid out by the Holy Prophet, he asked people to behave, consistently; and then he acted accordingly. There was no situation whereby the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would ask people to do a task that he would not do himself. He asked to people to recite prayers, and he was the first to lead in prayers. He asked the people to give donations, and he collected the donations. He asked the people to pay their disbursements, and he spent, his and theirs, in the manner that Islam had outlined. Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) asked people to strive: and he, to a great extent, was the illustration and teacher of what it meant to strive for God's cause. That is, whatsoever the Prophet had stated about Islam, as a collection of an Islamic government, existed in the behavior of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and in the very community that the Prophet had established. In other terms, the Prophet exhibited the ways of Islam to people both practically and literally.

There was only one provision from the provisions of this Islamic government, which was said by the Prophet yet

not practiced: he kept saying it but never practiced it. This was a pillar of the pillars of the Islamic government. In the community that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had established, if we assume that there were ten to twelve pillars, and one was this pillar which the Prophet had stated its provisions and features, as well as all the necessary justifications and guidance; but the Prophet, himself, had not practiced this great pillar of the Islamic government and could not have done so: there was indeed no possibility that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) could practice it himself. What was it? It was what create, at once, this Islamic community, steady like a train, and if the Islamic government went off its rails, consequently, the overall trend of this government changes.

Well, this is truly one of the cornerstones of a government. A government is established, indicating that a community should develop with certain types of material, spiritual, and economic features as well as a statehood and other features. It, likewise, creates the community, but if that community becomes diverted from its intended course or if the powerful—the oppressors and the aggressors—separate the community from its principles, either by changing its statement or has not changed the statement, yet altered the intent, what is the community to do? What should be done? This is also one of the provisions. If the founder of Islam (P.B.U.H.) had expressed all

the Islamic provisions yet had not spoken about this one, he would have carried out flawed work; the Prophet has stated this matter. He had told Muslims that if one day the Islamic government derailed from Islam and the direction of Islamic community changed; either by the powerful, the tyrants, the hypocrites, or those hiding amongst Muslims; if such a deviation happened, what they should do about it. The Prophet had said this, yet he had not practiced it. But why? Because it was impossible for the Prophet to implement it; since at the time of the Prophet this deviation would have never occurred. As long as the Prophet was alive; as long as the Prophet was in charge; there would be no deviation: so long as the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) behaved according to what was decreed by Islam.

This, too, should be carried out at the time of the Prophet's successors; in other words, if the successors of the Prophet faced a conflict wherein the Islamic society had so deviated, that it was possible and there was a danger in that Islamic concepts would change completely, in such a situation, at such a time, what could be done? This task should be carried out by one of the successors of the Prophet. Who was this successor? It did not matter, depending on which particular circumstances were to occur or at any given time of the immaculate Imams, after the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

After the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), these features were largely reserved: and, although there were frictions and collisions and impacts on the body of such a divine-human and honorable sovereignty, Muslims, due to the conquests and some other matters, became entangled more or less in wealth, worldly life, prosperity, and self-indulgence; however, as soon as the Commander of the Faithful came to power, the divine sovereignty was restored again. Once more, 'Ali bin Abi Talib (P.B.U.H.), as an Islamic ruler, instead of treating people with ostentation, arrogance, insolence, and with self-glorification, ruled like one of the people; furthermore, in terms of life, he considered the quality of his life to be less than that of all people; that is to say, we do not find this situation, even in the life of the holy Prophet, with features of such continuity and firmness. Indeed, the Commander of the Faithful created such a situation again: in order to save people from the mire of aristocracy and from drowning in a turbulent lifestyle that they were moving gradually towards; as well as the catastrophe, which, like the state of ignorance, was returning to the people, becoming dominant.

But after the Commander of the Faithful's martyrdom, all manifestations and social phenomena within the community shifted to a position that the prophets and their successors warned about; once more all these problems, the

same rule of force, the rule of the aristocracy, the rule of whims and desires, the rule of the privileged or the closest to the head of the state and the potentate, the rules based on the values of ignorance and not on the basis of Islamic values, returned. The message that the Commander of the Faithful shared with the people at the beginning of his rule and his caliphate, “You should know that the same troubles have returned to you which existed when the Prophet was first sent”<sup>1</sup> reveals the situation. And this situation, on that day, did not exist with such despotism at the time of the first caliphs, the Rightly Guided Caliphs<sup>2</sup>. That day, people had the right to speak, protest and walk out while the caliph was on the pulpit. If there was any harshness against the people who protested the return and reinstatement to ignorance, the rigor would be like that of, for example, Abu Dhar<sup>3</sup> who was banished to exile in Al-Rabatha<sup>4</sup> or mayhap Ammar bin Yasir who was beaten in front of the Caliph: it never exceeded this. The right to speak and to act were reserved for the true believers

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1. Nahjul Balagha (S. 16)

2. i.e. The Rashidun Caliphs or the 30-year reign of the first four caliphs (successors) following the demise of the Prophet, namely: Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman bin ‘Affan, and ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.).

3. Jundub bin Junadah bin Sufian known as Abu Dhar al-Ghifari al-Kinani.

4. It is a settlement in Saudi Arabia located some 200 km to the north-east of Medina on the pilgrim route from Kufa to Mecca.

and the Prophet's companions, who were numerous, and truly they could criticize; and if there were a move and policy towards the values of ignorance and the state of the tyrannical period, they could preserve the people; however, after the martyrdom of the Commander of the Faithful, immense oppression and tyranny dominated, everywhere, that even the power to act was taken from all of them. The history and image that writers, from that era, portrayed, since the time after the Commander of the Faithful's martyrdom, express the bitter misfortune of the people on that day; especially that of true Muslims, believers and devotees; to the extent that one becomes astonished upon the realization that only a half-dozen years have passed since the demise of the Prophet of Islam. Islam was still fresh! The people had just embraced Islam; entire cities and regions had just embraced Islam; Islamic principles altered and everything changed. Indeed, such a situation had arisen.

It is quoted from Abu Dhar that once the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) stated, "When the family of Abu al-'As<sup>1</sup> reaches thirty,"<sup>2</sup> once the family of Abu al-'As, one of the main branches of Umayyads and the offspring of Abu al-'As, ruled in the Islamic world for about fifty years from Marwan bin

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1. Abu al-'As bin Umayya was the son of Umayya bin 'Abd Shams.

2. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 22, Ch.13, H.6).

Hakam<sup>1</sup> to Marwan Hammar<sup>2</sup>; the last of the Umayyad caliphs and the First Marwanid caliphs; when these people are thirty in number, Abu Dhar continues quoting from the Prophet.”<sup>3</sup> All of the strivings which Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) moved and revolted for, and whatever the Islamic world had suffered from before the uprising of Imam Husayn and whatsoever was the greatest calamity and tribulation for Islam and the Muslims, can be summed up in these three sentences: that is, the border between the ruthless government and the divine government is at these three points.

First of all, on assets, the oppressive and tyrannical government uses the assets of God for its own benefit: wealth on earth, treasury house, public revenues and so on must be shared among all people, even the opportunities, everyone must take advantage. Not only, does it not consider assets that should be used by all; not only, does it not deem the deprived as true beneficiaries and usufructuaries; not only, does it not sever the hands of foreigners from the rich, the aristocrats, and the powerful: it cuts off the hands of the disadvantaged, the poor and the weak from the blessings of God. It monopolizes and

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1. Marwan I (626 – 685 CE.)

2. Marwan II (691 – 750 CE.)

3. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 22, Ch.13, H.6)

exploits the assets of God: it and its doggish associates gather around the table and use the assets of God. “They will take the assets of God, the servants of God as their bondservant and God’s religion (as) a deception.” This is one characteristic of tyrannical sovereignty. Just the opposite, a divine government recognizes the assets of God as His and considers that it belongs to the servants of God, and gives to His weakest servants. Indeed, it prefers the poor and the disadvantaged to the rich, the aristocrats, the mighty and the wealthy. It numbers itself among the lowest and most deprived of social classes, comparable to the rule of the Commander of the Faithful. The Commander of the Faithful used to eat in a way that there were comparable foods at his table and rigid cloths of which he slept upon to the poor from those days of Islam. Well, this was the difference between the Abu al-‘As branch of the Umayyad which ruled for years, whom the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had warned others about during their rule and administration, and the superlative rule of Imam Husayn and ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (P.B.U.H.).

The second point is “consider the servants of God as their bondservant.” This is another feature of tyrannical governments that deem the servants of God as “bondservant”; that is, they consider other humans as their own servants and slaves. Of course, they may not have

explicitly asserted that humans were their bondservants; but, the fact remains, they considered some people as their slaves; this practice occurred and manifested during the rule of the Umayyads and the Abbasids during the first centuries of Islam. It began at the time of Muawiyah who dominated at the time of Yazid; it reached its peak at the time of Marwan and ‘Abd al-Malik; it continued through the same vein: they indeed used humans as their own personal slaves and servants. Of course, they did not say at first. After several years passed, in the early ninth century<sup>1</sup> or at the end of the eighth century<sup>2</sup>, a well-known Arab author, al-Jahiz<sup>3</sup>, in his books, states that humans are all servants of the commander of the faithful; that is, the bondservants of the very debauched and lascivious caliph whom they called the commander of the faithful. He asserts he<sup>4</sup> is the superintendent and master, “and people are his slaves.” This thought and perception came about after the initial deviation of Islam and the deflection of the Islamic rule. Here are other features wherein “they consider the servants of God as their bondservants”:

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1. 3rd century AH.

2. 2nd century AH.

3. Abu ‘Uthman ‘Amr bin Bahr al-Kinani al-Basri (776-869 CE.), known as al-Jahiz, was an Arab prose writer and author of works of literature, Islamic nonconformist theology, and politico-religious polemics.

4. Ref. the caliph

they do not respect people; they do not give rights to the people; the right to choose or the right to vote. If there is a need for allegiance, as the caliph wants or the powerful and the swordsmen seek, the people must pledge their allegiances and they have to rehash allegiances; they had such an understanding of the people.

The third point is “the religion of God (as) a deception.”<sup>1</sup> The religion of God was treated as a mere puppet on their hand. Here, the abridged meaning of “(as) a deception” is to do whatever they wish with God’s religion. Sometimes it is essential to express pretentiousness to attract people and make them believe in themselves: talk about Islam, bring up the Qur’an and pray congregationally. Sometimes it is also necessary to flout the rules of Islam in their own personal lives, in social life, in a matter, in a decree, in war, or in peace: they practice Islam any way they wish. In fact, Islam is not a guide or way of life to them rather they are the ones who exploit Islam whenever and how they want to. This is clearly seen in the lives of the caliphs of the Umayyads and Abbasids if anyone reads the history of the tragic black days in the eighth and ninth century books; they realize what “the religion of God (as) a deception”<sup>2</sup> meant when the Prophet had used it to warn others about

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1. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 22, Ch.13, H.6).

2. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 22, Ch.13, H.6).

Abu al- 'As. They did whatever they wished: they faked a hadith, banned the reciting of a verse or interdicted its interpretation. Or they decreed such verses should be recited and should be interpreted like this: whatever they needed and desired. There were also some people called "men of religion"; the toady men, hirelings, those who had their needs met around the caliph's luscious table; the benefactors and those who overlooked God's religion; indeed, whatever the caliph wished they abided it accordingly. These were the three points that the Prophet of Islam had warned about according to Abu Dhar al-Ghifari, stating when the family of Abu al-'As got to the thirty that they would do the following: "They will take the assets from God" –and they would do as they willed with God's assets; take "the servants of God as their bondservants" –they would do so with the servants of God; "and God's religion (as) a deception" –they would do as they willed with God's religion. All three things happened. The family of Abu al-'As, on the scene of governance, may have not yet reached thirty people, in number, while similar obstacles arose in the Islamic world; in other terms, within the divine government and Imamate, the divine Imamate, which the Qur'an declared "guiding by Our command."<sup>1</sup> By our command, they

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1. Sura 21, Al-Anbiyaa, Aya 73.

guide people, perform prayers, pay alms, enjoy good and forbid wrong; an Imamate with such features transformed into a tyrannical monarchy: a state which one finds that whatever cruelty exists in human nature or the vilest of man is revealed in the life of their sultans. Whatever they knew they practiced, and whatever they did not know they learned from the memoirs of past sultans—kings of Persia and Roman emperors—and practiced: such a situation arose.

Well, what should one do now? This was a big question in history. The solution was an unknown, divine command before the Islamic world of that era and all other generations of Islam. What should happen when such a situation occurred in an Islamic community and what was their duty? When the Commander of the Faithful was the head of government and had power, his duty was to prevent such a situation from occurring; therefore, he strove. Until ‘Ali (R.B.U.H.) was alive, no one committed acts of debauchery and everyone adhered to the Qur’an. After the martyrdom of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Hasan followed and pursued the path of the Commander of the Faithful until he found he could not move like ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (R.B.U.H.). The Commander of the Faithful had many troops; they were ready to fight. Such forces were not at Imam Hasan’s disposal; they were not ready for

war after five years. Those qualities in the Commander of the Faithful that could bring populations together, did not exist anymore because of the influence that had been exerted by Muawiyah at the time of Imam Hasan. Therefore, Imam Hasan was forced to change his path; that is, the direction and purpose were the same, but the tactics were different; I might have already discussed the life of Imam Hasan and the peace treaty of Imam Hasan. If I find an opportunity to explain, I will make it clear that this was the best and most beautiful act that Imam Hasan carried out during his time while people were still unaware: the truth of the ruthless rule was not yet clear to them, and they did not yet know what disaster awaited them. Under such circumstances, the best and most powerful thing was what Imam Mujtaba did: making peace with Muawiyah, which was indeed a cease-fire. Peace was a tactical move: the gentlemen and women of that time knew that Imam Hasan was awaiting his opportunity to prepare the ground well. Thus, for ten years Imam Mujtaba persisted and exerted himself, and the grounds were prepared until Imam Hasan was poisoned.

Afterwards, it was Imam Husayn's turn. Once more, Imam Husayn continued the same path as Imam Hasan. For ten years, Imam Husayn trod this path: enlightening, speaking, delivering lectures, advising his

close companions and uniting the Shia populations; familiarizing the scholars, the jurists and those who could have been involved in their duties with one another; however, with Muawiyah's existence nothing could be accomplished because Muawiyah was very controlling. There was no hope that Muawiyah would have any respect for Imam Husayn. But during the sixtieth year, Muawiyah passed away. When Muawiyah died, the ground had been prepared, essentially: people were ready, the minds were near ready, everything was said to be ready.

On the other hand, Yazid's personality was incomparable to Muawiyah's. Muawiyah, at least, had perceived the time of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.); people had observed some phenomena of Islam in him. His kinship with the Prophet had attracted some people, and besides, he did not show that he was anti-Islam and never acted against Islam. He had a fixed personality. He and his brother went to conquer Levant and stayed there; it became the base of their rule. But Yazid did not have such characteristics. Yazid did not have any roots or origins in the Islamic world. Additionally, he was a nefarious drunkard and notorious for debauchery: he was that someone Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) could raise a flag against in the Islamic world and declare "I refuse to swear allegiance to anyone like Yazid because he is not worthy."—This became the point of

origin for the movement. Imam Husayn lifted and moved the people; he revived the Islamic world and restored the Islamic government; he reverted the monarchy to a divine and Islamic Imamate: such groundwork was prepared.

Thus, the role of Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) becomes clear. Of course, I would tell you, if at that particular point in time each of our great Imams stood in Imam Husayn's place, they would have done the same. If this situation had occurred during the lifetime of Imam Hasan, during the time of Imam Sajjad, during the period of the Imam Sadiq, at the time of Imam 'Ali an-Naqi and Imam Hasan 'Askari, at the time of each of the infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.), such a situation would have arisen; the chief martyr and the master of the martyrs of Islam would have been the same magnanimous Imam. This situation occurred at the time of Imam Husayn; it was already revealed to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) by God the Almighty, and the Prophet of Islam had proclaimed it.

Well, what was this role? The role the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had ordered and was recognized in God's knowledge and was part of the Islamic government where once the right line of the Islamic government diverged, it should have been done, it should have been implemented, what was it? What was the duty which the Prophet had allocated and Imam Husayn had accomplished?

In expressing this duty and in summing up the practice of Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.), various opinions have come about. Many have voiced several ideas; both the precursors and their successors have been spoken on. In recent years, there were two summations that, in my opinion, neither were correct and there is one more thing, a third summation, summing up what Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) did.

Some of them said that Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) was seeking to take control of the government. And the uprising of Husayn (P.B.U.H.) was just to seize the government: only for encompassing control over the government because he saw that Yazid was an unrighteous and corrupted person, having exposed the Islamic community to a serious Islamic threat. It was for this that the Imam rose up to seize the government. Well, he had also provided the people with an apparatus—as they spoke on as mentioned. Then, after he left to Kufa in an attempt to uprising or ‘release Kufa’ (as it is called today); collecting his own forces to oppose the central government; on the road, upon discovering that it was not possible, he realized that the Kufis had left him alone. The Imam gave up. He said, “let me go, go to Yemen, go where I was, and stay there.” One is this statement. They, of course, also cite some shreds of evidence and implications for that, but in general, this is not true.

On the other hand, there are some who say: “Nay, Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) at no time had the intention to rule, there was no intention of acceding to power and the premiership of the Muslims, yet he willed to be killed; indeed, he rose up to be killed.” For he deemed that he could not accomplish that divine duty in his lifetime, he attempted to perform it through being killed. “Now we cannot achieve anything by being alive, let’s do it by being killed,” this is also a statement which indicates that Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.), from the very moment he departed from Medina, consistently desired to be killed:—He had no intention but this. Once he arrived in Mecca, he designed or planned his death in a delicate and beneficial manner; this is, likewise, an opinion. This is not true as well.

The truth is that Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) neither went to rule or be killed. As I put it, summarized in a few words—keep this in mind, I will give a detailed explanation later: being killed and governing was not an objective of Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.); rather, they were the consequences of Husayn bin ‘Ali’s movement. One of the two was a definitive outcome of Husayn bin ‘Ali’s movement; that is to say, Imam Husayn would have either been killed or come to power in this way. The Imam knew this himself. Of course, we know that Imam Husayn was aware of his future fate; but that movement, which

Imam Husayn initiated, would have certainly resulted in one of the two consequences. To rule and to be killed: these were the consequences, but neither were the goals of Imam Husayn. What was Husayn's goal? Imam Husayn's goal was the essence of the movement and uprising; it was the essence of creation and proclamation of resistance. If this resistance and this movement had come into power, it would have been much better. Imam Husayn would have moved up, risen, and taken the control of the government; grown, prospered the world and pursued the prophetic government. Had he not seized the government, he would have been, ultimately, killed, reaching martyrdom which Imam Husayn welcomed.—For this reason, his goal was achieved through his movement.

Therefore, I express the third comment. I am saying that neither one was a goal of Imam Husayn: being killing nor seizing the government. The goal of Imam Husayn was to create this movement since the essence of such was an exemplar for all Muslims who were born on that day and throughout history. Indeed, this movement filled a vacuum in the Islamic government. This was what the Holy Prophet had instructed; and he said that once you saw that the world was falling into ruin and the Islamic government was facing corruption, you had to act and you might rise. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had stated this. Nonetheless, the

Prophet, himself, could not do this; he could not execute this divine decree because this would never happen in his time; namely, there was no deviation. This should have been performed. The Prophet had instructed on saying prayers, paying alms, making a pilgrimage and striving for the cause of God; he had taught all himself. Furthermore, one of his successors had to pass these lessons on to the people; thus, Imam Husayn did so.

So, in short, we say that the objective of Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) was to carry out this movement so that, with the blessing of this movement, humanity, Muslims of history, and Muslims of those days would understand their duty in such a situation; and they would recognize, once oppression governs, the minute blasphemy rules, when the Islamic government falls into corruption and deviation—the moment this train is about to go off the tracks—what their duty is.

The purpose of Imam Husayn was to carry out a divine duty during the toughest or most difficult of situations: to instruct people, to send out a historical message and to teach all generations that once a situation is like so, action and movement should be as such; he strove to instill this message. He strove to instruct, historically, and how to move, rise, and strive relentlessly: indeed, this is the secret of Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) eternal history.

Of course, such a move would result in the following two consequences: one was martyrdom and the other was being victorious. There was no other way. When a person reacts, he should struggle with such a domineering force that he will either triumph and form a government—as it happened in some cases. The turbulent and remonstrative movement of some of the ‘Alawites, under the rule of Abbasids, ended with them coming to power and forming a government—some even ruled for many years. As for seeking out martyrdom, it does not matter; what’s important is not the consequence of a mission: the essence of the action is important, a movement is necessary.

This is what I mean by the statement: the Islamic revolution has conveyed ‘Ashura and drawn out the message of Husayni incident for us. We did not know it, we did not feel it, but during the Islamic revolution, Iranian people understood and perceived it. They understood what their duty was in the face of such a condition that governed us and what tyrannical sovereignty meant. The people’s duty was to take action, and they did, and they rose as well.

With God’s grace, the result that came to Iranian people was the same “one of the two excellences.”<sup>1</sup> The same is true, wherein if it had happened for Imam Husayn, the

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1. Sura 9, Al-Taubah, Aya 52:

history of the world would have changed. The oppression in the world would have ended, at least for some time. Islam would have spread throughout the world: The world would have been shadowed by justice. Unfortunately, this did not occur, and Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) became a martyr. According to the narrations, when Husayn (P.B.U.H.) was martyred, “God’s anger became more intense towards the people on earth.”<sup>1</sup> The anger of God became so severe over the guilty and ungrateful people of earth that He delayed the movement of His divine destiny for a long time; which is one of the very interesting and heartening debates on the lives of the infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.)—that they foresaw the years of 689 CE. - 757 CE. in the traditions for the occasion of an uprising against falsehood and the establishment of the Islamic Imamate.

Therefore, the situation of Imam Husayn is that Imam Husayn was met by conflict while trying to spread the movement to the people, and the message of Imam Husayn is also a clear message. Fortunately, Husayni movement was a noble uprising, something that has remained throughout history for us to date. Imam Husayn spoke with and expressed his words to his family, enemies, the indifferent, the fanatics, his companions, offenders and all. Now, pay attention, I will read some

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1. Al-Kafi (Vol. 1, Ch.82, H.1).

of these texts that are from the words of Imam Husayn; these detail the incident of ‘Ashura. When Muawiyah passed away and had announced Yazid as his successor—of course, the minute Muawiyah desired to present Yazid as his successor, Husayn bin ‘Ali (R.B.U.H.) had opposed it. Walid bin ‘Uqba apprised Imam Husayn to come to the governorate and said: “I have something to do, together, with you.” The Imam said to the eminent personalities of Medina: “I suspect, as there is no news, Muawiyah had passed away, and they invite us to pledge our allegiance.”

Hence, the Imam went to the governorate vigilantly. That was their point. They asked him to swear allegiance to Yazid. Walid bin ‘Utba—the ruler and governor of Hijaz stationed in Medina—and Marwan bin Hakam were present. They asked the Imam to pledge his allegiance, and the Imam tried to delay the case. He said, “Let’s leave it for tomorrow, see what we should do, and if there is going to be an allegation, it is better to be in the presence of the population.” Right when he was leaving, Marwan bin Hakam said to Walid bin ‘Utba: “Do you truly want to let Husayn go? If Husayn leaves, you cannot reach him any longer, and it would be better to put pressure on Husayn and make him swear his allegiance here.” The Imam, turning to Marwan, said with an angry tone: “Who wishes to force me to swear allegiance? You or Walid? How could

you? By God, you do not have the power to do this and be aware that ‘a person like me will never swear allegiance to a person like Yazid.’ Be assured! I will never pledge allegiance to a person like Yazid. How could I swear allegiance to him? But we’ll postpone it until morning. ‘Now, we wait for morning and we’ll see what will happen.’<sup>1</sup> Let’s see what happens.” Again, the Imam did not allow this exceptional opportunity to be void so that he could safely take him and all their companions to Mecca, and prepare themselves for that prodigious movement. Therefore, the Imam came out and departed the same night.

Addressing Marwan, in this meeting—once Marwan said those things, or perhaps after coming to this meeting, I do not remember this fittingly—anyhow, in addressing Marwan bin Hakam, a certain amount was spoken about Yazid. Marwan said, “I find it helpful to you, Husayn bin ‘Ali! You should swear allegiance. Do not hurt yourself. Let this happen.” The Imam stated, “indeed, we belong to God, and to Him do we indeed return.”<sup>2</sup> I pay my final salutations to Islam because the nation of Islam is suffering at the hands of a shepherd like Yazid.”<sup>3</sup> – This is the same deviation, this is the state we have pointed out that may

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1. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 10, Ch.73, H.2).

2. Sura 2, Al-baqara, Aya 156

3. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 10, Ch.73, H.2).

once occur in a system; in other terms, “Indeed we belong to God, and to Him do we indeed return”<sup>1</sup> shows the broad plight. The phrase “indeed we belong to God, and to Him do we indeed return” illustrates the precision of concern, that is, how much one should be worried and pessimistic the minute the Muslim nation suffers from a ruler like Yazid. “I pay my final salutations to Islam because the nation of Islam is suffering from a shepherd like Yazid.” He said the day people suffer from a shepherd like Yazid—the unsuspecting sheep had a wolf instead of a shepherd amongst themselves, “I pay my final salutations to Islam,”<sup>2</sup> we should bid farewell to Islam. There would be indeed no place for Islam; that is to say, the goal of Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) was the revival of Islam.

Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) did not ever entertain any personal hostility toward Yazid; that is, from the human side, Yazid and non-Yazid were not different for Imam Husayn. Of course, the corrupt Yazid, the indecent Yazid, was considered to be a corrupt person in the eyes of Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.). And once this corrupted, indecent Yazid was trying to be the caliph of the Muslims and the successor of the Prophet he felt danger; this is indeed where Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) felt the beginning of the same event or the

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1. Sura 2, Al-baqara, Aya 156:

2. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 10, Ch.73, H.2).

peak of it would end in deviation. Perhaps this was not the beginning of deviation; this was the peak of deviation that the Prophet had referred to—here and now. In another narration we will later mention that Imam Husayn quoted the Prophet (P.B.U.H.); and that was at a point where one can no longer endure: “Whatever we endure is enough. Today is the day that we can no longer endure and should rise.”

That day the governor of Medina could not make the Imam pledge allegiance. He said, “Well, then go tonight, come tomorrow or later.” The Imam came out and departed from Medina the same night. Seeing that he could not stay there, the Imam left Medina at night and went to Mecca. There is also a document from Imam Husayn and that is the honorable Imam’s will to Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah<sup>1</sup>, in which, after mentioning the precepts of the will, the Imam inscribed: “This contains that which has been willed by Husayn bin ‘Ali bin Abi Talib to his brother Muhammad renowned as Ibn Hanafiyyah.” He testified to divine unity—as it is customary to bear witness to God’s unity—the prophethood of the Prophet, and so on in the will so that the propagandists of that day could not make accusations against him. Then, he asserted, “I have not risen to spread evil or to show off, nor for spreading

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1. Muhammad bin ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, also known as Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah.

immorality or oppression.”<sup>1</sup> I am leaving Medina now, and my departure from Medina is not due to pride, insolence, taking Yazid into no account or considering myself above all. The issue is not a personal matter nor is it a matter of emotion. My departure from Medina is neither an act of oppression nor an act of corruption. Many times, in governments, over the course of history, there has been a government in place wherein some people—for the reason that they desire to seize this government, themselves, and have neither logic nor criterion—rise, kill, and create some tyranny. Well, this is considered degeneracy. The Imam insists that what he was doing should not be mistaken with such affairs: his departure from Medina was not for personal issues, personal feelings, oppression or corruption.

The Imam still had not departed from Mecca.—This is when he broke away from the camp at Medina; the issue is an issue of uprising and exiting, it is a matter of action, it is not a matter of resorting to the sacred shrine.—Here, the word “rise” does not denote moving up with the culture of that era. He says, “I have not risen to spread evil or to show off.”<sup>2</sup> This uprising, this rise, this move is not due to arrogance, selfishness, and seeking power like those who

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1. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 10, Ch.73, H.2).

2. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 10, Ch.73, H.2).

are corrupters, tyrants, and oppressors of the world. We are not into oppressing, we do not seek to corrupt, yet we have another goal.

So, why have I risen? “But I have left for the betterment of the nation of my Grandfather.” I have left to seek reform in the nation of the Prophet! That is to say: to eradicate the corruption that was created in the nation of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.); that is, the state we have described the Prophet had foreseen and also determined its nature: corrupt. I seek to eliminate this deviation. “And I desire to encourage good and forbid wrong.”<sup>1</sup> The truth and the spirit of this movement are to encourage good and forbid wrong. I want to forbid them from committing mischief in the society and bring them to the goodness that exists within Islam. “Thus, following the footsteps of my grandfather and father – ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (P.B.U.H.).” I revive the path of my grandfather and my father, ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (P.B.U.H.); namely, as the same Islamic Imamate or the sovereignty of God among the people: this was his real goal.

This was the truth behind the movement of Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.). At that point, the Master of Martyrs (P.B.U.H.) departed from Medina to Mecca. In Mecca, the Imam exchanged letters with the people of Kufa. Well, when it comes to making a move, the meaning of this move and

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1. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 10, Ch.73, H.2).

this uprising is not about one instigating his own death; in other words, he does something that has no effect, no benefits, and no yields: nay, it is intended that Husayn bin ‘Ali’s (P.B.U.H.) movement should shake the foundation of the Umayyad and Yazid rule. Then, it would be fine, even though it, ultimately, leads to the death of Imam (P.B.U.H.). But it was supposed to stir up an outcome, administering a decisive blow to the regime: the ruthless, corrupt and insubordinate government. The Imam sought to do this. Well, this requires an effort from a number of people and an apparatus; this entails collecting people and providing facilities; therefore, an exchange of letters began. However, the Shi’ites were in Kufa: it was the center of the Shi’ite Muslims; and the companions of the Commander of the Faithful, who had met the venerable Imam in person and fought in the wars alongside him just like Habib bin Madhahir and etcetera; as well as the eminent figures of the Islamic community lived in Kufa and were all well-known. Moreover, the general public followed them, and they were interested in them. And they wrote a letter that said, “You may come to Kufa, we are ready to support you and to rise up against the Umayyad rule.”

Of course, the tone of letters was different; some of the letters indicated that “Your enemy passed away and now you can turn the government back towards the direction

of Islam. Come back.” In some of the letters, they wrote as if streams of Kufa flowed and the trees were fruitful; and they portrayed that the weather of Kufa was good for Husayn bin ‘Ali’s (P.B.U.H.). Letters were different depending on the capacity of thought, mind, and consciousness of the author; some thought and wrote articulately; while others’ way of thinking was simplistic or basic. They invited the Imam to eat fruit, for example, they wrote “Our berry tree bears berries. So, come visit us to enjoy this beautiful weather and seasonal fruit.” They wrote such letters to the Imam. The letters are all written in various ways. As for the exact number of letters written, they might have exaggerated the actual amount. There are some indications of a large amount, around twenty to seventy letters, which is likely to be exaggerated and much less than that. Many letters were sent to the Imam, during the period, at Mecca; these letters were received by the Imam, and, eventually, he departed. Well, all those who were in the Mecca and Medina, of the eminent personalities, who did not understand the truth of the matter, opposed this. Ibn Abbas disagreed, Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah disagreed, ‘Abdullah bin Ja’far—the brother-in-law of the Imam and husband of Zaynab (P.B.U.H.)—disagreed, and many others opposed it. There were many personalities—all of whom or some of them were good, respectable, and decent

people—that argued with Imam Husayn and advised the Imam against his proposed expedition to Karbala due to affection! Like Mohammed bin Hanafiyyah—his brother, like ‘Abdullah bin Ja’far—his brother-in-law, like ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas—his cousins, like ‘Umar bin ‘Ali—his brother, and many others. For instance, Umm Salama—the wife of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.)—and so many others argued with the Imam; they expressed their affection, even though they had, personally, confronted Muawiyah and Yazid they were not willing to permit Imam Husayn’s move. Nor did they, themselves, join the movement, nor did they allow Imam Husayn to carry out his goal. The difference between Imam Husayn and them was this matter. –They were satisfied with speaking.

Yes, although, in the era of the Commander of the Faithful, something had happened between ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas and the Commander of the Faithful –according to what is cited in Nahj al-Balagha and alluded in some of the historical and authentic books—there is no doubt that ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas was loyal to the Commander of the Faithful and the household of the Prophet (P.B.U.T.), regarding this, I have no doubts. Based on what I read about the history, life, former days and circumstances of ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas after the incident of ‘Ashura, there is no doubt that ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas was a sincere devotee

of the household of the Prophet (P.B.U.T.) and had opposed their opponents. He was opposed to Muawiyah, he was against Yazid, he resisted and confronted all those who succeeded the caliphate after Yazid.

Umm Salama (May God be pleased with her) – the great assistant of the Prophet – felt the same way. – Although she was an elderly woman and a wife of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), she loved Imam Husayn. All of these individuals were the ones who did not support the path of Imam Husayn in the specific way that the Imam followed it.

Some individuals wrote letters begging the Imam to return, to Kufa, once he departed to Karbala, they urged him to come back. Some people never lost hope, they wrote letters far in advance. Why? Because they would calculate, why this was being carried out. Well, if this was to ensure that the Imam would rise to power, most of the conditions for coming to rule were void. Many conditions for Imam to become the ruler were lacking. If the soul of this movement was desirable, instructing this movement was required; instigating the people at that time and in later times was desirable. In movements, which one could lose his life, these individuals were those who were not prepared for martyrdom: – they were not ready. And for that reason, they wrote letters, bothering and prohibiting the Imam, but despite all their suggestions and so-called

words of advice, which they deemed as wise and prudent, the Imam kept to his path.

Imam Husayn's mission was to make it clear to the people of the world, to the Muslims of that day, and to all the Muslims throughout history that when the situation of the Islamic society and the Islamic government came to this place wherein there was a sultan at the top of the state instead of an Imam, their duty was like that of his own. Their duty is to move; their duty is to rise; their duty is to oppose, using all possible means. If it is possible with a sword, you do should not use speech, and it is not permissible to confine yourself to using only words. If it is possible to oppose with harsh language, it is not permissible to oppose with mild language; you have to act with the strongest and most powerful means that you have at your disposal; and it does not matter to where this action leads to, even if it ends in one's death. – This is the path of Husayn (R.B.U.H.). Indeed, Imam Husayn's mission was to reveal what his path was.

On the eighth day of Dhu al-Hijjah, although it was a day when, clearly, all people had gone to Mecca and to 'Arafat to prepare for the pilgrimage to Mecca, that day the Imam left Mecca and traveled to Kufa. Of course, the very movement of that day, the assortment of that day for this matter, itself indicates that Husayn bin 'Ali (R.B.U.H.) sought

to make all people aware of the veracity of his action, that everyone knew Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) carried out this great undertaking. He departed from Mecca; certainly, there were incidents and speeches during the stops on the way. The events that had happened, the words quoted from the Imam, which, of course, have a lot of detail; yet, I do not want to mention them now.

Until they reached a point where Hurr bin Yazid Riyahi intercepted the Imam; I want to show the intentions of this movement and its actions, which shine through in the words of this magnanimous person, the Imam, in order to make it clear for what purpose and with what intentions this action was carried out. Hurr bin Yazid Riyahi, as you know and you heard about, was dispatched as a deterrent force to sanction the Imam as the Imam was approaching Kufa. That is to say, Ibn Ziyad assumed that if Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) had reached Kufa, the presence of Imam Husayn in Kufa might have excited and induced a number of the populace to gather enormous force around Imam Husayn; perhaps, this might have happened all the same if Imam Husayn had entered Kufa: his entrance to Kufa might have stirred up some of the old memories. Well, Kufa was the place where the Commander of the Faithful, the father of Imam Husayn, had ruled. This was the city where Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) had lived along with his father, the caliph

of Muslims, for many years; the people had seen him and knew him; not such a long time had passed. Of course, almost twenty years had passed, however, twenty years was not that long. There were memories shared, and Imam Husayn knew Kufa well: its neighborhoods, the tribes in those neighborhoods, the leaders of those tribes, he knew all of this well; and this was a danger to the ruler of Kufa, the governor of Kufa if the Imam moved to Kufa. So, they sought for the Imam not to reach Kufa at all, and for his move to be sanctioned.

Of course, they did not want the Imam to return because they knew that if he returned to Mecca, he might cause problems for them again. They wanted to destroy this enemy, which they imagined was caught in their trap, with all his capabilities and proficiencies. Therefore, Hurr bin Yazid Riyahi was dispatched, along with one thousand horsemen, to sanction the Imam. He intercepted the Imam, while saying, "I didn't permit you to enter Kufa." The Imam insisted, yet he denied; explicitly, he was not sent to accept, and he did not accept. The Imam stated, "So, I return," but he did not even permit the Imam to return. While making the first stop, which was obviously Sharaf,<sup>1</sup> they encountered Hurr. There, the Imam spoke

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1. Sharaf means a height from the waters on the way of Mecca to Kufa which is located between Waqisa and Qar'a'. In the incident of Karbala, Imam Husayn

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some words as a reminder because they were the people of Kufa, the Iraqi people, who came to fight with the Imam. The Imam reminded them: “You invited me, you stated that you were ready, that I should come to establish a divine and Islamic government, to revive Islam and to cooperate with you. Why are you turning your backs?”

In the next resting-place, the Imam once again spoke a little. And it was there that one of the sermons of the Husayn bin ‘Ali (R.B.U.H.), from which the passionate discourses of the Imam (R.B.U.H.) I am reading the manuscript, was delivered to his companions; of course, others heard too, the Kufis heard it as well. After the preliminaries, praise, and tribute to God, he stated: “The matter happened to us as you see it. Verily, the world has changed and has become unfamiliar”<sup>1</sup>; these are the words of someone who feels that there is not much time left in his life. “There is a bit of goodness left like a bit of food at the bottom of a dish.”; and that is also a low kind of living like a dangerous and difficult pasture. In such a condition, it is appropriate for Muslims to be eager to meet Allah (SWT), to find martyrdom and closeness to God. Uttering a few other sentences, then he added, “Can’t you see that they do not act justly, and do not abandon the unjust?” This is the

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ordered his companions to take and spare some water in this halting-place.

1. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 11, Ch.73, H.1).

core point of view of Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.), namely, you see the Islamic community is far from its true and proper status, do you not? You see that the right is bereft, but the false is iterated! Well, what should be done here, when one sees that people do not act justly, and do not abandon the unjust? When a person sees a world of oppression, grief and cruelty against himself, what should he do? “In such condition, it is appropriate for Muslims to be eager to meet God: to find martyrdom and closeness to God. I also see death and martyrdom as prosperity, and living with oppressors as shame and degradation,”<sup>1</sup> this is the eagerness. Thus, the Imam wrote a letter and announced his coming after he departed from Mecca. He addressed the Kufis through Muslim bin Aqeel, saying, “We are coming, be ready to fight.” Now, the Imam saw that an obstacle was created around him and against his move to Kufa, and this would lead to the second consequence. What was the first consequence? –Achieving leadership over the government; the second consequence was martyrdom: one of these two consequences would definitely happen. The Imam, here, felt that the first consequence, which was becoming ruler of the government, would not ensue. What would occur would be martyrdom and the advent of Allah in this way. Subsequently, he declared his eagerness. He alleged

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1. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 75, Ch.73, H.1).

that there was a situation in which a believer should be willing to meet the Lord. When one realizes that a world of ruthlessness is before man; when one realizes that the oppressors and tyrants dominate all world affairs, one must be prepared to deal with and confront the situation; martyrdom, in this situation, is a congenial achievement: this was one of the statements expressed by the Imam.

Well, these are some of the immaculate Imam, which are cited. Then, Hurr bin Yazid heaped his pressure on and did not allow the Imam to move either towards Kufa or return to Mecca. The outcome was thus that Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) chose the third plan, he moved to Karbala, Hurr bin Yazid also came along with them. That is, Hurr was told the same old maxim, which the commissioner is not to blame: The Imam should neither go forward nor return. They had relayed these two plans to Hurr, but they had not revealed to him that what he should do if the Imam chose a third route. He had not been given orders on this and accordingly did not know what to do. So, it was: he thought that his duty would be to move alongside the Imam and go wherever the Imam went. Thus, he traveled every which way with the Imam. They moved from place to place with each other until they reached Karbala. It was near Karbala, during one of the stops, that the Imam, once more, delivered a long speech. Now, the

longevity is not very detailed, but it was very powerful; in which it is similar to the one I've mentioned, wherein the Prophet had granted the decree yet placed a special duty on our shoulders to lead, leaving duty on predecessors' shoulders. During the second or third stop, which was called Bayza<sup>1</sup>, the Imam delivered a speech. In that speech, he stated: "In the name of God, the Beneficent, and the Merciful. O' people, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has said that if a man sees a tyrannical ruler transgressing against God and the Prophet, and oppressing people, but does nothing in word or action to change the situation then it will be just for God to place him where he deservingly belongs."<sup>2</sup> That is, O' people: here, the word people refers to both his own people, who know the logic and theory of Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.)—they might well know them, but these became more sophisticated in their minds—and the people of Hurr bin Yazid, since they were less likely to hear these things; and they did not even know why Husayn (P.B.U.H.) had come and surely there was a lot of propaganda against Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.).

"O' people!" That's O' to the people: "Whom have

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1. It was part of the land of Banu Hanzala Tribe located between 'Udhayb and Waqisa in which there was water well.

2. Battle of Karbala/ the departure of Husayn (P.B.U.H.) from Mecca/ the midway halting-places/Bayza

accompanied me and want to understand what the nature of our movement is, and O' the people who are today against us as our enemies. And O' the indifferent, whom the news of the uprising of Husayn (P.B.U.H.) would reach them, and they would not know why the Prophet's grand on was rising; and O' those who, in history, sought to learn the commandments of Islam and the divine laws and rules, yet they did not know why we were rising up. Behold: 'O' people, the Prophet has said that if a man sees a tyrannical ruler transgressing against God and the Prophet, and oppressing people, but does nothing in word or action to change the situation, then it will be just for God to place him where he deservingly belongs.' Those are the words of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.): I mean, I am not speaking for myself, O' people! I am not talking on my own terms. I am not expressing my personal opinion: This is the very decree that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had granted—I just put it into practice." The Messenger of God (P.B.U.H.) said that, "Whosoever sees that there is a sultanate or an authority in a community that has made the unlawful of God lawful and the lawful of God unlawful, they have broken the divine covenant and oath, or have moved and acted among the servants of God with oppression, hostility, and indignation," the people have a duty. That is, love for the people is not in his heart; he has no interest in the people;

the interests of the people are not important to him; his own interests are more important to him. Whosoever sees this situation and does nothing by word or action to change it, “Then it will be just for God to place him where he deservingly belongs.”<sup>1</sup> Meaning, it is just and fair for God the Almighty to take this indifferent person to the place where He takes the unjust person, on the Day of Resurrection, and doom him to the same punishment: for the sake of such indifference to oppression, corruption, and deviation. Those who are indifferent, in fact, keep their power away from the Lord of the Universe, from divine power, from the movement that should put the right in place and execute the divine rules; they keep it away from such movement. They hoard their power which should be used in the cause of God, but not used. Hence, they are just like them<sup>2</sup> as they are their adherents. Today, Islamic countries, where there are some tyrannical sultans, who are disposed of the Holy Prophet, have broken their covenant with God; they’ve entered a covenant with the United States. Yes, once one breaks the covenant of God, he seals a covenant with Satan, the covenant of Satan replaces the covenant of God. Today, the United States is the Great

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1. Battle of Karbala/ the departure of Husayn (P.B.U.H.) from Mecca/ the midway halting-places/Bayza

2. i.e. unjust people

Satan as you know. In cases where a covenant is sealed with the Great Satan and all the interests of that nation, all the facilities of that nation, are placed at the disposal of the Great Satan, instead of being placed in the hands of God are perfect examples of this. In these countries, those who look at this situation indifferently, they absolve themselves from any responsibility for themselves. Indeed, what have they done in this situation? They keep away these powers, which are for God, out of the reach of divine forces and divine powers, do they not? It is as if you have a lot of money, a hungry person dies of hunger; well, you hoard your money, your financial power; you do not spend it when it could be used to save a life. Or a nation needs money, if you hoard money or hoard the goods, if you do not give it to the destitute, to a nation, to a group, to some people, you are in fact remorseless. Where a human being remains indifferent to all of the corruption that exists in those countries, what does he do, in fact? Indeed, he hoards his spiritual power and does not allocate it to serve God.—This is the saying of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Well then, Husayn bin ‘Ali’s (P.B.U.H.) movement was to use his own power against the corruption and oppression that existed; he teaches humanity a lesson that goes down in history: if you face a similar case in your community, you should act as he did.

I, at that time, in the era of repression—when one was not able to make clear speeches because a tyrant king ruled in Iran, and so many were indifferent before him—used to narrate a parable and expressed this scenario more through it: the parable of a merchant who went to India for trade and business. When the merchant prepared for a journey, he said to his parrot, “What souvenir from the journey do you want, so that I may bring it to you from your land?” The parrot answered: “Yes. I want you to go to that part of India where my kinsmen and other parrots live and say that I am, one of them and of their species, in a cage at your home. Give them the news. I have nothing else for you.”

The tradesman left, did his business, and bought souvenirs he desired for his child, his wife, his neighbors, his friends, and others. Finally, he went to the place where the parrot had told him to go. He went there and saw that yes, there was an amazing parrot land. Thousands of parrots were busy singing on tree branches. He went to them, then addressed the parrots saying, “I have a message.” They asked, “What is the message?” Everyone became silent and listened. He said, “Yes, my message is that one of your kind is in my house, in the city so-and-so in Iran, in a cage.” As soon as he said this, these parrots all trembled greatly, they fell from the tree, stopped

breathing, and died. The merchant became sorry about delivering news: he exclaimed “What a pity! I agitated all these parrots with bad news to the extent that all of them fell down dead.”

With sorrow and grief, the merchant finished his trading and returned to his hometown. He provided everyone with souvenirs. Then, he went to his parrot in a cage, saying “What a message you gave me!” The parrot said, “How come?” The merchant replied, “I told your complaints to a group of your fellow and kin parrots. Their heart, being broken from hearing your pain, they suddenly trembled, fell down from the tree branches, and died.”

As soon as he uttered this, his parrot—sitting in the cage on a bar—trembled, fell in the cage, and became cold. The merchant, dismayed, said: “What a miserable message it was! From him to them, from them to him.” The parrot was dead. The merchant opened the cage, took the claw of the parrot and threw him on the roof. As soon as the parrot was thrown out of the cage, he started to flap and resurrect: he was restored to life. The parrot flew to the wall and stated, “My dear merchant and master, well, I have been bothering you for two years and you fed me; I apologize to you. I go now, to my kinsmen and fellowmen. They did not die, they are alive like me. They taught me, through you, that the way to my freedom is to flap and

fall to the ground. You practically taught me flapping and dying. I learned from them as well. I flapped, died, and now I am free. I was caught in your cage, now I am free.”

During that era of repression, we narrated this parable for our friends and acquaintances whenever we delivered a speech so that they know that sometimes a movement in history, an act in history, is a lesson, an exemplar or a pattern. It may have had a great effect at the same time, but the effect that it has on history is much greater. What Imam Husayn did is like that. Of course, Husayn bin ‘Ali (R.B.U.H.) created an effect with his own movement and rose up against the situation that had arisen in the Islamic community and expanded. All at once, the people’s laments voiced up. At the same time, the veracity of Yazid’s deeds became apparent to many people. The same people of Kufa, the same people of Levant, knew Yazid a little bit more, his mask had been taken off and his true face revealed. It was a great effort, but greater than the effect that was achieved, at that time from what Imam Husayn had done, was certainly the impact that had been left on history. It became clear to all the Muslims of the world that once the train of the Islamic community and the Islamic state is about to go off the line, the solution is what Imam Husayn did. The minute the corruption spread to the Islamic world, the remedy was what Husayn

(P.B.U.H.) did. And you saw that our dear Imam Khomeini had learned this lesson very well from Imam Husayn. Some people are not strong learners. Imam Khomeini was an intense learner, he took this lesson and transferred it to us. He taught us that whenever we see oppression, corruption, repression, and deviation from the highest level of society and face government corruption, from the tyrant—who is at the head of the affairs—whenever we see this, we must do something like what Imam Husayn did. When a Yazid-like is found in our time, we should also become a pupil of Imam Husayn and perform as Imam Husayn did. This is what Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) taught us and we, ourselves, have executed this in our lives, have we not? That is to say, our nation has done it. Our nation had performed as Imam Husayn did and had risen. The nation followed the Imam Husayn of our time—our dear and honorable Imam Khomeini –and moved. The Imam, himself, moved, the nation moved after him, and were able to carry out the wish of a thousand years or thousand and several hundred years of the faithful and devout Muslims against the corrupt states. This wish is fulfilled today, thank God, the Islamic state has been achieved and exists in the community. Of course, this state should step towards a complete Islamic state<sup>1</sup>, which, God willing, is

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1. i.e. There are still a lot to do to achieve an Islamic country.

being shepherded in. And it was for the sake of this great goal that Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) endured those sacrifices, those losses, those sufferings and those hardships, in the face of which the big hearts are small and powerless and the strong and powerful spirits are weak.

What Imam Husayn did has not been performed in this world ever. I have, once again, said that martyrdom and martyrs are very dear and venerable, but no martyrdom or no day is like the one Husayn's (P.B.U.H.) companions and the Master of Martyrs (P.B.U.H.) got martyred on and no other day as the day of 'Ashura has occurred in this world. What happened on that day was the lonesomeness of those martyrs, their loneliness, the hardships that fell upon them, they even knew that there would be nobody left to bury their bodies. Their martyrdoms are the kind that we no longer see in recent history. Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) is dubbed the master and chief of all martyrs due to the fact that no one has endured such a martyrdom or faced such a plight to gain martyrdom. Of course, Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) is standing on the summit. We should move from the bottom of the summit to its peak.

It was the same engine that moved the Islamic Revolution in Iran. It was via that engine that we were rising. In that era of repression, those who were undaunted by death, struggled, protested, endured, went to jail, were subjected

to murder, and some were martyred; that was as a result of a movement. That is, with the provocation and daring that the Prophet, according to his grandson, Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.), had given to all Muslims, he rose up and led them.

Today in the world, the duty of the Muslim people and the message of Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.) to the Muslim people are the same. They are the same everywhere, regardless. If they are not so, the fate of that tyrant, before God, is one with the fate of that person indifferent and disrespectful to the mission, the interests of Islam, and the Islamic destiny. Of course, today, we have the same duty against the bloodthirsty dominators of the world. We do not yet know the struggle is over. We still do not regard the Husayni movement as over in our own community. We are still moving on the way to Karbala and 'Ashura. Our nation must still feel that they are in the field and on the scene of Nineveh<sup>1</sup> and Karbala. One day, you, the Husaynians, after more than thirty thousand and fifty years, were against Muhammad Reza<sup>2</sup> the traitor; the next day, you, the Husaynians and 'Ashurians, are against the "master and god" of Muhammad Reza, global arrogance:

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1. It was an ancient Assyrian city of Upper Mesopotamia, nowadays a desert, located on the eastern bank of the Tigris River.

2. Mohammad Reza Shah's era (1941–1979)

it is not any different. And this is the spirit of the real movement of Muslims. Wherever there is a movement for Islam, for the benefit of the divine rule, for the renewal of Islam, it is a Husayni one.

It is true that those who struggled to save Palestine pursued a similar quest to that of Imam Husayn. Some of the Palestinian leaders expressed this in their claims, their own words in comfort; they said that: “We are inspired by the spirit of Karbala, the soul of ‘Ashura, and the path of Husayn (P.B.U.H.)” That is the truth. And wherever in the world, there is such a movement, the message of Imam Husayn is also included; and Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) moved with such spirit, firmly and decisively.

All the way, from Medina to Mecca—when Imam Husayn stayed in Mecca for a few months—and from Mecca to Karbala, which lasted some time, in other words, from the eighth day of Dhu al-Hijjah to the second day of Muharram, it took at least twenty to perhaps twenty-two days for Imam Husayn to make it. You see, Imam Husayn had a defensive tone. Everywhere, the tone was bellicose. Of course, whoever asked a question: if it was a person who did not have much capacity, he was weak or he was like Farazdaq—the poet who, although his heart was with Husayn (P.B.U.H.), did not long to strive and endure trouble; or like Umm Salama—an old, disabled person,

who should not have been upset and distressed; or like Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah—once the second time in Mecca he came to Imam Husayn, he was ill and perhaps, if Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah had not been sick, he would have accompanied Imam Husayn (P.B.U.H.); the Imam replied to them in a delicate manner. In such cases, Imam Husayn spoke so that the addressee would not be offended by the utterances or hard words that the Imam used, he replied with a brief answer like, “Whatsoever pleases God,” “Whatever happens,” “We have prepared ourselves,” “God willing, there is nothing,” and so on... or “Now let’s see what will happen,” which the Imam said in response to Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah. Wherever the audience was the one to be reckoned with, the Imam spoke decisively. After Walid bin ‘Utba left Imam Husayn like this, Yazid disapproved of him. He was dismissed from the governorate and ‘Amr bin Sa’id bin ‘As<sup>1</sup> became the governor of Medina. He also came to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. When Imam Husayn wanted to move from Mecca, the governor was also inadvertently in Mecca. ‘Abdullah bin Ja’far, the husband of Lady Zaynab (P.B.U.H.), took the brother of the governor with himself and got safe-conduct from ‘Amr bin Sa’id with dismay and discomfort. He hastily and hurriedly reached Imam Husayn outside

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1. He was the Muslim governor of Medina under Yazid I.

Mecca. He said, “master! This is a safe-conduct, please do not move or leave and let’s stay in Mecca until we see what happens.” Here, the Imam answered firmly. He said, “Immunity is God’s immunity. Whosoever enjoys the immunity of God, he does not require anyone’s safe-conduct.” At this point, the Imam spoke scornfully.

Even when the Imam reached Karbala and ‘Umar bin Sa’ad<sup>1</sup>, seemingly, arrived at Karbala on the third day of Muharram, Imam Husayn and ‘Umar bin Sa’ad had been constantly talking for a short time or a few days. Many a time, ‘Umar bin Sa’ad came to the tent of Imam Husayn, they sat and spoke together. In one of these conversations, the Imam’s address to ‘Umar bin Sa’ad was a scornful one. Now here, you imagine the situation: Imam Husayn was the one who had risen, and now he had come to this desert where he was apparently stuck and surrounded. It was only the tip of the iceberg. The Imam, with dozens of women and children, with forty or fifty men – maybe they were not still seventy men on that day – young or old, all somehow were stuck in this desert. Around them, there were several armed men who had received money to go there and kill them, just like wild

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1. He was the son of Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas and a clergyman. He took orders from Ibn Ziyad and led the troops that killed Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) in the Battle of Karbala.

animals; they were like the same as “the desert wolves”<sup>1</sup> which the Imam himself had referred to in Mecca: “I can see as if the desert wolves are attacking me between Nawawis<sup>2</sup> and Karbala and tearing me into pieces.”<sup>3</sup> They were much like the hungry, wild wolves of the desert: swords in their hands, spears in their hands, and their open mouths waiting for the bait of the commander ‘Ubayd Allah bin Ziyad<sup>4</sup>—some had surrounded Imam Husayn in this form.

Well, the tip of the iceberg was that Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) was stuck here. In such a situation, you know how the tune of an individual would be. Now, the commander of the same army that seems to be victorious, came into the tent of Imam Husayn. How would the conversation go between these two? Of course, it should have been as if he blamed the Imam, questioning him with “Why did you come here?” And the Imam might have replied, “It just happened. We should now do something.” We see the contrary is true. When he came to Imam Husayn’s tent, Imam Husayn asked him, “O’ Ibn Sa’ad! Why are you not

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1. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 4, Ch. 37, H.2).

2. Ref. the ruins of a Christian village located near Karbala.

3. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 4, Ch. 37, H.2).

4. He was the Umayyad governor of Basra, Kufa and Khurasan during the reigns of caliphs Muawiyah I and Yazid I, and the leading general of the Umayyad army under caliphs Marwan I and Abd al-Malik.

willing to move and rise up with us?” He answered, “My children are there<sup>1</sup> and might get caught.” The Imam said, “Go, then, do not fight with us, balk at the command of ‘Ubayd Allah.” He claimed, “I cannot, I am afraid, they may attack me and confiscate my properties.” The Imam put him in an uneasy situation: the Imam protested him, and he apologized to Imam Husayn. The Imam enjoyed such a steadfast and strong spirit. Of course, when the signs of martyrdom were revealed and it turned out that this would definitely end in martyrdom, the tone of Imam Husayn became a special one with his loved ones and his close, ardent companions.

Of course, when we say it became apparent to Imam Husayn, it does not mean that when Imam Husayn was departing from Mecca, he did not know he would be killed, no. This could be understood even if no one had Imam Husayn’s knowledge or understanding. As Farazdaq found out; a few of those Kufis who had come from Kufa discovered, too; those who pursued the Imam felt it; and, at that time, others were aware that this movement would be a bloody one: Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) would be killed. But, then again, Husayn (P.B.U.H.) was clearly aware of this. It was all that the Prophet had announced and everyone

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1. Ref. Kufa

was aware of it. ‘Umar al-Atraf<sup>1</sup>, who was the brother of Imam Husayn the son of the Commander of the Faithful, came to remind the Imam in Mecca, saying, “O’ brother! Do you not remember that the Prophet said that Husayn (P.B.U.H.) would be killed or slain in Iraq? Now, you are going to Iraq during such a situation? You are killing yourself.” The Imam said, “Do you think that you know what I do not know? Do you think that you remember what I do not remember? I know I will be killed.” But the issue is not whether Imam Husayn was afraid of being killed and refrain from it or not, and that is because being killed in Iraq may have happened in different forms and different times.

At one point in time, it became clear to everyone that Imam Husayn would be martyred at this place. Then, the tone of Imam Husayn changed, and one can, undoubtedly, distinguish between who were the loyal companions of Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) and not. I think, it is good, that here I mention a few remarks on Zaynab al-Kubra (P.B.U.H.), even though we owe her much more than this. Indeed, Karbala without Zaynab (P.B.U.H.) was not Karbala. An ‘Ashura without Zaynab al-Kubra (P.B.U.H.) would not be a historic event: it would not be sustainable throughout history.

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1. Or ‘Umar bin ‘Ali bin Abi Talib was one of the children of Imam ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) and according to some historians, was among the martyrs of Karbala.

Zaynab (P.B.U.H.) felt anxious twice and mentioned it to Imam Husayn. Once was in one of the stops, after the martyrdom of Muslim, the Imam came and narrated events and the various news was speculated. Lady Zaynab (P.B.U.H.) was also a woman with fervent emotional affections with a woman's subtle feelings, and the epitome of the boon of emotions was likewise the same Household of the Prophet (P.B.U.T.).

This, too, I say to you: while at the same time, at the same strength, at the same level of courage, at the same resistance in the afflictions, the origin of the flowing limpid spring of humane delicacy and piety is the same Household (P.B.U.T.) of which I would like to exemplify Husayn bin 'Ali (P.B.U.H.): the one, who resisted all alone against an opposing world, a desert full of hungry wolves, and did not tremble before, became so upset in the face of small issues. For example, once an Ethiopian slave fell to the ground, the Imam rushed to the side of the enslaved man. He was a slave, yet he was among the sincere and the devoted: perhaps, it was John<sup>1</sup>, the slave of Abu Dhar who, due to the social status and social culture of that day, did not have such a high status among the Muslims and did not belong to an outstanding class. When he died, well, many were killed: the Kufian aristocrats, the elders

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1. Jawn bin Huway

of Kufa, such as Habib bin Madhahir<sup>1</sup> and Zuhayr bin Qayn,<sup>2</sup> and many others—who were among the elders and renowned men of Kufa—were martyred. Imam Husayn did not show affection for them. Addressing Muslim bin ‘Awsaja<sup>3</sup>, the Imam (P.B.U.H.) stated: “God willing, may you receive rewards from God.” But for an African slave—who had no one, who had no children, who had no family waiting for him or to shed tears over him—Husayn bin ‘Ali (P.B.U.H.) rushed to his side and did for Jawn the same thing he had done for ‘Ali Akbar<sup>4</sup>. Sitting beside John, he put his bloody head upon his lap, but the Imam did not soothe; instead, everyone noticed that the Imam put his own face against the face of his companion whom was once a slave—such human affection is powerful.

Thus, Zaynab (P.B.U.H.) is a woman with expressive feelings, with emotions, yet not an ordinary woman: a sister of

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1. He was one of the companions of ‘Ali, Hasan ibn Ali and Husayn ibn Ali (P.B.U.T.) who sent letters to Husayn ibn Ali (P.B.U.H.) and invited him to Kufa. Though, when he realized that people of Kufa have broken their allegiance to Husayn (P.B.U.H.), he left Kufa, joined Husayn, and was martyred at the age of 75.

2. Zuhayr b. Qayn Bajali was a senior member of al-Bajila tribe in Kufa, a companion of Imam Husayn and a high-ranking member of the Imam’s army. He was later martyred in Karbala.

3. Abu Hajal Muslim bin ‘Awsaja al-Asadi was companion of Prophet Muhammad and a brave soldier among Arab Muslims. He was finally martyred in Karbala.

4. The son of Husayn (P.B.U.H.)

Imam Husayn, a sister who liked Husayn (P.B.U.H.) from the depths of her heart, and a sister who left her husband and family in order to accompany Imam Husayn. She did not come alone; she also brought ‘Aun and Muhammad—her sons. I suspect that ‘Abdullah bin Ja’far was not happy about his sons going. I am not sure that ‘Abdullah was pleased, but Zaynab (P.B.U.H.) took them; for they were with her, and if there was a need to suffer martyrdom for the cause of God, they would also become martyrs.

Now, at one of the stops in the middle of the journey, she felt that it was a dangerous place; thus, she said to Imam Husayn, “My brother! I feel danger. I see the situation is dangerous.” She knew the situation might end with martyrdom and captivity, but the agitation of the events put her under pressure to the extent that she referred to Imam Husayn. Here, Imam Husayn did not say much to her. He said, “There was nothing, whatever God wishes, the same would happen,” and more on the same connotation such as, “Whatsoever God is willing, that will happen.” We no longer see Zaynab al-Kubra (P.B.U.H.) address or question Imam Husayn or feel pressure in her soul and refer to Imam Husayn, except on the night of ‘Ashura.

Early on the night of ‘Ashura, there happened, where it can be said that Zaynab al-Kubra (P.B.U.H.) became restless

due to the intensity of sadness. The narrator of this matter is Imam Sajjad. Imam Husayn's son—Imam Sajjad was ill at the time he narrated the event that follows. He said, "I was lying down in the camp, my aunt, Lady Zaynab (P.B.U.H.) sat by my side, taking care of me. My father, Imam Husayn was in the tent next door while Jawn was preparing the Imam's sword. Both men were preparing themselves for a battle they had to fight the following day. Suddenly, I noticed my father began to quietly recite a poem which contained this message: "The world has turned its back and life betrays one and death are close."<sup>1</sup> One who sings this poem is sure that they will soon bid farewell to the world." Imam Sajjad continued to narrate: "I heard the poem, and I understood the message of the poem: I realized Imam Husayn was informing us of his martyrdom. I tried to control my feelings; however, I saw my aunt, Lady Zaynab (P.B.U.H.), was very saddened. She rose from her position and proceeded towards her brother's tent. She said to him, 'My beloved brother, I see you are informing us of your death. We placed our hope in you since our father departed, we thought we still had our brothers. When my brother, Imam Hasan, was martyred I thought to myself, I have my brother, Imam Husayn. For years, my heart has been warmed by your presence. I have relied on you, and now I

1. Bihar al-Anwar (Vol. 10, Ch.73, H.1).

see you are also informing us of your martyrdom.”<sup>1</sup>

I think the situation that existed for Zaynab (P.B.U.H.), on that day, was an exceptional one. We cannot compare the situation endured by any of the women and even Imam Sajjad to the situation of Zaynab (P.B.U.H.). Zaynab's (P.B.U.H.) condition was so abundantly difficult.

All men were martyred on 'Ashura day. On the evening of 'Ashura, there was not one man who remained throughout the entire camp, except for Imam Sajjad, who was sick and had fallen, and he may have been even in a coma.

Now you see how much these tents and camp—in which eighty or eighty-four women and children were surrounded by an ocean of enemies—needed attention.

Some were thirsty, some were hungry; or it should be said, that everyone was thirsty and hungry.

All hearts were trembling with fear; the mutilated corpses of the martyrs had fallen to the ground; some of them were their brothers and some of them were their children. Regardless, it was a horrifying incident. Someone needed to manage this crowd. And that very person who managed things, from then on was Zaynab (P.B.U.H.).

Zaynab (P.B.U.H.) was not the only one that had lost her brothers, or her children, or all her loved ones, but the eighteen youths of Banu Hashim and some loyal

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1. *ibid.*

companions lost loved ones; yet, perhaps, the importance of this was no less than the heavy burden of managing and protecting this broken, dispersed, and detached camp, amongst all those enemies, which was left upon Zaynab's shoulders: she even had to take care of Imam Sajjad.

So Zaynab (P.B.U.H.), in the hours that followed the incident, until the hour they were moved and left Karbala, and the enemies determined what to do with them, in those hours—in which there was a dark, dusky, and cold night—only God knows what had happened to Zaynab al-Kubra (P.B.U.H.).

Consequently, Zaynab (P.B.U.H.) was constantly moving around during these few hours; running to this child, or to that woman, or to a deceased mother, or to the sister who lost her brother: she was always moving about these people, gathering them and soothing them.

But, once Zaynab (P.B.U.H.) was at the end of her rope, she addressed her brother, spoke to her martyred brother—who was her only refuge and haven.

It is narrated that Zaynab al-Kubra stood over the deceased and mutilated corpse of her brother; she let out a mournful cry, from the depths of her heart, saying: “Messenger of God, may the angels send peace to you! Take a look at your Husayn who is covered in blood...”

“There is no might nor power except in God.”

Dear God! By the sanctity of the blood of the martyrs of Karbala, make us the followers of Husayn (P.B.U.H.) and 'Ashura.

Dear God! Awake the Muslims of the world and make us all devotees of Husayn (P.B.U.H.).

Dear God, by Muhammad and his Household (P.B.U.T), protect this Islamic state, the Islamic government, and the Islamic Republic which are reminiscent of Husayn (P.B.U.H.), rooted in the blood of Husayn (P.B.U.H.), and devoted to Husayn (P.B.U.H.) until the appearance of Imam Mahdi (May God hasten his advent).

Dear God, may you guide us! Dear God, may you help us! Dear God, show us the straight path.

Dear God, may you solve our troubles. May you suppress and crush our enemies. Give us victory in all we do.







