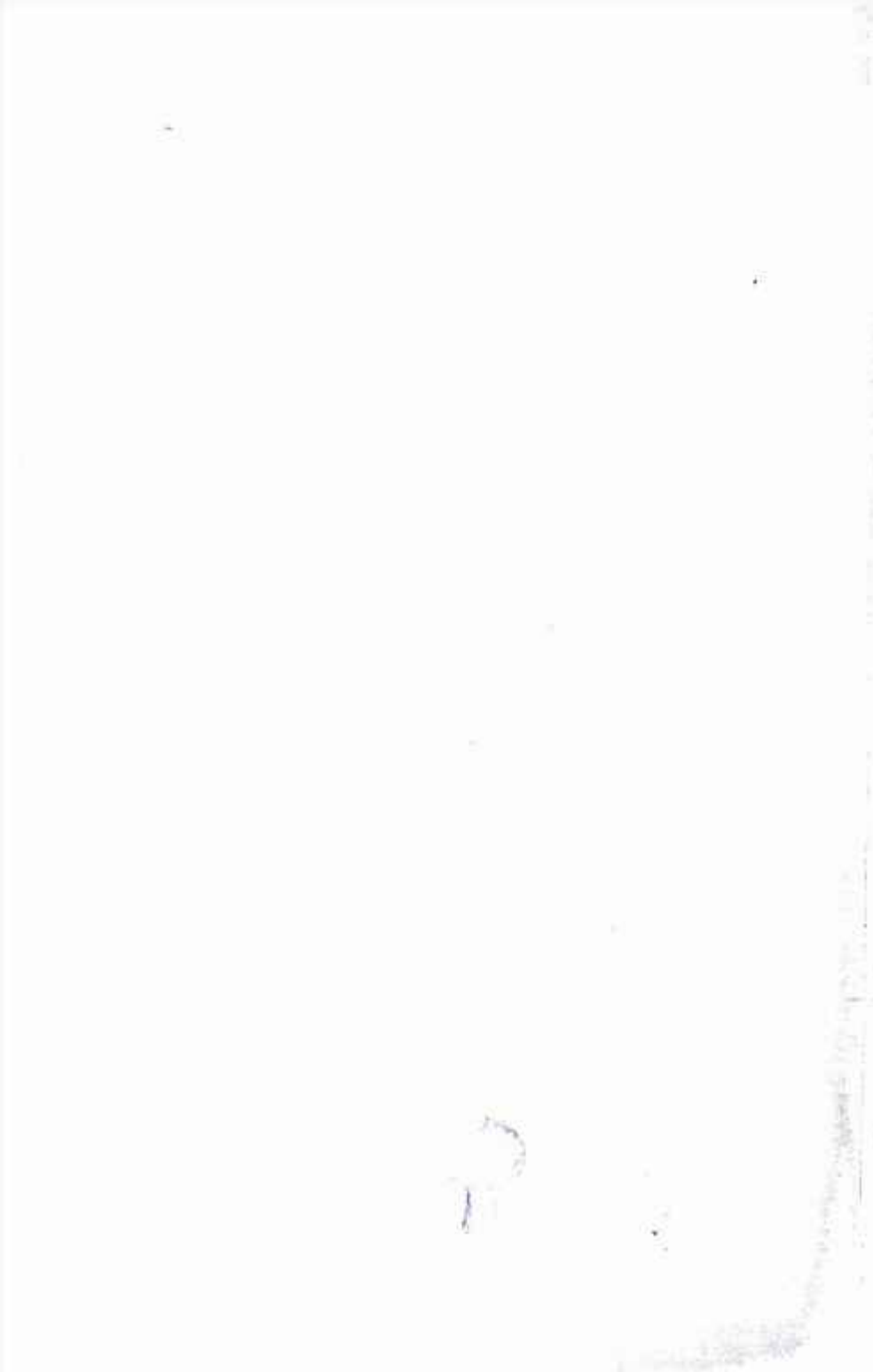


YOUR KALIMA
AND
THE SAVIOR

WAJAHAT HUSSAIN



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YOUR KALIMA AND THE SAVIOR

By
Wajahat Husain

Edited by
Yasin T. al-Jibouri

ISBN No. 20933
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"In fact they say: we have found our fathers practicing a religion, and we are only following their footsteps. It has always been the same case. Whenever before you, we sent a Warner to a town, its rich people invariably said: we have found our fathers practicing a religion and we are only following in their footsteps."

(Sura Al-Zukhruf, 43:22-23).

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*Dedicated, to my parents
who loved me intensely and
gave me everything that one
could hope for.
May Allah bless their soul.*

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Kerbala	8
Kerbala In The Light Of Imam Husain's Speeches And Sermons	11
Public Reactions	23
Speech Of Fatima Daughter Of Imam Husain	25
Speech Of Imam Zainul Abideen (As)	28
Janab Zainab's Historic Role	32
Hazrat Zainab Addresses The People Of Kufa	34
Hazrat Zainab At Ibn Ziyad's Court	36
Hazrat Zainab At Yazid's Court	38
Kerbala Tragedy And Public Reaction	42
Speech Of Mu'awiyah Son Of Yazid	43
The Hate Campaign	46
Yazid Invades Medina	46
Al-hajjaj Bin Yusuf Al-thaqafi	47
Abd Al-malik Bin Marwan	47
Hisham Bin Abdul Malik	47
The Abbasids Were No Better, Either	48
Al-mansur	48
Haroon Ar-rasheed	48
Al-Mutawakkil	48
The Wahhabis	49
The Institution Of Azadari	51
Conclusion	58

FOREWORD

The diversity of the entire universe has been presented in Quran as a Muslim Ummah in which each micro-particle and each macro-combination of these particles, be it big or small, simple or complex, seen or unseen, animate or inanimate is in submission to Allah — The Absolute Oneness. (— and to Him submits whoever is in the heaven or earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to shall they return. Quran 3:83). Apart from the material kingdom, the plant and the animal kingdom too have been presented as a Ummah. (— and there is no animal that walks upon the earth nor a bird that flies with its two wings but they are Ummah like yourselves—Quran 6:38). Even in the human world there is a perceptible uniformity underlying human needs, human emotions and human reason. It is only the human ego, which seeks to disrupt this essential uniformity because without disrupting it the ego cannot make room for asserting its own sovereignty. The role of religion in general and Islam in particular is to humble this ego into submission so as to save the self from annihilation and the society from anarchy. Quran and Ahlulbayt (AS), one as the Word and the other as the Living Example, have been putting together all possible efforts within the framework of Divine Justice just to save both the individual and social ego from disintegration and damnation. *This shows that the highest premium placed in Islam is on the unity, it cannot be compromised with anything except when the very principle of unity is in danger*—that is when the ego is sought to be given the sanctity of God and the very edifice of justice is threatened to be laid upside down. It is, therefore, highly obligatory that the wisdom of preaching Islam in general and that of Ahlulbayt in particular should see that the very points of difference be communicated with utmost patience and politeness so that the fibers of unity are not rudely touched. The very articles of the true Faith, which have unfortunately been thrown into controversy, cannot be driven home in a tense climate. The emotional resistance has to be removed in the first place or else the very purpose of ‘Tableegh’ will get defeated. ‘Tableegh’ means to get some message delivered into the heart of human

beings which logically implies that the preacher has but to remove all the mental and emotional cobwebs hanging between two hearts.

The tough paradox about 'Tableegh' is that the most central point of 'Tableegh' (namely Wilayah) is also the central point of all kinds of hostilities, both within the Muslim circle and that of the non-Muslims. It therefore follows that to convey it to the heart and mind of the people at large needs a wisdom which may cut through all the hostilities without yielding that central principle. It is this wisdom (Hikmah) and the best mode of moral dialogue (Mauza-e-Hasana) that is visible in the characters of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his progeny (AS) throughout their lives. They had to pass their words and actions at the highest level of wisdom and generosity to ensure that no charge of disintegration might ever be levelled against them nor they could ever be blamed to have bartered their principle in return for some gain of personal nature. The very fact that the true Islam with its pristine purity has reached us intact, is exclusively due to the pain and perseverance undertaken by Ahlulbayt (AS) in resolving this paradox with wisdom and magnanimity of their heart. Their stand as such was indeed the Divine Savior which alone could save the kalema, and it is simply because of this that the credibility of the Islamic Faith rests entirely on holding your heart wide open to Ahlulbayt (AS). They were the great citadels of the unity of Muslim Ummah. Their martyrdom has a clear orientation to the Unity of God on the one hand and the unification of humanity around that Unity, on the other. Azadari is the transmission and perpetuation of the message of martyrdom which calls for extra care and patience to make way for this message to reach the larger humanity and stir its conscience and make it crazy to know who the Aal-e-Mohammad (AS) were.

It is true that this path is not easy because all kinds of tyranny and heart-rending accusations are let loose on the adherents of Ahlulbayt (AS) and they are being paraded as the Kafirs and Mushriks, Ghalis, heretics, deviants and the greatest enemies of Islam. But these buffets should be taken only as a tribute because when the hostile world does not find enough reason and justification in Quran, history and commonsense to contradict the place of Ahlulbayt (AS) as irrevocably due after the

Holy Prophet (SAW), it becomes helplessly hostile. The hostile tone betrays the inherent weakness in their stand to supplant the Divine selection with the democratic arrogance sanctioned by the choice of the majority — the goddess of number! The party which is in possession of the solid ground of sense, reason, historical evidence and above all the evidence of Quran, should never make the folly of crying hoarse or hostile, instead it should address the issue with a mind far more open and a heart far more magnanimous just like a doctor should address a patient and a savior should address the deviant. It is with this vision and this spirit that Wajahat Husain has written this book, being too concerned to remain silent on the popular trend of generating hostile response in the alien members of their audience rather than diluting it to be able to reach their mind and heart and make them feel for themselves as to what should be the right path to follow. Wajahat Husain has based his argument on the nature of content in the letters and speeches of Imam Husain, Ali bin Husain, Hazrat Zainab, Umme Kulsum (peace be on them all) to prove that these saviors of the Kalema neither flinched from the principle nor ever allowed the unity of the Muslim Ummah to get fragmented even in the most difficult moments of pain and agony. They had won their war against injustice with the most effective weapons of wisdom, perseverance and love for the misled humanity. Their words and action both imbued and informed with the Divine Mercy and their lives radiant with the Divine Light, they fulfilled their mission. I wish the respectable readers of this book to share the concern of the writer with sympathy, understanding and without grudge. May Allah (SWT) enlarge our vision, refine our emotions and fortify our will to be able to follow the Divine Will.

Dr. S.A.Qasim
Allahabad (UP)
INDIA
5.5.2000



In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful.

INTRODUCTION

I begin in the name of ALLAH, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. This presentation is my humble attempt to highlight the urgent need for Muslims' unity and to provide a basis for the same. I am neither a writer nor a historian... I am merely trying to convey my feelings. I feel strongly for the unity of the Muslim Ummah, which I have observed during my lifetime to be going from bad to worse. Seeds of discord and disunity are being planted, at first very discreetly, and now very openly.

The Muslim Ummah is badly fragmented, and all this has been and is being done in the name of Islam. Just look around you. The world around you is so obsessed and fearful of the Islamic ideology that our enemies are not leaving anything to chance. They are actively busy creating dissension and distrust among the Muslims so that the weaknesses in their own ideologies and systems may be protected. But erosion in the so-called "world order" has already set in. Communism has almost died. The philosophies of Marx, Engel and Hegel have given way to imperialistic democracies. More recently, the capitalistic democracies are also finding it difficult to remain afloat. They resort from time to time to wage wars on other countries in order to divert attention from their own domestic problems. But oppression is confined to Muslim majority areas of the world: Bosnia, Kosova, Kashmir, Palestine, Chechnya etc.

The adherents to capitalistic democracy have realized that the real solution lies in adopting the Islamic ideology, but the inherent opposition of several centuries not only stops them from trying the system, but, contrarily, it keeps them busy trying to find ways and means to sabotage the Islamic system wherever they find the same being introduced and practiced. More recent is the case of Turkey where the interested self-styled "super power" has used the

local military as its vehicle to dislodge an Islamic party voted in by the masses. They went to such an extent that in the recent devastating earthquake, wherein thousands of people died, the Turkish government, under military pressure, did not allow any single Muslim country to either visit Turkey or provide help and assistance to the affected population. Contrariwise, Western countries and Israel were welcomed and their assistance and help fully publicized through the state-controlled media. This was done mainly to ward off any Islamic influence on the local population which is very much prone to Islamic teachings. Their radio, television and newspapers have all the time been busy discussing the "Islamic fundamentalists" and "Islamic terrorists." Nowadays, Russia is mercilessly bombing Chechnya as the whole world watches, and the media is all the time broadcasting the claim that Russia is only bombing "Islamic terrorists." Do not you, my brother, realize that the West is bent upon degrading Islam and portraying Muslims as terrorists? Have you ever read in the newspapers or heard on the radio or watched on the television any term such as "Christian terrorists," "Jewish terrorists," or any other terrorists given the religious label? Yet you all the time hear of "Islamic fundamentalists." When it comes to Christians or Jews, these are only referred to as Orthodox Christians or Jews. Why such a differentiation between the Muslims and the followers of other religions who adhere faithfully to the teachings of their respective creeds? Western democracies all the time "talk" against racism and racial hatred, but when it comes to Islam, they are the biggest hate mongers, preaching violence and applying double standards. My Muslim brothers, please wake up and stop fighting among yourselves. Do not allow anyone to use you to create dissension among the Muslims.

We have been used over the centuries by self-seekers and power hungry individuals to serve the latter's purposes. Just think if we, the common people, have at all benefited from these infights carried out in the name of Islam. It is time we grew up and started **seeing the Game** in which most of us have been involved without realizing the ultimate consequences. I do realize that this is not very easy because over the centuries, we, Muslims, have been conditioned to think in a particular fashion, giving Islam only our lip service. Yazid, too, donned an "Islamic garb," and there were

"Muslim Qazis" (judges) on Yazid's payroll who issued *fatawa* (verdicts) justifying the killing of Imam Husain (AS). So, **please research the Islamic history YOURSELF**, and do not simply rely on the "maulvis" (preachers) who **ONLY** tell you their own version and only such things that serve their purpose but do not necessarily serve Islam. I have talked to many of my Muslim friends who have not even heard of the "Mubahala" incident, one of the most significant events in the early Islamic history, which refers to a debate with the Christian clergy of the time. This incident is referred to in the Holy Qur'an in Chapter 3 (Sura Aal-e-Imran), ayat (verse) 61 wherein the following is stated:

But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, say: Come, let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women ourselves and yourselves, then let us be earnest in prayer and pray Allah to curse the liars.

History records that when the Christians declined to accept the Prophets' explanation, insisting on calling Jesus the "Son of God," the Holy Qur'an challenged them to a "Mubahala" (to invoke [make "ibtihal, root word of mubahala] Allah's curse on and to incur His displeasure with the liars). For this purpose, Prophet Mohammad (SAW) on an appointed day, proceeded to the appointed place in the open plain accompanied by his grandsons, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain, his daughter, Janabe Fatima Zahra (SA), and by Hazrat Ali (AS). When the Christian clergy saw these personalities, they inferred from the predictions contained in their religious scriptures, that truly these personalities are such that if they pray to Allah, they can move the mountains from their places. Consequently, they refrained from the contest. It is surprising that while Christians acknowledge it even today (*refer to Vol. 64, No.6, of the Columbian Mission Magazine, which is published from Nebraska, November 1981*), wherein it is written that, "Muhammad, in 631 at Madina, had extended to a delegation of Christians from Najran. Muhammad had asked the Christians to prove the truth of the incarnation by inviting them to invoke, together with him and his companions, the curse of God on those

whose beliefs were in error as they performed the *Mubahalah*. The Christians refused to accept Muhammad's challenge." Yet our Muslim brethren have been kept quite ignorant about it.— or have they deliberately avoided mentioning it?!

I request you to read history with a clear mind without any pre-conceived notions. Then you may derive your own conclusion. Surely you will be able to remove the biases which have been planted in our way to unity. The Muslim Ummah would have then found the basis for unity.

Recently, I was reading in the newspapers that Lutherans and Catholics have ended their rift and buried their differences after 500 years of discords and dissension. The news item datelined from Augsburg, Germany, read, "Putting aside five centuries of differences in theology, Roman Catholic and Lutheran church leaders embraced at a service Sunday where they signed a declaration ending a dispute over salvation that sparked the Protestant reformation and led to the Thirty Years War (The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, November 1, 1999). This unification is symbolic and is surely full of meaning for those who have vision for the future and for those who can see. It is in this background that I am venturing to write what I believe is the wake-up call for all the Muslims of the world. My request is that it should be read with an open mind and not as Shi'as, Sunnis, Hanbalis, Malikis, Shafiis or Hanafis but as Muslims. **Do not look upon the beliefs and practices of anyone with prejudice; instead, examine it on the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.**

The biases created during the Umayyad regime have to be reexamined. For instance, during the reign of Mu'awiyah, the latter issued instructions to his appointed judges stating the following: "Do not accept the testimony of Ali's followers (Shi'as) or of his descendants in (your) courts." Another letter stated the following: "If you have evidence that someone likes Ali and his family, omit his name from the list of the recipients of rations stipulated from the Zakat funds." Another letter said, "Punish whoever is suspected of following Ali and demolish his house." History tells us that Mu'awiyah had ordered all prayer leaders at the mosques to curse Ali from the pulpits. This practice was labeled as "Sunnah". It is for the reader to decide whether Mu'awiyah was justified to issue such instructions against the fourth Caliph of the Muslims who is

counted among the Khulafa-e-Rashideen. I am sure no Muslim would find any justification for Mu'awiyah's actions.

Similarly, just for being different, a Hanafi or a Maliki faqih prohibits the audible pronouncing of the Basmala. In the words of Fakruddin al-Razi, "Shi'as are of the view that it is Sunnah to audibly pronounce the Basmala in the audible prayers as well as in the inaudible ones, whereas the majority of faqihs differ from them. It is proven through tawatur that Ali ibn Abu Talib used to audibly pronounce the Basmala. Anyone who follows Ali in as far as his creed is concerned will surely be on the right guidance by token of the *hadith* saying, "O Allah! Let right be with Ali wherever he goes." This statement of al-Razi was not digested by Abul-Thana al-Alusi who followed it with his comment wherein he said, "Had anyone acted upon all what they claim to be *mutawatir* from the Commander of the Faithful, he will surely be an apostate; so there is no alternative to believing in some and disbelieving in others. Please refer to page 478, Vol. I, of Ibn Qudamah's book *Al-Mughni*, to page 204, Vol. 1, of al-Kasani's *Badai al Sanai*, to page 216, Vol. 1, of al-Zarqani's *Sharh of Abul-Diyas Mukhtassar of Maliks Fiqh* wherein audible pronouncement is not Sunnah in the daily prayers. The reader can see the fallacy in the argument. **Can the majority of faqihs match Ali's knowledge**, the man whom the Prophet himself acclaimed in the indisputable *hadith* saying, "I am the city of Knowledge and Ali is its gateway"?

Wearing the ring on the right hand is being practiced by the Shi'as, whereas Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Maliki has said, "The Sunnah has recorded everything as abominable if handed by the left hand and everything *tahir* if handed by the right one. In this sense, it is highly recommended to wear a ring on the left hand to be taken by the right one and then placed on the left. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani narrates saying that Malik hated to wear a ring on his right hand, believing it should be worn on the left (ref to the book *Al-Fatawa al-Fiqhiyya al-Kbra Vol. II, page 264, al-Madkhal, Vol I, p. 4*). Shaikh Isma'il al-Barusawi has said in *Iqd al-Durr*, "Originally, it was a Sunnah to wear a ring on the right hand, but since this is the distinguishing mark of the people of bid'as and of injustice, it became a "Sunnah" in our time to place the ring on a finger on the left hand. My understanding of the Sunnah is that it is

whatever the Holy Prophet (SAW) did or ordered the Muslims to do. It is not a Sunnah if ordered by anyone else. These are not the only instances where opposite is practiced merely on account of prejudices and biases. For example **Zamakhshari** in his book titled *Al-Kashshaf* has remarked: "It is *makrooh* (abominable) to bless the Prophet because it causes one to be charged with being a *Rafidi*. You can find similar remarks in *al-Ghazalis Wajeeza*, in *al-Nawawis Al-Minhaj*, in *Ibn Hajars Fahth al-Bari*, and in other reference books.

Al-Sharani, in his book titled *Rahmat al-Ummah bi Ikhtilaf al-Aimmah*, writes the following: "It is a Sunnah to plane the graves. But since it became a distinguishing mark for the *Rafidis*, it is better to do contrariwise."

The reason for pointing out these differences in practicing Islam is simply to bring to the attention of my respected readers the necessity for all of us to study the Islamic history and find out for ourselves the true facts in order to know what exactly created divisions among the Muslims. This is the age of reason. Islam is the religion of reason, of knowledge, and of enlightenment. We are not supposed to be living in the days of *Jahiliyya* any longer. Do not simply take everything as gospel truth which the half-baked and self-styled *maulvis* and so-called "religious preachers", who propagate in the name of Islam, try to make us believe as the 'only truth.' During the time of *Khilafat-e-Rashida*, there was unity, and the Ahlul-Bayt tried to safeguard that unity at a great cost. It is after that period that hostile elements, those who had not accepted Islam wholeheartedly and were simply paying lip-service to Islam in order to gain power and control over the Ummah, created dissension and divisions by fabricating thousands of *ahadith* then attributing them to the Prophet (SAW) in order to legitimize their own actions and lust for political power, so much so that Yazid was able to obtain a *fatwa* (religious verdict) from his court-appointed judge justifying the slaying of Imam Husain (AS).

I request the readers to go through the contents of this presentation with an open mind and understand the importance of the institution of "Azadari" which has tried to preserve Islam and the Kalima—the Kalima, which you recite: *La Illaha IL Allah, Mohammad Rasul-Allah*. This Kalima is the very cornerstone of Islam. Just imagine; had Imam Husain (AS) not sacrificed his and

his companions' lives, and had Hazrat Zainab and Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) not propagated the true Islam, perhaps we all would have been reciting a different version of the Kalima. **Just pause here and think about it.** Do not let anybody influence you...

I do not intend to go into the details of history beginning from the proclamation of Prophet-hood in order to avoid accentuating the differences among the Muslims. My intentions are to highlight the common grounds upon which we can together erect the Islamic house of unity where the world can benefit and become a peaceful place to live. Let us lead the world to real peace.

The major source utilized for this text is Br. Yasin T. al-Jibouri's book *Kerbala and Beyond* (paperback edition published in 1999 by Ansariyan Publications, P.O. Box 37185/187, Qum, Islamic Republic of Iran), and I truly thank him for accepting to edit it for me.

In this book, I am merely trying to point out to the readers the already existing bases for Muslim unity which have been made obscure due to the irrational preaching and opposition to the House of the Holy Prophet (SAW). For this reason, I am also avoiding quoting historians views. I am merely relying on the undisputed versions of the speeches and sermons of Imam Husain (AS), Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) and Hazrat Zainab (AS). I really do not know how far I have succeeded in impressing upon my respected reader the need for Muslim unity and adherence to Islamic ideology. May Allah guide us all.

Wajahat Husain
Sha'ban 3, 1420 A.H.
12th November 1999



It all started at

KERBALA

To me, Kerbala is the starting point. We all agree that the rejuvenation of the Islamic creed took place at Kerbala in 61 A.H. Had Imam Husain (AS) not sacrificed his life, his family and his companions, and had he kept quiet as Yazid went on flagrantly violating the Islamic code, Islam would have died a most tragic death. This is not just my personal view, it is a fact of history, and it is universally acknowledged. To quote just one recognized authority, here is the well-known couplet composed by the world renowned Sufi Saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri:

شاه هست حسین بادشاه هست حسین
 دین هست حسین دین پناه هست حسین
 سردار نه داد دست در دست یزید
 تھا کہ بنائے لا الہ ہست حسین

The King is Husain, the saint is Husain
 The religion is Husain, the savior is Husain
 Gave his head, didn't give his hand in the tyrant's hand
 Truly, the foundation of LA ILAH is Husain.

The revival of Islam is linked with the great sacrifice of Imam Husain (AS) and his companions at Kerbala. No doubt Imam Husain's sacrifice is unparalleled in the history of mankind.

Yet merely sacrificing such lives would not have served the purpose, had it not been for Hazrat Zainab and Imam Zainul Abideen (AS). They both propagated the cause, publicized the martyrdom in those days of restricted means of communications, making known the facts to almost the entire Ummah. With an open mind, if we only study the events that led to the Kerbala tragedy and its aftermath, there can be no denying of the fact that the *Kalima* of **La Ilaha IL Allah, Mohanmad Rasul ul Allah**, which the Muslims recite today, was saved and preserved due to the persistent propagation by Bibi Zainab (AS), Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) and the subsequent Imams (AS), all through the institution of Azadari. I request all Muslims to shun prejudices and, for a moment, try to visualize how Imam Husain (AS) and his companions were brutally massacred in the desert of Kerbala. There is no one to inform the widely disunited Ummah the facts and the philosophy behind this great sacrifice.

Do you think that people would have remembered the *Kalima* as it is today, or that they might be reciting Yazid's and Banu Umayyias *kalima* instead, the *Kalima* of those who had already denounced the Prophet?! As is clear from the poetry composed by Yazid, he publicly asserted that neither revelation nor any Book was ever sent by God, it was all an act staged by Banu Hashim to acquire control over the Arabs and to rule the world. In such a background, Bibi Zainab and Imam Zainul Abideen's forthright speeches and statements, during the long and tedious journey in captivity from Kerbala to Kufa and on to Damascus at Yazid's court, unveiled the actual motivation behind Yazid's animosity towards the House of the Prophet (SAW) underscoring his most brutal and heinous act of murdering Imam Husain (SA) and his companions. Yazid, with a view to degrade the women and the children who were taken prisoners, all being the offspring of the Prophet (SAW) by his daughter Fatima (SA), ordered them to be paraded through the bazaars of the cities by which they passed. Instead of humiliation, however, the opportunity was seized by the new Imam and by his aunt, Janab- Zainab daughter of Imam Ali and Fatima (AS), to inform the public of the true facts that led to the tragedy. These speeches and sermons laid the foundations for the institution of Azadari, which has helped, preserve Islam and its teachings for all times to come. All the Muslims the world over

recognize that the Kerbala tragedy is the greatest, saddest and the most cruel in the history of mankind, and it is Kerbala which saved Islam from total annihilation and extinction. Let us start from here and shed away our prejudices, those which have been surreptitiously introduced among the Muslims in order to create dissension and discord which serve the ulterior motives of the enemies of Islam. With this in mind, I have tried to briefly trace the history of Azadari, *an institution that has saved and preserved your Kalima and mine and everyone else's*. In order to be more objective, I have tried to avoid historians' versions and their comments on the Kerbala tragedy. I have mostly relied on the speeches and sermons of Imam Husain (AS), Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) and Janab Zainab (AS), which are all truthful and accepted by everyone, even by their opponents.



KERBALA IN THE LIGHT OF IMAM HUSAIN'S SPEECHES AND SERMONS

Opponents of Islam and of Prophet Mohammad (SAW) have always tried to distort the important events in Islamic history in order to suit their own purposes. They are still busy trying to do so, and I suppose they always will. The Kerbala tragedy and the events leading to it are being twisted, even nowadays, in such a manner as to undermine its importance and to deny the high place, which this great sacrifice (*Zibh-e-Azim*) occupies in restoring Islam to its rightful place among the religions of the world. Some described the events of Kerbala as a fight between two political rivals, some as a revolt against the "caliph of the time," and some even dared to deny that the Kerbala tragedy ever took place...! But if we do not take recourse to what historians of the time narrated and simply concentrate on the letters and speeches of Imam Husain (AS), the same could be linked together to form a chain of events leading to the undeniable and irrefutable Kerbala tragedy. The events following the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) has been recorded in history books in the form of speeches and public addresses by Imam Zainul Abideen (AS), Hazrat Zainab and Umme Kulthum (SA).

Tracing the background leading to the Kerbala tragedy, we start with the letter of Imam Husain (AS) to Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan in reply to the latter's communication. Imam Husain (AS) says,

"I neither intend to fight you, nor to oppose you, though I fear Allah for not doing so. You have gathered a clan of tyrants around you who are all followers of Satan. Are you not the killer of Hajr bin Adiy who belonged to the tribe of Kinda and who was the pious companion of the Holy Prophet, the one who offered prayers, decried, injustice, opposed innovations in Islam, forbade people from committing sins and exhorted them to do good deeds? He never dreaded anyone who

rebuked him for preaching Allah's religion. He was a fearless preacher of Islam. You ignored the firm promises and pledges given to him, yet you killed him. Are you not the killer of 'Amr bin Hamq who was a pious man and a companion of the Holy Prophet? Due to excessive offerings of prayers and adoration, he had become very weak. First, you granted him protection, then you had him killed. Have you not accepted Ziyad bin Sumayya who was born in the house of Thaqif, the slave, as your brother, thus breaking the ethical code of Islam? You then imposed him on the Muslims so that he might oppress and kill them. Ziyad the tyrant chopped off Muslim's limbs, blinded them with hot iron rods and crucified them on palm trees. Did you not kill the Hadrami clansmen who were reported by Ziyad to be the followers of Islam as practiced by Hazrat Ali (AS)? You issued instructions to Ziyad to kill everyone who followed Hazrat Ali (AS) in matters of the religion. Your orders were brutally carried out by Ziyad who mercilessly killed all those who followed Hazrat Ali (AS) in matters of the religion, and Hazrat Ali (AS) practiced exactly the same as preached by the Holy Prophet (SAW) of Islam."

The above excerpt from Imam Husain's letter highlights the state of affairs prevalent during Mu'awiyah's time. Yet another letter from Imam Husain (AS) replying to Mu'awiyah's letter, wherein the latter sought Husain's oath of allegiance to his son Yazid, reads: "The one who had the right (to be the leader of Muslims) was deprived of all, whereas Satan gulped the entire. Whatever diplomatic excellence you attribute to Yazid is intended to create an impression as if you are introducing some hidden aspects of his personality to the nation which have been unknown

so far. However, the truth of the matter is that Yazid, by his deeds, has already made himself known to the Ummah as to what he really is. You should let Yazid have the life, which he has chosen for himself. His interest in dogfights, pigeon flying, his enjoying the company of singing damsels and his indulgence in frivolous and meaningless activities should suffice him. He is suited for all of this; so, give up what (position) you are contemplating for him. By Allah, you have been perpetuating injustice upon the people, harboring ill will against all and accumulating a "wealth" of bad deeds. You are surrounded by completely unreliable and untrustworthy advisers, and now you have favored a corrupt and uncouth person over the learned and the pious companions of the Prophet (SAW) to rule over the Ummah."

In 60 A.H., Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan died and Yazid ascended the throne. Immediately, Yazid turned his attention towards Medina and commanded al-Walid, the governor of Medina, to secure the oath of allegiance for him from Imam Husain (AS). Al-Walid deputed Abdullah bin Umar bin Uthman to escort the Imam to his [governor's] mansion. Imam Husain (AS) was at that time at al-Masjid al-Nabawi (the Prophet's Mosque) and responded to the messenger by telling him to go away, and that he (the Imam) would follow suit. Imam Husain (AS) had not left the mosque when yet again the messenger of al-Walid came and informed him that al-Walid was waiting for him. Imam Husain inquired about the reason for such haste, remarking that he would go there shortly. The Imam then went home from where, in the company of about thirty youths of Bani Hashim, he walked towards al-Walids court. Al-Wahid received the Imam with the respect worthy of him and had him properly seated at his court. Al-Walid informed Imam Husain of Mu'awiyah's death and of Yazid's instructions for obtaining the oath of allegiance from the Imam. Imam Husain replied saying that since it was a matter that required serious consideration, it would be better if it was put off till the next morning "... when you gather the people at the mosque so that I spell out my views on this important issue." Al-Walid agreed and asked the Imam to come the next day, but Marwan bin al-Hakam (another Umayyad who later became "caliph" in Syria) interrupted and said to al-Walid, "If you allow Husain to go away now, you shall never be able to lay your hands on him. Take the oath of

allegiance here and now and upon refusal behead him as per Yazid's orders." Having heard this statement, the Imam became angry and challenged Marwan saying, "O you son of the Blue Woman (prostitute)! Who dares to touch me and coerce me to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid, the corrupt, the drunkard, and the debauchee!" Then he walked out and went home.

Al-Walid described the entire episode to Yazid who wrote back asking for the head of the Imam. Al-Walid informed the Imam that Yazid was bent upon shedding his blood, adding that he (al-Walid) would not comply with Yazid's orders. He, however, wished that the Imam should take whatever steps necessary to ward off the danger.

Imam Husain (AS) contemplated over the situation as a whole, went to the grave where the Holy Prophet (SAW) was buried and wept over the state of things forcing him to leave his abode and home town. While at the grave of his grandfather, Imam Husain (AS) saw the Prophet in a vision kissing his forehead and warning him that soon the Ummah would slaughter him "... without allowing you any food or water, and none will come to your rescue in spite of your pleas." When the Imam woke up from his dream, he went home and informed the family that since there was no alternative left, he had decided to leave the city of Medina. On this occasion, the Imam wrote the following letter to his half-brother Mohammad bin al-Hanafiyya informing him of his decision to leave Medina, attaching his will. He wrote the following:

"I begin in the name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful. This is my will addressed to my brother Muhammad known as Ibn al-Hanafiyya. Husain bears witness that there is no god except Allah Who is the One and only God, without any partners, and that Mohammad (SAW) is Allah's servant and Prophet who has brought true messages and instructions from Him, and without doubt, heaven and hell are true. There is, without any doubt, the Day of Resurrection, and on this Day, Allah will order the dead to come out from their graves alive. I am not leaving my residence in order to create a rift, nor to inflict injustice on

the Ummah, nor to underscore my superiority over others. I am simply leaving it with the intention to guide and to reform my grandfather's Ummah and that of my father Hazrat Ali (AS) and his followers. Those who accept me as just, Allah shall reward them. Those who reject me, I shall bear it patiently till Allah judges between the Ummah and me; He is all Just. This is my Will to you, Brother. I seek guidance from Allah to Whom I look and upon Whom I depend for all and everything."

As he was departing for Iraq, the Imam said, "All praise is due to Allah. Whatever He wishes does happen, and no one else has such power. Death is as closely attached to the son of Adam as a necklace around a young woman's neck. I am as eager to join my elders, who have passed away to the next world, as Yaqub (Jacob) (AS) was eager to meet Yusuf (Joseph) (AS). For me, the location of my death has already been determined, and I will definitely be there. I envision the desert hounds (meaning the forces of Kufa and Syria) near Kerbala cutting my limbs and devouring me in order to satisfy their hunger. Whatever Allah has destined for us, we, the Ahl Al-Bayt, willingly accept. We demonstrate patience during trials and tribulations, and we expect full rewards from Him, those that are reserved for those who persevere. The Prophet's near and dear ones will never be separated from him; instead, they will all be gathered around him to see, and they shall all be pleased. Then the Prophet (SAW) shall fulfil the promises made to them. *Inshallah*, I shall be leaving Medina tomorrow morning; whoever is ready to die for us, and whoever has prepared himself to uphold the cause of Allah, is welcome to come with us.

After a pause, he addressed Ibn Abbas saying, "What do you say about the Ummah that has forced the grandson of its Prophet (SAW) to leave his home, to leave behind the mausoleum of the Prophet (SAW), leaving no room for him to escape? They want to shed his blood when he has neither committed any sin nor any *shirk*. Ibn Abbas said to the Imam, "If you really have to go to Kufa, do not take the women and the children with you." Imam Husain (AS) replied: "O son of my uncle! I have seen the Prophet

(SAW) in my dream ordering me to take all my family members with me."

Scholars state that on the 28th of Rajab of 60 A.H., Imam Husain (AS) left Medina for Mecca never to return. The family consisted of 18 youths comprising his brothers, sons and nephews. One daughter, about 7 years old, was ill, so she was left behind in the care of her grandmother, Umm-e-Salma. The departure from Medina was very agonizing especially since the Imam knew that most of them would not be able to return. But for the sake of preserving and protecting Islam, every hardship was acceptable.

It was on the 3rd of Sha'ban of 60 A.H. that the Caravan reached Mecca. When the Imam arrived, Mecca's governor fled to Medina where he wrote Yazid indicating that the masses were steadily showing inclination towards Imam Husain (AS). Based on this information, Yazid started making plans to have the Imam slain in Mecca where he stayed for four months. Yazid sent thirty Kharjites to Mecca dressed as pilgrims under the command of Umar ibn Sa'd with the instructions to kill Imam Husain (AS). Also, three hundred Syrians were sent for the same purpose. Yazid had planned that even if the Imam escaped from Mecca, he would be cornered in Kufa whose population had sent written invitations to the Imam (AS) pleading for help in getting rid of the hated authority of the Umayyads. It is said that 12,000 letters were sent to the Imam inviting him to Kufa. All this was done in the name of Islam and imploring the Imam to fulfil his religious obligations of enforcing the Shari'a which the Umayyads had trampled. Realizing his obligations, Imam Husain (AS) sent his brother Muslim bin Aqeel to Kufa on a fact finding mission to assess the situation.

While in Mecca, Imam Husain (AS) received a letter from his cousin Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Tayyar saying, I implore you in the Name of Allah not to leave Mecca. I fear for you and for Ahl al-Bayt's lives. You are the light of Allah, and if you are slain, where from shall we seek spiritual guidance? Do not make haste in going to Iraq as I will seek from Yazid and Banu Umayyah protection for you and for all your family members.

Imam Husain (AS) wrote him back saying, "I have received your letter and I understand your concern. Listen; I have

seen my grandfather in a vision ordering me to do what I am doing regardless of the consequences.

Even if I take refuge in the smallest hole where insects reside, they will still get me out and slaughter me. By Allah, their excesses are similar to what the Jews did on the Sabbath."

Al-Farazdaq, the poet, inquired from the Imam saying, "Why are you leaving Mecca just before performing the Hajj?" Imam Husain (AS) replied: "If I do not act promptly, I will soon be arrested. Then the Imam inquired from him about the people of Kufa, to which al-Farazdaq replied, "Their hearts are with you, yet their swords are raised up against you."

During his march towards Kufa, the Imams family stopped at Zabala where he gathered his companions and read out a letter informing them of the martyrdom of his brother Muslim bin Aqeel and also of Hani ibn Urwah and Abdullah bin Yaqtar. The Imam also informed them that the Kufians reneged from their assurances of support. "Whoever wants to leave my camp, he said to them, "may do so." Hearing this, those who had accompanied the Imam in the hope of obtaining worldly rewards deserted him, dispersing in various directions in order to escape arrest, harassment or persecution at the hands of Yazid's forces. Those who believed in his mission stayed with him to the end.

While en route, al-Hur al-Riyahi intercepted Imam Husain (AS) and his family, stopping them from proceeding to Kufa or even returning to Medina. The Imam addressed Hur and his troops saying, "O people! I want to make it clear that I have not come here of my own accord but upon receipt of invitations through letters and by special messengers. You implored me to make haste because you were without an Imam and you wished to receive guidance from Allah through my intercession. Now if you are firm in your word, and if you need me, reaffirm your allegiance so that I feel satisfied. If you do not do so, and if you do not like my coming here, I am prepared to go back." Al-Hur and his troops offered prayers under the Imamate (leadership) of Imam Husain (AS). At this time, the Imam, again addressed them saying, "If you fear Allah and recognize righteousness, Allah will be pleased with you. We, the descendants of the Holy Prophet (SAW), are more deserving of and more suited for the leadership of the Ummah rather than those dishonest claimants who treat you with brutal

force and with contempt. If you do not like us and insist upon ignoring our rights, and if now your opinions are contrary to what you had depicted in your letters and messages, then I am prepared to go back."

From the above, it is quite evident that Imam Husain (AS) tried his best to avoid confronting the forces bent upon killing him and left no choice for him whatsoever. On one occasion, Abu Haram enquired from the Imam as to what led him to leave Medina, to which the Imam replied, "When Banu Ummayyah tried to belittle me, I endured it. They confiscated my possessions, yet I kept quiet. Now they are bent upon killing me. So I have left my abode. By Allah, they will kill me."

Imam Husain (AS) kept telling his companions of the physical dangers involved, allowing them to leave him if they so desired. In one of his addresses to the companions, he said, "On the basis of apparent indications of Iraqis professing allegiance to me, I had so far accepted you in my company. But now I have received dreadful news about the martyrdom of my brother Muslim. This shows that those who implored me to hastily go to their rescue have reneged from their promises and assurances. Be it known that only those of you who can bear the wounds of the swords and the spears may remain with me or else part company while there is still time to do so."

On the one hand, Imam Husain (AS) kept warning his companions of the tragedies that awaited them and that if they so wished, they could part company with him. On the other hand, in order to perform his religious duty, he continued to invite everyone to join him, indicating that whoever joined him and was killed in the path of Allah would attain glory.

At Bayda, Imam Husain (AS) once more addressed al-Hur and his troops saying, "O people! Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has said that whosoever sees a ruler who is a tyrant, one who denounces Allah's commandants, who breaks pledges made with Allah, who acts against the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) and commits excesses against Allah's creations, neither opposing him by a word nor by an action, Allah will be obliged to grant him the same place in hell as is destined for the tyrant ruler. Listen, these Banu Umayyah have sworn allegiance to Satan, diverging from Allah's path. They have created dissension, transgressing beyond

the limits set by Allah. I am the most appropriate person to raise a voice against them as I am the nearest relative of the Prophet (SAW). I received your letters, and your messengers conveyed to me that you profess allegiance to me. If you fulfil your promise, you will be rewarded. I am Husain son of Ali and Fatima daughter of Mohammad, Messenger of Allah (SAW). My life is with you, my family is with your families, and you have to be with me during all circumstances. If you do not come with me, and if you break the promises, which you had previously made, such conduct is not beyond you, since you had done the same to my father, brother and cousin Muslim bin Aqeel. You will be the losers. He who accepts your words is deceived. You have thrown away your benefits by breaking your promise and have harmed none but your own selves. Soon, Allah will relieve me from you. May Allah be kind to you." He also said, "You are witnessing the calamities that have fallen upon us, yet you do nothing. The world has turned away from us and no good has been left in it. Whatever is left in this world is just like a few drops in a water bowl, and such is the degradation, which cannot be swallowed. Don't you see that justice is not being acted upon while bad deeds are not being abstained from? A believer must yearn for the love of Allah. I now regard death preferable to living with the unjust and with the tyrants."

When the intentions of Banu Umayyah became sufficiently evident, Imam Husain (AS) addressed his companions in these words: "You accompanied me on this journey on the premise that I am going to those people who have professed allegiance to me wholeheartedly, but now the situation is quite different. Those who invited me have been overpowered by satanic influences, so they have totally forgotten Allah and His commandments. Now their sole aim is to slaughter me and my companions and to take my family and everyone else captive. I fear that you could be caught in this unknowingly, and you may not be able to say or to do anything simply out of respect for me. Deception is not our tradition, we the family of the Prophet (SAW). So, whoever wants to leave us is free to do so. Whoever wishes to sacrifice his life for the cause shall be with us in Paradise and will be protected from Allah's Wrath."

When restrictions were placed on the movements of Imam Husain and those accompanying him, such as their drawing water

from the Euphrates river, he addressed the opposing army saying, "You are aware of the Islamic code. You have read the Qur'an. You also know that I am the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Messenger of Allah. In spite of knowing all this, you are still bent upon killing me out of enmity and in order to perpetuate the tyrannical rule of the ruthless and the unprincipled. You see the flowing water of the Euphrates river from which all can drink, even so much as dogs and swine are also free to drink, yet the family of the Prophet (SAW) are dying of thirst and are denied even a drop of water."

In order to drive his arguments home, Imam Husain (AS) once again asked them. "By Allah, tell me: Do you recognize me?" They replied: "Yes, you are the grandson of the Prophet (SAW)." The Imam then said, "You also know that my mother is Fatima, daughter of Prophet Mohammad (SAW)." They replied: "Yes, we do." The Imam continued thus: "You also know that my grandmother was Khadija daughter of Khawaylid, the first lady to embrace Islam." Everyone replied in the affirmative. "You also know that Ja'far al-Tayyar, who is in heaven, is my uncle," he continued. "You also recognize this sword and the head-gear which I have here. These belong to the Prophet of Islam (SAW)," he added. All confirmed that they were aware of all this. Imam Husain then said, "You all know that Hazrat Ali was the first among men to declare adherence to Islam and he was the most forbearing of all the pious and the master of all the believers." When Imam Husain received the reply in the affirmative, he put forth the following question: "Since you know all this, how do you justify killing me? They replied: "We no doubt know all that you have said, but we will not leave you till we kill you without even giving you a drop of water."

When it was the 9th of Moharram, and when Umar ibn Sa'd allowed Imam Husain one night more respite for offering prayers to Allah, the Imam gathered his companions and said, "I praise Allah and offer gratitude whether in comfort or in calamity. O Lord! We offer our gratitude to You for bestowing prophethood on us, for giving us the knowledge of the Book and for the faculty to understand the working of the religion. You gave us the hearing ears, the seeing eyes and a wealth of contented heart. You saved us from ever indulging in *shirk* (doubting the Oneness of Allah). I do

not find any others as pious and as faithful as my companions. May Allah reward you for this. I now allow you to go away from here in the darkness of the night and disperse in your towns so that you may escape persecution. These people are only after my life. Once they get me, they will not search for any of you." Hearing this from the Imam, everyone in his own words assured the Imam of allegiance and said, "Why should we do so? May Allah not enable us to see the light of the day when you are not in this world." When the Imam witnessed this spirit of total dedication and faithfulness expressed by his Companions and relatives, he prayed for them.

On the day of Ashura (the tenth of Moharram), when Imam Husain saw most of his companions being killed, he said, "Allah was very angry when the Jews ascribed a son to Him. He was angered when Christians divided God in their Trinity. Those who worship the sun and the moon were also the targets of His wrath. Now Allah will be angered very much because this Ummah has joined hands to kill the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (SAW). By Allah! I do not yield even to a single term and condition which they want from me, so much so that I shall meet Allah drenched in my own blood."

Addressing the members of his family, he said, "Be prepared for the hardships and agonies, and be informed that Allah is your Protector and Helper. Soon He will free you from the evil doings of the enemies, and the end result will be good. The enemies will be dragged into numerous calamities, while you will be awarded various bounties. Respect Allah's word for you will be increased. So, do not complain, nor should you say anything which may decrease respect for you in the eyes of others.

On yet another occasion, he addressed the enemies saying, "O you folks who are deceitfully professing adherence to Islam! You are the followers of the worst of creations. Beware, this is the last time that I warn you. You think that by killing me you can enjoy the worldly pleasures. Impossible! Soon you shall be engulfed by such calamities that every joint of your body will ache and shake, your hearts will be saddened and you will no where find any protection or solace. You will be the most degraded of the Ummah, and why should you not be so since you have sworn to kill the Prophet's progeny and take his family members captive?! I

put three proposals before you, but none was accepted by you. You take pride in your numerical superiority and strength. How can I accept your irreligious leader, Yazid, and obey him? Self-respect, integrity and honesty never allow us even to be near such depraved souls. With dignity, our self-respect takes us even towards death. I am eager to join these young Ones and my companions, those who have been martyred before me." But Yazid's forces were not moved and they all fought Imam Husain who, in his defense, showed such great valor seldom recorded in the annals of history. It is reported that his entire body was covered with wounds inflicted by the forces of evil gathered at Kerbala for the sole purpose of killing him and extinguishing the guiding light intended by the Almighty to lead mankind towards salvation. The *mu'azzin* was calling for the 'asr' (afternoon) prayers when Imam Husain (AS) alighted from his horse and put his head on the ground in total submission to Allah. Shimr dhul-Jawshan was the most callous of Yazid's army. He severed the head of Imam Husain and raised it on his spear. Yazid's army was jubilant... Imam Husain's camp had upheld the Islamic principles and laid down their lives for the Glory of Allah.' *We are from Allah and to Him shall we return.*



PUBLIC REACTIONS

Having briefly described the Kerbala tragedy, I would like to bring to the attention of my respected readers some of the reactions of those who were openly not subscribing to the Islamic faith. In this context, the first name that stands out is that of Wahab ibn Abu Wahab, a Christian by faith. Incidentally, his wife is the first lady martyr of Kerbala. They had been married only a fortnight before the Ashura-e- Muharram. Having witnessed what went on between Imam Husain (AS) and his foes, they sympathized with the Imam and embraced Islam at his hands. Wahab's mother, still a Christian, said to her son, "I will not be pleased with you till you give your life away for the sake of Imam Husain." Wahab fought bravely and was killed by the enemies. His wife watched all this and then pleaded with Imam Husain (AS) saying, "O Imam! Please do not ask me to go back! I prefer to die fighting rather than to fall captive in the hands of Banu Umayyah!" The Imam tried to dissuade her, telling her that fighting was not mandated on women, but she could not control herself and ran towards the battlefield where her husband was lying dead. A slave of Shimr Dhul-Jawshan beheaded her while she was holding the head of her husband in her lap. Wahab's mother was happy and said, "O Allah! Thank you for saving my honour through my son's martyrdom before the Imam." Then the old Christian lady turned to the Kufians and said, "You wicked people! I bear witness that the Christians in their churches and the Zoroastrians in their fire houses are better people than you".

Another Christian mentioned in history is a messenger sent by Emperor Caesar to the court of Yazid. He witnessed the insolent behaviour of Yazid towards the severed head of Imam Husain (AS) lying in front of him. The Christian messenger said to Yazid, "We have in some Island the hoof of the donkey upon which Jesus rode, and we make a pilgrimage to it every year from all lands and offer *nadh'r* to it and hold it in as much regard as you hold your sacred books; so. *I bear witness that you are wrongdoers.*" This statement enraged Yazid who ordered him to be killed. The messenger stood up, walked to Imam Hussain's severed head, kissed it and pronounced the Kalima. At the moment, when the messenger's head was cut off, everyone heard a loud and fluent

voice saying, *La hawla wala quwwata illa billah* (There is neither power nor might except in Allah).

Another notable defection from the Yazidi camp to which history has given prominence is al-Hur al-Riyahi. He was responsible for stopping Imam Husain(AS) from going further or even going back. He was responsible for holding the Imam at Kerbala. But Hur's conscience kept on bothering him and finally he, on the day of Ashura, defected from the Yazidi camp and came over to the Imam's side knowing fully well that ultimately he was to be killed along with the Imam and his companions. Al-Hur asked for pardon from the Imam and wished to fight on his side and lay down his life in the Imam's defense. Not only al-Hur but his sons also came over with him and Yazidi forces killed all. The Imam prayed for their salvation..

Islam has never counted heads. It has always been the principle that has mattered. You have to be the one resolved to uphold the truth, no matter how great a number stands in opposition to you. This is what al-Hur had demonstrated by moving over to Imam Husain's camp on the day of Ashura.



SPEECH OF FATIMA DAUGHTER OF IMAM HUSAIN

Following is the text of the speech of one of Imam Husain's children, Fatima, which she delivered to the Kufians at *Bazar-e-Kufa* one day after the martyrdom of her father (on the 11th of Moharram):

"All praise is due to Allah, as much as the number of sands and stones, as much as the 'Arsh weighs up to the ground. I praise Him, believe in Him and rely upon Him, and I testify that there is no god other than Allah, the one and only God, there is no partner with Him and that Mohammad is his servant and Messenger, and that his offspring have been slaughtered by the Euphrates river neither on account of blood revenge nor out of dispute over inheritance. Lord! I seek refuge with You against saying anything contrary to what You have revealed while taking many a covenant regarding the viceregency of Ali ibn Abu Talib, the man whose right is confiscated, who was killed without having committed a sin (just as his son was killed only yesterday) at one of the houses of Allah, the most Exalted, at the hands of those who give Islam nothing but lip service. Destruction may afflict their heads who did not ward off from him any injustice as long as he lived nor at his death, till Allah Almighty took his soul to Him while his essence was praised, his dealing with others was commendable, his merits were well known, and his beliefs well admitted by everyone. Never did he ever accept anyone's blame nor the criticism of any critic in doing what is right. Lord! You guided him to Islam even when he was a child and praised his virtues when he grew up. Never did he ever cease enjoining others to follow Your Path and that of Your Messenger. He never paid any heed to the riches of this world. He always desired

the Hereafter, a man who carried out *Jihad* for Your cause. With him were You pleased, so You chose him and guided him to a straight path. O people of Kufa! O people of treachery, of betrayal and conceit! we are members of a family tried on your account by Allah, afflicted by you. He made our dealing with you to be fair and good, and He entrusted His knowledge to us, and He bestowed upon us its comprehension, so, we are the bastion of His knowledge, understanding and wisdom, and His *Hujjat* (Argument) on earth which He created for the good of His servants! Allah bestowed upon us His Blessings and greatly honoured us with His Prophet (SAW) peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, favouring us over many of those whom He created. Yet you called us liars and apostates, and in your eyes you deemed killing us as lawful, and so is looting our possessions, as if we were the offspring of Turks, just as you killed our grandfather in the past. From your swords, drips our blood, the blood of Ahl al-Bayt, out of past animosity. Thus have your eyes been cooled, and thus have your hearts been elated, telling lies about Allah and out of evil plans, which you hatched, while Allah is the very best of planners. So do not be carried away with your excitement because of our blood which you have spilled or our wealth which you have snatched away, for what has befallen us is truly a great tragedy and a momentous calamity. "In a Book even before we created them, surely this is easy for Allah, so that you may not be grieved because of what you missed nor feel happy because of what you acquired, and Allah does not love anyone who is conceited, braggard (57:23)." May you be ruined!

Expect to be cursed and tormented, for it seems as though it has already befallen you, and more and more signs of wrath are on their way to you from

the heavens till He makes you taste of the chastisement and make some of you taste of the might of others, then on the Day of Judgement shall you all remain for eternity in the painful torment on account of the injustice with which you have treated us; the curse of Allah be upon the oppressors. Woe unto you! Do you know what hand you have stabbed, what soul found it agreeable to fight us? With what feelings did you walk towards us with the intention to fight us? Your hearts became hardened, and Allah sealed your hearts, your hearing, and your vision, and Satan inspired you and dictated, placing a veil over your eyes, so you can never be guided. Destruction is your lot. O people of Kufa! What a legacy of the Prophet (SAW) is standing before you, and what blood revenge will he seek from you on account of your enmity towards his brother Ali ibn Abu Talib, my grandfather, and towards his good and righteous.?! Yet you even brag about it saying,

*We killed Ali and Ali's sons,
With Indian swords and spears
And we placed their women in captivity
Like Turks! We crushed them with severity.*

May stones and pebbles fill your mouths! You brag about killing people whom Allah chose and whom He purified with a perfect purification and from whom He kept away all abominations. Suppress it, then, and squat just as your fathers did, for each will get the rewards of what he earned and will be punished for what he committed. Woe unto you, for you felt jealous of us for what Allah, the most Exalted One, favoured and preferred us. Such is Allah's favour; He bestows his favours upon whomsoever He pleases, and surely with Allah are great favours. For whoever Allah does not make a *noor*, he shall have no light at all.

SPEECH OF IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (AS)

On the same day (the 11th of Moharram), Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) signalled to the people of Kufa to be silent. Having praised Allah, said:

O people! Whoever recognizes me knows me, and whoever does not, let me tell him that I am Ali son of al-Husain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib. I am the son of the man whose sanctity has been violated, whose wealth has been plundered, whose children have been seized. I am the son of the one who has been slaughtered by the Euphrates neither out of blood revenge nor on account of an inheritance. I am the son of the one who has been killed in the worst manner. This suffices me to be proud. O people! I plead to you in the name of Allah: Do you not know that you wrote to my father and then deceived him? Did you not grant him your covenant, your promise, and your allegiance, then you fought him? May you be ruined for what you have committed against your own souls, and out of your corrupt views! Through what eyes will you look at the Messenger of Allah when he says to you, "You killed my progeny, violated my sanctity, so you do not belong to my nation?"

Loud cries and wailing's were heard from the gathering. The Imam continued thus:

May Allah have mercy on anyone who acts upon my advice, who safeguards my legacy with regard to Allah, His Messenger and his Ahl al-Bayt, for we have in the Messenger of Allah a good example of conduct to emulate.

Yazid was under the impression that after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS), the world would recognize his power and

authority. Throughout the streets people thronged to see the "captives" of Kerbala who had been branded as those who had revolted against the ruler and *Khalifatul Muslimeen*. Yazid had even invited foreign dignitaries, including a Roman delegation to his court to witness "the show." But Yazid's hopes were dashed when the leader of the captives, Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) who was chained, handcuffed and bleeding around his neck, from his feet stood up in Yazid's court, raised his head and commenced his sermon thus:

Praise be to Allah Who has no beginning, Whose entity is eternal, the First without a beginning, the Last without an end, the One who will exist when everything else will cease to be. He it is Who split time and space into nights and days and blessed these with His grace. Listen, O people:

We (the Ahl al-Bayt) are divinely blessed with six virtues and seven distinct honours. Knowledge, gentleness, charity, eloquence, courage and **Mu'min's** love for us is personified in us. We have the honour that Prophet Mohammad (SAW), the last of the Divine Messengers, Ali the Truthful one, al-Tayyar (Ja'far) the ever vigilant. Hamza the lion of Allah and of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Iman Hasan and Imam Husain (AS) all belong to our genealogical stock.

Listen, O People:

Those who know me, know me well; as for those who do not, I have told them about myself and my ancestral lineage. I am the son of *Mecca* and *Mina*. I am the Son of *Zamzam* and *Safa*. I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet (SAW)) who lifted the sacred black stone (*al-Hajr al-Aswad*) wrapped in a sheet of cloth. I am the son of him (The Holy Prophet (SAW) who was the exalted of all prophets. I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet

(SAW)) who ascended into the heavens astride the Buraq (the horse-like celestial animal on which Prophet Mohammad ascended to Heaven). I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet (SAW)) whom Hazrat *Jibrael* (archangel -Gabriel) (AS) took up to the berry tree near *Jannat al'Ma'wa*. I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet (SAW)) who had the honour to be at '*Qaaba Qawsain*' (the distance of two bow throws). I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet (SAW)) with whom the angels offered their prayers in the sky. I am his son (the Holy Prophet (SAW)) whom Allah Almighty blessed with His special revelations. I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet (SAW)) who fought religious wars at Badr and Hunain at the front. I am the one who never went near disbelief in Allah even for a fraction of a moment. I am the heir of the Divine prophets, the most pious of the *Mu'mins*, the leader of the Muslims, and the most daring annihilator of disbelievers, apostates, aggressors and other evil doers. I am the steadfast son of Imam Hasan, Imam Husain and Ali bin Abi Talib (AS). I am the son of Fatima Zahra (SA), the most exalted of all women in the world. I am the son of Khadija al-Kubra. My father lies slain on the bloody sands of Kerbala. I am his son (Imam Husain's), over whom angels weep in the darkness of nights and birds lament in their flight.

Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) also delivered another sermon in Medina upon his return from Damascus. Everyone gathered there was weeping and crying. The Imam signalled to them to calm down, then he stated the following:

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, the King of the day of Judgement, Creator of all creations Who is exalted in the high heavens, Who is so near, He hears even the silent speech. We praise Him on the

grave events, on time's tragedies, on the pain inflicted by such magnanimous and afflicting hardships, O people! Allah, the most Exalted One, praise to Him, has tried us with great trials and tribulations, with a tremendous loss suffered by the religion of Islam. The father of Abdullah al-Husain and his family have been killed, and his women and children taken captive. They displayed his head in every land from the top of a spear; such is the catastrophe similar to which there is none at all. O people! Which men among you are happy after him, or which heart is not grieved on his account? Which eye among you withholds its tears and is too miser with its tears? The seven great heavens wept over his killings; the seas wept with their waves, and so did the heavens with their corners and the earth with its expanse; so did the trees with their branches and the fish in the depths of the seas. So did the angels who are close to their Lord. So did all those in the heavens. O people! Which heart is not grieved by his killing? Which heart does not yearn for him? Which hearing hears such a calamity that has befallen Islam without becoming deaf? O People! We have become homeless, exiles, outcasts, shunned, distanced from all countries as though we were the offspring of the Turks, without having committed a crime, nor an abomination, nor afflicted a calamity on Islam! Never did we ever hear such thing from our fathers of old. This is something new. By Allah! Had the Prophet (SAW) required them to fight us just as he had required them to be good to us, they would not have done to us any more than what they already have. So we belong to Allah and to Him is our return from this calamity, and what a great, painful, hard, cruel, and catastrophic calamity it is! To Allah do we complain of what has happened to us, about the suffering we have endured, for He is the Omnipotent, the vengeful.

JANAB ZAINAB'S HISTORIC ROLE

"If you are asked to imagine a lady who saved the heavens from falling, it would be difficult, as it seems both strange and lying beyond imagination. However, if we give a little serious attention to the simple facts, which stand to reason, we would be able to comprehend it. Such fall of Divine Embassy in the human world is, in fact, the fall of heavens and earth. But the mighty storm of evil forces, let loose on the Imam (Imam Husain), to crush his will, exhausted themselves only to find the Imam utterly undisturbed in his will; his esteem highly intact in a blissful adherence to the Divine Will which addressed him as the "*al-Nafs al-Mutmainna*" (the soul which is in perfect harmony and balance, supplying harmony and order to the cosmos as well). But the battle did not end at Kerbala; in fact, the real battle had started from the martyrdom onwards as the fruits of martyrdom remained to be consolidated. It is on this highly crucial juncture that Janab Zainab emerged as the mighty light-bearer of the Divine Will. She handled this moment with such a tremendous gravity that the cosmic gravitation, which was at stake, remained intact, owing to the gravity of her words and actions. And she came so heavily upon the very foundation of the anti-divine stronghold that the latter crushed to pieces and its true identity was exposed forever. Had she shown even the slightest weakness in her will, the earth and heavens would have weakened by the same degree. She held upon the strength of her will the Divine Cause so precisely and so infallibly in place that the Divine Order remained intact and, thus, she saved the heavens from falling. The measure of her spirit is unfathomable because in the fold of her courage lie all the dimensions of the mighty will of the great prophets and Imams. "She proved [to possess] the mettle of her mother Fatima al-Zahra, the embodiment of the al-Isamat al-Kubra. The order of this universe rests on their indomitable moral order of existence. If they are gone, the order in nature is gone too" as suggested in an article titled "Janabe Zainab in the Cosmic Perspective" by Prof. Dr. Syed Abul Qasim.

It is the indomitable personality of Janab-e- Zainab, which quite distinctly stands out as the one that helped propagate the cause for which Imam Husain (AS) laid down his and his companions' lives. She led the battle to unmask the treacherous regime of Yazid and established the Azadari Institution with the sole purpose of propagating the truth and exhorting the masses to practice *Amr bil Maroof and Nahī un il Munkar* (enjoining the doing of what is commonly known as good and prohibiting the doing of evil). Islam is indebted to Janab Zainab for saving it from distortion and annihilation after the Kerbala tragedy. Had she not taken the lead, Imam Husain's sacrifice might not have achieved the same results as were intended. We owe the preservation of our Kalima in its present form to our Lady Janab Zainab who, through the Institution of Azadari, has ensured its perpetuation till Doomsday.

Having acknowledged the contribution of Janab Zainab to the preservation of the Islamic faith and values, I would like to quote below some of her sermons and speeches which have been preserved by history and which help lift the veil of false propaganda from the Kerbala tragedy and bring the truth in focus.

The readers are, however, requested to visualize the situations and circumstances during which these and other speeches were delivered by Bibi Zainab, Fatima Kubra and Imam Zainul Abideen (AS). The sons, relatives and companions of Imam Husain (AS) were all brutally murdered by the Yazidi forces while these ladies and children were taken prisoner and paraded in the streets of Kufa and Damascus. The captors intended to degrade and humiliate the offspring of the Prophet (SAW), i.e. the Ahlul Bayt (AS). Under these circumstances, to keep cool and composed, and to be able to deliver thought-provoking and eloquent speeches, requires absolutely super-human caliber and guts. It is in this perspective that you have to read their sermons and speeches. In the face of such mighty opposition and destruction brought about by the enemies of Islam, to speak so fearlessly and to place the facts before the misinformed and misguided public was possible only by the inheritors of the legacy of *Mubahala* and the '*Aal-e-Kisa*. Following is another Kufa speech, which she delivered:

HAZRAT ZAINAB ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE OF KUFA

Hazrat Zainab addressed the people of Kufa who had gathered for the show, i.e. to witness the "prisoners of war." The bazaar was over-crowded with spectators on account of the false and misleading publicity propped up by the Yazidi government. Janab-e-Zainab, in her address, reconstructed with great eloquence the atrocities committed by ibn Ziyad and the Yazidi forces on the fields of Kerbala. She exposed the wrong beliefs injected into the minds of the antagonists towards the Prophet's Progeny, apprising the Kufians of the true character of the adversaries of the House of the Prophet (SAW). She addressed them in the commanding voice with oratorical excellence reminiscent of her father Hazrat Ali (AS). The crowd was held spellbound when she started thus:

Praise be to Allah the Almighty and may His blessings be upon my father, Prophet Muhammed Mustafa (SAW) and his righteous progeny (AS). O You treacherous people of Kufa! Listen: Weep, O you people! May your tears and sighs never cease. You are like the old woman that un-knits the fabric after having once spun the yarn and woven it into a piece of cloth. You are used to deceiving each other after swearing that you would be true to your word. Do you, people, possess any quality of character other than vanity, falsity and perversity? You are like the slave girls who excel in flattering their masters. You are like the treacherous enemy who has no scruples whatsoever. You are like a fodder of the horse or the flowery bed over the grave. What a mass of evil you people have collected for the hereafter! Know you, O people, the wrath of Allah is destined for you. You stand condemned to hell, where you all will suffer for eternity. O you people! You are weeping for us after having brutally murdered us. By Allah, weeping is what you people deserve. So, weep, do weep and weep well. Laugh a little, for you have so irretrievably stained yourselves with evil and

shame that nothing can ever wash the blot. How can you ever remove this blot? How can you ever repent enough to undo what you have done? You have brutally murdered the beloved grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (SAW), the last of the Messengers of Allah. You have slain the sacred person who is the Master of the Youths of Paradise, the refuge for the good ones from among you, the haven of redress for the distressed, the guiding light in your life and an eloquent spokesman of the truth. You used to seek his refuge in every calamity, and you used to learn about religion and its divine laws from him. So, you have, indeed, collected too heavy a sinful burden to account for on the Day of Reckoning. There is now no salvation for you, people; you are doomed to destruction. You are destined to be flung face down into hell fire. You are beyond redemption, and you must hopelessly remain so. May your arms be chopped off! All your promises will gain nothing spilled?! We are the ladies of Prophet Muhammed's sacred family. Look! Whom have you dragged unveiled into public scrutiny?! 'The gravity of the crime you have committed is so serious that the heavens may fall from their places. You may wonder why the sky did not let loose a shower of blood in cognizance of your evil doings. But rest assured, what you will witness in the hereafter will be far more diabolic and disgraceful than you expect. So, do not be jubilant and boastful because of the respite, which you have at the moment. The Almighty Lord does not act hastily in carrying His punishment out, for time cannot bypass the moment of His vengeance. The Lord is ever vigilant of the evil doers.

These proclamations moved the audience so much that they involuntarily started sobbing and crying loudly, thereby transforming the assembly into a mourning gathering.

HAZRAT ZAINAB AT IBN ZIYAD'S COURT

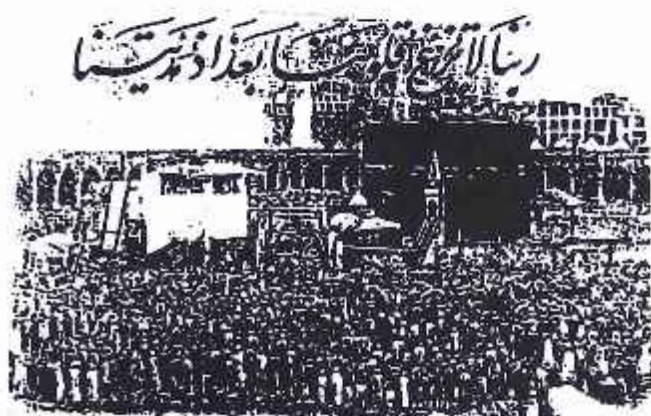
At the court of Ibn Ziyad, the severed head of Imam Husain (AS) was placed in front Ibn Ziyad who kept hitting it with a rod. Zaid bin al-Arqam broke into tears and warned Ibn Ziyad not to do this as he had himself seen the Messenger of Allah kissing those lips. Ibn Ziyad scolded Bin al-Arqam, upon which the latter warned everyone saying, "A slave is now a monarch ruling them, treating them as his property. O Arabs! Henceforth, you are the slaves! You have killed Fatima's son and granted authority to the son of Marjana who kills the best from among you and permits your evil ones to be worshipped. You have accepted humiliation, so away with whoever accepts humiliation."

Ibn Ziyad addressed Janab Zainab saying, "Praise be to Allah Who exposed you to shame, who killed you and proved you liars." She responded by saying, "Praise be to Allah Who honoured us by choosing Muhammed (SAW) (from among us) as His Prophet and purified us with a perfect purification. Rather, only a debauchee is exposed to shame, and a sinner is proven to be a liar, and we are neither."

Ibn Ziyad asked her, "How have you seen what Allah has done to your Ahl al-Bayt?" She replied, "I have seen Him treating them most beautifully. These are People for whom Allah prescribed martyrdom, so they leaped from their beds welcoming it. Allah shall gather you and them, and you shall be questioned, and your opponents shall charge you; so, you will then find out whose lot shall be the crack of hell, may your mother, O son of Marjana, lose you". This statement enraged Ibn Ziyad who wanted to kill her but was restrained by Amr Ibn Hareeth.

Ibn Ziyad then turned to Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) and after exchange of words ordered him to be killed. Janab-e-Zainab put her arms around the Imam and said "O Ibn Ziyad! suffices you not what you have shed of our blood—have you really spared anyone other than this? If you want to kill him, kill me with him as well." The Imam said to Ibn Ziyad, "Do you not know that we

are used to being killed, and that martyrdom is one of Allah's blessings upon us?" Ibn Ziyad looked at both of them saying, "Leave him for her. Amazing is their tie of kinship; she wishes to be killed with him."



HAZRAT ZAINAB AT YAZID'S COURT

Hazrat Zainab heard Yazid quoting the following verses by Bin al-Zubari:

I wish my forefathers at Badr had witnessed
How the Khazraj are by the thorns annoyed,
They would have glorified and unified Allah
Then they would make *tahleel* and say in elation:
"May your hands, O Yazid, never be paralyzed!"
We have killed the masters of their chiefs
And equated it with Badr, and it was so, indeed,
[Banu] Hashim played with the dominion so indeed,
No news came, nor was there a revelation revealed.
I do not belong to Khandaf if I do not
Seek revenge from Ahmed's children
For what he to us had done.

Having heard these words, Janab Zainab responded thus:

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds.
Allah has blessed His Messenger and all his
Messenger's progeny. Allah, Glory to Him, has
said the Truth when He said, "Then the end of
those who committed evil was that they disbelieved
in Allah's signs and they were ridiculing them
(Qur'an, 30: 10)." Do you, O Yazid, think that
when you blocked all the avenues before us, so we
were driven away as captives, that we are light in
the sight of Allah and that you are superior to us?
Or is it because you enjoy with Him a great status,
so you look down at us and become arrogant,
elated, when you see the world submissive to you
and things are done as you want them, and when
your authority and power became all yours? But
wait! Have you forgotten that Allah has said, "Do
not regard those who disbelieved that We grant
them good for themselves. We only give them a

respite so that they may increase their sins, and for them there is a humiliating torment (Qur'an 3:178)"?

Is it fair, O son of *taleeqs*, that you keep your free as well as slave women in their chambers and, at the same time, drive the daughters of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) away as captives with their veils removed and faces exposed, taken by their enemies from one land to another, being viewed by those at watering places as well as by those who man your forts, with their faces exposed to the looks of everyone near or distant, lowly or honourable, having none of their protectors with them nor any of their men? But what can be expected from one (who descended from those) whose mouths chewed the livers of the purified ones [a reference to Hind, wife of Abu Sufyan, Yazid's grandfather, who chewed the liver of Hazrat Hamzah, Uncle of Prophet Muhammed (SAW)] and whose flesh grows out of the blood of the martyrs? How can it be expected that one who looks at us with grudge and animosity, with hatred and malice, would not hate us, we Ahl al-Bayt? Besides, you, without feeling any guilt or weighing heavily what you say, recite:

Then they would make tahleel and say in elation,

"May your hands, O Yazid, never be paralyzed!"

Yazid had a cane in his hand with which he was hitting the teeth and lips of Imam Husain's severed head lying in front of him on a platter. Janab Zainab addressed Yazid thus:

How dare you hit the lips of Abdullah's father, the Master of the Youths of Paradise? But why should you not do so, since you stirred a wound ~~that~~ almost healed, and since all mercy is removed from

your heart, having shed the blood of the offspring of Muhammed (SAW) and the stars on earth from among the family of Abdul-Muttalib? Then you cite your mentors as if you speak to them. Soon shall you be lodged with them, and soon shall you wish you were paralyzed and muted and never had said what you have said nor done what you have. O Allah! Take what belongs to us out of his hands, seek revenge against all those who oppressed us and let Your Wrath descend upon whoever shed our blood and killed our protectors! By Allah! You have burnt only your own skin! You have cut only your own flesh! You shall come face to face with the Messenger of Allah, peace of Allah be upon him and his progeny, bearing the burdens of the blood which you have shed, the blood of his offspring, and of his sanctities which you violated, the sanctities of his women, kinsfolk, flesh and blood, when Allah gathers them together and seeks equity on their behalf. *"And do not reckon those who are slain in the way of Allah as dead. Nay! They are living with their Lord, receiving their sustenance (Qur'an 3:169)."* Allah suffices you as your Judge and Muhammed, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, as your opponent, and *Jibrael* as your foe. All those who instigated you to do what you did and who put you in charge so that you might play havoc with the lives of the Muslims, how evil the end of the oppressors is! You shall have the worst place and will be the least protected. Although calamities have forced me to speak to you, I nevertheless see you small in my eyes and find your verbal attacks too much to be ignored, and I regard your rebukes too much to bear, but these eyes are tearful, and the heart is filled with sorrow. What is even more strange is that the honoured party of Allah is being killed by *the taleeq party of Satan*. Your hands are dripping with our blood, your mouths are

feeding on our flesh, while those sacred and pure corpses are offered as food to the wild beasts of the desert and are defaced by the brutes. If you regard us as your booty, you shall soon find us your opponents, that will be when you find nothing but what your hands had committed, and your Lord never treats His servants unjustly, To Allah is my complaint, and upon Him do I rely. So, scheme whatever you wish to scheme, and carry out your plots, and intensify your efforts, for by Allah, you shall never be able to obliterate our mention, nor will you ever be able to kill our inspiration, nor will your shame ever be washed away. Your view shall be proven futile, your days numbered, and your wealth wasted on the Day when the caller calls out: "The curse of Allah be upon the oppressors (Qur'an 11:18)." All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Who sealed the life of our early ones with happiness and forgiveness, and that of our last with martyrdom and mercy. We plead to Allah to complete and to bestow His rewards upon them and to enhance the same, making succession good for us. He is the most Merciful, the most Compassionate. Allah suffices us, and how Great He is!



KERBALA TRAGEDY AND PUBLIC REACTION

So thorough was the ignorance of the people in general and that of Damascus in particular about the Prophet's family members (the Ahlul Bayt) that during one Friday sermon, as per the Government directives, when Hazrat Ali (AS) was being cursed from the pulpit, as was the Umayyad tradition that was started by Mu'awiyah and lasted for more than 80 years, a certain person asked as to who "Abu Turab" (Hazrat Ali's title) was. The man sitting next to him said, "I really do not know. He must be one of the bedouins of Arabia"! Similarly, there was one person in Syria who, on being asked about Janab Fatima (AS), gave a baffling reply, calling her father as husband, her husband as father, and instead of calling her daughter of the Prophet (SAW), he described her as his wife! This was the state of public enlightenment! The masses were told that Bani Umayyah were the lawful successors of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and that the Prophet (SAW) had left no progeny of his own except the Umayyads.

Thus, the public addresses, speeches and sermons of Hazrat Zainab and Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) provided an opportunity to the general public to know the facts and the truth about the "victory" of the Umayyads. The courageous discourses and the unyielding dialogues between the Yazidi group and the members of the Ahl al-Bayt were such that they shook the world's conscience, and the people started seeing things in their true perspective. It is a normal trait of the human nature that when a person is deliberately kept in the dark about the things he ought to have been told correctly and honestly, and when all of a sudden he comes to know the facts, the automatic reaction is that of revolt against those who kept him in the dark. A sense of being cheated and fooled overtakes him. The reaction is then violent. Intoxication of success on the part of the "apparent" victors of Kerbala subsequently rendered the enemies themselves instrumental in the propagation of the Imam's mission for an appreciable period of time.

Sporadic revolts and uprisings against Yazid as a reaction to the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) and his companions was the natural corollary to the atrocities committed by the enemies

of Islam. Yazid used barbaric means, but his attempts to stem the tide proved futile. Apart from other abominable acts on the part of Yazid, *the burning of the Ka'ba*, the holiest of holy places in Islam, is yet another unpardonable crime. Catapults were installed around Mecca and fireballs were hurled and the Ka'ba was soon in flames. Its walls collapsed and were burnt down, and its ceiling crumbled (see Al-Mas'udi's voluminous book *Muruj al-Thahab*). Pleas to spare the Ka'ba went unheeded. This happened in 61 A.H. (December of 680 A.D.). Yazid died within a fortnight of this attack.

SPEECH OF MU'AWIYAH SON OF YAZID

Yazid's death meant that his son, Mu'awiyah bin Yazid (also known as Mu'awiyah II), was to succeed him. But the son renounced his father and delivered an eye-opening speech announcing his abdication from the throne, which was usurped by his forefathers. The speech, coming as it was from Yazid's son, is proof enough of the victory scored by Imam Husain (AS) over Yazid and should serve as an eye-opener for those who may still have a soft corner in their hearts for the devilish Yazid. The text of the said speech is excerpted from the classic book *Hayat-ul-Haiwan* by al-Dameeri as recorded on page 77, Vol. I (Egyptian edition). My translation may not be exact due to the richness and complexity of Arabic, so I request the reader to forgive my imperfection. However, the feelings and the facts as described by Mu'awiyah bin Yazid has been translated truthfully and to the best of my ability. The speech reads as follows:

"O people! Beware that I am not inclined to rule over you because of that great shameful act which was committed by you. Surely I know that you do not like us because we participated with you in tyranny and sin and vice versa. Yes, my grandfather differed and quarreled with that personality (Hazrat Ali) on the question of caliphate. That person was better and more

deserving than all others. He was great on account of his relationship with the Prophet (SAW), his great superiority and his being the first to acknowledge the Prophet (SAW) and to accept Islam. He was greater than all others in commanding respect and prestige among all the immigrants. He was the bravest of all and possessing more knowledge than all others put together. He was the first of the believers. He was the greatest of all prestigious people and had the priority and preference over others in accompanying his uncle's son, the Messenger of Allah (SAW). And he was the son-in-law of the Prophet (SAW) and his cousin to whom the Prophet (SAW) had given his daughter Fatima (AS) with her consent, in marriage. And he was the father of the masters of the youths of Paradise (*Sardaran-e-Jannat*). On account of the training of the Prophet (SAW), he is the best among the Muslim Ummah. The sons of Fatima (AS) are from the sacred tree (*Shajar-e-Tayyaba*) (genealogy). My grandfather [Mu'awiyah] acquired that thing, that position [caliphate], which you all know, and you occupied that position and place of which you were quite ignorant and [for which] unsuitable, so much so that for my grandfather, the government became smooth and the sailing was good and the deeds of his government all became his right. But when my grandfather died, he went to his grave alone along with his deeds. Whatever bad deeds he had committed in life, he reaped the results in his grave. The caliphate was transferred to my father Yazid and he, in accordance with the wishes of his father, accepted to be the head of the wretched government. My father, on account of his evil deeds, tyranny and excesses was not at all suited for ruling over the Prophet's Ummah. He was subservient to his desires, animal desires, and considered his mistakes as good and attempted to

revolt against Allah. He fought battles against the children of the Prophet (SAW) whose respect and sanctity was a sacred duty. And he insulted the Prophet's family and revolted against them, so much so that his life shortened and all his traces erased. He also went to his grave with all his evil in him, but his evil effects remained. Whatever he had sent ahead of him, he got the same. Now his repentance cannot benefit him. Alas! What he said and what was said of him! Surely because of his evil deeds he received punishment from Allah and his deeds were squarely rewarded. This is my opinion of all things gone before me. (At this point, Mu'awiyah bin Yazid stopped and wept bitterly for quite a while, then continued as follows).

I am the third person of this family. I cannot carry the burden of your sins, and Allah should not witness me carrying your load and taking responsibility for your deeds. I leave your affairs to you. You may select or elect anyone whom you may choose to be your ruler and leader. I withdraw my authority over you and free you from the oath of allegiance that you had taken in my favour. If caliphate is the prize of war, then my father had received it and earned sin for it. If it is something bad, then he earned what he deserved.

Having delivered this sermon to his people, Mu'awiyah bin Yazid stepped down the pulpit and went to his palace from where, forty days later, his dead body was taken out to be buried. It is not known whether he died of natural causes or was murdered for exposing the evil deeds of Banu Umayyah committed against the House of the Prophet (SAW).

Mu'awiyah bin Yazid's speech is an example of the reactions towards the public addresses and sermons delivered by the "captives" of the Kerbala tragedy who informed the masses of the true motives and the treacherous killings resorted to by the Banu Umayyah against the House of the Holy Prophet of Islam (SAW).

THE HATE CAMPAIGN

Banu Umayyah ruled from 41 A.H. to 142 A.H. (662 to 760 A.D.). The Abbasids, their successors, started making inroads in 132 A.H. The seeds of hatred were sown by Banu Umayyah who were later dispossessed of *Khilafat* by Banu Abbas who, in their time, also acted against the House of the Prophet (SAW). The atrocities committed by the reigning Khalifas (caliphs) against the House of the Prophet (SAW) and their followers may be seen from the following few incidents quoted from the vast number of atrocities and persecutions carried out over several centuries after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS). History has preserved it. Since it is not within the scope of this presentation to discuss in detail the atrocities committed by the so-called Muslim caliphs and rulers of the supposedly Islamic governments, I am merely throwing a cursory glance on various periods. Those of you who would like to know more of the ordeals faced by the followers of the House of the Prophet (SAW) may consult other books on Islamic history. You may also refer to a book dedicated entirely to this theme, namely Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani's book *Maqatil al-Talibiyyeen*.

YAZID INVADES MEDINA

When the looted caravan of the martyrs of Kerbala entered Medina, and the holy city came to know of the atrocities committed by Yazid, its people revolted against Yazid who sent his army under the leadership of Muslim bin Uqbah to kill several hundred innocent people. His men raped chaste women and children; refer to *Yaqut al-Hamawi's Mu'jam al-Bulda* where the town of Harra is discussed.

Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) also saw how the invading army lodged their horses at the Prophet's Mosque, turning the sacred place into a filthy stable filled with horses' refuse. The Imam was greatly pained but kept quiet, setting an example of forbearance and endurance.

AL-HAJJAJ BIN YUSUF AL-THAQAFI

A few years after Yazid's death and after that of his son Mu'awiyah II, a reign of terror was unleashed on innocent people; the Umayyads were at it again. A large number of supporters of the Prophet's family were killed.

ABD AL-MALIK BIN MARWAN

This Umayyad ruler ordered an attack on Mecca in 72 A.H./692 A.D. and had the governor replaced by a Syrian rogue named Thu'labah who was totally against everything and anything Islamic while still claiming to be a Muslim and ruling in the name of Islam! **The Ka'ba was burnt.** Marwan, the caliph, was not satisfied with the sedentary life, the life of seclusion, which Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) was leading. The Imam was entirely devoting himself to worshipping his Lord and preaching Islam. **Preaching Islam has always bothered the rulers who lack its practice. This had been so in the past, and it is so even today.** Turkey, for example, was once the defender of Islam, now its government, coming under the thumb of the Zionists and the Imperialists, is fighting Islam with all its might and means. The same can be said about Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the list goes on and on. Abd al-Malik ordered the governor of Medina to arrest the Imam and to send him to Damascus in chains. This was done. Later on, the Imam was allowed to return to Medina. The cruel Umayyad regime could not tolerate the Imam, so Walid bin Abdul Malik had him poisoned. The Imam (AS) died inside Medina's jail.

HISHAM BIN ABDUL MALIK

As is the case with other Umayyads, this "caliph" not only harassed the Prophet's family, but he also persecuted their followers. He was succeeded by al-Walid bin Yazid bin Abdul Malik followed by Yazid bin al-Walid followed by Ibrahim bin al-Walid, then by Marwan, al-Himar with whom Banu Umayyah's tyrannical regime came to an end and the Abbasids took over.

THE ABBASIDS WERE NO BETTER, EITHER

AL-MANSUR

He tried to annihilate the Sayyids (the Prophet's offspring). He had Muhammed bin Ibrahim bin al-Hasan walled alive. It is reported that whenever the Abbasids built a house or a mansion, they would bring a number of descendants of the holy Prophet (SAW) whom they would place inside the new structure's columns, making their bodies part of the construction, slowly killing them by suffocation. For more details, refer to page 136 of *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin* by *Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani* where you will come across hundreds of such barbaric practices.

Al Mansur wanted to belittle Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (AS) in the eyes of the people who held the Imam in high esteem (AS). There are several reported incidents of such unsuccessful attempts on the part of al-Mansur. He was deadly against the followers of the House of the Prophet (SAW).

HAROON AR-RASHEED

He acceded to the throne and issued instructions that hollow building cylinders and columns were to be filled up with live bodies of the elite from among the Alawi youths. During his time, the followers of the House of the Prophet (SAW) faced untold miseries. There was a genuine fear of extinction among them. He even attempted to defile the sanctity of Imam Husain's shrine at Kerbala, but the Almighty foiled his evil plan.

AL-MUTAWAKKIL

He issued orders forbidding the public from visiting Kerbala and Nejaf for paying homage to the shrines of Imam Husain and Imam Ali (AS). He also attempted to demolish the shrine of Imam Husain (AS). During his reign, which lasted from 232 to 247 A.H. (847 to 861 A.D), he issued demolition orders four times. Imam Hasan al-Askari, a descendant of the Prophet (SAW), was imprisoned during his time.

During the caliphate of the Abbasid **al-Ta'i Lillah**, in 369 A.H/979-80 A.D., Zabbah bin Muhammed al-Asdi committed the crime of burning the shrine of Imam Husain (AS). He was later punished by the ruler Izzud-Dawlah who placed the shrine under his protection.

In 407 A.H./1016 A.D., during **al-Qadir Billah's** regime, a fire damaged the dome of Imam Husain's shrine. During the last days of the Abbasid caliphate, Baghdad witnessed a mass massacre of the followers of the House of the Prophet (SAW), so much so that the waters of the Tigris remained stained with blood for several days. Like their predecessors the Banu Umayyah, the Abbasids were also totally annihilated. The Tartars raided Iraq and pillaged Baghdad. **Hulegu** (1217 - 1265 AD) and later the Mongolian ruler, **Khuda Banda**, embraced Islam. Thus, the sacred shrines escaped demolition or pillaging.

This continued hatred against the House of the Prophet (SAW) and of their followers has continued, and I guess it always will.

THE WAHHABIS

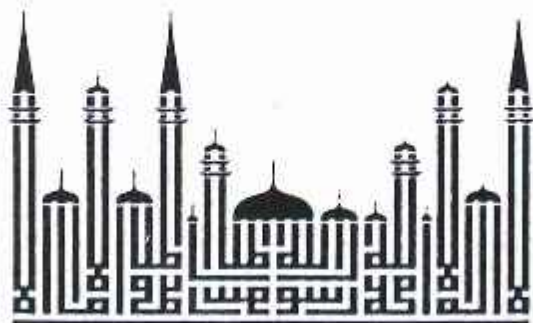
The followers of Muhammed bin Abdul Wahhab caused the most serious damage to the shrine of Imam Husain. The Al Saud bedouin clansmen embraced Wahhabism. On the 18th of Thul-Hijja, 1216 A.H. (April 21, 1801 AD.), Prince Saud mobilized an army of 20,000 to invade Kerbala. His army looted, burnt and killed more than 5,000 Muslims. Gold items, chandeliers, Persian rugs and historical relics were taken away from the shrine. These raids continued for the next 12 years thereafter, taking advantage of the weakening of the Ottoman Sultanate seated in Turkey. In 1218 A.H./1803 AD, during the *hajj* season, Abdul Aziz Al Saud attacked Mecca and looted whatever he and his troops could lay their hands on. In 1220-21 A.H./1905-06 AD, Mecca and Medina were again looted by the Wahhabis, and the cemetery where the graves of many relatives of the Prophet's family and those of his companions (*sahaba*) are located were razed to the ground and obliterated.

The next attempt was carried out on the 9th of the month of Ramadan 1225 A.H./ the 8th of October, 1810 AD when the same Wahhabis assaulted both Kerbala and Nejaf. Roads were

blocked, pilgrims were looted and massacred and the shrines were damaged.

The more recent of such attacks dates back to 1343 A.H./ 1924 AD when the Medina gravesites of the Prophet's *sahaba* (companions) as well as those of the Prophet's family members were destroyed. In 1413 A.H./1993 AD, the Wahhabis also demolished the house of Khadija, wife of the holy Prophet (SAW) as well as the house where the Prophet (SAW) was born, turning both of them into public bathrooms...!!! *Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilayhi Raji'oon* (We are Allah's, and to Him shall we return).

I have only briefly touched on the various periods of history simply to provide you with samples of the continuing hatred towards the followers of the House of the Prophet (SAW). I have not been able to find any logical reason for such an antagonistic attitude towards the House of the Prophet (SAW), surely the very best of all the houses in the history of mankind, and towards their followers except that the antagonists' worldly aspirations conflict with the Islamic teachings as practiced by the House of the Prophet (SAW). The readers should also think over the miracle of survival of the comparatively much smaller minority of the followers of the House of the Prophet (SAW). The cause behind such survival lies in the Institution of Azadari. How potent is the remedy provided by Janab Zainab (AS), who not only saved and preserved the *Kalima*, *your Kalima and mine, my Muslim Brother/Sister*, but also established an Institution intended to be the torch bearer for the propagation of the Islamic values.



THE INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

Having briefly described the Kerbala tragedy and the hostility of the ruling parties against the House of the Prophet (SAW) and their followers, I now wish to explain how, under very trying and difficult conditions, the message of Islam was protected from corruption, distortion and defacing. Such perils, strange enough, were caused by those who on one hand recite the Kalima and acknowledge Muhammed (SAW) as the Prophet of Allah but, on the other, indulge in looting and annihilating the progeny of the Prophet (SAW) and their sympathizers...! I strongly feel that had Janab Zainab and Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) not given the lead and encouraged the sympathizers to narrate the events of Kerbala, the truth would not have been known to the masses and the great sacrifice of Imam Husain (AS) would have gone down in history as yet another fight for power between two rival clans. The Muslim Ummah as a whole (if the conscience is not dead) should be thankful to those courageous personalities of the House of the Prophet (SAW), who dared to speak the truth in the face of the tyrant Yazid and his henchmen, checking them from completely defacing Islam. If we have the understanding of Islamic history and have read the same with an open mind, we should bow our heads in gratitude to Allah, Who through the House of the Prophet (SAW), have enabled us to know the truth and to hold fast to it. Imagine the "captives" of Kerbala led by the sick Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) heavily chained and a heavy iron collar hanging around his bleeding neck, who was made to walk barefoot from Kerbala to Kufa and from there to Damascus. The family of the Prophet (SAW) was also tied in ropes and were paraded through the streets of Kufa and Damascus in an attempt to degrade them and belittle them in the eyes of the ignorant and misinformed masses. These prisoners were also taken to the courts of Ibn Ziyad and Yazid, overflowing with the invitees to witness the supposed degradation and belittling of the Imam and the House of the Prophet (SAW).

Please, for a moment, visualize the situation and then read the speeches of Janab Zainab and Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) delivered in the courts and on the streets of the cities through which the captives were paraded during their long and arduous

journey. Since these historical speeches symbolize propagation of truth and negation of falsehood, the grateful followers of the house of the Prophet (SAW) have continued to repeat them in order to keep the torch burning and to guide humanity towards Islam. The persistence in demonstrating the injustice dealt to Imam Husain (AS) stirs the emotions and attracts the hearts of sympathizers. The tales of horrible events show that the Imam did not succumb to anything lowly and that he laid down his life; the lives of his kith and kin and those of his companions in order to uphold the lofty principles of Islam. *Now it is our obligation, we Muslims, to keep the cause alive and to propagate it to the rest of the world so that the torch is kept burning for the guidance of humanity.*

Precisely this is what is done at the *Majalis-e-Husain*. The background to the Kerbala tragedy and the details of the atrocities committed by the forces of evil, the patience and the courage of the companions of the Imam are all detailed, and the message of Islam is renewed and rejuvenated. These *Majalis* and commemorations of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) held during the month of Muharram and Safar have, over the centuries, become institutionalized. Azadar-ee-Husain is now an institution by itself designed to tell the world the numerous attempts made to subvert Islam in Kerbala, and to sound the warning to the Yazids of our time not to underestimate the strength and the will of the Muslims to thwart any attempt at harming Islam and the Muslims. Azadari is a moral obligation if we recognize Imam Husain (AS) as the saviour of Islam, which no doubt he is.

To me, and to many other researchers and historians, the origin of Azadari dates back to the first sermon which Janab-e-Zainab delivered at Kufa's bazaar. The purpose of Azadari is to inform the public of the truth and to warn them of the pitfalls of ever falling for falsehood. The foundations laid down by Hazrat Zainab and Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) have borne fruits. Throughout the centuries, wherever *Majalis-e-Husain* are held, the throngs of believers are informed of the various aspects of the Kerbala tragedy so that the lessons learned from the greatest of sacrifices offered in the history of mankind for upholding the highest values of life are not forgotten and the masses are reminded of the present day dangers of falling into the traps so skillfully set

in the way of the unsuspecting and innocent Muslims. This is the reason why the "infiltrators" into the Muslims' ranks are trying from within to sabotage the voices raised against the injustices perpetuated in the world. Voices of protest raised during these *Majalis* against injustice and coercion leave an imperceptible wave of fear among the world powers trying to hold on at all cost.

The first *Majlis-e-Husain* (gathering to commemorate Imam Husain's martyrdom) was held in a dilapidated house provided by Yazid in Damascus when, sensing revolt against his regime, he decided to release the prisoners from captivity, allowing them to return to Medina. Hazrat Zainab and Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) attended to the ladies and all those who gathered there to offer condolences and to listen to the details of the Kerbala tragedy.

The second *Majlis* was held in Kerbala after the captives had been freed and allowed to leave for Medina. The caravan stopped at Kerbala on its way to Medina. It halted at the gravesite of Imam Husain (AS) and at those of the other martyrs. It was surely quite a heart-rending scene...

The third *Majlis* was held at Medina when the caravan arrived there and the ladies visited Hazrat Zainab and others to offer their condolences. The men offered their condolences to Imam Zainul Abideen (AS). This continued for days and people came to the Imam from all parts to offer their condolences. From then on, it became a practice for the visitors of the House of the Prophet (SAW) to narrate the Kerbala tragedy and to offer condolences to the Imam.

Though apparently Yazid had freed the captives of Kerbala, the Banu Umayyah regime had not allowed them to enjoy complete freedom. For all practical purposes, Imam Zainul Abideen (AS) remained confined to his house and was not allowed to come into public contact. The followers of the House of the Prophet (SAW) were regularly harassed. They were stopped from holding *Majlis-e-Husain*, punished and persecuted. In spite of all these restrictions, the faithful did, however, manage to hold gatherings during which the Kerbala tragedies were described in detail and mourning for Imam Husain (AS) and his companions observed.

Both Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (AS) and Imam Jaf'ar al-Sadiq (AS) encouraged people to propagate Azadari. During their times, especially during the month of Muharram, mass mourning gatherings were arranged wherein the audiences were enlightened about the great sacrifices offered by Imam Husain (AS) at Kerbala. The opponents of the House of the Prophet (SAW) and their followers greatly suppressed the Muharram mournings and thus helped to perpetuate the divisions among the Muslim Ummah. Despite the restrictions imposed by the successive Muslim rulers, Azadari continued and the memory of Imam Husain (AS) became deeply rooted. Eminent historians and literary luminaries, like **Da'bal al-Khuza'i**, **al-Kumait**, both renowned poets, **Syyid al-Himyari**, the historians **al-Tabari**, **al-Ya'qubi** and **al-Mas'udi**, and many other writers and historians, gave masterly descriptions of historical events with their scholarly interpretations. **Abu Mikhnaf**, **Oqbah bin Sam'an** and **al-Zohak al-Mashriqi** added evidential weight to the institution of Azadari, thus making it an integral part of the Islamic history. It no longer remained confined to Mecca, Medina, Kufa or Kerbala. Wherever the devotees of Imam Husain (AS) went, they carried the legacy of Azadari with them; thus, this institution influenced all parts of the Islamic world. It has always done so, and it always will, thanks to the Kerbala tragedy.

When Banu Umayyah started losing control, the Abbasids started making inroads in 132 A.H., gradually taking control in 142 A.H. Their power lasted from then till 247 A.H. During their rule, the Alavis (Alavids or Alawis) and the Fatimids enjoyed relative freedom. For political reasons, not for the love of the House of the Prophet (SAW), the Abbasids had to express their gratitude to these who, in one way or another, directly or indirectly, helped them conquer the Umayyads. As such, freedom for Azadari enabled it to spread to Iran. With the advent of the Buwayhid (Aal-e-Bawaiyh) dynasty, in mid 4th century A.H., Azadari flourished. **Asad ad-Dawla** and **Mughir ad-Dawla** established Ashura (the 10th of Muharram) processions under their official auspices. During this period, literary giants such as **Shaikh al-Sadooq**, **Allama Abu Ja'far al-Toosi**, **Shaikh al-Mufeed**, **Syyid al-Razi**, **Syyid al-Murtaza** and **al-Tabari** were busy propagating Islam and its teachings. **Shaikh al-Sadooq** delivered

his sermons on the 1st, the 9th and the 10th of Muharram. Azadari spread to Hijaz (northern Saudi Arabia, as the land is now called after the corrupt Saudi dynasty), Yemen, Iran and Iraq. This was taking place around 368 A.H. The Buwayhid rule extended from 332 to 467 A.H. It promoted the establishment of Azadari in Iraq and Iran. Sultan Mu'izud-Dawla a-Dailami became governor of Baghdad in 334 A.H. he ordered the closure of all shops and marketplaces on the 10th of Muharram. The first public *Majlis-e-Husain* was held in Baghdad in 352 A.H.

The Turkish Saljuqs (or Seljuks) opposed the Buwayhid dynasty. When the latter came to power, they outlawed Azadari, terminated *Majalis-e-Husain* and the commemorative processions on the 10th of Muharram. All this took place in 442 A.H. But even at the risk of losing one's life or of banishment (exile), the devotees continued reciting *Majalis* privately and observing Muharram with the same zeal, solemnity and reverence as they had been taught by their ancestors and Imams (AS).

The Fatimid rulers introduced Azadari in Egypt. The Safavis did likewise in Iran. Shah Abdullah bin Hamdan did the same in Lebanon. The Alavis followed suit in Syria. The Nawabs and the Rajas patronized Azadari in India. The Afghans and the Ghoris line of rulers also promoted Azadari in India. Taimur, of Mongolia, raided India and promoted the institution of Azadari.

The Turks invaded Karkh and slaughtered the followers of the House of the Prophet (SAW). Unlike the Safavids, the Usmani (Ottoman) government clamped restrictions on Azadari.

In South India, especially in the Deccan areas, the Qutub Shahi rulers were in power from 918 to 1098 AH. The Adil Shahi dynasty in Bijapur ruled from 890 to 980 A.H./1310 to 1489 AD, patronizing Azadari, hence the Institution gained momentum. Aurangzeb, the Muslim Moghul emperor of India, fought the Adil Shahi governments of the south and defeated them. He demolished all traces of Azadari. This took place in 1117 A.H. What happened to the Muslim rule in India subsequently is history.

My sole purpose of mentioning, in passing reference, the attempts of the so-called "Muslim Rulers" to curb the *Azadari-e-Husain* is only to prove to you, the reader, the fact that such attempts at silencing the mourners of Imam Husain (AS) have never succeeded. On the contrary the attempts to stifle *Azadari-e-*

Husain provided fresh impetus and as a strong reaction *Azadari* emerged stronger than before. Such attempts were ushered by those who always opposed the implementation of Islam as a way of life and who never wanted to practice the Islamic teachings in their own lives. Yazid recited the Kalima and professed to be a "Muslim," but he never practiced Islam at all. He wanted to do whatever he liked, **NOT** what Islamic teachings dictate. For this reason, Imam Husain (AS) had to come out to preach '*Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar*' (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong), so he was slain by Yazid.

The Institution of *Azadari* is basically nothing more than the commemoration of Imam Husain's martyrdom and the reinforcement of '*Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar*'.

Azadari is:

- *Admission of the divine greatness of Prophet Muhammed (SAW) and of his progeny (AS).*
- *A genuine demonstration of one's belief in and support for Islam.*
- *A means of voicing protest against all manifestations of wickedness similar to that evident in Yazid's conduct and in those of his likes from among "Muslim" rulers in any time and clime.*
- *An open declaration of faith and respect for the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his Ahlul Bayt (AS).*
- *A means of propagating the true spirit and purpose of Islam not as an ideology but as a way of life.*

The Institution of *Azadari*, however, has adopted different shapes in different countries. The form of *majlis* recitation in different countries varied according to the local customs and culture in each. In some countries, during *Majalis-e-Husain*, the speaker confines himself to only narrating various *ahadith* of the Prophet (SAW) that clearly express, in unmistakable terms, his love for Imam Husain (AS) and for the *Aal-e-Kisa* (Ahl al-Kisaa') and their superiority over the Ummah. He then narrates the massacre at Kerbala and the hardship faced by the captives, the Prophet's offspring and that of their small band of supporters who

stood with them to the last minute. In some countries, the symbolic gesture of showing grief, i.e. the symbolic beating of the chest, without causing any physical harm, is accompanied by beating the drum. Other reciters may do so during the recitation of the tragic events in the form of poetry, which they compose and recite. In some other countries, the speaker resorts to reciting some verses from the Qur'an, then he elaborates on their implications, explaining the occasion when they were revealed and their relevance to the Kerbala tragedy. Thus, it provides an opportunity to the audience to understand the Qur'anic teachings particularly how such teachings were actually practiced by the Imams (AS) in their daily lives. The followers of the House of the Prophet (SAW) believe that the members of the said House practiced Islam, lived Islam, and that all their actions conformed to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Thus, the speaker, by relating the actions to the Qur'anic teachings, exhorts the audience to emulate these Imams (AS). Indo-Pakistani speakers generally observe this pattern. It can be said that this forum is intended to impart some knowledge of the Qur'anic verses and to briefly describe the history of early struggle, the efforts to save Islam from adulteration and distortion intended for it by the hypocrites. Such hypocrites, in every time and clime, put on the Islamic garb but in reality do not accept Islam at all, as their actions prove it.

Islam has not suffered at the hands of its open opponents as much as it has at the hands of those who disguise themselves as Muslims, thus misleading others while they themselves are the misled. In these *majails*, a serious attempt is undertaken to sound the alarm against such hypocrites and to exhort people to practice Islam rather than to give it their lip service.



CONCLUSION

From all the above, the respected reader can see for himself that the Institution of Azadari contains nothing repugnant to the teachings of Islam. On the contrary, **it provides a common platform for ALL Muslims** to unite and to stand up for what is right and to jointly oppose all oppressive practices perpetuated by the world hegemonists. My humble request to the readers is to ponder over the events of the last fourteen centuries. Ours is supposed to be a civilized age. Are we really behaving as civilized people? Just think over it and then decide for yourself as to **who has benefitted when the Muslims kill other Muslims.**

Islam is the religion of peace, knowledge and scholarship, not of hatred, nor of ignorance, and often ignorance begets hatred, and hatred incurs the Wrath of the Almighty. It is time that we all study Islamic history with an open mind. Let us find out for ourselves what the motives have been behind centuries old infighting and killings. Why this "hate campaign," which has been mostly promoted by the Wahhabis during the last two centuries and by other fanatics, against their brethren in Islam? Why have the ruling juntas, over the centuries, tried to suppress the holding of *Majalis-e-Aza*? What are they afraid of when Muslims remember and mourn the greatest tragedy in the history of mankind? They fear lest such platforms, such an Institution, should provide accurate information about what Islam is all about. They fear the revelation of such historical events may bring the Muslims closer together. They fear the unity of the Muslims which would give strength and increase their power. They like to keep the Muslims divided as it makes their task easier. Unity is the enemy of all tyrants of the world. "Divide and rule" is the motto not only of the British colonizers of bygone days but even of tyrants who preceded them and called themselves Muslims. Once Muslims are united, no world power can match their might, nor can any oppressive tyrant rule over them. Such might is derived from none but Allah, the Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Annihilator of all oppressors. It is the might begotten by conviction, by **IMAN.**

Let us not quibble about wearing the ring on the right or on the left hand, or about reciting the Basmala in the daily prayers audibly or silently, or about planing the graves or making them look like mounds, or about folding our hands or letting them down when we pray. Let us accept each other, respect each other,

support each other, love each other even while differing from each other in our views, inclinations, or interpretations. Such is the conduct of civilized people. Are we civilized? Do we adhere to all the above? I don't think so, and I bet my respected reader does not think so either. Let us not be agitated about the caliphate issue. Let us read and learn from various sources, not only from the sources with which we agree. Take cognizance of the historical facts and make 'reason' your guide in determining interaction among Muslims of varying perceptions.

It is a fact of history that Hazrat Ali was pressured to accept the caliphate after the death of the third caliph Uthman bin Affan. Hazrat Ali was the fourth caliph of the Muslims. The entire Muslim Ummah acknowledges that there had been only four "*Khulafa-e-Rashideen*" and that Ali (AS) was their last. Muslims also recognize that during the first, second and third caliphates, whenever the Muslims faced a precarious situation, Hazrat Ali (AS) was consulted and his advice sought. He ungrudgingly offered his advice, lending a helping hand in the service of Islam, humbling himself, the great genius that he was.

Here is a recognized fact of history: Ali (AS) is acknowledged by ALL Muslims as the most brave, the most knowledgeable, and the most pious of all, the man who never for a moment deviated from Islam all his life-long as preached by the Prophet (SAW) who raised him ever since he was born and who was for him like a father, and Ali is one of the "*Rashideen*"... Having acknowledged all of this without any contention, why should we harbour any opposition to him, to his offspring, or to his followers?! Opposing him is opposing the House of the Prophet (SAW). He always came to the rescue of the Islamic nation. Opposing him does not make sense at all. He and his saintly offspring never hesitated for a moment from laying down their lives for safeguarding the *Kalima, your Kalima and mine*. He and his offspring, with their holy blood, saved Islam from destruction. **YOU**, my dear reader, should **THINK** and contemplate over my humble suggestion. Do it for the sake of unity among the Muslims. Do it for the house of the Prophet (SAW), the best house in the history of mankind. Do not compromise the basics of Islam, the tenets of Islam, the injunctions of Islam....

The Prophet's family members did, indeed, cooperate even with those who opposed them and demonstrated prejudice against them, even persecuted them. Opposing certain practices merely because the House of the Prophet (SAW) and their followers

uphold them, as outlined above, just makes no sense at all. You have to judge an action solely through the following simple criterion: "Is this action Islamic or not?" Personal likes and dislikes, enmity towards some others, prejudices, personal interpretations, political ambitions..., cannot be the bases for such a judgement. You will be judged on the Day of Judgment by the Judge of Judges Who created an earth large enough for all of us. He hates to see the Muslim Ummah so divided and, hence, so weak, while its enemies are so united and so powerful politically and economically.

Unity is strength, my Brother. Once upon-a-time, the Muslim Ummah was the greatest on the face of earth, the most sophisticated and the most mighty. Nowadays, it is the most weak and the most humiliated, so much so that hardly any Muslim government could take any serious action when Muslim women were raped in Bosnia, Serbia, Chechnya and elsewhere. **Unity**, my friend, pleases the Almighty. He is One and He loves oneness. You cannot stop doing a thing simply because someone else, whom you dislike for some reason, does it. Putting it bluntly, you cannot stop being truthful, even with your own self. We should NOT stop helping the needy, going into business, or going to college... etc, simply because non-Muslims do so! Let us be objective about the whole affair and join hands in the true Islamic spirit. Let us form a unified Muslim Ummah capable of leading the world in the 21st century towards real peace and harmony instead of being an Ummah of underdogs. Do not oppose the suggestion of unity simply because it is coming from a humble follower of the House of the Prophet (SAW). Let the unrealistic and illogical opposition be a thing of the past. My heart bleeds and I am sure **YOU** also feel the same way, but there seems to be a barrier; an imperceptible barrier, which hampers your holding the hand of friendship extended towards you. Take courage and tear down that artificially created barrier so that we can proudly call ourselves Muslims, so that our Ummah may be united. This is the only way we can face the world, which is bent upon destroying the Islamic ideology.

Kerbala provides us with an undisputed platform whereupon we can all unite and gain such strength, which the world will find difficult to match. Here is a humble personal observation: Look at the Jews who seem to have taken the cue from the Institution of Azadari. They make it a practice to keep the memory of the holocaust alive in each and every conceivable

way, capitalizing on it, even sometimes going to extremes in their exaggerations. They fully exploit the story of genocide committed by Hitler against them, reaping unimaginable wealth and power. This persistence in keeping the memory of the holocaust alive has given the Jews power, means and unity. If others can learn lessons and thus benefit by adopting the basic principle of Azadari, why can't the Muslim Ummah come together on the same platform which can undisputedly infuse new life into the terribly disunited and fragmented Muslim Ummah? I am sure many readers have performed Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. Now think and tell me: Does not everyone offer prayers around the Ka'ba in perfect unison and behind the same prayer leader (Imam)? In Medina, at Masjid-e-Nabavi (the Prophet's Mosque), you find everyone offering prayers behind the same Imam. This is how Islam wants it to be. This is how it should always be. Do not simply follow the rituals. Adopt the spirit, and practice Islam as the Prophet (SAW) wanted us to. The *mullahs* and the self-styled preachers have their own axe to grind. Each may have different motive to keep the Ummah divided, and all this is done in the name of Islam! Imagine! The educated and the informed public have to take the lead, warn the dissenters and the rift-creating self-imposing *mullahs* to keep away from the pulpit and to stop using the masses for their own nefarious and narrow personal motives.

Unity of the Muslim Ummah is the call of the time. Please work for it, each in your own sphere of influence. May Allah grant you the vision to see for yourself how we have been manipulated century after century, how we have been fighting among ourselves, thus making the Muslims the most fragmented, the disjointed and the most weak of all nations of the world... May Allah grant us the courage to speak the truth and to do what is right. **Taking the first step is all that is needed.** May Allah be with you, *Allahomma Ameen.*

Due date

یہ کتاب آپ کے پاس امانت ہے۔ اسے پڑھیں، اس کی حفاظت کریں اور بروقت (اور درج آخری تاریخ تک) واپس کریں۔ تاخیر کی صورت میں جرمانہ ادا کرنا ہوگا۔

مجھے لائبریری سولجوا بازار کراچی فون: 7211795

"Remember! that extremes of right and left will lead you astray, moderation is the best course for you to adopt. It will keep you within the four corners of the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of our Prophet (SAW). It is a path which will guide you to the true impressions of the doctrines and life of the Prophet (SAW), it will lead you to the fountain-head of Sunnah (tradition) and along it is the correct route to liberation. Who ever claims to know a better path to salvation than disclosed by the Holy Prophet (SAW), is doomed; who frames and invents lies against its true principles is condemned; and one who tries to oppose it's precepts is fated for eternal destruction.

No individual is lost and no Nation is refused prosperity and success if foundations of their thoughts and actions rest upon piety and godliness, and upon truth and justice.

Do not create disturbance and discord among men, let there be peace and tranquility and try to advance friendship and Unity. Concentrate on atonement of your misdeeds."

(NAHJUL BALAGHA)

