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Imam Husayn's Revolution: An Analytical Review

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This survey of the unique revolution of Imam Husayn (as) is analytical in essence, its purpose is to give a qualitative rather than quantative account. The following account is only a person's viewpoint which is not necessarily the complete answer, nevertheless, it is based on the most popular and trustworthy authorities on the subject.

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Introduction

This survey of the unique revolution of Imam Husayn (as) is analytical in essence, its purpose is to give a qualitative rather than quantative account.

It has dealt with the causes, policies and results of the eternal revolution, in the hope of unveiling the startling aspects of the revolution's message which is often neglected in its traditional commemoration.

In being confronted with this event, many questions need to be answered; why did this revolution take place? What were its implications and procedures? And what were its conclusive results? These answers may provide a guiding light on which people can formulate their judgments.

The answers to the above questions are by no means easy, because they involve analysis of the prevailing conditions before and after the revolution. Indeed comprehensive answers would require a work of many volumes in order that one may be satisfied. Not to mention the stormy and turbulent events of the time, which add substantial difficulties in the way of objective research.

The following account is only a person's viewpoint which is not necessarily the complete answer, nevertheless, it is based on the most popular and trustworthy authorities on the subject.

To understand Imam Husayn's personality and the collective culture of the society, a summary of Islam's view of life is necessary.

The Islamic Message

Islam is a philosophy of life, it gives reasons and a set purpose for living. Furthermore, it defines the best ways to secure progress and happiness. This is done by elevating the spiritual side and satisfying the material needs of people.

Islam considers man as a Representative of God on earth. This status is a fine one, but it is also critical that its requirements be satisfied. Thus, because man is in an envied position, his acts and behaviours are expected to conform with that high level he is occupying.

The Islamic concepts and its laws are inseparable parts of the Islamic ideology. They are the practical expression of Islam in society and life in-general. These concepts and laws are essentially concerned with harmonizing people's relationships among themselves, with other beings, and above all with the Creator.

The basic Islamic outlook to this life is that of an introductory course. This worldly life is viewed as a prelude to another eternal life. Therefore, this world is a preparatory stage for people in order to attain the spiritual level which permits them to enter Paradise. The other side of the picture is the horror of Hell for people who misuse the powers at their disposal. Hence, success and failure are not measured with this worldly or materialistic supremacy.

The Islamic measure differs from materialistic standards by accounting for the life hereafter. The satisfaction of God is the sublime aim which surpasses all other inclinations and wishes. This is by no account neglecting materialistic supremacy, but putting it in its rightful place. It is with the satisfaction of God that Muslims seek materialistic supremacy.

Who Is Imam Husayn?

Imam Husayn's life and status in the Islamic history is formidable. Indeed, it is not of obscurity but because of the vitality and the significance of his contributions. The following account is only a very brief record of his qualities.

He was one of two sons of Imam Ali (as) and Fatimah (sa), the daughter of the Prophet (S). His father, Imam Ali, who needs no introduction, is acknowledged by those; far and near as well as friend and foe, as being openly declared by the Prophet, as Commander of the faithful. Needless to mention his knowledge, bravery, steadfastness, brotherhood to the Prophet, justice
and piety.

Fatimah (sa) was the dearest daughter to her father (S). Al-Tirmidhi narrated through Usamah ibn Zaid that the Prophet (S) said 'The dearest member of my family to me is Fatimah". She was declared by the Prophet as the master of all women in the whole world. She and her husband were members of the family who were signified for their qualities and roles.

They are examples of interest to Muslim men and women. Their role was an extension of the Prophet's role, in the sense of leading the great cultural transformation from the darkness of non-Muslim culture to the brightness of heavenly light.

Historians recorded the birth of Imam Husayn as an exciting event for the Muslims in Madina and especially to the Prophet of God. The Prophet (S) was even concerned with the name given to his grandson, 'Husayn'. As the news flared up in the sky, the Muslims congratulated each other for the new child whom the Prophet considered as his own son.

The Prophet once declared, "Husayn is of myself and I am of Husayn, O, God be pleased with those who please Husayn". This statement was not accidental nor the result of emotional strain as it is wrongly claimed sometimes. This declaration came from a responsible wise leader, the Prophet of God who would never commit a mistake during the performance of his Prophetic task. He was delivering the Islamic Message and informing people of those who will act as springs and guardians for this Message in the future.

Emotions and sentiments are not loose in a Muslim's life, but are controlled by Islamic concepts and ideals. There has always been a criterion for liking and disliking within Islam, which evolves from the deeply rooted Islamic concept. For example; although Abu Lahab was the Uncle of the Prophet, his extreme anti-Islamic behaviour made him cursed till the Day of Judgment.

Another such statement which leaves no doubt of Imam Hasan's and Husayn's role is, the Prophet of God (S) said "Hasan and Husayn are the masters of youth in Paradise". This was presented as a credential to the Muslim nation in order to hold firm to their leadership.

At a certain time the Muslims in Madina felt the Islamic Message's glory and good results, so they intended to reward the Prophet for his effort in guiding them. The gift they presented to the Prophet (S) was some gold which they had collected. The Prophet’s answer came in the following verses which were revealed during this incident.

"Say: 'No reward do I ask of you for this except being kind to those of kin" (23:42).

Al-Kashaaf narrated that when this verse was revealed, people asked the Prophet "O Prophet of God, who are these of kin which this verse makes their respect obligatory upon us?" The Prophet answered, "They are Ali, Fatimah, and their two sons". However, this did not imply disrespect for other Muslims, companions or the rest of kin to him.

Looking objectively at the message of the verse it will indicate first of all reluctance to accept material reward, if a reward was not suitable then it cannot be restricted to the material only. Hence, the verse was indicating respect to some specific people, not because they are his relatives as such, but the real reason behind this respect was to safeguard the Islamic Message. The role they had to play in the Islamic history required such respect in order to enable them to perform their task.

Al-Hakim narrated through Abu Saaid Al-Khidri that the Prophet said, "He who dislikes us, we the family, God will place him in Hell", this implies those who dislike Islamic conduct and life. Jabir narrated that the Prophet in his speech after performing the last pilgrimage, said, "O people I am leaving the book of God and my family (Itrah) for guidance. If you hold fast to them, surely you will never go astray". This Hadith was narrated through some twenty different sources of trusted chains of narrators, Muslim in his Sahih quoted some of them.

Another striking Hadith obtained through Abu Dharr where he quoted the Prophet saying, "O people, let my family act as a head of a body of you, and as eyes of a head among you."

These last few Hadiths are impressive in many respects; firstly they were narrated by different sources of different inclinations which add to them extra value, secondly the same content throughout all indicates the consistency of the event.

Imam Husayn, as already stated, was one member of the family of the Prophet. He was brought up within the Prophetic guidance where he received the direct concern of the Prophet. The ideal atmosphere where he had grown up with his grandfather, father, mother and elder brother was the highest level ever attained.

Thus Imam Husayn acquired wisdom, generosity, bravery, piety and letters; occupying outstanding posts during his father's reign in the Islamic State.

During the terror and corruption which swept the Muslim World at the hands of the Umayads, he was the sole hope of the Muslims to restore the establishment of the Islamic laws which would bring the Muslims prosperity, peace and happiness within the two worlds. He never failed the Muslims, but acted as expected of a great ideological leader and performed his duty to the best.

Who Is Yazid?

Yazid was the son of Muawiya ibn Abu Sufyan, from the family of Umayyah, one of Quraish's families. Abu Sufyan was acting as the chief adversary in the non-Muslim's campaign against Islam. Muawiya's mother, Hind, ate the liver of Hamza, the Uncle of the Prophet, because of her burning hatred and beastliness. Muawiya too was an active opponent to Islam.

Indeed, Abu Sufyan's family was active in strategic, financial and morale boosting within in the non-Muslim's campaign against the Muslims. Their efforts, wealth and diplomacy were of great burden in preventing the spread of Islam among Arab tribes.

During the liberation of Mecca, it was suddenly besieged with enormous forces of Muslims. The unbelievers at Mecca were struck with seeing the Muslim fighters who had caught them unprepared. Thus, they the non-Muslims had no choice but to abandon their arrogance which had prevented them from accepting Gods sovereignty.

During this incident, historians recorded some peculiar stories about Abu Sufyan's family. However, there is one thing for certain that they accepted Islam unwillingly, and they were treated in a special way for that.

For instance, they were given extra donations in order to gain their hearts towards Islam. But whether this generosity had any influence to produce a change in their materialistic thinking is a different matter. Indeed subsequent events revealed no change in their way of thinking and life.

Yazid was brought up in a family whose atmosphere was electrified with the emotions of their dead family members who fought against Islam, in addition to seeing those Muslims who killed them receiving full honour and respect by society. Not to mention the wasted wealth, injured pride and stripped privileges of their family.

However, Yazid had some unique qualities in the adverse sense; he was known as a playboy during his youth. Historians recorded him being drunk, committing adultery and in general leading a very corrupt life. Some even quoted Yazid saying, "The family of Hashim staged a play to get a Kingdom. In reality there was neither news from God nor a revelation".

Even if we discarded this extreme, there is no escape from facing the rest of his shameful deeds and horrifying crimes. Not to mention his illegal claim to rule the Muslim World, or misusing Muslims money, or intrusion upon peoples dignity and lives.

Origins of Deviation

How did Muawiya ascend the ruling stage, and even dare claiming the succession of the Prophet? What happened to the Muslim World to be silent at the assumption of power by an ignoble person like Yazid?

Indeed, it is astonishing to witness the indifference and irresponsibility shown by the vast

majority of Muslims as if Islamic values and ideals were totally alien to that society. What had happened to the dynamic forces which had awakened the world, when the Prophet's voice had not yet died away?

Regarding the responsibility of Muslims, he once said, "He who sees a cruel governor, violating Gods laws, breaking his Covenant, acting in contract to the Tradition of the Prophet, doing mischief and intruding upon people's rights, then does not try to change that governor through action or speech, God has promised him a suitable place in Hell".

We all may wonder over the causes of deviation that led to this deplorable situation. We know for sure that Islam is a perfect and practical religion, and there is no doubt of its ability to guide the Muslims to a stable and prosperous life. Therefore, the question of deficiency in its Islamic Message, or the way it was conducted by the Prophet (S) has no place.

Therefore the only possible errors are confined to; the subsequent status of the Muslims, their handling of affairs or their conformity to the Islamic laws; besides the 'natural' obstacles encountered in the sequence of events.

This topic is so large that it cannot be dealt with in this short review; nevertheless, it is important to review it.

It is well-known that the Islamic State vastly extended its borders, embracing huge population sizes. In this short time of conquest, it made cultural assimilation near to impossible; this was coupled with the language difficulties and primitive means of communications and propagation. This caused many Arab tribes to have fought against Islam, after the Prophets departure to the next world, who were under the political influence of Islam.

Needless to say that any real and thorough cultural transformation needs time as a basic factor and a complete transition from one culture to another might require many generations before the new culture is firmly established.

The second factor in determining any cultural change is the presence of any ideological leadership, especially one that has a deep insight into the message and is potentially ready to sacrifice for its success. Naturally, such a leader is expected to conform by the ideological messages and orders, otherwise the aim of his presence would not be realized.

The Muslims had elected Abu Bakr as the successor to the Prophet and the events which accompanied that election was sadly recorded by all historians. This is by no means an objection to, nor an attack on the ability of the respected companion Abu Bakr (may God be pleased with him). But careful observation leads to the conclusion that Abu Bakr himself remarked that there were other people who were more able than himself for the task.

It is indeed eye-catching, the many incidents and Hadiths in Islamic history, which encourage Muslims to follow and proclaim the leadership of Imam Ali after the Prophet.

In Tafseer Abi Ishaq, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Al-Nisabouri Al-Thaalibi, who died in 337 A.H., gave a commentary on the following verse:

"Your guardians are God, His Prophet, and the believers who pray and give alms while prostrate to God. Regarding those who disobey God, His Prophet and the believers, the party of God are the victors" (5:58,59).

He quoted Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari stating, "I heard the Prophet (S) with these ears or would I be deaf, and saw him with these eyes or would I be blind; the Prophet once said, "Ali is the leader of the best believers, and the killer of unbelievers, the victor is he who supports him, and weak who doesn't ".

Abu Dharr added, "One day we were praying with the Prophet, a beggar had entered the mosque. The beggar was requesting people for help but none helped him except Imam Ali. While Imam Ali was offering his prayer, he donated his silver ring by pointing his finger to the poor man and the latter took it filled with joy.

After this incident the Prophet prayed humbly to God and said, "O God, my brother Moses asked You, "O my God, expand my breast; ease my task for me; and remove the impediment from my speech, so that they may understand what I say; and give me a Minister from my family, Aaron, my brother; add to my strength through him, and make him share my task that we celebrate thy praise without stint, and remember thee without stint". And You answered: "Granted is thy prayer, O Moses". "O God I am your servant and Prophet. Expand my breast; ease my task; and give me a Minister from my family, Ali, my brother; add to my strength through him, and make him share my task".

Abu Dharr concluded: "By God, as soon as the Prophet completed his prayer the trustworthy Gabriel came with the following verses:

"Your guardians are God, His Prophet and the believers who pray and give alms while prostrate to God . . . !" (5:58, 59).

Ibn Sinan narrated this incident in Sahih Al-Bukhari and Ibn Abbas narrated this story in Asbab Al-Nuzol by Imam Wahidi. All interpreters of Kanz Al-Umaal held the same opinion of the cause of the revelation of this.

On a different occasion, the Prophet (S) told Imam Ali, "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, but there is not Prophet after me". But perhaps the most outstanding occasion which sank into people's memories, is the Prophet's speech during his last pilgrimage. Amongst a large congregation of Muslims he declared, "He whoever I am his master, Ali is his master too. O God assist whoever supports him and disgrace those who have enmity towards him".

Indeed, whilst these are only a few of the quotations about Imam Ali, their consistency and the number and variety of people who confirmed the authenticity of the stories leaves no room for doubt that Imam Ali was chosen by God and His Prophet to be the ideological leader after the Prophet's departure. Hence it can be safely concluded that Imam Ali's exclusion from his assigned duty marked the first major mistake. The inevitable consequences were a slow deviation which ended up in a turbulent stream of events, which no one was able to exercise control over.

Abu Bakr's reign lasted approximately two years, which was an eventful epoch. The dangers besieging the Muslims were so great that the very existence of the Muslim community was threatened, only being eliminated by the many sacrifices of the Muslim community.

Umar ibn Al-Khattab was appointed by Abu Bakr as the Caliph, his rule being for ten years. His reign is particularly important because of the vast changes and events which took place during his time. The conquest of vast areas brought enormous wealth to the Muslims, but

the way this wealth was handled created complex problems, eventually forcing Umar to admit their grave consequences. Indeed, he tried to reform the laws but it was too late to act, for by that time he was murdered.

Umar ibn Al-Khattab was the first person in charge of Muslim affairs to start uneven donation of provisions among Muslims. He used to prefer some people to others for various reasons, generating social classes and sparking off enmity and rifts within the Muslim society. His policies were also not in conformity with the traditions of the Prophet or even with Abu Bakr's policies.

Umar was sad when he saw the unrest and rifts within the Muslim community, once declaring "I was informed that people have distinct gatherings. When two sit together they talk of the different groupings and separate entities, by God that is harmful to your religion, honour and unity". Realising the cause of this social phenomenon he added, "I used to allure people in order to gain their goodwill by preferring some to others. But if I lived this year, the distribution of wealth will be even among all people as the Prophet and Abu Bakr used to do."

A rather serious measure taken by the Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab was his appointment of six nominees to the Caliphate post. This, it is believed had induced a desire in the nominees to ascend one day to this powerful and honorable position. Since it was only a matter of time for everyone, they were engaged in preparing the way for their own ascents.

Eventually Uthman ibn Affan was chosen by Abdul Rahman ibn Auf to be the next Caliph, after being turned down by Imam Ali. Imam Ali refused to accept the Caliphate post because Abdul Rahman ibn Auf put a condition which meant retaining the status quo and preventing any radical change.

Uthman's policies were resented by the vast majority of Muslims. His monetary policy was the focus point of their resentment, because he donated large amounts of money to his relatives while the rest of the people were left empty handed (Muruj Al-dhahab 2/241 by Al-Masaudi Al-Ansab and Al-Ashraf (5/25,-28,48,52) by Al-Baladhiri).

Indeed, the governors who were assisting in administering the Muslim country had neither ability nor piety and is believed their appointment was because of their kin to Uthman. For instance, Al-Waleed ibn Aqabah ibn Abi Muaeet was appointed to govern Kufa. Al-Waleed was reputed to be a drunkard and when the people’s dissatisfaction with his behaviour peaked and Uthman replaced him, it was with Saaid ibn Al-As, who had the famous statement "Iraq is Quraish's garden, we take or leave of it whatever we like" (Muroj Al-dhahab 2/346 by Al-Masaudi).

Muawiya who was governing Damascus and Jordan during the reign of Umar, Uthman added to his state Hams, Palestine, and Jazera. Egypt's governor was Abdullah ibn Abi Sirah, with all of its previous governors being Uthman's relatives. The most striking feature of this bunch of rulers was their contempt for people's rights and dignity, they simply looked at the whole Muslim country as their private property, as demonstrated in Al-Waleed's aforementioned statement.

Moreover the principal treasury at Madina was not utilised in its rightful ways. Many Muslims like the treasurer's trustees, Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu Dharr and similar distinguished companions objected strongly against Uthman"s monetary policies. Uthman's reply to those people was, "We take from the treasury whatever we want inspite of some people's

objections".

These policies were not only foreign to Islamic conduct and ideals, but caused tremendous sufferings and hardships to the majority of Muslims. Many responsible Muslims played their role in warning Uthman against these deviations but their advice was in vain. Thus, the situation reached its danger point one day and exploded, resulting in Uthman's murder. This act of violence as I believe could have been avoided by using some peaceful methodology.

The chaotic conditions and the deterioration of the Muslims material and social statuses forced them to rethink their past, present and future. Perhaps it was like a film passing in their minds, reminding them of previous events which were connected with their present. It is normally the last incident and last speech which remain alive in peoples' memories. Indeed, it was the Prophet's famous speech in Khum during his last pilgrimage which was recalled.

Muslims remembered that significant event where there were more than one hundred thousand Muslims present and the Prophet was briefing the Islamic message to them. Being within the middle of that anxious crowd, listening carefully to every word he (asa.h.f) uttered, and watching every sign he made. The Prophet took Ali ibn abi Talib's hand and raised it while saying "O, people who-ever I am his master, then Ali is his master too. O, God, assist those who support him and disgrace those who do not".

Thus after the cloud of events surrounding Uthman's death settled, the Muslims hurriedly went to Imam Ali (as) calling him to perform his assigned duty, but the abnormal situation existing at that time made the task difficult indeed. Indeed, the very acceptance of his duty during such a situation was not healthy.

Imam Ali's reply to the Muslims was negative. He (as) said "Leave me aside and seek someone else, we are heading at a subject which has many facets and various colours, neither the hearts would rise to, nor the minds would be firm upon. The horizons are black and gloomy while reason is rejected. You should know that my acceptance means what I know will he applied and obeyed. I shall not conform to ones ideas or listen to others reproachment. On the other hand, leaving me aside means I am one of you, listening and conforming to whom you have appointed for your affairs. I am better a minister than commander for you".

In this speech, perhaps, he (as) wanted to gauge peoples' interests and determination. Moreover, he showed his disinterest for power and ruling if that was an aim by itself. But the vast majority of Muslims were determined to see the Prophets' words and will be implemented, and they left no choice to Imam Ali but to accept his rightful role of being the ideological leader to the Muslim community.

Imam Ali's Reform

The major problems which were confronted at the time were; the existence of a corrupt and incompetent administration, unjust social privileges and a wide financial gap between the rich and the poor. Thus, Imam Ali's reforms covered these three major fields.

1. Administration

All previous governors were instantly expelled from their posts. And the following people were put in charge, Uthman ibn Haneef for Basrah, Sahl ibn Haneef for Syria, Qais ibn Saad ibn Ubadah for Egypt and Mousa Al-Ashari for Kufa. It is noteworthy that all the mentioned governors were not from Quraish tribe, and this was bitterly taken by Quraish who were accustomed to ruling and getting the lion’s share of money and authority.

It is also not out of place to mention that the new governors were not only known for their piety and good conduct, but also possessed sound administrative abilities. However, it must be taken into account that the conditions in which they were operating and the unstable situation of that period gave them no chance to fully manifest their talents. But still the marks which they left in the society were so deep that they survived and were remembered for generations.

2. Protection of Rights

The rights of Muslims whether social or financial were carefully observed and protected. Thus Imam Ali (as) declared "O people, I have the same rights and obligation as the rest of you". Therefore, he cut the way of every intruder who wanted to exploit his position or kinship or religious reputation.

Imam Ali also stated, "It should be known that whoever is an immigrant (Muhajir) or a supporter (from Ansar) who accompanied the Prophet (S), and think he is better than others for his companionship, then his goodness will be rewarded by God in the Hereafter. Every person who believes in God and His Prophet is entitled to the same rights and obligations. Money belongs to God which must be divided equally among people. No one will get a greater share than others, those pious people would get their reward in the Hereafter'".

3. Fiscal and Monetary Policy

The extravagant monetary policy of Uthman accumulated the treasury’s wealth among his relatives and associates, which had seriously imbalanced the society, so when Imam Ali (as) came to power, he had to take some drastic measures against this existing imbalance.

Thus he warned all people, "I shall follow the Prophet's Tradition and execute whatever he had commanded, every gift of which Uthman gave of God's money will be returned to the treasury. Nothing will cancel its belonging to the treasury even if it was married with, or distributed in the wide country. Justice must be implemented, if someone feels hard to accept justice then injustice is harder to accept".

Moreover, he condemned prodigals who run after the pleasures of this life only while disguising in religious masks. In this respect Imam Ali said, "There are some people whom life has absorbed completely. They have built many houses, made rivers, rode beautiful horses, and took to themselves slave-women which brought disgrace upon themselves. Whenever I prevent them from indulging in bad deeds and give them no more than their rights, they turn angry and object furiously. They say 'Ali ibn Abi Talib has prevented us our rights".

Imam Ali’s new policies were aiming at stripping the Quraish completely of their social privileges, financial statuses and authority. This irritated the Quraishite as they no longer

enjoyed their garden of Iraq and the rest of the Muslim country and what they have already gained was in danger of being restored to the Muslims' treasury.

The Quraish not pleased with this new regime and worked continuously to hinder the stabilization of the new authority. Dissents were sent and wars were launched successively, shaking the whole state; economically, socially, politically and morally. Meanwhile, the heads of Quraish who were campaigning against Imam Ali's rule, realized it was not Imam Ali as a person they were fighting, but it was the ideals and policies which he (as) had advocated, it was once again Islam.

Thus the Umayyad's who accepted Islam under various conditions, found that their materialistic thinking couldn't reconcile with Islamic values, so they decided to distort the Islamic values and ideals, since opposing Islam openly was fatal, as they had experienced previously. Muawiya then ordered the formation of a committee to fabricate Hadiths and distort the interpretation of Qur'an.

Five years had lapsed, which were full of violent events; the battle of camel in Basrah, the battle of Sifsin against Muawiya, the battle of Nahrawan against Khawarij and many other ongoing campaigns. Thus the opposition was able to feed unrest practically in every part of the Islamic State, shaking the authority of the new administration.

Finally Imam Ali (as) was murdered at Kufa mosque and Muawiya was given access to rule the whole country. The circumstances in which Muawiya assumed power will be discussed promptly.

Muawiya's Reign

The following points are the main features of his rule.

1. Authority

Muawiya assumed authority by sheer force; he did not hide this fact and put it plainly in his address at Kufa. He said "O people of Kufa, do you think I fought you to establish prayers or giving alms (Zakat) or perform pilgrimage?" He continued, "I know you pray, pay alms, and perform pilgrimage. Indeed, I fought you in order to command you with contempt, and God has given me that against your wishes. You must be certain that whoever has killed any of us, then he will be killed. And the contract between us of amnesty is under these feet of mine".

2. Terrorism

Muawiya's rule caused terror throughout the whole Muslim land; this was spread by him sending convoys to various regions of the country. It was narrated that Muawiya summoned Sufyan ibn Auf Al-Ghamidi, one of his army commanders, and said "This Army is under your command, proceed along the river Euphrate till Heet. Any resistance in the way should be crushed, and then invade Anbar. After that, penetrate deep into Madaain"

He further said "O Sufyan, these invasions will frighten the Iraqis and please those who like us. Such campaigns would attract frightened people to our side. Kill whoever (those) having

different opinions from ours, loot their villages and demolish their houses. Indeed, the War against money is similar to killing but is more painful to their hearts".

Another commander, Basar ibn Artat, was summoned and ordered to proceed towards Hijaz and Yemen. Muawiya instructed him, "Proceed to Madina and expel its people, meanwhile (any) people in the way who are not from our camp should be terrorized. When you enter Madina, let it appear as if you are going to kill them. Make it appear that your aim is to exterminate them. Then pardon them. Terrorize the people around Mecca and Madina and scatter them".

3. Islamic Concepts and Laws

During Muawiya's reign even basic human rights were denied to people, no-one was free to express their opinion, spies were employed to terrorize people and the army and police spared no opportunity to crush the people and silence their voices.

Some of the documents of the time reveal Muawiya’s instructions to his governors, including the following letter, which was addressed to all his judges. "Do not accept the witness of Ali's followers or his descendants in courts", another letter stated "If you have evidence that some person likes Ali and his family, then omit his name from the rations of Zakat", another letter continued, "Punish whoever is suspected to follow Ali and bring his house down". Such was the situation of Muawiya's rule.

Historians who were recording the waves of terror described them as unprecedented within history; the people were so frightened that they did not mind even being called atheists or thieves, just not followers of Imam Ali.

Another facet of Muawiya's rule was the discrimination between Arabs and non-Arabs. It is an established fact that non-Arabs during Muawiya's reign were treated as third class citizens, although they embraced Islam they still had to pay Kharaj and Jizyah! Non-Arab soldiers in the state armies used to fight for bare subsistence level.

Once a dispute between an Arab and a non-Arab was presented to a court, the Judge was Abdullah ibn Amir, during the procedure the non-Arab sadly remarked to his opponent "May God not multiply people of your kind (meaning Arabs)”, The Arab answered him light heartedly "O God, increase their population among us (meaning non-Arabs)". The people who were present asked the Arab in a state of bewilderment “How do you pray for their increase while he prays for your decease?" The Arab answered "Yes indeed, they clean our streets, make shoes for our animals, and weave our clothes".

Perhaps the most dangerous mischief Muawiya had embarked upon was the fabrication of Hadiths. When he was facing Imam Ali (as) as an adversary, he found his case to be hopeless, his past was dark and shameful, whilst that of Imam Ali was glorious and shining. In order to sustain his campaign and boast his followers, Muawiya had to attract weak character companions and employ them to fabricate Hadiths.

Naturally, his aim was to boast his campaign, challenge adversaries, and legalize his claim to rule. Muawiya's order was to not narrate any Hadith or incident in favour of Imam Ali but to fabricate a similar one and attribute it to Uthman, Umar and Abu Bakr. The second phase of this psychological warfare was to put Hadiths in Muawiya's favour. The third phase was to silence people and keep them calm at what he did whether in wronging Muslims or his violation of Islamic laws.

This trend of fabrication of Hadiths, was constituting a grave danger to the integrity of Islam. Hadiths are considered as the secondary source of Islamic legislation after Qur'an, therefore it was very important to divert such a danger. The exposition of this trend to the Muslims at large was very vital, this was done by disgracing those who embarked upon this terrible mischief and those who nurtured it. A few samples of the fabricated Hadiths are as follows.

Through Abu Hurairah, the Prophet said "God has trusted three for his revelation: myself, Jabriel and Muawiya". I wonder what God was doing for the revelation when Muawiya was 'part of the non-Muslims' camp. Again, Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet had given Muawiya an arrow and told him "Take this arrow until we meet in Paradise". What a lucky arrow to enter Paradise. Abdullah ibn Umar claimed that the Prophet said "You will see greed after me, and things which you would disagree with", the people asked "O Prophet of God, then what do you order us?" The Prophet said, "Do the governor's right and ask God for yours".

Another fabricated Hadith said to be narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar "Endure what you do not like of your governors, because if you separate from the group (Jama'a) one foot and then died, you would have died as an unbeliever"

These fabricated Hadiths are not only principally contradicting the Quran and other verified Hadiths but are calling Muslims to be slaves of their rulers, exactly what the Ummayads' were aiming for.

4. Appointing Yazid

Muawiya was not ruling as an individual, but was representing a way of thinking different in nature from that of Islam. He was not content to leave the ruling stage without making sure that it was properly looked after, his pragmatic and materialistic mind drove him to prepare the crowning of his son, Yazid, even though he made many promises that he would not even contemplate so.

Muawiya had a difficult job to perform before leaving this world, because the conditions at the time were such that there were still Muslims who were politically conscious and wanted to see the restoration of Islamic laws and values. Indeed, he tried his best at buying allegiances for his son from; Army commanders, chiefs of tribes and distinguished personalities. But his efforts failed with many and he left general instructions of the way to deal with them.

Imam Hasan's Policy

Wars and internal strife during five long years caused tremendous strain among the people and Imam Ali's speeches at Kufa manifested this phenomenon very clearly, with the people being tired of war, because they were worn out economically.

The murder of Imam Ali was disastrous politically. The apparent dispute between the two parties, which was symbolized by Imam Ali and Muawiya, was worsened after the murder of Imam Ali (as) and Muawiya gained a stronger hand within the political field, since his opponent had disappeared from the stage of opposition.

Although Imam Hasan assumed authority after his father, his power was not established.

Thus, some Iraqi tribes defected to Muawiya's camp when the latter promised them high donations and animated their hopes of success and good reward. The scene in Kufa was hopeless, the majority of people were longing for peace, however they did not realize at the time the price of peace they were wishing for.

Nevertheless the political scene required nothing but wise manipulation and patience. The Iraqis and the rest of the Muslim world seemed to be in need of direct exposure with the Umayyad rule. Imam Hasan (as) gave them this chance in order to polarize them permanently against the Umayyads.

In such conditions, the most daring Islamically conscious person would get killed and Imam Hasan wanted to spare such people from such a fate and utilize them for the greater task of the purity of Islam and the existence of Islamic ideals and practices within the society. Those people were entrusted with the propagation of Islamic concepts, unveiling the un-Islamic character of the Umayyads and exposing their deviations to the society.

Thus Imam Hasan's answer to Hijr ibn Uday Al-Kindi came "I found people wishing to reconcile and who disliked war. I did not want to go through something which they disliked. I reconciled especially for the sake of our followers to be spared from being killed. However, I have only postponed the war, and God has a surprise every day".

It is noteworthy that Imam Hasan's move was politically sound, he actually scored many points against Muawiya in that incident. First, he showed his keen concern for the lives of Muslims and their wellbeing. Secondly, he displayed his integrity and disinterest in power if that was seen being seen as an aim. Thirdly, he respected the contract while Muawiya broke it as soon as it was signed. Fourthly, the very conduct of Muawiya's ruling and his clique exposed the seriousness of his danger and put people in a continuous struggle against his power.

Thus, Muawiya's religious mask was stripped off, and at least, some responsible people had no doubt about his real character. Therefore the danger of his deeds was partly eliminated.

Yazid's Claim

Muawiya was busy preparing the installment of Yazid as his heir in ruling the Muslim world. In writing to Imam Husayn he found no pleasant answer to his demands and thus Muawiya reminded his son to beware of Imam Husayn. Yazid took his father's advice and promptly wrote to his governor at Madina, Al-Waleed ibn Utabah, to secure recognition from Imam Husayn, but Al-Waleed's efforts were in vain.

Imam Husayn's reply was definite and direct. He said "We, the family of the Prophet, the essence of the message and the visiting place of angles . . . . While Yazid is a corrupt, drunkard, murderer and fostering his sins. A person like me cannot obey a person like him".

Yazid's ascent to power was arranged by his father and all the power at Muawaiya’s disposal was transferred to Yazid, and he used every of these means to obtain submission for his unholy policies of oppression and aggression. Therefore, Yazid had no legal right whatsoever in his claims and demands. On the contrary, he was responsible for many illegal deeds which demand scorn and required punishment.

The Revolution's Motives

The motives for revolution were numerous, some were direct grievances of the general people while others were ideological. The following were the most apparent:

1. The most important motive was the attempt to distort Islamic concepts and ideals. This aspect was of extreme importance and preoccupied the minds of responsible Muslims at that time. The fabrication of Hadiths was all too common, which had a poisonous effect on the lives of Muslims. This was giving the Umayyads for a while, a free hand to carry out their inhuman deeds and policies, but the mask of religion which they used to hide their un-Islamic conduct was extremely dangerous.

In the long run, this could have changed Islamic concepts of ruling and inverted social ideals, thus, stripping off this mask and exposing the true Umayyad's picture was of utmost necessity.

2. The state's structure was built on an un-Islamic basis. Quraish was born to rule, Arabs were second class citizens, and non-Arabs constituted the base of the society's pyramid. That was the general social picture of the Muslim world under the Umayyads dynasty. Freedom of thought and expression were denied, when one dared to express an opinion contrary to that of the Umayyad's; prison became his home, his property was robbed, and even his life was at stake.

3. The Umayyads considered the Muslim world to be their own property. The alms (Zakat) and other Islamic dues were collected, but no one knew nor could they question where that money went. Large gifts and donations were given to a few cruel governors and tribal chiefs in order to secure their allegiance. Large sums of money were wastefully spent on racing, gambling, wine-making, and buying slave women to entertain high-class people in power. Hence, the majority of Muslims were left near starvation level while the ruling group all enjoyed the social and material privileges.

4. The Muslims had apparently got used to the un-Islamic rule of the Umayyads as time passed by. Their resistance slackened and some people began adjusting themselves to the new conditions. Hence, the revolutionary spirit of Islam began to disappear gradually from Muslims’ lives and thoughts. Therefore, a new stimulant to their souls was necessary to activate their lives and try to restore Islamic conduct to the society.

The Revolution's Procedure

Imam Husayn made no doubt of his intentions to fight the regime of the Umayyads; the speeches he delivered at Mecca were consistent as was the will which he entrusted to his brother Muslim ibn Al-Hanafia, who remained at Madina.

That will, in fact was a formal declaration of the revolution. He (as) wrote "I am not campaigning for unwillingness to accept righteousness, or having intent to do mischief and suppress people. Indeed, I have decided to reform my grandfather's nation, I want to enjoin what is right and forbid dishonour. People who accept my call for being right, then God is

the Master of righteous people. Those who reject my call, then I shall be steadfast till God passes His judgment. Indeed, God is the best Judge".

During his travels to Karbala, he never ceased calling people to strive for the Islamic ideals of social justice and government, and to wage war against deviation from Islamic conduct. In his speech (as) at Karbala, he quoted the Prophet (S) saying "He who sees a cruel governor violating Gods law, breaking his covenant, acting in contrast to the Tradition of the Prophet, mischievous and suppressing people, then he does not try to change that ruler by
action or speech; indeed God has promised them with an appropriate place in Hell.”

He also said; "O people those Umayyads have pledged allegiance to the Devil and left God's obedience. They have spread corruption, suspended the application of Islamic laws, and taken to themselves Muslims' wealth. Besides forbidding what is permitted and allowing what is forbidden."

Imam Husayn's speeches were aiming directly at stripping the religious mask of the Umayyad's regime. He was introducing himself to people and explaining his message to the nation. Indeed, the personality of Imam Husayn and his religious reputation was beyond question or doubt, especially despite so many distinguished people whom were not ready to even raise a finger. Any objective study of this great revolution will show something unique, when a leader predicts his own death before even setting a foot in the march! But yet, he goes on carrying out all necessary preparations for that campaign.

At Mecca, Imam Husayn's addressed his people, "O people, as if my body be cut to pieces by spears and wolves between Al-Nawawees and Karbala. . . . There is no question of the day which was already written. God’s satisfaction is our aim, we the family of the Prophet".

The way Imam Husayn and his Companions fought was a glorious record of bravery and nobility; they were only seventy men fighting against thousands within the Umayyad's Army. Even with this imbalance of fighting power, the Umayyad's Army used the most vicious and ignoble methods in fighting this tiny camp. The Umayyad's Army went to the extent of preventing them drinking water and tortured them for three days in the burning heat of the desert. But, the firm faith of Imam Husayn and his followers in their cause was never shaken.

Thus Imam Husayn and his Companions set an ever-shining torch of Jihad against deviation from Islamic conduct and smashed the myth of the Umayyads, of keeping allegiance to deviated regimes.

The Revolution's Results

What had Imam Husayn's revolution meant in history? Some people who are not familiar with its motives, innocently inquire about its results. Others have even questioned the wisdom of striking at a mighty force like the Umayyads, which was fatal. Although the revolution's motives have already been discussed, a brief review of the changes in the Muslim World after Imam Husayn's revolution is appropriate;

1. Murdering Imam Husayn (as) the grandson of the Prophet (S) was a great shock to the

whole Muslim world. This is not to mention the way he was murdered or the treatment given to his family who had the highest esteem and respect of all Muslims. Consequently, all Muslims dissociated themselves from the Umayyad's deeds and policies. Indeed, who wants to share in the certain curse upon those who murdered the family of the Prophet?

Thus, this revolution had done the task of unveiling the Umayyad's un-Islamic character to the general public and left no doubt in any person's heart about the Umayyad's substance.

Therefore, the concepts which the Umayyad's were propagating in order to distort the ideals of Islam found no listening ear any longer, diverting the Umayyad's mischief of changing Islamic concepts and ideals.

2. Imam Husayn's revolution set a lively example as to the duty of Muslims in such conditions. It had deeply penetrated peoples' hearts and produced great pains within them for not doing their Islamic duty. This feeling which pained people all the time transformed into repentance and then to an open revolt against the Umayyad's regime. Thus, the revolution provided the stimulant to move their spirit and set it in a dynamic movement. Indeed, the Islamic movement was put to a new gear throughout the rest of the Islamic history.

A series of revolutions manifesting Imam Husayn's revolutionary spirit and reforms emerged at successive intervals. Tawabeen's revolution took place immediately after Karbala's tragedy. Another revolution at Madina was aiming at doing away with the Umayyads deviated regime. Al-Mukhtar Al-Thaqafi led another revolution which stormed the Umayyad's regime in Iraq and he was able to punish all principal collaborators in the campaign against Imam Husayn in Iraq. Mitraf ibn Al-Mughira's revolution against Hajjaj and Abdul Malik was another result.

However, there were a chain of revolutions in all parts of the Muslim world which eventually did away with the Umayyad's regime. Imam Husayn's revolution was the principal slogan of the revolutionaries against the Umayyad's. The Abasides came and soon their conduct was exposed as not that which the family of the Prophet was advocating. They realized that the revolution's results were stolen and before they could do anything, the main personalities which carried the revolt through were treacherously eliminated by murder, poison and imprisonment.

The attempts to restore Islamic conduct have never ceased throughout Islamic history. Bitter experiences and intermittent material failures are natural results of struggle. Most importantly is the triumph of the Islamic spirit against intimidation and attempts to obscure its shining face and glory. A ceaseless revolution in Muslim lives is a reality, which the enemies of Islam failed to extinguish.

The secret key of this blessed revolution lies in the firm faith in God, the unshakable conviction, which puts material supremacy and gain in an inferior position to God's satisfaction. These ideals were demonstrated by Imam Husayn when the Muslims were in need of such an example most.

The revolution of Imam Husayn was not solely for changing a government, if it was so, then it would be wrong to call it a revolution. Imam Husayn was advocating a drastic change in the social set up, the economic and political structures and refining Islamic concepts from foreign ideas which had crept into Muslims' minds and thoughts.

Imam Husayn wanted to change the life of Muslims to be in conformity with Islamic laws and ideals. Indeed, this explains one main reason for why Imam Husayn was let down by the tribes of Kufa after being promised support, and his call was ignored by the rest of the Muslim world. Hence, a revolution means a drastic change in one's life or the collective life when applied to a large scale.

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