

Imam Husayn (A)

Imam Husayn (a), the third Imam, was born on 3rd Sha'ban 4 A.H. in Madina. On his birth, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (a) prophesied that the faith of Islam would be rescued by his second grandson, Husayn (a). Like his father and brother, he was very learned, kind, brave and self-sacrificing.

In his days Yazid, the son of Mu'awiah ascended the throne. He was an unjust and irreligious person. He was known for his devilish character and brutish conduct. As soon as he came to power, he began to violate the rules and laws of Islam. In addition to this, he also claimed to be a caliph and a successor to the Holy Prophet of Islam. To get this position confirmed, he decided to compel Imam Husayn (a) to take an oath of allegiance to him.

Due to an impudent person like Yazid becoming the caliph, there arose a danger for the people again to adopt un-Islamic beliefs and customs.

The responsibility for protecting Islam and human rights thus fell on the shoulders of Imam Husayn (a).

The people of Kufa had not recognized Yazid as a caliph. They invited Imam Husayn (a) to come to Kufa and guide them. He, therefore, left for Kufa accompanied by a few young men, ladies and children and some sincere friends. While on his way, he had to face Yazid's armed forces. In order to save the faith preached by his Holy grandfather, Imam Husayn (a) decided to face these satanic forces in the field. He and his companions fought valiantly and most of them were martyred. This happened at Karbala – a desert area in Iraq – on the tenth of Muharram 61 A.H.

The tenth of Muharram is called the day of Ashura'. On this day, Muslims all over the world commemorate the unmatched struggle of Imam Husayn (a) and his companions against tyranny. They mourn these martyrs who laid down their lives for the safety of Islam.

The sacrifices rendered by Imam Husayn (a) for the safety of Islam is unparalleled in the history of the world. He said:

“In my view it is a blessing to lay down one's life in the path of Allah and nothing except humiliation can be gained by extending one's hand of co-operation towards the tyrants”.

We should be prepared to make the greatest sacrifices for the safety of Islam.

Questions

1. Who was Yazid and what sort of person was he?
2. Why did Imam Husayn (a) proceed to Kufa?
3. How did Imam Husayn (a) meet Yazid's challenge?

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