

The Revolution of Imam Husayn

A Historical Analysis of the roots & the impacts of Karbala

Author(s):

Shaykh Mansour Leghaei [3]

A series of seven Lectures that analyse the roots & the impact of Imam Husayn's (as) uprising against the caliph of his time, Yazid.

Category:

Imam al-Husayn and Karbala [4]

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The Revolution of Imam Husayn

To you O' master of the youth of Paradise,
To you O' light of guidance and the ark of salvation,

To you O' master of the martyrs.
O' you the exalted one!
Distress has seized us and our family
We have now brought but scanty capital.
So pay us full measure, and treat it a charity to us.
For Allah does reward the charitable.

Acknowledgment

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In the Beginning...

The Son of the Prophet Was Killed-Why?" The tragedy of Karbala is not only a terrible event in the history of Islam, but also an astonishing story. Just 50 years after the passing away of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) his grandson is killed, not by non-Muslims nor by non-Shiites, but by those who are known as lovers of Ahlul-Bayt!!!

In just less than half a century from the passing away of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), Mu'awiyah, who alongside his father Abu-Sofyan has fought Islam for about 20 years becomes the leader of the Islamic territory! And finally, Yazid, the tippler, son of Mu'awiyah sits in the position of the Commander of Believers! The massacre of Karbala takes place at his command!!!

Nevertheless, in spite of all the painful aspects of Karbala, it holds a great significance in the early Islamic era, for the revolution of Imam Husayn (a.s.) was not merely an event which had taken place by chance. It was rather a movement for the revival of Islam. In these series of lectures, I am aiming at analyzing the above bitter events of the first century in Islamic history. I will examine the roots and the reasons why the massacre of Karbala took place. Also, I will present the impacts of Karbala on the revival of Islam.

Meeting 1: History, A Source of Human Knowledge Part 1

Date: 19/5/1996 (1/1/1417)

“O’ creatures of Allah, verily Time will deal with the survivors just as it dealt with those gone by.”¹ Experience is one of the most important consequences of human life. By experience, man can improve his life and proceed towards perfection. It is experience which will help us to reduce mistakes, save time and ultimately go forward. However, the life of a human being is so short that one cannot, and should not, rely on self-experience alone. Had I been born, and lived in this world, twice, I would have experienced in the first life and would have benefited from those personal experiences in the second one.

But since this is a mere dream, I should learn from the experiences of other people. Human experimental knowledge is established and based on the very fact that since individuals do not have a sufficient length of life, we should pass on our experiences to others so that they don’t repeat our mistakes.

If Einstein, the German American physicist created a scientific revolution in the 20th century with his theory of Relativity, it was because of the efforts and the records of previous scientists such as Galileo, Newton, Descart and others. Therefore, in order to know any branch of science, you ought to be familiar with the history of the development of that science.

Also, in order to obtain a logical analysis of the present problems of people we need to be familiar with the history of the development of humans, since the roots of many present events goes back into history. In short, history makes us familiar with the reasons for the prosperity of the previous nations as well as the reasons behind their disasters. This will teach us how to gain prosperity and refrain from the miseries of life. That’s why some historians have asserted that history is the mirror of the future. You can, by and large, foresee the future if you are fully aware of the past.

To this end, the Holy Quran, the Book of guidance, has emphasized on the importance of studying history and quotes the story of the previous nations in many instances. However, the Holy Quran is not just a chronological record of history. That is the main difference between the Bible and the Holy Quran, since the first is merely a historic and chronological book whereas the latter is analytical history. In the Holy Quran we read:

“There is, in their stories instruction (Ebrat) for men imbued with understanding.” (12:111)

The word ‘Ebrat’ means to pass or transmit from one stage to a higher one. In other words it means a transmission from being, towards becoming. In another Aya we read:

“So relate the story, perchance they may reflect”. (7:176)

The term ‘Al-Qessa’ in Arabic means searching for the impacts of an event. Therefore, the Quran calls upon people to read the history in order to transmit their society a better and more developed one (Ebrat), and to find out the impacts, both good and evil, of the actions of the previous nations.

1. Nahjul-Balagha, S. 157

Meeting 2: History, A Source of Human Knowledge Part 2

Date: 26/5/96 : (8/1/1417)

“Surely you know that the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) said: Whoever witnesses a tyrant ruler considering the prohibition of Allah as permissible, breaking the covenant of Allah, opposing the practices of the prophet of Allah (s.w.t.), treating His servants sinfully and cruelly, and does not oppose him verbally or with action, then Allah truly associates him with that ruler.”¹

Problems of History

Despite all the benefits that the study of history contains, when we practically approach the history of mankind we face difficulties in gaining access to genuine information. The narrators of events, in many instances being biased, have not related to us the whole story. Frederick Capelston, a British Philosopher who died almost 3 years ago, in his book ‘History of Philosophy’ which is the most comprehensive book in western philosophy, asserts in his preface that no historian can claim that he has no tendency towards any particular opinion.

This problem becomes worse when the historian belongs to the time of the event. The reason being, that narrators usually belong to a particular agency, hence, they show us a particular angle of the event which interests them.

I was reading a book named 'The Gulf War Never Happened'! It may be surprising?! However, the author is trying to prove that the Western news agencies, on the top of which stands CNN, have very carefully produced a movie called 'Desert Storm' in which the president of America is the angel and the president of Iraq is the devil.

You and I are sitting in our living rooms watching our televisions with the assumption that seeing is believing, ignoring the fact that we are seeing an American version of the event by those who are themselves involved in that event. Hence, their narration must be opinionated.

You may read every day many stories in the daily papers believing them to be accurate. However, if you are aware of the exact details of an event and read it from the papers then you can examine the validity of the narration. Therefore, the problem of studying history is that many narrators are either mercenaries and agents for a particular group, or they are biased due to their own belief.

Three approaches to History

The above problems have caused the three different approaches to history.

1. Ignoring the past totally: The adherents of this idea hold that studying history is just useless. Let's talk about our present problems and current affairs. They suggest that it's always better not to talk in the absence of people who are resting on the bed of history. You will be disturbing them, they say, when speaking of their infamy. Mu'awiyah was one of the adherents of this idea. A famous expression is quoted from him: 'Mention the dead in good'.

Unfortunately, many of the Sunni theologians also hold that we are not allowed to criticize the Muslims of early Islam. Of the Western thinkers, Davy Crockett, American folk hero of the 18th century, also held that we are not able to judge on historical events and hence, it's better to let the dead rest in their eternal place, i.e. their graves.

Al-Ghazali, the famous Sunni Ethician, dared to assert that we are not allowed to castigate Yazid nor to curse him, for he was a Mojtahid and had made a mistake!! Or he may have repented!! Worse than him is another one who wrote a book about the so-called virtues of Yazid!²

Well, for your information, the majority of Sunni scholars have not a single doubt of the enormity of the crime Yazid has committed, which subsequently proves his Kofr, and hence they have endorsed his cursing to the extent that Jahedh says "he who prohibits the cursing of Yazid must be cursed too."³

2. Ignoring the present totally: This approach is opposite to that of the first. The supporters of this concept always concentrate on the past and have totally ignored the current affairs of the contemporary world. Reciting Maqatal with no analysis given is a stereotypical example of this approach.

Their task is provoking emotions for the sake of a heavenly blessing. They may seem very religious too.

You may find them reciting Ziarat Ashoora every day, cursing Yazid hundreds of times, holding Majalis for Imam Husayn (a.s.) beating themselves severely for the Imam.

However, when you are chatting with them about current affairs of this world, they are lost. They actually mean it, for this is their purposeful attitude towards politics, for it is their belief that politics corrupts their piety! A pious person in their terminology is one who does not know who the president of America is, doesn't read the newspapers and is totally ignorant about this world (Addonya)!

3. Being concerned for the past as well as the present: I believe the above two approaches are overdoing it. We ought to read history, but not ignore the present, or it is nothing more than an amusement. We read history in order to find the roots of current conditions on the one hand, and to be able to deduce general law, to foresee the future and the impacts of the current problems on the other.

Different Approaches to the study of History

In order to give you an academic approach, I would like to demonstrate the different approaches to history. There are three historical approaches:

1. Narrative history: That is to narrate the series of historical events; like a movie which shows serial events. This type of history contains no judgment or analysis. It's aim is either amusement, to enjoy listening to fairy tales or adventure stories in its passive sense, or to be used as raw information for analytical history.

2. Scientific history: This is to deduct general laws from partial events. Such laws can be generalized and may also be used as one of the sources of human knowledge. However, this type of history still deals with being, not becoming, although it shows the law of being.

3. Philosophy of history: This is the final task of history and that is what the Quran is advocating for and calls it 'Al-Qessa' or 'Al-Ebrat'. This type of history deals with the development of societies from one stage to another. It takes us from being to becoming.

The useful part of history is to find out the roots of events and their impacts. For instance, when we approach the tragedy of Karbala sometimes we just narrate the events without analyzing. Reciting Maqtal is a stereotypical example of this type of history. Certainly, it reflects some knowledge, as well as provoking the emotions, however, it may not bring a tangible impact to our lives.

Sometimes we analyze the events and arrive at law but are not able to relate it to our present time. This will lead us to the second type of history, i.e. scientific history. Finally, we read the events, analyze them, deduce the general laws, find the roots and the impacts of the events and compare them with our present time. At this stage, we will be searching for a figure in this present stage who resembles Imam Husayn, that we may join his camp.

We will also figure out the present devil of our time who resembles Yazid, to avoid him. This stage is the one that the Quran advocates for and we are intending to discuss it alongside the scientific history which deals with the analysis of the events of Karbala. I will Inshallah, lead you throughout my series of lectures to the roots which caused the most abhorrent catastrophe of Karbala to take place. Also, we are going to discuss, Inshallah, the impacts of Ashoora on the beneficial aspects of Islamic development, to realize the fact that “Islam initiated with Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.w.) and continued with Imam Husayn (a.s.)”.

Therefore, unlike the skeptical approach to history, we believe that despite all the difficulties of finding an accurate record we should and do have the right to investigate the historical events. The reason being, some of the present problems may be traced back to history, and we may not be able to eradicate these unless we find their roots. Secondly, we want to learn from history. By recognizing figures like Yazid and Imam Husayn (a.s.) and their attitudes and characteristics we will be able to assess the present types of each, thus, enabling us to follow the righteous one and avoid the evil. This is the interpretation of the saying of Imam Husayn (a.s.) to Marwan Ibn Hakam: “Farewell to Islam, if the Islamic Ummah is stuck with (a ruler) like Yazid”. 4

And this is the interpretation of the words of Imam Husayn (a.s.) who said to the governor of Madina when he was asked to pledge allegiance to Yazid, “One like me does not pay homage to the one like Yazid”. 5 Imam Husayn in this everlasting statement is giving us a standard as to why he did not pay homage to Yazid.

Karbala, A living School

Under the shadow of the above explanation we should now be able to answer the general misconception about the tragedy of Karbala, that it was a personal event and Imam Husayn (a.s.) had a private mission, and hence no one is allowed to follow him. He was an infallible Imam, they say, and had his own mission. They assume such a belief gives a higher respect to the Imam. The adherents of this idea always try to show the Imams as extraordinary humans so that no one can make a model of their lives.

For instance, when they are dealing with the virtues of Lady Fatima (s.a.) they just focus on issues such as; she was not observing monthly menstruation, or the sperm she was made of was consist of a heavenly fruit. You scarcely hear from speakers about her behaviour at home with her husband and her children.

Therefore, Muslim ladies do not normally think that Fatima (s.a.) can be their role model, for the scholars have introduced her in a way which shows her to be a different being. I believe one of the major problems of our community is the lack of practical role models. They do not have any pattern to follow.

Contrary to this false presentation, the Holy Quran states:

“You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern.” 33:21

I have not a single doubt that Imam Husayn (a.s.) is Walyullah. I myself have explained to you a lot about the spiritual status of the Ahlul-Bait, to the extent that many may not be able to grasp it. However, this does not imply that they cannot be role models. If we say whatever Imam Husayn (a.s.) has done on Ashoora was by the guidance of an angel, then two problems will be raised:

1. Imam Husayn (a.s.) has never been able to use his brain and intelligence!
2. No angel will come to me and hence he cannot be a role model for me. He was a different creature with a different mission! Now you tell me, does this idea bring respect to Imam Husayn (a.s.)?! So, the argument is whether Imam Husayn (a.s.) rose against Yazid as an Imam who had a private mission, or as the leader of the Islamic Ummah and a true believer in Allah? Thank God, Imam Husayn (a.s.) himself has already solved this problem, if we give up our own pre-assumptions and listen to his own words. Here are some examples:

- Imam Husayn (a.s.) upon his arrival at Karbala wrote a letter to the leaders of the tribes of Kufa. One part of the letter reads: “Surely you know that Prophet (s.a.w.w.) said: Whoever witnesses a tyrant ruler considering the prohibition of Allah as permissible, breaking the covenant of Allah, opposing the practices of the prophet of Allah (a.s.), treating His servants sinfully and cruelly, and does not oppose him verbally or with action, then Allah truly associates him with that ruler.”
- On the day of Ashoora, he addressed his companions saying: “Can’t you see the truth is not practiced, and the false is not avoided, so the believer must be interested in visiting Allah (martyrdom) and indeed I do not see death but as a prosperity, and life with the tyrants a disgrace”.⁶

Therefore, a true follower of Imam Husayn (a.s.) never shakes hands with Zionists. This is the philosophy of Karbala, and this is one of the lessons we should learn from this school and this is why Karbala is still alive and will remain alive as long as the struggle between truth & falsehood, between angel & devil, and between light & darkness, continues.

1. Al-Tabari, Tarikh 3:306

2. Fadhael Yazid, Ibn Rajab, Tabaqatul-Hanabeleh 1:356

3. Rasael Jahedh : 298

4. Al-Kofi, Al-fotooh 5:17

5. Ibid

6. Al-Tabari, Tarikh 3:307

Meeting 3: The Cursed Tree, Bani Umayya Dinasty

Date: 02/06/1996

“Let not the unbelievers think that our respite to them is good for themselves, We grant them respite that they may grow in their iniquity; but they will have a shameful punishment.” (3: 178)

When we are studying history and historical personalities it is always better to do a comparative study. Knowing the positive and noble figures in history without having sufficient knowledge about the devils with whom they have been fighting, may not give us a thorough concept about that particular event and subsequently may not help us in deducing general laws for which we are basically searching, from studying the history.

You may have heard much about the virtues and excellencies of Imam Husayn. For example: “he along with his brother are the masters of the youth of paradise”.¹ Or “Husayn is the light of guidance and the ark of salvation” and similar Hadiths which are all narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). However, we may not have spoken enough about the enemies of Imam Husayn and their characteristics, a point which is no less important in judging the event.

Moreover, knowing about the dynasty of Bani-Ummayah will help us in finding some of the reasons for which Imam Husayn fought against Yazid. Once more I would like to mention that in these series of lectures we are seeking the historic as well as ideological roots of the tragedy of Karbala.

By the way, I am going to introduce to you, from the most reliable sources, the dynasty of Bani-Ummayah from which Yazid executed the tragedy of Karbala. In order for you to fully know Yazid, I shall introduce his family tree to you also.

The father of Yazid was Mu’awiyah, as the father of Imam Husayn was Imam Ali (a.s.), the first man who embraced Islam. The grandfather of Yazid was Abu-Sofyan, as the grandfather of Imam Husayn was the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). The grandmother of Yazid was Hind as the grandmother of Imam Husayn was Lady Khadija, the first lady who embraced Islam.

Now let’s start from the top.

Who is Hind, the grandmother of Yazid?

She was known as the wife of Abu-Sofyan. Unfortunately, some historians have quoted that she was known in the pre-Islamic era (the era of Jahiliah) as an unchaste woman, to the extent that her son Mu’awiyah was related to four fathers! Abu-Sofyan of course was the legitimate one and the other

three were his friends.²

Bani-Ummayah which was led by Abu-Sofyan who was a leading Jahiliah tribe in the pre-Islamic era, and Abu-Sofyan was considered the Pharaoh of Mecca. With the appearance of Islam his kingdom began to shake, and hence he became the first enemy of Islam.

The first battle between Muslims and the infidels of Mecca was the battle of Badr, which was organized basically by Abu-Sofyan in which the father of Hind (Otbah), her uncle (Shaybah), her son (Handhalah) who were all killed by Imam Ali and the uncle of Prophet, Hamza. Eight people were killed in that battle from the family of Bani-Ummayah.

From that time, Bani-Ummayah held a very strong animosity against Islam in general and Imam Ali and Hamza in particular. Therefore, after the battle of Badr, Abu-Sofyan made an oath not to wash his head until he took revenge on Prophet Mohammad. As a result, the second major battle was organized, called the battle of Uhod.

Hind, the wife of Abu-Sofyan, who had also lost her father, son and uncle, had appointed a black slave just to kill Hamza, the uncle of the prophet, cut open his chest, remove his liver and hand it over to Hind in order for her to chew it so that she might satisfy her anger, and this she did. Historians have narrated that she mutilated the bodies of the martyred from that battle and made a necklace for herself from the cut noses and ears!³

A few years later, Abu-Sofyan initiated a campaign against Islam. He mobilized all allied groups and parties including the Jews who were against Islam, to fight Islam. The battle of Ahzab (meaning parties) was the result of that plot, though Muslims fortunately won the battle and all the allied groups were scattered.

Two years before the passing away of the Prophet, the city of Mecca was captured by the Muslim troops and the kingdom of Abu-Sofyan collapsed forever.

Both he and his wife were in Mecca and had not a single doubt that they would be amongst the first to be executed. However, the merciful Prophet of Islam, forgave them all and made an announcement "Go, you are all free". Thus, he had no other choice but to embrace Islam, although he never seriously believed.

One day he saw the Prophet passing by, and he whispered to himself saying: 'I wonder how he defeated me'. 'By the power of Allah' replied the Prophet after reading his mind. In the year 10 after the Hejrat, the Holy Prophet of Islam passed away, and the event of Saqifah took place. Abu-Bakr in a political game became the ruler and Imam Ali was ignored.

Abu-Sofyan who was now seemingly a Muslim, though never believed in Islam, came to Imam Ali to pledge allegiance to him. Imam Ali, knowing that he had the intention to split the Muslim community and

take advantage of this opportunity for his devilish plans, refused and said to him: “I do not need your support”.

On his way back home, Omar Ibn Khattab, an intimate friend of Abu-Bakr who was later appointed by him as second Caliph, saw Abu-Sofyan coming from the house of Imam Ali. He immediately informed Abu-Bakr and asked him to pay an amount of charity to Abu Sofyan, which would silence him. The proposal was accepted and Abu-Sofyan shook the hand of Abu-Bakr as Caliph.

Abu-Bakr, in return, as a reward, appointed his son Yazid, brother of Mu’awiyah, as the commander-in-chief of an army which was dispatched for a battle in the then border of Islam, Damascus. The army of Islam won the battle and Yazid was appointed as the governor of Syria. A few years later, during the reign of the second Caliph, Omar Ibn Khattab, a disastrous plague came to Syria and many people died.

Yazid, the governor was also affected and hence wrote a letter to the Federal Government asking Omar to appoint Mu’awiyah as his successor. Again, the proposal was accepted and Mu’awiyah became the governor of Syria and the neighboring states. From that time, the pillars of the Bani-Ummaya dynasty started to become re-established.

Before continuing with the story I’d like to mention a Hadith from the Prophet for you: Tabari, the famous historian has quoted that the Prophet once saw Abu-Sofyan riding a camel and his two sons, Mu’awiyah and Yazid were walking, one in front and one behind the camel. The Prophet said: ‘May God curse the rider and the one in front and in the back.’⁴

Years passed by and he was still the governor in Damascus until the third Caliph, Uthman came into power. Things were improving, for Uthman was from the same family tree of Bani-Ummayah. Abu-Sofyan was still alive and his dreams were becoming reality, i.e. to rule Muslims and destroy Islam under the mask of Islam.

Therefore, during the reign of Uthman, Mu’awiyah had more freedom and designed many plots against Islam. It was during this time that his true nature became apparent and he started drinking alcohol. Obadat-Ibn-Samet who was one of the distinguished companions of the Prophet, was one day walking in Damascus. He was surprised to see a caravan of camels carrying a liquid which looked like wine.

Given the fact that it was an Islamic state, and drinking of alcohol is forbidden in Islam, he asked the leader of the caravan if the liquid was olive oil?! The man answered: No, it is wine and I am delivering the order of Amirul-Mo’menin Mu’awiyah! Upon hearing that Obadat ripped off all the skins of wine.

The years passed in this manner and Mu’awiyah freely ruled for about 19 years until Uthman was killed by Muslims and they asked Imam Ali to accept the leadership. One of the first duties of Imam Ali was to write a letter to Mu’awiyah asking him to resign otherwise he would be sacked, since he didn’t deserve the position. The answer of course was negative, and the battle of Seffin was organized by Mu’awiyah against Imam Ali.

Unfortunately, the leadership of Imam Ali did not last long, as after almost four years, the Imam was assassinated. Since then, Mu'awiyah became the one and only leader of the Islamic Ummah. In order for him to seek revenge from Imam Ali and his followers, he put the followers of the Imam under the utmost oppression.

The story of Bosr's raid is one of his crimes. Hamdan was a tribe of Muslims who loved Imam Ali. Mu'awiyah appointed his cruel commander, Bosr Ibn Artat to attack the tribe. In a barbaric raid all the men of Hamdan were killed, their houses were set on fire and their ladies, including their children, were taken as prisoners of war and sold in the market as slaves!⁵ This is the first time in Islamic history that Muslims were taken as prisoners of war by so called Muslims.⁶

Final goal of Mu'awiyah

Mas'oudi, a very reliable historian has quoted in his book *Morooju-Dahab* from Motaref son of Moghayra that: "Once I made a trip with my father to Damascus where Mu'awiyah was ruling. My father was visiting Mu'awiyah every night and when coming back home, he was praising Mu'awiyah and acknowledging his intelligence.

Suddenly, one night he came back home in a bad mood. He didn't even have his dinner. I asked him what was wrong? He replied: I've come back from the most devilish person, my dear son! Surprised I asked him who he meant? He turned around and said: Mu'awiyah! Who? Mu'awiyah?! You were praising him every night! Yes, but I never knew his real intention. Tonight, when all the people around us went away, it was only he and I. I took advantage of the opportunity and told him to reduce his pressure on the followers of Imam Ali, since he had gotten everything he wanted.

However, he replied: "You are talking nonsense. Look at Abu-Bakr, the first Caliph. He died and with his death his name has almost died too. The same with Omar and Uthman. But the name of this man (meaning the Prophet) is still repeated 5 times a day! Nay, I will never stop the pressure until I bury his name!" ⁷

Mobilizing the Muslims towards Yazid

In the last 7 years of his ruling, Mu'awiyah started paving the way for his son Yazid to be the next caliph. Let me tell you some of his plans:

1. **Assassinating the suspected candidates:** His first plan was to assassinate and get rid of those who could be in the pipeline of leadership. One day, he delivered a lecture in Damascus and asked the crowd their opinion for the next caliph, as he did not want to appoint anyone without their consent. They unanimously replied: "We are happy with Abdul-Rahman Ibn Khalid." Mu'awiyah, who was thinking of his son, Yazid, got upset but did not say a word and swallowed his anger. However, he decided to assassinate Abul-Rahman. A few months later, Abdul-Rahman fell sick and needed a doctor.

Mu'awiyah took advantage of the opportunity and sent his own doctor to him and ordered the doctor to poison Abdul-Rahman. The doctor accepted on the condition that he would be exempt from paying his taxes for a whole year. Mu'awiyah agreed and the assassination was committed.

2. Imam Hasan (a.s.) was also in the position of candidacy. Mu'awiyah sent some money secretly to the wife of the Imam, Jo'dah, with the message that should she poison Imam Hasan. All the money would be hers and the son of Mu'awiyah, Yazid would be also her husband. The plot was carried out. She killed Imam Hasan with poison. However, Mu'awiyah did not fulfill his second promise, reasoning that a woman who is not loyal to the son of the Prophet would definitely not be loyal to his own son!

Mu'awiyah used different ways and means to pave the way for the leadership of his son. Buying the leaders of the tribes was another plan. Arabs at that time had a tribal life. Each clan had a leader, whose word was law. Therefore, in order to have the support of a tribe you just needed to satisfy the leaders of the tribe. Mu'awiyah once called upon the leaders of some of the trouble-making tribes.

He offered 100,000 Dinars to each leader on the condition that they should not protest against Yazid. Among the leaders was a person named Hattat. Mu'awiyah gave him 70,000 Dinars. When they left the castle, they counted their money and Hattat noticed he was given 3000 less than the others. He returned to the castle angrily and asked Mu'awiyah why he had paid him less. "Your belief is not worth more than that" said Mu'awiyah. He said: "No Mu'awiyah, buy my belief at the same price" and he was paid the rest.

Levying heavy taxes to humiliate people was another plan of Mu'awiyah's to force their allegiance. By the way, in the year 60 A.H. Mu'awiyah, after almost 40 years of ruling, died, and his son Yazid, the tippler, the gambler, the one who had no care for Islam, the one who had all the vengeance of his ancestors in his blood against Islam, came into power. If Mu'awiyah was secretly assassinating figures like Imam Hasan, Yazid had no shame barbarically killing the Imam.

By his order, the master of the youth of Paradise, along with his noble companions, were ruthlessly killed, horses were ridden over their bodies after they were mutilated. Their families were taken as prisoners of war. Finally, when the severed head of the Master of the youth of Paradise was brought to his castle in Damascus he hit the lips of the Imam with his stick saying: "Today is for the day of Badr." Meaning, I have revenged now the day of Badr in which my ancestors were killed by Muslims, especially Imam Ali. Then he recited some poems in which he explicitly demonstrated his Kofr:

Just imagine the scene, the head of Imam Husayn severed from his body, in front of him are all the orphaned boys and girls whose fathers were killed in front of them a few days before. Lady Zaynab is also amongst those watching Yazid hitting the lips of her dear brother Imam Husayn. She courageously stood up and recited the Ayah:

"Let not the unbelievers think that our respite to them is good for themselves, We grant them respite that they may grow in their iniquity; but they will have a shameful punishment." (3: 178)

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1. Majlisi, Behar 49:122
 2. Ibn- Jozi, Tadhkeratul-Khawas p.116
 3. Compare and relate it to the evening of Ashoora.
 4. Tabari, Tarikh, 11:357
 5. Ibn-Athir, Osdol-Ghabah 1: 180
 6. Compare and relate it to the captives of Ashoora.
 7. Ibn-Abel-Hadid, Sharh Nahjul-Balagha 1: 463

Meeting 4: Obeying the Caliphs, A Theological root of the event of Ashoora

Date: 23/06/1996

***"Oh you who believe, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the last day; that is best and most suitable for final determination."* (4:59)**

The above Ayah is dealing with one of the most important Islamic issues, i.e. the issue of divine leadership. In principle, leadership is the secret key for both the progress and declination of human nations. A weak and incompetent leader will mislead his nation to annihilation and destruction, whereas a strong and competent leader will lead his nation to prosperity and development.

A true leadership will pave the way for the talents to flourish, whereas a false leadership will demolish the talents. The way people believe usually depends on the belief of their leaders. An Arabic expression says that 'people believe what their leaders believe'. Pious leaders will lead people naturally to piety whereas corrupted leaders will corrupt the community.

By the way, the Ayah under consideration is firstly commanding the believers to obey Allah, for He is the source of all types of obedience, hence the leadership must come from Him, the Mighty. On the second step he orders the believers to follow and obey His Messenger, the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) who is infallible and doesn't act according to his personal desires.

On the third and the last step, He orders the believers to obey those charged with authority, those from among the Muslim community who safeguard Islam and both the material aspect of a Muslim's life as well as his/her spiritual life.

Who are 'the authorized ones'?

This is a very controversial question, to the extent that the answer of the question has divided the entire Islamic Ummah into two main branches, i.e. Sunni & Shiite. The absolute majority of the Sunni scholars and interpreters of the Quran hold that 'Olel-Amr' are the rulers and the statesmen at any time. As a result, Muslims are duty-bound to obey them as their Olel-Amr, whatever their government is; just or unjust, even a barbaric regime such as the Ba'th party in Iraq.

Despite this common opinion of the Sunni scholars, there are a few contemporary thinkers and intellectuals among Sunni scholars who have rejected this traditional approach and asserted that 'we are duty bound to obey them on the condition that they do not breach the Islamic rules and laws'. Seyyed Qotb in his commentary; Adhelal, and M. Abdo in Al-Menar are the examples of this new approach.

The justification of the traditional approach is that the Ayah under discussion is commanding us to absolutely obey Allah, His Messenger, and Olel-Amr. The reason being, that disobedience to any of the above authorities may disturb the peace and tranquility of the Ummah.

Another justification which is the major one, is the narration of numerous Hadiths which are claimed to be quoted from the Prophet stating that rulers are to be obeyed irrespective of their conduct and qualifications. Such fabricated Hadiths are on a large scale the products of (FHF Pty. Ltd.) the Factory of Hadith Fabrication established during the reign of Moa'wia. The intention of such fabrications, of course, was nothing but the justification of their false leadership to mislead the Islamic Ummah.

The following are some examples of such fabrications:

1. When Othman the third Caliph saw Muslims protesting against him due to his abundant corruption, stated in an official letter to his governor Mu'awiyah that "In blasphemy are indeed people in Madina, for they disobeyed their leader (meaning himself) and breached their allegiance, so send me the fighters of Damascus to help me."
2. Muslim in his Authority quotes from Hodayfah that the Prophet is quoted to have said: "There will be rulers after me that they may not follow my path and tradition. Among them are some whose hearts are devilish hearts in human bodies." Hodayfah then questioned the Prophet as to what he should do? The Prophet replied: "Listen to and follow your Amir, even though he is whipping you and seizing your property".¹
3. Muslim again from the authority of Ibn-Abbas has quoted from what the Prophet is supposed to have said: "Whoever observes something repulsive from his Amir, he should be patient, for whoever goes away one step or one span from the majority he will die the death of Jahiliah."²
4. Muslim has quoted from Ziad Ibn Olaqah from the Prophet to have said: "There will be disasters, so whoever divides the affair of the Ummah into pieces whilst it is united, kill him by sword whoever the

person is”.³ (Mind you that Ziad Ibn Olayah was one of the enemies of Ahlul-Bait) Based on such fabricated Ahadith a Sunni scholar named Abubakr Ibn Arabi has asserted in his book Al-Awasim that: (Imam) Husayn was killed by the sword of his grandfather (meaning his Hadith), for he had rebelled against his Imam (Yazid!).

5. Muslim, on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Omar is quoted from the Prophet to have said: “Whoever disobeys his government, he will meet Allah in the hereafter whilst he has no proofs for what he has done, and whoever dies without having the allegiance of a government he has died a Jaheliah death (non-Muslim)”.⁴ Abdullah Ibn Omar has quoted this Hadith after the massacre of Madina which took place three years after Ashoora.

Nawawy the most distinguished commentator of Muslim says in the explanation of the above-mentioned Hadiths: “All the Sunni scholars being jurists, narrators and theologians have unanimously agreed that the Caliph will not be discharged due to his corruption and misconduct and ignoring the interest of the public. So, no-one is allowed to rise up against him. The most people are allowed to do is to give him a few words of advice and frighten him from the punishment of Allah, for Hadith tells us to do so.”

Sunni scholars throughout Islamic history went astray and misled their followers as well, since they relied on the fabrications of Mu’awiyah’s factory. They pray behind whoever leads the prayer, they promise their loyalty to their rulers whoever they are. Shiites on the other hand are also accused of being rebels and revolutionaries, and not peaceful people.

Millions of crimes in the history of Islam are justified by such false doctrine. In the massacre of Madina hundreds of innocent Muslims were killed 700 of whom were those who knew the Quran by heart, 1000 girls were raped and their properties were usurped for three days by the army of Yazid, all under the justification of Obeying the Caliph.

Obeying the Caliph on Ashoora

It was for the sake of obeying the caliph that in Karbala the noble family of the Prophet was banned from having some water for drinking, the basic blessing of Allah which is open to all creatures! It was under the justification of obeying the caliph that noble gentlemen from the family of the Prophet were killed and mutilated and their pure bodies crushed under the hooves of horses in Karbala!

It was with the excuse of obeying the caliph that the most noble family of the Prophet, among whom were all innocent children and ladies, was taken into captivity of war and demonstrated as being on sale!

Ka’b Ibn Jaber who had fought against Imam Husayn in Karbala was saying in his supplications after the tragedy of Karbala: “O Allah, we only showed our loyalty to our leader (Yazid), so do not judge us equally with those who breached their loyalty to their caliph” (meaning Imam Husayn who revolted against Yazid).

Shemer Ibn Dhel–Joshna the final killer of Imam Husayn, who happened to be a knowledgeable person, was seeking the forgiveness of Allah after Ashoora. Some people were surprised asking him how Allah would forgive the killer of Imam Husayn?! His answer was: Had I not killed Imam Husayn I would have been worse than these mutes, for I only obeyed my Amir” 5

The youngest soldier of Imam Husayn and obeying the caliph

After all, the criminals of Ashoora committed the most vicious crime under the justification of obeying the caliph. On the day of Ashoora when all the soldiers of Imam Husayn were killed, the Imam came to the tents of the ladies. He asked for his last soldier, to say his last proof against the followers of the so-called caliph. According to the oldest documents, as well as a Visiting (Ziarat) narrated by Imam Zaman (a.j.) the name of the infant was Abdullah.

The Imam took the baby to the army of Yazid showing them his dried lips. Now let us see the degree of their obedience to their caliph, the level of loyalty to the leader of criminals. I wonder how much a human can be corrupted? How can someone who has got even a little bit of common sense justify murdering cruelly a six months old baby for the sake of obeying the caliph? Who is this diabolical caliph for whose sake no blood whatsoever is respected?!

Imam Husayn raised his shining baby showing him to the devilish army. The head of the sweetheart of the Imam was drooped down due to his intensive thirst. To show his dried lips to those criminals, the Imam had to raise the head of his baby...

The scene is so painful I can hardly describe it... I wish I could have died for you, my sweetheart!... I haven't seen your lovely face and yet my hands are shaking, stopping me from uttering the description of your murder. You! my flowering bud who never bloomed, for what crime were you killed?!

Then, as soon as Imam Husayn raised the little face of his six month old infant and the beauty of his shining neck was shown, Omar Ibn Sa'd ordered Harmaleh Ibn Kahel to shoot the illuminated neck. Immediately after, the baby became silent. He stopped crying forever. Not because he was satisfied by water, but because of the arrow which pierced his fragile neck.

1. Muslim 6: 21

2. Ibid

3. Muslim 2:121

4. Muslim 6:20

5. Dhahabi 3: 18, 19

Meeting 5: The Impacts of Karbala on Vigilance of Muslims Part 1

Date: 30/06/1996

Imam Husayn (a.s.): “Indeed, I did not revolt (against the tyrannical regime of Bani-Ummayah) joyfully, arrogantly, to be an oppressor or a corrupted one, rather, I revolted persuading the reformation of the Islamic Ummah of my grandfather, the Prophet”.

Unlike a hasty approach to the event of Karbala which may reflect the idea that the revolution of Imam Husayn was unfulfilled and it was an unsuccessful struggle, when we carefully study the historical events after the tragedy of Karbala we will, no doubt, come to the conclusion that the revolution of Imam Husayn was not only successful in its own nature, but was also the major cause of all the revolutionary movements which took place after Karbala.

In fact, Karbala, in the history of Islam should be regarded as a turning point in the reforming of Muslims. It was only after the tragedy of Karbala that Muslims were encouraged to revolt against all tyrannical regimes, especially the followers of Ahlul-Bait who found their ideal role model. ‘When the Master of the youth of Paradise was willing to sacrifice his life and shed his blood to reform the corrupted society, of course my blood is not more respected than his’.

Such medicine was injected into the semi-dead body of the whole Islamic Ummah by the revolution of Imam Husayn. As a result, all salvation movements, initiated one after the other, right after the tragedy of Karbala were, and still are, inspired by the great revolution of Imam Husayn (a.s.). To this end, Karbala is the luminous torch of human salvation which is lighting forever the high peak of Islamic history to awaken all people throughout the ages.

The difference between Jesus & Imam Husayn

Imam Husayn and Jesus Christ have something in common. Both were reformers, and according to Christian belief, both were martyred. However, there is a main point which makes Imam Husayn different from the Jesus of present Christianity, i.e. the martyrdom of Jesus in Christianity is a personal issue. Jesus, in Christian belief, has been crucified to save his believers. There is no more responsibility on his followers.

Whereas, our Imam Husayn was martyred to awaken people, and his mission was not a personal mission. His role in the history of mankind is as a role model that must be followed, whereas the role of Jesus, according to Christianity, was to descend to Earth as an embodiment of God, the Father, to be sacrificed for the guaranteed salvation of his believers. Jesus, according to this doctrine, is the

personification of God and a ransom and hence his embodiment is impossible to be followed.

A Glance at some of the major revolutionary movements after Ashoora

There is no doubt that the martyrdom of Imam Husayn had a great impact on the then Islamic Ummah. It was such a great catastrophe that shocked the whole Ummah, to the extent that it not only awakened many Muslims, but some of the Bani-Ummayah were also impressed by the tragedy of Karbala.

Historians such as Dr. Hassan Ibrahim in his book 'The History of Islam', Kharbotali in 'The History of Iraq', and Philip Hatti in 'The History of Arabs' have all asserted that the event of Ashoora increased drastically the number of Shiites, to the extent that as P. Hatti says: "We may be able to claim that Shiite movements initiated from the tenth of Moharam 61 A.H."

Nicolson, the famous orientalist holds in his book 'The Political History of Islam' that "the tragedy of Karbala made Bani-Ummayah feel regretful for what they had done, for it united the Shiites to revenge unanimously, especially in areas such as Iraq and Iran, where the new Muslims would like to be rid of the influence of Arabs."

Mind you, the policy of race discrimination and the privilege given to Arabs by Bani-Ummayah, had annoyed many new Muslims. Among all Muslims, the followers of Ahlul-Bait were the first to be shocked. The following are some of the main revolutionary movements which took place after the tragedy of Karbala which were inspired by Ashoora.

1. The event of Harreh (The massacre of Madina)

All reliable historical sources have narrated this tragedy which took place almost 3 years after Ashoora. Although right after the catastrophe of Karbala so many protests were mobilized against Yazid, Madina the centre of revelation and the main base of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) in which hundreds of the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) were still living, rebelled against the tyrannical government of Bani-Ommaya.

Abdullah son of Handhaleh (bathed by the angels)¹ who later on led the movement, upon receiving the news of Karbala, paid a visit along with a delegation from Madina to Damascus, the capital of Yazid. He reported later on, out of what he had observed in Damascus, that the extent of the corruption had gone so far, he wouldn't be surprised if they were stoned in Damascus from the sky.

As a result, upon his arrival to Madina, he mobilized an army against the government. They captured the House of the Governor in Madina, deported the governor, Othman Ibn Mohammad Ibn Abu-Sofyan from the city and declared an autonomy. By doing this, the first capital of Islam was released from the influence of Bani-Omayya. However, as soon as the news was reported to Syria, Yazid dispatched one of his most vicious and murderous officers named Muslim Ibn Aqabeh² along with his troops which

consisted of 5000 soldiers to suppress the revolt.

In spite of a heroic defense from Madinians, the barbaric troops of Yazid ultimately conquered the city. According to Mas'odi, the famous historian, so many people including Bani-Hashim and the companions of the Prophet were killed. In short, Yazid had permitted his troops to enjoy their total freedom for 3 days in Madina, meaning no chastity, no property and no blood was respected. Tens of pages in the history of early Islam consist of descriptions of the Massacre of Madina.

Al-Fakhri in his History describes this bitter part of Islamic history as: during those 3 days, hundreds of the Prophet's companions were killed. The troops of Yazid entered the Masjidul-Nabi, and polluted the mosque. Around 900 girls were raped. For many years, Madinians would not guarantee the virginity of their daughters when marrying them. By the way, although the people of Madina were defeated in that battle, the protesting flag was transferred to Mecca, where the Holy Mosque and the Qibla of Muslims were.

2. Revolution in Mecca

Right after the Massacre of Madina, Meccans had an uprising against the central government. Although this movement was also inspired by the revolution of Imam Husayn, the leader of the revolution of Mecca, Abdullah Ibn Zobair, had no intention of vengeance for Imam Husayn. In order for Yazid to suppress this movement too, he also ordered Muslim Ibn Aqabeh to attack Mecca, though Allah, the Almighty did not give him any further opportunity and he died on the way to Mecca.

At that stage, Hosain Ibn Nomayr, the murderer of Abbas at Karbala, led the army of Yazid. Ibn Zobair who failed to continue the defense, sought refuge in the Holy Mosque. However, the troops of Yazid had no respect and hence they started firing at the Mosque. As a result, the curtains of the Mosque were set on fire and some parts of the walls of the Ka'ba were destroyed by fire.

This event also took place in the year 63 A.H. and Yazid, the most vicious figure of Bani-Omayya's tyranny died 11 days after the event of Mecca. Apparently, Meccans again were defeated in that battle. However, the more the crimes of Bani-Ummayah increased, the more the people rose up against Bani-Ummayah. The kingdom of Bani-Ummayah began shaking day by day until the beginning of the year 65 when the Bani-Ummayah dynasty fell into the rubbish bin of history forever. The details of the story will be discussed Inshallah in the next meeting.

Lady Sakina, Engrossed By Divine Perpetual Beauty

Imam Husayn (a.s.): "Regarding Sakina, she is engrossed by the perpetual beauty of God and hence she is not ready to marry anyone." Sakina was one of the daughters of Imam Husayn. She and her brother Abdullah (known as Ali-Asghar)³ were from the same mother, Robab. Based on the most reliable historical documents, Sakina must have been over the age of 9 in Karbala.

Since her cousin, Hasan Mothanna (the eldest son of Imam Hasan who was miraculously saved on the day of Ashoora after losing consciousness during the battle) had asked for her hand in marriage. As a matter of fact, Imam Husayn did not give her to Hasan, the reason being, she had been engrossed by the eternal beauty of God, as Imam Husayn has described her character. Instead, he offered his older daughter, Fatima.

It is interesting to know that she was about 70 years old when she died in the year 117 A.H.⁴ Her life coincided with the 4 Imams, i.e. her father, her brother and her nephews Imam Baqir and Imam Sadeq. She was such a knowledgeable lady that many Shiite and Sunni scholars have written her biography.⁵

Sakina at Karbala

She witnessed the whole catastrophe of Karbala. On the day of Ashoora she heard the painful voice of her father calling for assistance. In fact, she is one of the eye witness reporters of Ashoora who has quoted many things for us.

I am wondering which one of these to choose, whether the time that the bloodstained horse of Imam Husayn came back to the tents, the time that she threw herself on the body of her father, when in the evening of Ashoora her caravan passed over the martyrs, her painful experience of being exhibited for sale in the markets of Kufa and Damascus, her experience of being bound by iron chains all the way to Kufa and Damascus, or ...

I believe the most heart-breaking part of her tragedy, in the evening of Ashoora, when all the tents had been set on fire. Imagine the scene! Imagine the young children, orphaned boys and girls who had just lost their fathers. All throughout the day their throats had been on fire due to the intense thirst, and now their tents were on fire too. At the same time, the barbaric army of Ibn Ziad was plundering the tents. The whole land of Karbala was full of fire, smoke, plundering and savagery.

Let us listen to one piece of the story from Sakina herself: "I was in my tent when the enemies of Allah attacked it. They were so cruelly looking for whatever they could plunder, until one of them noticed the necklace that I was wearing. He attacked me, trying to grab it from my neck. I was escaping from him until he pulled off my scarf. I fell down unconscious and all I remember was that I awoke in the bosom of my aunt, Zainab."

1. Handhaleh, the father of Abdullah was among the martyrs of the battle of Uhod who had just married one night before the battle. Since he had directly gone from his wedding night to the battle without having his ritual bath done, the Prophet gave him the title of 'being bathed by the angels'. Abdullah, his son was the only child he left behind as a result of the one and only communication he had with his wife.

2. Due to his numerous crimes, some historians have named him instead of Muslim 'Mojrem' (meaning criminal).

3. There are two different narrations in regards to the name of the baby of Imam Husayn. According to Ibn Shahr Ashoob and Ibn Tawoos, the name is Ali-Asghar, whereas Mofid in his book Ekhtesas, confirms the name as Abdullah.

4. Tabari 8:228, Shadharatul-Dhahab 1:154, Ibn-Athir 5:71

5. As there are so many misconceptions regarding the life of lady Sakina, for the best study of her life see: Moqarram : Sayyedah Sakina.

Meeting 6: The Impacts of Karbala on Vigilance of Muslims Part 2

Date: 07/07/1996

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in Ziarat Arbaeen (Visiting on the 40th): **“Peace be on Husayn; the oppressed, the martyr. Peace be on the captives of grief and those killed by the teardrops. O God! Indeed, I bear witness he granted the advice and sacrificed the blood of his heart for Thy sake, in order for him to rescue Thy servants from the ignorance and the perplexity of going astray”.**

In the previous meeting, I shared with you some of the impacts of the revolution of Imam Husayn (a.s.) on the awareness of people. As I mentioned, the main task and the mission of the Imam was to awaken the Ummah and to make them realize that an ill fortune was awaiting them otherwise. His mission was not just to reform the then government. Imam Husayn, along with all his ancestors, being the previous Imams or prophets, all carried the unique mission, i.e. to fight ignorance and save people from going astray.

Their mission, therefore, was to train reformers, and hence, the school of Karbala should be considered as a school of training reformers, for it is not enough to believe Imam Husayn was only a social, as well as religious, reformer. His task was higher than that. He aimed at making people rise up against all types of oppression, corruption, alteration, and discrimination.

To this end, he sacrificed all that he possessed to be an everlasting role model for all who have the ambition of reforming their corrupted society. This fact is acknowledged by Imam Sadiq in his Ziarat (Visiting) on Arbaeen. According to his Ziarat, rescuing people from ignorance has been the main philosophy behind the tragedy of Karbala.

In the last meeting, I presented two examples of the rising up of the Ummah as a result of the tragedy of Karbala. The first was the massacre of Madina, and the second was the revolution in Mecca. As a matter of fact, the impacts of the tragedy of Karbala on awakening the Ummah can be found right from the evening of Ashoora.

On that evening, after the tents of Ahlul-Bait were plundered, a woman who happened to be the wife of a soldier from among the troops of Ibn-Ziad, perhaps was the first who shouted against the tyrannical

regime of Bani–Ommaya seeking revenge for Imam Husayn. She bravely shouted: “O you who look like men! The clothes of the daughters of the Prophet are being seized, and yet no one protests?! Down with this secular government!”¹

By the way, it was during the battle of Mecca that joyful news reached Mecca. Yazid, the tippler, the ruthless, died, ...off to hell. Husayn Ibn Nomair, who had now lost his reason for fighting Ibn Zobair, compromised with him. As a result, Ibn Zobair after he was about to be defeated, took control of Mecca again.

Bani–Ummayah After Yazid

After the death of Yazid in the year 64 AH. a serious dispute arose among the Bani–Ummayah family as to who should come to the throne. Mu’awiyah, the Second son of Yazid was appointed to be the Caliph.

However, since he was so impressed by the crimes of both his father and grandfather, he addressed the people in his first public lecture saying: “O people! Indeed, my grandfather, Mu’awiyah, confronted Ali Ibn Abi Talib who deserved the caliphate and forced you to commit what you are aware of until he died, carrying his sins with himself forever. Then, my father came into power, a man who did not deserve his position. He followed his desires though he didn’t gain them until he died, also carrying his sins with himself forever.” He then cried and refused the throne.²

At that time, he was only around 20 years old and 40 days after his resignation he secretly died. After his death, Marwan Ibn Hakam, the cousin of Uthman, was deported from Madina along with the governor prior to the Massacre of Madina, who took advantage of the existing gap, came to Damascus and immediately married the widow of Yazid. He then forced Bani–Omayyeh to accept him in allegiance. From that time the Bani–Ummayah dynasty declined forever.

Kufa and its Revolutions

In the beginning of these series of lectures, I, as many other historical analysts, castigated the Kufans for betraying their Imam after inviting him to Kufa. Although, the blame is accurate and many Kufans unfortunately broke their promises, it is inaccurate to believe that all Kufans turned against the Imam.

According to Mamaqani around 4500 people were jailed in Kufa prior to the tragedy of Karbala. In any case, after the tragedy of Karbala, Kufans more than others felt guilt and regret, to the extent that according to some historians the city had become like a volcano ready for eruption.

1. The Movement of Tawabin

In general, the citizens of Kufa were divided into 3 categories:

1. Sincere Shiites who were very emotional and seeking revenge from Bani-Ummayah. The main body of this group consisted of Yemenis, Iranians and other converts.
2. The partisans of Bani-Umayyah who were mainly Iraqi aristocrats from the clan of Modhar. The majority of the troops of Ibn-Ziad in Karbala had been provided from this group.
3. Conservatives who always avoid whatever might disturb their material life, being their business or material comfort. This group, which is always found in all communities, plays neutral or hypocritical roles. Their doctrine is to make everyone happy. Their slogan is “live in a way that after your death both Muslims and Hindus attend your funeral whilst the first washes your corpse with the water of Zamzam and the second cremates³ it by fire.”

The first group set a movement in motion named ‘the Movement of Tawabin (meaning Penitents). This movement was led by noble figures such as Solayman Ibn Sorad and Rofa’a Ibn Shaddad. They came to the belief that nothing can cleanse the sin of leaving Imam Husayn alone but being killed for his revenge. The movement created a battle between Tawabin and the army of Ibn-Ziad in the year 65 A.H.

Tawabin, before going to the battle, visited Imam Husayn’s grave and those of other Martyrs of Karbala. In their grief they performed a mourning ceremony which caused many of them to lose consciousness.

A bloody fight occurred between Tawabin and the army of Ibn-Ziad in an area out of Kufa called Aynul-Warda. The number of Tawabin is estimated at around 4000 while the troops of Ibn-Ziad, some of which had already participated in the battle of Karbala, were roughly 30000 soldiers. As a result, in spite of the courageous fighting of Tawabin most of them including their leader Solyman were martyred.

2. The Uprising of Mokhtar

The uprising of Mokhtar was the most successful movement after the tragedy of Karbala which took place in the year 66 A.H. Mokhtar, one of the devoted Iraqis of Imam Ali (a.s.), a noble figure in Iraq, who was jailed during the visit of Muslim Ibn Aqil in Kufa, was released from prison. His main mission and ambition was to seek revenge from all the criminals of Karbala.

During his one and a half years of ruling Iraq he rigorously sought and killed the main criminals of Karbala. Those who had already proudly narrated the story of their crimes to the people, during the time of Mokhtar were executed one after the other. Omar Ibn Sa’d, Shemer, Harmale even Ibn-Ziad were all mercilessly executed by the order of Mokhtar.

Execution of Harmala, the murderer of the six month old baby

Taking into consideration that this meeting prohibits narration of the way in which all the criminals of Karbala were executed, I would like to bring my speech to an end by sharing with you in a few words a description of the worldly punishment of Harmale, the murderer of the infant of Imam Husayn.

Menhal Ibn Amr from Kufa, one of the followers of Imam Sajjad (a.s.) quoted: “in the year 66 when Mokhtar was in power in Iraq and was executing the murderers of Karbala one after the other, I made a pilgrimage to Hajj. After performing the Hajj ceremony, I went to Madina to visit Imam Sajjad. The Imam asked me about Harmale. I replied that he was still alive when I was last in Kufa. Imam Sajjad raised up both of his hands praying: ‘O God! let him taste the burning of the iron, let him taste the burning of the iron, let him taste the burning of the fire.’”

All the criminals of Karbala were of course cruel, but Harmale was the most vicious figure among them all. The way Imam Sajjad was praying to God to punish him will reflect to us the bereaved heart of the Imam.

Menhal said: “I came back home. Mokhtar was busy finding the murderers. I went to see him and found him with his soldiers at the city’s round-about waiting for someone. As a matter of fact, he had been informed about the hiding place of Harmale. A few minutes later some of his soldiers came back cheerfully bringing Harmale with them. Mokhtar commanded his soldiers to immediately prepare him for execution.

He was of course sentenced to death and yet it was the least punishment a devil like him could have received. However, prior to carrying out the decree he was given a chance to confess and narrate the details of his crime. He said: “On the day of Ashoora I had three special poisoned arrows. The first I pierced through the fragile neck of the baby of Husayn. I fired the second at the heart of Imam Husayn after he had taken away his shirt wiping up his injured forehead. And the third one...”

Imam Hasan (a.s.) had three sons who all participated in Karbala. Hasan Mothana, the oldest one, Qasim the middle one, and Abdullah the youngest one. On the day of Ashoora, Abdullah was about 10 years old. In fact, he was born when his father, Imam Hasan was just martyred. Because of his age, he was kept along with the other children inside the tents. However, in the last minutes of the life of Imam Husayn, when he heard the painful voice of his dear uncle calling for help, he ran away from inside the tent.

He reached Imam Husayn as a criminal was about to hit the Imam with his sword. Abdullah raised up his little hand to stop the devil. As a result, his hand was chopped off. The orphan of Imam Hasan yelled sorrowfully and yet dropped himself on the Imam, saving the uncle who had always been as kind to him just as a father. At that very moment, Harmale confessed later on that, he targeted Abdullah with his last poisoned arrow and brutally killed him on the bosom of his uncle.

1. Ibn Tawoos; Lohooif , p.132.

2. Balatheri; Ansabul-Ashraaf 4:61

3. Cremation is forbidden in Islam as well as Orthodox Judaism, but recently approved by Roman Catholic church.

Meeting 7: War & Peace in Islam

War & Peace in Islam 1

Date: 4/07/1996

“In the name of Allah Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Verily We have granted you a manifest Victory.” (48: 1)

We are here in this spiritual gathering today to commemorate two great occasions; the passing away of the most noble creature of God, the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.w.), and the martyrdom of the second infallible Imam, the first grandson of the Prophet; Imam Hasan (a.s.).

The topic I am going to deal with today is “Peace and War in Islam” a very controversial issue nowadays. The reason I have chosen this topic is that unfortunately there is a misunderstanding among some Shiites who don't have enough Islamic education. They assume that Imam Hasan was a man of peace whereas Imam Husayn was a man of war.

As a result, conservatives praise Imam Hasan and claim to be his followers, while the extremists blame Imam Hasan and accuse him of seeking a comfortable life. Imam Husayn, on the other hand, is an extremist for the first group and a role model for the second. According to the second group, armed struggle is the only duty upon every Muslim, he is Yazidian otherwise.

This argument in fact goes back to the question of whether Islam is the religion of peace or does it advocate for war? In other words, was Islam in its early days spread by sword or were there other factors involved? Is Islam the religion of violence or it is the religion of peaceful coexistence? Are Muslims allowed to sign any peace treaty with a non-Islamic state that they are in conflict with, or they are bound to fight, whatever the circumstances are?

These and many such questions have occupied the minds and the time of many contemporary intellectuals. It may not be an exaggerated claim that many people in the West hold that Islam is a terrorist religion and hence the term Islam sounds obnoxious to them. Such a false belief, to the best of my knowledge, is one of the main barriers between Westerners and real Islam. Should they become familiar with the true image of Islam regarding war and peace, I can assert many of them who are already perplexed and seeking asylum would embrace Islam.

Such an illusion has not of course come to their mind out of the blue. Millions of dollars have, and are still being allocated by the enemies of Islam, especially in the last decades to inject this illusion into the minds of people, to introduce Islam, as a frightful evil which no one would be daring enough to get close to. To cut a long story short, we believe Islam in its nature is a peaceful religion advocating a wise

coexistence. The following are some of the proofs that wars have never been the cause for the spread of Islam:

1. Indonesia is the most populated Islamic state with more than 100 million Muslims. Yet, there has never been any Islamic military attack to that country.
2. Millions of Muslims in China are worshipping Allah and yet, Islam has never entered China by military force.
3. Many African countries as well as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, have all embraced Islam without being forced by any Islamic groups.
4. In the contemporary world, many people in the West, from black Americans, including their inmates, as well as Europeans including their migrants, to Australians, New Zealanders to Aborigines are coming towards and embracing Islam without any military force.
5. The Mongol leader Genghis Khan was one of the great conquerors in the history of the world, born C. 1167. In his series of destructive, savagely and bloody invasions of much of the Asian mainland, he invaded Iran which was an Islamic state by then. Yet, after one or two generations instead of Iranian Muslims being converted to the Mongolian religion, they themselves embraced Islam.
6. Many Ayat as well as Ahadith in different ways and means condemn all types of corruption on earth. Needless to say, human wars and the shedding of blood are one of the best examples of corruption.

Q. With all respect to the previous proofs, still we do have some examples of Islam being spread by the sword. Iran is one of the vivid examples which was conquered by Muslim Arabs in early Islam. As a result, Iranians had to become Muslims and give up their previous religion, i.e. Zoroastrianism.

A. Hundreds of wars have taken place in the history of mankind, yet the conquerors have never been able to force their religion upon the conquered peoples, as the Mongolians failed to do so. Hence, Iranians did not embrace Islam because of the sword of Muslims. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to penetrate into the hearts of people by sword. The power of the sword is not more than for cutting the flesh. The sword is not capable of influencing the conscience and the belief of human beings. In short, the main reason for people like Iranians accepting Islam rests on other issues. Iranians were impressed by the justice found in Islam, after being sick of the vicious discrimination from the Sasanian dynasty.

Types of War

Although Islam is the religion of peace, and unlike some of the Western thinkers, such as Freud and Nietzsche, who did not acknowledge war as a natural phenomenon in human life, Islam prescribes war under a few circumstances. In general, there are two types of war.

1. War in the sense of blood shedding, murdering, massacres and plundering for the sake of power, as a struggle for survival.

2. War in the sense of protecting the life of the innocent by destroying the evil people who try to destroy human life and wisdom. Such a war is like a surgical operation for the sake of saving the rest of the body by amputating the decayed organ or limb. The sword of Islam is nothing more than a surgical knife in the hands of a wise surgeon. It is like a small shovel to uproot the weeds from the gardens of humanity.

To this end, war in Islam is not only a form of worship, but holy worshipping. The Islamic Jihad (holy war) has never been mentioned in the Quran without having the preliminary statement 'for the sake of God'. That, then, is what makes Islamic wars different from other types of human war which are fought for the sake of power, sovereignty and profit.

Peace in Islam

Since the man of Islam has surrendered to Allah, he is a warrior when war is required, based on the above explanation, and he is the most peaceful person when it is time for peace. The Holy Quran states:

“And if the enemy incline towards peace, you should also incline towards peace, and trust in Allah..” (8:61)

The history of Islam has presented many examples in which the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.), as well as his infallible successors have welcomed peace when it would be of benefit to the Ummah. Islamic victory does not necessarily mean fighting and conquering. If the victory can be gained in a peaceful way, then war is not prescribed in Islam. Therefore, to be a warrior or a peaceful man in Islam depends upon the circumstances in which a man of Islam finds himself.

Two vivid examples of peace in Islam

1. The Peace of Hodaybiah

Hodaybiah is a small village near to Mecca in which the treaty between the Prophet and the infidels of Quraysh was concluded in the year 6 AH. In short, in the year 6 AH the Prophet along with his companions who it is estimated were around 1600 people, left Madina to pilgrimage to Hajj. As part of their good will, and to show that their only reason for the journey was the performance of Hajj, they did not carry any weapons. However, the Qoraysh, who were informed of the Muslims journey, took an oath that they would not allow Muslims to enter Mecca.

The Holy Prophet sent an ambassador² to them with some gifts, explaining to them that the Muslims did not wish to confront the Qoraysh. In return, the Quraysh killed the camel of the ambassador, and death, too, was close for the ambassador himself. For the second time the Prophet appointed another

ambassador to deliver the message. Omar Ibn Khattab was the appointed one, though he refused, his excuse being that many of the Quraysh hated him and his life may be danger. 3

Finally, a treaty was made between the Quraysh and the Prophet, named the Treaty of Hodybiah. The scribe of the treaty was Imam Ali (a.s.). He initiated the treaty with the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. The agent of the Quraysh objected to that, saying: if we believed in Allah we would not fight you. The name was omitted. Again, when the name of the Prophet was mentioned in the treaty as the messenger of Allah, the agent of Quraysh objected saying: 'If we believed you were the messenger of Allah we wouldn't fight you'.

In short, although most parts of that treaty seemed against Muslims, the Prophet did not reject it, for that situation required peace which could later bring greater victory that sometimes may not be gained by the sword. Ignoring this fact, Ibn Hisham, the famous historian has narrated that upon acceptance of the peace treaty, Omar Ibn Khattab objected to it, going to the Prophet and surprisingly, questioning him as to whether he was the messenger of God!

Yes, I am, replied the Prophet. Aren't we Muslims? Yes, said the Prophet. Aren't they infidels? Yes, added the prophet. Then why should we humiliate ourselves? The Holy Prophet said: "I am the servant of God and His messenger and will never disobey Him, as He will never leave me alone."⁴⁵

Although the treaty seemed bitter to the taste of some of the Muslims who were not able to foresee the future, nor did they surrender to God, it paved the way for many great victories, to the extent that the Holy Quran has mentioned that treaty as a vivid victory: "Indeed, We have granted you a manifest victory". In fact, the treaty of Hodaybiah paved the way to conquer Mecca as well as Khaybar in two years' time. Muslims strengthened themselves and within two years easily interred Mecca; the capital of the infidels of Qoraysh. To this end, Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says: There was no event in the history of Islam, as blissful as the treaty of Hodaybiah.⁶

2. The Peace treaty of Imam Hasan (a.s.)

The peace treaty between Imam Hasan and Mu'awiyah is one of the bitter events in the history of Islam. This treaty has even been used by some of the adversaries to blame and accuse Imam Hasan of being a man who was, God forbid, seeking his material comfort to the extent that some of them have shamelessly accused him of blasphemy. In fact, the state of Imam Hasan's oppression is more than that of his brother Imam Husayn. For, Imam Hasan was oppressed by both his companions and those historians partial to Ahlul-Bait.

Safadi shamelessly says: "(Imam) Hasan Ibn Ali said to Mu'awiyah that he had a debt. If Mu'awiyah would pay his loan off, then he was willing to give up the Caliphate to him. Mu'awiyah paid off his loan and Hasan Ibn Ali gave up the Caliphate to Mu'awiyah."⁷

Dr. Philip Hatti following Safadi with utmost impudence says: "People of Iraq appointed Hasan Ibn Ali,

who was the oldest son of Ali and Fatima the daughter of the Prophet to be their spiritual leader. However, Hasan, who was a pleasure seeking person(!), not a statesman, was not suitable for the position and hence resigned being satisfied with an annual ration he received from Mu'awiyah".⁸ The followers of Mu'awiyah have never provided any historical documents for their false claims.

The Causes of Peace

Before shedding some light on the reasons why Imam Hasan was forced to agree to the Peace Treaty, we should ask ourselves: Did not the Prophet of Islam sign a peace treaty with the infidels? Of course, he did. So, can we say the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) was, God forbid, a man seeking pleasure and not a statesman? Was not Imam Ali, the courageous man of Islam, forced to accept the peace treaty which was imposed on him in the battle of Seffin? Moreover, no doubt, peace is accepted in Islam when the circumstances allow, as I have already explained.

Above all, it is a big mistake to assume that making peace with the enemy is equal to seeking pleasure but that constant fighting is courage and bravery. In contrast, the man of Islam is seeking God's satisfaction. His reason for fighting is the same as his reason for making peace. To him, both peace and war are to be used in their due place.

Therefore, different circumstances require different treatment and strategy. Do not forget that Imam Husayn who is known to us for his courageous devotion in Karbala, continued the peace strategy of his brother with Mu'awiyah for ten years. In short, there is no single difference between our Imams.

Had either of them been in the other's situation, he would have done the same. It is the circumstances which make the difference. By the way, among many reasons which forced Imam Hasan to accept the Peace Treaty, the following were the main ones:

1. The rumor of peace

Cold War is one of the methods used in wars. Spreading rumors against the enemy and weakening the morale of the opposing soldiers has always been one of the methods of defeating the enemy.

Mu'awiyah, utilizing this method, appointed some of his spies to spread rumors among the army of Imam Hasan to the effect that the Imam had corresponded with Mu'awiyah accepting peace.⁹ The army of Imam Hasan was impressed so much by the rumors that some of them accused Imam Hasan of blasphemy saying: "The man has become an infidel!"

2. Division, Impatience and tending to material pleasures

Imam Hasan, prior to accepting the peace, delivered a lecture to the public explaining to them the reasons behind their being defeated by Mu'awiyah. One part of the lecture reads: "We were fighting people of Damascus by the power of coexistence, unity and patience, until you were divided and lost

your patience. Before, you used to prefer your belief to your material comfort, and now your material comfort is what you care for. Mu'awiyah has invited us to a peace treaty in which you will lose your dignity. Nevertheless, if you are willing to sacrifice, then we will fight him." The crowd shouted: "Accept the peace. Accept the peace."¹⁰

In fact, Mu'awiyah had purchased the high officers of Imam Hasan. Obaidullah Ibn Abbas was the first commander of Imam Hasan and yet, Mu'awiyah was able to buy him with one million Dirhams, half to be paid cash and the rest on credit. The companions of Imam Hasan were so unfaithful that they even made attempts upon his life.

If the tents of Imam Husayn were plundered by his enemies face-to-face, the tent of Imam Hasan was plundered by his own so-called soldiers. They pulled away the mat on which he was praying. If Imam Husayn was wounded by the arrows of the army of Yazid, Imam Hasan was wounded by his own officer Jarrah Ibn Senan.

It was under such circumstances that Imam Hasan accepted the peace. He then carried on another mission, i.e. to train faithful soldiers, if not for his time, they were trained for the time of his brother, Imam Husayn who was going to carry the same message. As a matter of fact, the peace treaty that Imam Hasan agreed upon, paved the way for the revolution made by Imam Husayn.

To this end, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) is quoted to have said: "Hasan and Husayn are both Imams, whether they rise up or sit down."

Slow Death

After accepting the peace, Imam Hasan left Kufa forever for Madina. After which, he opened another chapter in his life. At this stage, he was gradually being sacrificed. Unlike a soldier in the battle front who has a quick death, the dear Imam suffered a slow death throughout 10 years.

During the last 10 years of his life he carried yet another mission. The Ummah was not prepared to fight the devil. They needed to be educated and that was the mission of the Imam. Despite the rumors that Mu'awiyah was spreading against the Imam, his personality was an influence on people.

Such great men as our infallible Imams reach a point where both their lives and deaths are a real threat to the oppressors. They attempt to destroy their personalities by spreading rumors against them. But their transcendental personalities are too high to be reached by those devils.

Mu'awiyah was encountering this puzzle which had made him confused, until a vicious plot was arranged. He bribed Jo'dah, the wife of the Imam who was suffering from the inferiority of infertility, to poison her husband. Half a century had passed since the migration of the Prophet, and the Imam was at the age of 47.

On a day whilst fasting, Jo'dah poisoned the cup of milk with which Imam Hasan was supposed to break his fasting. Immediately after drinking the milk, the poison corrupted his digestive system and the Imam faced death. He called upon his brother Imam Husayn. These were the last seconds of the life of Imam Hasan... two brothers cordially hugging each other. This was one time that Imam Husayn hugged one of his brothers. The second time was at Karbala when Abbas called upon Husayn while both his arms were brutally chopped off...

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1. On the occasion of the martyrdom of Imam Hasan (a.s.) and the passing away of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.).
 2. His name was Kherash Ibn Ummayah : Ibn Hesham 3:343
 3. Ibid 3:329.
 4. After 8 years having an imposed war with Iraqi regime, the late Imam Khomeini accepted the peace which was to him like the Cup of Hemlock, nevertheless he accepted it for it would contain the benefit of the Islamic Ummah.
 5. Ibn Hisham 3:331. According to Tafseer Qomi, Omar has said that had he had 40 men supporting him he would have opposed to the Prophet. Qomi 2:312
 6. Kolayni 8:327
 7. Safadi : Sharh Laamia 2:27
 8. F. Hatti, Al-arab. p. 78
 9. Ibn Abil-Hadid 4:13-15
 10. Ibn Athir, Al-Kaamil 3:406

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