

THE  
LEADER  
OF  
MARTYRS

AS HIS SUBLIME WORDS PORTRAY

*By Ahmed H. Sheriff*

M. Ballou





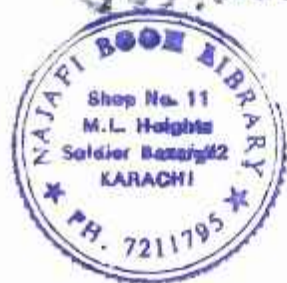
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# THE LEADER OF MARTYRS

AS HIS SUBLIME WORDS PORTRAY

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## PREFACE

1400 years have passed since the birth of Imam Husain (A.S.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), yet this name as an exalted personage and Leader of the Martyrs still survives in the annals of history. Muslims and non-Muslims alike still recall his supreme ideals and sacrifices which act as a torch light of guidance to all those who feel the need of reforming and revolutionizing their society. The Islamic Revival of recent years in Iran is a vivid example of our times in this respect.

No martyr has been revered and remembered so often, by so many and for so long in this world other than Imam Husain (A.S.) His supreme sacrifices in the cause of truth and his unrelenting trust in Almighty Allah in most trying circumstances, provide profound testimony of the Islamic truth to the world.

With the aim of reminding the world of the noble ideals and teachings of the Imam on the occasion of his 1400th birthday anniversary, I have endeavoured to compile and translate words spoken by him, adding explanatory notes. These were published by the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania in 1984 in two parts.

I have since reviewed the contents and this second edition consists of the two parts in amalgamated form with all possible improvements.

I am grateful to Mr. A. Rizvi of New York for his help and suggestions.

That the sublime words of the Imam will inspire us to look beyond the horizon of this materialistic life aiming at higher goals of achieving lasting bliss, is my fervent hope.

September 1986

Ahmed H. Sheriff

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**IMPACT OF HUSAIN'S MARTYRDOM**

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"In the history of Islam, especially the life of Imam Husain stands unique, unapproached and unapproachable by any one. Without his martyrdom, Islam would have extinguished long ago. He was the savior of Islam and it was due to his martyrdom that Islam took such a deep root, which is neither possible nor even imaginable to destroy now."

"In a distant age and climate, the tragic scene of the death of Husain will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader."

**EDWARD GIBBON**  
**"DECLINE AND FALL OF THE**  
**ROMAN EMPIRE"**

**HUSAIN**  
**AS DESCRIBED BY THE PROPHET**  
\*\*\*\*\*

"Husain is from me and I am from Husain "

(Jam'a Tirmizee)

"Husain would suffer the death of a  
martyr on the bank of the Euphrates"

(Mishkat)

"Whoever loved Hasan and Husain  
loved me and whoever bore enmity  
to them bore enmity to me"

(Mustadrak)

## PROCLAIM THE RELIGION

Once Imam Husain (A.S.) was requested to explain the meaning of the following Ayat of the Holy Qur'an:

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ

*"As to the bounties (favours) of your Lord, do announce (proclaim) to others."*

The Imam explained:

أَمْرُهُ أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِمَا أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ بِهِ عَلَيْهِ فِي دِينِهِ

*"God has commanded to proclaim the blessing of religion endowed by Him."*

Almighty Allah has bestowed upon us His countless blessings and it is only proper for us not to conceal them but to announce and proclaim them so that others may share the knowledge and benefit.

According to the inner and special meaning of the above Quranic Ayat, as explained by Imam Husain (A.S.), it is the blessing of the religion of Islam which we are commanded to proclaim and spread to others. What better blessing could be other than Islam which keeps us on the right path for the welfare of our lives in this world and in the hereafter.

Had it not been the paramount duty of protecting and spreading the divinely revealed religion of Islam, Imam Husain (A.S.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.S.), would not have willingly offered his supreme sacrifices on the burning plains of Kerbala.

In the light of the above, those free of prejudices and truly enlightened with the teachings of Islam

would not think of confining the message of Islam within the four walls of their mosques and houses.

### WHAT IS GOOD OF THIS AND THE NEXT WORLD

From the people of Kufa in Iraq, someone sent a letter to Imam Husain (A.S.) asking for information on the good of this world and the next. In reply, the Imam wrote this:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنَّ مَنْ طَلَبَ رِضَى اللَّهِ بِسُخْطِ النَّاسِ كَفَاهُ  
اللَّهُ أُمُورَ النَّاسِ وَمَنْ طَلَبَ رِضَى النَّاسِ بِسُخْطِ اللَّهِ  
وَكَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَى النَّاسِ وَالسَّلَام

*"Bismillahi Rrhamani Rrahim*

*"If one seeks the pleasure of Allah despite the wrath and displeasure of people, Allah is sufficient for him in his affairs with them. And if one seeks the pleasure of people despite the wrath and displeasure of Allah, he will be forsaken by Him leaving him to (the mercy of ) people*

*"Wassalam."*

In dealing with people concerning business, domestic or social matters, man is often faced with a choice whether or not to uphold the pleasure of Allah against the wishes and pleasures of people around him. The Imam in his above-mentioned words has assured such a person of Allah's protection and help, if he gave preference to His pleasure and not to that of people.

But should he restrict himself to the pleasure of people for sporadic gains irrespective of God's pleasure, then Allah would not be on his side. He would be left to the mercy of people, surely not a

reliable and lasting source of support and protection.

### WHAT IS A TRUE SHIA?

A man once came to the Imam claiming to be one of his Shias. The imam instantly reacted to this, saying:

إِنَّ شِيعَتَنَا مَنْ سَلِمَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ غِشٍّ وَغِيلٍ وَلَا يَكُنُّ  
قُلًّا أَنَا مِنْ مُوَالِيكُمْ وَمُحِبِّكُمْ

*"Fear God and do not claim anything for which Allah may tell you that you have lied and made a false claim. Verily our Shias are those who kept their hearts clean of fraud and malice. But you may claim that you are from our friends and lovers."*

Having been born in a Shia family and following in Shi'ite traditions and gatherings, one may be outwardly recognized as a Shia. But from the foregoing definition of a Shia by the Imam, anyone who cherishes fraud and malice in his heart against others, so commonly witnessed in our surroundings today, cannot be considered a true Shia.

### SOURCE OF PERFECTING INTELLIGENCE

In explaining the true way of increasing one's intelligence, the Imam said:

طَوْلُ التَّجَارِبِ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْعَقْلِ

*"Intelligence increases with the length of experience gained."*

It is an undeniable fact that the ups and downs, the wealth and poverty, the health and sickness, and the travelling from place to place provide different valuable experiences that one learns and is

able to increase his intelligence provided of course that he keeps his eyes and mind open.

Islam has encouraged people to move around and learn from experience and draw lessons from the outcome of the lifestyles of the people of the past.

### HOW TO REFRAIN FROM SINS

A man came to the Imam to seek his advice about what to do, as he was unable to restrain himself from committing sins. In reply, the Imam advised him to do five things and then he could sin as he wished:

لَتَأْكُلُ مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَأَذِيبَ مَا شِئْتَ  
أَخْرَجَ مِنْ وِلَايَةِ اللَّهِ وَأَذِيبَ مَا شِئْتَ  
أَطْلُبُ مَوْجِعًا لَا يَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَأَذِيبَ مَا شِئْتَ  
إِذَا أَدْخَلَكَ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ لِيَقْبِضَ رُوحَكَ فَأَذِيبَهُ عَنْ  
نَفْسِكَ وَأَذِيبَ مَا شِئْتَ  
إِذَا أَدْخَلَكَ مَالِكُ النَّارِ فَلَا تَدْخُلْ فِي النَّارِ  
وَأَذِيبَ مَا شِئْتَ

(1) Do not eat the sustenance of Allah and then sin as you like.

(2) Go out of the kingdom of Allah and then sin as you like.

(3) Find a place where Allah sees you not and then sin as you like.

(4) When approached by the angel of death to take your soul, stop him from doing so.

(5) When you are dragged into the hell-fire by Allah, refuse to enter.

What a splendid way of arousing man's consciousness of the basic facts of his life. However indepen-

dent, strong, healthy and fully satisfied we may feel in our life, there are certain things from which we can never escape under any circumstance. If we convince ourselves and remain ever conscious of the fact that we live in the kingdom of Allah, enjoying His sustenance, unable to make ourselves unseen by Him, unable to delay death and there is hell-fire awaiting to punish us for our misdeeds, we would be apt to refrain from committing sins.

### RECOGNIZE YOUR FRIEND AND ENEMY

Describing the nature of a true friend and enemy, the Imam said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّكَ أَنْهَكَ وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَكَ أَغْرَاكَ

*"One who loves you prevents you from committing errors, and one who hates you encourages you to commit follies."*

Your true friend is one who has your welfare at heart. He gives you frank and sincere advice taking into consideration the long term interests and benefits for yourself. Whereas your enemy is the one who engages in sweet talk and flattery thus causing you to boost your sense of pride and conceit much to your detriment.

A wise man is the one who is not easily influenced with what people say about him. He pauses to think and weigh each and every word spoken and treads cautiously with those who flock around him.

### VICIOUSNESS OF BACKBITING

A man was engaged in backbiting another person. On hearing it, the Imam addressed him saying:

يَاهَذَا كَفَّ عَنِ الْغَيْبَةِ فَإِنَّهَا إِدَامُ كِلَابِ النَّارِ

*"Oh you! stay away from backbiting as it is the food of the dogs of hell."*

It has become a common practice to indulge in backbiting others whenever friends or relatives get together. Quite often the defects of the person exposed are untrue and without foundation. Beside committing a sin, the ill-feeling and mistrust spread become difficult to rectify.

The above saying of the Imam signifies how the habit of backbiting is despicable.

### RELIGION: ONLY LIP-SERVICE

In describing the strange mentality of the people and the state of religion during his time, the Imam said:

إِنَّ النَّاسَ عَبِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَالدِّينَ لَعِقُّ عَلَى أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ

*"People have become slaves of worldly things and religion has become a matter of lip-service."*

In other words, the mentality of the people was so much enslaved with the worldly gains and enjoyments that only lip service was being given to the religion of Islam. No efforts were being made to follow its tenets and its teachings. People had become hypocrites and they cared for Islam so long as they were able to derive worldly benefits.

More or less, the same situation can be said to exist today. Religious activities continue to prevail as long as there is good incoming of wealth and things go rosy. No sooner there is a crisis and the situation becomes gloomy, the faith in Allah would be seen to be shaken and people start grumbling to the extent of doubting the mercy and protection of Allah.



## THAT WHICH RELAXES THE HUMAN BODY

In one of his sayings, the Imam had said:

الْقُنُوعُ رَاحَةُ الْبَدَنِ

*"Contentment gives rest to the body."*

It is a natural phenomenon that when one lives a life of contentment and curbs the greed and craving for more and more wealth besides avoiding excessive enjoyment of food and drinks, there is less strain over his mind and body. Consequently his body is able to enjoy a good rest and his mind relaxes in peace which he needs.

## SALUTATION BEFORE TALKING

A man came to the Imam and commenced talking before showing the courtesy of salutation and said, "How are you, may Allah protect you?" In reply the Imam said:

السَّلَامُ قَبْلُ الْكَلَامِ عَافَاكَ اللَّهُ

*"Let (salute) first before any talk,  
May Allah protect you."*

Then the Imam added by saying:

لَا تَأْذَنُوا لِأَحَدٍ حَتَّى يُسَلِّمَ

*"Do not allow anyone to talk before he salutes."*

From the foregoing, we can notice how the Imam was putting into practice the Islamic teaching of showing courtesy to one another by reciting 'Salamon Alaikom' which is meant to convey a message of peace. This courtesy has the psychological effect of inspiring a desire of peaceful coexistence with

another whatever differences of opinion there may exist between them.

### AVOID HAVING TO APOLOGIZE

In one of his advices to people, the Imam said:

إِيَّاكَ وَمَا تَعْتَذِرُ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَا يَسِيءُ وَلَا يَعْتَذِرُ  
وَالْمُنَافِقُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ يَسِيءُ وَيَعْتَذِرُ

*"Beware of those acts for which you may have to beg for excuse. For verily the faithful does not commit an evil act and does not need to seek and excuse for it, whereas a hypocrite does so every day and has to find an excuse for it."*

Prevention is better than cure and the Imam has taught us to beware of every act lest we have to repent and beg for apology should we do wrong to others.

The Imam has also shown us the difference between a believer and a hypocrite. Whilst a believer is careful of his every action, a hypocrite is careless and goes on committing wrong and then does not feel ashamed of having to apologize.

### GENEROSITY WITH HUMILITY

One of the outstanding qualities which elevates one to become a famous leader of his people and followers is a generous nature and outlook. Imam Ali (A.S.) has said, "The key of leadership is a generous heart." From the life history of Imam Husain (A.S.), one comes across instances of profound generosity rarely to be witnessed in lives of other great men of the world. But for his generous heart, dedicated to save Islam from extinction, his supreme sacrifices on the plains of Kerbala would not have taken place.

A beggar once came to Madina and approaching the Imam, begs for some financial help. The Imam instructed his treasurer to pay him one thousand Ashrafi (gold coins of the time). The beggar received the money but instead of going away with it, he sat down to check and count each and every coin. The treasurer of the Imam asked him whether he had sold any goods that he was doing so in return. The beggar replied, "Why not? I have sold my dignity by begging." On hearing this, the Imam interrupted by saying that it was true what he had said and instructed a further one thousand gold coins be paid to him. When he had counted and taken possession of two thousand coins, the Imam lifting his prayer mat took a further one thousand Ashrafi from underneath and, giving them to the beggar, uttered these words:

*"The first one thousand Ashrafi is in response to your begging*

*The second one thousand Ashrafi is in return for your dignity*

*And the third one thousand Ashrafi is for your visit and coming to me instead of going elsewhere to ask for help"*

On another occasion, a bedouin Arab came to Madina and inquired who in the city was most generous. He was given the name of Imam Husain (A.S.). Searching for him, he reached the mosque of the Prophet where he found the Imam in the course of prayers. He sat beside him and recited the following couplets:

<p>حَرَكَ مِنْ دُونِ بَارِكِ الْحَلَقَةِ أَبُوكَ قَدُ كَانَ قَاتِلُ الْفَسَقَةِ كَانَتْ عَلَيْنَا الْجَحِيمُ مُنْظِفَةً</p>	<p>لَمْ يَخِبْ الْآنَ مَنْ رَجَاكَ وَمَنْ أَنْتَ حَيَّوَادُ وَأَنْتَ مُعْتَمِدُ لَوْلَا الْيَدِيُّ كَانَ مِنْ أَوْلَاكُمْ</p>
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*"Never was he disappointed whosoever placed his hope upon you and moved the chain of (knocked upon) your door*

*You are generous and you are the trusted one, and it was your father who had killed the very wicked transgressor*

*Had it not been for your ancestors (guidance) for us would have been a confinement in hell-fire"*

On hearing these words, the Imam terminated his prayer and, returning home, asked Qamber whether there was anything remaining from the wealth received from Hejaz. The reply was that there was a balance of four thousand Ashrafi. The Imam told him to bring them as the Arab was more deserving than they themselves. Wrapping the Ashrafis in a piece of cloth and stretching forth his hand with it from behind the door, the Imam offered them to the Arab in a state of embarrassment and recited the following couplets:

خُذْهَا وَاتِّبِ إِلَىٰ بَيْتِكَ مُعْتَذِرٌ  
وَاعْلَمْ بِأَنِّي عَلَيْكَ ذُو شَفَقَةٍ  
لَوْ كَانَ فِي سَيْرِنَا الْقَدَاةَ عَصَا  
أَمْسَتْ سَمَاوًا عَلَيْكَ مُتَذَفِقَةً  
لَاكِنَّ رَبِّبَ الزَّمَانِ ذُو غَيْرِ  
وَالكَفَّ مَنِّي قَلِيلَةً التَّنْفِقَةَ

*"Please accept this with my apology and let it be known to you that I bear compassion and kindness towards you*

*Had the scepter (of Khilafat) today been in our hands (you would have seen how) our generosity would have rained upon you*

*But Alas! the times have changed and my hand is restricted in charity"*

The Arab with tears in his eyes accepted the Ashrafis. Rather moved to see him in that condition, the Imam said to him:

*"Perhaps you find our gift to be small*

'Not so,' replied the Arab, adding 'The reason behind the tears over my face is that I wonder how a person like you shall depart from this world and for the earth (of the grave) to consume your hand.'

The foregoing are instances of profound humility with which the poor and the beggars were treated by the Imam in whose philosophy those seeking help were not to be looked down upon by those expected to help. On the contrary, they deserve to be respected because were they not to come forward to seek help, there would be no opportunity for prospective helpers to earn divine reward and grace. That it is a divine blessing upon one to be expected to meet the needs of people can be gleaned from the following words of Imam Husain (A.S.):

إِنَّ حَوَائِجَ النَّاسِ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَا تَمْلُوا النَّعْمَ

"Verily the needs of people coming before you are blessings of Allah upon you; therefore do not neglect them."

#### CONCEPTION OF FEAR OF ALLAH

Once the Imam was praised by someone saying 'How real is your fear of Allah?' To this the Imam reacted by saying:

لَا يَأْمَنُ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا مَنْ خَافَ اللَّهَ فِي الدُّنْيَا

"One will not be saved on the Day of Judgment unless he had fear of Allah in this world."

And whenever the Imam was taking ablution for prayers, the colour of his face would change and his joints would tremble. When asked about the reason for that, he replied:

حَقٌّ لِمَنْ وَقَفَ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ الْمَلِكِ الْجَبَّارِ أَنْ يَضْفِرَ  
لَوْتَهُ وَتَرْتَعِدُ مَفَاصِلُهُ

*"It is only right for the one standing before a Mighty King (Allah) that he turns pale and his joints tremble."*

The importance of fearing Allah can be gleaned from the foregoing words of the Imam. The stronger one's faith in the existence of Allah and his absolute control over all our affairs and destiny the more his fear of him. Coupled with the staunch faith in the life after death when everyone is to account for his deeds, one ought to become concerned about his actions lest he is subjected to severe punishment in the next world. Such a fear of Allah in our daily life prevents us from committing sins and encourages us to do noble deeds.

#### PRAYER FOR THE LIFE HEREAFTER

The Imam used to pray to Allah and supplicate in these words:

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي الرَّغْبَةَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ حَتَّى أَعْرِفَ صِدْقَ  
ذَلِكَ فِي قَلْبِي بِالزَّهَادَةِ مِنِّي فِي دُنْيَايَ اللَّهُمَّ  
ارْزُقْنِي بَصْرًا فِي أَمْرِ الْآخِرَةِ حَتَّى أَظْلُبَ الْحَسَنَاتِ  
سَوْفًا وَأَفْرَمَ مِنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ خَوْفًا يَا رَبِّ

*"Oh Allah, endow me with the desire for the life Hereafter so that I become aware of the truth in that my heart by the help of detachment from this world. Oh Allah, endow me with insight into the matters concerning the life Hereafter till I attain longing for good deeds and refrain from sins out of fear of Thee Oh Lord"*

The above prayers of the Imam should inspire us to be concerned with and strive for the betterment of the life Hereafter by abstaining from sins and from

vain pleasures in this world. It is also aimed at boosting our insight into the facts about life in the next world to the extent that we inculcate in our minds the keen desire for charitable and noble actions so as to benefit from their rewards in the next life. It is through regular meditation in the form of prayers, supplications and recitation of the holy Qur'an that one is able to develop in himself that attachment to Allah and awareness as well as longing for the life Hereafter.

### THE PEAK OF INTELLIGENCE

With Moavia bin Abi Sufyan once, a discussion had arisen on the subject of intelligence. On hearing this, the Imam giving his opinion said this:

لَا يَكْمِلُ الْعَقْلُ إِلَّا بِاتِّبَاعِ الْحَقِّ

*"No man can reach the peak of intelligence except by following Haq, i.e., Truth."*

Hearing this, Moavia reacted by saying 'there is no other thing in your heart except one thing.'

In other words, the Imam hinted that true and perfect intelligence did not lie in conspiring and usurping other people's rights as believed and practiced by the Omayyads. The true path of perfecting one's intelligence lies in living and acting with righteousness.

Moavia had already experienced well how Imam Ali bin'Abi Taleb (A.S.) as well as his first son Imam Hasan (A.S.) had, despite all sorts of persecution and opposition from him, confined themselves to the path of righteousness. Now the same was followed by Imam Husain (A.S.), a member of the same household of the Prophet, who also proclaimed that it was living with righteousness that enables one to perfect his intelligence. Thus he was obliged to con-

firm the noble ideology of Aal-i Muhammad (A.S.), the holy progeny and rightful vicegerents of the Holy Prophet (A.S.W.)

### WHAT IS THE BEST OF IBADAT - WORSHIP

The Imam defined the true worship of Allah in these words:

إِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَغْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ التَّحَازُرِ  
وَأَنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَهْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْعَبِيدِ  
وَأَنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ شُكْرًا فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأَخْرَارِ  
وَهِيَ أَفْضَلُ الْعِبَادَةِ

*"There are people who worship Allah for the sake of (fulfilling their) desires and that is the worship of business people. And verily there are those who worship Allah out of fear of Him, this is the worship of slaves. But there are those who worship out of their gratitude to Him, this being the worship of free-minded people and is the best of worship."*

Many of us who say their daily prayers are perhaps prompted to do so by the desire for worldly gains, such as wealth, health or prestige. Some may be praying for attaining higher places in heaven or of enjoyment of sweet fruits or beautiful hoories in mind. It is the business people who base their actions on such thinking, which does not carry much value.

However, there are those truly and religiously enlightened people whose sole aim of prayers is to show gratitude to Allah for His countless bounties showered upon them, or out of awe and fear of Him that they are so insignificant before Him. This is a true worship of elevated level and is of the people who are truly noble minded.



## THE MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAIN PREDICTED

The effect of the heart-rending martyrdom of Imam Husain and its impact on the people were well known in advance to the Holy Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W.) and to Imam Husain (A.S.) himself. The noble aim and the far-reaching effects of the sacrifices of Imam Husain are described in some of the following predictions. The Imam said:

أَنَا قَتِيلٌ الْعَبْرَةُ لِأَيْذِكُرِّي مُثْمِنٌ إِلَّا اسْتَعْبَرَهُ

*"I am one who will be killed in a manner that tears will be shed upon me AND my remembrance will not but awaken the conscience and impart lessons."*

In one of his sermons, the Imam stated:

وَلَكُمْ بِي أُسْوَةٌ

*"And for you, I shall become an example."*

The Holy Prophet predicted the outcome of the martyrdom of his grandson in the following words:

رَأَى لِقَتْلِ الْحُسَيْنِ حَرَارَةً فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُتَمَنِّينَ  
لَا تَبْرُدُ أَبَدًا

*"Verily with the martyrdom of Husain, a wave of heat would generate from the hearts, which will never cool down."*

More than 1300 years have passed since the tragedy of Kerbala took place, yet we find that the memory of Husain lives. In almost every part of the world, Husain and his companions are remembered almost every day through religious discourses, eulogies, processions, publications, etc. Tears are shed when mention is made of the atrocities heaped upon him.

As predicted by the Holy Prophet, the remembrance of Imam Husain continues to produce heat in the hearts of the people and the narration of the history of Kerbala has a profound effect upon the people. The conscience of the people is awakened and the examples set by the martyrs are emulated by them.

### THE SACRIFICE OF LIFE IS PREDICTED

When departing from Mecca, the Imam proclaimed to his followers of what was at stake and for what aim they should accompany him:

أَلَا فَمَنْ كَانَ بَادِلًا بَيْنَنَا وَمُهْجَتَهُ وَمَوْطِنًا عَلَيْنَا  
لِقَاءِ اللَّهِ تَفْسَهُ فَلْيُرْحَلْ مَعَنَا فَإِنِّي رَاجِلٌ  
غَدًا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

*"Beware whoever is prepared to sacrifice his life with us and is fully resigned in going to meet his Lord (ready to die in way of Allah) should travel with us. Inshallah I am going to depart from here tomorrow."*

How abundantly clear these words make the fact that in following and accompanying the Imam in his march, no one was to be tempted with worldly gains of any sort. Only those willing to sacrifice their lives for the noble cause of safeguarding Islam were wanted.

### BACKGROUND TO THE LIFE OF YAZID

Yazid was the son of Moavia and the grandson of Abu Sufyan. (Abu Sufyan, during the time of the Prophet, was converted to Islam but not with a sincere heart). In his book, *The Literary History of the Arabs*, Nicholson writes that the Omayyads were against the Islamic Sharia, rejecting its principles. During their Caliphate, kufr-polytheism of the Times of Ignorance had reverted and was domi-

nating the Islamic scene. He adds that Yazid himself had never accepted Islam and was brought up by his Christian mother living in a Christian tribe. Hunting, drinking and prostitution were his daily indulgences!

Well known in history as the one who lived a life of licentiousness, Yazid did not spare even his own step-mother. Indulgent in games of chess, dog and monkey, he openly took part in drinking parties surrounded by slave girls. In order to make a mockery of the holy men of Islam, he used to arrange for monkeys attired in the dress of Ulema (learned men of Islam) and mounted them on horseback; he took them out in processions around the bazaars of Damascus. Depicting his infidelity, the following couplets recited by him while sitting on his throne in Damascus, are well known in history:

كَعَبَتَ هَاشِمٌ بِاَلْمَلِكِ فَلَا خَيْرَ جَاءَ وَلَا وَحْيٌ نَزَلَ

*"The Banu Hashim (the tribe of the Prophet) had only played with conquests. Neither any message was sent nor any revelation came."*

Yazid's rule lasted for three years. In the first year he embarked upon the killing of Imam Husain (A.S.) and his companions. In the second, he attacked Madina and annihilated the holy city. And in the third, he attacked the holy Ka'aba in Makkah, setting it on fire.

#### WHY YAZID'S LEADERSHIP IS INTOLERABLE?

When a Caliph and leader of the Muslim Ummah, totally devoid of faith, openly flouts the teachings and tenets of Islam, then there is a serious danger that the religion may not survive and it may become extinct.

WHY?

People normally have the tendency to believe and to follow what the caliphs and rulers do. When people start following a caliph and a ruler who has no regard for religion, then in course of time, the original teachings are lost and the creed becomes adulterated with innovations and false traditions.

With the proclamation of Yazid as Caliph and the ruler, this was precisely happening in Syria and was spreading to other Islamic dominions. The martyr Murtaza Mutahhari writes that a section of the people of Madina sent their leader Hanzala Ghaseel Al-Malaika to Syria for investigations about the leadership and caliphate of Yazid. When he arrived at the court of Yazid in Damascus, he saw what strange things were going on there. On his return to Madina, he told his people that during my stay in Syria, I was fearful lest a stone of wrath might fall upon our heads from the sky. He added that whilst sitting at the Caliph's court, he noticed that Yazid openly drank wine, gambled and indulged in dog and monkey games. His flouting of Islamic rules was to the extent that he freely indulged in adultery and prostitution with women whose marriage with him was illegal.

Hanzala then told the people of Madina that it was incumbent upon them to rise against Yazid in protest of his gross misdeeds in the name of Islam and whether they did or not, he was going to do so along with his eight sons. In his determination to rise in protest against Yazid, he first sent his eight sons who were all martyred. Thereafter he himself followed and laid down his life in sacrifice for Islam.

#### THE MEANING OF BAYA'T

In the old days in Arabian countries including Syria, kings were worshiped as God, and Yazid had adopted this tradition. That the king must be fully obeyed as God was what the Omayyads staunchly be-

lieved in and caused it to be reinforced. Since his kingdom was dependent upon this belief, Yazid not only upheld it and arranged for it to be spread around in other places.

"Baya't," an Arabic word, originates from the word "Bayo'n" which means to sell, to dispose of. The word "Baya't" is usually interpreted to mean paying allegiance to a Caliph or ruler - an irrevocable oath whereby the person doing so becomes bound to obey each and every command of the ruler. It meant selling oneself to him like a slave entirely at the mercy of his master. By making a "Baya't" of a Caliph, it meant acknowledging him as a Supreme Head of the Islamic Sharia and bowing down to his every word.

In his book Jazabul Qoloob, Sheikh Abdul Haq Dehlavi, a prominent Sunni author, writes that the people were forced to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid and submit to his slavery. If he liked to sell them (as slaves) or free them, (it was up to him) if he wished he could call them to obey God or disobey Him.

Allama Masoodi writes that whoever accepted the slavery of Yazid by allegiance to him, was saved, otherwise he was doomed. Thus the meaning of Baya't of Yazid was not merely the acceptance of a new Caliph, but it meant to sell one's religion and faith in slavery to a tyrant.

Yazid wanted Imam Husain (A.S.) to give allegiance to him so that all his actions, however un-Islamic and evil, could be accepted as lawful by the masses in general. Failing to secure the allegiance, he decided to kill the Imam, not only to remove an obstacle but also revenge those of his ancestors who were killed in the battles of Badr and Ohad during the times of the Prophet. His aim also was to revert to the creed of polytheism (kufr) and at the same time to destroy Islam.

As such, it was inconceivable that a personage of the status of Imam Husain (A.S.), the grandson of the Prophet and guardian of Islamic Sharia, to stretch his hand of allegiance to a mean and lowly person like Yazid. Not only this, the situation then made it incumbent upon him not to sit quiet but to rise in protest against Yazid for his crimes against Islam. And that is why at the time of departure for this purpose, we read his words about what would happen to Islam under the leadership of Yazid:

وَعَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ سَلَامٌ إِذْ قَدْ بَلَّيْتَ الْأُمَّةَ سِرَاعٍ مِثْلَ بَيْرِيدٍ

*"Islam is doomed if the Ummah is led by a shepherd (leader) like Yazid."*

#### KEEN DESIRE TO MEET THE LORD

Yazid sent some people to Makkah disguised as Hajis (pilgrims) with instructions to assassinate the Imam whilst the Imam was in the course of performing the Haj rituals. The Imam came to know about this and for the sake of avoiding bloodshed in the holy places, he decided to depart from Makkah on the eighth of Zilhaj. Just before that, the Imam called the people present for the Haj and addressed them in these words:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ  
عَلَى رَسُولِهِ

*"All praise be to Allah (for) what pleases Him and there is no power but with Allah. May God send His blessings on his Prophet."*

حَطُّ الْمَوْتِ عَلَى وُلْدِ آدَمَ مَخَطُّ الْقَلَادَةِ عَلَى جَيْدِ  
الْقَتَاةِ

*"The line of death upon the children of Adam is like that caused by the*

necklace around the neck of a young woman."

Firstly in praising the Lord and acknowledging His Might, the Imam proclaimed his absolute pleasure and submission to His Will. He also reminded the people of the need to remember the Prophet with invocation to Allah for His blessings upon him.

In comparing death with the lines caused on the neck of a young woman by her necklace, the Imam was trying to portray death as an adornment for the children of Adam (mankind). That death was not the end to this life but a kind of adorned elevation for those who, having rightly understood the philosophy of life, were always treading upon the path of righteousness. Who could better qualify for such adornment but the martyrs who welcomed death in the cause of Allah?

The Imam then, expressing his keen desire for death so as to join his ancestors, said:

وَمَا أَوْلَهْنِي إِلَىٰ أَسْلَافِي إِشْتِيَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ إِلَىٰ يُوسُفَ

"I am attracted towards my ancestors like the keen desire of Prophet Yakoob for his son Yusuf."

وَخَيْرَ لِي مَضْرُوعًا أَنَا لِأَقِيهِ كَأَنِّي بِأَوْصَالِي تَقَطَّعُهَا  
عُشَلَانُ الْفَلَوَاتِ بَيْنَ النَّوَامِيْسِ وَكَرْبَلَاءَ

"The land on which I am to meet it (death) has been selected. As if on my reaching it I see my body being cut into pieces by the wolves of the wild between Nawamees and Kerbala."

لَأَمَجِيضَ عَن يَوْمِ خَطِّ الْقَلَمِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ رِضَانًا أَهْلَ  
الْبَيْتِ نَصْرًا عَلَىٰ بِلَاغِهِ وَيُوقِنَا أَجْرَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"There is no escape from the day which is already drawn by pen (destiny already decreed.)" We the household of the prophet are pleased with what pleases Allah. We shall exercise patience on calamities from Him and He will pay us in full the reward reserved for the patient."

لَنْ تَشُدَّ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ لِحِمَّتِهِ وَهِيَ مَجْمُوعَةٌ لَهُ فِي حَظِيرَةِ الْقُدْسِ تَقَرُّ بِهِمْ عَيْنُهُ وَيُنَجِّرُ بِهِمْ وَعُدَّةُ

"We are not separate from the flesh of the Prophet of Allah of whom we are a part and we shall be together in heaven, securing the satisfaction and the divine promise to him shall be fulfilled."

The foregoing words of the Imam clearly portray his firm determination in marching forward towards his final place of martyrdom with absolute willingness to sacrifice his life in submission to the Will and Pleasure of Allah. That there can be no doubt about the ultimate reward from Allah for those exercising patience against calamities in this world is also to be learnt from the above saying.

#### AIM OF DEPARTURE FROM MADINA

History bears witness to the fact that by the year 60 A.H., Islam - the divine creed revealed upon Prophet Muhammad (A.S.) - had been overshadowed by dark clouds of hypocrisy and treachery. The sublime tenets of the faith were openly flouted by Yazid bin Moavia who had usurped the Caliphate. Not only his blasphemous words on the throne of Damascus and his complete lack of faith, but also his indecent behaviour and debased actions, all portray open rebellion against Islam. People were coerced to pay allegiance to him so as to put a seal of approval



to whatever he did, however un-Islamic action it was.

In the circumstances, Husain, the grandson of the Prophet and the rightful guardian of Islam, could neither succumb to the pressure by the tyrant to pay allegiance, nor remain indifferent. Had he done so, it would have been a fatal blow to Islam. But he was absolutely certain that his life was no longer safe, hence he decided to migrate with his kith and kin from Madina - his dear birthplace and homeland - so as to preserve the sanctity of the holy place.

His march from Madina was Jihad against Yazid in protest of the latter's crimes and tyranny. At the time of departure, he abundantly clarified his aim in his will addressed to his brother, Muhammad el Hanafiyya:

إِنِّي لَمْ أَخْرُجْ أَشْرًا وَلَا بَطْرًا وَلَا مُفْسِدًا وَلَا ظَالِمًا  
وَأِنَّمَا خَرَجْتُ لِطَلْبِ الْأَصْلَاحِ فِي أُمَّةِ جَدِّي أَرِيثِدُ  
أَنَّ أَمْرًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

*"I did not leave (Madina) for doing mischief, corruption or injustice, but I only left with an aim of reforming the nation of my grandfather. I intend to command what is recognized as good and prohibit what is wrong."*

#### WHAT IS PRECIOUS OF THIS WORLD

On arrival at Makkah, Imam Husain (A.S.) could have easily recruited a sizable army from the thousands of pilgrims gathered there. Yet he did not do so, thus proving that his stand was non-aggressive. Neither did he accumulate arms in Makkah nor did he raise an army but all his movements and sayings remained concentrated on expounding the truth and upholding the lofty tenets of Islam. To pilgrims gathered there from distant lands, he advised to

spread the message of true Islam. When leaving the Holy Ka'aba in Makkah, he preached the following words of advice:

فَإِنْ تَكُنِ الدُّنْيَا تَعُدُّ نَفِيسَةً  
 وَإِنَّ الأَبْدَانَ لِلْمَوْتِ أَنْشَأْتِ  
 وَإِنْ تَكُنِ الأَرْزَاقُ قِسْمًا مُقَدَّرًا  
 وَإِنْ تَكُنِ الأَمْوَالُ لِلتَّرِكِ حَمَقَةً  
 فَمَا بَالُ مَتْرُوكِ بِهِ المَرْءِ يَبْخُلُ

*"If this world be considered precious,  
 the pleasure of Allah is more elevated  
 and noble*

*If bodies have been created to die,  
 then the death of man by the sword (in  
 the way of Allah) is the best*

*And if sustenance is given according to  
 Divine decree, why then should man  
 miserly cling to wealth*

#### STAND AGAINST YAZID JUSTIFIED

On reaching the rest place named Baizah, the Imam justified his stand against Yazid by quoting the following saying of the Holy Prophet of Islam:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ص قَالَ مَنْ رَأَى سُلْطَانًا  
 جَائِرًا مُسْتَحْلًا لِحَرَامِ اللَّهِ نَاجِسًا عَمِدَةً مُخَالِفًا  
 لِسُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ يَتَعَمَلُ فِي عِبَادَةِ الأَثَمِ وَالصَّدْوَانِ  
 فَلَمْ يُقَيِّرْ مَا عَلَيْهِ يَفْعَلْ وَلَا يَقُولْ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى  
 اللَّهِ أَنْ يُدْخِلَهُ مَدْخِلِهِ

*"O people! the Messenger of Allah had  
 said:*

*'Whoever is faced with a ruler who is  
 oppressive and who permits what is pro-*

*hibited by Allah, who breaks the covenants of Allah, who contradicts the Sunnah of the Prophet of Allah, and who acts with wickedness and gross injustice towards people, if he does not oppose him either by actions or words, it would be right for Allah to put him into such an abode that befits him (i.e., hell)'"*

By quoting the above saying of the Prophet, the Imam was justifying his defiance against Yazid in order to expose his tyranny and inequity. As a rightful vicegerent and grandson of the Prophet, the Imam thus proclaimed his paramount duty of coming out in he open to challenge yazid so as to draw a line between truth and falsehood and save Islam from extinction.

It is by drawing lesson and guidance from this ideology of the Imam that the ulema in every era of history raised their voices of protest and took steps against the unjust and oppressive rulers. Had it not been for the profound inspiration from the martyrs of Kerbala, the people of Iran led by their ulema would not have dared to throw out their oppressive ruler - Muhammad Reza Pahlavi - and boldly challenged the superpowers of the world who intervened in their internal affairs.

#### DEATH DID NOT FRIGHTEN THE IMAM

On the way to Kerbala, when Hur (a commander of Yazid's army) tried to frighten Imam Husain (A.S.) by saying: "I advise you to think of your life; for I am sure you will be killed if you fight."

"Do you think you can frighten me with death?" replied the Imam. The Imam then recited the following poem of a companion of the Holy Prophet from the tribe of Aws:

سَأْمِيْنَ وَمَا بِالْمَوْتِ عَارٌ عَلَيَّ الْفَتَىٰ  
إِذَا مَا نَوَىٰ حَقًّا وَجَاهَدَ مُسْلِمًا

*"I will die, but there is no shame in death for a young man, if what he pursues is right and he strives as a Muslim"*

وَوَاسَى الرَّجَالَ الصَّالِحِينَ بِنَفْسِهِ  
وَفَارَقَ مَثْبُورًا وَخَالَفَ مُجْرِمًا

*"If he supports the righteous men by sacrificing his life, and if he disengages himself from those condemned and opposes the criminals"*

فَإِن عِشْتُ لَمْ أَنْدَمَ وَإِن مِتُّ لَمْ أَلِيْمَ  
كَفَىٰ بِكَ ذِلًّا أَنْ تَعِيشَ وَتَرْغَمَا

*"If I live, I will not regret, and if I die, I will not suffer; let it be enough for you to live in humiliation and be reviled"*

#### WATER SUPPLY TO THE ENEMY

An outstanding instance of generosity of the Imam was the help of water extended to the soldiers of Hur, who on instructions of Yazid were coming from Kufa to intercept the Imam and his followers. It was mid-day at a place of burning sand in the Arabian desert under extreme summer heat. The soldiers of Hur were almost dying of thirst. The Imam immediately commanded his men to offer all their water reserves and quench the thirst of the enemy to their full satisfaction, with himself holding a water bag to help those badly affected and out of their senses, suffering from extreme thirst.

A tactic of warfare is to cut off the supply of food and water from the enemy. But here we see how the Imam acted to the contrary, knowing fully well

that the soldiers under the command of Hur were his archenemies, having come to intercept him. He was also aware that they were the very people from Yazid who were ultimately to surround him and his kith and kin on the plains of Kerbala and to deny water to them from the river of Euphrates, even to his six months year old babe.

Historians have further elaborated the unparalleled incident of the Imam's generosity by stating that the help of water was not restricted to the soldiers under Hur but also extended to their horses also suffering from thirst. Whilst commanding his men to quench their thirst, the words uttered by the Imam are indeed worth pondering upon.

The Imam said this:

وَرَشَّفُوا الْخُيُولَ تَرَشِيفًا

*"And let the horses drink water to their full satisfaction."*

Where else can we find such examples of unprecedented generosity and humanism?

### BETTER DEATH THAN LIFE WITH TYRANTS

In one of his speeches delivered before reaching Kerbala, the Imam said:

إِنَّهُ قَدْ نَزَلَ بِنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مَا قَدْ تَرَوْنَ وَإِنَّ الدُّنْيَا  
تَغْيَرَتْ وَتَسْكُرَتْ وَأَدْبَرَ مَعْرُوفُهَا وَاسْتَمْرَتْ حَذَائِهَا  
وَلَمْ يَبْقُ مِنْهَا إِلَّا صَبَابَةٌ كَصَبَابَةِ الْإِنَاءِ وَخَسِيصُ  
عَيْشٍ كَالْمَرْمَرِ عَلَى الْوَبَيْلِ

*"Verily you see what has befallen us. The world has turned its back upon goodness, its opposition is continuous. Nothing is left of goodness except a few remnants like the remnants in a*

vessel and vile (remnants) like unhealthy pasture."

أَلَا تَرَوْنَ إِلَى الْحَقِّ لَا يُعْمَلُ بِهِ وَإِلَى الْبَاطِلِ  
لَا يَتَنَاهَى عَنْهُ لِيُرْغَبَ الْمُؤْمِنُ فِي لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ  
مُحَقَّقًا قِيَامِي لَا أَرَى الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا سَعَادَةً وَالْحَيَاةَ  
مَعَ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا بَرْمَةً

"Don't you see that the truth is not being practiced and the falsehood is not being prevented? (the situation is such that) a believer should rightly desire to meet his Lord (by sacrificing his life for establishing goodness) I do not see death except as bliss, and life with tyrants as a disgusting (thing)."

Islam is a way of life which covers all aspects of life including politics. Muslims are bound to take part fully in national developments. If a ruler of a nation is oppressive and works to the detriment of national welfare or suppresses the rights of the people, then Islam calls upon people to rise against such a ruler as Imam Husain (A.S.) rose against Yazid.

### THE NIGHT OF TEST

A day before Ashura (the day of martyrdom), a letter was received by Umar bin Sa'ad (the commander of Yazid's army) from Obaidullah bin Ziyad (the governor of Kufa) containing strict instructions to commence the battle against Imam Husain (A.S.) without any further delay.

That evening Shimr (the cruel assassin of the Imam) approached the camp of the Imam and shouted: "Where are my sister's sons, Abbas, Ja'ffer, Abdullah and Uthman?"

The four brothers were the sons of Ali bin Abi Talib by his second wife Ummul Baneen, who happened to be a cousin of Shimr.

Imam Husain (A.S.) instructed Abbas bin Ali to go out and listen to what Shimr had to say.

Abbas went out and asked Shimr: "What do you want?"

Shimr replied: "Oh sons of my sister, I offer you safe conduct."

On hearing this, Abbas was furious. He retorted: "May the curse of God fall upon you and the safe conduct you are offering us whilst denying it to the son of the Apostle of God." Abbas then added:

تَأْمُرُنَا أَنْ نَتْرُكَ أَخَانَا الْحُسَيْنَ ابْنَ فَاطِمَةَ  
وَنَدْخُلُ فِي طَاعَةِ اللَّعْنَاءِ وَأَوْلَادِ اللَّعْنَاءِ

*"Do you invite us to abandon our brother Husain, the son of Fatima, and enter into the obedience of the cursed and the sons of the cursed people (i.e., Banu Umayya)?"*

The above encounter between Abbas (the step brother of Imam Husain (A.S.) and Shimr (the most cruel man of Yazid's army) portrays the exemplary faithfulness of the Imam's companions.

Shimr was bitterly disappointed and was enraged on hearing the words of Abbas because he failed in his shrewd maneuver to cripple the Imam's army by removing Abbas who was its Standard Bearer.

On seeing the readiness of the enemy to commence the battle that very evening, Imam Husain (A.S.) sent his brother Abbas to him with a request for a night's respite, saying:

إِنَّا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ لِرَبِّنَا اللَّيْلَةَ وَنَسْتَغْفِرَهُ فِيهِ  
 نَعْلَمُ أَنَّ أَحَبَّ الصَّلَاةِ لَهُ وَتِلَاوَةَ كِتَابِهِ وَكَثْرَةَ  
 الدَّعَاءِ وَالِاسْتِغْفَارِ

*"We wish to pray to our Lord during the night and beg for pardon from Him for He knows how fond I am of prayers and the recitation of His Book (the Holy Qur'an) and excessive supplications in seeking his pardon."*

When Abbas approached Umar Sa'ad with the request, he kept quiet as if he was not willing to wait for the night. However, Omar bin Hajjaj said to Umar Sa'ad: "By God, if these people were Turkish and Dailamite slaves and had made such a proposal, we would have accepted. Why refuse the request of members of the household of Muhammad (S.A.W.)

The enemy then agreed and the battle was put off until the following morning.

As the night set in, the Imam addressed all of his companions, and after praising Almighty Allah, he delivered the following sermon:

أَمَا بَعْدُ فَإِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ أَصْحَابًا أَصْلَحَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا أَهْلَ  
 بَيْتٍ أَبْرَ وَلَا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي فَجَزَاكُمُ اللَّهُ  
 حَمِيْعًا عَنِّي خَيْرًا

*"I know of no companions more loyal and more virtuous than my companions, nor of any household members more righteous and better than mine. May Allah reward you well on my behalf."*

### CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS ON THE BATTLEFIELD

On the TENTH day of Muharram of the year 61 A.H. of the Islamic Era, Imam Husain (A.S.) and his group of 72 men were preparing to face a huge army of not



less than 30,000 men sent by Yazid bin Moavia ibne Abu Sufyan.

This small group of Imam Husain's followers was suffering from extreme thirst for the third day in succession as the army of Yazid had cut water supplies to them and had denied them access to the river Euphrates to fetch water.

On the burning sands of Kербala, the ladies and children who were with them were also extremely thirsty as water had not reached the tents of Husain for the third day in succession.

Under such circumstances, one would not expect this small group to maintain its presence of mind.

But, NAY, this was not the case. All of them had complete presence of mind. They were eagerly looking forward to lay down their lives and seek the pleasure of the LORD.

The battle had begun. At mid-day. One of the valiant companions of Imam Husain, Abu Thumama-e-Saidavi, approached the Imam and requested him to lead the congregational prayers for Zohr (mid-day prayers). The Imam looked towards the sky and, noticing the exact time for mid-day prayers, exclaimed:

ذَكَرْتَ الْمَلُوءَةَ جَعَلَكَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ

*"O! Abu Thumama, you have reminded of the Prayers. May Allah place you among those who perform prayers."*

Imam Husain led the congregational prayers. Two companions of the Imam, Saeed bin Abdullah and Zuhair ibne Quain stood in front of the Imam to ward off the arrows being thrown by the army of Yazid whilst the Imam and his followers were performing the congregational prayers.

Saeed bin Abdullah and Zuhair ibne Quain prevented the arrows shot by the enemies from reaching and injuring the Imam and his companions who were performing the congregational prayers. In so doing, both Saeed and Zuhair were severely wounded as they took the arrows on their chests rather than allow them to reach the congregation.

When the prayers ended, both valiant men fell down and bid farewell to the Imam by breathing their last on his lap.

From the incidents noted above, the following points are worth noting:

(a) Despite the extreme heat on the burning sands of Kerbala, the extreme thirst caused by denial of water for the third day in succession, the extreme suffering of the ladies and children, the grim situation of facing the enemy, the companions of Imam Husain were fully determined to lay down their lives in the cause of Islam.

(b) Fully acquainted with reality, they were all calm and had complete presence of mind.

(c) Cognizant of the importance of performing prayers on time, despite their confrontation with death, they could determine the exact time for performing ZOHR prayers (mid-day prayers) although such determination is difficult in comparison to the SUBH (Morning) and MAGHRIB (Evening) prayers as such times are indicated with the sighting of the flash of white line for Morning Prayers and the appearance of reddish colour on the sky for Evening Prayers.

(d) They performed the congregational prayers on the battle field under scorching sun despite the incessant attack of arrows showered upon them by the enemy.

By participating in a congregational prayer at such a critical moment, Imam Husain and his companions demonstrated:

(1) The importance of performing prayers at the exact time of FAZILAT.

(2) The importance of performing congregational prayers.

(3) The importance of remembering God and performing prayers at all times.

The Holy Prophet and his Ahlul-Bait have always stressed the importance of performing prayers at all times. A similar incident signifying the importance of prayers is recorded in the history of Islam in the year 37 of the Islamic Era when Imam Ali ibne Abu-Talib had to face Moavia ibne Abu Sufyan in a battle known as Siffin. It is narrated by Ibne Abbas (the renowned disciple of the Holy Prophet and the interpreter of the Holy Qur'an) that in the midst of the battle, he saw Imam Ali spreading his prayer mat on the battle ground. Seeing this, Ibne Abbas exclaimed:

*"Is this the time and place for performing prayers? An arrow could injure you or take away your life."*

On hearing this, Imam Ali replied:

*"It is for the sake of upholding prayers that we are fighting here."*

But let us note here the contrast in faith and courage between the companions of Imam Ali (A.S.) in the battle of Siffin and those of Imam Husain (A.S.) in the battle of Kerbala.

Submission to the will of GOD and his remembrance in all walks of life are the messages conveyed by the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul-Bayt.

### ALLEGIANCE TO A VILLAIN IMPOSSIBLE

On the eve of the martyrdom, the Imam delivered a sermon in which he told his followers:

*"Allegiance to the villain (Yazid) is impossible. Whoever wants to go away can do so and whoever wants to die with me can stay behind."*

إِنِّي لَا أَرَى الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا سَعَادَةً  
وَالْحَيَاةَ مَعَ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا بَرَاءً

*"I do not see in death but salvation; and living together with oppressors is nothing but humiliation and iniquity."*

That life of true dignity lies in absolute steadfastness on the noble principles of Islam and not in compromise nor bowing down before a villain and oppressive ruler, however fatal the course for that may be.

### FOR SURVIVAL OF ISLAM

In the course of his defensive Jihad against the enemies who had surrounded him on the plains of Kerbala on the 10th Muharram 61 A.H., the Imam had uttered these words:

إِنْ كَانَ دِينُ مُحَمَّدٍ لَمْ يَسْتَقِمْ إِلَّا يَقْتُلُنِي يَا سَيُوفُ خُذِينِي

*"If the creed of Muhammad (i.e., Islam) cannot survive except by my being killed, then O! swords come and get me."*

What a profound sense of devotion and sacrifice and determination to lay down his life for the noble cause of saving Islam. Only one absolutely certain of divine approval of his stand and ultimate justice in afterlife would utter such words and welcome martyrdom.

### CHALLENGE TO THE ENEMY

In the course of the battle at Kerbala on Ashura Day, the Imam was often putting forth this question before the army of Yazid:

لِمَ تَقْتُلُونِي أَمْ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ غَيْرَتِهَا أَمْ عَلَىٰ  
دِمَاءٍ سَفَكْتُهَا

*"Why do you kill me? Have I made any alteration in the Sharia (of Islam)? Have I shed anybody's blood?"*

The question was a challenge to the enemy to prove the charge which justified their coming to kill the Imam. It was a proclamation of his innocence to all people of the present and future generations to come. The fact is that the enemy had no answer to justify his stand except his animosity to the members of the Prophet's family.

### FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Standing before the army of Yazid on the day of Ashura, the Imam admonished them in these words:

إِن لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ دِينٌ وَكُنْتُمْ لِاتِّخَافُونَ الْمَعَادَ  
فَكُونُوا آخِرَارًا فِي دُنْيَاكُمْ

*"If you have no religion and are not afraid of the day of resurrection, then at least be noble-minded in your worldly affairs."*

In other words, the Imam was telling them that if they followed no religious principles nor had any scruples nor were they afraid of the Day of Judgment when they would be brought back to life to account for their crimes in their coming out to kill him, then at least they ought not behave like slaves in bowing down and succumbing to the pressure of a tyrant.

### WHAT FOR DID IMAM HUSAIN SEEK HELP?

On the plains of Kerbala on the day of Ashura, the Imam was also repeatedly heard calling for help in these words:

هَلْ مِنْ نَاصِرٍ يَنْصُرُنَا هَلْ مِنْ مُغِيثٍ فَيُغِيثُنَا

*"Is there any helper to come and help us?"*

*Is there any one to come to our aid?"*

What did these words imply and what sort of help did the Imam seek?

From the statement made before leaving Makkah, the Imam had clearly proclaimed his intention and final destination. That he was going to sacrifice his life for the cause of truth and to save Islam and only those ready to die were welcome to accompany him. Moreover, he neither induced anyone nor made any effort to recruit any helpers or soldiers in the course of his march from Madina. He is reported to have extinguished lights on Ashura night to allow those people who might have come with a motive of worldly gains to return home without feeling any embarrassment deserting the Imam.

Why then was the Imam raising an alarm and asking for help?

The philosophers on the martyrdom of Kerbala tell us that it was meant to sound a final warning to the followers of Yazid to reappraise their position and consider abandoning the path of falsehood and error and switch over to the path of righteousness, so as to redeem themselves from the hell-fire on the Day of Judgment.

Besides, the seeking of aid by the Imam was a worldwide message and call for help to all present and future people to preserve the sanctity of Islam and its tenets. The call for help by the Imam was for the preservation of Islam in its pristine purity, free of any adulteration and alteration.

#### PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH EXPLAINED

In order to boost further the morale of his companions on the Day of Ashura and acquaint them of the philosophy of death, the Imam had spoken the following words to them:

صَبْرًا بَنِي الْكِرَامِ فَمَا الْمَوْتُ إِلَّا قَنْظَرَةٌ تُعْبِرُكُمْ  
 مِنَ الْبِئْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَاءِ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ الْوَاسِعَةِ  
 وَالنَّعِيمِ الدَّائِمَةِ مَنْ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَنْتَقِلَ مِنْ سَجْنِ إِلَى قَصْرِ

*"Exercise forbearance Oh the sons of the noble people. Verily death is nothing but a bridge over which you are now passing from this world of distress and afflictions towards a vast heaven and eternal bliss. Who among you resent to migrate from the (worldly) prison to (heavenly) palace; and as for your foes, it is like migrating from palace towards prison (of hell)."*

The foregoing words of the Imam throw good light on the essential Islamic belief in life after life and reward or punishment on Day of Judgment. But for staunch and firm faith in this belief, one may not

be expected to face afflictions and meet death for good cause.

### LIFE OF HUMILIATION UNACCEPTABLE

Mounted on a camel on the battle front of Kerbala on the 10th Muharram, the Imam delivered a long sermon in which he admonished the army of Yazid for their lack of faith and for turning against him. In affirming his determination of welcoming death with honour rather than life of humiliation, the Imam said this:

أَلَا وَأَنَّ الدَّعِيَّ ابْنَ الدَّعِيِّ قَدْ رَكَزَ بَيْنَ اثْنَتَيْنِ ،  
 بَيْنَ السَّلَةِ وَالذَّلَةِ وَهَيْهَاتَ مِنَّا الذَّلَةُ يَا أَبَى اللَّهِ  
 ذَا لِكَ لَنَا وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُتَمَسِّكُونَ وَحُجُورٌ طَابَتْ وَطَهَّرَتْ  
 وَأَيْوُفٌ حَمِيَةٌ وَنُفُوسٌ آيِبَةٌ مِنْ أَنْ تُؤْتِيَ طَاعَةَ  
 اللُّثَامِ عَلَى مَمَارِعِ الْكِرَامِ

"Beware! Verily the illegitimate pretender (reference to Obaidullah bin Ziyad, the then governor of Kufa) has placed me with a option between a sword and humiliation (i.e., either be killed or give allegiance to Yazid). Far from us is humiliation. That is forbidden for us by Allah, His apostles, the faithful people and those of purified and clean birth, also by men of honour, that I should act in obedience to the mean and debased people in preference to the honorable ones."

By those words the Imam has set a noble example to all the people present and of generations to come that this worldly life is only worth living provided it was free of humiliation, with no compromise of one's sacred principles. Death was preferable to a life of humiliation which consisted of having to bow down before any tyrannical and oppressive ruler.



The Imam then recited the following famous words of the poet Farwat Museek Muradi:

لِإِنْ نُهَزِمَ فَهَزَامُونَ قَدِيمًا  
فَإِنْ نَغْلِبَ فَغَيْرُ مَغْلِبِينَ

"If we succeed (in defeating the enemy) then our success would be welcome. And should we be overcome (by the enemy) we would not be (considered as being) defeated."

وَمَا أَنْ طَبْنَا جُبْنٌ وَلَكِنَّ  
مَنَائِنَا وَدَوْلَةَ آخِرِينَ

"Not because cowardice became pleasant for us, but we are obliged (by change of circumstances) that (the turn of) success was for others."

إِذَا مَا الْمَوْتُ رَفَعَ عَنْ أَنَاسٍ  
كَتَلَاكِهِ أَنَاخَ بَآخِرِينَ

"If death were to be set aside from some people, it would step into the door steps of others."

فَأَفْنَى ذَالِكُمْ سَرَوَاتُ قَوْمِي  
كَمَا أَفْنَى الْقُرُونِ الْأُولِينَ

"Indeed it (death) has annihilated the elders of my community the same way as it had annihilated those of previous centuries."

فَلَوْ خَلَدَ الْمُلُوكُ إِذَا خَلَدْنَا  
وَلَوْ بَقِيَ الْكِرَامُ إِذَا بَقِينَا

"If kings had lasted (in this world); we too would have lasted. If the honored ones had remained behind, we too would have remained."

فَقُلْ لِلشَّامِتِينَ بِنَا أَفِئُوا  
سَيَلْقَى الشَّامِتُونَ كَمَا لَقِينَا

"Therefore tell those rejoicing upon our misfortunes to take lessons from us. As it (death) would, without doubt, meet those rejoicing, the same way as it has met us."

The Imam had stressed that death one day is to overtake everyone and there was no way of escaping from it. Even the powerful Kings have not been spared nor have the notable and honorable ones remained behind. Therefore it is proper for those endowed with success and high positions in life not to be jubilant and forgetful of what is surely to happen to them ultimately.

#### A SUPPLICATION WHEN FACED WITH CALAMITIES

When all his companions were martyred, Imam Husain (S.A.) went to his camp to bid farewell to his family members. His sick son, Ali bin Husain, narrates: "My father took my hand and pressed it against his chest. At that moment, I saw that he was severely wounded and his wounds were bleeding. He then said to me as follows:

"O son, I am teaching you a Do'a - sup-  
plication - to God, which you should  
remember. It was taught by Gebrael (the  
angel bringing the divine message to  
grandfather (the Holy Prophet Muhammad  
S.A.W.) who passed it on to my mother  
(Fatema - the daughter of the Holy  
Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.).

Whenever you have a special need or are  
faced with any calamity or crisis, or  
are afflicted with any grief, recite  
the following Do'a:

بِحَقِّ يَسٍ وَالْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ وَبِحَقِّ طِهِ وَالْقُرْآنِ  
 الْعَظِيمِ يَا مَنْ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى حَوَائِجِ السَّائِلِينَ مَنْ  
 يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الصُّمُورِ يَا مَنْفَسَاةَ غَمِّ الْمَكْرُوبِينَ  
 يَا مُفْرِجًا عَنِ الْمُغْتَمِبِينَ يَا رَاحِمَ شَيْخِ الْكِبِيرِ  
 يَا رَازِقَ الطُّفْلِ الصَّغِيرِ يَا مَنْ لَا يَحْتَاجُ إِلَى  
 التَّفْسِيرِ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَافْعَلْ  
 بِي كَذَا وَكَذَا

*"By the truth of (for the sake of) Yasin (a title of the Holy Prophet) and the Qur'an full of wisdom, and for the sake of Taha (another title of the Holy Prophet) and the great Qur'an Oh He who is able to fulfill the desires of those asking, Oh He Who knows what is in the heart, Oh He Who banishes sorrow from the sorrowful, Oh He Who dispels grief from those who grieve, Oh He Who is merciful to old men, Oh He Who provides for infants, Oh He Who needs not to be explained, send blessings upon Muhammad and his progeny and fulfill for me..... (mention one's desires)."*

The above Do'a was taught by the Imam to his son at a time when his son was about to face all the calamities. After the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.), Ali bin Husain Zainul Abedeen had to take the charge of women folk and children who were surrounded by the enemies, and whose camp was looted and set on fire. For Ali bin Husain, at such a time, not to panic and patiently bear the atrocities heaped by the enemies, was indeed a great test of faith and a display of complete trust in God.

The foregoing Do'a in fact is meant to be a lesson to us not to get shaken in faith even under most trying circumstances. The words contained in the Do'a are meant to convey to us that Allah is fully aware of what is going on in our heart, He is capable of dispelling our sorrows and griefs and He is the only One Who can fulfill all our desires. What

is required of us is always to have full trust in Him and rely upon Him and Him alone.

It is we, who due to our short comings, weaknesses, and sinfulness, that we are not fit to stand before Him all alone. As such, we are taught to present our desires and our problems with the recommendations of the divinely chosen personalities in the persons of Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his progeny. We are therefore required to invoke blessings upon Muhammad (S.A.W.) and his progeny whilst supplicating to Almighty God.

#### A SLOGAN OF SUPREME VALOUR

When all his companions were killed one after another sacrificing their lives for Islam, the Imam faced the enemy all alone. So valiantly he fought that the frightened enemy fled far from him. History is yet to produce one like Imam Husain (A.S.). Despite having been bereaved by the loss in one day of seventy-two of his most faithful companions and his kith and kin, and despite the three day thirst, he fought his enemy so bravely and stood firm, unrelenting from his noble principles to his last. His following slogan before the enemy in the last moments of his life are worth noting:

الْقَتْلُ أَوْلَىٰ مِنْ رُكُوبِ الْعَارِ أَوْلَىٰ مِنْ دُخُولِ النَّارِ  
وَالْعَارُ أَوْلَىٰ مِنْ دُخُولِ النَّارِ

*"Better be killed than succumb to humiliation*

*And better humiliation than enter the hell-fire."*

#### WARNING AGAINST DIVINE WRATH

Despite repeated warnings by Imam Husain (A.S.) against staining their hands with his sacred blood, the Yazid's army did not pay any heed. In the

course of his last battle when many of his companions had already laid down their lives, the Imam admonished the enemy in these words:

أَشْتَدَّ غَضَبُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى الْيَهُودِ إِذْ جَعَلُوا لَهُ وَلَدًا

*"The wrath of Allah became severe on the Jews when they made a son for Him"*

*(by proclaiming Uzair as son of God)*

وَأَشْتَدَّ غَضَبُ اللَّهِ عَلَى النَّصَارَى إِذْ جَعَلُوهُ ثَالِثَ ثَلَاثَةٍ

*"And the wrath of Allah became severe on the Christians when they made him a third of three"*

*(by proclaiming the belief in the Holy Trinity)*

وَأَشْتَدَّ غَضَبُهُ عَلَى الْمَجُوسِ إِذْ عَبَّـذُوا الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دُونَهُ

*"And the wrath of Allah became severe on the Magians (Zoroastrians) when they worshiped the sun and the moon and disregarded Him"*

وَأَشْتَدَّ غَضَبُهُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ اتَّفَقَتْ كَلِمَتُهُمْ عَلَى قَتْلِ ابْنِ بِنْتِ نَبِيِّهِمْ

*"And his wrath became severe on the people who have united in their verdict on killing the son of the daughter of their Prophet"*

أَيُّهَا وَاللَّهِ لَا أُحْيِيهِمْ وَالَّذِي شِئْتُ مِمَّا يُرِيدُونَ حَتَّى أَلْقَى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَأَنَا مُخَضَّبٌ بِدِمَائِهِمْ

*"But by Allah I shall not accept what they want (i.e., allegiance to Yazid) till I meet Allah the Glorious whilst I am dyed with my own blood"*

To associate a partner or anything with God is called SHIRK - a major and unpardonable sin in Islam, qualifying for severe divine wrath. In his above words the Imam was reminding the enemy of the severe punishment and wrath of Allah that had befallen in the past upon the people of Judaism, Christianity and Zoroasterism when they turned their backs against their original belief in ONE GOD.

And by warning the Yazidi men of similar severe punishment from Allah for their intention to kill the grandson of their Prophet, therein was a hint that their action would be tantamount to SHIRK - a major crime of obeying the tyrant Yazid whilst turning against Islam.

#### CONSTANT ATTENTION TO THE LORD

The siege by the enemy in the plains of Kerbala and the three day denial of water under a scorching sun did not deter the Imam from his firm stand against the demand of allegiance from Yazid. In consequence the great sacrifices of lives were willingly offered to save Islam.

But what was the factor which prompted the Imam to remain so resolutely steadfast and firm on his stand? What else could it be but his unflinching faith and trust in Allah! And what better testimony and witness for TAWHID - the Islamic belief in ONE AND THE ONLY GOD - than this could be cited from the history of mankind.

The history of Kerbala tells us how the attention of the Imam, in every critical moment, remained constantly toward Allah. This fact is derived from

his statements and prayers on different occasions in the course of the battle.

When heading towards the army of Yazid on the day of Ashura, the Imam raised his head towards the sky uttering the following words:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ شَقْتِي فِي كُلِّ كَرْبٍ وَرَجَائِي فِي كُلِّ شِدَّةٍ  
وَأَنْتَ لِي فِي كُلِّ أَمْرٍ كَرَمٌ لِي شِقَّةٌ وَعِدَةٌ وَأَنْتَ وَلِيٌّ  
كُلِّ نِعْمَةٍ وَمَصَابِحُ كُلِّ حَسَنَةٍ وَمُنْتَهَى كُلِّ رَغْبَةٍ

"Oh Lord! Upon YOU is my trust in every distress and hope in every calamity. And it is YOU Who is the source of confidence and esteem in every affair that confronts me. YOU are the Guardian of every blessing, the Master of every good work and the Goal of every desire."

When his eighteen-year old young son Ali Akbar came to seek his permission to go to the battle front, the Imam looked at him with a look of despair and with tears flowing over his face saying:

اللَّهُمَّ اشْهَدْ فَقَدْ بَرَزَ إِلَيْهِمْ غُلَامٌ أَشْبَهُ النَّاسِ  
خُلُقًا وَخَلْقًا وَمَنْطِقًا بِرَسُولِكَ وَكُنَّا إِذَا اشْتَقْنَا  
إِلَى نَبِيِّكَ نَظَرْنَا إِلَيْهِ

"Oh Lord! Bear witness that a young boy who, of all the people is most resembling in countenance, character and speech to your Prophet is now going towards them (the enemy). And whenever we were keen to see your Messenger, we looked at him."

The foregoing words whilst depicting the sad feelings of the Imam prove his willing submission to the Lord in sacrificing even such a charming young

son - the one who so closely resembled the prophet of Islam.

Again, when his six-month old bay Ali Asghar, was hit with a three-pronged arrow of Hurmula - the renowned Arab archer, piercing through under one ear and coming out from another with blood flowing from the ripped open throat of the child, the Imam was not shaken in his faith and determination. Raising his head towards the sky and addressing Allah, he said:

اللَّهُمَّ اشْهَدْ عَلَي هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ اللَّهُمَّ عَهْدُوا  
أَلَّا يُبْقُوا مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ نَبِيِّكَ أَحَدًا

*"Oh Lord! Bear witness of those people  
Oh Lord! They (the enemy) have pledged  
to leave no one alive from the descen-  
dants of your Messenger (Prophet  
Muhammad S.A.W.).*

At that grim moment of his life when the little bleeding child overturned from the hands of his father, the Imam under severe shock and grief could have broken down. Yet for him to remain composed and to remember Allah is an outstanding testimony of his profound faith and devotion.

#### SUPPLICATION TO ALLAH

It was afternoon of Ashura - the 10 Muharram of 61 A.H., when all his companions lay dead with their blood-stained bodies on the burning sands of Kerbala, Imam Husain (A.S.) was left all alone and his heart was drawn and intensely attached to Allah. Towards the sky he suddenly raised his head and in supplication to the Lord, he uttered the following memorable words:

تَرَكْتُ الْخَلْقَ طَرًّا فِي هَيَاكِ وَأَيْتَمْتُ الْعِيَالَ لَكِنِّ أَرَاكَ  
فَقَدْ قَطَعْتَنِي فِي حُبِّ أَرَبِيَا لَمَّا هُنَّ الْفُؤَادُ إِلَي سِوَاكَ



*"Oh my Lord! I have given up all without exception out of my love for Thee.*

*And I have abandoned all my family and accepting the orphaning of my children in order to meet Thee.*

*If, out of love for Thee, my body were chopped into pieces, even then my heart will not bend before anyone but Thee."*

It was under extreme afflictions that the Imam had shown his undaunted faith and love for Allah, which is unparalleled in the history of mankind. It is indeed a source of inspiration to us all of how one reached the peak of awareness of divine existence and willing submission to His will.

#### FINAL SUBMISSION TO ALLAH

And it was towards the evening of Ashura when the blazing sun had already cast the hottest of its rays over the sands of Kerbala. The Imam was profusely bleeding from the countless wounds inflicted upon him by the enemies. He could no more hold himself on the horseback hence slowly he began to lean towards the ground reciting these words:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَبِأَلِّهِ وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

*"In the name of Allah and with the help of Allah and by the creed of the Messenger of Allah."*

That, his approach to his final place of sacrifice and martyrdom was in the name of and for the sake of Allah, and that he was firm on the creed of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) the Messenger of Allah, is what the Imam meant to convey to the world through these words.

As the forehead of the Imam touched the burning sands on the ground, he uttered the following historical and inspiring words addressed to the Almighty Allah:

رَضًا بِقَضَائِكَ وَتَسْلِيمًا لِأَمْرِكَ وَصَبْرًا عَلَى بَلَائِكَ  
لَا مَعْبُودَ سِوَاكَ يَا غِيَاثَ الْكَرْبَةِ الْغَيْثِيْنَ

*"Willingly do I submit to Thy Will*

*And bow do I to Thy command*

*Accepting from Thee the trials and afflictions with forbearance*

*Oh the Helper of those who seek His help"*

These last words of the Imam during the most critical moments of his life denote the remarkably high degree of tranquility and undaunted faith in Allah. The severest of the calamities including the three day thirst amidst blazing sun, the separation from his dear kith and kin and the forthcoming tortures to his household members did not shake him from his firm stand against the tyrant Yazid and his determination to save Islam from extinction.

The sublime words of the Imam will ever remain a source of noble inspiration in all ages to all members of mankind irrespective of creed, race or colour.

The blood-stained body of the Imam, with thousands of wounds by the enemy, lay on the ground. And Shimr - the cruel assassin - was close by, preparing to cut off his head. Suddenly he heard murmurs from the Imam's lips. He thought he would hear words of curse against him and his friends. He bent over the Imam's prostrate body to hear what he was saying and the following are the last words he could catch from his lips:

إِلَهِي إِنِّي وَفَيْتُ مَهْدِي فَأَوْفِ بِعَهْدِكَ

*"Oh my Lord! I have fulfilled my pledge, so let Your pledge be also fulfilled."*

In response to this, a call was heard from an unseen source saying:

فَنُوَدِّي يَا حُسَيْنُ طِبُّ نَفْسًا إِنِّي أَهْبُ لَكَ مِنَ الْعَاصِينَ مِنْ مُحِبِّكَ حَتَّى تَرْضَى

*"Oh Husain! Feel happy that I shall for your sake forgive so many of the sinful of your lovers till you are satisfied"*

On hearing this call, the lips of the Imam moved again and he was heard saying:

فَقَالَ الْآنَ طَابَ لِي الْمَوْتُ

*"Now death has become pleasant for me"*

How compassionate was the Imam that even during the last moments of his life, he should voice his concern for the ultimate destiny and salvation of his lovers. But how unfortunate would be if those claiming to be his lovers did not care to understand and act upon his teachings.

A question may herewith arise whether the promised forgiveness is a free license for the friends of the Imam to commit whatever sins they like. If so, then the threatened punishment for misdeeds in so many Ayats of the Holy Qur'an would become null and void.

The fact is that a true lover is the one who does nothing that displeases his beloved. If all the great sacrifices made by the Imam were for the purpose of saving Islam and to uphold its rules of

Sharia, then to flout them would be tantamount to displease our beloved Imam.

Whilst there can be no doubt whatsoever in the pledge of Allah for forgiving the sins of the lovers of the Imam, they have to provide the protection in this worldly life and in the grave against afflictions and punishment resulting from sins committed.

Weeping is not always the result of pain or uneasiness. It is quite often accompanied with tenderness of heart, sympathy and agitation. The tears of joy and happiness are a familiar human experience.

The philosophy in repeated lamenting for the martyrs is participation in the enthusiasm and harmonizing with their spirit of devotion and sacrifice for the truth. It also signifies the expression of love for those martyred. It is also meant to portray an expression of continued protest against oppression and to arouse hatred of oppression and disassociation with oppressors.

By his great personality and heroic martyrdom Imam Husain (A.S.) has become the ruler over the hearts of millions of people. When reminding people of his heart-rending episode on the plains of Kerbala, tender feelings erupt from the hearts resulting in tears flowing down their faces. It is a natural sympathy aroused by this most heart-rending and moving episode of human history.

The secret of the immortality of Imam Husain (A.S.) is that his heroic deeds and sacrifices are being sustained from the logical side as well as from the deep feelings of the people. His martyrdom had a reason and logic behind it. The continued lamenting and shedding of tears for the Imam makes the people absorb in their hearts the spirit of sacrifice for the cause of truth and revolution against forces of oppression. The softened hearts as a re-

sult of repeated lamentation become receptive to the message of truth and the teachings of the Imam. Thus the assembling of people for lamenting for the martyrs affords opportunity of reforming their lives in the light of the Islamic teachings and sublime ideals of Imam Husain (A.S.).





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