



# *Hossein's uprising*

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In the Name of Allah,  
the Gracious, the Merciful

A Summary of the book:

**THE UPRISING OF  
IMAM HUSAYN**

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## **The first analysis**

The incident upon which I have tasked myself to analyze from the start is not an event that happened lately. All the people who are acquainted with the Islamic history - Muslims or non-Muslims - are well aware of it. It is an incident that has been discussed for more than a thousand years. Countless books have been written, poems and elegies composed and assemblies held in regards to this incident.

Suppose one wishes to analyze the incident of 61 AH by only tracking the last thirty years of the history of Islam, it is possible for him to arrive at the following conclusion:

From the second half of Uthman's caliphate till the end of Muawiyah's reign, the principles or some of the principles of the Islamic regime began to slowly change or in other words, the innovations (bid'ah) were introduced in the religion. During the reign of Muawiyah, these innovations reached their climax. For instance, justice, which is one of the major principles of this religion, had almost been abolished. People getting killed or being sent to exile, illegal confiscation of people's properties or based on



critical permissions, torture due to allegiance to a particular sect or having a different mentality were things that had become very rampant during this reign. The rise of these innovations led to the emergence and quick growth of an unhappy and dissatisfied people and thus prepared that Arab society for an uprising.

The demise of Muawiyah and the coming into power of Yazid opened a door for the dissatisfied people. They found a golden opportunity to come up together in order to topple the reign of Yazid, whom apart from lacking the moral conditions necessary for being the Caliph and contrary to the normal Islamic regime, had become the new ruler of the Muslims. The people wanted to return the caliphate to its former course, that is, electing the leader through a consensus (ijma') of the society - referring to the public opinion - and to also eradicate the innovations.

The new regime in Damascus which had been established on the basis of hereditary power - and against the culture of the Muslims - wanted to solidify the base of the newly found kingdom as quickly as possible. It is pretty obvious that in such a situation, the first step is making all the Islamic states compliant to the ruler - Hijaz<sup>1</sup> and Iraq - and getting a pledge of allegiance from all the probable candidates for caliphate in these states and making them subordinate.

The only state that the newly formed regime was afraid of was Iraq and the only candidate for caliphate that they were afraid of was Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a). For many years in Iraq, the Umayyad tribe were considered to be insignificant.

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1. Hijaz is a region in the west of Saudi Arabia, which includes the cities of Mecca, Madinah, Jeddah, Tabuk, Yanbu, Taif and Baljurashi. [Translator]





Yazid and his relatives knew pretty well that they had to either subdue the Imam by any means possible or kill him. This was in order to return Iraq to its former position. It was due to this matter that Yazid applied most of his pressure upon the Imam. When Damascus was defeated due to a conspiracy and the scope of danger increased, Yazid decided to use the military power. He sent a competent and hard-hearted commander to Iraq who killed the first representative of Imam Husayn (a) - Muslim ibn Aqil - along with his companions (sahaba) and then later on killed the Imam with his followers.

This is the summary of what has been written as the reason behind the occurrence of this sad incident. This analysis appears to be very logical and natural in the first glance and perhaps it has pleased a group of researchers. Nonetheless, a question still arises here whose answer is not found in what has been written in regards to this incident.

If a person that is well acquainted with the Islamic legal and penal provisions carefully studies the manner in which the incident of Karbala occurred and how the members of the holy progeny (a) were killed mercilessly, and sees the people of Kufa - who were apparently Muslims - doing to the children of their own holy Prophet (s) and their companions what they used to do to the infidels<sup>1</sup>, then he will be faced with this question:

If, for the sake of safeguarding his reign, Yazid ignored the basic principles of Islam, if the agents of Yazid in Syria, Hijaz and Iraq obeyed the commands of the ruler and never gave any importance to the Muslims and this religion, if the efforts of the ruler of Kufa were solely

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1. They killed the adult males and captured women.



aimed at pleasing Damascus in order to prolong his days in office for some more days or avoid being held accountable, if the soldiers of the three states - Syria, Hijaz and Iraq - were so loyal to the regime to such an extent that they sacrificed their religion, then what can be said of the Muslims of that time who showed no reaction at all to this event? What had happened that after only half a century, these people remained ignorant of the Islamic jurisprudence and religious rules that they didn't know whom they were serving and what disgrace would befall them?

If according to the verses of the noble Qur'an, an evil deed is forbidden (haram), then why did the killing of an innocent soul seemed unimportant to them? What crime had Imam Husayn (a) and his companions committed for the Islamic jurisprudence to consider death as their penalty? If they had not committed any crime, then why did the Muslims join forces to aid the soldiers of Kufa in killing them? There was still a number of companions of the holy Prophet (s) living in Kufa whereby some of them were prominent. By cooperating with a big group of the followers (taabi'uun)<sup>1</sup> and the leaders of the city, these companions could have compelled the governor of Kufa to consider another means instead of what they had planned but chose not to do so, why?

If we leave Kufa aside, in the year 61 AH, there were companions of the holy Prophet (s) still living in Damascus and some of them were greatly respected by Yazid. Why did they take no step in opposing this sad incident from

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1. The tabi'un means 'followers' or 'successors', are the generation of Muslims who followed the companions (sahaba) of the holy Prophet (s), and thus received their teachings secondhand. A follower knew at least one companion. As such, they played an important part in the development of Islamic thought and knowledge, and in the political development of the early caliphate. [Translator]



happening? The other two great cities - Mecca and Madinah - which after Kufa and Damascus, played a significant role in determining the political blueprint of the Muslims, showed no response at all to this incident.

A surprising matter is the soldiers of Kufa who had surrounded and killed Imam Husayn (a), performed the five daily prayers facing the Qiblah. In each of the call for prayer (adhan) they made for these prayers, they confessed to the prophet-hood of Muhammad (s), the grandfather of the Imam! More surprising than this is that during the first encounter of the Imam with the vanguard of the Kufan soldiers, two armies performed the prayers with him. This means that they considered him to be a Muslim and suitable to be the leader of the congregational prayer (Imam). How comes that a person who was considered to be a Muslim and a leader of the congregational prayer was considered to be an infidel after one night?!

It is possible for them to assert that they killed him because he did not pay allegiance to Yazid. Well, until his last breath, he did not pay allegiance to him. However, failing to pay allegiance to the ruler of the time is not a crime, and even if it is a crime, its penalty is not death. Failing to pay allegiance was not a new thing in Islam.

When Abu Bakr became the Caliph, it is narrated that for up to six months, Amir al-Mu'minin (a) and his followers did not pay allegiance to him. During the reign of Amir al-Mu'minin (a), we see that when he was taking allegiance from people, there are those who refused to pay their allegiance to him and the Imam did not complain in regards to this matter. Therefore, failing to pay allegiance was neither a new thing nor a crime in Islam. It is possible for them to say that Imam Husayn (a) led an opposition against



the ruler of the time and this opposition was considered to be a kind of internal rebellion. It is true that the Imam criticized Yazid, his caliphate, his moral suitability and his faith in Islam.

Nonetheless, calling Yazid a transgressor, accepting the invitation of the Iraqis and fighting against the Kufan soldiers is not an uprising against the interests of Muslims. If it becomes certain that a Muslim or a group of Muslims have risen against another group of Muslims, the noble Qur'an says that one should try as much as possible to settle the matter expediently. If the person leading the uprising stands firm in his opposition and starts the war, you should fight him till he submits to God's decree. Now look at what Imam Husayn (a) wanted and how the Kufans dealt with him. Is it the Imam who started the war? Did he insist on continuing the war? No! In the beginning of the uprising, in accepting the invitation of the Kufans and giving the reason for his uprising, he kept saying in his sermons that what Allah the Almighty had ordered to be lawful (halal) had become forbidden (haram) and vice versa.

We all know that it is the duty of each and every Muslim to revive the traditions of the holy Prophet (s) and eradicate all forms of innovations. The Imam only arrived in Iraq after receiving numerous letters of invitation. From the first day he encountered the vanguard of the Kufan soldiers and the commander of this troop asked him what he wanted, he replied: "The people of this region have invited me in order to revive the religion with their help. Now, if they have turned against their own words, then I will go back to Hijaz."

After seeing that the Kufan soldiers were neither ready to



disobey the orders of Ibn Ziyad nor join him, the Imam tried as much as possible to avoid a war. Even in his last conversation with Ibn Sa'ad, he wanted him to accept one of his two proposals. If the governor of Kufa had accepted one of these proposals, the events would have taken a different course altogether. Nevertheless, Ibn Ziyad wanted nothing other than humiliating and making the Imam submissive to himself. And this was a thing that the great Imam would never have accepted. He stated: "I will never submit myself to you like slaves."

So, as we see, those questions still remain unanswered. The incident of Muharam in the year 61 AH is one of the incidents whose real reason or reasons must be researched upon and that too, not during that year or some years prior to its occurrence. It is possible that the research for the above question may compel us to go back to the years before the caliphate of Abu Bakr and even before the advent of Islam or even the years before the birth of the holy Prophet (s). This is because this incident is connected to each other like the links of a chain. It is due to this fact that I want to analyze this event from different perspectives and arrive at a conclusion that will convince me. In that case, it is possible that the readers may also side with me. If I succeed in this task, we shall therefore provide the right answers to those questions.



## **The second stage of the existence of Islam**

From the day that the holy Prophet (s) made the vital pact with the people of Madinah, Islam began its second stage of life. Religion and government merged and formed the source of authority. When the holy Prophet (s) was still living in Mecca, Islam was the only religion. Its practical laws were summarized in performing the religious duties and adhering to some moral regulations. Nevertheless, in Madinah, this religion took the form of an integrated government. A government in which the law supervises the relationship between the servant and the Creator and the servant and the rest of the people.

There is no doubt that the holy Prophet (s) was on a divine mission. He was ordered by Allah the Almighty to invite people towards the belief in His oneness (tawhid). The laws which he made obligatory on Muslims based on the verses of the noble Qur'an or his traditions had no precedent before him. Even though a slight similarity in laws can be seen in some of the previous religions, however, most of the laws that the Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) established, that is, it became fundamental for civil and political rights, and many transactional rulings also



have an establishment aspect. Nevertheless, it has neither been pointed in the noble Qur'an nor in the traditions that the people are completely under the authority of divine revelation (wahyi) in their work, and they are deprived of any kind of discretion (ikhtiyar) to an extent that even in the simplest matter, they still have to wait for God's order.

The holy Prophet (s) used to hold discussions with his companions in matters of state and government policy and would accept their advices. We can assert that on one side, his administration was a kind of mutual commitment between him and God, and on the other side, between him, God and the people. When the matters were related to the revelations, people would accept the words of the holy Prophet (s) and when the matters were related to the views of the people, the holy Prophet (s) would accept their words too. In matters of disagreement, his words were the final. After the holy Prophet (s), even though the discussion was about leadership and until today, more than one thousand and four hundred years have passed, this discussion is still present between different Islamic sects. Again, they all believe that inheritance is not a recognized factor in Muslim leadership.

The Shiites believe that after the holy Prophet (s), Amir al-Mu'minin (a) is his successor due to his vast knowledge, his preeminence in Islam, his countless efforts and sacrifices in the course of Allah's religion, his piety in imamate and his justice while dealing with the Muslims and not because he was the cousin to the holy Prophet (s).<sup>1</sup> It is true that Abu Bakr designated Umar as his successor. However, apparently, this position only became official when the immigrants from Mecca (muhajirun) and the

1. The Shiites believe that after Amir al-Mu'minin (a), his eleven children are also Imams because they are infallible and their imamate is God-given.



helpers from Madinah (ansar) endorsed the action of Abu Bakr. When Uthman showed people the letter from Abu Bakr and asked people if they accept the person named in that letter by Abu Bakr as their caliph, the leaders of the immigrants and helpers accepted.

Therefore, in the election of Abu Bakr and Umar, a kind of reference to Muslims' public opinion was observed. After Umar, his son too, did not inherit the caliphate from him. The six people that Umar appointed to elect his successor elected Uthman and the Muslims too, accepted this choice. Amir al-Mu'minin (a) too, based on one view, was elected by a council of the immigrants, helpers and other Muslims and according to another view, he was elected as the caliph of Muslims after several efforts and dialogues. So, within the period of a quarter century after the demise of the holy Prophet (s), we see that due to their precedence in Islam, and endeavoring in the course of the religion, a group of people had a spiritual position in the eyes of the people in such a way that they chose the successor of the holy Prophet (s) on their behalf. A.H

Nonetheless, throughout this period, Amir al-Mu'minin (a), whom according to the belief of the Shiites was the designated successor of the holy Prophet (s), was in harmony with others for the sake of preserving the unity of Islam and observing the interests of the Muslim community. This right to choose a leader was so natural and taken for granted to such an extent that these people considered themselves capable of breaking their pledge and dismissing a caliph if he was not observing the interests of the people. The first innovation took place during the battle of Siffin.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The Battle of Siffin was fought in the year 37 A.H between Amir al-Mu'minin (a) and the rebellious governor of Syria, Mu'awiyah. The battle is named after its location Siffin on the banks of the Euphrates. [Translator]





When Muawiyah realized his ultimate defeat against the soldiers of Amir al-Mu'minin (a), he used his famous trick - mounting the noble Qur'an on the spears and inviting the Iraqis to choose this holy book as their judge. At first, Amir al-Mu'minin (a) tried as much as possible to convince his followers that Muawiyah and 'Amr Ibn al-As did not want and would never want the judgement of the noble Qur'an. He told them that Muawiyah was only playing a trick on them since he had seen his defeat in this war.

However, they did not listen to the Imam and in fact, they compelled him to accept the invitation of Muawiyah - a thing that they had no right upon. So if we leave aside the issue of imamate and its divine decree (naṣṣ), the council of immigrants and helpers had elected Amir al-Mu'minin (a) as the caliph. The traditions of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman gave this right to the immigrants and helpers. Syria and other states had no other option but to accept this order. Muawiyah refused to pay his allegiance to the Imam of his time and even went into war against him. Based on the noble Qur'an, the Muslims were supposed to fight him till he submits to the Imam. The Muslims were neither in doubt in designating the successor so that the noble Qur'an would solve their puzzle and remove their doubt, nor did they have the right to elect Ibn al-As and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as their representatives to check whether their chosen successor had the credibility of ruling or not.

Thus, by a kind of representation in which the prerequisites for such a representation were also not correct, Muawiyah became the caliph of the Muslims. His caliphate had no similarity whatsoever with any caliphate of his predecessors. Neither the immigrants, nor the helpers, nor the Egyptians, nor the other Islamic states accepted his caliphate.



Muawiyah and his father were people that Umar had always warned people against. When Umar went to Damascus, he and Abdul Rahman ibn Auf were riding a donkey. On the way, they met Muawiyah who passed by while riding a donkey that was very well decorated. However, Muawiyah did not recognize Umar. When he was told that the man who was riding the donkey was the caliph of the Muslims, he stopped and went back to meet them but Umar paid no heed to him. Muawiyah started following him by walking. Abdul Rahman told Umar that he was tiring Muawiyah. At this moment, Umar turned to Muawiyah and said: “Muawiyah! You are walking with such a cruel servant! I have heard that people wait for so long in your house before you grant them permission to enter, is this true?”

In his first decade of caliphate, Muawiyah’s aim was to undermine the principle of electing the ruler by the people and once again ignore the opinion of the Muslims in determining their own administration. Twenty years had not yet passed since the last reference to the peoples’ votes for electing the caliph, when another innovation was introduced in Islam. An innovation that again destroyed the Islamic government system. The caliph of the Muslims was chosen on a basis whereby neither God nor the people were taken into consideration. More than forty years since the demise of the holy Prophet (s) had not yet passed when another custom from the customs of the age of ignorance (jahiliyyah) was restored. Just like the tribal customs stipulates, whenever a Sheikh passes away, his eldest son takes his position, Muawiyah too, had decided to restore this custom.

In the year 55 A.H, Muawiyah wrote a letter to all the big



cities and asked them to send their representatives to Damascus for the sake of discussing the caliphate of Yazid. The discussion of these representatives shows to what extent the Muslim community had moved away from the Islamic principles in that year or at least it is a sign of how these representatives had sold their religion for the prosperity of other peoples' world. The only response which depicts a sign of opposition, is the speech of Muhammad ibn Amr ibn Hazm - the representative of Madinah - who said: "Yazid is a wealthy person but comes from an average descent. Allah the Almighty will question each caliph regarding the manner in which he treated his own people. You should fear God and look at what person you want to bestow the caliphate of the Muslims upon." Muawiyah referred to this person as 'the adviser' and did what he had planned to do. He ended his statement by stating: "Nobody else has remained except my son and the sons of Banu Hashim and I love my son more than their sons. Leave this place now!"

The other representatives knew well of their duties and they showered Yazid with all sorts of praise knowing that he possessed none of them and never mentioned any of his defects. The level of hiding the truth and selling religion had reached its apex.



## **The situation of Islamic societies**

Most of the people who were present during the year 61 A.H are those that were born during the reign of Uthman, matured during the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'minin (a) and got integrated into the society during the reign of Muawiyah. This group of people did not know how Muawiyah attained power and what they only witnessed was the coming into power of Yazid. For this group of people, perhaps it seemed somewhat natural that any opposition to Yazid was considered to be causing havoc in the Islamic society.

What we know regarding the life of Yazid is that he did not have a proper upbringing. The day Muawiyah heard Yazid's mother saying that she preferred wearing a robe and living in a tent to living in a palace and wearing silk clothes, he sent her together with Yazid back to her own tribe. He was thus raised in the desert where he neither studied any knowledge nor learnt any craft. He was brought up among the desert dwellers and thus spoke fluently and recited nice poems. Nonetheless, what he lacked was the religious nourishment and the Islamic jurisprudence.



An environment for a quiet and comfortable life, hunting, drinking and playing with dogs made him a revelry, temperamental and unrestrained creature. Unfortunately, the autocracy of Muawiyah in the period of 20 years of his caliphate deprived him the opportunity to have worthy and religious people around him. This matter went on till in the second decade of his caliphate, whereby those around him, either out of family affection or to preserve their own position, no longer guided him or allowed anyone to speak the truth to him. When Yazid returned to Damascus from Huwwarin,<sup>1</sup> he found himself surrounded by such flattering, unwilling, irreligious, and worst of all, ignorant people.

We see that it is necessary to analyze the situation of the big cities of Islam and the people of these cities during the end of Muawiyah's reign and the beginning of Yazid's reign.

### **Damascus:**

From the moment the people of this city accepted Islam, they witnessed Khalid ibn al-Walid, Muawiyah ibn Ab Sufyan and al-Dahhak ibn Qays as their leaders. These were the most religious Muslims in the eyes of these people and the rules of the noble Qur'an were manifested in the actions of these governors and their subordinates. In regards to the people of Syria, Muawiyah tells his son: "Take the Syrian people first. If you are afraid of an enemy, then send them to fight this enemy. However, when they have finished their mission, don't let them remain outside of Syria. Order them back to their homes as soon as possible so as not to imitate the mood of foreigners."

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1. Huwwarin is a village in central Syria, administratively part of the Homs Governorate, south of Homs. [Translator's]



From the year 35 A.H when Uthman was killed in Madinah and Amir al-Mu'minin (a) became the caliph, Muawiyah gradually convinced the people of Syria that Amir al-Mu'minin (a) had participated in the killing of Uthman. And since another Muslim (Muawiyah) rose up to avenge for his blood and to enforce the divine limit and demanded his killers from him in order to exact revenge, he refused to surrender them. In this way, their enmity with Imam Ali (a) took a religious aspect.

### **Mecca:**

During the sad incident of Karbala, this city withdrew itself and assumed the role of a spectator. This withdrawal had its own reasons. One of the reasons is that Ibn Zubayr had for a long time established Mecca as his base and a group of people in Mecca and Hijaz loved him. Another reason is that during the last years of his life especially when he decided to designate Yazid as his successor, Muawiyah did not hesitate to comfort and honor the sons of the companions and the immigrants and helpers.

When Imam Husayn (a) began his journey from Mecca to Iraq, apart from two or three people who, in their opinion, wanted to stop him from going to Iraq through benevolence, and except for the envoys of the ruler of Mecca, who were concerned about his journey to Iraq, no one else said a word either in agreement or in opposition.

### **Madinah:**

In the period of half-century, Madinah too had undergone significant changes. Madinah was the first city whose people sincerely accepted the invitation of the holy Prophet (s) to Islam. For a period of thirty five years, this great city was the center for solving the problems of the Muslims



and most of the great figures of Islam lived and died here. The helpers who were Arabs originating from Yemen were invited here from Mecca by the holy Prophet (s). They helped the holy Prophet (s) till he defeated the Quraysh and conquered Mecca. When Imam Husayn (a) went from Madinah to Mecca, there were no major reactions from the people. And this shows that during that time, the people of Madinah preferred an easy and comfortable life to mobility and suffering. It is obvious that the family members of Imam Husayn (a) and also a group of his followers who were living in Madinah were concerned about his life. However, when his caravan left Madinah for Iraq, apart from his family members, no one else accompanied him.

### **Basra:**

This city was established in the year 16 A.H or 17 A.H as a residence for the soldiers. Nevertheless, just as we shall talk about Kufa, Basra too gradually developed into a big city. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a) became the caliph, he replaced Abdullah ibn 'Āmir with Uthman ibn Ḥanīf as the governor of Basra. However, Abdullah stole as much wealth as he could and went to Muawiyah. No sooner had Ṭalḥa and Zubayr separated from Amir al-Mu'minin (a) and joined the camp of Aishah than they chose Basra as the center of their activities.

### **Kufa:**

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a) came after Talha and Zubayr to Iraq and arrived in Kufa, although, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari - the governor of Kufa - was obedient to the Imam of the time, he stopped people from mobilizing under the pretext of avoiding sedition (fitnah). However, at long last, people forced him to withdraw and Amir al-Mu'minin (a) came to the city and the people of Kufa accompanied him until he



defeated the army of Basra. After the battle of Basra, Amir al-Mu'minin (a) established Kufa as his center of operation. From this time onwards, Kufa became one of the important Islamic cities. My discussion in regards to this city dates back to the time that the Kufans consisted of different people who had divergent ideals, beliefs and whims. Among the Arabs, the Yemenis formed the biggest percent.

Historical accounts show that in this city, the thing that neither interested these people nor were they ready to listen to was a word of realism and benevolence. On the contrary, the thing that really interested them and were always ready to listen to was a speech aimed at stimulating their emotions and feelings, and the speaker to utter those words with more excitement and passion. From the end of Uthman's reign till the time that the center of Islam was transferred to Baghdad, and another breath of fresh air intervened in the Islamic public policy, Kufa was no longer peaceful. Whenever there was a tyrannical ruler over them, they would remain silent, and whenever the weakness of the government was revealed to them, they would rise up to organize and conspire and finally lead a revolt.

From the year 36 A.H - 75 A.H, when Abdul Malik ibn Marwan handed the governorship of this city to Hajaj, who ruled with harsh and terrible politics, most of the time this city witnessed a lot of chaos, conflicts and division amongst its people. It was due to this temperament and mood swings that made Muawiyah advice Yazid that if the Iraqis demand the dismissal of an agent on a daily basis, then he should accept their demand. This is because dismissing one governor is easier than facing thousands of swords.

Most of the Kufans who had helped Amir al-Mu'minin (a)





in the battle of Basra, and stood with him in the battle of Siffin, did so because they wanted the headquarters of Islamic governance to be transferred from Hijaz to Iraq, since attaining this distinction would have enabled them to have bragging rights over Syria. The competition between Syria and Iraq was not something new. The difference of people of these two regions hailed from tribal, political and economic roots. The day that Kufa became the headquarters of the Islamic caliphate, Iraq moved a step closer towards attaining its greatest desire. Nonetheless, one thing must not be forgotten and that is, in the same manner that the people of Syria were steadfast in obeying their ruler, the Iraqis brought problems to their own ruler by disrupting his job, interfering unnecessarily in the work of the government and making quick decisions and turning back from them.

The people who had bravely stood alongside Amir al-Mu'minin (a) for many months and moved closer to the threshold of victory, instead of listening to their Imam, when Ibn al-As tricked them and invited them towards the judgement and rule of the noble Qur'an, they accepted this invitation and compelled the Imam to accept the words of the Syrians. Since the Imam used to witness these change of stance and lack of insight from the Kufans, he used to say: "The Syrians are united in their deviation, while you lack unity yet you are on the right path. I am willing to exchange ten people from your group with one person from the group of Muawiyah."

By conducting a short analysis regarding these three Islamic states and five vital Islamic towns which played a significant role in determining the destiny of Muslims, we come to this conclusion that, after the death of Muawiyah,



the only region that wanted the Syrian regime to be toppled and even carried out measures for this matter to materialize was Kufa. Nevertheless, all the people that wrote letters to Imam Husayn (a) and invited him to Iraq, and promised to help him, did not care at all about the religion. There was a hidden political agenda in their invitation. Remember Iraq was competing with Syria and wanted the headquarters of the Islamic caliphate to be transferred from Damascus to Kufa.

As we know, in the year 35 A.H, several groups of people from Egypt and Iraq gathered in Madinah as a sign of protest against Uthman's caliphate and eventually, the first sedition appeared in Islam. However, in the year 61 A.H, apart from Iraq, there was no dynamism in any other place, why? This is because, it was during this quarter of the second century that the Islamic society fell down the slope.

From what has been written, we come to this conclusion, in the year 61 A.H:

1. The vast majority of the Muslim generation that was living in the Arabian Peninsula during that time, were born during the end of Umar's caliphate and grew up during the caliphate of Uthman and got integrated into the society at the beginning of the caliphate of Muawiyah.
2. The 50 year-olds of this generation had not seen the holy Prophet (s) and the 60 year-olds were 10 years old when the holy Prophet (s) passed away. Only a few people remained who had seen the holy Prophet (s) and heard his words and were living in Kufa, Madinah, Mecca or Damascus. These were people of 70 years old or above who only preferred to think and prepare for death and the hereafter instead of wasting their energies



- on matters pertaining to this world.
3. Most people, and specifically the youths who carry out most of the activities in the society whose ages were between 25 and 35 years, had witnessed Islamic regimes that were ruled by people such as Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, Sa'id ibn 'As, Walid, 'Amru ibn Sa'id and other Quraysh nobles. These were people who were transgressors, oppressors, loved accumulating wealth, living a life of pomp and splendor and the worst racist of all. For the whole of their lives, this generation only witnessed merciless and oppressive rulers who killed or jailed anyone that tried to oppose them.
  4. The group of Muslims that witnessed the severity of Umar's caliphate was compelled to conceal their activities due to the fear of being summoned. With the financial benefit that was granted to them in the next regime, they prepared a good life for their future in order to live nicely in the later stages of their lives when they become old and physically weak. And since they did not want to disrupt their future comfort, any incident that occurred - even if it was against the religion - they would make a justification for it so that they would escape their own guilty conscience.
  5. The acquaintance of the people of this region with the ideology of their neighbors and the introduction of philosophical discussions in the mosque assemblies, created the opportunity for these people to avoid the religious responsibilities. Just like in the second period of the Umayyad dynasty, as a result of finding theological



loopholes, a group named ‘Murji’ah’<sup>1</sup> emerged. This group went as far as finding refuge for the perpetrators of major sins.

6. The more the gap between the Muslims and the era of the holy Prophet (s) increased, the more the Islamic traits were forgotten and the customs of the age of ignorance were revived; racial superiority, reminding your rivals of your past, fighting against each other because of racial prejudices and hatred of each other.
7. What we consider as the spirit of the Islamic laws - piety and justice - were things that did not exist in this society. Among the social rules of religion, only the Friday and the other congregational prayers were prosperous - that too in a ceremonial way. At times this formality turned into innovation and even debauchery. Walid, the maternal brother to Uthman, who had been appointed the governor of Kufa by Uthman, went to the mosque while drunkard and led the morning (fajr) prayers by praying three units (rak’ats) instead of two. After completing the prayer, he asked those in attendance if they wanted him to add some more units!!
8. During the reign of the holy Prophet (s), Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, the battlefield was in the territory of the infidels and non-Arabic lands and apart from the Arabs fighting non-Arabs, they used to fight with the disbelievers. However, in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan the Muslims fought and killed one another.

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1. Murji’ah (those who postpone), also known as Murji’as or Murji’ites, were an early Islamic sect. Murji’ah held the opinion that God alone has the right to judge whether or not a Muslim has become an apostate. Consequently, Muslims should practice postponement (‘irja’) of judgment on committers of major sins and not make charges of disbelief (takfir) or punish accordingly anyone who has professed Islam to be their faith. [Translator]



- As a result, for those who had weak faith, these battles resembled the battles of the age of ignorance and thus revived the bloodlust which the holy Prophet (s) had already abolished in the farewell pilgrimage (hijjatul wada').
9. Among the Islamic regions, Syria was the home of staunch supporters of the Umayyad dynasty. Mecca and Madinah did not show any major reactions towards the uprising of Imam Husayn (a). The only region that reacted was Iraq and that too was the city of Kufa.
  10. Although, due to the religious and Islamic pride, a group of the Iraqis demanded the return of a just regime and the revival of the traditions of the era of the holy Prophet (s), however, the heads of tribes and nobles who were in charge of most of the affairs wanted Iraq to be victorious in order to take their revenge against Syria.



## After Muawiyah

Muawiyah passed away in the month of Rajab in the year 60 A.H in Damascus. When he passed away, Yazid was in Huwwarin. When he arrived in Damascus and people paid allegiance to him, he wrote a letter to the governor of Madinah - Walid ibn 'Utbah - stating: "Make sure that Husayn ibn Ali, Abdullah Umar and Abdullah Zubayr pay allegiance to me, otherwise do not let them free."

The governor of Madinah sought the advice of Marwan ibn al-Hakam in regards to this matter. Marwan told him: "If you are interested in my advice, then you should summon Ibn Zubayr and Husayn ibn Aliright now since people have not yet heard of Muawiyah's demise! If they accept to pay allegiance, then well and good, but if they refuse, then kill them. This is because if they do not pay their allegiance and people learn that Muawiyah is dead, they will join forces with Husayn ibn Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn (a) and Zubayr and this will be a big sedition. Nonetheless, ibn Umar is not an activist unless people go to his home and hand over the caliphate to him."

So, Walid summoned the Imam and Zubayr. They were



both in the mosque when the messenger of Walid arrived and informed them. They told him to go and tell Walid that they would soon come to him. Imam Husayn (a) went to Walid and after the governor informed him of the death of Muawiyah, he requested him to pay his allegiance to Yazid. The Imam told him that a person like him cannot pay his allegiance in secret. He told the governor to summon him and the rest of the people so as to see what will happen. The governor accepted this matter and allowed the Imam to leave peacefully. Marwan told Walid: “You should not let him leave because if he doesn’t pay his allegiance and leaves, you will never get him again. Therefore, if he does not pay his allegiance, kill him.” The Imam asserted: “Neither you nor him can kill me.” At long last, ibn Zubayr and the Imam left Madinah for Mecca.

During these days when Damascus was worried about the people of Hijaz that had refused to pay their allegiance, there were some incidents taking place in Kufa which indicated the coming of a violent storm. The Shiites of Amir al-Mu’minin (a) had gathered in the house of Sulayman ibn Surad al-Khuza‘iy and people were giving sermons. The host who had already experienced the tough times and conditions of life and had severally seen the hypocrisy of his fellow citizens, said, “Oh people! If you are cowards and afraid of your lives, then do not give fake promise to this guy (Imam)!”

Cries were heard from different parts of the house stating: “Never! We are no longer worried about our lives, we have taken an oath that we shall topple Yazid and replace him with Imam Husayn (a) as our caliph!” They thus wrote a letter as follows: “Praise be to Allah the Almighty who has eliminated your enemy. An enemy that killed the good



people from the nation (ummah) of the holy Prophet (s) and autocratically ruled over them. He divided the public treasury of Islamic state (bayt al-mal)<sup>1</sup> amongst the wealthy and nobles. At the moment, there is nothing to prevent you from becoming the caliph. The governor of this city - Nu'uman ibn Bashir - lives in the government palace. We are neither joining forces with him nor praying behind him.”

This was not the only letter that was sent to Imam Husayn (a) by countless sincere Shiites. It has been reported that the number of these letters were hundreds and some say that they were thousands. However, during those days that the deliveries were being sent from Kufa to Mecca, history states that a given delivery contained several letters. There were also messengers from Kufa to Damascus and vice versa who carried letters to Yazid that were written as follows: “If you want Kufa, you have to appoint a stronger and tactful governor since the current governor - Nu'uman ibn Bashir - is a weak leader or is purposefully pretending to be one.”

From the fact that the number of letters increased, Imam Husayn (a) deemed it necessary to go to Iraq. He wrote an answer to the Kufan leaders with this gist: “Hani and Sai'id were the last messengers that brought me your letters. You have said that I should come to you since you have no leader. Perhaps, with my arrival, you may be guided to the right path. I am sending to you my cousin brother whom I fully trust in order to inform me of the state of Kufa and what is going on there. If he writes to me

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1. Bayt al-mal is an Arabic term that is translated as ‘house of money’ or ‘house of wealth’ and it refers to the public treasury of Islamic state. Historically, it was a financial institution responsible for the administration of taxes in the Islamic states, particularly in the early Islamic Caliphate. [Translator]





and states that the context of the letters and the words of your leaders and wise men is similar, then I will come to you. I swear that an Imam is someone who acts according to the noble Qur'an and executes justice and considers Allah the Almighty as his watcher."

Just like his father, Imam Husayn (a) was a religious person and not a compromising politician and considered religion to be what his grandfather (the holy Prophet (s)) preached during the advent of Islam; executing justice by taking the rights of the poor from the aggressors. According to him, religion was not only summarized in performing the Friday congregational prayers and its sermons whereby all the efforts of the speaker were aimed at delivering the sermon in a rhymed prose. Rather, he considered religion to be the traditions of Allah the Almighty which must be executed in the society. A tradition whereby each and every person is equal to one another and no race is superior to the other one. At the moment, when these traditions have become extinct and have been replaced by innovations and the Imam is capable of ending these vices (munkar), he should not wait any longer. His grandfather said, "Whoever sees an evil deed and has the capability of ending it must endeavor to stop that evil deed."

Therefore the Imam was supposed to remove the cover of hypocrisy and falsehood that the sons and grandsons of Abu Sufyan had drawn on the Muslims and introduced the religion to the people as a racial government in which the Quraysh were considered superior to the others and to reveal the real face of Islam. In his quest to achieve this matter, the Imam faced a lot of problems and the biggest threat of all was losing his life and he knew better than anyone else about this threat.



He was well aware of the end of this uprising. This can be proved by the short verses that he used to recite from time to time. It is as if he was seeing the Kufans breaking their promises since he used to say: “People are servants of the world, and they only seek religion to the point where it serves their worldly affairs. So, when there comes a test from Allah the Almighty, the number of the sincere believers will be small.”

Imam Husayn (a) would never abandon the people that wanted his leadership from the fear of losing his life and his uprising failing to bear any fruit. He had no way but to accept the invitation of these people, go to them and it was now the duty of these people to remain steadfast in their pledge to the Imam. The numerous letters that these people had sent was a conclusive argument to the Imam.

The Kufans had written to the Imam complaining that the previous leader had divided the public treasury of Islamic state amongst the wealthy and nobles and deprived the poor and needy ones from that. They also wrote to him: “A tribe of Arabs - unjustly and without merit - has called itself superior to the other Arabs and Muslims and this is totally different to the teachings of the noble Qur’an. You have to come and we shall help you in order to eradicate these innovations.”

The Imam also wanted this matter to happen. His main grievance since the caliphate of Muawiyah was the revival of innovations and the abolishment of traditions of the holy Prophet (s). If there were people willing to help him, then he had to make sure that the traditions are revived and the innovations are eradicated. So, how would things end? This was in the hands of Allah the Almighty.



Muslim ibn ‘Aqil started his journey towards Kufa with the letter of the Imam. According to the historical accounts, at the beginning of his journey, he and his two guides were overwhelmed by severe thirst to an extent that these two guides passed away. Muslim considered this incident to be a bad omen and so requested the Imam to resign from this mission. Nonetheless, the Imam told him that the prophet’s progeny (ahl al-bayt) do not believe in omen and thus emphasized that he must accomplish his mission. Muslim arrived in Kufa and stayed in the house of Mukhtar ibn Abi ‘Ubayd al-Thaqafi. The Shiites used to visit the house of Mukhtar in groups and he would read the letter of the Imam to them. After hearing the letter of the Imam, they would cry and pay their allegiance to the Imam.

Muslim carried out this mission while he was only 28 years old. It was the first political mission that he had discharged in his life. He was only 8 years old during the battle of the Iraqis and the martyrdom of his uncle - Amir al-Mu’minin (a) - and the betrayal of the Kufan army with his cousin (Imam Hasan (a)). He was not present in any of these tricky scenes and since he had not lived with hypocrites, he did not expect a Muslim to make a promise and then break it. When he witnessed the hospitality of the Kufans, he wrote a letter to the Imam as follows: “Indeed, the people of this city have listened to your words and are only waiting for you.”



## **Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad and the martyrdom of Muslim ibn Aqil**

When the letters arrived in Damascus, Yazid became very worried. He discussed with his advisors on what step they should take. He sought the advice of Sarjun,<sup>1</sup> his adviser from Rome. He advised him to seek the help of Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad who was living in Basra and was not in good terms with Yazid during that time. Yazid accepted this advice and thus wrote to Ubayd Allah ordering him to take the governorship of Kufa and establish law and order in that city.

Ubayd Allah had been nurtured by a father who had been working for many years in the regime of Amir al-Mu'minin (a) and Muawiyah as the governor of many cities in Iraq. He was well acquainted with all the groups of people in Basra and Kufa. He knew pretty well where to begin with if he wanted to nip this uprising in the bud, where to send

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1. Sarjun ibn Mansur was a Melkite Middle East Christian official of the early Umayyad caliphate. The son of a prominent Byzantine official of Damascus, he was a favorite of the early Umayyad caliphs Mu'awiyah and Yazid, and served as the head of the fiscal administration for Syria from the mid-7th century until the year 700, when caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan dismissed him as part of his efforts to Arabicize the administration of the Caliphate. [Translator]



a spy, who to jail and who to kill. Ubayd Allah had grown up in such a political environment and was well aware of the details of this type of regime. When he entered Kufa, he employed a style that clearly illustrates his shrewdness and opportunistic instinct. He did not behave like a messenger that was sent by the caliph of Damascus to only come to Kufa to restore law and order. He came with a group of people from Basra. Before he entered the city, he wrapped his head and face and when he arrived in Kufa, the Kufans thought that he was Imam Husayn (a) who has finally arrived.

Wherever he went, people stood up for him in respect and told him, “Welcome, the son of the prophet! We have soldiers here ready to listen to your commands.” It was by this means that Ubayd Allah learnt of the situation of Kufa without even breaking a sweat. He learnt of the number of the people supporting Imam Husayn (a), their leaders and their preparations. It is pretty obvious that if the Kufans had known that he was not Imam Husayn (a), and that he was Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, they would never have left him in peace and would surely have killed him at the entrance of the city. However, sly as he was, he did not disclose who he was till he arrived at the palace.

No sooner had he arrived at the palace than one of his close associates shouted: “Move aside! This is your commander, Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad.” It was at this moment that people realized that the person they had just freed from their grasp is the same person that had come to fight with them. If, instead of the twelve thousand people that had paid their allegiance to Muslim, only two thousand or even five hundred people who were competent and insightful in Kufa had gathered around Muslim, they



would have swiftly taken siege of the castle, arrest Ubayd Allah and kill him and establish the caliphate of the holy progeny (a) and show Damascus who is in charge.

On the next day, Ubayd Allah went to the mosque very early in the morning and just as he had learnt from his father, by use of a short sermon with powerful words which had deep impact in the hearts of these mindless and gullible people, he threatened them that if they disobey him, he will not forgive them and if they obey his commands, they will enjoy his rewards. He then sought the help of the headmen of all the neighborhoods in this matter and ordered them to prepare him a list of all the strangers in the city and to make sure that no one acts contrary to his orders.

His second job was to find out the hideout of Muslim. This was in order to kill him before he took his next step. He summoned a guy called Ma'qil and gave him three thousand Dirhams and told him to try and get acquainted with the followers of Muslim. If he manages to find one of them, then he should tell him that he is also a Shiite and he knows that Muslim needs help during such a time. Moreover, he want to give him this amount of money so that he can utilize it in the war against the enemies.

During the days when the spy of Ubayd Allah was going to the house of Muslim ibn 'Ausajah, Muslim ibn Aqil moved from the house of Mukhtar and went to the house of Sharik ibn A'ur. Sharik was a prominent figure and Ubayd Allah used to respect him a lot. So, when he heard that Sharik had fallen ill, he informed him that he will pay him a visit at night. Sharik told Muslim: "Ubayd Allah will come to visit me at night and so you should remain in the hiding place. Therefore, when he arrives and sits, you



should attack and kill him instantly. You should come out when I ask for water.” Muslim accepted. Ubayd Allah came to the house of Sharik and began speaking with him. Sharik asked for water and thus waited anxiously for Muslim to come out with his sword but he never came. Sharik was afraid that the opportunity would be lost. He thus recited some verses of poetry asking: “What are you waiting for?” Since he repeated these verses severally, Ubayd Allah became nervous and suspected that there was something fishy going on behind the curtains. He asked: “What is the meaning of these verses that Sharik keeps on reciting?” Hani ibn Urwa who was also present at Sharik’s home, said: “Sharik is ill and has become incoherent and this continuous recitation is due to his illness and incoherence.” Nonetheless, Ubayd Allah took precaution and immediately left that house.

When he had left, Sharik asked Muslim why he had not killed him. In response, Muslim said: “It is because of a tradition (hadith) that has been narrated from the holy Prophet (s) which prohibits treachery (in this case against a guest who had been given an assurance of safety).”<sup>1</sup>

Hani told him that if he had killed him, he would have killed a corrupt, oppressive, dissolute and sly person. Consequently, the greatest enemy of Muslim, Imam Husayn (a), Hani and Sharik escaped from a trap that he had set himself in. All this was because a sincere Muslim and a firm believer of the religious principles, who thought of nothing else other than executing the Islamic legal laws, did not wish to break a law of Islam for the sake of his own safety and attaining victory in his mission. He made this decision even though it would eventually cost his life and

1. Al-Iman Qayd al-Fatak (Faith is under the Chain of Destruction), Tabari, vol. 7, p. 248



that of the Imam who had sent him on this mission.

After the death of Sharik, Muslim moved into the house of Hani. Ma'qil too visited Muslim in that house and each day, he would come to him before anyone else and he would be the last person to leave after everyone else has left. It was due to this that he completely learnt about the number of Muslim's followers and all their decisions and plans and he would report all these to Ubayd Allah. By learning of the hideout of Muslim and the leaders of his followers, Ubayd Allah took his next step. He summoned Hani and asked him why he was sheltering Muslim in his house. In the beginning, Hani refuted these claims but he was left speechless when Ma'qil was summoned and he came face to face with him. Ma'qil stood in front of him and asked: "Hani! Do you know me?" Hani said: "Yes I know you. You are the biggest hypocrite!"

So, after Hani had seen Ma'qil, he realized that refuting the claims was of no use. He then said: "I never invited Muslim to my house. He used to come to my house without informing me and if you allow me to go back, I am going to chase him away." However, Ubayd Allah did not accept this request from him. Rather, he told him that he shall not set him free unless he submitted Muslim to him. If Ubayd Allah would have set Hani free, it is possible that Hani would have told Muslim to leave his house and run for his safety. Nonetheless, accepting such a request from Ubayd Allah was something that he could never do. A respected Sheikh like him would never expel a guest from his house and hand him over to his enemy and bring a great shame for himself, his family and tribe.

The dialogue went on for a long time till two people intervened asking Hani to accept Ubayd Allah's request





and hand over Muslim to him but he did not accept. Ubayd Allah ordered Hani to be brought closer to him and he hit him hard on the face and severely injured him with the walking stick that he had in his hand. He then ordered Hani to be jailed. The Madhhaj<sup>1</sup> tribe received information that Ubayd Allah had killed Hani. The members of this tribe gathered around the palace and Ubayd Allah became afraid. He summoned Shuraih al-Qadi<sup>2</sup> and ordered him to go and confirm that Hani was alive and that he should tell those people.

Shuraih went to the jail and saw the injured and bloodied Hani. However, when he faced those people, he only told them that Hani was alive and that they should return to their homes. Those people left after hearing this. Therefore, through this false testimony given by the Muslim judge, who had sold his religion for this world, the followers of Muslim and Hani lost yet another opportunity (for killing Ubayd Allah). On that day when those people had taken siege of the palace, there were only a few people guarding Ubayd Allah and if they had worked diligently, they would indeed have killed him.

From the moment the news of Hani being jailed circulated in the city, Muslim knew that there was no more time for dilly-dallying and that he had to come out of the hideout and commence the war immediately. So, he sent his

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1. Madhhaj is a large Qahtanite Arab tribal confederation. It is located in south and central Arabia. This confederation participated in the early Muslim conquests and was a major factor in the conquest of the Persian Empire and the Iberian Peninsula. It is also found in Mosel, Levant, and the Iberian Peninsula. [Translator]
  2. Shurayh ibn Harith al-Kindi known as Shurayh al-Qadhi [Judge Shurayh] was among the social, judicial and somehow political figures of the early Islamic period. He was appointed by Umar bin Khattab as the judge of Kufa and Uthman confirmed his position as well. At the time of Amir al-Mu'minin (a), he was exiled because of his wrong rules and decisions. [Translator]



messenger to go and inform his followers. History reveals that from the eighteen thousand people who had paid allegiance, only four thousand people had gathered around Hani's house and the surrounding houses. The messenger summoned all the helpers of Muslim from all the places by using the slogan: "Oh the helpers of the nation." Muslim divided them into groups and handed each group to a Shiite leader.

One of these groups was sent towards the palace of Ubayd Allah. As it is narrated in history, when this group reached the palace, there were only thirty guards, twenty leaders of Kufa and the family of Ubayd Allah. If these people who had taken siege of the palace were warriors or insightful enough, or had an experienced leader, they ought to have ambushed the palace at that time and killed Ubayd Allah. Nonetheless, these were the kind of people who carry out an action and then later on think about what they have done.

When Ubayd Allah realized that he was in danger, he selected some people from the thirty prominent leaders of Kufa surrounding him and sent them to the people in order to scatter them. These experienced leaders, knew how to stop these reckless and riotous people from committing what they wanted. Each of these leaders went to a group of people and asked them: "What do you people want? What are you doing? Don't you know that the army from Syria is arriving tomorrow? Aren't you aware that you cannot fight against the Syrian army? If this army arrives in Kufa, they will kill all of you in no time." During that moment, no one thought of the fact that indeed the Syrian army was already trapped in the palace and was worried about Hijaz, Egypt and other regions which were ready to explode.



Another thing was that suppose such an army was ready, it would have taken it more than a month to arrive in Kufa.

The threats from these hypocritical nobles and Kufan leaders had such a devastating impact that in two shakes of a lamb's tail, the fathers and mothers of these people came out crying and summoned their sons to go back home. At long last, from the eighteen thousand people who had paid their allegiance to Muslim, only thirty people had remained by night-time and after praying the night prayer, everyone left except only one person! Ubayd Allah and his companions had greatly feared the rally of people to an extent that after they had dispersed, they did not have the courage to even come out of the palace. They thought that Muslim and his followers were playing a trick and had set a trap for them and were only waiting for them to come out of their hiding place and kill them. So, they waited till late at night and when they saw no one was coming after them, they sent out the torch bearers to go and check the situation. However, no matter how hard they checked, they found no one. So, they returned and informed Ubayd Allah that there was no more person around the palace.

When Ubayd Allah confirmed that the Kufans were no longer together with Muslim, he sent out two of his close companions to the streets of Kufa to inform people that they must pray their night prayers (maghrib and 'isha') in the mosque. They also warned people that whoever does not pray in the mosque shall face consequences. It only took some minutes before the mosque became completely full. Ubayd Allah went to the pulpit (minbar) and in the course of threatening and luring the people present, he said: "Have you people seen the kind of commotion and disturbance this senseless Muslim ibn Aqil has caused in



this city? You should know that whoever shelters this man in his house or knows of his hideout and does not inform the authorities, will be killed.”

He then faced his army commander and said: “Hasin ibn Tamim! Woe unto you if Muslim escapes from your grasp! You have the permission to go and search for him in every house of Kufa!” Since Muslim had performed his night prayers, he realized that he was all by himself in the streets of Kufa with nobody to be seen. In every direction that he faced, he saw groups of people who were searching for him. At long last, he found himself in a dead end street. He was so tired and exhausted that he rested on the door of the house of an old lady and requested water from her. The name of this lady was Tau‘ah. After drinking the water, the lady asked him to enter in the house. This is because the act of Muslim sitting on the door of a house that had no man did not portray a good picture. Muslim introduced himself to the lady and since she was a follower of Amir al-Mu‘minin (a), she readily welcomed him into the house.

Nevertheless, at night, the son of this lady became suspicious when she realized that her mother frequented one of the rooms of their house. After questioning his mother, he realized that Muslim was hiding in that room. At midnight, the son of this lady went to Ibn Ash‘ab - one of the highly respected guards of Ubayd Allah - and informed him of this matter. Ibn Ash‘ab happily went with this son to Ubayd Allah and informed him that his mother was sheltering Muslim in her house. This story, with these details has been narrated by Tabari - who is one of the oldest historians - from Abu Mukhafaf who was born a few years after this incident. Are the details of this story really what transpired or not? Allah the Almighty knows best. Nonetheless, what is clear is that this is not a fabricated story.



No sooner had Ubayd Allah learnt of Muslim's hideout than he sent Ibn Ash'ab along with sixty or seventy soldiers to go and arrest him. Muslim was in the house of this lady when he abruptly heard the sound of horses' hooves and the voices of the soldiers. He knew very well that they had come to arrest him. In such a tough situation, his first duty was to safeguard the owner of the house from the harm of the attackers. It was owing to this matter that Muslim quickly drew out his sword, came out of the house and drove away the attackers from that place. Since the soldiers of Ubayd Allah saw the bravery and swordsmanship of Muslim, they swiftly went to the roof top and started attacking Muslim by throwing fire and stones at him. At long last, they took away his sword, put him on a carriage and took him to Ubayd Allah. Muslim arrived at the palace in this state. Exhaustion, bleeding, the injuries he had suffered and the hot weather made him very thirsty. At the entrance of the palace of Ubayd Allah, he saw a jug of water. He requested to drink a little bit of water from that jug. One of the hypocrites and God knows up to that day, how many letters they had written to Imam Husayn (a) requesting him to come to Iraq, said: "You shall not taste even a drop of this water and you shall only drink the boiling water (hamim) of hell!"

After killing Muslim ibn Aqil and Hani, Ubayd Allah ordered his men to tie their legs with ropes and drag them in the streets of Kufa. Who knows? Perhaps some of the people who had paid their allegiance to Muslim were among the people who were dragging his corpse in the streets of Kufa and wanted to attract the attention and love of the new governor with this kind of service or wanted to show him that they are always willing to execute the commands of the oppressive ruler.



## **The preliminaries of the uprising and martyrdom of Imam Husayn**

The couriers who came after each other on the basis of the truthfulness of the letter writers, and spoke of the Kufans' desire to fight for Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a) and to attain the caliphate, clarified the task for the Imam. The Imam had no option but to leave for Iraq. Coincidentally, during that time, the Imam became aware of another incident that made him affirm his decision of leaving Hijaz. He was well aware that the messengers of Yazid had arrived in Mecca in order to launch their attack on him during the hajj period and suddenly kill him. The preparations for this attack had already been made.

Firstly: Just like the other two prominent people from the immigrants and helpers, he did not pay his allegiance to Yazid and the caliphate did not formally recognize him. So, there was no any kind of - Islamic or moral obligation - binding the people with this man who was claiming the leadership of the Muslim nation.

Secondly: In comparison to those two other prominent people, he considered himself to be the best suited for the



caliphate of the Muslim nation and this was a reality that was well known to all the Muslims.

Thirdly: The Imam considered Yazid to be a transgressor and a very incompetent person and it was only due to the conspiracy, trickery and threats or by means of the support of the Syrians - and that too, through blind following - that he managed to usurp a right (of caliphate) that was not his.

Fourthly: The authority of Yazid over the Muslims and his claim of the caliphate was an evil deed that was clear to everyone. This is because, his caliphate was neither based on the consultation with the Muslims nor based on his kinship with the holy Prophet (s), nor was it based on his personality trait.

Fifthly: Making efforts to abolish innovations and forbidding evil deeds is the duty of each and every Muslim and since the Imam is a son of the holy Prophet (s), he had the precedence over this duty than any other person.

Sixthly: Procrastinating the issue of forbidding evil is only permissible when a person lacks the power to carry out such an uprising. It was due to this reason that the Imam had remained silent for twenty years during the reign of Muawiyah, who, just like his son Yazid, was a person that had confiscated the rights of the Muslims. Nonetheless, now that the Imam had attained enough power and support, he had no more reason to procrastinate this matter. He had no choice but to stand against this evil deed as quickly as possible.

Sevently: As we had earlier on said, just like his father, Imam Husayn (a) was also a religious person and wanted nothing out of this uprising other than the pleasure of Allah



the Almighty and the welfare of the Muslims. He was not a politician that was merely interested in attaining power - and that too, by any means possible. We have seen that since the Muslims paid their allegiance to Amir al-Mu'minin (a) for the caliphate, his first step was removing Muawiyah from the governorship of Damascus. Although his advisors told him to delay this matter (removing Muawiyah from his post) for some months till he cemented his authority, he replied: "I am not happy to let Muawiyah oppress the Muslims for even one more second."

Eighthly: As we had previously stated, Imam Husayn (a) knew that Yazid would not leave him alone, and now that he had even refused to pay allegiance to him, and had arrived in Mecca from Madinah, he had sent people to kill him during the hajj period. By killing the Imam, two evil deeds would have been committed in the Islamic society; one would be the shedding of blood in the house of Allah the Almighty (Ka'abah) - a place where even the animals and birds are at peace and no one has the right to disturb them - yet these people had planned to kill the son of the daughter of the holy Prophet (s) in such a holy place. The second evil would be that with such an assassination, the blood of the Imam would have been shed for nothing.

The arrangements of all these preparations made his task clear. The Imam had to leave Mecca for Iraq).

When and where did Imam Husayn (a) learn of the assassination of Muslim ibn Aqil? What seems right is that the news of the assassination of Muslim reached him during the days before he met with Hurr. What is also clear is that the mission of Hurr was to thwart the caravan of the Imam, monitor him and wait for the next command from Ubayd Allah. As soon as the Imam received the news of





the assassination of Muslim, Hani and also the two messengers that he had sent to Kufa to inform people of his arrival, he summoned all the people who had accompanied him in this journey. In that assembly, he did what was expected from a free man like him. He knew that amongst these people who had accompanied him from Hijaz or had joined him on the way, there were those who did not do it for the sake of pleasing Allah the Almighty.

He wanted to put their minds at ease. When people paid their allegiance to the Imam, they made a pledge which they would fulfill till their last breath. The Imam wanted to free them from this oath and so he told them: “I have received a very heart-rending news. Muslim and Hani have been killed and my Shiites have abandoned them. So, anyone that does not wish to remain with us till the end, is free to leave now.” A group of people left the Imam. This was a group of people who were after the world. A group too, remained with the Imam and this was the group of true and sincere Muslims.

After the caravan had taken a rest in the house of Ashraf, they drank water and then continued with their journey till around mid-noon. Suddenly, one of the people praised Allah the Almighty (said takbir)<sup>1</sup>. The Imam said: “Invoking the name of Allah the Almighty in all situations is good. However, tell us the reason for doing so at this time.” The man replied: “There is a palm-grove that is visible in front of us.” The other people told him that there was no palm-grove in that road and what he was seeing was something else. After moving further and close

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1. The takbir ‘magnification [of God]’ is the name for the Arabic phrase ‘Allahu ‘Akbar meaning ‘God is the greatest’. It is a common Arabic expression recited by Muslims in many different situations, for example, when they are very happy, to express approval and so on. [Translator]



enough, one of them asserted: “What we are seeing are spear heads of the enemy’s army.” Therefore, what they thought was a palm-grove was in reality the vanguard of the Kufan’s army. The people who were supposed to be happy and praise Allah the Almighty and ready to welcome the caravan of the Imam were in fact the people who had armed themselves and prepared for a war against him! This world is full of wonders! How weak was the faith of these people?!

Hurr thwarted the caravan of the Imam. The Imam said: “These people invited us to their land in order to help us abolish the innovations that have been brought into the religion of Allah the Almighty. These too, are the letters that they wrote to me. Thus, if they are regretting their decisions, we are ready to go back.” Hurr said: “I am not one of the people that wrote letters to you and so, I have no information whatsoever regarding these letters. My commander (Ubayd Allah) has ordered me to stop your caravan whenever I see you and take you to him.” It was obvious that the Imam would not accept the words of Hurr and he too, would not leave the Imam to go back to Hijaz.

In this encounter, on one hand, the commander of the enemy’s army had stopped the caravan of the Imam and was dealing with him like someone whom they had arrested. On the other hand, when it was time for prayers, they would call him the leader of the Muslims and pray behind him! This matter depicts the fact that not only was the Imam a Muslim, but also more suitable to lead the congregational prayer than the person sent by Ubayd Allah. The Imam wanted to reach Kufa as quickly as possible since there was a possibility that he could gather a new army. Nonetheless, Hurr did not allow this matter as



he continued to block his caravan from moving while waiting for the next command from Ubayd Allah.

Eventually, both groups decided to move to a land where they would neither go to Kufa nor return to Hijaz as they wait for the letter from Ubayd Allah. And this land is what is today known as Karbala. The letter from Ubayd Allah arrived which ordered Hurr to stop the caravan of Imam Husayn (a) wherever he received this letter. This letter had insisted that Hurr should move the caravan of the Imam to a dry land without water and wait for his next command.

From what has been written in regards to the original form of the word Karbala, perhaps what is close to reality is that this word has been formed from the combination of two words; (karb) which means land and (al) which means God in the Aramaic<sup>1</sup> language. Anyway, the above meaning of this word is related to many centuries before the incident of Karbala. From the year that this sad tragedy occurred in this land, the name Karbala with its Arabic meaning, that is, (karb) meaning sadness and (bala) meaning tragedy, got into use. In some traditions, it is narrated that when the Imam arrived in this land, he asked for the name of this place and when he was told that it is called Karbala, he said: “I seek refuge in Allah from sadness (karb) and tragedy (bala).”

From the very day that this caravan arrived in this land, Karbala became famous in the history of Islam and Shiite in particular. This fame is to such an extent that it is possible to say that after Mecca, this city is the second

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1. Aramaic is a branch of the Semitic family of languages, especially the language of Syria used as a lingua franca in the Near East from the 6th century BC. It was also the language of Jesus (prophet Isa (a)) who spoke the Galilean dialect during his public ministry, as well as the language of several sections of the Hebrew Bible, including parts of the books of Daniel and Ezra. [Translator]



most famous one in the history of Islam. From the day that the grave of Imam Husayn (a) became a holy shrine, there is no Shiite whose heart does not yearn to visit this grave and land. Before this history too, regardless of the troubles and dangers they used to face on their way to Karbala, the Shiites made effort to shed a tear in this holy land and through this gift, prove their friendship and love for the martyr that has been buried in that place.

So many people have endeavored by means of health and wealth to visit that land. A great number of people have also passed away on their way to pay homage to that holy land and carried their wishes to the hereafter. A lot of wealth and lands around the world belonging to Shiites have also been gifted to this holy shrine as endowments (waqf).<sup>1</sup> Many religious poems have also mentioned this incident and the name of this land. Karbala does not only refer to the holy tomb of Imam Husayn (a). Rather, it also refers to a land of the struggle between right and wrong and the struggle between justice and oppression. This land is the resting abode of the free men who preferred death to the disgrace of this world and considered getting killed with honor to be better than living with oppressors.

Many years after this incident, a person who was in the army of Ibn Sa'ad was asked: "What a shame you have bought yourself! Why did you kill the son of the holy Prophet (s) with his companions in such a cruel manner?" He responded: "A group of people had stood against us with their weapons firmly aimed at us. These were people that neither accepted a moment of respite nor were

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1. Waqf also called 'habs' or mortmain property, is an inalienable charitable endowment under Islamic law. It typically involves donating a building, plot of land or other assets for Muslim religious or charitable purposes with no intention of reclaiming the assets. [Translator]



interested in the worldly wealth. There were only two options for this group; getting killed and attaining authority or being killed. Woe unto you! We only did what we had to do.”

From this short conversation, it is possible to comprehend what happened. This conversation and how he praises the martyrs reminds us of a short saying from the sayings of Imam Husayn (a) which states: “I see death as nothing but happiness and life with oppressors as nothing but boredom.” From that night that the Imam informed his caravan about the assassination of Muslim and Hani and the betrayal of the Kufans and gave them the freedom to choose whether to go or remain, where a group of people left him and only a few staunch believers remained behind, no more people joined forces with this group except for two or three people who joined them in the last days. These were the days that this army faced Hurr. A few people too left the camp of Ibn Sa’ad and joined the camp of the Imam. However, how many were they? The historians have reported that the number of these fighters did not exceed hundred. They claim that the number was either seventy or seventy two or seventy five. On the other hand, the number of the soldiers in the camp of Ibn Sa’ad is also not clear. Some historians have claimed that their number was eighty thousand and some also claimed that their number had surpassed one hundred thousand.

Mas’udi and Tabari and the early historians have claimed that the number of the soldiers that came with Ibn Sa’ad was four thousand. It is clear that just in the same manner that the former historians failed to pay attention in stating the number of the fighters, so did the second group of historians. The Shiite traditions have mentioned that the



number of the soldiers from Kufa was twenty thousand<sup>1</sup> and this number is not exaggerated. When a caravan sets forth for such an expedition, there will always be opportunists along the way waiting to join. We can say that the number of soldiers in the camp of Ibn Sa'ad was between six thousand and eight thousand and this number seems enough to fight against this group of hundred people.

Umar, who had been instructed by Ubayd Allah to fight Imam Husayn (a), was the son of Sa'ad ibn Abī Waqas. Sa'ad was the conqueror of the Qadisiyyah<sup>2</sup> battle and was one of the ten people who are reported to have been pleased on hearing the demise of the holy Prophet (s). Although he was ill during the battle of the Muslims against the Iranian army, Sa'ad still led the Muslim's army. In the expedition of Ubaydah ibn al-Harith, it is reported that Sa'ad was the first person to shoot an arrow towards the camp of the Quraysh and it is recounted that his arrow was the first one in Islam to be shot against the enemies.<sup>3</sup>

In those battles, Sa'ad was fighting for the sake of attaining God's pleasure and helping His religion and holy prophet (s). However, not even half a century had passed since the occurrence of these incidents, yet we see that his son was ready to fight the son of the holy Prophet (s). So, when he was ready to make an attack, he repeated the same phrase uttered by his father in the battle of Qadisiyyah: "Oh the army of God! Mount on your horses and receive glad tidings."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Al-Luhuf ala qatla al-Tufuf, p. 50

2. The Battle of al-Qadisiyyah was an armed conflict which took place in 636 CE between the Rashidun Caliphate and the Sasanian Empire. [Translator]

3. Ibn Hisham, vol. 2, p. 224

4. Tabari, vol 7, p. 317



A question; didn't Ibn Sa'ad know the person whom he was fighting against and on whose side he was fighting for? He was capable of refusing this mission. If he had refused, there was nothing that Ubayd Allah could have done to him (as there was no enmity between them) and there were also many other people willing to take this mission. Nonetheless, as we know, it is only a few people who can remain steadfast when facing a test from Allah the Almighty. Perhaps, in the beginning, these people never thought that this matter would end like this and according to their imagination, they only wanted this matter to end in a peaceful manner. However, such imaginations were merely self-deception. Umar Ibn Sa'ad knew Imam Husayn (a) very well and was sure that the Imam would not compromise his position to please him. Therefore, after his negotiations with the Imam, he wrote to Ubayd Allah: "I have asked Husayn why he has come here and he has said that the Kufans invited him to come over and if I don't want him to go to Kufa, then he is ready to go back."<sup>1</sup>

Ubayd Allah replied: "So, now that your claws have tightly held him, he wants to free himself? This is something that is not possible." And it was in this letter that he ordered Ibn Sa'ad to make matters tough for the Imam and should deny him water together with his companions unless he pays his allegiance to his man, that is, Yazid.

It is not clear whether all that strictness at the beginning and later on planning the war and executing it in such a merciless manner was a command from Damascus or was it just an initiative from the governor of Kufa? Perhaps, both the governor and the executor planned this together.

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1. Tabari, vol 7, p. 311



However, one point can be noted from the conversations of the people in the battlefield, the palace in Kufa and Damascus, and that is, the Kufans did not know and may be never wanted this incident to end in the manner that it did.

Most of the commanders of these troops were among the people that had written letters to Imam Husayn (a) inviting him to Kufa. In the beginning, they did not want such a war and they probably never expected this matter to end up in such a way. On one hand, Ibn Sa'ad, who was the general commander of the whole troop, was basically interested in leaving a mark behind and wanted the governorship of Ray. And on the other hand, he was afraid of the disgrace that this mission would bring to him and never wanted the blood of Imam Husayn (a) to be on his hands. Was he really afraid of God? May be he used to be afraid of God but this matter ended when he accepted this mission. Nonetheless, after accepting this mission, what we see is that his biggest concern was mostly from the reproach of people instead of God. He knew very well that there are people in the society that won't remain silent against such a great crime; that a son of the companion of the holy Prophet (s) to kill the son of the holy Prophet (s). However, it is also not clear if the people who would blame him for carrying out this mission, would surely have not done it themselves if this opportunity was given to them.

Nonetheless, when the war ends and everybody returns to their normal life, how is he going to live and deal with the nation of the holy Prophet (s)? This is something that really worried Ibn Sa'ad. There are some poetic verses that have been composed depicting his hesitance. It has also been reported that some of his close people used to advise





him against carrying out such a terrible offence. The state of mind of most of his commanders were not better than his. Nevertheless, there were also some mean adventurers in this camp who never worried about anything. These were the hypocrites who are always looking for their personal gain in any event. The same people who even when they have nothing to gain, they are pleased by seeing the losses and harms of other people. The same people who do not like to see peace in the family or city or the society. These are the people that Amir al-Mu'minin (a) describes as follows:

“Woe unto the people whose faces cannot be seen except where there is evil.” These are the people who Amir al-Mu'minin (a) complained about and Imam Ḥasan (a) had no option but to stay away from them. These were people like Shabath ibn Rib‘i, Shimr ibn Dhī al-Jawshan and two other detestable people who wanted this matter to be accomplished as fast and in the worst manner possible. However, those who were more insightful, were not hurrying the matters and due to this, the starting of the war was delayed twice. The Imam too, never wanted this matter to end in a war. He only wanted war when he encountered Hurr and one of Hurr’s men said: “It is better for us to eradicate this barrier, otherwise we shall face tougher barriers in the future.” Hurr accepted his words. However, in his response, he said: “At the moment, my duty is not to wage a war.” So, the fact that the historians have written that out of compassion, some companions of the Imam tried talking with the enemy’s camp and warned them against doing what they intended to do, seems to be authentic. Both camps were Muslims and were ready to confront one another. The command of the noble Qur’an in such a situation is as follows:



“If two groups of the faithful fight one another, make peace between them. But if one party of them aggresses against the other, fight the one which aggresses until it returns to Allah’s ordinance. Then, if it returns, make peace between them fairly, and do justice. Indeed Allah loves the just.”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the Imam and his companions considered themselves more obliged than anyone else to follow the commands of the noble Qur’an. He had to try as hard as possible to guide these people out of their mistake and deviation. One of the companions who endeavored in this matter was Zuhayr ibn Al-Qayn. He went to the enemy’s camp (the army from Kufa) and told them: “Oh people! Benevolence is the right of a Muslim upon another Muslim. Before we draw our swords against each other, we have to remember that we are all brothers and belong to one religion and one nation. Nevertheless, when the war breaks out, there will be no more ties between us.”

By talking to them, Imam Husayn (a) also tried as much as he could to revive the dead hearts and conscience of these people who had drowned in the worldly affairs. It is due to this that the early hours of the 10th day of Muharram were spent in sending and receiving messages between the two camps and offering sermons by the Imam. In this sensitive situation, the Imam offered short sermons to his companions. Fortunately, these short sermons have been recorded in the history books and they are precious documents. The following is one of the sermons of the Imam during those hours full of anxiety.

“Oh people! Do not be in a hurry! Listen to my sermon! I only wish the best for you people! I want to tell you the reason for coming to your land! If you listen, and judge

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1. Surat al-Hujurat: 49



justly, and see that I am saying the truth, this war that can break out in any second will be totally avoided. If you neither listen to me nor follow the path of justice, then you will be in a great loss. Do you people know who am I? Do you know who my father is? Is killing me good for you? And is it right to break my sanctity? Am I not the son of the daughter of your Prophet (s)? Is my father not the successor, cousin and son-in-law to the holy Prophet (s) and the first person to accept Islam? Have you heard this tradition from the holy Prophet (s) where he talks about me and my brother saying, 'My two sons (Hasan and Husayn) will be the masters of the youths of paradise?' If you consider my words to be true, then well and good. I swear by Allah the Almighty! I have never lied and if you think that I am lying, there are some companions of the holy Prophet (s) who are still alive that you can ask. Some of them are Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, Abu Sa'id Khidri, Sahl Sa'idi, Zayd ibn Arqam and Anas ibn Malik! These people will tell you that what I am saying is the truth. Oh people! By what legal permission do you want to spill my blood?"

It is crystal clear that the Imam was not saying these words because he feared the breaking out of the war or feared for his life. If he had wanted such a thing, he had a better chance some few days prior to this day. Any sincere person who listens to these words will properly comprehend the reconciliatory, benevolent and friendly nature of the Imam. It is a sermon that was given with the aim of reviving the dead souls of the enemies. Read this sermon once again. The sermon is so simple with no ambiguity. The Imam did not pay attention to the logical reasons and arguments. It was a very clear statement that even the laymen could easily comprehend its deep meanings.



The Imam continued: “Oh people! I only want the best for you. I have not come here to cause division amongst you. You all know me well. You all know that I am not a liar. So, why do you want to kill me? Who has given you this right?” It was at this moment that the seditionists and war mongers feared that these words may affect the hearts of the people. They were afraid that the soldiers or a group of them may be influenced by these words of the Imam. If this was to happen, then they would not have accomplished what they wished, that is, sowing the seeds of sedition in the society.

One of the bloodthirsty hypocrites shouted: “I have worshiped God in falsehood if I know what you are saying.” This was a statement from a person that had never truly worshipped Allah the Almighty in his whole life. We are well aware of this person from the time he joined forces with Amir al-Mu’minin (a) in order to kill Imam Husayn (a) whenever the opportunity - that he had been waiting for eagerly - arrives. Shimr ibn Dhi al-Jawshan, was one of the people who took pleasure in torturing people and they attained their happiness in slaughtering a pious person with their own hands. Unfortunately there are always people like this in the course of history.

At long last, what was not supposed to happen, happened. This was a scene that the noble Qur’an had predicted half a century before its occurrence. The book of Allah the Almighty states:

“Muhammad is but an apostle; [other] apostles have passed before him. If he dies or is slain, will you turn back on your heels? Anyone who turns back on his heels, will not harm Allah in the least, and soon Allah will reward the grateful.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. Surat Al ‘Imran: 144



After only fifty years, these people had gone back to their culture, that is, their life during the period of ignorance. A life that was fully dominated by nothing other than hatred and lust. Fifty years of the noble Qur'an, traditions and the customs of the companions of the holy Prophet (s) and true Muslims had been overturned in a period of a few hours. The predatory instinct that had been confined under these constraints was now released. An instinct that not only didn't benefit from the Muslim nature, but also a deep gap was seen between it and the human nature.

The number of the people killed in this one-sided battle is clear. The male companions in the camp of Imam Husayn (a) from the age of fourteen were killed. In some history books, we read that Imam 'Ali ibn Husayn (a) was spared because he had not yet attained the age of puberty. However, only God knows the number of the Kufan soldiers killed. The fewest number recorded is seventy five while others have reported that thousands of people were killed. The most surprising thing of all is that in this battle and in a period of a few hours, the violent and cruel spirit of the period of ignorance was manifested in its full scale.

In that moment of agony, a person called Imam Husayn (a) saying: "Husayn! Do you see this water? I swear by Allah that you shall not taste a drop of it till you taste the boiling water of hell fire." Another shameless hypocrite tells the son of the holy Prophet (s) and his family: "We are pure while you are impure." Or the order from the commander - after such a cruel massacre - instructs his troops to crush the lifeless bodies lying on the ground with their horses. It is hard to believe that these people are the direct generation or the second generation of people who took water from



their thirsty palates and gave their friends who also passed the water to the next person till all of them died of thirst. Or the people who when guests visited them at night, would place the food in front of the guest, reduce the light and pretend to eat so that the guest can think that he is eating together with the host. They used to do this fearing that if they ate together with the guest, the guest might not get satisfied. Perhaps, you have heard of the story of Ibn As with the two pigeons during the conquest of Egypt.

During the conquest of Egypt, Amru ibn As had mounted his tent in a place that is currently known as Al-Fustat.<sup>1</sup> On the day that they wanted to leave the camp and relocate to another place, one of his soldiers told him: “A pigeon has made a nest and laid eggs on top of your tent. Suppose we dismount this tent, the eggs will break and these two pigeons (male and female) will become sad.” Ibn As said: “Let the tent remain as it is! Let there be a soldier who remains here till these pigeons’ eggs hatch. Therefore, when the baby pigeons begin to fly, dismount the tent.

Almost forty years later after this incident, we see the sons of these same people burning the tents of the daughters of their holy Prophet (s) in order to burn the young children of Imam Husayn (a) and the grandchildren of the holy Prophet (s)!! In reality, between these two stories, which one is more heart-rending? What causes a man to descend to such a low point in his life? The verses of the noble Qur’an properly explain the reason behind this matter as follows:

“Satan has prevailed upon them, so he has caused them to

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1. Al-Fustat, also spelled al-Fostat was the capital of the province of Egypt during the Muslim caliphates of the Umayyad and Abbasid and succeeding dynasties, until captured by the Faṭimid general Jawhar in 969. [Translator]



forget the remembrance of Allah. They are Satan's confederates. Look! Indeed, it is Satan's confederates who are the losers!"<sup>1</sup>

On that day, out of the hundred thousand or thirty thousand or eighteen thousand people who had paid their allegiance to Muslim ibn Aqil in the house of Mukhtar ibn Abu Ubaydah and the group of people that had joined this caravan from the cities of Iraq or Hijaz, there were only around seventy two bodies covered in blood lying on the ground. Who were these people? These were the real Muslims! These were Muslims that had faced a test of Allah the Almighty and passed with flying colors. Other than passing this test, they have also taught others that if they want victory, then they have to be sincere and pious. So what happened to the other ten thousand people who paid their allegiance? Were they not Muslims? Of course they were! However, they were only Muslims to the point where being a Muslim neither harmed their wealth nor life. There was also a small group that showed more dedication! They did something that made them the laughingstock of people forever. So what did they do? On such a day, they went to the top of a hill and put handkerchiefs on their eyes and cried while saying: "Oh God! Help Husayn!"

The last hours of the day were passing. After they had killed, burnt and slaughtered, these crazy people - whose anger and lust for wealth and worldly ambition had filled their bodies and souls - came to their minds and perceived that they had done a very bad deed. This is yet another characteristic of people who do not properly use their brains. They quickly get angry and are also quick to regret.

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1. Surat al-Mujadilah: 19



Ah! What have we done?! Yes, what a bad thing we have committed?! At first this process begins in their conscience, then by means of whispering and then in a loud voice. Step by step these words of regrets reach another person. Ah! What have we done?! Yes, what a bad thing we have committed?! This man only wished the best for us! We are the ones who invited him here. Then, not only didn't we help him, rather, we killed him together with his companions! We have killed the master of the youths of paradise with our own hands for the sake of pleasing the oppressors. These people were now regretting but it was already too late. Once again, in the ugliest way, Kufa displayed its abjection and humiliation before Syria. Not only did Kufa fail to defeat Damascus, but also cemented its position under the sultanate of Damascus with more disgrace.

During his last moments of life, Imam Husayn (a) warned these people by saying: "If you kill me, you shall have no peace as you will also begin to fight among yourselves and kill one another. Nevertheless, God will not be satisfied with this punishment on you. He will prepare a greater chastisement for you." He then cursed them from the bottom of his heart. A curse that they well deserved: "My Lord! Cut the rain of your mercy upon these people! Deny them the blessings of the earth! Never make the rulers happy with them! Never grant them the success of fellowship."<sup>1</sup> Hardly did it take four years when the curse of Imam Husayn (a) took toll upon those people. Killings and spilling of blood began in Iraq and chaos arose.

So, what about the people that left the Imam alone (those that never participated in the war) and went back to their

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1. Tabari, vol 7, p. 365



homes? These people too, as we shall see, never escaped the punishment of Allah the Almighty. By the way, why did this people leave the Imam alone? Let us review the sermon of Imam Husayn (a): “People are the servants of this world. They only use religion as far as it serves their world. So, when they face a test from Allah the Almighty, the number of the sincere believers will be small.”





## **The caravan of the captives**

From that day till today, Kufa has had many generations. However, when any generation that replaces the previous one, gathers around the grave of Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a), it becomes ashamed of its ancestors. Nonetheless, if it was possible to reverse time and revive that scene, what would these people who are embarrassed and weeping have done and which camp would they have joined? May Allah the Almighty never test His servants! And if He gives them a test, may He also give them a steadfast power to overcome the test!

The reality of the defeat dawned on these people a few moments after the storm had calmed down with the expression of regret by the victorious commanders. The hidden conscience of the weak people had been revived for a few moments, however, this amount was not enough. These people were supposed to return to their city to see how their fellow citizens, that is, the same people that were their allies in the past month who only broke their treaty (with the Imam) and never added the disgrace of killing their guest to it, would face them. At night, a happy man was going back to his house. His lady asked him:



“What has happened that makes you so happy?”

He replied: “Aren’t you aware? I have brought you the wealth of this world. I have the head of Imam Husayn (a).”

The lady angrily retorted: “Woe unto you! People are bringing back gold, silver and expensive jewelry, yet you bring the head of the son of the holy Prophet (s)! I swear by Allah the Almighty that I shall never sleep with you.”

Kufa fully attained sobriety and perceived the obscenity of their actions when they witnessed the wife and children of Imam Husayn (a), the children of Amir al-Mu’minin (a) and the grandchildren of the holy Prophet (s) brought to this city as if they were infidel captives. Not even twenty years had passed since the day that Amir al-Mu’minin (a) became the successor of the holy Prophet (s) and the caliph of the Muslim nation, and got killed in this city after ruling for only five years. The ladies whose ages were above thirty had seen the dignity of Zaynab in the eyes of Amir al-Mu’minin (a) and her majesty in the eyes of their fathers and husbands. Witnessing this incident revived the previous memories and the alleys and markets were all filled with agony.

The agony of the ladies made the children cry and the crying of the children softened the hard hearts of the old people and made them to also cry. There were cries and screams from all sides. The only person in that group who was capable of culminating peoples’ emotion by use of words was the daughter of Amir al-Mu’minin (a). Was it Umm Kulthum or Zaynab (a)? I don’t know. After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a), due to her maturity, Zaynab became the leader of this caravan of captives. Most of the historians and Shiite researchers have attributed



this speech that I am writing to her. Nevertheless, the oldest books of reference have attributed it to Umm Kulthum. Ibn Abi Zahir who was born a hundred and forty years after this incident and died two hundred and twenty years later, has recorded the sermon of Umm Kulthum in his book entitled, *Balaghat al-nisa'* (The Eloquence of Women), which is a collection of eloquent speeches from the Arab and Muslim ladies.

When he saw the Kufans crying, Imam Ali ibn Husayn (a) - who was still fresh youth and was sick during that time - said: "Are you people crying for us? Aren't you the same people that killed us?" At this time, Umm Kulthum gestured with her hand for people to keep quiet. The author has mentioned in his book that from that moment onwards, only the sound of peoples' breaths were being heard. She began: "O Kufans! O men of vaunt! O treacherous men! O retreaters! Beware! May your lament never cease and may your wailing never end. Verily your similitude is that of a woman who untwirls the threads spinned by herself. You have broken your pledges by deceit and there remains nothing in you except pretense, self-conceit, exorbitance and dishonesty. You have adopted the flatter of maids and coquettishness of the enemies as your customs. Your similitude is of that of the expanse vegetation or jewelry in the graveyard.

Beware! What an evil you have brought forth for yourselves that has invited Allah's wrath upon you and you have earned a place of fury in the hereafter. You weep for my brother? Verily yes by Allah! You should weep, for you deserve it. Weep abundantly and laugh less, thus you are tainted with disgrace and trapped in contempt that you shall never be able to wash off. How will you wash off the



blood of the son of the ‘seal of Prophet-hood’ and the ‘mine of apostleship’ from yourselves, who was the master of the youths of paradise, the general of the battlefield, and an asylum of your group? He was a residence of repose for you and your well-being. He healed your wounds and safeguarded you against whatever evil came towards you. You approached him when you quarreled among yourselves. He was your best counsel and you relied upon him, and he was a lantern of your path.

Beware! What evil you have brought forth for yourselves and what load you have put upon your neck for the Day of Judgement. Perdition! Perdition! Destruction! May your search go in vain and may your hands paralyze as you have handed over the affairs of your provisions to the wind. You have occupied a place in Allah’s wrath, while the stamp of contempt and misfortune is sealed upon your forehead.

Woe unto you! Do you know that you have amputated the dear child of the holy Prophet (s)? And what pledge have you broken off from him? And what endeared family of his have you brought out onto the streets? And what veil of sanctity you have snatched away from them? And what blood have you shed from him? What an awry thing have you brought forth that it is likely that the heavens would fall down and the earth would disperse, while the mountains would crumble down as much as the fill of the earth and the heavens.

The bride of your affairs is hairless, unfamiliar, indecent, blind, ugly and sullen. You wonder why the heavens rain blood. The chastisement of the hereafter is more disgraceful and there will be no helper. Let not this respite make you frivolous, for none has the power to anticipate upon Allah,



the Mighty, the Sublime, and seeking vengeance does not lapse from him. No, not at all, your Lord is in ambush for you”.

This speech which came from a burning heart with such eloquent words and got strength from the turbulent sea of faith in God, changed everyone. The listeners hesitated with their hands over their mouths. The caravan of the captives were taken to the palace of Ubayd Allah. A ceremony to demonstrate his power and might was conducted. According to his imagination, Ubayd Allah thought that he had won this battle to the fullest. He had killed Imam Husayn (a) and taken his wife and daughters as captives with their hands tied. So, now everything was over. He is the victor and the holy Prophet (s) is the loser.

He boastfully said: “Praise be to God who has immensely humiliated you and showed that what you were saying was nothing other than lies.”

Indeed, there is nothing more offensive and painful for an oppressor who has nothing apart from his power than to make fun of him by underestimating his power.

The daughter of Amir al-Mu’minin (a) began talking. She was speaking as if nothing had happened yet; as if no one from her family had been killed or anyone (including herself) taken captive or this person whom she was answering was capable of killing all of them with one order. The dialogue between her and Ubayd Allah was as follows:

Zaynab: “All praise is for Allah the Almighty who blessed and honored us with the holy Prophet (s). No one lies except the wicked, no one is disgraced except the evildoer,



and that is not us, it is others.

Ubayd Allah: “Have you seen what God has done to your brother?”

Zaynab: “I have seen nothing but goodness from God! My brother and his companions have taken the course that Allah the Almighty wanted. They have chosen martyrdom with dignity and have thus attained this blessing. But as for you! Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad! Prepare to answer for what you have done!”

(Ubayd Allah did not even achieve what he had intended to achieve by this conversation. He was defeated once again here. Nonetheless, as we know, what is the last weapon that a fool resorts to? Abuse.)

Ubayd Allah: “God has healed our hearts with the death of your stubborn brother.”

Zaynab: “Ubayd Allah! You have killed my protector, severed my stem, and up-rooted my origin. Our hearts are debilitated. If that was your cure, then you are indeed cured!”

Ubayd Allah: “Zaynab is talking in rhymed prose (saj’)<sup>1</sup>. I swear by my soul that even his father used to speak in rhymed prose.”

Zaynab: “Ibn Ziyad! What rhymed prose are you talking about? Is this a time to speak in rhymed prose?!”

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1. Saj’ is a form of rhymed prose in Arabic literature. It is named so because of its evenness or monotony, or from a fancied resemblance between its rhythm and the cooing of a dove. It is a highly artificial style of prose, characterized by a kind of rhythm as well as rhyme. Saj’ is used in sacred literature, including parts of the noble Qur’an and in secular literature, such as the One Thousand and One Nights. [Translator]



Among the people of Damascus, no one had seen the holy Prophet (s) nor heard his speech nor knew Islam in the manner that was prevalent in Medina. One hundred and thirteen companions of the holy Prophet (s) had either participated in the conquest of this region or gradually settled here. A glance at the biography of this group depicts that apart from a few of them, the remaining ones had only seen the holy Prophet (s) for a short period and had only narrated two or three traditions from him. Most of these companions, lived during the reign of Umar and Uthman and died during the beginning of the reign of Muawiyah. During this incident, only eleven of these companions were alive and living in Syria. These were people whose ages ranged between seventy and eighty and preferred a life in seclusion to a life that involves mingling with people.

The result of this is that the young generation - those who were age mates with Yazid - knew nothing regarding the reality of Islam and perhaps, according to their view, Islam was also a reign just like the reigns of the previous rulers who had ruled their land. The luxury of Muawiyah's court, peoples' desire for wealth, paying heed to the manifestations of outward civilization such as building luxurious palaces, creating a guard of respect for the ruler, sending into exile, jailing and executing those opposing the regime was a normal thing to them. These were people that did not even know the holy progeny (a), that is, their status and position to Allah the Almighty. Owing to this, if some historians write that the people of Syria celebrated on the day that the captives entered their city and commemorated the killing of their men, then it is not far from the truth.

When this caravan of captives were entering the palace of





Yazid, these were the kind of people that made up the entourage of Yazid. I do not know if the poems attributed to Yazid were really composed by him or not. However, Ibn Abi Twahir has attributed these three verses to Yazid. He says that Yazid was hitting the teeth of Imam Husayn (a) with a rod while saying: “I wish our ancestors that were present at Badr and were killed by the arrows of the Khazraj tribe could be alive today to attend this ceremony and celebrate this matter. They would have thanked me. We have paid our revenge to the family of Amir al-Mu’minin (a) for what they did at Badr and we have avenged for our blood.”

If you take a careful look at these verses, you will notice that there is no word regarding the holy Prophet (s), the religion and the noble Qur’an. What we see here is a reminiscent of the past grudges dating back to the period of ignorance. They had avenged for their blood with blood.

If this assembly had ended at this point, then Yazid would have been considered to be the victor or what he had ordered to be committed would have seemed to be a little evil. Nonetheless, Zaynab did not allow this to happen. She demonstrated to them that Islam is based on the pillars of having piety and not power:

“Then evil was the end of those who did evil because they rejected the communications of Allah and used to mock them.”<sup>1</sup>

O Yazid! Do you believe that you have succeeded in making life hard for us and that we have become your captives just because we have been brought before you in a row and that you have secured control over us? Do you

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1. Surat al-Rum: 10



believe that we have been afflicted with insult and dishonor by Allah and that you have been given honor and respect by Him? You have become boastful of this apparent victory that you have secured and you have started feeling jubilant and proud over this prestige and honor. You think that you have achieved worldly good; that your affairs have become stabilized and our rule has fallen into your hands. Wait for a while. Do not be so joyful. Have you forgotten Allah's saying?

'The unbelievers should not carry the impression that the time allowed to them by Us is good for them. Surely We give them time so that they may increase their evil deeds, and eventually they will be given a humiliating chastisement.'<sup>1</sup>

O son of freed slaves, is this your justice that you keep your own daughters and slave maids veiled while the daughters of the holy Prophet (s) of Allah are being paraded from place to place without their veils?

You have dishonored us by unveiling our faces. Your men take us from town to town where all sorts of people, whether they are residents of the hills or of riversides have been looking at us.

The near as well as the remote ones, the poor as well as the rich, the low as well as the high are all casting their glances at us while our position is such that we have no male relative to render us help or support.

Anyway, what more can be anticipated from someone whose heart is filled with immense hatred towards us? You are saying that you wish your ancestors who were killed in

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2. Surat Al Imran: 178



Badr would be here and while saying these words, you are hitting the teeth of the son of the holy Prophet (s)?! You will never perceive the greatness of the sin that you have committed. Why is that? It is because by spilling the blood of the children of the holy Prophet (s) and the family of Abd al-Muttalib who were the stars on the earth, you have reignited the enmity between two families. Do not be so happy since you shall soon appear before God. It is that time that you shall wish that you were blind and never seen this day. You would wish that you had never said that you wish your ancestors would have been present in this assembly to celebrate your actions. My Lord! May you avenge on our behalf. On the day that you shall meet the holy Prophet (s), his daughter (Fatima al-Zahra' (a)) and his progeny (a) under the shadow of God's mercy, you will stand before him in total disgrace. That will be the day when God's promise will take toll on you. All these oppressed people here in your palace will be gathered on that day. Allah the Almighty says:

“Do not suppose those who were slain in the way of Allah to be dead; no, they are living and provided for near their Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

However, as for your father - Muawiyah - who unjustly designated you for the caliphate of the Muslims shall on that day (where the petitioner is the holy Prophet (s) and the judge is Allah the Almighty) comprehend who is the most miserable and helpless person.

O Yazid! O the enemy of Allah the Almighty. I swear by my Lord that I do not consider you worth of blaming or humiliating. But what can I do when tears are in my eyes and sadness in my chest. After Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a)

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1. Surat Al Imran: 169



had been killed, the Satan's army brought us from Kufa to the court of the foolish group, in order to break the sanctity of the holy Prophet's family and get their rewards from the public treasury of Islamic state - which is the result of the hardworking and oppressed people. After the hands of these tyrants are stained with our blood, their mouths are full of pieces of our flesh and after the ravenous wolves have gnawed those pure bodies, what pain will your reprimand and blame cure?

If you think that killing and taking us captives has benefited you, then you shall soon realize that what you thought was a benefit is actually a harm. On that day, you shall reap what you sowed. You have collaborated with Ibn Ziyad to commit this atrocity. You shall be arraigned before the judgement of Allah the Almighty together with your helpers. On that day you will learn that the best luggage (that you will carry on your journey to the hereafter) that Muawiyah prepared for you was killing the children of the holy Prophet (s). I swear by Allah the Almighty that I fear none other than Him and I have no one else to complain to apart from Him. Do as you wish. Use any trick that you want! Illustrate to us any kind of enmity that you have. I swear by Allah the Almighty that this stain of shame that you have brought yourself will never be erased. All praise is to Allah the Almighty who granted martyrdom to the master of the youths of paradise. He has made paradise obligatory for them. I ask Him to elevate their ranks and status and shower them with abundant mercy, for He is all-powerful.”

The reactions to such a speech emanating from someone in great agony and getting its strength from a heart full of piety is pretty obvious. The most hard-hearted people,



when faced with faith and piety, see their own weakness and the strength of the opponent and are unable to make a decision for a few moments. You could have heard a pin drop due to the silence that had engulfed the entire palace. Yazid witnessed the effects and signs of unhappiness in the faces of the people in attendance. He said: “May Allah kill Ibn Ziyad. I did not sanction the killing of Husayn.”

He then realized that keeping these captives in their state will not serve him any benefit. He ordered them to be taken to a better place and gave permission to the ladies of Quraysh to visit them whenever they wished. He used to invite Ali ibn al-Husayn for lunch and supper and would eat with him. In reality, did a little regret get into his heart? By analyzing the hypocritical nature of the Bedouins, there is a possibility of this matter. Nevertheless, the confirmation of such a possibility drives away another certainty. And that is, if Yazid did not do this, there was a probability of the chaos arising in Kufa to find their in Damascus even though they would have been quelled as quickly as possible. All in all, from this day and this assembly, a group of people in Syria began to realize that what they used to think was Islam was in reality not Islam and the Islamic ruler was not indeed an Islamic ruler.



## The regret of the victors

The noble Qur'an states:

“The unbelievers should not carry the impression that the time allowed to them by Us is good for them. Surely We give them time so that they may increase their evil deeds, and eventually they will be given a humiliating chastisement.”<sup>1</sup>

The caliphate of Damascus and its subordinate in Kufa thought that they had achieved victory. Now that Husayn had been killed, who else had the power and courage to oppose them? However, both of them had forgotten to put one thing into consideration, that is, the punishment for wrong doings!

This is the norm of creation. It is the law of Allah the Almighty that will never change. The oppressors must pay for the crimes they have committed. The blood of the oppressed must be requited.

The first stage of reactions as we had said was regret. Regret by the army commanders, regret by the soldiers

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1. Surat Al Imran: 178



and then regret in the department of the Kufa government and the Sultanate of Damascus.

Hardly did it take before Ibn Ziyad summoned Umar Sa'ad and said: "What happened to that order I wrote to you regarding the killing of Husayn? Give it to me!"

Umar Sa'ad: "For how long did you expect me to keep that writing? It is lost!"

Ibn Ziyad: "Do you want to hang it in front of the old women of Quraysh?"

Yazid said: "I would have been pleased if one of my children was killed instead of Husayn. May Allah kill Ibn Ziyad! Why did he do such a thing?"

There is no doubt that Yazid was lying and this was because he was afraid of the reactions of the people. He had witnessed their immediate reaction and behavior during the first assembly. It did not even take a year before the representatives of Madinah came back from meeting Yazid and informed their people that everything that Yazid lacked was the real Islam. In other words, everything that Yazid did was nowhere close to Islam. Chaos arose in the whole of Madinah and the people of this city revolted. To begin with, they chased away the Ummayyads and then took charge of everything. Nevertheless, Syria eventually intervened in a very unsympathetic style. They took siege of the city and killed several people in Madinah. Indeed, what they committed was a great massacre in the city of the holy Prophet (s).

Nevertheless, on the other hand, Abdullah ibn Zubayr led a revolt in Mecca and expanded his power and this is something that really worried Yazid during his last years.



Yazid died in the year 64 A.H. With his death, Kufa turned into a center of anarchy. At first, the Shiite leaders thought of taking swords and killing each other like the ‘sons of Israel’ (Bani Isra’il) as a way and means of atoning for their sins.<sup>1</sup> However, they eventually came to a logical conclusion, that is, they should relieve their anger by killing others and not by killing themselves. Again, new wars ensued where a lot of people were killed. Nonetheless, this time round, the people killed were neither believers nor the friends of Allah the Almighty. These were killers who had stained their hands with the blood of the martyrs.

So, one of these evil doers was slaughtered like a sheep, the stomach of another one was ripped open, the one who shot the three-headed arrow that killed one of the children of Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a) and also killed the young boy who used his body as a shield for the Imam, received the same punishment. Another one was thrown into a pot of boiling oil. Another one was tied on the ground and horses trampled him to death. As the historical accounts narrate, in one place, around 248 people who had participated in killing Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a) and his companions in Karbala, tasted this type of punishment.

As we read these stories, we see a kind of cruelty in those incidents. In spite of that, we must know that judging the actions of the ancient people after thirteen centuries is not right. Another thing is that when the anger of the revolution started, the standards changed. As we all know, a revolution

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1. These Shiite leaders related their case to the story of prophet Musa (Moses) which is illustrated in the following verse: ‘And (remember) when Musa said to his people: “O my people! Verily, you have wronged yourselves by worshipping the calf. So turn in repentance to your Creator and kill yourselves (that is, the innocent should kill the wrongdoers among you), that will be better for you with your Lord.” Then He accepted your repentance. Truly, He is the one who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.’ Surat al-Baqarah: 54 [Translator]





is usually accompanied by anger and violence. In fact, if a revolution lacks these characteristics, then it is not counted as a revolution.

Shimr, Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, Umar Ibn Sa'ad, Hafs ibn Umar ibn Sa'ad, Khuli, Sanan and many more commanders of the Kufan's army tasted this kind of torment. However, history does not end here, this was neither the last revolution nor the last revenge. Many more revolutions took place. Mukhtar was assassinated by Mus'ab ibn al-Zubayr and Mus'ab too, was assassinated under the order of Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan and along these leaders, a large group of people were also killed.

The head of Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a) was taken to Ibn Ziyad and the head of Ibn Ziyad was taken to Mukhtar. The head of Mukhtar was taken to Mus'ab and the head of Mus'ab was taken to Abd al-Malik. All these events took place in a period of less than ten years. In the period of these ten years, just in the same manner that they had tormented the son of the holy Prophet (s), Kufa too did not have peace. In every year and month, a new conspiracy arose from some place.

At long last, the promise of Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a) materialized and that was in the year 75 A.H. One day when a group of the elders of Kufa were sitting in the mosque, a person came in with his head and face covered. He had a sword on his waist and a bow on his shoulder. Ignoring the people, he broke the prayer lines and made his way to the pulpit. He ascended the pulpit and sat on the uppermost stair and remained silent. He never uttered a single word as he remained silent for a long time. It has been said that he remained silent for a full hour and perhaps, they have also exaggerated on the issue of time as



they always do. Anyway, no matter how long it was, his silence made people to start whispering on each other's ears.

One asked, "So, who is this person?"

The other one replied, "Aren't you aware that we have a new ruler!"

Another one retorted, "May Allah curse the Umayyads for sending such a person to govern Iraq! Can I shower him with stones?"

His friend answered him, "No brother, leave him alone. Wait a little bit and let us see what will happen."

Therefore, when everyone had kept quiet, he unmasked his face and said:

"You all know me very well and that I am not afraid of anything. When the time arrives you shall properly know who I am. O Kufans! I swear by Allah that I surely know how to deal with evil, how to overcome it and how to pay it back. I see closed eyes and stretched necks. I see some heads that resemble ripe fruits and are burdening the shoulders with their weights, and should thus be picked as quickly as possible. I see blood that have stained the turbans till the beards and the sunlight makes the redness of this blood to glow. O the people of Iraq! O the source of division and hypocrisy! O the morally corrupt people! I am not a willow to be shaken by these winds! I am not a puppet that you can play with and squeeze between your fingers! I passed all my tests of intelligence and tact with flying colors. The caliph summoned all his toughest soldiers and gave them a stern test and I emerged the best amongst all of them. He designated me for you people



because for many years, you have been living with chaos and sedition, you have chosen misguidance and taken the path of disobedience.

I swear by Allah that I will peel off your skin the way people pluck a branch from a tree. I will hit you on your head like a fire stone, I will break your blades like a bramble and I will flog you like a strange camel that is driven from all sides. Your parable is like the parable of the people of that city who used to live in peace and harmony and their sustenance from God was abundant. However, when they disbelieved, God clothed them with hunger and fear.”

When the people heard of these abuses and perceived this kind of humiliation, they fathomed that finally, someone had arrived who spoke to them in a language they knew. This incident resembled that of the cattle buyers of the Israelites who when they saw all the signs they knew in the cow, they all said in the present language - You have now come with the truth! We were searching for you and anxiously waited for you because you are a genius! (My eyes do not look at anyone but you and do not accept anyone but you.)

The hands of that same person who wanted to shower this man on the pulpit with stones was now shaking and the stones fell off from his hands. Hajjaj ibn Yusuf was now the new governor of Kufa. Once again, the apparatus of incitement, espionage, accusations, arrests, imprisonment, torture, murder and finally a tyrannical regime was launched. Yes, this is the punishment for those who disbelieve in God’s blessings. Those who kill their own expedients and benefactors by their own hands. They turned away from God and made Satan their direction (qiblah). Once again, Syria laughed extremely hard at Kufa.

The uprising of Imām Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī(a) marked the beginning of several uprisings in the course of the history of the world. In this book, we have briefly analyzed the causes of the uprising, its impacts and the mental and spiritual state of the companions of the Imām and the enemies before and after the incident of Karbalā. One of the vital things that we learn is that the oppressors will ultimately pay for what they have committed, either in this world or the hereafter or in some cases, both in this world and the hereafter. From this uprising, we perceive that one should never oppress a person who has no one to defend (him) except Allah the Almighty.

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