



## IMAM HUSAYN

### امام الحسين (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

## THE HIDDEN EVIL AND THE DAZED 'MUSLIMS'

In the lesson on Imam Ḥasan (as), we discussed that the Imam signed a peace treaty with Mu'āwiyah which Mu'āwiyah blatantly disregarded. After Mu'āwiyah violated the peace treaty, the Muslims started to realise Mu'āwiyah's true evil character. However, the Muslims did not have the courage to oppose him or fight him. Before Mu'āwiyah passed away he handed over the Caliphate to his son Yazīd. Yazīd was well known for his indecency (such as publicly drinking alcohol, committing adultery and incest, playing with animals, etc...) yet the people did not have the courage to oppose him either. On the other hand, Mu'āwiyah and Yazīd had somewhat disguised their evil nature and real intention (of using Islam to gain more power) by 'virtuous' deeds such as building numerous mosques<sup>ii</sup> throughout the Islamic countries. He also paid the Muslim soldiers generously in order to fight non-Muslim countries to expand the Islamic territories.<sup>iii</sup> The Muslims seeing this considered it as good revenue for themselves and thought it was a good deed, without realising the real intention behind it.

## NEVER SUBMIT TO HUMILIATION

The Muslims pledged allegiance to Yazīd whether voluntarily or by force. However, Imam Ḥusayn and the family of the Prophet and true followers of Ahlul Bayt did not. Yazīd knew that for his leadership to be safe from opposition, it was vital for Imam Ḥusayn (as) to pledge allegiance to him. He therefore sent a messenger to Medina to ask the Imam to pay allegiance. Imam Ḥusayn responded to this in the following manner:

### Objectives >>>

#### Students should understand:

- The objective of Imam Ḥusayn's sacrifice in Karbala
- The effects of his martyrdom on the Islamic nation
- That there are many untrue accounts of the events of Karbala and we need to distinguish the true narrations from the false ones
- That Imam Ḥusayn's love for Allah (SWT) was the motivation behind his sacrifice

## Imam Ḥusayn (as)

Imam Ḥusayn (as) is the third divinely appointed Imam and successor of the Holy Prophet. In previous years, we have learnt about his great personality and his sacrifices for the sake of Allah (SWT), especially in Karbala. Undoubtedly, you know of his sacrifice from your attendance of the Muḥarram majālis at different centres and mosques. In this lesson we will learn more about Imam Ḥusayn's role in Karbala and its effects on Islam throughout history till today.



“We are the Household of Prophecy ... and Yazīd is a man who drinks wine, kills innocent people and openly commits sins. Hence someone like me will never pledge allegiance to someone like him...”

On another occasion, Imam Ḥusayn (as) said, “Farewell to Islam if the Islamic nation is afflicted with a ruler like Yazīd.”

## **CAN'T WE HAVE AN UNJUST RULER AND PRACTICE OUR OWN BELIEF?**

We need to understand that the personality of the leader of a nation will have an impact on the people and can subtly influence their faith over time. That is why Allah (SWT) sent numerous Prophets (i.e. righteous, just and perfect leaders) over time, in order to guide mankind and eradicate oppression.<sup>iv</sup> Imam Ḥusayn (as) knew his role as an Imam and guide for people; he wanted the people to wake up from their misguidance and encourage them to take action against tyranny. Hence he reminded them of what his grandfather had ordered:

Surely you know that the Prophet (saw) said: “Whoever witnesses a tyrant ruler who considers the prohibitions of Allah as permissible, violates the covenant of Allah, opposes the practices of the Prophet of Allah, treats the servants of Allah sinfully and cruelly, and does not oppose him verbally or physically, then Allah will associate him with that ruler.”

## **IMAM ḤUSAYN MIGRATES TO KUFAH**

The people of Kufah in particular wanted a just leader and hence wrote letters to Imam Ḥusayn (as) who was in Medina at the time, to attend to them as their Imam. Imam Ḥusayn (as) accepted the invitations of the Kufahns and headed towards Kufah to fulfil his duty as an Imam and lead them justly. Imam Ḥusayn (as) acted similarly to his grandfather the Prophet (saw) when he left Mecca and migrated to Medina<sup>v</sup> in order to be able to practice and establish the true teachings of Islam in a complete manner.

## **IMAM ḤUSAYN'S AIM WAS TO REVIVE THE MUSLIM NATION**

When he was asked about his departure to Kufah Imam Ḥusayn (as) replied:

“Indeed I did not revolt (against the tyrannical regime of Bani Umayyah) joyfully or arrogantly nor to cause corruption or to be an oppressor; rather I rose up in order to reform the Muslim nation of my grandfather the Messenger of Allah (SWT).”

This shows that Imam Ḥusayn (as) wanted to bring back the true teachings of Islam that the Prophet had established and remove the injustice that was inflicted on Muslims (under the guise of Islam) by the unjust leaders who seized the Prophet's position after his demise (especially Mu'āwiyah and Yazīd).

By analysing the events that took place after the tragedy of Karbalā', we will realise that by the sacrifice of Imam Ḥusayn (as) and his companions, Islam had been revived and continues to exist till this very day. Let us have a look at the impact of the tragedy of Karbalā'.

## **THE AWAKENING**

The martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (as) and his family (the progeny of the Prophet) and companions in Karbala sparked questions about the murderer. Furthermore, the women and children were taken as captives which also caused people to question the legitimacy of Yazīd's authority and personality. These questions triggered revolutions not only against Yazīd but other tyrant leaders too.

The very first revolution was begun by Imam Ḥusayn (as) himself in Karbala by not pledging allegiance and sacrificing his life and his family for the cause of truth and justice. This was followed by Sayyedah Zaynab and Imam Zaynul 'Ābidīn's (as) opposition and stance against 'Umar ibn Sa'd, 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyād and Yazīd<sup>vi</sup> after being taken as captives.

## **SACRIFICE FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE OF ALLAH**

After learning about what happened in Karbalā', we may think 'how did Imam Ḥusayn (as) have the courage to sacrifice his family and own life for the sake of Allah? What is the secret behind it?'

When we love someone we are more willing to sacrifice for them. For example, when a friend that you love asks for a favour you immediately fulfil their need. You are willing to give your wealth and time to make that friend happy.

Similar is the case with Allah (SWT); when we love Him we become more mindful of what we do and try as best we can to impress Him. The more we love Allah, the more Allah will love us, which in turn will attract us to love Allah (SWT) more. Imam Husayn (as) reached a level of loving Allah that not only did he give his wealth for Allah (e.g. giving to the poor and needy even though he also was in need, as we have learnt in previous years), his time (e.g. worshipping Allah in prayers, helping others) and his family (to the extent that he sacrificed his infant baby), but he also gave his own life for the sake of Allah (SWT). That is why Imam Husayn (as) said:

ان كان دين محمد لم يستقم الا بقتلي فيا سيوف خذيني

“If the religion of Muhammad will not stand firm except by my death, then O swords come and take me!”

### BRIEF SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

“The company and social interaction with the people committing transgression is a cause for blame”

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 122)

#### References:

Lectures by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei:

- Muharram 2008/9, lectures 11 and 12
- The aftermath of Karbala 1 & 2
- The aftermath of Ashura 2
- eHawza, Semester 4, course 6, lectures 12 & 13
- eHawza, Semester 4, course 4, lecture 2

The Revolution of Imam Husayn (A historical analysis of the roots & the impacts of Karbala) – A series of lectures presented by Sheikh Mansour Leghaei. Compiled by the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Community of Australia, 1996.

<sup>ii</sup> The Umayyid mosque in Syria (Damascus) and the Sakhray Mosque in Jerusalem are examples of such mosques.

<sup>iii</sup> Expanding the Islamic territories in the way that the Umayyids and Abbasids did was never endorsed by the Imams. One of the Shia (who was a soldier under the command of the Abbasid rulers) at the time of Imam Sadiq (as) came to the Imam and asked him whether it was permissible for him to go and fight kuffar (non-believers) in order to expand the Islamic territory when demanded by the Abbasid Caliph. Imam (as) replied that it was not permissible and that they (the Ahlul Bayt) do not endorse such wars. And further, if he was to die in such a war his blood would be wasted and he would not be considered a martyr. The most that one can do is guard the borders of the Islamic territory so that the enemies would not attack but they were not permitted to attack other territories just to expand the Islamic territory.

As proof that the aim of bani Umayyah was to increase their power: Yazid ibn Muhallab was one of the commanders of bani Umayyah. In one of the expansion wars they attacked the northern part of Iran (to the Caspian Sea). When they were about to expand and defeat, the Iranians resisted. Yazid ibn Muhallab took an oath that he will make a river of blood (ie kill so many of them

“One who removes the anguish and sorrow of a faithful person, Allah grants him deliverance from the sorrows and dejections of this world and the Hereafter.”

(BIHAR UL ANWAR VOL 78, P 121)

## Review Questions

**Q1. Imam Husayn (as) rose up against the tyrants of his time because:**

- He wanted to establish justice
- He wanted to re-establish the real teachings of Islam
- Both of the above

**Q2. Imam Husayn's (as) revolution:**

- Had no real effect on the Muslim world
- Revived the Muslims and led to many other revolutions
- We are unsure of its consequences

**Q3. Imam Husayn (as) did not pay allegiance to Yazid because:**

- He was an open sinner and an unjust ruler
- He didn't like his family
- He was the son of Mu'awiyah

that a river of blood flows on the land of Tabarestan). As a result he captured a thousand people (women, children and men), took them to a valley (in order to fulfil his vow) and beheaded them all. The soldiers told Yazid that the blood wasn't flowing, and there wasn't anymore people around to behead. So Yazid replied that they should add a bit of water to the blood to make it flow and so his promise would be fulfilled (in a way to cheat God) ... they didn't have any concern about Islam and expanding its territories for the sake of Islam, it wasn't their intention. They were expanding the territory to enforce their power and have more land to themselves under their power.

<sup>iv</sup> Nabi Musa (as) is mentioned many times throughout the Quran. One of his main missions was to fight against the tyrannical Pharaoh at his time. Through the actions of Prophet Musa Allah is teaching humankind to not voluntarily accept unjust rulers. In his uprising against Pharaoh there's a huge lesson otherwise Allah would not mention it merely for entertainment in the Quran.

<sup>v</sup> This is the first migration of the Prophet (sawa) after preaching for 13 years in Mecca. When the pagans exerted every cruel act and sanctions on the Muslims (such as the 3 years the Muslims had to live in the valley of Abu Talib without being able to have any interaction with the Meccans) the Prophet migrated with the Muslims to Medina in order to establish Islam and live according to the Islamic rules. Another migration is when the Prophet sent some of the Muslims under the command of Ja'far ibn Abu Talib (brother of Imam Ali (as)) to the Christians of Najran in Ethiopia.

<sup>vi</sup> Sayyedah Zaynab and Imam Ali Zaynul 'Abidin's courageous and eloquent speeches and defence in the courts of 'Umar ibn Sa'd and Yazid played a key role in awakening the Muslims from their slumber. Not only did they expose the evil actions and blasphemy of those tyrant rulers, they brought the Muslims back to their senses and caused them to question Yazid and oppose him. They also caused the Muslims' feelings of regret (for deceiving or deserting Imam Husayn) to erupt and hence a chain of both unsuccessful and successful revolutions against the Umayyads began.