

IMAM HUSAYN

امام الحسين (ع)

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)

In previous years, we have discussed the reasons for Imam Ḥusayn's revolution and the importance of this great sacrifice for the sake of God. In this lesson, we will discuss the aftermath of 'Āshurā' in detail, and some of the important things that happened after Imam Ḥusayn (as) and his companions gave their life for the sake of Islam in Karbala.

THE UPRISINGS

After hearing of the atrocities of Karbala, and after hearing the speeches of Sayyeda Zaynab and seeing the Ahlul Bayt in captivity, the people began to see the corrupt nature of the Umayyad regime, and started to oppose it.

People's courage to oppose tyrant leaders and sacrifice their lives for the sake of the truth increased. Each

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

uprising against the Umayyad leadership held the banner of "Ya li-thārāt al-Ḥusayn" (i.e. we are avenging the innocent blood of Imam Ḥusayn).

THE BATTLE OF ḤARRA

When the people of Medina¹ heard of the news of Imam Ḥusayn and his companions they sent people to Syria to eye-witness the tyranny and blasphemy of Yazīd. Once this was confirmed, they mobilised an army against the governor of Medina who was 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abu-Sufyān (Yazid's cousin) and sent him into exile. When Yazīd heard of this, he sent five thousand men under the command of his most vicious officer Muslim ibn 'Aqabah to suppress the revolt. They met the people of Medina in a place called Ḥarra (just outside Medina) and a battle took place between both parties where many of the people of Medina were killed. This happened in the year 63 A.H. Furthermore, Yazīd gave permission to his troops to enjoy their freedom in Medina for 3 days, where the troops plundered all they could find, raped the ladies and girls, polluted the Prophet's mosque, and killed many companions of the Prophet.

MOVEMENT OF THE TAWWĀBĪN

This was an uprising against the Umayyads by the Tawwābīn (the Repentant) in the year 65 A.H. These were the Kufans who regretted their betrayal of Imam Ḥusayn (as) after inviting him to Kufa.ⁱⁱ They believed the only way to cleanse themselves of the sin of leaving the Imam was to give their life in avenging the blood of the Imam (as). The Repentant, who were estimated to be about four thousand men, gathered and fought the army of 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād in an area out of Kufa

called 'Aynul Ward. The Repentant Army fought courageously but tragically most of them were killed by the thirty thousand troops of ibn Ziyād.

THE REVOLUTION OF AL-MUKHTĀR

Mukhtār al-Thaqafi was a devoted companion of Imam 'Ali (as) who was jailed in the year 60 A.H. when Muslim ibn 'Aqīl visited Kufa (remember 'Āshurā' occurred in 61 AH). He was released from jail in the year 66 A.H, after which he immediately began to take revenge from the criminals of Karbala. The criminals were not hard to find as they had all been publicly boasting about the crimes they committed in Karbala ever since the tragedy until the year 66 A.H. Mukhtār and his men seized the well-known criminals such as Shimr ibn Dhil-Jawshan, Ḥarmala, 'Umar ibn Sa'd and 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād and executed them one by one.ⁱⁱⁱ They also killed many of the other men who attacked the Ahlul Bayt in Karbala. The revolution of Mukhtār was the successful movement in comparison to all other uprisings (although the other



uprisings contributed and were important in order to expose the evils of the Umayyads and awaken and encourage the Muslims).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE REVOLUTIONS

The achievements of the revolution of Karbala are multidimensional and everlasting. Imam Ḥusayn (as) knew that militarily or physically he would not be 'victorious'. However, he still fought the enemies in Karbala. He showed the people that there are two paths in life, one is right and the other is wrong. We need to always be aware and choose the right path in order to be successful, even though we have to sacrifice along the way. Hence Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) states that Imam Ḥusayn:

“gave the blood of his heart to rescue the servants of Allah from the ocean of ignorance and the perplexity of going astray”.

The sacrifice of Imam Ḥusayn (as) and his companions in Karbala caused a shock-wave that hit the conscience of the Muslims and sparked their faith and courage to revolt against tyrannical rulers and to enjoin good and forbid evil. By removing such leaders that lead their people to corruption, loss of faith, and greed for worldly matters, justice will prevail in the society.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE DISTORTIONS OF KARBALA

As we can see, there are many lessons that we can derive from Imam Ḥusayn (as) and Karbala. The sacrifices that were offered for the sake of Allah gave courage to the Muslims. On the other hand, because it was a tragic event, relating the story of Karbala became a reason to arouse people's emotions. Those who were eloquent in writing began to fabricate dramas with little truth, based only very loosely on the story of Karbala. They would make alterations and distortions to the story in order to provoke people's emotions.^{iv} This was tragic within itself as it changed the purpose of Imam Ḥusayn's martyrdom into one that would merely make people cry. These distortions occurred mostly between the 6th and 13th Century A.H.

ANOTHER REVOLUTION FOR THE TRUTH!

In the 13th Century a scholar in India, Haj Mirza Ḥusayn Nūri, came across books that were filled with these distortions about Karbala and began a revolution against the scholars who endorsed and recited such fabricated stories. He put forth two criteria for the reciters of the majalis of Karbala:

- 1) the majlis is recited with sincerity for the sake of Allah only
- 2) what is recited must be only the truth without any of the fabrications or distortions (whether it makes people cry or not).

One of Allamah Nūri's students, Sheikh Abbās al-Qummi (who is the compiler of Mafātīh al-Jinān) later compiled a book about Karbala, known as an-Nafas al-Mahmūm. This book is dependable because the author was careful in selecting the narrations and avoided most of the fabricated stories.

This was the beginning of enforcing people to seek the pure untainted truth and to practice according to the true lessons that Imam Ḥusayn (as) established by his sacrifices. In turn it is our duty to seek the truth in the

ⁱ This was under the command of 'Abdullah ibn Handhala who was a pious man who lived in Madina. Upon hearing the news of Karbala, he wanted to see with his own eyes what Yazīd was like, so in the year 63 A.H. he travelled to Syria with a group of people. When they returned to Madina they reported: *"By Allah I was in Damascus and saw the lifestyle of Yazid and I was scared that stones would fall on us from the heavens (i.e. a punishment). Because he sits the position of the Prophet and says he's the successor of the Prophet while he sleeps with his mothers and daughters and sisters and drinks wine (intoxicates himself) and pays no heed to prayers."* From this they began their revolt.

history of Karbala in order to derive the true lessons from it and practice Islam correctly.

Review Questions

- 1. Write a short response on some modern movements or revolutions which have been inspired by the values of Karbala.**

ⁱⁱ They were under the command of noble figures such as Solaymān ibn Sorād and Rofā'a ibn Shaddād

ⁱⁱⁱ The revolution of Mukhtar against the murderers and criminals of Karbala, while not directly endorsed by the Imams, did lead to their satisfaction that the criminals of Karbala were punished and killed.

^{iv} An example of this is the wedding of al-Qasim ibn al-Hasan with Imam Husayn's daughter which till today is still being recited. Others are those which portray weakness in the family of the Prophet (such as Sayyedah Zaynab) and Imam Husayn (as).