Lady Zaynab and Arbaeen
in the statements of
Ayatollah Khamenei

The Charisma of Husayn

Translated by Kazim Bhojani
Edited by Muhammad Mahdi Kassamali

The Charisma of Husayn

Certainly, the personality of Hazrat Zaynab (s) is not limited to her alleviating sorrow and taking care of others in Karbala.

Zainab al-Kubra (peace be upon her) represents a complete exemplar of a Muslim woman; a role model that Islam has set before the eyes of the people of the world for the tarbiyah (spiritual growth) of women.

Lady Zaynab (s) has a multi-dimensional personality that encompasses wisdom, knowledge, and excellence. She is an outstanding human being. Anyone encountering this noble lady feels humbled in the presence of her intellectual and spiritual greatness.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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introduction

This collection contains valuable statements of the Supreme Leader of Iran, Āyatullāh Khamenei, from the year 1980 up to 2010. The two subjects of the book are 'Zaynab al-Kubrā (a)' and 'Arbaʿīn', and the statements have been extracted from the book *Āftab dar masāf*.[i] The content has been summarised and presented with headings for the respected audience's convenience.

The final days of Ṣafar are referred to by Āyatullāh Khamenei as the days of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her). These days also coincide with the commemoration of the Arbaʿīn of Sayyid al-Shuhadā (peace be upon him), which according to Āyatullāh Khamenei marks the beginning of Imam al-Ḥusayn's attraction in hearts of the people, as well as the beginning of the attempt to revive the memory of Karbala and establish the tradition of commemorating his movement. As a result, in this collection efforts have been made to compile and publish material related to both themes as we approach these significant days. Naturally, a substantial portion of the content of both topics are closely connected with one another. Hence, their compilation in one collection was deemed appropriate.

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i. The book *Āftab dar masāf* (The Sun on the Battlefield) is a comprehensive collection of Āyatullāh Khamenei's statements to do with Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him).

This book consists of three chapters entitled: 'Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her),' 'Arba'īn,' and 'An Exposition of Some Passages from the Ziyārah al-Arba'īn.' The content has been organised chronologically in each chapter, meaning that in each chapter statements related to the theme have been brought, ordered by the date that they had been given. Content that was deemed to potentially not be relevant, was omitted from this collection. Additionally, clear titles have been provided for the overall theme of the statements, which also summarise the content.

We hope that this work will provide the followers of *wilāyah [al-faqīh]* with greater and better opportunities to benefit from the guidance of that lofty personality.

Finally, we express our gratitude and appreciation to the officials and researchers of the *Ḥadīth-e Lawḥ va Qalam Institute* who assisted in compiling this work.

chapter one
ZAYNAB AL-KUBRA

THE KNOWLEDGE OF LADY ZAYNAB AL-KUBRĀ REGARDING HOW THE BLOOD OF HUSAYN IBN ʿALĪ WILL CONTINUE TO EVOKE INTENSE MOURNING

When Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) saw the dismembered body of her brother lying on the ground in that sanctuary of love, devotion, sacrifice and jihad, she placed her hands under the body and raised her head towards the sky, crying out:

إلهي تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا هَذا القُرْبَان

"O God! Accept this sacrifice from us."[i]

She knew that the memory of that fervent blood would create a tsunami of love for martyrdom and sacrifice throughout history in the hearts of Muslims, and so it did. Since the day of the tenth of Muḥarram, ʿĀshūrā, this roaring wave has continued its course throughout history.

The blood of these martyrs led to the toppling of numerous tyrant rulers. Under the impact of this tempest that destroys the pillars of injustice, the tyrannical rule of the Umayyads, the Abbasids, and many other oppressive regimes were completely

i. al-Muqarram, *Maqtal al-ḥusayn*, p. 322.

destroyed and erased. Over time, many governments came and went in the Islamic lands while Islam itself remained. Shīʿah Islam, as the pulsating vein and the invigorating inspiring current within Islam, endured.

Despite the efforts of the tyrannical governments, from a hundred years ago until today, everywhere [we see] the blood of Ḥusayn beating and the hearts of the martyrs throbbing, inspiring the Islamic community to move forward and strive. This is the case from the time of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādi [i] and Mīrzā Ḥasan Shīrāzī [ii]—those great religious scholars—through the era of the scholars who initiated the Constitutional Movement [iii] and until the time of Mīrzā

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i. Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādi (1838-1897) was an influential Muslim scholar who traveled throughout the Muslim world and Europe, advocating for Muslim unity, and staunchly opposing Western imperialism. Through his writing, his lectures, and by training students he tirelessly worked to improve the extremely difficult situation the Muslim world faced. He called on Muslims to leave aside their divisions and superstitions, to come out of their ignorance and embrace a rational understanding of Islam. Details about his nationality and sectarian beliefs are a point of controversy; since these matters were not of importance to him it is as if he purposely hid them.

ii. Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Ḥusaynī (1815-1896) more famously known as Mīrzā Shīrāzī, was the sole *marjaʿ* of the Shīʿah community for a period of thirty years in the 19th century. He had been a close student of the eminent *marjaʿ* Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī whom he succeeded, and himself trained a large number of other scholars in the subjects of jurisprudence and its principles. During his time as the *marjaʿ* he settled in the city of Samarra. With his moving there, a vibrant seminary came about in that city for a time, only to diminish with his passing away. Mīrzā Shīrāzī is often remembered for an important edict that he passed in the year 1891 against the consumption of tobacco, an act in protest to the monopoly that Naser al-Din Qajar had given to the British over the production, sale, and export of tobacco.

iii. The Constitutional Movement, also known as the Constitutional Revolution,

Kūchak Khān Jangalī [i]—that noble Islamic scholar, that Islamic guerrilla fighter, and that founder of armed struggle in Iran. Similarly, this continued up to the time of Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris, [ii] the martyr Shahīd Nawwāb Safavī [iii] and

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took place in Iran between 1905 and 1911. It was an attempt to establish a constitutional government, limiting the absolute powers of the Shah by means of a constitution and a parliament. Although the movement eventually failed in limiting the Shah's power, for the Pahlavi dynasty that later came about was even more autocratic in nature than the Qajari dynasty, but the parliament itself remained.

i. Mīrzā Yūnus (1880-1921), more famously known as Mīrzā Kūchak Khān, was an Iranian revolutionary who founded an armed movement during the reign of Ahmad Shah Qajar, a weak and ineffective ruler whose time was marked by internal unrest and foreign influence. Based in the forests of Northern Iran, Mīrzā's movement was known as *The Jungle Movement*, and initially succeeded in establishing an independent republic. However, the republic was short-lived and in 1921, just over a year after it was established, the republic was defeated by central government forces under colonel Reza Khan, the future Reza Shah. It is worthy of mention that Mīrzā Kūchak Khān was himself a cleric who had studied in the religious seminaries and his movement was based on religious teachings.

ii. Sayyid Ḥasan Mudarris (1870-1937), was an Iranian mujtahid and a politician who was active during the early 20th century and was eventually martyred by Reza Shah due to his outspoken criticism. He was from the province of Isfahan, where he initially started his seminary studies as a child, before moving to Iraq. After studying extensively under great scholars such as Mīrzā Shīrāzī and reaching the level of ijtihād, Mudarris moved back to Iran and began teaching in the seminaries of Isfahan and Tehran. From 1910 onwards, he was an active member of Iran's new parliament. Initially he was a representative of the religious seminary, tasked with supervising the laws passed by the parliament to ensure they did violate the *sharī'ah*. Later he was a representative of Tehran during multiple terms, bravely opposing the influence of foreign powers and the unjust policies of Reza Shah. The day of his martyrdom is remembered in Iran as the day of the parliament.

iii. Sayyid Mujtabā Mīrlawḥī (1924-1956) more famously known by the name Nawwāb Safavī was an Iranian cleric and the founder of the group Fadā'iyān-e Islām. Born in Tehran, he moved to Najaf in the 1940s and studied in the seminary under scholars such as 'Allāmah Amīnī, the famous author of *Al-ghadīr*. Within a few years however he returned to Iran with the goal of combating the

the Fadaiyaan-e Islam,[(i)] the Oil Nationalisation Movement,[(ii)] and the bloody 15th Khordad uprising of [the Iranian year]

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blasphemous views of a secular scholar named Ahmad Kasravi. After initially opposing Kasravi through speeches and debates, Safavī concluded that this was futile and that Kasravi was guilty of blasphemy. Hence, a member of the Fadā'iyān-e Islām had Kasravi killed. In the following years, Safavī and his group played an important role supporting the movement to nationalise Iran's foreign-owned oil industry, by assassinating politicians who stood in the way of this movement. However, when the nationalists came to power, Safavī was upset with their lack of adherence to the sharī'ah and was jailed by them due to his opposition. He was eventually executed by the Pahlavi regime in the year 1956.

i. Fadā'iyān-e Islām was the name of a political activist group in Iran, active during the 1940s and 1950s, and comprised primarily of revolutionary seminary students. The aim of the group was to take revenge against deviant and blasphemous scholars such as Ahmad Kasravi, or against corrupt politicians working against the interests of the country like the prime minister 'Alī Razmārā. The group was successful in assassinating important figures such as the two mentioned, and they also initially enjoyed widespread support amongst religious people and scholars. However, over time there were differences of opinion regarding their approach, and Āyatullāh Burūjerdī even openly spoke out against them. After a failed assassination attempt on the prime minister Ḥusayn 'Alā in 1955 the group was suppressed, and key members of it such as Nawwāb Safavī were executed.

ii. The Oil Nationalisation Movement was a movement in the early 1950s led by Mohammed Mosaddegh, a member of parliament who later became the Prime Minister. The movement sought to take control of and nationalize Iran's oil industry which was run by private companies and largely served foreign interests, particularly those of Britain. By means of legislation verified by the parliament in in March 1951, the movement achieved this goal. Mosaddegh enjoined widespread support amongst common people, elite intellectuals, and religious scholars such as Āyatullāh Kāshānī. Despite this, his government's dependence on America led to him being overthrown in a coup orchestrated by the CIA in the year 1953.

1342.[i][ii]

THE EPIC STRUGGLE OF LADY ZAYNAB IN THE TRAGEDY OF ʿĀSHŪRĀ

On the ʿĀshūrā of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), after all the young men of the Banū Hāshim had fallen to the ground with their bodies torn apart and after Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her), the sister and the mirror-image of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), had endured all this distress and pain for the sake of God, in those final moments, she came to the place where he had been killed. There, she found the mutilated body of her Ḥusayn, scattered into pieces. She gently placed her hands under the body of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and offered it to God, saying:

إِلٰهِي تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا هَذا القُرْبَان

"O God! Accept this sacrifice from us."[iii] [iv]

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i. The 15th of Khordad, 1342 in the Iranian calendar corresponds to June 5, 1963. On this day, Iranians in different cities carried out massive protests against the arrest of Imam Khomeini that had happened before dawn on that same day. Two days prior to this on the day of ʿĀshūrā, Imam Khomeini had given a speech in the Feyziyyeh seminary in Qom, wherein he harshly denounced the Shah, comparing him to Yazīd. In cities such as Qom and Tehran, the mass protests were crushed by the Shah's military and police, leading to deaths. The protests planted the seeds of the Islamic Revolution that would happen fifteen years later, establishing the leadership of Imam Khomeini. In Iran the anniversary of this day is commemorated yearly and is a public holiday.

ii. Speech delivered on 1980/03/30.

iii. al-Muqarram, *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, p. 322.

iv. Speech delivered on 1980/09/08.

LADY ZAYNAB'S WORDS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF KARBALA

Just as Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) did not lose herself and her hope amidst all the intense difficulties and hardships on the evening of ʿĀshūrā as well as the eleventh night [of Muḥarram], we too have not lost hope today, and we must not!

According to the account in some narrations, on that very evening of Ashūra, Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) said to her nephew, ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), "My dear nephew, the situation will not remain like this. A time will come when these graves will become places of visitation, these banners will be raised high and people, nations and the future generations will come here, learn from this place and return."[i]

This place will become a *madras*[ii] for freedom seekers... and it has become so. On that day, this hope lit the path towards what was to come.[iii]

THE GRANDEUR OF THE FAREWELL OF IMAM AL-HUSAYN AND LADY ZAYNAB

The moments of the farewell of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) and Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) have arrived. A brother and sister who were so close to each other and loved each other so much are now going to be separated. If one were to truly pay attention to these moments, they would

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i. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, p. 447; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, p. 182.

ii. *Madras* in Arabic means a place of learning and study. (Tr)

iii. During a meeting with many families of martyrs in Tehran and its suburbs, 1984/11/13.

appreciate the magnificence of the situation.

Aside from the heart-wrenching and emotional aspects, the psychological depth of this account humbles a person and makes one feel insignificant in the face of such grandeur. Just look at the grandeur in this sister and brother, who loved each other so much. It is only natural that they loved each other so much. They were a family with two brothers and one or two sisters. They shared each other's pains, endured sufferings together, celebrated their joys together. They experienced the loss of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) together. They endured the grief of losing their mother together, and they lost their father together. Now, from all those personalities, grandfather, mother, father and brothers, only one brother—Abā 'Abdillāh (peace be upon him)—remains for Zaynab (peace be upon her).

It is natural that all the love she had for the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), for Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him), for her mother and for Imam al-Ḥasan (peace be upon him) should now be focused on this brother. It is natural that Zaynab (peace be upon her) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), who are from that small yet unparalleled family in the history of Islam, one that underwent so many significant events and painful tragedies, should have a love for each other that knows no bounds. Their affection for each other surpasses the ordinary love between siblings. This is why Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) rose up and accompanied Sayyid al-Shuhadā (peace be upon him). She could have stayed back; she could have chosen not to accompany her brother on this journey. She could have

left her young children behind, but she chose to bring them along. This showed how it was impossible for Zaynab (peace be upon her) to separate herself from Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) for even a moment.

Thus, she accompanied him. Even though it was a dangerous journey. From the very beginning when they set out, from the words of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) it was clear that it was a perilous journey. But when a person sees the death of their beloved, when they see their body, they find it hard to accept that they lost them. Similarly, when a person's beloved is injured, when they are at the warfront, when their life is in danger, the person would like to convince themselves by any means that their beloved will not be taken away from them. Even though she could see where the end of this journey would be, even though the journey was fraught with danger, Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) wanted to believe that she would not lose Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him).

On the night of ʿĀshūrā, Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) heard Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) in his tent, reciting those heart-rendering lines of poetry while he was sharpening his sword:

يَا دَهْرُ أُفٍّ لَكَ مِنْ خَلِيلِ

كَمْ لَكَ فِي الإِشْرَاقِ وَ الأَصِيلِ

'O Time! What an evil friend you are! How many esteemed ones and nobles are devoted to you [however you betray them]'

Meaning: O the passing time! How cruel a friend and how cruel a beloved you are. Although everyone loves you, you are

a treacherous friend. Woe unto you! You have already passed over so many days and nights and once we are gone, you will pass over many more, yet how unfaithful you are!

Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) was quietly reciting these verses and thereby describing his own state. When Zaynab (peace be upon her) heard and understood the gravity of the situation, realising that she may soon be losing her dear Ḥusayn, according to some of the accounts narrated in the *maqātil*,[i] she cried out loudly and her state changed to such an extent that Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) was forced to come to her side, to console and protect her. At that moment, Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) cried out:

الْيَوْمَ مَاتَتْ أُمِّي فَاطِمَةُ وَ أَبِي عَلِيٌّ وَ أَخِي الْحَسَن[ii]

O my beloved Ḥusayn! Today, I have lost my mother Fāṭimah, my father ʿAlī, and my brother al-Ḥasan. Meaning that now that I realise I'm losing you, I am losing everything of mine. See what kind of love this is. Such intense love is now coupled with the difficulty of parting from her brother at that moment of farewell.[iii] In those perilous circumstances, Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) sees her brother has come to bid her farewell so that now he may go to the

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i. *Maqātil* is the Arabic plural of the word *maqtal*, literally meaning place or time of being killed. In the Shīʿah culture, the word refers to a genre of literature that recounts the tragedy of Karbala. (Tr)

ii. al-Mufid, *Al-irshād*, vol. 2, pp. 93-94; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 1-2. A slightly different account: Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 4, pp. 58-59.

iii. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tarīkh madīnah dimashq*, vol. 14, p. 221; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *Manāqib āl abī ṭālib*, vol. 3, p. 257; al-Majlisī, *Jalā' al-ʿuyūn*, p. 201; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, p. 47.

battlefield, never to return.

On the one hand, there is this love and the feeling of loneliness in the absence of her dear one. On the other hand, there is this heavy responsibility that Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) will have to shoulder. Until now, she relied on her brother for support. But now that she will be losing her Imam and her brother's shadow will no longer be there to shelter her, all his responsibilities will fall upon her and she will have to lead and guide this caravan.

You can see how critical this moment is. In such a moment, it is clear how Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) will feel and what her state will be. If we reflect and pay attention, these critical moments will teach us profound lessons...

I would like to say that throughout the entire duration of the Islamic revolution, both before and after the victory, we should have and must always keep the memory of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) alive in our minds and hearts. This is a responsibility we have to perform going forward, just as we did in the past; it is both a means of solace and a way to seek lessons. Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) went through that great struggle and made that grand sacrifice at that time to establish this same Islamic system. Today, by the blessings of the blood of all the martyrs throughout history, from the onset of Islam until our time, we have managed to establish this Qur'ānic system. Therefore, we must continue to strive and dedicate our lives to this grand movement. Today, by the grace of Allah and thanks to these very struggles, the Islamic government can proudly claim to follow Ḥusayn ibn

'Alī's footsteps. Even in the past, we always recited *maṣā'ib,*[i] shed tears, beat our chests, lamented and honoured Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), but our nation and our community could never claim to be followers of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) like we can today. Today, the spirit of 'Āshūrā exists in the hearts of our nation.[ii]

THE GREATNESS OF THE PERSONALITY OF LADY ZAYNAB AL-KUBRĀ

Consider Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her). In all honesty, the dimensions of her personality cannot be described in just a few sentences. Rather, even many passages and lengthy poems would not suffice to capture her story. One must witness her circumstances, experience them, understand the state of her society, and comprehend Zaynab's actions in order to grasp the magnitude of Zaynab (peace be upon her). Her true essence cannot be conveyed from afar, by means of words or brief references.

Now, look at her and behold the pinnacle of a woman's character. This is a woman who knows that her caravan is moving towards a difficult and unavailing jihad, one devoid of any worldly or tangible outcome. Yet she moves forward, embracing the risks that lie ahead. Apparently, all that is there in this journey is difficulty and danger. However, there is something

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i. *Maṣā'ib* is the plural of *muṣībah* literally meaning calamity or misfortune. In the culture of the Shī'ah however, it is a term refers to a traditional eulogy, a recounting of the tragedy of one of the Imams, in particular Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him).

ii. During a gathering of mourners at the Tehran refinery, 1985/09/26.

beyond the difficulty and danger, something more important. More than the personal troubles, there is the calling of duty.

Zaynab (peace be upon her) knows that if her brother, Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him), is taken away from this society, there is no one else worthy of leading, overseeing and managing them. They are going to face a very bitter, difficult and complicated fate. Despite this, she remains courageous and determined, beyond the level of other prominent women and like one of the preeminent ʿAlawī menfolk. She is like Amīr al-Mu'minīm (peace be upon him), like the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family,) and like Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). She displays such a remarkable ability, entering this complex and challenging arena. Throughout the subsequent events, she plays the role of a wise, brave, dignified and decisive leader right until the end. It is as if she has planned everything in her mind beforehand and is following that plan step by step, not surprised by any unexpected events. She does not react in an unprepared manner; she is not taken by surprise. It is as if she had already foreseen, witnessed, and planned; like she knew about all the incidents in advance and had the appropriate responses and reactions ready to implement.[i] Examples of this include the night of ʿĀshūrā, the morning of ʿĀshūrā, the afternoon of ʿĀshūrā, and the night of the eleventh of Muḥarram. Similarly, when the tents were set on fire and when leaving Karbala with a group of defenceless women and children together with a

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i. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, pp. 444-448; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 28, pp. 55-61.

nephew who was so sick that he could not even sit and stand; in all of these situations and at all times, she was as such.

If just one of these tribulations that Zaynab (peace be upon her) faced in that twenty-four hour period were to afflict anyone in their life and they were able to make timely decisions and act appropriately, this would deserve to be venerated and recorded in history. But we see that several significant events occur in the life of this great woman, that too in a very short period of time, and she deals with them all with a wisdom and strength that astonishes someone.

You see that when a person is sad or troubled, they cannot even perform their daily tasks properly. When someone is anxious or facing difficulties, it is like a heavy burden on their heart. When they stand to pray, they lack the enthusiasm they should have. Even if they attend gatherings with friends and colleagues, they feel no sense of joy or interest and are unable to do anything. Given this, now consider Zaynab (peace be upon her). A person who is burdened with such immense grief and is carrying the weight of mountains of sorrow. She has witnessed the loss of loved ones; her children have been martyred; her brothers have sacrificed their lives. She has seen young ones die, their families devastated.[i] Furthermore, despite witnessing such tragic events, the world seems indifferent to them. No one is worried, no one is crying for them.

It is such a profound grief, such a heavy and shattering tragedy that would break even the strongest of individuals.

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i. al-Mufīd, *Al-irshād*, vol. 2, pp. 125-126; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Al-istī'āb*, vol. 1, p. 396; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 62-63.

Yet this and countless other similar events, just as heavy and as bitter, befall this lady, yet she doesn't shatter nor does she become incapable of making decisions. On the contrary, she manages every situation and handles the circumstances in the best possible way. She guides this shattered and broken ship amidst the turbulent waves; she steers, preserves and controls it, bringing it safely to its destination. This is the greatness of Zaynab (peace be upon her).

Do not compare her with the mother of a martyr today. The mother of today's martyr gave her beloved child in the way of God while millions of people, millions of eyes, admire her and her society honours her in the best manner. Zaynab al-Kubrā's situation was not like this; no one in her society dared to praise her, offer any kind words to her or show her any form of respect.

In such a difficult society and time, just as how the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) was exceptional and incomparable to all other martyrdoms from the onset of Islam till today, Zaynab's actions were similarly unparalleled. Indeed, the day of 'Āshūrā cannot be compared to any other day, be it the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), the time of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him), or our own time.

The greatness of Zaynab (peace be upon her) is not merely about her patience; her greatness lies in how she embodies all the prominent qualities found in a great human being. The perfections of the eminent personalities of history are present within this lady. During these last days from the first ten days of Muḥarram up until her return to Madinah, at which time

she passed on the burden and her own responsibilities were completed—in these one or two months—she administered the most difficult of situations in the wisest and most prudent manner.[i] Undoubtedly, she is an exceptional individual.

If you look among the leaders of today's world, among the celebrated figures of history, and among the remarkable women of the past, can you find anyone who has demonstrated such greatness?

I would now like to come to a conclusion. This is Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) who we have described, although it is beyond my limited ability to describe that sublime and majestic character, one who is illuminated and angelic in her nature. Now, let me ask: this lady is the product of what? What era does she belong to? Pay attention to this point. These events took place sixty years after the *Hijrah* and seventy years after the emergence of Islam.

The emergence of Islam coincided with a time when women were in a state of extreme decadence, misery, corruption, and humiliation. This was not just limited to the Arab regions, it was prevalent everywhere, even in Persia and Rome, the two great empires and civilized societies of that era. The highest position a woman could have had in those societies was to be a luxurious commodity or a beautiful doll for the powerful members of society. This was the pinnacle of a woman's possible achievement. Forget about the state of those women who were slaves, those who were buried alive, or those who

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i. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-aʿmāl*, vol. 3, p. 100; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, pp. 334-335.

were simply considered to be an insignificant addition to their families and relatives. The women who excelled and reached the pinnacle of their potential, reached the highest possible level a woman in that world could achieve, were those who due to their beauty, their elegance or some skill, captured the attention of a powerful and wealthy man, a sultan, or an emperor. These men elevated such women from the depths of degradation. Just as a beautiful doll, which has no real value and is lifeless, becomes an expensive prized possession when it is aesthetically pleasing. It becomes something that is showed off and placed on display. In the same way, such women were given position and placed at the forefront. Sometimes, these women even had the authority to give commands and ministers had to listen to them. But this was not due to their own personality. Rather, it was because of the personality of the influential men who had favoured them. Knowledge, insight, ethics, spiritual enlightenment, inner transformation, and high human character were never the cause of a woman's status in those times. Amid such a society and under such circumstances, the Islamic transformation that came about could bring forth an exceptional woman like Zaynab (peace be upon her). Today too, Islam can perform the same miracle.

Today's world is undoubtedly very different from the *jāhiliyyah* at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), there is no denying that. Nowadays, we have many great, thoughtful, intelligent, knowledgeable, ethical and virtuous women in the world, no one disagrees with that. However, the perspective that the prevailing cultural and civilization has with respect to women does not reflect this.

Ask the most cultured individuals living in Western societies which do they prefer. Is it the knowledgeable, accomplished and innovative woman who is capable of achieving scientific wonders, even though she may lack the charms of a desirable Western woman? Or is it the illiterate uncultured woman who possesses those charms and is considered a celebrity? Take a moment to think about which one they would prefer in their hearts. Unfortunately, today's world is plagued by this bitter reality. In the Western culture, a woman is not given her due intrinsic value. For a woman, flaunting her beauty and charm has become is a necessary condition of her personality [for her to succeed].

Those who strongly oppose the concept of *ḥijāb* and the limitation of social interactions between men and women, one of their primary arguments is that it restricts women. It prevents women from displaying their beauty to others. A woman is beautiful, she naturally wants to showcase her beauty. It is her desire that she exhibit her charms in front of others. This is an accepted notion in today's world, that a woman should display her beauty to men. What does this imply? Is this not just a continuation of the ancient Roman perception of women still existing in the core of Western culture? Today's woman is still regarded in the same way. Islam [and Islamic values] has not yet found its way into this culture.

From the perspective of Western culture, despite all the uproar they create and all the big claims they make about women and women's rights, when you delve into the depths of their understanding you see that they still view women as a means of pleasure for men. Not that a wife is such for her

husband, but rather the female gender for the male gender. This is a profound insult to women.

However, amidst this cesspool of cultural corruption, a Muslim woman can stand tall. She can proudly make her presence felt in the form of her true self and her Islamic identity. Today, we can be hopeful that just as how Islam once brought forth a woman like Zaynab (peace be upon her) as a role model and exemplar of greatness for all—not just an outstanding woman—the teachings of Islam and Islamic culture can bring forth exemplary and remarkable Muslim women. And that is what we need amidst the chaotic clamour created by the biased propaganda of the West. Today, the world needs Muslim women to demonstrate their cultural identity and true reality.[i]

HOW ZAYNAB AL-KUBRĀ CORRECTLY UNDERSTOOD THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND ACTED OUT OF RESPONSIBILITY

The birth anniversary of Lady Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) necessitates that we expand the scope of our discussion, especially in the current global conditions. Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) is a great woman. What is it that gives her such prominence in the eyes of the Muslims? It cannot simply be said that it is because she is the daughter of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him) or the sister of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) and Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him). Familial relationships can never create

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i. In a meeting with some nurses and groups of women on the occasion of Nurses' Day, 1987/01/05.

such greatness. All our Imams had daughters, mothers and sisters, but who is there like Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her)?

The value and prominence of Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) is due to her important position and her grand movement. A grand movement whether it be considered from a religious or an unreligious perspective; a movement driven by a sense of divine responsibility. Her actions, her decisions, the manner of her movement, all these factors bestowed such greatness upon her. Whoever performs such actions, even if they were not the daughter of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him), would be considered great.

The bulk of this greatness stems from two factors. The first is her understanding of the circumstances, this includes the situation before Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) departed for Karbala, the critical moments of the day of ʿĀshūrā, as well as the tragic events that followed Imam al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom. The second factor is the choices she would make in accordance with each situation; it is these choices that shaped Zaynab (peace be upon her).

Before the journey to Karbala, eminent figures like Ibn ʿAbbās, Ibn Jaʿfar and other prominent personalities of early Islam, with supposed valour, expertise in jurisprudence positions of leadership, nobility and the like, were bewildered and unsure of what stance to take. However, Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) did not falter; she understood that she must proceed on this path and not leave her Imam alone, and

so she went forward.[i] It is not that she did not grasp how difficult the path would be; she sensed this even better than others. She was a woman who recognised the importance of this mission to an extent that she was ready to part from her husband and family. It is for this reason that she took her young children along with her,[ii] she sensed the nature of the impending calamity.

In those critical hours, when even the strongest of individuals could not comprehend what to do, she understood and supported her Imam, preparing him for martyrdom.[iii] After the martyrdom of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him), when the world plunged into darkness, when hearts, souls and the world's horizons turned bleak, this great woman became a source of light and radiance. Zaynab (peace be upon her) attained a position that only the greatest human beings in the history of humanity, meaning the prophets, could possibly attain...

LADY ZAYNAB: A ROLE MODEL FOR WOMEN OF THE WORLD

Women today need a role model. If the role models they opt for are Zaynab and Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (peace be upon them), then they will gain a correct understanding, be alert in understanding situations, and choose the best actions, even if this requires them to sacrifice and stand firm to fulfil the duty

i. al-Dīnawarī, *Al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, p. 228; al-Naqdī, *Zaynab al-Kubrā*, p. 88.

ii. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbah, *Al-ʿiqd al-farīd*, vol. 5, p. 126; al-Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-warā*, vol. 1, p. 446; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 44, p. 366.

iii. al-Ḥā'irī, *Maʿālī al-sibṭayn*, vol. 2, pp. 24-25.

that God has placed upon the shoulders of human beings.

Zaynab (peace be upon her) is a role model. Zaynab (peace be upon her) was not a lady devoid of knowledge and understanding; she possessed the highest levels of knowledge and the purest gnosis.[i] Lady Sukaynah (peace be upon her), whose name you have heard in the event of Karbala—the daughter of the Imam, the niece and student of Zaynab (peace be upon her)—is one of the shining beacons of Arabic literature during the entire history of Islam, up until today.[ii] Those who are researchers and are interested in reading can further look into this matter. Even people who did not and do not accept Zaynab (peace be upon her), her father, or Sukaynah's father, acknowledge that Sukaynah (peace be upon her) was a beacon of knowledge. Hence, following their path does not mean distancing oneself from knowledge, understanding, an understanding of the world, intellectualism, information and etiquette. On the contrary, these traits are the consequences of following this path.[iii]

CARRYING THE TRUST WITH COURAGE

Today, I wish to mention a few sentences of *maṣā'ib* from the *maqtal* entitled *Al-luhūf* by Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs, recounting some of the great scenes that transpired, for you dear listeners ... One of these events, is the event when Qāsim ibn al-Ḥasan

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i. al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-ṭālibīyyīn*, p. 95; al-Ṭabrisī, *Al-iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, p. 31; al-Naqdī, *Zaynab al-kubrā*, p. 34; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 42, p. 93.

ii. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-muntaẓam*, vol. 7, p. 175; al-Ziriklī, *Al-a'lām*, vol. 3, p. 106.

iii. In a meeting with many nurses, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Lady Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) and Nurse's Day, 1991/11/13.

(peace be upon him) went to the battlefield, which is a very remarkable incident . . . Another scene is that of when ʿAlī al-Akbar (peace be upon him) went to the battlefield, which is an extremely eventful and extraordinary scene . . . These are the extraordinary scenes of this great saga. Today is the day of Lady Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her); that eminent personality also has her own extraordinary episodes. Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) is the one who, from the moment of Imam al-Ḥusayn's (peace be upon him) martyrdom, shouldered this burden and carried this trust, moving forward with courage and utmost strength, in a manner befitting of the daughter of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him). These personalities were able to eternalise Islam and preserve the religion of the people. The episode of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) did not just lead to the salvation of a nation or community, it resulted in the salvation of all history. Through this movement, Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), his sister Zaynab (peace be upon her), and his companions saved history.[i]

HOW ZAYNAB AL-KUBRĀ PROTECTED ISLAM

The efforts of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) extend beyond merely safeguarding[ii] and nursing[iii] the ailing Imam in Karbala. Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) nursed the overall spirit of Islam and the Muslim society at that time. Her

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i. In the sermons during Friday prayers in Tehran, 1998/05/08.

ii. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-muntaẓam*, vol. 5, p. 341; al-Ḥā'irī, *Maʿālī al-sibṭayn*, vol. 2, p. 83.

iii. al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, vol. 4, p. 318; al-Nīshābūrī, *Rawḍah al-wāʿiẓīn*, p. 184; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, p. 1.

greater contribution of nursing lies there. In confronting a world of evil, injustice, brutality, inhumanity and cruelty, Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) stood alone and with this unwavering stance she managed to nurse and safeguard the overall spirit of Islam. Just as we say that Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) preserved Islam, we can similarly claim that Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) also preserved Islam through her steadfastness. This steadfastness is a secret factor, it is fundamental.[i]

ZAYNAB AL-KUBRĀ: AN ETERNAL ROLE MODEL

These days, due to the occasion of Lady Zaynab al-Kubrā's (peace be upon her) birthday, are associated to the personality of this prominent noble lady, who stands as a timeless role model for Muslim women and men alike.

Certainly, the personality of Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) is not one that is limited to alleviating sorrow and caring for those around her. Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) represents the most perfect exemplar of a Muslim woman. She is a role model that Islam has presented to the world, for the spiritual development of women.

Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) has a multi-dimensional personality that encompasses wisdom, knowledge, and gnosis. She is an outstanding human being. Anyone who encounters this noble lady feels humbled in the presence of her intellectual and spiritual greatness. Perhaps the most

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i. In a meeting with nurses, on the eve of the auspicious birth anniversary of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her), 2001/07/25.

significant dimension that the personality of a Muslim woman can possibly exhibit—a dimension that is influenced and nurtured by Islam—is precisely this dimension. The personality of a Muslim woman, by means of her faith and surrendering her heart to the divine mercy and grandeur, becomes so expansive and majestic that the greatest calamities before her appear insignificant and trivial. In the life of Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her), this aspect is most evident and prominent. Even an event like that of 'Āshūrā, cannot break Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her).

The apparent grandeur and authority of the oppressive and despotic systems like that of Yazīd's and 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād's cannot put down Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her). Be it in Madinah where that eminent personality used to live, in Karbala which was the centre of her tribulations, or in the courts of tyrants like Yazīd and 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād, she maintains that spiritual majesty and grandeur; other personalities stand humiliated in her presence. Yazīd and 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād—those arrogant oppressors of their time—are put to shame in front of this woman, despite her arriving in their presence as a captive whose hands are bound.

Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) combines the emotions of a woman with the strength, composure and determination of a true believer, as well as the eloquence and clarity of someone performing jihad in the path of Allah. A fountain of pure knowledge flows from her tongue and heart; it mesmerises the listeners and all those present. Her feminine grandeur belittles the false greatness of those in front of her; they are humiliated before her. Feminine grandeur means this,

it is a blend of passionate human emotion the likes of which cannot be found in any man, together with a steadfastness of character and a spiritual strength that overpowers all difficult and perilous events. She bravely strides forward amid raging fires; her feet do not tremble, and she moves forward. At the same time, she teaches and enlightens the people around her. At the same time, she provides comfort and solace to the Imam of her time, Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him), like a compassionate mother.[i] At the same time, amidst that severe storm of calamities she is a strong support, providing security, tranquillity and consolation to her brother's children and the other orphaned offspring, thereby creating an environment of safety and comfort. Hence, Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) was a comprehensive and balanced personality. Islam nurtures and trains women, moving them in this direction.[ii]

ZAYNAB AL-KUBRĀ: THE PIONEER OF PRESERVING EVENTS THROUGH ART

In my opinion, the pioneer in preserving historical events through eloquence and art, is Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her). Had it not been for the movement and the steps taken by Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her)—which after that eminent personality were later continued by other members of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) like Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him)—the tragedy of ʿĀshūrā would not have remained

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i. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, pp. 444-448; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 28, pp. 55-61.

ii. In a meeting with different groups of people, 2005/06/15.

in history. Yes, it is true that the *sunnah* [i] of Allah is to keep such events alive in history but all divine *sunan* have specific means by which they occur. The means for the preservation of these truths throughout history are that those people who hold these secrets, those who harbour the pain, those who are informed about the intricacies of what transpired, share this information with others.

Unto this end, an artistic rendering such as articulate speech is essential. The sermons of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) in the city of Kufa [ii] and the city of Sham [iii] are outstanding examples of this. When it comes to their beauty and their attractiveness, they were the perfect example of articulate speech. They were delivered so eloquently that no one can overlook them. Even an opponent or an enemy, if they were to hear these expressive sermons, would inevitably be struck by them as if they were being pierced by an arrow or cut by a sharp sword. The impact of art is such, it does not depend on the recipient's choice; its effect will transpire whether someone likes it or not. Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) and Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him) demonstrated this in their powerful and eloquent sermons at the masjid of Sham, [iv]

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i. The *sunnah* (plural *sunan*) of Allah is a Qur'ānic concept that refers to the manner or the laws by which Allah administers existence. According to the Qur'ān these laws do not change. (Tr)

ii. al-Kūfī, *Al-futūḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 121-122; al-Ṭabrisī, *Al-iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, pp. 29-31; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 164-166.

iii. Ibn Ṭayfūr, *Balāghāt al-nisā'*, pp. 20-23; al-Ṭabrisī, *Al-iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, pp. 34-37; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 133-135.

iv. al-Kūfī, *Al-futūḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 132-133; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *Manāqib āl abī ṭālib*, vol. 3, p. 305; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 137-139.

and today you are also engaged in work of a similar nature.[i]

HOW THE EFFORTS OF IMAM AL-SAJJĀD AND LADY ZAYNAB PRESERVED THE MEMORY OF ʿĀSHŪRĀ

The memories of the valiant struggle and far-sighted jihad of the people of Azerbaijan will never be forgotten by the Iranian nation. One of these memories took place on the 29th of Bahman, 1356.

If we were to briefly depict the event for our beloved youth who did not witness that day, it would be as follows: A movement rose up in the face of the treacherous regime [of the Shah] stemming from one source, that was the religious seminary of Qom and the people of Qom. In response, the foolhardy and treacherous regime that relied on America, severely suppressed the movement. For a moment, people held their breath; everyone thought the matter was over. But that which prevented this incident from being terminated and ensured its continuity by transforming it into a powerful movement was [the contribution of] Tabriz and Azerbaijan. The proud, courageous and sharp-sighted people of Tabriz turned this incident into a movement, not allowing it to be buried in Qom. To draw a parallel with the events of the early days of Islam, it was similar to the actions of Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (peace be upon him) and Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) in preserving the events of ʿĀshūrā. They made sure that the event was not forgotten and buried in the sands of

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i. In a meeting with war veterans, writers and other content producers for the Office of Literature and Art of the Resistance, 2005/09/22.

Karbala. You [people of Azerbaijan] raised this [event] like a flag and held on to it firmly, making it a prominent symbol, and thus illustrating its significance.[i]

THE LAST TEN DAYS OF SAFAR: THE TEN DAYS OF ZAYNAB AL-KUBRĀ

These days are the last ten days of Ṣafar, the days after Arbaʿīn. If we look back at the history of early Islam, these days are the days of Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her). The actions that Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) performed were of the same nature,[ii] meaning they were purely for the sake of the Almighty, and they were in the midst of dangers, hardships and difficulties. They were a manifestation of spirituality, a divine manifestation of religion on the determined face of Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her). It is essential to realise and understand these valuable historical events, which have been the source of intellectual blessings and knowledge until today and will God-willing continue to be so until the end of time. Zaynab (peace be upon her), during her journey to Karbala alongside Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be

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i. In a meeting with various groups of people in Azerbaijan, on the occasion of the 29th of Bahman, 1386 (2008/02/18).

ii. A reference to the Homafaran Allegiance, an important incident in the Islamic Revolution that is commemorated in Iran as the day of the Air Force of the Army. This specific talk of Āyatullāh Khamenei was given on one such commemoration, that happens yearly on the 8th of February. In this incident in 1979—which occurred just a few days before the victory of the Islamic Revolution—a group of officers from the Shah's Airforce presented themselves to Imam Khomeini in their military clothing and declared their obedience to him. A famous photo of them saluting Imam Khomeini was immediately published in the newspaper Kayhan and was a significant blow to the Shah's army.

upon him), during the tragedy of the day of ʿĀshūrā when she endured those difficulties and hardships, as well as during the incidents after the martyrdom of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) when there was no refuge for the remaining group of women and children, shone in her capacity as a *walī* of Allah so brightly that no equal to her can ever be found. Throughout history, no one can match her. Afterwards this was also the case, in all the events that took place one after the other, during Zaynab's captivity, in Kufa, in Sham, right up until these days in the end of Ṣafar. These days [after Arbaʿīn when Zaynab returned to Madinah] mark the end of that historic episode and the beginning of another phase in the Islamic movement; [by establishing the culture of remembering the tragedy of Karbala] these days mark the advancement of Islamic thought and the progress of Islamic society. It was due to these great struggles that Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) has attained a status in the eyes of the Almighty that is indescribable for us.

Observe how in the Holy Qur'ān, Allah sets forth the example of two women as perfect exemplars of faith. And similarly, two women are presented as exemplars of disbelief:

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ ۖ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ

"Allah presents an example of those who disbelieved: the wife of Nūḥ and the wife of Lūṭ. They were under two of Our righteous servants..." (Qur'ān 66:10)

These two examples above pertain to women who are exemplars of disbelief. Note how God does not set forth examples of men. Rather he sets forth examples of women, both when

it comes to exemplars of disbelief and exemplars of faith.

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ

"And Allah presents an example of those who believed: the wife of Pharaoh..." (Qur'ān 66:11)

From those given as exemplars of complete faith, one is the wife of Pharaoh and the other is of the Lady Maryam al-Kubrā.

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ

"And Maryam, daughter of 'Imrān..." (Qur'ān 66:12)

A brief comparison between Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) and the wife of Pharaoh highlights the greatness of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her). In the Noble Qur'ān, the wife of Pharaoh is presented as an exemplary believer for both men and women throughout history until the end of the world. Now, compare the wife of Pharoah, who believed in Mūsā and attached her heart to the guidance that Mūsā presented. When subjected to the torture of Pharaoh, which according to historical records and narrations this same torture was the cause of her death,[i] her being tortured physically led her to cry out:

إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِندَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِن فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ

"My Lord! Build for me a home near You in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds." (Qur'ān 66:11)

She requested from Allah, "O my Lord! Build for me a

i. al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-bayān*, vol. 10, p. 64; Ibn 'Adī, *Al-kāmil*, vol. 1, p. 185

house near to You in Paradise." In reality, she sought death, desiring to depart from this world.

وَنَجِّنِي مِن فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ

"And save me from Pharaoh and his misguiding deeds."

Such was her plea while the suffering, torment, pain and physical agony experienced by Lady Āsiyah, the wife of Pharoah, were all physical in nature. Her experience was not like that of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her), who had lost numerous brothers, two children, many close relatives and nephews. Before her very own eyes they went to the battlefield. Such emotional and psychological pain that befell Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) did not befall Lady Āsiyah, the wife of Pharoah. On the day of ʿĀshūrā. Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) beheld all these dear ones before her eyes go to the battlefield and attain martyrdom; she saw the Master of Martyrs Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him),[i] she saw ʿAbbās (peace be upon him), she ʿAlī Akbar (peace be upon him), she saw Qāsim (peace be upon him), she saw her own her own children and she saw her other brothers. Furthermore, after their martyrdom she suffered even more calamities, such as the enemy's attack, their violation of the women's sanctity and respect, while at the same time she had the responsibility of safeguarding the women and children. Can the magnitude of these calamities be compared to physical torture? However, in the face of all these afflictions Zaynab (peace be upon her)

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i. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, p. 142; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 44, p. 238.

never said to Allah

رَبِّ نَجِّنِي

"My Lord, save me."

Rather, on the day of ʿĀshūrā she said, "My Lord, accept [this] from us." When the mutilated body of her brother was in front of her, beheld by her eyes, she gave her heart to the Lord of the Worlds saying:

إِلٰهِي تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا هَذا القُرْبَان

"O Lord! Accept this sacrifice from us."[i]

When she was asked how she considered [the events that transpired], she replied saying:

مَا رَأَيْتُ إِلَّا جَمِيلا

"I saw nothing but beauty."[ii]

All these calamities are beautiful in the eyes of Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) because they are from God, they are for Him, in His cause and along the path of raising His word.[iii] Look at this station, the station of such patience and such devotion to God and the truth. How profoundly different is this from that which the Qur'ān narrates about Lady Āsiyah. This demonstrates the greatness of Zaynab's station. Work for the sake of Allah is like this. Thus, the name

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i. al-Muqarram, *Maqtal al-ḥusayn*, p. 322.

ii. al-Kūfī, *Al-futūḥ*, vol. 5, p. 122; al-Ḥillī, *Muthīr al-aḥzān*, p. 71; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 115-116.

iii. A reference to the concept mentioned in the Noble Qur'ān, 9:40. Raising the word of Allah means to help and manifest the religion of Allah.

of Zaynab (peace be upon her) as well as her actions serve as an exemplary model and remain timeless in this world.

The continuity of the religion of Islam, the preservation of the path of God, the ability of Allah's servants to continue treading on this path are all dependent on the actions of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (peace be upon him) and Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her). They all derive help from and draw strength from their actions. That immense patience, steadfastness and perseverance through all the hardships and difficulties have resulted in this situation that you see today, where divine values are common in the world. All the human values that align with the human conscience and are found in various schools of thought are rooted in religion. Religion has taught them. This is nature of actions performed purely for the sake of Allah.

The Islamic Revolution had a similar nature and essence. This is why the revolution has endured, gained spiritual power, true power and permanence.[i]

ZAYNAB: THE REASON WHY BLOOD WAS VICTORIOUS OVER THE SWORD

In the Islamic Republic, a commemoration entitled *Nurses' Day* is held every year on the birth anniversary of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her), which holds a profound significance. Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) is an eminent example in history that illustrates the greatness of a woman's presence

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i. During the visit by the commander and personnel of the Air Force of the Army, 2010/02/08.

يَا أَهْلَ الْكُوفَةِ يَا أَهْلَ الْخَتْل

O people of Kufa! O people of deceit!

O those who pretended! Perhaps you yourselves believed that you were following Islam and the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). But when tested you failed in such a way, and in the face of sedition you displayed such a blindness!

هَلْ فِيكُمْ إِلَّا الصَّلَفُ وَ الْعُجْبُ وَ الشَّنَفُ وَ الْكَذِبُ وَ مَلَقُ الْإِمَاءِ وَ غَمْزُ الْأَعْدَاء

Do you possess anything but pomposity, arrogance, hostility, dishonesty, the flattery of slave-girls and signalling of enemies?

Your actions and words did not match your hearts. You were deluded about yourselves, thinking that you were believers, imagining that you were still revolutionaries and presuming that you were still followers of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him). Whilst the reality of the matter was different. You could not handle confronting the corruption; you couldn't save yourselves.

مَثَلُكُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّتِي نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَها مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكاثاً

Your case is like the case of the lady who would undo her yarn, breaking it up after spinning it to strength. [i] [ii]

Your example has become that of someone who spins wool, turning it into thread only to then unravel it back into its original loose form of wool or cotton fibres. Due to your lack of insight, misunderstanding of the situation and failure to

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i. A reference to the Noble Qur'ān, 16:92.

ii. al-Ṭabrisī, *Al-iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, pp. 29-30.

distinguish between right and wrong, you rendered your previous deeds and luminous past worthless. You display faith outwardly and your mouths are full of revolutionary claims, but on the inside your hearts are weak and you are unable to resist the opposing winds. This is an example of [Zaynab peace be upon her] identifying problems [in society].

She spoke like this, with such strong expressions and with these eloquent words, despite facing such difficult circumstances. The audience sitting in front of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) was not a passive crowd, attentively listening to her while she delivered a sermon to them. There were some enemies among them; she was surrounded by enemies armed with spears. Aside from that, there were various others with different inclinations who were present. Those same people who handed over Muslim to Ibn Ziyād, those same people who wrote letters to Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) but later betrayed him, those same people who were supposed to confront Ibn Ziyād but instead hid in their homes, it was these people who were present in the bazaar of Kufa. There were also some weak individuals in the crowd; earlier they had shown weakness and now again they are doing so, crying when they see the daughter of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon her).

Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) faced this diverse and fickle crowd, yet she spoke firmly. She is the epitome of the perfect women in all history. She is not weak, one can never consider her as being weak. The essence of a faithful woman demonstrates itself in such difficult situations.

THE GREATNESS OF LADY ZAYNAB

This woman is a role model, a role model for all the great men and women of the world. She identified the problems that had come about after the revolution of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and the revolution of ʿAlī (peace be upon him). She says [to society], "You were unable to discern the truth amidst the corruption. You were unable to fulfil your duty and, as a result, the head of the Prophet's beloved was placed upon a spear." The greatness of Zaynab (peace be upon her) can be understood here.[i]

i. During the meeting with a group of outstanding nurses from the country, 2010/04/21.

chapter two
ARBAEEN

ARBAʿĪN: ESTABLISHING THE TRADITION OF ZIYĀRAH AND REVIVING THE MEMORY OF KARBALA

What is the significance of Arbaʿīn? Apart from the fact that it marks forty days since the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), what special significance does it possess? The uniqueness of Arbaʿīn lies in the fact that the memory of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) was revived, and this holds immense importance.

Imagine if this great martyrdom had occurred in history such that Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) and the other martyrs alongside him had been martyred in Karbala, but the Umayyads had then managed to erase their memory from people's minds at that time and the times to come. In the same way that they eliminated Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and his beloved companions and concealed their pure bodies beneath the earth [imagine that they were similarly able to eliminate their memory]. Would this martyrdom have served any purpose for the Islamic world? Even if it did have an impact at that time, would it have had any effect in terms of enlightening and uncovering the truth in future generations during periods of trial, obscurity, and being afflicted with other rulers like Yazīd?

If Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) were martyred, yet the

people of that time and the generations to come, failed to understand that he had been martyred, what influence and role could this memory have had in the growth, development, guidance, and inspiration of nations, societies, and history? Clearly it would have had no effect. Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) would have been martyred and he himself would have reached the highest level of Divine pleasure. Those martyrs who remained unknown and became martyrs in a state of loneliness, silence, and obscurity would have attained their reward in the Hereafter; their souls would have achieved an eminent share in the presence of Allah. But how much would they have become a lesson or a role model for others?

To what extent could such martyrs become exemplary figures? The martyrdom of a martyr becomes a lesson when his martyrdom and the oppression he faced are acknowledged and heard by present and future generations. The martyr that becomes an example for others is the one whose blood continues to boil and flow through the annals of history.

The oppression a nation faces can only bandage and help heal the wounds of other oppressed and subjugated nations, if this oppression that was faced by them turns into a loud slogan, if the voice of the oppressed people is heard by others. This is why today the superpowers are making every effort to suppress our voices. They are willing to spend vast sums of money so that the world does not understand why and with what motive the Imposed War has been unleashed upon us.[i]

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i. The Imposed War, also referred to in Iran as the Sacred Defence, refers to the Iran-Iraq War fought between 1980 and 1988. (Tr)

Whose hands are behind it? Who instigated it?

At that time, the systems at the disposal of the arrogant powers were ready to do whatever they could to prevent the name and memory of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), the blood of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), and the martyrdom of ʿĀshūrā, from becoming a lesson for the people of that time and future generations. Undoubtedly, at the onset, they did not fully grasp the greatness of this matter. But the more that time passed, the more they understood this. In the middle of the Abbasid era, they even destroyed and submerged the grave of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him), seeking to erase any trace of him.[i] This is the significance of remembrance and the memory of martyrs and martyrdom. Martyrdom without remembrance, without recollecting, without the martyr's blood continuing to evoke a fervent zeal in the people, does not yield its effect. In this context, Arbaʿīn is the day when the flag of the message of Karbala's martyrdom was raised for the first time; it is a day dedicated to those who survived the tragedy of Karbala.

Whether or not the family of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) came to Karbala on the first arbaʿīn[ii] or not,[iii] it is still the day when the first known pilgrims of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) came to Karbala.[iv] Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh

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i. al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-ṭālibīyyīn*, pp. 478-479; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *Manāqib āl abī ṭālib*, vol. 2, p. 53; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 394-395.

ii. al-Bīrūnī, *Al-āthār al-bāqiyah*, p. 422.

iii. al-Ḥillī, *Al-ʿadad al-qawiyyah*, p. 219; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, pp. 334-335.

iv. Ibid.

al-Anṣārī[i] and ʿAṭiyyah,[ii] who were from the companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and the supporters of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him), came there. It is written in texts and narrations that Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh was blind, and ʿAṭiyyah held his hand and placed it on the grave of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him). He touched the grave, wept, and spoke to Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace beuponhim).[iii]

By coming to Karbala and by the words that he spoke, he revived the memory of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) and established the tradition of doing *ziyārah* of the graves of martyrs. Such is the significance of the day of Arbaʿīn.

THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION: A RE-EXPERIENCE OF THE TRIUMPH OF BLOOD OVER THE SWORD

You, the families of our beloved martyrs, are today in a unique position in history. The situation we face today in the Islamic Republic differs from the circumstances of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him). Today, you live in a society where the ideology and spirit of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) governs, a society that came into existence through a movement like that of Ḥusayn's. It was with the call of Ḥusayn that the oppressors of the time were dragged down from the peak of their power!

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i. al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, pp. 31-32; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Al-istiʿāb*, vol. 1, pp. 219-220.

ii. al-Tūstarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 7, pp. 209-211.

iii. Ibn Kirāmah, *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*, p. 90; al-Khawārizmī, *Maqtal al-ḥusayn*, vol. 2, pp. 190-191; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 65, pp. 130-131.

Our men and women, by means of taking a lesson from Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), were able to relive the experience of the triumph of truth over falsehood and demonstrate it to the world. This happened during a time wherein the people of truth were isolated and deprived, a time when there was no sign that truth could ever prevail over falsehood and that a divine and sacred way of thinking would find its place among the people and in their lives. Our people were able to reach this point by sacrificing their lives, giving their blood, and offering themselves as martyrs, accepting martyrdom as a for themselves and for their beloved ones.

Just as how Zaynab al-Kubra (peace be upon her) did not lose herself and did not give up amidst all the hardships and difficulties on the evening of ʿĀshūrā and the eleventh night of Muḥarram, we too have not lost hope today and we must not.

On the eve of ʿĀshūrā, according to some narrations, Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) said to her nephew ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), "O my nephew! This situation will not remain as such. These graves will flourish, and this flag will be raised. The day will come that people, nations, and future generations will come here in groups, take heed from what transpired here and then return."[i] This place will become a school for the seekers of freedom, and so it did. On that day, this hope showed a glimpse of the future.[ii]

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i. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-ziyārāt*, p. 447; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, p. 182.

ii. During a large meeting with families of martyrs from Tehran and its suburbs, 1984/11/13.

ARBAʿĪN: THE CONTINUATION OF THE MOVEMENT OF ʿĀSHŪRĀ

I will just mention a few words about the event of Arbaʿīn. The arrival of the household of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) to the land of Karbala[i]—the arrival itself being something commonly accepted, although whether it was in the first or the second year after remains uncertain—was not merely so that they could empty their heart by mourning or so that they could renew their pledge, as is commonly said at times. It went far beyond this! The actions of personalities like Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him) or Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) cannot be trivialized by interpreting them in an ordinary and superficial manner. The actions and decisions of such distinguished personalities must be investigated to uncover the profound secrets behind them.

In reality, their gathering at the shrine of the Master of Martyrs (peace be upon him) was a continuation of the movement of ʿĀshūrā. With this act, they sought to make the followers of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), the friends of the Prophet's family, and all Muslims who were deeply affected by this tragedy, understand that this tragedy had not concluded. The matter did not end with the killing, burying, taking of captives and then subsequently the releasing of the captives. The matter continues still! They reminded the Shīʿah that, this land is the place of your gathering. This is the appointed place where, by gathering at this appointed place, people can remind

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i. al-Bīrūnī, *Al-āthār al-bāqiyah*, p. 422; al-Ḥillī, *Muthīr al-aḥzān*, p. 86; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, pp. 335-336.

one another about the goal of the Shīʿah community and the great Islamic goal that pertains to the Muslim community at large. The establishment of an Islamic government and the need to strive towards it, even to the extent of martyrdom, and that too in such a heart-rending manner—these are all things that Muslims should have never forgotten, and their memory should have remained alive forever. The arrival of the Prophet's family, Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him), and Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) in Karbala on the day of Arbaʿīn was for this purpose.

It is for this reason that you see that one of the most profound and meaningful *ziyārāt* mentioned for the Imams (peace be upon them), is the *ziyārah* for the day of Arbaʿīn.[i] [ii]

ARBAʿĪN: ESTABLISHING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE MOVEMENT OF HUSAYN

Essentially, the significance of Arbaʿīn lies in the fact that on this day, through a Divine plan executed by the family of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), the commemoration of the uprising of Ḥusayn became eternally preserved; the foundations for this remembrance were laid down. If the surviving family of a group of martyrs and their true inheritors—in various events such as in the case of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) on the day of ʿĀshūrā—do not strive in preserving the memory

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i. al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, pp. 788-790; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, pp. 331-332.

ii. In the sermons during Friday prayers in Tehran, 1987/10/16.

and legacy of martyrdom, then future generations would not derive much benefit from the fruits of this martyrdom.

It is true that God Almighty keeps the martyrs alive even in this world, and that automatically a martyr remains alive, both in history and in the memory of people. However, the natural and regular means that God has ordained for this to occur, like all other matters, are in our possession and dependent upon our will. It is up to us to revive and keep alive the memory of the martyrs, their legacy, and the philosophy of their martyrdom, by making correct and timely choices.

Had Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) and Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him) not strived, explained, and disclosed the crimes of the enemy, had they not explained the truth and the philosophy behind ʿĀshūrā, had they not clarified the goal of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) and recounted the oppression committed by their enemies,[i] the event of ʿĀshūrā would not have remained fervent, alive, and illuminating until today. They did so during the entire duration of their captivity, whether it was on the evening of ʿĀshūrā in Karbala, during the following days in Sham and Kufa, later during their return to Karbala and their subsequent journey

i. How Imam al-Sajjād's (peace be upon him) disclosed the crimes of the enemy in Kufa, Sham, and Madinah: al-Kūfī, *Al-futūḥ*, vol. 5, p. 123; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-ṭālibīyyīn*, pp. 119-120; al-Ṭabrisī, *Al-iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, pp. 33-34; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *Manāqib āl abī ṭālib*, vol. 3, p. 305; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Al-luhūf*, pp. 92-93; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 148-149. How Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) disclosed the crimes of the enemy in Karbala, Kufa, Sham, and Madinah: al-ʿUbaydalī, *Akhbār al-zaynabāt*, pp. 115-119; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, vol. 3, p. 206; al-Kūfī, *Al-futūḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 121-122; al-Mufīd, *Al-irshād*, vol. 2, pp. 115-116; al-Ṭabrisī, *Al-iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, pp. 33-34; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, p. 198; al-Muqarram, *Maqtal al-ḥusayn*, p. 322.

to Madinah, or even afterwards during the long years that these distinguished personalities remained alive.[i]

Why is it that Imam al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him), according to narrations, said that whoever recites one couplet from a poem about the incident of ʿĀshūrā and makes people cry by reciting that poem, God will make Paradise obligatory for him?[ii] Because all the means of propaganda at that time were being utilized to isolate the incident of ʿĀshūrā, to keep it—and generally all matters related to the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon him)—concealed and in darkness, so that people would not understand what happened and what the reality was. That is how propaganda works. In those days, just like today, the oppressive and tyrannical powers made the maximum use of false, biased and malicious propaganda. In such an atmosphere, was it possible for the event of ʿĀshūrā, which had occurred with such grandeur but in the wilderness, in a corner of the Islamic world, to remain vibrant and alive? Undoubtedly, without those endeavours, it would have been lost.

What kept the memory alive was the perseverance of the surviving family of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him). Just as how the struggles of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) and his companions in being the standard-bearers, were

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i. Regarding the life of Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him) refer to: al-Kulaynī, *Al-kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 468; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tarīkh madīnah dimashq*, vol. 41., p. 415; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 46, p. 12. Regarding the life of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her): al-ʿUbaydalī, *Akhbār al-zaynabāt*, pp. 122; al-Tūstarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 11, p. 43.

ii. al-Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-aʿmāl*, pp. 83-85; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 44, pp. 282-283.

met with obstacles and hardships, similarly, the endeavours of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her), Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him), and other noble figures with them, were difficult. However, it is essential to note that their arena of activity was not a military one but rather one of communication and culture. We must pay attention to these points.

The lesson that Arbaʿīn imparts to us is that we must keep the truth and memory of martyrdom alive in the face of the enemy's propaganda storm. If the truth is not promoted and disseminated in a manner that counters the enemy's propaganda, then the enemy will prevail in this arena of communication. The arena of communication is an arena of great importance, but it is also fraught with dangers.

The oppressive and tyrannical regime of Yazīd used its propaganda to denounce Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him). They falsely portrayed Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) as a rebel who revolted against the just Islamic government! Some people believed these false narratives. Later, when Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) was martyred on the plains of Karbala, in that painful and tragic manner and at the hands of such evil individuals, they portrayed it as being a victory and triumph. However, the correct education and communication, as carried out by the institution of *Imāmah*, turned the tide against these fabrications. The truth is such.[i]

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i. In a meeting with various groups of people from the city Naeen, the city Abardeh in Khorasan, a group of families of martyrs from Tehran, Gorgan, Chahar Dangeh, members of the Red Crescent Society, officials from the cultural departments of the Foundations of Martyrs, and female students of Isfahan University, 1989/09/20.

MASĀ'IB ON THE ARBAʿĪN OF THE MASTER OF MARTYRS

I want to briefly mention a few words of *maṣā'ib*. Tomorrow marks the Arbaʿīn of the Master of Martyrs (peace be upon him). On the occasion of the anniversary of Imam Khomeini's demise, we have gathered from various places to visit his shrine.[i] The concurrence of this gathering, of our visitation of Imam's grave, along with the Arbaʿīn, is a remarkable concurrence. It was also on the day of Arbaʿīn, after those bitter days and that extraordinary martyrdom, that the first visitors of Abā ʿAbdillāh al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) gathered to visit the grave of that infallible martyred Imam.

Among those who came that day, one was Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Anṣārī and one was ʿAṭiyyah ibn Saʿad al-ʿAwfī, who was also a companion of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him). Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh was one of the companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and took part in the Battle of Badr.[ii] By that time, it would appear that he was very old, perhaps at least sixty or seventy years of age, if not more. If he had been at the Battle of Badr, then he must have been over seventy years old at that time. However, ʿAṭiyyah was a companion of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him), and he was younger because it appears that he lived until the time of Imam al-Bāqir (peace be upon him).[iii]

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i. This sermon was given on the fourteenth of the third Iranian month, Khordad, which also marks the anniversary of Imam Khomeini's demise.

ii. al-Bukhārī, *Al-tārīkh al-kabīr*, vol. 2, p. 207; al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, vol. 1, pp. 205-208.

iii. al-Tūstarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 7, pp. 209-211.

'Aṭiyyah says: "When we arrived there, we wanted to go straight to the grave, but this elderly man said, 'Let us first go to the bank of the Euphrates and perform *ghusl*.' So, he performed *ghusl* in the Euphrates and then tied a piece of cloth around his waist and wrapped another around his shoulders, just like someone intending to visit the house of God and perform the *ṭawāf*. The he headed towards the grave of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him)." Apparently, he had lost his eyesight. 'Aṭiyyah continues, "We went together until we reached the vicinity of Imam al-Ḥusayn's grave. When he touched the grave and recognized it, his emotions surged within him. This old man, who had undoubtedly seen Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (peace be upon him) many a time in the arms of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), called out loudly three times: 'Yā Ḥusayn! Yā Ḥusayn! Yā Ḥusayn!'"[i] [ii]

THE EVER-INCREASING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ZIYĀRAH OF KARBALA

There [Karbala al-Mu'allā] lies the Ka'bah of hearts. It is the very spot where it was once presumed that everything has been buried: authentic and noble teachings, truth, values, and all the manifestations of the original religion of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). On that day it appeared that everything had been lost and come to

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i. Ibn Kirāmah, *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn*, p. 90; al-Ṭabarī, *Bishārah al-muṣṭafā*, p. 125; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 65, p. 130.

ii. In the sermons during Friday prayers in Tehran, 1996/06/04.

an end. But today, see how it has attracted the hearts of the people of the world! Not merely as a matter of faith and belief, but by means of love. From Iran, Arabia, India, and from all corners of the world, people eagerly make their way there. This illustrates the reality that material forces can never bury the authentic teachings. If some people are weak and feeble, and the truth is being concealed and suppressed in front of their eyes, then they will eventually suffer the consequences of their lack of zeal and determination. However, the Almighty God will raise individuals who will be able to harness those authentic teachings.

From the time that the incident of Karbala occurred, up until the time when people began to visit to go for *ziyārah* in large numbers, this circle has only grown wider. This is unlike the laws of the natural world. In the natural world when you throw a stone in water, it creates waves, it creates a circle around itself, but as time passes this circle constantly becomes smaller. However, this event is the opposite. As the circle expands, its waves become higher, more prominent, enduring, giving life to other things, and full of energy.

Even today however, there are obstacles. There are certain individuals over there who can be considered as the remnants of those who follow Mutawakkil, they cannot bear to see this![i]

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i. A reference, apparently, to the Ba'athist regime and its leader Saddam Hussein, may Allah's curse be upon him. Mutawakkil (207-247 AH) was an Abbasid caliph who reigned during the life of the tenth Imam (peace be upon him). Mutawakkil had an extreme hatred towards 'Alī (peace be upon him) and his family. He tortured and killed those who loved 'Alī and forbade them from performing the ziyārah of Imam al-Husayn (peace be upon him) in Karbalā. In the year 236 AH he even ordered that the blessed shrine in Karbala be destroyed. (Tr)

In recent years, on multiple instances they have confronted groups of people going from various parts of Iraq towards Karbala on the day of Arbaʿīn. The honourable and faithful tribes of Iraq have been tested with violent ordeals and given blood in this way, however they [the Ba'athist regime] does not allow this news to spread.

We had a similar incident around three or four years ago. If the path [to Karbala] had been open, it would have been even more clear where these passions lie, how abundant and extensive these focal points of love, fervour, and affection are in people's hearts, and how profound they are! Ultimately, love and affection are a burning fire. Most forms of love, like dry wood placed on fire, ignite a flame but do not last long; they are superficial. However, this love is a spiritual love, and day by day, its intensity only increases. It has no extinguishing point, no fading away. This is spiritual power. Blessed are those who carry a spark of this flame in their hearts.[i]

ARBAʿĪN: THE FIRST GUSH FROM THE FOUNTAIN OF HUSAYN'S LOVE

The first buds of ʿĀshūrā blossomed on the day of Arbaʿīn. The first gushes from the flowing fountain of Ḥusayn's love, which caused the stream of *ziyārah* to continuously run throughout these centuries, appeared on Arbaʿīn. The magnetic attraction of Ḥusayn's love drew the first hearts towards it on the day of Arbaʿīn. The going of Jābir ibn

i. In a meeting with the Minister of Commerce and his accompanying delegation after their journey to Karbala, 1999/11/14.

ʿAbdullāh and ʿAṭiyyah for the *ziyārah* of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) [i] on the day of Arbaʿīn [ii] marked the beginning of a blessed movement that has constantly and continuously grown in magnificence, attraction, and fervour over the centuries. Day by day this movement has caused the memory and remembrance of ʿĀshūrā to be more alive and vibrant in the world.

ARBAʿĪN: THE BEGINNING OF THE MAGNETIC ATTRACTION OF HUSAYN

This year, with the coinciding of Nowruz and the Arbaʿīn of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), the celebration of our new year took on the colour of Ḥusayn and was adorned with the name of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him), the leader of the free souls of the world and the Master of Martyrs. Whether the arrival of the family of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) in Karbala on the day of Arbaʿīn, as some narrations indicate, [iii] is true or not, it seems that there is no doubt that Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Anṣārī took this journey and reached the grave of the martyr of Karbala on this day. [iv] Jābir did so along with one of the *tābiʿīn* [v]—whose name

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i. al-Khawārizmī, *Maqtal al-ḥusayn*, vol. 2, pp. 190-191; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 65, pp. 130-131.

ii. al-Mufid, *Masār al-shīʿah*, p. 46; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 95, p. 195.

iii. al-Bīrūnī, *Al-āthār al-bāqiyah*, p. 422; Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Al-luhūf*, p. 114; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, pp. 335-336.

iv. al-Ḥillī, *Al-ʿadad al-qawiyyah*, page 219; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, pp. 334-335.

v. The generation after the Prophet's companions. (Tr)

has been mentioned by some as "Aṭiyyah'[i] and by others as "Aṭā'[ii]—a distinguished member of the *tābi'īn* who resided inKufa.[iii]

The beginning of the magnetic attraction of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) occurs on the day of Arba'īn. It is what makes Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh set out from Madinah and it is what brings him to Karbala. After these long centuries, this magnetic attraction continues to this day; it is pulsating within me and you. Those who have knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) always carry this love and fervour for Karbala in their hearts. This affection began on that day; love for the sacred soil of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and the resting place of the Master of Martyrs, Sayyid al-Shuhadā (peace be upon him).

Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh was among those who fought during the early years of Islam,[iv] he was one of those who fought in Badr. This means that he served the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and fought alongside him even before the birth of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). He witnessed the birth, childhood, and growth of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (peace be upon him) with his own eyes. Undoubtedly, Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh had repeatedly seen how the Prophet (peace

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i. al-Ṭabarī, *Bishārah al-muṣṭafā*, pp. 124-126; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 65, pp. 130-131.

ii. al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, p. 329.

iii. al-Tūstarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 7, pp. 209-211; al-Ziriklī, *Al-a'lām*, vol. 4, p. 237.

iv. al-Bukhārī, *Al-tārikh al-kabīr*, vol. 2, p. 207, al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, vol. 1, pp. 205-208.

and blessings be upon him and his family) held Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) in his arms and kissed his eyes and his face. The Prophet used to feed Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) with his own hands and give him water. It is very likely that Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh saw that. Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh must have heard from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) that Hasan (peace be upon him) and Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) are the masters of the youth of Paradise. [i] After the passing of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh witnessed the eminent status and personality of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), during the time of the previous caliphs as well during the caliphate of Amīr al-Muʿminīn (peace be upon him), whether in Madinah or in Kufa.

Now Jābir has heard that Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) has been martyred. They have martyred the beloved son of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) whilst he was thirsty. So, he sets out from Madinah, and from Kufa onwards he is accompanied by ʿAṭiyyah. ʿAṭiyyah narrates that when Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh arrived at the bank of the Euphrates, he performed *ghusl*, donned clean white garments, and then slowly proceeded towards the grave of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him).

The narration that I saw is as follows. It says that when he reached the grave, he loudly exclaimed three times, "Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar." This means that when

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i. al-Ṭabarānī, *Al-muʿjam al-kabīr*, vol. 3, p. 39; al-Maghribī, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*, vol. 3, p. 76; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 27; p. 119.

he saw what had happened to the beloved son of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Zahrā' (peace be upon her), when he saw how the ruthless criminals driven by worldly desires had martyred the Imam with such cruelty, he said *takbīr*. Afterwards, it says that due to his overwhelming sorrow, Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh fell unconscious on the grave of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). We do not know exactly what happened, but according to this account, when he regained consciousness, he began speaking to Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), saying:

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم يَا آلَ اللهِ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم صَفْوَةَ اللهِ

"Peace be upon you, O family of Allah. Peace be upon you, O chosen ones of Allah."[i]

O Ḥusayn, the oppressed one! O Ḥusayn, the martyr!

Today, on the first day of this new year, we too say the following from the depths of our being:

السَّلامُ عَلَيْكُم يَا أبَا عَبْدِ اللهِ. السَّلامُ عَلَى الحُسَيْنِ الشَّهِيْدِ.

Peace be upon you, O Abā 'Abdillah, Peace be upon you, O" "!Ḥusayn the martyr

Your martyrdom, your jihad, and your steadfastness have given energy and vitality to Islam, they have breathed fresh life into the religion of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). Without your martyrdom, nothing would have remained of the religion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). Today, our

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i. al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, p. 329.

hearts are also eager for Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) and that holy grave. Although we are far away, we speak while we remember him, while our hearts are replete with his love. We have made a pledge and will make a pledge to ourselves that we will never separate our lives from the remembrance of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), the name of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), and the path of Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). Such sentiments are shared by all the people of our nation, our country, all the Shīʿah worldwide, and indeed all the free souls across the globe.[i]

ARBAʿĪN: THE BEGINNING OF THE SPREADING OF THE MESSAGE OF KARBALA

Today is the day of Arbaʿīn, and the tragedy of Tabriz on the 29th of Bahman is also an Arbaʿīn-like incident.[ii] With regards to the event of Karbala, Arbaʿīn marked a beginning, a commencement. After the events of Karbala unfolded, and that great calamity occurred, it was the captivity [of Imam al-Ḥusayn's family] that would now cause this message to spread. The unparalleled sacrifice of Abū ʿAbdillāh (peace be upon him) and his companions, supporters, and family took place within a confined environment. This message had to then be disseminated over a wide domain through words, sermons, eye-opening speeches, and by disclosing the truth. This was done by Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) and Imam al-Sajjād

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i. In the courtyard of the Holy Shrine of Imam al-Riḍā (peace be upon him), 2006/03/21.

ii. This talk was given on the 28th of the Iranian month of Bahman. (Tr)

(peace be upon him); their words served as a powerful means for communicating the message. Thus, it was imperative for them to spread and propagate the ideas, events, objectives, and overall purpose of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him).

A HARROWING SILENCE: THE RESULT OF YAZĪD'S SUPPRESSION AFTER ʿĀSHŪRĀ

The distinguishing characteristic of a suffocating environment is that people do not find the opportunity and courage to manifest the truths they have understood, in their actions. Firstly, the oppressive and despotic regime does not allow people to comprehend, and even if it cannot control people's understanding and people do become aware, then it does not permit them to act according to their understanding. In Kufa, in Sham, and along the way, many people grasped various truths from the words of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) or Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him), or through witnessing the plight of the captives. However, who would dare to do anything? Who possessed the ability to openly express what they understood, in the face of the tyrannical, oppressive and subjugating system? It remained like a deep-rooted resentment stuck in the throats of the believers.

ARBAʿĪN: THE FIRST SIGN OF BREAKING THE SUFFOCATING ENVIRONMENT

On the day of the Arbaʿīn this deep-rooted resentment erupted for the first time. The first signs of these simmering emotions were manifested on the day of Arbaʿīn in Karbala. The late Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs and other great scholars have

written that when the caravan of captives, meaning Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) and the others, entered Karbala on Arba'īn, it was not only Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī and 'Aṭiyyah al-Awfi who were present. There was also "a group from the Banū Hāshim", a group of supporters who had gathered around the soil of the Master of Martyrs (peace be upon him), and they came to welcome Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her).[i] Perhaps this *wilāyah*-based strategy of Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her), that she insisted on going to Karbala upon her return from Sham,[ii] was so that this small but meaningful gathering could occur over there. Some have questioned how it could be possible for them to have reached Karbala by the day of Arba'īn.[iii] However, the late martyr Ayatullāh Qāḍī has a detailed treatise,[iv] in which he proves that it is indeed possible for this event to have taken place.

In any case, what is there in the writings of great scholars and the *qudamā*[v] is that when Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) and the group of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) entered Karbala, 'Aṭiyyah al-Awfi, Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh, and a number of men from the Banū Hāshim were present

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i. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Al-luhūf*, p. 114.

ii. Ibid.

iii. al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, p. 334.

iv. A reference to the book *Taḥqīq darbāre-ye avvalīn arba'īn-e sayyid-e shuhadā* (A Research into the First *Arba'īn* of Sayyid al-Shuhadā), written by the scholar Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī al-Qāḍī al-Ṭabāṭaba'ī who was the leader of Friday prayers in the city of Tabriz, before his martyrdom in 1979. He was the first of a series of martyrs who were killed shortly after the Islamic Revolution whilst leading congregational prayers and are referred to as *shuhadā-ye miḥrāb*. (Tr)

v. Meaning the early scholars. (Tr)

there. This is as a sign and an example of the realization of the intended purpose that is to be achieved through martyrdom. The ideology represented by the martyr is to be disseminated and it should result in the empowerment of the people. It was from this point [the day of Arbaʿīn] that the movement of *tawwābīn* emerged.[i] Even though it was suppressed,[ii] shortly after that the uprising of Mukhtar and the other brave people of Kufa occurred.[iii] As a result of this, the oppressive and wicked Umayyad dynasty eventually came to an end. Although it was after this specific incident that the family of Marwan came into power,[iv] but the struggle [against the Umayyads that started from the day of Arbaʿīn] continued, and the path [of this struggle] had been initiated.

This is the distinguishing characteristic of Arbaʿīn; that is, on the day of Arbaʿīn, there is the disclosing of the enemy's crimes, there is action, and there is the actualization of the goals for which the enemy's crimes were disclosed.

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i. The movement of the *tawwābīn* was an uprising of a group of Kufan Shīʿah in the year 65 AH, led by Sulaymān bin Ṣurad al-Khuzāʿī. These Shīʿah regretted their shortcomings in helping Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and rose up to fight the Umayyads, thereby seeking to atone for their mistakes. For four days they fought against the Umayyad army under the command of ʿUbaydullāh Ibn Ziyād, and a large number of them were killed in this fight. It is narrated that Mukhtār al-Thaqafī did not agree with their approach and considered Sulaymān to not have the necessary political acumen. He launched his own uprising the following year and managed to rule Kufa for a period of eighteen months, wherein he took revenge on many of the perpetrators of the tragedy of Karbala.

ii. Ibn Saʿad, *Al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, pp. 509-510.

iii. al-Dīnawarī, *Al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, pp. 288-308; al-Ṭūsī, *Al-amālī*, p. 240-245; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 332-338.

iv. al-Dīnawarī, *Al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, pp. 281-285; al-Mufīd, *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, p. 131.

The same thing occurred on the *arbaʿīn* of Tabriz. In the past as well, I have said to the dear people of Tabriz that if the incident of the 29th of Bahman had not happened in Tabriz, the tide of the resistance [the Islamic revolution] may have taken a different course. It was extremely important that the martyrs of Qom be remembered by the people of Tabriz in such a manner, accompanied with sacrifice. It was very likely that this significant incident, in the manner that it occurred, would not have happened. In other words, the events that transpired in Tabriz and the uprising of the people of Tabriz on the 29th of Bahman was a decisive event. It gave life to and revived the memory of the blood that was spilt in Qom, and the fundamental motivation of the movement that had started in Qom. Without a doubt, the people paid a price in going down this path; they sacrificed their lives, their peace, and their security. But the result they achieved was the awakening of the entire country. Hence, an *arbaʿīn* was observed for Qom, and then several *arbaʿīns* were observed for the martyrs of Tabriz, who were martyred on the 29th of Bahman. The fact that the commemorations were spreading, indicates a movement. A true movement is as such.[i]

THE COLLECTIVE DUTY OF PRESERVING PRECIOUS AND POWERFUL MEMORIES

While the oppressors and tyrants wanted to erase the memory of the tragic event of the ʿĀshūrā of Ḥusayn and prevent its enduring impact, it was Lady Zaynab (peace be

i. In a meeting with a group of people from East Azerbaijan, 2009/02/16.

upon her) who did not allow this to happen. Zaynab al-Kubrā (peace be upon her) made two significant journeys. One was a journey of captivity to Kufa and Sham, where she eloquently expressed the truths and unveiled the injustices. The other was her journey of *ziyārah* to Karbala during the day Arbaʿīn, regardless of whether it was the first Arbaʿīn, the second, or whenever else. This act of hers indicates that we must not allow wicked motives that aim to erase precious, influential, and important episodes from people's memory, to succeed. Although undoubtedly, they will never succeed. As long as nations are vigilant, as long as voices that utter the truth exist, and as long as believing hearts have motivation, those forces will not be able to consign these events to oblivion, just as they have not been able to in the past.

These hostile enemy motives remained from the early period of Islam until long periods of time had passed. For instance, Mutawakkil, one of the Abbasid caliphs, attempted to destroy the sacred shrine of Abā ʿAbdillāh (peace be upon him) around 170 or 180 years after the incident of ʿĀshūrā. In the same way, today the Iranian nation must expect and be ready for the enemies to continue their schemes, evil plans, and malevolence in an attempt to make people forget the beauty of the revolution.[i]

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i. In a meeting with the people of Qom on the occasion of the 19th of Dey uprising, in Imam Khomeini Ḥusayniyyah, 2015/01/07.

THE ROLE OF THE CONGREGATION OF ARBAʿĪN AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST CONGREGATION

If the Islamic nations in this vast region, who constitute a significant portion of the world's population, come together, not in some minor issues but in their broader purpose and path, then the Islamic world will reach the pinnacle of progress and excellence. If they are seen to be standing together on these broader and fundamental issues, just being seen in this way will have a substantial impact. If the leaders or the intellectuals in Islamic countries speak against each other—even if it is just speech—this makes the enemies more audacious, it gives them hope. This is the way it is today.

If we just come together in voicing our stances, this bestows greatness on the Muslim world; it bestows greatness on the identity of the Muslim *ummah*. Whenever we have witnessed examples of this unity, even if it was merely bodies standing side by side, we have seen its impact in the world. It brings honour and dignity to Islam and Muslims; it brings honour to the Prophet. When we perform the Eid prayer, we stand together, we say:

الَّذِي جَعَلْتَهُ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ عِيداً ، وَلِمُحَمَّدٍ صلى‌الله‌عليه‌وآله ذُخْراً وَ شَرَفاً وَ كَرَامَةً وَمَزِيداً

[This day] which You have made a celebration for the Muslims, and for Muḥammad, blessings be upon him and his family, a valuable asset, a cause of honour, dignity, and an increase.

Simply standing side by side in prayer is a source of honour for our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family); it is a source of dignity and esteem for the Muslim *ummah*.

The same is true for the gathering of Hajj. This year, you observed that millions of people came together during Arbaʿīn in Karbala. In and of itself, this magnificent movement of a group of Muslims—it was not just limited to the Shīʿah, the Ahl al-Sunnah were also part of it—when it reverberated throughout the world, caused people to admire it, to honour it. They considered it to be the largest gathering in the world. Who considered it as such? Those who are observing and monitoring the issues of the Islamic world.

At this point, since we have recalled that magnificent gathering, I find it appropriate and necessary to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Iraqi government, the Iraqi people, and the Iraqi tribes. In the face of this trial, they demonstrated great sacrifice, service, kindness, and nobility. I thank them.

This year's Arbaʿīn in Karbala was truly remarkable. The enemies of Islam and the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt thought that they had blocked this path. However, look at what a tremendous movement occurred! When even just people's bodies come together like this, it causes such an impact. If we stand together, Islamic countries, Muslim nations—the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shīʿah, including the different sects within the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shīʿah—with warmth and goodwill in our hearts towards each other, free from suspicion and animosity, respecting and not insulting one another, look at the positive impact it will have in the world. What an honour it would bring to Islam! Unity! Unity...[i]

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i. In a meeting with the officials of the Islamic Unity Conference on the birth anniversary of the Holy Prophet and Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon them), 2015/01/09.

THE ARBAʿĪN WALK: A DISPLAY OF NATIONAL DETERMINATION AND RESOLVE

When we look back at the events that transpired in the year 1393,[i] we observe that by the grace of God, the determination of the nation clearly manifested itself. Our nation demonstrated its unwavering determination both in enduring certain challenges that it faced and on the occasions of the 22nd Bahman,[ii] the Day of Quds, and the magnificent walk of Arbaʿīn. These events showcased the people's unwavering determination and strong will.[iii]

i. The Iranian year 1393 corresponds to parts of the years 2014 and 2015. (Tr)

ii. The anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. (Tr)

iii. In the Nowruz message on the occasion of the beginning of the Iranian year 1394 (2015/03/21).

Chapter Three

An exposition of [some passages from]

THE ZIYARAH OF ARBAEEN

THE OBJECTIVE AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE IMAM'S UPRISING

In one of the *ziyārāt* of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) that is recited on the day of Arbaʿīn, there is a profoundly meaningful statement that says:

وَ بَذَلَ مُهجَتَهُ فيكَ لِيَستَنقِذَ عِبادَكَ مِنَ الجَهالَةِ

And he offered his lifeblood to rescue Your servants from ignorance.[i]

The philosophy of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī's sacrifice is encapsulated in this sentence. The reciter of the *ziyārah* addresses Almighty God, saying that this servant of Yours, your Ḥusayn, offered his own blood to save people from ignorance.

وحَيرَةِ الضَّلالَةِ

and from the bewilderment of misguidance.[ii]

He rescued the people from the confusion and bewilderment of misguidance. See how profound this statement is and

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i. al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, vol. 6, p. 113; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, p. 331.

ii. Ibid.

what a lofty and advanced meaning it contains!

The issue is that humanity has always been subject to the schemes of *shayāṭīn.*[i] Throughout history, both major and minor *shayāṭīn* have victimized other human beings, the masses, and even entire nations to achieve their own objectives. You have read about this occurring in the past, in the accounts of oppressive and tyrant rulers and how they treated nations. Similarly, you see this today in the state of the world and the methods that major powers are using. Humanity is subject to the temptations and deceptions of these *shayāṭīn.* Humanity must be helped, and God's servants must be aided, so they can rescue themselves from ignorance and liberate themselves from bewilderment and confusion.

Who can extend this hand of salvation to humanity? Those who are attached to material pleasures, lusts and desires cannot do so, for they themselves are misguided. Those who are prisoners of their own selfishness and ego cannot save humanity. In fact, they need someone else to come and help them; God's mercy needs to come to their aid, so that their will becomes strong enough to free themselves. The one who can save humanity is someone who can forego his own attachments, someone who can sacrifice and transcend his desires. Someone who can overcome his own selfishness, self-centeredness, greed, desires, envy, miserliness, and other such entanglements that human beings are usually afflicted with, so that he can

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i. *Shayāṭīn* is the plural of *shayṭān* which in Qur'ānic terminology means any being amongst Jinn and men who tries to misguide others, mainly by using trickery and deceit. (Tr)

then be a guiding light for humanity's path.[i]

AN EXPLANATION OF A SENTENCE FROM THE ZIYĀRAH OF ARBAʿĪN

There is a sentence in the Ziyārah of Arbaʿīn of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) which, like many other lines in these *ziyārāt* and supplications, is very profound and worthy of contemplation and reflection. Today, on the occasion of the day of Tāsuʿā,[ii] which is a day of mourning, in the first sermon I want to present some material about this very sentence, which pertains to the overall goal of the uprising of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). The sentence is as follows:

وَ بَذَلَ مُهجَتَهُ فيكَ

And he sacrificed his blood for You.

This is from the Ziyārah of Arbaʿīn. However, the initial phrases of this *ziyārah* are a supplication. Hence, the reciter of these lines is saying to God Almighty:

وَ بَذَلَ مُهجَتَهُ فيكَ

Meaning that Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) gave his life and blood in Your way.

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i. In a meeting with the children of martyrs, disabled veterans from the cities of Mashhad, Tehran, and the Kurdistan Province, a group of students from schools in Tehran, teachers of teacher training centres, as well as a group of athletes and officials from the National Physical Education Organization, 1990/09/12.

ii. The 9th day of the first lunar month in the Islamic calendar, the month of Muharram, is referred to as Tāsuʿā. (Tr)

لِيَستَنقِذَ عِبادَكَ مِنَ الجَهالَةِ

So that he could save Your servants from ignorance.

وَحَيرَةِ الضَّلالَةِ [i]

And emancipate them from the confusion and bewilderment that results from misguidance.

This is one side of the matter, the side pertaining to the person who rose up, that is Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him). The other side of the matter is mentioned in the next passage:

وَقَدْ تَوازَرَ عَلَيْهِ مَنْ غَرَّتْهُ الدُّنْيا، وَباعَ حَظَّهُ بِالأَرْذَلِ الأَدْنَى

And those who had been blinded by the world rallied against him, selling their share for the lowest of the low. [ii]

On the opposite camp were those who were preoccupied by the allure of the worldly life. Material possessions, worldly embellishments, carnal desires, and selfish inclinations had caused them to lose sight of their true selves.

وَباعَ حَظَّهُ بِالأَرْذَلِ الأَدْنَى

They sold their share, which God Almighty has bestowed upon every human being in His vast creation—this share being the felicity and well-being in both this world and the hereafter—for a cheap and insignificant price that was not worth anything. This is the summary of Imam al-Ḥusayn's movement.

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i. al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid*, p. 788; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 98, p. 331.

ii. Ibid.

Upon careful reflection, one can discern that the movement of Ḥusayn can be looked at in two different manners. Both of these are correct, but it is the combination of the two perspectives that illustrates the grand dimensions of this movement.

One perspective is the outward actions of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him), which were a movement against a corrupt, deviant, oppressive, and tyrannical government—namely the government of Yazīd. However, the internal aspect of this matter is an even greater movement that the second perspective reveals to man, which is a movement against ignorance and humiliation.

In reality, although Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) engaged in combat with Yazīd, his far-reaching historical struggle is not merely against Yazīd, whose life was short and worthless.[i] Rather, it is a struggle against human ignorance, debasement, misguidedness, self-conceit, and humiliation. Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) was fighting against these traits...

THE SUMMARY OF IMAM AL-HUSAYN'S MOVEMENT

If we want to summarize the story of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) in a few sentences, it would be as follows: humanity was suffering from oppression, ignorance, and discrimination. The great empires of that time, the Ceaser and the Khosrau of that time, whether in Iran or the Roman Empire, were marred with nepotism, disregard for people,

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i. al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, vol. 4, pp. 383-384; al-Ḥillī, *Dhawb al-naḍār*, p. 77; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, p. 356.

irrational bloodshed, ignorance, and corruption. Likewise, smaller governments such as those in the Arabian Peninsula, were even worse off. The entire world had been immersed in ignorance.

Amidst this, the light of Islam, through the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), and along with divine help and the great and overwhelming struggles of the people, managed to illuminate a region of the Arabian Peninsula initially and then gradually spread until its rays reached everywhere. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) departed from this world, this government was a well-established government which could serve as a model for all humanity throughout history. If this government had continued in the same direction, undoubtedly history would have been changed. That is, what was supposed to happen centuries afterwards, what is now going to happen during the appearance of the Imam of the Time (peace be upon him), would have occurred at that time. A world filled with justice, purity, truth, knowledge, and love is the world of the era of the Imam of the Time (peace be upon him); in fact, it is that time which will mark the beginning of human life. The real life of humanity in this world is for the period after the appearance of the Imam of the Time (peace be upon him), and God knows what greatness awaits humanity in that era!

Therefore, if the continuation of the Prophet's government had been possible, and in those early periods if this had been realized and the destiny of humanity changed, then the ultimate end of mankind would have occurred much earlier. However, this did not happen for various reasons.

The distinguishing feature of the Prophet's government was that instead of being based on injustice, it was based on justice. Rather than polytheism and profane divisive ideas, it rested on monotheism and focused on submission to the Lord. Instead of ignorance, it relied on knowledge and gnosis. Rather than fostering animosity among people, it promoted love, connection, compassion, and tolerance. In other words, it was a government adorned with both outward and inward beauty. An individual nurtured under such a government would possess piety, would be virtuous, knowledgeable, insightful, active, full of energy, and always moving towards his perfection.

However, over the course of fifty years, things changed. The name of Islam remained, but the essence was no longer Islamic. Instead of a just government, tyranny returned; instead of equality and brotherhood, discrimination, division, and social inequality emerged; and instead of knowledge, ignorance prevailed. In this period of fifty years, the more time passed the worst the situation became. If one seeks to find examples beyond these points, there are hundreds of pieces of evidence and instances that scholars should shed light upon for young and inquisitive minds.

Imāmah transformed into monarchy! The nature of *imāmah* is contradictory and distinct from the nature of monarchy. They are two opposing concepts. *Imāmah* means a spiritual and moral leadership and an emotional and ideological bond with the people. On the other hand, a monarchy denotes a rule based on force, power, and deceit, devoid of any spiritual, emotional, or faith-based connection.

These two are complete opposites of each other. *Imāmah*

is a movement within the Islamic *ummah*, for the sake of the *ummah*, so that it can reach goodness. A monarchy represents an authoritative power that works against the interests of the people and benefits certain elite classes, to accumulate wealth and satisfy the desires of the ruling elite.

What we witness during the uprising of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) is the second type of leadership, not the first one. In other words, Yazīd came to power without any connection with the people, lacking knowledge, piety, and purity. He had no previous precedence of participating in jihad, not an iota of belief in the spirituality of Islam, and neither his actions nor his words resembled those of a true believer or a wise individual. There was nothing in him that bore any resemblance to the conduct of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or his teachings.[i]

In such circumstances, there arose an opportunity for someone like Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him)—who himself was the rightful Imam intended to succeed the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family)—to rise up and start a movement.[ii]

Analysing the situation outwardly, this uprising appears to be merely against the corrupt and authoritarian rule of Yazīd. However, at its core, it is an uprising to uphold Islamic values, knowledge, faith, and dignity, aiming to rescue people from corruption, degradation, and ignorance.

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i. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, vol. 5, pp. 286-288; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. 3, pp. 67-68; al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-aghānī*, vol. 17, p. 192.

ii. al-Ṣadūq, Kamāl al-dīn wa tamām al-niʿmah, pp. 256-285.

For this reason, from the beginning when he was leaving Madinah, in a message to his brother Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah—and in reality, in a message to all of history—Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) said the following:

أَنِّي لَمْ أَخْرُجْ أَشِراً وَ لَا بَطِراً وَ لَا مُفْسِداً وَ لَا ظَالِما

Meaning, I did not rise up with arrogance or pride. I did not do so out of haughtiness or an inclination to rule. I was not someone thirsty for power.

إِنَّمَا خَرَجْتُ لِطَلَبِ الْإِصْلَاحِ فِي أُمَّةِ جَدِّي[i]

I see the condition of the Prophet's *ummah* and how things have drastically changed. The current trajectory is incorrect; it leads towards degradation and deviates from the path that Islam intended and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) brought. I am rising to confront and combat these deviations.

THE OUTCOME OF THE UPRISING: GOVERNMENT OR MARTYRDOM

The struggle of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) has two aspects meaning that it could have led to two results, both of which are positive and good. One result was that Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) could have triumphed over the government of Yazīd and seized power from the clutches of those who through their tyranny subjugated the people and

i. "I did not rise up in a wild or an arrogant manner, nor did I rise up in a corrupt or an oppressive way. Rather, I rose to seek reformation in my grandfather's *ummah*." al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 44, p. 329.

ruined their destiny, thus redirecting matters to the correct path. If this had happened, undoubtedly, the course of history would have changed.

The other possible outcome was that for whatever reason, Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) would not achieve political and military victory. In that case, Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) would ensure that his message leave an everlasting impact on history, like an unending and unstoppable current. This he would do, not through ordinary language, but rather through means of his blood, through being oppressed, and with a language that history would never forget. And indeed, Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) accomplished this.

Of course, had those who claimed to have faith acted in a different manner than what they did to Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), the first result would have been achieved and Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) could have rectified the world and the hereafter of the people at that time. But they fell short! The discussion about why and how they fell short is a lengthy and bitter topic that I previously addressed, to a certain extent, under the title, "The Elite and The Common Masses."[i] Who fell short, who was responsible, how did they fall short, where exactly did they fall short? I do not wish to repeat those discussions once again. Nonetheless, there were shortcomings, and due to the shortcomings of others, the first objective was not achieved. However, the second

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i. A reference to his gathering with the commanders of the 27th Muḥammad Rasūlullāh division of the armed forces on the date 1996/06/09, as well as the sermons during the Friday prayers on the date 1998/05/08.

objective was realized! And that second objective is something no superpower can take away from Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him). The strength of embracing martyrdom, sacrificing his own life and the life of his beloved ones. That great sacrifice whose grandeur is so immense that no matter how great the enemy's power may seem, it pales and fades away in comparison.

THE EVER-INCREASING RADIANCE OF ABŪ ʿABDILLĀH

And day by day, this shining sun further illuminates the world of Islam; it further surrounds all humanity with its light. Today, more so than five centuries ago and even more so than ten centuries ago, Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him), Islam, and you [followers of him] have become known in the world. Today, the situation is such that thinkers, intellectuals, and unbiased individuals, when they encounter the history of Islam and see the story of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), they feel a sense of awe and humbleness before the Imam. Those who do not comprehend Islam but understand the concepts of freedom, justice, dignity, greatness, and lofty human values, look upon him from this perspective and see that Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) is their Imam in terms of seeking freedom, demanding justice, fighting against evil and corruption, and in combatting ignorance and humiliation in society.

IGNORANCE AND A LACK OF DIGNITY: THE ROOT OF HUMANITY'S PROBLEMS TODAY

Today, wherever people in the world have been struck by a blow—be it a political blow, a military blow, or an economic blow—if you delve into its root cause, it can be traced back either to ignorance or a lack of dignity. In other words, either people lack the knowledge and understanding of what they should know, or they possess the knowledge but have sold themselves cheap, buying disgrace and willingly subjecting themselves to a state of humility. According to what has been narrated from them, Imam al-Sajjād (peace be upon him) and Amīr al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him) have both said:

لَيْسَ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ثَمَنٌ إِلَّا الْجَنَّةُ فَلَا تَبِيعُوهَا إِلَّا بِهَا

There is no price for your souls except Paradise, so do not sell them except for it.[i]

O man! If it must be that your existence and identity be sold, it has only one price, and that is the divine Paradise. If you sell it for anything less than Paradise, you have been cheated. Even if they were to offer you the entire world in return for accepting humiliation, disgrace, and a soul that lacks dignity, this would not be permissible.

All those who, around the world [today], have submitted to the power and wealth of those in authority and accepted this humiliation—be they scholars, politicians, sociopolitical activists, or intellectuals—have done so because they did not

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i. al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-balāghah*, saying 456; al-Ḥarrānī, *Tuḥaf al-*'uqūl, p. 391; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 75, pp. 13 and 303.

recognize their own worth and have sold themselves. Many politicians around the world have sold themselves. Dignity is not merely sitting on the throne of kingship or presidency. Sometimes, a person occupies the throne of kingship and boasts arrogantly to thousands of others and orders them with force, but at the same time, is humble before and enslaved by another power and another thing. They are enslaved to their own selfish desires. Although, today's political 'slaves' do not even reach this latter stage because they are captives of centres of power and various global institutions . . . Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) desired to rid human beings of this humiliation.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) would eat and sit among people like a slave, not like the aristocrats. It is reported about him:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص يَأْكُلُ أَكْلَ الْعَبْدِ وَ يَجْلِسُ جُلُوسَ الْعَبْد

The Messenger of Allah used to eat food like a slave and sit in the manner of a slave. [i]

Despite being from a noble family, [ii] the Prophet interacted with his people with humility; he treated them with respect and did not boast or act obstinately. However, a single blessed gesture or gaze of his—towards the later years of his life—was enough to send shivers down the spine of the emperors of that time. This is honour and dignity.

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i. al-Barqī, *Al-maḥāsin*, vol. 2, p. 456; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 16, p. 255.

ii. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, vol. 1, p. 64; al-Khuṣaybī, *Al-hidāyah al-kubrā*, p. 175; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 15, p. 344.

Imāmah signifies an institution that bestows a God-given dignity upon the people, imparts knowledge and gnosis to them, promotes compassion and tolerance among them, and safeguards the grandeur of Islam and Muslims against their enemies. On the contrary, oppressive kingdoms and governments represent the opposite of this.

Today, in many countries around the world, the rulers may not be officially called kings, but in reality, they hold power like kings. They are not called kings, and they make a pretence of democracy, but in truth the government is a kingdom. Meaning their rule exhibits arrogance towards the people and subservience to any higher power that is above them. You can even see today that in a large and powerful country, its political leaders are often subjugated by and subservient to the owners of international corporations, undercover international networks, mafia-like groups, and Zionist institutions. They are forced to speak and take positions according to the desires of these groups; they are forced to not displease them. This is a [modern-day type of] kingdom. When there is humiliation and subservience at the top, humiliation and subservience will also prevail at the base and among the masses. Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) rose up against this.

SPIRITUALITY, DIGNITY, AND ABSOLUTE SERVITUDE THROUGHOUT IMAM AL-HUSAYN'S UPRISING

In Imam al-Ḥusayn's conduct, from the time he set out from Madinah until the day he attained martyrdom in Karbala on

a day like tomorrow,[i] the same sense of spirituality, dignity, and exaltedness, combined with absolute servitude and submission to God, can be felt. This is true in all stages of his journey. The time that hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of letters arrived for him saying that we are your Shīʿah and your devoted followers, we are awaiting you in Kufa and Iraq,[ii] he did not become arrogant. Similarly, the time that he addressed the people and said:

خُطَّ الْمَوْتُ عَلَى وُلْدِ آدَمَ مَخَطَّ الْقِلَادَةِ عَلَى جِيدِ الْفَتَاة

Death is inscribed on Adam's offspring, just as a necklace traces a line on the neck of a young lady.[iii]

He spoke of death. He did not say I will do this, and I will do that. He did not threaten his enemies or entice his friends by distributing the positions of power in Kufa. His was a true Islamic movement, accompanied by knowledge, servitude, and humility. This was when all hands were outstretched towards him, expressing their admiration and loyalty towards him.

Similarly, on that day in Karbala, when he was accompanied by a group of less than a hundred people,[iv] and surrounded

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i. This speech was given on the ninth day of Muḥarram, one day before the day of ʿĀshūrā. (Ir)

ii. al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, vol. 4, pp. 261-262; al-Kūfī, *Al-futūḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 27-29; al-Mufīd, *Al-irshād*, vol. 2, pp. 36-38; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirah al-khawāṣ*, page 215; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 44, pp. 333-334.

iii. al-Ḥillī, *Muthīr al-aḥzān*, p. 29; al-Irbilī, *Kashf al-ghummah*, vol. 1, p. 239; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 44, p. 366.

iv. al-Kūfī, *Al-futūḥ*, vol. 5, p. 101; al-Mufīd, *Al-irshād*, vol. 2, p. 95; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, p. 4.

by a group of thirty thousand[i] despicable and wicked people who threatened his life and that of his beloved ones, who threatened his women and family with captivity, at this stage not a trace of anxiety was seen in this man of God, this servant of God, and this dear personality of Islam.

That narrator who recorded the events of the day of ʿĀshūrā, which have been passed down generation to generation in books, says:

فَوَ اللَّهِ مَا رَأَيْتُ مَكْثُورا...

By God, I have never a makthūr...[ii]

Makthūr means someone upon whom waves of sorrow and grief have crashed. For example, someone whose child has died, whose friends are eliminated, whose wealth has been lost, and all the waves of calamity have come striking down upon him. The narrator says: I have never seen anyone with a more steadfast and firm heart in the face of calamities than Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him).

أَرْبَطَ جَأْشا...

...who was calmer and more composed.[iii]

In different situations and areas of life such as on the battlefield, in the arena of social interactions, or in the arena of political struggles, an individual comes across different types

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i. al-Ṣadūq, *Al-amālī*, p. 547; Ibn ʿInabah, *ʿUmdah al-ṭālib*, p. 192; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 44, p. 298.

ii. al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh*, vol. 4, p. 345; al-Mufid, *Al-irshād*, vol. 2, p. 111; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, p. 50.

iii. Ibid.

of people, people afflicted with a variety of sorrows. The narrator says: Never have I witnessed anyone in such a situation and facing so many calamities, yet retaining his composure, determination, and reliance on God as did Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him). His countenance reflected a sense of serenity, determination, strength of willpower and trust in Allah. This is that divine dignity.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) initiated this movement in history and [because of it] humanity understood that they must struggle for such a society and government. A society wherein disgrace, ignorance, enslavement and discrimination have no place. Everyone should work towards such a society, and it will one day happen, it is possible...

THE EFFECT OF KEEPING THE MESSAGE OF ʿĀSHŪRĀ ALIVE

If we keep Imam al-Ḥusayn's message alive, if we remember the name of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) with reverence, if we consider this movement to be the most significant human event throughout history and honour it, this is because the remembrance of this event will help us to move, help us progress forward and follow the path indicated to us by Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), until by the grace of God we achieve those goals. And, God-willing, the Iranian nation will reach those goals. It is God that elevated the name of Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and preserved the event of Karbala in history. When I say we preserve it and revere it, this doesn't mean that we are the ones doing it. No! This event is much greater than being something that other

worldly incidents could lessen in importance or cause to be forgotten.

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND WHY IMAM AL-HUSAYN BROUGHT HIS FAMILY

Today is the day of *Tāsūʿā*, and tomorrow is the day of *ʿĀshūra*. The day of *ʿĀshūra* marks the climax of this great and significant event. Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) did not come to Karbala with the equipment and weapons of war. Someone who wishes to go to the battlefield needs equipment, but Imam al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (peace be upon him) brought his women and children with him.[i] This means that a certain incident had to happen here that would continually evoke the emotions of people throughout history so that the magnitude of Imam al-Ḥusayn's mission can be understood.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) knows that his enemies are lowly and vile. He sees that those who have come to fight him are among the despicable and wicked people of Kufa, who, for a petty and worthless reward, are willing to commit such a great atrocity.[ii] He knows what fate awaits his women and children. Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) is not oblivious to this, but at the same time, he does not surrender, he does not turn back from his path, and he persists in his mission. This shows how crucial this path is,

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i. al-Dīnawarī, *Al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, p. 228; al-Nīshābūrī, *Rawḍah al-wāʿiẓīn*, p. 172; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 44, p. 326.

ii. al-Khawārizmī, *Maqtal al-ḥusayn*, vol. 1, pp. 343-344; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirah al-khawāṣ*, p. 228; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 45, pp. 59-60.

and how significant this endeavour is.[i]

i. In the sermons during Friday prayers in Tehran, 2000/04/14.

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