The Truthful Zainab:
Sister of al-Hussain (Peace Be Upon Them)

By Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi



الصديقة زينب شقيقة الحسين (عليهما السلام)

لآية الله العظمى السيد محمد تقي المدرّسي



Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi, born in 1945, is an Iraqi Shia marja' and political theorist.

He is the author of over 400 books on matters of theology, historiography, jurisprudence, philosophy, logic and social science.

Zainab ('a) witnessed the revolution of the Martyred Imam and carried its message to the world. Because the goal of the revolution was to awaken the people's conscience, we can say that the blood of the martyrs would have been in vain without the role of the great witness Zainab ('a) and the role of the other witnesses with her. This was the reason Imam al-Hussain ('a) brought his women with him.

In reality, destiny had prepared the truthful Zainab ('a) for this role, and during her short life after the Battle of Karbala, she planted in every horizon of the Islamic world the seeds of the Hussaini revolution and dug a flowing river of noble emotions towards the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that made the words "O' the avengers of Hussain" a trigger in the hearts of the Muslims. One which when called mobilizes the people to revolt and prepare for martyrdom. Martyrdom for the sake of Allah and resistance against the tyrants became goal for the virtuous sons of the nation. That is all by virtue of the martyrdom of al- Hussain ('a), and the words of the Truthful Zainab ('a) and the other captives of the Battle of Karbala.

Today, hundreds of millions of people follow the example of this Virtuous Truthful Lady, and annually revive the rituals of the Martyred Imam which spread and become more glamorous every day.

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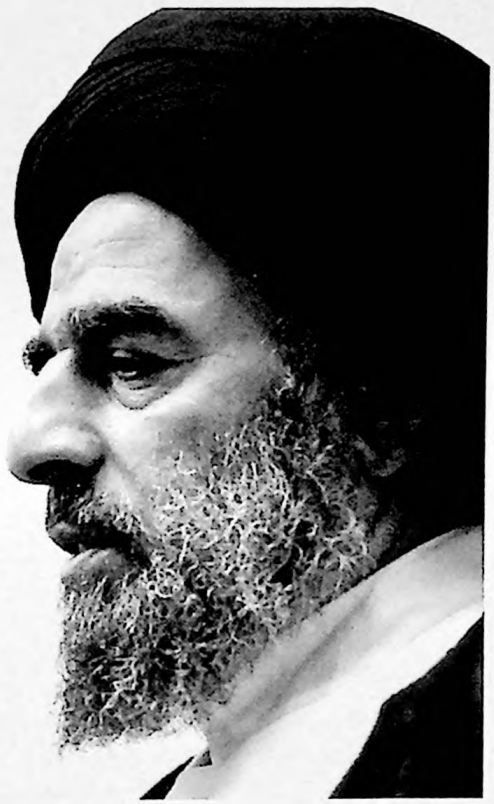
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Biography of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi (Arabic: محمد تقي الحسيني المدرسي) born in 1945 is an Iraqi Shia *marja'* and political theorist.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi is the author of over 400 books on matters of theology, historiography, jurisprudence, philosophy, logic and social science.

The Anglican Centre in Rome has stated that *"Grand Ayatollah al-Modarresi is probably the second most senior Shia cleric after al-Sistani. His call for peace & human dignity is very significant."*

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was born into a distinguished Shia religious family in Karbala, Iraq. His father is Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Kadhim al-Modarresi. His mother is the daughter of grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mahdi al-Shirazi. He is from the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed (sawa).

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi began his religious education in the religious seminaries of Karbala, at the young age of 8. He studied under some of Karbala's most senior scholars such as Shaykh Mohammed al-Karbassi, Shaykh Jafar al-Rushti, Shaykh Yusuf al-Khurasani and his uncle, Sayyid Mohammed al-Shirazi.

Due to the rising pressures of the Bathists anti-Shia sentiment Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi emigrated to Kuwait in 1971. He settled there until 1979, after which he moved to Iran. With

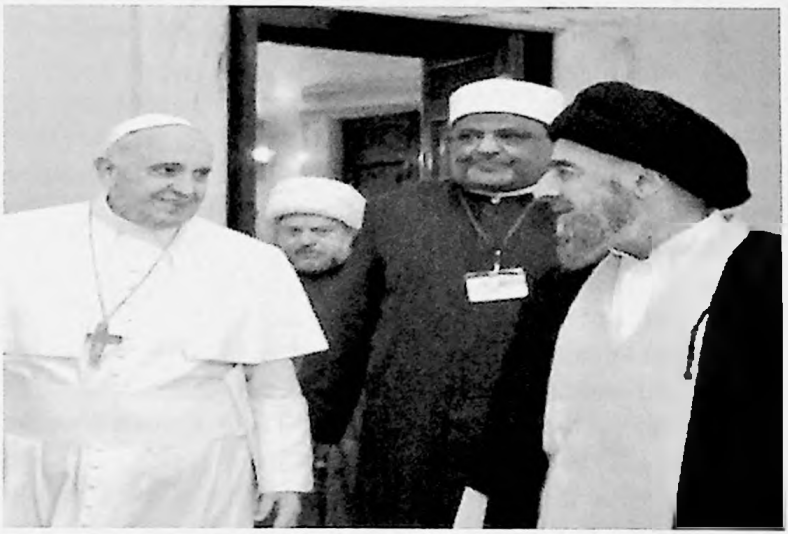
the overthrow of Saddam Hussein by American-led forces in 2003, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi along with other Iran-based clerics returned to Iraq.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was the first Shia religious leader to issue a call to popular resistance against ISIS, after its swift capture of large swathes of land in Iraq in June 2014. In his statement, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi warned against the destruction of churches and temples belonging to all religions.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi made an official statement regarding the COVID-19 strain, saying that the people of Iraq should self-isolate, and utilize the month of Rajab, by performing the recommended prayers and supplications at home. He also stated that Muslim community needs to increase its faith in God, so that He may protect us from all evil. Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi also called for the Iraqi government to take up all measures to face this new viral strain, which threatens the lives of many today. He added, the Iraqi people are always willing to stand by its government and provide aid, as is seen in the Arbaeen pilgrimage.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modaressi traveled to Bahrain in 2002 on an official visit, at the invitation of the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs, Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa.

In December 2014, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was invited by the Pope to attend a summit of world religious leaders at the Vatican. This made him the first Grand Ayatollah to have met the Pope.



In his speech, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi asked world religious leaders to "engage in a symbiosis of civilizations and religions". He condemned terrorism, nuclear proliferation, modern day slavery and said:

"At its core, divine religion is one, but failure to understand religion has divided human beings and created barriers between us. We must exert extra effort to tear down those barriers and join religions under the umbrella of a common term. We have a calling to love one another, to protect the environment, to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction and to end slavery in all its forms."

In 2016 he went to Australia, where he met community leaders as well as the Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. The two discussed Iraq, the war on terrorism, as well as how Muslims can be better integrated into the Australian community.

Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may the blessings of Allah be upon the Master of Creatures, the Example of Goodness, the Prophet of Mercy, Mohammed Ibn Abdullah (s) and his Virtuous Guiding Household, the Masters of Creatures and Guardians of Authority.

For a person to live in shadows of loyalty and to be honored to speak about the Household of Prophethood is a great honor and a prosperous, divine blessing. I have sought to write about the younger Lady of Truth Zainab ('a) for years, but I had not been fortunate until I prayed to Allah to bless me with it and put my trust in Him. I was finally blessed in the days of Hussaini mourning in the Holy month of Muharram 1416 AH. The loyal followers of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) devote themselves in these days to replenish with the light of loyalty. I too was called by destiny to the shadow of loyalty in these days, and I achieved great happiness as I relived the journey of our aunt, the Oppressed Zainab ('a). I listened to her and accompanied her in her journeys of struggle. I relived her feelings. So, I was blessed to present this booklet which despite its humble size is great in subject. I pray to Allah to accept it from me and to make it an aid for me in the Day of Need, as defending the right of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is surely great in Allah Almighty's scale of deeds.

Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi
01/07/1416 AH
Tehran

Sister of al-Hussain

Everyone knows that Sayyida (Lady) Zainab (‘a) is the daughter of Ali and Fatema (‘a), and the sister of Imam al-Hussain ('a). But I chose this phrase as the title of this book as it bears a much deeper meaning: Sayyida Zainab (‘a) was the complementary part of the movement of the Martyred Imam, Imam al-Hussain ('a). Just like the Battle of Karbala was destined by Allah Almighty for a purpose, Zainab (‘a) was chosen wisely to complete the second part of it. That is because no one bears resemblance to the Imam like his sister. Not only in the physical aspects, but in all aspects.

Like Allah chose for Adam (‘a) his wife, for Musa (Moses) (‘a) his sister, for ‘Isa (Jesus) (‘a) his mother, and for the Prophet (s) his daughter, He chose for al-Hussain his sister, the Younger Lady of Truth. They are of one soul. The age difference between them is minimal and was overcome with time. Their upbringing is one; in the hands of the Messenger (s), in the lap of Fatema Bint Mohammed (‘a), and under the shadow of the Commander of the Faithful Ali ('a). She is the eldest of the daughters, following her brothers al-Hassan (‘a) and al-Hussain ('a). She resembles the characteristics of her mother, in her beauty and greatness and the characteristics of her father, in her piety and knowledge. She suits the personality of her brother al-Hassan ('a), and almost matches the personality of her brother al-Hussain ('a).

If we are to say that genetics, upbringings, and events determine a person's personality, and that the person's purpose in life was determined for him, then we can agree that Zainab ('a) shares all these aspects with her brother Imam al-Hussain ('a).

Since the dawn of time, the battle of Karbala was destined, as it was the climax of the conflict between Islam and ignorance following the outburst of revelational light on the hills of Mecca. The events following the death of the Prophet (s) quickly led to it, and the Umayyads reemerged in the theater of events hidden under the cloak of hypocrisy amidst the unawareness of the Ansar (Natives of Medina) and the condonation of the Muhajireen (Migrants of Mecca) for temporary political benefit.

Sayyida Fatema al-Zahra ('a) stood up against this deviation, and drew with her blood, wounds, and epic cries, a path of struggle for her children. So, she became the Lady of the Women of Paradise as she laid the foundation of pure Islam in which tyrants do not rule in the name of religion. One in which hypocrites do not oppress the people in the name of the Quran and Messenger (s). She drew a path which held the burden of the message. One whose milestones were immigration, revolution, death, martyrdom, the revolutionary word which does not rest, and the powerful tear which does not settle.

Zainab ('a) had accompanied her mother while she suffered and fought for the Commander of the Faithful ('a) to prevent the people from forcing him to give allegiance. Did she not see her mother as that cruel man struck her with his whip to leave her husband? Indeed, she did. She also accompanied her mother when she gave that staggering speech in her father's mosque in Medina. In fact, it was she who later narrated it.

The path was clearly drawn in the mind of that intelligent young lady. Her walk from Medina to Karbala, then to Kufa, Damascus, and Medina was an advanced repetition of the struggle of her mother Fatema ('a), from the

house to the mosque, from the mosque to the house, and her call to the Ansar to aid the truth.

Zainab's speech in Damascus was like her mother's speech in the Mosque of the Prophet; the values, goals, expressions, courage, wisdom, agitation, and call were all the same. However, unlike her mother, she was a chained prisoner, tormented with the loss of her closest family. Despite this, she prevailed; captured her capturer, shackled his hands, and defeated the killers of her family with the true word, and trust in Allah, for He is sufficient as a Trustee.

The Truthful

In those days in which the Household of the Message, along with the true companions of the Messenger, were holding the funeral processions of the Truthful Zahra (‘a) with extreme secrecy, Zainab (‘a), her sister Um Kulthum, the grandsons [of the Messenger] (‘a), and the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) silently grieved.

Zainab (‘a) and the children of Fatema (‘a) definitely knew why their mother passed away at such a young age, why they washed her body at night in the dim lights of candles, and why they must not raise their voices in weeping. They certainly knew that it was all for the sake of Allah and to raise the words of truth. They knew that they should anticipate the reward from Allah for their struggle.

The calamity was so great that it would crush mountains if they were to bear it, but because it was for the sake of Allah, the righteous progeny comprehended it.

Zainab (‘a) understood the lesson and grasped patience well. She then saved this patience for another destined day, the Day of ‘Ashura, in which she would

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witness the tragedy and lead the struggle following the martyrdom of her brother.

"*Patience has limits*," [1] but the patience of the righteous has no limits as it is powered by trust in Allah, that is why everything for a believer is easy when he remembers his Great Lord.

Zainab ('a), the Truthful, had great patience, and was a model of patience in every calamity. She had accommodated her father on the 19th night of the month of Ramadan when his holy head was struck in the Mosque of Kufa. She was present when her brother Imam al-Hassan ('a) vomited blood after his wife poisoned him by the orders of Muawiyah in turn for money.

Indeed, destiny had prepared this virtuous lady for a great day, to be a model in divine patience. As her mother had been the chief lady of the women of the worlds, she was a model to the women of her world, perhaps the lady of the women of her world. She was the grand-daughter of the Messenger of Allah (s) and the daughter of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) and Fatema al-Zahra ('a). She was, as Imam Ali Ibn al-Hussain ('a) described her after giving her great speech amidst the crowds of Kufa following the Battle of Karbala, *"Aunt, be silent, the past is enough [for them] of a lesson, and you are, praise be to Allah, a scholar without having been taught, and a naturally perceptive lady."*[2]

She was indeed the exegete jurist whose classes were well-attended by the women of Medina and Kufa. She was given the title "Lady of the Hashemites" as she was the most prominent, pious, knowledgeable, and perceptive of the

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[1] A common Arabic expression.

[2] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 164

Hashemite women. Indeed, she truly deserves the title "the Truthful" for her role with her brother Imam al-Hussain ('a).

In the House of Abdullah Ibn Jafar

Members of the Hashemite family constantly spoke of their uncle who bravely endured a journey of struggle and never returned.

The Byzantine king of the Levant was a frivolous tyrant who upon receiving the message of the Prophet (s) threatened him and declared war on Islam. So, the Prophet (s) sent to them an army of three-thousand troops commanded by Zaid Ibn Haritha and sent his cousin Jafar Ibn Abi Taleb as a deputy to Zaid saying, *"If Zaid is injured, Jafar is your commander."* His cousin, Jafar Ibn Abi Taleb, had recently returned from Abyssinia. He had led a successful migratory journey with the early Muhajireen (Meccan Muslims) to it.

When the two armies met, three thousand Muslims on one side and over one hundred thousand nonbelievers on the other, the battle turned against the Muslims. Jafar, whose horse was slaughtered, fought bravely on foot. His right arm which was carrying the army banner was severed, then his left arm, so he held the banner with what was left of his two arms. He fought bravely and courageously defended his religion until he was martyred. After his martyrdom, over 80 wounds, strikes, and stabs were found in his body.[3]

The Prophet (s) gave him the title "the one who flies" saying he was rewarded for his severed arms with two wings to fly with in heaven.

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[3] Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, Ibn al-Athir | vol. 1 | pg. 608

The wife of Jafar was a noble lady. She was one of those whom the Messenger of Allah (s) referred to as "the Believing Sisters." Her sister, Maymuna, was the Mother of the Believers (a wife of the Prophet), her sister, Salma, was the wife of Hamza, the Master of the Martyrs, and Lubaba was the wife of al-Abbas Ibn Abdul-Muttalib.

She had four children with Jafar, including Abdullah who was born during the migration in Abyssinia. Then she married Abu Bakr and had Mohammed, whom Imam Ali ('a) said about, *"He is my son from the progeny of Abu Bakr."*

After Abu Bakr, Imam Ali ('a) married her, and together they had Yehya and Mohammed al-Asghar (the youngest). It is also narrated that they had Yehya and Awn. So, the children of Jafar were raised by their uncle Imam Ali ('a) under his blessed, noble shadow.

After the martyrdom of Jafar, the Prophet (s) visited his family and said: *"I am their guardian in this world and the hereafter."*

Because the Commander of the Faithful was the Prophet's successor, custodian, and heir, he succeeded him in this guardianship.

Of Jafar's children was Abdullah, who was a blessed child. The Prophet (s) said following the martyrdom of his father: *"Surely, Abdullah bears great similitude to me in appearance and behavior,"* and he said three times, *"O' Allah succeed Jafar in his family and bless Abdullah in his trade."*[4] Like the Messenger had asked Allah, He blessed him in his trade, and Abdullah became wealthy through his

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[4] Al-Sayyida Zainab, Bint al-Shati,
Narrated from: Al-Isabah, Ibn Hijr | v. 3 | p. 49

blessed trade, and was extraordinarily generous. He was a symbol of generosity, to the extent that his Umayyad enemies found nothing but his generosity to use against him. So, they accused him of extravagant generosity. The poet said describing him:

ولو لم يكن في كفه غير روحه
If he had nothing but himself to give,

لجاد بها فليتق الله سائله
He would give it generously, so let his asker fear Allah [of excessive asking]

Another said:

وما كنت إلا كالأغر ابن جعفر
Be like the esteemed son of Jafar

رأى المال لا يبقى فأبقى له ذكراً
Who knew that money does stay, so kept himself a remembrance [in generosity]

When his cousin Zainab (‘a) the Eldest daughter of Imam Ali ('a) reached the appropriate age, Abdullah who possesses these great qualities proposed to her. Imam Ali ('a) did not hesitate to answer him, as it had been narrated from the Prophet (s) that he once looked at the Hashemites and said, *"Our daughters are for our sons, and our sons are for our daughters."*[5] Here they were fulfilling the Prophet's wish, the Imam married his daughter to her cousin. History does not mention any details of the wedding as it did not exceed the wedding of Fatema al-Zahra ('a) who set the greatest example for her noble children ('a),

[5] Marriage between the cousins of the tribe of Bani Hashem

History does not mention that Imam Ali ('a) placed any specific conditions on Abdullah, however, we can deduce some conditions based on Zainab's destined role in Karbala. So, Abdullah Ibn Jafar did not hesitate when Zainab ('a) decided to accompany her brother in his revolution against the tyrant Yazid. Despite Abdullah Ibn Jafar not participating himself in the battle of Karbala for reasons unknown to us, he did send two of his mature sons who were martyred with their uncle and master Imam al-Hussain ('a), and he was proud of their martyrdom in the Imam's struggle.

History does not thoroughly tell us about the life of the Truthful Zainab ('a) prior to the Day of 'Ashura, but we do know that she had four sons: Ali, Mohammed, Awn al-Akbar, Abbas, and two daughters. Women had gathered around Zainab ('a) to learn religious teachings. She had migrated with her father and husband to Kufa. Her husband participated in defending the Commander of the Faithful ('a) during his wars against the tyrants, and that he was one of the commanders of the Islamic army in those wars.

There is no doubt that the Hashemite House with all its members had been fighting a multi-dimensional struggle since the death of the Prophet (s) to restore power to religion, and to resist the Umayyad hypocrisy that took over the nation's leadership.

Many Muslims were preoccupied after the conquest of Mecca and with multitudes of people joining the religion. They were preoccupied with the gains of the conquest that they neglected the responsibility of defending divine values, and they ignored the infiltration of hypocritical and opportunist elements into the centers of power in the country.

So, the elements of the ignorant godlessness began to mobilize. The remnants of the army of Abu Sufyan, who was defeated at Badr, gathered benefitting from the tolerance of Islam and the heedlessness of the believers who were preoccupied with the Islamic conquests and their pre-Islamic alliances. Benefiting from all of this, the hypocrites began to regain their lost influence and power.

There is no doubt that the Prophet (s) fought to establish Islam as the primary political force in the Arabian Peninsula, so he tolerated his enemies in order to attract them, even outwardly, to accepting the religion despite his knowledge that they did not truly believe in it in their hearts. Nonetheless, many noble verses were revealed to warn Muslims of the presence of hypocritical elements in their ranks, like Allah Almighty's saying:

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَرَدُواْ عَلَى النِّفَاقِ لاَ تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنُعَذِّبُهُم مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ

[*Some of the desert dwelling Arabs around you are hypocrites as are some of the inhabitants of Medina. They are persisting in their hypocrisies. You do not know them, but We know them well and will punish them twice over. Then they will be brought to the great torment (on the Day of Judgment).*][6]

قَالَتِ الأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِن قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِن تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُم مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

[*The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You do not believe but say, we submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts; and if you obey Allah and His Messenger,*

[6] Quran 9:101

He will not diminish aught of your deeds; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.][7]

The task of eliminating the weak and hypocritical elements was given to the Commander of the Faithful ('a), and the Hashemites after the Messenger (s).

The Messenger (s) fought the Umayyads to establish the revelation of the Book because at that time they were openly disbelieving, while Imam Ali ('a) fought them over the interpretation of the Book when they accepted Islam and concealed disbelief, and the Prophet (s) told him about that.

The Commander of the Faithful ('a) led the elite of the companions of the Prophet (s) and their followers to defend the sanctities of Islam in the face of the Umayyad corruption. He had succeeded in three battles, and was planning the fourth, when he was viciously assassinated in the morning of the 19th of the month of Ramadan, ten days before the appointed time of battle.

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali ('a), his son, Imam al-Hassan al-Mujtaba ('a) fought the political and media war against the Umayyads and succeeded in purifying the pure religion from the tyrannical cultures that the Umayyads tried to pass on to the people in the name of religion.

Imam al-Hussain ('a), had another task, which he carried out in the best way. The task was to revive the spirit of martyrdom in the conscience of the nation in order to defend the values of religion before the corrupt authorities, to sacrifice themselves for the sake of upholding the word of truth.

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[7] Quran 49:14

The people knew that the truth is with Imam Ali ('a) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), and that Muawiyah, Yazid, and those who came with them and supported them up are the people of falsehood, but they were weak and did not defend the truth. Thus, they betrayed Imam Hassan ('a) and abandoned his messenger Muslim bin Aqeel, while carrying a demonic and malicious slogan, "*Why should we involve ourselves with the ruler?*" They were as the poet al-Farazdaq described them, *"their hearts are with you (meaning Imam Hussain) and their swords are against you."* Here they were drawing their swords which they had fought the Umayyads with in Siffin and put away with arrogant justifications against the grandson of the Messenger, the true Successor, the Guide to the Quran, and the model of Faith!

At that time, people needed an uprising of conscience, a violent earthquake that shakes their deepest feelings, brings them back to their religious senses, and tells them that this great world that they have surrendered to is nothing in comparison to the hereafter, and it is not to the true believers but a speck, so how can they be deluded?

So, Imam al-Hussain ('a) came to Karbala, where he was destined to trigger the Revolution of Conscience. A revolution which would become an everlasting sword striking the heads of the oppressors and never becoming dull. It would be the everlasting banner of the oppressed, an awakening call for the conscience of the cowards, and a light guiding the believing warriors.

Imam al-Hussain ('a) became a true arbiter between the religion of Allah, which calls for faith and opposition to desires, submission to Allah, and truthfulness in every situation, and the religion of the sultans, which calls for justification of injustice, subordination, and enslavement. Between the religion of Mohammed, the Messenger of Allah

(s), and the religion of Abu Sufyan. Between the religion of Imam Ali ('a) and the religion of Muawiyah. Between the religion of Hijr Ibn Uday, Amr Ibn Hamaq,[8] and Saeed Ibn Jubayr,[9] and between the religion of Samra Ibn Jundub[10] and Shurayh al-Qadi (the Judge)[11] and Omar Ibn Saad.

Imam al-Hussain ('a) came to say to the Muslims: If the blood of the grandson of the Messenger of Allah was sacrificed for the sake of Allah, then what blood is too precious to be sacrificed? If the family of the Messenger of Allah (s) is taken captive in order to expose falsehood, then what is the preciousness of the families of others?

Imam Al-Hussain ('a) came to revive the hearts of the nation, and to ignite a blazing revolutionary movement against tyrants, and he succeeded. The banner of the Umayyads fell, and the banner of Islam rose. To this day, the true successor and the religion of the Messenger remain powerful, and their traditions continue to live and will continue to live on till the Day of Resurrection.

Yazid's goal was to spread racism and Umayyad supremacy, then establish a tyrannical kingdom. His goal was to spread the culture of playing with monkeys. He himself had a monkey whom he claimed to be a wise Israelite man that was metamorphosed into a monkey because of a sin

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[8] Hijr Ibn Uday (حجر بن عدي) and Amr Ibn Hamaq (عمرو بن حمق) were two companions of Imam Ali ('a) wrongfully tortured and killed by Muawiyah.

[9] Saeed Ibn Jubayr (سعيد بن جبير) was an early Muslim scholar who was cruelly killed by al-Hajjaj al-Thaqafi, the Umayyad governor of Iraq.

[10] Samra Ibn Jundub (سمرة بن جندب) was a corrupt narrator who was paid by Muawiyah to narrate false narrations condemning Imam Ali ('a) and praising the Umayyads.

[11] Shurayh al-Qadhi (شريح القاضي) was a corrupt judge in Kufa during the time of Imam al-Hussain who is responsible for the killing of Muslim Ibn Aqil (ra).

he committed. He had such great passion for him that when he died, he ordered him to be buried in a respected ceremony and ordered the poets and sultans' preachers to mourn him.

Yazid's slogan was, *"The Hashemites have played with governance; no good has come nor a revelation revealed."*

The goal of the Martyred Grandson ('a) was to have men who defend the truth against Yazid and his tyranny and prepare themselves for martyrdom for the sake of Allah, in fact, have martyrdom as their main goal, and he succeeded.

The Witness of the Revolution

Yazid and his movement perished, while Hussain's only expanded. His movement continued by the Truthful Zainab ('a) when Ibn Ziyad asked her: *"How did you find the way Allah treated your brother and family?"* She said, *"I have seen nothing but beauty. It was Allah's wish that they should be martyred, so they rushed towards their graves with honor. But know that Allah will judge between you and them, and He will call you to account, so be worried about the winner at that day. O' son of Marjanah! May your mother be mournful for you."*[12]

Zainab ('a) witnessed the revolution of the Martyred Imam and carried its message to the world. Because the goal of the revolution was to awaken the people's conscience, we can say that the blood of the martyrs would have been in vain without the role of the great witness Zainab ('a) and the role of the other witnesses with her. This was the reason Imam al-Hussain ('a) brought his women with him. The Messenger of Allah (s) had told him in a vision before his departure

[12] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 116

from Medina that Allah had destined for them to be held captive.

The Umayyads believed that marching with the Prophet's family as prisoners, accompanied by the heads of the Imam ('a) and the companions would raise fear in the hearts of their opponents, and further establish their authority. They did not know that the revolution was planned to be the revolution which proves the superiority of the blood which defeats the sword, and the conscience which defeats benefits and money.

The severed heads were the greatest witness to the oppression of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), their struggle for the sake of Allah, and their great sacrifice for the cause of religion. The words of reprimand and defiance that filled their speeches, their mockery of Umayyad tyranny and cruel authoritarianism indeed marked the greatest cultural revolution in the nation.

So, we hear Imam Zain al-Abidin ('a) when Ibrahim Ibn Talha asked him after his father's martyrdom, *"O Ali Ibn al-Hussain, who was defeated [in the battle]?"* So, the Imam ('a) answers him saying, *"If you want to know who triumphed, and the time for prayer has come, then call Adhan and Iqaamah."*[13]

Indeed, the permanence of prayer and remembrance of the Prophet (s) in the *Adhan* (call to prayer) and the *Iqaamah* is evidence of Islam's victory over hypocrisy by virtue of the blood of Imam al-Hussain ('a).

In reality, destiny had prepared the truthful Zainab ('a) for this role, and during her short life after the Battle of

[13] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 177

Karbala, she planted in every horizon of the Islamic world the seeds of the Hussaini revolution and dug a flowing river of noble emotions towards the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that made the words *"O' the avengers of Hussain"* a trigger in the hearts of the Muslims. One which when called mobilizes the people to revolt and prepare for martyrdom. Martyrdom for the sake of Allah and resistance against the tyrants became goal for the virtuous sons of the nation, like it has been against the non-believers. That is all by virtue of the martyrdom of al-Hussain ('a), and the words of the Truthful Zainab ('a) and the other captives of the Battle of Karbala.

The Characteristics of Zainab

What gave Zainab ('a) this great role? It is the optimal characteristics she was adorned with:

1. Truthfulness

On the night of 'Ashura, Zainab ('a) looked at the land of Karbala, and there it was filled with virtuous corpses scattered over a large area like sacrifices. Their heads had been displaced from their bodies, and their clothes had been stolen. On the other side were the remnants of burned tents and a group of frightened children and mourning women running, grieving, and crying of thirst.

Surrounding this valley, is a barbaric army drunkenly celebrating its victory.

Merely imagining such a tragic image causes the calmest people to collapse. But Zainab ('a) stood strong. She gathered the children, calmed the women and comforted them. Then she stood to pray to her Lord and supplicated, perhaps to give her patience and strength, and to accept the sacrifices of the Household of Mohammed (s), like her

brother's prayers in the final moments of his noble life: *"O' Allah, You are verily the Elevated in position, the Magnificent in omnipotence, the Mighty in prowess, the Self-Sufficient from the creatures, the Ample in pride, the Powerful over all that which You want, the Close in mercy, the Truthful in promise, the Opulent in favors, the Sympathetic in ordeals, the Nigh when Your are prayed, the All-encompassing of all that which You have created, the Accepter of the repentance of him who repents to You, the Powerful to do whatever You want, the Taker in all that which You decide, the Thankful for those who thank You, and the Rememberer of those who mention You. I pray to You for I need You, I desire for You for I am in want of You, I resort to You for I am terrified, I weep before You for I am distressed, I seek Your aid for I am weak, and I depend upon You for I trust in none save You. So, I beg you to judge between our people and us with the truth, for they have deceived us, cheated us, disappointed us, betrayed us, and killed us. We are the progeny of Your Prophet (s) and the sons of Your beloved one, Mohammed Ibn Abdullah, whom You have chosen for the Divine Message, and have trusted with Your Revelation. So, we beg you to prepare a way out and a relief for us, out of Your mercy, O' most Merciful of all those who show mercy!"*[14]

Then he said: *"O' Lord, give us patience on Your matter, there is no God but You, O' Aid of those who seek aid."*

Indeed, true belief was manifested in the words of the Martyred Imam ('a) in these decisive moments. It was then upheld by the Truthful Zainab ('a) following his martyrdom, sealing the Hussaini movement with the seal of sincere monotheism.

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[14] Mafatih al-Jinan, al-Qommi | 3rd of Shaban Supplication

One of the most important characteristics of Zainab (‘a) was believing all that had been revealed in the Holy Book and explained by the Messenger (s). Therefore, she was able to tolerate all these great calamities, as she knew Allah would reward her for her endurance.

So, she ('a) returned to the camp at midnight to pray her night prayers. The master of worshippers Imam Ali Ibn al-Hussain ('a) saw her and asked, *"O' aunt, do you pray while sitting?"* Zainab ('a) said, *"O' nephew, my feet cannot bear me."*

Days earlier, when the caravan of the Prophet's Grandson arrived in the land of Karbala, Imam al-Hussain (‘a) sat before his tents to fix his sword while reciting lines of poetry the Arabs used to recite when expecting danger:

يا دهر اف لك من خليل
Woe to you O' time of a companion,

كم لك بالإشراق والأصيل
who between sunrise and sunset,

من صاحب وطالب قتيل
kills many of his friends and beggars.

والدهر لا يقنع بالبديل
Surely, time does not do otherwise.

Surely the matter is to Almighty Allah, and everyone else pursues the path of life.

When his sister, the Truthful Zainab (‘a), heard this she called, *"Woe to me! May death take me!"* Her memories of calamity gathered, so she said, *"Today my mother Fatima*

died, my father Ali, and my brother al-Hassan. O' successor of those who past, and the last of those who remain!"

Hussain looked at her and said, *"O' sister, do not let the devil take your patience,"* tears brimmed in his eyes, *"If only I had a choice [to protect you]."*

She cried, *"Woe be to me! Do you hurt yourself for that, that only further wounds my heart and worsens how I feel."* She then slapped her face tore her clothes, then fell and fainted.

After she woke up, Imam al-Hussain ('a) said to her, *"O' sister, fear Allah and mourn with the consolation of Allah, and know that the people of the earth die, and the people of the sky do not stay, and that everything perishes except Allah Almighty who created creation with His power, sends and returns the creation, and He is only one."* Then he said, *"O' sister, I swear on you and hope you fulfill, do not tear any clothes [in grieve] for me, do not scratch your face for me, and do not ask for demise if I perish."*[15] From that moment, when Zainab ('a) understood that her role requires patience, so she was calm, and sought the reward from Allah for her patience.

2. Patience

History has not witnessed a woman with great patience than Zainab ('a). Her sons Awn (or Abdullah)[16] and Mohammed were slaughtered before her eyes, yet she did not break. In the following hours, her Imam, Imam al-Hussain ('a), her brother, and nephews, were martyred before her eyes, but she continued to observe patience,

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[15] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 3
[16] Ibid. | p. 34

becoming a model in composure, wisdom, and leadership in harsh times. She was captured, perhaps chained, exhausted by spiritual and physical calamities and difficulties, but she led the opposition during her capture and handled the affairs of the other captives, so what great patience does she possess that is not given except with the grace of Allah and trust in Him.

On the evening of 'Ashura, when the Umayyads burned the tents of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), Zainab ('a) came to Imam Zain al-Abideen Zainab ('a), who was suffering from sickness, and asked him, as he was the Imam who obedience to is obligatory after Imam al-Hussain ('a), she asked him about her duty, so he ordered her and the women to escape.

After taking those who remain of the Messenger's family to the outskirts of the valley of Karbala, Zainab ('a) returned to the Imam's tent and saved him from amidst the fire, assuring his safety. Then, along with her sister Um Kulthum, she gathered the children and women under the cover of a half-burned tent. Such actions are not carried out by a woman tormented with tens of great calamities, unless she possessed great patience, patience through the Mighty Allah.

When the Messenger's family were called to leave the valley of Karbala, the captives were taken near the bodies of their family to spite them. Imam Zain al-Abideen ('a) took a painful look of farewell at his father's severed body, becoming overwhelmed with grief. The Truthful Zainab ('a) looked at him and felt that the Imam of her time Ali Ibn al-Hussain ('a) was in danger, as grief nearly crushed him. She quickly handled the situation and said to him, "*Why are you hurting yourself O' heir of my grandfather, father, and brothers?"* Imam Zain al-Abideen ('a) said, *"Why should I not grieve and panic, and I see my master, brothers, uncles, cousins, and family drowned in their blood, robbed of their*

clothes, not shrouded, not buried, and no one visits them or gets near them, as if they are (non-believing) Persians or Turks."

She said, *"Do not fear what you see. By Allah, a covenant has been given from the Messenger of Allah to your grandfather, father, and uncle. Allah has taken a covenant from people of this nation whom you don't know. Emperors of this land. They are known by the people of the Heavens to gather and bury these scattered parts and severed bodies, and they will set a landmark in this land for the grave of your father, Master of the Martyrs, that will never perish nor will it disappear with passing of the nights and days. The leaders of Godlessness and parties of deviation will strive to erase and destroy, but it will only become more evident, and its message will only become louder."*[17]

So, Zainab (‘a) was able to return peace to the heart of the Imam ('a).

The captives of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were taken to the court of Ibn Ziyad, the cold-hearted evil-doer, whose mother was an adulteress and father, Ziyad, was an illegitimate child. For this, he was referred to as "Ziyad son of Marjanah" or "Ziyad son of his Father."

Zainab (‘a) entered dressed in ragged clothes. Ibn Ziyad looked at her and asked, *"Who is she who's disguised [in these clothes]?"* They said to him, *"It is Zainab daughter of Ali."* Ibn Ziyad wanted to humiliate her, so he said, *"Praise be to Allah who exposed you and showed the falseness of your sayings."* She said, *"Indeed, the wrongdoers are exposed and the falseness of the depraved is shown, and that is not us."* Ibn Ziyad said, *"How did you find the way Allah treated your brother and family?"* She said, *"I*

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[17] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 179-180

have seen nothing but beauty. It was Allah's wish that they should be martyred, so they rushed towards their graves with honor. But know that Allah will judge between you and them, and He will call you to account, so be worried about the winner on that day. O' son of Marjanah! May your mother be mournful for you."

Ibn Ziyad became furious and wanted to attack her. So, Amr Ibn Hurayth said, *"She is a woman, and woman is not be blamed for [the fallacy] of her logic."*

So, Ibn Ziyad said, *"Allah has relieved me from your tyrant, al-Hussain, and the rebellious insurgents of your family."*

She said, *"I swear on my life, you have killed my leader, cut my branches, and uprooted my roots. If that is a relief to you, then you have been relieved."*

Ibn Ziyad said, *"That is poetry, I swear that your father was a poet."*

She said, *"O' Ibn Ziyad, since when are women poets."* She added, *"I am amazed by those who kill their Imams and know that they will take their revenge from him in his afterlife."*[18]

It is true composure, patience, knowledge and wisdom. Zainab (‘a) felt that she was responsible for protecting Imam Ali Ibn al-Hussain ('a) as well as the other captives of Ahl al-Bayt ('a), and she surely succeeded in that.

In the court of the tyrant Yazid, one of the commanders of his army asked for Fatima daughter of Ali,

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[18] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 116

who was attractive and said, *"O' Yazid, give me this maid."* So, she held onto her sister Zainab ('a) who defended her and said to that Levantine, *"By Allah you have lied and are cursed. It is not for you [to ask] or for him [to decide]."*

Yazid became furious and said, *"By Allah you have lied, and I could [give her] if I want to."*

She said, *"By Allah, Allah will not allow you unless you publicly renounce our faith and take a religion other than our religion."*

He furiously said, *"Do you say that to me? It is your father and brother who have renounced the religion."*

She said, *"It is through the religion of Allah and the religion of my father, brother, and grandfather that you, your father, and grandfather have been guided."*

Yazid said, *"You have lied O' enemy of Allah."*

She said, *"A king cursing wrongfully and oppressing with his tyranny."* So, he, may Allah's curse be upon him, was embarrassed and became quiet.

The Levantine, may Allah's curse be upon him, repeated, *"O' Commander of the Faithful, give me this servant."*

He said to him, *"Go away, may Allah give you a perishing death."*[19]

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[19] Ibid. | pg. 156

That is the courage and patience of the Truthful Zainab (‘a). It is an image which reflects the reality of that heart aided by the light of Faith.

When we read all her speeches, we know that they have not come except from a heart comforted with the serenity of faith, sure of the divine victory, certain of the virtue and soundness of his path.

3. Eloquence

Great knowledge, great wisdom, decisive speech, divine courage, powerful language, and clear expression, all these factors describe the eloquence of the Truthful Zainab (‘a).

She was three years old when she accompanied her mother to the Mosque of the Messenger of Allah (s) where her mother delivered that important sermon which summarized the values of the message and the meanings of rejection (of tyrants). It was Zainab (‘a) who narrated this great sermon to us.

It was narrated that her father asked her of a certain matter, so she replied with complete confidence, *"Yes, my mother had taught me it."*

The extent of her knowledge in Allah was so vast that her father the Commander of the Faithful Ali ('a) seated her and her brother Abbas (‘a) next to him when they were children, and told Abbas (‘a), *"Say one."* He said, *"One."* Then he said, *"Say two."* He said, *"I cannot say two with a tongue I said one with."* So, Ali ('a) kissed his eyes, then he looked at Zainab (‘a) who sat at his left while Abbas (‘a) sat on his right. She said, *"O' father, do you love us?" He said, "Yes O' daughter, our children are our hearts."* She said, *"O' father, two loves do not meet in one heart; the love of Allah*

and the love of children, so if you must, have pity on us and love for Allah alone." These words only increased Ali's love for them.[20]

Zainab ('a) 's knowledge of Allah was not different to that of her grandfather, father, mother, and brothers. She lived in the house of revelation and gained knowledge which built her religious vision to the extent that the Imam testified to her intelligence by saying, *"You are, praise be to Allah, a scholar without being taught, and a naturally perceptive lady."*

Imam al-Hussain ('a) entrusted Zainab ('a) with the burdens of the message, as he had instructed her to substitute for Imam Zain al-Abideen ('a) during those difficult days.

It is enough proof of her wisdom that she led the opposition in those times and after that great tragedy.

As for her powerful words and eloquence, we will display some of her speeches. Her words were as Huthaim al-Asadi described them in Kufa, *"By Allah, I have not seen a modest woman more eloquent than her, it is as if she speaks with the tongue of the Commander of the Faithful."*[21]

Delivering the Message of 'Ashura

These characteristics made the Great Zainab ('a), the best messenger of 'Ashura to awaken the restful consciences, shake the lifeless hearts, and trigger the forces of rejection in the nation of Allah. Zainab ('a) accomplished this role in three ways:

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[20] Mustadrak al-Wasail, al-Nouri | vol. 2 | pg. 635
And : Al-Tifl Bain al-Wiratha w al-Tarbiya, al-Falsafi | vol. 20 | pg. 253
[21] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 162

1. Public Discourse

We will display, with the will of Allah, the public speeches of Zainab (‘a) which were the pact of revolution and publication of rejection. She helped spread the art of martyrdom and the culture of challenge in the nation.

2. Direct Incitement

In Kufa, Damascus, and Medina, then later in Egypt and Damascus, the Truthful Zainab (‘a) spoke to the people and incited them against the Umayyad rule by narrating what had occurred to them in Karbala, and the Martyred Imam's philosophy of resisting tyrannical powers.

History has only given us some narrations of such incitements but has not given us all. We will use these narrations to understand the others.

Zainab (‘a) was a partner in the Hussaini movement since the beginning, as she initially mobilized others for it. For example, on the night of ‘Ashura, Imam al-Hussain (‘a) had entrusted his brave brother al-Abbas ('a) with the task of protecting the camp. Al-Abbas was carefully patrolling the area when someone appeared from between the tents. So, he called, *"Who are you?"* It was none other than his sister Zainab (‘a).

Al-Abbas (‘a) said. *"O' Sister, why have you left [your tent] in this dark night?"*

She said, *"I came to speak to you."*

He said, *"It is a good time to speak."*

So, Zainab ('a) told al-Abbas ('a) how their father asked his brother Aqil after the death of her Truthful Mother ('a) to help him find a woman born to the bravest of the Arabs. When Aqil asked him why, he said, *"To give birth to a cub who will aid my son al-Hussain."* She then added, *"O' brother, this sanctity is yours (to protect)."* The Hashemite strength lit in the eyes of al-Abbas, so he said, *"Do you encourage me O' Sister? May your eyes never see suffering."*

It is also narrated that she similarly incited Burair. So, we find Zainab ('a) present with her brother Imam al-Hussain ('a) in every moment of the great tragedy.

Even after the tragedy, Zainab ('a) continued this role. When she and the others of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) were placed in a house near Kufa's House of Governance, she ordered that no one enters to speak to her except women who had been previously captives, as they would have felt the bitterness of captivity, and through them, she was able to spread the message. Perhaps, the reason she chose such women was because they were more likely to respond and spread the realities of the tragedy to the people, and she continued the same role in both Damascus and Medina.

3. Mourning

After the return of Sayyida Zainab ('a) to the city of her grandfather, Yazid's governor on the city of Medina wrote to Yazid saying, *"Her presence between the people of Medina instigates their emotions. She is eloquent, intelligent, and wise. She, and those with her, are determined to revolt to avenge al-Hussain."*

So, he wrote back to him, *"Separate her from the others."*

So how did she incite the people of Medina?

Through mourning, as she held mourning gatherings. These mourning gatherings which continue to be held to this day in the Islamic world became media institutions characterized by emotional mobilization and religious awareness, as well as self-purification and education.

Sayyida Zainab's cries had divine purpose, as they were not disgraceful cries, nor ones of remorse or despair. They were cries of challenge and awakening. So were her other acts which are seen as despairful.

For example, when she struck her head with the base of the howdah, it was not just a naive emotional act. she was provoking the consciences of the people of Kufa with her thunderous speech. The crowds of Kufans, who were stunned by the horror of the tragedy, listened to her speeches and interacted with them. This frightened the authority who feared an uprising. So, it ordered the head-bearer of Imam al-Hussain ('a) to bring it near her in an attempt to terrorize her. When she saw the head, she instead burst into tears and struck her head with the howdah's base, causing blood to gush from her forehead. Thus, the people of Kufa only became more furious at Yazid and Ibn Ziyad.

The patient Zainab ('a) who saw all that tragedy certainly did not feel despair when she saw the severed head of her brother, despite it being a painful scene. She was in reality provoking even the deepest human emotions in the people, as if she is saying *"It is such a great calamity that it deserves heads to be struck for it,"* or as if she was telling her enemies, *"We are still ready to sacrifice ourselves for the cause of Allah, and do not fear death."*

Zainab ('a) met each escalation from the enemies with a unique challenge and an uncontrollable escalation. So, when they used the method of emotional terrorism by displaying the severed noble head, she used the method of emotional incitement by striking her head with the howdah's base while poetically saying:

يا هلالاً لما استتم كمالا
O' moon who upon reaching completion,

غاله خسفه فأبدا غروبا
Was demolished with an eclipse, making it disappear

ما تو همت يا شقيق فؤادي
You did not suspect [falsely] O' brother of my heart,

كان هذا مقدراً مكتوبا
It was surely a destined destiny.[22]

Perhaps, the Shi'ites learned most of the Hussaini rituals which continue to instigate the nation and keep the tragedy of Karbala alive, renewing it every year from Zainab ('a).

Furthermore, whenever the enemies increased their cruelty in the court of the oppressor Ibn Ziyad and the tyrant Yazid, Zainab ('a) resorted to weeping to silence the enemies and triggering the emotions of the audience.

The Sermons of Zainab

In a later chapter, God-willing, we will discuss the effects of the Hussaini revolution, which was only completed with the Zainab ('a) I call, notably, her powerful

[22] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 115

sermons. By studying the words of Zainab (‘a), we will benefit in two ways:

1. Understanding the reasons that made these words effective in the nation, causing the many revolutions that continue to this day.

2. Benefitting from the Truthful Zainab's influential approach in Hussaini sermons and preaching.

Our study will be focused on two sermons; the sermon of Kufa and the sermon of Damascus, and we will examine them progressively to gain a comprehensive understanding of their meanings.

Zainab reprimands the people of Kufa

Huthaim Ibn Shuraik al-Assadi narrates that when Ali Ibn al-Hussain Zain al-Abideen ('a) came from Karbala with the women, he was very sick. So, when the women of Kufa came wailing and crying with their men, Zain al-Abideen (‘a) said in a weak voice fatigued by sickness, *"These people cry. Who killed us other than them?"*

So, Zainab (‘a) daughter of Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) signaled to the people to be quiet. Huthaim says, *"By Allah, I have not seen a modest woman more eloquent than her, it is as if she speaks with the tongue of the Commander of the Faithful."* She told them to listen, and everyone became silent. Then she praised Allah Almighty and sent blessings upon His messenger (s).

Zainab (‘a) praised her Lord with the most beautiful praise and sent blessings upon the Prophet (s) displaying great remembrance of him. This beautiful introduction to her

speech with her captivating voice silenced all the voices who looked towards her waiting for what she would say.

1. She then began by reprimanding and criticizing them as if she is the rolling thunder. She discussed how they had "unraveled their yarn" and broke their covenant, meaning how they had become, after the martyrdom of the Imam, slaves to the Levantines after fighting them for so long. She ('a) said, *"O' people of Kufa! O' people of disloyalty, injustice, and betrayal! May your cries never end and your tears never diminish. You are like a woman who foolishly unravels her yarn after it is firmly spun, by making your oaths a means of deceit among yourselves."*

2. Then she uncovered the reality of the people of Kufa and displayed their wicked characteristics that caused their horrible defeat of becoming their enemies' hands in killing their master, so she ('a) said, *"You are overwhelmed with arrogance, pride, hatred, and falsehood. You are filled with lies, disgraced like slaves, and humiliated by the enemies, like plants atop rubble, and silver atop graves (meaning you appear good but are in reality wicked). Beware, for you have brought upon yourself a very wrongful act for which Allah is displeased with you, and with no doubt, you will be eternally punished."*

3. She then continued to reprimand them to try to awaken their consciences. So, she said in regard to their meaningless cries, *"Are you now crying for my brother? Yes, by Allah you must weep because you deserve the tears. Laugh a little for you will cry much."* They must cry for themselves not for Imam al-Hussain ('a), as they were the ones who were disgraced by the tragedy.

So, she said *"You have become contaminated with such shame and disgrace, that you will never be able to wash*

it off. How could you wash off the crime of killing the son of the Seal of Prophet Mohammed (s), the Master of the Youth of Paradise ..."

Then she began explaining the extent of their loss with the killing of the Prophet's grandson (‘a), who was their commander in war, Imam (leader) in society, shelter in peace, cure in injury, refuge in calamities, guide in disagreement, support in objection, and lantern in darkness. So, she said, *"... your shelter of war, the refuge of your party, your residence of peace, your cure of injuries, your aid in struggle, your guide in discussion, the speaker of your debates, and the lantern of your path."*

She then warned them of the punishment of Allah, saying, *"What evil have you brought upon yourselves, and what heavy burden are you carrying to the Day of Resurrection. Annihilation be upon you and downfall. Efforts were lost, and hands ceased from work, and the bargain was lost. You placed yourself in the wrath of Allah and you manifested yourselves in greed and begging."*

The Truthful Zainab (‘a) placed all the responsibility for what happened on them, so that they do not blame their leaders or the authorities. She then warned them of severe punishment in this life and the afterlife for their negligence. Their punishment in this life is irradicable shame, and divine wrath in the afterlife.

Zainab (‘a) then once again explained the greatness of the tragedy and how painful it is on the Prophet (s) Mohammed (s). So, she said, *"Woe be to you! Do you know how many organs of the Messenger (s) you have severed, which covenant you have broken, whose blood you have shed, which noble family you have brought to the public as captives, whose sanctity you have violated? You have done*

that, which could tear down the skies, shatter the earth, and make the mountains vanish. You have brought such a terrible act, the like of which cannot be found in the depths of earth nor the vastness of the skies. Do not be astounded if the skies rain blood, as certainly the punishment of the Hereafter will be much more disgraceful, and they will not be helped. Do not let the passing of time fool you, as the Almighty is not affected by time and does not fear the passing of revenge. For your Lord is truly vigilant of us and them." Then she said poetically:

ماذا تقولون إذ قال النبي لكم
"What will you say when the Prophet (s) asks you:

ماذا صنعتم وأنتم آخر الأمم
How did you, O' final nation,

بأهل بيتي وأولادي ومكرمتي
Treat my Household, children, and beloveds?

منهم أسارى ومنهم ضرجوا بدم
Some of them are captives and others are covered in blood.

ما كان ذاك جزائي إذ نصحت لكم
Is that my reward for sincerely guiding you,

أن تخلفوني بسوء في ذوي رحمي
To treat my family in such terrible way?

إني لأخشى عليكم أن يحل بكم
I fear that (for it) you would face

مثل العذاب الذي أودى على إرم
A punishment like that which struck Iram."

She then left.[23]

Huthaim (the narrator) says, *"The people were startled. I looked at an old man near me, his beard was soaked with tears, and his hands were raised to the sky. He was saying: May my mother and father be sacrificed for them (Ahl al-Bayt), their elderly are the best of elderly, their youth are the best of youth, their progeny is a noble progeny, and their merit is a great merit."*

Zainab ('a) was clear and honest with the audience. She did not utter a single false word to appease them. Perhaps, the reason for that is because they knew the truth but did not support it, like the Ansar (natives of Medina) and the Muhajireen (immigrants of Mecca) when the Truthful Sayyida Fatema al-Zahra ('a) spoke to them with a similar strong tone. It was the same tone as that of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) in his final speeches to the people of Kufa.

This is the best lesson Hussaini preachers should learn from the Truthful Zainab ('a): To not appease to injustice for worldly benefits or be silent about truth in fear of the government. Either they speak with honesty and clarity, or they should not speak. Moreover, the speech included all other influential factors: intense emotion, spiritual awareness, sincere loyalty to the religious leadership, and a clear call to it, and to give the audience a direct responsibility. This is another lesson the Truthful Zainab ('a) teaches the preachers of the Hussaini pulpit: To not neglect one aspect of religion for the sake of another.

The people of Kufa justified participating in the war against the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (s) with fear of the Levantine army and the Umayyad authority. But the

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[23] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 163-164

Truthful Zainab ('a) did not even mention the authorities in her speech, despite being in a clear war with the oppressor Ibn Ziyad and the tyrant Yazid. So why did she not mention that in her public speech?

Perhaps, she purposely did not mention them to not allow the audience to justify their stance by blaming the authorities alone. In reality, the responsibility of the tyrant does not exonerate the responsibility of his tyrannical tools, those who did not say anything, and those who accepted his actions. Therefore, when speaking to the people, the speech should address their responsibility, while when speaking to the tyrant, the speech should address his responsibility. This is one of the greatest pillars of eloquence, and it is a great lesson for the preachers of the Hussaini pulpit.

Zainab challenges the tyranny of Yazid

Glory to Allah, what great power a person gains when they trust and depend on Allah? A distressed woman, mourning the loss of eighteen virtuous men of her family, held captive and taken forcibly in a public march of humiliation without even a cover to protect her from the burning sun. She was hit, humiliated, tired, exhausted, and hurt, yet she stood powerfully before a large group of an applauding audience and did this and did that.

Then she was taken to a powerful ruler, cynical enemy, victorious tyrant, and bloodthirsty criminal. She was brought in shackled along with her sick nephew and the other captives exhausted by the tiring journey.

Damascus was decorated as if it were a holiday, to celebrate Yazid's victory. The reckless tyrant was celebrating in his palace and had gathered his people to display his power before them. There was not a single

material factor of oppression and humiliation not used in this scene. All the material factors were in favor of the tyrant Yazid, but Allah is greater, and the spiritual power can crush all the material factors. Indeed, truth is mightier and powerful, and surely Zainab ('a) represented in that day, truth with all its power, might, and majesty.

She stood, sarcastically looking at that weak throne and looking proudly at the severed head of the Master of the Martyrs ('a) which was placed in a golden plate. Yazid hit the teeth and lips of Abu Abdullah ('a) with a baton in his hands while reciting verses from a poem of Ibn al-Zajwi along with other poetic verses he had added. The poem said,

ليت أشياخي ببدر شهدوا
I wish my elders in Badr had seen

جزع الخزرج عن وقع الأسل
The Khazraj's fear of the falling spears.

لأهلوا واستهلوا فرحاً
They would have celebrated and become joyful,

ولقالوا يا يزيد لا تشل
And said "O' Yazid, may your hand not paralyze.[24]"

فجزيناهم ببدر مثلها
We punished them with Badr, its like,

وأقمنا مثل بدر فاعتدل
And became victorious like they did in Badr.

لست من خندق إن لم أنتقم

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[24] "May your hand not paralyze" is an equal to the Arabic saying of appreciation meaning "May you have a long life."

I am not the son of [the fighters of] Khandaq, if

من بني أحمد ما كان فعل

I do not take revenge from the family of Ahmed (the Prophet (s)) for what he did.

So, Zainab ('a) stood and said, *"Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds and may His blessings be upon my grandfather, the Seal of Prophets. Allah Almighty said, and His word is true, [Then evil was the consequence to those who dealt in evil, because they denied the revelations of Allah and made a mock of them].[25]"*

She then crushed the snake's might by mocking his weak authority and looking down at his material powers by showing the infinite power of Allah. She said, *"Did you O' Yazid, think that you have gained power over us by narrowing the skies and earth on us and making us your captives? Do you believe that we have been afflicted with insult and dishonor by Allah and that you have been given honor and respect from Him? You have become boastful of this apparent victory that you have secured and you have started feeling jubilant and proud over this reputation and honor. You think that you have achieved worldly good that your affairs have become stabilized, and our rule has fallen into your hands. Do not be so joyful! Wait and you will see. Have you forgotten Allah's saying [And let not those who disbelieve ever think that because We extend their time of enjoyment it is better for them. We only extend it for them so that they may increase in sin, and for them is a humiliating punishment].[26]"*

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[25] Quran 30:10
[26] Quran 3:178

She began her speech with consecutive unforgiving attacks against the tyrant himself. She disregarded his power, mocked his tyranny, and reminded of the power of Allah, and that the measure for gaining nearness to Allah is not the worldly goods nor any of its temporary pleasures.

She then reminded Yazid of his great sin which he cannot escape, that is taking the daughters of the Messenger of Allah as captives. She then reminded him that he is the son of the Emancipated whom the Messenger of Allah (s) had emancipated following the conquest of Mecca despite having complete power over them, and said *"Go, for you are the Emancipated."* She reminded him that it is, least to say, unjust to take the daughters of this noble Messenger as captives in a form of public humiliation, violating their sanctity and without any guardians.

So, she said, *"O' son of the Emancipated, is it just that you keep your own daughters and maids veiled while you take captive the daughters of the Messenger of Allah (s)? You remove their veils and expose their faces, while their enemies take them from one town to another, and the people of every stream and hill look at them? All the near and far, the absent and present, the noblemen and humble, the high-ranking and low-ranking all look at them, and they are not accompanied by their guardians or men, all out of hatred towards Allah and ungratefulness for the Messenger of Allah for what he has delivered from Allah."*

She rebuked him with what can make him conscience-stricken after removing the veil of temporary power which he was proud of. Then she exposed him before the commanders of his army and the governors of his authority, and she made it clear that he does not represent Islam, which he rules in the name of, in any way. So, she said, *"It surely is a clear sign of unbelief, a hatred borne*

since the day of Badr. So, why would he not practice his hatred towards us, he who looks at us, the Ahl al-Bayt, with the sight of arrogance, enmity and resent? He proves his unbelief, declares it with his tongue and boldly proclaims: 'I have killed his (the Prophet's) sons and made his progeny captives. They (meaning his ancestors) would have celebrated [my actions] and become joyful, and said O' Yazid, may your hand not paralyze.' Then gladly turns towards the lips of Abu Abdullah ('a), whom the Messenger of Allah (s) used to kiss, and hits it with his baton!"

Yazid ruled in the name of Islam, and here the Truthful Zainab ('a) was, exposing him and showing that he is not a real Muslim, and that he has hidden hatred since the day of Badr when the religion defeated godlessness.

Based on this, we could learn that it is the duty of the preachers in the time of apostasy to expose hypocrisy and show the nation the reality of the ruling authorities. To separate outward appearance of religion from the true reality of religion. The difference was clear between true religion with the Messenger of Allah (s) kissing the lips of Abu Abdullah ('a) and the bloodthirsty tyrant hitting it with his baton.

Describing the greatness of the tragedy, the Sayyida ('a) added, *"I swear by my life, by killing the Master of Youth of Paradise, the son of the Master of Arabs and the shining sun of the progeny of Abd al-Muttalib, you have deepened our wound and uprooted us completely. You called for your ancestors and sought nearness to them with his blood. You called, but they did not hear you, and soon you will see and they will see you, and you would then wish that your hands, as you claimed, would have been fully paralyzed (before killing al-Hussain) and that your mother did not bear you,*

and that your father did not have you when you see the wrath of Allah and be questioned before the Messenger of Allah."

Sayyida Zainab ('a) warned him of the great punishment and destroyed the principle of ignorant tribalism which he called for. Then she explained that tribalism is in hell, as its roots which were represented by the evil spirits and decayed bones are burning in hell, and that Allah would send all those who call to it to join them (in hell).

She then prayed to Allah with a broken heart, in an unparalleled supplication saying, *"O' Allah! Take our rights from them and seek revenge from our oppressors and send forth Your wrath upon those who have shed our blood, killed our aids, and violated our sanctities."*

She returned from this short, yet powerful, prayer to rebuke Yazid for his terrible act without any fear of his tyranny and power, so she said, *"You committed the deed of yours. By Allah! You have torn your own skin and have ripped your own flesh, and you shall see the Messenger of Allah with the heavy burden of having shed the blood of his progeny and violating his sanctity, and spilling the blood of his family and adherents, at a place where Allah will have united their dispersed ones, increased the quantity of their scattered ones, avenged their blood, and taken their right from their enemies."*

With these words, Sayyida Zainab ('a) showed the status of the Master of the Martyrs ('a) as the leader of the Messenger's Household, and that by killing him, he had eradicated the entire Household and progeny (of the Prophet). She then challenged him with the strongest words of condemnation, she said, *"Do not be joyful of killing him. [And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are with their Lord, receiving*

provision.][27] *Surely, Allah is sufficient as a judge upon you, and Mohammed will be your enemy supported by Jibra'il. Very soon, he who set forth the kingdom for you and sat you upon the neck of the Muslims, will realize what a terrible recompense awaits the oppressors, what an evil place you have acquired, and what a misguided path you have taken."*

Sayyida Zainab ('a) reminded them of the responsibility of the leaders and nobles (many of whom were listening to her) and warned them that having someone like Yazid in power was not a good sign and that he is the worst to succeed (the caliphate).

Zainab ('a), the granddaughter of the Message, the lioness of the virtuous Ali, and the daughter of the Truthful Fatema, is not to speak to the wicked depraved Yazid. Her like does not speak to his like. But she explained the reason she is speaking to him saying, *"I consider your status low, so I do not speak to you in hope that you repent, as you have done such a terrible act for which the eyes of the Muslims cried and their hearts broke. Your heart is of stone, your soul is tyrannical, and your body is filled with the wrath of Allah and the curse of the Messenger. The Devil has nested in it and bred. Surely, no good is sought from you. It is surely astonishing for the pious, the descendants of the Prophets, the heirs of the successors, to be killed at the filthy hands of the Emancipated, the descendants of the corrupt and depraved. These are the very hands that have clenched our blood, and these are the very jaws that have devoured our flesh. While the virtuous bodies are laying on the harsh sands, torn by the wolves, and covered with sand by the young predators."*

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[27] Quran 3:69

Then Zainab ('a) described the tragedy of the Martyred Imam ('a) with short words that held a powerful tone. She said, *"Now that you consider yourself victorious, remember that this is because of what your hands have sent forth, and verily, Allah is not unjust to His slaves. To Allah we appeal, on Him we rely, and from Him we seek refuge and hope."*

Once again, the Truthful Zainab ('a) reminded her tyrannical opponent of Allah and the afterlife that he will be punished for his acts. His gains of victory in this life will be factors of defeat and punishment in the afterlife. His life is certainly fleeting and truth, which is represented in the Message and the progeny of the Messenger, will remain. So, she said, *"You may contrive and try however much you can. I swear by He who honored us with revelation, the Book, and Prophethood, you cannot achieve our status, nor reach our position, nor can you affect our mention, nor remove from yourself that shame and dishonor that you have brought upon yourself. For surely, your word is weak, and your days are counted. Beware of the day in which the caller would call, 'May the curse of Allah be upon the oppressors'."*

To conclude, she prayed to Allah Almighty saying, *"Praise be to Allah who destined happiness for His supporters, and granted His vicegerents their goals, then called them back to His mercy, pleasure and bliss. For you (meaning Yazid) have not hurt or brought misfortune upon anyone but yourself. So, we pray to Allah to complete His favor upon them and generously bless them with aid and rewards, and we ask Him for the best successorship and the beauty of dedication, for surely He is Most Loving, Most Merciful."*

Yazid responded to her with poetry,

يا صيحة تحمد من صوانح
What a powerful cry you cry?

ما أهون الموت على النوائح
That I wish for death over these cries![28]

Zainab ('a) not only shook the throne of the Umayyads, but she also shook the conscience of the tyrant Yazid, so that he later said, *"May Allah curse Ibn Marjanah, for he forced him (meaning al-Hussain) out and killed him, making the Muslims have hatred for his killing and planting my enmity in their hearts for killing Hussain. I am not responsible for Ibn Marjanah!"*[29]

Yazid was shook, his throne (authority) was shaken, and the earth trembled beneath the feet of the Umayyads, but that was not enough. The tragedy of Karbala is more important, and its goal is much greater and more dangerous. This tragedy must remain a sting in the consciences of the negligent, a light in the path of the warriors, and a love for martyrdom in the hearts of the believers.

So, Zainab ('a) held a mourning gathering in Damascus, then when she returned with Imam Zain al-Abideen ('a) and the other captives to Medina, she arranged a mournful entrance. There, Sayyida Zainab ('a) held mourning gatherings. Women would visit her, and she would narrate to them the tragedy, and incite people against Yazid's government. She was so influential on the people that the governor of Medina, Amr Ibn Saad Ibn al-Ashdaq, wrote to Yazid saying, *"Her presence between the people of Medina instigates their emotions. She is eloquent, intelligent, and wise. She, and those with her, are determined to revolt to*

[28] Bihar al-Anwar, al-Majlisi | vol. 45 | pg. 157-160
[29] Al-Sayyida Zainab, Bint al-Shati, p. 158: Narrated from al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir.

avenge al-Hussain." So Yazid wrote back to him saying, *"Separate her from the others!"*

So, the governor asked the Sayyida to leave Medina to any other place she'd like, but she refused and challenged Yazid's orders saying, *"By Allah, he knows (well) what has happened to us. He has killed the best of us and taken the rest like animals in a herd. By Allah, we will not leave even if our blood is spilled."*

But the Hashemite women spoke to her and convinced her to leave Medina. Perhaps, she saw that leaving Medina would benefit the (revolutionary) movement. So, she chose to leave for Egypt, according to some narrations, as she saw an appropriate foundation for the love of Ahl al-Bayt in it, or the Levant, according to other narrations. According to another narrations, she left at the request of Imam Zain al-Abideen ('a).

The Final Journey

Historical narrations differ here. Some say that the Truthful Zainab ('a) traveled to Egypt where she passed away, while other say she went to Damascus, where her shrine is today. Wherever it was, the historical message of Zainab ('a) was completed. She felt the heaviness of the tragedies she had borne for years strangle her, the earth had become constrained to her, and she yearned for her family.

Let us accompany our Lady to her final abode. One of the historical narrations says that she left with some women to Egypt, where there were many followers of her father and the governor, Maslamah Ibn Mukhlid al-Ansari, greatly respected the Ahl al-Bayt.

When the governor learned about her journey, he left with the nobles of Egypt to welcome her. They met with her caravan in the beginning of Shaban 61 AH, the same year in which Imam al-Hussain ('a) was martyred in Muharram. The nobles of Egypt welcomed her with tears and lamentation, for Zainab ('a), the Mother of Misfortune, had become a symbol of mourning rituals.

She resided in the house of the governor and spent her time in worship and reciting Quran. The days passed and the Truthful Zainab ('a) became more and more dedicated to supplication and prayer, until, according to this narration, she passed away on the 14th of Rajab 62 AH and was buried in her respected shrine which is visited to this day by the Egyptian people.

Before her death, the governor had come to her asking to be bequeathed the copy of the Quran she used, but she said to him, *"You will not make use of it."* He did not know what she meant by these words, but it is later understood, as the governor passed away only two days after her death. He was then buried near her based on his request.

The second narration says: When Abdullah Ibn Jafar, Zainab's husband, saw that she had become very sick and tired, he sent her to the Levant where he had a garden on the outskirts of Damascus. She lived there for some time, then passed away where her shrine is today.

Whether this narration or the other, which seems to be more historically accurate, is correct, the Lady is remembered in more than one place, and the visitors of her shrines ask for reward from Allah. Allah Almighty will reward them with the best reward in the afterlife, and the best proof of the acceptance of their deeds is that their prayers are answered in both places.

The Earthquake

Sayyida Zainab (‘a) left to her Lord before seeing the fruits of her distressing struggle and the blood of her family's martyrs. But this was not an issue, as the true servants of Allah never struggle for themselves. The greatest goal of a true fighter is the pleasure of Allah, and to meet His Lord pure from the filth of submission to the tyrants or acceptance of oppression. As for victory, it, as well, is a goal which the fighter seeks for his religion and nation before himself.

A little over one year after the death of the Truthful Zainab (‘a), the holy city of Medina, led by the son of Ghaseel al-Mala'ika, [30] Abdullah Ibn Handala revolted. Despite Yazid's use of extreme force to suppress the revolution, as he allowed the commander of his army "Muslim Ibn Uqbah" better known as "the Extravagant Killer" to loot Medina, the event which was known as "The Battle of al-Harra" only further exposed him and brought more curses on him. His enemy Abdullah Ibn al-Zubayr gained more power, as during that battle which took place at the end of 62 AH, Yazid ordered catapults to sack the Kaaba to force Ibn al-Zubayr out of it. However, the campaign which ended in 63 AH failed. Yazid died, and the Umayyads plunged into problems.

The Truthful Zainab (‘a) had also planted the seeds of opposition in Kufa. Only years later, these seeds ripened and became green. Five years after the martyrdom of the Imam, the revolution of the Tawabeen took place, headed by the noble companion Suleiman Ibn Surad al-Khuzaie who delivered a powerful sermon that sparked the revolution in

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[30] "Ghaseel al-Mala'ika" or "He who was washed by the Angels" is the title given by the Prophet to Handala Ibn Abi Amer, a companion who was martyred in the Battle of Uhud in 3 AH.

which he said, *"We have been afflicted with long lives and challenged with many trials, and we hope we are not of those Allah speaks to [on the Day of Judgement] saying [But did We not grant you life enough for whoever would remember therein to remember],*[31] *and the Commander of the Faithful Ali has said 'The time that Allah has forgiven the son of Adam in is sixty years' and all of us have passed that time'."* Then he said, *"What is our excuse to our Lord and when we meet our Prophet (s) that the son of His Beloved and his progeny was killed in our presence. By Allah, we do not have an excuse unless we kill his killer and their followers or die doing so."*[32]

The phrase *"O' Avengers of al-Hussain"* became the slogan of every revolutionary. From 65 AH, it was heard in the streets of Kufa mobilizing thousands of Shi'ites who saw themselves accountable for the martyrdom of the Imam to leave Kufa for Karbala, where they'd repent to Allah at the shrine of Abu Abdullah al-Hussain ('a) then head towards the Levant to avenge the Martyred Imam.

This resistance campaign was very similar to the battle which took place in Karbala on the Tenth of Muharram. It did not aim to achieve victory rather martyrdom in defense of truth. The noble companion Suleiman Ibn Surad was martyred along with a number of jurists and righteous scholars, and their virtuous blood flowed through the same canal as the blood of the martyrs of Karbala, irrigating the tree of Islam, reviving the consciences, and provoking the efforts of revolution.

It was the vanguard of another later revolution headed by al-Mukhtar al-Thaqafi which sought to eradicate

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[31] Quran 35:37

[32] Al-Kamil, Ibn al-Athir | v. 2 | p. 625

the killers of al-Hussain and send their severed heads to Imam Zain al-Abideen ('a) in Medina.

Revolutions followed successively, and the fluttering revolutionary blood-stained banner of the Martyred Imam which was held by Zainab ('a) rose victorious, mobilizing, to this day, the loyal hearts.

These were the fruits of the Truthful Zainab's struggle. So may peace be upon her, and upon her grandfather, father, mother, and brothers. Today, hundreds of millions of people follow the example of this Virtuous Truthful Lady, and annually revive the rituals of the Martyred Imam which spread and become more glamorous every day.

As I write these the final lines of this book on the ninth of the month of Muharram 1416 AH, 1355 years after the Battle of Karbala, I witness the capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran, and the capital of knowledge, Qom, commemorating it as its greatest national and religious event, as if the historical event took place today, and we hear the news reporting similar ceremonies in many countries. For the first time, global news agencies share the news of mourning for al-Hussain ('a)![33]

O' Virtuous Truthful Lady, we extend to you our peace and gratitude for your endurance for the sake of the Hussaini message, and we promise to remain loyal to this revolution by the grace of Allah, surely our blessings are all from Allah; on Him we depend, and to Him we repent.

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[33] At the time of writing this book, it was the first time a global network, CNN, reported images of the mourning gatherings in Azerbaijani capital, Baku.