

**IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)  
As His Words Portray**

**1400th ANNIVERSARY  
BIRTHDAY OF IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)  
1404 — 1984.**

**PART TWO**

# IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.) AS HIS WORDS PORTRAY

IN COMMEMORATION OF 1400<sup>th</sup> YEAR  
OF THE BIRTHDAY OF IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

BY:  
AHMED H. SHERIFF

Published by:  
Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania  
P. O. Box 20033  
Dar es Salaam - Tanzania

PART II

Dedicated in the Loving Memory  
of Late Haji  
Ghulamhusein Alimohamed Jagani  
Mombasa  
Expired on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 1984 - 9<sup>th</sup> Shawwal, 1404

# CONTENTS

Preface . . . . .	1
Proclaim the religion . . . . .	4
Source of perfecting intelligence . . . . .	5
Recognize your friend and enemy . . . . .	6
Viciousness of backbiting . . . . .	7
Religion: Only lip-service . . . . .	8
Conception of fear of Allah . . . . .	9
Prayer for life hereafter . . . . .	10
Martyrdom of Imam Husain predicted . . . . .	11
Background to the life of Yazid . . . . .	13
Why Yazid's leadership intolerable . . . . .	15
The meaning of Bay'at . . . . .	17
Keen desire to meet the Lord . . . . .	19
Death did not frighten the Imam . . . . .	23
Better death than life with tyrants . . . . .	24
The night of test . . . . .	25
Congregational prayers on the battlefield . . . . .	29
Warning against divine wrath . . . . .	34
Life with humiliation unacceptable . . . . .	36
A supplication when faced with calamities . . . . .	39
A slogan of supreme valour . . . . .	42
Constant attention to the Lord . . . . .	43
Why lament for the martyrs . . . . .	47
Summary . . . . .	50
Bibliography . . . . .	53

## PREFACE

No martyr has been revered and remembered so often, by so many, for so long, in this world, other than Imam Husain (a.s.) - the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (s.a.w.).

His supreme sacrifices in the cause of truth and his unrelenting trust in Almighty God in most trying circumstances, provide profound testimony of the Islamic truth to the world.

In celebrating the 1400<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the Imam, what better homage could be paid to his memory other than reminding ourselves of his noble ideals and teachings and striving to follow them.

The first edition of the “First Part” of this book was published during the month of May, 1984, which was followed by the second edition shortly afterwards.

Prompted by the good interest shown by the esteemed readers round the globe, I have endeavoured to compile the “Second Part” of this book, adding translation and explanatory notes to the sublime sayings of the Imam.

Both parts are aimed at imparting the understanding of the sublime ideals for which the Imam offered his sacrifices. They are meant to provide some useful material to lecturers and teachers to enable them to spread the message of truth.

The sayings of Imam Husain (a.s.) inspire us all to look beyond the horizon of this materialistic life aiming at higher goals of achieving lasting bliss.

It is my fervent hope that the sayings of Imam Husain (a.s.) contained in these books would inspire us to lead a meaningful life in this world with a view of ensuring salvation in the life hereafter.

Ahmed H. Sheriff  
P. O. Box 83856  
Mombasa - Kenya.

18<sup>th</sup> Zilhaj 1404 A.H  
14<sup>th</sup> September 1984

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Grateful thanks to Mr. Ahmed A.M. Jaffer for his assistance and suggestions.

## PROCLAIM THE RELIGION

Once Imam Husain (a.s.) was requested to explain the meaning of the following Ayat of the Holy Qur'an:

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ

“As to the bounties (favours) of your Lord, do announce (proclaim to others).” (93:11)

The Imam explained:

أمره أن يحدث بما أنعم الله به عليه في دينه

*God has commanded to proclaim the blessing of religion endowed by him.*

Almighty Allah has bestowed upon us His countless blessings and it behoves upon us not to conceal them but to announce and proclaim them so that others may share the knowledge and benefit.

According to the inner and special meaning of the above Qur'anic Ayat, as explained by Imam Husain (a.s.), it is the blessing of the religion of Islam which we are commanded to proclaim and spread to others. What better blessing could be



other than Islam which keeps us on the right path for the welfare of our lives in this world and in the hereafter.

Had it not been the paramount duty of protecting and spreading the divinely revealed religion of Islam, Imam Husain (a.s.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), would not have willingly offered his supreme sacrifices on the burning plains of Kerbala.

In the light of the above, those free of prejudices and truly enlightened with the teachings of Islam would not think of confining the message of Islam within the four walls of their mosques and houses.

## **SOURCE OF PERFECTING INTELLIGENCE**

In explaining the true way of increasing one's intelligence, the Imam said:

طول التجارب زيادة في العقل

*Intelligence increases with the length of experience gained.*

It is an undeniable fact that the ups and downs, the wealth and poverty, the health and sickness and the travelling from place to place provide different valuable experiences that one learns and is able to increase his intelligence provided of course if he keeps his eyes and mind open.

Islam has encouraged people to move around and learn from experience and draw lessons from the outcome of the lifestyles of the people of the past.

## RECOGNIZE YOUR FRIEND AND ENEMY

Describing the nature of a true friend and an enemy, the Imam said:

من أحبّك نهاك، ومن أبغضك أغراك

*One who loves you prevents you from committing errors, and one who hates you, encourages you to commit follies.*

Your true friend is one who has your welfare at heart. He gives frank and sincere advices to you taking into consideration the long term interests and benefits for yourself. Whereas, your enemy

is the one who engages in sweet talks and flattery thus causing you to boost your sense of pride and conceit much to your detriment.

A wise person is the one who is not easily influenced with what people say about him. He pauses to think and weigh each and every word spoken and treads cautiously with those who flock around him.

## VICIOUSNESS OF BACKBITING

A man was engaged in backbiting another person.

On hearing it, the Imam addressed him saying:

يا هذا كف عن الغيبة فإنها إدام كلاب النار

*Oh you ! stay away from backbiting as it is the food of the dogs of hell.*

It has become a common practice to indulge in backbiting others whenever friends or relatives get together. Quite often, the defects of a person exposed are untrue and without foundation. Beside committing a sin, the ill-feeling and mistrust spread becomes difficult to rectify.

The above saying of the Imam signifies how vicious and contemptuous the habit of backbiting is.

## **RELIGION: ONLY LIP-SERVICE**

In describing the strange mentality of the people and the state of religion during his time, the Imam said:

إن الناس عبيد الدنيا والدين لعق على ألسنتهم

*People have become slaves of wordly things and religion has become a matter to be licked over their lips.*

In other words, the mentality of the people was so much enslaved with the wordly gains and enjoyments that only lip-service was being given to the religion of Islam. No efforts were being made to follow its tenets, its teachings. People had become hypocrites and they cared for Islam so long as they were able to derive wordly benefits.

More or less, the same situation can be said to exist today. Religious activities continue to prevail so long as there is good incoming of wealth

and things go rosy. No sooner there is a crisis and the situation becomes gloomy, the faith in Allah would be seen to be shaken and people start grumbling to the extent of doubting the wisdom and protection of Allah.

## CONCEPTION OF FEAR OF ALLAH

Once the Imam was praised by someone saying 'How high is your fear of Allah.' To this the Imam reacted by saying:

لا يأمن يوم القيامة إلا من خاف الله في الدنيا

*One will not be saved on the Day of Judgement unless he had fear of Allah in this world.*

And whenever the Imam was making ablution for prayers, the colour of his face would change and his joints would tremble. When asked about the reason for that, he replied

حق لمن وقف بين يدي الملك الجبار أن يصفر لونه وترتعد مفاصلة

*It is only right for the one standing before a Mighty King (Allah) that he turns pale and his joints tremble.*

How important and what is the ultimate benefit of maintaining fear of Allah can be gleaned from the foregoing words of the Imam. The stronger one's faith in the existence of Allah and His absolute control over all our affairs and destiny, the higher his fear of Him. Coupled with the staunch faith in the life after death when everyone is to account for his deeds, one ought to become concerned about his actions lest he is subjected to severe punishment in the next world. Such a fear of Allah in our daily life, prevents us from committing sins and encourages us to do noble deeds.

## PRAYER FOR THE LIFE HEREAFTER

The Imam used to pray to Allah and supplicate in these words:

اللَّهُمَّ ارزقني الرغبة في الآخرة حتى أعرف صدق ذلك في قلبي  
بالزهادة مني في دنياي اللَّهُمَّ ارزقني بصرا في أمر الآخرة حتى  
أطلب الحسنات شوقا وافرا من السيئات خوفا يا رب

*Oh Allah, endow me with the desire for the life here-after so that I become aware of the truth in that in my heart by the help of detachment from*

*this world. Oh Allah endow me with insight into the matters concerning the life hereafter till I attain longing for good deeds and refrain from sins out of fear of Thee Oh Lord.*

The above prayers of the Imam should inspire us to be concerned and strive for the betterment of the life hereafter by abstaining from sins and from vain pleasures in this world. It is also aimed at boosting our insight into the facts about life in the next world to the extent that we inculcate in our minds the keen desire for charitable and noble, actions so as to benefit from their rewards in the next life. It is through regular meditation in form of prayers, supplications and recitation of the holy Qur'an that one is able to develop in himself that attachment to Allah and awareness as well as longing for the next worldly life.

## **THE MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAIN PREDICTED**

The resulting effect of the heart-rending martyrdom of Imam Husain and its impact on the people were well known in advance by the Holy Prophet Mohammed (s.a.w.) and by Imam

Husain (a.s.) himself. The noble aim and the farreaching effects of the sacrifices of Imam Husain are described in some of the following predictions:

The Imam said:

أنا قتيل العبرة، لا يذكرني مؤمنٌ إلاَّ استعبر  
*I am the one who will be killed in a manner that tears will be shed upon me AND my remembrance will not but awaken the conscience and impart lessons.*

In one of his sermons, the Imam stated:

ولكم بي اسوة  
*And for you, I shall become an example.*

The Holy Prophet predicted the outcome of the martyrdom of his grandson in the following words:

إنَّ لقتل الحسين حرارة في قلوب المؤمنين لا تبرد أبداً  
*Verily with the martyrdom of Husain, a wave of heat would erupt from the hearts, which will never cool down.*

More than 1300 years have lapsed since the



tragedy of Kerbala took place, yet we find that the memory of Husain lives. In almost every part of the world, Husain and his companions are remembered almost every day by way of religious discourses, eulogies, processions, publications, etc. Tears are shed when mention is made of the atrocities heaped upon him. As predicted by the Holy Prophet, the remembrance of Imam Husain continues to produce heat in the hearts of the people and the narration of the history of Kerbala has a profound effect upon the people. The Conscience of the people are awakened and the examples set by the martyrs are emulated by the people.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE LIFE OF YAZID**

Yazid was the son of Muawiya and the grandson of Abu Sufyan. (Abu Sufyan, during the time of the Prophet, was a convert to Islam but not with a willing and sincere heart). In his book *The Literary History of the Arabs*, historian Nicholson writes that the Omayyads were against the Islamic sharia rejecting its principles of the faith. During their caliphate, kufr -

polytheism of the old age of ignorance had reverted and was dominating the Islamic scene. He adds that Yazid himself had never accepted Islam and was brought up by his Christian mother living in a Christian tribe. Hunting, vane games, drinking and prostitution were his daily indulgences!!

Well known in history as the one who lived a life of licentiousness, Yazid did not even forsake his own step-mother. Indulgent in games of chess, dog and monkey, he openly took part in drinking parties surrounded by slave girls. In order to make a mockery of the holy men of Islam, he used to arrange for monkeys attired in the dress of Ulemas learned men of Islam and mounted them on horsebacks he took them out in processions around the bazaars of Damascus. Depicting his extreme lack of faith and infidelity, the following couplets recited by him while sitting on his throne in Damascus are well known in history:

لعبت هاشم بالملك فلا \* خبر جاء ولا وحي نزل

*The Banu Hashim (ancestry of the Prophet) had only played with conquests. Neither any message was sent nor any revelation was made.*

Yazid's rule lasted for three years. In the first year he embarked upon the killing of Imam Husain (a.s.) and his companions. In the second, he attacked Madina and annihilated the holy city. And in the third, he attacked the holy Ka'aba in Mecca setting it on fire.

## **WHY YAZID'S LEADERSHIP INTOLERABLE**

When an assumed Caliph and leader of the Muslim Ummah, totally devoid of faith and shamefulness, openly flouts the sacred teachings and tenets of Islam, then there is a serious danger that the religion may not survive and it may go into extinction.

### **WHY?**

People normally have the tendency of believing and following what the caliphs and rulers do. When people start following a caliph and a ruler who has no regard for religion then in the course of time, the original teachings are lost and the creed becomes adulterated with innovations and false traditions.

With the proclamation of Yazid as the Caliph and the ruler, this was precisely happening in Syria and was spreading to other Islamic dominions.

The martyr - Murtaza Mutahhari - writes that a section of the people of Madina sent their reader Hanzala Ghaseel Al-Malaika to Syria for investigations about the leadership and caliphate of Yazid. When he arrived at the court of Yazid in Damascus, he saw what strange things were going on there. On his return to Madina, he told his people that during my stay in Syria, I was fearful lest a stone of wrath might drop down upon our heads from the sky. He added that whilst sitting at the Caliph's court, he noticed that Yazid openly drank wine, gambled and indulged in dog and monkey games. His flouting of Islamic rules was to the extent that he freely indulged in adultery and prostitution with women whose marriage with him was illegal.

Hanzala then told the people of Madina that it was incumbent upon them to rise against Yazid in protest of his gross misdeeds in the name of Islam and whether they did or not, he was going to do so along with his eight sons. In his determination to rise in protest against Yazid, he

first sent his eight sons who were all martyred. Thereafter he himself followed and lay down his life in sacrifice for Islam.

## **THE MEANING OF BAY'AT**

In the primitive old days in Arabian countries including Syria, kings were being worshipped as God and Yazid had adopted this tradition. That the king must be fully obeyed as God, was what the Omayyads staunchly believed and caused it to be enforced. Since his kingdom was dependent upon this belief, Yazid not only upheld it and arranged for it to be spread around in other places.

'Bay'at' an Arabic word originates from the word 'Bay'on' which means to sell - to dispose off. The word 'Bay'at' is usually interpreted to mean paying allegiance to a Caliph or ruler - an irrevocable oath whereby the person doing so becomes bound to obey each and every command of the ruler. In real sense, it meant selling oneself to him like a slave entirely at the control and mercy of his master. By making a 'Bay'at' of a Caliph, it meant acknowledging him

as a Supreme Head of the Islamic sharia and bowing down to his every word.

In his book *Jazabul Qoloob*, Sheikh Abdul Haq Dehlavi a prominent Sunni author writes that the people were forced upon taking oath of Yazid, to worship and submit to the slavery of Yazid. Whether he liked to sell them (as slaves) or free them, (it was upto him) if he wished he could call them to obey God or disobey Him.

Allama Masoodi writes that whoever accepted the slavery of Yazid by paying allegiance to him was saved otherwise he was doomed. Thus the meaning of Bay'at of Yazid was not a simple acceptance of a new Caliph, but it meant to sell one's consciousness, religion and faith in slavery of a tyrant and self-assumed caliph.

Yazid wanted Imam Husain (a.s.) to pay allegiance to him so that all his actions, however unislamic and evil they were, could be accepted as lawful by the masses in general. Failing to secure the allegiance, he decided to kill the Imam not only to remove an obstacle but also to take revenge of those of his ancestors who were killed in the battles of Badr and Ohad

during the times of the Prophet. His aim also was to revert to the olden creed of polytheism (kufr) and at the same time destroy Islam.

As such, it was inconceivable that a personage of the status of Imam Husain (a.s.) the grandson of the Prophet and guardian of Islamic sharia to stretch his hand of allegiance to a mean and lowly person like Yazid. Not only this, the situation then made it incumbent upon him not to sit quiet but to rise in protest against Yazid for his misdeeds and ill-intention against Islam. And that is why at the time of departure for this purpose, we read his words of what would happen to Islam under the leadership of Yazid:

وعلى الاسلام السلام اذ قد بليت الأمة براع مثل يزيد

*Islam is doomed just then if the Ummah is left to be overtaken with a shepherd (leader) like Yazid.*

## **KEEN DESIRE TO MEET THE LORD**

Yazid sent some people to Mecca disguised as Hajis (pilgrims) with instructions to assassinate the Imam whilst the Imam was in the course of performing the Haj rituals. The Imam came to know about this and for the sake of avoiding

bloodshed in the holy places, he decided to depart from Mecca on the eighth of Zilhaj. Just before that, the Imam called the people present for the Haj pilgrimage and addressed them in these words:

الحمد لله ما شاء الله، ولا قوة الا بالله، وصلى الله على رسوله

*All praise be to Allah (for) what it pleases Him and there is no might - power but with Allah. May God send His blessings on His Prophet.*

خط الموت على ولد آدم مخط القلادة على جيد الفتاة

*The line of death upon the children of Adam is like that caused by the necklace around the neck of a young woman.*

Firstly in praising the Lord and acknowledging His Might, the Imam proclaimed his absolute pleasure and submission to His Will. He also reminded the people of the need to remember the Prophet with invocation to Allah for His blessings upon him.

In comparing death with the lines caused on the neck of a young woman by her necklace, the Imam was trying to portray death as an



adoration for the children of Adam (mankind). That death was not the end to this life but a kind of adorned elevation for those, who having rightly understood the philosophy of life, were always treading upon the path of righteousness. Who could better qualify for such adoration but the martyrs who welcomed death for the cause of Allah?

The Imam, then, expressing his keen desire for death so as to join his ancestors said:

وما أولهني الى اسلافي اشتياق يعقوب الى يوسف

*I am attracted towards my ancestors like the keen desire of Prophet Yakoob for his son Yusuf.*

وخير لي مصرع انا لاقيه. كأني بأوصالي تقطعها عسلان  
الفلوات بين النواويس وكربلاء

*The land on which I am to meet it (death) has been selected. As if on my reaching it I see my body being cut into pieces by the wolves of the wild between Nawamees and Kerbala.*

لا محيص عن يوم خط بالقلم رضا الله رضانا أهل البيت  
نصبر على بلائه ويوفينا أجور الصابرين

*There is no escape from the day which is already drawn by pen (destiny already decreed). We the household of the Prophet are pleased with what pleases Allah. We shall exercise patience on calamities from Him and He will pay us in full the reward reserved for the patient.*

لن نشذ عن رسول الله لحمته وهي مجموعة له في حظيرة  
القدس تقربهم عينه وينجز بهم وعده

*We are not separate from the flesh of the Prophet of Allah of whom we are part and we shall be together in heaven, securing the satisfaction and the divine promise to him shall be fulfilled.*

The foregoing words of the Imam clearly portray his firm determination in marching forward towards his final place of martyrdom with absolute willingness to sacrifice his life in submission to the Will and Pleasure of Allah. That there can be no doubt about the ultimate reward from Allah for those exercising patience against calamities in this world is also to be learnt from the above saying.

## DEATH DID NOT FRIGHTEN THE IMAM

On the way to Kerbala, when Hur (a commander of the Yazid's army) tried to frighten Imam Husain (a.s.) by saying: "I advise you to think of your life; for I am sure you will be killed if you fight."

"Do you think you can frighten me with death?" replied the Imam. The Imam then recited the following poem of a companion of the Holy Prophet from the tribe of Aws:

سأمضي وما بالموت عار على الفتى \* إذا ما نوى حقاً وجاهد  
مسلماً

*I will die, but there is no shame in death for a young man, in what he pursues is right and he strives as a Muslim*

وواسى الرجال الصالحين بنفسه \* وفارق مشبوراً وخالف مجرماً  
*If he supports the righteous men by sacrificing his life, and if he disengages himself from those condemned and opposes the criminals*

فإن عشت لم أندم وإن متّ لم ألم \* كفى بك ذلاً أن تعيش  
وترغما

*If I live, I will not regret, and if I die, I will not suffer. Let it be enough for you to live in humiliation and be reviled.*

## **BETTER DEATH THAN LIFE WITH TYRANTS**

In one of his lectures delivered before reaching Kerbala, the Imam said:

انه قد نزل بنا من الأمر ما قد ترون، وان الدنيا قد تغيرت  
وتنكرت وأدبر معروفها، واستمرت حدّاء، ولم تبق منها الا  
صباية كصباية الاناء، وخسيس عيش كالمرعى الوبيل

*Verily you see what has befallen us. The world has turned its back from goodness, its opposition is continous. Nothing is left of goodness except a few remnants like the remnants in a vessel and vile (remnants) like the unhealthy pasture.*

ألا ترون الى الحق لا يعمل به، والى الباطل لا يتناهى عنه،  
ليرغب المؤمن في لقاء ربّه محقّقاً، فاني لا أرى الموت الا سعادة،  
والحياة مع الظالمين الا برما

*Don't you see that the truth is not being practiced and the falsehood is not being prevented? (the situation is such that) a believer should rightly desire to meet his Lord (By sacrificing his life for establishing Goodness) I do not see death except bliss, and life with tyrants a disgusting (thing).*

Islam is a way of life which covers all aspects of life including politics. Muslims are bound to take part fully in national developments. If a ruler of a nation is oppressive and works to the detriment of national welfare or suppresses the rights of the people then Islam calls upon people to rise against such a ruler as Imam Husain (a.s.) rose against Yazid.

## **THE NIGHT OF TEST**

A day before Ashura (the day of martyrdom), a letter was received by Umar bin Sa'ad (the commander of the Yazid's army) from Obaidullah bin Ziyad (the Governor of Kufa) containing strict instructions to commence the battle against Imam Husain (a.s.) without any further delay.

That evening, Shimr (the cruel assassin of the Imam) approached the camps of the Imam and shouted: “Where are my sister’s sons, Abbas, Jaffer, Abdullah and Uthman?”

These four brothers were the sons of Ali bin Abi Talib by his second wife Ummul Baneen, who happened to be the cousin sister of Shimr.

Imam Husain (a.s.) instructed Abbas bin Ali to go and listen to what Shimr had to say.

Abbas came forward and asked Shimr: “What do you want?”

Shimr replied: “Oh sons of my sister, your security is guaranteed.”

On hearing this, Abbas was furious, and he retorted: “May curse of God fall upon you and your security which you offer to us whilst denying it to the son of the Apostle of God.”

Abbas then added:

تامرنا ان نترك أخانا الحسين بن فاطمة وندخل في طاعة  
اللعناء وأولاد اللعناء

*Do you invite us to discard our brother Husain -*

*the son of Fatima, and enter into the obedience of the cursed, and the sons of the cursed people (i.e. Banu Umayya).*

The above encounter in harsh words between Abbas (the step brother of Imam Husain a.s.) and Shimr (the most cruel man of the army of Yazid) portrays the exemplary faithfulness of the Imam's companions.

Shimr was bitterly disappointed and was enraged on hearing the words of Abbas because he failed in his shrewd manoeuvre to cripple the Imam's army by removing Abbas who was the Standard Bearer of the army of Imam Husain (a.s.)

On seeing the readiness of the enemy to commence the battle - that very evening, Imam Husain (a.s.) sent his brother Abbas to the enemies with a request for a night's respite saying:

إننا نريد أن نصلي لربنا الليلة ونستغفره، فهو يعلم أي أحب الصلاة له، وتلاوة كتابه، وكثرة الدعاء، والاستغفار

*We wish to pray to our Lord during the night and beg for pardon from Him for He knows how fond I am of prayers and the recitation of His Book*

*(the holy Qur'an) and excessive supplications in seeking his pardon.*

When Abbas approached Umar Sa'ad with the request, he kept quiet as if he was not inclined to wait for the night. However, Omar bin Hajjaj said to Umar Sa'ad: "By God, if these people were slaves of Turk and Dailam and had made such a proposal, we would have accepted. Why refuse the request despite the fact that they are the members of the household of Muhammad (s.a.w.)."

The enemy then agreed and the battle was put off for the night.

As the night set in, the Imam assembled all of his companions, and after praising Almighty Allah, he delivered the following sermon:

أما بعد: فإني لا أعلم أصحاباً أوفى ولا خيراً من أصحابي،  
ولا أهل بيتٍ أبر ولا أوصل من أهل بيتي، فجزاكم الله  
عني جميعاً خيراً

*I know of no companions more loyal and more virtuous than my companions, nor of any household members more righteous and better*



*than mine. May Allah reward you well on my behalf.*

## **CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS ON THE BATTLEFIELD**

On the TENTH day of Muharram in the year 61 A.H. of the Islamic Era, Imam Husain (a.s.) and his group of 72 men were preparing to face a huge army of not less than 30,000 men belonging to Yazid Bin Muawiyah Ibne Abu Sufian.

This small group of Imam Husain was suffering from extreme thirst for the third day in succession as the army of Yazid had cut out water supplies to them and had denied them access to the river Euphrates to fetch water.

On the burning sands of Kerbala, the ladies and children who were with them were also extremely thirsty as water had not reached the tents of Husain for the third day in succession.

Under such circumstances, one would not expect this small group to maintain the semblance and have presence of mind.

But, NAY, this was not the case. All of them enjoyed tranquility and had complete presence of mind. They were eagerly looking forward to lay down their lives and seek the pleasure of the LORD.

The battle had begun. During the mid-day, suddenly one of the 72 valiant companions of Imam Husain, by the name of Abu Thumama - e - Saidavi approached the Imam and requested him to lead the congregational prayers for Zohr (midday prayers). The Imam looked towards the sky and noticing the exact time for mid-day prayers, exclaimed:

ذَكَرْتُ الصَّلَاةَ جَعَلَكَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ

*Of Abu Thumama, you have reminded of the Prayers. May Allah place you amongst those who perform Prayers.*

Imam Husain led the congregational prayers. Two companions of the Imam, Saeed bin Abdullah and Zuhair ibne Quain stood in front of the Imam to ward off the arrows being thrown by the army of Yazid whilst the Imam and his followers were performing the congregational prayers.

Saeed bin Abdullah and Zuhair ibne Quain prevented the arrows fletched by the enemies from reaching and injuring the Imam and his companions who were performing the congregational prayers. In so doing, both Saeed and Zuhair were severely wounded as they went to the extent of accepting the arrows on their chests rather than allow the arrows to reach the congregation.

When the Prayers ended, both valiant men fell down and bid farewell to the Imam by breathing their last breaths on his laps.

From the above incidents, the following points are worth nothing:

- a. Despite the extreme heat on the burning sands of Kerbala, the extreme thirst caused by denial of water for the third day in succession, the extreme sufferings of the ladies and children, the grim situation of facing the enemies against heavy odds and having no recourse other than abandoning the cause of Islam, the companions of Imam Husain were fully determined to lay down their lives in the cause of Islam.

- b. Fully acquainted with reality, they were all calm and had complete presence of mind.
- c. Cognizant of the importance of performing prayers on time, despite all the hustle and bustle and tension, they could determine the exact time for performing ZOHR prayers (mid-day prayers) although such determination is difficult in comparison to the SUBH (Morning) and MAGHRIB (Evening) prayers as such times are indicated with the sighting of the flash of white line for Morning Prayers and the appearance of reddish colour on the sky for Evening Prayers.
- d. They performed the congregational prayers on the battlefield under the scorching sun despite the incessant attack of arrows showered upon them by the enemy.

By participating in a congregational prayers at such a critical moment, Imam Husain and his companions have signified:

1. The importance of performing prayers at the exact time of FAZILAT.

2. The importance of performing congregational prayers.
3. The importance of remembering God and performing prayers at all times.

The Holy Prophet and his Ahlul - Bait have always stressed the importance of performing prayers at all times. A similar incident signifying the importance of prayers is recorded in the history of Islam that in the year 37 A.H. of the Islamic Era, Imam Ali ibne Abu Talib had to face Muawiyah ibne Abu-Sufian in a battle known as Siffin. It is narrated by Ibne Abbas (the renowned disciple of the Holy Prophet and the interpreter of the Holy Qur'an) that in the midst of the battle, he saw Imam Ali spreading his prayer mat on the battle ground. Seeing this, Ibne Abbas exclaimed:

*Is this the time and place for performing prayers?  
An arrow could be fletched and injure you or take  
away your life!*

On hearing this, Imam Ali replied:  
*It is for the sake of upholding prayers that we have  
come to fight.*

But let us mark herewith the contrast of faith and courage between the companions of Imam Ali (a.s.) in the battle of Siffin and those of Imam Husain (a.s.) in the battle of Kerbala.

Submission to the will of GOD and his remembrance in all walks of life are the messages conveyed by the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul-Bait.

## WARNING AGAINST DIVINE WRATH

Despite repeated warning by Imam Husain (a.s.) against staining their hands with his innocent blood, the Yazid's army did not pay any heed. In the course of his last battle when many of his companions had already laid down their lives, the Imam holding his beard in his hand, admonished the enemy in these words:

اشدد غضب الله تعالى على اليهود إذ جعلوا له ولداً

*The wrath of Allah became severe on the Jews when they made a son for Him*

*(by proclaiming Prophet Musa (a.s.) as son of God)*

واشتد غضبه على النصارى إذ جعلوه ثالث ثلاثة

*And the wrath of Allah became severe on the Christians when they made Him a third of three (by proclaiming the belief in the Trinity of God)*

واشتد غضبه على المجوس إذ عبدوا الشمس والقمر دونه

*And the wrath of Allah became severe on the Magians (Zorastrians) when they worshipped the sun and the moon and disregarded Him.*

واشتد غضبه على قوم اتفقت كلمتهم على قتل ابن بنت نبيهم

*And His wrath became severe on the people who have united in their verdict on killing the son of the daughter of their Prophet.*

أما والله لا اجيبنهم إلى شيء مما يريدون حتى ألقى الله تعالى وأنا

مخضب بدمي

*But by Allah I shall not accept what they want (i.e. allegiance to Yazid) till I meet Allah the Glorious whilst I am coloured with my own blood*

To associate a partner or anything with God is called SHIRK a major and unpardonable sin

in Islam, qualifying for severe divine wrath. In his above words the Imam was reminding the enemy of the severe punishments and wrath of Allah that had befallen upon the past people of Judaism, Christianity and Zoroasterism when they turned their back against their original belief in ONE GOD.

And by warning the Yazidi men of similar severe, punishment from Allah for their intention to kill the grandson of their Prophet, therein was a hint that their such action would tantamount to SHIRK a major crime of obeying the tyrant Yazid whilst turning against Islam.

## **LIFE WITH HUMILIATION UNACCEPTABLE**

Mounted on a camel on the battlefield of Kerbala on the 10<sup>th</sup> Muharram, the Imam delivered a long sermon in which he admonished the army of Yazid for their lack of faith and turning against him. In affirming his determination of welcoming death with honour rather than life of humiliation, the Imam said this:



ألا وان الدعي ابن الدعي قد ركز بين اثنتين، بين السلة  
والذلة وهيهات منا الذلة، يأبى الله ذلك لنا ورسوله والمؤمنون  
وحجور طابت وطهرت، وأنوف حمية ونفوس أبية من أن  
نؤثر طاعة اللئام على مصارع الكرام

*Beware! Verily the illegitimate pretender (reference to Obaidullah bin Ziyad - the then governor of Kufa) has placed me with an option between a sword and humiliation (i.e. either be killed or pay allegiance to Yazid). Far from us is humiliation. That is forbidden for us by Allah, His apostles, the faithful people and those of purified and clean laps, also by those of self-esteemed faces and elderly souls that I should act in obedience to the mean and debased people in preference to the honourable ones.*

By these words, the Imam has set a noble example to all the people present and of generations to come that this worldly life is only worth living provided it was free of humiliation with no compromise of one's sacred principles. Death was preferable to life of humiliation which consisted of having to bow down before any tyrannical and oppressive ruler.

The Imam then recited the following famous words of the poet Farwat Museek Muradi:

فإن نهزم فهزامون قدما \* وإن نغلب فغير مغلبينا

*If we succeed (in defeating the enemy) then our success would be welcome. And should we be overcome (by the enemy) we would not be (considered as being) defeated.*

وما إن طبنا جبن ولكن \* منايانا ودولة آخرينا

*Not because cowardice became pleasant for us. But we are obliged (by change of circumstances) that (the turn of) success was for others.*

إذا ما الموت رقع عن أناس \* كلا كله أناخ بآخرينا

*If death were to be set aside from some people, it would step into the doorsteps of others.*

فأفنى ذالكم سروات قومي \* كما أفنى القرون الأولينا

*Indeed it (death) has annihilated the elders of my community the same way as it had annihilated those of previous centuries.*

فلو خلد الملوك إذا خلدنا \* ولو بقي الكرام إذا بقينا

*If Kings had lasted (in this world), we too would have lasted. If the honoured ones had remained behind, we too would have remained.*

فقل للشامتين بنا أفيقوا \* سيلقى الشامتون كما لقينا

*Therefore tell those rejoicing upon our misfortunes to take lessons from us. As it (death) would, without doubt, meet those rejoicing, the same way as it has met us.*

The Imam has stressed that death one day is to overtake everyone and there was no way of escaping from it. Even the powerful Kings have not been spared nor have the notable and honorable ones remained behind. Therefore it behoves those endowed with success and high positions in life not to be jubilant and forgetful of what is surely to happen to them ultimately.

## **A SUPPLICATION WHEN FACED WITH CALAMITIES**

When all his companions were martyred, Imam Husain (a.s.) went to his camp to bid farewell to his family members. His sick son, Ali bin Husain narrates: “My father took my hand and pressed

it against his chest. At that moment, I saw blood profusely coming out of his body. He then said to me as follows:

*'O son, I am teaching you a Do'a - supplication to God, which you should remember. It was taught by Gebrael (the angel bringing the divine messages) to my grandfather (the Holy Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.) who passed it on to my mother (Fatema - the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.).*

*Whenever you have a special need or are faced with any calamity or crisis, or are inflicted with any grief or affliction, then recite the following Do'a:*

بِحَقِّ يَسٍ وَ الْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ وَ بِحَقِّ طِهِ وَ الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ يَا مَنْ  
يَقْدِرُ عَلَى حَوَائِجِ السَّائِلِينَ يَا مَنْ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الصُّمِيرِ يَا مُنْقَسِماً  
عَنِ الْمَكْرُوبِينَ يَا مُفَرِّجاً عَنِ الْمَغْمُومِينَ يَا رَاحِمَ الشَّيْخِ  
الْكَبِيرِ يَا رَازِقَ الطِّفْلِ الصَّغِيرِ يَا مَنْ لَا يَحْتَاجُ إِلَى التَّفْسِيرِ  
صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ افْعَلْ بِي كَذَا وَ كَذَا

*By the truth of (for the sake of) Yasin (a title of the Holy Prophet) and the Qur'an full of wisdom, and for the sake of of Taha (another title of the Holy Prophet) and the great Qur'an Oh He Who*

*is able to fulfil the desires of those asking, Oh He Who knows what is in the heart, Oh He Who banishes sorrow from the sorrowful, Oh He Who dispels grief from those who grieve, Oh He Who is merciful to old men, Oh He Who provides for infants, oh he needs not to be explained, send blessings upon Muhammad and his progeny and fulfil for me ..... (mention one's desires).”*

The above Do'a was taught by the Imam to his son at a time when his son was about to face all the calamities. After the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.), Ali bin Husain Zainul Abedeen had to take the charge of womenfolk and children who were surrounded by the enemies and looted and whose camps were set on fire. For Ali bin Husain, at such a time, not to panick and patiently bear the atrocities heaped by the enemies, was indeed a great test of faith and a display of complete trust in God.

The foregoing Do'a in fact is meant to be a lesson to us not to get shaken in faith even under most trying circumstances. The words contained in the Do'a are meant to convey to us that Allah is fully aware of what is going on in our heart, He is capable of dispelling our sorrows and griefs and

He is the only One Who can fulfil all our desires. What is required of us is always to have full trust in Him and rely upon Him and Him alone.

It is we, who due to our shortcomings, weaknesses, and sinfulness, that we are not fit to stand before him all alone. As such, we are taught to present our desires and our problems through the intermediaries and with the recommendations of the divinely chosen personalities in the persons of Muhammad (s.a.w.) and his progeny. We are therefore required to invoke blessings upon Muhammad (s.a.w.) and his progeny whilst supplicating to almighty God.

## **A SLOGAN OF SUPREME VALOUR**

When all his companions were killed one after another sacrificing their lives for Islam, the Imam embarked upon facing his enemy all alone. So valiantly he fought that the frightened enemy fled far from him, touching the gates of Kufa. History is yet to produce one of the like of Imam Husain (a.s.). Despite having been bereaved by the loss in one day of seventy-two of his most

faithful companions and his kith and kin, and despite the three day extreme thirst in absence of water, yet he fought his enemy so bravely and stood firm unrelenting from his noble principles to his last. His following slogan before the enemy in the last critical moments of his life are worth noting:

القتل أولى من ركوب العار\* والعار أولى من دخول النار

*Better be killed than succumb to humiliation. And better humiliation than enter the hell-fire.*

## CONSTANT ATTENTION TO THE LORD

The oppressive surrounding by the enemy on the plains of Kerbala and the three day denial of the supply of water under the desert scorching sun did not deter the Imam from his firm stand against the demand of allegiance from Yazid. In consequence, the heavy sacrifices of lives were knowingly and willingly offered to save Islam.

But what was the factor which prompted the Imam to remain so resolutely steadfast and firm on his stand? What else could it be but his unflinching faith and trust in Allah! And what

better testimony and witness for TAWHID - the Islamic belief in ONE AND THE ONLY GOD other than this could be cited from the history of mankind.

The history of Kerbala tells us how the attention of the Imam, in every critical moment, remained constantly beamed towards Allah. This fact is derived from his statements and prayers on different occasions in the course of the battle.

When heading towards the army men of Yazid on the day of Ashura, the Imam raised his head towards the sky uttering the following words:

اللهم أنت ثقتي في كل كرب، وأنت رجائي في كل شدة، وأنت لي في كل أمر نزل بي ثقة وعُدَّة، فأنت ولي كل نعمة، وصاحب كل حسنة، ومنتهى كل رغبة

*Oh Lord! Upon YOU is my trust under every distress and hope in every calamity. And it is YOU Who is the source of confidence and esteem in every affair that confronts me. YOU are the Guardian of every blessing, the Master of every good work and the Goal of every desire.*

When the eighteen-year old young son Ali-unil-



Akbar came to seek his permission to go to the battle front, the Imam looked at him with a look of despair and with tears flowing over his face saying:

اللهم اشهد فقد برز إليهم غلامٌ أشبه الناس خلقاً وخلقاً  
ومنطقاً برسولك، وكنا إذا اشتقنا إلى نبيك نظرنا إليه

*Oh Lord! Bear witness that a young boy who, of all the people is most resembling in countenance, character, and speech to your Prophet has (now) emerged towards them (the enemy) And whenever we were keen to see your Messenger, we looked at him.*

The foregoing words whilst depicting the sad feelings of the Imam, prove his willing submission to the Lord in sacrificing even such a charming young son - the one who so closely resembled the Prophet of Islam.

Again, when his six-month old baby Ali-unil-Asghar was hit with a three-pronged arrow of Hurmula - the renown Arab archer, piercing through under one ear and coming out from another with blood flowing from the ripped open throat of the child, the Imam was not shaken in his faith and determination. Raising his head

towards the sky and addressing Allah, he said:

اللهم إني أشهدك على هؤلاء القوم، فإنهم نذروا إلا يتركوا  
أحداً من ذرية نبيك

*Oh Lord! Bear witness of those people Oh Lord!  
They (the enemy) have pledged to leave no one  
alive from the descendents of your Messenger  
(Prophet Muhammad s.a.w).*

At that grim moment of his life when the little bleeding child overturned from the hands of his father, the Imam under severe shock and grief could have humanly broken down. Yet for him then to remain composed and to remember Allah is an outstanding testimony of his profound faith and devotion.

And finally when left alone facing the enemy attack from four sides and as a result of countless wounds, he could hold himself no more, the Imam slipped from his horse downwards towards his final place of martyrdom. As he leaned down to the ground, he was heard saying:

باسم الله وبالله، وعلى ملة رسول الله

*In the name of Allah and by the creed of the  
Messenger of Allah*

That his approach to his final place of sacrifice and martyrdom was in the name of and for the sake of Allah, and that his movement was firm on the creed of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) the Messenger of Allah is what the Imam meant to convey to the world through these words.

Abu Makhnaf - the renown historian narrates that as the Imam fell down from his horse with his face touching the ground, the following words were uttered by him:

صبراً على قضائك يا رب، لا إله سواك

*With forbearance on your decree Oh Lord! There is no God but Thee.*

Thus in every critical moment till the end, the Imam's attention to the Lord remained constant and undisturbed. And his devotion and trust in Him and Him alone remained unabated to the last.

## **WHY LAMENT FOR THE MARTYRS?**

According to the martyr Murtaza Mutahhari, laughter and weeping are apparently two

peculiarities of human beings. Laughter and merry-making mostly have a personal and individual aspect. Whereas weeping and lamentation mostly have an aspect of selfdenial and uniting with the beloved ones. Laughter can be said to be like a sexual passion whereas weeping is like love.

Weeping is not always the result of pain or uneasiness. It is quite often accompanied with tenderness of heart, sympathy and agitation. The tears of joy and happiness at times are familiar with human nature.

The philosophy in repeated lamenting for the martyrs is participation in the enthusiasm and harmonizing with their spirit of devotion and sacrifice for the truth. It also signifies the expression of love for those martyred. It is also meant to portray an expression of continued protest against oppression and to arouse hatred and dis-association with oppressors.

By his great personality and heroic martyrdom Imam Husain (a.s.) has become the ruler over the hearts and feeling of millions of people. When reminding people of his heart-rending episode

on the plains of Kerbala, tender feelings erupt from the hearts resulting in tears flowing down their faces. It is a natural sympathy aroused by this most heart-rending and moving episode of human history.

The secret of the immortality of Imam Husain (a.s.) is that his heroic deeds and sacrifices are being sustained from the logical side as well as from the deep feelings of the people. His martyrdom had a reason and logic behind it. The continued lamenting and shedding of tears for the Imam makes the people absorb in their hearts the spirit of sacrifice for the cause of truth and revolution against forces of oppression. The softened hearts as a result of repeated lamentation become receptive to the message of truth and the teachings of the Imam. Thus the assembling of people for lamenting for the martyrs affords opportunity of reforming their lives in the light of the Islamic teachings and sublime ideals of Imam Husain (a.s.).

## SUMMARY

The sayings of Imam Husain (a.s.) on different occasions, contained in the preceding chapters, can be summarised as under:

1. ISLAM as a profound blessing of Allah should always be cherished, protected and proclaimed to others as exhorted by the Holy Qur'an.
2. BACKBITING is such a vicious habit that it has been described as the food of hell-fire dogs.
3. INTELLIGENCE increases with more practical experience.
4. MARTYRDOM of Imam Husain (a.s.) was of paramount importance for the future well being of Islam and for the welfare of mankind. Long before, it was predicted by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) that with the Martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) 'a wave of heat would erupt from the hearts of people.' How true has this prediction proved to be. Today, more than 1300 years after the tragedy of Kerbala, the

remembrance of this tragedy continues unabated with ever increasing fervour.

5. YAZID - the Omayyad Caliph, was not a Muslim but a first class villain and an opportunist who had embarked upon destroying Islam. As such, Yazid's leadership of Muslim Ummah was totally intolerable.
6. BAY'AT of Yazid (allegiance to Yazid) tantamounted to complete sellout of one's freedom of conscious, religion and dignity to a tyrant ruler.
7. CONSTANT FEAR OF ALLAH in this worldly life is essential to earn safety and obtain salvation in the life hereafter.
8. CONGRGATIONAL PRAYER (NAMAZE JAM'AT) led by the Imam on the day of Ashura right on time under the showers of arrows signifies the importance of congregational prayers i.e. praying together and at their exact times.
9. LIFE WITH HUMILIATION is unacceptable and death should be

preferred rather than bowing down to a tyrannical and an oppressive ruler.

10. THE UNSHAKING LOYALTY AND FAITHFULNESS of the companions of the Imam, demonstrated on the burning deserts of Kerbala against heavy odds of being surrounded by thousands of well equipped enemies and under the extreme thirst of three consecutive days, has no parallel in this world
  
11. TAWHID - THE BELIEF IN ONE AND THE ONLY GOD is portrayed in the Imam's total faith and trust in Allah by his detachment from this world and constant attention to HIM till the last moments of his life.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Balaghatul Husain by Ustad Mustafa M. Moosavi
2. Al Imam Husain bin Ali (a.s.) by Dar el. Tawhid.
3. Meerase Imaman by Seyyid Rasool Hejazi.
4. Lohoof by Seyyid bin Tawoos (a.r.).
5. The Martyr - Analysis of the Concept of Martyrdom by Murtaza Mutahhari.
6. Al-Irshad by Shaikh Mufid (a.r.).

September, 1984

5000 copies



Published by:  
Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania  
Box 20033, Dar es Salaam

Printed by:  
PRINTWELL LIMITED, Box 99308, Mombasa