

Kumayt al-Asadi: The Great Revolutionary Shi'ite Poet

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Al-Farazdaq said: "Al-Kumayt was the poet of the first and the last.
'Ukrima al-Dabbi said: "Were it not for his poetry, there would be no translator for the language
nor would there be a tongue for explanation.

(Roudat al-Jinan, vol. 6, p. 59)

He was the foremost thinker and writer of the period. He played an important role in developing
.Arab culture and Islamic scientific movement. The following are some bright sides of his life

His Birth and his Early Life

He was born in the year 60 A. H. It was the year when the Moslem community was bereaved of
Ima`m Husayn, the Lord of martyrs, peace be on him. (Al-Ghadir, vol. 2, p. 211)
So, that tragedy impressed him. It reacted on his feelings and sentiments. That appeared in his
poetry through which elegized Ima`m al-Husayn, peace be on him.
As for his early life, it was in Ku`fa, the capital of the Shi'ites, and the place of revolts against
the Umayyads. He was brought up on the love for the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt),
.peace be on them. So, the love for them was among his elements

His Talents

Al-Kumayt was among the unique in history. He was among the prominent figure in the Arab
nation. He was endowed with noble talents and high qualities. A historian numbered his
qualities as ten. The historian said: "Al-Kumayt had ten qualities, of which no poet had. He was
the orator of Asad's (tribe). He was the jurist of the Shi'ites. He was a memorizer of the Holy
Koran. He was steadfast. He was a writer with good calligraphy. He was a genealogist. He was
disputatious. He was the first to debate (with others) on Shi'ism. He was a Bowman. No one
from Asad's sons was better than him in sharpshooting. He was a pious brave knight.
(Moreover, he was famous for open Shi'ism.(Khazanat al-Adab, vol. 1, p. 99

His Poetry

As for his poetry, it is among the masterpieces of Arab literature. It is the most wonderful of all
that Arab poets have composed. In his poetry, he did not incline to joking and impudence. With
that he separated himself from the poets of Umayya and the 'Abba`sids periods. For they used
their intellectual talents in amusement, futility, and corrupt manners.

As for al-Kumayt, he devoted his poetry to his masters from the Ha`shimites. Thus, proclaimed their noble deeds and their outstanding merits through wonderful Arab poetry. The historians said : "Al-Kumayt did not announce his poetry till he was satisfied with it or sure of it. For this reason his poetry has become masterpieces showing creation, art, and thinking. As for (his poems called) al-Ha`shimiya`t, they are greater than limitation and evaluation. He has inserted in them the evidence for his doctrine, which is indisputable and undoubted. (His poems called) were among the cultural means at those times. For they are rich in thinking and .literature. They were reported in the clubs and the assemblies. So, the people memorized them

Al- Kumayt and al-Farazdaq

The historians reported that al-Kumayt composed his (poems called) al-Ha`shimiya`t. However, he concealed them. He did not announce them among the people. For he wanted to ask the advice of al-Farazad b. Ghalib, the great Arab poet, about them. So, he went to him.

When he met him, he said to him:

"O Abu` Fira`s, you are the chief of (the tribe of) Madar and their poet. I am your nephew, al-Kumayt b. Zayd al-Asadi. You are truthful. You are my nephew. What is your need,"al-Farazdaq asked.

I have composed poetry. I want to submit it to you. If it is good, order me to announce it. If it is bad, order me to conceal it. And you will be the first to conceal it for me," answered al-Kumayt.

So, al-Farazdaq admired his politeness. Then he said him:

"As for your reason, it is good. I hope that your poetry is as equal as your reason. Recite to me what you have written.

Thus, al- Kumayt recited him his wonderful (poem), saying:

I am delighted. I am not delighted for the beautiful women Al-Farazdaq interrupted him, saying:

"My nephew, for what you are delighted?"

"I am not delighted for play. Does the old man play?" replied al-Kumayt.

Yes, my nephew, play. You are at the time of play,"said Al-Farazdaq.

Neither a house nor the trace of the house divert me.

Nor does a finger dyed with henna make me delighted," said al-Kumayt.

Al-Farazdaq admired this poetry. Then he asked: "My nephew, what has made you delighted?"

"Nor do the antelopes that pass me on the right hand in the evening (delight me). (I am not delighted) whether a sounded-horned (antelope) or a one broken-horned (antelope) passes," said al-Kumayt.

Yes. Do not be pessimistic," said Al-Farazdaq.

"However, the people of outstanding merits, piety, the best of the children of Eve (has delighted

me). The good are sought," said al-Kumayt.

This high wonderful poetry moved Al-Farazdaq, so he said:

Woe unto you! Who are they?"

Al-Kumayt said: "(I am delighted at) the white group (the Ha`shimites). Through love for them I seek nearness to Allah. Al-Kumayt controlled the feelings and sentiments of Al- Farazdaq.

"Relieve me! Woe unto you! Who are they?" shouted Al-Farazdaq.

So, al-Kumayt said: "(They are) the Ha`shimites, the family of the Prophet. I am satisfied with them. I always become angry for them. I have made my soul obedient to them out of love (for them). I receive them with pleasure.

This poetry controlled the feelings of Al-Farazdaq. So, he said:

My nephew, announce, and then announce (your poetry). By Allah, you are better in poetry than .those who passed away and those who are still alive

The Characteristics of his Poetry

The poetry of al- Kumayt is distinguished by the religious values through which he sincerely expressed his feelings towards his masters, the Ha`shimites. For he showed sincere affection and love for them. The unquestionable proofs imposed that on him. As for the characteristics

of his poetry, the following are some of them:

1. His poetry concerning the Ha`shimites is not mere sentiment. Rather, it depends on dispute and satisfaction. Shawqi Dayf said: "Thus, al- Kumayt's poetry does not express only feelings. Rather, it also expresses thoughts. Moreover, it expresses the ability of the Arab reason to dispute and to convince. (Al-Tatwir wa al-Tajdid, p. 241).Perhaps, it expresses thoughts more than it expresses sentiments.

These are two lines of his wonderful poems. They represent this trend:

They said:

We have inherited it (the caliphate) from father and mother.

Neither mother nor father had given it to them by will.

They think foolishly they have obligatory right on the people.

However, the right of the Ha`shimites is more obligatory.¹ With these two lines al-Kumayt condemned the persons who usurped illegally the caliphate. For they singled out a right for them and imposed the right on the people. They claimed that they belonged to Quraysh, the

family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. So, they seized the caliphate.

However, the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, satisfied perfectly this condition. For they were the nearest people to him. After these two lines, al-Kumayt praised the great Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. Then he mentioned the right of the

members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, to the caliphate. He said:

They (the Umayyads) said:

He (the Prophet) is not inherited.

Were it for his successors, Bakil, Arhab, 'Akk, Lakhm, al-Sikun, Himyar, Kinda, al-Hayya`n, and Taghlab would equally take part in it (the caliphate).

With these two lines, al-Kumayt wanted to refute the Umayyads, who said that no one would inherit the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. The Explainer of the poems called al-Ha`shimiya` said: "If this was true, the above-mentioned tribes would equally take part in the caliphate." Thus, the caliphate would not be confined to Quraysh. This is logical thinking. Through these proofs, al-Kumayt became a jurist. He composed his poetry as the knowledgeable jurist did. For he was knowledgeable in discussing and proving the problems, as Dr. Yousif Khulayf said. (Hayat al-Shi'r fi al-Kufa, p. 713)

2. Al-Kumayt quoted some verses from the Koran when he praised the Ha`shimites. Addressing the Ha`shimites, he said: We have found a verse concerning you in the verses beginning with Ha` Mim.

The pious and the non-pious from us have explained it.

In other than the verses beginning with Ha` Mim, there are successive verses concerning you.

They are as signposts (of knowledge) for the possessor of tiring doubt.

(Al-Hamshimiyat, p. 40)

In the first line, al-Kumayt meant these Words of Allah, the Exalted: "Say I demand not, of you any reward for it (the toils of preaching), except the love of my relations." (The Holy Qur'an, al-Shura, 23)

In the second line, he meant these Words of Allah, the Most High: "People of the House, surely, Allah intends to keep off from you every kind of uncleanness, and to purify with a thorough purification." (The Holy Qur'an, al-Ahzab, p. 33)

"And give to the near of kin his due. (The Holy Qur'an, al-Isra', 26)

And know that whatever thing you acquire in war, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Apostle and for the near of kin. (The Holy Qur'an, al-Anfal, 41)

Al-Kumayt confirmed the outstanding merits of his masters, the Ha`shimites, with verses from the Holy Koran. For "falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it.

3. Al-Kumayt's poetry on praising the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, is truthful in language, and strong in sentiment. It is free from worldly pleasures. It is full of pure of pure faith. Al-Kumayt composed such kind of poetry to seek Allah's pleasure and the hereafter. The following words of his prove that:

(I am delighted at) the white group (the Ha`shimites). Through the love for them I seek nearness to Allah. Al-Kumayt's love for the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt) was sincere.

For he found no other means to seek nearness to Allah except the sincere love for them.

4. Al-Kumayt composed poetry on the Ha`shimites. In this poetry, he did not depend on the laudable deeds and the outstanding merits he heard. Rather, he depended on his own observations. For he was contemporary with them. So, he recognized their ideals that spread throughout the world. Thus, he adored them. He was like those who adored and admired virtue. Al-Kumayt's poetry was a live picture. It showed the real state of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. For "Allah Kept off from them every kind of uncleanness, and purified them with a thorough purification." These are some characteristics of the poetry. As for its techniques, they require elaboration. However, we have preferred shortness to elaboration in .most of this research

His firm Doctrine

Al-Kumayt had firm faith in his doctrine. He based his doctrine on unquestionable ideas. So, he was the poet of the Shi'ite doctrine. He expressed the Shi'ite ideas and fundamentals. The narrators mentioned that he was the first to split open the door to the pleas for Shi'ites in his poems called al-Ha`shimiya`t. He was their tongue. He defended them. He offered pleas on behalf of them. His poems called al-Ha`shimiya`t pictured the cultural and the ideological sides of the Shi'ite doctrine. They encompassed clearly the affairs of the Ima`mate, which was .regarded as among the basic elements in the Shi'ite doctrine

Al-Kumayt and Ima`m al-Ba`qir

Al-Kumayt devoted himself to Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him. So, he was his special poet. He recited to him some of his poems called al-Ha`shimiya`t, which he wrote about the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. They impressed the Ima`m, peace be on him. So, the Ima`m thanked him for that. He asked Allah to forgive al-Kumayt and to be pleased with him. Al-Kumayt thought there was no one worth of obedience and respect except his master, Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him. He came to him and said:

There passed away those in whose protection (the people) lived.

No one has remained except the gloating (over other's misfortune) and the envious.

Only one (person) has remained in the earth. It is he who is wanted.

(It is you who is that one (person)).(Roudat al-Jinan, vol. 6, p. 56

His longing for seeing the Ima`m.

Al-Kumayt lived in Ku`fa. He longed very much for seeing the Ima`m. So, he traveled to Medina (Yathrib). When he stood before the Ima`m, he recited to him his poem. In his poem, al-Kumayt

described his longing for him. In it he said:

Longing for you has affected me.

So, I covered many places to see you.

O You who are the best one, to you is my obedience and humbleness.

You are my hope.

Thus, the person strives to come to his hope.

You are the followers of Allah.

You have pictures in my eyes and in my ears.

You order (people to do good deeds) and forbid (them from doing evil deeds).

You are not tired of asking Allah for good.

You respond to the one who asks you.

.These lines show his great obedience to the Ima`m and his longing for him

Al-Kumayt elegized al-Husayn

Al-Kumayt was born in the year when Ima`m Husayn, the father of the free, peace be on him, was killed. When he grew up and understood life, he knew that the fears of that immortal tragedy perplexed the people. Thus, they recalled in their assemblies the burdensome misfortunes of Ima`m Husayn, peace be on him. So, those disasters moved the feelings and sentiments of al-Kumayt. They filled his soul with stormy pains. His soul melted for Ima`m Husayn. Thus, he elegized him with many poems. The narrators said that he composed a poem to bewail al-Husayn. Then he went to Ima`m Abu` Ja'far to recite it before him. When he came

to him, he said to him:

O Son of the Apostle of Allah, I have written some lines of poetry about you. Do you permit me

to recite them?

These are the white days.¹ Reciting poetry during them is abominable," replied Ima`m Abu`

Ja'far.

They are especially on you," explained al-Kumayt.

Recite what you have," said the Ima`m.

Thus, al-Kumayt recited:

The time made me smile, and it made me weep.

The time has changes.

Nine (persons) were betrayed in Karbala`.

When the Ima`m heard this elegizing about his grandfather, he burst into tears. His son, Ima`m

Ja'far al-Sa`diq, peace be on him, and the 'Alid women burst into tears too.

Al-Kumayt went on reciting, saying:

Six (persons) with whom no one competed.

They are the sons of Aqil, the best of knights, and 'Ali, their good lord.

Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, went on weeping. Then he told al-Kumayt about the abundant reward Allah had prepared for those who mentioned the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, and had mercy on them.

Then al-Kumayt went on:

Who was delighted at what afflicted you?

Or who was gloating over it one day?

After that glory, you have become lowly.

Then, I cannot repel oppression when it covers me.

So, the Ima`m, peace be on him, took al-Kumayt by the hand and invoked Allah for him, saying:

O Allah, forgive al-Kumayt his past and present sins!"

Finally, al-Kumayt asked:

When will the Truth rise among you?

When will your Mahdi, the second, rise?

So, the Ima`m turned to him. He told him about Ima`m al-Mahdi, may Allah quicken his appearance. He said: "He is the awaited Ima`m. He will fill the earth with justice and fairness as it was filled with oppression and tyranny." "When will he appear?" asked al-Kumayt. The Ima`m, peace be on him, replied: "Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, was asked about that. So, he answered: 'He is like the Hour (of Resurrection), which will (unexpectedly come to you.)' (Al-Ghadir, vol. 2, p. 200

A Poem of his Poems called al-Ha`shimiya`t

Al-Kumayt recited one of his poems called al-Ha`shimiya`t before Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him. It is the most wonderful of Arab poetry. It clearly describes his personal impressions of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. For he observed their noble deeds and ideals. In this poem he said:

My heart does not yearn for youth, nor does it yearn for night dreams nor does it long for beautiful women whose cheeks are as white as the white antelope.

However, my hidden and manifest love is for the Ha`shimites,

who are the best of all people, who are near to generosity,

who are far from oppression,

who are right when the people are wrong,

who has established the rules of Islam,
who are the sufficient defenders when the war breaks out,
who are the rain when drought hits the people,
who are the shelter for the orphans' mothers,
who are the sufficient leaders in all conditions,
who are the doctors of the doubters,
who are able to take vengeance.

They are like the camels that carry water for the people.

They are like the seas that quench thirst.

They are good, righteous, truthful , and liberal.

Their faces are bight. Their grandfathers are generous.

Their lineage is clear.

They are knowledgeable chiefs.

Their honor is shining.

They are noble chiefs.

They are clement. They are just in behavior. They skillful in the critical affairs.

They are the best of all the people in speech and bravery.

In the beginning of his poem, al-Kumayt mentioned that he loved, and that love controlled his feelings and sentiments. For whom is this strong love? Surely, it is not for the beautiful women, who charm the people with their beauty. Rather it is for those who are the best of all people in importance and the highest of them in position. It is for the Ha`shimites, in whom all the elements of honor and glory came together. They were the best of all people in talents and cleverness.

Al-Kumayt confined his obedience and love to them. He did not depend on feelings and sentiments when he loved his masters, the Ha`shimites. Rather, he found them a wonderful example, of which no one had in the history of mankind. He saw, observed, and felt the outstanding merits that promoted them to the highest height , namely the height of thinking and leadership in Islam. Al-Kumayt adored his masters, for he observed the following

outstanding merits:

1. They were the sources of generosity and liberality. They gave generously all what they had to refresh the deprived and to save the poor.
2. They were the source of justice. They did not prefer close relatives to common people. Rather, the people were equal with them. They did not know patronage and the other considerations, which people put into effect out of their sentiments and desires.

3. They were the bravest of all creatures. Fright did not pass through their souls. They took part in many battles. They showed extreme courage, of which no one saw throughout history. For example, Ima`m 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, is known for his bravery. Ima`m Husayn, peace be on him, showed unique courage at the Battle of 'Ashu`ra'. All the members of the Prophet's family had such an outstanding merit. They had courage, of which

no one of the people had.

4. They were the shelter of the orphans and the deprived people when drought hit them. The people found no one to have mercy on them except the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt),

peace be on them.

5. They were the custodians over the affairs of the people. In other words, the people consulted them when they faced with difficult affairs. They also resorted to them when crises and events struck them. There was no one who could solve such difficulties except the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. They had excellent reason and correct

opinions. So, they were able to solve the difficulties and crises of the people.

6. They were wise and skillful in curing psychological diseases. Thus, they could removed the germs of deviation from the truth. They studied the essence of man. So, they knew why he inclined to greediness, caprice, and deviation from the truth. Then they gave him excellent directions to cure his psychological diseases. You find in their words wonderful maxims and

preaching. They said them to reform and educate the people.

7. They were the noble chiefs, who created wisdom to enlighten people. Thus, the thirsty (for wisdom) resorted to them. Those who wanted life depended on their generosity and liberality.

8. They were the seas that quenched the thirst of those who were about to perish. They were

the source of happiness and good for man.

9. They were the best of all people in goodness, truthfulness, generosity, handsomeness, noble

grandfathers, importance, and lineage.

10. They were more important than the people, more just than them, and more skillful than

them in the critical affairs.

11. Throughout history, they exceeded the people in truthful talk, genuine thinking, and fruitful

ideas.

After these lines, al-Kumayt went on mentioning the laudable and the outstanding merits of his

masters, the Ha`shimites, whom he adored. He said:

(They are) beneficiary, givers, feeders without miserliness.

(They are) helpers, very obliging, very forgiving, clement toward the army that devours all

things.

They are able to take vengeance and leave it,
 even if they are angered with ugly words.
 They untie their garments on the day of disturbance.
 They are generous Abtahis. They are as manifest as the stars.
 They are Ghalibis Ha`shimites. They have knowledge from the All-Knowing (Allah).
 They are honest in their positions. Thus, they raise their heads high.
 When war burns, and the knight walks toward the knight,
 they are the lions in war.
 They are the lions of war, the rain of drought, cheerful, and eloquent.
 They are not prattling in the assembly nor are they silent out of confutation.
 They are chiefs. They defend the women when the battle is like the battles (of Arabs).
 They have the sense of honor. They are courageous at the battle.
 They are not unarmed in the battles nor are they sluggish.
 They put into effect the most reliable affair out of their piety.
 They were the first to respond to the message (of the Prophet).
 They perform the pilgrimage (to Mecca).

In these lines, al-Kumayt presented the ideal qualities of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. They are as follows:

1. They earned money. They generously gave this money. They wanted neither reward neither thankfulness.
2. When they were wronged, they were able to take vengeance. However, they left vengeance. For they preferred what Allah has to vengeance. The ugly words of their enemies did not anger them.
3. They were full of clemency. So, they were patient toward every disturbance.
4. They were the chiefs of Quraysh. They were generous. So, they were like the stars or the signposts which the straying follow.
5. They belonged to Ghalib b. Fihr, the lord of the Arabs. So, they belonged to Ha`shim. They got knowledge, of which no one got. Allah, the Most High, endowed them with that knowledge.
6. They were honest in their positions. They were free from sins, mistakes, and defects. So, they raised their head.
7. They showed extreme courage when the battle started. So, they received death with smiling lips.
8. They were not talkative in the assemblies. They talked when there was a necessity to talk. They kept silent when silence was necessary, namely without confutation.

9. They protected their families from oppression during the most critical battles of the Arabs.

10. They were bold during the battles. They were the lions of the battles. They lighted the fire of the battles. They threw themselves into it. They were neither armless nor were they slow in the battles. Rather, they were signposts, leaders, and chiefs.

11. Finally, al-Kumayt gave a perfect picture of the character of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. He mentioned that they depended on the most reliable affairs, and that they refrained from doubts. For they were very pious. Then he mentioned that they were the first to respond to the true message, which the great Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, announced. For Ima`m 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, was the first to believe in Islam. He was the first to defend the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and his message.

After praising the 'Alids, al-Kumayt satirized their enemies, the Umayyads. He said: They (the 'Alids) are leaders. However, they are not like those who treat people as they treat the animals. They are not like 'Abd al-Malik, al-Walid, Sulayma`n, and Hisha`m, whose opinions towards their subjects are like those of the shepherd toward their sheep in the darkness.

Thus, when they (the caliphs) die, their reputation dies, too.

When they live, they do not treat people with justice.

This is the strongest and the most truthful satire of the Umayyads. In these lines, al-Kumayt unveiled the Umayyad politicians, who regarded the people as sheep. They did not believe in the rights of the people. Rather they exposed them to painful tortures. Then al-Kumayt mentioned that the Umayyad kings would have no reputation. For they violated all the rights of the people. They did not establish justice. Thus, the people would not mention them with good.

Rather, they would mention their oppression, tyranny, and severe punishments.

Then al-Kumayt went on praising the Ha`shimites, saying:

They are near to every goodness. They far from every defect.

They are the most merciful of all the people. They are the most clement of them. They have lent a helping hand to people. They have held back the hand of oppression and ignorance from them.

They have put into effect moderation, and gone on it.

Noble deeds and ancient lineage belong to them.

They are the family of the one with truthful talk, Abu` al-Qa`sim, the branch of the noble chiefs. These lines picture the high ideals of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. For they were near to every goodness and far from every ugly deed. They fulfilled all promises. They had mercy on the people. They were the most clement of all the people. These

outstanding qualities and others have made people incline to them, adore them, and admire them. In his wonderful poem, al-Kumayt went on praising the great Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, saying:

He was the most perfect human being from his birth till his death.

He belonged to the noblest lineage.

He immigrated from Mecca to Medina (Yathrib), and resided there.

The delusions of the world did not deceive him.

He guided us to Paradise, so he saved us from the Fire.

Through him, Allah removed ignorance from people.

After praising the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, al-Kumayt praised the great martyr, Ja'far al-Tayya`r, the cousin of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family. He also praised the immortal martyr, Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, saying:

The one who is adorned by two wings (i. e, Ja'far), and the son of Ha`la (i. e, Hamza), the lion of Allah, the brave defender, are from them (the Hashimites).

There is no cousin like this nor is there an uncle like this, who is the lord of uncles.

Then al-Kumayt praised the lord of the trustees, the gate of the city of the knowledge of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, Ima`m 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, saying:

Al-Tajwabi (i. e. , Abd al-Rahma`n b. Muljim) ruined the throne of the community through (murdering) the trustee (i. e. , Ima`m 'Ali).

He (Ima`m 'Ali) was chaste, glorious, good, and skillful in solving the affairs.

He was the trustee (of authority), the ruler, and the knight.

He sometimes fought against the polytheists, and sometimes with the Kha`rijites.

Then al-Kumayt mentioned Ima`m Husayn, the lord of martyrs, and the plant of sweet basil of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family. He said:

The trustee of the trustee, the owner of the sound plan, who ruined the enemies on the day of the enmity. Then al-Kumayt mentioned the tragedy of Ima`m Husayn, peace be on him. For that tragedy has saddened the souls. He said: Many low people killed him at al-Taf (a place near Ku`fa).

When Ima`m Abu` Ja'far heard this line, he burst into tears. Then he said to al-Kumayt, as Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, said to Hassan: "The Holy Spirit supports you as long as you defend, the members of the House (ahl-al-Bayt). (Qasas al'Arab, vol. 2, p. 296. Murujj al-Dhahab, vol. 2, p. 195)

Then al-Kumayt mentioned Abu` al-Fadl al-'Abba`s, the son of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him. For he sacrificed his soul for his brother, Ima`m Husayn, the lord of the free, peace be on him. He said:

And Abu` al-Fadl, indeed, their pretty remembrance, is the cure of selves from illnesses.(Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 84) Finally, al-Kumayt said:

Allah has made pure my love (for the Ha`shimites).

When al-Kumayt had finished reciting his wonderful poem, Ima`m Abu` Ja'far turned to the direction of the Kaaba. He invoked Allah for al-Kumayt, saying:

O Allah, have mercy on al-Kumayt, and forgive him (his sins).

The Ima`m repeated this supplication three times. Then he said to al-Kumayt: "O Kumayt, take this one hundred thousand (dirhams). I have collected it from household." However, al-Kumayt refused to accept the money. He said that he wanted a reward from Allah, the Exalted. Then he asked the Ima`m, peace be on him, for a shirt. So, the Ima`m gave him a shirt.(A'yan al-Shi'a, 1/4/515-516). Al-Kumayt saw off the Ima`m. Then he went to 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan. He recited to him his wonderful poem. So, 'Abd Allah admired the poem, and then he said to al-Kumayt: "O Abu` al-Mustahal, I have a country estate. I have been given four thousand dinars for it. This is the contract of it. I asked some witnesses to testify to that.

Then 'Abd Allah gave the contract to al-Kumayt. However, the latter refused to accept it, saying: "May my father and mother be ransom for you, I had composed poetry concerning other than you. I had wanted the world for it. By Allah, what I have said regarding you is for the sake of Allah. So, I will take neither money nor rewards for what I do for Allah.

Then 'Abd Allah insisted on that. So, al-Kumayt took the contract and went away. Some days passed. Then he came to 'Abd Allah and said to him:

I have a need.

What is it? I will fulfill all your needs.

Every need?"

Yes.

Accept this contract. And return the country estate.

Al-Kumayt gave 'Abd Allah the contract. So, the latter accepted it. Then 'Abd Allah b. Mu'a'wiya b. 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far rose. He took a bag and gave it to four of his retainers. He entered the houses of the Ha`shimites, saying:

O Ha`shimites, this is al-Kumayt. He says poetry about you while the people have kept silent towards your outstanding merits. He has exposed his blood to the Umayyads. Then reward him for that.

Thus, the 'Alids put dirhams and dinars into the bag. Moreover, the 'Alid ladies took off their ornaments and put them into the bag. So, 'Abd Allah collected one hundred thousand dirhams. Then he brought it to al-Kumayt and said to him: O Abu` al-Mustahal, we have brought you a small reward. We are in the state of our enemy. We have collected this sum of money. The ornaments of the women are with it. Make use of it against your time.

However, al-Kumayt refused to accept the money, saying: May my father and mother be ransom for you. When I praise you, I want nothing except Allah and His Apostle. I will take no reward from the world. Return the money to its people. Abd Allah spared nothing to convince al-Kumayt to accept the money. However, the latter (refused to accept it.(Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 2, p. 195

His Poem called al-La`miya

Al-Kumayt recited before Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, his poem called al-Lamiya. This poem moved the feelings and sentiments of the Ima`m. For, in this poem, al-Kumayt mentioned the painful political events at that time. He also mentioned the persecutions from which the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, suffered. In the beginning of the poem, he said: Does the one who commits sins, follows his caprice, pays no attention to wisdom, consider carefully the final results? Does the one whose heart evil and mistreatment control understand the truth?

Does the community wake for its own affair, rise from its lull and slumber, so it takes off the garment of laziness and cowardice, and removes the oppression and tyranny that have befallen it?

The silence (of the people) towards oppression has become long. If this oppression was changed, their silence would be better for them.

In these lines, al-Kumayt summoned the Moslems to end their silence. He warned them from lull and laziness. Then he encouraged them to revolt against the Umayyads, who persecuted the people.

In this wonderful poem, al-Kumayt said:

The (religious) precepts have been canceled.

It seems that we follow a religion other than our religion.

Our words are those of the leading prophets.

However, our deeds are those of the people who lived before Islam.

We are satisfied with the world, from which we do not want to separate our souls.

Yet, in it, we die and are killed.

We cling to it. It is like a shield of which we are afraid.

In the first line, al-Kumayt mentioned that the Umayyads stopped the religious precepts and the Islamic fundamentals. Thus, it seemed that the Moslems followed a religion other than the religion of Islam.

In the second line, he dispraised the Umayyad rulers. For their words were of the righteous. Still, their deeds were contrary to their words. Rather, their deeds were of the people who lived before Islam.

In the last two lines, he ascribed that state of the Moslems to their love for the world. So, they did not revolt against the Umayyad government. Then al-Kumayt said:

The people are neglected. They are like the camels that graze without a driver.

O Politicians, answer what we ask you about. By my life, there are eloquent ones among you.

Are you the people of the Book? Do you rule the people according to it?

In the first line, al-Kumayt said that the Umayyads neglected the affairs of the people. So, the people became like the neglected camels, which had no driver to take care of them. In the last two lines, he asked those politicians if they were the people of the Book, and if they ruled the people according to it. If they were so, then why did they deviate from the religion? Why did they neglect its teachings? Then al-Kumayt went on asking the Umayyads about that negligence. He ascribed oppression and tyranny to them. He numbered their bad qualities. Then he summoned the Moslems to revolt against them. Then he mentioned Ima`m Husayn, the father of the free, peace be on him, saying:

Their swords selected al-Husayn and his companions, as the one who selected plants.

Their horses were covered with blood from the family of Mohammed.

The Prophet of Allah was absent from among them. His absence was a misfortune that befell people.

Al-Kumayt's words and sentiments were truthful when he elegized al-Husayn, peace be on him. His lines moved Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, very much. Then al-Kumayt said:

The fighters hit him (al-Husayn) through the bow of other than them.

The first (Hisha`m) gave error to the last.

In this line, al-Kumayt said that the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, were liable to many disasters. The previous people were responsible for such disasters. For they helped the Umayyads seize the authority and rule over the Moslems. When Ima`m Abu` Ja'far heard this line, he was full of sadness. So, he raised his hands towards the sky. Then he invoked Allah for al-Kumayt, saying: "O Allah, forgive al-Kumayt.

With this, we will end our talk about al-Kumayt's poem called Lamiya. In this poem it was mentioned that he elegized Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him. In it he said:

I will die for the Truth, as Abu` Ja'far died.
Surely, al-Kumayt composed this line after the death of Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him. Then the
.line has been added to his poem called al-Lamiya

His Poem called al-'Ayniya

The following is another wonderful poem of his poems called al-Hashimiyats. Al-Kumayt came to Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, to recite this poem before him. He said to him: "I have written poetry. If I reveal it, I will be killed. If conceal it, I am afraid of Allah, the Most High." Then he recited for the Ima`m, peace be on him, this wonderful poem:

Sleeplessness has dismissed sleep from your eye.

And a care brings tears from it.

The care has controlled the heart. It moves the illness and sadness (in the heart), which has been prevented from happiness. That is for the missing of the chiefs from Quraysh.

In these lines, al-Kumayt described his continuous cares. For they made him sleepless. They made him know nothing except sadness and sorrow. For he always thought about the disasters and misfortunes that befell his 'Alid masters. Those disasters and misfortunes burnt his heart. They filled him with sorrow and sadness.

In his poem called al-'Ayniya, al-Kumayt described his master, Ima`m 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him. He said:

With the Most Merciful (Allah), he (the Prophet) discloses al-Matha`ni (Surat al-Fa`tiha).

Abu` Hasan (Imam 'Ali) was a chosen one for him.

His cousin who degraded his own caprice.

He hastened to please his Creator.

The Prophet chose him, irrespective of those who refused to mention his outstanding merits.

He announced his authority on the day of Ghadir Khum.

However, the men pledged allegiance to each other.

They forgot his right and wronged him.

In these lines, al-Kumayt mentioned Ima`m 'Ali, the commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He mentioned that the Ima`m, peace be on him, supported the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, when he announced his bright message. The Ima`m protected him from the oppressive aggressors. From that he wanted nothing except Allah's pleasure and the hereafter.

The Ima`m, peace be on him, had outstanding spiritual abilities.

So, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, chose him. He made him his helper and the successor after him. He announced that in the general meeting he held at Ghadir Khum. He announced his Ima`mate and his succession (to authority) after him. In this connection, the

Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, said: "Whoever I am the master of, this man, 'Ali is his master. O Allah, befriend whoever befriends, be hostile to whoever opposes him, support whoever supports him and desert whoever deserts him. Thus, Allah and His Apostle pledged allegiance to Ima`m 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, and the first leader of the Islamic Message. However, the people paid no attention to this homage. They ignored their pledge of allegiance to the Ima`m and forgot his high rank. So, they held a meeting under the shelter (saqifa). History books have mentioned in detail this event.

Then al-Kumayt went on reciting his wonderful poem, saying:
Even you are afraid of the sword and the whip, say to the Umayyads wherever they are:
Fie on the time when I am cowardly and obedient to you.
May Allah make hungry him whom you have satisfied.
May He make full him whom you have made hungry through your tyranny.

(Al-Hashimiyat, pp. 81-82)

In these lines, al-Kumayt mentioned the Umayyads. He invoked Allah against their hirelings. He asked Allah to starve them and to deprive them of His mercy. For they were full of the money and gifts of the Umayyds. Meanwhile he invoked Allah for those whom the Umayyads wronged. He asked Him to enrich them and to make them lead a happy life. Then al-Kumayt mentioned the Ha`shimites. He said that they were the leaders of the community. So, they would let the community live in comfort.

The historians said: "When Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, heard this poem, he admired it.
Then he said: 'O Allah, be sufficient to al-Kumayt.

The Ima`m repeated this supplication three times. So, Allah saved al-Kumayt from the prison (of the Umayyads).(Akhbar Shu'ara' al-Shi'a, pp. 72-73

His firm Struggle

Al-Kumayt struggled firmly for his beliefs and fundamentals. In the most critical circumstances, he proclaimed the laudable deeds and outstanding merits of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. He summoned the people to support them. In the meantime he summoned them to revolt against the tyrannical Umayyads. He played an important role in shaking and overthrowing the Umayyad entity. The following is some of his :efforts in this connection

His praising ahl al-Bayt .1

Al-Kumayt praised the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, very much. He numbered their noble deeds and their outstanding qualities in his poems called al-Hashimiyat,

which are the most valuable masterpieces in Arab literature. Worth mentioning, his poems played an effective role in enlightening the Moslems. They made them detest the Umayyads. Al-Kumayt praised the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. However, the Umayyads officially prevented the people from praising them. Rather, they forced the people to curse them on the pulpits. They ordered the teachers to make their pupils detest them. They formed committees to make traditions to defame them. Moreover, they punished severely those who mentioned their laudable deeds. So, al-Kumayt endangered himself when he praised the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. For he resisted the desires of the authority. Besides, he opposed its policies

His dispraising the Umayyads .2

Al-Kumayt played a dangerous role in opposing the Umayyads. For he dispraised their kings. He numbered their bad deeds. In his poetry, he pictured them as the worst creatures. The people memorized what he composed about them. So, they turned away from the Umayyads. They were indignant with them. Thus, his dispraise was among the factors that overthrew the Umayyad government. Among his words on them are:

Even you are afraid of the sword and the whip, say to the Umayyads wherever they are:

Fie on the time when I am cowardly and obedient to you.

May Allah make hungry him whom you have satisfied.

May He make full him whom you have made hungry through your tyranny.

He recited these lines before Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him. So, the Ima`m asked Allah to forgive al-Kumayt and to be pleased with him.(Mu'jam al-Shu'ara', p. 348)

Al-Kumayt also dispraised Hisha`m b. 'Abd al-Malik. He said:

Our words are those of the leading prophets.

However, our deeds are those of the people
who lived before Islam.(Mu'jam al-Shu'ara', p. 348)

Al-Kumayt also dispraised the supporters and the hirelings of the Umayyads. For example, he dispraised al-Hakim b. 'Ayya`sh al-Kalbi. He prided himself of dispraising the Umayyads. So, his son al-Mustahal hastened to him and blamed him for boasting of the Umayyads, saying:

Father, you dispraised and defamed al-Kalbi. Then you boasted of the Umayyads. Yet you have regarded them as unbelievers. Would you boast of 'Ali and the Ha`shimites, whom you follow?

So, al-Kumayt replied:

My little son, al-Kalbi has devoted himself to the Umayyads, the enemies of 'Ali. If I mentioned 'Ali, al-Kalbi would leave mentioning my name, and he would dispraise him. Thus, I would

expose 'Ali to dispraise.

Thus, al-Kalbi refrained from answering al-Kumayt. However, he let sorrow and sadness hurt him.(Al-Aghani, vol. 15, p. 129) 3. His moving Tribalism between the Yemenis and the Naza`ris Al-Kumayt played a dangerous role in destroying the Umayyad state. He spared no effort to stir up discord between the Yemenis and the Nazaris, the most important of the Arab tribes in number and influence and supporting the Umayyad government. In his poems, al-Kumayt dispraised the Yemenis. He numbered their defects.

Al-Mas'u`di reported the reason al-Kumayt dispraised the Yemenis. He said that al-Kumayt visited Abd Allah b. al-Hasan.

The latter asked the former to compose poetry to sow division among the Arabs to overthrow the Umayyad state. So, al-Kumayt accepted that. Then he composed wonderful poems. In them, he glorified the Yemenis, and mentioned their laudable deeds. Meanwhile he dispraised the Qahtanis.

His poetry had great effects on the hearts. Thus, it moved malice and hatred between the two tribes. Di'bil al-Khuza`i, the Poet of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, supported the Qahtanis. I think that there was a secret agreement between al-Kumayt and Di'bil. For they were among the poets of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them.

So, each tribe mentioned its own laudable deeds. Meanwhile they defamed each other. Thus, enmity took place between them. Then the enmity included the people of the villages and the desert. Accordingly, their hearts were full of malice and hatred. Discords occurred between the two families. Marwa`n b. Mohammed al-Ju'di, the last Umayyad king, sided with the Nazaris. The Yemenis deviated from the Umayyads. Then they joined the 'Abba`sids. With that the Umayyad state collapsed. Ahmed Amin said: "A short time after al-Kumayt, the Umayyad state (was overthrown.(Duha al-Islam, vol. 3, p. 206

His Arrest

Al-Kumayt satirized the Yemenis. His satire became famous. The people talked about it in their assemblies and clubs. Kha`lid b. 'Abd Allah al-Qasri, the governor of Ku`fa heard of it. He sided with the Yemenis. He said: "By Allah, I will kill al-Kumayt."The historians said: "Kha`lid b. 'Abd Allah al-Qasri bought a very beautiful slave girl. He made her memorize al-Kumayt's poems called al-Ha`shimiya`t. After she had memorized them, he gave her as a gift to Hisha`m b. 'Abd al-Malik. He wrote to him about al-Kumayt's stories and satire against the Umayyads.

He sent him al-Kumayt's poem, in which he said:

O Lord, victory is sought through You.

O Lord, reliance is on You.

It is a long poem. In it al-Kumayt elegized Zayd b. 'Ali, the great martyr, and his son al-Husayn b. Zayd, the immortal martyr. In it, he also praised the Ha`shimites. When Hisha`m received the poem and read it, he became very angry. He wrote Kha`lid a letter, in which he ordered him to cut off al-Kumayt's tongue and hand. So, Kha`lid b. 'Abd Allah al-Qasri ordered the police to arrest al-Kumayt. The police arrested him and imprisoned him. He remained in prison for some (days. During them he suffered from persecutions.(Al-Aghani, vol. 15, p. 114

His Escape from Prison

Al-Kumayt remained in prison. He was afraid and worried. Cares and troubles controlled him. He did not know the time of his execution. The historians said: "Al-Kumayt had a close friend called Aba`n b. al-Walid al-'Ajali. The Umayyads had appointed Aba`n governor over Wa`sit. When Aba`n heard of al-Kumayt's news, he wrote him a letter. In the letter, he said: 'You will be executed. Send for your wife. Put on her clothes, and order her to stay in prison.' He gave the letter to his retainer and ordered him to go quickly to al-Kumayt. Al-Kumayt did that and (escaped from prison.(Muqaddamat al-Hashimiyat, p. 17

Al-Kumayt received Forgiveness

The authorities sought for al-Kumayt everywhere, but could not find him. For he hid himself from them. Al-Kumayt intended to praise Hisha`m and the Umayyads to save himself from them. He had sent his nephew, Ward, to Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, to ask his permission before he did that. Thus, the Ima`m, peace be on him, permitted him. Then Ward came back to his uncle and told him about the Ima`m's pleasures. (Muqaddamat al-Hashimiyat, p. 17)

So, al-Kumayt and a group of the Asadis headed for Damascus. When they arrived in it, they went to a group of the chiefs of Quraysh. They told them about the matter. They accepted that, and then they except al-Kumayt went to 'Unbisa b. Sa'id b. al-'As. They said to him: O Abu` Kha`lid, Allah has given you this noble deed. This is al-Kumayt b. Zayd, the poet of Madar. The Commander of the Faithful (i. e. , Hisha`m) ordered him to be killed. However, he escaped. He has come to you and us.

'Unbisa responded to them. He went to Moslima b. Hisha`m and said to him: "O Abu` Shakir, I have brought you a noble deed through which you reach the pleiades.""What is it?"asked Moslima. They told him about the matter. So, Moslima protected al-Kumayt.¹That became famous. When Hisha`m heard of it, he summoned his son Moslima and asked him: "Why have you protected al-Kumayt without an order from the Commander of the Faithful?"

I have been waiting for the calmness of his anger," replied Moslima.

Bring him immediately," Hisha`m commanded.

Moslina left the assembly of his father. He went to al-Kumayt and said to him: "O Abu` al-Mustahal, the Commander of the Faithful has commanded me to bring you to him.

Abu` Shakir, do you want to submit me to him?" asked al-Kumayt. No," replied Moslima. Moslima paved the way to his salvation. He said to him: "Mu'a`wiya b. Hisha`m has recently died. He (Hisha`m) is very sad for him. When the night comes, sit by his grave. I will send you his children. When he summons you, ask them to tie their clothes to your clothes. Ask them to say: This man has sought protection with the grave of our father. We are worthy of protecting him." Then Moslima left al-Kumayt and went away. When it got dark, al-Kumayt headed for the grave and sat by it. When Hisha`m entered upon morning, he came to the grave of his son. Then he asked: "Who is that over there?" "Perhaps, he is a seeker of protection with the grave," they replied. "Everyone is given protection except al-Kumayt," Hisha`m said. It was said to him: "He is al-Kumayt." He ordered him to be brought. He was brought. The children had tied their clothes to his clothes. When Hisha`m looked at them, he burst into tears. Then the children said: "O Commander of the Faithful, he has sought protection with the grave of our father. My father has died. Forgive al-Kumayt for him and us." So, Hisha`m wept.

Then al-Kumayt praised Hisha`m with some lines of poetry. So Hisha`m said: "Poetry should be like these lines. I am pleased with you"

Al-Kumayt thanked him for that. He asked him to prevent Kha`lid b. 'Abd Allah al-Qasri from pursuing him. Hisha`m accepted that. Then he ordered forty thousand dirhams and thirty garments to be given to al-Kumayt. Then he wrote to Kha`lid to release al-Kumayt's wife and to give her twenty thousand dirhams and thirty garments. So, Kha`lid did that. (Al-Aghani, vol. 15, pp. 115-119)

Al-Kumayt could overcome the events with his cleverness, his eloquent words, and his strong character. He showed neither weakness nor fear before the tyrannical ruler, Hisha`m. Rather he showed solid will and firm determination. He was not satisfied with safety and salvation.

.Rather, he asked Hisha`m to prevent Kha`lid, the governor of Ku`fa, from pursuing him

Admonition and Apology

Al-Kumayt came to Ima`m Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him. The Ima`m welcomed him, sat beside him, smiled at him, and blamed him in a friendly manner, saying:

O al-Kumayt, is it you who said:

Now I have joined the Umayyads?"

Thus, al-Kumayt apologized to the Ima`m for that. He answered as the knowledgeable jurist

did:

Yes, I have said that. I do not want the world through these words. For I have recognized your outstanding merits.

Ima`m al-Ba`qir, peace be on him, was pleased with al-Kumayt. Then he said to him: "If you said that out of precautionary dissimulation, there would be no harm on you. For precautionary dissimulation is lawful.

That occurred for he asked no permission from the Ima`m to praise the Umayyads. Al-Kumayt sincerely loved the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. He was obedient to them. Many tribulations befell him for them. Namely, he was liable to the wrath and adversities of the Umayyads. He ended part of his lifetime in prison. There he was full of fright. From that .he wanted nothing except Allah's pleasure and the hereafter

To Paradise

Al-Kumayt was a brave man. He defended the rights of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. Thus, Allah willed to grant him martyrdom at the hand of the most wicked ones of His creatures. That was as follows: Kha`lid al-Qasri, who punished al-Kumayt severely, was removed from the office. Then Yousif b. 'Amr was appointed ruler over Iraq. So, al-Kumayt went to him to praise him with a poem. Meanwhile he dispraised Kha`lid al-Qasri. However, Yousif's guards sided with him. So, they stabbed al-Kumayt in the abdomen with their swords.

He went out of Yousif's room. He fainted, and then he recovered. He was heard say: "O Allah, Mohammed's family! O Allah, Mohammed's family! .Then he passed away