(.The Path of Imam Husayn (A.S

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In understanding the events of the life of Imam Husayn, upon him be peace, it is necessary to understand his position in relationship to the Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family, which necessitates an understanding of his view of the Qur'an and how this view manifested itself in his actions.

It is reported by al-Kulayni in his book al-Kafi that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, upon him be peace, was heard saying: "Whoever opposes the Book of Allah and the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, has rejected Allah."

To follow the Imams of the House of the Prophet, who are the heirs of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings be upon them all, is to follow the Prophet. The Imams did not bring anything new, but rather followed the way of the Prophet with the knowledge they received one after the other in direct succession from the Messenger of Allah.

It is related in a tradition from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, upon him be peace that he said: "The Prophetic heritage (that is the wasiyah) descended from the heavens to Muhammad as a covenant. There were no sealed covenants which had been sent down to Muhammad except this covenant of the wasiyah. (At the time that Jibril brought it to Muhammad) he said: 'O Muhammad, this is your heritage and testament for your 'ummah which is to be entrusted to the members of your household' (the Ahl ul-Bayt).

The Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family, replied: 'Which ones of the people of my house, O Jibril?' He answered: 'The most excellent among them with Allah as well as their offspring, so that they might inherit from you the knowledge of the prophets in the way that Ibrahim left it as his heritage and testament (to his offspring). This wasiyah should go to 'Ali and his descendants who come forth from him.'"

(The Imam continues his narration) saying: "There were seals placed upon this wasiyah. The first seal was opened by 'Au, upon him be peace, and he carried out whatever instructions were contained therein. Then Hasan, upon him be peace, opened up the second seal and carried out whatever he was commanded to do. When Hasan died and passed on, Husayn, peace be upon him, opened the third seal and he found the command, '. . . fight, kill and be killed, go out with a group of your people to your own martyrdom for they will have no martyrdom without you.' So he did that. Before he passed on, he handed it over to 'Ali ibn Husayn, upon him be peace, who opened the fourth seal and found the instruction, and keep

your head bowed, for the knowledge has passed behind a veil.' When he died he handed it over to Muhammad ibn 'Ali.

upon him be peace, who opened its fifth seal and found the command: '. . . explain the Book of Allah, confirm your forefathers, pass this wasiyah on to your son, establish the 'ummah, stand up with the Truth of Allah, speak the Truth in conditions of fear or security, and do not fear anything but Allah. So he did that and passed the wasiyah on to the one who followed him . . ."

(that is, to Imam Ja'far, upon him be peace, who related this hadith.)

In Surat un-Nisa', ayah 59, Allah has said:

Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and the possessors of authority among you.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, upon him be peace, was asked about the meaning of this ayah and he replied: "This ayah was sent down regarding 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. Hasan and Husayn, upon them be peace." The person who was address-sing the Imam asked him: "The people ask why is it that the Messenger did not name 'Mi and the members of his household in the Book of Allah?"

He answered:

"Reply to them that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, had the command concerning salat sent down to him and Allah did not say whether the salat would contain three or four rak'ats until the Messenger of Allah himself explained it to them. The instruction concerning zakat was sent down and it was not stated that one dirham should be given for every forty dirhams until the Messenger of Allah explained it. The instruction to perform the Hajj was sent down and Allah did not say: 'Perform seven tawafs,' but it was the Messenger of Allah who explained the ayah."

The Imam continues concerning the ayah above: "This ayah was sent down in regard to 'Mi, Hasan and Husayn. The Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family, said (on several notable occasions) about 'Mi: 'For whomever I have been his master and leader so 'Mi is his master.'

"He also said: 'I admonish you to adhere to the Book of Allah and my Ahl ul.Bayt for I have asked Allah to not separate them until He brings them to me at the pool (of Kawthar), and He granted this to me.'

"The Prophet said also: 'Do not teach them for they are more knowledgeable than you.' He also said: 'You will never expel them from the door of guidance nor will you ever cause them to enter into the door of misguidance.'

"If the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, had remained silent and did not make clear who his Ahl ul-Bayt were, the family of so-and-so or some one else would have made the claim. But Allah sent down a confirmation for his Prophet in the ayah:

Indeed Allah Wants to remove impurity from you Ahl ul-Bayt and to purify you a thorough purification.

(Surat ul.'Ahzab:33)

"And the Messenger of Allah called 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn, upon them be peace, and placed them under his cloak while he was in the house of 'Umm Salamah, then he said: 'O Allah, every prophet has a people and an anchor and these are my people and my anchor.' 'Umm Salamah asked him, 'Am I not one of your people?' He replied: 'You are in goodness but these are my people and my anchor.'

"When the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family, died, 'Ali, upon him be peace, was the most deserving of the people because of all that he had received from the Messenger of Allah and by virtue of the Prophet having stood with him before the people and taking him by the hand (declaring him to be his successor). When 'Ali passed on he could and did not include his sons Muhammad ibn 'Ali nor 'Abbas ibn 'Ali nor any of his other children in the Imamate. (If he had) Hasan and Husayn would have said, 'Allah sent down the commandment concerning us and concerning obedience to us in the same way that He sent it down concerning you and concerning the obedience to you. We have received (knowledge) from the Messenger of Allah in the same way that you received it from him and Allah has removed impurity from us in the same way that He removed it from you.' "When 'Ali passed away, Hasan, upon him be peace, was the most deserving of the Imamate because of his being older. When he died he did not appoint any of his own sons to that position, although Allah had stated (in the Qur'an):

And the closest relatives are nearer to one another in the ordinance of Allah. (Surat ul-Anfal:75)

"Had he placed (the Imamate) with his son, Husayn, upon him be peace, would have said (to him): 'Allah has commanded that I be obeyed in the same way that He has ordered that you be obeyed and that your father be obeyed. The Messenger of Allah gave me knowledge as well as he gave it to you and your father. Allah has removed impurity from me like He has removed it from you and your father The ones then who possessed the authority from Allah were the Imams from the household of the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all, and Allah with this ayah, Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and the Possessors of authority among you, has made obedience to them obligatory. Likewise, the Messenger of Allah made it absolutely clear on many occasions that Ali ibn Abi Talib was his successor.

In a tradition related by al-Kulayni who reports it with its chain of authorities relating that

Sulaym ibn Qais said: “I witnessed the will and testament of Amir ul-Mu’minin (‘Ali bin ‘Abi Talib, upon him be peace) when he appointed his son Hasan as his heir. Husayn and Muhammad ibn Ali witnessed it as well as all of his other children and the leaders of his followers and family members. At that time he gave him (Hasan) a book and his weapon and said to his son Hasan: ‘O my son, the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family, has commanded me to make you my heir, and to hand my covenant (of the wasiyah) and my weapon over to you.

When he appointed me his heir and gave me his covenant and his weapon, he also commanded me to order you to appoint your brother Husayn as your heir at the time of your death.’ He then turned to his son Husayn and said: ‘The Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon hun and his family, has likewise ordered you to turn this over to your son.’ He then took the hand of ‘Ali ibn Husayn, and said to him: ‘The Messenger of Allah has commanded you to turn this over to your son Muhammad ibn ‘Ali and to give his salams from the Messenger of Allah and from me.

Those who oppose Husayn, upon him be peace, oppose both the Book of Allah and the explicit instructions of the Messenger of Allah. The Imams from the house of the Prophet are the signs of the grace and favor of Allah to His creation. They are the ones that the Messenger of Allah described as being like the ship of Nuh: whoever board it shall be saved and whoever miss it will perish. They are the Grace of Allah of which He spoke when He described the fate of those who exchange His Grace for worldly wealth and power, saying:

Have you not seen those that exchange the Grace of Allah in reiection (of Him) and place themselves in the abode of destruction, Jahannam. (Surat Ibrahim:28-29)

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq, upon him be peace, recited the following ayah from the Qur’an:

And remember the favors of Allah, perhaps you will be successful. (Surat ul-A’raf:69)

He then said: “Do you know what the favors of Allah are?” (The man he spoke to) replied: “No.” The Imam then replied: “They are the most sublime blessings of Allah upon His creation, which is our wilayah” (guardianship).

This world is but an inn on the highway to the Yawm ul-Qiyamah. It is through the example of absolute trust in Allah’s wisdom and fathomless knowledge exhibited by lmam Husayn, that we will find success both in this world and the next. If we transgress the boundaries Allah has clearly established for us in the Qur’an, and which the Prophet and the Imams have further detailed for us, we will have left the protection of Allah and brought about our own destruction.

It is related by al-Kulayni that a man named Khaythamah related that Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq, upon him be peace, said to him, “O Khaythamah, we are the tree of the Prophethood, the abode

of mercy, the keys of wisdom, the treasure-house of knowledge, the storehouse of the prophetic message, the ones who are frequented by the Angels and the storage place for the secrets of Allah.

We are that which has been entrusted by Allah to His servants. We are the greatest sanctuary of Allah. We are the protection of Allah. We are the Covenant of Allah. Whoever should break this covenant has broken the covenant of protection with Allah."

Imam Husayn, like his brother and father, upon them be peace, was raised in the house of the Prophet. The Prophet actually took charge of his upbringing until his death, then Imam 'Ali, upon him be peace, took it on. His knowledge was what he received from the Prophet himself, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family, while he was in the Prophet's house. On the journey to Karbala, at a stopping place called Tha'labiyyah, the Imam was replying to someone who came to him, and during their conversation the Imam asked which city he had come from and the man replied that he had come from Kufa. The Imam, upon him be peace, said the following to him:

"By Allah, if I had met with you in Medinah I would have shown you the footprints of Jibril in our house and the place where he descended with the revelation to my grandfather. 0 Brother of the people of Kufa, we are the spring of knowledge (of Allah). Can it be that they (our enemies) should know and we are ignorant? This cannot be so."

The closeness of Imam Husayn to the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah grant them both peace and blessings, is spoken of clearly in a tradition related by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, upon him be peace, who said:

"Jibril, upon him be peace, came down to Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him and his family peace, saying: 'O Muhammad, I bring you the news of a child who will be born to Fatimah and whom your 'ummah will kill after you.' The Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, replied: 'O Jibril, I send my salams to my Lord, but I am not in need of a child who will be born to Fatimah and killed by my 'ummah after me.' So Jibril ascended to the heavens then descended once again saying:

'O Muhammad, your Lord sends you His salams and the news that He will place the Imamate, the wilayah, and the wasiyah within your offspring.' The Prophet replied: 'I am contented.' Then he sent (the message) to Fatimah, upon her be peace, (saying): 'Allah has informed me of a child who will be born to you and who will be killed by my 'ummah after me.' She replied: 'I have no need of a child from me whom your 'ummah will kill after you.' (The Prophet) sent her (the message) that Allah would place the Imamate, the wilayah and the prophetic heritage (that is, the wasiyah) within her offspring to which she then replied: 'I am contented.'" Then the Imam

as-Sadiq quoted the ayah:

And his mother carried him in difficulty and bore him in difficulty. (Surat ul-Ahqaf: 15)

"Imam Husayn was not nursed by Fatimah, peace be upon them both, nor by any other woman. The Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family, used to come to him and put his own thumb into Husayn's mouth who would suck and receive enough nourishment to suffice him for two or three days Imam Husayn, upon him be peace, will stand as the example of self-sacrifice and trust in Allah for the people of iman until the Yawm ul-Qiyamah. He knew with absolute certainty, the nature of this world and its defects.

It is related in a tradition from Imam as-Sadiq, upon him be peace, who said: "At the time when help (from the angels) descended upon Husayn ibn 'Ali at Karbala to the point that it extended from the heavens to the earth, he was given a choice between this help and meeting Allah. He chose the meeting with Allah."

The goal of those who fought against Imam Husayn was limited to the pursuit and acquiring of mere worldly power and authority. For this they were willing to kill the grandson of the Prophet of Allah. They were willing to ignore the Qur'an, the Book of Allah.

Their immediate goal of worldly power and domination over others was attained but where are they now? Few people even know their names anymore. Where are the graves of those who fought against Imam 'Mi and his sons, upon them be peace? Where is the grave of Muwawiyah? Where is the grave of Yazid? Where is the grave of Abu Sufyan? Where are the fruits of their victory? Where are the kingdoms? Where are the Bani Umayyah? Those who ruled for one thousand months.

The night of Power is better than a thousand months. Where are the 'Abbasi's? Their victories were but hollow victories and their motives were so transparent. Those who appeared to be the losers were in reality the winners and will remain so until the Yawm ul.Qiyamah. The blood of Imam Husayn will always stand as a testimony against tyranny and oppression. The message that the Imam taught was the message of the Holy Qur'an:

The love of the desires for women and children, for amassed wealth of gold and silver, for steeds arrayed in ranks, for cattle and lands are made to appear beautiful to men. That is the pro vision of the worldly life, and with Allah is the beautiful return. (Surat Aal-i Imran:14)

The one that understands the nature of the world understands that it is constantly passing away. Ultimately all that remains is al-Baqi:

Everything upon it (the earth) is perishing and the Face of your Lord will remain, the Possessor of Glory and Generosity.

(Su rat ar-Rahman: 26-27)

In a tradition related from Imam Zayn ul-Abidin, upon him be peace, he relates that on the night of Ashura Imam Husayn was seated in his tent with a number of his companions when he spoke the following words of poetry:

يا دهـر أفٍّ لـك من خليـل كم لك بالإشراق و الأصيل
من صاحب أو طالب قتيل و الدهـر لا يـقـنع بالـبديـل
و إنـما الأمر إلى الجـليـل و كـل حـيٍّ سـالـك سـبـيـل

Oh time, fie upon you as a friend,
For how many of your companions and seekers have fallen in the mornings and nights; And you will not be satisfied with any change (to your nature). Yet the affair is to the Exalted, the Sublime, and every living thing is a traveler of the path (toward death).

Imam Zayn ul-Abidin, upon him be peace, said: "When I heard this poem, I understood from it that he was speaking of his own death and an-flouncing his martyrdom. My eyes filled with tears but I refrained from weeping. On hearing these words my Aunt Zaynab, upon her be peace, after his companions had departed, began to cry out: 'O I wish I was dead so that I would not be forced to witness such a day. 0 you (she said, speaking to Imam Husayn) who is the memory of those loved ones who have departed from me, 0 you who are a refuge for my loved ones who remain. It is as if I will lose all those whom I hold dear to me today. That which is about to take place is the same thing which happened to my father 'Ali, my mother Zahra and my brother Hasan.'

"The Imam consoled Zaynab and told her to be patient saying: 'O my sister, take up the path of patience, and know that all of the people of the world will die and none of the inhabitants of the heavens will remain. Everything shall perish but the Face of Allah who created the earth with His power, Who sent the creation forth and to Whom all shall return. He is absolutely unique, alone. My father was better than I and my mother was better than I. My brother was also better than I. And the Messenger of Allah, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family, is an example for me and for all of them.'"

There was indeed a good example for you in the Messenger of Allah for those who want Allah and the last day and who rem ember Allah much. (Surat ul-Ahzab:21)

And seeking help by way of patience and salat, this is indeed a mighty task except for those who are fearful, those that know they will meet their Lord and that they shall return to Him. (Surat ul-Baqarah: 45-46)

According to the narrations of Ibn Quluyah and Mas'udi, Imam Husayn, upon him be peace,

turned around after he had prayed the salat of Fajr on the day of his martyrdom and said the following:

“Surely Allah has given the permission for you and I to be killed on this day. You must now be patient and continue to struggle.