

Imam Husain's Role in Reviving Islam

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On the third day of the blessed month of Sha'ban, the fourth year after Hijrah and a year after the birth of Imam Hasan (A.S.), the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) was given the news of the birth of Imam Husain (A.S.). He hurried to the house of Imam Ali and Fatima al-Zahra '. "O

Asma '. " he ordered Asma ', the daughter of Umays , "bring me my son."

She took the newborn to him. The infant was wrapped in a piece of cloth. The face of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) lit up upon seeing his grandson. He took him in his arms. He recited the call to prayer (azan) into his right ear, and read the shorter version (iqama) in his left ear. He, then, placed the baby in his lap and wept.

" May my father and mother be your sacrifice, " Asma' asked him, " why are you crying?"

"Because of my son," he replied.

"He is a newborn baby," she said.

"O Asma'," he said, " After me, the transgressing party will kill him. May Allah never grant them my intercession." Then he said: "Asma', do not tell Fatima about this, for she has just given birth to him." At that moment, the revelation descended on the beloved Messenger, Muhammad (S.A.W.), with the name of the infant. Having received the divine order, the

Messenger (S.A.W.) looked at Imam Ali (A.S.) and said:

".Name him Husain

The Status of Imam Husain (A.S.):

Imam Husain (Abu Abdulla) (A.S.) had a lofty position in the Qur'anic verses which mentioned his high position with the position of Ahlul-Bait (A.S.). next to the verses of the Glorious Qur'an like the verse of Purification, Malediction, Affection and others, we quote statements, from the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) as additional evidence expressing the lofty position occupied by

Imam Husain (A.S.) in the world of Islam and the Muslim Ummah. Some of them are:

1. In the Sahih of Tirmidi, The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) said:

"Husain is from me and I am from Husain, Allah loves whoever loves Husain."

2. Salman Farsi is reported to have said: I heard the Prophet of Allah (S.A.W.) saying: "Hasan and Husain are my two sons. Whoever loves them, then he loves me and whoever loves them then Allah loves him. And whomsoever Allah loves, He will make him enter Paradise. And whoever dislikes them then dislikes me. And whoever Allah dislikes, He will throw him into hell

face downward."

3. Ali bin Husain (A.S.) said, on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather (A.S.), "The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) took the arms of Hasan and Husain and said, 'Whoever loves me and loves these two and their father, he will certainly be with me on the Day
".of Judgement

Aspects of His Character:

Under the supervision of his grandfather (S.A.W.), his father, and his mother, al-Zahra' (peace be upon them all), the aspects of his characters fused together personifying the Message of Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, in thought, action and conduct. Here, we cite some examples regarding him:

Shu'aid bin Abdul-Rahman is reported to have said: "On the way to Taf (Battle of Karbala'), wherein he was martyred) a mark was seen on the back of Husain bin Ali (A.S.). Imam Zainul-Abideen (A.S.) (his eldest son, and the son who survived the battle) was asked about it. "It is the trace," he replied, "of the bag, which he puts on his back (carrying food) to the house of the widows, orphans and the poor."

Another example, reflecting his humble nature is that of his acceptance of an invitation to having food with the poor. He encountered a number of poor men. Having had their food they hastened to ask him to share with them. He dismounted from his horse saying: "Surely, Allah does not like the haughty." He partook of their food and said: "I have accepted your invitation won't you accept mine?"

"Certainly, we will," said they. He took them to his house and said to al-Rabab, his wife, "Bring us what you have been storing."

2. One day he was asked, "How great is your fear of your lord?"

"No one would be secure on the Day of Judgement except those who feared Allah" he replied." The night before the tenth of the month of Muharram, Imam Husain (A.S.) asked the Ummayyad army to delay the battle till the following morning. He said: "This night we want to offer our prayers to our Lord, and we want to ask His forgiveness. He knows that I love to offer my
".prayers to Him, recite His Book, and pray much asking for His forgiveness

Imam Husain Revived Islam:

Whoever follows the life of Imam Husain bin Ali (A.S.) will deeply realize that his role in Islamic life started very early. While still a young man, he contributed, effectively, to the rising movement of Islam. Eminent was his role during the Imamate of father, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (A.S.) and side by side with his brother Imam Hasan (A.S.).

In the wake of Imam Husain's (A.S.) departure to his Exalted Lord, Imam Husain's (A.S.) role entered a new phase due to the complications which sprung up in the midst of the Ummah, since the role of any Imam from the house of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), is defined by the nature of the social, ideological and political developments of his time.

Indeed, Imam Husain (A.S.) faced the deviated Ummayyad plot in the Islam and, also, the difficult conditions which the Ummah lived in. He (A.S.) also lived its danger proportions after the signing of the peace document between Mu'awiya and Imam Hasan (A.S.). The following goals figure in Mu'awiya's notorious plan:

1. Unleashing a wave of terror, and embarking on elimination of all opposition forces, particularly the followers of Imam Ali (A.S.). They were hunted down, and every means of oppression and terror was employed to silence every free voice

Mu'awiya wrote to his governors:

"Whoever is accused of being loyal to these people severely punish him and tear down his house."

In short and expressive words Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A.S.) depicts this bloody tragedy. He says:

"Our true followers were killed in every city. Hands and legs were cut off at the slightest suspicion. Whoever was reported to love us or had any contact with us would either be imprisoned or robbed of his property or his house destroyed. Oppression increased in volume and became unduly harsh, till the time of Ubaidulla bin Ziyad, the murderer of Husain (A.S.)."

Ibn Atheer, a historian, recorded the bloody account of events that took place during the time of Mu'awiya. He said:

"After Ziyad appointed Sumre, temporarily, as a governor of Basra, the latter killed great numbers of people. Ibn Sirin said: 'During the absence of Ziyad, Sumra put to the sword eight thousand men'. 'Don't you fear you have killed an innocent person?', Ziyad asked Sumra. 'Had I killed a double number I would never have feared', replied Sumra.

Sawari Adwi said: 'Sumra had killed, during a single day, forty-seven of my companions. All of them had memorized the Qur'an."

2. Dispersing money for the sake of buying-out men, and weakening their Islamic character, and helping the deviant policy of Mu'awiya to fulfill its devilish objectives. In reality, two kinds of men were exposed:

A. A number of preachers and traditionists whose role was outrageous in working in favor of Mu'awiya. They forged traditions and falsely attributed them to the Prophet of Allah (S.A.W.) in order to deprecate Imam Ali (A.S.) and all members of his family.

B. Leading social men who might act against the Ummayyad rule. It was a policy practiced by Mu'awiya and the other rulers of the Ummayyad dynasty. War of starvation. It was the most effective weapon used by the Ummayyads. The Muslim Ummah felt humiliated and unable to change the rulers. His (Mu'awiya) recorded directive, which he sent to his governors in this respect said: "See to it that whoever is proven, by irrefutable evidence, to love Ali and his household, his name should be erased from the public register, and his pay and food allotment should be dropped."

The economic structure during that period was thoroughly recorded by the historians. They wrote about the disturbed scales of economic distribution. Individuals were the possessors of great wealth. Certain ones took advantage of the Ummayyad influence from the outset, during the latter years of the rightly guided caliphs, at which time they literally piled up money. For example:

"Amru bin Aas the governor of Egypt under Mu'awiya, left a wealth amounting to 325,000 Dinars (gold), 1000 dirhams (silver), crops worth 200,000 dinar in Egypt and the well-known estate in Egypt, which was worth 10,000 (gold) Dinars."

4. Breaking the bonds holding the Muslim Ummah as one entity by stirring up the nationalist, tribal and regional spirit among the different groups and reviving the spirit of sectarianism of the Arabs against the non-Arab Muslims.

5. Assassination of Imam Hasan bin Ali (A.S.) as he was the legitimate symbol of original Islam.

6. Crowning Yazid, a corrupt wine-drinker and gambler, as the new ruler after Mu'awiya. The mandate given to Yazid to lead the Muslim Ummah, plan its future, and define its course of action meant in reality, the liquidation of the Islamic existence. It was an actual regression from it shrouded in another attire.

Yazid, as history testifies, was overwhelmed by deviation in his thought, practices and feelings. It is on wonder that our history brims over with stories about Yazid's daily practices which were immersed in deviation, under the noses of the majority of the Muslims in Syria. He plunged himself into debauchery, vain entertainment, alcohol-drinking, womanizing and singing. He was .so careless and morally corrupt that he used to put gold bangles on his dogs

The historian, Baladuri said:

"Yazid had a monkey named Abi Qais... that he would bring along with him to where he and his associates would drink wine. He would place a pillow for his monkey which was very vile. He would carry it on a wild she-ass, which had been tamed, with a saddle and reign. Abi Qais ".would take part in competitions against horses on a fixed day

Another historian, Ibn Atheer, said:

"It is narrated that Yazid was well-known for playing stringed instruments, drinking wine, singing, hunting, occupying himself with lads, female singers and dogs. He used to make rams, bears and monkeys to fight each other. No day passed unless he was drunkard. He also used to strap a monkey to a horse having a saddle and make it ride it and make the monkey wear caps of gold and, likewise, the lads he associated with. When a monkey died, he expressed his sorrow for it. It was said that the reason for his death was that once he carried a young monkey and made it dance and it bit him."

If the caliph behaves like this, what about the others. In this respect, an historian, Mas'oodi said:

"Yazid's governors and officials were influenced by his corruption. During his rule singing spread throughout Madinah. Musical instruments were used. People began to drink wine in public."

Since Mu'awiya decided to appoint his son, Yazid as the caliph of the Muslims after him and which is opposite to the principles of Islam and its regulations, this decision stimulated the Islamic public opinion, particularly the well-known Islamic personalities in the society. And, so, the Ummah stood at the threshold of a new stage in its history. Ahead of it there were two choices:

1. Either to develop a strong rejection of the type of life being imposed on it, whatever the price.
- 2 .Or to accept the de facto life, wherein it had to give up its message, the source of its greatness and symbol of its pride among other nations

The Uprising: Why?

If we study the life of Imam Husain (A.S.), the events he witnessed, and the circumstances which beset him, we will easily detect the fact that he had no chance whatsoever of scoring, materialistically speaking, a victory over the oppressive authorities of the Ummayyads.

Though he was quite sure that he would be killed, he was insisting on starting his uprising and standing his ground till the tragically inevitable end.

Why did he insist so? Rather, why was the uprising?

Without Imam Husain's revolution, the way represented by the Ummayyad being in all its deviations, oppression and corruption, was the one which represented Islam in the minds of mankind till the present time.

Imam Husain (A.S.), the second son of Imam Ali (A.S.), and the grandson of the holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), was a pure page of the book of Islam, and a vivid translation of its goals

and concepts. That is why he first one who responded to the call of faith in his time. In order to honor his commitments to the Shar'ia, he had no other way before him other than that of uprising. Without it there would be no reforms. The first communiqué of his uprising incarnated this fact with all its positive implication:

"And I am not taking up arms in order to make merry, or be ecstatic over what I possess. I am not making mischief, nor exercising oppression. But, I am ready to fight for the sole goal of seeking reform of the Ummah of my grandfather, the Prophet of Allah (S.A.W.). I want to enjoin good and forbid evil and guide the affairs of the people as my grandfather, and my father, Ali bin Abi Talib(A.S.) were doing."

These are the basic justifications which gave Imam Husain (A.S.) and his followers the right to start their uprising. An uprising which still echoes in the minds of the people today. It is the revolution that immortalized Islam and inspired the revolutionaries throughout the ages, to defend Islam and fight heroically in the battle of sacred jihad against the unjust and .oppressors

Wind of the Uprising:

Shortly after the death of Mu'awiya, his son, Yazid, took over. He ordered his governors to take the pledge of allegiance to him from the people. He focused on Imam Husain (A.S.), in particular, due to the Umayyad conviction that he was the unshakable resisting force among the opposition. Once they subjugated him, all dams before them would collapse. The opposition, minus Imam Husain (A.S.), would be easily subdued.

Instantly, Yazid wrote to the governor of the city of Madinah, Walid bin Utba, to take the pledge of allegiance from the people of Madinah, in general, and from Imam Husain (A.S.), in particular. Indeed, Imam Husain (A.S.) explained his refusal of giving the pledge of allegiance to Yazid. He said to Yazid's governor in Madinah, Walid:

"Yazid is a corrupt man, who imbibes wine, puts to death the soul which Allah forbids to be harmed and declares his debauchery in public. A man like me would never give pledge of allegiance to him."

In return, Imam Husain (A.S.) explained the qualifications of the leader to whom the pledge of allegiance should be given, in his letter addressed to the inhabitant of Kufa:

"By my life, what is the Imam except one who is judged by the Book of Allah, one who upholds justice, one who professes the religion of truth, and one who dedicates himself to the essence of Allah."

That was the starting point of the rejection of the policy of treachery and oppression. Imam Husain (A.S.) made up his mind to shoulder his responsibility to challenge the oppressors, as

he was the legitimate Imam of the Ummah and the righteous with the faith. He went to the tomb of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), his grandfather and offered prayer beside it. Then, he raised his hands in prayer: "O Allah! This is the grave of Your Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), and I am the son of the daughter of Your Prophet. You know what I am going through. O Allah! I love good and detest evil. I beseech you, O! The Lord of glory and honor, and adjure You by this grave and its contents, to choose for me whatever pleases You and Your Prophet." Imam Husain (A.S.) hastened to gather the members of his family and the loyal among his companions. He told them about his decision to move to Makkah, the sanctuary of Allah. The objectors increased in number. They beseeched him to yield. They were helpless and .thought he would be killed in vain

Imam Husain (A.S.) was too determined to back down.

The caravan of Imam Husain (A.S.) marched towards Makkah. The name of Allah was on his tongue, and his heart was filled with love of Allah. Upon entering Makkah, he recited the glorious verse: "And when he turned his face towards Madyna, he said: Maybe my Lord will guide me in the right path." He stayed at the house of Abbas bin Abdul-Muttalib. Throngs of the faithful gathered to welcome him. The news of the Imam's (A.S.) departure from Madinah and his refusal of giving the pledge of allegiance to Yazid spread. Thus, different delegations and letters of support for him began to reach him from diverse lands. As a result, he (A.S.) began to send books and letters of answer in which he called them to revolt and overthrow the power of Yazid and deposit his allegiance which was brought through force, terror, bribery and tricks. A result of this movement was that the spirit of revolution began to spread in Iraq. Imam Husain (A.S.) monitored the reactions of the Muslims throughout the Islamic provinces towards the ascension of Yazid to the office of caliphate. Kufa, the capital of Iraq, was witnessing a revolutionary movement and a remarkable political shake-up. After long periods of terror and suppression the opposition forces stirred seeing it the golden chance to free themselves from the yoke of the tyrants. At the head of these revolutionaries were the followers of the Ahlul-Bait (A.S.). They held an emergency meeting to discuss the mounting tension in Kufa and the responsibility they should take vis-à-vis the change in the government, after Yazid bin Mu'awiya had taken the affairs of the Ummah into his own hands. After reaching a consensus on this point, the leading men of Kufa wrote a letter in which they

declared their total and final rejection of the Ummayyad rule and they knew no substitute for Imam Husain (A.S.). Then letters poured in from Kufa carrying the urgent call of the Kufans for Imam Husain (A.S.) to join them, to take office as the caliphate and Imam of the Muslims. The wave of support for Imam Husain (A.S.) was so massive that a list of the tribes waiting for his arrival, totaling 100,000 fighters, was prepared.

With him, Imam Husain (A.S.) dispatched a special letter to the people there, and particularly their chiefs. He explained the qualifications of his envoy, and the nature of his mission. He was to closely examine the situation and describe precisely what was going on there.

Kufa welcomed Muslim bin Aqil as any loyal and dutiful following would. The pledge of allegiance was taken from Imam Husain (A.S.). Muslim, by now, was convinced that the change was on behalf of Ahlul-Bait (A.S.) and the message of Allah, the Exalted. It was by no means something common and could not be ignored. It was a truth, tangible and subjective. They should quickly deal with the situation before something happens and spoils the opportunity.

And so Muslim, may Allah be please with him, saw it fit to dispatch an account to Imam Husain (A.S.) about the direction of the de facto situation. In his account he called him to come to Kufa. He wrote:

"Certainly, the man sent by a caravan in a desert to explore the way ahead of it will never lie to those who had sent him. All the people of Kufa are with you. Eighteen thousand of them have given their pledge of allegiance to me. So make haste and come to us as soon as you read this letter of mine. And peace and the blessings of Allah be on you."

In the meantime, Imam Hussien (A.S.) thought it would be wise to contact the chiefs of Basra and discuss with them his decision to oppose deviation and injustice. He wrote to them. Yazid bin Mas'ood sent a letter in which people spoke much about the loyalty of the tribes of Tamim and Bani Sa'd to Ahlul-Bait (A.S.). Quite painfully and regrettably, his letter arrived too late. Thus, Nahshali's troops were late to arrive. The man was so shocked at the news of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) that he died. He had missed the opportunity to help the .(grandson of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W

Kufans's Regression:

At first, the authorities of the Ummayyad party were panic stricken at the great success achieved by the faith and its real representative, Imam Husain bin Ali (A.S.). The top leaders of the Ummayyad party held a meeting, and discussed what would their next step be. They decided to provide Yazid bin Mu'awiya with the latest news, and the actual situation in the city of Makkah. They wrote a letter to their master in Syria telling him of all successive developments

in Kufa.

Yazid was flustered at the news. His special advisor suggested that Ubaidulla bin Ziyad should be the governor of Kufa. Ibn Ziyad was murderous, the emptiness of his heart of such human emotions as mercy or compassion and his black hatred for the household of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) made him a prime candidate for the job.

Ibn Ziyad received the decree issued by Yazid appointing him the new governor of Kufa. Installing his brother in his place in Basra, he hurriedly headed for Kufa leading a 500-strong division from the Ummayyad army.

Accompanying him were also certain eminent chiefs of Basra who had influence over the Kufans due to their blood relations.

In Kufa, Ibn Ziyad gathered the people, and addressed them. He promised those who sided with the Ummayyad's handsome rewards. He threatened the opponents of the Ummayyad dynasty with harsh punishments, i.e. death. Under coercion, he ordered the tribal chiefs to present lists of the names of those who overstepped the Ummayyad redline. Otherwise, they would be crucified at the door of their houses.

Thus, an atmosphere of heavy gloom set in on the city. The scales of power tipped in favor of the Ummayyad house, represented by Yazid. The Shi'ite leaders and the loyalists to the movement of Islam represented by Imam Husain (A.S.) were rounded up.

Fear spread its wings, and despair descended on the hearts of the people. Events took so vicious a turn that the tribes began to prevent their chiefs from opposing the Ummayyads in any form. Mothers locked up their children lest they help Muslim bin Aqeel. Those who were after wealth hastened to the governor's mansion, happy with the abundant money Ibn Ziyad lavished on them. Practically, the society of Kufa was torn into shreds.

The loyalists to the call of Islam, who were still free, adopted secrecy in their contacts with Muslim. He ordered them so, under the pressure of the new conditions.

The spies of the Ummayyad's local terrorist lost no time in spreading throughout the city and Ibn Ziyad had made use of every possible means of trickery to get out of the crises. He floated rumors, by his spies and followers, that a tremendous Ummayyad army was at the threshold of Kufa. Rumors were soon on every lip. Gossip increased and terror ruled. Women prevented their sons from joining Muslim, and those who already were with him were forced to quit. Men discouraged their sons and brothers from taking part in the military actions.

The situation further deteriorated. Many people left Muslim's army, and panic prevailed. Inducement and discouragement of the opponents succeeded. Muslim, eventually, was left with a few loyalists who engaged the Ummayyads in street fighting. They made the

neighborhood of 'Kinda' their base. Muslim fought in a rarely seen reckless and courageous way.

After all had deserted him or been killed he fought the Ummayyad police alone. Finally he was overcome and promised safety. When he was brought before Ziyad he refused to honor the promise of safety given by the police and ordered Muslim to be executed. After dictating his last will, Muslim was taken to the torrents of the palace and thrown down. Later he was beheaded. His head, along with the head of Hani were sent to Yazid in Syria.

Thus, the two pillars of the Islamic movement in Kufa were torn down. The movement of Muslim and Hani, two of its greatest field leaders in Iraq. Kufa was humiliated with defeat and .the darkness of terror descended on it. The tyrants seized control of lives of the people

En Route to Iraq:

The Ummayyad were extremely worried at the news of the success of Husain (A.S.) in Makkah. He had won over nearly the whole city. Fearing the spread of the opposition movement, Yazid dispatched an army from Syria. He appointed Umar bin Sa'id as its commander-in-chief. Imam Hussien (A.S.) received word that the Ummayyad army was on its way to Makkah. Given the Ummayyads disrespect of the Sacred House of Allah, he had decided to leave the city. It was impossible for him to allow the sacredness of the city to be violated because of him. In advance, he knew of his inevitable fate in Iraq. He expressed it in the speech he delivered in Makkah before he left. He said:

"Praise be to Allah. What Allah desires is certainly done. There is no power but in Allah. Blessings of Allah be on His Messenger. Death had been decreed on man, as the necklace encircles a girl's neck. How great is my desire to see my predecessors. It is as strong as Ya'qoob's (Jacob) desire to see (his son) Yusuf (Joseph).

"It is better for me to face my death. It is as if I am seeing now my members being torn to pieces by by the wolves of the desert, in a place between Nawaweess and Karbala'. They will fill their empty stomachs and their hungry bellies. There is no escape from a day decreed by the divine pen."

On the eighth day of the month of Dhul-Hijja (the day the pilgrims get ready to perform hajj), in the year of 60 A.H., Imam Husain (A.S.) caravan set out.

En route to Iraq he would ask the travelers he met about Iraq and the current situation there.

The only reply was: "The people were with the Ummayyad, but their hearts were with him!" He was sure that the faith would be revived after his death and there was no defender of the faith next to him. It is because of these considerations that he went on to achieve the real, historical victory. Only with shedding his blood and sacrificing his soul and those who were

with him from the descendants of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), Islam would be
.immortalized

In Karbala':

It was Thursday, the 2nd of Moharram 61 A.H. Imam Husain (A.S.) and his companions and his righteous family dismounted and camped at the deserts of Karbala' in order to be a symbol for free men, and a slogan for the revolutionaries throughout the ages and generations. On the other hand, the Ummayyad authorities, at the helm of which stood Ubaidulla Ziyad in Kufa, started sending reinforcements and mobilizing more forces for Karbala'. Ibn Ziyad replaced Umar bin Sa'd as the new commander of the army. Umar later yield to Ubaidulla's desire when the latter threatened to deprive him of the ruler ship of Ray. Umar had been struggling with two question: Submission to the life of this world or refusing worldly temptations and refraining from warring with Imam Husain (A.S.). Finally, the first question triumphed and he decided to take part in the battle against him.

He expressed that struggle in two lines of verse:
"Could I decline the governor ship of Ray, while it is my dread, or should I return blamed for killing Husain? Should I kill him, then I wind up in the fire, which has no veil, while the governor ship of Ray is the refreshment of my eye."

Umar is not but a model for those men who fought Imam Husain (A.S.), and what they bear of villainous intentions and mean goals.

Thus, he decided to carry out that task and advanced to Nainawa (Karbala') at the head of an army of about 4,000 soldiers. Upon his arrival, Umar bin Sa'd surrounded Imam Husain's camp. Imam Husain (A.S.) began negotiations with him, and they had several meetings. As a result, he wrote to Ubaidulla bin Ziyad suggesting lifting the siege on Husain's camp and allowing him to return from where he had come, thus, halting the impending shedding of blood. Ubaidulla received the letter. Even he at first appreciated the idea and wanted to put it into effect. But then, Shimr bin Dil-Jawshan-one of the blood enemies of Ahlul-Bait (A.S.) - warned him of the consequences. Ubaidullah accepted the suggestion of Shimr and handed him a threatening letter to be delivered to Umar bin Sa'd. The letter read in part:

"Therefore, see to it that if Husain and his followers submit to my authority and surrender, you send them to me in peace. If they refuse, then march against them to fight them and to punish them; for they deserve that. If Husain is killed, make the horses trample on his body; both front and back."

Thus, the logic of Ibn Ziyad insists on shedding blood and mutilating the martyrs as his forefathers did during the pre-ignorance of Quraish who mutilated Hamza, the Prophet's uncle,

before.

There was no alternative except war. Husain (A.S.) could under no circumstance surrender to
Ibn Ziyad:

"One like me can never give a pledge of allegiance to Yazid".

He continued: "I do not wish a death for myself other than martyrdom, while life among the
unjust would be unbearable".

He (A.S.) recited the words he took from the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), which he conveyed
to the Ummayyad army a few days earlier. He told them:

"O people, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) had said:

"Whoever witnesses an unjust ruler considering the prohibitions of Allah, the Almighty, as
permissible, breaking the covenant of Allah, opposing the practices of the Messenger of Allah
(S.A.W.), treating his servants sinfully and cruelly and had seen all these misdeeds but did not
oppose him by words or actions, Allah surely will punish him as He wills."

Imam Husain (A.S.) saw that he could not negotiate with this herd of weak-willed men who
dedicated themselves to win booty and wealth. He asked his brother, Abbas, once again, to talk
to the army and demand a delay of only one night. Umar bin Sa'd and his officers agreed to
grant Imam Husain (A.S.) the delay he asked. On the morrow, history would turn a new page in
.the life of Islam. Men would fight one another in a great and glorious battle in Karbala

The Night of Ashura':

It was not to rethink his decision concerning the military choice that Husain asked Ibn Sa'd to
grant him the extra time. The path was crystal clear in his mind, but Husain (A.S.) eagerly
wanted to stay up that night in worship. He desired that it be the last night during which he
would talk to his family, companions and loved ones. He knew what lay ahead. Thus he said to

his brother Abbas, the second time he sent to Ibn Sa'd:

"Go back to them. If you can delay them until morning and persuade them to keep away from
us during the evening, then perhaps we may be able to pray to our Lord during the night, to
supplicate to Him loved prayer, the recitation of His Book, invoking Him at length and seeking
his forgiveness."

Darkness fell. The household of the Prophet (S.A.W.) and their supporters did not close their
eyes. Some of them were praying, invoking Allah for his mercy, and reciting the Qur'an.
Others were preparing wills and saying last words to their families. Voices were like the buzz of
the bees. They were preparing themselves to meet their Lord. Swords and spears were being
readied. That night they were guests on the land of Karbala'. History awaited the event that
would take place on the morning. The swords and spears were pens that would inscribe the

most glorious chapter on the continuing drama being written by man. During that night, Husain (A.S.) bid farewell to his family and loved ones. He paid visits to al-Sajjad, Sukaina, Layla, Rabab and al-Baqir al-Saghir (A.S.) his nephew. He made his last will, as he decided to water the orchard of Islam with his own blood

The Day of Ashura':

Imam Husain (A.S.) together with his pious companions, passed the night before the tenth of Moharram in prayers, supplications and getting ready for the following day. That night came to an end. It was as if a long history had elapsed. The tenth of Moharram, the day of blood, jihad, and martyrdom, the day of the decisive battle, was already born. Umar bin Sa'd was arranging his troops in line, and mobilizing his soldiers to fight the fifth member of the purified family of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), whose love was decreed by Allah on the Ummah through the explicit words of the Holy Qur'an. Imam Husain (A.S.) went out of his tent completely ready to engage the enemy. The battle was inescapable. So, he started fortifying his camp where the children and women were waiting for what would happen next. He ordered the digging of a trench at the rear of the camp. This was to prevent the army from attacking the camp from that point. He set the trench ablaze. Secure as the back of the camp was, the battle would be fought in the front only. Once again, Imam Husain (A.S.) delivered a speech. He reminded the Kufans of their letters and envoys, combined with their pledge of allegiance, but to no avail. His call fell on deaf ears. He mounted his horse, and galloped to a place before the hostile army, in his hand he grasped the Qur'an. He opened it, raising it above his head, and said: "O people! Let us have the Book of Allah and the Sunna of my grandfather, the Prophet of Allah (S.A.W.), to arbitrate between us."

No one seemed to be influenced by the words of Imam Husain (A.S.). Rather, Umar bin Sa'd ordered the standard-bearer of his army to advance and gave the go-ahead for the war to start. He, himself, fired the first arrow toward the camp of Imam Husain (A.S.), shouting,

"All of you be witness that I am the first to shoot."

Imam Husain (A.S.) stared unperturbed and strong hearted at the great army which was equipped to the teeth. Like a towering mountain, determined and unshakable, Imam Husain (A.S.) did not show the smallest sign of weakness. Never did he think of reconsidering his decision. There was no one but Allah to look to. He raised his hands in prayer: "O Allah! It is You in Whom I trust amid all grief. You are my hope amid all violence. You are my refuge and provision in everything that happens to me. How many grievances that weaken the

heart, leaving me with not means to handle them, during which friends desert me, and the enemy rejoices in it. I lay it before You and complain of it to You, because of my desire in You, You alone. You relieve me of it and remove it from me. You are the Master of all graces, and the possessor of all goodness, and the Ultimate Resort of all desires."

That was the outset of a catastrophe and tragedy which victimized the scion of prophethood and the leader of the Muslims, the grandson of the noble Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), Husain bin Ali bin Abi-Talib.

The men lunged at one another, first in single battles, then in a full war. It was only natural that strength would help the army of Yazid bin Mu'awiya massacre this small group of warriors whose number were not more than 72.

The whole tragedy of the Ahlul-Bait (A.S.), and their painful suffering at the hands of their enemies was crystal incarnated in the battle of Karbala'.

The battle continued at Karbala'. The cascade of exalted blood was flowing, making its way to immortality. The companions of Imam Husain (A.S.) were falling to the ground, one after the other. Those matchless heroes from the household of Aqeel and of Ali bin Abi-Talib (A.S.) were now decapitated bodies scattered on the plains of war like the stars on an autumn sky, or lotus petals on the surface of a pond.

Now the attack intensified. They were most almost encircled by the Ummayyad army. Some of the soldiers went into the tents looting property. Ibn Sa'd ordered, "Set the tents ablaze". The children cried and the woman also wept, as they saw the tents burning.

Imam Husain (A.S.) stood there amid them, sure of joining them shortly, but deeply stirred by the cries of the children and lamentations of the women. He looked for a helper. He called out: "Is there a defender of the womenfolk of the Apostle of Allah? Is there a monotheist who fears Allah and so helps us? Is there any supporter seeking Allah's reward and so aids us?"

There was no answer except the wailing of women and children. Imam Husain (A.S.) had no option except fighting the enemy. His heart was flooded with fatherly compassion and love and being afraid for his family, sanctity, the sanctity, the sanctity of the Ansar and the orphans of the martyrs.

Certain that he (A.S.) would never return alive from the battlefield, he went to the tent of his sister Zainab, asking her to bring him his baby so as to kiss his lips and see him for the last time.

Imam Husain (A.S.) repeated the phrase:

"O Allah! I complain to You about what is being done to the son of the daughter of your Prophet".

He (A.S.) looked around and there was no one to help him. His companions were strewn lifeless around him, they had done their duty raising the famous watchword. Imam Husain (A.S.) was all alone. He was carrying the sword of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) in his hand and the heart of Ali (A.S.) in his depths. On his tongue there was word of piety. This was the very day the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) promised him and this was the place he told him would be his last abode. He called the enemy to fight him in single combat.

One after the other they came forward and were dispatched to the other world.

Imam Husain (A.S.) was still very worried about his camp, which continued to burn.

When the forces of Ibn Sa'd cut him off from the camp, he called to the Ummayyads: "I am fighting you. Women have no blame. I will prevent your villains from harassing my womenfolk as long as I am alive".

The ears and hearts of those ill-mannered ones were deaf to the speech of the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), Shimr bin Dil Jawshan with ten of his men moved towards the tent of Imam Husain (A.S.) in which his family were, then, Imam Husain cried out at them:

"Woe unto you. If you do not have faith nor fear the Day of Judgement, be free in (your world), and noble, and forbid my possessions and family from your tyrants and your ignorant ones."

The attack continued violently, while Imam Husain (A.S.) debated with them, until an arrow directed at Imam Husain (A.S.) lodged in his throat. Spears and swords were eating into his body. He was weak from profuse bleeding while his body became a metaphor for a book, on which every sword blow and arrow had written the most majestic lines of an epic tale.

They were sixty-seven wounds' silently reciting the story of struggle and jihad and indelibly inscribing the tragic chapters of oppression and injustice.

The enemies were not yet satisfied. Shimr approached Imam Husain (A.S.) carrying his sword and struck him several time, Then he cut his head off. He carried the head proudly, to be placed in front of Ibn Ziyad as a bounty waiting its rewards.

The head that never said 'yes' to the oppressors, that was repeating: "By Allah! Will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated, nor will flee like a slave".

Ibn Sa'd ordered horsemen to trample over the holy body of Imam Husain (A.S.). The head of Imam Husain (A.S.), along with the heads of his companions (and even the tiny head of Ali Asghar) were distributed among the criminals, as gifts, carrying them to the Ummayyad governor of Kufa.

For three days the pure, holy bodies of the martyrs were left lying on the desert of Karbala'

before men from the tribe of Bani Asad who were living not far away from the battlefield buried them. The criminals, not yet satisfied with all this, carried the children and women, in addition to the sick son of Imam Husain (A.S.), Imam Zainul-Abideen (A.S.), as prisoners from Kufa to Syria. At the front of the sad procession were the head of Imam Husain (A.S.) and his followers.