

Conclusion: Husayn in History

Husayn has gone into history in two ways. First, to the modern secularist man, or one who looks at religious revolutions from their social aspects, Husayn's uprising is seen as a noble act. To such a man the comparison between Husayn and his followers, and Yazid and Ibn Ziyad and their armies is an important fact of difference between right and wrong. After Husayn fell and was finally beheaded, they trampled his body under the hooves of their horses. Nor was this the last act of treachery against God's creatures.

For it was in the time of Yazid that the "radiant city" of the Prophet was sacked and both Helpers (*Ansar*) and Emigrants (*Muhajirun*) were put to the sword. So the revolution of Husayn is seen by men like al-'Awwad, Shams al-Din, and others as the first and greatest of all Islamic revolutions, which they regard as extensions of Karbala. 'Aqqad writes of this stream of sacred blood that has run through human history and of the martyr of Karbala: To these (great martyrdoms) the martyr of Karbala Husayn Ibn Ali, may God be pleased with him, belongs. Nay, he is the prince of martyrs (*Abu al Shuhada'*) and spring of continuous martyrdom not to be compared with any other spring in human history. [1](#)

The other way in which Husayn has gone into history may be seen, with all the intensity of human emotions, in the Ta'ziya celebrations during the first ten days of Muharram. Here Husayn is completely and physically present to the pilgrims to his shrine in Karbala, or wherever his head is claimed to be. The head itself has had its own peculiar history. Although its exact spot of burial is unknown, it has been claimed by many people. The pious Umayyad Caliph, Umar Ibn Abd al-'Aziz, is supposed to have prayed over it and buried it, thus shedding a bright ray of light over an otherwise dark era. The Fatimids, at the summit of their glory, sought to crown their empire with the sacred head, which is said to have been found and brought by them to Cairo where the mosque of Husayn still stands.

In this drama we have good and bad characters. The martyrdom of its hero has been the source both of controversy and inspiration through the centuries. But he himself passed into eternity, into the company of other great martyrs, martyrs whose lives continue to shine as the guiding star in human history. To time, that is time untouched by the nobility of great ideals and the blood of martyrs, he addressed these harsh words:

**Oh time, (Dahr), fie on thee of a friend, forbear.
How thou claimest in the morn and at eventide
Many an illustrious victim**

[1.](#) Aqqad, op.cit, 93

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