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Lesson 20: The Third Imam And The Fifth Infallible Figure, Imam Husayn

He was born on Sha'ban 3, 04. At the command of God, the great Prophet named him Husayn and foretold his martyrdom in the cause of religion on the day of his birth and said, "A group of infidels and tyrants from Bani Umayyah would kill him. May God keep my intercession from them."

Husayn (‘a) spent forty six years with his grandfather, parents, and brother and attained the position of leadership at the age of forty seven after the demise of Imam Hasan. He suffered under the deceptive and oppressive rule of Mu’awiyah but so long as Mu’awiyah was living, he could not do anything because just as Imam Hasan, for the sake of Islam, agreed to peace with Mu’awiyah on a number of conditions and thought it advantageous to Islam and Muslims to renounce war with him, Imam Husayn (‘a) also thought it expedient to refrain from confrontation during the remaining ten years of his rule.

But following the death of Mu’awiyah, Yazid mounted the throne and announced his rule and to strengthen his position, demanded allegiance from all senior figures including Imam Husayn (‘a) but Imam (‘a) from the very beginning said, "When persons like the dissolute, gambling and drunken Yazid, who do not even superficially observe and respect Islam, intend to assume the leadership of the Islamic community, that time would mark the death and annihilation of Islam because these people intend to eradicate Islam with its own power."¹ And on these grounds, he refused to pledge allegiance and did not recognize the rule of Yazid and at the command of God, the Exalted, and for the sake of Islam, he decided not to acknowledge Yazid's rule and rise up against him even at the risk of his life.

Thus, upon the invitation of the inhabitants of Kufah, he set out toward Iraq in the year 60. From the start of this journey through his martyrdom, he announced to his companions and other Muslims that his uprising was aimed at the promotion of decency and prohibition of indecency and revolt against the oppressor and refusal to acknowledge a tyrannical regime, and eventually the protection of the Holy Qur'an, Islam and the prophetic tradition. With the same steadfast resolve, finally, he and his children and some of the youths of Bani Hashim and some of the most prominent figures of the time, were killed

in Karbala and his household went into custody but he made it clear to his contemporaries and the following generations that sacrifice and selflessness are essential in the great cause of truth and he established his reputation like a shining sun in the history of Islam.

A Lesson From The School of Imam Husayn

Since his martyrdom, his followers and devotees have constantly commemorated his memory and have held mourning services and thus and by visiting his holy shrine they have renewed allegiance to the memory of Karbala.

Our infallible leaders underlined the preservation of the memory of Karbala and repeatedly held commemoration and mourning ceremonies themselves and talked a lot about the benefits of mourning for Imam Husayn.

Abu ‘Ammareh has said, “One day I was with Imam as-Sadiq (‘a). He asked me to recite some elegies about Imam Husayn and as I started reading, Imam burst out crying and he kept on weeping so loudly that his cries were audible outside the house, when I finished, he talked about the advantages and greatness of reciting elegies and mourning for Imam Husayn (‘a).” [2](#)

Indeed, mourning and crying for Imam Husayn and recalling the history of Karbala is a great virtue and is invaluable but we should bear in mind that the mourning services and the narration of the incidents of Karbala are intended to derive lessons of selfless sacrifice and devoutness in the cause of religion, and the dignity and honor and protection of the Holy Qur’an and its holy edicts and not lamentation and mourning for their own sake, because the objective behind these mourning ceremonies and rites is to immortalize the goals of Imam Husayn (‘a).

Excerpts From Imam Husayn’s Supplications

“O God! I grant Your unity and count Your blessings although I know that I won’t be able to enumerate them because Your gifts are countless.”

“I have consistently, from my birthday, enjoyed Your blessings and from the start of my life, You have protected me from poverty and destitution and suffering and misery and have provided the means of my welfare.”

“O the best person to whom we can express our demands, and the kindest from whom to seek forgiveness.”

“O the one who is aware of the closing eyes and the secret peeping, O the one to whom the hidden secrets of the hearts are not unknown. O the kindest, bestow your good regards upon Muhammad and his household. O God! I can’t accomplish but what merits my meanness and we demand what merits Your generosity.”

These were the prayers that Imam said at the plains of ‘Arafah on the day of ‘Arafah and wept and taught greatness and knowledge of God to mankind.^{[3](#)}

^{[1](#)}. Lahuf, p. 20.

^{[2](#)}. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 44, p. 282.

^{[3](#)}. Iqbal by ibn Tawus, p. 339.

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