

Responses to Doubts

Who Killed Imam al-Husayn (as)?

One of the accusations often raised against the Shi'ahs in recent times is that they themselves were the killers of Imam al-Husayn (as). The accusers say that the majority of the soldiers who were recruited in the army of 'Umar ibn Sa'd to fight with Imam al-Husayn (as) were people from Kufah, and the people of Kufah at that time were all Shi'ahs of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).

The fault-finders say that the reason the Shi'ahs hold mourning ceremonies for Imam al-Husayn (as) is to show penance for the actions of their predecessors. They believe that the Shi'ahs cry in order to express remorse at why their forefathers killed the Prophet's grandson.

In his book entitled, "*Al-Husayn*", the Egyptian writer, Sayyid 'Ali Jalal Husayni writes, "A surprising thing about Imam al-Husayn (as) is that his own Shi'ahs killed him, and then started holding mourning ceremonies for him every year in all countries of the Muslim World."¹

We intend to analyze this accusation to show who the real killers of Imam al-Husayn (as) were.

The different aspects of the Shi'ah Islam

The Shi'ism has different aspects and forms, but we will only mention the four main ones here:

1. Political Shi'ism

Political Shi'ism [*tashayyu'-e siyasi*] signifies belief in the superiority and preference of Imam 'Ali (as) over all the other companions of the Holy Prophet (S), including the caliphs. Political Shi'ism denotes belief that in the battles against the Khawarij and the companions at Siffin and Jamal, truth and justice was on the side of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (as).

Political Shi'ism refers to the presence of a group of people in the history of Islam who had determined a definite political point of view. They had accepted the leadership of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) not because they believed that the fourteen Infallibles were appointed by Allah, but because they understood the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) to be the most learned and virtuous of all the people on earth. This view was prevalent among most of the people who lived after the Holy Prophet (S). Many specialists in *hadith* and jurists held this view. They preferred the judgement of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, especially in political affairs, over the verdicts of anyone else. It is for this reason that they are called Political Shi'ahs. This group opposed the group which was following the caliphs in political affairs.

This point of view has been extended to books written by scholars of Sunni *hadith*. It can be seen in history that some people in the first, second and third centuries of the Islamic era [*hijrah*] were endowed with the Shi'ism, and a large number of them became popularly known as '*fihi tashayyu' yasir*'.

They regarded Imam 'Ali (as) to be superior over all the other caliphs, especially 'Uthman. Again, the people with these beliefs are called Political Shi'ahs.

2. Ideological Shi'ism based on religious conviction

The Shi'ism of Faith [*tashayyu'-e 'aqidati*] is belief in the Imamate, caliphate, administratorship and religious authority of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) as ordained by Allah, the Exalted, and that the forerunner and first of them is 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as). This point of view was a prevalent opinion among the people beginning during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S). These were people who followed the instructions of the Qur'an strictly.

They obeyed the Prophet's commands to the letter. They were some of the most pious and sincere companions of the Holy Prophet (S) who followed the explicit wording of holy texts and the Prophet's directives and did not practice religious jurisprudence or inference. It is these people who accepted Imam 'Ali (as) as the heir and successor of Allah's Prophet (S).

They believed that following Imam 'Ali (as) was in accordance with Allah's orders and the Holy Prophet's (S) directives. This line of thought continued to exist among the Holy Prophet's (S) companions, the *tabi'in* and the generations which followed them.

These pious Shi'ahs knew that even though the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) had been sidelined and unjustly pushed aside from political authority, their identity as religious and scholarly jurists and authorities had become manifest right from the beginning.

Aban ibn Taghlab, who was one of Imam al-Sadiq's and Muhammad al-Baqir's (as) companions, describes the Shi'ahs in this way: "The Shi'ahs are people who, whenever people differ about a matter which has reached us from the Holy Prophet (as), refer to Imam 'Ali (as) and adopt his verdict, and whenever a disagreement appears about a matter which has reached us from Imam 'Ali (as), the Shi'ahs refer to the words of Ja'far ibn Muhammad (as)."²

3. The Shi'ism of love and affection for the Ahl al-Bayt (as)

The third aspect of the Shi'ism seen among Muslims is what has been called the Shi'ism of Love [*tashayyu'-e hubbi*]. When the term Shi'ism is applied in this sense, many Sunnis will also be considered as Shi'ahs because a lot of people, even among the Sunnis themselves, possess strong love and affection for the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as).

There are numerable accounts about the virtues and spiritual accomplishments of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) in the Prophet's sayings which are recorded in Sunni Books of *hadith*. For examples, we can mention Ibn 'Abd Rabbah Andulusi, the author of the book entitled, *Al-'Aqd al-Farid*, and Muhammad ibn Idris Shafi'i.

Muhammad ibn Idris Shafi'i has recited a wonderful poem in which he says,

إن كان حبّ الولي رفضاً فأنّني أرفض العباد

*"If love of the wali (the temporal and spiritual guardian Imam 'Ali) makes a person a heretic, then, I am surely the most heretical of all of Allah's servants."*³

4. Religious Shi'ism

The fourth aspect of Shi'ism is interpreted as religious and cultural Shi'ism [*tashayyu'-e dini*]. These people believe that the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) are the only legitimate religious authorities on earth.

That is, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) are the source of religious edicts and the only people who have been entrusted with interpreting the Holy Qur'an. They believe that, within this religious and cultural aspect, it is the duty of every person in the community to seek guidance and refuge in the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) when the need arises.

They hold this belief, but at the same time follow the Sunnis (the caliphs) in political and governmental affairs. They do not believe in divine appointment of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) as explicitly expressed in religious texts, the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's (S) sayings.

Instead, they consider the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) to be superior over the rest of the people in knowledge and general religious affairs. An example of such people is Shahrestani, the author of the book entitled, "*Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*".

Who is a real Shi'ah?

We find many people in the world who claim to hold certain beliefs but do not act upon their professed convictions at all. These people are not steadfast in their beliefs. They claim to belong to a certain

religious group, but are not faithful to the basic teachings of the religious sect they profess.

They may not even know much about the fundamental beliefs of their own religious order. They sometimes even go so far as to trample the basic beliefs of their professed religious denomination underfoot due to lack of real faith and piety.

We cannot seriously consider such people as really belonging to a particular sect, even though they may apparently appear to belong to that sect. In reality, they are a deadly army of hypocrites posing the greatest danger against the very religion or sect they claim to adhere to. Even the opponents of that particular religion or sect do not take such people seriously, and do not fear them.

In reality, they do not consider them to be members of that sect at all. On the contrary, the real people belonging to a particular religion or sect are the people who are faithful and steadfast to the basic teachings of that group. They are the people that are ready to sacrifice their lives and property for their beliefs that are genuinely considered to be members of a particular group.

The same can be said about the Shi'ism and the Shi'ahs; in the sense that even though many may claim to be 'Ali's (as) Shi'ahs and followers of the Prophet's *Ahl al-Bayt* (as), if their profession of belief has not gone beyond mere words and has not settled in their hearts, they are not dedicated to the basic beliefs of the Shi'ah Islam and cannot be considered to be real Shi'ahs.

We cannot consider such people to be pious Shi'ahs, and neither can we judge the Shi'ism by their actions. A real and pious Shi'ah is a person who certainly would not dare kill an *imam* who he professes to love and follow.

On the contrary, he sacrifices his life and soul for his *imam*, in the same way that many real Shi'ahs sacrificed their lives on the day of 'Ashura in order to assist Imam al-Husayn (as). The real Shi'ahs reached out to their Imam lovingly, and sincerely gave their lives up in his way as martyrs.

We can ask those who doubt and dispute these questions: Can we say that all the people living in Islamic countries are real and pious Muslims? Are they all steadfast to their professed beliefs? Who are the people living in Islamic countries that are busy working for world imperialists and by doing so are helping destroy and wipe out Islam?

Are there not people in Islamic societies who are abject slaves and servants of the unbelievers [*kuffar*] and are working with the colonizers against Islam and the Muslims? It is certainly not possible for reasonable persons to consider such people to be real Muslims. On the contrary, such people only possess Islamic names and identities.

It is also possible to find some 'Shi'ahs' who are like this and there is nothing unusual at all about it. They call themselves pious or believing, but are not steadfast to their basic beliefs of their professed religion.

Religious instructor, Shaykh ‘Ali Al Muhsin, says, “There is open contradiction and discrepancy in the words of those who accuse the Shi‘ahs of killing of Imam al–Husayn (as) because the very word Shi‘ah means someone who follows and loves the Imam.

How is it possible to compromise this meaning with fighting against and killing an *imam*? Does a real Shi‘ah kill an *imam*? If the accusation that Imam al–Husayn’s (as) killers were Shi‘ah is right, their treacherous action would certainly expel them from the fold of the Shi‘ism.”[4](#)

While responding to this unfair and unfounded accusation, Sayyid Muhsin Amin ‘Amili says, “I seek refuge in Allah that the real Shi‘ahs should be the killers of al–Husayn (as)!

The people who martyred Imam al–Husayn (as) were of various categories; some were people drowned in worldly appetites and pleasures who had nothing to do with religion whatsoever, others were low, mean and wicked people of the flesh, and the rest consisted of those people lacking religious conviction and pursuing their worldly dreams. Love of this world persuaded all these people to commit such a great crime.

None of Imam al–Husayn’s (as) lovers and Shi‘ahs took part in killing him. On the contrary, all the sincere and real Shi‘ahs accompanied and helped Imam al–Husayn (as). They stood by their Imam to the last drop of their blood, devoting and sacrificing their lives for him until they attained martyrdom.

They stayed at the service of their Imam despite the insurmountable hardships which lay in the way and never gave up on him to the very last moments of their lives. Many of these people did not expect any financial reward from Imam al–Husayn (as) for their loyalty, so they were definitely not motivated by money when they decided to sacrifice for him and take part in his hardships.

In order to escape and join their beloved Imam (as), others took such high risks as tearing down the fortification which Ibn Ziyad had raised around Kufah, and made their escape.

These steadfast Shi‘ahs underwent every kind of hardship imaginable to join their beloved Imam. The fallacious accusation that even one of Imam al–Husayn’s (as) Shi‘ahs and lovers took part in killing him is something that never took place in reality...”[5](#)

The Shi‘ism of the people of Kufah

With recourse to history, especially after the death of Imam ‘Ali (as) and during the time of Imam al–Husayn (as), and with careful examination of the beliefs of the people of Kufah, we come to the conclusion that the predominant type of Shi‘ism which existed in Kufah at that time was Political Shi‘ism. The Shi‘ism of Kufah was not founded on religious conviction.

The people of Kufah only believed in the superiority of ‘Ali (as) over ‘Uthman and the other companions. They did not believe in the Divine Guardianship [*wilayat wa imamat*] of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) or the other

Infallibles by way of divine appointment as has been explicitly stated in holy texts (the Holy Qu'ran and *hadiths*). Furthermore, we cannot consider political Shi'ahs in the same light as the pious Shi'ahs who believed in the Divine Guardianship of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as).

In order to prove this, we will cite an example:

In his book called "*Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq*" (*The Short History of Damascus*), Ibn 'Asakir Damishqi Shafi'i narrates on an authentic chain of transmission that Harith ibn Abi Matar said, "I heard Salmah ibn Kuhayl saying, 'Musayyib ibn Najbah Fazari and I were once seated in the Mosque of Kufah.

There were many Shi'ahs in the Mosque. I did not hear any of them speak about anyone of the companions of the Prophet (S) save 'Ali (as), and they spoke about him with lots of praise and laudation. All their talk was about 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) and 'Uthman'." [6](#)

The Sunnis praise all the Prophet's companions without exception. They believe that all of the Prophet's companions were just and equitable people. The people they consider to be political Shi'ahs are those who later believed in the superiority of Imam 'Ali (as) over 'Uthman. There were people in Kufah who held this belief. There were, though, others who did not believe in Imam 'Ali (as) to this extent, as we have shown from the *hadith* (tradition) recounted by Ibn 'Asakir.

The exile of religious and pious Shi'ahs from Kufah

Ibn Abi al-Hadid recounts that Abu al-Hasan Mada'ini said, "Mu'awiyah issued these orders to his governor generals in a letter he had circulated to them, 'I have acquitted myself from any obligation regarding anyone who recounts the virtues of Abu Turab (Imam 'Ali) and his *Ahl al-Bayt*.' It has been narrated that Mu'awiyah went so far as to declare that whoever would transmit a *hadith* in praise of the virtues of the Household of the Prophet (S) would have no immunity or protection concerning his life, property and merchandise.

After this command, the governor generals gave orders to their state preachers to start cursing and insulting Imam 'Ali (as) and his pure *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) from the pulpits. The people most affected by this misfortune were the people of Kufah because at that time there were many Shi'ahs in that city.

Then, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan appointed Ibn Ziyad to be the governor general of Kufah and Basrah because he knew and recognized the Shi'ahs very well. Ibn Ziyad kept very strict surveillance over the Shi'ahs through his secret network of spies. 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad used to look for the Shi'ahs and kill them wherever he found them, or terrorize them by cutting off their hands and legs and by plucking their eyes from their eye-sockets.

His tactics included hanging innocent Shi'ahs from trees and expelling a large number of them from Iraq. That is why no well-known Shi'ahs remained in Iraq." [7](#)

The Shi'ahs from Kufah joined Imam al-Husayn (as)

History bears witness to the fact that a number of the Shi'ahs found opportunities to escape from Kufah and join their beloved Imam. They did so at great risk of their lives and by exerting strenuous effort. One example of such Shi'ahs is Yazid ibn Thubayt 'Abdi and his two children 'Abd Allah and 'Ubayd Allah.

Yazid ibn Thubayt was a Shi'ah and one of the companions of Abu al-Aswad. He was a person well-known among his people for his praiseworthy virtues and benevolence.

Abu Ja'far Tabari recounts, "Mariyah, the daughter of Munfidh 'Abdiyyah, was a Shi'ah woman. Her house was a place for the Shi'ahs to meet and engage in conversation. News reached Ibn Ziyad that Imam al-Husayn (as) was on his way towards Karbala in response to the letter the people of Kufah had written to him. Ibn Ziyad therefore ordered guards to keep strict surveillance over the city.

He ordered them to close the way and control the entry and exit of people into and out of Kufah. Yazid ibn Thubayt decided to leave Kufah and join Imam al-Husayn (as). He had ten children. He informed all of them about his will and decision. He suggested to them that anyone willing was welcome to come with him on this journey. Two of his ten children accepted to go with him. Their names were 'Abd Allah and 'Ubayd Allah. After that, he went to the house of Mariyyah and addressed his companions, 'I have the intention of leaving Kufah and joining Imam al-Husayn (as). Who will join me on this journey?'

Most of them replied that they were afraid of Ibn Ziyad's spies and companions... Then, accompanied by his two children, 'Amir and his slave, Sayf ibn Malik, and Adham ibn Umayyah, Yazid ibn Thubayt left Kufah with the intention of joining Imam al-Husayn's caravan.

They made every effort and managed to reach Imam al-Husayn in Mecca in a short period of time. When news reached Imam al-Husayn that some of his followers had arrived, he went out to meet them.

They said to him, 'Yazid ibn Thubayt and some of his companions have come to join you also.' Imam al-Husayn (as) waited for them. After a while, Yazid ibn Thubayt arrived and said to Imam al-Husayn,

بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا ... 697...

With this statement, he implied that it was a grace and favor from Allah to meet Imam al-Husayn (as) and that he ought to be happy and be congratulated. Then, he gave his greetings [*salam*] to Imam al-Husayn (as) and sat on the ground in front of him. He told the Imam (as) that he had come with two of his children and a number of his companions to help him. Imam al-Husayn (as) made a prayer asking Allah to grant Yazid ibn Thubayt a good reward both in this world and in the hereafter.

Then Yazid ibn Thubayt's caravan was brought next to that of Imam al-Husayn (as). They all accompanied Imam al-Husayn (as) to Karbala, where they were martyred after courageous battle."

Another person who joined Imam al-Husayn (as) from Kufah was Burayd ibn Khadir Hamadani. He had not met or seen the Holy Prophet (S), but had met and seen the Prophet's (S) companions. He was an excellent reciter of the Holy Qur'an, and was one of the companions of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).

He was known to be of the nobles of Kufah. Writers of biography say, "When the news reached him that Imam al-Husayn (as) was on his way from Medina towards Mecca, he started off from Kufah towards Mecca where he joined Imam al-Husayn (as). He stayed with the Imam (as) until they arrived in Karbala where he was martyred."

Other people who had joined Imam al-Husayn (as) from Kufah were Sa'd ibn Harath Ansari and Abu al-Hutuf ibn Harath Ansari. These two had initially come together with the army of 'Umar ibn Sa'd with the intention of killing Imam al-Husayn (as).

However, on the day of 'Ashura, and after the martyrdom of many of Imam al-Husayn's (as) companions, and after hearing the wailing voices of women and children on the other side calling for help for Imam al-Husayn (as), they used their weapons to find their way out of 'Umar ibn Sa'd's army and managed to join Imam al-Husayn's (as) side.

In short, they defected from 'Umar ibn Sa'd's army and came to the defence of Imam al-Husayn (as). After courageous battle and killing a lot of people in the army of 'Umar ibn Sa'd, they attained martyrdom.

Another group of Imam al-Husayn's (as) sincere Shi'ahs who came from Kufah to join him at Karbala consisted of six people. Their names were 'Amru ibn Khalid Saydawi, Sa'd Mawla 'Amru ibn Khalid, Majma' al-'A'idhi, 'A'idh ibn Majma', Junadah ibn Harath Salmani and the servant of Nafi' Bajali (or Jamali) who was leading the horse that belonged to Nafi' because Nafi' had already joined Imam al-Husayn (as).

They were informed and persuaded to join Imam al-Husayn (as) by leaflets passed around by Qays ibn Mushir al-Saydawi. The leaflets said Imam al-Husayn (as) had left Mecca for Iraq. These six people knew that there were guards along the way who had been charged with the duty of arresting anyone going to help Imam al-Husayn.

They found a guide who could ride to show them a secluded way out of Kufah. Their guide took them to Imam al-Husayn (as) as fast as he could. They made every effort to hide themselves from the sentries. When they joined Imam al-Husayn (as), the newcomers recited some poems they had learnt from their guide for the Imam (as).

Imam al-Husayn (as) said, "I hope that Allah intends good for us, whether we are killed or are the victors."

Hurr had tried to stop these newcomers from joining the caravan of Imam al-Husayn (as), and told them

to return to Kufah or they would be taken prisoner. Imam al-Husayn (as) said, "We will never allow such. We will protect them in the same way that we protect ourselves. These people are my helpers.

You promised not to interfere until the letter of Ibn Ziyad arrives." Hurr said, "That is true, but these people did not come with you." Imam al-Husayn (as) said, "These people are my helpers and companions. It is better for you to keep your promise or we will be forced to fight you." When Hurr heard this, he dropped his opposition and left them alone. The six people mentioned were not only martyred at Karbala, but were among the earliest to be martyred. At the beginning of the battle, they were surrounded by the enemy. Imam al-Husayn (as) told his courageous brother, 'Abbas, to go and free those six people from encirclement.

'Abbas followed his brother's orders and made a vicious attack on the enemies who had surrounded those six people. He broke the enemy line and freed them. These six youths returned to Imam al-Husayn (as) covered in blood. 'Abbas ibn 'Ali was behind them keeping watch over them. Yazid's soldiers tried to close the way for them.

When the six men saw this, they separated themselves from 'Abbas and in a fierce counter attack they all attained martyrdom. 'Abbas gave the final report of what had happened to Imam al-Husayn (as) and the Imam prayed for them and wished them a peaceful return to their Lord.[8](#)

Yet another person who joined Imam al-Husayn (as) from Kufah was Habib ibn Mazahir Asadi, a very popular companion of the Holy Prophet (S). He and Muslim ibn 'Awsajah were among those who had gotten the people's allegiance on behalf of Imam al-Husayn (as). After 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad entered Kufah and isolated Muslim ibn 'Aqil, they left Kufah with the intention of going to help Imam al-Husayn (as).

Writers of biography narrate, "Habib equipped his horse and told his slave to take his horse and go to a certain place, being careful not to attract anyone's attention. He told him to wait for him at that place. Habib bade farewell to his wife and children. He then secretly left the city. When the slave saw that Habib was late, he started talking to the horse,

'O Horse! If your owner does not come, go by yourself to help al-Husayn (as).' At that very moment, Habib arrived and heard what the slave said to his horse. He could not help but start crying. As his tears were flowing, he said, 'May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O son of the Holy Prophet! Even slaves have hopes of helping you, let alone the free.'

Then, he freed his slave in the way of Allah. The slave started crying and said, 'O my master! I will never leave you alone. I am coming with you to help Imam al-Husayn'."

Another person from Kufah who came to the help of Imam al-Husayn (as) was Hajjaj ibn Masruq Ju'fi. He was one of the followers of Imam 'Ali (as). He came from Kufah to Mecca in order to join Imam al-Husayn (as). He came with the Imam to Karbala. At prayer times, he was the one who recited the call to

prayer [*adhan*]. He was one of those martyred at Karbala.

Two others from Kufah were Nu'man ibn 'Amru Azdi Rasibi and his brother Hulas ibn 'Amru. These two brothers were initially in the army of 'Umar ibn Sa'd, but escaped to join Imam al-Husayn's (as) army by night. They stayed with him and were among the people martyred in the early confrontation with the enemy.

Also, from among the people of Kufah was Zuhayr ibn Qayn Bajali. He was one of the nobles and brave men of Kufah. He was extraordinary in battle. In the beginning, he was a supporter of 'Uthman, but in the year 60 of the Islamic calendar, he went on pilgrimage [*hajj*] to Mecca together with his family.

When returning to Kufah, he met Imam al-Husayn (as) along the way. Allah, the Exalted, guided him. From then on, he became one of the supporters of Imam al-Husayn (as). He came with the Imam to Karbala and was martyred there.

It can be deduced from this that there were other supporters and well-wishers of 'Uthman in Kufah. They existed up to the time of Imam al-Husayn (as), and did not have much inclination towards the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as). Therefore, it cannot be supposed that all the people of Kufah were devout and faithful to Imam 'Ali (as).

One of the Shi'ahs who escaped to join Imam al-Husayn (as) was Sa'id ibn 'Abd Allah Hanafi. He was one of the bravest and most devoted Shi'ahs of Kufah. When the news of Mu'awiyah's death reached him, he called the Shi'ahs of Kufah together. They wrote a joint letter to Imam al-Husayn (as) inviting him to come to Kufah. When Muslim ibn 'Aqil came to Kufah, Sa'id ibn 'Abd Allah Hanafi swore that he would sacrifice his life to help Imam al-Husayn (as).

Muslim ibn 'Aqil wrote a letter and entrusted it to Sa'id to take to Imam al-Husayn (as). When Sa'id joined Imam al-Husayn (as), he stayed with him until the day of 'Ashura when he got martyred.

On the night before the day of 'Ashura, Imam al-Husayn (as) gave a speech in which he gave his companions the liberty to stay with him or escape under the cover of darkness. In the beginning, every one of the members of Bani Hashim said something pledging loyalty to Imam al-Husayn (as) and promising to stay with him to the very end.

When they finished talking, the first person from the companions to speak in defence of Imam al-Husayn (as) was Sa'id ibn 'Abd Allah. He said to Imam al-Husayn (as), "We will never leave you alone until we are sure that we have safeguarded the Prophet's right in you. I swear to Allah! Even if I knew that I would be killed, then brought back to life, then burnt alive, and this were repeated seventy times, I still would never stop at anything to help you."

On the day of 'Ashura, he was the one shielding Imam al-Husayn (as) from spears by acting as a human shield. His body took all the spears and arrows that were aimed at the Imam. As a result of this,

no spear or arrow hit the Imam. He got so wounded by the arrows and spears which hit him that he finally fell on the ground. Then after cursing the enemies, he turned to Imam al-Husayn and said, "O son of Allah's Prophet! Have I been faithful to my promise?" Imam al-Husayn (as) replied, "Yes, you will be my advance guard in paradise." Then, the soul left his blessed body and he was martyred.

Others from Kufah include Shawdhab ibn 'Abd Allah Hamadani and 'Abis ibn Abi Shabib Shakiri. Shawdhab was one of the bravest Shi'ahs of Kufah. He was one of the reliable memorizers and transmitters of *hadith* (Islamic traditions) from Amir al-Mu'minin Imam 'Ali (as). Together with his master, he brought Muslim ibn 'Aqil's letter from Kufah to Mecca for Imam al-Husayn (as) and then they accompanied him to Karbala where they were both martyred.

'Abis ibn Abi Shabib Shakiri was one of the most famous Shi'ah personalities in Kufah. He was a tribal headman and a very brave man. He was an eloquent speaker and a man devoted to worship. The tribe of Bani Shakir was among the most sincere believers in the *wilayat* (guardianship) of Imam 'Ali (as). On the day of 'Ashura, he came alone on the battlefield and challenged the enemy, "Is there anyone to fight me?" No one had the courage to come forward and fight him, so in the end, 'Umar ibn Sa'd ordered his troops to shower him with stones. When he saw this, he threw his armor and headcover off and went forward to fight them. He fought on till he attained martyrdom.

Yet another of the true Shi'ahs from Kufah was 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umair Kalbi. He and his wife Umm Wahab hastened to help Imam al-Husayn (as). On the day of 'Ashura, Umm Wahab held the pillars of the tents and said to her husband, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! Go and fight in the way of the Prophet's grandson!"

'Abd Allah ibn 'Umayr sent her to the women's side of the camp, but this lioness could not leave her husband. She tightly held his clothes and said, "I will not leave you at all, till I attain martyrdom by your side."

Imam al-Husayn (as) said to her, "May you have a good reward from the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and may Allah have mercy on you. Return to the women and stay there with them, because women are exempted from fighting." She returned to the women. After her husband's martyrdom, this heroine came to the place where her husband's body had fallen and brushed the dirt off him while saying, "May you enjoy paradise."

Shimr, the accursed, gave orders to his slave to hit the woman with a wooden stick in the head. Rustam, Shimr's slave, struck her head with a wooden stick so hard that she attained martyrdom right there.

Two others who escaped from Kufah and managed to join Imam al-Husayn (as) were 'Abd Allah ibn 'Urwah Ghaffari and his brother 'Abd al-Rahman. These two brothers joined Imam al-Husayn (as) at Karbala. They were honored to be in the presence of Imam al-Husayn (as) on the day of 'Ashura.

They said to Imam al-Husayn (as), "The enemy has surrounded you from every side. We would love to

be at your service and fight your enemies so as to repel them from you.” Imam al-Husayn said, “Well done! Come with me.” They joined Imam al-Husayn (as) and fought by his side bravely until they attained martyrdom.

‘Amru ibn Qarzah Ansari is also one of the companions of Imam ‘Ali (as) who came from Kufah. He had fought beside Imam ‘Ali (as) in all the wars that had taken place during his time. He was a trusted memorizer and narrator of *hadith*. He joined Imam al-Husayn (as) in Karbala before anyone could prevent him. He too was one of the people who took turns guarding Imam al-Husayn (as) on the day of ‘Ashura.

He came forward with his face and chest towards the enemy in order to stop arrows and spears from harming Imam al-Husayn (as). He fell on the ground covered in blood. He said, “Have I been faithful to my promise?” Imam al-Husayn answered, “Yes, you are my guard in paradise. Give my greetings and *salam* to the Prophet of Allah. Tell him that I too will join him very soon.” Then, ‘Amru ibn Qarzah Ansari achieved martyrdom and returned to his Lord.

Abu Thamamah ‘Amru al-Sa’idi was also a Shi‘ah from Kufah from the time of Imam ‘Ali (as). He had taken part in the wars that Imam ‘Ali (as) had fought, and later in the battles his son Imam al-Hasan (as) had fought. Then, he remained in Kufah. After the death of Mu‘awiyah, he wrote a letter to Imam al-Husayn (as) asking him to come to Kufah.

In Kufah, he was one of those who had been ordered by Muslim ibn ‘Aqil to collect donations for buying arms. ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad sent a person to arrest him. He and Nafi‘ ibn Hilal Bajali escaped from Kufah and joined Imam al-Husayn (as).

On the day of ‘Ashura, he stood in line to protect the Imam from spears and arrows when Imam al-Husayn (as) was performing his prayers. By the end of the prayers, he had been hit by thirteen arrows. He suffered a lot of wounds and finally fell on the ground and attained martyrdom.

Muslim ibn ‘Awsajah was one of the Prophet’s (S) companions. He was one of the people of Kufah who had written the letter to Imam al-Husayn. He was also one of those who got the people’s allegiance for Imam al-Husayn (as). After the martyrdom of Muslim and Hani ibn ‘Urwah, he went into hiding in Kufah. Later, he and his family escaped. They joined Imam al-Husayn and he sacrificed his life for Imam al-Husayn in the way of Allah.

Another one of the people of Kufah who joined Imam al-Husayn (as) was the One Legged Martyr, Muslim ibn Kathir A’raj Azdi. He had lost one of his legs fighting on the side of Imam ‘Ali (as) in one of the wars. Even though he was legally exempted from war, and it was not at all incumbent for him to fight, he escaped from Kufah and went to Karbala to be at the service of Imam al-Husayn (as).

He became one of Imam al-Husayn’s (as) soldiers and was one of the first people to be martyred at the beginning of the battle. Mas‘ud ibn Hajjaj Taymi and his child ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Mas‘ud were also

among the people who came from Kufah and were martyred at the beginning of the battle on the day of ‘Ashura.

These two had employed a very good trick. When they noticed that they could not manage to escape from Kufah and join Imam al-Husayn (as) in Mecca, they enrolled in the army of ‘Umar ibn Sa’d and in this way were able to reach Karbala. After reaching Karbala, they escaped from ‘Umar ibn Sa’d’s army and joined Imam al-Husayn (as).

Mawaqqi‘ ibn Thamamah Asadi was also one of the people who came to Karbala from Kufah. He traveled by night until he joined Imam al-Husayn (as). On the day of ‘Ashura, he fought very bravely. When his strength was exhausted, he fell on the ground. The enemies wanted to cut his head from his body, but he had relatives in the army of Yazid who hurried to protect him from his enemies and managed to take him back to Kufah.

They wanted to secretly cure him, but their secret could not remain hidden. When news reached the Governor of Kufah about what they intended to do, he gave orders that Asadi’s wounded and incapacitated body should be put in yoke and chains and sent into exile to a distant land. Mawaqqi‘ ibn Thamamah Asadi spent a year in yoke and chains with a body covered in blood until he finally joined Imam al-Husayn (as) by attaining martyrdom.

These were some of the religious and devoted Shi‘ahs of Kufah who joined Imam al-Husayn (as) and sacrificed their lives and souls for the Imam and his aims and objectives.

There are many people who joined Imam al-Husayn (as) from Kufah, but we cannot mention all of them here.[9](#)

Martyrs who carried messages

There were other Shi‘ahs who took the duty of carrying messages between Kufah and Mecca. They attained martyrdom as letter carriers. We will now mention some of them here:

1. ‘Abd Allah ibn Yaqtar Humayri, Imam al-Husayn’s foster brother

Biographers write, “Imam al-Husayn sent ‘Abd Allah ibn Yaqtar Humayri to Kufah to deliver the reply he had written to Muslim ibn ‘Aqil. Ibn Ziyad’s notorious spy, Hasin ibn Tamim, arrested him in an area called Qadissiyyah near Karbala. Hasin ibn Tamim took him to ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. ‘Ubayd Allah asked ‘Abd Allah ibn Yaqtar Humayri what Imam al-Husayn (as) had sent him to do. He did not give any answer to this question.

‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad ordered him to the top of the palace where he must curse ‘the lying son of the liar’ [*kadhdhab ibn kadhdhab*]. (By this ‘Ubayd Allah meant Imam al-Husayn.) ‘Ubayd Allah said, “Then you must come down and get the judgement I will issue for you.”

He went on top of the palace, turned to the people and addressed them, “O people! I am a messenger from al-Husayn son of Fatimah the daughter of Allah’s Prophet. I have been sent to you. The message he entrusted to me to give to you, the people, is that he requests you to help and support him in his uprising against the sons of Marjanah and Sumayyah.”

At this point, ‘Ubayd Allah gave orders to his agents that they should drop ‘Abd Allah ibn Yaqtar Humayri from the top of the palace to the ground. When they did this, his bones were broken. Then, as he was breathing his last, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umayr, a *faqih* (religious jurisprudent) of Kufah, cut his head off. When the people criticized him for doing so, he sarcastically replied, “I wanted to put him out of his misery.”

2. Qays ibn Mashar al-Saydawi

One of the couriers who was martyred was Qays ibn Mashar al-Saydawi. He had carried a letter from Muslim ibn ‘Aqil to Imam al-Husayn (as), and was bringing the Imam’s reply to Kufah when he was arrested by the villainous spy Hasin ibn Tamim and brought before ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad asked him what the contents of the letter were.

He replied, “I tore the letter to pieces so that you could not find out what the contents were.” ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad asked, “To whom was the letter addressed and written?” Qays said, “A number of people whose names I do not know.” ‘Ubayd Allah said, “If you do not know their names, then at least go on the pulpit and curse ‘the lying son of the liar’ [*kadhdhab ibn kadhdhab*].” Qays ibn Mashar al-Saydawi went on the pulpit and said, “O people! Verily al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali is the best creation of Allah and son of Fatimah the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S). I am a messenger from him sent to you.

We separated from each other at an area called Hajar. You should hasten to join and help him.” At that moment he cursed ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad and his father, and sent peace and blessings upon Amir al-Mu’minin, Imam ‘Ali (as). Ibn Ziyad gave orders to his agents to bring Qays ibn Mashar al-Saydawi down from the pulpit and kill him.”¹⁰

These were the true Shi‘ah.

The forerunners of martyrdom

After Muslim ibn ‘Aqil came to Kufah, and before the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as), a number of people were martyred because of paying allegiance or sending messages to Imam al-Husayn. Others were martyred because they wanted to escape and help Imam al-Husayn but were discovered before they could succeed. We will now mention some of them:

1. ‘Ammarah ibn Salkhab Azdi

He was one of the Shi‘ahs who had paid allegiance to Muslim ibn ‘Aqil in Kufah. When Muslim was captured, Ibn Ziyad also captured ‘Ammarah ibn Salkhab Azdi and asked, “What tribe are you from?” He

answered, “I come from the tribe of Azd ibn Ziyad.” ‘Ubayd Allah bin Ziyad gave orders to his agents to take ‘Ammarah to his tribesmen and separate (cut) his head from his neck.

Abu Ja‘far recounts, “They cut his head off in the presence of his tribesmen.”

2. ‘Abd al-A‘la ibn Yazid al-Kalbi

‘Abd al-A‘la ibn Yazid al-Kalbi was an astute horseman and a very brave Shi‘ah of Kufah. He was a supporter of Muslim ibn ‘Aqil. After Muslim ibn ‘Aqil was deserted by the people, Kathir ibn Shahab arrested ‘Abd al-A‘la and handed him over to ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad.

Abu Mukhnaf recounts, “After the martyrdom of Muslim ibn ‘Aqil, ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad called for ‘Abd al-A‘la. He asked him how he was feeling. ‘Abd al-A‘la answered, ‘I came out in order to be a spectator at the battlefield.

I did not have any intention of fighting against you.’ ‘Ubayd Allah asked him to swear upon Allah that he was telling the truth. ‘Abd al-A‘la refused to swear. Therefore, they took him to a place infested with wild and vicious animals and he was martyred there.”¹¹

The presence of Khawarij in Kufah

When we inspect historical accounts, we see that the commanders of ‘Umar ibn Sa‘d’s army were bitter and obstinate enemies of Imam al-Husayn (as) and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as). They were all of Nawasib, Khawarij and Umayyad descent, including ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, ‘Umar ibn Sa‘d, Shimr ibn Dhi al-Jawshan, Qays ibn Ash‘ath, ‘Amru ibn Hajjaj Zubaydi, ‘Abd Allah ibn Zuhayr Azdi, ‘Urwah ibn Qays Ahmasi, Shabath ibn Rib‘i Yarbu‘i, ‘Abd al-Rahman Abi Sirah Ja‘fari, Hasin ibn Numayr and Hajjar ibn Abjar.

Likewise, there was no one famous as a Shi‘ah among the people who took part in killing Imam al-Husayn (as). On the contrary, most of the enemy combatants were reputed for being hostile and for bearing grudges against the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as).

These include Sanan ibn Anas Nakha‘i, Harmalah Kahili, Munqidh ibn Marrah ‘Abdi, Abi al-Hutuf Ju‘fi, Malik ibn Nasr Kandi, ‘Abd al-Rahman Ju‘fi, Qash‘am ibn Nadhir Ju‘fi, Bahr ibn Ka‘b ibn Taym Allah, Zar‘ah ibn Sharik Tamimi, Salih ibn Wahab Mari, Khawli ibn Yazid Asbahi, Hasin ibn Tamim and others.

The presence of followers of Abu Sufiyan in Sa‘d’s army

Imam al-Husayn (as) bestowed the title, “the Shi‘ahs of Abu Sufiyan” on the soldiers of ‘Umar ibn Sa‘d. He addressed them in this way,

«ويحكم يا شيعه آل ابي سفيان! إن لم يكن لكم دين، وكنتم لا تخافون المعاد، فكونوا أحراراً في دنياكم»

“Woe upon you, O followers of the household of Abu Sufiyan! If you lack religion and do not fear the Day of Resurrection, then at least be free in your world.”¹²

When we refer to and ponder the words and speeches of Imam al-Husayn (as) at Karbala, we do not find a single instance where he calls his rivals his Shi'ahs or followers. In the same way, the killers of Imam al-Husayn (as) were never called the Shi'ahs of Imam al-Husayn in the words of other narrators either. This in itself is proof that the traitors who enrolled as soldiers of 'Umar ibn Sa'd were not real Shi'ahs of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as).

When Imam al-Husayn (as) asked why they wanted to shed his blood, some of 'Umar ibn Sa'd's soldiers answered, “We are at war with you because of the enmity and grudges which we bear against your father.”¹³

It is clear that these people held deep-seated enmity and hatred of Imam 'Ali (as) due to the sinister propaganda machine of Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan. A true Shi'ah of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) would never say that they were enemies of Imam 'Ali (as). Some of the enemy soldiers called Imam al-Husayn ‘the lying son of the liar’ [*kadhhab ibn kadhhab*].¹⁴

Some of them addressed him thus, “Al-Husayn! We give glad tidings to you that you are going to the fire!”¹⁵ They also told Imam al-Husayn (as) and his companions, “O al-Husayn! Your prayers will not be accepted by Allah.”¹⁶

A true Shi'ah of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) would never utter ugly words from his mouth regarding his leader and guide. All these ugly statements were a result of hatred and grudges that were held against the Prophet's *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) by followers of Abu Sufiyan and Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan.

¹ A'yan al-Shi'ah, vol. 1, pp. 584–585.

² Rijal Najjashi, p. 9.

³ Al-Kawakib al-Durriyyah, p. 30.

⁴ Lillahi wa lil-Haqiqah, p. 97.

⁵ A'yan al-Shi'ah, vol. 1, p. 585.

⁶ Tarikh Madinat al-Damishq, vol. 57, p. 198.

⁷ Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 11, p. 44.

⁸ Absar al-'Ayn fi Ansar al-Husayn (as), p. 66.

⁹ Tustari, Qamus al-Rijal; Absar al-'Ayn fi Ansar al-Husayn (as); Dhakhirah al-Darin fima Yata'alliqu bi al-Husayn wa Ashabih; Ma'ali al-Sibtayn; Pishva-ye Shahidan (The Leader of Martyrs); Nafs al-Mahmum; Tarikh Tabari; etc.

¹⁰ See previous footnote.

¹¹ See previous footnote.

¹² Khwarazmi, Maqatal al-Imam al-Husayn (as), vol. 2, p. 38; Al-Luhuf, p. 45.

¹³ Yanabi' al-Muwaddah, p. 346.

¹⁴ Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 67.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 66; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 183.

Did Imam al-Husayn (as) have Prior Information about his Martyrdom?

One of the doubts often raised by skeptics in connection with the event of Karbala is about the Shi'ah belief that every *imam* is prescient so has knowledge of things that are hidden from most human beings.

They believe that the Imams are able to foresee and know exactly what is going to happen in the future. Skeptics dispute that if this Shi'ah assertion is true, then how can they justify Imam al-Husayn's (as) uprising against Yazid, the son of Mu'awiyah, when he knew very well that he was going to be martyred in the end? If Imam al-Husayn (as) had prior knowledge about his death, then why did he undertake the uprising?

The reality is that the above-raised question is not confined to Imam al-Husayn (as) alone. This question is valid about the martyrdom of all the Imams, because they all knew by what means they would be martyred but still proceeded towards their own martyrdoms willingly.

We will now discuss this topic in detail because it is an important one.

Evidence that the Imams knew of their martyrdoms

The topic of Imam al-Husayn's (as) knowledge about his own martyrdom is something that is not hidden to any researcher of history and can be proven in a variety of ways:

1. In general, all Shi'ahs believe that Imam al-Husayn (as) and all the other Imams had and have prior knowledge of events and knowledge about what would and will happen in the future. They acquire this knowledge from the Holy Prophet's (S) teachings and divine inspiration. One of the issues they have prior information about is their own martyrdoms. Although this topic has been a subject of exhaustive debate and dispute among Islamic scholars, we have shown the truth of this matter in a separate article entitled, "*Ilm-e Ghayb-e Imam*" (Hidden Knowledge of the Imam).[1](#)

2. There are a lot of *hadiths* (traditions) recounted in books by the various sects of Islam which prove that the Holy Prophet (S) knew everything about the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as) and the place and manner of the tragic event of Karbala. These traditions have been traced and seen in the words of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (as), Imam al-Hasan (as), Imam al-Husayn (as) himself, Umma Salmah, 'A'ishah, and others. There is no doubt that Imam al-Husayn (as) had heard these traditions and knew about them well.

Asma' bint 'Umayy says, "I was Fatimah al-Zahra's attendant after the birth of Imam al-Husayn (as). One day the Holy Prophet (S) came and said, 'O Asma'! Bring my child to me.' I wrapped a piece of cloth around al-Husayn (as) and took him to the Noble Prophet (S). The Prophet put him on his lap and started reciting the call to prayer [*adhan*] in his right ear and the prelude to prayer [*iqamah*] in his left ear."

She adds, "Then, the Noble Prophet started crying and said, 'Verily, soon it must be that a horrible event must come to pass for you. O Lord! Curse his killer!' Then, the Prophet turned to me and said, 'Do not inform Fatimah about this'."

Asma' recounts, "On the seventh day after the birth of Imam al-Husayn, the Holy Prophet (S) came and sacrificed a sheep for the blessed newborn.

He performed all the Islamic ceremonial acts according to Allah's laws such as naming the child and reciting supplications that are supposed to be recited for newborns on the seventh day. Then the Noble Prophet (S) put the newborn on his lap and said, 'O Aba 'Abd Allah! It is very hard and unbearable for me.'

Then, he cried. I said, 'My father and mother be your ransom! Why are you crying on this first important day of celebration after the birth of a child?' He answered, 'I am crying for this child of mine because a group of oppressors from the tribe of Bani Umayyah and other unbelievers [*kuffar*] will kill him. Allah will not permit me to intercede for these people on the Day of Resurrection'." [2](#)

Ibn 'Abbas says, "One day, Imam al-Husayn (as) was on the Prophet's lap. The Archangel Gabriel said, 'Do you love him?' The Noble Prophet (S) said, 'How can I not love him when he is the fruit of my heart?' Gabriel said, 'Verily, your *ummah* (nation) will kill him. Do you want me to show you the site of his martyrdom and grave?' Then, Gabriel brought out a fist full of soil full of blood and showed it to the Holy Prophet." [3](#)

3. It has been directly reported in various *hadiths* that Imam al-Husayn (as) knew about his martyrdom at Karbala. Although the chains of transmission for some of these *hadiths* have problems, some sections of these chains are authentic.

We will now refer to some of these *hadiths*:

Imam al-Husayn (as) said, "There is no believer who sheds tears for my martyrdom unless it serves as a lesson." [4](#)

One day, when Imam al-Husayn (as) was leaving the Ka'bah, 'Abd Allah ibn Zubayr came to escort Imam al-Husayn (as) and see him off. 'Abd Allah ibn Zubayr said, "O Aba 'Abd Allah! It is time for the *hajj*. Are you abandoning the *hajj* and going to Iraq?" Imam al-Husayn (as) replied, "O son of Zubayr! It is better for me to be buried next to the River Euphrates than next to the Ka'bah." [5](#)

In a letter to Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah, Imam al-Husayn (as) wrote, “*In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful*, from al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali to Muhammad ibn ‘Ali and before him Bani Hashim. Verily, whoever does not join me will not attain victory; *wa salam*.”⁶

When Imam al-Husayn (as) reached the pass of Batan, he told his companions, “I do not see myself in a situation other than that I should be killed.” They said, “How is that, O Aba ‘Abd Allah?” He answered, “I saw a dream a while ago.” His companions asked, “What did you dream?” He answered, “I saw dogs attacking me viciously...”⁷

4. When we refer to history, we come to know that some people tried to stop Imam al-Husayn (as) from going to Iraq. They reminded the Imam that if he undertook this journey, he would certainly be killed.

In a letter to Imam al-Husayn (as), ‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far said, “I request that you change your mind about going on this journey, because I fear that it will result in your death...”⁸

Ibn ‘Abbas, Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah and Abu Bakr Makhzumi also tried to prevent Imam al-Husayn (as) from undertaking this dangerous journey, and warned him about the disloyalty of the people of Iraq.

5. Political and military analysis also confirms this issue because events which testify to this subject all prove that the way which Imam al-Husayn followed would end in his martyrdom. After hearing that Muslim ibn ‘Aqil had been martyred, and also after Hurr ibn Yazid Riyahi had informed Imam al-Husayn (as) about ‘Umar ibn Sa‘d’s intention, it was very clear for Imam al-Husayn (as) that his action could have no other conclusion other than martyrdom.

He did not require supernatural powers or inspiration to perceive this—common knowledge was enough for him to understand this issue.

Examination of the Qur’anic verse regarding self-destruction

We have gathered from the proofs previously presented that Imam al-Husayn (as) had knowledge about his impending martyrdom. But the question is: Does Islam allow a person to take measures which are sure to result in his own death? Wouldn’t this be considered self-destruction [*tahlukah*] which is forbidden by the divine law [*shari’ah*] of Islam according to explicit texts of the Holy Qur’an?

Now, it is important to examine and analyze the following Qur’anic verse that talks about self-destruction, well-known as “the Verse of Self-destruction” [*ayah al-tahlukah*].

Allah, the Exalted says,

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And spend in the way of Allah and cast not yourselves into perdition by your own hands, and do good to others, surely Allah loves the doers of good.”⁹

Response

Responding to this objection, we say,

Firstly, this verse cited as evidence pertains to charity (and spend in the way of Allah), and the intended meaning is that a person is not supposed to bring about his own perdition as a result of giving charity.

The aim of this verse is to say that man should not give charity to the extent that he himself becomes helpless and needy. Therefore, this Qur’anic verse is not relevant to the subject of martyrdom and being killed in the way of Allah.

Secondly, if the meaning of the above-mentioned verse could be extended to donating and pledging one’s soul in the way of Allah, it would only forbid man from committing acts that are unfruitful and purposeless. This means that man should not commit acts which result in wasting and ruining his life without reason.

However, if exposing oneself to the danger of death leads to martyrdom which will in turn lead to the awakening of the society from indifference and apathy and the result is that a better society should be built from the radiance of this action, this kind of ‘self-destruction’ will never be considered as throwing oneself into perdition.

It is for this reason that Allah, the Exalted, in the Holy Qur’an interprets the death of martyrs not as death, but as ‘spiritual life’.

Martyrs never die because with their apparent death in the form of a body without a soul, the blood of a martyr injects new life into society. Can it be said that a self-sacrificing man who dies fighting at the war front has thrown himself to perdition and destruction?

Were all those companions of the Holy Prophet (S) who were invited to *jihad* in the way of Allah cast into perdition and destruction? Such an idea cannot be accepted.

Thirdly, what is the intent of “perdition by your own hands” as mentioned in the above quoted verse? If the purpose is worldly perdition and destruction, then the intended meaning of the verse is: do not let the corrupt and unbelieving people gain predominance over you.

If the purpose is about the hereafter (in the sense that, man does not respond positively to divine call and duty), then the meaning is that the one who abandons self-sacrifice and charity should be wary about his hereafter.

He should not throw himself into perdition and self-destruction because of not responding positively to

the divine call.

The judgement of reason

This issue can also be approached from the viewpoint of reason and logic. Some say, “Reason judges that man should protect his life from every kind of danger and calamity. He should not go out looking for trouble exposing himself into self-destruction.”

As has been mentioned earlier, logic and reason reproach taking measures that will lead to self-destruction and perdition when the result is not beneficial. However, if the dead man is in essence alive, his spirit remains in the society, and he has spiritual life which goes with receiving sustenance directly from Allah, common sense and logic cannot consider such a death to be ‘self-destruction’.

On the contrary, refraining from such a death would be an unwise or foolish thing opposed to reason.

Measures taken by the Imams regarding the means of their martyrdoms

In a previous discussion, although we considered the topic of Imam al-Husayn’s (as) divine knowledge about his martyrdom, it is possible that this question has not been fully answered as regards the other Imams.

The question which remains is, “Why did the Imams take measures which they knew would finally lead to their own deaths? For example, if they knew that the food they were taking contained deadly poison which was meant to kill them, why then did they eat that food?”

Do their actions, just like the uprising of Imam al-Husayn (as), result in blessings and graces which persuaded them to undertake such action? Considering that he knew that Ibn Muljam was lying in ambush for him in the Mosque of Kufah, why did Imam ‘Ali (as) go to the mosque? And why did Imam al-Hasan (as) and Imam al-Rida (as) eat the food they were given although they knew that the food they were taking was poisonous? Is this not suicide? Does this not amount to self-destruction?

Response

There are a number of ways to respond to the above question:

1. Regarding the nature of the knowledge of the Imams, there is debate about whether their knowledge is intuitive [*huduri*] or acquired [*husuli*]. In addition, there is a question of whether the knowledge of an *imam* depends upon his will or whether it is always present with him without requiring him to use his will or exert any effort to get it? That is to say, do the Imams know things whenever they wish to know them, especially in external issues?

According to the opinions of some religious scholars and on the authority of *hadiths*, the knowledge of the Imams about the hidden [*ghayb*] is dependent upon their own wills [*mashiyyah*].

2. Even if the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) have complete awareness about events that will come to pass, and supposing their understanding about the reality of things and events is intuitive knowledge, not dependent on their own free will, they still cannot trespass or violate the destiny of Allah because they depend on Allah and follow His divine will and decree in all matters.

Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani, in the book "*Al-Durrah al-Najafiyyah*", says, "The reason the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) were pleased to be killed either by poison or by the sword, or by means of any other hardship imposed upon them by the oppressors, even when they had the power to repel these events, is that they knew that their actions were pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Therefore, their actions do not amount to self-destruction and perdition. The mentioned verse is about an instance where Allah has forbidden undertaking a certain action. On the contrary, we know that the measures undertaken by the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) were all a source of Allah's satisfaction."

3. Because the martyrdoms of none of the Shi'ah Imams was futile or fruitless, and because their martyrdoms all had significant social benefits, we can therefore compare their martyrdoms with the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as).

Their martyrdoms: a) helped people recognize their enemies better; that is why some of their martyrdoms resulted in uprisings and revolts against usurper governments; b) were causes of social awareness in the *ummah* during their time and awoke the people from indifference and apathy; c) caused people gather together to commemorate their death anniversaries, and in this way helped people get to know and understand their virtues and spiritual perfections better. Gathering to commemorate the death anniversaries of the Infallible Imams (as), in itself, has a lot of blessings and graces for the awareness of the Muslim World in any age or time.

Because the origin of their martyrdoms is in itself a great blow against the body of Islam and the Muslims and is a cause of deprivation of the favors and graces resulting from their presence in the *ummah*, it is therefore appropriate to hold ceremonies to commemorate them and participate in mourning ceremonies.

4. 'Allamah Hilli, commenting on the action Imam 'Ali (as) took by going to the Mosque of Kufah where he would become martyred on the nineteenth of the holy month of Ramadan, says, "It is possible for me to say that Imam 'Ali (as) knew about his martyrdom on that night. He knew where he was going to be killed.

But his duty cannot be compared to our duty; there is a difference between what measures he is charged with undertaking and the measures we are charged with undertaking. It is possible that giving the blood of his heart generously in the way of Allah is incumbent for him, in the same way that

steadfastness is incumbent upon the holy soldier who is fighting in Allah's way, even though his steadfastness may lead to his death.”¹⁰

- ^{1.} ‘Ali Asghar Ridwani, Shi‘ah–shenasi va Pasokh be Shubahat (To Know the Shi‘ahs and Responses to Doubts).
- ^{2.} Hayat al–Imam al–Husayn (as), vol. 1, p. 98; Al–Hakim al–Neyshaburi, Al–Mustadrak ‘ala al–Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 176; Ibn ‘Asakir, Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 13, p. 62.
- ^{3.} Majma‘ al–Zawa‘id, vol. 9, p. 62.
- ^{4.} Saduq, Al–Amali, majlis 28, hadith 7.
- ^{5.} Kamil al–Ziyarat, section [bab] 23, hadith 5.
- ^{6.} Ibid., hadith 15.
- ^{7.} Ibid., hadith 14.
- ^{8.} Hayat al–Imam al–Husayn (as), vol. 3, p. 24.
- ^{9.} Surat al–Baqarah 2: 195.
- ^{10.} Mir‘at al–‘Uqul, vol. 3, p. 126, as narrated by ‘Allamah Hilli.

Did Allah Leave Imam al–Husayn (as) Unaided?

One of the questions which is often asked about the event of Karbala and Imam al–Husayn (as) is why Allah did not help Imam al–Husayn (as)? Allah is capable of doing whatever He wishes. Why then did Imam al–Husayn (as) not resort to miraculous and supernatural powers in order to repel and exterminate his enemies?

Did Allah not, according to explicit Qur’anic texts, help His Prophet (S) with invisible aid in the Battle of Badr and other wars? Why did the event of Karbala have to end with the martyrdom of Imam al–Husayn (as), all his companions and some members of his family and the captivity of those who remained alive?

The concept of help in Islamic thought

The concept of help [*nusrat*] enjoys a special position in Islamic thought, and the Holy Qur’an has mentioned a number of instances in this regard.

A. The means of Allah’s help

Some verses of the Holy Qur’an have recounted the means of Allah’s help, such as:

1. Eradicating the unjust

The Holy Qur’an mentions eradicating and uprooting the unjust, an action that is in reality a kind of help to the monotheists and believers. Allah, the Exalted, says,

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونَ * قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ * فَأَخَذْنَاهُمُ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غُنَاءً فَبُعْدًا ﴿١﴾ لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ * ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُونًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٢﴾

“He said: O my Lord! Help me against their calling me a liar. He said: In a little while they will most certainly be repenting. So the punishment overtook them in justice, and We made them as rubbish; so away with the unjust people. Then we raised after them other generations.”¹

2. Invisible soldiers

Sometimes Allah helps believers with invisible soldiers; meaning that He helps believers by means of the angels.

Allah the Most High says,

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْهُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ﴿١﴾ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢﴾

“If you will not aid him, Allah certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion: Grieve not, surely Allah is with us. So Allah sent down His tranquillity upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved; and the word of Allah, that is the highest; and Allah is Mighty, Wise.”²

3. Intimidation and fear

Sometimes, the fear that Allah puts in the hearts of the unbelievers is a kind of help to the believers. By this means, Allah intimidates the unbelievers. Allah says,

سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَنْزَلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ وَيُسْ مَثْوًى لِلظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١﴾

“We will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they set up for Allah that which He has sent down no authority, and their abode is the fire; and evil is the abode of the unjust.”³

Intimidation and fear are the most effective weapons on the battlefield, and Allah has helped the believers enjoy the benefits of this weapon.

B. The conditions for help

Allah's help and aid has conditions, which have been mentioned in the verses of the Holy Qur'an; among them:

1. Patience and steadfastness

Allah says,

﴿وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَلَئِنَّ آتِبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي﴾
﴿جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ﴾

“And the Jews will not be pleased with you, nor the Christians until you follow their religion. Say: Surely Allah's guidance is the true guidance. And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have no guardian from Allah, nor any helper.”⁴

He also says,

﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخِلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ﴾
﴿الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَىٰ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ﴾

“Or do you think that you would enter the Garden while yet the state of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you, distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently, so that the Apostle and those who believed with him said: When will the help of Allah come? Now surely the help of Allah is nigh!”⁵

2. Preserving and safeguarding help

One of the conditions for receiving Allah's help is that the people for whom this help is meant should possess the capacity and worthiness to receive that help, meaning that they should preserve it and bring about social justice after the fulfilment of Allah's help.

Allah, the Exalted, says,

﴿أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ * الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا﴾
﴿رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهْجَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيْعٌ وَصَلَواتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا﴾
﴿وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ * الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا﴾
﴿بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ﴾

“Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and

most surely Allah is well able to assist them; those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah. And had there not been Allah's repelling some people with others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty. Those who, should We establish them in the land, will keep prayer and pay the poor rate and enjoin good and forbid evil; and Allah's is the end of affairs."[6](#)

C. Testing a believer by withholding help

It can be inferred from certain verses of the Holy Qur'an that sometimes Allah tests the believers by withholding help from them. He intends to manifest whether they have perseverance and firmness of purpose or are weak and fainthearted. Will they run away from the battlefield or stand firmly defending the religion of Allah? Allah, the Exalted says,

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ * إِنْ يَمَسُّكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ
نُداوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ * وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَيَمْحَقَ الْكَافِرِينَ * أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ

“And be not infirm, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers. If a wound has afflicted you (at the Battle of Uhud), a wound like it has also afflicted the unbelieving people; and We bring these days to men by turns, and that Allah may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you; and Allah does not love the unjust. And that He may purge those who believe and deprive the unbelievers of blessings. Do you think that you will enter the Garden while Allah has not yet known those who strive hard from among you, and (He has not) known the patient.”[7](#)

Responses to two questions

Sometimes it is asked whether or not Imam al-Husayn (as) achieved the professed objectives of his movement. Also, the question is sometimes asked as to whether Imam al-Husayn (as) was militarily victorious over his enemies or not. Here, what is meant by victory is a victory which leads to rule and government.

The answer to the first question is that Imam al-Husayn (as) certainly attained to the professed aims and objectives of his uprising and undoubtedly came out of the war victorious as shown in previous discussion.

As for the second question, it must be said that the answer is negative; because outwardly the army of 'Umar ibn Sa'd managed to prevail over the tiny army of Imam al-Husayn (as), killing Imam al-Husayn himself (as), the youths of Bani Hashim and many of his companions. This is something which, from a

military perspective, apparently looks like defeat.

However, Imam al-Husayn's (as) uprising had aims and objectives beyond military defeat and governmental rule. The Imam intended to awaken the Islamic community; a community that had sunk into apathy and indifference, and had turned the teachings of Islam upside down. The only factor that could awaken the consciences of these insensible people from their deep sleep of negligence was Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom.

That is why we see that after the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as), uprisings sprang up against the rule of Bani Umayyah which finally led to the downfall of this cursed sultanate. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

«حسين منّي وأنا من حسين»

“Al-Husayn is from me, and I am from al-Husayn.”

That is to say that the Holy Prophet (S) and his message is intricately connected to Imam al-Husayn (as) and his uprising.

The triangle of prosperity, trial and free will

Man attains advancement and success by means of trials and difficulties and the use of his free will to make correct decisions about his life. Therefore, prosperity and salvation have no meaning and become worthless when they are attained without trials and self-determination.

In the same way, a man who has never been tempered by trials and afflictions will not put in the same effort to improve and advance and so will never achieve success at the level of his innate and inherent propensity.

Trials are sometimes personal and private and they are sometimes social, including under their fold all aspects of the society. Sickness, poverty, disbelief, children, worldly life, help, opportunity to escape from the battlefield, and other things like this are all kinds of trials for a believing person. Mention has been made in the Holy Qur'an about trials and temptations for believers, when it says,

... وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ

“And most certainly, We will try you until We have known those among you who exert themselves hard, and the patient, and made your case manifest.”⁸

The event of Karbala was a trial for the Muslim ummah

The event of Karbala was a scene of great trial for the Islamic *ummah* in the same way that the wars which occurred during Imam ‘Ali’s caliphate and the peace which Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) made with Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan were all incidents of Allah’s trials for the Islamic community.

Allah tried the Muslims to manifest who in reality was trudging the path of truth and justice and would follow the Infallible Imams (as) from those who had deviated from the path of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as). In this way, everyone was made known by his own actions.

- [1.](#) Surat al-Mu‘minun 23:39–42.
- [2.](#) Surat al-Tawbah (or Bara’ah) 9:40.
- [3.](#) Surat Al ‘Imran 3:151.
- [4.](#) Surat al-Baqarah 2:120.
- [5.](#) Surat al-Baqarah 2:214.
- [6.](#) Surat al-Hajj 22:39–41.
- [7.](#) Surat Al ‘Imran 3:139–142.
- [8.](#) Surat Muhammad 47:31.

Why Did Imam al-Husayn (as) Bring his Family to Karbala?

Another question brought forth for discussion is why Imam al-Husayn (as) brought his family to Karbala while he knew very well that a brutal battle would ensue between him and the army of Kufah and that this battle would end with his martyrdom and his family being taken into captivity. Why would he bring his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) along on this dangerous journey?

First response

There have been various responses provided for the above-mentioned question. One of the answers is that it was a prevalent custom among the Arabs of that time to bring their families and wives to the battlefield.

Objection

This response does not meet the needs of our question because it brings other questions to mind: Why did the Arabs bring their families to the battlefield? Even if it is true that this custom did exist among the Arabs, what benefit and gain would there be in bringing one’s household to a battlefield?

Was it usual for Imam al-Husayn (as) to follow or imitate the customs and social practices of the Arabs? Was Imam al-Husayn (as) not following Allah's decree when he brought his family and newborn children to the battlefield?

Second response

Another answer put forward as a possibly correct response is that Imam al-Husayn (as) knew that he bore a great divine mission on his shoulders. The mission was to bring about social awareness and consciousness in the Muslim *ummah*. For fulfillment, this mission had to traverse different stages.

One of those stages was fulfilled by the martyrdom of certain individuals. Another stage would have to reach fulfilment after the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as) and his companions, and was accomplished by way of speeches and open and public display of the oppression imposed upon Imam al-Husayn (as) and his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) by Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah's government.

Only with the manifestation of this second stage does the divine mission of Imam al-Husayn (as) become complete.

This second aspect was well fulfilled by the household of Imam al-Husayn (as) and the captives of Karbala. Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah wanted to secure his position and government by killing Imam al-Husayn and then later claiming that he had only been compelled to do so because Imam al-Husayn (as) had strayed from the religion.

It was by means of the speeches given by the captives of Karbala, led by Imam al-Sajjad (as) and Zaynab al-Kubra, that the oppression and crimes committed by Yazid were exposed. It was because these crimes were publicly disclosed by the captives that Yazid could not achieve his sinister and ominous objectives.

Imam al-Husayn (as) knew very well that if he and all his children and companions were killed, and some of his household members were not present to witness his martyrdom, no one would disclose the oppression committed against him to the public.

There had to be some family members who should remain alive and be taken into captivity so that they could disclose the oppression that was committed against him, or all the blood which would be shed would have been futile. This is why Imam al-Husayn (as) brought the womenfolk of his household along with him and why this act was considered necessary.

It can therefore be said that the public speeches which were given by the womenfolk of Imam al-Husayn's (as) household shook the foundations of Yazid's government and eventually brought about its collapse.

Objection

This possibility, although rational, does not completely meet the needs of our question either because still a second question comes to mind: Why did Imam al-Husayn (as) bring even the newborns of his household? The duty of divulging the events of Karbala could be left to certain older members of his household, as was done by Imam al-Sajjad (as) and Zaynab al-Kubra, and the other women who were in Imam al-Husayn's (as) caravan.

There was no need to bring the children and newborns to accomplish this duty. Therefore, this argument does not explain the entire cause for bringing all the members of his household, although it can be cited as one of the philosophies behind bringing his family along.

Third response

Some people, while trying to provide a response to this question, have focused on the human tragedies of this event, and have emphasized that Imam al-Husayn (as) intended to prove and expose Yazid's inner self and the crimes he had committed against Islam and the Prophet's *Ahl al-Bayt* (as).

That is why Imam al-Husayn (as) brought all the members of his household, including the women and children. Even though he knew what Yazid would do to his family members, Imam al-Husayn (as) brought them along in order to prove the true nature and identity of Yazid and his government. In this way, he could substantiate that Yazid was not worthy of being the caliph for the Muslim *ummah*.

This response can also be cited as one of the causes of Imam al-Husayn's (as) bringing his household along, but is still not a complete reason for this act.

Fourth response

Others say: the reason for bringing all his household members to Karbala was that Imam al-Husayn (as) wanted to incite people to come to his help, because when the Imam is seen with all his children and womenfolk, his friends and supporters would be persuaded to join him out of mercy and compassion, and the hearts of his enemies would become sympathetic.

However, this possibility does not seem correct because:

Firstly, Imam al-Husayn (as) could use other means of persuading both his friends and enemies, like making speeches and sending representatives to different cities and countries.

Secondly, Imam al-Husayn did not want to create a state of anxiety and uneasiness in the *ummah*. He did not desire to obtain the people's help at all costs by arousing their emotions and sympathies. On the contrary, he wanted the people to choose their way by their own volition.

Fifth response

Another answer, which is probably a better answer to this question, is that Imam al-Husayn (as) brought his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as), womenfolk and newborns because he was worried about them. If Imam al-Husayn (as) had gone on his own and left his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) in Medina when he rose up against Yazid, there was the fear that the caliphate apparatus would arrest and imprison them.

The Imam saw it to be in everyone's interests to take his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) along with him so that, on the one hand, he could keep them under his own protection and, on the other, they could be charged with continuing the mission by sermonizing and divulging the oppression suffered by the pure and chaste *Ahl al-Bayt* (as). This possibility can also be confirmed as follows:

- a. When we take Yazid's government's way of conduct into consideration, it is probable that Yazid would have arrested and taken the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) into custody.
- b. On the night before the day of 'Ashura, Imam al-Husayn (as) told all his companions to feel free to leave him alone at Karbala, but he did not give permission for his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) to do the same.
- c. The governor of Medina at that time was 'Amru ibn Sa'id Ashdaq. When the news of Imam al-Husayn's (as) death reached him, he rejoiced. At a time when the whole of Medina was engulfed in sorrow and everyone was crying and feeling miserable, he said, "This cying and weeping should be for 'Uthman." And also in another speech, he severely criticized the people for mourning over Imam al-Husayn (as), and rejoiced at their misfortune.^{[1](#)}

Now, if the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and womenfolk of Imam al-Husayn (as) had remained in Medina, no one can imagine what such a vile man would have done to them? Would he not have arrested, tortured and imprisoned them? Sa'id was the one who gave orders that all the houses of Bani Hashim should be destroyed. And he was very stubborn in his enmity and hatred of Imam 'Ali (as).^{[2](#)}

¹. Muqarram, Maqatal al-Husayn (as), p. 334.

². Ibid., p. 335.

Why did Imam al-Husayn (as) give his Companions Permission to Leave?

One of the objections and questions put forward by some people regarding the event of Karbala is why Imam al-Husayn (as) gave his companions permission to go and leave him alone at Karbala on the night of 'Ashura.

Imam al-Husayn (as) knew that he was facing a large number of enemy soldiers whose hearts did not possess any mercy at all. He knew that fighting with them was certain. He also knew that in any war, there is need for help from friends and supporters.

Why then did he give his companions permission to leave the desert of Karbala? Why did he advise them to take advantage of the darkness of the night and leave him alone?

Two types of permission from Imam al-Husayn (as)

With recourse to history, we come to know that Imam al-Husayn (as) gave two types of permission to his companions.

A. General permission

Imam al-Husayn (as) addressed his companions in a general way,

أَمَّا بَعْدُ؛ فَإِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ أَصْحَاباً أَوْفَى وَلَا خَيْراً مِنْ أَصْحَابِي، وَلَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ إِبْرَءِيلَ وَأَوْصَلَ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي، فَجَزَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِّي خَيْراً. أَلَا وَإِنِّي لَأُظَنَّ يَوْمَنَا مِنْ هَوْلَاءِ غَدًا. أَلَا وَإِنِّي قَدْ أَذْنَتُ لَكُمْ، فَانْطَلِقُوا جَمِيعاً فِي حُلٍّ، لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَرَجٌ مِنِّي وَلَا «.ذِمَامٌ، هَذَا اللَّيْلُ قَدْ غَشِيَكُمْ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ جَمَلاً»

“And after this; verily, I have never known companions more loyal and better than my companions. I have never found household members more excellent in observation of bonds of relationship than my Household (the *Ahl al-Bayt*). Allah will reward you graciously on my behalf. Beware! I strongly predict that the day of our confrontation with them will be tomorrow. Beware! I have given you permission to leave. You are all free to go. I do not and will not reproach anyone of you for doing so. This is a night whose darkness has covered you like a mounted camel. Therefore, take advantage of it and make your escapes.”¹

B. Special or personal permission

History narrates that Imam al-Husayn (as) did not content himself with the general permission he had given to his companions. He went further and gave personal and special permission to some people for certain reasons.

Imam al-Husayn (as) addressed Muhammad ibn Bushr Hadrami on the night of ‘Ashura in this way, “Your child is being held captive in Marzari.” Muhammad ibn Bushr replied, “I entrust his captivity and mine to Allah and His account. I would rather die than live to see my child in captivity. I would not desire to remain alive after him.”

When Imam al-Husayn (as) heard this, he said, “May Allah have mercy on you. You are free from any obligation to me. Go and strive hard to free your child. You are not obliged to me at all.” He answered,

“May the wild beasts tear me to pieces alive if I should leave you.” Imam al-Husayn (as) gave him some clothes and said, “Give these clothes to your son so that he may exert himself to free his brother.” The value of those clothes was one thousand *dinars*.²

Imam al-Husayn (as) came out of the tents in the heart of the night to examine the pits and holes which were in the desert. Nafi‘ ibn Bilal followed the Holy Imam (as). Imam al-Husayn (as) asked him, “Where are you going?” Nafi‘ ibn Bilal answered, “O son of Allah’s Prophet! Your movement towards this rebellious army has aroused my fears.”

The Holy Imam (as) said, “I came out of my tent in order to examine the highs and lows of this desert so as to be able to distinguish the enemy’s military strategic position.” Imam al-Husayn (as) took Nafi‘ ibn Bilal’s hand into his hands and said, “Verily, it is exactly as I have already predicted. I swear upon Allah!

The promise cannot be abrogated.” After this he said, “Are you not going to take advantage of the darkness and pass through these two hills in the heart of the night in order to save yourself?”

Nafi‘ ibn Bilal fell at Imam al-Husayn’s (as) feet and started kissing them. He said, “May my mother mourn for me! My sword is worth a thousand *dinars* and my horse is worth a hundred *dinars*. I swear upon Allah who holds me indebted for the favor of your presence! I will never leave you.”³

The reality of permission and consent

The question which is put forward at this juncture is this: Does this permission mean that Imam al-Husayn (as) gave his companions clearance from duty and acquittal from the obligation of fighting? Does it imply that they were free from any obligation if they left him alone in those dangerous circumstances?

Does it denote that no sin and requital would be recorded for them if they left their Imam unaided? Or is there a deep secret lying beneath this permission?

We believe that Imam al-Husayn (as) had a number of aims in mind when he gave his permission:

1. When Imam al-Husayn (as) made his sermon of giving permission, he wanted to allow the ones who still harboured doubts about his uprising to leave and not get involved in a war they did not fully believe in. The Holy Imam (as) wanted to let those who had joined him for the sake of worldly position, power and money quit the battleground.
2. Additionally, the presence of people lacking strong motivation and character can harm an army and is not beneficial. This is because such people spread the fear and uncertainty which they feel in their hearts to the other soldiers in the camp. This reduces the morale and discipline of the entire army. Fear is contagious and can cause irreparable division among the soldiers of an army.

3. We can also infer that Imam al-Husayn (as) was inspiring his true companions with this kind of discourse to strengthen their determination for war. He was stimulating his true and loyal companions to be even more steadfast in his defence.

4. We can deduce that because the tents were pitched close to each other and the people could hear each other's voices, Imam al-Husayn (as) wanted his family members to hear for themselves the answers that would be provided by his loyal and faithful companions. This would warm their hearts and raise their spirits high.

5. We can infer that with his speech Imam al-Husayn (as) intended to motivate his followers for a holy war and free them from tribal and clan bigotry. He wanted them to defend him not because of tribal ties, but out of divine motivation to defend what is right and true. He wanted to motivate them to come to the defence of Islam, the faith and monotheism.

Imam al-Husayn's (as) aim when he made his speech was not to acquit his companions from duty and obligation. In these sensitive circumstances, no one had any pretext for leaving his Imam alone when he needed their help the most.

In reality, the battle that Imam al-Husayn (as) was involved in was such that there was no need for him to ask for help from his companions. Everyone was duty-bound to aid the Holy Imam (as). The very fact that Imam al-Husayn (as) found himself in these circumstances is a call of invitation for help. Is it not incumbent upon people to protect the life of Allah's trust on earth?

6. When Imam al-Husayn (as) witnessed that his companions possessed sincere and honest intentions, he prayed for them and said, "Lift your heads to the sky and see for yourselves." When they looked up, they observed their places in heaven. We can deduce from this that Imam al-Husayn (as) wanted to get their allegiance and loyalty before showing them their places in heaven. Seeing and witnessing their places in heaven would strengthen their wills and make them fight with more determination and certainty.

7. On the day of 'Ashura, Imam al-Husayn (as) was repeatedly asking for help. He would say,

«هل من ناصر ينصرني؟»

This is not compatible with giving his companions permission to leave and setting them free from any obligation.

8. It has been narrated in some history books that Imam al-Husayn (as) entered Zaynab's tent after talking to Nafi' ibn Bilal and the other companions. Nafi' ibn Bilal stood outside Zaynab's tent waiting for Imam al-Husayn (as) to come out. He heard Zaynab's voice. She was talking to Imam al-Husayn (as).

She was saying, “Have you tested the determination and will of your companions? I fear that they will leave you alone and surrender you to the enemy when the war gets fierce and the enemies intensify their attack on you.” Imam al-Husayn (as) said, “I swear upon Allah! I have tested them. I have observed that they are capable of being steadfast and patient during hard times. They are more attracted to death than a newborn is attracted to its mother’s breast for milk.”⁴

Opposing positions

In order to substantiate that the permission granted by Imam al-Husayn (as) meant that everyone was at liberty to quit the scene of fighting and was exempted from obligation on the condition that they should go far enough that the voice of Imam al-Husayn (as) calling for help and assistance should not reach them, the sceptics have resorted to certain incidents which came to pass.

One of these incidents was when Imam al-Husayn (as) encountered ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Hurr Ju’fi in the palace of Bani Maqatil. Imam al-Husayn (as) invited ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Hurr Ju’fi to join him and become one of his helpers but ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Hurr refused and withheld his help from the Holy Imam (as).

Imam al-Husayn (as) said, “I advise you then to do all that is in your capacity to avoid hearing us, the oppressed, when we call out for help. I recommend that you do all that you can to avoid witnessing what will befall us. Because I swear upon Allah! No one who hears our oppressed voices and withholds his help from us will be exempted from the fire of hell.”

Response

If Imam al-Husayn (as) had set everyone at liberty to leave him, then why did he ask for help and assistance from ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Hurr Ju’fi? Yes, it is true that the Holy Imam (as) asked him to go so far that he could not hear the Imam’s voice calling for help against the oppressors or witness the killing.

The Imam was trying to help him not to get caught up in an even greater sin than refusing his help because on the Day of Judgement, any person who hears an oppressed person calling for help and withholds his help will meet with the wrath of Allah. If that oppressed person happens to be a Holy Imam, the person who withholds his help will certainly be afflicted with harder retribution than the one who does not hear or witness the battle.

^{1.} Muqarram, Maqatal al-Husayn (as), p. 212.

^{2.} Ibid.

^{3.} Ibid.

^{4.} Ibid., p. 219.

Why did Muslim ibn ‘Aqil not kill ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad in Hani’s House?

Historians have recounted: When Muslim ibn ‘Aqil was informed that ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad had made a speech warning the people of Kufah not to follow him, Muslim ibn ‘Aqil feared that the government agents would arrest and kill him. For this reason, he left Mukhtar’s house and sought refuge in the house of Hani ibn ‘Urwah Madhhaji, a strong and proud Shi‘ah. Hani was one of the nobles of Kufah and a renowned reciter of the Holy Qur’an in that part of the Muslim World.

He was also a *shaykh* and spokesman of a religious group that had pledged allegiance of brotherhood to one another and formed what they called a ‘religious clan’. He had four thousand mounted soldiers and eight thousand ground troops at his command. In addition, if we take the contributions of his allies (in times of need) into consideration, his troops would reach thirty thousand able and willing fighters.

He was considered to be one of the closest people to Amir al-Mu‘minin ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as). He had participated in all the three wars which were imposed on Imam ‘Ali (as). He had also had a limited personal experience with the Holy Prophet (S) and understood well the era of the Holy Prophet (S).

Muslim ibn ‘Aqil sought refuge in Hani’s house. At that time, there was someone else in Hani’s house. His name was Sharik ibn ‘Abd Allah A‘war Harithi. He was one of the highly respectable and renowned Shi‘ahs of Imam ‘Ali (as) in Basrah. He was very honorable and considered to be a great man among the companions.

He had taken part in the Battle of Siffin and had been seen fighting alongside ‘Ammar ibn Yasir. Sharik ibn ‘Abd Allah and Hani ibn ‘Urwah were very close and special friends. While Sharik ibn ‘Abd Allah was in Hani’s house, he became very ill. ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad came to visit this sick person in Hani’s house.

Before Ibn Ziyad had arrived, Sharik ibn ‘Abd Allah addressed Muslim ibn ‘Aqil in this way, “Your aim and the aims of your Shi‘ahs is to bring ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad to perdition. Therefore, hide yourself in that secret closet over there. Whenever you feel certain that he has arrived, leave your secret hiding place and come forward to kill him. I will guarantee your safety.”

When they were still discussing this, it was said that the governor (‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad) had arrived at the doorstep. Muslim ibn ‘Aqil hid himself in the closet and a while later ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad came in to visit Sharik ibn ‘Abd Allah.

After waiting for some time, Sharik noticed that Muslim ibn ‘Aqil was not coming out of his hiding place to kill ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. He feared that Muslim ibn ‘Aqil was delaying and losing time. In order to give

him a sign that the time was right for killing Ibn Ziyad, Sharik kept removing his head turban and placing it on the ground.

In order to induce Muslim to come out of his hiding place and kill ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, he would repeatedly recite poetry. He kept reciting poetry while his eyes were locked on Muslim’s hiding place. Finally, with a voice loud enough for Muslim to hear, he said, “Quench his thirst, even though that will lead to my death.”

At that moment, ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad turned his face towards Hani ibn ‘Urwah Madhhaji and said, “Your cousin hallucinates because of his illness.” Hani answered, “Since he got ill, Sharik has been speaking deliriously. He does not understand what he utters.”

‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad left the gathering. Muslim ibn ‘Aqil did not make the least attempt to kill him. The question that can be asked here is: Why did Muslim ibn ‘Aqil not act according to their discussion and kill the matrix of corruption and the zenith of perversion, ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, before the event of Karbala? In other words, why did he not exact vengeance and retribution before the crime?

Response

Various responses have been offered for the above question and objection, and we will now mention some of them:

1. Muslim ibn ‘Aqil could not resort to deceit and trickery in order to kill ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad because the Holy Prophet (S) forbade any kind of guile. Therefore, Muslim could not employ craftiness in order to fight ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. Imam al-Sadiq (as) recounts a *hadith* in which Allah’s Prophet (S) said,

«إِنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ قَيْدُ الْفِتَنِ»

“Verily, Islam became an obstruction of deceit and an obstacle of trickery. (Islam has tied and chained guile and craftiness).”¹

2. It has been narrated in history books that the wife of Hani ibn ‘Urwah had made Muslim ibn ‘Aqil swear not to kill ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad in her house. She even cried in front of Muslim ibn ‘Aqil in order to persuade him not to carry out their plan. This is something which Muslim ibn ‘Aqil himself mentioned.

3. Killing ‘Ubayd Allah by means of deceit was not compatible with Muslim’s conduct and personality because he was a man endowed with strong faith and abstinence. He was raised and brought up in the house of Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).

The responsibilities he was carrying from Imam al-Husayn (as) were to get and secure the people’s allegiance for the Holy Imam (as) and inform him about all that was taking place in Kufah, not killing

‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. Therefore, if he had killed ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, he would have gone beyond the domain of his duties and beyond his line of responsibilities.

4. Muslim ibn ‘Aqil considered his duty to be the awakening of the consciousness of the people. If ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad and the likes of him were assassinated in the absence of social consciousness arising from awareness among the people, the result would be that the people would bring to power someone similar or even worse than Ibn Ziyad.

The people had to become aware and informed about the corruption and perversion of the caliph himself. This social awareness and awakening could not be attained by assassinating one man. This is why there is no historical document confirming that Muslim ibn ‘Aqil had concurred with Sharik’s plan of assassinating ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. It is possible that Muslim ibn ‘Aqil was thinking about this plan, but did not have a definite intention of executing it.

5. When we deeply reflect upon this event, we come to the conclusion that Hani ibn ‘Urwah had granted guarantees of safety to ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. The reason is that when Ibn Ziyad asked Hani to give him permission to come and visit Sharik, Hani ibn ‘Urwah granted him the permission.

This in itself is a kind of verbal guarantee which Hani gave to ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. In these circumstances, Islam binds a man to respect the rules of civility by stipulating that he should not kill anyone who has been granted guarantees of safety, even if that person is a matrix of corruption and a source of perversion like Ibn Ziyad especially when this person is visiting another person’s house, not yours, and the host’s wife is not pleased with such an action and is pleading with you to quit the plan; particularly when she insists that if you seriously intend to carry out the assassination, you should do it elsewhere, and not in her house.

6. ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad had come with bodyguards. Some of his bodyguards had remained outside the house behind the door and some had come inside the house along with him. The atmosphere prevailing in Kufah at that time demanded that everyone take every precaution about their lives. There was no guarantee that Muslim ibn ‘Aqil would have succeeded at killing ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad even if he had carried out his plan.

7. There was also no guarantee that had Muslim ibn ‘Aqil succeeded at killing ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, the people of Kufah would have judged in his favor and put him in the governor’s palace.

The people of Kufah feared that if ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad got killed in Kufah, the central government in Sham would just send a more bloodthirsty man, worse than ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, to Kufah to kill them indiscriminately. They were afraid that the central government in Sham would hold them responsible for killing the governor, and as a result avenge his death with massacre of the people of Kufah.

[1.](#) Tahdhib al-Ahkam, vol. 10, p. 214; Al-Kafi, vol. 7, p. 375.

Why Didn't Abu al-Fadl Drink Water?

Historians have narrated that when Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas (as) decided to go on the battlefield, Imam al-Husayn (as) requested that he bring some water for the children and newborns. Abu al-Fadl (as) got a water skin and mounted his horse.

He started moving towards the River Euphrates. Four thousand men surrounded him and were showering spears on him from every direction, but the lone soldier Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas (as) did not pay the least attention to them, nor to the spears which were being showered all around him. He managed to drive the enemies away from the river bank and gain access to water all by himself.

He dismounted his horse and went next to the river with astounding ease and calmness. He then got a handful of water from the river and wanted to drink it because of the intense thirst he was feeling. All of a sudden, he remembered that Imam al-Husayn (as) and his children and the entire family were thirsty. He dropped the water that was in his hands back into the river and recited the famous poem,

يا نفس من بعد الحسين هوني وبعده لا كنت ان تكوني

هذا حسين وارد المنون وتشربين بارد المعين

تالله ما هذا فعال ديني

"O soul! You should be debased for al-Husayn (as) and never live after him.

Al-Husayn (as) has come face to face with death and yet you want to drink cold and delicious water!?

I swear upon Allah that this is not in accordance with the dictates of my religion!"

Then, he filled the waterskin, mounted his horse and returned towards Imam al-Husayn's (as) camp. The enemy closed his way...[1](#)

Some ask why Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas did not drink the water. It would have been better if he had quenched his thirst first in order to gain the necessary strength that was needed to fight, and by this means inflict heavy blows on the enemy or even exterminate them altogether. If he had drunk the water, he would have been able to help Imam al-Husayn (as) and Islam better.

Response

Firstly, Imam al-Husayn's (as) aim at Karbala was not to bring about the deaths of all the people. On the contrary, Imam al-Husayn's (as) main aim was to awaken the Islamic community and bring about social consciousness. Even killing the enemy has to occur when there is a pressing need and expedience in the action.

Secondly, the issue of Abu al-Fadl's not drinking water has served as further proof of the oppression that was committed against Imam al-Husayn (as). This action has attracted sympathy and affection and led human hearts towards Imam al-Husayn (as). It has drawn people to initiate uprisings against Yazid and others like him.

Thirdly, Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas knew very well that he and his brother, the Holy Imam al-Husayn (as), were going to get killed, whether he took the opportunity to drink water or not. He knew that he was not going to leave this battlefield safe, sound and alive. He knew that the enemies were determined and bent on killing all the household of Bani Hashim at all costs. Therefore, was it not better to attain martyrdom and return to his Lord with thirsty lips?

What bears witness to this is that man drinks water whenever he knows with certainty that drinking water will save his life, but Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas had no hope of living after this war. He knew with certainty that he was going to be martyred.

Fourthly, Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas believed that drinking water when Imam al-Husayn (as) and his household were thirsty amounted to treachery in some way. The rules of proper Islamic conduct did not allow him as a follower to satiate his thirst when his holy leader was thirsty.

Fifthly, generosity and self sacrifice are among the morals and gracious virtues of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as). Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas sacrificed in the same way that his father Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), Fatimah al-Zahra (as), al-Hasan and al-Husayn (as) had sacrificed generously and given the food they so badly needed to break their fast with in the holy month of Ramadan to the poor, orphans and the captives for three days in a row while they themselves were forced to remain hungry all this time.

¹. Muqarram, Maqtal al-Husayn (as), p. 267.

Is Obeying a Tyranical Ruler Incumbent upon

Muslims?

One of the issues about which the Sunnis and the Imamate Shi'ahs differ is obedience to a corrupt ruler or submission to a tyrannical government. Is it permissible to dismiss the caliph from office if he is corrupt or becomes corrupt? Is it permissible to rise up in arms against him or is it never permissible?

The Sunnis have reached consensus that the caliph cannot be dismissed and removed from office, even if he is corrupt and perverted. Therefore, they say it is not permissible to revolt against him. The only thing Muslims can do is to advise him to change his corrupt ways.

In contrast, the Imamate Shi'ahs not only regard obeying a tyrannical and corrupt ruler not to be incumbent, but consider it to be forbidden [*haram*] by the Islamic law to submit to such a leader. In certain circumstances, it is obligatory [*wajib*] to rise up against a tyrannical ruler.

In this discussion, we intend to prove the truthfulness of the Shi'ah standpoint.

Religious edicts [fatwas] issued by the Sunnis about obeying a corrupt and oppressive ruler

1. Imam Nuwi says, "The Sunnis have reached consensus that the sultan and caliph cannot be dismissed from office, even though he is corrupt..."^{[1](#)}
2. Qadi 'Ayad says, "All the Sunnis from different fields of specialization such as Islamic jurisprudence, *hadith*, history and theology believe that the sultan cannot be dismissed from office, even if he is corrupt, perverted, oppressive and tramples the rule of law underfoot."^{[2](#)}
3. Qadi Abu Bakr Baqilani writes, "All the Sunnis believe that an *imam* cannot be dismissed from office even if he is corrupt, oppressive, or seizes people's property by force. He cannot be removed from power although he hits or slaps people in their faces and does not respect the honor of others, and even though he tramples the rule of law underfoot. It is not permitted to rise up against him.

The Muslims can only go so far as to advise and warn him about the negative consequences of his actions. It is of course not binding upon the people to obey him when he invites them to participate in his sinful actions, but they cannot dismiss him from office. There are a number of narrations which assert that it is incumbent to obey an *imam* and caliph, even though he might be an oppressor or even if he forcibly usurps and seizes people's property. Because the Prophet (S) has said, 'Listen to and obey your ruler, even if he is a slave with a flat nose or an Ethiopian. Also, pray behind every person, virtuous or perverted.' He also said, 'Follow and obey your rulers, even if they loot your property and break your backs'."^{[3](#)}

However, some Sunni scholars have opposed this point of view, and instead believe that a corrupt ruler should not be obeyed. Some of those who have opposed obeying the corrupt ruler are Mawardi in his book “*Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*”⁴, ‘Abd al-Qahir Baghdadi in his book “*Usul al-Din*”⁵, Ibn Hazm Zahiri in his book “*Al-Fisal fi al-Millal wa al-Ahwa’ wa al-Nihal*”⁶, and Jurjani in his book “*Sharh al-Mawaqif*”.⁷

Edicts regarding illegality of rising up against a tyrant

Many Sunni scholars [*‘ulama’*] have agreed that rising up against a corrupt *‘imam’* or caliph who is an oppressor is not permissible.

Among those of old, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar and Ahmad ibn Hanbal are some of the most headstrong opposers of rising up against the Muslim caliph even if he is an oppressor and a perverted man. Abu Bakr Marwazi narrates that Ahmad ibn Hanbal used to advocate preventing bloodshed and strongly denied the legitimacy of uprising against the Muslim caliph.⁸

Dr. ‘Atiah al-Zahrani adds a footnote at the bottom of Abu Bakr Marwazi’s narration saying, “The chain of transmission of this narration is correct. This is the true belief of the Salafi sect.”⁹

Imam Nuwi, while expounding on the agreement of the Sunni scholars on this issue, says, “According to the consensus of the scholars, rising up against the Muslim caliph is forbidden [*haram*], even though he is corrupt and oppressive.”¹⁰

However, this claim is not correct and, as we will explain later, the Imamate Shi‘ahs oppose it and believe that not only is obeying a corrupt and oppressive ruler not permissible, but it is also obligatory [*wajib*] to rise up against him under certain circumstances.

Dr. Muhammad Faruq Nahban attributes the edict [*fatwa*] which forbids rising up against a corrupt and oppressive caliph to the majority of Sunni scholars and says, “Sunni scholars have two opinions regarding revolution and rising up against a tyrannical and perverted ruler:

The first opinion is that rising up against the ruler and dismissing him from power is permissible. This opinion is held by the Mu‘tazilites, the Khawarij, the Zaydis, and a number of sects. They even say that it is incumbent to rise up against an oppressive ruler. They have resorted to the following Qur’anic verses to prove their claim,

﴿وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ﴾

“... and help one another in goodness and piety...”¹¹

﴿... فَفَاتِلُوا آلَ لَئِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ...﴾

“... but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command...”¹²

﴿ لَا يَنْالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ... ﴾

“... My covenant does not include the unjust.”¹³

The second opinion is that drawing one's sword and rising up against the caliph is not permissible, because it brings about sedition [*fitnah*] and bloodshed. This is the opinion held by most Sunnis and the *Rijal al-Hadith*¹⁴ as well as a number of the Prophet's (S) companions like Ibn 'Umar, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas and Usamah ibn Zayd.”¹⁵

Reasons put forward by the Sunnis

A. Traditions [hadiths]

In order to prove the illegality of rising up against a corrupt ruler and the incumbency of obeying him, Sunni scholars have resorted to a number of traditions narrated through Sunni sources. Now, we will mention some of these *hadiths*:

1. In his book “*Al-Sahih*”, Muslim quotes from Hudhayfah that the Holy Prophet (S) said, “There will come after me *imams* who will not be guided to what I have been guided, and who will not act according to my *sunnah* (way of life). Soon it will come to pass that people will rise up against them. Some of the people revolting will possess hearts like those of the satans [*shayatin*] in their bodies.” Hudhayfah says, “I asked the Noble Prophet (S), ‘What should I do, O Prophet of Allah, if I experience such a period?’ The Noble Prophet (S) said, ‘You must listen to the rulers. Obey them even if they break your back and take your property by force. You should listen to the ruler and obey him’.”¹⁶

2. Muslim also quotes from Ibn 'Abbas that the Holy Prophet (S) said, “Anyone who witnesses something from his *imam* which is displeasing to him should exercise patience, because a person who separates himself from the community and then dies in that state has died the death of the Age of Ignorance [*‘asr al-jahiliyyah*].”¹⁷

3. Muslim recounts another *hadith* from the Holy Prophet (S) saying, “Anyone who turns his back for just a span on his sultan and dies in that state has died the death of the Age of Ignorance [*‘asr al-jahiliyyah*].”¹⁸

4. Muslim narrates yet another *hadith* from 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar ibn Khattab. He says that when the event of Harrah occurred, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar ibn Khattab used to say, “I heard the Noble Prophet say, ‘Anyone who quits obeying his sultan will meet Allah without any plea or appeal for themselves. And anyone who dies in a state where he has not paid allegiance to the sultan has died the death of the Age

of Ignorance [*‘asr al-jahiliyyah*].”¹⁹

B. Political and social structures of Muslim affairs

In order to prove the illegality of rising up against a corrupt and perverted ruler, some Sunni scholars have resorted to reasoning that preserving the standing structures of Muslim affairs is the most important duty of all, and hence rising up against the ruler will cause sedition [*fitnah*], chaos, anarchy and bloodshed among the Muslims.

Therefore, they say it is not permissible to rise against any ruler. Rather, it is forbidden [*haram*].

Dr. Muhammad Faruq Nahban says, “... the majority of Sunnis believe that it is not permissible to rise up against a corrupt and oppressive ruler because this will lead to sedition [*fitnah*] and much bloodshed...”²⁰

Incongruities in this argument

A. Response regarding traditions

The belief that it is obligatory [*wajib*] to obey and follow the caliph and sultan, even if he is corrupt and oppressive, and that rising up against him is forbidden [*haram*], has a lot of faults and weaknesses according to Islamic thought.

We will now mention some of those faults:

1. Opposition with the explicit wording of the Holy Qur'an

It can be understood from Qur'anic verses that the Imamate and caliphate are not bestowed upon or granted to oppressive and corrupt people, and that if the ruler is a corrupt man, it is not at all permissible to obey him.

a. ***“And when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an imam of men. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust: said He.”***²¹

﴿وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

b. ***“Say: Is there any of your associates who guides to the truth? Say: Allah guides to the truth. Is He then who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you; how do you judge?”***²²

﴿ أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَيَّ الْحَقُّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّنْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يُهْدَىٰ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ... ﴾

It can be deduced from this verse that a person who does not guide towards the truth of Allah is not worthy of being followed and obeyed.

c. Some Qur'anic verses have said that submission and inclination towards oppressors will make man taste the fire of Hell. One verse says,

﴿ ... وَلَا تَرْكَنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ﴾

“And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the fire touch you...”²³

d. The Holy Qur'an has called a ruler who does not rule and judge according to what Allah has revealed to be an unbeliever [*kafir*]. It says,

﴿ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ... ﴾

“... and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the kafirs.”²⁴

All Muslims agree that obeying and following an unbeliever is not permissible.

2. These hadiths are opposed to Qur'anic verses which prove that it is forbidden to follow and obey sinners

There are a lot of verses in the Holy Qur'an which have unconditionally and generally (in such a way that no limitations are mentioned) forbidden obeying anyone who is well-known for sin, regardless of whether he is a caliph, sultan and *imam* or otherwise.

a. Allah, the Exalted says,

﴿ فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴾

“So do not yield to the rejecters.”²⁵

b. ***“And yield not to any mean swearer.”²⁶***

﴿ وَلَا تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴾

c. ***“And be not compliant to the unbelievers and the hypocrites.”²⁷***

﴿ ... وَلَا تُطِيعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ ﴾

d. ***“And do not obey the bidding of the extravagant.”***[28](#)

﴿ وَلَا تُطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ * الَّذِينَ يَفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ ﴾

e. ***“Therefore wait patiently for the command of your Lord, and obey not from among them a sinner or an ungrateful one.”***[29](#)

﴿ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِيعْ مِنْهُمْ آثِمًا أَوْ كَفُورًا ﴾

f. ***“And do not follow him whose heart we have made unmindful to Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case is one in which due bounds are exceeded.”***[30](#)

﴿ وَلَا تُطِيعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا ... ﴾

g. ***“On the day when their faces shall be turned back into the fire, they shall say: O would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Apostle! And they shall say: O our Lord! Surely we obeyed our leaders and our great men, so they led us astray from the path; O our Lord! Give them a double punishment and curse them with a great curse.”***[31](#)

﴿ يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ يَا لَيْتَنَا أَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ * وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا ﴾
﴿ فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلَا * رَبَّنَا آتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنَهُمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيرًا ﴾

h. ***“And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the fire touch you, and you have no guardians besides Allah, then you shall not be helped.”***[32](#)

﴿ ... وَلَا تَرْكَنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ﴾

3. These hadiths are opposed to the Qur’anic verses which prove that enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is incumbent upon Muslims

In the Holy Qur’an, Allah, the Exalted, has ordered people in general or specific ways that they should enjoin the good and forbid the evil. This generality covers all people from all walks of life, the rulers and the ruled alike. Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil [*amr bi’l-ma’ruf wa nahy ‘an al-munkar*] takes various forms, among them:

Allah, the Exalted, says,

﴿وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

“And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful.”³³

And, He also says,

﴿... كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ﴾

“You are the best of nations raised up for the benefit of mankind; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah...”³⁴

And He also says,

﴿لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ * كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ﴾

“Those who disbelieved from among the children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary; this was because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limit. They used not to forbid each other the hateful things they did; certainly evil was that which they did.”³⁵

4. These hadiths are opposed to other hadiths narrated by the Sunnis themselves

This belief is opposed to another set of *hadiths* which have been recounted in Sunni sources. This other set of *hadiths* forbids following a corrupt and perverted ruler.

It also must be taken into account that:

Firstly, every *hadith* must be compared with the Holy Qur'an; if it is opposed with the verses of the Holy Qur'an, it cannot be considered authentic because all Muslims believe the Holy Qur'an to be completely authentic and unchanged.

In addition, from the previous section we can see that the *hadiths* which say that it is incumbent to obey a corrupt ruler are opposed to the verses of the Holy Qur'an; therefore, they are not acceptable.

Secondly, there is obvious contradiction and disagreement between *hadiths* which prohibit following a corrupt ruler and those which say that it is incumbent to follow the Muslim ruler whether he is corrupt or

not. In accordance with the law of incongruity, the final judge is Allah's Book, the Holy Qur'an.

When faced with such a dilemma as having discrepancies in the wordings of *hadiths*, we act upon those *hadiths* which are in accordance with the Holy Qur'an and reject those *hadiths* which disagree with the Book of Allah. In this case, it means we must follow the *hadiths* which have forbidden obeying and following a corrupt ruler.

Thirdly, if there are no contradictions between *hadiths* and hence there is no seeming need to refer to the Holy Qur'an, we still must suspend all the *hadiths* and only refer to the general verses of the Holy Qur'an if they prohibit obeying a corrupt leader.

We will now mention a few *hadiths* which have been recounted in Sunni sources of *hadith* prohibiting obedience to a corrupt leader.

a. Allah's Prophet (S) said, "The spinning wheel of Islam is soon to roll. Wherever the Holy Qur'an is, you must revolve around it. A day shall come when sultans and the Holy Qur'an will be separated from each other. With all certainty, soon it will come to pass that kings will rule over you.

They will judge for themselves in one way and for others in another way. If you obey them, they will mislead you. If you do not follow them they will kill you." The people asked, "O Prophet of Allah! What should we do if we experience that period?" The Noble Prophet (S) said, "You should be like Jesus' followers, whose bodies were cut to pieces or they were hung to death, but they never followed the corrupt rulers. Death in the way of obedience to Allah is better than life in sin."[36](#)

b. 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar says, "Allah's Prophet (S) said, 'It is incumbent upon every Muslim man to follow his caliph in things he likes and things he dislikes, except when he is ordered to sin. In this case, obeying the caliph is not permissible'."[37](#)

c. 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud says, "Allah's Prophet (S) said, 'Soon it will come to pass after me that custodians who will extinguish the *sunnah* and act according to their own innovations will take charge of your affairs.

They will delay the prayers from being said at their right times.' I asked, 'O Prophet of Allah! What should I do if I experience that period?' He said, 'Are you asking me what you ought to do, O son of Umm 'Abd!? A person who commits sins against Allah is not supposed to be followed or obeyed'."[38](#)

5. These *hadiths* are opposed to *hadiths* of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)

a. In interpreting the Qur'anic verse,

﴿ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾

“My covenant does not include the unjust: said He.”³⁹

Suyuti quotes ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) saying, “Obedience is only in good and virtuous acts.”

b. Tabari and other historians narrate that while Imam al-Husayn (as) was on his way towards Kufah, he stopped at Baydah’s house. There, he addressed the people in this way, “O People! Allah’s Prophet (S) said, ‘Any person who sees an oppressive sultan making illegal that which is lawful [*hala*], breaking Allah’s covenant, opposing the *sunnah* of Allah’s Prophet (S), conducting himself in a sinful and tyrannical way among Allah’s servants (the people) and does not speak out against such a sultan in order to bring about change; it becomes binding upon Allah to throw this apathetic person where he belongs, in Hell’.”⁴⁰

c. Tabari and other historians narrate that in his reply to the letter which the people had written to him, al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as) wrote, “I swear upon my own soul! No one is an *imam*, unless he acts according to the Book of Allah, and is equitable and just. He does what is right, and restrains his passions for the sake of Allah.”⁴¹

d. Tabari and other historians have also narrated that al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as) addressed Walid in this way, “O Amir! We are the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Holy Prophet, the abode of the prophetic mission, the place of frequentation of the angels, and the place of divine revelation. It is through us that Allah begins and ends things. Yazid is a drinker of wine and a killer of innocent people. He publicly commits sins and immorality; a person such as I cannot pay allegiance to him.”⁴²

Who is Imam al-Husayn (as)?

Imam al-Husayn (as) is a person who, according to the explicit wording of the Qur’anic Verse of Purification [*ayah al-tathir*], is infallible [*ma’sum*]. Allah’s Prophet (S) said this about him,

«الحسن والحسين سيدا شباب أهل الجنة»

“Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the two leaders of the youths of Paradise.”⁴³

The Holy Prophet (S) also said,

«حسين منّي وأنا من حسين»

“Al-Husayn is from me and I am from al-Husayn.”⁴⁴

Elsewhere, he said,

«خير رجالكم علي بن أبي طالب، وخير شبابكم الحسن والحسين، وخير نساءكم فاطمة بنت محمد»

“The best man among you is ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib. The best youths among you are al-Hasan and al-Husayn. The best woman among you is Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad.”⁴⁵

Ibn ‘Abbas says, “The Holy Prophet (S) said, ‘On the night that I went on the ascension [*mi‘raj*], I saw it written in heaven,

لا إله إلا الله، محمد رسول الله، علي حبّ (حبيب) الله، الحسن والحسين صفوة الله، فاطمة أمة الله (خيرة الله)،
«على باغضهم لعنة الله»

“There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is his Prophet, ‘Ali is Allah’s beloved, al-Hasan and al-Husayn are Allah’s chosen ones and Fatimah is Allah’s servant. Allah’s curse and wrath be upon anyone who harbors hatred in their heart for them’.”⁴⁶

The reality behind hadiths that permit obeying a corrupt ruler

The presence of so many *hadiths* (traditions) in Shi‘ah and Sunni books which forbid obeying a corrupt and perverted ruler points to the fact that the other set of *hadiths*, which contradict these *hadiths* and the Holy Qur’an and permit following a corrupt leader and forbid rising up against him, are all fabrications.

These *hadiths* were forged by the dynasties of Bani Umayyah and Bani ‘Abbas for the sake of justifying their perverted and oppressive ways of conduct. They fabricated these *hadiths* in order to preserve the people’s loyalty to themselves and encourage the masses to follow the rulers’ orders no matter what the circumstances. They intended to prevent any kind of uprising against their dynasties by the people, so they were left with no option but to invent false *hadiths*.

It is regrettable that some scholars chose to record these forged *hadiths* in their books without considering their contents and comparing these sayings with the verses of the Holy Qur’an and other *hadiths*.

Unfortunately, as a result, some jurisprudents have issued religious edicts [*fatwas*] based on these fabricated *hadiths* that have caused great harm to the Muslim *ummah*. It must be borne in mind that if an enemy desires to forge a *hadith*, it is possible to fabricate chains of transmission which are ‘correct’.

B. Response to the false claim that it is binding upon all Muslims to preserve the system

That which can be inferred from the reasons put forward by those who oppose rising up against a corrupt and perverted caliph is that preserving political and social structures of the Muslims is binding and incumbent [*wajib*]. However, it has to be borne in mind that preserving any kind of power structure is

not *wajib*.

The only political system that must be preserved is an Islamic government whose leader is just and acts according to Allah's orders as noted in Qur'anic verses. This kind of government and its ruler must be preserved. There is no reason to oppose such a government. However, if the political system rules 'in the name of Islam' but its leaders are corrupt and perverted, then preserving such a power structure is not *wajib* at all.

On the contrary, an uprising must take place in order to establish an Islamic political system and exterminate a corrupt and oppressive political system. That is exactly what Imam al-Husayn (as) did: he rose up against the corrupt and oppressive political system of Yazid, the son of Mu'awiyah, and kept true Islam alive.

- [1.](#) Nuwi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, vol. 12, p. 229.
- [2.](#) Ibid.
- [3.](#) Baqilani, Al-Tamhid.
- [4.](#) Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah, p. 17.
- [5.](#) Usul al-Din, p. 190, 278.
- [6.](#) Al-Fisal fi al-Millal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal, vol. 4, p. 175.
- [7.](#) Sharh al-Mawaqif, vol. 8, p. 353.
- [8.](#) Al-Sunnah, vol. 1, p. 131
- [9.](#) Ibid., hashiyah.
- [10.](#) Nuwi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, vol. 12, p. 229.
- [11.](#) Surat al-Ma'idah 5:2.
- [12.](#) Surat al-Hujurat 49:9.
- [13.](#) Surat al-Baqarah 2:124.
- [14.](#) Those who interpreted the hadiths literally, and did not believe in esoteric meanings of the hadiths. [trans.]
- [15.](#) Nizam al-Hukm fi al-Islam, pp. 527-529.
- [16.](#) Muslim, Al-Sahih, Kitab al-Amarah, Bab al-Amr bi-Luzum al-Jama'ah, section [bab] 13, hadith 52.
- [17.](#) Ibid., hadith 55; Sahih Bukhari, Kitab al-Fitan, hadith 6530.
- [18.](#) Ibid., hadith 56.
- [19.](#) Ibid., hadith 58.
- [20.](#) Nizam al-Hukm fi al-Islam, p. 527.
- [21.](#) Surat al-Baqarah 2:124.
- [22.](#) Surat Yunus 10:35.
- [23.](#) Surat Hud 11:113.
- [24.](#) Surat al-Ma'idah 5:44.
- [25.](#) Surat al-Qalam 68:8.
- [26.](#) Surat al-Qalam 68:10.
- [27.](#) Surat al-Ahzab 33:48.
- [28.](#) Surat al-Shu'ara' 26:151,152.
- [29.](#) Surat Insan (or Jathiyah) 76:24.
- [30.](#) Surat al-Kahf 18:28.
- [31.](#) Surat al-Ahzab 33:66-68.
- [32.](#) Surat Hud 11:113.
- [33.](#) Surat Al 'Imran 3:104.
- [34.](#) Surat Al 'Imran 3:110.

- [35.](#) Surat al-Ma'idah 5:78–79.
- [36.](#) Durr al-Manthur, vol. 3, p. 125; Similar hadith in: Kanz al-'Ummal, hadith 1081.
- [37.](#) Sahih Bukhari, Kitab al-Ahkam, Bab al-Sam' wa al-Ta'ah, vol. 3.
- [38.](#) Ibn Majah, Sunan, vol. 2, p. 956; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 1, p. 400.
- [39.](#) Surat al-Baqarah 2:124.
- [40.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 7, p. 300; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 280; Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 3, p. 171.
- [41.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 7, p. 235; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 267.
- [42.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 7, pp. 216–218; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 263.
- [43.](#) Ibn 'Asakir, Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, section [bab] Imam al-Husayn (as), p. 41.
- [44.](#) Ibid., p. 80.
- [45.](#) Ibid., p. 122.
- [46.](#) Ibid., p. 130.

Why did Imam al-Hasan (as) Make Peace while Imam al-Husayn (as) Rose up in Arms?

The issue of the peace treaty of Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) with Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan is one of the subjects about which there is controversy and differing opinions among historians.

Some historians have accused Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) of being unworthy and say that Imam al-Hasan (as) was not fit for the caliphate and Imamate. Some even believe that the Holy Imam (as) did not possess enough strength and fortitude to handle the responsibilities of government affairs.

Other historians say that Imam al-Hasan (as), just like his father, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), had the capability for the caliphate, but sensitive circumstances which prevailed during his time demanded that he should make peace. In other words, Imam al-Hasan (as) was forced to make peace and avoid war.

In this topic, we intend to give a clear explanation and description of the events that led to Imam al-Hasan's (as) peace agreement with the people of Sham.

Imam 'Ali's (as) reproach of the people of Kufah

In order for us to understand the conditions of the people of Kufah, the people who pledged allegiance with Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as), it is important to refer to Imam 'Ali's (as) words about them, because he lived with them for many years and was their leader.

1. Addressing the people of Kufah, Imam 'Ali (as) said,

الحمد لله على ما قضى من أمر، وقدّر من فعل، وعلى ابتلائي بكم أيتها الفرقة التي إذا امرت لم تطع، وإذا دعوت

«...لم تُجب»

“I praise Allah for what He willed and destined. And I praise Him for my entanglement in the troubles created for me by you, the people of Kufah. O people! You who did not follow any of the orders which I gave! Whenever I called out to you, you did not respond positively...”¹

2. Elsewhere, Imam ‘Ali (as) says,

«لقد كنت أمس أميراً فاصبحتُ اليوم مأموراً، وكنت أمس ناهياً فأصبحتُ اليوم منهياً، وقد أحببتُ البقاء وليس...
«...لي أن أحملك على ما تكرهون»

“Until yesterday, I was a leader and commander, but today I am the one who is being commanded. Until yesterday, I was the one preventing people from acting in certain ways, but today I am the one who is being prevented. You love staying alive. I cannot force you take a path which you do not like...”²

3. After hearing the news that Busr ibn Artat had conquered Yemen for Mu‘awiyah and become Mu‘awiyah’s representative and official in that land, Imam ‘Ali (as) went on the pulpit and, while complaining about his companions’ shortcomings and opposition, addressed the people in this way,

«انبئت بسراً قد اطلع اليمن وانّي والله لأظنّ أنّ هؤلاء القوم سيدالون منكم باجتماعهم على باطلهم وتفرّقكم عن...
حقّكم ويمعصيتكم امامكم في الحقّ وطاعتهم امامهم في الباطل، وبأدائهم الى صاحبهم وخيانتكم، وبصلاحهم في بلادهم وفسادكم، فلو ائتمنت احداكم على قعب لخشيت ان يذهب بعلاقته، اللهم انّي قد مللتهم وملّوني وسئمتهم...
«...وسئمتوني، فابدلني بهم خيراً منهم، وأبدلهم بي شراً منّي»

“News has reached me that Busr ibn Artat has gained predominance over Yemen. I swear upon Allah! I knew that very soon the people of Sham were going to prevail over you because they are united in their support of that which is wrong while you are disunited in defending that which is right. You have disobeyed your Imam every time he ordered you to do what was right, while they have obeyed their leader when he ordered them to commit what was wrong.

They are loyal to their leader while you are treacherous! They are busy trying to build and improve their cities, while you are busy corrupting and destroying yours. You have sunk so low in corruption that I fear to entrust a wooden water carrier to anyone of you because you might steal its leather cord.

O my Lord! I have made these people tired with my incessant advice and counsel, and they too have made me tired with their unceasing disobedience. They have lost their patience with me, and I have lost my patience with them, too. I am heartbroken. O my Lord! Change these people for me with better ones, and change me for them with a worse one...”³

4. When he was inviting the people to move towards Sham, he said,

أَفَ لَكُمْ لَقَدْ سئمت عتابكم، أرضيتُم بالحياة الدنيا من الآخرة عوضاً، وبالنذل من العزّ خلفاً، إذا دعوتكم الي جهاد
...عدوكم دارت أعينكم كأنتكم من الموت في غمرة ومن الذهول في سكرة

“Damnation and curses be upon you O people of Kufah! I am tired of reproaching you. Do you prefer the transient life of this world over the everlasting one of the hereafter? Instead of self-respect and honor, have you chosen a life of misery and abjectness? I invite you to fight in *jihad* against the enemies, but your eyes are turning in circles because of fear. It seems that fear of death has hijacked your intellects. Like drunken people who have lost their minds, you are bewildered and disoriented...”⁴

We understand from these statements that Imam ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) was displeased with the contravention of his soldiers and followers. These are the same people who would later pay allegiance to Imam al-Hasan (as) and choose him to be the one in charge of their affairs.

We will now summarize some of the negative circumstances and conditions that existed at the time:

- a. A spirit of despotism, mutiny and freedom-seeking existed among the people.
- b. Both Imam ‘Ali (as) and his soldiers were tired and impatient of each other.
- c. Some of Imam ‘Ali’s soldiers were inclined towards the government of Sham (the government of Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan) because of hatred and animosity that they held against Imam ‘Ali (as).
- d. The presence of the Khawarij among Imam ‘Ali’s (as) soldiers was another negative factor because they had taken steps that were to the detriment of the Islamic army.

Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) inherited such an army; an army that had behaved treacherously with his father. In such sensitive times, what else could Imam al-Hasan (as) have done?

How was he supposed to handle both the irresolution of his own soldiers and the open enemy under the leadership of Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan? Under such circumstances, can it be said that Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) accepted truce and signed an armistice because of negligence of duty or was it because of lack of loyal and obedient followers?

It is clear that Imam al-Hasan (as) was compelled by the circumstances which prevailed at the time to make peace.

Imam al-Hasan’s (as) army

Imam al-Hasan (as) ascended to the leadership of Kufah at a time when Mu‘awiyah was planning to mount a decisive war against the Imam and bring about a final conquest of Kufah.

In some of his letters to his governors and appointed stooges, Mu'awiyah wrote, "Some of the people of Kufah have written to me asking me for their protection and the protection of their near ones."⁵

At the same time, Imam al-Hasan (as) was calling on the people of Kufah to go to war and confront the army of Sham. However, Imam al-Hasan's (as) soldiers and followers consisted of people with various beliefs that can be divided into a number of groups:

1. The Khawarij

They were the same people who mutinied against Imam 'Ali (as) and went to war with him.

2. Those inclined to the government of Bani Umayyah

Such people were present among the soldiers of Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as), and can be divided into two groups:

- a. Those who did not attain to their earthly desires and aspirations by remaining loyal to the government of Kufah, so they set their covetous eyes on the government of Sham under the leadership of Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan,
- b. Those who were opposed to Imam 'Ali (as) and held grudges against Imam al-Hasan's (as) father.

3. The bigoted and prejudiced

This group consisted of people who were drowned in clan and tribal prejudice, and it was for this reason that they joined the army of Imam al-Hasan (as) rather than for Islamic goals.

4. Those that lacked any objective or purpose

Another group of people who took part in Imam al-Hasan's (as) army were those who lacked any aim or purpose in life. In other words, they joined Imam al-Hasan's (as) army just because they saw other people enlisting.

5. The sincere and faithful

There was one sincere group among the followers of Imam al-Hasan (as). This group recognized and acknowledged the rightful status of Imam al-Hasan (as). They followed his orders without complaint or misgiving.

These were the real Shi'ahs who were religious and devoted to their Imam (as). They were ready to sacrifice their lives for Allah following Imam al-Hasan's (as) orders. These were, however, outnumbered by the other irresolute groups.

Awareness about the circumstances which prevailed

Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) was aware of the sensitivity of the circumstances; he knew that the large numbers of Mu'awiyah's army and their sacrifices for him for worldly gain were apt to vanquish the Imam's small and disloyal army. At the same time, Mu'awiyah was aware of the weak points of Imam al-Hasan's (as) army and how to infiltrate it.

That is why Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan suggested the peace plan to Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as); the aim was to weaken the spirit of the Imam's (as) army right from the start so as to reduce their enthusiasm.

Because Imam al-Hasan (as) was also well-aware of Mu'awiyah's deceit and previous tricks, he initially sent an army of twelve thousand soldiers under the command of 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Abbas to confront Mu'awiyah's army. Imam al-Hasan's (as) army encountered Mu'awiyah's army at a place called "Maskan".

The Imam (as) was aware of signs of sedition which had begun to appear inside his own army as a result of Mu'awiyah's stratagems to attract his soldiers' attention by sending spies to create conspiracies inside Imam al-Hasan's (as) army by bribing the soldiers.

For the sake of weakening the spirit of Imam al-Hasan's (as) army, some people started spreading false rumors and hearsay that the Imam (as) had accepted Mu'awiyah's suggestion for peace. They cynically asked, "Why then should we fight against Mu'awiyah's army?"^{[6](#)}

Turmoil and confusion arose inside Imam al-Hasan's (as) army. Signs of division began to appear. Some confirmed as true the news that Imam al-Hasan (as) had accepted peace while others dismissed the news as false.

Finally, through various intrigues and the payment of great sums of money, and by issuing threats, Mu'awiyah was able to corrupt the aides and commanders of Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as).

In his letter to 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Abbas, Mu'awiyah wrote, "Al-Hasan has written a letter to me suggesting peace. He has entrusted the caliphate to me. If you become one of my followers, I will appoint you to be a governor. If you do not follow me, you will remain an ordinary person." Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan sent this letter together with a million *dirhams* for 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Abbas.^{[7](#)}

In his wars against his enemies, Mu'awiyah always knew the weak points of his enemies and penetrated them from there.

When 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Abbas thought about the situation, he accepted Mu'awiyah's invitation and joined Mu'awiyah's army by night. When morning arose, Imam al-Hasan's (as) army found themselves without a leader and commander. Imam al-Hasan (as) appointed another commander from the tribe of Kindah.

He sent him with four thousand additional soldiers to combat and encounter the army of Mu'awiyah. When they reached a place called "al-Anbar", Mu'awiyah sent five hundred thousand *dirhams* for this new leader and promised him the governorship of certain cities under Mu'awiyah's rule. This new commander too defected and joined Mu'awiyah's army together with two hundred people from his clan.

Imam al-Hasan (as) appointed a third commander from the tribe of Murad to go and lead the army into war against Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan. He, too, acted treacherously and defected like the previous commanders and joined Mu'awiyah's side. He did this after fervently swearing before Imam al-Hasan (as) that he was not going to be deceived by Mu'awiyah's tricks. Nevertheless, he was seduced by Mu'awiyah and he, too, betrayed Imam al-Hasan (as).^{[8](#)}

Imam al-Hasan (as) made a very firm stand and insisted on fighting against Mu'awiyah, but he knew at the same time that this was not going to end in the best interests of Islam and the Muslims. He could foresee that a continuation of such a state of affairs was going to end in self-slaughter and suicide for Bani Hashim and the few dedicated Shi'ahs he had. He had the duty to protect Islam and the Muslims.

In order to test and prove the weaknesses of his own army, Imam al-Hasan (as) made a speech in which he said, "Beware! Mu'awiyah has invited us to something which is devoid of glory and equity. If you have made up your minds to die, then let us encounter him with the sword and apply Allah's law on him. However, if you prefer to stay alive, I will agree and make peace with him for your sake and good pleasure."^{[9](#)}

The people shouted from all corners that they preferred life. They called out, "Sign the peace agreement!"

It was after making this speech that Imam al-Hasan (as) knew the real intentions of his army and found them to be weak in spirit. A majority of them preferred a peaceful life to fighting against Mu'awiyah.

Conditions of the peace treaty

Mu'awiyah took advantage of this opportunity. He sent a letter to Imam al-Hasan (as) in which he proposed peace. He said Imam al-Hasan (as) was free to demand any conditions for himself, his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and his Shi'ahs.

In his reply, Imam al-Hasan (as) inserted demands and asked Mu'awiyah to act according to his promises. On the surface, Mu'awiyah accepted whatever demands Imam al-Hasan (as) made, though deep inside he did not believe in any one of the conditions. Actually, he planned to deliberately undermine all these conditions when the right opportunity arose.

Imam al-Hasan's (as) conditions were as follows:

1. Entrusting the caliphate to Mu'awiyah on the condition that he would act according to Allah's Book

and the Prophet's (S) *sunnah*.

2. The caliphate should be handed over to Imam al-Hasan (as) after the death of Mu'awiyah, and in case of Imam al-Hasan's (as) death, the caliphate should be entrusted to his brother Imam al-Husayn (as). Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan agreed not to hand the caliphate over to anyone else.

3. Mu'awiyah agreed to stop cursing and vilifying Imam 'Ali (as). He agreed to stop insulting Imam 'Ali (as) in the supplications he offered at the time of prayers. He even agreed to remind himself and the people about the good works and excellent virtues of Imam 'Ali (as).

4. Mu'awiyah agreed not to claim the money belonging to the public treasury of Kufah. (This money amounted to five thousand *dirhams*.) In addition to that, Mu'awiyah agreed to send one million *dirhams* every year to Imam al-Husayn (as). He recognized the tribe of Bani Hashim to have higher family ties with him than tribe of Bani Shams. Mu'awiyah had to share and divide a million *dirhams* among the children of the people who were martyred in the wars of Jamal and Siffin when he fought against Amir al-Mu'minin, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).

5. All Muslims in all corners of the Muslim World, whether in Sham, Iraq, Hijaz or Yemen, would be able to live in peace and enjoy safety. All races and sects would be able to live in safety and no one should follow up on old grudges and seek retribution from the other.

Imam 'Ali's (as) companions were guaranteed to live in peace and safety wherever they might be, and no trouble should be made for his Shi'ahs. Their lives, property, children and women would be left in peace and security and none of them should be persecuted or attacked. Every one of their rights should be observed and respected.

None of their rights should be abused... and never should any aggression, whether openly or secretly, be carried out on Imam al-Hasan (as), Imam al-Husayn (as) and anyone of the Prophets's (S) *Ahl al-Bayt* (as). None of them should be terrorized no matter where they live.

These were some of the conditions which Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) inserted in the peace treaty. If we carefully ponder the conditions which Imam al-Hasan (as) demanded, we realize that he never planned to affirm or stabilize Mu'awiyah's caliphate. On the contrary, these conditions were against the interests of Mu'awiyah. Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) was only trying to buy time to his own advantage. [10](#)

Two opposing circumstances

Some people, because they lack sufficient knowledge about the position and status of an *imam*, have endeavored to portray Imam al-Husayn (as) as higher in status than Imam al-Hasan (as).

The reason they put forward is that Imam al-Husayn (as) fought the enemies of Allah with very few

companions until they all attained martyrdom while Imam al-Hasan (as) chose the way of peace and compromise. However, this belief is a result of misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about the Imam and his infallibility, because:

Firstly, we believe that the duty of every one of the Imams was previously planned and determined, and was foretold by the Holy Prophet (S). In addition, each of them has executed all the duties they were charged with in the best interests of the Muslims and for the expedience of Islam.

Secondly, with careful consideration of the circumstances of these two Infallible Imams, the decision made by each of them was correct and reasonable (in the interests of Islam and the Muslims). The treachery of the people of Kufah was such that they prepared the ground for Imam al-Husayn's (as) apparent victory and invited him to come with his family and entire household to Iraq, while they had never done such a thing for Imam al-Hasan (as).

Thirdly, it has to be borne in mind that Imam al-Hasan's (as) soldiers broke their allegiance after promising loyalty but the people of Kufah during the time of Imam al-Husayn (as), even though they had invited him in order to pay their allegiance to him, started opposing one another before actually paying their allegiance and going to war. It is for this reason that Imam al-Hasan's (as) soldiers are considered more treacherous than the people of Kufah during the time of Imam al-Husayn (as).

Imam al-Hasan (as) did not have as many loyal people in his army as Imam al-Husayn (as), so it was practically impossible to fight any war against the enemy.

Fourthly, when we consider the ways and stratagems of the enemies of these two Imams in their different times of Imamate, we realize that Imam al-Hasan (as) and Imam al-Husayn (as) faced two different kinds of enemies. These two different kinds of enemies needed to be confronted with two different strategies, one was to make peace and the other was to fight with the sword until martyrdom was attained.

The enemy facing Imam al-Hasan (as) was Mu'awiyah, and the enemy facing Imam al-Husayn (as) was Yazid, the son of Mu'awiyah. These two false caliphs had two different ways of life and handling affairs.

Even though Mu'awiyah was a trickster and a perverted man who did not waste any resources to annihilate the basic teachings of Islam, he nonetheless apparently followed the laws of Islam to some extent. However, Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah was not only an enemy of Islam in his inner being, but also showed his enmity and hatred of Islam and Allah's Prophet (S) publicly.

He did not observe or respect any one of the revered orders of Islam. Although Mu'awiyah apparently showed some respect to Bani Hashim, Yazid did not show any kind of respect for them.

It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

«الحسن والحسين امامان قاما او قعداً»

“Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are *imams*, whether they make peace or rise up.”¹¹

Therefore, we believe that if Imam al-Husayn (as) was in Imam al-Hasan's (as) position, he would do exactly the same thing which Imam al-Hasan (as) did. And if Imam al-Hasan (as) was in Imam al-Husayn's (as) position, he too would do what Imam al-Husayn (as) did.

The reason is that they both were sharp at analyzing the times in which they lived and were aware about their circumstances. Whatever decisions they made were for the best interests and expedience of Islam and the Muslims.

^{1.} Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 10, p. 67.

^{2.} Ibid., vol. 11. p. 29.

^{3.} Ibid., vol. 1, p. 332.

^{4.} Ibid., vol. 2, p. 189.

^{5.} Ibid., vol. 16, p. 38.

^{6.} Ibid., p. 42.

^{7.} Ibid.

^{8.} A'yan al-Shi'ah, vol. 4, p. 22.

^{9.} Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 204.

^{10.} Al-Nasayih al-Kafiyah, pp. 156–157; Tarikh Tabari, vol. 6, pp. 92–97; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 166; Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 26; Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 4, pp. 8, 15; A'yan al-Shi'ah, vol. 4, p. 43; Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 194; Tarikh Ibn Kathir, vol. 8, p. 41; Al-Isabah, vol. 2, p. 12; 'Umdah al-Talib, p. 52.

^{11.} Ibn Shahr Ashub, Munaqib, vol. 3, p. 394; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 291, hadith 54.

What is the Ruling Regarding the Fast of 'Ashura?

There are deep and intense divisions among jurists about fasting on the day of 'Ashura. Some jurists believe that it is highly recommended to fast on the day of 'Ashura. Others say it is prohibited [*haram*] to fast on the day of 'Ashura and some believe that fasting on the day of 'Ashura is disapproved but not absolutely prohibited.

There are also other questions related to this issue. For example, has the fast of 'Ashura been enacted or legalized for the sake of appeasing and being in agreement with the Jews? Was it enacted before the fast of the holy month of Ramadan and later suspended when the fast of Ramadan was enacted?

Did the Holy Prophet (S) and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) ever fast on the day of 'Ashura? Did Bani Umayyah

put emphasis on this fast to show their happiness and pleasure? These are some of the questions that will be discussed in this chapter.

Enacting and enforcing the fast of ‘Ashura before the fast of the holy month of Ramadan

Jurisprudents differ in their opinions about whether the judgement of the fast of the day of ‘Ashura was enacted before the Qur’anic verse which enacted the fast of the holy month of Ramadan and whether it was obligatory [*wajib*] to fast on that day or not.

According to certain opinions put forth by some Shi‘ah scholars and the purport of some Islamic traditions, the first possibility is that it was *wajib* to fast on the day of ‘Ashura before the Qur’anic verse enacting the fast of the holy month of Ramadan was revealed. Also, some Sunnis, among them Abu HHanifah, believe that it was *wajib* to fast on the day of ‘Ashura.

The Shafi‘i sect apparently believe that it was not *wajib* to fast on the day of ‘Ashura. Two opinions have been quoted from Shafi‘i and two *hadiths* have been quoted by Ahmad. We will now mention some of the opinions expressed by jurisprudents belonging to different sects.

Opinions put forth by Shi‘ah scholars

1. The renowned researcher Muhaqqiq Qummi says, “What can be deduced from the wording of *hadiths* is that apparently the fast of the day of ‘Ashura was enacted before the fast of Ramadan and was later abandoned.”^{[1](#)}
2. Sayyid ‘Amili writes, “There are a lot of differing opinions about fasting on the day of ‘Ashura. Was it *wajib* or was it not? That which has been recorded in our *hadiths* is that fasting on the day of ‘Ashura was *wajib* before the enactment of fasting in the holy month of Ramadan. Among the people who narrated these *hadiths* are Zurarah and Muhammad ibn Muslim.”^{[2](#)}
3. Allamah Majlisi relates from the book, “*Al-Muntaqi*” that in the first year of migration to Medina, Allah’s Prophet (S) fasted on ‘Ashura and the other people followed suit.”^{[3](#)}

Upon study of the sayings of the Shi‘ah scholars, we infer that they have not put forward a definite opinion about fasting on the day of ‘Ashura. They have contented themselves with narrating the differences which exist among the scholars and in *hadiths*. Only the renowned researcher Muhaqqiq Qummi has cited *hadiths* that apparently indicate the necessity of fasting on this day.

The opinions of Sunni jurists

1. Qadi 'Ayni says, "They have differed about the judgement of fasting during the early days of Islam. Abu Hanifah has said that it was *wajib* to fast on the day of 'Ashura in the past. Shafi'i's companions have given two opinions: the most famous opinion is that it was highly recommended [*mustahabb-e mu'akkad*] right from the beginning of Islam and Islamic law and never has it been *wajib* for the Islamic *ummah*.

After the revelation of the Qur'anic verse enacting the fast of Ramadan, it remained *mustahabb*, but lost the recommendation and emphasis it enjoyed before. The second opinion of Shafi'i's companions is similar to that of Abu Hanifah.

'Ayad has said that some predecessors used to believe that this fast was *wajib* and remained *wajib* without any abrogation even after the verse enacting the fast of Ramadan, but supporters of this opinion have been weakened and vanquished and hence common consensus is that this fast is not *wajib*, and they maintain that it is *mustahabb*."⁴

2. Ibn Qudamah says, "There are differing opinions about the fast of the day of 'Ashura as to whether it was *wajib* or not. Qadi says that it was *wajib* and this is as a result of religious deduction and conclusion. He has deduced this using two rationales. It has also been quoted from Ahmad ibn Hanbal that the fast of the day of 'Ashura was *wajib*."⁵

3. Kasani writes, "The fast of the day of 'Ashura was *wajib* during those days."⁶

4. 'Asqalani says, "It can be deduced from the total sum of reported *hadiths* that this fast was *wajib*." After this, he has listed six reasons to support and prove his claim."⁷

A critique of 'Asqalani's statements

Ibn Hajar writes, "In matters where Allah's command and law had not yet been revealed, the Holy Prophet (S) preferred to follow the Jewish ways, especially in matters where the Jews were opposed to the ways of the idol-worshippers."⁸

Problem

This claim is opposed to *hadiths* quoted from the Holy Prophet (S) because he said the following about opposing the Jews,

«صوموا عاشوراء وخالفوا فيه اليهود»

"Fast on the day of 'Ashura and by doing so oppose the Jews."⁹

Also, Ya'la ibn Shaddad narrates that he heard from his father that Holy Prophet (S) said,

«صَلُّوا فِي نَعَالِكُمْ وَخَالِفُوا الْيَهُودَ»

“Pray your prayers in your slippers and in this way oppose the Jews.”^{[10](#)}

And it has been reported in another *hadith* that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

«لَا تَشَبَّهُوا بِالْيَهُودِ»

“Do not resemble the Jews in any way.”^{[11](#)}

In light of the above traditions, it cannot be claimed that the fast of the day of ‘Ashura was enacted for the sake of imitating or resembling the Jews.

Jews and fasting on the day of ‘Ashura

When we study history, we come to know that the Jews organized their traditions around their own calendar. The Jews had their own months which did not coincide with the Islamic calendar. There is no logic in saying that they ‘fasted on the 10th of Muharram’, unless it could be proven that this date always coincided with the Jewish day of fast. Their fasting did not take place every year on the day of ‘Ashura and certainly not in the holy month of Muharram.

Apparently, the tradition of the Jews at the time of the Holy Prophet (S) was that on the 10th of the month of Tishri of the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur, the Jews observed a fast. They say God delivered Moses and his people and drowned Pharaoh and his forces on that day. It cannot be said, however, that Pharaoh was drowned on the day of ‘Ashura.

On the contrary, these events are said to have taken place on the 10th of Tishri which does not correspond to the day of ‘Ashura. Therefore, that which has been said about the fast of ‘Ashura having its roots in Judaism and that it has been imported from the Jews is baseless and not founded on truth.

Abu Rayhan says, “Tishri lasts thirty days... and on the tenth day of that month, the Jews start their fast of Yom Kippur, which some call ‘Ashura. This fast carries more virtues for the Jews than the other fasts. That is why it is *wajib*.”^{[12](#)}

Hasan ibn ‘Ali Saqqaf Shafi‘i says, “We do not find any evidence to prove that the Jews used to fast or hold a festival on the tenth of Muharram. There is no written historical evidence to suggest this. On the contrary, they used to fast on the tenth of Tishri.”^{[13](#)}

He also says, “The Jews have their own special calendar which has very apparent differences with the

Islamic calendar. This calendar begins with the month of Tishri, which is followed by the month of Heshvan, and ends with the twelfth month called Elul...

The number of days in a normal year is either 353 or 354 or 355 days. However, in a leap year, the number of days is either 383 or 384 or 385. And therefore, the calendar that is now observed by the Jews is such that the months are lunar but the years are solar.”[14](#)

About the Arab calendar that was used before the Islamic calendar came into effect, Mahmud Pasha Falaki says, “It can be gathered and deduced from history that the Arab Jews also had ‘Ashura, but their ‘Ashura was on the tenth of Tishri which is the first month of their calendar according to Jewish civil law and the eighteenth month of their religious calendar. Also, the Jews follow a solar calendar.

Therefore, the day of ‘Ashura on which Pharaoh was drowned is not at all connected to Muharram. In addition to that, it was merely accidental that it coincided with the Holy Prophet’s (S) entry into Medina.”[15](#)

The verdict of fasting on the day of ‘Ashura

There is a number of *hadiths* that have mentioned the fast of ‘Ashura:

With recourse to Shi‘ah sources of *hadiths*, we come to know that it has been narrated in some *hadiths* that the one who quits this fast has to atone and expiate for his actions for up to one year. It has also been reported that the Holy Prophet (S) himself used to fast on the day of ‘Ashura, and strongly advised everyone, even children, to fast on that day.

This demonstrates and proves that the day of ‘Ashura and its fast are overflowing with heavenly blessings.[16](#)

In other reported *hadiths*, the opposite has been narrated; that is to say, the fasting on the day of ‘Ashura has been forbidden and is one of the prohibited actions. Some other *hadiths* say it is an act of innovation, and fasting on that day is not a part of the religion.

Others have gone so far as to say that the reward of fasting on the day of ‘Ashura is the fire of Hell. It has been reported in other *hadiths* that the Holy Prophet never used to fast on that day.

As regards the conduct of the Infallible Imams (as), it is important to mention that no *hadith* has reached us suggesting that they or their companions used to fast on the day of ‘Ashura. If fasting on this day were *mustahabb*, the Infallibles would not fail to fast on that day.[17](#)

The *hadiths* which have been recorded in Sunni books regarding this issue are also varied. The meaning of many of these *hadiths* is that it is highly recommended [*mustahabb-e mu’akkad*] to observe the fast of ‘Ashura.

However, another group of *hadiths* contradict the first, in the sense that they say that the Holy Prophet (S) never used to fast on that day and never at all ordered anyone to fast on that day after the Qur’anic verse enacting the fasting of the month of Ramadan. [18](#)

Hadiths which prevent fasting on the day of ‘Ashura

1. On his own chain of transmission Shaykh Saduq narrates that Imam al–Baqir (as) said,

«كان صومه قبل شهر رمضان، فلما نزل شهر رمضان ترك»

“The fast of the day of ‘Ashura used to be observed before the Qur’anic verse about the fast of the holy month of Ramadan, but after that it was discontinued.” [19](#)

2. Kulayni on his own chain of transmission narrates from both Imam al–Baqir (as) and Imam al–Sadiq (as) that they said,

«لا تصم في عاشوراء، ولا عرفة بمكة، ولا في المدينة، ولا في وطنك، ولا في مصر من الامصار»

“On the days of ‘Ashura and ‘Arafah, do not fast whether you are in Medina, your hometown, or any other city.” [20](#)

3. Kulayni has also narrated that he asked Imam al–Baqir (as) about fasting on the day of ‘Ashura. Answering his question, Imam al–Baqir (as) said,

«صوم متروك بنزول شهر رمضان، والمتروك بدعة»

“This is a fast which was discontinued after the Qur’anic verse enacting the fast of the holy month of Ramadan was revealed. Doing that which is abandoned is an act of innovation.” [21](#)

The narrator (Kulayni) says, “I asked this same question from Imam al–Sadiq’s (as) father, too. He gave the same answer as Imam al–Sadiq (as) and added,

«أما أنه صوم يوم ما نزل به كتاب، ولا جرت به سنة، إلا سنة آل زياد بقتل الحسين بن علي»

‘Beware! This is a fast about which no Qur’anic verse has been revealed and is not an observed way of conduct. It was only the way of conduct for the partisans of Ziyad when they killed al–Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as).”

4. Kulayni again on his own chain of transmission narrates that ‘Abd al-Malik said, “I asked Imam al-Sadiq (as) about fasting on the ninth day of Muharram and the day of ‘Ashura. Imam al-Sadiq said, ‘The ninth day is the day when al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as) and his companions got besieged and surrounded by the enemy.

It was the day that the mounted soldiers of Sham were enlisted and brought to Karbala where they camped. Ibn Marjanah and ‘Umar ibn Sa’d were very pleased because of the great numbers of mounted soldiers and considered al-Husayn (as) and his companions as weak. They believed that no help would come for al-Husayn (as) because the people of Iraq would not help him.

O my Father! May I be sacrificed for you, O you who were oppressed in a foreign land!’ Then, Imam al-Sadiq continued, ‘However, the day of ‘Ashura is the day when al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as) fell to the ground (was martyred) along with all his companions. Should fasting be observed on such a day? Never at all!

I swear upon the Lord of the Sacred House (the *Ka’bah*)! Such a day is not a day for fasting. That day is only reserved for sorrow and mourning that has been inflicted on the inhabitants of the skies and the earth altogether. It is a day of happiness and pleasure for the son of Marjanah and Ibn Ziyad’s partisans and the people of Sham.

Allah’s curse be on them and their offspring. The day of ‘Ashura is a day when all the tombs and mausoleums of the earth except the tombs of Sham cry for al-Husayn. Therefore, Allah will unite on the Day of Resurrection anyone who fasts on that day or looks upon that day as a day of celebration with Ibn Ziyad and his partisans, discontent with a transformed heart...”²²

5. Kulayni also quotes from Ja‘far ibn ‘Isa that he said, “I asked Imam al-Rida (as) about fasting on the day of ‘Ashura. I also asked his opinion about what people say about this fast. The Imam (as) said,

«عن صوم ابن مرجانة تسألني»

‘You are asking me about the fast of the son of Marjanah?’”²³

6. On his own chain of transmission, Kulayni quotes from Zayd Narsi that he said, “I heard ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Zurarah asking Imam al-Sadiq about fasting on the day of ‘Ashura. Imam al-Sadiq (as) replied saying,

«من صامه كان حظّه من صيام ذلك اليوم حظّ ابن مرجانة وآل زياد»

‘The reward for anyone fasting on that day will be given to the son of Marjanah and Ibn Ziyad’s partisans’.”²⁴

Zayd says, “I asked what the reward of fasting on that day is.’ The Imam (as) replied,

«النار، اعاذنا الله من النار، ومن عمل يقرب من النار»

“The Fire, may Allah save us from the Fire. Anyone who fasts on the day of ‘Ashura has made himself nearer to the Fire.”²⁵

Preference for traditions which prevent fasting on ‘Ashura

Although the chains of transmission of *hadiths* which denote that fasting on the day of ‘Ashura is prohibited have been disputed by some jurists, we can nonetheless vindicate them and make up for their weak forms and aspects:

1. These *hadiths* have been recorded in reliable and credible books. Naraqī is quoted to have said, “The weaknesses of chains of transmission for these *hadiths* cannot prevent us from utilizing them because these *hadiths* have been recorded in authoritative and credible books, especially those that are situated among authentic *hadiths*.”²⁶

2. These *hadiths* are common; perhaps they are even close to a state of successive transmission. Sayyid ‘Ali Tabataba‘i writes, “Texts that exhort and encourage fasting on the day of ‘Ashura, because of the weaknesses of their chains of transmission and the absence of someone to put them to general practical application, contradict many *hadiths*. These are contradictory *hadiths* that are near to successive transmission; as such it is not at all possible to act upon them even out of laxity...”²⁷

3. *Hadiths* which prevent fasting on the day of ‘Ashura have credible chains of transmission because Shaykh Tusi has proven that there is opposition and discrepancy between these *hadiths* and *hadiths* that encourage and exhort fasting on the day of ‘Ashura. This denotes the credibility of *hadiths* which prevent fasting on the day of ‘Ashura because contradictions are secondary to the credibility and dependability of the chain of transmission.

4. *Hadiths* which prevent fasting on the day of ‘Ashura are very credible because they conform with the way of life of the Infallibles (as) and their companions and also the way of life of all those committed and faithful to the religion.

In conclusion, it is preferable to avoid fasting on the day of ‘Ashura.

The aversion of fasting on the day of ‘Ashura

Some contemporary Shi‘ah jurists have issued religious edicts [*fatwas*] that fasting on the day of ‘Ashura is undesirable [*makruh*] but not absolutely prohibited [*haram*]. Other Shi‘ah jurists, such as Bahrani and Majlisi, have gone so far as to say that it is *haram* to fast on the day of ‘Ashura.

We will now examine the proofs put forward as reasons for the abhorrence [*kirahat*] of fasting on the day of ‘Ashura:

1. Fasting on the day of ‘Ashura was a way of life for the enemies of Islam and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) which Muslims should not revive and imitate.
2. *Hadiths* which denote the permissibility or even the incumbency of fasting on the day of ‘Ashura can be interpreted as staying hungry as a result of deep sorrow on the day of ‘Ashura, not for the sake of ritual fasting, and/or can be interpreted as instances of dissimulation [*taqiyyah*].
3. Fasting on the day of ‘Ashura was not customary among the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) and their companions. It was not their way of life.
4. We interpret the *hadiths* that appear to prohibit fasting on the day of ‘Ashura to denote abhorrence, not absolute prohibition, because there is unity of conjecture and analogy between them and those *hadiths* which prohibit fasting on the day of ‘Ashura, especially that some of those prohibitive *hadiths* appear to denote abhorrence.

Many Shi‘ah jurisprudents have issued religious edicts that it is recommended [*mustahabb*] to abstain from food from morning up to mid-afternoon on ‘Ashura, but not with the intention of fasting. Among those who have issued this *fatwa* are Shahid Thani²⁸, Muhaqqiq Kurki²⁹, ‘Allamah Hilli³⁰, Muhaqqiq Ardabili³¹, Shahid Awwal³², Shaykh Baha’i³³, Sabzevari³⁴, Fayd Kashani³⁵, Hurr ‘Amili³⁶, Majlisi³⁷, Kashif al-Ghita’³⁸, Naraq³⁹, Muhaqqiq Qummi⁴⁰, and others.

‘Ashura, a festival for Bani Umayyah

Bani Umayyah not only opposed holding mourning ceremonies for the Doyen of Martyrs, Imam al-Husayn (as), but they also went so far as to introduce it as a day for festivities and happy celebrations. They did this as a practical measure of opposing mourning for Imam al-Husayn (as).

Abu Rayhan Biruni writes, “Muslims believed that it was ominous and a cause of bad omens to burn tents or cause fires, carry the heads of dead people on spears, making horses race or run over dead bodies on the day of ‘Ashura because that was the day when the child of the Holy Prophet was killed.

These ominous actions have never at all occurred in the history of mankind, even among the most corrupt and perverted peoples. However, Bani Umayyah used to decorate and adorn themselves and hold festivities on the day of ‘Ashura. They used to invite guests to participate in their happy celebrations.

This custom was prevalent during their reign, and continued to exist even after their decline. On the other hand, the Shi‘ahs used to mourn and weep and visit the holy land, Karbala, where Imam al-Husayn (as) was killed.”⁴¹

Maqrizi writes, “The ‘Alavis, followers of Imam‘Ali (as), in Egypt used to mourn and cry on the day of ‘Ashura. After the fall of the Fatimids and their government, the Ayyubis ascended to power and started holding joyful celebrations in the same way and custom as the Shamis.

This vile custom was established by Hajjaj ibn Yusuf during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan for the sake of opposing the Shi‘ahs of ‘Ali (as) who used to mourn and express sorrow on the day of ‘Ashura.” Then, he adds, “I myself have experienced and witnessed the celebrations held by the Ayyubis.”[42](#)

Ibn Hajar Haythami says, “The first person who instituted and inaugurated celebrations on the day of ‘Ashura was Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Thaqafi. He did this in the presence of ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan and a number of the Holy Prophet’s (S) companions and *tabi‘in*. It was then that it was announced that remembering al-Husayn (as) and his afflictions in sermons was forbidden [*haram*].[43](#)

Hasan ibn ‘Ali Saqqaf Shafi‘i says, “In the book called, “*Al-Amir*”, Makiyafilli has written about these issues and derived the contents of this book from facts regarding political survival. One of the strategies for political survival that he has adapted is the logic that “the end justifies the means”.

According to this principle, it is permissible for political leaders to bury the event of ‘Ashura for the sake of achieving their political aims; even though this is inconsistent with religion and acceptable moral standards; they have tried to extinguish the fire of ‘Ashura and have endeavored to bury the event of Karbala in this manner.

It is for this same reason that they resorted to fabricating and forging *hadiths* and attributing them to al-Husayn’s (as) ancestor, the Holy Prophet (S). Because the government propaganda apparatus was not consistent, discrepancies and contradictions appeared. They forged numerous *hadiths* for the sake of burying the event of Karbala, but none of these were successful.

The only thing that continued to hold and survive against all the odds was the event of Karbala. The issue of considering shedding the blood of al-Husayn (as) to be permissible [*halal*] is truly significant...”[44](#)

Accounting for hadiths which oppose each other

We can interpret the Shi‘ah *hadiths* which permit or even order fasting on the day of ‘Ashura to have been said out of dissimulation [*taqiyyah*] for the sake of bringing about agreement and conformity with *hadiths* narrated by the Sunnis and avoiding hostility and conflict. Therefore, the contradiction of these *hadiths* should not be considered.

Even if we consider these inconsistencies in Shi‘ah *hadiths*, we should put into practice those *hadiths* which oppose the Sunni belief of fasting on the day of ‘Ashura; that is to say, those *hadiths* which prevent fasting on this day.

Regarding those *hadiths* which say that the Holy Prophet (S) used to fast on the day of ‘Ashura, we interpret them to mean that the Holy Prophet (S) used to do this before the Qur’anic verse enacting the fast of the holy month of Ramadan.

In addition, those *hadiths* that have permitted fasting on the day of ‘Ashura and consider this fast to be recommended [*mustahabb*] do not seem to be correct because the *hadiths* narrated by Hasan ibn Abi Ghandar indicates that it is not acceptable to fast on a day of affliction and sorrow, but on the contrary fasting is done for the sake of thanksgiving and good fortune.

When we consider these *hadiths* together, we understand that it is recommended to abstain from food on the day of ‘Ashura up to the afternoon, but without the intention of fasting, and that we have to eat before the evening prayers. This is the purport and meaning of the *hadiths* narrated by Ibn Sanan.

Hadiths in this regard narrated by the Sunnis can also be justified and explained:

First of all, recently the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia have published an encyclopedic collection of fifteen volumes about weak [*da‘if*] *hadiths* arranged according to subject in a comprehensive manner.

A group of renowned instructors including ‘Ali Hasan ‘Ali Halabi, Dr. Ibrahim Taha Qaysi and Dr. Hamdi Muhammad Murad have done this extensive job. Twelve volumes of this work are about weak *hadiths* and three volumes are a table of contents of the *hadiths*. Some of the *hadiths* shown to be weak in this extensive work are about the event of ‘Ashura.

They have arranged these particular *hadiths* under various topics, such as: the heavens and the earth were created on the day of ‘Ashura; the event of ‘Ashura was on the ninth day; the fast of ‘Ashura atones for sins for a period of one year; anyone who provides the needs of his family on the day of ‘Ashura will be provided for a period of one year; on the day of ‘Ashura Allah divided the Red Sea for the Children of Israel [Bani Isra’il].

Secondly, the contents of *hadiths* narrated about fasting on the day of ‘Ashura are various: some denote that the Holy Prophet (S) ordered that we should fast on the day of ‘Ashura, but they have not made it clear when this order was issued; some denote that the Holy Prophet (S) gave this order in Medina;

some denote that the Holy Prophet (S) used to observe this fast before the advent of Islam and that it was abrogated after the Qur’anic verse which enacted the fast of the holy month of Ramadan; some say that this fast was begun when the Holy Prophet (S) entered Medina and this was done just for the sake of appeasing the Jews; some say that fasting on the day of ‘Ashura was instituted for the sake of opposing the Jews;

some say that the Holy Prophet (S) did not order anyone to fast on the day of ‘Ashura after the Qur’anic verse which instituted the fast of the holy month of Ramadan; some say that the fast of ‘Ashura continued to be observed up to the time when the Holy Prophet (as) passed away.

The many inconsistencies noted weaken the dependability of these *hadiths*.

Thirdly, many of these *hadiths* have either weak or false chains of narration, in spite of the fact that they have been narrated in the most dependable books of Sunni *hadiths*.

Fourthly, some of these *hadiths* have problems and weaknesses of denotation.

1. Ghana'im al-Ayyam, vol. 6, p. 78.
2. Madarik al-Ahkam, vol. 6, p. 268.
3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 19, p. 130.
4. 'Umdah al-Qari, vol. 11, p. 118.
5. Al-Mughni, vol. 3, p. 174.
6. Bada'i' al-Sana'i', vol. 2, p. 262.
7. Fath al-Bari, vol. 4, p. 290.
8. Ibid., p. 288.
9. Al-Sunan al-Kubra, vol. 4, p. 475.
10. Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 7, p. 290, hadith 7165; Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 1, p. 260.
11. Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 7, p. 290, hadith 7164.
12. Al-Athar al-Baqiyah, p. 277.
13. Al-Hadi Magazine, no. 2, p. 37.
14. Ibid., p. 36.
15. Bustani, Da'irah al-Ma'arif, vol. 11, p. 446.
16. Tahdhib al-Ahkam, vol. 4, pp. 299–300, hadith 895, 906–908; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, section [bab] 20.
17. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, section [bab] 21; Al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 146, hadith 4–7.
18. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 341.
19. Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol. 2, p. 51, hadith 224; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, p. 452, hadith 1.
20. Al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 146, hadith 3; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, p. 462, section [bab] 41, hadith 6.
21. Al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 146, hadith 4; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, p. 461, section [bab] 21, hadith 5.
22. Al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 147, hadith 7; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, p. 459, section [bab] 21, hadith 2.
23. Al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 146, hadith 5; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, p. 460, section [bab] 21, hadith 3.
24. Al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 147, hadith 6; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, p. 461, section [bab] 21, hadith 4.
25. Ibid.
26. Mustanad al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, p. 492.
27. Al-Riyad al-Masa'il, vol. 5, p. 467.
28. Masalik al-Afham, vol. 2, p. 78.
29. Jami' al-Maqasid, vol. 3, p. 86.
30. Tadhkirah al-Fuqaha', vol. 6, p. 192; Taharir al-Ahkam, vol. 1, p. 84.
31. Majma' al-Fa'idah wa al-Burhan, vol. 5, p. 188.
32. Al-Durus al-Shar'iyyah, vol. 1, p. 382; Ghayah al-Murad, vol. 1, p. 329.
33. Jami' 'Abbasi, p. 106.
34. Kifayah al-Ahkam, p. 520.
35. Al-Wafi, vol. 11, p. 76; Mafatih al-Shara'i', vol. 1, p. 284.
36. Bidayah al-Hidayah, vol. 1, p. 238.
37. Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. 16, p. 361.
38. Kashf al-Ghita', p. 323.
39. Mustanad al-Shi'ah, vol. 10, p. 487.
40. Ghana'im al-Ayyam, vol. 6, pp. 78–79.
41. Biruni, Al-Athar al-Baqiyah, p. 524.

- [42.](#) Maqrizi, Al-Khitat, vol. 2, p. 385.
- [43.](#) Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, p. 221.
- [44.](#) Al-Hadi Magazine, 7th year, no. 2.

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