

Selection of Migration to Iraq

Imam Husayn ('a) chose to migrate to Iraq and not to any other place in the Islamic lands, while he knew what conditions and atmosphere surrounded the people and what difficulties the Iraqis lived in. Probably, the selection of Iraq and not any other place was made the Holy Imam ('a) due to the following factors:

First: Iraq, in those days, was the center of Islamic Kingdom and the place of wealth and manpower, such that Kufa was established there as a garrison town and it had a definite role to play in Islamic victories and had participated in the conquests of Ram Hormuz, Shoosh, Shustar and Nihanand as Umar bin Khattab had sought help from them in these campaigns.

Umar wrote to his governor, Saad bin Abi Waqqas: "Send a large contingent with Noman bin Maqran to Ahwaz. In numerous reports concerning Islamic conquests it has been recorded that Umar sought the help of Kufians. Umar has also praised them extensively, "May Allah give the people of Kufa a goodly reward as they are content with their area and they also help people of other areas."

A Syrian has said regarding them, "You are the treasure of Islam. When the people of Basra seek your help, you help them. And if the Syrians seek your help, you help them."¹

Apart from this Iraq was the capital of the government and it had been in ancient times a land of power and wealth. "It was the centre of the kingdom and it held a huge treasure in addition to the prosperity that the Almighty Allah had given to the Kufians: Such as: Manufacture of colored garments and silk and other things like fruits and dates etc."²

Umayyads considered it as an important source that contributed to the treasury of Damascus.³ Muawiyah received around 50 million Dirhams from taxes of Kufa and its surrounding areas.⁴

While taxes collected from Batha⁵ were only in the range of 5 million Dirhams.⁶

Iraq was the center of the illuminated world of Islam which surpassed all the provinces in fields of politics, economics and social spheres, such that all the revolutionaries were attracted by it and moved towards it⁷ so that they may make it the place of launching their political movement'. And Kufa alone was

that city in the Islamic lands that understood the value of the events and aims of political movements because social awareness was dominant there to a great extent and Kufians used to impose their desires on rulers and when they did not fulfill them they used to draw swords against them and stand up to confront them.

Anyway, Imam (‘a) chose to migrate to Kufa, from the aspect that the city of Kufa was the center of power in the Islamic world. Abdul Muta-aal Saeedi says: “Imam Husayn (‘a) did not make a wrong choice. He decided to move to Iraq at that time because Iraq was a suitable place to lay the foundation of the movement of uniting the aims of Muslims. And therefore he selected it so that afterwards this Kingdom may be established for the Iraqis and later on the Abbaside Kingdom developed there, which ruled on Muslims for 500 years.”⁸

Secondly: Kufa was the cradle of Shiaism and a native place of the Alawites which displayed exceptional devotion to Ahlul Bayt (‘a) on numerous occasions. Groups of revolutionaries, under the leadership of Malik Ashtar Nakhai, a prominent Shia personality, moved to Medina and laid siege to Uthman and they attacked him and nominated the Imam for caliphate. This was the seed of Shiaism that was sown in Kufa during the caliphate of Umar. Because among the governors of Kufa were Ammar bin Yasir and Abdullah Ibn Masud, who publicized the greatness and merits of the Imam in gatherings of Kufa; that had been recorded from the Holy Prophet (S) in his regard. They spoke all this so much that finally the people became devoted to the Imam and began to have respect and regard for him. In such a way that Kufians participated on the side of the Holy Imam (‘a) in the battles of Jamal and Siffeen and they used to say to His Eminence, “O Amiral Momineen! Take us wherever you like as we are your soldiers and companions. We are inimical to all those who are inimical to you and we shall be with anyone who returns to you and obeys you.”⁹

Imam Amirul Momineen (‘a) has praised their goodness because he believed that they were sincere friends towards him and he told them, “O people of Kufa! You are my brothers, companions and supporter for truth and those who respond for Jihad against those who make the unlawful as lawful. By your support I shall defeat all those who confront us and I am hopeful of your complete obedience.”¹⁰

He also said, “Kufa is the mine of faith, the treasury of Islam and swords and spears of God that He appoints wherever He likes.”¹¹

Iraq participated in the more severe battles and the deadliest confrontations for the sake of Ahlul Bayt and they took revenge from the killers of Ahlul Bayt under the leadership of the great revolutionary Mukhtar Ibn Abi Ubaidah Thaqafi who rose up to take revenge for their blood. On the basis of this the Imam selected Iraq for migration because the people of the Iraqi cities had a deep loyalty and devotion to Ahlul Bayt.

Thirdly: Kufa was the original center of the opposition to Umayyad Kingdom. Because throughout the Umayyad rule, the Kufians had never restrained from confronting the Umayyads and they always aspired

to bring about its downfall. According to Falhauzen the cause of Kufian animosity towards the Umayyads was that the caliphate had been relocated from Kufa to Damascus and that previously, they themselves had been at the helm of the government. And that their city was reduced to the position of only a territory of the new kingdom. And their lands were taxed and funds dispatched to the lands they themselves had conquered. Now the position was such that they had to remain content at the leftovers of the Umayyad rule. Therefore it was nothing strange that Kufians displayed remarkable fury in confronting the Syrian Kingdom and they considered their authority as a yoke of slavery upon them and tried their best to overthrow their domination.

Among the factors that lent severity to the anger of Kufians against the Umayyads was that Muawiyah had appointed incapable persons like Mughairah bin Shoba and Ziyad bin Abih as governors of Iraqi provinces. And these two wreaked injustice and oppression among them and took away their comfort and peace. They also tried to bring about their economic deprivation and took steps to make effective the politics of hunger and deprivation. Kufa became the center of revolt against the Umayyad regime and the arrests, murders and oppression of the governors did not restrain them from it.

Thus, the selection of Kufa by the Imam for migration and his decision to choose it as the center of his mission was that it was the only city inimical to the Umayyads and that the clamor of opposition to the Umayyads had reached to its peak after the death of Muawiyah.

Fourthly: Imam Husayn (‘a) selected Iraq to migrate because of the continuous flow of letters from the people who wrote to him and begged him to join them. The majority people sent the Imam letters persuading him to come for their help. These petitions were dispatched to the Holy Imam (‘a) even during the lifetime of Muawiyah. Thus Imam (‘a) had to relent when letter after letter arrived and they encouraged the Imam to move to Iraq. If the Imam had refrained from giving them a positive reply he would have been answerable to the Almighty Allah. Especially after his emissary Muslim Ibn Aqil wrote him informing him about the unanimity of the people on Imam’s allegiance and their anticipation of Imam’s arrival. Muslim also urged him to come immediately. Thus His Eminence had no choice but to accept it.

Dr. Muhammad Halami says: “Imam Husayn (‘a) did not set out to Iraq immediately after receiving representations from Iraqi people so that he may lead them in revolt against the caliphate of Yazid. But he first dispatched his emissary, Muslim bin Aqil bin Abi Talib so that he may test the claims of the people of Kufa and find out if they were really having true sympathies with the Holy Imam. Muslim succeeded in taking allegiance of 12,000 persons to help in the determined uprising of Imam Husayn (‘a) and managed to keep them away from the allegiance to Yazid. Muslim reported these developments to Imam Husayn (‘a) and he decided to personally travel to Iraq and lead the uprising. Therefore Imam Husayn (‘a) cannot be said to have resorted to haste in initiating the uprising because letters addressed to him had arrived. His Eminence wanted to find the level of their sincerity. And his active representative was able to gauge this in a short period of time and had taken allegiance of thousands of people.” [12](#)

Fifthly: If Imam Husayn (‘a) had moved to any other province, Umayyad mercenaries would have pursued him and definitely martyred him against his will. While he would have been criticized why he did not move to Iraq? While it was a land of his companions and Shias and people of Iraq had sent him letters in thousands and encouraged him to join them? In that case what reply His Eminence had given if he had moved to some other land and the Umayyad army had pursued him?

These were some of the factors that caused the Imam to select Kufa in order to make it the launch pad of his uprising.

Abandoning Hijaz

Here a matter remains that why the Imam (‘a) did not remain in Hijaz to make it the center of his movement? Probably the following factors caused him to take this step:

(a) The Hijaz province had very few economic sources because Muawiyah had spread poverty and deprivation there. And it is natural that a revolution required greater monetary support and with the lack of wealth and money how could the Imam organize his revolt in Hijaz?

(b) There was lack of political awareness in Hijaz, because the majority of the people there were aloof from politics while Iraq held the torch of political know how in the Arab lands.

(c) Hijaz was not suitable to become the center of revolution because it had been continuously made the target of attacks by the Umayyad forces. That is why Yazid had sent a huge army to fight Ibn Zubair under the commandship of his brother, Amr bin Zubair.

(d) Hijaz did not have a garrison town or center so that the Imam may have taken refuge there to obtain protection and support.

(e) The majority of people in Hijaz was inimical to Ahlul Bayt and more inclined to Umayyads.

Abu Ja’far Iskafi says: “As for the Meccans they were all hostile to Ali and the whole of Quraish was opposed to him. And the majority of the people supported Bani Umayyah.”¹³

Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (‘a) has said, “There were not even 20 individuals in Mecca and Medina who supported us.”¹⁴ Thus despite it being a known fact that Hijaz was hostile to Ahlul Bayt (‘a) how could the Imam make it the center of his uprising?

Imam (‘a) left Hijaz seen and heard by its populace but none rushed out to accompany him and except for his Ahlul Bayt no one followed him to help and defend him.

Avoiding Egypt

Imam ('a) avoided Egypt and he did not correspond with anyone there because the people of that area had during the regime of the Umayyad caliphs, been used to comfort and peace and they remained aloof from political happenings. Also not a single letter from them was sent to the Imam, inviting him to join them. Then how could the Imam have migrated there? In addition to this, the Uthmani view was predominant over there. And the governor of Egypt was Amr bin al-Aas who propagated enmity towards Ahlul Bayt and cultivated among the people devotion and loyalty to Umayyads. Thus how it be possible for the Imam to decide on Egypt?

Avoiding Yemen

Ibn Hanafiyah and others suggested to the Imam to move to Yemen because Shias of the Imam and his Holy father resided there. But the Imam did not accept this view. In our opinion the Imam avoided Yemen for the following reasons:

(1) Garrison area was not present in Yemen that could have helped and defended the Imam from attack of Bani Umayyads because the Yemenis neither have weapons nor military provisions or contingents. They had no military capability at all.

(2) The rabble of Yemen, when Muawiyah's soldiers attacked them under the command of Busr Ibn Abi Artat, the oppressor, did not step forward to defend their land. So much so that oppressors slew a lot of their men and captured their women and sold them in the markets. The stronger of them brought a good price due to their physical well-being. But the Yemeni people did not stand up to defend their territories and property and they submitted their blood and property to the Umayyad foes. In such a case how the Imam could had moved to Yemen?

(3) Yemen was involved in poverty and deprivation, the economic life was paralyzed and people had no power to provide funds and weapons necessary for revolution and a large number of Yemenis had migrated to Kufa in search of livelihood and prosperity.

(4) If Imam had gone to Yemen, Yazid would not have left him alone. He would have sent his mercenaries to fight him and in this way lives would have been lost and Imam would have been blamed for creating mischief and discord and thus the justice established by His Eminence on the basis of the statement of Dr. Ahmad Mahmud Sabihi, would have been destroyed. [15](#)

From what we have stated is apparent the weakness of the view of Dr. Ali Husayn Kharbutali who has criticized the Imam 'Why he did not head to Yemen after leaving Hijaz because these two places were having his true friends and sincere Shias of his father. Apart from this the plus point of Yemen was that it was far from the center of caliphate, his strong castle and his vast valley.' [16](#) This view is not having an iota of reality because the Imam did not have any true friends in Hijaz and if he really had them when he

declared his move to Iraq they would have come forward to accompany him and they would not have left him alone a prey in the hands of Ibn Marjana. We have also mentioned that Yemen, from the strategic view point was not suitable that the Imam could have chosen it for his revolution.

Avoiding Iran

The Holy Imam ('a) avoided going to Iran also because he did not have any support there and the invitation towards Ahlul Bayt ('a) had yet not crystallized there. It was only after a short time that it became the center of the Alawite propagation. That is when a great society of Shias, most of whom had been exiled there, took shape in this land and they began to spread Shiaism there and the claimants of Bani Abbas bore the fruits that the Shias had produced in Iran. They designated Iran for themselves and it was from here that they launched their opposition to Bani Umayyah and destroyed their kingdom.

Avoiding Basra

Imam ('a) avoided Basra also because it had a garrison loyal to Uthman and many of the people there were followers of Talha and Zubair.

Abu Ja'far Iskafi says, "The people of Basra were generally inimical to Ali ('a)." [17](#)

And it was because of the Battle of Jamal that most of the heads of the people of Basra had reaped and made their hearts filled with animosity towards the Imam and his children. Although there did reside a group of Shias in Basra to whom the Imam wrote at the time of his departure towards Kufa.

Anyway, Kufa was the most suitable center for announcing the revolution against the Umayyads. Because this revolutionary town had led the opposition to Bani Umayyah and after the death of Muawiyah it had become absolutely ready to invite the Imam. In such a way that it was considered the real native town of the Shias of His Eminence. The hearts of the people of Kufa were rich with love and devotion to His Eminence.

The selection of Kufa as the destination was chosen by the Imam with exception to all other places because of a deep study of the existing conditions in all Islamic provinces and their surrounding areas. His Eminence had encompassing knowledge of the attitude of the people of every place, be it in the political sphere or in the field of belief which was the standard of their economic and military power. Because the Holy Imam was aware of all these matters and knowledge and he could not find any other place having the strategic advantage of Kufa for support of his revolution and guarantee of his victory. And he had realized the strengths of his supporters and opposition to the Umayyad regime. On the basis of this, movement towards Kufa was the need of the hour as there was no alternative to it.

Sympathizers and critics

When the decision of His Eminence, Husayn (‘a) and his determination to leave Hijaz for Kufa became public, a group of members of Ahlul Bayt and his Shias sympathized with him and some of the politically greedy persons made a show of sympathy like Abdullah Ibn Zubair and feigned sincerity to him or like Ashdaq, due to trepidation that the Umayyad regime will be destroyed, became worried and he expressed sympathy for the uprising of the Imam. They all warned the Holy Imam and frightened him of the about turn of the people of Kufa and their betrayal of trust towards him, just as before this they had betrayed trust of his brother. They all suggested to the Imam that he must not go to this province and that he must not join them.

In the same way some government agents and their followers, due to the fear of the downfall of Umayyad regime and their routing criticized the Imam for organizing the uprising. Some opponents of Ahlul Bayt (‘a) in numerous areas also spoke up against the Imam’s uprising. The views of these two groups are presented below:

Sympathizers

Sympathizers from the Shias of Imam Husayn (‘a) and his Ahlul Bayt were such that their hearts were filled with sorrow, and grief for Imam’s departure from Hijaz overcame them. They spoke with a kind tongue and warned the Imam of things he was not fearful of. They suggested to the Imam that he give up confrontation with the regime and give allegiance to Yazid so that he remains safe from his mischief and oppression. However His Eminence saw that the religion of his grandfather had become a toy in the hands of Abu Sufyan’s grandson and it was necessary for him to rise up in defense of its honor and to sacrifice everything in its support and it was that same aim that none was capable of restraining the Imam from it’these are some of the statements of sympathizers and those who restrained him:

1. Masoor bin Mukhrama

When Masoor bin Mukhrama¹⁸ came to know of the decision of the Imam about leaving Hijaz for Iraq he became extremely perturbed and he wrote the following letter to His Eminence: “You must not join with the letters of the people of Iraq and to what Ibn Zubair has told you, you must not believe that they would give you support. You will be deceived. You must not go away from the Holy Sanctuary as they, that is the Iraqis, if they are needful of you, they would mount the camels and hasten to join you. In that case you may go out to them with power and military equipment.”

When the Imam read his letter he thanked him for his sympathy and sent a message to him: “I shall beseech the Almighty for goodness in this matter.”¹⁹

2. Abdullah bin Ja'far

Abdullah bin Ja'far also became fearful about his cousin when he learnt about the decision of His Eminence to march towards Iraq. Waves of depression surrounded him. He sent his sons, Aun and Muhammad to His Eminence with the following letter: "So to say: I implore you by the name of God, that the moment you read this letter, you change your decision because I am afraid regarding you as you are risking your life for this and your Ahlul Bayt shall be uprooted and destroyed if something happens to you today. The effulgence of the earth shall be extinguished. You are the standard bearer of guidance and the chief of the believers. So do not make haste in moving out as I am coming behind my letter. And peace be upon you."

While the son of Ja'far had exhausted his strength and he had become worried and perplexed he hastened to Amr bin Saeed the governor of Mecca and took from him a letter guaranteeing security to His Eminence, Husayn ('a) and then went quickly to His Eminence while Yahya bin Saeed bin Aas was with him. Then he suggested the Imam to stay in Mecca and give up the intention of going to Iraq but the Imam did not accept his advice. He began to petition the Imam and implored him to change his decision.

Imam said, "I saw Allah's Messenger in the dream and he commanded me to hasten towards him"

Ja'far's son asked him about the dream but the Imam refused to speak about it. He said, "I have not related it to anyone and I shall not relate it to anyone till I meet Allah, the Mighty and Sublime."[20](#)

Abdullah Ibn Ja'far was filled with sorrow and grief and he went away with the certainty that a terrible catastrophe would befall. He ordered his two sons to remain in the service of their maternal uncle, His Eminence, Husayn ('a).

3. Abdullah bin Abbas

Abdullah bin Abbas hurried to the Imam in a disturbed state of mind and asked him, "Useless people have spread the rumor that you have decided to move to Iraq. Have you indeed made such a decision?"

"Yes, I have decided to set out to Kufa on one of these two days. I want to, if Allah wills, join my cousin, Muslim, there."[21](#)

Ibn Abbas became distressed and he told the Imam, "I beseech the Almighty's refuge for you, tell me, are you going towards the community that has murdered its chief (Amir) and that has taken over its province? If they have done so, you may go to them. But if they have invited you while their governor is upon them, ruling over them and his officials are collecting taxes from them, they have in fact invited you for war and I am not in peace regarding you because they are deceiving you, they have lied to you. They shall desert you and betray you and they shall be the worst of the people against you."

These perceptive points were not concealed from the Imam, because His Eminence was perfectly aware

of his circumstances, therefore he told Ibn Abbas, “I shall seek goodness (*Istikhara*) from the Almighty Allah and see what happens.”

Ibn Abbas was worried and agitated and he could not rest in peace. Thus he turned to the Imam and said, “I tried to remain patient but was unable to do so. I am fearful of your death and destruction because of this decision of yours’the people of Iraq are disloyal and betrayers of trust, do not go to them. Stay in this town as you are the leader of the people of Hijaz. Thus if the people of Iraq are desirous of you as they are claiming to be, write to them to exterrn their governor and enemy and then you may go and join them. Then if you like you may go out and move to Yemen as there are castles and valleys over there and it is a vast and huge land. And your father had Shias over there and you shall be far away from the people. Then you may write to the people and send letters to them, send your emissaries all over the country and I am hopeful that you shall able to achieve what you like peacefully”

Imam informed him about his determination and steadfastness to undertake the journey. Ibn Abbas told him, “If you have decided to move, do not take your ladies and children as I am afraid you shall be slain in the same way as Uthman was killed, while his ladies and children witnessed the carnage’.By setting out from Hijaz you have pleased the son of Zubair, today while you are present here; no one pays attention to him.

At that time, Ibn Abbas lost control of his emotions and in a bewildered state, as the historians have described he said, “By the One except Whom there is no deity, if I had known, I would have held your hair and forehead, so that people gather over us and you had listened to what I say and remained here, I shall do it.”

Whatever Ibn Abbas had said was not concealed upon the Holy Imam and His Eminence was determined on his aim which was the victory of Islam.

Ibn Abbas, while his feet were moving with difficulty and his heart was bursting with grief, went to Ibn Zubair and told him, “O Ibn Zubair! Your eyes have lighted up!” Then he recited the following couplets:

“O lark! Now you are left alone and your surroundings have become empty. So lay your egg and chirp aloud.

And as much you like peck at the ground

For Husayn who is going to Iraq and leaving you at Hijaz”²²

If the Imam had been desirous for rulership and kingdom he would have accepted the suggestion of Ibn Abbas. However, His Eminence wanted reform and he wanted to turn back Islam to the illuminated reality and he was certain that this could not be accomplished except through blood sacrifice. It was the only thing that would enable him to achieve his aim.

4. Abu Bakr Makhzumi

Abu Bakr bin Abdur Rahman Makhzumi²³ hastened to the Imam and said to His Eminence: “My relationship has persuaded me to sympathize with you and I don’t know how I should advise you? Your father was the bravest person and people were more hopeful of him, more obedient to him and were more prepared for him. He marched against Muawiyah while except for the people of Syria all were supporting him and he was more respected than Muawiyah. But they deserted him and in greed of material wealth left him alone. And they made him taste gulps of anger and they opposed him till he reached where he reached from the honor and satisfaction of God’after that they did with your brother what they did and you also witnessed all that and saw it with your own eyes. Now you are going towards those who had oppressed your father and brother so that you may fight against the people of Syria and the people of Iraq. You are going out to fight one who is more prepared and stronger than you and people are more afraid of him and are more hopeful of him. If the news of your departure reaches them, they will lure the people through greed of wealth so that they may become slaves of the world. At that time, those who have promised you support would be prepared to fight you.

And they shall desert you. You are more liked by those you help. So remember Allah in your heart”

Imam (‘a) thanked him for his advice and sympathy and informed him that he was determined on what he had decided.

Abu Bakr despaired and said, “O Aba Abdillah! I entrust you to the security of God!”

Then Abu Bakr went to the governor of Mecca saying:

“Many of those who are advised do not pay any attention to it, however if they are blamed secretly they accept the advice.”

“What happened, O Abu Bakr?”

He informed him about his conversation with His Eminence, Husayn. He told him,

“By the Lord of the Ka’ba! You have indeed given a sincere advice to him.”²⁴

5. Abdullah bin Judah

Abdullah bin Judah bin Hubairah was very much concerned about the Imam. Thus he sent his son, Aun to the Holy Imam with a letter in which he requested the Imam to turn back and also stated his apprehension regarding the march of His Eminence to Iraq. However this matter was not liked by the Imam.²⁵

6. Jabir bin Abdullah

Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari also rushed to the Imam and demanded him not to leave but the Imam did not agree to it.^{[26](#)}

7. Abdullah bin Muti

Imam met Abdullah bin Muti' on way to Iraq and Abdullah, knowing the decision of the Imam said, "O son of Allah's Messenger! I remind you about the sanctity of Allah that it may not be defiled. And the respect of Quraish and the pledge of Arabs. I beseech you in the name of God. By Allah! If you seek what is in the hands of Bani Umayyah, they shall kill you and if they kill you, after you they shall not care for anyone'By Allah! This is the sanctity of Islam, the sanctity of Quraish and the sanctity of Arab. So for the sake of Allah! For the sake of Allah! Do not do this and do not go to Kufa and do not put yourself in opposition to Bani Umayyah."^{[27](#)}

And in Al Iqdul Farid 4/376 it is mentioned that he met the Imam and said to His Eminence: O Aba Abdillah, after you, the Almighty Allah will not give us drinking water, where are you going? His Eminence (a.s.) said: Muawiyah is dead and I have received more than a camel load of letters.

8. Amr bin Saeed

Amr bin Saeed Ashdaq sent a letter to the Imam offering security and assured that His Eminence will not have to face any difficulty.

It was mentioned therein: "I pray to the Almighty that He may inspire you to resort to peace. And I want to tell you about what they (enemies) intend to do with you.

I have heard that you have decided to go to Iraq. I pray Allah to give you refuge from mischief. Thus if you are afraid, come to me as you shall have security and rewards with me."

How was it possible for the chief of the nobles to humble himself before Ashdaq and ask for his protection? Ashdaq wanted to control the Imam so that he may no more exercise his will. This matter was not unknown to the Imam. He replied to Ashdaq as follows:

"If your intention by writing to me was really to reward me, the Almighty Allah shall give you a goodly reward in the world and the Hereafter'and the one who invites to Allah and performs good deeds and says that I am a Muslim, he is creating mischief. And the best of the security is the protection of Almighty Allah and by Allah! One who does not fear Allah in the world is not having faith in Him. And we beseech Allah to make us fearful of Him in the world so that we may be eligible for His protection in the Hereafter."^{[28](#)}

9. Muhammad bin Hanafiyah

Muhammad bin Hanafiyah was in Medina and when he learnt about the decision of his brother to march towards Iraq, he set out for Mecca²⁹ and he reached there a night prior to the scheduled departure of Imam to Iraq. He met His Eminence immediately and said, “My brother! The people of Kufa! You are aware of their betrayal of trust with your father and your brother. I am afraid that you shall also have to bear the same treatment. Thus if you decided to stay on in the Holy Sanctuary, you would be the most beloved and secure person in the here.”

Imam (‘a) thanked him for his concern and advice and told him, “I am afraid that Yazid Ibn Muawiyah would have me killed and at that time I shall be the one to have defiled the sanctity of this House.”

Muhammad said, “If you are afraid of this, you may go to Yemen or some desert area as there, you would be in a better position to defend yourself and no one would be able to overpower you.”

His Eminence, Husayn said, “I shall reflect upon what you have said.”³⁰

Abdullah said: Do not do this, as by Allah, they did not accord security to your father while he was better than you, thus how will they give you security? By Allah, if you are killed, after you no sanctity will remain but they defile it.

When it was dawn and he was performing ablution (Wuzu), he was informed that the Imam has set out for Iraq. He began to weep so much that the sound of his tears falling into the pail was audible.³¹

Muhammad rushed to his brother and caught the rein of his camel and said to His Eminence, “O my brother! Did you not promise me about what I had requested you?”

“Yes, but after you departed, Allah’s Messenger came to me and told me: O Husayn! Set out! As the Almighty Allah wants to see you slaughtered.”

Muhammad was terribly distressed and he began to tremble from the head to toes and tears began to flow on his cheeks while he was saying, “Then why are you taking these ladies and children when you are going out in such circumstances?”

Imam (‘a) replied to him with determination and calmness, “The Almighty Allah desires to see them as hostages.”³²

10. Her Eminence, Umme Salma

When Umme Salma, the Mother of believers became aware of the Imam’s determination to move to Iraq, she was extremely disturbed. It was the time when His Eminence was in Medina and had not yet gone to Mecca. So she hurried to the Imam and in a voice filled with sorrow and shock, she said:

“O my son! Do you distress me by going out to Iraq as I heard your grandfather, Allah’s Messenger say: ‘My son, Husayn shall be killed in Iraq at a place called Karbala, and I have the soil of your grave in a bottle that the Prophet had entrusted to me.’”

Imam replied to her with firm determination, “O mother! I also know that I shall be killed unjustly and oppressively and Allah, the Mighty and Sublime desires to see my family and Ahlul Bayt rendered homeless and my children killed and taken hostages in chains in such a way that they would be calling out for help but shall not be helped”

Umme Salma was extremely distressed and she exclaimed loudly, “Wonder! Then why are you going while you know that you shall be killed?!”

Imam, while he considered death a joke and life an object of ridicule replied to her, “O mother! If I do not go today, I will have to go tomorrow. And if I don’t go tomorrow, I have to go the day after. And there is no escape from death. And I know the day I shall be killed and the hour I shall be slain and the ditch I shall be buried in, just as I recognize you and I am watching it just as I am looking at you.”³³

11. Abdullah bin Zubair

When the Imam decided to leave Mecca, Abdullah Ibn Zubair hastened to meet him from the Bab-e-Mujamela.

Balazari has stated: By this Ibn Zubair desired that the Imam should not blame him and that he should be excused from the aspect of speaking.³⁴ So he expressed sympathy and concern for His Eminence and said, “Where are you going? To the community that killed your father and slashed your brother?”

Imam (‘a) replied, “If I am killed at such and such place it is preferable to me than this place; that is Mecca should be defiled because of me.”³⁵

Imam remained firm in his resolve and the forbidding of forbidders and the sympathies of the sympathizers did not make him change his decision. Because he had become absolutely certain that the affairs of Islam shall not be successful and the word of Allah cannot be exalted on the earth except by laying down his life and giving sacrifice.

Ustad Khalid Muhammad Khalid says: The matter that made the valiant one wave his flag was not a personal one that it be related to his right to caliphate’or due to his personal rivalry with Yazid. In the same way that was not an imaginative high flying matter that falls down on its author. And that it may force him to a bewildered state where there may be profit or loss. This matter was greater, higher and loftier. It was the matter of Islam and its future and for Muslims and the future generations.

When all Muslims were silent against this falsehood while some were criticizing it and the rest hated it inwardly, the meaning of this was that Islam has been prevented from training those people.

It implied that Muslims had lost their eligibility of the greatness of this great religion'and also its meaning is that the future of Islam and Muslims both had been surrendered to power of invaders. Whoever is dominant, he mounts it and apart from this no power remained for Islam and reality'it was this matter in the view of Husayn and it was this logic that persuaded him to rise up in revolt.[36](#)

Sympathizers of His Eminence urged him not to harken to the callers of Kufa and that he should keep sitting at home and make peace with Yazid. But the chief of the nobles was thinking of something all those people were unaware of. His Eminence saw that Islamic life had fallen into severe weakness and this matter was reaching a situation when it would be completely destroyed. What it was required that he should infuse it with his own blood so that the active life of Muslims may return and its youth may be restored through his blood which was the blood of the Holy Prophet (S).

Critics

Also a group stood up to criticize the uprising of the Imam and denounced the declaration of Jihad by the Imam because this was going to be a cause of the weakening of the Umayyad regime by whom they had received rewards and largesses. Some of those who followed them have also issued statements of writer who flayed the Imam's revolution against Yazid's regime while their statements had no value in Islamic Shariah. They have quoted the following characters:

1. Abdullah Ibn Umar

Abdullah Ibn Umar criticized the Imam's uprising and found fault with his entering into political confrontation and he said, "Husayn succeeded by his uprising against us and by my life he derived lesson from his father and brother, he saw how the people left them and did not help them. And it was not suitable for him to initiate any moment as long as he was alive and for the sake of the well-being that people have seen it was necessary for him to realize that this congregation is better!"[37](#)

2. Saeed bin Musayyab

Saeed bin Musayyab denounced the uprising of the Holy Imam ('a) and said, "If Husayn had not undertaken the uprising, it would have been better for him."[38](#)

3. Abu Waqid Laithi

Abu Waqid Laithi was a partisan of Bani Umayyads. He came to the Imam and implored him in the name of Allah that he must not rise up against Yazid. He did not do this because of his attachment to the Imam. It was so because he was worried about the Umayyad regime. Imam, on the other had, paid no attention to him. He just ignored him.[39](#)

4. Abu Salma

Among those who condemned Imam's revolt against Yazid was Abu Salam bin Abdur Rahman⁴⁰ who said, "Husayn must have recognized the people of Iraq and he would not have moved towards them, but Ibn Zubair encouraged him!"⁴¹

5. Abu Saeed

Abu Saeed also criticized the Imam's revolution and said, "Husayn invited me to join the uprising, but I told him, 'Fear Allah, stay in your house and do not rise up against your leader!'"⁴²

6. Ammarah binte Abdur Rahman

Ammarah binte Abdur Rahman⁴³ was a staunch ally of Bani Umayyad and she was much concerned about the well-being of Umayyad regime. She wrote a letter to the Imam pointing out that the Imam's revolt was a dangerous matter and she urged him to co-operate and obey the congregation (majority). She warned him against rising up in revolt because it was inciting him to his death. She wrote in her letter that she heard Ayesha narrating the Prophet that His Eminence said, "My son, Husayn shall be killed."

When Imam ('a) read the letter and saw the Prophet's saying about his martyrdom he said, "In that case there is no solution other than my being killed."⁴⁴

These were some of the critics of the Imam who condemned his stand and they did not view the uprising of His Eminence from the Islamic point of view. They viewed it from a materialistic angle because the Umayyad regime had given a lot of wealth to them and thus they were worried of the downfall of the regime.

Modern Critics

A group of modern writers have also condemned Imam Husayn's uprising against Yazid and they considered it an uprising against the will of the community. Below we present some examples:

1. Shaykh Muhammad Hadhari

Shaykh Muhammad Hadhari, Shaykhul Azhar, in his historical discussions about Islam, has not displayed any regard to Ahlul Bayt ('a), while the Almighty Allah had commanded love and devotion towards them, and he says with regard to Imam Husayn: "By undertaking the uprising, he committed a great mistake. This action of his created such discord and mischief in the community and shook the foundation of communal amity that its effects last to this day."⁴⁵

Imam definitely did the correct thing and staged his uprising for the benefit of the community and he is

having superiority to every Muslim, because if his sacrifice hadn't been there neither would have Islam survived in name nor in ritual. His Eminence destroyed the plot of the Umayyads whose aim was to eradicate Islam and annihilate all its treasures. His Eminence, Husayn, by his sacrifice made himself the sacrifice of the religion of Islam and the belief of Monotheism.

2. Muhammad Najjar

Muhammad Najjar says, "As for the rightfulness of Husayn ('a) in the position of caliphate, it is a matter regarding which the majority of the people agree. But what is the value of these opinions if they are not supported by military power? In such circumstances the uprising was not necessary because the leadership of the inferior in presence of the superior is lawful, just as Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) considered himself as the rightful recipient of caliphate post but he did not organize uprising against anyone."⁴⁶

Najjar believes that the caliphate of Yazid was legal according to the Shariah! And it is the weakest type of Imamate that is lawful in their view. However, it has been proved by many logical arguments that the Imamate of the weaker in presence of the better one is invalid and Shia scholastic theologians have proved its absolute invalidity and said that it is a revolt against logic and an attack on Islamic guidance to say that Islamic law allows in practical life and general welfare of the community that the superior could follow the inferior. Because it is a matter that would destroy merit and it would be a revolt against the well-being of the community and the Holy Quran has said that it is improper to consider the two of them equal, as the Almighty Allah says:

"Are those who know and those who do not know alike?"⁴⁷

And as the Usulis have said: If we accept this rule, it still does not justify the caliphate of Yazid because he, according to the consensus of Muslims, had no merit, rather he was a transmogrified man who committed evil deeds and was sunk in sinful acts and revolt against him was a religious duty.

3. Muhammad Ghazzali

Shaykh Muhammad Ghazzali has also condemned the revolution of Imam Husayn ('a) and he considers it extremism devoid of diplomacy!⁴⁸ And according to Ghazzali it was necessary for Husayn to have paid allegiance to Yazid and accepted the leadership of this wanton sinner, who was in no way qualified for the leadership of the community. And it was something that His Eminence, Husayn and his lofty principles could never accept, because His Eminence was the foremost in having the responsibility of saving Islam and defending its sanctities and values.

4. Ahmad Shibli

Ahmed Shibli is another one who has frantically defended Yazid and criticized the Imam for having organized uprising against the son of Muawiyah. He says: We come towards Husayn and regretfully state that his steps in some of the aspects of this matter were unacceptable, because he did not accept

the advice of the advisors and especially Ibn Abbas and he remained adamant in his attitude! Secondly: He forgot the behavior of the people of Kufa and the way they dealt with his father and brother or that he ignored those things. Thirdly: He took along his ladies and children as if he were going to a special outing or to visit relatives and that during the journey he received the news of the betrayal and disloyalty of people of Kufa but in spite of this he continued his journey towards them or that he followed the opinion of Aqil's family and he took a group of children, women and some men in order to take the revenge of Muslim's murder. It is, by Allah, possible that the incumbency of Yazid was a practical mistake, but was it the right way to confront a mistake?"⁴⁹

Shibli has not studied with insight the reality of Islamic life during the period of Yazid. He has merely followed his inclination to bigotry and considered him sentimentally, that is why he has written such absolutely deviated things.

Islam, during the time of Yazid was in a mortal danger of being wiped out and the uprising of the Imam was aimed at restoring life to the arteries of the Islamic community and His Eminence declared that: "I am not taking up arms in order to make merry, or be ecstatic over what I possess. I am not making mischief nor exercising oppression. But I am ready to fight for the sole goal of seeking reform of the Ummah of my grandfather the Apostle of Allah. I want to enjoin good and forbid evil and guide the affairs of the people as my grandfather and father were doing" We have explained the aims of the revolution of Imam Husayn ('a) in the second volume of this book and also clarified the doubts regarding it.

Here we conclude our discussion about those who criticized the uprising of the Imam against Yazid's regime.

1. At-Tabaqat al-Kubra, 6/124
2. Hamadani, Mukhtasar Kitab al-Buldan, Pg. 52
3. Futuh al-Buldan, Pg. 293
4. Yaqubi, 2/218
5. Batah', a large part of land between Waast and Basra consisting of villages in close proximity (Mojam al-Buldan 1/666)
6. Qudamah bin Ja'far, Al-Khiraj wa Suna'tul Kitabah, Pg. 169
7. Al-Iraq fee Zillul Hukmul Amawi, Pg. 9
8. Journal 'Ghurra', Year 9, No. 11-14, Pg. 108
9. Al Imamah was Siyasah 1/125
10. Al Imamah was Siyasah 1/124
11. Ibne Faqih, Mukhtasar al-Buldan, Pg. 163
12. Al-Khilfah wad daulah fil Asr al-Amawi, Pg. 115-116
13. Sharh Nahjul Balagha 4/103
14. Ibid, Pg. 104
15. Nazaria Imamat Nazd Shia Ithna Ashari, Pg. 243
16. Tarikh Iraq Dar Zer-e-Sulte Umayyan, Pg. 121. Sooli has also expressed the same view in his book Ad-Daulatul Amawiya fish Shaam, Pg. 53
17. Sharh Nahjul Balagha 4/103
18. Masoor bin Mukhrama bin Naufal Qarashi Zuhri was born two years after the Hijrah and he has narrated from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.). He was a man of religion and excellence. He was with Ibne Zubair and when the siege of Mecca took

place he was injured by a stone thrown by the catapult and he passed away, Al-Isabah 3/400

[19.](#) Ibne Asakir, Tarikh 14/208–209

[20.](#) Tabari, Tarikh 5/387, Al Bidayah wan Nihayah 8/163 & 167, Seer A'laamun Nubla 2/297

[21.](#) Waseelatul Maal fee idda manaqibul Aal, Pg. 187, from the facsimile in Amirul Momineen Public Library, and it is also mentioned in As-Siraatus Sawi min Manaqib Aalin Nabi Pg. 285, by Sayyid Mahmud Shaikhani Qadri, from facsimile copy at Imam Amirul Momineen Library

[22.](#) Ibne Asakir, Tarikh 4/39, Ansaab al-Ashraaf 3/374

[23.](#) Abu Bakr bin Abdur Raman bin Harith Makhzumi Qarashi was one of the jurists who was born during the caliphate of Umar and due to his excessive prayers he was called the monk of Quraish. He was blind and an elder of Quraish and he passed away in 95 A.H. (Tahdhib at-Tahdhib 30/12)

[24.](#) Muruj az-Zahab 3/56, Tabari, Tarikh 5/382

[25.](#) Ansaab al-Ashraaf 3/377

[26.](#) Dhahabi, Tarikh Islam 5/8

[27.](#)

4 Waseelatul Maal fee idda manaqibul Aal, Pg. 189. And in Tarikh Ibne Asakir 14/207 it has come that: Abdullah bin Muti' said to His Eminence, Husayn: May my parents be sacrificed on you, benefit us by your presence and do not go to Iraq as by Allah, if these people kill you they would make us slaves and bondsmen

[28.](#)

[29.](#) Ibne Asakir, Tarikh 14/209–210

[30.](#) Dhahabi, Tarikh Islam 9/5

[31.](#) Ansaab al-Ashraaf 3/377 and in As Sawaiq al-Mohreqa Pg. 196 it is mentioned that he cried till the pail was filled with his tears

[32.](#) Ad-Darul Maslook 1/109

[33.](#) Muqarram, Maqtal 136 and Khwarizmi has said: This conversation was between His Eminence, Husayn (a.s.) and Ibne Umar in Mecca, when he invited His Eminence to come with him to Medina

[34.](#) Ansaab al-Ashraaf 3/375

[35.](#) Ibne Asakir, Tarikh 14/203

[36.](#) Farzandaane-e-Payambar dar Karbala, Pg. 123–124

[37.](#) Tahzib al-Kamal, 6/416. Tarikhul Islam 5/8. Ibne Asakir, Tarikh 14/208. It is mentioned in Tahdhib at-Tahdhib 1/155 that Shobi said: "Ibne Umar had come to Medina when he got the news that Husayn has departed for Mecca. Thus he journeyed for two days to reach him. He dissuaded him and said: It is their rule and the Almighty Allah put the choice of the world and the hereafter for His Prophet and the Prophet chose the hereafter and you are also a part of his body, none of you will give your hand to him. He has not taken it away from you but for something better."

Imam refused and that time Ibne Umar embraced him and said: "And seeing that you shall be surely killed I entrust you to Allah."

It is mentioned in Ad-Darul Maslook of Hurre Amili 1/106: Abdullah bin Umar suggested to His Eminence that he should pledge allegiance to the deviated people and he warned him of being killed and fought. His Eminence, Husayn said to him: "O Aba Abdur Rahman! How valueless it is before Allah that the head of Yahya bin Zakaria was gifted to a tyrant of Bani Israel? Have you not seen that the Bani Israel killed seventy prophets from the dawn to sunrise and after that sat conducting their usual business as if they have not done anything? The Almighty Allah was not hasty on them, rather gave respite to them and after that He seized them; a terrible seizing. O Aba Abdur Rahman! Fear Allah and do not give up my support."

[38.](#) Ibne Asakir, Tarikh 14/208, Dhahabi, Tarikh Islam 5/8

[39.](#) Ibne Asakir, Tarikh 14/208, Ibne Kathir, Tarikh 8/162, Tarikh Islam 5/8

[40.](#) Abu Salma bin Abdur Rahman bin Auf Zuhri Madani is considered as belonging to the second category of Medinans. He died in 104 A.H., Tahdhib at-Tahdhib 12/116

- [41.](#) Ibne Kathir, Tarikh 8/162
- [42.](#) Ammarah the daughter of Abdur Rahman bin Saad Ansari Madani, was brought up under the care of Ayesha and she has narrated from her. She was most knowledgeable about the traditions of Ayesha and she passed away in 103 A.H. (Tahdhib at–Tahdhib 12/438)
- [43.](#) Dhahabi, Tarikh Islam 5/8
- [44.](#) Ibne Asakir, Tarikh 14/209
- [45.](#) Tarikh Al Imamatul Islamiya 1/517
- [46.](#) Ad Daulatul Amawiyah fil Sharq, Pg. 102–103
- [47.](#) Surah Zumar 39:9
- [48.](#) Min Maalimul Haq, Pg. 131
- [49.](#) At Tarikhul Islam wal Ikhtisarul Islamiya 2/201

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/life-imam-husayn-research-and-analysis-baqir-shareef-al-qurashi/selection-migration-iraq#comment-0>