

# Reasons Behind the Commemoration of Imam al-Husayn (as)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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Subject: Martyrdom of Hussein Bin 'Ali (The Master of the Youth in Jannah)

Allow me to shift the emphasis of the discussion a little bit to a misunderstanding I might have. This misunderstanding might be due to the environment in which I was brought up.

Assalamu Alaykum,

After reading your article, I realized that the misunderstanding here is due to accepting what you have heard by some of your Wahhabi friends without giving it a second thought. What they have provided you as an argument against the Shi'ites is fully rejected by logic, let alone the History and Hadith. Had you have think about their argument, you would never have bought it nor would you have posted it, my friend. However, I presume that you are searching for the truth, and I will be glad to share my understanding of the subject with you.

The Shi'a netters refer to Karbala and what they do at that time as a celebration of the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein. Any Muslim must mourn the killing of one of the most beloved youth to the Prophet (S) as well as one of the most important Sahabi's, the son of two of the most important and loved people among the Sahabah ('Ali and Fatimah RAA both). Still, I do not understand why people celebrate the Martyrdom, I mean I mourn it and I am sad at what happened, but celebrate is the wrong word.

Brother, if you have tuned to SRI, you would have seen many reasons behind commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (as). Since you mentioned that this subject has been discussed in SRI and MSA, then you should have had some idea about these arguments. Do you have any comments on

those arguments?

Let me put it in simple words. If your father (may Allah grant him long life if he is still alive) dies, what will be your reaction to his death? If you loved him a lot, you or other members of your family will cry for him. crying is a sign of missing a highly dear one for a person who has human heart.

Now, suppose he has been killed on the path of Allah with some noble ideas to implement. What will be your reaction to his martyrdom? Do you pass from it as in the case of a simple death? Or you raise your voice and try to keep his noble ideas alive by reminding people of his actions and thoughts and give them a lesson on his bravery and sacrifices, and asking people to join his path and to keep alive his noble thoughts?

(One side remark here is that, just imagine that you and your brothers and sisters mourn for your father who has been martyred, and meanwhile some body jumps and accuses you of killing your father because you are mourning for him and based on his logic mourning is a sign of feeling guilty of murdering. What will be your reaction to such corrupted logic? I am really interested to hear from you.)

Now, let us go further and consider a religious leader who has spent his lifetime in learning the religion and teaching others the way one should live and explaining the Islamic duties and thoughts. If such person is martyred by the tyrannical rulers, then our commemoration will include a much wider aspect, since this man is no longer a father of an individual, but rather a father for all those who were benefiting from his knowledge and guidance.

Finally, if we consider the supreme level of the Prophet Muhammad and his Ahlul-Bayt who were the best of mankind, the most knowledgeable, the most illustrious, the most god-fearing, the most pious, the best in personal virtues, and the most honored before Allah and the leaders for all the generations till the day of judgment, then one can comprehend that keeping their path alive is a duty upon us as their followers.

By commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (as), we learn lessons from his noble thoughts and convictions. Learning about what happened to him and his companions in the history will provide us a light for the future. Learning about his actions has inspiring effects on our actions as well.

The other more puzzling thing is what happens during the celebration. Again I might be wrong and please correct me in a gentle way if I am. Usually during this celebration, my Shi'a brothers start hitting themselves on the head (Is it at that time or am I wrong ?) until in some cases they faint or blood starts getting out of their heads. I have even seen (on TV) pictures of small children being hit or being made to hit themselves (I admit that those could be fabrications and out of context pictures but that's what I've seen and I am ready to be corrected). I ask my Shi'a brothers and sisters, is this the way to celebrate ? Why do you hit yourselves ?

I have never heard of small children being hit, nor have ever seen adults are being hit. What you

pictured should be really an amazing ceremony. No my dear friend, there is no such silly actions. These are propagated by those who hate to see the remembrance of Ahlul-Bayt, and they resort to all possible means to mock to Followers of the Members of the House of the Prophet (S). And you has become their voice unwittingly, I presume. Usually the ceremony includes speech by a learned man with regard to the movement of Imam Husayn and his aims and his message. Then the speech continues to reminding the heart-breaking events of the catastrophe of Ashura and those who have human heart will cry, and mourn.

Of course, there are traditions transmitted by Ahlul-Bayt which state, crying for Imam Husayn, or making others to cry for him (through speech and reminding the events) has a lot of rewards. In fact, all the prophets of God without any exception cried for Imam Husayn and commemorated Ashura, including Prophet Muhammad (S). Not only that, but also the Jinns (unseen creatures) mourn for Imam Husayn. I have mentioned some of traditions affirming this fact in my previous posts quoting from Sunni collections.

Nonetheless, we affirm that hurting own body is forbidden. Some people may get very emotional and do that, yet the rest are not to be blamed. An analogy is the case when a person loses a dear one, where s/he will cry for him. Due to the height of emotion one (specially women) may start beating herself to the extent that it causes harm for her body. This is what is forbidden, while what has no harm to body (including beating chest) is allowed. Thus the commemoration can not be questioned by the innocent overreaction of certain individual(s).

The explanation that I was given (by Non-Shi'a's mind you), that Shi'a hit themselves as a punishment that they left Imam Hussein go from Koufah (?) alone with a few men and did not help him. At the same time it was them who sent for him to come and lead them to fight for his right to be the Khalifah.

It is really amazing that you readily accept such rumor without even giving it a second thought. Even I suppose the Shi'a killed Imam Husayn in year 61 AH, why should I feel guilty about what some people did in the history? Even suppose my father killed Imam Husayn, then why should I feel guilty of what my father did? The sin of a sinner will never be inherited to his offspring. (The ancestors may have a share of such sin if they mislead their offspring, but the reverse is never true). Thus such argument that we cry for Imam Husayn since our fathers allegedly killed him would be the most stupid interpretation on the reason behind commemoration of Imam Husayn (as). I shouldn't expect any more intelligence from the enemies of Ahlul-Bayt.

My dear brother, we cry in the memory of Imam Husayn, for:

- 1- all the messengers of God cried for him;
- 2- all the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt cried for him;
- 3- we love him more than we love our fathers and our dear ones;

4- he is a Symbol of resistance against tyranny and the leader of the Martyrs for us;

5- we want to swear allegiance to him and his path and keep aloof from their enemies;

6- his aims have not been fully achieved and his blood has not been revenged yet. As such, we keep this event with all its emotion alive until such time that Imam Mahdi (as) appears who will cleanse the surface of the Earth from all such tyrants;

7- condolence to the Prophet Muhammad (S) and the members of Ahlul- Bayt;

8- abiding the instruction of Ahlul-Bayt in remembering this event and seeking the reward associated with it.

And there are much more reasons that you will find if you switch the books at your disposal and study some Shi`ite literature regarding to Imam Husayn (as).

As for the stupid claim that the Shi'a killed Imam Husayn (as), I would like to first ask you what is the definition of Shi'a. If Shi'a means all those who claim to love Ahlul-Bayt, then I can tell you that all Muslims, with no exception from the time of the Prophet till today are Shi'a! Even the Wahhabis are Shi'a by your definition. Shi'a means "followers", and as such those who forsake their leader can not be considered his followers by any stretch of imagination.

The true followers (Shi'a) of Ahlul-Bayt have always been in minority. The Shi'a of Imam Husayn were those who stayed with him in Karbala (beside those who did not have ability to join him due to justifiable reasons. Examples include, but are not limited to: Ibn Abbas and Jabir Ibn Abdullah al-Ansari who were both blind at that time.)

Those who fought Imam Husayn comprise those you claim to be Tabi'een (disciples of companions) whom you believe you should follow! Those who fought Imam Husayn were NEVER the followers of Ahlul-Bayt unless you believe in contradiction. Those who joined the army of Yazid were rather the followers of Satan. Yes, some of those who wrote to Imam Husayn to come over Iraq, did not support him later, for the simple reason that they were not his followers but rather the followers of their own whims. They were people who were tired of the oppression of the Umayyad, and they were looking for an easy relief. Some of them thought if Imam Husayn takes over the power and they will be able to get rid of oppression and more importantly they were thinking of reaching to money, position in his government. But after the pressure of the agent of Yazid in Kufah and the enforcement of marshal law, and when they saw that their lives are in jeopardy and their dreams are unlikely to take place, they forsook Imam Husayn's deputy.

They were no better than Talha and Zubair who supported Imam 'Ali at the beginning for their own worldly interests, but when they found that the Imam will not fulfill such interests for them they went against him and fought him. Do you ever claim that Talha and Zubair were the Shi'a of 'Ali?

Certainly not. Shi'a means "followers", and those who forsake their leader can not be considered his followers by any stretch of imagination. By the way, you, as a Sunni, acknowledge Imam 'Ali to be a righteous Caliph. Does that make you Shi'a? Certainly not.

Similarly, most of those who were living under the government of Imam 'Ali were not his followers, and that was why they rebelled against him for their own worldly interest, the list include: Aisha/Talha/Zubair and their supporters, as well as those whom Imam 'Ali named them al-Khawarij (kharijites) who disobeyed Imam 'Ali in the battle of Siffin and announced that 'Ali is a polytheist (Mushrik).

No doubt that Imam 'Ali gave an oath that he will fight and kill all of them except nine individuals who will be able to escape (one of which later murdered Imam 'Ali (as)), and this exactly happened in the battle of Nahrawan. Imam 'Ali never called them Shi'a, nor the historians claimed them as such, but you do! The Shi'a of Imam 'Ali are those for whom the Messenger of Allah as follows:

The Messenger of Allah said to 'Ali: "Glad tiding O 'Ali! Verily you and your companions and your Shi'a (followers) will be in Paradise."

يا علي أبشّر، فإنّك و أصحابك و شيعتك في الجنة

Sunni references:

(1) Fadha'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v2, p655

(2) Hilyatul Awliyaa, by Abu Nu'aym, v4, p329

(3) Tarikh, by al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi, v12, p289

(4) al-Awsat, by al-Tabarani

(5) Majma' al-Zawa'id, by al-Haythami, v10, pp 21-22

(6) al-Darqunti, who said this tradition has been transmitted via numerous authorities.

(7) al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar Haythami, Ch. 11, section 1, p247

Thus the Messenger of Allah (S) used to say the phrase of "Shi'a of 'Ali". This phrase is not something invented later! Prophet Muhammad

(S) said that the true followers of imam 'Ali will go to Paradise, and this is a great felicity. Also Jabir Ibn Abdillah al-Ansari narrated that:

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "The Shi'a of 'Ali are the real victorious in the day of resurrection/rising"

شيعة علي هم الفائزون يوم القيامة.

Sunni references:

- al-Manaqib Ahmad, as mentioned in:
- Yanabi al-Mawaddah, by al-Qundoozi al-Hanafi, p62
- Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthoor, by al-Hafidh Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, who quotes the tradition as follows: "We were with the Holy Prophet when 'Ali came towards us. The Holy Prophet said: He and his Shi'a will acquire salvation on the day of judgment."

The "day of rising" could also refer to the day of rising of al-Mahdi (as). But in more general term, it means the day of judgment. The stupid claim that Shi'a killed Imam Husayn follows that the Prophet states those who will kill Imam Husayn will go to Paradise! Perhaps, you believe that's why Yazid did so.

Such claim by Wahhabis has been made solely to cover the nasty face of the tyrannical leaders of that time and to drift the attention from their horrible crime, and to justify their rule. It will not be surprising that they have gone as far as saying it was the legitimate right of Yazid to take all possible action to preserve his dynasty. In contrast with the claim of these individuals, the Sunni history confirms that Imam Husayn was killed by the direct order of Yazid (LA):

Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad (the governor of Yazid in Kufah) was leaving Iraq to Syria after killing the battle of Karbala, with a guard of his followers. Shuraih (the payroll Judge who gave verdict that the blood of Imam Husayn is Halaal) noticed that he was silent for a long time, he approached him and said: "O Ubaydullah, I think it bothered you that you killed Husayn?! Ubaydullah said: No! Indeed Yazid had ordered me to either kill Husayn or he (Yazid) will kill me.

Sunni reference: History of Ibn Athir, v.4, p140

The above gives evidence to the fact that he was Yazid who gave the direct order to kill Imam Husayn (as). Later, when the scandal of his horrible crime and the abuse of the household of the Prophet started shaking his regime, he condemned the act of Ibn Ziyad in public and disassociated himself. It has also been reported that:

Yazid ordered the head of Husayn brought to Syria, when it was put to him he started abusing it and beating it with his stick and said the following Poetry

I wish that my elders in Badr witness the fear of Khazraj from the falling of the swords. Then they would have cherished and savored (my act) and by saying O Yazid may your arm be powerful (for getting revenge by killing Husayn).

Sunni references:

- Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, end of ch. 11, pp 331-332
- al-Radd Ala al-Muta'assib al-Aneed, by Ibn al-Jawzi, p47-48
- Tarikh Alisalm v5, p18-19

Ibn al-Jawzi comments:

It is not difficult to understand why Ibn Ziyad (the governor of Yazid in Kufah) fought Husayn, but the more surprising was the brutality of Yazid in abusing the head of Husayn and whipping Husayn's mouth with his stick, and ordering to carry the household of the Prophet on camels without saddle, and many other shameful acts such as displaying his head in the city.

It is certain that he (Yazid) did not have any intention but to humiliate (the household of the Prophet) by displaying the head. Such action is permissible only for al-Khawarij and transgressors. Had not Yazid have the rancor of the al-Jahiliyyah (the era before Islam) and the malice of (the defeat of his clan in) the battle of Badr, he would have respected the head (of Imam Husayn) when he had received it and he would have buried it with shroud.

Sunni references:

- Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, end of ch 11, pp 331, quoted from Ibn al-Jawzi.
- al-Radd Ala al-Muta'assib al-Aneed, by Ibn al-Jawzi, p48

Also Ibn Jawzi in his commentary about Ibn Hanbal's damning of Yazid said: "would there be a greater crime than killing Husayn?!"

It should be noted that many Sunni scholars allow explicit curse of Yazid, among them are Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and Ibn al-Jawzi. Ahmad proves his opinion by Qur'an. (See al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, by Ibn Kathir, v8, p223; also Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, end of Ch. 11, pp 331-332; also al-Radd Ala al-Muta'assib al-Aneed, by Ibn al-Jawzi, p47-48). However, as Ibn Hajar wrote, the least thing that is agreed upon by ALL the Sunni scholars (including the pseudo ones) is as follows:

It is unanimously agreed that it is permissible to curse those who killed Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him) and those who ordered his killing and those who allowed it and those who were pleased with that action, without explicitly mentioning the name of Yazid.

Sunni reference: Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, end of ch 11, p334

Let us now see the opinion of the son of Yazid about his father and grandfather, who was the witness from within the royal family!

...When (Yazid) offered the kingdom (throne) to his son, Muawiyah the second, in order that the flag of caliphate continues to wave in the house of Abi Sufyan!!

After his death, Muawiyah the second, gathered the people on a well known day, he stood in them preaching, he said:

"My grandfather Muawiyah stripped the command from those who deserved it, and from one who is more justified of it, for his relation to the Messenger of Allah and his being first in Islam, and that is 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, he (Muawiyah) took over it by your help as you are fully aware."

"Then following it my father Yazid wore the command after him, and he did not deserve it. He quarreled with the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, and by that he shortened his own life... He rode his whim and hope left him behind."Then he cried and continued:

"Surely, the greatest problems of us is our knowledge of his bad behavior and his awful ending, and that he killed the progeny (Itrah) of the Messenger of Allah, and he permitted drinking alcohol, and he fought in the sanctuary of Mecca, and destroyed the Ka'ba."

"And I am not the one who is dressing up for your command, nor the one to be responsible for your followers... You choose for yourselves..!!"

Sunni References:

- Khulafaa al-Rasool, by Khalid Muhammad Khalid, p531 (The above Quote included author's punctuation.)
- Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, end of ch 11, pp 336

Now, please offer these reports to your Wahhabi friend and see if they to know better than the son of Yazid as to who killed Imam Husayn.

Also Shabrawi wrote in his book that:

"Would any man of reason doubts that Yazid killed Husayn?"

Sunni reference: Alethaf, by Shabrawi, pp 62,66

Moreover, In Ibn Abbas's reply to a letter by Yazid, he said: Do not think that I will forget your crime of killing Imam Husayn (as)

Sunni reference: Tarikh Ya'qubi, v2, p249

Then can any man of reason think that Yazid did not order killing Imam Husayn?!!! The above was just few Sunni documents out of many, to prove this fact. Please refer to the articles of Br. Abbas which were posted in SRI for more.

Throughout Islamic history many mass conversions between Sunni and Shi'a occurred. Two big



examples are Egypt (Shi'a mostly and then mass conversion to Sunni) and Iran (Sunni mostly at one time and then mass conversion to Shi'a).

Dear brother, you have very distorted information for which you have no evidence. I am afraid, you are confusing between the government and people. Most people of Persia were the followers of Ahlul-Bayt from the beginning of their conversion to Islam.

One reason for their tendency to Shi'a was the discrimination that Umar enforced between the rights of Arabs and non-Arabs. Another reason was the injustice of some governors and their misconduct that was being carried on in the name of Islam, and so on.

This gave reason to people for searching the truth and they found the shining light of Ahlul-Bayt and their followers such as Salman al-Farsi who was also an important factor. However, later, Umayyad and Abbasid oppressive governments continued their injustice to Arabs and non-Arabs alike! They prosecuted the followers of Ahlul-Bayt in Persia, Iraq, Hijaz, and other places. The early Sunni government in Iran did not represent the belief of people as much as the today's governments in Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait, United Arab Emirate, Amman, and Bahrain (which are all Shi'a dominated) do not represent the belief of their people.

As for the Fatimid rule in Egypt, you should better know that they were the offshoot of Ismailis. We do not consider Fatimid to be Shi'a of Imam 'Ali at all. They were among the political movements appeared centuries later. Again the difference between the belief of people and the government should be noticed. Your claim concerning the conversion in Egypt is false. Based on "The Encyclopedia of Islam," the majority of people in Egypt were Sunnis during the entire reign of Fatimid, and as such, no conversion occurred when the Fatimid government collapsed. It was politically started and politically ended.

Thus neither in Iran nor in Egypt mass conversion from Sunni to Shi'a or vice versa occurred. No body can force a person to convert into another religion or school of thought, since belief is in the heart of People and not in ID. Those who convert their religion in their heart due to the pressure of government, did not have religion at all!

Recall the existence of many Arabs inside Hijaz in the Arabian Peninsula (what is now known as the kingdom of Saudi Arabia) who have been Shi'a of Imam 'Ali (as) from the time of Imam 'Ali till now despite the fact that Hijaz has had the most oppressive regimes since the early history of Islam.

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