

دشوارت

Doubts

Study of Doubts/ Discourse Formation and Response

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The Center for Studying and Answering Doubts (Hawzah 'Ilmiyah)

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The day of Ashura, as it is

Key Characteristics of a Comprehensive and Constructive Interpretation Focused on the Motives and Goals of Imam Husayn (a)

What, in your view, are the essential features of a comprehensive interpretation that truly reflects the motives and objectives Imam Husayn (a) realized in Ashura?

1. Comprehensiveness:

Regarding the event of Ashura, we should not have a narrow, exclusive analysis that says Imam Husayn only went to perform Amr bil Ma'ruf (enjoining good) and Nahy anil Munkar (forbidding evil). Rather, the interpretation should be holistic, reflecting the comprehensive nature of the Imam himself and his uprising. Such interpretation must encompass not only Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahy anil Munkar, but also the call to Tawhid (monotheism), struggle against oppression, and other related aspects. Thus, the first key indicator of a constructive interpretation is its comprehensive nature.

2. Rationality:

The second key indicator is that the interpretation must be rational. Some claim that what happened in Karbala is irrational—how could a man bring his best sons like Ali Akbar and put them in the line of martyrdom? How could he risk the life of his brother Abbas, one of the finest? Such events must be analyzed with a deep understanding of Imamology and guidance, using a reason that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (AS) defined as:

"Reason is that which the Merciful God is worshipped through, and through which Paradise is earned."¹

Ashura is in harmony with this rationality; indeed, Ashura itself is the epitome of true reason.

3. Social Dimension:

Another key indicator is the social aspect of the interpretation. Ashura cannot be interpreted as a purely individual event; without its social dimension, it cannot be a model for society.

4. Role Modeling:

The interpretation should be exemplary—such that today's Muslim society can draw lessons and emulate it.

5. Heroic and Resistance-Oriented Aspect:

Ashura carries a heroic dimension and inspires resistance and struggle. It provides the best lesson of steadfastness for humanity. Without Ashura, religion would be lost or distorted, as the meaning



of faith was hijacked by oppressors and corrupt individuals.

6. Emphasis on Wilayat (Guardianship):

The aspect of loyalty to the Imam's authority (Wilayat) must be considered. Imam Husayn's companions said:

"O Husayn! If we had a thousand lives, we would sacrifice them all for you. Even if we were promised eternal life in a palace of gold, we would prefer to be by your side than live forever in such luxury."

Wilayat, after true recognition, love, and obedience, manifests itself clearly.

7. Compliance with Sharia (Islamic Law):

The interpretation must align with Sharia and religious law. One must analyze Ashura's jurisprudential aspects: What are the duties of Muslims in such circumstances as Ashura? If religion is endangered or eradicated, should people stand up or remain passive? On what Sharia basis did an Imam who embodies the Sharia enter Karbala and face this tragedy?

8. Reformist and Political Perspective:

The interpreter must have a reformist and political outlook on Ashura. Imam Reza (a) said about Imamate:

"The Imam is the ruler and caretaker of the servants."

The Ziyarat Jamia Kabira also describes the Imam as "Sasat al-Ibad" (political leader of the servants). The political dimension of Ashura cannot be separated. Imam Khomeini's statement that "mourning for Ashura is political" is significant. Gatherings commemorating Imam Husayn should be reformative, transformative, and revivalist.

9. Mystical and Devotional Aspect:

Ashura has a profound mystical and loving dimension. On the battlefield, when Imam Husayn (a) lost all his loved ones, his face became more radiant and cheerful, for he was nearing union with the Beloved. This needs deep mystical analysis on how a person reaches such a state.

10. Justice-Oriented View:

Finally, Ashura should be interpreted with an emphasis on justice. All prophets came to establish justice. The torch of justice must be kept alive. The awaited Mahdi's (a) emergence will also be for the realization of this justice.

Footnotes:

Kulayni, al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 11.



Tears That Bring Joy

The vast empire of anti-religious media — which unfortunately exerts considerable effort to dominate people's minds — insists on claiming that crying and grief during the mourning of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are signs and causes of depression; whereas there are many reasons to reject this claim.

Findings from Psychology

Various studies show that, according to psychological criteria, holding mourning ceremonies and crying are not signs of disorder or depressive illness. Instead, these ceremonies bring happiness, vitality, and peace. A research report titled "The Effect of Participating in Muharram Mourning Ceremonies on Mood (Level of Depression)" states the following:

This study examined the impact of attending religious mourning ceremonies during the first ten days of Muharram on participants' depression levels. The tool used was the second edition of the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Steer, and Brown, 2000). The research design was a quasi-experimental field study with pre-test and post-test but without a control group.

Results of the dependent groups' t-test showed no significant difference between pre-test and post-test depression scores overall. However, participating in Muharram mourning ceremonies was associated with a significant reduction in depression scores (according to Beck's Depression Inventory) in depressed participants (those scoring above the cutoff in the pre-test), whereas no significant difference was observed in non-depressed participants (those below the cutoff). The researcher concluded that the healthy participants and the general group did not progress towards depression after attending the ceremonies, but the depressed participants showed improvement.

Improved Functioning

Attending mourning ceremonies and holding majlis (assemblies) for the Ahl al-Bayt not only does not cause decline in performance but, given the content and form of these sessions, leads to improved functioning. Because scientific and intellectual discussions are

often presented in these gatherings, attending them fosters cognitive growth and broadens social connections, enabling participants to mature in social relationships. Furthermore, the emotional and tragic dimension of the Ahl al-Bayt mourning ceremonies increases responsibility and concern for others and their issues, preparing individuals to accept responsibilities. It also teaches how to face life's challenges — which are unavoidable — and how to manage personal problems.

Role Modeling

The importance of "role models" in educational systems and social efforts to introduce role models is evident. Humans initially learn from their parents, but later in life, they adopt role models from prominent religious, political, and social figures. Therefore, contrary to the claims of those who say attending Ahl al-Bayt mourning gatherings causes depression, mourners learn by following these figures how to live peacefully despite life's difficulties and avoid psychological and nervous tension. Moreover, this role modeling not only does not cause depression but also brings vitality, because the best social role model is one that promotes reform — meaning employing different methods according to the time and place. The Imams (peace be upon them), as reformers approved by God, used various behavioral methods adapted to different times and circumstances.

Hence, mourning is a spiritual and soulful behavior considered healthy and stemming from a healthy person, with pleasant individual, social, ethical, spiritual, worldly, and hereafter-related effects and consequences.

Subheading:

The emotional and tragic dimension of Ahl al-Bayt mourning ceremonies increases responsibility and concern for others and their problems, prepares the individual to accept responsibilities, and teaches how to face life's challenges — an unavoidable part of every person's life — and manage their problems.



Why Didn't Imam Sajjad(a) Fight in the Battle of Karbala?

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Imam Zayn al-Abidin (peace be upon him) accompanied his father in leaving Medina and traveling to Mecca and eventually to Karbala. One of the main reasons for his presence, along with the rest of the Imam's family, was to prevent their capture and protect them from potential threats that could have jeopardized Imam Husayn's (a) uprising.¹

Historical sources report only that Imam al-Sajjad (a) was gravely ill during the night and day of Ashura. This severe illness was a divine decree to ensure the survival of the Imam. According to al-Shaykh al-Mufid, Imam al-Sajjad was ill on the eve of the ninth of Muharram (Tasu'a). The Imam himself says: "Though I was ill, I approached to hear my father's words to his companions at dusk on Tasu'a."²

The preservation of Imam Zayn al-Abidin's life as the divine proof (hujjah) after the third Imam was a divine will so that the earth would never be without a proof of God and that the position of Imamate could continue. Numerous narrations affirm the necessity of the existence of a divine proof (Imam) on Earth. The infallible leaders emphasized that the earth is never without an Imam:

"Indeed, the earth is never empty except that there is an Imam in it."

The divine proof remains on earth to distinguish the lawful from the unlawful and guide people to God:

"The earth has always had a proof of God in it, who makes the lawful and unlawful known and calls people to the path of God."

Without such an Imam, truth and falsehood would remain indistinguishable:

"God never leaves the earth without a knowledgeable guide; otherwise, the truth would not be known from falsehood."³

By the afternoon of Ashura, all of Imam Husayn's companions had been martyred in Karbala. Among his children, no one remained except Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him), who at the time was ill and physically incapable of fighting. Qadi Nu'man al-Maghribi (d. 363 AH) refers to the Imam's severe illness, noting that he lacked the strength for combat.⁴

However, some sources mention that Imam al-Sajjad did attempt to fight. They describe how, despite his illness, he took up a sword and entered the battlefield, was injured, and was eventually returned by order of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). Fudayl ibn Zubayr, a narrator and companion of the fifth and sixth Imams, mentions that Imam al-Sajjad, while sick, was wounded in Karbala when he appeared on the battlefield and fought.⁵

Therefore, even in his state of illness, Imam al-Sajjad tried to arm himself and move toward the battlefield. However, Imam al-Husayn (a) instructed his sister to take him back from the battleground.⁶ The second report does not mention the Imam's injury. The important point in this narration is Imam Husayn's effort to ensure his son's survival so that the earth would not be left without a descendant of the Prophet's household.

Footnotes:

1. Ibn Tawus, al-Luhuf, p. 84.

2. Mufid, al-Irshad, vol. 2, p. 91.

3. Kulayni, al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 178.

4. Qadi Nu'man, Sharh al-akhbar fi fada'il a'immah al-athar, vol. 3, p. 250.

5. Fudayl b. Zubayr, Tasmiyat man qutila ma'a'l-Husayn, p. 24.

6. Majlisi, Bihar al-anwar, vol. 45, p. 46.

Black Is the Color of Love



Hossein, the Elegant Gentleman

Hossein was a tall and graceful man—stylish and gentlemanly, the kind who coordinated his watch, trousers, and shirt with care. Among his friends, he was known for his vibrant and cheerful outfits. That old saying fit him well: “The crease in his trousers was sharp enough to slice a melon.”

But when Muharram came around, he would switch entirely to a black theme. And when people asked him why, he would smile and say: “Black is the color of love.”

At the beginning of Muharram, he had to attend a family gathering where some curious relatives surrounded him with questions. One said, “Isn’t black the color of the people of Hell?”

Another remarked, “Doesn’t Islam consider black clothing makruh (discouraged) for men?”

A third, jokingly, quipped: “The only good thing about black clothes is that no one notices when they’re dirty!”

Ashkan listened carefully to all the comments and responded with precision.

He began with Farshid, who had mentioned black as the color of the people of Hell. “True,” he said, “Imam Ali (peace be upon him) is reported to have likened black clothing to Pharaoh’s garments. But has any Shi’a jurist ever issued a fatwa forbidding black clothes? At most, it is considered makruh—which Shahab correctly pointed out.

But if that’s to be taken as a blanket rule, how do we explain that a great scholar like Ayatollah Mar’ashi Najafi instructed that the black robe he wore while mourning Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) be buried with him? Can we really believe that he wanted to be buried in the clothes of the people of Hell?”

Isn’t wearing black at a friend or relative’s funeral a sign of respect and sympathy? If it is—and we all know it is—then why shouldn’t I express sympathy for the family of the Prophet in their sorrow over Imam Husayn? Of course, if I had invented this practice myself, that would be one thing. But this behavior has been demonstrated repeatedly by those closest to the Prophet, and no one ever objected.

Saman, the stylish cousin, made a joke that got everyone laughing. He said, “The good thing about black clothes is, no matter how dirty they get, no one notices.”

Ashkan responded, “Have you ever considered that part of the negative view of black in some hadiths might have been to deter pre-Islamic Arabs from wearing garments where filth wasn’t visible?”

He then straightened up and asked, “Have you ever seen me wear black outside of mourning ceremonies for Imam Husayn (a) or funeral gatherings?”

Everyone nodded in agreement and said No.

He continued: “Isn’t wearing black at a friend or relative’s funeral a sign of respect and sympathy? If it is—and we all know it is—then why shouldn’t I express sympathy for the family of the Prophet in their sorrow over Imam Husayn?”

Of course, if I had invented this practice myself, that would be one thing. But this behavior has been demonstrated

repeatedly by those closest to the Prophet, and no one ever objected.

When the news of Imam Husayn’s martyrdom reached Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet, she wore black. She set up a mourning tent in the Prophet’s Mosque and held a memorial there.

According to historical records, when the women of Banu Hashim heard about the tragedy of Karbala, they too donned black. Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) not only didn’t stop them but personally ensured they were provided food during the mourning period.

Don’t these acts, all occurring under the supervision of an infallible Imam, point to a clear exception for black clothing during the mourning of Imam Husayn?”

Ashkan spoke, and the others listened. The once-critical tone had disappeared.

How beautiful it is when people bow before the truth.

A Subtle Distortion

Question: Do the sayings of the Infallible Imams stating that if someone sheds a single tear for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), Paradise becomes obligatory for them, not lead people to indulge more in sin?

Numerous narrations have been reported concerning weeping for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and mourning for him. For example, Shaykh al-Saduq narrates from Rayyan ibn Shabib that Imam al-Ridha (peace be upon him) said:

“O son of Shabib! If you are to weep for anything, then weep for al-Husayn ibn Ali (peace be upon him), for he was slaughtered like a lamb... O son of Shabib! If you weep for al-Husayn (peace be upon him) such that tears flow down your cheeks, Allah the Exalted will forgive all your minor and major sins—be they few or many. O son of Shabib! If you wish to reside in the lofty chambers of Paradise, in the company of the Messenger of Allah and the purified Imams, then curse the killers of al-Husayn (peace be upon him).”¹

In contrast to these narrations, there are numerous hadiths stating that one who abandons a single divine obligation is considered a disbeliever. For instance, Dawud ibn Kathir reports that he asked Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him):

“Are the traditions of the Prophet like the obligations made compulsory by Allah, the Mighty and Majestic?” The Imam replied: “Indeed, Allah the Almighty has prescribed obligations upon His servants, which are binding. Whoever abandons one of these obligations and denies it is a disbeliever. However, the acts that the Prophet has recommended are good, and whoever neglects them is not a disbeliever but merely loses a virtue.”²

Hence, a true Shi’a is one who fulfills all of Allah’s obligations and refrains from all His prohibitions. The word Shi’a means “follower,” and Imam means “leader” or “guide.” Thus, we can only be counted among the Shi’a of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) if we truly follow his path and that of the other Pure Imams through our actions.

The Holy Qur’an says:

“Indeed, Allah accepts only from the righteous (muttaqin).” (Surah al-Ma’idah, verse 27)

Therefore, mourning and weeping of a person who is not God-conscious and pious is not even accepted, so how can the rewards mentioned in the narrations be applied to them?

Now, the question may arise: if the rewards for mourning Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) are only for the pious, then why do



the narrations speak of the forgiveness of even great sins?

In response, we must say: those narrations that declare “Paradise becomes obligatory for them” certainly refer to the pious—those who, despite shortcomings in worship or devotion, are compensated through the intercession of the Ahl al-Bayt and thereby attain ease and comfort in the Hereafter.

As for the narrations that mention the forgiveness of major sins, they refer to sinners who are not infallible and may fall into sin, but who sincerely repent and seek to change their path. Such a person may turn to Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) for help and intercession. Hence, the forgiveness of grave sins pertains to this situation. Allah does not forgive sins without sincere

repentance, remorse, and the resolve to return to the right path.

Martyr Murtaza Mutahhari, in a discussion about the distortion of Ashura’s message, said:

“One of the most subtly executed spiritual distortions regarding Karbala is the idea that Husayn ibn Ali (peace be upon him) rose up to be killed as atonement for the sins of the nation—that he was martyred so that our sins would be forgiven.

This concept has been borrowed from Christianity, where they believe that Jesus was crucified as a ‘redeemer’ and is even referred to as ‘al-Fadi’ (the Redeemer).

This notion—that ‘Husayn is the atonement for sins’—is a slander against Abu Abdillah (peace be upon him) and completely incompatible with the spirit of Islam. If someone were to say this during Ramadan, their fast would be invalid.

Abu Abdillah rose up to combat sin—not to serve as a shield for sinners! As if Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) had established a sin insurance company: just weep for me, and I will compensate for your sins—no matter who you are, even if you’re Ibn Ziyad or Umar ibn Sa’d.

In such a case, Husayn (peace be upon him) would be furthering the cause of the likes of Ibn Ziyad!

Yet he himself declared clearly that his motive was enjoining good and forbidding evil. He rose to revive the religion of God and to confront corruption.”³

Footnotes:

1. Shaykh Abbas Qummi, Muntaha al-Amaal, vol. 1, p. 197.

2. Shaykh al-Kulayni, Al-Kāfi (Uṣūl al-Kāfi), vol. 5, p. 394.

3. Murtaza Mutahhari, The Epic of Ashura (Ḥamāseh-ye Ḥoseynī), vol. 1, pp. 103–104.



Go on pilgrimage, come alive!

Question: Why, even after many years, do we still hold mourning ceremonies for the Imams, especially Imam Hussein (peace be upon him)? Why do so many people always travel to Mashhad, Karbala, and Hajj, spending big amount of money in the process? Wouldn't it be better to spend this money on orphans, dowries for girls, and the poor and needy people?

Answer: Maintaining any affair requires spending appropriate resources according to its value and importance. There is no doubt that serving people and addressing their problems, especially the poor and needy in society, is an important and fundamental matter. However, it should be understood that in an Islamic society, there are many important matters that each must be attended to in their proper place and time, and focusing on one matter should not make us neglect others.

Holding commemorative ceremonies for the Imams and mourning for the Master of Martyrs (Imam Hussein), and visiting their shrines, is one of these important and fundamental affairs. It is closely connected to the happiness and well-being of the Islamic community in this world and the hereafter. The costs of such matters are generally provided by the moderately religious and sometimes even the less wealthy people, the very groups mentioned in the question, and all benefit materially and spiritually from their blessings, especially the deprived classes.

Visiting and holding mourning ceremonies for the Imams, especially Imam Hussein (peace be upon him), is among the highest acts of worship and means of drawing closer to God. There are numerous Quranic and narrational evidences supporting it, and it is obligatory upon believers to hold these ceremonies as grandly as possible. The establishment of religious rites and preservation of the religion throughout history has great benefits and blessings, and the costs involved are negligible compared to these benefits. Some of these are:

1. Introducing the status and conduct of the great Islamic leaders;
2. Creating unity among the various followers;
3. Increasing love and affection for Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family), which is the reward of the Prophet's mission. As the Quran says: "Say, I do not ask you for any reward for it except the love of kinship." (Surah Ash-Shura, 42:23) Loving the close relatives has many meanings, including being joyful in their happiness and sorrowful in their sadness;
4. Promoting the pursuit of perfection and virtue among society;
5. Calling people to religion, making them aware of its truths, and inviting them to righteousness and reform while avoiding

deviations;

6. Proving the righteousness of Imam Hussein's movement against the tyrants and familiarizing people with its characteristics;
7. Remembering the sufferings of Ahl al-Bayt, which makes enduring hardships easier for their lovers;
8. Empathizing with the Prophet, Amir al-Mu'minin (Ali (a)), Fatimah Zahra (a), and other Imams;
9. Keeping the memory of Ashura alive; without these mourning ceremonies, future generations would not know how Imam Hussein was unjustly martyred, and the fight for truth and against oppression would be forgotten;
10. Exposing the crimes of oppressors, especially the Umayyads and Abbasids;
11. Learning lessons and role models from the events of Ashura and the movements of the Imams;
12. Honoring the Imams and divine and human values;
13. Fostering virtues and divine dignity and nurturing the spirit of martyrdom;
14. Keeping Islam alive through mourning; if Imam Hussein had not risen up, Islam would have vanished;
15. Visiting shrines and performing Hajj also boost the

economy by supporting businesses such as transportation and shops.

Now, why are such criticisms not made about other foreign travels to for instance Europe, where far more money is spent? Those who spend on pilgrimages to Karbala and Mecca tend to also spend more and more easily on helping the needy, following the example of the leaders. Surely, solving the problems of the deprived and oppressed is achievable under the realization of Imam Hussein's ideals of justice and truth-seeking, not by giving occasional small charity.

Martyr Morteza Motahhari, about half a century ago, answered this question by saying:

"They think someone spends money for reward and say: Give charity here; build a hospital to gain reward. The issue is higher than just reward. Go to Mecca, come alive! Go to Medina, visit the Prophet and gain strength! Go to the gatherings, develop love with Hussein, with Ali... Then you build bridges and schools as well... Why don't those who don't go to Mashhad, Karbala, or Medina build bridges and schools? In Paris or Switzerland, they corrupt their souls; then say their children are sick, poor; what does it matter to me?"

Holding commemorative ceremonies for the Imams and mourning for the Master of Martyrs, and visiting them, is one of these important and fundamental affairs that are closely connected with the happiness of the Islamic community in this world and the hereafter. Usually, the costs of such matters are provided by moderately religious and sometimes even the less wealthy people (the very groups mentioned in the question), and all benefit materially and spiritually from their blessings, especially the deprived classes.



Was the Uprising of Ashura a Divine or Democratic Movement?

Question: Was the uprising of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) a democratic movement? In other words, did he move toward Kufa simply because its people had written to him, requesting that he implement democracy?

Answer: The uprising of Ashura has been understood as a divine movement aimed at confronting a deviant trend within the Islamic society. Enjoining good, forbidding evil, upholding truth, and fighting falsehood have been described as the pillars of this movement. The letters sent by the people of Kufa were in fact an invitation to Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) to assume leadership and establish a just government. These letters were the reason for his departure from Mecca to Kufa. Ultimately, however, due to the people's failure to support him, the Imam was martyred.

The Philosophy Behind Imam Husayn's Uprising

Upon examining the reasons for Imam Husayn's (peace be upon him) uprising, it becomes clear that its primary motivation was to oppose a deviant current that had emerged within the Muslim community—one that targeted the very foundations of religion and gradually emptied Muslim society of divine commandments and heavenly law.

Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) did not rise up during the reign of Mu'awiyah, and one reason for this lies in the differences between Mu'awiyah's and Yazid's rule. While Mu'awiyah, during his rule, tried to avoid overt opposition to Islamic teachings, his son Yazid had no qualms about open sinfulness and flagrant violations of Islamic law. Yazid used the office of the caliphate as a means to destroy the essence of religion. When Yazid's envoy demanded that Imam Husayn pledge allegiance to him, the Imam replied, "How can I pledge allegiance to a corrupt man, a wine-drinker, who openly displays sinfulness?"¹

The Imam stated that the purpose of his uprising was to enjoin good and forbid evil. When he left Medina, he told his brother Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyah: "I am not leaving Medina in search of power, leadership, or worldly position. Rather, I seek to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and to reform the community of my grandfather, the Messenger of God."²

The essence of the Imam's movement was the pursuit of truth and opposition to falsehood. He declared, "Do you not see that truth is not being practiced and falsehood is not being prevented? In such a situation, it is fitting for a believer to choose martyrdom." In a letter to the prominent figures of Basra, he explained that his motivation was to call people back to the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Messenger, at a time when the Prophet's traditions were being

erased and innovations were on the rise.³

The Role of Public Will in the Uprising of Ashura

A key aspect of Imam Husayn's uprising—and indeed of the political leadership of the infallible Imams—is the consideration of public acceptance and willingness. The formation and implementation of an Islamic political system becomes actualized after the public declares support and consent for it. For instance, the government of the Prophet in Medina, the political leadership of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) in Kufa, and the short-lived caliphate of Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) all came about following widespread public support and allegiance from various Muslim groups. Their continuation also depended on the ongoing practical support of the people.

However, this does not mean that the public's approval is what legitimizes a divine government. Political authority during the presence of an infallible Imam belongs exclusively to him. People are not allowed to accept the political leadership of a non-infallible in place of the rightful Imam.⁴

From the above, it can be concluded that the uprising of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) had a divine and religious origin. Of course, this does not negate its popular aspect. By forcing the Imam to pledge allegiance, Yazid initiated a process that would have led to the complete destruction of religion. In reaction, and after refusing to pledge allegiance and leaving Medina, Imam Husayn received numerous letters from the people of Kufa—who were fed up with Yazid's actions—inviting him to lead them and overthrow Yazid's tyrannical rule.

This invitation made the duty of the Imam clear and rendered the divine responsibility of overthrowing false rule undeniable. Thus, Imam Husayn began his historic uprising. Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad, Imam Ali, and Imam Hasan (peace be upon them) also formed governments only after receiving widespread public support. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that public opinion, as understood in modern democracy, is the ultimate source of legitimacy.

Footnotes:

1. Baqir Sharif al-Qurashi, *Hayatal-Imam al-Husayn*, vol. 2, p. 255.

2. Sayyid Hashim Rasuli Mahallati, *Life of Imam Husayn*, p. 152.

3. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari*, vol. 4, p. 266.

4. For example, several verses of the Holy Qur'an emphasize the political authority of the Messenger of God and instruct the believers to obey his commands, not granting themselves the right to disobey God's and the Prophet's rulings. See: al-Nisa' 4:64 and al-Ahzab 33:36.

All Wept for Him

The Mourning of the Shiite Imams for Imam Husayn (a)

Question: Did the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) hold mourning ceremonies for Imam Husayn (a) during the month of Muharram?

Answer: Shiite historical and hadith sources mention the mourning of the Imams for Imam Husayn (a). The mourning ceremonies held by the Ahl al-Bayt for him took place on various occasions, but during Muharram, these gatherings were held daily. Some, such as Imam al-Sajjad (a), were even seen wearing black during this month.¹

Imam al-Sajjad (a) said: "The Prophet Jacob had twelve sons; God took one of them away, and from his intense weeping, his eyes turned white and he became blind. But I saw with my own eyes my father, brother, and... all martyred before me. So how can my grief ever come to an end?"²

Mourning of Imam al-Sajjad (a)

Imam al-Sajjad (a) was present in Karbala at the time of his father's martyrdom. According to sources, he spent the rest of his life mourning his father and weeping for the martyrs of Karbala.³

Imam al-Sadiq (a) said about him: "He mourned his father for forty years. He would fast during the day, and when it was time to break his fast, and food was brought to him,

he would say: 'The son of the Messenger of God was martyred hungry. The son of the Messenger of God was martyred thirsty.' Then he would repeat these words and weep."⁴

Mourning of Imam al-Baqir (a)

Ibn Qulawayh narrates in Kamil al-Ziyarat that Imam al-Baqir (a) would command mourning on the day of Ashura and would hold mourning gatherings in his home.⁵

Mourning of Imam al-Sadiq (a)

Many traditions have been narrated about Imam al-Sadiq's (a) mourning. He would ask poets to recite elegies for his grandfather Husayn and encouraged them in this endeavor. His family would listen from behind a curtain and weep upon hearing the poetry.⁶

In one narration, Imam al-Sadiq (a) asked a man to recite poetry for him. When the man began reciting, the Imam said: "This is not the kind of poetry I meant. I want you to recite those poems that are recited at the grave of Husayn (a)." The man then recited poetry about Imam Husayn, but upon seeing the Imam's tears, he stopped. The Imam asked him to continue.⁷

Mourning of Imam al-Kazim (a)

Imam al-Ridha (a) said: "With the arrival of

the month of Muharram, my father would never be seen smiling or laughing. This would continue for the first ten days, until the day of Ashura. On that day, he would grieve, weep, and say: 'Ashura is the day on which my grandfather Husayn was martyred.'"⁸

Mourning of Imam al-Ridha (a)

Di'bal al-Khuzā'i narrated: At the beginning of Muharram, I visited Imam al-Ridha (a). He was surrounded by his companions and was deeply sorrowful. Upon seeing me, he said: "Bravo to you, Di'bal! Bravo to the one who supports us with his words and hands!" Then the Imam ordered a curtain to be placed between his companions and his family, so that his household could sit behind it and mourn the tragedy of Husayn (a). He then asked Di'bal to recite elegies.⁹

Mourning of the Four Later Imams

From the time of Imam al-Jawad (a) to the time of Imam al-Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance), the practice of mourning sometimes flourished and sometimes declined. For example, during the time of Imam al-Jawad, Shi'as were able to openly mourn, and this continued until the reign of al-Mu'tasim al-'Abbasi. After that, however, mourning faced restrictions, and the Shi'as were pressured when trying to keep the Husayni rituals alive.¹⁰

Footnotes:

1. Wearing Black in Mourning for the Imams of Light, Ali Abolhassani Mondar, pp. 127-128.
2. Shaykh al-Saduq, al-Khisal, vol. 2, pp. 518-519.
3. Tarikh al-Niyahah 'ala al-Imam al-Shahid al-Husayn ibn 'Ali, Sayyid Saleh al-Shahrastani, p. 118.
4. al-Majalis al-Sunniyyah, Sayyid Mohsen al-Amin, vol. 1, p. 155.
5. Tarikh al-Niyahah 'ala al-Imam al-Shahid al-Husayn ibn 'Ali, p. 120.
6. Tarikh Sayyid al-Shuhada, Abbas Safa'i Ha'eri, p. 566.
7. Ibn Qulawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, pp. 105-106.
8. Shaykh al-Saduq, al-Amali, vol. 2, p. 111.
9. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 40, p. 257.
10. Ibid., pp. 136-137.

