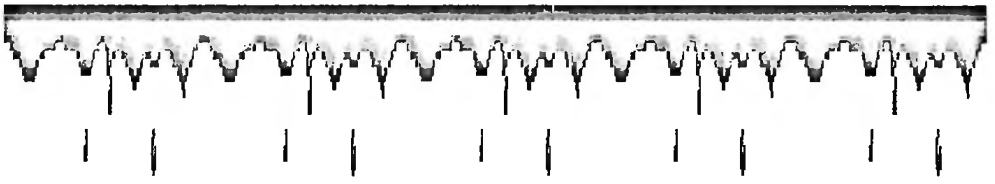


Commemorating the Mourning Rights of Imam al-Husayn

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Commemorating the mourning Rights of Imam al-Husayn (peace be upon him)



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In the Name of Allah (SWT), The Beneficent, The Merciful

I begin this humble writing with the hope of attaining the pleasure of the Ahl ul Bayt (S), to whom all mankind is greatly indebted. May our Master, the Imam of our time (AJ) accept this humble work as a gesture of condolences for the martyrdom of His Grandfather, the king of martyrs Abu Abdillah Al Husayn (peace be upon him)

On the tenth day of Muharram, fifty years after the martyrdom of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny), the party of the devil disguised itself in the attire of Islam and gathered to wage war against the noble grandson of the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him and his progeny) on the plains of Karbala.

Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), his noble band of seventy two companions and elite family members were denied access to water for three days under the blazing desert heat until they were finally massacred by an army of thirty thousand mercenaries. The pure Imam (peace be upon him) was martyred having received one hundred and fourteen sword wounds to his body (in addition to the numerous arrows shot at him). In the end, he was beheaded by Shimr ibn Dhil Jaushan (may he dwell in eternal damnation) who stabbed the blessed neck of the Imam ten times with a dagger. The mutilated corpse of the Prophet's grandson was then trampled upon by horses, leaving it crushed to pieces between the desert sands drenched in its own blood.

The devoted followers and lovers of the blessed progeny of the Messenger of God have been commemorating the grand revolution of Karbala and reviving its legacy each year for the last one thousand two hundred and seventy years despite their constant persecution throughout history. Indeed, they will continue to do so until the hour of reckoning – and before that, together they shall mourn the slain martyr in the company of the Awaited Saviour Imam Al Mahdi (May Allah

hasten his re-appearance) as He seeks to avenge the pure blood spilled to preserve the pure cause.

Across the passage of time, numerous challenges and obstacles were placed to attempt to limit the commemoration and lamentation of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). Sometimes the barriers were in the form of violence and executions, and sometimes by disseminating false ideological beliefs within the circle of the Shias consequently creating doubts within their minds as to the scope of permissibility in regards to the lamentation and commemoration rites practised to honour the King of Martyrs.

This writing attempts to overcome the second type of barrier hoisted by various parties for various reasons. This work is a translation of majority of the original text in Arabic titled **"Al Sha'air Al Husayniya"** (commemorating the mourning rites of Imam Husayn) authored by the martyr Ayatullah Hasan Al Shirazi, founder of Hawza Al Zainabiya located in the suburbs of Damascus within the precincts of the Holy Shrine of Lady Zainab Al Kubra (peace be upon her). He was executed in the year 1979 in Lebanon by the Ba'athist party led by Saddam Husayn. He attained martyrdom having received thirty nine bullet wounds to his body including nine to the head.

This work has been translated by meaning and provides a comprehensive understanding of the desirability and scope of performing the various mourning rites related to the commemoration of the tragedy of Karbala which has been the subject of heavy criticism over the last few years. We hope to clear all misconceptions through this work. As the translator, I have added numerous additional notes throughout the text with the aim of clarifying the proofs in discussion. These footnotes are an addition to the original work of the author and have been distinguished by being printed in bold.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Sayid Mujtaba

Allawi who assisted a great deal in making this translation possible. We pray to the Almighty Lord to bestow us with the blessing of possessing love for the Holy Prophet and his blessed progeny, and to implement the message which they devoted their lives to.

Mohamed Abbas Panju
Hawza Al-Ilmiyya Al Zainabiya
4th Safar, 1432

Preface to the second edition

Introduction

Islam as a global religion bloomed from within the core of the Arabian Peninsula. It was a suitable and strategic starting point due to certain favourable circumstances such as lack of any central government whose sole purpose was to eliminate the religion from its very first days, and its abundant population which possessed the potential and ability to accept (the religion). Hence, unlike its surrounding areas, it was a more suitable region to begin from. Despite these circumstances, Islam emanated during an aggressive period dominated by severe crisis and challenges inherited from the long and dark ages of ignorance. As a religion, it therefore had to be prepared to face the complex challenges and obstacles from within the same region (that from one dimension happened to be favourable for its emanation), and the solution to these predicaments was not through war or violence, but through sublime morals and tender guidance.

Additionally, there were bands of blood thirsty people nourished within a vicious cycle of life dominated by savagery who absolutely refused to co-exist with Islam in a non violent manner. They refused to adapt to the (honourable) code of conduct presented by Islam - so they brandished their swords against Islam before eventually seeking shelter under its shade. Thereafter, the same people engaged in internal rivalry to attempt the religion's downfall from within its own ranks. The Prophet at this stage had one of two options: Either to put them all to the sword or to accommodate them and persevere. The Prophet selected the second option as it upheld and illustrated the noble principles of non violence and mercy incorporated by Islam.

At this juncture, the question that comes to mind is: why would the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his

progeny) accommodate such hypocrites within the ranks of Islam despite knowing that they would create constant obstacles and pose as regular threats to Islam during his lifetime, and after his martyrdom?

The answer to this is that the righteous Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) from the dawn of Islam, never limited admission only to the sincere believers hence making the religion exclusive, but accepted anyone and everyone from whichever background of ignorance they surfaced such that he may be able to fence Islam (at least through its apparent large numbers) from the powerful regional oppositions that united against it. Therefore the invitational slogan of Islam was: "Say there is no God save Allah to be successful"[1] In return, the religion accepted within its fold everyone who verbally uttered this slogan even if they did not truly believe in the divine concept in their hearts. This leniency from Islam's point of view was however exploited by the hypocrites as an opportunity to penetrate the folds of Islam and camouflage themselves within the ranks of pious believers with utmost deception. They found the religion to be an opportunity to achieve all their greedy motives which they were not able attain during the times of ignorance. Even though the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) used them (their apparent numbers) to ward off the external enemies of Islam, but at the same time these hypocrites were gnawing into the very entity of Islam. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) diverted all his efforts from both - a materialistic and spiritual perspective to progressively nourish them with the (pure and sincere) Islamic values hence they may mend their ways. As well, the Holy Quran placed severe pressure on these hypocrites by exposing them (through their actions and characteristics) and

[1] Manaqib Ibn Shahrshuwb, vol. 1 – Chapter on the non-believers and the message of Islam, Bihar ul Anwar vol. 18 – Chapter on propagation of Islam

openly singled them out from among the ranks of the sincere believers as those whose hearts were deeply rooted in wretchedness. Furthermore, there were those classes of people who entered within the fold of Islam due to their weak resolve. They entered Islam not because they saw within it a code of conduct to implement in their daily lives, but as a means to preserve their material interests only. Their hearts were much more evil than to be enlightened by the faith.

However, had the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) rejected all these groups of people from entering within the folds of Islam, there would not have remained anyone except for himself, Imam Ali (peace be upon him), Salman, Abu Dhar, and a few select and noble companions – Islam would have remained stagnant as a minority faith confined within the precincts of Mecca whereas the Holy Prophet's (peace be upon him and progeny) divine mission was to establish an eternal global religion that would perpetuate across the passage of time through its grandeur such that the *Halal* of Muhammad would be *Halal* till the day of Judgement, and the *Haram* of Muhammad would remain *Haram* till the day of Judgement.[2]

In light of the above factors and circumstances, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) accepted these hypocrites within the fold of the religion. They were very few in number during the early days of Islam, but as it spread and grew in strength with time, so did their numbers and consequently those who were at the forefront of hypocrisy were able to deceivingly and cunningly usurp the positions of leadership hence dealing a severe blow to Islam from within its very core. They would have almost destroyed the religion were it not for the valour and magnificence of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) who defended

[2] A renowned expression used to illustrate the eternity and the prevalence of the laws of Allah revealed to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny)

Islam against them in numerous ways during various occasions, hence exposing them to the world and forever distancing them and their actions from that of the real and pure Islam. Therefore, Islam was blessed with the gift of life due to Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) on two occasions: Once when the enemies overcame the Muslims such that they (abandoned and) submitted their Prophet to the mercy of the enemies - here Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) valiantly brandished his sword and sent to the depths of hellfire all those who were adamant to strike and end Islam[3], and the second time when those hypocrites deceptively rose to power and falsely attempted to portray themselves as the manifestations of the principles of Islam thereby damaging the image of Islam from within its very core after having failed to destroy it while previously being its open enemies. Subsequently, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) concentrated all his efforts to distance these corrupt people (and their actions) from Islam and to return the religion back to its pure form[4]. Hence, it is deserving and truthful to proclaim that Islam is *Allawi* twice over![5]

Therefore if Islam is a divine religion revealed from the Almighty Allah upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) to guide mankind and grant them salvation from the doom of ignorance and misguidance, then Islam is nothing but Shi'ism - and Shi'ism in return is nothing

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[3] A collective reference to the unmatched and unparalleled heroics displayed by Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) such as his roles in the battles of Badr, Uhod, Khandaq, Hunayn, Khaybar, and every other stance he took during the lifetime of the Prophet as is mentioned in the numerous books of Islamic history.

[4] A collective reference to the brave stances adapted by Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) from the martyrdom of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) until he himself was martyred.

[5] i.e. Islam is indebted to Imam Ali (peace be upon him) twice

but Islam – as a matter of fact, Islam and Shi'ism are two synonymous words denoting one and the same reality (message). It is the Almighty Allah who states this reality in the Qur'an when He revealed the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

O Messenger! Convey the (message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord. If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His mission. Verily Allah will defend thee from men (who mean mischief). Indeed Allah guideth not those who reject Faith[6]

And upon the revelation of the verse, did the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) not raise the hand of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) on the day of Ghadeer in the presence of tens of thousands of Muslims and proclaim: "Whosoever takes me as a master then Ali is his master!"?[7] Did He not thereafter instruct the people to pledge allegiance to him and to greet him with the title "Prince of Believers"?

Therefore it is correct to say that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) enjoined the people towards Shi'ism from the very first day he proclaimed: "Say there is no God save Allah to be successful" – whereby he was building its foundations from the mountains in Mecca until it attained its pinnacle on the Day of Ghadeer.

Shi'ism[8] was consequently engulfed in danger when

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[6] Quran 5:67

[7] Al Ihtijaj, vol. 1 - Chapter on the events that occurred after the death of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) which states in addition to the statement above: "O Lord be an enemy to whoever is an enemy to him, and make victorious those who aid him, and disgrace those who (attempt to) disgrace him

[8] **i.e. Islam**

Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) was martyred, and an ideological catastrophe began to brew the day Mu'awiyah (may he dwell in eternal damnation) assumed leadership of the Muslim empire, and the Kharjite beliefs began to spread across the Muslim lands centralizing their efforts on propagating abhorrence towards Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him). The intensity of this hatred is made apparent from the numerous historical encounters like that of Hajjaj - who excavated twenty thousand graves in and around the city of Kufa in search of the corpse of the infallible Imam such that he may mutilate it!

This disastrous catastrophe reached its destructive peak the day Yazid ibn Mu'awiya (may he dwell in eternal damnation) ascended the pulpit of the Blessed Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him and his progeny) - seated cross legged on the divine throne of Imamah, intoxicated with wine and amusing himself with monkeys!

Yazid was a creature that not only exited from within the fold of Islam, but did not deserve to be within the fold of humanity altogether. Abdullah ibn Hanzalah narrates: "We feared that Allah the Almighty will descend His chastisement against us if we did not revolt against Yazid."

He was a bloodthirsty adulterer who amused and preoccupied himself with hunting and nurturing of beasts. With such traits and characteristics he was more deserving to manage a stable - not govern the entire Muslim empire! His fantasy with animals was a mockery - he was deserving of a job to train monkeys (to perform tricks) - not to govern and lead an entire young and energetic Muslim population which had the potential to soar to the highest levels of progress and development!

He owned a monkey and named it Abu Qays. He would dress it in silk garments decorated with gold and silver embroidery and then mount it on an ass and race it against other animals. Such contests would not only amuse him, but

pre-occupy him such that he would ardently cheer his monkey against the other animals to the extent that he would compose poems in honour of Abu Qays as is recorded in the books of history.

Indeed, he was extremely zealous when it came to hunting monkeys or gazelles, but he lacked any courage to face any of the male servants while practising fencing, and this little courage further melted away if he was to face a seasoned horseman – he couldn't fight to defend neither his life nor his religion!

When Mu'awiya sent an expedition under the command of Sufyan ibn Auf to Constantine in Rome, Yazid pretended to be ill hence avoiding participation in the army. After some time, the army was plagued with a severe famine and drought. Upon hearing this (from the comfort of his palace) he composed a poem insulting the intelligence of the army and in the process, he exposed the wretchedness of his father's government. This poem quickly circulated amongst the agitating masses[9]. Mu'awaiya, to save face, immediately sent Yazid to join the army and participate in the expedition.

It is within such a crucial state of affairs that Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) used his divine judgement to rise in revolution because he recognized that the divine tenets of the religion in its entirety were at risk of being abolished through the hands of this foolish winebibbing sinner. There did not remain even a glimmer of hope for any sort of righteousness to prevail under his authority. In essence, Shi'ism as a whole would have been eradicated had the Imam not countered Yazid with his supreme revolution, which upon explosion enlightened the entire world (in regards to its lofty principles) and brought the Umayyid dynasty crumbling down to ashes. Hence, it is deserving and truthful to proclaim

[9] **These poems are recorded in the original Arabic version of the author's book.**

that Shi'ism is *Husayni* - Therefore, if Islam is *Allawi* and Shi'ism is *Husayni*, then it is pure truth to assert that the flower of Islam which the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) planted was protected by Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and nurtured by Imam Husayn (peace be upon him).

The establishment of Islam required the struggles of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), similarly, faith is not complete unless a believer attests and believes in all three of these divine personalities without exception. This is because the role of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) in relation to Islam was like that of a founder; that of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was to defend (and protect) it; while that of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was to ensure its eternity. Each of these three key role players together ensured the existence of Islam as a religion – the success of each role dependent on the other. Therefore, a believing Muslim as well, for his faith system to be complete can not be independent of any one of them; (The Prophet, the successor, and the martyred vicegerent).

Undoubtedly, the triumphant companions were those who were loyal to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) - those who stood by them during their respective roles and enlightened their souls through their divine teachings. As for the later generations who did not get an opportunity to meet them in person, they must live within the shade of their legacies which encompass all aspects of life.

The legacy of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) is realized from the Qur'an and his way of life, while that of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) is realized through studying his eloquence, valour and heroic stances. But what about Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)? The

legacy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) must be realized in a manner which is much more vigorous than that of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) or his successor (peace be upon him) , because the role of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was revolutionary – his legacy is kept alive by keeping alive every dimension of his revolution in every aspect of our daily lives. The speeches and hymns recited in his honour ensure his remembrance, but do not contain the capacity to materialize the accomplishments of the revolution - which has the potential to transform lives and sway the earth in disarray, such that the pillars of tyranny and oppression come crumbling down and the virtuous prevail. Allah the Almighty states this in the Holy Qur'an:

لا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الأَرْضِ وَلا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

... those who intend not high-handedness or mischief on earth: and the end is (best) for the righteous.[10]

So how can we keep alive the legacy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) from a perspective such that every generation will stand up in revolution to perform what the generation of the Imam did?

In reality, the legacy of the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) cannot be revived unless through the emphatic revival and commemoration of each and every mourning rite usually commemorated during the first ten days of Muharram - including holding mass communal weeping ceremonies, dressing in black attires, the processions of re-enacting and the beating of chests, the letting of blood and every other ceremony that alters the routine of daily life and stimulates an emotionally fiery atmosphere provoking the masses to capture and sense within themselves the blazing flames of revolution.

Indeed, it is through the establishment and

[10] Quran 28:83

participation of mourning rites such as these that the hearts and mind-frame of the masses can be transferred from that of indifference and stillness to that of the burning revolution which Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) lived on the day of Ashura.

The revolution of the Imam is unique and the Muslim nation is distinguished by it over all other nations. Had this revolution been within the heritage of any other nation or religion, they would have utilized its potential to triumph and soar to the heights of success, whereas the Muslim nation neglected it due to their lack of understanding hence diminishing its potential. Despite all this, it is quintessential to keep this revolution alive in the minds of the Muslim nations such that one day they may be able to seek guidance through it and perhaps restructure its entity anew based on its values. And if these nations persist in neglecting the potential of this great revolution, it shall most definitely lead itself into a spiral of destruction, such that even the future generations shall not be able to recover from it due to the lack of fundamental revolutionary factors to inspire them to do so.

It would not be an exaggeration to state that the pure revolution of the Imam is the greatest trust bestowed upon the Muslim Ummah. The Shi'ahs of the previous generations have protected and safeguarded this revolution with their blood and given numerous sacrifices so that our generation would be able to safely inherit this legacy. Similarly, in this day and age, it is our collective responsibility to safeguard this trust at all costs so that we may pass this great tradition on to the future generations.

When the colonialists[11] endeavoured to suppress the Muslim nations, they rose to weaken its sources of power – they downplayed the role of the Qur'an and Hajj, and

[11] **The term colonialist or imperialist as used within this text refers to any individual, organization or nation that attempts to forcefully dominate over another person, creed, organization or nation.**

attempted to do the same with the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) but in vain. They tried to downplay the significance of the revolution and distort its values such that its supreme and dynamic potential may be crippled. But the revolution of the Imam could not be weakened nor distorted; rather it only became stronger due to its deep rooted role in the existence of the religion.

The Nations submitted to the colonialists and compromised all their beliefs hence collapsing - except the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) - the one and only perspective of religion which the colonialists could not destroy because the revolution by its very nature revolts against colonialism in essence. So long as the remembrance of this revolution is kept alive, the Qur'an is kept alive – and from it the qualities and mannerisms of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) and Sayida Fatimah Al Zahra (peace be upon her) are recognized, and every believer whose heart is guided by Allah the Almighty seeks shelter under the shade of this supreme revolution.

If the remembrance of the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is omitted from the minds of the people, then there would be no fundamental inspirational factor through which the people could unite and combat the colonial powers. The colonialists were aware of this factor, so they exerted and implemented every technique possible to destroy this supreme revolution – but since Allah is its protector, the revolution became nothing but stronger and inflamed within the hearts of more and more people!

When they realized that this revolution could not be weakened through weapons, at last, they penetrated the circle of the Muslims by creating certain factions whose sole purpose was to serve their colonialist interests. These factions upon the instruction of the imperialists collectively began to incite the Muslims and wage war (from within) against the only remaining pillar of faith in what seemed to be a pre-

planned and orchestrated move.

They echoed that the revolution was nothing but a huge obstacle to the progress and development of Muslims, although they were fully aware that it was the sole factor obstructing the colonialists from dominating the Muslim lands. These factions that began to echo anti-revolution slogans essentially received monetary support from the colonialist elements, either directly or indirectly. They waged war and opposed the remembrance of the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) not because they ideologically disagreed with it, but because it was a means to achieve wealth.

These factions used a variety of means to annihilate the remembrance of the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). Sometimes they justified their views by referring to and citing weak and anomalous opinions originating from within the ranks of certain (limited) scholars and thinkers; and sometimes by alleging that the commemoration of the revolution attracted sarcasm and mockery upon the Muslims, whereas in reality, they themselves did not seem to be affected by the mockery and sarcasm that was rained down upon them from all their friends and foes alike while they openly danced to the tunes of the colonialists.

Furthermore, the two justifications cited above are purely void. It is incorrect to found an entire belief system based on weak and anomalous opinions found in a few unorthodox books. As for the hypocrites, they echo their opinions citing such weak views only because they aid them in achieving their personal and selfish motives. Hence they sought shelter in such abnormal views and publicised them – falsely attributing credibility for them. Additionally, they promoted every politician who aided their views thereby shunning and belying all the mainstream views from all the renowned scholars on the subject.

As for the notion of prohibiting the commemoration of

Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) because of the sarcasm and mockery it attracts, this is nothing but a clear indication of the weakness (i.e. lack of self esteem) within the people who call for such a stance. Just because the enemies and opponents to Islam mock us, does this mean we should abandon our faith? Indeed the disbelievers and the polytheists were more severe in their sarcasm and insults to Islam during the time of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) except that he did not find any value in it so as to pay attention to it. Indeed he persevered in his path until he attained victory. The Holy Qur'an sheds light on these events in the following verses;

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَى شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ

اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

When they meet those who believe, they say: "We believe"; but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say: "We are really with you: We (were) only jesting."

Allah will throw back their mockery on them, and give them rope in their trespasses; so they will wander like blind ones (To and fro)[12]

Verily, the Jews mocked the call to prayer (*Aadhan*) and the polytheists used to ridicule the act of prostration. However, these jeers did not succeed in weakening the resolve of the Muslims; rather it strengthened it hence safeguarding our creed to this day and age.

In reality, the opponents of Shi'ism were never able to attack its principles from a logical or theological point of view, therefore they retorted to sarcasm - the only remaining weapon available to them which in itself is a proof of their invalid belief. The truth and faith system that the Shi'ahs

[12] Quran 2:14-15

believe in is much powerful than to be shattered through mockery - indeed, if the principles of Shi'ism could not be destroyed through the brutality of wars, then how can it be destroyed by the weak and unsubstantial fibres of sarcasm? The Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) used to encourage the Shi'ahs to persist in this eternal commemoration. Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him) used to supplicate on their behalf in this regard by saying: **"O My Lord! Verily the enemies jest them for their coming out to perform our visitation, however this does not prevent their participation - they come out in defiance of our adversaries. O Lord! have mercy upon those faces that get sunburnt and upon those cheeks that touch the grave of Abi Abdillah Al Husayn (peace be upon him). (O Lord!) have mercy upon those eyes that shed tears out of compassion for us, and have mercy upon those hearts that burn with anguish (due to the atrocities committed on us), and have mercy upon those who wail (mourn) for us."**[13]

Verily the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) supplicated against those who ridicule the Shi'ahs as they commemorate their rites when he told Imam Ali (peace be upon him): **"Only the most debased of people jeer those who visit your graves...indeed, they are the most wicked of this nation. Allah shall never grant them my intercession, nor will they be quenched at the pond"**[14]

The Shi'ahs are not affected by the mockery and sarcasm directed at them by their opponents so long as they are certain to be on the right path. Some companions once complained to Al Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him) about the sarcasm that was directed towards them. He soothingly consoled them by saying: **"By Allah, they are deviant in their ways, deprived of the rewards from Allah, and distant from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his**

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[13] Kamil Al Ziyaraat, chapter 40

[14] Bihar ul Anwar, vol. 97

progeny)."[15]

Dhurayh al Muaharibi narrates: "I told Imam Abi Abdillah that every time I informed my tribe or my family about a narration stating the great rewards of visiting Al Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him) they belied me saying that I was slandering Imam Jafar Ibn Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Imam replied by saying: **"O Dhurayh! Let them be and let them say what they want - By Allah, Allah takes pride in the one who visits Al Husayn (peace be upon him)."**[16]

In reality, what is the value of this mockery such that it should deter us from practising our pure and righteous religion? What is the worth of the person who jeers us such that he should even be granted any importance? As a matter of fact, those who mock and jeer the Shi'ahs acknowledge that they themselves are worthless – they know they have no intellectual proof to counter them, and hence are content with resorting to sarcasm and mockery which in itself is a proof of their deviation.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that the mourning rites in regarding to the revolution of Al Husayn (peace be upon him) are based on sound intellect and are well established within the tenets of religion to the extent that they can never be abandoned even if the entire world was to unite and stand up in opposition to it. It is true that we need to put an end to the mockery directed at us – but how do we attain this target? At the cost of compromising our faith system or by exposing our adversaries (and their void ideologies) such that they never return to have the audacity to shamelessly jeer at our sacred principles? Should we unconditionally yield to the dictation of the creed's enemies or safeguard our own interests? Is the persuasion of these rogues much stronger or

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[15] Kamil Al Ziarat, chapter 98

[16] Kamil Al Ziarat, chapter 56

our conviction in Islam?

If the answer to all the above questions is the second option, then why should we abandon our principles due to baseless laughter and mockery emanating from the enemies of Islam? If these rogues are able to have a greater influence over us than our own Infallible Imams (peace be upon them), then we should abandon our religion all together and embrace their values and principles! If we have utmost conviction in our Divine Imams, then why do we not adhere to their words rather than submitting to the words of their enemies?

After all this, we need to be aware that the enemies of Shi'ism cunningly wait to attack us from any direction possible. They praise the actions deemed weak, and mock the grand practises such that they may be abandoned and hence we spend our lives indulged in the less grand practises. We should be well aware that when these people mock and "laugh" at us, they do not "laugh" at us because they are amused, rather they have a devious goal or scheme that they want to achieve through that laughter - hence they will never mock us on an action perceived to be a weak point and harmless to their interests, rather they will always mock and "laugh" at the strongest principles of the creed which they perceive as a threat to them, hence trying to eliminate it. If we want independence from such rogues, we need to make our own decisions based on our own interests rather than on theirs.

In reality, commemorating the Sha'air of Imam Husayn (the mourning rites of Imam Husayn) is to keep alive its legacy which threatens every tyrannical and oppressive regime no matter where they may be in the world, which is why they find a thousand and one ways and justifications to end this practise. This should not entail us being indifferent to these ideological attacks, but we need to strengthen our resolve and defend the practises that define our creed.

In regards to the opposition we face on this matter, we

have two obligations: firstly, we need to safeguard the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) because it represents the pinnacle of our faith; and secondly to preserve it as it represents our ideals of freedom.
We have a responsibility to keeping alive the legacy of the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) by commemorating it. We need to build and add to its prestige and honour as was done by the previous generations before us rather than destroy it in the pursuit of imaginary ideas which in reality are baseless, and indeed God will account them for it.

Indeed, the foes of our creed are aware that they can only dominate us by indoctrinating our societies with false beliefs. They only attack the commemoration of this great revolution because they are aware that it stands as the sole impediment between freedom and dictation over us. We have lived the times whereby the colonialists (foes of the creed) penetrated our society and took away the Qur'an as a constitution and the real rites of Hajj in exchange for so called "development and progress" only to discover that their motive was the destruction of the Muslim entity. The end result was that the Islamic governments were helplessly hurled into the depths of conflict and millions of people from the masses were deviated from their beliefs due to artificial doubts and misconceptions.

Sayid Hasan Al Shirazi
7th November, 1384 A.H. (The Holy City of Karbala)

Inclination towards commemorating the legacy of Imam Husayn (Peace be upon him)

The imperialists directly waged war upon the Sha`air of Imam Husayn (commemoration of the legacy of Imam Husayn), but there is no doubt of their failure in this regard, because no matter where the Muslims migrated, they never accepted the interpretation of the tenets of their religion from atheists and non-believers.

They therefore implemented another strategy through which the ideologies of the cancerous colonialism began to fatally injure the entity of Islam. Consequently, they diverted all their efforts in creating factions within the creed and then used them as a mask to forward their deviated principles as part of the religion thereby achieving their goals.

Unfortunately, certain officials and representatives of various sects and parties ultimately betrayed the virtuous religious scholars and propagated the ideas of the imperialists by echoing out the prohibition of commemorating the legacy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), claiming it to be an obstacle to progression, thereby creating widespread doubt. In response to this sudden prohibition, certain questions need to be addressed:

1. If the genuine goal is to curtail actions prohibited[17] by Islam and to safeguard the creed, then why are other actions that are clearly outlined in Islam as forbidden not curtailed?
2. If commemoration of the legacy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was an obstacle to the progression of Islam as a religion, then why was there no objection raised against it from the very first day it was practised

[17] **Prohibited act: an action which must not be performed and lack of compliance is thus a sin.**

keeping in mind that these rites were commemorated in all their different forms for several years even before the forefathers of those who protest (today) were born?

3. Have the essential ideals for what the mourning rites represent drastically changed such that it deserves to be absolutely abolished?
4. The people who stand to oppose the commemoration of the legacy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), do they act out of their own judgement or are they incited by the imperialists such that they obtain their pleasure and in the process earn the wrath of the Almighty?
5. If those who oppose the legacy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) are sincere in their concerns, as they portray, then what factor made them change their long standing attitude such that they now wage war against these divine commemorations?
6. What aspect of the mourning rites do they find corrupt such that they condemn it?
7. Were these opponents not promised prominent government posts if they dedicated their utmost efforts in propagating the banning of these mourning commemorations?

The point of astonishment lies in the fact that the very people who once participated in these commemorations with zeal and defended them, now suddenly changed their opinions and began opposing it, when no verse was revealed upon them, nor was any Prophet sent to them to replace the existing Islamic practise!

I however, advise these people to return to their previous path and not take Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), his father Ameerul Mu`mineen (peace be upon him) and his grandfather The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) as opponents on the day of reckoning.

In fact, I assure them, and any one else on the face of this earth, if they all rose up united in opposition against the

commemoration of the mourning rites in regards to Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) , they shall definitely fail, and victory shall prevail for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and those who invite others to him. Rather, the commemoration of the mourning rites of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) shall not only continue, but expand in magnanimity. The opposition we face today is not more powerful than that of yazid (may he dwell in eternal damnation) who mobilized a force of thirty thousand mercenaries or more, to enagage Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) in war - each one of them under the pretext of seeking proximity to Allah through spilling his blessed blood! But Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) overwhelmed them all. He defeated yazid (may he dwell in eternal damnation) and his entire umayyid dynasty - and the symbol of this victory is his golden dome which till today stands towering between the clouds, the flag of his remembrance wavers in every place, and orators all over the globe praise his valour to this day.

As per the point of view from Jurisprudence, commemoration of the legacy of Imam Husayn (Sha`air of Imam Husayn) is not a *bida`ah*.[18] Rather, in reality, the *bida`ah* lies in its prohibition. Bida`ah which is severely punishable by definition is: Attributing the ruling over an action to the Shaari`h[19] without having any proof[20].

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[18] **An accurate translation of this word within the context of religion would be: "falsely ascribing a ruling to Allah". This notion is evident from the Quranic verses that talk about Bida'ah as presented in the coming pages.**

[19] A reference to the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the twelve divinely appointed Imams who are the means through which the laws established by Allah are recognized.

[20] **Proof: the word proof here denotes the basis upon which an Islamic ruling is derived. These are comprised of two primary sources: Quran, Sunnah of the Holy Prophet and the divine Imams, and two secondary sources: Consensus of the scholars (Ijma'ah) and Reason (Aql) both of which are dependent upon the primary sources. Refer to Mabadiul Usool, shaykh Fadhli, pg 16**

The Quran has particularly outlawed *bida`ah* in matters of religion in an extremely and exceptionally stern tone – in a manner much more severe than when outlawing any other act (rendering them prohibited). This can be understood by comparing certain verses in the Quran. Notice how the Holy Prophet is addressed and referred to with great honour and respect as in the following verse:

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.[21]

And notice how it commands the believers to invoke salutations and blessings (in honour of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) upon him in the following verse:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O ye that believe! Send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect.[22]

Now the same Quran which honours and states the elevated status of this Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) cautions him in one of the most sternest of revelations he ever received when approached by certain people to falsely attribute certain sayings to Allah or to change certain aspects of the rulings of God:

وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذًا لَاتَّخَذُوكَ خَلِيلًا وَلَوْلَا أَنْ ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتَ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا

And their purpose was to tempt thee away from that which We had revealed unto thee, to substitute in our name something quite different; (in that case), behold! they would certainly have made thee (their) friend!

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[21] Quran:33:40

[22] Quran:33:56

And had We not given thee strength, thou wouldst nearly have inclined to them a little.[23]

As well the Quran states:

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الأَقَاوِيلِ
لأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ
ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ
فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ

And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name,
We should certainly seize him by his right hand,
And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart:
Nor could any of you withhold him (from Our wrath).[24]

The severity of the admonishment clearly indicates the severity of *Bida`ah* as a crime - it is blasphemy and pure slander against the Creator of the universe.

Keeping in mind the boundaries and framework within which *Bida`ah* has been defined in the Quran, anyone who proclaims that a certain action is obligatory (*wajib*) without (basing it on) any considerable proof has committed Bida`ah. Similarly, anyone who proclaims a certain action as prohibited (*haram*) without (basing it on) any considerable proof is guilty of committing bida`ah. The same applies for actions that are recommended (*mustahab*) or undesirable (*makrooh*). Therefore in reality, it is those who call for the prohibition of the sha`air al Husayn (mourning rites of Imam Husayn) who are committing *bida`ah* because there has not been any single proof found (from all our sources of narrations) that originates from any of the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) that states the prohibition of striking the cheeks or beating the chest for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), or that proclaims that wearing black clothes to commemorate his martyrdom

[23] Quran: 17:73-74

[24] Quran:69:44-47

and performing *tathbir*[25] is prohibited.

So long as such people continue to echo the prohibition of an action without presenting any proof then (as per the Quran verse) they are "inventing sayings on behalf of Allah" which in other words is the equivalent of slandering the Almighty Creator of the Universe.

As a matter of fact, the sources of legislation in Islam are not silent over the issue of commemorating the sha`air Imam Husayn such that certain factions find "grey areas" and hence propagate their *bida`ah*. Rather, they are absolutely straightforward in deriving their permissibility (*mubah*) from the perspective of a primary ruling, and its desirability (*mustahab)* from the perspective of view of a secondary ruling.

Primarily, the Sha`air of al Husayn are derived through the Islamic laws to be permissible (*mubah*) in essence. This is because Islamic rulings may be categorized into five types: Obligatory (*wajib*), Prohibited (*haram*), recommended (*mustahab*), undesirable (*makrooh*) and permissible (*Mubah*). These five categories encompass the nature of all actions that may possibly originate from a person or be associated with him. Therefore, the religion as a source of legislation has not neglected any type of action save that it can be categorized under any one of these five rulings. Consequently, any thing or action that does not fall under the category of the first four types of rulings is categorized as permissible (*mubah*). The Quranic verses that indicate the above premises are as follows:

لا يُكَلِّفُ اللهُ نَفْسًا إلا مَا آتَاهَا اللهُ

"Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him..." [26]

وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّى نَبْعَثَ رَسُولا

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[25] **To let blood from the head as will be explained in full detail in the subsequent chapters.**

[26] Quran:65:7

"nor would We visit with Our Wrath until We had sent an messenger (to give warning)"[27]

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ
"And Allah will not mislead a people after He hath guided them, in order that He may make clear to them what to fear (and avoid)- for Allah hath knowledge of all things"[28]

لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَا مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ
"That those who died might die after a clear Sign (had been given), and those who lived might live after a Clear Sign (had been given). And verily Allah is He Who heareth and knoweth (all things)"[29]

The above Quranic verses in their entirety illustrate that Allah the Almighty does not hold accountable the servant to whom guidance has not reached.[30]

Furthermore, there are abundant narrations from the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) that illustrate the same:

It is narrated on authority of Imam Jafar Al Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"every thing is permissible until a prohibition (regarding it) is established."**[31]

It is narrated on authority of Imam Abi Abdillah (peace be upon him):

"All things are permissible so long as there is no prohibition established (in regards to it). Everything (possesses the

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[27] Quran:17:15

[28] Quran:9:115

[29] Quran:8:42

[30] In other words, they are not accountable for performing an action whose prohibition is not declared.

[31] Man La Yahdhuruhu Al Faqih, volume 1, chapter 45, Al Ghawali al Laaiy, volume 3, chapter of hajj, and chapter of food & drink

nature of) lawful (halal) or unlawful (haram), and things are always lawful (halal) so long as its prohibition is not established."[32]

It is narrated by Ibn Mahboob on authority of Imam Abi Abdillah (peace be upon him): **"All things are (either) lawful (halal) or unlawful (haram). All things are therefore always lawful for you until the unlawful from it is essentially established."**[33]

It is narrated by Al Shaheed in Al Dhikra on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"All things are therefore always lawful for you until the unlawful from it is essentially established upon which you should refrain from it"** – like for example a robe you may purchase (legally) may in reality be usurped, or a woman you marry may be your (long lost) sister or shared the same nursing woman, and so on and so forth – all these actions are initially assumed to be lawful until it becomes clear to you or proof has been presented that claims otherwise.[34]

As well it is narrated in certain traditions: **"...they are not accountable for what they do not know"**[35]

All the above narrations indicate the permissibility of a thing or action so long as there is no prohibition in regards to it. The essence of permissibility is established for every thing or action in so long as there is no binding ruling upon it.

As for the Ijmaah (consensus of the scholars), it is sufficient to quote that all the *Usoolis* unanimously and most of the *Akhbaris* agree that the religious ruling of permissibility applies on every thing or action upon which there is no binding ruling (that necessitates compliance) from the Quran

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[32] Aamali of Shaykh Tusi

[33] Tahdheeb al Ahkaam, volume 9

[34] Al Usool Min al Kafi, volume 1, Kitab Tawheed

[35] Tarteeb nawadir Al Raawandi

and narrations and nor from the intellect.

As for the intellect, reason dictates injustice for punishment of an action which is not stated as forbidden.[36]

Therefore, the permissibility for any action is essentially derived so long as there is no binding ruling in regards to it, and the commemoration of the legacy of Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him) are those set of actions upon which no binding ruling has been issued (in its prohibition). Hence it is essentially permissible. Consequently, whoever prohibits it is guilty of committing Bida`ah since he has prohibited an action deemed permissible by Allah without any justification or proof.

As well, there is the faction that echo the prohibition (haram) of *tathbir* (letting blood from the head) or the hitting the shoulders and backs with chains (*dharb al salaseel*) claiming that it is injurious to health or personal well being and therefore, it is impermissible. We shall reply to this claim from three perspectives;

Firstly: The sha`air Imam Husayn does not include any practise that is injurious to the health of a person – the *tathbir* results in nothing but a minor wound on the scalp and loss of a certain amount of blood – the quantity of which is not harmful to any given person's health. On the contrary, this shedding of blood is proven to be beneficial for the health similar to that of *hijamah* (cupping).[37] As for the hitting of

[36] **Islamic rulings are deduced using four sources – two primary sources include the Quran and Sunnah of Ahlul Bayt), while the remaining two secondary sources include Ijmaah (consensus of scholars) and Intellect (Aql). So far, the author has proved the permissibility (mubah) of commemorating the sha`air Imam Husayn using all these four sources. Hence we are so far able to conclude that the Sha`air Imam Husayn neither contradict the Quran or the Sunnah, nor the Ijmaah or Intellect hence the sha`air al Husayn cannot be classified as a bida`ah.**

[37] **An ancient practise still conducted to date. It involves extracting blood from certain parts of the body to eliminate sickness and to generally revitalize the body. The blood may be extracted either from the head or the back. One may refer to books of medicine dating back to the Holy Prophet and the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them all) for further information.**

chains on the backs and shoulders, they more or less result in strengthening the surface of the skin.

In any case, if an individual does risk sustaining a substantial injury due to participating in these ceremonies such that he may die or suffer permanent disability, then the prohibition that arises is an individual ruling - and not a general one to be applied on all Muslims. Furthermore, such an individual ruling is founded on a secondary basis which does not affect the permissibility of the action under its primary category.

As per the logic of those who call for the prohibition of the commemoration of the Sha`air of Imam Husayn because it causes pain to the body, then the general premise should be that everything that causes pain to the body should be prohibited. Such a ruling would involve even obligatory acts such as fasting or Hajj- hence there is no justification for such a premise.

Secondly: The endurance of pain or harm which is prohibited as per intellect and the Islamic rulings is that which is sustained without any meaningful or righteous purpose; else there is no prohibition in doing so. For example, the bodily pain endured by ascetics or pious worshippers through the intensity of their worship in the way of earning the pleasure of the Almighty lord is not prohibited (haram).

Thirdly: There is no proof indicating that everything painful (apparently harmful) is prohibited such that it can be made the premises for a general ruling. The indication across this line of thought originates from the following Quranic verse:

وَلا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

"And make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction..."[38]

In addition to the verse, there are numerous narrations as well that indicate the prohibition of committing suicide or permanently dismembering any limb. There is no debate over

[38] Quran:2:195

the prohibition of committing suicide or dismembering any limb of the body, and whoever does so, undoubtedly commits a great sin. However, this does not indicate that an action encompassing pain or sustaining a wound falls under the same category as suicide or permanently dismembering a limb from the body such that the same ruling can be applied on it.

As for the narration of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) that states: **"there is no pain or inconvenience in Islam"**[39] the explanation is two fold:

Firstly: It is particular and does not include rulings that require endurance of pain in path of God such as jihad, fasting, hajj, corporal punishment, endurance of patience even though it may be painful (psychologically), training ones self to abstain from negative characteristics (even though abstention may be difficult to endure), or childbirth.

Secondly: The narration states the non existence of fundamental rulings within Islam that entail pain (or suffering) - it does not prohibit (haram) the endurance of pain on an absolute basis. It is for this reason, that it is permissible to make an oath or pledge to fast the entire year save the two days of Eid, or continuously remaining in a state of, or complying oneself to perform the entire recommended prayers during any given day, or to perform Hajj on foot, or perform the visitation of the Holy shrines on foot, or to spend the nights sleepless in worship (despite all these acts of devotion entailing inconvenience, endurance of pain, suffering, and even sustaining bodily wounds).

In addition, the infallible representatives of Allah on earth all share the tradition of enduring pain in the way of God. Indeed, Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) wept upon being removed from (the temporary) heaven such that the tears resulted in his cheeks becoming sore.

Prophet Yaqub Ibn Ishaq (peace be upon him) wept

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[39] Man la Yahdhuruhu al Faqih, volume 4, chapter 181

profusely upon the separation from his son Prophet Yusuf such that the people would say to him (as stated in the Quran):

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفْتَأُ تَذْكُرُ يُوسُفَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ حَرَضًا أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ

They said: "By Allah! (never) wilt thou cease to remember Joseph until thou reach the last extremity of illness, or until thou die!"[40]

And Allah the Almighty describes his state:

وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسَفَى عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

And he turned away from them, and said: "How great is my grief for Joseph!"And his eyes became white with sorrow, and he fell into silent melancholy.[41]

It is narrated in the traditions that Prophet Yahya Ibn Zakariya (peace be upon him) wept until the tears made his cheeks sore blistering them, such that his mother applied fur on them.[42]

It is narrated that Prophet Shoayb (peace be upon him) wept profusely out of the love of Allah to the extent that he turned blind. Allah therefore bestowed his sight back to him, so he wept again until he lost his sight a second time until he lost his sight. Allah therefore granted him back his sight a third time, so he wept again until he lost his sight for the third time. Allah therefore granted him his sight again. When he was asked as to why he wept so profusely, he said it was out of his love for Allah. The Almighty responded by saying: "it is for this (action) that I made the one who receives direct

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[40] Quran:9:85

[41] Quran:9:84

[42] Qisas Al Anbiya,chapter 14, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 67

communication from me (Musa Ibn Imran) your servant.[43]

The Messenger of Islam (peace be upon him and his progeny) would stand in worship until his feet would swell. It is narrated on authority of Imam Ali (peace be upon him): "Verily the Messenger of God for a span of twenty years spent the entire nights in worship while standing on the tip of his toes until his feet would swell, and his complexion would turn pale... "[44]

It is narrated on authority of Imam Abi Jafar (peace be upon him) on authority Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him): "Verily my grandfather the Prophet of God (peace be upon him and his progeny)...may my mother and father be sacrificed for him, worshipped to such an extent that his feet and toes would swell. He was questioned as to why he did so despite being sinless whereby he replied by saying: "should I not be a thankful slave?"[45]

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) continued to worship Allah in such a state until Surah Al Taha was revealed with the following verses in reference to the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny):

مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى

"We have not sent down the Qur'an to thee to be (an occasion) for thy distress"[46]

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[43] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 12 which additionally states: "Prophet Shoayb wept profusely out of the love of Allah such that he turned blind. Allah therefore bestowed his sight back to him, so he wept again until he lost his sight a second time until he lost his sight. Allah therefore granted him back his sight a third time, so he wept again until he lost his sight for the third time. The fourth time Allah granted him his sight, He asked him: "O Shoayb! Until when shall you weep? If it is out of the fear of hell, then I grant you safety from it, and if it is out of ambition to attain paradise, then I have granted it to you" Prophet Shoayb therefore said: "O My Lord and my Master! You know that I did not weep in fear of your hell fire nor out of desire from your heaven, but because of the intensity of my love for you ..."

[44] Al Ihtijaaj, Al Tabarsi, Mustadrak al Wasail, volume 1, chapter on 18

[45] Aamali of Shaykh Tusi, Manaqib Ibn shahrshuwb volume 4 chapter on the Imamah and worship of Imam Abi Muhammad Ali Ibn Husayn (peace be upon him)

[46] Quran:20:1,2

And when he would rise to pray his complexion would turn pale and he would quiver, and a humming sound could be heard resonating from within him as if it were an aggravated heart beat. This cannot occur except due to terror and extreme fright.

It is narrated that Sayeda Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon her) would stand in worship until her legs would swell. As well in Bihar Al Anwar, it is narrated on authority of Imam Hasan Al Mujtaba (peace be upon him): "There wasn't a single person on the face of this earth more devoted to worship than Sayeda Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon her). She would stand in prayer until her feet would swell."[47] The swelling of the feet and suffering from dehydration (due to long hours of worship) are both conditions that require medical attention.

It is stated in numerous traditions that Sayeda Fatima al Zahra (peace be upon her) would dedicate herself in worship compromising her own well being, and would grind the mill to the extent that her hands would be wounded.[48]
It is narrated on authority of Salman Al Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him): "I saw Fatima (peace be upon her) grinding the barley and the pole of the mill was stained with blood while Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was crying."[49]

Verily the Prince of Believers Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) would supplicate to his Lord every night while recalling (the difficulties of) death, the grave and hellfire such that he would faint out of awe and fear of Allah - and the state of his body would be compared to a dry piece of wood!

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[47] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 43

[48] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 43

[49] Al Kharaaij wa Al Jaraaih, volume 2, chapter on Sayeda Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon her)

Indeed Imam Hasan al Mujtaba (peace be upon him) performed Hajj on foot twenty five times during his life time.

It is narrated upon the authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) that Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) once set off for hajj on foot and his feet began to swell (during the journey)...[50]

Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) used to mount sack loads of food on his back and deliver and distribute them amongst the orphans and the needy such that the bruises sustained on his back (due to the weight of the food) was visible even after his martyrdom. When the enemies asked about how those bruises were sustained, Imam Zaynul Abideen (peace be upon him) replied: "these are due to the (weight) of the sacks"

It is narrated by abu Mikhnaf on authority of Al Jaldawi: "when Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) fought his way to the bank of the River Euphrates, he scooped a handful of water whereby one of the enemies called out: "O Aba Abdillah! Do you quench your thirst while your women are being attacked?" Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) threw back the water without drinking and rushed to the tents of the women to find them safe from the marauding enemies.[51]
Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) did not drink the water, but instead rushed back (to the women) despite the severity of his thirst, and its affect on him.

Indeed the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) fasted for three days, breaking their fast at sunset with nothing but water for three continuous days such that Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (peace be upon them) were trembling due to severe hunger, and Allah The Almighty rewarded them (for this painstaking show of selflessness) by revealing Surah Al

[50] Al Usool Min Al Kafi, volume 1

[51] Manaqib Ibn Shahrshuwb, volume 4, Bihar al Anwar, volume 45

Insan[52] in their honour.

Imam Al Sajjad (peace be upon him) wept and mourned his father Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) until his slave once said to him: "may I be sacrificed for you o Son of the Prophet! Indeed I fear for your death"[53]

Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) spent his life in ailment, grief, and was extremely fragile - his complexion pale due to his intense and incessant worship, his sight became weak due to keeping awake the entire nights (in prayer). His forehead and nose was scarred due to long periods of prostration.

Imam Baqir (peace be upon him) narrates: "My fathers skin was shrivelled and dried up[54] due to his long prostrations. He used to cut out the dead skin twice each year..."[55]

Verily, he was extremely feeble due to his long and intense worship such that he would sometimes sway with the wind, such that Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al Ansari once asked him to take care of his health, whereupon the Imam replied: "I shall never abandon the path of my fathers, and shall remain grieved over them (their martyrdom) till I meet them."[56]

When Abul Fadhl Al Abbas (peace be upon him) conquered the River Euphrates, he scooped a handful of water with his palms, and then remembering the thirst of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and his blessed family, he threw the water (without drinking) and filled up the water bag.[57]

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[52] 76th chapter of the Quran

[53] As a result of his intense and continuous grief and weeping – Kamil al Ziarat, chapter 35, Bihar al Anwar, volume 46

[54] The knees, toes and forehead

[55] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 46

[56] Manaqib Ibn Shahrshuwb, volume 4, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 46

[57] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45

Lady Rubab (peace be upon her), the esteemed wife of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) upon returning to Medina never sought shelter under a shade from the scorching sun for the year that she lived after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon her), and subsequently died in a state of intense sorrow. Certain traditions narrate that she remained in Karbala for an entire year and upon returning to Medina, she died as a result of her severe grief.

All these traditions, and plenty more which are stated throughout the biographies of the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) indicate that to suffer body pain and sustain injuries is not prohibited (*haram)* in Islam, rather it is a highly commendable act if it is done (with the intention) to seek the pleasure of Allah.

It is narrated by Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"any believer who is pained because of the atrocities committed upon us such that his tears flow onto his cheeks, Allah will protect him from all harm."**[58]

It is clearly evident from all these narrations, everything that (apparently) causes harm to the body is not prohibited (*haram*) in Islam as some people mistakenly assume - rather it may sometimes be recommended (*mustahab*).

With this in mind, we shall centralize our focus on the Sha`air of Imam Husayn – the different expressions of grief that constitute the mourning rites of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and revive his legacy. As well, we shall present proof from within the legislative framework to determine the opinion of Islam on this matter.

[58] Kamil Al Ziarat, chapter 32, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 44

Weeping

Weeping in it self is an act which is permissible. Rather it becomes apparent that weeping as an action is highly recommended because it indicates softness of the heart whereas (excessive) laughing and indifference is a sign of hard heartedness. The Holy Quran states:

فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

They shall laugh little and weep much as a recompense for the (evil) that they used to do.[59]

The reality of the matter is revealed in the Holy Quran whereby it describes the state of the virtuous believers as those who excessively weep:

قُلْ آمِنُوا بِهِ أَوْ لا تُؤْمِنُوا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُّونَ لِلأَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا

وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولا

وَيَخِرُّونَ لِلأَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا

Say: "Whether ye believe in it or not, it is true that those who were given knowledge beforehand, when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration.

"And they say: 'Glory to our Lord! Truly has the promise of our Lord been fulfilled!'

They fall down on their faces in tears, and it increases their (earnest) humility[60]

In another verse, the Almighty Lord says:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ آدَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْرَائِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا إِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا

Those were some of the prophets on whom Allah did bestow His Grace - of the posterity of Adam, and of those who We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of

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[59] Quran:9:85

[60] Quran:17:107-109

Abraham and Israel of those whom We guided and chose. Whenever the Signs of (Allah) Most Gracious were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears.[61]

It is standard for Islam to permit crying because it is a sole and natural means of relieving emotional grief. This is because the difficulties and sorrows which man faces during the course of his life deposit and accumulate within him such that relief more or less can only be attained through vengeance (from the party responsible for him incurring that pain or difficulty). However, Islam is a religion of peace and non violence, and even though man's animalistic instincts may call upon him to seek revenge, his religion prevents him from doing so. He is therefore not left with any other alternative to vent out the grief bottled up within the depths of his heart except by crying. In many cases, suppression of crying results in the exhibition of negative and violent behaviour (including bloodshed) due to the emotional imbalance that instigate concealed aggravation.[62]
Suppressed aggravation is a state of emotional disturbance which risks violent and aggressive behaviour (crime) which is why it should be treated at its earliest.

According to our traditions, the Prophets who possess the best of conduct and are the supreme role models selected by Allah for mankind to emulate used to weep as well.

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[61] Quran ;19:58

[62] **Modern day research in psychology supports this notion stating that suppressing crying causes depression and other mood disorders. Refer to the December 2009 journal of the Current Direction in Psychological science. Johnathon Rottenberg and Lauren M. Bylsma, two psychologists working at the University of South Florida, collaborated with Ad J.J.M. Vingerhoets of Tilburg University, in an analysis of crying experiences. The results demonstrated that once a person stops crying, the body moves from a state of high arousal to one of relaxation. Breathing and heart rate slows, sweating decreases and the period of the relaxed state tends to last longer than the time spent crying.**

Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) wept upon being cast out of the temporary heaven he used to inhabit, such that his tears would pour down his cheeks.

Prophet Yaqub (peace be upon him) wept due to the grief of his separation from his son Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) to such an extent that he lost his eyesight. His son Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) as well wept uncontrollably while in prison such that his inmates asked him to either cry during the day or during the night.

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his progeny) wept over the death of his infant son Ibrahim (peace be upon him) who died while he was eighteen months old. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) wept intensely such that the people would approach him and ask him how is it that he would advise them with patience yet he himself wept uncontrollably. The Prophet replied to them by saying: **"the eyes are tearful, and the heart is sorrowful but we did not utter anything to anger the Lord"**[63]

Indeed Sayeda Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon her) wept upon the martyrdom of her father the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and thereafter was never seen except with tearful eyes - until the end of her life. In fact, many times she would lose consciousness due to the intensity of her weeping.

Imam Ali Ibn Al Husayn (peace be upon him) – commonly known by the epithet "The Ornament of the worshippers"[64] wept continuously over his father for the twenty five years that he lived after the tragedy of Karbala.

Therefore, weeping is an action that reaps the

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[63] Refer to Bihar Al Anwar, vol. 12, and in vol. 18 it is narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "the soul is filled with grief, and the heart is distressed, and for you O Ibrahim, we grieve- yet we say nothing that may anger the Lord.

[64] **A reference to the fact that he was at the zenith of faith and worship; indeed the definition of worship was manifested in his character.**

pleasure of the Lord – whether it is weeping out of awe and fear for Him, or whether it is upon a calamity that has occurred. As for weeping upon the tribulations and misfortunes that befell the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them), and especially that of Karbala, it is highly recommended and carries immense rewards.

As a matter of fact, there are plenty of narrations that illustrate that each and every Prophet sent down on earth, and every subsequent successor that was appointed was informed of the tragedy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and wept upon it. Similarly, the Holy Prophet, Sayeda Zahra and all the Imams (peace be upon them) bitterly wept over the tragedy of Karbala. Indeed his family mourned his looming martyrdom on the day he was born. In fact, he was given the title: **"the one for whom the tears easily flow"**[65] and **"the tear of every believing man and woman"**[66].

Imam Ali ibn Musa Al Ridha (peace be upon him) used to say: **"verily the day of Husayn (the atrocities that were committed upon him) has wounded our eye lids and made our tears to pour down (flow in abundance) – our honourable ones were humiliated in the land of trial and tribulation"**[67]

The leader of our age - Imam Al Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) laments his grandfather thus addressing him: "...**Since I have been pushed behind by the passage of time, and was prevented from helping you by fate and could not fight those who fought you, and since I was not able face your enemies (in your defence), I will lament you day and night and weep over you tears of**

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[65] **An indication that any mention of the atrocities that befell Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) immediately brings tears to the eyes**

[66] **An indication that there is no believing person in any corner of this earth, except that he or she has wept for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)**

[67] Aamali of Shaykh Saduq, section 28, Bihar al Anwar vol 44

blood..."[68]

It is narrated on the authority of Imam Abu Jafar Al Baqir (peace be upon him) who said: **"the Prophet once gazed at Imam Husayn while he was in front of him and then sat him on his lap, and said: "Verily, for the martyrdom of Husayn, there is a heat in the hearts of the believers that shall never be extinguished"** and another time He said in regards to Imam Husayn (peace be upon him): **"no believer remembers him except that he weeps for him."**[69]

As for the narrations that mention the great rewards attached with weeping for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), they are numerous as well. Some of which include:

Abu Hamza narrates on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"it is undesirable to lament and display anguish over a servant of God in any issue except for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), indeed, to lament and display anguish for Husayn ibn Ali is rewarded"**[70]

It is narrated on authority of Imam Ali ibn Musa Al Ridha (peace be upon him): **"Whosoever remembers the tragedies that befell us and weeps shall be in the same rank as us on the day of judgement. Whoever recalls our tragedies and weeps, and makes others weep, he shall not cry on the day the eyes shall be tearful**[71]**, and whoever participates in a gathering whereby our remembrance is revived, his heart will not die on the day the hearts shall die"** [72]

Ali Ibn Ibrahim narrates on the authority of Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"whoever remembers us, or makes others remember us (our tragedies), and thereby**

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[68] Ziarah Al Nahiya, Bihar Al Anwar, vol 98

[69] Mustadrak al Wasail, Kitab Al Haj, Faraid Al Simtain

[70] Kamil Al Ziarah, section 32

[71] A reference to the day of judgement

[72] Aamali of Shaykh Saduq

sheds a tear even if it may be the size of the wing of a mosquito, God will forgive him all his sins even though they may be as much as the foam in the seas"

Shaykh Saduq in his Amaali has recorded a narration on authority of Imam Jafar Ibn Muhammad Al Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"whoever sheds a tear (out of grief) for our blood that was spilled, or for our rights that were usurped or for our sanctity which was violated or for any one of our Shias, then Allah shall reserve for him a seat in paradise for (all) eternity"**

Abu Harun Al Al Makfoof narrates on the authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"Whosoever remembers Al Husayn (S) and sheds a tear even the size of the wing of a fly, then his reward which shall be determined by The Almighty Lord, will be no less then paradise"** [73]

Numerous traditions such as the ones mentioned above point towards the significance, and consequent reward for weeping over the King of Martyrs - Imam Husayn Ibn Ali, as well as for the rest of the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them all).

The Imams as a matter of fact, used to encourage the people to weep for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) in various ways possible - sometimes by mentioning the great rewards attached to it, and sometimes by praying for those who weep - for example, it is narrated in Al-Kafi and in Kamil Al Ziarat that Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) whilst in the state of prostration (which is the ultimate display of devotion and worship) was heard to have said: **"O Lord! Have mercy upon those faces that have become sun burnt, and those cheeks that have rubbed against the grave of Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him), and have mercy upon those eyes that shed tears out of grief for us, and have mercy upon those hearts that have become distressed and burn with anguish (out of compassion for us), and have mercy upon those who**

[73] Thawabul A'amal wa Iqaabul A'amal

wail and lament us. O my Lord, indeed I entrust those bodies and souls to you until You allow them at the pond of kawthar on the day of thirst (i.e. day of judgement)"
And when Muawiya Ibn wahab felt that this supplication was an exaggeration for the visitors of the grave of Abu Abdillah (peace be upon him) and for those who weep upon him, Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) said to him: **"O Muawaiya, those who seek mercy for the visitors (of Imam Husayn) in the skies, are far more in number than those who seek mercy for them on the earth"**

Weeping for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) has an effect on our lives from a social and moral perspective. A person does not weep unless he is emotionally affected or aroused by a tragedy, and every tragedy involves a tyrant and a victim – and it is human nature for man to denounce and rise against the oppressor and seek justice or side with the victim. Hence he rises up in revolution against the oppressor and exhibits compassion for the oppressed. Indeed Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and yazid (may he dwell in eternal damnation) were not two warriors who faced each other equally in a battlefield whereby one overcame the other, rather each one of them represented the apex of contradictory traits (virtue versus evil), hence this tragedy unlike any other in history encompassed the ultimate clash between divine principles and satanic vice.

The one who weeps over Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) allies himself with the party of virtue, and stands in opposition to the party of evil and wickedness in its entirety - such a lofty mindset cannot be achieved by weeping for any other martyr, nor over any other tragedy save the tragedy of the king of Martyrs. The weepers attain eternal freedom through their belief in the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) and are deserving of eternal recompense - therefore the reward for weeping over Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is paradise because the one weeping distances himself from all

the characteristics possessed by the inhabitants of the hell fire, and sides with all the virtuous traits possessed by the residents of heaven hence providing himself the opportunity to nurture himself with noble mannerisms.

Hence the great rewards narrated for weeping over the tragedy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) should not be dismissed as exaggerations, neither should the great reward be viewed as a compensation purely for weeping, but for the potential effect it has on the nourishment of the soul with noble mannerisms and principles.

Feign weeping

To feign weep is to imitate the actions of a mourner such as the voice, frowning of the face or hitting of the forehead as mourners regularly do but without actually shedding tears. Feign weeping is in regards to those who wish to weep over the tragedy of Karbala but are unable to shed tears from their eyes due to medical reasons which indicate the inability of the eye to shed tears[74] or because the person is not able to envision the magnitude of the event in his mind such that it arouses him to the level where he sheds tears.

Whoever attempts to weep over the catastrophe of Karbala despite his nature preventing him from doing so is considered a believer. This is due to his alliance with the party of the oppressed and his apparent condemnation of oppression - even if he does not incorporate this principle in reality, he is considered as one attempting to change himself. The fact that he is attempting to weep exhibits that deep within him there is a conscious admonishing him to change his ways. And every person who recognizes his weaknesses, and works to improve himself is bound to succeed. It is based on such a principle that the one who feign weeps is deserving of rewards similar to the one who weeps.

Indeed, the Infallible Imams indicated the equivalent rewards between weeping and feign weeping in a number of narrations and encouraged the practise of feign weeping with the same intensity as they did for weeping.

It is narrated in Kunzul A`amal that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him and his progeny) recited the following verse for his companions: "

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا

[74] Due to inability of the tear gland or tear duct within the eye to produce or transport tears to the eye.

"The Unbelievers will be led to Hell in a crowd..."[75]
All the companions began to weep except for a youth who confessed to the Prophet (Peace be upon him and his progeny) saying: "I did not shed any tears, but I imitated (the act of) weeping. The Prophet replied: **"whoever feigns weeping shall enter heaven"**[76]

As well, it is narrated on authority of Jurayr that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) told his companions: **"I am about to recite the chapter of Takathur (Materialistic rivalry)**[77] **for you. Whosoever weeps shall attain paradise - indeed, I am to recite it (for you) a second time, whosoever weeps shall attain paradise, and whosoever cannot weep, should feign to do so."**[78]

It is narrated by Abu Dharr Al Ghaffari that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny)said: **"if any one of you can weep, then he should do so, and whoever cannot do so, then he should try to stimulate the emotion of sorrow in his heart by pretending to weep – for verily, a hard heart is distant from Allah"**[79]

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted to have told Abu Ammar: : **"O Abu Ammar! Whoever composes a eulogy about Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him) and makes fifty people weep, then surely he has attained paradise. Whoever composes a eulogy for Al Husayn (peace be upon him) and makes thirty people weep, then surely he has obtained paradise. Whoever composes a eulogy about Al Husayn (peace be upon him) and makes twenty people weep, he has obtained paradise. Whoever composes a**

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[75] Quran: Zumar: 71

[76] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 44

[77] Chapter 102 in the Holy Quran

[78] Kunzul a`amal

[79] Majmuwa`h shaykh Waraam

eulogy about Al Husayn (peace be upon him) and makes ten people weep, then surely he has obtained paradise. And whoever composes a eulogy about Al Husayn (peace be upon him) and makes one person weep then surely he has obtained paradise. And whoever composes a eulogy about Al Husayn (peace be upon him) and weeps himself, then surely he has obtained paradise. And whoever composes a eulogy for Al Husayn (peace be upon him) and feign weeps, the surely he has obtained paradise"[80]

Therefore, to weep and to feign weep is considered to be one and the same, just as the affect it has (on a person) and the reward is the same – Except that the person who possesses the physical and psychological ability to weep should do so, while the one who does not possess these abilities should feign weep.

[80] Aamali, shaykh Saduq, majlis 29, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 44. It is also narrated in Bihar al anwar as well that Imam Sadiq (S) asked Abu ammar to recite euology (in regards to Imam Husayn) for him. Abu Ammar says" every time I recited a verse (of the eulogy) he would weep and weep, until I heard wailing from within the house (i.e. all the people in the house began to mourn)

Al Ma`atim (to communally mourn)

Al-Ma`atim: A collective gathering in which the tragedy that befell a person is recalled. It is a simple ceremony reflected by colours that resemble grief.

The *Ma`atim* of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is a gathering whereby the tragedies and catastrophes that befell him are recited (and revived). [81]

To establish a *Ma`atim* for Al Husayn (peace be upon him) results in directly supporting his revolution – because it ensures its eternity, explains its goals and objectives, its (historical) circumstances, and clears the misconceptions that may surround it bringing it to life within the minds of the people in the same way as it occurred in reality.

Had it not been for these communal mourning ceremonies *(al-ma`atim)* that were established and commemorated ever since the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), the grand objectives of this gigantic revolution would have remained limited and would not have propelled the fall of the Umayyid dynasty and every other oppressive regime that came after that.

Had the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be

[81] Throughout the world, whichever city, town or village the Shias reside in, they collectively gather in community halls or centers built to facilitate these mourning ceremonies. These community centers are commonly named as "*Husayniyas*". A scholar usually ascends the pulpit and preaches to the people about the principles of religion (this includes but is not limited to interpretation of the Quran, history, etc), and in particular about the lofty goals underlining the sacrifice of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). The sermon is usually concluded with a eulogy describing the heart rendering circumstances under which the pure Imam and his progeny (peace be upon them) were martyred. Such commemorations are held throughout the year, the peak being during the months of Muharam and safar (1st two months of the Islamic calendar)

The end result is a mass of listeners mourning emphatically, roused with love for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and love for the religion.

upon him) been confined as a historical event that occurred in a specific age, many of its benefits and potentials would not have been realized. Indeed it is a result of the consistent commemoration of the ma'atim in every age and generation - past and present - the proclamation of its philosophy, goals and circumstances that revives and brings to life the revolution of the Imam year after year such that the people may relate to it and apply its principles (in their daily lives) no matter how difficult the prevailing state of affairs may be.

Because of the fact that Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was not only the leader of his generation, but of every generation till the day of judgement, it is necessary for his words and actions to be publicized and for his revolution to be globalized for all eternity such that the world may seek shelter from it from all its crisis till the day of judgement. To limit The Imam's revolution to his time is a great crime as it equates in limiting his leadership and limiting his message – the principles of which people lived for and died for!

And perhaps, it was for such a vital reason that the infallible Imams relentlessly insisted upon their Shias to establish and commemorate such *ma'atim* - in remembrance of themselves, and in particular for Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him)

It is narrated by Imam Ridha (peace be upon him): **"When I received the orders to be extradited from Medina, I gathered my family and asked them to mourn me; I then bequeathed twelve thousand dinars among them and said: "I shall never return to my family again""**[82]
Consequently, we recite in one of the salutations to Imam Ridha (peace be upon him): **"Peace be upon the one who asked his family to mourn him even before death reached him"**

Shaykh Tusi in the second volume of Tahdheeb

[82] Uyun Akhbar al Ridha, Shaykh saduq, volume 2, Bihar Al Anwar volume 39

Al Ahkam records a narration by Younis Ibn Yaqub on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): **Imam Abu Jafar (peace be upon him) asked me to bequeath a certain amount of money from his wealth to a group of women who would mourn him in Mina, during the days of Mina[83] for a period of ten years"[84]**

It is narrated by Di`bil Al Khuzai: **" I visited Imam Ali ibn Musa Al Ridha (peace be upon him) during the first ten days of the month of Muharram, and saw him seated with his companions around him, with sadness and distress apparent on his face.** When He (peace be upon him) saw me, he greeted me by saying: **"Welcome O Di`bil! Welcome O one who aids us (and our cause) through his speech and actions"** Then He (peace be upon him) said to me: **"O Di`bil I would like for you to compose a eulogy (in regards to Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)), for verily these are the days in which we the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) were afflicted with deep grief and sorrow while our enemies especially the Bani Umayya were overjoyed with glee and happiness. O Di`bil! Whoever weeps or makes others weep by remembering our tribulations - even if it were one person, his reward lies with Allah. O Di`bil!**

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[83] **One of the mandatory stages of Hajj where the symbolic stoning of Satan is conducted, the cow, sheep or camel is sacrificed, and the head is shaved. All this is performed on the tenth day of Dhil Hijjah (day of Eid al Adha)**

[84] From this narration, it is evident that the goal of establishing this communal mourning was not solely for shedding tears over a specified time span, else there would be no reason to specify Mina as the venue for this commemoration. In fact, it would have been more appropriate and easier to organize the mourning ceremonies in Makka or Medina. Instead He (S) selected Mina as the venue for commemoration of his mourning ceremonies with the end goal of spreading his message which is why He (S) selected a strategic venue like Mina, and strategic days like that of hajj at a time where people from different parts of the world have gathered, such that a maximum number of people may benefit from these mourning ceremonies and learn about the affairs of the Imams and then return back to their respective countries and convey the message to their people, hence spreading the message. This was an extremely diligent and effective method through which the message of Ahlul Bayt (S) could be spread across the globe without any restriction or prohibition by the oppressive regime of the time.

Whoever sheds tears out of grief due to the tribulations that befell us through the hands of our enemies, Allah The Almighty will raise him on the day of Judgement on our side – with us. O Di`bil! Whoever weeps out of grief for my grandfather Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), Allah The Almighty shall forgive him all his sins."

The Imam (peace be upon him) then stood up and set up a veil to partition the room allowing the womenfolk from his household to participate in the mourning. The Imam (peace be upon him) then said to me; **"O Di`bil! Eulogize Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) for verily you are our helper and extoller (through whom we are recognized) so long as you are alive; therefore, do not have any shortcoming in supporting us in so long as you can.**

Di`bil then narrates: "my eyes teared, and with great sorrow I recited (the following eulogy):

Had Fatima (Al Zahra) seen the crushed corpse of Husayn,
And seen how he died thirsty besides the banks of the river Euphrates,
Then she would have struck her face in grief, with tears streaming down her cheeks[85]

It is narrated in Manaqib on authority of Abu Mikhnaf: "when the womenfolk (from the household of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny)) entered the palace of yazid 9may he dwell in eternal damnation), there did not remain any one from the household of Muawiya or Abu Sufyan (may the dwell in eternal damnation) except that they wept and shrieked, and mourned for three days[86]

It is narrated on authority of Sayid ibn Tawoos:

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[85] Al Majalis Al Sunniya, volume 2

[86] Jala Ul Uyoon, Volume 2

This event demonstrates the merciless and heinous fashion in which the progeny of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) were enslaved to the extent that even their own enemies wept!

"...and when the women were returning back from Sham via Iraq, they asked the guide of the caravan to pass by Karbala. Upon reaching the battlefield, they saw Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al Ansari with a number of men from the Bani Hashim by the grave of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). They all mourned and lamented Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), beating their chests in a heart rendering manner for a number of days. The women from the honourable family gathered as well and held a mourning ceremony there for a number of days"[87]

And in Jala Al Uyoon as well, it is narrated on authority of Zurarah: "Abu Ja`afar (peace be upon him) allocated eight hundred dirhams to be spent on the mourning ceremonies (in regards to Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)), and viewed this as a recommended act especially because the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) had proclaimed: "prepare food for the family of Ja`afar (Al Tayyar) for they have been overtaken (by grief).[88]

It is narrated in Tarikh Al Tabari: "The people gathered to condole Abdullah Ibn Jaffar Al Tayyar (peace be iupon him), whereby he said: "Praise be to Allah the Great and Glorified Lord for the martyrdom of Husayn (peace be upon him) - for if I could not assist him myself, then verily my sons were able to do so..."[89]

It is narrated in Riyadh Al Ahzaan: **"Ummul Baneen (peace be upon her), the wife of Ameerul Mu`mineen (peace be upon him) established a mourning ceremony in honour of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). The women of Bani Hashim all gathered there and wept for**

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[87] Jala Al uyoon, volume 2, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45

[88] Jala Al Uyoon, Volume 2

[89] Al Kamil Fi Taarikh, volume 2, Tarikh Tabari, volume 5 on the events of the year 61 A.H

the Imam and his progeny, and Umm Salamah (the wife of the Holy Prophet (peace b eupon him and his progeny)) tearfully cried out by saying: "May Allah chastise them with fire in their graves for their actions"[90]

It is narrated in Taarikh Tabari, Al Bidaya of Ibn Katheer, Al Lahoof, and Aamali of Shaykh Saduq: "When Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) addressed yazid (may he dwell in eternal damnation) in his court (with her powerful and eloquent speech), everyone in attendance was awestruck, until a man began to speak up against the injustice that had overwhelmed them. Yazid (may he dwell in eternal damnation) therefore saw it necessary to evacuate the women from his palace and confine them in a dungeon which was neither capable of protecting them from the heat nor from the cold, so they (the womenfolk from the household of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)) spent three days there weeping and mourning Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)[91]

It is narrated in the Mahasin of Al Barqi, in the chapter of food for the purpose of communal mourning: **"when Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was killed, the women of Bani Hashim dressed themselves in black seated in the veranda (of their houses) not paying attention to the heat or the cold, and Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (peace be upon him) would prepare food for them while they all wept and eulogized Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)**[92]

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[90] Bihar al Anwar, Volume 45, Tarikh Madinatul Dimishq, volume 14, Siyar A`alam al Nubala`a, Volume 4, and in addition to that, it is also mentioned here by Shahr Ibn Hawshab: "I was at the house of Umm Salamah when she received the news of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (S) – so she replied in awe by asking: "really did they do that? May Allah fill their houses and graves with fire" She then lost consciousness as we left.

[91] Al Kamil fi Tarikh, Volume 2, Tarikh Al Tabari, volume 5, and in addition to that, it is also mentioned here: "there did not remain any woman from the family of of Muawiya except that they came to pay condolences to the womenfolk and wept and eulogized Imam Husayn (S) for three days.

[92] Kitab Al Mahasin

It is narrated by Shaykh Kulayni on authority of Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him): "when Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred, his wife from the tribe of Kaleeyb commemorated a mourning ceremony in his honour. All the women and their maid servants profusely wept out of grief (for a long period of time) until they were in no state to shed any more tears (i.e. their tears had dried up). It was in such a situation that she noticed one of the maid servants still bitterly crying with tears flowing down her cheeks. So the Imam's (peace be upon him) called the maid servant and asked her: "you have been weeping amongst us all this time – how is it your tears still flow?" so she replied by saying: "when I was overcome with weakness (earlier on), I had a drink of *saweeq*[93]" The Imam`s wife then called for food and *saweeq* to be catered for and served and said: "we are in need for this (food and water) to replenish our energy such that we may renew our weeping and mourning for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)"[94]

It is narrated in Bihar al Anwar from Al Kafi: "...As for Rubab (wife of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and mother to Abdullah Al Radhi (peace be upon him) and Sayeda Ruqayya (peace be upon her)), she would lament Imam Husayn (peace be upon her) until her tears became dry and could cry no more. Some of her neighbours then advised her that consumption of *saweeq* increases the tears. She therefore had the *saweeq* prepared to allow her to continue weeping for Imam Husayn (peace be upon her)"

The Imams (peace be upon them) did not only exhaust themselves in holding commemoration gatherings in honour of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), but also vigorously encouraged their Shias to do the same. It is

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[93] **Traditional mixture extracted from wheat and barley – Lisan al Arab**

[94] Usool Al Kafi, volume 1, Mustadrak Al Wasail volume 16, Bihar Al Anwar volume 45

narrated on authority of Imam Muhammad al Baqir (peace be upon him): **"May the mercy of Allah descend on upon the slave (believer) who meets with another and recalls our affairs, for verily, the third one to be amongst them is an angel who seeks forgiveness for those two - no two people gather to remember our affairs except that Allah flaunts them with angels. Hence if you all collectively meet, then remember and summon people to our affairs for verily our legacy is brought to life through your gatherings and commemorations, and the finest of people after us, are those who recall our affair and invite others to do the same."**[95]

It is narrated that Imam Jafar Al Sadiq (peace be upon him) once asked Fudhail Ibbn Yasaar: **"do you all collectively meet and discuss (our affairs)?"** Fudhail replied in the affirmative whereby the Imam (peace be upon him) then said: **"Indeed I approve of these gatherings. Revive (recall) our affairs, for verily Allah has mercy upon those who do so. Certainly, whoever participates in a gathering where our remembrance (and affairs) is evoked, his heart shall be alive on the day all hearts shall die (Day of Judgement)"**[96]

It is narrated in the book Kamil Al Zaiaraat on authority of Malik al Jahni, on authority of Imam Muhammad al Baqir (peace be upon him): **"one should eulogise and weep for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) - and enjoin his household to cry for him, and commemorate the tribulations that befell him by displaying acts of anguish**[97] **(and when he meets others) they should greet each other with tears - condoling one another over the tragedy that befell Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). If one does all this, then I shall be their guarantor and ensure he receives his rewards from**

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[95] Amaali, Shaykh Tusi, Bihar Al Anwar, Volume 1

[96] Wasail Al Shia, volume 10, chapter on weeping over the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and the tribulations that fell upon his blessed progeny

[97] The Arabic word as per the text of the hadith is (Jaza') which are those actions that signify dejection, torment and agony.

Allah The Almighty"[98]

As well, it is apparent from certain narrations that the weeping of women over the tragedies that befell the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) is recommended - even within the presence of men who may be able to hear their voices. Imam Baqir (peace be upon him) requested in his will that women should mourn him in Mina - in a place where men and women are assembled - on the day of Eid - so that the people may inquire about the cause of their mourning. In this way, the oppression of the Ahlul Bayt (S) at the hands of the tyrannical regime and their subsequent assassinations was revealed in front of the masses.

Indeed, Sayeda Zainab Al Kubra (peace be upon them) wept out aloud over the massacre of her brother on every occasion, and between the ranks of the enemies on the 11th of muharram, as per the narrations recorded by shaykh Mufeed and Sayyid ibn Tawoos, in that when the enemies walked the womenfolk through the battlefield and the places where the mutilated bodies of their near ones lay, they shrieked out aloud (in grief) and began to hit their faces (in anguish). One of the narrators mentions: **"I swear by Allah I shall never forget how Zainab bint Ali cried out and wept for Al Husayn in a heart rendering manner such that the enemies broke down to tears, and even the tears of the horses flawed down to their hooves!**[99]

In some narrations it is mentioned; **"...then Sukaina flung herself on the corpse of her father weeping profusely, until a group of men from the enemies came and forcefully**

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[98] Kamil Al Ziarat, Jafar Ibn Quwaylah al Qummi, chapter 71

[99] Al Luhoof fi Qutala Al Tufoof, Al Kamil Fi Tarikh, volume 2 under the events of 61 A.H. it is mentioned: "the women shrieked and wept out aloud and hit their faces, and Zainab cried out aloud: "o Muhammad! The angels in the heavens praise you and here lies Husayn unshrouded, drenched in blood, his body mutilated while your daughters are imprisoned and taken captive" everyone wept upon hearing this.

separated her from her father..."[100]

Imam al Hujjah (May Allah hasten his reappearance) narrates in his eulogy known as Ziarah al Nahiya: **"...And when the ladies saw your horse return (without a rider), and its saddle dismantled, they came out of the tents beating their faces wailing and lamenting..."**[101]

And it is narrated in Maqtal Al Khawarizmi that they cried out aloud: **"O Muhammad! O Grandfather! O our Prophet! O Ali!"**[102]

Hammad Al Basri narrates that Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) once said: **"I have received news that people from Kufa and other areas on the 15th of Sha`ban go to pay tribute to Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and their women mourn him as poems and eulogies are recited and tears are shed" Al Basri then replied in the affirmative, whereby the Imam (peace be upon him) then said: "All Praise is due to Allah who created from mankind those who serve our purpose, honour us and eulogize us and made our enemies those who slander them on account of us, while others spill their blood, and repulse what they perform"** [103]

From the above narration we see the explicit encouragement of the Imam for women to mourn in the presence of men, and the desirability of visiting Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him) during the 15th of Sha`ban.

Certain people attempt to oppose and deny this form of mourning stating that the voice of a woman is part of her beauty, hence it should be concealed from men and therefore they should not weep!

In reply to the above statement, let us analyze the verse

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[100] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45

[101] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 98, Kitab al Mazaar, Al Dua wal Ziarah

[102] Maqtal Khawarizmi, volume 2

[103] Kamil al Ziaraat, chapter 108, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 98

in the holy Quran that states that the voice of a woman is considered as part of her beauty:

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلا مَعْرُوفًا

O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any of the (other) women: if you do fear (Allah), then do not speak in a soft (enticing) voice, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire: rather speak in the manner of enjoining the good[104]

Therefore it is evident that the type of speech forbidden is one that is enticing to men. Hence the prohibition of listening to their voices is not unconditional and absolute. And even if we suppose this was the case, then why would Allah permit the wives of the Holy Prophet who are elevated in status above all other women by saying:

وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ

And when you ask (his wives) for anything you want, ask them from behind a screen[105]

From the above verse we are able to conclude that the prohibition was not in asking questions to the wives of the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) (entailing hearing their voices), rather the prohibition was in looking at them.

The biography of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) contains numerous occasions whereby he would permit the women to mourn and would invoke mercy on their deceased. In fact he requested for a mourning ceremony to commemorate the martyrdom of his uncle - the king of martyrs - Hamza Ibn Abdul Muttalib, and when the Prophet's aunt Safiya and daughter Fatima (peace be upon

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[104] Quran 32:33

[105] Quran 33:53

her) began weeping, the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) joined them and wept as well and provided solace for them in the presence of all those companions who eventually narrated the event. Furthermore Sayeda Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon her) mourned her father day and night but the people of medina became irritated and asked Imam Ali (peace be upon him) to request her either to mourn during the day and remain quite at night or mourn during the night keeping silent during the day![106]

As a matter of fact, we are able to derive from a number of narrations that the wailing of women out of grief and sorrow for the martyrs of Karbala is approved by the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) such that Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him) includes them in his supplications as per the narration of Muawiya Ibn Wahab who narrates Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) having said: **"(O Lord!) Have mercy upon those who wail[107] (out of grief) for us"[108]**

Shaykh Saduq in Al Uyun narrates that when Di`bil Ibn Ali al Khuzaai recited the following eulogy in the presence of Imam Ali Al Ridha (peace be upon him) *"Had Fatima (Al Zahra) seen the crushed corpse of Husayn,*
And seen how he died thirsty besides the banks of the river Euphrates,

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[106] Tarikh Al Tabari, volume 2 whereby it is also stated: "The Prophet passed by the houses of his companions from the tribes Abdul Al-Ashhal and dhafar while they were mourning their kin (killed in battle) and his eyes were filled with tears and he wept and then said: "but there is no one to weep for and mourn Hamza". When Sa`ad Ibn Ma`adh and usayd Ibn Hudhayr returned to the quarters of the tribe of Abdul Al Ashhal they requested the women to mourn for the uncle of the Prophet of God

[107] **The exact Arabic word translated as "wail" is "sayha" which in the Arabic dictionary as per definition is a loud scream or shriek which emanates either from women or from men**

[108] Kamil Al Zaiarat, chapter 40, on the section of the supplications of the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali, Sayeda Zahra and the Imams (S) for the visitors of Imam Husayn (S)

Then she would have struck her face in grief, with tears streaming down her cheeks" - the women began weeping profusely and their wailing could be heard from behind the curtains, and Imam Ridha (peace be upon him) wept so profusely, until he fainted - and when he regained consciousness, he wept again till he fainted a second time.[109]

Abul Faraj Isfahani narrates in the book Al-Aghani: when Humayri visited Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him), The Imam seated the women from his household behind a veil and requested Humayri to euologize Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). The narrator mentions: **"I saw the tears of Imam Sadiq streaming down his cheeks, and the wailing (triggered by the overwhelming grief) could be heard from outside the house, such that they had to be consoled (and hence contained)"**

It is narrated in the al Kamil that Abi Haroon al Makfoof composed eulogies for Imam Abi Abdillah Al Sadiq (peace be upon him) such that he wept profusely and so did the women.[110]

And it is narrated in Al Kamil as well, on authority of Abdullah Ibn Ghalib: **"I visited Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) and eulogized Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) such that I heard the women weeping from behind the screens wailing out: "O our father!"**[111]

Indeed when Sayeda Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon him) approached the mosque to object to Abu Bakr`s claim, she wept so profusely that the people broke down into tears, and upon completing her sermon, she stood at the grave of her blessed father in tears, and picked up some soil from his grave scenting its fragrance and composed a heart rendering

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[109] Uyun Al Akhbar Al Ridha, volume 2

[110] Refer to kamil al Ziaraat chapter 33 for excerpts from the original poem recited.

[111] Refer to kamil al Ziaraat chapter 33 for excerpts from the original poem recited

eulogy.[112]

And it is narrated that on the eighth day after the demise of her blessed father, she visited his grave and began to weep and wail such that all the women and children (of Medina) joined her. A large assembly of people gathered around her, and the lights were dimmed so that the characteristics of the women may not be revealed.

And upon the martyrdom of Ameer Al Mu`mineen, Sayeda Zainab (peace be upon them) together with the other women began weeping, striking their faces, and wailing out aloud such that the residents of Kufa rushed out of their homes and the entire town trembled with the overwhelming display of grief and anguish.

These collections of narrations indicate very clearly the permissibility of women to mourn and wail in the presence of (unrelated) men. Indeed, Sayeda Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon her) did so, as was practised by a number of our Infallible Imams – by their womenfolk and others.

In Al Kafi, it is narrated by Abi Baseer: I was sitting with Imam Abi Abdillah (peace be upon him) and Um Khalid was refused permission to visit him by Yusuf Ibn Umar whereby the Imam said: "would you not like to hear what she has to say?" I replied in the affirmative and he sat me on a carpet and permitted her to come in speak though she was a mature woman."[113]

Had it been prohibited to listen to the voice of a woman, the Imam would not have permitted Abu Baseer to listen to her talk.

Therefore, a mourning ceremony that includes men and

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[112] Al Ihtijaj, volume 1 & 2, chapter on the objection of Sayeda Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon her) upon being denied Fadak. **The Arabic text has recorded the eulogy she recited as well**

[113] Al Furu' min al Kafi,volume 8, kitab al rawdhah, the speech of Abu Baseer with a woman

women is permissible, rather its level as an act of recommendation remains unchanged, even if it results to (unrelated) men hearing the mourning and wailing of women.

Dressing in a black attire

Black is a dull colour traditionally attributed with sorrow. It is by its very nature a symbol of grief used to convey the commemoration of sorrowful or grievous events.

This symbolism preceded the advent of Islam and continued to be practised even after it was established. Furthermore, it is not exclusive to Muslims only, rather it is universal. Rome, Germany, France and Russia traditionally used to mast their flag posts with a black clothe to commemorate grievous events such as the sinking of a ship, occurrence of an earthquake, or loss during battle. Furthermore, black is the universal attire colour worn during funeral ceremonies of close friends and relatives.

Similarly, the Shias have a legacy of commemorating the tragedy of Karbala by dressing in black attires, and draping the buildings and town walls in black as a symbol to commemorate and portray their sorrow simulating an environment of grief and sadness, while at the same time bringing to life the memory of the glorious revolution of the martyred and oppressed Imam (peace be upon him).

Just as a black attire affects the mood, it influences the psychological mindset of a person as well. Every time the Shias dress themselves in black, it reminds them that they are in a constant state of mourning for the horrendous tragedy that occurred in Karbala. It reminds them that they not only yearn for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) but also for the principles and goals which he represented - and to revolt not only against yazid (may he dwell in eternal damnation)[114], but against the principles and the goals which he represented.

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[114] **As well as those (individuals or organizations) who support his actions, or were/are indifferent to his oppression.**

Furthermore, a black attire is preferred while mourning because weeping is an expression of a temporary outburst of grief followed by silence and subsequent composure whereas the black dress impacts the mood of the person wearing it constantly reminding him and making him conscious of the reason of his grief.

In addition, the traditional social norms have always indicated that the person dressed in black has been afflicted by a tragedy, and hence it is natural that it should be a recommended act for every one mourning Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) to wear black while commemorating his martyrdom.

Dressing in a black attire while mourning, retains its place as a recommended act despite a standing view prohibiting the wearing of that colour. The reason is that such views are based on narrations that provide insufficient evidence, or are weak in their chains of narration, or both.

The author of Al Hadaiq mentions these set of narrations in his book and then adds the following statement in his footnotes: **"This does not negate the wearing of black attires while commemorating the mourning of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) due to the abundant presence of narrations enjoining the outward expression of grief in relation to him (peace be upon him)."**

It is evident when one researches the topic in relation to the clothes worn during prayer, that the most recommended colour is white, while all dark colours are less desirable, and black being the darkest of them all- it is least desirable. In any case, an action less desirable does not necessitate its prohibition.

As for the analysis of certain traditions in regards to the prevention of wearing black, this prevention is on the basis of "not desirable". This is because the grammatical composition of the traditions that denote causality indicates "less desirable" (*makrooh*) and not absolute abstention.

Furthermore, it is narrated in Wasail Ul Shia on

authority of Ameer Al Mu`mineen (peace be upon him): "do not wear black, for verily it was the dress (colour) of firawn"[115]. Here the prohibition is to wear black with the intention that firawn used to wear black and not an absolute prohibition on the colour black all together.

Therefore, the prohibition of wearing black because it is the colour of the enemies of God is a restricted prohibition, and hence, wearing black during a certain time period or during an entire lifespan due to commemoration of a tragedy or without any particular reason is not undesirable, as was practised by the Infallible Imams (peace be upon him).

Even if we were to hypothetically assume for argument sake that the narrations do indicate the absolute prohibition of wearing black, it would be obligatory to dismiss them or at the very most categorise it as an "undesirable act" because most of the Infallible Imams dressed in black while commemorating their grief, and otherwise.

Indeed the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) dressed in black - as is narrated in Mustadrak Al Shia off the narration of Shaykh Saduq in his Aamali on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) who states: "the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) once appeared dressed in a black robe whereby he was asked: 'who gave you this cloak O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "my beloved one..."[116]

It is narrated in Misbah Al Faqih on authority of Muawiyah Ibn amaar who narrates on authority of Imam

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[115] Wasail Al Shia, volume 3 – it is undesirable to wear black except the slippers, turban and outer robe (kisaa), bihar Al Anwar, volume 10, Ilal Ul Shara`ih, volume 2

[116] Mustadrak al Wasail,volume 3, chapter 17, Al Aamali of Shaykh Saduq, majlis 34 which additionally states:"...the chosen one, and the sincere believer in me – my brother, mmy successor and my inheritor; the first one to believe in Islam and the most sincere in faith, the most lenient of men, and the leader of them all after myself ...the Imam of all mankind Ali Ibn Abi Talib..."

Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"The Prophet entered Makkah on the day it was conquered (Fathul Makkah) wearing a black turban"**[117]

And it is narrated in Mustadrak as well: **"The Prophet used to pray while he was dressed in a black turban"**[118]

Imam Ameer Al Mu`mineen (peace be upon him)

It is narrated in Mustadrak on authority of Abi Dhiyan who states: **"We saw Imam Ali (peace be upon him) dressed in a yellow garment and draped with an outer robe black in colour."**[119]

Imam Al-Hasan Mujtaba(peace be upon him)

Imam Hasan Al Mujtaba (peace be upon him) dressed in black while mourning the martyrdom of his blessed father Imam Ameer Al Mu`mineen (peace be upon him). In the book Nasikh Al Tawarikh, the volume regarding the biography of Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) it is stated: "After Imam Ameer Al Mu`mineen (peace be upon him) was buried, Ibn Abbas announced to the people: "Verily Ameer al Mumineen (peace be upon him) has been martyred, and has appointed his successor... The people hereby began to weep and requested for the Imam to make an appearance before them. Imam Hasan Al Mujtaba (peace be upon him)therefore came to the mosque dressed in a black robe, ascended the pulpit and began his sermon..."

Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him)

It is narrated in al Wasail, al Kafi, Ruh Al Ma`ani and in numerous other books narrating the martyrdom of Imam

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[117] Mustadrak al Wasail, volume 3

[118] Mustadrak al Wasail, volume 3

[119] Mustadrak al Wasail, volume 3, Bihar al Anwar, volume 16

Husayn (peace be upon him) on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) stating that when Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred he was dressed in a black garment[120]

Imam Zainul Abideen (peace be upon him)

It is narrated in Mustadrak al Wasail that Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (peace be upon him) was seen wearing a black mantle and a black robe over it.

Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him)

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) regularly dressed in black to validate its permissibility, and the opinion of it being the dress of the people of hell fire does not necessitate its absolute prohibition. It is mentioned in Mustadrak Al Wasail on authority of Hadhiqah Ibn Mansoor: "I was with Imam Abi Abdillah (peace be upon him) when a messenger from the abbaside caliph summoned him, so He (peace be upon him) called for a rain coat – black on one side, white on the inside, and wore it. Imam Abi Abdillah (peace be upon him then said: "would I wear it knowing that it is the dress of the people of hell?"[121]

In Mustadrak al Wasail and Ilal al Shari`i it is narrated on authority of Dawood Al Riqqi: "The shias came to question Imam Aba Abdillah (peace be upon him) on the permissibility of wearing black, whereby we found him seated dressed in a black garment, wearing a black cap, and black slippers with black interiors. He then said: "**whiten your heart and wear (any colour) you like.**"

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[120] Al Kafi, volume 2

[121] Ilal al Sharaih, volume 2, chapter on the reason of the permissibility of wearing black while praying, Wasail Al Shia, volume 2, chapter on undesirability of wearing black save socks, turban and outer robe

Imam Ali Ibn Muhammad Al Hadi (peace be upon him)

In Dalail al Tabari it is narrated on authority of Abu Abdillah Al Qummi, on authority of Muhammad Ibn Ismail who narrates on authority of his father: "I was in Samarra when I came across Yazdad the Christian doctor who was making his way from Musa Ibn Bafaa`s house. We walked together for a while during which he asked me if I knew the owner of a house which we just passed. After replying in the negative, He told me it was the house of an Alawi youth from Hijaz (Arabia) - Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn Al Ridha (peace be upon him). I then asked him what the importance of this information was whereby he said: "if there is anybody who possesses knowledge of the unseen, then it is he (Imam Al Hadi (peace be upon him))." I asked him how it could be. He first put me under oath not to disclose this discussion to anyone since he was a reputable doctor well known by the ruling abbasid regime of the time. On the other hand, Imam Al Hadi (peace be upon him) was brought from Hijaz to Samarra and detained so that the people would not be able to interact with him (consequently increasing his popularity). He then narrated the following: "I met Imam Ali Al Hadi (peace be upon him) before a few days riding a black horse, dressed in a black robe and wearing a back turban. His complexion was tanned as well. As I saw him, I stood humbly out of respect for him but uttered in my heart: "There is no truth save Christianity" I then thought to myself: " a black robe, black horse and a black turban - black on black in black" - These were thoughts that occupied my mind and I never said them out aloud. At this moment, the Imam cast a glance at me and said: "your heart is much darker than the colours you see with your eyes". I remained quite and did not know how to answer back, so I replied to him saying: "how pure your heart must be to be able to know this" the Imam replied by saying: "God is All-knowing." After this incident, Yazdad called for me again and said to me; "my heart has been guided after it

was astray - I bear witness that there is no god but Allah - The One with no partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and that Ali Ibn Muhammad is God`s vicegerent on earth and the conveyor of Gods message" He then died as a result of the ailment he suffered from and I participated in his funeral rites.[122]

From the above recorded incidents of history, we are able to deduce the permissibility of wearing black attires while mourning. Indeed, it is not only the humans who have a dress particular to grief, but other creations as well. It is narrated by Ibn Quwaylah in his biik Kamil al Ziarah on authority of Hisham Ibn Sa`ad on authority of Al Mashiyqha: "The angel who conveyed the news of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn Ibn ali (peace upon him) to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) was the angel of the seas. In addition, an angel from the heavens of *firdaws* descended upon the seas and spread out its wings and shrieked out in a loud voice: **"O residents of the seas! Dress yourselves in the garments of grief for verily the grandson the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has been butchered!"** The angel then carried some grains of sand from the plains of karbala on its wings and ascended the heavens. There did not remain any angel in the skies except that they smelt from its fragrance and were deeply moved by it. As a result, they all prayed to Allah not to encompass the Imam's killers with His Mercy.[123]

We are not able to constrict the connotation of this narration because we do not know who is referred to as the "residents of the seas" - whether they are from the animals that are water borne or some species of jinn or angels. Similarly we are not able to deduce what exactly their garments of grief consist of. The unknown nature of this

[122] Bihar al Anwar, volume 50

[123] Kamil al Ziarat, chapter 21

narration does not legitimize its denial or rejection, however it does indicate that wearing a particular attire to convey grief is natural - rather it is an act that is highly recommended even for the residents of the seas when done in commemoration for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), not to forget, that this precedence was set for us by the Infallible Imams throughout their history.

As well, it is narrated by Al Barqi in his book Al-Mahasin on authority of Umar Ibn Ali Ibn Husayn: "After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), the women of Bani Hashim used to be dressed in black seated in the veranda of their houses indifferent to the heat or cold while commemorating mourning ceremonies (for the slayed Imam) while Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (peace be upon him) would prepare food for the (mourning) gathering.[124]

This tradition continued throughout the history of the remaining Imams whereby they and their shias would dress in black attires from the first day of Muharram up till the 9th day of Rabi` al Awwal.

It is narrated by Ahmad Ibn Ishaaq Al Qummi on authority of Imam Abi Muhammad Al Hasan al Askari on authority of Imam Ameer al Mu`mineen (peace be upon him) in regards to the merits of the 9th day of Rabi` Al Awwal: **"This is a day of joy, and elimination of grief and sorrow - it is the second Ghadeer[125] - the day of regret for the**

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[124] Kitab al Mahasin, bihar Al Anwar, volume 45

[125] **This was the day when upon the command of Allah the Almighty, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) officially designated Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib as his successor on the 18th of Dhil Hijjah in front of a crowd of 120,000 people. For more information, refer to the book Al Ghadeer by Allamah Amini. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) is narrated to have said: "the day of Ghadeer is the best of Eids for the people of my nation...it is the day the religion was perfected..." (Aamali of Shaykh Saduq). It is narrated by Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): "...It is the greatest Eid of Allah. Indeed, each and every prophet sent by Allah celebrated this day as an Eid and observed its sanctity..." (Wasail Al Shia, volume 7, chapter 40, Al Tahdheeb, volume 3**

oppressors"[126] This is a small excerpt of his long sermon in which many realities are uncovered.

It is narrated by Sayid Ibn Tawoos in his book Al-Iqbal off Kitan Al Nashr wal Tayy on authority of Imam Ridha (peace be upon him): "on the day of Judgement, four days shall be presented with splendour and glory - the day of Adha, the day of Fitra, the day of Friday, and the day of Ghadeer - and verily the day of Ghadeer is between Adha and Fitra, while Friday is like the moon between the stars. It is the day on which Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was granted safety from the fire....and the day of wearing (new) clothes and removing the black ones.[127]

This tradition shall continue till the re-appearance of Imam Al Hujjah (May Allah hasten his reappearance) and His slogan shall be **"vengeance for Al Husayn"** and one of his indications shall be a black attire.

It is narrated in the book al Wasail on aouthority of ali Ibn Mughira on authority of Imam Abu Jafar (peace be upon him): "It is as if I am by Abdullah Ibn Shareek Al Amiri - on him a black turban whose ends fall over his shoulders, standing elevated on the mountain infront of the Qaim of the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) while there are four thousand glorifying Allah.[128]

Ibn Shareek al Amiri`s lineage does not return back to lineage of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and hence cannot be wearing a black turban to symbolize that his lineage traces back to that of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), rather it is a symbol of displaying his grief for Imam Husayn (peace be

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[126] Bihar al anwar, volume 95

[127] Iqbal Ul A`amaal – merits of the day of ghadeer

[128] Wasail al Shia, volume 3

upon him)[129]. Similarly the slogan of the companions of the Awaited Imam (May Allah hasten his reappearance) – "Vengeance for Al-Husayn" – is a signification that it shall be a revolution against those who have oppressed Islam – which in turn has survived due to the sacrifice of those such as Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)

[129] **It is common in this day and age that anyone who dresses in a black turban as we see, refers his lineage to that of the Holy prophet (peace be upon him). It may be probable that the Imam is not referring to the same style of turban that we commonly see today – it may be a reference to any cloth or covering on the head which is black in colour. Allah knows best.**

Shaqq Al Jayb (to tear the seam of the outer garment)[130]

To tear the seam of the outer garment is a natural response which an aggrieved person may resort to when he is afflicted with a tragedy greater in magnitude than what he may be able to bear. Whenever a person is afflicted with such a tragedy, his body temperature begins to rise (due to the aggravation), such that the rate of his heartbeat increases as well. He therefore needs to breathe faster lest he faints, and he begins to breathe in quick gasps as he feels his body temperature rising, and in the process he rips or tears open the seam of his garment as a natural response to the overwhelming heat and aggravation he feels. This type of response is similar to just like how a person would subconsciously close his eyelids in response to a threat he feels around his eyes. Hence due to its nature and occurrence as an subconscious response to a grief, it is deemed permissible by the Religion.

Al Kashi as well as other scholars through a number of different sources has narrated: "Abu Muhammad[131] accompanied the bier of Abul Hasan[132] (during his funeral) while his outer robe was ripped across the seams. Abu Awn Al Abrash therefore wrote to him saying: "have you seen or

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[130] One of the goals behind this chapter is to prove the permissibility of tearing the seam of the outer garment as a means of expressing anguish. As well, the unfamiliar reader may acknowledge and appreciate the different forms of expressing grief permissible in Islam as practised by different people and different cultures across the globe, keeping in mind that Islam is a universal religion and teaches us tolerance and brotherhood across all ethnicities.

[131] Agnomen referring to Imam Hasan Al Mujtaba (peace be upon him)

[132] Agnomen referring to the Prince of Believers Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him)

heard of any divinely appointed leader tearing the seam of their outer robe as you did?" Imam Abu Muhammad (peace be upon him) wrote back by saying: "...Indeed, Moses did so (in grief) over Aaron's death."[133]

Shaykh Mufeed narrates on authority of Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (peace be upon him): "my father Al Husayn (peace be upon him) recited the following poem:

"O Time! Fie upon you for a friend!
How many do you have at dawn and at dusk..."

When my aunt Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her) heard this, she beat her cheeks, tearing the seam of her outer most robe, and fainted.[134]

Sayyid Ibn Tawoos narrates: "...and yazid (may he dwell in eternal damnation) ordered the ropes to be loosened (from around their necks) and the (blessed) head of Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was placed in front of him. The women were made to sit behind him such that they could not see what he does, he then displayed it (the blessed head) to Ali Ibn Husayn (peace be upon him) and he didn't eat after that (except that he wept), and as for Lady Zaynab (peace be upon her), when she saw the blessed head, she clutched on to the seam of her outer robe thereby tearing it, and wept out in a painful and heart rendering voice: "O Husayn!"[135]

Sayyid Hashim Al Bahrani narrates in Al Dama'atul Sakibah that when the Bani Hashim halted at Karbala on their way back to medina, they wept and lamented - and commemorated mourning ceremonies for three days. **Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) then ripped the seam across her outer robe shrieking in a painful voice: "O Husayn! O beloved one of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his**

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[133] Bihar al Anwar, volume 50

[134] Bihar al Anwar, volume 45

[135] Al Luhoof fi Qutala Al Tufoof

progeny)! O son of Mecca and Mina! O son of Fatima al Zahra (peace be upon her)! O son of Ali Al Muradha!..." until she lost conciousness.

It is narrated in Al Tahdheeb on authority of Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"The Fatimiyaat[136] tore the seams of their outer robes, and struck their cheeks out of grief for Al Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him) - and it is upon the likes of people such as Al Husayn (peace be upon him) that the cheeks should be struck and the garments should be torn"[137]**

As narrated previously, Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) and the rest of the women ripped the seam of their outer robes and struck their cheeks out of grief during the martyrdom of Ameerul Mu`mineen Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him)

The sacred Religion has permitted the tearing of the outer seam of the robe as a method of expressing grief in regards to the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and all the Infallible Imams. Rather, it has also permitted it in regards to the death of family members as well - except upon the death of a child and wife. As for the women, there is no restriction upon them.

It is narrated in Jawahir Al Kalaam on authority of Khalid ibn Sadeer: "I asked Abu Abdillah (peace be upon him) about a man who tore his garment on account of his grief over his father, mother, brother, and upon his close ones." **The Imam replied: "there is no harm in tearing the (seam across the) outer garment. Indeed, Moses tore his robe over his brother Aaron's death - and a father should not tear his garment (out of grief) for his son nor for his wife - but a wife may tear (the seam across) the outer robe (out of grief)**

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[136] **A reference to the women from the household of the Imam (peace be upon him)**

[137] Tahdheeb Al Ahkam, volume 8

over her husband – indeed, the Fatimiyaat struck their cheeks, and tore the seams of their outer robes (in distress) over (the tragedy of) Al Husayn (peace be upon him) – and it is upon the like of Al Husayn (peace be upon him) that the (outer) garments should be torn and the cheeks should be struck."[138]

The above are all authenticated narrations. Scholars such Al Muhaqqiq Ibn Idrees have unanimously accepted the permissibility to act upon these narrations.

Therefore, there is no prohibition in tearing the (seam of the outer) garment (as a gesture of grief) except in two situations. Rather, not only is it permissible, but it is a recommended action in regards to Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him) as it is considered as a means of expressing grief over the tragedy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), and as well as the direct narrations in it being a recommended act as per the traditions of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) as recorded in books such as Al Tahdheeb, and others.

[138] Tahdheeb Al Ahkam, volumem 8, Wasail Al Shia, volume 15

Latam [139]

Indeed every Shia in every era until the day of judgement is and will be deeply afflicted and overcome by grief due to the tragedy of Karbala. As a result of his faith, the anguish he experiences is unquantifiable – to the extent that no other personal affliction can be considered greater than that of Karbala.

It is through an event such as Karbala - from within the depths of oppression that the sublimity of the Ahlul Bayt (S) shined like a bright light, and the wickedness of the Bani Umayya became apparent through their savage behaviour. It is this ultimate battle between honour and wickedness that rouses the emotions of every person who has even the slightest inclination towards Ahlul Bayt (S) – rather it stirs up the emotions of any person who inclines towards the basic principles of humanity.

Because of the fact that this disastrous calamity befell upon a saintly personality who is revered as the third divinely appointed Successor of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) - the son of the daughter of the Prophet of God (peace be upon her), it stirs up an even more intense religious fervour within every person who adheres to the true beliefs portrayed by Shiaism. Hence the combination of emotion (extreme grief) and passionate religious zeal results in one experiencing an explosive level of sorrow - one which is

[139] **Latam as per the renonwned lexicons Lisan Al Arab and Majma'ul Bahrayn refers to hitting the cheeks or any part of the body with the palm of the hand. In context of the subject i.e. mourning for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), latam denotes striking or hitting of the cheeks, chest or head with ones palms as an expression of severe anguish.**

unmatched by any personal tragedy or affliction.[140]

Any person afflicted by a catastrophe experiences a severe level of sorrow. If it remains constricted within the heart with no proper means to vent this sorrow, it causes negativity and aggravation in his outward behaviour due to the emotional imbalance. Hence it is important for a person to express his grief in a manner that is proportional to the sorrow he internally experiences hence venting it and returning to a state of emotional balance.

Therefore, if the grief is due to simple issues, one may achieve relief by simply talking out his problems – the expression is verbal. Sometimes, if the cause of the grief is at a larger scale, then one may relieve his grief by verbally expressing it and by crying. Similarly, as the magnitude of the grief increases, the form of expression utilized to relieve one's self from it also increases in proportion.

Similarly, since the tragedy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is the most heart rendering tragedy experienced by the Shias – with unparalleled anguish, they obtain relief (vent out the grief) by utilizing every form of expression possible.

In addition to the extreme sorrow experienced due to Karbala, the strict prohibition to manifest and express this grief imposed upon the Shias throughout their history added an even more intensity and desperation in their hearts. Hence it was but a natural reaction, that when given the opportunity,

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[140] The magnitude of the tragedy of Karbala is two fold: the nature of the brutality and oppression demonstrated by the forces of bani umayya, and secondly, the fact that it was carried out on the Representative of God on earth – the Imam who is the flesh and blood of the Holy Prophet - to love him is to love the Prophet, and to oppress him is to oppress the Holy Prophet as per the prophetic narration: "Husayn is from me, and I am from Husayn – Allah loves the one who loves Husayn." (Kunzul Ammal, volume 12, Ibn Asakir), It is narrated on authority of Ibn Abbas that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) said in reference to Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (peace be upon them): "Whoever loves these two loves me, and whoever antagonizes them antagonizes me. (Kunzul Ammaal, volume 12, Ibn Asakir)

they collectively took to the streets to express their sorrow by way of mass communal ceremonies.

The Shias were consistently persecuted by the oppressive regimes of the Bani Umayya and Bani Abbas and were limited in their freedom to express their grief for Imam Hausayn (peace be upon him). However, as the political climates changed and they gained relative respite from the ruling powers over time, their methods in expressing grief evolved in many ways. I have categorized their history into five eras as listed below:

The first era: the age of the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) whereby expressing grief was severely restricted. A group of shias would typically gather in one of the houses whereby a person from them would recite poetry or a eulogy in honour of the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) and the people would weep silently and secretly in fear from the oppressive government persecuting them or having them imprisoned in the darkest of dungeons. And if the women were not able to suppress their wailing or shrieking from being heard in the streets, they would seek excuse from the authorities for doing so by saying that they were weeping the death of their young child.

The second era: the age of the Bani Abbas who initially rose to power by using the slogan: "to avenge the blood of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)". They hence defined themselves in black attires – in honour of the martyrs of Karbala. But despite obtaining power using the grievances of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) they immediately apostated against Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) upon gaining the government because they realized that the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was not solely against the Bani Umayya (in name), but against every tyrant in every age - therefore to allow the remembrance of his revolution would be against their very own interests just as it was against the interests of the Bani Umayya. So they attempted to eliminate

the remembrance of the Imam and regressed on their faith, and went back on the pledge which they made to the entire nation which supported them in gaining power on the basis and principles of the revolution of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). So they took a bewildering stance (against Imam Husayn) that perpetuated until the last days of their dynasty – some of them destroyed the holy shrine –while others condemned the visitation to his grave, and others would decapitate and chop off the hands of those who went to visit Imam Husayn`s (peace be upon him) shrine. Despite all these tyrants` collective efforts to limit the remembrance of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and Shia`ism as a creed, the mourning ceremonies became nothing but more intense in grief and larger in numbers - in honour of the king of martyrs. This resulted in collective mourning even though it was faced by limitations.

The third era: the age of the Buyid, Daylami and Fatimid dynasty – and particularly that period of the daylami who allowed the Shias to express their beliefs and grief. They gave the Shias the opportunities to conduct mourning ceremonies from outside the confines of their houses and into the streets and public squares. They announced the day of Ashura as an official day of grief[141] whereby all trading and commercial markets were closed for the day. They coordinated and orchestrated all the processions and ceremonies that denoted the commemoration of the tragedy of Karbala in the streets and public squares.

The fourth era: The age of the Safavids, and in particular the period of Allamah Al Majlisi who dynamically encouraged and supported the practise and conduction of mourning ceremonies with utmost freedom (in public). It is here that re-enacting *(tamtheel)* of the tragedy was established.

The fifth era: The age of the later scholars such as

[141] **In other words a public holiday**

Shaykh Murtadha Al Ansari and Ayatullah Al Derbandi whereby participation of shias in self flaggetion[142] and *tathbir* dramatically increased after a period where it was limited in practise.

The reality is that shi`aism, since the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) has suffered violent blows one after the other, and it is their right (of the shias) to express their grief. Had the shias during the age of the Infallible Imams had any freedom, they would have established and participated in the same mourning ceremonies present today – or even more. They were however suppressed by the tyrant governments of their time which imposed severe restrictions and were determined in eliminating Shiasm as a creed altogether. The Shias were however resolute –many times challenging these oppressive powers; sometimes collectively and sometimes individually sacrificing themselves to attain the freedom to weep for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). These struggles consistently took place across the passage of time until they were able to express their sorrow for the Imam with total freedom in the way we do today.

The first procession which the shias publicly demonstrated involved the *latam*. They synchronized it such that groups of shias during the first ten days of Muharram, or on the death ceremony of any Infallible Imam (peace be upon them) would gather at any revered place and systematically beat their chests in an environment of remorse and grief – and perhaps they slapped their faces and beat their heads. They (men) therefore remove their shirts and lament by beating their chests in a grievous manner coordinated to the sorrowful recitation of eulogies that narrate the painstaking tragedies that befell the household of the Holy prophet (peace be upon them). Between every new stanza of a eulogy, a chorus to

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[142] Which includes hitting the backs and shoulders with chains in marked processions as will be explained in detail in subsequent chapters

which all people repeatedly respond is recited. This formal procedure of lamentation and coordinated beating of the chests is known as *latam*.

Sometimes, the people commemorate the *latam* in a particular place, or at other times assemble at a particular place and then collectively walk out in huge processions onto the streets in a carefully orchestrated manner - systematically beating their chests to the recitals of short poems. This procession usually then ends at a mosque, shrine, or any other revered place.

Naturally, when such a procession takes to the streets, onlookers and passer-bys gather around the procession or on the side-walks of the streets to witness and listen to the painful recitation of eulogies amidst a background resonance emanating from the rythematic beating of the chests in an environment filled with grief and sorrow, such that they themselves begin to beat their chests as well and participate in this gesture of expressing anguish – they break into tears as each one envisions the tragedy of Karbala, and the entire town is enveloped in an atmosphere of emotion highlighted by sorrow and anguish – this level of emotion or this sort of environment and fervour cannot be simulated even by the most articulate of orators. This is because a speaker, no matter how eloquent he may be, is limited to expressing himself though words and hence the affect he may have on the listeners is limited, whereas a procession such as the one described has the potential to engulf and propel an entire city into a mode of grief and high emotion such that every resident is affected in one way or the other.

Chest beating or *latam* is a highly emotional form of expressing the intense grief experienced by a person – hence it is a practise not limited to a certain time or generation, nor particular to a certain ethnicity or culture, and as a matter of fact, as indicated in some narrations, it is not a practise limited to this world only as the heavenly maids performed *latam* in

grief of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) as narrated in Ziarah al Nahiya: **"and the heavenly maids struck themselves (while) lamenting you"** Furthermore, Di`bil composed the following eulogy in the presence of Imam Al Ridha (peace be upon him):

"Had Fatima (Al Zahra) seen the crushed corpse of Husayn,
And seen how he died thirsty besides the banks of the river Euphrates,
Then she would have struck her face in grief, with tears streaming down her cheeks"

Imam Ridha (peace be upon him) did not stop and question di`bil as to how he knew (or assumed) that Lady Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon her) strikes her face out of grief, because it is simply a natural emotional expression of grief by one who has been afflicted by a severe tragedy.

It is sufficient to prove the permissibility of *latam* (striking the chest, face or head) as a means of lamenting the holy household of the Prophet and in particular Imam Husayn (peace be upon them) due to lack of any narration prohibiting it. This is based on the general ruling: **"all things are permissible unless its prohibition has been stated"**

There are three categories of proof that indicate striking of the chest (*latam*) is a recommended act of worship:

1st category: general indications that encourage lamentation on Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) like the prophetic tradition when he informed Lady Fatima Al Zahra about the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and she was overcome with distress, he described the shias as being those **"who will revive the lamentation (over the martyrdom of her son) generation after generation"**[143] *Latam* (chest beating) falls under one of the many categories of lamentation (and expression of grief).

2nd category: Specific indications that demonstrate the

[143] Bihar Al anwar, volume 44

desirability (i.e. recommended acts) of performing *latam* (chest beating) like the two traditions from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) – one of them narrated in Al Jawahir on authority of Khalid Bin Sadeer, and the other narrated by Shaykh Tusi in Al Tahdheeb: **"... they tore (the seams of) their (outer) robes, and they struck their cheeks out of grief for Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him) and it is upon the likes of him (Husayn Ibn Ali) that the cheeks should be struck and the (outer) robes should be torn"**[144]

3rd category: specific indications that the women from the household of the Prophet struck themselves *(latam)* in grief for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) during his lifetime, and after his martyrdom which have been previously mentioned. As well, in a majority of the books narrating the epic of Karbala, the following text is widely quoted: **"When Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) reached Karbala and informed them of his fate and that of his family, the women began to weep, and struck their faces out of grief, tearing the seams across their (outer) robes"**

And on the night of Ashura when the Imam (peace be upon him) composed a poem signifying the time of his martyrdom was fast approaching, lady Zainab (peace be upon her) struck her face, ripping the seam across the outer robe and bitterly wept while the other women wept with her while hitting their cheeks. And when Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) delivered his final sermon in front of the enemies on the day of Ashura, the women upon hearing his words began to weep while striking themselves (latam)[145]

And in a narration by Shaykh Mufeed in which he describes the 11th day of Muharram: **"...and his women were made to mount camels without saddles and were paraded as captives similar to the way roman and Turkish slaves were**

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[144] Tahdheeb al Ahkam, Shaykh Tusi, volume 8, chapter of Kaffaraat

[145] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45

paraded and the women saw the corpses (of their dear ones) they wept and wailed and struck their faces (out of grief). And when they were brought into the evil palace in Sham[146], the women were wailing while striking their cheeks..."[147]

At this point, two questions must be addressed;

<u>First question</u>: Are the actions of the household of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) a binding proof upon us?

The answer is two dimensional:

Firstly, if were to suppose that the actions of the household of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) are not a binding proof upon us, then the acknowledgement of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) during his lifetime, and the acknowledgement of Imam Zaynul Abideen and Imam Muhammad Al Baqir (peace be upon them all) after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is a binding proof (hujjah), and the women struck their faces in the presence of these Infallible Imams who did not prohibit their actions. Had they prohibited (or condemned) these actions, then the impermissibility of such manifestation of grief would be incorporated within the rulings of Islam, and such a prohibition would have been known (through narrations). In conclusion, the acknowledgement (of an Infallible Imam) of such manifestation of grief in their presence is a binding proof upon us in regards to the permissibility of *latam* (striking the

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[146] The remains of the palace of yazid still stands to date. It is known as masjid al ammawi. The site stands witness till today to the cruelty and oppression faced by the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) at the hands of yazid and his satanic allies.

[147] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45

face, cheeks or chest)[148]

Secondly, it is not acknowledged that the deeds (and actions) of the household of Imam Husayn (peace be upon them) are not a binding proof because they were not infallible - rather their actions are a binding proof (hujjah) just as the words of the high ranking scholars (ulema) are a binding proof (hujjah) upon us in matters of recognizing and discovering Islamic laws even though they are not infallible. Therefore, being infallible is not a prerequisite when determining whether a certain person's words or actions are a binding proof (hujjah), else a great part of Islam would have been invalidated - even during the age of the Infallible Imams because they (the Imams) (generally) did not have the opportunity to directly preach the rulings of Islam to the masses, except to a limited number of companions. As for the mass public in every generation, they learnt the rulings of Islam from other than the Infallibles, rather the Infallible Imams permitted for the rulings of religion to be learnt from the trustworthy (authentic

[148] Refer to Mabadiul Al usool, Shaykh Al Fadhli , pg 23– chapter of proofs in deriving Islamic rulings. An Islamic ruling in regards to an action either being obligatory, prohibited, desirable or undesirable is established through four sources: The Quran, the Ahadith , Sunnah of Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) and Ijmaa'h. The sunnah of the Ahlul Bayt includes any action they performed, any verbal verdict on a given action, and their acknowledgement i.e. tacit approval of an action committed in their presence. The approval may be denoted by their silence, because if an action was to be performed in their presence which is in violation to the commandments of God, then it is obligatory upon them to condemn that action and guide that person.

and sincere) believers (known as *wuthaqa*)[149].
Therefore, if it is sufficient that the rulings of Islam may be learnt from an authentic and trustworthy believer (*thiqah*) such that his words and actions are a binding proof (*hujjah*), then how can we discredit the actions of the household of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)? Undoubtedly, they are those who were born and raised, and nurtured under the direct guardianship of a number of Infallible Imams and hence attained the highest level of knowledge (and piety) and are the peak of emulation in matters pertaining to the rulings and verdicts of Islam.
Another factor that indicates that the actions of the household of Imam Husayn (peace be upon them) are a binding proof is that Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) permitted the tearing of the seam across the outer robe based on the actions of the women from the household of Imam Husayn[150] (peace be upon him) from two narrations:
1st narration: the narration in Jawahir al Kalaam on authority of Khalid Ibn Sudayr who narrates: "I asked Aba Abdillah (peace be upon him) about a person who ripped his robe out

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[149] A person once approached Imam Ridha (peace be upon him) saying that he lived far away and could not always travel to visit him. He therefore asked the Imam, what he should do in such a situation when it came to matters of religion (that needed clarifications or explanations). The Imam (peace be upon) replied to him by telling him to take his religion (i.e. emulate) from Zakariyya Ibn Adam Al Qummi because he was a trustworthy believer (*thiqah*) – refer to "duroos mujiza fi ilmay al rijal wal dirayah" - chapter o how to establish credibility of a narrator, authored by Ayatullah Ja`far Subhani. We are therefore able to conclude, that in addition to obtaining Islamic rulings from the Infallibles (who are the primary source) we are permitted to obtain Islamic rulings from other personalities who are fallible but possess lofty traits and characteristics such as piety, righteousness, justice. For a detailed outline of these characteristics, one may refer to the books in the science of traditions (Ilm Rijal).

[150] This tradition indicates the sublime status of the women from the household of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) such that Imam sadiq (peace be upon him) – an Infallible representative of Allah establishes the permissibility of an action based on the actions of these divine and pious women.

of grief for (the demise of) his father, or mother, or brother, or any close relative. The Imam replied: **"there is no problem in that. Indeed Musa Ibn Imran (peace be upon him) ripped his robe (in grief over the death of) his brother Harun...and indeed, the women from the household of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)[151] ripped their robes and struck their cheeks (in grief) over (the martyrdom) of Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him)[152]**

2nd narration: The narration by shaykh Tusi in Al Tahdheeb, on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) whereby he states: **"the fatimiyaat tore the seams across their outer robes and they struck their cheeks (out of grief) for Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him), and it is for the likes of him (Imam Al Husayn) that the cheeks should be struck and the robes should be torn)"** [153]

The second question: Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) on the night of Ashura himself prohibited the women from his household from manifesting their grief in such a way when he advised them by saying: **"O my sister! O um kulthum, and you O Zainab!, and you O Fatima! And you Rubab! When I am killed, then do not tear your outer robes, and do not graze your faces (in anguish) or say anything demeaning"[154]**

The answer to this is two dimensional:

Firstly, he asked his women to refrain from manifesting and expressing their grief and distress during the immediate time of when he was going to be killed such that the enemies would not (have an additional reason to) rejoice and gloat

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[151] **Collectively known as Fatimiyaat in the narrations**

[152] Wasail Al Shia, volume 15, chapter 31

[153] Tahdheeb al Ahkam, volume 8

[154] Al-Luhoof fi Qutala Al Tufoof

(over their anguish).[155] Therefore, the restriction (to manifest grief) was one that was limited to that specific period only and not after his martyrdom whereby the enemies couldn't gloat or taunt him. Verily, the Imam (peace be upon him) expressed the same reason on the night of Ashura when Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) tore the seam across her outer robe and struck her face while lamenting, whereby he said to her: "please stop lest the people gloat (taunt us) over our misfortune."[156]

And on the day of Ashura when she was overwhelmed with distress, The Imam (peace be upon him) said to her: "...lest the enemies jeer me and taunt me over my misfortune..."

Therefore, the advise against such display and manifestation of grief was for a limited period only and for a specific reason - and this is what was understood by the womenfolk hence they endured their sorrow and (painfully) restrained the display of their grief during that particular time, and thereafter, they manifested their grief and distress until their (blessed) souls departed from this world.

Secondly, the Imam restricted the manifestation of grief for the specific (painful) period involving his martyrdom because He was well aware that after being killed, the enemies would attack the tents - and the children and infants would be exposed to the marauding enemies and risk being trampled by the horses. At this instance, the responsibility of the women was to gather and protect the children from the vicious enemies – hence it was quintessential for the women to demonstrate endurance (and not display their grief no matter how painful it may be) - so the restriction was not to not

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[155] **This is a form of humiliation the Imam wanted to avoid – for him to see his womenfolk openly weeping exposed to the marauding enemies while he is not able to protect them (due to his injuries) and thus be the subject of painful taunts. Some verbal insults and taunts tear the heart apart and are more painful than the pain suffered from spears and arrows.**

[156] Bihar Al anwar, volume 44, Al Luhoof fi Qutala Al Tufoof

manifest grief and distress altogether, but for that limited time period, because if they were to break down into tears and weeping and wailing, then the children would be left unprotected and exposed to the danger (and subsequent death at the hands of the marauding enemies. So the objective in asking the women to endure and not manifest their grief was so that they may protect the orphans.[157]

Therfore, this restriction was limited to a certain time period and is similar to the admonishment for his daughter Sukaina (peace be upon her) when he saw her weep while he was biding farewell to the womenfolk - so he consoled her with words of patience as elaborated in the following poem:

Do not burn my heart with your sorrowful tears so long as my soul is within my body, for when I am killed, you are most deserving of expressing your anguish, O best of women!

If beating or striking the chest (or cheeks) is permissible, then in order to revive lamentation over Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), it becomes an absolutely recommended act.

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[157] Ayatullah Sadiq Al Shirazi asserts the same notion with grammatical proof stating that the word ((اذا translated as "when" in the above narration denotes a particle representing a temporary time period. This temporary refrain from weeping was so that the women could compose themselves and concentrate their efforts and attention on protecting the children and orphans from the marauding enemies which in itself was a great task that could not have been performed had the women broken down into tears and expression of grief.

This analysis illustrates two important points: Firstly, the precision of words in the Arabic language, and secondly the courage and "jihad" of the women in Karbala which they were faced with after the immediate martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him).

Dharb Al Salalseel (to hit with the chains)

The procession of *salaseel* involves a group of people (men) in a particular place who convene to mourn Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), and they adorn black shirts which are exposed from the back – shirts specifically deigned for this type of procession, they then hold on to metal chains bound together and use it to hit their backs and shoulders in a systematic manner coordinated to the beats of drums and cymbals that stimulate an intense war like atmosphere.

The procession then spreads out onto the streets as they make their way to a shrine or mosque. Together with the resonance from the systematic hits of the chains against the backs to the beats of drums and cymbals, the people chant eulogies and slogans such as: **"O Oppressed...O Husayn...O martyr...O Husayn...O thirsty one...O Husayn"**

Such a form of mass demonstration of grief was initially practised by the Turks, and then adapted by all the different ethnicities within the creed of Shiaism who went on to perform this practise wherever they lived around the globe. Such a procession rouses an extremely emotional environment and affects the entire residents of a city – much more than the procession of *latam* (chest beating) due to its intensity.

Such an action, through its primary ruling i.e. by its very own nature is permissible, but when analyzed through its secondary ruling[158], it becomes a recommended act as it

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[158] **Islamic rulings can be divided and categorized in a number of ways depending on the type of analysis. One of these divisions is: All rulings are divided into two:**

- **Primary ruling (Hukm Al-Awwali) – this describes the permissibility or prohibition of an action as per its own nature – e.g. drinking water in itself is permissible.**
- **Secondary ruling (Hukm al Thanawi) – this describes the permissibility or prohibition of an action with consideration of the external factors that surround it. These factors compel a change in the primary ruling – e.g. drinking water in itself is permissible, but if**

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falls under the category of displaying distress over the tragedy of Imam Husayn (Peace be upon him) because each and every action that indicates grief, distress and anguish as a result of the tragedies that befell Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is commendable so long as it does not lead to death or permanent damage of any limb.

Rather, the conclusion derived through all the narrations indicate that to feel pain in all its different ways out of anguish for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is recommended and praiseworthy[159]. The different words in the traditions denoting (feeling) pain exceed to more than fifty – some of which include: *latam* (striking or beating the face or chest) as per the narrations of Sayeda Zainab (peace be upon her) and (experiencing) anxiety and (displaying) distress as per the traditions of Um Ayman, weeping blood in place of tears as mentioned in Ziarah al Nahiya, and expression of anguish as per the narration of the Holy Prophet (peace be

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a person was to be stranded in a desert and his survival depends on drinking water, then keeping in mind the situation and external factors, the ruling on drinking water changes from permissible to obligatory – refer to Mabadiul Usool, shaykh Fadhli, chapter on category of rulings, pg 8

[159] This is the heart of the argument. It is about experiencing the pain and expressing anguish over the most gruesome catastrophe to occur on the face of this planet. The womenfolk were mercilessly whipped on their backs and shoulders as well as hit with spears. For the lovers of the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) who hit their backs and shoulders with chains, it is a form of participating in the pain endured by the women of the household of the Prophet for the sake of preserving the values of this religion – rather it is a pure symbol indicating that had they been present in Karbala, they would have defended them with their own backs and shoulders from the violent lashes of the whips and bruising strikes of the spears! This is nothing but a pure expression of loyalty and love towards the family of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) which is commendable especially in light of the prophetic tradition which states: "A person does not become a believer unless I (the prophet) become more beloved to him than his own self, and my progeny becomes more beloved to him than his own progeny" (refer to Fawaa'id of Al Naseebi, Al Hafidh Al Bayhaqi in his book Shi'ib al Imaan, and Datlami in his Musnad. Furthermore, it was such type of loyalty, selflessness and sacrifice that was required by the holy prophet (peace be upon him) from his companions during all the wars they were engaged in.

upon him) when he informed Sayeda Zahra (peace be upon her) about the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)

Imam Zaynul Abideen (peace be upon him) upon reaching the outskirts of medina while returning back from Karbala said in his sermon: *"O heart, do not split asunder from grief over his martyrdom*
Verily we are from Allah, and to Him do we return
How unbearable is the tragedy! How agonizing and heart rendering it was! How violent and harsh it was! How heavy is the burden to bear in the heart![160]

Imam Al Mahdi (May Allah hasten his re-appearance) in the supplication of Nudba states: "...**it is upon the most purified of the purified from the progeny of Muhammad and Ali (peace be upon them) should the weepers cry, and for them should they lament, and upon them should the mourners shriek and clamour (in a heart rendering manner) (out of grief and anguish)...is there any distressed one whom I may share my anguish with when he is alone? Is there any eye weeping of a thorn such that my eye may sympathise with it?"**[161]

Therefore displaying anguish over (the tragedy) of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is commendable, and hitting oneself with the chains *(dharb salasil)* is an action that denotes one of the levels of displaying anguish.

Upon seeing the mangled corpse of his blessed father Imam Al Sajjad (peace be upon him) was filled with torment and agony to the extent that his pure soul could not bear the pain any more (this was evident from his appearance) such that lady Zainab (peace be upon her) approached him and said: "why do I see you on the verge of death (your soul departing from your body) O legacy of my grandfather, father

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[160] Bihar al Anwar, volume 45, Al Lohoof fi Qutala Al Tufoof

[161] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 99

and brother?..."[162]

Therefore, if the anguish which Imam Sajjad felt and displayed was to the extent that he was on the verge of death, then the hitting of chains (as a means of displaying anguish) (*dhaarb al salasil*) should not be a practise whose permissibility is debatable.

In addition to that, the hitting of chains on the backs and shoulders, chest beating (*latam*) are not harmful to the body to the extent that one may have the illusion that it should be forbidden, especially because they do not result in any substantial injury to the body. On the contrary, it is beneficial for the body as it congeals the skin toughening the surface layer. Additionally, congealing the skin is practised and considered a training prerequisite in various contact oriented sports.

[162] Kamil Al Ziarah, chapter 88, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 28

Re-enacting the tragic events of Karbala

The event of Karbala cannot be re-enacted in its entirety no matter how skilled or talented the performers may be. Instead, a certain event or a select number of events from the epic of Karbala are re-enacted. The practise of re-enacting is usually of two types:

Type one: Re-enacting by subject or a particular event whereby an event or series of events is played out in a pre-set arena.

Type two: In this category, the re-enacting is not played out in a pre-set arena. Rather the performers usually play out their roles which include riding their horses in the streets or public squares and then re-enacting a particular event from the many tragic events of Karbala.

Re-enacting the tragedy of Karbala requires numerous materials and rehearsals and has proven to be the most effective means of commemorating and reviving the tragedy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) – with the exception of *tathbir*. This is because sight is a common means of learning among the majority of people – an event cannot be fully comprehended in the mind purely by listening to its description - but when people see and witness the re-enacting and replication of a historical event, they are able to envision it more clearly in their minds and this has a greater effect on them.

Re-enacting is an efficient way of portraying history. If important historical events are to be confined to plain monotonous narrations as has been done in regards with numerous other historical catastrophes before and after Karbala, the later generations will not be able to relate to them (nor take lessons from them). Therefore, it is vital for these historical events to be revived and "brought to life" such that it can play a part in shaping the peoples' lives. This goal can

undoubtedly be achieved through re-enacting and replicating historical events.

Re-enacting has a great affect on the people, the magnitude of which can be seen through the tears and wails that emanate from the spectators and crowds as they watch the battle between the brave Hashemites and the vicious enemies re-enacted in detail.

I do not think that there is a single person who would prohibit the tradition of re-enacting if it is known to be conducted in a respectable way in honour of the martyrs of Karbala. The goal behind re-enacting Karbala is not to demonstrate the role of each and every martyr per say, but to illustrate and replicate a certain characteristic, atmosphere or environment and portray it as closely to reality as best possible.

There is no doubt in the permissibility of doing so as mentioned in the Holy Quran. The Divine light of Allah (*noor*) is compared to and portrayed as a lantern[163], and as mentioned in the Prophetic traditions – where Ameerul Mu`mineen (peace be upon him) is sometimes compared to a lion and at other times is symbolized as a sword or a shining light. This does not mean that his status or honour has been compromised or demeaned because respect and disrespect are relative behaviours and vary (as per the different peoples and cultures.) In today's day and age, it is universally accepted that to re-enact a historical event that includes certain key historical figures is not a sign of disrespect, but a means of honouring them.

Of course appropriate measures should be taken (in order to maintain the sanctity of the re-enacted event and the

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[163] The logic behind this analogy is that re-enacting entails using some characters to represent other characters (pious Imam or the martyrs) such that people may envision the tragic episode or understand it more clearly. Similarly, in the Quran, certain characters or concepts are used to represent or illustrate the reality of another character or concept such that the idea is much clearer in the minds of the people.

re-enaction it self) such that an openly misguided person or sinner does not assume the character of the Imam or any one of the martyrs nor does an unchaste one assume the role or character of the pious womenfolk (from the family of the Imam). These are secondary issues that do not (primarily) affect the validity or invalidity of re-enacting as a concept in itself.

There are numerous proofs that indicate the permissibility of re-enacting the event of Karbala:
It is entailed within the traditions with the following expressions: **"...whosoever weeps, or makes others weeps, or feign weeps, paradise becomes obligatory for him"** and **"...they will revive the mourning ceremonies (in his honour) year after year..."** and **"...revive our affairs..."**
The common goal behind all these traditions can be realized through the practise of re-enacting.

Indeed, Allah the Almighty replicated the likes of the most beloved creation to him (Prophet Isa Ibn Maryam) with the most despised of creation (Yihoodh Al Ashkhriyuti) such that he was the one mistaken for Prophet Isa and crucified on the cross while Prophet Isa was raised up to the heavens. The Quran narrates the event as follows:
وَبِكُفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَى مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا

That they rejected Faith; that they uttered against Mary a grave false charge;

وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا

That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah"- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not.

بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.[164]

As well, the creation of an angel who resembles Imam Ali Ibn Talib (peace be upon him) for all the angels to look at whenever they long to glance at the blessed face of Ameerul Mu`mineen (peace be upon him). As well, the angels who were sent down (by Allah) on the day of Badr in aide of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) resembled the likes of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him).

In a summarised narration in the book Al Ilal Al Sharaaih, it is narrated by Abu Hamza that Imam Muhammad al Baqir (peace be upon him) was asked about the reason as to why the awaited (twelfth) Imam (May Allah hasten his re-appearance) is also referred to as the "Al-Qaim"[165] The Imam replied by saying: "when my grandfather Husayn (peace be upon him) was killed, the angels were overcome with grief and tears and began to shriek. They said to Allah the Almighty: **"O our Lord and our Master! How can these killers overcome the most pious and the most distinguished one over all creation while he is also the son of the most pious and most distinguished of all creation?"** Allah the Almighty then revealed to them: **"By My Honour and My Might, I shall claim vengeance even if it is after a period of time."** The Almighty then revealed the (divine lights of) Imams from the lineage of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) for the angels to see. Amongst them (the Imams), there

[164] Quran: Surah al Nisa:156-158

[165] **Al Qaim has multiple meanings including: upright, straight, standing. These are expressions to symbolize the fact that the awaited Twelfth Imam will rise in revolution and fill the earth with justice after it has been filled with oppression and injustice**

was one who was standing upright while in the state of prayer. Allah the Almighty then said: **"By the Qaim shall you take vengeance"**[166]

And when Allah the Almighty willed to demonstrate the worship of his (sincere) slaves on earth, he created a resemblance of them on the divine throne bowing down and prostrating as they did on earth (with sincerity and submission), such that when the angels saw this, they prayed for the one whose resemblance was created and sought forgiveness for him.

When Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) asked why he was uncontrollably taken aback by tears each time Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was mentioned to him, Allah the Almighty created a re-enaction of the event of Karbala in its entirety for him to witness on the wings of angel Jibrail.[167] Similarly, when prophet Musa inquired from Allah the reason as to why He created hell fire, He created a representation of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) on the battlefield.

Sayid Ibn Tawoos in his book Al Iqbal, under the chapter of visitation of the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), and on authority of a narration from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) mentions: **"Verily he hears you when you visit him (at his shrine), and your greetings are conveyed to him when you salute him from afar. If you would like to pay him a visit, (despite being away from him) then replicate the shape of a grave in front of you and write his name on it and be in a state of major ablution..."**[168]

Just as personifying a lower individual with a higher

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[166] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45, Dalail Al Imamah, pg 239, Ilal Al Sharaaih, volume 1, chapter 129

[167] Jalaa Al Uyoon, volume 2

[168] Iqbal al I`imaal, chapter on visiting the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), Wasail al Shia, volume 10, chapter on the desirability of visiting the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), Bihar al Anwar, volume 97

one is permissible, the opposite is also permissible. Hence to personify Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) through other believers (during the re-enacting) is an act by itself permissible and becomes recommended given that it is performed to revive mourning of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and revive the affairs and remembrance of the blessed progeny of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon them).

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) disguised himself as Abdullah Ibn Abbas (i.e. personified himself as Ibn Abbas) in the battle of Siffeen when none of the enemies would accept his challenge to battle (out of fear).

Angel Jibrail used to descend upon the holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) sometimes personified as Dahya Al Kalbi. He also personified himself as one from the Bani Abbas when he descended upon the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) to inform him of the crimes and atrocities that Bani Abbas would commit against the religion

As for the personification for a limited time period (during re-enacting) with the objective of revealing the lofty position of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and the oppression they suffered at the hands of the vicious and savage like enemies - such personifications are not included in that hadith, rather it is an indication to two other prophetic narrations that state: **"whoever loves a people (their actions and traits) he shall be resurrected with them."**[169]

As for men personifying women, there is no prohibition established for this especially because the men are draped in long black robes from head to toe. Furthermore, this personification is only symbolistic - its prohibition un-established.

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[169] Bisharatul Mustafa, Mustadrak Al Wasail, volume 12, Bihar Al Anwar volume 65, 98, Gurar al Hukm – which also mentions in addition: "Beware to not love the enemies of God or have amicability with other than the Friends of God, for verily one will be resurrected with the people he loves

However, there is no doubt in the absolute prohibition in the actual and permanent personification of a man as a woman – such that he assumes and permanently displays the traits and behaviours of the opposite gender hence considering himself feminine in gender. It is upon this basis that the edicts of Muhaqiq Al Qummi, Shaykh Ansari, Muhaqiq Al Naini, and Muhaqiq Al Mamqani are based. These edicts have been published and widely circulated, and has obtained the consent of all the scholars without exception.

Muhaqiq Al Qummi in his book Jami`I Al Shataat states: It is understood from the narrations about personifications of the opposite gender that the prohibition is confined upon the man who personifies a woman such that he permanently trades his masculine identity for a feminine one through his behavioural traits such that he considers himself as part of the feminine gender. The opposite for a woman is also applicable. As for the personification of a man as a woman for a specific period of time for a specific purpose, then there is no problem.

Muhaqiq Al Ansari states: It is apparent that the type of personification that has been prohibited is the one that indicates (permanently) feminizing a male identity[170] and to (permanently) masculinise a female identity. This edict is supported by the narration in the book Ilal al Sharaih that narrates: "Imam Ali (peace be upon him) saw a man who had assumed for himself a female identity in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) whereupon he (peace be upon him) said: "leave from the mosque of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) for verily I have heard the Prophet of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) say: " The mercy of Allah is removed[171] from those men who personify themselves as

[170] **Identity includes dress, behaviour and thought**

[171] **The worst possible state a creature could be in – for a person who is removed from within the mercy of Allah is destined to eternal damnation**

women, and from those women who personify themselves as men – they are the ones who have intercourse with the same gender."

Al Muhaqiq Al Mazandarani, Sayid Al Sadr, and Mirza Al Shirazi Al Haeri collectively endorsed the above edict.

Muhaqiq Al Naini in his famous edict which was collectively agreed upon by the high ranking scholars of his time states: **It is apparent that there is no prohibition in the permissibility of the personifications and the re-enactions which the Shia Imamiyahs conduct in order to mourn (Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)) even if it involves the men using the attire of women.**

Ayatullah Al Mamqani states: It is absolutely clear (and straightforward) from the narrations and statements of the scholars that there is not a single (Quranic) verse or narration - regardless of whether it is *"weak"*[172] or is *"mursal"*[173] in its chain of transmission that indicates the prohibition of personifying another individual or re-enacting a particular historical event if it were conducted for an intellectual reason (sound goal), and whosever attempts to say otherwise, should do so using proof – which he will be unsuccessful in – and how can they deny such a practise when the first scholar to initiate re-enacting and personifications was Allamah Al Majlisi who himself is the source for numerous scholars? Furthermore, plenty of scholars after Allamah Majlisi witnessed the re-enacting and never raised objections to it.

Allamah Al Shaykh Abdul Husayn Al Hilli Al Najafi in his book Al Naqdul Nazeeh states: The personification in question during the re-enacting process includes a man draped in a long black robe from head to toe such that he

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[172] **A category of narrations whose probability of it emanating from an Infallible is not established (refer to Mabadiul Usool, Shaykh Al Fadhli)**

[173] **A category of narration in which one or more of the narrators are missing in the chain of transmission (refer to Mabadiul Usool, Shaykh Al Fadhlil)**

appears as a woman in front of the people. There is no established prohibition for such an act. We have not found any narration indicating any prohibition through text – directly or indirectly. Some people who are negligent of the truth advocate that re-enacting the tragedy of Karbala and personifying Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is disrespect[174] towards him – especially if the person who personifies the Imam is not a respectable and righteous person.

Disrespecting a person or belittling his status is an act contingent upon intent i.e. purposely performing a certain action with the intent of harming the character of another person. Take for example oppression or torture– there is prior intent to harm the other party. Yes, an act may be perceived as disrespectful even if the intention was not to do so, but this is a matter of interpretation with a number of possibilities (variety of different interpretations) – the reality of which cannot be ascertained unless we go back to the real intention behind it. And in the case of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) the intent is absolutely clear – to illustrate (symbolistically) the oppression suffered by the pure progeny of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) at the hands of the vicious enemy on the day of Ashura.

The narrations that prohibit the personification of the opposite gender refer to those cases where people attempt to change their gender permanently i.e. assume the absolute identity of the opposite gender through their behavioural traits (such as style of dressing, talking, walking, body gestures) such that they consider themselves as part of the opposite gender. The most explicit narration in regards to this matter is narrated in Al Ja`afariyaat by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny): **"The mercy of Allah is**

[174] The word disrespect in this context includes belittling the status of the Imam (peace be upon him)

removed from those men who (permanently) portray themselves as women and from those women who (permanently) portray themselves as men."

Another tradition narrated by Asl Abi Sa`eed Al Usfori states that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: **"Allah removes His mercy from the men who personify themselves as women and the women who personify themselves as men – and the angels seek from Allah to do the same (remove His mercy)"**

Hence it is absolutely clear that the prohibition lies in a man who feminizes himself and a woman masculinises herself such that they assuming the permanent character and identity of the opposite gender (through daily behavioural traits). It does not include the temporary dressing or personification as occurs in plays and in re-enactions.

And perhaps the most clear example (among the many) that indicates the permissibility to personify the opposite gender (in clothing) for a limited period of time is when Imam Ali (peace be upon him) after having achieved victory in the battle of Jamal, ordered forty women to disguise (personify) themselves as men – wearing turbans, capes, armours, and brandishing swords and spears such that they may accompany aisha and protect her from stranger men as she returned from Basra back to Medina.[175]

In conclusion, it is established that there is no prohibition for the opposite gender to personify each other during the re-enacting, rather it becomes a recommended act while re-enacting the painful tragedy of Karbala whilst maintaining its sanctity which is a secondary issue after the establishment of its permissibility as an action.

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[175] This was done to protect aisha as it highly inappropriate for a woman to travel by herself amongst or within the company unrelated men. This was done despite the fact that she came out to fight Imam Ali (peace be upon him) leading an army of thousands of unrelated (non mahram) men.

Tathbir: bloodletting[176]

Throngs of loyal believers gather on the night of Ashura in various *Husayniyas* dimly lit in red and whose walls are draped in black clothe. They shave their heads and are dressed in white shrouds brandishing swords. They then come out in organized and coordinated processions – each group led with a huge red flag accompanied with drums, trumpets and cymbals[177]

Amidst the synchronized and intense beats of these instruments, the crowds intermittently chant out **"Husayn....Haydar"** - chants which echo and rattle the entire city simulating a war like environment– it is a hair raising spectacle for every onlooker – be he near or far.

These processions take place on the eve of Ashura. The large masses of people circumbulate between the centers and Holy shrines or any other sacred place until the call for morning prayers are heard. Upon hearing the call for prayer, the chants come to a halt, and nothing can be heard except for the humming of people deep in prayer. Thereafter, as the sun's rays begin to gradually light up the horizon, the throngs of believers once again convene in an orchestrated procession. As the drums, trumpets and cymbals are intensely played, the crowds begin to emphatically chant out **"Husayn...Haydar"** in a manner that tremors the entire city. With such an awe-inspiring display, the crowds march out into the streets as the on lookers cluster together on the side walks to watch.

In the sacred land of Karbala, such processions take place around the revered shrines. Nothing is seen except swords dripping in blood, heads dyed with blood, shrouds

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[176] A practise whereby blood is shed from the head due to a crisp (shallow) strike of a sword on the scalp.

[177] Instruments traditionally used in war.

drenched in red, and tears rolling down the cheeks – nothing can be heard except the beating of drums, the blowing of trumpets and clashing of cymbals amidst the passionate chants of "Husayn...Haydar" and the heart rendering wailing of women. The whole city is enveloped in an atmosphere of intense anguish and sorrow – tears flow down the bloodstained cheeks and the hearts are torn apart in grief – sorrowful of the fact that they were not present to help the oppressed Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) who was martyred without anyone to support or aide him.

The people are overcome with an intense sensation as they make a pledge that because they were not there to support and defend the Imam, they can (through *tathbir*) at least show a humble gesture of their loyalty to him now...and exclaim that they will always be heartbroken by this grievous tragedy. They hence participate in the pain as a gesture of solidarity and loyalty.[178]

The people then disperse each one of them overcome with a burning sense of revolution, resolute in the lessons and guidance learnt (from the sacrifice of Karbala). This burning flame of revolution and resolution can never be extinguished from the hearts - even with the passage of time – not even if all the waters of the oceans were to be poured over it!

Indeed, I believe, that if Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was to come today, he would find loyal companions (participating) in processions such as these – even if they may

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[178] From here we understand the pure and divine goals and aims behind *tathbir*. Unlike the negative image it is attributed with in the widespread media - as being a violent and barbaric act of self harm, and thereby the subsequent attribution of Islam as a religion of violence. In reality, there is nothing violent about *tathbir* – it is but the highest manifestation of love for the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) and a gesture of self sacrifice i.e. a gesture illustrating that we (shias) are ready to defend the Imams and their cause even if it is at the expense of our blood. It is this intense revolutionary fervour and staunch loyalty towards Ahlul Bayt, and it is this ultimate stance against oppression (and against the enemies of Ahlul Bayt) which is aroused in the hearts of the Shias that is truly feared.

not be many in number, they would not be fewer than the companions that he would find in the other processions.

The practise of *tathbir* is the most powerful procession that revives the revolution of Karbala because in many ways it simulates a warlike environment – the beating of war drums, trumpets and cymbals – instruments traditionally used to symbolize war and battle, swords dripping with blood, heads that are wounded, and shrouds drenched in blood.

The sensation and atmosphere created by the procession of *tathbir* is unmatched – even the most eloquent of orators may not be able to conjure such a sensation (amongst the people) through the most descriptive of words. It stirs an even greater magnitude of emotion than the processions which carry out the re-enacting because even though the re-enacting portrays the tragedy, it is still by and large figurative - whereas the event of *tathbir* is one of actuality – the swords, the blood, the wounds are all real - the closest one can get to represent or experience the reality - which is precisely why it stirs the highest level of emotion and causes the tears to flow uncontrollably.

As for the permissibility of tathbir, it is primarily permissible, and by way of demonstrating anguish for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) it becomes recommended – upon comprehension and contemplation of the concept, it is understood to be a matter which is un-debatable, but since it has been made into a subject of debate, we shall deduce its validity with proof.

Before we begin to do so, it is quintessential to shed light on the magnitude of the catastrophe that occurred in Karbala. The tragedy that befell Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was not incurred by any other prophet or divinely appointed saint.

Indeed the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), Ameerul Mu`mineen (peace be upon him), Sayeda Zahra (peace be upon her), Imam Hasan Al Mujtaba (peace be

upon him), and the eight divinely appointed Imams from the lineage of Imam Husayn (peace be upon them all) were either martyred by the sword or through poison – and a number of the prophets, divine saints and pious believers were either hanged, sawed into half, skinned alive, or tossed into boiling oil until their skin burned off their bones – but despite all these atrocities, the heavens and the earth never wept for them as they did for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and neither was the universe up heaved for them in the way it was for him.

Everything (within the realm of existence) wept for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)

Meetham al Tammar narrated on authority of Ameerul Mu`mineen (peace be upon him): **"everything laments him; even the wild beasts in the jungles, the whales in the oceans, the birds in the skies. The sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens and the earth weep upon him, and so do the believers from mankind and from the jinn, and all the angels in their entirety, and those (angels) who guard heaven and hell, and those who carry the divine throne, and (for him) the sky rains down blood and ashes."**[179]

Shaykh Tusi states that Husayn Ibn Abi Faakhitha narrated on authority of Imam Abi Abdillah Al Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"Indeed when Aba Abdillah Al Husayn was martyred, the seven heavens and the seven earths and everything in between them wept upon him – (including) everything in the heavens and everything in the hellfire, and all that which can be seen and all that which is unseen."**[180]

Abi Baseer narrates on authority of Imam Abi Abdillah Al Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"The skies and the earth wept for the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) by reddening – and they never wept for anyone save for Yahya Ibn Zakariya and Al Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon them)"**[181]

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[179] Aamali of Shaykh Saduq, majlis 27, Bihar al Anwar, volume 45, Matheerul Ahzaan (chapter of the prophecy on the martyrdom of Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him), Ilal al Sharaih, volume 1 (reason as to why the day of Ashura is the most grievous day), Al Luhoof fi Qutala' al Tufoof, Manaqib Shahr Ibn Ashwoob, volume 4

[180] Aamali of Shaykh Tusi, volume 2

[181] Jala'a Al Uyoon, volume 4

It is narrated by Ali Ibn Mas-har Al Qarshy: "my grandmother narrated to me that Imam Husayn Ibn Ali was martyred during her life time. She then said: **"for the next one year and nine months the sky resembled a (huge) dark clot like blood - and the sun was not visible"**[182]

It is narrated on authority of Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (peace be upon him): **"indeed, the sky never wept since being created except for Yahya Ibn Zakariya and for (Imam) Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him)..."**[183]

It is narrated by Ibn Shahr Ashoob in his Al Manaqib on authority of Nadhra Al azadiyah: **"when (Imam) Al Husayn was martyred, the skies rained blood such that I and everything in my possession was soaked in blood."**[184]

As well in the same text, it is narrated: **"when Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred it rained blood such that the seeds and the fish (we possessed) were covered in blood"**[185]

It is narrated by Qaradha Ibn Ubaydallah: **"It rained for half that day - such that (my) white cloak was drenched in blood, and when the camels went to drink from the oasis, its water had turned to blood - this was on the day Al**

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[182] Jala'a Al Uyoon, volume 2, Majma'h Al Zawaid, volume 9 which additionally mentions on authority of Um Hakeem: "when Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred I was at the time a young maid servant, and the sky darkened like a blood clot for a number of days, and this is mentioned by Al Tabarani, Maqtal khawarizmi, volume 2, and additionally, it is mentioned on authority of Ali Ibn Mas-har who narrates from his grandmother: "I was a young maid servant during the days of Imam Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him), and the sky reddened like blood for a number of days after his martyrdom.

[183] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45, Kamil al Ziarah, chapter 28

[184] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45, Maqtal Al Husayn, Al Khawarizmi, volume 2 which additionally mentions: on authority of nadhra al Azadiya: "when (Imam) Al Husayn was martyred, the skies rained blood such that we, and everything around us was soaked in blood"

[185] Manaqib Ibn Shahr Ashoob, volume 4, chapter on Imamah of Imam Abi Abdillah al Husayn (peace be upon him), under the title: signs after his death, Jala'a Al Uyoon, volume 2

Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred"[186]

It is narrated by Um Saleem: **"When Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred the sky rained what seemed to be blood, and consequently the houses and walls were stained in red."**[187]

The Honourable and Wise Lady Zainab – daughter of Ameerul Mu`mineen (peace be upon her) stated in her sermon in Kufa: **"...do you then wonder why the skies rain blood? Surely the torment in the hereafter is a more severe chastisement, and they shall not be helped..."**[188]

In some salutations (peace be upon him) of Imam Husayn, the texts state: **The heavens and it residents wept upon him, and so did the earth and everything on it...The martyred one for whom tears (uncontrollably) pour..."**[189]

It is mentioned in Tarikh Ibn Asaakir and in Al Sawaaiq Al Muhriqah by Ibn Hajr: **"When Al Husayn (peace be upon him was martyred) the skies rained blood such that the houses and walls remained stained from it for a long period of time."**

It is mentioned in Tarikh Ibn Asaakir and in Al Sawaaiq Al Muhriqah by Ibn Hajr: **"When Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred, no stone was left unturned**

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[186] Jala`a Al Uyoon, volume 2

[187] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45

[188] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45, Faraid Al Simtayn, volume 2 which additionally mentions: "when Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred, it rained upon us such that the houses and rooftops were (stained) like blood (with red). I then received news that a similar occurrence took place in Basra, Kufa, Sham, Khurasan such that we had no doubt that the wrath of God was going to befall us"

[189] Bihar al Anwar, volume 98

except that blood was found underneath it"[190]

It is stated in Jala`a al Uyoon on authority of Um Hayaan: **"the day Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred, total darkness reigned upon us for three days, the saffron we consumed lost its taste and no stone in Baytul Muqaddas was left unturned except that blood was seen underneath it."**[191]

It is stated in the Ta`arikh of Ibn Asaakir and in Al Sawaaiq: **"when they arrived with the head of Al Husayn (peace be upon him) to the mansion of ibn ziyad, its walls began to stream with blood"**

In the Kamaal of Ibn Atheer, it is mentioned: **"... and fire broke out from a section of the walls in the palace, such that its flames roared and spread in the direction of ibn ziyad (wherever he fled). He then told whoever had witnessed the event to conceal it."**

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[190] Maqtal Al Husayn, Al Khawarizmi, volume 2, which additionally mentions: "Himad Ibn Zayd said: "the first time Al Zuhuri was recognized is when he spoke out in the court of Walid Ibn Abdul Malik. Walid asked: "which one of you knows what happened to the stones in Bayt Al Muqaddas (Palestine) the day Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was killed? Al Zuhuri replied: "I have come to know that no stone was left unturned except that blood was foud underneath it", refer as well to Tahdheeb Al Kamaal, volume 2, Kifayatul Talib, Ta`rikh Madinatul Dimishq, volume 14, Al Sawaaiq Al Muhriqah, Jala`a Al Uyoon, volume 2, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45, which additionally mentions: "Al Zuhruwi said: "I have come to know that no stone was left unturned except that blood was seen underneath it.", Faraa`id al Samiteen, volume 2 which additionally mentions on authority of Al Zuhruwi: "there was not a single pebble lifted in Baytul Muqaddas except that blood was found underneath it. In the book Tabaqatil Kubra, volume 8, Ibn Sa`ad says: "Abdul Malik Ibn marwan asked me: "what were the signs indicating the martyrdom of Al Husayn (peace be upon him)? I replied: "we did not move any stone except that we found blood underneath it." Abdul malik replied: "how unusual this is for us." Majma`ul Zawaid, volume 3, which additionally states he said: "let us confine this incident between the two of us.", Rayhanaul Nabi, chapter on the catastrophe of Karbala.

[191] Tahdheeb al Kamaal, volume 6, Dhaqaair al Uqba, Seeyar l`elaam al Nubalaa', volume 4, Tarikh Madinatul Dimishq, volume 14, Al Sawaaiq Al Muhriqah, Baghiyatul Talib, volume 6, which additionally states on authority of marwan – the slave of Hind, the daughter of Muhallab: "Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad's doorman informed me : "when the head of Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was brought and placed in front of him (Ibn ziyad), I saw the walls of the palace (Daarul Imaara) begin to flow with blood"

It is narrated in Kamil Al Tarikh: **"...for about two to three months the people would see the walls (of their houses) stained with blood during sunrise."**[192]

It is stated in the books Al Kamil, Al Sawaaiq, and Tareekh Ibn Asaakir, and Tadhkiratul Khawaas among numerous other books of history (with slight variations in words across the different texts):

"When Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred, the world was covered in total darkness for three days such that the people began to believe that the day of reckoning was unfolding, the stars began to appear during midday and would collide with each other (in the skies). The world remained in this state for three days."[193]

It is stated in Tareekh Al Nasawi on authority of Al Aswad Ibn Qays: **"there appeared a reddening of the sky from the western horizon, and a reddening from the eastern horizon which kept spreading until they would merge (making the whole sky red in colour). This continued for six months."**[194]

In regards to the commentary of verse twenty nine of Surah Al Dhukan[195], Al Tha`alabi narrates: **"the redness in the sky during the twilight hours never used to occur before the martyrdom of Al Husayn (peace be upon him)"**[196]

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[192] Al Kamil fo Tareekh, volume 2, events of the year 61 A.H

[193] Al Sawaaiq Al Muhriqah, Majma'ul Zawaaid, volume 9, Maqtal al Husayn, Al Khawarizmi, volume 2 which additionally mentions: Abi Qubayl narrates: "when Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him) was martyred, there occurred a complete solar eclipse (i.e. the sky totally darkened) and the stars appeared during midday such that we began to believe that it was the day of judgement..."

[194] Manaqib Ibn shahr Ashoob, volume 4, chapter on the Imamah of Al Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him) under the section of the signs that occurred after his death, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45

[195] (فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالأَرْضُ) ***(And neither heaven nor earth shed a tear...)*** – Quran:44:29

[196] Al Sawaaiq Al Muhriqah, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 45

Sayid Ibn Tawoos narrates: **"...the time at which Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was killed, a terrible storm occurred - the violent winds cast the sky in total darkness. A sandstorm wrathfully blew in all directions such that nothing or no one could be seen. The people thought that divine chastisement had befallen them. The dark storm continued for an hour before subduing."**

It is narrated in Jala`a Al Uyoon on authority of Al Fath' Ibn Aabid: **"I used to feed crumbs of bread to the birds daily, but on the day of Ashura, even though I threw out crumbs of bread, the birds did not eat – I knew that they are not eating due to their grief for Al Husayn (peace be upon him)"**[197]

It is stated in Al Kamil on authority of Haarith Al A`awar by Imam Ali (peace be upon him): **"By my father and mother, Al Husayn is the martyred one within the outskirts of Kufa, By Allah, it is as if I see the wild beasts extending their necks over his grave, while others (beasts) weep and lament him all night till the morning. If this happens, beware not to be from among those who are astray"**[198]

Ibn Qawlawayh in Kamil Al Ziarah narrates on authority of a resident from Baytul Muqaddas: "**By Allah, we – the residents of Baytul Muqaddas and its surroundings knew of Husayn Ibn Ali`s (peace be upon him) killing the night before.**" I asked: "**and how did you know that?**" he replied: "**we didn't lift any pebble, neither any (piece of) clay, nor a rock, except that we found underneath it blood that was boiling, the walls were stained with red like a blood clot, and it rained fresh blood upon us for three**

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[197] Jala`a Al Uyoon, volume 2, Maqtal Al Husayn, Al Khawarizmi, volume 2 which additionally states on authority of Fath Ibn Sahr Al Aabid: "I used to feed grains to the birds daily and they would eat from it,but on the day of Ashura, they refused to eat from the grains so I knew they refused because Al Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him) had been killed.

[198] Kamil Al Ziyarah, chapter 26

days."[199]

It is mentioned in Kamil al Ziarah as well: **"the sun did not shine for three days..."**

It is narrated by Shaykh Saduq in his Al-Amali and Al-Ilal Al Sharaih on authority of Jablah Al Makkiyah, that Meetham Al Tammar said: **"O Jablah! If you see the skies redden like blood, then know that the king of martyrs Al Husayn (peace be upon him) has been killed"**. Jablah Said: **"I went out on that day and saw the sun cast a red shadow over the sky as if it were (a huge) red cape. I thereby shrieked and wailed saying: "by Allah, our master Al Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him) has been killed."**[200]

It is also narrated in numerous books of history including Al Sawaaiq Al Muhriqah, Al Maqtal Al Khawarizmi, Al Kawakib al Duriyyah, Al Ittihaaf, Tareekh al Khulafa and Majma'ul Zawaid: **"when Al Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him) was martyred, the sun did not shine**

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[199] Kamil al Ziarah, chapter 24, which states the remainder of the tradition: "and we heard a voice call out in the middle of the night: how does a people who killed Husayn (peace be upon him) hope for the intercession of his grandfather on the day of judgement."

This is mentioned in: Tareekh Madinatul Dimishq, volume 14, Jawahir Al Aqdayn fi Fadhl Al Sharifayn, Dhakhaair Al Uqbah, Baghiyatul Talib, volume 6, Al Istiyab fi Ma`arifatil As'haab, volume 1, Kifayatul Talib, Al Khasais al Kubra, volume 2, Tahdheeb al Kamal, volume 6, Maqtal Al Husayn , Al Khawarizmi, volume 2, which additionally states: "we found the following verses inscribed on a wall:

Does a people who killed Husayn (peace be upon him) hope for the intercession of his grandfather on the day of judgement,

Never by Allah, is there for them any to intercede, and they on the day of judgement will (receive) the chastisement

[200] Aamali of shaykh saduq, majlis 27, Majma`a al Zawaid, volume 9, which additionally states on authority of Isa Ibn Al Harith Al Kindi: "when Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred, for seven days, when we recited the Asr prayers, we would see the sky cast a red shadow on the walls as if it were a cape dyed (in red), and we saw the stars (in the sky) collide with each other.

such that the stars were visible during the day". In the book Majma'ul Zawaid, the narration states the sun entered into an eclipse which resulted in total darkness[201]. In Al Sawaaiq, it is mentioned that the sun was in an eclipse[202] such that the stars could be seen at midday.[203]

Abu Naeem Al Haafidh states in his book Dalail Al Nabuwwah: Among the phenomenal events that occurred on the day Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was martyred - the sky entirely darkened such that the stars were visible even though it was daytime.

It is narrated in Sawaaiq Al Muhriqah: the sky reddened upon his killing - Al Husayn (peace be upon him) - and sun's rays obliterated (resulting in darkness) such that the stars were visible at midday, indeed the people thought that it was the day of judgment[204]

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[201] These traditions point out the extra-ordinary changes in the cosmos due to the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) such that the nature of such a solar eclipse resulted in entire darkness.

[202] **We are able to deduce that what is meant by an eclipse is that the sun was not visible resulting in absolute darkness**

[203] Maqtal al Husayn, Al Khawarizmi, volume 2, chapter 12 on the punishments that befell the killers of Al Husayn (peace be upon him), Al Sawaiq Al Muhriqah, Majma'ul Zawaid, volume 9

[204] Insaab al Ishraaf, volume 2, Tareekh Madinatul Dimishq, volume 14 which additionally mentions on authority of Abi Qubayl: "the sky entirely darkened on the day Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was killed, such that the stars were visible.

The numerous traditions and historical accounts pointing to the darkening of the sky and the extra-ordinary changes in the cosmic order due to the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) are extremely clear and straightforward and illustrate the lofty and divine status of the Imam. However, there are some muslims weak in their faith who object to these traditions stating that this cannot occur due to anyone's death. This supposition is based around the following tradition:

Ali Ibn Abdillah narrates on authority of Abul Hasan Imam Musa Al Kadhim (peace be upon him): "when Ibrahim the son of the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) died, the sun entered into a position of an eclipse, such that the people began to say this was as a result of the death of the son of the Prophet of God. The Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) therefore ascended the pulpit, glorified and praised Allah, and then said: "O people! The sun and the moon are two signs from the numerous signs that prove the existence of Allah – they rotate in obedience to His command, and do not enter in a state of eclipse for anyone's death or birth. If any one of them does enter into a state of eclipse, then observe the prayer of the eclipse. He then descended the pulpit and recited the prayer of eclipse. Upon completion, he said: "O Ali (peace be upon him)! Prepare my son" Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stood up and performed the ritual bath given to the deceased and shrouded Ibrahim (peace be upon him). They then accompanied the coffin until he was laid in his grave – whereupon the people said: "verily the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) due to his anguish forgot to pray over his son. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) stood up and announced: "O people! Jibrail has revealed to me what you say! You assumed that I have forgotten to pray over my son due to grief. It is not as if you think. The Honourable and Lofty Lord has ordained five prayers upon you and prescribed the prayers for your deceased ones to be comprised of *takbirs*(glorification of Allah by uttering: God is greater than all things) and has ordered me not to pray (the prayer on the deceased) except on the one who has prayed.(Al Kafi – chapter on the ritual wash for the deceased children, and prayers over them)

The majority are of the opinion that this narration is fabricated due to the following issues:

1. It contradicts the abundant traditions and historical accounts that narrate the eclipse that occurred as a direct result of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). It also directly contradicts the sermon of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) which delivered upon the demise of the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) whereby he said: "...the sun eclipsed as a result of his death..."
2. Its contradiction to the narrations that state the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) himself led the prayers upon his deceased son Ibrahim – as per the correct narration of Abdullah Ibn Bukayr which is narrated in the book of Al Tahdheeb on authority of Imam Abu Jafar (peace be upon him): "The Holy Prophet prayed upon his son Ibrahim with five

There are numerous traditions that describe the intense grief of the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them all) during the first ten days of Muharram - and their grief reached a peak on the day of Ashura such that they sat in their houses wailing and mourning, inviting poets to compose eulogies in honour of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) - and they encouraged every devotee to lament and visit his grave.

There are abundant traditions that indicate the desirability of participating and experiencing (a part of) the

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Takbirs(To say Allah is greater than all things five times), Tahdheeb Al Ahkam, (chapter on funeral prayers)

3. Its application by those in contradiction with the Shias whereby they do not observe the prayers on the dead except the one who attained the age of puberty (and hence the five daily prayers were obligatory on him during his life), whereas the shias perform the prayer on every deceased - as per the tradition of Ali Ibn Yaqteen who narrates: "I asked Imam Abul Hasan (peace be upon him): "do we pray upon the toddler who just lived for a few years and a few months?" the Imam replied: "the prayer should be recited upon everyone except on a foetus (miscarried) that is not fully developed."(Al Istibsar, chapter on prayers upon the child, Al Wasaail Al Shia, chapter on the desirability to perform the funeral prayers on a child who did not live past six years of age)
It is also narrated by Al Sikuwneey on authority of Imam Jafar Al Sadiq (peace be upon him): "an infant inherits, and the funeral prayer is prayed upon him if he is born alive." (Al Wasail Al Shia, chapter on the desirability to perform the funeral prayers on a child who did not live past six years of age.)

4. The contradiction of the majority in regards to this narration. The majority opinion (among the scholars) is that this narration was fabricated by the Bani Umayya - because the sun eclipsed as a result of their killing of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) - so they belied the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) by attributing a saying to him so as to bury the great status of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and his message. They will to extinguish the light of Allah, but He will manifest it perfectly, even though the obstinate one may detest.

various tragedies suffered by Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) such as grief, fear, thirst, and so on[205]. For example, it is recommended to abstain from food on the day of Ashura from sunrise till the time of Asr – an expression of participating in the thirst and hunger of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him).

It is narrated in the book Al Misbah on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Sinan that Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: "...and do not make it a day whereby you fast (until sunset), rather you should have a sip of water an hour after Asr..." [206]

It is obvious that such abstention from food and water is not the same as fasting rather it is an expression of solidarity – a symbol of our participation with him in the thirst and the hunger he suffered on the day of Ashura. Indeed, Imam Jafar Al Sadiq (peace be upon him) supplicated for those who experience the grief of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) as a symbol of solidarity with the following words: **"May the mercy of Allah encompass our Shias! Our Shias, by Allah are the true believers! Indeed by Allah, they participated in our grief with their continual sorrow and regret"**[207,208]

Fasting on the day of Ashura is unacceptable as per the tradition in Al Kafi which narrates on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) when he was asked about the permissibility of fasting on the ninth and tenth day of Muharram: **"As for the day of Ashura, it was the day the**

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[205] **The idea of participating in the grief of the Imam is a gesture of solidarity - one of loyalty and self sacrifice. It is a gesture to symbolize had one been present in Karbala on the day of Ashura, he would instantly and willingly support the Imam even at the cost of enduring the hardships of thirst, hunger, fear, and ultimately death.**

[206] Misbah al mujtahid, Al Wasail al Shia – chapter on the fasting of the ninth and tenth day of Muharram out of grief.

[207] **Regret: not being physically present to support or fight alongside the Imam**

[208] Thawaabul A'amaal wa l'iqaabul A'amaal

companions of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) were killed, and he (peace be upon him) lay martyred between them – should there be fasting on such a day? By the Lord of the Ka`aba, absolutely not – it is not the day of fasting – it is not save a day of grief and tragedy for the residents of the heavens and earths, and all the believers – while it is a day of rejoice and happiness for Ibn Marjanah, the family of Ziyad and the residents of Sham."

Therefore, there is no fasting on the day of Ashura, rather the recommendation is to participate in the pain of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) as a gesture of solidarity. The Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) did the same by refraining from drinking water on the day of Ashura.

Even the sheep belonging to Prophet Ismail (peace be upon him) participated in the grief of the Imam (as a gesture of solidarity). It is narrated that one of the herders used to tend a part of the herd belonging to Prophet Ismail along the banks of the Euphrates River. One day he complained to the Prophet that the sheep were neither grazing nor drinking water for a number of days. Prophet Ismail supplicated to Allah in regards to the issue whereby Jibrail descended and said: "O Ismail! Ask the sheep as to why they do not drink water nor graze". Ismail asked them, whereby they replied by saying: "this is the land upon which the son of the Prophet of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) from your lineage will be slaughtered while he is thirsty – and we are not

drinking water so as to participate in his thirst."[209]

The horse of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) shared in the tragedy by remaining thirsty. The books of history detailing the epic of Karbala narrate that when Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) fought his way to the river Euphrates, his horse refused to drink the water before the Imam and turned its head away from it.

His cousin and deputy, Muslim Ibn Aqeel (peace be upon him) as well participated in the thirst of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) despite being martyred before him. The entire books of history mention that when Muslim Ibn Aqeel was brought to the palace in Kufa, he asked for water - and every time he attempted to drink from it, blood from his wounded mouth would stream into the cup of water - this happened twice, and the third time round, as the blood oozed into the cup, his blessed tooth fell into it. He thereby left the drink saying: **"had it been apportioned as a part of my sustenance, I would have drunk it."**

Indeed when Abul Fadhl Al Abbas (peace be upon him) conquered the Euphrates, he cupped the water with his hands, and then threw it back - to remain thirsty with Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) (so long as he was thirsty) and

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[209] **Such traditions should not provoke sarcasm especially when there is abundant proof that indicates that Allah the Almighty has made everything within the realm of creation subservient to those divine creations who are His representatives on earth – i.e. the Prophets and Infallible Imams (peace be upon them all). This is one of the miracles through which the Holy Prophet and the infallible Imams could establish their credibility. For example, it is narrated in books of the Prophet's biography that once the Meccans challenged him to move a tree from its position if he were truthful – and he did so by pointing towards it, or when the prophet would walk the gardens, the trees would bow down in front of him as a sign of respect, or how the clouds would shade him from the sun whenever he walked, or how he split the moon into half upon being challenged by the Meccan atheists. (refer to Seerah Halabiya). Needless to say, that all these miracles are performed with the permission of Allah.**

participate in his grief – in solidarity[210]. This grand gesture made him deserving till the day of Judgement to be saluted by the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) and their Shias when they visit his grave by proclaiming: **the ultimate blessing of a brother is manifested in yourself - the one who participated in solidarity (in his brother's grief)**

This act of solidarity on the part of Abul Fadhl is not an exaggerated one. This is understood from Shaykh Hadi al Khurasani in his book – Iddatul Shuhoor narrates: " Ameerul Mu`mineen (peace be upon him) during his last breaths called for Al Abbas (peace be upon him) and embraced him, then kissed him on the forehead, recited his testimony to him and took a pledge from him saying that if he conquered the waters of the Euphrates on the day of Taff, he should not drink a drop from it while his brother Husayn (peace be upon him) is thirty. It is lack of mannerism to quench your thirst with water while your believing brother is thirsty – then how can Al Abbas drink water if His Imam is thirsty?

Mu'lah Ibn Khunays narrates on the authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) in regards to the right of a believer over his brother in faith: **"...do not be content (eat to the full) while he (your believing brother) is hungry, do not quench yourself while he is thirsty, and do not dress yourself while he is unclothed..."**[211]

The Quran describes the Believers as those who prefer others over themselves during hardships as in the verse below:

وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

...they give them preference over themselves, even though

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[210] **In other words, it was impossible for Abul Fadhl Al Abbas to quench his thirst and be satisfied while his master Imam Husayn and the children remained thirsty. This is the peak of loyalty, dedication and self sacrifice – one that is unparalleled across the passage of time.**

[211] Al Usool min al Kafi – book of Imaan and Kufr, chapter on the rights of the believers

poverty was their (own lot)...[212]

In the battle of Jamal, ten Muslims fell down injured – each one crying out his last breath. One of the companions, approached the first wounded Muslim with water so as to quench his thirst, but he pointed out to his fellow companion (the second one) who was also injured and preferred for him to be quenched first! Water was therefore carried to the second Muslim so that he may drink from it, but he signalled to another fellow companion (the third one) who was also injured in battle and preferred for him to be quenched first! This act of selflessness continued as the third one preferred for the fourth one to drink first....and so on and so forth until the water was carried to the tenth person who refused to drink until the first one of the companions who had initially fallen drank the water! When the water was taken to that first companion, they found him dead – so the water was taken to the second one who was also found dead...and similarly the third and fourth...and so on and so forth until all ten men were found dead – all of them died thirsty- each one preferring his brother's thirst to be quenched before his!

The commentary of Ali Ibn Ibrahim Al Qummi in regards to the verse related to the expedition of Tabuk states that Abu Dharr Al Ghaffari passed by an oasis with cool water and despite being thirsty, he carried it (in a waterbag) but did not drink from it before the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his family) did so (lest he was thirsty) – he therefore had the water sent to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) lest thirst wears him out.

It is narrated in certain traditions that Allah the Almighty willed for certain prophets to experience some of the tragedies suffered by Al Husayn (peace be upon him) as a gesture of solidarity.

Verily, when the ark of Prophet Noah approached the

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[212] Quran:59:9

land of Karbala
It was rocked by violent waves such that it was on the verge to capsize. Angel Jibrail therefore descended and said: **"O Noah! Verily this is the land upon which the offspring of the Final Prophet and the son of the best of Saints[213] will be martyred."**

Prophet Solomon used to voyage the skies on a carpet which was driven by the winds made subservient to him[214]. When he reached the land of Karbala, the wind circumbulated around it thrice. Prophet Solomon questioned the winds (about this peculiar behaviour) it replied by saying that this is the land upon which the offspring of the chosen Prophet Ahmad will be killed.

Allah made Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) to experience fear and unease around the land of Karbala because it was the land upon which Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was faced with unease and fear – i.e. a gesture of solidarity with Imam Husayn (peace be upon him).

Similarly, certain prophets shared in experiencing the grief of Imam Husayn as a gesture of solidarity by shedding their blood.

There are numerous credible traditions that state when Prophet Adam reached the land of Karbala, and the tragic martyrdom of Al Husayn (peace be upon him) was narrated to him, he stumbled upon a rock thereby bleeding (profusely) from his foot. Allah the Almighty then revealed to him: **"on this land, your son Al Husayn (peace be upon him) shall be martyred. I willed for you to participate in his pain and grief, and for your blood to be spilled on it just as his blood will be spilled."**

One day Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was

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[213] Saint: successor of the prophet

[214] Upon the command of Allah the Almighty

riding his horse across the plains of Karbala when it suddenly faltered. Consequently, he fell off his horse onto the ground striking his head on a stone hence bleeding profusely. Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) began to seek for forgiveness and said: "O my Lord! Which sin did I commit to deserve such a punishment?" Jibrail descended from the heavens and said: **"O Ibrahim! You have not committed any sin, but this is the land upon which the offspring of Muhammad Al Mustafa and the son of Ali Al Murtadha will be killed unjustly. Therefore, Allah willed for you to participate in his grief and your blood to be shed on it"**

Prophet Moses and his successor Yoshua Ibn Nun crossed through the plains of Karbala, and upon doing so, the strap of his sandal broke. Consequently he stepped on some thorns making his feet bleed. Upon asking the reason for this mishap, Allah revealed to Prophet Moses: **"On this land the blood of my servant Husayn (peace be upon him) shall be spilled hence I willed for your blood to be shed as well"** (in solidarity with Imam Husayn (peace be upon him))

From all the narrations gathered in this chapter, it is evident that the tragedy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) is not like any other tragedy that occurred in history, rather it was a catastrophe by which everything created by Allah was afflicted – regardless of whether they are creatures that can be seen, or unseen – it caused anguish in the humans as it did in the animals and all other things within the realm of creation. The sky and the earth wept for him – such was the tragedy that it distressed the creation in the realm of the hereafter – the two angels *Ridhwan* and *Malik*[215] wept over him, the *Hur Al Ein*[216] lamented over him just as everything in heaven and hell wept – the prophets and their successors all wailed upon his tragedy, and a mourning ceremony was commemorated on

[215] **The gatekeepers to paradise and hellfire**

[216] **Heavenly maids**

the day he was born. Therefore, since the tragedy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) was unparalleled in history, the nature of commemorating and expressing grief over him as well should be unparalleled and extra-ordinary.

The last set of traditions narrate that Allah the Almighty willed for His prophets to share in the grief of Al Husayn (peace be upon him) and to shed their blood on the land of Karbala as a gesture of solidarity and participation in his grief and pain. Even though it was an unintentional occurrence (from the side of the prophets), it is sufficient proof indicating the desirability of performing *tathbir* as a gesture of sharing and participating in the pain of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and his companions.[217]

Shaykh Saduq in his book Al Ilal and Ibn Quwlawayh in Al Kamil narrate on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): "(in regards to the commentary of the Quranic verse) ***"...and (O messenger!) mention Ismail in this Holy Book; verily he was true to his promise, and was an emissary and a prophet..."***[218] – this is not Ismail the son of Abraham, rather it was a different prophet from the prophets of Allah sent to guide a people. They seized him and skinned his scalp and face, consequently an angel descended upon him saying: "Indeed Allah the Almighty has sent me to aid you – so

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[217] This is the heart of the argument. It is about experiencing and participating in the pain and expressing anguish over the most gruesome catastrophe to occur on the face of this planet. The representative of God on earth – the grandson of the Holy Prophet was savagely killed, his head severed from his blessed body, and then his mutilated corpse was trampled upon by horses! For the lovers of the Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them) who perform tathbir, it is a pure symbol indicating that had they been present in Karbala, they would have defended the Imam with their own bodies! This is nothing but a pure expression of loyalty and love towards the family of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) which is commendable especially in light of the prophetic tradition which states: "A person does not become a believer unless I (the prophet) become more beloved to him than his own self, and my progeny becomes more beloved to him than his own progeny" (refer to Fawaa'id of Al Naseebi)

[218] Quran: 19:54

command me as you wish" Prophet Ismail replied by saying: **"Al Husayn (peace be upon him) and what he will endure is a model of emulation for me"**[219]

Ismail chose to be patient while his scalp and face was skinned off, sighting Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) as a model of emulation – the people he preached to seized him and tormented him out of hatred. He did not chose to be skinned hence he did not have an active intention to emulate, whereas Tathbir is performed with an active intent to emulate. (Therefore, emulation is of two types: active and inactive. Under this division, *tathbir* is established as a form of emulation)[220]

It is mentioned in the narrations that the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) was saddened when he saw there was no one to weep for his uncle Hamza[221]. The women from the Ansar therefore gathered at the door of the Mosque and wept for a third of the night. When the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) saw them weeping and lamenting his uncle, he said to them: **"May Allah have mercy upon you all – indeed you have consoled**

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[219] Kamil al Ziarah, chapter 19

[220] **The logic behind extracting proof from this narration is as follows: Prophet Ismail endured the suffering sighting he wanted to walk in the footsteps of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him)– he wished to emulate the state of the Imam – be like him in the way that atrocities were committed upon him, and he remained patient and endured persecution for the love of Allah. Similarly, tathbir includes emulating the state of the Imam on the day of Karbala – just as the Imam was injured and struck by a sword on his head, his loyal companions wish to emulate that state (to a certain degree). Both cases (of the prophet Ismail and the one who performs tathbir) are based on emulation – the difference being one is intended while the other is not. From here, we understand that emulation can be divided into two types: active (intentional) and inactive (unintentional)**

[221] **Hamza (peace be upon him) was martyred in the battle of Uhod. His corpse was then mutilated – whereby hind (wife to Abu sufyan, mother to Muawiya, and grandmother to yazid) ripped open the belly of Hamza and attempted to chew on his liver.**

us (and participated in our grief)"[222]

As for weeping, it is narrated to be an act of consolation for lady Fatima Al Zahra (peace be upon her), and a means of building an attachment with the Holy prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny). It is means of observing the rights of the infallible Imams (peace be upon them), and to emulate the noble tradition of the prophets, Imams and angels (as a way of expressing grief).

If weeping is considered a means of displaying and participating in grief, then to shed one's blood is also a part of it - the difference being the intensity in the display of anguish. The following categories of evidence indicate the permissibility of *tathbir:*

1. Permissibility of an action when there is no narration outlining its prohibition. To date[223], there is not a single primary source of Jurisprudence available that indicates the prohibition of letting (shedding) blood.
2. Certain personalities from the household of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) shed blood (out of grief for the Imam) with the tacit approval of Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him)[224]. It is narrated: **"when the wise Lady Zainab Al Kubra (peace be upon her) saw the blessed head of her brother raised on the head of a spear, she hit her forehead against the pole of the carriage such that blood was seen to flow from underneath her *Qinaa'ah*[225],[226]** This was done in the

[222] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 79

[223] **This book was authored forty seven years ago. And upon completion of this translation (2010), there still remains no narration outlining its prohibition. Refer to the ruling of determining the permissibility of an action as stated by the author in his introduction.**

[224] **The tacit approval of an infallible Imam in regards to an action performed in his presence is a component of the sunnah from which Islamic rulings are derived – refer to mabadi' ul Usool, shaykh al fadhli)**

[225] **Qinaa'ah: a part of the veil worn to cover the face**

presence of Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) and he was able to prohibit her (from displaying her anguish in such a manner) - but he did not disallow her to do so, which is proof for its permissibility.[227]

3. There are numerous traditions that indicate the permissibility of grazing[228] the face out of grief for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). The grazing results in bleeding; hence if grazing the face such that it results to bleeding is permissible, then to shed blood from the head is also permissible. It is narrated in an authenticated tradition on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): **"It is upon the likes of Al Husayn (peace be upon him) that the robes should be torn, and the faces should be grazed, and the cheeks should be struck"**

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[226] Jala'a Al Uyoon, volume 2

[227] **Certain objections have been raised stating that this narration is weak and hence cannot be used as a justification. The reply is two dimensional. Firstly, various scholars have established the authenticity of its occurrence such as Shaykh Al Shari'ah Al Isfahani . Secondly, there is a popular concept in the study of Usool known as "Tasaamuh fi adillatul sunan" (leniency in the derivation of recommended acts) whereby a permissible action can be categorized as recommended (mustahab) and may be implemented even if it emanates from a weak tradition. The renowned scholar Shaykh Murtadha Al Ansari states in Rasail Fiqhiya: "It is correct to establish an act as desirable (mustahab) on the premises of a weak tradition". The same fact is established by the great Muhaqqiq Al Naraki in his Mustanad Al Shia, volume 4. Two important points that the gentle reader should keep in his mind: a weak narration does not entail a fabricated tradition rather it may include a personality within the chain of transmission who is unknown or, it may be a tradition whereby the chain of transmission is incomplete. Secondly, from such rulings we are able to appreciate that the guidelines used by the Faqih in deriving an act that is either Wajib (obligatory) or Haram (prohibited) are different than those for determining desirable (Mustahab) and less desirable (makrooh) acts. For a detailed proof analysis on this subject, one may refer to books of Usool dealing with the subject on deriving rulings of recommended actions.**

[228] **The original word in Arabic as per the traditions narrated from the infallibles is "خمش" (khamsh) which as per the renowned lexicon (Majma`ul Bahrain) means: to scratch, slap or hit causing injury to the surface of the skin which results in bleeding**

4. It is narrated by Allamah Al Majlis in his monumental works "Bihar ul Anwaar" and in "Jalaa al Uyoon" that when Imam Ali Ibn al Husayn Zaynul Abideen (peace be upon him) would drink water from a bowl, he would remember his father's thirst and weep intensely such that it (the bowl of water) would be filled with tears of blood.
5. The Awaited Saviour of Mankind - Imam Al Hujjah (May Allah hasten his re-appearance) sheds blood as narrated in Ziarah al Nahiya[229] which originates from him:

   (...and I shall weep blood[230] in place of tears for you...)[231]

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[229] **There are some inaccurate notions that suggest Ziarah Al Nahiya originates from Sayyid Murtadha. This misconception is easily clarified by referring to the footnote added by Allamah Al Majlisi in Bihar Al Anwar volume 98 where he seperates the ziarah al Nahiya recited and modified by Sayid Murtadha and the Ziarah al Nahiya that originated from the Imam Al Mahdi (May Allah hasten his re-appearance). In any case, Allamah Majlisi makes it very clear that Sayyid Murtadha used to recite the version of Ziarah Al Nahiya that emanated from the Imam (May Allah hasten his re-appearance) specifically on every Ashura and personalized it by adding a few lines.**

[230] **The possibility of this phrase of the salutation being metaphorical is discounted from its grammatical construction – the word as per the text in Arabic is: "*la-abkiyannaka*" (لابكيَنَّك) - meaning I shall weep for you - the (ك) is a pronoun that refers to the addressed person – in this case Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). The Arabic equivalent for "I weep" is (ابكي) which denotes present continuous tense. The addition of either the letter (لَ) at the beginning of the verb, or (نَّ) at the end of the verb denotes absoluteness in occurrence i.e. the verb occurring without doubt. The intensity of the guarantee of weeping blood (which is the verb) is illustrated by the fact that two letters denoting absoluteness are used in a single verb. For grammatical rules regarding usage of letters denoting absoluteness refer to the renowned grammar text Sharh Ibn Aqeel, volume 1, chapter of verbs.**

[231] Al Dua and Al Ziarah : ***"...surely I shall continue to lament you each morning an each evening, and weep blood instead of tears out of my grief for you , sorrowful of the (tragedies) that afflicted you..."***, Bihar Al Anwar, volume 98, Al Mazaar Al Kabeer

Weeping blood instead of tears can occur from one of two ways:

a. Through an intense amount of weeping such that the delicate capillaries in the eyes are ruptured causing blood to flow from the eyes.
b. Through intense and prolonged weeping such that the blood is not able to be converted into tears at a quick enough rate in response to the continuous and aggressive weeping of a person.[232]

6. The shedding of blood from various Infallible Imams. Ibrahim Ibn Abi Muhammad narrates on authority of Imam Al Ridha (peace be upon him): **"verily the day of Al Husayn (peace be upon him) has wounded[233] our eyelids[234]"[235]**
7. Imam Zainul Abideen's (peace be upon him) tacit approval of bloodletting. It is narrated by Sayid Ibn Tawoos in his book Al-Luhoof: **"...when Bashir Ibn**

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[232] **Medical experts are able to attest that such a condition may prevail in cases of absolute intense and extreme weeping – and who is more deserving of such a form of weeping than the grandson of the slain Imam himself? The awaited saviour who has been in occultation for over 1000 years, and will emerge to avenge the pure blood of his grandfather.**

[233] **Definition of wound: Injury to a part or tissue of the body, especially one caused by physical trauma and characterized by tearing, cutting, piercing, or breaking of the tissue (The American Heritage® Medical Dictionary Copyright © 2007, 2004 by Houghton Mifflin Company)**

[234] **Definition of eyelids: one of two movable folds of protective thin skin over the eye, with eyelashes and ciliary and meibomian glands along its margin. It consists of loose connective tissue containing a thin plate of fibrous tissue lined with mucous membrane (conjunctiva) (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 8th edition. © 2009, Elsevier).**
Thus if the Imam wept to such an extreme such that the delicate tissues around the eyes were damaged and hence causing bleeding and wounding, then tathbir as a wound to the head which is much less painful and harmless is also permissible.

[235] Aamali of shaykh Saduq, Majlis 27, Bihar al Anwar, volume 44

Hadhlam informed the residents of Medina of the martyrdom of Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him) and the return of Imam Zainul Abideen (peace be upon him), there remained not a single maid servant nor a free woman in the entire city, except that they came out of their houses grazing their faces[236], beating their cheeks, wailing over the grief and perdition, seeking chastisement (for the killers of the Imam (peace be upon him)."

8. The Infallible Imams encouraged the display of anguish over Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him). It is narrated in Al Masaabih on authority of Imam Abi Jaffar (peace be upon him) whereby he describes the etiquette of salutation and visitation of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) from afar on the day of Ashura by saying: "**...and he should commemorate his tragedy by displaying anguish[237] over him...**"[238,239]

   Imam Al Sajjad (peace be upon him) displayed anguish on the eleventh day of Muharram, whereby he said to his aunt (Lady Zainab (peace be upon her): "**how can I not feel anguish, nor be overcome with awe while I see (in front of me) my master, my brothers, uncles, cousins and family slain (and lying) in their own blood, the winds blowing and**

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[236] **As previously stated, the tacit approval of an infallible Imam is a component of the sunnah from which Islamic rulings are deduced.**

[237] **The Arabic equivalent of the word translated as anguish is (جزع) which as per definition in the dictionary is a level of extreme sorrow which dominates over (the actions of) a person.**

[238] Kamil Al Ziaraat, chapter 71

[239] **Anguish can be displayed in a number of ways – one of them, and probably the most visible action denoting anguish is the shedding of ones own blood**

scattering sand over their corpses, looted – without being shrouded. [240]

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) praised Masma`a Kardayn by saying: **"Indeed, you are from among those who express anguish over (the calamities that befell) us."**[241]

The display of anguish is an act opposite to displaying patience, and *tathbir* is the most evident act that displays and illustrates anguish.[242]

9. Bloodletting (as a concept in itself) is a recommended act within the Islamic Shariah – such as in the case of *Hijamah* (popularly known as cupping). It is narrated by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny): "I did not pass by a single angel on the night of *Me`raj* (heavenly ascension) except that he advised me (on the importance of) having love for Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), *Hijamah* and similarly, the importance of circumcision.[243]
10. It is narrated by Al Sikuwni on authority of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): "Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said: "if a man professes Islam, he should perform

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[240] Bihar Al Anwar, volume 28, Kamil Al Ziarat, chapter 88

[241] Kamil Al Ziarat, chapter 32, Bihar al Anwar, volume 44

[242] **This is because it is an illustration of anguish within the heart of the lover – because he is sorrowful and it is unbearable for him that he was not present in karbala to shield the Infallible Imam with his own body from the arrows, spears and swords, he will now let blood as a symbol of his loyalty, wearing a shroud – symbolizing his willingness to face death out of love, and in defence of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). It is this display of love and loyalty for the representative of God on earth that Imam Al Sadiq (peace be upon him) commends.**

[243] **Therefore it would be absurd to suggest that it is permissible to extract blood from the head for medical purposes, but at the same time it is impermissible to perform the same action with the pure intention of displaying love and loyalty towards the King of paradise (peace be upon him)**

circumcision even if he is eighty years of age."[244]

Similarly, piercing the ear of a male slave – it is narrated by Masa`dah Ibn Sadqah on authority of Imam Abi Abdillah (peace be upon him): "piercing of the ear of the male slave is from the sunnah"

And similar is the case in regards to piercing the nose for the women.[245]

Had bleeding (from the body) or experiencing pain in itself been impermissible, then there would be no basis of categorizing actions such as above as being recommended (mustahab). With this argument being sound, then, *tathbir* in it self is permissible, and becomes recommended when performed out of anguish for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and as a gesture of solidarity.

All of the above cases that illustrate the permissibility of *tathbir* are proofs derived from the perspective of jurisprudence. In addition to this, there is another category of proof, even though it may not explicitly indicate the permissibility of performing *tathbir* but rather it illustrates the extraordinary nature of this great act. The hit of a sharpened sword on the scalp (shaved head) usually should require medical attention, whereas we see thousands of people performing the *tathbir* during the

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[244] Al Furu' min al Kafi, volume 6.

This does not a literal expression – rather the usage of the number eighty here stresses importance of the action. There is no doubt that if an elder or any other person was to suffer unbearably due to this, then he is exempted from the action similar to the one who is exempted from fasting if he is in danger of suffering unbearable pain.

[245] These examples have been cited as proofs because in the olden days, to pierce the body entailed enduring pain. We negate the argument that tathbir is prohibited because it involves inflicting pain citing these two actions which also involved pain.

The relevancy of this proof in relation to tathbir is the desirability to perform certain actions even if they entail experiencing pain.

morning hours and then participating in the various processions that circumbulate around the shrines of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and Abul Fadhl Al Abbas (peace be upon him) and around the parameter of the city of Karbala – walking a total distance of at least one mile – sometimes in the heat of the summer, and at other times in the middle of the winter, but at the end of the procession, they simply wash their heads and bathe without requiring any medical attention! Thereafter, they all participate in the remainder of the processions that include the *latam* and the hitting of the shoulders and backs with chains until nightfall and despite all this, none of them suffer life threatening injuries! In any case, if someone does faint or is overcome with weakness due to excessive blood loss, as soon as he recovers, he rushes to participate in the remaining processions. I (the author) have personally not heard of any person dying as a consequence (of *tathbir)* except that I followed up the case only to discover it was false news being circulated by certain people among the masses.

Ayatullah Al Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Kashif Al Ghita states in his book Al Ayaat Al Baiyinaat that to extract blood by ones own action within the boundaries is an act which in itself is permissible. However, it becomes obligatory at certain times, and during other times it becomes prohibited. Its classification as an obligatory or prohibited act is based upon its secondary ruling which revolves around external factors that surround the act. Therefore, to remove or extract blood becomes obligatory if ones health is contingent upon it – like in the case of *hijamah* (cupping) or surgery, and at other times it becomes prohibited – like if for instance if the extraction of blood necessitates death or danger of illness.

Similarly, it (extraction of blood) has a dimension of being classified as a recommended act when performed

out of love for the divine progeny, the fifth person from the people of the cloak, and out of love for the seventy two valiant battalions of Karbala. It is sufficient (to be deemed as a recommended act) when it is performed as a gesture of solidarity and expressing anguish, and as a gesture of yearning to be with them, and to re-enact a part of their tragedy in front of their lovers. All this keeping in mind the loftiness and superiority of the intended goals behind performing these acts.

As for the issue regarding injuries sustained, and possible death as a result of excessive blood loss to an extent that the whole practise (of *tathbir*) should be ruled out as impermissible, there are two responses to this issue:

1. I (the author) during the sixty years of my life have been witnessing the occurrence of this event every year, and have never seen nor heard of an instance whereby a person died as a consequence of performing *tathbir*
2. In any case if there does happen to occur any death or permanent injury (disability), it would be considered as an exceptional or rare personal case[246], and it is not possible to derive a general Islamic ruling[247] based on exceptional individual cases. The Faqih is only obligated to state the major and general laws and rulings, and not the secondary particulars which vary from individual to individual. Therefore, we state, that any one who fears he may suffer an injury (substantial) by performing a certain action, it becomes impermissible for him on an individual basis.

In reality, the extra-ordinary nature that surrounds the processions and occurrence of *tathbir* is sufficient proof that

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[246] **This is in comparison to the number of people who could hypothetically die or sustain permanent disability as a result of doing tathbir compared to the millions who do the same each year and do not sustain any major injury save a scratch mark on the head.**

[247] **A general ruling whose compliance is obligatory upon all muslims**

the rights of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) are encompassed by an exclusive sort of mercy. This is adequate evidence in its permissibility.[248]

[248] In regards to further information regarding this issue, refer to the book "Al Madaaih Al Nabawiya" which was authored by Dr. Zaki Mubarak in the year 1935 where he states: "it was normal for wails and shrieks due to lamentation over (the tragedy of) Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) to be heard in the streets of Cairo each year on the day of Ashura. I used to hear about this in the news while I was a student in Cairo, but never believed in it because I never witnessed it since I would spend the days of Ashura with my family in the suburbs. One of the years, I purposely decided to stay in Cairo and witnessed the procession myself – whereby the shias would circumbulate around the Mosque of Imam Husayn (May Allah be pleased with him) with bodies that had sustained injuries and covered in blood. This practise has been concealed with the rise of the new government, but I witnessed for a few years processions from the village of Hamazawi whereby people would come out wailing and lamenting while listening the tragedy of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) on the night of Ashura." – text ends here.

This account establishes for us that tathbir was practised by the shias (outside of Iraq), and the shias of Cairo in particular had the freedom to do so in their city over seventy years ago.

A Glimpse of the divinity surrounding tathbir:[249]

Tathbir and tableegh

The extraordinary nature of the event of tathbir is also apparent in its role of tableegh. As a matter of fact, numerous people have embraced shiasm solely on account of witnessing the procession of tathbir.

The late Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Shirazi (May allah Bless his soul) states in his booklet entitled: "Ashura and the neglected Quran" that a delegate of shias from India had once come to perform Ziarah (visitation) of the shrine of Imam Ridha (peace be upon him) and his noble sister Lady Masuma Qum (peace be upon her). While in Qum, they visited the grand scholar who upon greeting them and after a short conversation conceded that they were previously hindus before embracing Shiasm. The late Scholar then inquired from them as to the reason for their change in faith. They replied by saying that they were from different ethnic backgrounds across India and from various respectable professions such as doctors, engineers, etc and converted due to their witnessing the procession of Tathbir.

They went on to elaborate that they were aware that any one who sustained an injury from a sword or otherwise that resulted in bleeding (similar to the likes of tathbir) would more than often need extensive medical attention, bandaging, abstention from water, and a certain time frame to recover, whereas the people who participated in tathbir for the sake of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) healed and recovered from their wounds in a medically phenomenal way - free

[249] This is an additional section added by the author and is not part of the original works of the late author. There are numerous incidents of similar nature which you will encounter in this chapter. Due to constrains in time, we are obliged to put forward a selection of only five such incidents.

from the pain and procedures of healing that would be necessary for any other person on any other normal occasion.

This observation led them to believe that the personality who was being mourned had to be divine - and hence they researched Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and embraced the faith with all their heart and sole.[250]

Words of advice from Ayatullah Al Naini:

It is stated by the late shaykh Mohamed Al Gharawi al Kashani who was one of the students of the late Ayatullah Al Naini (May Allah bless his soul) that the marja (i.e. Ayatullah Al Naini) would always remind us during his classes repeatedly each year as the blessed month of Muharram would approach by saying: "Indeed I see you all on the verge of undertaking the responsibility of conveying the shariah to different people in different cities - I therefore urge you that when you are faced with questions pertaining to the lamentation of Imam Al Husayn (Peace be upon him) such as the latam, and hitting of chains, and tathbir and role playing.....do not display any opposition towards these actions through your answers. This is because you do not have the right to create doubt in the minds of the people in regards to these issues.[251]

Tathbir on Idd al Ghadeer

It was from the habit of the late Allamah Al Amini[252] (May Allah bless his soul) to sit in the courtyard of the shrine of the King of Martyrs (peace be upon him) in Karbala every year on the day of Ashura whilst in the company of scholars

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250 Ashura and the neglected Quran, pg 42, Imam Muhammad Shirazi

251 Al Azaa al Taqleedi lil shia, vol 1, pg 795

252 Revered author of the unmatched encyclopedia titled: Al Ghadeer. An eleven volume work describing and proving the event of Ghadeer and undisputed of Imam Ameer al Mu`mineen (peace be upon him)

from other schools of thought within Islam.

On one particular year, as they were seated, they were watching the different mawkibs (processions) coming from the village of "Twayrij" into the courtyard of the shrine lamenting the Imam (peace be upon him). The believers of one of these processions were involved in a frenzied state as they passionately beat their chests. At this moment, one of these scholars from the opposing school of thought turned around and asked Allamah Al ghadiri in a very sarcastic manner if such mannerisms were permissible. The shaykh remained silent and did not say a word.

Shortly after, a procession performing tathbir walked into the courtyard of the shrine whereby another scholar from the opposing school of thought hysterically stood up and shouted out sarcastically if such an action was permissible. Allamah Al Amini in a very calm and composed manner replied by saying: "yes this is permissible – and it is because of the commemoration of these practises you are not able to deny the martyrdom of Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him) nor are you able to deny the crimes of yazid the son of muawiyah (May they both dwell in eternal damnation). As a matter of fact, we have erred by not performing tathbir on Idd al ghadeer; had we done so, you would not be able to have denied its occurrence.[253]

Miracle at the shrine of Imam Ameer Al Mu`mineen (peace be upon him)

The Martyr Allamah Al Dastghaib Al Shirazi in his writing "Qisas al Ajeebah" and Shaykh Alaam Ridha Al Asadi Al Bashrowti in his writing "Diwaan Ashura" both narrate the following incident:

[253] Al Intisar, volume 9. pg 111-112

Once during the time of Ayatullah Abul Hasan Al Isfahani, the Iraqi government of the time was adamant in banning the tathbir procession in the holy city of Najaf, and on the day of Ashura, they locked up the doors of the shrine leading into the courtyard such that no one may enter.

As the procession of tathbir approached the blessed shrine, the mourners were weeping and wailing "Ya husayn...Ya Husayn" while striking their heads, when suddenly the large doors of the shrine bolted open from behind shattering the massive locks placed on them into half. The city was perplexed and taken by awe at this miraculous incident. From that day onwards, the government of the time was not able to restrict any form of lamentation for Imam Al Husayn (peace be upon him)[254]

Tathbir and Imam Al Mahdi (May Allah hasten his reappearance):

Shaykh Mohamed Mahdi Zaynul Abideen Al Najafi states in his book, in regards to the piety and the consequent blessings that were bestowed upon his grandfather - The late Ayatullah Al Shaykh Zaynul Abideen Al Najafi (May Allah bless his soul):

During the time of Ayatullah Sayid Kadhim Al Yazdi[255] a number of believers from various places in iran and Azerbaijan had sought religious edicts from the Ulema of najaf in regards to the permissibility of using drums while commemorating the martyrdom of the Imam (peace be upon him) together with other questions such as the permissibility of hitting the backs with chains, performing tathbir, etc.

Ayatullah Zaynul Abideen replied to the queries with a letter which read as follows: "I was pondering over the

[254] Ahsan ul Jazaa fi Iqaamatil Azaa ala Sayidil Shuhada, volume 2, page 71

[255] Author of the Fiqh masterpiece titled "Urwatul Wuthqa"

practise of tathbir and was reluctant to issue an edict in regards to tathbir. I therefore went to Masjid al Sahla to seek the intercession of my master Hujjatullah Ibn Hasan (May Allah hasten his reappearance)[256] whereby I saw him and asked him about the permissibility of tathbir whereby he replied to me by saying it is permissible. I therefore deliver the same fatwa as my Master and my Leader by saying that it is permissible. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon you.[257]

[256] i.e. Imam Al Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance)

[257] Bayaan ul A`immah, volume 2, pg 461-462