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LONDON, JULY 1984

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Because of the size of this volume it has been decided not to publish the Autumn issues 1985 and 1986 of this journal.

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PREFACE

This special number of *Al-Serāt* contains papers which were either presented at, or, in some cases, subsequently submitted in longer written form to, the International Conference on the Imam Ḥusayn held in London from the 6th to the 9th of July, 1984. The event was jointly organized by the Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Muhammadi Islamic Centre, Toronto, Canada, to commemorate the 1400th *hijrī* anniversary of the birth of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the third Shʿī Imam and grandson of Muḥammad, the prophet of Islam, in 4 AH. Further details of the conference and speakers can be found in: Maryam Wdlings, 'Report on the International Seminar on Imam Ḥusayn. peace be upon him', *Al-Serāt* X/2 (Autumn, 1984), 3-12.

The papers have been arranged thematically under three headings, and within these headings the order is alphabetical, according to author. Given both the variety of ways in which the subjects were treated in the papers themselves, and the different backgrounds of the contributors, only an absolute minimum of uniformity has been imposed by the editors, and, while it is hoped that consistency has been maintained within each paper, such consistency should not be looked for between them. Dates, for example, usually appear in their *hijrī* form, but in some places they are given according to the Christian calendar, or in both forms; it should be clear from the context which system is being used. Qur'ānic quotations have been given throughout in the form of, e.g., 2:156. without further indication. The transliteration of Arabic names and terms follows the usual style of *Al-Serāt*, but in the case of other languages the editors have generally retained the transliterations given by each author.

The Muhanimadi Trust would like to thank the contributors and organizers for their cooperation and assistance, and for their kind patience in awaiting the delayed publication of these papers. In particular, they would like to thank Mahmoud Ayoub and Azim Nanji for their help and advice in the preparation of this volume, and Lynda Clarke for her translation of Professor al-Janhānī's contribution.

INTRODUCTION

This publication of the proceedings of the conference to commemorate the 1400th *hijra* anniversary of the birth the the Sayyid al-Shuhadā', the Imam Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, gives me the opportunity to say a few words of introduction about the Muhammadi Trust and the Muhammadi Islamic Centre for those whose do not already know about their operations and activities. The Muhammadi Trust was established in the United Kingdom in 1973, with its registered office in London, for the purpose, *inter alia*, of encouraging Islamic studies and disseminating knowledge of Islamic teachings: and its sister organization, the Muhammadi Islamic Centre of Canada, was set up in 1979, with the additional aim of awarding fellowships to students and scholars of Islam, and it has recently been registered under the name of the Muhammadi Islamic Foundation so as to allow it greater freedom and independence in its activities. Both organizations are anxious to strengthen unity among all Muslims, and, in particular, the youth. In pursuit of these objectives, the Trust has published a number of books and booklets in the English language. Some of these are translations of Arabic books on religious themes and topics, written by renowned scholars, and some are original works by scholars of international repute who have contributed to the study of Islam. The Trust also publish a journal, *Al-Serāt*, which prints articles on religious topics by eminent writers. Those who are familiar with this journal know that the utmost importance is given to the quality and standard of the articles, and, at the same time, full freedom to express views is allowed the writers so as to permit the publication of articles propounding diverse views with which the publishers may not necessarily agree. This effort of the Trust is directed towards the dissemination in English of knowledge concerning Islam in all its aspects.

Although a large body of literature on Islam exists in oriental languages such as Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, there is, in contrast, a dearth of such literature in English. Yet English is the only language with which our younger generation living in the Western world is familiar.

The diffusion and dissemination of knowledge is. according to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the religious duty of every Muslim, man or woman. The Prophet of Islam has enjoined us to acquire knowledge from the cradle to the grave. As Sa'dī said,

پئے علم چوں شمع باید گداخت کہ بے علم نتواں خدا را شناخت

'*to kindle the light of knowledge, one must necessarily melt like a candle; for how can one understand the divine Being without the glow of learning.*'

I will now say just a few words as my humble tribute to the great Imam whose memory we have honoured in this conference. As a gem of the purest rays, serenest sparkles and reflected light, the life of the Imam Ḥusayn mirrors the light of guidance through its every facet. It is no wonder that the Imam Ḥusayn is looked upon as an ideal by all who believe in righteous causes, who believe that no sacrifice is too great for the achievement of a noble aim, who believe that death for a righteous cause is the very acme of noble living and far preferable to a life of ignominy and degredation based on compromising principles. How rightly Kawar Mchandra Singh Bedi has said:

جی کے مرنا تو سب کو آتا ہے مر کے جینا سکھا دیا تو نے

'*Everybody knows that after life there is death;*
but it is you [O Ḥusayn] who has taught how to live by dying.'

As Thomas Carlyle, in his *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, has put it: 'The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Husayn and his followers were rigid believers in God: they illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to truth and falsehood. The victory of Husayn, despite his minority, marvels me.'

On the plains of Karbalā', Ḥusayn showed what *jihād* stands for in Islamic terminology. He taught us, as no one else could have done,

that it does not mean aggrandisement or the flamboyant display of valour which cries out: 'One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name.' He showed, as none else could have done, that to remain firm and steadfast in the hour of trial and tribulation, to surrender to the will of Allah with complete resignation is the zenith of martyrdom and *jihād*. He showed us that even the death and destruction of his dearest ones cannot deter a person from the performance of the appointed task, from the fulfillment of the ordained purpose, without the least hesitation, without the least demur, without a word or murmur of complaint. Who else but Ḥusayn could have prayed to Allah for the salvation of Muslims without any rancour or bitterness under the dagger of the assassin. And all this with the utmost serenity and calm which comes from supreme resignation to the will of Allah and complete submission to His divine purpose. As Yagana says,

ڈوب کر پار اتر گیا اسلام آپ کیا جانیں کربلا کیا ہے

Only after drowning did Islam survive. How is it possible for anyone to comprehend the meaning, message, and significance of Karbalā'?

Secretary to the Muhammadi Trust.

THE ETERNAL MEANING OF THE IMAM ḤUSAYN'S MARTYRDOM

Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina
University of Virginia

The purpose behind studying the historical events that led to the martyrdom of the Imam Ḥusayn in the year 61/680 is, primarily, to try to articulate intelligibly the humanly most significant questions which have since altered the context of routine human life in Islamic history. As such, what happened in that year cannot remain just private concern with the past, because the events at Karbalā', Iraq, were in some sense or other outstanding in the context of humankind generally, and not just in relation to the Prophet's family or their adherents. The day of 'Āshūrā' has proven to be an event with obvious religious and moral implications whose significance is universally perceived and whose religious and moral challenges cannot be ignored by anyone who claims to be a Muslim. The religious and moral deeds that took place on this day have remained unrepeatable ones that have an everlasting claim to our respect. After having known those deeds, the Muslim community can never remain indifferent to the Islamic challenges posed by the event of Karbalā': not because of the tragic nature of those deeds, but because those deeds cause spiritual and moral awareness and motivation in us and add to our understanding of who we are and of what we are committed to both as human beings and Muslims. Furthermore, the events at Karbalā' generate in us a sense of what is worthy of our wonder and our tears.

Hence the study of the events at Karbalā' ought to revive in us the great commitment and loyalty that we, as Muslim, have borne towards the Islamic revelation — the commitment and loyalty which were made explicit by the events on the day of 'Āshūrā', when the male and female, the old and young members and supporters of the Prophet's family demonstrated the excellence of their human endeavor. In the final analysis, it is the relevance of Karbalā' to humanity which

continues to challenge our conceptions of standards of human respect and recognition for as long as there remain conscientious beings on earth.

However, the Imam Ḥusayn's struggle to uphold the spiritual and moral values of Islam becomes comprehensible when seen in the light of the entire struggle of Abrahamic traditions to assert the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*). In other words, the assertion of monotheism which is pre-eminently attributed to Abraham in the Qur'ān (12:37-40), calls for the act of submitting to God (*islām*). Which means accepting a spiritual and moral responsibility to uphold the standards of action held to have God's authority. Hence, accepting Islam and its challenge meant that Muslims opened themselves to vast new considerations of what life might mean when a person 'submits' to God. So construed, their act of 'submission' could be defined as commitment to the Abrahamic faith enunciated by the Prophet Muḥammad, which required to establish an intensely creative person as committed to the social and juridical consequences of being a Muslim. Consequently, adherence to Islam presented an opportunity to build a new order of social life such as the Islamic vision had more and more obviously demanded. The 'submission' to God demanded, in the first place, a personal devotion to spiritual and moral purity; but, personal piety and purity implied a just social behavior. Sooner or later, this challenge of Abrahamic faith was bound to require the creation of just social order as the natural outgrowth and context of the personal piety and purity (*taqwā*) it required, because Islam is never satisfied with mere exposition of its ideals, but constantly seeks the means to implement them. Obviously, when no Muslim could have remained neutral to this challenge of Islam, how could the Imam Ḥusayn have tolerated a movement spearheaded by the Umayyad's which attacked the ideals and principles of Islamic social order and suggested an alternative sort of sanction for their behavior and especially for social leadership.

It is therefore pertinent to understand the Imam Ḥusayn's revolution within the historical context created by the individual's relationship to God and maintained by the aspirations for the creation of just public

order prevalent in the Muslim community as a whole and given form in their corporate life. By regarding the events of Karbalā' as subordinate, some Muslim scholars, and following them, some Westerners, have tried to reduce the exceptional significance of the struggle of the Imam Ḥusayn and its impact upon the course of subsequent Islamic history. Undoubtedly, without full reference to the general socio-political milieu which developed following the death of the Prophet in the year 632, and which culminated in the events of Karbalā', the day of 'Āshūrā' appears to be a mere tragedy without any meaning and significance for posterity. The Imam Ḥusayn's revolution cannot be isolated from the general historical context of the Islamic challenge within which the Imam and his followers acted to make the purpose of the revolution explicit. In other words, it is impossible to appreciate the purpose behind the Imam Ḥusayn's and his followers' martyrdoms without first understanding the historical circumstances that called upon him to defend the spiritual and moral heritage of Islam.

This is indeed a difficult task, because it is usually considered an impossible undertaking to separate two consecutive events in the history of human society. The explanation of this difficulty lies in the gradual nature of change of factors that demarcate one historical period from another. Moreover, it is even more difficult to demarcate the end of one period of a society and the beginning of another when two consecutive periods are required to be examined in order to determine the subsequent changes. It is this difficulty adumbrated in sensitive consequences to one's cherished notions about a particular period in Islamic history, especially the early days following the death of the Prophet, which has caused Muslim scholars in general to deviate from the responsibility of preserving their scholarly integrity in treating the history of the Imam Ḥusayn. Thus the imperative need to properly demarcate the period when the Muslim community began to witness their leaders' obvious deviation from the fundamental teachings of Islam, in order to fully discuss the Imam Ḥusayn's response, has been ignored by many Muslim historians. It is only through objective evaluation of the early period of Islamic history that it becomes possible to understand the stance the Imam Ḥusayn took in the year 60-61/679-

80. However, for a number of Muslim historians, who have generally failed to point out the obvious deviations from the Islamic revelation in the period that followed the Prophet's death, the challenge lies in revising their tendentious historical presentation of that early period, which has been slow in coming forth.[1] Nevertheless, a consensus among all historians belonging to various schools of Muslim thought has emerged that it is possible, at least, to fix the period of these deviations from Islamic norms, if not earlier, then, from the beginning of the second half of the period of 'Uthmān's caliphate (644-656 AD).

'Uthmān's caliphate typifies a period that caused general political and religious patterns to drift away from the standards that were provided by Islam. Indeed, it became apparent that the new currents in the Muslim community around this period which went towards creating new forms in the realm of public order were the result of these currents interacting with the mentality of the group that held power in the society, namely, the Umayyad's, who had very little concern for the ideals of Islam. As a result, it is not sufficient merely to discuss these new forms at that time by limiting overselves to the evaluation of the external forms only; rather, it is necessary to embark upon a serious discussion of the factors that created these forms and the way they affected the society and the personages who molded the history of this period. Such inquiry remains legitimate public concern, which puts the event of 'Āshūrā' in its proper perspective. The main question, then,

1 Among modern scholars, the works of Taḥa Ḥusayn, *al-Fitna al-Kubrā* and *'Alī wa Banuh*, and 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād, *Abū al-shuhadā' Ḥusayn b, 'Alī* mark a beginning in this direction of critical evaluation of early Islamic history. The importantphase of 'revisionism' is also marked by Abū al-'Alā' Mawdūdī's controversial (as far as Sunni Muslims are concerned) *Khilāfat va mulūkiyyat*. This work has been refuted again and again by several Sunni authors who do not agree with Mawdūdī's objectivity in dealing with both 'Uthmān and Mu'āwiya's caliphate, see for instance: Muḥammad Ishāq, *Iẓhār-i ḥaqīqat bi J̌avāb-i Khilāfat va mulūkiyyat*, and Maḥmūd Aḥmad 'Abbāsī *Ḥaqīqat-i Khilāfat va mulūkiyyat*. Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London, 1982), p. 181-194, reviews modern literature written on the Imam Ḥusayn by Arab and Persian scholars. Unfortunately, Enayat did not read Urdu, and was unable to take into account an important and rather controversial study by the learned scholar 'Alī Naqī Naqavī, *Shahīd-i insāniyat* (1942), which precedes the Persian study of Ni'mat Allāh Sālihī Najafabādī, *Shahīd-i J̌āvād* (1968), based on historical method.

that we intend to treat in this paper is: What had happened to Islam during this period that the Imam Ḥusayn felt it necessary to take upon himself to undo the harm the Umayyad's were causing to it?

Islam conceives of human nature in terms of both its spiritual and physical needs, and as such it is never content with mere exposition of its ideals, but constantly seeks the means to implement them. The Qur'ān gave Muslims every reason to wish for a government and a society which would be based on the 'noble paradigm' set by the political and the ideal sides of the Prophet's mission on earth. However, Major political undertakings of the early Muslim leaders inevitably demonstrated a lack of commitment to the 'noble paradigm'. Since 'Uthmān's time the ruling class had used Islam more or less as a badge of identity. Whereas Islamic ideals carried a responsible and egalitarian social commitment, these rulers were engaged in creating a privileged class of a small elite tied together by common Arab heritage. The implications of such a deviation from the Islamic ideal became discernable to those Muslims who were most serious about the moral and political responsibilities which an acceptance of the Islamic faith entailed. The most obvious implication of reference to the Arabic heritage in ordering public and private life meant that Islam became the envied badge of a favored ruling class of Arabs who happened to be bound together by Islam. As such, that would have made Islam an Ishmaelism (as the Arabs were the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham), analogous to the Israelism of the Jews, in which converts could enter as members of the community only on the basis of their having descended from Abraham. Despite the comprehensiveness of the Islamic ideal and its universalistic direction, the exalting of the Arabs as being of the line of Ishmael and producing an ethnically-bound community became part of the political program of the Umayyad's from the second half of 'Uthmān's Caliphate. The most important consequence of this political mission, which gradually became clearer, was that Muslims were not treated on an equal basis as prescribed by the Qur'ānic dictum regarding the 'brotherhood of all believers', and the Prophet's recommendation to the Muslims to renounce all conflict

based on genealogy.[2] On the contrary, the great families of Medina who descended from the Prophet's close associates were accorded 'social priority' (*tafḍīl*), and the sense of the inviolability of the Arab tribesmen was reinforced against the Qur'ānic requirement that a Muslim, regardless of his ethnic affiliation, had to be accorded that personal liberty and dignity.[3]

Consistent with this anti-egalitarian attitude of the early Muslim leaders was the development of elaborate forms of urban luxury and social distinction. The fruits of conquest, in the form of the booty and the revenue from the conquered lands, had created an unequal distribution of wealth among all Arab Muslims. Consequently, the wealth was concentrated among the conquering families, affording them privileges based on arbitrary distinctions of rank. According to al-Dhahabī, during 'Uthmān's reign there was so much wealth in Medina that a horse would sell for one-hundred thousand dirham's. While a garden would fetch four-hundred thousand. The Umayyad's, says al-Dhahabī, had, during this period, acted indiscriminately in amassing wealth to the extent that they had discredited the caliphate as the guarantor of the equality of all Muslims in sharing the wealth acquired through the spoils and the taxes from the conquered lands.[4]

2 See the Prophet's widely-quoted speech on hte occasion of his Farewell Pilgrimage in Ibn Hishām, *Ṣirāṭ al-.Nabī*, p. 821; and Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 123.

3 I have pointed out above that the seeds of this discrimination were sown earlier than 'Uthmān's period. See, for instance, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, VIII, II, where the author relates the principle of 'social priorityr — *al-tafḍīl* — introduced by 'Umar in the year 20/640, when he distributed the pensions on the basis of 'priority'. Thus, even the *muḥājiūn* were classified into Quraish and non-Quraish immigrants; wheras all *muḥājiūn* had priority over all the *anṣār*, and all the Arabs were given priority over the non-Arab (*al-'ajam*), and so on. Apparantly, during the last years of his rule, 'Umar came to realize the errors of his social and political policies, and regreted their implementation, This is evident in his reproach to one of his governors in the year 23/643 for having adopted class stratification and the etiquettes of the aristocrats in his gatherings. See Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, IV. 25.

4 Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, IV, 125f. The problem of the amassing of wealth and the unfair distribution of the fruits of conquest goes back to an earlier period when, according to Ṭabarī, the Arab leaders changed their simple ways by settling down in the centres of wealth-concentration in Syna. When 'Umar visited Mu'āwiya in Syria, he was shocked to see the way Mu'āwiya demonstrated his wealth to the caliph every time he came to see him (*Ta'rīkh*, VI, 184.)

Muʿāwiya, who Symbolizes the prevailing tendencies of the Arab aristocracy in the first century of Islam, clearly formed his policies as the Arab chief, concerned perhaps less with the directives of the Qur'ān or the Prophetic 'pattern of moral behavior' — the *sunna*. It can be maintained with much documentation that the Umayyad rulers did the minimum for the consolidation of Islamic matters. The Umayyad rulers and their governors — who were by the large neither pious nor committed to Islam — were not the people to promote a religious and social life corresponding to the *sunna* of the Prophet. As a matter of fact, reference to the *sunna* was not necessarily a reference to the *sunna* of the Prophet; rather, Muʿāwiya made frequent references to the *sunna* of 'Umar in setting the fiscal policies of the state.[5] There was little concern about the religious life of the population. As true Arabs, they paid little attention to religion, either in their own conduct or in that of their subjects. If a man was observant of his religious obligation and was seen to be devoutly worshiping in the mosque, it was assumed that he was not a follower of the Umayyad dynasty, but an ardent supporter of 'Alī.[6]

Individual examples cited by several authoritative traditionalists indicate the state of affairs in regard to the ignorance prevailing among the Umayyad's about the ritual performances and religious precepts in the first century. In Syria, where the Umayyad's had the staunchest support, it was not generally known that there were only five canonical daily prayers, and in order to make certain of this fact, it was decided that an associate of the Prophet who was still alive should be asked about it.[7] It is impossible to fully comprehend the state of affairs that prevailed under the Umayyad's when the rulers of the people who lived

5 Yaʿqūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 264

6 Dīnawārī, *Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, p. 249

7 Abū Dāwd, *Sunān*, I, 142; Nasā'ī. *Sunān*, I, 42; Dārīmī, *Sunān*, p. 195. The general ignorance of the Muslims about religious matters is further attested by the account which shows that when 'Uṭba b. al-Naḥḥās al-'Ijlī cited a line of by poem by 'Adī b. Zayd, and attributed it to God in his sermon, people though that it actually was from the Qur'ān, until he was challenged by Hishm b al-Kalb. See Ibn Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 91. In the *Sunān* of Nasā'ī, p. 46-7, there are traditions which indicate that up to the time of al-Ḥajjāj and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Azīz, people had no idea of the proper times for prayer, and the most pious Muslims were unsure of quite elementary rules.

under them showed very little concern for the understanding of the laws and rules of Islam, Indeed, such a period was alluded to in the Prophetic tradition which predicted the critical religious future of the Muslim community:
There will come rulers after me who will destroy the canonical prayers (*ṣalāt*) but continue to perform the prayers at the fixed times all the same.[8]

Moreover, the Umayyad hatred of the Hashemite's, especially the Prophet's family, which was evident under Muʿāwiya and his successors, give rise to controversies among Muslims on issues of Islam, whether political or doctrinal. The Umayyad spirit of fabrication, dissemination, and suppression of Prophetic traditions is evident in the instruction which Muʿāwiya gave to his governor al-Mughīra on defaming ʿAlī and his companions:

Do not tire of abusing and insulting ʿAlī and calling for God's mercifulness for ʿUthmān, defaming the companions of ʿAlī, removing them, and refusing to listen to them, praising, in contrast, the clan of ʿUthmān, drawing them near to you, and listening to them.[9]

This instruction is in the form of official encouragement to fabricate lies directed against ʿAlī and to hold back and suppress those reports that favored him. Evidently the Umayyad's and their political followers had no scruples in promoting tendentious lies in the form of Prophetic traditions, and they were prepared to cover such falsifications with their undoubted authority.

One such pious authority was al-Zuhrī, who could not resist pressure from the governing authorities, and was willing to promote the interests of the Umayyad dynasty by religious means. Al-Zuhrī belonged to the circle of those Muslims who believed that a *modus vivendi* with the Umayyad government was desirable. However, even he could not cover up the report that Anas b. Mālik had related regarding the critical religious situation under the Umayyad's. The report is

8 Tirmidhī, *Sunān*, I, 37.
9 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 112.

preserved in al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, in a section entitled: 'Not offering the prayer at its stated time':

Al-Zuhrī relates that he visited Anas b. Mālik at Damascus and found him weeping, and asked him the reason for his weeping. He replied 'I do not know anything which I used to know during the lifetime of the Messenger of God [Everything is lost] except this prayer (*ṣalāt*) which [too] is being lost [that is, not being offered as it should be].'[10]

That the manner in which this well-established Prophetic practice of prayer had been altered, either out of ignorance or due to the anti-*Sunna* and anti-'Alī attitude of the Umayyad's, is further demonstrated by another tradition in al-Bukhārī, in the section entitled: 'To end the *takbīr* (the saying of God is greater') on prostrating.' The tradition is narrated on the authority of Muṭarrif b. 'Abd Allāh, who said:

'Imran b. Ḥusayn and I offered the prayer behind 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (in Basra). When 'Alī prostrated, he said the *takbīr*, when he raised his head he said the *takbīr* and when he stood up for the third unit (*rak'a*) he said the *takbīr*. On the completion of the prayer 'Imran took my hand and said: 'He ('Alī) made me remember the prayer of Muḥammad, peace be upon him.' Or, he said (something to the effect that) 'He led us in a prayer like that of Muḥammad, peace be upon him.'[11]

The above facts show sufficiently the prevailing trend in the Umayyad state, where Islam was above all a badge of united Arab aristocracy, the code and discipline of a conquering elite. As become apparent in subsequent periods, the traditions of Arab aristocracy had relatively little inherent connection with Islam itself. In fact, under the Umayyad's a responsible and egalitarian spirit of Islam was ignored in favor of power politics. Under such circumstances, the faithful had to deal with a crucial moral and religious question: To what extent could the Muslims consent to obey the rulers, who were completely opposed to the basic teachings of Islam?

10 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 301f, *ḥadīth* no. 507. For al-Zuhrī's relationship with the Umayyads see: Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, II, 130.

11 Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 417f, *ḥadīth* no. 753.

It is possible to surmise from various sources on this period of Islamic history that the Umayyad's presented a dilemma for the committed Muslims as to how they were to order their religious life under such rulers. Or course, there were some, like al-Zuhrī, who did not consider the deviation from the religious obligations by the Umayyad's a sufficient reason to refuse obedience to them and declare them as unjust. These were the Marjaʿites, who believed that to acknowledge the Umayyad's as true believers it was sufficient that they professed Islam outwardly, and that it was not necessary to pry into their un-Islamic behavior. Accordingly, these people did not raise any objection to the cruel measures adopted by the Umayyad's and their governors against those pious individuals like Ḥujr b. ʿAdī and later on, the Imam Ḥusayn, who refused them their allegiance on the basis of their conviction that as an essential consequence of their religious responsibility they could not do so, On the contrary, the Marjaʿites even defended the massacre which the Umayyad's caused among their most pious opponents on the grounds that these individuals were disrupting the unity of the community by challenging the authority that represented the Muslim community as a whole.[12]

There were others among the pious persons, who, although acknowledging the unworthiness of the Umayyad's to rule the community on religious grounds, maintained that the *de facto* rule of the Umayyad's was in the interest of the state and of Islamic unity.[13] They thereby contributed towards the acceptance of the rulers, and the people, following their lead, tolerated and paid allegiance to the un-Islamic regime. Furthermore, the accommodating outlook of this group laid the groundwork for the acceptance of any claim to legitimacy by a Muslim authority that managed to successfully seize power through upheaval or revolution.

12 It is interesting to note that many early jurists belonged to the Murjaʿite party, and were willing to be used as tools by the Umayyads. Abū Ḥanīfa, for example, was asked whether or not a wicked person could become the leader of the Muslim community; He is reported to have replied affirmatively, although some of the followers of the Ḥanafī school, understandably, in the later period, have denied this ascription to him. See Aḥmad b. ʿUmar al-Shaybānī, *Adab al-Qāḍī*, p. 261.

13 Ibn Ṭiqṭiqā', *Ta'rīkh al-Fakhrī*, p. 41f. Many relevant traditions can be seen in Tirmidhī, *Sunān*, II, 191, 15; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunān*, I, 252.

On the other hand, we have persons like the Imam Ḥusayn, who refused to acknowledge these corrupt leaders and their representatives at all, and met them with resistance. As such, the Imam Ḥusayn and his followers provide a clear contrast to accommodation to Umayyad policies. The Imam Ḥusayn unbending religious attitude stems from his conviction about the political responsibilities which an acceptance of Islamic revelation entailed. In his letter to the people of Kūfa, who had urged him to come to Iraq to assume the responsibilities of an *īmām*, he reaffirms his penetrating awareness of the religio-political responsibilities of the *īmām*. He says:

I solemnly declare that a person is not the *īmām* if he does not act in accordance with the Book (of God), and does not follow justice (in dealing with the people), and is not subject to the truth, and does not devote himself entirely to God.[14]

Undoubtedly, one can discern the implication of the above statement in the Imam Ḥusayn's declaration, made in a speech to the army of Ḥurr, who had come to intercept him on his way to Iraq. This declaration shows the disgust of the pious with the life lived under the ungodly Umayyads:

Do you not see that truth is not followed anymore, and that falsehood is not being interdicted [by anyone]? Indeed, it is within the rights of a believer to desire to meet God. Verily, I do not see death except [in the form of] martyrdom; and I do not see life with the unjust as anything but loathsome.[15]

It is evident that the Imam Ḥusayn was reacting to the general condition of deterioration in the upholding of the Islamic teaching brought about by the anti-religions Umayyad's and the prevailing outlook of accommodation among the Muslims encouraged by those theologians who supported the existing order and wanted to prevent civil strife at the expense of the Qur'ānic principle of Justice. Thus, the

14 Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, V, 353.
15 *Ibid.*, V, 404.

events of the year 1680 become comprehensible when seen in light of the Qur'ānic insistence on the establishment of a just social order under the guidance provided by God in the form of the Book and the 'Noble paradigm' of the Prophet, and the manner in which the representatives of the Muslim community deviated from this goal following the death of the Prophet. Moreover, it was the commitment to the ideals of Islam that finally decided the course adopted by the Imam Ḥusayn and his followers in Karbalā' on the day of 'Āshūrā' — a day which continues and will continue to challenge our conceptions of standards of human respect and recognition for as long as there remains a conscientious being on earth.

It is, I believe, the message of Truth and Justice — the Islamic revelation in its entirety — that makes the study and the commemoration of the Imam Ḥusayn's martyrdom deserving of our wonder and our tears. In Islamic history there is no other occasion which can generate the total responsibility that a Muslim has towards God and his fellow men. Furthermore, there is no other 'paradigm' that equals the paradigm provided by all the members of the Prophet's family in creating an egalitarian social commitment, which Islam obviously demands from its adherents. It is this paradigmatic nature of the Imam Ḥusayn's life that gives it an eternal meaning, Promised in the Qur'ān, to all those who struggle and sacrifice their lives in the cause of God: *Count not those who are slain in God's way as dead, but rather as living with their Lord, by Him provided.* (3:169)