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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 MARTYRDOM OF THE IMAM ḤUSAYN AND THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF EARLY ISLAM

A. D. Al-Ḥabīb al-Janhānī
Kullīyat al-Adāb wa-al-Ulum al-Insānīya, Tunis

The martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn was not an isolated instance in the history of early Islam, but rather the expression of one significant trend of a much more widespread movement. The characteristics of this movement began to emerge after the first six years of the caliphate of ʿUthmān; widely-based, it was aimed against all forms of autocracy and of deviation from the original principles of Islam, principles which were rooted in the Medinan society of the time of the Prophet and of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.

Imam Ḥusayn thus presented an example of martyrdom in the cause of opposition against all forms of tyranny and injustice, and against deviation from the foundatins for Islam laid down by the Prophet and followed by the first two caliphs and then ʿAlī.

It is our opinion that it is not possible to arrive at an understanding of the example which he gave us without reference to the great changes in Islamic society during the caliphate of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān. In our analysis here we shall concentrate first on the economic aspects of these changes, and then turn to the massive social and political consequences that they brought about.

In examining economic life during the time of the Prophet and the first four, 'rightly-guided', caliphs, one is struck by the desire of the nascent Islamic state in Medina to realize social justice for all groups in Islamic society.[1] And this is hardly surprising, for the weak and the poor had hastened to support the new faith. The Byzantine emperor Heraclius

1 See A. D. Al-Ḥabīb al-Janhânī, 'Economic Life in the Arabian Peninsula in the Time of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs' (in Arabic), in *Abḥāth al-Nadwa al-ʿĀlamīya al-Thālitha li-Dirasāt Tārīkh al-Jazīra fī ʿAmr al-Rusūl wa al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidīn* (Faculty of Arts, Riyāḍ University, October 1983).

asked Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb about the followers of the Prophet, saying: 'Tell me, then, about those among you who follow him. Who are they?' And Abū Sufyān replied: 'They are the poor and the weak, and young men and women; as for the noble and powerful, not one of those are his followers.'[2] The mass of the first Muslims, then, were from the poorer classes. The Prophet said to 'Adīy b. Ḥātim: 'You see that the Muslims are in need, and thus are prevented from entering this religion. But, by God, wealth is about to come to them in such great quantity that there shall be no one found to take the trouble to pick it up!'[3]

Thus we see that, from an economic point of view, the new faith came in opposition to all forms of extreme wealth — and this in spite of its respect at the same time for private property. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf reports from his father this exchange with the Messenger of God:

The Prophet said: 'O Ibn 'Awf you are a rich man, and shall therefore not enter Paradise except creeping on the ground! Give then a loan to God so that he may free your legs and allow you to walk instead.' My father asked, 'And what shall I give as loan. O Messenger of God?' He replied: 'Begin with what you have acquired until now.' 'O Messenger of God,' exclaimed my father: 'all of it?' 'Yes', he answered And my father left greatly concerned by the Prophet's words. The Messenger of God then sent for him. and told him: 'Gabriel has said: Command Ibn 'Awf that he give hospitality to guests, feed the poor, and give to the beggar. and that he begin with those for whose support he is directly responsible. If he does that, then it shall count as purification (*tazkīya*) of the wealth he possesses.'[4]

In addition, Islam made out of the *sadaqa* (freewill offering) an instrument for the distribution of wealth intended to approximate true social justice as closely as possible. Yazīd b. Sharīk al-Fizārī was heard to say in answer to this question, 'In the lime of 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who did he used to send to the people [in order to gather *sadaqa*]?' 'It

2 al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk* (Cairo. 1960-69), II,.648.
3 *Ibid.*, III, 115.
4 Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr* (Leyden, 1321/1903), III/1,93.

was Maslama b. Mukhallad; he used to take the *sadaqa* from the rich, and give it to the poor.'[5]

During times of trial and crisis the interests of the Muslim community always occupied first place. Thus in the year of the famine of Ramāda, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb considered housing the hungry and destitute who were coming in from the desert in dwellings better than those occupied by the people of Medina themselves. ʿUbayd Allāh b. 'Umar reports from Nāfiʿ on the authority of Ibn ʿUmar that ʿUmar declared; 'If I cannot provide for these people sufficient wealth to relieve their situation except by housing in each dwelling the same number of people as already live there, and then giving them half the food of the inhabitants of that house to eat until God Himself provides relief for them, I will do it. [The Medinans] shall not perish for want of half their food!'[6]

When the first signs of imminent wealth began to appear after the beginning of the Islamic conquests, the 'rightly-guided' caliphs were disquieted, fearing that the growing gap between different social groups would lead to unrest and sedition. The following report is from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf. He said:

I went one day to see Abū Bakr, the Veracious One, when he was ill with the sickness of which he eventually died, and I said to him, 'I see, O Caliph of the Prophet of God, that you are recovering!' He said 'Not so, rather I am in extreme pain, but what I have undergone because of you, O Emigrants, is more difficult to bear than my pain. For I appointed the people I thought best for you to rule your affairs, but each of you insolently sought power for yourselves without taking into the account the one I had appointed. By God, you use brocade pillows and silken covers, and you consider reclining on fine wool to be like sleeping on a bed of sharp thorns! By He in whose Hand is my soul, if one of you were to have his head cut off unjustly, it would be still better for him than plunging into the murky affairs of this world! O you who are supposed

5 *Ibid.*, p. 234.
6 *Ibid.*, p. 228.

to be yourself a guide to the way. you have lost the way. If you wait until dawn, you shall see clearly, but if you journey without a guide, it will lead to misfortune!'[7]

In fact, the situation reached such a state toward the end of 'Umar's caliphate that he was moved to utter his famous words: 'Had I seen things then the way I see them now. I would have taken the excess wealth of the rich and divided it among the poor of the Emigrants!'[8]

The spreading frontiers of the young Islamic state after the beginning of the conquests and the emigration of the tribes to new settlements made necessary a rethinking of the administrative and fiscal structures regulating the affairs of the slate and its subjects. Thus 'Umar set up the *dīwāns*: '. . . and he was the first to register people in Islam in registries; he registered them according to their tribes, and allocated for them a fixed payment (*aṭā'*).'[9]

This fiscal arrangement was a simple one, thus increasing caliphal control over affairs. In spile of its simplicity, however, it was precise in its operation, aimed at justice in the distribution of wealth. 'Umar declared: 'By God, if I remain alive, I shall ensure that even a shepherd shall receive his share from [the income from a place as far away as] Mount Ṣan'ā', while he remains in his place!'[10] Salmān also reported that 'Umar said to him: 'Am I a king, or a caliph?', to which Salmān answered: 'If you take so much as a *dirham* from the land of the Muslims, or less or more, then use it other than it should be used, then you are a king rather than a caliph.' And upon hearing this, 'Umar wept.[11]

It is financial policy which is the touchstone of the true nature of a political order. It is no wonder then that we find the two caliphs of

7 *Al-Kāmil lil-Mubarrad* (Cairo, n.d.), I, 6ff.; and Ṭabarī, III, 429ff.

8 Ṭabarī, IV, 204.

9 Ṭabarī, IV, 204. On the causes for the establishment of the *dīwāns* and on the distribution of the *aṭā'*, see also ibid., pp. 209ff; Ibn Sa'd, III/I, 202 and *passim*, 212ff., and al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā' wa al-Kuttāb* (Cairo, 1938), p 16 and passim

10 Ṭabarī, IV, 211.

11 *Ibid.*, IV, 211.

the Prophet of God, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, paying great attention to financial policy and setting strict standards for the ways in which the community's wealth was to be spent. It was subsequent negligence in the application of these standards which became one of the main causes of resentment and unrest among the people, as we shall see in our examination of the caliphate of ʿUthmān.

In this respect I would like to first make the following points:

(a) ʿUmars emphasis on financial and economic policy in general was a part of his view of the ʿwealth of God' as being that of the whole of the Muslim community. He once said: ʿI consider myself in relation to the wealth of God as an orphan: if I myself am wealthy, then I refrain from it, but if I am poor, then I partake of it as is proper.'[12]

(b) ʿUmar well understood the importance of the honesty of officials and the effect it has on the life of the community. He used to say: ʿThe people will themselves remain honest as long as their leaders are honest.'[13] It was this honesty on the part of ʿUmar which causd Abū ʿUthmān al-Nahdī to declare: ʿBy God, were my spear able to talk, it would have many things to speak of, and were ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb a balance, that balance would not be out the weight of hair!'[14]

(c) ʿUmar imposed the financial policy which he applied to himself on his family and kinsfolk as well. We have already indicated that ʿUmar had been compelled to borrow from the treasury — the *bayt al-māl*. The affair continually preoccupied him, and even in his death agony his mind would not rest until after he had his son ʿAbd Allāh take reponsibility for the debt.

The attempt made here to present some of the political-economic foundations of this period is aimed, on the one hand, at a discovery of the fixed principles of this policy, and, on the other, at an examination of the deep influence these principles exercised over the political and

12 Ibn Saʿd, III/I, 197.
13 *Ibid.*, p. 210.
14 *Ibid.*, p. 210.

social events which Medina experienced, beginning. as we shall see, with the changes which took place under the caliphate of ʿUthmān.

Imam ʿAlī tried to follow the same path as Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[15] Towards the Quraysh. who after ʿUmar's severity had experienced a period of laxity during the time of ʿUthmān, he was exacting, and this brought about clear social and economic consequences. However, the change in the situation and the unrest attendant on it did not permit him to apply any economic policy that would have required political stability in order to bear fruit.

It is hardly surprising that Imam ʿAlī tried to follow in the footsteps of ʿUmar, for ʿAlī was the purest of men and the closest to the policy applied bythe Prophet, as well as being among the closest advisers to the two caliphs Abū Bakr and ʾUmar. Once when ʿUmar was taking counsel on what part of the treasury was lawful to him to spend on his family, he said ʿOnce I was a merchant, and God provided for my family through my trade, but now you have employed me in your affairs. [Tell me, then,] if you consider any part of the treasury lawful to me.' People had many different opinions on the matter, but ʿAlī remained silent.[16] 'Umar, wishing to know ʿAlī's opinion exactly, said: 'What do you say. O ʿAlī?' ʿAlī answered: 'Whatever is needed for your welfare, and that of your family as is befitting none of this wealth is yours except that.' And

15 Webmaster's note: This statement is from the author of the article; Imam Ali being an Infallible, would never follow a fallible person. As such, even during his apparent caliphate, he implemented only the *sunna* of the Prophet.

In the *Shūrā*, ʿAbd al-Rahman b. Awf consulted with people especially with the elite and rulers. Ultimately, he declared his decision. He asked Imam Ali (a) if he could act according to the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet's tradition (*sunna*), and Abu Bakr's and ʿUmar's approach in caliphate. Imam Ali (a) responded: "I hope I will act according to Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition as much as my knowledge, my power, and my effort are" (means I will not go on the approach of previous caliphs). Then, ʿAbd al-Rahman stated his conditions for ʿUthmān and he immediately accepted. As the result, ʿAbd al-Rahman b. Awf pledged allegiance to ʿUthmān. [See Yaqubi, *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, vol. 2, p. 162; Tabari, *Tarikh al-ʿumam wa l-muluk*, vol. 3, p. 296, 302; Ibn Abi l-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-balagha*, vol. 1, p. 194.]

16 Ṭabarī, II, 616.

those gathered said: ‘The right opinion is that of Ibn Abī Ṭālib!’[17]

When Imam ʿAlī died, his son Ḥasan gave his funeral oration in the mosque of Kūfa. He said: ‘By God, he left nothing but seven or eight hundred (*dirhams*), and that he marked for his manservant!’[18] And ʿAlī also used to say: 'O wealth of this world, you may deceive others, but do not deceive me!’[19]

This, then, was financial policy during the time of the Prophet, and these were the rules of conduct in relation to the affairs of the new Islamic community according to the principles laid down in the time of the Prophet. Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿAlī were all very much intent on abiding by these rules and maintaining honesty in their application, considering any overstepping of them to be perversion. This was because they were very fundamental matters on the one hand, and because the texts concerning them were clear and their viability was confirmed by their application in the time of the Prophet, on the other.

17 *Ibid.*, 616.

18 Ṭabarī, V. 157. See also Ibn Sa'd, III/I,26.

19 Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Bayān al-ʿArabī, 1965), II, 712. The well-known story concerning ʿAlī in which he is said to have noticed his daughter wearing a pearl from the treasury again points to the great care he look in spending the wealth of the Muslims. It is reported from ʿAbbās b. Faḍl, a client of the Banū Hāshim, who reported it on the authority of his father, who reported it on the authority of his grandfather Ibn Abī Rāfiʿ: [My grandfather] was keeper of the treasury for ʿAlī. One day he came by, when his daughter was adorned in finery, and he saw that she was wearing a pearl which he knew to be from the treasury. ‘Where did she get that from?’ he said ‘By God, I must now cut off her hand!’ My grandfather saw that ʿAlī was serious, and replied, ‘It is I, O Commander of the Faithful, who used it to adorn the daughter of my brother. And where would she have got it from if I had not given it to her?.’ ‘Alī then fell silent.’ (Ṭabarī, V, 156) As for Muʿāwiya, he was most eager to amass wealth by any means available to him. While he was on his deathbed and his two daughters were kissing him, he said to them, ‘You kiss one who was ever-changing and devious, and who amassed wealth by any means possible. Will not such a person enter the Fire?" Then he cited the following verses: I have done for you the best I could: I have spared you the trouble of running hither and thither [to acquire wealth].’ Muḥammad b. al-Ḥakam also reported that he was told ‘When Mu'awiya was on the point of death, he willed that half of his wealth be returned to the treasury, wishing’ — Ibn Athīr writes "it was as if he wished ....’ — to make good the rest.’ (See ibid., p. 326 and passim.)

What then, were the most prominent features from the political and economic point of view of the change away from this approach in the conduct of the affairs of the Islamic community?

First this point must be made: that in spite of its respect for private property and for legal business enterprise, Islam always strove to fix a limit on the exorbitant accumulation of wealth and to maintain the community in its unity by regulating factors likely to cause upheaval and unrest foremost among these factors being the widening of the social gap between various groups. This approach is sharply and clearly evident in the time of the Prophet and of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. Imam ʿAlī strove as well to follow the same approach, in spite of the fact that his caliphate was cut short and in spite of the great number of political and military events which it experienced.

Against this background great social change was taking place. Abū Bakr, while on his deathbed, had already alluded to the characteristics of these changes. He had already given ʿUmar his advice and, his thoughts turning to the matter of the caliphate, he turned to ʿUthmān and said: ʿO ʿUthmān, if the people should recognize your [precedence in] age [i.e.. if they should therefore make you caliph], then fear God, and do not make the people carry the weight of [your clan,] the Banū Abī Mu'ayṭ on their shoulders!' He then repeated the same advice to ʿAlī, saying. ʿIf you should rule the Muslims, do not make the people carry the weight of the Banū ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib on their shoulders!'[20]

This is the caution which we find also in the policies followed by ʿUmar in the settlement of the cities. When ʿUmar gave permission for brick buildings to be raised in Kūfa after it had been burned down in the year 17. he said: ʿGo ahead, then, and build. But let no one of you build any more than three houses, and do not make the buildings too high. Keep to the *sunna*, so that the empire will survive for you.'[21]

It was not long, however, after the death of ʿUmar that the situation

20 Ibn S ʿd, III/I,246, 249.
21 Ṭabarī, IV, 44.

and its polities changed. Sayf relates from Muḥammad and Ṭalḥa that they said: ‘Not a year of ‘Uthmān’s rule had passed when some men of Quraysh began to appropriate property in the cities and to deprive the people of them.’[22] Sayf b. ‘Uthmān b. Ḥakīm b. ‘Abbād b. Ḥunayf related from his father: ‘The first indecent act which took place in Medina was the flying of pigeons and shooting them down with bows [i.e., as a form of gambling].’[23]

This was in the year 35 during the time of ‘Uthmān, indicating clearly that signs of economic and social change had already found their way into Medina itself. In the year 30 of the *hijra* ‘Ulhmān himself gave warning to his family, saying: ‘O people of Medina, be ready and be steadfast, for sedition is aboul to overwhelm you.’[24] However, even before sedition ‘was ahout to overwhelm’ Medina, its flames had already been kindled in the new settlements. The result of demographic developments and of a change in economic and social structures. Upon being appointed ruler of Kūfa in the year 30 of the *hijra*, Sa‘īd b. al-‘Āṣ declared in his *khuṭba*: ‘Sedition has reared its ugly head, and by God I shall beat it down until I manage to suppress it, or until it exhausts me!’ He also wrote to ‘Uthmān: 'The situation of the people of Kūfa has become unsettled. The nobles, the great families and the leading persons among them are in defeat, while it is the upstarts who dominate the city. The tribesmen are rebellious to the point where they pay no heed to those of noble lineage; there is no greater affliction than that which has befallen Kūfa, nor will that affliction be lightened.’[25]

22 *Ibid.*, p. 398.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 398.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 280.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 279. In regard to this it is also worth recalling that it was in the seventh year of ‘Uthmān’s rule that Sa‘īd b. al-‘Āṣ arrived in Kūfa He had been an orphan, brought up in the house of ‘Uthmān, and was in fact the last of the family of al-‘Āṣ. The lower classes, and especially the slaves, did not approve of the dismiss-al of al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba from office and the appointment of Sa‘īd, for Walīd had ‘... treated the people kindly, even to the point where he began to divide shares among the maidservants and slaves. Both slaves and free men mourned his departure, and maidseivants wearing mourning clothes could be heard to chant ‘Woe to us, for Walīd has been dismissed! and now Sa‘īd has come to starve us. He gives short measure, he never gives more, and starves maidservants and ⇒

The new social groups which persisted in their opposition and which represented the mass of the people in Medina and the new settlements held fast to the principles laid down by the Prophet and consolidated by Abū Bakr and ʿUmar after him. Foremost among these principles was that of equality among all Muslims and of cooperation. This was achieved through the application of *shūra* (consultation) in the taking of crucial decisions affecting the life of the community. These groups rejected the politics of favouritism and group politics arising from the clan and the tribe. Thus is it related from Sayf, who related it from Muḥammad and Ṭalḥa, that they said:

Those who have no claim to precedence cannot rise in council, in leadership or in favour to the same level as those who do have claim to such precedence. Such people used to refuse to accept the fact that others were preferred, and considered it cause for dispute. But all the while they concealed it, scarcely showing their true feelings at all, for they have no proof for their position, and the people are against them. However, if someone joined them, such as a new convert or a tribesman or a freedman, such persons would find their words pleasant. Thus their numbers increased while the numbers of the other people decreased, until evil prevailed.'[26]

The central government was not able to maintain control of this demographic development and the political and economic problems which were its consequence. The problem reached critical proportions in Kūfa. It was as if Kūfa were dry wood set on fire: '. . . thus was the condition of the people of Kūfa, and gossip and rumour were rife.'[27]

The difference between the policies which ʿUmar applied in the

⇐ slaves' (*Ibid.*, p. 278.) This is the same Saʿīd who uttered the famous words: 'This Sawwād [that is the cultivated land of Iraq] is a garden for the Quraysh.' And Mālik al-Ashtar, who was one of those opposed to ʿUthmān's policies, retorted, 'Do you claim that the Sawwād, which God granted us through our swords, is a garden belonging to you and your kin? By God, He shall not increase your booty by a single share; rather your share shall be the same as that of any of us.' (*Ibid.*, p. 323.)

26 *Ibid.*, p. 281.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 279.

organization of his rule and in the economic and social spheres — and especially in his great care in the matter of financial policy and his zealous guarding of the wealth of the masses — and between those of ʿUthmān, was enormous. ʿUthmān failed to heed the warning which ʿUmar had given him, and he ʿmade the people carry the burden of the Banū Muʾay.ʾ

In the year 27 of the *hijra* when ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿīd b. Abī Sharḥ, ʿUthmān's foster brother, was about to be sent to Africa, ʿUthmān said to him: ʿIf God. praised and exalted be He, gives you victory tomorrow over Africa, that which belongs to you from that which God grants the Muslims in booty is a fifth of the fifth of the booty which is taken in coin.ʾ This behaviour stirred up the resentment of ihe army and brought protests from the Muslims. Ṭabarī gives a story from al-Wāqidī in which ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿīd concluded a peace with the people of Africa in return for three hundred *qīnṭār* weights of gold. ʿUthmān then ordered that it be given to the family of al-Ḥakam.[28] In the year 35 of the *hijra* a number of camels from the *sadaqa* were given to ʿUthmān. He subsequently gave them as a gift to some members of the Banī al-Ḥakam. News of this came to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, who went out and divided them instead amongst the people. At the same time ʿUthmān was in his house and one of the inhabitants of Medina was threatening him with death, saying: ʿBy God, I will pul these fetters around your neck if you do not let go these hangers-on of yours!ʾ

Imam ʿAlī was in the vanguard of those who criticized the behaviour of 'Uthmān's hangers-on in relation to affairs of state and the wealth of the community, and he gave him advice on more than one occasion, all without result. ʿAlī said: ʿʿUthmān refuses to accept the advice of anyone. He has chosen his allies from deceitful people, and there is not one of them but that he has usurped land, the revenues of which he devours and the inhabitants of which he humiliates.ʾ[29] Nor did ʿUhmān repudiate this financial policy which he had brought about, and which was a complete change from that of ʿUmar. Rather he tried to justify

28 *Ibid.*, p. 253 and *passim.*
29 *Ibid.*, pp. 356ff, p. 406.

it, saying: ‘‘Umar used to withhold from his family and relatives out of desire for the face of God, and I give to my family and relatives out of desire for the face of God. . . .’[30] Thus ‘Uthmān’s relatives began to regard the institution of the caliphate, which had originally sprung from the principle of *shūra*, as their personal property. Marwān b. al-Ḥakam spoke to the people massed in front of ‘Uthmān’s house at the beginning of the seige, saying: ‘You have come with the intention of depriving us of our property. Get away from us . . .’[31]

A great number of the Companions of the Prophet also were opposed to the radical changes which were taking place, especially in the area of finance, during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān.[32] The matter affected them to such an extent that in the year 34 of the *hijra* one group of people wrote to another that ‘. . . if you wish for *jihād*, then we have cause for *jihād*, for the people have rallied against ‘Uthmān and they tell of him the ugliest things that anyone has ever been accused of, and the Companions of the Prophet of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, see and hear (what is taking place], but there is not one among them to deny these accusations or defend ‘Uthmān, except an insignificant group. . .’[33] A number of other Companions, however, had themselves amassed indecent wealth through ownership of huge tracts of land, especially in the conquered territories after ‘Uthmān violated the policies of ‘Umar,[34] or through mercantile enterprise. It is sufficient here to recall the wealth of some of the Companions in order to gauge the seriousness of the change in the economic field. Ṭalhā b. ‘Ubayd Allāh left behind two million and two hundred thousand *dirhams* and two hundred thousand *dīnārs* in capital assets, and his property in Iraq gave him one hundred thousand each year — excluding what he got from the Sarāt, a mountainous and fertile land between the Tihāma and the Yaman, and elsewhere, Al-Zubayr left property be-

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 345

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 362.

32 One of the leading figures of this group was Abū Dharr al-Ghaffārī. See *Ibid.*, pp. 283ff.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 336ff.

34 Concerning this great change, see *Ibid.*, pp. 280ff.

hind to a value of fifty-one or fifty-two million![35] When Zayd b. Thābit (whom ʿUthmān had put in charge of the *dīwān* and the treasury) died, he left behind so much silver and gold that it had to be broken down with hammers, and this figure did nor take into account property and landed estates, the value of which was one hundred thousand *dīnārs*. In addition he used to bring in the annual provisions for his family from a farm in Qanāt so large that it was irrigated by twenty streams. Yalʿa b. Munabbih died and left behind five hundred thousand *dīnārs*, and debts owing to him, landed properly and other bequests to a value of one hundred thousand *dīnārs*. Masʿūdī adds to this information that ʿThere could be many more instances given and much more information on those who had great wealth at this time. But it was not so in the time of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭā,. for then the way [to proceed] was clear.'[36]

'Abd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf bequeathed fifty thousand gold *dīnārs* in the way of God. He left an enormous legacy: he had one thousand camels and three thousand sheep, and he owned such a large area in the Jurf [in the Hijāz) that it required twenty streams to irrigate it. He left behind four wives, and the share of each one of them was between eighty to a hundred thousand. It is reported that ''Abd al-Raḥmān left such a quantity of gold that the hands of the workmen became blistered from the excessive labour required to break it down. And he was not alone in this, for others among the Companions of the Prophet and the leaders of the Quraysh were also in a similar position.'[37]

Among the greatest accusations which the opponents of ʿUthmān made against him was that he employed his relatives and family in positions of authority, and that he followed a corrupt financial policy.[38] Thus

35 See Ibn Saʿd, IV/I, 76, 158: and al-Dūrī, *Muqaddima fi Tārīkh Sadr al-Islām*, 2nd ed (Beirut. 1961), p. 56.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

37 Ṭahā Ḥusuyn, *al-Fitha al-Kubra*, (Beirut, 1976), p. 743. Also in this connection see the account taken by Ibn Khaldūn from Masʿūdī: al-Muqaddīma, II, 712ff.

38 Balādhurī speaks aiso of the altitude the people had toward ʿUthmān. He writes: ''Uthmān lived and continued to be amīr for twelve years after he came to power. For six years the people had no complaint against him. The Quraysh in fact like him more than they had ʿUmar, because 'Umar had been severe [against them], whereas ʿUthmān was quite lenient. In the six years following, however, he became ⇒

‘Ubayda b. Hilāl speaks many times of the faults of ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān’s policies. He says: ‘Then he seized the booty of God, which God had granted to them [that is to all the Muslims] and divided it between the corrupt among the Quraysh and the wanton among the Arabs.’[39]

Here l would like to make the following points:
(a) The new economic and social relations which Arab Islamic society faced played a basic and specific role in the consequences of this change in financial policy.

(b) It can be seen that the many problems encountered after the territorial spread of the young Islamic state and its domination in a very short time (not more than a quarter century) over areas of ancient civilization economically rich and varied in their population, as well as its control of an extensive network of routes crucial to the operation of world trade, all worked against any further development of the principles derived from the time of the Prophet which Abū Bakr and ‘Umar had laid down with regard to economic and social organization. Thus, development, which might have been possible through a sharp transition to a central administrative structure capable of being put into operation, and which could have embodied the rapid change which the new community was experiencing, did not come about.

(c) We have pul great emphasis on the first stirrings of the crisis which reached its zenith after the appointment of Yazīd as caliph over the Muslims. The martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn was an expression of a strong current of opposition within the young Islamic state, especially in the

⇐ careless in his relations with the Quraysh, overlooking them and pulling his close relatives instead into positions of authority. He gave Marwān b al-Ḥakam the khums from Africa, and in general gave much wealth to his relatives, [citing as justification] the injunctions which God has laid down concerning kindness to near relations. He look that money and also borrowed some money from the treasury, saying, ‘Part of this money is that which Abū Bakr and ‘Umar left, and which belonged to them personally; thus I am taking it and giving it to my relatives.’ And for this he was Strongly criticized.' (Aḥmad b. Yaḥya al-Balādhurī, *Anṣāb al-Ashrāf*, (Jerusalem: 1936-J, V[I971], 25. pp. 47ff). Sec also Ibn Sa‘d, III/I, 44 and A. D. Al-Ḥabīb al-Janhānī, *Dirāsāt Maghrībīya* (Beirut, 1980), pp. 33ff.

39 Ṭabarī, V, 565IT.

great settlements of Medina, Makka, Kūfa and Baṣra, against deviation from the principles of the Islamic faith and changes in the institution of the caliphate. The caliphate was a concept new to Islam, and its first pillar was scrupulousness in expenditure of the continuity's wealth This is illustrated by the reply of Salmān al-Fārisī to ʿUmar's question: ʿAm I a king or a caliph?'[40]

We believe that it is not possible to understand the depth of the experience which is exemplified in the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn and the numerous social upheavals which it led to except in reation to the series of other upheavals which began with the besieging of ʿUthmān in Medina, continued with the Battles of the Camel and of Ṣiffīn and the movement of the martyrs of Marj ʿAdhrā', and then culminated in Karbalā' and the other social and political movements of similar significance which followed upon it. It would be naive to regard all these great events which the early Islamic community underwent as simply a struggle for power or a return to the old rivalry between the Banū Hāshim and the Banū Umayya. In our view the problem is much more profound than that. What the sources occasionally have to say about these tribal alliances and other such matters represent in our opinion only very secondary considerations in the face of the radical differences between two dominant social trends, the characteristics of which can be distinguished already during the caliphate of ʿUthmān.

The signs of the first main trend began to appear in the *wilāya* or administrative district of Syria in the time of Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān. The caliph ʿUmar noticed these signs when he arrived in Syria and Muʿāwiya met him in a splendour which would have befitted a king. ʿUmar exclaimed: ʿO Muʿāwiya, are you then a king, like the Persian Khosraw?' Muʿāwiya answered that the Syrians were used to seeing their rulers in such fashion, and that this was the only way to gain their respect. And despite ʿUmar's lack of further comment on the matter, Muʿāwiya's answer was not satisfactory, for what 'Umar had observed was in fact the beginning of a transformation of the caliphate into a

40 See above p. 190.

monarchy, as the events which followed were to confirm.[41]

It is strange indeed to find Ibn Khaldūn attempting to justify Muʿāwiya's reply to ʿUmar in spite of the historical events which are clear proof that by ʿUmar's reference to the Persian monarchy he meant (in Ibn Khaldūn's own gloss) ʿperpetration of wrong, tyranny, oppression, and disregard for God on the part of the kings of the Persians.'[42] The signs of this type of monarchical rule become clear after Muʿāwiya's refusal to pledge allegiance to ʿAlī and the Umayyad party's resort to arms in order to defend the advantages which they derived from the new king (as various sources confirm and as is supported by ʿUmar's accusation against Muʿāwiya and the cunning and deception which Muʿāwiya used in replying to his accuser).[43]

It is well known that Muʿāwiya was the first ruler in Islam to make use of guards and the first to have a government department or *dīwān* especially for seals. He never refrained from shamelessly enjoying worldly things or from glorying in being king. ʿAbd Allāh b. Mas'ada b. Ḥukma al-Fizārī reports:

Muʿāwiya was travelling from one district of Syria to another, and encamped at a certain spot. A place was prepared for him on the top

41 See Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, the section on 'The Transformation of the Caliphate into Royal Authority', II, 708ff (English translation: Franz Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah*, 3 vols., 2nd rev. ed [Princeton University Press, 1967], I, 414ff.)

42 *Ibid.*, p. 711.

43 Abū Muḥammad al-Umawī reported that: ''Umar b al-Khaṭṭāb went to Syria, and there he saw Muʿāwiya coming to meet hmt with a great mounted escort. ʿUmar said to him "O Muʿāwiya, you come and go accompanied by such a retinue, and I have heard as well that each morning when you rise there are needy people at your door!" Muʿāwiya replied "O Commander of the Faithful, we are surrounded by the enemy, and they have eyes to watch us, and spies. Thus I only wished, O Commander of the Faithful, that they see Islam to be powerful." ʿUmar replied: "This is nothing but the deceit of a crafty man, the deception of a clever man." To which Muʿāwiya replied: "O Commander of the Faithful, command me as you will, so that I may fulfill your command!" "Woe to you!" declared ʿUmar, "I have never disputed with you concerning anything in which I was wont to find fault with you, but that I was left in the end not knowing whether to command or forbid you!"' (Ṭabarī, V, 331.)

of a hill overlooking the road. He gave me permission to enter his presence and I sat down with him. Processions of camels, beasts of burden, maidservants and horses passed by. He said to me: 'Ibn Mas'ada, may God have mercy upon the soul of Abū Rakr! Neither did he desire the world, nor did the world desire him. And as for 'Umar, the world desired him, but he did not desire it. As for 'Uthmān, he obtained some of the wealth of the world, but the world got the better of him. But as for us, we wallow in it!' Then it was as if he regretted what he had said, and he added: 'By God, it is God who has given us dominion!'[44]

'Abd al-Mālik b. 'Umayr also reported that: 'A man spoke coarsely to Mu'āwiya and then continued to speak more coarsely still. "Are you going to put up with this?", he was asked, and he replied: "I do not interfere between people and their tongues as long as they do not interfere between us and our rule!"[45] Mu'āwiya was the first as well to have singing parties, and he spent a great deal of the Muslim community's money on singers, even when they were of doubtful morality.[46]

These were some of the characteristics of the new Umayyad rule. And the goal of maintaining this rule and all the privileges which it conferred on the ruling, family and their cohorts became the justification for any means, regardless of whether they were in direct contradiction to the principles of the Islamic faith and its values. While on his deathbed Mu'āwiya advised his son Yazīd, who was to be his heir, thus: 'And as for he who lies in wait for you like a lion and who is cunning against you like the fox, if the chance is given him he will pounce. That one is Ibn Zubayr. And, if he does pounce, then overpower him and cut him to pieces!'[47]

The Islamic historical sources are full of information about the tyranny and oppression which the Umayyads used against all forms of opposition to their rule. Zuhayr b. Qayn in his speech to the people of

44 *Ibid.*, p. 334.
45 See *Ibid.*, p. 337.
46 *Ibid.*, p. 322ff.
47 *Ibid.*, p. 426.

Kūfa on the day of Karbalā' gives a description of the behaviour of the Umayyads:

We invite you to the cause or the victory of the progeny of Muḥammad and to abandon the tyranny of ʿUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād, for you shall experience nothing from these two [i.e., the caliph and his appointee] but evil all the days of their reign. They shall gouge out your eyes and cut off your arms and your legs. They shall mutilatc you and they shall crucify you on the trunk of a palm-tree. They shall murder your best leaders and your Qur'ān readers, such as Ḥujr b. ʿAdīy and his companions, and Hānī' b. ʿUrwa and those like him.'[48]

These methods of the Umayyads began with political cunning and the falsification of testimony, then spread to buying supporters with money from the treasury.[49] And when the offer of money and high office did not avail, banishment, cruel death, mutilation, and burying alive were used to intimidate their opponents. In fact, the first head in Islam to he publicly exhibited was carried from Mawṣil to Muʿāwiya in Damascus.[50]

Nevertheless opposition to the tyranny of Umayyad rule continued to grow and develop, taking on the form of social opposition dominated by leaders known for their piety and for their willingness to defend Islamic values and to be martyred for their sake. The movement, for instance, of Ḥujr b. ʿAdīy b. Jabala al-Kindī and his companions — the martyrs of Marj ʿAdhrā'[51] — was not that of one person or of a small group of persons, but rather one manifestation of a widespread resentment which, in spite of the intimidation which the rulers in Damascus used in these cities, came to include all the great Islamic settlements,

48 For a discussion of the measures of oppression used by the Umayyads in the time of Muʿāwiya and his son Yazīd, see *ibid.*, pp. 356, 358. 479, and 562: and also the rich store of information to be found in the *maqātil* literature, for instance in Abū al-Faraj al-Ishfahānī's *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyīn.*

49 See Ṭabarī, V. 270, 272, 278. 478. 483. 495. and *passim.*

50 This was the head of ʿAmr h. al-Ḥamiq It is also said that ʿUthmān shot the head through nine times with some arrows he had with him. See *ibid.*, p. 265.

51 For details of Ḥujr and his companions and their deaths in Marj ʿAdhrā' near Damascus, see *ibid.*, pp. 253ff.

especially Medina, Baṣra and Kūfa. Finally the wave of anger engulfed even the partisans of the Umayyads and their relatives among the ranks of the notables of Kūfa. Ziyād acknowledged this when he attacked these notables. He said:

'O people of Kūfa! Do you then attack with one hand, and pretend to console with the other? Your bodies are with me, but your desires with Ḥujr, that foolish troublemaker! You are with me, and your brothers, your sons and your families are with Ḥujr! This, by God, is your deceitfulness and your faithlessness! By God, you shall show me that you are guiltless, or else I shall bring people against you who will straighten you and put you down!'

They then stood up before Ziyād and said: 'We take refuge in God, the Exalted, that we should have any say in the matter other than that we should obey you and the Commander of the Faithful, and anything else which we believe you would lake pleasure in. If there is any way we can show our obedience to you and our opposition to Ḥujr, then order us to do it!'[52]

Umayyad oppression reached such proportions that it even affected the ranks of well-known persons who had very recently supported the Umayyads in their call for the blood of 'Uthmān and then in their violent conflict with 'Alī.[53] It finally led to a policy of hunting down all opponents and stilling them in one way or another. The height of this policy was reached on the day of Karbalā'.

Here it is necessary to ask ourselves about the forces propping up the administration of the new empire in Damascus. It is difficult to define these forces exactly, and especially their position with regard to class and social status. However, certain indications which have come down in the extant sources allow us to state with some confidence that it was the social groups which had tied their political and economic fortunes to the new regime in Damascus which supported the trend

52 *Ibid.*, 257ff.

53 Concerning 'Ā'isha's position regarding the killing of Ḥujr. see *ibid.*, p. 279.

led by Muʿāwiya and stood in opposition to that led by Imam ʿAlī and then his son Ḥusayn. Sulayman b. Ṣurad declared: ‘The true murderers of Ḥusayn were the notables of Kūfa.’[54] The situation in Kūfa was accurately described by Mujammīʿ b. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿĀ’idhī, one of four men who came lo Imam Ḥusayn. He was told: ‘Tell me about the people behind youʿ i.e., those he had left behind in Kūfa. Mujammīʿ answered: ‘As for the nobles, their corruption has increased greatly and their sacks are full. They can be bought, and their counsel is of no avail. They are as one man against you. As for the rest of the people, their hearts are with you, but their swords shall tomorrow be unsheathed against you.’[55]

I would venture here to suggest that the position of the nobles of Kūfa and of other politically and economically influential groups in the other cities did not rest on a conviction that the rule of Muʿāwiya or Yazīd was legal, but rather on the need to defend their own interests and privileged positions. One of the most striking examples of this can be seen in the person of ʿUmar b. Saʿd, the leader of the Umayyad army on the day of Karbalā’,[56] and especially in the exchange which took place between him and Imam Ḥusayn. Abū Mikhnāf takes his account from Abu Janāb who in turn relates it from Thubayt al-Ḥaḍramī, who himself witnessed Husyan’s murder. The account states that Ḥusayn faced ʿUmar b. Saʿd and said: ‘Come with me to Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya, and let us dismiss our forces.’ ‘Umar answered: ‘But then my house will be destroyed!’ Ḥusayn said: 'I will rebuild it for you.’ ‘My lands will be taken!,’ said ‘Umar. ‘I will give you better land from my lands in the Hijāz’, replied Ḥusayn. ‘Umar, however, refused. Abū Mikhnāf adds: ‘People talked much about this incident, and accounts of it were spread without them having heard or been aware of anything which had passed.’[57]

When Zaynab, daughter of Fāṭima, said to 'Umar b. Saʿd: ‘How could you bear that Abū ‘Abd Allāh be murdered, while you look on!’, his

54 *Ibid.*, p. 558.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 405..

56 Concerning his position and the position of the notables of Kūfa concerning Ḥusayn, see *ibid.*, pp 409ff.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 413.

tears flowed over os checks and his beard.[58] This, however, did not prevent him from afterwards ordering ten of his horsemen to trample Imam Ḥusayn's corpse with their horses![59]

Thus Imam Ḥusayn represented the tendency which his father had led at Ṣiffīn, and he always remained loyal to it. That tendency represented the defence of the principles of the Islamic faith and opposition to all forms of deviation from them and all developments which would transform the institution of the caliphate into one of monarchical rule. Imam Ḥusayn thus represented a guarantee against desecration of the sanctity of Islam, and for respect for the Quraysh and the Arabs in general.[60] After the murder of Imam Ḥusayn many Muslims feared that the sanctity of Islam would be desecrated, and that they would be disgaced. This is in fact what took place, for the two noble sanctuaries of Makka and Medina were violated, and the Muslims were required not simply to confirm Yazīd in the caliphate by an oath of allegiance, but to pledge that they would be his slaves![61]

It is not surprising that we find in the ranks of the party represented by Imam Ḥusayn a large number of Islamic personalities known for their firm adherence to the principles of the new Islamic faith, their opposition to all forms of oppression and deviation, and their piety and devotion. Thus when Ziyād b. Sumayya tried to falsify Shurayḥ b. Hānī' al-Ḥārithī's testimony against Ḥujr b. ʿAdīy, Shurayḥ himself wrote to Muʿāwiya:

In the name of God, the All-merciful, the Compassionate. To ʿAbd Allāh Muʿāwiya, Commander of the Believers, from Shurayḥ b. Hānī'. I hear that Ziyād has sent you a testimony attributed to me against Ḥujr

58 *Ibid.*, p. 452.

59 *Ibid.*, pp. 454ff.

60 See, for instance, the words of ʿAbd Allāh b. Maṭīʿ to Ḥusayn upon meeting him on the road to Kūfa: *ibid.*, pp. 395ff.

61 After Muslim b. ʿUqba entered Madina he called the people to swear allegiance to Yazīd, swearing that they were 'the slaves of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya, and that he could dispose of their property, their persons and their families as he willed.' (*Ibid.*, p. 495)

b. ʿAdīy. But my testimony as to Ḥujr is this; that he is one of thosc who offers prayers, gives *zakāt*, pelorms the pilgrimage and the lesser pilgrimage, and enjoins to the right and dissuades from that which is reprehensible. Both his blood and his wealth are therefore unlawful. If you wish to, then kill him, or if you so wish it, then let him go.[62]

And these outstanding qualities were by no means rare among the partisans of Ḥusayn.

It is clear from what we have said that the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn came as the culmination of a series of armed revolutionary struggles which the supporters of the second main trend referred to above undertook. The representatives of this trend had made public from the beginning their opposition to the corruption which had begun to appear since the second half of the caliphate of ʿUthmān and which became even greater in Damascus during the time of Muʿāwiya's rule and that of his son Yazīd. It was only natural, therefore, that Imam Ḥusayn should refuse to swear the oath of allegiance to Yazīd, despite being threatened with death.[63]

The people in the cities, however, and especially those in Kūfa, did not refuse their allegiance to Yazīd and write instead to Imam Ḥusayn asking that he come so that they could swear allegiance to them only because he was a descendant of the Prophet and the son of Imam ʿAlī. Rather they did so because he was first and foremost the leader of those in opposition to the Umayyad policies which the Shīʿī notables in Kūfa described to him in their letter. They wrote: 'Praise be to God who has crushed your stubborn and tyrannical enemy [i.e., Muʿāwiya], he who leapt upon this community, seized rule of its affairs and usurped its booty, then lorded over it without its consent, then murdered the best and spared the evil among them, and made the wealth of God a commodity changing hands among the rich and powerful! We have no *imām*. Come, therefore, that God may bring us together through you to the way of truth.'[64]

62 *Ibid.*, p. 272.

63 See *ibid.*, p. 338.

64 Concerning ilie delegation of tbe people of Madina, see *ibid.*, p. 480. the sermon ⇒

In contrast to the Umayyad policies of which the letter of the people of Kūfa gave account, Ḥusayn described the duties of an *imām* in this way: ʿBy my life, an *imām* is nothing other than one who acts in accordance with the Book, who preserves justice and professes the truth, and who acts strictly in accordance with God's commands.'[65] He also wrote in his letter to the people of Baṣra: 'I call you to the Book of God and the *sunna* of his Prophet, for the *sunna* has been made to die and innovation (*bidʿa*) made to live. If you listen to my words and obey my command. I shall guide you on the way of truth.'[66]

ʿAbd Allāh b, Zubayr in his sermon to the people of Kūfa after the murder of Ḥusayn compared al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya, the leaders of the two main trends to which we have referred. He said:

After what has happened to Ḥusayn, should we trust these people [i.e.. the Umayyads], believe what they say or accept their promises? No! We do not consider them worthy of that! By God, they killed him, although the hours in the night he had spent in prayer were long, and the days he had spent in fasting, were many. He had more right than them to what they had, and he had precedence through both religion and virtue. By God, he never substituted singing for [recitation of] the Qur'ān, or vain chants in place of weeping for fear of God, nor partaking of forbidden drinks for fasting, nor riding about in search of prey [like Yazīd] for prayer sessions in remembrance of God. Perverse indeed are their ways![67]

The text which most clearly gives, an account of the programme of the current of opposition headed by Imam Ḥusayn is his sermon at Bayḍa. After praising God. Imam Ḥusayn said:

ʿO people, the Prophet of God said 'Whoever sees a ruler practising

⇐ of ʿAbd Allāh b. Zubayr to the people of Makka after the murder of Ḥusayn, comparing him and Yazīd (*ibid* , pp 474ff) and thc exchange between ʿUbayd Allāh b. Ziyād and Muslim b. ʿAqīl: *ibid.*, p. 377

65 *Ibid.*, p. 353.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 357.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 475.

oppression and usurpation and breaking the covenant of God, acting in opposition to the *sunna* of the Prophet of God and dealing with the servants of God through sin and transgression, but who does not try to change matters either through word or through deed — God then has the right to place him m the place he deserves [i.e.. in the Fire]! These people are in the service of Satan and have left the service of the All-merciful. They have proclaimed iniquiy, suspended the bounds (*hudūd*) laid down by God. and have taken the booty for themselves. They have made lawful what God made unlawful, and have made unlawful what He made lawful. . .'[68]

Ḥusayn understood the equation of military power, and that he could not stand up to the might of the Umayyads which surrounded him at Karbalā'. Yet he rejected disgrace and submission to the power of tyranny, and he and his companions sought martyrdom instead in order to stand against oppression. Ḥusayn rose at Dhū al-Ḥusum, praised God, and declared:

The situation has become as you see it. The world has changed and taken on a false character, and decency has departed from it, so that nothing is left of it but a meagre portion like the last few drops in the bottom of a vessel, and a livelihood like that of no more than a poor pasturage. Do you not see that truth is not heeded and falsehood not forbidden? Let the man of faith therefore seek to meet with God. I do not consider death anything less than martyrdom, and life with these oppressors anything but hardship.[69]

It is not easy to comprehend the true meaning of Imam Ḥusayn's decision to expose the little band of his family members and followers to martyrdom in order to stand against an oppressive ruler.[70] Some see in him simply an example of idealism. Others see in Ḥusayn a lack of political sophistication or a case of misjudgement of political and military factors — a view which, however, would also have to assume compromise on his part and an acceptance of a kind of trading off the

68 *Ibid.*, p. 403.
69 *Ibid.*, pp. 403ff.
70 See his words to his sister Zaynab: *ibid.*, pp. 420ff.

truth, which is precisely what the movement he represented had always rejected.[71]

Imam Ḥusayn's decision was to face martyrdom in a battle for the defence of truth and of Islamic values in order to oppose oppression and tyranny and deviation from the straight way of a path laid out by noble ideals. He intended his martyrdom to be an eternal lesson in the conduct of human struggle against oppression and for the building of a society based on truth, freedom and social justice. When Imam Ḥusayn heard about the murder of Qays b. Mashar al-Ṣaydāwī, the messenger he had sent to the people of Kūfa, his eyes filled with tears he could not control himself. He recited the Qur'ānic verse: *Some of them have completed their covenant with God, while others await death still, not wavering in the least.* (33:23)

The martyrdom of Ḥusayn was in fact an example for all forces struggling against oppression in all us various forms. It was not long before there were many uprisings against the Umayyad regime, examples of which are the uprising of Najda b. ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī b. al-Yamāma, that of the inhabitants of Medina in the year 63 of the *hijra*, then those of the people of Kūfa, and other such movements which took their model and example from Karbalā'.

Keeping alive the memory of the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn goes far beyond exhortations about the need to repent a great sin — that repentance which was discussed by the notables of Kūfa in the bouse of the Shaykh of the Shīʿī Sulaymān b. Ṣurad. Rather it is the keeping alive of the memory of a human experience which shall remain eternal and which mast be an example for all Muslims whatever their persuasion. In fact Ḥusayn's martyrdom stands as an example for all peoples in their struggle against all forms of oppression and wrong and for the building of a society based on social justice.

71 In fact, Mughīra b. Shu'bu had advised ʿAlī in the first days of his rule to keep Zubayr, ʿAlī and Ṭahā in their respective governorships in order to gain the allegiance of the people and of the army (Ṭabarī, IV, 438). ʿAlī, not wishing to compromise the principles of Islam, refused.

In conclusion I would like to pose the following question: What can contemporary movements of Islamic revival learn from the heritage of rich historical experience which the movement exemplified by Imam Ḥusayn underwent?

In order to benefit from this experience it is important in my opinion to first immerse ourselves in the study of the history of Islamic society in all its forms throughout the ages. This must be a scientific and critical study, thorough and comprehensive, making use of the latest methods available to us in the human and social sciences. Such a study must be removed as far as possible from all traces of fanaticism and narrow-mindedness, and must not drift toward uncontrolled emotion or premature judgements. Such a Study would permit us to understand the political, religious and social factors present in early Islamic society, and the great gap which that society experienced at many stages between theory and practice. What we mean here by the gap between theory and practice is the gap between clear Islamic principles and the world of reality, especially in the area of certain fundamental and crucial matters such as type of rule, freedom, and social justice.

Finally, it will be necessary to understand the historical experience we have spoken of here in light of the factors present in contemporary human society. This means that wc must make use of these experiences in the struggle against oppression in the framework of a clear programme suitable to the political movements of mass consciousness which are struggling in the world today for democracy and social justice in Islamic society.