

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

- (i) And abuse ye not those whom they invoke besides lest they abuse God in transgression without knowledge (i)
- (ii) No compulsion be in religion. (i)
- (iii) And obey God, and obey the Prophet, and be ye guard, but if ye turn back, know ye then, that Our (Mohammad) is bound only to deliver a clear argument (on Our behalf).
- (iv) And call thou unto the way of the Lord with wise kindly exhortation and dispute with them in the which is the best. (i)
- (v) And hold ye fast by the cord of God all together not divided (among yourselves). (i)
- (vi) "Verily I, I (alone), am God: There is no god but I: thou (only) Me, and establish prayer for My rance!" (i)
- (vii) Recite thou (O' Our Prophet Muhammad!) that hath been revealed unto thee of the Book and prayer; verily prayer restraineth (one) from filth: and certainly the remembrance of God is the (duty of the believers); and God knoweth what ye (i)
- (viii) O' my Son! establish prayer and enjoin the good and the evil, and be patient against what befalleth thee: this is the task of steadfastness." (i)
- (ix) And say not of those who are slain in the path of God they are dead; Nay, (they are) living, but ye perceive not. (i)
- (x) Reckon not those who are slain in the way of God dead; Nay! alive they are with their Lord. (i)



Rauza of Hazrat Imam Husain (A.S.) in Karbala.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW
OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

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".....And whoever respects the signs of Allah, verily it is (the reflection) of the piety of the heart". The Holy Quran (22: 32)

AZADARI

A Historical Review of Institution

of

AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

PART ONE

Translation

of

"Aza-l-Husaini par Tarikhi Tabsera"

by

Maulana Syed Ali Naqi Sahib Qibla

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Translation

"Azad-i-Husaini par Tazkiat-i-Tasbeeh"

Mawlana Syed Ali Nadwi Sahib Qadri

Published by

PERMAHOMED EBRAHIM TRUST
KARACHI-2

AZADARI

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

PART I

CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE

PREAMBLE

MEANING

The word 'Aza' in Arabic literally means 'patience'; 'Tazi'at' means 'To console'; 'to advise patience'. Thus the word 'Tazi'at' is used in respect of words used in expressing grief and condoling expressions. Idiomatically, however, just as certain words have come to retain in their etymological origin to convey specific ideas, limiting their use to peculiar objects and sense, the word 'Azadari', is to confined in respect of its use to express the sorrowful and mournful feelings that arise with the memory of Hazrat Imam Husain (A.S.).

AZADARI AND TAZIADARI

'Azadari' is different from a somewhat similar word 'Taziadari'. The later word conveys only one specific manner of mourning; but the former word,

i.e. 'Azadari', includes mourning congregations, lamentations with beatings of the breast, and all such actions that seek to express the emotions of grief and anguish.

JUBILATION AT THE APPARENT SUCCESS

It is a universal practice for the victorious side in a war to publicise its victorious achievements on as large a scale as possible, and thereby glorify its success. The historic Tragedy of Karbala was no exception to this general practice. Some of the apparent heroes of this episode had established such periodic jublations in commemoration of the event. Yazeed and his followers initiated such commemorations in their attempts to glorify their apparent success at Karbala, introducing various ways of glorifications of their performance. But, the purpose and objects of these jublations were, however, offset within a short period of time.

COMMEMORATION OF THE TRAGEDY

These celebrations gradually tended to become a secretive observance, for, now the other side, i.e. the people whom they regarded as 'Vanquished', started commemorating the Tragedy in various manners expressive of the colossal and brutal nature of the episode. These counter-commemorations continue to this day, despite continued efforts from the other side to circumvent and prevent these constructions.

AGAINST THE EVIL

Thus, what the enemies thought was a commemoration of their victory, was in effect a public glorification of the object that Imam Husain (A.S.) had been

martyred for, the opportunity for which he himself had provided to them.

One can easily visualize how adversely certain individuals react when even an ordinary person is showered with praises and publicity over something he has achieved. They stoop to all manners of vindictive jealousy and imputations against the one who excels over them with his personal achievements. If this is what that invariably happens with average human beings who pose no danger to anyone's crown or throne or to any major cause, one can easily assess the impact of this similitude where the person in focus was no less a personage than Imam Husain (A.S.), who had taken up the cudgels not only against the territorial suzerainty then in the clutches of Bani Umayyaa or against a few specific group of individual's authority, but against the entire horde of evil forces; and their concepts even.

FALSE PROPAGANDA

Under these circumstances it was but natural to expect the governmental machinery of the time to be geared up effectively against Imam Husain (A.S.), when it was felt that that he had resolved to succeed in his mission. The Government of the time necessarily had to resort to false propaganda campaigns, which they thought could defeat the Imam's objectives; but Imam Husain (A.S.) had so perfectly propagated his mission during his life-time itself, and had himself created such circumstances at Karbala that the enemy was at a complete loss as to how some circumstances could be manipulated which could extenuate their killing of the

Imam. There was absolutely nothing with which the enemy could possibly impute Imam Husain (A.S.), though Prophet Mohammad (S.A.), too, was himself not spared as a target of false imputations. This is clear from his saying: 'There are many persons who attribute false statements to me. Therefore, know it that anyone who attributes falsities to me, he will find his abode in the Hell.'

The other Infallible Imams also had to face similar imputations. Some persons, who managed to get themselves associated with the companions of these Imams, fabricated convenient falsities and attributed their origin to the Imam; and he had consequently to curse such innovations. Thus, when the other Infallibles, and the Holy Prophet himself, were not spared, how could Imam Husain (A.S.) have escaped such mischief? Imam Husain (A.S.) was after all a link in the chain of these Infallibles, and one who had taken upon himself a stupendous mission of vital importance. How could them the enemy miss any opportunity or any method of imputing him with falsehoods with a view to render his spiritual supremacy dubious?

Thus, it was not at all surprising that the enemies started creating a mountain out of a mole when a slight opportunity offered itself to them for such an exploitation. This was the occasion when Imam Husain (A.S.) chanced to speak to Omar Sa'ad while no other person was near about. This person, Omar Sa'ad, lost no time in scoring a hit. He started airing that Imam Husain (A.S.) had told him that he (the Imam) should be allowed to go to Yazeed so that he

(the Imam) could personally place his hand in the hand of Yazeed as a mark of allegiance to the latter. This was, however, reputed later by Uqba bin Sam'an who had survived as an eye-witness of the happenings on the field of Karbala. He told that he always, and regularly, used to enquire of what conversations Imam Husain (A.S.) used to have; and that the Imam never said that he would place his hand in the hand of Yazeed.

However, it is clear from this instance that the enemies never missed any opportunity which they could exploit to their own advantage. Thus, one would be perfectly right in saying that the enemy could never have missed anything that could possibly be used for defeating the Imam's mission; but the spiritual greatness and foresight of Imam Husain (A.S.) left no such loopholes for the enemy to exploit.

Imam Husain (A.S.) knew that the mission he had taken upon himself involved a total as well as a decisive war between good and evil. He realized that false attributions to the Holy Prophet in the past, though condemnable, were trivial as compared to the prevailing context of situation, when he was on a threshold of a decisive war, the like of which there never was nor would there ever be. As such, he felt that it he left anything open to doubt at this critical juncture, the whole purpose of his mission would fall flat. He, therefore, took all possible measures to ensure that the enemy got no such exploitable things, thereby guaranteeing for all times to come a clear exposition of his righteousness and his enemy's tyranny.

MISSION PROPAGATED THROUGH ENEMIES

Intoxication of success or political blunder—whatever one may call it—on the part of the apparent victors at Karbala, subsequently rendered the enemies themselves instrumental in the propagation of the Imam's mission for an appreciable period of time. Their public celebrations of their apparent victory and their demonstrations of atrocities they had committed, all served to project the cause the Imam had stood for. These commemorations were not of local significance, for, through them the other provinces of the state which had hitherto been kept unaware of the cause which the Ahle Bait had stood for, and to conceal which truth all possible measures had been taken, now came to know the truth that was staked on the field of Karbala. So thorough was the ignorance of the people of Damascus in respect of the Prophet's family members (the Ahle Bait) that once when a Friday sermon was in progress at the central mosque there, during which congregations it was ordained necessary to rebuke Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.), a certain person who heard abuses being hurled at Abu Turab (Hazrat Ali's title) from the pulpit, asked as to who 'Abu Turab' was. The man sitting next to him, said: "I really don't know. He must, I think obviously, be one of the decoits of Arabia!"

A blissful ignorance indeed!

Similarly, there was that person in Syria who, on being asked about Janab Fatima (A.S.), gave a

baffling reply, calling 'father' as 'husband'; 'husband', as 'father' and daughters as 'wife'. This was the state of enlightenment which this prodigious Syrian exhibited. The fact, however, was that these men were never really appraised by anyone with what was true. What most people were told was that the Bani Umayyās were the lawful successors of the Holy Prophet, and that the Prophet had left no progeny of his own except the Umayyās.

This, those the people who knew nothing about the Ahle Bait not even their names—now came to know about them through such public commemorations of their supposed victory. The people now flocked to pay homage to the memory of the noble personages, though at they were now symbolized with their severed heads at the points of spears and as captives. These sacred personages could not have remained anonymous even when their heads had been cropped off and their survivors held captives. The people who had so far been totally unaware of them, now saw for themselves what the enemies of the Ahle Bait exhibited as having accomplished. Those of Imam Husain's family members who had survived were thus introduced to the masses, who hitherto knew hardly anything about them. This could have proved all the more dangerous to them; for, if they had sent out only the severed heads of the martyrs, the people would merely have felt sorry at the ghastly sight and the matter might have ended at that. But, by parading the Holy Prophet's kith and kin who had survived the mad massacres at Karbala, and exhibiting their capture, the enemies of Ahle Bait had provided the

people with the opportunity of having their hearts won by the sheer force the personalities of the Prophet's surviving members of family, for, they had thus presented to the unknowing world persons who could storm their way into the hearts of the people by virtue of their eloquent oratory, as which the Ahle Bait were past masters. Thus, though unwittingly, the enemies had helped to create situations wherein the hitherto unwitnessed qualities of unparelled oratory now for once come to the forefront with all its fire and anguish.

Be it Zainab-e-Kubra's sermon, or Umm-e-Kulsoom's moving oration, or Imam Zainul Abedeen's (A.S) address, all these eloquent expositions were such that they shook the world conscience, and the people started seeing things in their true perspective. It is a normal trait of human nature that when a person who has deliberately been kept in the dark about things he ought to know, comes to know of them in a sudden manner, he or she gets infuriated at having been fooled for all that while. As such, the result of these actions on the part of the enemies was that within a short span of time, the ruling clique came to realize that through their own folly, they had dug their own graves.

The ground under their feet was slipping,

MAY GOD CURSE IBNE MARJAANA

They therefore now embarked on efforts seeking to neutralize the harm they had done to themselves. They were now hectic in inventing such stories as would conceal the brutal nature of the atrocities they

had committed. They now resorted to displays of grief and regret, the purpose being purely to draw a curtain over their brutal deeds. Censuring Ibne Marjaana, and shifting the weight of responsibility to him, was one such artifice of saving oneself like the proverbial drowning person who leaps even at straw to avoid his inevitable end. Even to this day these frantic efforts continue. The supporters of the Bani Ummayyas even to day cite, by way of extenuation, the words purportedly uttered by Yazeed, Conveying :

"May the curse of God be upon Ibne Marjaana. If I was in his place, I would not have done what he did".

Then they say that Yazeed got his house vacated and that his womenfolk participated in the lamentations that followed.

These, however, are subsequent developments. It was only when defeatist feelings pinched them that these artifices commenced, and continue to be in vogue to this day. Obviously feelings of elation at apparent victory were short-lived, while feelings of remorse at their innate failure were, and continue to be, of a perpetual nature. It was only for a short while that they rejoiced at what they thought to be a glorifying victory, but the way truth crystallized itself subsequently forced them to realize that they had in effect lost their battle so completely that their fate was sealed for ever, with no possibility of their redemption at any time in the future. Thus it was that the supporters of Yazeed realized that there was no way out

except trying to conceal the monstrous outrages which they had so brazenly committed.

AZADARI

But then there were those staunch Muslims who nourished a burning hatred for the tyrants who perpetrated inhuman excesses on the Ahle Bait. They naturally reacted to such exculpations by resolving to perpetuate the memory of the brutalities Karbala on as conspicuous and effective manner as was possible.

As a matter of fact, the act of preparing grounds for perpetuating the reminiscence of the tragic events at Karbala is what the word 'Azadari' actually means in its usual parlance. The actual modes of 'Azadari' or commemoration of the Tragedy of Karbala, has had different and varying forms in different ages and different countries. Its mode was never constant at any period of time ; but the spirit behind it remains the same, whatever their form.

The adversaries continued with the efforts for some time, doing all they could to make the people forget the black deeds at Karbala ; but when they failed to achieve their aim, they resorted to other tactics. They now embarked on introducing other reminiscences along with the commemoration of Karbala Tragedy. The strategy in associating other things with it was that by doing so they thought they could gradually minimize the impact of the Tragedy till it lost all its emotional effects in course of time. But this was a futile attempt, for, far from neutralizing the effects, they only helped to aggravate its potential

weight. Their adulterating measures proved themselves to be briefly transient and died their own death within a short period of time.

"NOTHING MORE GLORIOUS THEN MARTYRDOM"

Having failed in their efforts to render ineffectual the mournful commemorations of Karbala Tragedy, the antagonists now thought of yet another way of curbing them. They theorized speculatively that if they dressed and presented an event in an un-natural manner, it would succeed in destroying its true significance. They, therefore, now decided that the Tragedy of Karbala should be projected in such a manner that instead of allowing its inherent elements of grief to be pin pointed, an element of joy or jubilation should be injected in it. For this, they now fabricated such explanations and excuses as would justify and give sanctity to their innovations. For instance, they stressed that there could be nothing more glorious than achieving martyrdom ; and that since Imam Husain (A.S.) had attained such a glorifying martyrdom, one must rejoice at his success rather than lament over it ! They argued that only those could lament over the episode who believed that martyrs were as good as other dead persons, and that when it is believed that martyrs live for even after death, there should be no need for weeping over them.

What in fact the antagonists desired to achieve by this 'logic' was that somehow the memory of the brutalities at Karbala be pushed into oblivion. Since they failed to achieve their object by direct methods,

they now thought of shrewd subtleties as alternatives, though they understood the plain and simple truth that sorrow and grief were quite natural on an occasion such as this, and that to rejoice on such a grave and solemn occasion would be wholly unnatural. On the contrary, it is an established psychological fact that expressions of grief and anguish are more eloquent and impressive than joyful ones. They, therefore, tried to convert the austere complexion of Karbala Tragedy into a pleasant event to be commemorated in a joyous manner'.

Accordingly, the kingdoms and principalities officially sought to ensure that the 10th of Moharrum was celebrated with festivities associated with occasion like Eid etc. This novelty continued for quite some time; but not with complete success or in the form originally stipulated. As a consequence, one can today notice in various parts of India a combination of grief and joy, the former element being indicative of what the true Muslims in the past did on the occasion. In certain parts of the country, one can even find persons indulging in joyous fireworks during the first ten days of Moharrum. It is a common sight to see men wearing tiger and bearskins and performing acrobatics. These activities, according to them, form a part of commemorations of the Tragedy of Karbala.

One can obviously find no connection between acrobatics, ballets and grief.

A little reflection will, however, explain these apparent absurdities. There is an old Arabic proverb

that says : *people follow in the footsteps of their kings.* Let us therefore reflect on this adage for a while and see what we find.

There were two distinct categories of kings and Kingdom : One, who demonstrated their grief over Karbala Tragedy ; and the other, who rejoiced in commemoration of it. The Muslims in general adopted certain customs and practices from each of these two diverse categories without taking into consideration the motivating factors behind each category. The result thereof was an admixture of demonstrations that carried both grief and jubilation in their expression ; and all these cross-blendings came to be a part of the commemoration of the Tragedy of Karbala.

Those Muslims who have respect and regard for Imam Husain (A S.), and consider his martyrdom to be a thing that inspires grief and anguish must consider it their duty to explain to the other Muslims the true significance of commemoration of the martyrs of Karbala. It must be explained to them that the manner in which they commemorate Imam Husain's martyrdom defeats the very purpose for which it is intended. It is possible that with goodwill and an amicable approach, the desired effect could be achieved, and they might eventually adopt those modes of commemoration as befit a mournful occasion that the Tragedy of Karbala undoubtedly is.

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AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A S)

CHAPTER II

THE INITIAL PHASE OF AZADARI MANIFESTATION OF HUMAM EMOTIONS

Lamentations and demonstrations of grief that came before the public eye immediately after the tragic events at Karbala were not in any manner premeditated. They were spontaneous and natural manifestations of human emotions. For, the pathetic sight of those of Imam Husain's kith and kin who had survived the mad brutalities on the field of Karbala presents a living picture of grief, anguish and sorrow. One cannot even imagine any person to be so profusely grief-stricken as the survivors of Imam Husain in and the inmates of his household encamped on the desert sands of Karbala.

Just imagine a mother who had lost for ever his beloved youthful son as a target of spear-thrusts; imagine a sister who lost her darling brother who embraced his death after starving for morsel of food and thirsting for a drop water to drink for three consecutive days; imagine that oppressed person whose

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6-month old infant was made a target of full volleys of arrow-shots; imagine the state of that widow whose husband was martyred before her eyes. Who among these survivors was there who had not been afflicted with, not one at a time, but one after the other, tragic blows, without having the chance to recover his or her senses in between. In a situation like this, one cannot possibly say that their wailings, lamentations and weepings were premeditated or motivated for any purpose other than the natural urge to vent their anguish. Even if they had been stopped from giving a vent to their natural and spontaneous feelings, it would have only sharpened the sting of their anguish; and the result likely to follow such a forced suppression would have been that even their forced silence would undoubtedly have assumed an eloquent form of moving expression, forceful enough to cause others to lament.

"One grief-stricken person can render a mirthful gathering sorrowful", so runs a Persian saying. There can be little doubt about the truth of this saying. Anyone with a human heart and feelings, even if he happens to be of an inimical disposition will invariably be affected under such circumstances, for, not all enemies are cruel-hearted. Calamity is something that even the enemy who is the cause of it weeps when he sees its victim actually struck with it, not to mention those of the opposite group whose hearts are not completely bereft of human feelings at the sight of those in anguish. This is exactly what happened as an epilogue of inhuman atrocities to which Imam Husain (A.S.) and his family members

fell martyrs. While the surviving members sat silent, the others who saw, them lamented aloud at the speechless anguish of their shocked silence which by itself spoke volumes. The balconies in the streets and lanes through which they were paraded, echoed with sobs and lamentations of the people who had gathered to watch what was given out as 'fun'.

This happened at Kufa in Iraq.

ENEMY'S CAPITAL—CENTRE OF AZADARI

After that, what happened at Damascus was still more astounding. While the Ahle-Haram (i.e. women-folk of Imam Husain's family) sat hushed in woeful silence in the court-hall of Yazeed's palace, his own womenfolk were wailing aloud inside the ladies' apartments! Such was the power of patient silence which the survivors of Imam Husain exercised through their speechless eloquence on the world at large. If these survivors had been given the opportunity to voice their feelings and if they, too, had resorted to self expression through loud lamentations, history would have flooded itself with tears that could inundate all records of the profoundest sorrow and grief that even struck mankind.

However, when Yazeed announced that he was setting his captives free, he asked if they wanted anything from him. And what they said in reply cannot be truly evaluated in material terms:

"We have not wept out our hearts to the extent we Wish to", they told Yazeed, "We would ask you to vacate your house so that we can lament, bear our breasts and tear out our hearts to the full".

Yazeed now had no choice but to relent, for, what he sought now was to please or satisfy them out of necessity and expedience. Therefore, though he realized that granting such a request would be harmful to himself, he had to agree to what they desired. The annals of history stand testimony to the fact that when the Ahle Haram moved into Yazeed's house, there was not one single woman in Damascus who did not turn up at this house for condolence and returned home afflicted with pangs of choking grief.

This then was the first Azadari that took place right in the centre of the enemy's Capital. Everyone who came to pay their respectful condolence at Yazeed's house, went back taking along with him an impression that could not be obliterated by the passage of time; for, though the mat that the Ahle Haram had spread out for mourning sessions was formally wound up after three or seven days continuous Azadari, it ignited in the hearts of the thousands of persons who congregated upon it a fire which it was not possible to extinguish thereafter.

It is reported that when this caravan of the ladies of Imam Husain's household left Damascus for Medina, they passed through Karbala which was on route, which means that, in a way, the ritual of performing a pilgrimage at the sacred graves of the martyrs was also accomplished. It was only natural that these grief-stricken ladies should have been anxious to see

it, their near and dear ones had been duly buried, for, they had themselves not been able to do so. They, therefore, headed towards the site.

And the historic phenomena that occurred there need not be stressed here. Suffice it to say that the entire blood-soaked field of Karbala echoed with Cries of "Ya Husain."

These phenomenal manifestations are self-evident, and go right into the hearts of people even if no one discourses upon them. Hence, when the people of Karbala and its suburbs saw and heard these phenomenal happenings for themselves they could not help being impressed with their Divinity destined to last permanently in their hearts and conscience.

RETURN TO MEDINA

CONDITION OF UMMUL BANEEN

Later, when these survivors of Karbala Tragedy reached their destination, Medina, after having lost all that mattered to them, the scenes that materialized back home can best be imagined than described in words. How majestically had they left! And with what splendour did they return home! The fateful events that took place on the desert-field of Karbala were still fresh in their minds; in fact, their memory remained fresh and alive for all time. Everyone in Medina—the city of the Prophet—whether a friend or foe, were all equally dumbfounded at the enormity of the Tragedy of Karbala, particularly by those connected with the martyrs in any manner of relationship. Their grief was beyond words, for, their anguish

might have been lesser if they had the consolation of seeing their beloved ones if they had the opportunity of themselves being present at the scene of the Tragedy. Equally maddening was the sight of Ummul Baneen who was not personally present at Karbala. This venerable lady had so explicit confidence and devotion for Imam Husain (A.S.) that she entrusted the entire lot of her sons to him on his march to Karbala, herself remaining back at Medina. For her, her sons were the only capital she possessed in life. As such what must have been her mental state when she learnt of the fate that had befallen the Imam and her own sons? According to historical accounts, she would arise with the dawn of day and go out to the graveyard at Jannat-ul-Baqi (where the Holy Prophet's daughter, Fatimatuz-Zahra lies enshrined). There in the awesome and serene silence of this sacred cemetery she would sob and weep out her heart, reciting soul-stirring epicediums and elegies from morn to eve. This she did as a routine everyday for the rest of her life.

So mournful and moving were her self-inspired elegies that even a person like Merwan—an arch-enemy of the Holy Prophet's family—who used to pass by the site, would halt there to listen to her impelling wails and weep spontaneously at the impact of her maternal outpourings.

Such was the gripping effect of this lady's elegies that they arrested the feelings of both friends and foes equally.

As mentioned by me in my book *Shuhda-e-Karbala*, the elegies that Ummul Baneen poured out from the core of heart were not mere emotional epepidiums of high literary value. What they project with equal emphasis is her being the mother of a distinguished and brave son like her Abbas. This is what she says (in substance) in one of her heart-rending elegies:

Why call, alas, the mother of sons; why call?

For, 'Ummul Baneen'—my name you all call,

Means mother of sons, loving, fair, and tall
Yes, indeed, I suckled one and possessed them all

Yes, yester time it was that I had them all;
But today are gone, they one, two and all.
(Versified by M. Jaffer Husain)

Another elegy which I have described in my said book as most expressive of unique valour on the battle-field conveys this anguished cry of a mother left alone:

Lo the lion Abbas, my son stout and brave,
Sending the foe in one attack to their grave.

That sight, so valiant, so gallant, so unique
I cherish:

When Abbas, my lion, thirsty on sand they
saw perish;

But only when the foe, doomed for ever to
hell, Cut his arms, alas! And to ground his
arms fell.

Not ere this could the wretches dare strike
at him That blow which blew the glow of
life off him.

(Versified by Mr. Jaffer Hussain)

Similar are the epepidiums extemporized by Umme Hani. Her wailings, too, are clothed in feelings that emanate spontaneously from the innermost recesses of an anguishing human heart. Thus, one finds that the origin of Azadari (mournful reminiscences of the Tragedy of Karbala) was founded on spontaneous and natural human feelings which leave, as they did, and impression on human conscience that can never be obliterated.

The effects of the Tragedy of Karbala on the people of Kufa also deserve mention. It must be stated here that the people of this city have, unfortunately, become reputedly known for their treachery and infidelity. This charge against them is true to the extent that the army which fought against Imam Hussain (A.S.) at Karbala comprised of Kuffans; but it must be realized that there existed in Kufa a fairly large population who can rightly be regarded as 'Shi'ah-e-Kufa' who can under no circumstances be implicated in the blood bath at Karbala. For details on this, the reader is advised to refer to the journal entitled 'Qasban-e-Hussain Ka Mafahim' and the book 'Shuhda-e-Hussain'. Suffice it to say here that when Imam Hussain became the head of the State

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CHAPTER III

EFFECTS OF THE TRAGEDY ON

THE PEOPLE OF KUFA

IBNE ZIAD REPLACES NOMAN BIN BASHIR

The effects of the Tragedy of Karbala on the people of Kufa also deserve mention. It must be stated here that the people of this city have, unfortunately, become reputedly known for their treachery and infidelity. This charge against them is true to the extent that the army which fought against Imam Husain (A.S.) at Karbala comprised of Kufians; but it must also be realized that there existed in Kufa a fairly large population who can rightly be regarded as 'Shi'an-e-Kufa', who can under no circumstances be implicated in the blood bath at Karbala. For details on this, the reader is advised to refer to the journal entitled "Qatilan-e-Husain Ka Mazhab" and the book "Shaheed-e-Insaniat", Suffice it to say here that when Ibne Ziyad became the head of the State

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in Kufa, all such persons who could be suspected of having any sympathy with the Holy Prophet's progeny the (Able Bait) were all searched out and thrown into jails.

It was this kind of high handedness which Noman bin Bashir, who was the Governor of Kufa at the time Muslim bin Aqeel came to the Capital with a mission assigned by Imam Husain (A.S.), detested; and had declared that he would not soil his hands with anyone's blood merely on suspicion. He, however, made it clear that if any one resorted to violent means, he would then be forced to resort to war against such elements. This pacifist policy of Noman bin Bashir could not naturally appeal to the followers and admirers of the Bani Ummayyad ruling clique. Noman bin Bashir was therefore summoned to the Caliph's palace, following complaints to the Caliph. Consequently, Noman bin Bashir was dismissed from his office as the Governor of Kufa, and replaced by Ibne Ziyad.

HAZRAT MUSLIM AND MUKHTAR

Yazeed had issued specific orders to Ibne Ziyad, empowering him to arrest all such persons who could even remotely be suspected of treason, even if such a suspicion was likely to prove wrong. How could then anyone defy these Caliphal orders? The result was that all those who were known to be the sympathizers of the Ahle Bait, including even respected dignitaries, were arrested and imprisoned. Some, who were suspected of aiding, or intending to be of help, to Hazrat Muslim, were straightaway killed. Mukhtar

was not present in Kufa at the time when Hazrat Muslim was martyred. He reached there after the incident when Amr bin Harees had raised the flag indicating the call for an armistice, proclaiming thereby that all those who flocked under this flag would stand assured of their life and property. Obviously, a call for armistice can come only after there has been a general massacre. Thus this call that guaranteed safety of life and property, clearly shows that everyone was in danger of losing his life erstwhile ago.

Mukhtar knew and realized that he had many important things to do while he lived. If he had met Hazrat Muslim alive in Kufa, he would certainly have aided him in his mission. When however, he found that Hazrat Muslim had been martyred, he wisely responded to the call for armistice given out by Amr bin Harees. But even this did no good to him. He was arrested all the same, and imprisoned. Thus, the Government headed by the Bani Ummayya clique felt their authority safe only after it had put into jail a considerable number of persons as 'suspected traitors'.

In this state of suspense when everyone on whom the Government machinery could lay its hands was indiscriminately arrested and confined to jails, it was but natural for all people to ensure security of life for themselves. Thus, all those who had not been arrested so far, went under ground. Some fled away from the city to seek refuge in rural areas, while others headed towards the woods.

AFTER THE MARTYRDOM OF HAZRAT MUSLIM

Consequently, soon after Hazrat Muslim had been martyred, the administration ordered a general blockade of the city of Kufa. No one could now leave or enter the city. It was thus not possible to keep those who had evaded arrest and were successful in getting out of Kufa, informed of local developments. Similarly, those who had gone underground within the city, had no means of knowing anything about Imam Husain's movements. They, therefore, did not know that the Imam had already reached the outskirts of Kufa; for, both the messengers, Abdullah bin Qitar and Qais bin Sabr, whom Imam Husain (A.S.) had sent ahead to inform the administration of his arrival, had been waylaid enroute and murdered.

AFTER THE MARTYRDOM OF HAZRAT IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

It is thus clear that the devotees of the Ahle Bait in Kufa were mostly confined in jails; and those who could not have been arrested, were totally unaware of the happenings outside the city. After the eventual martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.), when the caravan comprising of the ladies of the Imam's household came to Kufa enroute to Medina, the only occupants of the residential houses in the city were women and children. The wailing cries of loud lamentations that arose from the houses at the sight of the caravan were those of these lonely women and children whose male members had been

imprisoned, or those who had fled the city as a result of intimidations held out to them by the Government officials. Thus, it were only these women and children who remained at homes; and they were the ones who wept and lamented at the mournful and awe-inspiring sight of the ladies of the Imam's household.

The absconding men however, came back from their hideouts when the Government lifted the restrictions on public movements now that it felt secure to do so with the Imam no more to pose any threat to the regime, and with the ladies of his household safely brought into Kufa. Restrictions on gatherings were also lifted; and with the exception of some persons whom the administration still regarded as 'dangerous persons', all others who had been arrested were released. And those who had sought refuge in the outlying villages, as also those who had fled for safety into the woods, also came back. As such, it was only after this return of comparative normalcy that the devotees of the Ahle Bait got the chance of meeting each other and of knowing what all had transpired so far.

Now, when these men met each other, the only topic on the lips of everyone was that of Imam Husain's martyrdom. Everyone of them was compunctious at their misfortune at not having been in a position to go out to help the grandson of the Holy Prophet who, they regretted, had been martyred at a place so near their city. Their frustration was too acute to permit any complacency at this tragedy of

unparalleled enormity. They must do something, they decided.

PROPOSAL TO AVENGE THE MARTYRS OF KARBALA

They therefore unanimously agreed to a proposal which envisaged that either they should compensate for their failure to help the Imam by killing as many of his enemies as was possible, or get themselves killed. All this happened, it must be noted, at a time when the hold of the enemy was yet strong, and Yazeed still alive.

Consequently, a mass meeting was convened under the leadership of Sulaiman bin Sard Khuzai whereat a party of men was formed, volunteering to avenge the blood-bath of innocent victims at Karbala. This party which thus commissioned itself with the mission of avenging the martyrs of Karbala is known in history as a "Jama'at-e-Tauwabeen", literally meaning an 'Association of Repenters'.

I have repeatedly stressed in my speeches that far from dampening the courage and spirit of men, the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) actually spurred human hearts to still greater heights of bravery and determination. This contention is quite evidently not unfounded when one realizes that it was no easy matter for anyone, unless one was highly inspired to have the courage to convene a public meeting at a time when an oppressive Government had just accomplished the worst tyrannical feat in the world. It required an immense amount of moral and physical courage to

deliver anti-Government speeches at public meetings at a time such as this. Verily, the fact that these faithful devotees did just that proves that the spirit and motive power behind such daring was the remarkable animation inspired by the righteousness of the cause Imam Husain (A.S.) stood and fell for.

JAMA'AT-E-TAUWABEEN

This Jama'at-e-Tauwabeen—Suicide Squad one might call in modern phraseology—comprised of 4,000 men organized themselves under the Command of Sulaiman bin Sard Khuzai. This fearless band, 4,000 strong, included the Companions of the Holy Prophet, and had served devotedly in Ameerul Momineen Ali's army in the historic campaigns at Jamal, Siffin and Nehrwan. These resolute persons unanimously conferred their command to Sulaiman bin Sard Khuzai who was then in his eighties. It was also agreed that in case he fell a martyr on the field, Musayyab bin Najba would take up the command; and if the latter, too, fell, then Abdullah bin Vaal would take his place, to be replaced by Rafe bin Shaddad Bajali in case of further necessity.

Note here that in every speech that speakers of this party made they highlighted the cruelties to which Imam Husain (A.S.) was subjected; every such eloquence indicated the depth of their anguish, for, they felt the pinch of their conscience all the more in view of the fact that it was this group of men who had failed to be by the side of the Imam after themselves having invited him to Kufa. The nature and depth of their frustration can be gauged if one

realizes that when today, after 1300 years, even we ourselves get restive and wish we were with the Imam, one can only visualize the intensity of the regret and remorse which this group of men, who were actually living in those fateful times but rendered unable to do anything, must naturally have felt for having failed hopelessly to keep up their assurance of necessary help to the Imam.

As a result, every meeting of this Party which was held to consider the ways and means of waging a retaliatory war used to assume the of a mass-condolence congregation whereat while on one hand the speakers spoke of their determination to retaliate with armed force, on the other they recounted the inhuman atrocities of Yazeed's men at Karbala and lamented over the Imam's martyrdom. To instill the true spirit of sacrifice in the hearts of those who were still hesitant in joining their Party, every speaker spoke as eloquently as he could in focussing the heroic deeds of the supporters of the Imam on the field of Karbala.

This group of men openly declared Yazeed as Number One murderer of Imam Husain (A.S.); and as such, they resolved to take direct action against him. It was purely a political overturn that made Yazeed say later that the real villain in the Drama of Blood at Karbala was not he but Ibne Ziyad. This is what certain admirers of Yazeed even today try to project as a face-saving theory to extenuate the Bani Umayyad from the responsibility for the outrageous

brutal excesses they indulged in at Karbala. Say what they might, facts of history cannot be erased; and history testifies that the first ever organized Party which emerged as an aftermath of the Tragedy of Karbala to avenge the atrocities against Imam Husain (A.S.) was the first representative organization to have openly indicted Yazeed with first degree of palpable murder amounting to manslaughter.

Thus convinced and determined, they resolved to proceed to Damascus and put an end to Yazeed's life, notwithstanding their small strength. Accordingly, they all decided upon a tentative date on which they would all venture out on their mission: but before they actually did that, they settled that they should first visit the graves of the martyrs at Karbala and pay homage to Imam Husain (A.S.). This entire group of 4,000 Mujahideen under the command of the veteran soldier, Sulaiman bin Sard Khuzai, were thus eager to brave the hazards of journey to reach the waterless wasteland where not long ago there was not a single human soul to bury the dead. This desolate and fateful spot was their destination to which these men were magnetically drawn. One can only visualize their frantic yearning to get at this sacred place where they once languished to reach when the Imam was still alive. The same remorseful people were now longing with all the intensity of their unfulfilled desire to arrive at the same place when, alas, the Imam was no more there.

Anyway, when this band of Mujahideen approached the borders of Karbala, they flung

themselves off their horses, threw off their headwears, and went to the sacred grave of Imam Husain (A.S.) with naked swords drawn out in their hands. Thus bubbling with deep and indescribable emotions, which found outlets in the form of sobbings and lamentations, they stood wailing over the Imam's grave throughout the night, as if assuring the reposeful Imam that they would stake their lives in faithful devotion to him, and repentfully conveying:

"Pardon us, our Maula! We could not reach you in time; but here we stand today at your feet. We missed the fortune of laying down our lives ere this; but now, today, and here, we are, oh Maula! Ready, willing, eager, craving, and hankering to shed our last drops of blood for your sake..."

Thus, with a redoubled determination and resolution these men headed towards Syria; but the intelligence of their move reached ahead of them. As a result thereof, at a place called Alwar—midway between Iraq and Syria—the Mujahideen were intercepted by the State army. Though they numbered 4,000, their force could hardly match with the size of the full fledged Syrian army. In the fierce clash that took place, Sulaiman bin Sard Khuzai, the Commander of the Mujahideen, fell a martyr, to be followed by Mussayyab and Abdullah bin Vaal, one after the other. In three days of desperate fighting, as many as 3,700 commandoes laid their lives, leaving 300 Mujahideen, all of whom were either bodily wounded or permanently disabled. These Survivors were consequently taken back home by Rafe bin Shaddad,

where they later joined hands with Mukhtar to continue avenging the murderers of Imam Husain (A.S.).

The soul inspiring spirit which this Party, Jama'at-e-Tauwabeen, had instilled in the hearts of men and women was something that was destined to be active and alive for all times to come. This Jama'at had laid the foundation of Azadari in its own typical manner. There can hardly be any doubt that the burning feelings which people harboured in their hearts were set aflame all the more intensively by the news of the frenzied and spontaneous manner in which the members of this Party had thronged and lamented over the sacred grave of Imam Husain (A.S.). Such potent were the effects of this historic mourning that they have continued, and will continue to do so, from generation to generation of those to whom Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and his Ahle Bait mean what God ordained them to mean to believers.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN

CHAPTER IV

ACTIVITIES OF MUKHTAR

HIS PROPOSAL

Later, when Mukhtar embarked upon his party's avowal of avenging, he decided with the concurrence of his partymen that there was no need to go all the way down to Syria to seek vengeance there. Their purpose, he emphasized, was one while the means to achieving that purpose could be several. The murderers, he pointed out, were right amidst the population in their own city; and as such, they could pick up these culprits and despatch them to their graves even while remaining stationed locally.

UNIQUE METHOD OF PENALISING

Consequently, in a united and organized way these men started picking up their quarries to punish them suitably in a manner that was as effective as it was novel. The modus operandi of this unique method

of penalizing the tyrants was to drag them to congregational mourning sessions, where in every such picked-up culprit's role on the field of Karbala was portrayed through eloquent recapitulations by competent orators who with their factual descriptions of brutalities, would strike straight at his conscience. Every such criminal was then asked to recount himself his own felonious deeds at Karbala. This subtle technique was indeed potently productive of that extremely painful chastisement which psychologists term as 'self-condemnation'. One can understand the acuteness of the anguish of a person whose own conscience leads him to bewail his own excesses in the presence of the devotees of the Ahle Bait, when we, today, centuries after the Tragedy, are moved to the quick by merely reading the anguishing accounts written by historians. Thus, every such meeting which Mukhtar's partymen held was virtually a Majlis (gathering of mourners) where everyone, including the criminals themselves, wept and lamented over the fiendish tyrannies meted out to Imam Husain (A.S.) and his devout followers.

IMAM SAJJAD DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF MUKHTAR

In distant places, where further atrocities were indulged in, particularly the martyrdoms of Sulaiman bin Sa'd Khuzai, Musaib and Abdullah bin Vaal, the events could not gain much publicity, for, there were no means of it at the time of their occurrence. But during the time of Mukhtar's tirade against the adversaries of the Ahle Bait, there were no such impediments of transport and communications. In fact,

Mukhtar and his partymen had established a parallel Government of their own not only in Kufa but at other outlying areas as well, where their men were even functioning as Administrators. As such, the news of these developments in Kufa could not remain confined to the city limits, particularly when the sympathizers of the Ahle Bait all over the State were eager to know of what was taking place at the centre.

The surviving members of Imam Husain's family especially, were also, more than anyone else, anxious to keep themselves in touch with what Mukhtar was doing each day at Kufa. Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) himself would personally keep enquiring from persons coming from Kufa as what Mukhtar did on the day. According to certain narrations, it is reported that Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) asked on such returned from Kufa if Hurmala the heartless murderer of infant Ali Asghar (A.S.), was as yet hauled up or not. When the man told the Imam that the fellow had not been arrested till the time of his departure from Kufa, the Imam lifted his hands towards the heavens and prayed: "Oh God, give this fellow a taste of roasting fire". It is thus obvious that when the Imam was so deeply concerned about the fate of Hurmala before his eventual arrest and execution, how emotionally must he have not expressed his feelings of fulfilment when this fellow was actually hauled up and despatched to his deserving end.

The mission to which Mukhtar dedicated himself as long as he lived was to keep alive and fresh the sacred memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) not only in the

minds of the people of Kufa but in the hearts of men and women far beyond the frontiers of the citadel.

EXPLOITATION

Consequently, the commemorations of Imam Husain's sacrifice and mournings for him become so effective instruments that even those who did not have any particular regard for the Ahle Bait, exploited and used them as a weapon by recouring to them whenever they had to confront the Ummayyad regime. In fact, the Abbasid regime was established on this professed sentiment, though in reality the Abbasid never honestly had any genuine sympathies for the Ahle Bait. It was not possible for them to unite the Muslims merely in the name of Abdul Abbas Saffah, the founder of their dynasty. What actually worked was the exploitation of the cause for which the Ahle Bait stood, the tragedy of Imam Husain (A.S.) in particular being the most effective weapon in the process. All army flags were ordered to be black-coloured as a symbol reminiscent of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.). The first such flag to be raised was in Iran on the 10th of Moharrum. The Infallible Imams of time knew how far this outwardly expression of regard for the Ahle Bait had anything in common with true feelings.

Any sentimental person would undoubtedly have been deceived by this subtle exploitation to which these men resorted; but not so the Infallible Imams, who knew everything inside out. The Imams, therefore, could not possibly be tricked through such

apparent blandishments; and they consequently instructed their devotees not be led into believing in the bonafides of such outward sympathies.

ABBASID UNCONSCIOUSLY HELPED TO SERVE THE CAUSE OF AHLE BAIT

Nevertheless, the Abbasids themselves, thought unconsciously, helped to serve the cause of Ahle Bait inasmuch as they were instrumental in spreading the significance of Imam Husain's martyrdom and hatred for those who brutally murdered him to the remotest corner of the empire. The impact of the Tragedy of Karbala thus gained deeper roots in the minds of the people.

Abul Abbas Saffah, who was the first of the Abbasid Caliphs and who made the Bani Ummayyas the target of his severities, justified his actions by giving out that he was merely avenging the excesses which they (the Ummayyas) had heartlessly perpetrated on Imam Husain (A.S.). Though this plea was devoid of truth, it nevertheless served effectively to create a universal hatred against the Bani Ummayyas on one hand, and sympathies for the Holy Prophet's grandsons and progeny on the other.

The effects of a positive nature that came about as a result of the severities against the Bani Ummayyas were, however, not of a permanent nature; for, these anti Ummayya policies were inspired solely for political reasons, and we all know that political expediencies never remain constant. They change with the demand of times, renouncing their effects transitory thereby.

Thus, the Abbasid managed to win the confidence of the people by exploiting the name of Holy Prophet's grandsons, but then the e also came a time when these very Abbasid persecuted and imprisoned the progenies of the Holy Prophet. They even mixed the sacred blood of the Prophet's descendents in the plaster and used it in the construction of their State Palace—an act that even the Bani Umayyias failed to think of. And this was not all, they even tried to demolish the sacred shrine entombing Imam Husain (A.S.). This fact has nicely been expressed by a poet, the substance of the couplets is as follows :

Darling of Mohammad's daughter, no doubt,
Umayyias killed ;

No doubt, the sands of Karbala with holy
blood they filled ;

But those the Prophet's kinship did so truly
claim,

Those very, the Abbasids, put now even
Yazeed to shame.

Grave of Husain did Yazeed preserve, holy
and divine.

Men of Abbas ! they ravaged the same like
the swine.

(Versified by M. Jaffer Husain)

However, what subsequently the Abbasid did was something that suited their own political ends ; but their previous actions had no doubt left a permanent impression of sanctity on the minds of the people. Thus, it was this lasting consciousness imbibed by the earlier policies of the Abbasids that proved to be a decisively important instrument against their own regime. Neither the Abbasid Governments nor any other such power could at any time curb the forces of devotional dedication to the Ahle Bait, with which the people were inspired.

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AZADARI

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CHAPTER V

THE PACT OF THE TRAGEDY

ANSARS FROM VARIOUS TRIBES

The fact that those supporters a Imam Husain (A.S.) who were martyred at Karbala belonged to various and distinct tribes proved to be a positively helpful factor in widening the scope of the influence of the Tragedy among the different tribes in Arabia. That is to say that if Bani Hashims alone had been Imam Husain's supporters at Karbala, though it would certainly have proved immensely congenial in a religious sense, materially speaking, the impact of the tragic event upon the rest of the tribes and clans would have been missed by virtue of a one-clan show. If one studies the list of Imam Husain's supporters, he will find that almost all the notable tribal chiefs of Arabia had thronged to his side to subscribe to his cause. In terms of numbers they were 30,000 from various tribes; but they were illiterates and ill-informed, whose opinion or say was of no consequence. However, the

72 men who remained attached to the Imam were persons who constituted the nucleus of their respective tribe's genius. Imam Husain (A.S.) had not taken the masses along with him to Karbala ; but the select few who accompanied him were men of calibre, including pious men who prayed non-stop during nights. There were among them men who had memorized the entire Quran by heart ; and there were also the living narrators of the Holy Prophet's Traditions. These dignitaries had achieved a reputation and status of their own even before they flocked to Imam Husain (A.S.) as his supporters. Everyone of these Ansars (supporter) exercised a substantial awe not only over the foes on the battle-field but on those as well who later learnt about their individual sterling qualities.

That the impact of the Tragedy of Karbala should have penetrated deep into the rank and file of Arabian society was but natural, for, the handful contingent which remained steadfastly attached to the Imam and gave their lives for his cause comprised of such recognized and powerful segments of the tribal population of Arabia as the Bani Sa'ad, Hamdan, Khuza'a, Bani Asad Bajlia, Khas'am, Tughlab, Hajaf and scores of other such tribes who Mattered. Here I have mentioned only casually a few tribes and clans. I had given out the whole list of these volunteering tribes with necessary details in my Radio-talk some three years ago on this subject.

CHARACTERISTIC TRAIT OF ARABS

Leaving aside the religious aspects of the issue and considering it purely from a psycho-ethnological

angle, the reason for the profound effects of Karbala Tragedy on Arabian society as a whole at once becomes easy to understand : It was a characteristic trait of the Arabs to follow and support their respective tribal chiefs in whatever they said or did whether right or wrong. That being so, it was only natural for them to become restive and enquire from all available sources at all places as to how and why their noble and God fearing Chiefs were so brutally murdered by Ibne Ziyad's army along with Imam Husain (A.S.). Thus, it was but natural for all tribes in Arabia to find the true causes of the tragedy that took place at Karbala.

LACK OF SUPPORT—UNWARENESS

Earlier, I had mentioned only about Kufa where the sympathizers of the Ahle Bait were persecuted and put in jails. But in other places where there were persons under the impression that there still was some time left for them to rise in support of Imam Husain (A.S.), things were entirely different. It was already the 10th of Moharrum in the year 61 A.H. ; and yet what the people were given to understand was that the Imam had not expressed his fealty for Yazeed, These ill-informed people, therefore, were innocently waiting for the Imam's call to arms, so that, they thought, when it comes about, they would respond by joining him and fight against his foes. But Imam Husain's arrival in Karbala and the climax of the whole Tragedy on the 10th of Moharrum was an explosion of ugly and rapid development, least expected.

For, right upto the afternoon of 9th Moharrum, 61 A.H. even Yazeed's army commander, Omar Sa'ad, himself did not know that there was going to be a bloody clash of arms. It was only in the late hours of the afternoon on the 9th of Moharrum that he received the letter from the Headquarters reprimanding him to the effect that he had not been sent to Karbala to negotiate deals with Imam Husain (A.S.) or give him any hopes of deliverance from the situation he was in. The letter told Omar Sa'ad plainly to place two alternatives before the Imam : Surrender and recognize Yazeed, or refuse and fight it out. After receipt of this letter, Omar Sa'ad felt it futile to discuss matters with Imam Husain (A.S.) and ordered the attack on the Imam's camp.

The suddenness of the attack was so astoundingly unexpected that Imam Husain (A.S.) was perplexed at its intineliness. He was indeed astonished at this abrupt somersault from peaceful negotiations to a sudden burst of violence without so much as a formal declaration of war. He therefore sent out Janab-e-Abbas to enquire from the other side the reason for this sudden attack. It was then that the contents of the said letter were revealed, and the reason for attack explained.

Still more astonishing is the fact that Hur, a responsible official under Omar Sa'ad, also did not know that there was to be a war even as late as till the fateful morning of the 10th of Moharrum, for, the first thing he did on that morning was to ask his boss, Omar Sa'ad, whether he actually intended fighting Imam Husain (A.S.). To this, Omar Sa'ad had

replied in the affirmative, adding that there would be such a bloody war that heads and arms would be seen being severed from their bodies and tossed on to the ground. Surprised at this diabolic prediction, Hur enquired if out of the several conditions for peace, which the Imam had offered, not one was acceptable ?

"No", replied the army commander, adding, "I am helpless in the choice. Your Governor, Ibne Ziyad, has refused to accept any of the Imam's alternatives for peace".

It is thus clear that no-one could actually anticipate the timing of blood-bath of Karbala or the form it was to take. In view of the undermined outbreak of hostilities, it can safely be said that it was a sheer piece of good fortune for as many persons as did manage to reach the Imam in time to have been by his side on this occasion, the like of which is never likely to re-occur. It was indeed their sheer strength of conviction and will-power that had spurred these fortunate men to hear their last before the Imam breathed his. As for those who failed to reach Karbala to be with the Imam, it can be said, for some, that they lacked in their strength of conviction ; for some that they lacked in their will-power ; and for the majority of others, that it was just their bad luck.

As a matter of fact, in view of the adverse circumstances described above, even if only ten to twenty had reached Karbala, it would not have been anything surprising. However, even the few who did manage to find their way to Imam Husain (A.S.) counted as

more than hundred for him in the situation as it was ; and this small number was of a mettle that the Imam had desired for. Nevertheless, if the borders were not closed, and if the people had been in touch with the day to day developments taking place at Karbala, and if means of communication and transport were available, a far greater number of men would have rushed to the spot.

Thus, for those who had been unable to reach Karbala in time, the misfortune of not being by the side of Imam Husain (A.S.) was something they regretted all their lives. As such, their protests and lamentations over the brutalities of the Bani Ummayyas was a natural corollary that was expressive of their hatred for them, the intensity of their loathing for the Bani Ummayyas being not less than that which filled the hearts of those who fortunately were by the Imam's side on the actual scene.

Those who went to Imam Husain (A.S.) and laid their lives at Karbala for his cause were indeed the enviable ones ; while those who lived to rue their inability to do so are the ones to suffer most the pangs of remorse and repentance.

If the unfortunates had managed somehow to get over to Imam Husain's side to help him, they felt, they too would have died a blissful death, like Muslim bin Ausjah who laid his life smilingly in the process. There would then have been no cause for shedding

our venerable Imams, and indeed all those devoted to the Able Bait, lamented for ; and continue lamenting even to this day.

Thus it was that all those living at that time, whether in Basra Taif, Yemen, Iran, or in any other part of the Muslim world, who felt remorseful at not having been informed of the situation so as to enable them to reach the scene and lay their lives for the Imam, now, when they learnt of the details of the Tragedy of Karbala, started lamenting madly. This was how mass mournings and lamentations commenced all over the Islamic world.

ASTONISHING PHENOMENA

That there was a solar eclipse soon after Imam Husain (A.S.) was martyred at Karbala is testified by historical records recognized as authentic by both the Shia as well as Sunni sects of Islam. It is an agreed fact the entire world was sunk in darkness at the time, accompanied by a phenomenal rain of blood drops from the heavens that continued for three days. According to some versions, this astonishing phenomenon lasted for full forty days.

We are, however, convinced about the occurrence of these geo-cosmic manifestations. The weight of historical evidence in this regard is so great that one cannot refuse its believability ; but the non-Muslims who are not bound to believe in these things can at

place elsewhere. The Bible, for instance, says that the world was in darkness for three days following the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Similarly, there were occasions when such rare occurrences did materialize when religious dignitaries, besides those of Islam, died as martyrs in their own missions, leaving their followers deeply moved at such calamities as they had to face in the cause of their respective religious principles.

Religiously, the Muslims regard Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) as the greatest of all Prophets ; but still, no such phenomenon is believed by any school of thought to have occurred at the time of even the Holy Prophet's death, as was evident when Imam Husain (A.S.) met his martyrdom. This is sufficient to convince men and women of all other religions that in the estimation of Muslims, there is no calamity as colossal and of as tragic a magnitude as the one that is manifest in the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) and the remifying effects of this Tragedy are so far-reaching and embrative that no other incident in the history of the world, past or future, can equal it.

What then could the effect of these heavenly manifestations ; or according to non-Muslims, of the widely popular truth of these historical narrations, be upon the minds of the common masses ? One can safely say in reply that when even the heavens shed tears of blood over what happened to Imam Husain (A.S.) at Karbala, should we not even do so such as weep our hearts out and lament over this Tragedy, the magnitude and nature of which will for ever dominate over human minds ?

The immensity and scope of the impact of the Tragedy of Karbala on the psyche of the Muslim world can thus be visualized from what has been said above. Needless to say that.....this impact of beastly conduct upon human emotions can never produce feelings of delight, as is being vainly attempted today to imply so, on the argument that since Imam Husain (A.S.) had attained the status of a martyr the occasion must therefore be celebrated in a joyous manner ! This is simply absurd, for, the reaction that such a grievous calamity could naturally produce in sane human beings, as it did at the time of its actual occurrence, can never honestly be described as 'pleasant'. If today some perverted minds create a 'pleasant' nature of writings in this connection, it only helps to show how utterly blind they are to the truths of human nature; and as far as normal human nature goes, the reaction of the events of Karbala can produce as they in fact did, no emotion in men and women other than that of a deep and lamentable grief that surpasses all other such emotions.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHEEM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN

CHAPTER VI

AZADARI—ITS SECOND PHASE NOVEL METHOD OF PROPAGATING THE CAUSE OF MARTYRDOM

After the Tragedy of Karbala, the Imams of the Ahle Bait retired into seclusion, but continued serving the cause of Islam and ensuring its destiny calmly and patiently. They realized that the unparalleled sacrifice Imam Husain (A.S.) had made for the sake of Islam was unique, and one which preserved the basis of *La ilaha illallah*—the foundation upon which the edifice of Islam rests. This purpose of preserving Islam can, therefore, continue to be the driving force only as long as the memory of the sacrifice that gave Islam a new lease of life is kept alive.

If the world becomes oblivious to this great sacrifice of Imam Husain (A.S.), the purpose that activated the martyred Imam to lay down his life would,

in terms of futurity have gone waste. The Imams of the Ahle Bait in fact realized that the object of Imam Husain (A.S.) taking the ladies of his household along with him to Karbala was that through them the memory of his martyrdom could be perpetuated for all times to come. Thus, those who went with him, and survived to return after the holocaust: served as promoters of the mission of Islam which Imam Husain (A.S.) had preserved at the cost of his own sacred life. As the successors of the martyred Imam, they felt that it was their sacred duty to continue preserving the cause for which their venerable ancestor had laid his life in so tragic a manner. Thus, the Imams of the Ahle Bait felt it their responsibility to carry forward Imam Husain mission which was cut short by his martyrdom. Two of these Imams of the Ahle Bait, namely; Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) and Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.), were themselves present on the spot at Karbala, the former being an invalid at the time, and the latter still an infant.

These two Imams, consequently, were with the lady members of Imam Husain's household wherever they went after the Tragedy.

If Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) wept all his life, as he actually did, for what happened to his father and others on the field of Karbala, there can nothing be really surprising about it; for no other person can feel in the same way as he did, both as a son and as an Imam. We cannot even imagine the intensity and depth of his feelings. What one can do at best is to describe in words his lamentations; but one cannot

really depict his anguish. What we feel strung to the core is for not having been living then to have been of some assistance to the Imam and his faithful comrades.

Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) could not throughout his life get any opportunity for an adequate expression of his inner feelings; for, the period he lived in was a period of great turbulence. He was, one might say, a virtual prisoner, in the sense that he was rendered unable to apprise people of the true guidelines in this connection. That being so, how could it have been possible for him to advise people to hold mourning gathering in commemoration of Imam Husain's martyrdom?

According to a popular narrative which lacks historical evidence, but which sounds true all the same, it is reported that Zahri once pressed Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) to agree to be a guest at a wedding party. The Imam declined the invitation, saying that ever since the day his venerable father was martyred, he had given up attending all pleasant functions. Zahri, it must be noted, occupies a respectable position as a distinguishable scholar in the estimation of the Muslims in general. Seizing the opportunity, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) utilized it to voice out his feelings by making known just one of the general practices that he had adopted to maintain a life-long self severance from merriments as a mark of mourning for his martyred father, Imam Husain (A.S.). Zahri, however, was persistent. He told Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) that if he condescended to attending the wedding function, he (i.e. Zahri) would

organize a mass congregation to mourn the martyrdom of his venerable father. Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) was highly pleased at this assurance and assured Zahri of his participation at the wedding function. Consequently, when this meeting of mourning was held, Zahri had the Imam seated on the Presidential pulpit; but when this meeting ended, Zahri was surprised to find the Imam sitting in the last row of persons attending the Majlis. Surprised at this, Zahri asked him as to how and why he had moved to that position. Upon this, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) told him: "Do you know who all are attending this mourning meeting? They (the martyrs of Karbala) are also busy lamenting unseen here, just as I am doing".

THE MENTAL PICTURE OF THE TRAGEDY ERASED AT THE PRAYER-TIMINGS

This was what the period of Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) like. He used to carry on his mission as an Imam in a quiet and tranquil manner. He had not the opportunity of establishing any Academy where people could go and benefit themselves through his enlightenments. However, despite his ever anguishing grief, the Imam by his occupation in prayers round the clock presented himself as a living embodiment of the Holy Prophet. Yet, notwithstanding the immense grief and incessant-lamentations for his venerable father, through his full-time engrossments in prayers, became to be known as Zainul Abideen and Syed-us-Sajideen, meaning a jewel among the worshippers' and 'the most eminent worshipper; respectively.

These titles are exclusively used for him. He used to say that when he stood up for prayers, Divine awe and splendour would become visible to his eyes, thereby making him forget all his woes and mental afflictions. This was something that Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) alone could do. It is beyond a normal person to do that, for, when one is faced with mental worries, one can hardly think of anything else. But the Imam was one who had a complete mastery over his self. In fact, the human Ego in him was completely at his command,

Normally, the picture of the tragic events which he personally witnessed at Karbala would dominate his mind, and he would weep so much over it that his wailings have become proverbial; but when it was time for prayers, with the water-pot before him, he would completely erase from his mind the image of Karbala which till that moment had been dominating over him; and in his devotion to Allah, he would forget about everything that grieved him erstwhile ago. This was a practical demonstration of virtues that an Imam only could possess.

IMAM MOHAMMAD BAQUIR (A.S.)

Now a word about Imam Baquir (A.S.), who as has been stated above, was taken captive at Karbala along with his father Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) and taken along to Yazeed's palace along with other captives. Tabari, the renowned historian gives an interesting anecdote at Yazeed's peace about a boy. Tabari mentions this boy with a different name, but it is more than likely that this boy was none other

than Imam Baquir (A.S.) Tabari relates that when this boy stood up in the palace hall, one of the sons of Yazeed happened to come there. Turning playfully towards this boy, Yazeed asked him if he was prepared to have a wrestling match with his son.

"No", replied the boy, "not a wrestling match. I will have a duel with swords. Give your son a sword, and give me, too one; and then you can see for yourself who becomes the victor and who the vanquished.

"Chip of the old block!" Yazeed quoted at the confidence of the boy, "Like father, like son".

However, coming back to our subject, it must be noted that Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.) was a contemporary among those who faced untold tribulations on the field of Karbala. Though a little boy then, the image of what he had seen and heard on the thirsty sands of Karbala was pictured on his memory that lasted all his life, giving him the consoling satisfaction of having been amidst those in whom Imam Husain (A.S.) had confidence, and had taken them along with himself to Karbala.

It must be recollected here that Imam Husain (A.S.) was a mere boy, four or five years of age, when he had accompanied the Holy Prophet on the occasion of historic Mubahilla, being carried along on his shoulders; but the memory of this had inculcated in him a sense of responsibility right from his childhood that told him that this incident had charged him certain obligations which, even as a boy then, he had resolved to fulfill when the time came to do so in the

cause of Islam. Similar in nature was the case of Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.) when the martyred Imam had taken him along with himself to Karbala, the only difference being that while Imam Husain (A.S.) had accompanied his maternal grandfather, Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.) had done so with his paternal grandfather. One thing in common to both was that each of them were accompanied by their respective parents. How could then Imam Baquir (A.S.) have forgotten in his life the unforgettable occasion when, like the Holy Prophet, his own venerable father, too, had taken him along to be amidst the personages who participated in the religious war that flamed up at Karbala.

Thus the object with which Imam Husain (A.S.) had taken all these members with along him, continued to be fulfilled by each other successive Imams. The object, as we have seen above, was that Imam Husain (A.S.) by taking them along, desired that the episode of Karbala should be apprised to people who knew nothing about its developments. It was, therefore impossible that Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.), who had been a witness to the Tragedy throughout, could have shown any indifference to this object of his grandfather, Imam Husain (A.S.). As such, while Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.) carried on the mission of projecting the ideals of the Prophet Mohammad (S.A.), he also propagated and focussed the importance and true significance of the Tragedy of Karbala, along with the necessity of commemorating the sacrifice of Imam Husain (A.S.). He thus projected the true personality of the martyred Imam, and presented him to the

world in a manner that even today inspires mankind with its re-capitulation.

Imam Baquir's period was a time when he could publicly ask people as to whether they ever revived the memory of Imam Husain (A.S.). One can note here the difference between the situations of the two Imams. While Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) could not, on his own, say such things publicly but expressed the same through his personal conduct, Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.) in his own time could say as well as act in the manner he chose for propagating mournings for commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.). His was a time when he could preach as well as act, and even invite others to follow suit. Now, Traditions on the beneficence of lamentations were freely cited, mourning sessions freely propagated, and poets, too, were freely invited to compose eloquent elegies in tearful commemorations of the greatest martyrs the world ever knew.

For, this was the time when the hold of the Bani Umayyads over the Caliphate was on a rapid decline. Their official influence was slowly but surely dwindling; and grounds for re-emergence of Bani Hashims (the Holy Prophet's clan) into authority were becoming progressively fertile.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER VII

ABBASID PERIOD

FIRST-BLACK FLAG

It was now that Abbasids came into the picture. They were, as we have seen earlier, cognizant of the sympathies that people had for the Ahle Bait following the tragedy of Karbala. They, therefore, were quick to exploit these sentiments. Accordingly, they raised banners and playcards proclaiming; We are with the Ahle Bait in public, following it up with donning black dresses as an indication of their mourning for the martyrs of the Ahle Bait. They coloured the flag black. And finally on the 10th of Moharrum that year they hoisted their flag in Iran, signifying their supremacy over the Caliphate.

Abul-Abbas Suffah was the first Caliph of the Abbasid dynasty. He was the one who wiped of the remnants of the Bani Ummayya dynasty who had survived the earlier massacres. In just one sitting he

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butchered these Ummayyas by the thousands. Probably that is the reason why his name came to be appended with the title "Suffah" which literally means 'The Killer Merciless.'

PERIOD OF ELEGIES

As mentioned earlier, the means adopted by Abbasids to capture the Caliphate were not quite moral. The genuine sympathizers of the Ahle Bait, and the Ahle Bait themselves, too, did not therefore in any way support or cooperate with the Abbasid movement. Their movement, however, did one good thing in so far as the people could now openly organize condoling gatherings to mourn the Tragedy of Karbala. This led to prominent poets of the time to adopt the Karbala. Tragedy as the main theme of their poetry and writings, though such poetic outpouring had already commenced earlier on a modest scale by other poets in addition to the elegies which the Ahle Bait themselves composed. For instance, these two very popular couplets of the epicedium which Janab-e-Umme Kulsoom composed, the substance of which is hereundered versified in English thus:

Medina! O' city of Prophet's holy shrine. How high your honour, what glory in your ! Yet, to embrace you do now we shy with hearts so full and eyes that cry.

For, Once—the day to Karbala when we tread.

With blood so holy, so sacred by God blessed.

With babies at breasts and Elders benign.

To fate in land so distant we did resign.

Now, of Elders bereft, and hearts that ache.

To you. O' city, we our footsteps take.

With scent of lips, thirsty infant's, on our breast.

Washed with blood, lulled and laid to rest.

(Versified by: M. Jaffer Husain)

Then there were those poets who had started composing elegies expressing their deeps emotions soon after the occurrence of the Tragedy. Some of these compositions are contained in the collection entitled as 'Divan Hemasa-e-Abu Tamam', and are regarded as the earliest expressions of grief in poetic forms that were written to mourn the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.).

This then is the origin of Rhapsodic forms of mourning, though it must be said that due to the intimidating circumstances prevailing at that time were such that no poet could lend such expressions a regular currency of a continual nature. However, with the coming into power of the first Abbasid Caliph, Abul-Abbas Suffah, and during the early phase of the Abbasid regime, such poets got the opportunity of writing, and making such writings the sole occupation of their lives in furtherance of regular commemorations in the sacred memory of the Ahle Bait. One such poet who lived during the time of Abul Abbas Suffah was Sadeef, who was one of the attendants in

the Bani Hashim dynasty. This poet, Sadeef, actually started reciting his elegies right in the centres of public traffic; and people would flock round him to listen to his versified mournings at these public junctions. His elegies were so potently effective with their mournful strain that crowds would get themselves completely lost in the depths of emotions which his recitations inspired.

One of his versified narratives that has become popular, and is often recited by mourners at mase mournings, is the one that relates how the poet Sadeef called out the names of the martyred Bani Hashims one after the other in the court of Abul-Abbas and, with his poetic eloquence, stirred the caliph to avenge their martyrdom. Though this particular incident may not be a historical fact, it nevertheless, indicates the prominent part played by this poet in his own time, as mentioned in epic literature which has termed him as 'The Poet of the Ahle Bait'.

Kumaith bin Zaidi Asadi is another outstanding epic poet listed in the lexicographies compiled by the Imams of the Ahle Bait, and whose compositions are cited as specimens of classic elegies, particular his collection of works entitled as 'Hashimyaat' which enjoys a legendary fame. He is also the enviable poet who had the distinctive and rare honour of reciting his verses in the personal audience of Imams Baquir (A.S.) who would listen to his compositions with rapt attention and bless him with his good wishes. Kumaith his probably the first poet who openly eulogized the generations of the Holy Prophet in public gatherings.

There was another such poet, Farzdaq by name, who preceded Kumaith Asadi; but he had not the facilities of freedom of expression as the latter had. The situation, politically, was very unfavourable during Farzdaq's time. It might as well be mentioned here that Farzdaq was the same person who had met Imam Husain (A.S.) when he was on the way to Kufa. Farzdaq was then on his way to Mecca for pilgrimage, accompanied by his mother. On meeting the Imam enroute, Farzdaq enquired as to where the Imam was heading.

"I have set out for Kufa, replied Imam Husain (A.S.).

Farzdaq, who was a distinguished intellectual, responded with poetic eloquence, beseeching the Imam not to proceed there.

"Their hearts", he said in metaphors, meaning the people of Kufa, "Their hearts today are with you, but tomorrow their swords would be swish-swashing in harmony with those of the Bani Ummayyas".

Anyway, Farzdaq was a poet whose genius was inspired by his love for the Ahle Bait. It is, however, unfortunate that his writings could not find their way to us because of the great turbulence that was evident during the times he lived. Nevertheless there was an occasion when this great poet was so violently moved by his urge for spelling out the Truth that, like a turbulent wave of storming sea dashing against the shore to waste its ferocity, Farzdaq poured out his anguish in one soul-stirring epicedum, eulogizing

Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.), the opening couplet of which stormed its way right into the hearts of the audience who were virtually spell-bound by its poetic beauty coupled with a deep emotional anguish. The entire elegy, composed by Farzdaq, is an unparalleled masterpiece that occupies a place of its own in Arabic literature for its sheer beauty of poetic thought and exquisite quality of emotional expression.

The occasion that inspired Farzdaq towards his spontaneous feelings in poetic glamour was when Hisham bin Abdul Malik, the Caliph in his time, was performing the Haj (pilgrimage) at Mecca. The enormous crowd of pilgrims and the stampede of their rush was so great that Hisham found it impossible to reach the sacred Black Stone (Hajre-Aswad). Unable to squeeze his way through the streaming crowd, he found a raised piece of ground and seated himself there to wait for the rush to subside so that he could again attempt to get at the Black Stone and perform the sacred ritual of kissing it. As he sat waiting, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.), who had also come for performing the pilgrimage, arrived and headed towards the spot housing the Sacred Stone. So magnetic and compelling was the divine grandeur of the Imam's personality that the crowd, as if in a trance, started making way for him to proceed; and the Imam coolly and conveniently reached the Stone, kissed it gracefully and reverently, and finally returned. Hisham, who sat silently watching this majestic figure in astonishment, asked his attendant as to who this person was, who so regally came and went back so gracefully. All those around Hisham said that they

did not know who that person was. Farzdaq, who was witnessing the incident, could not hold himself in check any longer. Given below is a substance of what he said extempore on the occasion alluded to above.

Know you not this jewel of man, his regal gait.

The land of Mecca for whom does with love await ?

The grace, beauty the charm so sublime.

Of way he treads, which none can mime.

Know this, you men of Ignorance fed and bred!
Zain—the Jewel he is, of Abids—pure, noblebred.

House of God—Him, the Ka'aba, holy and Divine.

Knows; the very well at sight of him in delight do shine.

(Versified by M. Jaffer Husain).

The rest of this elegy is pregnant with such similar outpourings of the poets inner feelings, every couplet of which increased the wrath of Hisham, who, however took no action on the spot. But on his return to the capital, he lost no time in issuing orders for Farzdaq's arrest. He was thus eventually arrested and put behind the bars for having eulogized the Imam so emotionally in public.

It will not be amiss here to say that it is common for poets and writers to sing the praises of the authorities to their faces in public functions, the motive of such literary appeasements being, by and large, pecuniary. But, here, on the occasion described

above, one finds a poet singing his heart out at an Imam who was not physically present on the scene to listen to his glorifications. Farzdaq, the poet, was pouring out his inspired encomium over Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) in absentia, and that too at a place where his foes dominated in numbers.

Later, when Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) learnt about the circumstances and reason for his arrest and imprisonment, he became concerned about the means of livelihood of his dependents. He, therefore, managed to send some money secretly to Farzdaq, but the poet declined this gracious gesture, saying that it would have been a different matter if, like others, he too had praised ordinarily important personages for the sake of monetary returns and that since heart-felt elegies in honour of personages of the status of Imams, such as the one he had eulogized, were not motivated with such dross material considerations, he would not accept even a wee bit of what money was sent to him.

Thus, when such was the state of affairs prevalent then, when one could be penalized with imprisonment for reciting just one elegy, it is no wonder if the poets of those repressive times felt apprehensive to eulogize Imam Husain (A.S.) by describing the brutalities indulged in by the Bani Ummayyas.

MOURNING GATHERINGS HELD PUBLICLY

As against the repressive nature of regime during the life of Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.), the times of Imam Baquir (A.S.) were comparatively liberal. It

was during this somewhat congenial political atmosphere that Kumaith bin Zaid Asadi—the poet mentioned in earlier paragraphs—and other poets seized the opportunity and started ventilating their suppressed heart-pangs, which now gushed forth through their pens. These poets now brought out poetical genius and flooded the verse-books with their poignant praises of the Ahle Bait's sterling excellence. Their lengthy epic poems, particularly the epicediums on Imam Husain's martyrdom, were a special feature of their literary achievements during this period. Some of these epicediums were even submitted to Imam Baquir (A.S.). The Imam, who knew that the authors of these elegies and epicediums were not motivated with monetary expectations, would appreciate the poets' efforts and bless them with his prayerful assurances that God would reward them adequately and that they would find their abode in paradise. For each couplet of their elegies, the poets would thus be profusely blessed by the Imam. In short, the Imam would pronounce his prayerful appreciations in degrees proportionate to the poetic excellence of each individual poet. Gradually now, the close associates of the Imam found themselves stimulated to encourage such mourning gatherings, where they would keenly participate and lament over their tribulations.

One finds that compilation of Traditions and the pace of historical evolution are closely linked with one another for, there is no record of Traditions attributable to Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) on this subject of Azadari. This is obviously because his was a time

that did not permit such a thing. As a matter of fact, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) was never approached by persons for elucidations on even religious matters. Even on such a principal matter as fundamental religious laws, one finds that there are only a few Traditions traceable to Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.). That there are no Traditions from him pertaining to Azadari—a subject that naturally militates against the political morality of the Bani Umayyad—thus becomes easy to understand.

INSTITUTION OF AZADARI AUTHENTICATED

As compared to Imam Zainul Abideen's time, the atmosphere during the life of Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.) was more productive of literary achievements, including masterly discourses on classic Islamic jurisprudence. Along with these, eulogies in honour of the Ahle Bait and epicediums elegizing the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) also found fuller expressions. Traditions on these subjects now started streaming forth in abundance.

And then, in the time of Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.), these developments became more pronounced; for, now a political revolution had changed the complexion of the times. The old order of things had changed with the onset of a new governmental regime. The congeniality of political atmosphere that had started taking shape during the days of Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.), now took a definite and positive shape for the better in the time of Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.). Thus it is that a maximum

amount of religious enlightenments and jurisprudential data have come down to us from the latter and for this reason, Shia religious beliefs came to be known also as 'Mazhab-e-Ja'fari', literally meaning the religion of Imam Ja'far (A.S.).

And what a grand and glorious time it was! No less than 4000 pupils attained scholarly distinctions at Imam Ja'far's Academy, including compilations of a mass of Traditions pertaining to everything under the sun. Some of these pupils eventually became distinguished scholars and orators: some, experts in Islamic jurisprudence; and some, famous as commentators on Quran and Traditions. So acute and genuine was the thirst for knowledge during the time of Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.), that there emerged a group of seekers of truth who would cluster round the Imam's residence almost round the clock. Public debates and discourses became another special feature of these glorious days, when people would exchange their views, ask questions and get their replies to their satisfaction.

And along with these socio-religious advancements, the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) also got a fillip inasmuch as that Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) himself encouraged such mournings by discoursing on their sanctity and significance, thereby authenticating the institution of Azadari for the Martyr of Karbala.

TENTH MOHARRAM THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DAY

The martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) having thus been established and accepted as a universal

symbol of calamitous manifestation unequalled in its enormity by any other calamity in the world, Azadari came to be associated specifically, and solely, with it. In fact, it was this specific relevance of Azadari exclusively to Imam Husain (A.S.) that the people debated; for, it is usually such exclusive terminologies that create scepticism in people's minds and cause them to question the appropriateness of their monopolic use for only specific objects or persons or places. Otherwise, people could merely have asked Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) whether it was, or was not, a fact that Imam Husain (A.S.) had suffered more tortures than any other person? Such a plain question would have been no more than an enquiry about the comparative degree of human suffering. But that was not the case. It was Azadari, as an exclusive institution, that people wanted it to be explained.

Let us see how Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) explained it.

It is reported that Abdullah bin Fazal once posed this question to Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.). He asked the Imam why specifically the 10th of Muharram has come to stay as the day exclusively meant for mournings and lamentations, whereas the day Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) had died, or the day when his daughter, Fatimatuz Zehra (A.S.) died or the day when Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.) was martyred, or the day Imam Hasan (A.S.) was martyred through poisoning, was not marked with the same gravity of observance?

"The gravity of the day," elucidated the Imam. "When Imam Husain (A.S.) was martyred, surpasses all other such occasions in its significance because (of several reasons, the main being that) there were initially five Divinely destined persons whom God held as His most beloved among human creations (Ref. Mobahila). Thus, when Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) died, there then remained the four of the five, namely: Ameerul Momineen Ali, Fatimatuz Zehra, Hasan, and Husain (A.S.), who were a source of fortitude for the Muslims after the Holy Prophet. Subsequently, when Fatimat-uz-Zehra died, people still found solace in Ali, Hasan and Husain (A.S.). Then Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.) fell a martyr, and people even then resigned to console themselves with the presence of Hasan and Husain (A.S.) amidst them. When eventually Imam Hasan, too, was poisoned, the community turned to the last of the quinary links of one whole, Imam Husain (A.S.), as the only source of fortitude for them. In other words, with Imam Husain (A.S.) alive amidst them, he epitomized in himself a figure representing the images of the four gone ahead of him. But when Imam Husain (A.S.) was finally martyred at Karbala, who among the quintessential embodiment of Divine origin was left there for the Muslims to turn to? None. There was none with the requisite virtues necessary for temporal as well as spiritual leadership of Muslims. Thus the brilliance of the flame that guided the destiny of the Muslims community, was now apparently extinguished on the day Imam Husain (A.S.) met his martyrdom on the desert sands of Karbala. With his martyrdom was lost that beaconing tower of light which was left centred in him alone.

"These were exactly what the feelings of Imam Husain's sister, Zainab (A.S.); were like when she in her own unique strain moaned and lamented at her brother's martyrdom saying:

"Today my grandfather, the Holy Prophet (S.A.) has breathed his last today I have lost my darling mother, Fatima Zehra (A.S.) today my venerable father, Ali (A.S.), and my loving brother Hasan have forsaken me for good; and alas, today I have lost my loving brother, Husain (A.S.) also..."

"These spontaneous expressions mean that while Imam Husain (A.S.) lived, the rest of her near and ear ones also lived, intrinsically alive in his person and with his martyrdom, they all had virtually ceased to be".

Although Abdullah bin Fazal, the enquirer, felt convinced with the cogency of the Imam's elucidation on the matter of 10th of Muharram and its signal significance, he wanted to convince himself still further. Abdullah bin Fazal, therefore, argued that after all there still remained Imam Husain's son, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.). How was it that the Muslim community could not derive the same amount of fortitude and consolation in his person as they did in Imam Husain (A.S.) after the Ameerul Momineen (A.S.) was no more?

"That is true", explained Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.), "Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) was no doubt there after his father; but, you must appreciate that

he could not have imbibed the same vitality of personal import which his father and other ancestors had by virtue of having been in personal contact with the Holy Prophet during their actual lives.

His father and others had the benefits of being the direct recipients of the Holy Prophet's personal enlightenments Divinely inspired. They had personally heard for themselves all that the Prophet used to say in their edification. They had actually seen and personally experienced those playful and loving gestures that the Prophet often delighted in indulging in. The people, on seeing them used to be reminded of the Traditions the Holy Prophet to say in respect of them. Imam Husain (A.S.) was the last of the Ahle Bait who possessed all these distinctions and virtues after the rest of them were no more; and since he was also the last to be martyred, his martyrdom revived the grief of his previous Infallible elders also, besides that of his own, in the minds of all true Muslims. But the same thing cannot be said of Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) for, he did not combine in his person those personal associations which his elders had the honour of sharing by virtue of the fact that while they were the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) was not."

I have cited this narrative because it proves two things. One, that by this time, the 10th of Muharram had become a day for communal mournings in memory of Imam Husain's martyrdom. Two, that the 10th of Muharram came to assume a permanent place in history with a significance which no other day of the year ever had.

OPPOSITION TO AZADARI

Now, let us see in contrast the picture that presents an entirely antonymous complexion to the issue under consideration, namely : Azadari, which certain groups project. The origin of this negative outlook also is traceable to the same period. One comes across in history-books instances that prove this. There is, for example, this instance when someone asked Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) as to how it was that people in general regard the 10th of Muharram as very auspicious day. The Imam was highly moved at the malice latent in the question, but explained coolly the reason.

"When Imam Husain (A.S.) was martyred", he said in reply, "The class of Traditionists who sought to secure favourable positions in Yazeed's administration invented such convenient Traditions which gave the idea that the 10th of Muharram was a day of bliss and auspiciousness. Such fabrications were adequately rewarded with rich favours and monetary awards. The people, accordingly made this day a day of merriment and rejoice. They started even fasting on this day so that the people may become indifferent to the austerity of Imam Husain's martyrdom with which this day is inseparably associated. God alone will be the judge of this gulfing actions".

It is thus clear that the followers of Bani Umayyad and some other unenlightened classes of Muslims were deceived into celebrating the 10th of Muharram with rejoicings and festivities, believing these indulgence to be in keeping with the auspiciousness of this

day, as given out by self-seeking Traditionists in Yazeed's time.

The Infallible Imams, however, counteracted the designs of pseudo-Traditionists and their followers by observing the 10th of Muharrum with still greater force of mournings and lamentations in order to prove that the depth of grief and sorrow that went inseparably with this day surpassed all other such days in intensity. So it was that just as Imams Zainul Abideen and Mohammad Baquir (A.S.) the two who personally witnessed the Tragedy of Karbala—used to observe the day by mournings and lamentations over Imam Husain's martyrdom, the other Imams who succeeded them, also did the same in their own respective times. As such, Imam Ja'fer-e-Sadiq (A.S.), too, adhered to such mournings for all time, especially so during the month of Muharrum.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD 'MAJLIS'

It is reported in this connected by Abu Ammara Nashd that it never happened that Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) smiled at anything for the rest of the day after having talked, or heard anyone else talk, about Imam Husain (A.S.).

Then there is that instance when Fazeel came to Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) and he (i.e. the Imam) asked him: "Do you people ever organize gatherings and recall some of the events connected with the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.)?"

"May our lives be sacrificed for you, indeed we do", replied Fazeel.

"I highly approve of such Majlises", observed the Imam.

The use of the word 'Majlis' for gatherings of mourning in memory of Imam Husain's martyrdom appears to have been derived from the above cited narrative. Lexically, 'Majlis' means a 'session', whether individually observed or collectively held; but in the context of the background in which Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) used it, this word, 'Majlis' become a proper noun exclusively used for gatherings of this nature, though the Imam's use of the word had no such specific connotation attached to it. He had actually used this word in the general dictionary sense.

IMAM FOND OF ELEGIES

Thus, just as the above cited words of Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) have reached us, so also did those people in various places and times came to know of them; and this was how the desire to organize gatherings to mourn Imam Husain (A.S.) found a firm footing in the thinking of the pro-Ahle Bait sections through the ages.

So it was that Abu Ammara Nashd started presenting himself before Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.). This man, Abu Ammara, was a Nashd, meaning one who memorizes the poetic compositions of various poets and reads them out to gatherings. Once, the Imam desired Abu Ammara to recite a few couplets elegizing Imam Husain (A.S.). The man complied; and the Imam sobbed in grief on listening to these

verses till the whole of that particular epicedium was read out. Not gratified fully with merely one elegy, the Imam asked Abu Ammara to recite another. Once again the man read out another epicedium; and the Imam still continued wailing. Abu Ammara states that he went on reciting one elegy after another till he heard the sound of loud lamentations coming from inside the Imam's home.

That the Nashd, Abu Ammara, could go on reciting one poet's epicedium after another's shows that a considerable number of elegists must have emerged during the time. The extent of such a mass emergence of elegiac poets can be gauged from the fact that the individual collection of epicediums in memorium of Imam Husain (A.S.) in the possession of professional reciters alone ran into volumes. These reciters had memorized collections of elegies which they would read out poet-wise, one followed by another written by another poet and so on till the audience was satisfied. So, if one reciter alone, Abu Ammara for instance, could possess such a voluminous collection of elegies on Imam Husain (A.S.), one can only guess the entire amount of such compositions that must have been produced at that time.

However, one can but lament at the amount of ignorance when a person like Maulvi Shibli, whom a certain section of Muslims in the Indo-Pak subcontinent regard as an eminent historian of Islam, says in one of his books that "even in Arabia, where this incident (ref. Commemoration of martyrdom of Imam Husain) took place, no considerable number of

epicediums were produced as elegies on Imam Husain (A.S.)."

A lot can be said over this sweeping statement of the learned Maulvi but I have only casually alluded to it to emphasize its hollowness, for, true historicity makes it clear that by the middle of the second century A.H., there had come to exist a voluminous collection of elegies on Imam Husain (A.S.).

MAY MY LIFE BE A SACRIFICE FOR YOU

Zaid Shiham relates that once when he and a few others from Kufa were sitting in the company of Imam Ja'far-c-Sadiq (A.S.), a certain person, named Ja'far bin Iffan presented himself before the Imam. The assembly of persons was appreciably large, but despite that, the Imam called Iffan to himself and made him sit by his side. The narrative then goes on thus:

"Hullo Ja'far", said the Imam then.

"May our lives be sacrificed for you; what commands do I have the honour of obeying", submitted Iffan.

This was a typical manner of conversing with the Infallible Imams, and one that all the companions had adopted. The phrase *May my/our lives be sacrificed for you* does not appear with so much regularity of use as a form of address in the case of other personages as it does in the case when the addressee is the Holy Prophet, or his daughter Fatema Zehra (A.S.)

or any of the Twelve Infallible Imams. Personally, I think that this wishful phrase is paraliteral expression of the unfulfilled desire of having been there to sacrifice their lives along with Imam Husain (A.S.) on the 10th Muharram on the part of the devotees of the Ahle Bait. The words 'May our lives be sacrificed for you' also symbolize the feelings of remorse for not having sacrificed their lives when they could have done so at the time when Imam Husain (A.S.) had staked his life at Karbala. This manner of address in respect of Imams, therefore, was a manifestation of their repressed desire, and continues to be so for all times to come. However, to return to where left:

"It has come to my knowledge", said Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.); "that you compose very moving epicediums on Imam Husain (A.S.)".

"May Allah sacrifice my life for you. Yes, I do write such poetry", replied Iffan.

The Imam then asked this poet to read out his elegy; and as he went on reading his poetic thoughts, Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) continued wailing over the expressive descriptions of Imam Husain's martyrdom. And so did the entire gathering of men around him.

"O' Iffan" exclaimed the Imam with tears streaming down into his beard, "do not think that it is only this gathering that is listening to your poetry. In fact, God's closest angels are present,

now, here, at this mourning gathering; and they all are listening to your recitation. And know you, O' Iffan, that just as I and we all are lamenting here, so do these angels... May God bless you adequately for your elegies. God will verily reward you with the paradise for the verses that you have composed and recited today.

Syed Ismail bin Mohammad Humairi, a great admirer and devotee of the Ahle Bait was another prominent poet of Imam Baquir's period. Initially, he had no particular regards for Imam Baquir (A.S.) but ultimately he repented and joined the ranks of the Imam's selfless devotees, and became famous as the 'Poet of the Ahle Bait'.

Kumaith was Humairi's predecessor, but the former did not leave behind as vast a collection of his epicediums as did Syed Ismail Humairi. It must be noted here that the prefix of 'Syed' to his name bears no genetic relevance. The word is no more than a title with which he came to be called. This great poet had dedicated his whole life to the service in the cause of Ahle Bait and writing of elegies upon them.

FAR REACHING EFFECTS OF AZADARI

Even non-Muslim groups of people were cognizant of the widespread psychic effects which the mournings for Imam Husain produced during the time of Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.), when the Shia'an-e-Ahle Bait and the companions of the Imams could, and did, establish the institution of Azadari in a more pronounced form and public manner. The effects of a far-reaching nature that Azadari had produced during

this period of history is evident from an anecdote that says that once one of the close companions of Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) told the Imam that he (i.e. the companion had "a slave who hails from Turkey and is totally unaware of religion that is Islam." But yet when one of us gets annoyed with him and wants to reprimand him, this slave would say: 'I appeal to you in the name of that personage whom you remember so much and mourn so deeply for him'.

It is thus clear that everyone, irrespective of one's religious affiliations, was conspicuously affected by such mournings, while those not so affected were made aware of what they did not know through Azadaris for Imam Husain (A.S.). It is also quite apparent that a person appeals for succour in the name of only that personage who holds a special status in the estimation of the appellate person. The slave obviously had realized that that personage must, indeed necessarily, be a unique one, because, his memory has so perpetual effects that men, women and children, all weep for him to this day.

Such was the ever-lasting effect of mournings for Imam Husain (A.S.).

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CHAPTER VIII

TRAGEDY OF KARBALA

REVIVED AFRESH

MARTYRDOM OF JANAB-E-ZAID

It was in this very period of Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) that a group of Bani Hashims revolted against the Government of the time. In fact, this revolution had already started during the last days of the Umayyad regime, when Janab Zaid, Imam Zainul Abideen's son, had mobilized a considerable force of his comrades who supported him in his plans to overthrow the Government regime. Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) no doubt had natural sympathies for Janab Zaid; but since the Imam with his political acumen and foresight, saw clearly the futility of such a move, he did not extend any co-operation to Janab Zaid. On the contrary he discouraged him from proceeding with such a rash action. But Janab Zaid,

relying mainly on the enthusiastic response of his comrades and without reckoning into consideration the power and means at the disposal of the Government, plunged himself against the regime. What followed was nothing unexpected. Janab Zaid was not only martyred but his mutilated body was hung at a public place, where it remained dangling for a long time.

It is natural for human beings that when a fresh calamity hits at them after the impact of a previous one becomes stale, the fresh one invariably revives the memory of the previous one. Thus it was that this chain of calamities did not cease with the martyrdom of Janab Zaid, for, after him it was his son, Husain Zul Dama'a's turn, which was in turn followed by his son, Yahya.

It was his sense of responsibility and judicious insight that compelled Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) to refrain from co-operating with Janab Zaid and his comrades. But was it not natural that he should have been affected to the core of his heart at their martyrdom? As a matter of fact he wept so much at the news of Janab Zaid's martyrdom that tears of deep sorrow soaked his beard; and as he wept, he prayed, too, for his salvation.

However, whatever the nature of Janab Zaid's revolt, it nevertheless revived the memory of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.). The slogan that Janab Zaid raised as his war-cry was "where are the avengers of Husain's blood?" This slogan clearly denotes that in his estimation every ruler who had

usurped the right of the Ahle Bait to the Caliphate was a veritable Yazeed.

MARTYRDOM OF SAADAAT

This revolutionary movement, led by Bani Hashims and the progeny of Fatima Zehra, was current during the Abbasid regime also.

The truth that we voice today, and one that every historian is constrained to acknowledge, is that it was by exploiting the public sympathy for Ahle Bait that the Abbasids managed to grab the Caliphate. When this is what we feel to be true today, is it not logical, indeed natural, that the Bani Hashmis and the progeny of the Holy Prophet through Fatema Zehra, should themselves have felt the same? That the Masoomeen (i.e. Prophet Mohammad, Fatema Zehra and the Twelve Imams), did not vent these feelings in a militant way, except through occasional expressions in the form of protests, was because these Infallibles were above normal human emotionalism. By virtue of being Infallible, these personages had eschewed such rash actions with a deep sense of responsibility. Nevertheless, there were also some consanguine persons among their progenies whose sense of responsibility and other similar virtues were not of the same super human standards as could border on infallibility. It were these persons with lesser degree of responsibility who not only felt the pinch at their usurpation, but also expressed their feelings of hurt sometimes in violent forms, and sometimes in the form of direct armed actions also. And the reason for these

occasional ventilations is that after the usurpation of the Ahle Bait's rights, the usurpers not only treated the descendents of the Prophet known as Saadaat indifferently but even victimized them with all manners of cruelty.

It is inherent in human nature to react violently if some one exploits the name of the other for the purpose of achieving authority, and then subject that very same exploited person to all sorts of excesses after having achieved power. This is virtually what happened with the descendents of the Holy Prophet. It was, as such, for this reason that the desperate and warring type of persons among the Saadaat resorted to armed risings, though what they gained in this process was but martyrdoms for themselves, and that too through most beastly forms. Yet, each of these martyrdoms was an occasion which invariably revived afresh the Tragedy of Karbala, and with it, the memory of Imam Husain (A.S.). Nevertheless, these uprisings provided for Abbasid Caliphs the grounds for victimizing the progenies of Fatema Zehra (A.S.).

PERIOD OF TRIBULATIONS AND STRIFE

Consequently, the period following that of Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) was a period of great tribulations and strife. This was the time of Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) when, despite all research efforts, one can find no mention whatsoever of any lamentations over the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) Indeed, how could there have been any such mourning commemorations during a time when people dared not openly give

expression to such Traditions? Such was the despotic and intimidating nature of this regime that the companions of Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) had to coin a code-word for referring to the Imam. They would say: "The scholar" said such-and-such thing, meaning Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) or they would say "The pious man", meaning the Imam.

Thus, one finds that the Traditionists were not in a position that permitted even a free use of the Imam's name. Added to this is the fact that Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) was imprisoned in jail and subjected to solitary confinement for a considerable period of time. Under such repressive conditions there could hardly be any opportunity for the Imam to have promoted the institution of Azadari for Imam Husain (A.S.).

This then was a period when it was practically impossible for mourning commemorations to be held. In fact, Caliph Haroon-ur-Rasheed even attempted to defile the sanctity of Imam Husain's Holy Shrine. That being the state of things during this period, persons wishing to pay homage at the martyred Imam's grave had to do so very secretly and at great personal risks. And what more, the ardently religious persons during these times had to go to extent of feigning themselves as lunatics, so that under the guise of their apparent absurdities, they could say things exposing Truth. There was, for instance, that great figure, Bahlul, whom the people used to call "Bahlul the Mad", while the fact was that he had donned that role intentionally to carry on the promotion of what was true and Divine. Reference books in fact describe

this man as 'Bahlul Dana' meaning 'Bahlul the wise', for, even in his 'Madness' he used to say such wise things that others in their right senses could not. Similarly, there was another such protagonist of truth, Zaid by name, who got himself renowned as 'Zaid Majnun', meaning 'Zaid the Insane'. His was also the same mission as Bahlul's was. Both these men had to take recourse to 'madness' in propagation of what they felt to be the truth. Space does not permit to give a fuller account of them here; but if one refers to what the books of reference say about them, one will himself be stupified by the intellectual depth of their supposedly insane loquacities. It was, thus, the exigencies of their time that had made people proclaim the truth, even if one had to become 'mad' for the purpose.

Then, there came the time when Haroon-ur-Rasheed was succeeded by Mamoon-ur-Rashid. The latter inherited a political situation that was explosive, for, the uprisings during the former's time consequent to his repressive policies, had not tilted the masses in favour of the descendents of the Holy Prophet. Mamoon-ur-Rashid was, therefore, forced to embark on a different policy. He now felt that the need of the moment was to seek refuge with this powerful sector of the subjects. Hence, it was a result of this political development that Mamoon-ur-Rashid virtually forced Imam Raza (A.S) to accept to become his heir-apparent.

Like his ancestor, Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.), who condescended to accept the reins of the Government after the Third Caliph, Imam Raza, too, similarly forced, agreed to Mamoon-ur-Rashid's persuasions. He, however, laid three conditions prior to his acceptance of heir-apparency :

- (i) that he would not be bound to subscribe to anything mala fide.
- (ii) that he would neither dismiss nor appoint subordinate officials.
- (iii) that he should not be associated personally with the active administration of the State.

The entire lot of people who had longed for ages to see a progeny of the Holy Prophet in such a conspicuous temporal position were now jubilant. So far they had merely heard that there was once one Musa Kazim who was said to be a progeny of the Holy Prophet (S.A.). In the past the masses seldom had the opportunity of personally meeting Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.); but now with official investiture, when they came to know that Imam Raza (also known as Ali bin Musa) was the son of the same Musa bin Jaffer, they all flocked to him in unprecedented enthusiasm.

It will be recalled that when the Abbasids had risen in revolt against the Umayyad regime, the Abbasids had inscribed the slogan 'we want Aal-e-Rasool to rule' on their flag. Thus, with the official investiture of Imam Raza, the State Seal, too, was engraved with this inscription, thereby giving the impression that they had entrusted ruling authority to the living Aal-e-Rasool now in keeping up their pre-revolution assurance.

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CHAPTER IX

IMAM RAZA (A.S.) AND AZADARI

The opportunity that now Imam Raza (A.S.) got of propagating the precepts of his holy ancestors and commemorating their outstanding achievements was not what the Government of Mamoon-ur-Rashid really intended. It was but an unavoidable result of the political developments that shaped themselves into this congenial atmosphere, just as it had happened during the times of Imams Mohammad Baquir and Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.). The heir-apparency of Imam Raza (A.S.) was thus a product of political waverings that had swayed into a pattern favourable to the enhancement of the Ahle Bait's mission. One, therefore, finds a substantial amount of Traditions relating to Azadari during this period. In fact, Azadari had now spread out to wider extents. Whereas previously it was confined to Arabia, it was now extended to Iran also.

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As a matter of fact, it ought to be acknowledged that the special regard the Iranians have for Ahle Bait, is a manifestation of the influence that Imam Raza (A.S.) had engendered during his time.

Imam Raza's Headquarters was at Marv a place near the city now called Meshhed, in the province of Khurasan. This was then known by the name of Toos. The word 'Maru' is the root of, and co-related with, the domicile indicating word 'Maruzi' which is generally appended with names of eminent scholars and biographers of the Traditions. Since the last alphabet of the word 'Maru' is 'V' 'Vav', in Urdu, which is a vowel; and any conjunction of this vowel with another vowel would have sounded heavy and odd in pronunciation, the letter 'Z' (Zaa in Urdu) was suffixed in between, like the word 'Razi', where 'Z' separates the vowels in it, namely 'a' and 'i' (alif and Ye in Urdu).

This place, Marv, which was the Headquarters of Imam Raza (A.S.), was situated almost in the centre of Iran. This central position therefore provided an easy access for people all around the area to congregate at the Imam's Headquarters, were no sooner the Moharrum moon was sighted, than Imam Raza (A.S.) would go into mourning. The Imam would now extol and highlight the blessings which follow commemorations of the martyrdoms of Ahle Bait. "Those who weep in remembrance of the tortures to which we (i.e. the Ahle Bait and their progeny) were subjected", he would assure, "will arise with us on the day of Resurrection... Those who weep for us, as well as make others too weep for us, will not have to weep on the

Day (of Resurrection), when all others would be weeping...Those who attend gatherings (Majlises) where our memory is revived, their hearts will be alive on the Day (of Resurrection) when the hearts of others will be dead as ever”.

These are some of the Imam's sayings of a general nature. More specific sayings used to be quoted at these gatherings by, sometimes, Ibne Shabeeh and, sometimes, by some other narrators.

Friend or foe, all would attend the Majlises of Azadari now in this period of Imam Raza (A.S.) Previously, only those who had special regards for Imam Mohammad Baqir and Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) used to do so. But now, in the time of Mamoon-ur-Rashid, Imam Raza (A.S.) exercised his influence in dual capacities as the Imam as well as the heir-apparent. The scope for projection of the cause of the Ahle Bait was wider now with people of all denominations flocking to him for redress, for some as the Imam and, for others, as the Caliph designate.

The manner in which, Imam Raza (A.S.) used to apprise the gatherings during Moharrum with the true significance of the month shows how ignorant the people were in this matter. Given below are a few of these appraisals :

“Even in the pre-Islamic Age of Ignorance, people would abstain from fighting wars so as to avoid blood-shed during the month of Moharrum”.

“Even the totally unenlightened ones during the Age of Ignorance had so deep respect for the sanctity of the month of Moharrum; but to shed our blood (i.e. Ahle Bait's) during this month was considered proper; All sorts of insults were flung at us during this sacred month. Our children and womenfolk were taken captives, our camps were set on fire, our property was looted, and no regard was shown to our kinship with the Holy Prophet”.

‘The fateful day of Imam Husain's martyrdom has rendered our eyes beneful; it makes us weep tears of blood. And this day of Moharrum has made grief and lamentations our lot till the Day of Judgement.

The above sayings are limited to expressions of the importance of the month of Moharrum and the reactions of the Aal-e-Rasool to the excesses committed on Imam Husain (A.S.) during this month. The quotations that follow below are expressive of how others should regard this sacred month :

“It is proper and desirable that those who weep over Husain (A.S.) should wail and lament”.

“My venerable father, Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) would never be seen laughing during the month of Moharrum. He would remain grief-stricken throughout the first ten day. Particularly on the 10th of Moharrum, he would be all the more sad and lamenting, and would say that this was the day when our venerable ancestor was martyred.”

"O' Ibne Shabeeh ! People even during the Age of Ignorance had so much respect for the sanctity of this month (Moharrum) that they would not go to war during it. Alas ! It is this Muslim community that not only disregards this month but has also failed to respect thereby the Holy Prophet, too.

The Imam would then recount the tortures that the Ahle Bait were subjected to, and encourage people to lament over these.

POET DA'ABAL

Poets also now started seeking audience with Imam Raza (A.S.). Two such poets were Abdullah bin Sabit and Da'abal bin Ali Khuzai. The latter once presented himself before Imam Raza (A.S.) and told him that he had composed an elegy which he wished to him before he did so to anyone else. The Imam thereupon recite that famous and moving elegy of his asked Da'abal to recite; and he did recite that famous and moving elegy which opens with a wailing call addressed to Fatema Zehra (A.S.), the Holy Prophet's darling daughter. Given below is a free English versification of the substance of the opening lines of the said epicidium:

Come, oh come to Karbala, do come,
Daughter of Prophet, Fatema, do come!

Here on sands like hot burning sun,
See what they did, with Husain your son.

Why sky so hot so blazing the day.

Of Moharrum today, tenth fateful day.

(Versified by M. Jaffer Husain).

The Imam was so deeply moved on hearing this forceful epicidium that he presented Da'abal with a costly suit of clothes as a mark of appreciation. The poet, however, declined this rich prize and preferred to ask for a used apparel which the Imam had discarded after wearing it. Imam Raza (A.S.), accordingly, acceded to the poet's affectionate desire and presented one such apparel in addition to the costly new one.

When Da'abal returned home carrying these enviable and sacred gifts, he halted at Qum, which was a centre of Islamic learnings. The people at Qum flocked round him to pay their homage to the Imam's used robe and offered him as much as 1,000 Ashrafies (gold coins) for it, but the poet was reluctant to part with even a shred of it at any cost. When, however, the people continued pestering him with their pleadings, he parted with it for 1,000 dinnars, retaining a piece of it for himself as a souvenir.

THE CALIPH DISTURBED

This indicates that the atmosphere during this period had by now so changed that true and devoted Muslims could openly demonstrate the love and affection for the Holy Prophet's progenies. The incidents mentioned above also prove that congregational mournings Majlises for Imam Husain (A.S.) had truly commenced during this period, which however, proved to be a temporary achievement, for, Mamooun-ur-Rashid

soon realized the 'Folly' of his trusting a progeny of the Holy Prophet. He saw now that though he had placed Imam Raza (A.S.) into a temporally high position in the State administration, he continued conducting himself in the same manner as did his ancestors. Mamoon-ur-Rasheed was really disturbed at Imam Raza's exemplary conduct. He noticed that the Imam would have his guests served with delicious food, while he himself ate bread with only milk and cheese at night after observing fast for the day, which was his normal routine. Mamoon now felt apprehensive that with such nobility of conduct, Imam Raza (A.S.) would win the hearts of the people for himself, thereby endangering the authority of the Abbasids for all time.

Another thing that disturbed Mamoon-ur-Rasheed was that Imam Raza (A.S.) would never miss any opportunity of encouraging good and discouraging evil. He would never miss to accost the Caliph if the latter did anything that went against the sanctity of Sharia' or Religious laws. So strict was Imam Raza (A.S.) in this matter that once when he noticed Mamoon-ur-Rasheed performing the ablutions aided by his attendant who would pour water for him, the Imam at once remarked that undue assistance from others in such a matter was undesirable. "It is due to being rich that a man becomes addicted to comforts", he observed, adding, "Does not a rich man possess physical strength enough for lifting a water can by himself? One should not become so prone to comforts that he has to depend on his servants to do what one should himself do for his personal needs".

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CHAPTER X

TRIBULATIONS AND SUFFERINGS

FINAL PHASE

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM RAZA (A.S.)

Aristocrats cannot tolerate such caustic remarks on their princely ways. Thus, Mamoon-ur-Rasheed came to develop animosity towards the Imam; and one day, ultimately, he got Imam Raza (A.S.) poisoned by having grapes mixed with a total dose served out to him.

Though he had succeeded in having Imam Raza (A.S.) poisoned, he was apprehensive of the reaction of the people to the Imam's martyrdom for, by now the influence of the Holy Prophet's generations had penetrated deep into the social segments of the society. Mamoon-ur-Rasheed, therefore, was not prepared to have himself associated in any manner with the

Imam's martyrdom. He therefore bribed the doctors to manipulate things, whereby the people should not suspect him as the murderer. He got the public to see the face of the lifeless body of the Imam so that they should know that there were no signs of poisoning on the face.

Anyone with an average intelligence can conclude that the Imam could not have died by any means other than poisoning, because under normal conditions no one has the need to collect witnesses for someone's death or obtain medical certificates to testify that the dead man was not poisoned. Official pressure could no doubt obtain such convenient certifications; but men who could see beyond their noses, knew what such certifications really meant.

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM TAQI (A.S.)

However, Imam Raza (A.S.) was no more now. His son, Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.) was a minor at this time. The ruling Caliph, thinking that he could exploit this age-factor, tried initially to keep the young boy under his control. He even proposed to have his own daughter married to the young Imam. The Bani Abbasis reacted to such a proposal and protested against the advisability of matching Fatema Zehra's progeny, who had not yet attained even intellectual maturity, with the Princess. But Mamoon-ur-Rasheed was adamant.

"What do you people know about the intellectual qualities of this boy?" He said, "You people may not be knowing, but I do. Get all the known scholars

of the day collected and let these matured men of learning test the intellect of this young son of Raza (A.S.). You can then find out the truth for yourselves".

Accordingly, all the scholars of religion were assembled; and Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.), despite his young age, silenced them all with his intellectual superiority. The entire gathering was now convinced that there was none in the State capital to equal the young Imam in knowledge and wisdom. Consequently, Mamoon-ur-Rasheed got his daughter married to Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.).

Mamoon-ur-Rasheed, however, could not achieve his real purpose even through his daughter's marriage with the Imam, which fact proves that these personages (i.e. the Infallible Imams) are not among those who can be influenced by worldly temptations. Thus, when even this move proved futile, the result was that Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.) met the same fate as that his venerable father. The Imam lived only for short while after this marriage.

The trend of times had once again taken an unfavourable turn during the period Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.) lived. He hardly got any opportunity to propagate religion during his short span of life. What followed after him is a chain of tribulations and sufferings.

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM NAQI (A.S.)

Imam Ali Naqi also lived a short life during which he enjoyed no freedom. He was called over from Medina to Samarra in a state of detention, where he breathed his last.

MARTYRDOM OF IMAM ASKARI (A.S.)

Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.), who had accompanied his father, Imam Ali Naqi (A.S.), to Samarra, also could not return to his homeland. He remained by his father's side during his detention. It was during this detention that his Imamate commenced and it was, also, during this detention that he too breathed his last like his venerable father had done.

Thus, in a practical sense, Imam Hasan Askari's period of Imamate was a period of Imamate in jail, the people therefore never actually saw him before them as an Imam. Hence, during the period ranging from Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.) down to Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.) being that of isolations, there was hardly any scope for any of these Imams to express themselves over the matter of Azadari or to encourage others to convene such Majlises.

ATTEMPTS TO DEMOLISH THE SHRINE OF IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

The times of Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.) were indeed a period of great tribulations and miseries. This was the time when Mutawakkil was in power. Mutawakkil, as everyone knows, was an arch and declared enemy of Ali Ibne Ali Talib (A.S.). In the

gatherings over which he presided, the adversaries of the Ahle Bait would indulge in all sorts of mimicries in derision of Ali (A.S.) and laugh at such exhibitions. It was during Mutawakkil's time that they attempted to demolish the shrine of Imam Husain (A.S.). They had planned to level up the ground where the Imam's grave was, and divert the river to flow through this area.

Such were the hall-marks of Mutawakkil's regime

OCCULTATION

It was now, when the state of affairs had deteriorated to such low ebbs of morality, that God ordained the necessity of occultation for the Imam in order to preserve Divine values. As a result, there was no Imam physically present for almost seventy years, which period is known as 'Ghaibat-e-Sughra', that is, minor occultation. In other words, there were certain persons who were the Imam's deputies (Naibs) charged by the Imam-in-occultation to convey his directives to the community. Even though the Deputies enjoyed no particular freedom, they discharged their responsibilities entrusted to them by their Imam as best as they possibly could.

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CHAPTER XI

AZADARI—THIRD PHASE.

REMEMBRANCE OF MARTYRDOM INFUSED IN THE BLOOD OF DEVOTEES.

Between the period 61-260 Hijra, the concerted missionary efforts with which the Imams continued in times favourable or otherwise, developed eventually in the emergence of a community which made the commemoration of Imam Husain's martyrdom not only an occasional affair but infused it into their minds as an integral part of their everyday lives.

There are no doubt communities in the world who respect the memory of their respective dignitaries. They do commemorate their lives and achievements; but they do not make their memory an abiding influence in their day to day lives. This community of the devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) that now

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emerged, not only revived the memory of the martyred Imam through congregational mournings, but made his remembrance an attitude of life itself, which finds expression in unmeditated and natural forms in all activities of life. While drinking water, for example, each time they satisfy their thirst, the memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) springs up spontaneously in their minds. Then, after each of the five ordained times they offer prayers, they turn in the direction of Karbala. Each time they see anyone in distress, their thoughts fly back to Imam Husain. When grief and adversity befalls themselves, their feelings shoot back to the Imam, and they murmur his sacred name for solace. Since the Tragedy of Karbala epitomizes all griefs, sufferings, pain and sacrifices, all such occasions are a reminder of what the martyred Imam braved at Karbala; and their minds essentially go back to him. Thus, every unfavourable situation reacts on their reflexes that remind them of Imam Husain (A.S.). This is a characteristic that cannot be found in any other community in the world in respect of its great men.

In this perpetuation of Imam Husain's martyrdom, there can be no doubt that there were Divine forces working behind it but viewed purely in a non-religious context, it can be said that the repressive roles that various regimes played and their antipathies that created political imbalances, had also contributed appreciably to the emergence of this community of persons dedicated so completely to the Imam.

It is psychological fact that if human emotions remain statically composed, there invariably comes a time when they lose their depth and become stale. Even if such emotions are preserved through formal conventions, they still become devoid of their initial warmth. In other words, when one gets used to a certain thing, the thing, in course of time, loses its influence on the mind "Familiarity breeds contempt", though a proverb, is an invariable truth.

Similarly, if the institution of Azadari had continued in a static manner of observance without being reacted against, it too could have lost its effects, and people would have got so used to it that it would have ceased to have the same appeal in it, rendering itself as just a mere routine ritual. But that was not the case with the evolution of Azadari through the ages. The ever changing political situations and the intermittent oppositions through which this unique institution passed, actually promoted its evolution into a non-perishable institution with no bane of familiarity in it, for, it became a part and parcel of the way of thinking in persons, who eventually metamorphosed into one single community of devotees to the Infallible Imams.

It is a natural law of science that if a river is allowed to flow, the water current of its flow continues to be uniform, but if the flow is blocked by a dyke over it and the dyke happens to collapse later, the water so controlled, is bound to gush forth with a violence that is difficult to be checked. This is exactly what happened in the evolution of Azadari. It was

not allowed to continue with its normal course in an uninterrupted manner. The periodic restrictions that it had to contend with during the various periods of history only helped in aggravating pent-up emotions to a bursting point, which eventually exploded like volcanic eruptions whenever such repressive measures eased. The intensity of such emotional expressions, suffocated for long, would naturally assume a fierceness as fresh, if not more so, as with which they had initially commenced.

Taking stock of the history of the past 1300 years, one will find that with the lapse of all these centuries, neither has there been a decline in the restrictions on Azadari nor has Azadari, too lost any of its sting in emotional observance.

However, coming back to our subject, the repressions that were current during Mutawakkil's time when Imam Hasan Askari's imprisonment took place, eased to some extent when Mutawakkil was murdered and his son took his place. It would not be amiss here to relate the eye-opening manner in which Mutawakkil was murdered.

This son of Mutawakkil was the same person who had reprimanded his father at a public meeting for his mimicry of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) and the insolent manner in which he derided the Ameerul Momineen. "What a pity", he had told his father, "that you have no regard for the Bani Hashim dynasty, of which you claim yourself to be a prodigy. We must have decency of at least respecting the blood that runs in our veins". But Mutawakkil, who was

heavily drunk on the occasion, not only paid no heed to his son's reprimand, but insulted even his own son by a versified rebuke which he commanded the musicians present there to sing as the song of the day.' This the singers and the musicians complied, and kept singing it to the end of the function. Obviously, this provocation could not have left the Prince unaffected.

The result was that Mutawakkil was put to death by his own son.

During the period that followed the removal of Mutawakkil from the scene for ever, the progenies of the Holy Prophet were comparatively eased of the antipathies against them, though not completely so, even then.

PERIOD OF DEPUTYSHIP

The period of Deputyship for the Imam in occultation lasted from 260 to 329 Hijra, during which four Deputies exercised their functions as such. These were Osman bin Saeed Omari, Mohammad bin Osman bin Saeed, Husain bin Raub Naubakhti, and Ali bin Mohammad Samari. The centre of spiritual learning during those days was Qum, where Sadooq's father, Shaikh Ali bin Babvay Qummi a contemporary of the last of the Deputies, namely Ali bin Mohammad Samari, lived. Since the Deputies were stationed in Baghdad, this place, Qum, served as the Central Headquarters of the Shias. Here, too, there was no dearth of eminent men of learning, among these being

the author of Kafi (A textbook on Islamic jurisprudence), Sheikh Mohammad bin Yaqub Kulaini—author contemporary of the last of the Deputies of the Imam-in-occultation.

This period was also a period of great disturbances inasmuch as the Imam of the time being physically about (i.e. in occultation), there rose several persons in the community, claiming entitlement to Imamate and Deputyships of the Imam. In addition, aggressions from across the borders and internal dissensions too, continued to create instability for the local Government.

It is a sad fact, but a fact all the same, that scholastic attainments of intellectuals who do not practice what they preach allow themselves to be swayed by aspirations for high Government positions or monetary considerations. This is true in respect of Azadari for Imam Husain (A.S.) or the Ahle Bait's commemorations. While the ruling class was utilizing all possible material means, though unsuccessfully, to counteract these institutions, the misguided Ulema, too, contributed likewise by creating rifts within the community. Though these ambitious Ulema could not succeed in their designs due to the weight of Quranic injunctions against their self-inspired arguments, it must be said that such scholastic moves tend to create misunderstandings in the minds of persons who are impressed with the literary status of such Ulema.

One of such frivolous theory advanced by this class of Ulema was that the Quran said : Kafirs

(disbelievers) shall never triumph over the momins (true believers)'. Their syllogism was based on this premise: If Kafirs, these Ulema contended, could not annihilate momins, how was it that Yazeed and his followers who were not momins, could triumph over Imam Husain (A.S.) who was a momin? Thus, the Ulema deduced, that the said Quranic verse renders the Tragedy of Karbala absurd.

This skepticism was, no doubt, a shrewd move made by the adversaries of Imam Husain (A.S.) but coming, as it did, from the Ulema, it made the simple folks who had a deep regard for the martyred Imam, think that like Jesus Christ, Imam Husain (A.S.), too, must have been lifted into the heavens by God, for, the Imam could never have fallen a victim of the high-handedness of Kafirs;

This corrupt thought had initially been instilled into public mind during the time of Imam Raza (A.S.) which the Imam negatived in these words:

"When the Quran said that Kafirs could never triumph over the momins, what God obviously meant was that Kafirs shall never triumph over the intellectual prowess of the momins. It did not mean triumph in a physical sense. Even Prophets were murdered by the Kafirs in the past (yet their missions triumphed), which proves that the sense conveyed by this verse was intellectual invincibility. Similarly, Imam Husain (A.S.) was martyred, but his martyrdom

cannot change what the said verse intrinsically means".

However, this notion continued being fed to the masses for a long period till the time of Husain bin Rauh. This time their argument was worded thus;

"Husain (A.S.) was a friend of God, and his murderer was an enemy of God. How is it possible to believe that God could have allowed His own friend to be over-powered by His own enemy?"

Husain bin Rauh replied to this ridiculous argument with an elaborate discourse on the subject, the ending words of which were;

"People would have regarded Prophets as demised if the Prophets were triumphant all the time under all circumstances. God, therefore, made them as human as the rest, with the same human bodies, same physical strength and faculties as the others, so that people may think of them as being creations of their own species. Had it not been for this Divine arrangement, the very purpose of spiritual guidance would have been lost. Prophets could not have then presented themselves as exemplarians to other human beings in the world. It was Divine expedience that they were made to face all sorts of tribulations, so that others should learn a lesson through seeing the courage and patience with which the Prophets remained steadfast in their mission."

The persons who had raised the issue before Husain bin Rauh went away satisfied with this reply. However, it struck him later that, may be, what Husain bin Rauh had said was his own opinion. He therefore went again to Husain bin Rauh the next day to ascertain whether what he said the other day was on his own or whether it emanated from the Imam of the time. Husain bin Rauh assured him that he had said what he had been told by the Imam to say, and that he never would say anything on his own.

These negative theories, thus, indicate that despite unfavourable circumstances, the memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) continued to be potently current.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XII

AZADARI—THE FOURTH PHASE GHAIBAT - E - KUBRA

The major occultation (Ghaibat e-Kubra), commenced in 329 Hijra. The last of the Deputies of the Imam-in-occultation, namely Ali bin Mohammad Samari, was dead now. Two prominent personalities among the Ulema, Mohammad bin Yakub Kulaini, the author of Kafi, and Ali bin Babvayh Qummi, Sadooq's father, also died in the same year. These demises were severe blow for the Jaffariya community; but it must be said to the credit of the other Ulema (whom may God bless with His choicest blessings), that they, with their enlightening knowledge and wisdom, filled these voids in a very commendable manner at a time when things looked bleak for the community. They maintained successfully, and in various manners, the memory of Imam Husain's martyrdom, the preservation of which was the chief

object of all the Infallible Imams. The most distinguished among such stalwarts were Sadooq, Ibne Babvayh Qummi, Mohammad bin Jaffer Toluba, Ibne Namma and others.

COMPILATIONS OF MOURNING IN PROSE

Sadooq was the one who personally started the commemoration of Imam Husain's martyrdom in the form of consecutive sessions. His procedure was that he would sit upon the pulpit and have another man by his side who would scribe all that he said in his sermon during the first session on the day. This would be the first Majlis, followed by the second on the next day, again with the scribe noting down in his register what Sadooq said on that day. This would be the second Majlis. Thus, in this manner, one whole volume, entitled *Amali Sadooq*, was compiled. *Amali* is the plural of *Imla*, meaning dictation.

This is perhaps the first compilation of mournings in prose, the early ones to have been read out to the Imams being mostly in the form of poetries. It was during this phase that Ibne Qaulia wrote his *Kitab-ul-Mazaar*, visualizing Imam Husain's martyrdom's and Ibne Namma his *Maqatal*, both of which are preserved to this day.

The political situation during this phase was comparatively more conducive. It was the time when the Dailami group of kings and chieftains were in power. Prominent among these were Rukn-ud-Daula, Iz-ud-Daula, Moghir-ud-Daula and Azod-ud-Daula, all of whom were the progenies of Babvayh line of

rulers, of which the founder was Amir Imad-ud-Daula. All these chiefs were devotees of the Jaffari sect. Though these local kings and chieftains were formally under the Abbasids, their influence and standing were so commanding that the central Government at Baghdad was duly cognizant of their powerful hold in their areas. It were these men who repaired the shrine of Imam Husain (A.S.), which Mutawakkil had damaged in his time. The impressive constructions over the sacred graves at Najaf and Karbala that one sees today are the monuments which these men had built. The gold inlay works and decorations in the halls at these shrines were no doubt the additions made by Safavi kings; but the original buildings were constructed by the generations of Boya, as stated above.

THE FIRST MOURNING PROCESSION

It was during this phase in the year 351 Hijra that Baghdad saw for the first time the public mourning procession on the 10th of Moharrum, which Moghir-ud-Daula organized personally. All shopping centres in the city were closed, and thousands of men came out on the streets, beating their breasts and lamenting loudly. It was indeed a historic event, the like of which the people of Baghdad had never witnessed. Even those who were devoid of any feelings of grief were noticeably moved at the immensity of this mass mourning on so great a scale. The entire capital was echoing with the sound of anguished lamentations and breast-beatings. Men, women and children were all gripped with these spontaneous ventilations of sorrow and pain at Imam Husain's martyrdom.

Historian Yafa'e in his book, *Marat-ul-Jinan* describing the spread of such mournings, writes :

"Shiaism had burst forth in Egypt and Baghdad in the year 361. Obviously, only something that has been repressed from expressing itself can burst in a violent manner. Since before this time, the devotees had no freedom of expression, their emotions had accumulated to a bursting point. Now, with the freedom they got, their pentup emotions naturally erupted like a volcano spitting out its lava after ages of suppression".

Fatemis were the rulers over Egypt at this time and the Abbasids, who feared the eminence of Fatemis, had to think of measures that could lower their estimation in the eyes of the people who really liked their masters. They therefore embarked on a suitable policy of making the people doubt the genealogical antecedents of the Fatemis. For this purpose, they gave out that Fatemis were not real Sa'adaats, i.e. their descent was not traceable to the clan of Bani Fatema. For this, they got a genealogical tree made out into a form of document upon which signatures of prominent persons were obtained in order to lend an authentic complexion to it. This was a period when the Ashraafs, i.e. descendants of Ali and the Fatema had gained considerable importance in Baghdad other dominions under the Abbasid Caliphate. There used to be one Naqeeb-ul-Ashraaf appointed specifically for the purpose of safeguarding the interests and rights of all Ashraafs, who functioned

directly under the king. This appointee, the Naqeeb-ul-Ashraaf, would personally see the Caliph and decide matters pertaining to Ashraafs whenever it was necessary to do so. During the period under review, this position of Naqeebul Ashraaf was held by Husain bin Tahir Moosavi who was the father of Syed Murtaza Almul Huda and Allama Syed Razi—the renowned compiler of *Nahajul Balagha*. The latter himself was subsequently appointed as the Naqeeb-ul-Ashraaf.

The Abbasid Government made concerted efforts to disprove the consanguinity of the Fatemids with Bani Fatema. They bribed the Ashraaf of Baghdad for this purpose ; they brought pressures to bear upon the Ulema ; and intimidated other dignitaries, and thus obtained their signatures on the document that was forged to disprove the bonafides of the Fatemids. The number of signatures thus obtained forcibly was considerable. But Allama Syed Razi was the one who refused outright to sign the document, though even his own elder brother hesitated and was inclined to advise his younger brother to be cognizant of the exigencies of the moment. Syed Razi, however, did not listen to anyone in this matter.

In short, the Fatemid rulers greatly helped to promote the institution of Azadari for Imam Husain (A.S.) on a mass scale in Egypt. The first ten days of Moharrum used to be marked with continuous mournings, and all possible efforts were made to focus the Truth that was behind Azadari. This favourable situation, however, did not last very long.

AYYUBI MONARCHS

Then came another revolution; and in its wake the Ayyubi monarchs installed themselves in authority. These rulers sought out the Fatemids, one after the other, and executed them. Not satisfied with this, they continued with all sorts of repressive measures against the devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.).

Consequently, the 10th of Moharrum—the day of Imam Husain's martyrdom—was officially declared a day of rejoicings, and necessary arrangements for pleasant festivities on the day were made. This officially sponsored switch-over was temporary. People took to celebrating the day with rejoicings; but despite this, they could not wipe off the constructive attitude which the Fatemids had succeeded in instilling in the minds of the people in respect of the progenies of the Holy Prophet. This is evident from the fact that Mashhed Ras al-Husain, in Cairo, remained a public place of homage, and continues to be so even today with all its glory.

The Ayyubian effects, however, proved transitory; for, the deep impressions that the Fatemid rulers had left on the minds of the people, continue to prevail even today in Egypt. This is borne out by the fact that only recently have 1000th Anniversary of Fatemids been observed enthusiastically despite the time gap of no less than ten centuries that intervene in between with a series of political upheavals. The research work and volumes of books on Fatemid history presently being published adds further to the glory that was Fatimid, besides establishing the falsity of

imputations which the Abbasids had levelled against the Fatemids. This re-assessment and glorification of deposed kings cannot be construed as the result of materialistically inspired motives. Rather, it is the sense of justice and nobility of the Fatimids that has found permanence through this re-evaluation of them after centuries of oblivion.

PERIOD OF EMINENT SHIA ERUDITES

However, coming back to where we left, this was a phase of the evolution of Azadari when Syed Razi Sharif Moosavi lived. We do not know what the exact mode and manner was in the conducting of mourning congregations (Majlises). It is, however, known that events of the tragedy of Karbala were exuberant in the narrations by authentic narrators.

Tarikh-e-Tabari.—The historical work of the famous historian, Tabari, dates back to this period. This monumental work contains all events relating to the Tragedy of Karbala, recorded correctly in the manner Traditions are recorded with authenticities. However, there are also such narratives in this voluminous work that pertain to what the supporters of Bani Ummayyas gave currency in their time concerning the Tragedy. This is because the learned author does not belong to the Shia school of thought. But, it must also be said to the credit of this historian that this work does contain material originating from Shia sources also. If one were to compare Tabari's versions with those of the Shia scholar, Shaikh Mufeed, it will be noticed that there

is no noticeable difference in presentation of facts between these two historians.

It must be borne in mind that Tabari preceded the historians Abul Fida and Dayar Bakari, who came long after him. Despite this there are hardly two of three pages that deal with the events at Karbala in their respective works, *Tarikh-e-Abul Fida* and *Tarikh-e-Khamees*. That Tabari should have discoursed on the Tragedy of Karbala so exhaustively and in greater manner than the other two authors proves that in the time of the former, the topic of Karbala had occupied the minds of both Shias and Sunnis as the most predominant subject of the period. Both these communities were equally cognizant of the effects the Tragedy of Karbala had upon each of them.

This was obviously the result of effects over their thinking, produced by Azadaris during that period in Egypt, Baghdad and Iran.

Now we come to the period of Shaikh-ut-Taifa. Abu Ja'far Toosi, following that of Shaikh Mufeed and Syed Murtuza (Taab Sirahu) The Dailamies were no longer in power now; and with the disappearance of this element from the political scene, the atmosphere under the Abbasids, too, ceased to be congenial any longer for the Shias. Consequently, the situation deteriorated to such an extent that the pulpit from where Shaikh Toosi, Taab Sirahu used to deliver his discourses was burnt down, and a substantial number of his masterly books was also destroyed. As a result of these

atrocities, Shaikh-ul-Taifa was forced to flee and seek refuge in Najaf, where he settled down. In his footsteps, followed his pupils too; and since this time, Najaf became the centre of learning.

One cannot say what it was that had inspired the Shaikh to establish his centre there; but it is significant that Najaf has continued to serve as the literary centre for over 900 years now, and God willing, it is hoped that it would continue doing so in the future also.

The above happening occurred in the fifth century after Hijra. Shaikh Toosi died in 460 A.H. In the following sixth and seventh centuries, Hilla, a place on the route to Mecca, also became another centre of scholastic learning, beside Najaf.

GENERAL MASSACRE OF SHIAS

This was the ending phase of the Abbasid Caliphate. Mohalla Karkh, in Baghdad, was the centre of the Shias, where they used to congregate for the purpose of Azadari with due solemnity. It was not, however, possible for Azadari to continue undisturbed under a Government dominated by a majority that belonged to a different school of thought. Consequently, communal riots broke in; and as a result, there followed a general massacre of the Shias under the orders of the Abbasid heir-apparent. Countless persons were killed and their properties looted. So much blood was shed that the waters of River Tigris remained stained with the colour of blood for several days.

What, however, this bloody riots served to achieve was that they aggravated the anguish of the Shias and helped Azadari to be more sweet, like the proverbial 'forbidden fruit', though it must also be said that open Azadari became for the time being a dare-devel performance under the Abbasids.

But inscrutable indeed are the ways of God !

ANNIHILATION OF ABBASIDS

It was natural that under such circumstances Azadari could have suffered heavy set back : but Providence ordained that these brutal blood-sheds be properly avenged.

And avenged they were !

What a Providential vengeance it was ! The Abbasids, like their predecessors, the Omayyads, were completely annihilated like the writing on the water.

This happened in the wake of the historic invasion of Iraq by the Tatars, who completely ravaged the capital, Baghdad, and with it collapsed the Abbasid regime. Hilla, however, still remained the centre of learning. Research scholar, Najamuddin Abul Qasim Jaffer bin Saeed Hilli, was a product of this age.

The history of Islam even today laments over this Tatarian menace, censuring the Tatars for what they call 'inhuman atrocities'. What pinches these historians most is that a highly distinguished research authority like Toosi had aligned himself with Halaku,

the blood-thirsty chief of the Tatars. But these men seldom stop to reflect on how and why so eminent person like Khwaja Naseerudin Toosi took refuge in aligning himself with Halaku and his forces, who were non-Muslims. These men who censure Toosi and insinuate him so contemptuously with the charge of having acted as a traitor against an Islamic State, do not care to see in what manner the so-called Islamic State was functioning. Why cannot they take cognizance of its conduct ? Why don't they realize what Toosi achieved for the Muslims by his alliance with the non-Muslims ?

MONGOLIANS BECOME SHIAS

In fact, it did not take very long for Toosi to create an atmosphere among these non-Muslim forces which eventually made them discard their heathenish beliefs and embrace Islam. This transformation, no doubt, took some time; for it is only logical that one who seeks to discard his old original beliefs in favour of new truthful ones should first investigate and then decide to convert himself to any school of thought that appeals to him. This is what the Mongolian ruler Obahaito Khuda Banda did. He assembled the scholars (Ulema) of the various communities of Islam and organized enlightening debates and discourses so as to know which was the right religion to adopt. Ayatullah Allama Hilli (Taab Sirahu), a scholar of the Jaffari sect, was one of those who participated in these literary-cum-religious congresses. After lengthy and revealing discourses, the Mongolian Sultan was convinced that the only true religion was Islam as projected in Shiaism. Accordingly, he embraced the

Shia faith of Islam along with other officials of his State.

That explains why the Sunni historians are not pleased even at this mass conversion of the Tatars to Islam. This was indeed an achievement of Toosi over which any Muslim should well be delighted. He had accomplished a missionary's job by converting a wild and anti-Muslim group to Islam.

Personally, I think it is a propaganda stunt that states Chengiz Khan and Halaku as 'savage murderers', their names being linked proverbially with untamable violent brutal force. The truth is that since Halaku and his hordes wiped away the last vestiges of Abbasid supremacy, therefore, Halaku becomes the worst tyrant'. But the critics lose sight of the fact that it was Halaku's, refuge which the oppressed Muslims sought, having failed to invoke any mercy from their own Muslim masters.

It is indeed a shameful fact that Muslims were so much tyrannised over by their own Government that they were forced to seek refuge for a peaceful life under an alien anti-Muslim Government. Some of these Sa'adat Persons genealogically linked with the descendents of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) migrated to India for their lives, but a majority of these preferred to remain under the Tatars whom they eventually converted to their beliefs by virtue of their own nobility of conduct. What would actually have been contemptuous was if these refuge-seeking Muslims had deserved their own faith and become one of

them; but if these Sa'adat had got anti-Muslim elements converted to Islam, one cannot see any sense in their being censured.

It were these Sa'adat who became the exponents of true Islam after the fall of the Mongolian empire. However, since the Islam that these persons propagated was the one that the Holy Prophet and his Able Bait had stood for, the majority community of Islam seems to prefer that these Muslims had remained apostates along with the Tatars rather than the latter embracing Islam.

It was in the period of history that Muslim History
Kashan emerged into prominence as a preaching

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN

CHAPTER XIII

AZADARI—THE FIFTH PHASE

CONDUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE

History in a continuous evolution of time and space with the annihilation of the Abbasid Caliphate and the consequent emergence of the victorious Mongols as devotees of the Holy Prophet's Ahle Bait, the institution of Azadari found itself in a conducive atmosphere, wherein it could boost itself up. There were no impediments now in the convening of mourning congresses. Consequently, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran and Iraq became the citadels where Azadari for Imam Husain (A.S.) prospered with all its glory and progress, and by the tenth century after Hijra, both prose and poetic forms of recital developed into their full bloom of emotional expressionism.

It was in this period of history that Mulla Husain Kashafi emerged into prominence as a preaching

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monitor and also as the author of the book *Rauzatus Shaheda*, which became so popular that its contents were recited by all reciters at the *Majlises*. The popularity of this poetic work can be gauged by the fact that the reciters came to be called as *Roza Khwans* after the title of the book. Mulla Husain Kashafi was himself a distinguished orator, deeply attached to the Ahle Bait. The Sunni sect claims him to be of their own school of thought but Mulla Husain's belief are clearly Shi'ite, as is evident from his poetic compositions.

Similarly, there were other prominent Sunni Ulema who were also good orators and recited the martyred Imam's epicediums with a deep warmth of feelings. Allama Jauzi was one; and another, Sibte Ibne Jauzi the compiler of *Tazkira-e-Khwas ul Aimmah* to mention only two.

One can thus get an idea of the general attitude that prevailed in respect of Azadari in this period.

AZADARI IN IRAN

Then followed the Safavi regime. The Safavis, who were an ethnic group of Dervishes in Iran, were favourably inclined towards the Ahle Bait and did every possible thing to aid the propagation of Azadari. Though this powerful group had no particular place in the Shia community, they must certainly have been influenced in their attitudes by the precedents left behind by their predecessors in respect of Azadari.

That is to say that the methods which were employed elsewhere in the spreading of Islam after the Holy Prophet, must have been resorted to for a similar purpose in certain parts of Iran also in respect of truth pertaining to the Tragedy of Karbala and the consequent Azadari for Imam Husain (A.S.). Be that as it may, in our view, religion is not responsible for the acts of kings or his officials; nor can Islam be held responsible for the methods resorted to for its promotion and propagation. Thus, if such methods were adopted in furtherance of Shiaism, one cannot possibly blame Shiaism for it.

However, all efforts were concerted at properly introducing the Ahle Bait and their Divine status to those who had not hitherto been apprised so. Moreover, beauty of abstract Truth or of physical form is a magnetic force by itself. Truth has both the beauty as well as the force that can win hearts.

In pursuance thereof, the Dervishes or friars, were made to memorize poetic eulogies in reverence of the Divine status of the Ahle Bait and the martyred Imam. Epicediums composed in appealing poetic forms were distributed among the mendicants so that they could sing these out in the streets and at house doors. Thus did the Safavi line of kings apprise the Iranian masses with the personal greatness of the progenies of the Holy Prophet.

And thus did the Iranians come to know that the person who had stood up so valiantly to fight the racial prejudices of the Arabs and glorified their country, Iran, with the honour of being linked with the

honour of being linked with the Ahle Bait in a genealogical sense, was none other than the oppressed erstwhile stranger, Husain Ibne Ali (A.S.) whereas the ignorant Arabs were so meanly race minded that when the Princess of a non-Arab country came into their custody as a war-prisoner, they were inclined to treat her as any other slave girl with whom they could do anything they liked. The Iranians now learnt that it was this noble stalwart of a man, Ali (A.S.), who stood up in her defence and warned the Arabs that they dared not treat her as a slave-girl. He reminded them of the Holy Prophet's directive which ruled that princesses and daughters of kings, when captured in war, should not be treated as slave-girls.

"This girl", Ali had said, pointing towards the captive Princess, "is a Princess, and will remain so. She has so far been a Princess in the worldly sense of the word, but from now on, she will be the queen of the spiritual king's house".

That the Safavis emerged on the political horizon so late can best be attributed as an accident of history. However, the fact remains that not until their emergence into power did the Iranians know what the truth was. The dawn of Safavi regime had opened their eyes to the truth which they had missed all along the ages.

Truly speaking, the hearts of the Iranians were won on the day when Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.) had got his son, Imam Husain (A.S.), married to the

Iranian Princess Shehr Bano. The graceful feeling this matrimonial bond generated were further cemented by Imam Raza (A.S.) who, though an heir-apparent during Mamoon-ur-Rasheed's regime in Iraq, had personally demonstrated true Islamic values to the people in Khurasan.

The official pressures and manipulations that were evident during the intervening regimes had, however, rendered the masses oblivious of the Ahle Bait; but now, with Safavis at the helm of affairs, when once the blinding prejudices were removed, truth once again prevailed and spiritual values, too, once again came to the forefront and enveloped one and all in their blissful embrace.

It must be realized that it is not possible for any country to be transformed overnight through bloodshed or violence. It is a natural phenomenon, particularly apparent in the history of Islam, that whenever and wherever violence is resorted to as a means of changing the outlook of a nation, the people invariably react with a still more pronounced resistance to such aggressive approaches. If violence employed by Governmental machineries had the power to crush inner feelings, the very name of Prophet Mohammad's Ahle Bait would have become extinct long ago. The fact that it still continues in a potent manner, despite official efforts to obliterate it, proves that Governments cannot completely change the religious concepts and beliefs of the people.

That being so, how could any king, Shah Abbas Safavi for instance, have done so? Obviously, it was

not possible for him to transform the attitude of the people of his time in so lasting a manner that the changed outlook could have survived for generations. Such a thing is simply impossible for any one person to achieve all by himself. Thus, what happened when the Safavis were in power in Iran was that when religious feelings subdued erstwhile in a repressive manner, reverted back to their original exuberance, when the situation became conducive to such a rebounding of conceptual beliefs, resulting in the whole of Iran becoming a nation attached devoutly to the love and reverence for the Ahle Bait.

Prior to the coming of Safavis into prominence, mostly Sunni scholars had dominated in Iran. Naishapuri, the author of *Gharaeb-ul-Quran*. Ghazzali, Baihaqi Razi, Nasafi Hirjani, Taftazani, Davani, Joyini, to mention a few, were the renowned Sunni scholars which Iran had seen; but after the 10th century Hijra we do not find a single prominent scholar of the Sunni school of thought in Iran. It were only the Shia literary luminaries who dominated the scene now. Though one may concede that Shah Abbas Safavi was a despot to some extent, the period following his death was free from any traces of regal despotism. History testifies to this statement. One might, therefore, say that the mental outlook of the nation had changed radically.

Consequently, Azadari now flourished unimpeded throughout the length and breadth of Iran in an unprecedented manner. Newer forms of *Majlises* for Imam Husain's martyrdom were evolved. Mournful recitals, both in prose and poetry, found improved

expression. While Mulla Husain Kashafi became a legend in his own life with his famous work *Rauzatus Shuheda*, other budding poets and elegists like Maqbal, Mohtashim and Visaal found their way into prominence with their poetic compositions.

ALLAMA MAJLISI

This was the era when Allama Majlisi with his literary genius and scholastic sagacity dominated the socio-religious scene like an intellectual giant of the age. It was this great scholar who had rendered into Persian language the treasure of enlightenments originating from the Holy Prophet's Able Bait, thereby supplementing the efforts of the Government in the task of moulding religious zeal in the right direction of the Able Bait. It was, as it were, a two-pronged move with the Government on one end, and the Ulema on the other. While the former developed a thirst for facts in the minds of the people, the latter provided these with their convincing expositions.

However, there were troubles for the Shias in Iran even in this period also. For example, the Turkish king, Sultan Saleem Osmani, invaded Iran. This caused as many as 70,000 men to die. This invasion, however, could not harm Shia ideology; for, a thing can be harmed only when it is in the process of its evolution. But once when a thing crystallizes itself and its scope of influence gains wider dimensions, nothing can then cause any harm to it. The scope of Shi'ite influence was so wide and extensive by now in Iran that no country could exterminate it even through massacres. What such bloody actions did produce was that the Tragedy of Karbala found even deeper and firmer roots in the minds of the people.

Thus, Azadari continued to flourish with newer reinforcements and deeper intensity.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XIV

AZADARI IN INDIA

MIGRATION OF IRANIANS

Safavi supremacy in Iran coincided with Moghul rule over India, Shah Abbas being the king in Iran and Akbar the Emperor in India.

The inception of Azadari in the Indian subcontinent is synchronous with the arrival the refugees from Iran who had fled from their country in various guises. It were these hapless and dislodged persons, not yet established fully in foreign surroundings, who initiated Azadari in India with all the pathos that is inherent in it. One can visualize a small community of men, women and children, struggling desperately for their existence in a land far away from their own, congregating to mourn and lament for Imam Husain (A.S.) after themselves being the targets of brutalities at the

hands of unscrupulous men in their own homeland. The effect their mournings must have produced on the Indian natives must indeed have stirred their conscience with the impelling appeal that Azadari intimately possesses.

TAIMUR AND TAZIA

A few words about Tazia must be said at this stage. 'Tazia' means, a model of the tomb of Imam Husain (A.S.), which is carried along in processions on the 10th Moharrum. Consequent upon the consolidation of Moghul supremacy in India, it became widely known that King Taimur was the first person to have made such a model (Tazia) of Imam Husain's tomb. Call it our inadequate knowledge or anything, we confess that so far we have failed to discover the authentic origin of this practice in the annals of history pertaining to the times of King Taimur. A book entitled Tazk-e-Taimuri is often mentioned in this context; but then there was not one Tazk-e-Taimuri. There were several books on Taimur that went by this title. One cannot say in which particular Tazk-e-Taimuri this practice of Tazia modelling was mentioned, if ever it was. And also, no one knows anything about the existence of its manuscript or its copy anywhere. None has been able to place it, actually.

That being so, it is not possible to say anything in respect of the authentic reasons or circumstances that led to devising this practice.

One thing, however, can be surmised. And that is, means of transport being inadequate at that time, it

was very difficult for intending persons to go all the way to Karbala to pay their homage at the shrine of Imam Husain (A.S.). Hence, in order to satisfy their urge, people must have devised this substitute method of homage by modelling out miniatures of the Imam's tomb, so that those unable to undertake the long and arduous journey to Karbala could contend themselves with Tazias as replicas of the original.

As far as history indicates, Indian culture is blended with Iranian cultural strains. That being so, if this practice of carrying Tazias was current in Iran in any period of its history, it could be said that the Indian Muslims had followed such a precedent established by the Iranians. But that is not the case. One does not see Tazia processions in Arab countries. There is no need, actually, for, Imam Husain's sacred Shrine happens to be right in the midst. In Iran, too, where Azadari is observed in numerous manners, there is no such thing as Tazias there. This is something that one sees only in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent; and the fact that this is a speciality of this part of the world indicates that there must have been some extraordinary circumstances that led to this practice.

However, Tazias continue presently in two distinct forms, namely: Tazias and Zarihs. As far as I can say, Zarihs are miniature replicas of the interior construction of Imam Husain's tomb; and Tazias, that of the view of the sacred tomb from outside the enclosure, facing the hall therein. If one, standing in the courtyard of the holy shrine, views the

tomb, he will get the same view of the tomb that Tazias project. Similarly, when we view the interior of the tomb from inside the enclosure, we see the view that Zarihs present.

AN OBJECTION AGAINST TAZIAS

Tazias, some people object, amount to idol-worship. I have said earlier that when political efforts fail to produce desired results, psychological strategy becomes the alternative way. Technically, according to general enunciations of Islam, worship of any thing other than Allah, is highly condemnable. But then, one must also bear in mind that worship is something that is directly co-related with the intentions with which one is inspired. It is said that worship means 'respect or reverence'. Thus, if a son rises from his seat as a mark of reverence on seeing his father, can the son's reverence for his father amount to 'worship'? Similarly, if we respect and show our reverence to persons according to their respective standings, can such gestures be termed as 'worship'? Hence, mere gestures or expressions of reverence do not fall within the purview of what the word 'worship' really means. Reverence, of course, becomes 'worship' when it is expressed in respect of persons substituted in place of God, or one that militates against Divine injunctions pertaining to His worship. But reverence shown for any person by virtue of being sentimentally attached to his personality, directly or indirectly, cannot be termed as worship. For instance, you stand up as mark of respect when a person for whom you have a deep regard comes to you. This gesture of yours is no doubt a normal expression of the love and respect

you have for the comer; but when you do the same when the comer is the son of the person you respect; then your respect, thus expressed is not really for the personal qualities of the son, but is actuated by the regard you have for his father. And when you stand up respectfully to receive a servant of the person you hold reverence, your gesture denotes the highest degree of love and respect you have for the master by treating even his servant so reverently. This means that your love and affection—for your Ideal is so deep and intense that, let alone his son, even his servant symbolizes for you what you hold so dear to your heart. Similarly, not only human relationships, but even an inanimate object like a letter becomes the symbol of your beloved just because it contains his handwriting. The emotions with which you react on receipt of a letter from your beloved person, which is after all a mere piece of paper, are expressions of love, not for the piece of paper, but for him who is associated with it directly or indirectly.

In the same manner of analogy, if any benign Muslim could have had the fortune of enjoying close nearness to God, and if we could avail this fortunate person's hand for kissing it, then the act of kissing the hand would naturally be an expression of awe and reverence for God. There is one person who did have this singular honour; and that was Prophet Mohammad (S.A.).

Hence, if men kissed his hands in reverence of the Divinity of his person, how can anyone say that kissing of his hands militates against the concept of

God's worship? People kissed his hands, not because he was the son of Abdullah; not because he was the darling of Aamna, his mother; not because he was a Meccan; not because he was a member of the powerful clan of Bani Hashims. People did so purely because he was the Prophet of God, and one who actually felt the Divine Presence of God. Therefore, the act of kissing his hands is nothing more, nothing less than a form for expressing our attachment for the Divine one.

Thus, in the physical absence of the Holy Prophet, and of his kith and kin, too, who were his living embodiments, we stand separated from these living symbols of Divinity by the gulf of time and space. Yet, when the opportunity offers, we now rush off to Medina to pay homage at his shrine. We kiss the foot of the Holy Prophet's sacred grave in deep reverence of him. By doing so, it is not the heap of earth over his body that we pay our homage to. We do that because that piece of ground is his last resting place. Likewise, Karbala is another place where one can go and kiss the feet of Holy Prophet's grandson, Imam Husain's grave. To say that his sacred grave is a lifeless object makes no sense. That letter, analogy of which we have read above, was also lifeless. It was the writer of the letter who was the object of affection. Similarly, it is not the heap of earth or the lifeless wooden coffin that we revere. If that was so, one might as well go to any grave of his choice at the nearest cemetery and satisfy himself. The long and arduous journey to Medina or Karbala that we undertake at great expense of money and income is

for the mental association these places arouse in our minds in respect of the Holy Prophet and his progeny, who lie buried there. It is definitely not worship as some people call it. It is a symbolic gesture of attachment to the one who lies beneath the tomb.

Thus, if the recipient of symbolic gestures of attachment happens to be Imam Husain (A.S.), it is because reverence for him is reverence for the Holy Prophet, and reverence for the Holy Prophet is in turn, reverence to God, Whose Prophet he is.

We now come to the next substitute manner of giving vent to religious feelings. That is, **Tazias**. It is an undeniable phenomenon that love always flows in the direction of its object; and if the object, for one reason or the other, happens to be beyond its reach, it contends itself even with an **Image** of the object it cherishes. Thus, when the devotees of God, His Prophet and his progeny, find themselves unable to go to the shrines of the latter, their urge for expression of their inner longing makes them resort to substitute forms of satisfaction. For this, they make out miniature replicas of these shrines. That these miniatures, **Tazias**, are made of ordinary paperboards, tinsels and bamboo-stick choppings, is irrelevant to the point. Obviously, these materials are not what gratifies them. If that was the case, uncut paperboards and unshaped bamboos could have as well sufficed. It is only when these materials are meticulously laboured into finished forms of **Tazias**, representing the Imam's shrines, that they assume a sacred significance. Thus, it is their manipulated resemblances that stir and

create mental associations with the originals in distant lands. These Tazias are now no more mere stray pieces of tinsel and bamboos. They are now transformed into dynamic replicas of Imam Husain's tomb. It is this potent substitute that kindles, as well as extinguishes the consuming flames of passionate longing to be at the Imam's sacred resting place.

Truthfully speaking, Imam Husain (A.S.) had himself allayed this skepticism when he had once observed :—

“When you long for something, and are unable to get at it, you can draw your satisfaction by looking at something that resembles the object you long for”.

Again, when Ali Akbar (A.S.), the Imam's son, stood before him just prior to his last good-bye on the field of Karbala, these are the words that flowed forth from Imam Husain (A.S.) during his anguishing supplication to God.

“O' Allah, our Lord, whenever we felt the urge to see the Holy Prophet in absentia, we used to cast our eyes at the person of this young lad, for he is the very exact personification of Your Holy Prophet”.

It must, therefore, be borne in mind that we draw inspiration from these sayings of Imam Husain (A.S.) in the matter of Tazias Zarihs, for, these miniature replicas are emblematic of the martyred Imam's sacred tomb.

However, whatever the origin of Tazias be; whether the credit goes to Taimur or to anyone else, the fact is that the institution of Azadari did not enjoy any particular position in the social set-up under the Moghuls. The reason for this coolness was that the Moghul emperors in India were not so deeply attached to the Holy Prophet's Ahle Bait as King Taimur was. Emperor Akbar's regime is said to be the 'golden period' in the history of India but even so, Shias as a community did not enjoy any particular recognition. The same prejudices against Shiaism were apparent during Emperor Jehangir's reign, also. This is evident from the fact that Qazi Noorullah Shoostary an eminent religious scholar of the period, was put to death for no reason other than that he was a devout Shia. This luminary is famous in Indian history as “Shaheed Salis”, literally meaning “The third martyred. Actually, Qazi Noorullah Shoostary was a very cautious person and led a quiet life. He never had the chance to preach his religious beliefs. His only achievement that has survived him is *Ehqaq al-Haq* a literary exposition of Divine Truth that he wrote, but remained concealed upto the last days of his life. It was this book that led to his being sent to the gallows, for, Emperor Jehangir's Government came to know of it through its wide net-work of intelligence services. But the question is : what predicament did Qazi Noorullah achieve while he lived? None, really. That being so, the question of Azadari or propagation of Shiaism during the Moghul period in areas where they ruled supreme does not at all

arise. Qazi Noorullah, or for that matter anyone else, hardly had any opportunity to do so.

AZADARI IN THE DECCAN REGION

In the Deccan, i.e. Southern India, however, there ruled the Qutub Shahi dynasty who were the devotees of the Ahle Bait. The Burhan Shahi dynasty that followed after them, also became converts to Shiaism as a result of a miracle which Mulla Tahir Dakni—a Shia religious personality of the time—performed. **Azadari**, therefore, flourished with all its glory in this part of South India. Nevertheless, it was this unimpeded progress of **Azadari**, coupled with the wholesale conversion of Burhan Shahis to Shiaism that irritated Emperor Aurangzeb most in the North. So choleric was this Moghul Emperor against this development that he sent his armed forces out to quell what he termed as the 'Shia menace' in the South. In consequence of this armed action, **Azadari** once again suffered set backs. It, however, did continue in India, but its development was curbed.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER OF SHIAS

This stalemate in the progress of **Azadari** then unclosed itself with a bang when Maulana Syed Dildar Ali (Tab Sirahu) rose into prominence as a distinguishable Shia religious scholar in Lucknow which was at that time the capital of the State of Oudh. It was then that a proper Centre was established at Lucknow, which started functioning as a publishing organization for the promotion of Shiaism in India.

Consequently, it was in the month of Rajab, 1200 A.H., that for the first time in India, the Shias offered their prayers in a congregational form.

Maulana Syed Dildar Ali contributed greatly to the propagation of **Azadari** also, and helped in the promotion of this institution to rehabilitate itself into a state of development which continues to be in process to this day. In fact, it was Maulana Saheb who, by instilling love for Imam Husain (A.S.) in the heart of the late Nawab Asif-ud-Daula, inspired him to lay the foundation of Husainia Asifi, which today enjoys the reputation of being the biggest Imam Bara, not only in India but the whole world. This Imam Bara is not only a fine specimen of Architectural art, but is also a literary centre where learned scholars from all over the world congregate for exchange of views and scholastic discourses.

There is another Imam Bara in Lucknow which is also famous by the name of Husainia Ghufuran. This was built by Maulana Sayed Dildar Ali independently. Though not very remarkable for its structural grace, this Imam Bara is spiritually the most sacred place in India. The Maulana also built another Imam Bara at Naseerabad, his native place in the United Provinces. This building also exists today, though not very well maintained.

So deep was his attachment to Imam Husain (A.S.) and mournings for him, that Maulana Syed Dildar Ali, in his bequest, contained in *Ijaza-e-Ijtihad* which dedicated to Sultanul-Ulema (Taab Sirahu),

wrote that it must be ensured that there would be no diminishing of enthusiasm in the matter of mournings for Imam Husain (A.S.). This bequest was duly respected after he was no more; and from that to this time, **Azadari** in the subcontinent has been progressing; and it is hoped that, God willing, it will continue progressing for all times to come.

The Nawabs of Oudh, may God bless them, did everything possible in the preservation and promotion of **Azadari** in India. With predication efforts of the **Ulema** on one front, and financial encouragement coming readily from the Nawabs of Oudh on the other, both these two potent sources combined into one great force to ensure that **Azadari** was propagated in the most progressive manner, which in fact continues to do so to this day.

India, as everyone knows, is a land populated by numerous and different religious and social denominations. It was, therefore, felt that methods adopted for promotion of **Azadari** should be such that all those other community groups who were hitherto unaware of its true significance, should be apprised of it, thereby drawing all diverse groups into an orbit of sympathetic understanding. For this, various kinds of elegies, numerous forms of mourning processions, manifold **Tazias** and **Zarihs**, abundant **Majlises** and a generous distribution of snacks were introduced. In addition, the Nawabs of Oudh started personally visiting the mourning centres during the first ten nights of Moharrum, when they would donate money

over **Tazias**. Other princes and the rich class also followed this example of the Nawabs, and they too made such offerings. These precedents attracted the poor class of people of other religions also to start making **Tazias**, and thus associating themselves with the institution of **Azadari** in their own way.

The gesture of the Nawabs in donating cash amounts was in fact a gesture of social service which the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) had inspired in human hearts, so that other groups too, benefited from it in more than one way.

The result of these efforts was that every ethnic and religious group in the Indian subcontinent became associated with **Azadari** which started progressing with a glorious pace.

And unscrutable indeed are the ways of God!

The same Marathas, including the Sandhya dynasty who once had been fighting against the Muslim emperors, and whom history condemns for the wholesale genocide in Delhi in their period, their very State, namely the Gwalior State, became the biggest centre of **Azadari**. In this development of **Azadari** in Gwalior State, intermittent phenomenal miracles played a major role.

Among other things that **Azadari** has achieved is the fact that in those parts of India where even

Azan (Muslims call to prayers) was not heard in the past, one can today hear the lamenting cries of "Husain, Husain" echoing in the air during the month of Moharrum each year. Even today, when communal fanaticism reigns supreme, the observance of the 1200th anniversary of Yadgaar-e-Husaini (1361, A.H) has proved that even now there is a plane on which all nations and religions can converge in unison. Mournings for Imam Husain (A.S) thus stand out as a uniting force for all the nations of the world, free from racial and religious prejudices.

HAZRAT ALI (A.S.) SAID :

Where are those who have had a longer life than yours ? have left the greatest monuments ? have built, fortified, organized, embellished ? where are the accumulators and planners ? Where are Kisers ? Waisers ? Tubba ? and Himyar ?

"And say not of those who are slain in the path of God that they are dead; Nay (they are) living, but you perceive not."

The Holy Quran (2: 154)

AZADARI

A Historical Review of Institution

of

AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

PART TWO

Translation

of

"Tarikh-e-Azadari"

by

**Maulana Syed Murtaza Husain Sahib
Sadrul Afazil**

Published by :

**PEERMAHOMED EBRAHIM TRUST
KARACHI-5.**

MINAR NIN ANJAS NIN ALJIMIS

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KARACHI-2

Ten years back I had suggested to Janab Haji Hasanally Saheb that this book be rendered into the English language, which idea he appreciated and accepted. Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust (of which Janab Haji Hasanally Saheb is the Trustee) has so far published some very valuable books, and God willing, the Trust will continue this noble task in the future as well.

I extend my full appreciation and gratitude to the Trust on its publication of the Urdu and English versions of **Tarrikh-e-Azadari : History of Azadari** (Lamentations for Imam Husain (A.S.)).

15, Moghulpura, Lahore. (Sd.)/ Syed Murtuza Hussain
Dated: 1-6-1972. (Sadrul Afazil)

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

AZADARI SYEDUS SHUHADA

(Lamentation for the King of Martyrs)

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH

THE MOST MERCIFUL

THE MOST COMPASSIONATE

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Series of my articles on Azadari had been under print for over a period of time. My late brother, Maulvi Syed Ali Reza Saheb had even compiled the series into one volume, and at his instance I had agreed to complete the material with final touches. Then, in 1958, Khateeb-e-Azam Janab Allama Turabi Saheb had expressed the desirability for having a history of Azadari written. However, for one reason or the other, the matter remained pending. At length Mohammad Siddique Saheb got the material published in the Moharrum editions of Razakaar in a manner that he considered suitable, and I was sorry that he should have done so.

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AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

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FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

FOREWORD

Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) was the last of the Divine Messengers. Yazeed bin Muawiya demanded allegiance of Hazrat Imam Husain (A.S.), the younger grandson of the Holy Prophet and the second son of Hazrat Ali and Fatematuz Zehra (A.S.) in the month of Rajab in the year 60 A.H. The object of Mauwiya in trying to secure the Imam's recognition of his regime was to prove to the Muslim community his nobility of character, thereby ensuring a respectable religious status for himself in the estimation of the people. Unlike his father, Yazeed had claimed successorship to the Holy Prophet in a direct manner so as to be recognized as the Caliph. If Imam Husain (A.S.) had chosen to remain silent over this demand of Yazeed, or if (God Forbid), he had acceded to Yazeed's demand by swearing allegiance to him, God alone knows what the fate of Islam would have been. An entirely new complexion of Prophet's deputyship would have emerged in such a situation; and Yazeed,

following in the footsteps of Museilima and Sajjah, would certainly have destroyed the very fundamental concepts of Islam. If, however, there remained safe some Muslims, they would invariably have declared Yazeed to be a Mujtahid.

Imam Husain (A.S.), however, frustrated the designs of Yazeed by rejecting outright both the sanctity of the government at Medina as well as Yazeed's demand for his allegiance. Thus thwarted, Yazeed engineered a scheme to do away for once and for all this exponent of Truth by having him martyred. God Almighty, however, blessed Imam Husain (A.S.) with an eternal life through his martyrdom and made Yazeed a symbol of falsehood, tyranny and an anti-human element and Devils' companion. The word 'Yazeed' is actually a rebuke, implying in import of sense : the enemy of God and the Holy Prophet, a debauchee and adulterer, and wicked and cruel person, a fornicator, a drunkard, a brute, a blood-thirsty demon, and a murderer of innocent human beings.

Imam Husain (A.S.) was martyred at Karbala by the Commander of Yazeed's army on the 10th of Moharrum, 61 A.H. on the orders of Yazeed. Imam Husain (A.S.) was accompanied on this occasion by a few ladies and children, besides some steadfast young and old men who were devotedly attached to him. All these men, women and children were encamped there, tired and worn out after about ten days stay in Karbala under hardships and miseries and starving for food and water for the last three days. These people were all innocent. Their only crime was that they remained attached to Imam

Husain (A.S.) and stood fearlessly by the cause of Islam and its values. Since the Imam had declared Yazeed's Caliphate as invalid, the latter had resolved that Imam Husain (A.S.) and his admirers, their children, young and old, their womenfolk and the ladies of the Imam's household, all should be uprooted from their native places. This scheme did materialize, but what followed immediately after the martyrdom of Imam Husain was disgraceful for Yazeed. Each day that dawned after the Imam's martyrdom was steeped in sorrow. Months, years, decades and centuries have gone by, but the memory of the Tragedy of Karbala remains as fresh as ever.

No sooner the Moharrum moon is sighted than the hearts of the Muslims get filled with grief; they mourn for their loss. Every Muslim home echoes with mournful reminiscences of the martyred Imam. The Imambaras, too resound with sermons on the far-fetching results of Imam Husain's sagacity in rejected Yazeed's demand for allegiance and his consequent martyrdom. The audiences are enlightened on what the Imam sought by sacrificing his life. The Imam's success in securing the sanctity and preservation of Islam, the Holy Prophet's teachings, his precepts and personality, in short numerous religious, moral, philosophic, literary and socio-economic issues are thrashed out in the context of Imam Husain's martyrdom and Islamic ideology. Tears flow forth

on his calculated martyrdom, and people pay a tearful homage to the venerable companions who stood firmly with the Imam. Every Muslim confesses that he regards Imam Husain's example as the righteous one, and abhors the brutalities of Yazeed. There are specific modes of expressing this regard, which while similar in spirit to those current in different nations and different countries, have assumed certain characteristics of their own, like donning of black attires, convening mourning gatherings, making miniature models of sacred shrines, carrying of the Ahle Bait's flag. Zuljinnah processions, Imambaras, special sermons, peculiar poetic elegies, breast-beating in specific forms, special types of mourning processions, abstinence from merriments, night and day-long wailings and weepings, and refraining from entertainments and marriage ceremonies for ten days (in certain sections), or forty days, or for two months and eight days.

The present book deals with a historical review of these practices, gulfing the gap of time and space between the past and the present.

15, Moghulpura, Lahore. (Sd-)/ Syed Murtuza Husain
Dated : 1-6-1972. (Sadrul Afazil)

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

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FOR IMAM HUSAIN

PART II

CHAPTER XV

AZADARI

THE DRIVING FORCE IN ISLAM

The world has witnessed numerous tragedies, but the Tragedy of Karbala in the history of Islam surpasses all tragedies in its immensity and greatness of significance. Even the history of Islam itself has no parallel to it. This Tragedy that took place in the Moharrum of 61 A.H. took hardly eight to ten days to culminate, or at the most, six months to a year, but the chain of adversities and tribulations it entailed continues even to this day.

The first shock which the devotees of the Holy Prophet's progeny had to endure was the death of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.). The second shock came when Fatematuz Zehra (A.S.), the Holy Prophet's

daughter, died a martyr. This was followed by the martyrdom of Imam Hasan (A.S.). All these martyrdoms, one after the other, carry equal importance. The eloquent elegies of Janab-e-Syeda and Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.) upon the death of the Holy Prophet, followed by Ameerul Momineen's moving sermons on the martyrdom of the Infallible Lady were no less important factors in pacifying the inner anguish caused by these departures. Perhaps, that is why the mourning devotees, despite these tragic events, felt consoled; and the martyrdoms of these beloved persons were borne out in a befitting manner. Similarly, Imam Hasan's martyrdom, too, was endured after giving a vent to anguished grief through lamentations over him and for the sorrow that overtook the Ahle Bait then. But where Imam Husain (A.S.) is concerned, the matter is singularly different inasmuch as that his was not a tragedy that enveloped him alone. There were 72 persons who fell martyrs along with him in a short space of time. One can imagine the enormity of the event with Qasim, Ali Akbar and Abbas (A.S.) following one another in their pursuit for martyrdom.

Moreover, Imam Husain (A.S.) was not martyred in a secret manner. He was martyred by his foe openly after defying the sanctity of Islam and challenging its adherents. They severed the heads of the martyrs amidst the cries of **Allaho Akber**, as if to dissect human heads off the bodies was a virtue or fundamental requirement of Islam for the foes! Besides this, the Imam had not come to the battle-field on his own initiative. What the Imam had bluntly

said was that allegiance to Yazeed was nothing less than defilement of Islam; that those who recognize Yazeed as a King in Islam i.e. history or as Ameerul Muslimeen or as the deputy of the Holy Prophet, could not be reckoned as Momins (true believers). "Yazid is poles apart from Islam", the Imam had declared, adding. "Islam is a Trust that I hold with me. I have come to Karbala as the rightful claimant of this sacred trust. To kill me would mean killing the sanctity of the Holy Quran, the Prophet's precepts, the purity of religion, and humanity itself".

It was with these convictions that Imam Husain (A.S.) accepted Yazeed's challenge and sacrificed his life not only for the sake of Truth, but also for a higher plane of Truth, i.e. conviction of faith.

COMMEMORATION EXPLAINED

People feel sorry at the death of any and everyone invariably. Flags flutter at half-mast when important figures die, no matter whether these men were wicked persons, Muslims or non-Muslims or atheists. Shops and business remain closed as a mark of respect to these deceased dignitaries. Condolences are expressed. It is quite easy to understand the custom of spending huge amounts of money over perpetuating the memory of national and international personalities by erecting commemorative monuments in their names. This is quite logical, and current, too. Monuments in memory of Kemal Ataturk, Raza Shah (Sr.), Gandhiji and the Quaid-e-Azam speak

for themselves today in this context. Anyone who celebrates the death anniversaries of these national heroes by wearing gaudy dresses and indulging in merry-making is censured as an 'uncivilized and uncultured' individual. To mourn the loss of national heroes is but a universal practice.

That being so, is it not in keeping with socio-moral values to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.), who was a towering personality in the estimation of all national leaders; an Imam (spiritual leader) in the estimation of Muslims; a figure to whom obedience and submission is incumbent in the estimation of the Shia community of Muslims; and a King amongst the martyrs of Islam? His tirade in the cause of Divine Truth and Islam was not limited to tribal or geographic boundaries. He had sacrificed everything he possessed wholly and solely for the cause of Islam and its adherents. If Islam is an eternal religion, as indeed it is, are we not morally bound to perpetuate his memory?

If after Imam Husain's martyrdom, Imam Zainul Abedeen (A.S.) had the opportunity of building a monument to the memory of his venerable father; if Imam Husain (A.S.) had been the only one to be martyred; if his dignified companions and supporters had not sacrificed their lives for the sake of Islam; if Imam Husain's martyrdom had not ensured the survival of Islam; and if the example of the martyrs of Karbala had not guaranteed the survival of Islam; and if the example of the martyrs of Karbala had not served as a means of inspiring righteousness and spirit of sacrifice in the minds of nations, the memory

of this historic event, and the element of grief attached to it, could not possibly have survived for more than a century at the most. But, Islam is a living force, and a Muslim is a living product of it. Therefore, the memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) also is something that is destined to survive till the end of time and space on this earthly planet.

The element of anguish and suffering that is associated with the Tragedy of Karbala adds further to grief and promotes it, for we learn a lesson in compassion and its affinity with Islam. Practices such as preserving the photographs of eminent personalities who are no more; preserving their used clothes, books, residences, sayings, houses where they were born, the rooms where they met people, the trees they planted, the letters they personally wrote; in short, everything associated with their lives is valued and maintained in tact. No one raises any object against these practices on the grounds of religious laws, though these practices are the products of mere customs.

Yet, they object when they see commemorative processions in memory of the unique sacrifice which the greatest martyr, Imam Husain (A.S.) the beloved grandson of the Holy Prophet, gave for the sake of Islam. They censure the respect shown for the miniatures of his sacred shrine; replicas of his steed; the carrying of his flag; the propagation of the cause he stood for; breast-beatings for the brutalities committed upon his person, lamenting processions in his memory; the constructions of Imam baras in perpetuation of his memory; and the free distribution of food

and drinks in his name. Could these practices be regarded as objectionable? No, certainly not. To feed the poor, to serve refreshing drinks to the thirsty is perpetual benevolence to humanity arising out of Imam Husain's martyrdom and this will continue for all times.

AZADARI—A MORAL OBLIGATION

Azadari, or mourning, for this greatest of all martyrs is but a moral obligation that humanity owes to the martyred Imam in purely social terms; but when the Imam is once recognized as the Saviour of Islam, to whose sacrifice Islam owes its preserved existence; and when he is accepted as the Spiritual Guide (Imam), then the same Azadari for him remains no more a social obligation alone. It at once becomes a religious incumbence, too. We lament and bemoan for Imam Husain (A.S.) because we believe him to be our Spiritual Guide, the Saviour of Islam, and the enemy of Yazeed and the Devilish values Yazeed personified in himself. We lament for Imam Husain (A.S.) because he was martyred wantonly, despite his innocence, in the most brutal manner. We weep for him because of his tyrannical subjection to inhuman oppression. We raise the cry "Husain Zindabad" because he is immortal through his martyrdom, which gave a new lease of life to Islam. We will continue to exist as long as we revive his memory. Not to remember and mourn for him would be stark ingratitude. Not to take out commemorative processions in his memory would mean approving the Satanic conduct of Yazeed. It was for

the sake of a living futurity for Muslim that Imam Husain (A.S.) had laid down his life. We will, and must, therefore preserve his memory at all costs, even if it means sacrificing our own lives in the process, for :

AZADARI is a confession of the Divine greatness of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and his progeny ;

AZADARI is a convincing demonstration of one's belief in and support for Islam ;

AZADARI is the means of voicing protest against all manifestations of wickedness, as evident in Yazeed's conduct ;

AZADARI is an open declaration of faith and respect for the Holy Prophet and his Ahle Bait ;

AZADARI is the means of propagating the true spirit and purpose of Islam.

It is our firm religious belief that we will continue to be guided by the true spirit of "La Ilaha Illallah Mohammadur Rasoolullah"—the base of Islam—only as long as we continue to revive the memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) and the concept he stood for. We can value the precepts of the Imam only as long as we view them in a religious context. Otherwise, Imam Husain's achievement can only serve as a weapon in politics, and not as a living and preserving force of

Islamic ideology. One can gain material ends through it, like Abu Muslim Khurasani did, but not real enlightenment like the Masoomeen (the Twelve Infallibles) did, or their devotees do.

ALLAMA IQBAL ON IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

This is how the Poet of the East, Dr. Iqbal, feels about Imam Husain : These lines are a free versification of this great poet's Persian couplets :

There ! In blood and sand does lie Husain,
And hence he laid the foundation of "La
Elaha Illallah".

The bond of love that threads his wounds
with us,

Eeman owes a debt of gratitude to his last
Takbeer

O' winds ! O' the messenger for these far off
Throw our tears of grief and sorrow on the
holy grave.

It is this "bond" that threads us with Husain which constitutes the life-line of earthly human existence. What Iqbal said did not solely pertain to the "string" of his own life. Love for Imam Husain (A.S.) is a life-bond not only for this great poet, but a harp string that vibrates in anguished melody in the heart of every Shia and every Muslim. The day this harp-string ceases to ring with anguish enlivened by Imam Husain's martyrdom ; the day we cease to glorify his sacrifice with homage in tears, we too will all cease to be.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN

CHAPTER XVI

THE ELEMENT OF RELIGION

Good and evil forces have always existed in human life, and will continue to exist as long as there remains life on this earthly planet. Domination of evil is the result of being indifferent to what is good, but this certainly does not mean that good values in life are perishable. The domination of evil cannot mar the beauty of what is good, noble and true, nor affect its innate greatness. Murder of man by man is a deplorable act, whatever the circumstances. Violation of law of the land is universally condemned as a bad thing, though it may exist everywhere. To promote what is good, noble and true, man has had to resort to reformation through proper education and effective propaganda. For this elimination of evil, abidance with moral norms and legal sanctions has always been regarded as essentially incumbent.

The world has witnessed several civilizations, each with its own peculiar reforms of propaganda, its own moral and legal codes. There are yet more civilizations to come, stay, and go in their turns. Civilization is a continual process; and to ensure its ideal progress, a whole army of philosophers, ascetics, literary men and thinkers came and went their way. Whatever their missions, their efforts, and the result of their efforts, these things occupy no more than a chronological description of events in the annals of history. Their names have remained in cold print, only to serve as source references to their theories and writings.

The element that enlightened human conscience, blessed human life with spiritual values, and bestowed human intellect with progressive continuity of advancement is the element of RELIGION; and amongst religions, the one that got a stamp of permanence is ISLAM, and in turn, Shaheed Momin (Martyred true believer) is the one whom Islam has blessed with a life everlasting.

WHO IS A TRUE MARTYR?

The one who believes implicitly as well as explicitly in the oneness of God; the one who regards the precepts of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) as a complete code of life; the one who does not equate the directives of the Holy Prophet with anyone else's except those of God; the one whose life is dedicated wholly and solely to God, the one who dies in His course; the one who sacrifices his desires and antipathies for

gaining Divine pleasure in accordance with the Holy Prophet's commandments; the one who chooses what only religion permits; the one who discards any and everything that Islam ordains as undesirable, is a true Momin; and the one who has no true faith in the Divine revelation:

"Anyone who treads a path other than that of Islam, or abides with principles other than those of Islam, such indeed is the one whom Allah will not accept",

is the one who is destined to be the loser in the Hereafter. His life in this world will be far from being a successful stay.

The Divine message to mankind since the inception of human life is just one and unalterable, and will remain so till the end of time and space on earth. Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) is the guarantor of the truth of this Divine message, and God Himself is its Preserver. The call of Allahu Akber (Allah is Great) and La Ilaha Illallah (There is no god but Allah—THE ONE) will continue to echo in the mosques as long as the adherents of Islam live. Prayerful gatherings in mosques will continue till Doomsday. The flame that this Divine message has kindled can never be blown out. The world may try to obstruct the radiance of this Divine flame, but this wall of opposition is doomed to collapse one day. The devotional community that circumbulates around the Divine flame of Islam like the admiring moths around a candle will eventually emerge victorious, and the martyrs among them will again be laddened with

homages. Another chapter will be added in history, and the enemies of Islam will again stand humiliated. The cycle of historic truths is often ignored and forgotten, but truths invariably revive themselves in glory. Adversities have always befallen individuals and nations, and death never fails to stalk.

THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE DURING THE EARLY PHASE OF ISLAM

Hardly had Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) placed the basic concept of the unity of God before the aggressive community of non-believers in Mecca when he was confronted with a shower of stones to choke the voice that declared Divine Truth. Ammaar's family was slaughtered inhumanly in the wilderness of the Meccan desert when they declared their unflinching faith in the basic concept of Islam, i.e. **La Ilaha Illallah Moham-madur Rasoolullah**. There is no god but Allah, and Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah. The glory of Islam was, however, predestined by God. Accordingly, those who accepted the truth of the unity of God and the bonafides of Prophet Mohammad's Divine Messengership, that is the Muslims, resolved irrevocably that they would face the heavy odds aligned against them, and not deviate from Islam even if it cost them their lives. The number of these Muslims was very modest. In fact they were too few. They were helpless and poor. They had no weapons to fight. They had no hopes of material aid from any quarter. Nevertheless, they were resolute persons—few in numbers, but potent in their convictions which

gave them the strength to defy everything in their way. They had an explicit faith in God; and with this faith they advanced forth.

The second battle in the history of Islam was fought at Uhud. The enemy having suffered a crushing defeat at Badr earlier had converged again to avenge their earlier loss. This time they came well-equipped with arms and a larger number of fighters. It was a desperate situation for the small number of Muslims who were ill-equipped. The battle-field was littered with the dead bodies of Muslim warriors. To consolidate their initial gaining of ground, the foes spread the rumour that the Holy Prophet was martyred in the engagement. With a stalwart like Hazrat Hamza already martyred, this rumour of the Holy Prophet's martyrdom completely demoralized the Muslim army, so much so that they took to their heels.

It was in this confusion that Hazrat Fatematuz Zahra (A.S.) who understood the strategy of the rumour, ventured out to her father—the Holy Prophet—to nurse the wounds he had sustained. While she did this, Hazrat Ali dashed into the thick of the enemy's flank. The battle-field was one great mass of confusion, shrieks, rattling of weapons and moanings of the wounded and the dying.

Amidst this confounding scene, a female figure emerges undauntingly on the field. She is a woman belonging to the Dinar tribe. She has just heard the news that she has lost her father, brother and husband fighting gallantly on the field. Almost simultaneously she hears the 'news' about the Holy Prophet having

being martyred. She advances now amidst the shower of arrows and lances. Men stop her. They asked her where she is going. They point out the place where the dead bodies of her near and dear one lie scattered, but she completely ignores this information. She is concerned for someone else.

"I want to assure myself of the well-being of the Messenger of Allah", she says with resolute courage and indifference to her own losses.

Some men assure her that the Prophet is safe and sound, and advise her to retreat to her tent.

"But I must see him with my own eyes. Only then can I remain patient", insists the woman.

Ultimately, her love for the Holy Prophet and her faith in her Message lead her to where the Prophet lay wounded, but alive.

"Thanks to Almighty", she says, "It gives me, O' Prophet, the satisfaction of my life to see you alive. I am gratified now. With you alive, no calamity can mean anything".

This is the essence of the message of Islam ! what is of real importance and value is that the giver of Islam and the message be conveyed be preserved at all cost. Even if one has to sacrifice a father, a brother, or a husband, the price is not really too high.

Another instance as the Battle of Ohud is also equally striking and somewhat similar to the one related above. This concerns a lady named Hinda binte Hazam a paternal aunt of the eminent Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari, a reputed Companion of

the Holy Prophet. On being told that she had lost the entire lot of male members of her family and of the Prophet's news of his having been martyred, this lady rushed out of her home and came on to the battle-field. The first thing she assured for herself was the safety and well-being of the Holy Prophet. It was only after being satisfied with his safety of life that she picked up the dead bodies of her husband, Omar bin Jamuh, and Abdullah bin Omar, her brother. She placed them on a camel and returned from the field to have them buried in Medina.

As she approached the outskirts of the city, she chanced to meet the ladies of the Holy Prophet's household, all of whom enquired about the well-being of the latter. Hinda put to rest the anxiety of these ladies, adding: "with Mohammad (S.A.) alive, no calamity can mean anything".

THE SUSTAINING SOURCE OF ISLAM

It is the depth of conviction which a Muslim has in his faith that fetches him safe and sound even from the grip-hold of death. This is the spirit Islam seeks to instill in the hearts of its adherents, indeed of mankind. The more the people inculcated this spirit of steadfastness in their faith, the more successful and victorious they proved. It was this invincible weapon of explicit faith in the unity of God and the Prophet-hood of Mohammad (S.A.) that the enemies of Islam strove to snatch away from the possession of Muslims right since the dawn of Islam. It was Divine providence and the sustained efforts of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) that thwarted the negative designs of the anti-Islamic elements.

Thus frustrated, the enemies of Islam had to think of other ways of achieving their ends. They, therefore, resorted to hypocrisy as a means to succeeding in their plans to annihilate this unconquerable driving force which Islam imbibed in the hearts of its true followers. Accordingly, they started professing belief in the unity of God and the Messengership of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.). They embraced Islam; and under its garb, they managed to grab positions of authority.

Thus placing themselves in advantageous positions, they exploited the resources of the State and started scheming against the truly devoted religious leaders. They fabricated false Traditions against these eminent dignitaries, and attributed their fictions to the Holy Prophet. These hypocrites organized a united front against these noble leaders. They even went to war against them. Then, they concluded treaties, too, with them. They murdered them and incited the public so effectively against them that "I have corrected the prayer-direction to that towards foppery" became a common confession. This religious retrogression was not limited to a few individuals alone. It became a mania with a vast majority of persons who called themselves Muslims. There were, however, a very few left whose hearts wept silently at this moral degeneration, but there was nothing they could do about this sordid state of affairs. Circumstances, as they prevailed then, had rendered these noble souls absolutely helpless.

MORAL DEGENERATION

The few faithful adherent of Islam who stood their ground in silent anguish at the calculated defilement of Islamic values had no choice but to be patient. With the defiler's outwardly profession of being believers in the unity of God and Prophet Mohammad's Messengership, and with copies of the Holy Quran dangling in the homes of these hypocrites, the true devotees felt that the wisest course open to them was to wait and endure it out patiently.

Thus the process of moral degeneration gained momentum and proceeded unabated. Finally, there came a time when wine, dancing and music became popular occupations for the people, so much so that slanderous poetry, insulting the images of Prophets, were composed and openly sung. The low ebb to which morality sank can be gauged from the fact that not only was Islam made an object of clownish ridicule, but even the Holy Prophet was referred to in very contemptuous language. The extent of this moral turpitude is evident in the following obscene poetic mutterings of Yazeed :

The sunny radiance of wine-grapes basks gloriously in the inside roundness of the goblet ;

The beloved cup-bearer is the Eastern horizon of the sun that this wine-grape is,

And Yazeed's gullet is where this sunny radiance sinks like the sun does in West,

When this wine descends into the cup from the goblet, it is akin to....., :

If this wine is prohibited in Islam, then come, take it. and drink it as prescribed in religion of.....

(Ref. Tareekh-e-Ashura Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim, Barrasi, p. 15).

One can gauge from above ravings the extent to which morality had degenerated and the role Yazeed played in the promotion of antipathy towards Islam. The entire community of Islam stood aghast at Yazeed's depravities. None dared say anything in protest.

IMAM HUSAIN TO THE RESCUE

It was in the midst of such abhorable atmosphere and forced silence that Imam Husain (A.S.) rose to break the spell. Nourished and brought up under the personal care of the Prophet of Islam, he came of a household which had imparted to men and women a driving martial spirit that sustained the sanctity of Islam right from its first armed engagement at Badr to Siffin.

It was only this noble figure—the Imam and the grandson of the Holy Prophet, who alone could revive this spirit once again. It was he alone who could instill in the hearts of the people that spirit which could ensure the preservation of Islamic values, even if they had to sacrifice their lives and homes in the process.

It was with this conviction that Imam Husain (A.S.) set out from Medina for Syria. He visualized

the Call of prayers echoing once again in the mosques there, people taking to regular prayers, and the glorification of the Holy Prophet and Islam with its flag fluttering dominantly once again. But what happened in effect was quite different. Yazeed intercepted Imam Husain (A.S.) with his army which blocked his way with naked swords and spears; but that did not deter the latter from sounding the Call of prayers from a top the spear. The Imam prostrated to Allah right under the cutting-edge of the enemy's sword. He performed his worship under the hailstorm of arrows. Imam Husain (A.S.) fell a martyr; but his martyrdom humiliated the wine-worship in Yazeed's Darbar and resurrected the greatness of Islam for all times.

The first ten days of the month of Moharrum of the year 61 A.H. were decisive days for ensuring the future of Islam for which Imam Husain (A.S.) had set forth. It was on the 10th of Moharrum that year that the Imam, accompanied by a few devout Momins, clashed finally against a whole army of anti-Islam, anti-Prophet and anti-God elements. He sacrificed the lives of his infant son, another young and youthful son, his valiant brothers and nephews and a score of faithful and unique companions for the cause of Islam and all that it stood for. Then, as a drop-scene of this brutal drama of blood, Imam Husain (A.S.) laid down his own life for the glory of Islam, thereby making Karbala a stronghold of Islamic ideology—a divine and inspiring centre for all believers in Divine Truth. With each century that passes off in terms of time and space, the memory of Imam Husain's

martyrdom strengthens itself in its womb as a homage to him; and one can clearly hear a celestial voice saying, to quote Allama Iqbal again:

There. In blood and sand does lie Husain
And hence laid the foundation of "La Elaha Illallah"

The message that Imam Husain's martyrdom—the foundation on which the edifice of Islam rests resurrected; the foundation he gave to mankind was culled like a tender flower on the field of Karbala, to be nourished and promoted by Hazrat Zainab (A.S.), the Imam's loving sister. Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) was in the nursing care of this venerable lady—his paternal aunt. The perverted henchmen of Yazeed paraded the inmates of the Holy Prophet's household in the open streets of Kufa and Syria, their object being to deter the true adherents of Islam from remaining steadfast with their faith in Islam. Yazeed exhibited the severed heads of the martyrs before the spectators at his *darbar* (palace), placing the head of Imam Husain (A.S.) in a particularly outrageous manner. He strove vainly to humiliate the high status and honour of the female progeny of the Holy Prophet. God Almighty, however, abased Yazeed so thoroughly that his very name is a filthy rebuke today, whereas the names of Imam Husain (A.S.), his family members and his supporters stand glorified as symbols of the spiritual excellence of Islam; of Truth; of the singular unity of Allah; of the veracity of Prophet Mohammad's Divine Messengership; of God's vicegerency (*Imamat*) that constitutes the supporting pillar of Islam, and as the fountain source of life eternal.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XVII

WHAT MOHARRUM REMINDS

With the appearance of crescent-moon heralding the month of Moharrum year after year devoted hearts beat with a mournful rhythm that proclaims to humanity that Husain (A.S.) is Pure, Infallible, True and Divinely attested as such; that Allah is One and there is none else like unto Him; that those who defy His blessed religion—Islam—is an atheist; that Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and his precepts are incontrovertible; that anyone who denies this is a fornicator, a wine-addict, and one who advocates such a person is a disciple of Yazeed. The Moharrum moon reminds humanity that it was Imam Husain (A.S.) who fought for the cause of Truth against Yazeed and vanquished his evil forces for ever.

This is what the month of Moharrum reminds to every devotee of Imam Husain (A.S.), and this is what his martyrdom means in plain words:

That Islam alone is the right religion;

That the principles and practice Islam advocates, The socio-moral code it presents, the philosophy of life it expounds—these alone are Divinely true. Everything else is false;

That for seekers of Truth, the sacred shrine of the Banner of Islam—Imam Husain (A.S.)—at Karbala is an invincible fortress of Islam;

That its preservation is our sacred duty;

That the month of Moharrum is the time to dedicate ourselves to the task of promoting the teachings of Islam;

That this is the sacred month during which those who read, write or listen to the events of the Tragedy of Karbala pay a humble homage to the Martyred Imam with tears and feeling of gratitude to him, and seek thereby to mould their lives according to the principles he has left behind.

AZADARI DURING THE UMMAYYAD PERIOD

The foundations of the mournings and lamentations over Imam Husain's martyrdom that one sees today were laid as early as immediately after the Tragedy of Karbala. It was not possible in those days to convene mourning gatherings and lament

openly in public because of the severe restrictions of the then prevailing Government ban on such assemblies, and also because of the absence of the means of communication and propaganda which could promote social intercourse for the purpose. The growth and evolution of the institution of Azadari has been a gradual process akin to that of a sown seed, which first appears in the form of stapling struggling through the crust of the earth, then grows gradually into a tree with tender branches ladden with green leaves and finally becomes a spreading tree with shade-giving and firm branches and fulfilled leaves.

Similarly, history and culture are products of civilizational evolution spread over centuries. It is thus a deep study and proper research of available material that can throw some light on the origin and evolutionary development of Azadari and its links with history. There are major and minor links in the chain of its development spread over centuries. There are, however, also a few gaps in the chain; but these gaps are the result of historians' lack of attention to the vacuums of history and cultural progress. Otherwise there never was any real break in the continuity of Azadari at any stage of its existence. It has always sustained itself as a necessary institution for true Muslims at all times.

Let us therefore begin with a brief discourse on the precepts and practice of Islam as personified by the Holy Prophet and his Able Bait, particularly in the context of the role played by Yazid in the history of Islam and the circumstances and events binding the

Muslims to this Tragedy, and the consequent unceasing grief it brought for them.

10TH MOHARRUM 61 A.H. AND THE AFTERMATH

There was a peculiar sort of confusion in the minds of the people of Kufa and its suburbs following the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) at Karbala on the 10th of the month of Moharrum of the year 61 Hijra. The impact of the earlier Battles of Jamul and of Siffin, and even of the recent martyrdoms of Imam Hasan (A.S.), followed by Janab-e-Hani's and Janab Muslim's, had not made deep enough marks on the thinkers of the people of Kufa for history to retain. They were a fickle-minded community who had exhibited their capricious character many a time; and at each such instances, the Kufians were branded as traitorous and treacherous set of community. These regular condemnations, however, failed to bring about any reformation in their depraved mentality.

The Tragedy of Karbala, however, was an event that shook the whole of Kufa for the first time in history, particularly so those devoted to Imam Husain (A.S.) who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the Imam but were either helpless or were afraid to do so openly.

Yazeed's army on the other hand paraded the captive household members of the martyred Imam's family, including Hazrat Zainab (A.S.), and paraded them bound in chain on the streets of Kufa.

The Government made this procession of fettered captives a thing of public exhibition; and the people, too, influenced with the official propaganda, came out in large numbers to see the captive progeny of the Holy Prophet being paraded in the streets. These men and women of Kufa were so much prejudiced against the Holy Prophet's generations that they threw dates at them in a contemptuous manner.

However, when the mob of spectators had reached its peak of frenzy when they had poured out their hatred and satisfied their pervert conscience; and when it became clear that these people of Kufa had no sympathies for Prophet Mohammad's children, it was then that Janab-e-Zainab (A.S.) apprised the crowds of spectators with the facts of the events. She reconstructed with pathetic eloquence the atrocities committed on the field of Karbala. She exposed the wrong beliefs injected into the minds of the antagonists of the Prophet's generations and apprised the Kufians of the true character of the adversaries of the Ahle Bait. She addressed the spectators with moving oratories and advised them to be patient. Her gestures, and her commanding voice and oratorial excellence reminiscent of that of Ali (A.S.), mesmerized the crowds and held them spell-bound. This is what she told them:

"Praise be to Allah the Almighty and may His blessings be upon my father—Prophet Mohammad Mustafa (S.A.) and his progeny.

"O' you treacherous people of Kufa ! Listen:

"Weep, O' you people. May your tears and sighs never cease. You are like the old woman who unknits the fabric after having once spun the yarn and weaved it into a piece of cloth. You are accustomed to deceive each other after swearing that you would be true to your word. Do you people possess no quality of character other than vanity, falsity and other perversities? You are like the slave-girls who excell in flattering their masters. You are like the traitorous enemy who has no scruples whatsoever. You are like the fodder of a horse or the flowery bed had over the grave. What a mass of evile you people have hoarded for the Hereafter! Know you, O' people, the wrath of God is destined for you. You stand condemned to Hell, where you all will suffer till eternity. O' you people, you are weeping for us after having brutally murdered us? By Allah, weeping is what you people deserve. So, weep, do weep, and weep well. Laugh not much, for, you have so irretrievably stained yourselves with evil and shame that nothing can ever wash the blot. How can you ever remove this blot? How can you ever repent enough to undo what you have done? You have brutally murdered the beloved grandson of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.)—the last of the Messengers of God. You have slain the sacred personage who is the Leader of the young of the paradise; who was the refuge for the good ones among you; who was haven of redress for the distressed among you, who is the guiding light in your life, and an eloquent spokesman of Truth. You used to seek his refuge in every calamity, and

you used to learn about religion and its Divine laws from him. So, you have indeed collected too heavy a sinful burden to account for on the Day of Reckoning. There is now no salvation for you people; you are doomed to destruction. You are destined to be flung face-down into the fire hell. You are beyond redemption, and you must hopelessly remain so. May your arms be chopped off! All your promises will gain nothing but losses. Divine wrath envelopes you. You stand surrounded by humiliation and disgrace on all sides. Curse be upon you all. Look, which darling of the Holy Prophet you have slain! Look, whose blood you have spilled! We are the ladies of Prophet Mohammad's sacred household. Look, whom have you dragged unveiled into public gaze!

"The gravity of the crime you have committed is so serious that the heavens may well drop off from their place. You may wonder why the sky did not let loose a shower of blood in cognizance of your evil doings; but rest assured, what you will witness in the Hereafter will be far more diabolic and disgraceful than you expect. So, do not be jubilant and boastful because of the respite you have at the moment. Lord Almighty does not act hastily in awarding His punishment, for time cannot bypass the moment of His vengeance. The Lord is evervigilant of the evil doers..."

These piercing and eloquent expressions of Janab-e-Zainab (A.S.) violently moved the hearts

of the audiences so much so that the mobs started weeping aloud, and the entire assembly was transformed into a mourning gathering. Everyone, irrespective of individual beliefs and religious affiliation, was weeping, profuse with grief and tears that damped their beards. According to historians, no man and woman and child were ever seen weeping so emotionally and in so spontaneous a manner before this historic occasion.

After Janab-e-Zainab (A.S.), Hazrat Umme Kulsoom and Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) addressed the crowds. The speech of the former is not available. That of Imam Zainul Abideen runs thus:

"Praise be to Allah the Almighty, and may His blessings be upon Prophet Mohammad and his progeny.

"O' People!

"Recognize me if you know me.

"If not, then listen.

"I am Ali bin Husain bin Ali bin Abi Talib.

I am the son whose father was brutally butchered on the bank of River Euphrates. I am the son whose father's property was plundered. I am the son whose father was insulted; whose ladies of the household were made captives. I am the son whose father's martyrdom surpasses human patience in its magnitude of execution, and this ment is indeed a source of great distinction of which I can justifiably be proud as a son of so unique a father.

"O' people!

"I ask you all under oath:

"Have you forgotten that you yourselves had written letters to my father, asking him to come to you?

And when he responded to you by coming, you proved to be treacherous.

"Have you forgotten that it was you who had made certain promises and agreement with my venerable father and extended your hands in allegiance to him? Yet, when the time came, you forsook him and left him helpless to be murdered in the most brutal manner, dismembering his body in gradual degrees.

"May your treacherous doings be cursed! curse be upon what you have accumulated for the Day of Reckoning. What an ignoble conduct you people have adopted! How can you now face the Holy Prophet on the Day of Resurrection? Will he not question you about the wanton killings of his flesh and bones that we are of him? Will be not ask why you outraged his sacred dignity? Will he not forsake you and declare you to be outside the pale of Islam".

At this stage Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) paused for a few moments. His moving words had pierced right down to the cores of the hearts of the crowd of people listening to him. The entire crowd stood weeping, and the whole atmosphere echoed with

their sobs. And in the midst of these wailings, the Imam resumed.

"May God have mercy upon and bless those who respond positively to what I say straight from my heart, and those who act in the cause of God and the Holy Prophet and his Ahle Bait according to my sincere advice.

"Listen:

We are the most suited missionaries of the Divine message the Holy Prophet brought, and we (i.e. the Ahle Bait) are the best administrators".

At this the whole crowd with one voice shouted, saying: "We all are obedient to you; we will honour the Agreement we have made with you; we will all be faithful and abiding to you; we will carry out each and every order that you may give us; we will fight against whomsoever you fight and abide peacefully with those with whom you choose to be at peace. We will ultimately, one day, catch hold of Yazeed and avenge the blood he has shed. We declare hereby that those who have wronged you are our confirmed foes".

To this mob expressions, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) replied with these words:

"Pity, Fie be upon you, O' self-excusing traitors! You have nothing more in your characters than falsity and deceit. I can never be hoodwinked by your trickeries. Do you people think that you can play the same drama of blood that you staged with my father?

"No.....Never.

"By God, the wounds of my martyred father are still fresh. It was only yesterday that he was slain along with the other members of our family; and the Holy Prophet, too, has not yet overcome the grief of the slayings of my father and my brothers. The grief and pain of their martyrdoms is still lingering in my throat. The magnitude of this Tragedy is still a living matter in body and soul. Holy breast still heaves with the suffocating effects of this heart-rending calamity. Hence, what I seek from you people is that you neither align yourselves with us nor do so against us".

Ref. MUNTAH AL-AMAAL, IRSHAD
AL HAUF. TABARI, ETC.

The effect of these speeches in Kufa was virtually magical. Those who a little while ago were laughing scornfully at these captive members of the Holy Prophet's household, were now moved to tears with the moving eloquence of their addresses, which sowed the seeds of friendliness in hearts that were erstwhile enmical. These speeches also created hatred in the minds of the people against the families of the murderers, and restored honour to the surviving members of the families of the martyrs. They helped to interpret the Tragedy of Karbala in its true perspective, and highlighted its true significance. They made the people think over the issue.

Ibne Sa'ad had taken out the members of the Holy Prophet's family in a procession, chained as captives,

through public thoroughfares in order to add insult to injury, and humiliate them. But this only served to glorify the Ahle Bait. People, instead, wept over them. This reaction of the people shook the very foundations of Yazeed's authority. Perhaps that is why even today mourning processions are taken out and sermons delivered on the streets as commemoration of this day. The devotees and sympathizers of the Holy Prophet's progeny mirror their grief by walking bare-headed and bare-footed on the streets on this day, and make the people weep by reconstructing the scenes of the Tragedy of Karbala, thereby striking at the very roots of aggression which was the weapon-in-chief of the tyrants. These public demonstrations and commemorations of that evil day make the heads of the enemies of Truth hang down in humiliation and shame.

Thus it was that Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) was glorious, though oppressed; and the oppressor was disgraced through the eloquent expositions of the oppressed.

THE SCENE AT IBNE ZIYAD'S COURT

Ibne Ziyad, pleased with the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.), sat jubilant in his court. Before him stood the party of the members of the Imam's household from the field of Karbala, stunned with grief. The severed sacred head of Imam Husain (A.S.) lay before the throne upon which Ibne Ziyad sat, turning and tossing the sacred head in most insulting manner. Seeing this bestial indulgence of Ibne Ziyad, Zaid bin Arqam could not hold himself in check, and

rebuked him very sternly. Zaid bin Arqam then eulogized the greatness of the martyred Imam and wept profusely over him. Janab-e-Zainab and Imam Sajjad (A.S.) also discoursed upon the events on the field of Karbala; and Janab Rabab (A.S.) followed them up with his poetic elegies, the substance of which is:

"Ah : Husain

Husain : Your memory is immortal.

The enemy made him a target of their lances ;

They abandoned his dismembered body, unconfined and unburied on the field at Karbala.

May both the River banks of Karbala never prosper by the Curse of God.

"That Divine light from which everyone sought enlightenment,

That same light lies unattended at Karbala.

Ibne Ziyad then stood and delivered a speech to the audience that had gathered in the court, to which Abdullah bin Azeef Azari Ghaamedi gave a befitting reply. As a result of this, the Government again started the campaign of arresting the sympathizers of the Ahle Bait in Kufa. The people protested against this official repression by gathering daily around the prison voicing their lamentations (Ref. Maqal ul-Husain. Abdur Razzaque al-Maqam, p. 423).

These events and circumstances promoted the propagation of the cause for which Imam Husain (A.S.) fell a martyr. The silent agony that persisted

so long, suppressed and strangled, due to official pressures or political expediences, now burst out into vocal protests. The situation now had two complexions. While on one hand the people lamented and grieved over the Tragedy of Karbala, the desire for vengeance was also gradually gaining ground in the emotions of the people. Thus there emerged a few devotees of the Ahle Bait who courageously came forward to fulfil the task at the risk of their lives. There were others, too, who co-operated with these pioneers of the movement, their motive in doing so being to extenuate themselves from their feelings of guilt at not having been of use at the actual time of the Tragedy.

THE AHLE BAIT IN DAMASCUS

The caravan comprising of the captive members of the Prophet's household were then ordered to be sent over to Syria. Accordingly, they were escorted on the way to Damascus. Enroute, they addressed people wherever they got the opportunity to do so. They would describe the events at Karbala and apprise the audiences with facts relating to Imam Husain's martyrdom; and men, women and children with a conscience wept at the descriptions of the brutalities committed on Imam Husain (A.S.), his kith and kin and his devout supporters.

It was in Damascus—the capital of the State where Yazeed suffered the most ignoble humiliation at the hands of the Ahle Bait. Yazeed was under the impression that after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) the world would recognize his power and

authority. He thought that the sight of the Prophet's progeny in chains would make the people repose confidence in his "victory." Instead, what actually happened was quite the reverse. Decorated streets and bazaars as well as Yazeed's palace became places where multitudes of people came out and acknowledged the greatness of the martyred Imam by hundreds. In particular, the protestations by the Roman delegation among the invitees made clear the emotional and deep regards even the foreigners had for Imam Husain (A.S.) and the Ahle Bait. What shocked and silenced Yazeed more than anything else was the eloquent sermon which Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) delivered to the audience when he took the floor, superseding the official speaker whom Yazeed had asked to speak as a reply-addressee. Rising up dramatically, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) commenced his sermon thus:

"Praised be Allah who has no beginning; whose entity is eternal; the First One whose infinity is beyond comprehension; the Last One whose existence is endless; the One who will exist when everything else will cease to be. HE it is, who split time and space into nights and days, and blessed these with His graciousness.

"Listen, O' People:

"We (the Ahle Bait) are Divinely blessed with six virtues and seven distinct honours. Knowledge, gentleness, charity, eloquence, courage, and Momins' love for us is personified in us. We have

the honour that Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) the last of the Divine Messenger; Ali the Truthful one; Tayyar (Jaffar) the ever-vigilant; Hamza the lion of Allah and the Holy Prophet; Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (A.S.) all belong to our genealogical stock.

"Listen O' People:"

"Those who know me, know me well; and for those who don't, I have told them about myself and my ancestral lineage. I am the son of Mecca and Mina. I am the son of Zamzam and Safa. I am the son of him (The Holy Prophet) who lifted the sacred Black Stone (Hajr-e-Aswad) wrapped in a sheet of cloth. I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet) who was the exalted of all the Prophets. I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet) who ascended into the heavens astride the Buraq (the horse-like celestial animal on which Prophet Mohammad ascended to Heaven). I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet) whom Hazrat Jibrael (A.S.) took up to the berry tree near gannated Ma'ava. I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet) who had the honour to be at "Qaaba Qausain".

I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet) with whom the angels offered their prayers in the sky. I am his son (the Holy Prophet) whom God Almighty blessed with His special revelations.

I am the son of him (the Holy Prophet) who fought religious wars at Badr and Hunain at the

front. I am one who never went near disbelief in God even for a fraction of a moment. I am the heir of the Divine Prophets; the most pious of the Momins; the leader of the Muslims; and the most daring annihilator of disbelievers, apostates, aggressors and other evil groups. I am the steadfast son of Imam Hasan, Imam Husain and Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.). I am the son of Fatematuz Zahra (A.S.)—the most exalted of all the women in the world. I am the son of Khadija-e-Kubra. My father lies slain on the bloody sands of Karbala. I am his son (Imam Husain's), over whom angels weep in the darkness of nights and birds lament in their flight".

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XVIII

AZADARI—AN INSTITUTION BY ITSELF

It is not my intention to go into the details of events. My main object is to focus the fact that Azadari is not limited to angels or unseen spirits or legendary birds. Nor was its origin related to personal or impersonal influences. In other words, Azadari is an institution by itself. It enveloped in its embrace every men, woman and child right from the very moment Imam Husain (A.S.) was martyred, and was evident in the form of mass-mournings at every such gathering where the speaker reconstructed the events of Karbala. Even the high-handedness and oppressive measures of Ibne Ziyad and Yazeed could not curb the emotional tempest associated with the grief over the Tragedy of Karbala. No amount of repressions by Ziyad and Yazeed could stop it despite all efforts, including such indecent poetic compositions by Haseen bin Hamam who in order to please Yazeed read the following verse in antipathy to Imam Husain (A.S.) at the latter's court:

"Our people refused to do justice to us;

Our swords have, therefore, settled the issue.

The swords dangled in our hands in such a manner that blood was dripping from their ends.

Hearing the above detestable lines recited on this occasion, Yahya bin Hakam bin Abi al-Aas Amavi stood up and replied to this perverted poet in extempore verses, in which he accused Ibne Ziyad for his flattery of Yazeed. This poetic exchange was followed up with a short sermon on the greatness of Imam Husain (A.S.) by Abu Burza Aslami, a companion of the Holy Prophet, in which he censured Yazeed for poking the lips and teeth in the severed head of the martyred Imam in an insulting manner. Yazeed then expressed his delight over having avenged the blood of those killed by the Prophet's army in the Battle of Badr. Thereupon Princess Kubra sprang up and delivered a speech, the oratorical excellence and force of which created a havoc in the darbar of Yazeed.

THE FIRST MOURNING HALL IN DAMASCUS

The Ahle Bait were freed after a long time as captives in Syria. In the official order releasing them, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) was given the choice of continuing to live in Damascus if he preferred to do so, or if he chose to go back home, arrangements would accordingly be made. In reply Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) informed Yazeed that he and the other members of the Prophet's household would like to stay in Damascus for some time more.

Accordingly, a house was vacated to accommodate the Ahle Bait who now wore black mourning altires. No sooner had they moved into this premises than the womenfolk of the Quraish tribe started visiting the house, where in mourning gatherings remained a regular routine for seven days. Thus, Damascus—the capital city of the province, became the first centre echoing solemnly with the sounds of breast-beatings and loud lamentations. In fact, it was Janab-e-Zainab who was the pioneer in improvising a Mourning Centre right in the city of Damascus by selecting it for this purpose, and thereby exposing publicly the excesses suffered by Imam Husain (A.S.) at the hands of Yazeed the tyrant. This Mourning Hall exists even today in Damascus, and is a monument to the sacred memory of Janab-e-Zainab.

The historic premises in Damascus comprise of:

- (i) A mosque (Masjid Bani Ummayya). In the corner on the left wing of this mosque, is the place where the Ahle Bait were confined as captives. In the same spot lies the place where Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) used to pray.
- (ii) Raas-al-Husain: the spot where the sacred severed head of Imam Husain (A.S.) was placed. The continued existence of these places in contrast to the ruins of Yazeed's palace is a miracle that speaks for itself in regard to the martyred Imam.

- (iii) Aza'-e-Hazrat Zainab: The covered and secluded mourning halls for ladies, particularly Aza'-e-Hazrat Zainab, is a very big and prominent Centre for mass mournings, where pilgrims from all over the world congregate, and where there is a round-the-clock activity of mourners who wail and lament for Imam Husain (A.S.) and the other martyrs of Karbala.

THE MOURNING CENTRE AT MOSUL

There are two important mourning centres near Damascus, midway between Iraq and Syria. One is Mesh'had-e-Nuqta-e-Mosul", which was once very famous. It is said that the sacred severed head of Imam Husain (A.S.) was placed here, where pilgrims used to congregate to pay their homage. This Centre was housed in an imposing building with an impressive dome over it. Abdul Malik bin Mervan (d. 86 A.H.) removed the historic slab inside it. The building, however, remained undamaged. For quite a long period of time, people used to gather here during the month of Moharrum to mourn and lament for the martyred Imam. Writing about this Centre, Mullah Husain Waiz Kashafi states that Shaikh Uhadi used to compose a few moving couplets in Moharrum each year when he used to visit this place.

MOURNING CENTRE AT HALAB

Like the one at Mosul, there was another prominent Centre for mass mournings at Halab during the Umayyad regime. This Imambara, known as

"Mesh'had ul-Husain" was constructed in a zealous spirit by Saif-ud-daula Hamdani in 351 A.H., and had remained well maintained till 1337 A.H., when it was destroyed during the Great War. In 1379 A.H., the late Hazrat Ayatullah Syed Mohsin al Hakeem ordered it to be renovated in a befitting manner, and today it ranks as one the important Centres. Historian Syed Husain Yusuf Makki Aa'mel has drawn a historical sketch of this Centre in his **Tareekh-e-Mesh'had ul-Husain** published from Beirut in 1968 (this book is preserved in my personal library). This book, however, does not give any details about the modes of mourning. Details in this regard are, however, to be found in the sixth volume of Maulana Rumi's waitings which will be discussed later in this survey.

Ibne Shehr Ashoob Mazandarani (d. 588 A.H.) in his work entitled "**Kitab ul-Mana'iq**"—a monumental work—has also mentioned about other mourning centres in Asqalan, Nasibain and Ha'mat besides the two above-mentioned ones.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF IMAM HUSAIN'S SACRED SHRINE

It was long after the Tragedy of Karbala and the subsequent imprisonment of the Ahle Bait that some courageous person buried the martyrs. (The Martyrs of Karbala were buried on 13th Moharrum i.e. three days after martyrdom. Publishers). The tribe of Bani Asad dwelt then in Karbala. As such it were these people who looked after the resting place of the martyrs. In due course of time, pilgrims started

pouring in to pay their homage. It is also a well-known fact that Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari and Obaidullah bin Hur Ja'afee also visited these shrines during this period. The latter also wrote an Elegy on Imam Husain's martyrdom. We will deal with this in the pages to come. There were several other dignitaries who visited Karbala; but unfortunately, history could not preserve the names of these eminent visitors.

In 65 A.H., during the rule of Merwan bin Hakam and Abdul Malik bin Merwan Abu Ishaque Mukhtar bin Abu Obaida Saqafi captured Kufa. It was he who rehabilitated the population in Karbala and constructed the sacred shrine of Imam Husain (A.S.). This structure which Mukhtar erected was in fact a hall with two entrances, one on the Eastern side and the other on the West. One old berry-tree which must perhaps have shaded the sacred grave of the martyred Imam, was also preserved in its original place as a commemorative mark. There was also a mosque near the sacred shrine. This structure lasted till 170 A.H., and when the Abbasids gained power after the decline of the Umayyad dynasty, Haroon-ur-Rasheed instead of renovating or improving it, ordered its demolition. However, his son, Mamoon-ur-Rasheed reconstructed this building when he became the Caliph.

(Ref. : **Tareekh Wa Tameer-e-Karbala**. Murtuza Husain, Moharrum Supplement Razakar of 1390 A.H., Also see Encyclopedia of Islam, Urdu, Panjab University and **Tareekh-e-Atba'at-e-Aalia** M S Murtuza Husain).

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AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XIX

AZADARI IN MEDINA

Medina was overrun and destroyed by Yazeed soon after the Tragedy of Karbala. Following this up, he ordered an invasion of Mecca. The Companions of the Holy Prophet were shamefully humiliated in Medina, and there was a general massacre of the dignitaries of Islam. Not only did they contend with their atrocities in Medina, they even burnt down Ka'aba the sacred House of God. Finally, Yazeed also died.

All these developments highlight the importance of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) and the cause he fell for. When Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) arrived in Medina alongwith the members of the Imam's household, he sent a person named Bashir into the city of Medina to proclaim what had happened at Karbala. This man accordingly went round the populated areas of Medina and announced ;

"O' you dwellers of Yethreb! Medina is now no more a haven of peace for you. Husain has been martyred! Weep, O' you people, weep and weep as much as you can".

Hazrat Ummul Momineen Umme Salma, Ibne Abbas and other prominent persons of the tribe of Bani Hashims were already in mourning since long. This announcement of Bashir added fuel to the fire, and the entire city of Medina was now afire with lamentations.

The arrival of the caravan of the household members of Imam Husain's family presented moving scenes. The ladies in particular were so much touched at returning to their home-city after the martyrdoms of Imam Husain (A.S.) and others of their family that they started wailing and lamenting. The verses which Hazrat Umme Kulsoom recited extempore on this occasion are famous for their poetic beauty as well as depth of emotions. The following is an English free versification of her inimitable poetic excellence.

Medina: O' city of Prophet's holy Shrine,
How high your honour, what glory is your.

Yet, to embrace you do now we shy. With
hearts so full and eyes that cry,

For, Once—the day to Karbala when we tread,
With blood so holy, so sacred by God blessed.

With babies at breasts and Elders benign,
To fate in land so distant we did resign.

Now, of Elders bereft, and hearts that ache, to
you, O' city, we our footsteps take.

With scent of lips, thirsty infant's on our
breast, Washed with blood, lulled and laid
to rest.

(Versification. M. Jaffer Husain).

In reply of this lengthy Elegy, a sister of Hazrat Muslim bin Aqeel recited a few verses, substances of which is:

"What explanation do you have to put forward when the Holy Prophet on the Day of Judgment will ask you all—his followers how it was that you, despite being his followers, subjected his progeny and his Ahle Bait to all sorts of excesses after him? Some of his kith and kin were taken prisoners, and some bathed in blood! What reply would you give?"

This was the first and the biggest public mourning in Medina. The Ahle Bait had returned to their homes, but the women of the Bani Hashim tribe donned black clothes and went into mourning. Notwithstanding the severity of Arabian heat and cold waves, they continued weeping and lamenting day in and day out. Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) used to make arrangements for feeding these mourners. The womenfolk forsook all their merri-ments. They gave up combing their hair and abstained from cooking food in their homes for a considerable period of time (Ref. Kitab ul Mohasin, Burq, p. 194, Bahar-ul-Anwaar, Kitabut Tahara Vol. 18, p. 210).

Hazrat Ummul Baneen, the venerable wife of Ameerul Momineen, had made it a daily routine of her life to go out to the graveyard at Janat-ul-Baqi, where she used to lament in an agonizing manner. So deep-felt and moving were her poetic wailings that the people of Medina used to stand mesmerized around her when she used to pour out her heart for Imam Husain (A.S.) and other martyrs of Karbala. The same was the routine of Janab-e-Rabab, a wife of the martyred Imam (Ref. Maqatil ul-Talebeen, pub. Egypt, 1949 p. 85).

It was as if all the homes of the Bani Hashim, including of course those of Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.), of Hazrat Zainab and of Janab-e-Umme Kusloom, and even the graveyard of Jannat-ul Baqi had become mourning centres in Medina. Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) and Abdulla bin Abbas used to be particularly engaged in relating to male sections of these gatherings the events that took place on the field of Karbala, and make them weep and wail with the description of brutalities. So deep was the impact of his father's martyrdom on the mind of Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) that even while sitting down for meals, with the glass of water in his hand, he would burst out weeping and lose himself in the agony of his recollections. People used to advice patience to him, and in reply he would say "I cannot help it. Whenever the memory of my father flashes into my wind, my tears stream forth....."

(Ref. Irshad ul-Quloob, pub. Bombay, p. 23).

As for Hazart Ibne Abbass, his grief lingered him till ripe old age, so much so, that he lost his eye sight as a result of incessant weeping. (Ref. Mooraj-uz-Zahab, pub. Egypt 1346 A.H., p. 116).

Imam Mohammad Baquir (A.S.) and Imam Jaffar (A.S.) also used to encourage people in the propagation of Azadari. During their time, the month of Moharrum was specifically dedicated to mass mournings. These two Imams used to gather the people in Medina, listen to Elegies on the martyrs of Karbala, and enlighten the audiences with the sacrifices offered by Imam Husain (A.S.).

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CHAPTER XX

AZADARI CONTINUED DESPITE

OFFICIAL STRICTURES

If Unity among the sympathizers of Ahle Bait had prevailed; if the Imams had been free from official strictures on the devotees of the Ahle Bait; and if the contemporary historians had known the significance of Azadari, its comprehensive background and its potent futurity, the Imams would certainly have enlightened the people on this subject much more than circumstances permitted them. But the fact is that successive government regimes and the adversaries of Ahle Bait suppressed the spread of this knowledge; and as a result of this suppression, considerable literature comprising of eloquent Elegies has been lost to us.

However, despite these suppressions, we find in history the names of Kumait and Farzdaq—the two

most outstanding literary figures during the Ummayyad period. The literary works of these eminent scholars is generally available in old publications. There were a few other not-too-well-known poets also who, despite grave personal risks, wrote eloquent Elegies on Imam Husain (A.S.). Some of these compositions have come down to us. One of these persons is Abul Aswad Do'a'ily who was a devout follower of the Companions of the Holy Prophet, and a close associate of Hazrat Ali. It was Abul Aswad Do'a'ily who laid the foundations of syntax (grammar) and lexicons. He died after the year 69 A.H., i.e. after the Tragedy of Karbala. Historian Masudi has cited two verses from Do'a'ily's Elegies, the substance of which is as follows :

"I pray to God with all the force of my heart's agency that may He destroy the empire of Bani Ziyad in the manner He destroyed the civilizations (Ad and Thamood) of yore. Those people have proved to be very dishonest and traitorous by slaying Imam Husain (A.S.).....

(Morooj-uz-Zahab : 2/95, pub. 1346 A.H.)

"Poets dared not write Epicediums for fear of incurring the wrath of the Bani Ummayyad", writes Abul Faraj Isfahani in *Maqatil ut-Talebeen* (p. 122).

Those Elegists who did compose Epicediums could not finish their series. For instance, the prominent poet of that period, Sulaiman bin Qatta whose under-mentioned Elegy is reported to have become very

popular. Even recognized literary figures like Ibne Qotaiba, Abul Faraj Isfahani and Abu Tamam recorded his verses. It appears, therefore, that Sulaiman must truly have been a specialist poet who wrote mainly about the Tragedy of Karbala (Qatta is the name of Sulaiman bin Habib Maharabi Malghi's mother. The same Sulaiman has also written an Epicedium on Imam Husain (A.S.). See *Maqatil ut-Talebeen*).

SUBSTANCE OF SULAIMAN'S ELEGY

- (i) "When I passed through the localities where once the progeny of Mohammad (S.A.) dwelt, I noticed that their houses and the surroundings were not the same as they were when they lived there.
- (ii) "Did you not notice the sun suffering an eclipse, and the earth trembling, at the time Imam Husain (A.S.) fell a martyr?
- (iii) "Till yesterday the world used to ask for help from them, but today they stand as personifications of adversity and oppressed victims. And the nature of their suffering? God protect!
- (iv) "Till only yesterday the tribe of Qais used to extend their hands towards us for their needs and we used to oblige these beggars; but in our bad days these very people became our murderer. Is this what humanity stands for?

(v) "Abdulla bin Otba Ghunsvi (a murderous man of Karbala) owes his blood to us, and we will avenge our blood on the day we come into the field.

(vi) May God make their houses and the occupants prosper though they. The houses have been vacated their houses against my wishes.

(vii) "The Martyr of Karbala from among the Bani Hashims is he whose manner of martyrdom has humiliated the "Muslims" in a disgraceful manner.

(viii) "If God takes cognizance of the deeds of these tyrants, then these wretched people will be completely destroyed just as the people who strayed away from the path of Truth during the time of Prophet Moses were destroyed.

(The last couplet has been taken from Masudi's work, and the rest of the verses have been quoted from *Hamasa*, *Maqatil al-Talibain* and *Manaqib* etc.).

In verse vii, the original word in place of "Muslims" was Quraish. According to Ibne Qatiba, a certain elder of the Bani Hashim clan, Abdullah bin Husain, deleted "Quraish" and inserted "Muslims"; and Sulaiman acknowledged this correction with gratitude to, and recognition of, Abdullah's superior poetic consciousness, what this correction implies is quite apparent. By mentioning the "Quraish" in the said verse, Sulaiman had limited the import of the Tragedy of Karbala to only the Quraish tribe, whereas

Abdullah, by correcting it to "Muslims", widened the import to cover the entire Muslim community, for, it was not for the Quraish only, but the entire brotherhood of Islam, that Imam Husain (A.S.) fell a martyr.

The same poet, i.e. Solaiman, has written another lengthy Epicedium which eulogizes other martyres of Karbala besides Imam Husain (A.S.). There are as many as 400 couplets elegizing Aun's and Mohammad's martyrdom alone. The following are a few specimen from this Epicedium:

(i) "There lay the name-sake of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) bathed in blood. The sharp edge of the enemy's sword had done its job.

(ii) "O' tear-filled eyes, pour out your tears in torrents, if weeping is what you seek. Let the flow of your tears stream forth like a flood.

(iii) "If weep you must, then weep for Aun, the brother of Mohammad (A.S.), for how can you overlook him in calamity.

(v) "By my life, The Ahle Bait were confronted with the greatest of calamities. I will therefore keep lamenting for them for ever and ever".

The object of quoting these verses is, because according to Syed Murtuza, Sulaiman bin Qatta Malghi Teemi Mohadis was the first ever elegist who

wrote Epicediums on the martyrs of Karbala (Ref. *Aah Shayr Wa Shora*, Ibne Qatibe, pub. Egypt—1364 A.H., F.N. by Ahmed Mohammad Shak, Vol. 1, p. 6).

However, Allama Ibne Shehr Ashoob (d. 588 A.H.) thinks otherwise. In his view, the first known elegist poet was Atba bin Ameer Schmi:

- (i) The eye-sight exists no more, O' Ahle Bait, when you are seen in distress, though the eyes of others in general may feel delighted at the pleasantries of life.
- (ii) When I passed by the side of Imam Husain's sacred grave in Karbala, a torrent of tears streamed forth from my eyes.
- (iii) Thus struck with grief, I remained at the spot, pouring out my agony through singing Elegies on him and weeping out my heart for hours.
- (iv) "And in my wailings and lamentations, my eyes bore company with me in venting the flood of my emotions.
- (v) "There was a large crowd of devotees that remained at the graves of the martyrs after paying homage to Imam Husain (A.S.) at his sacred resting place.
- (vi) "My humble salutations to you, O' you who rest peacefully at Karbala, and also to you, O' you who pay homage to them.
- (vii) I wish to God that pilgrims continue to visit these graves and drink deep at this fountain of Divine blessings.

It is obvious that in gatherings, if such epicediums are recited, the pitch of grief must necessarily reach its peak; and it is quite natural for the audiences to vent their feelings through tears. These epicediums and events, as such, reflect the grief that prevailed during the Ummayyad period of history in respect of Imam Husain's martyrdom. What we can gather from these writings is that Azadari, through the media of Arabic poetry, had gained currency during the period the Ummayyas were in power, and that mournings for Imam Husain (A.S.) had become a routine observance according to the customs and practices prevalent then. Thus, breast-beatings were quite common then, as also mourning congregations with poetic recitals. Majlises also were current, whereat the Tragedy of Karbala was discoursed upon, and some of the poets were as emotional as the following verses indicate:

"Our affinities lie amidst the graves at Karbala,
O' Bani Ummayyas!

"May the curses of God be upon you; you are the products of the conquest of Mecca and the Battle of Badr".

Ibne Asakir credits Khalid bin Mohajir, the grandson of Khalid bin Waleed, with the authorship of these verses in his *Tareekh* (Vol. 5, p. 91. See also my article *Tareekh Aur Mersia Ka Ta'aluq* 'Publishers' Sargodha—1967).

LETTER WRITTEN BY HAZRAT ABDULLAH IBNE ABBAS

A documentary evidence of the prevalence and spread of Azadari during the Ummayyad period is the letter written by Abdullah Ibne Abbas addressed to Yazeed Ibne Muawiya. Written as it is by one who is recognized in history as an authority on Quran and Traditions, and as a venerable companion of the Holy Prophet in Medina, and the chief of the Bani Abbas clan, it reflects through the pathetic currents of its contents, the feelings of Ibne Abbas and his contemporaries in respect of Imam Husain's martyrdom. The letter from Ibne Abbas corroborates the authenticity of the events that have been narrated earlier in these pages on the authority of different sources.

The background of this historic letter is that soon after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) Yazeed started making efforts to win over Abdullah bin Abbas to his side, but failed to do so. While his vain efforts were continuing, Yazeed learnt that Abdullah bin Abbas had refused to declare his fealty to Abdullah bin Zubair, hinting at his own (Yazeed's) right to the latter's allegiance. The reply that Abdullah bin Abbas wrote to Yazeed throws sufficient light on the emotional aspects of Azadari. Historian Ibne Aseer has cited both these letters in his monumental work *Tareekh-e-Kamil* (Vol. 4, p. 50) while dwelling upon certain events and developments during Yazeed's regime.

Ibne Aseer starts initially with describing the moral depravities of Yazeed, including his indulgences

with wine and women. He then goes on to describe how Abdullah bin Zubair rose in revolt against Yazeed after Imam Husain (A.S.) was martyred, and how he then demanded allegiance from Abdullah Ibne Abbas. When Yazeed came to know of this development, he wrote the following letter to Abdullah Ibne Abbas :

"I understand that 'Infidel' Abdullah bin Zubair had tried to seek your allegiance, and that you refused, being more concerned with your fealty to me. This act of yours is an indication of your faithfulness to me. May God bless you with His choicest blessings which He reserves for His virtuous ones. I will not forget your faithfulness and integrity and virtuous attachment to your dear ones. Please note that when people whom Ibne Zubair has influenced with his claims come to you at Mecca and Medina from distant places, you must explain the true position of Ibne Zubair to them, for, you enjoy a much more esteemed position in their estimation by virtue of your sterling qualities than does Ibne Zubair....." (For detailed contents, see Yaqub's *Al-Tareekh*, Vol. 2, p. 220, pub. Najaf—1358 A.H.).

Note : (The use of the word 'Infidel' for Abdullah bin Zubair exposes the true religious beliefs of Yazeed. The use of this objective for one who was the son of Zubair bin Awam—a close companion of the Holy Prophet—and the tone of address lays bare the debased mentality of Yazeed—*compiler*).

Having written this flattering letter, Yazeed thought that he had succeeded in winning over Ibne Abbas to his side. But in this he was greatly mistaken, for this is what the latter wrote to him by way of reply :

"I acknowledge receipt of your letter. By God, my purpose in refusing my allegiance to Ibne Zubair was not intended to please you. Nor did I wish for your gratefulness to me. What my real object was is best known to God alone. You think that you will never forget my best wishes for you ! O' wretched man, confine these sentiments to yourself alone. As for me, my well-being does not in any way have anything to do with you.

"You have asked me to convince people into your favour by inciting them against Ibne Zubair so that they abandon their affiliations with him and join your camp. Rest assured that this can never happen. There is neither any pleasure nor honour in doing so. Above all, why did you murder Imam Husain (A.S.) and the other darlings of Abdul Muttalib ? It was under your orders that your army slew them and left their butchered bodies on the desert sands, bathed in blood. Their rude bodies were abandoned without being covered. They were martyred brutally, thirsting for a drop of water to drink. They were neither buried nor their bodies handed over to their kith and kin so that they could be duly buried. Gusts of wind deposited layers of sand over their bodies in the wilderness of the open desert, and their

fragrance dominated the sandy atmosphere. Finally, God sent a community of people who had no genealogical links with these martyrs, and it were these people who carried out the funeral services of the martyrs. It were these unrelated people who shrouded their bodies and buried them. It was through their means that you got the throne which you now occupy, for, had not Islam emanated from our homes, you could never have had the opportunity of claiming yourself to be a king of the Muslims and grab the eminent position you have usurped and hold on to today. I can never forget these things.

"I can never forget that it was you who drove out Husain (A.S.) to Mecca from the Holy Prophet's abode. Your army kept chasing him, and you continued to be enmical towards him. From there you compelled him to go out to Iraq. From here too he had to leave with mixed feelings of hope and apprehension, only to be murdered most brutally in Karbala. It was your enmity against God, His Holy Prophet and his Ahle Bait that made you think that they were helpless, despite the fact that were purified and made Infallibles by God Himself. In spite of their desire for mutual understanding and their desire to return home, you uprooted the Ahle Bait, thinking that they were without any support. You people murdered them by conspiring against them like the people of Turkey and Abyssinia once did.

"What surprises me most is that you should now feel the need for my sympathies and help, knowing fully well that you are the murderer of my forefathers. My blood is still dripping from you sword, and I might as well tell you that you are one of those upon whom I have to avenge the blood you shed. Do not feel proud for having gained the upper hand over us. This is merely a temporary phase, and one day, I may assure you, you will stand vanquished by us.

Note : It is clear from this letter that Ibne Abbas believed that the entire responsibility of the Tragedy of Karbala lay upon Yazeed. In other words, all other companions of the Holy Prophet felt the same—*compiler*).

Thus, one can assess the effects the Tragedy of Karbala had on the minds of the people. Why did Ibne Abbas become so emotional while replying to Yazeed's letter? Why did his grief surpass the limits of his endurance? If Ibne Abbas could be so eloquent and emotional while writing a short letter, one can only imagine how much more vociferous and emotionally violent he must have been in his conversations with the people in Medina, and how languishingly he must have been weeping for the martyrs of Karbala, while making other also weep with him.

According to historical accounts, Ibne Abbas used to weep so much over the Tragedy of Karbala that he eventually lost his eye-sight, just as Hazrat Yaqoob had lost his in his grief for his son Yusuf, despite the fact that the former was known for his patience, as is mentioned in the Holy Quran.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF A AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XXI

AZADARI DURING

THE ABBASID PERIOD

(Abbasids came into power in 132 A.H. and the first Umayyad Caliph Muawiya came into power after 41 A.H. Publishers).

The Umayyad Caliphs ruled from 61 A.H. to 142 A.H. Feelings of unrest and animosity in the hearts of the people in Mecca and Medina, however, continued unabated. People in Kufa and Basra were publicly demonstrating their dislike of Umayyad administration. Janab Mukhtar Ibne Obaida Saqafi punished the persons involved in the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.). This cooled the wrath of the people to some extent, but the agony in their hearts remained active. Things would perhaps not have been so serious if Yazeed had contended himself by having only Imam Husain (A.S.) martyred. But what

added insult to injury and made things worse was the fact that the lifeless bodies of the martyrs were made to be crushed under galloping horses, their bodies were left unburied on the field ; and the members of the Imam's household, including ladies and invalids were taken captives. The public parading of these venerable personages as captives on the streets of city after city inflicted a cancerous wound in the hearts of true Muslims. This cancer continued with its agony.

On another front, mourning congregations and moving epicediums by elegist poets kept alive the memory of the Tragedy of Karbala. Thus the people could never forget at what cost Imam Husain (A.S.) had enlightened them with the teachings of Islam, and also with the manner in which the martyred Imam exposed the explicit as well as the implicit dangers of dynastic kingship.

A REGION OF TERROR

The first steps the Umayyads took after the Tragedy of Karbala was to ensure that people forget the progeny of the Holy Prophet. This, they followed up with victimizing the offspring of Hazrat Ali (A.S.). To top it all, there was the person of Yazeed whose very mention was abhorable to all true Muslims. After the death of Yazeed, Mervan, the son of Hakam bin Aas, ascended the throne ; and his succession revived the memory of the role his ancestors had played in history. Hakam bin Aas was the person whom the Holy Prophet had detested and exiled from Medina, and both the father and the son, i.e. Hakam

and Mervan, had demonstrated during Osman's time now depraved their moral character was.

Mervan murdered the official appointed in Egypt by Abdullah bin Zubair. After Mervan, Abdul Malik became the ruler. This gentleman insulted the Divine sanctity of the Holy Quran, humiliated the Prophet's Companions in Medina, harassed every Muslim who went to Mecca for pilgrimage, attacked the sacred Ka'aba, murdered Abdullah bin Zubair in the most beastly manner, and hung his dead body in public and got his severed head sent to Damascus. Hajjaj bin Yusuf was his arbitrary military General. Subsequently, Suleman bin Abdul Malik, and later, the eighth King Omar bin Abdul Aziz, were able to cool down public sentiments to some extent. This was, however, a temporary gap, for Yazeed bin Abdul Malik (Jr.) revived the tyranny at which his ancestor, Yazeed I, was a past master.

Then followed a period when people felt disgusted with religion. And the evidence of this degeneration became all the more conspicuous with the wanton murder of Hazrat Zaid bin Ali, whose dead body was mutilated and sent over to Kufa by Yusuf bin Omar Saqafi, where it was hung on the gallows. One half of his body was burnt down to ashes, while the other half was thrown into the river.

Then came the eleventh ruler. Waleed bin Yazeed bin Abdul Malik. This man openly insulted the Divine sanctity of the Holy Quran. Not contented with his mean act, he shot arrows at it. Still not

satisfied, he exiled Janab Yahya, the son of Hazrat Zaid.

As a result of the evil intentions of the Ummayya ruler, Hisham, and apprehensive of blood-shed among Muslims, Janab Yahya kept moving from one place to another. From Kufa, he moved over to Madain ; from Madain he shifted to Rai ; from there to Sarkhs, thence to Toos and other places. Ultimately in 125 A.H. he was murdered in cold blood. His head was chopped off apart from his body, his both legs and arms were severed, and the body hung on the allows.

Learning about details of Hazrat Zaid's murder, Waleed sent out orders to Yusuf bin Omar Saqafi. directing him to remove Hazrat Zaid's body from the gallows and throw it into fire. Yusuf then lost no time in carrying out these beastly orders. In fact, he over-did his bit by not only roasting the lifeless body on fire but by actually grinding the body to ashes and storing the same in bags. This 'powder', he sprinkled at various places into the river. Abu Muslim Khurasani was the person who managed to secure the severed head of Hazrat Zaid, which he duly buried himself, and observed mourning over him for one full week (Ref. Tabari, Vol. 8, Maqatil ut-Talebeen, Ibne Aseer etc...).

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENTS FROM 61 A.H. TO 193 A.H.

The foregoing historical background will enlighten the reader on the inhuman character and anti-Islamic

conduct of the Bani Ummayyas and their deliberate disregard of the teachings of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.). Limiting the count to Bani Hashims alone, as many as some fifty dignitaries of this clan were murdered by the Ummayyas in most diabolic manners. In addition, countless sympathizers of Hazrat Ali, Imam Husain (A.S.) were butchered by these maniacs. Lives of other devotees also were unbearable.

As a result of these excesses, all the important rulers in the Hedjaz and Iraq remained antagonistic towards the Bani Ummayyas. In certain other places, the people even rose in revolt against them. Hitherto only the Arabs had been facing the situation. Iran does not seem to have played any important role so far in favour of Sa'adiat-e-Bani Ali. It was only in the Arabian peninsula that people protested against the reign of terror to which they were subjected all along, and confronted the Bani Ummayyas' ever-increasing tyranny. Mukhtar and Abdullah bin Zubair were both Arabs. All other anti-regime movements, too, that were launched, originated on the initiative of the Arabs. It were the Iraqis and Arabs who enlightened the non-Arabian Muslims, for it was in the person of Janab Yahya who had come to Iran, that the Iranians saw the beacon-light. They had seen for themselves how he was chased and persecuted in their country. They also saw the beastly manner in which he was butchered in Iran.

Thus, it were the Arabs and the people of Iraq who had initiated the non-Arab populations into awareness of the oppressions that had become the

highlights of this period of their history. It were the Arabs who told them about the treatment meted out to the tribe of Bani Fatema. And again, it were the Arabs who impressed upon them that it was the memory of Imam Husain's martyrdom that had served as the sustaining power for Muslims despite the brutal murders of a large number of the Holy Prophet's generations (Sa'adaat).

It was this enlightenment that forged unity between the Iranians and the Arabs; and united, they stood up to bring about a revolution in the order of things. Their one slogan was: "**Vengeance...we will avenge Husain's blood**". In this they were helped by the Abbasids also. Abu Muslim Khurasani, too, made sacrifices for Abbas on the assumption that the latter deserved it as his right.

THUS IT WAS THAT UMMAYYAD DYNASTIC RULE ENDED.

As in the past, Imam Mohammad Baquir did not participate in this revolution. Historical records prove beyond doubt that he neither initiated nor participated in any movement against the Government at any time. In view of these facts, it would be unjust to say that this revolution was the result of political moves by the Shia community or that it was an outcome of conspiracies by non-Arab elements.

There can, however, be no doubt that the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) has always remained a matter of grief for the Muslims, and it was this fact which political opportunists never failed to exploit by playing upon the emotions of the community for

achieving their own ends. Nevertheless, the Shia Imams always kept aloof from these political machinations. The Ahle Bait in particular have made it clear that the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) was meant to serve as a preservative force for the domination of religion in the lives of the individual as well as the State. Territorial expansionism was neither Imam Husain's motive, nor we his devotees, see to grab territories, using his sacred name for the purpose.

In the month of Rajab in the year 132 A.H., Abul Abbas Abdullah bin Mohammad ascended the Caliphal throne. Mervan was murdered in Zilhaj, 132 A.H. The Abbasids took full advantage of the confusion that prevailed among the masses. The Bani Ummayya had fallen into disgrace in the estimation of the masses during the period commencing with the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) and lasting upto the assassination of Janab Yahya bin Zaid. The Abbasids now adopted "**Ya Shahadaat al Husain**" as their war-cry, and the Umayyad empire tumbled down before the Abbasids. It is an established fact of Islamic history that whenever victorious adventurers wanted to placate public feelings by murdering persons from the Bani Ummayya dynasty, they invariably resorted to the strategy of reviving in public mind the memory of the brutalities the Umayyads had committed. Their poets would come out with such incitements as this ;

"Despatch Bani Ummayya to the infernal depths of disgrace and humiliation which God has rightfully reserved for them.

"Just remember the martyrdoms of Janab-e-Hamza, Imam Husain (A.S.), Janab Zaid and Ibrahim. How savagely were these venerable men butchered".

With this background of emotions, Abul Abbas Abdulla bin Mohammad embarked upon a full-scale massacre of Bani Ummayyas as a plea to avenge the blood of the martyrs, and the people gave him the title of 'Saffah' for this performance. The supporters of Bani Hashims were happy at this destruction of their old enemies. This also helped to appease the sentiments of the mourners of Imam Husain (A.S.).

With the accession of Abul Abbas into power, the Ahle Bait, too, were relieved temporarily of the continuous suppressions to which they had remained subjected all the while. The atrocities of the Ummayyas were recounted in all the important cities of the state. The injustice to the Holy Prophet's generations became a common topic. The new Government made Kufa its centre, and people of the Hedjaz and the Hashimites settled down here in large numbers. There was a marked increase in the traffic of pilgrims to Karbala. According to authorities on the history of Karbala, the Chieftains of the Abbasid dynasty convened public gatherings near Karbala in the year 130 A.H. (Ref. *Madinatul Husain*, Mohd. Hasan Aal-e-Kileedar, pub. 1949, p. 79.) Janab Yahya came down to Karbala and had the honour of presenting himself at the shrine of Imam Husain (A.S.).

After Abul Abbas Saffah, Mansoor invited Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) to Kufa, and the Imam came and

paid homage at the sacred resting place of his forefather. At a place called Quria Ghazaria, the Imam bathed himself in River Euphrates, changed his clothes and walked the distance to Imam Husain's shrine, where he recited the famous '*Ziyarat-e-Warisia*', which is a brief summary of the greatness and sufferings of Imam Husain (A.S.) and the Ahle Bait.

Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) used to instill the desire of pilgrimage to Karbala in the hearts of all who came in contact with him. Thus commenced a bright chapter of dedicated mournings for Imam Husain (A.S.). This promoted a focal unity, and it was but natural that this unity should have emerged as a result of pilgrims congregating regularly at Karbala, reviving the events of the Tragedy; the mutual meetings of poets and the epic poems they wrote; and the compilations of facts and figures as retold by the narrators who also assembled there in large numbers. All these activities now gained momentum and the Tragedy of Karbala thus became a topical subject of the time.

Noticing the deep regard shown by the Muslims for the progenies of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.), Mansoor became jealous of the mass affection for them. He was also an aspirant of being regarded as the successor to the Holy Prophet's vicegerency. Therefore, like the Bani Ummayyas, Mansoor too adopted an unfriendly attitude towards the Infallible Imams.

In 170 A.H., Haroon-ur-Rasheed ascended the Caliphal throne, and with his accession the institution of Azadari suffered a serious set-back. Not contented with strangulating the growth of Azadari, Haroon-ur-Rasheed demolished the sacred Shrine of Imam Husain (A.S.) in 176 A.H. The old berry tree that had been in the centre of the sacred compound was cut off. Quite obviously all these severe measures affected adversely the customary observances of mournings for the martyred Imam. However, in 193 A.H., Haroon-ur-Rasheed died, having failed to wipe off the memory of Imam Husain (A.S.), which was what he was most concerned about during his life.

After Haroon-ur-Rasheed, there was a tussle for the Caliphate between his two sons, Ameen and Mamoon, the latter being victorious in the end. Having thus secured the caliphal throne, Mamoon-ur-Rasheed exhibited his concern for the well-being of the Holy Prophet's progeny. He even reconstructed the shrine of Imam Husain (A.S.) which his father had demolished.

A SLAVE-GIRL AND MUTAWAKKIL'S MADNESS

The year 236 A.H. was yet another eventful year in the history of Azadari. It was in this year, when Mutawakkil was the Caliph, that something shocking again took place. It all started when one night Mutawakkil, having a good time during his nocturnal merry-makings, felt the need for a certain slave-girl who was employed in his harem. This girl was not present in the premises when she was demanded to

present herself. However, later when the girl returned from where she had gone, she was rushed into Royal presence at the darbar.

"Where had you been when you were required by me?" Asked Mutawakkil.

"I had gone for pilgrimage with the Princesses", replied the girl.

"Pilgrimage! This is the month of Sha'aban. What sort of pilgrimage can there be in this month?" Exclaimed the Caliph.

"What is meant by 'Haj' (Pilgrimage) here", explained the girl, "is that we had all gone to Karbala to pay homage at the shrine of Imam Husain".

This meant that men as well as women from Baghdad had been quite commonly visiting Karbala, and that the mourners were still flocking at the sacred shrine there. Now, this was something that Mutawakkil could hardly tolerate. He therefore demolished the sacred structures at Karbala. The madness of his fury did not stop at merely demolishing the shrine. He ordered the waters of River Euphrates to be channalized in the direction of the demolished structures and flood the whole area, so that people could no longer visit the place. This madness of Mutawakkil was resulted in the destruction of the biggest centre of mourning for Imam Husain (Ref. Tabari, Vol. 11, p. 44).

THE REDISCOVERY OF THE IMAM'S SHRINE

Mutawakkil should have drawn a lesson from the fate of Yazeed's enmity towards the Ahle Bait

and that of Haroon's efforts against them (Ahle Bait.) This he failed to do, and the result was that he failed disgracefully in preventing people from visiting these holy places in Karbala. He could not even truly demolish the martyred Imam's sacred grave, for, Zahabi in his "history book writes." "A certain Arab came there after the place had been devastated. This Arab searched for the ruined grave and ultimately located it. Delighted with his success, the Arab recited some verses on the occasion and expressed his feelings through lamentations for Imam Husain (A.S.). The substances of one of his verses was :

"People sought to eliminate this sacred grave for ever, but the divine fragrance of it pointed out the way to it".

Imam Musa-e-Kazim (A.S.) was Confined in the prison at Baghdad. Sahad Hadi, and Haroon-ur-Rasheed had mercilessly persecuted these befriending the Ahle Bait (A.S.). Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) was poisoned. Imam Raza (A.S) was martyred in Toos by Mamoon-ur-Rasheed. This was followed by Imam Mohammad Taqi's martyrdom in Baghdad. Imam Ali Naqi was martyred at Samarra. It would appear from these successive martyrdoms that it was a technique of the enemies of the Saadaat of Bani Fatema to murder them outside their native places. The Abbasids too maintained these sodistic traditions and perpetuated the tyrannies which the Bani Ummayyas had started ; and they did this with full concentration.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XXII

AZADARI CONTINUES DESPITE CURBS

But no amount of suppression and tyranny could curb down Azadari. On the contrary, the memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) became still more deep-rooted. Now, eminent historians and literary luminaries like Da'abal, Kumait, Syed Humeri, Tabari, Yaqubi and Masudi emerged on the scene with their masterly descriptions of historical events and their scholarly interpretations. Another group of historians like Abu Mukhnaf, Oqba bin Sama'an and Zohak Mashriqi, and other numerous historians also added evidential weight to the institution of Azadari as an integral part of Islamic history. It was now not possible for any Government to conceal what these literary figures uncovered by their monumental works. Thus the institution of Azadari no longer remained confined to Mecca, Medina, Kufa and Karbala. Its scope of observance widened now to include distant places like

Qum and Mashhad in Iran, and Sind in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Halab, Damascus, Sa'ad Saida, Kazmain, Samarra, in short wherever the devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) went, the institution of Azadari also went with them. Poets initially used to recite their Elegies on Imam Husain (A.S.) in the presence of the Ahle Bait. Now, such recitals became more public; and at the centre at Qum, gatherings were organized openly to hear Da'abal recite his epicediums, one of which was adjudged as the best epicedium among the numerous ones that were composed during the Abbasid regime. Da'abal (d. 246) wrote several other epicediums besides this. Among these is the one that he wrote upon the death of his son, Yapu (A separate article by me on Da'abal is under print).

TRAGEDY OF KARBALA REVIVED AT FUNERALS ALSO

In the epicedium that Da'abal wrote upon his son, he touched movingly upon the subject of the martyrs of Karbala also. This points to the prevalence of the practice of the devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) to revive the memories of the sufferings of the Karbala martyrs at the funerals of their own kith and kin and weep over the fates of the Imams of the Ahle Bait.

The following is an abstract from the elegy Da'abal wrote over his son's death :

"I have not said good-bye unwillingly to my dear Ahmed.

There he lies underneath a heavy block of stone.

Unprovided and helpless I have left him in the grave :

Against my own wishes I was very miserly in this respect.

Had it not been for the directives of the Holy Prophet and his progeny.

I would have drained off all the tears in my eyes and lost my sight in his grief.

Ahmad is my darling, my life : but at the same time the love for Mohammad's children also abides in my heart.

They suffered much due to the issue of the Holy Prophet's succession, and finally they died willingly.

The wolves of the tribe of Bani Ummayya kept subjecting them to all excesses.

And then the Abbasids created trouble in religion, and these brutal men ruled by force.

And committed tyrannies in galore upon the Prophet's progeny".

Kumait and Da'abal fulfilled their obligation of criticising the Government and supporting the Prophet's generations during the Ummayyad and Abbasid periods respectively. These two poets promoted and boosted up the art of composing epicediums to its peak of poetic perfection, which the people readily recognized and greatly appreciated. Sakeet Yalabsami has very movingly touched upon

the incident of the demolition of Imam Husain's shrine and tyrannies committed by Mutawakkil in one of his epicediums. The following are three verses abstracted from this epicedium :

"By God, Bani Ummayya no doubt murdered the darling son of the Holy Prophet in a most brutal manner, and the same act Bani Abbas also commit.

"I swear by God, they also did the same, for they demolished the shrine of Imam Husain (A.S.) as if to fulfill this unfulfilled desire of having been with the murderers themselves.

"Having missed that opportunity, they grabbed their share by defiling the Divine sanctity of the Imam's sacred body that lay buried".

MUSTANSIR BILLAH RECONSTRUCTS IMAM HUSAIN'S SHRINE

The Elegists of Imam Husain (A.S.) did not confine their elegies only to the atrocities committed by the Bani Ummayya. They also included the excesses committed by the Abbasids as well, who put scores of devotees to the sword in order to stop such writings. Such indiscriminate killings, however, only served to enhance the love and regard for Imam Husain (A.S.). This order of things continued till the death of Mutawakkil who, despite concerted efforts, failed to curb the ventilations of the emotions of the devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.).

Things, however, changed for the better with the ascension of Mustansir Billah to the Caliphal throne. He did not repeat the follies his father had committed. He was in fact a liberal person. He removed all restrictions on pilgrimage to Karbala. It was during Mustansir's rule that Syed Ibrahim Mojaab, a son of Mohammad bin Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) got the shrine of Hazrat Abbas made. The shrine of Imam Husain (A.S.) was also reconstructed during Mustansir's period, and Janab Ibrahim Majab became its custodian. Even today his tomb stands in the corner in the Western wing inside a silver enclosure (Ref. My article: **Karbala, Tareekh Wa Tamir**, "Razakar", Moharrum Edition—1390 A.H. and **Tareekh-e-Hazrat Abbas**, Pub. Lahore, Moharrum supplement, 1390 A.H.).

Thus it was that mourners once again got back their central city in 247 A.H. for mourning congregations. The traffic of pilgrims and mourners between Karbala and Baghdad, Kufa, Arabia and Syria was once again resumed in full swing. By the end of the third century A.H., the refugee group of Alavi Syeds formed their own principality in Tabristan. The ruler, Mohammad bin Zaid Alavi, secured good quality brickstones from Iran and renovated the old structure over the shrines of the martyrs at Karbala in 283 A.H. This was a time when the sympathizers of the Holy Prophet's generations were free from political pressures. They were a powerful group now. With the creation of centres by the Abbasids in Baghdad and Samarra and other places, people from Iran and Turkey also came down and settled here. The orbit

of Government influence also was wider now. The nearness of Iranian pastures and mountains helped to promote social intercourse between these two regions. The spread of arts and sciences and commercial dealings brought about a progressive trend of understanding and mutual friendship on socio-religious as well as socio-economic levels.

THE SCENE EXTENDS TO IRAN

So far it were only the Arab poets and orators who had been participating actively with their compositions and sermons at the mass congregations for Imam Husain's mourning. But now the Iranians also joined in these gatherings. The Alavi and Fatemi Syeds now started migrating to the suburban settlements in Iran near Baghdad and Kufa as a result of persecutions by the Abbasid rulers, who chased them even in these far-flung areas and murdered them there; and in whichever village or town these fleeing Syeds were murdered, the inhabitants of that place became the sympathizers and supporters of the Syeds dwelling in their area.

Mamoon-ur-Rasheed poisoned Imam Raza (A.S.) in Iran, after which Toos became another new Centre. Thus it was that both people of Iraq and Iran developed a special regard for the Prophet's progenies. People forgot the history of distant past, which had obliterated the institution of Azadari and mournings of the Arabs. With the civilizational and educational progress that asserted itself now in newer forms, the people looked forward with newer expectations. The time had come now for history to be re-written in a

broader perspective. "Necessity is the mother of inventions", it is said. Accordingly, there emerged on the literary horizon a line of eminent Traditionists and expert jurists from Bukhara, Naishapur, Nasa, Baihiq, Rae, Toos and Kufa. From Tabristan and Isfahan rose a new class of historians. They wrote freely and fearlessly on the current developments and events of their time. But narrow-minded persons branded their writings as being a result of Iranian favouritism for the Alavis, though Iran alone was not the place where the Alavies commanded respect and regard by virtue of their being noble and victimized people. The fact is that wherever the Alavies went, they were persecuted and victimized, and to sympathize with victims of aggression is but a natural and noble trait of human character. When the Alavies were in Arabia, they enjoyed the respect and support of the people in the Hedjaz, Yemen and Bahrain. When they were butchered in Damascus, the people there sided with them. Similarly, now when they migrated to Iran, the Iranians too extended their love and regard for them in their cities and towns.

The number of Muslims was much more greater now. The Socio-cultural values of the Muslim community were more well defined now. As such, eulogies and sympathies for the Ahle Bait and edifications of shrines became more pronounced and free. Formerly, only the Arabs used to convene commemorative meetings in respect of the Tragedy of Karbala and go to Karbala to pay homage at the shrine of the Martyrs. Now, the Iranians also joined

the ranks. When the Arabs were the only ones who visited Karbala, there was no talk about it; but when men and women from distant and foreign lands did what the Arabs had all along been doing, there was a great fuss about it.

ENTERBAVAYH AND SALJUQ DYNASTIES

Mid-fourth century A.H. saw the emergence of the Bavayh dynasty in eminence in the political sphere with Azud-ud-Daula and Mughir-ud-Daula as their Ameen. These Ameen openly confessed and exhibited their deep love for the generation of the Holy Prophet's Ahle Bait. They attended to the maintenance of the Holy Prophet's shrine in Medina. They decorated the shrines at Kazmain, Najaf, Karbala and Baghdad. The first ten days of Moharrum were declared as official mourning days. Azud-ud-Daula, his brother and brother's son used to visit Karbala regularly from Baghdad for paying homage at the shrines of the Martyrs there. Mourning processions on the 10th of Moharrum were a regular feature of the time. This period of history was indeed the period of an unimpeded growth and progress of Azadari for Imam Husain (A.S.).

Incidentally, the political opponents of the Bavayh were the Saljuqs. In course of time, the Saljuqs got the upper hand over the Bavayhs and captured the office of the Ameerul-Sarai by virtue of their political majority. Thus poised, they started a full fledged campaign of hatred and victimization against the Bavayhs. They demolished their religious institutions and out-lawed Azadari. As a result, mourning

processions ceased. Formerly, shops, offices and business centres in Baghdad used to remain closed on the 10th of Moharrum. The people used to don black attires as a mark of mourning in Moharrum. All illuminations and merry-makings used to be withheld. But now with the Saljuqs in power, things changed radically. The people now started wearing gay-coloured dresses during Moharrum. Ashura Day became a day holding pleasant fairs and rejoicings.

Traditional Azadari and sentiments for Imam Husain (A.S.) however, had become so deep-rooted in the hearts of the true devotees that these could not be suppressed, despite official pressures. Even at the risk of certain death and exile, the Shia scholars, poets, orators and the masses continued fearlessly with their dedicated attachment to the Tragedy of Karbala. This was the phase in history when literary giants like Sadooq, Allama Abu Jaffer Toosi, Shaikh Mufeed, Syed Razi and Syed Murtuza poured power in their writings. While historian Tabari came out with his *Zakheem Maqtal* the Ulema continued delivering eloquent orations at Majlises. So wide spread was the attachment for Imam Hussain (A.S.) in the Hedjaz, Yemen, Iraq and Iran that every poet and every man of literature made these expressions of devotion to the martyred Imam a source of inspiration for their creative writings. The famous Persian scholar of Mustansir Billah's period, Qazi Abu Bakr Hameedud Din (d. 559 A.H.), has drawn a good sketch of Azadari during the Abbasid period in the 23rd article in *Moqaamaat-e-Hameedi*—one of the best known books in Persian literature. This article

concerns a certain episode, but the description it gives of mournings and mourning processions is a moving eye-witness account. Given below is an extract from this article :

‘There I saw a crowd of some persons standing, and some squatting. The lamentations, wailings and sighings of men who had cast off their distinguishing headwears filled the air with their emotional intensity. The entire sky seemed to have donned a mourning attire over itself. All eyes seemed to have over-flown with a torrent of tears. All feet and heads in the multitude were covered with dust. Tears of blood were streaming down the cheeks with a fragrance all their own. When the noise of the lamentations reached its pitch, and the recapitulations of the scenes of Ohud, Hunain, and of the tortures suffered by Hasan and Husain reached their climax...’.

This pen-sketch gives the impression that Hameed-ud Din had witnessed the scenes at a great crowd of mourners in a Moharrum Majlis where people wept bare-headed and wailed loudly with cries of “Hasan-Husain”. His description is very similar to the scenes one witnesses today at Moharrum Majlises and processions.

MOHARRUM IN CONSTANTINOPLE

The scope of Azadari thus went on widening. Though Medina was its Centre, other regions in and outside Arabia also came into its orbit. It is not easy now to describe its evolution in geographic details.

Having quoted the pen-sketch of Qazi Hameedud Din for the enlightenment of the reader, it would not be amiss to quote the famous Urdu writer, Shibli Nomani, also. The extractors given below are from his *Safarnama Room Wa Sham*, and give an idea of Azadari in Turkey. Since the Turkish Government is a successor-Government of the Abbasids, it would not be improper to deal with it in a passing manner. This is what Shibli Nomani says :

“The observance of the sanctity of Moharrum here (i.e. in Turkey) is worth mention. There are no less than fifty to sixty thousand non-Arab Muslims who have domiciled here for various reasons. Most of them are Government servants, and a substantial number of them are traders and labourers. Although these men are spread all over the city, they live in concentrated groups in a locality known by the name of Waleda Khana. This is the place where Majlises and mourning congregations chiefly take place during the month of Moharrum.

“The practice of poetic recitals of elegies is not current in the Majlises here. The proceedings are limited to only narrations from the Traditions. As a matter of fact, this is what the real purpose of holding Majlises is. The usual procedure here is that a person stands near the pulpit and reads out orally a few verses eulogizing Janab Ameer (Ali) and Hazrat Imam Husain (A.S.). After this initial commencement, recognized Aalim (religious scholar) occupies the pulpit and

revives the events of the Tragedy of Karbala in his sermon in an eloquent manner. I was greatly pleased to notice the solemnity and respect with which the Turks attend such meetings. With the exception of one or two specific occasions, the sermons delivered at these Majlises are usually in the Turkish language.

"Modes of mourning differ, some of them being peculiar but impressive. The ordinary manner of lamenting is by fierce breast-beatings, so much so that the flesh becomes lacerated. Another method is using chains, with which they beat their breasts or their bare backs in groups of 30 or 40 men. The reverberating sound of these beatings can be heard even at a distance. Yet another way is the use of swords, and this is expressively reserved for lamentations on the night of Imam Husain's martyrdom. This kind of lamentation starts with men lined up with naked swords in their hands. Then, with emotional self-abandonment, they start slashing their foreheads, heads and shoulders with the swords, and in no time, blood starts gushing forth from wounds and streams down the bare bodies of the mourners. The whole scene represents a battle-field with fierce action in progress. Multitudes of crowds gather around to witness this thought-provoking scene. So great is the rush at this spot that one finds it extremely difficult to find a point of vantage in the crowd to have a look at this performance..."

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CHAPTER XXIII

MAJALIS

(MOURNING CONGREGATIONS): ORIGIN

'Majlis (plural Majalis), is in Arabi word and means 'place for sitting, a group of persons seated, a meeting, a gathering, a public function'. But the usual sense of the word 'Majlis, in Shia parlance, particularly in the idiomatic phraseology of Lucknow school of usage, implies the seated gathering of persons in a meeting in which the greatness of and the tortures that Imam Husain (A.S.) and the Ahle Bait suffered are discoursed upon either in a everyday language or in a poetic form of the current language. The words 'Mehfil' 'Jalsa' or 'Nishast' are also used for such meetings.

A Majlis usual comprises of a group of persons seated on the floor in a solemn and disciplined manner. At a central point facing in the front row

of the persons, a chair or a pulpit is kept, which elegists and speakers occupy to read out epeidiums and deliver sermon which commence usually in the Arabic language. After this initial start, a few verses from the Quran or Traditions of any of the Infallible Imams and members of the Ahle Bait are read out. This is followed by a preliminary discourse on the subject in view. After this, the greatness and Divine virtues of the Ahle Bait are sermonized, and finally the tyrannies suffered by the Holy Prophet's Ahle Bait and the tragic events of the Tragedy of Karbala are recounted by the speaker. The audience listens to these in reverent silence, feeling elated and expressing their feelings by showering blessings up on Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and his progeny in the name of God, or applauding a good point advanced by the speaker, or sobbing emotionally, as and when such occasions arise during the sermon.

MAJLIS ITS HISTORY

Majalis or mourning gatherings and their significance as viewed in present context have their background in a history of their own. Their conventional origin started immediately after Imam Husain (A.S.) fell a martyr on the field of Karbala. Whenever the Ahle Bait got the opportunity and wherever their devotees gathered, the Tragedy of Karbala was invariably the subject they discussed in austerity that went with the element of grief.

The first proper Majlis that was held was perhaps the one which was convened in 62 A.H. (682 A.D.), which was the time when the household members of

Imam Husain (A.S.) returned to Medina after the Tragedy of Karbala. It was Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) who had despatched Noman bin Bashir in advance to Medina to announce the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) to the people, himself remaining encamped outside the city. Accordingly, Bashir went out into the city and proclaimed the news to the populations in the localities of Medina, announcing:

“O’ people of Medina. This city has no longer any charm for you. Husain has been martyred. Weep, O’ people! Weep, and weep as much as you can”.

The Medinites ran amock with the gravity of this news. There was commotion in every home in the city. The locality where the Bani Hashims dwelt in majority, in particular, was the worst affected. The memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) walking gracefully through the streets and by-lanes of the city came before the people like a vision. Today, this same city of Medina bore deserted look. The Holy Prophet's sacred tomb, too, radiated grief from its green dome. The womenfolk now remembered that the Prophet had desired that people should lament for the death of his uncle on the battle-field of Badr. This recollection told them that had the Prophet been alive this day, he would certainly have vented his grief in a like manner. They recollected the mournings and weepings of Syeda Fatematuz Zahra (A.S.) on the day had she lost her father, Prophet Mohammad (S.A.). The memory of Syeda's lamentations over her father inside the mourning Centre at Janatul Baqi flashed

back to their minds with a living vitality. They also recollected the moving scenes that followed the fatal poisoning of Imam Hasan (A.S.). The Quincunx Unit (i.e. Mohammad, Fatema, Ali, Hasan and Husain) was no more in physical existence now. Imam Husain (A.S.) was slain in a distant land, enroute the journey he had undertaken.

Every single person was seen weeping over the shocking news. Men, women and children, everyone of them was flocking to where Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) had camped, all of them eager to listen from him the details of the Tragedy. One can only imagine what the scene must have been when Imam Zainul Abideen had faced these grief-stricken multitudes.

There was one spontaneous tempest of moans and sobs, lamentations and breast-beatings. The entire atmosphere in the vicinity echoed with the heavings of unsuppressible sighs and cries of anguish. The heavens seemed to reverberate with the cries of "Husain...alas, O' Husain". It was amidst this tumult of unrestrained expressions of grief that Janab-e-Umme Kulsoom stood up and recited her extempore epicidium which has come to stay as the most moving elegy with an emotional depth that strikes straight at the tenderest strings of grief-stricken hearts. An English rendering of this famous epicidium is given below in free verse form:

Medina! O' city of Prophet's holy shrine, How high your honour, what glory is your!

Yet, to embrace you do now we shy.

With hearts so full and eyes that cry.

For, once—the day to Karbala when we tread,
With blood so holy, so sacred by God blessed.
With babies at breasts and Elders benign,

To fate in land so distant we did resign.

Now, of Elders bereft and hearts that ache,
Unto you, O' city, we our footsteps take,

With scent of lips, thirsty infant's, on our breast.

Washed with blood, lulled and laid to rest.

(Versified by: M. Jaffer Husain).

How long these strains of grief continued, inside the female section and what must have the state of emotions outside among the men can best be imagined than described. Finally, when silence prevailed and sobbings abated a little, and Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) rose to address the gathering, the air was rent asunder with a burst of renewed lamentations. So eloquent, so moving, so piercing, so pathetic and so vivid were the Imam's descriptions of the brutal scenes at Karbala that the audience stood aghast at the reconstructions of the Tragedy. So deep indeed was the impact of these descriptions that many of the persons who listened to Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) were never seen happy throughout their lives after this historic oration in Medina.

Hazrat Aqeel's daughter also recited her Elegy on this occasion, the substance of which is:

O' you Muslims, what explanation will you have to forward on the Day of Judgement when the Holy Prophet will ask, "Why you committed

these atrocities despite your being the last and final torch-bearers of Divine Truth conveyed by me?

"As soon as I departed from the world, you murdered some of my Ahle Bait, and some, you imprisoned.

"I was sincere and affectionate with you people, and you have repaid me by maltreating my progeny"!

(For full Epicediums and notes see my **Jehad-e-Husain**, pub. Idara-e-Taleemat-e-Ilahiya, Karachi).

So deep and permanent was the grief of Janab-e-Ummul Baneen (A.S.), the mother of Janab Abbas (A.S.) that she forsook sitting under the shade of her roof. It became a daily routine of hers to walk off to the graveyard at Jannat-ul-Baqi and weep out her hearts in the desolate surroundings of the cemetery. People used to visit her there and console her in her grief. This daily routine of hers continued till she breathed her last.

It became a regular practice of Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.), and all other Infallible Imams after him, to revive the memory of the events at Karbala, themselves weeping in the process and making others, too, weep along with them. Elegists would gather around him and make the audiences in the congregations weep and lament over the martyrdoms of Imam Husain (A.S.) and others with him. Abu Daheel, Suleman bin Fatta, Kumait and Da'abal were the

reputed Elegists who used to read out their expressive epicediums to the Imams and gain their blessings and awards for their moving compositions.

For about 150 years these mourning congregations continued in this strain. The sermons delivered by the Infallible Imams and other knowledgeable persons at these **Majlises** have, unfortunately, not been preserved. However, a collection of sermons compiled by Abu Mukhnaf Loot bin Yahya Azadi under the title **Waqia'at Maqtal** gained a wide popularity, which means that writing of epic poems on the Tragedy of Karbala and their recital had commenced as early as that period. The titles of these compositions and their gist of matter is available in the bibliographies compiled by Ibne Nadeem, Najjashi and others. The early historians used the compilations of Abu Mukhnaf in their works, and these compilation are available even today. Oriental as well as Occidental language editions of these compilations are also available now.

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CHAPTER XXIV

MOURNING CONGRESSES: ITS EVOLUTION (FIRST PHASE)

Discourse on the Tragedy of Karbala is the pivotal theme of Majlises (mourning congresses). Quite understandably the events of Karbala were revived in the form of narratives in the beginning, easing gradually into a plain manner of delivery with an admixture of poetry in its prosaic form in the style of Abu Mukhnaf. Only the Ulema retained the older scholastic style, as is evident from the works of historians like Tabari, Masudi, Ibne Taoos and others of this class. A careful study of ancient historic material on the subject indicates that epic forms of recitals in Majlises had commenced on the continent.

Collection of data on this subject had been destroyed by the Bani Ummayyas and Abbasids. One

of the important works that escaped the wanton destruction of the Ummayyas is the voluminous work compiled by Abu Mukhnaf and entitled as **Maqtal-ul-Husain**. Another monumental work that has come down to us through the generations is **Al lahoof Ala Qatl il latoof** compiled by Janab Ali bin Musa bin Jaffer bin Mohammad bin Taoos Husaini (d. 664 A.H.) during the period between the fall of the Abbasids and the dawn of the Tartarian rule. These were the books which they people used to listen to in the **Majlises** and which made the audiences weep with the sheer agony ignited in their hearts by their moving contents. Perhaps this is what is known as **Kitab Khwani** in the Persian partance. In the preface to his above-mentioned book, the author, Ibne Taoos, writes:

"The pilgrims to Imam Husain's shrine had very little to spare. They could not bring voluminous books with them. In view of this difficulty, I wrote out a book that was concise and easy to carry about, my object being to ensure that the devotees achieved their satisfaction of grief through reading these shorter editions."

The exact manner in which the pilgrims used to read out the contents of these books, and the manner in which the audiences listened to them, is evident even today in the **Majlises** in Iraq on the 10th of Moharrum and the 40th day of Imam Husain's martyrdom. The speaker occupies the pulpit and relates the events of Karbala, and the audience listen to his sermon in rapt attention and weep with

anguish. For reading the collections of these sermons the reader is advised to read the collections **Al Husain Qateel ul-A'bara** compiled by Khateeb-e-Azam Janab Abdus Zehra Al-Ka'aby', and Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim Ayati's Collection of Sermons entitled **Barusi Tareekh-e-Ashura** published by Kitabkhana-e-Sadooq, Teheran. These two compilations differ with each other in their approach and presentation. While the former covers the events of the Tragedy of Karbala in a Chronological order in a simple language, the latter in addition to giving a graphic account of the Tragedy, also discusses the background, significance and impact of the events in their historical perspective. Both these two styles of presentations have been common factors in the history of **Majlises** through the ages. **Maqtals** written by Abu Mukhnaf, or Ibne Nama or Ibne Taoos; or narrations of the Tragedy in conjunction with relevant Quranic references and the Prophet's Traditions, the oldest specimen of which has come down to us is the compilation of sermons entitled **Al Amaali** by Janab Abu Jaffer Mohammad bin Ali bin Musa bin Babvayh Qumi, in all these the serial and consistent manner of narration is quite evident (For details on Janab Sadooq Ibne Babiya see my book **Tareekh: Tadwin-e-Hadees aur Shia Mohaddis**, pub. (Rawalpindi)).

SADOOQ'S FIRST MAJLIS

Janab Sadooq was born in 305 A.H. (i.e. 917 A.D.), and died in 381 A.H. (i.e. 991 A.D.). In the manuscripts under review in **Al-amaali**, perhaps three sermons which Shaikh Sadooq read out on

the 1st, 9th and 10th of Moharrum in the year 368 A.H., are preserved in their original form. Given hereunder is an English version of one of these sermons which will give the reader an idea of the type of **Majlises** and the form of delivery as it existed in the period under review:

"In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the compassionate. We are told by Abu Jaffer Mohammad bin Husain bin Musa bin Babvayh Qumi who told by Husain Ibne Ahmad bin Idrees who said that he was told by his father Mohammad Husain bin Abu Khatiab that he was told by Nasr bin Mazamum who heard from Omar bin Sa'ad that Artaat bin Habib and Fuzail bin Rasan Jibillah Makkia and Meetham-e-Tammaar used to say: 'By God, I say that this community of Muslims will murder the grandson of the Holy Prophet during the first ten days of the month of Moharrum; the enemies of Allah will regard that day as an auspicious day and observe it with festive celebrations. This event Allah Knows it will and it must necessarily take place. I understood this when Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.) had said that the whole world will weep over Husain. The beasts in the woods; the fishes in the seas; the birds in the air; the moon, the stars, the skies, the Earth, the entire lot of angels, including Rizwan, the Keeper of the Paradise, and the heavenly creatures will lament for Husain. The sky will shower down a burst of blood-storm. Ameerul Momineen, then went

on to say that it is incumbent that the murderers of Husain (A.S.) be cursed like the infidels and Jews and Christians, have necessarily to be cursed with disgust.

"Jibillah asked Meetham why people would regard the day of Imam Husain's martyrdom as a day for rejoicing. The latter started weeping and replied that this would be because the people would rely on fabricated narratives which say that this day (i.e. the day of Imam Husain's martyrdom) is the day when God had accepted Adam's atonement. These people will wrongly believe that this was the day when God had split the sea and provided an escape for the Bani Israels, though the fact is that these incidents occurred during the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal.

"Husain bin Ali (A.S.), continued Meethan asking Jibillah to bear in mind, will arise as the King of Martyrs on the Day of Resurrection and dominate over all other martyrs. 'So, Jibillah', said Meetham, 'when you see the sun red-hot like the colour of blood you must understand that your Imam (i.e. Imam Husain (A.S.) has been martyred'.

"Jibillah says, 'one day I noticed that the colour of the sunlight falling on the walls was like a spread of clothes coloured in a hue of golden red radiance. Noticing this, I shouted out that "Husain Ibne Ali (A.S.) has been martyred today"'.
 100

SECOND NARRATIVE

Imam Raza (A.S.) has said:

"The month of Moharrum is a period of time when the people during the Age of Ignorance believed that to fight wars (or shed blood) during this month was prohibited. Despite this respect shown by even the ignorant people of yore, the people of our Age regarded it as proper to shed our blood during this month. They insulted and humiliated us, took our ladies and children as captives, set fire to our camps, permitted the looting of our property, showed disrespect to the Holy Prophet. All this they did with impunity during this month..... We lie bedded in perpetual grief and agony till Doomsday under the desert sands of Karbala. Therefore, the devotees must weep and lament for Imam Husain (A.S.), for this is the means to one's own salvation. My own father (Imam Musa Kazim A.S.) was never seen laughing or in a happy mood after the onset of Moharrum. With the lapse of each day, his grief would progressively entrance till the climax on the 10th of Moharrum. The 10th of Moharrum is, therefore, a day of great calamity. This day was wholly and solely dedicated to mournings by my venerable father 'Alas! This is the day when Husain was slain', he would keep on moaning".

THIRD NARRATIVE

Once Ameerul Momineen Ali asked the Holy Prophet why he loved Aqeel so much, to which,

the Prophet replied by saying: "Yes, by God, I love Aqeel for two reasons. One reason is that he has a lovability of his own inasmuch as Abu Talib himself, too, loved him deeply; and the other reason is that his son will be killed for his devotion to your son. The eyes of the Momins will for ever weep for him, and God's nearest angels, too, will send their blessings to him". Saying this, the Holy Prophet wept so much for Aqeel that tears streamed forth profusely from his eyes and soaked his breast. The Prophet then added, "I will represent before God the tribulations which my progeny will suffer after I am no more".

FOURTH NARRATIVE

God will fulfil all the needs, in this as well as in the next world, of whosoever abstains from his personal occupations on the Ashura day. The day of Resurrection will be like a day of merry festivity for all those who will regard the Ashura day as day of mourning. On our account the eyes of such devotees will be blessed with a serene sense of solace. Those who regard this day as an auspicious day and buy new things for their homes, such persons will forfeit all Divine graces, and they will be doomed to the same fate as that of Yazeed, Abdullah bin Ziyad and Omar bin Sa'ad in the most infernal depths of the fire of Hell.

FIFTH NARRATIVE

"When I presented", says Aban bin Shabeeh, "myself before Hazrat Imam (the reference is perhaps to Imam Raza (A.S.) See Rijal-e-Najjashi) on the first day of the month of Moharrum, the Imam asked me if I was fasting. I replied in the negative. At this, the Imam observed. 'This is the day when Prophet Zachariah had prayed to God thus:

O' my Lord! grant me from to 'You' a good offspring. Verily 'You' are the hearer of prayer.

God accepted this prayer; and when Prophet Zachariah stood praying in the sanctuary, God sent an angel to him who conveyed:

"Verily God gives you the glad tidings of a son (Yahya).

"Thus, the beseechful prayers; of all those who fast on this day will be granted with Divine favour in the same manner as Prophet Zachariah's was granted.....O' son of Shabeeh! Moharrum is so sacred a month that people even during the Age of Ignorance regarded blood-shed as something forbidden during this month; but alas! this community of Muslims did not respect its Divine sanctity, nor did they have any respect for the Holy Prophet during this sacred month. On the contrary, they butchered the Holy Prophet's progeny, took their lady members as prisoners, and plundered their belongings.

“‘May God never forgive the enemies. O’ son of Shabeeh, if ever you weep, weep for Husain (A.S.), for he was butchered virtually like a goat is butchered to pieces. As many as eighteen men in the prime of their youth, like Husain himself, died for his sake, the like of whom the world will never see. All the seven heavens wept for him, and as many as 4000 angels came to him for aid (on the field of Karbala), but he accepted martyrdom only. Those angels are sitting dust-ridden and sorrowful at his grave. When the Holy Prophet’s vicegerent will ultimately emerge one day, these angels will flock to him and clamour for avenging the blood of Husain (A.S.).”

“‘And Ibne Shabeeh, it has been narrated by my venerable father that there was a rain shower of blood at the time Hazrat Imam Husain was martyred.,”

“O’ son of Shabeeh, if one weeps even as little as enough to wet his cheeks with tears, God will forgive all the major and minor sins of such a person, howsoever less or great the extent of sins. O’ son of Shabeeh, if it appeals to you for your own good, then go on pilgrimage to the shrine of Husain (A.S.); and if you want to be with the Holy Prophet and his progeny in the Paradise, then condemn and curse the category of those who had slain Husain (A.S.). If you wish to gain the blessings of the supporters of Husain (A.S.), then say. “Would that I was with them

to achieve a great Victory”, when you remember this Tragedy. And if you intend to be with us in the highest realms of heavenly abode, then be grieved at our grief, and be happy in our happiness. Regard loving us as an integral article of your faith. God will raise persons along with their beloved objects on the Day of Resurrection, even if the beloved object may be a stone.”

SIXTH NARRATIVE

Bani Saleem Says : “When we were at war in Rome, we saw an inscription in a Church there. The inscription which was in the form of a poetic verse read :

Do those persons who slaved Husain also expect to gain their salvation through the intercession of the Holy Prophet. Mohammad (S.A.) ?

We asked the local residents there if they knew when this verse was inscribed inside the Church. To this they replied : ‘Some 300 years before the proclamation of your Prophet’s Divine Messengership.”

SEVENTH NARRATIVE

Imam Husain (A.S.) had two rings on the fingers of his hand. One ring was engraved with the words :

- (a) “There is no God but Allah. Ready to meet Allah” (b) and the other with “Verily God accomplishes His purpose.”

And the ring that Imam Zainul Abideen wore on his hand bore the words :

The most disgraceful and the most wretched is the murderer of "Husain ibne Ali."

(c) "....."
"....."

EIGHTH NARRATIVE

Said the Masoom (A.S.) i.e. Imam Husain (A.S.):

"A certain man came to Ameerul Momineen and said : 'O' Abul Hasan, you claim to be the rightful Ameerul Momineen. Tell me, who made you the Ameerul Momineen'?"

To this the Ameerul Momineen replied", God the Almighty".

Not satisfied with it, the man went to the Holy Prophet and wished to have his confirmation of what the Ameerul Momineen had replied. "Is what Ali said true?" He asked the Prophet, "Is it a fact that God made Ali the Ameerul Momineen?"

"Yes", replied the Holy Prophet, rather annoyed, "Ali is the Ameerul Momineen as per the decree of God. Ali was bestowed Imamah (one who gives Divine guidance) at the Divine Abode of Allah. The angels are a witness to the fact that Ali is the authentic vicegerent named by God with Divine finality. To obey Ali is to obey

God, and disobedience to him is disobedience to God. One who understands him, understands me. One who refutes his Divinely exalted greatness, questions my bonafides. One who fights against him, does so against me too. One who rebukes him, rebukes me, for, Ali is a part and parcel of myself with a common blood bondage. He is the husband of my daughter and the father of my grandsons, Hasan and Husain (A.S.)"

Having said this, the Prophet then added, "Ali, Fatema, Hasan, Husain and the nine consecutive offsprings through Husain are the final appointees of God. Our enemies, are God's enemies and our friends are God's friends".

NINETH NARRATIVE

Says Yazeed bin Qazab :

"I was once sitting in the company of Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib when some persons from Abdul Uzza came and stood in front of the Ka'aba. Fatema binte Asad, the Ameerul Momineen's mother was also among them. She was full-term pregnant at the time, and child-birth was expected any day. Just as Fatema passed by the side of the wall of Ka'aba, she muttered :

"My Lord, I believe in 'You' and in all the Prophets and Divine Sacriptides sent by 'You' I testify that Prophet Abraham was the founder of this most ancient House. My Lord ! I beseech you in the sacred name of the Founder of this Divine House

and in the name of the child in my womb to ease the delivery of my child”.

Continues Yazeed bin Qazab :

“We saw the wall at the back of the Ka’aba split itself open and Fatema binte Asad enter it. The opening in the wall closed itself as soon as she was inside. We tried all means to unlock the proper door of Ka’aba, but failed to do so. We were thus convinced that all this was at the command of God.

“Later, after days, inside the Ka’aba, Fatema binte Asad stepped out from there, carrying the infant Ameerul Momineen (Ali) in her arms and saying :

“I have been exalted over all other women of the past, for, Aasia binte Muzahim worshipped God in secrecy as she was compelled by circumstances to do so. When Mary, daughter of Imran, shook the dried up tree, she got fresh dates to eat. And I? When I was inside the House of God (the Ka’aba), I had fruit from the Paradise for me to eat, and when I rose to come out of Ka’aba, a voice from the unseen called out. ‘Fatema!’ Name this child as Ali.....I have named this child after My own name and imbued him with the knowledge of My laws and discipline. I have opened up my secrets to him. He is the one who will demolish all the idols housed in My

House. He will sound the prayer-call in My House and propagate My beneficence and sanctity. Blessed will all those be by Me who are friendly and obedient to him : and My curse and wrath will be upon those who disobey and feel animical towards him.”

May the blessings of Allah be upon Prophet Mohammad (S.A.), and upon his Divinely purified progeny”.

It is clear from the above excerpts from Sadooq’s sermons that Traditions dominated in the sermons at Majlises during his time. Sadooq was an authority on Traditions. As such, the connecting chain of narrators and their actual wording figure prominently in this era of his. In other words, this style of orations at Majlises persisted till the fourth century after Hijra.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S)

CHAPTER XXV

MOURNING CONGRESSES

SECOND PHASE

With the fall of the Bavayh rule and supremacy, the devotees of Ahle Bait were once again in trouble. Saljuqs, the successors, subjected them to all sorts of excesses including murders and plundering of homes. Thus whatever ascendance Azadari had gained so far, remained static. Abu Jaffer Toosi (d. 460 A.H) made Najaf his Centre and took necessary steps to found an Educational Centre, 'Shia' Dar-ul-Uloom, which he ultimately succeeded in establishing. Karbala, Najaf and Kazmain in Iraq; and Meshhad in Iran, are the prominent Centres of the Shia school of thought today. It was in these cities that the devotees of the Infallible Imams had appreciable freedom to adhere to and follow their religious customs and practices by virtue of their majority in these places. Mourning

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congregations and Educational Centres were established there; and a congenial atmosphere prevailed at these places as a result of the nearness of the sacred shrines and the enlightening presence of the Ulema. There was no dearth of funds also due to substantial charitable endowments. All these factors helped to ensure a progressive interest and attachment to Azadari at the Majlises, though of course the nature of these congregations remained the same as mentioned before.

THE AFRICAN SCENE

With the establishment of the Fatimide rule in Egypt, the institution of Azadari got a boost. "Meshhad-e-Raas ul-Husain" at Cairo is the biggest mourning Centre in Egypt. After the Fatimids, Shia influence and customs suffered a serious setback in Egypt, and as a result of the indifference of other schools of thought towards the Shia minority, the holding of Majlises is almost extinct in these places.

There is no evidence of any affiliations to Imam Husain in Africa and Spain. It is no doubt widely believed that the whole of Africa is a venue of the Shia propagandists. This is a fallacy: for, let alone the matter of propagating belief in the Infallible Imams, even the mention of the basic Shia tenets of Islam is hard to find there. To state the truth, all political movements in the African continent were strategically directed. It is one thing to win the favour of the masses by exploiting the name of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and his progeny and pretend belief in the

concept of Imammat and quite another when it comes to the actual implementation of such professions in practice.

As a matter of fact, it is the Maliki and Sunni concepts that prevail predominantly on the religious plane in this Dark Continent, though of course it must be said that as a result of the past Fatimide rule in Egypt, coupled with the influence of the Ismailia sect of Muslims, there are a few areas in Africa where Shias do exist, despite their difference in religious concepts from those of the general Islamic beliefs which the Shias have been confronting. But, whether it was due to the majority complex of the non-Shias, or whether it was due to the sense of respect for the sentiments of the general Muslim community on the part of the Shias, it was not possible for the institutions of Azadari and Majlises to find their place in the socio-religious fabric of African civilization.

However, now in the 20th century, Christian era, the Shias from Bahrain, Iran, Beirut and Pakistan have been able to establish Centres for Azadari all over the African continent. There are now mourning centres all over other countries as well, from where mourning programmes are chalked out.

Like the Saljuqs in Baghdad, Salahuddin Ayubi also heavily crushed the Shias in Egypt, leaving nothing undone to destroy all vestiges of their institutions. These suppressions did not fail to affect adversely the Shia culture and traditions in the rest of Africa as well as in Syria and Iraq, too.

The Chengezi invasion and emergence, however, had a different impact. Since it originated with foreign hordes with entirely a different religious concept, it had a uniform effect on Iraq and Arabia. According to authoritative historians, the Moghul emperors had a uniform regard for the religious dignitaries, scholars and mystics of all religions. As such, they treated all nationalities with equal respect for their individual beliefs, and treated all cultures and traditions with uniform equanimity. Thus, there prevailed a progressive trend in the development of religious regard for the progeny of the Holy Prophet and mournings for them.

SHIAISM IN OTHER PARTS OF ASIA

The Indo-Pakistan subcontinent was once ruled by the Afghan and Ghori line of rulers. Historians believe them to have been Shias; and according to certain historians, the entire Arab population of Multan was then of the Shia school of thought, and even their prayer-call was of Shia origin. However, since no research studies have been carried out on the history of this period, Shia culture continues to remain obscure.

History took a new turn on the socio-cultural plane with the emergence of the Taimurs on the political horizon of Asia. Taimur (d. 807 A.H.), who belonged to the Mongolian dynasty, emerged as the conqueror like a tempest and overran the Muslim regions. He was an admirer of the Ahle Bait, and therefore, ensured the safety and maintenance of the shrines of the members of Prophet Mohammad's

family. His was far peaceful period for the Shias. Politically, of course, the Shias were suppressed as much as the others; but in matters of religion, they enjoyed peace and freedom.

After Taimur, almost all rulers, peers, scholars, sufis and the masses took a Shia complex of religion. Non-aligned scholastic luminaries like Jami, Mulla Hasan, Waiz Kashafi and Naqshbandies became famous for their Shia'ite beliefs. The pattern of enthusiasm for holding **Majlises** and the modes of lamentations current during this period is aptly described by Mulla Hasan in his book **Rauzatus Shuhada** which he wrote in 907 A.H. It became so popular that it was in demand in all the **Majlises**, so much so that the word **Rauza Khwani**, after the title of the said book, became synonymous with **Majlises** in non-Arab countries. In Iran, Turkey, Iraq, the Deccan (South India), and then ultimately in the whole of former India, **Rauza Khwani** became the substitute term for **Majlises**.

Rauzatus Shuhada comprises of a collection of simple and appealing poems and prose on the Divine sanctity of the Prophet's progeny and the tyrannies borne by them. One can guess the extent of the appeal this book had for the masses when it is realized that it won an enthusiastic public approval despite the availability of other masterly works (the **Maqatil**) by such eminent writers as Abul Mafakhir Razi and Noorul A'imma. People started reading and reciting from this book, and in a short course of time other books became obsolete. It is

apparent from this that even centuries before the present time, preachers and orators worked hard to ensure successful performance at the **Majlises**, and thereby attain distinctive honours and fame according to their individual efforts for the same.

After the Taimurids, it was the turn of the Safavis to emerge as the rulers. Their period was particularly conducive to the progress of Azadari and holding of mourning congresses. The Safavis were very helpful towards the refugees from Iraq who had fled from their country as a result of suppressions. Now, with a Government machinery of their own, the devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) breathed a sigh of relief. Ispahan was a small city, but it gradually grew into a miniature world of its own. There was a free and abundant flow of discourses by the **Ulema** in the **Majlises**; writers came out with their literary works, and poets composed epic poems by the hundreds. It was in this period that Allama Majlisi Mohammad Baquir (d. 1111 A.H.) wrote his famous short and detailed articles in Arabic and Persian. Mohtasim's *Elegies* also gained wide popularity during these times.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN

CHAPTER XXVI

MOURNING CONGRESSES :

THIRD PHASE

(MAJLISES IN INDO-PAKISTAN

SUBCONTINENT

Azadari (or mournings for Imam Husain (A.S.) was in vogue in India since long; but due to political reasons and communal enmities, its proper history has not been able to reach us. And, according to Naseer-ud-din Hashmi in his **Dakkan main Urdu** (Third Edition, p. 180), the custom of organizing **Majlises** or reciting elegies did not exist in the Northern part of India till after the second attempt of Emperor Humayun to regain his throne. This view does not seem to be correct. However, in South India, Azadari and **Majlises** not only existed but gained appreciable encouragements and promotion as a result of the friendly attitude of the Bahmani.

Qutub Shahi, Nizam Shahi and Barood Shahi ruling dynasties. We will, therefore, trace the history of **Majlises** in the Indian subcontinent with South India as its starting point.

SOUTH INDIA

Among the dynasties that ruled over the Deccan (comprising the former areas of Hyderabad State, Bijapur, Mysore and Bangalore) in South India, the following were the most important and outstanding :

Bahmani.....748 to 933 A.H.

Imad Shahi...890 to 980 A.H.

Adil Shahi.....895 to 1097 A.H.

Qutub Shahi...918 to 1098 A.H.

Like the Safavis in Iran, the Qutub Shahi rulers in the Deccan were very devoutly attached to the Holy Prophets progeny and Imam Husain (A.S.). According to authorities on the history of the Deccan, **Majlises** and lamentations for the martyrs of Karbala originated in Bijapur during the regime of the Adil dynasty, but it were the Qutub Shahi and Nizam Shahi dynasties who promoted the institutions of Azadari and mourning congresses".

This then was the beginning of Azadari in Deccan, where the rulers as well as the masses took devoutly to lamentations for Imam Husain (A.S.). In the **Majlises** that used to be held here, the epicediums written by Mulla Kashafi (**Rauzatus Shuhada**), **Moh-tasim** and other Persian poets enjoyed the most wide

popularity. The common language spoken in Deccan being Urdu with a dialect of its own, many Urdu poets came into lime-light with their vernacular compositions, notably poets like Wajhi, Ghwasi, Lateef, Afzal, Mirza, Noor, Hashmi and Qutub Shah. Consequently, considerable collections of epicediums were compiled during the regimes of Adil Shahi and Qutub Shahi dynasties. In fact, so great was the volume of these compositions that it is difficult to find another instance of such mass writings of elegies in the history of literature.

The speakers at the **Majlises** used to reconstruct the scenes at the field of Karbala in their sermons besides reciting the epicediums. Seva, a great poet during the time of Ali Adil Shah (1083 A.H.), translated the famous **Rauzatus Shuhada** into Urdu for the convenience of the masses. Then, in 1119 A.H., Syed Mohammad Faiyaz Vali Velori wrote a versified Urdu version of **Ruzatus Shuhada**. This was followed by Hasan Baig Dakni who translated the same into Urdu prose entitled as '**Wasila-tun-Najat**' which is still preserved in Salar Jung Memorial Library in Hyderabad Deccan. In 1190 A.H., Mir Wali Khan of Bidar brought out his translation entitled **Riyaz ut Tahereen**. All these translations go to prove that recitations of epicediums at **Majlises** was a regular practice. In the Gujrati language, too, there were was a collection of similar elegiac material entitled '**Dah Majlis**'.

ENTER THE MOGHULS

However, in 1097 A.H. (1688 A.D.), Aurangzeb defeated the Adil Shahi Government in Bijapur; and

with this conquest, he demolished all traces of the institutions of Azadari. Next, he conquered Golconda. By 1117 A.H., all kingdoms in Deccan were taken over by Aurangzeb, and with that was lost what these devout followers of the Ahle Bait had achieved during their glory.

Of the historical material in respect of the origin and evolution of Azadari in the Indian subcontinent before the downfall of the Deccan Empire, there are no records left for us. Fortunately, however, one book has managed to survive and reach us. This book on the subject of Azadari in Northern India covers the period commencing soon after the annihilation of Deccan kingdoms by the Moghuls, and is an important document inasmuch as it links the lost material evidence with developments that followed subsequently. This book of invaluable significance is, '**KARBAL KATHA**, meaning: 'The Episode of Karbala'.

By 1712 A.D., i.e. during the period commencing with Alamgir's son, Moazzam Shah, commonly known in history as Bahadur Shah I (d. 1712) and Mohammad Shah (d. 1161 A.H.), the institution of Azadari had become widely prevalent in Delhi which was then a province. It was at the private residence of a wealthy man, named Nawab Ashraf Ali Khan, that mourning gatherings used to be held regularly, where Fazal Ali Fazli used to recite matter from **Rauzatus Shuhada** to the audiences. These meetings used to be attended by the female members of the Nawabs family. These ladies complained of their

inability to derive full satisfaction from these recitals in the Persian language which they could not understand. In deference to the wishes of these ladies, and with a view to render the Persian recitals understandable to them, Mulla Fazal Ali Saheb translated *Rauzatus Shuhada* into popular Urdu. This was the origin of *Karbala Katha*, and bears the year of translation as 1145 A.H., revised later in 1161 A.H.

Karbala Katha gradually gained a wide popularity among the classes as well as the masses, and became a substitute for the Persian *Rauzatus Shuhada* at the *Majlises* in the northern parts of India. Some writers modified its contents in order to simplify its readability; while some others wrote out similar books on the pattern of *Karbala Katha*. Thus, what was once '*Rauza Khwani*', now came to be referred to as *Dah* (Ref. *Moqaddama Karbal Katha*, p. 12. It may also be noted here that *Karbala Katha* was also popularly known as *Dah Majlis*, though its author had retained the original title of *Karbala Katha*).

However, as fate would have it, no trace of this book was found after the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Karimuddin Panipati left no stone unturned to find it, but all his efforts in this failed. The credit of obtaining the invaluable manuscript of this lost *Karbala Katha* goes to Dr. Mukhtaruddin Ahmed Arzu, who, after tireless efforts, got it from Berlin in 1955, and published the same from Delhi in 1960 (This happened after the publication of my article in *Razakar*, *Azadari* supplement).

Karbala Katha is spread over fourteen sections, four of which centre around the Holy Prophet, *Fatematuz Zehra*, *Hazrat Ali* and *Imam Hasan* (A.S.), and eight are dedicated to the martyrdoms of *Hazrat Muslim bin Aqeel*, his sons, *Hazrat Hur*, *Hazrat Qasim*, *Hazrat Abbas*, *Hazrat Ali Akbar*, *Hazrat Ali Asghar* and *Hazrat Imam Husain* (A.S.). The text is followed by a concluding charter split into five parts dealing with various events of relevant nature.

Given as a specimen below is an excerpt from the seventh *Majlis*; but before we quote it, it is necessary to give a brief Note to precede the translated text, for, this first specimen of Urdu translation is preceded by a sermon in Arabic in the original manuscript, the details of which it is not our intention to reproduce here for reasons of brevity. It must also be remembered that *Karbala Katha* is the first-ever book to have been written in the Urdu language.

NOTE

Mulla Fazli the translator of Rouzatus Shuhada, has reproduced the sermon in Arabic as contained in the original. This sermon, which opens with Sura Hamd of the Quran, is dedicated to the and glorification of the Holy Prophet. This introductory sermon serves two purposes: One, it elucidates the contents and interpretations of Sura Hamd; two, it fulfils the conventional decorum of commencing religious addresses in the established manner. At the end of the sermon are given eight Persian verses from Mohtasim Kashfi's epicdium. This is followed by the Heading covering the topic during the session; and then follows the narrative which follows hereunder;

"The narrators of the heart-rending tribulations and the scribes who recorded them describe the journey towards Kufa of Syed-us-Shuhada (Imam Husain A.S.); his arrival at the desert of Karbala; the start of hostilities, and the martyrdom of Hur Ibne Yazeed thus :

"When Muslim bin Aqeel reached Kufa, a large number of treacherous Kufis professed their allegiance to Imam Husain (A.S.). Accordingly, Muslim bin Aqeel wrote a letter to the Imam, giving him all relevant details. As soon as this letter reached him, Imam Husain (A.S.) set forth for Kufa from Mecca with the members of his household on the third day after Eid-uz-Zoha. Imam Husain (A.S.) by Mecca for Kufa on 8th Zilhaj—Publishers. Incidentally, Muslim bin Aqeel had been martyred on the same day. Jenab-e-Muslim bin Aqeel was martyred on 9th Zilhaj—Publishers. One of his devotees told the Imam : 'O' son of the Prophet, your going to Kufa is not without significance'. To this, the Imam replied thus :

"I am guided by TRUTH that has would itself round my neck like the reins, and I move in the direction it escorts me to'. At length, the Imam proceeded on his journey which continued from one half to another, till he reached a halt at Shaqooq. A certain person was coming from the direction of Kufa. The Imam sat at a distance from his tent, and noticing this man, the Imam called out to him and asked about the developments in Kufa. The man replied, 'O' Imam',

hardly had I left Kufa when I saw Muslim murdered by Ibne Ziyad, who severed his head and sent it to the vicious Yazeed, and hung the body on the gallows. As soon as he heard this, the Imam sighed and quoted 'and to' "*Verily we are God's and verily to Him shall we return*". (2:156).

"But no one except Imam Husain (A.S.) knew of the martyrdom of Muslim bin Aqeel. However, when the Imam returned to the camp, a thirteen-year-old daughter of the martyred Muslim bin Aqeel came and sat near him. The Imam conducted himself with profuse affections for her, so much so that he had never been so affectionate towards her at any time in the past. The Imam would stare intently at the girl's face and caress her head lovingly with his hands. Suspicion arose in the mind of the girl. Moved by her intuition, she told the Imam ; 'O' son of the Prophet, you are being strangely affectionate towards me tonight. Such an affection is reserved for the orphans, only. Tell me, has my father been martyred ?

"The moment the Imam heard these words of the girl, he could no longer control his emotions which he had suppressed so far. He burst out weeping spontaneously, saying between the sobs, 'O' darling daughter of my uncle's son, do not lose your heart, and do not weep, for I will be a father to you ; and my sister, Zainab, will be a mother to you. Regard my daughters as your own sisters and my sons as you own brothers'.

"But the girl in grief tore open her garments, and rolling herself on the ground, lamented thus :

'Alas : How I wish my mother had not given birth to me ; or, once born, how I wish she had not died.

'Alas, How I wish I had not arrived at my age of consciousness so that I could not beat my breast now with the awareness that I am a fatherless girl.

'Alas ! How I wish for death which can unite me with my father'.

"When these wailings of the girl filled the air in the camp, the sons of Muslim also came to know the death of their, and consequently beat their heads and tore their clothes". (Karbala Katha, p. 132).

Karbala Katha is a fine specimen of conventional style of prose writing. In course of time, the speakers who recited from this masterpiece modified the language of its texts to conform with the linguistic parlance of their times, and this resulted in enhancing the literary beauty of its contents ; and with this, its demand also increased. It is also probable that speakers at mourning congresses in Delhi, Benares, Lucknow, Calcutta, Patna and other distant cities in India may have been discoursing on the Tragedy of Karbala in the own individual and independent way, though we have no specific evidence of the exact nature of their deliberations on the subject.

OTHER BOOKS FOR MAJLISES

Haider Bukhsh Hyderi, a prominent figure in Urdu literature during the nineteenth century, translated the original *Rauzatus Shuhada* into Urdu and titled this translation as *Gulshan-e-Shaheedan*. On the 20th of Moharrum, 1227 A.H. (i.e. in February 1812 A.D.), Maulvi Syed Hasan Sabeb Yormi requested Hyderi for selections from his translation, and the latter obliged him with the selection of the manuscript of *Dah Majlis* under the title of *Gul-e-Maghfirat*. There is a time-gap of about 82 years between *Karbala Katha* and *Gul-e-Maghfirat*.

Mulla Fazli, the original author of *Karbala Katha*—the Urdu version of *Rauzatus Shuhada*, was no doubt a learned figure of his time; but Urdu was not an easy language either. As such, *Karbala Katha* was a transformation of *Rauzatus Shuhada* into Urdu language with its difficult syntax and idioms that prevailed then. As against this, Hyderi was the product of a literary age when organized efforts were being made to make Urdu a more easy-to-understand language and give it a befitting status in literature. Hyderi had written and compiled several works of Urdu prose by this time. He was an experienced scholar and seasoned teacher, and these qualities helped him to present *Gul-e-Maghfirat* in excellent prose with a beautiful style of writing. It was, therefore, not surprising that it gained immediate popularity in all circles. Several editions of this book were published from Calcutta and Bombay. In 1845, publishers in France also brought out its editions in Paris.

Gul-e-Magfirat comprises of very moving sermons and narratives. This compilation, which consists of sixteen sections, indicates that Majlises held on the Soyem (12th Moharrum), Daswin (20th Moharrum) and Chehlum (20th Safar) had become specifically important sessions by this time. Thus, by giving the Khateeb (speakers) a book of serially arranged sermons in an appealing style, Hyderi had pioneered the start of a series of publications on the subject in Urdu language. We give below an excerpt from this book as a specimen of the beautiful style of writing. This extract will also help to give the reader a good idea of the style of oratory as it prevailed among the speakers at Majlises in those by gone days.

EXTRACTS FROM GUL-E-MAGFIRAT

First Session Dedicated to The Demise of Prophet Mohammad Mustafa (S.A.):

Verse: Shedding tears for the beloved father of Zahra (A.S.) is a far better worship than all the conventional forms of worship put together.

O' Hyderi! Regard not the moisture of the eyes as more tears: for I heard the discerning sages say that tears of agony are oceans of salvation.

O' Momins! Tonight is the night which is dedicated to commemorating the passing of the Holy Prophet Mohammad Mustafa (S.A.). So, be seated in this m'urning session for him and shed your tears in sincere agony for his demise.

Verse: His is the grief for which the angels in heaven weep.

By God, all beings, supernatural and human, weep for him.

(There are 6 such verses).

O' Momins! O' pious ones! O' devotees of Mohammad's Ahle Bait! Know that the first shock of grief which Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (S.A.) bore was that when his father departed from this vile world before he was born, and went away into the Desert of Death from which there is no return. Thus the infant Prophet could not even have a taste of his father's nobility and paternal love, so that he was deprived of pleasure of being fondled in the loving embrace of his father. Oh! Oh! What a tragedy! What a tragedy that his venerable father died while he was still in his mother's womb. OH! What a fate that the would-be chief of men and genii became an orphan.

It is authentically mentioned in the Traditions that upon his birth Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (S.A.) was addressed as Yateem (an orphan) by the angels in heaven, followed by their sobbings for him.

Verse: Though your face is apparently marred with the stain of orphanage, but what if it is so?

For, the beauty of pearls in the shell is also marred by its shell; but the pearl itself retains its value all the same.

Addressing the angels, God Almighty said: "Know this, O' angels, that though My Beloved has been orphaned, I am his Guardian and Helper. I am his Provider and Director. So, send, you all O' angels, you salutations to him, and regard him as the most auspicious and noble of all My creations".

God be praised, when Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (S.A) was six years old, his mother also left for the journey into Eternity. The agony of this tragedy is inexpressible in words. This was the second shock of grief that befell the one who is the cause of all Divine creations.

Verse: The value of a pearl becomes all the more greater when it is separated from its mother-shell.

Thus did God enhance the value of this 'pearl of an orphan' separated from his maternal protective care.

[Note: Ref. Gul-e-Maghfirat, published by Majlis-e-Taraqqi-e-Adab, Lahore (1960), pp. 7-9. This latest edition is a very valuable publication by virtue of both its presentation as well as elucidatory notes on its text].

The thirteenth section in Gul-e-Maghfirat commences with two verses, followed by eight lines in prose, which are in turn followed again with seven couplets, after which comes the following text.

The following is written in "Oyun-e-Akhbaar-ur-Raza".

"O' devotees of the Ahle Bait, O' lamentors of Aal-e-Aba! Mourn and lament during the month of Moharrum. Detach yourself from all merriments during this month. God will bless you with a great reward with an abode in the Paradise".

A GLIMPSE OF PARADISE IN DREAM

It is reported that it was a regular practice of Omar bin Lais, the King of Khurasan, to award one mace made of pure gold to every army officer who presented himself with a contingent of one hundred cavalry men completely armoured for Royal inspection. One day it was time for the enmasse inspection of the entire army. Accordingly 125 army officers, each officer with 100 men under his command, were declared as qualified for the award of one mace of gold each. Looking thoughtfully at the vast spread of army before him, Omar bin Lais wept so much that he fainted with grief.

"Your Majesty, what fate has befallen you that you are in such a state of grief," asked one of the Vizirs by his side when the king regained consciousness.

"O' well-meaning Vizir", replied the king, "when I was looking at the sea of my army in rows after rows, the memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) flashed across my mind. It occurred to me that if this imposing army had been with the Imam on the field at Karbala, it would have returned victorious along with him after having slain the wicked infidels there to the last man".

To be brief, the noble King died one day. A certain person consequently had a vision when he was asleep one night. He saw this dead King strolling and riding a steed with a graceful gait in the Paradise, wearing a beautiful crown on his head and dressed in Royal robes with an embroidered belt round his waist and accompanied by a band of the virgins of the Paradise and other celestial creatures around him.

"How did your Majesty manage to attain this exalted state even after your death?" Asked the dreamer, struck with awe at this heavenly Sight.

"Listen my dear man", replied the King, "During my life on Earth, there was a time when I was not in the good looks of God. Later, there came a time when I developed a deep devotion to Imam Husain (A.S.) and would weep my heart out at the recollection of the tortures braved by the Imam. It is as a result of the grace of the Imam for my lamenting over his martyrdom that I have been pardoned by Allah for my sins in life, and thus have attained this

heavenly bliss. It is undeniably true that whoever associates himself with mournings for Imam Husain (A.S.), and whoever remembers the tortures inflicted upon him and sheds tears of true agony at the recollection of these brutalities, his lamentations will stand in good stead for him on the Day of Judgement. He will thus be entitled to a blissful salvation in the Hereafter" (Ref. Gul-e-Maghfirat, p. 174).

A PERIOD OF BOOM IN ELEGIAC LITERATURE IN INDIA

Haider Buksh Hyderi's period was a period when the institution of Azadari flourished in full swing in the Indian subcontinent. Delhi, Faizabad, Benaras, Jaunpur, Calcutta, Azeemabad, to name only a few, were the places where major Centres sprang up, and where the speakers at the Majlises delivered their sermons in Persian language besides the local languages. The rhythmic modulation of diction in which epicademics were recited became very popular. A printed Persian collection of sermons, *Waqia-e-Mulahiza*, read at Majlises during the time of Asif-ud-daula, as well as other compiled manuscripts of this period are still preserved in various libraries. I also possess in my personal library a Persian book titled *Lisan-ul-Waizeen* pertaining to this period, compiled by one Mohammad Ali Saheb who also wrote another book, *Huzn ul Momineen*. Both of these voluminous material are an invaluable source for reference work on Azadari and allied matters like Majlises, sermons etc. In Mohammad Ali Saheb's

Lisan-ul-Waizeen, there is a reference to Wajid Ali Shah's regime. To Wajid Ali Shah's period also belongs another book compiled in Urdu prose by Kalb-e-Husain Khan Nadir. I have in my personal collection this book, too, titled **Fazail-ush-Shuhada**, which is a sequel to **Rauzatus Shuhada**, printed and published by Asad ul Akhbar Press, Agra (1850). These books also make it evidently clear that Arab as well as non-Arab refugees from Iraq, Iran, Bahrain and other places in the Middle-East had migrated from their countries to India and became professional Majlis-speakers in various parts of the subcontinent.

Persian was a favourite language of the privileged class of society in Murshidabad, Khambhat, Hyderabad (Deccan), Bombay, Khairpur, Lahore, Ludhiana and other places. New comers from abroad used to recite in Persian at the **Majlises**, while in regions where Urdu was the common language, speakers proficient in Urdu used to recite in Urdu. Among the famous orators of the time, Maulvi Monammad Baquir Saheb of Delhi and Maulvi Jaffer Ali Saheb Jarchavi were the most outstanding two, who were unrivalled in their orational excellence at Majlis-recitals. The last of these outstanding personalities of the period was Janab Moulvi Ameer Syed Ali who died in 1308 A.H. (1890 A.D.)

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 brought in its wake a great upheaval in Indian history; and in the anarchic chaos that followed this blood-bath, the names and works of hundred of literary persons were lost for ever. So great indeed was this political conflagration that the entire subcontinent stood shaken to its roots.

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CHAPTER XXVII

MOURNING CONGRESSES

FORTH PHASE

With the onset of the current 20th century commenced an era of glory and advancement in the spheres of Arts and Sciences. After a long-lasting period of tumult, political instabilities gave way to a peaceful equilibrium in the subcontinent. Civilizational progress at length regained its norms. With the consequent spread of education and phenomenal advancement in the spheres of transport and communications, people got the opportunity and means of meeting each other, knowing and understanding each other, despite the geographic distances separating them.

In such a congenial atmosphere, it was but natural that institutions of Azadari and Majlises, too, should have gained their share of development and

progress. And this they did gain in good measure. Besides the field of literature to which Urdu was (and is still) deeply attached. Other venues of Arts and Sciences also found expression in this language. The old style of oration gave place to newer styles. The erstwhile conventional use of Persian and Arabic verses in writings and speech gradually declined; and propagation of religion, rather than the promotion of Azadari, became the main line of sustained action for the Ulemas. Answering to the criticisms of the Sunni school of thought, focussing the finer points of Shia beliefs, and repudiating the concepts of Hindu and Christian philosophies became the current topics of the day.

Unlike the past, the practice of applauding the speaker for his oratorical qualities at Majlises set in. Elements of wit and poetic thought crept into sermons. Elucidations of Quranic verses and Traditions, and discourses on Ethics and socio-religious codes were blended together in the sermons by the Ulema. Khateebis (speakers at Majlises) started injecting the element of humour in their sermons meant for elegising personages and recounting the tribulations braved by them. Many an accomplished Ulema became famous for their learning during this period. Many of them were acknowledged as the greatest Khateebis of India, the two most outstanding among them being Maulana Maqbool Ahmed Saheb and Maulana Sible Hasan Saheb, so much so that this period came to be referred to as Maqbool Ahmed-Sible Hasan Age.

It will not be amiss here to mention in passing a few of the great Khateebis of the time.

BRIEF NOTES ON A FEW KHATEEBIS OF INDIA

MAULANA SYED MOHAMMAD HUSAIN

Maulana Syed Mohammad Husain was famous for his research work in the Hindi language. He had a very impressive and appealing style of oratory. He was a popular figure whose popularity was equally spread over all the cities of undivided India. He was successful in creating a wide scope of influence and propagation of Shia concepts through his forceful sermons in the province of Bombay. People used to flock to his Majlises by the thousands and return home deeply influenced by what they heard him say. As a result, many families joined the ranks of Shias through voluntary conversions each year.

MAULANA MAQBOOL AHMED DEHLAVI (d. 1340 A.H./1921 A.D.)

Maulana Maqbool Ahmed was a Fazil (Lecturer in Theology) at the Delhi College. He was born a Sunni, but became a Shia subsequently. He had a complete command on Urdu and on the art of public speaking. Whenever he started his sermon at a Majlis, he would start with comments on his previous religious beliefs and the reasons for his subsequent conversion to the Shia school of thought. Then he would start discoursing on the issue of Imamate in a purely cool logical context. The Sunnis quite

naturally despised him, but their acrimony only helped to increase his zealousness for his new faith. Public appreciation of his personal and scholastic qualities raised him to the zenith of popularity in every nook and corner of undivided India. Khateeb, impressed by his style, made him their Ideal and started emulating his mannerisms. In fact, he came to be acknowledged as the founder of a new trend of sermonizing at Majlises.

MAULANA MOHAMMAD RAZA

(d. 1341 A.H./1922 A.D.)

To this period also belongs Maulana Mohammad Raza. This teacher at Madrasa-e-Sultan al-Madaris distinguished himself in Logics and Philosophy, which dominated in his sermons. He was particularly known for deducing Quranic verses and narratives to logical conclusions, which speciality became synonymous with his name. His elaborate elucidations of Unity of God, Divine justice, Resurrection and other Islamic concepts in philosophic terminologies and strain was a special feature of his masterly discourses which won a universal acclaim of other contemporary scholars.

ALLAMA ABDUL ALI HIRVI

(d. 1341 A.H./1922 A.D.)

This eminent scholar who originally came from Iran was an authority on Quran and Philosophy. Though he spoke in Persian, his sermons at Majlises in Lahore and the undivided province of the Panjab left a long-enduring influence on the thinking of his

audiences. He was a pastmaster at expounding Quranic verse-material in his arguments and literal expositions of Quranic philosophy. Though other prominent scholars of the time, like Maulana Mohammad Syed Husain and Maulana Kifayat Husain, emulated his style, they succeeded only in achieving a style all their own, not his inimitable one.

MAULANA SYED ALI HAA'ERI

(d. 1363 A.H.)

Majlises were a regular feature of life of Muslims in India during the period under review. In every big city and province, the Ulema and Khateeb used to deliver their sermons at Majlises. In Lahore, too, many a Khateeb had achieved popularity; but the most outstanding among them all was Janab Shamsul Ulema Maulana Syed Ali Haa'eri, the great compiler of Tafseer Lawaa'me-ut-Tanzeel. He had a unique style of his own in substantiating the Islamic ideology of the Infallible Imams, using reference material from Traditions and interpretations of Quran as subscribed to by the opponent schools of thought. With his scholarly and personal qualities of mind and heart, he attained enviable appreciation of the people at inter-communal congregations in the capital cities of undivided India.

His contemporaries were Janab Mirza Ahmed Ali and Janab Khwaja Mohammad Latif Ansari, who also were held in high esteem. In typical Panjabi accent and refined diction, Maulana Syed Zulfiquar Ali Shah occupied the highest rung of fame any Khateeb could ever wish for.

SHAMSUL ULEMA

KHATEEB-E-AAL-E-MOHAMMAD

MAULANA SYED SIBTE HASAN

(d. 28th MOHARRUM 1354 A.H.)

For the first time in the history of Azadari in the Indian subcontinent these dawned on the literary horizon a figure in the first quarter of the current century who became a living legend in his own lifetime, the like of whom was never seen or heard of in this part of the world in the sphere of oratory and command of the subject. His magnetic personality and depth of knowledge, coupled with his unique eloquence, surpassed all factional barriers inasmuch as Sunnies, Shias, admirers as well as antagonists, in short, every single person who mattered, were all drawn to him in the highest regard which none before him had ever commanded.

This was Maulana Sibte Hasan!

His appealing style of speech, his eloquence, his polished manner of oration, the impelling force evident in his sermons—all these were unique, inimitable, unparalleled, almost magical. In his elucidations of Qu'ani verses, in his elaborations of Traditions, in fact, in every in everything he said, there was such a volume of novel appeal that the audiences used to be held spell-bound while he spoke. His diction and his undulations of voice was indeed a marvel by its own right. Every gesture of his would draw a spontaneous applaud from his audiences whose ecstasy at the ebb and flow of his rich voice and

elegant manner of delivery leapt to unbounded limits. Everyone who heard him, no matter whether one was a Shia, Sunni, as illiterate, or a scholar, rich or poor, drew pleasure out of his discourses, the extent of which cannot be defined in words. Every word that he used in eulogizing the Ahle Bait and the Martyrs of Karbala was a miniature poetry in itself. Every phrase that he employed to describe the tortures braved by the Imams was an epitome of a whole epic. Whether the rain was pouring down outside in all its aquatic fury, soaking the audience to their skins, or a furious storm raging outside while he poked seated on the pulpit, the audience sat glued to their seats, listening to this nightingale of the garden of Aale-Mohammad, unaffected by the wildness of the natural elements around them, and lamenting for the Martyrs in unabated frenzy.

It is unanimously believed by all Ulama and enlightened individuals that no Khateeb was ever born before or after him on the Indian soil who could be said to be anywhere near the pinnacle of scholastic perfection that only Sibte Hasan could touch.

The current style and mode that is employed by the Zakirs (speakers at (Majlises) of the present times owe their prevalence to the precedents of Maulana Sibte Hasan alone, his style and mode being in that period the most impressive way that appealed alike to all Khateeb. It is this artful style that has been adopted by modern Khateeb as well, the most prominent of them being Janab Syed Kalb-e-Husain (d. 1383 A.H.), Janab Maulana Ibne Hasan

Nauncharvi, Janab Maulana Syed Mohammad Dehlavi (d. 1971), Janab Kifayat Husain, Janab Azhar Husain Zaidi, Janab Mohammad Shabbir, Janab Syed Ali Naqi, the late Maulana Abrar Husain Parvai and Janab Mulla Mohammad Tahir. In all these worthy personages, one can notice that each of them has an individual style of his own. However, it must also be said that the sarcasms by Maulana Maqbool Ahmed; the literary maturity of Maulana Sibte Hasan; the Philosophic expositions of Maulana Mohammad Raza; the lively style of Janab Murtuza Husain Allahabadi; the detailed and minutely critical elucidations of Allama Hirvi and Maulana Mohammad Sibtain; and the discourses on history by poet Aulad Husain were individual attainments which these eminent personalities gained for themselves as a result of their passionate and dedicated devotion to the religious sanctity of Majlises in memory of Imam Husain (A.S.).

(For details on Maulana Syed Mohammad see Khateeb-e-Azam published in Karachi).

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AZADARI

CURRENT PHASE

In continuation with the precepts and precedents left behind by the old masters like footprints on the sands of time, the present state of progress in the literary sphere in Indo-Pakistan subcontinent is a culmination of Ideals of the past which apparently seem to have reached their peak points today. This is not to say that "old wine" continues to be served in "new bottles". Rather the "wine" as well as the "bottles" both are new, in fact, ultra-new. For, Ideals have changed, values have changed, in short the entire outlook on and attitude to life has undergone a phenomenal metamorphosis. Trends in writing History, expounding of concepts in Psychology, and literary criticisms, have taken new turns in the literary sphere. Urdu language has assumed a new complexion. Phraseologies, which fifty years ago were understood

only by a specific class of persons, have now intruded into every-day-use. Newer philosophies, newer angels of approach, newer linguistic problems which were obscure in the past, now activated themselves on a mass scale. The public mind now started evincing interest in listening to complex issues. The new generation is eager to interpret everything in life in a new and novel way.

And, there is the other side of the picture, too.

Confronting the modernists, there is that class of religion-minded persons who feel disturbed at seeing the new generation going farther and farther away from ethical and religious norms, thus violating the sanctity of Islamic values of life. It is, therefore, more necessary now than ever before that our **Zakirs** (orators particularly those who recite elegies of the Martyrs of Karbala at **Majlises**) take due cognizance of this socio-religious retardation. Our masses are ignorant bulk of them being illiterate also. What they require is a sustained appraisal of the importance of adhering to Islamic teachings. What they ardently need is the exciting force in the sermons at **Majlises** and mosques like those in Iran and Iraq, potent enough to inspire them emotionally in the right direction of religious normalcy.

Then, there is that class of audiences (**Shias**) living in rural areas situated far away from the cities, and who have to bear the brunt of insolent taunts by various communities who bear antipathy towards them. This class is being constantly subjected to sarcastic flings by those whose religious affiliations

differ from theirs. What these censured rural minorities need is sufficient knowledge of their religious tenets and history to be able to reply befittingly to their opponents. To them, the scholastic requirements discussed above have no meaning in a practical sense. It is, therefore, upto the **Zakirs** and speakers to be cognizant of the all-round and overall supply of plain informative nature to these rurals, presenting the same in a manner that it is both digestible as well as embracive of all exigencies that they may have to be faced with. It must, however, be confessed that this is not an easy task. Even a slight confusion in handling this problem, a slight carelessness in planning, a slight lack of foresight and seasoned experience can lead to grave consequences.

Majlises are a religious institution aiming at keeping alive the Sacred memory of Imam Husain (A.S.). The main purpose of **Azadari** which includes **Majlises** and other forms of mourning, is to introduce the Tragedy of Karbala and its significance to the world at large. As such, if irrelevant and complex subjects like politics, science and logics are dragged into this introduction, it will defeat the very purpose which it seeks to serve. There will be then no difference between an ordinary public meeting in the park and a **Majlis**.

Majlises have a solemn complexion and a uniform mode of function. They have their own mannerisms, their own cadence and a set purpose. **Khateeb** is bound to abide by a sanctioned scope, within which he must confine his individual opinion. It is all these pre-requisites that give **Majlises** a special and distinct

status and a complexion that cannot be comparable with other gatherings. The art of oratory which has now taken new forms and styles of expression, and the changes that have taken place in the general trend of things in modern times has affected the mode of delivery of sermons at the Majlises as well. It is quite obvious to shrewd observers that the style that prevails among today's Zakirs is not the same as it was some twenty five years back. It may perhaps be not possible to assess the potentials of modern Khateeb's and their technique of speaking at Majlises but the future will no doubt bring into hold relief the importance and soundness of their polished tenor.

There will invariably come a time when the performance of today's Khateeb's will be critically examined, debated upon, and adjudged in the future. There is, however, one judgement that can confidently be pronounced today; and that is, that Syed-ul-ulema Moulana Ali Naqi, Allama Reza Husain and Allama Rasheed Turabi are the pioneers of new techniques of harangue in the sphere of oration at Majlises. These worthy persons with their intellectual sagacity, thought provoking phraseologies and an appealing and convincing style of oratory have ushered in a new era of Majlises with its values polished with greater emphasis, thereby widening the scope of influence of these mourning congresses and making them more productive of desirable effects.

A L U M S

'Alum' in the Arabic language ordinarily means a mark or sign by which one can differentiate an object

from other objects by noticing the sign or mark with which it is stamped. But, like many other words, this word 'Alum' also has come to have an identific usage as a symbol of the flag used by Imam Husain's army, which is now hoisted at Imam Baras or carried aloft during mourning processions. This Alum generally comprises of a long bamboo stick with a cloth wound spirally around it. At the top is fixed a contraption representing a cut out hand comprising only the wrist, palm and the five fingers. This is called 'Panja'. There are different variations of this. Below the Panja, which can be of gold, silver, copper or brass material is attached a triangular or a rectangular piece of cloth. This is known as 'Phuraira'. These components, when put together, are also known by the word 'Alum'. These Alums can be costly ones, bedecked with jewels and precious stones; or they can be very ordinary, too. These Alums are also fixed one each at the sides of the pulpit for sermons.

Hoisting of flags at the demise or martyrdom of the flag-bearer or army commander is a traditional practice that has come down to us through the ages. The history of Islam also stands testimony to this custom, as evident from this extract from Ibne Abil Hadeed's Sharh-e-Nahjul Balagha :

"...Hardly had Usama bin Zaid left for Tabauk with the Muslim army when Hazrat Umme Aiman despatched a messenger to him with the tragic news of the Holy Prophet's demise. Accordingly, Usama immediately turned

back toward Medina. The flag-bearer at the time was Bureida bin Abu Saib who on reaching the Prophet's house lowered the Alum in front of the door of the Prophet's house..."

Alums have a special significance in Azadari, and are identified specifically with Abbas bin Ali. No Tazia (Mourning procession) is complete without carrying an Alum.

T A Z I A S

Tazias constitute yet another symbolic significance of specific nature in the institution of Azadari : and being associated with Imam Husain (A.S.), they command a very high respect. In Hyderabad (Deccan), Lucknow, Rampur, Delhi, Punjab and Sind, Tazias are referred to also as Zarihs and Banglas by virtue of their structural shapes in miniature dimensions. These are made in a variety of colour combinations from special materials.

The more common Tazias are made from materials like wax, straw, flower wreaths, crystal glass, gold or silver foil and chipped wood. The Tazias known as Bangla Tazias resemble in shape to models of palaces or palanquins, which were perhaps once used for storing rare and holy antiquities.

Zarihs (miniature models of Imam Husain's and Ahle Bait's Martyrs' Shrines) made out of wax are an outstanding handicraft specimens of artisanship in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent; and it takes one whole year of the entire community's efforts to complete

one Zarih. All floral decorations, and even the layers of wreaths are of wax. These Zarihs, besides being preserved at Mourning Centres are carried along in mourning processions and kept inside the Imambaras and on house-tops from the 29th of Zilhaj to the 10th of Moharrum each year.

IMAMBARAS

Imambaras are special halls, where Tazias and Alums are kept. In some places, Imambaras are also called Ashoorkhanas, Azakhanas, Imam Khanas, Tazia Khanas, Mehfls, Karbalas and Husainiya. In Pakistan, India, Iran, Iraq, Kashmir, Africa and other places wherever there are devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.), these Imambaras are also there.

(Alao literary means a heap of flames. It was customary in Madras and South India to mourn for Imam Husain (A.S.) while treading over burning fuel. Hence the use of the word 'Alao' with mourning—

Tohfatul Aalum).

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CHAPTER XXIX

SANCTITY OF LAMENTATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAMIC HISTORY

Weeping and lamenting over the tribulations suffered by Imam Husain (A.S.) is an integral part of Islamic way of life. There are numerous sayings of the Holy Prophet and narratives from traditions which substantiate this. History has recorded a series of narratives pertaining to mournings during the whole year commencing from the first week of Moharrum. The following are a few narratives from history ;

'THE YEAR OF MOURNING'

Hazrat Ummul Momineen Khadija binte Khwailad, the Holy Prophet's most venerable wife, died 10 years after the public declaration of his Divine Messengership. Shortly after her, Hazrat Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle also died. Both

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these demises grieved the Holy Prophet so deeply that he abstained from all merriments and described that year as the 'Year of Mourning'.

(Ref. Masudi, Yaqubi, Tabari and others).

LAMENTATIONS OVER A MARTYR

The Battle of Ohad (3 A.H./625 A.D.) is one of the fiercest battles ever fought in the history of Islam. One of the Prophets' uncles, Hazrat Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib, who fought valiantly in this battle, was martyred during his engagement with the enemy. The Prophet was returning to his camp after the battle when he heard some ladies lamenting loudly over the martyrdoms of their respective near and dear ones, as was the custom in Arabia in those times.

"Alas!" Sighed the Prophet in despair, "How I wish there were ladies to lament over Hamza too". Hearing these words of the Prophet, his companions, Sa'ad bin Ma'az and Amar bin Sagheer collected the womenfolk of Bani Abd-e-Ash'hal and sent them to the Prophet's camp for a mass mourning over Hamza.

(Ref. Ibne Hisham, Tabari).

According to Tabqaat ul Kabir compiled by Omer Ibne Sa'ad (d. 230 A.H.), this custom of group-mournings by the clan of Abd-e-Ash'hal continued till his own time. Whenever any person died among them, these men would first

weep and lament in memory of Hazrat Hamza, and then cry for the own deceased ones.

(Ref. Tabqaat, pub. Lyden, Vol. 1, ch. 3, p. 31).

LAMENTATION APPROVED BY PROPHET

Hazrat Ja'ffar bin Abu Talib fell a martyr at the Battle of Mauta in 8 A.H./630 A.D. The Holy Prophet wept very anguishingly over this tragic event; and when his daughter, Fatema, reached there and heard the loud lamentations by the ladies, the Prophet observed, "Yes, the grieved ladies must verily weep for Ja'ffar".

THE HOLY PROPHET'S MOURNINGS OVER KARBALA TRAGEDY

As reported in Mishqat (p. 572, ch. Munaqib-e-Ahle Bait Umm-ul-Fazal Lababa binte Haris, the wife of Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib saw a certain dream and related in to the Holy Prophet.

"I dreamt", she told the Prophet, "that a part of your body fell into my lap". Thereupon the Prophet interpreted the dream as an auspicious tiding, foretelling the birth of Imam Husain (A.S.).

Later, on a certain occasion, Janab-e-Lababa came to the Prophet, carrying the infant Imam in her arms. Claspng the child in his own embrace, the Prophet started weeping. When Lababa asked the reason for his weeping, the

Prophet said, Hazrat Jibrael (A.S.) tells me that this child will be killed at the hands of my own followers". The Prophet then gave Lababa a handful of red coloured sand from the spot of land which was to become the arena where Imam Husain would be martyred.

(Ref. Bahar-ul-Anwar, pub. Iran—1270 A.H. Vol. 2, p. 1019).

One day the Holy Prophet walked into Janab-e-Umm-ul-Momineen Umme Salma's chamber and ordered that no one should be allowed to enter the room. It so happened that infant Imam Husain walked into this room. Seeing the child inside the room with him, the Holy Prophet became greatly emotional with affection. Following upon the child's heels, Hazrat Umme Salma also came into the room; and there she saw the Prophet holding Imam Husain (A.S.) tightly to his breast and weeping, holding something in his hand which he was examining repeatedly. Noticing her presence in the room, the Prophet told Umme Salma; "Umme Salma, Hazrat Jibrael (A.S.) tells me that my child will be murdered. Look, this is the sand from the spot where he will be martyred. Take this sand, when you notice that its colour has changed to the colour of blood, then be certain that my darling child has fallen a martyr on the day this change occurs."

(Ref. Maqatal-e-Ibne Nama, pub. Teheran 1316 A.H. p. 4.).

On the Ashura Day, i.e. on the 10th of Moharrum, Janab-e-Umme Salma saw a dream in which she noticed the Holy Prophet with his head and heard soiled by dust and sand. On asking how it was so, the Prophet told her, "Umme Salma, I have just seen Husain being killed."

Umme Salma woke from her sleep, weeping over what she saw in her dream.

(Ref. Mishqat, p. 570, citing Tirmizi).

THE PROPHET AND THE CRYSTAL-GLASS BOTTLE

Abdulla bin Abbas also saw a similar dream on the 10th of Moharrum in 61 A.H. He saw the Prophet in his dream with his head and hair soiled with sand, lamenting and holding in his hand a glass bottle in which fresh blood was boiling. Ibne Abbas asked the Prophet what that meant. The Prophet replied, "O' Ibne Abbas, this is the blood of Husain and his companions."

Ibne Abbas says that he kept a note of the day and time of his dream; and when he eventually got the details of the Tragedy of Karbala, it was found that the day of the Tragedy and the day of his dream were the same.

(Ref. Masud, Ahmad bin Hambal, pub. Egypt, old edition, Vol. 1, p. 242 & 572; Mishkat p. 570, citing Tirmizi, pub. Lucknow—1884-p. 222. For further reference see also Sirrus-Shahadatain, Abdul Aziz Dehlavi and notes on it under Sharh-e-Sirrus-Shahadatain.

IMAMBARAS FOR EARLIER TIMES

Consequent upon the Holy Prophets' demise, his daughter, Fatematuz Zehra (A.S.) used to occupy an attic in the graveyard at Jannatul Baqi where she used to lament over here her father. She continued observing this routine till her last moments of life. In earlier times, this place was situated in Medina; but when the Wahhabis came into power, this historic memorial was demolished, when I had the good fortune of visiting Medina during my pilgrimage in 1949, I saw small chamber under construction at this spot, the roof and pillars having been completed. On making enquiries, I was told that certain gentlemen from Iran were erecting a monument, Baitul Huzn (Mourning House) in dedication to Fatematuz Zehra (A.S.). This was the spot (Jannatul Baqi) where, after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.), Janab Umm-ul-Baneen a wife of Ameerul Momineen Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) and the mother of Janab Abbas, used to lament over Imam Husain (A.S.) and the other martyrs of Karbala in a heart-rending manner. It was here that the citizens of Medina used to come and join her in her Wailings.

Hazrat Rabab, a wife of Imam Husain (A.S.) also frequented this spot, where throughout her life she used to come and lament over her martyred husband, sitting in the open. Hazrat Zainab and Umme Kulsoom are also among the mourners who used to gather at Baitul Huzn.

(Ref. Maqatil ut-Talibeen, pub. Egypt 1949, p. 85).

THE EARLIEST MOURNINGS

When the household members of Imam Husain (A.S.) were released from their captivity in Syria and came over to Medina, Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.) directed Noman bin Bashir (or Bashir bin Jazlam) to go in advance to Medina and proclaim the news of their arrival in all the localities of the city. The Imam remaining encamped at the outskirts.

Accordingly, Bashir did as he was bid. Hearing the shocking announcement of the Tragedy of Karbala, the entire population of Medina, including women, men the young and the old, rushed weeping and lamenting towards Imam Zainul Abideen's camp, where the Imam made his appearance and delivered a mourning sermon to the gathering.

(Ref. **Maqatal-e-Ibne Nama**, p. 62; **Bahar-ul-Anwar**, Vol. tenth).

It is on historical records that Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.), Imam Mohammad Baqar (A.S.), Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.), Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.), and Imam Raza (A.S.) all used to get into mourning engagements as soon as the Moharrum moon was sighted, and refrained from all other routine matters for the period of mourning and forbid commercial transactions on the day of Ashura.

(Ref. **Bahar-ul-Anwar**, Vol. Ashar, p. 268).

HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)

THE TRAGEDY OF KARBALA

On the occasion of the Battle of Hunain, when the First Imam, Hazrat Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibne Abi Talib (A.S.) was passing through Karbala, he suddenly stopped on the field there. He then offered prayers on the spot; and picking up a handful of sand from the ground, he smelt it and spoke in the future tense about the catastrophe of the Holy Prophet's family and the martyrdoms of Imam Husain (A.S.) along with his companions and supporter. By lamenting over the Tragedy of Karbala 20 year before it actually occurred. Hazrat Ali (A.S.) had emulated the manner of the Holy Prophet and other Prophets of the past.

(Ref. **Ibne Mazaham** d. 212; **Waqiatus Siffin**, p. 140).

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CHAPTER XXX

MAJLISES, EPICEDIUMS AND FUNERAL ODES

IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN'S LAMENTATION

Among the dignitaries of Islam who lamented over the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) the names of Hazrat Ibne Abbas, Hazrat Ummul Momineen Umme Salma, Hazrat Ummul Baneen, Hazrat Rabab, Hazrat Zainab and Hazrat Umme Kulsoom (A.S.) have already been mentioned earlier. Imam Zainul Abideen's Azadari, too, is well-known. He used to speak personally to audiences very movingly on the scenes preceding the Karbala Tragedy and all that followed after it. Since he was himself an oppressed eye-witness of the brutalities at Karbala, the impact of the Tragedy on him was so deep that he mourned and lamented over it for full twenty years,

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so much so that even while he ate his meals, he would remember the Martyrs of the Holy Prophet's Ahle Bait ; and his voice used to be choked with suppressed anguish at the memory of the events of Karbala.

(Ref. Irshad-ul-Quloob, Dailami, pub. Bombay, p. 116).

MATAM (BREAST HEATING),

AZADARI AND PROCESSIONS

Much of important historical data relating to the institution of Azadari could not be well preserved due to the antagonistic policies of Ummayya rulers as well as due to the antipathy of their supporters and the suppressive efforts of the enemies of the Infallible Imams. However, despite these curbs and suppressions, Azadari continued gaining ground, though classic epicedioms of the outstanding poets of the time, and the public feelings over the matter of Azadari could not be published then. In spite of these brakes, poetic works of such great masters as Abul Aswad Do'ely, Farzdaq, Kumait, Da'abal, Abu Dahbal, Hamji, Abu Tamam and Syed Hameedi have seen the light of the day. Epic poems in volumes on the Tragedy of Karbala were somehow written ; and in 352 A.H., when all restrictions were lifted, mourning processions started filling the streets of Baghdad. The Saljuqs then stopped these processions with a firm hand ; and the mourners, therefore, left Baghdad and moved over to Karbala, where Azadari and processions and related practices continue unhampered today.

Caliph Aziz Billah Fatemi was the pioneer of mourning congresses and processions in Egypt, when he organized these in 352 A.H. However, when Salahuddin Ayubi ascended the throne, put a stop to these; but that did not deter the devoted mourners from their attachment. They migrated from there to assemble at Soor and Jabal Amil in Dumascus and Halab, where they dedicate themselves to their traditions which continue to survive to this day. Even today, caravans of mourners from the mountains and plains of Lebanon come out to Damascus and make the skies echo with the reverberations of their lamentations and breast beatings.

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CHAPTER XXXI

AZADARI IN LITERATURE

Mourning observances of the Arabs and the breast beatings of the Iranis had become so integral a part of life that scholars, writers and poets used the terminologies of Azadari in their books, thereby establishing its cultural importance both in practical life as well as in classic literature, using similies and metaphors bearing on the Tragedy of Karbala. For example this phrase of Abu Mohammad Qasim Ibne Ali al-Hariri Basri (d. 516 A.H.), reputed Arab scholar and eminent poet of his time :

“If you had faced a tragedy of the magnitude of the one braved out by Imam Husain (A.S.).....”

(Kitab al-Muqamaat ; Maqala al Aashera)

Another Persian Sufist poet of the same period, Hakeem Sanaa'ee (d. 525 A.H.) wrote :

(1) If you think deeply in religion, you will arrive at this conclusion, that all martyrs are Alive.

(2) In one row will find martyrs slaughtered with sword like Husain.

In another row, you will find martyrs poisoned like Hasan.

Another eminent Scholar, Qazi Hameeduddin Hameedi Balkhi (d. 560 A.H./1164 A.D.) in the 23rd essay in his **Muqamaat Hameedi**, Pub. Noelkishore (1923), p. 121, writes :

I saw a gathering where some people were sitting and some renowned persons were standing with their head-covers. They were all lamenting and mourning (with uneasiness). Their voices echoed all over the atmosphere. The sky also joined them in lamentation by giving up its natural look. And People were shedding tears and were throwing dust over their heads. They slapped their checks so much that they became red. They shrieked and shrieked.

The battle of Karbala surpassed battles of Ohad and Hunain and surpassed all.

One of the elderly persons in tattered clothes got up from amongst people and started giving vent to his feelings.

It is clear from the above extract that even six hundred years back mourning congregations were as impressive as the ones prevailing since the last hundred years. The scenes are witnesses today are the same, with the crowd bare-headed and in black attires squatting on the floor and lamenting for the Martyrs, sobbing their hearts out with loud sobs and wild, anguishing cries, listening to elegiac recitals or sermons in prose, their heads covered with dust and their breasts bleeding with uncontrolled beatings.

Similarly, one finds Maulana Roomi (c. 670 A.H.) describing majlises at Halab in the 6th chapter of his famous **Masnavi** :

On the day of Ashur people from Halab gathered at the gate of Antakia. They remained there the whole night. Shia men and women who assembled there lamented the whole night in memory of the martyrs of Karbala. They enumerated the sufferings and hardships to which the members of Husain's family were subjected at the hands of Yazeed and Shemir. There was such a great uproar that even the desert and forest were echoed with lamentations.

Hearing these wild lamentations, a non-subscriber of Azadari breaks into the gathering and poses several questions to the mourners. What they tell by way of a reply is :

Do not you know that mourning for Husain on the day of Ashur has been since ages. In the eyes of the Momins the mourning for Husain is

worth move then the devastation caused by the Hood of NOOH.

(Ref. Masnavi, Maulana Room, pub. Navalkishore 1953, Part 4, p. 14; op. cit. Pub. Lyden, part, 4, p. 317).

An important factor that emerges from the above descriptions of Maulana Room is that **Shab Bedari** (keeping awake for the night) is an ancient traditional practice, and that the Syrians and the Arabs kept themselves awake all night during the mourning period.

It must be borne in mind here that the Shia refugees had migrated from various Arab and Middle-east countries to Sind in India by this time ; and by the 8th century, had established their own colonies in the subcontinent. These settlements were, however, destroyed by their adversaries in the manner they destroyed them in Baghdad, Damascus and elsewhere. This is what the eminent historian, Farishta, writes in this context ;

“...An appreciable number of Dailamis and Alavis fled from their countries and migrated to Delhi, where they established their own colonies. But here, too, they had to suffer the some oppressions and victimizations. These colonies, which were established in the time of Ghyasuddin Baban in 664 A.H. (1265 A.D.) were destroyed during the reign of Feroze Shah in 753 A.H. (1351 A.D.).

The revolutions that came with the emergence of Mahmood Ghazni and the Mongols and the Taimurs, changed the complexion of the situation ; and the factional and prejudicial influence of Ummayyad, Abbasids and Ayubian rulers started wavering. Certain Shia groups remained stationed courageously in their homes in Iran and Iraq till the time the Moghuls had consolidated their position in Northern India and the Adil and Qutub Shahi dynasties had gained ascendancy in the Deccan. Thus the institution of Azadari was no more confined to the Arabian regions alone. It now spread over to other non-Arab countries, where it started flourishing with all its glory.

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CHAPTER XXXII

AZADARI IN THE DECCAN

The religious affiliations binding the Arab and Indo-Pakistan Muslims developed into a fresh era of brotherhood with the downfall of the Umayyad regime, by which time numerous Muslim invaders had established their hold in different areas of the North-west Frontier of India. By the time the Abbasids came into power, many provinces in India had become independent States. Muslim rulers in Sind, Multan, Rajputana, the North-west Frontier province and other areas were now busy building up their State armies. By the 5th century Hijra, these ruling Chiefs had conquered Delhi, which province thus became the Centre of Muslim rulers. However, despite the Muslim conquest of Delhi—The capital of India—there still remained other areas which continued to exist as independent States. One such independent political unit was the mountainous and torrid region of the Deccan in South India.

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The Deccan is an ancient political asylum of undivided India and a centre of non-Aryan races. Its language and culture still bears the stamp of antiquity. The Muslim conquest of Deccan brought in its wake a new era of culture which when merged with the Moghul culture, has produced a characteristic all its own. The Urdu language is the delicious product of this cultural evolutionary merger of Aryan and Dravidian influences of thought and feelings. Though it may have originated in a crude form in Sind or the Punjab, it stemmed forth fruitfully from its cultural roots in the Deccan. It is from here that this fine language branched out to Delhi, Lucknow and Lahore with all its expression beauty and linguistic potentialities.

The Deccan became an independent State in round about the 14th century Christian era (1310) consequent to its conquest. In 1351 A.D., Mohammad Tughlaq made Devgarh his capital. The movement for a completely independent and sovering State of Deccan commenced during the reign of Allauddin Hasan Bahm ni who ascended the throne in 1358 A.D. Due to the weaknesses of the Bahmani ruling dynasty, the adventurous officers started liberating various areas and establishing free Governments. One such adventurous youth was Yusuf Adil Shah who became the founder of the Adil Shahi dynastic regime in Bijapur.

It is believed that Yusuf Adil Shah belonged to the ruling dynasty of Osmani monarchs of Turkey. Yusuf Adil Shah was a disciple of a Sufi named Safi Shah whose disciples in course of time came to be

known with the appendage of "Qizilbash" with their names. When Yusuf Adil came to Deccan, he was a mere employee; but with his sustained efforts and skill, he gradually rose to be a Subedar of Bijapur which was then a province. With the decline of the Bahmani kingdom and liberation of its provinces, Yusuf Adil Shah became the virtual Ruler of Bijapur in 1489.

Yusuf Adil Shah and his family were Shias, whose generations ruled over Bijapur for about 200 years, during which period Azadari progressed unhindered.

There was another adventuring person named Sultan Quli, in Telangana district who was appointed as the Administrator by the Bahmani Government. For over 24 years, Sultan Quli looked after the administration of this region, after which he finally became an independent Sovereign and ruled over this part of Deccan for another 26 years. During the period his rule, he initiated Sermons dedicated to the memory of the Twelve Infallible Imams and openly demonstrated his love and regard for Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and his progeny. Citing the monumental work, "**Marghoob ul Quloob**," Syed Ali Asghar Bilgami of Hyderabad (Deccan) quotes Sultan Quli Qutub Shah as under:

"...It is now for about 60 years that I am fighting against anti-Islamic elements day and night. By the grace and guidance of Allah, about 60 to 70 strong and well fortified fortresses from the borders to the sea coast of Masaulipatan and Arjunbadri have already

fallen to my sweeping forces (i.e. Qutub Shahi). The main reason for these successes in my religious resolution which avowed to myself at the start of my struggle against the anti-Islamic elements, I had avowed then that if the Lord Almighty blessed me with success in my mission, I would introduce Sermon congregations all over the country in the sacred memory of the twelve Imams and propagate the right faith, Athna Ashari (Shiaism) throughout the land. I must make it clear that the actual time of this avowal of mine dates back to the period preceeding the emergence of the Jaffariya sect in Iran under Shah Ismail, lest people take a wrong impression that I emulated Shah Ghufuran Pannah. In fact, I it was who introduced coins stamped with the seal of Twelve Imams during Sultan Yaqub's reign. To tell the truth, Shiaism is my ancestral faith (Ref. Sarfaraz, Lucknow, dated 9th Nov. 1957).

Mourning observances during Moharrum were current in Telongana before Sultan Quli became the King; but with his emergence, Mourning Centres and Charity-feedings dedicated to the memory of the Twelve Imams, and Azadari as whole, received Royal attention and headed along with progressive prosperity and promotion of its values. Such great was the progress of Azadari in Deccan within a short period of time that is difficult to find a similar instance of such a pace in history. Epicediums, odes and other literary works on the Tragedy of Karbala that were

composed and compiled during this time are indeed unique in their character and style. The language (Urdu) found new expressions and newer dimension in thought; and in course of time the whole Indian peninsula echoed with the anguishing cries of "Husain-Husain". According to Mohammad Naseeruddin Hashmi, lamentations and precast-beatings were common in Golconda, Bijapur, and even as far as Ahmednagar during Moharrums.

The Muslims ruled over Deccan in various provinces for well over 600 years. As such, a review of Moharrum observances during this period is necessary. Mohammad Naseeruddin Hashmi has discussed this subject in his **Dakni Culture**, devoting full seventeen pages to this topic in the background of the period commencing from the time of Quli Qutub Shah to Mr. Osman Ali Khan (The Nizam of Hyderabad State). This book, entitled **Dakni Culture** Published in 1963 by Majlis-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, Lahore, is worth reading for its informative value, and is available at Books shop.

Peshwa-e-Azam, Allama Mir Momin used to look after the religious affairs. Festive arrangements on the occasions of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, and observances on Eid-e-Ghadir were un-paralleled in their planning and execution. The magnitude of Moharrum mournings was such that anyone who witnessed it was moved to tears in an emotional and spontaneous manner. Playing of kettle-drum music during Moharrums was stopped; all festivities prohibited; a solemn atmosphere with people wearing black

dresses prevailed all over, with cries of lamentations emanating from numberless Mourning Centres and private residences; and hundreds of speakers reciting epicediums and delivering sermons—This was the distinguishing feature that prevailed then.

Today, however, the entire complexion has changed. The march of time and the upheavals that it brought with it, has not allowed the institutional values of Azadari to continue with the glory that was once. Nevertheless, the memories of services rendered to the institution of Azadari by Sultan Quli (d. 940 A.H.); Jamshed Qutub Shah (d. 957); and Sultan Quli and Ibrahim Qutub Shah continue to live the minds of the devotees of the Holy Prophet, his Ahle Bait and the Infallible Imams.

Moharrum observances used to last for twelve days. The poor, the rich, and the Government, all participated proportionally in the expenses which amounted to thousands of gold coins current then. The Government used to issue a special variety of coins known as **Zar-e-Ashuri** on these occasions; and black mourning dresses used to be distributed among the mourners free of cost. The learned author of **Tareekh-e-Golconda** writes:

"Annual expenditure on mournings and other observances in respect of Infallible Imams and on Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi used to be 8,000 and 1,00,000 **Hawans** (monetary unit) respectively. This was apart from the expenditures on the maintenance of sacred movements and structures.

According to Moghul monetary system prevalent then, one **Hawan** was equivalent to current Rs. 4/- (Ref **Tareekh-e-Golconda**, pub. Hyderabad Deccan, p. 111).

During his time, Sultan Abdullah Qutub Shah (1583 A.D.) had added further renovations and decorations to the Mourning Centres. Asif Shah II fixed an endowment of Rs. 5,000/- per annum for this Centre with glazed tiles and made it a public one. The King exhibited the greatest interest in Moharrum observances. According to historians, all festivities including singing and dancing were banned for the first twelve days of Moharrum; and all Government official used to don black mourning dresses in deference to the Emperor's wishes. In the word of historian Zubairi, "Beetle-leaf shops and meat markets used to be closed down. From the early hours of the morning till late in the night. Majlises were held and epecediums were recited the whole time.

Due to the mischiefs of the subversive elements, these Emperors seldom got the opportunity of observing Moharrum solemnities in a fully free manner. Nevertheless, cries of "Husain-Husain" asserted themselves all over the place. The buildings built by Adil Shahi, Nizam Shahi and Qutub Shahi line of emperors, including Mourning Centres for the rich as well as for the poor, as also the Majlis sermons and epecedium delivered and written then are still preserved today.

Like the Ayubies of Egypt, the Saljuqs of Baghdad, and the rulers of Iraq and Turkey, the Moghul

Emperor Alamgir (Aurangzeb) ransacked and destroyed Hyderabad Deccan. However, despite this wholesale destruction, monumental structures like **Koh-e-Moula Ali**, **Alao Bibi** (Hayat Bakhshi Begum, d. 1669), and mourning centres like **Ala Yateeman**, **Ala Sartauq** and **Namal Saheb** have survived the ravages and still stand today as the invincible pillars of the institution of Azadari.

The plateau of Deccan comprised of Marahita, Telangi, Muslim (i.e. Irani and Turkish) and native Indian populations. Every single unit of these national and social denominations subscribed to the sanctity of the institution of Azadari, including Muslim rulers as well as Hindu Rajahs and Scholars. Even the Hindu scholars took to composing Elegies in honour of Imam Husain (A.S.) as an expression of their attachment to the institution of Azadari. Consequently, Ram Rao and Sewa gained fame in this sphere. The latter gentleman died in 1092 A.H., leaving behind a monumental literary work entitled **Rauzatus Shuhada** as a permanent memorial to his attachment to the significance of Azadari (For Hindu contributions to Azadari, see **Hadiqatul Alam** and **Tareekh-e-Junooobi Hind**, p. 374, by Mahmood Banglari; and **Hadiqatus Salateen** by Zubairi. Also refer to the article written by Masood Hasan Saheb in **Sarfaraz**, Moharrum editions of 1355 and 1370 A.H.).

The truth is that by instituting and promoting Azadari in the Deccan, the Deccan kings particularly the Qutub Shahi line of emperors, surpassed even the zealous Nawabs of Oudh in this respect. Despite

internal and external oppositions, these pious rulers perpetuated the sacred memory of Imam Husain (A.S.); and it was as a result of their honesty of purpose that after the devastating invasion of Alamgir, the Asif Jahi Nizam dynasty of rulers dedicated themselves to the task of promoting Azadari, and for that purpose established big Trusts to maintain and carry forward the noble institutions left behind by their predecessors. Thus it came about that Mir Osman Ali Khan (the Nizam of Hyderabad) built the last Royal Imambara, Azakhana-e-Zahra, in 1361 A.H. and established a very big Trust to look after it. Finally, when the Nizam died in 1967, and was buried as desired by him within the precincts of this Azakhana, a glorious chapter of history came to its end.

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CHAPTER XXXIII

A GLIMPSE INTO PAST

SOUTH INDIA MOHARRUMS

The Muslim rulers in South India (Deccan) valued the sanctity of all Islamic observances with due respect to geographic and social affiliations as well as local traditions. Since Azadari is an observance concerned purely with the element of tragedy and pathos, it received a right Royal attention; and these rulers observed it in the same solemn manner as is evident at the passing away of kings and monarchs, though it must be added that Moharrum observances had additional distinguishing features attached to them, like the banning of music, strict control on liquor, meatless days for the kings and the beggar alike, abstinence from personal addictions; in short, curbs on all types of pleasure. Black mourning dresses used to be issued free of cost from Government stores. Every single home was a virtual Mourning Centre. Famous Imambaras like the ones at

Bijapur, Hyderabad, Kulsoompura, Khairiatabad used to be bustling with mourning occupations with costly carpets spread out, black curtains hanging at the doors and windows and roofs adoned with multi-coloured shaminas and domes. No sooner the Moharrum moon was sighted than the whole complexion of life would change, including even the pattern of thinking and behavior of individuals. The poets would start contemplating on creations of new trends in focussing the events of the Tragedy of Karbala. The scholars and writers would take up their pens to pinpoint the significance of Imam Husain's martyrdom. The speakers and orators would embark upon stressing the values of Islamic teachings and their historical background. The devoted Muslims would flock to gatherings all over the area to listen to discourses on Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and the lives of his holy progeny. The echo of cries of lamentations and breast-beatings, and the recitals of moving epicediums and odes dominated the air in a monopolic manner. With minds enlightened, with eyes enlivened, the nights and days were all alike in the austere candlestick and oil-lamp illuminations that used to be arranged in impressive geometric patterns.

The use of Shamas (candlesticks or oil lamps) was a special feature, peculiar only to Deccan. On each night during the month of Moharrum, one row of lighted Shamas would be added afresh, though inner enlightenment of persons would enhance with the passing of each night. However, on the last night of the Ashura, every Azakhana would have ten rows of these Shamas, the radiance of which converted the

night into day with huge lamp-holders the size of average human beings carrying as many as 100 shamas apiece, thus presenting an atmosphere with a riot of colourful refractions of light meeting the eye from the illuminated water-fountains. Admist this, the devoted ones would busy themselves in listening to sermons, prayers and prayerful wishings.

Employees of the Royal administrative units used to erect **Tazias** and **Taboots**, the size and quality of which depended upon their individual monetary standings. In the Royal mourning Centres, flags dedicated to the names of the **Fourteen Masomeen** used to be hoisted, the staffs of which were of pure solid silver. Here, the reciters of epicediums and speakers would deliver their sermons, to listen to which Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah, and more particularly, Abdullah Qutub Shah would come riding upon their Royal steeds or steated on the Regal throne carriages followed by their Peers and officials carrying their stately emblems. At the entrance to the **Azakhana**, they would alight and enter the premises in reverential austerity and lay wreaths inside. At the shelves at the western side, the Kings would personally light up the **Shamas**. The Royal **Zakir** or **Waiz** (speakers at Majlises) would then occupy the pulpit and recount the Tragedy of Karbala, weeping and making others, too, weep at the eloquent reconstructions of the inhuman excesses committed on Imam Husain (A.S.) and other martyrs. At the end of the Majlis there would be concluding prayers, after which the Kings would ride back to their Palaces, where the entire audience that was present at the Majlis would

attend the Royal feast at which plain, but delicious, meatless dishes would be served. The feast over, the Majlis would resume again, lasting well past midnight.

From the sixth night of Moharrum, **Tazias** and **Alums** would start being brought and placed daily in the spacious compound of Dad Mahal mourning Centre, where there would be illuminations, elegiac recitals and lamentations accompanied by breast-beatings. At the end there would be a free distribution of **sukh-mukh** (dry sweet stuff) at the instance of the Kings.

On the morning of the 7th Moharrum, the Kings would arrive at the Imambara at Mir Alam Baradari. All Alum-bearing groups in Hyderabad Deccan would pass through a special route named after Imam Husain (A.S.) in the form of a procession. The Kings would themselves walk along with this flagbearing procession for five hundred paces, followed by Princes and peers besides a mixed crowd of Hindus and Muslims, both Sunnis as well as Shias. This used to be a mammoth procession with self-abandoned breast-beatings by the mourners. At the end, the **Mujawars** would receive bags of gold coins (**Ashrafis**) as an *ex-gratia* gesture of the Kings.

In the early hours of the morning of the Ashura Day, i.e. the 10th Moharrum, crowds of Hindus as well as Muslims, all clad in black mourning attires, would gather at Royal Palace where the Royal mourning centre 'Daulat Khan' was situated. The

ruling monarch, too, would be present here, sitting humbly, without any display of Regal status, inside the mosque. With the advance of the day, Majlis would be held, followed by **Fateha Khwani**, after which the King would retire into his Palace. The audience would then sit down for their lunch. Some two-hundred orphans, all Syeds, would present themselves before the King, when they would receive clothes and bagfuls of money. The whole population, Hindus and Muslims, would thus observe the day with due reverence. In most of the villages and townships, all expenses of Azadari was borne by the Kings.

In an article entitled **Dakkan Key Qadeem Qabail mein Azadari**, the author, Makhdoomi Janab Syed Zia-ul-Hasan Shah Moosavi, writes:

During the reign of Qutub Shahi dynasty of rulers, even villages and small townships had a Mourning Centre with an area of land attached to it through endowments from benevolent Trusts. The Asif Jahi rulers also allowed these **wakfs** to continue during their time. The tribal populations of the forest and mountainous regions, as well as the ones with their settlements by the lakes and river banks have been regular **Taziadars** since these times, some of them making **alums** from metals, and some from tree leaves. Their odes and manner of recital is peculiar with a stamp of their own (Ref. **Khateeb**, Karachi, Syed-us-Shuhada Supplement, 1384 A.H.)".

After the conquest of Deccan by Alamgir, the institution of Azadari was subjected to concerted efforts towards its suppression, spreading over to a period of about 80 years. Finally, it was in 1174 A.H. that Mir Nizam Ali Khan Asif Jah made Hyderabad the capital of his State; and with his era, Azadari once again resumed its progress and continues today with a mixture of old and modern practices; According to past as well as present writers of history, the institution of Azadari in Deccan with its glorious history, both in qualitative as well as quantitative terms, has had an extremely important significance, the impact of which will for all times be associated with the history of South India.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

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FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XXXIV

SOME IMPORTANT MOURNING CENTRES OF HYDERABAD DECCAN

There exist even today in Hyderabad Deccan and its outskirts some buildings wherein mournings for Imam Husain (A.S.) used to be observed about 400 years ago in a manner accorded to the funerals of kings and moranchs. In fact, the depth of mourning for the Imam surpassed that of Royalties, for, the sorrow at the death of a king lasted a few days or, may be, a few months, whereas the sorrow occasioned by the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) was and is, unique. The centuries that have passed in the history of South India bear out this fact, for though time has passed off, these Centres continue to exist, freshening the grief for the Imam year after year. The Royal Imambara of Bijapur is one such relic of this period.

THE ROYAL IMAMBARA OF BIJAPUR

Among the historical monuments relating to the period of the Bureed Shahi rulers of Bijapur is the mosque known as the Shahi Jama Masjid. Nearby is another monument called Shahi Jalwakhana (or a Royal Audience Hall). Adjacent to this Audience Hall is a large building with three spacious halls inside it. In one hall are housed some ancient relics like alums made of brass and gold-embroidered turbans. The walls are inscribed with rare specimens of artistical writing. For instance, there is a piece of inscription which if viewed from right, reads as **Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim**; when viewed from left, reads as **Mohammad-Ali-Fatema-Hasan-Husain**. Viewing the same from over its top, it presents **Nad-e-Ali** in reading; and when viewed from below, one can read the **Sura Ikhlas** of the Quran.

THE ROYAL IMAMBARA OF

HYDERABAD DECCAN

Among the historical monuments of the Qutub Shahi period, there lies in Pathar Gutti—the Central Commercial area of the city—a walled compound inside which stands an ancient building. This is the Imambara that Ali Qutub Shah had got constructed during his reign. This Mourning Centre was once an imposing structure. Lapse of time has denuded it of its original grace, but the surviving engraved work and inscriptions in it speak eloquently of the glory that was once. The rare quality of woodwork and engravings on wood reflect the deep attachment of the

artisans and the King had for the institution of Azadari. The entire Imam Bara is of green colour. In one hall where alums studded with precious stones one occupied the place, are to be found today alums made of brass, and in the place where once costly clothes and attires used to be kept, one finds today turbans decorated with gold-embroidery work on them. In another hall is an engraved pulpit made from Sandalwood. Facing this hall is a small courtyard with a water-fountain in it. Near this fountain is the place where once pillar-sized Shamas of camphor used to be lighted. At the other side of the courtyard is the Jalwakhana, where the Kings used to sit bare-headed and barefooted, watching the mourning proceedings. The walls have rows of 10 inches each which used to be filled with lighted Shamas in an attractive geometric patterns, starting with one Shama in each of the rows on each wall, and daily increasing in number till by the time of the end of congregations when the combined pattern of illuminations presented an eye-catching look. This Imambara was constructed in 1003 A.H. at a cost of Rs. 60,000. Abdulla Qutub Shah (d. 1082 A.H.) decorated its wall with mosaic and glazed tiles.

ASHURKHANA HUSAINI ALUM

A certain scholar named Ali Aaqa had brought an Alum from Arabia during the reign of Sultan Mahamood Quli Qutub Shah. This alum is shaped in the manner of double-edged sword, which, it is said, belonged to Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.). The king had the Azakhana built expressly for the sake of this

alum which was housed in it after its construction, with Ali Aaga appointed as its Keeper. Even today, his line of generations are looking after its maintenance; and this alum continues to command the same austere respect as it did during those times.

ASHURKHANA ILAWAH YATEEMAN

This is situated in Dabirpura. **Alums-Illawah Bibi**—are housed here during the first ten days of Moharrum. Hayat Bakhshi Begum, the mother of Sultan Abdullah Qutub Shah, was the pioneer of this Centre. On the 10th of Moharrum, the alums used to taken out, mounted on an elephant's back in a procession, followed by groups of mourners beating their breasts. This procession used to terminate at River Musa.

ILAWAH SARTAUQ

A certain Aaga Mohsin brought an alum from Damascus to Hyderabad Deccan during the time of the Qutub Shahis. The middle part of this Alum carries a piece of chain that was associated personally with Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.). This was originally placed in a chamber inside the ancient building that went by the name of Dar-ul-Shifa. Consequent upon the conquest of Deccan by Aurangzeb, the maintenance allowance for this building was withheld by the Moghul Emperor who refused to finance its maintenance with Government funds till such time as he did not witness some sort of miracle as a virtue of the sacred alum housed in it. Accordingly, twice the alum was removed from the building

each time ladden on an elephant's back; and on both the occasions, the back of the elephant cracked miraculously. Thus, as committed by Aurangzeb, the maintenance allowance was resumed on the orders of the Emperor who remitted the withheld amount to one Mirza Hashmat Ali Baig and sanctioned the fixing of the alum inside the building. This written **Farman** (Royal Order) is still preserved, the possessors being the present generations of Mirza Hashmat Ali Baig.

Mir Osman Ali Khan, the Nizam of Hyderabad, got a decent enclosure built in the centre of the compound of Dar-us-Shifa, where this alum now stands hoisted.

NA'AL SAHEB

The alum at this place was brought over from Bijapur during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Qutub Shah. It is said that this alum carries a crescent flag that personally belonged to Imam Husain (A.S.). In the past, this alum used to be hoisted at the Fort in Golconda, which later on was removed to Pathar Gutti in Hyderabad by Asif Jah II. Even today this alum is carried in Moharrum procession with Royal pomp and show.

ALUM PANJA SHAH

Housed in a locality of the same name, this is an extraordinarily big alum which is taken out on the Ashura Day in a procession through the city.

DARGHA HAZRAT ABBAS

This is at porch of Nawab Salar Jang's residence. The alum is coated with Sandalwood. People gather

here on Thursdays and Fridays, when Majlises are held. On the morning of the 10th of Moharrum, the alum is shifted over to the courtyard. The lamentations and breast-beatings that take place on this occasion are heart-rending. The entire line of the generations of Nawab Salar Jang's dynasties are Shias. As a matter of fact, Nawab Salar Jung's ancestors were the introducers of Qutub Shahi traditions of Azadari during Asif Jahi regime.

KOH-E-MAULA ALI, HYDERABAD DECCAN

This monument enjoys a great reputation among the other Sacred places and centres of the Shia School of thought. In connection with the origin and construction of Koh-e-Maula Ali, it is a popular belief in the provinces of the State that when the city of Hyderabad was being built, a certain Syed Alam had brought a "Panja" of Khak-e-Shifa (a handful of sand from the field of Karbala). As soon as the King learnt of the fact that Syed Alam was bringing this sacred earth he went out about 6 miles outside the city, accompanied by State officials to welcome the arrival of the Panja. And then, carrying it reverently on his own head all the way back, he brought it to the top of the hill called Koh-e-Maula Ali; and neither he nor the officials left the spot till after an enclosure was built and the alum hoisted there. Thus it was that 'Bhagpur', which was the name of the area at that time, called to be called as "Hyderabad", in keeping with relevant sanctity of the hill which is situated about seven miles from the city. A Railway station has also been constructed near this hill; and this Station

also is named as "Maula Ali". Momins from all over the city gather at this place every year on the 3rd of Rajab; and a decorated assortment of shops spring up on the occasion. The Nizam of Hyderabad himself, along with his train of Palace officials, used to come to this hill-top and lay gold-embroidered coverlets and wreaths, as well as cash, at the foot of the alum. Surrounding this sacred hill are the residences of Shia peers, jagirdars and the State officials. In a compound within the precincts of this Dargah, lies burried Janab Syed Ali Shoostry, also, who was the Nizam's Preceptor and was himself an accomplished scholar and jurisprudentialist. Majlises also used to be held here on a grand scale.

CHAND SULTANA'S IMAMBARA

There exists in Ahmednagar a Fort constructed during the Nizam Shahi period. This Fort is not generally open to public, but whenever circumstances warrant it, it is used as a prison or Military Headquarters. One cannot definitely say if there is a building inside this Fort that could be called an "Imambara". However, on a hill-top about five miles from the city, there is the tomb of Chand Sultana. Facing the western flank of the tomb is a hall, the walls of which are studded with alums carved out of ivory. Apart from this solitary indication, there is nothing also to suggest that Majlises or other mourning observances are still held here during Moharrum. But once upon a time, this was also a mourning centre.

AZAKHANA-E-ZEHRA

The late and last Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan (d. February, 1967), constructed an imposing

Imambara at a fantastic cost in memory of his deceased mother, the completion (1361 A.H.) of which coincided with the 1300th anniversary Imam Husain's martyrdom. There is also a big Trust endowed to it, from which the rich as well as the poor draw benefits. So great was the late Nizam's devotedness to Imam Husain (A.S.) that he wished expressly in his Will that he should be buried inside the precincts of this Imambara. Accordingly, when he died in February 1967, his wishes were duly carried out; and the Nizam lies buried today inside this Imambara.

Osman Ali Khan, the Nizam, was a devout Shia, and used to arrange regular Majlises with extraordinary devotion. Himself a good poet, he would himself compose Salaams (salutations to the Karbala Martyrs) and eulogiums, and have them recited at the Majlises. He used to listen attentively to other zakirs also.

KOH-E-MAULA ALI OF SARONJ

South of Malwa, in the region of Tonk, lies the district of Saronj. On a hill-top near a river flowing through this district is a Dargah (shrine) called 'Maula Ali Ki Dargah' which was constructed by Sher Shah Suri. This shrine is surrounded by a vast boundary of stone-wall. In the front part of the compound is a porch for drum-beaters, wherein are housed the drums donated by Emperors Alamgir and Aurangzeb. In another portion of the compound stands a mosque with a water-fountain in its yard. A jasmine tree that grows in the yard sends out ever fresh waves of sweet fragrance of its pearl white flowers. It is this water-fountain which is the

Dargah. Pilgrims and needy men and women come here to pay their homages and wish for the fulfilment of their desires and wants. Housed in an enclosure in one corner of the mosque is a miniature model of the shrine of the First Lady of the Paradise, i.e. Fatematu Zahra (A.S.), the Holy Prophet's daughter. Ever since the days of Sher Shah Suri this shrine continues to have a special significance. The Nawab of Tonk is the Mutawalli (keeper) of the Dargah, where on first Thursday of the lunar month, Mominis gather and pay homage; and the general community of Muslims celebrate a urs (anniversary) here every year in the month of Ramzan, when a large number of them participate in the festivities.

It is narrated that once when Sher Shah Suri was passing through this place during his military conquests, he noticed an old man sitting inside an enclave in the hill which exists even today. The moment this old man heard the sound of footsteps near his abode, he called out Sher Shah Suri by name, and told him that he had been waiting for him. The old man then asked Sher Shah Suri to construct a Dargah on the hill-top near the river and dedicate it to the memory of Maula Ali. The old man then offered some sacred relics to Sher Shah Suri and asked him to preserve them in the Dargah (These relics are now missing). The old man also indicated a period of three days during which the errand ought to be completed. In deference to the wishes of the old man, Sher Shah Suri had the orders carried out, and named the rehabilitated area as 'Seh Rauza'. In course of time 'Seh Rauza' became famous as 'Saronj' through misuse of its original name. On the other bank of the river is the tomb of this old man.

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CHAPTER XXXV

AZADARI PRE-MOGHUL PERIOD

The period commencing from the time of the arrival of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent, and extending upto the period of Shah Suri's dynastic rule, is a period of numerous revolutions and political upheavals. Arabian tradition and culture came to India with the Ghaznavid invasion; and it was towards the end of this period that a new social structure came into being. Historical evolution, however, continued with its usual course, every new century witnessing a change of rulers; and every new ruler was oblivious of the past. Where are the Mamluke, Khilji, Tughlaq, Sa'adaat, Lodhi or Moghul influences influence: or where can one find all the details of these ruling dynasties? It is difficult to guess as to who it was who first mentioned about Muslim traditions and customs to the Afghan rulers. It there existed some noble beliefs in respect of Prophet

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Mohammad's Ahle Bait and their generations as a result of political ties with the Caliphate at Baghdad, these were confined to the limited circle of Sufis.

In Multan, Delhi, and other places, it were the Alavish and Athna Ashari groups who were usually persecuted politically and exiled. Feroze Shah Tughlaq had destroyed the localities of the Shias in Delhi. As such, when these communities were victimized, it was but natural that their traditions and customs, too, were prevented from gaining popularity or recognition that, practices repugnant to those of Shias were encouraged and promoted. In Baghdad, for instance, while the Dailamies took out mourning processions during Muharram, the Seljuqs used to celebrate the Ashura Day with gay festivities, wearing red and gay-coloured dresses. This antagonistic attitude infiltrated into the Indian subcontinent as well; and 10th of Moharrum came to be celebrated with gaiety. Instead of the element of grief associated with this day in an Islamic context, practices far from being in keeping with Islamic values took roots.

AZADARI GHAZNAVID PERIOD

Numerous and differing beliefs have been existent since centuries in the minds of the people of various parts of undivided India over the matter of Azadari. Noticing an alum and Tazia at the tomb of Syed Salar Masood Ghazi in Behraij, I asked the people there about the origin of this practice, and I was told that it originated from the time of the Ghaznavid rule in India. Again, Tazias are kept at the tomb of the conqueror of Taragarh, Syed Husain Jang Sawar, in

Ajmer; and the present generations of this conqueror claim that their ancestors were Shias. Historian Mohammad Akbar, writing in his **Sitapur Ki Tareekh**, says that a "Tazia of 52 bamboos" was made by Syed Yousuf the conqueror of Khairabad, immediately after his conquest in 699 A.H.; and thus started the tradition of **Taziadari**.

(Ref. Sarfaraz, Moharrum Supplement -1952 p. 65.)

MAJLIS DURING THE REIGN OF SULTAN SHAMSHUDDIN ALTAMASH

Sultan Shamsuddin Altamash ruled over India from 607 to 633 A.H. It is said about this period that mourning congregations used to be held for the first ten days of Moharrum. Quite obviously, the Tragedy of Karbala must necessarily have been a topic in these gatherings.

According to Syed Mohammad Khairuddin Abidi, the compiler of the History of Jaunpur, the city of Jaunpur was founded in 773 A.H/1371 A.D. In the 9th century, Hijra, the Saadaat dynasty of rulers established themselves into power. The Saadaats originally came from Iran, and were Shias. The institution of Azadari, therefore, progressed well during their time; and the generations of these ancient rulers continue even today with their devout attachment to Azadari.

It is also said that Malak-ul-ulema, Qazi Shahabuddin Ahmed bin Shamsuddin (d. 1440 A.H.) has discoursed upon the matter of Azadari in his book **Hadiyatu's Sa'adia**.

AZADARI DURING SIKANDAR LODHI'S REIGN

Historical records indicate that Azadari was current with the Lodhies also in the 10th century Hijra. The author of **Tareekh-e-Dawoodi**, who is an authority on the history of Lodhis writes :

"Sikandar Lodhi (d. 7th Zilhaj 923 A.H.) built mosques all over India ; and every mosque had a **Qaari** (reciter of Quran), a **Khateeb** (one who delivers sermons), and a sweeper, all of whom were paid from Government Treasury. The indigent and the needy used to receive warm clothings in winter. On Fridays, there used to be a generous distribution of money to the poor. There were centres in the cities where in the poor used to be fed with meals daily. During the month of Ramzan and on the Ashura Day (i.e. 10th of Moharrum) the poor and the mendicants were adequately awarded with free gifts.....on days like Eid, Ashur Day and the Holy Prophet's anniversary, a list of outstanding dues used to be officially ordered to be prepared. Sikandar Lodhi would personally receive this list and write off the financial liabilities owed by the people to the State as shown in the list.

(Ref. Tareekh-e-Dawoodi, pub. 1954-p/. 360 and 380).

It is evident from the above excerpt that Moharrum commanded the respect of rulers in the time of

the Lodhi regime. It is probable that this respect for Imam Husain (A.S.) had prevailed before Sikandar Lodhi; and it is also probable that there may have been congregational commemerations in respect of Imam Husain's martyrdom, as indicated similarly in the time of Alamash.

TAIMUR'S AZADARI

The ninth century, Hijra, was politically a very favourable period of time in as far as the institution of Azadari was concerned. Aale Jala'air were in power in Iraq; and Hasan Jala'air (d. 757 A.H.), and after him, Sultan Ahmed Khan Bahadur (d. 814) contributed greatly in the renovation of Imam Husain's shrine and in the promotion of Azadari. Prejudices against Moharrum mournings had abated in Baghdad. In view of these developmepts, it was probable that the Indian subcontinent, too, must have been affected; for, people from these lands used to come to India. The Saadaat were a respected group in India. The Sufis exercised considerable influence. It is therefore most probable that there must have existed religious observances on the Ashura Day; and alums may have been taken out in processions. Traditional customs evident at the tombs of Saints in Sind, Multan and Ajmer lend support to this view. It is not surprising if historians have deliberately overlooked Shia traditions and practices due to their anti-Shia prejudices. It can, however, be said with reasonable amount of certainty that Azadari must have prevailed among the Shias in Iraq, Iran and Bahrain, though this may not have been publicly known then.

However, there rose a wild storm from Farghana in Turkistan. This was the rising of Taimur bin Taragha who got the religious sermon read out in his name in the central mosque of Balkh on 19th Ramzan, 771 A.H. From there, he advanced like a storm, and ravaging Turkistan, Khurasan, and Iraq, he occupied Baghdad and Damascus.

Taimur's genealogy is traceable to the Chengizes. Sultan Mohammad Khudaband, a notable member of Taimur's dynasty, had become a Shia as a result of the influences and preachings of great scholars of the time, like Allama Hilli and Hasan bin Yusuf (d. 726 A.H.). Following his conversion, the Chengez dynasty developed a devout attachment to Saadaats and Sufis. Thus, Taimur favoured Shiaism because of his family traditions and dynastic traits. In fact, Ibne Arabi Shah, the compiler of *Ajaib ul-Qadoor Fe akhbar-e-Taimur*, emphatically asserts that Taimur was a Shia. Maulana Sibte-ul-Hasan has cited numerous references to prove this (see *Sarfaraz, Moharrum Supplement*, Lucknow, p. 34).

In the opinion of some, Taimur is regarded as a Sunni, and that he did nothing contrary to the concepts subscribed to by the Sunni school of thought. The fact, however, remains that he was a great politician, and had over run a large territory of the Sunnis, and ultimately became a King over them. It was politically not expedient for him to have openly declared himself to be a Shia. In fact, this is what even his Shia generations also believed. This is evident from what Haider Shuko Taimuri has written in his

compilation entitled. **Alum-e-Hyderi der Aqaid-e-Salateen-e-Hyderi**, published from Lucknow.

All the members of the Taimuri dynasty belonged to the Athna Ashari sect, but they kept their religious beliefs concealed for political reasons and expediencies. Taimur's act of arson in Damascus was due to the incident of Imam Husain's martyrdom, as mentioned in **Tazak** testifies this fact. Besides that, Ameer Taimur's devotion to the Infallible Imams was so extraordinarily great that he held the Serious responsible for whatever was done by their predecessors; and he regarded as Divine favour the **alum-e-Baiza** which fell into his hands. Moreover, it was Taimur who introduced Taziadari during Moharrums. How can anyone regard such a person as being a Sunni?

Writing in terms of his family traditions, Mirza Mohammad Haider Shuko states that Mohammad Afzal Bukhari has deleted the pro-shia parts of the text from **Tazak**. He has quoted the first part of the Will written by Emperor Bahadur Shah I Qutubuddin Mohammad Shah Alam (d. 1713) as under :

"It is incumbent upon Kings and powerful monarch to take recourse to **Taqiyya** (concealment of beliefs) so as to ensure amicability among his officials and army personnel; but in their heart of hearts they must continue to remain attached to the salvation-assuring concepts of the Imams of the **Athna Ashari** school of thought and through this means, remain steadfast in their love for the

progenies of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) in the same manner as everyone from Amir Taimur to myself has ever devoted to this faith....."

While Mohammad Afzal Bukhari (God's curse upon him) has deleted all this relevant material while translating **Tazak-e-Taimuri**, written during Emperor Shah Jahan's time, the translation by Ameer Abu Talib during the reign of Jaffer Pasha in Yemen is also not a reliable one, for he, too, deleted pro-Shia matter, finding that it went against the contents of **Zafarnama**. For this reason, he wrote that Taimur was a Sunni, though it is wrong to have compared **Tazak** with **Zafarnama** or other books. As a matter of fact **Zafarnama** and other books ought to have been corrected according to **Tazak**, and not the other way round.

The fact of the matter is that Taimur was a Shia, for he did not estimate any religion other than Shiaism as being the best. Given hereunder is the substance of the portions from **Tazak** which were intentionally left out by Mohammad Afzal :

"Be it known to my Sons, officials of the State and the Ministers that Allah has blessed me with greatness on account of twelve virtues that I possess. It is because I made there twelve virtues the guiding principles of my life that God, through His Divine assistance, made me a shepherd of His creations and elevated me to the status of an Emperor....."

(Twelfth item) : I was 35 years old in 677 A.H. I had by that time liberated Tooran from the tyrannies of the Uzbeks. I then rode on the Royal Throne and occupied the areas of Maora and Ilaiha. Sermons on me were delivered from the pulpits in the mosques ; and the Sa'adaats, the Ulema, the Mashaikhs and Derweshes prayed for me.....

"Khwaja Abdullah, who was the Sunni religious leader of the time, ruled that people should not pray in my favour. He declared, 'this blood-thirsty Turk has butchered Muslims by the thousands'. Immediately after this, he saw a dream the same night in which he saw me standing along with Prophet Mohammad (S.A.). He advanced towards the Holy Prophet (S.A.) in the dream and said his salutations to him, but the Prophet did not respond to him. Not getting a response for the third time also, Khawaja Saheb submitted to the Prophet, Saying :

'O' Prophet ! How is that this Taimur who murdered thousands of men, has the honour of standing so close to you, whereas I, who served the cause of Islam, am denied of any recognition ?

'Yes', replied the Prophet, rather annoyed, 'Taimur no doubt murdered the followers of my religion ; but he loves, and is devoted to, my progeny. He helps them, also. Did you prevent the people from praying for him because of this' ?

"Khwaja Sahib then woke up from his sleep and rushed out to me in the darkness the same night, and apologized to me. When the people came to know of this incident, they all started praying for me. In gratefulness to this favour, I became even more attached to the Holy Prophet's progeny and their Divine status.....

"Among other instances of Providential nature is the one that relates to my military engagement against Rome. I was preparing to lead an attack on Rome. The Kaiser of Rome suddenly deployed an army of 400 men on the field. I had organized my army unit, and was viewing the right and left flanks when I perceived an army approaching us from the direction of Iraq. These men of army were the Saadaats from Karbala and Najaf under the command of Syed Mohammad Fathah, who was carrying a white alum (flag). I ordered this contingent to join us and regarded their timely assistance as an auspicious Omen and a Divine provision.....

"Syed Mohammad Fattah presented himself before me and said, "I have been commanded by Hazrat Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.) in my dream to hand over this white alum to a brother-Turk People of Najaf believe that by 'brother-Turk' is none but you yourself..... Tazak give us some valuable information, namely :

- (i) That Taimur was a Shia and had extraordinary devotional regard for the Prophet's Ahle Bait ;
- (ii) That Taimur was deeply moved by the Tragedy of Karbala, and that his spirit of vengeance for the blood of Imam Husain (A.S.) was apparent in his conduct ;
- (iii) That Taimur after receiving the white alum from Syed Fattah preserved it with great reverence ;
- (iv) That Taimur was given a Zarih made from Khak-e Shifa (sand from the field of Karbala) which he held in reverential esteem and used to pay homage to it, accompanied by mourning and lamentations ;
- (v) The Taimur used to hold Majlises and occupy himself with Taziadari during the first ten days of Moharrum.
- (vi) That Taimur is the first Muslim monarch whose mourning observances in memory of Imam Husain's martyrdom have come before us for the first time in a detailed manner.

Among other dreams of revelational nature is this dream, described in his own words in Taimur's Memoires.

"...I found myself in Kufa where the people told me that this was the place where the armies

of Kufa, and Syria, had murders Imam Husain (A.S.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet, or the orders of Yazeed.

"Soon after this, a certain Syed Mullah Hasan of Medina informed me that a man named Shaikh Zaid Hashmi in Medina possessed a sheet of cloth, the yarn of which had been woven personally by Janab Fatemtuz Zehra (A.H.). Sheet of cloth woven by Janab-e-Sayyeda can remain only in the house of Ahle Bait—Publishers. There was some writing and embroidery work on this piece of cloth. I got eager to have a look at this sacred relic. Consequently I summoned Shaikh Zaid ; and he duly arrived with the sacred cloth, and kindly presented it to me. True enough, there was some writing on it. As soon as I saw the sacred cloth, I could not help bursting into sobs. I wrapped this cloth round my head in reverence ; and as I did so, I perceived great many things in a visionary way.....

"And then I went to my homage at the sacred shrine of the Martyred Imam. The people of Karbala presented me with an alum made from the sacred soil of their land. I kissed this precious gift with my eyes in reverence, and held it over my head. My emotional ecstasy at Imam Husain's sacred grave was so great that for three days and three nights I was completely oblivious of my military duties and State affairs, which remained suspended for this while. Despite it, I was not willing to leave the side of the Imam's

grave. My officials therefore started consoling me ; and the local people made out a miniature of the sacred shrine (Zarih) from **Khak-e-Shifa** and presented it to me as a means for appeasing my emotions. I wept bitterly on seeing this **Zarih**, so much so that I fainted. During nights, there used to come such lamenting cries from this **Zarih** that those who heard them would also faint. For this reason, I called this miniature **Zarih Mo'aajiza** (the Miraculous Zarih).

"...From the 1st of Moharrum and during the ten days following. I used to place this **Zarih** in a scheduled section and carry out mourning observances as directed by Syed Madani. I used to listen to sermons concerning the Traditions and tribulations relating to Karbala Tragedy, and weep over them; and I would also distribute free food to people in the name of the martyred Imam".

There is still an **alum** preserved in the former State of Mahmoodabad in India today which is believed to be the same **alum** that Taimur has referred to in his Memoires. Similarly, one can see even today a box containing the sacred soil of the field of Karbala (**Khak-e-Shifa**) among other sacred relics preserved in a small museum housed above the main entrance gate of the Shahi Masjid in Lahore. There is also a piece of embroidered fabric which is believed to be the handkerchief that belonged to Hazrat **Fatematuz Zehra (A.S.)**, the Holy Prophets' daughter. These sacred relics have been obtained from the Moghul collections preserved at the Delhi Museum in India.

Taimur's generations reigned over Turkistan and Khurasan for a considerable period of time. They were deeply devoted to the progeny of the Holy Prophet, and mourned for the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.). During Sultan Husain Mirza Taimuri's period of rule over Khurasan, Majlises were very much in vogue. This is substantiated by the compilation of **Rauzatus Shuhada** by Mulla Husain Waiz Kashafi during this period, which sermons became very popular, and remained so, for a long time.

AZADARI OF THE TAIMURIS IN INDIA

One offshoot of the generations of Taimuri, i.e. the descendents of Babar, came over to India. Incidentally, Humayun was defeated in India and crossed over to Iran. The Taimuri princes were old friends of the Safavi dynasty. The Shah of Iran helped Humayun with military support, and assigned a contingent force of the Qizilbash tribe to him. Humayun declared himself to be Shia. According to Abdul Quadir Badayuni, he reconquered his Kingdom in India and commenced Sermons in the mosque in the name of the Infallible Imams (Ref. **Muntakhab ut Tawareekh**, p. 121). Mohammad Abdul Latif Khan Khalispuri, the compiler of **Ta'aziat-e-Husain**, writes that Bairam Khan constructed a **Tazia** of pure gold, weighing forty-six tolas. Inside this **Tazia** was inscribed **Ism-e-Azam** on the miniature tomb. The **alums** have the inscription "Ya Ali, Ya Ali"; and below the pulpit were written the words: **Ghulam-e-Imam**, Bairam Khan (959 A.H.). Bairam Khan presented this **Zarih** to Humayun, who preserved it with great reverence in his Palace.

Introducing the poet of the time, Hyder Totyai, Mulla Abdul Quadir Badayuni in his *Muntakhab ut Tawareekh* quotes a couplet of the poet and states that this couplet used to be engraved on the Tazias and recited at the mourning processions as well as Majlises. Obviously, this couplet is a part of poem which the mourners must have been reciting as an epicidium at the processions and Majlises. Even today a Tazia is taken out from the Fort in Agra, which is called as the Tazia Ahad-e-Akbari.

During the reign of Jehangir, an imposing Mourning Centre, known as 'Husaini Daalan', was built at Jehangir nagar in Dacca city. This structure denotes that Azadari was an established institution during this period. In other words, Azadari was not just confined to the four walls of private residences, but had spread out to congregational dimensions at public mourning centres in the Moghul occupied parts of the Subcontinent. Also, there were numerous Shia and Irani officials of State under Emperor Shah Jehan, like Asif Khan and others. These persons used to move between Deccan and Iran. As such, Azadari flourished in a substantial measure. This is evident from the existence of Imambara Mir Murad in Dacca, which was built in 1052 A.H. and still stands as a living indication of the position the institution of Azadari had gained by the time under reference.

There was a great deal of traffic of Iranis to and from Iran during this time. There was also a regular movement of State officials from Deccan. With a stable Government, prosperity and progress were

evident. The epicediums of Mohtasim and Mulla Kashafi's *Rauzatus Shuhada* had become very popular. There were mourning centres in the Fort as well. But Emperor Aurangzeb was a prejudiced man, and he despised the institution of Azadari. This dislike of the Emperor naturally affected mournings in the Fort. Mohammad Din Sahib writes:

"...Zabunissa was a Sunni, like her father Aurangzeb. She had a great respect and regards for saints and other religious dignitaries. She hated apostasy and innovations in Islam. She used to attend Majlises with great enthusiasm, and subscribed to Azadari before her father ascended the throne. However, when people condemned other undesirable practices and regarded mourning for Karbala Martyrs, too, as despicable, Zebunissa also gave up attending Majlises in accordance with these preachings". Ref. Zebunissa, pub. Lahore 1904, p.16).

Azadari, no doubt, suffered a drawback during Aurangzeb's time; yet when this Moghul Emperor was nearing the end of his life, he repented and suffered the pangs of his own conscience; for this was what he eventually expressed in his Will:

"...The grave of this sinful person (meaning himself) should be covered by the coverings from the sacred tomb of Imam Husain (A.S.), for, there can be no refuge for sinners except through appealing for forgiveness and salvation at this holy shrine, the great virtues and significance of which should be ascertained from my son,

Prince Aali Jah..." (Ref. **Waqe-e-Alamgiri**, pub. Azamgarh, p. 46).

Accordingly, as soon as Badshahzada Aali Shah ascended the throne after Aurangzeb's death in 1707, he issued a Royal decree to the effect that henceforth the names of the Twelve Infallible Imams be reverently mentioned in the Friday sermons at all the mosques throughout the Kingdom. This Royal order antagonized the people; and Khateebes were even beaten by angry mobs, and a united front was set up against the Emperor.

That Bahadur Shah Mohammad Moazam was a declared Shia, there can be no doubt. He even made **Tazias**. Khwaja Hasan Nizami had published a photograph of a **Tazia** in the Moharrum supplement of **Munadi** on 16th February, 1940, on the title page, under which he wrote: "This is the **Tazia** that was made by Aurangzeb's successor, Bahadur Shah, and which is still preserved in the Imambara of the saint, Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia. This is perhaps the oldest of **Tazias** in the history of Delhi."

Now, not only the Emperors but the Saadaats, Iranis, the State officials as well as the original Indian Shias started observing their respective religious observances in their own circles. The people of Kashmir, the Panjab, Delhi, Agra, Oudh, Rajputana, Bihar, Bengal, Madras, Orissa, and other places also freely observed Moharrum rites in their own individual manner through recitals of **Shahadat Namas**, **Jung Namas**, **Majlises** and mourning

processions. During the time of Mohaddis Shah, Azadari in India had become so noticeable that one touring journalist, named Syed Abdul Latif of Iran, visited Rajputana in the 13th Century Hijra and wrote out his reactions on Moharrum observances, including those in Jaipur, which place also he visited for this purpose. The following are a few excerpt from his report:

AZADARI IN JAIPUR DURING THE REIGN OF MAHOMED SHAH

"There is a place called Jainagar (Jaipur) near Shahjehanabad (Delhi). This a very clean and attractive city, which was built by Raja Jeet Singh (Jaisingh) who was a great learned man and a reputed astronomist....."

Then, after drawing a geographical sketch of the city, Syed Abdul Latif goes on to say:

"...Slaughtering animals here is officially prohibited. If anyone who slaughters a sheep or a buffalow or a fowl is found out, he is invariably put to death. The surprising thing about this city is that there is no trace of Muslims here; and one does not hear the Muslim call of prayers (**Azaan**). The Hindus, who make **Tazias** and observe mournings in Moharrum, own imposing Imambaras, which they maintain very keenly with personal interest. Everyone feeds the poor according to his individual means during Moharrums. They set up **Sabeels** (water-drinking places) of water and sherbet at market

places, the streets and homes. They make **Tazias** out of paper and wood and prostrate themselves in front of them. They beseech these **Tazias** for personal favours. After ten days, they bury these **Tazias** in the river or a fixed place which they call "Karbala" (Ref. **Tohfatul Alam**, pub Hyderabad, pp. 358-359).

Abdul Latif also witnessed the other general modes of Azadari in India in addition to mourning by walking bare-footed on burning fire. In places like Lucknow, Benares and Bengal, which were then referred to as **Kufristan** (meaning land of the infidels); he saw Azadari in various practical forms, including in Madras where walking on fire and beating the breast with chains of horseshoe iron was current. Obviously, these customs and practices of Azadari must have taken years to evolve themselves into prevalence on such a grand scale.

Since Abdul Latif has mentioned Azadari in Jaipur, it might also be mentioned here that Jaising died in 1161 A.H. He was particularly enthusiastic about Azadari; and even after his death, to the present times, Azadari continues to be observed with due reverence officially in Jaipur.

Till 1935, i.e. upto the time of Rana Madhu Singh, **Taziadari** was so popular that **Tazias** were built throughout the year in preparation for Moharrum. From 1st of Moharrum Majlises would commence; and both Sunnis as well as Shias would get busy with Majlises and **Shahadat Nama** recitals, each in their own way. On the night of the 10th Moharrum, the official State

Tazia, costly and decorated, would be ready under the supervision of a State official. On the 10th of Moharrum, the Maharaja would walk the distance, and the **Tazia** would then be lifted and carried with full military honours. On this occasion, no one was permitted to go through the usual forms of salutations to the Maharaja. If anyone did, he would be punished. After the dispersion of the procession, the mourners would be served refreshments by State officials.

AZADARI IN GWALIOR

It is not intended here to debate upon what happened during the reign of Alamgir; but what happened after him was that Azadari once again resumed its general progress. Gwalior, for instance, was under Alamgir; but after him, it was under Niamat Khan Ali. Gwalior then became a Hindu State, Mo'aavji Sandya being its Founder. He was succeeded by Jiyaji Rao, during whose time there came a violent storm which blew off the military camps. The frightened people ran for shelter in all directions. In this confusion, the Rajah saw a small tent unaffected by the fierceness of the storm that was raging in unabated violence. When the Rajah came to this tent in order to find how this tent had survived the storm, he saw a man, named Husain Bakhsh, busy making out a **Tazia**. On being asked to explain his conduct, Husain Bakhsh told the Rajah that his mother used to give births to children who used to die soon after their birth. My mother, therefore, avowed to herself that if her next child survived, she would

build **Tazias** in Moharrum. 'I am, therefore, keeping up what my mother had resolved,' finished the man. Thereupon, the Raja apprised himself of the details of the Tragedy of Karbala, and issued orders for **Taziadari** and **Azadari** in his State. Since that time, **Azadari** continues there on a very large scale.

Syed Abdul Hameed Saheb has written a full book on **Azadari** in Gwalior, entitled **Aijaz-e-Husain**, published by Idara-e-Uloom-e-Aal-e-Mohammad, Lahore. Besides Gwalior, **Azadari** flourished in Nepal, Udaipur, Dholpur, Indore, Kapurthala and other Hindu States.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XXXVI

AZADARI IN DELHI

In 1151 A.H., Salar Jung Nawab Dargah Quli Khan came to Delhi. The same year, the Marahatas attacked Delhi. This was followed by the invasion on Nadir Shah in the month of Ziqad of 1151 A.H. Nawab Dargah Quli Khan has left some very useful notes on Delhi during the time of Mohammad Shah Rangeela. **Murraqqa Delhi**, is an important document on **Azadari** as well.

MOURNING CENTRE AT

QADAM SHARIF

Nawab Dargah Quli Khan has first mentioned the famous religious Centre of Delhi, known as **Qadam Sharif-e-Rasool**. Writing about **Qadamgah Ameerul Momineen**, he states :

"...This place is about three Kurdas (league from the Shahi Fort. Night and day, there is a crowd ever-present here. People come

to pay homage here in large numbers. In Jaki Khana the reciters read out epi-cediums. 12th of Moharrum is specially observed as the day for mourning in memory of Imam Husain (A.S.), when the Taziadars weep and condole and offer prayers."

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, commenting upon the building which Dargah Quli Khan had called "Qadam Sharif", in *Aasaar us-sanaadeed* Second Edition (1854) writes :

"...Nawab Qudsia Saheb az-Zamani, the wife of the Emperor Mohammad Shah received a slab of stone, in 1724 which bore an impression of the footprint of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) Nawab Qudsia fixed this stone in the water-fountain made of marble, which stands in the same position today. Below the fountains, she built a marble-floor and a pulpit. On the side of the pulpit is engraved a Persian couplet that gives the date of this construction.....

"During the reign of Ahmad Shah (d. 1774), Nawab Qudsia built an enclosure in 1748 with a Mourning Hall and a mosque in it—Javed Khawajasara. In 1808, Ishrat Ali Khan, built another Mourning Centre, followed by Sadiq Ali Khan who made a Drum House in 1227 A.H."...

KARBALA

The field where Tazias are buried is known as "Karbala". The boundary wall of this field at Delhi was constructed by Mirza Ashraf Baig Khan.

BURJ KASA HAZRAT FATEMATUZ ZEHRA

There is a tower near Shah Mardan. Males are not allowed to enter into it. It is believed that the tower contains a tablet containing the impression of a bowl that belonged to Hazrat Fatematuz Zehra. This building, in other words, is meant exclusively for mourning women. Near this building is a big hall which a certain trader had built in consequence of his cherished desire having been fulfilled. There is a photograph of this tower in *Aasaar-us-Sanaadeed*, published from Delhi (p. 87) and also in the editions published from Naval Kishore, Lucknow.

The Mourning Centre of Shah Mardan dates back to the period preceding that of Nadir Shah, Najaf Khan and Nawab Saadat Khan. This is the *Azakhana* (Mourning Centre) where Dargah Quli Khan had noticed large crowd of mourners, which means that congregational mournings at centres were in vogue even before the time of Mohammad Shah.

Dargah Quli Khan's description of the activities at Chowk Saadullah Khan during Moharrums also contains reference to Moharrum Majlises. It is apparent from this that mourning Majlises used to held at public places before, as well as after, the time of Nadir Shah, and that spakers used to read out portions from *Rauzatul Shuhada* and make the audiences weep. There was no discrimination between Sunnis and Shias then; and Majlised used to last late into the nights.

MOURNING RECITALS

After the describing the festivities at the *Urs* (anniversary) and other activities at sacred places,

Dargah Quli Khan has devoted five pages, describing the epeidiums and odes which literary figures like Lutf Ali Khan, Miskeen, Hur bin Ghamgheen, Mir Abdulla, Syed Abu Turab, Shaikh Sultan, Mirza Ebrahim, Mir Dard, Atish Husain Janja and Ahmad Naeem wrote. He has Also described various mourning centres and majlises in the city (for details see *Muraqqa Delhi*, pp. 50—55).

MULLA FAZLI'S KARBAL KATHA

Writing epicediums was a popular occupation of poets; and many an elegist had gained fame through composing epicediums in Urdu. The art of oratory and delivering sermons reached new heights during this time. Speeches in Urdu became the vogue. If the reader wishes to acquaint himself with the style of oratory evident in these sermons, he is advised to read Mulla Fazli's Karbal Katha which is not only the oldest documentary work on Azadari in North India, but is also the first book in Urdu prose which can be described as an exquisite specimen in Urdu literature.

ATTENDANCE AT THE FORT

Mirza Haider Shuko Ibne Kam Bux, Ibne Suleman Shuko Ibne Mohammad Shah Alam Bahadur Taimuri writes as under on page 28 of *Risala-e-alum-e-Hyderi*:

"...My Great grandmother, Nawab Qudsia Begum, who was also the Great grandmother of Bahadur Shah Zafar—the Emperor of the time was publicly known to be a Shia. She even used to offer consecrate food (Haa'zari) in memory of

Hazrat Abbas (A.S.), where the Emperors Ahmed Shah and Mohammad Shah used to sit at the same Dastarkhwan and eat along with all others. There could be no more clear evidence than this ...

It is also stated in the said journal that there was a proper Mourning Hall inside the Delhi Fort, which certain Emperors had decorated and which certain other Emperors had sealed for expedient reasons. There were comparatively few restrictions on Azadari during the reigns of Bahadur Shah I, Mohammad Shah and Ahmad Shah. After Ahmed Shah, political power went into the hands of Najaf Khan and Saadat Khan, followed by Safdar Jung. Consequently, there was an increase in the number of Mourning Centres.

SHAH ALAM'S AZADARI

In 1802, General Arthur attacked Delhi and defeated the Marahtas; but with the defeat of the Marahtas, the Moghul Emperor Shah Alam, too, was rendered a king only in name. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan has included George III among the Emperors of Delhi in his *Aasaar-e-Sanaadeed*. With the fall of Delhi to the Britishers, the East India Company came in control of the national affairs; and the Englishman dominated the political scene in India, both inside as well as outside the subcontinent. Abu Nasr Moinuddin Akbar Shah, known in history as Shah Alam, however, remained a figure-head ruler for about 31 years, 5 months and 9 days, without functioning actually as an Emperor. In fact he had no powers at all in the administration. As a consequence, there

were no Shia-Sunni religious restrictions. There was a free traffic of people to and fro Delhi and Lucknow. There was thus a cultural exchange of customs and practices between the two provinces, people in one provinces adopted the modes of Azadari in the other, and vice versa. Nevertheless, there was also a group which opposed these inter-provincial coalescence by groups who favoured these mutual adoption. Emperor Shah Alam, however, remained attached to Azadari without caring for these mutual animosities. There is an entry in Kunwar Prem Kishore Firaqi's diary, entitled **waqa-e-Alam Shahi**, relating to his tour of Agra which reads as under:

"...Reached Saidpur on 2nd Moharrum 1784 and observed the month there...Both the Moghul forces as well as the Maratha army took full part in Moharrum mournings (pub. Rampur, p. 28).

"...Imam Husain's **Daswan** (10th day after martyrdom) fell on 20th of Moharrum, which was a Saturday. The Emperor held the Royal Darbar in the early hours of the morning that day, and ordered a Royal feast to be held. Accordingly, delicious dishes and refreshing drinks were prepared, and **Fatheha** was offered over these delicacies in the name of Imam Husain (A.S.) and other Martyrs of Karbala (p. 42).

The nature of Moharrum observance noticed during the reported travel indicates what must have been the magnitude of mournings in Delhi at the time. The compiler of **Majmua Naghz** writes that

Mirza Raja Ramnath Zarra, an official of the State, used to observe Taziadari from the 1st of Moharrum right upto the end of the month (Zef. **Majmua Naghz**, pub. Punjab University, Lahore, Vol. 1, p. 259).

EMPEROR SHAH ALAM'S

ATTENDANCE AT MAJLISES

Imdad Saabri, the author of **Tareekh-e-Sahafat**, has quoted a news item appearing the 6th September 1826 issue of the Persian journal **Jam-e-Jahanuma**, the translation of which reads as under:

"...Jahan Panah, Shahjehanabad: The Emperor listens every night during the first ten days of Moharrum to recitals of epicediums at mourning congregations. Maulvi Rasheeduddin Khan came here on 12th August (meaning 8th of Muharrum), i.e. 14th August. 10th Moharrum is correct). The Emperor was personally present inside the hall; and after listening to narratives from the Traditions, he gave eight **Ashrafies** (gold coins) to Maulvi Rasheeduddin Khan and one-hundred rupees to the dependents of the Late Maulvi Abul Aziz (Ref **Tareekh-e-Sahafat**, Vol. 2, p. 65).

BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR'S AZADARI

Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last of the Emperors from the dynasty of Taimur, ascended the throne in 1837. A man in the grip of old age and devoid of the usual regal pomp and show, Bahadur Shah passed his days as an ascetic in deep religious meditation. Fairs,

poetic symposiums and Urs (anniversaries of saints) were common. During the Moharrum mourning period, the whole city used to observe the sanctity of the month by holding Majlis. The Emperor himself, too, as per old traditions, used to observe these Sanctities with due reverence.

In 1268 A.H., Emperor Shah Zafar fell ill. Despite all possible medical care, his illness persisted. Mohammad Haider Shikoh had come over to Delhi from Lucknow at this time. He advised the Emperor to resolve that if God cured him of his ailment, he would donate an alum at the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.) and declare himself to be a Shia. The Emperor took the advice; and by God's grace he survived his illness. After complete recovery of health and his 'bath of health', he wrote a letter to the Mujtahid-e-Azam (Shia religious head) of Lucknow, Sultan-ul-Ulema Maulana Syed Mohammad Saheb, the contents of which read as under;

"...I hereby declare my devotion to, and recognition of the succession rights of, the Ahle Bait as the Holy Prophet successors, and condemn the enemies of Ali (A.S.) in emphatic terms. The construction of Imambara has already commenced. Majlis in memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) will commence at this Imambara as soon as the construction work is completed, God willing. My duty is to make efforts, which I am making. The success of efforts rests with God alone. In connection with other religious details, please contact Mirza Mohammad Haider Shikoh, who is my trusted man" (Ref. **Risala Alum Hyderi**

pp. 3,4. Also, a manuscript copy of this letter is contained in a diary preserved at the State Library of Rampur).

Following this Royal letter, the Emperor sent his alum to Lucknow, which Sultan-ul-ulema, Maulana Mohammad Syed Saheb, carried with Regal honours in a procession and fixed it at the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.). The news of this development spread like wild fire in Delhi, and Emperor Shah Zafar suffered the same fate as his ancestor, Bahdur Shah I. The Emperor was forced upon changing his religious beliefs, and Bahadur Shah Zaffar had no choice but to contradict the news. The renowned poet, Mirza Ghalib, was inspired by this event and wrote out a Mathnawi (Poem) which was widely distributed in Delhi and Lucknow.

This Mathnawi created a great uproar. Mirza Haider Shikoh, who was the trusted man of Emperor Shah Zaffar, released to the press the correspondence the Emperor had with the East India Company at Calcutta and with Sultan-ul-ulema Maulana Mohammad Syed Saheb at Lucknow and with himself. Then in a compilation which he called **Risala alum-e-Hyderi dar Aqaid-e-Salateen-e-Taimuri**, he proved his dynasty as being Shias and got it published at Lucknow in 270 A.H. Along with this publication, he also published a poem captioned "**Shaukat-e-Hydari**", in which he presented the facts relating to this incident in poetic rhymes. Mirza Ghalib countered this Mathnawi with another one written by himself, and these poetic exchanges continued for a long time. At last, Mufti Mohammad Abbas Saheb

wrote his own Mathnawi captioned **Khitab-e-Fasil**, and the controversy ceased with its publication.

Despite the uproar following disclosure of the Emperor's faith in Shia beliefs, and the controversy that followed it, mourning observances inside the Fort continued unabated. This is evident from a news item appear in the Persian journal **Sadiq al Akhbar**, dated Delhi, 17th to 24th January 1845, which read as follows :

"On the occasion of Moharrum ceremony, Mirza Ali Baigh, **Arz Baigi**, accompanied by sepoy, carried the sacred relics of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) stored at the Dargah at the Jama Masjid, and placed them upon the Royal throne. He illuminated the Royal family apartments at the Fort, the gates of which were ordered to be kept open the whole night to allow the Princes and the Princesses to enter along with the Emperor and enable them to pay their homage to the **Tazias** there" (Ref. **Tareekh e-Sahafat** Imdad Sabri, Vol. 1, 2nd Edition, p. 185).

Commenting upon the details of these observances, Munshi Faizuddin in his **Bazm-e-Akhir** writes :

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM AZADARI A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)
CHAPTER XXXVII

A LAST GLANCE AT AZADARI BY MOGHUL EMPERORS

"...The Moharrum crescent has been sighted. Mournful drum-beatings have started. **Sabeels** (Public drinking water stands) have sprung up all over. The Emperor becoming the beggar of Hasan and Husain (A.S.) with the robes of a beggar and a green cloth-bag containing sweetened granules of gram, fennel (sonph) and poppy seeds (**khash khaash**) walks to the Dargah and pays homage.

"For ten days there will be a free distribution of food in the mornings and cold drinks in the evening."

It is the sixth of Moharrum. The Emperor will arrive at the **langar** (free food distribution centre) today.

There ! Look at those two emblems of five fingers and the palm fixed atop two wooden staffs wrapped with red and green coloured cloth (alum), being carried by the Emperor one in each hand. The Emperor is wearing a silver chain round his waist. Two Syeds step forth and drag the Emperor a few feet...And lo. The chain has been put round the Emperor's neck ! And the two Syeds have carried away the alum.

"And now, it is the 7th of Moharrum. What a scene those lotus flowers, made of mica, present with lighted oil lamps in their centres ! Shavings of bamboo stick knit into mats and covered with red tissue paper with a riot of red-coloured lotuses like burning torches in the midst attract the eye. Trays with powdered henna and ground sweet roasted flour have been decorated with burning conical shaped shamas. In the forefront is a group of drum beaters carrying their semi-spherical drums, followed by the Emperor and lady members of the Royal family. Behind them march Negresses, Turkish women, Khojas and others...And Lo ! The group carrying powdered henna has reached the Imambara now, and with this, decorations are no more noticeable. The henna, the sweet cooked flour and the Shamas have been placed at the Dargah...

"The 8th of Moharrum ; and look ! Dressed in a red-coloured lungi, the Emperor is now a water-carrier of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.), supplying Sherbet to the Masoomen from the leather water bag which he is carrying upon his shoulder...

And now, see, the Emperor has finished feeding the Sherbet. He now offers prayers over Malida (sweetened roasted flour) and distributes it to those present.

"And now, today is the 10th of Moharrum. Empty water containers with long pouts, constricted, in the centre, have arrived. Milk and Sherbet have been filled in them. Earthen trays with red yarn wound their edges, filled with fresh-cooked halva (sweet dish) have been brought and prayers have been offered over them...And look at that ! Look how the young children are rushing impatiently at these. Look how each one of them drinks milk and sherbet. Swallows the halwa, fills his bag with coins and goes back hopping... It is now time for Zohur (afternoon) prayers. The Emperor arrives at Moti Masjid, where he offers his Ashura prayers. Next, there are preparations ahead inside the Diwan-e-Khas, where a large Dastar Khwan (cloth piece over which meals are served) has been spread out, Shirmals (bread), with roasted mutton, cheese, podina leaves (mint leaves), sliced ginger and radish over each, have been placed for the feast. The Emperor stands up reverently and offers fateha (prayers) over these dishes, and himself tastes a piece of the roasted mutton, cheese and radish. He then personally hands over one Shirmal and the other preparations, first to his heir apparent, and then to other Princes and dignitaries. After this, the rest of the things are distributed to everyone present. And now look there ! There

comes the carriage with the sacred relics, preceded by the military personnel playing the military band... There! It stops now, and the Emperor now stands up in reverence, takes the sacred relics and kisses them devotionally. First, he raises the holy cloak¹ of Prophet Mobammad (S.A.) to his eyes, then he kisses the Holy Quran² written personally by Hazrat Ali (A.S.), and holds it over his head... He now lifts the Khak-e-Shifa³ of Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (A.S.) and touches it with his eyes, and both the sacred hair of the Holy Prophet in rose water (These relics are still preserved at the Badshahi Mosque, Lahore).

"And now it is time for the ladies to pay homage to these sacred relics. The Begums, accompanied by the Emperor, enter into the Palace then: and the relics go back to the Jama Masjid in the same Royal manner in which they had been brought. Similarly, in the evening also they pay homage at the Dargah inside the Palace Compound... And look there! 'Bun Daliyan', cardamom seeds, nutmegs, broken betel-nuts, roasted sweet-melon seeds, coriander seeds, sliced pieces of dried coconut are being ground into

1. The cloak of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) cannot go out of the house of the Holy Prophet or His progeny... Publishers.
2. The Holy Quran written by Hazrat Ali was not accepted by the government it therefore remained with Ahle Bait—Publishers.
3. Khak-e-Shifa is the clay of Karbala. It is Therefore of of Imam Husain (A.S.) only—Publishers.

what is called 'gota'. This is then served out among themselves in glass and paper plates or in small saucers and embroidered bags with delicate designs of flower made on them.

"A majority of the Moghul Emperors used to observe Taziadari inside the Delhi Fort, some of them dressed like couriers, some as archers, some in the garb of tribal Chiefs, some preceding the Tazia procession as drum-beaters, and some reading out epicediums. Each reciter of epicediums used to get four saucerfulls of 'Bun chikni Daliyan' roasted sweet melon seeds and coriander seeds free from the Dargah. Such was the grand manner in which alums used to be taken out" (Ref. Bazm-e-Akhir, pub. Delhi, p. 47. This book has been published from Lahore also).

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XXXVIII

AZADARI IN OUDH

The geographic frontiers of this old province of Oudh, now included in Uttar Pradesh, have been changing often during the course of history. Oudh has always remained a region of greenery with fertile soil and a bracing and healthy climate. This ancient province which once included cities like Qanauj, Badayun, Behraich, Jaunpur, Rai Bareilly, Lucknow, Faizabad, Agra, Cawnpur, Amroha, Bareilly, and Ali garh, occupies a prominent place in the history of Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent. There are ancient monuments in Oudh which date back to third and fourth centuries, Hijra. It was in 410 A.H. that after crossing River Ganges Mehmood Ghaznavi had entrusted the task of conquering Oudh to his Generals, among whom is included the name of Salar Sahu, Masood Ghazi's father also. It is well known that Salar Sahu, who belonged to the generations of Mohammad bin Hanafiyya and was the brother-in-law of Mehmood Ghaznavi, came to

Qandahar, and thence to Thatta and Ajmere in 401 A.H. In Ajmere a son, Masood, was born to him, and grew to manhood here. Both father and son were with Mehmood Ghaznavi when he conquered Somnath. At the young age of 16, Salar Masood conquered Multan and then Ajudhan, from where he advanced towards Delhi and reached "Satrakha" via Meerut and Qanauj. After camping awhile at "Satrakha" he expanded his territorial conquests to include Behraich, Kanda Mareckpur and other areas. He died ultimately in 42 A.H. at Behraich.

Alums are kept during Moharrums at Salar Masood's tomb in Behraich, and Taziadari is also observed there. The people of Behraich regard observance as a relic of traditions that were current during the time of Mehmood Ghaznavi. The caretakers of this ancient monument take great interest in Azadari despite the fact that they are not themselves Shias.

The local natives of Khairabad trace the origin of the famous 52-bamboo Tazias to 699 A.H. The caretakers of Khanqa Yusuf Ghazi are still attached to Taziadari. Mohammad Akbar Saheb saw Hafiz Moharrum Ali making this 52-bamboo Tazia after duly performing ablutions in 1932, and also found Maqbool Mian to be an ardent Taziadar. If this narrative is true, it must then be conceded that Tazias existed even before the time of Taimur. There is also a Township called Makhanpur in Cawnpur district, where Azadari is still current during Moharrums at the shrine of Khwaja Badi-uz-Zaman.

The tomb of Syed Ashraf Jehangir Sanani at Kachocha Sharif, near Akbarpur, is also a mourning Centre. Makhdoom Syed Ashraf had gone to Jaunpur during the period when the Tughlaq dynasty ruled in India (For Azadari in Khairabad, Sitapur and Jaunpur, see Moharrum supplements of Sarfaraz, Lucknow, 1953 and 1957. Also see **Tareekh-e-Azadari Jaunpur**, by Syed Mohammad Khairuddin and Abul Arif Muzaffar Husain, pub. Benares, 1967). Makhdoom Syed Ashraf went once again to Jaunpur when Sultan Ebrahim Sharqi was the ruler. This means that after 1407 he had made Jaunpur his homeland.

The biographer of Makhdoom Syed Ashraf writes that Makhdoom used to hoist the **alum** as soon as Moharrum moon was sighted, and for ten days he would remain in **Aitekaf** (confining oneself to one place devotional worship) under the shade of this **alum**, narrating the events of the Tragedy of Karbala and cursing Yazeed alternatively during this time.

In the same period, Amir Yaseen Khan, a man from Eastern India, laid the foundations of a mosque and an Imambara near Badi Manzil-the Palace of Queen Rajiya Bibi. The foundations were demolished during the devastation that raged subsequently in Jaunpur. However, another Imambara was constructed in its place about 200 years ago. This Imambara was called 'Sadar Imambara' or 'Karbala', which became the centre where all **tazias** in the city used to converge and be buried. The inscription on this building is in Persian verse, the substance of which runs thus:

It appears that Azadari was current in towns like Jaunpur in Oudh, where there was a concentration of Sufis and Sadaats. This period has unfortunately remained obscure in Indian history as a result of political disturbances and administrative irregularities, till Saadat Ali Khan Burhan ul-Mulk of Naishapur came there as Subedar in charge of administration in Oudh.

THE ORIGIN OF OUDH RULERS

There was an Irani dignitary named Syed Mohammad Naseer. He was connected with the Safavi rulers of Iran. His son, Syed Mohammad Ameen, came over to India from Naishapur and secured some employment in the administration of Subedar Nawab Sarbuland Khan. Shortly thereafter, Mohammad Ameen got dissatisfied with Nawab Sarbuland Khan over certain matter and went away to Delhi. Farooq Syed was in command of Delhi at this time, and there was political chaos in the country. When there was a united action against the high-handedness of Husain Ali Khan and Abdulla Khan, Mohammad Ameen Naishapuri supported the Government, and both Aitemad-ud-daula and Mohammad Ameen jointly fought against Husain Ali Khan. Mohammad Ameen exhibited such military wisdom and courage that in appreciation of his extraordinary genius, Emperor Mohammad Shah honoured him with the title of "Saadat Khan Bahadur" and made him the Subedar of the province of Akbarabad (Shawal 1131 A.H.).

He then crushed the Jats; and hardly had he put right the administration at Agra when he was summoned by the Emperor at Delhi, where he

was given the title of "Burhan-ul-Mulk" and was entrusted with the mission of crushing the insurgents in the province of Oudh. Though this mission was a dangerous and important one, no army was given to him. He therefore recruited men on his own initiative and created an army of his own, and with this force he advanced towards Oudh. On his way, he subdued the insurgent **Zamindars** and reached Lucknow. At that time, Shaikh Abdur Rahim ruled over Lucknow as the sole Dictator. Nawab Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk captured Lucknow after a little armed resistance by Shaikh Abdur Rahim. He then reorganized the administration of the Province and took measures to improve its revenues. He took punitive action against the insurgent Rajahs of the area and rehabilitated the city of Lucknow.

Meanwhile, Nadir Shah invaded Delhi. Burhan-ul-Mulk, therefore, rushed to the Emperor's assistance with his army. In the clash that took place here he was seriously injured, and as a result of these injuries he breathed his last on the 9th of Zilhaj, 1151 A.H. in Delhi.

At a central place in the Province, near Ajodhiya, Nawab Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk had constructed a bungalow called "Faizabad" to serve as Headquarter for local administration. Lucknow, of course, remained the Capital; but Faizabad, too, served as a centre of the Nawab, where scholars from Ispahan, Shiraz and Rae used to stay with him along with the elites of Delhi, thus giving Faizabad and Lucknow a complexion of being the cities of Iran.

Nawab Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk had called his nephew over from his homeland. When this nephew, Mirza Mohammad Moqem Ibne Jaffer Baig, came to Delhi, the Nawab gave away his daughter to him. Thus, the nephew became his son-in-law as well, and he it was who succeeded his uncle with the title of "Safdar Jung" attached to his name, and became the Ruler of Oudh after Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk. Safdar Jung was in the State Capital when his uncle had rushed off to Delhi after entrusting to him the administration of the State. Subsequently, Emperor Mohammad Shah demanded a sum of Rupees two crore for Oudh. Safdar Jung paid the demand-money and thus became the permanent master of the province.

Shortly after this, he got the honour of becoming the Subedar of Agra and Kashmir as well. When Ahmad Shah succeeded Mohammad Shah as the Emperor at Delhi, he made Safdar Jung his Chief Minister, and later on entrusted the task of reorganizing administration of Multan, Ajmere and Allahabad as well. Consequently, Safdar Jung crushed the Rohilas, Marahatas, Jats and other insurgent factions, thereby bringing stability in the country's politics.

Safdar Jung was a literary-minded ruler and encouraged learning. He collected a circle of Ulema, writers and poets under his patronage. He ruled as a Nawab for 15 years, but most of his time was spent in shuttlecocking between Lucknow, Faizabad and Delhi to meet political exigencies that arose intermittently. He died eventually on the 17th of Zilhaj, 1167 A.H.

and his tomb still stands as a protected historical monument in Delhi (his body was temporarily buried at Delhi and was shifted to Karbala later). His memorial tomb in Delhi is situated near Ali Mardan, and by virtue of the fact that Safdar Jung was deeply devoted to Imam Husain (A.S.), this place has the honour of being a centre for the mourners of the martyred Imam.

About a quarter of a century after the reconstruction of Faizabad and Lucknow, when a more stable Centre was in the offing, it was fortunate that Nawab Jalaluddin Haider Mohammad Shuja-ud-daula became the Nawab of Oudh. So far, Nawab Shuja-ud-daula was stationed at Lucknow, though he would go over to Faizabad for a few days and move on to Benares and Gorakhpur. The Rohilas were posing a threat to provincial peace and tranquility at this time. After crushing them at the Battle of Buxar, Shuja-ud-daula shifted over to Faizabad from Lucknow. The Nawab transformed the old bungalow here into what could be called a Fort, and the military base there into a city by itself. According to the historians of the time, Shuja-ud-daula's Faizabad was no less a grand city than Shah Jahan's Delhi. There were all classes of Ulema, Sufis, scholars, orators and poets in this transformed city of Faizabad, including the grandfather of Mir Anees, the Master-elegist poet of all times. It is reckoned that Mir Hasan came to Faizabad in round about 1180 A.H.; and so did the other elegist poets, Mirza Sauda and Mirza Afsurda, also.

AZADARI

Nawab Shuja-ud-daula was deeply attached to the institution of Azadari and mourning for Imam Husain (A.S.). Taziadari and Majlises were abundantly current in Faizabad. Both Muslims as well as Hindus used to participate in mournings. For full ten days in Moharrum, there would be Sabeels (drinking water stands) all over the city, and mournful recitals of epicediums was evident in every house. These Marsias (epicediums) would be recited in compositions of 4 or 5 or 6 verses to a thought, or they would be in the form of long, continuous elegies. Tazia processions used to be of a Royal nature, with drum-beatings and melodious Shehnais (musical pipe) in the front. In the more common type of processions, there would be displays of dagger exercises with intermittent cries of "Ya Husain" from the processionists.

In the Royal procession, Nawab Shuja-ud-daula would be in the lead, carrying the alum bare headed and barefooted. Carrying alums had become a common practice.

AZADARI AT JALALI

Shuja-ud-daula was so particularly conscious of the sanctity of the month of Moharrum that even during the Maratha Abdali battle that took place during Moharrum, he donned black mourning dress and paraded with the alum in his hands, and presented himself before Emperor Ahmed Shah in this state. The Emperor gathered his tears in his handkerchief, saying that these tears were the means of salvation in the Hereafter.

It happened once again that Moharrum happened to be the month when Nawab Shuja-ud-daula was on a military mission in Itawa in 1187 A.H. Accordingly, he halted at Jalali—a Shia Colony—in Aligarh district. There he improvised Imambara, drawing its compound with cloth and observed mournings. It was on this occasion that Nawab Muzaffar Jung, a wealthy man of Farookhabad, became Shia [Ref. Sarfaraz, Moharrum Supplement, citing Lauh-e-Tareekh (Manuscript, p. 6)]. Mohammad Khamaluddin Husaini, the Mutawalli (Keeper) of the Imambara, Hisar, of Jalali in Aligarh district has mentioned this incident in full details in his book on the history of Azadari in his town.

Shuja-ud-daula and Asif-ud-daula allotted the land to one Syed Shah Khairat Ali for the exclusive use of the Imambara at Jalali. The documents relating to this allotment are still in the possession of the descendents of Syed Shah Karamat Ali. The Sadaats of Jalali in Aligarh district are the generations of the original Shias who migrated from Hamadan in Iran, and are believed to be belong to the genealogical line of Syed Ali Hamdani. In 665 A.H., Ghiasuddin Balban had constructed the boundary at Jalali, of which only one mosque remains today as a memorial. The natives of Jalali compare their mourning observances and customs with those of the people of Kashmir (Ref. Sarfaraz, Moharrum Supplement 1969).

Besides Nawab Shuja-ud-daula, his esteemed wife, Nawab Bahu Begum and his brother were also

dedicated to the institution of Azadari. The stately manner in which they observed the sanctity of Azadari in Faizabad was unprecedented in history.

Nawab Shuja-ud-daula died on the 24th of Ziqad, 1188 A.H., and was buried at Gulab Bari. After him Asif-ud-daula made Lucknow the permanent Capital of his State; but his mother, Nawab Bahu Begum Saheba, remained back at Faizabad where she promoted Azadari in a very progressive manner. Majlises continue to be held at Gulab Bari even today, and so does a Waqf exist for this purpose.

The beauty and grandeur of Faizabad declined, and finally was no more, after the death of Nawab Bahu Begum on 15th December 1815. What remain today as the relics of this golden period are the mosque of Hasan Raza Khan, the Manaqa of Nawab Shuja-ud-daula's Kitchen, some personal belongings of Nawab Bahu Begum and the Imambara of Jawahar Ali Khan.

NAWAB ASIF-UD-DULA AND AZADARI

Asif-ud-daula Yahya Khan Hazbar Jung ascended the throne at Oudh in 1775 and moved over to Lucknow in 1776 where he settled down permanently. He was a man with indomitable courage, with thirst for knowledge, and himself a scholar with high literary taste. Besides these qualities, he was a very generous and benevolent individual. His attachment to religion and devotion Ahle Bait can be gauged from the fact that he used to give away lacs of rupees to Hajis and pilgrims going to sacred places. He made

spacious Rest Houses for these pilgrims. He greatly respected the Ulema and had them by his side at his Darbar. His relics are still preserved among other items in Iraq. The River in Najaf-e-Ashraf is a glaring evidence of the generosity of Asif-ud-daula.

Besides himself mourning during Moharrums, Asif-ud-daula encouraged Azadari among other Taziadars also. Wherever he went, he would meet and solicit mourners and donate amounts at every Mourning Centre he visited. For Azadari each year, as well as on other relevant occasions during the year, he would allot lands, fix pensions and rewards. With his ascension to the throne, there was a rapid increase in the number of Imambaras in Lucknow. Nawab Asif-ud-daula also constructed several Palaces and other buildings. Fort Machhi Bhavan was existent then, and in every other Palace Azadari was observed in due solemnity. But what he wished most was that would construct a stately Mourning House surpassing the grandeur of all other Royal buildings.

THE BARA IMAMBARA OF LUCKNOW

In 170, Asif-ud-daula constructed a Imambara the size and architectural grandeur of which is uncomparable. It has been uniquely planned and beautifully constructed. Right from the main entrance to the interior where the pulpit stands, the entire structure is a wonderful masterpiece of craftsmanship and architectural engineering.

It is well-known in Luknow that its people had suffered a disastrous famine in 1784. Taking cognizance of the sufferings of his subjects, the kind and

generous-hearted Nawab Asif-ud-daula planned the lay-out of this Imambara. The construction work commenced after the blue-prints were prepared by Kifayatullah Mohaddis Dehlavi. The elite of the city used to work as labourers during nights, and by day-time, they would busy themselves in assisting the craftsmen in their art work and construction. Even today one Tazia is kept at this Imambara, which is popularly known as the "old woman's Tazia". It is a popular belief that when Nawab Asif-ud-daula was purchasing the land for this Imambara, an old woman who owned a house on the premises laid the condition that she would give up her house if her Azadari was allowed to continue undisturbed on the same spot. The Nawab obliged the old woman by agreeing to her condition. Consequently, when the Imambara was completed and started functioning, this old woman's Tazia was duly placed on the specified spot along with the Royal Tazias.

It took about eight years to complete the construction of this famous Imambara, the elegance and architectural ingenuity of which continues to astound the tourists from all over the world. According to an assessment by Kamaluddin Haider, 50 lacs of rupees on construction, and another 50 lacs on decorations, are estimated to have been spent over this Imambara. Abdul Latif Shustry, a tourist who visited the site during the period under reference, wrote:

"As an expression of his love and devotion to the progeny of the Holy Prophet, Asif-ud-daula built a greatly marvellous Taziakhana

and a mosque near his Royal Palace "Daulat Khana", over which a large amount of money has been spent. According to official estimate, as well as the construction supervisors and State officials, a sum of Rs. 2 crores is said to have been spent over its construction and decoration. There is nothing soul-stirring like it in the whole Subcontinent in as far as its size and grandeur is concerned".

This Imambara which stands majestically midway between the Nawab's Palace and Machhi Bhavan, and which once represented Royal grandeur, now towers as an uncrowned king. If you approach it from Husainabad Road, you will notice a clocktower before you. A little ahead is an arch as big as the one which Iranian monarchs had built, and more beautiful than this arch is the Roman door beneath the arch. Entering through this gate-way, you will notice two porches meant for drum-beaters, facing one another. On the right stands the Imambara. On entering its main gate, you will come across a square-shaped structure with two entrances, one each at two sides. Entrance into the **Azakhana** lies through a door which has been constructed on a raised plinth. Facing this door inside is a three-storeyed hall, spacious and high-walled, and courtyards.

Only bricks and mortar have been used in the construction of this Imambara, i.e. stone has not been used at all. Peculiar thing about it is that there is no trace of wood-work in the whole Imambara, nor is there a trace of iron or steel in its construction. God alone knows how its heavy roof is

supported by the walls of the hall, measuring 302 feet in length and 63 feet in height. Looking at a few pillars in this spacious and high-walled hall, one feels that Hazrat Suleman (Solomon) must have employed his genii in the construction of this marvellous specimen of architecture. The walls of this monumental structure are so wide and so dimensional in depth that well ventilated and lighted rooms have been housed in them, from where one can view the calm and Scenic surroundings outside. People call this marvellous building as "**Bhool Bhuliyan**" labyrinth.

In the central hall, lie buried Nawab Asif-ud-daula and his Begum, Shams-un-nisa. Adjacent to the Mourning Hall is a mosque, with a beautifully constructed water well at an appropriate distance. Unfortunately, during the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the Moghul gardens surrounding this building, as well as the Royal Palace and the Fort were demolished by the Britishers who converted the mosque for use as their military Headquarters. From that time, till today, this grand monument stands lamenting over its own ruin, while serving as a shelter for the victims of floods that devastate the population when River Gomti swells in a periodic cycle. Yet, those who saw it in its glory say that it was an unparalleled masterpiece of Art-cum-Engineering. Cypress trees towering majestically, the beds of Jasmine and Rose plants, and the water-fountains with scented sprays that met the eye on entering the Imambara, were simply unique in their scenic beauty that made the onlooker hold his breath in admiration. The silk and gold-tissue tapestry, the luxurious carpets, the life-sized mirrors

of Syrian origin, fixed in gold and silver frames, studded on the walls with costly monograms circling them, and scores of other decorative items in gold and precious stones, like chandeliers etc. mesmerized one who beheld them. All these decorative items had initially cost about Rs. 5 lacs in those days, and the annual budget provided an equal amount for their maintenance and upkeep. According to Mirza Abu Talib, "Nawab Asif-ud-daula had ordered hundreds of Tughras (monograms), all made in pure gold and silver. Among items made of glass were lotus plants with, as well as without, the flower in snow-white and multi-coloured shades, and chandeliers and globes, the value of which is difficult to calculate in terms of money.

"The roofs of the large and spacious halls in the Imambara were all studded with glass-work, the glare of which made it difficult for the visitors to stay inside. The visitors, therefore, used to sit upon the raised platform inside, and view the whole marvel from there".

Despite all this stupendous and fantastic magnitude of decorative fixtures Nawab Asif-ud-daula craved for still more additions to the embellishments. Accordingly, when Dr. Blount was leaving for England, Nawab Asif-ud-daula requested him to arrange for a golden and red-coloured Zarih made of crystal glass and other items of decoration. In compliance thereof, a costly Zarih, duly executed in crystal glass, was despatched after a year. In his travelogue Heber writes as under :

"...There were innumerable chandeliers hanging from the roofs of this sacred building, and the glare of refracted light that emanated from cut-glass lobes in various colours fringing at the ends of gold and silver-coloured holders, dazzled the eyes. Those chandeliers that were too heavy to be hung were placed on the floor. The bases of these chandeliers were of a large diameter, while the upper portions tapered off conically, like the cypress trees. Between two drawing rooms were placed Tazias of gold as high as eight feet, studded with precious stones" (Ref. Article entitled **Asif-ud-daula Ki Azadari** by Tassaduq Husain in *Sarfaraz*, Moharrum Supplement, 1957).

Abdul Latif Shustri has also drawn pen-sketch of this Imambara in his *Tohfatul Alam*, which reads thus :

"...I saw this Imambara which is wonderfully unique in the world. There are fourteen domes inside the Azakhana, and under each dome was placed a gold and silver Zarih, each Zarih being dedicated to each of the Fourteen Masoomeen. These Zarihs used to be decorated during the first ten days of Moharrum. There were about four to five hundred chandeliers made of crystal glass in which were placed lighted candles of camphor that burned throughout the nights. There were clocks made of gold and silver and life-sized mirrors. In short, the entire building was so brilliant with precious stones studded all over that not even the brilliance of the famous Koh-i-noor could match with it in grace and elegance. To those viewing this building from a

distance, the whole structure appeared like an ocean of light in a riot of colours. A sum of Rs. 3 lacs used to be paid from the State Treasury to meet the expenditures during Moharrum. Whatever was left of this amount after paying out all expenses, would be distributed *ex gratia* to the pilgrims who came there, and to the poor.

THE MODE OF MAJLISES

So far, epicediums and recitals from *Rauzatul Shuhada* constituted the general mode of deliberations at Majlises, but Lucknow introduced a new trend through what they termed as 'Waqiakhwani'. Mulla Shirazi is perhaps the first 'Waqiakhwan' to have been employed in service at Nawab Asif-ud-daula's Darbar. A polished religious scholar, and by temperament a witty person, Mulla Shirazi was an accomplished poet who recited his compositions in a pleasant and melodious voice. Nawab Asif-ud-daula regarded him as his own brother and always had him by his side. Abdul Latif Shustri holds Mulla Shirazi's literary talents in high esteem. This is evident from a collection of poems, entitled *waqiat-e-Mulaheza* several editions of which have been published by the Navalkishore Press. Besides this collection, the elegist poems of old Masters like Sirajuddin Khan Arzoo, Mir, Sauda, Hasrat and Soaz are also probably the products of this period of history. It is also most probable that Nawab Asif-ud-daula himself may have written his own epicediums.

Nawab Asif-ud-daula was the founder of a new complexion of Lucknow and its cultural life, and

many are the literary traditions and instances of generosity and nobility of character that are associated with his name in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Above everything else, his wholesale dedication to Azadari for Imam Husain (A.S.) remains the chief element associated with his image. He encouraged the promotion of Azadari and those who observed it, and at the slightest indication of his desire numerous Imambaras sprang up all over the Province. The Imambaras of Mian Almas, Mian Tajamul Ali Khan, Takeyt Rai, Jhao Lal, Ikram Khan and Mian Darab still exist to this day, some of them in ruins; and some, reminiscent of their past glory. Of the Imambaras constructed during the period under reference, some continue even today as the important Mourning Centres in Lucknow. The following are the existent Centres.

IMAMBARA AGHA BAQUIR

This is a small Mourning House with one *alum* made of silver. There is a dome dedicated to the sacred memory of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.). On Thursdays and Friday nights, the place is crowded with devotees. People come on other week days also and ask for Divine favours after praying.

IMAMBARA GHUFRAN MA'AAB

This is the Imambara of Asif-ud-daula's maternal uncle. It lies near the Imambaras of Asif-ud-daula and Amjad Ali Shah. It is called 'Kala Imambara' (Black Mourning House) because it is coloured wholly black from the inside. Among these Imambaras, the most

important one is the one called Dargah-e-Hazrat Abbas. It is so popular in Lucknow that mournings are observed here throughout this year. The details of the place are described under separate Headings, following a short note on Hasan Raza's Imambara.

IMAMBARA HASAN RAZA KHAN

When Nawab Hasan Khan, who took been interest in organizing Majlises even during the time of Nawab Shuja-ud-daula came over to Lucknow, he built this Imambara. It was at the mosque founded by him that Janab Ghufuran Ma'aab led the prayers for the first time. This Imambara of his functioned as the centre of Iraqi and Indian Zakirs for about 80 years, after which it was demolished during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 (Ref. Qaiser-ul-Ansar, Vol. 2, p. 55).

DARGAH-E-HAZRAT ABBAS.

This place of pilgrimage, which is the oldest as well as the most popular one in Lucknow, is situated in the locality known as Mohalla Rustam Nagar, and is dedicated to the sacred memory of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.). Over a particular area in the Dargah is a golden dome, on the pinnacle of which stands fixed a beautiful alum of gold. The founder of this Dargah was a certain person named Mirza Faquir Baig, who had constructed it during the rule of Asif-ud-daula. It was originally a skeleton structure which Asif-ud-daula plastered laster and added a dome to it. The Dargah was further improved upon during the rule of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan, when the dome of plaster was replaced by one of gold. Also, the area of the

Dargah was expanded and divided into two portions, one for males, and the other for ladies. It was after this renovation by Nawab Saadat Ali Khan that the Dargah came to be called as Dargah-e-Hazrat Abbas. The Dargah dates back to 127 A H.

Above the main entrance gate is a room for the drum-beaters, from where drums are sounded five times in 24 hours, indicating that everything is well and at peace. In the times gone by; it was a regular practice to distribute Hazri at all such Dargahs where there was a provision of Sheermal (bread), roasted mutton Kababs sliced chips of ginger, cut pieces of cheese, sliced radishes, onion shreds, mint leaves. At the present time, however, the quantity of Sheermals has decreased greatly besides the other ingredients. Cheese, in particular, is totally absent.

It became an accepted custom after the death of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan for every succeeding ruler to first present himself at this Dargah in a Royal procession. It would be relevant to mention here that when Sultan-e-Alam wajid Ali Shah was leaving for Calcutta, he left his Regal crown and the Royal sword at this Dargah.

When Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Moghul Emperor of Delhi, lay seriously ill, he had resolved that if God gave him back his health, would donate an alum at this Dargah. Subsequently, when he recovered from his illness by the grace of God, he duly donated this alum which Sultan-ul-Ulema Syed Mohammad Saheb carried in a Royal procession and fixed it at Dargah.

It has been a regular practice since after the Indian Mutiny in 1857 for mourning institutions to march in a procession, carrying an alum and beating their breasts, to this Dargah on every Thursday, particularly the Thursdays falling on new Moon dates. Such Thursdays occurring during the month of Rajab or falling on the day of Eid-uz-Zuha are observed with even more enthusiasm (For details, see my article on Moghul observances in India in Sarfaraz, Moharrum Supplement, 1951).

KARBALA BI MISRI

This mourning Centre is situated near the Ice Factory at Sahebgunj in Lucknow. Bi Misri was a talented and famous Artist who lived during the time of Nawab Asif-ud-daula. She repeated in her old age for her sins and withdrew into retired life in seclusion. She utilized the tract of 12-Bigha land (about 1440 sq feet), which Nawab Asif-ud-daula gave her as a gift, in building a house for herself with a mosque and a small Imambara attached to it. The mosque was fairly big and artistically built. It is unfortunate that interior decorations could not be carried out.

Tazias and Shias (Momineen) are buried now at Baghia. In the newspaper 'Himmat' dated the 15th May 1929, Syed Jalib had mentioned that Misri's Baghia is an ancient graveyard of Lucknow. According to the late Mir Hasan, the brilliant poet author of Masnavi Sehr-ul-Bayan and a few other aged persons, the renowned Urdu poet Mir Taqi Mir was buried here, where all that remains today are eleven

nameless graves under the shade of a tree (However, in a manuscript dating back to the time of Mir, the graveyard at Mohalla Sattli is mentioned as being the place where the poet was buried. This overrules the former conjecture of Syed Jalib).

Bi Misri had two daughters Bi Maryam and Bi Masaahib, both of whom were married to two Syeds. Details are lacking in this matter.

PERIOD OF AZADARI

EXTENDED UPTO 20TH SAFAR

Nawab Asif-ud-daula died on the 29th Rabi-al-Awwal 1212 A.H.; and Nawab Wazir Ali Khan succeeded him. He was, however, removed from the throne four months later by the Britishers and was replaced by Nawab Yemeen-ud-daula, the son of Shuja-ud-daula, as the Nawab of Oudh. The new Nawab constructed several buildings and palaces, and promoted Azadari. He renovated the Royal Azakhana (Mourning Centres) in Faizabad and Lucknow. And most important of all his doings was that Azadari, which used to be observed for the first ten days of Moharrum, and some observances on the 20th of the month, was now extended till the 20th of Safar (second month of Islamic Calendar); and now, for full forty days Majlises and lamentations continued uninterrupted. On the day of Chehlum (40th day of Imam Husain's martyrdom), Tazias and alum processions used to be taken out in the same manner as it used to be done on the Ashura Day (10th of Moharrum).

Ghazi-ud-din Haider Shah Zamun got the Nawabship of Oudh in 1814. He had to reconcile to new and

modern political concepts of the time, which he did. He promoted the cause of education and literature, and established printing presses; hospitals, educational institutions and Institutes of Science. He respected and promoted the sanctity of the traditions and culture of Islam. His venerable uncle had built the famous Bara Imambara. Likewise, his father had built the "Dargah", and now, following in the footsteps of his illustrious ancestors, Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haider built the famous **Shabeeh Rauza-e-Shah-e-Najaf** (a miniature model of the tomb of Hazrat Ali (A.S.).

This Rauza is adjacent to the Sikander Bagh. The golden cone-shaped dome with a pinnacle of gold at its top is the first of its kind to have been built. This gold pinnacle can be viewed from distance. The land surrounding this Rauza has elevated itself as a result of other Royal structures having been demolished during the Indian Mutiny of 1857, otherwise the high plinth and the grace of this elegant building could have been visible even from a longer distance than it is possible now. However, even today, its door engraved with an image of a lion and Royal insignia on it, stands preserved on one side of the road with a spacious garden around it. In the centre of the garden there is a raised rectangular platform, on the sides of which are the servant quarters. A little ahead is a hall with a staircase leading up to the main hall (Shah Nasheen) which has three beautiful doors opening into it. On the top frame of one door is engraved a persian couplet that gives the year of its construction as 1232 A.H.

During the times of the Nawabs there was a beautiful crystal glass Tazia in the centre of this Rauza. This Tazia, which had been made to order a European country, was studded with pure gold-work on it, giving an effect of a graceful combination of sapphires and blue-stones. Apart from this, there were Tazias made of ivory, ebony, sandalwood and of pure gold and silver also. Besides these, there is a store of costly turbans. Facing the Rauza are three graves, the railings of which are of silver bricks with best quality brocade shamianas above them. One of the graves is that of Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haider. His three wives, namely Mubarak Mahal, Mumtaz Mahal and Sarfaraz Mahal, also lie buried here. The Persian couplet inscribed on the Nawab's grave gives the year of his death as 1243 A.H.

SHABIH ROZA-E-SHAH-E-NAJAF

This Rauza is situated on a beautiful location on the bank of a river. The scenic beauty of a series of gardens, a graceful chain of buildings, a flower-garden, surrounding the boundary walls of this majestic monument impress the onlookers even today with the sheer force of their beauty and elegance. As per back as 1825, Sir Hasan Ali drew a pen-sketch of this monument in these words :

"...There is an imposing gate at the outer courtyard of this Imambara. The doors of this gate, which are made of stone and good-quality mortar, are the main entrance. The finishing of the doors is so sophisticated that they can be mistaken for marble stone. Adjacent to the gate

on both the sides are apartments meant for poor refugees who seek shelter there during natural calamities (This planning is noticeable in the Imambaras of Asif-ud-daula and Amjad Ali Shah also). The walls of these apartments constitutes the boundary of the Imambara.

"The floor inside the Roza is of black and white square-shaped marble slabs arranged in the manner of a chess board. The inside walls and area is resplendent with fine inlay work with gold-plated frames holding inscriptions. The entire circumference of the dome is decorated like a huge crown of pure silver plated with gold polish.

"The whole building is artfully decorated with glass-work and mirrors, with hundred-candled chandeliers and coloured goblets hanging from the roof. Likewise, the walls, too, are decorated with fixtures of chandeliers and other wall-decorating items. In the centre of the Imambara, there was a crystal-glass Tazia which was ordered to be made in England. This Tazia is studded with gold embroidery work, and stands encircled with wax candle-stands that are illuminated. On the right-hand side is a huge stone-lion, and on the left can be seen the Machli Tazia in the same colour shade as the lion, which is the Royal insignia. Alums and costly brocades are also fixed there. Recessed niches and overhead ventilators, are indispensable in architectural art in Asia, and Imambaras are no exception to this

trait. Decorative antiques occupy these recesses in the walls of Imambaras. Like the miniature replica of the Ka'aba in Mecca and the Holy Prophet's shrine, the miniature of Imam Husain's shrine, too, is of pure silver. All these three items are to be found in this Imambara, placed on separate tables carved out of silver.

"These antiquities are no more there today ; but since this Mourning Centre functions under Auqaf arrangements endowed by the Nawabs and their Begums, all deliberations are carried out in accordance with Royal traditions. A few of the antiquities mentioned above are, however, left and are preserved to this day.

"Constructions of Mourning Centres, Majlis-es and Mourning processions were evident on a large scale during the time of Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haider. Some persons initiated the practice of making miniature replicas of Jannat-ul-Baqi, Karbala-e-Mo'alla and Najaf-e-Ashraf and adopting their designs in the construction of buildings. Among such structures is the Rauza built by Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haider, which has been discussed above. Among other such monuments is another important one, known as "Karbala".

"KARBALA"—OR SHABEEH-E-RAUZ-E-KAZMEIN

The sacred tombs of Imam Musa-e-Kazim and Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.) are situated in

Baghdad. These two shrines are known as "Kazmein". Nawab Mo'atamad-ud-daula, the Chief Minister of Nawab Ghazi-ud-din, popularly known by the name of Agha Mir, built a full sized replica of these shrines at Mohalla Narhai in 1815. This monument, as it stands today, has four flower-vases, one in each of its four corners. The upper portion has three circular cupolas, two in the front and one Centrally behind the two. The Rauza was a single-storeyone, and stands to this day in its original form. The boundary wall and the main entrance of this "Karbala" are now in ruins. There was once a small mosque in the centre, which stands today in a dilapidated condition. There was a piece of land, measuring 1446 sq. feet, attached to this "Karbala", where Tazias used to be buried. The Britishers replaced this "Karbala" with the Scottish Mason Lodge, which people refer to as Jadoo Ghar (Magic House). This place is now possession of the present Indian Government.

KARBALA MIR KHUDABAKHSH

This Centre is located at Garhi Kanora in the extreme South of Lucknow, with what once a garden but now a graveyard. In the middle of this area there are three buildings with a main entrance at the side of the road passing by. Entering through this gate one can notice a roofless mosque adjacent to a Baradari on the right hand side. This Baradari is perhaps the "Karbala" of Haji Masita which was built during the time of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan. Ahead, towards the end of the compound, is the replica of Karbala-e-Mo'alla. Nearby is the grave of my father, Maulana Syed Qasim Agha Saheb.

Facing the "Karbala" is a compound. The entrance to the "Karbala" is through three high doors of Tripolitanian design. On a raised plinth in the centre is the Shabeeh of the tomb of Imam Husain (A.S.) and an inner hall. In the middle of the hall is a Zarih, the entire frame of which is covered with silverfoil. The dome of this Zarih is studded inside with artistic inscriptions and multi-coloured engravings of floral designs. Facing the hall are two Iraqi type of minarets with a golden dome. A little distance away, towards the south of the Rauza, stands another minaret of the same kind in place of Minara Marjan. The persian couplet inscribed on the western entrance-door gives the year as 1232 A. H.

It so happened once that Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haider ordered his Chief Minister, Agha Mir Mo'atamad-ud-daula to remain confined to his house, and appointed Nawab Qamaruddin Khan and Afreen Ali Khan in his place. Mir Khuda Bakhsh was a disciple and assistant of Afreen Ali Khan. After a year or so, there came about a reconciliation between the Nawab and Mo'atamad-ud-daula, and consequently Qamaruddin Khan and Afreen Ali Khan were charge-sheeted. Thus, Mir Khuda Bakhsh was also adversely affected. However, matters were straightened up as a result of the intervention British Resident.

Mir Khuda Bakhsh eventually died in 1243 A.H., and was buried in the eastern wing of the "Karbala" he himself had built.

During the period of the Nawabs in Lucknow, people had the choice of taking their Tazias to any

of the numerous Mourning Centres they liked. There were no restrictions in this respect. But when the first Moharrum following the Indian Mutiny of 1857 approached, the British Government ordered that all **Tazias** should be taken to the "Karbala" of Mir Khuda Bakhsh, as it was not possible to make necessary arrangements at all the Centres. This action of the British Government proved to be the cause of the popularity of Karbala Mir Khuda Bakhsh at the cost of rendering the other Mourning Centres desolate.

SHABEEH-E-KARBALA E-MO'ALLA

Nawab Naseeruddin Haider became the ruler of Oudh in 1827. He had a rough time with a restrictions imposed by the East India Company, internal dissensions and family feuds. However, despite this, the institution of Azadari suffered no set-back. Majlises continued to be held, and constructions of Mourning Centres went on increasing in numbers.

As soon as the Moharrum moon was sighted, the entire dominion of the Nawab would go into mourning. Black alums (flags) would spring up on house-tops and other buildings. The Imambaras would start bustling with lamentations and the holdings of Royal Darbar would remain suspended during the mourning period. The Royal Palace and its attached apartments would echo with cries of lamentations, accompanied by breast-beatings. There used to be a procession of fifty to hundred **Tazias** on the first day of Moharrum, which the Nawab himself accompanied bare-footed, saying, "Imam Zainul Abideen had walked on thorns, and I am

after all a humble devotee of his". The Nawab would observe mourning in the same manner as that of the rest of the mourners.

For example, he would give up all comforts. He would sleep on the floor, wear coarse clothes, and don the attires of a beggar and a prisoner on specific days. Chains made of gold and silver, and mourning items like alums of solid silver, turbans made of gold-brocade and Satin etc. used to be distributed freely to the those participating in the mournings.

It is believed that the practice of mourning for 40 days, instead of the usual 10, was introduced by Nawab Naseeruddin Haider, as also celebrating and mourning birth and death anniversaries of the Masoomen by holding Majlises and organizing mourning processions on those dates. For this purpose, the Dargah Dwazda Imam (Dargah of the Twelve Imams) was built. This Dargah had 12 separate apartments, all with copper and of brass pillars topped by gold-embroidered and satin shamianas, from which chains of pearls and other precious stones hung besides costly chandeliers and mirrors imported from England. And such a great quantity of fruits used to be bought for distribution at the Mourning Centres that it was difficult to find fruits in the city markets.

The novel trend that came in vogue during this period was that the main Mourning Centres began built on the patterns of the sacred shrine in Iraq, and were also named similarly. Nawab Agha Mir and Mir Khuda Baksh are probably the pioneers of this novel trend.

The Nawab built the Rauza-e-Imam Husain (A.S.), which is situated at Mohalla Iradatnagar on the other bank of the River Gomti. This monument stands gracefully to this day. On the top of this building there are two big round-headed domes and two unfinished minarets. The walls are of red bricks plastered beautifully. This whole building which had not been plastered completely was named as **Shabeeh-e-Karbala**. There were two separate enclosures in the centre of this Roza, one containing **Tazias** made of wood, and the other the tomb of the Nawab. On the left-hand side of the main entrance of the **Rauza** is a replica of the low-levelled ground-spot where Shahr had severed the sacred head of Imam Husain (A.S.) from his body.

This Mourning Centre was still under construction when Nawab Naseeruddin Haider died on the 20th of October 1837 as a result of having been poisoned by his enemies. He was buried on the very next day in the "Karbala" which he himself had started to build. Poet Suroor's Persian couplet at his tomb gives the eventful year as 1253 A.H.

Nawab Naseeruddin Haider, the Ruler of Oudh, had loaned out several lakhs of rupees to the East India Company, the annual interest alone on which amounted to Rs. 5,000/- per annum. The Nawab had allocated Rs. 3,000/- for the students of Madrasa Lucknow, Rs. 1,000/- to the helpless and disabled persons, and Rs. 1,000/- to cover the monthly expenses of free dispensing of medicines at the hospital, all these three institutions are functioning today since over 150 years. Besides these benevolent acts, the

Nawab had also contributed greatly towards welfare and the cause of education in his State. It was unfortunate that the construction of the "Karbala" and the matter of **Waqf** relating to it could not be finalized while he lived, but his noble intentions have earned their fruits in the form of a Degree College in his State which looks after the maintenance and upkeep of his "Karbala".

LAL DARGAH

Besides the "Karbala", there is also another Mourning Centre known as Lal Dargha in Mohalla Haiderabad near the Lucknow University Campus, which was built by this pious Nawab, dedicating it to the sacred memory of Hazrat Qasim Ibne Imam Hasan (A.S.) Elaborate Majlises used to be held here.

A PANORAMIC VIEW OF MOURNING DURING NAWAB NASEERUDDIN'S REIGN

One of the tourists during the period under discussion published a book entitled "Life of an Eastern King", the Urdu translation of which is entitled as "Shabab-e-Lucknow". I am quoting an eye-witness account of Moharrum observances from this book, for it gives a vivid picture of Azadari and its modes relating to our recent past in the context of mourning traditions and concepts as they prevailed in Oudh of that time:

"...With the onset of the month of Moharrum, the majority of the Muslim population of Lucknow seem so grief-stricken that they appear

to have been deprived of all the niceties and comforts of life. The streets and lanes bear a desolate look. Everyone becomes an emblem of sorrow even within the confines of his home. On the 2nd of Moharrum, people start appearing on streets, dressed in black mourning attires, accompanying Tazia processions which appear all over the city, with swelling crowds joining them as the processions move ahead.

"Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haider's Tazia a master piece of cut-work in green crystal-glass polished in gold, was made to order and obtained from England. The gold-embroidery decorations shine with such brilliance in the illuminated Imambaras that the eyes can hardly stand the dazzling glare. The entire premises of mourning centres become heavens of dazzling light reflected from the art-work of gold, silver, brocade and satin decorations on the walls. Nights seem to have been transformed into day-light. Yet, from all these decoration, and long-bearded men with highcapped turbans, the awe and silence of their monuments, the element of grief is clearly evident. To quote Sir Hasan Ali, the whole atmosphere of Oudh brought before my eyes a vision of medical halls which conjure up in one's mind while reading the fables of Arabian Nights.

A WEEP AT MAJLISES

"Majlises are held in two sessions, morning and evening, the evening one being the most crowded session. The Nawab, attired in black mourning robes and wearing a crown of pea-cock

feathers, sits facing the waqia-khwan (the speaker at the Majlis). Men, with grief-stricken faces and eyes downcast in reverence, enter into the hall in twos, and seat themselves behind the Nawab. The silence and awe-inspiring atmosphere of radiance from the candle-lighted chandeliers presents an impressive sight to the onlooker.....And then, the resonant voice of the speaker pierces the pin-drop silence with the commencement of his sermon, to which the audience listens in rapt attention amidst the reflected light from the illuminated alums and other decorations which give an impression of a raging fire in the hall. Hearing the narrations of the events of the Tragedy of Karbala, the audience burst out weeping with emotional outburst. Then, in the intensity of their feelings, they start beating their breasts, first, slowly, and then the beatings grow into self-abandoned wildness, making the hall echo with the sounds of vigorous breast-beatings. This outlet of emotion lasts for about ten minutes, after which there is a short break when the audience help themselves to cold drinks (sherbat). The Nawab and the Royal family members then smoke their hookkas (hubble bubble).

"After this short break, the sermon is resumed; and once again, breast-beatings commence afresh, followed by another interval. At the end of the sermon, epic-diums are recited, after which the whole congregation stands up and reads out Salaam.

"The Nawab himself, too, dedicated as he was to Moharrum sanctity, would continue mourning till the Ashura Day (10th of Moharrum) and then again till the fortieth day (chehlum) of Imam Husain's martyrdom. He would abstain from all gaieties, including wine and woman, State lunches and dinners and other pleasure pursuits, of which he was normally very fond...

MOURNINGS BY LADIES

"The Begums of the Royal household had their own Imambaras within the precincts of the Royal Palace, and ladies used to congregate here for Azadari.....The Shias do not merely believe in conducting or attending Majlises alone, but actually practice what Azadari really stands for. They curb their desires, brave the agonies of pain and hardships, sleep on matless cost, eat ordinary food; and likewise, the women, too, cast off their jewelleries from their bodies, discard make-up and self adornment, and abstain from other womanly occupations during the period of mournings...

THE ZULJINAH AND ALUM-E-ABBAS PROCESSIONS

"Headed by the Royal procession, all the alum processions from all over the city of Lucknow, on the 5th of Moharrum, concentrate and deposit their alums at Dargah Hazrat Abbas, which stands imposingly about five miles away from the Royal Palace. Men of all social categories proceed to this Dargah with their alums

made according to their individual means. The alum from the Royal Imambara is carried in a procession led by six elephants clothed and ornamented in embroidered fabrics, carrying gold and silver canopied howdahs (litters) on their backs. Some of these elephants had silver and gold chains hanging round their necks! On each elephant, rode a few men carrying the jewel-studded alum over them. Behind this group, went a police guard; and behind them marched a man, carrying a bamboo-spear, from the upper end of which hang two swords from an inverted bow. Next comes the Nawab surrounded by the members of the Royal household and ulemas close to him. Behind this group walks a well-built horse (Dul-Dul) of Arabian breed with a jewelled saddle-seat, covered from its head to the back with a blood-red cloth embroidered with gold and silver threads matching impressively with the natural gold shine of the hide of the animal, the reins being of pure solid gold. The saddle-seat carried on it an Arabian type turban, a bow, and a quiver with arrows stuffed in it. Accompanying the horse were a band of attendants dressed in colourful uniforms, swaying their brooms made of pea-cock feathers in order to keep away flies. Behind them walked the Royal servants, followed by cavalrymen. Behind the cavalrymen came the footmen of the regiment, followed by a mammoth crowd of citizens in the rear.

"The depositions of alums would continue from morning till the evening. The number of alums deposited was 50,000.

THE MEHENDI (HENNA) PROCESSION

The Mehendi processions organized by the common class of people congregate at the Imambaras of the richer class on the 7th of Moharrum, while those of the Nawab and the Chief Minister go to the Royal Imambara. There is an extraordinary of illuminations at Imambaras on this night, when people of all sections, without any restrictions, can go and see the colourful play of refracted light from the huge candle-illuminated chandeliers numbering in thousands. I remember having once counted as many as one-hundred lotus-shaped candlestands hanging from one single chandelier. Some onlookers stand gazing in wonder at the beauty of the colourful arrangement of lotuses and drums of crystal glass, while others stood feasting their eyes with the gracefulness of decorated Zarihs, in front of which stands painting showing a huge lion with two fishes joint at their heads and bowing to one another at each side of the painting. On one side can be seen ornamented alums of gold and silver with jewelled Panjahas and Patkas (cloth pieces) fluttering at their ends. By the side of these alums, one can see the gold and silver miniature models of the Ka'ba, the camp—tent of Imam Husain (A.S.) with sacred dome, and the silver maps depicting the events of the Tragedy of Karbala on a silver

table, the sight of which excites the hearts to weeping.

"The sound of canon fires outside indicates that the procession carrying the Mehendi is about to arrive. The volunteers and Government officials, therefore, rush and make way, and the Imambara is cleared of the people...And Lo! The Mehendi procession was arrived. The elephants, camels and horses have been tethered outside at the gate of the Imambara. The sepoys and processionists come as far as the courtyard with their drums. So great is their number that there is hardly any place for one to put his feet down. This huge crowd then swerves to the right, making room for the other processionists. The first to arrive is the batch of men carrying the actual things connected with Mehendi (henna) ceremony, followed by employees in gay-coloured dresses, and others carrying various types of sweet dishes, dried fruits, garlands, wrist-bands of flowers, bed-steads with canopies and curtains and flower bouquets in silver trays. A grand display of fireworks takes place at this stage. After this, arrives a silver palanquin preceded by a torch-bearer dressed in a gaudy uniform, carrying a flaming torch. Then, following behind this flaming radiance, come the groups of drum-players who parade inside the Imambara with all items of the Mehendi ceremony. All the items are then deposited over the Tazia; and immediately after this, one batch of Azadars (mourners) step into the Imambara, wearing black mourning

attires and look. Then comes Hazrat Qasim's taboot, followed behind by a crowd of mourners, behind whom walks a horse carrying on its back a gold-embroidered turban, a bow, a dagger, and a quiverful of arrows. The quiver is marked with the insignia of the Royal family (a parasol and ewer). The horse moves so gracefully around the Imambara that an onlooker does not feel like taking his eyes off the animal... Finally, the Majlis commences then.

THE SCENE AFTER THE PROCESSION

"It now give a description of the scene outside the hall. There a mammoth crowd waiting outside for grabbing the shower of money-coins; and in due course, rupee-coins and small silver coins start being strewn on such a generous scale that makes the European onlookers stand aghast in sheer surprise. Lakhs of rupees are spent annually on these ceremonies and arrangements. If this lavish amount be saved and be utilized for other State purposes, the overall annual expenditure could well be reduced; but no one cares to think in these terms. At the end of the mournings, all items are distributed free among the poor.

TAZIA BURIALS

"Several places, called "Karbalas", have been constructed for the purpose of burying Tazias. Innumerable crowds reach these place in the early hours of the dawn. The Tazia processions advance towards these "Karbalas"

with men dressed as sepoy, firing gun and pistol shots, carrying shields and waving swords, waving buntings and flags in the air, and playing martial tunes on their musical instruments. Tazias of the richer class of people take the lead, followed behind by those of the common class of people. At the rear walks a row of elephants, from above the backs of whom trusted employees distribute money-coins and bread to the poor. As Tazias are brought out from almost all the streets and by-lanes, the entire area of the city resounds with echo of gun and pistol shots and cries of "Hasan-Husain". On reaching the "Karbala", the Tazias are buried there.

"We never got any chance of meeting the Nawab personally during Moharrum. All State and business transactions used to remain suspended during the mourning period.

"According to Najmul Ghani Rampuri in his Tareekh-e-Oudh, His Majesty, i.e. the Nawab of Oudh had built a palatial building near the ladies section on the premises of "Farah Bakhsh"—the private residence of Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haider. This building had twelve doors named as "Dargah Dwazdah Imam". Hanging from the ceiling supported on gold-engraved pilars was a chandelier with 40 lotus-shaped candlestands, wherein candles used to be lighted. The building had a nicely laid floor, with man-sized mirrors studded in the walls. Zarihs of gold and silver were kept here; and on the occasion of birth anniversaries of each of the Twelve Imams, gay functions

used to be held there. Likewise, Majlises also were conducted there on the anniversaries of their martyrdoms.

"One whole Baradari (a summer house with twelve doors) used to be made entirely of flowers collected from all the Royal gardens, in addition to Rs. 5,0000/- worth of flowers bought daily from the market. The Baradari of flowers measured 100 feet in length by 20 feet in breadth. In the centre, gold, silver and brocade lacings used to be hung instead of flowers. This entire rectangular piece of floral fantasy was scented with various quality scents. Till Chehlum (40th day), the Royal members attended to all managerial and other duties themselves, no outsider being allowed inside. About 5 lakhs of rupees used to be spent over sweets and dry fruits alone. The Royal members used to carry tazias personally on their heads, numbering between 50 to hundred, covering a total distance of several miles in the process, during which time their feet would develop sores as a result of walking bare-foot on the pebbly ground. Badshah Begum and Malka Zamani The Begum and consorts of the ruling Nawab) and other ladies of the Royal household would put silver chains round the necks and waists of the male members, the total weight of which would be several pounds. All these items would be distributed to the poor later after the Chehlum was over. The Royal members would pass the nights during this period without going to sleep, personally reciting epicediums from evening till the next morning at every session.

"Thus did these persons occupy themselves for six months in a year, attending to nothing else in the world during this period".

THE CHHOTA IMAMBARA OF HUSSAINABAD

Another famous and worth seeing mourning centre is the Chhota Imambara of Hussainabad in Oudh. The Founder of this Imambara was Abul Fatah Mohamad Ali Shah Bahadur, son of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan. He became the Ruler of Oudh in 1837, and was an extraordinarily religious person, and himself a well versed scholar in religious science. He appointed Syed Mohammad Sahab, son of Maulana Syed Dildar Ali Sahab, as the Chief Minister of the State, and also gave him the title of Sultan-ul-ulema. He promoted and improved the running of Unani and allopathic hospitals in the State, which were established by Nawab Naseeruddin Haidar. He built residential quarters for the poor sections of the population. Hundreds of destitute families still dwell in a big and spacious compound called Sharif Manzil, and they even get a subsistence allowance for their basic necessities of life. He also built a big and imposing Imambara, called Imambara Husain, at a cost of Rs. 20 lakhs.

The precincts of this Imambara commence about two furlongs away with an impressive main entrance facing the Rumi Darwaza built earlier by Nawab Asif-ud-daula. The entrance door of this Imambaras is somewhat similar to the Roman design and pattern of Rumi Darwaza. As soon as one enters through

the gate, one can see the doors of the Imambara on the eastern side, facing a Drum House squarely on the west, from where drums are sounded five times a day as a salutation to Imam Husain (A.S.). Everyone who hears these drummings, invariably mutters: "Lord, The Royal threshold lies buried beneath the dust today, but salutations to Husain (A.S.) still continue regally. His kingship continues gloriously even today".

Green meadows meet the eye as one enters the main gate. Amidst the greenery is the Royal Imambara with a mosque to the right. Facing it are sitting rooms. A little ahead, one can see two graves of marble stone adjacent to each other. From an architectural point of view, these tombs are indeed a rare specimen of art of the times. It is a matter of misfortune that these wonderful specimens of architectural art happen to be at an Imambara in Lucknow. Had they been located elsewhere, connoisseurs of art and antiquities all over the world would have treasured them as classic examples of Oriental arts. Such is the regal splendour of art in marble.

There is rivulet streaming through in the centre with a small bridge spanning it. This adds further grace to the scenic beauty of the place. Facing the main gate is the building of the Imambara, constructed over a well laid plinth on a raised level. A big shamiana hangs over the high and thick pillars of silver. The first hall is decorated with gold-work. The roofs are adorned with numerous crystal glass chandeliers and goblets, and the wall with fine engraved inscriptions and gilded mirrors. There is a small gallery

running along each of the two sides of the hall. In the gallery on the left hand is placed a Tazia—regarded as the best in the world. This Tazia, which is made of solidified wax and takes one year to complete comes in a Royal procession from the Imambara of Nawab Asif-ud-dala, where it is prepared. A pulpit of silver is also placed in this gallery, from whence sermons are delivered. When a shamiana decorated with embroideries of brocades and satin fixed with wooden staffs covered with brocades wrappings is laid over the pulpit, the beauty and grace of the hall is enhanced all the more bringing back to one's mind the memories of bygone Royal splendour.

The second hall, which is profusely decorated with crystal glass work has adequate provision for seating. In the Centre are the tombs of the Nawab and his Begum with a shamiana over head. On the mantelpiece in the third hall, items used in mourning have been kept for display. The whole place is a fine specimen of majestic pomp and grandeur. It appears as if a piece of Paradise has descended upon the earth. Attendants dressed in golden turbans and costly belts of brocade, and carrying gilded staffs, stand guard at the doors as sentinels over the gold and silver alums, along with sepoys in black uniforms. The decorations here cost thousands of rupees. On the nights of the 7th, 8th and 9th Moharrum, countless people come here to watch the colourful display of illumination. These illuminations remind one of the time when there was none to light even a candle at the graves of the Martyrs of Karbala, whereas today millions of lights burn in the sacred memory of these Martyrs.

Even today people in Hussainabad get a free distribution of Pulao (Rice dish), sweet rice, bread, curry and sweets during the first ten days of Moharrum at Royal mourning centres like Imambara Asifi and Shah Najaf; and people flock to the houses of the rich class. Till about fifty years back, the standard of dishes served at these places was very high; but practically everyone today complains that half of the money allocated for this purpose is embezzled by the employees and the other half they utilize during Moharrum. This shows how generous the Royal allocations were. From the waqf at Hussainabad generous amounts of money go out to the shrines at Karbala and Najaf, where this money is paid out to the deserving devotees of Imam Hussain and Moula Ali (A.S.) and also distributed in the form of scholarships for students of Islamic studies. The remittances of this money being considerably substantial, they are also utilized in meeting the expenditures incurred in the maintenance of Imambaras, their attached buildings, employees serving there the reciters of Quran, mourning processions, Majlises, food distribution, illuminations and monetary relief to the poor and the indigent class of people at Karbala and Najaf. It is on record that the Chief Mutawalli (keeper) of Imambara, Rafique-ud-daula, deposited promissory notes amounting to Rs. 1,08,000/- out of the savings of Hussainabad Waqf. Thus, the Hussainabad Waqf, including those of Imambara Shah Najaf and other related institutions, is no less than a vast self-sufficient Estate. The history of the regal and stupendous manner in which Azadari is observed in Lucknow dates back to the time of the establishment of the

said Trust during the times of the Nawabs of Oudh. One can notice even in the present neglected state of these institutions a glimpse of the past glory. Though not much cared for, these places are reminiscent of the glorious phase of Azadari that the Nawabs of Oudh brought about.

According to available records, the construction work of Chhota Imambara commenced in 1253 A.H. After its completion and decoration, which took some time, Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah established a waqf of about Rs. 70,000/- per annum, which used to be paid out from the State Treasury as long as he lived. After his death on Saturday, the 16th May, 1842, expenditure ranging between Rs. 1 to 2 lakhs per annum is being met out of the reserves of the Trust presently.

KARBALA MALKA-E-AFAQ

This famous "Karbala", or mourning centre, is situated at a little distance south of Karbala Shah Naseeruddin in Mohalla Makkagunj. The gold pinnacles at the top of domes and minars of this mourning centre can be seen shining from distance. Another name for this mourning centre is "Asker-e-Mobeen".

The precincts of this "Karbala" house an Imambara also, which has two large domes over it. The most remarkable feature of this Imambara is its floor designed like a chess-board of square shaped tiles of green and red colours made locally, but as good as the glazed tiles from Japan. On the left-hand side of the

Imambara, in a separate compound, is another building which houses the replica models of the sacred tombs of Imam Hasan Askari and Imam Ali Naqi (A.S.). The art work and colourful designs on these models are worth seeing. The top part of the structure has a cupola with vases, the golden pinnacles of which are extremely beautiful.

Malka-e-Afaq was the daughter of Nawab Imam-uddin Khan, who was the grandson of Qamaruddin Khan—the Prime Minister of Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah. She was married to Mohammad Ali Shah when the latter was still a Prince-heir. Her real name was Khaitu Begum. On the coronation ceremony of her husband, Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah, on 8th July, 1838, Khaitu Begum was given the title of Malka-e-Afaq Mokhaddar-e-Azmi Mumtaz-uz-Zamani Nawab Jahanara Begum. Thus, this "Karbala" was built during the rule of Mohammad Ali Shah as the Nawab of Oudh.

Malka-e-Afaq died on 20th October, 1850, at her residence in Hasanbagh, and was laid to eternal rest at the Imambara which she had herself built.

Amjad Ali Shah ascended the throne on the morning of the 5th of Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1258 A.H. as the Nawab of Oudh. He was a deeply religious man and promoted religious institutions and traditions in the State. He maintained and promoted the upkeep of Imambaras built by his predecessors and those of the Begums, Princes and princesses as well; and the expenses of the Majlises and mourning processions organized by the rich as well as the commoners, too, were subsidized

substantially by his personal contributions and awards. He did away with several unwanted and meaningless practices that prevailed then in respect of Azadari; but yet Tazias and Zarihs continued being taken out officially in processions with Royal pomp and military honours. It had hitherto become a normal practice for every ruler of Oudh to build an Imambara in his own time, and Nawab Amjad Ali Shah was no exception to these noble traditions. He, too, started planning for one, but this death on Saturday the 13th February, 1847, cut short his ambitions.

He was buried in the graveyard in the cantonment area of Risaladar Mendu Khan in Hazratgunj.

His son and successor, Wajid Ali Shah, duly respecting the wishes of his late father, built an Imambara in Hazratgunj at a cost of Rs. 10 lakhs and called it "Sibtainabad". The Imambara as it stands today is on the same pattern as the one at Hussainabad, though not as big. It must have been a glorious piece of architecture before the devastation that took place during the Indian Mutiny of 1857, but what remains of it today is nothing but ruins. The surrounding buildings, servant quarters and Drum House have all been sold out, and several persons have occupied the area, unauthorized. The expenses of the maintenance of the actual building, its illuminations, recitals of Quran and Majlises are met out of the Waqf at Hussainabad.

The period of Nawab Amjad Ali Shah's rule produced many great Zakirs (orators at Majlises) and eminent elegist poets, most notable among them being

Dabir. Who was the most outstanding of all in this sphere of Urdu poetry. The first epicidium of his "Dafter-e-Matam", volume I, and eleven sets of verses are dedicated to the eulogy of Nawab Amjad Ali Shah. The devoted mourners of Imam Husain (A.S) had a deep regard for this Nawab.

THE LAST AZADAR RULER OF OUDH

Sultan Alam Wajid Ali Shah was the last of the line of Nawabs who ruled over Oudh almost as Emperors. He ascended the throne in 1847. Debarred from politics by the East India Company and led into occupying himself in luxuries and care-free pastimes by British intrigues in young age, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah lived a turbulent life. Thus frustrated, he developed an escapist attitude, believing that having a good time and travelling places was a solution to his problems. The East India Company had determined to do away with the Nawab-rule of Lucknow. Those were the days when even Emperors had no say in political matters. It had become a pleasant game for the British Company to deal with the administration of the country in any manner it pleased them. Though the country had an Emperor at this time, the real masters were the East India Company of Great Britain. No wonder then that Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar had taken to asceticism and termed the erstwhile Capital of his ancestors, Akbar and Shahjahan, as "monastries". He was an old man, and was just counting his days.

Wajid Ali Shah however, was a man in the prime of his youth. His income, too, was more than

substantial. The scope of his activities and occupations was, therefore, wider; though it must be said that the element of religion prevailed over his other indulgences. In fact, he participated in recitals of Quran and Traditions, Majlises and mournings and observed prayers and fastings more enthusiastically than his predecessors.

It was Wajid Ali Shah who had built the "Imambara Sibtainabad" in Hazratgunj. He served the cause of the other Imambara built earlier by his ancestors. He built a mosque and Azakhana also, along with Qaiser Bagh which he constructed at a cost of rupees one and half crores. When it was time for prayers, he would suspend his other activities and offer his prayers. In Moharrums, he would remain attached to Majlises and mournings for full two months.

At last, nine years after his ascension, the British strategy succeeded, and Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was dethroned as the ruler of Oudh, and escorted over to Calcutta in February 1856. He had no funds or income in Calcutta. Azadari, too, was conspicuous by its absence there; but despite this, he kept up his traditional attachment to Azadari in Moharrums in Calcutta so devotedly that "Matya of Burji" came to be regarded as another 'Lucknow' while his own Imambara Sibtainabad functioned in his homeland, Lucknow, along with the Imambaras of the Begums, Princes and the rich class. The exiled Nawab continued organizing Majlises himself in Calcutta, and would also attend the Majlises organized by others with equal enthusiasm. Wajid Ali Shah

was himself a good elegist poet, and recited his own compositions. He continued taking active part in recitals of epicediums, breast-beatings and mourning processions.

Wajid Ali Shah held elegist poets in high esteem. It was this literary regard and appreciation for elegiac poetry that made him summon Mirza Salamat Ali Dabir to Calcutta from Lucknow for treatment of the poet's eye-ailment. It was probably at one of the Majlises in the Moharrum of 1292 A.H. that he recited an epicedium composed by himself, dedicating about 25 verses in praise of Dabir, one of which says:

"His (i.e. Dabir's) mastery of style has enticed me into adoring his poetry since I was a kid: and I have been an adorer of Dabir's poetic genius since I was of minor age" (Ref. *Hayat-e-Dabir*, Vol. 1, p. 99).

This show of respect for Dabir is nothing compared to an incident that occurred in Lucknow once. The occasion was a Majlis organized by the Nawab. Dabir was reciting his *Mersia* (epicedium) from the pulpit. It so happened that the shamiana suddenly collapsed, and the poet was left exposed to the scorching heat of the sun. Noticing this, the Nawab rushed over to the pulpit with an umbrella in his hand held it protectively over the head of Dabir. The Government officials, and poet Dabir himself, too, protested against this Royal Condescension, but the Nawab insisted on holding the umbrella over Dabir's head.

Apart from Dabir who was a legend in his own life-time, there was Mir Anees, whom the people were fond of his listening to. Accordingly, as desired by some persons, the Nawab organized a Majlis. Anees ascended the pulpit and read out his *Salaam* (Salutations to the Holy Prophet and his Ahle Bait). After that he read out his epicedium. Wajid Ali Shah highly appreciated each and every verse of the recital. After the Majlis was over, he turned to Fatah-ud-daula and said, "Well, Fatah-ud-daula, did I not tell you that Mir Anees is the only outstanding poet in Lucknow? Don't you see, it appears that the Urdu language seems to be the monopoly of Anees, the way he employs it".

Poet Sabeit has narrated another anecdote in *Hayat-e-Dabir*. He relates that Majlises used to be held at the Imambara of the Nawab. Once when Mir Saheb (Anees) had finished his sermon, some friends told the Nawab that Mir Saheb hesitated in addressing him as "*Khudavand*" (Lord). The Nawab ignored this appraisal. Next day, too, Mir Saheb came to recite at the Majlis. He ascended the pulpit. The Imambara was full to its capacity. The State officials and personal friends of Wajid Ali Shah were sitting in the corridor; and the Nawab himself sat listening behind a latticed screen as Anees started with a *Rubae* (a stanza of four verses), the substance of which was:

"Should I say that my heart is unaware? Or should I say that it is enlightened?"

"Or should I say that I am bound by certain norms of conduct?"

"For, one day I have to face the Lord. How then should I address a mortal as 'Lord'?"

"Hyder (Moula Ali) I call the needless, and the rest are the needy."

"Countless are his (Ali's) virtues; how far can I sing his praise?"

"By God, in the lion of God (Ali) are manifest Godly virtues,

"He (Ali) is the mortal, who I will say, is the Khudavand (Lord)".

The Nawab listened with rapt attention to the recital and greatly appreciated the poetic genius of Anees. These anecdotes prove that while Wajid Ali Shah had a devotional attachment for the institution of Azadari, he also had a great inclination and regard for literature and elegist poets also.

ROYAL AZADARI IN CALCUTTA

Newspaper **Oudh Akhbar**, dated 31st, January, 1888, contains a news item that Nawab Wajid Ali Shah got his epicedium read at a Moharrum Majlis through Gulshan-ud-daula. During the same time, Mir Anees also went to Oudh from Lucknow and delivered his sermon at the Royal Majlis, in appreciation of which the Nawab honoured him by awarding a beautifully embroidered woollen shawl. The same newspaper, dated 26th May, 1868, writing upon Moharrum observances in Calcutta, reports as under:

"At this exclusive Imambara of the ex-Nawab, Sultan-e-Alam Wajid Ali Shah, in Matya Burj, Taziadari on a grand scale took place,

attended personally by Huzoor-e-Alam Nawab Ali Naqi. Illuminated trees, chandeliers, wall tapestries and other numerous multi-coloured illuminations made the place serenity of moon-lit night. On one of the nights during the mourning period, the Nawab personally read out an elegant **Mersia** composed by himself, describing in poetic grace the tribulations braved out by Imam Husain (A.S.). As he recited his moving epicedium, he wept and caused others also to weep, thereby acting up the Tradition which says that 'by shedding tears, and making others, too, do the same, one can extinguish the fire of hell'.

This was followed by other elegist poets and **Rauzakhwans**, who also lamented as they spoke and made others too lament. All the ten days of Moharrum passed in this manner. On the Ashura Day (10th of Moharrum), **Zarihs** and **alums** were taken out in procession from the Imambara and proceeded to "Badami Kothi", accompanied by State officials who treaded along, lamenting and beating their breasts."

This great devotee, Sultan-e-Alam Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, of Imam Husain (A.S.) and the Martyrs of Karbala, died on 21st December, 1887, and was buried in the Imambara he himself had built! He was an active figure in the socio-cultural life of Calcutta in particular, and Bengal in general; and the moving spirit of Oudh. At both these places, the Nawabs of Oudh promoted the institution of Azadari at great personal sacrifices, thereby ushering in a new era of its development and progress in the Indian subcontinent.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XXXIX

AZADARI OF OUDH IN RETROSPECT

After the Indian Mutiny in 1857, there was a free movement of Zakirs, Mersiakhwans and Souzkhwans from Lucknow to other parts of undivided India, like Kashmir, Nepal, Hyderabad Deccan, Africa and Burma. The devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) in these places received them with open arms. The epeidiums and elegiac writings of great masters like Anees and Dabir had made mourning Majlises the nurseries of Urdu literature. The Khateebis (orators at mourning congregations) spoke with eloquence from the pulpits, covering subjects like Islamic Traditions, history, beliefs and the greatness of the Ahle Bait and the sacrifices they made in the cause of Islam and its glory. The Zakirs and orators of Oudh played a major role in preaching and propagating Islam. They made Majlises the cradles of learning. They pin-pointed the element of Divine sanctity in the institution of Azadari for Imam Husain (A.S.) and

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the Karbala Martyrs. I have heard it said that Maulvi Ali Sajjad, popularly known as Ali Mian, was the first to have introduced in Lucknow the practice of saying the Salaat [Salutations to Prophet Mohammad (A.S.) and his Ahle Bait] during the sermons at Majlises. Likewise, Maulvi Syed Ali Saheb a unique Maulvi of his time—was the first to have started the practice of removing his turban and baring the head while recounting the brutalities suffered by Imam Husain (A.S.) and the other martyrs of the Tragedy of Karbala. The art of delivering lengthy as well as short sermons in an effective and comprehensible manner, and the ability to grasp the spirit of things and the oratorial eloquence that developed as a result of analytic understanding—all these were developments that were unique in their character.

It was mainly due to these influences in Oudh that the practice of demonstrating love and respect for Imam Husain (A.S.) and Karbala Martyrs started in astounding manner without religious or nationalistic prejudices throughout the Indian subcontinent, commencing with Moharrum, and lasting till the 8th of Rabi-ul-Awwal. Before the Nawabs of Oudh, Azadari in Oudh used to last only for the first ten days of Moharrum. Mournings used to cease on the 12th Moharrum with a final observance again on the 20th. In Arabia and other non Arabian Muslim countries, the 20th of Safar was a special day of mourning. But during the time of the Nawabs, mourning centres in Oudh used to bustle with activities as early as the 28th or 29th of Zilhaj; and on the Ashura Day (10th of Moharrum), mournings and

lamentations accompanied by breast-beatings reached their climax. The mourners used to keep awake through the nights; and with the dawn of each morning without their breakfasts, they would proceed to "Karbala", bare-footed, bare-headed carrying Tazias and alums in groups, and walking mile after mile, lamenting and beating their breasts in a mild frenzy of agony. They would then offer prayers in the open fields and "Karbala", and perform other rituals of homage. Summer or winter made no difference; mournings and breast-beatings would continue unaffected by climatic conditions. The mourners would swallow a little barley-bread with a few morsels of cooked vegetable leaves, unsalted, in the evening. During the last days, the mourners would squat on the ground and contemplate mournfully in memory of the martyrs of Karbala.

SHAM-E-GHARIBAN

A full day's mourning and lamenting required that one should also not forget the time when the members of Imam Husain's household had to sit abandoned in their burnt out tents on the field of Karbala, with the dismembered bodies of the martyrs lying scattered all over the field in the darkness of the night. It was with the idea of synchronizing the commemoration of these tragic moments with the time of their actual occurrence that Janab Maulana Syed Kalb-e-Husain Saheb organized a Majlis at the Imambara of the late Nawab exactly after the sun-set. The mourners sat solemnly on the bare ground. The Maulana had arrived. No lamp of any kind burned at the

Majlis. It was dark. As soon as he occupied the pulpit and started his sermon, I noticed that the huge audience started weeping and lamenting; and by the time the Maulana finished his sermon, several persons had fainted off with grief.

After the sermon was over, some youngmen in black mourning dress, accompanied by young boys, came into the Majlis carrying burning candles in a tray. Behind them came a few more miniatures of the replicas of sacred shrines. The intensity of lamentation and breast-beatings at this juncture was simply worth seeing. It cannot be described in words. It appeared that the earth as well as the heavens were weeping aloud. This introduction of **Sham-e-Ghariban** became so popular in course of time that today it is observed in every home and in every city.

"SOYEM" AND "CHEHLUM"

It is customary among the class of Nobles to hold **Quran Khwani** (complete group-reading of Quran) and offer prayers as a mark of respect to the memory of their departed near and dear ones on the third, tenth, twentieth, thirtieth and fortieth day after their demise. The devoted mourners of Imam Husain (A.S.) also observe the sanctity of these days in respect of the martyrdom of the Imam.

THE 8TH OF RABI UL AWWAL

The traditional manner of Azadari suffered a set back during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Majlises could not be held on the usual scale. It was not possible to take out mourning processions. The Taziadars

could not take off their **Tazias** from the mourning centres. One of the families so affected was that of Nawab Aghan Saheb. The elders and ladies of this family had avowed to themselves that unless God responds to their prayers they would not remove their **Tazias** from their mourning centre. When, however, their prayers and wishes had been fulfilled, the **Chehlum** had already passed over. This situation made them think of a suitable day when their **Tazias** and **Zarihs** could be removed in a procession and disposed off. It then occurred to them that Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.) had been martyred on the 8th of Rabi-ul-Awwal. People therefore chose this day, and arrangements were accordingly made. It is said that right at the time the **Tazia** was being taken out, the team scheduled to play the Royal band failed to arrive. The Nawab never the less ordered that the procession be continued.

As the procession proceeded, the band players also arrived; but the Nawab stopped them from playing their music. Ever since that time, this **Tazia** procession is known as the "**Choop Tazia**" or the "**Silent Tazia Procession**". The period of **Azadari** ceases after this procession is over; and mourners return once again to participating in the normal routines of life, including gay festivalities as well.

DECORATIONS OF MOURNING CENTRES

Majlises and breast-beating mourning processions are a regular feature of Moharrums not only in Oudh but throughout the Indian subcontinent. Mournings are observed in a hall or a room, the walls of which

bear alums and **Patkas** with **Zarihs**, **Tazias** pulpits, copies of **Quran** and/or other sacred relics in between them. This hall or room or **Imambara** is thrown open before sunset. Camphor oil-lamps or any other means of lighting illuminates the **Imambara** and burning aloe-sticks scent the place with their fragrance. Mournings start after **Maghrib** or **Ishan** (Night) prayers; and after these are over, a screen is pulled over the place. Certain big buildings are built expressly for the purpose of **Majlises**, and no one is allowed to use it as a residence. Normally, a portion of residential homes also is reserved as a place for mourning.

SHAB BEDARI (WAKEFUL NIGHTS)

The main **Tazias** which are placed in a mourning centre on, or one or two days before, the 1st of Moharrum are taken out on or after the 10th. The night preceeding their removal is spent in holding **Majlis** sessions and lamenting with breast-beatings. This nocturnal mourning is known as "**Shab Bedari**", which in itself is one of the most important forms of mourning.

TEN DAY PERIOD MAJLISES

Besides **Tazias**, **Majlises** (mourning congregations) during the first ten days of Moharrum are extremely important features of **Azadari**. These **Majlises** commence from the 1st of Moharrum and continue daily till the 9th, and sometimes till the 10th of the month. Most often **Majlises** are not held on the 10th of Moharrum, this day being exclusively dedicated to lamentations and breast-beatings. The practice of

holding Majlises for another ten days after the 10th of Moharrum originated in Lucknow, and is a normal routine throughout the Indian subcontinent. The period of mourning lasting for ten days in a stretch, when different groups and Imambaras hold them, is called the **Ashra**.

MOURNING PROCESSIONS

Momi Zarih, i.e. a miniature model of Imam Husain's tomb made of solidified wax is taken out in procession from the Imambara of Nawab Asif-ud-daula at Lucknow. I give below a description of this procession as I witnessed it personally in Lucknow.

The procession is led by a tall and graceful looking elephant in the fore-front. The elephant carries a costly decorated bag and a man holding an alum on its broad back. Behind this leading elephant walks a row of other elephants, each carrying the Royal insignia and emblems of the State cavalry. Behind this row of elephants march the band players, followed by a row of camels and another group of band players. Next comes a group of men wearing Royal uniforms carrying spears and silvergilted flagstuffs wrapped around with gold embroidered cloth with a triangular piece of velvet as banners. Then comes a small regiment of cavalymen, followed again by a group of band players. There are seven such sets of groups as described. Behind these seven leading group-sets come the Guards dressed in Royal uniforms with their heads bowing down in a reverential gesture, cordoning the group of breast-beating

mourners reciting lamenting verses. After them comes the group of mace-bearers dressed in broad-cloth attires with distinguishing marks on their turbans, carrying silver staffs and marching with measured steps. In their midst walks the Royal **Mutawalli**, accompanied by the Princes of Oudh and other civil dignitaries, bare-headed and carrying a karchief, walking as it were in slow motion. Behind this group comes the sacred **Zarih**.

This procession in Lucknow used to herald the onset of the month of Maharrum. The manner in which this mourning procession is planned and executed resembles a Drive-in-State of a monarch or a Royal funeral. Just as it is current these days to take out funeral processions with full military honours, so also it was usual in the days gone by to carry the funerals of Emperors in a specific and traditional manner.

There also used to be some such **Tazias** another **shabechs** in processions which were led by a chain of camels with drums being played upon their backs. Whipping the camels, the processionists would recite '**Sawari**' (recitals from versified compositions written specifically for such processions) in a peculiar dialect. So deeply moving were these cantings that people used to reach a high emotional pitch on hearing them.

Till 1947, one could witness these processions of **Momi Zarih** and **Chhoti Rani Ka Tazia**; and as one watches the stately processions, a living image of the regal glory and grandeur of the bygone past comes in view before the eyes of the onlooker.

These Tazias used to be taken out from Imambaras for disposal at "Karbala" after the Shab Bedari session. Some Tazias were taken out on the 15th of Moharrum, some on the 20th, some still on the day of Chehlum; and finally there was the Choop Tazia or silent procession on the 28th of Safar, after which mass mourning ceased till the next Moharrum.

TABOOT

Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) is believed to have died on the 28th of Safar. A model of his sacred coffin is taken out on this day by various mourning organizations in the city, carrying the alum and reciting odes relevant to the occasion. These coffin processions used to be brought out to the "Karbala", "Dargahs" and Imambaras. Similarly, on the 21st of Ramzan, processions carrying the model of Hazrat Ali's coffin also used to be taken out in a simple manner. These Taboots, whether taken out to Majlis or paraded in the city, emphasize the element of sorrow and grief accompanied with lamentations.

Similar mourning processions in respect of Hazrat Fatematuz Zahra and also organized, but are confined within mourning centres or private houses where only ladies participate under strict purdah arrangements.

ALUM

In Lucknow, on every Thursday night, mourning groups carry the alum from their private residences or mosques and Imambaras in their localities, to

Dargah Hazrat Abbas (A.S.) or Agha Baquir's Imambara. Noahas or odes are a form of progressive verse-writing which are very popular these with Khateeb and Mersiakhwans.

The first Thursday falling in the months the first Thursday of any month is Nauchandy—Publisher's of Rajab and Zilhaj is known as Nauchandi. Mourning processions and Azadari are special features on these occasions.

TABARRUK

Before a sermon starts at a Majlis, the floor is daintily covered with a white cloth overlaid with carpets, and round pillows are set for resting the elbows. The audience occupies the hall, each person taking his position according to his individual social status. Betel leaves and hookkas are served out to them, and they are entertained with tea or cold drinks, depending upon whether it is summer or winter time. This can be done either before the commencement of the sermon or after it. In many places, printed invitation cards are sent out a week ahead to the elite of the town along with token quantities of Sheermal (bread), Barfi (sweet), dates and Kababs (roasted meat). The general class of audience gets bread, curry, pulao (rice dish), Zarda (sweetened rice) or some other such item, all of which is served out in generous quantities.

Besides alum, Tazia and Taboot processions, processions in commemoration of Imam Husain's historic journey to Karbala are also currently in vogue. Local traditions are blended with national

characteristics in these observances. For example,

there are Tazias made of solidified wax, gold, husk, barley stalks, wood, etc. Similarly, the modes of

mourning also vary. The Kashmiris, for instance,

have a peculiar mode of their own; the Pathans have

their own regional manner; people from the United

Provinces of India beat their breasts with one hand;

the Kashmiris for a circle while beating their breasts;

and people in the Punjab and N.W.F.P. use their both

hands in breast-beating. Then there is breast-beating

with iron chains and daggers, even. These modes

originated in cities and were adopted in the suburbs.

Lucknow in India, and Karachi in Pakistan, now

present all forms of mourning and Tazias and alums.

Numerous modes of lamentation are current in these

cities.

Besides alums, Tazias and Taboot processions in commemoration of Imam Husain's historic journey to Karbala are also current in Lucknow. Local traditions are blended with national

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CHAPTER XXXX

SOME TRADITIONS AND

MONUMENTS OF LUCKNOW

The colourful and vastly varied forms and centres of mourning in Lucknow were a product of adequate availability of funds from the rich class, coupled with religious freedom and depth of devotional attachment to Imam Husain (A.S.) on the part of the people there. Sermons, for instance, were not monotypical. Their styles of delivery and presentations were numerous. So were the recitals of epicdiums, odes and eulogies, which varied both in prose as well as in poetic forms.

Mourning centres, which formerly used to be planned on the lines of Royal palaces and residences, have adopted the models of the structures at the shrines of Imam Husain (A.S.) and Hazrat Abbas (A.S.) at Karbala, or of the Ameerul Momineen's at

Najaf, or of the Rauza-e-Kazmein in Baghdad, or of the Rauza-e-Askerain at Samarra, or of Jannatul Baqi on the exact lines of the shrines of Fatema, Zainab, Hazrat Hur and the children of Hazrat Muslim (A.S.) at Medina. Most of these model constructions were demolished or devastated during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. However, besides the Imambaras modelled on the pattern of Rauza-e-Jannatul Baqi at the porch of Agha Mir with a mosque on the lines of Masjid-e-Kufa in Mohalla Kazmein, there are some other important centres which have survived and still stand in Lucknow. These are described below.

KARBALA-E-AZIMULLAH KHAN

(Modelled on the pattern of Rauza-e-Imam Raza).

This Mourning Centre, adjacent to the Karbala-e-Mir Khuda Baksh Khan, was built by Azimullah Khan, popularly known as Azam-ud-daula, on the pattern of the shrine of Imam Raza (A.S.) during the time of Mohammad Ali Shah. The structural beauty, colour scheme and the chessboard-like square-tiled floor of this Imambara is remarkable. This Mourning Centre has two mosques, one inside and another outside. The latter is an exact copy of Masjid Gohar Shad of Meshhed in Iran. Azimullah Khan was the Keeper of Mohammad Ali Shah's Palace, which post he held for five years. Azam-ud-daula was his title.

It is a popular belief that Madaria Hookkah (a hubble-bubble) was the invention of Azimullah Khan. Before he devised it, the hookkah used to be a huge and heavy thing, too burdensome to be carried

about. Azimullah Khan re-modelled it in a portable and finely reduced size, both beautiful and handy.

Among the gardens and other buildings built by Azimullah Khan, there still stand the ruins of a structure known as chowlakhi. This is a grand two-storeyed structure within the precincts of the famous Qaiser-bagh in Lucknow. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah had purchased it for four lakh rupees. That is how it came to be known as Chowlakhi, meaning Rs. 4 Lakh building, instead of after the name of its original builder, which was Azimullah Khan.

Azimullah Khan died on 18th April, 1849, and was buried within the precincts of his own Imambara, Rauza-e-Imam Raza (A.S.), in Lucknow. He had paid a fixed and stipulated amount of money to the East India Company as pension-fund for his two wives. This pension continues to be paid even today to his rightful generations.

KARBALA NAWAB AMINUD DAULA

There are five Rauzas (Mourning Centres), of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.) in Lucknow :

- (i) Built by Mirza Faquir Baig at Rustamnagar during the time of Nawab Asif-ud-daula.
- (ii) Built by Ashiq Ali Khan at Aish Bagh during the time of Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah. This was later purchased by Nawab Begum Malka Jahan at an agreed amount.
- (iii) Built by Mir Imam Ali Rafique-ud-daula during the time of Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah at Abbas Bagh on the highway to Kakuri.

(iv) Built by Nawab Imdad Husain Khan Amin-ud-daula in Daryagunj.

(v) Built by Ghaseetay Khan Masahab-ud-daula during the time of Sheher Bari Jan-e-Alam Wajid Ali Shah at Misri Baghia.

Amin-ud-daula was the Chief Minister of Nawab Imdad Husain Khan Amjad Ali Shah. The Rauza built by Amin-ud-daula has Quranic verses beautifully inscribed with mortar in the apertures of the structures. These inscriptions were once very colourful. The floor has coloured squares, giving the effect of mosaic tiles. The Rauza is topped with two stone-domes and minars which have a striking resemblance to the original. It took about two years to build this Mourning Centre, and was completed in the third year after Wajid Ali Shah was installed as the Nawab, which is 1266 A.H., according to the verse inscribed at the "Karbala". The pillars and the outer verandah of this Mourning Centre are fine specimens of glass-work decorations.

Nawab Amin-ud-daula breathed his last in 1856 after an attack of paralysis, and was buried in the precincts of this same Mourning Centre which he had built. This Mourning Centre is looked after presently by the son of Nawab Mohammad Raza, alias Nanne Miyan Saheb, who is taking keen interest in its maintenance improvement.

KARBALA NAWAB RAFIQUE-UD-DAULA

Syed Imam Ali (Rafique-ud-daula) was an old and a devoted friend of Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah.

Following the installing of Mohammad Ali Shah as the Nawab, Syed Imam Ali was honoured with the title of 'Rafique-ud-daula' and was appointed as an officer on special duty with the Nawab. During the last days of the ruling Nawab, Rafique-ud-daula used to feed meals to him with his own hands and lull him to sleep by telling interesting tales at night. The Nawab had allotted some land near Thakurgunj to him and it was here that Rafique-ud-daula had built Abbas Bagh and the Mourning Centre (Rauza-e-Abbas). This structure was also famous for its beauty and graceful decorations with two splendid pillars of Iranian type, an attractive door, and a spacious hall. In the centre is a Zarih, all four sides of which are exquisitely inscribed with Quranic verses in various colours and geometric designs. This is topped by a spherical dome with a golden crest at its pinnacle.

Rafique-ud-daula died on the 11th of Rabi-us-Sani, 1678, and was buried in the precincts of this "Karbala".

KARBALA SAEED-UD-DAULA

This Mourning Centre is situated on the side of the road passing in front of the Royal Hospital built by Nawab Naseeruddin Haider in Mohalla Haiderganj. This Centre houses the Rauza of Imam Husain (A.S.), with a display of colourful designs and Quranic inscriptions. Ravages of time have dilapidated some portions of the enclosed verandah (Ref. Tasadduq Husain, Roshni, Lucknow).

There is Trust to look after the maintenance and upkeep of this Centre, which was founded by Nawab

Zaki Ali Khan, popularly known by the name of Saeed-ud-daula. Saeed-ud-daula was the son of Nawab Mumtaz-ud-daula and a grandson of Nawab Begum Malka Zamania. He was married to the daughter of Prince Mujtaba Ali Khan Mirza Khurram Bakht. Saeed-ud-daula died in 1878, and was buried at this Centre, which remained incompleated as a result of his death.

KARBALA MALKA JAHAN

This Centre was originally founded and built by Ashiq Ali Khan, the Keeper of Aiwan-e-Aam of Azimullah Khan in Aish Bagh during the time of Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah. Later, Nawab Begum Malka Jahan purchased this from him and added another Rauza—that of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.)—in it. This Rauza contains fine specimens of 3-versed inscriptions.

Malka Jahan was the wife of Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah. Her real name was Husaini Khanum. Following his installation as the Nawab of Oudh, Mohammad Ali Shah conferred the title of Nawab Malka Jahan of his wife, as was the case with Nawab Malka-e-Afaq before her. Malka Jahan was a talented lady and a good calligrapher of Arabic script. Her husband, the ruling Nawab, also conferred upon her the ownership of the entire confiscated property of Mo'atamad-ud-daula Agha Mir located in Daulatpura (adjacent to Lucknow City railway station), including the estate known as "Wazirabad" and Buland Bagh". Malka Jahan used to organize several Majlises with

efficiency and personal encouragements. Humayun Bakht Mirza Ahmed Ali Khan was the son of Nawab Mohammad Ali through this lady. Humayun Bakht was married to the daughter of Nawab Noor Baig Khan, a wealthy man of Madras. Upon her marriage, this wife of Humayun Bakht got the title of Khaqaan Bahu from her father-in-law. Her palatial residence known as "Khaqaan Manzil" exists today in Vazirganj. She died in the month of Shaban in 1880, and her body was sent over to Karbala, in Iraq, for burial.

The journey Malka Jahan undertook to Karbala during her life was a memorial event—one that remained a current topic with the people for well over fifty years. She spent lakhs of rupees over this trip: and thousands of persons in Iraq benefited from the benevolent generosity of this lady. She placed a Royal crown on the sacred tomb of Imam Husain (A.S.), and founded a Trust for a Musafirkhana (inn for pilgrims) in Karbala (see my travel-report entitled *Purani Manzil Nai Rahen*).

KARBALA DIYANAT-UD-DAULA

This Mourning Centre was built by the Chief of the Royal household staff, Mohammad Husain, popularly known as Diyanat-ud daula in the month of Moharrum in 1852 at Mansoornagar during the time of Wajid Ali Shah. This Centre houses the model of Imam Husain's tomb. The entire Rauza has a floor of fine quality of marble, and the walls are decorated in harmonious shades of colourful floral designs. Other portions of the model are also well decorated

with attractive display of colourful patterns. The Rauza is topped with a grand golden dome, behind which there is another dome of tiles. Both these domes are flanked by two tiled vases, the upper parts of which are golden in hue. The inscribed date of construction of this Mourning Centre is given as 1268.

This beautiful building has a Zarih inside it, with a wooden verandah outside the interior hall. The roof of this verandah is a fine specimen of craft-work in mirror pieces. There is a waiting-hall and a fine courtyard outside.

Diyanat-ud-daula was a Negro of the Gala tribe, and had joined the Royal Palace as the Chief of the household staff when Wajid Ali Shah was the heir apparent. He had won the heart of his Royal master with hard work and honest service. It was in recognition of this dedicated service that he received the title of 'Diyanat-ud-daula' from the Prince. Later, when Prince Wajid Ali Shah became the Nawab of Oudh, he confirmed upon Diyanat-ud-daula the fulfilled honour of being referred to as Diyanat-ud-daula Motadayyan-ul-Mulk Mohammad Mo'atamad Ali Khan Bahadur Amanat Jang. After the dethronement of Wajid Ali Shah, Diyanat-ud-daula accompanied the Nawab to Calcutta, from where he proceeded to holy places on pilgrimage. He returned again to Calcutta after his pilgrimages and rejoined his services with the dethroned Nawab. He died ultimately in 1869, and his body was despatched back to Lucknow, where he lies buried in western wing of his own "Karbala".

His successor was Main Darab, who was then serving the Begum of the ruling Nawab. This Mourning Centre was under his charge, and he regularly used to organize Majlises here on every fifth of the lunar month. Mir Khurshid Ali Nafees, the son of Mir Anees, used to deliver sermons at these Majlises.

The Board of Trustees who look after the upkeep of Darab's Imambara situated in Kutcha Ihata Faquir Mohammad Khan, also act as the Care-takers of Karbala Diyanat-ud-daula. The annual income of Rs. 1,400/- which comes from the locality of Mian Darab, is also allocated for the running expenditure of Diyanat-ud-daula's "Karbala" (Ref. Tasadduq Husain, Roshni, Lucknow).

KAZMEIN

This Mourning Centres is built on the models of the tombs of seventh Imam, Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) and the ninth Imam, Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.), i.e. the grandfather's and the grandson's. A new convert to Islam, Mohammad Raza Khan had built this Centre on the models of the sacred tombs of Baghdad in Mohalla Mansooragar. This is a very imposing building with two Shoulder-like round elevations, each mounted with a spherical cupola with buds. Both the elevations and the cupolas are gold-plated and dazzle blindingly in sunshine. The designs and colour scheme are also noteworthy.

Mohammad Raza Khan lived during the time of Nawab Amjad Ali Shah. He was also conferred with the title of 'Sharaf-ud-daula'. He was charged with

the administration of Huzoor Tehsil, besides being entrusted with other State duties. He built Rauza-e-Kazmein in 1269 A.H., and died on the 26th of Jamadi-ul-Awwal in 1278 (Ref. Advocate Tasadduq Husain's Article : Lucknow Ke Ma'asar-e-Mutabarikar Rauzay aur Karbalain, in "Roshni" Moharrum 1372 A.H. supplement, Lucknow).

KARBALA MASAHAB-UD-DAULA

This Mourning Centre is situated in Misri Baghia near Masahabganj. Masahab-ud-daula had constructed this Centre on the model of the tomb of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.). This building greatly resembles the famous Dargah Hazrat Abbas in Rustamnagar. There is a very ancient, but beautiful Zarih inside the model with a huge tiled dome on the top with a crest.

Chhotey Khan (Anees-ud-daula) and Ghaseetey Khan (Masahab-ud-daula) were two brothers in Delhi. They joined the services of Sultan-e-Alam during the time of Nawab Amjad Ali Shah, and soon distinguished themselves with their dedicated work. When Sultan-e-Alam became the Nawab, Ghaseetey Khan was conferred with the title of 'Masahab-ud-daula' and given the office of an Usher. When Sultan-e-Alam was dethroned and sacked over to Calcutta, Masahab-ud-daula also accompanied him there.

Consequent upon the death of Sultan-e-Alam in 1887, Masahab-ud-daula returned to Lucknow, where he lived in a luxurious manner and founded a colony which he named after himself as Masahabganj. He died approximately in 1892, and was buried in the piece of land facing the Mosque which was built by

him (Ref. Tasadduq Husain, Roshni Moharrum Supplement, Lucknow).

KARBALA NAWAB AZMAT-UD-DAULA

This "Karbala" is situated in Mahdiganj near Mansooragar. There is only one Imambara in this locality, with a spacious hall and an attached verandah with side entrances. There is a spacious courtyard in front of this Imambara where Tazias are buried. In the compound there is a mosque built by a certain lady named Khanum Saheba. The long-continuing Tazia of Bakhshu used to be buried here on the 21st of Safar, and that of Faquir on the 22nd of the same month.

Syed Mohammad Baquir Munsif-ud-daula had built this "Karbala" at the outbreak of war. He was the son of Maulvi Syed Dildar Ali Saheb Nasserabadi.

Later on, this Mourning Centre somehow came in the possession of Nawab Azmat-ud-daula. Azmat-ud-daula Syed Mohammad Raza Khan Intizam Jang was the son of Mo'ajiz-ud-daula Mirza Abul Qasim Khan, who was a General in the State army, and was married to Nawab Zohra Begum, the daughter of Shah Ghazi-ud-din. Azmat-ud-daula was also married to Sipar Ara Kubra Begum, the daughter of the last ruler of Oudh.

Following the suppression of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, when the Britishers once again gained an upper hand in the affairs of the subcontinent, Captain Carringe deprived Nawab Azmat-ud-daula of several

lakhs of rupees worth of costly possessions, so much so that the Nawab was left with only one Lungi (piece of cloth wrapped waist down). The enemy had not spared even clothes of daily wear. As a result, Nawab Azmat-ud-daula had to sell off his pure-bred horse for Rs. 1,000/- in order to buy clothes for himself. He lodged strong protests and complaints against this wanton plunder to the East India Company, but he gained nothing there from (Ref. Tasadduq Husain, Roshni, Lucknow).

SHABIH RAUZA-E-FATEMEEN

This sacred Rauza at Top Darwaza (common gate) was built by a wealthy lady named Jawahar Khanum, or only Jawahar, during the reign of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. Unfortunately, when she lost all her money, or had become a widow, she leased out this Mourning Centre along with its attached lands against a substantial amount as Earnest Money to Nawab Sultan, Begum, daughter of Nawab Mohammad Ali Shah, the ruler of Oudh. Later on, Sultan Begum transferred this property in the name of her son, Nawab Sadiq Ali Khan. Nawab Moazam-ud-daula Baquir Ali Khan Ibne Nawab Kamal-ud-din Haider Khan Ibne Nawab Shuja-ud-daula, the husband of Sultan Begum, added more land to it. After him, Nawab Sadiq Ali Khan built a strong and spacious room where Momineen used to be buried. He appointed Janab Hakeen Chhotey Sahab, known more popularly as Hakeen Lasura, as the keeper of this Rauza, which post he held till his death. There was an underground room on the left side of the Rauza, which served as a store for various things. Majlis

used to be held on every Thursday falling on the new-moon night. Outside the Rauza, adjacent to the main gate was a spacious hall wherein items connected with Sabeels (drinking water-stands) used to be stored. On the 7th of Mobarrum, Sherbet (sweet cold drink) used to be served out at the Sabeel. This building no longer exists today, but one can still see a few traces of it on the site (Ref. Tasadduq Husain, Roshni, Lucknow).

After the death of Nawab Sadiq Ali Khan, his three sons, Nawab Husain Ali Khan, Nawab Asghar Ali Khan and Nawab Zainul Abideen Khan looked after the maintenance and upkeep of this Rauza.

RAUZA HAZRAT ZAINAB (A.S.)

This mourning centre is situated in Mahdiganj. It has a wide compound with two entrances, one for ladies and other for gents. In the centre stands a simple but imposing building which has been modelled on the pattern of the original Rauza of Hazrat Zainab (A.S.). It has a big hall with another hall in it. The inner hall has the Royal enclosure with graded seating rows, each row having its own entrance and exit. Here, there is a Zarih with a black cloth covering it. This is dedicated to the sacred memory of Hazrat Zainab (A.S.). Behind the Zarih hangs a piece of cloth and a replica garment purporting to be belonging to Janab Fizzah. In the second enclosure stands the Zarih (model) of Janab Sakina's tomb and a replica of her garment. The building has a dome over it, which lends further grace to the entire surroundings.

Mir Madad Ali Saheb Aish, the maternal grandfather of the famous elegist poet, Janab Mo'addab of Lucknow, was the Attorney of Prince Sulaiman Qadir Bahadur. Noticing the absence of the models of the tombs of Syrian exiled dignitaries among those of the Iraqis and Iranis in Lucknow, Aish had the models of the former made, and assembled them in one place.

Rauza-e-Zainab was built in 1878 ; and Aish died in 1892, and was buried in the compound of this Rauza,

The mourning centre of Zainabia used to be the centre where everyone used to gather for mournings, but 10th of Safar and 6th of Jamadi-us-Sani used to be observed with extraordinary zeal on account of mournings for Janab Sakina and Hazrat Zainab (A.S.) respectively. On these days, only ladies used to congregate here.

KARBALA MUNSHI FAZAL HUSAIN KHAN

Fazal Husain Khan was a clerk in the office of Sultan-e-Alam Wajid Shah at Bakhshigiri. After the dissolution of the Government of Oudh, he became the Manager at Nawab Sir Mohsin-ud-daula's office ; and after 1857 he secured for himself a key post in the Husainabad Trust. He led an honest and honourable life. He lived on Victoria Street and died in 1891. Among the relic and monuments he left behind is the Rauza-e-Pisaran-e-Muslim or Karbala Munshi Fazal Husain Khan on the road leading to Talkatora near Haiderganj.

This building is said to be modelled on the lines of Rauza-e-Farzandan-e-Muslim in Karbala, Iraq, but

it resembles the pattern generally noticeable in Lucknow. In the hall inside the building, there are two compartments, each containing a Zarih with a dome topped by a goblet. In the spacious courtyard there is a garden which also serves as a place for braving Tazias.

SHABIH RAUZA-E-NAJAF-E-ASHRAF

Hasan Mirza Saheb of Lucknow was a trader. While in Calcutta during his travels, he dreamt that he was carrying the coffin of Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.), which gave him a visual idea of the design of its structure. Consequently, when he returned to Lucknow in 1292 A.H., he made the coffin with his own hands at the residence of a relative, Mir Mohamad Shah Saheb, in Rustomnagar on the night of 19th Ramzan, i.e., on the night of the day Hazrat Ali was stabbed, and placed it there. He then carried it personally on the 21st of Ramzan. Call it the ominous virtue of the auspicious dream, or the grace of the Imam's appreciation, people started gathering there in large numbers from the very beginning; and within a short course of time, every house in the locality was packed to the full by ladies. So were the surrounding open areas and streets crowded by men. Thus, the original house having proved inadequate to cope with the large numbers of momins, the Taboot had to be taken out from bigger residences in the area.

Hasan Mirza had no male issue. He had only two daughters whose husbands used to remain at his side all the time. After his death, his eldest son, Haji Afzal Husain, who was a Factory owner, trader and one of the select group of Agents of the Asifabad Estate, used to take out the Taboot in the same

manner as the deceased used to do in his life time. Haji Saheb first of all purchased the house where the Taboot initially originated; later on he started making plans of a model of Hazrat Ali's Shrine of Najaf-e-Ashraf. Finally in 1332 A.H., inaugurated the foundation laying ceremony of the Rauza with a mammoth congregation of devotees including all the Mujtahids. Sarkar Nasir-ul-Millat laid the foundation stone. The same year the Cupola of the model was completed, bearing a stanza of verses written by Mirza Kazim Husain Saheb Mahshar. According to this stanza, the year of the event stands as 1332.

This Dargah has been built, to an appreciable extent, on the pattern of that of Hazrat Abbas. The same can be said in respect of the hall, the outer enclosure, the verandah and the courtyard. On every Thursday night visitors come here to pay homage. Khadim Husain Saheb and Nasir Husain Saheb are the present keepers of this Centre.

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AZADARI IN WEST PAKISTAN

Geographically West Pakistan is surrounded by Kashmir, India, Iran and Afghanistan, Arabian Ocean being its sea-water border. Arabs had been visiting this area of Pakistan since very ancient times, using sea-route. The province of Sind became aware of Islam as a religion while it was still in its early phase. After the death of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.), a delegation had also been sent out here. The Muslim Governors of Bahrain had even appointed their representatives in this area. Early in 39 A.H., Hazrat Ali (A.S.) had deputed Haris bin Murrah Abedi to fight wars in the Sind-Baluchistan region, which was then known by the name of Qiqan. Haris bin Murrah conquered a few regions and took about one-thousand men as prisoners of war. It was probably because of this Arab invasion that certain ethnic traits, akin to those of Ameerul Momineen's sterling qualities, may have been transfused into the local population.

Hazrat Ali (A.S.) had also sent Abdur Rahman bin Jarwa Latai on a military campaign in the region of Sistan. Abdulla bin Abbas the Governor of Basra at the time also sent 400, and thus this area was conquered (Ref. *Aeriyana Dairatul Ma'arif*, Afghanistan). People of Afghanistan, North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Sind came to know more about the progeny of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) when "Aal-e-Shansub" came into power. There was a news item in the national press in 1954 to the effect that during the excavations in certain areas of Sind, silver coins stamped with the name of Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (A.S.) were found.

MULTAN

The Alavis came into power in Khurasan towards the end of the third century, Hijra; and with their emergence as the masters, the exiled Sadaats from Syria and Iraq heaved a sigh of relief. Perhaps by that time, the Sadaats of the generations of Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (A.S.) had already settled down in Sind and Multan. Consequently, round about 1350 A.H., when Moaz-ud-daula Dailami ruled over Baghdad, the people of Multan got in touch with him (Ref. *Ab-e-kausar*). Friday sermons were also read out in Multan in the names of the Fatemide rulers of Egypt. According to Maqdisi, he heard the cry of Hayya Ala Khair-ul-Amal called out in the Azaan (call to prayers).

Mahmood Ghaznavi attacked Multan with the intention of annihilating the Qurmatis and Rafizis. What is interesting in this connection is that with him

also came a large number of Alavi Sadaats. Salar Masood for instance. He and his father came down here with Mahmood Ghaznavi and moved over to Oudh. In Sind and Punjab, among other people, the heirs of the Gardezi dynasty, Syed Jamaluddin and Abul Fazal Mohammad Gardi were born, the latter in 1069 in Gardez. He died in 1152 in Multan. Syed Mohammad Yusuf Sahab also came to Multan from Gardez. This was the period of Behram Shah Ghaznavi which lasted from 1118 to 1152.

Shah Girdez won the hearts of the people of Multan partly through his preachings of Islam and partly through the sheer spiritual force of his personality. After him came Shamsul Haq Shams Tabrez and Jalaluddin Haider Surkhposh, followed by Syed Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. These sufis from Iran and Turkey proved to be harbingers of Azadari for Imam Husain (A.S.) in Multan, where the Ismailis predominated them. It was as a result of their devotion and selfless efforts that Multan started echoing with the cries of "Ali-Ali" and "Husain-Husain". Everyone in Multan, including Shias, Sunnis, the poor and the rich, subscribe to the institution of Azadari; and almost all houses in the city observe the sanctity of the month of Moharrum. The Gardezis in particular mourn more for the Martyrs of Karbala than they do in respect of the deaths of their own kith and kin. They sleep on bare floors during Moharrum, wear black attires, mourn and lament for nights and days, and hold Majlises round the clock. No food is cooked in their houses. One cannot see any smoke coming out the chimneys from their kitchens. The

abode of Shah Gardez, the houses of the Khalifas and the Siddiquis hold Majlises at Imambara Jhak, Imambara Jahaz, Mahal and the Imambara of the Mohajireen. In short, every home and every Imambara in Multan echoes with their recallings of the events of the Tragedy of Karbala.

From the 1st of Moharrum to the 28th of Safar, people of all religious denominations take out mourning processions of alums and taboots. Among the groups of breast-beating mourners in the procession on the Ashura Day, the Tazias built by the Sunnis with extraordinary labour and enthusiasm are most worthy of mention. People from distant places flock to pay homage to these Tazias which are carried by the Sunnis. The Tazias of ustad and Shagird are reputed features of Azadari in Multan since very early times.

CHOOP TAZIA i.e., Silent Mourning procession is also taken out in Multan on the 8th of Rabi Awwal; but the outstanding feature here is the sweet language and dialect of the people, which enhances the appeal and pathos in the expression of their emotions. Zakirs (orators at mourning sermons) of Multan are very popular in the cities as well as in the rural areas of the Punjab. These Zakirs have been rendering yeoman service in the propagation of Islam and Azadari.

Multani literature is inherently very expressive in its linguistic effects, and most of its literature in prose as well as poetry centres on the note of mournings. There was a time when Multani poets constituted the bulk of elegist poets in Mianwali, Muzaffargarh and Bahawalpur, the most outstanding among

them being such poets as Syed Ali Shah, Ashraf Multani, Ashiq Husain Multani, Ghulam Haider Fida, Sardar Ali Fauq, and Nabi Bakhsh Shauq. I have in my personal library a compiled work of Moulvi Ghulam Haider Saheb, entitled **Parhan Shuhada** which reflects the ancient style of composition as evident in the famous **Rauza-tus-Shuhada**.

BAHAWALPUR

Bahawalpur was once a Sunni-autonomous State in the Punjab. It was a desert area with Abbasid rulers. There was no trace of Shia community here; and if any one became a Shia, or a Shia from outside came and settled there, he did so at the risk of his life. Ultimately, however, the people were enlightened with true knowledge, and Azadari commenced there. Imambaras sprang up and Majlises started being held in Bahawalpur, Ahmedpur, Shirqia, Sadiqabad and other places. Tazia and Zuljinah processions also started being taken out. Due to certain literary personalities epicdiums also became popular.

RAWALPINDI AND ISLAMABAD

Islamabad is the Capital of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Ever since it was built and people started settling there, Majlises also commenced in the new Capital with all the austere sanctity that the month of Moharrum commands. Government employees as well as the general mass of people started participating in mourning observances in all enthusiasm; and within ten years, Majlises and Ashura processions with crowds of mourners lamenting and beating their

breasts, acquired the same intensity and importance as is evident in other older cities. Intellectuals of both Shia and Sunni sects participate in Moharrum observances; and for ten days they mourn for the Martyrs of Karbala. The atmosphere of this vast Capital echoes with the lamenting cries of "Husain-Husain" with a depth of emotional intensity that is difficult to miss. A big Imambara is also presently under construction here.

Rawalpindi lies close to Islamabad. It is an ancient city and serves as a junction for routes to Kashmir and Peshawar. Devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) have been dwelling in this ancient military Headquarters since very early times in history. Among the old Imambaras here, Ruttay Ka Imambara, Agha Fazal-e-Ali Shah Ka Imambara and Shah Husain Chiragh Ka Darbar are prominent, which were reserved for Majlises and mournings, and from where mourning processions used to be taken out even before the establishment of Pakistan. The late Maulana Syed Ahmed Shah, Mirza Ahmad Ali Saheb, and Hafiz Kifayat Husain Saheb have been making commendable efforts in Rawalpindi for the promotion of the cause of Azadari. With their forceful and truth-enlightening eloquence, the dignitaries have been able to convert various groups of person to belief in Azadari. Azadari has progressed appreciably since the partition of the Subcontinent. Col. Maqbool Husain's Imambara used to be a bustling centre where Majlises were held. The mourning processions had a new dynamism. Mourning congresses were held at the Azakhanas of private individuals. Riaz Husain Shah Saheb Bukhari,

Janab Manzar Husain Saheb Sabzwari and Janab Tahsin Jafri formed a Jama'at (a group of volunteers) who go out to the Suburbs and conduct Majlises purely on a voluntary basis. These people emphasized the moral and religious values of life in their addresses at the Majlises. Mention must be made of Janab Abu Mohammad Saheb for his selfless service in this sphere. Likewise, Janab Syed Mohammad Agha Saheb also contributed greatly with his exemplary courage and determination in making mourning processions and Majlises a complete success.

The Imambara of Maulvi Noor Mohammad Saheb in Moghulabad, and Madrasa-e-Fatema in Saddar Mceenul-Aza Dalhouzi are particularly prominent. Majlises are held here, and processions also start from these centres and pass through the city. The Imambara of Mauladad Saheb in Satellite Town, and the tomb of Shah Pyarey in Chor is famous for special Majlises besides the Majlises during the month of Moharrum. Since the tomb of Shah Pyarey is in the cantonment area, frequent Majlises during every month are held here, where the valiant personnel of the Armed Forces of Pakistan gather and lament in the sacred memory of Hazrat Ali Akbar and Hazrat Abbas (A.S.).

The participation of the personnel of the Armed Force in Moharrum m. urnings is a special feature of Azadari in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Chaklala. When these stalwarts march beating their breasts in frenzied agony, the rhythmic sound of their breast-beatings stir the hearts of even the most stone-hearted individuals. It is a moving sight to watch the

intensity of their devotion and love for the Martyrs of Karbala.

Besides Bari Shah, Gojar Khan, Chaklala, Jhelum and other cities, "Saidkiran" is an important town in this region. This ancient town where refugee Sadaats from Kazmein and Meshhed settled down after their migration, has been a bustling town since the time of Moghul rule in India. Almost the entire town is populated by Sadaats. After morning prayers every day, the Quran is recited, followed by eulogies and epicediums. Like the people of Jhang the people of "Saidkiran" also have deep regard for the famous elegist poet, Mirza Dabir. These people mourn and lament in a most excruciating agony at Majlises and in processions with bare-heads and streams of tears flowing down their cheeks. They sleep on bare floors for the first ten days of Moharrum, and do not cook any food in their houses for this period. On the Ashura Day (i.e., the 10th of Moharrum), they come out of their homes with their heads smeared with dust and their shirt-fronts torn, as if they were lamenting actually for the death of their own Chiefs in their own houses. Every street, every lane, and every Imambara becomes a venue for mutual condolence.

The tomb of Shah Chun Chiragh is situated in Rawalpindi; and the date inscribed on the present structure is 1868. The devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) in Sind and the surrounding areas of the Punjab have been buried in Imambaras and centres for Majlises since very early times. The devotees in these areas have always been keenly attached to the promotion of Azadari, and they pride themselves for

this. That this is true is corroborated in the popular saying "One who has not been to Karbala should see Saidkiran".

Azadari is also prevalent in Lyalpur, Jhang, Sargodha, Sheikupura, Sialkot, Gujranwala and all other big as well as small cities, towns and villages. Zuljainah processions are current features during Moharrum in Sahiwal, Mianwali, Jauharabad and other distant places.

A special feature of Majlises in the Punjab is that mourning sessions are conducted non-stop for two day two nights. These kind of Majlises are called "Chehlum". Another striking speciality of this region is that besides the month of Moharrum, the Hindu calendar month of Jeth is also observed for the commemoration of the sacred memory of the Martyrs of Karbala. Long before the due time, people travel over sultry deserts and plains in the scorching heat of summer in order to congregate at the towns, where Majlises are held for days at hand. In certain places, the death anniversaries of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) Fatematuz Zahra (A.S.), Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.) and other Imams of the Ahle Bait are also observed with due and special zealously. On these occasions, free meals are served, meetings are held, and Majlises are conducted; and Taboots and Zuljinnah processions are also organized.

The Zakirs (orators at Majlises) in the Punjab deliver their sermons and recite epicediums in Punjabi language. These sermons and recitals are all the

more appealing on account of their emotional contents. These Zakirs have stirred the hearts of millions with their orations and recitals on Imam Husain (A.S.) and have given Punjabi language a refined literary status of its own. They have created in the hearts of the masses a consciousness of the cause Imam Husain (A.S.) stood, fought, and laid his life for. They have thus inculcated the habit of objective thinking in the minds of the people. They filled the air over deserts, towns and villages with the stirring cries of "Husain Husain". The services of Zakirs for the cause of Azadari in the Punjab and Sind are thus of a fundamental character. With the progress in the educational sphere, the Zakirs are now shifting their stress to facts of history, rather than sermonizing in a purely literary context.

PESHAWAR

The North-West Frontier Province is a land of brave and adventurous people. It was once friendly connected with Kabul, Hirat and Qandahar. It was used as a junction for the caravans of traders from Iran. That is the reason why the Persian language found popularity in this province. Sermons and epihediums in the Persian language have been current in the Imambaras of the Qizilbash and other tribes. The Kashmiries conduct their Majlises in the Kashmiri and Punjabi languages, while Urdu-speaking population do so in their own mother tongue.

It was after 1880 that the Qizilbash and other Shia tribes migrated from Afghanistan and settled down

in Peshawar, where they lived in peace as long as the area was under British administration. It was for this reason that about 40 years back, Persian Khateebis from Afghanistan and Iran used to be invited to address at the major Majlises in Peshawar. Gradually, however, Zakirs and elegist poets of the North-west Frontier Province and other places like Kohat and Dera Ismail Khan came into their own, thus reducing the necessity of requisitioning speakers from outside. Urdu-speaking Zakirs, however, continue to go to address Majlises.

The people of Peshawar speak in "Hindko" language, though Pashto remains the common language. Urdu is also commonly spoken. There are, thus, Zakirs with a good command on all the three language in Peshawar.

MATAM SERAIS

Imambaras are called "Matam Serai" in Peshawar. Matam Serais of Jan Saheb, Zafar Ali Shah Saheb, Mirza Qasim Saheb, and mourning centres in Mohalla Bahauddin are some, to mention only a few. In addition, there are a number of Imambaras of the Mohajireen. As far as breast-beating is concerned, the Mehendi, Tamama, alum and Zuljinnah processions are the most outstanding processions. Spectators are moved to tears and the earth shudders at the sight of the severity of breast-beatings with hands as well as with steel chains in accompaniment with the rhythmic recitals of Noahas (elegies) in Persian and Peshto. The night preceding the Ashura Day (10 of Moharrum) commences with the metallic sounds

of breast-beatings with chains and cries of wailings. Till 90' clock at night, ladies keep going to the **Matam Serias** (Mourning Centres), where they place flowers at the models, light the candles and lament in anguish over the Martyrs of Karbala. After 90' Clock at night, the replica of the turban of Hazrat Qasim (A.S.) and alum are taken out in a procession. This procession starts from one mourning centre and stops at another **Matam Serai**, where sugar candles in earthen pots are deposited with the processionists. After taking a round of all the **Matam Serais**, the procession finally terminates. Tea or **Qahva** is then made, using the sugar-candies collected enroute, and distributed among the mourners.

Unlike in Panjab and Karachi, Mourning Centres in Peshawar are not decorated with alums or other items. Only an alum with colourful cloth and a **Panjah** is generally found here. This is fixed in the courtyard of the **Matam Serai**. After the establishment of Pakistan, there have sprung up some mourning centres where individual customs and traditions of their founders are observed, including the mode of **Majlises** and mournings.

As many as three big congregations of **Majlises** are held in Peshawar during the first ten days of **Moharrum**. Similarly, the **Ashura Day** procession is also taken out on a very big scale. The youthful sturdy men of this city distinguish themselves singularly in breast-beatings. The whole day passes off with people weeping at the anguished loud cries of "**Ya Syedi-ya Abbas**" to the accompaniment of Pashto and Persian elagies.

In the tribal areas of the North-West Frontier Province, particularly in Kohat, Azadari, Korum, Parachinar and other places, the devotion of people to the institution of Azadari is indeed worth seeing. Iranian modes of mourning, blended with local tribal customs is a unique feature of this Province.

QUETTA

Baluchistan is a desert and mountainous province in West Pakistan. This distant region of climatic extremes is a homeland of freedom-loving and brave people. Quetta, which is the provincial Capital, is a city as old as approximately one hundred years. As far back as 1876, the Britishers had acquired this region for use as a military base and Headquarters. They had also established a grand Military Academy here. Before the establishment of Pakistan, Quetta was purely a military centre on the border of Sind. It was only after Pakistan came into being that it became an educational centre and attained political and cultural status.

Quetta's culture is a mixture of Afghan and Iranian cultures due to its close cultural affinities with these two countries divided geographically by their borders. Its population also consists of local tribes, their **Sardars**, traders from different parts of Pakistan, and Iranis.

"**Hazara**" tribesmen became the victims of blood-bath in 1880, when King Ameer Abdur Rahman of Afghanistan engineered a violent conflict between Shias and Sunnis. This entire tribe was devotionally attached to Imam Husain (A.S.), and mourning for

the martyred Imam was an article of faith with every single person of the tribe. Other minor tribes and clans in Kabul, Hirat and Qandahar were completely ruined at the hands of Abdur Rahman. The brave Hazara tribesmen, however, put up a gallant resistance and migrated to Peshawar, Kohat, and more concentratedly, to Quetta. Noticing the courage and martial spirit of the tribesman, the Britishers welcomed them with open arms in the ranks of their army. Their enlistment in the army strengthened the striking force of the British army. Many were the awards and Crosses these men of Hazara tribe achieved on the various fronts later. Similarly, in business enterprises as well as service, they owe their well-being and progress mainly due to their sustained labour and dedication. Persian is the language of the Hazara tribesmen in Quetta; and they are greatly attached to Iranis. Their mode of mourning for the Martyrs of Karbala is reflective of Afghan and Khorasani influences.

Azadari is observed in every home in Quetta. The refugee families in particular are very zealous about it with their own ritual practices. This of course is a general statement. From the 1st of Moharrum to the Ashura Day on the 10th, everyone including military personnel, Government employees and Shias from the suburbs converge at Quetta. The Imambaras owned by the Qandaharis, Punjabies and Hazara people are generally very big each Imambara being spacious enough to accommodate as many as 5000 persons in a single session of a Majlis. Sermons at the Imambara of the Iranian population are delivered in the Persian language, while at other places Urdu is the medium.

Mourning processions start from the 7th of Moharrum; and the final procession is taken out on the 9th. The straight and considerably long road through which this procession passes, becomes, as it were, an ocean of human heads. So great is the crowd. There are four Mourning Centres on Macanghe Road, each of which is filled with mourners who form themselves in groups and join the main procession with alums in their hands. Towards evening, with Zuljinnah encircled near Hazara Imambara, the breast-beating reaches its peak of intense frenzy. These mourners with bleeding chests and backs, their whole bodies soaked in warm blood as a result of breast-beating from 9 O'clock in the morning to 4 O'clock in the evening, then assemble in the courtyard of the Imambara where they recite the last farewell odes on Imam Husain (A.S.) and other martyrs of Karbala, beating their heads and breasts wildly with both hands and rendering asunder the atmosphere of the mountainous region with their lamenting cries of "Aqa Husain-Maula Husain". So pathetic, so stirring, and so fierce in the intensity of these breast-beatings and lamentations that it would appear as if even the angels, too, were mourning with them.

Just as in Agra in India, and in the Panjab and North-West Frontier provinces in Pakistan, bands of mourners mourn and lament for the Martyrs of Karbala on the 9th of Moharrum, and fulfil other mourning obligations on the morning of the Ashura Day, observe prayers and Ziarat, lament through the whole day, weeping and wailing with red-shod eyes and dust smeared heads, break their fasts in the

evening, and express condolences for the Holy Prophet and his Ahle Bait after listening to the Sham-e-Ghariban sermon; so also Majlises and processions are current in Sibbi, Loralai and Fort Sandeman and other places in Baluchistan; and by the grace of God, there is a steady increase in the number of Mourning Centres, and the standard of the sermons as well as the number of mourners, too, is rising. The day is now close at hand when, God willing, every home in Baluchistan will be a centre of mourning for Imam Husain (A.S.) and the other martyrs of Karbala. The day will certainly dawn when every Muslim will become duly cognizant of the significance of the greatest tragedy in the history of Islam; and God willing, every class of people will take pride in claiming Husain (A.S.) as eternally theirs.

L A H O R E

Lahore is the nerve-centre of Pakistan. This ancient city was once the Capital of Moghul empire during the reign of Emperor Akbar. Lahore has thus ruled over Delhi; and even as recently as few years back, it was the Capital of West Pakistan, controlling the affairs of the western wing from Karachi to Peshawar. Lahore has always been a strategic city in a military sense, and an important centre in the sphere of politics, economy, and social life. Today, too, it continues to be an arsenal of academic education and learning. It is said that the date when this city was founded is obscure. However, the name "Lahore", was first noticed in 982 C.E., when this city was under the administrative control of

Multan. It was in this direction that Mahmood Ghaznavi headed with his army when Jai Pal and Anand Pal ruled over the reign. "Abul Fatah" was then the Governor of Multan. Mahmood Ghaznavi believed him to be a Batini, i.e., a person suspected of concealing his true religious beliefs. Since Mahmood Ghaznavi was a staunch Hanafi (a sect of Sunni community), he considered it his religious duty to wipe off such class of persons. Who can today say with any amount of certainty whether the Batinis of Multan were heretics or Rafizis? What is generally known is that these people held the Ahle Bait of the Holy Prophet in reverential esteem. Some people believe them to be Shias, while there are others who say that they are Ismailis.

After the invasion of Mahmood Ghaznavi, Maudood and Majdood (Maudood was the grandson of Mahmood Ghaznavi) lead an attack on Lahore in 1040 C.E. It was after this event that Lahore's identity in history gained reckoning. However, no ruler or dynasty could rule own Northern India with any amount of stability till the time of the Moghul Emperor, Akbar. It is a fact the evolution of history that only long-lasting peace and tranquillity can ensure civilizational progress and religious enlightenment in cities. But what used to happen here was that no sooner peace was established, the Emperor would die.

Sultan Allauddin Khilji was a mighty and powerful Emperor of his time. The Khilji dynasty no doubt gained sovereign supremacy, but they lost their hold over it within a space of 33 years. The

slave dynasty of rulers, too, could not go beyond 50 years apiece. So was the case with the Sadaats, whose hold lasted for no more than 38 years. The Lodhis and Tughlaqs fared slightly better, but then their attentions were diverted elsewhere.

Moizuddin Sam Mohammad Ghorī was directly the master of Lahore after the decadence of the Ghaznavids. Then came Qutubuddin Aibak who crowned himself as the Emperor in Lahore, and also died there. Hardly had the Aibak rulers established themselves, when the Mongols descended upon Northern India like a tempest of brutal violence and inhuman fury; and with their devastating invasion, Lahore lost its magnificence. Then came Babur, only to return after a week or so. Then followed Nasiruddin Humayun. Hardly had he ascended the throne, when Kamran Mirza revolted and occupied Lahore. It is interesting to note here that among the historical monuments in Lahore, the house where Kamran Mirza lived, also exists as a protected monument today.

Humayun fled to Iran, enlisted the support of Iranian army, came back and conquered India; and with his conquest, opened new venues of social progress, thought and culture. Humayun died in 1556 as a result of an accidental fall. Thus, Akbar who was at that time in the Panjab, became the Emperor of India at a tender age of 13, with the famous Bairam Khan—a staunch devotee of the precepts of Hazrat Ali (A.S.)—as the Regent and tutor of the young Emperor.

Akbar stayed in Lahore for 14 years. It was in Lahore that the cultural and social programmes of Shahinshah Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar were planned and chartered; and it was during his reign that influences of the Shia States in Kashmir, South India and Iran found their way into the social fabric of Lahore. Ulema and scholars from these places came over to Lahore; so did other men of learning from Kashmir and the Deccan. With these transmigrations and visits, their respective traditions and practices, too, found their way into social life of Lahore. Likewise, Shia dignitaries and Safavi Princes from Iran also made this city their place of domicile.

Festivals were almost a daily routine at Lahore. As a matter of fact these were current even before the advent of Maghuls in India. Bara'wafaat, or the Holy Prophet's death anniversary, used to be observed with prayers and offerings. Qawwalis (singing function where mystic poetry and religious songs are sung in accompaniment with music), and Urs (death anniversaries of Saints) were common. People of all classes observed their own respective cultural and traditional rituals and practices. Settlers from the Deccan, Kashmir and Iran, too, had complete freedom in the matter of their religion, like performing prayers, observing fasts and congregational prayers on Eid days and Fridays. Influential Sunni Ulema from Maura Anhar, Khurasan, Ispahan, Shiraz and other places in Iran, coupled with the local Qazis and Turks, constituted the majority. New comers must, therefore, have perhaps been rather apprehensive about their new environment. But all people are not

alike in their mentalities, nor can every individual put up with the wrong behaviour of another individual for an indefinite period of time. Thus, while the Sunnis prided themselves on the strength of their being a majority community, the Shias on their part were prepared to stake their lives for their religious indentity. These tensions and factional attachments, therefore, led to violent conflicts and consequent unpleasant situations, leading to widespread communal riots and blood-shed. Powerful and undaunted Shia personalities like Mulla Mohammad Yazdi, Mulla Farooqui Thattovi, Qazi Noorullah Shoostry; Hakeem Fathehullah Shirazi and Mulla Faizi also lived in Lahore; while pacifist individuals like Mulla Yusuf Ali Akhbari Akbarabadi and Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan dwelt in this same city.

Mulla Mohammad Yazdi had totally rejected **Deen-e-Ilahi**—a religious innovation of the Moghul Emperor, Akbar. He declared this concocted religion introduced by Akbar as being wholly un-Islamic. Consequently, he had to pay for his outspoken judgement; and he paid it with his own life. Likewise, Mulla Ahmed Farooqi expressed his views against the pseudo-religious hotch-potch of **Deen-e-Ilahi** in his book **Tareekh-e Alfi**; and Qazi Noorullah Shoostry exploded the myth of Mullah Rozbaha's arguments in favour of it. The result was that these two also had to pay with lives for their undaunted courage of speaking out the truth. It is evident from the perusal of non-religious literary works of Mulla Abdul Quadir Badayuni, Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi and Al-Quadir Bedil, that these men cannot tolerate the Shias. Mulla Fathullah Shirazi was a recognized religious scholar

of very high standing. Even the Emperor, Akbar when he heard about the fame of Shirazi's literary status, summoned him to his **Darbar**, and honoured him as greatly as Bu Ali Sena and Abu Raihan Biruni were honoured. Emperor Akbar, as well as the Ministers and other dignitaries of his Court, were greatly impressed by Shirazi's personality. The Emperor, especially, used to refer to him as '**Aql Hadi Ashar**'. Such was his stature in the estimation of those who manned the destiny of Muslim India! Despite this, there was one thing that they could not have the magnanimity to tolerate; and that was Shirazi's attachment to Shia belief. According to Abdul Quadir Badayuni, Hakeem Fath-ullah Shirazi used to offer his prayers in the prayer-room at Emperor Akbar's court with his hands hanging down by his sides. These facts are frankly mentioned in **Muntakhub ut Tawareekh**. This means that howsoever great and good a person may be, if he happens to be a Shia, or is influenced by Shia concepts, the same persons ceases to be tolerated.

In this prejudicial atmosphere, there were some persons who reacted sharply to communal bias, and condemned it in an undaunted way. Some persons, however, treated these prejudices as something to be faced for the sake of future. There were also others who changed their loyalties due to political pressures and responsibilities which they owed as State employees, while there were some intellectuals who thought it expedient to keep quiet in view of the current circumstances.

There is a Note Book preserved at the Asifia library in Hyderabad Deccan (Exhibit No. 1184). This is a collection of letters written by Shaheed-e-Salis Allama Qazi Noorullah Shoostry, compiled by Abdur Rahim Baghdadi. Among these letters is one written by Allama Shoostry to Yusuf Ali Akhbari in which the Allama in reply to the latter's letters drawing attention to the advisability of **Taqiyyah** (Subterfuge permitted in religion under certain cases), or **Ikrah** as it is referred to by Sunni Jurisprudentialists, wrote back as under :

"...In my humble opinion, there is no need to resort to **Taqiyyah** in the Capital city of India; more so under a just Emperor like Akbar. If there be any need to resort to **Taqiyyah**, it is not essential for persons like my humble self, because, to die fighting in the cause of true religion is to glorify the religion one professes. The Holy Prophet has permitted such persons not to resort to **Taqiyyah**. However, **Taqiyyah** is essential for one who may be an obscure personality in the religious context, or one who may not be in a position to defend his religion through sound reasoning..."

Allama Qazi Saheb was an eminent religious scholar whose learning and personal character was recognized and highly appreciated by one and all. Despite this, he suffered the penalty of death for preaching his religion and for writing the book **Ehqaq ul-Haq** in reply to the arguments of the opponent

school of thought. This event took place on 26th Rabi-ul-Awwal in 1019 A.H.

This background of circumstances reflects the order of things that prevailed during the times of Akbar and Jehangir. In plain words, even Shia dignitaries and **Ulema** were prevented from expressing their religious beliefs openly, not to mention the poor and the common class of people. He could then the devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) dared to have organized **Majlises** and mourning processions? It was customary during these times for Shia families in Agra and Delhi to observe their religious ceremonies secretly. The illiterate class of people, like the non-Shia masses, used to limit their Moharrum observances to **Fatehas** or **Nazr**; or perhaps they may have been participating in **Tazia** and **Alum** processions according to common customs prevailing then. The general lot of people used to make **Tazias** and take them out on Ashura Day to the accompaniment of drum-beats. Recitals of common type of poetic compositions and display of acrobatic performances with daggers was a common feature.

There was thus no emphasis whatsoever on religion and its sanctity. With this sort of apathy and anti-Shia pressure during the rules of Jehangir, Shah Jahan and Alamgir, it was not possible for Aitemad-ud-daula, Noor Jehan, Asif Jah and Ali Mardan alone to combat this State of sorry affairs. The most anyone could have done under these circumstances must have been limited to the four walls of their homes or to a limited circle of intimate friends.

Thus, when Bahadur Shah I, Alamgirs successor (d. 1708), openly declared himself to be a Shia, there was a great uproar. The Ulema were greatly upset and protested violently against this declaration. As a result, the Emperor had to discontinue the mention of the Twelve Infallible Imams in the sermons at Mosques. Nevertheless, this event, must have been a source of encouragement to the Shias and Azadari; and the Shias community in Lahore must have observed the sanctity of Moharrum to the fullest measure under the circumstances prevailing then.

As a result of Nadir Shah's invasion in mid-eighteenth century, the Qizilbath tribe of Iran spread out as far as Delhi from Lahore, thereby engendering a conducive possibility of promoting mourning traditions in this region; and almost immediately thereafter, Ahmed Shah Abdali came into power, followed by the Sikhs who gained supremacy after him. Thus, by this time, Azadari had become a well established feature in North India as well as in South India. In Agra, Delhi and their suburbs, both Muslims and Hindu communities freely participated in Moharrum mourning observances. Similarly, Azadari in Lahore also found a firm footing. The saints and other older generations of Shias in Lahore were already dedicated mourners, and used to hold regular Majlises; but now a great personality of the State, like Sher Singh, the son of Ranjit Singh, also joined the ranks of mourners. According to Abdul Latif, Sher Singh's Tazia was among the most prominent and famous Tazias of Lahore.

The conducive and favourable atmosphere now prevalent, encouraged the Tazia-makers to develop their skill in the making of their models, which they did and became uncomparable in their art. Abur Rahman Chughtai, the famous artist of Pakistan has described the efforts of a certain expert Tazias-maker of this period in these words:

".....I have heard from my father that, there used to live in Haveli Mian Khan, Lahore, a great ustad (Master instructor) named Chiragh. He was an unmatched expert of his time in the art of making Tazias. He got an order of making out a Tazia one Moharrum. When he completed it, he presented it before my great-grandfather, Mian Salah, out of his respect for him in order to earn his appreciation and approval of his artwork. My great-grandfather examined the model critically and said to him in an under-tone: 'Look, ustad Chiragh, this is a Tazia—a serious matter. This is not something which concerns you and me alone. Thousands of persons have seen the original of the model you have made; and these include friends as well as foes. To be quite frank, the Gumti of the Tazia (a certain part of structure) has not been filled properly.' Having said this, my great-grandfather returned. Ustad Chiragh smiled and remained silent. He then spent the next whole year over perfecting another Tazia, taking care to remove the defect pointed out by my great-grandfather. He was in the process of assembling the parts, when some

one told him that Baba Salah (my great-grandfather) had died. Ustad Chiragh was so deeply shocked by this tragic news that it is said that he never again touched Tazias. Several Moharrums came and went by : and finally ustad "Chiragh died, saying unto last, what good will it be now if I make a Tazia without any defect? The one who could judge its art is no more today to view it critically..."

This means that Lahore had experts like ustad Chiragh even as far back as a century ago, and that Tazia processions used to be witnessed by thousands. Mourners lived concentratedly in Haveli Mian Khan, and Azadari prevailed also in the localities close by.

SIKH OBJECTIONS ON AZADARI DURING RANJIT SINGH'S RULE

According to the older set of generations in the Panjab, Azadari was common in the province, and both Shias and Sunnis used to take out Tazia processions during the rule of the Sikhs over Panjab. That Azadari was prevalent in Amritsar, Ludhiana, Batala, Gurdaspur, Ambala and Ferozepur is corroborated by the description of a Moharrum procession in Amritsar (p. 140) given in his research work *Maharaja Ranjit Singh aur Angrezi Mo'ahiday* (Maharaja Ranjit Singh and British agreements) by Sita Ram Kohli, M.A., Professor at Government College, Lahore, published by Hindustan Academy, Allahabad (1933). This is what the learned author says while discussing the subject of Agreements with the British (25th April 1809);

"...Hardly had the two sides agreed to sign this Agreement when Moharrum mournings and Holi festivities coincided according to respective calendar dates. A few Shia Sepoys were also among the personnel accompanying Mr. Mitkof. These Shia sepoy took out a mourning procession according to their traditional custom. Just as the Moharrum procession passed by Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, a fierce riot broke out between the Muslim and Sikh communities. The famous Akali leader, Sardar Phoolasingh, violently fell upon the Muslims along with his armed men. In the blood-bath that ensued, several men from both the sides were killed. The well-trained sepoy of Mr. Mitkof immediately formed themselves into a defence squad on the pattern of British emergency strategy. This move worked; and the Akali attack proved a failure. Meanwhile, the Maharaja also was informed of the developments. He immediately rushed out to the troubled area from Qilla Gobindgarh and quelled down the dispute....."

That it was possible for a few sepoy accompanying Mitkof to attend a Majlis in a city new to them is of course understandable; but to say that these sepoy themselves organized a procession sounds rather queer. What probably may have actually happened was that these sepoy might have merely joined the Tazia procession taken out by the local Muslims of Amritsar, who were long suppressed by the Sikh regime. It is thus reasonable to say that when the Sikh elements advanced to halt the progress

of the procession as usual, the sepoys might have acted in sympathy of the mourners by driving out the attackers from the route of the procession.

KARBALA GAMEY SHAH

Shias in Lahore had a tough time during the regime of Ranjit Singh. Water-supply from wells to them was cut off. Riots were engineered against them. Hindus and Sikhs and their Muslim henchmen prevented Tazia and mourning processions from being taken out. Mourning Majlises and breast-beating congregations which had been regularly held at the Imambaras of Alif Shah and Seeday Shah and private residences were officially stopped on the orders of Ranjit Singh in 1820. So were mourning processions. It was publicly proclaimed that anyone found taking out Tazias would be severely punished. It was under such repressive circumstances that Syed Gamey Shah made out a Tazia and took out a breast-beating procession. Ratansingh Girjagia, who was then the Judge and City Munsif at Lahore, arrested Gamey Shah and awarded him severe punishment. However, at night on the same day, Ratansingh felt ashamed at his own conduct. He therefore presented Gamey Shah with some gifts and freed him after apologizing to him.

Once it so happened that furious riots broke out between Shias and their opponents during the time when Major McGregor was the Deputy Commissioner. In the violence that followed, the opponents demolished the house of Gamey Shah and injured him severely; but despite this, this courageous man continued with his mourning.

After the death of Gamey Shah Bhikri, a Tazia was placed upon his grave, where people started holding Majlises and breast-beating sessions all the year round on Thursdays and Friday nights. Moharrum processions and Chehlum processions in the month to Safar from all over the city used to terminate at his place.

Gamey Shah was devotedly attached to Azadari, and worked ceaselessly for its promotion; and for this cause, he suffered great tribulations and made heavy sacrifices. Other mourners derived a great inspiration from his courage and undaunted spirit. It was due to him that a centre for mournings for Imam Husain (A.S.) and other Karbala martyrs sprang up under most unfavourable circumstances.

This demolished ancient monument was reconstructed by Nawab Ali Raza Khan Qizilbash (d. 1865) along with the mosque and the boundary wall, and the centre re-decorated. These events which are taken from Tehqqaat-e-Chistia (pp. 240-242, old edition; and P/631 latest edition of 1964) give an idea of the circumstances that prevailed about 175 years back vis-a-vis Azadari. It is evident from this that Shias used to hold Majlises in city, and their opponents used to create hindrances. Sunnis used to compose and recite epicediums; and others, thinking them to be Shias, would harass them on that score. The services rendered by the father of Janab Mohammad Chishti and Hakeem Ahmad Shuja Saheb, certain dignitaries of the Faquir dynasty, and certain other Sufis and Ulemas to the cause of Azadari are indeed commendable.

The political ascendance of the opponents of Azadari had all along been intimidating those devoted to it; but this could not, and did not, deter the institution of Azadari from its course. Whenever any devotee of Azadari happened to rise to a politically authoritative position, the Shias and others who were devoted to Azadari, observed their religious rites and customs openly. Finally, Syed Rajab Ali Shah Arastu Jah was appointed as the Chief Munshi and aide camp of the Governor. Thus, during the last days of his officialdom, the Qizilbash Nawabs gained honours both in official as well as public circles. These gentlemen observed the sanctity of Moharrum in a truly devoted manner, regarding Azadari as an article of their Faith.

IMAMBARA RAJAB ALI SHAH

Janab Rajab Ali Shah belonged to a noble Syed family of Bhakar. The area known as Talondi was his ancestral estate. It was here that he was born and received his primary education, after which he moved over to Lahore for higher Islamic studies. Among his tutors, Syed Khair Shah Tabeeb, Mulla Mahdi Khatai Talmeez and Mulla Mohammad Moqueem are the most outstanding. I think these learned gentlemen must have been distinguished personalities of the Shia community of the time.

Rajab Ali Shah later went over to Delhi; and after finishing his education at Delhi College, he joined service with the East India Company. Shah Saheb was an expert in Arabic studies with a good command over Arabic as well as Persian prose and poetry. He

is well-known for his argumentative debates and other writings. His God-given literary capabilities earned for him a high status in life, in addition to placing him on a sound position, financially.

With the taking over of the Punjab by the Britishers, Rajab Ali Shah was regarded as the representative of the new Government. At Lahore, he laid one beautiful garden, constructed a house and a Mourning Centre with a mosque. This Mourning Centre is situated today on Empress Road on the left-hand side of the road facing the Lahore Television station behind the residential blocks of Nawab Saheb Qizilbash. I am told by elders that this Mourning Centre is a historical monument of the period of Emperor Shah Jahan, and that it was initially attached with the tomb of Bibiyan Saheba.

THE TOMB OF BIBI PAKDAMAN

There are six tombs of great ladies in the Shahgarhi locality of Lahore. It has long been believed locally that these tombs are those of the daughters of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) and Hazrat Aqeel. Their bodies are said to have been despatched from Karbala in 61 A.H., to Lahore. It is also believed that it was because of the grace of the presence of their bodies in the city that local Hindu dignitaries became converts to Islam. People from distant places have been visiting these tombs since centuries, where they pay homage, hold Majlises and mourn with breast-beatings. Arastu Jah and his family used to live near this place. It was from here that they shifted over to Ludhiana, where they become pioneers by introducing Azadari there.

AZADARI BY THE FAQUIR DYNASTY

An elaborate scheme to crush the ancient Moghul traditions and customs was started by the Sikhs during their supremacy in the Punjab. To a great extent the Saikhs did succeed in introducing their own culture, and people forget the past. This culturization, however, rendered homeless the families who had migrated from Kashmir and Iran to settle down in Lahore; while the others fell victims to the ravages of their despotic regime. Yet there were certain distinguished families who, through their sagacity and foresight, attained offices in the State Government and became rich and influential in Lahore. They being Syed, combined with the nobility won the heart of Ranjit Singh who was instrumental in popularizing them with the group-title of "Faquirs". All of these persons were the devotees of the Imams of the Ahle Bait. They were unprejudiced men and were the recognized leaders and spokesmen of the Muslim community. Prime Minister Syed Azizuddin (d. 1845) and his family were devout Taziadars. These family traditions were perpetuated by Janab Syed Jamaluddin Saheb who built an Imambara in Bazar Hakeeman and created a Trust which functions even to this day.

IMAMBARA SYEDA MUBARAK BEGUM

Faquir Syed Iftikharuddin's daughter and the wife of Sir Maratib Ali Shah's wife, Syeda Mubarak Begum—an outstanding member of the Faquir group of families—also laid the foundation of an Imambara in Bazar Hakeeman, which is a centre of big Majlises in

Lahore during the first ten days of Moharrum. Zuljinnah, Chehlum (28th of Safar) and martyrdom anniversary of Hazrat Ali (21st Ramzan), processions also pass by this Imambara. On these occasions, the late Sir Maratib Ali Shah and his wife, Syeda Mubarak Begum, used to feed the mourners of their Imambara on a very grand scale. This traditional generosity is being duly honoured currently by their generations; and it is rightfully believed that this great family will continue to serve other causes also, besides those of Majlises and Taziadari.

AZADARI OF THE QIZILBASH FAMILY IN LAHORE

It is a fact that for the last hundred years or so Azadari and its progress in Lahore has mainly been due to the unceasing efforts and dedication of this dynasty. With the downfall of the Sikh regime and the emergence of British rule, there came a radical change in the political atmosphere of Lahore. Nawab Ali Raza Khan's ancestors, Nauroze Ali Khan, Sardar Ali Khan and Hedayat Khan (d. 1836) were noble men from Kabul. Nouroze Ali Khan had moved over to Punjab with Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1797. He had once been the Governor of Qandhar, and also acted as the Deputy to the Afghan King. He and his son were both military officers when Shahzaman had led an attack on India. When Shah Shuja had escorted the British into the Afghan territory in 1839, Nawab Ali Raza Khan was the person who helped the British army. Consequently, when the British army returned to Lahore from Afghanistan, they brought Ali Raza Khan along with them in recognition of his military

acumen. Ali Raza Khan remained subsequently in Punjab, where during his retired life he received a monthly pension of Rs. 800/-, and lived a stately life in Peshawar and Lahore.

Like several other notable personalities of the time, Nawab Ali Raza Khan also helped a British platoon during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. It was in recognition of his successful support to the Britishers that he was awarded **Jagirdari** (Landlordship) in Bahraich and Lahore. Nawazish Ali Khan, his son, then became the **Taluqadar** (District Officer) of Braich, and finally the Nawab of Lahore. He was also conferred Knighthood of the British Empire, and was held in high esteem by the British Government.

Both Ali Raza Khan and Sir Nawazish Ali Khan were men of exceptional courage. They were sagacious, generous and religious men with a deep devotional attachment to Imam Husain (A.S.). Many were the social services they rendered. They looked after the poor and the indigent in Braich and Lahore to the fullest extent. They built mosques and Imambaras. They observed mournings in Moharrum on no less a grand scale than Asif-ud-daula did in Oudh. For full twelve days in Moharrum, mourners used to be fed on a generous scale. The best of food and **Tabarruk** used to be sent out to people at their homes. Hundreds of individuals used to receive cash allowances to enable them to make **Tazias**. Gold coins used to be freely distributed at Imambaras and Sabeels. They built an imposing Imambara in Bahraich, where Majlises used to be held on a grand scale, and the best kind of **Tabarruk** distributed.

Zuljinnah models also used to be taken out from here. State Imambara had their own **waiz** or **Aalim** specially employed by the Government, and **Zakirs** were reserved for other public Majlises. Azadari in Braich progressed greatly as result of this keen interest and dedication. In Alirazabad also an Imambara was built, the expresses of which were borne by the father and son, thereby encouraging the people in that direction.

MUBARAK HAVELI

There is an ancient apartment inside Mochi Darwaza in Lahore which is believed to have been the residence of Faizi and Abul Fazal, and a dwelling abode of Mulla Mubarak. It is also said that Mir Bahadur Ali, Nadir Ali, and Bahad Ali had built this Haveli during the Moghul rule. A son was born to Bahadur Ali at the same time as when its construction work was completed. Believing this coincidence to be an auspicious event, he named the building as "Mubarak Haveli". This is the same building where Ranjit Singh had imprisoned Shah Shuja; and it was from this house that the world famous diamond, 'Kohinoor', was taken away from Shah Shuja. When he escaped to Ludhiana, Ranjit Singh took possession of this Haveli. After him Khersingh and Ghulam Mohiyuddin took its possession by turns. Finally, Nawab, Ali Raza Khan purchased, and later, his successor, Nawab Nawazish Ali, renovated and gave it a new pattern with a spacious Hall, a courtyard, and a modern type of water fountain on the lines of Imambaras of Lucknow. The decorations in the Hall also are similar to Lucknow

types, with huge chandeliers and goblets hanging from the roof, the wall decorated with recess work and fitted with huge costly mirrors, high-class inscriptions, graceful **Zarih** of silver, a fine pulpit, and turbans and alums. The building presented a heavenly view when illuminated in the evenings.

Afghan, Irani and local **Zakirs** and **Waizeen** used to address the Majlises here from the 1st of Moharrum to the Ashura Day. The Majlises that used to be held here were unmatched in the whole of Punjab in their scope and magnitude. People of various communities including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Sunnis and Shias used to attend the Majlises addressed by Maulana Syed Abu Qasim Hairi, Maulana Syed Ali Hairi, Maulana Abdul Ali Hirvi, Maulana Mohsin Ali Sabzwari, and Maulana Hafiz Kifayat Husain. Meals used to be served out night and day. Generous portions of higher-quality **Tabarruk** was freely distributed. According to historian Kanhiyalal of Lahore, more than Rs. 10 000/-used to be spent annually. **Mehendi**, **alum**, **Zuljinnah** and **Tazia** processions from all over the city used to converge here, where mournings and breast-beatings used to last all through the Ashura night, followed by **Zuljinnah** procession in morning.

ZULJINNAH ROUTE

The Qizilbash Nawabs had won the hearts of the people with their nobility of character and consideration for the welfare of the poor. Everyone was impressed with their deep devotion to Imam Husain (A.S.). Despite his high social status, Ameer Azam

would attend the Moharrum Majlises like any other ordinary servant, and serve the gathering; and everyone, low or high, used to attend these Majlises for all the ten days, and gained mental and spiritual enlightenment, impressed by his unassuming manners and exemplary intellect. His conduct in public gatherings and Majlises used to offset the wrong and prejudiced notions which the adversaries had created in respect of Azadari. The **Zuljinnah** procession that started from here used to be watched by thousands of men and women. The heavens used cloth, people would recollect to lament aloud, as it were, when the Nawab used to step out barefooted, holding the reins of the horse with tears streaming down like little rivulets. The **Zuljinnah** used to be ladden with costly jewels, rare type of sword, a shield, saddle, and stirrups. Seeing red stained cloth, people would recalled the horse which Imam Husain (A.S.) had ridden, and burst out lamenting and beating their breasts. A distinguished person would carry a costly umbrella protectively own **Zuljinnah**, keeping his pace steadily in uniformity with the slow movement of the processionists. People by the lakhs, numerous breast-beating groups, breast-beatings with iron chains and recitals of eulogies and epicediums, all these were new trends which the devoted subscribers of Azadari—the Qizilbash Nawabs—gave to Lahore for the first time.

This procession would pass through all the densely populated localities of the ancient city of Lahore. Enroute, scented water of **Kewra** and **gulab** (rose water) would be sprayed over the mourners; and milk mixed with saffron and various other drinks

would be freely distributed at the Sabeels, hot tea being served during the winters. Distinguished persons in every locality would come out and receive the processionists who comprised men from various religious sects. Thus would the Ashura Day pass off and culminate at the "Karbala". This has been the grand pattern of mourning during Moharrums in Lahore for the last 125 years or so. The custodians of this Imambara were Nawab Nisar Ali Khan, Nawab Fateh Ali Khan and Nawab Mohammad Ali Khan, in that order. The present custodian is Nawab Muzaffar Ali Khan.

With the coming into being of the State of Pakistan, while there came about a new spirit in cultural life everywhere, Azadari in Lahore also gained a dynamic expansion. The mourners got a fresh impetus, newer trends set in, Majlises started being held in every home, and every locality organized its own mourning procession. So numerous have the number of Majlises become during the ten days of Moharrum, that if any person wanted to attend all the Majlises within 20 hours, even then it would not be possible for him to complete one round. Scores and scores of mourners can be seen today frequenting the streets and lanes of this widespread city. People gather eagerly at mourning centres, where they are enlightened on the true Islamic values of life, and perpetuate with tears the sacred memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) for the inspiring sacrifice he made for the future of Islam.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XXXXII

A BRIEF NOTE ON MOURNING

PROCESSIONS AND IMAMBARAS

IN LAHORE

With the sighting of the Moharrum moon, every single mourner dons black mourning attires. Every home becomes a virtual mourning place. Majlises and lamentations commence. People start sleeping on bare floors in place of comfortable beds. All luxuries cease. Every Muslim abstains from merriments. Radio Pakistan suspends all its music programmes. All Imambaras vibrate with Majlis sermons and lamenting cries. Rishi Bhavan the residence of Dr. Riaz Ali Shah, Imambara Khwajgan, Imambara Mubarak Haveli and Takia Sadhuvan are the centres where large scale mourning sessions of are held. These Majlises which commence in the early hours of the morning last late into night till 1 P.M. Azakhana Syed Alif Shah inside Delhi Darwaza is the most

important mourning centre in Lahore. So great is the number's of mournings centres in this city that is difficult to list them all. I have however, listed a few of these in a passing manner, which are as under :

Imambara Saidey Shah (Purana Azakhana),
Mochi Darwaza :

Imambara Khwajgan Narowali, Mochi Darwaza :

Imambara Mubarak Haveli (the ancient Mourning Centre of the Qizilbash Nawabs. Majlises are held here at 10 O'clock in the Morning);

Nisar Haveli (Another important mourning centre of Nawab Qizilbash. Here, Majlises are held at Night).

Imambara Ghulam Ali Khan, Moghul Haveli,
Mochi Darwaza ;

Rabat Hyderia, Mochi Darwaza ;

Imambara Husniya Hall, Mochi Darwaza ;

Imambara Ahmad Waeen, Lakdi Mandi ;

Imambara Habib Waeen, Lakdi Mandi ;

Imambara Syed Mubarak Begum (the impressive mourning centre of Sir Maratib Ali Khan),
Bhatti Darwaza.

Imambara Syed Jamaluddin, Bhatti Darwaza ;

Karbala Gamey Shah, outside Bhatti Darwaza ;

Imambara Darbar-e-Husain, Mori Darwaza ;

Khaima-e-Sadaat, Edward Road ;

Najaf Manzil, Mozang ;

Imambara Baltistaniyan, Krishen Nagar ;

Imambara Qasr-e-Batool, Wahdat Colony ;

Imambara Balak Syedan, Krishen Nagar ;

Qasr-e-Abu Talib, Samanabad,

Shah Najaf, Gulberg ;

Imambara Model Town ;

Bait-ul-Imam, Lytton Road ;

Azakhana, Abbot Road ;

Imamia Hall, Sagar Road, Saddar ;

Imambara Nasir Shah, Moghulpura ;

Imambara Shia'an, Nabipura ;

Imambara Sheikhan, Mujahidabad.

ALUM PROCESSIONS

Generally, only Majlises are held from the 1st to 3rd day of Moharrum. Alum procession comes out on the 3rd of Moharrum. This procession is organized under the supervision of Sarwar Saheb. Before 1947, an alum procession used to be taken out from Koocha-e-Faquirkhana, in Bazaar Hakeeman, on the 5th of Moharrum. Faquir Syed Nasiruddin and Syed Munawar Ali Shah Kazmi used to stand facing one another before the alum and lament by beating their breasts. Another alum procesion is also organized by this same family in the same locality. This is known by the name of Dada Shah's alum. Shabih-e-alum is taken from Imambara Nasir Shah on the 6th of Moharrum. Certain mourning centres take out their alums on the 8th.

MEHENDI PROCESSION

Mehendi processions, and in certain places, Taboots are taken out on the 7th in memory of the martyrdom of Hazrat Qasim Ibne Imam Hasan (A.S.). It was a custom in the bygone days to place Mehendi (henna dust) in a plate inside a well-decorated palanquin incensed with burning sandalwood and frank-incense crystals. In the forefront march the drum beaters, followed by the processionists. Then come the breast-beating groups. Behind them comes the palanquin with the Mehendi; and behind Mehendi come men mounted on horses and Tongas in the same manner as done on the occasion of Barawafat procession in Rabiul-Awwal. Besides Faquirkhana, Mehendi procession used to be taken out from Takia Mirasiyan also, accompanied by lamentations upto the Nawab's Haveli. Nawab Nawazish Ali Khan used to receive the procession personally and distribute Tabarruk to the mourners, and money among the poor, whom he treated with great respect. As a result of his personal efforts, Ashura Day used to be Government holiday. The employees of Railway Workshop at Lahore used to lose their wages on holidays. Nawab Nawazish Ali Khan, therefore, announced that any Railway employee who took leave for the sake of mournings, would be paid personally by him for the number of days he absented himself for that purpose.

SHABIH-E-ZULJINNAH

Zuljinnah processions are taken out from various Imambaras in Lahore during the last three days i.e., on the 8th 9th and 10th of Moharrum. There is, for

instance, the procession taken out from Haveli Mian Khan on the 5th, which some people call as "Abbasi Ghorey". On the 9th and 10th, these procession come out from every Imambara and from every locality in the city, the one from Mochi Darwaza being most mentionable.

Ashura night is the most significant and tragic night. People generally keep awake throughout this night. All Mourning Centres remain open, and people flock to pay homage at the Tazias there. Zuljinnah processions commence soon after midnight. Mubarak Haveli, Nisar Haveli and Imambara Alif Shah are the most crowded Centre. The scene becomes most impressive and awe-inspiring when the Zuljinnah procession of the Nawab reaches the Imambara. This Zuljinnah procession which starts from Nisar Haveli, passes various Imambaras enroute before it reaches Karbala Gamey Shah. Similarly, the one from Imambara Alif Shah also moves throughout the night from one centre to another before it joins the main procession of the Nawab in the morning.

FIRE-WALK MOURNINGS

Breast-beating while walking on fire is observed at Qasr-e-Batool in Wahdat Colony, the Imambara near Railway washing Line and some other centres on the night preceding the Ashura Day. This custom of mourning was current in Burma, Madras, the Deccan, Lucknow and other places. In Lahore, it has been a regular feature since the last eight or nine years. The actual operation of this frenzied form of

mourning comprises of walking bare-footed to and from upon a strip of ground about 15 feet in length that has been previously dug and filled with burning coal. Breast-beating groups come in turns and stroll over this burning strip several time. The wild cries of "Husain-Husain" and the sight of frenzied beatings of breast at this juncture surpasses one's emotional limits; and people who watch this amazing feat cannot help reconstructions mentally the scene when the members of Imam Husain's household and the Ahle Bait went through what must have been a more anguishing experience.

ASHURA EVE

Ashura Day observances commence generally at 8 or 9 O'clock on the morning of the 10th of Moharrum with 2 Rakaats of Namaz-e-Ashura, 2 Rakaats of Namaz-e-Ziyarat followed by the Ziyarat of the Karbala martyrs. Then follow incantations of Divine Virtues on rosaries, followed by Dardood [alutations to Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and his Ahle Bait]. People then join the procession; some for breast-beatings, and others for paying homage at Karbala Gamey Shah. In some mourning centres, Majlises are held. At the time of Asr (evening prayers)—the time when Imam Husain (A.S.) was martyred—when people reach the peak of their grief. It is only after this hour that the mourners sit down to meals over which prayers have been offered. The meals consist of plain bread and cooked vegetable leaves or Dal. It is with this simple food that the mourners break their day-long fasts.

ZIYARAT-E-TASBEEH

There are other items of religious importance in various places besides Tazias, alums, Taboots and Zuljinnah. There are, for instance, such sacred relics. There can be in the possession of only Ahle Bait (A.S.)—Publishers like the sacred lack of the hair of Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (A.S.), personal belongings of Hazrat Fa'imatuz Zahra, Imam Hasan, Imam Husain and Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.). Majlis is held at 2 O'clock in the afternoon at Kothi Khalifa Saheban on Abbot Road. After the Majlis, a certain gentleman from a house across the road comes and joins the crowd here with a rosary in his hand. As the Asar prayer-time approaches, the beads of this rosary start turning red, like the colour of blood. Thousands of men assemble here to pay homage to this Rosary, accompanied by severe breast-beatings.

SHAME-GHAREEBAN

The sun, pale yellow after its long and consumating journey from the East horizon, sinks down tiredly beyond the hazy Western horizon. The mosques start echoing with the resonant calls of prayers. "Allah-ho-Akbar", cries the Mo'azzins; and those who hear are provoked to think not only of the Greatness of Allah, but also of the person whose sacrifice of life made possible the survival of this Call. The thought of "Husain" electrifies itself with the sound-waves of this call, filling the atmosphere with the stirring undulations of the call becoming the believers to prostrate themselves before Allah the Almighty. These awe-inspiring calls, this sight of numberless mosques,

these sources of Islamic concepts and conduct owe their continuity to the unique sacrifices Imam Husain (A.S.) and his devoted comrades made on the 10th of Moharrum of the year 61 Hijra. It were their martyrdoms on the field of Karbala that infused a fresh life into the perishing body of Islam.

Thus, each day the sun rises and sets; each Azan (call to prayers) that one hears; each mosque where the believers bow down to the Lord Almighty, is a reminder of the blood baths that took place during the first ten days of the fateful Moharrum in 61 A.H., culminating in the martyrdom of Imam Husain on the 10th of the same month. Therefore, this day is of a extra-special significance for those who believe in one God (Allah), in Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) as the last of Divine Messengers, and in Ahle Bait (family members) as his Divinely exalted successors. So, at sunset on the unforgettable day, the believers offer their Maghrib prayers, and after that, assemble inside Imambaras (mourning centres). This is the time now for mourning, weeping and condoling in memory of the martyrs of Karbala. It was at this hour in 61 A.H., that the household members of the grandson of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) were in an utterly destitute position. The butchered and mutilated bodies of the martyrs lay littered over the field, unshrouded and unattended. The Ahle Haram (Household members of Imam Husain's family) were virtually orphaned. The mourners in the Imambaras and elsewhere see mentally before their eyes the scene on the desert sands of Karbala. Their hearts throb achingly, their eyes tearful, and their breasts heaving

sighs and moans of anguish, the mourning community of Muslims sits at the Majlis with gloomy faces bath in look and gestures.

In the silence, broken only by suppressed sobs and sighs, the waiz (speaker at Majlis) then ascends the pulpit; and with this the lights in the hall are switched off. The intensity of moanings and lamentations that now flow forth, rent assunder the air. The speaker then describes the events of this fateful night at Karbala; and the audience just abandon themselves to a peak of emotional tumult. Finally, then, the mourners return to their homes and drop themselves on the bare floor like people struck with a colossal calamity.

The same scenes take place again on the 12th, 20th and 30th of Moharrum; and once again on the 10th of Safar, when Soyem, Daswan, Beeswan and Mahina ceremonies are observed respectively.

And so goes on Azadari, perpetually.

CHEHLUM

Chehlum (40th day of Imam Husain's martyrdom) is observed on the 20th of Safar in the same manner as the Ashura Day (10th of Moharrum) when Tazia and Zuljinnah processions are taken out and Majlises held. After parading whole day through the thoroughfares of the city, the procession terminates at Karbala Gamey Shah in the evening. Processions are taken out on the 19th of Safar also, but the Chehlum in Lahore remains an event observed in an extraordinary manner.

CHOOP TAZIA

The Choop Tazia or "silent procession" with the Taboot (Shrine model) of Imam Husain (A.S.) is taken out on the 28th of Safar ; and then, Majlises are held on the night of 8th Rabi-ul-Awwal at Karbala Gamey Shah, lasting till the early hours of the next morning, which is the last day of the period of mourning. A great crowd of mourners attends the Majlis on this day. After the Majlis, a procession comprising of Tazias, Gehwaras (cradles) and Taboots is taken out. For the first time (in 1392 A.H.), this year, "Silent procession" of mourners commenced from Karbala Gamey Shah and terminated at Balak Syedan after passing through Krishen Nagar.

With the Silent Procession and its disposal, the chain of mourning observances normally comes to a halt till the onset of the next Moharrum ; but in Lahore, Majlises continue to be held on Thursdays and Friday nights throughout the year.

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AZADARI**A HISTORICAL REVIEW****OF INSTITUTION OF A AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)****CHAPTER XXXXIII****AZADARI IN THE EYES OF OTHERS**

Azadari is a prevalent tradition respectfully observed by those who realize the true significance of the Tragedy of Karbala. To such person, Azadari is the means of religious ventilation of natural grief through lamentations over the inhuman manner in which the beloved grandson of our Holy Prophet was martyred along with his dear kith and kin and devoted comrades for the sake of what was, and remains to be, a Good, Beautiful and True cause of Islam in its Divine original form.

There is, however, also a sect of people who disapprove of mourning for the martyrs of Karbala. They regard this natural outlet of grief as an 'innovation'. Donning of black mourning dress (which is almost universal on sad occasions), in the eyes of these people, is something detestable. They wear new clothes during the month of Moharrum, and don gay red-coloured attires on Ashura day—the day on which

Imam Husain (A.S.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet, was butchered, and his head severed from the body after being starved of food and water for three days running. These people spray scents and perfumes on their clothes and visit the graves of their dead kith and kin, and place flowers over them. And since the idea of mourning for the martyrs does not appeal to their thinking, they create hindrances in the way of others whose faith in Islam is incomplete without Azadari for the flesh and bone of the Holy Prophet which Yazeed caused to be defiled wantonly on the field on Karbala.

And Yet, what a paradoxical conduct! These very people recite Shahadatnamas (versified compositions on the martyrdom of Imam Husain) at their homes and mosques, reviving in an austere and moving manner the tragic events of Karbala. They offer prayers over sweets and distribute it in their localities. They also serve free meals in the name of Karbala martyrs. Sermons on Karbala are delivered at their mosques, and those endowed with feelings for the progeny of the Holy Prophet even relieve themselves by weeping over the tyrannies committed upon Imam Husain (A.S.) and other martyrs. They even take out Tazias on Ashura Day. Though they do not beat their breasts, they nevertheless, mourn by reading aloud elegies (Nauha Khawani) on the Imam. They take out processions wherein they exhibit acrobatics. They raise the cries of "Ya Husain" and "Ya Ali". These processions carry Tazias also. In short, this sect of Muslims pay homage to Imam Husain (A.S.) according to their own way of feeling. Strangely

enough, the element of joy and rejoicings dominates their manner of commemorating a tragedy that stands unmatched in the annals of history. By and large, their observances reflect more of festivity than austerity.

This sect of Muslims organize sessions of the complete reading of Quran (Quran khani) and erect Sabeels (water stands) in the name of Imam Husain (A.S.). Some individuals even observe the occasion with mournings, like Mian Sirajuddin, the trader in books, did in the past by holding Majlises at his home like the Shias do. Nazim Husain Nazim (d. 1917) used to read out epicediums in honour of Imam Husain (A.S.). Mir Sardar Husain Habib used to hold Sozkhwani sessions. Shahzada Arshad Gorkani, Hakeem Shujauddin and his son, Sahibzada Hakeem Ahmad Shuja, also used to compose epicediums and recite them at gatherings. Even today there are several ulema in this sect who address regular Majlises and weep and make others, too, weep during their sermons.

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CHAPTER XXXXIV

AZADARI IN HYDERABAD (SIND)

Hyderabad was once the capital city of Sind. Azadari has prevailed here since centuries. "Qadam-gah-e-Maula Ali" is the Central Imambara in Hyderabad. Subsequent to the creation of the State of Pakistan, people from various parts of undivided India came and settled down in this City. There is, therefore, a mixed variety of observances during Moharrum, each ethnic group exercising their own traditions in respect of Majlises, processions, Tazias, Taboots and allied activities. There are several mourning centres from which large processions are taken out. For first full ten days of Moharrum, the city echoes with the cries of "Husain—Husain".

Omar bin Khasus was the Governor at Mansura in Sind round about the year 142 A.H. It was during this period that Abdul Al Ashutar—the famous missionary of the Zaidi sect—was martyred. It is on the

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basis of the existence of this data that among the generations of Arabs from Yemen in Sind, Mulla Mubarak, Faizi, Abul Fazl and certain other historical figures have been described as Shia Zaidis (It is possible that Mulla Mubarak's ancestors may have been Zaidis, but Faizi and Abul Fazal, doubtless, belonged to the Athna-e-Ashari school of thought).

In 270 A.H., A Fatemi Daa'ee initiated his missionary work. The emergence of Multan and Mansura as Ismaili States was, thus, the resultant of his preachings. Their identity as sectarian States is now a mere lifeless chapter in the chronology of time and events; but in every nook and corner of the province of Sind, the name of "Ali" continues on the lips of men, women and children. Vestiges of past concepts are, of course, noticeable; but merely as relics of antiquity. In contrast, the Mulaies (devotees of Ali A.S.) are conspicuous by their numbers. The Sumros, who are the pure and original racial group in Sind, are Alavis and Husainis in the genealogical context. They had ruled over Sind for not less than 500 years, roughly; and after them came the Talpure who reigned supreme for more than half a century.

CONTRIBUTION OF TALPUR RULES

OF HYDERABAD (SIND)

TO THE CAUSE OF AZADARI

The Talpurs of Sind, as has been stated above, were once the rulers of this large province. From the time of Mir Fateh Ali Khan (d. 1802) to the period of Mir Naseer Khan, these nobles played an important

role in the promotion and progress of Azadari, Majalises and elegiac literature in Sind. The Talpur rulers had the services of Ulema and prominent scholars of Iran. Among the Talpur rulers must be mentioned the names of Mir Karam Ali Khan and Mir Murad Ali, the fourth in the line, who were notable poets who wrote in Persian, and were devotionally attached to Aal-e-Mohammad (A.S.) The sixth and the last ruler was exiled to Calcutta, where he was imprisoned on 17th February, 1843. Wajid Ali Shah, the dethroned Nawab of Oudh, was also in exile at Calcutta about the same time. Both these erstwhile rulers were of the same school of religious thought; and both were distinguished poets and scholars, and were devout adherents of Azadari. They passed the rest of their lives in exile in Calcutta.

THE MALANGS OF SIND

The Talpur rulers were not only good poets and scholars themselves, but were personally associated in the promotion of Persian, Sindhi and Urdu literature in Hyderabad. During their period of supremacy, Azadari took great strides, the Maulaies and Malangs being the most enthusiastic participants in its promotion and progress. Maulaies are persons devotionally attached to Maula Ali (A.S.), in whom they have explicit faith; and Malangs are a class of Muslim Dervishes or mendicants, also devoted to Ali (A.S.), who keep long hair and leave them uncombed. Their manner of worship consists mainly of Zikr (incentation of Divine Attributes), Darood (recitation of salutations to the Holy Prophet) and Na'ara-e-Ali (the full-throated cry of "Ali-Ali"); and their favourite

occupation is mourning and breast-beating in memory of the Ahle Bait and the Imams. Wherever they go, and wherever they settle down, they hoist the flag of Hazrat Abbas, initiate and introduce the practice of breast-beating and propagate the cause of Azadari.

"Qadamgah" is the local centre of mourning in Hyderabad, where Dada Shah Saheb, Anjuman-e-Hyderia and numerous other individuals organize Majlises and processions. With the onset of Moharrum, the whole city of Hyderabad echoes with the cries of "Husain-Husain". Due to the keen personal interest taken by Mirza Faridun Baig's family and personalities like Hasan Ali Baig, Ali Nawaz Baig and certain others, socio-cultural traditions and customs continue to thrive here.

PAR

Alums are hoisted not only in the imambaras in Hyderabad and the whole of Sind, between open places and fields are also used for the purpose. They hoist an alum aloft on a raised base and is known by the name of "Par". The place thus marked is reserved solely for the purpose of mournings. In Lucknow, such lofty alums used to be called "Chhar". It is a Herculean job to lift and carry these alums, which are hoisted as soon as the Moharrum moon has been sighted, and remain aloft till the 25th of Zilhaj. Drum beatings are arranged at these spots, commencing from the 1st to the 12th of Moharrum.

Mourners don black altires during Moharrum not only in Hyderabad but the whole of the province, and even in the Punjab also. The Sunnis differ in this

respect in as much as they wear black mourning dresses till the 10th of Moharrum, while the Shias do the same till the Chehlum, or the 8th of Rabi-ul-Awwal. Tando Torha in Hyderabad is the main locality where mournings take place. Every house in this locality transforms itself into a mourning house with the onset of Moharrum; and the whole city vibrates with lamentations and mourning activities on Ashura Day, i.e. the 10th of Moharrum. A notable feature in Hyderabad is that both Suni as well as Shia men and women hold Majlises and participate in Zuljinnah and alum processions.

THATTA

Thatta is one of the ancient capital cities of the province of Sind, and enjoys a reputation and importance of its own. Azadari prevailed here much before the advent of Moghals in India, and continued even after the liquidation of the Moghal empire. Eminent social figures from Iraq used to visit Thatta periodically. In the tenth century, Hijra, a religious scholar by the name of Mirza Hasan had converted Mulla Ahmad Faruqi and Qazi Nasrullah Daibali's son to Shiaism. Mulla Ahmad Faruqi, after his conversion to Shiaism at the age of 22, moved over to Meshhed in Iran, where he learnt Quranic philosophy, Islamic jurisprudence and studies in Traditions under the tutorship of Maulana Afzal Na'en. From Meshhed he then went to Yezd. Here, under the able guidance of Mulla Kamaluddin Husain Tabeeb and Mulla Mirza Jan, he learnt medicine and philosophy. Thereafter he presented himself at the court of Shah Tahmasb

Safavi in Qazvin. After a short stay here, he proceeded to Mecca and Medina during the time of Shah Ismail II, where he performed the Haj and paid homage at the sacred tomb of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.). After gaining benefits in the learned company of prominent ulema here, he returned to India and presented himself at the Darbar of Qutub Shah, the Governor in Golconda. From here, he went over to Emperor Akbar's court, where the Emperor did him honour by enlisting him as one of the pannel of authors of Tareekh-e-Alfi.

Mulla Ahmed, as has been stated above, had voluntarily become a Shia at the hands of Mirza Hasan. His subsequent Shia activities, therefore, enraged his adversaries. This religious hatred on the part of his enemies finally led to his assassination by Mirza Faulad Barlas in 996 A.H. in Lahore, and was buried there. So malicious was the spite of his fanatic enemies that his interned body was dug out of the grave and set fire to. It is obvious that the family members and other relatives of Mulla Ahmad Faruqi in Thatta must have been devoted to Azadari. As such, the death of one of their progeny in a noble cause must have infused a fresh life and spirit in their devotional regard for Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and his generations.

Besides Thatta, Sukkur, Robri and several other towns, where mournings are observed, Azadari is progressing steadily in practically every nook and corner of Sind, including desert settlements and far-off villages, where alums can be seen at almost every house. Lamentations and Majlises are organized all

over the province with due reverence and enthusiasm. The Ismailis command great influence in these areas. It is customary in this sect to conceal everything concerning their religious doctrines. Thus, the institution of Azadari, too, is rather obscure here, though it can be confidentially asserted that both Hindu and Muslims communities in Sind are deeply devoted to the cause of mourning. To lament over the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) is a way of life with the people here since very ancient times. In certain areas of this province, Khojas and Pirs also observe mourning rites with great religiosity. The cry of "Ali—Ali" and recountings of the events of the Tragedy of Karbala are the most favourite occupations of the Sufis in this region.

SEHWAN AND BHITSHAH

Hazrat Syed Osman Shamsuddin Lal Shahbaz, son of Syed Ebrahim Kabir lived in Sehwan. He died in 1730, and was buried at Sehwan Sharif?

Makli in the Thatta district. His mystic poetry in Persian is very popular with masses as well as the intellectual class. Groups of mystics, known commonly as Qalandars, mourn through severe breast-beatings at his tomb in Moharrum. Lal Shehbaz Qalandar was himself a devout Azadar. He travelled widely; and whenever he went, he would hoist an alum, hold Majlises and proceed to his next destination. It is well-known that he had introduced the practice of Azadari in "Powan". There is a reference to his mystic poetry in a ascholarly work entitled **Muraqqa Multan**.

He covered the areas ranging from the Himalayan region to western India in the North, including the Punjab, Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, Multan, Bahawalpur, Sukkur, Hyderabad, Khairpur Mirs and Karachi, where he carried on the missionary work of propagating Islam and promoting Azadari. Innumerable number of persons became his disciples. In all he built 46 Imambaras and several mosques.

In and around Kot Diji, he used to carry on his missionary work among his Sindhi disciples. Impressed by his fame and reputation, Mir Sohrab Khan, the Nawab of Khairpur, presented himself personally before Lal Shehbaz Qalandar to become his disciple. On his behest the Nawab built an Imambara in his State, and allocated funds for its maintenance from his State Revenue, for which he personally secured the approval of his Government machinery.

It was a routine with Lal Shahbaz Qalandar to hoist an alum at every place he went; and at this spot, he would detail a Malangs who would sit to watch over it and light an oil lamp at night by way of illumination. These faithful Malangs would work like dedicated knights for the cause of Azadari purely on a voluntary basis.

Another great missionary personality and el gist poet of Sind is Shah Abdul Lateef (d. 1791), whose tomb lies in Bhit Shah. Like those of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's disciples, the disciples of Shah Abdul Lateef, too, have an extraordinary attachment for Azadari.

KHAIRPUR MIRS

There was once a State in the province of Sind, situated south of Sukkur and equidistant from Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Parkar and Hyderabad on one side and River Indus on the other. Khairpur is the Capital of that once existent State. It was Mir Sohrab Khan Talpur (d. 1830) who had founded this State in 1784. He was a great poet who wrote in Persian under the pseudonym of 'Sultan'. The collection of his verses contains numerous epicediums which show that he was an active subscriber of Azadari.

After Mir Sohrab Khan, Rustam Khan became the ruler, followed by Ali Masud, Khan, who promoted the cause of Azadari to an appreciable extent. He had a very deep affection and devotional regard for Imam Husain (A.S.), so much so that he had expressed it emphatically in his will that he be buried on the soil of Karbala in Iraq. Accordingly, in deference to his wishes, his coffin was preserved for a few days in 1311 A.H., and later, buried on the sacred soil of Karbala in Iraq.

Similarly, Mir Faiz Mohammad Khan was also a dedicated subscriber of Azadari. He used to abstain himself from all merriments as soon as the Moharrum moon was sighted. Like all other true devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) and other martyrs of the Karbala Tragedy, he used to don black mourning attires and organize Majlises during mourning period. Inspired by his devotional regard for Imam Husain (A.S.) and the exalted progeny of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.), he went on a long pilgrimage tour of the Holy places in

Iran, Iraq and Arabia. The generous contributions and donations in cash and kind that he made while on this homage paying journey is still remembered in superlative terms (Ref. Mazi un-Najaf wa Hazir Ha', p.154).

Every ruler of this State, starting with Mir Imam Bakhsh and his subsequent successors, Mir Ali Nawaz Khan, Mir Faiz Mohammad Khan, and presently, Nawab Ali Musood Khan—every ruler of this former State excelled one another in their regard and service to the cause of Azadari. There are numerous Imam-baras in this State where Moharrum observance of devotional mournings symbolize the sacred purpose for which they were specifically built by the devotees of the cause of Azadari. This State exists no more as an independent administrative unit today; but the dedicated and devotional regard of Nawab Ali Murad Khan for Azadari and its conventional modes of observance continue with the same intensity of attachment as before. All of these noble personages have been eminent elegist poets of their time, and have been promoting the progress of elegiac poetry with cash as well as with personal encouragements in that direction.

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CHAPTER XXXV

AZADARI IN KARACHI

Time and space have never been static. They never will be; and civilization is a product of these two primary measures of our universe. As such, civilization also is an evolutionary process. The world, as we see it today in a geographic context, is not the same mass of land and water that it was when signs of organic life became evident on its surface. What applies to civilization, applies equally to the sphere of architecture—the means of providing an orderly arrangement for communal life. Thus it was that small settlements, in course of time, developed into villages; villages into towns and towns into cities and so on, into major geographic units.

Thus, walled cities which existed once, are no more in evidence today. The concept of Town-planning which once laid emphasis on the strategic necessity of providing four walls for a city to thwart the possibility of invasion by external hordes is now

something that one finds only in books of ancient history. Ours is an age of atomic devices and rockets. Things have changed radically from what they were before. So have cities become provinces on the maps.

Karachi is no exception to this unwritten law of the evolutionary process. It is also one of those cities whose dimensional growth has changed its original complexion. Modern Karachi, the densely populated and progressive port city in West Pakistan is a treasury of the history, traditions, cultures and languages of numerous different nations of undivided India. It is difficult to find a city elsewhere as cosmopolitan in its population composition as Karachi is. This is a city where, in one glance, one can see a social complex—whole pulsating with interminglings of various ethnic traits and cultures belonging geographically to Sind, Bombay, Bihar, U. P., Bengal, the Deccan (South India), C.P., Rajputana, the North-West Frontier Province the Punjab and Baluchistan. One can see here faces whose features represent varied facial characteristics, each peculiar to one or the other racial groups of Aryan, Dravidian and Mongolian nations. So is the case with the languages and dialects spoken here, which are as numerous as the groups constituting the overall population. Urdu, however, serves as the lingua franca; but in this matter, too, there is a sharp difference in account, the main variance being the one between the Delhi and Lucknow schools of expressional inflexions and diction. In the matter of dresses also, Karachi presents a kaleidoscopic picture of colour and style. In short, one can rightly use a

metapher, and say that Karachi is a "bouquet" of flowers, each flower of which has a distinct pattern, shape, colour shades and fragrance of its own.

Coming down to our subject, Azadari, like other religious practices, is also an integral part of the civic life in Karachi. Though primarily confined to a sect of Muslims, it is shared in varying degrees by a number of ethnic and cultural groups, the spirit and purpose being universal to all constituents. The Iranians domiciled here have their own distinct identity; the Khojas have their own Imambaras; people from Lucknow hold Majlises in their own traditional manner; the Amrohvis hold mourning congresses in their own typical way; the Baltists and Kashmiris take out mourning processions in their respective traditional customs. Thus the cultural history of Karachi is in the process of evolving a pattern which the future historian will aptly describe as an exquisite blending of varied cultural inheritances, spanning and fusing into one another the tradition and customs ranging from the Khyber Pass in the snows of the Himalayas in the North to the rocky region of the Ajanta caves in the South.

Thus, the Moharrum of Karachi is an epitome of one whole country enveloped in mourning. The multi-forms of Azadari, observed here, prove in an assertive manner that it is not merely the city that is mourning. Rather, it illustrates how various countries, various races and various nations of the world express their grief for the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.). One can hear eulogies and epicediums recited here in Gujrati, Sindhi, Hindi, Baluchi, Bengali, Pashto,

Multani, Urdu, Arabic, Persian and almost in every Oriental language. The same can be said in respect of the modes of lamentations for Imam Husain (A.S.) and other Karbala martyrs. Some beat their breasts to a bleeding point; some do the same to their heads and thighs. At some places Sozkhwani is arranged; at some places sermons. In some places, Mersia-khwani (recitals of epicediums) is done; at some places lectures are delivered, while yet at some places, Shahadatnamas (accounts of the martyrdoms of Imam Husain (A.S.) and other martyrs of Karbala) are read.

The city assumes an austere look, and the devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) go into mourning as soon as the Moharrum moon is sighted. Mourning programmes are printed and distributed by the thousands. Series of Majlises start being held. Sermons are delivered in continuous sessions. Radio Pakistan (and PTV Corporation also) suspend all music programmes. Lamentations can be heard at houses in every locality.

Karachi was an unassuming coastal city populated sparsely by fishermen in old times. Gradual urbanization and industrialization eventually transformed this modest city of fishing boatmen into a bustling city of mechanized industry with an ever-increasing number of factory workers, traders, commercial centres and godowns. This city became a part of Bombay presidency subsequent to the conquest of Sind by Charles Napier in 1843. Later, in 1930, when Sind was declared a separate province through an Act of the Government of India under British rule, Karachi assumed the status of being the Capital seat of the

new provincial Government of Sind. Then followed the historical partition of the Indian Continent in 1947 and the emergence of Pakistan as an independent and sovereign State, comprising of East Bengal and Sylhet in the East; and Sind, Baluchistan, Punjab and the North Western Frontier Provinces in the west, with a thousand miles of Indian territory in between. Notwithstanding this geographical gap, Karachi was declared the capital of the State of Pakistan, and thus became the nerve-centre uniting the two distant wings in all spheres of national activity. Thus, Karachi achieved its highest status of identity as a State Capital about a hundred years after the conquest of Sind by Charles Napier in 1843.

The Khoja and Ismailia communities held an influential and important status in the civic life of Karachi round about 1870. The city was then a modest port city with very little population, of which these two communities formed a minor portion with about a hundred persons who were Azadars. It must be noted here that Agha Khanis and Ismailis also subscribe religiously to the institution of Azadari. Among them was Lalan Ali Dina who was a person with indomitable moral courage. He studied the Holy Quran thoroughly; and with his own inclination after his study of Quranic philosophy, he changed his faith to Shiaism, which appealed to him as the right one. There are two versions concerning his conversion :

- (i) "Quoting reference to the report of Ashiq Ali Lalan, the newspaper correspondent Hadi Husain has written that Aghakhanis were in

majority. Their awareness of Islam as a religion was limited to the Kalima [Belief in the Oneness of Allah and the Divine Messengership of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.)], and a few Quranic verses. When certain person among them came to know through other sources about Quran as a comprehensive Book of Allah, they became thoughtful about it. Their interest and curiosity to know more about Quran made them invite one Alim (religious scholar) from Punjab. This scholar then apprised them fully with the contents and message of Quran, including the exalted status of the Twelve Infallible Imams. This enlightenment resulted in the voluntary conversion of a number of Agha Khanis to the folds of Shiaism of the Athna Ashari sect. These mass conversions led to violent riots between those who changed their faith and those who did not; and in the blood-bath that followed this fanatic violence, Lalan Saheb was also killed (Ref. Nooqoosh-e-Rah 10. 54)"

- (ii) "A certain teacher named Nusrat Ali Shah Ibne Arif Ali Shah, who was a Punjabi from Narowal, used to impart lessons in Quran to the people in Karachi in 1876. Agha Ali Shah and his group of supporters, who detested Nusrat Ali Shahs' enlightenment of Quranic teachings, started opposing these religious appraisals and holding of Majlises. Lalan Ali Dina, who was the founder of Imambara where these Majlises used to be held,

stood steadfast and countered Agha Ali's machinations. This conflict subsequently led to intermittent violence between the two groups. At last, in 1897, Nusrat Ali Shah had to pay with his life for the unshakeable conviction he had in the faith which he voluntarily adopted as his own. (Ref. Irshad, Karachi, dated 16th June, 1962.)

KHARADAR IMAMBARAS

There used to be a regular trade-traffic of businessmen from Arabia and Iran to Bombay and Karachi. Commercial transactions between these countries existed since long. Along with business-affairs, these traders performed their religious rites also in the cities they visited. Local populations of Bombay, Kathiawar and Khambat, also had mutual social inter-relationship with one another. Shias also lived in Karachi. Lalan Saheb and his well-to-do friends founded an Imambara in the city. Now, Shia mosques and Imambaras have always been objectionable institutions for the Sunni sect of Muslims. They apprehend that if the masses take a close look at the religious customs and observances of the Shias, listen to these sermons in their mosques and Imambaras, and get enlightened with their religious teachings, the fictitious character of built-up episodes in Islamic history served out to them, will invariably dawn upon them. They, therefore, regard it rather imperative to prevent Shia mosques and Imambaras from being built.

The Khojas, as stated above, were already the subscribers to the institution of Azadari in Karachi. In addition, orators from Iran, like Mirza Mohammad Jaffer, Mirza Mohammad Sadiq, Mirza Mohammad Shafi, and Bachal Shah—a Zakir from Sind, used to address local mourning congregations which persons from other communities also used to attend, the most outstanding personality among these being Ali Shah, the great-grandfather of Prince Karim—the present Agha Khan (Ref. Irshad).

When the opponents started creating trouble over mass conversions at the Imambara built by Lalan Saheb and his associates, the original Shias themselves built a Imambara of their own instead of re-conditioning the old Imambara. This was in 1878. This means that the old Imambara in Kharadar had been in existence since quite a long time. Thus the subsequently built Imambara is about a century and six years old.

In course of time, this new Imambara proved inadequate to hold the progressively increasing number of Shia mourners. Moreover, it was damaged also, as a result of an earthquake. Lalan Ali Dina, Ghulam Husain Chagla, Thador Thariani and Abdulla Jagan, therefore, decided to re-build this Imambara on most modern lines, providing more seating capacity. Thus, this Imambara which now stands in Kharadar, came into being once in 1915. Subsequently, additions and expansions were made to it by buying the adjacent house and annexing it to this Imambara. This Imambara of Karachi is the oldest Imambara in the city and serves as the most important mourning centre

where the most important, most impressive and most eloquent Majlises in Pakistan are held on an unmatched scale. The Sham-e-Ghariban Majlis of 10th Moharrum held here is relayed both on Radio and Television every year.

Besides these two Imambaras, there are several other Imambaras owned by individuals as well as by Associations. Every single Imambara in this society has been nicely planned and built on impressive designs. But Nava Imambara and the Purana Imambara excell all other Imambaras in their structural grace and architectural elegance. Their historical background and greatness add further charm to their ornamental decorations and size of attendances, not excepting, of course, the public appreciation of their religious, historical and architectural significance. Items of interior decorations like chandeliers, multilamped stands, carpets, the sacred relics, their replicas in short, everything in these Imambaras has a grace and identity of its own. Near by is a mosque, which remains agog with religious activity of one kind or the other almost round the clock throughout the year.

MEHFIL-E-SHAH-E-KHURASAN

By and large, the Khoja community of Shias are a deeply religious group, and participate generously in religious activities. This spirit is in their blood. It runs in them as a traditional inheritance with an emotional force that surpasses all materialistic considerations. The "Qaiser Bagh", and "Mehfil-e-Shah-e-Khorasan"—the Imambara built by the late Mohammad Ali Jomani—in Bombay, were the well-known

centres of Azadari and religious publications in India; and they still continue to be so. Their dedication to religion and the cause of Azadari came over to Pakistan also, with the same degree of devotional attachment when they migrated to the new State of Pakistan.

Thus, when the New Town Scheme of Greater Karachi was launched in this capital city of Pakistan, the reputed Habib family of the Khojas came out zealously and founded an Imambara on a very grand scale, under Shah-e-Khurasan Trust which progressively expanded both in size and grace. The mosque and the auditorium named after Qasim Ali, I.J. Gakul and the Zarih made of pure gold and silver by Habib Kasarewala for the holy tombs Jannatul Baqui, are items which are being appreciated by connoisseurs of Art all over the world.

The elegant hall, the exquisitely decorated ceilings and walls, the finely prepared alums, the rare sacred relics. Their replicas the punctual and well attended Majlises and the mammoth mourning procession taken out from here are a few of the extraordinary features of this Imambara, known by the name of "Mehfil-e-Shah-e-Khurasan." The Islamic Centre sponsored by the management of this Imambara is an organ of compilation and publications with an extensive programme, which when finalized and starts functioning, will bring out scholarly works in volume-sets, replacing the short journals and periodicals which it is publishing currently. These proposed compilations and literary works will no doubt go a long way in benefiting the reading public with their enlightening contents. This scheme has already made an initial start in this direction with

the compilation and publication of an English version of the Quran, complete with exhaustive notes and commentaries. *Nahjul Balagha* in English is another of its product.

HUSAINIYA IRANIYAN

Azadari, as a religious discipline, has been a current observance in Iran for over six centuries, commencing from the time of the Safavi rulers to the present times. Every Irani takes pride in calling himself a Shia; and every single man, woman or child is deeply attached to Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) as his generations. Whether it is the construction or renovations of sacred shrines, or expansions of educational institutions; whether it is the matter of missionary programmes or publication of Islamic literature, the lionhearted men and women of this deeply religious community come out generously with their finances in a measure that indicates that to them Islam is all that matters. Money is no consideration at all when the cause of Islam is the choice. To them, Islam comes first; and everything else after it. Their religious zeal, their numbers, and their monetary contributions during the Haj season in Mecca and Medina are things that astound the world. Even the Arabs, who are reputed as one of the wealthiest nations in the world, cannot help feeling appreciative of their astonishing generosity and zealous religiosity. The extent of their dedication to their faith, and the heights to which they can go with their monetary offers, can best be judged by taking a look at the elegant edification and princely upkeep and maintenance of the sacred shrines in Najaf, Karbala, Kazmeim, Samrra, Damascus and

Meshhad. The majestic sight of these holy places is an eloquent testimony of the devotional attachment these people have for the Imams of the Holy Prophet's Ahle Bait.

The role played by the Iranis in the promotion of Shia culture and traditions in the Indian subcontinent will never be forgotten at any time in the course of history. Elegant and imposing Imambaras in Calcutta, Bombay, Karachi and Quetta stand as monuments to the memory of the traders from Iran who built them at these places. "Husainiya Iraniyan", the Imambara built by Irani Shias in Karachi, and its smooth and efficient management is an example of administrative excellence. All Iranis living in Karachi are participating generously in the extension and expansion schemes of this institution. Blessed as it is with the patronage and untiring services of Hujjat-ul-Islam Aqai Mirza Mahdi Poya, this Imambara is taking big strides towards still higher heights of perfection in the sphere of structural and interior decoration as well as in the scope of providing more room for the ever-increasing attendances and utility in the realm of religious enlightenments. Mention must also be made of other persons, too, who share the honour of serving this centre with their ceaseless efforts purely on voluntary basis. It is indeed worth watching the deliberations at this Centre with its hall spacious enough to hold as many as 20,000 persons in a single session, and its Majlises drawing more than 2 lakhs of audience, at which mammoth congregations *Tabaruk* is distributed in a most efficient and streamlined

manner thanks to organisational planning and execution. People of all schools of religious thought attend Majlises here during the month of Moharrum; and the Iranian mode of mourning and lamentations for Imam Husain (A.S.) which is exhibited at this Centre has such an intrinsic appeal that a majority of the main mourning processions in the city converge and terminate at this Imambara, as if drawn irresistibly by a magnetic power.

NEW IMAMBARAS

The history of Pakistan as a new sovereign State commences from the historical day of 14th August, 1947. Hardly had this new Muslim State emerged on the political map of the world with Karachi as its capital without as much as a proper Secretariat or even a chair and table for office work, when the month of Moharrum heralded itself scarcely after three months of its infant existence. It was in this utterly chaotic and almost gypsy-like environment that Muslim refugees observed their first mourning period in this Port City on the coast of the Arabian Ocean. The sacred name of Imam Husain (A.S.) was used as an inspiring slogan in the political creation of Pakistan. It was the Divine appeal in the Imam's name that stirred Muslims to stake everything that was dear to them. When the Hindu fanatics started a wholesale massacre of Muslims in various parts of India, it was the revival of the events of Karbala Tragedy that sustained them in their calamity. Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of the Islamic State of Pakistan, had described this land of Muslims as an "ex-gratia gift of benediction that followed a

Majlis session". This statement is corroborated by a letter written by Hadi Husain and published in the **Nazzara** weekly of Lucknow, dated 7th January, 1946. The relevant part of this letter runs as under :

".....The convener of the Annual Meeting of Dargah Punjah Sharif in Delhi stated :

"Mr. Jinnah had held a Majlis at his residence in Bombay. One gentleman who attended this Majlis is present at this meeting. After the Majlis, Mr. Jinnah distributed Tabarruk (sweets) wrapped in handkerchiefs. These handkerchiefs bear the stamp of the map of Pakistan on them. If any one desires to see these handkerchiefs, he can contact this person and satisfy himself....."

(Ref. Nooqoosh-e-Rah, p. 63)

The Moharrum of 1947 was the first Moharrum which the new State of Pakistan observed in the background of tumultuous and hectic political activity culminating in the birth of a sovereign country among the comity of the nations of the world. It was during this first Moharrum in 1947 that the sanctity and pathos that go with this month asserted the element of grief over the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) with all the intensity of emotions that human hearts are capable of pouring forth. The Quaid-e-Azam, through an official directive, suspended all music programmes from Radio Pakistan till the 10th of Moharrum. This order continues to be in force to

this day, filling the time-gap with broadcastings of speeches on the events of the Tragedy of Karbala, recitals of epicdiums and eulogies and learned discourses on Islamic history. On the initiative and directives of the Quaid-e-Azam and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, plans and schemes for the development of Karachi were finalized within one year by Mr. Abu Talib Naqvi and a panel of expert Town-planners. Under this Development Scheme, provisions for mosques and Imambaras in every locality of the city were duly made.

Consequently, several Imambaras sprang up within a short space of time, and Majlises started functioning. The Imambara on Martin Road; the Shah-e-Karbala Imambara in Rizvia Colony; the Central Imambara of Lyaquatabad; Imambara Shah-e-Najaf and many other mourning centres subsequently came into being as a result of the initiative taken by the Founder of the State and his Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, in cognizance of the institution of Azadari as a part of the religious complex of the nation.

IMAMBARA BARA IMAM

Certain nobles of the Talpur dynasty of Sind had endowed a Trust with several thousand squareyards of land on Lawrence Road. In 1361 A.H., on the occasion of the 1300th Anniversary of Imam Husain's martyrdom, Haji Noor Mohammad built a mosque on this site. Other arrangements followed thereafter; and today this Imambara stands imposingly in this densely populated area. Majlises and mourning processions are regularly organized at this Centre.

IMAMBARA MARTIN ROAD

Then followed another major Imambara on Martin Road—the first Imambara to be planned on modern architectural lines. Construction of the mosque has been completed, while the construction of the main building is also nearing its completion. Maulana Syed Mohammad Mohsin Saheb is the custodian of this mourning Centre.

IMAMBARA MARKAZI IMAM BARGAH

This mourning Centre is located in Liaquatabad, formerly known as Lalukhet. This Centre has a reputation of its own, and is looked after by Maulana Syed Abid-us-Shabbar saheb.

IMAMBARA SHAH-E-KARBALA

This Imambara in Rizvia Colony is reckoned as one of the most popular spacious as well as elegant Centres in Karachi. Maulana Aneesul Hasnain Saheb is the Incharge here.

Besides the foregoing major Imambaras, there are scores of other smaller mourning Centres, like "Mehfil-e-Shuhada-e-Karbala" near Punjabi Club; "Mehfil Abul Fazlil Abbas" in Korangi; and the latest "Imambara Sajjadia" in North Nazimabad. In addition to these, there must be at least another 50 Imambaras, not to mention private Centres run by individuals. According to a rough estimate, there are about 2000 houses and mourning centres that serve the purpose of Azadari. Further, there are the famous public places like Khaliqdina Hall, the Nishter Park,

the Jehangir Park and other public places all over the city, where mammoth Majlises are held on mass-scale on specific occasions.

THE GRANDEUR OF MAJLISES IN KARACHI

The size of the crowds of mourners attending Majlises at the mourning Centres in Karachi surpasses the attendances at the Imambaras in other cities of Pakistan. Even the biggest Imambaras here prove insufficient to cope with the swelling number of persons who flock in unending streams to the overflowing premises of the mourning Centres. So great is the rush that people occupy the adjacent streets and lanes, the roof-tops or houses near by, and even climb to tree-tops in order to find a foot-space to enable them to have a view and hearing of the Majlis proceedings from these points of vantage. Those with cars, remain glued to their seats inside their vehicles, stringing up in a row extending over two miles. Most of the thoroughfares are closed to vehicular traffic. Scores of amplifiers and loud-speakers are installed at measured distanced so as to ensure that the voice of the speaker reaches the farthest corners of the mass of human sea which heaves literally like the giant waves of an ocean at the eloquent and moving reconstructions of the events of the Tragedy of Karbala.

The standard of speeches delivered at the Majlises here, expounding the teachings of Islam; emphasizing the urgent need for universal Muslim unity; pinpointing the philosophy and significance of Imam Husain's

martyrdom in the cause of Islam; discourses on Islamic history, concepts; and problems; and dwelling on the greatness and tribulation braved by the Holy Prophet's Ahle Bait and the Infallible Imams, are of the highest scholastic order. Besides the Shia and Sunni communities, the Majlises are attended by persons of various nationalities from foreign countries as well. All newspapers carry a summary of the sermons delivered at these Majlises, with photographs of the scenes at the Imambaras. This journalistic coverage continues during all the ten days of mourning sessions, Commencing from the 1st to the 10th of Moharrum each year.

ALLAMA TURABI

There are quite a few orators in Karachi who deliver addresses in a very impressive manner before the discerning and critical Karachi audiences, every one of these speakers, or Khateeb as they are called, being a missionary of Islam and the cause of Azadari. But orators like Maulana Ibne Hasan Saheb Jarchavi, Maulana Ibne Hasan Saheb Najafi and Maulana Mohammad Mustafa Saheb Jouhar are a class by themselves in the art of oratory. There are other also, who have won long-lasting public acclaim as recognized Khateeb and Alims from all sections of audiences.

But among the circle of orators, stands a person who towers above everyone else like the dizzy Everest towering in the Himalayan ranges.

This giant with un-matched intellectual dimensions is none other than the inimitable Allama Rasheed Turabi.

Allama Turabi's sermons are an exquisite blending of sheer force of smooth-flowing eloquence, art of oratory, classic literature and philosophy and current trends in modern thought. The magical appeal of his eloquent discourses and his own personal scholastic charm can be gauged by the size of the huge crowds that flock like bees to the combe to hear him deliver his speeches at Imambaras, public halls and parks, and even open fields, crammed like sardines in a pond. A crowd of 2,00,000 or more is but an ordinary attendance where this legendary orator of modern times takes a stance before the mike. So over powering, so spell-casting, so moving and so inspiring are his orations that the audiences are not satisfied with merely listening to him, but tape his speeches with tape-recorders which can be seen in hundreds at the meetings addressed by him. These tapes are then replayed at other places and homes.

And that is not all!

The Telephones Department of the Ministry of communications relays Allama Turabi's sermons to no less than 50 other Centres in different areas within the Municipal limits of Karachi through its network of communication lines.

And, Still, that is not all!

The matter does not end here!!

His voice with all its force of diction, undulations and vocal gestures, reaches with lightning speed to distant cities like Hyderabad, Multan and even Lahore. People in these far off cities make special

arrangements with the Telephones Department and secure special connections at high costs; and then, using hired amplifiers and other sophisticated technological apparatus, they listen to his sermons transmitted over the wires with these connections in their homes, hundreds of miles away from the actual person of Allama Turabi at the mike in Karachi. This honour, this public applaud, this mass approbation is something which no orator, except Allama Turabi, ever had the fortune of achieving, nor is there anyone who stands presently anywhere near his status as an orator in this sphere.

To sum up, Allama Turabi is an institution by himself in the realm of oration.

KARACHI MOURNING PROCESSIONS

Just as Majlises continue till the 8th of Rabi-ul-Awwal and mourning and lamentations last continuously for the first ten days of Moharrum, so also a series of mourning processions continue to be taken out in Karachi. The patience and discipline noticed on these occasions is really commendable. The Karachi community of mourners comprises of various sections from various parts of undivided India, like the Deccan (South India), Lucknow, Agra, Oudh, Jaunpur, Madras, Bengal, Kashmir, the North-West Frontier Province, Baltistan, Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan; and also from foreign countries like Iran, Arabia and other places. Each section of these ethnic groups observes Azadari in their own peculiar manner. Their elegist poets, Zakirs, and their mode of lamentation is typical. They

prepare independently their own alums. Tazias, Taboots and Shabihs and join in the observance of Azadari and processions. On certain dates, they take out silent processions. On certain dates, they go through breast-beating only. Sometimes they breast-beat in accompaniment to poetic recitals of elegies on the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) and others. One group do breast-beating with only one hand; another group uses both the hands in the process. Epicediums are read out in various languages, like Gujrati, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Punjabi, Persian and Urdu. These mourning processions measure no less than five miles in length, which appear like an ocean of humanity rolling in waves on the long and wide stretches of roads in Karachi.

Ashura nights and Ashura mornings are observed in the usual manner in accordance with the principles of Azadari. Lakhs of mourners parade through the city thoroughfares in mammoth processions, beating their heads and breasts in a frenzy of emotions accompanied by anguished cries of "Husain-Husain." These processions epitomize in themselves a world, mourning, languishingly in acknowledgement of the universal grief attached to the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.). In short, Karachi stands unequalled in the grandeur and scale in which Azadari is observed in Pakistan.

PECULIAR TYPE TAZIAZ

There is a faction among the Sunni sect who observe Qurankhwani, Fatehakhwani and Taziadari. Like the Shias who mourn and weep at Majlises, these

gentlemen also do the same as Taziadars while listening to recitals from "Shahadatnama". Also, they read out epicediums and elegies (Nauhakhwani) in their Tazia processions, which are evident in appreciable numbers in Karachi.

ELEGIAE RECITALS

As has been observed earlier, Karachi is a Delta of various races, nationalities, religions, literary heritages and cultures. Such a cosmopolitan life naturally proves to be conducive to literary and cultural progress, particularly so in the sphere of fine arts and aesthetic inclinations like painting, poetry etc. It was thus quite natural for elegiac poetry, too, to attain progressive trends; and it has done so. Consequently, there are many elegist poets in Karachi as there are Khateebis, among them the most popular poets being Josh, Aale Raza, Qaim Raza Naseem, Ziaul Hasan Raza, Karrar, Azim, Asar Jalil, Dr. Yawar Abbas, Saba Akbarabadi, Zafar Jaunpuri, Mir Razi Mir, Ali Hasan Shaadaan, Sardar Naqvi, Manzar Azeemi, Shahid Naqvi, Dr. Safdar Husain and Agha Sikandar Mahdi to mention only a few.

After the Ashura Day on the 10th Moharrum, mourning sessions are solely devoted to recitals of epicediums and elegies in memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) and other Karbala martyrs. These sessions commence with the punctual arrival of the hour when the speaker recites Salaam. The Mersiakhwans then read out Mersias (epicediums) one after another (or in a chorus) till it is time to disperse. The Mersias read out at these Majlises are an admixture of ancient

and modern styles of versification. Some poets adopt the lines on which great masters like Anees, Dabir and Rasheed wrote; while there is another group whose writings reflect modern trends in poetry and verse composition, both these styles being equally impressive in appeal. "Sozkhwani" which is a synonym for Mersiakhwani has more votaries in Karachi than it has elsewhere, and eminent sozkhwans (those who recite over and epicedium) reside here.

Noahas and Salams (elegies of and salutations to the Martyrs) have also reached a more perfect stage, surpassing the norms of breast-beating and lamentations. Noahas have been brought in line with modern demands, and the elegist poets in Karachi have raised their standard to match with other developing forms Urdu poetry. If one listens objectively to the Noahas read out by the bands of mourners, he will invariably realize that these compositions are not merely grief expressed in measured metre and rymes. Hearing it, one feels his heart throbbing with a new spirit and vitality. Noahas are not mere poems. They are a mission; they are epitomes of the literary complex of a nation. They are a pain which is sweet to endure.

Similarly, Salams are also a form of poetry. The names of great masters like Anees, Munis, Dabir and Auj flash into memory when one talks about this form. They were the greatest composer of Salams in the history of Urdu literature. This form of poetry has made a commendable progress in Pakistan. In Karachi, particularly, special symposiums are held, where recitals are limited solely to readings of Salams. However,

the best time to hear them is when they are recited amidst a band of breast-beating mourners, with people abandoning themselves to spontaneous appreciation through unsuppressed sobs.

MAJLISES FOR LADIES

Moharrum mourning sessions exclusively for ladies were not generally in vogue in Pakistan. It was only after 1947 that Majlises were organized expressly for the female section of the mourning population. In this field, too Karachi has taken a lead over other cities in the country, though Sargodha, Lahore, Multan Rawalpindi and other places also hold sessions for the ladies.

Local traditions dominate the mode of sermons at these Majlises, including Sozkhwani, Mersiakhwani and speeches. Breast-beating, combined with Noahakhwani is a striking feature of ladies' Majlises. Lately, a class of educated ladies is emerging in this sphere, who have distinguished themselves as good orators. There are already a ladies who are very popular Khateebas, and they are requisitioned in various parts of country to go and address sermons for ladies. These learned ladies have all the pre-requisites necessary for a seasoned Zakir.

In the sphere of poetry, too, there are quite a few ladies who compose excellent Nauhas and Salaams. There are also groups of ladies who constitute the breast-beating bands. Mass Azadari of ladies is in fact more elaborate and commands more attention than does the male complex, though their mourning

activities, including Majlises and **Shabihs**, are restricted to private homes and ladies' Imambaras. No male member has access to these places. As a matter of fact, women are ten times more engrossed in their concentration than men in their Azadari; not that this is an aspersion on the male sex! Nature has made women that way. In truth, they are the ones who procreate as well as promote the trends of thought, culture and breeding in human society. There are, and have been, individuals in these females of the human species who attained undying honours by emulating the exemplary codes of conduct left behind for posterity by such Divinely exalted personages as Hazrat Fatematuz Zahra, Hazrat Zainab and Hazrat Umme Kulsoom (A.S.).

SHAM-E-GHARIBAN

The night following the sunset on Ashura Day (10th of Moharrum) is as tragic as the dawn of the same day. As such, soon after sunset, the ladies asssembled at Imambaras, burst afresh with lamenting cries as if their men have just returned to a grief-stricken house after burying the body of one who had meant everything to them. The state of the males, too, is no less pathetic. Their sad faces, and eyes swollen with weeping, bespeak the state of a nation that has just returned from the cemetery after the State burial of their beloved Ruler who reigned supreme over their hearts as well. They then offer Fateha and condole the irreparable loss inflicted by fate upon them. Karachi surpasses all other cities in the country in the size as well as numbers of such Majlises soon after the nightfall on Ashura Day,

the Majlis addressed by Allama Turabi in the Imambara at Kharadar being the most impressive. His speech on this occasion is relayed by Radio Pakistan for the benefit of the eager listeners abroad as well as in the remote corners of Pakistan.

SHUB BEDARI

Mourners keep awake throughout the night after the sunset on Ashura Day, lamenting and beating their breasts in incessant spurts of spontaneous grief. This observance is known as **Shub Bedari**, literally meaning 'Sleepless night'. This is an ancient traditional custom. On this night, the devotees of Islam, the devout community of mourners go out to Imambaras, pay homage at the **Tazias**, hold Majalises and lament and beat their breasts. In certain cities, **Shub Bedari** is observed also during the night, at the dawn of which **Tazias** are taken out from the mourning centres at private residences. It was initially in Lucknow that this custom gained ground and perfection. Subsequently, other organizations and Associations also adopted it, and it thus became a current observance all over the Indian subcontinent. In Karachi, these wakeful nights continue till the 8th of Rabi-ul-Awwal. All through this period, mourners in bands of five to ten units visit each house in turns, where they recite **Noahas** and lament with breast-beatings. A large number of people come to such houses merely to listen and lament. The set of persons who comprise the group of reciters of **Noahas** inspire the gatherings here to weep their hearts out with their emotional and melodious renderings, and draw tearful applauses. In Karachi, such **Noaha Khwanis** and breast-beatings

take place at about ten places at one time, which means that there is a ceaseless chain of Majlises during day-time and breast-beatings during nights upto the 8th of Rabi-ul-Awwal.

This then is a brief sketch of Azadari in Karachi. May Allah perseve the institution of Azadari and may He bless the homes which echo with the sounds of lamentations and breast-beatings in the sacred memory of Imam Husain (A.S.) and all the martyrs of Karbala.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

OF INSTITUTION OF AZADARI

FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER XXXXVI

THE ROLE OF RADIO, TELEVISION AND PRESS IN AZADARI

Another notable feature of Azadari in Pakistan is the profuse amount of literature contributed by eminent scholars and poets in the cause and promotion of this institutional observance. Scores of religious institutions and missionary Publishing Trusts publish thousands of books and leaflets every year. Almost all newspaper concerns and publishers of magazines bring out special supplements in Moharrum. Practically every Daily, Weekly, Fortnightly, and Monthly journal publishes enlightening literary articles, including mersias, Noahas, Salams, poems, short stories and other write-ups of religious nature. Articles by the opponents of Azadari also manage to appear in print certain journals, which are very few; and there are also some newspapers who must be refraining from publishing articles of extreme religious fanaticism for, as well as against, the matter of Azadari. However,

newspapers like Jang, Hurriat, Mashriq, Imrose, Nawa-e-Waqt, Pakistan Times, Dawn, Jasarat, Masawaat, Morning News, Watan (Gujrati); and periodicals like Razakar, Shia, Asad, Irshad, Al Mubaligh, Payam-e-Amal, Al-Muntazar, Al-Ma'aruf, Chataan, Zindagi, Urdu Digest, Helal (Persian) and Mah-e-Nau publish unprejudiced articles on the subject of Azadari and the Tragedy of Karbala in a truly unbiased journalistic spirit.

Radio and Television also respect the sanctity of Moharrum by suspending their music programmes till the 10th of Moharrum, i.e. the Ashura Day. The time-gap, so caused, is filled by relays and telecasts of recitals of epicediums (Mersias) Noahas, discourses on the events of Karbala, Islamic history, philosophy of the Quran and Traditions of the Holy Prophet. These programmes are poured out on to the air almost round the clock. As special features, relays of Majlises, Radio and TV eye-witness accounts of mournings in various centres of the city, and tape-recordings of sermons addressed by eminent ulema are also served out on the air for the benefit of listeners at home and abroad.

May Allah bless the staff and management of our Press, Radio and TV organizations with His blessings and guidance in the right direction.

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CHAPTER XXXXVII

AZADARI IN KASHMIR

Azadari in occupied Kashmir started as a consequence of Shia missionary work initiated by Mir Iraqi Safavi towards the end of the 9th century, Hijra. With the passage of time, Majlises and mourning processions spread over the entire region of this mountainous valley with a scenic beauty all its own; and today the cries of "Husain-Husain" with their intensity of anguish and grief echo over the plains, the mountains, the homes and Imambaras there.

In Azad Kashmir, too, comprising the areas of Muzafferabad and Mirpur, Azadari is equally evident during Moharrums.

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CHAPTER XXXXVIII

AZADARI IN BALTISTAN

Baltistan is an important part of Azad Kashmir with its borders touching those of Ladakh, Gilgit, China and Russia. Ladakh is under the Government of India presently, while Baltistan, which has area of some 8522 Square miles, along with Azad Kashmir is under the Government of Pakistan. Baltistan is also known as "Tibet-e-Khurd". River Indus, River Shink and River Shahr pass through here. Its mountainous charms with sky-reaching peaks covered perennially with snow pose a tempting challenge to the adventurous spirit of mountaineers, both at home and abroad, to explore the mysterious beauty which lures the dauntless among mankind to unravel what has hitherto remained unseen, untouched and untasted as virgin maidens in the protective folds of Mother Nature.

Skardu is the Government seat of Baltistan. Goming, Tolti, Parkota, Kwardu, Thowar and Mehandi

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are some of the well-known places on the banks of River Indus which cuts through this region. In the religious context, the entire region of Baltistan professes Shiaism of the Athna Ashari sect of Islam. As such, devotional attachment to the Holy Prophet and his generations is the foremost spiritual concern of the inhabitants of this area.

Balti is the language commonly spoken in Gilgit, Ladakh and Baltistan. Its script, which was of a different origin in the past, is now of Arabic character, and Balti literature comprises mainly of epicidiums and elegist poetry centring round the figure of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and his progeny. Despite its scanty population, very little agricultural produce, and lack of adequate means of transport and communications, there are Imambaras in considerable numbers, which fact means that the people here are not as poor as one might gauge them to be. Arabic and Persian are the mediums of education in addition to Balti, which remains the mother-tongue. Religious scholars qualified from Najaf, Karbala, Meshhed and Lucknow cater to the educational requirements of the student community. There is hardly any village without a religious scholar in it.

Maqpoon dynasty of rulers were the first tribe to have ruled over this mountain-region. These rulers not only had protocol connections with the Moghul Emperors, but had even blood relationships with them. Among the Maqpoon rulers was Ali Sher Khan Anchan Azam, whose conquests in 1096 C.E. extended from the Himalayan region in Kashmir to Gilgit. Later, Skardu became the capital of Baltistan when

Sher Shah and Ali Shah became the rulers. Subsequently, Pegu and Amacha dynasties became the masters, one after another. Most of these rulers were devotees of the Holy Prophet's Ahle Bait; and they were also good poets and elegists.

The people of Baltistan are an honest and deeply religious race, and reputed for their courage and ability to solve their own problems by dint of their resolute nature which Providence has given them in ample measure. The present Government under President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has worked out numerous development schemes for this region, work on some of which has already started; and a steady progress in all spheres is already evident.

Virtually every single Baltistani is devoutly attached to the institution of Azadari. With the sighting of Moharrum moon, this terrain of wild beauty with snow-capped mountain peaks and rocky valleys dons a mournful complex; and waves of mournings and breast-beatings reverberate in the austere atmosphere of every hamlet and home. The labourers, the youths, the men, women and children, all of them bear looks that speak volumes of grief pent up in their hearts and souls in memory of the martyrdoms of Imam Husain (A.S.) and his comrades. Cries of Ya-Imam become the them-song of the lives of this rugged mountain community.

Raja Husain Ali Khan—the youngest son of the last of the Maqpoon dynasty of rulers was regarded as the "Mir Anees" of Balti language for the masterly epicediums and elegiac poetry he wrote under the

nom-de-plume of Mohib. He was arrested and imprisoned during a battle against Gulab Singh in 1841, and died in imprisonment.

Besides Raja Husain Ali Khan Mohib, Raja Lutf Ali Khan Ashiq, Raja Ameer Haider Mukhlis, Raja Malik Haider Bedil, Raja Mohammad Ali Khan Zakir and Raja Haider Khan Haider (Amacha) are the recognized and popular figures in the sphere of elegiac poetry in Balti language. Besides them, there are other eminent Zakirs who are well versed in Persian language. Their moving sermons and violent breast-beatings by the mourners are a characteristic feature of Azadari in this land of hills and valleys.

The Baltistanis have their own Imambaras in other cities of Pakistan like Karachi; Lahore, Muzaffarabad and in every other place where they may happen to have settled. The local people of these cities who watch their lamentations in the Imambaras they have built for themselves cannot help being amazed at the grandeur of Baltistani-type Imambaras and the intense breast-beatings and lamentation that take place therein.

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CHAPTER XXXIX

AZADARI IN EAST PAKISTAN

It was in 699 A.H. that Mohammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji had established Muslim rule over Bengal after his conquest of the region. Consequently, Muslim culture and Islamic values found their foothold here and progressed with the passage of time. Later, Moghul Emperor, Akbar, conquered Bengal and made it a province of his vast Empire, and pioneered a new social structure in this part of India by sending one of the nobles of his court as the Governor there. After Akbar, his successor, Jehangir, deputed his own Governor who carved out a new city and named it Jehangirabad after the name of Emperor. Then followed Shah Jahan who entrusted the administration of this province to Shah Shuja.

Among the staff that Shah Shuja brought to Bengal from Delhi was an official named Mir Murad Shuja who was appointed on a key post in the province. It was this devotee of Imam Husain who laid

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the foundations of a grand Imambara in the City. This obviously means that there must have been in Bengal a community of Shias large enough to warrant the construction of a stately mourning Centre of substantial size. Surely, an Imambara without sufficient mourners to use it makes no sense.

The fact is that Mir Murad had the rare fortune of having the honour of seeing Imam Husain (A.S.) in his dream one night. "Build an Imambara and dedicate it to my memory if it be my pleasure that you seek," he heard Imam Husain (A.S.) say to him in the dream. Accordingly, the first thing Mir Murad did on waking up the next morning was to plan and make arrangements for the construction of a Imambara, which materialized eventually in the form of a grand and massive double-storeyed structure with two towers and a magnificent outer gate and a spacious garden. In the background is a lake. On the western side lies large open ground, adjacent to which stands a double-storeyed attic which was once a Drum-house. Even today Shehnai (musical pipes) are played from here during Moharrums. A little farther is a big hall with a verandah and an auditorium, on the outer wall of which is inscribed a Persian verse on a piece of Blackstone, giving the name of its founder and the period during which it was built.

Inside the hall stand Tazias, alums, Nishan, shields and swords in a decorated manner symbolizing in a epitomic way the reminiscences of the Tragedy of Karbala; while the walls of the hall which are coloured in black stand mourning the climax of the Tragedy.

"MATAM SERA-E-MURAD", as this Imambara is known, is a specious building, which must have cost at least Rs. 1,00,000 in terms of modern paper currency. Immovable property as well as cash funds are attached to the maintenance and upkeep of this Imambara in the form of a Trust. Members of Mir Murad's dynasty and Tabatabai Sa'adaat look after the management and administrative affairs.

This ancient mourning centre which dates back to the period of the Moghul Emperor, Shah Jehan's period, is called by the name of "Dacca Husaini Dalan", and is regarded as a monument of Azadari during the Moghul rule over India. Moharrum in Dacca of the old times used to be observed in a peculiar manner in this "Hussaini Dalan."

This Imambara was badly damaged as a result of the violent earthquakes that rocked Dacca in 1897, but was subsequently repaired and renovated by Nawab Sir Ehsanullah Khan at a cost estimated conservatively at Rs. 1,00,000/.

After the emergence of Pakistan as an Independent sovereign State, Dacca was raised to the status of the Capital of its Eastern Wing. In the transmigrations, transfers of population and fleings that took place as a sequel to the creation of Pakistan, a considerable number of refugees from U.P., Bihar, Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province came over to East Pakistan and domiciled in various parts of its area. It was with this concentration of Muslim populations in East Pakistan that the institution of

Azadari came to be respected in the manner its sanctity commands, for, prior to the partition of the Indian subcontinent, Moharrum was just another festival in the list of Government holidays, due mainly to Hindu influence that dominated then. This secular complexion, however, transformed itself into a religious one, and Moharrum came to be observed with due solemnity and austere regard as a month of mourning. As a result, therefore, Imambara Husaini Dalan and other mourning centres started bustling with mourning activities. The Shia as well as the Sunni communities started observing Moharrum sanctity according to their respective traditions and customs. Mourning processions commenced. The Tabatabai and Irani community of mourners built Imambaras in Baqarganj, where they lived in populous concentrations.

Besides Husaini Hall, another big Imambara was built in Hoogly by a certain Mirza Mohammad Mohsin during the supremacy of the East India Company with a Trust for its administration and development. As a sequel to the partition of the Subcontinent, the actual building fell to India's share; but another mourning centre, called Imambara Mohsiniya, of the same Trust that was situated at Rajuhat in Jessore fell to Pakistan. This was the Imambara which the local population of the area used for their mourning activities. A major portion of lands and buildings owned by Mohsiniya Trust also became Pakistan's share as a result of the Radcliffe Award. A substantial portion of lands in Dacca particularly, it is said, belonged to the Trust.

There was another Imambara in Bilalabad, owned by the Ispahani family, where Azadari used to be observed in the true conventional manner current in Iran. Besides Dacca, Azadari was evident in Jessore, Khulna, Rajshahi, Faridpur, Karnaphulli and Chittagong also.

After the fall of Dacca in December, 1971, and the resultant secession of East Pakistan, Hindu culture of India is finding its inroads into the social life in East Bengal. The secular nature of Government that has now manifested itself in this area is seriously undermining Islamic values there. Political intrigues, cultural machinations, linguistic prejudices generated by Indian imperialistic manipulations have gravely harmed the Muslims of this region. The entire political complex of what was once East Pakistan is presently in a melting pot over the fire. In what actual shape the situation will ultimately crystalize depends on the hands of Destiny; but indications are that in due course of time the Muslim population there will steer themselves through this storm and eventually emerge once again as a free nation that they were before the venom of secession was injected into their sentiments by expansionist foreign powers.

However, coming back to our subject of Azadari, it would be unfair not to talk about the Nawab of Murshidabad and Oudh while discussing Bengal in this context. Nawab Siraj-ud-daula was an ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet's Ahle Bait and their generations. Not only did he play a significant role in the development of Azadari, but his generations,

too, spread this sacred institution to all the places they went. Murshidabad—their ancestral State—remained an independent State till the partition of India in 1947; and Azadari that prevailed then was noted for its scale as well as grandeur. Even today, numerous Imambaras and Trusts exist as testimony to the devotional regard the Nawab of Murshidabad had for Azadari.

Calcutta is an ancient central city of Bengal which the East India Company of Great Britain had developed into a Capital city, thereby transforming it into a politically important unit. In the nineteenth century, this city was a metropolis of representatives from the Indian States, including the Consulate for Iran and other public leaders and traders. Azadari, therefore, flourished unhindered in Calcutta.

The identity of Calcutta as a city with a concentrated population of Azadars asserted all the more conspicuously when thousands and thousands of dependents and employees of Nawab Wajid Shah of Lucknow came over from Oudh and settled down in Matya Burj, where the Nawab had settled down after his dethronement from the rulership of Oudh in 1856. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was an ardent Taziadar. So were his Begums, Princes, nobles and employees of his Darbar, all of whom used to go into mourning as soon as the Moharrum moon was sighted; and Majlises would commence on a grand scale in the Imambaras of Calcutta. The dethroned Nawab had built a magnificent Imambara in the city, where Majlises, Matam (breast-beating) procession and

Taziadari were evident on a grand scale. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, who was himself an outstanding poet, would read out epicediums composed by himself. The best of Alims and orators used to address huge audiences with their eloquent sermons; and Tazias used to be taken out along with the Royal mourning procession of the Nawab. Lakhs of rupees used to be spent over these varied observances of Azadari in Calcutta. Paintings of this impressive mourning procession still hang, one in each, of the Museums in Lucknow and Lahore.

Considerable volume of literature on the importance and significance of the Tragedy of Karbala exists in Bengali language also. Classic works like Jangnama, Karbalanama and other local compositions in Bengali are recited all over Bengal during Moharrum. The oldest known Bengali Elegy is Maqtal-e-Husain, composed by the Bengali poet, Mohammad Khan, in 1245; which means this poet was a contemporary of the founder of the Husaini Hall. After the emergence of Pakistan, a substantial volume of elegiac literature has been added, both in Bengali as well as Urdu languages; and newspapers, journals, Radio and Television—all these media of information and publicity have played a commendable role in the cause and promotion of Azadari in both these main languages.

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CHAPTER I

A REPLY TO OBJECTIONS

AGAINST AZADARI

(Summarized from the Article Zinda Javed Ka Matam)

Negative approach to the understanding and appreciation of Azadari is as old as the origin of Azadari itself. Lack of unbiased assessment of Islamic values in their true historical and Scriptural, perspective has, more than any thing else, been the cause for making this issue a matter of religious controversy, though in fact it is far from being so; if one cares to shed all preconceived differences, and examines it with an objective attitude of mind. The pattern of arguments against Azadari through the ages has been kaleidoscopic, ranging from denominational sentimentalism to sectarian fanaticism. It is, therefore, not possible to discuss all these objections in a concise book like the present one. However, in order to enlighten readers on the general trend of

arguments against this issue, just one line of approach, as evident in poet Iqbal Sobail's verse will suffice to illustrate the theme-song deriding the observance of mournings for Imam Husain (A.S.) and his comrades.

This is how poet Iqbal Sobail expresses his negative thinking on the subject.

"...Weeping and lamenting for Imam Husain (A.S.) and other martyrs may find favour among those who believe Martyre to be mortals.

"We believe in a Martyr as being Immortal, and therefore, shun lamentations for those whose lives are deathless".

An interesting Philosophy!

Let us examine it coolly and see what conclusion, negative or positive, accrues from it.

Life of Martyrs after their martyrdom cannot obviously be described in the same physical sense that 'life' meant in their respect when they were breathing human creatures, existing visibly like all other living individuals. A simple reason to prove that a Martyr does not exist physically in that soon after his martyrdom, all his assets are divided among his heirs according to Islamic laws. His children become 'orphans' and his wife a 'widow'. If his burial after death is not reckoned as the end of his physical life, then such terms as 'orphans' and 'widows' make no sense at all.

According to Shia concept of Islam, if one Imam is martyred, he is succeeded by the next living Imam,

whereas the latter cannot take place while the former was alive. Similarly, a widow can remarry after the death of her husband, whereas she cannot have another husband while the first husband lives. Burial of a Martyr is different to that of others in as much as it is not necessary to bathe and enshroud the dead body of the former, though funeral prayers and burying the dead body is necessary in the cases of both. And obviously, funeral baths and burials are operations that go with the physically dead. Not with those who move about physically and very much alive!

Thus, since a Martyr is distinguished from the rest in the matter of funeral bath and burial; and since both were alive before their respective burial; and since one is described as "Immortal" or "living" even after having ceased to live (i.e. a Martyr), and the other merely as "the late Mr. So-and-so" or the "deceased so-and-so", the life attributed in respect of a Martyr after his martyrdom is, therefore, not a 'life' in the biological sense of the word, but a special state of 'being' or 'existence' in a spiritual sense. Viewed in this conceptual context, even the saints (Aulia) are 'Immortal', though they may not have died as "martyrs" in the terminological sense in which the word 'martyr' is generally used. What this word 'martyr', when used for Aulia or Saints, means in effect is that they continue to live perpetually in the minds of the people, their degrees of spiritual status surviving after their physical deaths being in consonance with the respective degrees of nearness to god. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet, upon the

authenticity of which all religious schools of thought are agreed, and which says:

"He who dies with love towards Aale-Mohammed, dies a martyr."

There can therefore be no doubt that the waiving aside of funeral bath and enshrouding of dead bodies applies only to those who lay their lives on a battle-field. This is exactly what Islamic laws say on the subject, which also stipulate that the levels of exaltitude of one's status of martyrdom depends on the depth and degree of the martyred person's individual attachment to the religious values he laid his life for. Thus, the honour of achieving status of a martyr is open to all true believers of Islam. As such, when every true Muslim (Momin) can be a martyr, i.e. a spiritually "Immortal", how can Prophets and Divine Messengers be ruled out?

Every class of Muslim believes in the living presence of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.), with the exception of the sect of Wahhabis who subscribe to the personal and self-created doctrines of Abdul Wahhab Nejdî—their founder, who is known for his anti-Sufist thinking. Nothing can be more final than what the Holy Prophet has himself said:—

("O' Muslims), send your salutations to me after I am dead in the same manner as you do now while I am alive, for your salutations will verily reach me in both the situations".

This is the reason why certain Ulema have disdained loud conversations near the Holy Prophet's tomb, quoting this verse of the Quran:

"Raise you not your voices above the voice of the Prophet and, speak not loud unto him (49:2).

The obedience which this Divine commandment entailed in those early times must necessarily continues today also, for it is clear that the Holy Prophet continues to be present and hears our voices.

Let us now consider what poet Iqbal Sohail has said in his couplet which had been quoted in the earlier paragraph. He wants us to refrain from lamenting for those who have become "Immortals". Now, what virtues go to make one "Immortal" after his death is only too clear to repeat here. It is only those who are endowed with a character, personifying everything that is good, noble and true, who can come anywhere near the class of persons who can become "Immortals" after their deaths. It would, therefore, mean, as per poet Iqbal Sohail's way of logic, that we should lament upon the death of those who are wicked and evilly disposed, and refrain from mourning for those with noble virtues.

Now therefore, with this conclusion which poet Iqbal Sohail's couplet leads, us to, let us examine his 'Philosophy' in the light of Quranic teachings. Let this sacred Book of God be the Judge, for, to all appearances the author of this brain-wave is a Muslim by faith. What he has thought fit to say in his couplet is not mere poetic coquetry that can be smiled at and tolerated as inconsequent cojolery of an indulgent poet. The thought that he has clothed in measured words, far from being an expression of graceful

poetry, in calculated to cast a malicious aspersion on the religious beliefs and conduct of not a few individuals but on the whole nation spread over all the corners of the world.

We will, therefore, let the Quran speak for itself. This is what God says in His Book, referring to the drowning of Firaun and his army :

"Neither the heavens nor the Earth wept over them; nor did they get any respite from Allah".

This verse is obviously a metaphoric allusion, seeking to express the evil deeds of Firaun and his men. An allusion worded in a allegoric or metaphoric way is a figure of speech which seeks to emphasize a fact by employing suitable synonyms and similar alternative expressions in a positive strain. For instance, if it is intended to convey that "a morning had dawned", one can mean the same thing by saying, "the golden hue on the Eastern horizon heralded the onset of a bright new day". It would be stupid to say, "the darkness on the horizon heralded a new day", for "darkness" is generally associated with nightfall. Similarly, if one wishes to emphasize the darkness of a night, he would say, "one could'nt see one's own hand on a night like this", which expression may sound somewhat exaggerated, but certainly not stupid.

But this is not what poet Iqbal Sohail feels, for he wants that we must not weep for the loss of pious and noble persons. He would rather have us shed our tears and beat our breasts for the loss of evil ones.

In other words, what the poet wants to convey is that it is the loss of wicked persons, and not of the noble ones, that rightly deserves to be lamented for ! God, however, ordains differently, by saying :

"Neither the heavens nor the Earth wept over them (i.e. wicked ones)".

This proves (if ever a proof was really required) that end of wickedness does not deserve to be grieved over, whereas the death of pious and noble ones must necessarily be lamented for. Thus, the more higher the status of deceased noble persons, the more benedictory would be the grief over them. The expression "heaven and the Earth", as used in the Quranic verse, though an exaggerated metaphor, can apply understandably to a 'catastrophe' in order to express its destructive enormity, like the everyday phrases like "the whole town wept for Mr. So-and-so", etc., which apply to ordinary human beings. However, the Divine phenomena of "The heaven and the Earth weeping" can prove to be an actuality if the departed one happens to have had a special Divine regard and is blessed as "Immortal". And this has happened, if one cares to read Islamic history with an open mind. That being so, if the heavens and the Earth can lament over an Immortal, whose actions are the result of Divine will, then human expressions of grief for such an Immortal are also bound to be Divinely approved.

Next comes the question as to who is the source through whom we came to know that Shuhada, or those who lay their lives on the battle-field, are to be regarded as Immortals who live even after their deaths?

Obviously, the answer is that it is Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) who enlightened us with this knowledge. As such, who can know more about the 'life after deaths'? We? or the Holy Prophet? The answer, again, is that it is the Holy Prophet who knows best. Let us then turn to Islamic history for a few illustrations.

Was Hamza Ibne Abdul Mutallib a Shaheed (a Muslim who is killed in the cause of Islam) or not? The answer is obviously in the affirmative. He is a Shaheed who was given the title of "Syed-us-Shuhada", i.e. the first of the Muslims who laid his life fighting for Islam. There can thus be no doubt about his being Zinda Javed, i.e. "Immortal". But what happened after his death on the battle-field at Ohud?

Did the Muslim weep and lament for him?

Or, did they rejoice over his death?

Did they cry?

Or, did they laugh heartily over his mutilated body?

It must be borne in mind at this stage that the Holy Prophet had wept at his martyrdom; and Bid'at means acting against the exemplary precedents left by him. If the Holy Prophet had laughed or rejoiced at the martyrdom of Hamza, then lamenting for martyrs would indeed be a Bid'at or innovation. Conversely, if the Holy Prophet had wept, as he doubtlessly did on the occasion, then lamentations for a martyr can, by no twist of reason, be termed as Bid'at. It would be a clear case of wilful disregard for the Holy Prophet's precedent if rejoicings follow on the demise of martyrs.

It is an unchallengeable fact of history that when Safia, Hazrat Hamza's sister, learnt about the tragic news of his brother, she rushed out madly into the thick of the battle on the field at Ohud. When the Prophet was told of her move, he hastily instructed Ali bin Abi Talib to hide off the mutilated body of Hamza, lest she cast her eyes on the dead body of her brother which lay nude. Accordingly, Hazrat Ali hurried off and covered Hamza's corpse with his cloak. Hazrat Hamza was taller than Hazrat Ali. Consequently, his naked feet still showed up from one end. Hazrat Ali had therefore to pluck out some grass on the field and cover up the protruding legs. Meanwhile, Safia reached the spot; and as soon as she espied her brother's corpse, she dropped upon the lifeless body and started weeping and lamenting aloud.

If it was appropriate, the Holy Prophet could certainly have stepped forth and stopped Safia from her wailings for her brother. The Prophet could have pacified her by saying that now that her brother had become "Immortal", there was no point in her lamentations for one who had been blessed with life everlasting.

But did the Holy Prophet do that?

No!

On the contrary, he himself joined the grieving sister in her weepings, so much so that, to quote from history, he started hiccupping due to incessant weeping. This means that the Holy Prophet's share in bemoaning the loss of Hamza, who became an "Immortal", was as much as that of the martyr's own sister, both in intensity as well as duration of time.

Now, what would one call a person who, knowing how the Holy Prophet conducted himself on this occasion, has the audacity to say that it is a **Bid'at** or innovation to lament for immortals, or **Zinda Javeds**, to use the compound noun used by Poet Iqbal Sohail.

And this was not the end of the event, lest one would say that the Prophet had acted impulsively on the spur of the moment; for, quite some time later, when the Holy Prophet was on his way to Medina, he heard cries of lamentations coming from the home of the Ansars over their near and dear ones who also had fallen martyrs on the battle-field of Ohud. Noting these lamentations the Prophet observed, "Alas! How I wish there were ladies to mourn the loss of my uncle Hamza also!" It must be mentioned here that Safia, Hazrat Hamza's sister, was all alone in her house with the dead body of her brother lying by her side. All she could do to mitigate her grief was to weep out her heart all alone for sometime and then quieten herself to silent anguish. So, when the Ansar womenfolk heard what the Holy Prophet said, they rushed over to Hazrat Hamza's house; and there they all wept and lamented for the martyr.

Now, who had encouraged this group mourning?

Was it not the Holy Prophet himself?

What right then has any person to say that this natural reaction, approved and encouraged by the Holy Prophet, is undesirable and unrequited?

Similarly, Hazrat Jaffar-e-Tayyar was martyred by the enemy at the engagement at Mauta, where both his hands were chopped off. The Holy Prophet broke this tragic news to the Muslims in a Sermon from his pulpit. This news reached Hazrat Fatematuz Zahra also at her house. Subsequently, when the Holy Prophet returned home, he noticed his daughter weeping for Hazrat Jaffar-e-Tayyar. History does not say that the Prophet quietened her saying: "No, don't weep, my child. Don't you know that Jaffar is not dead? His is alive for all times".....What the annals of history say, and which every Muslim, including poet Iqbal Sohail knows, is that the Holy Prophet said, "One cannot but lament for the loss of a person like Jaffar"

Thus, by his very word and deed, the Holy Prophet laid out a general principle to be practiced by his followers. He had declared, "one cannot but lament for the loss of a person like Jaffar". These words spell out the applicability of sanction not only to "Jaffar", but everyone else like him. It is a general directive of a qualitative nature. It can mean two things:

- (i) The words "a person like Jaffar" could mean any and all persons who has the personal qualities which Hazrat Jaffar-e-Tayyar had"

Or

- (ii) "Person like Jaffar" could also mean those persons who meet their death dying in the same manner as that of Hazrat Jaffar-e-Tayyar, i.e. those who lay their lives for the sake of God.

In both cases, the sanctity of lamenting over the loss of martyrs is clearly spelled out in consonance with the spirit of the Quranic verse quoted earlier, though in (ii) the emphasis is on the nature and cause of death, which limits the orbit of applicability to only to the Zinda Javeds i.e. those who lay their lives on the battlefield for the cause of Islam.

How then can it be a moral thing for any Muslim to have the impudence of saying, "We disapprove of lamenting for Zinda Javeds"? Any one who had the insolence to say so stands charged with calumny and blasphemy in wilful and deliberate disregard for that the Holy prophet approved as well as encouraged—a misconduct that is sufficient to expel the culprit from the pale of Islam.

However, if there are persons who dislike what the Holy Prophet did and encouraged in respect of Shuhada (i.e. the Martyrs), they might as well lament over those who met their end to remain everlastingly in their infernal abodes!

It is also argued in this connection that weeping denotes cowardice. Those who advance this infantile argument forget that it is indeed cowardice if one present on a war front starts weeping with a sense of fear of what might befall him; but when someone weeps over his being absent from the scene of action in which he wished he could participate, then his weeping is definitely an indication of courage and spirit of sacrifice. What happened on the field of Karbala illustrates this point in a fine manner. The small band of heroes who laid their lives there in the cause of

Islam, one following the other, did not weep over the anticipation of what was to befall them. On the contrary, Burair and Abdur Rahman were joking with each other in the face of what had happened before and what was going to happen as each fresh volley of arrows added to the number of bleeding wounds on their bodies. So was the case when it was the turn of Abbas and Ali Akbar (A.S.) to walk to their martyrdoms with a smile on their countenance. And what more, even the breast-fed infant, Ali Asghar (A.S.), was lulled to his everlasting sleep with his little lips parted in an angelic smile. There was no trace of apprehension or concern whatsoever on the part of those who were present and personally shared the destiny that awaited them on the field of Karbala. Neither Abbas nor Ali Akbar (A.S.), in fact, none of those who laid their lives on the bloody sands of Karbala did as much as shed a tear, because each one of them was satisfied at having the honour of adding his own stream of blood to the pool of the sacred blood that soaked the thirsty sands under a scorching sun.

Yes, there was one who did weep.

That was Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S.).

He wept.

And he kept weeping all his life.

Why?

Because, as Providence would have it, he was rendered physically incapable of attaining martyrdom, thereby missing the opportunity of joining the ranks of his predecessors on this occasion.

Likewise, the devotees of Imam Husain (A.S.) who had been unable to share in a physical manner the atrocities committed on these martyrs and their household members. These weepings, these lamentations and these breast-beatings is a spontaneous expression of grief for having missed for all time the honour of associating personally with the beloved grandson of the Holy Prophet and others who suffered a fate that will remain enviable till eternity. It is with this religion-based belief that those devotionally attached to Imam Husain (A.S.) have been weeping and lamenting, and Continue to do so, in order to ensure that there is no weakening of this belief in the generations to come, so that they continue to keep alive this grief and expectation of a similar opportunity when they might be called upon to prove the integrity of their Faith by sacrificing all that they hold dear in life.

BISMILLA HIR RAHMA NIR RAHIM

AZADARI

A HISTORICAL REVIEW

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FOR IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

CHAPTER LI

WHAT IS BID'AT (INNOVATION)

(From article : Azadari aur Bid'at)

According to the generally accepted definition in the famous Arabic Lexicon, Qamoos, the word 'Biddat' means "the creation of something that came into existence after the death of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.), or introduction of new beliefs and practices after the death of the Holy Prophet". Another reputed Arabic Dictionary, 'Majma'-al-Bahrain' defines the same word as "Any thing that did not exist during the life-time of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.)".

If one were to go by these definitions, not only Azadari but all other educative and conceptual institution and practices which give meaning and permanence to Islam would appear to be Bid'at or innovations, because almost all of these concepts and beliefs were introduced after the Holy Prophet. The Holy Quran itself, as it stands today, would be a

Bid'at. To add diacritical marks in its text, and insert dots therein also is a clear case of **Bid'at**. To compile the Holy Prophet's Traditions (**Ahadis**) other than in the manner in which they existed during his time would also be **Bid'at**. To have changed the Quran's original script to **Naskh** is also **Bid'at**. To have written books of commentaries on the text of Quran is also **Bid'at**. To employ logics for ascertaining the veracity of Traditions would also be **Bid'at**. To write or publish books on Divinely-revealed laws based on human deductions is also **Bid'at**. To teach Rhetorics is also **Bid'at**. Further, to have selected Caliphs through **Ijma'**, or consensus of opinion of individuals, is also **Bid'at**. To have appointed a panel of individuals to pick out a religious Guide is also **Bid'at**. The **Tarawih** (super-imposed prayers) prayer is also **Bid'at**. Recourse to analogies or syllogism in solving religious issues is also **Bid'at**. To have created **Baitul Mal** (Public Exchequer) is also **Bid'at**. To walk the streets during nights with a whip in one hand to spot crimes is also **Bid'at**. And what more? Even to don **shervani** and **pyjamas** is also **Bid'at**. To use paper currency for commercial purposes is also **Bid'at**. In short, if one were to take the dictionary sense of the word **Bid'at**! then everything and anything that did not exist during the life-time of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) is necessarily **Bid'at**, and it must be borne in mind that **Bid'at**, or innovation, of any kinds is **Haraam** i.e. forbidden in Islam.

Since **Bid'at** is forbidden in Islam, it would be pertinent to ask how many of the things listed above existed while the Holy Prophet was alive? If all these

practices fall within the definition of **Bid'at**, as they literally do, then should not the Muslims discard these innovations and thus redeem Islam?

Therefore, if **Azadari** has to be given up as **Bid'at**, the use of **Hijra**, i.e. the Islamic Calendar must discontinue as a despicable thing. All arts and sciences, and the teaching of these should be abhorred as irreligious offences; and the most tragic thing to do would be to declare Caliphate as **Bid'at** and uproot them from the history of Islam with a posthumous verdict that the Caliphs, whose accounts fill the pages of Muslim History, were the cuprits who committed **Bid'at** by having themselves installed as such.

Doesn't sound good!

Does it?

The fact is that the fountain-source of the anomalies springs from the simple reason that certain **Ulema** (religious leaders) of the majority section of Muslims thought it convenient to mislead the people by injecting into their minds the belief that everything new guides to evil, and that every such guidance leads to Hell. These **Ulema** thus deliberately confused the thinking of their followers, though it is common-sense to realize that the fallacious doctrine which brands every new development and practice as **Haraam** or forbidden is basically wrong. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet, subscribed to by all denominations of Muslim nation, which clearly lays down:

"Everything is lawful unless its invalidation is conveyed to you (through me)".

There is another saying, acknowledged by all sects in Islam, which says :

“Unless forbiddence in respect of a thing is revealed to me and conveyed to you, everything remains lawful”.

Therefore, the simplest thing for the critics of Azadari to have done before poisoning the minds of the masses was to have considered whether or not Azadari was ever deprecated and forbidden either in the Quran or by the Holy Prophet before having the audacity to call it a Bid'at.

If there be anyone who can prove on the basis of **Sharia**, or Islamic laws, that Azadari stands listed in the category of forbidden items (**Haraam**), such a person would indeed be doing a great service to Islam. But if there is none who can prove Azadari to be a forbidden act, it is only a human thing to advise such a person or group of persons to be mindful of the fire of Hell, the fuel for which will be the erring human beings and stones. Rather than defiling the sanctity of the sacred teachings of the Holy Prophet in order to cater to ones selfish ends, it would be far better to commit suicide, for the offence of suicide can put to end the life of individuals, whereas misleading is worse inasmuch as it can lead a whole nation to damnation.

In this commentary on **Sahih Bukhari**, Imam Asqalani in **Fath ul-Bari**—a Sunni scholar of repute, has divided 'Bid'at' into five distinct categories on the basis of Islamic laws as follow :

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| (i) Bid'at-e-Wajib | } Permissible innovations |
| (ii) Bid'at-e-Sunnat | |
| (iii) Bid'at-e-Mubah | |
| (iv) Bid'at-e-Makrooh | Better to avoid |
| (v) Bid'at-e-Haraam | Forbidden |

An example of Bid'at Wajib is the art of Rhetoric. Number (ii), i.e. Bid'at Sunnat, is illustrated with activities like writing of books and establishing of schools. Number (iii), i.e. Bid'at Mubah, pertains to things like new recipes in cooking foodstuffs. Number (iv), i.e. Bid'at Makrooh, includes luxury in food and clothes amounting to extravagance ; number (v), i.e. Bid'at Haraam, concerns acts like trachery against Ruling Authority and indulgence in all matters disapproved by **Sharia** or Islamic laws.

Likewise, Shia religious scholars like Shaheed Saani also have elaborated on this matter of Bid'at and concluded that every innovation is not Haraam or forbidden, and that certain persons have categorized everything else under these five categories, regardless of whether or not these things fall under relevant group.

In view of the above elucidations, no one in his right state of mind can say that all new practices, including adoption of new inventions and discoveries essential and desirable for social life, fall within categories (iv) and (v), i.e. 'undesirable' or 'forbidden'? Shaheed-e-Awwal has also observed in this connection that “there are several categories of things and matters

that developed after the life-time of the Holy Prophet, but in our considered opinion, Bid'at pertains to Haraam, or totally forbidden acts, under the code of Islamic laws".

It is thus crystal clear that permissibility or forbiddance of acts is not adjudged by whether such-and-such act or practice prevailed or not during the life-time of the Holy Prophet. What is essential in this connection is to ascertain whether an act or practice is, or is not, in conformity with What God has ordained about it in the Divinely-revealed code of Islam.

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CHAPTER LII

AZADARI CONFORMS

TO DIVINE SANCTIONS

In view of the foregoing facts, let us examine what this practice or institution of Azadari really is. To state briefly, "Azadari is a means of expressing grief over the tragic events of the Tragedy of Karbala, culminating in the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) and his devoted comrades; and the purpose of Azadari is to perpetuate for all times the memory of these martyrs and the beastly manner in which they were martyred". What we really need to consider in this context is to see whether it is against Divine sanctions to keep alive the memory of exalted and pious persons and their exemplary lives, or whether it is disapproved by God to do so.

To begin with, what one can say without any possibility of being contradicted by any right-thinking person or class of persons is that we are bound

through Divine commands to keep remembering those exalted and liked by God, and keep before us their exemplary lives as models for emulation in the moulding of our own lives. At least ten times in a day we Muslims say in our prayers to God, imploring him thus:

"Guide us in the straight path; the path of those whom You have blessed, not of those against whom You are wrathful, nor of those who are astray"

(Surah Fateha: Quran)

Obviously, when this is what we all pray to God for, how can our implorings to Him be reckoned as sincere if we do not respect the words and deeds of those blessed by Him and keep alive in our minds the sacrifices they made?

After ordained (compulsory) prayers, the institution of Haj or pilgrimage is another second major command in Islam. Its performance is a must, one way or the other. If one examines the rituals that go with Haj from the start to the finish, it will be realized that the whole thing is a reconstruction of what Prophets Abraham and Ismail did in their own time. The running between Safa and Marwa is a ritual which lakhs and lakhs of Muslims men and women perform each year.

Why was it approved, and even ordained as essential, by God? The background precedent of this Practice is that Hazrat Hajira had done the same, i.e. She had run seven times between these two hills in search of water

for her infant. That is why these small hills have been described in the Quran as "Signs of God", though giant mountain ranges like the Himalays and the Pamir knot also existed then as they do today. It is due to the personal association of Hazrat Hajira and Ismail with these little hills of Safa and Marwa that they stand more exalted in religious context than the other highest mountain peaks of the world.

Likewise, "Aab-e-Zamzam" or the water of the spring in Mecca is regarded as the best sacred gift any Haji or pilgrim can bring back with him.

Why does this water enjoy all this honour?

It is merely because this well came into existence on the command of God in order to enable Hazrat Hajira to quench the thirst of her infant Ismail.

Again, the 8th of Zilhaj is observed with due solemnity by the Muslim Community as 'Yaum-e-Tarviya, meaning a 'Day of contemplation, because it was on the night of preceding this day that Prophet Abraham had dreamt that he was in the process of running the knife over his son, Ismail's throat as a sacrificial compliance with Divine orders, and contemplated over carrying them out in actual physical manner.

The 9th of Zilhaj is observed as 'Yaum-e-Arafat', meaning the 'Day of Discernment of Truth' relating to the sacrifice of his son. All these observances have been adopted as Haj rituals as a means for perpetuating the memory of these historical events.

Slaughtering of sacrificial animals at Mina on the 10th of Zilhaj is an essential and important item of Haj performance. Why? It was on this day and on this spot that Prophet Abraham wanted to sacrifice the life of his son, Ismail, with his own hands. Though the Effacer and the confirmer chose only a lamb as the media in this 'great sacrifice' in the place of infant Ismail, and instead fixed 'Zibh-e-Azeem'—The great Sacrifice (i.e. Imam Husain (A.S.)) and thus Saved Ismail from the knife, but the Quran has preserved the memory of this episode for all times by calling all sacrificial animals as 'signs of Allah' Quran says :

"And whosoever respects 'signs of Allah' verily it is (the reflection, of the piety of hearts)". (22:32)

All these current practices and Quranic verses prove that to perpetuate the memory of great events is an established practice of a continual nature, which God has provided for mankind. There is, however, a condition attached to it; and that is, that these events must primarily be associated with only those personages who are His chosen and exalted ones. It would therefore be apt at this stage to ask the question :

Was not Imam Husain (A.S.) an exalted person blessed by God? Were not the events that filled his life of extremely great importance and significance?

What rank injustice and how preposterous it is to say that while God approves the incomplete sacrifice of Prophet Ismail so much that He ordains its reconstruction as a necessary ritual in Islam, He disdains the most complete and the greatest sacrifice

of life which Imam Husain (A.S.), the grand son of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.), made at Karbala!

There could not be a better way of insinuating God Himself!

The nature of events concerning Prophet Ismail's sacrifice that did not actually take place, can by no stretch of verbosity, compare with the events leading to the actual severance of the Holy Prophet's grandson's head from the body on the blood soaked sands of Karbala. If our religious concepts also permitted like these of others which permit modifications and nullifications, mourning for Imam Husain (A.S.) would no doubt have occupied as high an obligation as that of Haj. But even, now as it is, it cannot at least be denied that it confirms to Divine sanctions. As such, Azadari remains one of the numerous Divine sanctions and since there can be no changes or revisions in Divine laws which are eternal, Azadari too will remain unaltered. If we expose to the world the brutalities committed on the grandson of the Holy Prophet and his comrades by none other than a certain class of Muslims themselves; and if in order to keep fresh our grief over the treatment meted out to Imam Husain (A.S.) and other martyrs, we recourse to an expression of our grief every year, what cogent reasons could there be against it? We are doing simply what the Divinely authenticated preceptors of Islam themselves did.

Then, there are some persons who say that the Shia community observes "seasonal grief"; but they conveniently forget that observing sacrificial rituals in commemoration of Prophet Abraham's and Ismail's episode, to which they subscribe, is also ordained to be carried out only in the month in which the episode actually occurred. These critics must therefore concede in all fairness to human common-sense that the commemorations of Abraham-Ismael episode is governed by the chain of time. They cannot surely commemorate the event just as and when it pleases them to do so.

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CHAPTER LIH

AZADARI FOR IMAM HUSAIN

NOT AN INNOVATION

The foregoing facts from Quran and history have been mentioned purely on the hypothesis is that even if the institution of Azadari is a practice that cropped up after the death of Holy Prophet, it cannot fall in the category of things forbidden (Haraam). But now, having dealt with it in a hypothetical manner, it will be proved that mourning and lamenting for the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S.) is not at all among the practices that came into vogue after the Holy Prophet. On the other hand, it was the Holy Prophet himself who started it. It would be quite pertinent to quote mere a narrative which the learned Sunni scholar. Allama Ibne Hajar Makki has retold from Sihah-e-Sitta, citing Imam Sha'abs, quoting Masned-e-Ahmad bin Hambal. This is how the narrative of this eminent Sunni scholar runs:

...Said Ameerul Momineen Ali (A.S.); "One day when I went to the Holy Prophet, I noticed that tears were flowing down his face. I asked him who it was who had annoyed him thus, and asked the reason for his weeping. The Holy Prophet replied. "A little while ago Hazrat Jibrael (A.S.) had apprised me that Husain will be slaughtered on the bank of River Euphrates. After this revelation, Hazrat Jibrael (A.S.) asked me if I wanted him to bring over a handful of sand from the fateful spot so that I could smell it. I replied in affirmative. Accordingly. Hazrat Jibrael (A.S.) stretched out his both hands and gave me a handful of this sand, seeing I could not hold back my tears".

It is clear from the above narrative from one of the six recognized books believed to be the authentic by the Sunnis that it is not only proper to weep over the calamities braved by Imam Husain (A.S.) as a prelude to his martyrdom on the 10th of Moharrum, but that doing so is in full conformity of what the Holy Prophet himself initiated. In fact, in conforms to the Quranic verse also which says:

"Adopt everything that the Messenger brings to you".

Just imagine, when the Holy Prophet could get so deeply grief stricken at the revelation of Imam Husain's martyrdom much before it actually took place, what would have been the degree of his anguish if he had lived to see his beloved grandson's head severed from his body ! How much more moving and

more deep would his Azadari have been ! It is from this tragic event in Islam that it stands proved that to love Imam Husain (A.S.) is to love Holy Prophet; and that to profess love for the Holy Prophet without due evidence of mourning for Imam Husain's martyrdom is nothing more than a hoax.

It is also a significant thing in the said narrative that despite the fact that the Holy Prophet's love for Imam Husain was extraordinary, and despite the fact that the latter was physically safe and sound before his very eyes at the time the revelation came, still the Holy Prophet felt it necessary to ask for a handful of sand from Karbala so that he could smell it and feel more dimensionally moved. Thus, if we too feel the need for sandtablets of Karbala or alums, Taboots, Tazias, Chains, Cradles and arrows as symbols for enhancing our grief to more realistic degrees, as did the Holy Prophet by requisitioning a handful of sand from the field of Karbala, we are only acting according to what the Holy Prophet did and what the Quran, too, says:

"in the Messenger, you have the best specimen to guide you in your conduct".

In view of the frivolous nature of objections raised against Azadari, it would not be surprising if some one said why Hazrat Jibrael (A.S.) did not bring to the Prophet a Taboot or some other such symbolic item instead of a handful of sand from Karbala ! It must be pointed out that there were physically no grief-inspiring item other than the sand from the field of Karbala at the time of this revelation. Hazrat

Jibrael (A.S.) had, therefore, to contend with bringing only the send of Karbala, which did exist physically them.

But now that we have all the details of the Tragedy of Karbala, and photographic facilities too are available to us, why should we not take advantage of these and demonstrate their intrinsic value and significance and visualize the Tragedy to as full an extent as possible, and thus condole the Holy Prophet over this colossal Tragedy to the fullest extent possible!

Space does not allow discussing the validity of allied observances which go with Azadari, like Noahas Majlises, Taboots and Tazias. Suffice it to say that all these observances are traceable to the Holy Prophet's life time, and as such, they do not fall under prohibited Bid'at. As for Matam i.e., breast-beating, just one instance from the history of Sunni Caliphs of Islam should be enough to lay bare a mirror so that the critics of Matam can look and see their own reflection therein. The following narrative is quoted in Hayat-ul-Aaiwan ;

"Caliph Mutawakkil ordered breast-beatings to be held at the spot where funeral prayers were offered over the dead body of Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (a founder of one of the Sunni schools of thought). Accordingly, some 25,00,000 persons including Muslims, Jews, Christians and Majusis gathered there and mourned Ahmad Hambal with breast-beatings."

It may be noted here that this Caliph, Mutawwakil is the same one who had completely demolished the sacred shrine of the Holy Prophet's grandson, Imam Husain (A.S.). Yet he has so much love and regard for Imam Ahmad Hambal that he not only beats his own breast, but commands other religious group also to follow his example!

Perhaps these critics want us to believe that what is good for the good is not good for the gander!

THE END

The Trustees of the Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust, have undertaken to present to the general public good reading matter, suited to their physical, mental, moral and spiritual needs. The sensational pornographic reading material that goes by the name of literary production in the market has served to vitiate the whole social milieu, so that the restraints on social conduct are ever-more being relaxed, with resultant indisipline in the home atmosphere, no less than in the wider fields of human activities outside the dome. If such a situation is allowed to go on flourishing unchecked a veritable hell on earth is the natural outcome, as we are witnessing in the waves of crime sweeping over some of the so-called civilised countries of the West which are already affecting us. "BACK TO RELIGION" is now the watch-word of the saner elements among them. It is with this sense of perturbation that the trustees have embarked on the venture of publishing books, which are calculated to offset the baneful effect of low-grade, anti-social forms of reading material, and to inculcate a taste for and appreciation of sound and healthful mental food.

No commercialisation is aimed at by this venture, as would be apparent to even the most superficial observer, from the standard of prices of the books, which are fixed below the actual cost, and that too, because free distribution of books depreciates the worth of the same in the eyes of the general reading public and are also waste.

The Trustees, are conscious of the fact that inspite of all precautions on their part to avoid errors if something goes amiss in the form of errors of judgement involuntarily for no one can be in a position to comprehend the entire field of knowledge on any subject. Of one thing they can assure the discreet readers, to wit, that the material for reading is being presented with the best of intentions for the benefit of the public and for the pleasure of the Almighty Allah. If any reader finds anything which contradicts this objective, his observations in this behalf shall receive the maximum possible care to redress any any remissness that may be pointed out as having crept into the reading matter with the best of wishes for the reader we remain.

ONLY PROPHEET (S.A.) SAID :

Have explicit faith in Allah, the Almighty, before you die, for the value of explicit faith in Allah is radiance.

Death is a favour to a Muslim. Remember and speak well of your dead, and refrain from speaking ill of them.

While you live you die.

Each breath of a man is a step nearer death.

Death awaits every living creature, and every thing must end.

Take warning from those whose slogans were "There is none mightier than I". They went to their graves leaving all their might and glory behind them. They were carried to their last resting place but their rival was not announced, they were lowered in the pits dug for them but nobody was there to welcome and entertain them.

One expecting death gives himself up to good deeds.

Whoever is not serviceable to his kind is to be counted along the dead.

HAZRAT ALI (A.S.) SAID :

The alms of bravery are a holy war.

Assuredly, the most honourable end to a man's life is death on the field of honour. I swear by Him whose keeping is my soul that I would rather die of a thousand sabre blows in my bed.

If you are able to discriminate, it will be a certainty for you that bravery and truth are always found together, and falsehood and cowardice.

Be ashamed to flee on the day of battle. It will spell dishonour for your descendants, and hell for yourself on the Day of Judgement.

Have flight in horror ! It is to clothe yourself with dishonour and fit yourself for hell.

By God ! if today you flee before the sword of an enemy, you will not tomorrow escape that of the Supreme Judge.

Bravery is the name of contentment and humbleness.

The man of learning lives even after his death : the ignorant man is dead while still alive.

Death awaits every living creature, and every thing must end.