

The Commemoration of Muharram by Shia Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawoodi Bohras

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Author's Introduction: *The author is a renowned religious scholar and legal consultant who is acknowledged worldwide through his lucid writings on the Literature of Islam, as explained by Ahl al Bait. His lineage of "Aal al Waleed" is sufficient to introduce his relation with the Shia Fatemi Ismaili Tayyebi Dua'at at Yemen. He is serving well known constitutional institutions of Pakistan, in religious and legal affairs. His more than 150 articles are published in Yemen, Pakistan, India and Iran on many occasions. Alongside Masters Degrees in Urdu Literature, Political Science, History, Shariah Law and Ma'arif Islamiyyah from Al Hawzah al 'ilmiyyah, Najaf, he achieved Doctor of Philosophy in Law from USA. His Website: www.durrenajaf.com is popular among the seekers of Islamic Studies from the Shia point of view at large. "Editor"*

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1). The shimmering day of the new Muslim year:

Muharram ul Har'am is the first among the four months of the Hijrah calendar which are considered sacred. Even during the time of Jahiliyyah (pre Islam era), Arabs never used to confront or wage a war in these months. The New Year's celebration on the first day of Muharram was a part of the Shia Fatemi Ismaili court ceremonies from the beginning of the Fatemi dynasty's supremacy in Egypt. A student of al Maqrizi, Mamluk historian, ibn Taghribirdi (d. 874/1470) discussed New Islamic Year's procession in his celebrated book: "al-Nujum al-Zahira Fee Muluk Misr wal-Qahera". The procession used to start from the Bab ul Zahb. The unmounted horses were led by high ranking and selected dignitaries – ministers and Dua'at were marched to the right and left side of the Shia Fatemi Ismaili Imam al Muiz. The cavalry and infantry in their unique uniforms joined the parade with arms. The Imam left Al Qahera from Bab al Futuh and re-entered the city through Bab al Nasr. The entire city was decorated. Cantonment - which was out of the city walls - was decorated with curtains and drapes. When the Fatemi Imam re-entered the city, Sadaqah (charity) was distributed amongst the deserving and 'inayat(bliss funds) were given to the high ranking. The Qaris recited the Qur'an at Imami Dehleez (entrance) and they were also entertained. In the court of the Fatemi Imam, courtiers, Dua'at, ambassadors and other dignitaries presented him Tehniy'at (greetings). On this ceremonial occasion, the Fatemi Imam distributed gold and silver coins minted at Dar ul Darb, Al Qahera al Muaizziyyah to dignitaries and designated people. A banquet was also arranged on the first day of Muharram in which people were invited. Then the Fatemi Imam left for Ziyarah

of the sacred head of his great grandfather, Abi Abdillah al Husain ibn Ali. This ten day long celebration culminated on the evening of 1st of Muharram.

Contrary to Shia Ithna Asharis, the first day of Muharram is the day for celebration and exchanging wishes for the children of the Ismaili Tayyebi Dawah - Dawoodi Bohras - where they prepare a variety of food dishes, just like Shia Ithna Asharis prepare on the occasion of Naoruz, the Zoroastrian's New Year. Bohras exchange greetings of New Year which is restricted till the night and day of 1st Muharram as follows:

"New Year and Ayy'am al Aza Mubarak".

This translates to greetings of the New Year and proclaims that these are the days of Barak'at. The Shia Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawoodi Bohra Muslims celebrate new Muslim year's eve and day in following the tradition of the Fatemi Ismaili Imams but it is restricted only one day long. On the first night of Muharram, children of the Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawah normally visit Masjid for Sala'at and start their new year from the house of Allah. Many people pray the Sala'at of Tasbeeh ul A'azam on this night which is also known as Sala'at Jafar al Tayyar. After completion of Sala'at, Bohra families gather for a feast and enjoy varieties of food which is one of the best ways to celebrate the New Year. Bohras are known for their close social ties and prefer celebrating every occasion through socializing. On the eve of the New Hijrah Year, followers of the Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawah send different eatables to those who are their nearest and also to those who are under privileged. Muharram is the month of sacrifice and contribution. On this night, people usually decorate Thaal (a large stainless steel plate, serving 8 – 14 people depending on its size) with salt, sweet, milk, fruits (fresh and dry), fish, meat, honey, dates etc (one from each – mineral, plant and animal). "Lachka" is a popular variety of Halwa which is included in the food course of the majority and prepared with Jiggery and wheat. The decorated Thaal of the New Year Eve is called "Ma'aidatu Aale Muhammad" (Dastar Khawn of the children of Muhammad – Ahl al Bait). All family members sit together, circling the Thaal. The one endearing characteristic about any Bohra meal is the principle of "Families eat collectively live pleasantly". If there is a community in the world which truly lives by the maxim of "Eat with Love", it is the Shia Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawoodi Bohras. Furthermore, Isr'af (extravagance) in Thaal decoration with various kinds of foods is an act of Shait'an, for which the Dai warns his followers. It is not true that ignoring any particular food item in the Thaal will bring any bad luck.

2. Revival of Majalis al Hikmah:

The 51st Al Dai al Fatemi, Dr. Sayedna Taher Saifuddin, infused a new spirit in the Majalis al Aza (singular: Majlis) of Al Imam al Husain. He gave a fresh out-look to the Majalis al Aza in following of the "Majalis al Hikmah" (sessions of wisdoms) of the Dai al Dua'at, Baab ul Abw'ab of the Shia Fatemi Ismaili Imam al Mustansir, Sayedna al Muayyad al Shirazi from the 2nd of Muharram. Under the instruction of the Dai today Ulama arranged Majalis worldwide at 750 places. The reason behind these Majalis is Talim and Tarbiyyah of the children of the Dawah by Ma'arif of the Shariah. These sessions of Majalis have been a good source to unite the Mumineen in the fold of Dawah for centuries. When the cry of "Ya Husain" in the Majlis is raised, it provides energy in the body of every believer which encourages him /her to practice Islam of Mohammad(S). It is noteworthy to explain that the Majlis of the Shia Fatemi Ismaili

Tayyabi Dawoodi Bohras provides a platform to the community to ignite their quest of Talim along with socializing. These Majalis prepare and produces a generation of devotees in obedience which follows the instructions of the Shariah. One of the unique features of these Majalis is the complete Ban on Tahrif (distortion) in Zikril Husain, which is noticeable outside of the Ismaili Dawah Majalis on a large scale. Our Awliya instructed us to abstain from the Ghulu(exaggeration) and Qulu(minimization). The Qur'an guides us that Tahrif is a habit of Jews and this should not be allowed even in Masa'ib Bay'an of Moula al Husain ibn Ali and his Ahl al Bait. Majalis of the Shia Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawah are pure from words playing for Wah Wah – Subhan Allah - as its focal point is to communicate 'ilm of the Shariah as much as possible to the children of the Im'ani Dawah with in short period of eight days, as the ninth Majlis is of A'ashurah, which is fixed for the Maqatal Bay'an. There is a valid reason as to why Ismaili Dua'at never allowed the followers to acquire Talim of Deen outside of the fold of the Dawah because purity of thought and following the pure Im'ani practice is necessary in Aqidah.

3. Clarion Call of the Dai for Zikril Husain:

The 52nd Al Dai al Muqaddas, Dr. Sayedna Mohammed Burhanuddin started a movement to invite the community in each Bay'an towards "Hifz al Qur'an" and thousands of Mumineen responded. Special sessions of Hifz al Qur'an are conducted with modern methodology, even during Muharram. This Majlis al Wa'az is not a mere ritual but a commitment to Abi Abdillah al Imam al Husain. It is a response to Husain's final clarion call:

"Hal Min Nasirin Yansurna? Is there anyone who can help us?"

Attendees of these Majalis respond by beating their chest:

"Labbayka Ya Husain". "We are here, O Husain. We are with you."

This Matam is a powerful punch on the face of Yazidiyat. Majlis is the commitment in which all children of the Dawah pledge (Ahd) to uphold the values of Islam, to subordinate their hearts to the wishes of Moula al Husain. Attending the Majlis means responding to the call of Syedah Zainab bint Ali and to follow her Talim to become good human-beings, good Muslims in order to lead a dignified life in civic society.

Unlike other communities, the Shia Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawoodi Bohra Muslims around the world attend Majlis in a uniform dress; men in traditional 'Libaas ul Anwar', which is the Dai's own costume and women in traditional 'Rida' or Hij'ab'. The Majlis presided by the Dai or assigned by him has now turned into a socio-religious ceremony, where community members from across the globe assemble and meet each other. New ties of business and fresh social contacts of their children's future are often born through these Majalis. Spiritual children of the Dai dream and hope to follow and practice what their spiritual father has and continues to teach. The spirit of Walayat increases every day until the awaited day comes. As we see the tears of our Dai, our hearts melt as we try and imagine what happened 1400 hundred years ago. After everyday's Majlis, Niyaz meal is served as Tabarruk in the traditional manner. Sabeel serves rose flavoured water and delicious Sharbat or milkshakes.

4). Commencement of the Ayyam al Aza:

Zuljanah, the horse of Husain, reached and stopped at the land of Karbala on the 2nd day of Muharram 61 AH. The grandson of Rasulullah (S), Moula al Husain (as) along with his Ahl al Bait

(as) and Ash'ab went through tear-jerking and heart-rending hardships and torture in Karbala to save the religion of his grandfather during those days. With the 'izan (permission) of Al Imam al Husain (as), his Ahl al Bait and Ash'ab embraced Shahadat. Al Imam al Husain (as) for the sake of protecting Kalimah al Shahadat, sacrificed his life. In his final Sajdah he offered Dua, the Barakah of which shall continue for the seekers of Shafa'at and Naja'at till the day of Qiyamah. Furthermore, observing Sawm on the 2nd Muharram has distinguished importance. It was by the Wasilah of Al Imam al Husain (as) that Allah answered the Dua of Zakariya (as) and granted him a son, Yahya (as), in his old age. Allah answers the wishes of the one who observes this Sawm with devotion and takes Wasilah of Moula al Husain (as).

Majlis al Wa'az al Husain (as) begins from 2nd Muharram and goes on till the day of A'ashurah. Majlis al Husain (as) is like Jannah on this Earth, where the Malaek descend upon the Mumineen who listen about the Zikr (account) of Al Imam al Husain (as) and commemorate his Gham(mourning). Rasulullah (S) says for a Mumin who sheds tears on Al Imam al Husain (as):

"Whoever will weep, make others cry or express the grief and sadness on his face upon my son Husain will indeed confirm his destiny in Jannah."

Apart from Aza, the Wa'az(sermon) of Muharram also includes the Bay'an of Anbiya (as), Awsiya (as), Aimmah (as) and Dua'at. It is a perfect blend of Nasihah (advice) and Hikmah (wisdom). It is a complete guide for a Mumin in the beginning of the New Year about how to lead a meaningful life by abiding by the obligations of Shariah. We need healthy food to lead a healthy life; the Wa'az of Muharram is the best of all the spiritual foods. Devotees should never miss this spiritual food which is needed for the purification of the soul. For nine days, Majlis in Shia Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawah is an Amanat(trust) of Sayedah Zainab. It is the following of the tradition of Majlis al Hikmah of the Fatemi era in which several topics are discussed in the light of the Qur'an, Ahadith, Akaleem Amir al Mumineen in a manner that one is inter related to the other. Each day's four hour Wa'az covers numerous issues of interest. The Qasas al Qur'an and Haqaiq (Asrar 'ilahiyyah, ultimate reality) of Anbiya is discussed. From 2nd Muharram, Bay'an starts from Adam (as) whereas the 3rd Muharram is fixed for Nuh(as), 4th for Ibrahim (as), 5th for Musa(as) and Essa (as). From the 6th, history of Al Khamsat ul Atha'ar (Muhammad, Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husain) begins.

These Majalis al Wa'az cover numerous topics in which the following are prominent:

- i). Tafsir of the Ayat of the Qur'an, Ahadith, Kalaam of Amir al Mumineen and Aimmat Tahireen.
- ii). Fiqah, Hikmah, Nashiyyah, Manaqib Ahl al Bait, etc. In each Wa'az, one can learn some new points of 'ilm, which help in distinguishing right from the wrong.
- iii). The history of Anbiya, Awsiya, Aimmah and Dua'at, especially the history of Al Khamsat ul Athar, with reference to Sayed al Shuhada Abi Abdillah al Imam al Husain (a.s), his Ahl al Bait and Ashaab.
- iv). The 'ilm of Aale Muhammad which is transferred from generation to generation and Dua'at save it in their hearts and in the form of manuscripts. This legacy is continued till today. This 'ilm guides us on how to spend time in this material world with dignity and prepare our luggage for the long journey of A'akhirah in following of the Shariah and instructions of the Hadi of the time. The 'ilm that is discussed with the permission of the Dai helps children of the Dawah in leading a spiritual and healthy life.

The Wa'az begins with the recitation of the following famous Arabic Nuha in a mournful tune: *"Khayrul Anaame Muhammadun wa Wasiyohu"* (Muhammad and his Wasi Ali are the most excellent and outstanding).

This Marsiyah was composed by Sayedna Ali bin Hammad, Hujjat Jazirah (a high rank in the Ismaili Dawah hierarchy) of Ray, part of today's greater Tehran. He was the predecessor of the great Ismaili philosopher and intellectual Dai, Sayedna Abi Yaqub al Sijistani. The writer of the Marsiyah was an exemplary learned thinker and scholar of high repute who had command over various languages, and branches of science. It seems that the above Marsiyah was not written by the drops of ink, but by the blood of the Dai. This Marsiyah is recited in a chorus by every attendant of the Majlis loudly today; it is an old Shia Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawah tradition which turns the entire atmosphere mournful within a few seconds.

5. Marsiyah of the Dua'at:

51st Al Dai al Fatemi, Dr. Sayedna Taher Saifuddin, had composed innumerable Aby'at and Marasi (sing: Marsiyah), in the Zikr of Abi Abdillah al Imam al Husain (as). One of his famous Marasi is *"Ya Sayedash Shuhadaee"*, which is a master piece of Arabi Literature. The Arabi Marsiyah is a poetic miracle of the 51st Dai, the Lehn (tone) of which is Hindi (Indian). Husain ibn Ali has granted the miraculous curing power in this Marsiyah as a reward. Till the day of Qiyamat, those who will recite it with tears will get the answer from the son of Fatimah. Mas'aib Biy'an in Wa'az normally begins with the recitation of the relevant stanza of this above mentioned Marsiyah, in Dawah Majalis, which refreshes the memories of the episode of Karbala in the hearts and minds of listeners.

52nd Al Dai al Muqaddas, Dr. Sayedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, also composed a Marsiyah, the transliteration of which is as follows:

Fulkul Husaine Be Karbala

Mulkul Husaine Be Karbala

Nuskul Husaine Be Karbala

Miskul Husaine Be Karbala

Abkyka Maulayal Husain

Afdyka Moulayal Husain

Moulayal Moulayal Husain

Recitation of a single stanza of this Marsiyah creates an atmosphere of Huzn and Buka upon al Imam al Husain in Majlis within a few seconds. Sayedna Mohammed Burhanuddin had composed and recited this Marsiyah on Thursday 4th Zilqadah, 1430 (AH) at Karbala on the Maqsurah of Moula al Husain. Each verse consists of seven lines, with the final three lines recurring in all 52 verses. In the Marsiyah's opening verse, Sayedna al Muqaddas summarizes the importance and eternal nature of Karbala in four words:

i). Fulk (ship – Safinatun Naja'at)

ii). Mulk (Kingdom – Dawah)

iii). Nusk (Ibadah – Zahirah and Batinah)

iv). Misk (Musk – Shafa'at)

The Dai explains that Shahadat of Husain ibn Ali allowed the survival of his Fulk (ship), the Safinatun-Naja'at that is sailing towards the shores of Jannah. Due to the Shahadah of Moula al

Husain, his Mulk (kingdom) of Imamah will continue forever. Sayedna Mohammed Burhanuddin recalls the son of Fatimah's Nusk in Karbala, especially on the eve of A'ashurah. It is this Nusk that has ensured that the ibadah of Allah shall be done for eternity. Lastly, Sayedna al Muqaddas informs us that the scent of the Misk (musk) Moula al Husain gave to his Ahl al Bait and Ashaab on the night of A'ashurah remains fragrant even today. The first verse, like every other, culminates with, "I will continue to weep upon you, my Moula Husain! My Taf'adi(sacrificial spirit) for you is eternal, my Moula Husain! My Moula! My Moula Husain!"

Muharram, indeed, is a month of purification which is attained by the Zikr of Moula al Husain (as). It may be observed in any way – either by attending the Wa'az of the Dai or listening to his Wa'az relay in any town, giving money in the Niyaz, contributing time for the Khidmah of Mumineen etc. There are numerous things which children of the Dawah can do in the name of Moula al Husain (as). There is Majlis at night from 2nd Muharram to 9th Muharram in which Zakireen recite Marsiyah and Nuha. Participation and contribution of young generation in Azadari activities is a sign of inspiration; it is an announcement that all ages will remember the sacrifice of Moula al Husain.

6). Eid al Kabat wal Huzn of "Ikhwan us Safa":

Moula al Husain ibn Ali elevated his Asha'ab on the night of A'ashurah in the Tarteeb(sequence) of Dawah hierarchy as a reward. It is the best night to elevate our spirit through Ibadah and izha'ar of Huzn and Buka upon Moula al Husain. This is one of the blessed nights to get answer of Dua from Allah by Wasilah of Husain (as) as Ahl al Bait (as) and Ash'ab al Husain (as) spent the same night in ibadah. Sayedaat and the women at Karbala cried the entire night because they knew well that they will not see their Moula the following night. Innocent children wept on the night and evening of A'ashurah but not for water and food; instead, they cried remembering that Ali Asghar will embrace Shahadah by an arrow of three prongs. Such was their devotion and loyalty that they kept waiting for the Raza(permission) and Rida(pleasure) of Al Imam al Husain (as) to go to the battle field of Haq versus Batil at Karbala and sacrifice their lives for the survival of Islam. Mumineen should offer Sala'at al Tawassul along with Sala'at Nisfil Lail and Tahajjud on this night. They should take the Wasilah of Moula al Husain (as) and ask Allah for Istaghfar and recite Ziyarah A'ashurah which has great significance.

Al Shakhs al Fazil, Saheb al Rasael discussed four Eids in "Ikhwan us Safa":

- i). Eid al Fitr
- ii). Eid al Adha
- iii). Eid al Ghadir al Khum
- iv). Eid al Kabat wal Huzn

Eid means gathering and A'ashurah is a gathering where Zikr al Husain is at its peak which is why it is known as Eid al Kabat wal Huzn. The meaning of Kabat, the root word of which is K-A-B with Hamzah in between Kalimah of Ain means Hazeen(sorrowful) in Arabic. Hujjat al Jazirah of Ray, Syedna Abi Yaqub al Sijistani explained the meaning of Huzn in one of his books as follows: Sadness, grief, anxiety, sorrow, apprehension etc.

The word Eid comes from the word Awdat(to turn, to recur, to come again and again since it returns every year). A'ashurah is the day of Qiyamah for the Mumineen in which their Moula

was slaughtered brutally by the unsharpened dagger of Maloon Shimar, just to provide Mumineen the ultimate liberation.

7). A'amaal and Ziyarate A'ashurah:

Children of the Shia Fatemi Ismaili Tayyabi Dawah keep "Faqah" on the day of A'ashurah. Sawm is illegal on this day, as Yazidian keeps Sawm on this day in the victory of Bani Umaiyah. The Niyyat of Faqah should be tribute to Moula al Husain and his Masa'ib. Can a Mumin forget the thirst of the children of Ahl al Bait for three long days? Faqah and Matam is the sign of support in the presence of Imam that 'O Moula! We are with you.' After Sala'at al Zuhr, Mumineen offer two Raka'at Sala'at al Tawassul of Al Imam al Husain (as) – approaching Allah with the Shafa'at of Husain (as) and offering Dua to fulfill their Haja'at. The person authorized to conduct Wa'az normally appoints another person to recite the Ziyarate A'ashurah, which has immense value. It is the best source to approach Allah with the Wasilah(authorized source of approach) of Husain to fulfill Hajaat(desires). Children of the Im'ani world recite Ziyarate A'ashurah and announce Walayah of Husain and declare Bara'at with all the supporters of Yazid as well as send Lanah on them.

8. The day of A'ashurah:

On the day of A'ashurah after Sala'at al Asr, usually the Aalim who conducts the Wa'az comes towards Masjid for delivering Maqal Bayaan in a Maukib (procession) which is an old historical tradition. Devotees loudly recite Nuha and do Matam, and the entire crowds of the mourners respond. The person who is assigned for Wa'az on behalf of the Dai sits on a simple mat instead of the comfortable cushion-seat to commemorate Aza on the day of A'ashurah. The major narration of the Wa'az is based on the Maqal Abi Mikhnaf - episode of slaughter of Ash'ab, Ahl al Bait and Sayed al Shuhada. The Aalim recites the Shahadat very briefly of each Shaheed and sends Rahmah(not simply as 'mercy' but something deeper – an emotion closely tied with motherhood) of Allah upon him while sending Lanah(eternal curse) upon his murderer; this is repeated by the entire crowd of Mumineen. This Majlis culminates on the Shahadat Bay'an of Husain ibn Ali. The children of the Dawah offer Sajdah and do Matam till the time of Az'an of Maghrib. Faqah is ended after Sala'at al Maghrib in the remembrance of the children of Ahl al Bait who broke their Faqah when the wife of Hurr al Riyahi brought water with some food. Before breaking Faqah, Mumineen recite the following two Ady'at(singular: Dua):

i). **Ya Muhsinu Qad Jaakal Masee.....**

ii). **Allahumma Ya Mutiyas Suwalaat...**

After Sala'at , everyone heads for Niyaz. It is an old tradition that Mumineen eat simple meal like leaves of Chulaee with Roti(bread), Suji Halwa and Khichdra (prepared from wheat, grains and beef on the). Its origin is based in the tradition that when the wife of Hurr brought some food for the Ahl al Bait and others; however, Sayedah Zainab said that they didn't want to derive pleasure by tasting a particular dish so the food was mixed and then taken only with the intention to survive.

9. Majlis: a Sacred Institution of Talim and Tarbiyyah:

Majlis is an institution of Talim and Tarbiyyah for the followers of Ahl al Bait. These Majalis are a source of inspiration on how to live in this world as enemies try to destroy the values of the

real Islam – Islam of Muhammad(S), for which Al Khamsat ul Atha’ar embraced Shahadat. The real Islam is purely discussed here and allows us to understand how hostile people have created a distorted version of Islam for their nefarious purposes. Majlis of Al Imam al Husain (as) is the most auspicious thing which a Mumin should never miss. Because it not only deals with the account of Moula al Husain (as) but it portrays a complete picture of what a Mumin should do in this world – to be successful in Duniya and Akhirah.

Aza (remembrance of the tragic Shahadat of Moula al Husain) and Buka (crying) in Majlis is an open declaration of Bara’at from the Shait’an which is compulsory for each Mumin who wishes to attain Naja’at. Those who are bed-ridden should remember their Imam and believe firmly that he/she will get Shafa’at of Husain after death. May Allah grant each one Tawfiq to come and join the Saff (row) of Azadarane-Husain (mourners upon Husain ibn Ali) in the most graceful manner during Ayyaam ul Aza (the 9 days of Muharram). Azadarane Husain should bring with them their children to encourage them to understand the significance of Asharah Mubarakah and the Haqaiq of Shahadat. Even an infant should not remain away from the Barakah of Matam. Rasulullah(S) didn’t demand anything from his Ummah as a reward of Hidayat. When Muslims came to pay him in return and offer gratitude, the following Ayah came:

“Qul La Asalokum Alaihi Ajran ‘illal Mawaddata Fil Qurba” - “I do not ask any reward from you (Ummah) upon this Hidayah(guidance), except the Mawaddah(Love) of my Ahl al Bait”.

Ah! The so-called Muslims removed the head of his grandson in reward. The Matam sessions are a declaration of Bara’at with the enemies of Husain ibn Ali. This is not crying on the dead bodies but a way of expressing our sentiments on the brutality of the so-called Muslims who gave such Ajr (reward) to Muhammad(S). This Matam is a response of the sentence of Sayedah Zainab bint Ali Amir al Mumineen, which she said in the court of Taghut(rebel of Allah) of Syria, Yazid Maloon:

“Do whatever is in your capacity, but Wallah you will never stop people from remembering us”.

10. Concluding Discussion:

Today, the Baab of the gateway of Madinatul ‘ilm al Nabi, the 53rd Al Dai al Mutlaq, Chancellor of Aligarh University, Dr. Sayedna Abu Jafar us Sadiq A’aliqadr Mufaddal Saifuddin, is working day and night to disseminate ‘ilm. He says:

"Mumineen! Receive and learn the rightful and true ‘ilm and remain steadfast on the path of Ima’an (faith)."

With that sole purpose, Al Huzur al Aala prepares Wa’az each year on a remarkable scale and for nine days, delivers ‘ilm of such magnitude that for all Mumineen it becomes a treasure for their Duniya and Akhirah. Amongst the Dua’at Mutlaqeen, Dr. Sayedna A’aliqadr Mufaddal Saifuddin's standing, action, vision, mission and glory are unique. His compulsory invitation is unique for the attendance to the community in the name of Al Imam al Husain during nine days of A’asharah. In the days preceding A’asharah, children of the Dawah are constantly anxious to know where the Dai will deliver Majalis, and in following of “Majalis al Hikmah” of the great Ismaili Dai, Sayedna al Muayyad al Shirazi, Dai of the era distributes Ruhani fruit and food. For the last few decades, the Dai selects a different place and geographic region so that the followers of those different areas treasure the maximum ‘ilm and gather Barakah. In addition,

children of the Dawah from all corners of the world flock to that region to gain that treasure as well.

It is a humble appeal to the devotees that they should design and contribute in various projects of welfare in the name of Moula al Husain. Every penny spent in the name of Al Imam al Husain (as) is a Hasanat (good deed) for which the reward is gained in the form of Jannah. From 2nd Muharram to the day of Arbeyeen (20th Safar), Mumineen avoid extravagance in their routine life. Due to Gham (grief) of Husain ibn Ali, Mumineen dress up in simple but clean clothes till Arbeyeen, and completely shun fun activities, eat simple food, and avoid non religious activities. The month of Muharram gives Talim to fight with the Zalim (tyrant), whoever he is. Karbala gives us lesson of support to Mazlum (oppressed). No doubt, Muharram is the month which gives us lesson to differentiate between Haq and Batil and exposed the ugly face of enemies of Husain, Bani Umaiyyah, who killed Husain and ruled in the name of Islam.

The sacrifice of Husain was not only for the spiritual preservation of any particular community but for the preservation of humanity and for the real freedom of the entire society. There is no day more memorable than the day of A'ashurah. In this world, if we attend an educational conference of some sort, we spend a lot of money. The 'ilm that we will gather in each of these nine days of A'asharah is a thousand times more precious than that of any other worldly conference that we might attend. If there is to be a certain amount of cost involved in attending this most valuable spiritual conference, it will be only for our own benefit, not only in this Duniya but in the A'akhirah as well. In fact it would be too little even if we gave our life for such an Abadi (everlasting), Ibdæe (eternal) benefit. Moreover, one should note that commemorating Muharram is meaningless until we realize the essential message and deep philosophy of the mission of Al Imam al Husain:

“Fighting unto death is more honorable than submitting to tyranny and injustice.”

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