

**IECRC COMMEMORATES THE MARTYRDOM OF HAZRAT IMAM HUSAYN
(MAY ALLAH ALMIGHTY BE WELL PLEASED WITH HIM)**

*Wa qul jaa al Haqqu wa zahaqal batil
Inna batila kaana zahuqa*

And proclaim, "The Truth has arrived and falsehood has vanished; indeed falsehood had to vanish."

[The Holy Quran 17:81]

The timeless struggle between truth and falsehood, good and evil, is epitomized in no other chronicle of Islamic history than on the banks of the river Euphrates in the plains of Karbala, Iraq. What the soil of Iraq witnessed in 61 Hijra / 680 CE was a testimony and lesson for all time to come that sacrifices are inevitable on the Path of Truth and that those who are closest to their Lord and therefore most committed to the Path are to endure the severest of hardships.

To further this salient message, the Islamic Educational and Cultural Research Center of Northern California observed the momentous day of *Ashura* at its weekly *Dhikr* location in Fremont, California on Sunday February 12, 2006. Derived from the Arabic word for ten, *Ashura* is commemorated on the 10th day of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic lunar calendar. This historic day carries in it the heartrending reminder of the martyrdom in Karbala of Hazrat Imam Husayn ibn Ali (may Allah be well pleased with them both), the most beloved grandson of the Beloved of Allah Almighty, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace & Prayers Of Allah Almighty Be Upon Him.)

The Crown of Saints, Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (1077/8-1166 CE, may Allah Almighty be well pleased with him) narrates authentic Prophetic traditions in his magnum opus, "*Al-Ghunya li-Taalibi Tareeq al-Haqq*" rendered into English as "Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth", that *Ashura* is the day in which Allah Almighty created the heavens and the earth, the Tablet and the Pen, and is also the day in which Hazrat Musa (peace be upon him) and his community were delivered from the unjust reins of the Pharaoh, and is also the day on which this world will come to an end. It is also the day that Allah Almighty chose to honor Hazrat Imam Husayn with his pre-ordained martyrdom to grant him the elevated rank of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be well pleased with them). It is worth reflecting that despite the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) had been made aware of this fatal fate of Hazrat Imam Husayn (may Allah be well pleased with him) by Angel Jibraeel (peace be upon him) as is taught to us through authentic Prophetic narrations; and despite the fact that any supplications by the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) to change this fate would have been accepted by Allah Almighty, no such prayer was made. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) chose and agreed to give up the life of His beloved grandson for the sake of His *Ummah* (community) so that we may learn the essential lessons of sacrifice. Peace Be Upon Him & His Noble Family!

Unfortunately, the Islamic concept of martyrdom has become the subject of much confusion both within and outside the Muslim community with disastrous consequences. In Islamic *Shariah* (Law), the breath of life is considered one of the greatest gifts as it is through being alive that one has the opportunity to do righteous deeds. However, those who oppose goodness, either knowingly or unknowingly, present the possibility of endangering the property, honor and life itself of those struggling to do good works. Therefore, the willingness to have one's life taken away in the pursuit of doing good works and upholding the Truth is considered very noble in Islam. However, let it be known that taking a civilian's life or one's own life, no matter how bleak things seem, is completely beyond the pail of Islam. As a matter of fact Allah Almighty urges Muslims in the Holy Quran:

"... do not lose hope in Allah's mercy; ..."

[The Holy Quran 39:53]

Furthermore, Muslims are exhorted to bear trials with patience, and not retaliation, as outlined in the Holy Quran:

"O People who Believe! Seek help from patience and prayer; indeed Allah is with those who patiently endure."

[The Holy Quran 2:153]

The great 11th century CE Sufi scholar, Hazrat Abul Hasan Syed Ali bin Uthman Hujwari famous as Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh (may Allah be well pleased with him) writes in his encyclopedic treatise on *Tasawwuf* (Sufism), the “*Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*” rendered into English as “Unveiling the Veiled”:

“[Hazrat Imam Husayn رضي الله عنه] is one of the great *Awliya* Allah devoted exclusively to Allah and famous for renunciation, patience and forbearance in the hours of extreme affliction, such as that experienced in the massacre at Karbala.”

Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh (may Allah be well pleased with him) further quotes Hazrat Imam Husayn رضي الله عنه in the *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*:

“We are the people called *Ahl-e-bala* (sufferers). We love *bala* (calamities) and feel pleased with it. We live for others and not for ourselves.”

This is the foundational spiritual teaching of Hazrat Imam Husayn (may Allah Almighty be well pleased with him) and the essential message of unconditional service to others that the IECRC attempts to convey and promote to the community through its various conferences, events and especially the *Urs* (memorial) days observed for the *Awliya Kiram* (Noble Friends of Allah Almighty or Sufi Saints, may Allah have mercy on them all). This is the message of all the Sufi Saints of the Islamic tradition. IECRC’s commemoration of the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husayn (may Allah Almighty be well pleased with him) in February 2006 in Fremont, California was no exception. Poignant couplets were recited by various community members including young children, reminding the audience of the great sacrifice that this luminary of the Islamic tradition gave in order to uphold the principles of Islam. He gave his head but did not pledge allegiance to the tyranny of the then ruler of the Muslims. Hazrat Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (may Allah have mercy on him), the great 12th century CE Sufi Saint of India writes the following Persian lines in praise of Imam Husayn (may Allah Almighty be well pleased with him):

*Shah ast Husayn رضي الله عنه baad Shah ast Husayn رضي الله عنه
Deen ast Husayn رضي الله عنه Deen panaa ast Husayn رضي الله عنه
Sar daad na daad dast dar dast-e-Yazid
Haqqa ke bina-e laa ilahaa ast Husayn رضي الله عنه*

Husayn رضي الله عنه is the king, Husayn رضي الله عنه is the king of kings
The *Deen* (Islam) is Husayn رضي الله عنه, the protector of the *Deen* is Husayn رضي الله عنه
He gave his head, but did not give his hand in the hand of Yazid
In reality, Husayn رضي الله عنه is the foundation of “*La ilaaha illallah*” (There is no God but Allah)

Yazid was a transgressor from a young age and despite constant advice from his father Hazrat Muawiya (may Allah be well pleased with him), yazid did not mend his ways. Imam Husayn’s رضي الله عنه confrontation with Yazid was a call for justice and restoration of the *Shari’ah*. Yazid had done many anti-*Shari’ah* acts. He had committed the sacrilegious act of tying horses to the Mosque of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and they had soiled the blessed mosque. Imam Husayn رضي الله عنه exhorted and warned Yazid three times to give up his tyrannical and blasphemous ways and to pledge allegiance to the family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. However, this call for rectification fell on deaf ears.

Some 72 lovers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were forced to take on the huge army of Yazid that had laid siege upon them. The martyrdom of Imam Husayn رضي الله عنه and the rest of the martyrs of Karbala was the price paid for the fortification and safeguarding of Islam and the guarantor for this religion having reached us today.

Seventy thousand angels alighted in the grave of Imam al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (may Allah Almighty be pleased with them both) on the day when he was mortally wounded, and they will continue to weep over him until the day of Resurrection. [*Al-Ghunya li-Talibi*]

The highlight of IECRC’s commemorative evening was a most informative talk by Hafiz Prof. Dr. Mohammad Abdullah Qadri who delivered his important speech via telephone. Hafiz Abdullah Qadri is the older brother of Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ahmed Qadri, the Founding Director of IECRC. Hafiz Dr. Qadri is also a Ph.D. in Political Science despite the challenge of being blind from infancy. He has also completed the 18 year *Dars-e-Nizami* and is the Director of Research in the Department of Political Science at Karachi University. Hafiz Dr. Qadri holds the honor of being the first blind Ph.D. in the Department of Political Science in the world. In his speech, Hafiz Qadri emphasized the

importance of remembering that those who are martyred in the Path of Allah Almighty are not to be considered dead as is taught by the Holy Quran. He also highlighted that Muslims should hold on tightly to the obligatory prayers and principles of Islam for the upholding of which Hazrat Imam Husayn (may Allah Almighty be well pleased with him) gave up his life.

Also quoted at this spiritual gathering were the profound words of Hazrat Allama Iqbal رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, the great 19th century Urdu poet-philosopher of Pakistan:

*Qatl-e-Husayn رحمۃ اللہ علیہ asal mein marg-e Yazid hai
Islam zinda hota hai har Karbala ke baad*

**The slaughter of Husayn رحمۃ اللہ علیہ [Truth] is in reality the death of Yazid [Falsehood]
Islam is revived after every Karbala**

The above couplet is an intense reminder of the constant struggle between good and evil, truth and falsehood that not just played itself on the plains of Karbala, but is the constant activity of the human soul. Every moment we are faced with an inner battle between the lower (falsehood) and higher (truth) self and whenever the higher self wins it revives a state of peace, a state of Islam.

May Allah Almighty grant us the guidance to benefit from the teachings of our great luminaries and to apply their teachings of patience, forbearance, love for Truth, and sacrifice for the betterment of our communities and humanity at large. Ameen.