

PRESS RELEASE: IMAM HUSAYN – THE GRANDSON OF PROPHET MOHAMMED

9 January 2013

A peaceful procession was conducted in Leicester on Sunday 30th Dec 2012 honouring the martyr Imam Husayn, who was the son of Ali (the first Shiite Imam and the fourth Sunni Caliph) and the grandson of the last Prophet of Islam, Mohammed. Many traditions have been recorded about the affection the Prophet had for Husayn and he is loved and revered by all Muslims and non Muslims for his stance against the brutal and oppressive regime of the day.

In 680 C.E., Yazid, son of Muawiya, who was imposed on the Muslims as Caliph by his father, became the first dictatorial Ummayid dynasty ruler with disastrous consequences. He immediately demanded but failed to get the Prophet's grandson's allegiance. Imam Husayn, not wanting to spill blood in the holy city of Medina and well aware of the apocalyptic predictions by his grandfather, instead chose to leave for Kufa (modern day Iraq). With his family and companions, Imam Husayn was driven into the desert of Iraq, known as Kerbala, by Yazid's forces and, after being denied water, was brutally murdered. His companions, family members and even his children were killed by the Caliph's army. Thereafter, Yazid sacked, pillaged and plundered and looted the cities of Medina and Mecca, raping women and finally burning the sacred cubic house (the Kaaba) to the ground. The Kaaba is the directional point for all Muslims in their daily prayers.

All Muslims of all sects commemorate the tragic event of Kerbala in their different ways. The Shia community brings public awareness through poetry and plays, distributing leaflets, holding lectures and sermons and through eulogy known as 'marsiyas'.

The message of Imam Husayn is one that is inherently felt by all of mankind irrespective of their colour or creed. If Imam Husayn's monumental sacrifice is read in depth, it would awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader. His fight against oppression has been the source of inspiration for spiritual leaders and historians such as Mohandas Ghandhi, Thomas Carlyle and many others.

Farooq Murad, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain said: "The 10th of Muharram which is commonly known as Ashura is commemorated for the tragic massacre at Karbala, in Iraq in 61 A.H. of Imam Husain, his family and supporters. They sacrificed their lives in order to uphold the Prophet's message of truth, freedom and justice'.

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