Husayn is the conscience of all holy divine religions / Ashoura tragedy in Bible

An interview by Mohammad Zare'

Antowan Bara, a Christian researcher and writer, has said, "Husayn is the conscience of all holy divine religions till the end of the world; he wanted to awaken sinful conscience and release them from abyss of sins.

Characteristics of great men of history has various aspects, but which aspects of him attracted you more that you have spent several years of your life researching about this great Shia leader and his historical movement?

Antowan Bara, a Christian researcher and writer, has said, " Husayn is the conscience of all holy divine religions till the end of the world; he wanted to awaken sinful conscience and release them from abyss of sins.

All aspects of his personality from the start of his movement to his entrance to Karbala have been fascinated me.

In fact, no specific feature of him can be pointed to. As a personality like his has

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different aspects and searching about such a characteristic is similar to looking for a pin in a vast place. The personality of imam Husayn is like an endless sea which can taught us lessons if we look carefully.

But even by the difficulty exist in knowing him, we should attempt to pay attention to some aspects of him; for example, he disregarded all tempting offer given to him at his time; especially at the time of Yazid rulership. Husayn could accept a position and wealth that Yazid offered him and lived a secure life and avoid all those tragic happening he had to go through. I am saying this because some thought like this at the start of the combat, including some groups of hypocrites, extremists and subservient who tried to say the goal of this combat was to reach power. Even nowadays such an attempt still exists.

But the holy personality of the grandson of Prophet realized the existence of such a wrong belief and understood this attitude towards himself, by passage of time, will expand and as a result all future generations will receive this distorted message.

This distortion could change the meaning of all those devotions of companions of the Prophet or even imam Ali. Therefore, imam Husayn decided to stand up against Yazid; Yazid is known as a naïve person by all historical sources.

Naïve in it all sense.

Imam Husayn was always following a clear principle and rule and never put it aside.

As he said, I am not an ambitious, rebellious, corruptor or cruel person. I am raising to correct the nation of my grandfather. I want to do Amr bi Marouf and Nahi anil-Monkar. So Husayn had two goals for his uprising. First, correcting the nation of his grandfather and second Amr bi Marouf and Nahi anil-Monkar. Though, there were lots of temptations to distract his attention in that time but he never left these two principals. Why? It is because since the time he was born, he was the clothes of martyrdom in and the Mercy of God prepared him to play this significant role in the history of Islamic nation.

What I have said was the most highlighted feature of his personality, which is his adherence to the principles and did not have tendency towards this and that. Though, many people wanted to talk him out of this combat by their advice. But imam Husayn did not accept.

One of these individuals was his brother Mohammad ibn Hanifeh who said, “do not revolt.” Mohammad looked at this uprising with materialistically. And against this materialistic view, imam Husayn had a spiritual non materialistic look.

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Seeking truth and adhering to the principles were the first impression we get when we are looking at this figure.

Q. you have written in your book that Imam Husayn is the permanent and everlasting gem of religions. What made you or which aspect of his personality made you to get into this conclusion?

This is exactly what I have said in my book. I also said Husayn is the conscience of all religions till the end of the world. Why? Because his revolt was because of the belief of his grandfather and Husayn was acting based on the public conscience of Muslim nation. And as he was the representative of Muslim nation, he is the conscience of all religions. According to the traditions of Christians, Isa came to this world to sacrifice himself for human beings and the meaning of devotion and sacrifice is not its usual and ordinary meaning that we have in our minds. Therefore, is imam Husayn uprising natural?

No! His uprising was similar to a volcano in the spirits of all muslim nation and it left behind tremendous aftershock. Imam Husayn wanted to waken up consciences sinking in sins by these quakes and saved them from abyss of sins. From the other hand, it was close that the measures of the ruling system of that time torn apart newly shaped religious belief of people. In addition, great people of the first years of Islam went through hardship and had many devotions for Islam; but after them a group took the rein of power who wanted power only and attracted people's heart, mind and soul to corruption.

Therefore, the word conscience is a symbol which shows Husayn's movement was from God and his uprising was similar to the missions of prophets. When imam Husayn said, "if God wants me killed, I will be killed, and there is no escape from the Day (day of Ashoora) which is determined by God."

Imam Husayn was an agent from God to do this mission and that uprising was the will of God. The will that many people disregarded it in that time. This was the same will of God that made Abraham to revolt against Namrood. He was dropped into fire in front of Namroods' eyes to burn. And the same will caused Yahya to stood up against Hirodus and tell him: the wife of your brother is not halal for you. Therefore, he could abolish their sunnah and this will of God caused Isa to address Ahbar (Jews scholars) and said, you are satanic. From the generation of thieves and mean ones. And because of this will of God Muhammad- that poor and orphaned child- carried the mission of prophethood and spread it to the East and the West.

Q. in our researches about personality of Husayn and his mission, we came to this belief that if it was not his mission

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and martyrdom, the path of salvation would remain closed to human beings, did you get such a result from your researches?

I agree with you. And I allocate a specific part of my book to this topic. In other parts of the book, I also talked about this. I also said, if it was not the uprising of imam Husayn, historians when recording the history of Islam as a religion would not find anything and if it was not this uprising, history of Islam would be forgotten. Some people criticized me when I said the beginning of Islam is from Muhammad but its continuation is by Husayn and the revolution and uprising of Husayn was done by Husayn but its continuation by Zeinab.

Since the time of Prophet to the time of Imam Ali, each one of Ahle Bayt, had a mission given to them by God, imam Husayn, imam Hasan and Zeinab and Zahra. Each one of them has a clear role to guide the nation of Muhammad. But the role of Zeinab was to continue the mission of her brother and hold his flag raised. And what Zeinab has done in that time is not less than what Husayn had done.

And Zeinab had a complementary role in this uprising. Therefore, Islam had revealed to Prophet, Ali interpreted and taught it. Karballa was the final level of this revelation and Zeinab helped Husayn in this way.

Hazrat Zeinab was prepared for such a day to be his helper. Zeinab loved her brother since her childhood and if Husayn was late for home, she waited for him impatiently. And when Zeinab married Abdullah ibn Jafar, a contract was set between Ali and Jafar saying Zainab is free to be besides her brother whenever she wants without taking any permission from her husband.

And when Ashora Tragedy happened, though Zainab could join her brother without taking permission from her husband but she took permission and the reason of this is her special upbringing.

Therefore each one of Ahle Bayt had a clear mission and people could not comprehend it easily. Why? Because they don't care about the Will of God in changing the life of infallibles and chosen ones of God. The will that put Abraham in fire and beheaded Yahya by Saloomeh, the daughter of Hirood. According to this Will, Quraish and disbelievers were bothered Prophet to the extent that Muhammad said, no Prophet was tortured by his nation more than me.

Q. God has brought all infallibles in a way or other to Karbala and informed them about this tragedy of imam Husayn. In your opinion what was the reason? Since the time of Adam downfall on the earth, God has set all infallibles be informed of this tragic event and even some of them mourned

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for him in advance. It has been narrated that Isa once was passing from Karballa, he stopped there for a while and picked up a handful of soil of there, smelled it and cried for Husayn ibn Ali.

The tragedy of Karbala was the ultimate form of all desperate devotions of Prophets who had started before. This subject that Isa had seen Karbala is correct and has been mentioned in historical documents.

The tragedy of Ashora is the ultimate devotion in the history of religions. If we look at Quran, we see only the word religion in singular form and not plural form. Quran talks about a united general religion. Therefore, that religion has been received to us by three prophets. It is true that Isa has been to Karbala and I explained it in details.

All these things have happened based on Hikmah of God. Hikmah and Might of God can produce such a miracle. I myself believe that Isa was present in the land of Karbala, because they were both to sacrifice, though Husayn was not a prophet, by his devotion and sacrifice could get close to Isa and this opinion is based on our Christians literature.

In conclusion, visitation of Prophets of Karbala is correct, though some people claim it not to be authentic. But it happened and has been mentioned in authentic source books. Therefore, it is not strange if Isa was present there and felt that bloody bloodshed from close; the history of religions has never witnessed such a martyrdom like martyrdom of Husayn.

Arrows, knifes, swords, amputation, being trapped by horseshoes,… a death by these things is not a usual death from one hand, and from the other hand, the one who was murdered was the grandson of holy Prophet.

God has chosen some people like Husayn to show humanity that how they risked their life to fulfill a significant goal and even devoted their family and best friends for this goal.

Imam Husayn knew that he could not win by seventy individuals against thirty thousand soldiers of Yazid. But he accepted martyrdom peacefully and happily. And it was Hikmah of God to give eternity to this martyrdom. Hikmah was this when Imam was asked not to take women and girls with him, he did not accept and insisted on it, so by being eye witness, they could be trustworthy and reliable reporters of this tragedy. Imam had perceived his mission; presence of women besides him could complete his uprising. It was the sunnah of Arab to cut head of men, put them on arrows in order to get reward. The same has been down to Husayn.

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Because of this Zeinab insisted to be with his brother in his movement. Though some friends of Imam Husayn tried to talk him out of his decision like Mohammad ibn Hanafiyeh, Abdullah ibn Jafar, … or at least persuaded him not to take women. But it should be noted that if he went there alone, no one would become informed of what had happened there. Because Yazid had special groups who spread false news and rumors among people, very similar to some news agencies of the present time. These groups were named Morjada; their duty was to change realities. Show black as white and white as black. Therefore, when Zeinab went to Damascus, walking in the front of Karvan of captive ones, people insulted her and said, you nasty, corrupted rebels wanted to topple Yazid? So your killing is mobah (allowed).

But Zeinab by her sermon and lecture changed people's ideas and burned their hearts. She made reality clear for people and people realized that this karvan were not rebels or corrupt ones but they were Ahle Bayt of Prophet. If it were not Zeinab and other women; imam Sajjad would be murdered too. And no one would remain from Prophet. When we look at this picture from above, at least its Hikmah and reason become clear for us.

You told somewhere Isa told Bani Israel, anyone who saw Husayn, should haste to help him. In your opinion, in this era, how can a Christian specifically and the world of Christianity in General help Husayn?

Yes, Isa said, anyone who lives at his time. And it means in the beginning everyone was called Bani Israel. Because Isa was selected by God to guide Bani Israel. Isa asked people to help imam Husayn in his combat. And this combat was not fighting with sword. Isa wanted people and his companions took part in this scene by advice and adherence to principles. The principles which stop distortion.

Q. the news of tragic event of Ashoora has been mentioned in Bible; we read in part of it, an slaughtering will happen besides Nile (Forat). And as we know Ashoora was happened there.

Yes, we read this and we read in its continuation, attack, wear war clothes, … and all these descriptions have a meaning, therefore, the words which are said by Prophet have a symbolic meaning. It is right that Isa was informed of this tragic event and announced it. When Isa came to visit Karbala land, he knew that according to Hikmah of God, a martyrdom will come in the third level of massengership and by his great devolution, will finish this third level of massengership; the reports of his great devotion will replete the world. Therefore, he could defend from the third belief and in addition to this, he was the

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guardian of the first two believes from two previous massengership.

Because all those three levels are part of three-level part of a unique religion.

I allocate a complete chapter to this topic in my book. This part raised a dispute and challenge among readers. In this book, I talked about words of Isa and Husayn. Their words are very similar to each other. For example, we can point to the words of Isa at the time of being tortured or the words of Husayn to the army of enemies. Or when Husayn told his companions, "leave me and go away." Isa told the same to his apostles, "leave me and go away." All these words can show that this person has come to do devotion. For this, getting help is meaningless. And helping refers to each person conscience. As Isa and Husayn asked their friends to leave the scene but they stayed there.

The meaning of "to comprehend the present" is to realize the principles of Husayn and put them in practice. Therefore, if a person after passing fourteen centuries from Ashoora tragedy, defends it and writes about it and explains and interprets it, it is as if he was present there and fought next to Husayn.

This means what I have already said. Of course, at the time of Ashoora, helping Husayn was difficult and from one hand, religions are to be followed in every era. And they are not specific for an era. Likewise, the words of Prophets and chosen ones are applicable for all eras.

Q. from the wonderful issues of martyrdom of Imam Husayn is the scene of his martyrdom. Even enemies struggled with each other for taking his clothes.

He was trapped under the feet of horses, swords and spears. His enemies even did not leave his pants and ring untouched, took them out harshly. And these things happened before Shemr cut his holy head off.

In that tragic event, two groups were present: a group who helped Imam; like Hor ibn Riyahi and a group who desisted helping him.

The same had happened for Isa. Therefore, I tried to have a comparison between Isa and Husayn and in my book, in a nice chapter, titled "did isa inform us of Karbala?", I included it. This part raise challenges among readers. And some tried to answer me and wrote, "Presence of Isa in Karbala is not possible." And I answered, "this is done by Hikmah and Might of God. It didn't obey world laws which we think of it as an impossible action. God could take Isa to there in a wink of an eye to see in close the third level of a unique religion." In conclusion, no one can ignore this event or refuse it.

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Q. you said in your book that if Husayn had belonged to us, we would have put up a flag in each and every corner in his name, and we would have invited people of the world to Islam. In your opinion, muslims and specially Shia, what should they have done for imam Husayn but they haven't, and which failure of them made you say this?

You the muslim do not recognize the high position and value of him and do not save it. Why? I wrote in my book that in order to save the tragedy of Karbala having ceremonies is not sufficient.

In addition, I wrote another sentence about this and I used it in another interview. I said, you muslims do not recognize imam Husayn well and do not value it as you should. Why? The question is what the duty of Shia is regarding Husayn? I said in my book that keeping Ashoora alive should not be limited to some ceremonies. Of course these ceremonies are good like beating on the chests, mourning, … but each muslim and non muslim must apply imam Husayn guidelines and behavior in his personal life and family life and in society and even the world. Why? To spread rightness and justice and to uproot injustices.

Because Husayn was the symbol of innocence. And this is what made Gandi say that Husayn taught me the way of being innocent which led me to reach victory at the end. But how an innocent and oppressed person can win? And how this can lead to victory? Therefore, there should exist a compatibility between innocence and victory. Isn't it?

It is my understanding that it is not enough to suffice to mourning, but we should try to expand his guidelines and culture all around the world.

These steps can help people of the word specially west and Christians be informed that there is a person like their Prophet Jesus who was very similar to him in terms of devotion and defending his believes. Because believes also like other phenomenon can be distorted and when Husayn felt the process to distort belief was started, he began his movement to create that spiritual quake.

I do not regard Husayn's uprising as a war, but I know it is as an epic for his opinions and for humanity. Its difference with other epics is the other epics mentioned in story books are not real, they are imaginations of authors, maybe they are believable or unbelievable and even they can be fun. Reading them will give us joy but this tragedy and epic is not like this. It belonged to all time and it is for all eras and it contains lots of lessons.

Here human beings are put in the testing situation: to understand these lessons and

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apply them and not to have a superficial look at Husayn's epic and not to suffice to keeping some ceremonies alive. For example, human being is also in an attempt to reach social position and save his financial gaining, but Husayn was not like this. He ignored all these things and stood up against injustices. Though he couldn't win; by this uprising, Islam could win other combats ahead. This is the philosophy of Karabala Tragedy.

To answer the question that what is the duty of Shia towards Ashoora tragedy and Husayn I should say I had started to wrote this book when I was twenty-three and it was my first book of my fifteen books in this regard. Though before writing this book, I had read Maghtal of Husayn by Moghrem. Because I didn't have any background, I started to read it and took notes, some saw my notes and comments writing in the book and said these notes contained a new look and approach in itself; the color of a Christian who lives among muslims and the identity of his life is in fact Islamic and who is interested in Husayn. They encouraged me to put my step in this way.

Q. some orientalists had a materialistic look at the tragedy of Karbala and some muslims even do not hold a correct idea about it. and our Shia brothers hold a kind of emotional look to this epic.

Yes, that's true. For example, some people like Ibn Teymiyeh said Husayn's uprising spread corruption. But we do not know he is talking about which corruption. Therefore we should hold a fair look at this. From one hand, Shia brothers have emotional look at this tragedy. When my book was published, I welcomed by threats and exaggerated harsh reactions; of course I am happy with these reactions. After passing twelve years of its publication, which brought me hardship, I am unable to entangle myself from the charisma of Husayn's personality.

I had decided that this book be my first book about Husayn. And now after 37 years, I do not find this ability in myself to write a similar book to this again and I believe this book, by the help of God and Husayn and Ahle Bayt, has achieved a lot, though its author has 23 years old. Readers thought that it was written by a man of 90 years old. The wonder is my book was sued in a court and they issued a verdict for a funny reason. My accusation was a sentence I wrote about Othman ibn Afan; and it is interesting that I took the sentence without any change from the book "revolution of Husayn and its social effects" by Mohammad Shams al-Din.

I was accused that I made fun of Othman in my book. And it is written in the law that a researcher can documented to the books which are in the libraries if he

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doesn't make any change in them. I did the same. But even though that book is in the libraries, I was convicted and the publication of my book was banned.

You said earlier there is a relationship between Imam Mahdi reappearance and return of Isa and the movement of imam Husayn, and said there is a tight relationship among them. You said anyone who likes to experience this, should know imam Husayn and await returning Isa. How do you explain this similarity?

Definitely guidance and attention of God has created this similarity, and each human being based on his religion will have a general or detailed understanding from it. We could not comprehend Decisions of God completely; we only understand a part of it. Therefore, we should accept this and try more to pay attention to all aspects. A look which is rooted in faith. By faith, we mean the faith which was in all prophets and infallibles and the chosen ones. They came to increase the level of humanity. The movement of all prophets was similar; as they were to invite people to worship God and justice.

As a Christian, I believe Isa and Mahdi(p.b.u.h.) will revive humanity from the abyss of sins and cruelties.

According to us – Christians- and also muslims there will a time when sin will occupy all the world, and then Mahdi will come. Of course even at the present time, the signs of reappearance of him are tangible. But no one but God knows its exact time. And I as a Christian believe in that time Isa and Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) will revive humanity from the abyss of sins and cruelties.

Therefore all attempts and devotions of prophets were to transfer true belief to human beings and reach them to the prosperity of this world and the other world. Opposite to this, human being turns to the world and this interest to the world brings corruption and violence as a result.

This has a lesson in it for humanity and in the light of these infallibles and chosen ones people will find salvation.

Concerning divine rulership, I should say we as human beings can not have a general picture different from what has been mentioned in holy books. As I said our dream is to reach that divine rulership. All these issues need prerequisites and preparation which are mentioned in Christianity and Islam.

And both emphasize that prerequisites of reappearance is when oppression and injustice have spread the world. As imam Ali said, "How few passengers pass through right path. This is undeniable that only a few people will tread on this path."

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Though imam Ali said this at his time but this sentence is rooted from prudence of him to future as other individuals of this family had this prudence.

It is enough to remember the words of imam Husayn or hazrat Zeinab who was in the first line of caravan of captives; she told her nephew something that showed her prudence. She said, future will be full of our name and our place will be high. The question is how did she know after 14 centuries events will go towards this? This is a reason on my claim. Several years ago I went to karbala in Arbaeen and I saw 24 million pilgrims there and this is a part of her prudence and her brother's. They know that hearts will get in touch with this epic and their names will be respected. And any place they put their foot, a shrine will be constructed, people in groups will go to visit them; people who eagerly count minutes to visit there. Of course when someone does not have such an experience, for him it is difficult to understand.

One who is on the way to visit imam Husayn shrine in the day of Arbaeen and leaves his belongings behind, and tends to find truth, will not suppress anyone, and if because of him another person is bothered or oppressed, he couldn't sleep a wink that night.

On the way to Karbala, he thinks about why Karbala has happened? Why did Husayn devote himself, his family and companions? Why? Does this epic an answer to the order of God? What a splendid answer? Husayn, the great and nice flower of garden of villaya… in reply to the order of God, could have created such an epic. In Quran, we read, "you all hurry, financially or physically do jahad. If you understand, it is better for you all."

This haste and preparation was not for usual and mundane devotion. But it teaches human beings a lesson, and in this stormy ocean of greed of human beings, which makes the path of God fading; Husayn is there, the tower of guidance for those who take the path of God as their way of life, clears the way to stop people of falling in the abyss of sins and bites of deadly snakes of this road.

Therefore, all these things are Hikmah of God. But how would be that reappearance? Only God can answer it. And as we said we have some pictures in our mind of how it would be. In that time, Isa and Husayn will have some tools that no human being has ever seen before. In this great event, stars, skies and magnetic powers of the earth will help them.

Likewise, all unknowns to human beings since the time of his creation till then will be known. Angels with their various types and benevolent people all will be at the commandership of Isa and Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) to spread justice and uproot oppression.

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The oppression that human being has made by different methods and by the means of science and technology.

As I said, each work for Husayn or about him will cause a lot of concepts related to this culture be passed to people and add to their information. As imam Ali said, “human being is enemy of what he doesn’t know.” Or in another place, “do not have relationship with ignorant people.”

Therefore, not knowing something is not suitable when the channels of getting information is open to us now. We should even by making films, writing books, … try to defend opinions, thoughts and principles of Husayn movement, even if it is going to happen after 14 centuries; As I have tolerated all those hardship in writing for Husayn and I did not chose anyone but Husayn. In that time I had never thought my book would have been published. But against all negative environment, I did it and now I am proud of it because the path of Husayn is a big shiny star of Islam and humanity. I wish you luck in this way.

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