



Lecture Summary – Thursday 2nd October 2025

The Tobacco Revolt – Sheikh Ali Abbas Malik

Condemnation of Violence & Terrorism

- Begins by unequivocally condemning terrorism and murder, referencing attacks such as on synagogues.
- Islam, he stresses, is a religion of peace and never permits indiscriminate killing. Any act of mass violence, whether terrorism or state warfare such as nuclear or carpet bombing, falls outside the teachings of Islam.
- Killing innocent people is categorically **haram** (forbidden).

Tribute to a Recently Deceased Lady

- The lecture then shifts to honouring the life of a notable lady who recently passed away.
- She came from a distinguished scholarly and religious family, with deep roots in Shi'a scholarship and leadership.
- Her heritage included figures such as:
 - **Ayatollah Mohsin al-Hakim** (prominent marja').
 - Influential scholars and reformers from the Hawza of Najaf and Karbala.

Role of Shi'a Scholars in Society & Politics

- The lecture reflects on the historical and social role of Shi'a scholars in guiding the community.
- In Iraq and the Middle East, scholars resisted political ideologies like socialism and Marxism which had infiltrated the youth.
- Despite persecution, assassinations, and exile, maraji' (senior scholars) maintained leadership and sacrifice for the preservation of religion.

Examples of Scholarly Activism

- Several historical examples were highlighted:
 - **Tobacco Protest (1890s, Iran):** Led by Ayatollah Mirza Hassan Shirazi, where a fatwa against British control of the tobacco trade mobilised society, leading to the cancellation of colonial contracts.
 - **1920 Iraqi Revolt:** Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi played a central role in resisting British occupation, showing how scholars mobilised both spiritually and socially.
- These events show the power of religious leadership in defending independence and justice without resorting to violence.

Continuity of Heritage in Families

- The deceased lady carried this legacy within her family and household, combining both the bloodlines and scholarly traditions of leading maraji'.
- Such families represent a heritage of sacrifice, knowledge, and activism that influenced communities across generations.

Connection to Karbala & Imam Husayn (as)

- The lecture concludes by drawing parallels with the ultimate sacrifice of **Imam Husayn (as)** in Karbala.
- His thirst, suffering, and refusal to submit to tyranny embody the principles that later scholars and communities drew upon in their own struggles.
- The narrative of Karbala is a source of spiritual strength, teaching steadfastness, dignity, and resistance against oppression.

✓ Key Themes:

- Absolute rejection of terrorism and indiscriminate killing.
- Importance of scholars in guiding the Muslim community socially, politically, and spiritually.
- Historical examples of Shi'a activism (Tobacco Protest, 1920 Revolt).
- The continuing legacy of scholarly families.
- Karbala as the eternal inspiration for resistance and sacrifice.