

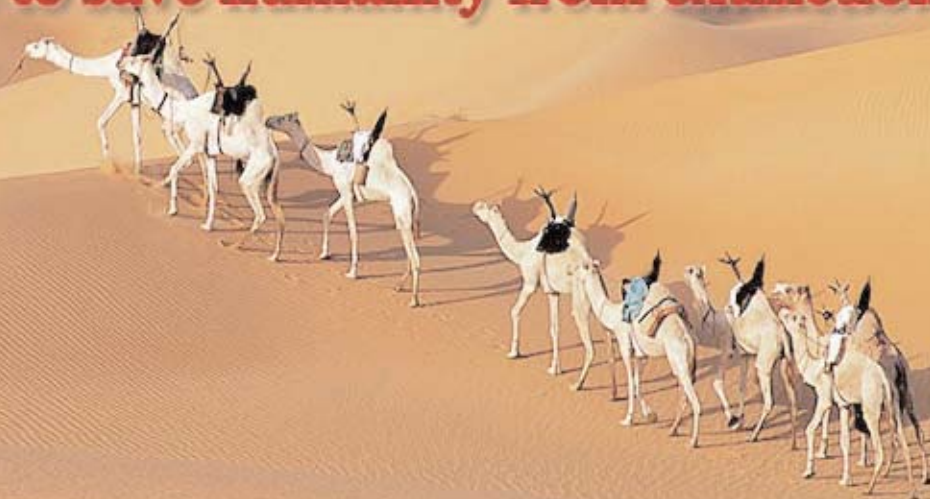
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Presents

THE KARBALA



Story of sacrifice to save humanity from extinction





In the name of God, the beneficent the merciful

Think not of those who are slain in God's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord. Holy Quran (3:169)

The events of Karbala reflect the collision of the good versus the evil, the virtuous versus the wicked, and the collision of Imam Hussain (the head of virtue) versus Yazid (the head of impiety). Imam Hussain (pbuh) was a revolutionary person, a righteous man, the religious authority, the Imam of Muslim Ummah (nation). As the representative of his grandfather Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Imam Hussain's main concern was to safeguard and protect Islam and guide fellow Muslims. On the other hand, the staying power of the rulers (Muawiya and his son Yazid) depended solely on the might of the sword. They used brute force to rule over the Muslim empire even by all possible illicit means.

The mission of Imam Hussain (pbuh) is distinctly unique, political and religious revolutionary movement in the history of World. His was a tremendous undertaking which still reverberates throughout the Muslim nation. He has been a propelling force and a seminal element in events throughout Islamic history, particularly in the sphere of Jihad (the holy struggle in the way of Almighty God). Imam Hussain's example has remained vividly alive for generations and centuries. His uprising, movement and ideals still have a deep impact on the conscience and awareness of the Muslim empire.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said: "The best of Jihad is that of a word of right spoken to an unjust ruler."

Imam Hussain (pbuh) witnessed the deteriorating political and social situation and clearly recognized that the general policy of the authorities did not abide with Islamic principles. He was aware of the Ummah's numerous and painful afflictions, and was determined to exercise his religious duty, being the duly sanctioned leader & central figure capable of restoring Islamic values. Thus he rose. His revolt is rich in lessons and divinely inspired attitudes. Imam Hussain (pbuh) embodied the sacrifice of self, money, family, social status and the challenge to terror and cruelty. He patiently traversed hundreds of miles, moving both night and day. The epic protest he engendered came at the most critical political juncture. In fact, the Prophet's grandson had vowed to sacrifice himself.

Thus, Karbala proved to be a clash involving Islamic truths versus falsehood, belief versus disbelief, and the oppressed versus the oppressor, faith against brute force. Karbala was about standing in the face of oppression, regardless no matter the cost. In Karbala, Imam Hussain the fifty seven year old second grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), sacrificed his totality and all he had, for one goal. This goal was to let the truth triumph over falsehood eventually, and he did that brilliantly. His goal was to foil the plan that Muawiya had expertly developed for his son, Yazid, which was to establish a permanent Umayyads (Banu Umayya) ruler ship over the Muslim Ummah (even by sacrificing the Islamic principles), but doing it in the name of Islam. Brilliantly, Imam Hussain (pbuh) succeeded in foiling this plan and he exposed the disreputable nature of Umayyads though this was at the expense of his life.

Eventually he was martyred along with his sons, most of his household and all of his companions. The bodies were mutilated and their heads were carried from Karbala, to Kufa and finally Damascus. His womenfolk were taken prisoners and marched across the desert. He himself was expecting all that, but did not budge an inch.

An uprising led by the noblest and best accepted personality in the entire Ummah, is certainly one which is uniquely distinguished as a movement abounding with spiritual, moral and religious ideals. Due to the importance of this personality, we are honored to present this concise, well documented book to our readers. Hereunder are related the most outstanding incidents of the dynamic Hussaini movement, which stands unequalled in its greatness and fills pages upon pages of history.

Such a sublime revolution has to be studied, dissected and fully understood. Lessons should be drawn from it. Here we note that the backward and downtrodden nations must one day follow in the footsteps of Imam Hussain (pbuh) if they are to challenge the despots.

We beseech the Most High and Almighty God to make this volume of enduring benefit to our esteemed readers and to help us in disseminating benevolence and guidance. He is the Hearing and Answering.

Wassalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmutallahi Wa Barkatahu

Introduction and References

Karbala garden of swords, blood and inspiration for innumerable pens.

Karbala is the word of right...the hymn on the lips of time.

Karbala is a poem...a rhyme of anguish and pain.

Karbala never passes away. Its sun never sets in the horizon of history. Its anguish can never be effaced from the conscience of freemen by the collective conspiracy of tyrants.

At Karbala clouds of blood rained and generations of martyrs and revolutionaries took root and sprouted. The sound of the fearless voice of Imam Hussain (pbuh) still echoes in the valley of Karbala, ringing in the ears of time. It is a hurricane that chafes and shakes the tyrants. It is a volcano of blood, violently jolting the despots' thrones. It awakens free consciences and stirs within man the spirit of revolution and Jihad. His voice is still echoing in the ears of mankind:

**“By God, I will never give you my hand like a man
who has been humiliated, nor will I flee like a slave.”**

Who actually is Hussain? What is the background of this exceptionally unique and great personality? This prominent man of history, the legend of epics, the word of pride and honor was no less the Grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) the son of his daughter Fatimah Zahra (pbuh) and her cousin and husband the Commander of the Faithful, Ali son of Abu Talib son of Abdul Mutalib son of Hashim.

Hence the only fact remains: There never was a Hussain before him, there has been none after him.

The object of this work is only to present with extreme brevity the great historic event of the matchless sacrifice of the King of Martyrs Imam Hussain (pbuh), in the seed of Abraham (pbuh) through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), offered to save the Truth and humanity from getting lost to falsehood forever, for the apostleship had been concluded with the revelation of the Holy Quran, the Final Word of God. If anything had to be done or could be done, to save the Truth, it was only through the Imamate which was destined to do it, and Imam Hussain was the divinely chosen one for it.

Most of the matter for this book is taken from the below mentioned books. For further reading in greater depth, you may also refer to the same below mentioned books.

1. 'Ashura - Misrepresentations and Distortions By: Martyr Mutahhari
2. The story of the children of Muslim Ibne Aqeel By: Husayn Sabouri
3. Imam Husaein and The Day of Ashura From: Al-Huda Foundation
4. Introduction to Islam By: Sayyed Mojtaba Musavi Lari
5. Husain The Saviour of Islam By: S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali
6. Towards Karbala By: Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi
7. Imam Husain's Revolution By: Hadi Al-Modaresi
8. Understanding Karbala By: Siddiq Juma
9. Al-Hussain: a children cartoon book

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Islam the Universal Religion for Mankind

The conception of God in Islam (religion of peace) is unique in its strict Unitarian aspect. The jurisdiction of God, is not restricted or limited to any section of humanity or to any part of the world. God according to Islam is the 'Rabbul-Aalameen' (i.e., The Lord of the Worlds or the Absolute Monarch of the whole Universe). Also the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the Last Apostle of God was not to guide any particular tribe, community or any part of the human race, but for mankind as a whole, and the religion Islam was revealed to be current for all times until the Day of Judgment. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had been sent as the 'Rahmatunlil Aalameen' (i.e., The Mercy unto the Worlds or the Universe).

“And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.”
Holy Quran (21:107)

The religion preached by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was the divinely perfected code of discipline for human life on earth, it was named Islam and was prescribed for the human race for all times till the end of the world.

“This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.” Holy Quran (5:3)

To Destroy Islam is to Destroy Humanity

Islam is the divinely revealed religion for the whole human race, as the only religion acceptable to Almighty God.

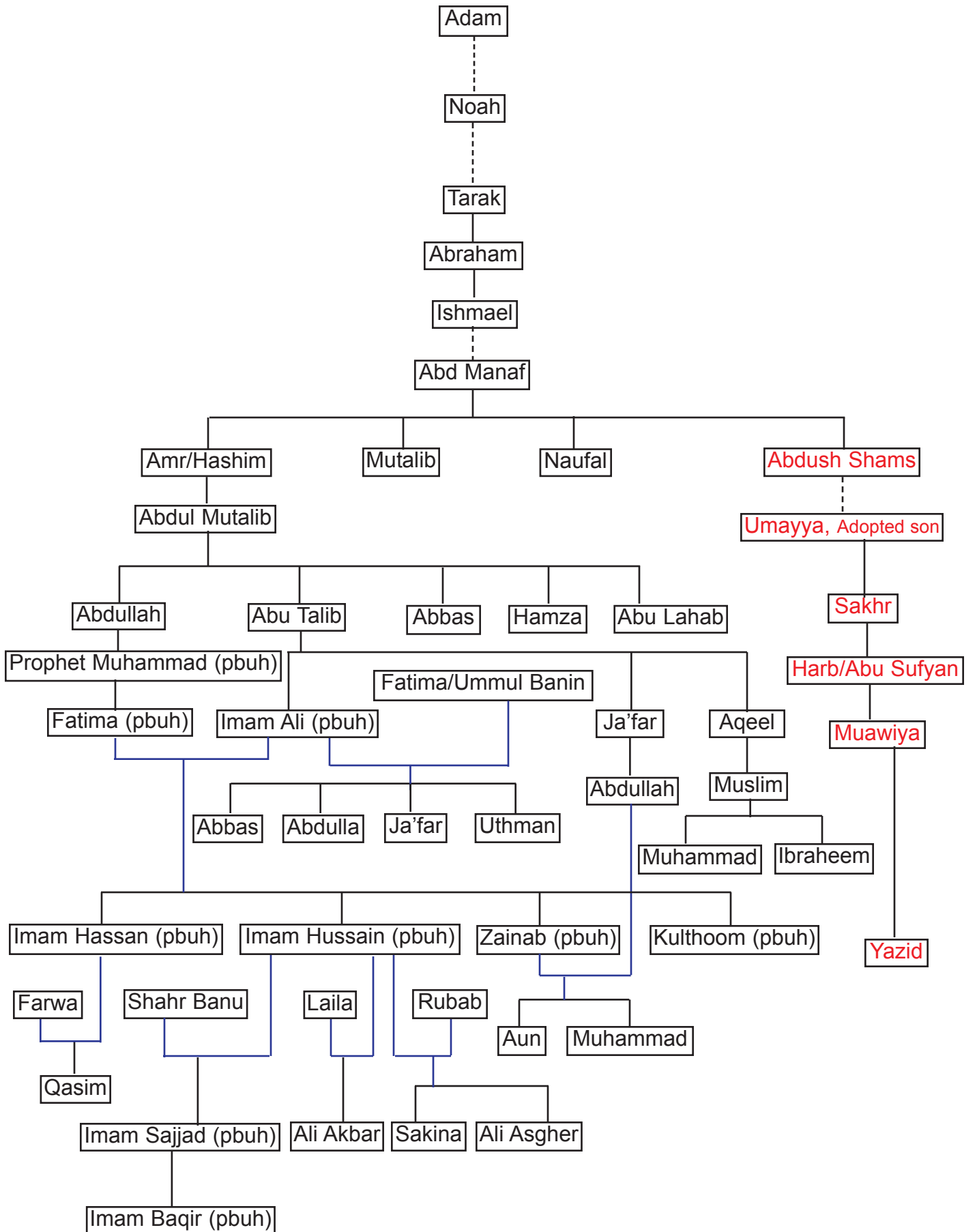
“If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to God), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (All spiritual good).” Holy Quran (3:85)

None but the Devil alone would aim to destroy or corrupt it, and the one who aims to do it, would be the worst enemy of mankind. He would naturally be the devil in human form. And the one, who saves the religion from being destroyed or getting corrupted, would undoubtedly be the Greatest Benefactor and the Savior of Truth and humanity as a whole. It has been clearly announced by the Lord in the Holy Quran that the one who saves a single human life, has saved humanity as a whole.

“Whosoever killed a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saved the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind.” Holy Quran (5:32)

“Do not say what you do not understand, because most of the Right is in what you deny. Accept the argument of one against whom you have no argument.” (Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 17)





As well as some of the names mentioned above, other members of the Prophet's family also fought in the battle of Karbala.

The Nearest Ancestry of the Promised Prophet (pbuh)

The Quraishites (tribe of Quraish) were the direct descendants of Prophet Abraham through Prophet Ishmael, and Abd Manaf. Abdush Shams and Hashim were the twin issues of Abd Manaf. The children of Hashim through his son Abdul Mutalib were called the 'Hashimites/Banu Hashim' (tribe of Hashim). Abdush Shams had adopted a clever, crafty and active Roman slave boy Umayya, whom Abd Manaf had purchased and presented to his son Abdush Shams. However, the issues of Umayya become known as the 'Umayyads/Banu Umayya' (tribe of Umayya). Abd Manaf, before his death, had handed over the charge of his privileged hereditary duties of service to the House of God, the 'Holy Kaaba' to Hashim his eldest son who was very noble by nature and godly in temperament. This aggravated the hatred, jealousy and animosity of Umayya whose tendency continued as a personality trait from generation to generation in his seed. Much fuel was added to the already burning fire of envy and enmity of the Umayyads when Abdul Mutalib, miraculously discovered the natural spring-well of 'Zamzam' which lay hidden and unknown to any one, for ages together. Umayya became angry and started being very rude towards Hashimites. When the elders of the tribe saw this, they decided that he should not be allowed to remain in Makkah, and was therefore sent to Syria. This was the beginning of the hatred of the Umayyads towards the Hashimites, which eventually led to the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (pbuh).

Hashim was the Great Grandfather of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and that is why the families of the Prophet are known as the Hashimites. The Hashimites were good, noble and gentle, while the Umayyads were wicked, mean and aggressive. The Hashimites held the Trusteeship and the Custody of the Kaaba, which was the most coveted and unique honor enjoyed exclusively by the Hashimites. The Umayyads envied this the most, and could not bear it. While the charitable disposition of the Hashimites could not allow the hoarding of any personal wealth, the selfishness and niggardliness of the Umayyads had enabled them to store abundant wealth which had made the Umayyads ever more haughty and proud against the noble, the gentle and the meek ones of the Hashimites.

Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) started preaching to the people of Makkah at the age of forty (40) years. If anyone goes through the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), he will not be able to resist shedding tears for the tortures, the miseries and calamities which the great godly soul suffered at the hands of the people. Any intelligent reader would find that all the sufferings which every one of the preceding apostles of God had suffered, had been inflicted on the Last Apostle of the Lord, along with other additional tortures and miseries which none else had ever experienced and he suffered all the calamities with ideal patience, matchless fortitude, unparalleled steadfastness and unshakable determination to fulfill the covenant established with the Lord.

Conspiracy to Assassinate the Holy Prophet (pbuh)

The Makkan's alarmed at the growing impact of Islam and their abject helplessness to contain its radiant rays conspired to assassinate the Holy Prophet. Moreover, the death of Abu Talib that devoted guardian of infant Islam, had removed an obstacle from their path, embodying the haughty ignorant to plot Muhammad's (pbuh) assassination.

Beginning of Hijra Calendar

As per the command of Almighty God, the Holy Prophet migrated to Medina at the age of fifty three (53) years. This epoch-making night which marked a turning point in the message of Islam, also marks the start of the Muslim Lunar Calendar (Hijra).

فان طبع



السلامة
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Parents of Imam Hussain/Abu Abd Allah (pbuh)

In the second (2) year of Hijra, the Prophet's cousin, Imam Ali (pbuh) married the Prophet's daughter Fatima; the Lady of Light (pbuh) in the simplest possible manner. A divine lady like Fatima (pbuh) could not have been the wife of any ordinary man, and more particularly when she was destined to provide the Divine Plan with the godly characters suitable to be the Universal Guides to mankind as a whole. They had four children, Imam Hassan, Imam Hussain, Zainab and Kulthoom.

Imam Hussain (pbuh) was born on the 3rd of Shabaan in the fourth (4) year of Hijra. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) came to Fatima (pbuh) and taking the baby in his lap, mysteriously placed his tongue in the mouth of the baby, and the baby began sucking it and thus the Holy child was first fed by the Saliva of the Apostle of God, as the first sustenance of his Holy body in this world. After giving the Holy baby the first feeding by his Saliva, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Hussainun minni wa ana minal Hussain (Hussain is of me and I am of Hussain).”

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) loved all his grand children very much. One day, when he was in prostrate (Sajdah) while praying in the mosque, Imam Hussain (pbuh) climbed on his back. The Holy Prophet remained in prostrate until Imam Hussain came down by himself.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to carry Imam Hussain (pbuh) and his elder brother Imam Hassan (pbuh) in his arms and declare expansively in front of his companions.

“O God, I love them and love those who love them.”

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) expressed his deeply felt love for Imam Hassan (pbuh) and Imam Hussain (pbuh) in these words:

“These two sons of mine are my two plants of sweet basil in this world.” “Whoever loves Hassan and Hussain then he loves me and whoever dislikes them he dislikes me.”

Also, said that both **“Hassan and Hussain are the chiefs of the youth of paradise.”**

The Funeral of the Holy Prophet (pbuh)

Those of the companions, who were turned out by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from his presence, got busy in the Saqeefa and did not return until he was buried. When the Holy Prophet passed away at the age of sixty three (63) years on 28th Safar (11 Hijra), Imam Ali assisted by his pupil son of Abbas and the other Hashimites, attended to the last rites to the Holiest one of God's creations and the grief of Fatima moved the hearts of those present there.

History says that Abu Bakr, Omar and the other companions being busy at the Saqeefa, could not attend the funeral of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

History repeats itself

The dealings of the wicked ones with the men of God particularly the Apostles had been identical in all ages. The Holy Prophet had already prophesied that all that happened among the people of the ancient Apostles particularly the people of Moses in the Israelites will happen among his followers.

Moses was absent for only about forty (40) days and his people revolted against his Deputy Aaron and followed the Samiri and started worshipping the Calf. Jesus was betrayed by his own disciples and was handed over to be crucified. The Last Apostle of God similarly suffered an identical desertion by his people even before his last breathing.

The Love of the World - Maddens Man

Very recently (April 8, 2005) when Pope John Paul II was to be buried, almost all the Paramount Powers in the world sent their representatives (Presidents, prime ministers and kings) to attend the funeral as a token of their regard and human sympathy, plus millions joined to bid an emotional farewell. But when the Prince of the Prophets, the Last Apostle of God, who was divinely sent to rule over the human hearts and the human affairs on earth and who was also the Godly ruler of the state, had not even breathed his last, the people who called themselves his followers and claimed to be his close companions left him away to assert and establish their respective contentions about their claims to rule the state in the place of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and returned only when he had left this world and was buried.

Thus in the love of the world the people left away even the Apostle of God unshrouded. This is the worst record of the madness of man for the material world. The paradox is that yet man claims himself to be the lover of God, the lover of the Apostles of God and the lover of Godliness.

Karbala's Foundation laid

The events of history give out a clear verdict that the series of the sufferings, the miseries and the calamities inflicted on the Ahlul Bayt, which culminated at one stage in the wholesale massacre of the Holy Imam Hussain and his faithful devotees at Karbala, and the misfortunes and the assassinations of the other Imams and their families and their devotees, which thereafter followed up to the eleventh Imam Hasan Al-Askari, was inaugurated at the Saqeefa. Had the people remembered the repeated declarations about Imam Ali, and his Ahlul Bayt, the world would never have witnessed the hideous scenes of the sufferings and the massacre of the Holy ones; on the other hand, today the world would have been ruled by the men of God, and humanity had enjoyed the Godly kingdom on earth, and the human race by this time would have been united under one single brotherhood which was inaugurated by the Holy Prophet at Madina.

The Caliphate thrust upon Imam Ali (pbuh)

After the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the Caliphs (leader of the Muslims) are:

1. Abu Bakr for 2 years and 4 months
2. Omar for 10 years and 6 months
3. Othman for 11 years and 11 months

The Third (3) Caliphate ended in chaos, turmoil and the murder of the Caliph Othman. There was unrest among the people all over the empire. Muawiya the governor of Syria appointed by second Caliph Omar took full advantage of the patronage of the Umayyads by the third Caliph and had established himself strongly at Damascus and had made the place a stronghold of his own.

An amazing situation was created that the Caliphate after which people ran and for which there was so much of dispute and tension, now was running after Imam Ali imploring him to accept it. There

was no question of any election, nomination or cooptation now; the whole nation was now at Imam Ali's door, imploring him to be gracious enough to accept their Caliphate. Imam Ali repeatedly refused by saying **"The world is a corpse and its seekers are dogs."** But the public as a whole would not accept any excuse from him. Then Imam Ali said: "If you excuse me and elect another, whomsoever you may think fit to choose, I shall most submissively yield obedience to him, if not, and I must comply with your wish to accept the offer, I must say frankly at the outset that I shall conduct the administration quite independently and I shall deal with all of you according to the Holy Book of the Lord and to the best of knowledge and Judgment."

The people unhesitatingly and unanimously assented to the condition and gladly extended their hands in token of their fealty to Imam Ali, but he refused to accept their assent unless it should be in public, in order that none might have any doubt about the offer being from the people and none might have any cause to grumble thereafter.

The next day, the Mosque of the Holy Prophet was so fully packed that none could cross through the crowd and the multitude of those who could not get into the Mosque were thronging around the holy edifice to hear about Imam Ali's consent to their offer and last of them all, arrived the Vicegerent of the Holy Prophet and mounting the pulpit making plain and clear to everyone, his condition for accepting the offer, assented to it. People, who on the previous occasions were running away from paying their fealty to the Caliphate and who had to be forced, coerced, threatened, encouraged and purchased to pay it, now were rushing to have the honor of kissing the holy hand of Imam Ali (pbuh).

Imam Ali (pbuh) became the Caliph at the age of fifty seven (57) years, and remained Caliph for next 4 years and 9 months. During this period he fought three battles, first against Ayesha the daughter of the first Caliph Abu Bakr, and the widow of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), Talha and Zubayr at Basra called as Jung-e-Jamal (Battle of Camel) in 36 Hijra. After returning from this battle, Imam Ali (pbuh) transfer the capital of his government to Kufa from Madina because it was more centrally placed in the Muslim Empire, and he could halt Muawiya's progress into Iraq. Second battle is against Muawiya son of Abu Sufyan the Arch-enemy of Islam and the great grandson of Umayya, at Siffin, near the banks of river Euphrates. Muawiya's army took over the river Euphrates and stopped the army of Imam Ali (pbuh) from getting any water. Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain who were now young men, led a group of fighters and got back the control of the river from the enemy. Imam Ali allowed everyone to use the river including the enemies. It was on this same river twenty three (23) years later that Imam Hussain fought his final battle for the sake of saving Islam.

After the unsatisfactory conclusion to the Battle of Siffin, which ended in arbitration, Imam Ali (pbuh) returned with his army back to Kufa on 37 Hijra. During the march, a group of twelve thousand (12,000) men kept themselves at a distance from the main part of the army. These were the Kharjites (Kharjite means one who rebels against religion). Ultimately Imam Ali (pbuh) fought the third battle against Kharjites at Nahrawan. This battle took place on the 38 Hijra. In the midst of all this, bloody fighting and political struggle, the Kharjites laid plans to assassinate 'Muawiya son of Abu Sufyan', 'Amru son of Al-Aas' and 'Imam Ali son of Abu Talib'. Two years later, the plot against history and humanity was carried out by 'Abdur Rahman son of Muljim'. He martyred the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali son of Abu Talib' by striking his head with a poisoned sword, during the dawn prayer at Kufa Mosque, on the 19th day of the month of Ramadan in the year 40 Hijra. Imam Ali (pbuh) attained martyrdom on the 21st day of the same month, at the age of sixty three (63) years.

"Even if Almighty God had not scared us from the punishment for our disobedience, then also the gratefulness towards his bounties should prevent us from disobeying him."
(Nahjul Balagha, Saying 290)

Imam Hassan (pbuh) become the Caliph

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali (pbuh), Imam Hassan (pbuh) his elder son was chosen by the people of Kufa as their Caliph. The election of Imam Hassan as the next Caliph was a thorn in the heart of Muawiya. His propaganda machine against the House of Imam Ali, in fact against Islam, began its work in earnest. Large sums of money and fraudulent promises of vast properties and governorships of provinces were given to many commanders of Imam Hassan's army who left Imam Hassan without much power. Thus, Imam Hassan was forced to accept a treaty with Muawiya in order to save Islam. It was therefore the hallmark of Imam Hassan's life that making peace was his share in the same manner as the Holy Prophet of Islam did in Hudaibiya. The salient points of the treaty are:

1. Muawiya should rule strictly according to the Holy Quran and the Sunna of Holy Prophet.
2. Muawiya should not appoint or nominate anyone to the Caliphate after him but that choice should be left to the Muslims.
3. The people should be left in peace, wherever they are in the land of God.
4. The persecution of the companions of Imam Ali should immediately be stopped; their lives, properties and families guaranteed safe conduct and peace.
5. The cursing of Imam Ali from the pulpit should stop immediately.
6. No harm should be done secretly or openly against Imam Hassan and his younger brother Imam Hussain or any of the Ahlul Bayt (pbut).

Thus the rightly guided Caliphate came to an end with the abandonment of the Caliphate by Imam Hassan (pbuh). He returned to Madina after administering the people's affairs, following the martyrdom of his father, Imam Ali (pbuh), for a period of six (6) months.

History tells us that from day one Muawiya did not comply with any one of the terms of the treaty agreed upon between him and Imam Hassan. He trampled the treaty under his feet saying to the people of Kufa, "do you think I have taken power to teach you about Islam. No, I have taken power for the sake of it and if any one of you tries to disagree with me shall pay a costly price of losing his head."

Muawiya carried out his ambition of keeping the power in his family by nominating his son Yazid after him as the ruler of the Kingdom. This demanded that Imam Hassan should predecease him, an unlikely event considering their discrepancy in their ages. Hence Muawiya bribed Ju'ada daughter of Ash'ath (wife of Imam Hassan), to poison him. He also promised to marry her to his son Yazid and so Ju'ada poisoned Imam Hassan in 50 Hijra. Imam Hassan died with the effect of poisoning on 28th of the month of Safar, at the age of forty seven (47) years.

When Imam Hassan (pbuh) died, the followers of Imam from Iraq began to make plans. They wrote to Imam Hussain (pbuh) concerning removing Muawiya and giving the pledge of allegiance to him. However, he refused and chooses to abide by the treaty between Imam Hassan and Muawiya, which he could not break until the period came to an end.

But the decision of nominating Yazid as the ruler, stirred widespread agitation among the faithful, particularly amidst prominent personalities such as Imam Hussain son of Imam Ali (pbuh), Abdul-Rahman son of Abu Bakr, Abdullah son of Omar, Abdullah son of Al-Zubayr and other well-known, leading figures. Because, Muawiya was the first one to appoint his son to succeed him and the first ever to do so during his life.

"The one, who recognizes himself, recognizes God." (Gharar ul Hikam)

Imam Hassan's Body shot at

As the funeral proceeded towards the grave of the Holy Prophet, Some Umayyads mounted on horses obstructed and Ayesha the daughter of the first Caliph Abu Bakr appeared, mounting a mule, shouting that the grave of the Holy Prophet was in her house and she would not allow the grandson of Ummul Momeneen Khadija to be buried beside the Holy Prophet. With the shouts from Ayesha a shower of arrows fell on the coffin. Imam Hussain in the fulfillment of the last wish of his departed brother, turned the procession of the funeral towards Baqi and when the body was taken out of the coffin to be laid to rest in the grave, Imam Hussain finding some of the arrows which were showered at the coffin, had struck holy body of his martyred brother.



Yazid succeeded the Caliph at Damascus

After the death of Muawiya in 60 Hijra, Yazid succeeded his father to the throne. Imam Hussain was then fifty seven years old. Yazid was known to be even worse than his father and represented a real danger to the Islamic nation, for he was not a true Muslim. He was not properly educated with the teachings of Islam. And he used to drink alcohol, gamble, and commit all other sins according to historic sources. He said: **“Hashimites staged a play to obtain the Kingdom. Actually, there was neither any news (from God) nor any revelation.”** Such a man could not be entrusted with the affairs of the nation.

The Call from the Governor

On receipt of the letter from Yazid, ‘Al-Walid son of Utbah son of Abu Sufyan’ the Governor of Madina immediately called his servant (Abdullah son of Omer son of Uthman) and sent word inviting Imam Hussain and Abdullah son of Al-Zubayr, to visit him. Imam Hussain and Son of Al-Zubayr were in the Mosque at night time, when Walid’s servant came to them with the message inviting them to the Governor House. The moment Imam Hussain heard the call from the Governor; he suddenly exclaimed that Muawiya had died.

In reply to the call Imam Hussain sent word to the Governor Walid saying, it was too late and he will visit him the next morning.

The next day Imam Hussain accompanying around thirty (30) Hashimites courageous youths visited the Governor, but reaching the entrance of the Governor’s house, he told the Hashimites to stay at the door watchful and if they hear Imam Hussain talking unusually aloud they may get in to him.

Walid received Holy Imam with all respect and regard. Offered him the seat besides him and read out the letter he had received from Yazid and when he reached the matter asking him to send the severed head of Hussain, if Imam Hussain refuses to pay allegiance. Imam Hussain smiled and said:

“O Walid! Pledge of allegiance cannot be given secretly. Invites the Muslims of Madina tomorrow and ask them if they say that I should pay allegiance to Yazid, let us then decide.”

Walid readily accepted the Holy Imam's reply but 'Marwan son of Al-Hakam' the old enemy of Islam who was expelled by the Holy Prophet out of Madina, seated there, addressing Walid said:

"Let not Hussain go out of the grip now, lest the fox is out of the four walls of the court you will not approach the dust behind it. Cut off his head now and let not this unique opportunity go for, you will never get it again."

Imam Hussain (pbuh) stood up to depart from the Governor and hearing the insulting words of Marwan, Imam Hussain the son of Ali the Lion of God got angry and retorted aloud: "Woe to you, O son of a foreign women, will you cut my head off? By God, you have told a lie and showed your base origin." Then he turned to al-Walid and said to him:

"O Walid! We are the household of the Prophet (pbuh). We surely are the centre of the message, and to our house the angels descend from heaven. By us God sent his first Apostle and by us He sent the seal of the Prophets. Yazid, on the other hand, is a corrupt man, who imbibes wine, puts to death the soul which God forbids to be destroyed and declares his debauchery in public. A man like me would never give a vow of loyalty to him. But we will see about that in the morning, so will you. We will see and so will you, who is more entitled to the office of Caliphate and to receive the pledge of allegiance."

Marwan immediately got up and ran away and the Hashimites youth who stood restless and anxious, hearing the voice of the Holy Imam, rushed into the court with drawn swords. Imam Hussain immediately commanded restraint and had not Imam Hussain controlled the situation, the matter would have been settled then and there. The meeting came to an end. Imam Hussain returned home.

Situation demanded another 'Muhammad' to rescue the faith

Imam decided to rise to his religious responsibilities as the lawful Imam and the leader of the Islamic nation entrusted with the task of preserving its divine message.

He went to his grandfather's grave, and recited the following prayer: "O God, This is the grave of your Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) and I am his daughter's son, and I have come to know what you undoubtedly know. O God, I like to enjoin the good and reject the evil. I ask you O Almighty God by this grave and by who is in it to choose for me what would please You and Your Prophet."

Thus Imam Hussain (pbuh) pledged that he would defend the message whatever the cost, as long as it would lead to God's satisfaction. He declared his first revolutionary communique which took the form of a will he wrote to his brother, Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyah:

"...I did not revolt for the cause of evil tyranny or corruption, but to reform my grandfather's [Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)] nation. I want to enjoin the good and denounce the evil, and take the course of my father and grandfather." This eternal communique was the official declaration of his revolution.

Imam Hussain (pbuh) decides to leave Madina

In the month of Rajab; exactly four months remained for Hajj. During the time of Hajj, people from every corner of the country would come for pilgrimage to Makkah. He could then easily convey his message to the people, Imam Hussain knew that if he were to start his Qiyam and struggle from Makkah, all the world of Islam would become aware of his objectives and then it would not be so easy for the regime to deceive the people about him and his aims.

Imam Hussain (pbuh) determined to leave Madina for Makkah at the earliest opportunity before the Governor and related officials had any knowledge of his intentions of departure.

This decision was announced before the members of his family and was a secret matter. However, the other people belonging to the tribe of Banu Hashim soon came to know about the matter and came to visit Imam Hussain. After coming to know about the reasons of this sudden journey, they expressed their views in opposition to Imam Hussain's decision, either because they were afraid that he would get killed, or because they were not courageous enough to follow him. But his resolve to uphold the right was not shaken by such objections or threats.

Ummul Momeneen (mother of believers) , Umm-e-Salama, one of the Prophets wives, clung to him and adjured him not to go. Then told him, quoting from the Apostle of God (pbuh) that he would be martyred. Imam Hussain informed her soothingly, **“Indeed, I know I am going to be martyred, mother.”**

There were two persons among the visitors with whom Imam Hussain had a lengthy conversation and upon whose lives his decision had a direct impact. The first of them was Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyah, the eldest of his brothers who, after conferring with Imam Hussain wanted to accompany him on this fateful journey. Imam Hussain, however, told him to stay and send him the reports of everyday events that passed in Madina during his absence. He told him that the only person who was capable of fulfilling this sensitive and dangerous responsibility of reporting about the reaction of the regime in Madina and the opinion of the masses there, as an aware and well-informed observer, was Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyah. Therefore he had to stay behind and carry out this duty assigned to him.

The second person was Zainab-e-Kubra (pbuh) his younger sister, the wife of Abdullah son of Ja'far. When she saw that Imam Hussain's decision was final and that nobody could make him turn away from it. She was deeply moved, with, grief choking her, voice and tears in her eyes, she spoke to him in these words: “Dear brother! After Grandfather [Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)], Father [Imam Ali (pbuh)], Mother [Bibi Fatima (pbuh)] and Brother Hassan (pbuh), only you remain to console my heart and of all of them it is only you who are left. I cannot bear your separation. How can I stay here with unbearable worry and anxiety about what may happen? Is it not possible that I might be of some service to you if I come along?”

Imam Hussain replied: “No sister. You are a woman with a house, husband and children to take care of. Your husband is an illustrious man. I am not the one to decide about your affairs. It is Abdullah son of Ja'far who can give you the permission. As to myself, I have no alternative but to leave.”

Abdullah son of Ja'far (who was himself suffering from sickness at that time) agreed to Zainab's accompanying her brother on the journey. Not only this, he sent two of his sons Aun and Muhammad to accompany her by saying; “Aun will represent his maternal Grandfather Imam Ali (pbuh) and the other will represent his paternal Grandfather Ja'far-e-Tayyar.”

Less than thirty hours after his meeting with the governor, Imam Hussain was prepared to leave. As he was making his preparations, he was brought the news that the governor had summoned all other persons who had opposed Yazid's allegiance and conferred with them. One of the opponents of the regime, Abdullah son of Al-Zubayr had secretly left for Makkah the night before. He was pursued by the government's men who could not trace him since he had not used the usual road to Makkah.

Not more than a few hours were left for his departure when for the last time he visited the tombs of his Grandfather, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his mother, Bibi Fatima (pbuh) & his brother

Imam Hassan Mujtaba. As he was returning, he met Marwan on the way who told him: "I want to give you some advice. I think it is best for your worldly life as well as your Hereafter that you accept to give allegiance to Yazid. Do not put yourself and your relatives into trouble." "Inna Lillahe wa Inna Ilaihe Raje'oon, And bid farewell to Islam?" replied Imam Hussain (pbuh).

If Marwan did not understand Imam Hussain's words, others understood afterwards. Obviously Imam Hussain wanted to say, "If I agree to support Yazid's corrupt government, then Islam will be wiped out without any trace. Opposition to Yazid may prove to be costly, but anyhow we would have saved our Hereafter. Indeed everything comes from God and returns unto Him."

Just before Imam Hussain (pbuh) left Madina, Ummul Banin (Mother of Sons) or Fatima daughter of Hazam, the mother of Abbas. Summoned all her four sons (Abbas, Abdulla, Ja'far and Uthman) and said to them, "My sons you must remember that, Imam Hussain (pbuh) is your Master. If Imam or his sisters or his children get injured or hurt while you are still alive, I will never forgive you." There were tears in Abbas's eyes as he promised his mother that he and his brothers would lay down their lives for Imam Hussain (pbuh) and his children.

Two days remaining until the end of the month of Rajab, on the night of Sunday, Imam Hussain (pbuh) left Madina for Makkah with a most simple caravan together with his family and a few companions. As he left, this verse of Quran was on his lips, a verse which relates the story of Moses as he fled from Pharaoh's Egypt: **He therefore got away there from, looking about, in a state of fear. He prayed "O my Lord! Save me from people given to wrong-doing."** Holy Quran (28:21)



The night passed, and, as the travelers drew away from Madina, the sun came up. One of the relatives came to Imam Hussain and suggested that the caravan leave the highway for the danger of being stopped by pursuers: "It is possible that they might pursue us like Abdullah son of Al-Zubayr and catch up with us and cause us trouble." Apparently the suggestion was a good one. But Imam Hussain, in view of the open and sublime nature of his objectives replied, "I will never deviate from the right way. And you too, friend of Hussain, always choose the right road and move straight. God will be your protector. There is no danger of losing the way as long as you chose to travel on the straight highway!"

The caravan completed its five day journey from Madina to Makkah and entered the city on the 3rd of Sha'ban of the year 60 Hijrah. As he entered the city, Imam Hussain hopefully murmured this verse of the Quran - the words uttered by Moses as he entered Madyan fleeing Pharaoh's men: **Then, when he turned his face towards (the land of) Madyan, he said: "I do hope that my Lord will show me the smooth and straight Path."** Holy Quran (28:22) and there he chose to stay at the house of Al-Abbas son of Abdul Mutalib.

The news of his coming soon spread through the city and all men who held any significant social position hurried to see him. The governor of Makkah, other city officials and similarly many important personalities of the city came to pay a visit.

Soon, the busy hours of visitors rushing to see Imam Hussain came to pass and the days took a normal and relaxed aspect. It was during this time that most of the visitors wanted to find out Imam Hussain's views about Caliphate and the general political conditions of the time.

It did not take much time for the people to know that Imam Hussain's movement from Madina was a gesture of opposition to the regime and a protest against the orders sent from the Syrian court to the Governor of Madina. Very soon this news spread to all parts of the country; it reached the capital in Syria and other provinces.

Yazid became aware that Imam Hussain had made the determination to oppose his Government, even as he had refused before to give allegiance to this nomination as crown prince. He discussed the matter with his courtiers and asked them for advice. They held the opinion that it seemed inadvisable to take any hasty step. They advised that it was better to wait and discover the dimensions that Imam Hussain's opposition might take. It seemed possible that he would settle down in Makkah and maintain his silence as before. They suggested that any attempts at his persecution would only help to aggravate the prevailing situation. They reminded him about Muawiya's advice that if Imam Hussain continued his silence, it was sufficient for Yazid and that his persecution was inadvisable under any condition.

In the mean time the news about the political uprising in Kufa reached Makkah, and the leaders of the city wrote a letter in which they declared their opposition to the Umayyads rule, and they would not accept anybody else but Imam Hussain (pbuh) to rule them. This letter was followed twelve thousand (12,000) similar letters, Fruits have ripened and fields have become green. If you come you will have one thousand swords supporting you. If you do not come to us, we will dispute with you in front of God at doomsday.

Imam Hussain could neither blindly accept the call from Kufa, because he had seen how the people of Kufa had not come to his father's help when he needed them, and how they had mistreated his brother Imam Hassan. The Kufees (people of Kufa) who were known for their unstable character and unsettled conduct, if later turn treacherous, the world would question Imam Hussain's ready response to their call without the necessary caution. Therefore Imam Hussain decided to send a deputy of his to Kufa to write to him after studying the sincerity in the invitation.

Muslim son of Aqeel - the Holy Imam's Deputy to Kufa

The Holy Imam commanded his cousin Muslim son of Aqeel, to proceed to Kufa which used to be the capital of Iraq at that time. And to report from there, after studying the bona fide of the call from the people of the place. In the middle of Ramadan 60 Hijra Muslim son of Aqeel left Makkah with two of his young sons Muhammad and Ibraheem. It is said that Muhammad was just ten (10) years old and Ibraheem was eight (8) years old.

After reaching Kufa, he stayed in the house of Al-Mukhtar son of Abi Ubayda. The Kufees gave Muslim son of Aqeel a very warm reception and eighteen thousands (18,000) of them paid their 'Allegiance' to the Holy Imam on the hands of Muslim son of Aqeel. Poor Muslim son of Aqeel, impressed with and guided by the enthusiasm of the deceitful Kufees and not knowing what would befall him the very next day, wrote a letter to Imam Hussain to come over to Kufa. When the letter inviting the Holy Imam had gone with a favorable report about the situation at Kufa, Muslim son of Aqeel learnt of the treachery, i.e., the turn of the tide of the situation. Yazid, having learnt of Muslim's arrival at Kufa as the Deputy of the Holy Imam and the Kufees having paid their homage to the Holy Imam, as their religious head, sent Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad, a well-known enemy of the Prophet's family from Basra to handle the situation in his favor, by replacing previous Governor of Kufa Al-Numan son of Bashir.

When Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad reached Kufa, he was wearing a black turban and he was veiled. News

of Imam Hussain's departure had reached the people of Kufa and they were expecting Imam's arrival. When they saw Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad, they thought that he was Imam Hussain. Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad did not pass a group of people without them welcoming and greeting him. They were saying: "Welcome, son of the Apostle of God, your arrival is a happy (event)."

When Muslim son of Aqeel heard of the coming of Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad to Kufa, he left the house of Al-Mukhtar son of Abi Ubayda and went to the house of Hani son of Urwa and went in to stay there. The People of Kufa began to visit Hani's house secretly to keep it hidden from Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad and they enjoined that it should be kept secret.

In a day or two, almost all the leaders of the town were bribed; some of the tribal leaders were arrested and put them into prison. Strong threats from Yazid's deputy the Governor of Kufa, made the people of the town as a whole, desert poor Muslim son of Aqeel. Under the strict ordinances issued against those who gave even shelter to him, Muslim son of Aqeel was left all alone in Kufa. None in Kufa would now even speak to Muslim and he was left actually homeless, wandering in the streets with everyone in town, now hostile to him. None would allow him even to rest for a while in the shade of his house. At every door he stood, he was being driven away, not even a cup of water he could have from anyone in the town. Hungry and thirsty, the helpless Deputy of the Holy Imam actually wandered in the streets of Kufa with his two innocent children, in the hope of help from someone, but none took pity on him, and not even on the innocent young children.

Hani son of Urwa, the good-hearted Kufee who offered hospitality to Muslim son of Aqeel was mercilessly butchered. All those miseries and persecution did never upset Muslim son of Aqeel in the least but the one and only worry he felt, and which grieved him the most of which he frequently shed tears, was that he had written to the son of Fatima, the Holy Imam, in favor of such a treacherous people and had invited him to go over to a place where only death and destruction waited for him. He could not leave the town for he was not allowed to do it, nor could he send any note to the Holy Imam to intimate the treacherous change in the situation.

Son of Aqeel sends out His Children with Message to the Imam

At last Muslim son of Aqeel somehow managed to send his two young children out of Kufa with his message to the Holy Imam, a counter to his previous communication to him, requesting Imam Hussain never to think of Kufa anymore. The two innocents of the House of the Holy Prophet with the divine gift of bravery and courage against the odds and the miseries in the way of the Lord, walked through the desert during nights, hiding themselves from the sight of the people and during day time. The two young innocent fugitives were passing through a dreadful and mortal atmosphere. They were passing through the Valley of Death. Whenever they happened to meet anyone they would not disclose their identity and if any one took pity on their age and their plight, and offered any hospitality, they accepted it; otherwise they contented themselves with their lot but always mindful of the Lord and prayerful to Him.

Muslim son of Aqeel Arrested and Martyred

Having dispatched his sons, Muslim son of Aqeel, discarded by one and all in Kufa and hunted by the men of Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad, wandered in Kufa, as a homeless destitute without any shelter or shade to lay his head or even to rest a while against the scorching sun. None dared to give him even a cup of water. Passing through a street Muslim son of Aqeel halted at the door of a Godly woman Tawah, She had been a slave-wife (Umm Walad) of Al-Ashath Bin Qays and he had freed her. She had, then, married Usayd al-Hadrami and had borne him (a son called) Bilal. Bilal had gone out with the people and his mother was standing at the door waiting for him.

Muslim son of Aqeel greeted her and she returned the greeting. Then she asked him without recognizing: “O’ Servant of God, why don’t you go home and rest?”

Muslim son of Aqeel replied: “Where to go? I have no home or nor clan in this town.”

Tawah looked at Muslim son of Aqeel and asked: “Who are you?”

Muslim son of Aqeel replied: “I am Muslim son of Aqeel, the Deputy of Imam Hussain! Hunted by Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad.”

Tawah, immediately identified of Muslim son of Aqeel and the name of the Holy Imam, told him to get into her house and Muslim son of Aqeel taken shelter in Tawah’s house, the son of Tawah, an incorrigible delinquent, returned home and Tawah advised the lad repeatedly not to let any one know about the where about of Muslim son of Aqeel. Early next morning, the lad informed the state authorities. Muslim son of Aqeel heard the approach of the soldiers to Tawah’s house and apprehending that if he stays any longer in the house, the house of the poor lady will be ruined, rushed out and shown great resistance. He killed many of them and they could not defeat him, so they dug a hole behind him and allured him to it. He fell into the hole and they captured him by the contingent and carried to the court (Dar Al-Imarah) of the Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad. Muslim son of Aqeel entered the court without the usual salutation to the Governor. “Don’t you greet the Governor?” demanded the guard.

“If he wants my death, what is (the point of) my greeting him with words of peace?” he replied. “If he did not want my death, my greetings (of peace) to him would be profuse.”

Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad called his men and commanded Muslim son of Aqeel to be taken on the roof of a Castle to be beheaded and his body to be thrown down from the top, to the ground.

Hearing the verdict, Muslim son of Aqeel replied: “I am ready to pass on in the way of the Lord” and then turning to the audience in the court asked, if there was any Quraishites among them there to hear his last desire in this world and execute it. Omar son of Sa’d, a Quraishites, replied: “Yes! I am here! Say what you have to say!”

Muslim son of Aqeel said: “Look O’ son of Sa’d! The first thing I request you to do is to write to the Holy Imam or send a message at once to him never to think of coming over to Kufa!”

Secondly, “I owe seven hundred dirhams to the people here in Kufa. Here is my horse and my armor. Sell these two things and disburse the dues.”

And finally! “Bury my body out of my own money raised by the sale of my belongings without any obligation from any one of the Kufees.”

Omar replied we will act as deemed desirable by us. The people seated around in the court wept but none spoke a word against the brutal behavior against Muslim son of Aqeel.

When Muslim son of Aqeel was taken on top of the Castle, asked respite of the executioners to offer his last prayer to the Lord. After the prayer he turned toward Makkah and cried:



“Pardon me O’ Holy Imam, for misleading you. But think not to come towards Kufa!”

No sooner Muslim son of Aqeel had finished his prayer, and his cry to the Holy Imam, fell the stroke of the sword from the executioner. His head was taken and the body was thrown down on the ground. The heads of Hani son of Urwa and Muslim son of Aqeel were despatched to Yazid as a token of the faithful execution of his orders by his Deputy Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad.

The bodies of Hani son of Urwa and Muslim son of Aqeel, with a rope tied in the legs, were dragged into the streets of Kufa, as an active and visual warning to the people against their loyalty to the House of the Holy Prophet and particularly to Imam Hussain. At last the body of Hani son of Urwa and Muslim son of Aqeel were hung at the gateway of the City and remained there hanging for days together. None of the last desires of Muslim son of Aqeel was executed and immediately orders were issued to comb the city and its surroundings and find out the children of Muslim son of Aqeel. A tempting prize was announced on the heads of the innocents.

Muslim son of Aqeel attempted rising in Kufa was on Tuesday, 8th of Dhu al-Hijja in the year 60 Hijra. He (May God have mercy on him) was martyred on Wednesday, 9th on the Day of Arafa.



Children of Muslim son of Aqeel Martyred

The two young souls of Muslim son of Aqeel in their concealed march from Kufa, traveling during nights, lost their way in the desert. Once they were arrested and put into a dungeon.

On the 20th of Dhu al-Hijja in 60 Hijrah, when the Jailer came to give the children their evening meal, he saw them saying their prayers. The Jailer waited. When the boys had finished their prayers, he asked them who they were. When the Jailer learnt that they were the sons of Muslim and the Grandsons of Imam Ali (pbuh), he let them escape. The children came out of the prison.

It was a dark night. Their first thought was to go to Imam Hussain and warn him not to go to Kufa. Everywhere they went, they found the roads blocked by Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad soldiers. It was impossible to get out of Kufa. Now it was almost day-break. Where could these two young boys go?

They found themselves by the side of the river Euphrates. They drank some water from the river and then went up a tree to hide for the day. Just then a woman came to the river to get water. She saw the two young boys and asked them who they were. Ibraheem said, “We are two orphans, could you please leave us alone and not tell any one that you have seen us?” The woman asked them to accompany her to her mistress who would help them.

The woman’s mistress was a good-hearted lady. After talking to the boys for a while she realized who they were. She gave them food and said to them, “You can spend the day here and I will try to help you. Unfortunately my husband Harith is working for Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad, who is already in search of you to win the rich reward. He is out at the moment. You can rest in the spare room but make no noise otherwise when he comes back, he will find out you are here.”

The children said their prayers and went to sleep. In the evening Muhammad woke up and started crying. Ibraheem asked him why he was crying. Muhammad said “I saw our father in a dream, he was calling out for us.” Ibraheem said, “Brother, be patient. I also saw our father in a dream beckoning us to him.” They both started weeping. Harith, who had come back, heard the children crying. He opened the door and asked the children who they were. On learning they were the sons of Muslim, he jumped

with joy and getting into the room dragged those two young souls out of their beds saying:

“I killed myself in your search the whole day for you and you are here in my own house.”

The brute tied both the boys to a pillar. Harith’s wife tried to stop him, but he beat her up. Harith wanted to collect the reward which Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad had offered to anyone capturing the children. The children spent the whole night tied to the pillar. In the morning Harith dragged them to the river-bank and the good lady accompanied them pleading for them. When Harith wanted to behead them, the children cried to the good lady addressing her as ‘Mother dear!’ The poor lady was already imploring the brute of her husband not to lay his hands on the helpless innocents. But the heartless brute would not listen to the implore from the lady. When he raised his sword, the lady ran to intervene and stop the stroke, and got her two hands severed.

Ibraheem asked him, “Harith, are you going to kill us?” Harith said “Yes!” Ibraheem said, “In that case give us time to finish our morning prayers.” The two boys said their prayers. They raised their hands and cried out “Inna Lillahe wa Inna Ilaihe Raje’oon, O God we are coming to you. Give our mother the courage when she hears of our death and judge between us and our killers!” and no sooner the holy souls had finished their supplication to the Lord, then Harith wanted to behead them. The elder brother implored saying: “O’ man! Listen behead not my younger brother before me for my mother when we parted from her last, handed him over to me. Oblige me by beheading me first.”

With a stroke of the sword the head of the elder one of the two innocents fell and Harith threw the body into the river, and then turning to the younger one, he did the same. It is said that the body of first floated stationary in the waves of the river until the body of the second one joined it and both floated away together. Harith cleansed the blood from the head and faces of the children and went on his way to meet Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad.



Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad was seated on his throne in his palace in Kufa with an heirloom in his hand. People were seated on both sides of his throne. Harith was present too and with a single gesture of Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad he came forward and greeted him. From beneath his arms, Harith produced a bundle wrapped in cloth and place it on the table facing Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad. He untied the knot and seeing the contents in the cloth the whole crowd stood baffled and dumbfounded. On catching sight of the two heads Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad rose from his throne and sat again repeating this act three times.

Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad regarded Harith and asked him, “While you were killing them did they say something to you?” “Yes, they begged me not to kill them for the Holy Prophet’s sake, instead to sell them in the market or to bring them to you alive.” They said they were only little children and that I should feel pity on them and set them free. But I told them that God did not grant me a soft heart. I granted just one wish of theirs. “Good and what was their wish?” “They wanted to pray two rak’at namaaz.” I told them they could pray as much as they liked to ease their pain. I stood behind them listening and after their namaaz they started reciting a prayer. I heard them say “O God, you are the ever living; you make the judgment between this man and us.” Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad intervened, “Prayer? What prayer? What did the children say?” “Nothing important.” Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad insisted, “Tell me what they said.” Well they said, “O the Alive, O the self subsisting, O the Forbearing one, O the Wise, O the Best judge, you yourself make the right judgment between this man and us.”

On hearing this Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad got up from his throne hitting the heirloom on Harith's head, "Incidentally, this prayer is very important because taking this name is very helpful and their prayers are surely answered." Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad ordered his executioner, "Oh Jallad, come here at once." A strong and powerful man came forward with large arms and a pink mask on his face. With a heavy sword he came swiftly to Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad bowing and saluting. "I am at your service, master." "Take this man to the same place where he killed the two children and kill him but make sure his dirty and contaminated blood does not mix or mingle with their pure blood. Now go!" Harith's face turned deathly pale and his body began to tremble and he cried and begged, "Oh Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad, what wrong have I done? I thought I was doing all this to please you. Please have mercy on my wife and children." Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad answered, "Coincidentally, I am an example of you. God has not placed an iota of mercy in my heart." Meanwhile Harith was dragged out of the palace by the executioner and a couple of other soldiers.

No Refuge for the Holy Imam Even in the Holy Kaaba

News had reached Damascus that Imam Hussain had left Madina for Makkah. Yazid became so worried that he decided to send 'Amr son of Saad son of Al-Ass' as delegate of the Caliph to the Hajj pilgrims and that among his duties was to kill Imam Hussain wherever they found him and whatever the costs. Yazid hired thirty men to guide themselves as pilgrims (Hajjis) with daggers hidden in their pilgrim garbs to murder the Holy Imam even while performing the pilgrimage rites, be he even in the very precincts of the Great Sanctuary of the Holy Kaaba.

Imam Hussain had received the letter from his Deputy Muslim son of Aqeel in Kufa to proceed towards Kufa without any delay, the letter which Muslim son of Aqeel had written before what befell him later. Imam Hussain only waited for the pilgrimage to start, so that he can proceed towards Kufa thereafter. But he got intelligence about the plot to kill him even in the Holy Sanctuary.

Imam Hussain's Sermon at Mina

O people take lesson from the counsel God gave to His friends when He rebuked the Rabbis by saying: "Why do not the Rabbis and the doctors of Law (scholars) forbid them from their (habit of) uttering sinful words and eating things forbidden? Evil indeed are their works." (5:63)

And God says: "Curses were pronounced on those among the Children of Israel who rejected Faith, by the tongue of David and of Jesus the son of Mary: because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses. Nor did they (usually) forbid one another the iniquities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did." (5:78-79)

God reproached them because they saw with their own eyes the oppressors committing vile and corrupt acts, but did not stop them, out of love for the favors they received from them as well as fear of persecution and injury. However, God says: "Fear not men, but fear Me." (5:44) And He says: "The believing men and women are friends and protectors to each other; they enjoin the good and forbid the evil; they perform the prayer, and pay the alms, and obey God and His messenger. Upon them God shall have mercy; God is Almighty, All-wise." (9:71)

God mentions the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil (al-Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy an al-Munkar)



before all other duties, because He knows that if it is performed and is established in the society all other duties, the easy and the difficult, will also become established. The reason for this is that al-Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy an al-Munkar means summoning people to Islam, as well as resistance against injustice, opposing and struggling against oppressors, and endeavoring to ensure that public wealth and income derived from war are distributed in accordance with the just laws of Islam, and that taxes are collected, levied and expended in due and proper form.

O scholars, who are celebrated and enjoy good repute on account of your learning! You have achieved a good name in society because of your good will. It is on account of God that men venerate you and stand in awe of you, so that even powerful fear you and the weak honor you, and those who are not subject to you and over whom you hold no authority grant you favors they deny themselves. When the people do not receive their due, they seek your intercession, and you walk in the street with the majesty of kings and princes.

Have you not earned all this respect and prestige because of the people's hopes that you will implement God's laws, even though in most instances you have failed to do so?

You have taken lightly your duties as leaders. You have neglected the rights of the oppressed and the lowly, but have assiduously pursued what you regard as your personal rights. You have not spent your money or risked your life for the sake of the One Who gave you life, nor have you fought against any group or tribe for the sake of God. Nevertheless, you desire - and regard it as your due - that He should grant you paradise, the company of the prophet, and security from chastisement in the hereafter. You have such expectations of God, I fear that the full weight of His wrath descend upon you, for although it is by His might and glory that you have achieved high rank, you show no respect to those who truly know God, while you yourselves enjoy respect among God's creatures on His account.

(I am also afraid for you for another reason:) you see the covenant enacted with God being violated and trampled under foot, yet you show no anxiety, when it comes to the covenants enacted with your fathers, you become greatly disturbed and anxious if they are only violated in part, but the pledges you have given to the most noble Messenger are a matter of complete indifference to you.

The blind, the dumb, and chronically ill everywhere lack protection in towns and no mercy is shown them. But you neither behave in accordance with your function and rank, nor you support or pay any regard to those who do. You purchase your safety from the oppressive ruling powers with flattery, cajolery, and compromise.

All these activities have been forbidden to you by God, and He has, more over, commanded you to forbid each other to engage in them, but you pay no attention.

The calamity that has befallen you is greater than what has befallen others, for true rank and degree of "Ulama" has been taken away from you. The administration of the country and the issuing of decrees and ordinances should actually be trusted to religious scholars who are guardians of God's ordinances concerning what is permitted and what is forbidden. But your position has been usurped from you, for no other reason than that you have abandoned the truth (al-Haqq), and have disagreed about the nature of the sunnah, despite the existence of clear proofs.

Had you the forbearance to endure adversities and hardships for the sake of God, then all proposed regulations (God's affairs) would be brought to you for your approval and for you to issue; authority would lie in your hands. But you allowed the oppressors to take away your functions and God's affairs (i.e. government) to fall into their hands, so that they administer them by resorting to ambiguities and

make arbitrariness and the satisfaction of lust their consistent practice. What enabled them to gain control of government was your fleeing in panic from (inevitable) death and your love of life, which shall in all certainty depart from you. As a consequence of that mentality, you have delivered the powerless masses into the clutches of the oppressors. While some cringe like slaves under the yoke of oppressors, and others have been reduced to destitution in regard to their livelihood, the rulers run the affairs of the government in accordance with their whims, earning ignominy and disgrace for themselves with their licentiousness, following evil counselors, and showing impudence toward God. One of their appointed spokesmen mounts the pulpit (Minbar) in each city. The country is defenseless before them, and their hands grab freely whatever they want of it. The people are their slaves and are powerless to defend themselves. One of the governors is a dictator by nature, malevolent and rancorous; another represses to recognize either God or the Day of Resurrection! It is not strange - how can one think it strange, that society is in the clutches of a cunning oppressor whose tax collectors are oppressors and whose governors feel no compassion or mercy towards the believers under rule.

It is God who will judge concerning what is dispute among us and deliver a decisive verdict concerning all that occurs among us.

O God! You know that everything we did was not prompted by rivalry for political power, nor for a search for wealth and abundance; rather it was done to demonstrate to men the shining principles and values of Your religion, to reform the affairs of Your land, to protect and secure the indisputable rights of Your oppressed servants, and to act in accordance with the duties. You have established the norms, laws, and ordinances which You have decreed.

So (O scholars of religion!) You are to help us reach this goal, win back our rights from those powers who have considered it acceptable to wrong you and who have attempted to put out the light kindled by your Prophet. God suffices us, upon Him do we rely, to Him do we return, and to Him shall we return.

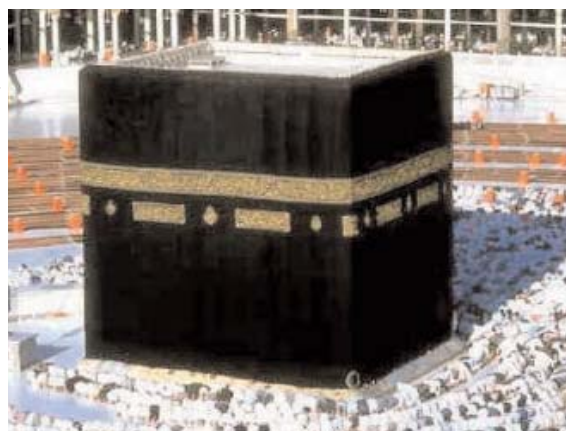
Imam Hussain saves the Sanctity of the Great Sanctuary

The Holy Kaaba, a Sanctuary, the Holiest of the Holy Places of Islam, a Sanctuary wherein no creature animate or inanimate could be disturbed wherein even a confirmed convict could not be killed, nor even a plant be plucked out. If the sanctity of the Holiest Shrine of Islam be violated by the shedding of the blood of the Holy Imam which was the very blood of the Holy Prophet himself, no security for anyone else would be left thereafter; the Holy Kaaba would cease to be a Sanctuary.

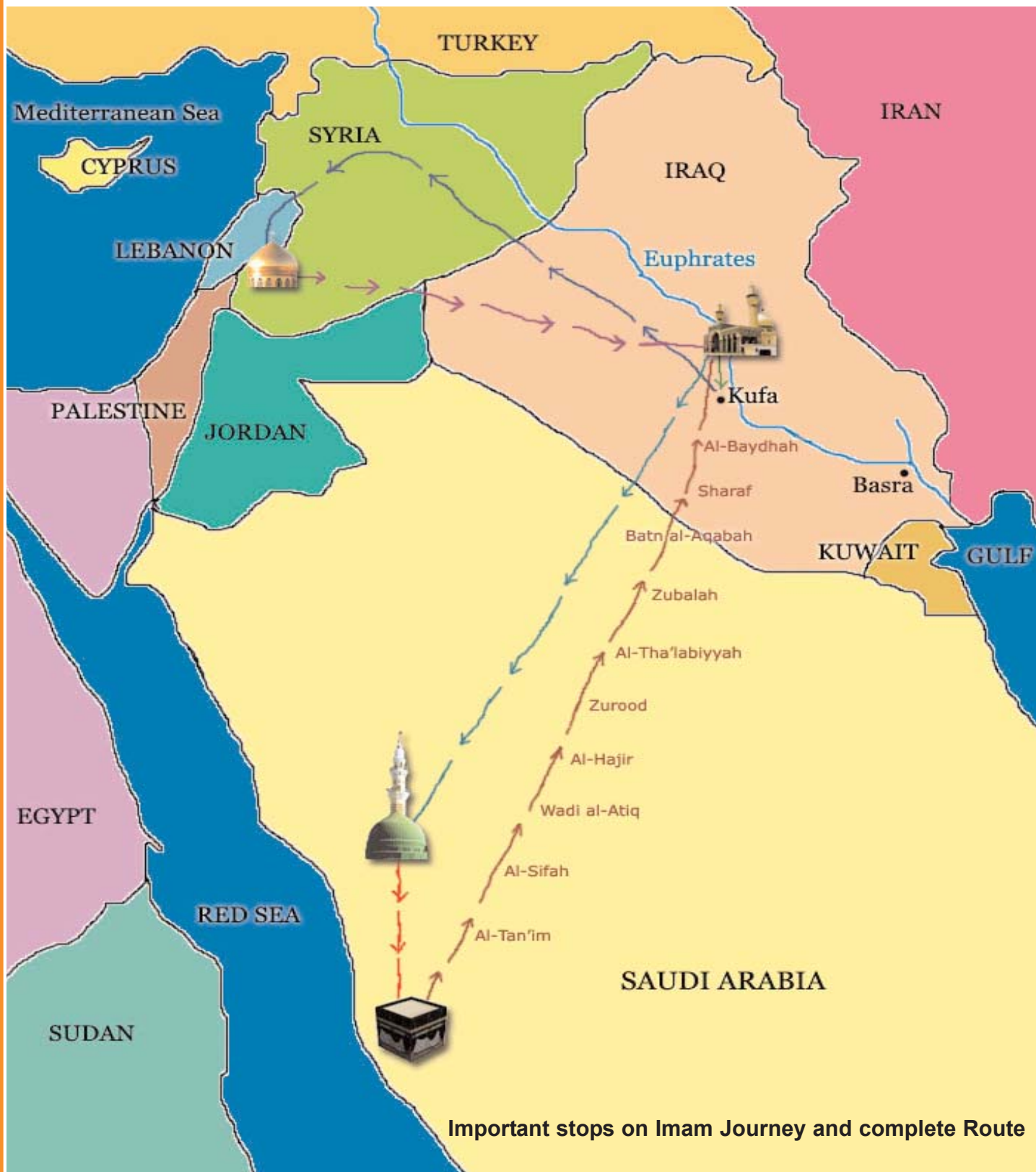
The next day was the day of the pilgrimage and Imam Hussain in the interest of the sanctity of the place could remain there no more. The Holy Imam decided to leave the place with his whole caravan, performing the briefer pilgrimage 'Umra' instead of the full pilgrimage 'Hajj', which could be done only the next day, when every Muslim rushes to the place and covets to be there.

Imam Hussain left Makkah on the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah, 60 of Hijrah preceded towards Kufa. His cousin Abdullah son of Abbas asked him to wait, and warned him, "You might be killed, and the people of Iraq are not reliable. At least go some other place, such as Yemen, where your father had followers."

The Imam replied, "O my cousin! I know that you are sincere, but I have decided on this journey." Son of Abbas said, "Then, do not take your children and your family, I am afraid



if you take them, they may see you die.” Imam Hussain replied, “By God, they are not going to leave me. If they leave me, they are going to be victims of someone who would not have mercy on them.” He wanted the family to be united, and whatever happens would happen to them together. And, if he leaves them, they would not be under anyone’s protection. Although he knew before hand the ultimate destiny he was to face. But he believed that the true victory of God’s message would be realized through his martyrdom, since there was no one else to stand up for the oppression. He knew that the nation would not wake up except by such a great shock. Therefore, let this shock be his martyrdom, along with his family who went all the way with him.



Al-Sifah: Here, a man was on his way to Makkah for the Hajj pilgrimage. The man came closer and asked someone, “Whose caravan is this?” And he was informed that it was the camp of Imam Hussain. To himself, he thought that he should pay his greeting of peace to the Grandson of Messenger of God.

The Imam asked him, “Who are you?” He replied, “I am al-Farazdaq, son of Ghalib.”

The Imam greeted the famous poet kindly, then after some time, he asked him, “What do you know about the attitude of the people?”

Al-Farazdaq answered, “Their hearts are with you, but their swords are with the Umayyads, and the destination comes from heaven.”

Imam said, “You spoke the truth, and everything is up to God. He does what He wishes, and we ask help only from Him.”

Imam (pbuh) also learnt that every road leading into Kufa was blocked and guarded by enemy troops.

Al-Hajir: Here, the Imam set camp. He wrote a letter to Muslim son of Aqeel and gave it to Qays son of Mashar Al-Saydawi to take to Kufa. In it he wrote, “O people of Kufa! I have received the letter of Muslim son of Aqeel stating that you have gathered to help us and ask for our rights. I ask Almighty God to reward you for this action. For this reason, I left Makkah on Thursday the 8th of Dhu al-Hijja. When my messenger arrives, be united until I reach Kufa in a few days.”

Meanwhile, for some time, Imam stayed at the water of Abdullah Ibn Muti? Who tried to convince the Imam not to go to Iraq, but the Imam refused.

When Qays son of Mashar Al-Saydawi reached Al-Qudisiyyah, Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad’s army captured him. When they tried to search him, he tore the letter apart. He was brought to the governor’s Castle in Kufa, and Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad asked him, “Why did you tear the letter?”

Qays replied, “So you will not know what was in it.”

Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad said, “You have to tell me what was in it!”

Qays refused. Then Ibn Ziyad said, “You have to go on the pulpit and curse Hussain, his brother, and his father. Otherwise, I am going to cut you into pieces!”

Qays went on the pulpit and blessed Amir Al-Mu’minin Imam Ali, Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain, and cursed Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad and his father and the Umayyads. Then he said, “O people! I am the messenger of Hussain to you!” He told them where he left the Imam and said, “Go help him!” Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad ordered for him to be thrown from the top of the Castle. He fell and died.

Zurood: And a large number of the people thinking that if Imam Hussain, the Grandson of the Apostle of God stands against Yazid, the Muslim World as a whole would support the Holy Imam and those who support Imam Hussain’s cause will certainly get the share of the booty accompanied him. At every step Imam Hussain warned them saying their imagination, was totally wrong and will never be realized. However, the crowd accompanied Imam Hussain until when the news of the fate of Imam Hussain’s Deputy, Muslim son of Aqeel, reached him. At this stop, the news of the martyrdom of Hani son of Urwa and Muslim son of Aqeel reached the Imam. The Imam was deeply upset and many times said, “God bless them.”

He and other people cried with the sad news, the ladies wailed, and the whole camp was in mourning. Then, two of his companions stood and said, "O Grandson of the Prophet of God! Please change your decision and do not go to Kufa." Others disagreed and said, "We have to continue and die the same way as Hani and Muslim died for the cause."

The Imam listened to each conversation and looked deeply into their faces and then said, "There is no goodness in life after these two (Hani and Muslim)." And the crowd began deserting Imam Hussain in large numbers.

Sharaf: Here, the Imam set camp and asked his children to re-supply with water and carry more water than they needed. When he heard one of his followers saying "Allahu Akbar (God is great)," the Imam asked him, "Why did you say that?" He answered, "I see palm trees in the far distance."

All the people around him said, "There are no palm trees around here in this desert?" When they looked carefully, they saw spears and horses.

The Imam agreed and said, "That must be it." Then he asked, "Is there any shelter here?"

They told him there is a place called Dhu-Hasm on the left and that is the best place to take shelter. The Imam went there and set his camp. Then, at noon, the command of a famous Commander Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi, with 1,000 soldiers, appeared in front of the Imam, carrying a message from Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad ordering him to prevent the Imam from returning to Medina or capture him and bring him to Kufa. By the time they met Imam Husain's caravan Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi and his troops had run out of water and were nearly dying of thirst.

When the Imam saw that the army of Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi was thirsty, he asked his followers to give them and their horse's water. They gave all of them and all of their horse's water except for the last animal. The inexperienced rider of this last Camel came to the Imam, not knowing how to water his animal, and Imam Hussain told him, "Anikh al-Rawiyah." In the Hijazi Arabic dialect, it means "loosen the ropes around the Camel's neck (so it can drink)," but in the Kufi Arabic dialect it means "loosen the neck of the water bag." So, the soldier loosened the knot around the water bag and the water spilled out.

Then, Imam Hussain did it himself and showed the soldier how to loosen the ropes and let the Camel drink. Then, after all of the army and their animals were finished drinking, the Imam stood and said, "I did not come here until all of your letters came to me, and the letters say that you do not have any leader and that you need my help as guide. If that is still your demand, give me something that shows that you are truthful in your promises, and if you do not like me, I will return to where I came from."

The soldiers were silent. No one spoke a word. Then, Hajjaj son of Masraq made the call to prayer for the Dhuhur (Noon Prayer). The Imam said to Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi, "You are the chief of your army. You go and pray with your own people."

Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi replied, "No. We pray with you." Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi, with all of his troops, prayed behind Imam Hussain. When the Imam finished the prayer, he stood and said, "O people! Fear God and find the truth and follow it. We are the members of the House of the Prophet. We deserve trust more than those who do injustice. If you do not like us or you ignore our rights or you have changed your minds from whatever you have written to us before, then I will leave you."



Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi said, "Written? I do not know what letters you are talking about!" The Imam asked one of his followers to bring two sacks of letters. Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi said, "I am not one of these people." I have been ordered not to leave you alone until I bring you back to Kufa to Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad.

The Imam said, "Death is before that." He turned and told his followers to get ready to ride their horses, but Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi stopped them from going. Then, for the first time in his life, the Imam spoke an insult, "Your mother sits mourning you." Then he said, "What do you want from us?"

Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi replied, "If anyone beside you had said those words to me, I would have replied the same to him, but I cannot do that to you for your mother Fatima (pbuh). However, take a road between you and Kufa, which does not reach Kufa nor goes to Medina, until I write to Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad and see what his orders are. May God relieve me from this catastrophe."

Then he said to the Imam, "I bear witness that if you fight, you will be killed."

The Imam said, "Are you threatening me with death? Are you going to kill me? Are you helping the Messenger of God?" When Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi heard this, he turned around and left the Imam. He did not want a confrontation with the Imam. The Imam's caravan continued in an unknown destination, and Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi's army followed behind. It was a mysterious move divinely guided by the will of the Lord, to fulfill the Great Sacrifice destined to take place in the seed of Abraham.

Nainawa: When the Imam's caravan came near this place, they saw a man on a horse coming towards them. He was carrying a message from Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad to Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi.

Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi came and read the letter to Imam Hussain, "Be firm with Hussain. When you read my letter, do not let him camp anywhere but in the desert where there is no water and no fortification."

The Imam said, "Then, let us go to Nainawa or Ghadariyyah or Shufayyah." Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi replied, "I cannot do that because the messenger is a spy on me."

Zuhayr son of al-Qayn said, "O, Grandson of the Messenger of God! To kill these people now is easier than fighting with the reinforcements that will come after them. Let us start fighting and finish them. After these will come people that we will not be able to fight." The Imam said, "I am not going to start the fighting."

Zuhayr said, "There is a village here on the Euphrates and has a fort and the Euphrates crosses it. Let us go there." The Imam asked, "What is it called?"

He said, "It's called Aqr in Arabic, means 'the cutting'." Imam said, "I seek refuge with God from Aqr."

Then, the Imam asked Hurr to let him go a little bit further. Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi agreed and the Imam's caravan went with Hurr's troops following behind until they reached Karbala (Land of distress & disaster). The day, Holy Imam's caravan reached Karbala was 2nd of Muharram, 61 Hijra.

"Those who worship and adore God do not worship others." Imam Hussain (pbuh)

The Prophesied Desert of Karbala

At a place near the Euphrates, the Holy Imam's steed suddenly stopped and in spite of the unusual spurring, the animal did not move; but raised its head towards heaven, as if to say that it was helpless and could not step forward any more. Imam Hussain changed six (6) horses one after another but none of the animals moved from the spot. Gathering the people in the neighborhood, the Holy Imam enquired the name of the place. Some said 'Maria' some said 'Nainawa' and some said 'Shattul Furat' but the Holy Imam was not satisfied and continued his enquiry asking if there was any other name for the place. An old man stepped forward and said "O' Son of the Apostle of God! I have heard from my ancestors this plain being called also as 'Karbala'."



The moment the Holy Imam heard the name of Karbala, he smiled, thanked God and said:

"Surely this is the plain I was in quest of. This is the place where my holy Grandfather had prophesied that I, with all my faithful companions, will lay slain after suffering three day's hunger and thirst. Here will the Garden of Fatima be cut and destroyed. I cannot and I will not move an inch from this place, I have reached the destined destination."

Saying this, the Holy Imam ordered the caravan to be stopped and declared that the journey had ended as he had arrived at the desired destination. Tents were ordered to be pitched but Bibi Zainab, Hussain's sister, hearing of the Imam's decision to camp there, wept and sent for Hussain and requested him saying:

"Brother dear! Do not camp here! Some how my heart is restless and does not consent. Brother dear! Since our arrival on this plain, I distinctly hear the lamenting voice of our dear mother, wailing somewhere nearby in this desert."

Imam Hussain, hearing his mother's name, shed tears and said: "Zainab! We need not fear when God is with us. It is immaterial, sister, where we camp. This is the place, sister dear, I was in quest of, and thanks to God I am at it and now sister dear, I cannot move from here." Imam Hussain, set up camp by the banks of the river Euphrates known as the Al-Qama.

Imam Hussain (pbuh) purchases the site for the Graves

The Holy Imam gathered the people of the surrounding places, the owners of the plain of Karbala, and purchasing the land from them gifted the same to the people of Banu Asad.

Addressing the males among them he said: "On the Tenth day (Ashura) of this month (Muharram) you shall see us lying here slain, our bodies lying on the plain with our heads severed and taken away. I request you to kindly bury us, and when our devotees come to visit our graves, hold them in honor as your guests and point out to them the places of our burial."

He then addressed the ladies:

"O virtuous ladies! If your husbands, fearing the wrath of Yazid do not bury us, you kindly encourage them to do it or do it yourselves."

The Holy Imam then turned to the young children in the gathering and addressing them said:

“O innocent ones! If your parents, out of fear of the wrath of the Ruler, do not bury us, you may, by way of playing bring some mud in your laps and throw it upon our bodies and hide them.”

The appeal was so touching that the whole gathering wept.

Arrival of Yazid's Forces

The Brute Ibn Ziyad at Kufa got the information of Imam Hussain's getting out of the control of Hurr and also learnt that Imam Hussain had camped near the river Euphrates known as the Al-Qama.

On the 3rd of Muharram Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad sent an army counting four thousand led by Umar son of Saad Abi Waqqas were the first to move towards Karbala. His orders were to get Imam Hussain to surrender to Yazid. When Imam Hussain refused, Umar son of Saad told Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad to send more troops. Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad ordered all the men in Kufa to come out and join the army to fight against Hussain. Anyone not doing so would be killed. Whoever brings the head of Hussain will get a great prize and I will make him the Governor of Al-Ray province.

Regiment after regiment began to pour in on the plain of Karbala from all sides until they were (30,000) thirty thousand and ultimately the enemy's forces compelled Hussain to shift his camp from the bank of the river to the interior of the burning desert. Hussain's brother, the lion-hearted Abbas, objected to this demand from the enemy, claiming priority of occupation and the right of the son of the Holy Prophet, the Holy Imam, to stay where he had first camped. When the enemy wished to march towards the Holy Imam's camp, the brave Abbas at once drew his sword and stood firm and shouted to the men: “If you advance one step forward, you shall lay headless there.”

Knowing the bravery, valor, and prowess of the valiant son of Ali, the Lion of God, none cared to step forward. But Hussain called his Brother saying:

“Brother Abbas! Let not bloodshed be initiated from our side. Let them occupy any place they like. They call themselves my Grandfather's followers. Let them enjoy every comfort they want. We shall suffer for them, being away from the water. When God is with us, Brother, what if, the river is far away from us.”

With these words, Imam Hussain (pbuh), in order to avoid bloodshed, issued orders to shift this camp several miles into the interior of the burning desert and it was immediately done. Also Imam Hussain did not want the people to think that the battle in Karbala was about water.

No room for any criticism left

If the Holy Imam had stayed at Madina and got slain there, it would have been said, why did he not migrate to Makkah to take shelter in the Great Sanctuary there? He did go to the Kaaba and if he had stayed there to be killed by Yazid's agents, it would have been said why did he not leave the holy place to avoid bloodshed in the Great Sanctuary? Imam Hussain left Makkah too, even though it was the very eve of the pilgrimage. And if he had gone to Kufa it would have been said why he went to a place where his Deputy Muslim had been killed, and when he knew the situation there. Imam Hussain avoided going to Kufa. Imam Hussain also availed of the opportunity given by Hurr. Now when the enemy became cruel, heartless and aggressive, he avoided bloodshed by shifting his camp into the interior of the desert, abandoning the bank of the river to the enemy.

Imam Hussain (pbuh) besieged at Karbala

When the whole plain of Karbala was full with Yazid's regiments and the Imam Hussain's camp was totally surrounded by the enemy's forces, Son of Saad the Commander of the Brute armies met Imam Hussain on the banks of the river and demanded 'allegiance' on behalf of the tyrant Yazid and said:

"If you pay homage to Yazid, everything will go well for you and whatever worldly comforts and privileges you desire for, will be at your disposal. Otherwise, it will end in a wholesale massacre of yourself and all your dear ones here."

Imam Hussain firmly refused to pay the 'allegiance' saying:

"Tell Yazid to tempt with the worldly comforts to those who are after this World. I am the Imam, the representative of the Apostle of God. I shall never yield to the one who believe not in God and who defied the Word of the Lord, in word and deed, and who spread godlessness on the earth. Let any calamity befall on me & my dear ones, the will of the Lord shall be followed. Hussain will cheerfully meet any catastrophe but never surrender Truth to falsehood."

Water supply to Imam Hussain's camp cut off

At last on the 7th Muharram 61 Hijra the Commander of Yazid's forces received orders to cut off all sources of supply to the Holy Imam's camp and not allow even a drop of water to reach any of the inmates therein. It can better be imagined than described what the condition of Imam Hussain's camp would have been under the scorching Arabian sun. The camp was in the midst of the burning desert, with the heat-waves blowing from all sides. The unavailability of water, with nothing to feed even the young children, the wriggling of the babies for milk which the poor mothers, who were themselves suffering from the killing thirst, could not give, caused distress. What a torturous situation it must be, and how did those Holy ones suffer all these unbearable tortures, it is very difficult for any human mind to conceive, but all these are facts which the Holy Imam and his Godly companions suffered with wonderful fortitude and patience. Over and above all these tortures, the sight of the enemy's forces preparing all around for the massacre and a wholesale destruction was there, before the ladies and the children in the besieged camp. Hurr remembered how kind Imam Hussain was when he needed water. He asked Umar son of Saad to give water to Imam Hussain's camp or at least to the children, but Umar son of Saad showed no pity.

Note: Abbas the Standard Bearer, had already come to receive the nickname 'Saqqā' (water carrier), as earlier, on one or two occasions, at nights he had been able to pass through the enemy's ranks to fetch water for the children. It was not the case that they had not drunk any water for three days and nights. Access to water had been closed for three days and nights, but during this time they had been able to get some water on one or two occasions, including the night of 'Ashura', when they had taken bath and washed their bodies.

Enemy decides to attack

All efforts of the enemy through temptations, promises, persecutions and tortures, to persuade the Holy Imam, to yield to Yazid were in vain. Even the killing heat of the desert and the thirst of three continuous days suffered by himself, his faithful companions, the helpless ladies & even the innocent infants and the babies, could not move the Holy Imam to effect the least change in the strength of his

will re-establish the Truth paying any price the task might demand. On the 9th of Muharram a final warning was sent to Imam Hussain from Umar son of Saad that if he did not surrender, he would be killed. Imam Hussain refused to bow down to his threats. The enemy's forces advanced towards the camp of the Holy Imam to affect a wholesale massacre of all the inmates therein. Imam Hussain sent word to the enemy's Commander, Umar son of Saad through the brave Abbas with the request for a night's time to spend it in his last prayers to the Lord which was at first refused but ultimately with much reluctance granted.

The Holy Imam and Umar son of Saad confer

The Holy Imam sent for the enemy's Commander Umar son of Saad and proposed the following:

“Leave me, and I shall quit the Muslim Empire with my whole family and children, and live in some non-Muslim lands. I shall go away to Yemen or to Iran or to the far off Hind (i.e., India).”

The tyrant answered: “It can never be so.”

Imam Hussain said: “Will you at least allow having some water for the helpless ladies and & innocent babies who are dying of thirst in my camp?”

The tyrant replied: “First pay ‘Bait’ (allegiance) and then take the water from the river.”

Imam Hussain at last said: “Umar son of Saad, why you destroy the house of the Holy Prophet? If the whole world were to be given to me to rule over, I shall never yield to the tyrant.”

Imam Hussain had done the best possible to avoid bloodshed, but every offer for a peaceful settlement was rejected and the surrender to Yazid was insisted upon. Imam Hussain then decided to fight the might of the Devil for the truth and to surrender his all in the way of the Lord and to demonstrate to the human race what Bravery, Steadfastness, Patience and Fortitude, ever in the worst of the painful sufferings, those who really love God should put up with to defend the Truth and uphold it.

When all efforts through exhortations to the enemy's forces proved unfertile and the only alternative left was to fight for the cause of Truth, the Holy Imam decided first to prove the miraculous strength and the matchless prowess the Godly ones possessed, and how bravely the huge host of the enemy could be resisted, and then to surrender himself and his dear ones to drink the cup of martyrdom and to fulfill the Covenant of the Lord to save the Truth for all times Imam Hussain asked Umar son of Saad: “Will you at least agree to conduct tomorrow's battle in single combats between one from either side?” Umar son of Saad consented but the treacherous Brute did not keep to his promise.

On the evening of the 9th, six thousand (6,000) men led by ‘Shimr son of Zil Jawshan’ were the last detachment to reach Karbala.

The night before the tenth Muharram

The night following the ninth day of Muharram presented a unique spectacle which has no parallel in the history of the world. A detailed description of the scene of that night in Karbala, requires at least a separate chapter. However, only a few important events of the dreadful night are briefly related here.

Since his arrival at Karbala on the 2nd Muharram, the Holy Imam used to gather all those who had accompanied him from Makkah, and address them after every night prayer, advising them to leave him to his own fate and to return to their homes, giving them every assurance that the consequences of his journey would be quite a different one from what had been imagined by them to be.

The final shifting

Imam Hussain had to offer the sacrifice which had been termed by God Himself as ‘Zibh-e-Azeem’ the Great Sacrifice (37:104-108). The purity of his body and the divinity of his soul were unquestionable, but those whom he had to offer along with himself in the way of the Lord, had to be of some purity worthy to be blessed with the martyrdom. There were the good and the bad ones, mixed up, in his camp but what he needed was only a pure and clean stuff to be presented to God along with himself. Many who had accompanied him with selfish intentions, had deserted him, and of those still left, the Holy Imam wanted to effect a final shifting so that only those who desired nothing but the pleasure of the Lord, might remain to accompany him in his resignation to the Divine will, to resist against the onslaught of the falsehood of the Devil. At last on the 9th Muharram, soon after the enemy’s consent to wait till the following morning, the Holy Imam, after the ‘Isha’ or the night prayers summoned the remaining people and addressed them thus: I am most pleased with you. I know no companions more loyal or better than my companions and no household more reverent or pious than my household, so may God bless you for my sake because you have been good and cooperative. I do not think that the enemies will give us a day more than tomorrow.

“You are all free, my companions, members of my family, my sons, and my nephews - everyone - to leave without being liable to anything. I release you from the oath and excused you all and you may go free from my obligation. They (i.e. the enemy forces) have nothing against anyone except me. Do not feel guilty; the night is dark. Take advantage of the darkness of the night and depart, let each one of you take the hand of one of my household. Leave me to my fate and save yourselves. They will definitely not stop you.”

At the end of his speech, the Holy Imam asked his brother Abbas to put out the lamp in the tent so that people may walk away in the darkness without being ashamed of being seen by him.

It is reported that as soon as the lamp was put out, all those who had accompanied the Holy Imam from Makkah in their vain hopes of making their own fortune, began to desert the Holy Imam in batches and when the lamp was again lit after a while, there were left only a few here and there, and those who remained constituted the Godly band of the Holy Seventy-Two (72) who stood fast by the Holy Imam in the battle for Truth to save the human race against its falling into the abyss of falsehood.

But these remaining seventy two people said unanimously, that such a thing was impossible. Oh son of the Prophet; What will we tell the people, shall we say that we have abandoned our chief and leader, the son of the daughter of our Prophet without lancing an arrow for him or stabbing with a spear for him or striking a sword for him; by God no, oh son of the Prophet we will not leave you until we die before you and let us share your fate with you for life after you is meaningless. What answer we will give to the Prophet on the Day of Resurrection? What will happen to loyalty, to humanity, to love and attachment? Their ardent responses and their words said on that occasion melt a heart of stone and are most moving.



Abbas the brave said: "Is one life worth enough to be sacrificed for someone like you? I wish that I were brought to life seventy times to die seventy times for your sake." Another says, "I would lay down a thousand lives for your sake if I had them."

Another companion Saad son of Abdullah Al-Hanafi who raised saying:

By God no, oh son of the Prophet we will never abandon you so, that God will know that we have kept our word to His Prophet Muhammad regarding you. And if I know that I would die for your sake and then live again then be burnt alive and sprinkled for your sake and that is done to me seventy times. I will never leave you until I meet my destiny with you. And why would I not do this when I know that it is only one death and then I will get the everlasting reward?

And then the Imam changed the subject and told them about the events of the next day, informing them that they all would be killed. I tell you openly now that I will be mercilessly butchered. My Brother Abbas will lose both his hands and die on the banks of the river. My eighteen (18) year old son Ali Akbar will die by the lance pierced through his chest. And similarly, every one of my companions who will remain with me here, whether he be a relative or a friend of mine, will be rolling in his own blood and ultimately be slain. Only my son Ali (Imam Sajjad), who is sick, will survive to suffer the worst of tortures along with the people of my family. All of them receive it as great good news.

But the young thirteen (13) year old Qasim son of Imam Hassan (pbuh) wondered if he too would be one of them. He thought to himself, after all I am only a boy. Perhaps the Imam means that only the elderly would be martyred. I am just a minor. Therefore, he turned to the Imam and asked him: Will I be among those who will be killed?

The Imam says to him, "Qasim, first let me ask you a question. I will reply after you have answered me." "My nephew, tell me, how do you regard death and what do you think about getting killed?"

"It is sweeter to me than honey!" i.e., "I haven't a desire that should be dearer & sweeter to me!"

After getting this answer, the Imam said to him, "My nephew, you too will be killed. But your death will be different from that of others and (it will be) after you have faced a great ordeal." I tell you now, not even my baby son Ali Asgher will be spared; he will receive an arrow on his tiny neck in my own arms and pass away.

This small band of Godly souls, pure in their spirit and sincere in their desire to fight and fall in the way of the Lord. Spent the night in prayers, reciting the Holy Quran & rejoicing in the hope to drink the fast approaching cup of martyrdom the following morning. Everyone anxiously waited for the break of dawn, to lay down his life in the way of the Lord in supporting the cause of Truth. The ladies were preparing their young children to be sacrificed along with the Holy Imam in upholding the cause of the Lord. The noble mothers of the family of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) were busy advising their young sons to be steadfast in facing the might of the enemy in defense of the right, and to lay down their lives cheerfully and thus to drink the cup of martyrdom in the cause of the correct guidance of the Human Race.



Zainab said to her sons, “My sons, tomorrow there will be a battle. I cannot ask you to fight because you are young. But if anything happens to Imam Hussain, while you are still alive, I will be filled with shame.” Both the boys stood up and said: “Mother, we have the blood of Ali and Ja’far in our veins. Our Grandfathers were warriors whose fame will always be remembered. Do you think we can possibly shame them? Moreover we are the pupils of Uncle Abbas. Mother, unless you forbid us and stop us from fighting, we shall go to the battlefield & show the enemies of Islam how bravely the children of Islam can fight. All we want from you is a promise that you will never weep for us. Or souls will never rest in peace if you grieve for us after we are gone.” Tears of joy and pride flowed down Zainab’s eyes as she embraced her two boys.

When Imam Hussain was passing by Farwa’s [the widow of Imam Hassan] tent he heard Qasim say to his mother, “Mother, tomorrow Uncle Abbas, Ali Akbar and I will defend Imam Hussain. Mother, if I get killed please do not weep for me.” Farwa replied, “My son although I dearly love you, I shall not weep for you. Nothing will make me prouder than to see my son give his life for Islam.” When Imam Hussain heard this conversation he prayed to God to bless Qasim and Farwa.

Abbas the Brave, Guard the Camp

Abbas the dauntless lion stayed beside Imam Hussain ever since they left Medina and was loved by all the members of the Imam’s family. He was so devoted to Imam Hussain, that when ‘Shimr son of Zil Jawshan’, the second-in-command of Yazid’s army came towards Imam Hussain’s camp and called out: “Where are my nephews, Abbas, Abdulla, Ja’far and Uthman?” Abbas refused to reply. It was only after Imam Hussain told him “Answer him, because, despite the fact that he is corrupt he is also one of your relatives” then Abbas asked Shimr what he wanted? Shimr replied: “O, my nephews, I have specially asked ‘Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad’ for the safety of you all. So why do you wish to kill yourselves with Hussain? Why do you not join the forces of the mighty Yazid?”

Abbas looked at him with contempt and retorted, “May God’s wrath fall upon you and upon your proposition, O, enemy of God! How dare you counsel us to desert our Master, Imam Hussain (pbuh) and tie ourselves up with the corrupt and misguided Yazid?” Shimr turned round and went away angrily.

The camp of the Holy Imam contained the ladies and the children of the House of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Apprehending a surprise attack from the enemy forces which consisted of people who had turned treacherous to the Holy Imam and his family, a ditch was dug around the camp and fire was lighted the whole night and Abbas the Brave, guarded the camp in a vigil the whole night walking around it with his sword in his hand mindful of the safety of the Holy Imam and the inmates of the camp, with a vigilant eye on the ranks of the enemy.

The night in the Yazidian Camp

While the hungry and thirsty devotees of God in the Holy Imam’s camp spent the night in prayers and the devotional supplicate services to God, the soldiers in the Yazidian ranks in the opposite camp spent the whole night in drinking, feasting and making merry in the hope of the promised rewards from Yazid in return for the destruction of the family of the Holy Prophet. God alone knows how many thousands of bowls of wine were emptied on that night. The Yazidian forces anxiously awaited the break of the dawn of the next day to affect the brutal slaughter of the Holy Imam and the small band of his kith and kin and faithful devotees.

The Holy Imam's last prayer with his devotees on Earth

At the break of the dawn of the fateful day, 10th Muharram 61 Hijra, Imam Hussain called his son Ali Akbar who resembled the Holy Prophet the most, and said:

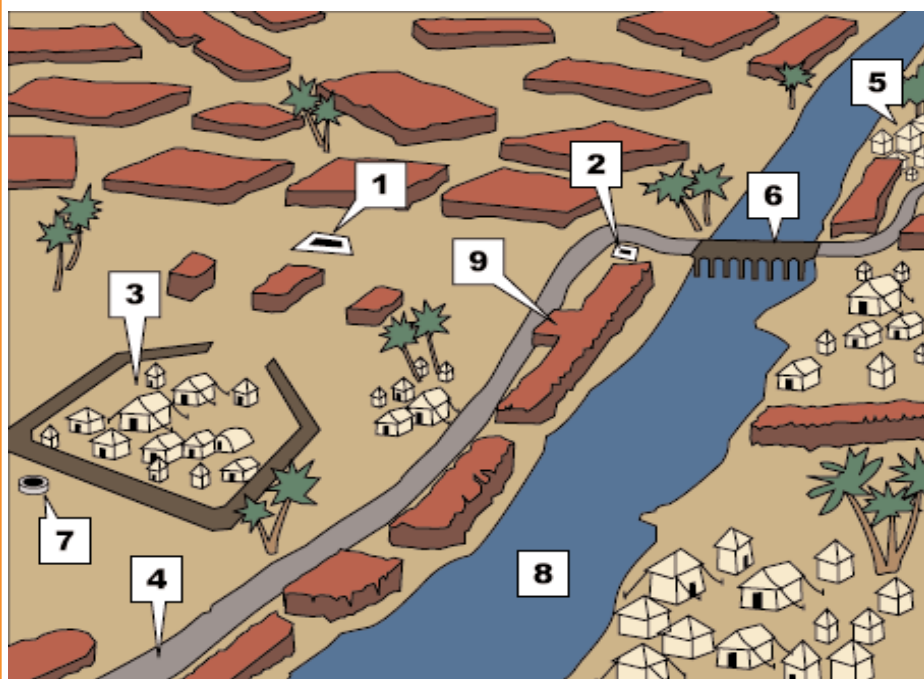
“My dear son, Ali! Let me hear the ‘Azan’ (the call for Prayer) for the last time in this world!”

When Ali Akbar gave the call ‘Azan’ in the Sahara, reporters say that the voice resembled the voice of the Holy Prophet and Imam Hussain hearing the last ‘Azan’ of his son in the voice of his Grandfather, remembering the Apostle of God, shed tears, and as the voice of Ali Akbar reached the inmates in the camp, Zainab along with other ladies hear the call for prayer in the sweet enchanting voice of the beautiful son of Imam Hussain (pbuh).

It was the third day of the thirst inflicted on the whole camp of the Holy Imam. The Holy Imam and his devotees performed ‘Tayammum’ instead of ‘Wozu’ (Ablution) and the Holy Imam offered the last congregational prayers with his devotees on earth.

After the prayer is over, in the morning of that day ‘Umar son of Saad’ led the attack against Imam Hussain (pbuh). He positioned ‘Amr son of Al-Haj Al-Zubaidi’ on the right wing of the army and ‘Shimr son of Zil Jawshan’ on the left wing. And on the infantry he positioned ‘Shibthah son of Al-Rubay’ and gave the banner/standard to his slave Durayd.

Then Holy Imam ordered all his faithful companions, who were about seventy two men to fall in, and divided his small Godly band into three flanks, i.e., the right and the left wings and the central body. Imam Hussain (pbuh) appointed ‘Zuhayr son of Al-Qayn’ as the Commander of the army’s right wing and ‘Habib son of Mouzaher’ on the army’s left wing. Imam Hussain (pbuh) called his brave brother, Abbas, the Faithful and presented to him the Holy Standard of Truth and thus Abbas from that day came to be known as ‘Abbas-e-Alamdar’ or Abbas the Standard Bearer. They positioned themselves with the houses and tents behind them.



1. Where Imam Hussain (pbuh) fell
2. Where Abbas the Standard Bearer fell
3. Camp of Household of Prophet's (pbuh)
4. Road from Karbala to Kufa
5. Village of Ghadariyyah
6. Bridge to Kufa
7. Well dug by Abbas the Standard Bearer
8. Euphrates (Furaat) River
9. Armies loyal to the Yazid

Shimr become angry and shouted as loud as he could: Why are you in such a hurry for hell?

Imam Hussain (pbuh) replied: your mother was a goat herder; you more deserve to roast in it.

Then 'Muslim son of Awsaja' wanted to shoot him with an arrow but Imam Hussain (pbuh) stopped him and said: I hate to start the fight.

Then Imam Hussain (pbuh) approached the people with some of his companions and 'Burayr son of Khudayr Al-Hamadani' in front of him. Imam Hussain (pbuh) said: Talk to them Burayr.

Then Burayr approached forward and said: Oh, fear God. Muhammad's household is now between your hands and those are his children, daughters and women. What do you have to say?

We want to capture them and let the prince Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad decide what to do with them.

Burayr answered: Don't you accept that they return back to the place where they came from? Calamity on you citizens of Kufa, Have you forgotten all about your letters and the pledges of allegiance you sworn by God on. Calamity on you citizens of Kufa, You invited the Prophet's household. May God punish you on Doom's day. We don't know what you are talking about, said someone from opposite.

Then Burayr said: Thank God who gave me a better mind than yours. Oh, God I am innocent of their doings; Oh, God let their powers fall on them until they meet you, while you are angry with them. And the troops from opposite started shooting arrows at him.

At last when it became sure that the devilish forces were bent upon a wholesale massacre, Imam Hussain (pbuh) spoke out a rhetorical speech aloud addressing the men of the Yazidian forces in an apostolic tune as a protest on them on Doom's Day.

Sermon of the Holy Imam on the day of Ashura

Imam Hussain (pbuh) thanked and praised Almighty God first. Then mentioned Holy Prophet (pbuh) and prayed on him and said:

Citizens of Kufa, Remember my image and look who I am, then awaken yourselves. Ask if it is fair for you to kill me and to violate the honor of my women? Am I not the son of your prophet's daughter, the son of his successor, his cousin and the first one who believed in what he attains from God? Isn't Hamzah, Master of martyrs, my father's uncle? Haven't you heard the words that God's Messenger said to me and my brother that we are the masters of the Heaven's youths.

Are you asking me for a dead person I killed, or money I usurped, or by punishment for wounds?

When no one answered, he shouted loud and said: I beseech you by God; do you know me? Yes, you are the Grandson of God's Messenger (pbuh), they replied.

I beseech you by God; do you know that Muhammad is my Grandfather? And do you know that Ali son of Abu Talib is my father? I beseech you by God; do you know that Fatima the daughter of God's Messenger is my mother? I beseech you by God; do you know that Khadija daughter of Khuwayled the first women in Islam is my Grandmother? I beseech you by God; do you know that Hamzah master of martyrs is my father's uncle? I beseech you by God; do you know that this is the prophet's sword? I beseech you by God; isn't the Turban I am wearing Prophet's Turban? I beseech you by God; wasn't

Ali the most all-knowing the bravest man in Islam, and the master (Maula) of every faithful Muslim? Yet you are shedding my blood and he is my father.

Yes, we know all that and we will not leave you until you taste death from thirst.

When his daughters and his sisters (Zainab & Kulthoom) heard his speech they cried, wept, slapped their cheeks, and shouted. Imam Hussain sent his brother Abbas and his son Ali to silence them. Then he continued another speech, by saying I swear that they will have to cry a lot later.

Woe, to you: You cried for help and we came running, but you drew your sword of faith against us and tried to burn us with the fire we set for your enemies. You have turned to them and became their allies, without any justice or any hope they have given you.

May your fate be as tragic as your actions. You have left us while we were in the midst of the battle, and you run to the pleasures of life. May God's curse be upon you, for you are the slaves of this nation and the outcast of any party, the deviators of their words, the bandits of evil and the breath of Satan. How could you ally with our enemies against us? But treason is a habit that runs deep into you, in your roots and in your branches as well as the air you breathe and the food you eat. That Swindler son of Swindlers had left me to choose between death and humiliation. But there is no way humiliation could find a route to us. God, His messenger and our pride would neither wish us nor let us obey those vicious mean people. May God bear witness I am going to fight with my family no matter how few our supporters are?

Imam Hussain (pbuh) made this speech so that later no one would be able to say that it was Imam Hussain (pbuh) who started this battle. Umar son of Saad became worried that Imam Hussain (pbuh)'s words might change the minds of some of the troops. Hence ordered his slave Durayd saying: Hay Durayd holds your banner and be me witness in front of the prince that I was the first to fight Hussain (pbuh). He put an arrow to his bow and shot it towards Imam Hussain (pbuh)'s tent. There followed thousands of arrows towards Imam Hussain (pbuh)'s camp.

Hurr joins the Holy Imam

Hurr son of Yazid Al-Riyahi, the commander of Yazid's regiment, who had obstructed Hussain's way near Kufa, was also present in the enemy's forces in Karbala. He spent all his time in repenting and feeling very guilty for having obstructed the way of the son of the Holy Prophet, and blamed himself for bringing Imam Hussain to Karbala. The enemy's officers and soldiers were only wondering at the mysterious sorrowful silence and the serious pensive mood in which Hurr spent all his time since his arrival on the plain.

On the morning of 10th Muharram, Hurr called his son secretly in his tent and said: "We are doomed driven towards 'hell'. There is yet time. I have decided to dash out of the ranks of Satan and join the side of the Imam Hussain (pbuh) and seek pardon of the son of the Apostle of God. Would you like to accompany me or stay where you are?"

The son of Hurr readily consented to accompany him and Hurr's slave who was a faithful & trusted one of his master, was present in the tent and implored saying Master! Take me away from this God's cursed side, along with you. Please don't leave me for hell and Hurr agreed.

Hurr, with his son and a slave, dashed out of the enemy's ranks. After that, Hurr approached until he took a place ahead among the people then he started to approach Imam Hussain little by little. 'Al-Mouhajer son of Awss' asked him: What do you want to do? Do you want to fight Hussain?

Hurr began to tremble and Al-Mouhajer said: You arise my doubt; I swear by God that I have never seen you like this in any situation and if someone asked me about the most courageous man in Kufa, I would have never chosen anyone else other than you. But what happened to you today? For God's sake, I am choosing between heaven and hell and by God I'll never choose but heaven even if I am to be cut into pieces and burnt.

Hurr appearing before the Holy Imam with tears in his eyes begged his pardon for the wrong he had done. "O my Imam, I am so sorry for forcing you to come to Karbala. Please allow me to fight along with you. I would be honored if you would let me lay down my life first before anyone amongst you is killed. I have brought my son to die with me defending your sons." The return of Hurr had already been foretold by Imam Hussain in his camp. Hurr was received very warmly by Imam Hussain and his companions as special guest. Hurr was amazed by the kindness of Holy Imam. And when the fight against the devil began, Hurr was the first one who went into the field against the enemy and charged bravely like a wolf among a herd of Sheep and laid down his life, after killing more than forty (40) of enemies.

Imam Hussain rushed to him found him with big cut on the head and the wound was bleeding badly. Imam Hussain took his scarf which had belonged to his mother Fatima (pbuh) and bandaged his wound and cleaned his eyes from blood. Hurr told Imam "Did I do well and are you satisfied?"



The last thing Hurr heard before he died was Imam Hussain telling him your mother made the right choice by naming you Hurr (The Freeman). Body of Hurr was carried by his tribe and buried.

The Battle of Truth against Falsehood

Thus the battle of Truth against Falsehood began. One after another of the Godly ones from the Holy Imam's side went into the field and laid down his life after exhibiting wonderful bravery, courage, valor and prowess. It looked as if the thirst, hunger, heat and the wounds had no affect whatsoever on the patience, the strength and the determination of Imam Hussain (pbuh)'s devotees. At last when the deceitful Umar son of Saad saw the wonderful fight, he was astonished that each one from the Holy Imam's side easily destroyed dozens before he fell, and who proved unconquerable, he ordered a sally in contravention of the solemn agreement entered into, the previous night. The bravery and the skill displayed by the faithful supporters of the sacred cause, the matchless resignation to the Divine Will, and the flawless devotion and the ideal attachment of each one of the hungry and thirsty sufferers of the Godly camp, to the Holy Imam and to the sacred cause of Truth, drowned the Devil's army and their officers in wonder and astonishment, and they had become so awe-stricken at the miraculous strength and unparalleled courage of the helpless sufferers that they began to dread the very countenance of each of the Godly devotees of the Holy Imam who came alone into the field and fought and fell in the way of God.

Imam Hussain's companions were determined that as long as one of them was alive, they would not allow the blood of Imam Hussain and his family spill in Karbala. From early that morning, Imam Hussain together with Abbas the brave, Ali Akbar and others carried the bodies of their companions back to the camp. Although these brave soldiers did not have their own families to mourn their death, the ladies in Imam Hussain's camp cried for them as if they were part of their own family.

Thus, whenever a supporter of the Holy cause went against the Devil's forces and fell, Imam Hussain, Abbas the brave and Ali Akbar would rush out to be by the side of their dying companion and brought his body back and laid it in a tent pitched particularly for the martyrs. As the battle for Right against Might proceeded and the supporters of the Truth fell one after another, the tent containing the bodies of the martyrs was turned into a 'Ganj-e-Shaheedan' or the 'Repository of the Martyrs'. When the dust of the battle settled, around fifty of Imam Hussain (pbuh)'s companions were martyred.

Wahab and his Family

Wahab son of Abdullah Al-Kalby was a Christian, who was accompanied by his newly married wife and mother. All of them declared their Islam before Imam Hussain (pbuh) on the way to Karbala.

During the Battle between Holy Imam (pbuh) and his enemies Wahab's mother said: "My son, go and support the son of God's messenger." That is what I intend to put my best resolve into. Wahab replied.

He rode to the battlefield saying: "If you deny me. I am the son of Al-Kalby. You'll see me and my fighting. And learn of my strength and steady fastness."

Wahab killed some of them and returned to his mother and said: Mother are you satisfied with me?

I'll never be satisfied until you are killed for the cause of Imam Hussain (pbuh).

His wife said "For God's sake we have just got married I cannot stand even the thought of your death."

His mother interrupted saying "Go away from her sight; don't listen to her. Go back and fight for Imam Hussain (pbuh). You will earn his Grandfather's intercede on Doom's Day."

He got back fighting until he killed nineteen knights and another twenty of the infantry. Then his fingers were cut; at that moment his wife carried a pole and rushed towards him, saying: May my father and my mother be your redemption. Fight for the sake of the women of God's Messenger.

He tried to make her return back to the women camp, but she held his clothes and said: I'll never go back until I die with you.

Wahab turned back to her saying "Some time ago you were objecting and now you are urging me to fight! What happened?"

She replied: Wahab, I have forsaken life since I heard Imam Hussain calling: Oh My God, Oh How few are my resources. I am left alone; is there anyone to support us? his voice really broke my heart.

Then Wahab sought assistance from Imam Hussain to tell her to go back to her tent. Imam Hussain said: May God reward you and May God have mercy upon you, go back to the women. So she returned and Wahab fought like an angry lion and he killed so many of the enemies, but the enemies had no choice but to shower him with arrows till he was martyred.

The enemies beheaded Wahab and threw his head besides his wife's tent. His wife came out and started to wipe the blood and dust from Wahab's face. Shimr saw her and ordered his slave to strike her; she fell down beside her husband's head, thus becoming the first women to be killed from Imam Hussain's camp.

Salat al-Khawf/Prayer of Fear

As the sun rose higher in the desert sky, the heat became more intense by the minute. The children were crying for water. Some of the remaining companions approached the river banks to get some water but were stopped by the enemy. They fought bravely and were martyred in battle: Sadly no water reached the thirsty children of Karbala.

It was now midday, and the time for Zuhur prayer was approaching. Imam Hussain (pbuh) asked Hajjaj to make the Azan and asked the enemy to cease fighting till they pray. But 'Al-Hosayn son of Numeir' replied. It will not be accepted from you. But 'Habib son of Mouzaher' attacked him and hit the head of his horse. Al-Hosayn fell down, but his companions were able to rush and rescue him.

The Imam Hussain (pbuh) ordered 'Zuhayr son of Al-Qayn' and 'Sa'id son of Abdullah' to stand in front of him to shield against the arrows. So that he can perform 'the prayer of fear' with his other companions. In the heat of the battle on the day of 'Ashura', the Imam offered his prayers hurriedly in the form of 'Salat al-Khawf' and there was no respite even to offer full prayers. Those two (2) companions, who were standing in front, fell from the injuries inflicted under the shower of the arrows, by the time the prayer ended. The enemy would not even give respite for offering prayers.

After that all his companions came out to fight, one after the other, until they were all martyred. Imam Hussain was left alone with his handful of households only, to fight the huge army of Yazid. Ali's sons, Ja'far's sons, Aqil's sons, Hassan's sons and Hussain's sons. The first among them to rush to the battlefield was 'Abdullah son of Muslim son of Aqil'. He fought and was martyred.

Aun and Muhammad

Aun and Muhammad were the sons of Zainab, and they were quite young, aged ten (10) and nine (9) years respectively. They had learnt the art of fencing from their uncle, Abbas the brave.

When devotee after devotee fought and fell, in defense of the Holy Family, Aun and Muhammad felt that it was now their turn to go to the battlefield. They went to their mother Zainab, to ask for her blessings. Aun and Muhammad assured their mother that they would fight with such bravery that whenever she thought of them, she would remember how brave they were. Zainab went to her brother to request him, and said: "Hussain, at the Battle of Siffin, Abbas was only ten (10) years old. When he saw someone trying to attack you, he rushed into the battle field and killed the man. Do you remember how proud our father Ali was? Today I too want to be proud of my sons. I want to see them go out there and defend Islam. Will you not allow me that privilege?" Imam Hussain stood there in silence. He looked at his sister. He saw the disappointment on her face, and saw tears forming around her eyes. Then said: "My beloved sister you have never asked me for anything before, how can I say no to you now." He turned to Aun and Muhammad and said "Go my sons, be brave, I shall join you soon on your journey to the heavens." Zainab held them close and kissed them goodbye. The boys raised their hands and said "Fi Amaani-llah, mother!" Zainab replied, "Bismillah my sons. God be with you!"

The two boys rode out into the battlefield. They fought bravely. At one point 'Umar son of Saad' asked, "Who are these two youngsters? They fight like I have seen Ali son of Abu Talib fight." When he was told who they were he ordered his soldiers to give up single combats and surround and kill the boys. Aun and Muhammad were attacked from all sides.

Imam Hussain, Abbas and Qasim, stood by Zainab as she watched her sons fighting. Hardly a few minutes had passed when Aun fell from his horse and shouted for Imam Hussain. Just at that moment another cry was heard, this time from Muhammad. Abbas left Qasim with Zainab while he ran to the battlefield. Imam Hussain carried the body of Aun while Abbas carried Muhammad.

Imam Hussain walked to Zainab's tent. He found her in Sajdah praying, "Oh my God, I thank you for accepting my sacrifice. My heart is filled with pride because my two sons have given their lives for your religion."

Zainab came to the two bodies of her sons and addressing them said: "My dear children! Now I am pleased with you that, you have proved your worth and laid down your lives for Truth and pleased God and His Holy Prophet (pbuh)."

Qasim son of Imam Hassan (pbuh)

Qasim was the youngest son of Imam Hassan (pbuh), he was born in 47 Hijra, three (3) years before the martyrdom of his father. When Imam Hussain prepared to leave Madina in the month of Rajab 60 Hijra. Qasim's mother Farwa asked Imam Hussain to take her and Qasim with him. Imam Hussain agreed. Qasim, although only thirteen (13) years old, had, like his cousins Aun and Muhammad, learnt fencing from Abbas and Ali Akbar.

After Aun and Muhammad had fallen in the battlefield, Qasim came to Imam Hussain and begged for permission to go and fight. Twice Imam Hussain refused saying "Qasim you are young and your mother's only son." After much insistence, received the permission to leave for the battlefield, being very young, there was no armor that was fit for his years, nor a helmet nor shoes, nor arms. Imam Hussain tied Imam Hassan's turban (Amamah) on the head of Qasim and helped him mount his horse. Qasim came to the battlefield. He was a very handsome boy. When the enemy saw him, they began to murmur, "How can we kill someone whose face is shining like moon?"

In a loud and a clear voice Qasim introduced himself and cried out a challenge for single combat. He killed several famous warriors who came forward. When 'Umar son of Saad' saw the courage of this young fighter, he ordered his troops to attack him in force. They surrounded him from all sides, and attacked him with swords, spears, daggers and arrows. An enemy soldier hit him on his head with such force that he fell from his horse.

Imam Hussain stood near the tents as he held his horse's reins. Evidently he was alert and ready. At once he heard a cry. It was Qasim: "Ya Ammah!" (O Uncle!). Imam Hussain flew on the horse like a hunting falcon. As he arrived by the side of Qasim, about two hundred men had surrounded this child. They fled as the Imam attacked, and one of the enemy's men who had dismounted to sever Qasim's head was himself trampled under the hoofs of the horses of his fleeing comrades. When the Imam arrived at Qasim's side, there was so much dust and confusion that nobody could see what was happening; when the dust settled down, they saw the Imam sitting at Qasim's side with his head in his arms. They heard the Imam utter this sentence: "My nephew! By God, it is very hard on



your uncle that you should call him and he should not be able to respond, or that he should respond without being able to do anything for you!” It was at this moment that a cry came from this youth and his spirit departed towards its Creator.

Note: The one who is said to have been trampled to death under the hoofs of the horses was one of the enemy’s men, not Qasim. And the report about the wedding of Qasim to ‘Fatema Kubra’ the daughter of Imam Hussain (pbuh), on the night before ‘Ashura’ is not true. Another two sons (Abdullah and Hassan-e-Mussanna) of Imam Hassan (pbuh) were also participated in the battle of Karbala, apart from Qasim. Qasim and Abdullah were martyred, while Hassan-e-Mussanna born from Ju’ada daughter of Ash’ath survived.

Abu al-Fadl Abbas - The Standard Bearer/Flagman

Abbas Qamar-e-Banu Hashim (the Moon of the Hashimites), who was next only to the Holy Imam in charge of the Holy Imam’s camp, after a very strenuous fight with the enemy at the river, got a sack of water but when the sack filled with water was placed before the thirsty children, the poor innocents not waiting till it was properly opened, and not knowing how to open the sack, rushed to it and fell upon it, one over the other, in the haste to at least cool their burning bodies. But alas! The knot at the mouth of the sack gave way to the pressure and the whole water flowed away on the sand. It can be imagined what the feelings of despair and disappointment of the poor children and the helpless mothers would have been, and how disappointed the brave son of Imam Ali (pbuh), who got the water, would have felt at the loss of the water which he could get for the poor children and the inmates of the camp after so much of fight with the enemy guarding the banks of the river. Attempts to dig a well were also made but in vain, for instead of water, stones came out. The Holy Imam preached patience and fortitude to every one at each disappointment and torture, saying: “Be you all cheerful and always surrender to the will of the All-Merciful Lord, for the end of all these trials is at hand and the water of Paradise awaited there to quench your thirst.”

After the Zuhur prayers on the day of Ashura, one by one the brave companions of Imam Hussain fell in the battlefield. At last only Imam Hussain, Ali Akbar and Abbas were left. Imam Zainul Abideen (Sajjad) lay sick in his tent.

Several times Abbas asked Imam Hussain for permission to go and fight. Each time Imam Hussain would reply “Abbas, you are the captain of my army; you are my Alamdar - the Standard Bearer.” Abbas would never argue with Imam Hussain. His three brothers were killed in the battle fought after Zuhur. Imam Hussain could see the anger in Abbas’s eyes. Imam Hussain knew that if he let Abbas go and fight; there would be a massacre in the enemy rank. Imam Hussain's object was to re-awaken Islam and not to score a victory on the battlefield.

يا ابا الفضل العباس

Just then Sakina (According to other reports Roqaiya is the name) four (4) year old daughter of Imam Hussain came out holding dried up leather bag (Mashk). She walked up to Abbas and said “Al Atash, Ya Ammahu! I am thirsty O my uncle Abbas!” Abbas went to Imam Hussain (pbuh) and requested for permission to go and get water for Sakina. Imam Hussain gave his permission. Abbas put Sakina’s Mashk on the Standard (Alam), mounted his horse and rode up to Imam Hussain. He said “I have come to say goodbye.” Imam Hussain said “My brother, come and embrace me.” Abbas dismounted his horse. There were tears in Imam’s eyes. As Abbas prepared to mount his horse, Imam Hussain said, “My brother, I want a gift from you. I want your sword.” Abbas, without uttering a word, gave Imam Hussain his sword and rode into the battlefield, armed only with a spear and holding the Alam.

Now note this majestic scene! What greatness! What valor! What a spirit of understanding and self-sacrifice! A lone warrior, alone by himself, advances against a host. The number of men who guarded the river bank was four thousand (4,000). They had all heard of the valor of Abbas. A cry arose, "Abbas is coming!" Yazid's soldiers started hiding behind one another. A few brave ones dared go near Abbas but were soon put to death by the spear or by a kick.

He descends along the river bank Euphrates (Furaat) and leads his horse into the water. First, he fills the water skin (Mashk) that he has brought and lays it on his shoulder. He himself was very thirsty. The air is hot and has been fighting. But as he sits on the back of his horse and the horse stands in water reaching up to its belly, he lowers his hands into water, takes water into them and raises them somewhat towards his sacred lips.

Those who were watching from a distance report that he hesitated for a while. Then they saw that he threw the water back and came out of the river without drinking any. He placed the Mashk on his Alam and started to ride back. No one knew why Abu Al-Fadl did not drink water there. But when he came out he recited Rajaz verses which were addressed to himself. Now from these verses they understood why he had not drunk water:

"O soul of Abu al-Fadl! My wish is that you live not after Hussain! Will you have a drink of cold water, while there stands Hussain, thirsty, near the tents, And about to drink the cup of death!? Such is not the way of my faith, Nor that of one who abides in conviction and truth!"

'Umar son of Saad' cried out, "Do not let that water reach Hussain's camp; otherwise we shall all be doomed!"

A soldier climbed a tree and as Abbas was riding past the tree he struck his sword on the right shoulder and the arm fell on to the ground. Just then someone crept behind Abbas and struck him on the left shoulder. The Alam fell down. Abbas gripped the Mashk with his teeth. His only object was to get the water to Sakina. Fighting with his feet he urged the horse to get him to Imam's camp as quickly as possible.

Alas! An arrow was shot. It went flying across the desert and hit the Mashk. The water began to pour out and with the water all the hopes of Abbas poured on to the sands of Karbala to be buried forever in the thirsty desert. Abbas now did not want to go back and face Sakina. With his feet, he signaled the horse to turn back. The enemy surrounded him from all sides. Abbas fell from the horse!! As he fell, he cried out "My Salutations (Salaam) to you my Master (Maula)!" Imam Hussain seemed to lose all his strength when he heard the voice of his dear brother Abbas.

When Abbas left to go to fetch water, Imam stood at the gate of the camp watching the Alam. Sakina was standing next to Imam Hussain, also with her eyes fixed on the Alam. When Abbas reached the river bank and bent down to fill the Mashk, the Alam disappeared from sight. Sakina was frightened and looked at her father. Imam said, Sakina, your uncle Abbas is at the river bank. Sakina smiled and said, 'AlHamdulillah!' and called out all the children to welcome Abbas. When Abbas lost both arms, the Alam fell onto the ground. Sakina could not see it any longer! She looked at Imam Hussain, but he turned his face away. Sakina began to tremble with fear and her eyes filled with tears. She raised



her hands and prayed, 'Oh my God! Do not let them kill my uncle Abbas! I will never ask for water again!' and ran inside to her mother.

Imam Hussain reached where Abbas was lying. It was a tragic sight. Abbas was lying on the ground. Both arms had been severed! There was an arrow in the right eye and blood blocked the left eye. As soon as Abbas sensed the presence of Imam Hussain he said "Maula, why did you take the trouble to come over? Please go back and look after Sakina." Imam Hussain said, "My dear brother, all your life you have served me and my children. Is there anything I can do for you at this last moment of your life?" Abbas replied, "Maula, please, clean the blood from my eye so that I can see your beloved face before I die!" Imam cleaned the blood. Abbas fixed his gaze on Imam. Then he said, "Maula please do not carry my body to the camp. I do not wish Sakina to see me in this state!" Imam Hussain took Abbas in his arms, and kissed his forehead. Imam Hussain said "O Abbas I also have one request for you, I have never heard you call me brother, for once I would like to hear you call me brother." Abbas, with his dying breath called out "My brother", Imam Hussain (pbuh) cried "O Abbas my beloved brother what have they done to you? Who is now left to fight by my side now?" Just then the Thirty four (34) year old Abbas son of Imam Ali (pbuh) breathed his last. Imam Hussain placed Sakina's Mashk on the Alam and carried the Alam to the camp. He went to Zainab's tent. Imam Hussain could not say a word. He gave the Alam to Zainab and sat down on the floor!

The Hashimite Prince Ali Akbar's Martyrdom

After Abbas, came the turn of Ali Akbar, to go to the battlefield. The battle drums of the enemies were now getting louder and louder. It is reported that this eighteen (18) year old son was so very much loved by one and all in the camp that the account of his taking leave of his aunts, sisters, brothers and other relatives is so pathetic that none can resist shedding at least a few tears over the heart-rending event. At last when the Holy Imam sent Ali Akbar, the 'Ahmad-e-Thani', i.e., (Muhammad the Second), to the battlefield, he raised his head towards Heaven and said:

"Lord! Here I sent in your way, the one who resembled the most with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, whenever we did desire to have a view of the Holy face departed away from us, we used to look at the face of this youth."

"Lord! Hussain has one Ali Akbar and he is sent to be sacrificed for your cause, had I many more like him, I would have similarly offered them all in your way."

Is not this offer more acceptable to God than that of Abraham who offered with his eyes blindfolded? Is not this a Greater Sacrifice than that of Ishmael?



When Ali Akbar went to the battlefield, and faced the enemy with all the bravery that he inherited from his Grandfather Imam Ali (pbuh), it is reported that the enemy forces were so much amazed at his resemblance with the Holy Prophet that such of those who had seen him before, wondered if the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had reappeared in the world to help his dear Grandson Hussain. People were so anxious to have a look at the enchanting beauty of the youth that those in the rear of the enemy's ranks, mounted on the horses and camels, even stood on the backs of the animals to have a look at the matchless and the wonder striking beauty of this son of the Holy Imam.

Ali Akbar reminded the enemy that his father, Imam Hussain spent his life in the way of Islam, and did no harm to them. By spilling his blood they were making the Holy Prophet (pbuh) very sad. 'Umar son of Saad' told his troops not to listen to Ali Akbar, and ordered them to attack him. One by one he

fought them with great skill, and killed many of them. Ali Akbar received several wounds, and was losing a lot of blood. The thirst was getting more unbearable. At the moment he longed to see his loved ones for the last time.

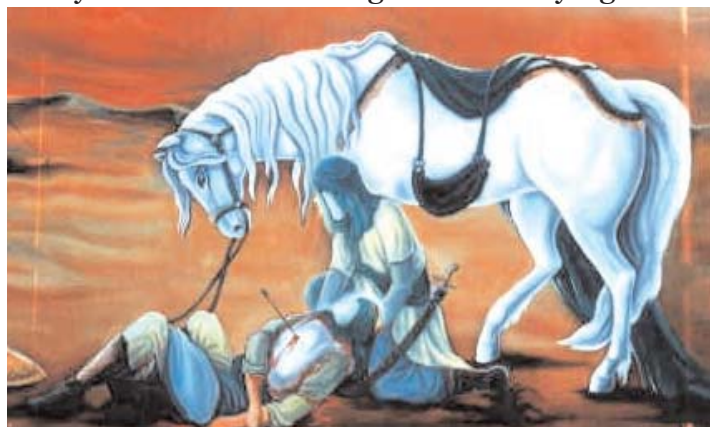
Ali Akbar turned his horse back towards his camp. He found his aged (57) father standing at the entrance of the tent; watching the battle between his beloved thirsty son and the enemy. Holy Hussain congratulated his son and then said "I am sad that I do not have any water to give you." Ali Akbar met each and every one of his family. They were all in tears because they knew that this time he wasn't coming back alive.

It was not long before Imam Hussain heard the painful cry from the battlefield. Ali Akbar fell with a fatal wound in his chest. He called out to his father to come to him quickly. Imam Hussain went towards his son; and found him lying in a pool of his own blood. When he saw his son he cried out "Here I am my son, please talk to me." Ali Akbar was in great pain, the broken end of the lance was sticking out of his chest, and blood was gushing out. Ali Akbar died in his father's arms. God alone knows what a patient heart the Holy Imam had been endowed with, which never gave way against any catastrophe even that of the loss of such a son. The Holy Imam stood looking at his son dying before his eyes and lifting his head towards Heaven said:

"Lord! It will be quite sufficient for your Hussain if you accept this sacrifice and if you pleased with this humble offer."

Imam Hussain lifted Ali Akbar carefully, as if protecting him from any more pain. He cried all the way back to his camp.

Note: 'Laila daughter of Abu Murra & the cousin of Yazid' is the mother of Ali Akbar. According to scholars she was not alive at the time of Karbala.



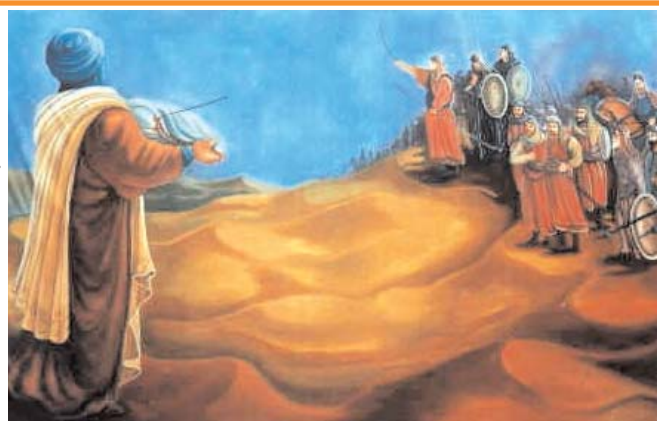
Baby Ali Asgher (Abd Allah) comes into Battlefield

When Imam Hussain (pbuh) stood all alone in the battlefield surrounded by the enemies, he was summoned by a call from his sister Zainab in his camp. When he went into the tent, he found his six (6) month old baby son Ali Asgher, dying of thirst in his cradle. And the poor mother Rubab, whose milk had dried up by the continuous thirst and hunger, could not help the baby with even a drop of milk. Telling the mother that he would show the baby to the enemy and get some water for it if they give it, Imam Hussain took the babe to the battlefield by covering with his robe and raising it up in his arms to enable everyone in the enemy's forces to see it, and said:

"O People! If, in your opinion, Hussain is guilty of any sin or crime, this innocent babe has done nothing to hurt any one of you. It does not even speak, and has not even uttered anything against you or your Amir at Damascus. He is dying of thirst. He had neither milk nor water for the last three days. Would you quench his thirst by a few drops of water? If you suspect that I demand water for myself in the name of the babe, then I will leave it here, if you want, and go easy and you may return it with his thirst quenched."

It is reported that the address of the Holy Imam and the scene, with the thirsty innocent babe in his hands, was so touching, so pathetic and so heart-rending that even the men in the enemy's army could not help weeping and cursing the Yazid and his Deputy 'Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad', Governor of Kufa, who had gathered them there against such Holy ones. 'Umar son of Saad', fearing a revolt of his forces

in sympathy for the Holy Imam, at once ordered a stonehearted brute named Hurmula to answer Hussain. The tyrant, shot an arrow from his bow which after piercing through the Imam's arm got stuck into the tiny neck of the innocent babe. Blood gushed out of his neck and splashed on to Imam Hussain's face. Ali Asgher died in his father's arms with his smiling face.



Imam Hussain (pbuh) walked back to the camp weeping with Ali Asgher in his arms. At the door he waited for a moment and then turned back, this he did seven times as if he was building his strength to face the mother of the baby who had been so brutally murdered. Rubab looked at her husband's face covered in blood and cried out "What have they done to my son, did they even give him a drop of water before they killed him?" Imam Hussain said "I pleaded with them to give him water, but instead they drenched him with blood." Rubab said "Please bury Ali Asgher with your own hands." Hence he sat down to bury his baby son in the burning sand of the desert, by digging a grave using sword. After that he looked up and said. "O Almighty God bear witness that I have done my duty to the last."

Does not even this one single sacrifice suffice to touch every human heart? Can we not call this one sacrifice alone greater than the sacrifice offered by Abraham? God alone knows the degree of the patience and the fortitude which He had endowed in the Imam Hussain (pbuh) to bear the series of such unbearable calamities.

The parting advice to Zainab and Kulthoom

The details of the final separation of the Holy Imam from the helpless ladies, children and other inmates of his camp, particularly from his sisters Zainab & Kulthoom, are very heart-rending and it is impossible for any one to describe the whole sorrowful scene in a paragraph of a brief work like this.

To Zainab and Kulthoom, his two sisters, Imam Hussain said: "Our camp will be plundered and set on fire. After I am slain, the series of calamities to you all would begin. Your heads will be stripped of your covering cloths-veils. Beware O my dear sisters; let not patience under any suffering be lost. The enemies will take you prisoners and parade you in the streets of Kufa and Shaam. This will be a very difficult time for you. Do not give up hope; you will have to be brave. Bear every calamity in the way of the Lord with patience and fortitude. Dear sisters, let not what I have done with so much of patience and fortitude would be undone by your impatience." Zainab with tears rolling down her cheeks promised her brother that she would not let him down. "Convey my salaams to my people, and tell them to remember our thirst whenever they drink water."

After that, Holy Imam told her sister Zainab to bring him an old garment. Because, the enemy is an unmanly one. After killing me, they will take my clothes as spoils. I want to wear an old garment under my clothes so my body will not be bare after I'm martyred.

Then, Imam Hussain turned to sister Zainab and said "I am leaving the widows and orphans in your care. My dear sister please look after my Sakina especially, she has never been separated from me even for a day. Please dear sister when you get water give it to her first, she hasn't asked for water since her uncle Abbas died."

At this Sakina came forward and said, "Oh father. When 'Muslim son of Aqeel' was martyred, you hugged his orphan girl and patted her head. If you go and I become an orphan who is going to pat my head?" Imam's eyes filled with tears. While fighting back his tears, he slowly whispered, "Sakina, my

daughter, please do not cry, because after I go you will shed many tears. While I am here still alive, do not set my heart ablaze with your tears.” He picked up Sakina, and kissed her cheeks, knowing that these same cheeks were going to be slapped by the cruel hands of Yazid’s men.



The Holy Imam at last came into the field bidding goodbye to all (including advanced age nurse, Fizza), not to return again to his camp, but to drink the cup of martyrdom to fulfill the covenant with the Lord to save and secure the Truth for all times until the Day of Judgment.

Hussain hands over the charge of the Imamate

Imam Ali, the eldest son of Hussain called Zainul Abideen (Grace of the pious) or Sajjad, was lying unconscious on his sick bed. Hussain went to him and handed over the charge of the sacred office of Imamate to him. He enumerated the difficulties and the tortures that would befall him immediately following his martyrdom and advised him (who was to succeed as the Fourth Holy Imam) to observe the highest degree of patience and fortitude against every aggression and oppression that would be inflicted on him and his dear ones, and never to get angry or curse the people.

Note: According to another report, when Imam Hussain went into the tent of Imam Zainul Abideen to bid him good-bye. Imam Zainul Abideen asked him, “Father! How did things come about between you and these people? (i.e., Imam Zainul Abideen was unaware of what was happening until that time).” The Imam Hussain said to him, “Son, this matter has ultimately led to a battle.” What happened to ‘Habib son of Mouzaher’?, asked Imam Zainul Abideen. “He was Martyred,” replied the Imam Hussain. How about ‘Zuhayr son of Al-Qayn’? “He was also Martyred,” replied the Imam Hussain. What happened to ‘Burayr son of Khudayr Al-Hamadani’? “He was Martyred,” said Imam Hussain. Imam Zainul Abideen continued naming each of his father’s companions one after another and the Imam’s reply was the same. Then he asked concerning the men of Banu Hashim. “What happened to Qasim?” “What happened to my brother Ali Akbar?” “What happened to my uncle Abbas?” The answer was the same: “They all have been Martyred.” This is a fabrication and a lie. Imam Zainul Abideen, Na’udhubillah, was not so sick and unconscious as not to know what was going on. Historians have written that even in that state of illness he rose from his bed and said to Zainab, “Aunt, bring me my staff and give me a sword.” Details can be read from next heading.

The last call of the Holy Imam in the way of the lord

Let later any one in the surroundings should say that he was neither called nor given any opportunity to serve the cause of defending the Truth by helping the Holy Imam who was fighting for it, Imam Hussain now standing all alone, with the enemy forces all around him, bleeding from innumerable wounds from head to toe, having lost one and all of his Godly comrades (sons, brothers, nephews and companions), gave his last call to humanity around him, inviting them to join him in the way of the Lord, saying: “**Hal Min Nasirin Yansorona** (Is there any helper to help us)?”

“**Hal Min Zabbin Yazubbo An Harame Rasoolullah** (Is there any defender to repulse the enemy from approaching the tents of the family of the Holy Prophet)?”

When there was no response from any one of the thousands standing around him, he then said aloud:

“**Alam Tasma’o? Alaisa Fikum Muslimu** (Do you hear me not? Is there not even a single Muslim

among you)?” Yet there was no response.

When Imam Hussain gave his final call to the world around him inviting the people in the way of the Lord, Imam Hussain’s son ‘Ali Zainul Abideen’ who was confined to bed with high fever, and who had just a little before received the charge of the Imamate from his father, got up and leaning on a staff, dragged himself out of his tent with his feeble sickly voice, walking towards the Holy Imam saying:

“Labbaik, Ya Abata, Labbaik (Yes, Here I am O Father dear! Here I am)!”

Imam Hussain seeing his ailing Ali coming out tottering in the high fever bade him saying: “Get back O son! My progeny is to spring from you.”

It is reported that in response to the call from the Holy Imam, some mysterious voices of ‘Labbaik! Labbaik!’ (Yes we are here O son of the Holy Prophet) were heard from the spiritual world above, to which the Holy Imam replied ‘Thanks to you all, but my concern here today is only with the living in the physical world.’

Imam Hussain in the Battlefield to offer the greatest sacrifice

Imam Hussain went to the battlefield wearing the Prophet’s robe and turban. Imam Hussain first preached to his enemies, the love of God, the obedience to the Holy Prophet and abstinence from vice and wickedness, and at last asked the people:

“Why do you kill me?”, “Did I commit any sin or crime?”, “Did I plunder anybody?”, “Did I interfere with any one's affairs?”

All stood dumb and none answered. Then the Holy Imam continued: “Then why do you kill me? What answer have you to give to God, and to the Holy Prophet on the Day of Judgment?”

When no answer from the enemy forces, the Holy Imam said:

“You have killed all my companions, my children, my brothers and even my little baby; now I tell you to leave me, I will migrate to Yemen, to Iran or even to the far off Hind (India), stain not your hands with my blood, which is the blood of the Holy Prophet himself, you will not have salvation. It is for you; I tell you, shed not my blood and save yourselves.”

This last offer of the Holy Imam was superb and matchless and yet the enemies did not avail of it. It was in fact the fulfillment of the ‘Hujjat’ or the argument to give the last chance to the greedy devils to save themselves from the wrath of God.

‘Umar son of Saad’ shouted to his men “Do not be fooled by Imam Hussain’s words, attack him now!” Arrows were showered on Imam Hussain. He charged into the battlefield like a lion, saying “If you are determined to fight me then I am ready; watch how the Grandson of the Prophet fights; see how the son of Ali and Fatima fights. Even after three days of hunger and thirst, I am not afraid to die. For me death is better than surrender.”



When the enemy saw Imam Hussain charging towards them, they thought for a moment that Imam Ali (pbuh) had come down from the heavens to take revenge on them. Many of them ran away. When ‘Umar son of Saad’ saw the fear on their faces, he sent his bravest soldiers to fight Imam Hussain. There was not a single member in Yazid’s army who could stand in front of Imam Hussain. The enemy troops surrounded him from all sides, but he defeated them all. ‘Umar son of Saad’ stood back and watched, amazed at how Imam Hussain who had suffered so much, was fighting so bravely.

Imam Hussain had chosen a point for his combat which was nearer the tents of the womenfolk. That was for two reasons. Firstly, he knew the unmanly and inhuman character of the enemies. They lacked even the sense of honor to spare the tents of their attacks as it was he whom they were fighting. Therefore he wanted to restrain them from attacking his camp so long as he was alive and had the strength to stop them. He would make a frontal attack and they would flee. But he would not pursue them but return to guard the tents of his womenfolk from any assault. Secondly, so long as he was alive he wanted the members of his family to know that he was alive. Accordingly, he had chosen a point from where his voice could be heard by them. Whenever he returned after making an attack he would stand at that point and cry out: There is no power or strength to save that which derives from God, the Exalted and the Almighty.

His cries would reassure the women who knew that the Imam was still alive. The Imam had told them not to come out of the tents as long as he was alive. He had told them that they must not make any untoward utterance which might reduce their reward with God. He had told them that they would find deliverance and that their ultimate end would be a good one, that God will punish their enemies. Hussain son of Imam Ali’s sense of manly honor and their own sense of feminine honor did not permit them to come out. Accordingly, when they heard the Imam utter ‘La Hawl Wala Quwatta Illa Billahil Aliyyil Azim’, they felt reassured. And as the Imam had come back to them once or twice after bidding them farewell, they still expected the Imam to return.

The unique unparalleled prayer (Namaz)

Every awakened mind will surely confess that it is not possible for any mortal to understand the great heavenly personality which enacted the absolute submission to the Lord, which he displayed on the field of Karbala.

Having lost every one of his faithful comrades including his baby son, himself fully wounded from head, to toe with arrows struck in his holy body with his blood flowing from the wounds, his clothes drenched with blood, and that of his comrades, his kith and kin whose dead bodies he removed from the field of the massacre to a tent in his camp to spare them from being trampled under the hoofs of the cavalry of the heartless enemy, hungry with choking thirst for the last three days, Hussain was seen seated on his horse the ‘Zul Jinah’, looking every now and then towards Heaven with prayers for the acceptance of his sacrifices. In the midst of the indescribable miseries, sorrow and grief, and under the indefinable agony of the worst torturous and the most painful death, the Holy Imam ever remained mindful of the Lord and his submission to Him with the desire not to leave the world defaulting not even a single one of the prayers (Namaz) prescribed by him for man in this world. Imam Hussain returned his sword back into the sheath so that he could prepare for Asr prayers.

“YAA AYYATUHAN NAFSUL MUTMAINNAH, IRJI’II ILAA RABBIKI RADHIYATAN MARDHIYYAH, FADKHULII FII IBAADII WADKHULII JANNATIIL.”

“O soul that is at rest satisfied. Return to your Lord well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So, enter among My servants, and enter into my Paradise.” (Al-Fajr 89:27-30)

His condition was such that Hussain now could not of his own efforts get down from the horse. Hussain hinted to his horse (which was presented to him by his Grandfather) saying:

“Will you my dear ‘Zul Jinah’ kneel down a little to enable me to roll myself down to the ground?”

The faithful animal which was itself hungry, thirsty and wounded, spread its legs in such a way that the Godly soul, one of the most brilliant stars of the heaven of divinity, slid himself down.

Now lying with his bleeding wounds on the flaming sand of the burning desert, Imam Hussain, desirous of offering his prayers and engaged in his last prayer (Namaz) on earth, resting his wounded forehead on a heap of the burning sand. Thus ultimately the wounded Holy Imam (pbuh) lay in communion with the Lord.

When ‘Umar son of Saad’ saw this he ordered his army to attack him in force. Some of them threw stones, while some attacked him with swords and others with arrows. Imam Hussain was very badly wounded; he was bleeding from head to toe, and the sacred blood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Imam Ali (pbuh) and Fatima (pbuh) was flowing on the earth.

Even in the last moments when that accursed wretch approached him to sever his sacred head, he says, “When I approached Imam Hussain son of Imam Ali & my eyes fell on him, the light & burnish of his face so gripped me that I forgot my intention to kill him. The light of his face and its awe-inspiring beauty so gripped me that I was distracted from the thought of killing him.”

Several men one after another, were deputed by the Commander of the enemy forces to cut off the head of the Holy Imam, but every one that came near the Holy one lying on the burning sand, found his lips moving and heard to say:

“O All-Merciful Lord of the Universe accepts the humble sacrifice of Hussain.” And at the end of the prayers it was heard: “O Lord! O Lord! Being repeated several times.”

Hearing these last prayers of Imam Hussain, none dared to cut off his holy head, even on an offer of thousands of Gold coins with promises of highly tempting rewards, but Shimr, the stone-hearted brute committed the heinous crime.

In those days they used to train Arabic horses for the battlefield, such a horse would show a particular reaction when its master was killed. The members of Imam Hussain’s household were in the tents waiting for the Imam, that he might return to them once again and they might see his angelic visage once again. Suddenly they heard the sound of the neighing of the Imam’s horse ‘Zul Jinah’. They rushed to the tent’s door imagining that the Imam had come. But they saw the horse without its rider with its saddle overturned. It was then that the children and the women raised the cries of Wa Husaynah! and Wa Muhammada! They surrounded the horse and each of them began to mourn for him. Mourning is part of human nature.



حسين

الاقْتِيلِ الْحُسَيْنَ بِكَرْبَلَا
وَالْآنُجِ الْحُسَيْنَ بِكَرْبَلَا



Zainab ran to Imam Zainul Abideen (pbuh), & told him what had just happened. They stood silently, tears rolling down their cheeks. A strong gust of wind blew on the desert. They felt as if nature itself was crying with them. The silence was only broken by the beating of drums from the enemy camp. They were celebrating their victory. It was indeed a hollow victory, won by a well fed huge army of more than thirty thousand (30,000), fighting against an army of seventy two (72) brave warriors, who died hungry and thirsty.

Note: It is worth knowing that Yazid ruled the Islamic world for three (3) years only. His main achievements of crimes during these three years were. The first year he Martyred Imam Hussain (pbuh), the Grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The second year he invaded Madina the capital of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and permitted his solders to kill, steal and rape all the women and children in Madina for three days after killing all his oppositions. The third year he invaded Makkah and ruined the Kaaba using ballista.

Shaam-e-Gareeba, the night of homeless

It was after Asr on the day of Ashura. Imam Hussain lay dead. The earth had trembled! Furaat had broken its banks! From the camp of the family of the Holy Prophet such lamentation arose as had never been heard before!

‘Umar son of Saad’ received a letter from ‘Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad’. The Governor of Kufa instructed that they should not be satisfied with the death of Imam Hussain. His body must be subjected to the ultimate insult of being trampled by the hooves of horses. And this was done to the Grandson of the Holy Prophet (pbuh)!

As the sun was setting in the horizon, the soldiers rushed to Imam Hussain’s camp in search of booty. They looted every tent. Every lady, and every girl was stripped of her veil. Fatima’s daughters were left bare-headed. Sakina’s ear-rings were pulled off her ears, splitting her ear lobes. When the little girl pleaded for her veil to be left untouched, she was slapped.



Surely they would stop now? But they did not. They set fire to all the tents. Zainab was very distressed. She turned to Imam Zainul Abideen (pbuh) and said “You are our Imam now. Tell us what we should do now, should we stay in our tents and burn, or go out without our veils?” Imam Zainul Abideen (pbuh) told her that it was their religious duty to try and save their lives. Zainab gathered everyone and waited outside, while their tents burnt down. When the fire was out, they took shelter under one of the tents which had not been completely destroyed.

‘Humayd son of Muslim’ describes how he saw a little girl with her dress on fire, her ears bleeding, running from the scene of carnage. He says: “I ran after her. I took her by hand. Put out the fire in her dress. I wiped the blood off her ears.” She looked at me and said, “You seem like a kind person, are you a Muslim?” I told her I was. She thought a while and then said, “Can you please show me the way to Najaf?” I asked, “Why do you want to go to Najaf at this hour and in this state?” She said, “I want to go and complain to my Grandfather ‘Ali son of Abu Talib’ about how they killed my father.” Realizing that she was Hussain’s daughter Sakina, I took her back to her aunt Zainab.

As the night descended, Zainab gathered all the ladies and children, into one small space in between the gutted tents. Imam Zainul Abideen lay on the ground surrounded by these widows and orphans. There was no fire, no light. Only the moon cast its dull light.

'Umar son of Saad' asked Hurr's widow to take some food and water to the ladies and the children. As she neared to where they were resting, Zainab recognized her. She stood up, went towards Hurr's widow and offered her condolences for the death of Hurr. This gesture on the part of Zainab, who had suffered so much, lost so many, and carrying so much grief in her heart, is a lesson in Islamic ethics which the world should never be allowed to forget. When Zainab saw the bread and water she cried. "Imam Hussain and his brave soldiers had died hungry and thirsty, and now the same people who martyred them were bringing bread and water to their widows and orphans." She looked at the sky and prayed to God to give her courage. Zainab remembered the words of her brother to give water first to Sakina. Zainab took the jug of water. She went to Sakina who had fallen into a fretful sleep.

Gently she stroked the girl's disheveled hair. Sakina opened her eyes. Zainab said, "Here is some water, Sakina. Please drink a little. You have been thirsty for so long!" On hearing the word 'water' Sakina cried out hopefully, "Has my uncle Abbas come back?" When she was told that Hurr's widow had brought the water, she got up, went to Hurr's widow, thanked her and then asked Zainab: "Have you all drunk water?" Zainab shook her head as no. Sakina asked, "Why then do you ask me to drink water?" Zainab said, "Because, my dear, you are the youngest." Sakina replied, "No! No! Ali Asgher is the youngest!" Sakina took the jug of water, ran towards where Ali Asgher lay buried, crying "Wa Asghera! Wa Asghera!"

This was how the homeless spent their night in Karbala. They had lost everything. Their men had died. Their children had been martyred. In this desolate desert fourth Imam, the women and the remaining children are huddled where only a few hours before had stood their camp. Abbas, Qasim and Ali Akbar had taken turns to guard the camp. Now Zainab and Kulthoom lay awake to make sure that Imam Zainul Abideen (pbuh) and the children were not attacked.

Suddenly, Zainab notices that Sakina has disappeared. She is alarmed. She looks around but Hussain's darling daughter is not to be seen. Zainab slowly walks to the battlefield. She comes to where Abbas lay. "Abbas! Abbas! My dear brother, have you seen Sakina?" There is silence! She makes her way to where Hussain's headless body lay. There, hugging her father, she finds Sakina, deep in sleep!

Attention of Zainab towards Zainul Abideen during the Journey

The night of calamity passed away and the ladies of Imam Hussain's household were made captives the next day. They were made to wait in the hot sun while the enemy spent the rest of the day burying their own dead. They were made to mount saddle-less camels like common criminals. Imam Zainul Abideen (pbuh) was sent towards Kufa hands and feet clasped together in iron and wearing a barbed iron collar and made to walk barefoot on the hot desert sand, even though he was sick. The caravan passed through the battlefield where the bodies of the martyrs lay without shroud, mixed in dust and blood. It was here that Imam Zainul Abideen would have died of grief. He turned a pale yellow. Zainab consoled her nephew, "Be patient! What am I witnessing? You are the Imam of the time." She reminded him of the tradition of Holy Prophet (pbuh) to Umm-e-Aiman which had explained the divine covenant.

At the front of the caravan the guards carried spears with the heads of Imam Hussain (pbuh) and his loved ones. The guards beat



the prisoners, if they complained of anything. They did not even spare the youngest. Some children died along the way, and their bodies were left in the desert. By the time they reached Kufa they were bruised all over their bodies. When Zainab saw Kufa, remembered the period of her father.

The caravan reached the court of Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad on the 12th of Muharram 61 Hijra. Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad, the governor of Kufa ordered the streets to be decorated, while there was a huge crowd on the streets of Kufa, jeering and making fun of the prisoners. There was commotion in the court of Kufa due to the oration of Zainab. The speeches of Zainab where she commented on the faithlessness and cowardice of the Kufees made them cover their faces in their clothes in shame & misery.

But when some of the people saw the head of Imam Hussain on the spear they turned their heads and started to cry. They felt guilty that they allowed this to happen to Imam Hussain when this same Imam was ready to help them when they needed him. It was noon and the sun was blazing hot. The children were crying of hunger and thirst. As the caravan reached the Governor's palace, Zainab faced the crowds and said "Do you know who your governor has killed? We are the Grandchildren of your Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). When your Governor killed the Prophet's loved ones, the skies cried and the earth shook. Where were you then?" There was complete silence in the crowd. Some of the people realized their mistake and started to cry with shame. When 'Umar son of Saad' saw what was happening he quickly led the prisoners into the palace.

When Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad saw Imam Zainul Abideen in the palace he ordered him to be killed straight away. Zainab ran in front of him and said "You will have to kill me first. How dare you sit on this throne which does not rightfully belong to you and insult us? Listen, O son of Ziyad we are the Grandchildren of the Prophet. You should be ashamed of yourself. You claim to follow the Prophet's teachings, yet you have done everything to destroy his family." Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad was surprised at how brave this lady was. He thought that after all that they had suffered; they would not have the strength to face him. More and more people started to realize that what Zainab was saying was true. Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad ordered the prisoners to be taken to the prison next to the palace immediately. He told Shimr and Khooli, who were the leaders of this caravan, to make preparations to take the prisoners to Syria (Damascus) before they had a chance to speak out in public again.

The caravan of Zainab left for Syria on the 13th of Muharram. Along the route, there were several altercations between the forces of Yazid and the supporters of Ahlul Bayt. As the caravan was leaving Kufa, people watched from the rooftops. Zainab and other prisoners continued to tell the people about what had happened in Karbala. Many people started to speak out against Ubayd Allah son of Ziyad. On the journey the prisoners again suffered in the hands of the guards. When the caravan reached Syria, the prisoners had to wait in the hot sun while Shimr went to Yazid's palace to announce their arrival. Yazid had declared that day as a day of celebration. Every corner of the city was decorated.

Ahlul Bayt (pbut) in the Court of Yazid

It is recorded in the books of histories that on 21st Rabiul Awwal, 61 Hijra, on Wednesday the caravan reached Damascus, , the capital and stronghold of Umayyad power.

The captive prisoners were finally taken to Yazid's palace. Yazid sitting on the throne with a stick in his hand and was repeatedly striking the parched lips of Imam Hussain's severed head placed in a tray before him, and called on his ancestors (who were killed by the Muslim army in the battle of Badr) to witness the revenge which he had extracted from the family of the Prophet. Zainab the courageous daughter of a courageous father put him to shame this heretic with her following fiery speech.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Universe, God's blessings be on His Messenger's Family altogether.

“In the long run evil in the extreme will be the End of those who do evil; for that they rejected the Signs of God, and held them up to ridicule.” Holy Quran (30:10)

Oh Yazid! Do you think that by making us prisoners in such a way that we are being taken from one place to another in humiliation, do you think that by this you have humiliated us in the sight of God and have earned respect for yourself?!

This apparent success of yours is the result of grandeur of your might and lofty status for which you are proud. You feel that you have conquered the whole world and your affairs are organized and that our domain is now under your control. And are you forgetting that God has said:

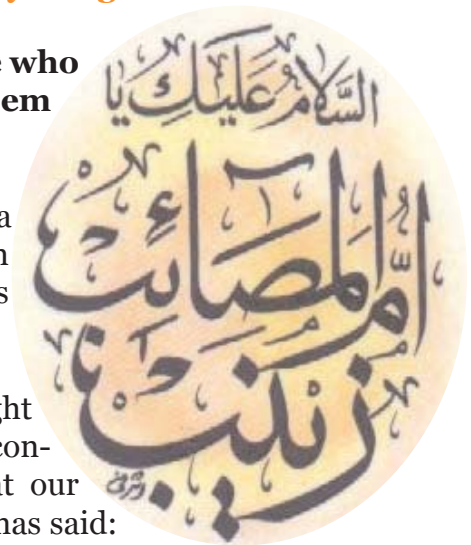
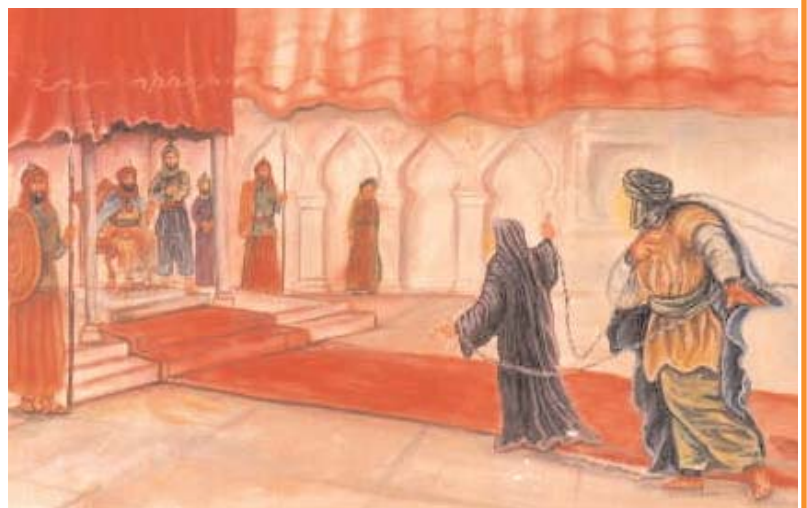
“Those who purchase Unbelief at the price of faith, not the least harm will they do to God, but they will have a grievous punishment.” Holy Quran (3:177)

Then Zainab reminds Yazid that his grandmother and other relatives came into the fold of Islam only after the fall of Makkah at the hands of the Muslims. Since Makkah was taken without any war or bloodshed, legally the entire inhabitant could have been made the slaves of the Prophet. But the Prophet, out of his mercy, declared to the people of Makkah that ‘I release you from the bonds of slavery, you are free.’ In other words, Zainab wanted Yazid to remember that his ancestors were the ‘freed slaves’ of her Grandfather. Look at the courage of Zainab! Standing as a prisoner in the court of Yazid, she does not hesitate to remind him of his reality.

Is it justice, O son of the freed slaves! That you provide your ladies and slave girls with Hijab, whereas the daughters of the Messenger of God are held prisoners? You have insulted them by taking away the covers; you have exposed their faces to the enemies from one city to another. Everyone irrespective of his high or low status stares at their faces. These ladies do not have their gents or protectors with them.

Then Zainab reminds the audience of the origins of Yazid: his Grandmother, Hind (the wife of Abu Sufyan), had ordered her slave after the battle of Uhud to cut open the chest of Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle, and chewed upon his liver to ‘quench’ her anger for death of her father and brother who were killed in Badr.

But, of course, how can we expect protection from him whose mouth spits out the heart of the pious people, whose flesh has grown from the blood of martyrs? And why should he not hate us who is jealous of us and shamefully say: ‘I wish my ancestors had seen me today; they would congratulate me and pray that my hand would never be weak.’ Yazid is saying this while, he is hurting [with his cane] the teeth of Hussain, the leader of the Youths of Paradise.



Why should he not say these things, he who has cursed his feelings and sores by spilling the blood of Muhammad's family, the stars of the family of Abdul Mutalib.

You call your ancestors hoping that they will answer you. You will be put together with them and then you will regret and say had my tongue become dumb so that I would not have said what I said.

O God! Give us our right, and avenge those who have oppressed us; and send your anger upon those that spilled our blood and killed our protectors.

By God! O Yazid, by killing Hussain you have not torn but your own skin and you have not cut but your own flesh. You will be brought to the Prophet with the crimes of spilling the blood of his children and humiliating his family.

“The oppressors will know when the time changes [against them].”

In the mean time a Syrian pointed towards Sakina and sought her for slavery. Zainab protected her from his advances. And shouted furiously, “O Yazid have you lost all of your sense of shame? You want to make the Grandchildren of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) slave?” Yazid shouted at Zainab “I am the truthful one; God is pleased with my victory. He has humiliated your family and caused death of your brother Hussain.” Zainab was very angry at Yazid. She could not just stand there while this wicked and corrupt man spoke like this. She said “Do you think that it was God who made you commit these awful crimes? Do you blame God for the sufferings that you have caused us? Do you blame God for the death of the Grandson of the Prophet? No Yazid, it was you who caused all these sufferings. Did you think that by killing the Grandson of the Prophet you have won the battle? No Yazid you haven't. It is my brother Imam Hussain (pbuh) who by shedding his blood in Karbala has made sure that evil men like you would not be allowed to destroy Islam. The victory is not yours. The victory is of Imam Hussain (pbuh). The victory is surely of Islam!”

Yazid was amazed at how this lady after all that she had gone through could talk to him like this. He thought that Imam Zainul Abideen would be an easier target for his insults, as he looked sick to be able to answer him back. He turned to Imam Zainul Abideen and said, “Well, who do you think the winner of this war is?” Imam Zainul Abideen replied, “Yazid, victory can only belong to those who are on the right path. Look at you, and then look at my father Imam Hussain (pbuh). My father, who you ordered to be killed so brutally was the Grandson of the Prophet (pbuh), Yazid you are the Grandson of Abu Sufyan, who was an enemy of the Prophet (pbuh) and Islam just as you are.”

Yazid instructed a speaker to mount on pulpit and calumniated the forefathers of Imam Zainul Abideen (pbuh). The speaker did as he was told, not sparing a single unbecoming remark against the household of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). When the speaker descended from the pulpit Imam Zainul Abideen raised and after praising Almighty God and sending salutations on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

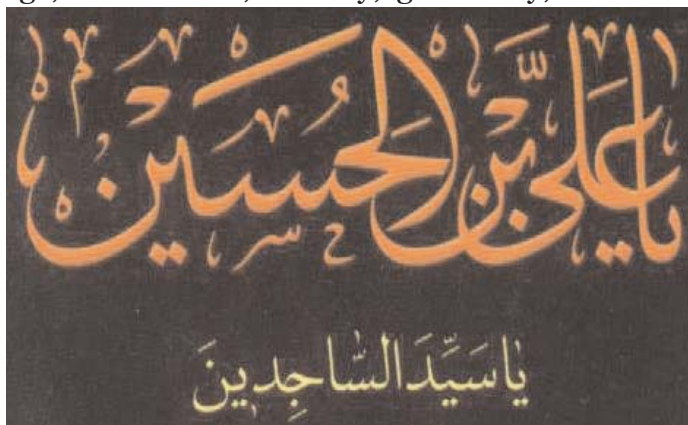
“O People! Those who are acquainted with me, know me and those who do not know me then recognize me. I am the son of Makkah and Mina; I am the son of Safa and Marwah. I am the son of the one who was elevated, who ascend-



ed so high that he went beyond the heights of Sidratul Muntaha. He drew so near to his Lord that the distance of two bows or even less remained in between. I am the son of one behind whose head whom the angels of heaven prayed in couples. I am the son of one who was killed unjustly. I am the son of one who was beheaded from the nape. I am the son of one who was not given water till his last breath. I am the son of one who rolled in his own blood in the sands of Karbala. I am the son of one whose turban and robe were looted. I am the son of one on whom angels of heaven have wept. I am the son of one who was placed atop of spear and presented as a gift. I am son of one whose womenfolk were made prisoners and dragged from Iraq to Syria.

O People! Praise be to God, who tested us firmly and gifted us with the knowledge of Guidance, Justice and Piety. The way he gave the sign of deviation to our enemies. Almighty God bestowed six privileges on us Ahlul Bayt. He bestowed knowledge, forbearance, bravery, generosity, love and respect for us in the hearts of the believers.

Imam kept on saying such sentences that until signs of restlessness appeared in the audience. Yazid in order to keep the circumstances under control gestured towards the Muezzin to give Azan. When he delivered testimonies Imam said "I too testify to one whom you testify." When he testified the Prophethood (ASH - HADU ANNA MUHAMMADAR - RASOOLULLAH) of Holy Prophet (pbuh), Imam asked from Yazid, "O Yazid tell me whether Muhammad was your Grandfather or mine? If you say that he was your Grandfather then you are a liar and if you say that he is my Grandfather then why did you slay my father and captivated our female kin?" Then he turned towards the public and said "O Men! Is there anyone amongst you whose father or Grandfather was the Holy Prophet (pbuh)." Thus the audience broke into mourning and crying aloud.



Yazid was so angry that he ordered the prisoners to be taken away immediately and put into the prison. As soon as the prison doors were closed they started saying their prayers to thank God. In the prison it was so dark that you could not tell, whether it was day or night. The days were so hot that it was difficult to breath. And the nights were so cold that Sakina's toes would turn blue. They had nothing to sleep on but the bare floor.

Demise of Sakina/Roqia (pbuh)

One night Sakina suddenly started to cry in her sleep. When her mother asked her what the matter was she said that she saw her father in her dreams telling her that he could not bear to see her in this state any more. Everybody started to cry so much that the noise reached Yazid at the palace. He asked the guards what all the noise was about. When they told him what it was, he ordered: that Imam Hussain's head be taken to Sakina in order to keep her quiet. The guards brought the head, and put it on the ground.

When Sakina saw her father's head, she ran to it and hugged it. All the ladies were stricken with grief. Sakina complained to her father about how the evil men snatched her earrings that he had given to her, how they took away



their veils, and burnt their tents. Suddenly Sakina stopped complaining and was completely quiet. INNA LILLAH WA INNA ILAYHI RAJI'ON: Sakina, the loving daughter of Imam Hussain, passed away, in the dark, lonely dungeon. Her dress was glued to her body with the dried blood caused by merciless and incessant flogging.

Imam Zainul Abideen buried her in a small grave in one corner of the prison. All the ladies sat by Sakina's mother Rubab and cried. Sakina will finally be able to sleep on her father's chest once again.

After the death of Sakina, the people of Syria started to question Yazid about the prisoners. Many felt that they had already spent so long in prison in the worst possible condition. What crime had they committed to deserve such treatment? Yazid realized that if he did not do anything to change the situation, the people would turn against him. He made arrangements for the prisoners to be brought to the palace court to be set free. Many people were invited to see the event. When everybody was seated, an announcement was made that the great Grandson of the Prophet was entering the court. The ladies of his household were seated behind the curtain which was put up especially for the occasion.

When Imam Zainul Abideen walked in everyone stood up. They could not believe what they saw. Even though the chains had been removed, he could hardly walk. His neck, hands and feet were deeply cut and bleeding. His back was bent because of the way he had been chained. But there was dignity in his face, never bowed down to Yazid, at any time. Yazid told Imam Zainul Abideen that they were free to leave, and offered them any amount that they required. Zainab said from behind the curtain "O Yazid, haven't you done enough to us. Do you still want to insult us, by this offer? Your actions can only be judged by God. You will have to answer to Him and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) for all that you have done. All that we want are the heads of our martyrs and our property which your men looted from us. They took away the veil that was given to me by my mother. They took away the bloodstained clothes of my brother. They took away Sakina's earrings which were given to her by her father. No Yazid there is nothing that you can give us to replace these things, which mean more to us than anything else." Yazid was amazed at her answer. He promised to give back everything that was taken from them in Karbala. One part of the royal palace was emptied. The first Majlis for Aza-e-Hussain took place in the palace of Yazid itself. The Syrian women came wearing black dresses. The wailing resounded the walls and doors of the palace due to the renditions of Zainab (pbuh).

Imam Zainul Abideen and the rest of the ladies and children stayed in Syria for a few more days and then made preparations to travel to Karbala, to pay their respects to their martyrs, and then go back to Madina. They went back to the prison to say goodbye to Sakina. Sakina's mother Rubab fell on the grave crying "O my dear Sakina, we are finally free to go home. But my child you are still imprisoned in Syria. My Sakina I am leaving, but my heart and soul will always be here with you. Please O people of Syria look after the grave of my child Sakina."

Finally, the Grandchildren of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) left Syria. Imam Zainul Abideen led the plundered caravan towards Karbala. Everyone



was very quiet. They were all thinking about their loved ones. When they arrived in Karbala in 40 days; they sat by the graves, crying and remembering that tragic day on the tenth of Muharram when they lost so many of their loved ones. Finally, after saying goodbye to their martyrs they started the journey back to Madina. How sad this journey must have been. Even though they were free, their hearts were in Karbala and Syria.

When the caravan reached Madina, Zainab (pbuh) visited the grave of her Grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). She sat by his grave and complained, with tears in her eyes. "O my Grandfather look at what Yazid and his men did to your Grandchildren. They killed your most beloved Grandson, Imam Hussain. They killed Abbas, when he went to get water for Sakina. They killed Ali Akbar, who looked like you. They killed my brother's son Qasim. They killed my sons Aun and Muhammad. They didn't even leave little Ali Asgher. O my dear Grandfather, your beloved Sakina is also gone. She died in the dark prison of Syria."

Zainab then went to the grave of her mother Fatima (pbuh) and said "O my dear mother look at what they have done to us? Look at these bloodstained clothes of your son. O my mother they paraded us in the streets of Kufa and Syria without our veils." A voice came from the grave, "My dear child I saw what they did. I was there when they beheaded my son. I was there when the guards slapped Sakina just for crying for her dead father. I was there when they paraded you on the streets without your veils." Zainab cried "O my dear mother I have so much to tell you..."

One of the tortures of Syria is about the prison in which household of Holy Prophet (pbuh) were imprisoned for approximately a year. And once after release from the imprisonment, when Imam Zainul Abideen (pbuh) saw his aunt praying while sitting, he asked with surprise, "O Aunt you were not performing even optional prayers in sitting position, while today you are performing obligation prayers in this posture." Tears came in the eyes of Zainab, she said "While in prison, the food and water were supplied in such a meager quantity that I used to pass on my share of food and water to the children. Due to continuous starvation I have become so weak that I could not pray by standing straight."

A man by the name of Noaman went to Madina three (3) years after the events of Karbala. He saw the Imam Sajjad standing near the grave of the Prophet weeping and complaining to the Prophet about the ill-treatment that Imam and the other members of the Prophet's family had received. Imam remained in this position until when he fainted and was then taken by his followers to his house. Noaman went to Imam's house. Then asked the Imam what was the most difficult time he had to face in Karbala and during his imprisonment to Kufa and Damascus. The Imam said, "Syria! Syria! Syria!" and then explained that in Syria (Shaam) the family of the Prophet was treated like animals and presented to the court of Yazid like slaves. In this way people of Madina were to see him mourning for his father from then till his death some thirty five (35) years later at the age of fifty seven (57). It is reported that whenever Imam Sajjad see water he would weep, remembering the thirst of the martyrs of Karbala. When he saw a goat or sheep being slaughtered, he would ask the slaughterer if he had fed the animal and given it water. On being assured that this had, indeed, been done, the Imam would weep, saying that his father & other martyrs were slaughtered hungry and thirsty of three days. He held regular mourning session in his house. Those who attended these sessions would then be served with food in the name of his father, Imam Hussain. One day somebody told him. "O son of God's Messenger! Up to when would you weep like this?" Imam replied "O servant of God. Prophet Yaqub had twelve sons but only one of them was taken away from him, he wept so much and for such long that his eyes turned white, his head turned gray and his back was bent although his son Yusuf was still alive. Whereas I watched my father, my brother and seventeen (17) members of my family being slaughtered all around me. How could my sorrow come to an end?"



بَيْتِ الْحَسَنِ
الْحُسَيْنِ
عَلَيْهِمَا
السَّلَامُ

Our Responsibility and Mission

The event of Karbala is, inevitably, an event possessing great social meaning for us, and it has a direct impact on our morality and character. It is an event that prompts our people, without anyone compelling them, to devote millions of man-hours to listening to the related episodes & to spend millions of dollars for this purpose. Every year, the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), through grief, sorrow and tears, keep alive the message, cause and purpose of the greatest martyrdom in human history.

Hence, this event must be retold exactly as it occurred and without the least amount of interpolation. For if the smallest amount of interpolation takes place at our hands in this event, that would distort it, and instead of benefiting from it we would definitely suffer harm.

The leaders of the faith, from the time of the Noble Messenger and the Pure Imams, have commanded in clear and emphatic terms that the memory of Hussain son of Imam Ali must be kept alive and that his martyrdom and ordeals should be commemorated every year. Why? What is the reason underlying this Islamic ordinance? Why is there so much encouragement for & emphasis on visiting the shrine of Hussain son of Imam Ali? We should reflect over these questions. Some might say that it is for the sake of condoling with Fatima Zahra (pbuh) and offering her consolation! But is it not ridiculous to imagine that Fatima Zahra should still need consolation after fourteen hundred years, whereas, in accordance with the explicit statements of Imam Hussain and according to our creed, since his martyrdom Imam Hussain and Fatima Zahra have been together in heaven? What a thing to say! Is it correct to think of Fatima Zahra as a little child that goes on weeping, even after fourteen centuries, and whom we have to go and console? Such kinds of beliefs are destructive for religion. Imam Hussain (pbuh) established the practical ideology of Islam and he is the practical model for Islamic movements. They (that is the Prophet and Imams) wanted Imam Hussain's ideology to be kept alive. They wanted Imam Hussain should reappear every year with those sweet, sublime and heroic summons of his and declare.

Don't you see that what is right and true is not acted upon, and what is wrong and false is not forbidden? [In such conditions] the man of faith should long to meet his true Lord!

They wanted to keep alive the memory of such scenes as that of Imam Hussain's confronting a force of thirty thousand (30,000) men, in a state when he and his family are faced with a great ordeal, and declaring in a manly manner - and the world has never seen such a manly personage!

If a man has faith in God, in Tawhid, if he has a link with God and faith in the other world, single-handedly he can inflict a moral defeat on a host of twenty and thirty thousand. Is this not a lesson for us? Where can you find another example of it? Who else can you find in the whole world who could utter two sentences of that sermon in conditions in which Hussain son of Imam Ali spoke, or for that matter two sentences like the sermon of Zainab (pbuh) at the city gates of Kufa? If our Imams have told us to revive this mourning every year and to keep it alive for ever it is for the purpose that we may understand these points, that we may realize the greatness of Hussain, so that if we shed tears for him it is out of understanding.

Do not allow the event of 'Ashura' to be consigned to oblivion! Your life, your humanity, and your dignity depend on this event! You can keep Islam alive only by its means! That is why they have encouraged us to keep alive the tradition of mourning Imam Hussain, and very rightly! The institution of mourning Hussain son of Imam Ali has a correct philosophy underlying it, a philosophy which is also

extremely sublime. It is fitting that we should do all that we can to endeavor for the sake of this cause, provided we understand its purpose and goal. Unfortunately some people have not understood it. Without making the people understand the philosophy of Imam Hussain's uprising and without making them understand the station of Imam Hussain, they imagine that if they just came and sat in mourning assemblies and shed tears, without knowledge and understanding, it would atone their sins. Imam Hussain was martyred to uplift Islam, as we confess while reciting his Ziyarah:

I bear witness that you established the prayer, gave zakat commanded what is right and forbade what is wrong, and did such Jihad in the way of God as ought to be done.

Imam Hussain was martyred in order to revive Islamic traditions, Islamic laws and regulations, not in order to create an excuse for the violation of Islamic norms. Keeping alive the memory of his name & his movement is for the purpose that our spirits may be illumined by the light of the spirit of Imam.

If a tear that we shed for him should signify a harmony between our souls and his spirit, it represents a brief flight that our spirit makes along with Hussain's spirit. Should it create within us a little glow of his valor, a particle of his free nature, a particle of his faith, a particle of his piety, and a small spark of his Tawhid, such a tear has an infinite value. They have said that it has the worth of an entire world even if it is so small as the 'wing of a gnat'. Believe it! But that is nor a tear shed for a pointless death, but a tear for the greatness of Imam Hussain, his great spirit and of movement in his steps. Yes, such a tear has an incalculable worth even if it is so small as a gnat's wing.

Our knowledge of Imam Hussain elevates us. It makes us human beings, free men, followers of truth and justice, and real Muslims. The school of Imam Hussain is a man-making school, not a school that produces sinners. Hussain is the bastion of righteous conduct, not a citadel for sin and sinfulness.

You should know that we have a serious responsibility in this regard, especially in the present times. One cannot serve the people with a distorted version of the truth, neither was it possible in the past. It was unproductive also in the past, but its harm was lesser. Its harm is much greater in this era. Our greatest responsibility is to see what distortions have occurred in our history; to see what distortions have occurred in the presentation of our eminent figures and personalities. We should see what kind of distortions have taken place in our history in historical episodes such as the historic event of 'Ashura', which must always remain a source of lesson and education for us, being a document of moral and social training and education. We should combat such distortions.

Weak point present in the Majlis (meetings) - with the objectives of the organizers and holders as well as with the wishes of the audience who like to get together and love tumult and fanfare. Should Alim (preacher) want to exploit this weak point then all that may bother him is how to draw larger crowds. It is here that an Alim stands at a crossroad: now that these people are fools and have such a weak point, should I exploit it, or should I struggle against it and go after the truth?

Another weak point present in the mourning gatherings - which is mostly from the people's side and has fortunately become lesser - is that profuse and loud weeping is regarded as the criterion of their success. After all, the speaker on the Minbar (pulpit) must relate the sorrowful accounts of the tragic events. While these accounts are related, the people are expected not merely to shed tears: the mere shedding of tears is not acceptable; the Majlis must be rocked with cries of mourning. I do not say that the Majlis should not be rocked with mourning; what I say is that this must not be the objective. If tears are shed as a result of listening to facts and the Majlis is rocked with mourning by descriptions of real history without false and fabricated narratives, without distortion, without conjuring companions for Imam Hussain (pbuh) that did not exist in history.

We beseech Almighty God, the Blessed and the Exalted, to lead our hearts towards the truth, to forgive us the sins which we have committed through Tahrif (misrepresentation) and otherwise, to grant us the ability to carry out successfully the duty and mission that we have in this field.

Imam Hussain (pbuh) in the Holy Quran



Imam Hussain (pbuh) is the example for the self-conscious, uncompromising revolutionary, the one who advocated the rights of the oppressed. He is one of the near relatives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) whom Almighty God orders us to love:

Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives; and whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein; surely God is Forgiving, Grateful. (42:23)

Imam Hussain (pbuh) was a member of the family of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), whom Almighty God has kept uncleanness away from:

God only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! And to purify you a (thorough) purifying. (33:33)

Imam Hussain (pbuh) was one of those counted with the Holy Prophet (pbuh) when the contest of prayers with the Christians of Najran was staged:

And whoever disputes with you concerning him (Jesus) after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of God on the liars. (3:61)

“Who is most in danger?” Imam Sajjad (pbuh) replied: “The one who does not regard the world dangerous for himself.”



السلام عليك يا ابا عبد الله

Imam Hussain inherited the mission of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed

Akramulla Syed