

Imam Husayn, The Saviour of Islam

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[Imam Husayn](#) [8]

Husayn, The Heir Of The Divine Guides

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

Who?

Husayn, the son of 'Ali and Fatimah; the grandson of Muhammad; the brother of Hasan; the third rightful successor of the Prophet of Islam.

Husayn, the heir of Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa, Muhammad and 'Ali; the embodiment of the Divine forces against the Satanic forces¹. Husayn the symbol of true servant of Allah.

Husayn and his brother Hasan have been introduced by the Prophet of Islam as the flowers of the Prophet, the Imams and leaders of the Muslims whether they fight or make peace (with the enemy), and the leaders of the young men of the Paradise. The Messenger of Allah said: "Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn."

What did he do?

Husayn refused to pledge allegiance to Yazid.

He left Madinah, his birth-place, the land which has in it the graves of his grandfather, mother and brother; the city where he had lived most of his life; the city to which are attached his memories of happy and sorrowful days.

He went to Mecca. But there also he found no refuge and had to leave on day the of the hajj ceremony.

But why?! Why leave Mecca in midst of the great ceremony of hajj?! Mecca was no more secure for Husayn. But who can dare to harm anyone in Mecca?! Does not Allah say, “... **and whoever enters it shall be secure**”(The Qur'an, 3:97)?

Yes, Yazid dared to do so. Yazid had sent some mercenaries as pilgrims with the mission to murder Imam Husayn even if they found him inside the Sacred Mosque. The mercenaries carried arms under their ihram. For the sake of the sacredness of the House of Allah, Imam Husayn did not like that his blood be spilled there; so he left Mecca.

He went to Karbala – Karbala the arena of the encounter between the person who was representing all the divine messengers of Allah and the person who was representing Shaytan and his forces.

On the day of ‘Ashurah, Husayn preferred martyrdom against a life under a tyrant; he preferred a glorious death against a life in which he could have attained the highest worldly position had he pledged allegiance to Yazid.

When?

He left Madinah on the 28 Rajab 60 A.H.

He reached Mecca on the 3 Sha‘ban 60 A.H.

He left Mecca on the 8 Dhi ‘1-hijjah 60/10 September 680.

He reached Karbala on the 2 Muharram 61/2 October 680.

He ascended to the highest stage of perfection by attaining martyrdom on the day of ‘Ashurah, the 10th of Muharram 61 A.H./10 October 680.

Against whom?

Against Yazid. No, not only Yazid. Yazid was the heir of Cain, the heir of Nimrod, the heir of Fir‘awn, the heir of satanic agents who rejected ‘Isa, the heir of Abu Lahab, the heir of Abu Sufyan, the heir of

Mu'awiyah. Yazid was representing the forces of Shaytan.

Yazid the son of Mu'awiyah, the grandson of Abu Sufyan and Hind. Abu Sufyan was the chief of the forces of Meccan polytheists who continuously tried to sabotage the message and the religion brought by Muhammad (upon whom be peace). Only after the fall of Mecca did Abu Sufyan apparently accept, nay surrender, to Islam. Even after accepting Islam he continued to distort Islam from inside. This can be clearly seen by what he said when 'Uthman became caliph.

He said: "O Children of Umayyah! Now that this kingdom has come to you, play with it as the children play with a ball and pass it from one to another of your clan. This kingdom is a reality; and we do not know whether or not there is any paradise and hell.²" Then he went to Uhud and kicked at the grave of Hamzah, the uncle of the Prophet, and said: "O Abu Ya'la! See that the kingdom for which you were fighting against us has at last come to us."³

Yazid's grandmother Hind was a well-known prostitute of pre-Islamic era; she is famous in Islamic history for her barbarism: In the battle of Uhud she promised to reward her slave, Wahshi, if he killed Muhammad or Hamzah or 'Ali. Wahshi killed Hamzah. When Hind came to know that Hamzah has been killed, she came to the body of Hamzah, had his liver taken out and chewed it and quenched her thirst for the vengeance of her father who was killed by Hamzah in a previous battle known as Badr. She even mutilated Hamzah's body by cutting his ears and nose.

Yazid was bluntly refusing to believe in the Prophet. He clearly stated his belief in his poem as follows: "Bani Hashim had staged a play to obtain kingdom, actually there was neither any news from God nor any revelation.⁴" Neither did he believe in the day of judgement as he said in a poem: "O my beloved! do not believe in meeting me after death, because what they have told you about our being raised after death for judgement is only a fiction which makes the heart forget the pleasures of this real world."⁵

He openly joked about Islamic prayers; showed his disrespect to religion by putting the robes of religious scholars on dogs and monkeys. Gambling and playing with his pets were his favorite pastimes. He spent all his time in drinking anywhere and everywhere without any hesitation; he had no respect for any woman. Even the prohibited degrees like stepmother, sister, aunt and daughter were just like any other woman in his eyes.

With whom?

Husayn went to Karbala with his wives, children, brothers, sisters and nephews; and many friends, some with their families, joined him in the way from Mecca to Karbala. There were around 120 male members, ranging from a child of six months old to an old mujahid of eighty years old, in Husayn's caravan. All of them sacrificed their lives for Islam.

But why take the womenfolk in such a situation? Because it was the sisters of Imam Husayn and the other women of his family who carried his message to all the cities and villages between Kufa and

Damascus. They were taken from Karbala to Kufa and from there to Damascus as prisoners by the mercenaries of Yazid. If it would not have been for Zaynab, Umm Kulthum and others, the message of Imam Husayn and his cause would have been buried in Karbala or, at the least, suppressed for a long time, and consequently delaying the results of this supreme sacrifice.

Why?

Could a person like Husayn pledge allegiance to a person like Yazid?! No! Never! Although everyone in the Islamic countries had already pledged allegiance to Yazid, still the rejection by Husayn was a matter of vital importance even in the eyes of Yazid. Acceptance of the whole Muslim community was of no value without the acceptance of Husayn. Not just because Husayn was the grandson of the Prophet, but because he, as a vicegerent of Allah on this earth, represented Hasan, 'Ali, Prophet Muhammad, 'Isa, Musa, Ibrahim, Nuh, and Adam.

Giving his hand in the hand of Yazid, that is pledging allegiance to him, would be as if 'Ali pledged allegiance to Mu'awiyah, Muhammad pledged allegiance to Abu Sufyan, 'Isa pledged allegiance to the Jewish priests, Musa pledged allegiance to Fir'awn, Ibrahim pledged allegiance to Nimrod... it would be as if Islam surrendered to kufr, and as if the divine forces surrendered to the satanic forces.

By his supreme sacrifice in Karbala, Imam Husayn awakened the conscious of the Muslim ummah, he made it clear that Yazid and those like him do not deserve, nay, they do not have any right, to become the caliph, the leader and the ruler of the Muslims. He wrote with his blood on the plain of Karbala that one should not submit himself to anyone but Allah or to a person who has been appointed by Allah. Husayn was an embodiment of light, truth, justice, equity; and never could light submit to darkness, or justice to injustice, or equity to inequity.

What did he say?

In Madinah, he said: "We are the house-hold of the prophethood, the source of messengership, the descending-place of the angels, through us Allah had began (showering His favours) and with us He has perfected (His favours). Whereas Yazid is a sinful person, a drunkard, the killer of innocent people and one who openly indulges in sinful acts. A person like me can never pledge allegiance to a person like him..."^{[6](#)}

Before leaving Madinah, he wrote: "I have risen (against Yazid) as I seek to reform the ummah (community) of my grandfather. I wish to bid the good and forbid the evil, and follow the way of my grandfather and my father, 'Ali bin Abi Talib."^{[7](#)}

In Mecca, in answer to the people of Kufa, he wrote: "... for by my life, what is the Imam except one who judges by the Book, one who upholds justice, one who professes the religion of truth, and one who dedicated himself to essence of Allah."^{[8](#)}

On his way to Karbala, he said to the army of Hurr: "... (The situation is such that) a believer should rightly desire to meet his Lord (by sacrificing his life) – for I do not see death except a bliss, and life with the tyrants a disgusting (thing).”⁹

In Karbala, facing the army of Yazid, he said: “O Men! Verily the Messenger of Allah has said: ‘Anyone who sees a cruel king who permits those things which have been forbidden by Allah, who disregards his duty, who opposes the way of the Messenger of Allah, and acts amongst the servants of Allah sinfully and aggressively – and that person does not do anything, in action or speech, to change the situation, then it would be right for Allah to place him along with the tyrant ruler (on the day of judgement).’”¹⁰

- ^{1.} The concept of Imam Husayn being the heir of all the divine guides has been derived from ziyarat warithah, taught by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) to Safwan. See Mafatih Al-Jinan of Shaykh 'Abbas Qummi.
- ^{2.} Ibn 'Abdi 'l-Barr, al-Isti'ab fi ma'rifati 's-sahabah, vol. IV, Cairo (in four volumes) n.d., p. 1679.
- ^{3.} Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid, Sharh Nahju 'l-Balaghah, vol. 16, Cairo 1959, p. 136.
- ^{4.} Sibt ibna 'l-Jauzi, Tadhkirah Khawasi 'l-Ummah, Tehran n.d., p. 261. at-Tabari, Ibn Jarir; Tarikhu 'l-Umam wa 'l-Muluk, vol. 13, Laden 1890, p. 2174.
- ^{5.} Sibt ibna 'l-Jauzi, op. cit., p. 291.
- ^{6.} Sayyid Ibn Ta'us, Maqtal al-Husayn, pp. 10–11.
- ^{7.} al-Khatib al-Khuwarazmi, Maqtal al-Husayn, vol. I, p. 88.
- ^{8.} Shaykh al-Mufid, Kitab al-Irshad, (translated by Dr. I. K. Howard), p. 305.
- ^{9.} Sayyid Ibn Ta'us, op. cit., pp. 32–33.
- ^{10.} Ibnu 'l-Kathir, al-Kamil fi 't-Tarikh, vol. 4, 1385 A.H., p. 48.

The Martyr, An Analysis of the Concept of Martyrdom in Islam

Murtadha Mutahhari

Translated By

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

The Sanctity of the Word ‘Martyr’

In the linguistic traditions of all the people of the world, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, there exist some words which carry a sense of dignity, and sometimes, sanctity. The words like scholar, philosopher, inventor, hero, reformer, teacher, student in general usage; and the words like nabi, imam, mujtahid, mujahid, worshipper, believer, ascetic, truthful, saint, muhajir, preacher and advisor in Islamic usage are some of those words which are associated with dignity, respect and sanctity.

Obviously a word, in se, has no sanctity; it derives its sanctity from its meaning. Sacredness and sanctity

of some of the meanings and concepts which exist, more or less, in all human societies is related to the psychological approach of those societies in evaluating the metaphysical concepts. This itself is a profound philosophical subject.

In Islam also there is a word which is engulfed in a peculiar sanctity. Anyone who is familiar with Islamic thoughts and comprehends that word in the Islamic usage, he will certainly feel that it is engulfed in divine light – and that word is shahid, martyr. In all its usage, by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, this word is surrounded by sanctity; the only difference exists in the values and standards of different societies that use it. Presently we are not concerned with the use of this word in non-Islamic circles.

According to Islam, anyone who achieves the honour of martyrdom has reached to one of the most high positions which a man can possibly attain in his ascend towards perfection. Of course, his martyrdom must be according to the standards fixed by Islam – to be killed for the high causes of Islam with the aim of defending true human values. The reason behind the sanctity of the word martyr can be understood from the Qur'an and the ahadith.

The Martyr's Proximity to Allah

A shahid's proximity to Allah is explained in the Qur'an as follows:

Do not think of those who are slain in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive with their Lord and are provided sustenance (by Him). (3: 169)

When Islam wants to elevate the position of a person or a deed, it compares that person or deed with the position of a shahid. For example, to show the importance of seeking knowledge, a hadith says that if someone becomes a student with the intention of finding the truth and serving his Lord (and not for material gains) and then dies while studying, he is considered a shahid. This expression manifests the sanctity and excellence of a student. Likewise, a hadith, praising a person who strives hard to provide the sustenance for his family, says: The one who strives hard for his family is like a fighter in the way of Allah.

The Right of a Martyr

All those who have served the human society, in one way or another, have a right on the human society. This service to humanity does not make any difference whether it was by the way of knowledge, philosophy, technology, invention, or ethics, etc. But no one has so much right on human society like that of the martyrs, and this is the reason underlying the extraordinary sentimental appreciation which people show in regard to the martyrs.

Why and for what the right of the martyrs is more than the other servants of humanity? All the other servants of humanity are indebted to the martyrs but the martyrs are not indebted to others. And if they

are indebted to others, it is to a lesser degree. The scholar in his study, the philosopher in his philosophy, the inventor in his invention and the teacher of ethics in his teaching, need a peaceful and free atmosphere so that they could do their work. And it is the martyr who provides such an atmosphere for others by self-denial, sacrifice and death. The parable of a shahid is like that of a candle whose function is to burn out and shed light so that others could easily do their work on the expense of its extinction. The martyrs also are the candles of human society, they sacrificed themselves but enlightened the world. If the world would have remained dark, no one could have possibly served the human society.

The relationship of a martyr with other servants of human society is similar to the story of a candle and an on-looker which has been written by Parvin (a famous Iranian poetess):

The on- Tonight I have decorated my room.
Last night I didn't sleep with excitement
I sewed the dress and put it on.
I stitched the pearls on the design,
I decorated it with flowers.
You can't even reach to the dust of my art,
For I have sacrificed my mind and body for it.
The candle laughed and said:
I was the one who saved you from darkness.
For letting you stitch the pearls on the dress,
I have filled my lap with pearl-like tears.
I cried like the rain-clouds of spring,
And thus watered the flowers on your dress.
I am happy with my burning out,
For I am enlightening your house.
Although there is no hope for me,

I illuminated your walls and created hope for you. For the manifestation of your beauty, I have strengthened my heart. The fruits of my life have burnt out, but I provided the fruits of your delight. The works you described to me, you didn't do them, I did them.

When man works in the daytime under the light of the sun and in the night by the light of the bulbs or the candles, he is aware of everything except the source which is providing light for him. If that light did not exist, all the activities and movements would stop. In the same way, martyrs are the source of light for human societies; but for their light during the darkness of tyrannies and deprivations, human society could not have taken a single step forward.

The Qur'an has an interesting description for the Prophet. It has described him as an illuminating lamp; in this way, the Qur'an has explained the concept of shedding light on darkness by self-extinction and

self-denial. It says:

O the Prophet! We have verily sent you as a witness, a bearer of good news, a warner and a guide towards Allah by His permission and as an illuminating lamp. (33:45-46)

However, the word shahid, in Islamic concepts and in the mind of those who are familiar with Islamic culture, is an enlightening concept and a sacred word.

The Body of the Martyr

Islam is a wise religion, it has no law which might be without any social wisdom or purpose. One of the Islamic laws is that when a Muslim dies, it is obligatory on others to wash his body in a prescribed manner, to clothe him in a shroud, pray on him and bury him. All these laws have reasons and purposes which cannot be explained here. But this law has one exception; and that exception is in regard to the martyr's body. It is only obligatory to pray on him and bury him; but there is no need to purify him by washing his body in the prescribed manner or to take out his clothes and dress him in a shroud.

This exception itself has a reason behind it. It shows that the soul and personality of a martyr is so pure and exalted that it has affected his body, his blood, and even his clothes. Body of a martyr is a "body with soul", it is not to be treated as a maytah, and thus there is no need to purify it. Even his clothes are affected by the rules regarding his body. The body and clothes of a martyr have achieved sanctity from his soul, his thought and from his inclination to the truth. A martyr who has been killed in the battle-field can be buried in the same clothes without washing him or changing his clothes.

The Source of Martyrdom's Sanctity

From where does martyrdom derive its sanctity? Obviously, martyrdom is not sacred just because it means being killed. Many ways of death are regarded "waste of life," sometimes, it is even a disgrace.

It seems necessary to elaborate this point more clearly.

Death can be of many kinds:

- a) Natural death: A person completes the normal span of life and dies naturally. This type of death is obviously regarded as an usual thing, there is no pride in it nor any disgrace, it is not even followed with much grief or sorrow. These types of death are not even regarded "waste of life".
- b) Accidental death: Death caused by epidemic disease like small-pox, etc., or caused by natural disasters such as earthquake, flood, etc. Their types of deaths also have no pride or disgrace in them; but they are counted as "waste of life", and thus it is regrettable.
- c) Homicide: The death in which a crime is involved. The death in which there was no temptation on the

part of the victim. The murderer, on his own will, considered the victim as an obstacle in the way of his interests, and killed him. The examples of these types of death can be seen in daily newspapers. A person, for instance, murders a woman just because he was not successful in gaining her attention towards himself.

In such deaths, there is crime and wickedness on the part of the killer; and his action is considered abhorrent. On the part of the slain person, – who had no active part in instigating this murder, who was a victim of terror, whose life has been wasted – his death creates sorrow and sympathy in others.

Obviously these deaths are not considered a pride or honour although they create sorrow and sympathy in others, because the victim had no part, whatsoever, in it. It was the envy, enmity and inferiority complex on the part of the killer which caused the victim's aimless death.

d) Suicide: The death which itself is a crime. This type of death is nothing but a waste of life, and a way of wasting oneself in the worst manner. Those who are killed in the automobile accident in which they themselves are at fault, their death also comes under this category. Likewise, those who are killed while committing a crime.

e) Martyrdom (sahadat): Martyrdom means that a person, fully aware of the certain or the probable danger, approaches it just for a sacred cause which is expressed in the Qur'an as "in the way of Allah". Martyrdom has two basic elements: Firstly, it must be "in the way of Allah," the cause must be sacred and the person must be wishing to sacrifice his life for it. Secondly, it must take place knowingly and with awareness.

Usually in martyrdom, the criminal aspect is also present. On the part of the victim, it is martyrdom and sacred; on part of the murderer, it is crime and wickedness. Martyrdom is a pride, honour and a heroic deed, because it is done knowingly and voluntarily, for a sacred cause and it is free from any shadow of selfishness. Among all the types of deaths, only martyrdom is a death which is more sacred, greater and holier than life itself.

It must be mentioned here, with much regret, that although most of the preachers of the commemorative gatherings for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) speak of him as a "martyr" and "the leader of the martyrs," they do not have an analytical grasp of this concept and thus they consider the death of Imam Husayn only as a murder and homicide, a category of death which is a waste of life. Many of our people mourn on just the innocence of, and the unjust treatment meted out to, Imam Husayn. They are sorry that Imam Husayn, just like a small child, became a victim of an ambitious ruler. If it is so, then Imam Husayn would be considered an innocent victim of terror just like the people who are killed by others in homicide. But then, the Imam would not be a martyr, let alone "the leader of the martyrs."

Imam Husayn was not only a victim of an ambitious ruler. There is no doubt that this tragedy, when ascribed to the killers, is a crime, a selfish and ambitious act; but, when ascribed to the Imam himself, it is a martyrdom which means a conscious confrontation and a courageous resistance for a sacred cause.

Yazid wanted a pledge of allegiance from him, and he, fully aware of all the consequences, did not accept. Moreover, he was very critical of them; silence in that situation was regarded a great sin by him. The biography and the sayings of Imam Husayn are a clear proof of this.

In conclusion, we can say that martyrdom derives its sacredness from the conscious sacrifice of oneself for a sacred cause.

Jihad, The Responsibility of the Martyr

In Islam, the concept which leads to martyrdom – a conscious death for a sacred cause – has emerged as a principle known as jihad. Here we cannot explain the nature of this principle whether it has a defensive nature or offensive; and if defensive, is it limited to the defence of individual rights or, at the most the national rights, or whether or not does it also include the defence of human rights in general like freedom and justice? Is the belief in unity of God a human right or not? Or is the principle of jihad contrary to the right of freedom? These are interesting and useful discussions which should be propounded in its appropriate place. Here we can only say that Islam is not a religion which says that if one slaps on your right cheek, present him the left one. It is not a religion which says pay to God what is His, and to Caesar what is his. It is not a religion without a sacred social ideal, or a religion which does not defend or try to spread that ideal.

The Qur'an has mentioned three sacred concepts jointly in many of its verses. These three concepts are: faith (Iman); migration (hijrah); and holy war (jihad). Man, according to the Qur'an, is a being related to faith and align to everything else. This creature who is related to faith, migrates for the protection of his faith; wages holy war for defending the faith of the society which actually means defending the society itself from the arms of a faithless ruler. If we wished to mention the verses of the Qur'an or the traditions which we have on this subject, the discussions will be prolonged. Here, we shall confine ourselves to the explanation of a few sentences from a sermon of Nahj Al-Balaghah:

Imam 'Ali says: "Now then, surely jihad is one of the doors of Paradise, which Allah has opened for His distinctive friends."

It is not a door which is opened for everyone; not all have the qualifications to get through the door of jihad. Allah has opened that door for his distinctive friends. The mujahidin are not only "the friends of Allah," they are "the distinctive friends of Allah."

The Qur'an says that there are eight doors to Paradise. Why? Is it for preventing the rush of the people? We know that the world here-after is not a world of rush, just as Allah has said that He will take the account of all the human beings in a moment – "and He is quick in reckoning." There is no problem for Allah to make the people enter from one single door at the same time, there will be no line-up. Then why does the Paradise have eight doors? It is just for formality? Is it so that the VIPs will enter from one door and the others from another? Again we know that such distinctions do not exist there. Or will the

doors be divided according to the occupations of all the different people?

We know that any occupation is of no value unless it is combined with faith, piety and good deeds. Then why eight doors? In the hereafter, there will be degrees and grades, but no classes. Everyone having faith, good deeds and piety will have a grade. Everyone will be on one of the grades of faith, piety and good deeds. Everyone has ascended the stairs of perfection to a certain stage; and accordingly, a door of similar grade will open for him. That world is a heavenly manifestation of this world. The door through which the martyrs will enter the paradise is the door of the distinctive friends of Allah.

Imam 'Ali continues his sermon by saying: "It (jihad) is the dress of piety." In the fifth chapter (verse 93), the Qur'an has mentioned the "dress of piety," and 'Ali says the jihad is the dress of piety. Piety (taqwa) means the real cleanliness and purity. Purity from what? From uncleanness. What are the roots of the spiritual uncleanness and ethical impurity? Selfishness, egoism. Therefore, a true mujahid is the most pious of the pious people, as there can be different types of pious people: one is pure from envy, the other from haughtiness, the third from greed, the fourth from miserliness. But the mujahid is the purest of the pure ones, because he has sacrificed his own life and existence. And so, the door which will be opened for him will be different from the door which will be opened for other pious people.

The difference in the grades of purity and piety can also be inferred from the Qur'an:

There is no blame on those who believe and do good deeds for what they eat, as long as they are careful of their duty, believe and do good deeds, then again they are careful of their duty and believe, and they are careful of their duty and do good to others. And Allah loves the good. (5:93)

This verse has explained two very profound teachings of Islam. First: The stages and degrees of belief and piety. Second: The aim of life and rights of man. The verse wants to imply that the blessings of Allah are for human beings and human beings are for belief, piety and good deeds. A man is allowed to benefit from the blessings of God only when he walks on the path of perfection for which he has been created. And that path of perfection is belief, piety and good deeds.

Under the inspiration of this verse, the Islamic scholars have divided the grades of piety into three:

1. The lower degree of piety;
2. The higher degree of piety;
3. The highest degree of piety.

The piety of the mujahidin is purest and highest form of piety; the martyrs have sincerely sacrificed everything for the cause of Allah. They have donned the dress of the purest type of piety.

In the same sermon, Imam 'Ali continues to say: "(It is) the protective armour of Allah and the trustworthy shield." If a Muslim nation has the spirit of jihad and is armoured in the armour of Allah, no attack by others can harm it. An armour is a dress, made of inter-linked rings or overlapping scales, which the soldiers used to put on at the time of battle; whereas, a shield is an instrument which they used to hold in their hands and defended themselves by it. The shield was for preventing the blow of the

enemy's sword, etc; whereas the armour was for neutralizing the effect of the enemy's blow. Apparently Imam 'Ali has compared jihad with both the armour and the shield, because some jihad are for repelling the offence of the enemy whereas other jihad are for neutralizing the effects of the attack.

Then the Imam says: "Whoever abandons it. Allah covers him with the dress of disgrace and the clothes of distress. He is kicked with contempt and scorn, and his heart is veiled with screens (of neglect). Truth is taken away from him because of missing jihad. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him." The person who neglects jihad because of his indifference to it, (and not because of the situation in which he does not consider that time is right for jihad), will suffer the consequences mentioned in the above saying of Imam 'Ali. This part of the Imam's saying is quite different from last three parts quoted above. The former were describing the positive effects of jihad, whereas the last quotation is describing the negative effects—the effects of neglecting it.

The negative effects, described above, are of collective nature, they are not of individual nature. In other words, they are related to society in general, and not to an individual in particular. The negative effects are as follows:—

1. Disgrace: The nation which neglects jihad will surely be disgraced.
2. Distress: Disgrace, in contrary to what many people think, is followed by distress and many problems.
3. Spiritual inferiority.
4. Losing the insight of truth: It is a surprising point that 'Ali considers the insight and light of heart to be dependent on fulfilling jihad. In Islamic thoughts it has clearly been mentioned that a spiritual insight of the truth is a result of good deeds, but nowhere has it been mentioned so clearly that a social deed like jihad is one of the pillars of spiritual ascendance and a way towards Allah, and that its negligence will cause the heart to be covered by veils.
5. By neglecting the duty of jihad, they will be deprived from the true Islamic government. They will no more deserve to be the propagator of Islam.
6. They will be deprived from justice of others. It means that as long as a nation is mujahid, others will take it into consideration and unwillingly behave justly with it. But a nation which has lost the spirit of jihad, others will not take it into consideration and will deal unjustly with it.

All these disgraces, insults and retreats (in social and economic grounds) are the consequence of losing the spirit of jihad. The Prophet said: "All goodness is under the sword and under the shadow of the sword." He also said: "Verily Allah has honoured my ummah by the hoofs of its horses and the positions of their spears." It means, the Islamic ummah is tantamount to a strong and powerful nation. Islam is a religion of strength and power. Islam is a religion which trains mujahids. Will Durant, in his *The Story of Civilization*, says: "No religion has called its followers towards strength and power like Islam."

There is another interesting hadith of the Prophet which says: "The one who has not fought (in the way of Allah) and has not even thought about it in his own mind, he shall die with a (hidden) type of

hypocrisy.” It means that Islam cannot be separated from jihad or at the least from a wish to fight in the way of Allah. The true faith of a Muslim can be recognised by this standard, i.e., longing to fight in the way of Allah. In another hadith, the Prophet was asked: “Why the shahid is not questioned in the grave?” The Prophet said: “The lightening of the sword over his (shahid’s) head is sufficient for his trial (or questioning).” The martyr has manifested his true faith by his sacrifice, and so, there remains no motive for questioning him in the grave.

Zeal of the Martyr

One of the peculiarities which can be seen in the early history of Islam is the special spirit which existed in many Muslim of those days. I do not know what to name this spirit. I think the most descriptive expression would be to call it “the zeal for martyrdom.”

The first in the list of these people is Imam ‘Ali (upon whom be peace). The Imam said: When the verse “Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, we believe, and not be tried?” was revealed, I came to know that as long as the Prophet is among us the Muslims will not have to face any ordeal. I asked the Prophet: What is the ordeal which has been mentioned in the verse? He said: O ‘Ali, it is an ordeal which my ummah will face after me. I said: On the day of (the battle of) Uhud when many Muslims had attained the honour of martyrdom and I was not able to attain that honour and was sad because of it, didn’t you give me good-tidings about my martyrdom in future? The Prophet said: Yes, it is as I said, you will be martyred in future. So now, tell me how will you bear it? I said: O the Messenger of Allah, (at the time of martyrdom) it is not the time for patience, it is the time of thanking and praising (Allah for giving me such an opportunity)! Then the Prophet explained the details of the ordeal which will take place after him.

This is the meaning of “the zeal for martyrdom”. ‘Ali was alive for attaining martyrdom; if this cause and hope had been taken away from him, he would find no use in being alive, life would have become meaningless for him. We take the name of ‘Ali on our lips too much. If everything had been perfect just by uttering some words, then no one is more Shi‘ah than us. But if Shi‘ahism is a reality, which of course it is, and if Shi‘ahism means to be like ‘Ali – then the task of being a Shi‘ah would be very difficult one. The example given above is just one that ‘Ali had the zeal for martyrdom and so his followers (Shi‘ah) also must have the same spirit.

Apart from ‘Ali we also find other persons, in Islamic history, who also had the “zeal for martyrdom”. They had a wish in their hearts that would Allah bestow them the glory of martyrdom. One of the usual prayers of the Muslims of early Islamic history was for seeking the glory of martyrdom. This tendency can be seen even in the invocations that have reached us from the Imams of Ahlu ‘1-bayt. In one of the invocations for the month of Ramadhan, we pray: “O Allah! By Your mercy include us among the righteous people, and raise us up to the uppermost heaven, and help us in attaining martyrdom in Your way with Your friend.” In early Islamic history we see this zeal in the young, the old, the black, the white

and in all of them. They used to come to the Prophet and say: "I eagerly wish to die in the way of Allah, so please pray that Allah may bestow us with martyrdom in His way."

In Safinat ul-Bihar, there is a story of a man named Khaythamah or Khuthaymah. It describes how a father and his son were arguing with each other for going to jihad and attaining martyrdom. The writer says that when the time of the battle of Badr came, this father and son were arguing with each other. The son was saying to the father, "I will go to jihad and you remain home with the family." The father was saying, "No, you stay with the family, I will go to jihad." The father and son, both were saying that they want to go and attain martyrdom. At last they agreed on casting a lot. The lot came for the son and he went to jihad and was martyred. After sometime, the father saw in dream that his son has attained the loftiest heights. The son said to his father: "Whatever my Lord has promised (as a reward the faith and martyrdom) was true." The old father came to the Prophet and said: "O the Messenger of Allah, although I have become old I dearly wish to attain the glory of martyrdom. Please pray for me so that Allah be bless me with this honour." The Prophet prayed for him. One year after that, the old man was martyred in the battle of Uhud.

There was another man known as 'Amr bin Jumuuh who was a lame. According to the shari'ah laws about jihad, such a person is excused from the duty of fighting in the way of Allah – "there is no blame on the lame". At the time of the battle of Uhud, sons of 'Amr prepared themselves for going with the Prophet. He said he also wants to go. His sons prevented him from doing so. Even the elders of the family tried to explain to him that he should remain home with the family, but he still insisted on going to jihad.

At last, 'Amr went to the Prophet and said: O the Messenger of Allah, why are my sons preventing me from participating in the holy war? If martyrdom is good, then it is good also for me. The Prophet told his sons to leave him alone and said that the holy war is not obligatory on him, but neither is it prohibited for him. So 'Amr the lame, also prepared for the holy war and went to Uhud. During the battle, one of his sons was always with him to defend him; but 'Amr himself penetrated the enemy's ranks without any fear, and was at last martyred. One of his sons had also been killed.

When the news reached Madinah that the Muslims were losing the battle after winning it, many men and women started to come to Uhud which was not very far from the city. Among those men and women was the wife of 'Amr bin Jumuh. She went to Uhud and found the bodies of her husband, son and brother. She placed all the three corpses on a camel and started to return back to Madinah with the intention of burying the bodies of her beloveds in the grave-yard of Madinah. In the way, she noticed that the camel was not willing to go towards Madinah. At that time some women, who were coming from Madinah, met her. 'Aishah, who was women, asked her that what was she carrying on the camel. She replied that she was carrying the corpses of her husband, son and brother. Then 'Aishah asked about the battle; she answered that all went well, al-hamdu lil-lah, because the Prophet's life has been saved; everything else is immaterial.

Then she explained the unusual behaviour of her camel; and said that when I turn him towards the city it does not take a step willingly, but when I turn it towards Uhud it moves fast. They advised her to accompany them back to Uhud and ask the Prophet. When the Prophet was approached with this problem, he asked the wife of ‘Amr that did her husband say something when he was coming out of the house. She answered: Yes, he said one sentence. The Prophet asked what was it. She said: When my husband came out of the house, he raised his hands and prayed that O God, do not make me come back to this house. The Prophet said that his prayer has been accepted, so do not take his body to Madinah; leave your husband’s body here to be buried with other martyrs.

Imam ‘Ali (peace be upon him) says: “Verily, a thousand strokes of sword are more dearer to me than dying on a bed.” When Imam Husayn was going to Karbala, he was reciting some verses of a poem (which, according to some narrations, were even recited by his father). The poem is as follows:

If the world is regarded a precious thing,
Then the house of rewards of Allah is loftier and more magnificent.
If the wealth is gathered for becoming a legacy,
Then why be mean in giving it away as charity.
If the human body has been made for death,
Then death by a sword in the way of Allah is loftier.

The Logic of the Martyr

Every person and every group has a peculiar way of thinking. Everyone has a set of values and standards by which he judges the various deeds and actions. The martyr also has a logic and a way of thinking which is peculiar to himself. The logic of a martyr cannot be compared to the logic of other people. His logic is of loftier heights. It is a combination of two logics: On the one hand, the logic of a sincere reformer, and, on the other hand, the logic of a gnostic who is longing to meet his Lord, constitute the logic of a martyr.

This can also be seen in the biography of Imam Husayn. When the Imam decided to go to Kufa, some prominent member of his clan advised him against it. They said to him that this is not a logical step. And, of course, according to their way of thinking they were right. Their logic was that of an ordinary person which revolves on personal interests and which is the logic of politicians. And so they thought that it was not logical for Imam Husayn to go to Kufa in that situation. But Imam Husayn had a completely different way of thinking – the logic of a martyr.

‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas and Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah were not ordinary persons; they were far-sighted politicians; according to their way of thinking – the political way of thinking, the logic based on personal interests – the step taken by Imam Husayn was illogical. Ibn ‘Abbas proposed a clever political move which is usually used by those who manipulate the masses to achieve their aims: they put the public in the front and keep themselves in the background; if the masses succeed, they would reap the harvest

and if the public is defeated, they lose nothing. Ibn ‘Abbas said to Imam Husayn that write a letter to the people of Kufa asking them to remove the representatives of Yazid from the city and get in control of its affairs. They will either do as you asked them to do or they won’t. If they follow your orders, you can go to Kufa and take the charge in your hands. If they do not do as you asked them to do, you won’t be in any trouble.

But Husayn did not heed to this proposal, he said: “I will go to Kufa.” They said: “You will be killed.” He said: “If I am killed, I am killed (I do not care about death).” They said: “One who goes to be killed does not take his women and children with himself.” He said: “I have to take them also.”

The logic of a martyr is a unusual and peculiar logic; his logic revolves around burning out and enlightening; it is the logic of melting into the society for its revival. It is the logic of giving life to the dead human values. It is a far-sighted logic. And this is the reason that the word shahid, among all the sacred words, has a peculiar sacredness. A martyr is a super-champion, he is a super-reformer, he is superior than everyone. No other word can take the place of shahid.

The Blood of the Martyr

What does a martyr do? Martyr’s work is not only to stand in front of the enemy; defeat the enemy or be defeated by him. If his work had been only that then we might say that his blood was shed for nothing. No, the blood of a martyr is not wasted, his blood does not spill on the earth – every drop of the martyr’s blood becomes hundreds and thousands drops, it takes the form of a sea and enters the veins of society. The Prophet said: “No drop of anything is more beloved in the view of Allah than the drop of blood which has been spilled in the way of Allah.” It means that no drop of anything is more valuable than the drop of the Martyr’s blood. Martyrdom means injecting the blood to the veins of society. The martyrs are the ones who donate new and lively blood to the body of society, in particular the society which has heavily lost its blood.

Enthusiasm of the Martyr

Martyr is a source of enthusiasm. The most distinctive feature of a martyr is his ability of creating enthusiasm. It is the martyr who creates enthusiasm in the nation which has lost its enthusiasm, in particular its divine enthusiasm. And so, Islam always needs martyrs, because it always needs enthusiasm.

The Immortality of the Martyr

A scholar serves his society by his knowledge, in other words, his relationship with the society is through his knowledge. His individuality merges with the society through his knowledge like a drop of water merges with the sea. In reality, the scholar gives immortality to his knowledge by merging it with the

society. An inventor is related to the society by his invention. He makes himself immortal by merging his invention to the society. In the same way, an artist makes himself immortal by his art. A teacher of ethics makes himself immortal by teaching the society.

In the same way, the martyr makes himself immortal by his blood. He injects immortal blood in the veins of society. In other words, one gives immortality to his knowledge and thoughts, and that is the scholar; the other makes himself immortal by his invention or art, and that is the inventor and the artist; and still other makes himself immortal by his ethical teachings, and that is the ethic master. But a martyr makes himself immortal by his blood and by his whole existence, he injects immortal blood into the veins of society. In reality, every other group of the servants of humanity become immortal just through a part of their existence, whereas the martyr becomes immortal by sacrificing everything which he owns. The Prophet has said: “There is a goodness above and over every good deed except the death in the way of Allah. When one is killed in the way of Allah, then there is no goodness above it.”

The Intercession of the Martyr

A hadith says that Allah will accept the intercession of three groups on The Day of Judgement: 1. The Prophets. 2. The divine scholars. (In this hadith, narrated from our Imams, the word “successors of the Prophet” has not been used and so it can be understood that the term “scholars” means “divine scholars” which includes, in the first place, the Imams and then the religious scholars who are their true followers.) 3. The martyrs. So we see that after the prophets, the Imams and the divine scholars, the martyrs will be the intercessors on the day of judgement.

This intercession of the martyrs is a “intercession of guidance;” it is a materialization of the reality which has taken place in the world. After the prophets, the Imams and the divine scholars, the martyrs are the one who lead the people from darkness towards light. Imam ‘Ali says that Allah will present the martyrs on the day of judgement with such a glorified prestige and light that if the prophets were to pass in front of them on their horses, they would get down from their horses for the respect of the martyrs.

Lamenting on the Martyr

In the early period of Islam, the martyr who became most famous was Hamzah bin ‘Abdu ‘l-Muttalib, the uncle of the Prophet. He was martyred in Uhud and came to be known as Sayyid ash-Shuhada’ (the leader of the martyrs). Those who have visited Madinah must have also visited the grave of Hamzah in Uhud.

When Hamzah migrated from Mecca to Madinah, none of his family-members were with him. When the Prophet returned from the battle-field of Uhud, he saw that there were mourners in house of every martyr except Hamzah’s. He said, “But Hamzah, he has no one to lament for him.” When the companions heard this from the Prophet, they went to their homes and said that the Prophet was grieved to see that there was no one to mourn for Hamzah. On hearing this, the woman who were lamenting for

their sons, brothers or husbands went to the house of Hamzah and lamented for him. After this incident, whenever anyone wanted to lament for a martyr he would first go to the house of Hamzah and lament for him.

This episode shows that although Islam does not encourage the lamenting for a dead person, it encourages the people to lament for the martyr because the martyr has created enthusiasm, and weeping on the martyr is participating in that enthusiasm, harmonizing with his spirit, and moving on the same path.

After the tragedy of 'Ashura' and the martyrdom of Imam Husayn which over-shadowed all the previous martyrdoms, the title of Sayyid ash-Shuhada' (the leader of the martyrs) was given to Imam Husayn. Hamzah is still known as Sayyid ash-Shuhada' but whenever the title "leader of the martyrs" is used generally (without any particular name), it refers to Imam Husayn. In other words, Hamzah is the "leader of the martyrs" of his own time; but Imam Husayn is the "leader of the martyrs" of all times. Just as the virgin Maryam is "the leader of the women" of her own time, whereas Fatimah is "the leader of the women" of all times.

Prior to the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, the martyr Hamzah was the symbol of lamenting for the martyr; after the martyrdom of the Imam, this status was given to him.

The Rationale of Lamenting for the Martyr

I feel it necessary to explain the rationale behind the lamentation for the martyr. In our age many people, even some religious youngsters, object to the lamentation for Imam Husayn. I myself have been the target of objections many times. Some people have bluntly stated that this is a wrong thing. They claim that lamentation is result of a wrong idea and that it is a negative perception of martyrdom. They even claim that lamentation has some bad social results, it causes weakness and backwardness in society, and causes fall of the nation which practices it.

During my student life in Qum, I remember reading a book written by Muhammad Mas'ud, a famous writer of those days. In that book, the writer had discussed about the lamentation of the Shi'ahs for Imam Husayn and had compared it with the Christians' approach to the martyrdom (of course, according to their beliefs) of 'Isa. (As we know, the Christians celebrate the day 'Isa was "martyred", they do not lament or mourn for him.) Muhammad Mas'ud had written that one nation is lamenting for its martyr because it considers martyrdom a defeat, an unacceptable and sorrowful thing; whereas another nation celebrates the day its martyr was killed because it considers martyrdom a success, an acceptable thing and an honour. A nation which laments for its martyr for a thousand years will naturally be a helpless and coward nation. But the nation which celebrates the martyrdom of its martyr for two thousand years will surely be a strong and self-denying nation. One nation considers martyrdom a defeat and thus laments for it and which, altogether, brings weakness and cowardliness. But the other nation considers martyrdom a success and thus it celebrates, and this brings about a high morale and strength. This is

the summary of the arguments of all those who object against lamentation for the martyr.

I intend to analyse this problem and prove that the reality is completely the opposite of what they have said. Celebrating for martyrdom of a martyr is a result of the individualistic approach of Christianity; whereas lamenting for the martyr is a result of the social approach of Islam. Of course, I do not want to justify the acts of the general public against which I have objected myself. Here I intend to explain the reason why our Imams have emphasized so much on lamentation for Imam Husayn.

First, let us study the concept of death and martyrdom from the individualistic point of view. Is death, in se, an acceptable thing for an individual? Is it regarded as a success? Should the others regard a martyr's death as a success and a heroic deed?

We know that there were some schools of thought, and still might be, which believed that the relationship of man with the world (in other words, the relationship of soul with body) is similar to the relationship of a prisoner with a prison, or of a bird with a cage. Naturally, in the view of these schools of thought, death is tantamount to freedom and so, even suicide is allowed. Such a point of view is even ascribed to Mani who claimed to be a prophet. On bases of these views, death has a positive value, it should be acceptable for everyone, it should not be followed by sorrow and lamentation. Freedom from a prison and a cage are the cases of celebration not sorrow.

A second point of view says that death means non-existence, nothingness, and cessation of existence. Whereas life is existence. Naturally, a person having such a point of view will prefer life over death. Life in whatever form will be preferred to death. According to this point of view, death has a negative value.

A third point of view says that death does not mean "non-existence", death is just a transfer from this world to another. And the relationship of man with the world (or soul with the body) is not like the relationship of a prisoner with a prison or a bird with a cage; rather it is like the relationship of a student with his school or a farmer with his farm. It is true that a student has to spend many years far from his home, family and friends to complete his education in a college or university. But this is the only way by which he can spend the rest of his life respectfully in his society. Again, it is true that a farmer has to spend much of his time in his farm; but it the farm and its products which provide the sustenance for him and his family.

Those who have this last point of view can be of two types:

1. Their lives have been spent in useless works or in such works for which they might be punished in the world hereafter. It is natural for such people to fear death. Actually they fear the outcome of their own deeds.
2. Their lives have been spent in good works, and so they do not fear death; they are always ready and even longing for death. Their relationship with this world and the world here-after is like the relationship of a student with his college and home. The student who is still studying, wishes to go back home, longs

to see his family; but even then he will not leave his studies incomplete, he will suppress his desire to see his family because he knows that the only chance of increasing his knowledge (which will help him in the future life) is by studying now. The friends of Allah are just like this student; they long for the transfer to the next world – which can be accomplished only through death. Imam ‘Ali says, “If there wasn’t the specified period (of life) which Allah has ordained for them, their souls would not have remained in their bodies even for a winking of an eye, longing for the reward and fearing the punishment.”¹ But at the same time, the friends of Allah suppress the desire for death because they know that the only chance for work and spiritual development (which will be fruitful in the next eternal world) is during the life of this world and so they pray to Allah for a long life.

From this point of view, we see that longing for death is not contrary to wishing for long life.

The Qur’an says to the Jews (who claimed to be the only friends of Allah) that if you truly are the friends of Allah then death should be a desirable thing for you. Then the Qur’an goes on to say that these Jews will never wish to die because of their bad deeds; they know what is awaiting them in the next world.

The friends of Allah suppress their desire for long life only under two circumstances: First, when they feel that they have reached to the highest degree of perfection beyond which they cannot go; at a level where they feel that continuation of life may cause their degradation. Imam ‘Ali bin Husayn says, “O My Lord! Make me live as long as my life is in Your humble obedience; but if it is the hotbed for Shaytan, then make me die and take me towards Yourself.” Second, martyrdom. The friends of Allah will accept death in form of martyrdom without any condition. Because martyrdom combines in itself two desires of the friends of Allah:

1. It is a good deed and perfection beyond which there no good deed. 2. The transfer to the next world which is always the wish of the friends of Allah. This is the reason behind the happiness of ‘Ali when he comes to know that his death will take place in form of martyrdom. During the time between his being wounded and his death, many sayings have been heard from ‘Ali. In one of those saying, he says, “By Allah, nothing has befallen upon me by death which I did not like nor anything has happened which I disliked. I am just like one who was looking for water in a desert and came upon a spring or one who was looking for something which he found it.” At the dawn of 19th Ramadhan when Ibn Muljim struck his sword on the head of ‘Ali (who was in the state of prostration), the first two words which were heard from ‘Ali were: “By the Lord of the Ka‘bah, I have succeeded!”

Thus, we can conclude that from the individualistic point of view martyrdom is a success for the martyr, rather the best success and the most desirable wish. Imam Husayn said: “My grandfather said to me that, ‘You have a high position with Allah which you cannot achieve but by martyrdom.’” So martyrdom was the most desirable wish and the utmost perfection for Imam Husayn.

Up to now we have talked about the individualistic point of view about death and martyrdom and we came to the conclusion that death in form of martyrdom (which is surely a success for the martyr) should

be followed by celebration and merry-making. For the same reason we find Sayyid Ibn Ta'us, a famous Shi'ite scholar, saying that, "Had it not been for the instructions (we have from the Imams about lamentation for the martyrs), I would have celebrated on the anniversaries of our Imams' martyrdom." It is from this point of view that we think the Christians have a right to celebrate for the "martyrdom" of Jesus. Islam also fully agrees that martyrdom is nothing but a total success for the martyr.

From the Islamic point of view, we should also have a look at the other side of the coin. We should even study the martyrdom from the social point of view, i.e., martyrdom is a result of certain social circumstances and which also gives rise of some events itself. The reaction which the society shows in regard to the martyr is not only related to the martyr himself. In other words, in studying the social reaction we do not only consider the point that the martyrdom was a success for the martyr or not. The reaction which the society shows is actually the attitude of the society towards the cause of the martyr and towards those who were against him.

The relationship of a martyr with the society is of two types:

1. His relationship with the people – if he had been alive, they would have benefitted from him; but at present they have been deprived of this opportunity. 2. His relationship to those who had caused the corruption of the society and against whom he had taken stand and was at last killed by them.

Naturally the friends of the martyr, who have been deprived of his person, will consider the martyrdom as a sorrowful thing. By lamenting for the martyr they are actually feeling sorry for themselves. But for these same people, when they consider the circumstances which caused the martyrdom, martyrdom is a desirable thing. In this case, it is just like a successful operation or like amputation of a limb for preserving the whole body.

31

The lesson which the people should learn from martyrdom is that they should not let those circumstances take place again. In this aspect, martyrdom is described as an undesirable thing which should not have happened; and so they grieve and lament for the martyr. This aspect (that martyrdom should not have taken place) is also helpful in training the people not to be like those who brought about those circumstances. This can be seen in those people who have been brought up under the influence of the principle of lamenting for Imam Husayn – they never like to behave, in their speech and deeds, like Yazid or Ibn Ziyad.

Another lesson which the society has to learn from martyrdom is that such circumstances will probably take place again. And thus, martyrdom should be described as a heroic deed (which was performed voluntarily) so as to create the same spirit of the martyr in the people. In this aspect, we say that lamenting for the martyr means participating in his enthusiasm, harmonizing with his spirit and moving in his direction. It is from this aspect that we should study whether celebration, merry-making, dancing, drinking, etc are the means of participating in the enthusiasm of the martyr or lamenting for him?

People usually misunderstand the phenomenon of weeping. They think that weeping is always the result of pain and uneasiness; and that weeping and lamentation is an undesirable act. Laughter and weeping are apparently two peculiarities of human beings. There are the most apparent expressions of our feelings. There are many types of laughter and lamentation. I do not want to go into this discussion. Lamentation and weeping is always accompanied with tenderness, sympathy and agitation. Everyone is familiar with the tears of joy and happiness. In the state of weeping, one feels more united with his beloved. Laughter and merry-making mostly have a personal and individual aspect. Whereas weeping and lamentation mostly have an aspect of self-denial and uniting with the beloved one. In other words, laughter is like sexual passion whereas weeping is like love.

By his great personality and heroic martyrdom Imam Husayn has become the ruler of the hearts and feelings of millions of people. If someone, particularly the religious leaders, use this great source of feelings and harmonize the feeling of the people with the spirit of Imam Husayn – the world could easily be reformed.

The secret of the immortality of Imam Husayn is that his heroic deed is being sustained from the logical side (as it had a reason and logic behind it) as well as from the deep feelings of the people. The Imams who emphasized so much on lamenting for Imam Husayn have actually given a very wise order. It is this lamentation which makes the people imbibe the revolution of Imam Husayn into their hearts. Of course, provided the orators of the commemorative gatherings for Imam Husayn make good use of this source.

The Grave of the Martyr

When her father taught her the method of performing tasbeeh, Fatimah went to the grave of her uncle, Hamzah bin ‘Abdu ’l-Muttalib, and made a rosary from the earth of the martyr’s grave. This itself has a significance (tasbeeh is a glorification of Allah by saying Allahu Akbar 34 times, al-hamdu lil-Lah 33 times, and Subhana Allah 33 times. We recite the tasbeeh after every prayer and at the time of going to bed).

What is its significance? The earth of a martyr’s grave is sacred. To recite some words of praising for Allah, one needs a rosary; and it doesn’t make any difference whether the beads of a rosary are made of stone, wood or earth. But we make the rosary from the earth of the martyr’s grave. This is a tribute to the martyr and martyrdom; it is a symbol of recognising the sacredness of martyrdom. After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, whenever someone wanted the earth of a martyr’s grave, he would go to the grave of Imam Husayn bin ‘Ali (peace be upon them).

When we want to pray, we are told that it is not permitted to do sajdah (prostration) on anything but earth or those things which grow from the earth (and are not used as food or clothes). So we usually carry a tablet made of earth with us. Now that we have to carry a tablet made of earth for performing sajdah, our leaders have said that it is preferable to have a tablet made from the earth of a martyr’s grave. Here also the preference goes to the earth of Karbala. It means that while praying you have to place your forehead on earth; your prayers will be correct by place your forehead on any earth whatsoever. But by placing

your forehead on the earth which is related to a martyr and which is mixed with the blood of a martyr, the reward of your prayers will increase manifold.

There is a hadith from our Imam that “do sajdah on (the tablet made from the earth of) my grandfather Husayn bin ‘Ali’s grave as the prayer in which you performed sajdah on that sacred earth will penetrate the seven veils (towards the Heaven).”

The Eve of ‘Ashurah, The Eve of the Martyrs

For what have we gathered here tonight? To whom is this night related? Tonight, the eve of ‘Ashurah, is the night of the martyrs of Karbala. In these days, it is a normal practice to name a day for some people or some group; for example, we have mother’s day, teacher’s day, etc. But no nation has specified a day as martyr’s day. In Islam we have a day which is known as the martyr’s day; and that day is the day of ‘Ashurah. And tonight, which is the eve of ‘Ashurah, is the night of the martyrs.

I have already mentioned that the logic of a martyr is a combination of the logics of a reformer and a gnostic. Combination of two personalities, a gnostic and a reformer, gives birth to a martyr like Muslim bin ‘Awsajah, Habib bin Mazahir, Zuhayr bin Qayn. Of course, the martyrs also have different ranks, not all of them are on the same level.

The Martyrs of Karbala From Husayn’s Point of View

In the eve of ‘Ashurah, Imam Husayn made a statement which shows the great prestige and high rank of the martyrs of Karbala. The martyrs are distinguished among all the good and pious servants of Allah, and the martyrs of Karbala are distinguished among all the martyrs. Some of those people, who had joined Imam Husayn between Mecca and Karbala, left the Imam before the 9th of Muharram. Now only the faithful and steadfast companions remained with him. In the eve of ‘Ashurah, Imam Husayn decided to test his remaining companions for the last time. And all of them were successful in this test.

In the evening, he gathered all his companions in a tent. He gave a very profound and lucid speech. The speech was related to the event which had taken place that same evening. As you all know that in the evening of the 9th of Muharram (which is known as the day of Tasu‘a) the army of Yazid started to advance towards the camps of Imam Husayn. The Imam sent his companions to see what was the matter with Yazid’s army. On coming to know that they had orders from Kufa to commence attack on Husayn’s small caravan, the Imam asked them to give a respite for one night so that they could worship their Lord. So when the Imam had gathered his companions, it was clear in everyone’s mind that tomorrow will be the day of confrontation and sacrifice.

Imam Zayn Al-‘Abidin says that I was in the camp which was next to the tent in which my father had gathered his companions. Then my father said: “I praise Allah with the best praise and thank Him in the moments of happiness and distress. O my Lord! I thank you for blessing us with prophethood, teaching

us the Qur'an and making us knowledgeable in religion." The one who steps on the right path is thankful to Allah in all the circumstances. As long as he is able to perform his duty, no distress or hardship is unbearable for him.

When Imam Husayn was coming towards Karbala he met the famous poet Farazdaq. The Imam asked him about the situation of Kufa. When Farazdaq explained the situation of Kufa to the Imam, he said, "If the decreed affairs are in our favour, we thank Allah for his blessings and ask Him to help us in thanking Him. And if the decreed affairs are not as we hoped, then still the one whose intentions are right and who is a pious man, he does not lose anything."

By saying, "I thank Allah in the moments of happiness and distress," the Imam wants to say that I have seen many happy days in my life, like the days when as a child I used to sit on the lap, and on the shoulders, of the Prophet. Those were the happiest moments of my childhood. I thank Allah for those days and I also thank Him for these days which are full of distress; because as long as I am able to perform my duty, I do not see any distress in them.

Then Imam Husayn gave the important testimony about his family and friends. He said, "I do not know of any companions better or more faithful than my companions, nor do I know of any family-member more righteous, more aware of family ties and better than my family." The Imam wants to say that his companions were even better than the martyred companions of the Prophet; better than those companions of Imam 'Ali who were martyred in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrwan – because the circumstances under which the companions of Imam Husayn sacrificed their lives for him were more significant and also dangerous than the circumstances under which the companions of the Prophet and Imam 'Ali gave their lives. This was the tribute which Imam Husayn paid to his companions and family-members.

Then he said: I clearly declare to my companions and family-members that these people (i.e., Yazid's army) do not have anything against any one of you. They want me to pledge allegiance to Yazid. They do not want anything from you. So now I declare to you, who have pledged allegiance to me, that I lift the obligation which you have to me as an Imam; the enemy is not preventing you from leaving this place and I also have lifted the obligation which you had to me, so now you are free. Any one who wants to leave may do so." Then he faced the companions and said, "Each one of you may take a member of my family with himself."

This is the time to see the perfection which the companions of Husayn had achieved. By leaving Imam Husayn they faced no danger from the enemies and the obligation which they had towards the Imam had also been lifted. Now they were completely free. But we see that none of them left the Imam and each one of the family-members and the companions declared their loyalty to the Imam in the most elegant way.

Two Sources of Pride for Imam Husayn

In the eve and on the day of 'Ashurah, Imam Husayn had two reasons for pride and happiness: 1. His family-members, ranging from the children to the elders, had stood by his side up to the last moment. 2. His faithful companions who had no defect whatsoever. The Imam was sure that no one will desert him; and truly none of them left Husayn and joined the enemies, rather many soldiers of Yazid's army deserted during the eve and the day of 'Ashurah and joined Imam Husayn. Hurr bin Yazid ar-Riyahi was one of them; about thirty soldiers had deserted the enemy during the eve of 'Ashurah alone. These were the causes for Husayn's pride and happiness.

In the eve of 'Ashurah when Imam Husayn had lifted the obligation of his family and companions to him, all of them declared their loyalty to him and refused to leave him. They said, "O our master! Are you permitting us to leave you alone among these enemies? Can we leave you alone?! No! By Allah, we will never leave you." One of them said, "If they kill me, burn my corpse, blow my ashes in air and then I am raised again from death and again I am killed in your cause, and this goes on for seventy times – still I will not desert you; whereas I know that I have to die once only." The other said, "I wished I had thousands lives and I would have sacrificed all of them for you."

The first person who declared his loyalty was the Imam's brother, 'Abbas. The others followed him and used almost the same expressions to declare their loyalty to the Imam.

This was the last time that Imam Husayn had put the loyalty of his companions and family-members to test. After they all had declared their loyalty, the Imam uncovered the realities of the next day. He said, "All of you are going to be martyred tomorrow." All of them said, "Praise be to Allah the Lord of the universe."

If someone looks at this event without grasping the logic of the martyr, he will say, "Now that Imam Husayn is to be killed then why should these people also remain with him to be killed. Why did they stay with the Imam? Why did the Imam allow them to stay with him? Why didn't he order them to leave him alone?" If a person without the logic of a martyr had been in place of Imam Husayn he would surely have said that there is no benefit in your remaining here, so it is wajib for you to leave. But the Imam did not do so because the way of thinking of a martyr is different from an ordinary person. Sometimes, the martyr has to sacrifice his life for creating divine enthusiasm in the people, for injecting blood to the veins of the dead society, for enlightening the human beings and for giving life to humanity. And the case of the martyrs of the Karbala was the same.

Martyrdom is not only for defeating the enemy; it also takes place for creating zeal in the people. If the martyrs of Karbala had not sacrificed their lives, how would it have been possible to see the religious zeal and enthusiasm which we see today? Although the nucleus of the martyrdom of Karbala was Imam Husayn himself, the martyrdom of the companions glorified the martyrdom of Husayn even more. If they had not sacrificed their lives, the martyrdom of Imam Husayn would not have had such significance,

glory and honour which keeps it alive for thousands of years for the people to gather together, commemorate it, learn from it, and move in the same direction.

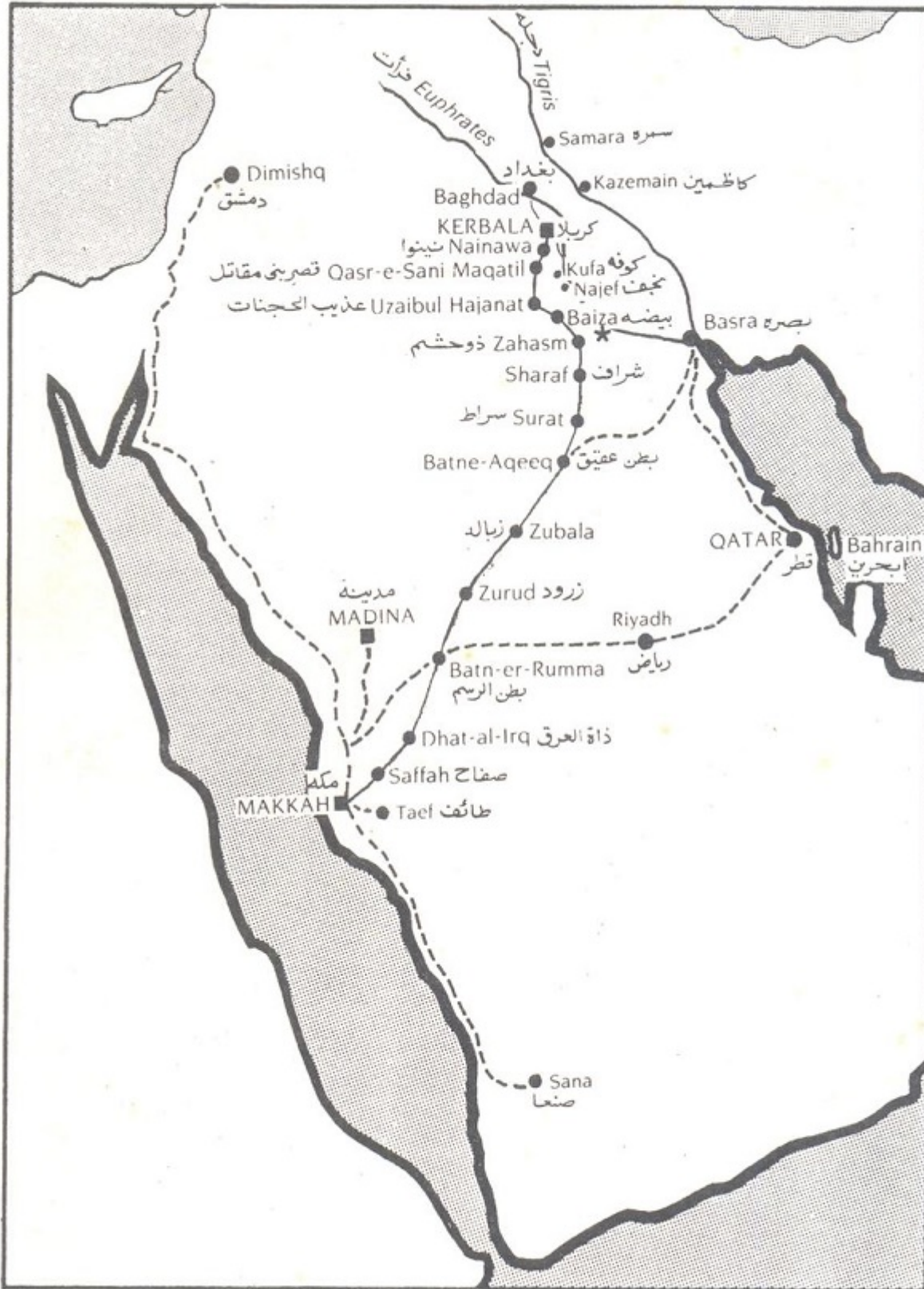
[1.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, sermon 193

Route Taken By Imam Husayn From Makkah To Karbala



Map Courtesy Of Mohammadi Trust Of U.K.

Image:



The Martyrs Of Karbala

Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

This and the next two articles have been taken from The Light (Dar-es-Salaam) vol. XI No. 6 (1977) and vol. XIV No. 2 (1980).

This article, giving list of, and some details about, the martyrs of Karbala, is based on Ibsaru 'l- 'Ain of Shaykh Muhammad as-Samawi, Bihar Al-Anwar of 'Allamah Majlisi, Manaqib of Ibn Shahr 'Ashub and Muntaha 'l- 'Amal of Shaykh 'Abbas Qummi. This list includes those martyrs also who sacrificed their lives for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) in Kufa and Basrah shortly before or after the tragedy of Karbala.

Banu Hashim

All the martyrs of Banu Hashim should more correctly be called Banu Abi Talib, because it was only the descendants of Abu Talib who gave their lives on the altar of Islam in Karbala; no other family from Banu Hashim participated in that supreme sacrifice (dhibh 'azim). Various narratives put their number from seventeen to thirty. A more reliable list would be as follows:

A) Children of Amiru 'l-Mu'minin 'Ali (a.s.):

1. Imam Husayn (a.s.).
2. 'Abbas.
3. 'Uthman.
4. Ja'far.
5. 'Abdullah.
6. Ibrahim.
7. 'Umar. (His case is doubtful.)
8. Muhammad al-Asghar. (Another tradition says that he was sick and was not martyred.)

B) Children of Imam Hasan (a.s.):

1. Ahmad (Abu Bakr).
2. 'Abdullah.
3. Qasim.
4. Hasan Muthanna was seriously wounded but later recovered.

C) Children of Imam Husayn (a.s.):

1. 'Ali al-Akbar.
2. 'Ali al-Asghar ('Abdullah ar-Radhi').

D) Children and grandchildren of 'Aqil:

1. Muslim bin 'Aqil (martyred at Kufa).
2. Ja'far bin 'Aqil.
3. 'Abdu 'r-Rahman bin 'Aqil.
4. Muhammad (or Abu 'Ubaydullah) bin Muslim bin 'Aqil.

5. ‘Abullah bin Muslim.
6. Ja‘far bin Muhammad bin ‘Aqil.
7. Muhammad bin Abi Sa‘id bin ‘Aqil.

Other two children of Muslim bin ‘Aqil were martyred at Kufa one year after Karbala; and no one remained alive from the progeny of ‘Aqil.

E) Grandchildren of Ja‘far at– Tayyar:

1. ‘Awn bin ‘Abdullah bin Ja‘far.
2. Muhammad bin ‘Abdullah bin Ja‘far.
3. ‘Ubaydullah bin ‘Abdullah bin Ja‘far. (His case is doubtful.)

Sahabah

Five companions (sahabah) of the Holy Prophet sacrificed their lives to help Imam Husayn (a.s.). They are:

1. Anas bin Harth al–Kahili.
2. Habib bin Muzahir.
3. Muslim bin ‘Awsajah.
4. Hani bin ‘Urwah al–Muradi, (age: more than 80 years; martyred at Kufa).
5. ‘Abdullah bin Yaqtur, (a foster–brother of Imam Husayn; martyred at Kufa).

Slaves

Sixteen slaves or ex–slaves attained the glory of martyrdom with Imam Husayn (a.s.). Their names are:–

1. Nasr bin Abi Naizar (ex–slave of Imam ‘Ali).
2. Sa‘d bin Harth (ex–slave of Imam ‘Ali).
3. Munjih bin Sahm (ex–slave of Imam Hasan).
4. Aslam bin ‘Amr (ex–slave of Imam Husayn).
5. Qarib bin ‘Abdullah Du‘ali (ex–slave of Imam Husayn).
6. Harth bin Nabhan (ex–slave of Hamzah).
7. John bin Huwai (ex–slave of Abu Dharr al–Ghifari).
8. Sa‘id or Sa‘d (slave of ‘Umar bin Khalid as–Saidawi).
9. Nafi‘ or Rafi‘ (slave of Muslim Azdi).
10. Salim (slave of Bani Madaniyyah al–Kalbi).
11. Salim (slave of ‘Amir al–‘Abdi).
12. Shawdhab (ex–slave of Shabib ash–Shakiri).

13. Shabib (slave of Harth Jabiri).
14. Wadhih (slave of Harth Salmami).
15. Sulayman (ex-slave of Imam Husayn. He was martyred in Basrah.)
16. Zahir bin 'Amr (ex-slave of 'Amr bin al-Humuq al-Khuza'i).

Martyred after Imam Husayn

Four persons were martyred in Karbala after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.). They were:–

1. Suwayd bin 'Amr bin Abi 'l-Muta'. He was unconscious having been fatally wounded at Karbala. When the din of jubilation of Yazid's army, mingled with the cries of the family of Imam Husayn reached his ears, he regained consciousness. He had hidden a knife in his socks. With it he attacked the enemy and was killed.
2. Muhammad bin Abi Sa'id bin 'Aqil. This innocent child was a nephew of Muslim bin 'Aqil. After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn when he saw the the women crying, he took a stick in his hand and came out of the tent, looking to right and left nervously. Laqit al-Juhani mercilessly killed him then and there. His name has already been mentioned in I.
3. Sa'd bin Harth;
4. and his brother 'Abdu 'l-Hatuff. They were in the army of Yazid. When the Imam was beheaded and they heard the anguished cries of the family of the Imam, suddenly the spark of faith came to life in their hearts and they attacked their own army. They fought bravely and were killed.

Wounded and Died Afterwards

Three helpers of the Imam were seriously wounded and afterwards succumbed to death. They were:–

1. Sawwar bin Mun'im Abi 'Umayr an-Nahm. He was seriously wounded in the first attack and died as a result of those wounds within six months.
2. Muwaqqa' bin Thamamah. He was also wounded seriously and then arrested. He died by end of the year.
3. 'Amr bin 'Abdullah al-Hamadani al-Jundu'iy. He fell on the ground seriously wounded, again was struck on head by a sword. His tribemen took him away but he could not recover and died by end of the year.

With Family

Apart from the Banu Hashim, only three companions of Imam Husayn had come to Karbala with their

families:–

1. Junadah bin Harth Salmani: He and his family remained with the Imam. When he was martyred, his widow told her child, ‘Amr, to go and sacrifice his life for the Imam. The Imam refused to allow him to fight, saying: “His father has just been killed in this battle; his mother, perhaps, would not like to part with her son also.” The child answered: “But it is my mother who has sent me to fight.” In the end, he also laid his life in the way of Allah.
2. Wahab bin ‘Abdullah al–Kalbi. He had accompanied the Imam from Bi‘r Jud. His mother and wife were with him. When he was fighting, his mother was there to exhort him to do his best. When he was killed, his wife went to his side and she was also killed. She was the only woman martyr of Karbala.
3. Muslim bin ‘Awsajah. He also came to the Imam with his family. When he was martyred, his maid rushed out from the tent, crying “Oh Muslim!” (See II)

Fathers and Sons

Five martyrs were killed in Karbala together with their sons:–

1. Imam Husayn (a.s.) with his sons, ‘Ali al–Akbar and ‘Ali al–Asghar (‘Abdullah). (See I)
2. Junadah bin Harth Salmani with his son, ‘Amr. (See VI)
3. Zayd (or Yazid) bin Thubayt al–Qaysi al–Basri, with his sons, ‘Abdullah and ‘Ubaydullah.
4. ‘Abdullah al–‘A‘idhi with his son, Mujamma‘.
5. Mas‘ud bin Hajjaj with his son, ‘Abdu ‘r–Rahman.
6. ‘Amr bin Khalid as–Saydawi with his son, Khalid.

There was one martyr whose father had sacrificed his life helping the father of Imam Husayn. He was ‘Ammar son of Hasan bin Shurayh at– Ta‘i. His father was among the martyr of Siffin.

There were also two martyrs whose father was martyred in Kufa in the cause of Imam Husayn. They were ‘Abdullah and Muhammad, sons of Muslim bin ‘Aqil. (Muslim’s two other sons were arrested after Karbala and were killed one year later.)

Brothers

There were many martyrs in Karbala who were killed with their brothers:–

- 1–7. Imam Husayn and his six brothers: ‘Abbas, ‘Uthman, Ja‘far, ‘Abdullah al–Akbar, Muhammad (who is known as Abu Bakr) and Ibrahim.

- 8–9. ‘Ali al–Akbar and ‘Ali al–Asghar (‘Abdullah), sons of Imam Husayn.
- 10–12. Qasim and his two brothers, Ahmad (Abu Bakr) and ‘Abdullah, sons of Imam Hasan.
- 13–15. Muslim and his two brothers, ‘Abdu ’r–Rahman and Ja‘far, sons of ‘Aqil.
- 16–17. ‘Awn and Muhammad, sons of ‘Abdullah bin Ja‘far. (All the above names were mentioned in I.)
- 18–20. Qasit, Kurdus (or Karsh) and Muqsit, sons of Zahir (or Zuhayr) at–Taghlibi.
- 21–22. ‘Abdullah and ‘Ubaydullah, sons Zayd (or Yazid) bin Thubayt al–Qaysi. (See VII)
- 23–24. ‘Abdullah and ‘Abdu ’r–Rahman, sons of ‘Urwah bin Hiraq al–Ghifari.
- 25–26. Nu‘man and Julas (or Hulas), sons of ‘Amr ar–Rasibi.
- 27–28. Sa‘d and his brother ‘Abdu ’l–Hatuff, sons of Harth al–Ansari. (See IV)
- 29–30. Malik and Sayf Jabiri. (There were half–brothers.)

Other Martyrs

So far, names of about eighty martyrs have been enumerated. Now, the names of remaining martyrs are given in order of the Arabic alphabets. This list is based on Ziyarat an–Nahiyah and other traditions:–

1. Aslam bin Kuthayr al–Azdi.
2. Bishr bin ‘Umar al–Hadhrami.
3. Jabalah bin ‘Ali ash–Shaybani.
4. Jundab bin Hijr al–Khawlani.
5. Hubab bin Harith as–Salmani al–Azdi.
6. Hajjaj bin Masruq al–Ju‘fi.
7. Hajjaj bin Zayd Sa‘di.
8. Hurr bin Yazid ar–Riyahi.
9. Handhalah bin Sa‘d (or As‘ad) ash–Shabami (or ash–Shaybani).
10. Huwai bin Malik adh–Dhabu‘i.
11. Zuhayr bin Bishr al–Khath‘ami.
12. Zuhayr bin Sulaym al–Azdi.
13. Zuhayr bin Qayn al–Bajalli.
14. Zayd bin Ma‘qil al–Ju‘fi.
15. Sa‘d bin ‘Abdullah al–Hanafi.
16. Sayf bin ‘Abdullah bin Malik.
17. Shabib bin al–Harith bin Sari’.
18. Shabib bin ‘Abdullah an–Nahshali.
19. Dirghamah bin Malik.
20. ‘Abis bin Abi Shabib ash–Shakiri.
21. ‘Amir bin Muslim.
22. ‘Abdu ’r–Rahman bin ‘Abdullah bin al–Kudar al–Arhabi.
23. ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umayr al–Kalbi.
24. ‘Ammar bin Abi Salamah al–Hamdani.

25. ‘Ammar bin Hasan bin Shurayh at- Ta’i.
26. ‘Amr bin Dhubai‘ah Dhubu’i.
27. ‘Amr bin Qarazah al-Ansari.
28. ‘Amr bin Khalid as-Saydawi.
29. ‘Umar bin Jundab al-Hadhrami.
30. (Abu Thamamah) ‘Umar bin ‘Abdullah as-Sa’idi (as-Saydawi).
31. ‘Imran bin Ka’b bin Harith al-Ashja’i.
32. Qasim bin Habib al-Azdi.
33. Qa’nab bin ‘Amr at-Tamri.
34. Qays bin Mushir as-Saydawi (martyred at Basrah).
35. Kananah bin ‘Atiq.
36. Malik bin ‘Abd bin Sari’.
37. Nafi’ bin Hilal bin Nafi’ al-Bajalli (or al-Jamali).
38. Nu‘man bin ‘Ajlan al-Ansari.
39. Yazid bin Hasin al-Hamdani.
40. Yazid bin Ziyad bin Muhasir al-Kindi.
41. Adham bin Umayyah.
42. Umayyah bin Sa’d at- Ta’i.
43. Bakr bin Hai at-Taymi.
44. Hajjaj bin Badr Basri.
45. Sayf bin ‘Abdullah al-‘Abdi.
46. ‘Abdullah bin Bishr.

In this way we get a golden roll of about 120 martyrs who sacrificed their lives “in the way of Allah”, in the battle of Karbala or shortly before or after that supreme encounter between Iman and kufr.

Their sacrifice is unique in the history; their devotion to Islam and their loyalty to Imam Husayn (a.s.) were unparalleled. Our words cannot do justice to their pristine faith and sincere deeds. It was left to Imam Husayn to appreciate their faith and loyalty in these words: “By Allah, I do not find a family of any prophet or his successor having more filial piety than my family-members; nor companions of any prophet or his successor more loyal than my companions.”

With humility and reverence, we salute them, as we have been taught by our Imams:-

Peace be upon you, O saints of Allah and His beloved ones; Peace be upon you, O chosen ones of Allah, and His dear ones; Peace be upon you, O helpers of the religion of Allah;

Peace be upon you, O helpers of the Messenger of Allah; Peace be upon you, O helpers of the Commander of the faithfuls; Peace be upon you, O helpers of Fatimah az-Zahra’, the lady of the woman of the worlds;

Peace be upon you, O helpers of Abu Muhammad, Hasan bin 'Ali, the friend of Allah, the pure, the sincere;

Peace be upon you, O helpers of Abu 'Abdillah (al-Husayn); May my father and mother be your ransom;

Pure and clean were you, and pure and clean became the earth wherein you are buried;

You achieved the great success;

Would Allah I had been with you to share the success with you.

Now we would like to mention two things which may be of interest to our readers.

The Martyrs of the First Attack

The following companions of Imam Husayn (a.s.) were martyred when the army of Yazid, sometime after the encounter had begun, attacked with full force, abandoning the Arab custom of individual encounters:

–

1. Adham bin Umayyah.
2. Aslam bin 'Amr.
3. Umayyah bin Sa'd at- Ta'i.
4. Bishr bin 'Umar al-Hadhrami.
5. Bakr bin Hai at-Taymi.
6. Jabalah bin 'Ali ash-Shaybani.
7. Julas (or Hulas) bin 'Amr ar-Rasibi.
8. Junadah bin Ka'b (see VI)
9. Jundab bin Hijr (or Hujayr) al-Khawlani.
10. Juwayn bin Malik at-Taymi (or Dhabu'i?).
11. Habab bin 'Amir at-Taymi (?).
12. Hajjaj bin Badr Basri.
13. Hubab bin Harith
14. Handhalah bin 'Amr (or Sa'd) ash-Shabami.
15. Zahir bin 'Amr.
16. Zahir, slave of 'Amr bin al-Humuq al-Khuza'i.
17. Zuhayr bin Bishr (or Bashir) al-Khath'ami.
18. Zuhayr bin Sulaym.
19. Salim bin 'Amr.
20. Sa'd bin Harth.
21. Sayf bin 'Abdullah al-'Abdi.
22. Sulayman.

23. Sawwar bin Abi 'Umayr an-Nahmi; (according to other traditions he was wounded and died with six months). See V.
24. Sayf bin Malik an-Namiri.
25. Dhirghamah bin Malik at-Taghlabi.
26. 'Amir bin Muslim al-'Abdi.
27. 'Abdu 'r-Rahman al-Arhabi.
28. 'Abdullah bin Zayd (or Yazid) al-Basri.
29. 'Abdullah bin 'Urwah al-Ghifari.
30. 'Abdullah bin 'Umayr.
31. 'Ayidh bin Mujamma' bin 'Abdullah al-'Ayidhi (doubtful).
32. 'Abdu 'r-Rahman bin Mas'ud bin Hajjaj at-Taymi.
33. 'Abdullah bin Bishr.
34. 'Amr bin Dhubi'a bin Qays Dhubu'i.
35. 'Ubaydullah bin Zayd (or Yazid) al-Basri.
36. 'Ammar bin Abi Salmah ad-Dalani.
37. 'Ammar bin Hasan bin Shurayh at- Ta'i.
38. 'Amr Junda'i.
39. 'Amr bin Mushi'a.
40. 'Imran bin Ka'b bin Harith Ashja'i.
41. Qarib bin 'Abdullah.
42. Qasim bin Habib al-Azdi.
43. Qa'nab bin 'Amr an-Namri.
44. Qasit bin Zahir (or Zuhayr).
45. Kananah bin 'Atiq at-Taghlibi.
46. Mujamma' 'A'idhi.
47. Mas'ud bin Hajjaj.
48. Muslim bin Kathir.
49. Munjih bin Sahm.
50. Muqist bin Zuhayr at-Taghlabi.
51. Nasr bin Abi Naizar.
52. Nu'man bin 'Amr ar-Rasibi.
53. Nu'aym bin 'Ajlal al-Ansari.
54. Yazid bin Thubayt.
55. (Abu 'Amr) Ziyad bin Gharib al-Hanzali.
- 56-61. Six slaves of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

Heads of the Martyrs

'Umar bin Sa'd, the commander of Yazid's army, sent the head of Imam Husayn (a.s.) to Kufa the day of

‘Ashurah with Khawli and Hamid bin Muslim. Then other martyrs were beheaded and the heads were sent with Shimr bin Dhi ‘1–Jawshan.

According to Muhammad bin Abi Talib, the heads were divided among various tribes in the army of Yazid, so that they might get rewards and appreciation from Ibn Ziyad and Yazid. So far as it is known, the following tribes got the heads as follows: Kinda (13); Hawazin (12 or 20); Tamim (17 or 19); Asad (16 or 9); Madhhij (7); other tribes (13).

The author of Ibsaru ‘l– ‘Ain says that heads of all the martyrs were severed, except the head of the infant child of the Imam, because the Imam had buried him in a grave dug by his sword; also, the body of Hurr was not beheaded because his tribemen (Banu Tamim) objected and removed his body far from other martyrs.

The heads of Muslim bin ‘Aqil and Hani bin ‘Urwah were sent to Syria before the heads of the martyrs of Karbala reached Kufa.

The Family Of Imam Husayn

Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) had married five times. Here is a short life–sketch of his wives.

1. Shahr Banu

Shahr Banu was a daughter of Yazd Gurd, the last emperor of Iran. She and her sister, Gayhan Banu, were sent to Arabia by Hurayth bin Jabir, governor of Persia in the time of Amiru ‘1–Mu‘minin ‘Ali. Shahr Banu was married to Imam Husayn and Gayhan Banu to Muhmmmad bin Abi Bakr, who was brought up by ‘Ali (peace be upon him).

Imam Zayn al–‘Abidin (peace be upon him) was Shahr Banu’s son. He was born in the year 38 A.H., in Kufa, and Shahr Banu died within ten days of the birth of Imam Zaynu ‘l–‘Abidin. He was brought up by a maid of Imam Husayn whom he addressed as ‘mother’. The stories in which Shahr Banu is shown present in Karbala have no basis at all.

Gayhan Banu gave birth to Qasim, whose daughter, Umm Farwah, was married to Imam Muhammad Baqir (peace be upon him) and she was the mother of Imam Ja‘far as–Sadiq (peace be upon him).

2. Rubab

Rubab was a daughter of Imra'ū 'l-Qays who was the chief of the tribe of Kinda. One of her elder sisters, Mahyat, was married to Amiru 'l-Mu'minin 'Ali (peace be upon him) and died in the life of Imam 'Ali.

Rubab was mother of Sakinah and 'Abdullah (known as 'Ali al-Asghar). Imam was very fond of Sakinah (whose real name was Aminah or Amimah).

Rubab was present in Karbala and suffered all the agonies undergone by the family of the Prophet. She was arrested and imprisoned together with other members of the family. After returning to Madinah, she would sit under hot sun, never seeking any shelter. Thus mourning the deaths of her dear ones, she died after one year.

3. Laila

Laila was daughter of Abu Murra, son of 'Urwah bin Mas'ud ath-Thaqafi. Her mother was Maymunah, daughter of Abu Sufyan. Thus she was a cousin of Yazid. Her aunt Umm Sa'id, daughter of 'Urwah, was one of the wives of Amiru 'l-Mu'minin 'Ali. Laila was mother of 'Ali Akbar. Her name has not been mentioned in the old books written about Karbala. Add to this the fact that her name was never mentioned in the court of Yazid and nobody blamed him that he had imprisoned his own cousin. Also, we hear that 'Ali Akbar was brought up by Zaynab, the sister of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). From these pointers, the scholars have concluded that Laila was not alive at the time of the tragedy of Karbala.

4. Umm Ishaq

Umm Ishaq was daughter of Talhah bin 'Ubaydullah Taimi. She was first married to Imam Hasan and she gave birth to two sons and one daughter. When Imam Hasan was poisoned, he told Imam Husayn to marry Umm Ishaq. Thus, some time after the death of Imam Hasan, she was married to Imam Husayn, and gave birth to Fatimah Kubra.

When Hasan Muthanna, the second son of Imam Hasan, approached Imam Husayn so that the Imam might arrange his marriage, the Imam told him: "My son, select either of my daughters, Fatimah or Sakinah." Hasan Muthanna blushed and could not answer. So the Imam said: "I select Fatimah Kubra for you, because she resembles my mother, Fatimah." Thus Fatimah Kubra was married to Hasan Muthanna and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. One of their sons, 'Abdullah, and two grandsons, Muhammad and Ibrahim, are well-known in Islamic history; they fought Mansur, the 'Abbaside king, and were killed. The tortures inflicted upon the descendants of Imam Hasan, owing to this opposition, are well-known to the students of Islamic history.

Hasan Muthanna was present in Karbala. He was seriously wounded and was put among the bodies of

the martyrs. After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, when sound of drums and the cries of rejoicings reached his ears, he regained consciousness. He found a broken sword in the battle-field and tried to fight the enemy again. But the loss of blood had made him so weak that the enemy overpowered him and he was arrested. Asma' bin Kharijah, a man from the tribe of his mother, rescued him from his fellow-mercenaries of Yazid. He later recovered from the injuries and returned to Madinah. After about fifteen years, when Hasan Muthanna died in Madinah, Fatimah Kubra erected a tent on his grave in Jannatu '1-Baqi', and remained there for exactly one year.

Then she returned to her house.

These historical facts leave no room for the myth of marriage, on the day of 'Ashurah, between Qasim bin Hasan and Fatimah Kubra. As Shaykh 'Abbas Qummi wrote in Muntaha 'l- 'Amal, the story-tellers, before reciting that story, should find out a daughter for Imam Husayn whom he could give in marriage to Qasim, in Karbala.

5. Qudha'iyah

She was from the tribe of Qudha'ah. Her name is not known. She gave birth to one child, Ja'far, who died in childhood.

Children

All historians agree about these six children: 1) Imam Zaynu 'l-'Abidin. 2) 'Ali al-Akbar. 3) 'Ali al-Asghar. 4) Ja'far. 5) Fatimah; and 6) Sakinah.

Some historians, however, have added some more names. Kamalu 'd-din Muhammad bin Talhah ash-Shafi'i in his book, Matalibu 's-Su'ul, counts 'Abdullah and 'Ali al-Asghar as two sons and adds the names of one more son, Muhammad, and one more daughter, Zaynab.

Add to this the daughter who died in the prison of Yazid in Damascus, whose name, as written on the tomb, was Ruqaiyyah. Also, some unauthentic narratives mention one daughter, Fatimah Sughra, who, it is said, was left in Madinah because she was ill when Imam Husayn left Madinah for Mecca. Thus we get the names of six sons (two of which are doubtful) and five daughters (two or three of which are doubtful).

Only Imam Zayn Al-'Abidin and Fatimah Kubra had any children.

Hind Or Uraynab, A Good Example Of Umayyad Propaganda

Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

Mu'awiyah had established a full-fledged department of propaganda. It was their duty to invent virtues and excellence (fadha'il) of Banu Umayyah and their partisans; and forge and publish bad things about the Hashimites in general and Imam 'Ali in particular. The activities of this department are well-known; no particular reference is needed for those who have studied Islamic history. Some of the orders given to this department during Mu'awiyah's reign are quoted below from al-Ihtijaj of at-Tabrasi for further information:—

“The announcer of Mu'awiyah announced: I have removed my protection from him who narrates any tradition of the Prophet concerning the virtues of 'Ali and the superiority of his family members (Ahl Al-Bayt)... And Mu'awiyah wrote (a circular) to all his governors in all the towns: Do not accept evidence of any Shi'ah of 'Ali and Ahl Al-Bayt; and find out among you the partisans of 'Uthman and those who love his family-members and friends, and those who believe in his superiority and virtues...

seat them near you and honour them; and note down the name and tribe of him who narrates his virtues. They did so; until the stories and tales about 'Uthman became numerous, and they had forged them... Then he wrote to his governors: Verily the traditions about 'Uthman have increased and spread in every town. Now ask the people to narrate about Mu'awiyah, his superiority and precedence, because this is dearer to our heart...

“And worst of all in this respect were the reciters (qurra' of the Qur'an) who showed piety and reverence (of religion); and they lied, forged and invented tales. By this they carried favour with governors and judges, who made them seat near themselves; in this manner, they collected riches, properties and buildings. This continued till their tales became “fact” and “truth” in the eyes of public. Thus they narrated those invented tales and traditions, accepted them, learnt them and taught them; they loved those who accepted them and hated those who rejected those traditions or had any doubt about them. Therefore, the whole group accepted, and agreed upon, those traditions; and they reached in the hands of pious people, who did not think it lawful to forge traditions; yet such persons accepted those traditions believing them to be true. And if they had known their falsity and believed that they were forged, they would certainly have discarded them... ”

The above narration gives us a glimpse of the function of this department during the reign of Mu'awiyah. Those people forged a tradition in praise of Ibn Muljim (the assassin of Amiru 'l-Mu'minin 'Ali) on payment of one hundred thousand dirham, and made the people believe that the Banu Umayyah were

the true successors and heirs of the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him), and that 'Ali (peace be upon him) was, God forbid, an enemy of the Messenger of Allah.

The department continued to function with devilish efficiency even after Mu'awiyah. When Yazid murdered Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), and the public became restless on knowing who was murdered, the orators and preachers under this department started to slander Imam Husayn and his family from the pulpits.

Later, some stories were invented to mar the altruistic nature of Imam Husayn's sacrifice, and to rob it of its spiritual value. Some said that the underlying factor of this battle was the family feud of the Hashimites and the Umayyads. Others said that the reason was a personal rivalry between Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and Yazid. Those story-tellers cleverly put in their stories some unsavoury details about Mu'awiyah and Yazid, thus camouflaging their real aim. They knew that the Shi'ahs would eagerly accept any "tradition" provided it contained some unfavourable items about the enemies of the Ahl Al-Bayt; they would gladly go on copying such traditions without putting them to academic test, and without realising that the real purpose of such stories was to turn the jihad of Karbala into personal or family vendetta. Those propagandists succeeded to a certain extent; many Shi'ahs unwittingly wrote those stories in their books, although "if they had known their falsity and believed that they were forged, they would certainly have discarded them."

One such "tradition" is the story of Uraynab, which is translated here (in short) from the Persian translation of Zahru 'r-Rabi', pp. 353-354:

Uraynab daughter of Ishaq was married to 'Abdullah bin Salam, who was governor of Iraq on behalf of Mu'awiyah. Uraynab had no peer in beauty, manners and riches. Yazid heard about her beauty and was enchanted by it. After some time he could not control his feelings. When Mu'awiyah learned about it, he sent him a message advising him to keep his love a secret, so that Mu'awiyah could try to get Uraynab for him. Yazid obediently kept quite.

Then Mu'awiyah called 'Abdullah bin Salam and showed him much love and respect. One day he told Abu Hurayrah and Abu Darda' (two companions of the Prophet, who had attached themselves to Mu'awiyah) that he had a daughter of marriageable age and wanted to give her in marriage to 'Abdullah bin Salam, as he was a very virtuous and attractive person. He asked them to give 'Abdullah a hint of this proposal. When 'Abdullah approached Mu'awiyah for his daughter, Mu'awiyah said that it was appropriate to get the consent of the girl. On the other hand, he advised his daughter: "If anyone comes to you with the message of 'Abdullah Ibn Salam, tell him that 'Abdullah is a noble person, but he is already married to Uraynab. If he wants to marry the caliph's daughter, he should divorce Uraynab."

When Abu Hurayrah and Abu Darda' asked the girl her opinion, she replied as she had been taught. 'Abdullah, when informed of this snag, at once divorced Uraynab, keeping the two companions as witnessess. Mu'awiyah heard the news of the divorce and pretended to be shocked by it. Then the two

companions, on Mu'awiyah's advice, brought the news of divorce to Mu'awiyah's daughter; and asked her to give her consent to 'Abdullah's proposal. She asked for some time so that she might enquire about her suitor's character and antecedents. In the meanwhile, the news of the divorce spread in the town, and also it became known that Yazid wanted to marry the divorcee, Uraynab. When finally the two companions talked with Mu'awiyah on behalf of 'Abdullah, he replied: "I have made enquiries about 'Abdullah and am not very satisfied of his way of life." Informed of this reply, 'Abdullah realised the trick played upon him by Mu'awiyah, but now it was too late. He only said: Would that these people too fail in their plan.

When the waiting period ('iddah) of Uraynab expired, Mu'awiyah sent Abu Darda' to Iraq to pass Yazid's message to her. On reaching Iraq, Abu Darda' found that Imam Husayn was there. He thought it improper to begin his assignment before visiting Imam Husayn (peace be upon him).

When the Imam came to know of his errand, he said: "I too wanted to marry her and was about to send someone to her with my proposal. Now that you are here, better take to her my message also, and I shall give her the same dower (mahr) which Mu'awiyah has offered." Abu Darda' took the two proposals to Uraynab, who asked him to choose for her the better of the two. Abu Darda' replied: "The son of the Messenger of Allah is better in my eyes than Yazid." Uraynab accepted the proposal of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him); Abu Darda' gave her the mahr and recited nikah (marriage contract) with the Imam.

When Mu'awiyah heard the news, he was very much annoyed; but what could he do? In anger, he started frustrating 'Abdullah, till his circumstances became straitened. 'Abdullah returned to Iraq, almost a pauper, and went to see Imam Husayn. He told the Imam that before going to Damascus, he had given some money to Uraynab. "Please remind her; I do not think that she would deny it or take what is not hers lawfully." Uraynab said that it was true, and that the money was safely kept in a bag with his seal intact. Imam Husayn came out and said to 'Abdullah: "Your money is here, come and receive it back yourself." Uraynab gave the sealed bag to 'Abdullah; Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) left them alone, they remembered their old days and cried in loud voices. Hearing the cries, the Imam went inside and said to Uraynab: "I divorce thee three divorces, with Allah as my witness. O Allah! Thou knowest that I had not married her for her riches or her beauty; it was done only to make her lawful for her former husband."

Thus did Imam Husayn divorce Uraynab and he did not take any thing back which he had given her. When her 'iddah expired, 'Abdullah married her again, and they lived happily ever after.

Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri, the author of *Zahru 'r-Rabi'*, has copied it from the history of Ibn Badrun. Also he says: "It is said that there was enmity, both fundamental and incidental, between Imam Husayn and Yazid: the fundamental one was the feud between their forefathers; the incidental was the episode of Uraynab." The reader would see that there no hint whatsoever of any religious differences between them. Anyhow, there are many interesting lapses in this story:—

1. Divorcing without the presence of two just (‘adil) witnesses is manifestly against the law of the Qur’an. Allah says: ***“And call to witness two just men from among you” (65:2)***. And it is the madhhab of the Ahl Al-Bayt that a divorce without two just witnesses is null and void. And this story wants us to believe that Imam Husayn, in total disregard of the law of the Qur’an and his own madhhab, divorced his wife without two witnesses (just or otherwise), by just calling Allah to be his witness.

2. The story-teller, because of his ignorance of the madhhab of Ahl Al-Bayt, thought that they too allowed three divorces in one sitting or in one period of cleanliness. He makes Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) say, “I divorce thee three divorces.” Such a divorce too is void in the madhhab of Ahl Al-Bayt; it is such a known rule that there is no need of quoting references from the books of traditions and jurisprudence. These two facts, divorcing thrice at a go and without two just witnesses, clearly show what was the madhhab of the person who invented this story.

3. Now about its historical blunders. The forger was not aware that after the agreement between Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) and Mu‘awiyah and before the tragedy of Karbala (when Mu‘awiyah had already died), Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) never went to Kufa or Iraq. But this story says that Abu Darda’ found him in Kufa! An Urdu writer had tried to stitch this torn fabric by taking Uraynab, after her divorce, back to Madina and sending Abu Darda’ also to that city. That particular writer had detestable habit of altering the quotations to mend the glaring defects therein. Academic world calls it forgery and dishonesty.

4. Now comes the prize nugget of history! Since the foundation of Kufa up to the end of Yazid’s reign, there never was a governor named ‘Abdullah bin Salam. The names of the governors of Mu‘awiyah’s time are given below:–

a) ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin ‘As: He was appointed in 41 A.H. when Mu‘awiyah concluded the agreement with Imam Hasan (peace be upon him); but was dismissed before he could go to Kufa.

b) Mughirah bin Shu‘bah: 41 A.H. till his death in 50 A.H.

c) Ziyad bin Sumaiyah: 50 A.H. —53 A.H.

d) ‘Ubaydullah bin Ziyad bin Sumaiyah: 53 A.H. —56 A.H.

e) Dhahhak bin Qays: 56 A.H. —58 A.H.

f) ‘Abdu ’r-Rahman bin Ummu ’l-Hakam: 58 A.H. —59 A.H.

g) Nu‘man bin Bashir: 59 A.H. —60 A.H. He was the governor of Kufa when Mu‘awiyah died in Rajab, 60 A.H. Yazid dismissed him when Muslim bin ‘Aqil came to Kufa on behalf of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him); in place of Nu‘man, Yazid appointed ‘Ubaydullah bin Ziyad bin Sumaiyah, who waged war against Muslim bin ‘Aqil, and then against Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) at Karbala, where the Imam was martyred.

These four points of law and history are more than enough to conclusively prove the falsity of this supposed event. Moreover, the same story has been narrated in so many ways that an impartial reader has but to conclude that it is a pack of lies.

Before going further, it should be made dear that if an event is known to be true, then merely some discrepancies in some details do not make it doubtful. For example, it is known that Imam Husayn's head was severed and taken to Ibn Ziyad and Yazid. There are different narrations as to what happened to it after that. Was it buried in Damascus, Madina, Najaf or Karbala. This difference cannot be used as an evidence that Imam Husayn was not beheaded at all. But if a story is basically wrong, unaccepted and known to be forged, then the difference in various statements becomes a further proof, if further proof is needed, that the supposed event never took place.

Now let us look at other statements. The second narration is found in Manaqib of Ibn Shahr 'Ashub and runs as follows:–

... Yazid saw Umm Khalid, daughter of Abu Jandal, wife of 'Abdullah bin 'Amir, and was enchanted by her beauty. He put this problem before his father. When 'Abdullah came to see Mu'awiyah, he told him: "I appoint you to the governorship of Basrah; and had it not been that you already have a wife, I would have married you to (my daughter) Ramlah." Hearing this, 'Abdullah went out and divorced his wife. Mu'awiyah sent Abu Hurayrah with the proposal of Yazid to Umm Khalid, and authorised him to give whatever mahr she wanted. Then Hasan, Husayn and 'Abdullah bin Ja'far came to know of it and sent their proposals to her. She chose Hasan (peace be upon him) and was married to him.

Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 10, also quotes it from Manaqib. In this narration we see the following differences:–

- a) The woman is not Uraynab daughter of Ishaq, but Umm Khalid daughter of Abu Jandal.
- b) Her husband is not 'Abdullah bin Salam, but 'Abdullah bin 'Amir. (It should be mentioned here that 'Abdullah bin 'Amir bin Kurayz was a commander of renown in the second and third caliphate; he conquered Khorasan, and died in 57 A.H. And he had married another daughter of Mu'awiyah, named Hind, in 44 A.H. Vide Annals of at- Tabari, vol. 7.)
- c) Umm Khalid married Imam Hasan, not Imam Husayn.
- d) This second marriage took place in Madina not Kufa.
- e) The man who took the proposal of Yazid to her was Abu Hurayrah, not Abu Darda'.
- f) There is no mention of her being divorced, and marrying her first husband.

It is unimaginable that the events of the same pattern happened twice, once with Imam Hasan, and then with Imam Husayn (peace be upon them). History does not repeat so rapidly!

The third report comes from Abu 'l-Hasan al-Mada'ini (752-839 A.D.). Majlisi quotes him in Bihar Al-Anwar, (vol. 10) as follows:—Abu 'l-Hasan al-Mada'ini has narrated that (Imam) Hasan married Hind, daughter of Sahl bin 'Amr; who once was married to 'Abdullah bin 'Amir bin Kurayz, and he divorced her. So Mu'awiyah wrote to Abu Hurayrah to take to her the proposal of Yazid son of Mu'awiyah. (Imam) Hasan told him (i.e. Abu Hurayrah): Take my proposal also to her.

Abu Hurayrah went to her and told her the news (of the two messages). She asked him to choose one of them for her. He said: I choose Hasan for you. Therefore, she married (Imam) Hasan.

In this report, the woman's name is again changed to Hind daughter of Sahl. There is no mention of the trickery of Mu'awiyah. There is an additional twist that Abu Hurayrah chose Imam Hasan against Yazid. Abu Hurayrah was one of the boot-lickers of Mu'awiyah, the most active agent of the above-mentioned propaganda department and, for some years, the governor of Mu'awiyah in Madina. In this background, this report cannot fail to produce an amused smile in historical circles.

The same al-Mada'ini again makes a slight change in the name of her father. He says: Imam Hasan married Hind, daughter of Suhayl bin 'Amr. Anyhow, according to these two statements, Hind daughter of Sahl or Suhayl, was first married to 'Abdullah bin 'Amir bin Kurayz, who divorced her, and then she was married to Imam Hasan (peace be upon him), where it may be assumed, she lived happily ever after. In short, Yazid could not get her.

Now comes the fifth statement. Describing the events of the court of Yazid, when the family of Imam Husayn was brought there as captives, it is written: "And came out Hind, daughter of 'Abdullah bin 'Amir bin Kurayz, wife of Yazid, who was before that married to Husayn; she tore away her veil... " (Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 10.)

In this statement the same Hind, who was till now a divorced wife of 'Abdullah bin 'Amir bin Kurayz, becomes his daughter. In the third and fourth reports, she was married to Imam Hasan; now she is claimed to be a former wife of Imam Husayn. Earlier, it was taken for granted that Yazid could not get her, now she is placed in his palace as his wife.

And here is the detail how she is supposed to reach the palace of Yazid: Yazid was enchanted by the stories of the beauty of Hind, daughter of 'Abdullah bin 'Amir bin Kurayz... She at that time was married to Imam Husayn. First, he requested Imam Husayn himself to divorce her. The Imam refused. Then he told Mu'awiyah who requested Imam Hasan to intervene; Imam Husayn, complying with his elder brother's advice, divorced Hind. But she rejected the message of Yazid; and sat in her house. Then Yazid deputed some people to watch her, and once, when she was going to participate in a marriage ceremony in neighbourhood, they abducted her and took her to Yazid in Damascus.

One is amazed to see the frequent and fundamental changes in the plot of this one story. Compare the first narration of Uraynab with this last one of Hind, and you will never imagine that it is the same story put in a different garb. Those who do not have time or inclination to make a comparative study of all the

relevant statements, have narrated the first and the last stories as two completely different events. Let us recapitulate the six stories here:–

The first story says that Yazid was enamoured by the beauty of Uraynab daughter of Ishaq, who was married to ‘Abdullah bin Salam. Mu‘awiyah tricked him to divorce his wife; but the wife married Imam Husayn, instead of Yazid. (Both proposals were sent through Abu Darda’). This second marriage took place in Kufa.

Later Imam Husayn divorced Uraynab and she was reunited with her first husband.

The second story keeps the plot intact, but all the names are changed. There is Umm Khalid daughter of Abu Jandal, in place of Uraynab daughter of Ishaq; ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amir, in place of ‘Abdullah bin Salam; Abu Hurayrah, in place of Abu Darda’; she married Imam Hasan, and not Imam Husayn. There is no mention whether she got to her first husband or not.

The third story is identical with the second; but the woman becomes Hind daughter of Sahl bin ‘Amr, instead of Uraynab or Umm Khalid.

In the fourth story there is again a great leap forward. Hind, who in previous stories was wife of ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amir bin Kurayz, becomes his daughter. She does not go to Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) by her second marriage, but is married to Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) presumably in her first marriage. Earlier statements assumed that she remained with Imam Hasan till the end; here it says that Imam Husayn divorced her and she somehow got married to Yazid.

The sixth statement gives the details of the fifth.

If one passionately looks at these versions, one has to conclude that the propaganda department of the Umayyads prepared an outline of the story, and various people coloured it in their own ways and according to their own knowledge (or, lack of knowledge). The resulting pictures were so different from one another that the first seems to have no connection with the last. But neither the first nor the last had any factual basis. I do not claim that Yazid had no wife named Hind. ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amir bin Kurayz was a trusted commander and governor of the previous caliphs, as well as of Mu‘awiyah. Also he was married to Yazid’s sister. If Hind really was his daughter (by another marriage), she might well have been married to Yazid. Also, she might have been a lover of the family of the Prophet (Ahl Al-Bayt). It was not uncommon in those days for a daughter or wife to have religious views opposed to her father’s or husband’s. But here the historical possibilities come to their end. What the Umayyads wanted to gain by linking her name with Imam Hasan or Imam Husayn (peace be upon them) is totally false, and hence unacceptable.

The aim of these stories, as mentioned in the beginning, was to show that the battle of Karbala was not fought for any altruistic purpose; rather it happened because there was deep-rooted enmity between the clans of Hashim and Umayyah, and that enmity was intensified because of the rivalry between Imam

Husayn (peace be upon him) and Yazid for a woman. But Allah says:

“They desire to put out the Light of Allah with their mouths; and Allah will perfect His Light, although the unbelievers may dislike it” (61:8).

He also says:

“They make a scheme; and I make a scheme (to nullify theirs); so give the unbelievers a respite, let them alone for a while” (86: 15–17).

Those people thought of a plan, and, accordingly to His scheme, Allah let them be so enthusiastic that the same plan was implemented in six different stories that one at once thinks of the Persian proverb, “A liar has no memory.” Add to it their blunders from historical and legal points of view, and you will see the picture mentioned in the Qur’an:

“They demolished their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers” (59:2).

The Selected Sayings And Letters Of Imam Husayn

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

1. When Walid bin ‘Utbah bin Abi Sufyan, the governor of Madinah, informed Imam Husayn that Yazid demands a pledge of allegiance from him, the Imam politely refused by saying that an allegiance in secret will be of no value, we shall see into this matter tomorrow in public. But then Marwan bin Hakam, who was also present in the meeting, told Walid to force the Imam for pledging allegiance to Yazid or to kill him and send his head to Damascus. At that time, the Imam said:

... We are the household of the prophethood, the source of messengership, the descending-place of the angels, through us Allah has begun (showering His favours) and with us He has perfected (His blessings). Whereas Yazid is a sinful man, a drunkard, killer of innocent people, and one who openly indulges in sinful acts. A person like me can never pay allegiance to a person like him... [1](#)

2. Before leaving for Mecca, Imam Husayn wrote a will and gave it to his brother Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is a will which Husayn bin ‘Ali bin Abi Talib makes to his brother Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah: Verily I, Husayn, bear witness that there is no god but Allah

who is One and has no partner, and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger who came with the truth from the Truth. (I also bear witness that) the Paradise and the Fire are truth, the time (of resurrection) is surely to come, there is no doubt in it; and that Allah is going to raise those who are in graves.

I am not rising (against Yazid) as an insolent, or an arrogant, or a mischief-monger or as a tyrant. I have risen (against Yazid) as I seek to reform the ummah of my grandfather. I wish to bid the good and forbid the evil, and to follow the way of my grandfather and my father, 'Ali bin Abi Talib.[2](#)

3. When Imam Husayn was in Mecca the news spread all over the Islamic countries that Husayn has refused to pay allegiance to Yazid and has left Madinah. The people of Kufa wrote many letters requesting him to come to their city. At last, the Imam sent Muslim bin 'Aqil with the following letter:–

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful From Husayn bin 'Ali to the leaders of the believers and the Muslims.

Hani and Sa'id have brought me your letters; they are the last two of your messengers who have come to me. I have understood everything which you have described and mentioned. The (main) statement of your great men is: "There is no Imam over us. Therefore come; through you, may God unite us under truth and guidance." I am sending you my brother, Muslim bin 'Aqil, who is my cousin and a trustworthy member of my family. If he writes to me that the opinion of your leaders and of the man of wisdom and merit among you is united in the same way as the messenger who have come to me have described and as I have read in your letters, I will come to you speedily, insha Allah. For by my life, what is the Imam except one who judges by the Book, one who upholds justice, one who professes the religion of truth, and the one who dedicates himself to the essence of Allah. Was-salam.[3](#)

4. In one of his lectures to the army of Hurr, Imam Husayn said: "People are slaves of the world, whereas religion (din) is what they lick with their tongues—as long as their wealth is flowing copiously they protect it; but when they are put to test, the religious people become very few."[4](#)

5. Before reaching Karbala, when Hurr tried to threaten the Imam by saying, "I advise you to think of your life; for I am sure that you will be killed if you fight," Imam Husayn answered that, "Do you think that you can frighten me with death?!" Then he recited the following poem of a companion of the Prophet from the tribe of Aws:–

I will die, but there is no shame in death for a young man

If what he pursues is right and he strives as a Muslim

If he supports the righteous men by sacrificing his life

And if he disengages himself from the condemned and opposes the criminal

If I live, I won't regret and if I die, I won't suffer

Enough is the humiliation for you to live and be reviled.[5](#)

6. In one of his lectures, also delivered before reaching Karbala, the Imam said:–

Verily you see what has befallen upon us. The world has changed and has turned its back to goodness; its opposition is continuous. Nothing is left of goodness except a few remnants like the remnants in a vessel, and vile (remnants) like the unhealthy pasture

Don't you see that the truth is not being practised, and the falsehood is not being prevented. (The situation is such that) a believer should rightly desire to meet his Lord (by sacrificing his life for establishing goodness)—for I do not see death except a bliss, and life with the tyrants a disgusting (thing).[6](#)

7. Facing the army of Yazid, the Imam said:–

O Men! Verily the Messenger of Allah has said: “If someone sees a cruel king who permits those things which have been forbidden by Allah, who disregards his duty, who opposes the way of the Messenger of Allah and acts amongst the servants of Allah sinfully and aggressively, and that person does not do anything, in action or speech, to change that situation, then it would be right for Allah to place that person (on the day of judgement) alongside the tyrant ruler.”[7](#)

8. During the last moments of his life, the Imam was heard saying:–

*O God! I left the world altogether for Your love
I orphaned my children so as to see You
Even if You cut me into pieces in way of love
My heart would not incline to anyone but You.*[8](#)

9. While attacking the right flank of the Yazidi army, Imam Husayn was saying:

*Death is better than accepting disgrace
And disgrace is better than entering the Fire.*[9](#)

10. On the day of 'Ashurah, before the encounter took place, Imam Husayn faced the army of Yazid and tried to advise them for the last time in the following words:

(After praising Allah and praying for the blessings of Allah on His Messenger, the Imam said:)

O Men! Trace my ancestry, see whom am I and then refer to your own hearts and blame yourselves. See if it is right for you to kill me and to commit sacrilege. Am I not the son of the daughter of your Prophet, son of his successor, son of his cousin and son of the first one among the believers who believed in the truth of the message of the Messenger of Allah? Is not Hamzah, the leader of the martyrs, uncle of my father? Is not Ja'far, the one who is flying in the Paradise with his wings, my uncle?

Haven't you heard what the Messenger of Allah has said about me and my brother that, “These two are

the leaders of the youngsters of Paradise”? So if you testify to the truth of what I have said, then it will be a right thing to do. (And, by Allah, I have never lied because I know that Allah hates those who lie.) And if you think that I am a liar, then there are some companions of the Prophet still alive among you whom you can ask about what I have said. Go and ask Jabir bin ‘Abdullah al-Ansari, Abu Sa‘id al-Khudari, Sahl bin Sa‘d as-Sa‘idi, Zayd bin Arqam and Anas bin Malik. They will surely tell you that they have heard these sayings about me and my brother from the Messenger of Allah.

Are not these facts enough to prevent you from shedding my blood?... If you doubt in these words of the Prophet, then do you doubt that I am the son of the daughter of your

Prophet. By Allah, there is no grandson of the Prophet other than me in the East or the West. Woe unto you! Do you want me for a slain person among you whom I have killed? Or for a wealth which I have destroyed? Or for retaliation of an injury I might have caused to someone among you?

...O Men! If you do not like me, then let me to go a secure place on the earth far from you.

In answer to this request, some of the officers of Yazid’s army said that “we do not know anything about what you said; we only want you to pay allegiance to Yazid.” The Imam answered:

No! By Allah, I will not give you my hand in allegiance like a humiliated person nor will I run away from this encounter as a slave. [10](#)

[1.](#) Ibn Ta’us, Maqtal al-Husayn, pp. 10–11.

[2.](#) al-Khatib al-Khuwarazmi, Maqtal al-Husayn, vol. I, p. 88.

[3.](#) Shaykh al-Mufid, al-Irshad, (translated by Dr. I. K. Howard), London, p. 305.

[4.](#) Shaykh ‘Abbas Qummi, Nafasu ‘l-Mahmum, Tehran 1368 A.H., p. 126.

[5.](#) al-Mufid, op. cit., (I have taken the liberty of translating two verses of this poem differently from the translation of Dr. Howard.) p. 338.

[6.](#) Ibn Ta’us, op. cit., p. 32–33.

[7.](#) Ibnu ‘l-Athir, al-Kamil fi ‘t-Tarikh, vol. 4, n.p. 1385 A.H., p. 48.

[8.](#) ‘Abbas Qummi, Muntaha ‘l-‘Amal, Tehran 1371 A.H., p. 285.

[9.](#) Ibid, p. 282.

[10.](#) ‘Abbas Qummi, Nafasu ‘l-Mahmum, p. 145–146.

The Life Of Imam Husayn

Extracted and reproduced from Kitab al-Irshad by Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413 A.H.); translated by Dr.

I.K.A. Howard; published by The Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (London, U.K.)

Imam Al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali

(This is) an account of the Imam after al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali, peace be on him, (giving) the date of his birth, the evidence of his Imamate, the age he reached, the period of his succession (khilafa), the time and cause of his death, the place of his grave, the number of his children. (It also provides) a selection from the (historical) reports about him.

The Imam after al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali was his brother, al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, (who was) the son of Fatima, daughter of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, through the designation (nass) of his father and grandfather, peace be on them, and the testamentary bequest (wasiyya) of his brother, al-Hasan, peace be on him. His kunya was Abu 'Abd Allah.

He was born in Medina, on the fifth of Sha'ban in the year 4 A.H. (626). His mother, Fatima, peace be on her, brought him to the Apostle of Allah. The latter was delighted with him and named him Husayn. He sacrificed a ram on his behalf in the rite of 'aqiqa. On the testament of the Apostle of Allah, he and his brother are the two lords of the youth of Heaven, and by unanimous agreement, they were the grandsons of the Prophet of Mercy.

Al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them, was like the Prophet, may Allah bless Him and His Family, from his head to his chest, while al-Husayn was like him from his chest to his feet. They were the two dear ones of the Apostle of Allah among all his family and children.

[Zadhan reported on the authority of Salman, may Allah be pleased with him:]

I heard the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, say concerning al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them: "O Allah, I love both of them. Therefore love them and love whoever loves them." Then he said: "Whoever loves al-Hasan and al-Husayn, is one whom I love. Whomever I love, Allah loves, and whomever Allah loves, He will cause to enter Heaven. Whoever hates them, I hate and Allah hates. Whomever Allah hates, He will cause to enter the Fire." Then he said: "These two sons of mine are my two plants of sweet basil (to sweeten) the world."

[Zirr Ibn Hubaysh reported on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud:]

While the Prophet, may Allah bless Him and His Family, was praying, al-Hasan and al-Husayn came and stood behind him. When he raised his head, he took them tenderly (into his arms). When he resumed (his prayers), they resumed (theirs). Then when he had finished, he sat one on his right knee and the other on his left knee and said: "Whoever loves me, should love these two. They, peace be on them, are the two proofs (hujjatay Allah) of Allah of His Prophet in the contest of prayer (mubahala). After their father, the Commander of the Faithful, they are the two proofs of Allah (hujjatay Allah) to the community concerning religion (din) and belief (milla)."

[Muhammad Ibn 'Umayr has reported on the authority of his teachers (rijal) that Abu 'Abd Allah (i.e.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq), peace be on him, said:]¹

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, said to his companions: "Allah has two cities – one in the east and the other in the west – in which Allah's creatures are never interested in disobeying Him. Yet, by Allah, Allah's proof to His creatures, both in those two and between them, is no other than myself and my brother, al-Husayn."

A narration of the same kind is reported from al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them, when he said to the followers of Ibn Ziyad on the day of deprivation: "What is the matter with you that makes you help each other against me? Or (don't you see) if you kill me, you kill Allah's proof to yourselves? No, by Allah, there is not between Jabilqa and Jabirsa a son of a prophet through whom Allah provides proof to you other than myself." He meant by Jabilqa and Jabirsa, the two cities which al-Hasan, peace be on him, had mentioned.

One of the conclusive pieces of evidence (burhan) of the perfection of both of them, peace be on them, and the proof of Allah's special regard for them both, after what we have mentioned of the contest of prayer of the Prophet, may Allah bless Him and His Family, (in which he used) them both, is the pledge (bay'a) which the Apostle of Allah made, to them, when he never made any (other) pledge to a child. The Qur'an also brings down the positive statement of the reward of Heaven to them both because of their works, despite the outward state of childhood in which they were. It did not bring down that to any other like them. Allah said in Surat Hal ata (Insan) (known also as Surat al-Dahr):

And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive. (76:8)

We only feed you for Allah's sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks. (76:9)

Surely we fear from our Lord a stern, distressful day. (76:10)

Therefore Allah will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and happiness. (76:11)

And reward them, because they were patient, with garden and silk. (76:12)

This statement is general to them, peace be on them, with their father and their mother. The tradition contains their assertion of that and their awareness of it; both of which indicate that the illustrious verse was about the two of them and (that) the greatest proof (hujja) to creatures was through them both. In the same way the report about the Messiah, peace be on him, speaking in the cradle was a proof of his prophethood and Allah's special regard for him through miraculous acts (karama) which indicated his place and position with Allah with regard to merit (fadhl).

The Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, had made clear his Imamate and the Imamate of his brother before him through designation (nass) when he said: "These two sons of mine are Imams who will experience difficulties."

The testamentary bequest (wasiyya) of al-Hasan, peace be on him, to him indicated his Imamate, just as the testamentary bequest of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, to al-Hasan, peace be

on him, indicated his Imamate just as the testamentary bequest of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, indicated his Imamate after himself.

According to what we have (just) mentioned the Imamate of al-Husayn, peace be on him, was confirmed after the death of his brother al-Hasan, peace be on him, and the obedience of all creatures to him was binding, although he did not summon them to (follow) him because of precautionary dissimulation (taqiyya) which he was following and because of the truce which existed between him and Mu'awiya Ibn Abi Sufyan and the need to fulfil it. In that he followed the same course as his father the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, in terms of the establishment of his Imamate after the Prophet, may Allah bless Him and His Family, despite (his own) silence (about it), and also of the Imamate of his brother after the truce despite (his) abstention (from politics) and (his) silence. In that they were acting according to the practices (sunan) of the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, when he was blockaded in al-Shi'b and when he escaped Mecca as an emigrant by hiding in a cave and he was hidden from his enemies.

When Mu'awiya died, the period of the truce came to an end. (It was this) which had prevented al-Husayn, peace be on him, from calling (people) to (follow) him. Then he made public his (claim to) authority as far as was possible. Time after time he explained his right (to authority) to those who were ignorant of it until followers gathered around him. Then he, peace be on him, urged (them) to take up the struggle (jihad) and prepared for battle.

Then with his children and the people of his house (ahl baytihi), he set out from the sanctuary of Allah (Mecca) and the sanctuary his Apostle (Medina) towards Iraq because of the help that was sought from him by the members of his Shi'a who had urged him (to come) against the enemies. His paternal cousin, Muslim Ibn 'Aqil, may Allah be pleased with him, had preceded him and had satisfied him of the (sincerity of their) call to Allah and of (their) pledge of allegiance to him to take part in the struggle. For the people of Kufa had pledged their allegiance to him (Muslim) to (do) that, and had promised (to do) it and had guaranteed help and advice to him and had given their trust and contract to him. However it was not long before they broke their pledge, deserted him and handed him over.

Then he was killed in their midst without them (trying) to stop it. (Furthermore) they went out to (make) war against al-Husayn. They besieged him, peace be on him, prevented him from returning to Allah's land (i.e. Mecca) and they used force against him in such a way that he could find no one to help him, and no place of refuge from them. They prevented him from getting water from the Euphrates so that they might gain power over him. Then they killed him. He, peace be on him, died, (a man desperately) thirsty, yet still striving and showing fortitude, (a man) forced to be detained, (a man) oppressed. The pledge of allegiance to him was revoked. The respect due to him was ignored. The covenant to him was not fulfilled nor the responsibility of the agreement made with him honoured. (He died) a martyr as his

father and brother, peace be on them, had done before him.

The Account of the Martyrdom of al-Husayn

(This is) a selection of the reports which give the reason for his (putting forward) his call (to follow him), and (which tell) of the pledge of allegiance which the people gave to strive (for him), with a brief account of his affair in setting out and (of) his death.

[What al-Kalbi, al-Mada'ini and other historians (ashab al-sira) have reported:]²

When al-Hasan, peace be on him, died, the Shi'a in Iraq began to make plans. They wrote to al-Husayn, peace be on him, about removing Mu'awiya and giving the pledge of allegiance to him.

However, he refused them and pointed out that there was an agreement and contract between himself and Mu'awiya which he could not break until the period (of the contract) came to an end. However, when Mu'awiya died, he would examine that (matter).³

When Mu'awiya did die – and that was halfway through the month of Rajab in the year 60 A.H. (680) – Yazid wrote to al-Walid Ibn 'Utba Ibn Abi Sufyan, who was in Medina (acting) on behalf of Mu'awiya, instructing him to get al-Husayn, peace be on him, to pledge allegiance to him and to allow him no delay in (doing) that. Therefore, al-Walid sent in the night to al-Husayn, peace be on him, and summoned him (to attend). Al-Husayn, peace be on him, was aware of what he wanted and so he called a group of his retainers (mawali) and ordered them to carry arms.

“Al-Walid has summoned me (to come to him) at this time (of night),” he told them. “I cannot be sure that he might not burden me with a matter I may be unwilling to respond to, he is an unpredictable man, so remain with me. When I go to him, sit at the door. If you hear my voice raised, come in to prevent him from (doing anything to) me.”

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, went to al-Walid, and Marwan Ibn al-Hakam was with him. Al-Walid gave him news of the death Mu'awiya and al-Husayn, peace be on him, replied with the formula: “We belong to Allah and to Him we will return.” Then (al-Walid) read out Yazid's letter and his order to get the pledge of allegiance from him.

“I do not see that my pledge of allegiance to Yazid in private would be sufficient,” al-Husayn, peace be on him, said. “(Wouldn't you prefer me) to give it in public so that the people are aware?” “Indeed,” agreed al-Walid.

“So see what you think about that in the morning,” suggested al-Husayn, peace be on him.

“Go, then, in the name of Allah but come to us when the people gather,” said al-Walid

“By Allah,” interrupted Marwan, “if al-Husayn leaves you now without giving the pledge of allegiance,

you will never have the same power over him until there is a great number of slain men between you and him. Imprison the man and don't let him leave you until he has paid homage (to Yazid), or you have executed him."

At that, al-Husayn jumped up and said: "O son of foreign woman, would you or he kill me? By Allah, you are a liar." With that he went out and walked away accompanied by his retainers until he reached his house.

"You disobeyed me," Marwan told al-Walid. "No, by Allah, he will never give you the same opportunity over his life."

"Then blame someone other than yourself, Marwan." replied al-Walid. "Indeed, You had chosen for me something which would have involved the destruction of my own faith. By Allah, I would not want all the worldly wealth and dominion which the sun rises and sets over, (if it involved) killing al-Husayn. Glory be to Allah, should I kill al-Husayn because he said 'I will not swear allegiance'? By Allah, I do not think that on the Day of Resurrection a man who is (responsible) for the blood of al-Husayn (will weigh) little in the scales of Allah."

"If this is your opinion, then you have acted correctly in what you did," said Marwan, without commending him for his view.

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, spent that night at his house. It was the night of Saturday (i.e. Friday night) when there were three days left in the month of Rajab, in the year of 680. Al-Walid Ibn 'Utba was occupied with sending to Ibn al-Zubayr about the pledge of allegiance to Yazid, and with his refusal (to come) to them. Ibn al-Zubayr left Medina at night heading for Mecca. In the morning al-Walid sent men after him – he sent (a party of) eighty horsemen under the command of a retainer (mawla) of the Banu Umayya. They pursued him but did not catch up with him, so they returned.

Towards the end of Saturday he sent men to al-Husayn, peace be on him, to bring him to pledge allegiance to al-Walid on behalf of Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, said to them: "Come in the morning. Then you will (have time to) consider (the situation) and so shall we."

They left him that night without insisting upon him (attending). He, peace be on him, left under (cover of the) night, – it was the night of Sunday (i.e. Saturday night) with two days left in the month of Rajab – and he headed towards Mecca accompanied by his sons, his brother's (al-Hasan's) sons and his brothers. There was most of the House except for Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya, may Allah have mercy on him.

When the latter had heard of his decision to leave Medina he did not know where he was intending to go. He said: "My brother, you are the most lovable of people to me and the dearest of them to me. I could not give advice to any creature except to you while you are more entitled to it. Avoid giving your pledge of allegiance to Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya and (avoid) the towns while you can. Then send your

messengers to the people and summon them to (follow) you. If the people pledge allegiance to you, I praise Allah; if the people agree upon someone other than you, Allah will not make your religion nor your reason deficient on that account, nor will He remove your manliness and outstanding merit because of it. Yet I am afraid that you will enter one of these towns and the people will differ with each other: a group will be for you and another against you. They will fight and you will be a target for the first of their spears. Then, the best of all this community, in person, in father and in mother would be the one in it, whose blood was most terribly exposed and whose family most humiliated,”

“Where should I go, brother?” asked al-Husayn, peace be on him. “(Go and) stay at Mecca,” he answered, “if that base is secure for you, it will be a means for (gaining power). However, if it becomes dangerous for you, then you can take to the deserts and the mountain peaks, and move from place to place so that you may see how the people’s attitude to the affair develops. Your best judgement will be made when you are facing matters directly.”

“Brother,” replied (al-Husayn), “you have given advice and shown your concern. I hope that your judgement is correct and successful.”

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, set off for Mecca reciting: Then he left it out of fear while he kept on the lookout. He said: ***“My Lord, save me from the unjust people” (28:21)***. He kept to the high road and members of his House suggested: “If you had avoided the high road, like Ibn al-Zubayr did, the search (party) could not follow you.”

“No, by Allah,” he replied, “I will not leave it until Allah judges what He will judge.”

When al-Husayn, peace be on him, entered Mecca, his entry occurred on the night of Friday (i.e. Thursday), 3rd (of the month) of Sha‘ban. As he entered, he recited: And when he set out towards Madyan, he said: ***“Perhaps my Lord will guide me in the right path” (28:22)***.

Then he stayed there and its inhabitants began to visit him frequently, as did those who had to come to make the lesser pilgrimage and (other) people from far and wide. Ibn al-Zubayr had settled himself there, near the Ka‘ba, where he used to stand in prayer and perform the circumambulation (tawaf). He came to visit him, peace be on him, with the (others) who came to visit him. He used to come to him at intervals of two consecutive days, and sometimes between the two-day intervals. He (al-Husayn) was the most troublesome of Allah’s creatures to Ibn al-Zubayr, who realised that the people of Hijaz would not pledge allegiance to him as long as al-Husayn, peace be on him, was in the land. He was more capable of (commanding) the people’s obedience than him, and was more respected.

The Kufans learnt of the death of Mu‘awiya, may the pit of Hell be for him, and spread rumours about Yazid. They (also) came to know of the news of the refusal of al-Husayn, peace be on him, to give (Yazid) the pledge of allegiance, (as well as) what the attitude of Ibn al-Zubayr had been, and (how)

both of them had left for Mecca. The Shi'a in Kufa gathered in the house of Sulayman Ibn Surad al-Khuza'i. (There) they discussed the death of Mu'awiya, and praised and glorified Allah (for that).

"Mu'awiya is dead." announced Sulayman Ibn Surad. "Al-Husayn has withheld giving his pledge of allegiance to the people (i.e. the Umayyads) and has gone to Mecca. You are his Shi'a and the Shi'a of his father. If you know (in your hearts) that you will be his helpers and fighters against his enemy, and that our lives will be given on behalf of him, then write to him and tell him of that. But if you fear failure and weakness, do not tempt the man (to risk) his own life."

"No," they declared, "indeed we will fight his enemy and our lives will be given on behalf of him."

"Then write to him," he told them. They wrote to him:

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate, To al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them,

From Sulayman Ibn Surad, al-Musayyib Ibn Najaba, Rifa'a Ibn Shaddad al-Bajali, Habib Ibn Muzahir, and the believers and Muslims of his Shi'a among the Kufans.

Greetings, we praise Allah before you, other than Whom there is no deity. Praise be to Allah Who has broken your enemy, the obstinate tyrant who had leapt upon this community, stripped it of its authority, plundered its fay' (booty for distribution) and seized control of it without its consent. Then he had killed the choice members of it and had preserved the wicked members of it. He had made the property of Allah a state (divided) among its tyrants and wealthy. He was destroyed as Thamud were destroyed. (Now) there is no Imam over us. Therefore come; through you, may your Allah unite us under truth. Al-Nu'man Ibn Bashir is in the governor's palace and we do not gather with him for the Friday (service). Nor do we accompany him (out of the mosque) for the festival service. If we learn that you will come to us, we will drive him away until we pursue him to Syria, if Allah, the Exalted, wills.

They despatched the letter with 'Abd Allah Ibn Musma' [4](#) al-Hamdani and 'Abd Allah Ibn Walin. They ordered them to go quickly. They hurried off and came to al-Husayn, peace be on him, at Mecca on the 10th of the month of Ramadhan. Two days after sending them with the letter, they sent Qays Ibn Mushir al-Saydawi and 'Abd Allah and 'Abd al-Rahman – the two sons of Shaddad al-Arhabi [5](#) – and 'Umara Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Saluli [6](#) to al-Husayn, peace be on him. With them they took about one hundred and fifty letters [7](#), (some written) by one man individually, (others by groups) of two and four. They (the Kufans) delayed a further two days and then sent Hani' Ibn Hani' al-Sabi'i and Sa'id Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Hanafi (with another letter in which) they had written:

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate, To al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them,

From the believers and Muslims of his Shi'a. Make haste. The people are waiting for you. They have no opinion (of any man) except you.

Therefore, speed, speed! And then again speed, speed! Greetings.

Shabath Ibn Rib'i, Hajjar Ibn Abjar, Yazid Ibn al-Harith Ibn Ruwaym, 'Urwa Ibn Qays⁸, 'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Zubaydi and Muhammad Ibn 'Amr al-Taymi⁹ wrote (a further letter which said):

The dates have grown green; the fruit has ripened. Therefore if you want to, come to an army which has been gathered for you. Greetings.

When all the messengers gathered together with him, he read the letters and asked the messengers about the people. (Then) he wrote (an answer and sent it) with Hani' Ibn Hani' al-Sabi'i and Sa'id Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Hanafi, who were the last two messengers.

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate, From al-Husayn b 'Ali,

To the leaders of the believers and the Muslims.

Hani' and Sa'id have brought me your letters; they are the last two of your messengers who have come to me. I have understood everything which you have described and mentioned. The (main) statement of your great men is: "There is no Imam over us. Therefore come; through you, may Allah unite us under truth and guidance." I am sending you my brother, Muslim Ibn 'Aqil, who is my cousin and my trustworthy (representative) from my House. If he writes to me that the opinion of your leaders and of the men of wisdom and merit among you is united in the same way as the messengers who have come to me have described and as I have read in your letters, I will come to you speedily, Allah willing. For by my life, what is the Imam except one who judges by the Book, one who upholds justice, one who professes the religion of truth, and one who dedicates himself to the essence of Allah. Greetings.

Al-Husayn, peace be upon him, summoned Muslim Ibn 'Aqil and despatched him with Qays Ibn Mushir al-Saydawi and 'Umara Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Saluli, and 'Abd Allah and 'Abd al-Rahman, the sons of Shaddad al-Arhabi. He enjoined him to be pious before Allah and to conceal his affair, and to act in a kindly way. If he saw that the people were united and had committed themselves to an agreement, he should speedily inform him of that.

Muslim, the mercy of Allah be on him, departed until he came to Medina. There he prayed in the Mosque of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, and said farewell to the dearest members of his family. Then he hired two guides. These two set out with him, but they missed the way and got lost. Both were struck by severe thirst and were unable to continue the Journey. They indicated the path to him after it again appeared clear to them. Muslim carried on along the path and the two guides died of thirst. Muslim Ibn 'Aqil, the mercy of Allah be on them both, wrote (a letter) from the place known as al-Madhiq (and sent it) with Qays Ibn Mushir:

I set out from Medina with two guides and they missed the way and got lost. Both were overcome by thirst and soon died. But we kept going until we came to water. We were only saved at the last moment of our lives. That water is in a place called al-Madhiq in a low valley. I have taken this as a bad omen for my mission. If you consider it so, you could relieve me and send another in my place. Greetings.

Al-Husayn, peace be upon him, wrote (back):

I am afraid that your urging me in the letter to relieve you from the task which I sent you on is only cowardice. Therefore go on with your task which I gave you. Greetings.

Muslim read the letter, he said: "It is not for myself that I am afraid." So he continued (once more) until he came to a well belonging to (the tribe of) Tayyi'. He stayed there (the night) then as he rode off (he saw) a man hunting. He saw him shoot a fawn as it came into his sight, and kill it. Muslim said: "(Thus), will we kill our enemies, Allah Willing."

He went on until he entered Kufa. There he stayed in the house of al-Mukhtar Ibn Abi 'Ubayda. which is called today the house of Muslim Ibn al-Musayyib. The Shi'a began to come regularly to (see) him. Whenever a group of them gathered together with him, he would read the letter of al-Husayn, peace be upon him, and they would weep. The people pledged allegiance to him (on behalf of al-Husayn) to the extent that eighteen thousand men made such a pledge to him. Therefore Muslim wrote to al-Husayn, peace be upon him, informing him of the pledge of allegiance to him of the eighteen thousand and urging him to come.

The Shi'a began to visit Muslim Ibn 'Aqil so frequently that his place (of residence) became well-known. Al-Nu'man Ibn Bashir, who had been Mu'awiya's governor of Kufa and had been confirmed in office by Yazid, knew of his whereabouts. He went up on the pulpit and after praising Allah said: "Servants of Allah, fear Allah and do not rush into rebellion and discord. For in that men will be destroyed, blood will be shed, and property will be plundered. I do not combat anyone who does not combat me, nor do I disturb those of you who remain quiet. I do not oppose you, nor do I apprehend (you merely) on grounds of suspicion, accusation or hearsay. However, if you turn your faces away from me, violate your pledge of allegiance and oppose your Imam, by Allah, other than Whom there is no deity, I will strike you with my sword as long as its hilt remains in my hand, even though I do not have any of you to help me. Yet I hope that those among you who know the truth are more numerous than those whom falsehood will destroy."

'Abd Allah Ibn Muslim Ibn Rabi'a¹⁰ al-Hadhrami, an ally of the Banu Umayya stood before him and said: "O governor, what you see can only be adequately dealt with by violence; for the view which you hold about what (should be done) between you and your enemy is that of the weak,"

"I would prefer to be one of the weak (while remaining) in obedience to Allah than to be one of the mighty (while at the same time being) in rebellion against Allah," answered al-Nu'man. Then he went down (from the pulpit).

'Abd Allah Ibn Muslim went out and wrote the (following) letter to Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya:

Muslim Ibn 'Aqil has come to Kufa and Shi'a have pledged allegiance to him on behalf of al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, peace be on them. If you have any need for Kufa, then send it a strong man, who will

carry out your orders and act in the same way as you would against your enemy. Al-Nu'man Ibn Bashir is a weak man, or he is acting like a weak man.

'Umara Ibn 'Uqba wrote to him in a similar vein, as did 'Umar Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas. When the letters reached Yazid, he summoned Sarjun, a retainer (mawla) of Mu'awiya and asked (him): "What is your view (of the fact) that Husayn has sent Muslim Ibn 'Aqil to Kufa to receive pledges of homage on his behalf? I have (also) learnt that Nu'man is weak, and had other bad reports of him. Who do you think that I should appoint as governor of Kufa?"

Now Yazid was angry with 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad so Sarjun answered him, "Do you think if Mu'awiya was alive and advising you, that you would take his advice?" "Yes," he answered.

Sarjun produced a (letter of) appointment for 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad (as governor) of Kufa and said: "This is the advice of Mu'awiya, which he ordered before he died. So join the two cities of Basra and Kufa (under the authority) of 'Ubayd Allah."

"I'll do that," replied Yazid. "I'll send the letter of authority (which my father wrote) for 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad to him."

After this he summoned Muslim Ibn 'Amr al-Bahili and he sent him to 'Ubayd Allah with the following (letter):

My Shi'a among the people of Kufa have informed me that Ibn 'Aqil is there gathering units in order to spread rebellion among the Muslims. Therefore, when you read this letter of mine, go to Kufa and search for Ibn 'Aqil as if you were looking for a bead until you find him. Then bind him (in chains), kill him or expel him. Greetings.

In this way he gave him authority over Kufa. Muslim Ibn 'Amr went to 'Ubayd Allah at Basra and brought him the authorisation and the letter. 'Ubayd Allah ordered that preparations should be made immediately and that the departure for Kufa would take place on the next day. He himself left Basra after he had made his brother, 'Uthman, his deputy. He took with him Muslim Ibn 'Amr, Sharik Ibn al-A'war al-Harithi, together with his entourage and household.

When he reached Kufa, he was wearing a black turban and he was veiled. News of al-Husayn's departure had reached the people and they were expecting his arrival. When they saw 'Ubayd Allah, they thought that he was al-Husayn. He (i.e. 'Ubayd Allah) did not pass a group of people without them greeting him. They were saying: "Welcome, son of the Apostle of Allah, your arrival is a happy (event)."

He saw in their welcoming of al-Husayn something which (greatly) troubled him. Muslim Ibn 'Amr said, when their number had become so great (that) they were delaying them: "This is the governor 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad."

He went on so that he was approaching the (governor's) palace at night. With him was (still) a great

crowd who had gathered round him and who did not doubt that he was al-Husayn. Al-Nu'man Ibn Bashir had (the palace) bolted against him and against his entourage. One of those with him called on him to open the door to them. But al-Nu'man, still thinking that he was al-Husayn, went up to the balcony and called down: "I invoke Allah before you, unless you withdraw (from me), by Allah, I will not hand over my office (amana) to you but I have no wish to fight you."

(Ibn Ziyad) did not answer him. But he went closer while al-Nu'man was hanging over the balcony of the palace. Then he began to say to him: "Open, you have not opened yet and you have already had a long night (in which you have slept instead of governing)." [11](#)

A man behind him heard this and withdrew to the people from Kufa who had followed (Ibn Ziyad) (believing) him to be al-Husayn. He said: "O people, it is Ibn Murjana [12](#), by Him other than Whom there is no deity." Al-Nu'man opened the door for him and he entered. They slammed the door in the faces of the people and they dispersed.

In the morning the call was made among the people: "Al-salat jami'a (the prayer is a general prayer which all should gather for)." The people gathered and he went out to them. He praised and glorified Allah and said. "The Commander of the faithful (Yazid) has appointed me to be in charge of your town and your frontier-station and the distribution of your booty (fay'). He has ordered me to give justice to the oppressed among you, to be generous to those of you who are deprived, and to treat the obedient among you with generosity like a good father, but to use the whip and the sword against those who abandon my commands and oppose my appointment. Let each man protect himself. True belief (sidq) should declare itself on your behalf, not the threat of punishment (wa'id)."

Then he went down, he took the group leaders ('arifs) and (some of) the people forcibly and he said: "Write to me about the strangers, those among you who supported the Commander of the Faithful (i.e. 'Ali b. Abi Talib), those among you who support the Haruriyya (i.e. Kharijites), and the trouble-makers whose concern is discord and turmoil. Whosoever of you makes these lists for us will be free from harm. But those of you who do not write anyone, will have to guarantee that there is no opponent in his group ('irafa) who will oppose us, and no wrongdoer who will try to wrong us. Anyone who does not do so, will be denied protection and his blood and his property will be permitted to us. Any group leader ('arif) in whose group is found anyone with partisanship for the Commander of the Faithful, who has not been reported to us, will be crucified at the door of his house, and I will abolish the pay ('ata') of that group ('irafa)."

When Muslim Ibn 'Aqil heard of the coming of 'Ubayd Allah to Kufa, of the speech he had made and his treatment of the 'arifs and (other) people, he left the house of al-Mukhtar and went to the house of Hani' Ibn 'Urwa and went in (to stay) there. The Shi'a began to visit Hani's house secretly to keep it hidden from 'Ubayd Allah and they enjoined that it should be kept secret.

Ibn Ziyad summoned a retainer (mawla) of his called Ma'qil. "Take three thousand dirhams," he told him,

“and look for Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil and search out his followers. If you get hold of one or a group of them, give them these three thousand dirhams. Tell them to use it to help in the war against your enemy. Let them know that you are one of them. For if you give it to them, they will be sure of you and have confidence in you, and they will not keep any of their information from you. So go (looking) for them and continue until you find where Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil is staying and you have met him.”

He did that. He came (to a place where) he sat near Muslim Ibn ‘Awsaja al-Asadi in the great mosque. The latter was praying, and he (Ma‘qil) heard some people saying that this (was one of those who) had pledged allegiance to al-Husayn. He went up and sat right next to him until he had finished praying.

“O servant of Allah,” he said, “I am a Syrian whom Allah has blessed with love for the House and love for those who love them.”

He pretended to weep (in front of) him. Then he continued: “I have three thousand dirhams with which I want to meet a man from them (the House) whom I have learnt has come to Kufa to receive pledges of allegiance on behalf of the son of the daughter of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family. I have been wanting to meet him but I have not found anyone who will direct me to him and I don’t know the place (where he is staying). While I was sitting (here), I heard a group of the faithful saying that this is a man (i.e. Muslim Ibn ‘Awsaja) who is acquainted with this House. Therefore I have come to you so that you may take this money from me and introduce me to your leader (sahib); for I am one of your brethren and someone you can trust. If you wish, you may receive my pledge of allegiance to him before my meeting him.”

“I thank Allah for you meeting me,” replied (Muslim) Ibn ‘Awsaja, “and it gives me great joy to get (you) what you desire, and that Allah should help the House of His Prophet, peace be on them, through you. Yet the people’s knowledge of my (connection) with this affair before it is finished troubles me, because of (my) fear of this tyrant and his severity.”

“It would be better (if) you took the pledge of allegiance from me (now),” Ma‘qil told him. So he took his pledge of allegiance and testaments heavily supported by oaths that he would be sincere and keep the matter concealed. He (Ma‘qil) gave him whatever would make him content in that way.

“Come to visit me at my house for (a few) days,” said (Muslim Ibn ‘Awsaja). “for I will seek permission for you (to visit) your master.”

He began to go to visit him frequently with the people (i.e. the other members of the Shi‘a) and sought permission for him (to visit). Permission was given and Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil received (Ma‘qil’s) pledge of allegiance. He told Abu Thumama al-Sa’idi to take the money from him. The latter was the one who collected money from them and what could be used to help each other, and he used to buy their arms. He was a perceptive man and one of the knights (faris) of the Arabs and one of the notables of the Shi‘a.

That man (i.e. Ma‘qil) began to visit them regularly. He was the first to enter and the last to leave, in

order to become acquainted with (everything of) their affairs which Ibn Ziyad wanted. He used to keep him informed about that at regular intervals.

Hani' Ibn 'Urwa began to fear for himself and he stopped attending Ibn Ziyad's assembly (majlis). He pretended to be sick. Ibn Ziyad asked those who did attend, "Why is it I don't see Hani'?" "He is sick." they replied.

"If I had been informed of his illness, I would have paid him a sick visit," said Ibn Ziyad. Then he summoned Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath, Asma' Ibn Kharija and 'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Zubaydi. Ruwayha¹³, daughter of 'Amr was married to Hani' Ibn 'Urwa; she was the mother of Yahya Ibn Hani'.

"What prevents Hani' from coming to visit us?" he asked them. "We don't know," they replied, "but it is said that he is sick"

"I have learnt," replied (Ibn Ziyad), "that he is better and that he sits at the door of his house. Go and tell him that he should not abandon his duty towards us. For I do not like one of the Arab nobles like him to ill-treat me,"

They went until they stood before his (house) in the evening. He was sitting at his door.

"What is stopping you from seeing the governor?" they asked. "For he has mentioned you and said that if he had been told you were ill, he would have paid you a sick-visit."

"An illness has stopped me," he answered.

"He has been informed." they said. "that you sit at the door of your house every evening. He finds you tardy and tardiness and churlish behaviour are things which the authorities will not tolerate. We adjure you to ride with us."

He called for his clothes and got dressed. Then he called for a mule and rode (with them). When he got near the palace, he began to feel some apprehension. He said to Hasan Ibn Asma' Ibn Kharija, "Nephew, by Allah, I fear this man. What do you think?" "Uncle, by Allah, I do not fear anything for you. Why do you invent a reason (for blame) against yourself?" he answered, for Hasan did not know why 'Ubayd Allah had sent for him. (So) Hani' went on until he came to 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad. With him was a group (of people).

When he looked up, 'Ubayd Allah said (to himself): "The fool's legs have brought him to you." Then, when Hani' had drawn near Ibn Ziyad, who had the qadhi Shurayh, with him, Ibn Ziyad turned towards him and recited:

I want is friendship but he wants my death.

The one who makes excuses to you is one of your own bosom friends from the tribe of Murad¹⁴.

He was referring to his earlier kindness and gentleness to him (Hani').

"What is that, governor?" asked Hani'.

"Yes, Hani', what are these matters which you have been plotting in your house against the Commander of the faithful and the general community of the Muslims?" asked Ibn Ziyad. "You have brought Muslim Ibn 'Aqil and taken him into your house. You have gathered arms and men for him in houses around you. You thought that was hidden from me."

"I have not done that and Muslim is not with me," he replied.

"Oh yes (you have)," was the answer.

After the argument between them had gone on for some time and Hani' persisted in contradicting and denying (the accusations), Ibn Ziyad summoned that spy, Ma'qil. He came and stood before him. "Do you know this man?" (Ibn Ziyad) asked him. "Yes," he replied.

At that (moment) Hani' realised that he had been a spy against them and had brought (Ibn Ziyad) all their information. For a moment he was bewildered, and then his spirit returned to him.

"Listen to me," he said. "And believe what I say. I swear by Allah that I do not lie. By Allah, I did not summon him to my house. I did not know anything about his business until he came to me asking to stay with me. I was too ashamed to refuse him. As a result of that, the duty of giving (him) protection fell upon me. Therefore I gave him lodging and refuge. Then his affair developed as you have been informed. If you wish, I will give you strongly sworn testaments that I will not do you any harm and danger. And I will come to you and put my hand in your hand. If you wish, I will give you a guarantee which will be in your hand until I return to you. Then I will go to him and order him to leave my house for wherever in the land he wants to go. Then he will leave his right of protection."

"You will never leave me unless you bring him," answered Ibn Ziyad.

"No, by Allah. I will not bring him to you," (the other) declared.

After the argument between them had gone on for some time, Muslim Ibn 'Amr al-Bahili rose (to speak). There was no other Syrian or Basran in Kufa except him.

"May Allah make you prosper, governor," he interjected. "(please) leave me with him (for a time) so that I can speak to him." He arose and took him (Hani') aside from Ibn Ziyad. They were (standing) where he could see them and when they raised their voices, he could hear what they were saying.

"I adjure you before Allah, Hani'", said Muslim, "you are killing yourself and bringing tribulation on your clan. By Allah, I hold you too precious to be killed. This man is the cousin of (your) tribe so they will not fight against him, nor harm him. Therefore give him (i.e. Muslim Ibn 'Aqil) to them (the authorities). There

will be no shame and failure for you by that for you would only be handing him over to the authorities.”

“By Allah, indeed there would be shame and disgrace for me,” answered Hani’, “were I to hand over one who has come under my protection and is my guest, while I am still alive and sound. I can hear; I see well; I have a strong arm and many helpers. By Allah, if I was the only one without any helper, I would not hand him over until I had died on his behalf.”

He began to shout at him saying: “By Allah, I will never hand him over to him.”

Ibn Ziyad heard that. “Bring him to me,” he said. They brought him. “Either bring him to me or I will have your head cut off,” demanded Ibn Ziyad.

“Then there will be much flashing (of swords) around your house,” replied Hani’, thinking that his clan would prevent him (from being killed).

“Come near me,” demanded (Ibn Ziyad). He came nearer and Ibn Ziyad struck his face with his cane and went on beating at his nose, forehead and cheeks so that he broke his nose and the blood flowed from it on to his face and beard and the flesh of his forehead and cheeks was sprinkled over his beard. Eventually the cane broke. Hani’ stretched out his hand towards the hilt of the sword of one of the armed attendants but the man pulled it away and prevented him.

“You have been behaving like one of the Haruri (i.e. Kharijites) all day long!” yelled Ibn Ziyad, “so your blood is permitted to us. Take him away!”

They took him and threw him into one of the rooms in the building. They locked the doors on him. He had told them to put guards on him and that (also) was done. However Hasan Ibn Asma’ arose and said: “Are (we) messengers of treachery now? For you told us to bring the man to you. Yet when we brought him to you, you smashed his nose and face, and his blood flowed on his beard. Then you claimed that you would kill him.”

“You will be for it here (and now),” cried ‘Ubayd Allah and he ordered him to be struck, shaken and pushed aside.

“We are satisfied with the governor’s attitude on our behalf and against (those of) us (who are wrong): the governor is only punishing (those who are wrong),” declared Muhammad Ibn al-Ash‘ath.

However when it was reported to ‘Amr b al-Hajjaj and he learnt that Hani’ had been killed, he advanced with Madhhij and surrounded the palace. He had a great crowd with him.

“I am ‘Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj” he called out “and these are the knights of Madhhij, and their leading men. We have not broken away from obedience, nor have we separated from the community.”

It had been reported to them that their colleague had been killed and they regarded that as a great

crime. ‘Ubayd Allah was told that Madhhij were at the gate. He told the qadhi Shurayh: “Go in to their colleague, look at him and then go out and inform them that he is still alive and has not been killed.”

Shurayh went in and looked at him. When Hani’ saw Shurayh he said, with blood flowing down his beard: “Oh Allah! Oh you Muslims! Has my clan been destroyed? Where are the people of religion? Where are the people of the town?” When he heard the tumult at the door of the palace he said: “I think those are the voices of Madhhij and my group of the Muslims. If ten of them got in, they would be able to rescue me.”

After Shurayh had listened to what he had to say, he went out to them and told them: “When the governor learnt about your attitude and your statements concerning your colleague, he ordered me to go and see him. I went and I saw him. Then he ordered me to meet you and inform you that he is still alive and that the report that he had been killed was false.”

“Praise be to Allah since he has not been killed,” answered ‘Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj and his colleagues. Then they went away.

‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad went out and went up on the pulpit. (He had brought) with him the nobles of the people, his bodyguard (shurat) and his entourage. He said “O people, seek refuge in obedience to Allah and your Imams. Do not cause division, for you will be destroyed, humiliated, killed or harshly treated and deprived. Your brother is he who speaks the truth to you. He who warns is excused.”

After he had finished, he was about to go down but had not gone from the pulpit, when the look-outs at the date-sellers’ gate of the mosque rushed in yelling; “Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil has come!”

‘Ubayd Allah quickly went into the palace and locked the gates. [‘Abd Allah Ibn Hazim reported:]

By Allah, I was Ibn ‘Aqil’s messenger at the palace to see what was done to Hani’. When he was beaten and imprisoned I mounted my horse and was the first to enter the house to bring information of him to Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil. There the women of Murad had gathered and they were crying out; “O tears of grief for him! O bereavement of him!”

I went in to see Muslim and gave him the news of him (Hani’). He ordered me to summon his supporters. The houses around him were full of them; there were four thousand men there. He told his messengers to cry out: “O victorious, kill!” so I cried out; “O victorious, kill”. Then the Kufans gathered and assembled before him. Muslim, may Allah have mercy on him, appointed leaders over the quarters, over the tribes of Kinda, Madhhij, Tamim, Asad, Mudhar and Hamdan. The people had answered the call and gathered, except for a few who had delayed so that the mosque and the market place were full of people. They were full of enthusiasm until the evening. ‘Ubayd Allah’s situation was grim. All his energy was concentrated on holding the door, for he only had thirty members of his bodyguard with him in the palace, twenty nobles of the people, and his family and entourage. The nobles who had not been with him began to come to him through the door which adjoined the building of the Romans.

Then those of the nobles who were with Ibn Ziyad began to look down on them (the people outside). (These) were looking at them, while they hurled stones at them and cursed them and abused 'Ubayd Allah and his father. Ibn Ziyad summoned Kathir Ibn Shihab and ordered him to go out among those of Madhij who obeyed him and to go round Kufa and make the people desert Ibn 'Aqil; he should make them afraid of (the possibility of) war and threaten them with the punishment of the authorities. Then he ordered Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath to go out among those of Kinda and Hadhramawt who obeyed him; he should raise a standard which would guarantee security to those people who came to him. He gave similar instructions to al-Qa'qa' al-Dhuhli, Shabath Ibn Rib'i al-Tamimi, Hajjar Ibn Abjar al-'Ijli and Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan al-'Amiri. He kept the rest of the nobles of the people with him, not wishing to be without them because of the small number of people who were with him. Kathir Ibn Shihab went out (and began) making the people desert Muslim.

Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath went out until he reached the houses of the Banu 'Umara. Ibn 'Aqil sent 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Shurayh al-Shibami to Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath from the mosque. When Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath saw the great number of those who had come to him (Muslim), he lingered where he was (i.e. he did not carry out Ibn Ziyad's instructions). Then he – Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath – Kathir Ibn Shihab, al-Qa'qa' al-Dhuhli and Shabath Ibn Rib'i began to make the people withdraw from their close adherence to Muslim for they made them afraid of the authorities so that a great number of their tribesmen and others gathered to them and they went to Ibn Ziyad through the house of the Romans. The tribesmen went in with them.

"May Allah make the governor prosperous," said Kathir Ibn Shihab, "you have many of the nobles of the people with you, (as well as) your bodyguard, family and servants. Let us go out against them."

'Ubayd Allah refused but he gave Shabath Ibn Rib'i a standard and he sent him out. The people with Ibn 'Aqil remained numerous until evening.

Their situation became strong. 'Ubayd Allah sent for the nobles and he assembled them. They (went up to the roof to) look down on the people. They offered additional (money) and kind treatment to those who would obey and they terrified the disobedient with (threats of) dispossession and (dire) punishment. They told them that the army from Syria was coming against them. Kathir Ibn Shihab spoke until the sun was about to set. He said: "O people, stay with your families. Do not hurry into evil actions. Do not expose yourselves to death. These are the soldiers of the Commander of the faithful Yazid, who are approaching. The governor has given Allah a promise that if you persist in fighting him and do not go away by nightfall, he will deprive your children of their (right to a) state allotment of money ('ata') and he will scatter your solders in Syrian campaigns. He will make the healthy among you responsible for the sick and those present responsible for those who are absent until none of those rebellious people will remain who has not tasted the evil consequences of what their hands have earned."

The (other) nobles spoke in a similar vein. After the people had heard what they had to say, they began to disperse. Women began to come to their sons and brothers (saying): "Go, the people will be enough

(without) you". Men were going to their sons and brothers and saying: "Tomorrow the Syrians will come against you. What are you doing causing war and evil? Come away." Thus (a man) would be taken away or would leave. They continued to disperse so that by the time evening came and Muslim Ibn 'Aqil prayed the evening prayer, he had only thirty men with him in the mosque.

When he saw that it was evening and he only had that group with him, he left the mosque and headed for the gates of Kinda. He reached the gates with only ten of them (left) with him. When he left the gate, there was no one with him to guide him. He looked around but could see no one to guide him along the road, to show him to his house and to give him personal support if an enemy appeared before him.

He wandered amid the lanes of Kufa without knowing where he was going until he came to the houses or the Banu Jabala of Kinda. He went on until he came to a door (at which was) a woman called Taw'a. She had been a slave-wife (umm walad) of al-Ash'ath Ibn Qays and he had freed her. She had, then, married Usayd al-Hadhrami 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.

Ibn 'Aqil greeted her and she returned the greeting.

"Servant of Allah, give me water to drink," he asked her. She gave him a drink and he sat down. She took the vessel inside and then came out again.

"Servant of Allah, haven't you had your drink?" she asked.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Then go to your people," she said. But he was silent. She repeated it but he was still silent. A third time she said: "Glory be to Allah, servant of Allah. Get up – may Allah give you health – (and go) to your people. For it is not right for you to sit at my door and I will not permit you to do it."

(At this) he got up and said: "Servant of Allah, I have neither house nor clan in this town. Would you (show) me some generosity and kindness? Perhaps I will be able to repay it later on."

"What is it, Servant of Allah?" she asked.

"I am Muslim b 'Aqil" he replied. "These people have lied to me, incited me (to action) and then abandoned me." "You are Muslim," she repeated. "Yes," he answered.

"Come in," she said and he was taken into a room in her house but not the room she used. She spread out a carpet for him and offered him supper but he could not eat.

Soon her son returned. He saw her going frequently to and fro between the rooms and exclaimed: "By Allah, the number of times which you have gone into and come out of that room this evening, makes me suspect that you have something important (there)." "My young son, forget about this," she answered.

“By Allah, tell me,” he replied.

“Get on with your own business and don’t ask me about anything,” she retorted. However he persisted until she said: “My young son, don’t tell any of the people anything about what I am going to tell you.”

“Indeed.” he answered and she made him take an oath. When he swore (not to do) that, she told him. He went to bed without saying anything.

After the people had deserted Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil, a long time passed for Ibn Ziyad without him hearing the voices of the supporters of Ibn ‘Aqil as he had heard them before. He told his followers to look down at them and see whether they could see any of them. They looked down and did not see anyone. Then he told them to see whether they were in the shadow and were lying in ambush for them. They removed the (bamboo) roof covers of the mosque and began to lower the torches of fire in their hands, and to look. Sometimes the torches gave light for them and sometimes they did not give (as much) light for them as they would have wished. They let down the torches and sticks of cane tied with rope on which was fire. They were let down until they reached the ground. They did this in (place in which was) the deepest darkness, (as well as) those parts which were closer and those which were in between.

They (also) did that in the darkness around the pulpit. When they saw that there was nothing, they informed Ibn Ziyad that the people had dispersed. Then he opened the gateway which (went) into the mosque. He came out and went up on the pulpit. His followers had come out with him. He told them to sit for a little while before the night prayer. He ordered ‘Amr Ibn Nafi’ to call out that there would be no guarantees of security for any man of the bodyguard, the ‘arifs, the supporters and the fighters who prayed the night prayer (anywhere) except in the mosque. Not an hour passed before the mosque was full of people. After ordering his caller (to call for prayer), he rose for the prayer. His guard rose behind him but he told them to guard him against anyone coming in (to try) to assassinate him. After praying with the people, he went up on the pulpit.

When he had praised and glorified Allah, he said. “Ibn ‘Aqil, stupid and ignorant (man as he is) has attempted the opposition and rebellion which you have seen. There will be no security from Allah for a man in whose house we find him. Whoever brings him, will have the reward for his blood. Fear Allah, you servants of Allah, and keep to obedience and your pledge of allegiance. Do not do (anything which will be) against yourselves. Husayn Ibn Numayr, your mother will lose you, if any of the gates of the lanes of Kufa is open or this man gets away. And you do not bring him to me. I give you authority over the houses of the inhabitants of Kufa. Send lookouts (to inspect) people on the roads. Tomorrow morning clear out (the people from) the houses and search them thoroughly so that you bring me this man.”

Al-Husayn Ibn Numayr was in charge of the bodyguard and was of the Banu Tamim. After this Ibn Ziyad went back into the palace. He gave ‘Amr Ibn Hurayth his standard and put him in charge of the people. In the morning he held an assembly and gave permission for the people to come to him. Muhammad Ibn

al-Ash'ath approached.

"Welcome to one of those whose loyalty is above suspicion," he said to him and sat him by his side.

That same morning the son of that old woman went to 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath and told him about Muslim Ibn 'Aqil being with his mother. 'Abd al-Rahman went to his father who was with Ibn Ziyad. He went to him and Ibn Ziyad learned his secret.

"Get up and bring him to me immediately," said Ibn Ziyad to (Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath), poking a cane into his side. He sent ('Amr Ibn) [15](#) 'Ubayd Allah Ibn 'Abbas al-Sulami with him, together with seventy men from the tribal group of Qays.

They went to the house where Muslim Ibn 'Aqil was. When the latter heard the beating of horses' hooves and the voices of men, he knew that it was him whom they had come for. He went out against them with his sword (drawn) as they rushed blindly towards the house. He fell upon them and struck them with his sword so that he drove them away from the house. They repeated the attack, and Muslim counter-attacked in the same way. He and Bakr Ibn Humran al-Ahmari exchanged blows and Bakr struck Muslim's mouth, cutting his top lip and slicing down to the lower lip to knock out two of his teeth. Muslim struck him a terrible blow on the head and repeated it again, cutting a nerve along his shoulder with a blow which almost reached his stomach. When the people saw that, they (went up and) looked down on him (Muslim) from the tops of the houses, and began to hurl stones at him and to light canes of wood with fire which they threw from the top of the house. When he saw that, he went out against them into the lane with his sword unsheathed.

"You can have my guarantee of security," said Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath. "don't kill yourself."

But he continued to fight against them saying:

I swear I will only be killed as a free man, although I see death as something horrible,

Or it makes the cold a bitter heat and deflects the ray of the sun (for ever).

Every man one day will meet an evil, I fear that I will be cheated and deluded.

"You will not be cheated, deluded or deceived," replied Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath. "These people (ie. the Banu Umayya) are your cousins and they will not fight against you or strike you."

He had been hurt by stones and weakened by the fighting. He was out of breath and he was propping his back up against the wall of that house. Ibn al-Ash'ath repeated the offer of security to him. "Am I granted security?" he said.

"Yes," he replied and he said to the people who were with him, "he is given security by me."

"Yes," replied the people, except ('Amr Ibn) 'Ubayd Allah Ibn al-'Abbas al-Sulami.

“I have neither she–camel nor camel in this (i.e. I will have nothing to do with it),” he said and he turned aside.

“If you will not grant me security,” declared Muslim, “I will not put my hand in yours.”

A mule was brought and he was put on it. They gathered around him and pulled his sword away. At that he was in despair for his life and his eyes filled with tears.

“This is the first betrayal,” he cried.

“I hope no harm will come to you,” called out Muhammad Ibn al–Ash‘ath.

“Is it only hope?” he retorted as he wept. “Where then is your guarantee of security? Indeed We belong to Allah and to Him we will return.”

“One who has sought for the like of what you have sought for, should not weep when there befalls him what has befallen you,” ‘Amr Ibn ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn al–‘Abbas goaded him.

“I would not weep for myself,” he replied, “nor would I grieve for my own death, even though I have not the slightest desire for destruction. But I am weeping for my family who are coming to me, I am weeping for al–Husayn and the family of al–Husayn, peace be on them.”

Then he went closer to Muhammad Ibn al–Ash‘ath and said: “O servant of Allah, by Allah, I see that you are unable to grant me a guarantee of security. Yet do you have the goodness to be able to send one of your men with my message so that it will get to al–Husayn? For I have no doubt that he has already set out towards you, or will be setting out soon with his House. (This messenger) would say: ‘Ibn ‘Aqil has sent me to you. He is a prisoner in the hands of the people, and he does not expect to see evening before he is killed; and he says: Return, may my father and mother be your ransom, with your House and do not let the Kufans tempt you, for they were the followers of your father and he desired to leave them even through death and murder. The Kufans have lied to you. A liar has no judgement’.”

“By Allah, I will do that,” replied Ibn al–Ash‘ath, “and I will inform Ibn Ziyad that I have given you a guarantee of security.”

Ibn al–Ash‘ath went with Ibn ‘Aqil to the door of the palace. He asked permission to enter. Permission was given him and he went in (to see) Ibn Ziyad. He gave a report about Ibn ‘Aqil and Bakr’s blow against him, and about his own guarantee of security to him.

“What (is this about) you and a guarantee of security?” demanded ‘Ubayd Allah, “as if we sent you to guarantee him security when we only sent you to bring him.”

Ibn al–Ash‘ath fell silent.

While Ibn ‘Aqil remained at the palace door, his thirst had become severe. At the palace door there were

people sitting waiting for permission to enter. Among them were 'Umara Ibn 'Uqba Ibn Abi Mu'ayt, 'Amr Ibn Hurayth, Muslim Ibn 'Amr and Kathir Ibn Shihab. There was a jug of cold water placed at the doorway. "Give me a drink of that water:" asked Muslim

"See how cold it is." replied Muslim Ibn 'Amr. "but by Allah you will never taste a drop of it until you taste the heat of Hell-fire" "Shame on you whoever you are!" cried Ibn 'Aqil.

"I am the one who recognized the truth when you denied it; who was sincere to his Imam when you deceived him; who was obedient to him when you opposed him. I am Muslim Ibn 'Amr al-Bahili."

"Your mother has been bereft of a son" replied Ibn 'Aqil. "How coarse you are, how rough, how hard your heart is. Man of Bahila, you are more appropriate for the heat of Hell-fire and to remain there forever, than I am."

He sat down, propping himself against a wall. 'Amr Ibn Hurayth sent one of his boys to bring a jug with a napkin and cup. He poured water into it and told him to drink. But whenever he went to drink, the cup filled with blood so that he was not able to drink. He did that once and then twice. When he made as if to drink for the third time, his tooth fell into the cup.

"Praise be to Allah." he said, "if it had been a provision granted to me (by Allah), I could have drunk it."

Ibn Ziyad's messenger came out and ordered him to go to (see) him. He went in but did not greet him as 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."

"By my life, you will be killed," declared Ibn Ziyad.

"So be it," he replied.

"Indeed, (it will)."

"Then let me make my will to one of my fellow tribesmen" "Do (so)."

Muslim looked those sitting with 'Ubayd Allah. Among them was 'Umar Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas. He said to him "Umar, there is kinship between you and me and I have need of you. So you could carry out what I need of you. But it is secret." 'Umar refused to listen to him.

"Why do you refuse to consider the need of your cousin?" asked 'Ubayd Allah.

So 'Umar got up with him and sat where Ibn Ziyad could watch both of them.

“I have a debt in Kufa,” said Muslim. “I borrowed seven hundred dirhams when I came to Kufa. Sell my sword and armour and pay the debt for me. When I have been killed, ask Ibn Ziyad to give you my corpse and bury it. Send to al-Husayn, peace be on him, someone to send him back. For I have written to him telling him that the people are with him and now I can only think that he is coming,”

“Do you know what he said to me, governor?” ‘Umar said to Ibn Ziyad. “He mentioned these things”

“The faithful would not betray you,” said Ibn Ziyad to (Muslim), “But the traitor was confided in. As for what you have, it is yours, and we will not prevent you from doing with it what you like. As for the body when we have killed it, we do not care what is done with it. As for al-Husayn, if he does not intend (harm) to us, we will not intend (harm) to him.”

Then Ibn Ziyad said: “Ibn ‘Aqil, you came to the people while they were all (united) and you scattered them and divided their opinions so that some of them attacked others”

“No,” replied Ibn ‘Aqil, “I did not come for that but (because) the people of the town claimed that your father had killed their best men, shed their blood and appointed governors among them like the governors of Choesroe and Caesar. We came to enjoin justice and to urge rule by the Book.”

“What are you (to do) with that, you great sinner?” cried Ibn Ziyad. “Why did you not do that among the people when you were drinking wine in Medina?”

“Me, drink wine! By Allah, Allah knows you are not speaking the truth, and have spoken without any knowledge, for I am not like what you have said. It is you who are more correctly described as drinking wine than me, (you) who lap the blood of Muslims and kill the life whose killing Allah has forbidden and (you are one) who sheds sacred blood on behalf of usurpation, enmity and evil opinion while he (Yazid) enjoys himself and plays as if he had done nothing.”

“You great sinner (fasiq),” shouted Ibn Ziyad, “your own soul made you desire what Allah prevented you from having (i.e. authority) (because) Allah did not regard you as worthy of it.”

“Who is worthy of it, if we are not worthy of it?” asked Muslim “The Commander of the faithful, Yazid,” answered Ibn Ziyad. “Praise be to Allah,” called out Muslim. “We will accept Allah’s judgement between us and you in every circumstance.”

“May Allah kill me, if I do not kill you in such a way as no one in Islam has (ever) been killed before,” retorted Ibn Ziyad.

“You are the person with the most right to commit crimes of innovation in Islam which have not been committed before,” Muslim replied, “for you will never abandon evil murder, wicked punishment, shameful practice and avaricious domination to anyone (else).”

Ibn Ziyad began to curse him, and to curse al-Husayn, ‘Ali and ‘Aqil, peace be on them, while Muslim

did not speak to him. "Take him up to the top of the palace," ordered Ibn Ziyad. "and cut off his head, (throw it to the ground) and make (his body) follow it (to the ground)."

"By Allah," said Muslim. "if there was any (real) kinship between you and me, you would not kill me."

"Where is the man whose head Ibn 'Aqil struck with (his) sword?" asked Ibn Ziyad. Then Bakr Ibn Humran al-Ahmari was summoned and he told him: "Climb up, and you be the one who cuts his head off."

He went up with him. He (Muslim) said: "Allah is greater (Allahu Akbar)." He sought forgiveness from Allah and prayed for blessings on the Apostle, saying: "O Allah, judge between us and a people who have enticed us, lied against us and deserted us."

They (took) him to a part which overlooked where the shoemakers are today. His head was cut off (and thrown down) and his body was made to follow his head. Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath, then approached 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad and spoke to him of Hani' Ibn 'Urwa. He said: "You know of the position of Hani' in the town and of his House in the clan. His people know that I and my colleague brought him to you. I adjure you before Allah, hand him over to me for I would not like (to face) the enmity of the town and his family."

He promised to do that but then afterwards something occurred to him and he ordered Hani' (to be) taken (immediately) to the marketplace and (his head) cut off.

Hani' was taken in chains until he was brought to a place where sheep were sold. He began to shout "O Madhhij! There is no one from Madhhij for me today! O Madhhij, where is Madhhij?"

When he realised that no one was going to help him, he pulled his hand and wrenched it free of the chain, crying: "What is there, stick, knife, stone or bone, with which a man can defend his life?"

(At this) they jumped upon him and tied the chain (more) tightly. He was told to stretch out his neck but he answered: "I am not so liberal with my life and I will not help you (to take) my life."

A Turkish retainer (mawla) of 'Ubayd Allah called Rashid struck him with a sword but it did not do anything.

"To Allah is the return. O Allah to Your mercy and Your paradise," called out Hani'. Then (Rashid) struck him with another blow and killed him.

Concerning Muslim Ibn 'Aqil and Hani' Ibn 'Urwa, may Allah have mercy upon them, 'Abd Allah Ibn al-Zubayr al-Asadi said^{[16](#)}:

If you do not know what death is, then look at Hani' in the market-place and Ibn 'Aqil:

(Look at) a hero whose face has been covered with wounds and another who fell dead from a high

place.

The command of the governor struck them (down) and they became legends for those who travel on every road.

You see a corpse whose colour death has changed and a spattering of blood which has flowed abundantly;

A young man who was (even) more bashful than a shy young woman, was more decisive than the polished blade of a two edged sword.

Is Asma' riding in safety a mount which moves at walking pace while Madhhij urged him to seek vengeance

And Murad wander around him? Are all of them in fear of the questioner and the questioned?

If you do not avenge your two brothers, then be harlots satisfied with little.

When Muslim and Hani' were killed, the mercy of Allah be on them, 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad sent their heads with Hani' Ibn Abi Hayya al-Wadi'i and al-Zubayr Ibn al-Arwah al-Tamimi to Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya. He ordered his secretary (katib) to write to Yazid about what had happened to Muslim and Hani'. The secretary who was 'Amr Ibn Nafi' – wrote but he was very wordy (in his style). He was the first to be wordy in writing letters. When 'Ubayd Allah saw the letter, he disliked it.

"What is this prolixity and this excess?" he asked.

"Write:

Praise be to Allah, Who exacted the dues of the Commander of the faithful and has given him sufficient provisions against his enemy. I (am writing to) inform the Commander of the faithful that Muslim Ibn 'Aqil took refuge in the house of Hani' Ibn 'Urwa al-Muradi. I set look-outs and spies on them, concealed men against them, I tricked them until I brought them out. Allah gave me power over them. Thus I came upon them and had them executed. I have sent their heads to you with Hani' Ibn Abi Hayya al-Wadi'i and al-Zubayr Ibn al-Arwah al-Tamimi. They are both people who are attentive and in obedience to you, and of sincerity. Let the Commander of the faithful ask them about whatever of the affair he may wish; for they have knowledge and truth. Farewell. Greetings."

Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya wrote (back):

You have not gone beyond what I wanted. You have acted with the decisive action I wanted. You have launched into the attack with the violence of man who has control of his emotion. You have satisfied me, been sufficient for (the task) and corroborated my view of you and my opinion of you. I have summoned your two messengers and questioned them, and talked to them. I found them in their views and merit as

you had mentioned. Receive them both with kindness on my recommendation. I have been informed that al-Husayn has set out for Iraq. Therefore set look-outs and watches, be vigilant and detain suspicious (characters). Put to death (any who are) accused and write to me about any news which occurs. Allah, the Exalted, wishing.

Muslim Ibn 'Aqil's (attempted) rising in Kufa was on Tuesday, 8th of Dhu al-Hijja in the year 60 A.H. (680). He, may Allah have mercy on him, was killed on Wednesday, 9th of Dhu al-Hijja, the Day of 'Arafa. Al-Husayn, the blessings of Allah be on him, set out from Mecca to Iraq on the day of Muslim's (attempted) rising in Kufa, that is the Day of Tarwiya¹⁷, after staying in Mecca for the rest of Sha'ban, the month of Ramadhan, Shawwal and Dhu al-Qa'da, and eight days of Dhu al-Hijja. In his stay in Mecca, peace be on him, a number of Hijazis and Basrans had gathered around him, joining themselves to his household and his retainers (mawali).

When he determined on journeying to Iraq, He made the circumambulation of the (sacred) House and the ritual running between al-Safa and al-Marwa¹⁸. Then he left the state of consecration (for the pilgrimage) (after) he had performed the lesser pilgrimage ('umra) because he was not able to perform the greater pilgrimage (hajj). Through fear of being apprehended in Mecca, and being taken to Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya, He, peace be upon him, had set out early with his House, his sons and those of his Shi'a who had joined him.

[As it has been reported to us:]

News of Muslim's (capture and death) had not yet reached him because (it had only happened) on the day he set out.

[It is reported that al-Farazdaq, the poet, said.]

I made the pilgrimage with my mother in the year 60 A. H. (680). I was driving her camel when I entered the sanctuary. (There) I met al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them, leaving Mecca accompanied by (some men carrying) swords and shields.

"Whose caravan is this?" I asked. "al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali's, peace be on them." was the reply. So I went up and greeted him.

"May Allah grant you your request and (fulfil) your hope in what you want, by my father and mother, son of the Apostle of Allah," I said to him. "But what is making you hurry away from the pilgrimage?"

"If I did not hurry away, I would be apprehended," he replied. Then he asked me; "Who are you?"

"An Arab," I answered and he did not question me (about myself) any further.

"Tell me about the people you have left behind you," he asked. "You have asked a good (question)," I answered. "The hearts of the people are with you but their swords are against you. The decision comes

from Heaven and Allah does what he wishes.”

“You have spoken truly of the affair belonging to Allah,” he replied. ***“Every day He (is involved) in (every) matter (55:29).*** If fate sends down what we like and are pleased with, we praise Allah for His blessings. He is the One from Whom help should be sought in order to give thanks to Him. However, although fate may frustrate (our) hopes, yet He does not destroy (the souls of) those whose intention is the truth and whose hearts are pious.”

“True, Allah brings you what you wish for (ultimately) and guards you against what you are threatened by,” I said. Then I asked him about matters concerning vows and pilgrimage rites. He told me about them and then moved his mount off, saying farewell, and so we parted.

When al-Husayn b ‘Ali, peace be on them, left Mecca, Yahya Ibn Sa‘id Ibn al-‘As met him with a group (of men). They had been sent to him by ‘Amr Ibn Sa‘id.

“Come back from where you are going,” they ordered. But he refused (to obey) them and continued. The two groups came to blows and hit at each other with whips. However al-Husayn and his followers resisted fiercely. Al-Husayn continued until he got to al-Tan‘im. There he met a camel-train which had come from Yemen. He hired from its people (additional) camels for himself and his followers to ride.

Then he said to the owners (of the camels): “Whoever (of you) wants to come with us to Iraq, we will pay his hire and enjoy his company and whoever wants to leave some way along the road we will pay his hire for the distance he has travelled.”

Some of the people went with him but others refused. ‘Abd Allah Ibn Ja‘far sent his sons, ‘Awn and Muhammad, after him, and he wrote a letter to him which he gave to them. In it, he said:

I ask you before Allah (to return) if you have set out when you see my letter. For I am very concerned because the direction in which you are heading will have within it your destruction, and the extirpation of your House. If you are destroyed today, the light of the land will be extinguished; for you are the (standard) of those who are rightly-guided and the hope of the believers. Do not hurry on your journey as I am following this letter. Greetings.

‘Abd Allah, then went to ‘Amr Ibn Sa‘id and asked him to write to al-Husayn (offering him) a guarantee of security, and (promising) to favour him, so that he would return from where he was going. ‘Amr Ibn Sa‘id wrote a letter in which he offered him favour and a guarantee of security for himself. He dispatched it with his brother Yahya Ibn Sa‘id. Yahya Ibn Sa‘id went after him (as did) ‘Abd Allah after dispatching his sons. The two handed (‘Amr’s) letter to him and strove (to persuade) him to return.

“I have seen the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, in my sleep,” answered (al-Husayn) “and he ordered me (to do) what I am carrying out.”

“What was that vision?” they both asked.

“I have not told anyone of it,” he answered, “and I am not going tell anyone until I meet my Lord, the Mighty and Exalted.”

When ‘Abd Allah Ibn Ja‘far despaired of (persuading) him, he told his sons, ‘Awn and Muhammad, to stay with him, to go with him and to struggle on behalf of him. He returned with Yahya Ibn Sa‘id to Mecca.

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, pressed on swiftly and directly towards Iraq until he reached Dhat ‘Irq.

When ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad had learnt of the journey of al-Husayn, peace be on him, from Mecca to Kufa, he had sent al-Husayn Ibn Numayr, the commander of the bodyguard (shurta) to station himself at al-Qadisiyya and to set up a (protective) link cavalry between the area of al-Qadisiyya to Khaffan and the area al-Qadisiyya to al-Qutqutaniyya. He informed the men that al-Husayn was heading for Iraq.

When al-Husayn, peace be on him, reached al-Hajiz (a hill above) Batn al-Rumma, he sent Qays Ibn Mushir al-Saydawi – some say it was his brother-in-nurture, ‘Abd Allah Ibn Yuqtur – to Kufa¹⁹. For He, peace be upon him, had not yet learnt the news of the fate Ibn ‘Aqil. He sent a letter with him:

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate From al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali To his brother believers and Muslims,

Greetings to you, I praise Allah before you, other than whom there is no deity. Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil’s letter came to me, informing me of your sound judgement and the agreement of your leaders to support us, and to seek our rights. I have asked Allah to make your actions good and reward you with the greatest reward. I set out to you from Mecca on 8th of Dhu al-Hijja, the day of Tarwiya. When my messenger reaches you, be urgent and purposeful in your affairs, for I am coming to you Within the (next few) days. Greeting and the mercy and blessings of Allah.

Muslim had written to al-Husayn seventeen days before he was killed and the Kufans had written to him: “Here you have a hundred thousand swords. Do not delay.”

Qays Ibn Mushir went towards Kufa with the letter. However, When he reached al-Qadisiyya, al-Husayn Ibn Numayr apprehended him and sent him to ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad.

“Go up on the pulpit.” ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad ordered him. “and curse the liar, al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on him”

Qays went up on the pulpit and praised and glorified Allah. Then he said: “People, this man, al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, the best of Allah’s creatures, the son of Fatima, the daughter of the Apostle, may Allah bless Him and His Family and grant them peace, (is nearby). I am his messenger to you. Answer him.”

Then he cursed ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad and his father and prayed for forgiveness for ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib and blessed him. ‘Ubayd Allah ordered him to be thrown from the top of the palace. They threw him and

he was smashed to pieces.

[It is (also) reported:]

He fell on the ground in chains and his bones were crushed and there only remained to him his last breath. A man called 'Abd al-Malik Ibn 'Umayr al-Lakhmi came to him and cut his throat. When he was told that that had been a shameful (thing to do) and he was blamed for it, he said: "I wanted to relieve him (of his suffering)."

(While this had been going on) al-Husayn, peace be on him, had left Hajiz in the direction of Kufa until he came to one of the watering (places) of the Arabs. There was 'Abd Allah Ibn Muti' al-'Adawi, who was staying there. When he saw al-Husayn, peace be on him, he got up and said to him: "(May I ransom) my father and mother for you, son of the Apostle of Allah, what has brought you (here)?" He brought him (forward) and helped him to dismount.

"It is a result of the death of Mu'awiya as you would know," replied al-Husayn, peace be on him. "The Iraqis have written to me urging me to (come to) them"

"I remind you, son of the Apostle of Allah, (of Allah) and the sacredness of Islam, lest it be violated. I adjure you before Allah (to think) about the sacredness of Quraysh. I adjure you before Allah (to think) about the sacredness of the Arabs. By Allah, if you seek that which is in the hands of Banu Umayya, they will kill you, If they kill you, they will never fear anyone after you. Then it will be the sacredness of Islam which is violated, and the sacredness of Quraysh and the sacredness of the Arabs. Don't do it! Don't go to Kufa! Don't expose yourself to Banu Umayya!!" Al-Husayn, peace be on him, insisted on continuing his journey.

(In the meantime) 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad had ordered (the area) which was between Waqisa and the roads to Syria and Basra to be occupied (so that) they should not let anyone enter, nor anyone leave (Kufa).

However, al-Husayn, peace be on him, went on without knowing anything (of that) until he met some Arabs. He asked them (about the situation) and they told him: "No, by Allah, we don't know (anything about it) except that we cannot get into or out of (Kufa)." He continued on his journey.

[A group of Fazara and Bajila reported (the following account). They said:]

We were with Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn al-Bajali when we came from Mecca. (Although) we were travelling alongside al-Husayn, peace be on him, there was nothing more hateful to us than that we should stop with him at a halting place. (Yet) when al-Husayn, peace be on him, travelled and halted, we could not avoid halting with him. Al-Husayn halted at the side (of the road) and we halted at the (other) side (of the road). While we were sitting, eating our food, a messenger of al-Husayn, peace be on him, approached, greeted us and entered (our camp).

“Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn,” he said, “Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Husayn, peace be on him, has sent me to you (to ask) you to come to him.”

Each man of us threw away what was in his hands (i.e. threw up his hand in horror): it was (as surprising) as if birds had alighted on our heads.

“Glory be to Allah,” (Zuhayr’s) wife said to him, “did the son of the Messenger of Allah send for you? Then aren’t you going to him? If you went to him, you would hear what he had to say. Then you could leave him (if you wanted to).”

Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn went (across) to him. It was not long before he returned to announce that he was heading east. He ordered his tent (to be struck) and (called for) his luggage, mounts and equipment. His tent was pulled down and taken to al-Husayn, peace be on him, then he said to his wife: “You are divorced, go back to your family, for I do not want anything to befall you except good.”

Then he said to his companions: “Whoever wants to follow me (may do so), otherwise he is at the end of his covenant with me (i.e. released from obedience to follow Zuhayr as the leader of his tribal group). I will tell you a story (of something which happened to me once): We were raiding a rich land. Allah granted us victory and we won (a lot of) booty. Salman al-Farsi, the mercy of Allah be on him, said to us: ‘Are you happy with the victory which Allah has granted you and the booty you have won?’ We said: ‘Yes.’ Then he said: ‘Therefore when you meet the lord of the young men of the family of Muhammad be happier to fight with them than you are with the booty which you have obtained today.’ As for me, I pray that Allah may be with you.”

He remained among the people with al-Husayn until he was killed.

[‘Abd Allah Ibn Sulayman and al-Mundhir Ibn Musham‘ill both from Asad, reported:]

When we had finished the pilgrimage, there was no concern more important to us than to join al-Husayn, peace be on him, on the road, so that we might see what happened in his affair. We went along trotting our two camels speedily until we joined him at Zarud. As we approached, there we (saw) a man from Kufa who had changed his route when he had seen al-Husayn, peace be on him. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, had stopped as if he wanted (to speak to) him, but (the man) ignored him and went on. We went on towards the man. One of us said to the other: “Come with us to ask this man if he has news of Kufa.”

We came up to him and greeted him. He returned out greeting.

“From which (tribe) do you come, fellow?” we asked.

“(I am) an Asadi,” he answered.

“We also are Asadis,” we said. “Who are you?”

“I am Bakr Ibn so and so,” he answered and we told him our lineage. “Tell us of the people (you have left) behind you?” we asked. “Yes,” he replied, “I only left Kufa after Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil and Hani’ Ibn ‘Urwa had been killed. I saw them being dragged by their legs into the market–place.”

We went on to join al–Husayn, peace be on him, and we were travelling close to him until he stopped at al–Tha‘labiyya in the evening. We caught up with him when he stopped and we greeted him. He returned our greeting.

“May Allah have mercy on you,” we said, “we have news. If you wish, we will tell it to you publicly or if you wish, secretly.”

He looked at us and at his followers.

“There is no veil for these men,” he answered.

“Did you see the rider who whom you were near, yesterday evening?”

“Yes,” he answered. “I had wanted to question him.”

“We have got the news from him and spared you (the trouble of) questioning him,” we said. “He was a man from our (tribe), of sound judgement, honesty and intelligence. He told us that he had only left Kufa after Muslim and Hani’ had been killed, and he had seen them being dragged by their legs into the market–place.” “We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return; may Allah have mercy on them both.” said al–Husayn and he repeated that several times.

“We adjure you before Allah.” we exhorted him. “For your own life and for your house that you do not go from this place, for you have no one to support you in Kufa and no Shi‘a. Indeed we fear that such men (will be the very ones who) will be against you.” “What is your opinion,” he asked, looking towards the sons of ‘Aqil, “now that Muslim has been killed?”

“By Allah,” they declared, “we will not go back until we have taken our vengeance or have tasted (the death) which he tasted.” Al–Husayn, peace be on him, came near us and said. “There is nothing good (left) in life for these men.”

Then we knew that his decision had been taken to continue the journey.

“May Allah be good to you,” we said.

“May Allah have mercy on you both,” he answered.

Then his followers said to him: “By Allah, you are not the same as Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil. If you go to Kufa, the people will rush to (support) you.”

He was silent and waited until daybreak. Then he ordered his boys and servants to get a lot of water, to

give (the people) to drink and more for the journey. They set out (once more) and went on to Zubala. News of ‘Abd Allah Ibn Yuqtur reached him. He took out a written statement to the people and read it to them:

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate, News of the dreadful murder of Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil, Hani’ Ibn ‘Urwa, and ‘Abd Allah Ibn Yuqtur has reached us. Our Shi‘a have deserted us. Those of you who would prefer to leave us, may leave freely without guilt.

The people began to disperse from him to right and left until there were only left with him those followers who had come with him from Medina, and a small group of those who had joined him. Al-Husayn had done that because he realised that the Arabs who had followed him had only followed him because they thought that he was going to a land where the inhabitants’ obedience to him had already been established. And he did not want them to accompany him without being (fully) aware of what they were going to.

At dawn, he ordered his followers to provide themselves with water and with extra (supplies of it). Then they set out until they passed Batn al-‘Aqaba. He stopped there and was met by a shaykh of the Banu ‘Ikrima called ‘Amr Ibn Lawdhan. “Where are you heading?” he asked.

“Kufa,” replied al-Husayn, peace be on him.

“I implore you before Allah,” exhorted the shaykh, “why are you going there? You won’t come to anything there except the points of spears and the edges of swords. If those who sent for you were enough to support you in battle and had prepared the ground for you, and you came to them, that would be a wise decision. However, in the light of the situation as it has been described I don’t think that you ought to do it.”

“Servant of Allah,” he answered, “wise decisions are not hidden from me. Yet the commands of Allah, the Exalted, cannot be resisted. By Allah, (my enemies) will not leave me till they have torn the very heart from the depths of my guts. If they do that, Allah will cause them to be dominated and humiliated until they become the most humiliated of the factions among nations.”

He, peace be on him, went on from Batn al-‘Aqaba until he stopped at Sharaf (for the night). At dawn he ordered his boys to get water and more (for the journey). Then he continued from there until midday. While he was journeying, one of his followers exclaimed:

“Allah is greater (Allahu Akbar)!”

“Allah is greater (Allahu Akbar)!” responded al-Husayn, peace be on him. Then he asked: “Why did you say Allahu Akbar?”

“I saw palm-trees,” answered the man.

“This is a place in which we never see a palm-tree,” a group of his followers asserted.

“What do you think it is then?” asked al-Husayn, peace be on him.

“We think it is the ears of horses,” they answered.

“By Allah, I think so too,” he declared. Then he said: “(So that) we can face them in one direction (i.e. so that we are not surrounded), we should put at our rear whatever place of refuge (we can find).” “Yes,” (lit. we) [20](#) said to him, “there is Dhu Husam over on your left. If you reach it before them, it will be (in) just (the position) you want.” So he veered left towards it and we went in that direction with him. Even before we had had time to change direction the vanguard of the cavalry appeared in front of us and we could see them clearly. We left the road and when they saw that we had moved off the road, they (also) moved off the road towards us. Their spears looked like palm branches stripped of their leaves and their standards were like birds’ wings. Al-Husayn ordered his tents (to be put up) and they were erected. The people came up; (there were) about one thousand horsemen under the command of al-Hurr Ibn Yazid al-Tamimi. (It was) during the heat of midday (that) he and his cavalry stood (thus) facing al-Husayn, peace be on him. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, and his followers were all wearing their turbans and their swords (ready to fight).

“Provide (our) people with water and let them quench their thirst and give their horses water to drink little by little.” al-Husayn ordered his boys. They did that and they began filling their bowls and cups and took them to the horses. When a horse had drunk three or four or five draughts, the water was taken away and given to another horse until they had all been watered.

[‘Ali Ibn al-Ta‘an al-Muharibi reported:]

I was with al-Hurr on that day, I was among the last of his followers to arrive. When al-Husayn, peace be on him, saw how thirsty both I and my horse were, he said: “Make your beast (rawiya) kneel.” I thought rawiya meant water-skin so he said: “Cousin, make your camel (jamal) kneel.” I did so. Then he said: “Drink.” I did so, but when I drank, water flowed from my water-skin.

“Bend your water-skin,” said al-Husayn. I did not know how to do that. He came up (to me) and bent it (into the proper position for drinking). Then I drank and gave my horse to drink.

Al-Hurr Ibn Yazid had come from al-Qadisiyya. ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad had sent al-Husayn Ibn Numayr and ordered him to take up (his) position at al-Qadisiyya. Then al-Hurr had been sent in advance with one thousand horsemen to meet al-Husayn.

Al-Hurr remained positioned opposite to al-Husayn, peace be on him, until the time for the midday prayer drew near. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, ordered al-Hajjaj Ibn Masruq to give the call to prayer. When the second call to prayer immediately preceding the prayer (iqama) was about (to be made) al-Husayn came out (before the people) dressed in a waist-cloth (izar) and cloak (rida’) and wearing a pair of sandals. He praised and glorified Allah, then he said: “People, I did not come to you until your letters came to me, and they were brought by your messengers (saying), ‘Come to us for we have no Imam.

Through you may Allah unite us under guidance and truth.’ Since this was your view, I have come to you. Therefore give me what you guaranteed in your covenants and (sworn) testimonies. If you will not and (if you) are (now) averse to my coming, I will leave you (and go back) to the place from which I came.”

They were silent before him. Not one of them said a word. “Recite the iqama.” he said to the caller for prayer (mu’adhdhin) and he recited the iqama.

“Do you want to lead your followers in prayer?” he asked al-Hurr Ibn Yazid.

“No,” he replied, “but you pray and we will pray (following the lead of) your prayer.”

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, prayed before them. Then he returned (to his tent) and his followers gathered around him. Al-Hurr went back to the place where he had positioned (his men) and entered a tent which had been put up for him. A group of his followers gathered around him while the rest returned to their ranks, which they had been in and which now they went back to. Each of them held the reins of his mount and sat in the shade (of its body).

At the time for the afternoon (‘asr) prayer, al-Husayn, peace be on him, ordered his followers to prepare for departure. Then he ordered the call to be made, and the call for the ‘asr prayer was made, and the iqama. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, came forward, stood and prayed. Then he said the final greeting (of the prayer) and turned his face towards them (al-Hurr’s men). He praised and glorified Allah and said: “People, if you fear Allah and recognise the rights of those who have rights, Allah will be more satisfied with you. We are the House of Muhammad and as such are more entitled to the authority (wilaya) of this affair (i.e. the rule of the community) over you than these pretenders who claim what does not belong to them. They have brought tyranny and aggression among you. If you refuse (us) because you dislike (us) or do not know our rights, and your view has now changed from what came to us in your letters and what your messengers brought, then I will leave you.”

“By Allah,” declared al-Hurr, “I know nothing of these letters and messengers which you mention.”

“‘Uqba b Sim‘an,” al-Husayn, peace be on him, called to one of his followers, “bring out the two saddle-bags in which the letters to me are kept.”

He brought out two saddle-bags which were full of documents, and they were put before him.

“We are not among those who wrote these letters to you.” said al-Hurr, “and we have been ordered that when we meet you we should not leave you until we have brought you to Kufa to ‘Ubayd Allah.”

“Death will come to you before that (happens),” al-Husayn, peace be on him, told him. Then he ordered his followers, “Get up and get mounted.”

They got mounted and (then) waited until their women had been mounted.

“Depart,” he ordered his followers.

When they set out to leave, the men (with al-Hurr) got in between them and the direction they were going in. “May Allah deprive your mother of you,” said al-Husayn, peace be on him, to al-Hurr, “what do you want?”

“If any of the Arabs other than you were to say that to me,” retorted al-Hurr, “even though he were in the same situation as you, I would not leave him without mentioning his mother being deprived (of him), whoever he might be. But by Allah there is no way for me to mention your mother except by (saying) the best things possible.”

“What do you want?” al-Husayn, peace be on him, demanded.

“I want to go with you to the governor, ‘Ubayd Allah,” he replied. “Then by Allah I will not follow you.”

“Then by Allah I will not let you (go anywhere else).”

These statements were repeated three times, and when their conversation was getting more (heated) al-Hurr said: “I have not been ordered to fight you. I have only been ordered not to leave you until I come with you to Kufa. If you refuse (to do that), then take any road which will not bring you into Kufa nor take you back to Medina, and let that be a compromise between us while I write to the governor, ‘Ubayd Allah. Perhaps Allah will cause something to happen which will relieve me from having to do anything against you. Therefore take this (road) here and bear to the left of the road (to) al-‘Udhayb and al-Qadisiyya.”

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, departed, and al-Hurr with his followers (also) set out travelling close by him, while al-Hurr was saying to him: “Al-Husayn, I remind you (before) Allah to (think of) your life; for I testify that you will be killed if you fight.”

“Do you think that you can frighten me with death?” said al-Husayn, peace be on him. “Could a worse disaster happen to you than killing me? I can only speak (to you) as the brother of al-Aws said to his cousin when he wanted to help the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant Him and His Family peace. His cousin feared for him and said: ‘Where are you going, for you will be killed?’ but he replied:

I will depart for there is no shame in death for a young man, whenever he intends (to do what is) right and he strives like a Muslim, (Who) has soothed righteous men through (the sacrifice of) his life, who has scattered the cursed and opposed the criminal.

If I live, I will not regret (what I have done) and if I die, I will not suffer. Let it be enough for you to live in humiliation and be reviled.”

When al-Hurr heard that he drew away from him. He and his follower, travelled on one side (of the road) while al-Husayn, peace be on him, travelled on the other, until they reached ‘Udhayb al-Hijanat. Al-

Husayn, peace be on him, went on to Qasr Bani Muqatil. He stopped there and there a large tent had (already) been erected.

“Whose is that?” he asked.

“That belongs to ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn al-Hurr al-Ju‘fi,” he was told.

“Ask him to come to me,” he said.

The messenger went to him and said: “This is al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on them, and he asks you to come to him.”

“We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return,” said ‘Ubayd Allah. “By Allah, I only left Kufa out of dread that al-Husayn, peace be on him, would enter Kufa while I was there. By Allah, I do not want to see him, nor him to see me.”

The messenger returned to him (al-Husayn). Al-Husayn, peace be on him, rose and went over to him. He greeted him and sat down. Then he asked him to go with him. ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn al-Hurr repeated what he had said before and sought to excuse himself from what he was asking him (to do).

“If you are not going to help us,” al-Husayn, peace be on him, said to him. “Then be sure that you are not one of those who fight against us. For, by Allah, no one will hear our cry and not help us without being destroyed.”

“As for that (fighting against you),” he replied, “It will never happen, If Allah, the Exalted. Wishes.”

Then al-Husayn, peace be on him, left him and continued to his camp. Towards the end of the night, he ordered his boys to get provisions of water. Then he ordered the journey (to continue). He set out from Qasr Bani Muqatil.

[‘Uqba Ibn Sim‘an reported:]

We set out at once with him and he became drowsy while he was on his horse’s back. He woke up, saying: “We belong to Allah and to Him we will return. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.”

He did that twice or three times, then his son, ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn approached him and asked: “Why are you praising Allah and repeating the verse of returning to Him?”

“My son,” he answered, “I nodded off and a horseman appeared to me, riding a horse and he said: ‘Men are travelling and the fates travel towards them.’ Then I knew it was our own souls announcing our deaths to us.”

“Father,” asked (the youth), “does Allah regard you as evil? Are we not in the right?”

“Indeed (we are),” he answered, “by Him to Whom all His servants must return.”

“Father,” said (the youth), “then we need have no concern, if we are going to die righteously.”

“May Allah give you the best reward a son can get for (his behaviour towards) his father,” answered al-Husayn, peace be on him.

In the morning, he stopped and prayed the Morning Prayer. Then he hurried to remount and to continue the journey with his followers, veering to the left with the intention of separating from (al-Hurr’s men). However al-Hurr Ibn Yazid came towards him and stopped him and his followers (from going in that direction) and he began to (exert pressure to) turn them towards Kufa, but they resisted him. So they stopped (doing that) but they still accompanied them in the same way until they reached Ninawa, (which was) the place where al-Husayn, peace be on him, stopped. Suddenly there appeared a rider on a fast mount, bearing weapons and carrying a bow on his shoulder, coming from Kufa. They all stopped and watched him. When he reached them, he greeted al-Hurr and his followers and did not greet al-Husayn and his followers. He handed a letter from ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad to al-Hurr. In it (was the following):

When this letter reaches you and my messenger comes to you, make al-Husayn come to a halt. But only let him stop in an open place without vegetation. I have ordered my messenger to stay with you and not to leave you until he brings me (news of) your carrying out my instructions. Greetings.

When al-Hurr had read the letter, he told them: “This is a letter from the governor ‘Ubayd Allah. He has ordered me to bring you to a halt at a place which his letter suggests. This is his messenger and he has ordered him not to leave me until I carry out the order with regard to you.”

Yazid (Ibn Ziyad) Ibn al-Muhajir al-Kindi who was with al-Husayn, peace be on him, looked at the messenger of Ibn Ziyad and he recognized him.

“May your mother be deprived of you.” he exclaimed, “what a business you have come to!”

“I have obeyed my Imam and remained faithful to my pledge of allegiance,” (the other man) answered.

“You have been disobedient to your Lord and have obeyed your Imam in bringing about the destruction of your soul,” responded Ibn al-Muhajir. “You have acquired (eternal) shame (for yourself) and (the punishment of) Hell-fire. What a wicked Imam your Imam is! Indeed Allah has said: ***“We have made them Imams who summon (people) to Hell-fire and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be helped”***. (28:41) Your Imam is one of those.”

Al-Hurr Ibn Yazid began to make the people stop in a place that was without water and where there was no village.

“Shame upon you, let us stop at this village or that one,” said al-Husayn, peace be on him. He meant by this, Ninawa and al-Ghadiyya, and by that, Shufayya.

“By Allah, I cannot do that,” replied (al-Hurr), “for this man has been sent to me as a spy.”

“Son of the Apostle of Allah,” said Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn, “I can only think that after what you have seen, the situation will get worse than what you have seen. Fighting these people, now, will be easier for us than fighting those who will come against us after them. For by my life, after them will come against us such (a number) as we will not have the power (to fight) against.”

“I will not begin to fight against them,” answered al-Husayn.

That was Thursday, 2nd of (the month of) Muharram in the year 61 A.H. (680). On the next day, ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqas set out from Kufa with four thousand horsemen. He stopped at Ninawa and sent for ‘Urwa Ibn Qays al-Ahmasi²¹ and told him: “Go to him (al-Husayn) and ask him: What brought you, and what do you want?”

‘Urwa was one of those who had written to al-Husayn, peace be on him, and he was ashamed to do that. The same was the case with all the leaders who had written to him, and all of them refused and were unwilling to do that. Kathir Ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Sha’bi stood up – he was a brave knight who never turned his face away from anything – and said: “I will go to him. By Allah, if you wish, I will rush on him.”

“I don’t want you to attack him.” said ‘Umar, “but go to him and ask him what has brought him.”

As Kathir was approaching him, Abu Thumama al-Sa’idi saw him and said to al-Husayn, “May Allah benefit you, Abu ‘Abd Allah, the wickedest man in the land, the one who has shed the most blood and the boldest of them all in attack, is coming towards you.”

Then (Abu Thumama) stood facing him and said: “Put down your sword.”

“No, by Allah,” he replied, “I am only a messenger. If you will listen to me, I will tell you (the message) which I have been sent to bring to you. If you refuse, I will go away.”

“I will take the hilt of your sword,” answered (Abu Thumama), “and you can say what you need to.”

“No, by Allah, you will not touch it,” he retorted.

“Then tell me what you have brought and I will inform him for you. But I will not let you go near him, for you are a charlatan.”

They both (stood there and) cursed each other. Then (Kathir) went back to ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d and told him the news (of what had happened). ‘Umar summoned Qurra Ibn Qays al-Hanzali and said to him:

“Shame upon you Qurra, go and meet al-Husayn and ask him what brought him and what he wants.”

Qurra began to approach him. When al-Husayn, peace be on him, saw him approaching. he asked: “Do you know that man?”

“Yes,” replied Habib Ibn Muzahir, “he is from the Hanzala clan of Tamim. He is the son of our sister. I used to know him as a man of sound judgement. I would not have thought that he would be present at this scene.”

He came and greeted al-Husayn, peace be on him. Then he informed him of ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d’s message.

“The people of this town of yours wrote to me that I should come,” answered al-Husayn, peace be on him. “However, if now you have come to dislike me, then I will leave you.”

“Shame upon you, Qurra,” Habib Ibn Muzahir said to him, “will you return to those unjust men? Help this man through whose fathers Allah will grant you (great) favour.”

“I will (first) return to my leader with the answer to his message,” replied Qurra, “and then I will reflect on my views.”

He went back to ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d and gave him his report.

“I hope that Allah will spare me from making war on him and fighting against him,” said ‘Umar and then he wrote to ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad:

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. I am (writing this from) where I have positioned myself, near al-Husayn, and I have asked him what brought him and what he wants. He answered: ‘The people of this land wrote to me and their messengers came to me asking me to come and I have done so. However if (now) they have come to dislike me and (the position) now appears different to them from what their messengers brought to me, I will go away from them.’

[Hasan Ibn Qa’id al-‘Absi reported:]

I was with ‘Ubayd Allah when this letter came to him, he read it and then he recited:

Now when our claws cling to him, he hopes for escape but he will be prevented (now) from (getting) any refuge.

He wrote to ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d:

Your letter has reached me and I have understood what you mentioned. Offer al-Husayn (the opportunity) of him and all his followers pledging allegiance to Yazid. If he does that, we will then see what our judgement will be.

When the answer reached ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d, he said: “I fear that ‘Ubayd Allah will not accept that I should be spared (fighting al-Husayn).”

(Almost immediately) after it, there came (another) letter from Ibn Ziyad (in which he said): “Prevent al-Husayn and his followers from (getting) water. Do not let them taste a drop of it just as was done with

‘Uthman Ibn ‘Affan.”

At once ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d sent ‘Amr b al-Hajjaj with five hundred horsemen to occupy the path to the water and prevent al-Husayn and his followers from (getting) water in order that they should (not) drink a drop of it. That was three days before the battle against al-Husayn, peace be on him.

‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Husayn al-Azdi, who was numbered among Bajila, called out at the top of his voice: “Husayn, don’t you see that the water is as if in the middle of heaven. By Allah, you will not taste a drop of it until you die of thirst.”

“O Allah, make him die of thirst and never forgive him,” cried al-Husayn, peace be on him.

[Humayd Ibn Muslim reported:]

By Allah, later I visited him when he was ill. By Allah, other than whom there is no deity, I saw him drinking water without being able to quench his thirst, and then vomiting. He would cry out, “The thirst, the thirst!” Again he would drink water without being able to quench his thirst, again he would vomit. He would then burn with thirst. This went on until he died, may Allah curse him.

When al-Husayn saw the extent of the number of troops encamped with ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d, may Allah curse him, at Ninawa in order to do battle against him, he sent to ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d that he wanted to meet him. The two men met at night and talked together for a long time. (When) ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d went back to his camp, he wrote to ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad, may he be cursed.

Allah has put out the fire of hatred, united (the people) in one opinion (lit. word), and set right the affairs of the community. This man, al-Husayn, has given me a promise that he will return to the place which he came from, or he will go to one of the border outposts – he will become like any (other) of the Muslims, with the same rights and duties as them; or he will go to Yazid, the Commander of the Faithful, and offer him his hand and see (if the difference) between them (can be reconciled). In this (offer) you have the consent (to what you have demanded) and the community gains benefit.

When ‘Ubayd Allah read the letter, he said: “This is the letter about a sincere man who is anxious for his people.”

“Are you going to accept this from him,” demanded Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan, jumping up, “when he has encamped on your land nearby? By Allah if he was a man from your land and he would not put his hand in yours, whether he was in a position of power and strength (or) whether he was in a position of weakness and impotence you would not give this concession, for it would be (a mark) of weakness. Rather let him and his followers submit to your authority. Then if you punish them, (it will be because) you are the (person) most appropriate to punish, and if you forgive them, you have the right (to do so).”

“What you have suggested is good,” replied Ibn Ziyad. “Your view is the correct view. Take this message to ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d and let him offer al-Husayn and his followers (the opportunity of) submitting

to my authority. If they do that, let him send them to me in peace. If they refuse, he should fight them. If he ('Umar Ibn Sa'd) acts (according to) my instructions, then listen to him and obey him. However if he refuses to fight them then you are the commander of the army (lit. people), attack him, cut his head off and send it to me."

Then he wrote to 'Umar Ibn Sa'd:

I did not send you to al-Husayn for you to restrain yourself from (fighting) him, nor to idle the time away with him, nor to promise him peace and preservation (of his life), nor to make excuses for him, nor to be an intercessor on his behalf with me. Therefore see that if al-Husayn and his followers submit to my authority and surrender, you send them to me in peace. If they refuse, then march against them to fight them and to punish them; for they deserve that. If al-Husayn is killed, make the horses trample on his body, both front and back; for he is a disobedient rebel, and I do not consider that this will be in any way wrong after death. But it is my view that you should do this to him if you kill him. If you carry out your command concerning him, we will give you the reward due to one who is attentive and obedient. If you refuse, then we withdraw (the command of) our province and army from you and leave the army to Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan. We have given him our authority. Greetings.

Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan brought the letter to 'Umar b Sa'd. After he had brought it and read it, 'Umar said to him: "Shame upon you, what is this to you? May Allah never show favour to your house. May Allah make abominable what you have brought to me! By Allah, I did not think that you would cause him to refuse what I had written to him, and ruin for us a matter which we had hoped to set right. Al-Husayn will not surrender, for there is a spirit like (his) father's in his body."

"Tell me what you are going to do," demanded Shamir. "Are you going to carry out the governor's command and fight his enemy or are you going to leave the command of the army to me?"

"No, (there is going to be) no advantage to you. I will carry that out instead of you. You take command of the foot-soldiers."

'Umar Ibn Sa'd prepared to (do battle with) al-Husayn, peace be on him, on the night of Thursday, 9th of the month of Muharram. (In the meantime) Shamir went out and stood in front of the followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him.

"Where are my sister's sons?" he demanded. Al-'Abbas, Ja'far, 'Abd Allah and 'Uthman, sons of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, peace be on him, came forward.

"What do you want?" they asked

"Sons of my sister, you are guaranteed security," he said.

"Allah curse you and curse the security which you offer without offering it to the son of the Apostle of Allah," the young men replied.

“Cavalry of Allah, mount and announce the news of Heaven (i.e. death),” ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d called out and the people mounted and he approached (the supporters of al-Husayn) after the afternoon (‘asr) prayer.

Meanwhile, al-Husayn, peace be on him, was sitting in front of his tent dozing with his head on his knees. His sister heard the clamour (from the enemy’s ranks). She came up to him and said, “My brother, don’t you hear the sounds which are getting nearer?”

“I have just seen the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in my sleep,” said al-Husayn, peace be on him, as he raised his head. “He said to me: ‘You are coming to us’.”

His sister struck at her face and cried out in grief.

“You have no (reason) to lament, sister,” al-Husayn, peace be on him, told her. “Be quiet, may Allah have mercy on you.”

Then he turned to al-‘Abbas Ibn ‘Ali: “Brother, the enemy have come, so get ready, but first, al-‘Abbas, you, yourself, ride out to meet them, to talk to them about what they have (in mind) and what appears (appropriate) to them and to ask about what has brought them (against us)”

Al-‘Abbas went towards them with about twenty horsemen, among whom was Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn.

“How do you see (the situation)?” he asked. “What do you want?” “The command of the governor has arrived that we should offer you (the opportunity of) submitting to his authority, otherwise we (must) attack you,” they answered.

“Do not hurry (to do anything) until I have gone back to Abu ‘Abd Allah (al-Husayn) and told him what you have said,” al-‘Abbas requested.

They stopped (where they were) and told him: “Go to him and inform him, and tell us what he says to you.”

Al-‘Abbas went galloping back to al-Husayn, peace be on him, to give him the information. While his companions remained exchanging words with enemy, trying to test them and dissuade them from fighting against al-Husayn, peace be on him, (al-‘Abbas) told him what the enemy had said.

“Go back to them,” he, peace be on him, said, “if you can, delay them until the morning and (persuade) them to keep from us during the evening. Then, perhaps, we may be able to pray to our Lord during the night to call upon Him and seek His forgiveness. He knows that I have always loved His formal prayer, the recitation of His Book and (making) many invocations to Him, seeking His forgiveness.”

Al-‘Abbas went back to the people, and returned (after) being with them, accompanied by a messenger on behalf of ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d, who had said: “We will grant you a day until tomorrow. Then if you surrender, we will send you to our governor, ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad but if you refuse we will not leave

you (any longer).”

(After) he departed towards the evening al-Husayn gathered his followers around him.

[‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn, Zayn al-‘Abidin. reported:]

I went near to hear what he would say to them (even though) at that time I was sick. I heard my father say to his followers: “I glorify Allah with the most perfect glorification and I praise Him in happiness and misfortune. O Allah, I praise You for blessing us with prophethood, teaching us the Qur’an and making us understand the religion. You have given us hearing, sight and hearts, and have made us among those who give thanks (to You). I know of no followers more loyal and more virtuous than my followers or of any House more pious and more close-knit than my House. May Allah reward you well on my behalf. Indeed, I do not think that there will be (any further) days (left) to us by these men. I permit you to leave me. All (of you) go away with the absolution of your oath (to follow me), for there will be no (further) obligation on you from me. This is a night (whose darkness) will give cover to you. Use it as a camel (i.e. ride away in it).”

His brothers and sons, the sons of his sisters and the sons of ‘Abd Allah Ibn Ja‘far said: “We will not leave you to make ourselves continue living after your (death). Allah will never see us (do) such a thing.”

Al-‘Abbas Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on them, was the first of them to make this declaration. Then the (whole) group followed him, (all) declaring the same thing.

“Sons of ‘Aqil,” said al-Husayn, “enough of your (family) has been killed. So go away as I have permitted you.”

“Glory be to Allah.” they replied, “what would the people say? They would say that we deserted our Shaykh, our lord, the sons of our uncle, who was the best of uncles; that we had not shot arrows alongside them, we had not thrust spears alongside them, we had not struck swords alongside them. (At such an accusation) we do not know what we would do. No, by Allah, we will not do (such a thing). Rather we will ransom you with our lives, property and families. We will fight for you until we reach your destination. May Allah make life abominable (for us) after your (death).”

Then Muslim Ibn ‘Awsaja arose and spoke: “Could we leave you alone? How should we excuse ourselves before Allah concerning the performance of our duty to you? By Allah, I will stab them with my spear (until it breaks), I will strike them with my sword as long as the hilt is in my hand. If I have no weapon (left) to fight them with, I will throw stones (at them). By Allah we will never leave you until Allah knows that we have preserved through you (the company of His Apostle) in his absence. By Allah, if I knew that I would die and then be revived and then burnt and then revived, and then scattered, and that would be done to me seventy times, I would never leave you until I met my death (fighting) on your behalf. So how could I do it when there can only be one death, which is a great blessing which can never be rejected?”

Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn, may Allah have mercy on him, spoke: “By Allah, I would prefer to be killed and then recalled to life; and then be killed a thousand times in this manner; and that in this way Allah, the Mighty and Exalted, should protect your life and the lives of these young men of your House.”

All his followers spoke in similar vein, one after the other. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, called (on Allah to) reward them well and then went back to his tent.

[‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them, reported:]

I was sitting on that evening (before the morning of the day) in which my father was killed. With me was my aunt, Zaynab, who was nursing me when my father left to go to his tent. With him was Juwayn, the retainer (mawla) of Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari, who was preparing his sword and putting it right. My father recited:

Time, shame on you as a friend! At the day’s dawning and the sun’s setting.

How many a companion or seeker will be a corpse! Time will not be satisfied with any substitute.

The matter will rest with the Mighty One, and every living creature will have to journey along my path.

He repeated it twice or three times. I understood it and realised what he meant. Tears choked me and I pushed them back. I kept silent and knew that tribulation had come upon us. As for my aunt, she heard what I heard – but she is a woman and weakness and grief are part of the qualities of women; she could not control herself, she jumped up, tearing at her clothes and sighing, and went to him.

“Then I will lose (a brother),” Zaynab said to him. “Would that death deprived me of life today, (for) my mother, Fatima, is dead, and my father, ‘Ali and my brother, al-Hasan, peace be on them (all).”

“O sister,” al-Husayn said to her as he looked at her with his eyes full of tears. “don’t let Satan take away your forbearance. (Remember:) If the sandgrouse are left (alone) at night, they will sleep (i.e. let nature take its course).”

“O my grief, your life will be violently wrenched from you and that is more wounding to my heart and harsher to my soul,” she lamented, and then she struck at her face. She bent down to (the hem of) her garment and (began to) tear it. Then she fell down in a faint.

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, got up and bathed her face with water. Then he said to her: “Sister, fear Allah and take comfort in the consolation of Allah. Know that the people on the earth will die and the inhabitants of heaven will not continue to exist (for ever). For everything will be destroyed except the face of Allah Who created creation by His power (qudra); He sends forth creatures and He causes them to return; He is unique and alone. My grandfather was better than me, My father was better than me and my mother was better than me. I and every Muslim have an ideal model in the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family.”

By this and the like he tried to console her and he said: “Sister, I swear to you – and I (always) keep my oaths – that you must not tear your clothes, nor scratch your face, nor cry out with grief and loss when I am destroyed.”

Then he brought her and made her sit with me. He went out to his followers and ordered them to bring their tents (much) closer together so that the tent pegs came within the area of each other’s tents, and so that if they remained among their tents, the enemy could only approach (them), from one side (for there would be) tents behind them, and to their right and left. Thus (the tents completely) surrounded them except for the one way which the enemy could come against them.

(After that) he, peace be on him, returned to his place and spent the whole night in performing the prayer, and in calling on Allah’s forgiveness and in making invocations. In the same way, his followers performed the prayers, made invocations and sought Allah’s forgiveness.

[Al-Dhahhak Ibn ‘Abd Allah reported]

(A contingent of) ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d’s (continually) passed us keeping watch over us while al-Husayn, himself recited:

“Let not those who disbelieve think that our giving them a delay is better for their souls. We give them a delay only that they might increase their wickedness. They shall have a disgraceful punishment”. (3: 178)

“Allah does not leave the believers in the situation you are in until He has made the evil distinct from the good.” (3: 179)

A man called ‘Abd Allah Ibn Samir, (who was) among those horsemen heard that. He was given to much laughter, and was a brave fighter, a treacherous knight and a noble. He cried out: “By the Lord of the Ka’ba. we are the good, we have been distinguished from you.”

“O terrible sinner,” cried Burayr Ibn Hudhayr. “has Allah made you one of the good?”

“A curse on you, whoever you are” he shouted back.

“I am Burayr Ibn Hudhayr,” he replied. And they both cursed each other.

In the morning al-Husayn, peace be on him, mobilised his followers after the Morning Prayer. He had with him thirty-two horsemen and forty foot-soldiers. He put Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn in charge of his right wing and Habib Ibn Muzahir in charge of his left wing, and he gave his standard to his brother, al-‘Abbas. They positioned themselves with the tents at the rear. He ordered (the) firewood and cane which was behind the tents to be left in a ditch which had been dug there and to be set on fire, fearing that they would attack them from the rear.

‘Umar Ibn Sa’d began the morning of that day – it was Friday, or Saturday as some say – by mobilising

his followers. He went out with the men with him towards al-Husayn, peace be on him. ‘Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj was in command of his right wing, Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan of the left Wing, ‘Urwa Ibn Qays was in command of the cavalry, Shabath Ibn Rib’i of the foot-soldiers. He gave his standard to Durayd, his retainer (mawla).

[‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn, Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be on them, reported:] When the cavalry began to approach al-Husayn, he raised his hands and said: “O Allah, it is You in Whom I trust amid all grief. You are my hope amid all violence. You are my trust and provision in everything that happens to me, (no matter) how much the heart may seem to weaken in it, trickery may seem to diminish (my hope) in it, the friend may seem to desert (me) in it, and the enemy may seem to rejoice in it. It comes upon me through You and when I complain to You of it, it is because of my desire for You, You alone. You have comforted me in (everything) and have revealed its (significance to me). You are the Master of all grace, the Possessor of all goodness and the Ultimate Resort of all desire.”

When the enemy began to move around the tent of al-Husayn, peace be on him, they saw the ditch behind and the fire burning the firewood and cane which had been thrown in it. (At this) Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan called out at the top of his voice: “Al-Husayn, are you hurrying towards the fire (of Hell) before the Day of Resurrection?”

“Who is that?” asked al-Husayn, peace be on him. “(It sounds) like Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan?”

“Yes, (it is),” they told him.

“Son of a goat-herdess, you are more worthy to be burnt by that.” he retorted.

Muslim Ibn ‘Awsaja wanted to shoot an arrow at him, but al-Husayn, peace be on him, stopped him from (doing) that. “Let me shoot at him,” he asked, “for he is a wicked sinner, one of the enemies of Allah, and the great tyrants. (Now) Allah has made it possible (to kill) him.”

“Do not shoot at him,” ordered al-Husayn, peace be on him, “for I am unwilling to begin (the fighting) against them.”

Then al-Husayn called for his mount and mounted it. He called out at the top of his voice: “O people of Iraq,” – and most of them (began to) listen to him – “people, listen to my words and do not hurry (to attack me) so that I may remind you of the duties you have towards me and so that (by telling you the true circumstances) I may free myself from any blame in (your attacking me). If you give me justice, you will become happier through that. If you do not give me justice of your own accord (as individuals), **“then agree upon your affairs (with your associates); let not your affairs be in darkness to you. Then carry (it) out against me and do not reflect (any further)” (10:71).**

“Indeed my guardian is Allah, Who created the Book; He takes care of the righteous” (7: 196).

Then he praised and glorified Allah, and mentioned what Allah is entitled to. He called for blessings on

the Prophet, may Allah bless Him and His Family, and on the angels and (other) prophets. No speaker has ever been heard before or after him more eloquent in his speech than he was. He continued: "Trace back my lineage and consider who I am. Then look back at yourselves and remonstrate with yourselves. Consider whether it is right for you to kill me and to violate the honour of my womenfolk. Am I not the son of the daughter of your Prophet, of his testamentary trustee (wasi) and his cousin, the first of the believers in Allah and the man who (first) believed in what His Apostle, may Allah bless Him and His Family, brought from his Lord? Was not Hamza, the lord of the martyrs, my uncle? Was not Ja'far, the one who flies in Heaven, my uncle? Have you not heard the words of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, concerning myself and my brother: 'These are the two lords of the youths of the inhabitants of heaven?' Whether you believe what I am saying – and it is the truth, for by Allah I have never told a lie since I learnt that Allah hated people (who told) them – or whether you regard me as a liar, there are among you those who, if you asked them, would tell you: Ask Jabir Ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Sahl Ibn Sa'd al-Sa'idi, Zayd Ibn Arqam and Anas Ibn Malik to tell you that they heard these words from the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, concerning myself and my brother. Is there not (sufficient) in this to prevent you shedding my blood?"

"If I understand what you are saying," interrupted Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan, "then I only worship Allah (very shakily) on the edge."

"I think that you worship Allah (very shakily) on seventy edges," said Habib Ibn Muzahir "For I testify that you are right. You do not understand what he is saying. For Allah has impressed (ignorance) upon your heart."

"If you are in any doubt about this," al-Husayn, peace be on him, told them, "you are in doubt that I am the Son of the daughter of your Prophet. By Allah there is no son of a prophet other than me among you and among the peoples from East to West. Shame on you, are you seeking retribution from me for one of your dead whom I have killed, or for property of yours which I expropriated, or for a wound which I have inflicted?"

They did not say anything to him. They he called: "Shabath Ibn Rib'i, Hajjar Ibn Abjar, Qays Ibn al-Ash'ath, Yazid Ibn al-Harith, didn't you write: 'The fruit has ripened; the dates have grown green; come to an army which has been gathered for you?'"

"We don't know what you are talking about," said Qays Ibn al-Ash'ath. "Submit to the authority of your kinsmen (the Umayyads). They have never treated you with anything but what you liked."

"By Allah, I will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated; nor will I flee like a slave," said al-Husayn, peace be on him. Then he called out, **"O Servants of Allah, I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord from your stoning" (54:20)**

"I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every haughty man who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning" (40:27).

He made his mount kneel and ordered 'Uqba Ibn Sim'an to tie its reins. They (the Kufans) began to advance towards him (al-Husayn). When al-Hurr Ibn Yazid perceived that the people were determined to fight al-Husayn, peace be on him, he said to 'Umar: "Are you going to fight this man?"

"Yes," he replied, "it will be a terrible battle, the least part of which will be heads falling and severed hands flying (through the air)." "Haven't you any other way of getting what you want?"

"If the matter rested with me," answered 'Umar, "I would do (anything else), but your governor has refused (any alternative)."

Al-Hurr went and stood apart from the people. With him was a man from his tribe called Qurra Ibn Qays.

"Qurra, have you watered your horse, today?" he asked. "No."

"Do you want to Water it?"

[Qurra reported (later):]

I thought that he (al-Hurr) was going to leave the battle, and did not want to be present at it but was unwilling to be seen when he (left). So I said: "I have not watered it and I was going to water it." Then I left him where he was. By Allah, If he had told me what he was intending to do, I would have gone with him to al-Husayn, peace be on him.

He (al-Hurr) began gradually to draw closer to al-Husayn.

"What do you want, Ibn Yazid?" asked Muhajir Ibn Aws, but he did not answer. (Instead) a great shudder came over him.

"Your behaviour is suspicious," said Muhajir. "By Allah, I have never seen you act like this before. If I was asked who was the bravest of the Kufans, I would not (normally) neglect (to mention) you. What is this I see in you, (today)?"

"By Allah, I am giving my soul the choice between Heaven and the fire (of Hell)," answered al-Hurr. "By Allah, I will not choose anything before Heaven, even though I am cut to pieces and burnt"

(With that) he whipped his horse and (galloped over) and joined al-Husayn, peace be on him.

"May I be your ransom, son of the Apostle of Allah?" he said. "I was your companion who stopped you from returning. I accompanied you along the road and made you stop in this place. But I did not think that the people would refuse to respond to what you have offered them and that they would ever come to this position (which they have now come to) with regard to you. By Allah, if I had known that they would finish up (by doing) what I am seeing (them do) to you, I would not have committed what I have committed against you. I repent to Allah for what I have done. Will you accept my repentance?"

“Yes,” replied al-Husayn, peace be on him, “Allah will forgive you. So get down,”

“You will have (no) horseman better than me, (nor), while I am on foot, any foot-soldier,” he said. “I will continue fighting on foot to the (bitter) end.”

“Do so,” replied al-Husayn, peace be on him. “May Allah grant you mercy (though) what He has revealed to you.”

He advanced, in front of al-Husayn, peace be on him, and called out: “People of Kufa, your mother(s) will be deprived of their sons and tears will come to their eyes. Have you summoned this righteous man (to come to you), then, when he has come to you, have you handed him over (to his enemies)? Did you claim that you would fight with your own lives for him, and then have you begun to attack him in order to kill him? You have laid hold of his life; you have seized his throat; you have encircled him on every side in order to prevent him returning to Allah’s broad land (i.e. the Hijaz). He has come into your hands like a prisoner who no longer has the power to use his own life and cannot defend it against harm. You have prevented him, his womenfolk, his children and his people from (getting) the water of the Euphrates which Jews, Christians and Majians may drink, and which the pigs and dogs of Sawad drink. They (al-Husayn’s family) are likely to die of thirst. How wickedly you have treated the offspring left by Muhammad. May Allah not give you water to drink on the Day of Thirst.”

Some of the foot-soldiers attacked him by shooting arrows at him.

He went and stood in front of al-Husayn, peace be on him.

“Durayd.” ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d called out, “bring forward your standard (for us).”

He brought it forward. (‘Umar) put an arrow in his bow and let it fly. He said, “(All of you) be witnesses of who was the first to shoot.”

The people began to shoot at each other and to come forward (for single combat). Yasar, retainer (mawla) of Ziyad Ibn Abi Sufyan, came forward (from ‘Umar’s army). ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Umayr (al-Kalbi) came forward (from al-Husayn’s ranks) to meet him.

“Who are you?” Yasar asked him, and (Ibn al-Kalbi) gave him his lineage.

“I do not know you,” (Yasar) answered. “Let Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn or Habib Ibn Muzahir come out against me.”

“Son of a prostitute, you wanted to do single combat with one of the people,” retorted ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Umayr (al-Kalbi).

With that (Ibn al-Kalbi) struck him with his sword until he had quietened him. While he was occupied with striking against him, Salim, retainer (mawla) of ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad, attacked him (Ibn al-Kalbi).

Al-Husayn's followers cried out (in warning): "The (other) servant is closing in on you!" (Ibn al-Kalbi) did not notice (Salim) until the latter was upon him. With his left arm he warded off Salim's blow but the fingers of his hand were cut off. Then he turned on (Salim) and struck him and killed him. After (thus) killing them both, (Ibn al-Kalbi) came forward and recited:

If you do not know me, I am Ibn al-Kalbi: I am a man of bitterness and anger; I am not a weakling in the face of disaster.

'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj, with the Kufans under his command, launched an attack on the right wing of the supporters of al-Husayn, peace be on him. When they drew near, the followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, knelt down and pointed their spears at them. The (attackers') horses would not come forward against the spears and they swung round to retreat. The followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, began to shoot arrows at (the enemy), killing some of them and wounding others.

'Abd Allah Ibn Hawza, one of the Banu Tamim, approached al-Husayn's camp and the people called out to him, "Where are you going, may your mother be deprived of you?"

"I am (in the right) advancing to a merciful Lord and an intercessor who is listened to (i.e. the Prophet)," he answered.

"Who is that?" al-Husayn, peace be on him, asked his followers.

"Ibn Hawza al-Tamimi," he was told.

"O Allah, drive him into the fire!" (al-Husayn) exclaimed. With that his horse upset him in its stride and fell. His left leg was stuck in the stirrups and his right leg was free. Muslim Ibn 'Awsaja attacked him and struck his right leg and cut it off. The horse galloped off (dragging) him (along) and his head struck every stone and clod of earth until he died. Allah hurried his soul to (Hell) fire. (More) fighting then broke out and more men were killed.

Al-Hurr Ibn Yazid attacked the followers of 'Umar Ibn Sa'd and (as he did so), he recited the words of 'Antara:

With my charger's neck and breast thrust forward I will launch myself at them again and again until (the beast) is clothed in blood.

Yazid Ibn Sufyan, from Banu al-Harith (of Tamim), came forward to meet him. Soon al-Hurr killed him.

(In the meantime) Nafi' Ibn Hilal came forward, declaring:

I am the son of Hilal. I believe in the religion of 'Ali.

Muzahim Ibn Hurayth came against him, crying, "I follow the religion of 'Uthman."

“Rather you follow the religion of Satan,” Nafi‘ replied and attacked and killed him.

“You stupid fellows.” ‘Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj cried out to (his) men, “don’t you realise whom you are fighting? (These) knights of the town are people who are seeking death. Don’t let any of you go forward to fight them in single combat. They are only few and their time is running out. If you only threw stones at them, you would kill them (eventually).”

“True, you’ve come to the right conclusion,” ‘Umar b Sa’d said to him. Then he sent (the message) to the commanders that none of their men should fight in single combat.

‘Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj and his men launched an attack against al-Husayn, peace be on him, from the direction of the Euphrates. They fought together fiercely for a time. Muslim Ibn ‘Aswaja was struck down, may Allah have mercy on him, (but) ‘Amr and his men withdrew. When the dust settled, (al-Husayn’s followers) found Muslim stretched out dying. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, walked towards him and he was on the point of death.

“Muslim, may Allah have mercy on you” said (al-Husayn). ***“Of them (the believers) is he who has accomplished his vow, and of them is he who waits; they have not changed at all” (33:23).***

Habib Ibn Muzahir approached and said, “Muslim, your death is hard for me to bear but I bring you good news of Heaven (where you are going).”

“May Allah bring you good news too,” replied Muslim in a weak voice.

“Even if I knew that I would follow you at this very moment. I would still like you to appoint me to carry out everything which concerns you.”

Then the people came again against al-Husayn, peace be on him. Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan attacked with his left wing (and thrust at) (al-Husayn’s) left wing, but they stood firm against him and forced him away (with their spears). Al-Husayn, peace be on him, and his followers were attacked on every side but the followers of al-Husayn fought fiercely. Then their cavalry began to attack and even though they were only thirty-two horsemen, they did not attack any side of the Kufan cavalry without putting it to flight.

When ‘Urwa Ibn Qays saw that – he was in command of the Kufan cavalry – he sent word to ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d: “Don’t you see what my cavalry is receiving today from this small number (of men)? Send the foot-soldiers and archers against them.”

He sent the archers against them. Al-Hurr b Yazid’s horse was lamed. He dismounted and began to shout:

You have tamed my (horse) but I am the son of freedom and braver than a manned lion.

He struck out against them with his sword but a great number came against him. Ayyub Ibn Musarrih

and another of the Kufan horseman shared in killing him.

The followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, continued to fight fiercely against the enemy until it was midday. When al-Husayn Ibn Numayr – he was in command of the archers – perceived the steadfastness of the followers al-Husayn, peace be on him, he advanced against his supporters with five hundred archers so that they showered the followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, with arrows. They continued shooting at them until they had lamed (most of) their horses and wounded some of their men. Then they moved against them and a fierce battle was fought between them for some time. Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan (also) attacked them with his followers but Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn with ten of the followers of al-Husayn (counter) attacked and drove them away from the tents. Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan turned back against them but (some) of his men were killed and the rest retreated to their positions. (The number) of killed was apparent among the followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, because of the fewness of their number while it was not so apparent among the followers of ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d because of their great number. The battle (continued to be) fought fiercely and desperately. The number killed and wounded among the followers of Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Husayn, peace be on him, continued to grow until the sun began to decline. Al-Husayn and his companions prayed the prayer according to the rite of the prayer of fear.

Hanzala Ibn Sa’d al-Shibami advanced in front of al-Husayn, peace be on him, and called out: People of Kufa! ***“O people I fear for you the same (that happened) on the Day of Parties! (40:30) “I fear for you on the Day of Summoning”. (40:32).*** O people, do not kill al-Husayn for Allah will destroy you with punishment. ***“He who forges a lie will be disappointed” (20:61).***

He advanced and fought until he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him. After that, Shawdhab, retainer (mawla) of Shakir, went forward, (after saying): “Greetings, Abu ‘Abd Allah and may Allah store his mercy and blessings for you.” He fought until he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him.

Then came ‘Abis Ibn Shabib al-Shakiri. He greeted al-Husayn, peace be on him, and fought until he was killed. Each man of (al-Husayn’s) followers continued to go forward and be killed until there only remained with al-Husayn, peace be on him, the members of his own House.

His son, ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them, whose mother was Layla daughter of Abu Murra Ibn ‘Urwa Ibn Mas‘ud al-Thaqafi, was (the next) to advance. He was one of the most handsome men of the time. On that day he was nineteen years of age. He attacked the enemy declaring:

I am ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali. By the House of Allah, we are those rightly (endowed) with the Prophet.

By Allah, the son of a spurious son will not judge us. I will strike with my sword in defence of my father, I will strike with the blow of a Hashimi, a Qurayshi,

He did that several times, and the Kufans were afraid to kill him. Then Murra Ibn Munqidh al-‘Abdi saw him. He said: “May the felonies of the Arabs come on me, if he gets past me doing the same as he has

been doing, (and) if I do not deprive his mother of him.”

(‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn) continued to attack the enemy as he had been doing but then Murra b, Munqidh came against him and stabbed him. He was struck down and the enemy fell upon him, cutting him with their swords. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, went out until he stood over him and said: “May Allah kill (the) people who killed you, my son. How foolhardy they are against the Merciful and in violating the sacredness of the family of the Apostle, may Allah bless Him and His Family.”

His eyes filled with tears and he said: “There will (only) be dust on the world after you.”

Zaynab, the sister of al-Husayn, peace be on him, came hurrying out, crying: “My brother, my nephew!”

She came up and threw herself on (her dead nephew). Al-Husayn raised her head and then led her back to the tent. He told his young (sons): “Carry your brother back.”

They carried him and put him before the tent which they had been fighting in front of. (Then) one of ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d’s men called ‘Amr Ibn Subayh shot an arrow at ‘Abd Allah Ibn Muslim Ibn ‘Aqil. ‘Abd Allah put his hand to guard his brow. The arrow struck his hand and penetrated through his brow, and riveted the hand to it. He was not able to move it when another man came down on him with a spear, thrust it into his heart, and killed him.

‘Abd Allah Ibn Qutba al- Ta’i attacked ‘Awn Ibn ‘Abd Allah Ibn Ja’far Ibn Abi Talib and killed him.

‘Amir Ibn Nashhal al-Tamimi attacked Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd Allah Ibn Ja’far Ibn Abi Talib and killed him.

‘Uthman Ibn Khalid al-Hamdani launched himself against ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn ‘Aqil Ibn Abi Talib, and killed him.

[Humayd Ibn Muslim reported:]

It was like that among us (i.e. many of al-Husayn’s supporters had been killed by ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d’s army) when a young lad came out against us. His face was young like the first splinter of the new moon and he carried a sword. He was wearing a shirt and a waistcloth (izar) and a pair of sandals, one of whose straps was broken. ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d Ibn Nufayl al-Azdi said to me: “Let me attack him.” I said: “Praise be to Allah, what do you want to do that for? Leave him. While even one of the family of al-Husayn remains, that will be enough to take vengeance on you for his (death).” But he insisted: “By Allah, let me attack him.” So he rushed against him and did not turn back until he had struck his head with his sword and split it in two. The young lad fell face downwards and he called out: “O uncle!”

At this, al-Husayn, peace be on him, showed himself just like the hawk shows itself. He launched into attack like a raging lion and struck ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d Ibn Nufayl with his sword. That man tried to fend off the blow with his arm but his arm was cut off from the elbow, and he gave a great shriek (of pain) which was (even) heard by the people in the camp. As al-Husayn, peace be on him, turned away from him, the

cavalry of Kufa attacked in order to save him but they (only succeeded) in trampling him to death beneath the horses' hooves, and the dust rose.

I saw al-Husayn, peace be on him, standing by the head of the young lad, looking at his feet and al-Husayn, peace be on him was saying: "May the people who have caused your death perish. For the one who will oppose them on the Day of Resurrection on your behalf will be your grandfather ('Ali, or great-grandfather, i.e. the Prophet)." Then he continued: "By Allah, it is hard on your uncle that you called him and he did not answer you, or rather he answered but your cry was (too late) to help you. For by Allah, those who kill his relatives are many but those who help him are few." Then he carried him in his arms. It is just as if (even now) I am looking at the two legs of the boy making marks (as they trail) on the ground.

He took him and put him with his son, 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them both, and the other members of the household who had been slain. I asked about the boy and was told that he was al-Qasim Ibn al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, peace be on them.

Then al-Husayn, peace be on him, sat in front of the tent. He brought his son, 'Abd Allah Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on him, who was (just) a baby and sat him on his knee. But one of the Banu Asad shot an arrow which slaughtered the child. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, caught the child's blood in the palm of his hand. When his palm was full, he poured (the blood) on to the ground and said: "O Lord, if it be so that You have kept the help of Heaven from us, then let it be because (Your purpose) is better than (immediate help). Take vengeance on these people who are (such) oppressors." Then he carried the child and laid him with the (other) members of his household who had been slain.

(Just then) 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Uqba al-Ghanawi shot an arrow at Abu Bakr Ibn al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them, and killed him. When al-'Abbas Ibn 'Ali saw the number of his family who had been killed, he said to his brothers on his mother's side – 'Abd Allah, Ja'far and 'Uthman: "My brothers through my mother, go forward so that I may see that you have remained true to Allah and His Apostle. For you have no children (to defend)."

'Abd Allah, may Allah have mercy on him, advanced and fought fiercely. He exchanged blow with Hani' Ibn Shabib al-Hadrami and Hani' killed him. After him Ja'far went forward and Hani' also killed him. Khawali Ibn Yazid al-Asbahi, may Allah curse him, went against 'Uthman who had taken the place of his brother. He fired an arrow at him and brought him down. One of the Banu Darim attacked him (while he was down) and cut off his head.

The group then launched an attack against al-Husayn, peace be on him, and cut off his access to his camp. His thirst became severe, and he set off towards the dam, trying to reach the Euphrates. In front of him was his brother, al-'Abbas. However, the cavalry of Ibn Sa'd, may Allah curse him, blocked his route. Among these was a man from the Banu Darim: he said to (the cavalry): "Woe upon you! Prevent him from reaching the Euphrates, don't let him get water."

Then al-Husayn, peace be on him, cried out: "O Allah, I am thirsty." The Darimi became angry and shot an arrow at him which lodged in his throat. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, pulled out the arrow and held his hand below his throat. Both his palms were filled with blood which he shook away, then he said: "O Allah, I complain to You about what is being done to the son of the daughter of Your Prophet." Then he returned to his position, while his thirst had become (even more) severe.

Meanwhile the people had surrounded al-'Abbas and cut him off from (al-Husayn). Single-handed he began to attack them until he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him. The two who took part in killing him were Zayd Ibn Warqa al-Hanafi and Hakim Ibn al-Tufail al-Shabsi, after he had been covered with wounds and could not move²².

When al-Husayn, peace be on him, came back from the dam to his tents, Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan advanced towards him with a group of his followers and surrounded him. The fastest of them was a man called Malik Ibn al-Nusayr al-Kindi. He cursed al-Husayn, peace be on him, and struck him on the head with his sword. (Al-Husayn) was wearing a cap. (The sword) went through it right into his head and made it bleed. The cap was filled with blood.

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, said to him: "May you never eat or drink with your right hand! May Allah gather you (on the Day of Judgement) with those people who are wrong-doers." Then he threw away the cap and called for a cloth which he tied around his head. Then he called for another cap, put it on and bound it (in place).²³

Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan and those who were with him had withdrawn from him to their (earlier) positions. After a short delay they came again against him and surrounded him. 'Abd Allah Ibn al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them, came out against them, he was only a boy, not yet mature enough to leave the women. He rushed forward until he stood beside his uncle, al-Husayn, peace be on him. Then Zaynab, the daughter of 'Ali, peace be on him, came after him to stop him, and al-Husayn, peace be on him, told her to stop him. However he refused (to take any notice of her) and determinedly prevented her (from taking him away). He said: "By Allah, I will not leave my uncle."

(At this) Abjar²⁴ Ibn Ka'b rushed towards al-Husayn, peace be on him. With sword (in hand), the young lad said to him: "Woe upon you, you son of an impure woman, are you trying to kill my uncle?" Abjar struck at him with his sword. The boy tried to fend off (the blow) with his arm. The sword cut through (his arm) to the skin (on the other side). There was the arm hanging (by the skin). The boy cried out: "O my mother!" Al-Husayn took hold of him and embraced him. He said to him: "My nephew, try to bear what has come to you and be comforted with the news that Allah will unite you with your righteous ancestors." Then al-Husayn, peace be on him, raised his hand and said: "O Allah, even as You have made life pleasant for them for a time, divide them into factions and make them follow the ways of factions and let their rulers never be pleased with them. They summoned us so that they might support us and then they became hostile to us and killed us."

The foot-soldiers launched an attack from right and left against those who were left with al-Husayn, peace be on him, until only a group of three or four remained with him. When al-Husayn, peace be on him, saw that, he called for a pair of dazzling Yemeni trousers (sarawil). He tore them and put them on. He tore them so that he should not have been plundered after he had been killed. When al-Husayn, peace be on him, was killed, Abjar Ibn Ka'b set on him, plundered him of the trousers and left him naked. After that the two hands of Abjar Ibn Ka'b, may Allah curse him, became so dry in the summer that they were like sticks and then soaking wet in the winter so that they sprinkled drops of water and pus, until Allah destroyed him.

When nobody except a group of three members of his family was left with al-Husayn, peace be on him, he moved against the people, while the three protected him until (all) three were killed. Al-Husayn, was left alone. Despite being weighed down by wounds in his head and body, he began to strike against them with his sword and they scattered to right and left, away from him.

Then Humayd Ibn Muslim said: "By Allah, I have never seen such persistence. His sons have been killed, and the members of his household and his followers, yet he is still as brave as ever and he has not allowed his spirits to leave him. When the soldiers attack him, he fights back with his sword and scatters them to right and left of him like goats when a wolf comes upon them."

When Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan realised (the position), he called for the cavalry and they came up at the rear of the foot-soldiers. He ordered the archers to shoot at (al-Husayn) and they showered him with arrows until he became (quilted with arrows) like a hedgehog (is with spikes).

He drew back from them and they stood facing him. His sister, Zaynab, came to the door of the tent and called out to 'Umar Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas: "Woe unto you, 'Umar. Is Abu 'Abd Allah being killed while you (stand by and) watch?" But 'Umar did not answer. Then she called out: "Woe upon you (all), is there not a Muslim among you?" But no one answered.

Then Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan shouted at the foot soldier and the cavalry: "Why are you waiting for the man? May your mothers be deprived of you!" So they attacked him from every side.

Zur'a Ibn Sharik struck him on the left shoulder-blade and cut into it. Another of them struck him on the shoulder. He fell prostrate on his face. Sinan Ibn Anas al-Nakha'i stabbed him with a spear and killed him. Khawali Ibn Yazid al-Asbahi hurried to him and bent down to cut off his head but he trembled (too much). Shamir²⁵ said to him: "May Allah crush your arm, why are you trembling?" Then Shamir bent down and decapitated him. He lifted the head (and handed it) to Khawali saying: "Take it to the commander 'Umar Ibn Sa'd".

Then they began to plunder (the body of) al-Husayn, peace be on him. Ishaq Ibn al-Hayat al-Hadhrami, may Allah curse him, took his shirt. Abjar Ibn Ka'b, may Allah curse him, took his trousers. Akhnas Ibn Marthad, may Allah curse him, took his turban. One of the Banu Darim took his sword. They plundered his saddle and his camel and they looted his womenfolk.²⁶

[Humayd Ibn Muslim reported:]

By Allah, I did not see one of his women or daughters or the women of his family who did not have her clothes ripped from her back, taken away and removed from her forcibly. Then we came to 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them both. He was stretched out on a bed and he was very ill. Shamir had a group of foot-soldiers with him and they asked him, "Shall we kill this sick one?" I said: "Praise be to Allah, will boys be killed (too)? This is only a youth even though he is what he is." And I went on (arguing) until I had moved them away from him.

Then 'Umar Ibn Sa'd arrived and the women cried out and wept in his face. He ordered his followers: "None of you should enter the tents of these women nor disturb this sick boy." The women asked him to return what had been taken from them so that they could clothe themselves again. So he commanded that whoever had taken any of their belongings should return them to them. But by Allah, none of them returned anything. He then entrusted charge of the main tent and the tents of the women to a group (of men) who were with him. He said: "Guard (the women) so that none of them may leave and do not harm them."

After this, he returned to his tent and called out to his followers: "Who will volunteer (to go) to al-Husayn and make his horse trample on (al-Husayn's body)?" Ten volunteered. Of these, Ishaq b Hayyat and Akhnas Ibn Marthad trampled on (the body of) al-Husayn with their horses until they had broken and bruised his back. 'Umar Ibn Sa'd despatched on that day – it was the day of 'Ashura', – the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, with Khawali Ibn Yazid al-Asbahi and Humayd Ibn Muslim al-Azdi, to 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad. Then he ordered the heads of the remainder of his followers and members of his House (who had been slain) to be cut off. There were seventy-two heads. He sent Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan, Qays Ibn Ash'ath and 'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj with these. They journeyed until they brought them to Ibn Ziyad. He ('Umar Ibn Sa'd) remained there for the rest of that day, and the next day until just after midday. Then he summoned the people for the journey, and set out towards Kufa. He took with him the daughters and sisters of al-Husayn, peace be on him, together with 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on him. The latter was still sick with a dysentery and was almost on the point of death.

When Ibn Sa'd departed, some of Banu Asad, who had been staying at al-Ghadhiriyya went to al-Husayn, peace be on him, and his followers. They performed the funeral prayer over them. Then they buried al-Husayn at the place where his tomb still is, and they buried his son 'Ali. Ibn al-Husayn al-Asghar (the younger) at the foot of the body. They dug around the area next to the two feet of al-Husayn, peace be on him, for the martyrs from his House and his followers. They gathered them together and buried them all together. However, they buried al-'Abbas Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them both, in the place where he was killed, on the road to al-Ghadhiriyya, where his tomb still is.[27](#)

When the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, arrived and after Ibn Sa'd arrived on the next day (bringing) with him the daughters and household of al-Husayn, peace be on him, Ibn Ziyad sat before the people in the governor's palace. He had given the people a general summons and had ordered them

to be present (to see) the head. He put it in front of him, and he began to look at it with a smile. In his hand he had a cane and he began to poke at the teeth with it.

When Zayd Ibn Arqam, a companion of the Prophet who was (then) an old man, saw him poking at the teeth with the cane, he said: "Take your cane away from those two lips. For, by Allah, other than Whom there is no deity, I have seen the lips of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, touch those two lips countless times." (With that) he began to weep.

"Does Allah make your eyes weep?" asked Ibn Ziyad. "Or are you weeping because of Allah's victory? If it was not for the fact that you are an old man who has become silly and your mind has left you, I would have cut off your head."

Zayd Ibn Arqam stood up in front of him and went to his house. (Meanwhile) the family of al-Husayn, peace be on him, was brought before Ibn Ziyad. Zaynab, the sister of al-Husayn, peace be on him, came in the middle of the group, pretending not to be herself; she was wearing her dirtiest clothes. She went and sat in a corner of the palace and her maids crowded her.

"Who is that woman who has gone to the side and has sat in a corner with her women?" Ibn Ziyad demanded but Zaynab did not answer. He repeated the question about her a second time.

"This is Zaynab, daughter of Fatima, the daughter of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace," one of her women told him.

"Praise be to Allah Who has disgraced you, killed you and revealed the false nature of your claims," said Ibn Ziyad as he came towards her.

"Praise be to Allah Who has favoured us with His Prophet, Muhammad, may Allah bless Him and His Family," answered Zaynab "and He has purified us completely from sin. He only disgraces the great sinner and reveals the false nature of the profligate. Such men are not among us, praise be to Allah"

"How do you consider Allah has treated your House?" asked Ibn Ziyad.

"Allah decreed death for them and they went forward (bravely) to their resting places," Zaynab replied. "Allah will gather you and us together. You will plead your excuses to Him and we will be your adversaries before Him."

Ibn Ziyad became enraged and burnt with anger.

"Governor," intervened 'Amr Ibn Hurayth, "She is only a woman and women are not responsible for anything that they say. Do not blame her mistakes."

"Allah has healed my soul from your tyranny and the rebellion of your House," he said to her.

Zaynab, peace be on her, became weak and wept.

“By my life,” she cried out to him, “You have killed the mature ones (of my family); you have pierced my family; you have cut down my young branches; and you have pulled out my root. If this heals you, then you have been healed.”

“By my life,” declared Ibn Ziyad, “this is a woman who makes poetry. Your father was a poet.”

“What has a woman to do with poetry?” she answered. “Indeed I have (things) to distract me from poetry but my heart causes me to say what I am saying.”

‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them, was presented to him.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“I am ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn,” he answered.

“Didn’t Allah kill ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn?”

“I have a brother who is also called ‘Ali,” answered ‘Ali, peace be on him, “the people killed him.”

“Rather Allah killed him,” affirmed Ibn Ziyad.

“Allah receives the souls at the time of their death” (39:42).

“How dare you answer me like that!” shouted Ibn Ziyad angrily, “and that will be the last of you because of (your) answer to me. Take him away and cut his head off!”

Zaynab, his aunt, clung on to him, pleading: “O Ibn Ziyad! Haven’t you had enough of our blood?”

Then she clung on to him and said: “By Allah, I will not leave him. If you kill him, kill me with him.”

Ibn Ziyad looked at her and at him, and said, “How wonderful is family relationship! I think she wants me to kill her with him. Leave him, for I see him (now) for what he is.”

He rose from his assembly to leave the palace and go to the mosque. He went up on the pulpit. He praised and glorified Allah, then he said: “Praise be to Allah Who has revealed the truth and the followers of the truth, and has given victory to the Commander of the faithful, Yazid, and his party, and has killed the liar who is the son of a liar and his Shi’a.”

At this ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Afif al-Azdi, who had been one of the Shi’a of the Commander of the Faithful (i.e. ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib) stood in front of him and shouted: “O enemy of Allah, you are the liar and your father and (the man) who appointed you and his father. O Ibn Murjana, you kill the sons of Prophets and take the place of men of truth on the pulpit.”

“Get him for me,” ordered Ibn Ziyad.

The soldiers seized him but he gave the battle cry of al-Azd. Seven hundred of them (quickly) gathered and took him away from the soldiers.

At night Ibn Ziyad sent someone to get him out of his house. He was executed and crucified in al-Sabkha, may Allah have mercy on him.

The (next) morning ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad sent the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, (to Yazid) after it had been taken through all the streets and tribes of Kufa.

[It is reported from Zayd Ibn Arqam:]

It was brought past, it was stuck on a spear and I was in a room in my (house). As it was opposite me I heard it recite: ***“Or do you think that the Companions of the Cave and the inscription were among Our wonderful signs” (18:9).*** My flesh shuddered and I called out. “O son of the Apostle of Allah, your head is miraculous, miraculous.”[28](#)

When they had finished taking it around Kufa and had brought it back to the palace door, Ibn Ziyad gave it to Zahar Ibn Qays and he (also) gave him the heads of his companions. He despatched him to Yazid Ibn Mu‘awiya and he sent with him Abu Burda Ibn ‘Awf al-Azdi, and Tariq Ibn Abi Zubyan al-Azdi together with a group of Kufans, to take them to Yazid Ibn Mu‘awiya in Damascus.

[‘Abd Allah Ibn Rabi‘a al-Himyari reported:]

I was with Yazid Ibn Mu‘awiya in Damascus when Zahar Ibn Qays brought the head to him.

“Woe upon you! What is behind you? What have you got?” demanded Yazid.

“O Commander of the faithful,” he replied, “I bring good news of Allah’s victory and support. Al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on them, came against us with eighteen men of his House and sixty of his Shi’a. We went out to meet them and we asked them to surrender and submit to the authority of the governor, ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad, or to fight. They chose to fight rather than to surrender. We attacked them as the sun rose and surrounded them on every side. Eventually (our) swords took their toll of the heads of the people and they began to flee without having any refuge (to go to). They (tried to) take refuge from us on the (open) hills and in the hollows, like the doves seek refuge from a hawk. By Allah, Commander of the faithful, it was nothing but the slaughtering of animals for slaughter. (It was only the time taken by) the sleep of a man taking his siesta (before) we had come upon the last of them. There were their naked bodies, their blood-stained clothes their faces thrown in the dust. The sun burst down on them, the wind scattered (dust) over them; their visitors were (scavenging) eagles and vultures.”

Yazid looked down for a time, then he raised his head and said: “I would have been satisfied with your obedience (to my orders) without this killing of al-Husayn, peace be on him. If it had been me who had accompanied him, I would have let him off (such a fate).”

After ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad had despatched the head of al-Husayn, he ordered the women and the young boys to be made ready for travelling. He ordered ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them, to be chained with a chain around his neck. Then he despatched them, to follow the heads, with Muhaffir Ibn Tha‘laba al-‘A‘idhi and Shamir Ibn Dhi al-Jawshan. They set out with them until they caught up with the people with the head. ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn did not speak a word to any of the people who had the head on that Journey. Eventually they reached (their destination). When they reached the door of Yazid’s (palace), Muhaffir Ibn Tha‘laba raised his voice and shouted: “Here is Muhaffir Ibn Tha‘laba who has brought the Commander of the faithful these vile profligates.”

‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn²⁹, peace be on him, answered him. “What did the mother of Muhaffir give birth to more evil and more grievous (than him)?”

When the heads were put in front of Yazid and among them was the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, Yazid recited:

We will split the skull of proud men (who come) against us; they were very disobedient and oppressive.

Yahya Ibn al-Hakam, the brother of Marwan Ibn al-Hakam recited: On the bank (of the river) a great army met him who is closer in kinship (to Yazid) than Ibn Ziyad (is), the man with a false lineage.

The offspring of Sumayya has acquired status, while the offspring of the daughter of the Apostle of Allah is (given) none.

Yazid struck his hand against the chest of Yahya Ibn al-Hakam and shouted, “Be quiet!”

Then he said to ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them: “Son of al-Husayn, your father cut (the bond of) kinship with me and showed ignorance of my rights, trying to deprive me of my position of authority. (Now) Allah has treated him in the way you have seen.”

“No misfortune strikes the earth nor yourselves unless it has been written in a book before We bring it into existence; that is easy for Allah” (57:22), replied ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn.

“Answer him,” Yazid urged his son, Khalid. However Khalid did not know what to say in reply. So Yazid answered: “Say rather: ***“whatever misfortune has struck you is because of what your hands have earned. And (Allah) forgives much” (42:30).***”

He summoned the women and the children and they were made to sit in front of him. What he saw was dreadful.

“May Allah detest Ibn Murjana,” he said: “If there had been (any bond of) kinship between him and you, he would not have done this to you; he would not have sent you in this state.”

[Fatima, daughter of al-Husayn, peace be on him, reported:] When we sat before Yazid, he showed pity

on us. An Ahmar of the Syrians stood up and said to Yazid; "Commander of the faithful, give me this one."

He meant me. (Then) I was a pretty young girl. I shuddered for I thought that that would be allowed to them. I caught hold of the skirt of my aunt Zaynab and she told (me) that that would not happen. She said to the Syrian: "By Allah, you are a liar. By Allah, you are (too) lowly born! Such a thing is not for you, nor for him (to decide)."

"You are a liar," Yazid cried out angrily. "That is for me (to decide). If I wish to do anything, I can do it."

"No, by Allah," she replied, "Allah would only let you do that if you left our faith and professed belief in another (religion)."

"It is me," screamed Yazid, distraught with anger. "whom you are treating in this (way). It is your father who has left the religion, and your brother."

"I am led by the religion of Allah, the religion of my father and the religion of my brother," she answered, "and (it is what) you are led by, and your grandfather and your father, if you are a Muslim." "Enemy of Allah, you lie," he shouted.

"You are a Commander of the faithful, (yet) you vilify unjustly and you have become oppressive with your authority," she answered. (At this) he was ashamed and became silent.

"Give me that girl," repeated the Syrian.

"Be a bachelor," Yazid said to him, "May Allah strike you dead!"

Then he ordered the women to be lodged in a house on (the) banks (of the river). With them (also he sent) their brother, 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them. (Later) a house was set aside for them, which was attached to Yazid's own house. They resided (there) for several days. (After a short time) he summoned al-Nu'man Ibn Bashir and told him to make preparations to take these women back to Medina. When he was about to despatch them, he summoned 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them. He took him aside.

"Allah curse Ibn Murjana," he said. "If I had been with your father, he would never have asked me for a favour without me granting him it; I would have protected him from death with all my power. But Allah has decreed what you have seen. Write to me from Medina and everything that you need will be yours."

He presented clothes to him and to his family. He sent with them in the group (of men under the command) of Nu'man Ibn Bashir, a messenger, who brought him (al-Nu'man) the order to set out with them in the night; and that they should go in front of him but they should never be out of his sight. When they stopped, he should go aside from them and he and his followers should separate around them like a group of guards over them. He should (only) keep away from them when any person of their group

wanted to wash or perform a need, so he (or she) would not be ashamed.

(The messenger) set off with them amid the group of al-Nu'man. (Al-Nu'man) continued to stay close to them along the road but he was kind to them as Yazid had instructed him and he looked after them until they entered Medina.

After Ibn Ziyad had despatched the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, to Yazid, he went to 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Abi al-Harith³⁰ al-Sulami and told him, "Go to 'Amr Ibn Sa'id Ibn al-'As in Medina and give him the good news of the killing of al-Husayn (peace be on him)."

['Abd al-Malik reported:]

I rode my mount and went towards Medina. (On the way) one of Quraysh met me.

"What is the news?" he asked.

"The news is for the governor, (then) you will hear it," I answered. "We belong to Allah and to Him we will return," he said. "By Allah, al-Husayn, peace be on him, has been killed."

When I went to 'Amr Ibn Sa'id, he asked: "What is your purpose?" "What will please the governor." I answered, "Al-Husayn, peace be on him, has been killed."

"Go out and announce his being killed," he told me.

I announced (it). I have never heard such wailing as the wailing of the Banu Hashim in their houses for al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, peace be on him, when they heard the announcement of his death. I went back (in) to 'Amr Ibn Sa'id. When he saw me, he smiled at me and laughed. Then he quoted a verse of 'Amr Ibn Ma'dikarib:

The women of Banu Ziyad raised a great lament like the lamentation of our women mourning (after the battle) of al-Arnab.

"This lamentation is in return for the lamentation for 'Uthman," 'Amr exclaimed. Then he went up on the pulpit and informed the people about the killing of al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, and he summoned (them to obey) Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya. (After that) he went down.

One of the retainers (mawali) of 'Abd Allah Ibn Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib, peace be on him, went to him and announced the news of the killing of his two sons and he said that we (all return) to Allah.

"This is what we have through al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them," said Abu Salasil, the retainer (mawla) of 'Abd Allah.

“O son of an obscene (woman),” exclaimed ‘Abd Allah Ibn Ja‘far, taking off his shoe (to strike him). “Are you saying this of al–Husayn, peace be on him? If I had been present with him, I would have preferred not to leave him and to be killed with him. By Allah, I would not have withheld those two from him and I take consolation from what befell them in that these two were struck down with my brother and cousin, consoling him and enduring with him.”

He went forward to those who were sitting with him and said:

“Praise be to Allah, Who has (made life hard for me) through the death of al–Husayn. For I did not console al–Husayn with my own hands, my two sons consoled him.”

Umm Luqman, the daughter of ‘Aqil Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah have mercy on them, came out crying when she heard the news of the death of al–Husayn, peace be on him. With her were her sisters Umm Hani’, Ramla and Zaynab, daughters of ‘Aqil Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah have mercy on them. She wept for her (relatives) slain on the bank and she recited:

What would you say if the Prophet asked you: What have you, the Last of the (religious) communities, done

With my offspring and my family after my departure from them? They are prisoners and slain and have been stained with their own blood

What sort of reward is this for my advice to you, that you should oppose me by doing evil to my blood relations?

On the night of the day upon which ‘Amr Ibn Sa‘id had given the public notice of the killing of al–Husayn b ‘Ali, peace be on them, in Medina, in the middle of the night the Medinans heard a voice calling out. They listened to the voice but they did not see any person. (The voice called out:)

O men who ignorantly killed al–Husayn, hear the news of punishment and chastisement.
All the people of heaven, prophets, angels and slain, prosecute you.

You have been cursed by the tongue of the son of David and (that) of Moses and (that) of the master of the Gospels.

The Names of the Members of the House who were killed with al–Husayn in the Plain of Karbala

There were seventeen souls. In addition to al–Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on them both:

1. Al–‘Abbas.
2. ‘Abd Allah.

3. Ja'far.

4. 'Uthman.

(These were all) sons of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on them, and their mother was Umm al-Banin.

5. 'Abd Allah.

6. Abu Bakr.

(Both of these were) sons of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on them and their mother was Layla, daughter of Mas'ud al-Thaqafi.

7. 'Ali.

8. 'Abd Allah.

(These were) two sons of al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them both.

9. Al-Qasim

10. Abu Bakr

11. 'Abd Allah.

(These were) sons of al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them.

12. Muhammad.

13. 'Awn.

(They were) two sons of 'Abd Allah Ibn Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with them all.

14. 'Abd Allah.

15. Ja'far.

16. 'Abd al-Rahman.

(They were) sons of 'Aqil Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with them.

17. Muhammad.

(He was) the son of Abu Sa'id b 'Aqil Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah have mercy on them all.

These seventeen souls, all members of Banu Hashim, may Allah be pleased with them all, included brothers of al-Husayn, peace be on him and them, sons of his brother and sons of his two uncles, Ja'far and 'Aqil.

They were all buried at the feet of al-Husayn, peace be on him, at the scene of his martyrdom. A trench was dug for them, they were all put in it, then the earth was flattened over them. (That is all of them) except al-'Abbas Ibn 'Ali, peace be on them both. He was buried at the place where he was killed, by the dam on the road to al-Ghadhiriyya. His grave is clearly distinguishable but that is not the case with the graves of his brothers and his family whom we named after (him). A visitor may only visit their graves at the tomb of al-Husayn, peace be on him, if he directs his greetings to them towards the ground at the feet of al-Husayn. 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them both, is among their number; it is said that he is the one of them who is buried nearest to al-Husayn, peace be on him.

The followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him and the mercy of Allah be on them, who were killed with him, were buried nearby. We are not able to find out accurate details about (the whereabouts of) their corpses. However, we have no doubt that that ground covers them, may Allah be pleased with them, make them happy and let them dwell in the Gardens of Paradise.

A Sample of the Outstanding Virtues of al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, Peace be on Him, the Merit in Visiting (His Grave) and Mention of His Tragedy

[Sa'id Ibn Rashid reported on the authority of Ya'la Ibn Murra, who said:]

I heard the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, say: "Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn. Allah loves whoever loves him. Husayn is indeed an (outstanding) grandson among grandsons."³¹

[Ibn Lahi'a reported on the authority of Abu 'Awana (with an interrupted chain of authorities) (rafa'ahu) back to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family:]

The Apostle of Allah said: "Al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them, are the ornaments of the throne (of Heaven). Indeed Heaven, itself, said, 'O my Lord, You have filled me with weak and poor inhabitants.' Allah, the Exalted, replied to it: 'Are you not content that I have adorned your corners with al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them?' Then it swaggered as a bride swaggers with happiness."

['Abd Allah Ibn Maymun al-Qaddah reported on the authority of Ja'far Ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq, peace be on them, who said:] Al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them, were wrestling in front of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family. "Hasan, catch hold of Husayn," said the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family.

"Apostle of Allah, are you encouraging the big one against the little one?" said Fatima, peace be on her.

"It is Gabriel, peace be on him, who is saying to al-Husayn: Husayn, catch hold of al-Hasan," replied the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family.

[Ibrahim Ibn al-Rafi'i reported on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather, who said:]

I saw al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them, walking to the pilgrimage. They did not pass a rider who did not dismount and walk too. It became arduous for some of them. They said to Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas: "Walking is arduous for us. We would prefer to ride but these two young lords (sayyid) are walking."

"Abu Muhammad," said Sa'd to al-Hasan, peace be on him, "walking is hard on a group of those with you. Yet the people cannot make themselves feel better by riding when they see you two walking. If you rode, (it would be easier for them)."

"We will not ride," replied al-Hasan, peace be on him. "We have pledged ourselves to walk to the Sacred House of Allah on our feet. However, we will turn aside from the road." They both went aside from the people.

[Al-Awza'i has reported on the authority of 'Abd Allah Ibn Shaddad, on the authority of Umm al-Fadhl, daughter of al-Harith:]

She visited the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family and said: "Apostle of Allah, I have had a strange dream during the night."

"What was it?" he asked.

"It was terrible," she said.

"What was it?" he repeated.

"I saw (something) like a piece of your body cut up and put in my lap," she answered.

"You have seen well," said the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family. "Fatima will give birth to a boy when she is sitting on your lap (to give birth)."

[She reported:] Fatima did give birth to al-Husayn, peace be on him, and he was in my lap just as the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, had said. One day I took him to the Prophet, may Allah bless Him and His Family, and I put him in his lap. His gaze turned away from me. Behold, both the eyes of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, were flowing with tears. I said: "(May I ransom you) with my father and mother, Apostle of Allah, what is the matter with you?"

"Gabriel, peace be on him, came to me," he said. "He told me that my community will seek to kill this son of mine and he brought me dust made red by his (blood)." [32](#)

[Simak reported on the authority of Ibn al-Mukhariq on the authority of Umm Salama, may Allah be pleased with her, who said:]

One day while the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, was sitting down, and al-Husayn was sitting on his knee, his eyes suddenly filled with tears. I said to him: "Apostle of Allah, why do I see you weeping, may I be your ransom?"

"Gabriel, peace be on him, came to me," he said. "He consoled me for the death of my son, al-Husayn, and he told me that a group of my community will kill him. May Allah never let them have intercession from me."[33](#)

[It is reported with another chain of authorities on the authority of Umm Salama, may Allah be pleased with her, that she said:]

One evening the Apostle of Allah left us and was away for a long time. He came back, he was dishevelled and dusty and his hand was holding (something). I said to him: "Apostle of Allah, why do I see you dishevelled and dusty?"

He said: "I have just been on a night journey to a place in Iraq called Karbala'. There I saw the death of my son, al-Husayn, and a group of my children and the members of my family (ahl al-bayt). I could not stop (myself) from gathering (some of) their blood and here it is in my hand."

He opened his hand and said: "Take it and look after it."

I took it. It was like red soil. I put it in a phial, fastened its top and kept it. When al-Husayn, peace be on him, left Mecca on his way to Iraq, I look out that phial every day and night. I used to smell it and look at it. Then I would weep for his fate. On the 10th of (the month of) al-Muharram, the day on which al-Husayn, peace be on him, was killed, I took it out. At the beginning of the day it was in its usual condition, but at the end of the day, behold, it was fresh blood. I shrieked (with grief) and wept. Then I restrained my anger out of fear that the enemies (of the family of the Prophet) in Medina would hear and would hurry to rejoice at their misfortune. I have kept it secret up to the present time, even to the day when the messenger bringing the news of his death came to announce it. Then what I had seen was proved.[34](#)

It is reported that one day the Prophet, may Allah bless Him and His Family, was sitting down. Around him were 'Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be on them. He asked them: "How would you feel if when you were killed, your tombs were scattered around (the country)?"

"Will we die an (ordinary) death or will we be killed?" al-Husayn, peace be on him, asked.

"Rather you will be killed unjustly, my little son, and your brother will be killed unjustly," he answered. "Your offspring will be scattered over the land."

"Apostle of Allah, who will kill us?" asked al-Husayn, peace be on him.

"The evil men among the people," he said.

“Will anyone visit (our graves) after we are killed?” he asked. “Yes, my little son,” he told him. “a group (ta’ifa) of my community will gain my beneficence and favour through visiting (your graves). On the Day of Resurrection, I will bring them to the place so that I may take them by the arms and save them from its terrors and sorrows.”

[‘Abd Allah Ibn Sharik al-‘Amiri reported:]

I heard the followers of ‘Ali say when ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d went through the gate of the mosque: “There is the killer of al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on him.” That was some time before he was killed.

[Salim Ibn Abi Hafsa reported:]

‘Umar Ibn Sa’d said to al-Husayn: “Abu ‘Abd Allah, stupid people have come to me claiming that I will kill you.”

“They are not stupid,” al-Husayn, peace be on him, told him. “They are men who dream (of the future). Yet it pleases me that you will not enjoy the land of Iraq for long after me.”

[Yusuf Ibn ‘Abida reported: I heard Muhammad Ibn Sirin say:]

Such a redness which was in the sky was never seen except after the killing of al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on him.

[Sa’d al-Iskaf reported: Abu Ja’far, peace be on him, said:]

The killer of Yahya Ibn Zakariyya (John the Baptist) was a son born out of wedlock. The killer of al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali was a son born out of wedlock. The sky only went red for those two.

[Sufyan Ibn ‘Uyayna reported on the authority of ‘Ali Ibn Zayd, on the authority of ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on them, who said:] We set out with al-Husayn, peace be on him. We did not stop at any halting-place without him setting off from there by (first) mentioning Yahya Ibn Zakariyya and his death. He would say: “There was a day – and it was a day of the humiliation of the world before Allah – when the head of Yahya Ibn Zakariyya was given to one of the prostitutes of the Banu Isra’il.”

Reports have already been presented (which show) that none of the killers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, and his followers, may Allah be pleased with them, managed to avoid being killed or suffering tribulation in such a way as put them to shame before their death.

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, came to his death on Saturday, the 10th of (the month of) al-Muharram in the year 61 A.H. after the (time for) the mid-day prayer. (He was) killed wrongfully, while thirsty, always showing fortitude but forced to be detained, as we have already explained. His age on that day was fifty-eight years. Of these, he spent seven with his grandfather, the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him

and His Family, thirty-seven with his father, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him, and forty-seven with his brother, al-Hasan, peace be on him. The period of his succession (to the Imamate) after his brother was eleven years. He, peace be on him, used to use henna and a black dye (katam). When he, peace be on him, was killed, the dye came off (the beard on) his two cheeks.

Many reports have come down about the great merit (to be acquired) by visiting his (grave), indeed of it being necessary for everyone who accepts the Imamate of al-Husayn, peace be on him, (as being bestowed on him) by Allah, the Mighty and High.

It is reported from al-Sadiq Ja'far b Muhammad, peace be on him, that he said: "Visiting the grave of al-Husayn, peace be on him, is equal to a hundred acceptable pilgrimages and a hundred acceptable lesser pilgrimages ('umra)."

The Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless Him and His Family, said: "Whoever visits the grave of al-Husayn, peace be on him, after the latter's death, will have heaven (as his reward)."

Reports of this kind are numerous and we have given sufficient detail of them in our book Manasik al-mazar "The rites of Visitations"

The Children of al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, Peace be on them

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, had six children:

1. 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn al-Akbar (the elder).

His kunya was Abu Muhammad and his mother was Shahzanan, daughter of Choesroe Yazdigard.

2. 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn al-Asghar (the younger).

He was killed with his father on the banks (of the Euphrates) as has already been mentioned earlier. His mother was Layla daughter of Abu Murra Ibn 'Urwa Ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi.

3. Ja'far Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on him.

He had no survivors. His mother was a woman of (the tribe of) Quda'a and he died during the lifetime of al-Husayn.

4. 'Abd Allah Ibn al-Husayn.

He was killed while still a baby child with his father. An arrow came, while he was in his father's arms, and killed him. Mention of that has already come earlier also.

5. Sukayna, daughter of al-Husayn, peace be on him.

Her mother was Rabab, daughter of Imru' al-Qays Ibn 'Adi of Kalb of Ma'd. She was also the mother of 'Abd Allah Ibn al-Husayn, peace be on him.

6. Fatima, daughter of al-Husayn, peace be on him.

Her mother was Umm Ishaq, daughter of Talha Ibn 'Ubayd Allah of Taym.

- [1.](#) Al-Kafi (Tehran, 1388A.H.) I, 462, tradition no.5. Al-Kulayni's isnad has been shortened as has the tradition.
- [2.](#) In fact the account follows Ibn al-Kalbi's account as reported by al-Tabari, II, 216–381. Al-Tabari uses three versions, but al-Mufid follows the version of Ibn al-Kalbi, only once adopting another reading. In places al-Kalbi's version is summarised by al-Mufid, parts of it are omitted, but by and large al-Mufid faithfully follows that version.
- [3.](#) This explanation is, rather surprisingly, not included in al-Tabari's version, for such letters cf. al-Baladhuri, Ansab al-Ashraf, II, 151–2
- [4.](#) Sabu' in al-Tabari, II, 234.
- [5.](#) The two sons are one in al-Tabari, II, 234.
- [6.](#) 'Ubayd in al-Tabari, II, 234.
- [7.](#) Thirty-five in al-Tabari, II, 234.
- [8.](#) 'Azra in al-Tabari, II, 234.
- [9.](#) Muhammad b. 'Umayr al-Tamimi in al-Tabari, II, 234.
- [10.](#) Ibn Sa'id in al-Tabari, II, 238.
- [11.](#) Al-Mufid omits Ibn al-Kalbi's account of 'Ubayd Allah's entry into Kufa as given by al-Tabari, II, 242, and gives 'Umar b. Shabba's cf. al-Tabari, II, 243. This suggests that al-Mufid got his version of Ibn al-Kalbi from al-Tabari.
- [12.](#) Reference to Ibn Ziyad by his mother's name.
- [13.](#) Rua in al-Tabari, II, 250.
- [14.](#) This verse is also supposed to have been recited by 'Ali concerning Ibn Muljam.
- [15.](#) 'Amr supplied from al-Tabari, II, 263.
- [16.](#) Al-Tabari reports that the verses are also attributed to al-Farazdaq, II, 266.
- [17.](#) The Day of 'Arafa is the day when the pilgrims assemble on Mount 'Arafa for the pilgrimage. The Day of Tarwiya is the day before it when the pilgrims collect water from the well of Zamzam.
- [18.](#) These are the rituals of the 'umra, lesser pilgrimage, but they also form part of the ritual of the greater pilgrimage.
- [19.](#) Al-Tabari reports two separate accounts concerning these two individuals, II, 289 and 293. As they both meet similar ends, al-Mufid's surmise seems reasonable.
- [20.](#) Mufid has switched into the first person narrative of an eye-witness account as presented by Ibn al-Kalbi. cf. al-Tabari, II, 296.
- [21.](#) 'Azra in al-Tabari, II, 309. The same difference is maintained concerning the letter. cf. 85, footnote 8.
- [22.](#) The account of al-'Abbas' death is missing from al-Tabari.
- [23.](#) This attack and the account of the cap are also missing from al-Tabari.
- [24.](#) Bahr in al-Tabari, II, 363.
- [25.](#) Sinan in al-Tabari, II, 366.
- [26.](#) The names of the plunderers and the plundered objects are different in al-Tabari, II, 366.
- [27.](#) These details are not given by al-Tabari.
- [28.](#) This account is not in al-Tabari.
- [29.](#) Yazid in al-Tabari, II, 376.
- [30.](#) Al-Harith in al-Tabari, II, 383.
- [31.](#) cf. al-Baladhuri, Ansab al-Ashraf, III, 142.
- [32.](#) cf. Ibn al-A'tham, IV, (Hyderabad, 1971), 211–2.

[33.](#) cf. Ibn al-A'tham, IV, 213.

[34.](#) cf. Ibn al-A'tham, IV, 212–4.

A Chronological List Of The Holy Prophet, His Daughter And The Twelve Holy Imams

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted

APPENDIX 'A'

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE FOURTEEN INFALLIBLES THE HOLY PROPHET, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE TWELVE HOLY IMĀMS

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted.

SL No.	Designation	Agnomen (<i>Kunya</i>)	Name	Father's Name	Title (<i>Laqab</i>)	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Martyred by means of	Place of Burial
1.	The Last Prophet of Allāh	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad (Aḥmad) (al-Muṣṭafā)	'Abdullāh	Rasūlu'llāh, Nabyyu'llāh, an-Nabiyy, Khātamu 'n-Nabiyyīn	17th Rabi' I, in the Year of the Elephant. (25. 8. 570 AD)	28th Ṣafar, 11 AH (25. 5. 632 AD)	Natural	Holy Medina, al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddiqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth Year after the declaration of the Prophethood. (2. 1. 615 AD)	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH (26. 8. 632)	Injured	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Wasiyy, al-Murtadā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 Years before the declaration of the Prophethood. (25. 5. 600 AD)	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); Died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH (27. 1. 661 AD)	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)
4.	2nd Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-Mujtabā, as-Sibt (al-Akbar)	15th Ramaḍān, 3 AH (1. 3. 625 AD)	7th Ṣafar, 50 AH (6. 3. 670 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
5.	3rd Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh	al-Ḥusayn	'Alī	Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā', as-Sibt (al-Aṣghar)	3rd Sha'bān, 4 AH (8. 1. 626 AH)	10th Muḥarram, 61 AH (10. 10. 680 AD)	Sword – in the Battle of 'Ashūrā	Holy Karbalā' (at-Ṭaff), Iraq.
6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sajjīd, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH (6. 1. 659 AD)	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH (31.10.712/20.10.713 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.

7.	5th Imām	Abū Ja'far	Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Bāqir	3rd Šafar, 57 AH (16. 12. 676 AD)	7th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, 114 AH (28. 1. 733 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
8.	6th Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh, Abū Mūsā.	Ja'far	Muḥammad	aṣ-Šādiq	17th Rabi' I, 83 AH (20. 4. 702 AD)	25th Shawwāl, 148 AH (14. 12. 765 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
9.	7th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (<i>al-Awwal</i> = The First), Abū Ibrāhīm	Mūsā	Ja'far	al-Kāzim, al-'Abd aṣ-Šāliḥ, al-'Alim.	7th Šafar, 129 AH (28. 10. 746 AD)	25th Rajab, 183 AH (1. 9. 799 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāzimi- yyah, Iraq.
10.	8th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (<i>ath-Thānī</i> = The Second)	'Alī	Mūsā	ar-Riḍā	11th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 148 AH – (29. 12. 765 AD)	17th Šafar, 203 AH (24. 8. 818 AD)	Poison	Holy Mashhad, (Ṭūs - Khurāsān), Iran.
11.	9th Imām	Abū Ja'far (<i>ath-Thānī</i> = The Second)	Muḥammad	'Alī	at-Taqī, al-Jawād.	10th Rajab, 195 AH (8. 4. 811 AD)	30th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 220 AH (25. 11. 835 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāzimi- yyah, Iraq.
12.	10th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (<i>ath-Thālith</i> = The Third)	'Alī	Muḥammad	an-Naqī, al-Ḥādī.	2nd Rajab, 212 AH (27. 9. 827 AD)	3rd Rajab, 254 AH (28. 6. 868 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā' (Surra-man-ra'ā), Iraq.
13.	11th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-'Askarī	8th Rabi' II, 232 AH (3. 12. 846 AD)	8th Rabi' I, 260 AH (1. 1. 874 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā, Iraq.
14.	12th Imām	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, al-Ḥujjah, al-Ghā'ib, Šāhibu 'z-Zamān, Šāhibu 'l-Amr, al-Muntazar.	15th Sha'bān, 255 AH (29. 7. 869 AD)	Still alive, but in occultation.	– –	– – –

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2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddiqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth Year after the declaration of the Prophethood. (2. 1. 615 AD)	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH (26. 8. 632)	Injured	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Wasiyy, al-Murtadā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 Years before the declaration of the Prophethood. (25. 5. 600 AD)	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); Died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH (27. 1. 661 AD)	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)
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6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sajjīd, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH (6. 1. 659 AD)	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH (31.10.712/20.10.713 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.

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