



A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF
IMAM HUSAYN IBN ALI (A.S)

BY

M.M DUNGERSI (Ph. D.)



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INTRODUCTION

This has been a wish of Allama Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, for a number of years now, to include biographies of 14 Masoomin in our International Correspondence Course but his multifarious activities around the world prevented him from undertaking the work.

Mission is grateful to Dr. Mohamed Raza M. Dungersi, of New York who volunteered to undertake this arduous work. No historian or writer, however dexterous he may be, can draw a true picture of the life of Masoomin (a.s.). However we congratulate Dr. Dungersi for this gallant endeavour and pray to Almighty Allah to reward him in this world and in the hereafter.

Lives of great men remind us how to make our lives sublime. History of great men is a fountain of knowledge, faith and aspiration which will never dry up. Lives of these great men are like light houses, which keep darkness away and show right path to the wayfarers in search of knowledge, better living and service to mankind.

Had these great souls not left their footprints on the sands of time, the world would have been groping in darkness and would have fallen pray to despair while combating with unseen and intelligible forces.

This is the third publication of a monumental project under which these discernible series are going to be published. Dr. Dungersi has already completed the biographies of our first four Imams.

Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania

CONTENTS

Preface . . . 1

Chapter 1: Imam Husayn (a.s.)'s Childhood . . . 4

Chapter 2: Imam Husayn (a.s.): His Youth and Manhood . . . 10

Chapter 3: Imam Husayn (a.s.)'s Departure from Medina to Mecca
and then to Karbala . . . 14

Chapter 4: The Night and Day of "Ashura" . . . 23

Chapter 5: His Martyrdom and its Achievement . . . 30

Chapter 6: His Character . . . 35

Chapter 7: His Family Life . . . 42

Chapter 8: His Sayings, Sermons (Khutbas) and Supplications
(Duas) . . . 46

Chapter 9: Ways to Pay Respect to Imam Husayn (a.s.) and Other
Martyrs of Karbala . . . 53

Questions . . . 63

PREFACE

In the late 50's and early 60's, when I was a madressa student in School Faize in Zanzibar-Africa, there was no such a subject as Islamic History on the madressa curriculum. Naturally, therefore, when I joined the teaching staff of the Huseini Madressa in Dar-es-Salaam Tanzania in early 80's and when I was subsequently assigned to teach Islamic History, I was at a loss, not knowing exactly what to teach.

Not that there was no syllabus for this subject. Rather, my main concern was the scope of the syllabus. For at the core of Islamic History syllabus was the study of the life of the Prophet (may peace be upon him and his progeny) and those of the other thirteen MASOOMIN from his progeny.

In my view, besides Yusuf Laljee's excellent book, *KNOW YOUR ISLAM*, there was no other simple but informative text that could be used comfortably by both the teachers and the students alike. Even then, the section on the life-history of MASOOMIN was rather sketchy in *KNOW YOUR ISLAM*.

Since those days, I have felt the need to compile brief teaching notes on the lives of our Twelve Imams (may peace be upon them all) with two objectives in mind: First, to focus on all those areas of information, not exclusively historic, that would enable the learner to appreciate the complex situations in which our Imams lived and performed their duties as divinely appointed guides for the universe. Secondly, to present this information in a style which has at its core the interest as well as the aptitude of the teachers and students alike. I found this task easy to conceive in mind, but very difficult to implement. Needless to say, I could accomplish little in this field until when I migrated to the USA.

As luck would have it, at Huseini Madressa in New York, I was

once more assigned to teach Islamic History. For reasons I need not disclose them here, I found this task even more daunting than it was in Africa.

Fortunately, at this critical time when I was groping in darkness in search of suitable teaching text for my class, I was commissioned by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the Chief Missionary of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, to write teaching units encompassing the lives of our Twelve Imams (may peace be upon them) for the Correspondence Course of the Mission. To me this was Allah – sent bounty in two ways.

Firstly, this commission gave me courage and confidence that I hitherto lacked. Now I had the support of one of the most renowned Shia scholars of our times – Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

Secondly, I would not have to worry about searching for sponsors to finance the printing, the publishing and the circulation of my writings; the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania would do that.

This unit and others to follow are therefore the result of the initiative and complete support of Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the administration of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania and its ex-chairman Al-haj Fidahusein Abdullah Hameer.

Both the substance as well as the style of this unit (and the ones to follow) have been overly simplified, to comply with Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar’s advice that “We have to keep in mind that these units are meant for youths and not for scholars.”

All said and done, despite the maximum precautions that were taken to keep this unit free of factual or any other errors, if, however, some have remained uncorrected, the responsibility is mine.

May Allah forgive me for these unintentional errors and may He reward here and in the hereafter all those who have in one way or another, assisted me in the writing, the production and the circulation of this unit.

WASSALAMU ALAYKUM WA RAHMATULLAHI WA BARAKATUH.

Mohamed Raza Mohamed Husein Dungersi, Ph.D.

New York, USA

March 15, 1995

Shawwal 14, 1415

CHAPTER 1 :

IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.)'S CHILDHOOD

HIS BIRTH

Imam Husayn (a.s.), is the second son of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Bibi Fatima (s.a.). He was born in Medina on Thursday 3rd of Shaban 4 AH (9th January 626 AD).

Several miraculous events surround the birth of Imam Husayn (a.s.); these are:

1. He resembles Nabi Yahya in that the period from when his mother became pregnant to when he was born was six months. With other children this period is between seven months to nine months. A child born before seven months of "GESTATION" does not live.
2. When Imam Husayn (a.s.) was in his mother's womb, he used to talk with his mother telling her of the events to follow in his life, that he would be oppressed and would be martyred.
3. When he was born, he was already circumcised (This quality is found with all the thirteen 'Masoomin' that is the Prophet and the twelve Imams from his progeny.)
4. He was born pure and clean. It is reported that when he was born the Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) asked that the boy be brought to him. Asma Bint Umays, a lady acting as his nurse, requested for sometime so that she would clean the child and then hand him over to the Prophet. The Prophet replied that there was no need to clean the child since he was born pure and clean; this was the wish of Allah.
5. According to Ibne Abbas, at the time of the birth of Imam Husayn (a.s.), Allah sent a special 'HOURI' (a maid of paradise mentioned in Quran) called Loaya to serve Bibi Fatima (s.a.). It is reported from the same source that Loaya is that lady of the paradise under whom seventy thousand other 'HOURI' work.

Shaykh Saduq reports on the authority of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that before Imam Husayn (a.s.) was born, Umme Aiman, the Prophet's beloved maid had a dream in which she saw that a part of the body of the Prophet fell into her lap. She did not understand the hidden meaning of the dream and thought that something bad would happen to the Prophet. She came to the Prophet weeping. On hearing all about her dream, the Prophet asked her to stop crying and be happy. This is because the dream that she had seen was good and it meant that very soon a grandson would be born to the Prophet and Umme Aiman would have the good luck of taking the child in her lap. Soon, Imam Husayn (a.s.) was born.

When Imam Husayn (a.s.) was born, Allah ordered the Arch-Angel Jibrail to take with him thousands of other angels and to go to the Prophet's house to congratulate him. When Jibrail was on his way, he passed over an Island on which was imprisoned an angel named Fitrus. This angel had fallen out of Divine Favour and had therefore lost even its limbs.

On seeing Jibrail and his army, Fitrus inquired as to what was behind this march. On learning that the angels were on their way to congratulate the Prophet, he requested Jibrail to take him along so that he, too, could salute the Prophet on this happy occasion. His wishes were granted and he, too, was taken to the House of the Prophet.

Once in the company of the Prophet, Fitrus appealed to the Prophet asking him for the sake of the newly born boy, to seek his lost favours from Allah.

The Prophet advised Fitrus to hold the cradle in which Imam Husayn (a.s.) was sleeping and to request Allah to restore to him his old position in honour of the Imam. Fitrus did what the Prophet told him to do. Allah accepted his prayers and returned to Fitrus his limbs and his old position.

Fitrus went back joyous and feeling proud for having been forgiven for the sake of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

When the Prophet was informed of his birth, he came to Bibi Fatima's house. He read "ADHAN" in the boy's right ears and "IQAMAH" in the left ears. He then put his mouth on the child's mouth and fed him with his saliva.

The Prophet himself named the child-Husayn.

On the seventh day following Imam Husayn's birth the Prophet performed "AQEEQA." That is to say a sheep was slaughtered and the child had his head shaved clean. The hair was weighed and an equivalent weight of gold was given to the poor as charity.

LIFE WITH THE PROPHET

Like Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.) also was very much liked by the Prophet. Not only would the Prophet kiss and fondle his grandson Husayn (a.s.), he would carry him in his arms or even on his back.

Like Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.) also on several occasions mounted on the Prophet's back when in "Sajda" and the Prophet would prolong his Sajda until when the child would come down from the back of the Prophet on his own.

It is reported that once the Prophet heard the cries of a child. These cries sounded like those of Imam Husayn (a.s.). The Prophet requested that the child be made quiet and should never be upset as to cry since his cries were like those of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and as such they pained the Prophet.

Once the Prophet was giving sermon (KHUTBA) from the Pulpit (MIMBAR) in the Mosque of Medina. Imam Husayn (a.s.) walked into the Mosque. He stumbled and fell. The Prophet stopped his

sermon. He stepped down from the Pulpit and carried the young Imam to the Pulpit. Not only that but the Prophet advised the Muslims to love Husayn (a.s.) as loving him was like loving the Prophet himself and that in turn meant loving Allah.

All scholars of Islam agree on the truthfulness of the famous “HADITH” of the Prophet namely that “Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn.”

It is easy to see how Imam Husayn (a.s.) is from the Prophet. But how do we explain the Prophet saying “I am from Husayn”?

What the Prophet knew, others did not. The Prophet knew of the role that his grandson Husayn (a.s.) would play to save Islam and the mission of the Prophet. As we shall see in the course of this unit, Imam Husayn (a.s.) was the key to survival of Islam. It was because of this the Prophet said that “I am from Husayn.”

Allah had given the Prophet information about what would happen in the future. The Prophet therefore knew of all the cruelties and hardships that his grandson Husayn (a.s.) would face from the enemies of Islam and these made him sad and even made him weep from time to time.

Every time an opportunity arose, the Prophet would advise the Muslims to love and to honour his grandsons Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.) as they would always be on the right path.

Abu Bakr Ibne Abu Kahafa is reported to have said, “I have heard the Apostle of Allah saying: Hasan and Husayn are the two lords of the youth of paradise.”

The famous Historian Tabari reports the Prophet to have said about Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.):
“O Allah, I love them and love those who Love them.”

“These two sons of mine are two plants of sweet basil (flowers) in this World.”

“Whoever loves Hasan and Husayn loves me, and whoever dislikes them dislike me.”

“Whoever loves me should love them.”

“Whoever wants to see a man from paradise, he should look at Husayn.”

Unfortunately, many Muslims forgot about the Prophet’s advice and turned against Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.).

Imam Husayn (a.s.) lost the loving company of his grandfather when he was only seven years old.

LIFE WITH HIS MOTHER BIBI FATIMA

Although Imam Husayn (a.s.) spent only seven years of his life with his mother, this period was of great importance in his life. She did a very important job of laying down the basic characteristics of his behaviour such as love for the creation of Allah, spirit of self-sacrifice, and above all, bravery. She taught him to have fear for none but Allah and to value nothing more than truth.

We shall see later on in this the result of this excellent training on the character of this noble Imam.

LIFE AS A CHILD WITH HIS FATHER

On her death-bed, Bibi Fatima (s.a.) had made a special request to Imam Ali (a.s.). Her wish was: he should take special care in the upbringing of his two young sons Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.). Imam Ali (a.s.) gave his promise and he fulfilled this promise.

Imam Ali (a.s.) was very caring. He did all that it takes to train his

two sons to be excellent in all fields of learning and arts such as horse-riding and self defence.

In manners, too, these young boys were excellent. They grew up to be the best men of their time. Even an enemy like Muawiya admits this to his son; he says: “.. More than anybody else, I know the type of training under which Husayn has been brought up... He has grown up in the home of a father like Ali. The administration of Abu Turab has been his school...”

CHAPTER 2 : IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.) : HIS YOUTH AND MANHOOD

YEARS OF SILENCE

During the rulership of Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman (from 11 AH to 34 AH) Imam Husayn (a.s.) did not have any public job. But like his father Imam Ali (a.s.) and his brother Imam Hasan (a.s.) he was busy teaching Islam to the community. His services to Islam were continuous.

An example is given here to explain how this service was provided. Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) saw an old man performing “WUDHU” for prayers. Unfortunately, he was doing this “WUDHU” incorrectly. The two young Imams went to him and said, “O Servant of Allah, can you do us one favour?”

“O sons of the Prophet, what is it that I can do for you?”

One of the Imams said, “There is a small misunderstanding between us the two brothers. Each one of us claims that his way of doing ‘Wudhu’ is correct. Can you be our judge? We’ll do ‘Wudhu’ in your presence and then you decide whose ‘Wudhu’ is correct and whose is wrong.”

The old man agreed.

The young Imams performed “Wudhu.”

The old man got the message. He said, “Oh the son of the Prophet, the way you do your “Wudhu” is the correct way. I was making mistakes. Thank you for correcting me in such a Polite way.”

Such was the way of Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) in their youth served the religion of Allah

YEARS OF ACTIVE WORK FOR ISLAM

In 34 AH, when Imam Ali (a.s.) was chosen to be the fourth

Caliph of the Muslims, both Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) got a chance to serve Muslims. Both the Imams were the right-hand of their father in carrying out the state duties.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) was one of the army Generals of Imam Ali's army at the Battles of "JAMAL", "SIFFIN" and "NEHERWAN." In the Battle of "SIFFIN", when the army of Muawiya had taken the waters of Euphrates and denied Imam Ali's army to have any water, Imam Ali (a.s.) sent Imam Husayn (a.s.) to remove these enemies of Islam from the Euphrates. Imam Husayn (a.s.) did so very easily.

After the Battle of "JAMAL" when the Imam Ali (a.s.) moved his capital from Medina to Kufa, Imam Husayn (a.s.) went with his father to Kufa.

When Imam Hasan (a.s.) became the Caliph of the Muslims after the Martyrdom of Imam Ali (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.) continued to serve Islam with his brother. One of his most important duties was to protect Imam Hasan (a.s.) from the sudden attacks of the hypocrites.

At the time of his death, Imam Hasan (a.s.) appointed Imam Husayn (a.s.) as his trustee. He wanted to bury Imam Hasan (a.s.) near the Prophet's grave as was the dying wish of the Imam. But Aisha, the Prophet's wife, who used the help of the Bani Umayyah, did not allow this. Imam Husayn (a.s.) buried his brother in the grave yard of Baqi.

At this point, one wrong thing which is said about Imam Husayn (a.s.) must be made clear. Sometimes, we hear that after the martyrdom of Imam Hasan (a.s.), some Muslims went to Imam Husayn (a.s.) and asked him to rise against Muawiya. Imam Husayn (a.s.) complained that he could not do so as his brother had made peace agreement with Muawiya. This is not true. Imam Husayn (a.s.) never complained or blamed his brother. In fact, If Imam

Husayn (a.s.) was in the place of Imam Hasan (a.s.) he would have done the same thing.

The truth is: Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) worked together to serve Islam and to save it from the evil programs of Muawiya.

In 50 AH, when Imam Hasan (a.s.) was killed by Muawiya's poison, Imam Husayn (a.s.) was left alone in his struggles against the plots of Muawiya against Islam.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) had a very difficult Job to do. He had to save Islam but do this so quietly as to avoid being killed before completing his mission. Whereas, Muawiya went ahead with his plans, killing those Muslims who opposed his evil plans and bringing into Islam impurities, the Imam went ahead preparing himself for that day when he would be called upon by Allah to rise for Islam.

HOW DID IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.) SAVE ISLAM FROM MUAWIYA BETWEEN 50 AH TO 60 AH?

As was explained in unit No.2, by making the treaty of peace with Imam Hasan (a.s.), Muawiya at first thought that he had tricked Imam Hasan (a.s.) to sign something that was useless. Because after the agreement had been signed, Muawiya said he was not going to follow it.

True to his words, he broke all the conditions of that agreement. For example, he continued abusing Imam Ali (a.s.) from "MIMBARS" and he continued killing the followers of Imam Ali (a.s.).

However, one condition in the agreement was very difficult to break. This condition was: On the death of Muawiya, the Caliph of the Muslims would be Imam Hasan (a.s.) if he was still alive. Otherwise, Imam Husayn (a.s.) would become the Caliph.

The wisdom of this condition was: it could not be broken by Muawiya as the question of its fulfilment would come when Muawiya would not be there!

As Muawiya's days in this world began to end, his worries began to increase. The person who came on his way was Imam Husayn (a.s.). Imam Hasan (a.s.)'s agreement bought time for Imam Husayn (a.s.) in which Imam Husayn (a.s.) won a complete respect in the Muslim world. The confusion that Muawiya had created and thus had put doubts in the minds of Muslims against Imam Ali (a.s.) and Imam Hasan (a.s.) had been quietly cleared by Imam Husayn (a.s.) from AH 50 to AH 60. With the exception of the Syrians, Muslims throughout the Empire had seen what kind of person Muawiya was. Everybody was waiting for his death so that the rightful Caliph could take over from him.

Muawiya thought that the key to his solution was to gain Imam Husayn's favour and support. He knew that any step, openly or secretly, to harm Imam Husayn (a.s.) would do no good to him. In fact, such a step could bring his own downfall. In his last days, therefore, Muawiya used favours and threats to get Imam Husayn (a.s.) on his side so as to prepare for Yazid to take-over. But he failed.

Knowing his own son, Muawiya died an unhappy man. He warned his son to be very careful in dealing with Imam Husayn (a.s.). In the way of advice to his Son Muawiya said "Son, treat him with honour. Be careful not to create conditions forcing him to rise against you and to resist you ... For if Husayn is forced to come to the battlefield, you will be the loser. Whatever be the outcome of the battle."

Despite the warning, deep in his heart Muawiya knew that his son would not take his advice seriously and that defeat was in store for him.

CHAPTER 3 :

IMAM HUSAYN'S DEPARTURE FROM MEDINA TO MECCA AND THEN TO KARBALA

IMAM HUSAYN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MUAWIYA 50 AH - 60 AH

After killing Imam Hasan (a.s.), Muawiya was looking for excuse to kill Imam Husayn (a.s.). Muawiya thought that it would be easy to drive Imam Husayn (a.s.) to rise against him. Then he would kill him, saying that Imam Husayn (a.s.) was breaking the agreement of his own brother Imam Hasan (a.s.)!

Instead of rising against him, Imam Husayn (a.s.) accepted all the injustices and oppression done against himself and his followers. However, he kept the message of Islam alive. Through this message, Muslims themselves began to judge Muawiya; and they found out that he was an enemy of Islam. By the time Muawiya realized what Imam was doing, it was too late.

Therefore, whereas in the beginning of 50 AH, Imam Husayn (a.s.) could not openly point out Muawiya's crimes, he could do so at the end of Muawiya's rule. For example, in the last years of Muawiya's ruler ship, Imam Husayn (a.s.) invited over 1000 well-known Muslims from all over the Muslim Empire to Mina. There he reminded them of their religious obligations and warned them of the dangers that was waiting for Muslims if they accept the Islam that was being taught by Muawiya.

Parts of the sermon of Imam Husayn (a.s.) is reproduced it reads:
"... You have seen with your own eyes that the laws of Allah are being broken and opposed but you are not worried. You are worried only when the laws of your grand grandparents are broken... The agreements made with the Holy Prophet have been broken and have been made useless and are insulted but you do not care about that.

“... You handed over Allah’s government to them (Muawiya and Bani Umayyah) ... They have turned Islamic land into their own personal properties ... They have no fear of the Almighty Allah.... They do whatever they like and the people are slaves... the tyrants and the proud suppress the weak people... Now it is Allah who can decide between us...”

The warning took time to sink into the heads of these people who were present on that day. But such a warning which the Imam continued giving to the Muslims wherever he got a chance had a great effect as days went by. As we shall see later on in this unit, these warnings proved to be very powerful weapons which helped defeat the evil plans of Bani Umayyah to kill Islam.

WHY DID IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.) LEAVE MEDINA?

On 22nd Rajab 60 AH Muawiya died. His son Yazid aged 34, became the Caliph of the Muslims. Muawiya’s headquarters were in Syria. The people of Syria had never had the opportunity of being taught the proper message of Islam. Since the day Muslims took over Syria from the Romans, it was under the rulership of Bani Umayyah. Their first Governor was Yazid, Muawiya’s elder brother. Their Second Governor was Muawiya. Syrians therefore accepted Yazid as their religious leader.

Muslims in Iraq, Hijaz (Mecca/Medina) and Yemen, thanks to the preaching of Imam Hasan (a.s.) and later Imam Husayn (a.s.), knew too well who the Bani Umayyah were. They knew all about Yazid.

Yazid committed all the sins that were named by Islam. For example, he drank wine and other forbidden drinks. The Arab-American historian Philip Hitti, in his book *History of Arabs* describes Yazid in the following words:

“Muawiya’s son Yazid was the first confirmed drunkard among the Caliphs and won the title *Yazid Al-Khumur*, Yazid of wines. One of his pranks was the training of a pet monkey, Abu Qays, to participate in his drinking bouts...”

Justice Ameer Ali has this to say of Yazid in his famous book *A Short History of the Saracens*:

“Yazid was both cruel and treacherous; his depraved nature knew no pity or justice. His pleasure was as degrading as his companions were low and vicious. He insulted the minister of religion by dressing up a monkey as a learned divine and carrying the animal mounted on a beautifully caparisoned Syrian donkey wherever he went. Drunken riotousness prevailed at court, and was naturally imitated in the streets of the capital...”

The Historian Masudi sums-up Yazid’s character in the following words:

“In the Muslim Ummah, Yazid was like the Pharaoh among his subjects... No, he was worse than the Pharaoh in matter of doing justice to his people...”

Muawiya had become officially the caliph because of the peace agreement signed with Imam Hasan (a.s.). The same agreement came on the way of Yazid. Yazid could not become the legal Caliph unless Imam Husayn (a.s.) gave away his right. Those who had thought earlier that Imam Hasan (a.s.) should not have such an agreement now realized how wise Imam Hasan (a.s.) was!

Yazid had no choice but to turn to Imam Husayn (a.s.). He did not follow the dying advice of his evil but intelligent father. This advice was: Do not use force to get Imam Husayn’s support; use diplomacy.

Yazid wrote to his Governor (who was also his cousin) Walid Bin Utba in Medina asking him to get “BAYAH” (oath of allegiance) from Imam Husayn (a.s.). However, if the Imam refused to do so, Walid should kill the Imam.

It was impossible for Imam Husayn (a.s.) to give his BAYAH to Yazid. (Why?)

Imam Husayn (a.s.) therefore decided to leave Medina for Mecca. He did so on 28th Rajab 60 AH together with his immediate family and some followers.

It was very hard for him to leave the city of his grandfather; his sadness is seen in the verses of the Quran that he read at the time of his departure from Medina “So he left the city afraid and careful, saying ‘Lord! Protect me from the unjust people.’” (Ch.28, v.21)

WHAT IS “BAYAH” (OATH OF ALLEGIANCE)

To understand more clearly Imam Husayn (a.s.)’s refusal to give his “Bayah” to Yazid we have to know what Bayah was and why was it such an important thing both to Yazid and to the Imam (a.s.).

In the old Arab culture a tribe or a community was controlled for its entire way of life by their leader. The position of the leader of the tribe therefore was very important. As soon as one leader died, another one had to be put in his place to stay there in his life time.

Whatever the methods used to choose the leader, once he was singled out every member of the tribe or community would give his word of honour that he would do what the leader wanted. Normally, this promise to serve the new leader faithfully and completely would be done in public. Each member would shake hands with the leader. This was called “BAYAH” (oath of Allegiance).

WHY DID IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.) REFUSE TO GIVE “BAYAH” TO YAZID?

If Yazid wanted to be only the King like any other King, the Imam would not have risen against him. Again, if Yazid had taken the Kingship from his father and left Imam Husayn (a.s.) alone, the Imam would not go for a fight. In fact, from the day the “BAYAH” was required from him until his martyrdom, Imam Husayn (a.s.) had been asking that he be left alone.

He did not demand that Yazid hand over the Kingship to him. Yazid could wear the Emperor's crown and sit with his monkey on the golden throne for as long as he wished. What the Imam did not want to do was to tell Muslims that Yazid was not only their King but also that what Yazid did was right. Also that what Allah wanted, Yazid was doing.

If Imam Husayn (a.s.) then gave his "BAYAH" to Yazid, all Muslims would do the same. What was unlawful in Islam would become lawful. In a short time, Islam would be dead.

It is for this reason that Imam Husayn (a.s.) refused to give "Bayah" to Yazid. So that people at that time and in the future should know exactly why he accepted death rather than give his "Bayah" to Yazid. Imam Husayn (a.s.) made his reasons clear on several occasions.

In his will that he left with his half-brother, Muhammad Hanafia back in Medina, the Imam explains his reasons for rising against Yazid in the following words:

"I do not leave (Medina) to do mischief or corruption or injustice, but only to improve the Affairs of the community ("Ummah") of my grandfather. I wish to do 'Amr-Bil-Maroo'f' (Enjoin good) and 'Nahi-Anil-Moonkar' (Forbid Evil) and follow the traditions (Sunnah) of my grandfather, The Prophet of Allah, and my father, Ali. If the people listen to my call and accept the truth from me, well and good. And if they do not accept it, I shall observe patience and I am not afraid of the bad things that may happen to me and I am not afraid of hardships and sufferings..."

IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.) IN MECCA 3RD SHABAN TO 8TH ZILHAJJ 60 AH

The Imam arrived in Mecca on 3rd Shaban 60 AH, reading the following verses of the Quran:

"When he (Musa) took his journey to Madian, he said, 'Perhaps my Lord (Allah) will show me the right path'" (Ch.28, v.22)

As was explained earlier, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn's preaching had opened people's eyes. They knew that Muawiya and his friends were out to kill Islam. Therefore, Muslims from Kufa, Basra, and Yemen invited Imam Husayn (a.s.) to go to Kufa and lead them to the true path.

While in Mecca, Imam received not less than 250 letters. The letters which had a real effect on the Imam were those in which the writers complained that they needed religious guidance from the Imam. The Imam therefore could not ignore them. He sent his cousin Muslim Bin Aqil to Kufa. Muslim was supposed to study the position in Kufa. He would then inform the Imam if he should go to Kufa or not.

In the mean time, Yazid came to know of the Imam's movements. He sent 40 of his soldiers all dressed as Pilgrims ("Haji") to Mecca under the leadership of Amr Bin Saeed Bin Aas. Their job was to kill Imam Husayn (a.s.) wherever they found him.

If the Imam was killed in Mecca, Islam would suffer into two different ways. Firstly, the Holiness of Kaaba (the House of Allah) would be destroyed with the blood of the Imam. Secondly, the mission of Islam would be in great danger. With Imam Husayn (a.s.) out of the way, Yazid would go ahead with his plans to destroy Islam. It became important for the Imam therefore to leave Mecca immediately without even waiting for the "GREATER HAJJ."

His well-wishers told him not to go to Iraq as the people of Iraq were unreliable and could not be trusted. But the Imam had made up his mind to go even though he knew of the dangers that lay on his way. This is because he knew that the only way to save Islam was for him to face Yazid's army.

He explained his position in his sermon that he made one day before his departure to Kufa: "I can see as if the desert wolves of Iraq are attacking me in between Nawawis and Karbala and tearing me

into pieces. It is for them to make themselves rich and to over feed, and it is for me to fight against this social and moral corruption. It is the plan of Allah that my Martyrdom would be the solution and a way to improve the present bad situation... We the family of The Prophet are happy with what Allah is pleased with, and like whatever He likes... I am a part of the body of the Prophet of Allah (s.a.w.w.) and a part of his body cannot be separated from him. I shall join him in paradise so that he may be pleased to see that I completed the promise which I had made to him. Only those who are ready to give their lives for my sake and to meet Allah, should come with me. Allah willing, I intend to leave tomorrow morning.”

IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.)’S JOURNEY TO KUFU, IRAQ

Imam left for Iraq with members of his immediate family and a few companions who had decided to join him when he was in Mecca. A few others joined him while he was on his way to Kufa.

When the Imam reached the station called Zurud, he received the sad news about the martyrdom of his cousin and messenger to Kufa, Muslim Bin Aqil.

Soon at Uzeybul Hajanat, He was to receive another bad news. His messenger to Kufa, Qays Bin Mushir Saidawi was also caught by the Umayyad soldiers and put to death.

But the Imam did not change his route he still went ahead with his plan to go to Kufa. He was told that the way to Kufa had been closed by the army of Yazid under the command of Hasin Bin Namir who was stationed at Qadsiya.

Soon after leaving Zubalah, Imam came face to face with the soldiers of Yazid under the command of the Hurr Bin Yazid Riyahi. It was noon time and the Arabian sun was at its highest point. Hurr and his 1000 soldiers had not even a drop of water to drink. All of them were about to die because of thirst. The Imam offered them

all and their horses as much water as they would care to drink, although he knew too well that Hurr and his soldiers were from Yazid and had come to arrest him.

Hurr had with him instructions from the Governor in Kufa, Ubaydullah Bin Ziyad. He was to stop Imam Husayn (a.s.) from going forward to Kufa or back to Medina or going anywhere else. It was agreed that the Imam would have to put his camp at a place neither in the direction of Kufa nor Medina. On 2nd Muharram 61 AH, Imam Husayn (a.s.) landed on the shores of the Euphrates at Karbala.

On 4th day of Muharram, Umar Bin Saad came to Karbala with an army of 4000 soldiers. The Imam's tents were forcefully removed from the shores of Euphrates and were pitched far away from any source of water.

Umar bin Saad was the Commander in charge of Yazids army. Records differ as to the number of soldiers who came to Karbala to fight against Imam Husayn (a.s.). The highest figure quoted is over 100,000 the lowest 25,000. The most notable Yazidi commanders and the size of their Battalions are as follows:

HUR BIN YAZID RIYAH	1,000	soldiers
UMAR BIN SAAD	4,000	“
SHIMR BIN ZILJAUSHAN	4,000	“
HASIN BIN NAMIR	2,000	“
MUGHAYER BIN RAHNIYAH	3,000	“
NASR BIN HARSHAH	2,000	“
KAAB BIN TALHA	3,000	“
SHABATH BIN RABI	3,000	“
HAJAR BIN ABJAR	1,000	“

Imam Husayn (a.s.)'s "ARMY" was made up of between 150 to 72 soldiers that included his infant son Ali (aged six months)

and Muslim Bin Awsaja who was probably over 70 years old. It is interesting to note that several followers of the Imam at Karbala were sons of Africans. For example, John was a freed slave of Abu Dharr and came from Africa. Other African martyrs were Salim Bin Zahir, Qurib Bin Abdallah, Munjeh Bin Salam, Saad bin Haris, Nasser Bin Abi Nazir and Har Bin Nabhan.

The Imam had with him ladies and children from the House of the Prophet. The most noted ladies were Zainab and Umm Kulthum (the grand daughters of the Prophet), Rubab and Sukayna (the Imam's wife and daughter respectively). Fiddha, a Nubian lady was also present.

Imam and his companion were totally surrounded by the army of Yazid. Every Evening Imam Husayn (a.s.) would meet Umar bin Saad to find a way to stop fighting.

On the 9th day of Muharram, Shimr bin Ziljaushan, one of the most senior Army-General from Kufa, landed in Karbala. He came with very bad news. He told Umar Bin Saad not to talk for peace with the Imam. His instructions were that Umar must immediately declare war on the Imam and his friends kill them and send their heads to Ibne Ziyad in Kufa.

Imam Husayn (a.s.) requested that he be given the last night to spend in prayers. The Battle could begin in the morning. This permission was given.

CHAPTER 4 : THE NIGHT AND DAY OF “ASHURA”

THE NIGHT OF ASHURA

All hopes, if there were any, for avoiding a bloody battle ended here on the night of “ASHURA.”

Imam Husayn (a.s.) called all his companions and relatives in his camp. He told them that their journey that had started in Medina on 28th Rajab was now coming to a sad end. The Imam told his companions and relatives that this was his last night as on the next day he would be martyred. He gave his companions and relatives the choice of leaving Karbala and go to a safer place. Their lives would be saved.

His companions and relatives told the Imam that they would never leave him alone. They were all very eager to be killed fighting the enemies of Islam. To give you an idea of how pious and pure these people were, we reproduce here the reply of one of the companion called Muslim Bin Awsaja who said:

“If we stop supporting you and leave you alone, what reason will we give to Allah? I swear by Allah that I shall never go away from you. I shall put a spear in the chest of your enemies and shall remove the thirst of my sword with their blood as long as possible. When I am left with no weapon to fight with I shall use stones. But by Allah we shall not leave you, so that Allah should see that when your grandfather was not here, we did our duties to his grandson.

“By Allah even if I am killed and then my body is burnt and the ashes thrown in the air and this happens to me seventy times, I shall not leave you alone. Therefore, when I know that I am going to be killed only once, why should I not be ready to get honour and happiness and be raised in respect for ever.”

Still to give chance to those who wanted to leave but were shy to do

when watched by others, the Imam put off all the lights. After some time the lights were put back on, those who had said they did not want to leave were still there.

Although everybody was sad that soon the beloved of Allah would be killed, there was also the eagerness to offer the last prayers to Allah. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) compares the tents of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his companions in the Night of Ashura to the hives of the bees: The reading of the Quran and prayers in these tents sounded like the humming of honeybees in their hives.

THE DAY OF ASHURA

Imam Husayn (a.s.) asked his 18 year old son, Ali, to recite “ADHAN” to let the world get up for their morning prayers. Imam led the morning prayers. After the prayers both sides started preparing for the battle.

Hur, Yazid’s Commander, who had forced Imam to camp in Karbala decided to join the forces of Imam. He asked for forgiveness and the Imam forgave him.

The Imam organized the army in such a way that Zuhair Bin Qain was commander of the right wing and Habib Bin Mazahir was Commander of the left wing. Abbas, his half brother, was overall in charge of the army and also the standard bearer.

To protect the tents they were all brought together and tied to each other. They were then surrounded by a trench which was filled with fire except at the entrance.

Umar Saad too, assembled his troops and called his army to be his witness that it was he who first started the battle against Imam Husayn’s army. The army of Yazid advanced forward wanting to crush the whole army at once. But the Imam’s companion fought so bravely that the enemies had to go back. Unfortunately, in this first attack fifty companions of the Imam were killed.

As there were few soldiers left on the side of the Imam, each went out one at a time to fight and earn martyrdom.

At the time of midday prayers (Zohr) Abu Thamama Saidawi asked Imam Husayn (a.s.) to lead the congregational prayers (“Jamaat” Namaz) so that those on the Imam’s side could pray their last congregational (jamaat) prayers, but the forces of Yazid refused to let the Imam pray. As a result the Imam had to pray the prayers of fear (“Khauf”). Zuhair Bin Qain and Saeed Bin Abdulla Hanafi had to stand in front of the Imam, shielding him against the arrows coming from Yazid’s forces.

By the time the Imam had completed prayers, Saeed fell down and died a martyr’s death. Zuhair was also wounded but he lived to fight and die a martyr fighting on the battle field.

When all the companions of the Imam had been martyred, then came the turn of the relatives of the Imam - The Bani Hashim.

Some historians say that Imam’s second eldest son Ali, popularly known as Ali Akbar, aged 18 years was the first to be martyred; others say he was the last.

Including Imam Husayn (a.s.) there were eighteen people from the family of Hashim whose names are under: all of them were killed on “The Day of Ashura” trying to save Islam.

CHILDREN OF IMAM ALI (A.S.)

1. Imam Husayn (a.s.)
2. Abbas
3. Uthman
4. Jafar
5. Abdullah
6. Ibrahim

CHILDREN OF IMAM HASAN (A.S.)

1. Ahmad (or Abu Bakr)
2. Abdullah
3. Qasim

CHILDREN OF IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.)

1. Ali (Akber)
2. Ali (Asgher) or (Abdullah Ar-Radi)

CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OF AQIL (IMAM ALI'S ELDER BROTHER)

1. Muslim Bin Aqil (killed in Kufa)
2. Jafar Bin Aqil
3. Abdul Rehman Bin Aqil
4. Muhammad Bin Muslim Bin Aqil
5. Abdullah Bin Muslim Bin Aqil
6. Jafar Bin Muhammad Bin Aqil
7. Muhammad Bin Abi Said Bin Aqil

GRANDCHILDREN OF JAFAR-AT-TAYYAR (IMAM ALI'S ELDER BROTHER)

1. Awn Bin Abdullah
2. Muhammad Bin Abdullah

IMAM HUSAYN'S MARTYRDOM

Some time before the time of "ASR" prayers, the Imam was left alone. All his companions and relatives who could go to the battle-field to fight against Yazid's forces had been martyred.

He came back to the tents to see his son Ali Zainul Abideen and the ladies of the house of the Prophet for the last time. Ali Zainul Abideen, was sick and could not take part in the Battle, therefore he was not martyred. He gave company to the ladies and children from the Prophet's house when they were taken as prisoners to Kufa and then to Damascus.

Having said goodbye to the weeping women and children, the Imam took his six month infant child Ali Asgher in front of the army of Yazid to ask for some water for the child who was dying with thirst. An army general by the name of Hurmala shot a three-headed steel arrow at the child. The child was thus killed in his father's hands.

What was now left for the Imam but to give his life in the way of Allah?

The Imam's martyrdom is described in simple but heart-tearing words by Said Husayn M. Jafri who says:

“At last the son of Ali rose and threw himself on the Umayyads. Attacked from every side, he finally fell face down on the ground just in front of his tent, while the women and children watched the dreadful scene. A boy of tender age, Abdallah the youngest son of Hasan bin Ali, in a fit of horror and terror, could not be controlled by the women. Abdallah rushed from the tent and stretched his hands around his uncle to protect him. A sword fell upon him and cut off the hands of young boy. Finally, as Sinan bin Anas bin Amr raised his sword again to make the final blow on Husayn, Imam (a.s.)'s sister Zainab came out of the tent and cried, addressing Ibn Saad: ‘O Umar bin Saad, will Abu Abdallah (Husayn's kunya) be killed while you are standing by and watching?’

“Nothing could help. Sinan cut off the head of the grandson of the Prophet in front of the tent where the women and children were watching and crying.”

If only the evil soldiers of Yazid had stopped their cruelties after the martyrdom of the Imam. They did not. Jafri describes the crimes committed by Yazid's soldiers in the following words:

“The soldiers turned to pillage and looting. They seized Husayn's clothes, his sword, and whatever was on his body. They looted the tents and seized from the women their ornaments their baggage, and even the mantles from their heads.”

“Husayn (a.s.)'s body, already torn by numerous wounds, was

trampled by horses of ten mounted soldiers who volunteered to inflict this final indignity on the grandson of the Apostle of God. On the morning of 11th Muharram bodies of the Umayyad troops that had fallen in the battle were collected together and after the prescribed prayer for the dead led by Ibne Saad, they were buried. But the headless bodies of Husayn (a.s.) and of those killed with him were even left uncovered. On 12th Muharram, however, when the Umayyad forces left Karbala, the people of the tribe of Bani Asad from the nearby village of Ghadiriya came down and buried the bodies of Husayn and his companions on the spot where the Massacre had taken place.

“Seventy-two heads were raised on the points of lances, each of them held by one soldier, followed by the women of the Prophet’s family on camels.”

Imam Zainul Abideen and the women from the House of the Prophet remained in the prison of Kufa and then Damascus for over a year. They were taken out in the streets and also brought in the courts of Ibne Ziyad and Yazid. There were two reasons for doing this.

Firstly, Yazid and other Umayyads were enemies of the Prophet for bringing Islam and ending Umayyad’s rulership in Mecca. By insulting the Prophet’s family, Yazid was taking revenge on the Prophet.

Secondly, Yazid was showing how powerful he was and letting others know that if they opposed him, they would have the same punishment which was being given to Imam Husayn’s family.

But things worked differently. By being insulted publicly, the Family of the Prophet proved to people how evil Yazid was. Muslims in Syria were always made to believe by Umayyads that Imam Ali and his family were enemies of Islam. Imam Zainul Abideen and the ladies from the House of the Prophet proved to Syrians that Muawiya was a liar and enemy of Islam.

It is for this reason that Imam Husayn (a.s.) had brought the ladies and children with him. Imam's friends like Ibne Abbas and his relatives like Muhammad Hanafia had not understood why the Imam had wanted to bring ladies and children on this journey. The reason became clear later on.

Through Imam Zainul Abideen, Bibi Zainab, (Imam Husayn's sister) and Bibi Sakina (Imam Husayn's 4 years old daughter) Muslims were made to see how wicked the Umayyads were. People began to show love towards the prisoners, and cursed Yazid. It became necessary for Yazid to free the prisoners or else his rulership was in danger.

Yazid therefore set free Imam Zainul Abideen and the ladies of the family of the Prophet and made special arrangement for them to be sent back to Medina with honour and dignity. Noaman Bin Bashir, who was once Governor of Kufa and a trusted friend of Umayyads, was appointed to travel with Imam Husayn's family to Medina.

It is important to note that Yazid did not free Imam Husayn's family from prison out of kindness. It is not true also to think that Yazid was sorry for what he did to the Family of the Prophet. Even those historians such as Ibn Kathir who always have good things to say about the Umayyads say that Yazid was never sorry for his acts. Ibn Kathir says that if Yazid was truly sorry and was not responsible for what happened to the Family of the Prophet, he would have punished Umar Bin Saad and Ibne Ziyad. He would at least have written a letter criticizing them. He never did that.

CHAPTER 5 : HIS MARTYRDOM AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS

THE IMMEDIATE RESULT OF IMAM HUSAYN'S (A.S.) MARTYRDOM

Muawiya was a wicked person but was also very cunning. He was an enemy of Islam and was planning to destroy Islam. He did this very cleverly. In private, he broke all the laws of Islam but in public he behaved like a Muslim. Yazid was as bad as his father but not as clever. He openly broke the laws of Islam. For example, he drank wine and other intoxicants in public. He openly made fun of Islam in his notorious poems. Addressing a woman friend, he said, "O my beloved, do not think of meeting me after death because what they have told you that we will be raised after death for judgement is a story only made to forget the pleasures of this world."

Muawiya got many pious Muslims killed, such as Hujr Bin Adi. He did this so quietly that he managed to escape the blame. Yazid, on the other hand, killed Imam Husayn (a.s.) openly with no shame. He imprisoned the family of the Prophet and openly declared his enmity to the Prophet in his court saying, "Bani Hashim made a play to get kingdom. To tell you the truth, there was neither any message nor book from Allah."

Seeing Imam Zainul Abideen and the ladies in chains, he boasted saying: "Alas, my forefathers were martyred at Badr! If they were alive they would see how I have taken their revenge. If they were alive they would thank me happily saying: O Yazid, may your hands never pain or get tired."

He added "May I not be the son of my forefathers if I do not take revenge on the children of Muhammad (the Prophet)."

It became clear therefore that Yazid was a very bad person and he killed Imam Husayn (a.s.) for no other reason than that the

Imam was a man of God. The immediate effect of Imam Husayn's martyrdom was: The whole Muslim World started blaming and cursing Yazid.

Yazid realized that he had made a big mistake to imprison Imam Zainul Abideen and Imam Husayn's family and bring them to Damascus. By doing this, he gave them a chance to explain to the world the innocence of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and the guilt of Yazid and the Umayyads. He set them free and let them return to Medina. But it was too late.

Muslims throughout the Empire began to rise against Yazid. The people of Medina removed Yazid's Governor Marwan Bin Hakam and drove him and other Umayyads away from Medina. The same thing happened in Mecca, where Abdullah Bin Zubair took advantage of people's anger against Yazid and made himself the ruler of Mecca. People in Basra also removed Yazid's Governor and put in his place a man of their own liking.

Fearing that his entire empire would get out of his hand, Yazid sent a strong army of 30,000 soldiers under Muslim Bin Aqaba to Medina. The People of Medina bravely fought against Muslim Bin Aqaba at the Battle of Harra in 62 AH. Unfortunately, they lost the battle. Several thousand companions of the Prophet were killed. Medina was attacked mercilessly. The killing of innocent men, women and children continued for three days. Horses were tied to the mimbar of the Prophet for several days.

Yaqubi describes Yazid's crimes in the following words: "Great numbers of people were killed... virgins gave birth to babies whose fathers were unknown. The people were forced to offer themselves as slaves of Yazid."

Hasin Bin Namir, who had taken over as Muslim Bin Aqaba was dead, then attacked Mecca. The people of Mecca closed the doors

of the city because it was surrounded on all sides. Burning arrows were shot in the city by Yazid's soldiers. As a result of these arrows the curtains of the 'KAABA' caught fire and the Kaaba itself was damaged. Before any further damage could be done Yazid died. He died in 64 AH. The army of Yazid, under the commandship of Hasin Bin Namir, returned to Damascus.

YAZID'S DEATH AND ITS EFFECTS

By killing Imam Husayn (a.s.) and by insulting the family of the Prophet, Yazid became so unpopular, that no one wanted to know anything about him. He did not live long after the Tragedy of Karbala. In 64 AH, he died at the age of 38. No reliable details are available about the cause or nature of his death or the place of his burial. Such is the fate of the enemies of Allah.

The death of Yazid encouraged Muslims again to rise against the Umayyads. The Muslims of Kufa rose to end Umayyad's rulership.

Sulaiman Surd was a pious companion of the Prophet. He was amongst those who had invited Imam Husayn (a.s.) to come to Kufa to guide Muslims to the right path. Unfortunately, he could not come to the help of the Imam at Karbala. He therefore felt very sorry and was not willing to do anything less than fight against Umayyads and, if necessary, give his life in this struggle. Others who had the same idea as Sulaiman's, joined him to form a small group of soldiers called the "TAWWABUN."

The "TAWWABUN" fought against the Umayyads at a place called "AUN AL WARDA" and most of them gave their lives fighting against the killers of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

Whereas the Tawwabun's main idea was to kill the murderers of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and give their own lives, there were other Muslims who had a different idea. Mukhtar Bin Abu Ubayda Ath

Thaqafi was one such person. He supported Sulaiman Bin Surd's idea of punishing the killers of Imam Husayn (a.s.) but did not agree with Sulayman's method of fighting to be killed. Mukhtar's advice to "TAWWABUN" was: let us first make ourselves strong and then go after the killers.

Mukhtar therefore did not rise until in 66 AH. He took Kufa and remained the Ruler in Kufa from 66 AH to 67 AH (or 68 AH). During his short rulership, he took complete revenge of Imam Husayn (a.s.). He went after every person who took part openly or secretly in the killing of Imam Husayn (a.s.), his family and companions. Although Umar Saad was a close relative of Mukhtar, he could not escape his punishment. He was killed by orders of Mukhtar. Others to be killed by the orders of Mukhtar were Ibne Ziyad and Shimr Ibne Ziljaushan.

Mukhtar could not rule longer because after the death of Yazid, Ibn Zubair sent a strong army to take away Kufa from Mukhtar. A Battle was fought. Mukhtar fought very bravely but was finally killed by Mosab Bin Zubair.

Mukhtar is today buried in a corner of the Masjid of Kufa not very far from where Muslim Ibne Aqeel is buried. May Allah overlook his shortcomings and grant him a place in Paradise for his efforts to punish the killers of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

THE EFFECTS OF IMAM HUSAYN'S (A.S.) MARTYRDOM IN THE LONG TERM

Besides proving to Muslims that Yazid was not fit to lead the Muslims, the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) had other effects also.

Muslims began to think very seriously about the Umayyads and their attitude towards Islam. Muslims began to ask: Are the Umayyads real Muslims or are they the same Polytheists of Mecca who had promised to destroy Islam?

Although Bani Umayyads continued to rule for another seventy years, their position as rulers became clear: They were Kings but not spiritual leaders. Their ways could not be considered as the way of life to be followed by an average God-fearing Muslim.

Imam Husayn's greatest achievement was: He laid down one very important principle: A true Muslim follows the "SUNNAH" (way of life) of the Prophet not of rulers of the time. The rulers could no longer change the "SUNNAH" of the Prophet. Islam was thus saved forever.

CHAPTER 6 : HIS CHARACTER

The scholars of education say that the character of a child depends mainly on two things; Firstly, on the character of the child's parents and secondly on the surroundings in which the child grows up. The same scholars also say that the main parts of a child's character or personality are formed in the first few years of the child's life. Whatever the child has learnt in the earlier years of his life will influence his behaviour for the rest of his life.

These principles are important when we look at the character of Imam Husayn (a.s.). His upbringing was done by the Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.w.), Bibi Fatima (s.a.), and Imam Ali (a.s.) who are the best persons in the world. Imam Husayn (a.s.) therefore developed an excellent character. To see the excellence of his character we should consider the following points about his behaviour.

1. HE WAS VERY PIOUS

His love for Allah was very strong. He liked to spend his time in prayers so that he would pray 1000 rakaats of "SALAT" every night. He never missed praying the late night prayers ("NAMAZ E SHAB"). His love for prayers was such that as his last wish in this world, he requested on 9th day of Muharram, that he be given one last night which he could spend in prayers.

The "DUAS" (supplication) that he recited on the Day of Ashura show the great love and trust that he had in Allah. If somebody else was to go through the troubles that he did, that person would fall down crying and complaining. Not the Imam. Far from complaining, the Imam was quite and cool, thanking Allah for whatever was happening. On the afternoon of Ashura when he was left alone, he turned to Allah and said, "Oh my Lord, I have given away everything out of your love and I have left my family and

accepted my children to become orphans so as to meet you. If out of your love my body is torn into pieces, still my heart will bow towards none but you.”

Consider also the following dua which the Imam read on the Day of Ashura:

“O Allah, You are my only trust in every bad times. You are the only hope in every hard time. You are the only hope in the hearts which have become weak and cannot act at times of difficulties and problems. You are the only one to whom a person can turn when his enemies are pleased and enjoy to see him go through bad times. O Allah, I submit myself to You; my complaints are to You alone against my enemies and to You alike do I ask what I need. No one else can remove my sadness. Only you have every blessing and goodness and can meet everyone’s desires.”

It is not surprising to note that he was killed when he was bowing down in “SAJDA” in remembrance of Allah.

Prayers alone were not the only acts of worship that he liked very much. He also had great love for the performance of Hajj. It is said that he and his brother Hasan (a.s.) performed not less than 25 Hajj walking from Medina to Mecca. Not that he did not have a way of transport. As a matter of fact, he would use his transport to help poor pilgrims who did not have their own transport. When people asked him why he took the trouble of walking to Hajj when he had a means of transport, he would reply that he wanted to look humble in the presence of Allah. Some people out of respect would join them on their way to Mecca on foot. These people however would suffer by so doing. Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) would therefore take the way through mountains so that others would not have to be uncomfortable because of the Imams.

2. HIS CHARITY TO THE NEEDY

To Imam Husayn (a.s.) worship of Allah did not mean only praying,

fasting and going for Hajj. It also meant spending his hard earned income on the needy. Anyone who needed help would only have to go to his house and ask for it. To encourage his followers to give charity, the Imam would often say “Any time a needy person comes asking for help, remember that he has sold his honour to you. It is important for you therefore to give something to him. Whatever you give to him should have the value of his honour and yours as well.”

A beggar once came asking for help. The Imam gave him whatever he had on that day. The beggar began to cry like a child. The Imam asked him as to why he was crying. Was it because what he got was not enough? The beggar replied, “My Master, You are so generous and gave me far more than what I need. I cry thinking that one day such a generous person like you would die and be buried in clay.”

The Imam did not limit his generosity to only those who came to his house. In the darkness of night, the Imam would carry a load of bread and other food materials to the places of the needy and give it to them all. He would cover his face so that people should not see who he was and feel shy for their poverty.

He spent so much after the needy that he came to be known as “THE FATHER OF THE BEGGARS.”

One day a group of beggars, who were eating dried bread, invited him to join them. He got down from his horse and joined them reading the verse of the Quran “Allah does not love the proud.” He told them he could not eat their food as ‘SADAKA’ was ‘HARAM’ for the family of the Prophet. They too must accept his invitation. He then took them all to his house, fed them with the best food and gave them clothes too.

Imam Husayn’s generosity was for the poor and for those not poor but who still needed help. He went to see Usama Bin Zayd who

was very sick. Usama was very sad and was saying “O GRIEF, O GRIEF.” The Imam asked why Usama was so sad. Usama said he had a debt of sixty thousand dirhams. Imam arranged to clear this debt immediately.

The Imam saw a slave sharing his meals with a dog. He asked for the reason. The slave said that he was very poor and his master treated him very badly. He was nice to his dog so that Allah should be pleased with him and get him freed. Imam immediately bought the slave from his master and set him free.

Anas Bin Malik reports that he saw a slave girl give as gift to Imam a bunch of flowers. The Imam set her free. Anas was surprised. He asked the Imam as to why he set her free for such a small gift. The Imam replied: “When someone gives you a gift, you should return a better gift as Allah says in the Quran and what gift could be better than her freedom?”

A person who gives away in charity when he has a lot of those things cannot be compared with another person who gives away in charity what he needs it most, especially when the one whom he is giving this most needed charity is his enemy. The greatness of Imam Husayn’s (a.s.) generosity is of this kind. The Imam meets the army of Yazid at that place in the desert where no water is available. The army of Yazid is made of soldiers who have come to fight with the Imam. Water is a very rare and valuable thing in such deserts. Imam Husayn has with him women and children. Common sense says that the Imam needed every single drop of water for himself. Still the Imam (a.s.) decided to give water to 1000 soldiers and their horses – free of charge. Indeed, it is difficult to see in history the example of such a generous person other than Imam Husayn (a.s.).

3. HIS BRAVERY AND COURAGE

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) is reported to have said that, “Husayn has inherited from me my generosity and my bravery.” As

for his generosity, we have already given you some examples. Let us now examine his bravery.

The Imam did not get a chance to show his skills as a soldier till when he was 31 years old. Then he went with his father in the Battles of Jamal, Siffin, and Neherwan and surprised the most skilful and experienced soldiers by his abilities. For example, at Siffin when Muawiya cut off the waters of the River Euphrates from Imam Ali (a.s.) and his army, it became necessary for Imam Ali (a.s.) to drive away Muawiya's army from the river. The river was very well guarded with a strong force. A very skilful and experienced Army General was needed for this job. Imam Ali (a.s.) appointed Imam Husayn (a.s.) to do this job and Imam Husayn (a.s.) did the job very well.

Imam showed similar bravery on the Day of Ashura when he had to fight the soldiers of Yazid.

Yazid's reporter, Hamid Bin Muslim describes Imam Husayn's bravery on the Day of Ashura in the following words:

“By Allah, I have never seen such strength and courage in a man whose sons, relatives and followers have all been killed. When the soldiers attack him, he fights back with his sword and makes them run away from him to the left and to the right like goats run away from the attack of a wolf.”

A man's bravery does not only mean his skills as a soldier to face ones enemies however many they may be. An act of bravery also lies in a person's ability to face difficulties in life without fear. This kind of bravery too was there in Imam Husayn (a.s.).

So far as Imam Ali (a.s.) and then Imam Hasan (a.s.) were alive, Imam Husayn (a.s.) let them deal with Muawiya and the Umayyads. After the martyrdom of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.) now had to deal with the enemies

of Islam alone. Having taken away Caliphate from Imam Hasan (a.s.) Muawiya became very powerful. He thought that he could now go ahead with his evil plans as everybody was now afraid of him. He soon found out that he was wrong. Imam Husayn (a.s.) continued to oppose him, not fearing for his life.

For example when Muawiya wanted to get the “BAYAH” for his son Yazid in his life-time, Imam Husayn (a.s.) opposed this without any fear.

4. TRUTHFUL

He was so truthful that even his greatest enemy, Muawiya, admitted this to his followers. This is how it happened. Imam Husayn (a.s.) wrote a strong-worded letter to Muawiya. In this letter the Imam described the bad things that Muawiya was doing. When Muawiya read the letter he was very angry. His advisers told him to write a similar letter in reply to the Imam. Muawiya said, “If I write a strong worded letter it shall have no effect because it will be full of lies only. If I want to be truthful, then I can find no fault in his letter.” (Meaning that everything the Imam said was true.)

On the Day of Ashura, Imam (a.s.) gave a long talk to the Army of Yazid in which he gave a brief report about himself, his family, and the reason for which he came to Karbala. He asked the soldiers of Yazid to correct him if there was any kind of falsity in his claims. No one came forward to say that the Imam was not saying the truth. Such was a truthful character of this Imam. The only reason that the enemies of Islam were giving for wanting to kill him was that he was refusing to surrender himself to Yazid.

In short, Imam Husayn (a.s.) was the very picture of Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) and Imam Ali (a.s.). The world today remembers him with respect and honour. Even Non-Muslims have nothing but good words to say about this noble person.

The English Christian historian Gibbon pays his respect to the Imam in the following words: “In a distant age and climate, the tragic sense of death of Husayn will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader.”

The character of Imam was so pure and his intention to be sacrificed in the way of Islam was so much part of this pure character that even those who have no connection with Islam cannot help but note this greatness of Imam. For says Charles Dickens the great 19th Century English Novelist, “If Husayn fought to quench his worldly desires (as alleged by certain Christian critics) then I do not understand why his sisters, wives, and children accompanied him. It stands to reason therefore that he sacrificed purely for Islam.”

His faultless character and his noble actions have made Imam Husayn (a.s.) a hero not only to Muslims but to Mankind in general.

CHAPTER 7 : HIS FAMILY LIFE

HIS WIVES

The total number of wives the Imam had during his life time was five.

It must be remembered that he did not have more than four wives at one time. Brief account is given about each wife of the Imam.

SHAHR BANU

She was the granddaughter of the last Emperor of Iran, Yazdjurd. She was brought to Medina as a prisoner of war during the time when Imam Ali (a.s.) was the Caliph of the Muslims. Her sister Gayhan Banu also came with her.

Imam Ali (a.s.) married Shahr Banu to Imam Husayn (a.s.). Out of this marriage was born the fourth Imam, Hazrat Ali Zainul Abideen (a.s.) in 38 AH. Ten days after giving birth to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), Shahr Banu died.

Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), who was the first born of Imam Husayn (a.s.), was brought up by a maid.

Shahr Banu was not present in Karbala.

LAILA

She was the daughter of Abu Mura Bin Urwa Bin Masud. Her mother was Abu Sufyan's daughter, Maymuna. She therefore was Yazid's cousin.

From this marriage was born only one son, Ali Akbar. Some people think that she was present in Karbala. But History books of the olden times do not mention her at all in any events at Karbala. Moreover, it is mentioned in history that Ali Akbar was brought up

by his Aunt Zainab. Some scholars say therefore that Laila too was not present in Karbala.

RUBAB

She was the daughter of the famous Chief and Poet of the tribe of Kida, called Imraul Qays. He was Christian but later changed into a pious Muslim. With her, Imam had two children. A girl Amina (known as Sakina) and a boy called Abdullah Razi (known as Ali Asgher).

She was definitely present in Karbala. She went through all the difficulties that befell the Family of Prophet in Karbala, in Kufa, and in Damascus.

In Karbala, she assisted Imam Husayn (a.s.) to bury his six month infant Ali Asgher after his martyrdom and Damascus she saw her daughter Sakina die and be buried in the grave dug in the prison.

By some accounts she never returned to Medina. On being set free from prison she went to Karbala and spent the rest of her life at the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

But according to some more reliable historical accounts, she returned to Medina. But in remembrance of the sufferings of Imam Husayn (a.s.) she refused to sit in shelter. She died in Medina after staying there for about one year.

UMM ISHAQ

She was first married to Imam Hasan (a.s.). On the martyrdom of Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husayn (a.s.), married her as this was the wish of Imam Hasan (a.s.) in his death-bed.

From this marriage was born a daughter called Fatima Kubra.

Probably, Umm Ishaq too was not present in Karbala.

QUDAIYA

She was from the Tribe of Qudaah. She gave birth to a son called Jafar who died when still young.

CHILDREN

All historians agree that the Imam (a.s.) had six children

1. ALI ZAINUL ABIDEEN - He is the fourth Imam
2. ALI AKBAR -
He looked like Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) in every way. By some famous historical accounts he was the first person among the relatives of Imam Husayn (a.s.) to give his life in the way of Allah on the Day of Ashura.
3. ALI ASGHER -
On the Day of Ashura, he was only six months old. The Imam had taken him to the battle-field in the hope that the enemies would take pity on his age and give him some water to drink. Instead, Hurmala Bin Kahil Asadi shot him and killed him with a three pronged arrow. On his death the Imam complained to Allah saying, "O Allah, be a witness of these people. Oh Allah, they have promised to kill everyone from the children of your Messenger (Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w))."
4. JAFAR -He died when he was young.
5. FATIMA KUBRA -
Her looks were like Bibi Fatima (s.a.). She was present in Karbala. She was already married to her cousin Hasan-e-Muthannah before Karbala, though she could not have been more the 10 years of age. Her husbandm one of the four sons of Imam Hasanm (a.s.) was present in Karbala. He fought and was wounded but did not die. His relatives from his mother's side took him under their care. After the event of Karbala, he

lived for another 15 years before he died in Medina. When he died his wife Fatima Kubra built a tent next to his grave and stayed there for one full year.

6. SAKINA -

Her name was Aminah or Amimah. The Imam, loved her very much. To him she was the peace of his mind and called her Sakina. She was very pious and very learned. All Scholars do not agree about her age and her place of burial. It is very likely that when in Karbala, she was aged about 4 years and was buried in the prison of Damascus. The grave in Damascus today has on it the name of Rukaiya; probably it should read Sakina.

Some accounts also mention another daughter Fatima Sugra who remained behind in Medina.

CHAPTER 8 : HIS SAYINGS, SERMONS (KHUTBAS) AND SUPPLICATIONS (DUAS)

HIS SAYINGS

Any study of this Imam will remain incomplete if we do not examine any of his sayings. This is because his sayings contain very useful lessons for us. We cannot look at all his sayings. We shall look at only a few of them in the following paragraphs.

THE IMAM SAYS:

1. If a person pleases Allah but by doing so angers and displeases people, Allah is enough for him in dealing with such people. However, if a person pleases people but by so doing he angers and displeases Allah, then Allah leaves him alone with those people.
2. Intelligence increases with experience.
3. A man came to Imam Husayn (a.s.) and said, “O Son of the Prophet, teach me to stop committing sins because I have tried but have failed”

The Imam said, “Learn to do five things and then do as many sins as you wish.

One: Do not eat what Allah has created to be eaten (“Rizq”) then sin as you like.

Two: Go out of the Kingdom of Allah, then sin as you like.

Three: Find a place where Allah does not see you, then sin as much as you like.

Four: When the Angel of Allah come to take your soul, stop him from doing so, then sin as you like.

Five: When you are taken to Hell-Fire, refuse to go there, then sin as you like.”

4. He who loves you stops you from making mistakes and he who hates you encourages you to make more.

5. Stay away from back-biting (“Ghibat’ as it is food of dogs of hell.
6. Somebody came to the Imam and started talking without first doing salam to the Imam. The Imam said “First send your salams, then talk, so that Allah will protect you.”
7. A person will not be saved on the Day of Judgement unless he had fear of Allah in this world.
8. It is said that whenever he was making “WUDHU” for prayer his body would shake and his face would change colour with fear. When somebody asked why this happened to the Imam replied: “It is right that one who stands in front of the greatest King (Allah) must shake and his face must turn pale.”
9. On his way from Mecca to Kufa, he preached by saying: “If this world is very valuable, then the pleasure of Allah is of even better value and is also noble.”
 “If bodies have been created to die, then the death through a sword (Martyrdom) is the best (of all deaths).”
 “And if ones earnings are fixed (by Allah) why should one hang to wealth.”
10. If a person worships Allah in a way he is supposed to worship Him, Allah will grant this person whatever he wishes and whatever he needs to have.
11. By asking for a favour from you, the needy person lowers his selfrespect you should not lower your self- respect by not giving him what he has asked from you.
12. A man said, “When kindness is shown to a person who doesn’t deserve it, that kindness is wasted.” The Imam replied, “This is not so. An act of kindness is like the rain; it showers on the pious as well as the sinner.”
13. If it had not been for three things - poverty, disease, and death - the human being would never have bowed his head before anyone.
14. To die with honour is better than to live with humiliation.
15. If you thank Allah for the favours he did to you in the past, you will receive more favours from HIM in the future.

16. He who has accepted your gifts has helped you in proving your greatness.
17. One group of people worship Allah for getting rewards from him; this is the worship of the businessman. Another group worships Him out of fear; this is the worship of the slave. A third group worships Him to thank Him; this is the worship of the free and the noble.

HIS SERMONS

Imam Husayn (a.s.) gave several sermons especially after he had made his decisions not to bow down to Yazid.

These sermons are very useful. Firstly, they explain why he found it necessary to rise against Yazid even by giving his life. Secondly, it gives us very useful advice on how we should live in a world ruled by oppressors and tyrants.

Some of these sermons are summarized below:

1. Imam told the army of Hur: "People are slaves of the world they lick religion with their tongue and protect it so long as wealth is coming to them. But as soon as they are put to test, very few remain with religion."
2. On his way to Karbala the Imam said, "See what (bad times) have fallen on us. The world has changed and has turned its back against goodness. Its opposition continues. Nothing is left of goodness except for a small part like scum in the vessel or unhealthy pasture. Truth is not practised and falsehood is not stopped, the believers should wish to meet their Lord. As for me I do not see death except as a happiness and life with tyrants disgusting."
3. On one occasion he told the army of Yazid that, "...The Messenger of Allah has said, 'If a person sees a cruel ruler allowing those things to be done which Allah has forbidden or who does not carry out his duties or goes against the teachings of the Prophet or deals with servants of Allah sinfully

and unjustly, and that person does nothing by speech or in action, than, it would be right for Allah to place that person with the cruel ruler on the Day of Judgement.”

4. On the Night of Ashura, the Imam stood in front of his friends, relatives and members of his immediate family and said, “I praise the Almighty Allah and thank him for the good and bad times that we went through. Allah I thank you for honouring us with Prophethood and for giving us good hearing and seeing power and sound mind; and for teaching us the Quran and making it possible for us to understand religion. Allah, include us amongst your thankful servants.

“I do not know of any companions who are better than mine in loyalty or in truthfulness. Nor do I know or any family members who are better than mine in kindness. May Allah award you all with the best reward.

“I know tomorrow will be the day of sacrifice. I willingly allow you all to go away from here, scattering in villages, towns and cities. Each companion should hold the hands of one of my relatives and go away. These people are only after my blood. If they get me, they will not want any of your blood”

5. On the Day of Ashura, the Imam put on the Turban of the Prophet, and carrying the sword of Imam Ali (a.s.), he mounted a camel and then gave a talk to the army of Yazid: “O people, listen to me and do not be hasty. I do not want to give you excuse (that you did not know what you were doing). I want to explain to you what brought me here. If you believe in what I am going to tell you it will be good for you. If you do not believe me then you can choose whatever you want to do. As for me, my allegiance is to Allah He gave us the book (Quran) and those who are on the right path are his friends.

“O people, remember who I am and search your conscience. Think if it is lawful for you to shed my blood. Am I not the son of the daughter of your Prophet and son of his trustee, his cousin and the first believer in Allah and his Prophet? Is not Hamza, the leader of Martyrs, the uncle of my father? Is not

Jafar, who flies about in paradise, my uncle? Did you not hear that the Prophet would call my brother and me ‘You are the leaders of the youths of Paradise?’ If you believe me it is better. For by Allah I never lie because Allah dislikes lies. If you do not believe me, there are men alive who can tell you that I am saying the truth. Ask Jabir ibn Abdullah, Abu Saeed, Sahal Ibne Saad, Zaid Ibn Aqram and Anass. They will tell you that indeed the Prophet of Allah did call us thus. Shouldn’t that be enough to Stop you from shedding my blood?

“If you have doubts about what I say, do you have doubts about I being the grandson of the Prophet; By Allah, there is no son of the daughter of the Prophet other than myself in the east or in the west.

“Have I shed your blood that you want to shed mine in revenge? Have I taken away from you your property? Have I done any wrong to you so to deserve to be punished?”

HIS SUPPLICATIONS

Imam Husayn (a.s.) has taught us several supplications (duas) which he advised us to read on various occasions. From these duas we learn a lot.

For example, we learn how we should address Allah when we need His help.

One of these duas is read on the Day of Arafat (9th Zilhajj) as the Imam himself read in at the ground of Arafat. Because this dua is very long, we do not reproduce it in whole but just in parts:

1. Parts of DUA-E-ARAFAT read by Imam Husayn (a.s.):

You have answered my prayers whenever I cried out to You. You gave me whenever I requested for (a thing). You acknowledged me and blessed me whenever I obeyed Your commands.

If I decide and try throughout my life to express my thanks and

gratitude to you for even one single favour you have done on me, I cannot find even words to do so. The only thing I can do to thank You is to do things you want me to do.

O Allah let happiness fill my heart, certainty of belief come in my mind, and truthfulness appear in my work, light come in my eyes, and strong understanding in my religion.

Send blessings on Muhammad and his family and help me keep away from mischief, quarrels and ups and downs in my day to day affairs. Free me from the fear of this world and the pains of the hereafter. Protect me from the corruption which has polluted the world.

Do not make me depend on others than yourself, O my Lord. Do not make me depend on those relatives of mine who do not care for me, or on a stranger who laughs at me or anyone who looks upon me with disrespect.

Look at me. It is I, O My Lord, who stands in front of You, O My Master, submissive, humble, helpless and small I have no way to excuse myself, so forgive me.

2. Dua read by Imam Husayn (a.s.) at the grave-site of his grandfather, the Prophet, when the Imam was leaving Medina for Mecca: (This has been reported by Abu Makhnaf)

“O Allah, this is the grave of your Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) and I am the son of the daughter of your Prophet. You know what I am going through. O Allah, I love good and hate evil. I beg You, O Lord of Glory and Honour, I request You by this grave and the person sleeping in it to choose for me whatever pleases you and your Prophet.”

3. On the Day of Ashura, when he was left alone, he went to see his son Zainul-Abideen for the last time and he said to him, “O son I

am teaching you a dua which you should remember. It is the same dua which the Prophet heard from Angel Jibrail, and taught it to my mother. Read this dua in times of great difficulties and stress.”

The Dua:

“In the name of Yasin and the wisdom of the Quran, in the name of Taha and the greatness of what is in (our) hearts, O He who can remove his sorrow from one who is sorrowful, O He who can remove grief, from the one who suffers from grief, O He who is Merciful to the old people and a provider of the infants, O He who needs no explanations, send blessings on Muhammad and his family and fulfil my desires which are...”

CHAPTER 9 :

WAYS TO PAY RESPECT TO IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.) AND OTHER MARTYRS OF KARBALA

WHO DECIDES WHAT IS GOOD AND WHAT IS NOT GOOD

The Holy Quran tells us:

“...Whatever the Prophet gives you, you accept it and from whatever he prevents you, be away from it...” (Ch.59, v.7)

From the above verse it becomes very clear that what the Prophet tells us to do we should do and what he tells us not to do, we must not do.

One thing which all scholars of Islam agree with is that the Prophet loved Imam Husayn (a.s.) very much and he wanted all Muslims to do the same. Traditions appearing in the books of both Shia and Sunni scholars tell us that the Prophet knew what would happen to Imam Husayn (a.s.) in the future in the hands of Bani Umayyah. For example, we are told that, when Imam Husayn (a.s.) was born, the Arch Angel Gabriel (Jibrail) informed the Prophet that one day this child would grow to be martyred by the enemies of Islam. When Bibi Fatima heard of this news she was very sad. She asked her father, “When my son Husayn will be martyred, will I be alive?”

The Prophet told her that neither he nor she would be alive. Imam Ali (a.s.) and Imam Hasan (a.s.) too would not be alive. But Allah would create one community just to keep the memories of Imam Husayn (a.s.) alive. “The men from this community”, the Prophet said, “Shall weep for Husayn and his male Martyrs and the women shall weep till the Day of Judgement for the women of our house.”

From the above tradition it becomes clear that the Prophet had wished that the life and martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) be remembered. Following the Prophet’s footsteps, Imams from his House took active part in doing all those things through which

the purpose of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) could be explained to the world.

HOW DO WE REMEMBER IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.)

HOLDING GATHERINGS:

Once again, we look in the life of the Prophet to see how he remembered his beloved ones and accordingly we do the same for Imam Husayn (a.s.) and other martyrs.

After the Battle of Ohad, those who lost their dear ones, gathered in their homes and started weeping for them. The Prophet was very sad, for his Uncle Hamza was killed in the Battle of Ohad but no one was weeping in his house. The companions of the Prophet (“SAHABA”) therefore asked their families to go to the House of Hazrat Hamza and weep for him. When the Prophet saw the families of his companion weeping for Hamza, he was consoled and he prayed for the well-being of “SAHABA” and their families.

At some other time when the Prophet learnt of the martyrdom of his cousin Jafar at the battle of Muta, he went in person to Jafar’s family to give them news. Jafar’s widow, Asma Binti Umayyad started weeping. The Prophet did not stop her. He let her weep.

Again, when his own son Ibrahim died when still young, the Prophet was very sad and he wept for his son very much.

Gathering and then weeping for the dead is therefore “SUNNA” of the Prophet. Not only did the Prophet encourage other Muslims to do so but he himself took active part in such gathering as was the case of the death of his dear ones mentioned above.

The Imams of the House of the Prophet therefore advised Muslims to hold gatherings (“MAJLIS”) in the name of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.), the sixth Imam, and Imam Ali Ridha (a.s.),

the eighth Imam (we shall learn about them in the coming units) had the chance to organize the gatherings for mourning of Imam Husayn (a.s.). At such gatherings, preachers would be called to give talks on what difficulties Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his companions faced before and after their coming to Karbala. At one such gathering, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) advised his companion to weep for Imam Husayn (a.s.) in the same way as Bibi Fatima is weeping for him in paradise. The companions asked the Imam as to how Bibi Fatima weeps for her son. Imam Sadiq said she weeps loudly like a mother weeps on the death of her 18 years old son.

Imam Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) (popularly known as Zainul Abideen) wept on the martyrdom of the martyrs of Karbala for over thirty years. It is said that he recommended to one of his companions to hold a gathering (“MAJLIS”) in remembrance of Imam Husayn (a.s.) before holding marriage ceremonies of his son or daughter; only then Zainul Abideen would attend the marriage.

According to Allama Majlisi, after returning from the prison of Damascus, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) would have regular gathering in his house for mourners of Imam Husayn (a.s.). After the mourning, food would be served in the name of Imam Husayn (a.s.) to those attending these gatherings.

Indeed the act of weeping for the dear ones has been praised in the Quran itself. When Prophet Yaqoob (Jacob) is separated from his son Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), Prophet Yaqoob cries so much for his son “till his eyes became white” (he became blind). If weeping was a bad thing Allah would have said so when he describes this action in the Quran. Instead, Allah praises Prophet Yaqoob and considers him as a man of patience: “He turned away from them and said, ‘Alas! My grief for Joseph!’ And his eyes became white with grief, and he was a patient one.” (Ch.12, v.84)

One way of remembering Imam Husayn (a.s.) therefore is to hold

gatherings (called MAJALIS) as often as we can. These “MAJALIS” are organized especially in the months of Muharram and Safar.

BEATING OF THE CHEST (“MATAM”) AND SHEDDING OF BLOOD:

At the gatherings or majlis mentioned before, it is common to see the mourners beat their chests on the night of “ASHURA”; Some mourners beat their chests with chains and sharp-edged metals and in this way shed their blood.

These acts of beating oneself are not part of the faith but it is a very natural way of showing ones grief and love for the martyrs of Karbala. Such acts are allowed in “SHARIAH” and have great merits. As explained in the following incident.

In the battle of Ohad, one enemy of Islam by the name of Utbah Abi Waqas threw stone at Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.). The stone hit the Prophet’s mouth and one or two of his teeth were broken. Oways Qarani, who was one of the Prophets respectable companions, and who was not present at the battle-field heard of the incident. He was struck with grief. To show his sorrow and love for the Prophet, he took a stone and knocked down his front teeth. He was not sure which teeth the Prophet lost. Oways decided to knock down all his teeth. He did so. When the Prophet heard of this he prayed for Oways. If the act of hurting oneself and shedding one’s blood in grief for a man of Allah was bad, the Prophet could have blamed Oways, not praised him.

Doing “MATAM” and shedding blood in the name of Imam Husayn (a.s.) (and other Imams) is an act of “THAWAB.”

SENDING “SALAMS” TO IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.) AND VISITING HIS GRAVE:

If you pay a visit to the “Majlis”, you will notice that after the preacher has given his talk on Imam Husayn (a.s.), those present stand up and facing in the direction of KARBALA they read salams saying:

Peace be upon you oh Aba Abdillah Imam Husayn (a.s.). Peace be upon you O son of the Prophet. Peace be upon you O son of the prince of the believers. Peace be upon you O son of Fatima, the Lady of light and the leader of women of all nations. Peace be upon you and with it be the mercy and the grace of Allah.

These salams are of different types and different ones are read on different occasions.

Again, reading of these salams may not be part of the faith but they are acts of great thawab. The greatest “THAWAB” can be obtained if we can read these “SALAMS” near the grave of the Imams. Paying visit to the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.) has been highly recommended.

Before we consider the benefits of paying a visit to the grave of the martyrs of the Karbala, let us first find out what Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) has said about visiting graves of Muslims generally and heroes of Islam in particular.

The graveyard of Medina, Baqi, was started by the Prophet, when he went to live in Medina. The practice of building graves and visiting them regularly was common in the time of the Prophet. It is a known historic fact that a few days before he left this world, the Prophet spent a long time in the graveyard of Baqi, moving from one grave to another praying to Allah for the forgiveness of the dead.

Moreover, the Prophet made special request to Muslims of his time and those to be born in the future, to pay a visit to his grave at least once in the life time. The Prophet has promised that he will pray to Allah on the Day of Judgement for the forgiveness of those who paid visit to his grave.

Indeed, it is because of this promise that some Muslims regard it

obligatory for themselves to go to Medina first for Pilgrimage of the Prophet's grave, before they could go to Mecca for "HAJJ."

Bibi Fatima (s.a.) used to go to the graveyard at Ohad every Tuesday to visit the grave of the Martyrs of Ohad. If such a visitation was not permissible, the Prophet would have stopped her. He never did.

In fact he himself paid visit to the grave of his own parents and prayed for them to Allah.

The above examples should be enough to prove the facts that the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) wishes all Muslims to regularly visit general graveyards and to specific graves of the heroes of Islam.

Following the example of the Prophet, members of his family, the Ahlul-Bayt, have themselves visited the graves of the people of Allah and have asked their followers to do the same.

Imam Zainul Abideen and the family of Imam Husayn (a.s.) visited the graves at Karbala when on their way to Medina from Damascus. Jabir Bin Abdulla Ansari, one of the most well-known and beloved companions of the Prophet, paid a visit to the graves at Karbala. The sixth Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) regularly went to Karbala on Pilgrimage. He strongly recommended his followers to go to Karbala and taught them different types of "SALAMS" to be read at the graves of the martyrs of Karbala.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) once asked his famous companion, Ibne Wahab, "How is it that you live in Kufa and near Imam Husayn's grave and still do not visit his grave? Do not ever stop visiting Imam Husayn's grave. Remember that angels on earth and in heaven pray for those visiting Imam Husayn's grave. Wouldn't you wish that the Prophet, Bibi Fatima, Imam Ali, and all other Imams raise their hands praying for you? Don't you wish to shake hands with angels on the Day of Judgement and be forgiven all your sins and be with the Prophet on the Day of Judgement?"

Ibne Wahab was shocked to hear about so many benefits one gets by visiting the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.). The sixth Imam replied, “Anyone who does not visit the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.) (without any good reason) should know that his faith is not yet complete.”

During the times of Imam Ridha(a.s.), Mamoon Rashid, the King of the time, would not allow people to go to Karbala unless they brought a guarantor. Imam Ridha (a.s.) would give a guarantee for anyone who wanted to go to Karbala.

Those Muslims who can afford to pay a visit to the graves of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and those of other Imams and other Holy person must do so and their actions will please Allah.

It is interesting to note that in all ages, the enemies of Allah and Islam have tried to stop people from visiting the graves of the Heroes of Islam.

The few examples are given below.

The Bani Umayyah (House of Abu Sufyan, Muawiya, Yazid, Marwan) did everything to stop Pilgrims to go to Karbala. Abdul Rehman bin Said, an army general of Abdul Malik bin Marwan destroyed the small house which had been built to shelter Imam Husayn’s grave.

The Bani Abbasi King were also mostly against anyone going to Karbala.

Two Kings were the worst. The first one was Haroon Rashid. He gave orders that the shrine of Imam Husayn (a.s.) be destroyed. This was done. He ordered that a lotus tree that was growing near the shrine be cut off. He wished that there should not remain even the sign of the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

The second Abbasi King who stopped Pilgrims to go to Karbala was Mutawakil. He sent his soldiers to pull down Imam Husayn's grave and turned waters of the river Euphrates over it. But he failed.

Then about two hundred years ago in 1801 AD the Bani Saud (who are now the rulers of Saudi Arabia) attacked Karbala and totally destroyed it. Muslims later drove them out and Karbala was rebuilt. So was the Mausoleum of the Imam. Unfortunately, the Imams Mausoleum and most of Karbala was again destroyed by Saddam Husayn, The Dictator of Iraq, in March 1991.

OTHER WAYS OF RESPECTING THE MARTYRS OF KARBALA:

The gatherings ("MAJALIS") for Imam Husayn (a.s.) are held at special places called "IMAMBARA" or "HUSAYNIA." When you visit Imambara or Husaynia especially during the months of Muharram and Safar you may see certain symbols like the "ALAM" (FLAG) or "TAZIA" (REPLICA OF THE GRAVE OF IMAM HUSAYN (a.s.).)

The use of symbols in Islam is common. In fact, every Mosque is a symbol, standing for the House of Allah, the Kaaba in Mecca. Every Pulpit, ("MIMBAR") in the Mosque is the symbol of the Prophet's pulpit found in MASJID-UN-NABAWI" in Medina.

Each of these symbols is supposed to remind us of the original thing for which it stands. The Mosque being the symbol of Kaaba reminds us of Kaaba. In Islam the symbol becomes things of respect. This is because their main work is to remind us of Allah and those who have worked for Allah. In the Quran Allah refers to such symbols as "SIGNS OF ALLAH." For example, Allah calls the Hills of Safa and Marwa in Mecca as "SIGN OF ALLAH", even the rope that is tied to the neck of a goat or a sheep which is to be sacrificed at Mina on the Day of "HAJJ" is regarded by Quran as "SIGN OF ALLAH."

The "Alam" that is found in Husaynia stands for the Alam or Standard or Flag of Islam that the Prophet carried in all the battles

that he fought against enemies of Islam and which Imam Husayn (a.s.) brought in Karbala and which was carried by his brother Abbas. This Alam is the “SIGN OF ALLAH.” It is the symbol of Islam. It reminds Muslims that Imam Husayn saved Islam on the day of Ashura.

The “TAZIA” is a symbol of the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.). Those who cannot go to Karbala to the original grave of Imam turn to the Tazia. The Tazia then is the sign of Allah.

When we show respect to the Mosque or Pulpit, we do this with the intention of pleasing Allah. We do not WORSHIP the Mosque or the Pulpit. When we are in Hajj, we kiss the “THE BLACK STONE” to please Allah. We do not worship the black stone. In the same way, when we kiss the “Alam” or the “Tazia” in the “Husaynia” we do so to please Allah. We DO NOT WORSHIP the Alam or the Tazia.

CONCLUSION

Imam Husayn (a.s.) has a special position in the presence of Allah Subhaanahu Wataala. This is because he gave everything that he had to save Islam at the time when no one could do that. The martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) has such lessons that they have saved Muslims of all time from being misguided by evil people remembrance of Imam therefore has special position in Islam.

All the ways which Muslims today use in keeping alive the memories of Imam Husayn (a.s.) are done according to the “SHARIAH.”

Enemies of Islam are afraid that by remembering Imam Husayn (a.s.), Muslims will never be misled. Therefore, all efforts are made to stop people from remembering the Imam.

Haroon Rashid and Mutawakil used force to destroy the remembrance of Imam Husayn (a.s.). They failed; today therefore a new method is used. The enemies of Islam want us to believe that they are very good Muslims and then they tell us that remembrance of Imam is “BID’AH” (something new and not done during the time of Prophet). Remembrance of Imam Husayn (a.s.) is based on the “SUNNAH” and “SIRAH” of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.). It is a life- giving force to Islam and therefore an act of “THAWAB” to Allah.

QUESTIONS

CHAPTER I

For each of the following questions, list of answers are given. You have to choose only one answer which you think is best one.

1. Imam Husayn (a.s.) was born in
 - a. Medina
 - b. Mecca
 - c. Karbala

On-----

- a. 3rd Shaban
- b. 4th Shaban
- c. 10th Shaban

In the year -----

- a. 3rd AH.
- b. 4th AH.
- c. 61st AH.

2. He is like Nabi Yahya as they were both born:
 - a. In the month of Shaban
 - b. In the Holy city of Medina
 - c. In Karbala
 - d. Having a gestation period of six months
3. Imam Husayn (a.s.) is like other 13 'MASOOMIN' because:
 - a. He was born already circumcised
 - b. He was born in Medina
 - c. He was a male
 - d. None of the above
4. The Prophet said that it was not necessary to clean Imam Husayn (a.s.) when he was born because:
 - a. He would catch a cold

- b. He was very young
 - c. His gestation period was less than six months
 - d. He was already clean
5. Loya was
- a. A wet - nurse
 - b. A maid
 - c. A woman from paradise
 - d. Imam's servant
6. Umme Ayman was crying because:
- a. She thought she saw a bad dream
 - b. She was afraid of dreams
 - c. She saw the Prophet in her dream
 - d. None of the above
7. Fitrus came to the Prophet's house to:
- a. See the newly born child
 - b. Congratulate the Prophet
 - c. Ask the Prophet's help
 - d. To seek his old position
8. Fitrus got his position and honour back by
- a. Going to the Prophet with Jibrail
 - b. Asking forgiveness
 - c. Using the name of Imam Husayn (a.s.) to Allah
 - d. Going to the house of the Prophet
9. "AQEEQA" is
- a. Shaving of the child's head
 - b. Slaughtering of the sheep
 - c. Doing (a) and (b) on the seventh day of a child's birth
 - d. Doing (a), (b) and (c) above
10. When Imam Husayn (a.s.) as a child fell down in the Mosque,

the Prophet did not

- a. Lift him
- b. Take him to the “MIMBER”
- c. Come down -from the “MIMBER”
- d. Remain on the “MIMBER”

CHAPTER 2

1. How did Imam Husayn (a.s.) serve in the way of Islam in the period
 - a. 11 AH. to 34 AH.?
 - b. 34 AH. to 40 AH?
 - c. 40 AH. to 50 AH.?
2. Why did Muawiya need Imam Husayn’s (a.s.) support? Did he get this support?
3. Why did Muawiya warn his son Yazid to be careful in his dealing with Imam Husayn (a.s.)?

CHAPTER 3

1. Some of the following statements are true others are false. Say which is true and which is false.
 - i. Muawiya was looking for an excuse to kill Imam Husayn (a.s.)
 - ii. Imam Husayn (a.s.) kept quiet in the beginning of Muawiya’s kingship.
 - iii. Imam Husayn (a.s.) Invited Muawiya and well-known Muslims to Mina.
 - iv. Imam Husayn (a.s.) in his sermon at Mina advised Muslims to pray and fast.
 - v. This sermon had its effect later on.
2. (i) Why did the people of Syria accept Yazid as their leader without any complain?
(ii) Why did other Muslims refuse to accept Yazid?
3. In your own words, say what kind of a person was Yazid.
4. For each of the following questions a list of answers is provided.

You must choose only that answer which you think is the best one.

- i. Muawiya became officially the Caliph because of:
 - a. The agreement he made with Imam Husayn (a.s.)
 - b. He was intelligent
 - c. He made Imam Husayn (a.s.) sign a peace treaty

- ii. Imam Husayn (a.s.) decided to leave Medina because:
 - a. Walid made him do so
 - b. Yazid told him to do so
 - c. Imam Husayn (a.s.) decided it was necessary to do so

- iii. If Yazid did not ask for “BAYAH”:
 - a. Imam Husayn (a.s.) would not rise
 - b. Imam Husayn (a.s.) would rise
 - c. The answer is not given

- iv. If Imam Husayn (a.s.) gave his “BAYAH” to Yazid:
 - a. Islam would grow strong
 - b. Islam would die
 - c. Yazid would grow very strong and popular

- iv. Imam Husayn (a.s.)
 - a. Did not explain why he refused to give “BAYAH” to Yazid
 - b. Did not very clearly say why he did not want to give “BAYAH” to Yazid
 - c. Gave clear explanation why he did not want to give “BAYAH” to Yazid

5. Why did the People of Kufa want Imam Husayn (a.s.) to go to Kufa? Why could not the Imam ignore them? To satisfy the people of Kufa, what did the Imam do?
6. Who was Muslim Bin Aqil and why did he go to Kufa? What happened to Him? Why?

7. Why did Imam Husayn (a.s.) decide to leave Mecca for Kufa?
8. Who was Hur? Why did he bring Imam Husayn (a.s.) to Karbala?
9. What happened on the following days in 6l AH
 - a. 2nd Muharram
 - b. 7th Muharram
 - c. 4th Muharram
 - d. 10th Muharram

CHAPTER 4

1. In the “NIGHT OF ASHURA” what did Imam Husayn (a.s.) tell his friends and relatives? What can you say about these friends and relatives?
2. Each of the following questions has a list of answers from which you must choose the one which you think the best one.
 - i. Imam Husayn’s tents on the Night of Ashura were like bee hive because:
 - a. Everyone was afraid of the coming death
 - b. The enemies were like bees, about to attack
 - c. The sound of prayers coming from the tents sounded like humming of bees.
 - ii. Hur joined Imam Husayn’s side because:
 - a. He/was sure Imam Husayn (a.s.) was on the right
 - b. He was driven away from Yazid’s army
 - c. He was tired of being with Yazid’s army
 - iii. The commander of Imam Husayn’s forces was:
 - a. Imam Husayn (a.s.) himself
 - b. Zuhair and Habib
 - c. Abbas, son of Imam Ali (a.s.)
 - iv. Imam Husayn (a.s.) and those who were with him prayed prayers of “KHAUF”, this means:

- a. They prayed “KASAR”
 - b. They prayed full Dhuhr prayers
 - c. They prayed special prayers done at the time of fear
- v. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) did not take part the battle because:
- a. The women and children would be left alone
 - b. He had to go back to Medina
 - c. He was ill and “JIHAD” is not for the ill
3. Why do you think Imam Husayn (a.s.) brought ladies and children with him to Karbala?
4. Why did Yazid free Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) from prison and send him to Medina with respect?

CHAPTER 5

1. Who were the “TAWWABUN”?
2. Why didn’t Mukhtar join the “TAWWABUN”?
3. How successful was Mukhtar in punishing the killers of Imam Husayn (a.s.)?

CHAPTER 6

1. Give examples to show the love of Imam Husayn (a.s.) for Allah
2. Why was Imam Husayn (a.s.) called the “FATHER OF BEGGARS”? Give examples.
3. Why is Husayn (a.s.) respected by non-Muslims? Your explanation must be supported by examples. .

CHAPTER 7

1. Write short notes to explain who were the following:
 - a. Ali Akbar
 - b. Ali Asgher
 - c. Fatima Kubra
 - d. Sakina
 - e. Rubab

CHAPTER 8

1. Try to learn by heart Imam Husayn's shorter sayings.
2. Study the sent ions and 'DUAS' carefully and try to understand them.

CHAPTER 9

1. Why do we remember the martyrdom of Imam Husayn
2. Weeping for martyrs is the "SUNNAH" of the Prophet. Give at least 3 examples to prove this statement.
3. Visiting graveyards especially of martyrs is "SUNNAH" of the Prophet. Give at least 3 examples to prove this
4. What do you understand by "SIGNS OF ALLAH"? Give examples to support your explanations.



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