



KARBALA

BEFORE AND AFTER

PART I : CHAIN OF EVENTS

PART II : ZAINAB BINTE ALI (A.S.)

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REVIEW :
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FOREWORD

This publication is based on the Author's two on-line articles, "Karbala - Chain of Events" and "Zainab Binte Ali (a.s.)" published several years ago. Its main purpose has always been to inform and educate the Muslim young generation, living in western countries, regarding historical events that eventually caused the battle of Karbala between the faith and innocence on one side, and brutality and barbarism on the other. The criminals brutally killed, on the land of Karbala, seventy two innocent persons, who were none other than the Holy Prophet (pbuh)'s descendents and faithful followers. The brutality did not end with the end of the battle. In the aftermath, perpetrators did not spare the women and children of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). They snatched away women's chadar (veil), burned their tents, tied them on camels bare backs, and moved them without hijab from one town to another. Many children fell from the camels and died in the way. It was a tragedy of enormous magnitude of which there is no parallel in any religion. Yazid's barbarian rule and terror had so much confused and misled the Muslim Ummah that they had almost forgotten to distinguish between right and wrong.

Karbala's tragedy is the cruelest tragedy humanity has ever seen. Yet, the startling events in Karbala, before and after, proved like a powerful volcano that stirred the consciousness of Muslims, ignorant and learned alike. The tragic events became the very beacon of light to always remind Muslims to practice Islam honestly, sincerely and non violently, to do what is right irrespective of consequences, and fear no one except Allah the Almighty.

After Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)'s release from captivity, someone asked Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), as to what was the hardest calamity in that whole period of captivity. He replied that the hardest part was the time when the Ahlul Bayt caravan was made to stop outside Damascus for four days. They were treated very miserably, with their hands tied; and little food or water. And the hardest moment was when Sakeena died and buried in the dungeon.

In Karbala's aftermath, Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) proved through her superb oratory, that "the word is mightier than the sword." People of Medina hailed Imam Al-Husain (a.s) as the savior of Islam, and Zainab (s.a.) as the savior of the Ummah. The tragedy of Karbala taught humanity a lesson that standing for the truth and fighting unto death for it, is more honorable and valuable than submitting to the wrongful, especially when the survival of Islam is at stake.

It is the Author's earnest wish that Muslim youths must read this book to make themselves fully aware of the true significance of Karbala, and to commemorate the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)'s most tragic sufferings, and the sacrifices made to save Islam. He very much appreciates and thanks Maulana Sheikh Abdul Jalil Nawee for guidance and performing a review of the book.

October 2014

Author.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
01. HIGHLIGHTS OF KARBALA	1
02. WHO WAS MU'AWIYA?	2
03. JAMAL CONFRONTATION	3
04. BATTLE OF SAFFIN	3
05. AFTER BATTLE OF SIFFIN	4
06. BATTLE OF NAHRAWAN	4
07. PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN IMAM AL-HASAN (A.S.) AND MU'AWIYA	5
08. MU'AWIYA'S PLOT TO POISON IMAM HASAN (A.S.)	6
09. MU'AWIYA DESIGNATES YAZID AS SUCCESSOR	7
10. MU'AWIYA DIES	7
11. YAZID BECOMES RULER:	7
12. ON THE WAY TO KARBALA	8
13. CARVAN REACHED KARBALA	9
14. ASHURAA	9
15. THE BATTLE OF KARBALA	10
16. AL-HUSAIN AND HIS BABY	11
17. AL-HUSAIN BY HIMSELF	11
18. LESSONS FROM THE TRAGEDY OF KARBALA	12
19. GLOSSARY	13

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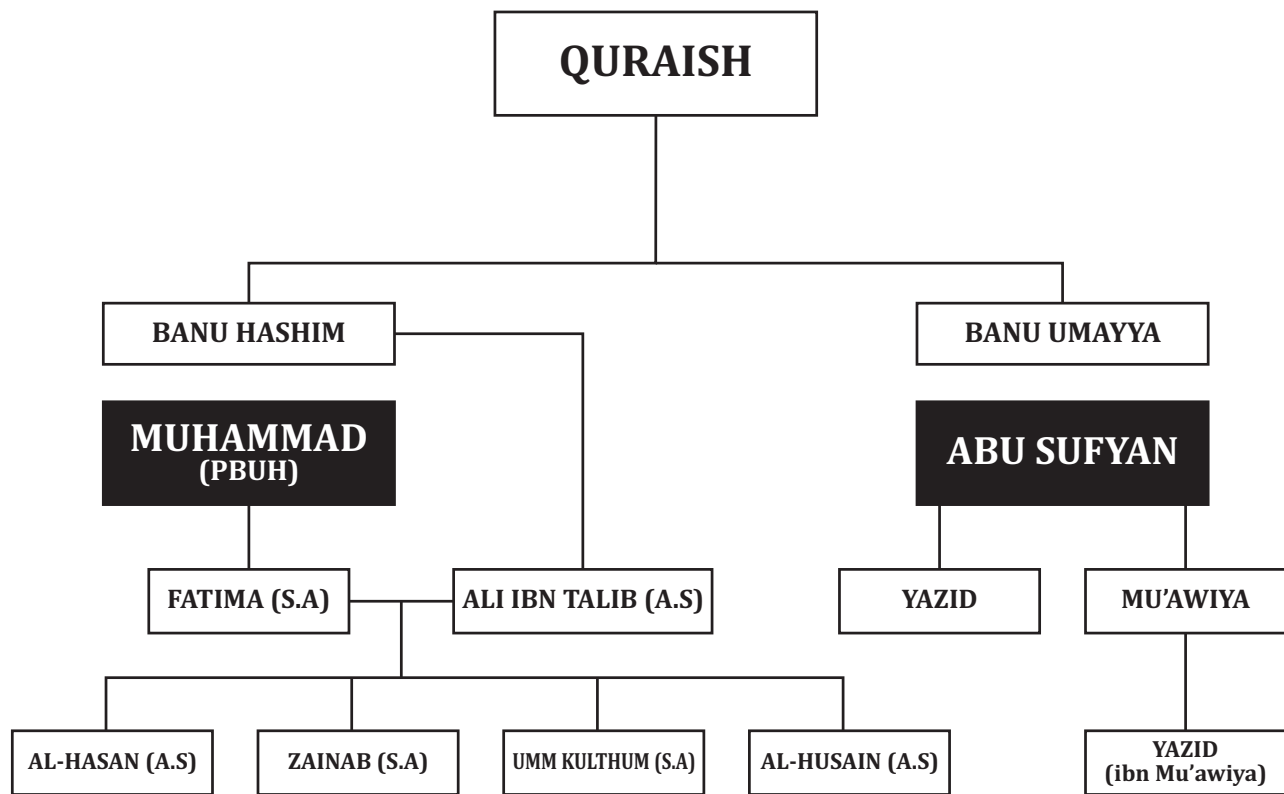
HIGHLIGHTS OF KARBALA:

The events of Karbala that occurred 14 centuries ago, reflect a collision of good versus evil, virtuous versus wicked, and an **Imam** (a head of virtue) versus **Yazid** (a devil). The collision resulted in a tragic confrontation between Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) and 72 companions on one side and Yazid's giant army on the other side. Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) a righteous man, a religious authority, was Imam of Muslim Ummah. His main concern as the representative of his grandfather Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was to safeguard and protect Islam and guide fellow Muslims. On the other hand, Mu'awiya and his son Yazid who used brute force and all possible illegitimate means to become rulers of their respective times, had planned to use all possible illicit means to make their family to rule permanently over the vast Muslim empire of Syria.

Imam Husain (a.s.) as head of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) never recognized Mu'awiya nor his followers. Before him Imam Ali (a.s.) had fought battles against Mu'awiya because Mu'awiya continuously violated the Islamic principles. *Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.)*, after considering options, had agreed to make a peace agreement with Mu'awiya, in order to safeguard the security of the Ummah which was at stake. When Yazid son of Mu'awiya declared himself a ruler over the Ummah, he demanded *Imam Al-Husain's (a.s.)* allegiance of loyalty. Imam Husain on his part flatly rejected Yazid's rule and behavior, for there was no way Yazid could represent Islam, since it would be blasphemy. But Yazid, the tyrant ruler over the Ummah, was adamant in his demand, and tension between the two parties increased day by day.

Imam Husain (a.s.) was quick to realize that giving allegiance of loyalty to Yazid would jeopardize the survival of Islam. To safeguard and protect Islam, therefore, the Imam had no choice but to confront and collide with Yazid's rule irrespective of consequences. Since Yazid had ordered his commanders to seize the Imam's allegiance of loyalty at any cost, even by brutal force, the commanders had to assemble a relatively large army estimated at 30,000, surrounding Imam Husain's camp in a desert in Iraq called **Karbala**. The enemy forces cut off the basic necessities to the camp, including access to water. The camp consisted of Imam Husain (a.s.), his family, friends, and companions, all of whom stood fast and firmly with him. These braves would rather face death for the noble cause of Islam, than submit to the outrageous tyranny and the un-Islamic ways of Yazid.

Thus, Karbala proved to be a clash involving Islamic truths versus falsehood, right versus wrong, oppressed versus oppressor, and faith against brute force. Karbala's battle was about standing in the face of oppression, regardless of the cost. Thus, in Karbala, Al-Husain the 57 year old grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), sacrificed himself, his children, his companions and all he had, for one goal. That goal was to let *the truth triumph over falsehood eventually*, and he did that brilliantly. His goal was to foil the plan that Mu'awiya had expertly developed for his son, Yazid, which was to establish a permanent Banu Umayyad's rule over the Muslim Ummah (even by sacrificing the Islamic principles), but doing it in the name of Islam. Imam Husain (a.s.) obviously succeeded in foiling that plan and he exposed the disreputable nature and practices of Banu Umayyad though this was at the expense of seventy two martyrs lives.



WHO WAS MU'AWIYA?

Mu'awiya was son of *Abu Sufyan*, a leader of *Banu Umayya* clan which was one of the clans of Quraish tribes. Mu'awiya grew up in a family known to be cunning, worldly, materialistic, and power hungry. Mu'awiya became Muslim only when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) triumphed over Mecca. Those who became Muslim in this manner were called ***Tulaqaa'***, (a term scornfully used for the disbelievers who became Muslims to save their lives). Mu'awiya, his father Abu Sufyan, his mother Hind, and his brother Yazid son of Abu Sufyan were all *Tulaqaa'*; Mu'awiya never forgot this stigma for the rest of his life; he could never shake it off from his mind, thus a feeling of malicious vengeance always existed in his heart. Mu'awiya's character and aspirations were entirely opposite to that of his sister, *Umm Habiba*, who was one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Unlike Mu'awiya, Umm Habiba was a sincere believer and a pious person.

Omar, the second Khalifa, appointed Mu'awiya's brother, *Yazid son of Abu Sufyan*, the Governor of Syria when the Muslims captured that territory from the Byzantines. Within a few years, Yazid son of Abu Sufyan died of a disease, and Omar appointed Mu'awiya in his brother's place as the Governor. Upon coming to power, Mu'awiya took advantage of the rich public treasury of Syria using it personally to buy favors and influence people. Thus he built a large base of support among some tribes, almost to the fanatic level. He used this to his advantage in later years to form a network of informants (spies) against *Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)* and their devotees.

JAMAL CONFRONTATION (Also known as Battle of Camel):

When Imam Ali (a.s.) became Khalifa, he relocated the Islamic capital from Medina to Kufa, He also decided to remove Mu'awiya immediately, notwithstanding Mu'awiya's strong base of support. At that time, Mu'awiya had been the governor of Syria, Palestine, and Jordan for 17 years. Mu'awiya became defiant, he refused to obey Imam Ali's (a.s.) orders. Brazen and unabashed, he even declined to recognize Imam Ali (a.s.) or give allegiance of loyalty to him. Also in defiance, Mu'awiya established a parallel government in Greater Syria, and started a campaign of treacherous accusations and malicious rumors against Imam Ali (a.s.). He falsely blamed Imam Ali for the killing of Uthman, the third Khalifa, and urged people to take up arms against the Imam. He spread these notorious accusations constantly to incite an uprising against Imam Ali (a.s.).

At the same time A'isha, the Prophet's widow, became highly vocal against Imam Ali (a.s.). She called for taking revenge for the blood of Uthman. She was paid out of the Baitul Maal (Public Treasure) to raise an army of 3,000 insurgents. Aisha along with her armed insurgents, supported by Sahaaba (Companions) such as Talha and Zubair, headed toward Basrah. The insurgents upon reaching Basrah clashed with the local authorities and finally occupied a portion of Basrah. Soon after the occupation these insurgents spread a reign of terror among the people, killing no less than 600 local Muslims, pilfering the treasury and stealing the arms supplies of the armory.

As a Khalifa in charge, Imam Ali (a.s.) could not ignore the situation, he had to act and restore peace and order. He ordered his forces to proceed to Basrah. As the Imam's forces reached near Basrah, Imam Ali (a.s.) tried to persuade the insurgents led by A'isha, Zubair and Talha to change their minds and avoid confrontation, but he did not succeed. A battle broke out though Zubair elected not to fight. Talha was wounded then bled to death. Thousands of people lost their lives. A'isha fell down from the camel after it was disabled; but luckily she was not hurt. Imam Ali asked Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, (A'isha's brother), to take A'isha to Basrah for a few days, and from there to escort her to Medina with full honor and dignity. Upon leaving Basrah Al-Hasan (a.s.) and Al-Husain (a.s.) accompanied the Prophet's widow for some distance before bidding her farewell. Imam Ali (a.s.) stayed in Basrah for a few weeks to restore law and order. He compensated for the dead, and decided to forgive and absolve all who fought against him, exactly as the Prophet (pbuh) had done when he triumphed over Mecca 40 years earlier.

BATTLE OF SIFFIN:

Upon returning to Kufa, Imam Ali (a.s.) immediately prepared for the anticipated clash with Mu'awiya. The defying Mu'awiya continued to violate the Islamic principles by personally using the public treasury for espionage and buying peoples' loyalty. The people of Syria fully believed him and in the false picture he presented. Ultimately this resulted in a confrontation called Battle of Siffin when the troops of the two sides met at Siffin. The battle saw ferocious fighting for nine days when Mu'awiya's forces were near collapse. His troops were fleeing and in disarray, and their retreat was in massive disorder, running helter-skelter. Mu'awiya, alarmed, tense, and frightened, preparing to run away, when he learned of a clever trick. The trick was indecent and unbecoming, it was to make the Holy Quran as an instrument and exploit it, to use it as a tool to his advantage. Mu'awiya seized on this immediately and commanded his fighters to raise 500 copies of Holy Qurans on tips of spears, in order to stun the troops of Imam Ali (a.s.). As jolting as it was, this maneuver did break the onslaught and the momentum of Imam Ali's fighters, for they were very pious men. But Imam Ali was quick to recognize this deceit, he knew how deceptive Mu'awiya was, and now that being near collapse, Mu'awiya wanted to save his neck

at the expense of the Quran itself.

With that in mind, Imam Ali (a.s.) urged his generals not to halt, but to keep fighting since victory was almost at hand. Alas, Imam Ali's generals and fighters were in shock, for the sight of the Holy Quran high on spear heads was startling to say the least. They could not take it. Not willing to fight, they wanted to accept Mu'awiya's offer to halt the fighting and negotiate instead. The termination of the battle in this manner and the consequences thereof proved to be disastrous to say the least, especially for Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and Islam.

It is said that there was a conspiracy between Amr Ibnil Aas of Mu'awiya's side, and Ash'ath Ibn Qais, a general in Imam Ali's camp, who was working as a spy against Imam Ali (a.s.), and secretly working as an agent for Mu'awiya. In this battle 45,000 men lost their lives in Mu'awiya's camp, and about 25,000 in Imam Ali's (a.s.) camp. Many men of high caliber from both sides died, especially Ammar Ibn Yasir, the great Companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), who was 90 years old and fought on Imam Ali's side against Mu'awiya.

AFTER BATTLE OF SIFFIN:

Imam Ali's (a.s.) generals, who stopped the battle to negotiate with Mu'awiya, did not pick the right person for the negotiation. They refused to accept Imam Ali's choice instead, they picked Kufa's Governor, Abu-Musa Ash'ari, an incompetent Governor who had been previously dismissed from office by Imam Ali (a.s.). Mu'awiya appointed Amr Ibnil Aas, a shrewd and cunning man, to be his representative in the negotiation. Negotiations between the two sides did not take place for about one year.

When the two negotiators came face to face, it was clear that Ash'ari's capability was no match for his opponent Ibnil Aas. In the negotiations, Ash'ari proposed that, both Mu'awiya and Imam Ali (a.s.) were to abdicate and to let the people hold election for the Khilaafah. Amr Ibnil Aas, a deceptive man at best, quickly agreed to Ash'ari's proposal and asked Ash'ari to first announce the agreement. Ash'ari stood up and announced, "O people, we have agreed not to consider Ali or Mu'awiya for Khilaafah. You may choose or elect whomever you think is fit." The cunning Amr Ibnil Aas stood up next to say, "O people! I won't consider Ali for the Khilaafah. But Mu'awiya, in my opinion, is the person for that office!" Upon hearing this (and feeling deceived), the people screamed disapprovingly, an uproar was the result. Imam Ali's (a.s.) camp was in shock, they were double-crossed, and deceived. Amr's double crossing and deception was simply beyond their imagination. They left the place bewildered and utterly disappointed. Because of this a large group of Imam Ali's supporters defected to form a separate group called Kharijies, meaning the Outsiders.

BATTLE OF NAHRAWAN:

The Khariji became fanatically opposed to Imam Ali (a.s.) and Mu'awiya. They started to engage in destruction of properties, and vowed to kill any muslim who would pay allegiance to Imam Ali (a.s.) They spread violence, fear and anxiety among the public, and attacked numerous innocent people. Imam Ali (a.s.) would not tolerate the lawlessness created by the Kharijies. At the time, Imam Ali (a.s.) was preparing for a stronger force to the forces of Mu'awiya again, but decided to handle the new (Kharijies) menace with force first.

The Kharijies gathered at Nahrawan for confrontation with Imam Ali's forces. As usual, Imam

Ali (a.s.) wanted to deal with the matter peacefully and therefore delivered a speech insisting on them (Kharijies) to come to their senses. Upon listening to the speech, a majority of the Kharijies quit the gathering. The remaining ones insisted to carry on with the fight. A battle between the two sides broke out in which almost all Kharijies lost their lives, however some managed to escape. When the battle was over, Imam Ali (a.s.) was looking for someone but he could't find him. People asked him for whom he was searching, and he replied: " Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) told me about this 30 years ago, saying that among these people there will be a man whose forearm will be without bone, will have a hairy round lump on it, and if you pulled at it, it would stretch down to the fingers and when left, it will fill again." People kept looking and finally they saw the body of this man. He was exactly in the same condition as was described by the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

Some of the Kharijies who had escaped from the battle met secretly in Mecca and drew up a plan to assassinate Imam Ali (a.s.) in Kufa, Mu'awiya in Syria, and Amr Ibnil Aas in Egypt. Three fanatics took the responsibility, they were to attack their victims in the morning, the same day, as the would-be victims were going to the mosque to lead the morning prayer. It was the 19th day of Ramadhan, Hijra 40, Ibn Muljim attacked and fatally wounded Imam Ali (a.s.) while he was praying morning salat, whereas Mu'awiya escaped with a light wound of his buttock. Amr Ibnil Aas was ill that day and his replacement was killed by the Khariji. Imam Ali (a.s.), in wounded condition, conferred the Imamah and the reign of the Islamic nation to his 37 year old son Al-Hasan (a.s.)

PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN IMAM AL-HASAN AND MU'AWIYA:

Imam Hasan (a.s.) faced extremely difficult conditions from the start. He observed that fear, anxiety and distress were ever present in Kufa, Basrah, Medina and other towns. The anxiety, uncertainty and insecurity were caused by Mu'awiya's ill dealing of sincere Muslims. Mu'awiya had spread secret agents all over to defame Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Imam Hasan (a.s.) knew that his father Imam Ali (a.s.) had stood like a lion in all difficulties and fought battles against Mu'awiya, but these confrontations had resulted in heavy casualties on both sides. Family devastation on a large scale was visible everywhere. Considering options and all circumstances, Imam Hasan (a.s.) discussed the matter with his brother Imam Husain (a.s.) and other relatives. He revealed to them that in order to end the bloodshed and to provide a reasonable safety and security to the Ummah, he would make a peace agreement with Mu'awiya and abdicate until after Mu'awiya's death. After a few days of careful consideration, Imam Hasan (a.s.) accepted an agreement as per the terms dictated by the Imam and agreed to by Mu'awiya. Four noteworthy terms of this agreement were:

- People of Syria, Iraq, Hijaz, Yemen and other places shall enjoy amnesty against persecution,
- Friends and companions of Imam Ali (a.s.) and all their women and children shall be protected from all dangers,
- Mu'awiya is to immediately stop the use of abusive language with reference to Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) (cursing Imam Ali) after Salat of Jumu'a), and
- Mu'awiya shall not appoint anyone as his successor. Upon Mu'awiya's death Al-Hasan will become Khalifa.

Once the treaty was signed, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and brother Husain (a.s.) moved out of Kufa and

settled in Medina. Over there both Imams lost no time in holding nightly meetings for Islamic discussions. The nightly meetings proved very successful and gained tremendous popularity. More people started to attend, to hear the two Imams giving their fountain of knowledge on Islam and humanity. The reputation of these meetings began to reach to far away places. People from as far away as Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, and other distant areas travelled to Medina to learn about the Islamic values. As years passed, the knowledge thus given started to bear fruits. The number of Islamic scholars multiplied and increased considerably.

In the meantime Mu'awiya, unabashedly elected to disregard the terms of his treaty with Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.). He sent secret agents to terrorize, kidnap, or even kill innocent people specially those who were loyal to Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Instead of helping the needy with the public treasury, Mu'awiya's governors and their surrogates used the public treasury for personal use, freely and excessively as they wished. Freedom suddenly died, and dictatorship took its place. Mu'awiya gathered a very large number of collaborators who unabashedly would do any thing for money.

MU'AWIYA'S PLOT TO POISON IMAM AL- HASAN (a.s.):

It was Mu'awiya's ardent desire to impose his son Yazid (who had been named after his uncle) upon the Muslims by making him the succeeding Khalifa, despite the fact that Yazid was the playboy of the time, with many evil habits including gambling, heavy drinking, and indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh. But the peace agreement signed with Imam Hasan (a.s.) would not permit Mu'awiya to appoint Yazid as his successor, (According to the agreement Imam Hasan (a.s.) would immediately become Khalifa upon Mu'awiya's death). Therefore, it was obvious to Mu'awiya that, if Al-Hasan did not outlive him, Mu'awiya could do as he pleased. Thus Mu'awiya planned to kill Imam Al-Hasan in order to pave the way for his son Yazid to be his successor.

Mu'awiya sent one of his agents to contact Imam Al-Hasan's wife Joda who was the daughter of Al-Ash'ath (once a secret agent for Mu'awiya against Imam Ali in the Battle of Siffin). Joda was asked a small favor, i.e., to put poison in Al-Hasan's food, and in return Mu'awiya would give her a large sum of money and also make her wife of his son Yazid. She found the offer too attractive to ignore, and foolishly agreed to accept it. A few days later, she mixed poison in honey and gave it to the Imam. As soon as the Imam took the poisoned honey he became seriously ill. Sensing that his death was imminent, the Imam designated his brother Al-Husain (a.s.) to be the third Imam of Muslim Ummah. Although Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.) knew he was poisoned, he did not reveal that to anyone but to his brother Al-Husain (a.s.).

Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.) had wished to have his burial by the side of his grandfather, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Imam Husain (a.s.) made all the arrangements to fulfill that wish but Mu'awiya's governor over Medina did not let that happen and used military force to stop it. Imam Al-Hasan was 47 year old when he died of poisoning.

Medina was never the same without Imam Hasan (a.s.). Everyone missed him dearly. People at first did not believe Mu'awiya poisoned Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.), but soon found out the truth.

When Imam Husain (a.s.) was designated the 3rd Imam he was 46 years old. Imam Husain (a.s.) carried on with his mission of teaching Islam as before. A large number of people kept coming to see him and to learn from him. This process continued for several years when people began to hear an ugly rumor that Mu'awiya wanted his son, Yazid, to succeed him.

MU'AWIYA DESIGNATES YAZID AS SUCCESSOR:

Mu'awiya began a campaign to introduce Monarchy into the structure of Islam. To have Monarchy, by force or otherwise is alien to Islam, an innovation in religion, simply not acceptable. Everyone knew that, for Islam does not subscribe to any form of Royalty through inheritance or Monarchy. In Islam all Khalifa appointments are supposed to be Shura.

Nevertheless, Mu'awiya sent his agents to the prominent members of the communities to obtain allegiance of loyalty to his son Yazid. But Yazid was evil, drunkard, incompetent, contemptible, and a pleasure-seeking person. People knew that Yazid was not fit to be Khalifa, so they protested vigorously. There was anger everywhere. Emotions went sky high. To calm people down, at least temporarily, Mu'awiya decided to send his son Yazid to Mecca for the pilgrimage. First Yazid refused to go but later on he did go to Mecca but only after taking alcohol with him as well as a chorus of girls for his entertainment.

MU'AWIYA DIES:

Mu'awiya was getting older day by day. At the age of 75, he became seriously ill. He was nearing death. He lay weak and lifeless as if something was choking and strangling him. He felt tormented, and continuously cried for mercy. He was in terrible pain. He wanted to die but death would not come to him. His conscience tormented him for the calamities that he brought upon the Islamic Ummah and Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Mu'awiya suffered in agony for many days. His suffering continued until he breathed his last. At the time of his death, his 30 year old son Yazid was nowhere near him, he had gone for fun on a hunting trip.

(Please note that Mu'awiya's brother was by the name of Yazid, and he had named his son after his brother.)

YAZID BECOMES RULER:

Upon Mu'awiya's death, Yazid, managed to impose himself on the people and became the Khalifa. At first people refused to accept him as a representative of the Prophet (pbuh) and Islamic Ummah, but Yazid approached people in mosques for their favors. Like his father Mu'awiya, Yazid used all possible means like bribery, coercion, threats, and force to receive the people's acceptance of him as the legitimate ruler. Many people were worried, threats to their lives and livelihood was too menacing, so they grudgingly and reluctantly gave in. But, Imam Husain (a.s.) and his family (who practiced Islam in its true sense), did not give in. As the true representative of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Al-Husain (a.s.) flatly refused accepting Yazid either as a Khalifa or a leader of Islam. Despite Yazid's intimidating military power, the Imam stood firm in his resolve and chose to challenge Banu Umayya's authority.

Yazid commissioned Waleed Ibn Ut'ba, his Governor over Medina, to ask for Imam Husain's allegiance of loyalty or else upon refusal, his head. Waleed invited Imam Al-Husain to a meeting for the purpose. Imam Husain (a.s.) did not give his word at the meeting and decided to leave Medina along with his family to proceed to Mecca. When Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) reached Mecca he received 12,000 letters from Kufa urging him to go to Kufa to be their leader, and be the Khalifa. Imam sent an emissary, his cousin Muslim Ibn Aqeel, to Kufa to ascertain first-hand information about the situation in Iraq. In the mean time Yazid spread a network of informants and secret agents in Mecca to assassinate the Imam during pilgrimage. Imam learned about the

spies, and carefully evaluated the situation in Mecca. Imam Husain (a.s.) knew that Yazid, son of Mu'awiya, had no regard for Islamic values and teachings, that he would do anything to enforce his tyrannical rule. Imam Husain (a.s.) also knew that giving allegiance of loyalty to an imposter like Yazid would certainly place Islam at great jeopardy. Therefore he decided to leave Mecca for Kufa to prepare for a confrontation with Yazid and his forces.

Many friends and relatives urged Imam Husain (a.s.) not to go to Kufa, but he insisted on going. Imam Husain (a.s.) along with family, friends, and companions began the journey, on the 8th of Zilhijja, Hijra 60, toward Kufa, a distance of approximately 1,100 miles, in a long caravan in the blistering heat of summer.

ON THE WAY TO KARBALA:

During the early phase of the journey the caravan met Al-Farazdaq (a famous poet) at a place called al-Sifah. Al-Farazdaq advised the Imam not to go to Kufa because though people's hearts were with him (Imam), their swords would be against him. But the Imam Husain (a.s.) continued with the journey. He received the first letter from his emissary Muslim Ibn Aqeel with good news. The letter indicated that the people were more than ready to welcome the Imam in Kufa and were looking forward to his leadership. Imam Husain (a.s.) decided to send another emissary to Kufa with a message. The caravan kept proceeding toward Kufa. Many days passed but the Imam did not receive any more responses from Muslim Ibn Aqeel.

In Kufa Muslim Bin Aqeel with the help of Mukhtar Al-Thaqafi and Hani Ibn Urwah continued to hold secret meetings with the supporters of the Imam. Within a short time the gatherings started to gain momentum. Yazid through his spies and informants learned about Muslim's successes in Kufa. He appointed the tyrant Ubaidullah Ibn Ziyad to replace al-Nu'man Ibn al-Basheer as Governor of Kufa.

Muslim bin Aqeel was greeted by thousands of people at the Kufa mosque in one of the daily salats. Learning this, the Governor Ibn Ziyad threatened the people with their lives if they attended the next salat. Hardly, any one showed up in the next salat.

Meanwhile, as Al-Husain's caravan got closer to its destination (Kufa), coming to a place called Zubalah, Imam Husain (a.s.) unexpectedly received shocking news. The shocking news was about Muslim Ibn Aqeel and the person who provided him shelter, Hani's Ibn Urwah, both of whom were arrested and beheaded by the Governor Ibn Ziyad. Mukhtar was also arrested and imprisoned and tortured by Ibn Ziyad.

Imam Husain (a.s.) gathered his companions and disclosed to them about the bad news, and said, "Our Shi'a have deserted us, those of you who prefer to leave us may do so freely and without guilt." Becoming scared, some companions left the caravan. Imam Husain (a.s.) continued with the journey along with close companions and family members until he was face to face with 1,000 horsemen led by Hur al-Riyahi representing the enemy. The enemy's army blocked the camps of Imam Husain (a.s.) from advancing. Tension started to rise between the two. The Imam addressed the enemy explaining to them his motives for going to Kufa, that it was in response to the invitation of the people. He even showed them a bagful of letters he received from Kufa. Hur said that he and his men were not the writers of those letters. Imam told them that if they did not like him to advance with the journey, he was prepared to return to Hijaz. Hur replied, "We are commissioned to follow you until we take you to Governor Ibn Ziyad, and suggested to the Imam to go towards a station which is neither Kufa nor Medina." Imam Husain

found the proposal fair and turned the caravan away from Kufa. Hur and his army marched parallel to the Imam. The two sides reached a village called Nainawa where Ibn Ziyad's messenger (Yazid's governor over Kufa) delivered a message to Hur. The message read, "...force Husain to a halt. But let him stop in an open space, without vegetation or water." Hur conveyed the contents of the letter to Imam Husain. The Imam, his family and companions defiantly resumed their journey and reached a place where another enemy force blocked their move and forced them to stop. When Imam Husain learned that the place was called Karbala, he felt he had reached the destination and ordered his camp to be setup. That day was 2nd of Muharram, Hijri 61.

CARVAN REACHED KARBALA:

Upon learning that his army had succeeded in laying a siege around the Imam's camp, Governor Ibn Ziyad sent additional military units to Karbala and appointed Umar Ibn Sa'ad in charge. Imam Husain (a.s.) opened a dialogue with Umar Ibn Sa'ad and convinced him to lift the siege so that the Imam with his family and companions could leave Iraq. Umar Ibn Sa'ad liked the Imam's proposal and sent a message to Governor Ibn Ziyad notifying him about the results of the talks with Imam Husain (a.s.). Ibn Ziyad also found the Imam's proposal acceptable. However before agreeing to it officially, Shimr Bin Dhil-Jawshan, a commander of Yazid's army opposed it strongly. As a result Ziyad wrote a letter to Umar Ibn Sa'ad commanding him to either go to war with Imam Husain (a.s.) or be relieved of his duties as commander of the army and added that Shimr would not only replace him but also despatch Ibn Sa'ad's head to Kufa.

Umar Ibn Sa'ad got the letter. After pondering over the consequences he decided to fight Imam Husain (a.s.). On the 7th day of Muharram he moved his troops closer to the camp and began to surround the Husaini camp. Ibn Sa'ad laid a blockade around the camp to cut it off from access to the river Euphrates, to deprive it of water in a move to force them to surrender.

Two days later, (on the 9th of Muharram), the enemy's military forces closed in on the camp of Imam Husain (a.s.). The Imam asked his brother, Abbas, to talk to Ibn Sa'ad and request a delay of the aggression by one night. Umar Ibn Sa'ad agreed. He ordered his troops to delay the aggression till next morning. Imam Husain and his pious companions spent that night in prayers. During the night the Imam told the companions, "...the enemy is interested in none but me, me alone. I'll be most delighted to permit each and every one of you to go back, and I urge you to do so...." All companions screamed in response, "By Allah, never, never! We will either live with you or die together with you."

ASHURAA:

Finally, the day of Ashuraa, the tenth day of Muharram, dawned upon the soil of Karbala. It was the day when Jihad would be in full bloom, blood would be shed, 72 innocent lives would be sacrificed, and a decisive battle would be won to save Islam and the Ummah.

It had been a few days since the water supply was cut off by the enemy. Children were crying for water, the women were desperate for water, Zainul-Abideen, the son of Imam Husain (a.s.) was sick with fever. The suffering from the thirst was too painful to bear. And despite this, not a single person in the camp made any complaints or even questioned the mission of Imam Husain(a.s.). Each member supported the Imam wholeheartedly and enthusiastically.

On the Ashuraa day morning Imam Husain (a.s.) went out of the camp and saw Umar Ibn Sa'ad mobilizing his troops to start the hostility. He stared at the intimidating army, and as large as it was. Imam Husain (a.s.) showed no signs of compromise. Imam raised his hands in prayer:

"O Allah! It is Thee in whom I trust amid all grief. You are my hope amid all violence. Thou are my refuge and provision in everything that happens to me. How many grievances weaken the heart, leaving me with no means to handle them, during which friends desert me, and enemy rejoices in it. I lay it before Thee and complain of it to Thee, because of my trust in Thee, Thee alone. You relieve me of it and remove it from me. Thou are the Master of all Grace, the Essence of Goodness, and the Ultimate Resort of all Desire."

Before the actual engagement was to take place, Hur, the previous commander of Yazid's army enemy, felt his conscience violently stirring. He was in turmoil. Upon realizing the gravity of the situation, he suddenly broke away from Umar Ibn Sa'ad's camp (along with two others). They rushed toward Imam Husain (a.s.) to join his camp. Hur's heart was jumping with joy, his mind relieved of an agonizing tension. Hur's defection worried Umar Ibn Sa'ad very much, lest others should do the same. So Umar Ibn Sa'ad threw an arrow in the air to indicate the start of the battle. This was the onset of a catastrophe and a tragic event that Mu'awiya had once conceived to happen.

THE BATTLE OF KARBALA:

Imam Husain's supporters insisted on being the first to fight. Therefore, they took the brunt of the enemy attack. The battle was ferocious. Within a short time the Imam's supporters slay a large number of the enemy fighters, they were on the offensive and the enemy on the defensive. This caused apprehension and confusion in the enemy military, the 72 of Husain's against the 5,000 of the enemy (some estimated them at 30,000) being on the defensive. Worried and nervous, the enemy commander-in-chief, Umar Ibn Sa'ad ordered his army not only to set fire to the Imam's tents (which were occupied mostly by frightened women and children. Umar Ibn Sa'ad also reinforced his fighters with more troops.

The heroes began to fall, they were men of valor welcoming martyrdom, they fell one after another, for the enemy was overwhelming in number. By noon time the Imam stopped the fight to perform the noon Salat. By this time those left were mainly his family and a few supporters. They performed the Salat together. Two supporters were guarding the performers of Salat. The enemy was standing still, watching!! When Salat was finished one of the guards fell dead; there were 17 arrows in his back.

Ali Akbar, Imam Husain's son obtained permission to fight and dashed toward the enemy. He engaged them in fierce fighting, falling on them like thunder, slaying numerous fighters. He continued to move forward, deep inside the enemy. The enemy was overpowering in number, it overwhelmed him cutting him with swords and spears, and his body became nothing but wounds gushing blood, until he died. Imam Husain (a.s.) rushed to the area and picked up the wounded body and brought it to the appalled camp. His sister and others in the camp were horrified and shocked at the scene.

Abbas and four other brothers of Imam Husain (a.s.) went to fight. They also engaged the enemy in a fierce fighting, almost doing the impossible. Abbas went toward the river to bring some water for the thirsty children. While he was returning on his horse with the water, he was attacked by a large horde of the enemy, overwhelming and severely wounding him. As much as he tried Abbas could not save the water. He fell from his horse and breathed his last.

There after went the sons of Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.) and Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) and their cousins went to the battle field. They were all in their teens but each stood bravely. Believing in the mission, facing a formidable enemy, they showed no less enthusiasm in their quest to embrace martyrdom.

AL-HUSAIN AND HIS BABY:

By the afternoon of the day of Ashuraa, 70 brave persons had sacrificed their lives in Karbala to save Islam. All had fought under nerve racking conditions, severe thirst, dehydration, exhaustion, and agonizing feeling of what would happen to the family of the Prophet (pbuh) afterwards. Imam Husain (a.s.) endured all that and more, for he saw all his beloved ones brutally cut to pieces, including children. Remaining the only one, Imam Husain (a.s.) was to face the enemy head on. Precisely at that moment Imam Husain (a.s.) heard his baby crying incessantly, agonizing because of the thirst. Imam Husain's love for his family was unbound, especially for a suffering baby. He held the six months old baby, his youngest son (Ali Asghar) in his arms, and appealed to the enemy fighters for some water for the baby. Imam wanted to awaken their conscience and stir their human feelings but the stone-hearted enemy, instead of giving water, zoomed an arrow toward the agonizing baby and killed him instantly. Imam Husain (a.s.) was shocked. He felt an unbearable wave of pain. The sight of the martyred baby in his arms was agonizingly painful. He filled his palm with the blood of the baby, and threw it upwards toward the sky, complaining to Allah The Almighty,

"O' Allah, O' my Lord! My consolation is the fact that Thou in Thine Majesty are witnessing what I am going through."

AL-HUSAIN BY HIMSELF:

Imam Husain (a.s.) was alone, one man against a large force of thousands. After conferring Immama to son Zainul Abedin, and saying good bye to other family members, Imam Husain (a.s.) proceeded to battle with the enemy. He fought bravely, and kept fighting, receiving many wounds in the process. Thousands of enemy fighters were surrounding him but none dared to move toward him. The silence was broken when Shimr screamed for an attack, then screamed again, threatening, and in response they attacked collectively, and one sword fell on Imam Husain's left wrist and deeply cut his left hand. The blood gushed like a fountain. Another sword was soon to follow and it hit his upper back. Imam Husain (a.s.) felt numb as he fell to the ground, bleeding profusely. He was near the point of shock, even though staggering he tried to stand by leaning on his sword. Imam decided to say his last prayer. He put his head on the ground for sujud. The prayer was still continuing that Shimr whose mother was a disbeliever, came forward and severed Imam Husain(a.s.)'s noble head from the body, the noble head was kissed often by the Prophet (pbuh)!

Umar Ibn Sa'ad ordered the horsemen to trample upon the smeared bodies of Imam Husain and all others who were killed, to disfigure them even further, as if the wounds, the bloodied bodies, and the headless forms were not enough.

For three days the holy bodies of the martyrs were left lying in the desert of Karbala. The people of the tribe of Banu-Asad, who were not far away from the battle field, helped bury them.

The brutality did not end with end of the battle. Umar Ibn Sa'ad and his forces (representing Banu Umayya) took the women and children as prisoners in shackles, put them on camels, and proceeded in a caravan from Karbala to Kufa. At the forefront of the procession were the heads of Imam Husain (a.s.) and his followers on the tip of spears. The scene was grotesque and pathetic. This was all that was left of the beloved family of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), in such a deplorable unimaginable condition, all caused by people who called themselves..... Muslims!

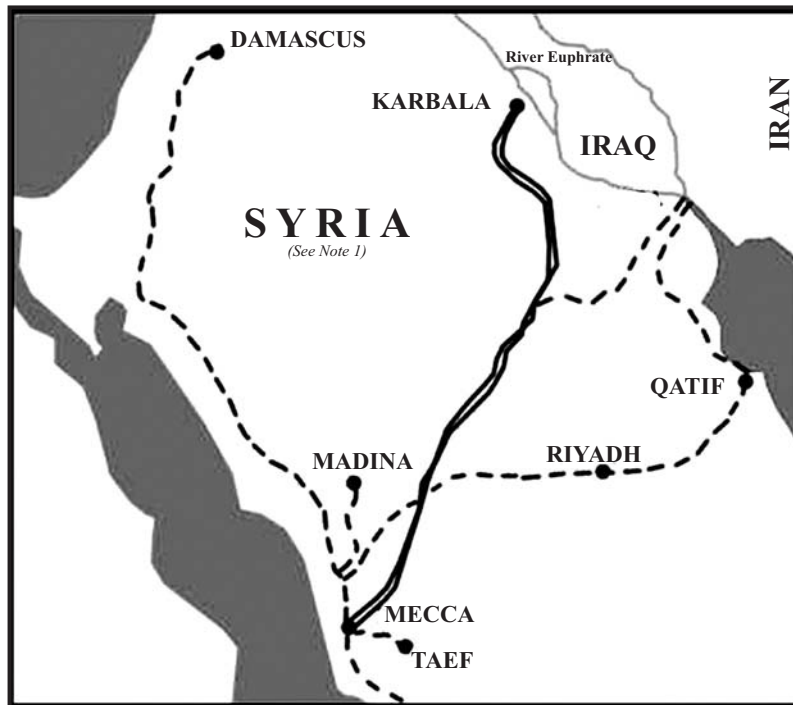
Detail of events occurred afterwards are given in Part 2 of the book.

LESSONS FROM THE TRAGEDY OF KARBALA:

Karbala is the cruelest tragedy humanity has ever seen. Yet, the startling (though appalling) events in Karbala proved like a powerful volcano that shook the very foundation of Muslims, it stirred their consciousness, ignorant and learned alike. For sincere Muslims, Karbala turned into a triumph. The tragic event became the very beacon of light to always remind Muslims to practice Islam honestly, sincerely and non violently, to do what is right irrespective of consequences, and fear no one except Allah The Almighty.

On the other hand, Yazid never achieved what he and his father had planned to. Within three years, Allah's wrath fell upon Yazid, causing him to die at the age of 33 years. Within a few decades the rule of Banu Umayya crumbled and came to an end.

The tragedy of Karbala taught humanity a lesson that standing for the truth and fighting unto death for it is more honorable and valuable than submitting to the wrongful, especially when the survival of Islam is at stake.



Note 1: Fourteen Hundred years ago Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia were part of one country named SYRIA.

Distance between Medina and Karbala about 1,100 miles.
Distance between Ibn Ziyad in Kufa and Yazid in Damascus about 750 miles.
Average travel by camel per day: 30-45 miles.

GLOSSARY

A'isha: Widow of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and a leader during Jamal Confrontation.

Abbas: Brother of Imam Husain (a.s.), flag-bearer during Karbala.

Abu Sufyan: Leader of Banu Umayya, Mu'awiya's father, was inveterate enemy of Islam.

AbuMusa Ash'ari: Governor fired by Imam Ali (a.s.), was selected to arbitrate after Siffin.

Ahlul Bayt (a.s.): The household of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), consisting of Imam Ali (a.s.), Fatima (a.s.), Imam al-Hasan (a.s.), Imam al-Husain (a.s.) and the 9 Imams descending from al-Husain (a.s.)(peace be upon them all).

AlFarazdaq: A famous poet.

AlNu'man Ibn alBasheer: Governor of Kufa, replaced by Ibn Ziyad through Yazid's order.

Ali Akbar: Son of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.), martyred in Karbala.

Ali Asghar: Baby of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.), martyred in Karbala.

Ammar Ibn Yasir: A famous highly revered Companion, on Imam Ali's side, killed in Siffin.

Amr Ibnil Aas: A cunning deceptive person, in Mu'awiya's camp, arbitrator after Siffin.

Ash'ath Ibn Qais: A spy General in Imam Ali's armed forces, also the father of Joda (wife of Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.)).

BaniAsad: The tribe that buried bodies of Al-Husain (a.s.) and the other martyrs of Karbala.

Basrah: An important town in south of Iraq.

Benu Umayya: A clan known to be power hungry, greedy, and materialistic, of Mu'awiya.

Byzantines: The Christian superpower ruling over Syria and Egypt that lost to Islam.

Hani Ibn Urwah: The man who helped Muslim Ibn Aqeel in Kufa and lost his life for the cause.

Hur Ibn Yazid alRiyahi: The Commander of the enemy force who defected to the side of Imam Husain (a.s.).

Ibn Muljim: The killer of Imam Ali (a.s.) while Imam was performing Salat Al-Subh.

Ibn Ziyad: The Governor over Kufa responsible for the atrocities of Karbala.

Imam: The 12 Divinely Commissioned leaders of the Ummah after the Prophet (pbuh).

Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.): The second Divinely Commissioned Imam, and elder brother of Imam Husain (a.s.).

Imam Ali (a.s.): The first Divinely Commissioned Imam, and the father of Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.).

Imam Husain (a.s.): The third Divinely Commissioned Imam, hero of Karbala, brother of Imam Hasan (a.s.).

Iraq: Country in which Imam Husain (a.s.) suffered at the hands of its military.

Jamal: Battle imposed on Imam Ali (a.s.) by A'isha, Talha, and Zubair.

Joda: Wife of Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.), who poisoned him when enticed by Mu'awiya.

Karbala: The site of the atrocities committed against Al-Husain (a.s.), his family and devotees, but Karbala saved Islam from disintegration in an indirect way.

Khalifa: Head of state after the Prophet (pbuh).

Kharijies: The outsiders who turned against Imam Ali (a.s.), then killed him while he was praying.

Medina: Famous town of the Prophet (pbuh) in Arabia.

Mu'awiya: Of Banu Umayya clan, brother of Yazid, also father of the infamous Yazid of Karbala.

Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr: Brother of A'isha who fought on Imam Ali's side during Battle of Jamal.

Mukhtar AlThaqafi: Loyalist of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)

Muslim Ibn Aqeel: Cousin of Al-Husain and his emissary to Kufa, killed by Ibn Ziyad.

Omar: The second Khalifa who appointed Mu'awiya as the Governor of Syria.

Quraish: The clan of the Prophet (pbuh).

Shimr Bin DhilJawshan: The killer of Imam Husain (a.s.), his name will remain in infamy.

Siffin: Battle imposed on Imam Ali (a.s.) by Mu'awiya.

Syria: Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine nowadays, used to be called Syria.

Talha: Sahaabi, leader during Jamal Confrontation, killed during that battle.

Tulaqaa': Denigrating term used by Muhammad (pbuh) for the disbelievers who had to become Muslims after Mecca was triumphed over.

Umar Ibn Sa'ad: Commander-in-chief of the military forces against Imam Husain (a.s.) in Karbala.

Umme Habiba: Sister of Mu'awiya, daughter of Abu Sufyan, wife of the Prophet (pbuh).

Umme Kulsum: Daughter of Imam Ali (a.s.)

Uthman: The third Khalifa killed by the protesting Muslims.

Waleed Ibn Ut'ba: Governor over Medina when Yazid son of Mu'awiya declared his rulership

Yazid son of Abu Sufyan: Brother of Mu'awiya, governor of Syria for a few years until he died.

Yazid son of Mu'awiya: Son of Mu'awiya, the infamous despicable ruler, cause of Karbala tragedy.

Zainab: Sister of Al-Husain (a.s.), a leader of Karbala survivors, losing her teenage children Aun and Muhammad for the cause.

Zubair: Sahaabi, leader during Jamal Confrontation, refused to fight during that battle.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

1. Maulana Syed Rafiq H. Naqvi, Khutbas of Jumu'a Salaat, Idara-e-Jaferia, Burtonsville, MD
2. Maulana Amir M. Faizi, Muharram Majlis, Idara-e-Jaferia, Burtonsville, MD.
3. Ahlul Bayt and Al-Khulafaa Al-Rashidoon By Dr. A. S. Hashim
4. Al-Balagh Foundation: Ahlul Bait #5, 1993 (Iran)

KARBALA
BEFORE AND AFTER

PART II

ZAINAB, DAUGHTER OF ALI (A.S.)

THE SAVIOR OF MUSLIM UMMAH THROUGH HER MAGNIFICENT LEADERSHIP....

THE READERS WILL NOTICE THAT YAZID, DESPITE HIS ENORMOUS WEALTH AND MIGHTY POWER, COULD NOT WIN THE BATTLE OF KARBALA.

IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.)'S GUIDANCE, AND SAYEDA ZAINAB (S.A.)'S PATIENCE, PERSEVERANCE, AND MAGNIFICENT LEADERSHIP PULLED MUSLIM UMMAH OUT OF YAZID'S EVIL AND TERRIFIED INFLUENCE, AND PUT THEM TO THE RIGHT PATH...

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KARBALA

BEFORE AND AFTER

PART II

ZAINAB BINTE ALI (A.S.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
01. INTRODUCTION	18
02. SAYYEDAH ZAINAB'S (A.S.) LIFE HISTORY	18
03. SHAM-E-GHARIBAN	20
04. CAPTIVES JOURNEY TO KUFA	21
05. CAPTIVES JOURNEY TO DAMASCUS	26
06. SAYYEDAH ZAINAB (A.S.)'S SERMON IN DARBAR-E-YAZID	27
07. IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.) FACE TO FACE WITH YAZID	30
08. SAYYEDAH SAKEENA (A.S.) DIES	32
09. KARBALA SURVIVORS RELEASE FROM PRISON	32
10. AHLUL BAYT'S RETURN TO MEDINA	33
11. RAMPAGE OF MEDINA AND MECCA	34
12. IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.) GUIDES UMMAH THROUGH SUPPLICATIONS	35
13. MUKHTAR'S RELEASE FROM PRISON	36
14. MUKHTAR BECOMES GOVERNOR OF KUFA	37
15. MUKHTAR AVENGES THE PERPETRATORS	38
16. IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.) POISONED	40
17. GLOSSARY	41
18. SOURCES OF INFORMATION	46

INTRODUCTION.

This article is about the family of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). It explains the sufferings, pain and grief borne by women and children during the battle of Karbala and afterwards.

The article briefly unfolds the events that occurred mostly in Kufa and Damascus following the martyrdom of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.), nineteen of his family members (see names in Glossary), and over fifty of his companions on 10th Muharram, Hijrah 61 in Karbala. The survivors included Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.), women of the martyrs, and children including Imam Al-Baaqir (a.s.).

In Karbala, the first Sham-e-Ghariban agonized the bereft survivors with frightful circumstances of terrible treatment, whereas Yazid's army spent the evening jubilantly celebrating what they perceived to be their victory. Most of the tents of Al-Husain's camp were filled with heart rending cries of agony over the losses of the loved ones. The evening had hardly progressed when Yazid's soldiers entered the tents and looted the occupants. They snatched away women's chadar (veil) and jewelry. After setting their tents on fire, they took everyone (including the ailing Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.)) as captives.

The captives were treated harshly. They were placed on bare back of camels, and traveled through a long exhaustive journey from Karbala to Kufa and then Kufa to Damascus (a distance of about 700 miles). During the journey, the women were without their hijab (head-covers), while ahead of them the captors were carrying the severed heads of Al-Husain and others hoisted atop spears. The Muslim Ummah of Syria, once noted for its loyalty to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) also joined the army. Yazid's atrocious rule had prevailed over the Ummah through the power of their media and rapid means of communication.

The article narrates the sufferings of Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) in captivity, and deals with her remarkable leadership, patience, and perseverance, as well as her eloquent speeches delivered in Kufa and Damascus. Through her speeches she succeeded in exposing the infamy of Yazid's notorious rule. Through her speeches she brought alive the high status of the family of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and their struggle against the forces of evil, thus waking up the Ummah to its senses. The article addresses the circumstances that led to the captives' freedom and their return journey to Karbala and Medina, where large numbers of people joined them in their grief and mourning.

After learning the truth, the people of Medina hailed Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) as a savior of Islam, and Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) as a savior of the Ummah. In the end, the article highlights several Muslim groups expressing fury over the Karbala massacre, stood up to punish Yazid for his criminal acts. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) showed his wisdom and far sightedness by opting to stay aloof of the groups. However, he did not hesitate to quietly bless Mukhtar al-Thaqafi for his vow to avenge the Karbala perpetrators. The article briefly mentions who Mukhtar was, and how did he accomplish his difficult mission.

ZAINAB (S.A.)'S LIFE HISTORY:

Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) the daughter of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Fatima al-Zahra (s.a.), was born in Medina on Shaban 1, Hijrah 6. She had two older brothers, Al-Hasan and Al-Husain. One younger sister Umm Kulthoom was born about two years later.

From an early age, Zainab became very attached to her brother Al-Husain. One day Fatima Al-Zahra (s.a.) described the intense love of (Zainab to Al-Husain), to her father the Prophet (pbuh). The Holy Prophet took a deep breath, his complexion changed, and said with moistened eyes, "O Fatima! Zainab will be confronted with a thousand and one calamities, and will go through great hardships in Karbala."

Zainab loved her grandfather the Prophet dearly. When the Holy Prophet passed away she was only four years old. After her grandfather's death, Zainab faced a period of more distress and hardship. Within a few months, her mother Fatima (s.a.) delivered the Fadak (see Glossary) sermon in Medina, and Zainab was by her side. At the time she was 5 years old, yet she remembered the sermon in its entirety. She narrated the sermon word by word so clearly that the people of Banu Hashim remembered it by heart.

It wasn't too long before her beloved mother Fatima Al-Zahra (s.a.) passed away. Her mother's death was felt acutely and made Zainab very lonely. After some time, Imam Ali (a.s.) considering the loneliness of the children, decided to marry again. He married Umm al-Baneen, to take care of the family. She was a devoted woman of piety who encouraged Zainab in her learning of Quran. While still a young girl, Zainab was known for helping others who were poor, homeless, or orphans.

Sayedah Zainab (s.a.) was married at an early age to her cousin Abdullah Ibn Ja'far. Abdullah grew up to be a handsome young man with pleasant manners and was known for his generous hospitality towards guests and selfless generosity to the poor and needy. Although Zainab's husband was a man of means, she preferred to live a modest life rather than a life of luxury.

Zainab who was also known as Zainab bint Ali (a.s.) was an exemplary woman of great ability, intelligence, courage, and perseverance. She and her husband were always charitable to the needy people. Abdullah and Zainab had deep love and understanding for each other. Abdullah always praised his wife saying she was the very best. Together they had five children, four of whom were sons (Ali, Aun, Muhammad, and Abbas) and one of which was a daughter (Umm Kulthoom).

Zainab was also nicknamed Zahidah (ascetic الزاهدة) and Abidah (devotee العابدة) because of her selflessness and piety. She found little of interest in the glitter of the world, always preferring the bliss and comfort of the Next World over that of this world. She used to say that for her, the life of this world was not but as a resting place to relieve fatigue along a journey. Humble and of high morals, her main concern was to strive to please Allah the Al Mighty.

When Imam Ali (a.s.) moved to Kufa as the Khalifa, Zainab and her husband Abdullah also went to Kufa to live with him. The respected women of Kufa requested Imam Ali through their husbands to allow them to benefit from the knowledge of Zainab. Imam Ali complied with their requests and the interested women learned from Zainab the expounding wisdom of the Holy Quran. Her circles of discussion, being previously in Medina or now in Kufa, were quite popular. They were well attended, and eagerly sought after, and the discussions included many subjects. Her store of Islamic knowledge was vast, and she was generous to confer it to others.

Zainab was fully aware and intensely interested in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s dealings with the despots, oppressors and insurgents of the Ummah. Be it at Siffin, Khariji encounter, the troublesome times with Mu'awiya, Zainab had the presence of mind and empathy as to share her feelings with her family and her father. However, one evil person (Ibn Muljim ابن ملجم) conspired to kill Imam Ali,

for he wanted to avenge the loss of so many Kharijis at the hand of Imam Ali. He hit Ali (a.s.) on his head with a poisoned sword, while the Imam was in Sujood of Morning prayer in the mosque of Kufa, and that was on the 21 Ramadhan, 40H, the night of Power (Leilatul Qadr (ليلة القدر)). The wound was serious and when Imam Ali's conditions worsened, all family members (specifically Zainab) were keenly listening to the last advice. His loss was felt most acutely, not only by the society but especially so by his family members. Before his martyrdom, Imam Ali (a.s.) had told his son-in-law, Abdullah not to prevent Zainab from going on a journey with her brother Imam Al-Husain. Accordingly, in 60H, when she found out that Imam Al-Husain was leaving Medina for Mecca to begin his eventful journey, Zainab decided to immediately join Al-Husain, and right away she bid farewell to her husband and children. Later, while still in Mecca, Abdullah took two of his grown up children to join Imam Husain: they were Muhammad and Aun. They left Medina for Mecca specifically for the purpose. Imam Husain (a.s.) asked Abdullah to stay behind, however.

In Medina, Zainab was known as the shining star in the history of Islam. Because of her commitment to pure Islam, and her love of justice, humanity, and virtue, and her fight against tyranny and oppression, she was divinely put to a test in Karbala and during its aftermath. Her ecstasy was Islam, and her agony was what was against Islam.

SHAM-E-GHARIBAN:

On the day of Ashuraa, the 56 year old Zainab watched how wantonly the enemy slay the loved ones: Al-Husain, her 5 other brothers, her many nephews some of whom were teenagers, and a few month old baby. They were slain in front of her very eyes along with the brave companions of her brother. What a devastating feeling! Zainab was busily figuring out how to lead, how to collect, and how to help the remaining of the Prophet's family: women, children including Imam Al-Baaqir, a 4 Yr old. The tents were loud with cries of the frightened children and women, the survivors. No adult male was left to look after them except Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), who was seriously ill. Zainab bint Ali (a.s.) leaving her own grief and emotions aside, shouldered the most agonizing and difficult responsibility. She gave solace, offered condolences, directed, and helped the bereaved women as a lioness toward her babes. She assembled them, gave them consolation and firm support, more so to the children.

Still watching, she saw Omar ibn Sa'd dispatching ten volunteers to trample with their horses on the bodies of Imam Al-Husain and other martyrs, as if the death of Al-Husain and his companions was not enough. Shimr came to the tents (along with a number of his soldiers) for the purpose of killing the son of Al-Husain (Zainul Abideen). Since he was ill, Shimr's companions objected and Omar ibn Sa'd came after them, reprimanded Shimr, and turned him out of the tents and said, "Ali ibn Husain is an ill man and he cannot do a thing, leave him alone." The soldiers turned toward the tents to loot the women and children. They snatched the women's chadar and golden jewelry and stripped off their head coverings. They set fire to some of the tents, which alarmed the women and frightened the children so much as to run out of the tents in different directions. It was a scene of utter atrocity. The circumstances put the leadership in the hands of Zainab (s.a.), the woman with the spine of steel.

Against the brutal and frightening background at Al Husain's camp, the other side was congratulating each other! At the enemy camp (very close by), Omar ibn Sa'd (the head of the army), along with Shimr, Harmala, and others celebrated the occasion, beating drums and blowing bugles.

For Zainab, the scene of the enemy was an utter sacrilege creating the biggest insult to Islam.

She went to her nephew Zainul Abideen, now the Imam of the time, and asked him whether to remain in the burning tents or be out without head cover. The Imam replied that it was mandatory religiously to save their lives. Therefore, Zainab first helped Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) to move out of the burning tent, then gathered the women and children and guided them to a safer spot.

When all of them got out of burning tents, the heads of women's of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and their companions were without hijab in front Omar ibn Sa'd and his soldiers. It was a humiliating and intolerable condition for them. Sakeena the youngest daughter of Al-Husain (a.s.) asked for her head cover but in response she was slapped on her face.

Hur's wife had some bread and water, and she came to offer it to Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) and others. Zainab embraced Hur's wife and offered her condolences (since she had just lost her husband fighting for Al Husain). Zainab looked at the water offered and said it is the same water that was cut off to Imam Al-Husain (a.s.), his companions, and the women and children for three days. She raised her hands and prayed to Allah asking for courage and endurance. As a courtesy, she took the bread and water and shared it with the widows and orphans. When she gave water to the frightened children, she suddenly noticed one child was missing. It was Al-Husain's daughter, Sakeena. Zainab, very distraught by now, ran all around to search for her but did not find her. However, not too far in the battle field she heard gasps of sobbing. She ran to the area and found Sakeena clinging to the headless body of her father Imam Husain (a.s.) and crying, "Oh father, my dear father, why do you not listen to me? Oh father why do you not speak to me? Oh get up and see that our tents are on fire!"

Zainab took the terrified Sakeena in her arms, wiped her tears off, and brought her back where other women and children were anxiously waiting, with worried looks on their faces.

Zainab could not resist thinking about the tragic and horrendous events that took place just a few hours ago, including the martyrdom of her two sons before her very eyes, and the martyrdom of her brother's children, teenagers and preteen, and more importantly, the martyrdom of her brothers: Imam Al-Husain, Al-Abbas and three of his brothers (see Glossary), along with the martyrdom of his faithful companions. These tragedies were so deeply etched in her mind and so shocking that she could not take a sip of water, even though she was very thirsty.

As the evening progressed, Omar ibn Sa'd approached the terrified survivors (altogether 55, see Note 1), and took them as captives. Among the prisoners were Zainab (s.a.), her sister Umm Kulthoom, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.)'s three young sons, Imam Al-Husain (a.s.)'s two daughters, and the martyrs' widows and orphans. As the night descended, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) lay on the ground surrounded by surviving widows and orphans. There was no fire, no light, all dark except a moon that cast its dull light.

Note 1. Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) caravan that arrived in Karbala included 128 persons of which 73 persons (including one infant) were martyred in Karbala leaving 55 survivors.

CAPTIVES' JOURNEY TO KUFA:

On the following day, Omar ibn Sa'd and his soldiers buried the bodies of all their soldiers who were killed in the battle. Afterwards, the members of the Holy Prophet's family and other women and children were chained and placed on bare camel backs to travel to Kufa to be presented to the Governor, Obaidullah ibn Ziyad (also known as Ibn Ziyad). While on their way, they passed through the battlefield to witness a heart-rending sight. It was the bodies of the martyrs, cut in

pieces, dusty and bloodied, wounded, without heads, laying on the sand. The enemy being so merciless had neither buried them, (although they had buried their own dead), nor gave us an opportunity to bury our loved ones. The scene of carnage was such that Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was on the verge of death himself. Noticing his state, Zainab (s.a.) said to him,

"O you who are a reminder of my grandfather and father, what has happened to you for I see that you are about to lose your life?" He replied:

"Oh Aunt! how can I be otherwise when I see that the bodies of my father, uncles, brothers and cousins are lying on the ground neglected, while their clothes have been pilfered, and there is no arrangement for shrouding and burying them."

Zainab then openly lamented over the murders of her beloved brother and family members along with his brave companions, as well as the survivors' sufferings and captivity .

Omar ibn Sa'd had entrusted the severed heads of Al-Husain, his sons, and the other martyrs to different tribal chiefs so that on the way people would see that various tribes had taken part in the battle and none would dare to interrupt their march. The captives were riding on camels without saddles, their faces unveiled for all to see, while ahead of them their arrogant captors were carrying the severed heads of their loved ones atop spears.

The terrifying journey and heat of the desert exhausted them. When they reached Kufa they were forced to march through public roads and its streets. Suddenly the camel on which Sakeena and Zainab were seated stopped near a house. Zainab's eyes fell on Sakeena and immediately knew that she had something to say. She asked Sakeena and Sakeena answered, "Oh aunt, I want to request you for something but it is impossible for you to fulfill". When Zainab insisted, Sakeena replied, "Oh aunt, I am so parched I do not think I can endure my thirst anymore". Sakeena's words were heard by women who, from the tops of their houses, could see the holy caravan march clearly. Among these women, a kind lady got up immediately from the crowd and rushed home to bring water for Sakeena. But when she came near the camel she said to Zainab that she wanted the thirsty child to pray for her when she tasted the water. Upon hearing this, Zainab prevented Sakeena from tasting the water and said to her, "Oh! Sakeena, first fulfill this lady's request." Zainab then asked the lady what did she want Sakeena to pray for. The lady answered, "My first wish is that my children may never be orphans like you. Please pray for me, oh dear child, because I see that you are an orphan and I am aware that God always listens to the prayer of an orphan." Sakeena raised her hands and prayed for the lady.

Then Zainab asked the lady about her second wish. The lady answered, "My second desire is to visit Medina. Please pray to God to give me the opportunity to visit the holy city." On hearing the name of Medina, Zainab asked the lady why she wanted to go to Medina. The lady answered, it was to visit the Holy Prophet (pbuh)'s grave and to meet Fatima bint Muhammad. Zainab replied, "But don't you know Fatima bint Muhammad is no longer alive?" The lady answered, "So what? I have also served her daughters, Zainab bint Ali and Umm Kulthoom bint Ali. I want to go to Medina to have my last chance and honor to meet them." Then Zainab asked her one final question.

"Oh Mu'mina (believer), if you see Zainab bint Ali would you recognize her?" The woman answered immediately, "Of course I would." Zainab then revealed her grieving face and cried, "Then your prayer has been answered. Behold Umm Habiba, it's me Zainab bint Ali, then why don't you recognize me? Don't you recognize us all?" and they cried!

The captives resumed their journey to Kufa. Wherever they stopped, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) and Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) discovered that the masses knew little about the events of the previous days in Karbala. So, they took the opportunity to inform the people that they were the very family of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and how the governor Ibn Ziyad had dealt them the most demeaning and inhumane treatment.

As tough as it was, Zainab and Umm Kulthoom couldn't help but compare the seat of power in the palace of Kufa, as it was theirs during the Khilaafah of Imam Ali (a.s.), their father, and now it is in the hands of the tyrannical Ibn Ziyad. They are now treated as captives as if they had committed crimes. How painful it was, and what a mere 20 years' difference can make!

It was nighttime when they arrived in Kufa, and the palace of Ibn Ziyad was shut, and the captives were forced to camp outside the palace. When Ibn Ziyad was informed of their arrival the next day, he commanded to invite all of Kufa residents to attend without distinction. The head of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) was placed on a tray near the court chair, and so were the heads of the other martyrs.

In anticipation of a joyful celebration, the citizens of Kufa poured into the streets and market place while the music of victory was heard as the captives arrived. But there were a few who guessed the truth, and they looked on with downcast eyes. One woman, upon recognizing Zainab surrounded by a group of unveiled women, ran into her house and brought them head covers and sheets with which to cover their bodies. But the enemy guards took them away, not allowing them to preserve their modesty.

Among the onlookers there were some who truly knew what had actually happened, they cried in alarm and wept Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) with tears in her eyes, asked them to be quiet and listen. She spoke loudly with piercing eloquence and meaningful insight, she said:

"Praise be to Allah and blessings be on my grandfather Muhammad and his purified and chosen progeny,"

"So now, O people who deceive, forsake and contrive, it is you who weep. May Allah not stop your tears and may your chests burn incessantly with the fire of grief and sorrow. Your example is that of a woman who assiduously prepares a strong rope and then untwines it herself, wasting her own hard labor."

"You swear such false oaths which bear no truthfulness at all. Beware that you have nothing except vain talk, false pride, mischief, malice, evil, rancor, falsehood, and smooth talk. Beware that your position is that of slave-maids and purchased girls who are but the meanest beings."

"Your hearts are full of enmity and rancor. You are like the vegetation that grows on filthy soil and is yet green, or like the mortar applied unto graves."

"You should know that you have perpetrated a very morbid deed and that you have prepared evil provision for your next life, because of which Allah's anger is against you and His wrath would fall upon you."

"Now you are crying aloud and wailing over my brother! Yes, cry, because it behooves you to cry. Yes, weep profusely and laugh less, because you have earned

the shame of killing the Imam of the age. The stain of his blood is now on your clothes and you cannot remove it, nor can you secure acquittal from the charge of killing the son of the last Prophet of Allah, the Prince of the Youthful in Paradise. You have killed a person who was your support, the knowledgeable of the Sunnah and the ultimate arbitrator at the time of your mutual disputations. He was the basis of your talks and actions. He was your nexus of refuge in the event of hardship."

"Oh people! Know that you have been guilty of the worst crime in the world and have prepared the worst provision for the Day of Judgment. Curses be upon you and may destruction overtake you. Your efforts have gone wasted and you have been ruined. You have transacted a losing trade. You have become the victim of Allah's wrath and have fallen into disgrace and degradation."

"O people of Kufa, woe upon you. Do you realize which piece of Muhammad's heart you have severed, which pledge you have broken, whose blood you have shed, and whose honor you have desecrated? You have certainly committed such a crime because of which the sky may fall down on the earth, the earth may crack and mountains crumble to pieces. By killing your Imam you have committed the most evil act of rebellion and heedlessness. In view of all these acts would you wonder if blood should rain down from the sky? In any case you should mind that the chastisement of the Next World will be severe. At that juncture there will be no one to help you. Do not regard the time and opportunity given you by Allah as small and unimportant, and do not be satisfied with it because if Allah is not quick in acting it does not imply that He is unable. For Him there is no fear that the time of vengeance is passing away. Allah is certainly keeping watch over you."

People were moved, stirred emotionally, and without appealing to sentiments of pity, Zainab exposed to them the reality of their selves. Their eyes that looked forward to celebrate were now downcast with guilt by the truthful force of her distinct style and eloquent speech.

Zainab (s.a.) along with her entourage entered the government palace with which she was quite familiar. In its audience hall, her father, (Imam Ali) had dispensed justice during his Khilaafah 20 years ago, and her sons had played there and her brothers had been accorded great respect by the people there. By now, although she was shabbily dressed, and her head was uncovered, she entered with awe-inspiring dignity and took her place in silence.

Ibn Ziyad, the governor, was taken aback at her appearance, and enquired who she was. Zainab ignored him, and it was left to someone else to inform him of her identity. Enraged at her defiant attitude, Ibn Ziyad addressed her, "Allah be praised! Your brother and your kinsmen are dead and their false claims have come to naught."

Zainab replied:

"It was Allah's wish that they should be martyred, and they met their deaths valiantly. If this was your heart's desire then you must indeed be content today. But you have killed those whom the Prophet (pbuh) held upon his knee when they were children and whose play filled him with joy. Soon you will stand with them before Allah and they will demand justice. Beware the day of reckoning."

It seemed to all, that Zainab spoke so forcefully that her voice resembled the voice of her father, Imam Ali (a.s.)

Taken aback, the arrogant and vindictive Ibn Ziyad turned to Zainul Abideen (who was still sick), and he asked: "What is your name?"

Zainul Abideen answered, "Ali, son of Al Husain." Ibn Ziyad retorted, "Was not Ali Ibn Al Husain slain by Allah?" Imam Zainul Abideen answered, "My brother's name was the same as mine, and he was slain by Ibn Ziyad's soldiers."

Ibn Ziyad retorted to intimidate him, "But Ali was killed by Allah." Zainul Abideen then quoted the Holy Quran"

الله يتوفى الانفس حين موتها والتي لم تمت في منامها فيسك التي قضى عليها الموت ويرسل
الاخرى الى اجل مسمى ان في ذلك لايات لقوم يفتكرون

"Allah takes away the souls at death" Surah 39, Ayah 42

meaning Allah does not kill. This silenced Ibn Ziyad, but angered him to the boiling point so as to order Zainul Abideen be put to death. Zainab interceded immediately screaming in a daring manner, "Then kill me with him if you so wish."

Imam Zainul Abideen retorted, "Do you threaten me with death, Ibn Ziyad? Don't you know that for us (Ahlul Bayt) to be slain is our tradition, and that martyrdom is an honor from Allah?" Ibn Ziyad was silenced, he retracted.

Having heard an advice to do otherwise, and considering the giddy events of the day before, Ibn Ziyad became sorely deflated, thus he rescinded his command. Thus in this manner Ali, son of Al-Husain, was saved. He was then shackled and to be kept with the women in detention. Thus, this family of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was kept as detainees in a house near the central mosque, under guard, and no one except the slave-maids were allowed to visit them. They were kept there for several weeks. The gruesome events of Karbala would occupy the mind of all of them with the deepest pain, and it encouraged them even more to carry on the fight for spreading the message of Imam Husain (a.s.) in the days ahead. This was especially true of Zainab and Zainul Abideen .

The day after the captives arrived in Kufa, Ibn Ziyad wrote to Yazid informing him about the killing of Al-Husain and his companions and the capture of his womenfolk who will be sent to him. Of course the message would take several weeks to arrive, then several weeks for a reply to arrive, since the message had to be carried over more than 700 miles each way.

In Medina there was no news about the events of Karbala, but people were apprehensive, as if feeling there is something dreadful impending. It was some time after Ashuraa when Yazid sent a messenger, Abdul Malik, to Medina to inform its governor Amr ibn Said al-Aas that Al-Husain ibn Ali and his companions had been killed in Karbala. The Governor, more conscious of the mood of the people, said that he himself could not make the news public, but that Abdul Malik, if he so wished, could make the public announcement. Accordingly, the following day Abdul

Malik announced the news after the morning prayers. The news shocked every body, it was jarring, and it shook everyone to the core. There was an uproar and such an intense weeping from the homes of Banu Hashim, that women of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) came out screaming: "What will you say when the Prophet asks you: 'What have you done with my family after I left them?'" Every afternoon the supporters of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), men and women would gather at Jannat al-Baqii for remembrance of the tragedy of Karbala. The mourning was so loud that the weeping and wailing could be heard from far away distance.

CAPTIVES JOURNEY TO DAMASCUS:

After about a month and seven days of captivity in Kufa, the captives were set off for Damascus with a large army of horsemen and footmen so that no one could intercept their journey. With their mean-hearted escort, the caravan left Kufa on the eighteenth day of Safar. They suffered untold hardships on their way to Damascus, which was no less than 750 miles away. The journey was long, tough, and exhausting, more so for children such as Al-Baaqir, who was only 4 year old. Sakeena was on a bare back camel, and at one point she slipped from her camel and fell, but the caravan didn't stop. No one, apart from her family members, noticed her fall but eventually she was saved. After this incident, the pitiless army changed the formation of the prisoners. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was already in shackles, but they tied his son, Al-Baaqir, on his back. Then the same rope was tied on his sister Sakeena's neck so that Imam Zainul Abideen could not stand up straight. If he did stand straight, the rope would become tight and strangle Sakeena.

Their journey took them through many villages and towns, among them Karbala, Ba'albeck, Hums, and Mosul. They were made to travel without hijab, and on bare-back camels. The heads of the martyrs were carried on spears before them. In some of the towns, the crowds flocked to jeer at them. But when they passed through a place where the people were friendly towards the family of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), they came out to fight Yazid's army. The escorts were often forced to take other routes involving long diversions, and the camels were made to run faster so as to cover the extra distance. After about 28 days of the journey, on the 16th of Rabi ul-Awwal, the caravan reached Damascus.

The common man in Syria, particularly in Damascus, thought some rebels were subdued. They did not know the true story, for such was the propaganda of Yazid's government! The common man was celebrating the occasion as the procession proceeded, a procession consisting of women on bare back camels, dusty and disheveled, a man in shackles, all of whom preceded by 72 heads on the tips of spears! It must have been a grotesque scene, a scene you never like to see nor a scene you can ever forget.

But soon people found out, and with that there came a feeling of high indignation, and an outrage grew within a few days. The government was caught red handed, its lies exposed, the outrage was well deserved.

When they reached the outskirts of Damascus they were made to halt. Yazid was informed of their arrival and he fixed a date for their entry into the city. On the morning of the appointed day, the members of the family of the Prophet (pbuh) and the companions were led into Damascus. They were herded together. No consideration or kindness were shown, only meanness and brute force. The city streets were decorated and music filled the air to celebrate the victor, Yazid. People came out in festive clothes and they rejoiced when they saw the procession of the vanquished, preceded as always by the heads of the martyrs atop the spears. The women, without hijab, along with the children were paraded through the main bazaars of Damascus. People were

to celebrate the demise of the rebels, as they were led to believe by Damascus.

Among the crowds was the son of an enemy of the Prophet (pbuh) who had once waged war with Imam Ali (a.s.). When he saw Imam Zainul Abideen he jeeringly asked him who was now victorious? In reply the Imam said:

"If you wish to find out who has been victorious, do so when it is time for prayer and the Athan and Iqaama are recited."

SAYYEDAH ZAINAB (S.A.)'S SERMON IN DARBAR-E-YAZID:

At the plush seat of government, Yazid, proud of himself, surrounded by men of influence, was seated in wait. It was somewhat startling when he saw the 44 (see Note 2) hands tied captives arrive. It was more startling when the head of Al-Husain was brought to him on a golden tray. He, playfully touched the Imam's teeth with the end of his stick and said:

"O Husain! You have paid the price of your revolt."

Taken aback at this audacity, Zainab and her companions were inflamed. Present were many sympathizers who felt sorely aggravated. But Yazid carried on gloating over his victory. He said to his subjects: "An avenge for my ancestors killed at Badr. Now Banu Hashim had staged a ploy to gain power." Zainab, however, was incensed. She drew herself up and said aloud:

"Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds and blessings on my grandfather, the Master of divine Prophets."

"O Yazid, Allah says, and His word is true, that:

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا الشُّوْأَىٰ أَنْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

In the long run evil in the extreme will be the End of those who do evil; for that they rejected the Signs of Allah, and held them up to ridicule. [Quran 30:10]."

"O Yazid, do you believe that you have succeeded in closing the sky and the earth for us and that we have become your captives just because we have been brought before you in a row and that you have secured control over us? Do you believe that we have been afflicted with insult and dishonor by Allah but that you have been given honor and respect by Him? You have become boastful of this apparent victory and you feel jubilant and proud over this honor. You think that you have achieved worldly good, that your affairs have become stable and that our rule has fallen into your hands. Wait for a while. Do not be so joyful. Have you forgotten Allah's saying:

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ مَمْلُوكِي لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا مَمْلُوكِي لَهُمْ لِيُزَادُوا فِي إِيمَانِهِمْ وَعَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

Let not the Unbelievers think that our respite to them is good for themselves: We grant them respite that they may grow in their iniquity: But they will have a shameful punishment. [Quran 3:178]"

"O son of freed slaves, is this your justice that you keep your own daughters and slave-maids veiled while the daughters of the Prophet of Allah are being paraded from place to place exposed."

"You have dishonored us by unveiling our faces. Your men took us from town to town where all sorts of people, whether they be residents of the hills or of riversides have been looking at us."

"The near as well as the remote ones, the poor as well as the rich, the low as well as the high - all casting their glances at us while our position is such that there is no male relative of ours to render us help or support".

"O Yazid, whatever you have done proves your revolt against Allah and your denial of His Prophet (pbuh) and of the Book and Sunnah that the Prophet brought from Allah. Your deeds should not cause amazement because one whose ancestors chewed the livers of the martyrs, whose flesh grew up on virtuous people, who fought against the Master of the divine Prophets, who mobilized parties for fighting against him and drew swords against him, should conspicuously excel all Arabs in unbelief, sinfulness, excesses, and enmity against Allah and His Prophet."

"Remember that the evil deeds and sinful actions that you have committed are the result of unbelief and old rancor you bear because of your ancestors who were killed in Badr."

"One who cast his glance of enmity, malice and rancor upon us does not lag behind in practicing enmity against us. He proves his unbelief, declares it with his tongue and jubilantly proclaims: 'I have killed the sons of the Prophet of Allah and made his progeny captive,' and wishes that his ancestors had lived to see his achievement and to have exclaimed, 'O Yazid, may your hands not lose their strength, you have wreaked good vengeance on our behalf.'

"O Yazid, you are striking the lips of Imam Al-Husain with your stick in front of this crowd while these very lips used to be kissed by the Prophet of Allah, and yet your face reflects pleasure and glee."

"By my life, by killing the Master of youths of Paradise, the son of the Master of Arabs (Imam Ali) and the shining sun of the progeny of Abdul Mut'talib, you have deepened our wound and uprooted us completely."

"By killing Al-Husain ibn Ali you have gained nearness to the state of your unbelieving ancestors. You proclaim your deed with pride and if they were to see you they would approve of your action and pray that Allah may not paralyze your arms."

"O Yazid! If you had heart enough to take account of your horrendous deeds, you yourself would surely wish your arms to be paralyzed and severed from your elbow and you would wish that your parents had not given birth to you because you would know that Allah has become displeased with you. Allah, Grant us our rights. Avenge those who have oppressed us."

"O Yazid! you did what you wished, but remember that you have cut your own

skin and your own flesh to pieces. Soon you will be brought before the Holy Prophet (pbuh). You will be overwhelmed with the weight of the sins committed by shedding the blood of his progeny and by dishonoring his family. The place to which you will be taken will be before all the members of his family. The oppressed will be avenged and the enemies will be punished."

"O Yazid ! It is not seeming for you to swell with joy after slaying the Prophet's progeny. 'Reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive and are provided sustenance from their Lord; rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His grace' [3:169-170]."

"Allah is sufficient to deal with you. The Messenger of Allah is your antagonist and Jubra'eel is our support and help against you".

"Those who have made you the head of state and burdened the Muslims with your leadership will soon find out what awaits them. The end of all tyrants is agony."

"O Yazid. I speak not to you thus to warn you of the severe chastisement in store for you so that you should be regretful for you are one of those whose hearts are hardened, souls are rebellious and whose bodies are busy in Allah's disobedience while they are under the curse of the Prophet of Allah. You are from among those in whose heart Shaitan has made his abode and has been breeding young ones".

"How amazing it is that the virtuous people, sons of the divine prophets and viceregents are killed at the hands of liberated slaves, evil-doers and sinners. Our blood is shed by their hands and our flesh serves as food for them. We feel grieved for those whose bodies are lying uncovered and unburied in the battlefield, wounded with arrows."

"O Yazid, if you consider our defeat is your achievement then you will have to pay its price".

"Allah commits not injustice to His servants. Our reliance is on Allah. He alone is our Relief and abode of Protection, and in Him alone do we repose our hope."

"You may contrive and try however much you can. By Him who honored us with revelation, the Book and Prophethood, you cannot achieve our status, nor reach our position, nor can you affect our mention, nor remove from yourself that shame and dishonor that is now your lot because of perpetrating excess and oppression on us. Your word now is weak and your days are counted. Beware of the day when the announcer would announce the curse of Allah on the tyrants and the unjust."

"Praise be to Allah who gave good end to His friends and granted them success in their aims, and thereafter called them back to His Mercy, Pleasure and Bliss, while you hurled yourself into evil and mischief by committing injustice against them. We pray to Allah to favor us with full recompense through them and grant us the good of Khilaafah and Imamah. Surely Allah is Kind and the Most Merciful over His creatures."

Among the gathering was a red haired Syrian who saw Fatima Kubra, daughter of Imam Al-Husain, and asked Yazid to give her to him. When Fatima Kubra heard this she clung to Zainab and started to weep, frightened. She feared that now after the loss of her father she was to be made a slave girl.

Zainab was not afraid. She turned to Yazid and told him that he had neither right nor authority to give the young girl away like that, at which he bristled, retorting that he could do so.

Zainab remarked, "You are abusing me because of your authority and power." At this Yazid was shamed into silence. To the Syrian she said: "May the curse of Allah be upon you. May hell be your eternal abode. May your eyes be blinded and your limbs paralyzed."

Yazid was so enraged with Zainab's sermon and her amazingly bold defiance of him that he ordered her be killed, were it not for Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Aas. He intervened on behalf of Zainab and asked to ignore her harsh words since she had suffered so much grief and hardship.

Imam Zainul Abideen would also have suffered death at the hands of Yazid on account of his fearless speech, had it not for Zainab who saved his life by interjecting with Yazid, crying slay me along with him.

IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.) FACE TO FACE WITH YAZID:

Yazid's court (and that of Mu'awiya's) was constructed along the Hellenic fashion, i.e., the Greek style of government. Its administration, management, and courtier were Byzantine like. It showed evidence of opulence by being very expensively decorated, and having numerous guards around. At the moment however, the atmosphere of the court was somber and gloomy, sensing that a very big mistake had been committed, since already people in the streets were outraged.

Being face to face Yazid said, "Son of Al Husain, your father refused to recognize my throne and authority..... You have seen what Allah did with him as a result of it."

Zainul Abideen retorted indignantly by quoting the Holy Quran, "You are visited with afflictions in this world, pre ordained for you." Then he added, "May the curse of Allah be upon those who killed my father."

The first confrontation over, Zainul Abideen and his family were kept in detention. In the days that followed, a number of exchanges took place in the court of Yazid. Each time Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) gave very powerful replies, relying mostly on quoting the Holy Quran.

On one occasion Yazid asked the Sermonizer to give a speech condemning Imam Ali. The person obliged, then Imam Zainul Abideen asked permission to speak up before the people. After some hesitation Yazid consented. Imam Zainul Abideen then said:

- أيها الناس أنا ابن مكة ومنى أنا ابن زمزم والصفاء أنا ابن من حمل الركن بأطراف الرداء
- أنا ابن خير مراتزروارتدي أنا ابن خير من انتعل واحتفى أنا ابن خير من طاف وسعى
- أنا ابن خير من حج ولبي أنا ابن من حمل على البراق في الهواء
- أنا ابن من أسرى به من المسجد الحرام إلى المسجد الأقصى أنا ابن من بلغ به جبرئيل إلى سدرة المنتهى
- أنا ابن من دنا فتدلى فكان قاب قوسين أو أدنى أنا ابن من صلى بملائكة السماء

■ أنا ابن من أوحى إليه الجليل ما أوحى أنا ابن محمد المصطفى أنا ابن علي المرتضى
 ■ أنا ابن من ضرب خراطيم الخلق حتى قالوا لا إله إلا الله
 ■ أنا ابن من ضرب بين يدي رسول الله سيفين وطعن برمحين وهاجر الهجرتين وبأبح البيعتين وقاتل ببدر وحنين ولم يكفر بالله طرفة عين
 ■ أنا ابن صالح المؤمنين ووارث النبيين وقامع الملحدين ويعسوب المسلمين ونور المجاهدين وزين العابدين وتاج البكاءين وأصبر
 الصابرين وأفضل القائميين من آل ياسين رسول رب العالمين
 ■ أنا ابن المؤيد بجبرئيل المنصور بميكائيل أنا ابن المحامي عن حرمة المسلمين وقاتل المارقين والناكثين والقاسطين والمجاهد أعداء
 الناصبين وأفخر من مشى من قریش أجمعين وأول من أجاب واستجاب لله ولرسوله من المؤمنين وأول السابقين وقاصم المعتدين ومبيد
 المشركين وسهم من مراعى الله على المنافقين ولسان حكمة العابدين وناصر دين الله وولى أمر الله.....

"O' people! Allah Almighty has especially endowed us with valor, wisdom, and knowledge. In the same way Allah has filled the hearts of the faithful with love for us.

Not only this, but Allah exalted us to a higher position in comparison with any other descendant of Muhammad (pbuh). (Sahih Al-Bukhari Vol 4, Page 164. Also Sahih Muslim Page 119).

I am hereby acquainting all, irrespective of whether you know me or not, of the honor and privilege I occupy:

- I am the offspring of the Lord of Mecca and Medina,
- I am the issue of the Lord of Zamzam and Safa,
- I am the lineal descendant of him whose forefather had lifted in his cloak the Black Stone,
- I am the child of the one who mounted the Buraq and gone through the regions of Heavens
- I am from the progeny of the one who went up to Sidratul Mun'taha, and whom Allah had shown the spring head of the Wahy
- I am the offspring of the guide from whom disbelievers got the guidance to the straight path, I am
- I am the son of a person whose thread of life was snapped by cruel fingers, and whose head severed while thirsty, body left exposed to the burning sands of Karbala,
- I am the son whose father's death was mourned by the Angels, and by men and Jinn,
- I am the son whose father's head was mounted on a spear and taken from one town to another.

O people! I take witness that I thank Allah that He involved Ahlul Bayt in serious trials and also that at the same time the standard of guidance was in our hands, while the misguidance in other people's hands....."

When Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) finished his speech, the stunned people were weeping and crying, while others were choked into utter silence. All felt ashamed, degraded, and very low.

Note 2: It is presumed that of the 55 captives, 11 children had died during journey or in the prison.

SAYYEDAH SAKEENA DIES:

One night Sakeena started to cry in her sleep. When her mother Rabab asked her about the matter she replied that she saw her father in her dream telling her that he could not bear to see her in that grieving state any more. Hearing that, all women started to cry so loudly that the noise reached Yazid in the palace. He asked the guards what all the noise was about. When they told him what it was, Yazid ordered that Al-Husain's head be taken to Sakeena in order to keep her quiet. When Sakeena saw the head she ran to it and hugged it. Sakeena complained to her father how the horrible men snatched her earrings, how they took away the women's chadar (veils) and burned their tents. The loving daughter of Imam Husain (a.s.) suddenly stopped complaining, became limp, and stopped breathing. She passed away in captivity in the dark inhospitable prison. Everyone was shocked, but not surprised.

Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) then held the body of Sakeena in her arms as Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) dug a grave for his sister. Sakeena's clothes were burned in Karbala, and due to injuries, had stuck with her flesh. Therefore, she was buried in the same burned, ripped clothes right there in the prison, see Note 3. As the grave was being filled up after the burial, Sakeena's mother Rabab let out a scream. All the ladies huddled around her, all crying, "Oh Sakeena, Oh Madhloomah!"

Note 3: Sakeena's body was removed from its original burial place, the dungeon of Syria, some centuries later, when a pious man of Damascus was informed in his dream that water was pouring into the grave of Sakeena. Upon confirmation that ground water was actually entering the grave, Sakeena's body was buried in a new shrine called Rowdha Sayyedah Ruqayya in Damascus. Her body was in the condition as if she had been buried the same day.

KARBALA SURVIVORS RELEASE FROM PRISON:

Through Zainab's fearless speeches and from the word that spread as a result of their journey, the Ummah came to know of the events of Karbala and its tragedy. Their hearts were stirred, they questioned and sympathized, and they were mad. The continued captivity and humiliation of the family of the Prophet of Allah was bringing their cause to the attention of an ever increasing number of people. The media then was word of mouth of the very good cause.

This led some advisers to inform Yazid that there was dangerous unrest in Damascus. Yazid, though tyrant, got terrified. Even some of his own family started to stay away from him. He became worried and very restless, even sleepless. When it seemed to him that the family of the Holy Prophet had been so humiliated, and due to urgings of certain people about the public's growing dissension, he shifted the blame of Karbala massacre to Ibn Ziyad, the Governor of Kufa, and decided to release the captives. Surprisingly Yazid sent for Imam Zainul Abideen, and when he came Yazid treated him politely and respectfully, and informed him of his impending release and asked if he wished for anything. The Imam said he would have to consult his aunt Zainab.

Arrangements were made to bring Zainab (s.a.) to Yazid. She arrived properly veiled. She asked, "O Yazid, since the day our leader Al-Husain was butchered, we have not had any opportunity to mourn for him." A large house was therefore provided for them in the residential sector of Damascus. Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) held her first gathering for the mourning and remembrance (Majlis e Azaa) of Imam Husain (a.s.). The women of the Quraish and Banu Hashim arrived clad in black for the mourning. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) sat on the carpet and then Zainab told the women of Syria some details of the atrocities dealt in Karbala, and some of its aftermath. This stirred their emotions, raised their sympathy, and they shed tears and mourned. They had not known about the events of Karbala and Kufa, but now when they went home they told their men folk, all about the frightful events and the unparalleled unfairness. Thus the illusions of Yazid's victory gave way and his cover up was exposed and dispelled. The truth of Karbala became known to so many.

AHLUL BAYT RETURNING TO MEDINA:

Yazid gave Zainab the choice of remaining in Damascus or returning to Medina. When Zainab (s.a.) decided to return to Medina he called Nu'man ibn Bashir, who had been a companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and ordered him to make suitable arrangements for their journey. Horsemen, foot-soldiers, and adequate provisions were made available. Gaily decorated litters with velvet seats were provided, but Zainab ordered that these should be covered in black so that people would know the travelers were in mourning.

Someone asked Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), after they were released from Syria, as to what was the hardest calamity in that whole period of captivity. He replied that the hardest part was the time when the Ahlul Bayt caravan was made to stop outside Damascus for four days. They were treated very poorly, with their hands tied; and little food or water. And the hardest moment was when Sakeena died and buried in the dungeon.

Before the caravan departed for Karbala, Rabab went to the grave of her daughter Sakeena, placing her cheek on Sakeena's grave and cried out, "Speak to me Sakeena. Only a word, my child, speak to me".

When the citizens of Damascus came to know that the members of the Holy Prophet's family were leaving, the women went to the house they were staying in for a last farewell. Many people accompanied the caravan for part of the journey and then returned to their homes with utmost grief and sadness.

During the journey Nu'man ibn Bashir showed the travelers every consideration and respect they deserved. Whenever they stopped, the tents of the men were pitched a mile away from those of the women so that the women could move unhindered and unobserved by strangers. Gatherings of mourners were held wherever they stopped and many people came, listened, and learned the truth about Karbala and their captivity. When the caravan reached Karbala on Safar 20, Hijrah 62, they found that Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansaari and some of the chiefs of Banu Hashim were already there for they had come to pay homage at the grave of Imam Al-Husain. It is speculated that upon arrival in Karbala, the severed head of the chief of martyrs that the caravan brought from Damascus was rejoined with its body by his son Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.). Heads of other martyrs were also respectfully rejoined. A Majlis to observe the martyrs first Arbaeen (40 Days mourning) was held before they resumed their journey to Medina. When the time came to leave Karbala, Zainab (s.a.) wanted to remain near her brother's grave till the day of her death. But Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) pleaded with her to not leave the caravan, so she reluctantly

agreed to return to Medina with the caravan.

Wherever the caravan stopped on its way, a Majlis e Azaa was held. When the city of Medina was in sight, Zainab bade the women alight from their camels and to hold black flags in their hands. On learning of their arrival the people of Medina came out in large numbers to meet them, and again Zainab recounted to them some details of the events at Karbala, Yazid's brutality, Ibn Ziyad's tyranny, and the hardships they suffered in captivity.

After a while Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) asked the women to ready themselves for entering Medina. Then they entered the city on foot, with black flags raised aloft. The caravan went straight to the grave of the Prophet (pbuh) where Zainab prayed complaining to him about the massacre of his beloved grandson. Banu Hashim held Majlis every day to commemorate Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) and his companions' sacrifices in Karbala. The mourning and commemoration lasted for many days in Medina.

The return journey had made Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) gaunt and fully exhausted, her hair turned grey, and her back bent. Although she had been reunited with her husband, she did not live long after the torturous trials she had to bear. The exact date and place of her death is not clear (see Note 4) but it is probable that she died in the year Hijrah 62, some six months after her return.

It was Zainab's destiny to proclaim to the world that the sacrifices made by Imam Al-Husain and the companions were for the cause of Islam. She exposed the evil deeds of Yazid and Ibn Ziyad with courage and fearlessness. She endured physical pain and mental agony with fortitude and was the hero and the leader, and she was the source of strength to all women and children around her. Never did she rebel against the destiny decreed by Allah. The strength of her submission was divine. The spirit of Zainab bint Ali (a.s.) will live forever. Her courage, forbearance, and submission will continue to inspire those who hear her life story of suffering and leadership for all time to come. Had it not been for her, the sacrifices of Karbala might have faded into oblivion; and the ignorant Ummah not knowing the truth, would have gone completely astray. In Karbala's aftermath, she proved through her superb oratory, that "the word is mightier than the sword." People of Medina hailed Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) as the savior of Islam, and Zainab (s.a.) as the savior of the Muslim Ummah.

Note 4: Zainab(s.a.)'s actual date of death is uncertain, as is the location of her burial. She is most popularly thought to be buried in Damascus, but by some information also was buried in Medina or Cairo. There are two explanations given as to how she came to be buried in Damascus: one being that some time after their return, Yazid once again sent his forces to attack them, this time at Medina, and she and other members of her family were taken as prisoners of war to Damascus where she died; another being that because of a famine that swept through Medina, her husband temporarily moved his family to a village near Damascus, and it was there while praying in a garden Zainab was accidentally but fatally struck by a gardener's spade, or fell victim to a serious illness from which she never recovered. The anniversary of her death is observed on the following dates: 11th or 21st of Jamad al-Thani, the 24th of Safar, or the 16th of Dhu'l-Hijjah, Hijrah 62. She was 57 years old.

RAMPAGE OF MEDINA AND MECCA:

The events of Karbala and the survivors' captivity were tragic and they stirred hearts of the people especially of Medina. The numerous Majalis held by Zainab along with her sister Umm Kulthoom in Medina during the first year after Karbala, had deeply influenced the people. People were

inflamed and felt aggrieved and aggravated by Yazid's rule. They wanted to avenge Yazid's shameful and disgraceful actions, and punish Karbala's perpetrators.

Different Muslim groups requested Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) to join them in their move to punish these enemies of Islam. Zainul Abideen (a.s.) kept himself aloof of them, and he deemed their uprising as untimely. He preferred to preoccupy himself in worship, preaching, and educating; setting an example of forbearance and endurance. However, some devotees were so overwhelmed with the dreadful events of Karbala that they went to Damascus to protest Yazid's horrendous deeds. Yazid got infuriated by this action.

News of Yazid's anger reached Medina where riots spread widely all over the city. Marwan ibn Hakam, a relative and supporter of Yazid (and an enemy of Ahlul Bayt), got frightened about the fate of his family due to a possible attack by the people of Medina. He approached many notables in Medina to give protection to his family at large. All refused. Desperate, he went to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) and requested him for the protection. He knew that Yazid's army had instructions not to harm Imam Zainul Abideen. Zainul Abideen (a.s.) obliged him without hesitation, and was the host to 400 members of that family for several weeks.

In Hijrah 63, Yazid directed the Syrian army to attack Medina. There was a bloody battle that occurred just north of the city whereby the sophisticated Syrian army prevailed. About 80 Sahaaba were killed, some from Benu Talib. After the battle, Medina was made free for looting to the Syrian army. As a result, thousands of innocent Muslims lost their lives as casualty. Those who took shelter in the Holy Prophet's mosque were also attacked and killed. The sanctity of the area was trashed with drinking, rape, and killing. For three days, the soldiers engaged themselves in destruction of property, looting the residents, and harassing Muslim women. When the Syrian army departed, the city of Medina and its residents were left in shambles.

After ransacking Medina, the Syrian army proceeded to Mecca and laid a siege to the city for sixty-four days causing substantial damage to the Haram and the Holy Ka'ba. While the siege was continuing, news came that Yazid, who had gone for hunting, had died. The Syrian army lifted the siege and immediately left for Damascus. It is claimed that Yazid was 33 years old when he died, but others claim he was well in his forties.

ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.) GUIDES THE UMMAH THROUGH SUPPLICATIONS:

Imam Ali ibn Al-Husain, popularly known as Zainul Abideen (a.s.), lived an arduous life, prevalent with grief, and political turmoil caused by the struggle for power to rule. Soon after his birth, his mother Shahr Banu died (see Note 5). When he was two years old he saw the first death in the holy family; Imam Ali was martyred. When he was 12 years old, his uncle, Imam Al-Hasan died of poisoning. Imam Al-Husain personally brought him up and provided the needed training so he could take up the burden of Imamah when the time demanded of him. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) married his first cousin, Fatima, daughter of his beloved uncle Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.). In Karbala, Imam Zainul Abideen was 23 years of age and was accompanied by wife Fatima and young son Muhammad Al-Baaqir.

The events of Karbala left an indelible picture on his mind, and it haunted him for the rest of his life. During their captivity, despite his illness and crushing distress, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) maintained his self discipline, composure, and spiritual dignity as the Imam of the time. The

Imam suffered an immeasurable humiliation when the women of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) were paraded without their hijab in the bazaars of Damascus. Bibi Sakeena's death in the Syrian prison took a heavy toll on him. It was a jihad at its extreme that the Imam and his aunt, Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.), undertook so fearlessly, to broadcast Karbala, and focus on Imam Al-Husain(a.s.)'s message. It was a jihad not only to awaken the confused Muslim Ummah and to educate them but also to rescue them from the tight grips of tyranny of Yazid and his ilk. After returning to Medina, like his grandfather, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) cultivated land and palm groves.

The best qualities and attributes of man were collectively present in his personality. He was the best example of tolerance, forgiveness and self-sacrifice, measures that went far above any known standards. During Salats he becomes so absorbed that he paid no attention at all except for God. He traveled to Mecca on foot for Haj twenty times, and he continuously guided people through the Quranic verses and other teachings. He was the author of numerous Du'aas, so much so that his writings were called the Psalms of Aali Muhammad! It is said that 160 Islamic scholars attended his discourses during his life time.

He looked after many houses of the poor and hunger-stricken families. He provided food to the hungry, dresses to the needy, and paid debts of the destitute. At night Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) would cover his face and carry sacks of food on his shoulder to distribute to the needy, covering his face so no one can recognize him. None of these families knew that it was Imam Zainul (a.s.) who managed and ran their lives, until after he died and the gifts stopped.

There was not a single day in the life of the Imam that there were no tears in his eyes. He used to pray to Allah with such intensity and devotion that the Ummah gave him titles of Al-Sajjad, Al-Aabid, and Zainul Abideen. With little means of the media at the time, the Imam took it upon himself the broadcasting of the tragedy of Karbala. By narrating the events of Karbala with tears in his eyes, he encouraged gathering of people to mourn the sacrifices of the martyrs. He managed to pass on the message and practices of Islam through a unique medium of prayers and supplications. The supplications gained so much popularity that a collection of his supplications was printed in a book known as "Al-Saheefa Al-Sajjadiya". It is considered to be the third holiest book after Holy Quran, and Nahjul Balaaghah.

Note 5: Shahr Banu's real name was Shah-Zenan, and she was the daughter of emperor Yazdajird. She was one of the two Persian princesses captured in battle of Qadisiya after the emperor was killed.

MUKHTAR'S RELEASE FROM PRISON:

When the tragedy of Karbala occurred, Mukhtar Abu Ubaida Mas'ood Al-Thaqafi, a well wisher of Ahlul Bayt, was 62 years old and in prison in Kufa. His mother's name was Husna. He had two sisters; one sister, named Safiyya, was married to Abdullah ibn Omar, the son of second Khalifa. Another sister was married to Omar ibn Sa'd, the commander in chief of Yazid's army in Karbala. Obaidullah ibn Ziyad, then Governor of Kufa, had put Mukhtar into prison for killing his soldiers and having contacts with Muslim bin Aqeel, who was murdered by Obaidullah ibn Ziyad. When the captives and the martyrs' heads arrived in the court of Obaidullah ibn Ziyad in Kufa, most of the prisoners were brought to the court to witness them. The scene was so sickening that Mukhtar vowed to God and himself to do everything in his power to punish the perpetrators, once out of prison.

In the prison, Mukhtar met Maytham Tammar, a close companion of Imam Ali (a.s.), who taught

him the knowledge of dream interpretation and predicting some future events. Maytham Tammar predicted to Mukhtar that his release from the prison would come soon, and his wish to avenge the killers of Imam Al-Husain will be fulfilled. When Mukhtar's friend Kumayl Hamadani informed Mukhtar's sister Safia about Mukhtar being in prison in Kufa, she pleaded with her husband Abdullah ibn Omer to use his influence for Mukhtar's release.

Abdullah ibn Omar, who was then Governor of Medina, wrote a letter to Yazid asking to order Obaidullah ibn Ziyad for Mukhtar's freedom. Kumayl Hamadani took the letter and went to Damascus to deliver the letter to Yazid. Yazid acted promptly and ordered Obaidullah ibn Ziyad to free Mukhtar. Upon receiving Yazid's orders, Obaidullah ibn Ziyad ordered for Mukhtar to be released immediately. That was late in Hijrah year 61. Once released Mukhtar and Kumayl Hamadani left Kufa for Medina. In Medina Mukhtar met his sister Safia and described Yazid and Ubaydullah's tyranny and brutality. After listening to Mukhtar, Safia fainted, and because she was unable to regain consciousness, she died.

After performing his sister's burial, Mukhtar schemed a plan to avenge the perpetrators of Karbala. He saw Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya (son of Imam Ali (a.s.) with whom he was in good terms. He asked Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya to accompany him to seek his nephew, Imam Zainul Abideen(a.s.)'s permission and blessings for the mission. Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya agreed and they both went to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) whereby Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya explained the details of the mission of Mukhtar. The Imam's reply was that the works of avenging Imam Al-Husain(a.s.)'s killers is a right that belongs to everyone. He followed that: I cannot do it myself because of the complex political situation present and it is in the overriding interest of spreading Islam that I do not take on the task myself. Imam said to Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya, I leave the matter in your hands and you have my full blessings. After both Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya and Mukhtar understood the implicit permission of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), Mukhtar proceeded with the mission.

MUKHTAR AS THE GOVERNOR OF KUFA:

After Yazid died, he was at first succeeded by his elder son Mu'awiya II. Mu'awiya II did not receive the Khilaafah favorably, so he denounced the office and abdicated within a few months. Soon he was murdered. Even his mother criticized him calling him "You are worse than a rag of a menstruating woman." As a result, a deep split and a crisis developed, there was a vacuum, it was the succession to the Khilaafah in contention.

Two factions developed within Syria: the Confederation of Qays, who supported Ibn Zubair, and the Qudha'a, who supported Marwan ibn Hakam. Obaidullah ibn Ziyad pressed Marwan ibn Hakam to take the office and appointed him the Commander in Chief of the army. Marwan agreed. The partisans of Marwan triumphed at a battle at Marj Rahit, near Damascus, and Marwan ibn Hakam became the Khalifa shortly thereafter.

Upon hearing the news, Mukhtar arrived in Kufa and began looking for a strong, courageous, and brave Shi'a with a dedicated desire to avenge the Karbala perpetrators. He contacted Ibrahim ibn Malik Ashtar, the son of Malik Ashtar, who was a devotee Shi'a and a firm supporter of Imam Ali (a.s.). After listening to the mission, Ibrahim accepted to team up with Mukhtar. Mukhtar showed Ibrahim the authorization that Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya provided on behalf of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.). Mukhtar and Ibrahim developed a plan to take over the palace of Kufa occupied by Governor Abdullah Muti. Both gathered their supporters and worked very hard to achieve the objective. They succeeded in capturing the Governor's palace. Abdullah Muti

managed to escape Kufa. Mukhtar thus became Governor of Kufa in Rabi al-Awwal, Hijrah 66. Ibrahim followed Abdul Muti who went to Basra where Musab ibn Zubair, the governor of Basra, provided him an army unit to fight with Ibrahim. A battle then took place between Ibrahim and Abdul Muti, wherein Abdul Muti was killed.

After becoming Governor of Kufa, Mukhtar's immediate actions were humane and altruistic. He immediately released innocent prisoners, helped the poor and needy to acquire better housing, and ensured that the Banu Hashim families living in Kufa were treated nicely and respectfully after years of persecution. Ibrahim advised Mukhtar that before embarking on the mission they better focus first on their stability by bringing under their influence and control the surrounding areas, like Mosul, to consolidate their government. Mukhtar agreed and replaced Mohammad Ashanath, the Governor of Mosul, and installed Abdul Rahman in his place. Mukhtar and Ibrahim thus became confident that if Obaidullah ibn Ziyad came to attack Kufa, he will have to come through Mosul.

MUKHTAR AVENGES THE PERPETRATORS:

After providing adequate stability in Kufa, Mukhtar asked Ibrahim to proceed with the mission, and he enforced an utterly tight blockade of Kufa so no perpetrator could escape. The Karbala perpetrators were taken by complete surprise since Mukhtar and Ibrahim were busy chasing Obaidullah ibn Ziyad. Mukhtar started to round up the perpetrators one by one, and asked them to relate exactly what they did in Karbala, so no innocent person was unduly punished. The first two criminals caught were Abdullah Asaad and Malik Bashir. Abdullah Asaad was amongst those who set on fire to the tents and robbed Imam Al-Husain of his turban after his death. Mukhtar ordered Abdullah be punished. Malik Bashir was the one who robbed Imam Al-Husain of his sword. Mukhtar ordered Bashir to be killed.

Next, Naffee Malik was caught. He was one of Omar ibn Sa'ad's commanders who was in charge at the banks of Euphrates river to ensure that no drop of water got to Imam Al-Husain's tents. It was on his order that an arrow was aimed at the water bag carried by Al-Abbas. Mukhtar ordered Nafee be executed.

Over the next few days, a number of perpetrators were caught, tried, and the guilty ones were executed by the orders of Mukhtar.

Ibrahim then focused on catching the major criminals like, Khooli, Sinan, Harmala, Shimr, and Omar ibn Sa'd. Khooli was caught from the attic of his house where he was hiding. Khooli admitted committing several crimes including snatching away Sakeena's hijab, and pulling her earrings off her lobes, beating Imam Zainul Abideen with a stick while he was unconscious, and stripping Zainab's hijab and earrings. Mukhtar ordered Khooli to be severely punished.

Next, the ten leaders who trampled Imam Al-Husain's body were caught and pinned to the ground and trampled with horses.

Many other perpetrators who had committed crimes in Karbala were brought before Mukhtar, and after interrogation, those who were guilty were punished. Mukhtar's soldiers succeeded in arresting Hakim Tufayl, a killer of Al-Abbas, from the house of a powerful person, Adi Tai. When Adi Tai learned about the arrest, he went to Mukhtar and demanded the release of Hakim Tufayl. Mukhtar showing him the head of Hakim, informed him that when people of Kufa heard of Al-Abbas' killer being arrested, they could not control their anger and immediately killed him. Adi

Tai left with disappointment.

Finding Adi Tai's intervention to be ineffective, the remaining major criminals like Shimr, Sinan, Harmala, Omar ibn Sa'd worried about their lives and went into hiding. Sinan managed to escape from Kufa to a town of Zihad where the local people arrested him and handed over to Mukhtar. Sinan confessed, amongst other crimes, that he had tried to steal a belt from Imam Al-Husain when he fell from his horse during the last few moments of his life; the belt was sewn by Fatima. Sinan also admitted cutting off Imam's hands in order to get to the belt. Mukhtar ordered Sinan be thrown into fire.

Shimr, while trying to escape from Kufa, was caught and immediately executed. Harmala was also caught and brought to the court of Mukhtar. Harmala confessed, amongst many crimes, piercing the water bag that Al-Abbas was carrying with an arrow, firing the fatal arrow at Ali Asghar which killed him instantly, and firing an arrow at Imam Al-Husain's forehead in his last moments causing Imam to fall on the ground. Mukhtar ordered Harmala be killed by arrows. Learning Harmala's fate, Omar ibn Sa'd got very much afraid and nervous. He took protection of Abdullah Hubayra, an influential person, in Kufa who agreed to ask Mukhtar to pardon Omar ibn Sa'd.

Mukhtar developed a plan in his mind and reluctantly agreed to pardon him on the condition that Omar ibn Sa'd will not try to escape Kufa. Mukhtar later leaked out the news that he had instructed Abdullah Kamil to arrest a perpetrator of Karbala who fitted Omar ibn Sa'd's description, but did not mention his name. When Omar ibn Sa'd heard this, he immediately tried to escape from Kufa. Omar ibn Sa'd was caught at the border and was advised to return to his protector since running away would be a breach of the condition of his pardon. Omar ibn Sa'd returned to his protector Abdullah Hubayra. Hubayra refused to extend his protection since he broke his promise not to leave Kufa. Mukhtar, after receiving reports about Omar ibn Sa'd's attempt to leave Kufa, contacted Abdullah Hubayra stating that Omar ibn Sa'd had committed a breach of the condition that had been kept by trying to leave Kufa, and thus had to be arrested.

Omar ibn Sa'd launched another tactic to avoid his arrest. He asked one of his wives, who was Mukhtar's sister, to intervene for him. Mukhtar's sister came to Mukhtar. He told her she should be ashamed to remain married to Omar ibn Sa'd and advised her not to return to her husband. After the arrest of Omar ibn Sa'd, Mukhtar ordered he be immersed in boiling oil to death.

After having punished Omar ibn Sa'd, Mukhtar decided to go after the tyrant gang leader Obaidullah ibn Ziyad and his two deputies, Haseen Nameer and Mohammed Ashath, all of whom acted as architects of the massacre at Karbala. At that time Obaidullah ibn Ziyad had captured Mosul and was strengthening his army to attack Kufa. Mukhtar asked Ibrahim to prepare an army and proceed to Mosul to catch Obaidullah ibn Ziyad. The people of Kufa became united and supported Mukhtar's policies. They gave a good send off to Ibrahim and prayed for his success. When Ibrahim reached the outskirts of Mosul, he met Nasiben, a supporter of Ahlul Bayt, who guided Ibrahim to a place where Obaidullah ibn Ziyad's family, including his three wives and many children, had taken shelter. Ibrahim arrested all of them and ordered to execute the oldest son, who was about twenty years old, to avenge the death of Imam Al-Husain's sons.

Nasiben then took Ibrahim secretly to Obaidullah ibn Ziyad's tent where he could be easily killed without fighting a battle. When they got inside the tent Ibrahim made no attempt to strike. He explained to Nasiben that due to the security guards outside, any attempt could be suicidal. Ibrahim returned to his camp and prepared for the battle the next day.

The battle started and a fierce fighting continued for three days killing, amongst others, Haseen ibn Nameer who had fatally injured Ali Akbar in Karbala. The fourth day of battle was on 10th Muharram, Hijrah 67, on the bank of Tigris River near Mosul. Obaidullah started to attempt an escape when he realized he was losing the battle. Ibrahim followed him, captured, and beheaded him. There was a wide spread jubilation in Mosul. Ibrahim sent the head of Obaidullah ibn Ziyad to Mukhtar in Kufa. Mukhtar treated the head same way as Obaidullah ibn Ziyad treated Imam Al-Husain head. Mukhtar mounted the head on a javelin and paraded it through the town, and then mounted it on the same door in the courtyard for three days so all public could see it.

Mukhtar sent Obaidullah ibn Ziyad's head to Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya in Mecca where incidentally, Imam Zainul Abidin(a.s.) was also there. Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya sent the head to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), on 9th Rabi-ul-Awwal, Hijrah 67. Imam looked at the head and appeared to be relieved of a big burden he was carrying.

Mukhtar also wanted to capture Muhammad ibn Al-Ashath who was under the protection of Mus'ab ibn Zubair in Basra. Mukhtar sent a letter to Mus'ab ibn Zubair asking for the extradition of Ashath. Mus'ab ibn Zubair refused and requested that his brother Abdullah ibn Zubair, the Governor of Mecca, send reinforcement to Basra so he could repel Mukhtar in case he attacked him. Ibrahim, who was in Mosul, informed Mukhtar that Mus'ab ibn Zubair was preparing for a confrontation. Mukhtar asked Ibrahim to come and join him but Ibrahim was unable to do so because Marwan had surrounded Mosul. Ibrahim advised Mukhtar not to leave Kufa and consider sending a deputy to lead the army against Mus'ab ibn Zubair; that way Kufa, would be contained by Mukhtar, and Mosul by Ibrahim. Accordingly, Mukhtar appointed two commanders and sent them to Basra to fight and capture Ashath.

Mus'ab ibn Zubair defeated the commanders of Mukhtar forces and advanced toward Kufa. A forceful battle began between Mus'ab and Mukhtar. Mukhtar succeeded in killing Ashath but lost many army men and retreated to Kufa. Mus'ab followed Mukhtar, put a blockade on the city of Kufa, and cut off all food supplies to the city. People of Kufa became restless and would not answer Mukhtar's call to fight. Mus'ab entered the city and surrounded Mukhtar's palace. Mus'ab entered the palace but Mukhtar continued to fight until he was martyred. Mukhtar was buried behind martyr Muslim ibn Aqeel in Kufa in the adjoining mosque on 15 Ramadhan, Hijrah 67

IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.) POISONED:

It is said that for forty years, whenever food or water was placed before Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), he would weep. One day, a servant said to him, "O son of Allah's Messenger! Is it not time for your sorrow to come to an end?" He replied,

"Woe upon you! Jacob the prophet had twelve sons, and God made one of them disappear. His eyes turned white from constant weeping, his head turned grey out of sorrow, and his back became bent in gloom, though his son was still alive in this world. But I watched while my father, my brothers, my uncles, and many members of my family were slaughtered all around me (see Glossary). How should my sorrow come to an end?"

The very existence of the Imam and his increasing popularity among the Ummah was taken as a threat by the power-hungry rulers of the time. Hisham ibn Abdul Malik, a cross-eyed grand son of Marwan ibn Hakam whose women folk were once protected by Imam Zainul Abideen, is said to have poisoned the Imam. At that time Imam Zainul Abideen(a.s.) was 57 years of age, just as the same age when Al-Husain (a.s.) and Sayyedah Zainab (s.a.) when they died. During washing

of the Imam's body, his son noticed markings of the shackles during captivity in the Karbala's aftermath. He also noticed scarring on the upper part of his back due to carrying the sacs of flour every night to distribute to the poor over the years. Imam Muhammad Al-Baaqir (a.s.) performed the burial, laying him in the graveyard of Jannat al-Baqi'i, in Medina, on Muharram 25, Hijrah 95.

GLOSSARY

Abd Al-Malik	Son of Marwan. Known as king of Khalifas since his 4 sons became successively Khalifas.
Abdullah Asaad	Among those who burned the tents and robbed Imam Al-Husain of his turban after his martyrdom.
Abdullah ibn Muti	Governor of Kufa whom Mukhtar defeated, and was subsequently killed by Ibrahim ibn Ashtar
Abdullah ibn Ja'far Al-Tayyar	Nephew of Imam Ali, and his son in-law, married to Zainab bint Ali.
Abdul Muttalib	The grand father of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).
Abdullah ibn Omar	Son of Omar, the second Khalifa. He was married to Mukhtar's sister Safiya.
Abu Obeida Thaqafi	Mukhtar's father, died as a commander in a battle with Iran, Hijrah 13.
Adi Tai	A dignitary in Kufa who had provided a temporary protection to Hakim Tufayl.
Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)	The family of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) including Imam Ali, Fatima Al-Zahra, Al-Hasan and Al-Husain, including the progeny of Al-Husain (the 12 commissioned Imams).
Al-Aabid	One of the entitlements proffered over Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.).
Al-Abbas (a.s.)	Son of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Umm Al-Baneen, Flag bearer during Karbala, was martyred while attempting to bring water for Sakeena and the family of Al-Husain (a.s.).
Al-Abbas Brothers	Al-Abbas (a.s.) had three brothers, Omar (nickname), Uthman, and Ja'far, all were martyred in Karbala before Al-Abbas was himself martyred
Al-Baaqir (a.s.)	The 5th Imam of the Shi'a branch of Islam, son of Zainul Abideen (a.s.), and Fatima bint Al-Hasan (a.s.).
Ali Akbar	Son of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.), and Umm Laila, was martyred in Karbala.
Ali Asghar	Baby of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) and Umm Rabab, martyred in Karbala when 6 months old.

KARBALA BEFORE AND AFTER

Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)	The first Imam of Shi'a branch of Islam, son in-law of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his cousin.
Ali ibn Al Husain (a.s.)	The 4th Imam, Zainul Abideen (a.s.), son of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) and Shahr Banu daughter of Yazdajird.
Arbaeen	The arbaeen or 40 days after the events of Ashuraa. Also called Chelum, Shi'a commemorate yearly
Ashuraa	It is the 10th day of Muharram when Shi'a Muslims commemorate the tragedy of Karbala.
Badr	Battle of Badr in the early days of Islam between the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and opponents among Quraish clan.
Ba'alback	A town in Syria
Banu Hashim	Clan of Quraish to which the Holy Prophet (pbuh) belonged, it is named after his great grand father Hashim.
Banu Umayya	A clan known to be power hungry, greedy, and materialistic, to which Mu'awiya belonged.
Basra	A capital of Basra province in Iraq.
Damascus	The capital city of Syria.
Darbar	A court in session with a Khalifa presiding.
Dungeon	It is a room or cell in which prisoners are held, especially underground.
Fadak	Orchards of fruit trees gifted by Holy Prophet (pbuh) to his daughter Fatima Al-Zahra (s.a.).
Fatima bint Al Hasan (a.s.)	Daughter of Imam Al Hasan (a.s.), was married to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), mother of Imam Al-Baaqir (a.s.).
Fatima Al-Kubra	Daughter of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.).
Fatima Al-Zahra (s.a.)	Daughter of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), was married to Imam Ali (a.s.).
Hakim Tufayl	Killer of Hadhrat Al-Abbas (a.s.) in Karbala.
The Haram	The Holy site in Islam.
Harmala	A killer of 6 months old Ali Asghar in Karbala by an arrow and the one who pierced the water bag that Al-Abbas (a.s.) was carrying for the thirsty family of Al-Husain (a.s.).
Hasan ibn Ali (a.s.)	The 2nd Imam, son of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Fatima Al-Zahra (s.a.), died of poison given by his wife Ju'da.
Haseen Nameer	He was the Chief of Police in Kufa responsible for tracking down Muslim ibn Aqeel, he was also responsible for blocking Imam Husain(a.s.)'s caravan from entering Kufa.
Holy Ka'ba	The holiest place in Islam, a large cubical building inside the al-Masjid al-Haram in Mecca.

Hums	A city in western Syria located north of Damascus.
Husain ibn Ali (a.s.)	The 3rd Imam, son of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Fatima A;-Zahra (s.a.). He was martyred in Karbala, Hijrah 61.
Husna	Mother of Mukhtar ibn Abu Obeida Thaqafi.
Ibn Muljim	A Khariji, the killer of Imam Ali (a.s.) while Imam was performing Salat Al-Subh.
Ibn Ziyad	See Obaidullah ibn Ziyad.
Ibrahim ibn Malik Al-Ashtar	A devoted Muslim and supporter of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), who killed Ibn Ziyad in a battle near Mosul.
Imam	The 12 Divinely Commissioned leaders of the Ummah after the Holy Prophet (pbuh).
Imamah	It is a Shi'a doctrine of religious, spiritual, and political leadership of the Ummah provided by 12 Divinely Commissioned Imams.
Imam Ali (a.s.)	The first Divinely Commissioned Imam, and father of Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.).
Imam Al-Hasan (a.s.)	The second Divinely Commissioned Imam, and the brother of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.).
Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansaari	A tribal leader of Banu Hashim. A revered Sahaabi of the Holy Prophet (pbuh)
Jannat al-Baqi'i	A famous cemetery in Medina, where Fatima Zahra (s.a.) and bodies of four Imams are laid to rest.
Jubra'el	Gabriel, is the angel, God used to carry divine revelations to the Holy Prophet (pbuh).
Karbala Martyrs of Al-Husain's Family	<i>Descendants of Imam Ali (a.s.) ibn Abu Talib</i>
	• Imam Hussain ibn Ali, Chief of the Army and the grandson of the Holy Prophet.
	• Hazrat Abbas ibn Ali, a half-brother of Imam Hussain and the Commander of the Army
	• Hazrat Ali al-Akbar ibn Hussain, a son of Imam Hussain and Umm-e-Laila
	• Ali al-Asghar ibn Hussain also called Abdallah, the six-month-old son of Imam Hussain and Bibi Rubab
	• Umar ibn Ali, a half-brother of Imam Hussain and full brother of Hazrat Abbas ibn Ali
	• Ja'far ibn Ali brother of Hazrat Abbas.
	• Uthman ibn Ali, brother of Hazrat Abbas
	• Abu Bakr ibn Ali
• Abu Bakr ibn Hasan ibn Ali	

KARBALA BEFORE AND AFTER

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qasim ibn Hasan ibn Ali • Qasim ibn Abbas ibn Ali • Fadl ibn Abbas ibn Ali • Abdullah ibn Hasan ibn Ali • Aun ibn Abdillah ibn Ja'far, the son of Zainab bint Ali • Muhammad ibn Abdillah ibn Ja'far, son of Zainab bint Ali <p><i>Descendants of Imam Ali's brothers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Aqeel • Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Aqeel • Muhammad ibn Sa'id • Abdulrahman ibn Aqeel • Ja'far ibn Aqeel ibn Abi Talib
Khalifa	Caliph, Head of State in the first system of Government created after passing away of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).
Khariji	One who belongs to rebel group who denounced Imam Ali and fought Imam Ali (a.s.) in Nahrawan
Khilaafah	Caliphate, refers to the first system of Government established in Islam.
Khooli,	A perpetrator who participated in killing of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in Karbala.
Kufa	A city in Iraq where Imam Ali (a.s.) made his capital and moved his Khilaafah from Medina to it
Kumayl Hamdani	A staunch supporter of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), he helped Mukhtar getting out of prison.
Malik Bashir	A criminal in Karbala, who robbed Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) of his sword.
Marwan ibn Hakam	A supporter of Yazid, became Khalifa after Yazid's son Mu'awiya II abdicated. He was killed shortly afterwards by his wife either by choking or by poison given to him.
Maytham Al-Tammar	A companion of Imam Ali (a.s.), and whom Imam Ali taught how to interpret dreams.
Mu'awiya II	Son of Yazid, who became Khalifa after Yazid's death, and abdicated within a few months.
Muhammad ibn Al-Ashath	Brother of Imam Al-Hasan's wife Ju'da bint Al-Ashath
Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiya	Son of Imam Ali (a.s.), uncle of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.).
Mukhtar al-Thaqafi	Son of Abu Ubaida Masood Al-Thaqafi and Husna, was a devotee and loyalist of Ahlul Bayt (as).

Musab ibn Zubair	Governor of Basra who provided an army to a fugitive Abdul Muti to fight with Ibrahim who was a staunch supporter of Mukhtar.
Naffee Malik	Omar ibn Sa'd appointed Naffee to control Euphrates River to prevent water from Husain's camp.
Nahjul Balaaghah	The famous collection of sermons, letters, and sayings of Imam Ali (a.s.), also known as "Peak of Eloquence".
Nasiben	A supporter of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), who guided Ibrahim to where Obaidullah ibn Ziyad and his family were hiding.
Nu'man ibn Bashir	A companion of Holy Prophet (pbuh).
Obaidullah ibn Ziyad	Also known as ibn Ziyad, The Governor over Kufa responsible for all atrocities of Karbala.
Omar ibn Sa'd	Leader of military forces again`st Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) in Karbala.
Rabab	Wife of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.), mother of Sakeena and Ali Asghar.
Safiyya	Mukhtar's sister, married to Abdullah ibn Omer, son of second Khalifa.
Sakeena	Daughter of Imam Al-Husain (as) and Umm Rabab. Died in Damascus from unbearable suffering
Sajjad	An entitlement of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.).
Shah Zenan Yazdajird:	Princess of Persia, converted to Islam, changed name to Shahr Banu, and married to Imam Al-Husain (a.s.).
Sham-e-Ghariban	The first evening after the day of sorrow; it refers to the first evening of the bereft survivors in Karbala.
Saheefa Al-Sajjadiya	A book of Imam Zainul Abideen(a.s.)'s supplications.
Shimr	Killer of Imam Husain (a.s.) in Karbala, who separated his head from his body, his name will remain infamy.
Siffin	A battle imposed by Mu'awiya on Imam Ali (a.s.) after he became Khalifa.
Sinan	He tried to steal Imam Husain (a.s.)'s belt when the Imam fell from the horse during his last few moments before martyrdom.
Umm al-Baneen	The second wife of Imam Ali (a.s.), mother of Al-Abbas and other brothers, all killed in Karbala.
Umm Habiba	A sister of Mu'awiya, daughter of Abu Sufyan, and wife of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).
Umm Kulthoom	Daughter of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Fatima Al-Zahra (s.a.), she was also one of the survivors of Karbala and taken captive by Omar ibn Sa'd.

Zainab Bint Ali (a.s.)	Sister of Imam Al-Husain, daughter of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Fatima Zahra (s.a.), was married to her cousin, she proved to be a magnificent leader, and the savior of Ummah in Karbala's aftermath.
Zainul Abideen (a.s.)	The 4th Divinely Commissioned Imam, son of Imam Al-Husain (a.s.) and Shahr Banu daughter of Persian emperor Yazdajird.

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