

The Tale of The Martyrdom of Imam Hussain (a.s.)

[The Kerbala Epic]

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Translator's Note

It is a great honour to be asked to translate the tale of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (a.s.) into English. However, in undertaking the task, I was faced with the problem of translating the Arabic poetry which normally accompanies the account of Imam Hussain's martyrdom and which may lose its meaning in the process. To circumvent this difficulty, I resorted to English poetry from the book "*Sunshine at Midnight, the Kerbala Epic*" written by the late Syyid Ali Mahdi, an eloquent poet and writer. Thus the reader will notice befitting passages of his poetry adorning the translation throughout.

Najim al-Khafaji, B.A.

Foreword

In the Name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful

Why the Recurrence of Recounting the Story of the Martyrdom of Imam Hussain (as.)?

Perennial conflict between truth and falsehood did not cease for a moment. At times, the conflict resulted in difficult periods with disastrous consequences for humanity. Had it not been for the Providence, it was about to cause a setback to the human procession towards peace, justice and equity.

The advent of Islam with the Prophet, Mohammad (S) and Imam Ah and his eleven descendants (A) at the helm of guidance for humanity was the grace of Allah.

Perhaps, the most glaring manifestation of this bitter conflict at the early days of Islam was the hostile stance adopted by the Umayyads towards the Messenger of Islam and his pure progeny. Readers of history will have noticed that the Ummayad clan, rivals of the Hashimite clan, although belonging to the same tribe - Quraish, did not spare any way or means to show their enmity and grudge against the Hashimite.

At the time of the Prophet (S) Abu Sufian, Sakhr bin Harb bin Umayya was the commander of the infidel armies who fought the Muslims in the battles Badr, Uhud and al-Khandaq. He professed Islam for fear of his life in 81 H., the year of the conquest of Mekkah.

Abu Sufian's grudge against Islam was all apparent. When Othman, an Ummayyad, assumed the mantle of caliph, Abu Sufian hurried to the grave of Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib, who was martyred in the battle of Uhud. Kicking the grave with his foot, he uttered his now infamous words: "By him whom Abu Sufian take an oath, there is neither heaven nor hell. Snatch it, Oh children of the Umayyads!, as if you were catching a ball; Hold to it (power) with the skin of your teeth".

This hostile stand against Islam was handed down from Abu Sufian to his son, Mu'aawiya. This was clearly manifested when Imam Ali (A) was chosen as caliph. Mu'aawiya waged three devastating wars against the legitimate caliph; these were (al-Jamal), headed by Umul-Mo'mineen (Mother of the believers), A'isha at the pretext of venging the blood of the caliph Othman, (Siffeen), commanded by Mu'aawiya at the same pretext and (al-Nahrawan) at the behest of Mu'aawiya; Mu'aawiya's unrelenting efforts and schemings culminated in assassinating Imam Ali (A), while he was leading congregational prayer.

After the death of Imam Ali (A), his son Imam Hassan (A) inherited the caliphate. Mu'aawiya did not give him a respite. He commissioned a big army and marched from Syria to Iraq to fight Imam Hassan (A). With deceit and carrot and stick he managed to manipulate the military situation in his favour. With many of his military commanders defecting to the enemy side, falling prey to Mu'aawiya's promises, Imam Hassan had no alternative but to sign a (truce) with Mu'aawiya, driven by concern to preserve what was left of the disciples (companions) of the Prophet in his camp, who were tracked down by Mu'aawiya's agents. It was for this and the fact that Imam Hassan wanted to buy time to re-organise his depleted army. Imam Hassan was

forced to sign the cease-fire agreement with Mu'aawiya. However, Mu'aawiya did not keep his part of the agreement. He unilaterally revoked the agreement. For him, extending his power base to include Iraq mattered the most. He made this evidently clear in his address to the Kufans:

"Oh people! I did not wage war against you in order to make you observe prayer, fast, pilgrimage, and pay religious dues. I only did so to be able to be in charge of your affairs".

As the era of Mu'aawiya was drawing to a close with all the calamities inflicted on the followers of Imam Ali (A), especially the elite amongst them, he appointed his son wayward Yazid as heir-apparent. This move inflamed the feelings of the majority of Muslims. In protest they refused to endorse his appointment due to his public debauchery and the fact that he did not meet the most basic of requirements of the Islamic office of Caliph. On top of those who publicly rejected Yazid's appointment at the helm of Muslim's affairs were Imam Hassan and his brother, Imam Hussain (A). Thus, Mu'aawiya decided to get rid of them so that he may have a free hand in his plan for the succession to the Ummayyad rule. He was successful in assassinating Imam Hassan (A) through poisoning by his wife Ju'dah bint al-Ash'ath, having promised her marriage from his son Yazid. After implementing the plan, he did not deliver, accusing her of betrayal and fearing for his own son as she might do the same thing to him.

As for Imam Hussain (A), the circumstance were not right for Mu'aawiya to kill him. He left the task of liquidating him to his son, Yazid. When Yazid rose to power after the death of his father, he ordered the governors of provinces to get the pledge of allegiance for him from the Muslims. Accordingly, the governor of al-Madinah requested the allegiance from Imam Hussain (A). His answer was unequivocal, "The like of me do not swear allegiance to Yazid, the playboy and the killer of respected soul". This statement amounted to a declaration of war against the Umayyads.

In his decision to travel to Iraq, Imam Hussain (A) wanted to spare Mekkah and Madinah the honours of war and blood shed, especially during the sacred months. And the fact that the Iraqis invited him to come to them as they, "have brandished swords for him against their enemy, the Banu Umayyah". Yet, even before his arrival in Kufa they betrayed him. They unveiled their true colours in unprecedented dishonesty and cruelty against the Imam, members of his family and companions at the battle of Karbala - as detailed in this tale; a glaring demonstration of enmity, oppression, ruthlessness, and brutality was meted out by the Ummayyad rule.

The question that lingers in the minds is: Why is the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A) commemorated every year in this public display of outpourings, as if it were an ever-fresh memory?

You will find the answer at the tip of every tongue of those infatuated with the love of Imam Hussain (A): We bring our children up on his memory, teach our youth to follow in his footsteps, remind the elderly of the magnitude of the tragedy so that it remains alive in the hearts and minds; and learn lessons, from his sacrifices and firmness in faith, to be emulated in our lives. At adversity, he never wavered, saying:

"If the religion of Mohammad was not going to live on except with me dead, let the swords tear me to pieces".

I used to listen to the account of Imam Hussain's martyrdom related in commemorative gatherings in Najaf and Karbala at a tender age. As time passes and circumstances change as a results of adverse events engulfing Iraq in general and Najaf and Karbala in particular, we ended up settling in London. And when we inaugurated Ahlul-Bayt Islamic Centre in 1982, we marked this occasion with the mourning assembly in memory of Imam Hussain following the traditional family commemoration of this solemn occasion. On the tenth day of Muharram, the tale of the tragedy of Karbala used to be recounted by the late Ayatullah as-Sayyid Moharnmad Taqi Bahrul Uloom.⁽¹⁾ After his death, I took the responsibility of reciting it. Since I assumed this responsibility, I consulted many a book dealing with the story of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A). Shorn of sentiments, my aim has always been accuracy of the reports, doing away with exaggerations and half truths. I hope I have been successful. And in order to reach a wider audience, I asked al-Haj Najim al-Khafaji to translate it into English. Also, to ensure veracity of the text, I kindly requested the eloquent orator, al-Haj Mulla Asgharali Jaffer, President of World Federation of K.S.I. Muslim Communities to revise it; he thankfully obliged and contributed to its publication. May their reward from Imam Hussain, in whose memory this publication has been commissioned, be great. From us are due the thanks and from the readers appreciation.

After all this my only hope is that all of us may have contributed, each in his own humble effort, to keeping the memory of Imam Hussain, the lord of martyrs so that the people of Kisa (mantle): Mohammad, Ali, Fatima, Hassan, and Hussain be our intercessors on the day of reckoning, when neither wealth nor offspring would avail. Allah, the Most High is the only Bestower of success.

Dr Mohammad Bahrul Uloom

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Introduction

Hussain - the Universalist

Hussain (4-62 AH. - 614 AD.) was the youngest son of Ali (A.D. 600-661) by Prophet Mohammed's daughter Fatimah. Ali was the fourth Caliph of Islam. When Yazid, son of Muawiyah, became Caliph he demanded allegiance from Hussain. He refused because of Yazid's wayward ways. Ultimately he had to confront Yazid. It had to be done, to preclude any further deterioration and eventual disintegration of Islam. He had to clear up the damage -the transgression of Islamic values, the frivolous social behaviour, in the name of Islam - the sickening dashing of dreams about future glories of Islam. Hussain had no illusions about the extent of that damage. Was it to ask too much of Hussain to take the responsibility? Certainly not. He as the Prophet's grandson had to do his duty. But there was no easy option for him. He had to bear the brunt. When a situation of this kind arose, a very heavy burden fell on Hussain.

Atonality from Yazid's degenerated symphony

Little wonder that Hussain's patience snapped when the Caliph firmly demanded allegiance. He realised that the consequences of this prolonged anarchy in Islam and a shattering triumph for immorality would permanently deface and disfigure the true faith and a pseudo-religion would emerge under the guise of Islam. Blasphemy would be practised till it dulled the senses and mob psychology took over. Religion would be compromised and its long term effects disregarded.

But for the men behind Islam, with their eyes on the future, this was not to be tolerated at any cost. They had to act before it was too late to halt or reverse the inexorable decline.

Hussain intensified his campaign. He was determined to accomplish his mission by means more vigorous than had hitherto been used. He deserves full credit for the exemplary courage and aplomb with which he handled the ugly situation. He did not resort to aggression yet firmly resisted Yazid's bluster.

Can man stand up to these conditions? When the scene moved to the battle-field of Kerbala, Hussain managed to say daringly: "Man can - but not necessarily with ease He, and a small group of followers including his immediate family were mercilessly massacred. The day of this tragedy is universally commemorated every year and is called "Ashura" (10th Muharram, Islamic calendar) and is marked by processions and mourning. It is observed as a national holiday in certain countries.

Hussain is buried in Kerbala (Iraq). His holy shrine is visited by millions of people, from all over the world, as a mark of veneration.

It is in the very nature of great reformers that they belong to everybody, everywhere. Hussain's noble deed is so relevant to the entire human race, that I am sure there is a far bigger audience waiting for him somewhere than the one he has already. All that is required is to draw people's attention.

The contemporary society, irrespective of race and religion, would do well to have a closer look at the Hero of Kerbala as his message transcends the barriers of caste and creed, race and religion. Advocates of human

rights, sociologists, reformers, theologians, all included, will find "delightful wisdom, sweet instructions, and a meaning suited to their mind", in his story. His message is certainly not an exclusive preserve of any particular group. It embraces the entire human race. It was not a power struggle. Hussain persistently and explicitly expounded: "what matters to me is to 'correct', not conquer" - an affirmation that he would die in the firm belief that a despot's idiosyncrasies could never be an effective instrument of religious policies.

Yazid became too big for his boots and assumed the characteristics of a despot who, almost as a condition of his position, made boastful and frivolous claims that he alone could lead the nation.

Hussain was, however, committed to redeeming Islam and maintaining the faith intact.

He hoped that matters will improve and kept a low profile to preserve amity. He had a clear choice: stand aside and let Yazid act according to his whims; (and thus join in and implicitly justify his abominable escapades) or counter his devious bluster. Hussain had to decide: to take the situation in its stride as a price worth paying for the "status quo"; or view it as an ominous foretaste of the consequences of the extensive damage done by the far-reaching anti-Islamic activities of Yazid, the mammon of unrighteousness, whose lust for power prompted him to beat the nation into the mould he favoured. He and his profane crew conspired to scuttle the ship of Islam by worse than heinous deeds, violating the aims for which Islam was born.

Hussain had no desire to live under such a corrupt Caliph. He wanted to act as quietly and "spontaneously" as possible so as to limit the possibilities of an open clash with the Caliph. But Yazid bargained hard. Hussain could not take his effervescent nonsense perpetually and did what was right.

If the moral standards of human behaviour were as high as they were in the person of Hussain the world would be a better place to live in, is the obvious inference. His incredible cool and superhuman moral courage to achieve his mission stirs our deepest emotions. His exemplary conduct, throughout, and adorable, conscience tore Yazid's monstrous designs to shreds.

The virtuous people will continue to do their duty to maintain righteousness in this world and in this they are entitled to universal recognition and support. Hussain's acceptance of persecution in the cause of humanity was most convincing and moving proof of God's immanence in men. He was a man par excellence who maintained the highest standards set by the martyrs and heroes of all ages. With a courage that was more than human he managed to leave a message for the entire world: "Do not submit to exploitation, of any kind; maintain a tenacious grip on veracity; better die with honour than live in shame". He surely deserves universal recognition. "He is an immortal heir of Universal praise". Fourteen Hundred years have passed but the memory of that adorable hero, who resolutely faced the soul-searing trials and tribulations, has not diminished. On the contrary, it has grown in intensity. Imbued with exemplary fortitude, moral fibre and aplomb, Hussain has emerged as the most revered and meritorious martyr

the world has produced, who established the highest standards of excellence of which humanity prides itself.

He was the odour of sanctity; the beauty of holiness. Here is a resolute hero, well past the prime of life, who is prepared to brace himself to confront the lurking menace and the acrimonious campaign of the powerful Caliph - to forestall a social and moral disaster. By this action he affirmed forever that it is both a social and moral duty to act when confronted with such situations and people who do not act have only themselves to blame if false values are imposed on them. Virtuous people who were endowed with sagacity and foresight always disliked sitting on the fence just listening to scheming delinquent busybodies. They acted. They were people who valued rectitude.

And all they asked of the party in power was that they enunciated edicts which were not obnoxious and did not blatantly infringe the higher values of life. The society would indeed pay a heavy price if it ignores reformers and thus extrudes righteousness for good. Any social order, if it seeks continuous satisfaction with a bad regime, of lives in constant fear of it, when all is not well, is heading towards abject catastrophe and total disintegration. These are the situations where a "Hussain" is required. He positively had a clear concept of a healthy social order. His endearing story could not have survived without the impetus of a powerful personality behind it.

Faith and conviction prompted his motley band of men, women and children, of widely differing ages, to defy the stupendous odds. The youngest martyr was Abdullah, Hussain's infant son, the buoyancy of whose innocent brood refloated the sinking ship of Islam. It seems extraordinary that a handful of men, including small boys -some of them hardly eight or nine years - could produce results that were not only amazing but perfectly sustained through the long passage of time. It was an intense collective action - immaculate, controlled, restrained and selfless.

The conflict between good and evil remains perpetual. Both persist in their efforts to sustain. We are besieged by irresistible evil forces. We helplessly oscillate between the two and find ourselves pathetically bogged down in this quagmire. But somehow "the foot prints" of Hussain, "On the sand of time", show us the way. It is for us follow them or go astray.

Our society is swamped by mindlessness. We find ourselves perpetually obsessed by a nauseating craving for terrestrial and temporal gratification, beckoned by the primrose path of pleasure, oblivious of the values of life.

In this situation remember Hussain. Had he surrendered to Yazid, there was "bed of roses" for him but he opted for "bed of thorns".

Total abandonment of the worldly pursuits and progress, for ordinary mortals like most of us, (barring canoodling with debauchery and other frivolous sensual pleasures which are certainly execrable), is neither desirable nor feasible, in the present day world. But if we shift the stress from temporal to spiritual gains we will neither get "icebound" nor tossed around in the turbulent ocean of terrestrial life. This inexorable logic is perfectly rational and a readily accessible compromise. It would do us a deal of good. It would mean that we would be able to devote more time to honest

activities. It has the simplest logical ways of making the world a better and more peaceful place to live in. It sounds rather a grandiose kind of idea but it is one that could be perfectly feasible, efficacious and irrefragible. There is nothing really demanding about such an approach towards life, only a bit of self discipline and genuine introspection will serve the purpose. Our lives will be characterised by benevolence and magnanimity and through individual goodness a healthy society will emerge, peace and justice would prevail.

Finally: Hussain realised that no common beliefs held him and Yazid together. Hussain thought that Islam should be better acted, better practised and better observed. In short, better presented to comply with the holy text (Qur'an) and the divine will.

He administered a shock treatment, to achieve this aim, and the world of Islam came out of the deep slumber, with a jolt, as a direct result of his sacrifice. He deployed a singular strategy; lost the battle yet won the campaign. The total effect was immensely impressive all of which stemmed from his steadfastness that is to say faithfulness to the religious principles. Hussain established a new moral and religious consensus to which even (most of) his opponents felt constrained to make obeisance.

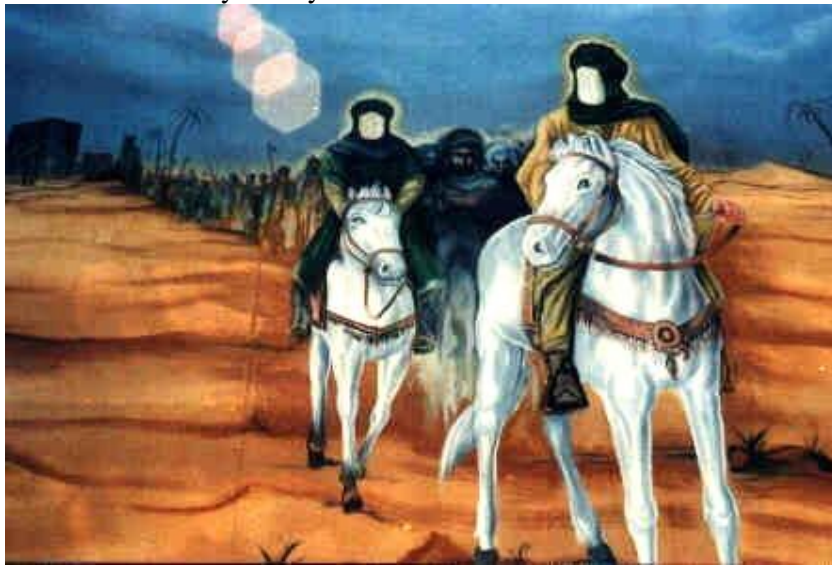
"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few" - Winston Churchill

Part 1 - Deliberation and Preparation

At the dawn of the 10th of Muharram, 62 A.H. (680 AD.) after Imam Hussain (A) led his followers for the morning prayer he wore the coat of arms of his grandfather, the Apostle of Allah (SAW), and put his turban on; he wore his father's sword, "Thul-Fiqar" or The two-pronged.

He then addressed his followers, stating with praise of and thanks-giving to Allah, "Allah has destined that you and me shall be killed today. I, therefor, would urge you to be resilient in fighting".

Thereupon, he mobilised his band for war. They were, as later related through Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (A), 45 horsemen and 100 foot soldiers. He made Zuhair bin (son of) Alqain commander of the right flank, Habib bin Mudhahir the left flank, and his household in the centre; he entrusted the bearing of the standard to his brother Al-Abbas (A). The troops gathered in front of the tents where women and children were housed. He ordered the digging of a trench, surrounding the tents enclosure from the back, filling it with firewood during the night of the tenth of Muharram, setting fire to it when fighting broke out so that it may serve as a back buffer between his fighters and the enemy's army.



Part 2 - The Arena (The desert of Kerbala, Iraq)

*A sweltering, simmering, broiling land
Igneous, sultry, arid sand.
No bramble (or thistle) it boasts
A crop of humpbacked dunes it hosts
A torrid, baking, seething place
Even delusion, cannot verdure trace.
Exhausted earth's infecund plot
Anhydrous, husky, soapless, spot.
Parched fragment of a barren world
A glowing meteor to the earth hurled.
No cheerless, forlorn cactus grows
Hellish, blustering simoom blows.
The blazing, fiery, flaming sun
An eerie desolation; the valiant shun.
A spooky silence, ominous hush
The wind escapes it, with a rush.
The terra firma appears ablaze
The earth stunned, in a languid daze.
A vision, on earth, of a virtual hell
A stretch of furnace, a fiery shell
The heatwave diffuses thermal haze
The fervid ether forbids the gaze.
The primeval sands primordial heat
With contempt does inferno treat
Behold a dauntless, valiant band
Stands, resolutely, on this land.
The Profit's grandson; with his group
A tranquil Guild, not a militant troop.
In this sombre, dreary terrain
They, their reverence did sustain.*

Omar bin Sa'ad, the commander of the enemy's army came with 30,000 of troops. He made Amr bin al-Hajjaj az-Zubaidi the commander of the right flank of his army and Shimr bin Thil al-Jawshan the commander of the left flank. Izra bin Qais Al-Ahnasi was made the commander of the horsemen, Shibth bin Ribī'e took charge of the archers.

*"Suddenly a deafening tumult I heard,
Thundering of myriad hooves, converged.
A tremor struck, the earth did shake,
My tranquillity disrupted, I was awake.
Loomed, ominously, a host of swords,
Rush, headlong, did furious hordes.
The glint of tinsel arms appeared,
As their coursers they spurred.
My waves, in terror, rushed, did flee
As their identity dawned on me.
Their sinister countenance, hideous looks,
Depicted a pack of depraved crooks.*

*Their obliquity; their visage betrayed,
A flash flood hit me (was dismayed)*

Part 3 - Meeting the Enemy

When the two belligerent sides confronted each other and the fire was raging in the trench, Shimr shouted, "Oh Hussain! you are in a hurry to go to hell fire before the day of judgement!" Hussain enquired: Isn't this Shimr bin Thil al-Jawshan; he was told that it was him. Hussain then retorted "Oh son of goatherdess! You are more deserving to burn in it".

When Imam Hussain (A) saw their gathering, which was like a torrent he raised both his hands to the sky and prayed, "Oh My Lord! You are my haven in every mishap, my hope in every predicament my refuge and defender in every ordeal. How many a distress that weakens the heart, makes the enemy rejoices at the misfortune when I entrusted it to You and resorted to You out of preference over others, you did not let me down and had driven away and eliminated all these distressing things. You are the Giver of every boon and the ultimate source of every wish to be granted."

Qaiyim bin Haseen Al-Fizari shouted, "Oh Hussain and followers of Hussain! Can't you see the water of the Euphrates the currents of which twist like the bellies of snakes? I swear by the Almighty you are not going to drink a drop of it until you taste death in doses". It is worth noting that Imam Hussain and his followers were denied access to the water the days earlier at the orders of Ibn Ziyed through Ibn Sa'ad. This was achieved by stationing 500 horsemen between Imam Hussain's camp and the River Euphrates. Imam Hussain was forced to ask his brother Al-Abbas to bring them water on two occasions before the 10th of Muharram. The enemy troops made it exceptionally difficult for Imam Hussain and his band to get water supplies on the night and day of 10th Muharram.

Imam Hussain, convinced of the enemy's determination to fight him, asked for his horse and mounted it; he then addressed them in a high voice saying, "Oh people!, heed my speech and do not get restless until I preach you as I see it my duty towards you and until I explain why I came to you. If you accepted my reasoning, believed in my speech, and were fair to your selves and mine, you would because of that be happier, then you would have no reason to attack me. If you do neither, resolve upon your affair and (gather) your associates, let not your affair be in darkness to you, then have it executed against me and do not reflect (any further). Allah is my helper and He is the Guardian of the righteous."

When the women heard him say this, they raised their voices screaming and crying. He sent his brother Al-Abbas and his son Ali Al-Akbar to the women to calm them down and remarked, "Alas! they will be crying a lot". When the crying came to an end, Imam Hussain (A) resumed his talk and said, "Oh people!, Allah created this world and made it an abode of destruction and transience, taking its inhabitants from one phase to another. It deceives the conceited and seduces the wretched. Let not this world deceive you for it is capable of dashing the hopes of those who put their trust in it and let down those who are greedy for its riches. I can see that you agreed on an affair capable of bringing the wrath of Allah upon you, causing Him to turn His face away from you, spread amongst you His revenge. Glory be to our Lord, and woe to you. You pledged allegiance (to Allah) and believed in the Messenger Mohammad (S), then ganged up against his

progeny intent on killing them. Satan has taken hold over you, precipitating you to forget the remembrance of the Almighty. May evil befall you and may your aspiration come to nothing."

"From Allah we come and unto Him we return. Those are people who disbelieved after they had believed; so away with the unjust people."

*Hussain was coaxed to change his heart
Induced, to play that heathen's part
Adamant to surrender, though he remained
Aggression he shunned, conflict abstained.
Hussain, explicitly, did explain:
"Vain, O' Yazid, is temporal gain.
Through calumnious and dissolute ways
Your prevaricate what the Prophet says.
Your evanescent, sordid, slippery boon
will vanish, like a mirage; too soon.
The morbid manoeuvres; you deploy
Islam will ruin, the faith destroy.
Through muddled thinking and notions dark
On a feckless mission do not embark
Potentially hazardous whims dispel.
This mood of bleak despair expel.
This sense of spiritual emptiness
By rational thinking do suppress.
Sanity do not in this bog sink
And push Islam to disaster's brink
Decay of the faith, I do perceive
The Prophet's mission I will retrieve.
Like a looming disc, on the horizon
Poised is the religion's setting sun.
To bury the hatchet, and heal the breach
I show an olive-branch; peace I preach.
A vain strife do not provoke
Save your necks from a hellish yoke.
Listen to me for goodness' sake
(Do not just acquiesce - advice take)*

Part 4 - Hussain, the Grandson of the Prophet (S)

"Oh people! Track back my lineage. Relate me and consider who I am. Then look back and remonstrate with yourselves. Consider whether it is right for you to kill me and encroach upon my integrity. Am I not the son of your Prophet's daughter and the son of his vicegerent and cousin, the first of the believers in Allah and his Messenger? Was not Hamza, the master of martyrs, the uncle of my father? Was not the 'winged' Ja'far my uncle? Have you not heard of the tradition of the Prophet (S) concerning myself and my brother, "These are the two lords of the youth of the inhabitants of paradise". Whether you believe in what I say - and it is the truth, for I swear by the Almighty I have never told a lie since I learnt that Allah hated people who told them - or you regard me as a liar, and chose not to believe my statement, there are amongst you who, if you asked them, would tell you! Ask Jabir bin Abdullah Al-Ansari, Aba Sa'eed Al-Khudri, Sahl bin Sa'ad Al-Sa'idi, Zaid bin Arqam and Anas bin Malik, to tell you that they heard these words from the messenger of Allah (SAW) in favour of me and my brother."

"Is there not (sufficient) deterrent in this to prevent you from shedding my blood?"

"If I understand what you are saying," interrupted Shimr bin Thil al-Jawshan, "then I only worship God (very shakily) on the edge".

"I think that you worship God (very shakily) on seventy edges", said Habib b. Mudhahir, "For I testify that you are right. You do not understand what he is saying. For God has impressed (ignorance) upon your heart".

"If you are in any doubt about this", Imam Hussain (A) told them, "you are in doubt that I am the son of the daughter of your Prophet. By God there is no son of a Prophet other than me among you and among the peoples from East to West. Shame on you, are you seeking retribution from me for one of your dead I have killed, or for property of yours I expropriated, or for a wound I have inflicted?"

They did not say anything to him. Then he called, "Shabath b. Rib'ie, Hajjar b. Abjar, Qays b. al-Ash'ath, Yazid b. al-Harith, didn't you write: 'The fruit has ripened; the dates are ready for picking; come to an army which has been gathered for you' ?"

"We don't know what you are talking about", said Qays b. al-Ash'ath, "Submit to the authority of your kinsmen (the Umayyads). They have never treated you with anything but what you liked".

"By God, I will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated; nor will I flee like a slave", said al-Hussain (A). Then he called out, "O servants of God, I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord from your stoning." (44:20). "I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every haughty man who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning." (40:27).

*A holy war it means, indeed
If waged to crush the devil's creed.
No rancour, 'gainst you, I hold
But faith do cherish - as I told.
Islam I will resolutely shield
Burnt will stand and never yield.*

*Would welcome death (and make it tame)
Would rather die than live in shame":
"Your Prophet's scion I'm - you know
At least some regard to his name show.
His singular dictum is my creed
"Universal good" I adore, indeed
Ali, the paragon, the seraphic Imam
Cham of the faith, the shield of Islam
Inimitable, impeccable: I am his son
His peerless attributes I have won.
My heart is virtues' abode and nest
Blessedness harbours in my breast
Condone the rule of right, I do
And believe, that right is might too
Your vulgar sway vanquish I will
This sacred duty will fulfil
My soul is couched on eminence
I was born with a divine sense.*

Part 5 - Warning to the People of Kufa

He then dismounted his camel and ordered Aqaba bin Sam'an to hobble it with a tie. The troops of the enemy marched towards him. Among them was Abdullah bin Hawza al-Temimi who shouted, "Is Hussain amongst you?" He said it three times. The followers of Hussain (A) replied, "This is Hussain, what do you want from him?" He retorted, "Oh Hussain! You lied. Be sure you will be consigned to hell". Hussain answered, "I come to a Lord who is forgiving, generous, commanding and intercessor. But who are you?" He replied, "I am Ibn Hawza". Hussain raised his hands very high so much so that his armpit showed and said, "Oh Allah! posses him to hell fire." Ibn Hawza became very angry and charged Hussain with his horse; there was a stream between them; he fell from his horse but his foot got entangled in the stirrup; the horse dragged him on the stones and trees; his free leg was severed; the rest of his body was still attached to the horse who threw him in the fire which was raging in the trench; he was burnt to death.

Imam Hussain (A) raised his voice and said, "Oh Allah! We are the Household of your Prophet, his progeny and his kinship, shatter those who did us injustice and usurped our fight. You are All-hearing, Near".

Masrooq bin Wa'il Al-Hadhrami said, "I was at the forefront of the horsemen which advanced to fight Hussain in the hope that I succeed in dealing a blow to him in order to get a prize from Ibn Ziyad. But when I saw what happened to Ibn Hawza, I was certain that the members of this house (the Household of the Prophet) have sanctity from and position with Allah. I then left their ranks and said to myself, "I am not fighting those people lest I should be in hell fire".

When the followers of Hussain (A) saw the determination of the people of the opposite camp to fight their Lord and Imam Hussain (A) Zuhair bin al-Qain came forward and stood in front of them and addressed them, "Oh people of Kufa! I warn you of the chastisement of Allah. It is incumbent on every Muslim to give counsel to his fellow Muslim. We are still brethren of one religion unless we resort to war. You need advice more than we do. If you resort to the sword there will no longer be any bond between us. We will be two nations (Ummas). Allah has entrusted us with the progeny of His Prophet, Mohammad (S) as a measure just to see how you and we behave towards them. We call upon you to support them and let down the dictator Yazid and Obaidullah bin Ziyad. Under their rule, you will only reap mistreatment, gouging of eyes, chopping of limbs, making a dreadful example of you, hanging you on tree trunks, killing your good men and reciters (of al-Qur'an) like Hijr bin Adi and his followers, and Hani' bin Urwah and his likes". He was heckled and interrupted by the people of Kufa; they swore at him and praised Ibn Ziyad and added that they would not budge until they killed Hani's companion (Imam Hussain) and those who were with him or sent them under escort to Ibn Ziyad.

Zuhair retorted, "Oh Men! the sons of Fatima have more right to befriend and support than the son of Sumayya. If you do not support them I pray to Allah that He guard you against killing them. You are therefore, requested to dissolve this man from Yazid; upon my life! He will be contented with your obedience without the killing of Hussain (A)".

Shimr shot at him with an arrow and said, "Shut up, May Allah silence your camel; we are fed up with your excessive talk".

Zuhair said, "Oh! you son of the incontinent, I do not mean you in my address for you are no more than an animal. I swear by the Almighty that you cannot master not even two ayas (verses) of the Book of Allah (Al-Qur'an). Surely, disgrace and chastisement will befall you on the day of judgement".

Shimr said, "Allah will kill you and your companion in an hour's time".

Zuhair said, "Are you threatening me with death. By the Almighty! Death with him is dearer to me than eternity with you".

Ziad then moved forward raising his voice and said, "Oh bondsmen of God! do not let this rude ruffian and his like deceive you. By the Almighty! Mohammad's (S) intercession is denied to those who shed the blood of his Progeny, and killed their supporters who protected their women."

A man from Hussain's camp called him and said, "Aba Abdillah (Hussain) says to you to come back. Upon my life! Like the faithful of the Pharaohs, you counselled and warned those people to the best of your ability. But alas! they do not seem to heed your admonition".

*"When mortals to heinous gains are lured
Their doom, eternal, is procured
Wallow in lustful lap of wealth
With a joyful face, sparkling health
Gloat over, regale, waver not
Indulge, frolic; then meet your lot
Perpetual remorse, unceasing pain
(Ceaselessly equate the ephemeral gain)
Truth sustains, exists, prevails
Knavery flops, infamy fails,
Repent you surely will, I warn
Callously, my "platitudes" you scorn.
A dealer in platitudes, I am not
Explicit support for the faith I sought
Sanity, ethics, sense I preach
Pursue I do whatever I teach.
With effortless clarity I speak
I never talk with tongue-in-cheek
A torch, to light your way I show
Follow its beam and safely go.
Initiate don't an abject act
'Tis futile if done and then retract.
All discernible trends in human thought*

Part 6 - Water is Denied

As it was very hot, Hussain and his household, and supporters were very thirsty. Therefore, Burair bin Khudhair Al-Hamadani who was an old devout man, an authority on Qur'an recitation, and well placed and revered by the Hamadani's asked to be permitted to address the people of Kufa. He was given the permission. He called, "Oh you people! Allah has sent Mohammad as a harbinger and warner, calling for the way of Allah, and a shining lantern. And this is the River Euphrates, the water of which is free for all kinds of animals pigs and dogs. Yet you have denied the son of daughter of the Messenger of Allah access to it. Is this the way Mohammad should be rewarded?"

A group of people from the camp of Ibn Ziyad retorted, "Enough of this nonsense. By the Almighty! Hussain shall not quench his thirst with its water like those who were denied to quench their thirst before him".

Burair said, "Oh you people! The heritage of Mohammad has ended up in your midst. And these are his progeny, household, daughters and holy members of his family. So what do you have to say and what are you going to do with them?"

They replied, "We want Emir Obaidullah bin Ziyad to get hold of them, and then decide what he would do with them".

He said, "Are you not satisfied that they go back whence they came? Oh people of Kufa! Woe unto you! Did you forget the letters you wrote and the pledges you made to me to which Allah bears witness? You invited the progeny of your Prophet and claimed that you would protect them with yourselves. When they responded and came to you, you want to hand them over to Ibn Ziyad, and denied them access to the water of the River Euphrates. What evil heirs to your Prophet and his progeny you turned out to be! What has become of you! May Allah not give you a drink on the day of judgement. What an evil folk you are!

A group of them replied, "We do not know what you are talking about".

He said, "Praise be to Allah for making me more discerning. Oh Lord! I seek refuge with you and disown the actions of these people. Oh Allah! Sow discord among their ranks and make them use their fortitude against each other until they meet with Your wrath."

The response from them was that they fired arrows at him which made him retreat.

*Enervate them, this tirade did
The foe still sustained its bid.
Woe to those whose hearts were sealed
Their promiscuous prattle, thus unveiled:
"Confound us not by harangues, Hussain
Unleash not your diatribes, in vain.
The Prophet, some message did convey
Concede, that Yazid now shows the way.
To usurp the Caliphate do not try
Your revolt, does envy imply.
What the Caliph avers, is verily best
Submit, and don't his dictums test*

*You shouldn't his celestial place dispute
Withhold not allegiance, pay tribute.
The Caliph pilots our faith and fate
Divinely commandeers our love and hate.
His words, divine truth contain"*

Part 7 - Hussain's Sermon

At forenoon of the tenth of Muharram when the heat of the sun started scorching the earth, Hussain, his household and companions began to feel the severity of thirst. The enemy was adamant not to give them access to the water of the River Euphrates out of Jahili'ite enmities and Badri'ite grudges. Therefore, Aba Abdillah AI-Hussain, feeling the strain of thirst, mounted his horse and opened the leaves of Al-Qur'an over his head and stood in front of the belligerent camp and shouted, "The Book of Allah and the Sunna (tradition) of my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (S) are the arbiters between you and me". He then made them bear witness on his pure soul and that he was wearing the coat of arms of the Prophet (S), his buckler and his turban.

They said that his statement was true. He then asked them what made them decide on fighting him. Their answer was that it was out of obedience to the Emir Obaidullah bin Ziyad. He then delivered this sermon:



Hussain's sermon:

"May grief and evil befall you, You wretched bunch! You distressfully called upon us to come to your rescue and when we responded fully, you unsheathed your swords against and pushed us unto the fire which we set alight for our enemy as well as yours. You, therefore, played into the hands of your enemy against your masters (the friends of God). Without justice the enemy administered amongst you and without hope you placed in them. Woe unto you! You abandon us while the sword is still blemished, oneself is collected, and the mind is yet to be made up. Yet, you rushed like the creeping bird and fell over yourselves like butterflies crowding on a flower; then you wrecked it; to hell with you! Oh you slaves of the bondmaid! Ahzab outlanders, forsakers of the Book [of Allah], distorters of facts, bunch of evil, blow of Satan, extinguishers of norms! Woe unto you! Have you chosen to support those, and let us down? Yes, by the Almighty this emanates from an old intrinsic treachery, fed to your origins and handed down to you; therefore, you are like a malignant fruit - distressing to look at and sickening when eaten."

"The bastard and the son of a bastard has left us but two choices, either resorting to the sword or capitulating. How preposterous! Humiliation is not our cup of tea! Allah shall never let this happen to us; so shall His Messenger, the believers, and chaste and pure laps and proud souls. For the sake of these values we would rather die in an hour and not submit to the ignobles. Hence my march leading this family albeit meagre in number and deserted by would-be supporters."

*Hussain thundered: "O, wretches you
Before the swine pearls I threw.
Don't venom spit in religion's name
Comprehend I do, your noxious game.
When degeneration marks its way
An entire nation goes astray.
Delusion, do not let you sway
Confounded whims induce decay.
For you is mild profoundest hell
That infernal jail can't match you well.
A hideous deed, sponsor not
Save your conscience, mend your lot
Erase and efface your sins' stains
With tainted conscience, no one gains
The lure, the virtuous to pursue
The crass chase it, to grab it, run.
This pathless desolation, do not tread
'Tis disquietude, self-imposed dread
Don't your conscience push and goad
Vainly, trudge not a craggy road".*

Part 8 - Al-Hur bin Yazid seeks Forgiveness

He continued with his address stating, "By the Almighty, soon you have done away with us, you will be shaken like a stone mill, like an axis."

"This is a covenant passed, to me from my grandfather the Messenger of God (SAW) through my father. *'You may resolve upon your affair and gather your partners then let not your affair be in darkness to you, then have it executed against me and do not reflect (any further)'. (10:71)* *'Surely I rely on Allah, my Lord and yours; there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock; surely, my Lord is on the right path'. (11:56)'*

Then he raised his hands towards heaven and said, "Oh Lord! give them no rain, afflict them with barren years like the years of Yusuf (Joseph) - (draught and famine). Give mastery over them to the boy from Thaqeef (reference to Al-Hajjaj al-Thaqafi), who will give them bitter water (torment them) because they branded us as liars and let us down. You are our Lord; we rely on You and unto You we return."

He returned to his camp and was surrounded by his brethren and followers. He said to them, "The folk are intent on fighting you. May Allah have mercy on you." Then he appealed for help and support.

When Al-Hur bin Yazid ar-Riyahi heard his plea for help he went to Omar bin Sa'ad and asked him, "Are you fighting this man?" Ibn Sa'ad replied, "Yes, by the Almighty! a kind of fighting the bottom line of which is heads will roll and limbs will be chopped".

Al-Hur said, "Are you not satisfied with what to you?" Ibn Sa'ad replied, "Had it been for me I would have accepted his proposal. But your master is adamant".

Al-Hur then stood a middle ground and shuddered, gradually drawing nearer to Hussain (A). One of his companions asked him, "What are you doing?" Al-Hur answered, "I am giving myself the choice between heaven and hell; by the Almighty I choose nothing short of heaven so much so that I do not mind if I were chopped into pieces and burnt. He then spurred his horse aiming towards Hussain (A) with his lance turned around, his bow upside down. He stood before Hussain (A), eyes cast down, and asked him, "O! could I but sacrifice myself for you, You son of the Messenger of Allah! I have been stalking you all the way. It was me who prevented you from going back (to where you came from), kept close watch on you, and roared on you in this place. I have never thought that the people would not agree to your proposition. Oh Lord! I turn to you in repentance for I frightened the hearts of Your friends, the offspring of Your Messenger."



"Oh father of Abdullah! I seek penitence from Allah for what I did. Do you, think that He will accept it?" Hussain (A) answered, "Yes, he will accept your repentance".

He then asked Hussain (A) for permission to address the belligerent camp; he was given it. He called in the highest pitch of his voice, "Oh, people of Kufa! You called on this good servant of God; when he responded you welcomed him and claimed that you do not mind getting killed to spare him. Then you changed your minds, transgressing against him with a view to killing him. You put a stranglehold on him, stretched his patience, and besieged him to prevent him from seeking a safe haven in Allah's vast land. He became like a hostage. You denied him, members of his household, and companions access to the waters of the River Euphrates from which Jews, Christians, and fire worshippers drink, and pigs and dogs wade in. Yet Hussain, his family, and companion, are dying of thirst. What misery you inherited the offspring of Mohammad (S)! May Allah not give you drink on the day of thirst." A group from the camp of Ibn Sa'ad attacked him shooting at him with arrows forcing him to retreat.

Omar bin Sa'ad drew nearer to the camp of Imam Hussain (A) and called Draid, the bearer of the standard, to move forward. He then took an arrow, placed it in his arch and released it in the direction of Hussain's (A) camp, and said, "Bear witness for me with the Emir that I was the first to shoot." The arrows then followed like rain, causing injuries among the companions of Imam Hussain (A).

Having made sure that the enemy is intent on fighting them, Hussain (A) ordered his followers, "Rise to certain death; may Allah have mercy on you; the arrows are the messengers of those people to you".

The companions of Hussain (A) waged a campaign and fought for an hour or so. When the dust settled, there were fifty dead. When Hussain (A) saw this elite group of his companions killed he held his beard and said, "Allah's wrath on the Jews was great because they claimed that he had a son, on the Christians because they made him one of the trinity, on the Magians because they worshipped the sun and the moon, and on the people

who were unanimous in the agreement to kill the son of their Prophets daughter. By the Almighty! I am not going to give in to them until I meet Allah blood-dyed".

*"Your predilection for conceit
And profane wiles, entranced with deceit
Have driven me to prove, with sword, my case
To screw my courage to the sticking place.
When my sword, to act, is forced
My views, by the apostates, are endorsed.
Bathed in the foe's infernal blood
Zooms, imbrued, through the gory flood.
As I draw my sword (and wield)
preemptorily the rivals yield.
A conquest, when I plan to clinch
To elude the battle the bravest flinch.
Launch an assault, and attack you do
A veritable rock will confront you.
In your quest to win; prevail
Assume the aggressive; charge; then fail
To feed hell's fire, be dispatched
Midst devils perform misdeeds, unmatched.*

Part 9 - Is there any amongst Man to help us ?

He then shouted, "Is there any one who can come to our rescue? Is there any one who can protect the sanctity of the family of Allah's Apostle?" The screaming and crying of women could be heard as a result of his plea.

One by one the companions of Hussain (A) asked for permission to meet in combat with the enemy bidding him farewell, saying, "Peace be with you Oh Aba Abdillah!"; he answered. "Peace be with you; we will follow", reciting, "...so of them is he who accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed the least". (33:23)

Then the two Jabiri cousins, Saif bin al-Harith bin Sari' and Malik bin Abid bin Sari' emerged crying and asked for permission to fight. Hussain asked them, "What makes you cry? I am hopeful that you will after a very short time have peace of mind and tranquillity". They answered, "We are not crying for ourselves, but for you. We can see that you are beleaguered, and we have no power to be of any good to you". Hussain thanked them. They fought till death.

Then the two Ghifari brothers, Abdullah and Abdul-Rahman sons of Urwah followed and fought and were killed close to Hussain (A).

A group consisting of Omar bin Khalid as-Saidawi, his servant Sa'ad, Jabir bin Al-Harith as-Salmani, and Majma' bin Abdullah Al-A'ithi came out and raided the enemy, the Kufi'ites; when they went deep into their ranks, they were encircled by the troops and cut off. Hussain sent his brother Al-Abbas in a bid to rescue them, which he did successfully. But due to their severe wounds they were overpowered by the Kufi'ites and were killed in one place.

Al-Hur bin Yazid ar-Riyahi attacked the enemy troops killing over forty of them. When his horse got wounded he fought them on foot and fell to the ground. Hussain stood over him wiping away soil and blood which was oozing from his face, saying, "Congratulations oh you Hur! You are Hur (free) as your mother named you". He passed away.

Wadhih, the Turkish servant of Al-Harth al-Mithiji came forward and asked for permission to fight. He fought until he was severely wounded; he called Hussain by name to come to his rescue. Hussain responded. But it was too late as he was in his final moments of life. Hussain hugged him. He said, "I am so lucky; the son of the Messenger of Allah putting his cheek on mine". He died immediately after that.

Aslam, the servant of Hussain (A) was next. He fought bravely. When he was badly wounded he called on Hussain for help. Hussain came to him and hugged him. He was still alive. He smiled, thanked God for granting him martyrdom and passed away.

Muslim bin Awsajah assaulted the enemy and fought very bravely. Amr bin al-Hajjaj and a band of his companions counter attacked the camp of Hussain from the direction of the Euphrates. When the two belligerent forces clashed and the dust settled, Muslim bin Awsajah was found fallen but still with a spark of life.

Hussain (A) and Habib bin Mudhahir walked towards him. Hussain said to him, "May Allah have mercy on you oh Muslim!" and recited, " ... *so of*

them is he who accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed the least". (33:23)

Habib bin Mudhahir approached him and said, "God knows how sorry I am that you will die, Oh Muslim! the good news is that you will go to heaven". Muslim replied in a faint voice, "May Allah bring good news to you

Habib added, "If I am not absolutely sure that I will follow in your foot steps I would have asked you to let me know of your will". Muslim answered, "I urge you to take care of this", pointing to Imam Hussain, "You should sacrifice your life protecting him". Habib said to him, "Feel serene and be confident about that". He gave up the ghost to its Creator.

When the followers of Ibn Sa'ad knew of the death of Muslim bin Awsajah they shouted in elation. Shibth bin Rib'ii said to those who were around him, "May your mothers be bereaved. You are killing yourselves with your own hands and bring humiliation to yourselves Do you rejoice at the death of Muslim? He has credit in the service of Muslims. I saw him at the battle of Azerbaijan killing six atheists before the horsemen of the Muslim army had the chance to re-group.

When the troops of Ibn Sa'ad suffered many casualties at the hands of the followers of Hussain (A), Amr bin Al-Hajjaj shouted at his followers, "Do you know who you are fighting? You are fighting clear-sighted knights, bent on killing you; by the Almighty! if you would use only stones against them you would have killed them!" Omar bin Sa'ad retorted, "You are right. Tell the troops not to meet with them in duel, for if you do so you will all perish".

Amr bin Al-Hajjaj attacked the right flank of Hussain's camp. The remaining combatants withstood their ground, falling on their knees, aiming their arrows at the enemy. Thus, forcing the horses of the enemy to refrain from forging ahead. When they resumed their attack they came under a hail of arrows from Imam Hussain's (A) followers causing many casualties among their ranks.

Shimr bin Thil al-Jawshan took on the left flank of Hussain's (A) camp. The combatants proved to be as steadfast as their companions in the right flank. The result was complete failure of the enemy to break through the solid defences of Hussain troops.

Among those who remained alive at this stage of the battle was Wahab bin Abdullah Al-Kalbi who was with his mother and wife. His mother urged him to come out and support the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah. He answered, "O mother! I will do my best". He came out chanting these sonnets.

"You better deny me not as I am the son of Al-Kalbi. You will see me and how fatal my blows are. How my assault and campaign seeking my revenge and that of my companions. I repulse the attack in the wake of the attack. For my struggle in the battlefield is not a playing matter."

Then he attacked the enemy killing some and wounding others, returning to his mother, saying to her, "Are you satisfied with my deed?" She answered. "Never! unless you are killed before Hussain (A)".



His wife intervened asking him, "I put you to oath by the Almighty! Do not bereave me by getting killed". His mother said to him, "Do not pay attention to what she says; go back and carry on fighting in front of the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah; you will be worthy of his grandfathers intercession on the Day of Judgement". He resumed combat, killing nineteen horsemen and twelve infantry troopers. He lost both his arms and was killed. May his soul rest in peace.

His wife walked towards his body and sat near his head, wiping away blood and saying, "Congratulations for you are guaranteed a place in heaven; I pray to the Almighty to bestow it on me to make me join you". Shimr was very angry at the spectacle. He dispatched his servant to kill her; he dealt a fatal blow to her head with a truncheon; she died instantly. She was the first women among the companions of Hussain (A) to be killed.

The enemy chopped off Wahab's head hurling it towards the tents of Hussain (A); his mother hugged it and wiped the blood off his face. She then was seen holding a tent pole and heading towards the enemy. Imam Hussain (A) prevented her from engaging in combat saying, "Go back. May Allah have mercy on you. You are relieved of jihad (holy war)". She returned uttering, "Oh Lord! do not frustrate my hope". Hussain said to her, "Allah will not do so".

Shimr attacked the tent of Imam Hussain (A) using his spear threatening to set it ablaze. The ladies inside the tent fled screaming and were in a distraught state. Hussain (A) called on him, "Oh you son of Thil Jawshan! Are you calling for my house to be burned while my family are inside? May Allah burn you in hell fire."

Shibth bin Rib'ii said to Shimr, "You have become a source of fright to women. I have never come across neither a deed nor a stance worse than yours". He felt ashamed and withdrew.

Part 10 - The Martyrs Die - One by One

It was just after midday when the fighting was still raging. Aba Thummamah as-Sa'idi approached Hussain (A) and said, "I can see that the enemy is getting very close. By God! I will not let them kill you and I am still alive. I wish to meet Allah, the Exalted after I have said my prayers in your company". Hussain raised his head towards the sky and said, "You remembered prayer! May Allah make you among those who say prayer and invoke Him; indeed, this is the start of (Dhuhr) Noon prayer". "Ask those people to give us a respite until we say our prayer", he added. Al-Hosein (of the enemy camp) said, "It will not be answered". Habib bin Mudhahir replied, "You claimed it will not be accepted from the house of the Messenger. Would it then be accepted from you? Al-Hosein attacked him dealing a sword blow to the head of his horse causing it to rear; he fell of and was rescued by his companions.

Hussain (A) then got ready for prayer - several versions as to how and what sort of prayers was said have been related. One version is that he led what was spared of his followers at that stage of the battle in 'fright prayer'; Zuhair bin Al-Qain and Sa'eed bin Abdullah Al-Hanafi together with half of the followers were in front of him. A second version claims that they said their prayer individually i.e. not in a congregational manner. A third story is that he led them in a quick prayer.

When Sa'eed was badly wounded he fell to the ground and said, "Oh God Almighty! Damn them as you have condemned the people of A'ad and Thamoud; give my regards to Your Prophet and let him know of the pain I am suffering; my aim is to be rewarded by You for defending the progeny of Your Prophet (S.A.W.)". He turned to Hussain and asked, "Have I lived up to my vow?" Hussain replied, "Yes, you are preceding me in entering paradise". He perished. He was found to have received thirteen arrows apart from wounds caused by swords and spears.

When Hussain (A) had finished his prayer he said to his companions, "Oh you noble folk! The gates of paradise are ajar, its rivers are flowing, its fruits are ready to be reaped; its dwellers - the Messenger of Allah and the martyrs who were killed in the way of Allah are waiting to welcome you; they yearn for your company. It is, therefore, incumbent on you to protect the religion of Allah, and His Messenger; drive away the enemy from his family. Their answer was, "Our souls are a protection to yours and our blood for yours; By the Almighty no harm will befall you and members of your kindred as long as we still breathe".

Omar bin Sa'ad ordered Amr bin Sa'eed who was in command of a group of archers to stun the horses of the followers of Hussain (A). The result was that no horseman was spared save Adh-Dhahhaq bin Abdullah Al-Mashriqi. He said the sight of our combatants falling led me to enter my horse in a tent to spare it destruction.

Abu Thamama as-Sa'idi came out and fought valiantly until he was critically wounded. A cousin of his, who had a grudge against him, set upon him and killed him.

Salman bin Mudharib al-Bajli, who is Zuhair bin Al-Qain's cousin, forged ahead fought and got killed.

Handhala bin Sa'eed ash-Shabami shouted "Oh people! I fear for you the like of what befell the (Al-Ahزاب) parties, the like of what befell the people of Nuh (Noah), and A'ad and Thamoud, and those who came after them, and Allah does not desire injustice for (His) servants; O my people! I fear for you from the day of calling out, the day on which you turn back retreating; there shall be no saviour for you from Allah, and whomsoever Allah causes to en, there is no guide for him. (40:30-93)

O my people! do not kill Hussain *"lest Allah should destroy you by a punishment, and he who forges (a lie) indeed fails to attain (his desire)"*. (20:61)

Hussain rewarded him with a good recompense and said "May Allah's mercy be with you; surely, they will deserve the punishment when they brushed aside your call for them to follow the truth, and rose to shed your blood as well as that of your coreligionists Just imagine how much more would befall them as they killed your good brethren!

He retorted. "You told the truth, O son of the Apostle of God! Is it not then the time to leave for the hereafter? Hussain gave him the permission to join the fray; he saluted Hussain and attacked the enemy and got killed.

Meanwhile, Aabis bin Shabih ash-Shakiri approached Shawthab, the servant of Shakir, who was a trustworthy follower in whose house Shia Muslims used to gather together and talked of the exploits and virtues of Ahl al-Bayt. Aabis said, "What do you like to do?" He replies, "I would like to fight alongside you until I got killed. Aabis wished him well and said to him, step before Hussain so that he can acclaim you as he did with the others who preceded you for that which we can expect reward in the hereafter". Shawthab saluted Hussain and pressed on, fought and got killed.

Aabis drew near Hussain and said, "There remained neither a kindred nor a friend who is dearer to me than you; if I am in a position to avert a diversity from you with any-thing that is more valuable to me than my own life, I would have never hesitated to do so. Peace be with you; I bear witness that I have been on the right guidance of your father and that of yours! He then advanced towards the enemy, sword in hand, and shouting. Since they knew him to be a very brave man, no one stood his ground in the face of his assault. Realising the danger, Omar bin Sa'ad shouted, "Pelt him with stones". As he was overwhelmed by stone throwing, he parted with his coat of arms and headgear and charged the enemy troops who fled. They regrouped and managed to encircle him and kill him. Dispute erupted among the troops each claiming the reward for his killing. Ibn Sa'ad said, "He has not been killed by any of you single-handed". He, therefore, denied them the recompense.



John, the servant of Aba Thar, stood before Hussain asking for permission to fight. He said to him, "O John! You joined us in quest of welfare; you are therefore, free to part my company". John knelt kissing the Imam's feet and pleading with him "In felicity, I lick your bowls; in adversity I will never let you down! Since my smell is bad, my lineage is humble and my colour is black, I look forward to that day in heaven when you breathe in me making my smell pleasant, my pedigree honourable, and my complexion white. Nay! by God I am not parting with you until this black blood of mine is fused with your blood!" Hussain gave him the permission. He fought valiantly killing twenty five soldiers. He then was killed. Imam Hussain attended his body and said, "O Lord! Whiten his face and sweeten his smell and gather him (on the Day of Resurrection) with Mohammad and let him be identified with the household of Mohammad". It was related that whomsoever passed by the battlefield smelled the aroma of his body which was more pleasant than musk.

Anas bin Al-Harith bin Nabih Al-Kahili, who was an elderly Companion saw the Apostle, heard his talk, and took part with him in Badr and Hunain battles, sought permission from Hussain, With his turban cloth, he assaulted the enemy troops killing about eighteen before he was killed. When Hussain saw him thus he wept and said,

"May Allah reward you!".

Amr bin Junadah Al-Ansari, a boy of eleven years, whose father was already killed in the battle, approached Hussain for permission to join the fight. Hussain was adamant not to let him do so saying, "This is a boy whose father was killed in the early campaign; his mother may hate to see him killed". The boy said, "My mother ordered me". He gave the permission to fight. No sooner the boy was killed and his severed head was thrown towards Hussain's camp. His mother took the boy's head, wiped the blood from it and hurled it at a nearby man and killed him. She then returned to the camp and fetched a tent pole, or some say a sword, singing war poetry and assaulting the enemy. Imam Hussain returned her to the camp after she had injured two men.

Al-Hajjaj bin Masrouq Al-Ju'fi fought until he was drenched with blood. He returned to Hussain to tell him how happy he was to meet Hussain's grandfather, Apostle of God, and his father the, vicegerent. Hussain replied, "I will soon meet them too". He then returned to the battlefield and got killed.

The Ansaris (Medinese) Sa'ad bin al-Harith and his brother Abul Hutoof heard Hussain's cry for help and the wailing of members of his family. They defected from Ibn Sa'ad army and joined Hussain's band. They fought the enemy and got killed.

Abush-Sha'tha Yazid bin Ziad Al-Kindi, who was on Sa'ad's side did the same by joining Hussain's. He was an archer. He knelt in front of Hussain and shot a hundred arrows. Hussain used to pray for him, "O Lord! Make his shot hit the target and reward him with paradise". When his arrows ran out he stood up and said, "It seems as though I killed five combatants". He attacked the enemy and killed another nine.

Bidding Hussain farewell, Swaid bin Amr bin Abil Muta' set forth and fought bravely until he was critically wounded. He fell face down. It was thought that he was dead; however when heard that Hussain was killed, he got up brandished a knife, and attacked the enemy; he was then set upon by the thugs and was killed. He was the last of Hussain's companions to be killed before Hussain's martyrdom,

*"Died other martyrs, one by one,
All were fearless, coward none.
Plucked were the Prophet's "blooms" in a day
Leaf by leaf-on the sand they lay.
Juveniles, adolescents, young and old,
An army not; seventy-two, all told
I groaned aghast as Hussain I saw,
(His visage stately, with no flaw")*

Part 11 - The Martyrdom of Ali al-Akbar

The Martyrdom of Ahl ul-Bayt (A) - The Posterity of the Prophet (S)

Since none of the companions who fought with Hussain was spared, members of his immediate family got ready to make the ultimate sacrifice in a manner that was characteristic of the pedigree of the Prophet - sheer determination, unrivalled bravery, and scant regard to personal safety. They bade farewell to each other, The first to come forward was Abul Hassan Ali al-Akbar who was twenty seven years old. He took permission from his father, Hussain and mounted his horse and met in combat with the Kufans. A man from amongst the crowd shouted, "O Ali! You relate to Yazid - for his mother Layla was daughter of Maymoona daughter of Abi Sufyan - and we want to respect this relationship. We may grant you an amnesty and a refuge if you wish". He said "The kinship of the Apostle of God should be second to none." He pressed on proclaiming who he was.

Imam Hussain could not hold back his tears and shouted at Omar bin Sa'ad, "What has become of you? May Allah bereave you of your kindred as you have made me bereft of mine, and did not respect my relationship of the Prophet. May Allah set on you an adversary who will slay you in your bed." He then raised his hands to the sky and said, "O Lord! Bear witness on those people for he who emerged to them is bearing a strong likeness to Your Prophet in all departments - resemblance of disposition, complexion, and logic. Hence we look at him when we crave to see Your Apostle. O Lord! Deprive them of the riches of the land, divide them, rend them asunder and turn them into smithereens. Never make the rulers be happy with them, for they sent for us so that they may support us but transgressed against us and killed us." He then recited Allah's words, "Surely, Allah chose Adam and Nuh and the descendants of Ibrahim and the descendants of Imran above the nations, offspring, one of the other, and Allah is Hearing Knowing".

Ali al-Akbar continued fighting. He killed all those who had the guts to meet him in duel. He killed scores of combatants.

Since thirst greatly contributed to his overstraining, he returned to his father to rest and complain of what thirst had done to him. Hussain cried, appealed for help and said, "You will soon meet your grandfather who will water you from his tumbler that you will never be thirsty again". He sucked his tongue to alleviate his predicament and gave him his ring to put in his mouth.

Ali returned to the battlefield happy to be told by his father that he would meet his grandfather, the Prophet. He delved into their ranks dispersing them. It seemed as though it were his grandfather, Imam Ali roaring in the battle ground fighting them. He killed more Kufans.

When the death toll mounted, Murra bin Munqidh al-Abdi made a pledge saying, "I shall bear all the sins of the Arabs, if I do not bereave his father." He ran his lance into his back and dealt him a blow on his head causing it to split. He embraced his horse which took him to the enemy camp where he was encircled by the troops who cut him into pieces.



On the brink of dying, he could muster a shout, "O Aba Abdillah! Farewell. Here is my grandfather; from whose cup I have drunk. Never again I will be thirsty. He says that there will be a cup waiting for you". Hussain hurried to him bending on him, putting his cheek over Ali's and murmuring, "Life is no longer worth living after your departure. How dare they encroach on Allah and violate the sanctity of the Prophet. Alas! It is hard on your grandfather and your father that you call on them for help which they cannot provide".

He then scooped a handful of his pure blood and throw it to the sky; not a single drop fell to the ground! That is why in the visitation ceremony we used to address him, "May my parents be sacrificed for you as you were wrongfully slain; for your blood which ascended to the heavens, for your sacrifice before your father in anticipation of God's reward. Yet he parted with you in extreme heart rending situation when he threw your blood to the sky as an offering and none of it fell to the ground.."

Hussain ordered his youth to carry his body to the tent, where the free females of the household of the Apostle of God gathered around him crying, wailing beating their breasts, and plucking their hair. Zainab al-Kubra (Senior), the pick of Bani Hashim threw herself on his body cuddling it for she saw in his demise her waning strength, the departure of the protector of her privacy and honour, and the crumbling of the buttress of her house.

Part 12 - The Campaign of the Abi Talibs

After Ali ul-Akbar, Abdullah bin Muslim bin Aqeel bin Abi Talib whose mother was Ruqaiyyah al-Kubra, daughter of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, was next to go to war. In three attacks, he killed a bunch of enemy soldiers. Yazid bin ar-Raqqad al-Juhni shot him with an arrow from which he protected his head with his arm. The arrow pierced his arm and lodged into his forehead sewing the two together. Failing to dislodge his arm from his forehead, he sent an outcry saying, "O Lord! They trampled on and humiliated us. So, God kill them as they killed us." As he was in that state, a man thrust his spear into his heart causing his death. Yazid bin Ar-Raqqad approached the dead body and plucked his arrow from his forehead causing the arrow to come off leaving the arrowhead buried into the forehead.

Abu Bakr Abdullah al-Akbar (Senior) son of Imam Ali son of Ramla, who was a slave-girl, fought bravely until he was killed.

After Abu Bakr al-Qassim, the turn was for his brother al-Qassim who was just a boy. When Hussain looked at him he embraced him and wept. He gave him permission to fight. His face exuding with light, sword in hand, wearing a shirt and a loin-cloth, and a pair of sandals. As he was engaged in combat his sandals snapped. Paying scant regard to the enemy soldiers, he stopped to tie it up for he did not want to be seen bare-footed by the enemy.

As he was thus Amr bin Sa'ad bin Nufail al-Azdi assaulted him. Hamid bin Muslim said to him, "What do you want of this boy? Is it not enough that all these troops have cut him off?" Amr replied, "By God! I have to harass him." He did not turn away before he dealt him a blow on the head causing him to fall face down. He called on his uncle, "O Uncle!" Hussain hurried to him as if he were a furious lion and struck Sa'ad with his sword; he lift his arm to protect his head, only to be severed from the elbow. He sent out a loud cry. When the troops heard it, the horsemen launched an attack to evacuate him; he was knocked down and trampled on by the horses and was killed.

When the dust settled, Imam Hussain was seen standing near the boy's head; the boy was kicking. Hussain was saying, "Lo! to those who killed you. Their adversary on the Day of Judgement shall be your grandfather".

"It is with regret that your uncle has been helpless, when you called on me I could not respond to your call, and when I responded there was nothing I could do. By God! It is a cry met with abundance of harm than help", he added. He carried him to the make-shift mortuary, where the bodies of Ali ul-Akbar and members of the Apostle's household lay. He lift his head towards the sky and invoked God, "O Lord! Do not lose count of them, and do not forgive them ever! O Cousins! forbear in adversity; you shall never see disgrace after today".

Part 13 - The Killing of Al-Abbas and his Brothers

When Abbas saw the death toll mounting amongst members of his family, he said to his brothers, Abdullah, Othman and Ja'far, "O Sons of my mother! Go forth to meet the enemy so that I may bear witness that you kept your covenant with Allah and His Apostle". He turned to Abdullah who was older than Othman and said to him, "Come forward, brother, so that I may witness your killing and thus be considered (by God)". So, they all fought in the presence of their brother, Al-Abbas till they were killed.

Al-Abbas reached the tether of his patience not to follow in the footsteps of his brethren and companions, especially when he could see that "The proof of the Time", Imam Hussain is getting increasingly beleaguered, his supply root cut, the screams of women and the crying of children, who were thirsty, filled his ears. He, therefore, asked his brother to allow him to meet the enemy in combat. Since Abbas was the most valued asset Hussain cherished because the enemy are wary of his attack and fearful of his courage, and the women feel safe and secure so long as they saw the standard hoisted, Imam Hussain did not wish to part company with him and said, "O Brother! You are the bearer of my flag".

*"Hussain placated Abbas, with calm:
Amity's balm seeks; hurt Islam
Restrain your wrath, my brother brave,
A battle, to precipitate, we don't crave,
'Tis prudent, now to peer ahead,
Don't let them act in haste - instead.
Intellect, sound, they have none
Antagonism, to them is a thrilling fun
Nothing is worse than want of zeal
Its lack can a nation's fortune seal
But aimless zeal is folly's trap
In wisdom's fort 'tis a mighty gap
Their show of passion is not zeal
This pseudo-zeal only varlets feel.
Peoples sans vision were destroyed
The prudent, e'er, vision employed
Canting spivs they all are,
Despicable insensates can't look far.
We hope our "passive defence" does work,
A "defence offensive" till last we shirk.
My cool appraisal of this mess,
Is a genuine effort to forestall distress.
The stakes are dreadfully high,
Staggering results it will imply.
Erupt will battle - will get worse,
They crave and yearn for the divine curse.*

Abbas replied, "I am sick and tired of these hypocrites, and I want to exact my revenge on them". Hussain ordered him. to ask them for water for the children. Abbas approached the enemy, preached and warned them of the wrath of the Almighty but to no avail! He shouted as high as he could,

"O son of Sa'ad! This is Hussain the son of the daughter of the Prophet. You have killed members of his family and companions."

"All what is left are his womenfolk and children who are thirsty. Quench their thirst with water for they may die of it". He, nevertheless, was pleading with them to let Imam Hussain and what was left of his household to leave Hijaz for the land of the Romans or the Indians. His words found sympathy with some of the crowd so much so that they cried. But ash-Shimr shouted, "O son of Abu Turab (one of Imam Ali's titles)! Even if the whole of the earth's surface were awash and we were in control, we would have never allowed you access to it, unless you pledge allegiance to Yazid."

*Left my bank my honoured guests
Swamped was I by the swarm of pests.
Shorn of the honour; I was robbed
Wept through waves, through swells I sobbed.
Lamented my ripples, my flow did wail,
Inherit I did, thus, a dolorous tale.
Water, my guests were refused, en bloc,
Agonised I was, distraught, with shock.
This torrid zone and simmering land,
None (sans water) could stand
Capture me if not they did
To counter the foe's obnoxious bid
if access to me they didn't attempt
Die of thirst they will, it meant."*



Abbas returned to his brother Hussain to advise him how the enemy were adamant not to give them water. In the meantime, he heard the children crying of thirst. He could not take it any more; his Hashimite ardour left him no room for manoeuvre nor more forbearance, He took the skin water container with the intention of bringing water. He was surrounded by some 4,000 troops who shot at him with their arrows. He did not fear their multitudes. The standard hoisted over his head, He started attacking them causing them to flee in front of him. His gallantry used to remind them of

his father, Imam Ali who used to annihilate brave and formidable foes in the battlefield. Thus, they did not stand their ground in the face of his determined and ferocious attacks. He managed to reach the waterline of the River Euphrates with fortitude.

He took a handful of water to drink whereupon he remembered the thirst of Imam Hussain and those who were with him. He threw the water away choosing not to drink out of empathy with his kinship.

Part 14 - Abbas - the Lion Roars

*Abbas, his brother; fearless, grand,
Thundered, with rage, took a bold stand:
Proximity of water, deny you can't
your witting Caliph's obnoxious flaunt
!n sheer buffoonery, arrant nonsense
Convey to him scorn, intense.
Pompous pride I abhor, detest,
Like the prismatic glass 'tis just a jest.
His faith is dimmed by the lure of gold,
And conscience, to rapacity he has sold.
Drained off is his fount of sense,
And creed abandoned to vain aberrance.
Padlocked his brains, and mind is packed,
Deposed his prudence, judgement sacked.
An egregious scamp, pretentious fool,
Egoism's caricature, asininity's toot*

The River recaptured (by Abbas)

*The river he saw at paces few
(The horizon scanned - had none in view)
With the flag held high, he forward pressed,
The dauntless cham his command stressed.
Advanced; across the terrain he swept,
Enlarged the territorial gain (and kept)
The capture of the rill was underway,
(A feat stupendous - least to say)
The rill capture he did, with ease,
(The "squatters" aberrant "lease" did cease)
The stream, repossessed, he firmly held,
(Thus showed how right at might excelled)
His "post-repossession" earnest stance,
His eminence (further) did enhance.
(The priorities, apt, his balanced move
His sound judgement amply prove)
The rill captured (and the sway restored)
With a firm resolve own drought ignored
Serenely he waded in the water - at will
A leathern container, with water did fill
Leisurely emerged in a triumphant way
His mighty sword kept the foe at bay.
Exult did not at the blessed gain,
Zealously adhered to his purpose - main.
"Water must reach the camp inmates"
(Elevated sense such resolve dictates)
Enshrined in mind was "a camp inmate"
He knew, his return his niece did wait.
Shunned he did even a glimpse of peace,
Unless the water did reach his niece.*

*His mettle the apostates could not match
The container, from him couldn't snatch.
The fortunate ones who death escaped,
Froze with terror, transfixed - gaped.
Petrified, ventured not impede him,
(Cocksure, their prospects were slim)
As the abject terror played its role,
The dragon of scare swallowed them - whole:"*

He filled in the skin container with water, mounted his horse, and aimed towards the camp. Enemy soldiers cut him off, upon which he engaged them; he managed to fend them off and gained a leeway.

Zaid bin ar-Raqqad al-Juhui was laying in wait for him behind a tree. Helped by Hakim bin at-Tufail as-Sanbasi, he hit him on the arm and severed it. He was indifferent about his right arm, forging ahead to deliver the water to Hussain's children and household. Hakim in the meantime was still laying in wait for him behind a tree. When Abbas got passed him, Hakim dealt him a sword blow on his left arm and severed it. Taking advantage of his weakened state, the rest of the troops took heart and swooped down upon him. They rained him with arrows from every direction; one arrow hit the water container and punctured it, spilling its contents; another hit him in the chest. A man hit him with a pole on the head, crushing his skull. Thereupon he fell to the ground calling, "O Aba Abdillah! Farewell". Hussain rushed to him only to find him aimless, his forehead ruptured, an arrow embedded into the eye, the brain strewn on the shoulders, the colours and water container beside him. Hussain face showed signs of despondency Throwing himself down upon him, sobbing and saying, "Now is the time my backbone broke; I can see no way out, and my enemy is rejoicing at my misfortune".

*Stealthily, a furtive foe appeared
The arms of the valiant, brave, severed.
The renegades' treacherous act did work
They this cowardice, did not shirk
The angel's saintly wings were clipped,
The flag, he held high, lurched and dipped.
The standard with his blood was red
Its bearer brave lay cold and dead
Stifled my waves, was shocked, alas!
With grief I froze - it was Abbas."*

Despondent, sorrowful, weeping, wiping his tears with hit shin sleeves, Imam Hussain returned to his camp only to see that the enemy soldiers had already invaded it. He appealed to the crowd, "Is there not one from amongst you who can respond to our cry for help? Who can grant us a safe haven?.. Is there not a seeker of right who can lend support to us? Is there not one, who is wary of hell fire, who can protect us?" Sukaina approached and asked him about her uncle.

He told her that he had been killed! Zainab overheard him and screamed, "O Our Abbas! What a loss!". The women started crying and Hussain joined them saying, "We are at a loss after your demise!".

Part 15 - The Infant Martyr

When Abbas was killed, Imam Hussain searched around only to find out that there was no one who could bail him out; he looked to his family and companions to find them slain like sacrificial lambs; in the meantime he used to hear the incessant crying and wailing of his children and women, whereupon he repeated his plea, "Is there not a protector who can defend the sanctity of the Prophet? Is there not a believer who may fear God of that which is befalling us? Is there not a deliverer who may aspire to God's reward in alleviating our distress?" The crescendo of women and children crying and waiting reached a new peak.

As-Sajjad, Ali son of Hussain got up leaning on a stick and dragging his sword for he was ill and could hardly move. Hussain shouted at Umm Kulthoom, "Do not let him lest the earth should be devoid of the stock of the posterity of Mohammad". She returned him to his bed.

He ordered his family to stop crying and bade them farewell. He was wearing a dark jubba (a long outer garment, open in front, with wide sleeves), a flowered turban with its two ends loosened, covered with the Prophet's garment, and wearing his sword,

He asked for a dilapidated piece of cloth to use it as an underwear, and put on torn pair of trousers so that nobody would wish to strip him off and, particularly, leave his private parts exposed!.



Imam Hussain asked for his son to kiss him farewell. Zainab brought him Abdullah son of ar-Rabbab; he put him in his lap kissing and cuddling him murmuring, "Away with those people! for your grandfather, the chosen Apostle, will be their opponent on the Day of Judgement". Clutching him in his arms, he approached the enemy and asked for water for the baby. Harmalah bin Kahil al-Azdi shot him with an arrow and slew him. Hussain scooped the blood into his hands and threw it to the sky. Abu Ja'far al-Baqir was reported as saying, "Not a drop [of Abdullah's blood] descended to the ground". The Awaited Imam (May Allah hasten his reappearance) was also reported as saying, "May peace be with Abdullah, the infant who was slain

by an arrow, drenched with blood, and whose blood ascended to the heavens. May Allah curse his killer Harmalah bin Kahil al-Azdi".

*"Holding a babe was he in arms,
of water deprived, 'gainst humane norms
Like fading stars, his eyes did show
His wavy hair by the wind did blow.
The babe hovered between life and death,
Breathing he was an erratic breath.
Hussain did gently hold his hand,
This tender touch was a magic wand.
A smile flickered, at the baby's face,
Appeared a sweetness, lovely grace.
An innocent gesture, to quietly tell:
"Worry not father, all is well."
(A died-down candle just flickered
Briefly, a sinking ship anchored.)
True love played its mystic part,
A conscious heart knew a conscious heart
Hussain caressed the babe, with care
With fingers combed his wavy hair.
(A babe subjected to pangs of thirst,
By the despicable, Caliphs, heartless, worst)
His drought was "slaked" by the wild mob,
An archers arrow, did its job.
Appalled was nature, did providence weep,
The babe in his father's arms, did "sleep".
With his firm, unshaking hand,
The father dug the glowing sand,
An emotions' tempest, though did blow,
No solitary tear, his grief did show.
His visage reflected a desolate grace,
A muffled anguish engulfed his face
The babe he put in the gloomy grave
This charming gift to Islam he gave*

Imam Hussain said, "I find solace in the fact that what has befallen me is in the way of Allah, the Exalted. O Lord! Let his position with you not be less than the station of the young (weaned) camel of Salih's she-camel. O Lord! if you have withheld victory from us, substitute it with that which will be better than victory; exact your revenge on the oppressors, make the afflictions that befell us in this world a treasure for us in the hereafter."

Part 16 - Imam Hussain in the Battlefield

After he had buried the baby, he met in duel with many a man who never stood a chance of emerging alive. He then charged the enemy troops who did not stand their ground in the face of his attacks.

Thereupon Omar bin Sa'ad yelled at the crowd, "Mind! He is the son of the exterminator of the Arabs. Set upon him from every direction." They rained him with 4,000 arrows. The soldiers cut him off his camp. He shouted, "O followers of Abi Sufian! If you are godless and you do not dread the Day of Judgement be free in his world and recall your ancestry if you claim to be Arab".

Shimr exclaimed, "What are you saying, son of Fatimah?" Hussain replied, "I am the one who is fighting you, and the women are not at fault. So long as I am alive, forbid your insolent thugs from harassing my inviolable".

Shimr acceded to his request, whereupon the enemy soldiers targeted him. A fierce fighting raged. Since he was very thirsty, he attacked the flank of the army which was sealing off the River Euphrates. He managed to disperse them and make his way to the river. Once he was in the water, he extended his hand to drink. A caller shouted, "Do you enjoy drinking water whilst the integrity of your family is being violated?" He let the water spill from his hands without drinking, and returned to the tents.



Imam Hussain bade his family farewell for the second time and ordered them to show forbearance saying, "Get ready for affliction, and be reassured that Allah is your protector; He will guard you against the evil of the enemy, turn your mishap into good, chastise your enemy with all sorts of torment, and compensate you for this tragedy with a plethora of bounties and dignity. So do not complain, and do not utter that which may degrade your lofty prestige".

Hussain turned to his daughter Sukaina who was standing aloof, crying and lamenting. He stood by her showing sympathy and solace.

*"To lay down life, he forward surged,
Upon the foe, a lion converged.*

*Bedecked was he by an aureole crown,
Immortal fashioned from entrenched renown.
A conundrum he was indeed,
Signified glory, though heart did bleed
Splendid, dignified, distinguished,
Tormented, distraught, hurt, anguished.
Though with chivalry, to the end, he fought,
The renegades got the prize, sought"
"The job concluded, the camp ransacked,
For final departure, the hoodlums packed.
They called my guests by the 'prisoners' name,
(As prisoners left, as guests who came!)
With 'watery eyes'; and heaving swell,
(Shattered my being) I said, farewell".
A soul searing, sad finale
Woeful 'tis, but a glorious tale.*

Part 17 - Surrounded by the enemies of Islam

Omar bin Sa'ad yelled, "Woe unto you! Attack him while he is busy with himself and his family. By the Almighty! Once he is free neither your right nor your left flanks would be more lucky." They swooped on him, raining him with arrows which were so abundant that they lodged in to the tent ropes; some found their way to the women's mantles, startling and causing them to cry and enter the tent; they looked at Hussain in the expectation that he might do something. Imam Hussain attacked the enemy like a roaring lion, No sooner he could engage anyone he left him dead. He received many wounds all over his body mainly as a result of arrows.



He returned to his position, repeating the saying, "There is neither power nor strength save in God Almighty". He asked for water, Shimr answered, "You are not going to taste it until you enter hell fire!" Another one called him, "O Hussain! can you not see the waters of the River Euphrates flow, glittering like the belly of a snake? You are not going to drink from it till you die of thirst". Imam Hussain invoked God, "O Lord! Let him die of thirst". It was then reported that the man used to ask for water, once he drank, the water gushed out of his mouth. He continued thus until he perished of thirst.

Abul Hutoof al-Ju'fai shot Hussain with an arrow which lodged into his forehead, Hussain took it off causing the blood to stream down his face, whereupon he said, "O Lord! You are witnessing the transgression against me by Your sinful creatures. O Lord! Do not let anyone of them get away

with it. Kill them all and do not let anyone of them live on the face of the earth. Never forgive them their trespasses."

He shouted, "O Bunch of evil! Shame on you. What bad guardians of the household of the Prophet you turned out to be. Since there is no man of my band left, you are not going to be deterred from killing anyone after me, for killing me would make it a forgone conclusion. By God! I hope that Allah bestow on me martyrdom, and avenge my death whence you do not expect."

Al-Hosein said, "How is he going to exact revenge on us?" Imam Hussain said, "He will sow enmity amongst you, shed your blood, and pour down punishment upon you, pouring it in abundance".

As he was weakened, he paused to rest. A man hurled him with a stone hitting him on the head causing the blood to stream down his face. He took out a piece of cloth to wipe the blood from his face, whereupon another archer aimed at him with a three-pronged arrow; it lodged into his chest in the area of the heart. He said, "In the name of Allah, by Allah, and following the path of the Apostle of Allah". He then raised his head towards the sky and said, "O Lord! You know full well that they are killing a man there is not on the face of the earth, a son of the daughter of the Prophet, save him!!".

He pulled out the arrow causing the blood to gush out. He put his band underneath the gaping wound. When it was filled with blood he threw it towards the sky and said, "My only solace is that what has befallen me is in the way of Allah". It was reported that not a single drop of that blood fell down. He filled it again. This time he stained his head, face, and beard with it saying, "I want to meet Allah and my grandfather in this state - splattered with blood".

Since losing blood weakened his body, he sat on the ground hardly lifting his head, whereupon Malik bin an-Nisr approached him, called him names, and hit him with his sword on his head which was covered with a burnoose. The burnoose was drenched with blood. He took off the burnoose, wrapped his turban on the cap and said, "May Allah deprive you of eating with your right hand, and gather you [on the Day of Judgement] with the oppressors".

Hani bin Thubait al-Hadhrami was quoted as saying, "I was one of a group of ten people when Hussain was killed. I was looking to a boy from the household of Hussain, who was wearing a shirt and loin cloth; two rings dangling from his ears, clutching to a shaft; he was distraught turning left and right. A horseman headed towards him, leaning over the boy and hitting him on the head causing his death". The boy was Mohammed bin Abi Sa'eed bin Aqeel bin Abi Talib. His mother was overwrought by the spectacle of witnessing the killing of her son.

After a short while the enemy troops came back to Hussain who was still in a sitting position for he was overcome by the severity of his wounds. Abdullah bin al-Hassan, an eleven-year-old boy looked towards his uncle only to see him surrounded by the enemy. He rushed towards his uncle after he managed to break free from his aunt, Zainab, When he arrived at the scene near his uncle, Bahr bin Ka'b descended his sword to hit Hussain. The boy yelled at him, "O son of the bad woman! Are you dealing a blow to my uncle?" He hit the boy who lifted his arm to protect his head causing it to be severed. The boy shouted, "O uncle!" and fell into his uncle's lap. Hussain

embraced him and said, "O nephew! Be patient at what has befallen you and consider it as a blessing for Allah, the Exalted will reunite you with your noble ancestors". He then raised his hands in supplication and said, "O Lord! If You had granted them enjoyment for a while, cause them to divide among themselves, disperse them into sects following different ways, do not let the rulers be pleased with them for they called on us so that they may be among our partisans, instead they transgressed against and killed us". Harmalah released an arrow towards the boy, whilst he was in his uncle's lap, and slew him.

Imam Hussain, fatally wounded, was left lying for a considerable time. What prevented them from finishing him off sooner was the fact that every tribe was relying on the other to do the job i.e. each tribe hated to be seen as the one which killed Hussain.

Shimr yelled, "Why are you standing idly by? The man is critically wounded. Attack and finish him off".

Zar'a bin Shariek hit him on the shoulder blade; al-Hosein shot him in the mouth; another hit him on the shoulder, Sinan bin Anas lodged his spear in the area of the collarbone, then in his chest; he also shot him with an arrow in the throat, Saleh bin Wahab stabbed him in the loin.

Hilal bin Nafi' was reported as saying, "I was standing near Hussain as he was on the brink of dying. By God, I never saw a person getting killed with own blood all over his body in a better state than Hussain. His face was exuding with light and awe! I was so overwhelmed by the radiance of his face that I refrained from contemplating killing him! He asked for water; they did not give him any to drink".

*The torrent stem, keep him at bay
Hold your own, and win the day.
Hussain observed him, did not move
Beckoning the renegade; to act and prove.
Face to face when Hussain he saw
The foe was overwhelmed, with awe.
Ravished he was by the dazzling scene
Such angelic face had never seen
With celestial sheen his visage bestowed
In propitious lustre glistened, glowed
So intense was the divine hue
His sight could not endure to view.
By the glorious sight he was dazed
But looked on still; gaped and gazed.*

Part 18 - Hussain is killed on the Plains of Kerbala

One from amongst the crowd said to him, "You are not going to drink water until you enter hell fire, whereupon you can drink from its boiling water". Imam Hussain replied, "I do not enter hell fire, but enter unto my grandfather, the Apostle of God and stay with him in his own house (in the seat of honour with a most powerful King) and complain to him of that which you have done to me and your transgression against me". All were very furious at his remarks as if Allah did not instil a grain of mercy in their hearts.



When his condition deteriorated, he raised his eyes towards the sky in supplication and said, "O Lord! You are mighty in Prowess, the Supreme, the Possessor of every greatness and glory, not in need of the creation, having mastery over everything; Your mercy is high, Truthful in your promise, Giver of bounty and favour; You are close to those who invoke You; encompassing all Your creation; You accept repentance from those who repent, capable of exacting Your will, Having full knowledge of what You are after, Thankful when thanked, remembering when remembered. I invoke You as I am in dire need, ask You as I am poor! I seek refuge in You for I am fearful, weep for I am grieved; I rely on Your succour for I am weak; I put my trust in You alone. O Lord! You are the Arbiter between our folk and ourselves for they trespassed against us, let us down, betrayed us, and killed us not with-standing our kinship to Your Prophet whom You chose for delivering the Message and made the repository of revelation. Alleviate our predicament and relieve our suffering for You are the Most Merciful".

"Forbearance with what You have destined is our solace, O Lord! There is no god but You. You are the Deliverer of the distressed. I have no God save You. Surely, You are the only Refuge for those who are without one."

"There is no other one to worship apart from You. Forbearance with that which you have resolved is our consolation. O Lord! You are the Everlasting. O Lord! You are the Resurrector of the dead. O Lord! You are

Watching over every soul and what it did. Adjudge between me and them for You are the best of judges".

Hussain's horse started roaming around Imam Hussain and staining its forehead with his blood, whereupon Ibn Sa'ad yelled saying, "Stop the horse as it is a thoroughbred of the horses of the Apostle of Allah." A company of horsemen surrounded him. He started galloping and kicking with his forelegs killing some men and horses. Ibn Sa'ad ordered the soldiers to leave the horse and to see what it was going to do. When the horse calmed down and felt secure enough, it went back to Hussain's blessed body staining its forehead with his blood, smelling him, and neighing loudly. Imam Abu Ja'far al-Baqir was quoted as saying, "The horse was saying: What an injustice was done to the grandson of the Prophet by his own umma (community)."

*His horse, in ecstasy, danced and pranced
by his equestrian, was entranced
A perfect horse, sans any defect
With his head high, and neck erect.
Had tiger's courage, and panther's zeal
His sinews were akin to pure steel
A thoroughbred's, all traits sustained
His sire's blood, in the veins maintained.
By innate courage, he was led
In the thick of battle, had no dread
His prancing steps, and goodly shape
The admiring eyes, with awe, did gape,
His amble faultless, a rhythmic flow,
His steps measured, neither fast nor slow.
His gait, the art of music graced
Was on rhythm, and tempo based.
The aggressor's will, to act, ruptured
He was charmed, dazzled, captured.
A feeble blow, the dastard tired
Hussain parried, with contempt defied
repeated strokes, the renegade rained
Hussain remained placid, calm, restrained
He hurled defiance, and braved it out
Thus paved the way for the dastard's rout.
To keep his ground, stood firm
His superior hold he did confirm.
With lofty demeanour, at a serene pace
Hussain advanced, with chivalrous grace.
Moved ahead, with careless ease
Less to liquidate him, more to tease
The youth, in panic, turned his pack.*

The horse, still neighing, then headed towards camp. Once it was there, the women saw the horse stained with blood and its saddle twisted, they came out from their tents spreading their hair! unveiling their faces, beating their cheeks, screaming, seeing their glory vanish, and spontaneously taking

to the place where Imam Hussain fell and died, headed by Zainab who was wailing. On arriving at the scene, she put her hand under his body raising it to the level of her breast where she left the body to rest. She said, "O Lord! Accept this sacrifice from US".

In the meantime Omar bin Sa'ad with a group of soldiers were approaching the scene as Imam Hussain was at the point of death. Zainab shouted at him, "Yes Omar! Abu Abdillah is being killed and you are standing watching him perish?!" He turned his face away from her with his tears streaming down his beard.



She said, "Woe unto you! Is there not amongst you a Muslim?" Nobody replied! Thereupon Ibn Sa'ad ordered the crowd, "Descend upon him and administer the mercy shots to him". Shimr initiated the attack; he kicked him, sat on his chest, got hold of his blessed beard, dealt 12 sword blows to his body, and finally beheaded him.

Part 19 - Epilogue



*Eternity will, his name preserve,
A place of honour reserve (conserve)
In radiance, divine, glows his name,
Kindles the universe, the eternal flame.
Devilry tide, vehemently, surged.
To Hussain we owe, our piety do
Adore and love his chivalry too
perpetual, endless, boundless, same,
Glorious, for ever, prevail his fame.
Tempests, storms and gales, did blow,
This taper retained its divine glow,
Howled tornadoes, did hurricanes rush,
This eternal bloom they could not crush,
Forward, forward, on and on,
Kept on the move Hussain's caravan.
Hussain did achieve his basic aim,
(an eternal triumph, he could claim)
For the faith's (tomorrow), his (today) he gave,
Laid down his life, Islam did save.
With pride and love, his name we quote
Who, with his own blood, history wrote.
His deeds will (neglect) never meet.
Oblivion, his name will not greet.*

*This tale of endurance, hardihood
has the test of time well stood*

TRUTH

*(An Eternal Message From Kerbala)
No brutal force 'gainst truth can work
Truth will conquer, will not shirk.
'Tis the greatest dike, to hold back sin
The silencer, of the mundane din.
The spiritual health, it will restore
For moral wounds; 'tis a surest sure.
Truth will strengthen sickly souls
Plug, in the conscience, gaping holes.
Truth, is not an elusive ghost
'Tis, to the righteous, a constant host.
Truth, in its exalted mood
Is clearest mind's amplitude.
"Infinite" is there in every man
Immortalise "finite" it can.
Truth, doesn't perish at death
It does outlive the human breath.
Redeemed, through truth, all can be
XYZ and you and me.
Truth, being infinitely great
Both kings and beggars, upon it wait.
Truth, individuals and Nations, makes
An infinite joy in the task it takes
Glow the universe, with its beams
Sun and moon, are truth it seems.
if the human perception's doors are clean
In every beauty truth is seen
Truth is proud, to know so much
Its every move has wisdom's touch.*

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