

Ashura' Encyclopedia

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Detailed accounts of people, places and events surrounding the al-Taff Battle and the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a), members of his household and companions on Ashura Day

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A - Aabis Ibn Abi Shabib Al-Shakiry

One of the bravest and most loyal men in the army of Imam Husayn in Karbala. Aabis was so old that he had to tie a piece of cloth around his forehead just to keep his eyebrows from falling on top of his eyes.

He was Muslim Ibn Aqeel's messenger to Imam Husayn telling him that the people of Kufa had agreed to fight with Imam Husayn. His story is well known on the day of Ashura', when nobody would dare to fight him. When Aabis realized that no one was going to come out to fight, he removed all his armour until a man cried to him: "Have you gone mad?" Aabis replied: "Yes, the love of Husayn has made me go mad". Finally, 'Umar Ibn Sa'ad shouted at his army saying: "What is the matter with you all, throw stones at him".

A - Abdullah Ibn Abbas

Among the people who tried to stop the Imam from going to Karbala, when he was that the Imam would not change his mind he became sad. He was among the first to know of Imam Husayn's death. On the day of Ashura', he saw in his sleep that his perfume had changed to blood, so he knew that Imam Husayn had been killed.

Ibn Abbas was the Prophet (pbuh&hf) and Imam Ali's cousin. He was a very well-known and respected figure in Quraish. He lost his vision near the end of his life and died in Al Ta'ef in 68 A.H. at the age of 70. Muhammad Ibn Al-Hanafiyyah, Imam Husayn's brother from his father's side, prayed on his body.

A - Anees Ibn Ma'qel Al-Asbahy

One of the martyrs of Karbala. He fought the enemies of Allah after the noon of Ashura' and after the martyrdom of Jon. He fought with bravery and killed twenty men.

A - Aslam, the Turkish slave

Among the martyrs of Karbala, he was originally from Turkey. He was well known for throwing arrows, at the same time he was Imam Husayn's writer. He read the Qur'an and knew Arabic well. When he was killed in Karbala, the Imam placed his face on Aslam's face, Aslam opened his eyes and saw the Imam's eyes and smiled.

A - Atiyya

He is always mentioned along with Jabir Ibn Abdullahh, a companion of the Prophet (pbuh&hf). They were the first to visit Imam Husayn's burial place forty days after his martyrdom. Because Jabir Ibn Abdullahh Al-Ansari was blind, Atiyya guided him to the grave.

It is said that Ahlul Bayt saw them when coming back from Al Sham. Atiyya Ibn Saad Ibn Junada was among the best Shia in science and speech. He was born in Kufa during the reign of Imam Ali and it was he who named him Atiyya.

In the days of the tyrant Al-Hajjaj, an order was placed to capture him, as was the cause with all the followers of the Prophet's household.

Finally he was caught in Persia and was told to cuss Imam Ali, but he refused to. Al-Hajjaj then ordered to whip him 400 times and beat his beard and head. He died in 111 AH in Al-Kufa.

A - Awn Ibn Abdullah Ibn Ja'far

Son of Sayyida Zaynab. He was around 13 years-old and, together with his brother Muhammad Ibn Abdullah that was around 12 years-old, was with Imam Husayn (as) at Karbala' and they both died while fighting with the enemies of Imam Husayn (as)

A - Awn Ibn Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib

Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib's son. His mother was Asma'a Bint Amees and was born in Habasha (Abyssinia). When his father Ja'far was killed in the battle of Mu'tah, the Prophet (pbuh&hf) asked everyone to bring his sons (Awn, Muhammad, and Abdullah) to him.

He then ordered for them to cut their hair and said: "Muhammad, why he looks like our uncle Abi Talib, and Awn, why he looks like both in outer and inner beauty. Imam Ali married him to his daughter Umm Kulthoom. He remained loyal to Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn to the very end. He was killed in Karbala at the age 56.

B - Bishr Ibn ‘Amr Alhadhrami

Also among the martyrs of Karbala. Bishr was originally from "Hadhramout" in Yemen. He was known for his loyalty to the Imam. Although his son was in the prisons of "Alrey" when he was in Karbala, he stayed and fought with the Imam. Bishr was killed in the first attack (Hamlah).

B - Burayr Ibn Khudhair Alhamadani

Amongst the martyrs of Karbala, he was known for reading the Qura'an and teaching it to others. Burayr was known for his bravery in Kufa. Originally from the tribe of "Hamadan", he was called 'Sayyid Al-Qurra'a', Master of the Reciters. In Karbala, he tried to guide 'Umar Ibn Sa'ad to the right path and leave Yazeed Ibn Mu'awiyah, but to no avail. He was killed early in Karbala right after the martyrdom of Al Hurr Ibn Yazeed Al-Riyahi.

D - Al-Dhahhak Ibn Abdullah Al-Mushrefi

He was with Imam Husayn in Karbala. When he saw the great number of people that had been killed in Imam Husayn's army, he came to the Imam and asked permission to leave him. The Imam told him to go.

A group of 'Umar Ibn Sa'ad's army followed him but then let him escape to wherever he was going to. Unfortunately, he missed his chance of being amongst the martyrs of Karbala. It is said that he was among the companions of Imam Ali Ibn Al Husayn.

H - Habib Ibn Muthaher

He was a loyal and close friend of the prophet Muhammad (pbuh&hf), and was originally from the tribe of Bani Asad. He fought with Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib in all his battles and the Imam Ali taught him "Ilm Almanaya was Albalaya" which means that Habib could fore- see into the future and know how any given person would die. He gave his allegiance to Muslim Ibn Aqeel in Kufah. He also was a close friend of Maytham Al-Tammar, a loyal companion of Imam Ali.

H - Hafhaf Ibn Muhanned Alrasibi

A very brave man who was with Imam Ali in his three battles. He was originally from Al Basra in Iraq. In the battle of Siffeen, Imam Ali made him the ruler over the tribe of Azd. After Imam Ali passed away, he stayed with Imam Hasan and then Imam Husayn. When he heard about Imam Husayn's departure to Karbala, he walked from Al Basra to Karbala, but the battle was over when he finally reached there, so he took his knife and attacked 'Umar Ibn Sa'ad's people until he was killed.

H - Hakim Ibn Tufail

He fought Imam Al Husayn in Karbala. He was the one who cut Abul Fadhl Al Abbas's left arm after Zayd Ibn Al Arqam had cut his right.

H - Hameed Ibn Muslim Al-Azdi

A very important narrator of the events that happened in Karbala. He was in 'Umar Ibn Sa'ad's army in Karbala. Hameed Ibn Muslim quarreled with Shimr after the battle was over and asked him not to burn the tents of the Imam. He was among the Tawabeen who repented fighting against Imam Husayn and took part in the uprising against the Umayyads.

H - Hani Ibn Urwah Al-Sib'eey

The last messenger the Imam sent to the people of Kufa. He went to Kufa along with Saeed Ibn Abdullah Alhanafi. When Ibn Ziyad learned why Hani was in Kufa, he ordered his people to cut off his head and drag his body throughout the streets of Kufa.

H - Harmalah

Harmalah Ibn Kahil Al-Asadi Al-Kufi, the killer of the infant of the Imam. When the Imam had lost all hope in the enemy, he came out riding on a camel and asked for water, not for himself, but for his small child who was dying of thirst.

‘Umar gave the order and Harmalah sent a three-headed arrow flying into the little child's neck. Imam Ali Ibn Al- Husayn prayed that Harmalah not live after that moment. Later on, during the uprising of the Tawabeen, Al-Mukhtar ordered to cut Harmalah's arms and legs and throw him in the fire.

H - Hilal Ibn Nafi'i

See Nafi'i Ibn Hilal.

H - Al-Husayn Ibn Numair

Originally from the tribe of Kindah, he was an enemy of the Imam Ali and the Prophet's household. In Siffeen, he stood by Mu'awiyah against Imam Ali, and in Karbala he stood with Yazeed Ibn Mu'awiyah against Imam Husayn.

He was the one to take Habib Ibn Muthaher's head and place it on his horse and run in Kufa with it. He was killed by Alqassim Ibn Habib, Habib Ibn Muthaher's son.

J - Ja'far Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib

The son of Imam Ali and brother of Abul Fadhl Al-Abbass. He was killed in Karbala at the age of 19 by Hani Ibn Thabeet Al Hadhrami or Khawli Ibn Yazeed.

J - Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari

Jabir, along with Atiya, were amongst the greatest Shi'as -followers of Imam Ali. They came to Karbala after Imam Husayn's martyrdom. Jabir was born 15 years before the Hijra (journey) of the Prophet in Medeenah. He was originally from the tribe of Khazraj.

His father was killed in the battle of Ohod with the Prophet (pbuh&hf). He fought in 18 of the Prophet's battles, and in Siffveen with the Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib. He was struck with blindness at the end of his life and was killed by Al- Hajjaj only because of his loyalty to Ahlul Bayt in 78 AH at the age of 91.

J - Jibleh Ibn Ali Al-Sheybani

Among the bravest in Kufa. He was killed in the first attack (hamlah) on the day of Ashura'. He fought in Siffeen with Imam Ali (as) and stood beside Muslim Ibn Aqeel in Kufa. After Muslim was killed he went and hid in one of the houses that were owned by his tribe until Imam Husayn came to Kufa.

J - Jon, the black slave

He was a servant to Abu Dharr Alghifary, a close companion of Imam Ali. His full name was John Ibn Jowey. He returned to Madinah after Abu Thar was banished by the third caliph and became loyal to the Ahlul Bayt.

He was in the service of Imam Ali, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, and Imam Ali Ibn Al-Husayn. He came to Karbala with Imam Husayn and was responsible for fixing and preparing the swords and various other weapons. He fought with the Imam until he was killed. The Imam then sat on his dead body and prayed to Allah for him.

J - Jonadah Ibn Ka'ab Alansari

Amongst the martyrs of Karbala, Jonadah was originally from the tribe of Alkhazraj. He traveled with the Imam from Makka to Karbala and was killed with his son in the first hamlah.

J - Jondob Ibn Hojair Alkoholani

He was amongst the martyrs of Karbala and a close friend of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib. He was from Kufa and came to Karbala and fought with the Imam. Jondob was killed in the first hamlah.

K - Al-Kumayt Ibn Zayd Al-Asadi

A famous Arab poet. His poems were always about the Ahlul Bayt and the slaying of Imam Husayn in Karbala. He was born on 60 AH, the same year the tragedy of Karbala occurred, and died on 126 AH. Because of Imam Ali Ibn Al-Husayn's prayer, Kumayt died a martyr.

L - Layla Bint Abi Morra Al-Thaqafi

She was the wife of Imam Husayn and the mother of Ali Al-Akbar and also one of the purest women at that time. Her name is seldom mentioned in the recitation of the tragedy of Imam Husayn.

M - Mane'e Ibn Zyad

He was amongst the martyrs in Karbala. It is also said that his name was Mane'e Ibn Raqqad.

M - Muhammad Ibn Al-Ash'ath

Among the companions of 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad who fought against Imam Husayn in Karbala. When Muslim Ibn Aqeel came to Kufa and entered Taw'a's house, Muslim told her about all the events that he had gone through and that the people of Ibn Ziyad were looking for him. Taw'a's son heard the conversation and in the morning went and told Muhammad Ibn Al Ash'ath who then told 'Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad. Shortly after the news of Muslim's whereabouts broke, Taw'a's house was surrounded!

M - Muhteshem Al-Kashany

He lived in the beginning of the Safawy period and wrote poems praising Ahlul Bayt. He died in 996 Hijrah. One of his most famous poems are the ones that are recited all around the world on the nights of Muharram. He became popular for his strong lines of poetry about the tragedy of Imam Husayn in Karbala.

M - Muhammad Ibn Al-Hanafiyyah

His father was Imam Ali (as) and Al-Hanafiyyah is his mother's last name. She was Khawla bint Ja'far Ibn Qays Ibn Salma Ibn Tha'lebeh, and her son Muhammad was among the bravest. In the war of Al-Jamal he held the flag of Imam Ali's army. He witnessed the battle of Nahrawan. When Imam Husayn refused to accept Yazeed as the new ruler of the Muslims, Muhammad Ibn Al-Hanafiyyah was among the people who disagreed with Imam Husayn's going to Kabala.

Imam Husayn wrote his will and gave it to Muhammad. After the Imam's martyrdom in Karbala, Muhammad was lonely like everyone who did not go with Imam Husayn and in 66 AH, Al Mukhtar Ibn 'Ubayd Allah accepted him as an Imam and took control of Iraq by his name. He died in 81 Hijrah in the days of Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan.

M - Al-Mukhtar Al-Thaqafi

Amongst the ones who fought ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad after the killing of the Imam in Karbala. His mother was Dawma bint Wahab. He was born in the year of the journey (Hijrah) of the Prophet and came with his father to Madinah. He was a very brave and courageous man.

When Muslim Ibn Aqeel came to Kufa, he offered him his house to stay in, and after Muslim was killed ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad put him in the same prison Maytham Al-Tammar was in. He was killed in a fight with Abdullah Ibn Al Zubair's army in the famous uprising of the repenters. His body rests next to Muslim Ibn Aqeel.

M - Muslim Ibn Uqbah

When the people of Madinah rejected the Ummayyads and fought them after the tragedy of Karbala, Mu'awiyah set up an army lead by Muslim Ibn Uqbah to go and terrify the people of Madinah. Muslim went to Madinah and killed thousands of the Prophet's (pbuh&hf) companions. He was later known in history as Musrif because his name was contradicted his actions.

M - Muhajir Ibn Aws

Amongst Omer Ibn Sa'ad's army. When he saw Hor Ibn Yazeed Alreyahi come closer to Imam Husayn's tents he came up to him and said: 'Why Hurr, if I was told who is the strongest man in Kufa I would have said without any doubt you. Why do you look so weak now?' Hurr answered him: 'I see myself between Paradise and Hellfire, and by God I shall choose nothing over Paradise'. It was then that Hurr joined the Imam's army.

N - Nafi'i Ibn Hilal

He is Nafi'i Ibn Hilal Ibn Jamal Ibn Sa'ad and one of the martyrs in Karbala. He was a known figure in Kufa and an excellent reciter of Imam Ali's narrations. He had been with Imam Ali in all three of his battles: Siffeen, Nahrewan, and Al-Jamal. After Muslim was killed in Kufa, he quietly hid himself and later on joined Imam Husayn and came with him to Karbala. In Karbala, Nafi'i spoke with enthusiasm to 'Umar Ibn Sa'ads army. They in return threw stones at him until they broke his arm and then they came and took him to Shimr who killed him. Some say his name was Hilal Ibn Nafi'i.

Q - Qarib (Servant of Imam Husayn)

One of the martyrs of Karbala. His mother was Fakeehah, a maid in Imam Husayn and his wife Rabab's house. He came with Imam Husayn to Karbala and was killed on the day of Ashura'.

Q - Al-Qassim Ibn Al Hasan

The son of Imam Hasan (as). He was a young boy, in his teenage years. His famous line in Karbala was when Imam Husayn asked him: "Qassim, how do you see death?" He replied: "Oh uncle, in your service, it is sweeter than honey". He asked permission from Imam Husayn to enter the battle several times before the Imam agreed. When he fell to the ground, Imam Husayn ran to him and told the others to come and take him to the tents because he could not stand taking his body by himself. Al-Qassim was also known for being handsome.

R - Al-Rabab

The daughter of Imr'e' Al-Qays Ibn Oday, and wife of Imam Husayn. She was the mother of Sakeeneh and Ali Al-Asgher (Abdullah). After the massacre in Karbala, she came back with the women and held a ma'atem for a whole year in Madinah. She always cried for her brother and never sat in a shaded place until she died after a year of Imam Husayn's martyrdom.

S - Sahl Ibn Saad

One of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh&hf) and loyal followers of Imam Ali. When he saw the women of Ahlul Bayt coming towards Damascus, he went to one of them, introduced himself and then asked if there was anything he could do for them.

Sakeena said that it would be appreciated if he could make the holder of Imam Husayn's head move away from them so that people would stop looking at the daughters of the Prophet. Sahl payed 400 Dinars to the holder of the head, and in return asked for him to do as Sakeenah had asked of him. Sahl died at the age of 96 or 100 on 88 AH.

S - Sarjoon (Sir Jon)

He is Sarjoon (Sir Jon) Ibn Mansoor. He was a Christian from Al-Sham. He served as Mu'awiyah and Yazeed's consultant in government matters. He was the one who suggested to Yazeed to have 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad a ruler over the people of Kufa. In the time of Marwan Ibn Al Hakem's ruling he was tricked and removed from his position.

S - Shabib Ibn Abdullah

One of the martyrs of Karbala. He was amongst the bravest in Kufa. He joined Imam Husayn and was killed in the first hamlah before the noon of Ashura'. He was one of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh&hf) and fought with Imam Ali in all three of his battles.

S - Shorayh Al-Qadhi

A judge in Kufa originally from Yemen. Shorayh was a learned man, but extremely naive. In the reign of 'Umar he was given the position of the supreme judge of Kufa and remained in this position for 60 years. Imam Ali did not remove him despite the fact that Shurayh had once naively accepted to indirectly remove Imam Ali from his position as Caliph and choose Mu'awiyeh.

T - Al Tawaboon

After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, the Shi'a of Karbala realized their mistake and were determined to do something to avenge the death of the Imam and ask forgiveness for their wrongdoings. They chose Sulaimaan Ibn Sard Alkhoza'ee as their leader and secretly started gathering weapons and money in order to be able to fight.

During this period, Yazeed Ibn Mu'awiyah died. When they felt they had a good enough army, they publicized their movement during Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam's reign and declared their army of about 4000 people.

They walked all the way to Imam Husayn's resting place asking Allah for forgiveness. Finally they went to Al-Shaam, the area encompassing Syria, Palestine, Lebanon today, and there they fought one of the bloodiest battles ever. They could not beat the powerful Army of Al-Shaam, so they came back to Kufa at night. Amongst the martyrs in the battle in Al-Shaam were: Sulaimaan Ibn Sard, Abdullah Ibn Sa'ad Al Azdi, Abdullah Ibn Wa'el, and Rifa'ah Ibn Shadad.

U - ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad

The ruler of Kufa. It was by his orders, and by the orders of his superior Yazeed that Imam Husayn was slaughtered in Karbala. He was known as the son of Marjanah, referring to his mother because nobody knew who his father was. In fact, he had six alleged fathers. He killed Muslim Ibn Aqeel by throwing him from the top of Dar Al-Imarah. He was the ruler of Khorasan in 54 Hijra.

U - Ummayah Ibn Sa'ad Alta'aey

He was killed with Imam Husayn in Karbala in the first hamlah. He was known for his courage in Kufa and was a close friend of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as). Ummayah was also among the people who fought with the Imam Ali in the battle of Siffeen. He joined the army of Imam Husayn on the 8th of Muharram.

U - 'Urwa Ibn Battan Altha'leby

An enemy of Imam Husayn in Karbala. He and Zayd Ibn Raqqad killed one of Imam Husayn's men by the name of Sowayd Ibn Motaa.

U - Uthman Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib

One of the martyrs in Karbala. He was the brother of Abul Fadhl Al-Abbas. His mother was Umm Al-Baneen (Fatima Al Kilabyeh). He said that his father Imam Ali had said: 'I called him Uthman because of my brother Uthman Ibn Madh'oon'. In Karbala he was hit by an arrow by Khawly Ibn Yazeed, which made him fall to the ground, then another man came and killed him. He was 21.

Y - Yazeed Ibn Mu'awiyah

Probably one of the dirtiest and cruelest men in history. He was responsible for the genocide in Karbala. He was born on 25 AH. He played with dogs and monkeys and did not believe in judgment day. He was ruler over the Muslims for three years. In the first he slaughtered Imam Husayn; in the second he committed genocide in Madinah where he ordered the slaying of close to 10,000 Muslims; and in the third, he attacked and demolished the Ka'abah.

Y - Yazeed Ibn Thabeet Al-Abdy

Amongst the martyrs of Karbala and a loyal Shia to the Ahlul Bayt. He was a companion of Abu Al-Aswad Al Do'ely. He had 10 sons, but only 2 of them and himself went to Karbala. His sons were killed in the first hamlah and he was killed in the 1-to-1 battles.

Z - Zayd Ibn Al-Arqam

One of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh&hf) who fought with him in some of his battles. At the time of Ashura' he was a very old man. It is said that when Imam Husayn's head was brought into Dar Al-Imarah, Ibn Ziyad started hitting the head with a cane. Zayd got up and said to Ibn Ziyad: Stop hitting those lips, by God which there is no God but him I have seen the Prophet (pbuh&hf) kissing those very lips. He then got up and ran home crying. He died in Kufa on 68 AH.

Z - Sayyida Zaynab Bint Ali (as)

She is the one who carried the story of Karbala to the world and stayed with Imam Husayn all his life. She was the daughter of Imam Ali and Sayyida Fatimah Al-Zahrah. She was born on 5 Jamadi Al-Ulah, 5AH in Madinah after Imam Husayn (as) and one of her names was: 'Aqeelat Bani Hashim'. She was known for her courage and loyalty to her brother Imam Husayn.

She was married to her cousin Ja'far Ibn Abdullah and had two sons: Muhammad and Awn who were both martyred in Karbala. Even after Imam Husayn was slain, Sayyida Zaynab took care of the women until they came back to Madinah. She went to Al-Sham with her husband and there she died on 63/65 AH.