

With The Caravan of Light

Author: Hussein Ansarian

www.alhassanain.org/english

Table of Contents

Publisher's Word.....	3
Notes:who is who?.....	3
Ahl-e Manteg: The logicians	3
Notes:Battles.....	6
Notes:Books	6
More Notes.....	7
A Unique Event.....	8
Divines beyond Comparison	8
Worldlings to the Worst Degree	10
The Viewpoint of Amir al-Mu'minin (a)	11
An Outstanding Figure Among the Husayni(a) Group	11
The Most Exalted and the Most Contemptible	13
Martyrs Without Peer.....	13
The Greatest Reality from the tongue of Jabir ibn- Abdullah.....	15
Constancy in Achieving Goals	15
Our Seeking God's Help In Attaining to Good Conduct	15
The Reverence Shown to Imam Husayn (a) By his Companions.....	16
Good versus Evil.....	17
Our Great Responsibility Concerning the event of Karbala	17
The Constancyof Husayn's (a) Companions	18
Undergoing the Divine Test	20
Nafi ibn- Hilal	20
Nafi ibn- Hilal's Very Strange Story	20
Yazid ibn- Thabit' Abqassi	21
Abis ibn- Shabib Shakeri	21
Hafhaf ibn- Mahnah Basrawi.....	22
Suwid Hadrami	22
The Moon of the Bani Hashim	22
Husayn (a)	23

Publisher's Word

With a view to making the rich culture of Shi'ism more profoundly known around the globe, the DAR AL-SADEGHAIN Cultural and Publishing Institute, in accordance with the aims of its Council of Founders, established an International Centre for this purpose in March 1998.

In fulfilling our responsibilities to this end, we feel duty-bound to provide the Shi'ite communities of the world with easier access to sources of knowledge on landmarks in the history of Islam. Hence, we have been engaged in researching, compiling and translating these valuable writings on Shi'ism.

Our first publication is this book "With the Caravan of Light" by Husayn Ansarian, a wellknown cleric and religious orator. The book gives a short account of the personality of the companions of Imam Husayn (a), the third Imam of Shi'ite Islam.

We would like to express our thanks to all the scholars and erudite personalities for their comments and suggestions.

M. J. Al-Yazdy
Managing Director

Notes:who is who?

`Ubaydullah, son of Ziad ibn-Abih: The young governor of Iraq, appointed by Yazid ibnMuawiyah. He was a faithless, aggressive and blood-thirsty oppressor of low birth who never abided by his promises. His mission was to hold Imam Husayn(a) prisoner or to kill him by whatever means he could. With an army of three thousand men, this fiendish man initiated the tragic event of Karbala and has remained cursed and detested by all pious people for ever.

Abdullah ibn Umeir and Amr ibn-Jinada: Both companions of Imam Husayn(a) and martyred in Karbala. Their murderers flung their decapitated heads towards the Imam(a).

Abu Ja' far Tabari: An eminent Shi'ite personality whose trustworthiness, dignity, eloquence and profound knowledge was known to all. Abul Aswad Da' ali: A loyal companion ofHadrat Ali(a) who learned syntax and the rules for the correct pronunciation of Arabic words from him. Abul Hatuf ibn-Harath and Sa'd ibn-Harath: They were brothers from the Ansar tribe of Medina. For twenty years they were members of the group that had revolted against Hadrat Ali(a) and were notorious for being his bitter enemies. Feeling sympathetic towards Imam Husayn(a) for being so tyrannically oppressed, they abandoned Yazid and fought for the Imam's holy cause and were martyred.

Aqilian: They were of the family of Aqil, the brother of Amir al-Mu'minin(a). They were martyred in the battle of Karbala.

Ahl-e Manteq: The logicians

Ahl-i-Ussul: Scholars versed in Islamic law and canonical doctrines namely Scripture, Sunna, the Consensus of Opinion and Deduction of legal rulings. A philosopher is the the person who, through using scientific laws, thought, reason and purification of his soul investigates the true nature of things in existence.

Aqaba ibn-Sam'an: He had the letters from the people of Kufa inviting Imam Husayn(a) to come to their city. When addressing the Kufans, the Imam(a) told Sam'an to produce these letters.

Aqilian: They were of the family of Aqil, the brother of Amir al-Mu'minin (a). They were martyred in the battle of Karbala. Ayatullah Haj Aqa Rahim Arbab: A learned figure in the Theological Seminary in Isfahan. He taught theosophy, philosophy and Islamic Law and its principles. He was endowed with fine moral qualities.

Bani Hashim: Among the most famous tribes of Qureish from which came famous personalities including Abd al-Muttalib, Abu Talib, Ali's(a) father and Abdullah, the Prophet's(s) father.

Barir and Sa'id: Both companions of Imam Husayn(a). The former was martyred while fighting and the latter during the noon prayers. Fadl ibn-Shadhan: Ail erudite Shi'ite from Nishapur, He was a great author, unequalled thinker and free of temporal attachments. His tomb is visited by men with heart, understanding and knowledge.

Habib ibn-Mazahir Asadi: A prominent companion of Imam Husayn(a) who left Kufa for Karbala at the request of the Imam. He was an old man but spiritedly put up a good fight and was martyred. Hafhaf ibn-Iyasruq: A companion of Imam Husayn(a) who accompanied the Imam(a) to Karbala. He called out the times of prayer and on the day of Ashura was martyred.

Hani ibn-Urwah: a prominent Shi'ite known for his devotion who acted for a short while as host of Muslim ibn-Aqil, Imam Husayn's(a) messenger to Kufa. He was apprehended by Ubeidullah ibn-Ziad and then killed because he refused to give information about Muslim's whereabouts.

Hashim Ilahi Qumsha'i: An outstanding figure in the Theological Seminary as well as in the University. He was pious, and a mystic, free of temporal attachments. His book of poems with more than twelve hundred pages is always within reach for men who are on the path of mystical experience of the truth. He has commented on Ibn Farabi's Fusus and has written a two-volume book on the Philosophy of Illumination.

Hurr ibn-Yazid Riahi: He was from a well known Arab tribe and a commander in Yazid's army in Iraq. He was ordered by Ubeidullah ibn Ziad to hold Imam Husayn(a) prisoner. On the day of Ashura, however, the pricks of conscience made him turn away from Yazid and repent. He joined Imam Husayn(a) in the battle and was martyred.

Husayn ibn-Ali Baghdadi: A historian in the tenth century A. H. , the author of Jawharah alThamin.

Ibn Bashir Hadrami: A prominent figure among the companions of Imam Husayn(a). On the night of Ashura he got the sad news that his son was taken prisoner. Although the Imam(a) permitted him to leave the camp to free his son, he insisted on staying with the Imam(a) and was martyred. Luqman: A sage free of temporal attachments, pure in soul and inspired with divine wisdom. A Surah of the Qur'an is named after him in which reference is made to some of his wise sayings.

Mariqin: Those who revolted against Hadrat Ali(a) and fought him in Nahrawan, a town near Baghdad. Miqdad ibn-Aswad, Abudhar Ghaffari and Salman Farsi: Three distinguished Companions of the Prophet(s) and were

recognised by God and His Messenger(s) for their devotion, righteous deeds and morality.

Muawiyah ibn-Wahab: A companion Of Imam Sadiq(a) and a reliable and learned narrator.

Muslim ibn-Aqil: Imam Husayn's(a) cousin and emissary to Kufa. The Kufans betrayed him and he was taken prisoner and killed by the order of Ubeidullah Ziad.

Nakithin: Those who broke their pledge of allegiance to Hadrat Ali(a) and brought about the battle of Jamal.

Qasitin: Those who pledged allegiance to Muawiyah and fought Imam Husayn(a).

Saravi-Muhammad ibn-Ali ibn Shahr Ashub: From Sari, Tabaristan (Mazandaran). He was an outstanding Shi'ite traditionalist and biographer. The author of some very important books including "Manaqib Ali bin Abi Talib (The Virtues of the Family of Abi Talib)."

Sayyid ibn Tawus: A great Shi'ite scholar from Hellah in Iraq. He was exemplary in virtue and religious devotion. He wrote the book "Lahuf" on the history of Karbala and the tragic martyrdom of Imam Husayn(a) and his companions.

Shimr ibn-Dhul Jowshan: Of the Arab tribe of the Bani Kilab. He was once a companion of Amir al-Mu'minin(a). At the time of the Arbitration, a group of people in Nahrawan had revolted against Hadrat `Ali(a) during his caliphate. Shimr was a member of that group and then later he joined the Umayyad party. Years later he went to Karbala as ordered by Ubeidullah ibn Ziad and fought in the battle. He volunteered to kill Imam Husayn(a) and subsequently beheaded the Imam(a). He was doomed to be treated as a contemptible outcast in this world and condemned to a painful punishment in the fire.

The Fourteen Sinless Ones: The Prophet of Islam(s), his daughter Fatimah Zahra, his son-in-law, Amir al-Mu'minin and their eleven descendents(a) all of whom held the position of Imamate.

The Late Akhund Mulla Muhammad Kashi: A man of great learning. At the time of the Qajar Dynasty he taught philosophy, theosophy, mysticism and ethics at the Theological Seminary in Isfahan. The Late Haj Sayyid Rida Sadr: An eminent contemporary theologian and author whose works in the realm of Islamic law, ethics and history are well known.

Umayyad Caliphs: Irreligious individuals of low birth, steeped in lusts and typical throwbacks to the pagan culture of the early years of Islam. They ruled over the oppressed Muslims for one thousand months committing innumerable atrocities during their rule. Wahab ibn-Abdullah: A young man from the tribe of Kilab. He had been newly-wed when he came to Karbala with his mother and wife to join Imam Husayn(a). He and his wife were martyred for the cause of Allah.

Wahab ibn-Manbah: A popular individual in the days of the Umayyad Caliphate. He claimed he had knowledge of the Torah, the Gospel and seventy-two other scriptures especially about the prophets. The Shi'ah authorities do not believe him and refute his claims and statements because he was a rank liar.

Zahir ibn-Qin Bajali: He was a distinguished man of Kufa and a follower of the Caliph Uthman. On his way from Mecca to Karbala he met Imam Husayn(a) and became attracted to his divine, sublime personality. He fought bravely to protect the Imam's life and was killed.

Ziad ibn-Abi Sufyan or Ziad ibn-Abih: father of Ubeidullah whose faith and religion Muawiyah bought for a mere trifle. Because his mother Sumayyah was promiscuous, it is not known who Abu Sufyan's father was. Muawiyah, alleging that his father Abi Sufyan had had an affair with Ziad's mother, declared Ziad his brother.

Notes:Battles

Nahrawan: The battle brought about by the Khawarij-those who revolted against Ali(a). They were completely defeated. Siffin: The battle waged against Amir alMu'minin(a) by Muawiyah. The war ended through an arbitration maliciously plotted by Muawiyah and Amr A' as to the detriment of the believers.

The Battle of Jamal: The battle brought about by Ayisha, Talha and Zubeir against Ali ibn-Abi Talib(a), the rightful Caliph immediately after the Prophet(s). Hadrat All(a) was victorious in the battle. The triple battles: Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan.

Notes:Books

Unsur Shuja'at: An eight-volume book that discusses the personality of Imam Husayn(a) and his loyal companions by Mirza Khalil Kamarah' i, the great philosopher and celebrated theologian.

Al Rijal: A biographical work by Shaykh Tusi about the narrators of the Sunna of the Prophet and of the People of his Household. Amali-e-Saduq: A book by Shaykh Saduq discussing ethical traditions and narrations.

Arba'in Qazi: A research work by Shahid Qazi Tabataba' i, Imam of the Juma prayers in Tabriz, discussing the return of the Household of the Prophet(s) who were held prisoners for forty days after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn(a).

Bahr al-Ma' aruf: A book on the subject of mystical and moral issues, by Mulla Abd al-Samad Hamadami. Bihar al-Anwar or the Encyclopedia of Shi'ism: A book in 110 volumes, by Mullah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi. Dar al-Salam: A scholarly book, by Haj Mirza Husayn Nouri, a Shi'ite scholar.

Farsan al-Hija: A book about the companions of Imam Husayn(a) by Haj Shaykh Dhabihulla Mahallati, a learned traditionalist. Ilal al-Sharayi: A valuable book on the philosophy of Islamic tenets and doctrines by Shaykh Saduq. Kamil al-Ziarat: A very important book concerning the religious traditions and narrations about the martyrdom of the Sinless Imams(a), eulogies about them and about visits to their holy shrines.

Kanz al-Amal: A sixteen-volume book about the Sunna of the Prophet(s), by Muttaqi Hindi, a Sunnite learned man. Kanz al-Fawa' id: A book about divine teachings, prophetic traditions and narrations, by the late scholar Karajaki. Kharaj-e-Ravandi: A valuable work by the Shi'ite scholar, the late Ravandi.

Ma'am al-Akhbar: A scholarly book explaining the narrations of the people of the Household of the Prophet(s). Manaqib: A book in four volumes, by Ibn Shahr Ashub Saravi.

Maqatal Khwarizmi: A book about the history of the martyrs, by Al Khwarizmi, a famous scholar. Pishva-e-Shahidan: A research work on the event of Karbala, by Ayatullah Sayyid Rida Sadr. Rijal-e-Kashi: A biographical book about the companions of the Prophet(s) and of the Sinless Imams(a), by the late Kashi. Sahuf: A book about the event of Karbala, by Sayyid ibn-Tawus, a Shi'ite learned man.

Sharh-e-Nahj ul Balagha: A twenty-volume book expounding upon the wise sayings of Hadrat Ali(a), by Ibn Abi al-Hadid, a great Sunnite scholar. Sharh Shafia: An important work of Ibn Faras.

Sharh-e-Nahjul Balagha: A book in Persian in more than thirty volumes by Allama Muhammad Taqi Ja'fari. Tadhkerah: A book about Islamic facts by Ibn Jouzi, the Sunnite scholar. Tafsir Tha'labi: A book commenting on the Qur'an by Tha'labi, a great scholar.

Thawab al-A' amal and Iqab al-A' amal (Rewards and Punishments for one's Deeds): A book by Shaykh Saduq, a major Shi'ite traditionalist. The Miracle of History: A book in eight volumes of 'Unsur Shuj'at, discussing the event of Karbala and the martyrdom of Imam Husayn(a), by the late Mirza Khalil Kamarah'i.

Notes: geographical Areas Basra and Ctesiphon: Cities in Iraq

Hamun: A plain.

Isfahan: A famous city in Iran noted for Islamic and historical monuments.

Karbala: A famous city in Iraq, where Imam Husayn(a) and his companions are buried. It is a Qiblah for pious and true lovers of that sinless and yet oppressed Imam.

Kufa: A city in Iraq, whose inhabitants were notorious for breaking their allegiance to Imam Husayn(a).

Kufan: Inhabitant of Kufa.

Madressa-e-Sadr: A school in Isfahan for religious studies attended by many Shi'ite scholars.

Shamian: Inhabitant of Sham (Syria).

The Ka'aba: The Muslim holy shrine, The Inviolable House of God in Mecca.

More Notes

Hunut: Anointing dead bodies with camphor. Force and Matter: This subject comprises a philosophical question discussed by many philosophers in their writings. Iftar: The breaking of the fast at the end of each day during the month of Ramadan.

Jami and Mani' : A definition meaning the whole and only truth of something or about someone with no distortion whatsoever. Mukashifa: The mystical spiritual ecstasy that saints experience in which they realize spiritual and divine truths.

Q'imiya: A prayer quoted from Hadrat Mahdi which gives a good account of the companions and children of Imam Husayn(a). Tasua and Ashura: Refer respectively to the 9th and 10th day of the month of

Muharram during which Yazid declared a state of war against Imam Husayn(a). Consequently the warring parties went out to battle in which the Imam and his companions were martyred.

The Preserved Tablet (Lawh-e-Mahfuz): Men of heart believe that the preserved tablet represents God's knowledge. It is a divine tablet on which all that God decrees is recorded.

Zakat: The poor-rate, i. e., a legal rate on wealth that is used for relief and support of the poor. Ziarat: Paying a visit to the holy shrines of the Prophet(s) and of the sinless Imams(a).

Ziarat-e-Nahiah: A text containing prayers for the fallen in the battle of Karbala, composed by the 12th Imam(a). Ziarat-e-Warith: A prayer rich in subtleties of language, quoted from the Sinless Imams. It is said on Friday nights as a homage paid to the memory of Hadrat Husayn(a).

A Unique Event

We will speak here about those who effected a unique event on the face of the globe, a great tragic occurrence that has served as a lesson for all-ages and lives- an incomparable fact and an overwhelming source of advice and admonition. Spiritual and worldly people alike would see such an event only but once, for never again will heaven and earth witness such a panorama.

Two tribes had clashed in battle in the desert of Karbala: one a tribe of pure divines; and the other totally corrupt and worldly. The first was Godcentric, seeking nothing but for the love of Truth, striving to win His favour, to hoist the banner of reality, and to maintain the light of virtue; they endeavoured to overthrow despots and despotism, to uproot the tree of evil and keep green the tree of piety. The other group was centered around false deities-the pleasures of the flesh and the passion and worldly riches and blatantly disregarded morality.

Divines beyond Comparison

These angelic figures, seventy two in number, under the leadership of Husayn(a) pitched the camp of magnanimity, honour and faith and constancy in the arena desert of Karbala. They were human in body but angels in soul. The Prophet(s) is reported to have said:

The Believers are dearer to God than the angels nearest to Him.

(Kanz al-'Amal. vol. 1 p. 164) And in another narration he(s) said:

They deserve greater respect than the Ka 'aba. (Bihar al-Anwar vol. 68 p. 16)

And which believer could be more superior or praiseworthy than those who in watering the tree of religion, in preserving the culture of Divine unity, and in safeguarding the efforts of the previous prophets and saints with an unspeakable zeal, shed their precious blood in Jihad for the cause of Allah?

Never once did they fear their wicked enemies and, at the side of The Chief of the Martyrs(a), fought them to pay their debt to the Truth and to steer the storm-stricken ship of humanity to the peaceful shore of salvation. They were taught the Book of Revelation by the Messenger of Allah and by the People of his Household and with perfect sincerity practiced all that they

were taught. As far as magnanimity and deep insight were concerned, they were second to none. They were perfect symbols of purity of soul, brightness of heart, unflagging faith, moral perfection, impeccable conduct and unstinting self-sacrifice.

Never did they stumble under the heavy burden of responsibility. They reflected the quintessence of Truth, standard bearers of nobility, geniuses in creation and doyens of all virtues; and graces. Those who wanted to harm them did them good and those who put them to the sword kept their memory alive. They stood and fought side by side with the Imam(a) to the bitter end, withstanding the enemy's attacks and impervious to any offer to abandon their leader. There were a veritable sea of endurance, constancy, honour religious zeal and purity of heart, never succumbing to the fiendish temptations of their enemies.

One base fellow, under the command of the son of S'ad was asked as to why had he been so ready to kill a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad(s). He retorted that if others had themselves seen what he had seen, they certainly would have done exactly as he did, adding that they had won the day only by force of numbers.

Worldlings to the Worst Degree

The enemy numbered thirty thousand men all of whom were notorious for their sinful behaviour. They were led by a man who was once a waif named Ubeidullah whose mother had revelled in the pleasures of the flesh. They were a bunch of thugs who had gathered together to kill the offspring of the Prophet(s). All of them were the subjects of Yazid, a libertine and a drunkard and they had learned the lessons of brutality, plundering, oppression, hypocrisy, ego-centrism and polytheism in the school of the Umayyad rulers.

Zahir, that gallant warrior, called the people of Kufa in that army to help the offspring of the Prophet(s) and withhold their support of Ubeidullah, the son of Ziad. He said that both of them have gouged out your eyes with red-hot irons, they have cut off your hands and legs, your ears and noses, they have hanged many from among you and have beheaded Qur'an reciters like Hujr ibn-'Adi and Hani ibn-Urwah. The angry mob instead interrupted his exhortations and insulted him. They lauded Ubeidullah and his father and threatened either to kill Imam Husayn(a) or deliver him and his companions to Yazid as prisoners of war.

How ignorant were the people to choose viceincarnate over virtue-incarnate as Amir and ruler.

Zahir continued:

The children of Fatima(a) deserve more support, from you than Samiyya (adulteress and mother of Ibn-Abi Sufyan). If you do not wish to support Imam Husayn(a) then at least leave him alone to deal with Yazid in whichever way he chooses, Yazid will be pleased with you even if you fail to kill Husayn(a).

Fearing that such a strong argument might encourage the mob to act in favour of Imam Husayn(a), Shimr, claiming that they were all tired of Zahir's long-windedness, shot an arrow at him. Zahir condemned Shimr as a poor beast, sure to be punished on the Last day.

When eventually Zahir fell dead on the battlefield, Imam Husayn(a) rushed to the side of his body and cursed his killers. Zahir had indeed called the people of Kufa what they were symbols of inhumanity without peer.

The Revelatory Dream of Imam Husayn(a)

Before dawn on the day of Ashura (the tenth day of Muharram, the first lunar month of the Muslim calendar) the Imam(a) had a revelatory dream. He said he saw a pack of rabid dogs attacking him and among them was a dog spotted like a leper, which was the (fiercest of all. Shimr who eventually personally killed the Imam(a) was a leper.

In a second dream he saw his grandfather, the Prophet(s) who told him that he would soon be joining the divine folk. And so, his dream came true on that very day of Ashura. (Maqatal of Kharazmi vol. 1, p. 25 r and Bihar al-Anwar vol. 25 p. 3)

The first dream depicted the true nature of the enemies of the Imam(a) and the second depicted the divine certificate of merit given to him by the Messenger of God(s).

The battle of Karbala was the human conflict between truth and falsehood where although the disbelievers had apparently won the day in reality it was the believers who were victorious.

The Viewpoint of Amir al-Mu'minin (a)

In sermon 133 of Nahjul Balagha, Hadrat Ali(a) said:

The world marks the limits of the vision of those whose hearts are blind who see nothing beyond it. The sight of the true seer pierces through and realizes that the eternal abode of man is beyond this world. Consequently he wants to leave this world while he who is blind wants to get further involved in it. The true seer collects his provisions from it for the hereafter while the blind person collects his provisions as if he can remain in this transient world.

The revealed religions and wise men throughout the ages are unanimous in their view that human beings are not created just to enjoy the ephemeral pleasures of this earthly world, to experience 'the ups and downs of life and then simply die; man comes into being and awaits on the shore of the sea of immortality for a while.

Man should therefore embrace this limited opportunity to lead a life of piety thanking his Lord for His blessings. He should strive towards moral perfection and try to make this world like an Eden of happiness for all. Unfortunately such cannot be expected from the wicked and base.

Worldly people are egoists and divine personalities are God-fearing and annihilated in Him. Divine people resonate with the melody of truth while those whose hearts are blind sing the song of fancy. The pious destroy the abode of the body to build the mansion of the soul.

Hakim Ilahi Qumshahi, based upon his knowledge of Islam, interpreted the last words of this leader of lovers of God in the following stanzas of poetry:

Thou art the sole object of love and worship in my heart and I gaze upon Thee with its eye.

Candle-like I burn with the desire of being near to Thee all the sooner; With my head on the enemy's spear I'm bound for Thy seat I asked Thee to show me Thyself when I reached the tryst with You on Mt. Sinai Thou art the Fount of Life from which Thou quenchest my thirst On the edge of the sea of existence I experienced the ascension of witnessing The mirror of the heart broke but the image of the Beloved remained The true image of Thee revealed the secret of He is Allah, the One.

These seventy two men bore the colours of the truth; they abandoned their humble abode in this world and gained possession of a mansion in the heavens; they laughed in the face of death and gained eternal life; they subdued their evil desires and yearned for nothing but the Truth.

After the event of Karbala, some followed the tracks of the Caravan of light and others went astray. Let us embellish ourselves with the morality of Husayn(a) and shun the fetid smell of Yazid. Imam Husayn's piety and religious devotion set an example for all generations in human history that a godly way of life leads to salvation.

An Outstanding Figure Among the Husayni(a) Group

Among those who had taken to follow the tracks of the Caravan of Light, and an outstanding figure in his time, was the late Akhund Mulla Muhammad Kashi. Among his proteges were such distinguished personalities as Ayatullah Martyr Mudarris, Haj Shaykh Murtada Taliqani, Haj Agha Rahim Arbab, Ayatullah Sayyid, Jamaluddin Gulpaygani and Ayatullah al-Uzma Haj Agha Husayn Borujerdi.

The Akhund was a pious septuagenarian who spent most, of his life acquiring knowledge and teaching in a small chamber at the SadrMadressah in Isfahan. His paltry earnings were hardly enough to provide bread and water, but as far as the spiritual side of life was concerned, he was a fountain of virtue. Not enslaved by his sexual desires he remained unmarried and lived on a meagre daily ration of bread and cheese or bread and vegetables with broth once a week.

Once, a young theology student waking up just before dawn to say his night prayers, found himself so surrounded by voices of praise and glorification of God coming as it were from all the walls and doors of the madresseh, that he fell unconscious. In the morning he went to the Akhund and told him the story not knowing what that chanting so full of light was, he found that it corresponded to the very chanting of God's Glory and praises that the Akhund recited before the dawn.

Akhund Kashi said to him:

The fact that all creation praises God is not something surprising, what is surprising is that this heavenly praise reached your ears as if it was coming from the walls and windows.

Worship God wholeheartedly like Imam Husayn did, because if you worship Him upon a margin you lose both this world and the hereafter. That is the sheer loss. (Qur'an, Surah Hajj v. 77);

Acquire divine attributes from godly men; learn bravery and honour from the shining sun of Karbala. Follow the example of Husayn(a) fighting against the rebellion of those estranged from Islam and learn how to get nearer to God. Attend the school of Islam and learn the Qur'an, courage, affection, magnanimity, beneficence and loyalty.

But to become lion-hearted, godly men, you must first learn good manners. Imam Husayn's companions were all distinguished and pious personalities. Those in the Caravan of Light knew well that their journey would end up in paradise, thanks to their devotion to their leader for the cause of Allah.

The Qur'an says:

As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one supposes it to be water till he comes unto it and finds it naught and finds in the place thereof, Allah, who pays him his due; and Allah is swift at reckoning. Or as a darkness on a vast, abysmal sea. There covers him a wave, above which is a wave, above which is a cloud. Layer upon layer of darkness. When he holds out his hand he scarce can see it. And for whom Allah has not appointed light, for him there is no light.

(24/39-40).

Elsewhere the Quran says:

But whoso finds ease in disbelief, on them is wrath from Allah. Theirs will be awful doom. That is because they have chosen the life of the world rather than the Hereafter and because Allah guides not the disbelieving folk. Such are they whose hearts and ears and eyes Allah has sealed. And such are the heedless. Assuredly in the Hereafter they are the losers (16/106-109).

Indeed they are the losers because they are deprived of God's favour and of the intercession of the Prophet(s) and the Folk of his Household(a). The Quran says about them:

But he who turns away from remembrance of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall bring him blind to the Assembly on the Day of Resurrection. He will say: My Lord Wherefore have you gathered me (hither) blind, when I was wont to see? He will say: So (it must be) Our revelations came unto you and you forgot them. In like manner you are forgotten this Day. Thus do we reward him who is prodigal and does not believe the revelations of his Lord; and verily the doom of the Hereafter will be sterner and more lasting (20/124-127).

The Most Exalted and the Most Contemptible

By the most exalted we can mean no other than the devoted companions of Imam Husayn(a) and by the most contemptible only to his enemies. The former group were annihilated in Allah and as mystic travellers were journeying unto Allah, being unattached to all and everything but Allah. The latter group, according to the Qur'an, chose the life of the world rather than that of the Hereafter.

The Prophet(s) said to Fatima(a), the paragon of virtue and the mirror of the divine attributes for all ages, that the companions of Husayn(a) were like stars in the sky. They competed with one another in sacrificing their lives for their leader. Their graves, would be in the heavens. (Bahar vol. 44 p. 264)

These birds of Eden had all fallen on the battlefield in less than half a day to get all the sooner and nearer to their sole object of worship. Thus they proved to be rightly called the greatest and the most exalted. Imam Husayn(a) called them the best and the most trustworthy companions. In contrast, the dirtiest record of evil; deeds ever observed have been attributed to the servants of Yazid, the representative of the false deity of that time, and they thus deserve to be called the most contemptible.

So strong and unwavering was their faith in Imam Husayn(a) that his companions defied the power of the most abominable of men, Yazid, and the most powerful aristocracy of the time, the Umayyad -dynasty.

Husayn(a) and his followers were moons and Yazid and his men were dogs that barked at the moon. The martyrs of Karbala are superior to all other martyrs in human history.

Martyrs Without Peer

The martyrs of Karbala: Zahir, Habib, Muslim, Barir, Hurr, S'aid, Abbas, to mention but a few, have been unsurpassed in human history. The Quran says:

Naught is as His likeness (45/11).

They were of pious descent. The Quran says:

*A goodly saying, as a goodly `tree, its root setfirm, its branches reaching into heaven giving its fruit in every season... * (14/24-24).

As for those wicked men who fought Imam Husayn(a), the Quran also says: *... having hearts wherewith they understand not, and havingeyes wherewith they see not, and having ears wherewith they hear not. They are as cattle-nay, but they are worse. These are the neglectful* (71/79).

The companions, knew that all power belonged to Allah. The Quran says: *... Whoso desires power (should know that) all power belongs to Allah. Unto Him good words ascend, and the pious does he exalt... * (35/0).

Hadrat `Ali(a) said that they were martyrs surpassed neither by anyone before them nor after them. Elsewhere Imam `Ali(a) said while addressing the earth of Karbala:

Strange though it may seem, Oh you mysterious earth, on the Day of Resurrection there will rise out of you a people that will enter paradise without having been called to account. (Bihar vol. 44 p. 255).

The companions of Imam Husayn(a) had based their lives on whatever their leader had mentioned the Prophet(s) as having said: God loves the loftiest not the lowest aims in life. Thus the army of Imam Husayn(a) was Godcentric and the Umayyad army was Satan-centered. The light of Husayn(a) was the light of God that never goes out.

The Quran says:

Faint would they put out the light ofAllah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light however much the disbelievers are averse (61/8).

All things attract their complement. Angelic people attract those whose characteristics correspond to theirs and infernal people do likewise.

The Quran says:

*...Lo! Allah has bought from believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs... * Monotheists trade their lives for their Lord's favour and polytheists trade their lives for the things the devil shows them, however worthless they may be. The true value of a human being lies not in his wealth but in his virtue.

Husayn(a) and his companions resonated with the refrain of the Truth:

We gave up everything we had to win Thy favour. The Quran says:

*Be mindful of your duty, and do right. Allah loves the good. * (5/93).

Elsewhere the Quran says:

Lo! Allah is with those who keep their duty unto Him and those who are doers of good (16n2s).

If we follow the example of Imam Husayn's(a) companions we are sure to win God's favour.

The Greatest Reality from the tongue of Jabir ibn- Abdullah

`Atiyyah ibn-Sa' d ibn Janadah said that he was in the company of Jabir when he paid a visit to the holy shrine of Imam Husayn(a). Jabir performed his ablution and put on some scent. He placed his hand on the sacred grave of the Imam(a) and swooned. When he came to himself, he lamented bitterly and then paid homage to the memory of the Imam's(a) companions saying that they also shared in his battle against his enemies.

`Atiyyah asked how could such a thing be; Jabir, greatly surprised, quoted the Prophet(s) as having said that one who supported others in what good they had done would be rewarded according to what they had done. If one is honoured with a visit to his holy shrine, one should say in his prayers:

I swear by Almighty God, His angels and His messengers that I believe in your leadership and in your return unto Allah. Every step I take for the cause of my religion and all my efforts in life are under the auspices of your leadership and guidance and inspired with my deep love and reverence for you. I surrender my heart to your pure soul and I try to follow the example you set for human salvation.

If after saying such a prayer however, one is not honest in his vow, that person would have told a great lie that will not be forgiven. Imam Husayn(a) and his companions were all paragons of virtue and if one wants to revere them duly for their divine attributes, one should try to be their true disciple in all stages of life.

In contrast, the enemies of Imam Husayn(a) and his followers were all vice incarnated manifestations of villainy, tyranny, bestiality, infringement upon the rights of others, neglectfulness of responsibility, covetousness, envy, pride and hypocrisy. When called to account on the Last Day, they will appear to be totally deprived of God's mercy. Imam Husayn's(a) murder was so terrible a crime that in the punishment of the murderers, there may be no room for mercy.

Constancy in Achieving Goals

In following the transcendental aim of Imam Husayn(a) and his loyal supporters, one must be prepared to face physical, financial, mental, familial or social difficulties; hence, it requires constancy, steadfastness, struggle, religious zeal, devotion and understanding. The Qur'an says:

Whoso obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are with those unto whom Allah has shown favour: the prophets and the saints and the martyrs and the righteous. And the best of company are they (4/69)

Our Seeking God's Help In Attaining to Good Conduct

Imam Husayn's companions gave a vivid picture of the spirituality of Islam in what they said and did. Indeed, they were angels that demonstrated the truths of Islam to the world for indeed their deeds were nothing short of angelic behaviour. They kept their duty in obeying Islamic tenets. Their message to all muslims was to revere the Truth, the Prophet, the Qur' an, the Imam and their leaders. That we must establish worship and pay the poor-rate, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong.

Those who neglect to establish worship are proud like Satan who disobeyed God's order to prostrate before Adam, and those who do not pay the poorrate are the miserly whose niggardliness keeps them from doing anything good.

The Qur'an says:

They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give the tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom (9/34)

We supplicate to God for success in good conduct; who so are neglectful of good conduct in relation to others are deprived of God's favour. People of ill-conduct are notorious for spreading the fires of dishonourable behaviour all over the world, while on the other hand, good conduct diffuses light everywhere and adds to the glory of the angels.

The Reverence Shown to Imam Husayn (a) By his Companions

Hadrat Sajjad(a), the Pearl among all Worshippers of God, says about the reverence held for Imam Husayn(a) by his companions:

The Imam(a) spent one part of the night of Ashura (the night before he was martyred) with his companions, the second part for his prayers and the third part in getting prepared for the battle. First, he thanked his Lord for His graces bestowed upon him and his family and his appointment as the leader of all the Muslims, for his being a descendant of the Prophet(a) and forgiving him the knowledge of the Qur'an and the tenets of Islam. He then addressed his companions saying that he knew of no better or more devoted men than they were.

He further said that they were about to fight a bloody battle which would result in their death. Since the enemy had a quarrel with him alone, the Imam announced that he had freed them of their allegiance to him. If they were not inclined to fight without it being any sin or blameworthy action on their part. In addition they had his permission to take any of the folk of his household with them if they so desired.

Abbas, in his response, said that they would never abandon him. Then the Imam(a) gave his permission for his cousins-the children of Muslim ibn-Aqil to leave the camp, their father had been martyred in the course of the events leading up to Karbala and his martyrdom would have been a sufficient enough contribution for them. But in reply they thanked their uncle and said that they would stand by him no matter what would befall them.

Like the men from the tribe of Bani Hashim, other companions of Imam Husayn(a) including Muslim ibn-'Awsaja, Zuhayr and Ibn Bashir Hadrami, all said that they would stand firm by the side of their exalted leader and valiantly meet their fate. It would be a great honour they said to lie among the fallen at the side of the beloved of the Prophet(s).

Qasim, the nephew of the Imam(a) asked his uncle whether he would be among the fallen. The Imam(a) replied that he would be killed as well as his own infant Abdullah. Qasim shuddered, at the thought of such a terrible thing, that their enemies could be so cruel and fiendish that they would not spare the lives even of a helpless infant.

Good versus Evil

In Karbala, two groups were arrayed in opposition to each other.

One group was the symbol of truth, honour, magnanimity, faith, virtue, honesty, worship and devotion, in other words, representatives of the Absolute Good, objective proofs of the Scripture and of sacred knowledge.

Salman Farsi was one of the most notable companions of the Prophet Muhammad(s). So high was his status that the Prophet(s) is reported to have said that God had ordered him to love four persons: 'All ibn-Abitalib, Miqdad ibn-Aswad, Abudar Ghaffari and Salman al-Farsi. (Kashi, Rijal p. 24). Hadrat Ali(a) said that Salman was the gateway to truth in the earth, those who acknowledged his sublime position were believers and those who denied it were disbelievers. (kashi, Rijal p.20)

Fadl ibn-Shadhan, the renowned author, said that no one was comparable to Salman in knowledge and insight. The Prophet(s) and Imam Baqir(a) knew him to be a member of the Household of the Prophet(s) and Hadrat Sadiq(a) said that Salman had known the Greatest Name (The secret great name of God). (Kashi, Rijal p. 18, 22). This man of such extraordinary caliber, on his arrival in Iraq, was recorded to have said that the battlefield of Karbala was the place where Imam Husayn(a) and his companions would fall. (Kashi, Rijal p.24).

Of those who were standing in opposition to the Imam(a), a number of them had seen the Prophet(s) and had witnessed his miracles. Nevertheless, in their actions, they denied his mission as God's messenger and attacked the members of his inviolable Household, beheading their men and innocent male children, and making prisoners of their pure womenfolk.

Some among them had lived during the heyday of Amir al Mu'minin, All, the Master of the Lovers of God, the Imam of mystics and the Paragon of honesty, and during the era of his illustrious son Hadrat Mujtaba. Their deeds, however, showed that they denied this divine source of light manifested to them and chose to remain in abysmal darkness.

They actually denied revelation and rather than monotheism and the mission of the Prophet(s) and the Imams(a) they chose Yazid, the drunkard, and Ibn- Ziad, the bastard and became themselves incarnations of vice. Yes, those who go astray, who with all their capabilities support irrationalism, who repress their consciences and defy the Truth are the most wicked of people.

The Qur'an says:

*Lo! the worst of hearts in Allah's sight are the deaf and the dumb who have no sense * (8/22)

Elsewhere the Qur'an says:

Lo! the worst of hearts in Allah's sight are the ungrateful who will not believe (8/55)

Our Great Responsibility Concerning the event of Karbala

In this great battle between these two tribes-one the representative of good and the other the representative of evil-lies a very important lesson for us. From Husayn(a) we can learn the lesson of virtue and morality and

protect ourselves against such hideous transgressions the like of which Yazid and his men were notorious.

Sa'adi, a celebrated poet in the literary firmament of Iran, said:

One should follow every piece of good advice even if written on a wall. Take as null and void whatever as the contrary, because one who is asleep can awaken not others that are asleep as well.

Luqman the famous gnostic and saint said that he learnt morality from immoral people, by doing the opposite of what they did. We can never claim to be as virtuous as the companions of Husayn(a), but we can claim we are on the path of good, as were those in the Caravan of Light.

The Constancy of Husayn's (a) Companions

The companions of Imam Husayn characteristically manifested the highest degree of stamina and endurance. No military commander would undermine the morale of his men if they were less in number or ammunition than their enemy; rather, with fiery speeches he would try to make them feel confident of victory and incite them to fight.

On the night of the battle however, the Imam(a) told his men that the enemy would win the day by force of numbers and that they would be all killed. They were exhilarated by this news and did not hesitate to declare their readiness to stand firm by his side and fight to the bitter end. In their eyes, it was the most grievous state to befall them if they survived their leader even for a single moment. (Bihar, vol. 44, p. 392, 393) Imam Sadiq(a) said that those who were ignorant of the rights of the Household of the Prophet(s) would not be rewarded even if they lived to be a hundred years and spent all of it in devotion.

The world is like a deep and stormy sea which without being guided by God or His Messenger(s), man would indeed succumb to the perils of the ocean. Husayn(a) is the torch for the Straight Path and the guide of the shipwrecked to the shore of salvation. We must abandon the path of transgression and embark on the path of Truth as his companions one of whom Hurr ibn-Yazid did.

Hurr, knowing full well that it would cost him his life, repented of his sins, he stopped following Yazid and accepted the Imamates of Husayn(a) and that of Husayn's father(a). Hurr, while he was still commander in Yazid's army, on two occasions had shown his reverence to Imam Husayn(a). The first occasion was at the time of the noon prayers when the Imam(a) asked Hurr if he would prefer to say his prayers with his own men or with him and Hurr answered that he preferred to be with the Imam(a). On the second occasion, Hurr was present with his army when the Imam(a) addressed the soldiers facing him saying:

Lo! O you Kufans! If you are God fearing, you know that it is we, the folk of the Household of the Prophet(s) who are the righteous leaders of the people, not those who treat you unjustly.

The Imam(a) further mentioned the letters the people of Kufa had written supporting him and ordered a companion, Aqa ibn-Sam'an, to bring the letters to show the soldiers as proof. In reply, Hurr, among whose soldiers were many Kufans, said that they were not among those who had written the

letters and that they had orders to take the Imam(a) back to Ubeidullah in Kufa.

When the Imam(a), in order to avoid confrontation, ordered his men to ride back to Mecca or Medina, Hurr barred their way and thus paved the way for more of Yazid's troops to arrive and surround the Imam's(a) small group of fighters.

On the day of Ashura however, the prick of his conscience induced a great remorse in him. He went back to Husayn's(a) camp to seek his forgiveness and to cast his lot with the Caravan of Light. The Imam(a) replied that God would accept his repentance. Later on, Hurr and his son launched a brave and relentless attack upon the enemy and were both eventually killed in the path of God. The Qur'an says:

O you who believe! Shall I show you a commerce that will save you from a painful doom? You should believe in Allah and His messenger, and should strive for the cause of Allah with your riches and lives. That is better for you if you did but know (61/10 -11)

What is meant here by commerce, is the willingness to trade a good, comfortable life in this world for an abode in Paradise in the Hereafter. Husayn(a) was victorious in the battle between truth and falsehood, between light and darkness. Because of his valor and devotion, this descendant of Mustafataught human beings the lesson of self sacrifice. The hero on the battlefield of courage took up the sword for his divine cause and because of this the tree of religion bore fruit and the palace of faith remained standing on solid foundations. Its threshold is the Ka'aba of hope for those with certainty of faith and its court the Qiblah for those of perspicacity.

For Yazid the palace of tyranny collapsed when he decided to extinguish the light of God. It is indeed wonderful to behold that after all these centuries, the fundamental distinction between truth and falsehood has remained; that the truth continues-eternal-while that falsehood represented by the Yazidi forces has utterly vanished.

Husayn(a) was a free man, a descendant of Heidar-Hadrat Ali(a)-and Fatima(a), daughter of the Best among Mankind. How could such a symbol of religious perfection yield to the will of a tyrant usurper? If his chest should be the target of a poisoned arrow and if he should die of thirst, he would never stoop to an enemy. We must learn to be free like Husayn(a) and gain victory.

Rasa, the poet, has said in a verse:

The fragrance of his dust animates me and I long to embrace his grave.

The Qur'an says:

*He will forgive you your sins and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, and pleasant dwellings in Gardens of Eden. That is the supreme triumph. And (He will give you) another blessing which you love: help from Allah and present victory. Give good tidings (O Muhammad) to believers * (61/12-13)

Undergoing the Divine Test

The army of Imam Husayn(a) undergoing a very severe test, unprecedented in human history, defeated the enemy. Arif Samadani, the learned gnostic says:

You are but a slave of your sensual desires and neglectful of too many other far more subtle pleasures in the domain of your existence. The soul is purified through divine tests, just as gold is melted in the crucible of perfection. Those who worship their Lord in distress are superior to those who worship him in affluence.

It has been said that a life of hardship is a token of God's mercy and favour upon upright people. In this respect see how dear Imam Husayn(a) and his companions were to God.

Nafi ibn- Hilal

Nafi was of noble birth, a reader of the Qur'an, narrator of the Sunna of Muhammad(s) and a companion of Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali(a). Before Muslim ibn-Aqil was martyred, he left Kufa to join Imam Husayn(a).

Ibn-Shahr Ashub said when Hurr ibn Yazid barred the Imam(a) and his companions from going to Mecca or Medina, the Imam addressed his men and told them that death was God's gift for the believers and that living under the yoke of despotic rulers would be a painful torture. When Nafi heard this, he eloquently answered:

O you, descendant of God's Messenger(s), You know well that your forefather did not live long enough to show the affection he had towards these people to its fullest capacity. Indeed among his people were hypocrites that promised to help him in time of need but did not abide by their promise when the need came. This also held true in the case of your father. Many promised to help, but in fact refrained from helping him. Now you are in the same predicament as regards to the hypocrites h, those who broke their promise, acted to the detriment of themselves and God has made it so that we do not find ourselves reliant upon them. Now lead your men to their fate. We love your friends and hate your enemies.

Nafi fought bravely in the battle. He killed as many men of Omar Sa'ad as he could and then was crowned with martyrdom.

Nafi ibn- Hilal's Very Strange Story

Shaykh Mufid, the outstanding theologian, narrated that for most of the time in Karbala, Nafi ibn-Hilal had closely accompanied Imam Husayn(a), especially when there was the danger of enemy ambush.

One night Husayn(a) left his camp for a reconnaissance tour of the site. Seeing this, Nafi shadowed the Imam(a) with his sword unsheathed. Suddenly the Imam(a) looked back and saw him. Nafi told him that he was very afraid for the Imam(a) to see him alone out there so near the enemy camp. The Imam(a) said he came to explore if there might be a hidden position from which the enemy could attack. After they both returned to camp, the Imam(a) entered his sister's tent while Nafi stood nearby.

All of a sudden Hadrat Zeynab, Husayn's(a) sister, broke into tears at the thought of the impending death facing her brother and his companions and expressed fears about the constancy of his men. The Imam(a) in response

had tried to assure his sister of their loyalty and devotion. On hearing this, Nafi headed for the tent of Habib ibn-Mazahir, another brave, loyal companion of Imam Husayn(a) and told him what he had heard.

Then they both went up to the tents of the women-folk in the camp to assure them of the loyalty of the Imam's troops. The Imam(a) told the women to come out of their tents and thank those loyal men outside for their willingness to sacrifice their lives, standing by the Household of the Prophet(s). In their response it seemed as if the companions of Husayn(a) were saying:

If we failed to stay at Mina (a place in Mecca where the pilgrims to the Ka'aba stay overnight) we would make our tryst in Karbala, another Mina; If we said farewell to Zamzam and Safa (respectively a well and a high cliff in Mecca), we should make of Karbala, a pillar of loyalty and sincerity (Safa) In order for human beings to know their Maker, we would make ourselves a mirror to show the image of God; To treat the abyss of people's ignorance, we would make of Karbala a place where people are cured of their illnesses; To liberate mankind from bondage, we would hoist the banner of freedom; We would overthrow oppressors and liberate the oppressed; We would tear down the palace of despotism and in its place build the palace of justice. If religious revolution was about to occur in the world, we would make it ring with the call for truth.

Yazid ibn- Thabit' Abqassi

Ibn Thabit was a shi'ite of a pure disposition and was lauded by Hadrat Mahdi(a) himself. When the enemy came to know that Imam Husayn(a) intended to leave for Iraq and unite with some people there, Ibn Ziad ordered his agent in Basra to be on the alert and make note of all those who were coming and going from Iraq.

Ibn Thabit, in company with Adham ibn-Umayya and other notables, left Basra for Mecca. On arriving there, they found that the Imam(a) was not in Mecca, so they went searching far and wide in the surrounding wilderness for him. At the same time, the Imam(a) was also searching for Ibn Thabit and eventually came upon his camp and went to his tent. When Ibn Thabit saw the Imam(a) in his tent he mentioned the Qur'anic verse: *O mankind There has come unto you an exhortation from your Lord, a balm for that which is in the breasts* (10/58)

Then he told Imam Husayn(a) that he had come to fight for the divine cause. The Imam(a) prayed for him and eventually Ibn Thabit and two of his sons were killed in the battle.

Never do men with religious zeal bow to vile people. Well done those who pledge allegiance to the prophet's son and would give both their arms for his cause. Well done those who, disdainful of danger rush upon the enemy. Gallant men who pierce their way through enemy hoards to slake the thirst of others. Martyrdom was a wine in the cup of death. Well done those drunken men who kissed it and drank the wine.

Abis ibn- Shabib Shakeri

He was a pious shi'ite notable orator and man of Truth. When Muslim ibn-Aqil came to Kufa, the notables among the Shi' a came to visit him.

After Muslim had read the letter of Imam Husayn(a), `Abis addressed him saying: O you messenger of Husayn(a)!, I speak neither for the people of Kufa nor do I wish to make a baseless promise on their behalf to deceive you. I swear by God that I have chosen to fight the enemy side by side with you, to the bitter end.

His fiery words kindled the fire of sacrifice for the cause of Allah. Here `Abis committed himself to uphold nothing but the Truth. He encouraged the people to pledge allegiance to Muslim. Muslim wrote a letter to the Imam(a) and handed it to Abis. In the thick of the battle `Abis Shakeri, in company with Shudhab rode out to defend Islam. `Abis then addressed the Imam and said:

I know of no one dearest to me, but you.

He rushed the enemy with his sword unsheathed. No one dared to fight him, so Ibn Sa'ad ordered his men to rain stones on him in order to crush his attack. `Abis, in a righteous rage, removed his coat of mail and helmet and launched a furious attack upon the soldiers of the enemy, cutting down many in his path. Finally, tired, outnumbered and surrounded on all sides, `Abis was cut down and martyred.

Hafhaf ibn- Mahnah Basrawi

He was a committed shi'ite and a brave companion of Hadrat `Ali(a), he had fought side by side with the latter in three battles (Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan) that `Ali(a) had fought against the wrongdoers.

After Hadrat `Ali(a) was martyred, he pledged allegiance to Imam Hasan(a) and then to Imam Husayn(a). In Basra, he found out that Imam Husayn(a) had left Mecca for Iraq. He hastened across the wide deserts between Basra and his destination with utmost speed and reached Karbala on the day of Ashura when the battle had ended. He asked the men in the army of Omar Sa'ad about Husayn(a). They answered: Don't you see plunderers are now busy in Husayn's(a) camp, robbing the womenfolk of their clothing.

In a battle when a soldier sees his commander lying among the fallen, he could become quite confused, but Hafhaf, like a fierce lion, attacked the enemy troops by himself putting them to the sword one by one until he was exhausted and killed.

Suwid Hadrami

He put up a good fight but suffered fatal wounds all over his body and fell unconscious to the ground. The enemy gave him up for dead and left him alone. All of a sudden when he heard the shout that Husayn(a) was killed, he sprang to his feet. Not finding his sword, he seized a dagger and attacked the enemy and was killed.

These were the companions of Imam Husayn(a), companions whose valour defies description. As to the members of the Bani Hashim themselves such as The Moon of the Bani Hashim, Hadrat Abbas - Husayn's(a) brother - and Ali `Akbar - son of Husayn - , no one can ever be able to do justice to them, for they represented the acme of heroism and chivalry.

The Moon of the Bani Hashim

Since no one is able to adequately describe the sublime personality of Qamar (The Moon) of the Bani Hashim, let us quote the words of some of the sinless Imams themselves in describing him:

God's blessings and the praises of His favourite angels, prophets, pious people, martyrs, saints and pure souls be unto you, O son of Amir al-Mu'minin. I swear by God that you were he who was wholeheartedly resigned to His will and unquestionably loyal to the Leader of the Martyrs. The best and highest of rewards be yours in acknowledgement of your endurance, devotion and in the support of your oppressed brother.

You were submissive to your Lord, to His Messenger(s), to your father Amir al-Mu'minin(a) and your brothers Hasan(a) and Husayn(a). You strove with all your being to uphold your religion and you led a life of complete righteousness, contemplation and obedience towards God and all His messengers. As a true worshipper of the Truth you were unparalleled.

Imam Sajjad(a) said his uncle, The Moon of the Bani Hashim, held an esteemed position on the Day of Judgment near the seat of the Author of the Universe which all the martyrs will desire. Riazi, the famous poet says:

You are our sacred Qiblah of need. Your memory is the object of praise and communion; You are the credit to all martyrs. You are the hands of Ali, O you the Moon of Bani Hashim. You were the companion of the leader of the Caravan of Love. You were Cup-Bearer for the Lovers of Husayn(a) and Standard Bearer in their gathering. You lost your head and hand for the cause of Husayn(a). You were the son, the brother and the uncle of Imams(a). Peace be upon you, O Hadrat Abbas.

You are the Teacher of honesty and loyalty in the school of divine love. The soul of the reverent was melted down and consumed like a candle in the crucible of selfless veneration. The Euphrates flowed, astonished at the fealty you had towards your brother. You kept alive the memory of the parched lips of Husayn(a) and his children, standing thirsty on the banks of the river. You put up with all these hardships and still shielded others from the enemy's attack.

You lost your hands and you lost your head. Your hands witnessed your sacrifice for the cause of Allah and those who followed you were favoured by God. The four Imams who saw you, kissed your hand that would bear the standard. Lo! my life for your homage. With you to join your brother. And with you bid him farewell and depart towards death. At birth you brought happiness, love and laughter. In martyrdom you brought bitter grief and lamentation. Sufficient unto you is the praise of the Imam of the Age(a), the Proof of the Truth and the Lord of the worlds. Your brother himself praised you. Who am I to praise you as he?!

Husayn (a)

To get a glimpse of the magnitude of the personality of the imam(a) it could suffice to quote some excerpts from the prayers for Imam Husayn(a): Peace be upon you, O Treasure and Custodian of the knowledge and mysteries of the Scriptures; of the Torah, the Gospel and the Book of Psalms Peace be upon you, O Trustee of the Beneficent, Intimate Companion of the Qur'an, the Guardian of religion and the Gateway to

Divine wisdom; Peace be upon you, O the House of modesty and worship and devotion, a place of security for all;

Peace be upon you, O Treasure of Divine knowledge of the mysteries.

O Aba Abdullah! The tents of the Empyrean, in the heavens and in the earth, in Paradise, and in the seas and deserts, all trembled and lamented the shedding of your sacred blood.

I testify to the purity of your soul; You called the people to uphold justice and truth;

Peace be upon you who are pleased when your Lord is pleased and angered when your Lord is angered.

Peace be upon you, O Trustee of God, Proof of the Truth, Gateway to Divine knowledge, and Guide to Allah, the one who called people to know Allah and know as lawful and unlawful what your Lord had shown as such, who established worship and paid the poor-rate, and who enjoined the right and forbade the wrong

Peace be upon you, the Proof of Allah in the earth and the Witness of the Truth for mankind.

God's blessings be unto the martyred Imam, murdered by the tyranny of enemies, leader of the devout.

God's blessings be unto the virtuous Imam(a), beset upon by the evil of others and resigned to God's will.

God's blessings be unto the Guide, who guided to the straight path.

Lamenting the Death of Imam Husayn (a)

Imam Sadiq(a) said:

He who sheds even a very small teardrop when he recalls the tragic martyrdom of Imam Husayn(a), God rewards him a reward no less than that of an abode in Paradise.

Elsewhere Imam Sadiq(a) said:

He who writes an eulogy on the death of Hadrat Husayn(a) and laments for him, he is rewarded with entry into Paradise.

The Ziarat of Hadrat Husayn (a)

Imam Sadiq(a) was quoted as having said that the grave of Husayn(a) is a garden in the Gardens of Eden and a place for the Ascension to the heavens. Angels descend to pay homage to his soul and ascend thereafter. Imam Sadiq(a) said that those who pray for Husayn(a) in all of creation outnumber those who pray in all the earth. The following merit's are ascribed to the companions of Imam Husayn(a):

1. They were pleased with God's mercy on them and God was also pleased with them.
2. They were the most loyal of all the companions of all the prophets and of all the Imams.
3. Their names were recorded in the Preserved Tablet, in toto.
4. No one was their superior, either before or after them.
5. Their martyrdom was of the greatest magnitude.
6. They were the most devout of the devotees of God.
7. In their magnanimity and in their sublime positions they were without peer.

8. Because of their sacrifice, the religion of Truth spread throughout the world.
9. They were the greatest lovers of Imam Husayn(a).
10. Their graves are known as very sacred sites.
11. Before the tragic event of Karbala, the prophets and saints had foretold the incident and informed the people of its magnitude and interpreted the Imam's companions as their brothers.
12. They were the Leaders of the martyrs in this world and are leaders among the ranks of the martyrs in the Hereafter.
13. The martyred companions of Husayn(a) are known as the martyrs for all of God's messengers.
14. On the Last Day, they will be standing by the side of their leader.
15. They are among the best of all the people of devotion.
16. They are known in the heavens as the stars are known in the earth.
17. If the Prophet(s) had lived in their time he would have kissed them and counted them among the best of mankind.
18. They did not fear death.
19. God took their souls to Himself.
20. Before their martyrdom they saw their abode in Paradise.
21. They entered Paradise immediately after they were martyred.
22. They drank the water of Paradise from the hands of the Prophet(s) and `Ali(a).
23. Their sacred blood was kept by the Prophet(s) to be shown on the Day of Judgment.
24. While they were being buried, the sacred spirit of the) Prophet was present at their burial.
25. They were given the glad tidings of eternal felicity by Hadrat Husayn(a).
26. Even their enemies lauded them for their courage, honesty, magnanimity and virtue.

www.alhassanain.org/english