### Sorrows & Sufferings

###### Martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.)

###### Grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.)

###### By:

###### Noorali S. Merchant

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| Title | : | Sorrows & Sufferings |
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| Re-Printed By | : | Ja’fari Propagation Centre.  94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10, Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid, Bandra (W), Mumbai – 50.  Email: jpcbandra@yahoo.com, jpconline.org |

# Dedication

This humble publication is respectfully dedicated to the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) and his Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and through them, to the martyrs and saints of Islam.

I beseech Allah, in all humility, to shower His choicest blessings on Muhammad and his holy progeny and through their compassionate intercession, to grant salvation to all the Momineen and Mominaat including:

(1) My parents late Sherali Hajimahomed Chevalwala and late Gulbanubai and my son late Aslam.

(2) My uncle late Ahmed Hajimahomed Chevalwala and my aunt late Sherbanubai.

(3) My grand uncle late Dawood Hajimahomed Bata and my grand aunt late Jenabai.

(4) My father-in-law late Khan Saheb Karmali Ebrahim Chevalwala, his brother Husain, and my mother-in-law late Mariambai and other deceased members of my family.

- Author

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## Martyrs are Immortal[[1]](#footnote-2)

In the Name of God, the Merciful the Magnificent

O all you who believe seek you help in patience and prayer; surely God is with the patient.

And say not of those slain in God’s way, ‘They are dead’; rather they are living, but you are not aware.

Surely We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and diminution of goods and lives and fruits; yet give you good tidings unto the patient.

Who when they are visited by an affliction, say, ‘Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return’;

Upon those rest blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those – they are the truly guided.[[2]](#footnote-3)

## The Night of Martyrdom

Black-robed, bare footed, with dim eyes that rain

Wild tears in memory of thy woeful plight.

And hands that in blind, rhythmic anguish smite

Their blood stained bosoms, to a sad refrain

From the old haunting Legend of thy pain,

Thy votaries mourn thee thro ‘‘the tragic night

With mystic dirge and melancholy rite

Crying to thee Husain! Ya Husain!

Why do thy myriad lovers so lament?

Sweet saint, is not thy matchless martyrhood

The living banner and brave covenant

Of the high creed thy Prophet did proclaim

Bequeathing for the word’s beatitude

The enduring loveliness of Allah’s name!

- Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, The Nightingale Of India

# Preface

1. This humble publication captioned “Sorrows & Sufferings”, in a poetic form, depicts ‘The Great Sacrifice’, the ‘Zibh-e-Azim’ as the Holy Quran terms it, of Hazrat Imam Husain ibn Ali (a.s.), at the altar of Truth, Righteousness, Justice, Virtue, Freedom Of Thought And Conscience, for upholding the faith and tenets of Islam in its pristine form, and to save the ‘Creed of Nature’ being reduced to the ‘Creed of Sovereignty’ by Yazid, the arch-enemy of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his new-born religion, who had usurped the Caliphate through trickery, treachery, and other illegal and questionable means, and wanted to change the basic structure of Islam itself, to suit his way of shameless life.

2. It is significant that, except for a microscopic group of Khwarjis and Nasebis (enemies of Islam, vide para 13 post), all sects of Muslims, whether they be Shias Or Sunnis, sincerely love and venerate Husain (a.s.), as an embodiment of love, velour and personification of sacrifice and devotion and admire his selfless, and heroic sacrifice, ungrudgingly and voluntarily, and despise Yazid, as an ‘epitome of everything evil and bad’. It may be pertinent, in this context, to particularly point out the highest esteem and deep regard for Husain and his unique martyrdom, displayed practically by all the Sufi Saints; the sayings of the two topmost Saints of their hierarchy viz. Ghaus-ul-Azam, Sheikh Abdul Qadar Gilani, Piran-Pir-Dastagir, and by Khwaja Muinuddin Hasan Chisti of Ajmer, Gharib-Nawaz, reproduced below are indicative of their sentiments of reverence for him and their praise for his noble sacrifice.

#### Hazrat Ghaus-ul-Azam Sheikh Abdul Qadar Gilani

(Guniat-ut-Talibeen)

“On the day of martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.), seventy thousand angels were appointed for mourning the tragedy until Doomsday (Resurrection).”

#### Hazrat Khwaja Muinuddin Hasan Chisti Ajmeri

(Quatrain in Persian, transaction of which is as under)

“Religion is Husain, Saviour of Religion is Husain.

He preferred to give his head rather than giving his hand into the hands of Yazid.

By God, the foundation of Laa Elaaha Illal Laah (the doctrine of Islam i.e. There is no god except Allah) is Husain.”

3. It is also gratifying that, Imam Husain’s epic martyrdom is equally eulogized by several well-known non-Muslim leaders of international fame, like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Smt. Sarojini Naidu, Sir Byramjee Jeejeebhoy and others as well as by the renowned Christian Historians of repute like E. G. Browne, Edward Gibbon, Thomas Carlyle, Washington Irving and others. Opinions expressed by some of them are reproduced at the end of this book for enabling unbiased persons to appreciate the significance of the greatest epoch-making event in the history of mankind, and the reasons why Husain’s admirers shed ‘tears of love’ for him.

4. For the benefit of the ‘Seekers of Truth’, who may not be fully acquainted with Islamic History, I would like to recapitulate, in brief, certain aspects of the gruesome tragedy, with special reference to the characteristics of the heartless aggressor and his helpless victim, as well as the reason for the heroic resistance, so that the soul-stirring episode, can be viewed in its proper perspective and not be misconstrued as a family feud or a fight for kingdom.

5. The aggressor and murderer in this tragic episode is the arch villain Yazid, who was illegally and unjustifiably nominated as Caliph, by his notorious and scheming father, Maowiya, in clear violation of the terms of the treaty, which he had signed with Imam Hasan (a.s.), the elder brother of Imam Husain (a.s.), wherein it had been specifically agreed that, after Maowiya, it would be left to the Muslims to decide as to who should be the Caliph. Yazid was a godless, power-crazy, cruel, vicious, deceitful, debauchery, immoral, heavy drunkard with an utterly irresponsible nature and with scant respect for truth, justice, decency, good conduct and other human values of life. He had neither any administrative experience nor ability, being a youth of about 36 years and having spent his life till then as a playboy and a bully of the most vulgar type. Moreover, he neither believed in Islam nor practiced it but, on the contrary, made a mockery of it. He also indulged in all sorts of perverse vices. Be was thus totally unfit for being vested with both temporal and spiritual leadership of the Muslims.

The fact that Yazid was a pseudo-Muslim, is amply borne put by the fact that, in his short reign of three and a half years he not only got the holiest living personality of Islam, Imam Husain (a.s.), and also his near and dear ones, unjustifiably massacred, (on 10th October 680 A.D.) but after sometime, ordered the invasion of Medina and put to sword a number of close companions of the Prophet, after indulging in wholesale slaughter and plunder of the innocent citizens and desecrating the shrine of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and converting his historical mosque into a stable for horses. He thereafter ordered the invasion of Mecca (in September 683 A.D.) and set fire to the Holy Ka’bah itself during the siege which lasted 64 days. How can any Muslim perform such sacrilegious acts, unless he is a KAFIR or a madman? Such was Yazid, the cursed, the scion of the Umayyads, the son of Maowiya, the grandson of Abu Sufiyan, the arch-enemy of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his new-born religion. He was a filthy, vulgar and evil man ever born in this world, outclassing the devil himself. He expired on 10th Nov. 683 A.D. [64. A.H.] at the age of about 40 years.

6. The victim and martyr was the 57 year old Imam Husain (a.s.), the son of Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib (a.s.) (Amir-ul-Momeneen) and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). He was a noble human being and an ideal specimen of a true Muslim, having imbibed the lofty principles of Islam in their purest form. He was a paragon of virtue, truthfulness, righteousness, honesty and justice, with absolute faith in the wisdom and justice of God. He was the advocate and defender of Islam and stood for the ideals of peace, freedom of thought and conscience, equality and fraternity, of the unity of mankind and effacement of narrow tribalism and nationalism, as well as oppression and tyranny. He was the most eligible person for the Caliphate, not because of his lineage, but because of his experience, knowledge, ideals, virtues and position in society as the most upright, pious, enlightened and saintly soul, being what is described in the Holy Quran as ‘Ulil-Amr’ i. e. the rightful successor of the Prophet.

7. Nonetheless, he never tried to enforce his rightful claim by force of arms, as he was totally averse to spilling the blood of fellow Muslims, for sake of self; this was not out of cowardice, but because he strictly observed the laws of God, according to which all life is sacred and should not be ended, except through justice. He was not against accepting leadership of any more worthy individual; nor was he averse to being left alone, but he was certainly not prepared to swear allegiance to a most unworthy person Yazid, even on pain of death. Acknowledging Yazid would have implied, according sanctity to all his sinful acts and which would in future have constituted the revised tenets of Islam; this would have not only sounded the death knell of Islam as a religion of Adam, Noah Abraham, Moses and Jesus (a.s.), as ordained by God and as preached by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), but his own spiritual death as well.

8. If Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was a preacher par excellence, Imam Husain (a.s.) was not far lagging behind as an ideal reformer, to demonstrate to the world that life’s cherished principles cannot and should not be compromised, even in face of death. He was, therefore, unyielding before the combined pressure of a corrupt, shameless and hypocritical society and a villainous and filthy tyrant. Eyebrows need not be raised at the words ‘corrupt, shameless and hypocritical society’, as it cannot be denied, that many persons had accepted Islam only as a matter of convenience, particularly because they were unable to resist the surge of Islam, which in its onward tide swept everything before it like a mighty river, and, even after their conversion, were feeling suffocated by the intense light of the new message and were too eager to escape it, at the earliest opportunity. Their ingrained prejudices, their deep seated primitive instinct of greed, cruelty, selfishness, and over- fondness for luxuries of life and sensual pleasures, were directly in conflict with the new ideas of Godliness, equality, justice and self-discipline. They were unwilling to impose any self-discipline on their lusts and greed, nor strangle their materialistic aspirations. A life of wine, women and vulgar display of wealth and might they knew, they could enjoy only under persons like themselves. At the same time, they were enamored and delighted with the rich booty that fell to their share, consequent on the victories and conquests, which the Islamic armies under the first three Caliphs achieved, against heathens, Jews; Christians, Persians, Romans and others. So instead of deserting Islam and reverting to paganism and idol worship, they made efforts to sabotage Islam from within, to gain their objectives, by extending full support to Umayyads and other arch enemies of Islam. For this purpose they frequently and shamelessly adopted double standards and deceit.

9. Imam Husain (a.s.) was fully aware of their fickle nature, as these very persons had time and again betrayed his sinless and faultless father Hazrat Ali (a.s.) as well as elder brother Imam Hasan (a.s.). He was, therefore, neither eager to raise a standard of revolt nor wage an aggressive war, by depending on their hollow promises. Moreover, he was a peace loving soul and his motive was solely to reform and save the Muslims in general from drowning in the abyss of filth, into which they had unfortunately fallen, and for preservation of Islam, in its pristine form.

10. If Imam Husain (a.s.)’s object had been to acquire a worldly empire, he would not have travelled the way he did, with a retinue of ladies and small children and less than hundred males, devoid of adequate arms and army, and with barely thirty-two horses for the ill-equipped escort. In fact, he was waylaid while on his way to Kufa, where he was invited as the Imam, to impart religious guidance and to save their beliefs from being corrupted. Prior to that, he was hunted for about six months and forced to flee from place to place. Ultimately, the greatest fight in the history of mankind, between the ‘caravan of truth’ and the ‘forces of evil’ took place at a location called ‘Karbala’ with such soul-stirring and tragic results, on Friday, 10th of Moharram, 61 A.H.

11. Thus it is abundantly clear, that Imam Husain (a.s.) was forced to combat the forces of evil in purely. Self-defense, when all hopes of peaceful settlement with the enemy were frustrated and he was mercilessly and without any provocation attacked, after being denied access to water for three days. He defended himself against their brutal onslaught with unmatched and unheard of velour. He was a picture of belief, determination, self-confidence, resistance, superb courage and enlightenment, when he was subjected to the worst conceivable physical and mental torture, which was beyond human endurance. It is unimaginable how Imam Husain (a.s.) could maintain his faith in God and even retain his balance of mind, when his near and dear ones were killed in most horrifying circumstances. He did not panic nor did he curse his enemies, even at the peak of the slaughter, but humbly bowed down his head before his Almighty Creator, with the words:

“We are from Thee and to Thee must we return; we submit to Thy Will and bow down our heads before Thy Command!”

The lightening events on the day of the martyrdom had made it abundantly clear as to what would be the fate of his family after his death, yet he embraced death so fearlessly and enthusiastically, as if it was just a matter of casting away a mould of mud. It was only his absolute submission to God and his vision of reality, encompassing it in its totality that enabled him to live fully such a balanced, meaningful and selfless life and to die such a purposeful and heroic death, to turn physical defeat into spiritual victory and transform death itself into eternal glory.

12. In the New Testament (vide 27-45), it is recorded that Jesus Christ (a.s.) complained to God, in his last moments, crying out: “Eili, Eili, lema Sabachtoni,” which meant.

“O Eliya, O Eliya, why do you abandon me”

Imam Husain (a.s.), on the contrary, even in his worst hour of trial, never despaired, even for a moment, the existence of Divine Justice and Mercy, but was absolutely calm and serene ‘Nafs-e-Mutmaeena’ as the Holy Quran terms it. With a unique faith in his Creator, he did not betray the slightest signs of hesitation or fear, in the performance of his assigned task of defending the honor of Islam, till his last breath, despite the fact that his caravan consisted of less than hundred males including very old and very young who, after three days of hunger and thirst could participate in the battle, against a mighty army of over forty thousand well trained, well equipped and well fed monsters, backed by the Might of a huge empire.

Prophet Abraham (a.s.) had to get his eyes covered while sacrificing his single son, Ishmael, for the love of God. Imam Husain (a.s.) on the other hand, witnessed the slaughter of over eighty of his near and dear ones, with open eyes, because he had achieved an immortal victory over pleasure and pain.

I have immense respect for Prophet Abraham (a.s.) the forefather of Prophets Muhammad (s.a.w.a.); Moses, and Jesus (a.s.), as well as for Christ, whom I adore, and the object in mentioning the two incidents is, God forbid; not to belittle them, but only to show to what sublime and spiritual height, Imam Husain (a.s.) rose on the day of his unsurpassed martyrdom; a height where ‘Sorrows & Sufferings’ and ‘Happiness & Pleasure’ loose their identity and both merge into a spiritual bliss of one eternal joy, because there the last veil between the Creator and his beloved Creature is lifted. What a celestial height! What a divine soul! What an unshakeable faith in God! What an indomitable Will! What a stupendous courage! What a noble sacrifice! Superb! All glory be to God, who created such a magnificent human being, who excelled even the Prophets in his colossal sacrifice!

13. It is strange that, among Muslims, there are still some Khwarjis and Nasebis (a small group of renegades enemies of Islam) who condone the hideous murder of Imam Husain (a.s.), on plea that Yazid was a companion of the Prophet and because he had participated in the conquest of Constantinople, he had acquired amnesty for his sins, as proclaimed by the Prophet. This is an absurd and false argument, because such proclamation was never made by the Prophet nor can any person kill another, much less the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), and yet not be answerable to God. The statement that Yazid was a ‘Sahabi’ is also a blatant lie because he was born sometime between the years 22 & 27 Hijra whereas the Prophet had expired in 11th Hijri. They further argue that Yazid cannot be held responsible for Imam Husain (a.s.)’s death, since he had himself raised a standard of revolt; this is equally untenable because Imam Husain (a.s.) had not raised any standard of revolt nor was Yazid a lawful Caliph, as earlier pointed out. Crooked indeed are the ways of hypocrites, liars and shameless persons, who do not feel any compunction or fear of God in defending the incarnation of the devil and falsely accusing a saintly soul.

14. It is significant that the illegal nomination of Yazid, by his crafty father, was also vehemently opposed, for reasons of their own, by Abdur Rahman (the son of the first caliph), by the three Abdullahs (the son of the second caliph; the son of Zuber and nephew of Ayesha and the son of Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet) and Ayesha, the widow of the Prophet and daughter of the first Caliph. (Ayesha was, however, liquidated by Maowiya himself, through treachery, before his death). Still, Husain was made the special target, not only because he was the most outstanding, outspoken, and unbending among them, but because the intention was to destroy Islam; and annihilate the house of the Prophet completely, so as to avenge the humiliating defeats, which the fore-fathers of Yazid had suffered, at his hands, prior to their reluctant conversion to Islam, each time they had treacherously waged war against him, to thwart his efforts to spread the message of Islam. Late Maulana Zafar Ali Khan has very nicely portrayed this point, in his Urdu couplet which means – ‘The blood of the Prophet (actually) streamed from the (injured) neck of Husain.’

15. The greatest indictment of Yazid was, however, made by his own son Maowiya the second, who succeeded him and immediately thereafter renounced the Caliphate, because he abhorred the unwarranted massacre of the Prophet’s family at the hands of his cruel father, and for his other sacrilegious acts. A brief abstract of the sermon, he delivered while abdicating, is most devastating and revealing and a fitting reply to the allegations of the Khwarjis, will be seen below:

“O people, I am not interested at all in ruling over you, as I detest Bani Umayyah, who is not liked by anybody after the event of Karbala, as we know each other very well. Listen O people, today I declare that my grandfather Moawiya, and after him the Caliphate claimed by his son (my father Yazid), who also actuated by the same lust, assumed rule (kingship) over you, as his father (Moawiya). My father Yazid, on account of his bad deeds and self-indulgence, was by no means fit for Caliphate of Mohammad (s.a.w.a.)’s people, as he (Yazid) had ridden firmly on the horse of passion, lust and taking his faults to be good qualities. He (Yazid) committed two gravest offences; disobedience and revolt against Allah and contempt of the Holy Prophet’s family through brutalities and shedding their blood, and now lies imprisoned in dungeon (grave), suffering for his black deeds. Now I am made the third Caliph of the Umayyads, but I do riot find myself strong enough to bear the burden of your sins. May Allah save me from being crushed under the load of your sins, or face Allah stained with all the disgraceful misdeeds.” “Hence I am abandoning this Caliphate so that you may find any other Caliph.”[[3]](#footnote-4)

16. But for Imam Husain (a.s.), there would have been no Islam today. It is largely due to him that at present one third of the world population is Muslim, despite the fact that the world is dominated by rank materialism and heartless heathenism. To combat the animal propensities in men, we have, however, the most illustrious example of Imam Husain (a.s.), to inspire us. What a glorious heritage, he has left behind for posterity to imbibe! May his angelic soul guide us, and act as a beacon light, to restore the sanity in this strife-torn world, full of vices, with man thirsting for each other’s blood, despite all the scientific achievements and enlightenment he has gained. Verily, it is a satanic age, and the need for remembering Imam Husain (a.s.) and practicing his ideals were never so imperative.

17. There is no appropriate English terminology to denote the word ‘Allah’ which is so unique that it has no plural nor feminine gender as the word ‘God’ has viz. gods, goddesses and so on. The said word represents the most sublime concept of the ‘Almighty’ with his limitless attributes befitting His Supreme Sovereignty. Nonetheless, the word ‘God’ has been used to denote ‘Allah’ as there is no alternative and, only as a matter of convenience, for those who know only English. I, therefore, crave indulgence of the ‘Almighty’ and of alt concerned for my shortcoming in this regard.

18. The abbreviation (s.a.) stands for salawaatul laahe alayha, alayhe or alayhim, which means peace be upon her, him or them. (a.s.) stands for alayhis salaam i.e. peace be upon him. (s.a.w.a.) stands for sallal laaho alayhe wa aalehi wa sallam, which means peace be upon him and his progeny.

19. The facts mentioned in this publication, have been compiled from normally dependable English publications published by reputable authors of recognized standing, like Justice Syed Ameer Ali of the Privy Council of Great Britain, Maharaj kumar M. A. Khan of Mahmudabad, Yousuf Laljee, Hashimali Haji Shariff, Saiyid Safdar Hosain, Al-Haj Dr. M. A. Salmin, ‘Zakir’ [author of ‘Tears and Tributes’], and few other Christian historians of repute, to all of whom I am indebted. I have endeavored to ensure strict veracity in the matter of facts and if, inspite of it, any factual errors are observed, the same may please be condoned by the readers and kindly treated as due to sheer inadvertence, with no ulterior motives. Similarly, I crave indulgence for printing errors, if any.

20. I would like to express my gratitude to Maharaj kumar Mohammad Amir Haider Khan, Managing Trustee, Madrasatul Waizin, Lucknow, for publishing the pre-revised edition of my poem ‘Sorrows & Sufferings’ in issues of his esteemed magazine, ‘Muslim Review’; and which, in fact, has encouraged me in my present venture to get the revised edition of my poem printed in a booklet form. I am also grateful to him, for the permission to make use of the information / material published in the said magazine, after due acknowledgement and which I do hereby.

I am also thankful to Mr. Hashimali Haji Shariff of Pakistan, for the blanket permission, recorded, in his wonderful book titled ‘Islam’, for use of material/information contained therein. I wish other authors of Islamic literature were similarly considerate and would forgo their claim to any copyright, unless their motive is commercial. On my part, I follow his footsteps in this regard, and do not claim any ‘copy right’ as my only object is to spread the name and fame of Imam Husain (a.s.) all over the world for the benefit of mankind.

My sincere thanks are also due to both Mr. Yousuf Laljee, the renowned author / publisher of several Islamic books and Mr. Mohamed Hasan Fezi, of Fezisons Printing Press, for helping and guiding me to get this publication printed. May God reward them for their selfless service to Islam, abundantly! Ameen.

1st March, 1982

May God shower His choicest blessings on Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), Imam Ali (a.s.) and Janab-e-Fatima (s.a.) for bequeathing us, with such a priceless pearl like the immortal Imam Husain (a.s.). Aameen.

Noorali S. Merchant

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

## (1) The Scene Prior To Islam

It was a desolate land: sandy, barren, and unfriendly

The home of the Arabs; wild ferocious and manly

They worshipped the idols; they loved to fight

Life to them was wine, women and might

The number of wives, the cattle they owned,

The number of slaves, one’s house adorned,

Was a sign of rank in wealth and might;

It was a society, where Might was Right.

Two qualities they had, which were good

The guests they honored, with best of food

Poetry to them, was an art supremely sublime

They were literary geniuses of their time.

They killed female babes, they buried them alive

They married the widows, their father’s wives

Vengeance was a passion, cruel the strife

These sons of desert, such was their life.

Morals they had none; wild was their lust

Women were cattle, treated like dust

Enjoyment of life was their sole goal

Woman, they believed, had no soul.

They had no belief in the life Hereafter

Life to them was all fun and laughter

Prophets had come and prophets had gone

Still, this land was of truth shorn.

Judaism was dead; Christianity was in name

Sickly and forlorn, the world remained

Vengeance, to them, was an article of faith

Blindly, they relished their creed of hate.

The priests were interpreters of heavenly laws

They commanded respect and were held in awe

Things that were unlawful, to them were allowed

A privileged class; they were haughty and proud.

In span of four thousand and odd years

Innumerable religions had been reared

With passage of time, they were polluted

Beyond recognition, each got diluted.

The true religions were only in name

It was virtually a devils reign

Truth was at a discount; honesty had fled

Virtue was scoffed at; goodness was dead.

This land was thus chosen for God’s last message

It was the crossroad of international passage

The last of message was thus destined,

To stay forever and cover all mankind.

## (2) Birth of Islam

God chose the Hashemites, a tribe of Quraish

They were among men, the noblest of race

He raised among them, a self-literate boy

To deliver His message; to bring them joy.

Muhammad was his name, whom God had chose

Al-Amin (the truthful) called him his foes

The keeper of Kaaba, was his grand sire

A rank than which, there was none higher.

Adam, Nooh, Ibrahim, Ismail, Moosa,

Dawood, Eesa and other Prophets of Allah (a.s.)

Testified that, from time immemorial, Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.),

Had been proclaimed the seal of Prophets of Allah

He lost his sire, ere he was born

Five years later, his mother was gone

Abd-al-Muttalib was his grand sire,

Two years later, he too expired.

The orphan boy was now his uncle’s charge

Abu Talib was glad, this responsibility, to discharge

He looked after the boy as his own son

So long he lived, dared touch him none.

He was of a reserved bent of mind

With burning desire, solace he tried to find

In the marvels of nature and forms diverse

He tried to fathom the mysteries of universe.

At twenty-five, he married a noble widow;

Khadija had watched him by a cloud over-shadow

Though forty, she remained in her lifetime, his only wife

Twenty-five years long was their married life.

One daughter they had, named Lady Fatima

Through her were born guardians of Kalima

She was married to Ali, Abu Talib’s son

He was renowned in courage like a lion.

In the House of God was Ali born

Its walls the idols then adorned

They were a hapless witness to his birth

A man who would soon smash them to earth.

These gods of Arabs could find no way

Powerless were they, while Ali in cradle lay

This mortal foe of theirs, was something divine

His luster made their eyes turn blind.

On Muhammad, he first cast his eyes

He was destined with him all his ties

He sucked his tongue, in solemn gait

In one mould they were cast by fate.

Ali grew in the Prophet’s care

His joys and sorrows, he shared

He imbibed qualities that are rare

With him, he made a heavenly pair.

Thus Imamat was born as adjunct to Nubuwat

Beyond scope of political intrigues and Satan

Twelve successors were named, by Divine Grace

To guide, for all times, the human race.

## (3) Preachings and Initial Struggle

He preached Islam, as ordained by God

Pure and simple is the Message of Lord

“There is no God but God,

Muhammad is the Messenger of Lord!”

A most practical religion of selfless love is Islam

To develop body and soul, without causing anyone harm

Most rational and logical in concept

Viewed from every angle, even in depth.

Five fundamental principles he, steadfastly proclaimed

Ten holy commandments he, unambiguously, named

Monotheism, Divine Justice, Prophethood, Imamat

And the day of Resurrection, were the five pillars of Islam’s Hut

Five times Namaz, one must pray

A month’s fasting, during the day

Zakat, Khums, Pilgrimage, for them, he ordained,

Who fulfilled the conditions, he proclaimed.

Defend the honor of Islam and self, he commanded

Disassociate yourself from its enemies, he demanded

Pursuit of missionary activities, out of love and not hate

Love and loyalty, he sought, for his “Ahle-bait”.

He taught them the ‘Unity of God’

And the diverse attributes of the Lord

He was the giver of daily bread

On the Judgement Day, He would raise all dead.

God is the focal point of all life

Through Him flows peace, driving out strife

If man joyfully submits himself to Him,

This life, and hereafter, he would win.

God created human beings, out of His Grace

Best of creation was the human race

He endowed it with such guiding light,

To discern the wrong from the right.

A heavenly reward for the doer of good

And for those, who for truth stood

A blazing hell for the doer of evil

Who shall dwell with the king of the devils.

He cultivated the values of life

Equal partners were man and wife

A man was brother, one to another

Respect they should, their father and mother.

Those who look after the needy orphans,

The anger of God would be softened

Those who care for the uncared widows,

Can aspire for heaven’s meadows.

And those who treat their slaves well,

Shall not normally taste the fire of hell

Those who free them from bondage,

Shall generally be immune from hell’s rage.

Truth was the base of all his teachings

Unity of God, a constant theme of his preaching

Charity, love and faith were to him most sublime

Brotherhood, was his solution for the ills of mankind

His offer was not of sensual heaven,

As alleged by biased heathens

But a bliss of highest spiritual essence

Of enjoying the radiance of Divine presence.

Live in this world and yet be out of it

Self-discipline; not celibacy is the holy writ

Physical body is, indeed, perishable but not the soul

Service before self should be life’s goal.

He first invited his near if kin

And declared to them his mission

He asked whether he had ever told a lie

“No never”! In one voice, was their reply.

He invited them to the path of ‘truth’

A path which in heaven had its roots

Blessed would they be, in this world and the next

Most fortunate possessors of the Divine text.

“Who, among you, will be my brother and heir

And with me God’s mission share.”

They exchanged glances; they ridiculed and scorned

Only Ali stood by him, alone and forlorn.

Thrice did he repeat his request

Each time only Ali rose to his behest

Holding him by his hand, he declared,

“Behold, he is my brother and heir!”

In public he now started to preach

But soon a stage was reached

When like a fugitive he was stoned

And place to place, forced to roam.

For years was thus his plight

Only Ali aided him in his fight

Far and few were the conversions

So fierce was the persecution.

In burning sand, with stones on his chest,

A new convert stood his gallant test;

“Ahadun! Ahadun!” (One God) Bilal cried,

But refused his faith to be decried.

Such were the tortures they had to face,

For believing in God and the new faith

Handful were they, old men, mostly slaves

With courage, all difficulties they braved.

A day soon came, when it was declared

That those who could, to Abysinia, should migrate

Few persons made up the small group

Ja’far, Ali’s brother, commanded this troop.

The Quraish were furious; they sent their envoys

They requested the king to return the exiles

The king was just; he rejected their plea

He sheltered the poor Muslim refugees.

The wrath of Quraish reached the boiling point

To murder Muhammad, they planned conjoint

They chose a person, one from each tribe

So that no vengeance could take the Hashemites.

The plans to Muhammad, God soon revealed

And desired, that he should ward the evil

And leave for Medina, the same very night

Letting Ali sleep in his bed and aid his flight.

Soon was the house surrounded by those,

Armed cap-a-pie were each of the foes

With handful of dust, Muhammad blew his fist

And calmly walked through their midst.

They raided his house, ere it was morn

Surprised to see Ali, the bed adorns;

“Where is Muhammad?” they demanded, “where is he?”

“Did you entrust him to me that you ask of me?”

Foiled in their attempt, they started a search

“Dead or alive, capture him”, they urged

Thus started a hunt, for three days long

They searched all over, including caves.

The Prophet’s companion became scared

As enemies’ shouts increasingly filled the air

“We are lost, we two”, helplessly, he cried

“No! We are three, for God is with us”. Muhammad replied.

Tired and forlorn, he slept under a tree

When rushed a foe: “who will now save thee?”

“God”, was the reply; it thunders struck the foe,

Trembling, he dropped his sword and bowed.

“Who will now save thee?” Muhammad cried

“Alas, none!” the foe imploringly replied

“Learn from me to be merciful” he said

As was his want, he pardoned him instead.

He reached Medina, a poor fugitive

Except a new way of life, he had nothing to give

Yet, he was welcomed with open arms

This was a turning point for Islam

He paired them, one with the other

And showed the brotherhood, how to further

Himself with Ali, he lovingly paired

Because the same heavenly light, they shared.

## (4) The Origins of Karbala’s Tragedy

Life is an eternal conflict of truth and evil

God having granted power to the devil

To rule the hearts of those who love this world

And care not the banner of truth to unfurl.

The forces of darkness were perturbed

For soon their kingdom would be disturbed

At first, they ridiculed and scoffed

To their dismay, they found themselves dwarfed.

They fumed and fret; threatened and cajoled

They offered Muhammad a chief’s role

They asked him to stop preaching Islam

Or else they would cause him bodily harm.

Abu Sufyan was their chief - a mortal foe

The grandson of Ommaya, the lowest of low

The progeny of Abd Shams, the brother of Hashim

They were steeped in enmity, which was ever lasting.

Envious were they, of the position of Hashim

Whom God had honored with things everlasting

Muhammad was thus their bitter foe

Whom they longed to see cast low.

Karun, Firaun, Namarood and Suddad

The four aces of arch-devil Iblis’ cards

Were the brains behind the notorious Abu Sufyan?

To destroy Islam and cause Muhammad harm.

Harut and Marut, the two fallen angels, were glad

The four Aces had mastered everything evil and bad

Abu Sufyan became their living agent

To them his services he joyfully lent.

They issued the call, they summoned aid

Each helper, they said, would be well paid

Thus started persecution of the new faith,

With all means that symbolized envy and hate.

They thought to themselves, the easiest way,

We are Muslims why not say?

Hit from within the Hashemites

That would throttle Islam, without a fight.

The decree of God none can stop

It flows like a river, with a drop to start

None can withhold its onward march

Be they friends or foes at large.

And so was the case with Islam’s flow

Many became Muslims, just for show

Pagans at heart, they hid their line

To wreck vengeance, in course of time.

They behaved as friends; they cloaked their pretense

For Muslims in name, were they from hence

They spread their tentacles, in many homes

They tightened their grip over Islam’s dome.

Ali, they knew, was the seedling’s strength

To guard it, he would go to any length

He would with pleasure sacrifice his rights

Rather than see Islam hurt in a fight.

They knew, that Ali was just a lad

When his mission, the Prophet declared

He was among the first to profess Islam

And stand by the Prophet through storm and calm.

When others ridiculed and threatened

He stood, by him alone, and unfrightened

He declared him his brother and heir

Destined to serve and his mission share.

They had heard Muhammad at Khybar declare

“This Alam is for one whose qualities are rare

He is the beloved of Muhammad and his God

Ever victorious is he, in the cause of Lord.”

They had had also heard the sermon at Ghadir-e-khum

It left, for doubt, hardly any room

Ali was Muhammad’s heir, by God’s decree

Assigned to keep Islam pure and free.

They had watched him even before

How Ali in stature grew more and more

He slept in Prophet’s bed in the midst of strife

While hundreds lay in ambush, each with a knife.

The Prophet’s end was drawing near

The dissension started, as he had feared

He ordered the dissenter’s to go to war

But they guessed what the order was for.

Death of the Prophet was a grievous blow

Old enmities erupted like a volcano

Busy with the funeral were the Hashemites,

Unheedful of the maneuverings and internal strife.

Abu Bakr was declared Caliph in the interim

He soon nominated Omar, to succeed him

The Caliphate became, thereafter, Othman’s turn

Before the mantle, despite opposition, on Ali dawned.

Ali, with his characteristic zeal, lost no time

He acted sternly, to save Islam from further decline

Firmly entrenched in power by now, the Ommayad’s frowned

And dared the simple and straightforward Ali for a showdown.

The hero of Islam knew neither malice nor fear

Renowned warriors had fled before him from the rear

He defeated the crafty Moawiyah, time and again

But alas! Treachery and trickery ultimately gained.

The internal rot had spread too deep, alas!

Corruption and nepotism was practiced en-masse

Ali, had soon to pay with his dear and precious life

Engrossed in prayers, he was struck with a knife.

And so was the case with his eldest son,

Most generous of all men was Hassan

He was fond of recluse and quietude

He was the symbol of patience and fortitude.

The roots of seedling were still shallow

A little shake up would render the ground fallow

Muhammad’s labor would thus be wasted

Before the world its fruit had tasted.

And thus the treaty with Moawiyah Hassan chose

Rather than fight him like an open foe

The time was not ripe for the showdown

A lot remained for preparing the ground.

This he knew would fall to Husain’s lot

To put his foot down and stop the rot

It would cost his life there was no doubt

But it had to be timed the tyranny to oust.

## (5) Yazid’s Demand for Allegiance

In the treaty which Hassan and Moawiyah signed

Moawiyah had himself agreed; it was underlined

The question of successor, would not be imposed

But be left to Muslims as they pleased to dispose.

No sooner was the said treaty signed

A campaign was re-started, Ali’s name to malign

And to build up Yazid, against people’s voice

As heir to the Caliphate, the best of choice.

With rise of Moawiyah, virtue was shamelessly replaced

The democratic rule of Islam, was likewise displaced

The oligarichal rule of heathen was triumphant

The attendant vice and immorality were rampant.

The wealth from his subjects, he pitilessly extracted

He lavished on the mercenaries, who were fully protected

They, in turn, helped to repress ruthlessly all murmuring

With fraud and treachery, were smashed all rumblings.

Before he died, Moawiyah summoned his aides

The oath of fealty to Yazid, he made them take

This was Yazid’s solitary title to the Caliphate

It was assumed, as if it was his father’s heritage.

Cruel and treacherous was he, as notorious as his father

He lacked pretence, to cloak the game of murder

His depraved nature knew absolutely no pity or justice

He was addicted to the vilest and grossest of vices.

His friends were outcasts of both sexes

He killed and tortured for pleasure and taxes

Such was the Caliph, Commander of the Faithful

A being, whose entire bearings, was most hateful.

Husain was in Medina; a message was received

By the local governor, in an envelope sealed

Obtain his allegiance, was the strict command

Kill him on the spot, if he refuses the demand.

The governor was unnerved, he was perplexed

To kill Husain in Medina was no easy t ask

He consulted Marwan; he summoned Husain

Who well knew Yazid’s dirty and nefarious game.

Husain point blank refused to acknowledge

The title of tyrant; of falsehood and subterfuge

His character, he regarded with contempt and abhorrence

His vices he despised, no less than his arrogance.

He returned to his grandfather’s earthly abode

He dreamt of the Prophet, in tearful voice he spoke

“ O, son of mine, O thou art a part of me,

The enemies are bent to torment and slay thee.”

Accompanied by Zainab he visited the tomb of his mother

What a heart rending scene it was; it caused a shudder!

It was Husain’s last farewell before the fateful journey

Guided by the unseen hand of – shall we say, Destiny?

The fateful hour had arrived for the long awaited fight

Between forces of darkness and Angels of Light

Husain knew that from childhood he had been reared

To perform this sacred mission, he knew absolutely no fear.

“For Mecca I leave, and then for a place beyond”

For a farewell pilgrimage, the plans were drawn

Hurried preparations were made for the journey

An unknown destination was on the itinerary.

## (6) The Journey To Mecca

It was 26th of Rajab sixty-first of Hijri

The heat was unbearable, boiling point the degree

The caravan was ready with young and old

This was the day, the Prophet had foretold

“A day will soon came when my dearest Husain

Will leave Medina, in indescribable grief and pain

To meet his fateful destiny, in a far off land

With his family and few friends, a tiny band”

With grief in the air, the atmosphere was surcharged

With heavy hearts the Medinites silently watched

Can it be true that their most beloved Husain,

With his family and friends, would all be slain?”

They pleaded with him to drop the risky journey

He was priceless in all terms, including money

Or take with him their strong young men with arms

Who would ensure him against any possible harm

They also pleaded that Ali Akbar be left behind

So that, when memory of Prophet came to their mind

They could look to him, for he was his very image,

From head to foot, in looks, mannerism and gait.

Husain was silent, how could he explain?

Islam was sinking! There were many to be blamed!

It was his martyr’s cup, how could he reveal

The plan of God to erase the cancerous evil.

He apologized; to grant their wish he was not able

Such love, such feelings were indeed laudable!

He would, however, remember them in his prayer

His daughter, Sugar, he was leaving to their care.

Seriously ill, she cried her heart out

They were leaving her, she had no doubt

Destiny’s hand was beckoning the Imam

Proceed he must, was God’s command!

Towards holy Mecca the caravan slowly proceeded

A farewell journey: no explanation was needed

The guardian of truth was himself out to uproot

The weeds of untruth, with his devil destroying boots.

From Kufa they sent an urgent pathetic appeal

In the name of God, from the helpless people

“Truth is being trampled, we look to you

To oust this tyranny, come to our rescue.”

“You, as our Imam, must heed our solemn call

And save Islam, from its impending downfall

There is no time to lose, we anxiously await

Please come at once and do not be late.”

He knew that treachery is a satanic vile

And the Kufians in this were ahead by miles

Time and again, Ali they had shamelessly betrayed

Fickleness and shifting loyalty, was their trait.

They had addressed him as their Imam

He was, therefore, in painful duty bound

To heed their call, despite past experience

It was a supreme test for Imam’s holy license.

Ordinary spiritual beings can easily foretell

The coming events, as well as, misfortune dispel

The fountainhead of spiritualism knew much more

The things, that were destined for him, in store.

He was so attuned to the will of Almighty God

His every act bore the stamp of the Merciful Lord

Destiny’s plan had to be implicitly carried out

By none other than Husain there was no doubt.

As his emissary, he sent his cousin, Muslim Ibn Aqil

To see things for himself; their pulse to feel;

He received a hearty welcome he wrote to Husain

Little did he realize their vile, treacherous game.

## (7) The Betrayal

Pin drop horrifying silence prevailed all round

The mosque of Kufa stood on hallowed ground

Treachery it had witnessed time and again

It was the mosque where Ali had been slain.

The town crier was reading the Governor’s decree

“To associate with Muslim will not go free

He is an emissary of Prophet’s grandson, Husain

Who has refused allegiance to Yazid, with disdain.”

When the prayer was over, Muslim looked back

The mosque was empty, earlier it was packed

He glanced at his host, Hani Ibn Urwah

No words were needed, only a breath choking, Ah!

The packed mosque had just witnessed jubilant scenes

So great was the rush to swear allegiance to Muslim

They had madly jostled and vied with each other

In honoring Muslim, as Husain’s cousin brother.

They exchanged glances, the picture was clear

For their own lives they had absolutely no fear

To inform Master Husain was the sole prime need

Whom could they trust? No, none, indeed!

Hani rushed out, choked to the brim

He had in his house, two sons of Muslim

He whisked them out by the back door

For safety’s sake, there was no other go.

Muhammad and Ibrahim, two innocent lads

Were anxiously awaiting return of their dad

They were now on the road; alone, all alone!

The cruel treacherous world was now their home.

Soon was Hani’s house completely surrounded

The hopes he had nourished were soon grounded

He fought the armed troops of upstart Obeidullah

The odds were too heavy; he prayed to Allah!

He was soon overpowered and chained

There was now no hope which remained

His only thought was to inform post haste

To Husain, of the events and breach of faith

After Hani’s departure, he reflected a while

A train of thoughts flowed, mile after mile

Hani was sincere, there was no iota of doubt

But if in danger, whom could he for help shout.

He thought of his sons, the two young kids

In the house of Hani, he hoped they were hid

He prayed to God to spare him for a little while

So that, to Husain, he could send the secret file.

It was night; he had no place to go

Tired and forlorn, his walk was slow

Curfew was imposed, no soul stirred out

The search was on in all possible hideouts.

He sat for a while and leaned against the door

The door of a house with an old muddy floor

An old lady came out to see who it was

“My son! Why do you not return to your house?”

“Do you not have a wife nor children?

Go and rest, in peace, in your own garden!”

A lump came to his throat: yet, he sadly smiled

“I come from the house of the Prophet,” he replied.

The venerable old lady was in shocking pain

“My God! You are Muslim, the Emissary of Husain,

How did I fail to recognize you, O, My Lord!

What reply will I give to my Most Merciful God?”

She hid him on the old wooden attic floor

Extinguished the lights and shut the door;

Her son soon returned from his usual rounds

He was in the army of the Yazidi hounds.

“Hani has been beheaded,” he declared,

“The search is now on for Muslim and his lads.”

The simple old lady was moved to tears

And confided to her son, her own gnawing fears.

The son was elated at the fortunate news

He pretended sorrow, as a deceitful ruse,

“I will soon be back with the two young lads”

And rushed to his Master, Obeidullah Ibn Ziad.

The sound of horses hoofs were approaching near

Muslim was in his prayers; he knew no fear

He immediately realized, he had been betrayed

His time was up; he would soon be dead!

The noble lady was aghast! How could she explain?

It was her son who had brought her everlasting shame

Muslim assured Taha that he was absolutely sure,

She was a lover of Husain and his grandsire!

The lane was narrow, it had no width

Two horses abreast could hardly breath

It was an ideal ground for single combat

Like lion, Muslim ferociously fought.

To the enemy, it soon became abundantly plain

It was a futile and sure loosing game

From housetops, they hurled missiles and stones

Seriously wounded, M7uslim left his vantage position.

He desperately moved forward; they all fell back

So fierce was the charge, they all fled in a pack

To stop him, they thought of a clever ruse

They dug a trench and had it covered, as subterfuge.

He rushed on wielding his sword dexterously

He fell in the trench, as planned treacherously;

The retreating hounds soon swooped down

In no time, he was heavily chained and bound.

In the streets of Kufa, he was soon paraded

Those who had sworn him allegiance, were delighted

They were watching him with perfect equanimity

As if he was an utter stranger; what rascality!

“As per Arab custom, I shall fulfil it

Your last wish if you shall reveal it.”

A glint of hope came to Muslim’s eyes

Why not accept and make this final try?

Obeidullah, if you are true to your word,

Fulfil my last wish and inform my lord

To return to Medina, before it is late

As coming to Kufa, would be a sheer waste.

The crafty Obeidullah was absolutely flabbergasted

Spare the lives of my two sons, he could have suggested

He could not even imagine, how could a person

Think of his master, when doomed were his sons.

Muslim’s last wish did not go in vain

Merciful God kindled the heart of one of them

He left Kufa post-haste to fulfil his mission

And informed Husain of Muslim’s martyrdom.

Husain wept bitterly, as never before

Muslim’s daughter realized her father was no more

One pair of earrings, he lovingly gave to her

And another to Sakina, his child most dear.

“Are you returning back?” the messenger inquired

“No! I am not,” Husain, very sadly replied

“As ordained, I am going to meet my destiny,

And so are my faithful friends, who are with me.”

## (8) The Gems

On Ashoor night, he called his friends

So pure and noble, each was a rare Gem

To induce them to leave, with their dear ones

For his sake, he declared, should suffer none.

With rolling tears and heads bent down

Their love for Husain knew no bound

Their burning desire, their goal of life

Was to defend Husain, in this strife.

“It is my life that Yazid desires

I permit you, one and all, to retire

The sufferings, you have so far faced,

Speaks volumes for your loyalty and faith!”

To avoid embarrassment, he put out the lights

For dark was the night, to aid their flight

When the lights were lit, after quite sometime

None had moved, even an inch, from the line.

“You are to us everything; how can we explain?

Without you, life is nothing!” they exclaimed

“Not merely we love, venerate, and adore,

Each single act of yours kindles truth and love anew!”

Habib, Muslim, Buraire and Zuhair Ibn Kain

Expressed these sentiments, all in one strain

Such devotion, such ecstasy, the world had not seen

Even among companions of ‘Hayder’ nor of ‘Al Amin’.

What brave souls were these followers of Husain?

What unique attachments of theirs, he had gained?

From different walks of life they came

Their object was, absolutely, one and the same.

With what simplicity, the noble Jaun exclaimed

“O, my lord, I am a Negro slave” he maintained

“Let my blood mingle with the martyrs blood,

To prove that we too are of the same mud.”

In the face of trials and tribulations,

He had only one solace and consolation;

A band of faithful and fearless human beings

The like of whom, the world had not seen.

Habib Ibn Mazahir, was a childhood devoted friend

He literally followed Husain, wherever he went

He veneratingly kissed the ground, Husain tread

He was loved by the Prophet and lovingly caressed.

He was in Kufa, when he heard of Husain’s plight

“For Karbala, I shall leave the very same night.”

With encouragement from his wife, a noble lady

His faithful slave, kept for him all things ready.

Kufa, was agog with numerous rumors afloat

Treachery was afoot, for sacrificial goats

Such was the risk, with spies all round

Yet he ventured; such was the magnetic bond.

He reached Karbala on 9th of Muharram night

Husain was distributing arms for the fight

He had kept aside, for him, one set of arms

“Habib, my dearest friend, is sure to come.”

Wahab, was the son of a noble and virtuous lady

From Damascus, she was externed, when he was a baby

For praising Ali, she had incurred Moawiyah’s wrath

Such was the fate, at that time, of all lovers of God.

Returning home, with his mother and wife,

He saw an army poised like a murderer’s knife

A small group, mostly women, babes and old folks

Were the victims of these cruel merciless foes.

He soon learnt, Prophet’s grandson, Husain Ibn Ali

Surrounded by Yazid’s hordes, were he and his family

He rushed to the side of Imam’s small group

And begged of him, to let him join his troop.

When Husain learnt Wahab had married only day before

He insisted on his leaving with his wife and mother

With unflinching resolve, imploringly he pleaded,

Till Husain gave in and to his joining agreed.

Muslim Ibn Ausaja, had witnessed rights being trampled

Bent with age, his love for truth was undampened

Venerable companion of the Prophet, a most saintly soul

To fight for truth, was his life’s sole object and goal.

Physically withered by age, being four score ten,

His anxiety to help was a heroic gesture to men

For he had witnessed on countless occasions

The undying love, which the Prophet bore for Husain.

Buraire Hamadeni, was a warrior of repute

His name caused shivers in adversaries boots

He was itching to display his terrific might,

To Yazid’s mercenaries, in single battle and fights.

Husain calmed him down and explained

To fight them is not at all our aim

But to defend and die like a martyr

Was the supreme test of each fighter.

On the eve, prior to the day of fateful battle,

Buraire urged his friends to show their mettle

And guard the Imam against the enemy’s surprise raids

For crafty was the enemy, unscrupulous, and debased.

Unbearable it was, the cry of thirsty children for water

Even savages watered their victims, before slaughter

Buraire, with his friends, fought their way to the river

Filled a bag and returned with the precious life giver.

With what dejection and dismay, he witnessed the sight

The thirsty children threw themselves in mad delight

The bag opened, under the weight of the terrible crush

And out poured the water, in a mighty and mad gush.

Moved to tears, the brave warrior’s eyes welled up

No water was left, O, merciful heaven, not even a cup!

The thirst of the children remained unquenched

Though the earth, in water, was fully drenched.

Hur Ibn Yazid Riyahi, a strict disciplinarian

In the army of Yazid, he commanded a battalion

With thousand soldiers, he blocked Husain’s path

Not realizing, that it would lead to a blood bath.

Hoping that a peaceful solution would be found

He forced Husain towards Karbala, as in duty bound

Little did he realize that his very men

Would dare spill the blood of Prophet’s Gem.

## (9) The Supreme Sacrifice

The sad day dawned, the heavens were aghast

Truth was at stake; the die had been cast

Never had they witnessed, so supreme a test

Between falsehood at its worst and truth at its best!

For three torturous days and three miserable nights

Husain’s small band, were in a waterless plight;

The babes, they licked, their mother’s tongues,

Parched and thorny, they weepingly let it hung.

His faith in God was sublime, beyond any dream

His patience, spoke of complete surrender to Him

Even in his worst hour, from the material eye,

He was calm and unperturbed, not afraid to die!

Husain was fully alive to things at stake

He well knew what would be his family’s fate

He was aware that ‘twas his martyr’s cup

He showed absolutely no grief when his time was up.

He endeavored to make a last attempt

But the foes were all determined and bent

To spill his blood, they thought it an honor

Such is the fate of all the world’s warners.

“Speak, O, you Kufi’s, is this how

You invite your guests and treat them now?

You summoned our aid, you one and all

You, as our Imam, must heed our call.”

“Truth is being trampled, we look to you,

To uphold the flame, come to our rescue

Treachery is, indeed, a satanic vile

But in this you are ahead by miles.”

“I beg you ponder what you do

Verily, those that can see, are few

Three honorable offers, I have to make

For no blood should spill for my sake.”

“If my life is what Yazid desires

Why should Muslims’ blood, be the hire

To Yazid, I request, you do me lead

No share, you have, in this foul deed.”

“Or let me, to Jihad, go and die

For this life, no fear have I

I will fight in the cause of God

Till death, descends from my Lord.”

“If not, let me to Hejaz return

You will Muhammad’s pleasure earn

For was he not my Grand Sire?

Verily, a shield against hell’s fire!’’

“Know for sure, that I am he

Whom God has granted Heaven’s key

We live for the Lord and His pleasure

We seek not the world, nor it’s treasure.”

“The flame of truth, is what we hold

Let none of you, I pray, make bold

To subdue the flame not those that hold

Though your heart may yearn for gold.”

The foes were silent, their mouths were shut

Only thirty of them felt genuine hurt

They demanded to know why Husain’s fair offer,

Could not be accepted and considered as proper.

In disgust, they left the enemy’s rank

And joined the Imam’s small faithful band

Too glad were they to fight for him,

Though chances of success, they knew were dim.

The rest were unmoved; their hearts were sealed

They danced and mocked, till their heads reeled

Husain still felt it his duty, to make it plain,

To save his life, was not his object or aim.

Omar Ibn Saad, discharged the first villain’s arrow

Proud, that he had had started this battle of sorrow

And soon to his dismay, he found Ali’s sons

To fight them, he learnt, was no laughter and fun.

They fought courageously like lions, one by one

Though outnumbered, they made them run

Till the archers took their inevitable toll

Claiming fifty, from Husain’s small fold.

Bent with grief, he surveyed the tragic scene

Tears welled up, his sorrowful eyes did glean

He made a plea, to the enemy’s rank and file

Whether none sympathized with the Prophet’s child.

Hur Ibn Yazid Riyahi felt this as a jolt

The words to him were, as from heaven, a bolt

He, with his slave and son, joined the Imam’s band

And begged for forgiveness at his merciful hands.

Forgiven were they, unreservedly, one and all,

By the generous Husain and his noble ‘Aal’

They fought for him, till they were slain

Their lives they lost, but heaven gained.

Corpses flowed in regular stream of these brave soldiers

Husain, and his friends, carried them on their shoulders

In the distant lands, they had no families to mourn them

The ladies of Husain wept, as for a bother or son.

Wahab Ibn Abdulla Kalabi, was the last to go

The newly married warrior, his spirit was low

Time and again, he had sought for permission

“Not yet!” was Husain’s firm decision.

“First seek permission of your mother and wife

Their claim is far greater on your invaluable life

Exclaimed, the mother of Wahab, standing nearby

“I will deem it an honour, for my son to die!”

With tears in her eyes, his wife pleaded

“Do defend Husain in his hour of need

Only one request I have, reluctantly, to make

The security of Husain’s family, may we partake.”

Little did she know, what fate had in store

For ladies of Husain, when he was no more

She never could imagine, that it was likely

The enemies would dare behave so dastardly.

History of mankind, numerous instances can cite,

Where brave persons have scaled great heights,

And endured hardships, out of love and affection,

Or died out of duty and self-consuming devotion.

But never before, the world had ever witnessed,

Such deeds of selfless devotion and self-abnegation

In this transitory world, though nothing endures,

The deeds of Husain shine, with ever-increasing luster!

And now were left, those tied by blood

Who cared a nought, for this mould of mud

Eager were they to offer their worldly lives

In cause of God, so truth may, forever, thrive.

Abbas Ibn Ali, was the truth’s standard bearer

Husain to him, was a jewel, nay, even more dearer

He called him “Lord”, though his foster brother

Such was the regard, they had, one for the other.

Ali Akbar, was his most beloved second son

More brave, more handsome, there was none.

Eighteen summers old, flower of youth,

An image of Prophet, from head to foot.

Qasim, was his brother Hassan’s child

He was, like his father, by nature mild

His father had willed before he had died

A tawiz he prepared and, to his hand, he tied.

It only be read, was his wish dear

By Husain, when his end was near

He remembered this will of his brother

Now that he would soon be murdered.

It was willed that Qasim should wed

Fatema Qubra, ere his blood was shed

Husain’s darling daughter was she

To wed her to Qasim, too glad was he.

A wedding with dowry as widowhood!

A feast without water and food!

A bridegroom with few hours to live!

A bride with only tears to give!

Such was the wedding in Karbala’s field

Which Husain, with his blood, would till

So that the plant of Islam may live anew

For sake of lovers of God, though very few.

Husain wished that Ali Akbar, his dearest son,

Should be the first to go to the battleground

His devoted friends and followers were aghast

They refused to entertain such idea - first or last.

Now were left with Husain, only the next of kin

Ali Akbar, bowed reverentially and stood before him

Husain, looked at his face; was he daydreaming?

He has come to seek permission; the words were ringing!

He tried to say something, amidst the enemies’ war-like cries

With considerable effort, he whispered, with downcast eyes

“Akbar, my beloved child, you wish me to see you slain

What I am experiencing, at this moment, I can hardly explain!”

“How can I grant you permission, Akbar, my son?

Knowing that none have returned, not even one!

The call of duty, however, makes me helpless

Ask you mother and aunt, who are restless.”

His aunt, Zainab and Umm Layla, his mother dear

Knew that it was now the turn of all those near

Who went first to the battlefield, and who went last,

Was a matter of time, which was running very fast.

Akbar, knew the affection his aunt, Zainab had for him

Of the pangs of sorrow, she was, since morn experiencing

He looked at her face and that of his mother

They were speechless at the thought of his murder.

“Let it not be said of my respected father Husain,

He spared me till his brothers and nephews were slain,

I implore you, by the love you bear for your brother,

Let me die first and quench my thirst, at Hauz-e-Kawsar.”

“May God be with you, my son”, Umm Layla said,

“With you, I shall lose all I have, my lad

What destiny has in store for me, I am fully aware

After you, for pleasure and pain, I shall not care.”

Death was now beckoning Ali Akbar, “come, my son, come!”

Amidst war-like shouts of enemy, amidst battle drums

The cries of the ladies and children, were most woeful

To die in the prime of youth, even death was mournful!

Ali Akbar was now facing the enemy’s forces

He was addressing them with such eloquence

The older ones were blinking their eyes in amazement

Has Prophet descended from heaven, his son to lament?

Omar Saad saw the magic spell, the words had cast

All would soon be lost, if he allowed this to last

He exhorted his men; he whipped their gold lust

“Emaciated is he by three days of hunger and thirst.”

He met the hounds in battle, one by one

Was this Ali himself? Each battle he won.

The winds were whispering “Laa Fatah Illaa Ali

Laa Sayf Illaa Zulfiqar” most solemnly.

Such was the skill and prowess in fighting

Heads rolled on with speed of lightening

None dared come forward from the enemy’s rank

Cowards were they; their hearts had shrank.

Through wounds, though victorious, in single fights

The blood was gushing; thirsty was his plight

He had left his mother, in a dazed condition

Irresistible was the urge, to see his dear ones.

His father was anxiously watching his son’s heroic deeds

His mother and aunt were behind, to attend to his needs

They watched his face; it reflected the progress of fight

If any calamity befell Ali Akbar, dim would grow the light.

“O, Allah, who brought back Ismail to Hajra!

O, Allah, who listened to the mother of Moosa!

O, Allah, who reunited Yakub with Yusuf, his son!

Grant us our wish, to see Ali Akbar, for once.”

Was it the effect of these prayers, of his mother and aunt

That brought Ali Akbar back to his father’s tent?

With an exclamation of joy and relief they clung to him

“Bravo, my son! Such a fight the world has not seen!”

“Father, the thirst is killing me; Ah, these wounds!

For victories in combat, it is usual to ask a boon

A refreshing cup of water, is all that I ask and need

But alas! I know not even a drop, you can feed.”

Ali Akbar, met his family including mother and father

The second parting was equally sad, perhaps even sadder

Fizza, the faithful maid, was disconsolate with grief

And so were Zainab and Umm Layla, to be very brief.

As he rode away, Husain walked for some distance behind him

Was it his sacrificial lamb? O, what a heart rending scene!

When Akbar disappeared from his sight, he turned heaven-wards

“O, Allah, be thou witness, your plans, I have not disturbed.”

“O, Allah, Thou art, my witness, on this mournful day

One, whom I loved, and cherished most, I have sent away

To defend the cause of righteousness and truth

And to fight the forces of the devil and his brutes.”

He sat on the ground; he looked all round in vain

He received a wailing call, a call of anguish and pain

Though Husain, and his people, were expecting such a call

A ghastly effect, it had on all of them, one and all.

“Father, Akbar, is with a mortal wound, in his chest

Father do come to me, please hurry, and try your best

If you are unable to reach me, your dear son,

I convey my salutations, to you and my dear ones.”

He rose from the ground and fell; he rose again and fell again

He struggled to his feet; his heart was in terrifying pain

Torrential tears were flooding his eyes; it was awesome!

He rushed hither and thither; from where had the cry come?

He was sobbing; uncontrollable and tragic was his condition

“Akbar, give me a shout, so that I can follow its direction

Akbar, my sight is gone; Akbar I can hardly hear your cry

Is there nobody in this world to guide me, to where you lie?”

To the side of his master, Abbas soon came rushing

Holding his hand, he led him to where Akbar was lying

Ah, the tragic sight! Akbar, lying in a pool of his own blood

Blood, blood, blood all around; the blood itself was in flood!

Writhing in unbearable pain and digging his feet in sand

His breathing was now heavier; on his heart was his hand

A gurgling sound was coming, from his parched throat

An uneven struggle with death, a fast sinking boat!

And so passed away the brave one, the angelic soul

With a smile on his face, he reached his heavenly goal

Leaving Husain back-broken and utterly inconsolable

God was a witness; the sacrifice was without parallel!

The days of our youth, are the days of our treasure

To some, life is doled out in a different measure

Surging, in young hearts, are the hopes and feelings

With every nerve and sinews, quivering with joy of living.

Some budding flowers are swept away, by the winds of doom

Before they have an opportunity to blossom and bloom

Such was the destiny of Husain’s three beloved nephews

Such rare Gems, they were limited, and sparingly a few.

Three innocent lads, barely in their teens

Husain’s nephews – Aun, Muhammad and Qasim

Were closeted together to discuss their role

For that fateful day, clear was their goal!

To seek Husain’s permission, was their main task

What should they say? How should they ask?

Seriously they discussed for quite some time

To die as martyrs, was in their family line.

How commendable was the behaviour of these three young ones

There was no sign of childishness or immaturity; no, none!

They were neither nervous nor, in any way scared

The chances of survival was nil, they were fully aware.

Qasim, abruptly left; he entered the tent

Umm Farwa, his mother, her head was bent

Engrossed in her thoughts - Hassan’s widow

Was thinking of her son and the morrow?

“Do you know why I called you, Qasim, my son?

To remind you of your duty to your uncle Husain

Hassan and Husain, were so much devoted to each other,

More than what children are to their father and mother.

He wanted you to deputize for him, on this day

It was your father’s wish that, come what may,

You should stand by Husain, through unflinching devotion

To defend Husain, should be your life’s sacred mission.”

A load was of his head; how thoughtful of his father

To have provided for this situation, and one still harder

A letter for Husain, containing his dying desire

“Qasim, shall deputize for me, since I have from the world retired.”

“My children! Do you know what tomorrow has in store?

Zainab’s near and dear ones will be no more.

All the vendetta nurtured, all these years,

Will rise like snakes; strike them down without fear!”

“I want both of you, my dear beloved sons

To defend uncle Husain and his priceless children”

How relieved they felt, and what a pleasant surprise

The hurdle was over; they had hardly surmised.

After a pause she added, “When I was leaving Mecca,

It was the wish of your father, Abdulla

You my son, Aun, should deputize for him

And you my child, Muhammad, be my offering.”

With folded hands, Zainab addressed her brother

“In my whole life, have I asked for a favour?

For the first time, grant me, my one wish,

Let my sons follow Ali Akbar, to the abode of bliss.”

“Go forward my children and fulfil your desire

Die like heroes and from physical world retire

I shall soon join you on your journey to eternity

Convey my salutations to the Heaven’s fraternity.”

My humble tributes to your dear ones, O, Zainab!

The two darling youngsters marched like lion cubs

Brave was their bearing, brave the stance,

Tiny little swords, soon clashed with enemy’s lance.

The dust lifted itself to give a clearer view

Enemy soldiers were battling with Husain’s nephews

“Bravo! My sons,” was it the voice of Ja’far-e-Tayyar?

Watching from the heavens was the famed winged warrior!

And why not? It was Muhammad his grandchild

It was a heroic fight, with numerous corpses piled

Some distance away, was his younger brother, Aun

Fortunate were they, to whom such sons were born.

Against heavy odds, as was obviously expected

Both fell heroically fighting; so it was fated

What a heart rending scene it was, O Merciful God!

Only the brave heart of Zainab could endure the dart.

As was the practice, they started beating the battle drums

The butchery of two innocent lads, to them it was fun

The usual cry, challenging the young defenders of faith

To come out in the battlefield, to face their fate.

Qasim, rushed with letter to his uncle dear

There was a crowd round him, how could he go near?

The corpses of Aun and Muhammad, had just been brought in

Such wailing and weeping, he had neither heard, nor seen.

Clad in his father’s clothes, he looked his very image

Aided by his mother, he pushed forward, taking courage

With letter in hand, he respectfully presented himself

The weeping Husain looked up; had Hassan come to help?

He read the letter of his beloved brother

He wept bitterly; he could read no further

His last desire, how could he not honour

When his love had permeated, every nook and corner.

Qasim fought bravely, though a youth of fourteen

He hurled the enemy one by one; what a wonderful scene!

Swords, spears, daggers and arrows, flew from all sides

Wounded from head to foot, he did not run or hide.

Falling from the saddle, he gave a gallant valiant cry

Crushed under horses’ hoofs, scattered the pieces lie

Husain, the immortal Husain, collected the mortal remains

It was his dear Hassan’s offerings, in the cause of Islam.

One against thousands - can it be called a fight?

Killing an innocent lad, it caused them delight

They thought they were doing something great

It was a spillage of their past game of hate.

Smeared with blood, on the shifting sand dunes of Karbala

Lay a figure of youth, on the banks of Alkama

The crimson life tide was ebbing fast, very fast

He was anxiously awaiting somebody, ere he breathed his last.

Through his parched throat, he was feebly calling somebody

His master had heeded the call, since morn, of everybody

To rush to the side of his dying friends, was his image

Despite thousand shocks, and famished body, he had not budged.

Who is this man, with indomitable courage, one may ask?

He is the standard bearer of forces that are no more, alas!

A pillar of strength, the full moon of the Hashemites,

A beautiful specimen of manliness; a glorious sight!

Before a man’s death, all past events fly in a flashback

Abbas, was seeing them, lying on the burning sand tracts

How, as a child, he followed his Master, Husain

To attend to his every need; to see that none caused him pain.

He was in reverie, for quite some time,

Scene after scene, passed the memory’s mind

He suddenly remembered, Sakina, with forty-two other kids

Had urged him for water, to meet their barest needs.

How like an enraged lion, he had charged at the enemies’ ranks

Like a knife piercing butter, he had reached the riverbank

He had filled the bag of water, without tasting a single drop

His horse also refrained, though it was not at all stopped.

One thought was in his mind; how to reach water,

For his dear little Sakina, Husain’s youngest daughter

Both his hands were cut, while on his way back

Pierced with arrows, empty was the leather bag.

He tossed on the burning sand; unbearable was the pain

Life was ebbing fast out; his wish to see his master remained

“O, my master! I beseech you, do come before I die”

One eye was pierced with an arrow; blood was in the other eye.

At last, he heard Husain’s voice, a half sob, a muffled cry

“Abbas, my brother, what have they done to you!” he cried

Uncontrollable was his grief, “You have come, at last, my Master!”

He was sobbing; his breath was now much faster.

Husain lifted his head; Abbas put it back on the sand

“My Master! When your life will be wrung by cruel hands

Nobody will be there, in this world, to comfort thee

Let my head remain, in the same position, as yours would be!”

“My Master, I have some last wishes to express”

Completely drenched in blood was his dress

“When I was born, I had a first look at your face

When I die, on your face, I want to fix my gaze.”

“Please clear the blood from my one eye

Let me fulfil my last wish, before I die

Do not carry my body to the Khaimaga

I had promised to bring water for Sakina.”

“Since I have failed, I cannot face her, even in death

Nor bring Sakina here, to see her uncle’s miserable fate”

The flow of Furrat became turbulent and dark as winter

A murmur arose, at the cruel and unwarranted slaughter.

“Abbas, I too have a wish to be fulfilled

You know well, I too have not much time to live

Since childhood, you have always called me Master

For once, with your dying breath, call me Brother.”

The blood was cleared; the pierced arrow removed

One brother looked long at another, along lingering look

Abbas was heard to whisper, “My brother, my brother!”

With these words, he surrendered, his soul to his Creator.

Though ten months old, he looked barely six

Famished and thirsty, his stare was fixed

Taking out his parched tongue, he turned it on his lips

Small were its wants; a little water to sip!

Ali Asghar uttered a heart rending moan; a tragic sight!

It tore asunder, the hapless mother’s sinking plight

“Sire, dying of thirst, is my small innocent child

Do something to save him, Umm Rabab frantically cried.”

To Yazid’s force, he carried Ali Asghar in his arms

Wrapped under his robes, they thought it was holy Quran

A little water for the child, he appealed, again and again

They threw arrows instead, to their everlasting shame.

What cruel men were these heartless brutes?

An innocent child, what harm could it do?

An arrow pierced its parched and thirsty throat

Providing water is a must, even while killing a goat!

Anxious was the mother, for the return of the child

Husain’s face was dripping with blood; a gruesome sight!

Her heart sank; shattered were her hopes, forever

The picture was clear; Ali Asghar was no more!

Alone, all alone, with none to befriend him

It was all clear; it needed no special vision

The time was up for the long awaited supreme test

Husain was not found wanting; he was at his best.

How can a man, in midst of such calamities and disastrous times

Retain his faith in God, and maintain the balance of his mind,

It’s difficult to imagine nor can be explained

Subject to such supreme test himself was Husain.

The challenges of the enemy were growing in tempo

The sun was now declining, there was no time to go

Few words of advice, he gave most lovingly to each

A touching farewell, a most cherished deed!

The farewell between Husain and Zainab

Was as sorrowful as between a mother and cub

Parting with Sakina, was no less difficult

It was a heart-rending episode, poignantly built!

Standing near Husain, looking at his face

His darling child was speechless and dazed

All his courage could not steel his heart

To tell Sakina, he was leaving her, alas!

Leaving her to the world, unkind to her

To fate, with only sufferings in store

He kissed her cheeks, wet with tears

To be slapped for mourning her father dear.

Putting Sakina down, he hurried to the tent

Ali Zainal Abedeen was lying full bent

He was unconscious, his twenty-five years old son

Chosen to live with death, he was the one.

“My appointed hour is near; wake up, Zainal Abedeen!”

Aroused from stupor, he was shocked, beyond dream

Husain’s transformation was beyond any description

Gaping wounds, snow-white hair, bent back; ah these fiends!

“O, God! What have the enemies done to my father?

Where is uncle Abbas, my brother, Ali Akbar

And my cousins, Qasim, Aun and Muhammad?”

He inquired; unaware, that they were all dead.

Husain explained to him all things he knew

It was now his turn, he had come to bid adieu

“Father, so long, I live, you cannot go and die

Let me go instead; let me hold the banner high.”

Husain gently put him down; he could not even sit

Burning with fever, he was famished and seriously sick

“You shall remain in bed, my beloved ailing son

As you father, and spiritual head, I command.”

“This is the beginning, not the end, of your terrible woes

Undescribeable trials and tribulations, you shall undergo

Destiny has singled you out, my son, to demonstrate

Faith, in the trial hour, is the real crusade!”

“Accompany your mother and other ladies in captivity

Bound in chain, suffer insults and indignities

Through Kufa and Damascus, you will be soon paraded

In the court of the tyrant, you will be humiliated.”

“Your sufferings will be far worse than death

Death is a reliever of things, destined by fate.”

He clasped his son, in a loving lingering last embrace

Unbearable grief, Zainal Abedeen was unable to face.

He fell unconscious; the agony he was spared

Of seeing the departure of his father aged

How merciful is God; no, none can dispute it

Through trials and tribulations, virtues he highlights!

Husain spurred his horse, Zuljanah, to move on

Glued to the spot, it did not budge nor respond

Famished, hungry, wounded, it was no doubt

Its behavior was inexplicable; it could not shout.

It bent its head towards the burning ground

Sakina was clinging to its hoofs, Husain soon found

“Do not take my Dad to the battlefield!”

She was imploring the aged faithful steed.

Exhausted, her moaning was hardly audible

Her condition was extremely sad and pitiable

Husain jumped down; both clung to each other

Choked with sobs, they cried their hearts together

To sleep on his chest, was her last desire

Before he departed to face the enemies’ fire

His chest, was her nest since birth

What was now left, save this little comfort?

She clung to him, as she had never done before

“No, father, to the battle field, I will not let you go!”

With supreme effort, Husain controlled his feelings

Shocked, she was beyond imagination, by gruesome killings.

He consoled his child, as best as he could

What was at stake, she soon understood

He promised her, he would pray to God,

To join her soon in the heavenly ward.

So eloquent was his speech; they remembered Ali

Greed was overpowering; their minds were sullied

Their task was nearing completion; they were elated

Extravagant rewards, for annihilation, they were bated.

He earnestly implored them, again and again

To save themselves from ever-lasting shame

And not be partners in Yazid’s foul game

As posterity would condemn their names,

Now that his job was more than done

He called to witness, all and one

Lest on Judgement day, they should plead

Their blindness to the foul deed.

Omar Saad was perturbed; he tried to act tough

“Husain, in your condition, my weakest soldier is enough.

Accept the one and only condition, we have imposed;

Accept Yazid’s competence, religious matters to dispose.”

The taunting words aroused Husain’s wrath

The Hashemite blood was raging and boiling hot

He was the son of Ali, the Lion of the Almighty God

Fierce was his ire; the devils were aghast.

“Omar Saad, I accept your challenge,” you knave

“In single combat, I will fight your bravest of brave.”

Shaken by Husain’s words, none dared come forward

Courage they had none; they were all cowards.

He faced the foes, they were all scared

To meet him in single combat, not one dared

They attacked enmasse, the cowardly ones

Little they realized, it was Ali’s son.

The archers fired a volley of deadly arrows

Swords, scimitars and daggers, flew like sparrows

Sword in hand, he cut through each flank

Utter confusion prevailed in enemies’ ranks.

Swift was his movement; well-trained his charger

With incredible speed, he did them scatter

The hounds retreated; they licked their wounds

Their boastful shouts, whimpered without a sound!

The road to the rivulet was now clear

There lay the corpse of his dear brother

“Abbas, did you see your brother’s last fight?

Why don’t you say bravo, to me, heavenly light!”

Husain looked at the sky, the sun was declining

It was time for prayers, the world was reclining

Availing of the respite, he sheathed his sword

Though he knew full well, he could ill afford.

Their fiendish minds could hardly understand

To think of prayers, how could any man,

In such circumstances, even think, or dream

The like of Husain, they had not seen!

After hurried consultations, from a safe distance

The archers fired arrows, from all sides, all at once

Accompanied by stones, missiles and burning coal

To kill him somehow, clear was the goal.

Wounded all over, the missiles kept on showering

With blood oozing fast, dizziness was overpowering

His mission was complete; the fight was over!

To hide from Zainab, he looked around for cover.

“Zuljanah, take me far away to a low lying ground

My family should not see my head being cut”, by hounds

Such was the understanding of his master’s wishes

It immediately bolted to a place free of crisis.

Realizing his master was unable to dismount

It knelt and slid him gently to the ground

From a small hillock, Zainab watched her brother

Seeing him unconscious, she darted like a mother.

In his sub-conscious mind, he saw the Prophets of Yore

Wailing and whining for him were those, who were no more

The Prophet was in tears, Fatima was disconsolate

Ali and Hassan, were helplessly watching his fate.

On his burning forehead, he felt something cool

Was it the hand of his mother or the blood pool?

His senses revived; he opened his blood-red eyes

Zuljanah was shielding him, the sun was high.

He remembered, why he has stopped his fight

To offer prayers, despite his vulnerable plight

With prostrated head, he addressed his CREATOR

The world had not witnessed such a WORSHIPPER.

“Thou art my witness, O, my most beloved God,

I have fulfilled my mission, without hesitation, my Lord;

Without squirming, faltering, complaining, O God,

To Thy decree, and Thy dispensation, I submit, O Lord!”

While Husain was still in prayer, Omar Saad pondered

“Cut off his head,” he thought to himself and soon ordered

Willing to wound, but mortally afraid to strike

None could master the courage, so great was the fright.

He himself went forth, by his side was Shimr

Husain was lying prostrate, his head in prayer

His lips were moving; can it be he was cursing?

They bent over to hear what he was saying.

“I beseech Thee, with all humility, O Allah!

Forgive, the erring ones, of their trespasses

Thou art, the most Benificient, the most Forgiving!”

Can there be a being, more compassionate, more loving?

The prayers were almost concluded, they were afraid

He was Ali’s son, none could dare under-estimate

Shimr jumped on his back, with sword in one hand

Too weak with loss of blood. Only his head he turned.

“O, Shimr, give me water, I am thirsty

Then accomplish your task.” However dirty

Zainab rushed out, she was on the scene

“Save my brother!’ she imploringly screamed.

She appealed to Omar Saad, again and again

To give little water, to save the life of Husain

He contemptuously turned his face, in utter disdain

O you fiend! O you slur on Islam’s name!

Her humiliation was watched by Husain

He was in greatest of agony and pain

“For the sake of love, you bear for me

Please return to the camp immediately.”

She rushed back to her nephew, Ali Zainal Abedeen

Shaking him from stupor, she narrated the scene

In the dusty panorama, they soon saw a spear

Husain’s head was on it, without malice, without fear!

## (10) The Loot

Eerie silence hung over the battleground

Broken occasionally by drum beating sounds

The carnage, the massacre, of saintly souls

Caused a shudder, in Islam’s true believers’ fold.

The massacre being over, they raided they tents

To loot and destroy, they were all fiendishly bent

Helpless ladies and children, they mercilessly pashed

Young innocent babes, to the ground they dashed.

Daughters of the Prophet, simple lives had led

Coarse and patched clothes, were all they had

Woven by Fatima, they were immensely treasured

In terms of money, none could be measured.

They were shamelessly looted of even their veils

The Yazidi hordes outclassed, themselves, the devils

Earrings were snatched of the child of Husain

She was slapped mercilessly, for crying in pain.

In stupor, lay the only surviving adult male

Ali Zainal Abedeen was flogged as in horror tales

After the looting, the tents were set on fire enmasse

Hell was let loose, with a vengeance, quick and fast.

Zainab was perplexed, she was lost

Perish in flames or face still worst

This hour of trial, whom to consult

Her nephew was unconscious, lying in dust.

“Ali Zainal Abedeen, I appeal to you

As our Imam, tell us what are we to do?”

He opened his eyes, burning with fever

With utmost effort, advise he delivered.

“To save our lives is a religious duty

Go in the open and seek security.”

Ladies and children, they left the tent

Salvaging what they could, as they went.

The loot, the pandemonium, was soon over

Burning embers of fire only hovered

A partially burnt tent was all that remained

A solitary witness of torture and blood stain.

The Ahl Bait cuddled together therein

Shattered in mind and body, beyond dream

The time had come almost to a standstill

The night was in sorrow; one could feel.

The mourning widows of Husain’s friends

Their anguished hearts, who could mend?

Zainab and Kulsum consulted each other

The orphaned children, they had to mother.

Zainab counted the children; one was missing

To her dismay, it was Sakina, her darling

“Tell me Sakina, where are you my child?”

In wilderness, the echo was the only reply.

Frustrated, she ran towards the battlefield

“Sakina is lost, your darling child

Husain, where shall I look for her?”

She imploringly sobbed, in utter despair.

The silvery moon, behind the clouds was hid

The clouds dispersed, the ground was lit

Lying with her head on Husain’s chest

Little Sakina was sleeping in her usual nest.

“Sakina, my child, I have come here

After searching the desert, my dear

Your father’s beheaded body, how could you find

In this dark night, with your frightened mind?”

“An irresistible urge seized me, though dampened

To tell my father all that had happened

How they snatched my earrings, after his death

The slaps I received, the treatment we met.”

“Running aimlessly in the desert I cried

Tell me dearest father, where do you lie

Sakina, my darling Sakina, come here, come here!

I heard him calling and found my father dear.”

“I narrated to him, all I had endured

It lightened my heart: I was re-assured

An urge to sleep on his chest, for the last time

I placed my head in the nest of mine.”

With Sakina, Zainab hurried to the camp

Again it was dark; there was no lamp

All were anxiously waiting in the ghostly night

Praying silently to God, the Eternal Light.

She placed Sakina in her mother’s arms

She had several other duties to perform

No, not to protect any worldly treasure

The children had suffered, beyond measure.

Advancing towards them, she saw a group

“There is nothing left, which you can loot

Pray, do not disturb the children in sorrow

If you want something, come in the morrow!”

“We do not want anything from you

We know, what you have said is true

We have brought some water and food

We know, you are in a sorrowful mood.”

Zainab was surprised; so polite was the speaker

It was the widow of Hur, the truth seeker

“Soldiers of Omar Saad have deputed me

To carry food and water for thee.”

“Lest you perish, due to hunger and thirst,

Before Yazid, they want to take you first

That is why they have sent water and food

Not because they have suddenly turned good.”

“O, sister, we are indebted to your husband

For his precious life, in defending Husain

He was our guest, but at a time, alas!

We had not even water; no, not a glass!”

“My lady, I am grieved, you lost not one

But eighteen members to death, were done.”

They offered condolences to each other

Zainab was large hearted like her mother.

“At last there is water for you

Wake up, Sakina, see it is true

Wet your throat, sobbing will stop.”

For days, she had not even a drop.

“Let Ali Asghar drink first, he is the youngest

My dear brother died of sheer maddening thirst

Now that water is available, give him first

Before I can taste it and quench my thirst.”

Guarding her folks, with a half burnt pole

Alone, all alone, with no waking soul

Due to exhaustion, Zainab fell in a swoon

O Merciful God, it was, indeed, a boon!

One person came galloping in her dream

“O Shaikh, please go back” she screamed

“I am daughter of Hazrat Ali and Fatima

We are guardians of the holy ‘Kalima ‘!

The person lifted the veil from his face

It was her father Ali himself, by Divine Grace

She poured out her mutilated and bleeding heart to him

The outpourings caused convulsions, ending the dream.

Lying on the desert sand, clothes wet with tears

The dawn was breaking, time of prayer was near

Events of previous day, she recalled with pain

Ali Akbar had given Azan; prayers led by Husain.

Finishing her prayer, she laid her head

Prostrate before God of the living and dead

To give her courage, to carry on the mission

Which, to the world, would be an everlasting lesson.

## (11) The Journey To Kufa

The sun rose, crimson-red was its color

Downcast with shame, the world looked duller

Ladies and children, huddled with shambled remains

The victors rejoiced, without compunction or shame.

Vying with one another, to torture and torment

They took delight, in causing them lament

Marching them, by the bodies of their dear ones

Before being taken to Kufa, in a caravan.

Without any saddles, on camels’ bare-backs

The ladies were put in a sheep like pack

Bound hand and foot, with ropes and chains

Children’s necks were tied with their hands.

Burning with fever and heavily chained

Zainal Abedeen was marched, though in pain

The heads of the martyrs, carried on spears

Headed the procession of Muhammad’s dears.

Kufa was reached in a few hectic hours

Shimr and Khooli gloated, over and over

To the governor was sent a courier

The caravan stopped at a barrier.

Zainab and Kulsum had resided for four years

In Kufa as daughters of Islam’s ruler

Now, they were captives of those Muslims,

Who were steeped in vices and sins.

The grand daughters of the Prophet of Islam

Were too noble, to cause anyone least harm

Helpless victims of those followers of Muhammad;

The lofty principles of Islam were thrown in mud.

O Kufa, recall the days of glory of Zainab!

The honoured daughter of the noblest of Arabs

For four years, Kufians vied with each other

Every wish of theirs to fulfil like a mother.

The same Kufa now wore a festive look

People gathered in every corner and nook

To watch the grand daughters of Muhammad

People of Kufa were now thirsty for their blood.

Heading the caravan, the town crier was crying aloud

The prisoners are Zainab and Kulsum, beyond doubt

Husain and his followers have all been slain,

By Yazid’s might and power, on Karbala’s plain.

All who question Yazid, such is their fate

Beware, lest you be subjected to such hate

If you obey Yazid, without any question

Rewards will be plenty and pleasingly handsome.

When the identity was revealed, some were sad

Ladies and children of the house of Muhammad;

Could they be captives and his grand-son murdered?

None, however, dared protest; they merely shuddered.

It was noon, the sun increasingly blazing

Continuous pleading for water, Zainab was facing

It was futile, to ask the brutes for water

Zainab was explaining to Husain’s daughter.

A lady in balcony saw the plight of Sakina

Rushing down with water, she was in a dilemma

She went to Sakina, breaking the police cordon

A tumbler of cool water; O merciful heaven!

Was it Umm Ayman? Zainab was not sure

Two decades had passed, since the days of yore

“I am thankful for your noble gesture,

May God, on you, His blessings shower.”

She was astonished and completely dazed

Zainab brushed aside the hair, from her face

The same Zainab, whom she adored and venerated,

Was now a picture of woe, a victim of fate.

Kissing Zainab’s feet, out of reverence

Umm Ayman, weepingly, asked for forgiveness;

Lest, such display rouse public sympathy

The guards pounced and whipped, Ayman, mercilessly.

Thrown aside, she weepingly complained to Allah

The caravan proceeded to the court of Obeidullah

Seated on a throne, holding his royal court

The prisoners were marched in the villain’s fort.

Seeing Zainab and Kulsum, he ordered his men

To place at his feet, the head of Husain;

He mockingly inquired, the son of a bitch’

“Are these slave girls or children of Prophet?”

as per the parting promise given to Husain

Zainab, who was controlling herself, lost restrain

“We are grand-daughters of your acknowledged Prophet,

Sisters of Husain, whom your henchmen murdered!”

In frenzy, she gave him a bit of her mind

“You are the stooge of Yazid, O you fiend!

He has flouted all the principles of Islam

The house of Prophet, he has unjustifiably harmed!”

“He has trampled all ethical concepts

Reduced all beings to a condition abject

your success, is ephemeral, be sure

very soon, God’s wrath, you will endure.”

Ibn Ziad, was stunned by this bold rebuke

His embarrassment was apparent, though he fumed

The awe inspiring atmosphere of the court

Held no terrors for Zainab and Kulsum, both.

He looked around to see the devastating effect

If she went on, the masses would defect

He shouted at the top of his heartless voice

Undaunted by threats, Zainab dared him twice!

She projected the issues, the sacrifices of Husain;

Most poignantly, she recalled his piety and fame

A blind companion of the Prophet, Ziad bin Arkan

Protested at the indignities on founders of Islam.

Ibn Ziad, shouting him down, ordered his removal

By nature, he was crafty and vindictively cruel

He hurriedly dismissed the corrupt court

“Carry the prisoners to Damascus”, he roared.

## (12) The Devil’s Den

Through the desert of Mesopotamia they marched on

Falling every few feet, due to sheer exhaustion

Ali Zainal Abedeen was mercilessly whipped

Even if he stumbled, even if he tripped.

Sakina fell down from the camel’s bare-back

Zainab raised an alarm; she was taken aback

The soldiers were intoxicated, they paid no heed

Without any succour, she would perish indeed!

In desperation, Zainab turned towards the spear

“Husain, fallen down is your daughter dear;

I am helpless, my feet and hands are bound.”

The spear, with Husain’s head, got planted down!

Khooli jumped down, to uproot the spear

The stooges rushed forth, from far and near

The spear remained stuck as if cemented

The impact would be great, if soldiers got scent.

Shimr approached Ali; his anger was boiling

The Imam looked at the head; tears were trickling

He turned his gaze, Zainab caught his weeping eye

“Sakina has toppled over, the child may die!”

Shimr picked up the unconscious exhausted child

Dumping her in Zainab’s arms, rushed the hostile

Khooli could now lift the spear from the ground

The caravan proceeded quietly, onwards bound.

The Syrian Desert was strewn with prickly thorns

Marching bare foot, like on painful corns

The torture was borne, with patience and calm

God was the healer, soothing was his balm!

For few hours they halted, each tiresome night

Feasting, the vulturous soldiers were a sight

Food and water, for prisoners was rationed

Barely enough to sustain them, was the caution.

They reached a mountain top, quite secluded

A hermitage of a holy and pious recluse

The heads of the martyrs, Shimr gave

For safe custody, in his solitary cave.

The prophets descended to guard the head

Startled and baffled, he awoke from his bed

Rushing out of the monastery, Shimr he awoke

“Whose heads are these?” boldly he spoke.

“The grandson of Prophet Muhammad had defied

The authority of Yazid ibn Moawiyah” Shimr cried

“For refusing to accept his spiritual suzerainty

He had been butchered at Karbala, ruthlessly.”

The hermit was shocked, beyond any words

“You cursed people, fie upon you cowards

Beheading your own Prophet’s beloved grandson,

His helpless family you now hold at ransom!”

Shimr lost his temper, he was enraged;

With one sweep of the sword, he chopped his head.

For Islam’s injunctions, he had scant regard

To grant protection to those dedicated to God.

The city of Damascus was soon in sight

Through hurried marches, by day and night

Near the gate of the fortress, the caravan halted

In blazing sun, the prisoners sweated.

The scenes in Kufa, had reached Yazid’s ears

To disclose their identity, he now feared

He announced, that a rebel had been defeated

A day of rejoicing, it should be treated.

The city was assuming a gay and festive look

Festoons and buntings hung from every nook

The victims were scorching under the burning sun

To the onlookers, it was all laughter and fun.

Sacrificial dates, they threw at them

To ward off evil from their dear ones

The hungry children tried to eat them

Zainab was perplexed and at her wit’s end.

“Prophet has forbidden his own family

To eat sacrificial offerings, O you ladies,

Do not throw such offerings at our children;

Pray, do not increase our pain and burden!”

Can it be, they are the family of Muhammad?

Their faces and bodies were smeared with mud

From some princely family of noble stock

Their bearings revealed, without any doubt.

After one full hour, the imperial orders came

Bring in the prisoners, the followers of Husain

An elevated throne, lavishly decorated with gold

Seven hundred gilded chairs surrounded it, all told.

In tattered rags, with dirt and mess

Blood oozing from lash-wounds in the flesh

Tightly tied in ropes and heavy chains

Were the daughters and sisters of Husain.

On a gold salver, the head of Husain,

At the feet of Yazid, was vindictively laid

He could not for a moment believe his eyes

These people claimed with Muhammad, blood ties.

Yazid was fully drunk; he quivered with rage

“Omar Saad, how dare you cheat me, your sage!

These are not the ladies of Husain.”

His eyes displayed a thirst for slaying

Flinging himself abjectively at Yazid’s feet

“Mercy, O Commander of Faithful”, he pleaded,

“I have carried out your august command,

Nay, your every wish, your every demand.”

“The prisoners are Zainab and Kulsum,

For any doubt, pray have no room,

The ailing man is Ali Zainal Abedeen,

Other members may also please be seen.”

Raising his eye brows, he watched Yazid’s face

“Ah, there, who is trying to hide from my gaze?”

Falteringly, he replied, afraid of being snubbed

“The old lady is Fizza; behind her is Zainab.”

“None, shall protect the prisoners from me;

Throw aside Fizza, so that Zainab I can see.”

Fizza turned to the slaves, behind the throne

With naked swords, as bodyguards they roamed.

“O brothers, from Abysinia, my own native land

with folded hands why do you passively stand?

Your aged princess demands from you protection

This tyrant’s blood thirst is his obsession!”

The slaves stepped forward and addressed Yazid

“Your Majesty, please desist from the foul deed;

If Shimr proceeds to do anything to her,

Blood will flow right now, like water!”

Yazid, was flabbergasted at this affront

He fully realized, they said, what they meant

In the light of chandeliers, their swords glistened

The coward in him panicked, as he shiveringly listened.

“Shimr, withhold your lash; stay where you are

I will chop off your head, if you harm her;

My good fellows, your devotion to me, is such

Your sense of honor, I will not touch.

The courtiers and others, saw his humiliation

To display his triumph, was his fascination

Beating Husain’s head, with a cane of gold knob

He rejoiced with glee, as the prisoners sobbed.

Using the cane, on the lips of Husain

He chuckled, wickedly, without any shame

“Were not these lips, receiving kisses from Muhammad

The same lips, which are now lying in mud.”

“How delighted my fore-fathers must be

How happy, their souls, must be today, to see

I have avenged them, for all their defeats

By butchering Husain; a daring feat.”

“Whose head is this, may I ask, O King?

What crime, had committed, this human being

To deserve, this treatment, even after death

Woeful is the punishment, his family has met.”

An ambassador, of a foreign country, Abdul Wahab

Inquired of Yazid, on seeing the holocaust

“The head is of Prophet’s grandson Husain;

He, with his supporters, were all slain.”

“These are the ladies of the house of Prophet

Watching them in distress is, to me, a treat

Husain, and his friends, were put to sword

Opposition to my Caliphate, I can ill-afford.”

“I shall subject them, to such punishment

To the world, it would be a valuable lesson

None, shall question my sovereignty, hereafter

Their punishment, will be, no fun and laughter.”

“You have committed the greatest sin, O King!

I have not heard of such tortures and killings;

My people treat me with highest respect,

For being a descendent of their Prophet.”

He then turned toward Zainal Abedeen

“Ali, from what I have heard and seen

Your father, indeed, was the noblest soul

To fight this tyrant, was a courageous role.”

“I declare, my faith, in your esteemed religion

fully aware of the consequences of the decision,

I denounce the usurper, the incarnation of ‘devil’;

He is the fittest epitome of the highest evil.”

Yazid was mad with rage, smarting under insult

Most unexpected was the rebuke, staggering the result

“Drag away the Ambassador,” Yazid angrily demanded

“Chop off his head,” like a mad cap, he next commanded.

Pin drop silence prevailed; everyone was reserved

Gulping down cups of wine, to soothe his nerves

“You there,” he shouted at Imam Zainal Abedeen

“Your punishment shall be such, the world has not seen.”

“You shall pay dearly for his sins

for the insults and rebukes, flung by him

I shall chop off your head, here and now

To wreak vengeance, I have the know-how.”

On second thought, he added, trying to be tough

“No, no; killing you will not be enough

Your life, will be a living death, everyday

You will pine for death, even while you pray.”

In a feeble, but clear ringing voice,

Said Zainal Abedeen, “O tyrant do not rejoice

Worst torture, is to make our ladies stand,

Without any veils, in this Islamic land.”

“I am not frightened by your threats

The descendents of Prophet, have no fear of death

Those who love God, are severely tried by him,

To display their true faith and heaven win.”

The retort evoked spontaneous whispers of admiration

Despite his cunning nature, Yazid was visibly shaken

He feigned loud laughter to cover his embarrassment

He still tried to justify the unparalleled harassment.

“God inflicted this punishment on you all

for your father’s obduracy and defiance of my call

to accept my lawful authority, you are reluctant still

you got what you deserved, according to his will.”

“O tyrant, do not distort the words of God

to act with justice or to ride rough shod,

he gives opportunities to all women and men;

punishment ultimately over takes those with evil in them.”

Yazid was speechless; he could not reply

His mouth was sealed, much as he did try

A subservient courtier, anxious to curry favor

Bowed before him, thinking himself too clever.

“Your Majesty, your indulgence I crave

Bestow that girl, Sakina, on me as a slave.”

Zainab standing nearby, with her head bowed

Was furious, and infuriated as never before.

“You, wretched soul; no shame you have

Prophets grandchild, you wish to enslave

Is there none amongst you, even to protest

Against the shocking and shameless request.”

A gold embroidered curtain only ruffled in shame

Hind, Yazid’s favorite wife, entered the harem

Once, she had been a lady-in-waiting, to Zainab

A devout lady, a believer in Almighty Rab.

She still remembered Zainab, with devotion

Yazid knowing this had concealed his intention,

To kill Husain and his family’s enslavement;

She was unaware, of the tragic development.

Hearing Zainab’s voice, and talk of enslavement,

She rushed out, without veil, in a frenzied moment

“What is all this about, do let me know

Who can enslave them, except the lowest of the low.”

The action of his wife, was a daring feat

Coming without a veil, was against custom, indeed

Yazid, hurriedly shouted orders, dismissing the court

“Carry the captives to the darkest dungeon in the Fort.”

The good lady kept on questioning her husband

Who the prisoners were, she enquired and so on,

He gave her evasive replies, to allay her fears

The prisoners are not the Prophet’s near and dear.

## (13) A Rose Bud Fades Away

In the dark desolate dungeon, the caravan halted

The scorpions and snakes took fright and bolted

Zainab and Zainal Abedeen, prostrated themselves in prayer

Without a word of complaint, without any demur.

It was dark inside, despite the sun’s bright rays

The stone walls were damp, crumbling with decay

Looks of sorrow and despondency, was on each face

Of joy and laughter, there was not even a trace.

The faces depicted sufferings, beyond human endurance

Prayer was the solace, they enjoyed, without hindrance

A few stale morsels of bread and a little water

Was their daily ration, in these horrible quarters.

“Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage,”

Was equally true in that merciless land and cruel age

Though in shackles, every night their spirits soared high

To heights sublime, beyond all plains, in the heavenly sky.

Sakina, woke with a shriek, in the dead of the night

She had seen her father’s heavenly soothing light

“O Sakina, you have suffered enough, come with me

The days of your sufferings are over; O where is he?”

It was just a dream, what a disappointment!

It was not a reality, to her bewilderment

Her uncontrollable lamentations, gathered a crowd

The ladies also lost control and wailed aloud.

Hearing the wails, Yazid sent slaves to inquire

Pacing up and down, he had not yet retired

On knowing the cause, his crooked mind strived

A devilish scheme, he soon mischievously contrived.

Yazid’s men entered with a covered tray,

“I do not want food, please take it away

I want my father; promises he did give

Without taking me, why did he leave?”

They removed the cloth; Sakina beheld the face

Even in death, it was full of heavenly grace

With a cry, she flung herself on the wooden tray

Hugging to her heart, she snatched the face away.

Inconsolably, she bent down over the head

Putting, her cheeks, against that of her dad

Within a few moments, her sobbing had stopped

Her mortal remains, she had quietly dropped.

“How long will you lie on your father’s head?”

Zainab touched her hand; she was shockingly dead

Sakina had gone with her father, never to return

Husain had kept his promise, as he had always done!

## (14) The Triumph Of Truth

A day dawned, when there was a stir in the prison

The jailors were puzzled; what could be the reason

The Queen of Damascus, was visiting the prison

To even imagine such a thing, was an act of treason!

Zainal Abedeen was in prayers, a guard entered the cell

Fizza, the oldest amongst prisoners, he turned to tell

About the visit of Her Highness, Queen Hind, and to ensure,

That not a word of complaint was uttered, by way of censure.

With her ladies-in-waiting, Hind entered the cell

Gloomy, was the dungeon, unventilated and dark, as hell

With bowed heads, and faces covered with long tresses,

The ladies were sitting, with torn and tattered dresses.

An emaciated figure, with heavy chains and manacles

Was busy with prayer, though unable to stand in shackles

A lady, with her head, lay prostrate on a small grave

In a corner of prison, portraying the sad and pitiable tale.

Hind, was perplexed; she was dumb-founded

Approaching the grave, the lady she sounded

“My good lady, do let me know, who are you

For what crimes, you are behind the bar?”

“Which family you belong to? Whose grave is this?

Untold sufferings, your sorrowful face reveals.”

The lady burst into sobs; her lips were sealed

Gently stroking her head, Hind herself kneeled.

Another lady sat in a corner, surrounded by others

She must be the one, who was, perhaps, their elder

This was the lady, who had roared like a lion

To hurl defiance at the court of the tyrant.

“What are the reasons for your sufferings and plight”

Hind inquired of Zainab; her tone was so polite

“My husband is evading, annoyingly, my repeated inquiries

On grounds that they relate to governmental diaries.”

“Lady Fatima, I am seeing frequently in my dreams

In a most disconsolate state, she is, so it seems;

I am perplexed, I am unable to understand

What all this means. Explain to me if you can”

“In the laps of luxury, Hind, you are comfortably living,

Tortures, beyond human endurance, my children are facing;

You are, no doubt, utterly in the dark of what has happened,

To my near and dear ones, and my beloved son, Husain.”

“My Lady’s coming and her constant lamentations

Has it any connection with your incarceration

I really wonder, how can it at all be true

Prophet’s family, to do anything with you.”

The eyes of the two ladies met, for a moment

One depicting a soulful of agony and torment,

The other reflecting bewilderment and inquiring

Zainab burst into sobs, trying to control her feelings.

She had not recognised her, so much the better

It saved her the humiliation, to narrate the torture

She partially covered her face, with her long hair

Hoping that Hind would soon go away and leave her.

Hind, suddenly remembered that, she had seen

In better times, the venerable lady had been

With a gasp, she cried, “Are my eyes deceiving me?

Is that Lady Zainab, O no! How can it be?”

“How can I, even entertain such a thought?

I feel, I am getting demented, O my Lord!

For the sake of Lady Fatima, I, beseechingly, implore you

Are you related to Lady Zainab? Is it true?”

“Hind, Zainab died long ago on Karbala’s plain,

With youths of her family, who were slain;

The shadow of Zainab, is now before you

Those who can recognise her are, indeed, few.”

Covering her face, her tears, she tried to hide

Falling prostrate at her feet, Hind cried

“Lady, forgive my utterly unpardonable neglect”

Begging forgiveness, she expressed profound regret.

Zainal Abedeen had just completed his prayers;

Turning to him, “O my Imam, your forgiveness I crave,

It was sheer thoughtlessness, for not probing deep

I do not know how I could eat, drink or even sleep.”

“When my suspicion was aroused, on that first day

When someone demanded, the young girl, Sakina as a slave;

She must be the beloved daughter of my Lord Husain.

Was she enslaved, by some brute, with a wicked brain?”

Zainab stood up and going slowly towards Hind

“In vain, you are looking for my beloved Sakina

She is sleeping peacefully in that yonder grave

Relieved of sufferings, she had courageously braved.”

“May I ask, what was the cause of her untimely death?”

This fragrant rose bud withered away, unsung, unwept

She narrated the sufferings, she had bravely endured

How her earlobes kept bleeding, how her body turned blue.

Recounting her sufferings, Zainab and others were crying

Only one lady, sitting near the grave, was quietly lying

Seeing her losing consciousness, Zainab immediately rushed

Putting her head on her lap, she was very caressingly brushed.

Hind, ordered cold water, from her nearby palace

She sprinkled it on Umm Rabab’s ash white face

Opening her eyes with a dazed look, she glanced

She faintly uttered, as if she was in a trance.

Her grief stricken mind had created a protective shield

To resist the cruel impact, of what fate had purposefully built

To escape the grief laden atmosphere around the grave

Of her darling daughter, who had, all sufferings braved.

Zainab felt, she must be awakened from this stupor

Or else she would lose her sorrowing mind, for ever;

She gently explained, that Sakina had joined her father,

At this, she returned, to the word of reality with a shudder!

Hind, excusing herself, to the palace she hurried

Moawiyah, her son, was the only male issue of Yazid

Only they had access to him, without announcement

They found Yazid, pacing up and down, himself denouncing.

Yazid was surprised to see Hind’s hair disheveled;

Her eyes full of tears, charges she defiantly leveled

Both mother and son, spared no words to make it plain,

“Set free this very day, the family of Imam Husain.”

The cup of cruelty had got filled to the brim

Yazid was aware, the situation was getting grim;

Realization had dawned that time was running out

Nemesis might overtake him, unless he had stopped the rot.

He was having nightmares, with Prophet upbraiding him

Every day, he was having most horrifying and frightening dreams

“O Yazid, what had my Husain done to deserve your vengeance

What made you bestow upon my family such inhuman penance.”

“Is your hatred, for me and my family, not yet satisfied

Such tortures, you are inflicting, as cannot be narrated.”

He was brooding about ways, to resolve the dilemma

Which was his own creation, a self created drama!

Now his own son, his own flesh and blood

With Queen Hind, was flinging at him mud

The time was now ripe to act with grace

A little delay, and he would lose the race.

“A strange way for pleading for mercy, you have

Could you not find, a better way, to remonstrate

I accede, to your request, to set the prisoners free

I shall summon my court and announce my decree.”

“Now, both of you may rest, in peace, till they are free

Let me have some respite, after the shock you have given me.”

“Peace, did you say?” in surprise, Hind burst out and cried

“Can we ever have peace, after knowing what has transpired?”

“For these unforgivable atrocities and unpardonable sins

Make best amends, to Lady Zainab and Zainal Abedeen

Restore them to the place of honour, which is their right.”

It is through them, that God sheds His Merciful Light!

Decked, in a jewelled dress of silk and brocade

Yazid sat on the throne; of solid gold it was made

With full display of regalia, of Ommayad’s courts

It was late in the evening; all had assembled in the Fort.

With all solemnity, the ushers announced in the Fort

The grandson of Prophet Muhammad, was entering the court

His garments tattered, but with dignity in his bearing

Zainal Abedeen entered, with everyone admiring his daring.

There was a radiance on his countenance; a “halo” on his face

It inspired awe in their hearts; they stood up out of grace

Yazid got up from his throne, seei9ng the spontaneous gesture

Impelled by an uncontrollable force of undiscriminating nature.

With a slow halting gait, Zainal Abedeen walked to the pulpit

His aching lacerated legs, made walking an ordeal, a bit

The rustling of the curtain, indicated the ladies had entered

Seated behind the pulpit were the ladies, with Zainab centered.

Yazid offered condolences; his words sounded hollow

Cursing his lieutenants; he tried to paint a “halo”

He pleaded innocence, as if he had in it no hand

He expressed profound regret, for all that happened.

He told the Imam, that they were all know free

He offered any amount, they wished as blood money

Seeing the Imam’s face turning red with rage

He urged it in the name of religious usage.

Zainab, who was listening from behind the curtain, cried out

“On the day of judgement, you shall be answerable, no doubt

You offer, what you possess, on that day, to Prophet Muhammad

It is not for us, to accept any money, for the Martyr’s blood!”

Yazid was abashed by the daughter of Ali’s bold retort

He had seen her courage, even as a prisoner in his court

He changed the subject and addressing Zainal Abedeen

He declared, “You are free to demand from me anything.”

“At your disposal, is a house of status and position befitting

Highest honor and respect will be extended to you beings.”

“All we want is the severed heads of our near and dear ones

Our looted property and clothes, though tattered and torn.”

Yazid, expressed extreme surprise, at the simple request

They had not even ornaments, at the time of their arrest

He could not see anything of value, in the things looted;

The immense sentimental value, which in them, was rooted.

He ordered restored of all their belongings, forthwith

He endeavored their every desire, every wish, to meet

Medina, via Karbala, they wished, to immediately return

Canopied camels and best horses; the purchase was done.

The local citizens paid their respectful condolences

To serve them, they vied with one another, for chances

“Stay on in Damascus, for some time”, they all jointly pleaded.

For burial rites, their presence in Karbala, was needed.

The entire city turned out to bid them adieu

Hind, had remained all along with Zainab, now knew

Time of parting was near; was unimaginably sad,

When you live and venerate someone, more than your dad.

She begged for forgiveness, for the past neglect, from each one

She was about to leave, when came a call from someone

Umm Rabab expressed, to Zainab, her departing wish

To visit the grave of Sakina, to bestow a farewell kiss!

The disconsolate mother fell on Sakina’s tiny grave

With a heart-rending shriek; vent to her feelings she gave

Turning to Hind, and other ladies of the unhappy town,

“Occasionally, offer Fateha,” she cried, and fell in a swoon.

## (15) The Savior Of Islam

Sweet melodies blew the heavenly horn

A joyous tiding; Husain was born

The sun rejoiced; the moon was gay

Each in its orbit, each did away.

The waters rippled; the wind was all play

Never were they, so happy and gay

It was Muhammad’s light and Ali’s ray

The Savior of Islam, had come to stay.

A gift to Muhammad, from his Lord

A son to Ali, the sun of God

A fruit of love, to the Lady of Light

A brother to Hassan, to cause him delight.

Born was he, out of God’s grace

A beacon light, to the human race

A soul of souls, whom God made pure

With heavenly love, the world to cure.

The Prophet rejoiced; his eyes shed tears

For here was one, to him most dear

For here was one, for Islam’s sake

His life and all, would one day stake.

For truth and justice, he would fight

In cause of God, without respite

For he was one, decreed by God

To lay his life, for the love of Lord.

The heavens were glad, for such a one

The Lord should choose, Ali’s son

For best was he; the world had seen

Whose vision one craves, even in dream.

“Fed with love, by the Lady of Light”

he got the best, of what was right

and from his father, the ‘Godly Knight’

he drew his strength and his might.

But Muhammad did give, beyond measure

All that he had, as his treasure

For he was his treasure, beyond doubt

As he often publicly proclaimed aloud.

“Love them my Lord, I do implore,

Who love Husain and him adore

He is of me and I of him”

Such a bond, the world had not seen!

He sucked his tongue, in playful jest

His breast he made, a place of rest

The reins he made, his curls of hair

His back he made, a stately mare.

Such was the love, the Prophet bore

For he was his grandson, and more

An anchor sheet, to all who care

To live and be, ‘just and fair.’

The life he lived; the path he led

He earned by sweat; the poor he fed

Not a pie had he, that he kept

But the poor he gave, ere he slept.

A king of kings, in simple attire

The crowns of world, he never aspired

To the uncared widow, and the needy orphan

He gave his all, and all so often.

Many a day, he tightened his loins

To buy his own bread, he had no coins

So noble of heart so pure a soul

To please his Lord, was his goal.

He lived for Lord and His delight

He toiled by day and prayed by night

The simplest of life, he liked to live

The best of things, he liked to give.

His life was such, a guiding light

To know the wrong and know the right

And such a soul, was asked to bow

To one who was, the lowest of low.

Yazid, the godless son of a crafty father

Was proclaimed a king or Caliph rather

Money and wine, most lavishly flowed

Till all the worldly heads had bowed.

But not the heads, who had bowed

To God alone, who had showed

The path of right, through Islam’s ray

Eighty and odd, among them, were they.

To save Islam from its sinking depth

Too glad were they, to face death

But to the ungodly one, they refused to bow

Undaunted and unnerved, they faced the foe.

It was not a fight, for a kingdom

Nor a family feud, as is not unseldom

It was a fight for principles and truth

As imbibed by Islam, in its holy book.

If he had bowed to the ungodly one

Riches and honor he would have won

Islam would then have been in name

Its seal., would have adorned, the devil’s reign.

The time soon came for their test

They were ready to lay their best

With women and babes, handful were they

Ready to face thousands, in battle array.

To cut off water, was the only way

To weaken them, they thought, for the fray

So frightened were they, of Ali’s son

To fight them they knew, was no fun.

Husain was fully alive, to things at stake

He knew well, his family’s fate

He was aware, that his was the Martyr’s cup

His end was near, his time was up!

The sad day dawned; the heavens were aghast

Truth was at stake; the die had been cast

Never had they witnessed, so supreme a test;

Falsehood at its worst versus truth at its best.

The wind was aggrief, it tore each leaf

Wild was its anger, wild with grief

It shook the river by its throat

The waves, it tossed all things afloat.

The sun glared down, wild with fire

It burned with rage; fierce was its ire

If only it could make itself somehow free

From the chains of bonds of heaven’s decree.

The river was ashamed; hapless was its plight

Destiny’s decree, how could it dare fight

It’s waters were controlled, by the rule of might

Who cared a nought, for wrong or right.

They guarded the river; they threw a ring

To deny water was worst of a vindictive thing

The hounds, they drank, and so did the drunks

Innocent babes; parched were their tongues.

For three torturous days and three night

Muhammad’s beloveds were in waterless plight

Young babes of most holy and innocent fare

Wailing and whining, the torture they share.

O Lord of Lords! What a pathetic sight

Yazid’s hordes, displaying their might

Thousands and thousands of blood-thirsty hounds

Waiting to pounce on eighty odd crowns.

While handful of souls, engrossed in prayer

Unheedful of them; a sight so divinely rare

Young and old, they prayed to Merciful God

With humble devotion, His help they sought.

To give them strength; no, not to fight

But to be content, in whatever plight

For well they knew, their role of life

Was to save Islam, from being knifed!

The battle he lost, the fight he won

Yazid’s title of sanctity was shorn

Islam’s plant survived the onslaught

Husain’s blood had watered the drought.

The revenge was complete, so it seemed

Abu Sufyan’s pledge to Satan was redeemed

The worldly eyes could, however, hardly see

Husain’s blood had kept Islam pure and free.

## (16) Tributes And Prayers

My respectful condolence to the dearest sister of Husain

My tearful home, to the wife of Abdulla Tayyar, O Zainab

Never was a woman, subjected to such sorrow and pain,

As the daughter of Ali and Fatima, O Zainab!

Aun and Muhammad, two unblossomed flowers of youth

Ali Akbar, was no less dear, than your own sons O Zainab

You sacrificed them all, at the altar of truth,

So that, Islam may be rid of the Satan’s hold, O Zainab!

The tortures you bore; the insults you faced,

Would have torn asunder any heart, O Zainab

You did not flinch, even in grace,

To the worst of ignominies and cruelties, O Zainab!

Your unique faith in God; your invaluable support,

Enabled Husain to sacrifice his all, O Zainab

Between brother and sister, never was such a rapport

Your indomitable will, sustained his mission, O Zainab!

Your heroic efforts, saved his sacrifices from going in vain

Your courage, saved his lineage from extinction, O Zainab

You presented the issues involved, in the sacrifices of Husain

Most eloquently, and in proper perspective, O Zainab!

Your virtues are endless, as eternity, and so, till then,

You will be mourned and gratefully remembered, O Zainab

Pray to God, to grant my wish to serve Husain

And you, my lady, in this world, and the next, O Zainab!

Aameen.

## (17) Names of Martyrs who sacrificed their lives at Karbala for the sake of the lofty principles of Islam as mentioned in “Ziyarah al-Nahiyyah”

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | Imam Husain ibn Ali (Amir al-Mu’mineen) grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) (killed by Shimr Dhiljaushan) |
| 2. | Ali al-Akbar ibn Husain ibn Ali (killed by Murrah bin Munqiz bin Noman al-Abdi) |
| 3. | Abdullah (also known as Ali al-Asghar) ibn Husain ibn Ali (killed by Harmala ibn Kahil al-Asadi) |
| 4. | Abdullah ibn Ali (Amir al-Mu’mineen) (killed by Hani bin Thubaet al-Hazrami) |
| 5. | Abul Fadhl al-Abbas ibn Ali (Amir al-Mu’mineen) (killed by Yazeed bin Ruqaad al-Heeti and Hakeem bin Tufail al-Taai) |
| 6. | Ja’far ibn Ali (Amir al-Mu’mineen) (killed by Hani bin Thubaet al-Hazrami) |
| 7. | Uthman ibn Ali (Amir al-Mu’mineen) (killed by Khooli bin Yazeed al-Adhbahi al-Ayadi and Abaani al-Daarimi) |
| 8. | Muhammad ibn Ali (Amir al-Mu’mineen) (killed by Abaani al-Daarimi) |
| 9. | Abi Bakr ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali (killed by Abdullah bin Aqabah al-Ghanavi) |
| 10. | Abdullah ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali (killed by Harmala bin Kahil al-Asadi) |
| 11. | Qasim ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali (killed by Umar bin Sa’d bin Nufail al-Azdi) |
| 12. | Aun ibn Abdullah ibn Ja’far al-Tayyar (killed by Abdullah bin Kutayya al-Nabahani) |
| 13. | Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Ja’far al-Tayyar (killed by Aamir bin Nahshal al-Tameemi) |
| 14. | Ja’far ibn Aqeel (killed by Khalid bin Asad al-Johani) |
| 15. | Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Aqeel (killed by Aamir bin Sa’sa’ah) |
| 16. | Abu Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Aqeel (killed by Amr bin Sudaih Saedavi) |
| 17. | Muhammad ibn Abu Saeed ibn Aqeel (killed by Laqeet bin Naashir al-Johani) |
| 18. | Sulaiman, slave of Imam Husain (killed by Sulaiman bin Auf Hazrami) |
| 19. | Qaarib, slave of Imam Husain |
| 20. | Munjeh, slave of Imam Husain |
| 21. | Muslim ibn Ausajah al-Asadi (killed by Abdullah al-Dhubabi and Abdullah KhashkaraalBajali) |
| 22. | Saeed ibn Abdullah al-Hanafi |
| 23. | Bishr ibn Amr al-KHazrami |
| 24. | Yazeed ibn al-Haseen (reciter of Qur’an) |
| 25. | Imran ibn al-Kalb al-Ansari |
| 26. | Na’eem ibn al-Ajlan al-Ansari |
| 27. | Zuhair ibn al-Qain al-Bajali |
| 28. | Amr ibn Qurzah al-Ansari |
| 29. | Habeeb ibn Madhahir al-Asadi |
| 30. | Hurr ibn Yazeed al-Reyahi |
| 31. | Abdullah ibn al-Umair al-Kalbi |
| 32. | Nafe ibn al-Hilal al-Jamali al-Muradi |
| 33. | Anas ibn Kahil ibn al-Harth al-Asadi |
| 34. | Qais ibn al-Mussahar al-Saedawi |
| 35. | Abdullah ibn Urwah ibn al-Harraaq al-Ghifaaree |
| 36. | Abdul Rahman ibn Urwah ibn al-Harraaq al-Ghifaaree |
| 37. | Shabeeb ibn Abdullah Nahshali |
| 38. | Jaun, slave of Abu Dharr al-Ghifaree |
| 39. | Hujjaj ibn Zaid Sa’di |
| 40. | Qasit ibn Zuhair al-Tha’labee |
| 41. | Kursh (Muqsit) ibn Zuhair al-Thalabee |
| 42. | Kinaanah ibn Ateeq |
| 43. | Dhargham ibn Maalik |
| 44. | Jowain ibn Maalik al-Dhabaai |
| 45. | Zaid ibn Thubait al-Qaesi |
| 46. | Abdullah ibn Zaid ibn Thubait al-Qaesi |
| 47. | Ubaidullah ibn Zaid ibn Thubait al-Qaesi |
| 48. | Amir ibn Muslim |
| 49. | Qa’nab ibn Amr al-Namari |
| 50. | Salim, slave of Amir ibn Muslim |
| 51. | Saif ibn Malik |
| 52. | Zuhair ibn Bashi al-Khath’ami |
| 53. | Zaid ibn Me’qal al-Jo’afi |
| 54. | Hujjaj ibn Masrooq al-Jo’afi |
| 55. | Mas’ood ibn Hajjaj |
| 56. | Son (name not known) of Mas’ood ibn Hajjaj |
| 57. | Majma’ ibn Abdullah al-Aezi |
| 58. | Ammar ibn Hassan ibn Shuraib al-Taai |
| 59. | Hayyan ibn Haarith al-Salmaani al-Azdi |
| 60. | Jundab ibn Hujair al-Khanlani |
| 61. | Umar ibn Khalid al-Saedaawi |
| 62. | Saeed, slave of Umar ibn Khalid |
| 63. | Yazid ibn Ziad ibn Mazahi al-Kindi |
| 64. | Zaahir, slave of Amir ibn Humuq al-Khuzaa’ee |
| 65. | Jabalah ibn Ali al-Shaybani |
| 66. | Saalim, slave of Bani Medinat al-Kalbi |
| 67. | Aslam ibn Khateer al-Azdi |
| 68. | Zuhair ibn Sulaim al-Azdi |
| 69. | Qasim ibn Habeeb al-Azdi |
| 70. | Umar ibn al-Ohdooth al-Hazrami |
| 71. | Abu Thamaamah, Umar ibn Abdullah al-Saaedi |
| 72. | Hanzalah ibn As’ad al-Shaami |
| 73. | Abdul-Rahman ibn Abdullah al-Arhabi |
| 74. | Ammaar ibn Abu Salaamah al-Hamdaami |
| 75. | Aabis ibn Shabeeb al-Shaakiree |
| 76. | Shaozab, slave of Shaaki |
| 77. | Shabeeb ibn Haarith ibn Saree |
| 78. | Maalik ibn Abdullah ibn Saree |
| 79. | Sawwar ibn Abi Uman al-Nohami al-Hamdani.[[4]](#footnote-5) |
| 80. | Amar ibn Abdullah al-Junda’i[[5]](#footnote-6) |

Note:

1) The learned author, Maharaj Kumar M. A. Haider Khan, in his article, captioned “The Roll Call of Martyrs” published in the magazine “Muslim Review” of January 1972, has, inter-alia, observed as under:

“The Ziyarat-e-Nahiyyah, as it has come down to us, omits certain names of martyrs, although they are well known for their participation in the holy struggle at Karbala. This omission may be due to some lapse of memory on the part of reporters or inaccuracy or inadvertence of copyist”

2) The names of ‘Martyrs’ mentioned above, have been compiled from the aforesaid article appearing in the magazine published by ‘Madrasatul Waizeen’ of Lucknow (India). The author is thankful to the said Waizeen for the information.

# Opinions expressed by distinguished Non-Muslims referred to above on the Martyrdom of Imam Husain Ibn Ali (a.s.)

(as appearing in the book captioned ‘Islam’ published by my learned Brother in Islam Hashamali Haji Sharif of Pakistan.)

#### 1. Mahatama Gandhi (Father of Indian Nation)

“My admiration for the noble sacrifice of Imam Husain (a.s.) as a martyr abides, because he accepted death and the torture of thirst for himself, for his sons and for his whole family but did not submit to unjust authorities.”

#### 2. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (The First Prime Minister of India).

“There is a universal appeal in this martyrdom. Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.) sacrificed his all, but he refused to submit to a tyrannicalgovernment. He never gave any weight to the fact that his material force was far less in comparison with that of the enemy. The power of faith to him is the greatest force, which regards all material force as nothing. This sacrifice is a beacon light of guidance for every community and every nation.”

#### 3. Dr. Rajendra Prasad (ex-Congress President and later President of India).

“The Karbala tragedy is a historical event of human martyrdom of such importance that it can never be forgotten. It shall continue to influence the lives of billions of men and women of the world throughout the ages. The event is commemorated in India with complete reverence, not only Muslims participate in the rites, but also the non-Muslims evince great interest therein equally well.

#### 4. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu (The Nightingale of India)

“Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.) gave to the world some thirteen hundred years ago a message and way of life, which was unique and perfect and of which we are now celebrating the memory. I do not possess the words nor has any language of the world the eloquence and comprehension, which can serve as the vehicle of expression for the sentiments of reverence, which I entertain in my mind for this magnificient martyr. Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.) does not belong only to the Muslims but he is a treasure, common to all the, creatures of the Almighty Allah. I congratulate the Muslims that among them have been such a personality, who is acknowledged and revered equally by all communities of the world.

#### 5. Sir Byramjee Jeejeebhoy, Knight (one of the leading Parsi personalities of India)

“The sacrifice that Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.) gave in the desert of Karbala thirteen hundred years ago is an example to us all, giving us impetus and intution to do our bit when circumstances, oblige us to face evil against truth. Imam Husain with his 72 followers achieved everlasting victory in his defeat, which it is impossible for any great force to acquire-at any cost. Imam Husain (a.s.) proved to the world, for all times that numbers do not count when the real spirit is in action with a definite purpose and determination.”

#### 6. E. G. Browne (A Literary History of Persia)

“A reminder of the blood stained field of Karbala, where the grandson of the Apostle of God fell at length tortured by thirst and surrounded by the bodies of his murdered kinsmen, has been at anytime since then sufficient to evoke, even in the most lukewarm and heedless, the deepest emotion, the most frantic grief and an exaltation of sprit before which pain, danger, and death shrink to unconsidered trifles.”

#### 7. Edward Gibbon (Decline and fall of the Roman Empire).

“In a distant age and clime the tragic scene of the death of Imam Husain (a.s.) will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader.” “In the history of Islam, especially the life of Imam Husain (a.s.) stands unique, unapproached and unapproachable by any one. Without his martyrdom, Islam would have extinguished long ago. He was the saviour of Islam and it was due to his martyrdom that Islam took such a deep root, which it is neither possible nor even imaginable to destrov now.”

#### 8. Thomas Carlyle (Hero and Hero-worship)

“The Best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Imam Husain (a.s.) and his followers were the rigid believers of God, they illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to truth and falsehood. The victory of Imam Husain (a.s.) despite his minority marvels me.”

#### 9. Charles Dickens

“If Imam Husain (a.s.) fought to quench »his worldly desires, (as alleged by certain Christian critics’) then I do not understand why his sisters, wives and children accompained him. It stands to reason therefore that he sacrificed purely for Islam.”

#### 10. Washington Irving

“It was possible for Imam Husain (a.s.) to save his life by submitting himself to the will of Yazid. But his responsibility as a reformer did not allow him to accept Yazid’s Caliphate. He therefore prepared to embrace all sorts of discomfort and inconvenience in order to deliver Islam from the hands of the Omayyads. Under the blazing sun, on the parched land and against the stifling heat of Arabia, stood the immortal Imam Husain (a.s.).”

1. This heading is given by the author himself and is not a part of the Quranic Verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Sura II: 153-157. The Holy Quran Interpreted by A. J. Arberry [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. ‘Allama Kamaluddin Damiri’ in his ‘Hayaatul Haywaan’, Vol. 1, Page 55 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Wounded Martyr who was captured and died in prison. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Pierced together with Martyr No. 79 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)