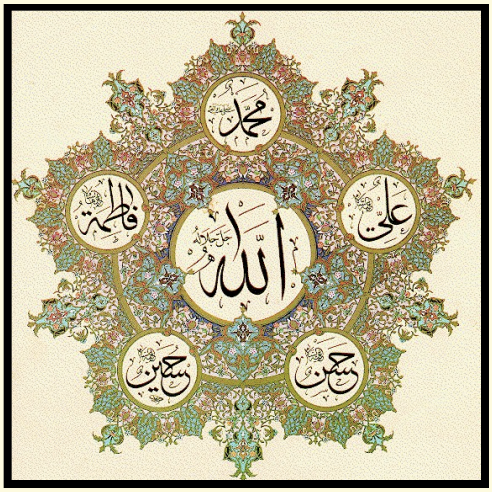
كربلاء

Karbalāāʾ:
Action, Reaction, Action



Remembering the Struggle
of
Sayyidinā al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ
from the perspective of
ʾAhlu-s-Sunna wa-l-Jamaʿa

Notes for a talk given by:
Sẖaykẖ ʿAbdullāh Noorudeen Durkee
at
Masjid al-Huda in Columbia, South Carolina
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Abū Dẖarr al-Gẖifārī ﷺ quoted the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying:
"The similitude of my progeny among you
is that of the Ship of Nuḥ ﷺ;
whoever boards it is set free and whoever does not perishes."



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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

قُل لَّآ أَسئَلُكُم عَلَيهِ أَجرًا إِلاَّ المَوَدَّةَ فِي القُربىَ

qul-lāā-as-ʾalukum ᶜalayhi ʾajåran ʾilla-l-mawaddata fi-l-qurbā

Say,"I do not ask any reward of you
save the love of those who are near to me."
(Sūrah asḫ-Sḫūrā 42:23)

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا
وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ
لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

fa-man hāāājjaka fīhi mim baᶜdi mā jāāʾaka mina-l-ᶜilmi
fa-qul taᶜalaw nadåᶜu ʾabånāāʾanā wa ʾabånāāʾakum
wa nisāāʾana wa nisāāʾakum wa ʾañfusanā wa ʾañfusakum
tḫumma nabåtahil fa-najåᶜal-laᶜnata-llāhi ᶜala-l-kādḫibīn

And whoever argues with you after there has come to you knowledge
then say,"Come! We shall call our sons and your sons
and our women and your women and our selves and yourselves
and then we shall pray humbly and invoke the
Curse of Allāh on those who lie."
(Sūrah ʾĀl ʾImran 3:61)

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

ʾinnamā yurīdu-llāhu li-yudḫhiba ᶜankumu-r-rijåsa
ʾahla-l-bayti wa yuṭahirakum taṭåhīrā

Allāh only wishes to remove impurity from you
oh People of the House
and to purify you with a thorough purification.
(Sūrah al-ʾAḥzāb 33:33)

ʾʾĀᶜisḫa ﵂ reported that the Prophet ﷺ went out one morning wearing a striped cloak of the black camel's hair and that there came along Ḥasan b. ᶜAli ﵇. He wrapped him under it, then came al-Ḥusayn ﵇ and he wrapped him under it along with the other one.

Then came Fatima ﷺ and he took her under it, then came ʿAli ﷺ and he also took him under it and then said: Allāh ﷻ only desires to take away any uncleanliness from you, Oh people of the household, and purify you (with a thorough purification).” (33:33) Ṣāḥiḥ Muslim: Book 031, Number 5955

[3]Ibn Kaṯīr, as-Suyuti, Bayḥaqi, and al Kẖatīb al-Bagẖdadī (الخطيب البغدادي) in ‘*Tarikẖ al-Bagẖdad*’, have quoted Umm Salma ﷺ as having said, “The verse, ’Oh People of the Prophet’s House.....’, was revealed in my house and Fāṭima, ʿAlī, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn ﷺ were in the room. The Prophet ﷺ spread his cloak on them and said: ‘These are the members of my family. (O Allāh!) Remove uncleanness from them and make them pure’”. And Ḥakim too has quoted Umm Salma ﷺ in ’*Mustadrak*’ as having said, “This verse (33:33) was revealed in my house”.

When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ noticed that a blessing from Allāh ﷻ was going to come down, he told Safiyya ﷺ (one of his wives): “Call to me! Call to me!” Safiyya ﷺ said: ‘Call who, Oh Messenger of Allāh?’ He said: ‘Call to me my Ahlu-l-Bayt who are ʿAlī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn ﷺ.’ Thus we sent for them and they came to him. Then the Prophet ﷺ spread his cloak over them, and raised his hand (toward the sky) saying: ‘Oh Allāh! These are my family, so bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad.’ And Allāh ﷻ, to whom belongs Might and Majesty, revealed: ‘Allāh only wishes to remove impurity from you, oh People of the House and to purify you with a thorough purification. (33:33).’”

1. *al-Mustadrak* by al-Hakim, Chapter of”Understanding (the virtues) of the Companions, v3, p148. The author then wrote:”This tradition is authentic (*ṣaḥih*) based on the criteria of the two Sẖaykẖs (al-Bukẖarī and Muslim) ﷺ.“

2. Talkẖis of al-Mustadrak, by al-Dẖahabī, v3, p148

3. Usul Gẖabah, v3, p33

Ḥakīm, too, narrates that Umm Salma ﷺ said, ‘Oh Prophet of Allāh! Am I not one of the members of your family?’

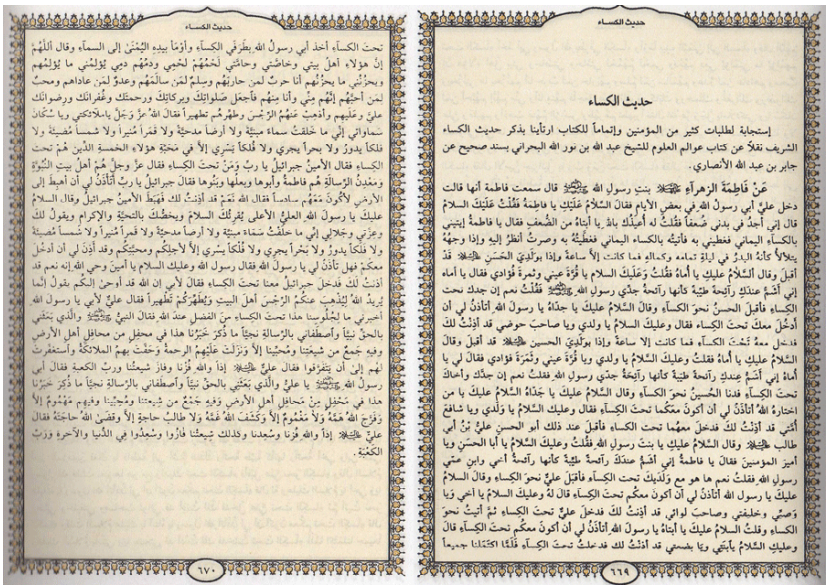
The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: “You have a good future but only these are the members of my family. Oh Lord! The members of my family are more deserving.”

Tirmiḍẖī narrated in his ’*Ṣaḥīh*’ in the chapter relating to the attainments of Sayyida Fāṭimah az-Zahra ﷺ and similarly in the ’*Riaz al-Nuzrah*’ and ’*Taḥzib al-Taḥzib*’ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, “O Allāh! These are the members of my family. Ward off uncleanness from them and make them pure.”

The Prophet ﷺ took ᶜAlī by the hand and said: “Whomsoever master (*mawla*) I am, ᶜAlī ؑ is his master, O Allāh! love him who loves ᶜAlī ؑ, and be the enemy of the enemy of ᶜAlī ؑ; help him who helps Ali, and forsake him who forsake ᶜAlī ؑ.” *Tafsir-ul’-kabīr* vol.12, pp 49-50, by Fakẖur-d-dīn ar-Razi

ʾImām Muslim related from Anās ؓ that he said: “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: ‘None of you will truly believe until I am more beloved to him than his family, wealth and all the people.’”

Here I include another ḥadīṯẖ of Sayyida Fāṭimah az-Zahra ﷺ authenticated by ʾImām Jafar as-Ṣādiq ؑ:



حديث الكساء

إستجابة لطلبات كثير من المؤمنين وإتماماً للكتاب ارتأينا بذكر حديث الكساء الشريف نقلاً عن كتاب عوالم العلوم للشيخ عبد الله بن نور الله البحراني بسند صحيح عن جابر بن عبد الله الأنصاري.

عَنْ فَاطِمَةَ الزهراءِ عليها السلام بنت رسولِ الله ﷺ قال سمعت فاطمة أنها قالت دخل عليَّ أبي رسولُ الله في بعضِ الأيام فقالَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يا فاطِمَةُ فَقُلْتُ عَلَيْكَ السلامُ قال إني أجدُ في بدني ضُعفاً فَقُلْتُ له أُعيذُكَ باللهِ يا أبَتاهُ من الضُعفِ فقال يا فاطمةُ إيتيني بالكساءِ اليماني فغطيني به فأتيتُه بالكساءِ اليماني فغطَّيتُه به وصرتُ أنظرُ إليه وإذا وجهُهُ يتلألأ كأنهُ البدرُ في إبانِ تمامه وكمالِه فما كانت إلاَّ ساعةً وإذا بولَدَيَّ الحَسَنِ عليه السلام قد أقبلَ وقالَ السَّلامُ عليكَ يا أباهُ قُلْتُ وَعَلَيْكَ السلامُ يا قُرَّةَ عيني وثمرةَ فؤادي فقال يا أماه إني أشَمُّ عندَكِ رائحةً طيّبةً كأنها رائحةُ جدّي رسولِ الله ﷺ قُلْتُ نعم إن جدكَ تحت الكِساءِ فأقبلَ الحسنُ نحوَ الكساءِ وقالَ السَّلامُ عليكَ يا جدّاهُ يا رسولَ الله أتأذنُ لي أن أدخُلَ معكَ تحتَ الكِساءِ فقال وعليكَ السلامُ يا ولدي ويا صاحبَ حوضي قد أذِنْتُ لكَ فدخلَ معهُ تحتَ الكِساءِ فما كانت إلا ساعةً وإذا بولَدَيَّ الحسين عليه السلام قد أقبلَ وقالَ السَّلامُ عليكَ يا أباهُ قُلْتُ وعليكَ السَّلامُ يا ولدي ويا قُرَّةَ عيني وثَمَرَةَ فؤادي فقالَ لي يا أماهُ إني أشَمُّ عندكِ رائحةً طيّبةً كأنها رائحةُ جدّي رسولِ الله فقلتُ نعم إن جدَّكَ وأخاكَ تحتَ الكِساءِ فدنا الحُسينُ نحوَ الكساءِ وقال السَّلامُ عليكَ يا جدّاهُ السَّلامُ عليكَ يا من اختارهُ اللهُ أتأذنُ لي أن أكونَ معكُما تحتَ الكِساءِ فقال وعليكَ السَّلامُ يا وَلَدي ويا شافعُ أُمَّتي قد أذِنْتُ لكَ فدخلَ معهُما تحت الكساءِ فأقبلَ عند ذلك أبو الحسنِ عليُّ بنُ أبي طالب عليه السلام وقال السَّلامُ عليكَ يا بنتَ رسولِ الله قُلْتُ وعليكَ السَّلامُ يا أبا الحسَنِ ويا أميرَ المؤمنين فقال يا فاطمةُ إني أشَمُّ عندَكِ رائحةً طيّبةً كأنها رائحةُ أخي وابنِ عمّي رسولِ الله فقلتُ نعم ها هو مع وَلَدَيكَ تحت الكِساءِ فأقبلَ عليٌّ نحوَ الكِساءِ وقال السَّلامُ عليكَ يا رسولَ الله أتأذنُ لي أن أكونَ معكُم تحتَ الكِساءِ قال لهُ وعليكَ السلامُ يا أخي ويا وَصيّي وخليفتي وصاحبَ لوائي قد أذِنْتُ لكَ فدخلَ عليٌّ تحتَ الكِساءِ ثمَّ أتبتُ نحوَ الكساءِ وقلتُ السلامُ عليكَ يا أبَتاهُ يا رسولَ الله أتأذنُ لي أن أكونَ معكُم تحتَ الكِساءِ قالَ وعليكِ السَّلامُ يا بُنَيَّتي ويا بضعتي قد أذِنْتُ لكِ فدخلتُ تحتَ الكِساءِ فلمّا اكتملنا جميعاً

حديث الكساء

تحتَ الكساءِ أخذ أبي رسولُ الله بطَرَفي الكِساءِ وأوْمأ بيدِهِ اليُمْنَى إلى السماءِ وقال اللَّهُمَّ إنَّ هؤلاءِ أهلُ بيتي وخاصَّتي وحامَّتي لَحْمُهُمْ لَحْمي ودَمُهُم دمي يؤلِمُني ما يُؤلِمُهم ويحزُنُني ما يحزُنُهم أنا حربٌ لمَن حاربَهُم وسِلمٌ لمَن سالَمَهُم وعدوٌ لمَن عاداهم ومحبٌ لمَن أحبَّهُم إنَّهُم مِنّي وأنا مِنهُم فاجعَل صَلواتِكَ وبركاتِكَ ورحمتَكَ وغُفرانَكَ ورضوانَكَ عليَّ وعليهِم واذهِبْ عَنهُمُ الرِّجسَ وطَهِّرهُم تطهيراً فقال اللهُ عزَّ وَجَلَّ يا ملائكتي ويا سُكّانَ سَماواتي إنّي ما خلقتُ سماءً مبنيّةً ولا أرضاً مدحيّةً ولا قمراً منيراً ولا شمساً مُضيئةً ولا فلكاً يدورُ ولا بحراً يجري ولا فُلكاً يَسْري إلاَّ في محبّةِ هؤلاءِ الخمسةِ الذين هُم تحتَ الكساءِ فقال الأمينُ جبرائيلُ يا ربِّ ومَنْ تحتَ الكساءِ فقال عزَّ وجلَّ هُمْ أهلُ بيتِ النُّبوّةِ ومَعدِنُ الرِّسالةِ هُم فاطمةُ وأبوها وبعلُها وبنُوها فقال جبرائيلُ يا ربِّ أتأذَنُ لي أن أهبطَ إلى الأرضِ لأكونَ معَهُم سادساً فقال الله نَعَمْ قد أذِنْتُ لك فَهَبَطَ الأمينُ جبرائيلُ وقال السلامُ عليكَ يا رسولَ الله العليُّ الأعلى يُقرِئُكَ السلامَ ويخُصُّكَ بالتحيّةِ والإكرامِ ويقولُ لكَ وعِزَّتي وجَلالي إني ما خلقتُ سَماءً مبنيّةً ولا أرضاً مدحيّةً ولا قمراً منيراً ولا شمساً مُضيئةً ولا فلكاً يدورُ ولا بحراً يجري ولا فُلْكاً يَسْري إلاَّ لأجلِكُم ومحبّتِكُم وقد أذِنَ لي أن أدخُلَ معكُم فهل تأذَنُ لي يا رسولَ الله فقال رسول الله وعليك السلام يا أمينَ وحي الله إنه نعم قد أذِنَ لكَ فدخلَ جبرائيلُ معنا تحتَ الكساءِ فقالَ لأبي إن الله قد أوحى الكُم يقولُ إنما يُريدُ اللهُ لِيُذهِبَ عنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أهلَ البيتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُم تَطْهيراً فقال عليٌّ لأبي يا رسولَ الله أخبِرني ما لِمَنْزِلَتِنا هذا تحتَ الكِساءِ مِنَ الفضلِ عندَ الله فقال النبيُّ ﷺ والذي بَعَثَني بالحقِّ نبيّاً وأصطفاني بالرِّسالةِ نجيّاً ما ذُكِرَ خَبَرُنا هذا في محفلٍ من محافلِ أهلِ الأرضِ وفيهِ جَمعٌ من شيعَتِنا ومُحِبّينا إلاَّ ونَزَلَت عَلَيْهِمُ الرحمةُ وحُفَّت بِهِمُ الملائكةُ وأستغفرت لَهُم إلى أن يتفرّقوا فقال عليٌّ عليه السلام إذاً والله فُزْنا وفاز شيعَتُنا ورَبِّ الكعبةِ فقال أبي رسولُ الله ﷺ يا عليُّ والذي بَعَثَني بالحقِّ نبيّاً وأصطفاني بالرِّسالةِ نجيّاً ما ذُكِرَ خَبَرُنا هذا في مَحْفِلٍ مِنْ مَحافِلِ أهلِ الأرضِ وفيهِ جَمْعٌ من شيعَتِنا ومُحِبّينا وفيهِم مَهْمُومٌ إلاَّ وفَرَّجَ اللهُ هَمَّهُ وَلا مَغْمُومٌ إلاَّ وكَشَفَ اللهُ غُمَّهُ وَلا طالِبُ حاجةٍ إلاَّ وقضى اللهُ حاجَتَهُ فقال عليٌّ عليه السلام إذاً والله فُزنا وسُعِدنا وذلك شيعتُنا فازُوا وسُعِدُوا في الدُّنيا والآخرةِ وربِّ الكَعْبَةِ.

This ḥadīṯ̱ is reported on the authority of Jabir Ibn ʿAbdullāh Ansarī ﷺ and, whilst it contains almost exactly the same information as the two ḥadīṯ̱ attributed to both ʾĀʿisḫa and ʾUmm Salama ﷺ, it is not generally accepted as ṣaḥīh by people of ʾAhlu Sunnah wa-l-Jamʿat due to a question concerning a weakness in the chain of transmission.

The import of all that as I have quoted above is that in accord with Qurʾān and ʾAḥadīṯ̱, ʾAhl as-Sunnah should love and support the family of the Prophet ﷺ, and honor his will in regard to them in light of his request ﷺ, "I ask you by Allāh ﷻ to take care of my family. I ask you by Allāh ﷻ to take care of my family." (Muslim) Beyond all sectarianism, in the end we are all Muslims together.

It is with this understanding firmly in both mind and heart that I wish to begin this talk on *Karbalāʾ: Action, Reaction and Action.* I ask that those either listening to my words or reading this paper keep what I have said in both mind and heart as well.

I will now account the events that led to the the Battle of Karbalāʾ.

The events that we are considering took place roughly a half century after the death of the Prophet ﷺ and the assasinations of the last three of the *Khulafā Rasḫidūn*, Umar al Kḫattab ﷺ, Utḫman bin Affan ﷺ and ʿAlī ibn ʾAbi Ṭālib ﷺ followed by the poisoning of al-Ḥasan ﷺ the grandson of the Prophet ﷺ and the Kḫalīfah (خليفة) after his father, ʿAlī ﷺ .

One of the crucial figures in the events that I shall relate is Muʿāwīya, the son of ʾAbu Sufyan and Hind, two of the most implacable enemies of the Prophet ﷺ. who was already a major player in Arab politics after the Battle of Badr (غـــزوة بـــدر), when he was already heir-apparent to the pagan throne of Makkah.

After the defeat of his family following the fall of Makkah in 8th year of the ḥijra (هِـجْـرَة), Muʿāwīya, along with his parents, declared his ʾIslām. After death of the Prophet ﷺ in 632, he served in the ʾIslāmic army sent against the Byzantine forces in Syria. He held a high rank in the Northern Muslim army.

This army was led by his brother Yazīd ibn Abu Sufyan. In the year 640, ʿUmar ﷺ appointed Muʿāwīya as governor of Syria when his brother died in an outbreak of plague. Muʿāwīya gradually gained mastery over the other areas of Syria, instilling remarkable personal loyalty among his troops and the people of the region. By 647, Muʿāwīya had built a Syrian army strong enough to repel Byzantine attacks. and, in subsequent years, to take the offensive against them in campaigns that resulted in the capture of Cyprus (649) and Rhodes (654) and the defeat of the Byzantine navy (655).

After the assassination of the third Kẖalīfah, Utẖman bin Affān ﷺ in 656, Muʿāwīya engaged in a major civil war against the fourth Kẖalīfah, ʿAlī ibn ʾAbi Ṭālib ﷺ and fought a protracted campaign against him ﷺ, allegedly for the purpose of seeking justice on behalf of the assassinated Kẖalīfah Utẖman bin Affān ﷺ.

ʾĀʿisẖa ﷺ, Talhah ﷺ and Al-Zubayr ﷺ (all of whom whom had their own agendas) were in agreement with Muʿāwīya that those who had assassinated ʾUtẖman ﷺ should be brought to justice.

ʿAlī ﷺ declined to apprehend and punish ʾUtẖman's ﷺ murderers, citing sedition (*fiṭnah*) and infiltration of the Muslim ranks, which resulted in Muʿāwīya's refusal to acknowledge ʿAlī's ﷺ khilāfah.

Muʿāwīya did not himself participate in the campaign by Āʿisẖa ﷺ, Talhah ﷺ and az-Zubayr ﷺ against ʿAlī ﷺ that ended in the Battle of the Camel in which the three were defeated in battle by ʿAlī ﷺ. Among over ten thousand Muslims who lost their lives were Talhah ﷺ and az-Zubayr ﷺ. ʿAlī ﷺ pardoned ʾĀʿisẖa ﷺ and had her escorted back to Madinah, where she lived under house arrest.

ʿAlī ﷺ then turned towards Syria (*Sẖām*), where Muʿāwīya was now in open opposition. He marched to the Euphrates where he engaged Muʿāwīya's troops at the famous Battle of Siffin (657), the bloodiest battle in the history of ʾIslām, in which over 70,000 people (among them many of the last surviving companions ﷺ of the Prophet ﷺ) died. Notable among the Companions ﷺ who were killed by Muʿāwīya's forces was ʾAmmar bin Yasir, ﷺ an old man of 95 at the time of his death.

Accounts vary and differ – but on the face of things it would seem that neither side had won a victory, since the Syrians called for arbitration to settle the matter, arguing that continuing civil war and loss of fighters would embolden the Byzantines. There are several conflicting accounts of the arbitrations.

Because ᶜAlī ﷺ agreed to submit the outcome of the battle to arbitration, dissension broke out within his camp where a number of his former supporters, later known as Kẖarijites (*Kẖawārij,* خـــوارج) felt that by entering into negotiations ᶜAlī ﷺ had betrayed the supremacy of the Kẖalīfahte. This *fitnah* forced him to open another front in order to put down and quell their dissension.

At about the same time, unrest was brewing in Egypt. The governor of Egypt, Qays, was recalled, and ᶜAlī ﷺ had him replaced with Muhammad ibn ʾAbi Bakr (the brother of ʾĀᶜisẖa ﷺ and the son of ʾAbu Bakr ﷺ). Muhammad ibn ʾAbi Bakr's rule resulted in widespread rebellion in Egypt. Muᶜāwīya ordered ʾAmr ibn al-ᶜĀs to invade Egypt which he did successfully; in the course of the invasion Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr was murdered and, under the orders of Muᶜāwīya , stuffed into a donkey. It is said that ʾĀᶜisẖa ﷺ never ate meat again in her life after this.

Consequently, the earlier antagonisms, insults, and discord amongst the leading Muslims, including family members ﷺ of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ, blended with their emotions of hate, bitterness, and petty ambition, to produce a wide array of moves, countermoves, and deceit that proved ultimately to be more poisonous to the ʾIslāmic community than the murder of Utẖman ﷺ.

In Kufa on Jumuᶜah morning, the 17th day of the month of Ramaḍāin 661ce/40H, ᶜAlī ﷺ set out for the morning prayers, and arrived at the *masjid* when it was still dark and seemingly empty. When ᶜAlī ﷺ stood to pray, Ibn Maljam as-Sarimi, a dissident Kẖarijite, struck ᶜAlī ﷺ on the forehead with a poisoned sword which penetrated his brain through the scar of an old wound. Immediately as-Sarimi fled from the masjid, and when the people arrived for *ṣalāt* ᶜAlī ﷺ was found lying wounded in a pool of blood on the prayer mat.

ʿAlī's ﷺ wounds proved to be fatal. No antidote could be found to counteract the poison that had penetrated his body but before he died the assassin was caught and brought before him He instructed his men that the assassin should be kept in custody and should not be subjected to any hardship. He said if he recovered from the wound, he would himself decide what punishment should be awarded to him. If he died, the assassin was to lose his life. He was, however, to be killed in one stroke, and was neither to be mutilated nor made to suffer a languishing death.

Before he died, ʿAlī ﷺ made his will, saying: "I declare in my will that except for Allāh ﷺ there is none who deserves to be worshipped. He is unique. He has no partner. Muhammad ﷺ is His Prophet and Messenger whom He commissioned to give the people guidance through the religion of ʾIslām. ʾIslām is the most perfect religion and it is destined to prevail over all other faiths.

"All our prayers, our sacrifices, our life, our death, our everything is for Allāh ﷺ. I require all my children and family members to have *taqwa* of Allāh ﷺ. I wish that all of you should die in ʾIslām.

"Hold fast to the faith of ʾIslām. Remain united, for according to the Holy Prophet ﷺ unity in ranks is better than prayers. Be kind to your kin so that Allāh ﷻ may be kind to you. Remain steadfast in piety and resign yourself to the will of Allāh ﷻ. Never aspire to do anything which is beyond your reach. Be truthful always.

"Be kind to the orphans, and in their affairs have *taqwa* of Allāh ﷻ. Do not wait for their seeking your help. See that in your presence they should not be overcome by any care or anxiety. Fear Allāh ﷻ in respect of the rights of your neighbors over you. The Prophet ﷺ always willed for the right of the neighbors, indeed to such an extent that we were afraid lest the neighbors be declared as heirs.

"Follow the Qurʾān in letter and spirit, and see that nobody takes precedence over you in the matter of the observance of the injunctions of the Qurʾān. In the matter of prayers be very particular, for it is the basic tenet of ʾIslām. As long as you are alive do not miss your prayers.

“Undertake *jihad* with your life and property. have *taqwa* of Allāh ﷻ in the matter of *zakat* for it extinguishes the wrath of Allāh ﷻ. Have *taqwa* of Allāh ﷻ in respect of your regard for the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, for the Holy Prophet ﷺ made particular mention of them in his will. Have *taqwa* of Allāh ﷻ in the matter of the poor and the needy. Make them share your wealth. Your slaves have rights on you. Fulfil your obligations. Those who disparage your religion, do not be afraid of them. If they wish to harm you, Allāh ﷻ will be enough to protect you. Try to live in the world in a way which may help it become better.

“Stop the tyrant from his oppression. Act upon the commandments of Allāh ﷻ. Face the realities of life with courage and fortitude. Do not be vexed by the obstacles that stand in your way. Help each other in the doing of good. Do not help those who rebel or do mischief. May Allāh ﷻ be merciful to all who belong to the House of the Prophet ﷺ!

“I entrust you all to the protection of Allāh ﷻ.”

After the assassination of ʿAlī ﷺ, Muʿāwīya assumed the caliphate in 661 by threatening further bloodshed and forcing the abdication of al-Ḥasan ﷺ to Madinah. Muʿāwīya continued in his position as the self-declared *kẖalīfah* until 680 when, on the point of death, he appointed his son, Yazīd, to succeed him.

During the nineteen years on Muʿāwīya’s self-proclaimed *khilāfah*, al-Ḥusayn ﷺ remained in Madinah with his brother al-Ḥasan ﷺ where they both continued, as had their father ﷺ before them, to teach and instruct the community in the lessons they has learned from their grandfather the Prophet ﷺ and their father ﷺ.

al-Ḥasan ﷺ, after almost coming to war near Sabat, entered into negotiations with Muʿāwīya in order to prevent further bloodshed and put an end to civil war, stipulating that on the death of Muʿāwīya the *kẖilafah* would revert to him or, if his death were to precede that of Muʿāwīya, that his brother, al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, would assume the *khilāfah*.

This treaty led to great benefits for the Muslims for years to come, owing to the unity, tranquility and avoidance of bloodshed that were the result of this notable wise and selfless act of al-Ḥasan ﷺ based on his love for peace, distaste for politics and its dissensions and corrupting influences.

During their time in Madinah both al-Ḥasan ﷺ and al-Ḥusayn ﷺ continued nightly to hold circles (*ḥalakah*/حلقة) of instruction and training as had Alī ﷺ before them. These meetings proved very successful and gained tremendous popularity. More people started to attend, to hear the two ʾImāms ﷺ give their teachings. The reputation of these meetings for instruction and training spread across the Muslim world and people from as far away as Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, and other distant areas travelled to Madinah to learn from them. As years passed, their teaching bore frutit and the number of Islamic scholars multiplied and increased considerably.

In the end however the treaty between al-Ḥasan ﷺ and Muᶜāwīya was not honored by Muᶜāwīya who is also thought to be behind the poisoning of al-Ḥasan ﷺ in Madinah on Ṣafar 28th in 50AH at the hands of his wife Judah bint al-Aṧʾaṯ who, it is said, was promised gold and a marriage contract with Yazīd.

As death, due to overweight, came for Muᶜāwīya in 680ce/60 *hijri* he named his son, Yazīd, as his successor. Yazīd immediately sought to consolidate power by demanding that the governors of what had become more an Ummayad kingdom than an ʾIslamic *kẖilafah* take the oath of allegiance (*bayᶜah*) to him. The oath was secured from all save al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and ᶜAbdullāh ibn Zubayr .

As an aside it is worth noting, vis-a-vis this shiftover from a *khilāfah* to a kingdom, a speech of al-Ḥasan ﷺ delivered at the insistence of ʾAmr ibn al-ᶜĀs and Muᶜāwīya in Kufa. Abul Faraj quotes the speech in his *Maqatil*, which reads: “The Kẖalīfah is one who dedicates himself to the way of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ, and not the one who is an oppressor and aggressor; the latter is but a king (*mālik*) who rules a kingdom (*mulk*). The enjoyment of a king is little, and his pleasure is short-lived.”

There are also numerous instances where Muᶜāwīya is recorded as saying, in reference to himself, "I am the first king of Islam." (*vide* "*Bidaya wa'n Nihaya*" by Ibn Katẖīr, Cairo, 1939, 8th vol., p. 135).

In any case al-Ḥusayn ﷺ refused to give his oath of allegiance to Yazīd and continued living quietly in Madinah with his family, but Yazīd considered him a threat to his rule and ordered his governor, Walīd Ibn Utᶜba, either to take the oath from al-Ḥusayn ﷺ or kill him. al-Ḥusayn ﷺ refused this demand and by careful words managed take leave of the governor and left at once for Makkah with his family on the 4th of Rajab in the year 60 AH, and reached Makkah on the 4th of Sẖaᶜban with an intention to perform Ḥajj.

But even at this holy place he wasn't able to perform his Ḥajj in peace, as Yazīd was actively conspiring to have him killed at the Kaᶜbah during the Ḥajj. So al-Ḥusayn ﷺ had to cut short his plan and performed the *Umrah* instead of Ḥajj

Abd-Allāh ibn Abbas and Abdullah ibn Zubayr held a meeting with al-Ḥusayn ﷺ in Mecca to advise him to refuse to travel to Iraq but on the 8th of Dẖu-l-Ḥijjah a small caravan of family and friends led by the 57 year old al-Ḥusayn ﷺ set out for Kufa, a garrison town in what is now al-ᶜIraq, that had formerly been ᶜAlī's ﷺ capital and was the home to many of ᶜAlī's ﷺ past supporters who were involved in a double game in which they also were seeking to restore Kufa's power over Damascus.

These former supporters of Alī ﷺ sent over 12,000 letters to al-Ḥusayn ﷺ stating their offer of support if al-Ḥusayn ﷺ were to claim the Kẖalīfahte. At the same time al-Ḥusayn ﷺ wrote to the nobles of Basrah and sent his cousin Muslim bin ᶜAqīl ﷺ as an emmisary asking for their support with the result that certain tribes had secretly gathered and were prepared to fight against Yazīd.

al-Ḥusayn ﷺ said to Muslim ibn ᶜAqīl: "Muslim, everyone knows that you are one of the bravest warriors. It is just possible that seeing you in Kufa some people may think that our intention is to fight Yazīd. Take your two sons with you. When they see you with the children, they will know that our intentions are peaceful."

During the early phase of the journey the caravan met al-Farazdaq (a famous poet) at a place called al-Sifah. al-Farazdaq advised al-Ḥusayn ﷺ not to go to Kufa because though people's hearts were with him (al-Ḥusayn ﷺ), their swords would be against him. But al-Ḥusayn ﷺ continued with the journey, and he received the first letter from his emissary Muslim Ibn ʿAqīl ﷺ with good news.

The letter indicated that the people were more than ready to welcome the al-Ḥusayn ﷺ in Kufa and were looking forward to his leadership. At this point he decided to send another emissary to Kufa with a further message. The caravan kept proceeding toward Kufa and many days passed but al-Ḥusayn ﷺ did not receive any further responses from Muslim bin ʿAqīl ﷺ.

In Kufa, Muslim bin ʿAqīl ﷺ, with the help of Mukẖtar atẖ-Tẖaqaʿ and Hani Ibn Urwah ﷺ, continued to hold secret meetings with the supporters of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. Within a short time these gatherings started to gain momentum.

Yazīd, through his spies and informants, learned about Muslim's successes in Kufa and quickly appointed the tyrant ʿUbaydullāh Ibn Ziyad to replace the more moderate and neutral al-Nuʿman Ibn al-Basẖīr as Governor of Kufa to stop Muslim’s successes.

Meanwhile, as al-Ḥusayn’s ﷺ caravan got closer to its destination they reached a place called Zubaydah where al-Ḥusayn’s ﷺ received the shocking news that Muslim Ibn ʿAqīl ﷺ and the person who provided him shelter, Hani Ibn Urwah ﷺ, had both been arrested and beheaded by the new governor Ibn Ziyad. Mukhtar ﷺ had also been arrested and imprisoned and tortured by Ibn Ziyad.

After the beheading of Muslim and Hani ﷺ and the public display of their heads, ʿUbaydullāh ibn Ziyad then addressed the people of Basrah and warned them against giving any form of aid to al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and to avoid any form of insurgency.

al-Ḥusayn ﷺ gathered his companions and gave them the bad news, telling them, “Our supporters have deserted us, those of you who prefer to leave us may do so freely and without guilt.”

Frightened, some companions left the caravan, leaving al-Ḥusayn ﷺ to continue the journey along with some 72 close companions and family members, until he came face to face with 1,000 horse-men led by one Ḥurr al-Riyahī ﷺ leading a mounted contigent of Yazīd's army, who blocked al-Ḥusayn ﷺ from any further advance. al-Ḥusayn ﷺ addressed Ḥurr, explaining to them his motives for going to Kufa: that it was in response to the invitation of the people. He even showed them a bagful of letters he had received from Kufa. Ḥurr said that, in any case, neither he nor his men were the writers of those letters.

al-Ḥusayn ﷺ told them that if they did not wish him to continue on to Kufa he was prepared to return to the Ḥijāz (الحجاز), to which Ḥurr replied, "We are ordered to follow you and take you to the Governor, Ibn Ziyad."

Ḥurr suggested that al-Ḥusayn ﷺ in the meantime go to a place which neither Kufa nor Madinah. al-Ḥusayn ﷺ found the proposal fair and turned the caravan away from Kufa. Ḥurr and his army marched parallel to the small caravan until they reached a village called Nainawa where a messenger from ʾIbn Ziyad delivered a message to Ḥurr which read, " ...force their caravan to a halt in an open space, without vegetation or water."

Ḥurr conveyed the contents of the letter to al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. but he, his family and companions defiantly resumed their journey until they reached a place where another contingent of Yazīd's army force blocked their move and forced them to stop. When al-Ḥusayn ﷺ learned that the place was called Karbalāʾ, he knew he had reached the destination, and ordered his camp to be setup. That day was 2nd of Muharram, in the Hijri year of 61 or October 1st, 680ce.

The tragedy that was to take place in Karbalāʾ was known to the family of the Prophet ﷺ twenty five years before it happened, according to a ḥadīṯ of Ahmad ﷺ in which Jibrīl ﷺ informed the Prophet ﷺ that al-Ḥusayn ﷺ would be killed at Karbalāʾ and that the family would suffer. This was also known by Umm Salmah ﷺ, who after the event informed the Muslim community.

The meaning of the name Karbalāʾ was narrated to the Prophet ﷺ by the angel Jibrīl ﷺ as being, "the land which will cause many agonies (*karb*) and afflictions (*balā*)."

He turned to his compaions and said, "People are the slaves of this world and the *dīn* is only lip-service for them. They will take care of it as long as it is pleasurable but when the crucible of trials approaches, only a few remain." To his sister, Sayyidah Zaynab ﷺ he said, "We need not fear when Allāh ﷻ is with us. This is the place I was in search of, and thanks to Allāh ﷻ I am here."

To the general, Ḥurr, al-Ḥusayn ﷺ said "I have not refused the *bayᶜah* (to Yazīd) becuase he is an insolent and arrogant person, a mischief-monger and tyrant (*ḍẖālim*). I have refused to give my *bayᶜah* as I seek to reform the *ʾUmmah* of my grandfather the Prophet ﷺ. My wish is to order the good and forbid the evil."

"O Allāh, what did he find who lost You, and what did he lose who found You?"

فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلِأُتِمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ

fa-lā takẖsẖowhum wa ʾakẖsẖownī wa li-ʾutimma niᶜmatī ᶜalaykum

And do not fear them but fear Me,
so that I may perfect My blessing upon you.
(al-Baqarah 2:150)

This brings me to the heart of this talk (or writings if you are reading this). So far all of or most all of what I have written is what happened on the outer planes or in the *ḍẖāhir*. Even looking at the outer events one cannot be but shocked and appalled to see what happened to the *ummah* in the fifty years following the death of the Prophet ﷺ, not only to the *ummah* as a whole but to those who were closest and among the most dear to the Prophet ﷺ. How companion turned on companion, how muslims killed muslims and conspired against each other and engaged in intrigues and plots. How could it be that muslims were now planning to murder al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, the much loved grandson of the Prophet ﷺ?

The beloved grandson ﷺ who had taken his life from the milk of his mother, Sayyida Fāṭima az-Zahra ﷺ and had been trained and taught by his father, ʿAlī ﷺ, the gate to the city of knowledge, the first man who accepted ʾIslām on the hand of the Prophet. ﷺ. How did things come to such a pass?

It is one thing to look at outer events, but how to understand what must have gone on inside al-Ḥusayn ﷺ as he witnessed his whole world fall apart, bit by bit and mite by mite until the old Arab ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*) (جاهلية), conservatism, casual aggression, covetousness, naked ambition, vulgarity, lust, lewdness, drunkeness and debauchery finally manifested in the form of Yazīd, a man who openly ridiculed the *sunnah,* had no time for the Qurʾān and would, upon on ordering the death of the beloved grandson of the Prophet ﷺ, who had been named, along with his brother, al-Ḥasan, to be the Leaders of the Youth of Jannah ﷺ, (*Sayyidu-sẖ-Sẖabābi ʾAhli-l-Jannah*), openly declare, ”My ancestors who were killed at Badr have been avenged” — how could he dare to call himself, *ʾAmiru-l-Muʾminīn* — the Leader of the Faithful?

A man who, according to ʾibn Katẖīr, “loved worldly vices; drank alcohol; listened to music; kept the company of beardless boys; played drums; kept dogs; made frogs, bears and monkeys fight. Every morning he used to be intoxicated, and he used to tie monkeys to the saddle of horses and make the horses race.”

A man who came to power, according to Sẖaykẖ al-Ḥadīṯẖ, Muḥammad Zakaria, an Indian Sunni scholar, by sending an army “to Madinah comprised of 60,000 horsemen and 15,000 foot soldiers. An army that for three days shed blood freely, 1000 women were raped and 700 named Quraysẖ and ʾAnṣar were killed. Ten thousand women and children were made slaves. Ibn ʾUqba forced people to give allegiance to Yazīd in such a manner that people were enslaved and Yazīd sold them as he pleased and no ṣaḥabi ﷺ who was with the Prophet ﷺ at Hudaibiya was spared.”

After Yazīd's death, when his son, Muʿāwīya II, was made the *kẖalīfah*, he stated the following in his inaugural address as recorded by Ibn Hajr al-Haytẖami, a scholar of the ʾAhl us-Sunnah:

"*Kẖilāfah* is from Allāh. My grandfather (Muᶜāwīya) fought for *kẖilāfah* against an individual who was more entitled to it: that was ᶜAlī ﷺ. He performed actions that you are all aware of, and he is suffering in his grave for that. Then my father Yazīd became the *kẖalīfah* even though he was not deserving of *kẖilāfah*. He fought the grandson of Rasūlullāh ﷺ — al-Ḥusayn ﷺ — and now he is suffering in the grave on account of his sins."

He then began to cry, "It is a terrible thing that we are fully aware of — of Yazīd's bad deeds: how he slaughtered the family of the Prophet ﷺ, how he deemed alcohol *ḥalāl*, and how he attacked and set fire to the Kaᶜbah."

Truly this was a very special time. A time which if you really stop to think about what had happened in the fifty years after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, simply takes your breath away.

So it was that al-Ḥusayn ﷺ found himself with seventy two members of his family and friends in an open space, in the desert, without vegetation or water and fully aware of what the outcome of all this would be, saying "O Allāh! Here is the place where our blood will be shed. Here is the place where our graves will be."

He actually gathered the owners of the plain Karbalāʾ, and purchased the land from them and then gifted it to the people of Banu Asad as a grave site, asking them to bury him ﷺ and his companions ﷺ when the time came (as it must and as it did).

In truth when we study the events of Karbalāʾ and all that led up to it as a whole we see that from the very beginning al-Ḥusayn ﷺ had in mind to carry out an action which would counter the great changes that were taking place in the ummah. In truth from the very beginning of the standoff with Yazīd, Sayyidina al-Ḥusayn ﷺ was planning to do something, to perform an act that would force the *ʾummah* to finally recognize what actually had happend since the death of the Prophet ﷺ.

What he wanted to do was to bring about a complete transformation, what is called a paradigm shift, in the religious consciousness of the Muslims.

When we look at how everything unfolded we can see, can sense, can understand that he knew and understood that military strength and political dominance is always temporal and never lasts.

A victory that is attained by suffering and sacrifice on the other hand, leaves permanent imprints on the the consciousness of human beings. They never forget and the act is always remembered.

In physics we talk about the second law of thermodynamics, which is an expression of the universal principle of entropy, stating that the entropy of an isolated system which is not in equilibrium will tend to increase over time or, in other words, everything is falling apart constantly which on all levels: religiously, spiritually and socially was exactly what was happening to the ʾummah.

Clearly the ʾummah was suffering and in many instances it was falling apart and something was needed to put it back together along the lines of the original actions (*sunnah*) of the Prophet ﷺ. Something that would counter the forces of cynicism, political opportunism, personal wrangling, petty jealousies, deceits, and outright corruption which had come to plague the ʾummah — then and now. Something that would stand as an example that would make clear what was true and what was false.

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۚ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

wa qul jāāʾa-l-ḥaqqu wa zahaqa-l-bāṭil ; ʾinna-l-bāṭila kāna zahūqā

“And say, “The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished.
Surely falsehood is forever bound to vanish.”

(Sūrah al-ʾIsrāʾ 17:81)

What had happened in essence was that from the time of the death of the Prophet ﷺ, the old forces of the *jahiliyyah* were emboldened and had once again come to the fore.

The original actions of the Prophet ﷺ had been threated at every level by the forces of reaction in the form of cynicism, political opportunism, personal ambition and wrangling, petty jealousies, deceits, corruption and just plain business as usual.

The world of *quid pro quo* in which I get mine and you get yours and it's every man for himself and big dogs eat first, was back.

Under Yazīd it had reached a point where, unless the forces of reaction were stopped cold, countered by an irresitable act, business as usual would become the order of the day for the rest of time and nothing would or could counter it.

For example, to understand the level of reactionary conciousness that came to be during the reign of Muʿāwīya, Yazīd once came to Madinah during the time of Ḥajj and was drunk on wine. Ibn ʾAbbās ﵄ and al-Ḥusayn ﵇ happened to pass by him and Yazīd called his slave and ordered him to serve wine to al-Ḥusayn ﵇, who of course refused and left immediately.

How then, when this same Yazīd had assumed, by the appointement of his father, Muʿāwīya, the station of the *ʾAmir al Muʾminīn* and the *kẖalīfah* of the ʾummah of Muhammad ﷺ, al-Ḥusayn ﵁ could ever even imagine putting his hand in the hand of Yazīd in the act of *bayʾah*? Unthinkable — how could he?

Again we emphasize — political machinations, military action, war would never solve the problem, for all of those solutions, even had they been possible — and given the people of veniality and deceit of his supporters in Kufa and Basrah that was clearly impossible — any move of that level would have been just one more event in the downward spiral of events that was destroying the ʾummah.

Something else was called for and what was called for was this selfless sacrifice on the plains of Karbalāʾ — an act which was and is totally counter to the forces of entropy and disintegration — which persists in the present as a permanent proof of how the forces of corruption, expediency and mendacity *can* be overcome.

Understanding that achievement is what prompts us not just to mourn for al-Ḥusayn ﵁ and his family ﵇ but, rather, to exult in what he and they did which was to perform the precise necessary action which stands as a clear shining example for all time of how indeed Truth comes and how falsehood vanishes.

It is in this light we should understand al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and his replies to his well-wishers who urged him not to go to Kufa and it also explains why he took his family, including women and children, with him. He knew full well the brutal nature of the people he was up against. He knew they would not be content merely to kill him and his men, but would take the women with him captive, and he saw that they would be paraded before the people and they would become a caravan of captives, but that caravan and all in it would force the ʾummah to reflect deeply — that it wouild awaken their consciousness both in his time and in ours and the times to come.

Had he not done what he did at Karbalāʾ, the way of life of Yazīd (and the all too many Yazīds who have followed him in the present – and one glance at the so-called Muslim world will reveal just how many Yazīds sit on seats of power in how many lands) would have been the norm, the accepted standard of behavior for Muslims. If al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, the grandson of the Prophet ﷺ, had put his blessed hand in the hand of Yazīd, then surely little would be left of truth, of honor, of nobility, of chivalry, of selflessness, of decency and grace. The Qurʾān would have been stood on it's head and the *bāṭil* would be seen to have overcome the *ḥaqq*.

On the 2nd day of Muḥarram, upon learning that his army had succeeded in laying a siege around the the camp of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, the governor of Kufa, Ibn Ziyad, sent additional military units to Karbalāʾ and appointed ʿUmar Ibn Saʿad as the new commander.

al-Ḥusayn ﷺ opened a dialogue with ʿUmar Ibn Saʿad and convinced him to lift the siege so that al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, along with his family and companions could leave Iraq. ʿUmar Ibn Saʿad liked the proposal and sent a message to Ibn Ziyad notifying him about the results of the talks with al-Ḥusayn ﷺ.

Ibn Ziyad also found the proposal of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ acceptable. However, Sẖimr bin Dhi-l-Jawsẖan, ranking officer and a paternal cousin of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and his four brothers (who had been offered, and refused, amnesty), strongly opposed it.

In the end Ibn Ziyad wrote ʿUmar Ibn Saʿad commanding him to either enter into battle with al-Ḥusayn ﷺ or else be relieved of his duties as commander and be replaced by Sẖimr who would not only replace him but would despatch his head to Kufa.

Umar Ibn bin Sa'ad got the letter and after thinking over the consequences he decided to fight al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. On the 7th day of Muḥarram he moved his troops closer to the camp and began to surround the camp of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. Ibn Saʿad then laid a blockade around the camp to cut it off from any access to the river Euphrates, to deprive those within the camp of water in a move to force them to surrender.

Two days later, (on the 9th of Muḥarram), the enemy's military forces closed in on the camp of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, who asked his brother, Abbās, to talk to Ibn Saʿad and request a delay in the battle for one night.

Ibn Saʿad agreed to the request and ordered his troops to delay the battle till next morning. al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. and his family ﷺ and companions ﷺ spent that night in deep prayer and remembrance.

During the night al-Ḥusayn ﷺ told those ﷺwith him , "…the enemy is interested in none but me and me alone. We will blow out all the lights and I grant you all permission — each and every one of you — to go back, and I urge you to do so...." They replied to him, "By Allāh, never! Never! We will either live with you or die all together with you."

Finally, the Day of ʿĀsẖurāʾ (عـاشـوراء), the 10th day of Muḥarram, dawned upon the earth of Karbalāʾ. It was the day when many innocent lives would be sacrificed, and a decisive battle would be won to redeem the *ʾummah*.

It had been a few days since the water supply was cut off by the enemy. Children were crying for water, the women were desperate for water, Zaynu-l-ʿAbdīn, the son of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ was sick with fever. The suffering from the thirst was almost too painful to bear. But despite this, not a single person in the camp complained or even questioned the mission of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ.

All present supported him whole-heartedly and enthusiastically.

The army of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ consisted of 72 men; 32 horsemen and 40 foot-soldiers. The right wing of the army was given in the charge of Zuhayr ibn Qayn ﷺ, while Habib ibn Muzahir ﷺ was in charge of the left wing.

The flag bearer was the brother of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, ʾAbbās ﷺ.

A trench was dug behind the camp which was filled with fire to prevent the enemy from attacking from the rear. Sẖimr, who rode past the camp on a galloping horse, noticed fire and cried aloud, "Oh Ḥusayn! Did you accept fire before the Day of Resurrection?" al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, replied, "Oh son of an itinerant vagabond (*bedu*)! You deserve the fire more than anyone."

That morning when al-Ḥusayn ﷺ rode out of the camp he saw ʿUmar Ibn Saʿad mobilizing his more than 5,000 troops in preparation for the coming battle.

Staring at the intimidating army, and as large as it was and as few as his men were, al-Ḥusayn ﷺ showed no signs of compromise. He raised his hands in prayer:

"Oh Allāh! It is You alone in whom I trust amid all my grief. You are my hope amid all violence. You are my refuge and provision in everything that happens to me. How many grievances weaken the heart, leaving me with no means to handle them. Those who were friends have deserted me and my ennemies rejoice. I lay it before You and complain of it to You, because of my desire in You, You alone. You alone can relieve me of it and remove it from me. You are the Master of all Grace, the Essence of Goodness, and the Ultimate Resort of all Desire."

al-Ḥusayn ﷺ then rode in front of the troops of Ibn Saʿad and repeatedly asked this question, but nobody answered.

"Oh people! Listen to me. Do not be rash. Let me admonish you. Let me say a few words in my justification and explain why I'm here. If my excuse is reasonable and if you can accept it, do justice in my case. You would be better off not to take up arms against me.

“If after hearing me you refuse to accept my words, I will be ready for you. Rush me all at once. Do not allow me any respite. Whatever the eventual outcome, My confidence in with Allāh ﷻ Who supports righteous men.”

”Oh people! You accuse me of being ambitious, but think who I am! Search your hearts for what you are about to do. Consider if it is lawful for you to kill me and violate my sanctity. Am I not the son of Fāṭima ﷺ the daughter ﷺ of your Prophet ﷺ, the son of the his cousin ﷺ? Was the leader of the *sḫuhadāʾ*, Hamza ﷺ not my father’s uncle? Is Jaᶜfar aṭ-Ṭayyar ﷺ not my uncle? Did not the Prophet ﷺ say of me and my brother that ‘they are the lords of the youth of Paradise ﷺ’? In no way can you deny the truth of what I say or what the Prophet himself ﷺ has said.”

“Tell me, is it right for you to receive me with unsheathed swords? If you don’t believe in my word, there are persons among you who can testify to the correctness of my statement. Ask Jabir bin ᶜAbdullāh al-Ansarī and Abu Sa’id al-Khudri ﷺ. Inquire from Saḥl bin Saᶜd Saᶜdi and Zayd bin Arqām ﷺ. They can tell you whether they heard the Prophet ﷺ saying this about me and my brother or not. Should not this fact prevent you from shedding my blood?

“By Allāh, there is no grandson of the Prophet ﷺ on the earth at this time except myself. I am the direct descendant and grandson of your Prophet ﷺ. Do you want to kill me, because I have taken the life of any one? Did I shed anyone’s blood? Have I usurped the wealth of anyone? What is the matter? What is my fault? Is all of what I have said not sufficient to prevent you from shedding my blood?”

Before the actual engagement took place, Ḥurr (whose name means free), the earlier commander of the enemy forces now under the command of Ibn Saᶜad, felt his conscience violently stirring; hearing the words of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ had created turmoil within him.

Upon realizing the gravity of the situation, he suddenly broke away from ᶜUmar Ibn Saᶜad's camp (along with two others) and they rushed toward al-Ḥusayn ﷺ to join him. The heart of Ḥurr ﷺ was wild with joy, his mind relieved of his agonizing dilemna.

Ḥurr ﷺ called out, “By Allāh, I am making a choice between the Fire and the Garden. By Allāh, I have selected the Garden, no matter if I am cut to pieces. O Grandson of the Nabi ﷺ! I am the same unfortunate person who prevented you from going back. I pursued you along the way and compelled you to camp here. I never suspected that these people would not agree to your terms and would go to such an extreme in your affairs. By Allāh, had I known that they would act in this way, I would have never done what I did earlier. I am ashamed of my wrong action.”

“I have committed my self to you and come to you for repentance. I want to sacrifice myself and I pray this will serve the purpose of my atonement (*tawba*).”

al-Ḥusayn ﷺ asked Allāh ﷻ to bless him saying, “May Allāh ﷻ accept your repentance and forgive you. As your mother has named you Ḥurr, you are a free man and *ʾinsẖāāʾa-llāh* you will remain free both in this world and in the next.”

The defection of Ḥurr ﷺ greatly worried ʿUmar Ibn Saʿad, and fearing lest others do the same and defect he shot an arrow into the air to signal the start of the battle. This was the beginning of a catastrophe and the tragic event that Muʿāwīya’ had once conceived now began to unfold.

The supporters of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ immediately took the offensive and chivalrous men from both sides came out in response to the challenge and fought with each other.

Every challenger of the rival army who came forward was killed by the companions of the supporters of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. On seeing this discouraging start, ʿUmar bin al-Ḥajjaj, who was in command of the enemy’s right wing, shouted:

“O fools! Don’t you realize with whom you are fighting? These people are not afraid of death!

“In this way you will be killed one by one. They are but a handful of souls. You can kill them even with stones.”

ʿUmar Ibn Saʿad immediately agreed wtih this assessment of events and ordered his troops not to engage in any further individual duels and instead ordered a general attack. Both the sides came to grips and then ensued a hand to hand combat in which the supporters of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ began to feel the full extent of the enemy assault. The battle was ferocious, bloody and hotly contested.

Even so, the supporters of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ managed to kill a large number of the enemy fighters and remained on the offensive and kept the the enemy on the defensive which caused great confusion among Ibn Saʿad's troops.

After some time, when the fighting abated somewhat, it was found that a brave hero, Muslim ibn Ausaja ﷺ was writhing in the sand covered with blood. al-Ḥusayn ﷺ ran towards him and found him still breathing and lamented for him with deep breaths saying, "Oh Muslim! May Allāh ﷻ shower his choicest blessings on you! Some of your companions have already died and others are awaiting death. But they stand firmly on the right path and they do not change their minds."

One wonders how it could be that the 72 warriors of al-Ḥusayn ﷺs could hold the field against 5,000 of the enemy troops — and some say more – but now the supporters of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ began to fall – brave men welcoming martyrdom, they fell one after another, for the enemy was overwhelming in number and the supporters of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ finally began to take the brunt of ttheir attack.

The fighting was now in full swing. It was almost midday but neither side seemed to have gained the upper hand. The reason was that the forces of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ had pitched the tents in such a way that the enemy could only attack from one side. When Ibn Saʿad realized that he could not succeed in this way he ordered some of his men to uproot the tents. Only four or five men from supporters of al-Ḥusayn pushed them back. Failing in this attempt, ʿUmar bin Saʿad ordered his men to set the tents, occupied mainly by women and children, on fire. His soldiers rushed towards tents carrying fire in their hands with the intention of setting them alight.

al-Ḥusayn's ﷺs forces were grew anxious due to this grave situation but al-Ḥusayn' said: "No matter, let them burn the tents. It will be better for us because they still cannot attack from the rear."

Finally at noon al-Ḥusayn ﷺ stopped the fight in order to perform the prayer (*ṣalātu-ḍẖ-ḍẖuhr*) By this time those left were mainly his family and a few supporters. They performed the *ṣalat* together with two supporters guarding them (*ṣalātu-l-kẖowf*). The enemy was standing still, watching! When the *ṣalāt* was finished one of the men guarding the worshippers fell dead with17 arrows in his back.

After *ṣalāt,* ʿAli Akbar ﷺ, one of al-Ḥusayn's ﷺs sons, obtained permission to charge and dashed toward the enemy. He engaged them in fierce fighting, falling on them and slaying numerous fighters. He continued to move forward, deep inside the enemy ranks. The enemy was overpowering in number, it overwhelmed him cutting him with swords and spears, and his body was nothing but wounds gushing blood, until he died. al-Ḥusayn ﷺs rushed to him and retreived his wounded body and brought it to the camp greatly shocking and horrifying his sister and others in the camp.

Then ʾAbbās ﷺ and the five brothers ﷺ of al-Ḥusayn ﷺs went into the fight. They also engaged the enemy in a fierce fighting, against impossible odds. In the midst of these clashes ʾAbbās fought his way to the river to bring some water for the thirsty children. While he was returning on his horse with the water, he was attacked by a large horde of the enemy, who overwhelmed and severely wounded him, cutting off both his arms until ʾAbbās, riding, with the water skin clenched in his teeth, fell from his horse to breathe his last.

Next the sons of al-Hasan ﷺ and Zaynab ﷺ and their cousins (17 in all) ﷺ went into the fray. They were all in their teens but each stood bravely, believing in the mission, facing a formidable enemy, and showed no less than the others by way of enthusiasm in their quest to embrace their inevitable martyrdom.

By the afternoon 70 brave persons had sacrificed their lives on the fields of Karbalāʾ fighting under the conditions of severe thirst, dehydration, exhaustion, and their agonizing feelings.

al-Ḥusayn ﷺ endured all that and more, for he saw all his beloved ones from the family of the Prophet ﷺ brutally cut to pieces, including his own children ﷺ.

Finally al-Ḥusayn ﷺ was left to face the enemy alone. Precisely at that moment he heard his baby son ʿAli Asgẖar ﷺ crying incessantly because of thirst. His love for his family was unbounded especially for the suffering boy. Holding the six month old baby ﷺ in his arms he appealed to the enemy fighters for some water for his child. Even then al-Ḥusayn ﷺ sought to awaken their conscience and stir their human feelings, but they had hearts of stone and instead of giving them water one of them shot an arrow into the baby killing him instantly. al-Ḥusayn ﷺ felt an unbearable wave of pain. The sight of the limp baby in his arms was almost more than he could bear. He filled his palm with the blood of the baby, and raised it upwards toward the sky, complaining to Allāh ﷻ,

“Oh Allāh, Oh my Lord! My only consolation in this is that You in Your Divine Majesty see what I am going through.”

Now he was the only one left standing. One man against thousands. He took them on, fighting bravely, and kept fighting, receiving many wounds in the process. Enemy fighters surrounded him but none dared to move toward him. The silence was broken when Sẖimr screamed for them to attack, then screamed again, threatening his men, and in response they all attacked collectively, and one sword fell on al-Ḥusayn’s ﷺ left wrist deeply cutting his left hand. The blood gushed like a fountain. Another sword thrust followed stabbing him in his upper back.

al-Ḥusayn ﷺ felt numb as he fell to the ground, bleeding profusely. He began to go into shock and, staggering, he tried once more to stand by leaning on his sword.

Then he received the fatal blow.

It was then, that Sẖimr came forward and severed the noble head of al-Ḥusayn’s ﷺ from his bleeding body, the head and lips so often kissed by the Prophet ﷺ!

With that, ʿUmar Ibn Saʿad ordered the horsemen to cut off all the heads of the dead and then with their horses trample the bodies of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and his dead family members and companions ﷺ grinding them into the sand so as to disfigure them even further as though the bloodied bodies and headless forms were not enough.

ʿUmar Ibn Saʿad and his forces rounded up all the women and children and took them as prisoners in shackles, unveiling the women, and put them, unveiled, on camels and proceeded by caravan from Karbalāʾ to Kufa.

At the forefront of the procession were the heads of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and his family members and companions ﷺ on the tip of spears. The scene was both grotesque and pathetic. This was all that was left in this world of the family of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

All this was done by people who called themselves 'Muslims'!

For three days the exposed bodies of the martyrs were left lying in the desert of Karbalāʾ for the jackals and the vultures. Afterwards, the people of the tribe of Bani-Asad, from, and for, whom he had purchased the land of Karbalāʾ, helped to bury them in accord with his request: "On the 10th day of this month you shall see us lying here slain, our bodies lying on the plain with our heads severed and taken away. I request you to kindly bury us, and when our friends come to visit our graves, hold them in honor as your guests and point out to them the places of our burial."

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

ʾinnamā yurīdu-llāhu li-yudẖhiba ʿankumu-r-rijåsa ʾahla-l-bayti
wa yuṭahirakum taṭhīrā
Allāh only wishes to remove impurity from you
oh People of the House
and to purify you with a thorough purification.
(Sūrah al-ʾAḥzāb 33:33)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, "*Ḥusaynun minni wa ana min Ḥusayn*" (Ḥusayn is from me and I am from Ḥusayn). That al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is from the Prophet ﷺ can be understood. However, what exactly does "*ana min Ḥusayn*" (I am from Ḥusayn ﷺ) mean?

Scholars have offered different interpretations for the tradition. One important meaning is the spiritual harmony between the Prophet ﷺ and al-Ḥusayn ؑ. The Prophet ﷺ is telling the people that I am the like of al-Ḥusayn ؑ; I am the same kind of person. The preposition "*min*" can convey this meaning. In simple words "Ḥusayn and I are in spiritual harmony". Hence if you see al-Ḥusayn ؑ, it is as if you have seen me; if you have seem me you have seen al-Ḥusayn ؑ. In truth the struggle of al-Ḥusayn ؑ is the struggle of the Prophet ﷺ and those who killed al-Ḥusayn ؑ are the same ones who sought (and make no mistake about it — still seek) to kill the Prophet ﷺ, one way or another, and his sublime message of mercy to all beings.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ

wa mā ʾarsalnāka ʾillā raḫmatal-li-l-ʿālamīn

"and We have not sent you save as a Mercy (*raḥmah*) for all creation."
(Sūrah al-ʾAmbiyāʾ 21:107)

It is reported that when the women and children of the Ahlu-l-Bayt were brought before the governor of Kufa, Ibn Ziyād, Sayyidah Zaynab ؑ, the sister of al-Ḥusayn ؑ, was wearing torn clothes and was surrounded by her maids. Ibn Ziyād inquired as to whom she was, but no one responded. When he inquired for the third time, a maid servant replied, "She is Zaynab bint Fāṭimah ؑ." Thereupon Ibn Ziyad shouted: "Praise be to Allāh who has disgraced and destroyed you and brought dishonor to your name." Sayyidah Zainab ؑ replied: "All praise is due to the Almighty Allāh Who honored us by raising the Nabi Muhammad ﷺ amongst us and purified us. Only the wicked and vicious are disgraced." Ibn Ziyad said again, "Don't you see how Allāh has treated your family?!" Sayyidah Zainab ؑ replied, "Death was their fate, so they met with death. Allāh will gather you and them together very soon and then you can cross exam each other in His Court." Ibn Ziyad said: "Allāh has given me joy in the death of your arrogant brother and the rebels of your family." Sayyidah Zainab ؑ tried to restrain herself but could not suppress her tears and said: "By Allāh, you have killed my brother and my leader (*ʾimām*), destroyed my family, slashed my branches, and cut off my roots.

“If this makes your heart rejoice then you are welcome to rejoice.”

Ibn Ziyad smiled and said: “Bravo! This is heroism. Your father was a poet as well as a hero. Sayyidah Zainab ﷺ replied: “What does a woman have to do with heroism? My misfortune had made me unmindful of heroism. What I say comes out of my mouth from a burning heart.” Ibn Ziyad was enraged but his advisor ʿUmar bin Hariṯ said: “May Allāh ennoble the Amir! She is merely a woman. A woman’s utterance should be taken lightly.”

Then the heads were brought before ibn Ziyād. Ḥamid bin Muslim who accompanied Kholi bin Yazīd while carrying the head of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ to Kufa reported that when the head of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ was placed before Ibn Ziyad, he repeatedly struck the lips of the ʾImām with his stick. Seeing this, Zayd bin Arqām ﷺ stood up and admonished him not to do so, as he had seen the Prophet ﷺ kiss those very lips. He then began to weep bitterly. Ibn Ziyad got annoyed with him and said: “May Allāh make you weep! Had you not been old and decrepit I would certainly have put you to death.” Zayd bin Arqam ﷺ left the meeting, saying:

“Oh Arabs! Henceforth you are slaves. You have killed the son of Fāṭima ﷺ. You have appointed Ibn Marjana (another name of Ibn Ziyad) as your ruler. He puts your noble men to death and enslaves your pious persons. You have chosen humiliation. May Allāh ﷻ destroy those who accept humiliation.”

After this incident Ibn Ziyad instructed the citizens to assemble in the main Masjid and delivered a sermon before the assembly in which he said the following:

“All praise is due to Allāh Who made the truth manifest and has granted victory to the followers of truth. Yazīd bin Muʿāwīya, the Commander of the faithful (*amiru-l-muʾminīn*) and his party became victorious and defeated Ḥusayn bin ʿAlī and his companions, the liars.”

On hearing this, ʿAbdullāh bin Afif Azdi, a well-known companion of Ali ﷺ who had lost his eye-sight in the battles of Jamal and Siffin, stood up and shouted for all to hear.

“By Allāh! Ibn Marjana, you are a liar and the son of a liar, and not Ḥusayn bin ʿAlī ﷺ.” Ibn Ziyad became enraged and immediatly put him to death. Just like that. Just like that.

Soon after the brutal forces of Yazīd’s army took the survivors of Kufa to Yazīd in Damascus, the capital and stronghold of Umayyad power. The ladies and children were forced to ride on the bare backs of the camels roped together without their head coverings. The young ʿAli Zaynu-l-ʿAbidīn ﷺ, though still feverish and sick, was put in heavy chains with iron rings round his neck and his ankles, and was made to walk barefooted behind the caravan on the plains from Karbalāʾ and Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ, in anguish due to the death of her brother Husayn ﷺ and her sons ʿAun and Muhammad ﷺ, was forced to march unveiled in front of the line of camels bearing the other ladies and children — an indignity designed to humilate the granddaughter of the Prophet ﷺ after her speech in Kufa.

When they reached the outskirts of Damascus they were made to halt and kept waiting in the burning sun whilst Yazīd was informed of their arrival and fixed the time for their entry into the city.

Finally, the members of the family of the Prophet ﷺ were led into Damascus. They were tied with ropes and herded together like goats. If anyone stumbled they were whipped —ladies and children. The city streets had been decorated and the sound of music filled the air. People came out in throngs wearing festive clothes and rejoiced when they saw the procession, preceded as always by the heads of the martyrs ﷺ. Bearing themselves with dignity and self-respect, the prisoners were paraded through Damascus. Zaynab ﷺ even refused the offerings of food that some of the onlookers offered them out of compassion. She did this because in one of his speeches, al-Ḥusayn ﷺ had said that the authorities in Kufa had given him only two options – humiliation or death – and went on to say, “And we do not accept the husks and morsels of humiliation.”

The son of an old enemy of the Prophet ﷺ who had waged war with Sayyidinā Ali ﷺ was in the crowds. When he saw the young ʿAli Zayn ul-Abidīn ﷺ he jeeringly asked him who was now victorious.

In reply Zayn ul-Abidīn ﷺ said: "If you wish to find out who has been victorious, do so when it is time for prayer and the *ʾadẖan* and *ʾiqamah* are recited."

In this manner the captives were paraded through Damascus until the afternoon, when they reached the palace of Yazīd. There he was seated on his throne and was much pleased when he saw the forty-four bound captives arrive. The head of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ was then brought to him on a golden tray whereupon he struck the teeth of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ with his stick saying: "Oh Husayn! Now you have truly paid the price for your revolt."

When Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ and her companions saw this show of arrogance they burst into tears, and there were many present who were ashamed. But Yazīd carried on gloating over his victory. He said to his subjects: "My ancestors who were killed at Badr have been avenged today. Now it is clear that all of this was just a play staged on the part of Bani Hasẖim to gain power, and there was neither prophet nor was there any divine revelation."

It was under such emotionally charged circumstances that Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ, the courageous daughter of a courageous father ﷺ, stood up and gave a very moving speech in response to Yazīd's statements.

"Oh Yazīd, play any trick you like and do anything that you think would make ʾIslām vanish, but you should know that you can not eradicate our message, path and memory. You should know that our memory will never die."

Then Zaynu-l-ʿAbdīn ﷺ spoke out: "O son of Muʿāwīya, Hind and Abu Sufyan! Revelation and *nubuwwa* came to our house long before you were born. In the battles of Badr, Uhud and ʾAḥzāb the flag of Rasulullāh ﷺ was in the hands of my grandfather Alī ﷺ and the flag of the *kuffār* was in the hands of your father and grandfather. If you understood what shameful acts you have committed, you would run into the mountains and cry out 'Woe to me!' I warn you of tomorrow's regret."

Then Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ began to speak again.

“Praise be to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds and blessings be upon my grandfather ﷺ the seal of all the Prophets ﷺ. Oh Yazīd, know that Allāh says,

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا السُّوأَىٰ
أَنْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

tḫumma kāna ᶜaqibata-l-ladḫīna ʾasāāʾu-s-sūūʾāā
ʾan kadḫḍḫabū bi-ʾāyāti-llāhi wa kānu bihā tastahziᶜūn

Then evil was the end of those who dealt in evil
because they denied the Signs of Allāh and mocked them.
(Sūrat ar-Rūm 30:10)

Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ continued strongly and with full confidence:

“Oh Yazīd! Do you really believe that you have made our life miserable and our existence impossible? That we are powerless just because we are standing in front of you tied and that you have gained power over us?

“Do you believe that we have been disgraced and that you instead have been honored by Allāh?

“That your position is safe and secure now that your crooked affairs are smoothed out, and that you are the master of this ʾummah and our ruler?

“Wait! Wait! And wait again. Have you forgotten Allāh ﷻ says:

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمْلِي لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ
إِنَّمَا نُمْلِي لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِثْمًا ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ

wa lā yaḥsabanna-l-ladḫīna kafarūū
ʾannamā numlī lahum kḫayru-li-ʾañfusihim
ʾinnamā numlī lahum li-yazdādūū ʾitḫma – wa lahum ᶜadḫābum-muhīn

And let not those who cover up [the Truth]
think that Our putting off punishment is something good for them.
We put it off that they may increase their evil deeds!
And a shameful suffering awaits them.
(Sūrah ʾĀl ᶜImrān 3:178)

"Is this your justice that the women of your house sit veiled in their *hijab* whilst we, the daughters of the Prophet ﷺ are imprisoned and paraded from place to place unveiled? Your men have taken us from town to town where all sorts of people have been looking at us — rich and poor, young and old, honourable ones and those of disrepute; all gaze at us from far and near, and we have no one to come to our aid.

"Oh Yazīd! Whatever you have done proves your arrogance in the Face of Allāh ﷻ and your denial of His Prophet ﷺ and of the Holy Book and the Sunnah (practices) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ sent down to him ﷺ by Allāh ﷻ.

"Your deeds should not cause amazement because one whose ancestors chewed the livers of the martyrs and whose flesh grew from the bodies of virtuous people and who fought the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ and who mobilized parties for fighting against him — it is only natural that the descendants of such people like you should be most prominent amongst the Arabs in unbelief, sinfulness, cruelty — and cause conflicts (*fiṭnah*) and act against Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ.

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

"One who casts his glance of enmity, malice, and rancor upon us does not lag behind in practising enmity against us. He proves it with his disbelief (*kufr*) and denial of the Prophet ﷺ proclaiming with pride and joy and jubilantly announcing from the rooftops 'I, Yazīd, have slaughtered and butchered the sons of the Prophet ﷺ and imprisoned his family members!' and wishes only that his ancestors had lived to see his accomplishment

"Oh Yazīd! You are striking the lips of ʾAbu ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥusayn ؑ with your stick.

"Do you not know that these are the lips that were kissed so often by the Prophet ﷺ and yet your face reflects pleasure?

“May Allāh ﷻ avenge those who have oppressed us!

“Oh Yazīd! If you thought over what you have done to your yourself you would surely wish your arms were paralysed and severed from your elbow and you would wish that your parents had not given birth to you because you would know that Allāh ﷻ is angry with you and the Prophet ﷺ is now your enemy.

“Oh Yazīd! remember that you have cut your own skin and flesh to pieces.

“Soon you will be brought before Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ!

“If you have gained something today by shedding blood, you will certainly be a loser on the Day of Judgment. On that day nothing but your deeds will count. On that day you will curse Ibn Marjāna and he will curse you. On that day you and your followers will quarrel with one another by the side of the Divine scale of Justice. On that day you will see that the best provision which your father made for you was that he enabled you to kill the children of the Prophet ﷺ. I swear by Allāh ﷻ that I do not fear anyone except Him and do not complain to anyone else. You may employ your deceit and cunning efforts, but I swear by Allāh ﷻ that the shame and disgrace which you have earned by the treatment meted out to us cannot be eradicated.

”I thank Allāh ﷻ Who has concluded the task of the Leaders of the Youths of Paradise ﷺ with prosperity and forgiveness and has bade them welcome and accommodated them in that Garden. I pray to Allāh ﷻ that He may elevate their ranks and favor them more with His kindness, for Allāh *is* Omnipotent.

“Oh Yazīd! On the day when Allāh ﷻ will be the Judge and Muḥammad ﷺ will be the petitioner, and your limbs will give evidence against you, and your father, who made you the ruler of the Muslims, will receive His punishment.

”Oh Yazīd! Do not feel joyous on killing the family of the Prophet ﷺ for remember that Allāh ﷻ has said:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا
بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ

wa lā taḥsabanna-l-ladẖīna qutilū fī sabīli-llāhi amwatā:
bal ʾaḥyāʿun ʿinda rabbihim yurzaqūna
fariḥīna bimāā ʾatāhumu-llāhu miñ faḍlihi

Do not think that those
who have been killed in the Way of Allāh are dead!
No! They are alive and with their Lord is their provision
—jubilant—because of what Allāh in HIs Grace has given them.
(Sūrah ʾĀl ʿImrān 2:169-170)

"Allāh ﷻ is sufficent to deal with you. The Messenger ﷺ is your enemy and Jibrīl ؑ is our support and help against you.

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

"Oh Yazīd! I speak about the severe punishment that lies in store for you not for the sake that you might regret and repent at what you did because that would be a fantasy — your heart has hardened — your soul (*nafs*) is rebellious — your body is busy in disobedience.

"You are one of those whose heart is the nest of the devil in which he lays his evil eggs. Truly your character is itself an ugly creation of the devil.

"One wonders how virtuous people, sons of Prophets ؑ and their successors should be butchered by such evildoers and sinners.

"Our blood is shed by their hands and our flesh drips from their lips.

"We feel grieved to think of those whose sacred and pure bodies are lying on the sands of the burning desert, shot through with arrows, abandoned without burial.

"Oh Yazīd! if you consider our defeat as your achievement then you will have to pay it's price. Allāh ﷻ commits no injustice to His servants. Only in Him do we put our trust and faith.

“He alone will deliver us and in Him alone do we seek safety and with Him do our hopes rest.

“I swear by Allāh ﷻ who sent upon our household His Book and Prophet ﷺ that you will never reach our station. Neither will you ever be able to destroy our station or extinguish our light, nor will you ever be able to wipe out your shame and dishonor.

“Your word is weak and your days are surely numbered.

“Beware of the Day when the Announcer will announce the curse of Allāh ﷻ on the oppressors (*ḍẖālimīn*) and the unjust!

“All Praise is for Allāh ﷻ who appoints a peaceful place for His friends and grants them success in their aims, and thereafter calls them back to His Mercy, Pleasure and Bliss. We pray to Allāh ﷻ to favor us with full payment.

”Surely Allāh ﷻ is Kind and Merciful to His creatures.”

Looking at the merits and circumstances of Sayyida Zaynab ﷻ can anybody say that the stations she passed and the obstacles she overcame were any more difficult that the stations crossed over by the companions of the Prince of Martyrs ﷻ? Having observed the historical conditions, can any person claim that in those trying moments her tongue had any knots? That her heart was in any way intimidated? That she faced any fear or dread?

She *is* the voice of truth in the face of all tyranny and tyranical governate and oppresive sultanate. Can there be any doubt that her words were more brutal for Yazīd than the wounds wrought by thousands of swords and spears? Can it be refuted that this sermon and others like it, some reaching us through history and others not, were such powerful weapons that they overturned the throne of Yazīd and his like and rendered them, in the end, non-existant.

In the end we might say, echoing the *dẖakir* at-Turabi,

“When Makkah was conquered the Prophet ﷺ gave a kẖutbah
now when *Sẖam* is conquered Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ gave a kẖutbah.”

The Prophet ﷺ in his kẖutbah freed the grandfather of Yazīd, ʾAbu Sufyan, who could have become part of the booty won by the Prophet ﷺ. Now Sayyidah Zaynab ﷺ reminds Yazīd of that freedom just as she implicates him in his attempt to destroy ʾIslām. She exposes the hypocrisy that had assumed power and underscores the insignificance of such power. — and the wrath that awaits those who ride the steeds of wealth and arrogance and tyranny.

Her grandfather ﷺ confronted the ruling power of his time just as her mother ﷺ and father ﷺ confronted the ruling authority of their time. Her brother ﷺ sacrificed his life and his family to preserve the Message of Allāh ﷻ. All of these deeds had to be brought to light and for that Allāh ﷻ chose Sayyidah Zaynab ﷺ.

Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ is her mother's ﷺ daughter and her mother ﷺ is the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ. In a sense it does not matter that no son of the Prophet ﷺ survived because Fāṭimah ﷺ survived and she is truly the *warith* of the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ and, indeed, all the Prophets, Messengers and Awakeners ﷺ.

Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ carries the benefaction of all the Messengers ﷺ and Friends ﷺ of Allāh ﷻ, of her parents ﷺ, and of her brothers ﷺ; a benefaction of true virtue, justice, patience, motherhood, sisterhood, sacrifice, nobility, love, swordless war, dishonored honor and so much more.

She ﷺ *is* the Lady of the Garden, a realm in which the glories of this world fade into non-being. Though she deserved the title and honor in this world it was not her destiny, but ultimately, all of that is nothing compared to the glory that is hers ﷺ.

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

ʾinnamā yurīdu-llāhu li-yudẖhiba ʿankumu-r-rijåsa
ʾahla-l-bayti wa yuṭahhirakum taṭåhīrā
Allāh only wishes to remove impurity from you
oh People of the House
and to purify you with a thorough purification.
(Sūrah al-ʾAḥzāb 33:33)

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۖ وَبِذَٰلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

ʾinnna ṣalāti wa nusuki wa maḥyāyī wa mamātī
li-llāhi rabbi-l-ʿālamīn
lā sẖarīka lahu
wa bi-dẖālika ʾumirtu wa ʾanā ʾawwalu-l-muslimīn

"Truly My worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying
are for Allāh, The Nurturer of All the Worlds –
in Whose Divinity none has a share
This I am commanded and I am the first [among you]
who surrender [to Allāh].
(Sūrah al-ʾAnʿam 6:162-63)

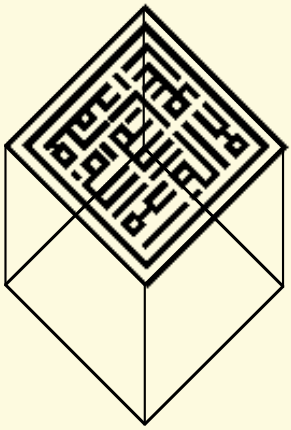
إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُم بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ۚ
يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۖ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي
التَّوْرَاةِ وَالْإِنجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ ۚ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۚ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا
بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُم بِهِ ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

ʾinna-llāha-sẖ-tara-mina-l-muʾinīna
ʾañfusahum wa ʾamwalahum
bi-ʾanna lahumu-l-jannah;
yuqātiluna fī sabīli-llāhi
fa-yaqåtulūna wa yuqåtalūn
fī-t-tawrāti wa-l-ʾiñjīli wa-l-qurʾān:
wa man ʾawfā bi-ʿahdihi mina-llāh:
fa-s-tabåsẖirū bi-bayʿikumu-l-ladẖī bayaʿtum-bih;
wa dẖālika huwa-l-fowzul-l-ʿaḍẖīm

Surely Allāh has bought from their believers their souls and their wealth
[in exchange] for the Garden.
They fight in the Way of Allāh and they kill and they are killed.
This is a promise binding on Him in the Torah, the ʾInjīl and the Qurʾān
[and] Who fulifills the covenant better than Allāh?
Rejoice in the bargain you have made, for that is the supreme attainment.
(Sūrah at-Ṭawbah 9:111)

السلام على الحسين وعلى علي بن الحسين وعلى أولاد الحسين وعلى أصحاب الحسين

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