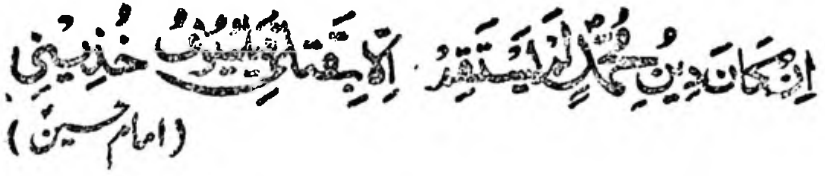
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Tragedy of Karbala at a Glance



" If the religion of Muhammad, can not stand firm, but by my martyrdom, then, O, swords (come and) get me", (I am ready)

(Imam Husain A.S.)

The advent of the grandson of Prophet Muhammed S.A.W. (Imam Husain A.S.) on the arid plains of Karbala marks and epoch of the greatest and ghasliest tragedy. unique for its unparalled magnitude in the entire history of the world, in general, and of Islam in particular,

Within a span of fifty years time after the demise of the Prophet, the so called self-appointed Muslim rulers transfigurated and distorted the image of Islam to such a degree of ugliness, that it became a mockery, not only of the teachings of Islam, but also of the basic rational inclinations of human mind.

The distortion of Islam was at its zenith during the tyrannical rule of Yazid, and Husain (A S.) promptly stood up to protect and save Islam from the savage clutches of the reprobate ruler, and his mercenaries masquerading as the true representatives of Islam.

Yazid, son of Muawiya the then ruler had diverted his energies to disarray the ranks of muslim solidarity, and social out look, both by purchasing their conscience and by tormenting the souls of the God fearing to obedience and to such humble submission that their sensibilities were deadened to dumbness. Husain (A S.), who had refused to swear subser-

vience to Yazid, showed his metal by upholding nobility of character against immoral treachery, confronting large numbers, with a handful of followers and defying agression with active resistance.

The battle of Karbala can never be defined as a clash of arms between two princes, but as a war between two contradictory principles and idealogies, one upholding piety, love, truth, righteousness and spiritualism and the other clinging to debauchery power and materialism, that resulted in the production of the heady wine of tyrannxical imperialism and spiritual bankruptcy.

A retrospective survey of the great tragedy of Karbala leads one to autometic inlrospection and produces the awakening of one's conscience so that one begins to feel, understand and cherish the true meaning of sacrifice and suffering for a just and noble cause. A very vivid and clear picture of this was painted by Husain's (A.S.) holy blood that restored originality to the faded image of Islam. The tragedy of Karbala is the precious life-blood of the master spirits (Husain A. S. and his chosen companions) embalmed and treasured, with a noble purpose for a life beyond life.

At Karbala, Husain A. S., offered at the threshold of Godliness within a short span of ten days time, treasures of divinity and human dignity, of endurance and forbearance, of suffering and sacrifice, of such magnitude, the like of which cannot be found in the pages of history, nor can they be expected to occur against in future.

—*by* **Abid Ali Rizvi**

About the Author

Maulana Saiyed Ali Naqi Naqvi is a rare specimen of sholarship and divinity, who has laboured in the study Islamic history for propogating Islamic spirit with untiring zeal. into the peoples of the world, especially with a reference to the great tragedy of Karbala,

Husain is a name to conjure with. He is truly a world figure, beyond all races and religions. He is a world teacher, for he is a teacher of righteousness, which is atonce the heart and pith and marrow of all religious and yet beyond all sectarian religions. He does not demand of you blind faith, nor belief in unverifiable dogmas; nor does he make your subscribing to a particular book as the only true one, nor to a prophet as the only savior. He beekons you to rightousness not by the temptations of heaven or the threats of hell, but because it is your true nature. He asks you to fight evil and support good even though this may involve a tremendous sacrifice. Indeed this is what he did. He made an unprecedented sacrifice, such as history has not recorded, a sacrifice not only of himself but of all his family. Different religions may divide mankind, but Husain unites it, for righteous is the religion of all mankind, and fighting evil and supporting good its sacred duty. Who can differ from this ? This is the religion of mankind and all those who subscribe to it are Hussainees. It is a regretable fact that at times Hussain becomes a matter of controversy. This is due to ignorance of the real character and contribution of Husain. He belongs to no sect; he belongs to all humanity.

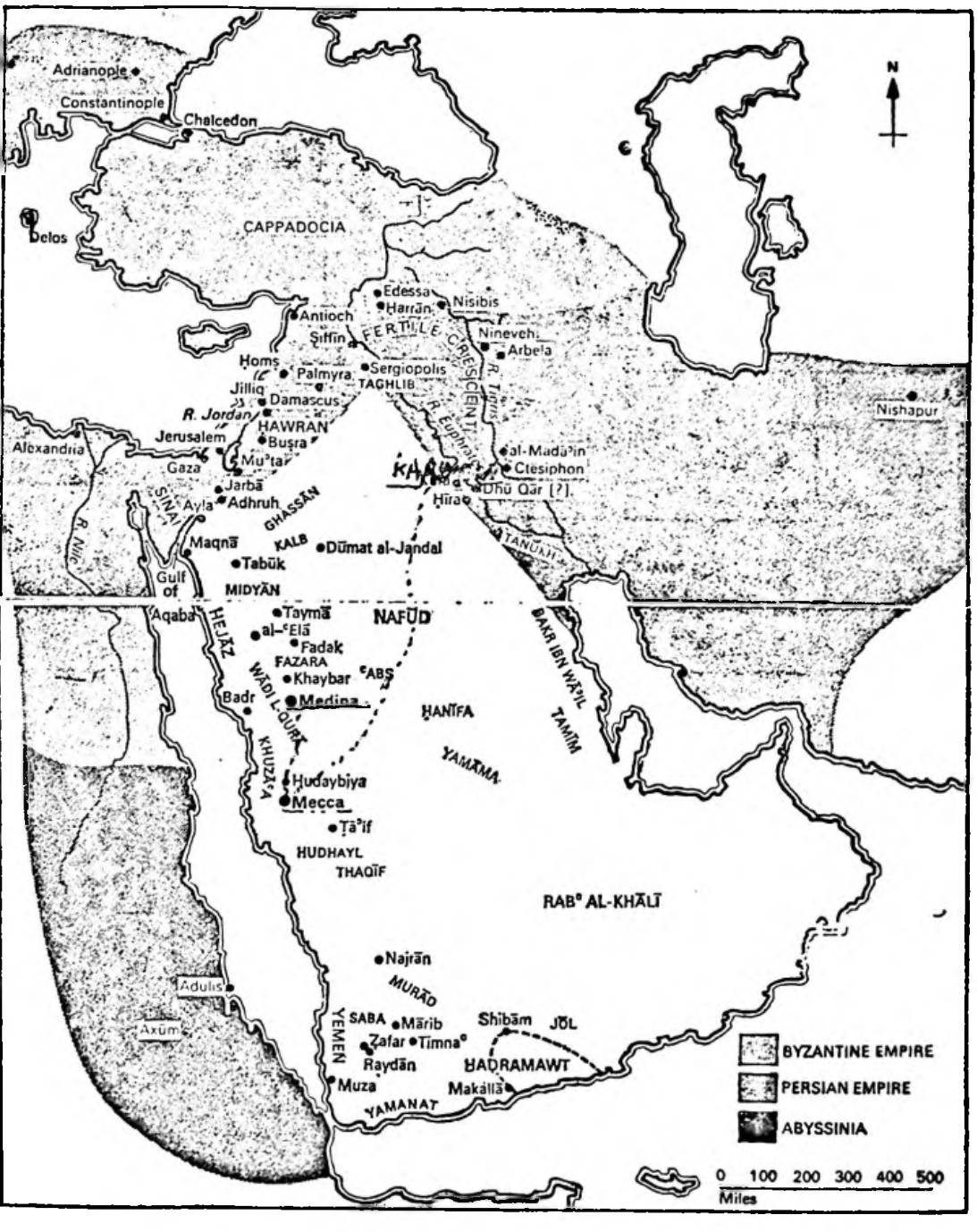
An important aspect about Husain is that he teaches not through words but through deeds. His book is the field of Karbala where his teachings have been written not in words but in deeds. That is why he impresses us, in that consists his credibility. He was honest and jast. He fought for humanity. He did not set himself up as anything else than a man, a man devoted to truth and justice, to the true ideals of the perfect

man, and who fought for his principles against heavy odds. He was a man of courage and determination. Let us honour him, and to the extent our moral strengrh allows, let us follow him. In this divided world he can become, if truly understood, a rallying point of human unity.

Karbala was not an ordinary battle between two kings. It was a battle between two principles. Husain was *Haq* incarnate and Yazid was *Batil* incarnate, Husain truimphed through sacrifice. All men should rejoice in this victory, But for Husain's sacrifice, evil would have truimphed. He gave his blood so that truth and justice may remain untranished. While we naturally feel sad at the tribulations of Husain, we should remember that his sacrifice was necessary in the cause of humanity and through these tribulations he emerged truimphant.

Dr. J. D. Shukla
I.C.S. (Retd.)
5-B, Butler Road, Lucknow

2-12-1982



Geographical Sketch of Arabia and Surroundings at the time of prophet Mohammad

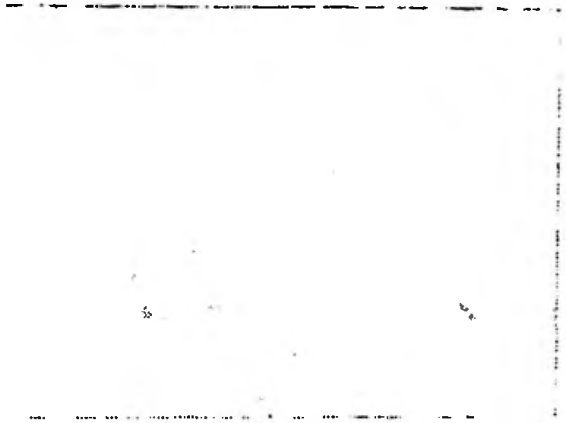


THE AUTHOR OF

" Shaheed - e - Insaniyat "

Allama Syed Ali Naqi Naqvi

President of Anjuman-e-Yadgar-e-Husaini



History of the Anjuman & Book

The " Anjuman-e-Yadgar-e-Husaini " was formed in 1936 A. H. under the Presidentship of Maulana Syed Ali Naqi Sahab (Naqqan Sahab) to celebrate the 13th Anniversary of the great tragedy of Karbala.

In 1963 the book entitled 'Shaheed-e-Insaniyat' was written by the Maulana in chaste, and simple Urdu.

In 1975 the Anjuman, with the permission of Maulana, took the decision to get it translated into English by the able and learned scholar, S. Ali Akhtar Rizvi, and renamed it as "Martyr of Humanity".

About The Author :

Saiydul Ulema Maulana Saiyed Ali Naqi Sahib is among those eceedingly rare Shia men of religion in India who have devoted their entire lives to the unremitting pursuit of knowledge about Islam and to the rigorous labour of propagating it,

He was born in the year 1904 and belongs the progeny of a series of very learned scholars, and acquired knowledge in foreign countries as Well.

He has not only adressed countless gatherings convened to mourn the tragedy of Karbala, but has also written a very large number of books on a variety of subjects concerning Islam before writing the 'Shaheed-e-Insaniat" which is among his more ambitious works, representing the distilled essence and epitome of over half a century of the Maulana's study

of the Quran, the Traditions and Islamic history with special reference to Imam Husain. He is as comprehensive, erudite and versatile in writing as he is ready, convincing and pertinent in speaking.

Maulana Saiyad Ali Naqi's general observations on certain aspects of the tragedy of Karbala bear indelible impress of a fresh and very well informed approach to those features and disclose his incisive insight and the excellence of the powers of his researchful reasoning,

The "Shaheed-e-Insaniyat" is unique for its masterly and concise treatment of the mediate and immediate causes which contributed to the great catastrophe of Karbala. and also of the events associated with that holocaust.

It is hoped that the Martyr of Humanity which is an English rendering of the excellent work, the Shaheed-e-Insaniat will be found of great help by those unacquainted with Urdu in getting to know the outstanding facts of the great battle which a very small band of dauntless and devoted companions of Husain, gave to overwhelming forces of darkness and evil and though seamingly destroyed, made truth triumphantly prevail at Karbala.

This book is an asset for interested researchful minds inclined to study the spirit of Islam, as it brings to light the ideology of sacrifices of pietists for noble causes and righteousness.

About The Translator :

Saiyed Ali Akhtar Rizvi had a consistantly brilliant record throughout his educational career. Graduating from the University of Lucknow in 1933, he was awarded two gold medals, one for being the best student of English in the Canning College, and the other for writing the best essay in English in the University. He then took the B. A. (Hons.) and M. A. (Special) degrees in English, both in the first division.

Joining the U. P, Civil (Executive) service in 1937, he served in various capacities, including the post of Secretary. Shia Central Board of Waqfs. Lucknow, of which he was the first incumbent, On selection to the I,A.S.. he served successfully as district officer and in the secretariate for many years, and did a stint as the first controller of the Shia Waqf Board. He retired from service in 1972 from the post of Commissioner Vigilance and President, Administrative Tribunals, Lucknow.

The Anjuman is extremely grateful to the members of the Committee and particularly to Mr. Azhar Masood Rezavi Treasurer, for the valuable help given in getting this book printed in English.

We very cordially welcome the magnanimous jesture of the Maulana in delivering us the copyright of translation and printing of the book.

We are also thankful to Mr. Ali Akhtar Rizvi for his hard work in excellent translation of the book.

—Syed Husain Ali
(Retd. Supdt. Jail U. P.)
Secretary

1984
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PREFACE

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

(In the name of Allah, the Benificent, the Merciful)

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوة على سيد المرسلين وآله الطاهرين

(All praise be to Allah, Supporter of Worlds, and blessings be on the Chief of his Messengers, and his Pure Progeny).

—: o :—

ARABIA mostly a desert, is a vast country along the western marches of Asia, its shores washed by the breakers of the Red Sea. From this land originated a great revolutionary wave, called Islam, in the seventh century of the Christian era. It was generated by Mohammad son of Abdullah, who declared himself a Prophet, and imparted to the World a message of the absolute unity of God and took his stand against the worship of idols, and of pelf and power, in fine, against the worship of everything other than God. This earned him the opposition of those to whose power this teaching posed a threat. They endeavoured to stem the tide of this revolution, and the Prophet had to suffer greatly at their hands.

The Omayyads took a leading part in the resistance to the prophet's teaching which, without directly upholding the superiority or affirming the humbleness of any family, made the excellence of performance and thoroughness in carrying out one's duties as a human being, the sole criteria for the achievement of superiority, honour and merit. Most of the Omayyads did not measure up to these standards and, in consequence, Omayya's grandson, Abu Sufyan, son of Harb, unfurled the flag of revolt against Islam. The perverse and benighted iconolaters of Arabia rallied round his flag, and began harassing the Prophet and placing all manner of obstruction in his spreading the message of Islam. In the beginning, the prophet put up with these hardships and persecutions, but when his enemies agreed upon his murder, he was compelled to leave his home at Mecca and to take up residence at Madina where people had accepted his teachings and had held out promises of assistance to him since before. This departure of

the prophet to Madina is called the Hejirah and with it commenced the Hejirah Era among the Muslims.

Even after the Prophet had left Mecca, he was given no respite and found no rest. Several raids were led by his enemies to put him to the sword. He was, therefore, compelled to give them many a battle, the chief among them being those of Badr, Ohad and Ahzab. Abu Sufyan lost all these battles and the numbers of the prophet's followers and his power grew steadily. Ultimately the power of the Omayyads suffered a thorough collapse, and in order to cover the embarrassment which they had been faced with, the Umayyads also donned the garb of Islam, waiting eagerly, nevertheless, for a decline in the fortunes of that faith to enable them to regain their erstwhile prestige and recapture their lost power.

There was little hope, however, of these yearnings of the Omayyads materialising in the prophat's life-time. Shortly after his death, however, the affairs of the Muslims fell into disarray and the government of the day found it expedient to suffer the Omayyads to establish their rule in Syrra, beginning as governers and, with the consolidation of their power in course of time, ending as independent rulers of that country.

No sooner had the Omayyads established themselves in Syria than they took to obliterating the ways and practices introduced by the Prophet, and abolishing the vestiges of all feelings of equality generated by Islam. Things ultimately came to such a pass that even the injunctions of the Quran were brazenly flouted.

The real successors of the Prophet, on whose shoulders had devolved the responsibility of protecting the Islamic way of life and civilised behaviour, could not tolerate these undesirable developments. When Ali, the Prophet's cousin and the first to proffer his support to him at his call, and his mainstay in spreading the teachings of Islam from the very beginning to the end of the Prophets' life, came to be recognised and installed as the Caliph of the Muslims, he had to contend against the ruler of Syria in the bloodshed of the war of Siffin. His purpose had not yet been achieved, nor his work completed, when he was struck with a sword on his head while prostrating himself in a mosque in prayers before God, and was crowned with martyrdom. After Ali, his elder son, Hasan, entered into a treaty with Muawiya, the ruler of Syria, stipulating certain conditions which, however, remained wholly unobserved by Muawiya who secretly got Hasan poisoned. After Hasan's death, the full responsibility of protecting the principles of Islam fell upon Husain who was the second grandson of the Prophet and Ali's younger son.

Abu Sufyan's grandson, Yazid b. Muawiya, new ascended the throne of Syria. He was a great drunkard and was so exceedingly depreved that he was 'guilty' of moral transgressions of which the barest mention is taboo in decent society. Even so the dread inspiered by the long-estabished Omayyad authority prevented even one voice from being raised against the goings on of the ruling clique. The people had been overawed out of the fear of God. Yazid knew to a certainty that in that quarter of Medina where resided the Hashimides in the Hijaz, there lived a man who was unafraid of him, wedded only to the fear of God. He was the real defender of the principles of Islam, a grandson of the Prophet. He might be silent for the time being, but there was no knowing when the scales may fall off the eyes of the people, and they may be attracted to the truth. Yazid's anxiety, therefore, mounted, and he longed to obtain the oath of allegiance to himself from Husain without loss of any time, somehow or other. Accordingly, he directed walid b. Otba b. Abu Sufiyan, Governor of Medina, to obtain the oath from Husain, and not to show any lenience in the matter. Husain instantly divined the import of Yazids' message. On principle it was impossible for Husain to pledge his fealty to Yazid. Indeed, it was much easier for him to offer his head than his hand to Yazid but before doing so, he had to abide by the basic duty enjoined by Islam to make every legitimate effort for self-defence.

Accordingly, Husain resolved upon leaving his hearth and home at Medina. He took with himself all his dependents, including ladies and children, and sought refuge at Mecca. This was an irrefutable proof of his entertaining no wish to fight with anybody and imperil his own life and the lives of those who had kept him company, if he was not compelled to pledge his loyalty to Yazid.

According to international usage as, indeed, according to Islam as well, Mecca was such an abode of peace that nobody need have entertained any manner of fright there, but the grandson of the prophet noticed here also that preparations were on foot to put him to death. Towards the last days of the approach of the time for the hajj pilgrimage, when people from all quarters of the Islamic world were converging upon Mecca, Husain had to bid goodbye to that city. He took the road to Kufa of which the residents had persistently invited him to guide them in religious duties. Moreover, he had already despatched his cousin, Muslim b Aqil, to observe how things stood there. In the intervel, however, conditions at Kufa had completely altered for the worse, after the heartless Obaidullah b. Ziyad, had established his authority there. Muslim met the fate of a martyr. After this

melancholy development it was, to all appearances, highly inexpedient for Husain to persevere in his resolve to go to Kufa, but return to Mecca or Medina was also not feasible, since from Kufa had been despatched a heavy contingent to take him captive. This barred Husain's onward progress no less than it prevented his retreat. He was therefore, constrained to alight at Karbala where, from the very next day, came pouring in Yazid's multitudinous armies. All roads were sealed and Husain was surrounded. Pressure was inexorably exerted to coerce Husain into swearing allegiance to Yazid.

Husain was accompanied by only 17 of his relatives, a few slaves and about a hundred or a hundred and fifty close friends who had managed to join him despite the strict watch that had been kept on all the highways.

From the 7th of Moharrum water was totally banned for Husain and his companions, not excepting even children. Husain was peace-loving by nature, and placed before the Commander of Yazid's army terms calculated to reduce tension and obviate the chances of a resort to violence. His approach was so reasonable and pacific that b Sa'd, had to concede that Husain's approach was one of peace, and he wrote to the governor of Kufa, Obaidullah b. Ziyad as much. Ziyad's son was, however, drunk with power and could form no idea of the lengths to which Husain could go in braving hardships. He thought that Husain had been reduced to seek a peaceful settlement of the outstanding issues between the parties on account of weakness and lack of resources, and wrote back to Omar b Sa'd that Husain could purchase safety only by making an unconditional offer to swear allegiance to Yazid. Husain, who was as self-respecting as he was aware of his religious responsibilities, found it impossible to abandon his stand.

On the evening of the 9th of Moharrum, Yazid's army, overwhelmingly superior in numbers, launched the offensive against Husain's small band. A night's truce was applied for by Husain, and it was only with much reluctance and difficulty that it was granted. Husain's object in seeking this brief truce was simply to spend the last night of his existence in offering prayers to God. And since it had been finally decided to entrust the event of the quarrel to the arbitrament of war, Husain might well have considered it eminently desirable to offord an opportunity to friend and foe alike, to quietly think over the whole matter once again, and deliberate upon the course to be finally adopted by every one of them, individually, so that should any of his companions elect to withdraw his support, and leave him to his fate, he may be free to do so. As to his enemies, no further argument had been left to be urged upon them to dissuade them from indulgence in

the unholy war. He collected his companions and told them plainly that the following day would see the end of his existence, and he gave them complete exemption from adhering to the oath of loyalty to him. Indeed, he encouraged them to leave for any destination they chose, and make good use of the cover of darkness afforded by the night. His brave, and selfless companions, with one voice, told him that they would never forsake him which was, indeed, exactly what they did.

A restless sea of a multitudinous army spread before him, sheer desolation and utter ruin surrounded him but Husain had in his immediate proximity the dear handsome faces of his brothers, nephews, sons and other relatives and friends. He had with him ladies as well, who lived in seclusion as they observed purdah. There were small children also with him. All approaches to the Euphrates were completely and closely guarded by the enemy. Husain and his companions were denied even a drop of water. Innocent children were greatly agitated and in deep distress on account of thirst. All manifestations of might and exhibitions of authority and all modes of persecution, however, failed to coerce Husain or his companions into the recognition of a sinful and depraved man as a ruler of Islam.

From morning till about midday on the 10th of Moharrum, Husain's brave companions, outside his family, sacrificed their lives for him and his doctrines. When all of them had attained martyrdom, the turn arrived for the relatives of Husain to sacrifice themselves. It would have been far easier for Husain to have sacrificed himself first of all, but he had to undergo the most thoroughgoing and harrowing test of his powers of endurance. His relatives, therefore, started leaving for the field of battle, one by one, to offer the sacrifice of their lives. Ali Akbar, Husain's grown-up, son, who resembled the prophet himself in appearance, was the first, among his relatives, to be sent to fight and to sacrifice himself. His mother was in her tent at whose door stood his father. She saw their handsome and valiant son getting lost in the innumerable shifting crowd of the hostile forces. His father saw, and his mother heard that Ali Akbar had been cut to pieces in the field of battle. They, however, did not lose control over themselves, and remained patient and composed. Then Husain's other relatives sacrificed their lives one after the other. Abbas, brother and the standard-bearer of his army, was then sent to die fighting. His departure broke Husain's heart, spirit and strength. When left with none else to be offered in sacrifice, Husain offered for sacrifice one who, under no law whatever, could have been held to have committed any wrong. The shocking plight of his infant son, Ali Asghar, restlessly gasping in his mother's lap, was noticed by Husain

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A restless sea of a multitudinous army spread before him, sheer desolation and utter ruin surrounded him but Husain had in his immediate proximity the dear handsome faces of his brothers, nephews, sons and other relatives and friends. He had with him ladies as well, who lived in seclusion as they observed purdah. There were small children also with him. All approaches to the Euphrates were completely and closely guarded by the enemy. Husain and his companions were denied even a drop of water. Innocent children were greatly agitated and in deep distress on account of thirst. All manifestations of might and exhibitions of authority and all modes of persecution, however, failed to coerce Husain or his companions into the recognition of a sinful and depraved man as a ruler of Islam.

From morning till about midday on the 10th of Moharrum, Husain's brave companions, outside his family, sacrificed their lives for him and his doctrines. When all of them had attained martyrdom, the turn arrived for the relatives of Husain to sacrifice themselves. It would have been far easier for Husain to have sacrificed himself first of all, but he had to undergo the most thoroughgoing and harrowing test of his powers of endurance. His relatives, therefore, started leaving for the field of battle, one by one, to offer the sacrifice of their lives. Ali Akbar, Husain's grown-up, son, who resembled the prophet himself in appearance, was the first, among his relatives, to be sent to fight and to sacrifice himself. His mother was in her tent at whose door stood his father. She saw their handsome and valiant son getting lost in the innumerable shifting crowd of the hostile forces. His father saw, and his mother heard that Ali Akbar had been cut to pieces in the field of battle. They, however, did not lose control over themselves, and remained patient and composed. Then Husain's other relatives sacrificed their lives one after the other. Abbas, brother and the standard-bearer of his army, was then sent to die fighting. His departure broke Husain's heart, spirit and strength. When left with none else to be offered in sacrifice, Husain offered for sacrifice one who, under no law whatever, could have been held to have committed any wrong. The shocking plight of his infant son, Ali Asghar, restlessly gasping in his mother's lap, was noticed by Husain

who raised him on his hands before the hostile army. A soldier fixed an arrow to his bow, aimed it at the infant's neck and released it. The infant's neck was pierced by the dart. This outraged the conscience of humanity and symbolised the utter collapse of all feelings of mercy and kindliness. Husain had now to offer his own sacrifice after offering resistance in self-defence, as enjoined upon him by the Islamic code. Heart-broken and helpless, Husain unsheathed his sword and defended himself according to the injunctions of Islam as best he could. The manner in which he confronted the enemy is normally far beyond human strength, but how can a man singlehandedly withstand an inundation of steel swords? Numberless wounds and injuries were inflicted on Husain's body, and he fell off from his horse. This stage had indeed been imminent since the very beginning but now it had actually arrived. Husain's head was severed from his body, and held aloft on a spearhead. The dead bodies of the martyrs were trampled by horses, the effects and belongings of Husain and his companions were given over to plunder and the sheets that covered the heads of the respectable ladies of the prophet's family were snatched away. Their tents were committed to flames. From among the men of Husain's party, a weak patient, namely, his son, Abid, was the only one to survive the holocaust; he was put under irons. The modest ladies of the noblest family in Arabia were publicly paraded from city to city.

This terrible calamity is often known as the "happenings of Karbala". Ordinarily every incident, on accouut of its place of occurence is related to some particular locality, country and section of society. Accordingly, the events of Karbala are also connected with the region of Iraq, the country of Arabia, the stock of Hashim and the community of the Muslims. Incidents, however, acquire universal and general application from their peculiar features and far-reaching consequences which have releva nce for the entire community of man, without any distinction of caste and creed. Thus on the events of Karbala converge the interest and attention of the whole of mankind for a variety of reasons.

One reason is that it is in human nature to detest the oppressor and sympathise with the oppressed, irrespective of whether or not we personally know those involved in such an unhappy relationship or their creed or religious persuasion. The cruelties and savagery employed against Husain in Karbala are unparalleled in the annals of the world Many prophets and saintly personages have, on occasions, been the victims of a variety of ruthless brutalities; many innocent persons have been put to the sword; many more have been deprived of their all, and many more have been

thrown into prisons with out any fault, but all manner of inhuman atrocities and barbarities meted out to others severally and on separate occasions were perpetrated against Husain alone, and simultaneously with one another. This makes the persecution of Husain unique for all time. Accordingly, as unequalled as the oppression exercised against Husain was and as unexampled was his persecution, as intense might well be the degree of sympathy evoked by and shown to Husain, and as unmatched might appropriately be the measure of aversion evoked by his oppressors. And since the persecution to which Hussain was subjected excelled that to which anybody else was exposed, so unrivalled might aptly be the abhorrence in which his oppressors might be held.

The second reason is that the sufferings of Husain were not due to his helplessness as would be those of a man, who, say, might be waylaid and plundered by highway robbers or killed by them. Such a person would indeed be held to be an oppressed one, entitled to sympathy. His helplessness, however, is uninvited and unwilled. It does not follow any act on his part which would be based on high principles. Consequently it would bear no comparison to Husain's helplessness, as Husain undertook to suffer all the hardships, and all the cruelties in support of a rightful cause and in defence of an exalted principle, which constitutes self-sacrifice. A variety of objects might be sacrificed but the supreme sacrifice consists in laying down one's life. And if a man falter not in offering himself up to this supreme ordeal he would be entitled to the esteem and respect of all mankind. Such a sacrifice would command honour and be entitled to homage in proportion to the merit and the excellence of the object for which it has been made. The self-immolation of Husain in Karbala stands unrivalled in the chronicles of mankind. Truth and justice were being shaken to their foundations, brute force and tyranny were riding rough-shod over men's right to liberty of conscience. At this critical juncture, Husain tore the mask off the face of unredeemed tyranny and sheer perversity by taking to the battle-field along with him his relatives and even children of tender age. He thus presented to the World the highest example of steadiness, resolution, self-control, patience, self-abnegation, sacrifice, devotion to the truth and firmness and purity of character. On account of these virtues which Husain so splendidly vindicated, he may, in justice, not be identified exclusively with any one particular nation or religion, but must be reckoned as correlated and belonging to the whole of mankind. His performance re-established humane conduct which was at its last gasp and gave to mankind a message which is, and would remain, deathless. He acquainted the world with the real value and merit of truth and truthfulness, and presented for its edifica-

tion a mode of death in which immortality itself is unmistakably latent. Accordingly, all the nations of the world who prize sacrifice in a noble cause like truth, liberty of conscience, or freedom of worship cannot but value exceedingly highly the sacrifice which Husain offered.

There is yet another reason. Husains' object, in submitting himself to the sacrifice, was not such as might be the subject of the slightest controversy between different faiths. At a certain level concerning human excellence and high morality, all religions tend to be at one with each other, for the underlying object of them all, supporting their various superstructures, is to develop human conduct and morals to perfection. It is entirely another matter, indeed, that on account of the contrariness of the times, certain principles and directions of the various religions might have been modified or altered on account of the misunderstandings of succeeding generations. As already stated, however the nub of all religions is to refine human conduct and perfect human qualities. Husain's aim coincided with this common objective of all religions. If Husain had striven against the followers of a different religion or faith, that is, if he had fought against non-Muslims then, howsoever impeccable might have been the object of his sacrifice, and, howsoever heartlessly he might have been led to martyrdom, his adversaries might well have pleaded animus with his name, faith and objective, to get away with their crimes. The tragedy of Karbala may well have fallen short of commanding universal sympathy. Husain's self-immolation was not formally meant to obliterate or support any particular faith. On the contrary, his sacrifice had been made to uproot the defects of, and re-establish virtue amongst, the followers of one and the same faith. Consequently since in principle, there are no fundamental differences between different religions about the concepts of virtue and vice, and all religions equally believe in fostering virtue and eradicating vice, the adherents of all faiths would applaud Husain's object, and do honour and pay homage to Husain's sacrifice.

Again, the perfect examples of a variety of excellent qualities of behaviour and of the manifestations of cardinal virtues that Husain and his followers furnished in such profusion during the tragic developments at Karbala provide for all men, without any distinction whatever, a perennial source of practical instruction which may be turned to advantage by them all. It was for these reasons that despite all their internal tensions and mutual differences, people the world over have looked upon the tragedy of Karbala as one in which they all were intimately concerned, and the nations of the world have alike conceded its importance. Throughout the centuries

not only has their interest in this momentous event suffered no abatement, but it has also experienced, on occasion, fresh accessions of strength.

If one were to undertake a journey over the whole world from the east to the west, and visit a new tract during the first ten days of Moharrum, one would surely notice that everywhere, according to their lights, people remember the martyr of Karbala in some fashion or other.

The memorial ceremonies that are annually held in various observances and forms, all redolent of mourning (*azadari*) had taken root even during the first hundred years following the tragedy of Karbala, and the number and the area of such mourning rites have regularly been on the increase.

By nature men are drawn towards happiness and shun grief. Distress occasioned by the chances and changes of life is sought to be driven into oblivion. Accordingly, among the nations of the world most celebrations are commemorative of occasions of good cheer. Events fraught with pain and grief have been sparingly commemorated. It is only Husain's martyrdom which has been solemnised over the centuries to the accompaniment of marks of mourning and symbols of woe. Since human nature cannot support any burden of gloom and depression for any great length of time, it follows from the doleful manner in which, for ages, the tragedy of Karbala has been solemnised, that it is productive of beneficial results and advantages to mankind.

It is a fact that fresh events blot out the memory of earlier happenings. The tragedy of Karbala has so forcibly defied this tendency, has maintained its sway over the hearts and minds of people so long, as evidenced by the undiminished fervour with which it has been observed for centuries, and has stood its ground against all later events with such conspicuous firmness, that one is constrained to believe that the world has yet to produce an event of greater weight and moment, whose impact on the imagination of humanity might rival Husain's sacrifice.

Numberless revolutions have taken place in the world after the events at Karbala. Civilisation has seen many upheavals and standards of behaviour and modes of thought and feeling have undergone many radical alterations, but the memory of the sacrifice to which Husain gave himself up has been kept alive continuously for 1300 years without losing any of its cordial sincerity. It would have, in consequence, to be conceded that Husain had offered the sacrifice in defence of such unexceptionable and exalted principles of human conduct as are shared in the largest measure by people all over the world. As a corollary, therefore, so long as mankind and the nobler

traits of humanity survive, those principles will continue to be cherished, and the memory of Husain's sacrifice would remain fresh.

It is obvious that in proportion to the importance of on objective, and its historical uniqueness and meaningfulness, men of letters and those of a reflective turn of mind, exercise the powers of their pens and the energies of their minds about it. No single incident in the history of the world has collected round itself such a huge mass of writing, in prose and verse, as the tragedy of Karbala, shewing its unmatched significance.

The blood of martyrs had not yet dried on the battle-field of Karbala when poets began pouring their minds in verse about the distressing event. Leaving out of account those addresses which the members of Husain's family or other speakers delivered on the spur of the moment, especially in connection with the preparations to avenge Husains' blood, such as those made by Suleiman, b. Sur'd Khizai, and later by Mukhtar, to impress upon people the gravity of the events which had taken place at Karbala, permanent works in prose started being written about them towards the close of the first century of the Hegira. Thereafter time and again historians wrote books about the events of Karbala, called the Maqatil. A chain of writings commenced in this fashion, and it is a fact that about no other single incident in history so much has been written and said as about the tragedy of Karbala. The subject, however, still remains unexhausted and much remains to be studied and much more about the event requires exposition. Besides, in most of the books dealing with the subject, the style of writing is such as accords with the taste of those alone who are largely concerned with religious doctrines. This generates a feeling of strangeness and unfamiliarity among the adherents of religions other than Islam. There is no single comprehensive work to which may readily be referred a stranger who wishes to acquaint himself with the events of Karbala in their historical perspective, their consequences and necessary details. The present work is being written to meet this need, and now that 1300 years have passed after the sad events of Karbala, and members of all creeds and communities have unanimously decided to establish a memorial to Hussain b. Ali, on the thirteenth centenary of his great sacrifice, this book is presented to the Court of equity, justice and truth, to the tribunal of freedom, equality and self-denial. to the sessions of the human heart, mind and conscience, to the judgement of human sentiments, feelings, and noble thoughts, to the verdict of human dignity, self-respect and prestige, to the arbitration of human aspirations, insight and character, and through all these forums to the supreme bench of the Creator of them all.

It is beyond the limited power of words to make a correct appraisal of the value and worth of the immortal performance of Husain, but if even one sentence in this book succeed in portraying any aspect of his sacrifice for all to see, this labour of love would have been more than fully requited.

Ali Naqi-un-Naqavi

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CHAPTER I

Husain's distinguished ancestors and the glorious traditions of his family

Heredity has usually an important role to play in shaping men's manners, giving direction to their behaviour and moulding their character. The ways of remarkable men seen, impressions of notable events witnessed and tales of heroic achievements heard during nonage have an uncanny way of sticking to the subconscious and providing sustenance to the gradual unfolding of comprehension and the development of under-standing in the child. It would, therefore, appear to be of the essence that in order to appreciate Husain's personality, the remarkable deeds of his forbears should be recalled, at least in outline.

Abraham occupies a largely international position, being held in reverence by the Jews, the Christians as well as the Muslims. Religiously speaking, he might be called a great-grand ancestor of the Muslims at removes both numerous and far between. Indeed the Ouran explicitly mentions that the prophet of Islam claimed to be a leader belonging to the faith of Abraham who, incidentally, was the first to name those who followed his faith as Muslims. The Quran records his prayer to God, "Make both of us (Abraham and his son, Ishmael) Muslims (persons obedient to Thee), and call into being from our descendants a group of Muslims (persons obedient to Thee)". The coming into existence of the Muslims as a nation and the advent of their prophet would, therefore, appear to be the fruit of Abraham's prayer. Traditions concerning Abraham's life, therefore, constitute the heritage of the Muslims in common with the Jews and the Christians, and contribute significently to the fashioning of the elements of the Muslim conduct and ethics. Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. From Isaac sprang the Israelites and from Ishmael, the prophet of Islam, both long, long after their anc.stors. Abraham and Ishmael, between themselves, built the Ka'ba which religion ordained to be the meeting place of all the peoples of the world. This pre-eminence which was given to the Ka'ba induced the growth. among the people, of the realisatlon of the pivotal position occupied by the descendents of Abraham.

Islamic history, as enshrined in the Quran also attached great significance to the legend, relating to these two great patriarchs, that Abraham received a divine command to sacrifice Ishmael with his own

hands and that he pushed the preparations for the sacrifice to almost the final stage of consummation with great fortitude and composure. At the stage of the actual slaughter of Ishmael, however, the sacrifice of an animal, instead of that of Ishmael, was brought about by divine dispensation. It was, however, announced that in future this postponed sacrifice would have to be made good by the offer of a great sacrifice, indeed, in the way of God وفديناه بذبح عظيم[1] Islam high-lighted Abrahams event which came to be commemorated as Id-i-Qurban (1d of sacrifice) or Iduz-zuha on a permanent basis.

Ishmael had twelve sons. The descendants of two of them, Nabit and Qidar, settled down in the Hijaz and greatly multiplied. Among Qidar's descendants, Adnan rose to great fame. The prophet of Islam was among his descendants.[2]

The geneology of the prophet from Adnan downwards, as unanimously preserved in histories and the traditions follows :— Adnan, Ma'ad, Nizar, Muzar, Ilyas, Mudrika, Khazuma, Kinana, Nazr, Malik, Fihr, Ghalib, Laway, Ka'b, Murra, Kilab, Qossai, Abd-i-Manaf, Hashim, Abdul Muttalib and Abdullah, father of Muhammad-i-Mustafa.[3] It would appear that twenty-one generations intervened between Adnan, and the prophet and, assuming the time separating one generation from its successor to be of an average duration of thirty years, all these generations were spread over about 630 years. There is lack of unanimity about who, from among the older of these 21 progenitors came first to be distinguished with the appellation of Quraish. Some authorities attribute it to Nazr, son of Kinana, some to Fihr and others to Qossai. The reasons given for the appellation are also more than one. It is sometimes held to be derived from 'taqarrush', meaning, trade and earning one's livelihood, because these men considered earning one's bread with one's own exertions the standard of respectability and practised what they esteemed. Others accord to it the meaning of 'assembly', and attribute the appellation to these people who formed themselves into a united body or assembly, after they had got divided.[4]

By the time Qossai emerged on the scene, Adnan's progeny had spread themselves out in the hills and defiles of Mecca. Qossai gathered all of

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1. Quran : Sura Saffat V. 107.
2. Tabari : Al-Umam Wal Muluk V. 2 p. p. 191-192.
3. Ibne Hisham : Sirat Vol. 1 (Egypt) : Ibne Sa'ad : Tabaqat, Vol. 1, p. p. 27-28 (Leyden).
4. Ibne Hisham, Vol. 1, p. p. 60-61.

them together and laid out quarters for them near the Ka'ba, and he was therefore, entitled, Mujamme' or 'gatherer'.[1]

After Nabit, son of Ishmael, the trusteeship of the Ka'ba passed to the Jorhom tribe, related to him on his mother's side. This tribe, therefore, came to exercise civil and religious authority. Long-entrenched in this position, the Jorhomites took to misappropriating the property of the Ka'ba, oppressing those who came for hajj from far off, and violating the observances sacred to the holy house. Issuing forth from Yemen, the Bani Khazaa, thereupon, turned them out of Mecca.

They look the Ka'ba under their care and custody which lasted for about 200 years. Qossai married into this tribe and when his influence and authority had been established in the Hejaz, he called all the descendants of Nazr, son of Kinana, and reminded them of their responsibility for the support and safe-keeping of the Ka'ba. They all united and defeated the Bani Khazaa, and took possession of Mecca themselves. They laid out quarters a fresh at Mecca, and erected a hall of Council (Darun-Nadwa), where the affairs of the community were transacted. They codified the rules of social conduct and community existence, arranged for the collection of taxes, and for the boarding and lodging of the hajj pilgrims.[2] They denounced drinking of liquor, and publicised its harmful effects.[3]

Amongst Qossai's sons, Abd-i-Manaf was the true representative of his ancestors in qualities of head and heart and in attainments. He, therefore, earned a name for himself even while his father was still alive.[4] Hashim, whose real name was Amr, was the most influential and distinguished among the sons of Abd-i-Manaf.

Amongst the distinguished offices relating to the Ka'ba, the exclusive privilege of supplying water and food to the pilgrims was granted to Hashim which he exercised with conspicuous ability. He entered into correspondence with the Roman Government and obtained from the Emperor a rescript conferring certain special rights on the Arab traders.[5] He was called Hashim as he was the first to entertain the Meccans to a repast of broken bread soaked in soup.[6] 'Hashm', in Arabic, means "breaking up, crumbling, grating etc."

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1. Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 182.
2. Ibne Hisham: Sirat, Vol. 1 (Egypt); pp. 71-79
3. Sudduq: Al Amali, p. 4.
4. Ibne Hisham: Sirat, Vol. 1, p. 81.
5. Ibne Hisham: Sirat, Vol. 1, p. 85.
6. Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 180.

Hashim was succeeded by his brother, Muttalib, since his own son, Sheba, was very young. Muttalib was, however succeeded by his nephew, Sheba, who came to be called Abdul Muttalib. He surpassed his predecessors in greatness and renown[1] and won the appellation of "Saiyyid-ul-Batha" which is still retained by his descendants who are called 'Saiyyids' even to this day. Abdul Muttalib's implicit faith and complete trust in God revealed themselves when Abraha advanced upon Mecca from Yemen in order to raze the Ka'ba to the ground. The Meccans were not strong enough to oppose the invader with the force of arms, but Abdul Muttalib reposed his trust in divine help, and ultimately divine help it was which destroyed the "men of the Elephant". Two of Abdul Muttalib's sons were Abdullah and Abu Talib.[2]

The story of the sacrifice associated with Abdullah, son of Abdul Muttalib, has been preserved in histories. Abdul Muttalib was ready to sacrifice his son, Abdullah. It was, however, averted at the instance of the relations of the latter's mother who insisted upon resort being had to an alternative sacrifice. Lots were cast, and Abdullah's life was spared in return for the sacrifice of 100 camels.[3]

Since Abdullah had predeceased his father, all the privileges and dignities enjoyed by Abdul Muttalib devolved upon Abu Talib on his father's death. He was distinquished with the titles of 'Sheikh-ul-Batha" (chief of the Meccans) and Saiyyidul Quraish (Leader of the Quraish).

Along with the legacies left behind them by Abraham and Ishmael, the greatest charge that Abu Talib succeeded to was the safe-keeping and care of the orphaned son of Abdullah, Muhammad.

The future prophet of Islam was still a youth when, in recognition of his truthfulness and trust-worthiness, all the Arabs had given him the title of Amin i.e. the 'trustworthy'. They commenced the practice of entrusting their valuables to him for safe custody and accepting his decisions in matters of import. When he was 20 years of age, the Quraish families bound themselves by an oath, called 'Oath of Fuzul' which was based on principles of unsurpassed nobility and good conscience. As Zubair b. Abdul Muttalib, originated the idea behind it, the credit for taking the initiative in the matter went to the Hashimides.

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1. Ibne Hisham : Sirat, Vol. 1, p. 86.
2. Usul Kafi (Lucknow), p. 283 ; Ibne Hisham : Sirat, Vol. 1, p. p. 32-34 ; Tabari : Vol. 2, p. p. 172-174.
3. Ibne Hisham : Sirat, Vol. 1, p. p. 94-97.

The inception of the oath followed the period of general lawlessness and oppression which ensued upon the death of Abdul Muttalib. Bloodshed on a large scale was, however, averted by considerations of consanguinity but acts of injustice against foreigners and strangers went unpunished and their rights remained unenforced. A case in point was that of a Yeminite of the stock of Zubeid who parted with a costly article without receiving payment for it from Aas, b. Wael Sahmi, the purchaser. He, therefore, addressed a complaint to all the descendants of Fihr against this iniquity in very moving words. Such incidents impelled the principal tribes among the Ouraish, the descendants of Hashim, Zohra and Asad to bind themselves by oath to take the part of the helpless and the oppressed. They met at the house of Abdullah, b. Jodaan, and with one voice agreed to take the oath that they would espouse the cause of the oppressed, allowing themselves no respite till the rights of the abused and the weak were enforced, their deprivations compensated and their losses restituted. The oath was named after an ancient society of the Jorhomites of whom Fazl, Fazzal and Mufzil were the members. The future prophet of Islam was a party to this oath, and was proud of it. Even after he had attained prophethood, and all other ancient accords and compacts had been annulled, he used to consider himself bound by the oath, remarking, "I would respond to any one who sought my help on the basis of this oath."[1]

The oath obviously cut entirely across the traditional Arab mentality which was conditioned solely by tribal ties. Help was extended to men of one's tribe only; it was entirely immaterial whether they were the aggressors or the oppressed. This spirit of tribal partisanship often aggravated personal frays into tribal vendettas, which often got prolonged over as many as 40 years. The decendants of Hashim were the first to raise their voice against this exceptionable feature of the national disposition as they deemed it to be their special responsibility to make the merit and excellence of justice and fair play universally recognised as immeasurably transcending the narrowness of communal, tribal and racial inhibitions.

Ali was born to Abu Talib on the 13th Rajab, in the 30th year of the Elephant at Mecca in the Ka'ba itself, when Mohammad, the future prophet, was 30 years of age. Ali was still only a few years old when a famine ravaged Mecca, reducing Abu Talib to economic straits. It was then that Ali was taken under his fostering care by his cousin, Muhammad, in order to lighten his uncle's burden.[2]

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1. Ibne Hisham Vol. 1, p. 84.; Ibnesaad Vol. 1. p. 82.
2. Ibne Hisham: Sirat, Vol. 1, p. 156.

traditions with which it had become invested since antiquity. The Ka'ba, which occupied the unique position of being the religious meeting-place the whole of Arabia had been raised by Abraham, the great patriarch of hi

stock. Abraham's son, Ishmael, came to be called ذبیح اللہ (one sacri-

ficed in the way of God) for offering himself for slaughter in obedience to divine behest. This story was almost repeated in respect of Abdullah, b. Abdul Muttalib, which once again signified that readiness to lay down one's life for divine ends was a hereditary trait running in the family. This was not lost upon the men of the peninsula who, on the basis of these two acknowledged

sacrifices conferred upon the prophet of Islam the title of ابن الذبیحین (son of

the two sacrificed ones)[1]. It was given to this family to unite the tribes sprung from Muzar's stock. The family occupied the focal point in Arabia as the custodians of the Ka'ba, having been invested with the privilege of catering to the needs of the pilgrims in the hajj season. The family led and represented the Arab nation in all matters of consequence, external and internal. It was also marked out as devoted to the help of the needy, and in times of distress like scarcity, it was known as principally concerned with the care of the weak and the impoverished. It was acknowledged as a family of Saiyyids, (chiefs) not only by virtue of their title, but also due to their deeds which agreed with the title. To the battle-field it sent dauntless warriors and for the discernment of spiritual secrets it contributed sages like Abdul Muttalib as shown by the manner in which he opposed the 'men of the elephant'. The family played a leading role in providing redress to the persecuted, and led all tribes of the Quraish to this end. And from this family was to arise one whose radiant splendour would, for all time to come, illuminate the world of mankind.

The seventh century of the Christian era was a period of obscurantism and darkness when the sun of Islam rose on the horizon of the Arabian peninsula. Initially it lighted up the Hijaz, but in due course, it bathed the whole world from end to end in its streaming resplendence. Islam won universal acclaim, and God picked up Mohammad, 'the Chosen' to propogate Islam's message of bowing down in worship beforc the one and

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1. Tabari, Vol. 1, p. 135 : Islam prohibited self-immolation or the sacrifice with one's own hand of one's relatives but offering for sacrifice one's own self or anthor in a holy war against an enemy was permitted. The prophet's descendants offered numerous such sacrifices.

only God, to the uncompromising exclusion of the adoration of all else, be they icons of precious metals or human beings of flesh and blood who, in order to subdue men to their adoration, flaunted their might and power in their faces, oblivious of Gods' omni-potence.

Ali was then 10 years' of age, and as he had already been taken under the prophets' care, [1] it might aptly enough be said that between Ali and Islam there grew up those bonds of intimacy and affection which bind two sons brought up by the same parents.

For some years, the message of Islam was only privately propagated.[2] Then came the divine command وانذر عشيرتك الاقربين requiring the message to be communicated to the prophet's near relatives. [3] Accordingly, the prophet arranged a feast inviting to it all of the stock of Abdul Muttalib. Before the assembled guests, he declared himself to be God's prophet and preached the unity of God. He then asked, "Who among you would support me in spreading the message of Islam, on the clear understanding that he alone would be my brother, and my successor?" The question elicited no response from the audience. Ali, though still very young, stood up, and promised to give all assistance in the mission. The prophet put his hand on Ali's shoulder and said, "This is sufficient. He is my brother, and my successor. It is incumbent upon you all to obey him." [4]

Idol workship now came to be openly reprobated. This excited the hostility of the Quraish towards the prophet and fixed them in their resolve to harm him. The forceful personality of his uncle, Abu Talib, however, kept him out of harm's reach, and his enemies could not put their mischievous designs thorough. At last a deputation of the Quraish notables, consisting of Otba Sheba, Abu Sufyan, Aas b. Hisham, Abu Jahl, Waleed b. Mughira, Aas b. Wael, and others met Abu Talib to complain about his nephew who denounced their gods, disparaged their faith, held them up to ridicule and deemed their ancestors to have been led astray. They requested him, therefore, to bid his nephew desist from these activities, or else to make him over to them. Abu Talib turned them away mildly. The deputation, however, repeated its visit to Abu Talib shortly afterwards, telling him brusquely that the state of things brought about by his nephew could no

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1. Tabari : Vol. 2, p. 312.
2. Tabaqat : Ibne Sa'b, Vol. 1, p. 132; Tabari, Vol. 2, p. p. 216-218; Mufid : Irshad, p. 16.
3. The Quran : Sura Shoara, V. 214.
4. Tabari : Vol. 2, p. 217.

longer be tolerated. They, therefore, demanded that Abu Talib should put curbs on his nephew's offensive conduct, failing which they defied him to an armed trial of strength, so that one of the two parties should be decisively crushed. Abu Talib, therefore, thought it fit to acquaint the prophet with the shape things had assumed. On hearing the whole story, the prophet said, "By God, even if these people put the sun into one of my hands, and the moon into the other, I would not be deterred from discharging my duty. God will bring my mission to a successful conclusion, or I will sacrifice my life to it." Tears welled up in his eyes when he said so, and this touched Abu Talib to the quick, and he told his nephew to persevere in the discharge of his duty, assuring him of his own assistance to his last breath.[1] Accordingly Abu Talib left nothing undone to protect the prophet and shielded him from all violence.

After the deaths of Abu Talib and Khadija, however, the persecutions and hardships which the prophet had to encounter at the hands of the Meccans rose both in frequency and severity. It became plain that hopes for the regeneration of the nation had, at least for the time being, to be suspended. The prophet therefore, resolved to leave his home. He began to direct his followers to shift to Medina where people had accepted his teachings. When the Meccans got wind of the intention of the prophet to leave for Medina, they resolved to do away with him. They plotted to beleaguer his house of a night, fall upon him and kill him. When leaving for Medina the prophet asked his cousin, Ali, to sleep in his bed wrapped in his sheet in order to foil the scheme of his enemies. Ali did as bidden, and thus saved the life of the prophet, sleeping soundly under the shadow of unsheathed swords.[2] After the prophet had setted down at Medina, his enemies persisted in their aggressions against the Muslims and battles like those of Badr, Ohad and Khandaq had to be fought. In all these engagements it was Ali's sword which won victories for the followers of Islam.

The prophet had a daughter, Fatima, whom he held in such high esteem on account of her great qualities that he used to stand up, as a token of his respect for her, whenever she visited him.[3] Many were the tributes of praise which he paid to her, one being his remark that she was the leader of the

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1. Ibne Hisham: Sirat, Vol. 1, p. p. 162-164; Tabari, Vol. 2, p. p. 219-220.
2. Tabaqat: Ibne Sa'd: Vol. 1, p. 153; Ibne Hisham: Sirat, Vol. 1, p. p. 244.
3. Isti'ab Vol. 2, p. 272, Aalaam Ul Wara, p. 656.

women in paradise and of the wives of the believers[1]. He also called her part of himself فاطمة بضعة مني[2].

It is obvious that for his daughter, who occupied such an exalted position in his eyes, the selection of the most eligible match must have engaged the prophets' attention. Many proposals for the hand of Fatima were, therefore, turned down. Only Ali, whom the prophet had pronounced to have been born of the same radiant light as he himself, was deemed equal for this union,[3] and the prophet announced that it was not his own choice, but that of God.[4]

Of these venerable parents Ali and Fatima were born two sons, Hasan and Husain.

How could Husain then forget the distinction that was his and the traditions that had redounded to the credit of his family ever since antiquity? Indeed, he represented a stock which had an uninterrupted record of sacrifice and devoutness spread over centuries.[5] He must have heard how his great ancestor, Abraham, had been ready to sacrifice his son to God, how his great-grandfather, Abdullah, had been offered for sacrifice by his father, Abdul Muttalib; how his ancestor, Hashim, had expended his fortune and exerted his influence in the service of mankind and how his family had moved that an oath be taken to assist the persecuted and to give justice to the oppressed. He must, therefore, have been impelled by the desire to hold himself bound, as in duty, to take the initiative in going to the aid of those whose rights had been trampled upon, and whose titles had been violated.[6] Husain believed in the continuing validity of the Halaful Fuzul as would appear by the appeal he made to it when Waleed, b. Otba, Governor of Medina, had treated him with harshness and disrespect. Husain had then reminded people that the oath was still in operation and worthy of respect, and as a result, Abdullah, b. Zubair, Masur, b. Makhrama, b. Naufil Zahri; Abdur Rehman b. Usman b. Obaidullah Taymi; and others had declared that they would take Husain's side if he based his claims on that oath.[7]

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1. Sahih Bukhari: Vol. 2, pp. 174, 185, 189. Sanih Muslim, Vol. 2, p. 290.
2. Bukhari: Vol. 2, pp. 185 and 189.
3. Dailami: Firdausul Akhbar.
4. Sawaiq Muharriqa, pp. 84, 97.
5. Dr. Syed Mujtaba Kamoonpuri.
6. Halafu Fuzul.
7. Ibne Hisham: Sirat, Vol. 8, p. 84.

Husain knew that his maternal grandfather, the prophet, had been met with showers of stones and put to an endless variety of persecutions and tortures for the sake of Islam, that his grandfather, Abu Talib, had shielded Islam with all his strength and force of personality, that whenever the question of protecting the faith from danger had arisen, the first to prove his loyalty, to be prepared to place himself in the veritable jaws of death, as when he slept in the prophets' bed on the night of the prophets' departure for Medina, to fight in all holy wars with entire unconcern for own safety had been his father, Ali, b. Abu Talib.

It is usual that hearing the splendid deeds of their ancestors, the ambition to perform similar feats springs up in young hearts. It was, therefore, only to be naturally hoped for that in addition to the compulsive sense of duty, animated by the innate nobility of his own nature and urged by the devout and humanitarian traditions of his family, Husain should have been keenly on the lookout for an opportunity to serve the truth, assist the persecuted and succour the oppressed in order to keep alive the high traditions of his glorius family.

CHAPTER II

The Hashimides and the Omayyads

In order to explain the bitter rivalry and deep seated animosity between the Hashimides and the Omayyads, the story goes that Hashim and Abd-i-Shams, father of Omayya, were born as twins, the finger of the first-born sticking to the forehead of the other. The finger was severed in order to separate the infants from one another and blood flowed from the wound. This was looked upon as ominous, betokening bloodshed between them or their descendants. The story may be true or not, but it does show that antagonism had struck such deep roots between the off-spring of the two brothers as to be accepted as only natural. History has, however, mentioned no occasion when Hashim and Abd-i-Shams fell out with, and engaged themselves in a war against, each other. After the death of Abd-i-Shams, however, his son, Omayya, created bad blood between himself and his uncle, Hashim, and kept up the enmity. Mecca experienced a season of great scarcity and its residents were reduced to extremes of destitution. Hashim travelled to Syria where he purchased large quantities of flour, and had it made into loaves which he despatched by camels to Mecca. The loaves were broken into rough powder and soaked in soup made of the flesh of camels slaughtered for the purpose. This preparation is called 'Surid' in Arabia and it was distributed among all the Meccans who took their fill of it. As luck would have it clouds came on. It rained. The spectre of famine was dispelled. People started saying that the rains of Divine Mercy came down owing to Hashim.

Hashim means one who crumbles bread. Poets have commemorated this incident in verses.

Omayya was wealthy. Stung by envy at Hashimi renown for his good deeds he made a vain attempt to emulate Hashim. The attempt failed leading him to further discredit and humiliation among the Quraish. It will be seen that Hashim had no hand in this discomfiture, but Ommaya's ire was excited by the gibes of the Quraish directed against him. He threw out a challenge to Hashim to contest his claim to superiority in a competition peculiar to the Arabs, and called, 'munafirat'. It consists of rival professions of merit being decided by an umpire before whom each of the two claimants recounts his outstanding deeds of valour and virtue. Hashim considered it below his dignity to take up the gauntlet thrown down by Omayya who was

his junior in age and inferior to him in rank. The Quraish, however, fancied such oral rencounters, and pressed Hashim to join issue. Hashim agreed on condition that the unsuccessful party would present to the other 50 black-eyed camels to be slaughtered at Mecca and go into exile from Mecca for ten years. Omayya accepted the terms, and a soothsayer of the tribe of Khaza'a was appointed the arbiter. The verdict went against Omayya who produced the camels and accepted banishment as stipulated. The camels were slaughtered and Hashim invited all the Meccans to a grand feast. Omayya retired to Syria where he stayed during the ten years of his banishment. This was the starting point of the enmity between the Hashimides and the Omayyads, which persisted for generations between them.[1] As a result of suffering defeats after defeats, the Omayyads lost many of the good qualities of the Arabs character, and developed vicious traits of meanness, duplicity and a sense of inferiority—traits that characterise a people disentegrating under repeated frustrations.

The hatred between the two branches of the same tribe reached such dimensions in bitterness that made it doubtful in the eyes of the Arabs whether they belonged to the same stock. And the final seal on the discomfiture of the Omayyads was set by the birth of the prophet among the Hashimides. This was a blow to Omayyad prestige that they could not easily endure. The Omayyads, therefore, looked upon the prophethood of Mohamed as the triumph of the Hashimides and, therefore, they offered him the greatest resistance.[2]

1. Ibne Sa'd: Tabaqat (Leyden) Vol. 1, pp. 43, 44; Tabari Vol. 2, p. 180.
2. Shibli: Sirat-un-Nabi, Vol. 1, p. 158.

CHAPTER III

Islam and its Message

The pre-Islamic period in Arabia is called the "age of ignorance" or the "era of darkness". It would, however, be incorrect to infer that in that period the Arabs were living in savagery and barbarism, and were unacquainted with the ways of leading a social existence, and the arts of civilised life. On the contrary, according to Dr. Wahid Mirza, "Centuries before the advent of Islam, Southern Arabia had been the cradle of a flourishing civilisation and the centre of a prosperous trade. The accounts of the archaeological memorials of the Himyar Kings, of the lake embankment (Sadd-i-Maarib), of Shaddad's garden, and of the throne of Bilkis, Queen of Sheba, testify to the advanced stage to which civilisation had attained in this part of the peninsula. Again, the poetry of the times, comprising some of the best specimens of literary expression, shows the Arabs as possessed of some of the noblest human attributes, like bravery, generosity, hospitality, faithfulness, fraternal affection and conjugal love. It also shows that notwithstanding the fact that they did not subscribe to contemporary revealed religions, being polytheists and idolators, they were not wholly unaware of some of the cardinal tenets of religion. They tried to put a gloss on their idol-worship by claiming for the idols no greater merit than that of bringing them into closer proximity to the one God. A large proportion of the Arabs claimed descent from Ishmael, and we may not be drawing too heavily on unsophistication to credit them with at least a nodding acquaintance with the teachings of their remote ancestors. Yet, it may even be held that speaking in relation to levels of civilisation alone, the pre-Islamic Arab community was treading the path of retrogression. The vestiges of their pristine virtues, still retained by the Arabs, were being swamped by a plethora of vices. They did annually assemble at Mecca for the performance of haji, but they had no inkling of the significance of this sacred duty. To be sure, their caravans still journeyed to the Hejaz, Iraq and Syria, with loads of merchandise, but they had lost their erstwhile ardour for industry, trade and commerce. Excessive poverty had whetted their rapacity. They still held some vague and nebulous notions about God, but their images commanded greater adoration. They realised the advantages of a life of peace and contentment, and shunned war, but self-seeking indigence abetted them in misappropriating what belonged to their neighbours. They grieved sorely over the dead, but were unequal to resisting the temptation of wreaking, vengeance,

often leading to bloody warfare lasting for generations. They loved their children, but could not endure the prospect of their daughters working as drudges for some callous uncle or indifferent brother like unbidden guests. They, therefore, considered the slaughter of their daughters as the best way of maintaining their self-respect. Social attitudes like these are generally intractably resistant to reform. A nation still in the stage of primitive savagery and primeval barbarism consists usually of simple-minded individuals. In the absence of any earlier impressions, their hearts, like clean slates, easily and distinctly receive the imprint of whatever may be urged upon their attention. The weaknesses of Arab society arose from the acceptance of a purely material dispensation of life, and indulgence in the lust for power. These failings, in association with the natural disposition of the Arabs, tended to be thrown into bolder relief.

When individuals get obsessed with notions of their superiority, personal rivalries, group jealousies and tribal animosities are the product, and these vices sprang up among the Arabs in great profusion and with marked intensity. Another development was the annulment of the sense of human equality and brotherhood. Dominance, power and authority were all that counted. The murder of an important person was not deemed to have been fully avenged with the perpetrator of the crime alone suffering death; hundreds of his tribesmen had also to be slain in retaliation. In the murder of an ordinary person by one who counted, the former's blood was not supposed to be entitled to be paid for by blood in requital. This invidious distinction made between the important and the not so important men was productive of countless social iniquities destructive of human dignity. This had come to pass as materialism, was allowed the greatest say in human affairs and all other considerations had been bereft of weight. All privileges and exemptions were determined by the possession of material resources, and this was not so in Arabia alone.

Religiously the Arabs were in an advanced stage of decadence. They had no common religion. People of many faiths lived in the peninsula. A large segment of the population was idolatorous or worshipped stars. No less then 360 idols had been installed in the Ka'ba itself, one day in the Arabic year of 360 days being sacred to the worship of one of the idols. The religions in vogue, Judaism, fire-worship and Christianity-all were degenerate, their practices unworthy, mutual respect and tolerance amongst their followers non-existent, and general blood-shed and like evils notoriously rampant amongst the people. Human nature seemed to be waiting for the emergence of a chosen being to deliver the Arab world from its afflictions.

It was at this crucial moment that God's chosen, Mohammad, son of Abdullah, appeared with the message of Islam which shook the world to its foundations. He brought the glad tidings of a renaissance to moribund humanity. As Dr. Wahid Mirza puts it, "The task before the prophet was, indeed, arduous since it was not his mission to convert savages living in a state of nature to civilised life, but to reform a diseased social order. His job was to make a clean sweep from the hearts of the Arabs of all those beliefs, superstitious, traditions and usages which had become integral parts of their lives. He had to instruct, in the ways of tolerance, forbearance, humility and forgiveness, those who deemed forgiveness as evidence of weakness, and forbearance a symbol of meanspiritedness and cowardice. He had to give lessons in equality and fraternity to those who prided themselves upon their high births and took pains to commit to their memories their geneological tables up to remote ancestors. Islam had also to struggle against many other evil customs and practices. It prohibited the use of liquor to which the Arabs had got used and upon which they looked as symbolic of generosity. It placed gambling under an interdict although it was esteemed by the Arabs as an unmistakeable concomitant of open-handed liberality. It also forbade many other practices corrosive of morals. The Arabs could not even dream of the purest man achieving the highest merit in the eyes of God, or that, after subscribing to Islam, the lowest of men could claim equality with any member of the noblest families in Arabia".

Khwaja Ghulam-us-Saiyidain has put the message of Islam very aptly in another form. "Islam brought to a world groaning under the power and authority of priests a message of freedom,—freedom from the shackles of a priestly order which claimed to be an intermediary between the worshippers and the worshipped,—freedom from the tyranny of an oligarchy of the affluent who, caring nothing for any divine law, and less than nothing for any human regulation, brazenly enjoyed the fruits of the toil and labour of others,—freedom for the slaves and the suppressed classes from the oppression, inhumanity and torture of their masters and social superiors,—freedom for women from what was, to all intents and purposes, slavery which divested them of even their elementary human rights,—freedom for the ordinary man from the constraints imposed upon him by narrow inhibitions of castes, colour, and race which blighted collective human life, and divided people into rival, warring camps. Mankind was fettered by trammels designed by itself. The plight in which men found themselves has been described in the following telling couplets by Iqbal:

بود انسان در جهان انسان پرست — ناکس و نابود و مانده زیر دست
سطوت کسری و قیصر رهزنش — بند ها در دست و پا و گردنش
کاهن و سلطان و پاپا دام میر — بهر یک نخچیر صد نخچیر گیر
از غلامی فطرت او دون شده — نغمه ها اندر نے او خون شده

1. Man worshipped man in the world.
   He was bereft of dignity reduced almost to non-existence, and relegated to the position of an underdog.
2. The power of Chosroes and Caesars had robbed him, and fetters were put on his hands and feet and round his neck.
3. Soothsayers, kings, popes and prominent leaders a hundred hunters for one prey.
4. His nature was debased by slavery, and sweet lays turned into blood in his flute.

Islam imparted to humanity the message of freedom, taught liberty, equality and human fraternity, and, for the first time in human history, conferred plenary civic and human rights upon all men. The enjoyment of these rights by them had been withheld on considerations of race, colour, sex, resourcelessness and destitution. The glad tidings kindled new hopes and awakaned a new awareness of their being useful members of society among the impoverished and the persecuted who had been so far only heartlessly downtrodden by the powers that be :—

نامینے حق بہ حق داراں سپرد — بندگاں را مسند خاقاں سپرد
اعتبار کار بندان را فزود — خواجگی از کار فرمایاں ربود
قوت او ہر کہن پیکر شکست — نوع انساں را حصار تازہ بست
تازہ جاں از دور تن انساں دمید — بندہ را باز از خداوندان خرید
حریت زاد از ضمیر پاک او — این مے نوشیں چکید از تاک او
تا شکیب امتیازات آمدہ — در نہاد او مساوات آمدہ
عصر نو کین صد چراغ آوردہ است — چشم در آغوش او وا کردہ است

1. The faithful one gave back their rights to those who were entitled to them.
   And entrusted to the slaves the throne of monarchs.
2. He added to the esteem in which workers were held.
   And deprived the employers of their mastery.

3. His power overthrew all antiquated institutions
   And raised a new fort for mankind's protection.
4. A new life pulsated in the human frame.
   He purchased back slaves from their masters to deliver them from their bondage.
5. His pure conscience ushered in liberty.
   This sweet liquor was distilled from his grapes.
6. He was impatient of all distinctions.
   Equality was in his natural make-up.
7. The modern age which has lighted a hundred lamps.
   Has opened its eyes in his lap and been fostered by him.

Precious ideas like these were sought by Islam to be woven in to the texture of the lives of the Arabs and comunicated through them to the whole of mankind."

In order to usher in such an intellectual revolution, Islam endeavoured to rivet the attention of people to a divine power, working its ends without the 'cabined, cribbed and confined' reaches of materialism, and looking upon all men as equal. There was no other way of establishing equality. Wealth is an extraneous adjunct which mightbe equally divided so as to establish financial equality among men. But physical strength, inherited respectability, the collective forces of tribes and races do not obviously lend themselves to such palpable outward division for the fashioning of equality among men and associations of mankind. Islam was alive to the impossibility of the achievement of outward equality. It, therefore decided to create a revolution in men's ways of thought, so that they might be enabled to shake off their mental lethargy and realise that they were all equal. Islam correctly hit upon the sure means to win general acceptance for equality and brotherhood. The one and only basis, it argued, upon which the snperstructure of equality and fraternity may be raised is the establishment of direct ties between plurality and one central unity. For then it becomes inescapable that the constituents of the plurality should claim, and be accorded, equality amongst themselves. Equality between brothers is taken for granted because they are the children of the same parents. Members of a family feel equal to one another and entertain feelings of mutual brotherhood as they are descended from the same ancestor. Residents of one country feel that ties of fraternity bind them and they claim equality amongst themselves because they belong to the self-same country. Orientals feel bound together as against the occidentals because they reside in tbe same direction or quarter of the earth. It becomes plain, therefore, that the only and the surest

means of bringing about equality between large numbers of men is the discovery of one common focal point to which the convergence of them all could be traced and attributed. In other words, whenever plurality gets related to a unity, feelings of equality and fraternity spring up among the component units of the plurality. It must, however, be noted that all unifications of pluralities, ordinarily contrived, serve only as preludes to large divisions and fragmentations. When sons of the same parents get united in equality, they get separated from the sons of other parents. When members of one family get united in fraternity and equality, they are parted from the members of other families. When residents of one country conjoin, a disjunction between them and the residents of other countries follows. Wars between one country and other countries, between one nation and other nations break out, followed by an unending series of successes or defeats. When people of one quarter of the earth band together in fraternity and equality, they, as a corallary, break away from the peoples of other quarters of the earth. Europeans form a separate race, and Asians follow suit in forming a different race. Where colour united people, the peoples of skins of different pigments got so exclusive of one another that the white races barred the black ones from resorting to the same hotels as they did, and closed the doors of their churches upon their own co-religionists among the latter. These separatist tendencies resulted from the fact that attempts at coalescing individuals, groups, races, countries and colours, had of necessity to be based upon the raising of corresponding barriers between human beings. A dividing wall, thus raised, united those on one side of it and separated them from those on the other side. Islam struck at the root of the impasse and. holding that equality among individuals could flow only from the unity of the point of their convergence, decided upon the demolition of all partitions separating humanity and the inauguration of a common meeting ground for all races, colours, countries, races and nations, so vastly extensive, of such illimitable dimensions as to accomodate within it the entire mankind. Since there would be nothing without the compass of that resort, no question of division of humanity and parting of their ways could possibly arise. The focal point towards which all men were to converge had, therefore, of necessity to be other than material. For everything material would perforce be subject to limitations *e.g.* of nearness and distance of space, of meagreness and abundance in measure. It was, therefore, of the highest import that human vision be averted from all that was materialistic and be fixed at that immaterial, transcendental power which, unhampered by the confining attributes of space, measure and degrees, would bear relationship to everybody and to which everybody belonged. This power is the one God whom Islam has presented as the object of universal worship, the creator of

all beings and the end of everybody's pursuit. Once it came to be realised that all men were God's creatures the development of a sense of equality and fraternity between individuals became inevitable.

Some religions have, however, struck different lines in formulating their notions about God. They have made him exclusively and personally their own, claiming for themselves the status of being His children. Islam refused these pretensions. Far from claiming for the Muslims the privileges of being Gods' progeny, it taught them to declare ربّنا وربكم لنا اعمالنا ولكم اعمالكم "He is our preserver and your preserver, our practices are for us, and yours for you." While admitting all men to a status of equality, Islam also set up a criterion of excellence and superiority which was to rest entirely upon individual conduct. In supersession of all standards set previously for apportioning pre-eminence, a new norm for determining merit was prescribed. He who discharged his duties as a human being most thoroughly deserved the highest distinction ان اكرمكم عند الله اتقاكم Accordingly, getting the upper hand, capturing power, gaining authority, the numerical superiority of tribes and races, all were deprived of intrinsic merit. A claim to superiority must be backed by a thorough discharge of one's duties as a human being, and the most lively realisation of one's responsibility to do so. As a consequence, excellence of manners and purity of morals received great emphasis. Indeed the prophet of Islam declared the purpose of his mission thus: "Only the improvement of mankind and the perfection of manners".[1]

The Muslims were told plainly not to hope to get away with their misdeeds. Indeed, they were warned that they would reap as they would sow. They were told that a Muslim was one who made a complete rurrender of oneself to God, it was not for one to disobey one's Creator or indulge in acts of insubordination. They would deserve to be counted Gods' friends if they obeyed His commands implicitly, and failure in doing so would spell the forfeiture of their claim to His clemency and to be reckoned amongst the members of the community favoured with Gods' mercy.

Socially, the equality of all, naturally and intrinsically was stressed. It was declared: خلقكم من نفس واحدة "He has created you from one and the

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1. Ibne Sa'd: Tabaqat, Vol. 1, p. 138.

same person," وجعلناكم شعوبا وقبائل لتعارفوا and "We have divided you into tribes and nations to mark you out for identificatiou." They were told that preecdence and elevation in rank had little to do with the person or nationality of anybody. لا فخر للقريش على غير القريش ولا للعربي على غير العربي "One belonging to the tribe of Quraish is not inherently superior to one belonging to a tribe other than that of the Quraish, and no Arab is better than a non-Arab. "Pre-eminence and dignity are dependent only upon abstinence and fear of God, that is, upon one's acts and the discharge of one's duties as a human being." ان اكرمكم عند الله اتقاكم "Among you, the highest distinction belongs to him in God's eyes who is the most abstinent and pious." This was shown by the prophet not only by making an oral declaration of it, but by practising it as well. He appointed Bilal, an Abyssinian as his crier for prayers (muazzin), and when some body spoke of it disparagingly, "Is this black also worthy o f raising the cry for prayers?", the verse was revealed يا ايها الناس انا خلقناكم من ذكر وانثى "O men, We have created you from men and women" that is, all men are equal, there is no difference between them, as men. As Abdul Hamid Badauni has stated, "Islam wanted really the establishment of a divine government. Islamic government has been made to hinge solely upon justice and equity. The Quran says about it. واذا حكمتم بين الناس ان تحكموا بالعدل ان الله نعما يعظكم "When you arbitrate between men, decide justly, surely what excellent advice God gives you" and again the Holy Book says, ولا يجرمنكم شنان قوم على الا تعدلوا اعدلوا هو اقرب للتقوى واتقوا الله "And let not enmiy for any tribe induce you to be guilty of doing injustice to them. Beware, you should in all circumstances play fair: this is very near piety; andfear God."[2] Under Islamic law, Kings and beggars occupy the same position. Accordingly the prophet made the pronouncement: ليس لاحد على احد فضل الا بدين وتقوى."[3]

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1. The Quran. Sura Nisa.
2. Ibid Maeda.
3. Mishkat.

"None is superior to another except by virtue of his faith and fear of God." The result which followed these teachings is that Islam does not regard state-craft as successful employment of means to capture power but looks upon it as the right organisation and regulation of the country and the community, running the affairs of men in the best manner. From this point of view, political power cannot be divorced from religious leadership and the prophet exemplified this in his own person.

It may, however, be noticed that despite the unrestricted authority which the prophet exercised over every body, as declared by the words. "He has power and authority over everybody which are fuller than anybody possesses over himself, he never called himself a King nor deemed himself to be one. On the contrary he dispelled all such notions. Once a man entered his presence, and started trembling all over in awe. The prophet told him "Collect your senses. I am no King. I am the son of a woman of the Quraish tribe, who takes bread soaked in soup".

This was stated in order to prevent the growth, among the Muslims, of the notion of a ruler unconnected with the leadership of the divine *Shariat*, and to emphasise that the Muslims should bow only before divine authority and no other.

CHAPTER IV

Islam and The Forces of Obstruction: Clash

The framing of Islamic laws and regulations, the setting up of Islamic practices and institutions and, in general, the establishment of an Islamic social order were achieved during the lifetime of the prophet of Islam. It was no mean achievement for the revolution ushered in by Islam. The prophet of Islam had to undergo untold hardships and contend against all manner of stiff opposition and overwhelming forces of obstruction in bringing about the revolution. Some men are so sentimentally devoted to all that is ancient that they harbour a motiveless malignity against any body who changes the existing order. Some others have vested interests in the old dispensation and apprehend impairment of their selfish advantages from any move to overthrow the status quo. The clean sweep that Islam had made of the old order and the far-reaching alterations that it had introduced in all departments of life were productive of personal loss to persons in many walks of life, not only in a pecuniary sense, but also in many other ways, concerning their rank and power. For example, Islam placed an embargo on the charging of interest on loans. Did this not forebode the reduction of the money-lenders of Arabia to bankruptcy, as they battened on the amount of interest exacted from the impoverished and the needy ? And then, the ban applied not only to the charging but also to the payment of interest. Obviously it is the needy many who pay interest to the opulent few, and it was the poorer classes who were being irresistibly attracted towards Islam. Accordingly, even if the capitalists could parry the blow aimed at them by not joining the ranks of the faithful, they stood to gain little, for those who paid interest and upon whom therefore, depended their livelihood, stopped payment of interest to them. Again, the Islamic instruction that precedence among individuals was to be determined solely on the basis of excellence of conduct and conscientious discharge of human responsibilities, and on no other grounds whatever, shattered the prospects of those who had wrested positions of authority and power simply on the strength of social superiority, wealth, property or the numerical preponderance of their tribes or races. The changes made by Islam in the standards of determining pre-eminence and merit amongst individuals abolished the rights enjoyed on the basis of previous norms, so that those in power before the advent of Islam were reduced to impotence, being devoid of merit as conceived by Islam. To the contrary, those who had been earlier deemed to be unworthy even of a passing notice

such as the strangers from foreign lands, the destitutes or the members of the oppressed and despised classes, were set on the road to the acquisition of dignity and respect, should they fulfil what was demanded of men in performance and piety and fear of God. How could then the monopolists of rank and distinction reconcile themselves to their unhappy lot under Islam? They had lorded it over their fellow men whom instead of making the bondsmen of God they had made their own slaves.

These reasons for the opposition to the prophet of Islam were underlined for the Omayyads by the memories of outstanding animosities, both ancient and of recent origin, and envy. Their leader, Abu Sufiyan, therefore, raised the whole of Arabia against the prophet. All kinds of torments were inflicted on God's messenger. He was pelted with stones, rubbish was heaped on his head, offensive things were cast at him, and he was threatened with ass-assination. When danger to the prophets' life became imminent, his uncle, Abu Talib, removed him to the safety of his mountain fastness: Sheb of Abu Talib. The prophets' family, all the Hashimides except Abu Lahab, joined Abu Talib in his retirement with the prophet. The Quraish formed a confederacy against the Hashimides : they would not marry their women, nor give their own women to the Hashimides in marriage, they would neither sell anything to them nor buy anything from them, and all transactions with them would stop. It was made almost impossible for even the necessities of life, like water and food, to reach the isolated Hashimides. This was in the seventh year year of the *prophetic* life of Mohammad, the chosen, and lasted for close on three years.

After the termination of the blockade, the Hashimides emerged from their seclusion. Within a year, however, Khadija and Abu Talib passed away. Opposition to the prophet assumed such intensity in bitterness that his ass assination was planned and he had to leave for Medina.

Even after he had reached Medina, opposition to the prophet did not allow him much repose. On the one hand those of his followers who could not leave Macca after his departure were put to a variety of hardships and on the other, preparations for launching an attack on Medina itself were set afoot. The prophet was, therefore, compelled to come out in the open to give battle to his enemies and save himself, and, what was still more important, to keep from harm the hearths and homes of those who had afforded him shelter.

The first battle fought after the arrival of the prophet at Medina was that of Badr. The Muslims, who were completely unprepared for the engagement, numbered only 313 men[1] who had between them only three horses[2]

1. Tabari : Vol. 2, p. 272.
2. Ibne Hisham : Sirat Vol. 1, p, 407.

and a few swords. But the Hashimides made things exceedingly unpleasant for the adversary. Hamza b. Abdul Muttalib, Obaida b. Haris and Ali b. Abi Talib, performed such outstanding feats of bravery that the enemy lost heart. The Muslims and, in particular, the Hashimides, suffered a grievous loss in the assassination of Obaida in the war, but the Meccans, specially the Omayyads, suffered much heavier losses. Abu Sufiyan had not only to mourn the death of his son, Hanzala, at the hands of Ali[1], but also to grieve over the capture of his other son, Amr, at the same hands.[2] Abu Sufiyan's wife Hind had to mourn the death of her father, Otba, her uncle Sheba, and her brother, Walid.[3] Abu Sufiyan was so overwhelmed with sorrow that he took a vow not to bathe till he had led on attack against the prophet. But the infidels could not muster courage enough to face the Muslims in battle. In order, therefore, to keep up the appearance of having honoured his oath, Abu Sufiyan collected two hundred horse from amongst the Quraish and made for Medina. Reaching the confines of Medina, he killed two Muslims, destroyed some date-trees and beat a hasty retreat. When the prophet emerged with his followers to give him battle, Abu Sufiyan had already fled, and in the hurried disorder of his flight his band shed all along the way, their wallets containing parched and powdered cereals, called 'sawique' in Arabic, which their pursuers recovered. The engagement is therefore, called the war of sawique.[4]

The important battle of Ohad took place in 3 A. H.[5] Ikrima b. Abu Jahl, Abu Sufiyan and Hind could not rest contented for a moment till they had settled old scores with the Medinites. The Meccans prepared for war on an ambitious scale. Besides the Quraish, the Bani Kinana and the Tahamites also joined the fray.[6] Their army consisted of 3000 armed soldiers,[7] of whom 700 were clad in armour. The prophet confronted this army with a force consisting of only 700 men of whom only 100 were mailclad combatants. Two horses[8] completed the strength of the army. Ikrima and Khalid b. Walid, were in command of the troops of the Quraish. A distinguishing features of this army of the Quraish was that a number of their women, led by Hind, wife of Abu Sufiyan, were behind them, beating their drums to the recitation of couplets, evocative of courage and daring in

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1. Mofid : Irshad p. 38.
2. Ibne Hisham : Sirat Vol. 1, p. 397.
3. Ibid, p, 37, Tebari Vol. 2, p. 297.
4. Ibne Hisham : Sirat Vol. 2, p. 56 ; Tabari Vol. 2, p. 299.
5. Ibid, p. 65.
6. Ibid, p. 68.
7. Ibid, p. 69.
8. Tabari : Vol. 3, p. 12.

order to boost the morale of the army. The verses which Hind recited on the occasion have been preserved in chronicles.[1]

The intensity of Hind's thirst for wreaking vengeance on the Medinites and the prophet might be measured by what she did to the dead body of Hamza, an uncle of the prophet, who was killed in the action. Hind overstepped all bounds of what behoved her sex, and indeed all human decency, in tearing out Hrmza's liver and trying to chew it and bedecking herself with the severed ears, noses and other limbs of those slain in the war.[2] Some chronicles have reported that she went to the barbaric length of even frying Hamza's liver and than eating it up.[3] This may also serve as an index to the virulence of the enmity which the Omayyads, men and women alike, nursed against the Hashimides in general and the prophet in particular.

This war wrought great havoc among the Muslims but the Hashimides' and Alis' swordsmanship ultimately retrieved the day, and the enemy had to retire, discomfited. The strength of the enemy, separately, was thus demonstrated to be no match for the powerful support available to the prophet. As a last attempt, therefore, they aligned as many parties in Arabia with themselves as they possibly could, and even manoevured to win over the Jews to their cause. Then they emerged with 10,000 men[4] in 5 A. H. for a war which, on account of the multi-party composition of its army, is called the "War of parties". Poised against this numerous army, the Muslims numbered only 3000; but their enemies again met with defeat, and their hero, Amr b. Abd Wud b. Abi Qais Aamiri fell a victim to Ali's sword.[5] Abu Sufiyan had to retire to Mecca crestfallen and in a very sorry plight;. The spirit of confronting the prophet in a war or launching an attack upon him had been crushed although the wounds inflicted by these reverses did not lend themselves to healing.

When the prophet of Islam found thar the infidel Quraish had desisted from showing aggression in any manner for some time, he made up his mind for the Omra or lesser pilgrimage to the Holy House in 6 A. H., and led a party of the Muslims[6] with sacrificial camels,[7] a sure symbol of the absence, on his part, of any warlike disposition. But when the Quraish heard of the approach of the prophet, they reached KRA-IL-GHAMIM with Khalid b. Walid, at their head to offer resistance to his entry into Mecca.

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1. Tabari, Vol. 3, pp. 15, 16.
2. Ibne Hisham Vol. 2, p. 84; Tabari Vol. 3, p. 23.
3. Istiab, Vol. 2, p. 786; Tabari Vol. 3, p. 43.
4. Ibne Hisham, Vol. 2, p. 84.
5. Ibne Hisham, Vol. 2, p. 162; Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 48.
6. Ibne Hisham, Vol. 2, p. 210; Tabari, p. 71 (Vol. 3).
7. Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 72.

At this juncture the courage of the Muslims had naturally been heightened by the successive triumphs that had attended their arms, especially when they noticed confronting them the same defeated troops that had not had sufficient time to put themselves in trim for a battle. It would, therefore, have been easy enough for the prophet to offer a battle to his adversaries so as to enter Mecca in triumph as a victor. The prophet, however, had to prove his pacific intentions and as soon as he noticed the dust raised by the opposing forces marching to check his advance he abandoned the road he was following and turned to the right and adopted the route which led to Hodaibia, passing behind Humz and through Saniat-Ul-Marar.[1]

This gesture of conciliation so impressed the unfriendly Meccans that they likewise fell back and opened negotiations with the prophet, through Urwa, b. Masud Saqafi. The prophet's conciliatory behaviour created such a cordial atmosphere that Soheil b. Amr, was despatched to the prophet as a representative of the Quraish to finalise the peace parleys. He presented such conditions for the treaty as favoured the infidels and were seemingly designed to put undue pressure on the prophet and to extort unfair advantages for his own men. The prophet, however, accepted all the terms proposed for the treaty which was then ratified. The settlement required that—

(1) Mohammad and his followers should go back that year without entering Mecca and performing the pilgrimage.

(2) War shall be suspended for 10 years.

(3) Whosoever wished to join Mohammad and enter into a treaty with him, shall have liberty do so; and whosoever wished to join the Quraish and enter into a treaty with them shall likewise be free to do so.

(4) If any one went over to Mohammad without the permission of his guardian, he shall be sent back to his guardian. If any one, however, from amongst Mohammads' followeres returned to the Quraish, he shall not be sent back to Mohammad.

(5) In the following year, Muhammad may visit Mecca with his followers for three days, and the Quraish would retire from the city for the duration. The Muslims shall, however, not carry any weapons, save those usually kept by the travellers, every one carrying only a sheathed sword. Every one of the Muslims shall leave Mecca within not more than the three days allowed for their stay in that city.

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1. Tabari: Vol. 3, p. 72.

These terms were so iniquitous and markedly disadvantageous to the Muslims that many of the prophets' companions, who were unable to perceive the underlying purposes of their leader, were thrown into great agitation and anxiety. As recorded by some historians, the matter assumed dimensions of great magnitude and acquired the attributes of uncommon delicacy in the hearts of men, and their renegation seemed imminent. Their faith was shaken and they were driven to all but apostasy. Accordingly, when after putting his signatures to the treaty, the prophet told his followers to offer their sacrifices and get their heads shaved and return to Medina, the majority of the assemblage maintained a glum silence. Nobody seemed interested in complying with the prophet's directions. The prophet, however, rose with conspicuous nonchalance, to offer the customary sacrifice and got his head shaved. Others also then rose with ill-concealed reluctance and got their heads shaved or their hair cropped, but looks of murderous sullenness were writ large on their brows.

Impervious to the sentiments of his followers, the prophet accepted the oppressive conditions of the treaty. Had he taken Mecca by storm, he would heve exposed himself to the charge of committing an act of agression againat the Meccans. He observed the terms of the treaty strictly in letter and spirit. The ink had not dried on the treaty when a son of Soheil, b. Amr himself who had acted as a representative of the infidels approached the prophet crying and seeking his intercession and shelter. This young man had embraced Islam and was unwilling to accompany his fathar back to Mecca. According to the terms of the agreement, Soheil, however, claimed him, and the prophet raised no objection. To the young man's piteous prayers he made only this reply, "This hardship will not last long. Be patient. God will assuredly work for you and others like you, some way of deliverance. We have concluded a treaty with these people, and will not do anything against it."[1]

The prophet then went back. The following year he returned to Mecca as provided in the treaty. The infidels withdrew from the city for three days, leaving the prophet and his followers undisturbed in the performance of the pilgrimage, whereafter the Muslims left Mecca within the specified time.[2] The Meccans, however, did not thereafter adhere to the terms of the treaty regarding non-aggression. The treaty, it will be recalled, had kept it open for all persons or groups to join the prophet or the infidels as allies of either. Accordingly, the tribe of Bani Khaza'e attached itself to the prophet and

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1. Tabri: Vol. 3, pp. 79-80.
2. Tabari: Vol. 3, pp. 100-101; Ibne Hisham, Vol. 2, pp. 249-250; Bukhari Vol. 3, p. 36, Muslim: Vol. 2, p. 105.

the tribe of Bani Bakr allied itself to the infidels. These two tribes were on terms of long-standing enmity and missed no opportunity of harming each other whenever opportunity offered. As war between the prophet and the infidels had been banned by the treaty for 10 years and, by implication, the embargo applied also to the allies of both, the Bani Khazaa, shedding their apprehensions, disarmed themselves and neglected to remain on the alert ageinst any possible hostile move by the Bani Bakr. They were surprised by the Bani Bakr when camping near a stream and lost many of their number as killed.[1]

Some of the Quraish secretly helped the Bani Bakr, and had a hand in the slaughter of the Bani Khaza'a. Amr b. Salim, belonging to the unfortunate tribe repaired to Medina lamenting what han befallen his Kinsmen. He saw the prophet when the latter was sitting in his mosque with his companions. A very tragic and moving account of exceedingly heartless cruelties which had been perpetrated against his tribe was given by him in verse ending with the words, "Prophet of God, the Quraish have broken their pledge to you. The Bani Bakr ambushed my tribe on the bank of a stream, knowing that nobody would come to our rescue or lend a willing ear to our laments. Had we been prepared for the war, they would not have dared attack us. They are not superior to us in numbers and have always been proved our inferiors in war. We were massacred while we were engaged in our nightly prayers and bowing and prostrating ourselives before God."

The prophet was so deeply moved by the verses recited that he did not tax the supplicant with a longwinded reply, contenting himself with the very eloquently brief remark, "Amr, b. Salim, you have been helped". Saying this, the prophet set out with his followers to the aid of the tribe allied to him. He was heading towards Mecca, but in a different attitude of mind this once. The infidels, lacking the spirit to try their luck against him in the field of battle, laid down their arms and in the extremity of distress, Abu Sufiyan found himself compelled to subscribe to Islam, outwardly. Abbas, b. Abdul Muttalib, and Abu Sufiyan had been friends. The night when the prophet had reached near Mecca, the infidels were in utter dismay. Abu Sufiyan went out reconnoitring to collect information of the movements of the prophet. Abbas was also abroad being vexed about the inescapable doom that awaited the infidels, should they have the foolhardiness of resisting the prophet. Abbas told Abu Sufiyan that the probhet was on the move with an army of 10,000 men, and that the infidels had no chance of success against him, and advised Abu Sufiyan to accompany him

1. Ibne Hisham : Vol. 2, p. 260, Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 111.

to the prophet to seek amnesty, warning him that if he fell into the prophets' hands otherwise, he would never be spared. Abu Sufiyan agreed and went to the prophet with Abbas who begged for quarter for his friend. The request was granted and Abbas was told that the quarter ended with the night, and that Abu Sufiyan be produced before him next morning. When Abbas took his friend to the prophet the following day, the prophet invited Abu Sufiyan to embrace Islam. Perceiving prevarication on the part of Abu Sufiyan in falling in with the suggestion, Abbas warned him to accept Islam to avert impending peril to his life.[1] Abu Sufiyan gave in and embraced Islam. Bokhari, however, says that Abu Sufiyan had actually fallen into the hands of the Muslim army's patrol party when he accepted Islam.[2]

It is a measure of his large heartedness that the prophet of Islam granted amnesty not only to Abu Sufiyan, but extended it to those also who took shelter in Abu Sufiyans' house or in the mosque or retired into their houses and shut their doors.[3] According to another version laying down of arms was the sole condition for the grant of amesty.[4] However upon actually entering Mecca, the prophet declared a general amnesty. When he entered the city, he asked those who had gathered in front of him, "How do you think I would treat you?". They answered "We hope only to receive good treatment. You are our generous brother and the son of a generous brother." The prophet replied, "You many go. I have set you all free".[5] After this, even Hind, wife of Abu Sufiyan who had displayed utterly heartless vengefulness at Ohad, subscribed to Islam, as did, indeed, all the most bigotted and prominent men of the Quraish.[6]

In view of the foregoing events it is only natural to presume that while the stunning blow of irretrieved disaster may force an enemy to capitulate, to Surrender arms and drive him to sullen silence it can never assuage feelings or melt an obdurate and cantankerous heart to faith. Nor could such defeat move ratred to love and loyalty—a consuming hatred nurtured over generation as evidenced by the preceding events. Such a change of heart is well nigh impossible, human nature being as it is. Human psychology makes it easy to realize that the dread dragon hissing death and defiance would now lie low and under the cloak of conformity feel free for underhand and clandestine intrigues and conspirecies. Such a foe can be truly dangerous.

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1. Tabari : Vol. 3, p.116.
2. Bukhari : Vol. 3, p. 39.
3. Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 116.
4. Sahih Muslim, Vol. 2, p. 104.
5. Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 121.
6. Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 121.

Such precisely was the assessment of Hazrat Ali, that assayer of Islam, when he observed :

مَا اَسلموا ولكن استسلمو

(They did not accept Islam : they only capituted before the might of) Islam."

CHAPTER V

The Birth of Husain, and His Early Life

3 A. H.—11 A. H.

Husain, b. Ali, was born on Shaban 5, in the third year of the Hejirah [1] His mother, Fatima Zahra, took the infant to her father, the prophet, who named him Husain, performed the ceremony of shaving the infants' head, and sacrificed a ram.[2]

The Prophets' lap, the nursery of Islam now became the cradle for Hasan and Husain. The two had before them three bright examples for emulation: their grandfather the Founder of Islam, their father the crusader and Defender of Islam and their mother Fatima born to be a living emobodiment of the Prophets' prompts for Muslim Womanhood.

In the words of Iqbal she was [P]

"Butul, the fairest blossom in the garden of Devotion.

Her perfects ways a guide for all mothers.

This Triune was indeed a perfect all comprehending Training School for thought devotion and practical life. Its influences seeped into the souls of the two children as they grew up through the most impressionable years.

The daily rounds of the five congregational prayers in the Mosque; the prophets soul elev ating discourses and addiesses to the eager fervent Muslims, homes humming with hymns to God, punctuated with Takbirs and descents of the Wahi: these occupied the greater part of the lives of the boys. Or else they would listen intently to plans of Defensive or pre-emptive compaigns, to Projects for the survival and progress of Islam, to schemes for aid to the poor and the weak or to arrangements for redressing the grievances of the oppressed. Such were the circumambient influences which enveloped the children incessantly.

This elevating spiritual environment under the brilliant training of a: Master-Preceptor like the Prophet acted on temperaments and dispositions specially endowed by Nature, adding lustre and effulgence to the boys innate Nobility. In manners morals and attitudes they came to mirror the Prophets own perfection—the Prophet whose main mission, declares the

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1. Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 394; Maqatil-ut-Talibin, p. 54; Irshad.
2. Irshad.

Quran, was the purifying of the self,[1] exposition of the Book, and the imparting of Wisdom. The Prophet himself had proclaimed that his real aim was the inculcation of the highest qualities into Man's morals chatacter and attitudes. How, then, could he have failed to infuse into his own progeny and members of his own household those high principles of thought morals and conduct which constituted the core of his Divine Mission.

The pre-eminent personal qualities possessed by them, and the outstanding attainments which adorned them made the prophet uncommonly fond of his grandsons, Manifestations of the prophets' deep affection for them have been recorded by historians. Not content with this, the prophet also made a point of impressing it upon others as well that they should entertain feelings of tenderness and affection for them. He declared, "whosoever loves Hasan and Husain loves me, and whosoever bears them enmity is my enemy."[2] He called upon God to bear witness that he loved them both exceedingly.[3] Husain saw his grandfather's extreme fondness for him, but from the intimate knowledge he had of the prophet's nature and of his unremitting endeavours for the propagation of the message of Islam, and of his single-minded devotion to its success and glory, he distinctly perceived that the prophet loved Islam a great deal more than he did his grandsons. Should Islam ever fall upon evil days, he would not hesitate to sacrifice them for Islam.

A sort of spiritual contest, peculiar to the Arabs of the time, called '*Mubahila*' took place in 10 A. H. between the prophet and the Christians of Najren, Yemen. Such a contest involves an invocation by the contending parties to God to send His curse upon whichever of them was false in his claim. The Prophet went to the rendezvous holding Ali by the hand preceeded by Hasan and Husain and followed by Fatima. The Christians were so awesttruck at the celestial sight that they yielded and agreed to pay tribute.[4] Obviously the Prophet could have coped with the Mubahila all by himself. Why then was he instructed to take members of his household to the contest as appears from an Exigesis of the relevant verses of the Quran.[5] This was done for several reasons. While it served to introduce to the world the real indisputable repositories of Divine Right it was also meant to impart practical training to these high personages of the household. By casting on them responsibilities and making them share the burden of executing his Apostolic mission the Prophet was, as it were, pinpointing the personages

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1. The Quran Sura Bagarah V. V. 129, 151; Ali Imran V. 164, Juma V 2.
2. Ibn Maja: Sunan, Vol. 1, p. 33.
3. Sahih Muslim 1, Vol. 2, p. 282.
4. Irshad, p. 87.
5. The Quran: Sura Al-Iniran, v. 61.

who alone would be the anchors of hope for Islam's defence in times of danger and trial. Holding Ali's hand, he was in effect, saying "I am here here in person today and am taking you along. But when I am no more and the call comes you too shall sallyf orth for the defence of Islam, as I am doing today." It also highlighted that none could be spared or exempted from the duty of helping and serving Islam, that should a crisis so demand men, women and children—all have to rise to the occasion to expend themselves for the cause. The youngest in the group was Husain. His participation seems to have been a beckoning of Destiny: a pointer to the awesome future: a prelude to the steely testing when once more he would have to stand forth as the bastion of Islam.

The prophet was unapproached as a judge of merit, and knew well enough who would lend his support to, and preserve his teaching. He directed his followers, therefore, in a variety of ways, that they should follow the lead of the members of his household. On one occasion, he told them that he was leaving among them, two things of great weight: the Quran and the members of his household, and that so long as they followed them instructions and lead of both, they would be safe from going astray.[1] On another occasion he remarked, "Members of my household are like Noah's ark: whosoever boards it obtains deliverance, and whosoever turns away from it is drowned in the ocean of perdition."[2]

He referred to his two grandsons particularly when he declared, "Hasan and Husain are the leaders of the young men of paradise",[3] which could only mean that the character of the two grandsons of the prophet was so noble and elevated that only by treading their path could one win God's approval. Again he declared, "Both of my sons, Hasan and Husain, are Imams, (obedience to whom is obligatory) whether they stood up or sat back."[4] A day was to arrive when one of them would sit back and stand aside after entering into a treaty, and the other would stand up to wage the holy war (jehad) and both these actions would be proved to be correct as declared by the prophet.

Amongst the numerous sayings of the prophet concerning Husain is the one to the effect that "I owe my being to Husain, and Husain owes his being to me,"[5] which means that the prophet's name and message would remain alive and unforgotten in the world on account of Husain. The time during which Husain was the object of the affection and care of his grandfather was brief. The prophet breathed his last in Rabi I, 11 A. H. Husain was not yet seven years of age.

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1. Ahmad bin Hanbul: Musadd.
2. Ibne Qoitiba : Maarif.
3. Ibne Maja : Vol. 1, p. 29.
4. Irshad : p. 204.
5. Ibne Maja: Vol. 1, p. 33.

CHAPTER VI

The Second Phase of Husain's Life from the Death of the Prophet To the Assassination of Ali

11 A. H. TO 40 A. H.

The prophets' death was a harrowing experience for the members of his family. His perfect manners and high attainments had won the hearts of friend and foe alike, and his death was mourned by all. The degree of grief felt naturally varied amongst individuals according to the degrees of their proximity to the prophet. The distress of the members of the prophets' house was indeed, immeasurable and, in special, Husains' grief was excessive as he had been the object of the prophet's particular affection. He was fondled by the prophet in his lap, and placed on his bosom and on his shoulders. The slightest inconvenience to Husain could not be endured by the prophet. Husain had now been bereft of these strong marks of affection.

It was also natural that Muslims in general, who professed attachment to the prophet, and protested their willingness to sacrifice themselves to save him from the slightest trouble should love Hasan and Husain, having noticed the unusual degree of love bestowed upon them by the prophet, and having repeatedly heard him declare that whosoever bore affection towards him should be bound by affection to them as well. They had also seen visible signs of annoyance on the prophets' face whenever any lapse, however small, from affectionate conduct towards his grandsons, occurred in the prophets' presence, as would appear from the sharp retort given by the prophet to one who, perhaps, lightly addressed Hasan thus, "How fine is your mount, child" on seeing him propped on the prophet's shoulder. The prophet at once rejoined, "And how good is the rider as well".[1] To those who had the slightest insight into the prophets' nature, such incidents left little room to spare any effort and care in according due consideration to these grandsons of the prophet. It would, therefore, be no exaggeration to say that Husain was then a lamp around which circled moths, or a sun around which revolved the planets. Adoration was shown to him from all directions of the world. The prophet who attracted the world towards himself ceased to be

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1. Sawaiq-i-Muhraqa, p. 83.

and the aspeet of things altered sharply for Husain. Earlier, as soon as the day dawned, he would hear the prophet calling out." الصّلواة الصّلواة [1]

انّما یرید اللہ لیذھب عنکم الرجس اھل البیت ویطھرکم تطھیرا [2]

"Get up, it is time for prayers. God wishes, O members of the house hold (of the prophet) to remove from you all trace of defilement and to purify you as purity itself may require." Every one would then get up. Husain would also go through the usual ablutions like his father and brother, repair to the mosque where muslims would assemble, the prophet would lead the prayers and address the congregation. Deputations of the tribes of Arabia and o the rulers of various countries and their embassies would arrive. The activities of various factions and groups would be reviewed, and measures to checkmate them would be deliberated upon. Civil and criminal cases would come up for hearing, statements of witnesses and their cross-examination, and the aguments of parties would be heard, cases would be decided, and offenders punished. The receipts of zakat (charities enjoined by Islam) and Khums (the fifth part of income, e. g. from booty reserved for God, the prophet and others) and their distribution according to fixed principles would be a rranged. In fine, all matters concerning the faith and the world would converge, as if to a focal point, upon the prophet. Husain used to be present with his grandfather on almost all such occasions. All this vanished with the death of the prophet.

It is a pity that the subject of Khilafat, i. e. succession to the prophet has become such a vexed question that even now the contention about it between the Shias and Sunnis defies resolution. This book is being written to present the events of Karbala in a non-controveraial manner, and it is not intended to dwell upon that painful subject directly. The historical fact, however, remains that upon the prophets' death, some of his followers joined hands to eliminate the members of the prophet's family from the seat of political power. As a result, therefore, the members of the prophet's house hold, suffered outwardly, in the eyes of the world, from an eclipse.

After the death of his grandfather, Husain always found his mother crying, save when engaged in her prayers. For some days she kept up her mourning and lamentation at her house. A complaint was then made by

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1. Istiaab. Vol. 2, p. 615.
2. The Quran, Sura Ahzab. V. 33.

the Meccans that her unremitting wailing had made it impossible for them either to take their meals or to snatch some rest. She, therefore, used to retire to the graveyard of Jannatul Baqi where she raised her continuous laments and cries.[1] He found that his father had withdrawn himself from all society and affairs of the world, as he found that people treated him with marked indifference. He had retired to the seclusion of his house and occupied himself with the compilation of the Quran in the chronological order in which it had been revealed. Indeed he had taken a vow not to put on his cloak to leave his house till he had completed the task of compiling the Quran.[2] All these things must have had a very depressing effect on Husain. He must, howsoever, have learnt from his father's behaviour, that however adverse be the circumstances in which they found themselves placed, they could not give up serving Islam, and that as the Quran was to keep them constant company, the members of the prophet's house-hold must guard and protect it as part of duty which could not be neglected.

Husain also found that among the people who visited his house, some urged it upon his father, to stand up for his rights and try to obtain control of the Islamic polity for himself. Among such man were his sincere friends as well as insincere allies. On the one hand, Abbas, the prophets' uncle and son of Abdul Muttalib, asked for permission to swear allegiance to him, telling him that people would brush aside all objections to pledging their loyalty to him when they saw the prophet's uncle acknowleding the prophets' cousin as the caliph. On the other hand, there was the chief of the Omayyads, Abu Sufiyan, b. Harb, who endeavoured to instigate Ali with the words, "What? It is the limit that in your presence, one of the lowliest families of Arabia should have gained the upper hand. By God, if you so desire I would fill the streets and lanes of Medina with mounted soldiers to aid you." But since Ali was above sentimentalism and selfishness, he gave Abu Sufiyan short shrift, saying, "By God, you have always been an enemy of Islam and of the Muslims."[3] This not only demonstrated how firmly Ali was resolved to place the collective interests of the community and the solidarity of Islam foremost even before himself. even though it might entail the sacrifice of his personal interests, but Ali's refusal to accept Abu Sufiyan's help also served to expose the insincereity of the acceptance of Islam by Abu Sufiyan and members of his family. It was also meant to be a warning against such duplicity as might ever pose a danger to Islam, since those who openly declared their opposition to the faith were incapable of causing such

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1. Kashful Ghumma, p. 148.
2. Sawaiq-i-Muhraqa, p. 76,
3. Irshad, p. 100, Istiab, Vol. 2, p. 710; Sawaiq Muhriqa p. 27; Tarikhul Khulafa, p. 45, Tabari, Vol. 3 pp. 203-204.

great harm to it as false friends and insidious enemies. It was, therefore, necessary that such persons should be closely watched and no opportunity be allowed to them to execute their nefarious designs.

A few months after the death of the prophet, Husain lost his mother also which not only broke Ali's heart but left Hasan and Husain even more friendless than after the prophets' death. Now they had only their father, Ali, to look up to for affection and guidance. From 7 years to 36 years of age, the natural gifts of Husain blossomed under the God-given knowledge, judgement, segacity and the highly moral training of his father. This period of life spans many stages in the development of the human personality, and is best suited for the growth, in boyhood, of unconstrained informality, the unfolding in youth of inborn personal gifts and faculties, and the ripening, in manhood, of a distinct personality and well-defined character. During this long period of apprenticeship, Husain could not have failed to notice his father's ungrudging readiness to give such assistance as might be desired concerning any matter requiring knowledge, and advice about any important project or expedition, or in the decision of legal difficulties in spite of the fact that on account of the indifference, apathy and forgetfulness shown to his rightful claims by the world, he was sorely disappointed and bitterly disheartened. People, swayed by their emotions, would ordinarily shun taking upon themselves these gratuitous burdens, especially if they related to offices from which, despite their undisputed eligibility for them, they had been unjustly eliminated. The lesson which Ali's behaviour conveyed to the members of the prophet's house was that they should not treat with unconcern any matter regarding Muslims, and that howsoever invidiously they might be eliminated from the position of having a say in them, they should watch out for opportunities to lend their support whenever the affairs of the Muslims came up against obstacles and dangers, and that they should consider serving the interests of Islam as their sole object.

At the time of the election of the third caliph of Islam, an opportunity arose when Ali could have won for himself the throne of the caliphate. When dying, the second caliph had constituted a consultative body of six persons from among whom the next caliph was to be chosen. One of the member of this advisory committee was Ali himself. All the other members, at one stage of the deliberations of this body, were willing to nominate Ali to the caliphate if only he would undertake, beside following the injunctions of the Quran and the sayings and practices (sunnat) of the prophet, to follow the saying and practices (sunnat) of the first two caliphs as well.[1] Husain noticed, however, that his noble minded and righteous father spurned the

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1. Tabari, Vol. 5, p. 40.

opportunity of becoming a caliph, and refused to agree to follow anything except the injunctions of the Quran and the sayings and practices (sunnat) of the prophet. He thus rejected the opportunity of succeeding to the caliphate for a very long time.

In the manner in which his father had conducted himself, Husain discerned the practical application of an important lesson on which indeed, his own future behaviour was based. It was this. The code of Islam and the deeds of Muslim rulers had become two separate matters. The ways of the rulers of the day, and their regulations should not, as indeed, they could not, be equated with conduct under the code of Islam. In reality it was the Code of Islam which constituted the permanent nexus which should determine the conduct of the rulers, and be their guide, as it was binding upon all the Muslims. When such a dispensation gets superseded, the Muslims were under the obligation to follow the Code of Islam, and not the conduct of the men in power. Whenever it came to pass that the conduct of the men in supreme control of wordly power was in direct opposition to the principles of the Islamic regulations, and brought about radical changes in the faith, it was the duty of the Muslims to do all in their power to prop and protect the faith and deem no secrifice in the cause too dear. It was during this period of Husain's life that in 31 A. H. the Persian monarch, Yazdgird, was slain by a Persian in circumstances of great distress and friendlessness.[1] The Persian princesses were despatched to Medina as prisoners of war. When crowds assembled to rejoice at the sight of the captive maidens of the hostile country. Ali and his noble-minded son not only saved them from humiliation, but Husain wedded one of them, Shahr Banu, or Shah Zenan. In so doing Husain did honour to the Islamic teaching of obliteration of all discrimination between different nations of the world.

The coucluding portion of the rule of the third caliph was a period of greatly unsettled conditions and tension. The Muslims nursed many grievances against him; they even resorted to direct action against him. Far from lending any countenance to such unruly conduct, All did his best to keep the rioters in check. He intervened many times between the inflamed crowd and the caliph to pacify the former and patch up a peace between them and the established government. He got many of the complaints of the dissatisfied elements redressed and argued and parleyed with them, and advised them to disperse and go back.[2] But Merwan who then held the office of *Katib* (Secretary) of the caliph, a position equivalent to that of a

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1. Tabari, Vol. 5, p. 71.
2. op. cit., pp. 96, 97, 110, 117. 122.

Some people, however, counselled Ali to retain Muawiya and all officials appointed by Usman in their posts and to remove them, if necessary, only after they had shed their anxiety and submitted themselves to his control. Ali refused to take this advice and remarked, as verily enjoined upon him by his religious duty,[1] that while acting upon the suggestion would certainly be expedient, how could he agree to partake of their oppression by retaining them in their posts, knowing as he did, that they were iniquitous and incompetent.[2] This manner of looking at such matters, had far reaching consequences. If Ali could not tolerate as one of his subordinates, the governorship of a man like Muawiya, how could Husain swear allegiance to Yazid, and bow to his authority since he was far worse than his father, Muawiya. Even so, the letter Ali addressed to Muawiya was not couched in terms suggestive of harshness or bitterness or calculated to provoke animosity. It was only a communication such as is usually sent by a superior to his subordinate officers. Wakidi gives the text of the letter as follows: "You might have heard how I kept myself aloof from the affairs of the Muslims and treated the caliphate with indifference till what could not be avoided happened. After the murder of Osman, I was left with no choice. These matters would take long to narrate. Whatever was destined has come to pass and the future shape of things is before our eyes. You may now obtain the oath of allegiance (for me) from people of your country, and present yourself to me with a deputation of your countrymen."[3] Muawiya was, however, determined to bargain for nothing less than the caliphate, and accordingly he did not even think of complying with the directions contained in the letter addressed to him by Ali. He was impelled by motives of old enmity and opposition towards Ali. The charge of the murder of Osman was trumped up against Ali and afforded Muawiya excuse enough to unfurl the standard of revolt against him.

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1. The prophet of Islam said, "Whoever, being charged with authority to govern the Muslims, appoints as a ruler one than whom better person are available for serving the interests of Islam, would act dishonestly with God and the prophet." There is another version of the saying "whoever confers upon any one authority over a group of the Muslims, notwithstanding the presence in that group of more desirable persons, would deal dishonestly with god, His prophet and all the believers. (As Siyasat Ush Sharia fi Islahur Rai War Raiyya: Sheikh Ibn. Taimiya: p. 37

2 Tabari, Vol. 5, p.p. 159-160, Nahjul Balagha, Vol. 2, p. 140.

3. Nahjul Balagha, Vol. 2, p. 140.

Muawiya incited the Syrians against Ali to a feverish pitch by indoctrinating them with a belief in the false charge against Ali. In the congregational mosque at Damascus, meetings to mourn the murder of Osman were convened, his blood-stained shirt was exposed to the general view from the pulpit, and huge crowds of about 50,000 persons used to raise their voices in wailing over Osman's assassination, and it was during these bouts of mourning that the Syrians were told that they had to avenge Osman's blood.[1] While Ali busied himself with preparations to meet the challenge from Syria, the unexpected news arrived that Talha and Zubair had set up a strong opposition to him, having won over Ayesha, widow of the prophet, to their side.[1]

Those who had seen Ali leading a retired life for 25 years, far from the din of battles, would have hoped that he would somehow manage to steer clear of war in the context of this fresh threat to peace. They found, however, that Ali, who had kept his sword sheathed for a period long enough to take him from the stage of youth to that of old age, was not unprepared to go to war in defence of the law, principles and justice since responsibility for taking positive action in this behalf now rested solely with him. Husain must have noticed, however, that his father scrupulously observed the rule that in war, the offensive must not be taken, and the taking of the lead in aggression must always, be left to the enemy. Accordingly in the war of Jamal,[2] when the parties had marshalled their armies in battle array, Ali took a copy of the Quran in his hands, and called out to his men, "Who would take the Quran to the enemy, and invite them to act up to it ? I warn you, however, that whoever carries this message would be killed." Hearing this, a young man from Kufa, Muslim, by name, stood up, and offered to take the Quran and the message to the opposing army. Ali made no reply, and repeated his question as well as the warning. The same youth again stood up and offered to do as directed. Again Ali made no answer. He simply raised his voice and repeated his query and caution, and the same young man again repeated his offer. Ali than handed over the Quran to the young man who took it to enemy ranks and invited them to act up to it. They served his right arm cruelly, and when he supported the Holy Book on his left hand, his left arm was also severed. The young man then supported the Quran with his severed arms, blood gushing out of his wounds. He was then assassinated. Upon this, Ali proclaimed, "War

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1. Tabari, Vol. 5, p. 163
2. Op. cit. p. 184

against these men is now lawful and justified."[1] The same sword which had been so effectively used in the battles of Badr, Ohad, Khandap (Trench) and Khyber, was again seen accomplishing the same feats of sure, swift slaughter as it had done in those battles. The war ended in the defeat of the enemy. In the moment of his triumph, Ali treated the leader of the hostile army, Ayesha, so nobly and honourably that no victor appears to have ever treated the vanquished with such generosity.[2] This was on a Thursday, the 10th of Rabi II, 36 A.H.[3]

Obviously Ali had now arrived at an age, 59 years, when men cease to hanker after warlike exploits and the clash of arms. That he too to war after a recession of 25 years only taught that the demands of duty alone should determine action and inaction, that the call of duty should always be attended to, and that in matters concerning principles and duties, the importunities of emotions and the claims of age should alike find no place.

In Syria, disorder and incitement to commotion continued unabated. Osman's shirt, besmeared with his blood and the severed finders of his wife, Naila, were exhibited from the pulpit. Mourning for Osman's murder was observed for a full year. Many Syrians vowed abstinence from sharing their beds with their wives, from bathing except when religiously obligatory, and from sleeping in their beds until they had put to the sword all who had murdered Osman.[4] In this manner Muawiya raised the entire country of Syria against Ali who, on his part, persevered in his attempts to mend matters. For this purpose he sent Jarir, son of Abdullah Bijli, to Damascus. This however, proved to be of no avail. Ultimately both the parties, opposed to each other, converged on Siffn where their armies pitched their camps. Even at this stage, Ali did not shut the door on giving advice both for the exercise of caution and acting righteously. He sent three men, viz. Bashir b. Amr, b. Mahz Ansari; Saeed, b. Qais Hamadani; and Shis, b. Rabiee Tamimi to Muawiya to induce him to settle for union, accord and coming together. This peaceful overture met with no success better than inviting the rebuff, "Go away from here, only the sword will decide between us."[5] There is no similarity whatever between this militant attitude of the

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1. 'Jamal' in Arabic means 'Camel', and the war is known as the war of Jamal since Ayesha, widow of the Prophet, was brought seated on a camel to fight against Ali.
2. Tabari; Vol. 5, p p. 205, 206
3. Tabari; Vol. 5, p. p. 203, 205, 218, 219 and 225
4. o.p. cit: p. 216
5. o.p. cit: p. 235

ruler of Syria and the peaceful manner in which Ali invited the representatives of Syria, Habib b. Muslim Fihri, Sharjil, b. Samt, and Ma'n b. Yazid b. Akhnass to follow the injunctions of the Quran and the practices and regulations (*Sunnat*) of the propet and agree to the stamping out of falsehood and revival of the trut.[2] This invitation was turned down and as a consequence the blood of the Muslims began to be shed with impunity.

Many principles of conduct emerged prominently in the course of this war. On this occasion also, Ali directed his army not to open the attack, till the lead in taking the offensive ad been taken by the eneemy.[3] Indeed, in all instances when he had to fight against the so-called Muslims, Ali had ordered his armies not to commence violence till the enemy had started the attack, since they had, by God's grace, full justification for the war, being on the side of trut. He argued that if they stayed their hands from taking the lead in aggression, leaving that course to the enemy, their action aould acquire greater justification. He also forbade the pursuit of a defeated foe, attempt to hurt a wounded enemy, the violation of the modesty of any woman, the disfigurement of any dead body, forcing entry into any tent without permission, plundering the effects and other belongings of the enemy, and causing hurt to women even if they used abusive language against the leaders of the victorious army.[4]

During the course of the war, the vanguard of Muawia's army, under Abul A'war Salmi, succeeded in wresting control over tye Euphates, and cut off supplies of water to Ali's forces. Ali was thus forced tr resort to hostilities to obtain supplies of water. His army succeeded in throoing back the forces of Abul Awar Salmi from the banks of the river, and resolved to repay their opponents in their own coin and deprive them of the use of the river. Ali did not, however, agree to this measure, saying, "They acted in the manner they thougt appropriate for themselves. You should not deprive them of the use of water; let them have all the water they want without any let or hindrance." Ali's behaviour taught that howsoever degraded in behaviour and removed from humane conduct one's opponent may prove himself, one should not conduct oneself towards him in a like manner, and that it was obligatory for one to maintain human dignity.

Ali was greatly pained at the shedding of Muslim blood in the war of Siffin. He drew Muawiya's attention to this purposeless and massive killing of the Muslims in the war, and challenged the latter to meet him in single

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1. Tabari : Vol. 5, p. 243
2. o. p. cit. : Vol. 6, p. 4
3. o. p. cit. : Vol. 5, p. 238

combat to settle the issue of the war quickly enoug without further loss of Muslim life. Muawiya evaded imprilling his life by crossing swords with Ali, electing to sacrifice others to what was in reality his personal cause Ali, on the contrary, was always there at the ead of is army, oblivious of his personal safety because his conscience was clear and his mind at rest. In fact he longed for the death of a martyr. He used to claim that he was fonder of death than an infant is of its mother's breast. He aborred a cotard's death in the security of his bed. He used to tell his companions that if they escaped assassination, they would die a natural death, since die they must. He called upon God, who held his life in His power, to bear witness that a thousand strokes dealt with a sowrd on ones head were easier borne that a lingering, agonising and distressful death in one's bed. [1] And his actions conformed to his words. Even in early youth, he had unhesitatingly consented, on the eve of the prophet's exodus from Mecca, to sleep in the latter's bed as directed, knowing full well that outside the prophet's house there were bloodtirsty enemies ready to strike, their drawn swords. He was ready to welcome death in a righteous cause.

He told Hasan in the course of this war at Siffin that the later's father was wholly indifferent to death falling upon him or he timself tfalling upon death. [1] How could the sons of a father whose conduct they ad observed with their own eyes, whose views on death they had heard with their own ears, ever entertain the slightest fear of death ? Husain took a full part in the war along with his brothers, Hasan and Mohammad Hanafia, and acted with great steadfastness in moments of the greatest danger. Zaid b. Wahb Jehni reports that when a major portion of Ali's army had been defeated, and he had been left with but a few most dutiful and brave companions, Ali turned his horse towards the left wing of his army where men of the tribe of Rabi were still putting up resistance to the enemy. Hasan, Husain and Mohammad Hanafia were seen accompanying their father and shielding him constantly against arrows which flew fast and thick betaeen the ears and shoulders of their father. [2] This was indeed no ordinary example furnished by Ali's sons of willingness to sacrifice their lives. It was only to be expected from these brave sons that they would never be deterred by the fear of death from showing the least laxity in discharging their duty, nor bow their heads before the powers of untruth to save their skins.

An important lesson was driven home by Ali during this war. While fully engrossed in fighting, Ali was noticed by I bne Abbas watching the sun.

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1. o. p. cit. : Vol. 6, p. 6
2. Irshad p. 128
3. Tabari : Vol. 6 p. 11

On being asked the reason for it, Ali replied that he was trying to ascertain if the time for the noon prayers (Zuhr) had arrived. Ibne Abbas asked Ali, "Is this the time for prayers ? The war is still raging". Ali made the reply, "What then are we fighting for ? It is for these prayers that we are waging this war". Thus Ali practically taught the importance and obligation of offering prayers to God, regardless of whether it rained arrows' or fire, when the time appointed for them arrived.

The war had been unduly prolonged and one day Ali resolved that it be terminated after achieving decisive victory. The fighting raged the whole day and during the whole of the succeeding night. The Syrian army commenced betraying visible signs of inability to withstand the onslaught of Alis' forces any longer. Defeat stared Muawiya in the face. Omar, b. Aas, however, had a trick up his sleeve for this emergency, and it was the raising of the Quran aloft on spearheads and announcing, "Brethern, this Book of God alone will decide between you and us. If all the Syrians are exterminated, who would guard the marches of Syria ? And if the people of Iraq are annihilated who would protect the confines of Iraq ? [1] It will be recalled that even before the commencement of this war, Ali had invited the enemy to turn to the Quran for a decision, but then the rosy prospects of an easy victory had blinded his enemies into the rejection of his offer. And now they sought the intercession of the Quran to escape the unpleasant consequences of an ignominious defeat. Ali warned his men against the hypocrisy and chicanery of his opponents, telling them that the latter neither followed Islam nor paid any regard to the Quran. [2] Many men of Ali's army, however, were misled into defying his instructions and insisting upon the swords being put into their scabbards, failing which, they threatened to use them against Ali himself. The troops threatened to mutiny in the midst of the war. Ali was in consequence constrained to suspend the hostilities. It was decided that the Syrians and the residents of Kufa should nominate an arbitrator each to decide between Muawiya and Ali. The Syrian choice fell on Amar Aas as the spokesman for Muawiya. Ali wanted one of his sincere well-wishers like Malik-i-Ashtar or Abdullah b. Abbas to be appointed as an arbitrator for the people of Kufa but the men of his own army strongly demurred, alleging that men like these two were, indeed, responsible for the war and, therefore, ineligible for that office of trust. [3] They nomina ted Abu Musa Ashari as their arbiter, although earlier he had acted in a manner which had clearly shown that there was no love lost between him

1. Ali Akhbar ut Towal, p. 184 ; Tabari Vol. 6, p. 10
2. Tabari, Vol. 5, p. 46
3. Tabari : Vol. 6, p. 27 ; Irshad : page 144

and Ali. Ali found it expedient to agree to this choice in order to ward off bloodshed in his party itself, and also in order that the aftermath might emerge for all to see. The agreement executed between the perties ran: "Ali b. Abu Talib has assumed the responsibility on behalf of the residents of Kufa and all other Muslims who are on his side, and Muawiya takes it upon himself on behalf of the Syrians and all who follow him to submit themselves to the decision of God and His Book, and agree that nothing but Gods Book would decide between them and be constantly kept in view by them, that from the beginning to the end they would uphold and keep alive what the Book of God upholds and keeps alive, and do away with what that Book does away with. The arbitrators would, therefore, be under the obligation to keep the Book of God constantly in view, to act according to what they find in it, and if they do not find in it anything to guide them, action shall be taken according to the undisputed practices and regulations, viz. the *sunnat*, of the prophet".

The terms of the agreement clearly specified that the arbitrators had been given no authority to decide according to their personal views which might be based on some mundane political influences. Ali had, therefore, taken care to personally explain to the arbiters "You are arbiters on condition that you decide according to the Book of God, and if you are not so inclined you should not deem yourselves to be arbiters".[1] This was explained to others as well. The arbitrators were fettered by the condition that they would take a decision according to the Quran, and would not act according to their personal opinions.[2] This agreement was drawn up on 13th Safar 37 A.H.

Despite the caution exercised by Ali to forestall any breach of the agreement, those bent upon mischief succeeded in their evil designs and the agreement had been hardly executed when went up in Ali's army the cry that it was wrongful to appoint human beings as arbitrators". There can be no arbiter except God". لاحکم الا للہ was the slogan vociferously raised here, there and everywhere in the field of battle, Urwa, b. Adiyya, of the tribe of Bani Tamim being the first man to shout it.[3] Thus came into being the party of the Kharijites; those who opted out of the faith or seceded from it. They pressed Ali first to fight with Muawiya in which they promised to be on Ali's side. Ali gave them the same reply that the

1. Tabari, VI : p. 28
2. Usdul Ghaba : Vol. 3, p. 246
3. Tabari : Vol. 6, p. 32 ; Irshad : p. 144

prophet had given when the peace of Hudaibia was signed. "After negotiating its terms with our opponents we have made an agreement which has been reduced into writing and made over to them. It is now not possible to go back upon it. The Quran enjoins that the pledged word should be honoured and a vow once taken should not be contravened when you have made God its surety. For he is certainly aware of what you do." Ali abided by the agreement strictly but the arbitrators completely ignored its conditions and disregarded the Book of God and the practices and regulations (sunnat) of the prophet thoroughly. As Abu Musa was a simpleton, and did not hold Ali in favour, he was soon enough duped by the low shifts and expedients of the astute Amr b. Aas.

When the arbitrators assembled at Daumat-ul-Jundal, which lay midway between Kufa and Syria and had for that reason been selected as the place for the announcement of the decision of the arbitrators, a series of daily meetings was arranged for them to discuss the matters in hand. On such occasions, Amr adopted a very respectful manner towards Abu Musa, always according to the latter precedence over himself as due to one superior to him both in length of years and companionship of the prophet. Amr had always showed Abu Musa the courtesy of encouraging him to speak before him, thus impressing the latter with his deep regard and respect for him. This prepared the ground for what he had in his mind to do later.

When the time arrived for taking a decision about the caliphate, Amr Aas deluded Abu Musa into entertaining the opinion that they should deprive both Ali and Muawiya of the caliphate, and give to the Muslims the right to elect the caliph. Abu Musa was taken in and believed that it was the decision to which both the arbitrators fully and finally Subscribed. He, therefore, decided to act accordingly.

As the time for announcing the arbitrators verdict approached, the people belonging to both the parties assembled, Amr Aas, as usual, requested Abu Musa to take the lead in announcing the decision he favoured Abu Musa had grown accumstomed to having his say first, and he unhesitatingly agreed to open the proceedings. Abdullah b. Abbas who was a man of strong common sense and prudence, warned Abu Musa against possible trickery on the part of Amr Aas, and advised him to ask the latter to announce his decision first, and pronounce his own award thereafter. Abu Musa told Abdullah, b. Abbas, that the precaution was unnecessary, since the two arbitrators had taken a unanimous decision. He, therefors, stood up and after paying the usual tributes of praise to God and of approbation to the prophet said, "We have devised a solution after a good deal of

thought and it may put an end to all contention and separatist tendencies. It is this. Both of us remove Ali as well as Muawiya from the Caliphate. The Muslims are given the right to elect a caliph in their place as they think best." As soon as he sat down after giving his award, Amr Aas sprang to his feet and addressing the gathering said, "You have heard Abu Musa who represents Ali. He has deposed Ali from the caliphate. As the representative of Muawiya I agree with him in the deposition of Ali, but I instal Muawiya as the caliph". No sooner had Abu Musa heard this than he shouted", What is it that thou hast done! May God punish them for it. Thou hast acted treacherously. Thou art guilty of dishonesty. Thou art like a dog, one may attack it or leave it alone but bark it must all the same-" Amr Aas replied, "You are like a donkey loaded with books."

Some persons from amongst the crowd rushed at Abu Musa and manhandled him, others made a dash for Amr Aas to attack him, and the gathering dispersed amidst these tumultuous and disorderly scenes.[1] Evidently such dishonest proceedings inspired no confidence in the justice of their outcome and the verdict was repudiated on all hands. The contention between the parties in consequence remained very much where it was, wholly unresolved. The incident, however, added to the divisive confusion in the ranks of Ali's forces. The Kharijites managed to organise themselves and set their house in order to offer stiff opposition to Ali. The War of Nehrwan was the result.

The long series of events which have been reviewed here throw into prominence, among other things, the distressing plight of a leader, like Ali, who is burdened with followers insincere in their loyalty to him and plagued with dissension and discord among themselves, and how destructive of his objects such a situation may turn out to be.

Even after the war of Nehrwan, sedition and turbulence had not been wholly rooted out. On the contrary while such fellow travellers of the Khanjites as had not participated in that war, and had settled down in cities, poisoned the atmosphere against Ali and incited feelings of rebellion against him, the ruler of Syria, Muawiya, taking advantage of the disunity and confusion that had gripped the residents of Kufa, greatly consolidated his power and made a strong bid to turn the prevalent disorder in parts of the Muslim territories into a veritable chaos. To achieve his purpose, Muawiya employed his forces to foment open opposition to Ali, and even stooped to dark and calendestine intrigues such as the one employed to eliminate Malik-i-Ashtar, a great loyal and able supporter of Ali, through

poisin.[1] Again, when Mohammad b. Abu Bakr, was sent to Egypt by Ali as governor, Amr Aas conspired against him with certain influential persons of Egypt and himself led on army against him. Mohammed b. Abu Bakr found himself faced with a two-pronged attack one launched against him by the Syrian army, and the other raised by the Egyptian conspirators.[2] He suffered defeat and was most cruelly done to death ; even his dead body was not spared and was committed to the flames.[3] After this, Muawiya's power was established in Egypt and this gave him added audauty. Accordingly, Noman b. Bashir attacked Ainut-tamar at the head of 2000 men—39 A. H. The raid was, however repulsed.[4] Then Sufiyan b. Auf Ghamidi raided Ambar with an army of 6000 men and put Ashras b. Hassan Bakri, posed there by Ali, along with his 30 associates to the sword and, after plundering their belongings, retired.[5] He was followed by Abdullah b. Musammaida Khizari who led an attack on Tima with 1700 men. Musabbib b. Najba Fizari, who was deputed by Ali to confront him defeated him and put him to flight towards Syria.[6] In the same way, when Zahhak b. Qais set out on a marauding expedition, with a force of 3000 soldiers and arrived within the precincts of qadisia, Hajr b. Adi led an army against him, and the former scurried away. It seems that after the war of Siffin it had been realised that it would be impossible to get the better of Ali in an open, pitched battle, and that the guerrilla method of warfare would more effectively serve the purpose of keeping Islamic territory in a state of permanent disturbance and ferment. Perhaps the most regrettable among these hit-and-run raids was the one led by Basr b. Abi Artat, against the Hijaz at the head of a force comprising 3000 men. He extorted the oath of allegiance from the residents of Mecca and Medina and headed for Yemen where he murdered a number of men, ransacked the house of Obdaidullah b. Abbas and butchered his two young sons. He however, fled with his arwy when Ali sent an army to meet his challenge.[7]

This dastardly manner of fighting was exceedingly abherrent and painful to Ali who was in consequence driven to resolve upon mounting an attach on Syria to put an end to such skirmishes. He made a very forcible

1. Tabari Vol. 6. p. 54
2. Tabari Vol. 6. p. 57
3. o.p. cit. p. 60
4. o.p. cit. p. 77
5. o.p. cit. p. 78
6. ibid.
7. Tabari Vol. 6. p. 80-81

speech to the people, and brought Muslims round to agree to enlist in his army, but hardly had a week passed when I bn-i-Muljim Muradi struck him on the head with his poisoned sword in the mosque where he lay prostrate during his morning prayers before God on the 18th of Ramazan 40 A. D. Three days later, on the 21st of Ramazan. Ali expired.

At the time of Ali's death, Husain was 36 years of age and during this considerable period which he spent with his father, the latter's exemplary life must have shaped Husain's character on principles of unsullied nobility and unapproachable excellence, his mind along lines of unmixed purity and unbounded generosity and conduct in ways of untainted sobriety and unflinching steadfastness.

CHAPTER VII

OMAYYAD POWER AND ITS POLITICAL BIAS

Omayyad mentality, in common with the sentiments of those who, like them, had been driven to accept Islam, either due to the sence of awe which it inspired, or the inpress of excellence which it bore, was characterised by the patterns of feeling and behaviour shared by all subdued and subjugated peoples. It partook of the emotions of hats, hostility, anger, revenge fulness and a supervening sence of fright. They could not obviously give went to these feelings openly, but awaited impatiently for an opportunity to unable them to damage the cause of Islam, since its complete destruction appeared to be only a remote possibility. Their plan was the more feasible one of disfiguring and corrupting the distinguishing features of Islam which had crushed their power. The accomplishment of their objective was to be effected by the insidious use of the cover of Islam, so readily available to them, in order to rehabilitate the values and privileges which had prevailed in the pre-Islamic days. Not that they had omitted to prepare to achieve this aim even during the lifetime of the prophet but their success had appeared to be more unlikely. Even though the prophet had spent his utmost endeavours to inculcate in his people true affection for Islam and its teachings, the slightest setback suffered by Islam, gave the Omayyads ill-concealed pleasure, sometimes finding oral expression. In the battle of Badr when, except a handful of loyal Muslims, all had taken to their heels, Abu Sufyan said, "They will now flef up to the sea." Another fresh convert to Islam opined, "Now, the magic has drawn to a close." [1]

The first attempt made by Abu Sufyan to attack and disrupt Islam has already been adverted to. He had tried to induce Ali to resort to war to get his title to the caliphate established. If instead of Ali, there had been any other person, easily swayed by his feelings, he would have been ensuared by the offer of help made by Abu Sufyan, and the resultant civil war would have shaken Islam to its foundations and the unity of Islam would have gone to pieces. But Ali's insight into the motives which had impelled Abu Sufyan to pose as his supporter, enabled him to see through the latter's game. Notwithstanding the fact that Ali considered himself to be the only deserving candidate for the caliphate, he gave a short shrift to Abu Sufyan, telling him, "You have always been an enemy of Islam and the Muslims."

1. Tabari, Vol. 3, P. 128

Repelled by and disappointed with Ali, Abu Sufiyan readily changed sides, and opening negotiations with the members of the opposite camp, brazenly shifted his loyalty to them. In this he scored ready and signal success. The first caliph, Abu Bakr, prepared to invade Syria in 13 A. H. and despatched Yazid b. Abu Sufyan on the mission with 7,000 men[1]! Abu Obaids Jarrah was placed in command of the remaining contingent, and Sahil b. Amr, and some other persons of note and experience were associated with Yazid as advisers. Later, when more troops could be assembled, they were sent to Yazid's help under another son of Abu Sufiyan, Muawiyah.[2] All told an army of 27,000 men was raised. Word was sent to Khalid b. Walid, to reach Iraq with the 9,000 men under him raising the total strength to 36,000. Every one of these leaders was named for various governorships: Abu Obaids Jarah for Hams, Sharjil b. Hasna, for East Jordan, Amr b· Aas and Algama b. Mujazzir for Palestine and Yazid b. Abu Sufiyan, for Damascus.[3]

Among the progeny of Abu Sufiyan, besides Yazid and Muawiya, their sister, Juevairia also participated in the war along with her husband.[4] Abu Sufiyan himself worked in the war as a story-teller to entertain the leaders.[5]

In the meanwhile, Abu Bakr died, but the war continued in Syria. Damascus fell in Rajab, 14 A. F., and as previously arranged, Yazid b. Abu Sufiyan, was appointed governor there.[6] Other Syrian cities also gradually fell before the invading army.

Abu Obaida and Yazid b. Abi Sufiyan, died in 18 A. H.[7] from plague Abu Sufiyan was then at Medina and when the second Caliph broke the news of his son's death to him, his first reaction was to enquire about Yazids' successor, when he was told that his son, Muawiya, had been appointed in place of Yazid, he was visibly relieved.[8] Muawiya now became governor of Damascus and its environs, and Sharjil b. Hasna became ruler of East Jordan and its neighbourhood.[9] Shortly afterwards Muawiya acquired the governorship of East Jordan as well.[10]

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1. Tabari, Vol. 4, p. 28
2. op. cit. p. 30
3. op. cit. p. 32
4. Tabari Vol. 6, p. 40
5. op. cit. p. 34
6. op. cit. p. 55-56
7. op. cit. p. 302
8. op. cit. Vol. 5, p. 69
9. op. cit. Vol. 4, p. 202
10. op. cit. Vol. 5, p. 69

During this period, Abu Sufiyan and others among the Umayyads derived great advantages. Hind, mother of Muawiya, who had been divorced by Abu Sufiyan, was advanced from the treasury of the Central Government a sum of 4,000 dirhams which she invested in trade, and earned huge profits. When Abu Sufiyan visited Damascus, he received a lump sum grant of 100 *ashrafis* as maintenance,[1] although he had even then not got over his ill-will for Islam. In the war of Yarmok when the Muslim army was fighting against the Romans, and the battle was at its thickest, Abu Sufian stood simply as a spectator. Whenever the odds appeared to favour the Romans, he used to shout, "Bravo, you gallant men of Rome!" On the contrary when the balance of advantage tilted against the Romans, he used to regretfully recite a couplet,

وبنو الاصفر الملوك ملوك الروم لم يبق منهم مذكور

meaning, "Alack-a-day. The names of the great kings of Rome appear to draw near obliteration." Abdullah b. Zubair, related this as his personal observation to his father after the Muslims had achieved a decisive victory. Zubair burst forth, "May God destroy him. He will not give up his double-dealing. Are we not superior to Romans in his eyes?"[2]

In 23 A. H., when Osman rose to be a caliph, Abu Sufiyan and other Omayyads looked upon the event as the highest consummation of their desires. They could hardly control their extreme delight. Abu Sufiyan who had grown old and blind went to see Osman, and told him that the caliphate had reached him after a long period of waiting and that he might revolve it in his hands like a ball. He advised Osman to strengthen the foundations of his caliphate with Omayyad support and added, "Whatever is worth-while is worldly authority. As for paradise and hell, I make nothing of them".[3]

Abu Sufiyan and the members of his family used the caliphate to their fullest advantage, and undoubtedly the former's dreams of worldly gains came true, in double measure during his lifetime. In 31 A. H., Hams, Qansreen and Palestine were added to Muawiya's charge and he became the sovereign of the whole of Syria.[4] In this very year (31 A.H.) Abu Sufyan died at the age of 88 years.

It appears that the piece of advice which Abu Sufiyan had given to Osman eventually paved the way for the latter's assassination. In his first interview witw Osman, regarding improvements in the conditions prevailing

1. op. cit. p. 30

1. Istiab, p.
2. I bid
3. Tabari Vol. 5, p. 69

in the country, Ali warned him plainly, saying "You confer unusual concessions and favours upon your Kinsmen, you shut your eyes to their mistakes, to the extent of administering no warning to Muawiya when he does things without your sanction and gives out that these had been done at you rbidding not even when you learn of these lapses."

It now came to be said to Osman's face that after him, the Caliphate of the muslim world would go to Muawiya.[1] It was probably on account of this certainty about his prospects, that when ossman wrote to him for help, Muawiys did not budge from where be was awaiting the outcome of the stir Medina.[2] Amr-b-Aas, openly incited people against ossman, and when the Caliph's palace was beleagured, he withdrew to Palestine to look forward to the success of his efforts. He used to ask every passer-by with great interest how things were shaping at Medina. When the news of ossman's assassination arrived, he congratulated himself on how his labours had prospered.[3] And it was he who became the right hand man of Muawiys after this and received many preferments from him. He had, however, once, the candour to tell Muawiya that had righteousness been his aim, there was no reason for his supporting the latter instead of Ali whose services to Islam, supepior merit and relationship with the prophet were well-known. He added, "I am with you because I seek the world."[4]

The descendants of Abu Sufian shaped their political conduct on the pattern of the ways of worldly potentates right from the establishment of their authority in Syria. If one who had witnessed manifestations of Islamic simplicity and equality prevailing in lands professing the faith, had chanced to stop into Syria, one would have been amazed at the pomp and magnificence which prevailed there. Not a trace of the informality which was the hall-mark of Islam was in evidance in Syria. It had been substituted with displays of regal grandeur and imperial splendour in their fullest plenty and excess. Some companions of the prophet who had seen life in the latters regime apprehended that the modes and standerds of conduct introduced, and the values laid down by him, with great effort, after abolishing the ways of worldly sophistication would, sooner than later, get completely supplanted, being already on their way out on account of the revivalist tendencies set on foot by the flmayyads. Once Muawiya put gold drinking cups to sale, charging prices higher than their weights warranted, and was told by

1. Tabari p, 97
2. op. cit, p. 100
3. op. cit, p. 100
4. op. cit. p.p. 108, 109, 110, 235

Abu Darda, a companion of the prophet, to desist from doing so as the practice was prohibited by the prophet. Muawiya had the impudence, to remark that he did not find anything amiss with what he was doing. Abu Darda came out with the remark, "God be praised. I am telling you what the prophet had enjoined and you argue about it. I would not live in the locality you inhabit." Exactly the same incident took place between the well-known companion of the prophet, Ibada b. Samit, and Muawiya, with the same exchanges of words between thme.[1] These incidente show that a rift between those devoted to the laws of Islam and the political policy-makers of Damascus had set in.

Another case in point relates to an experience of Abdur Rahman b. Sahl Ansari He was going to Syria in connection with a holy war when he noticed liguor being transported in water-bags by camels. He ripped open the containers with the point of his spear and all the liquor was spilled. The slaves entrusted with this errand reported the event to Muawiyah who remarked, "Leave that dotard alone. He has lost his wits." Abdur Rahman replied that he had not been beret of his understanding, but the prophet had enjoined that liquor should not enter our stomachs or utensiles.[2]

The result of incidants like those was to estrange the old companions of the prophet from Muawiya. Once, when Muawiya who had gone to Macca for the Hajj pilgrimage passed by Sa'd b. Abi Wiqas; he saluted the latter early in the morning, but his greetings drew no response. In order to put a gloss on the slight offered to him, Muawiys told his companion, "This is Sa'd, a companion of the prophat. It is a settled principle with him not to speak to anybody before sunrise." When Sa'd heard the story, he denied that there was any truth in Muawiyas' statement and added that God was his witness, he did not wish to speak to Muawiya.[3]

In proportion as the power of the government at Damasue grew, the measure of its loyalty to the injunctions of Islam and its culture diminished, and the extent of the adoption, by the rulers, of mundame standards of behaviour expanded. The result was that the criteria of conduct and the distinctive features of the practices prescribed by Islam for the simple needs of austere Spartan society suffered complete neglect, as exemplified by the banishment of Abu Zar, highly esteemed companion of the prophe. His only fault was that he disapproved hoarding of wealth which had come

1. Sunan Ibne Maja, Vol. 1, p. 7
2. Asaba : Vol 2, p. 401, Usd ul ghaba, Vol 3, p. 299
3. Al Wuzara Wal Kitab p. 26

into vogue in Syria. When he saw poverty-stricken Muslims dying of hunger, he went about in the streets of Damascus reciting the Quranic varse saying, "Those who are piling up silver and gold in their treasure chests and do not spend wealth in the way of God, should await the time when their foreheads, sides and backs would be branded with the fire of hell."[1] He denounced the amassing of wealth as the practice was contrary to the injunctions of Islam. He did not flatter the rulers and did not mince his words, and did not hesitate to come out with the ungarnished, disagreeable truth when occasion for plain-speaking arose. When Muawiya asked him what he thought of the place "Khizra" constructed by him, Abu Zar spoke out, "If you have raised it with God's money, you are quilty of defalcation. If you have built it with your money, you have committed an extravagance."[2]

Despotic power cannot breek plain-speaking. A complaint was made against him to the caliph at Medine, and Abu Zar was summoned there.[3] When he arrived at Medina, Abu Zar was exiled to die in a desolate place, unbefriended. Unable to endure his privations very long, Abu Zar died in 33 A. H. Nothing was done by way of disciplinary action against Muawiya.

When Abu Zar felt that his end was approaching, he bade his wife and daughter, who had accompanied him, to take his dead body, after the usual funereal preliminaries, to the route of the caravans, and request the wayfarers, if any such persons chanced to pass by to bury the remains of Abu Zar, a companion of the prophet. They did as instructed and, as luck would have it. Abdullah b. Masud, a companion of the prophet, happened to be travelling by the route to Mecca for the hajj pilgrimage, with a party of the residents of Iraq. Abdullah b. Masud and his companions lamented Abu Zar's misfortune and buried him.[4]

This first sacrifice against the imperialistic ways of the government of the the day was offered by Abu Zar.

It may be noted that Abu Zar Chaffari and Abdur Rahman b. Sahl Ansari, both companions of the prophet, were entitled to great veneration according to the standards of merit and distinctions of rank prescribed by Islam, but those criteris had lost all their validity, and these companions of the prophet were treated with scant courtesy and less than little consideration. This proves that the Islamic revolution was being chickmated by a counter-revolution of which the object was to resuscitate the old pre-Islamic values and standards.

1. Tabari Vol. 5, p. 66
2. Kitabul Baladan p. 156
3. Tabari Vol. 5, p. 66
4. Ibid, Vol. 3, p. p. 145-146

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THF TRUE CHAMPIONS OF ISLAM AND ITS SHAM PROTACONISTS AFTER THE PROPHET

It cannot be gainsaid that after the prophet's death, the members of his house-hold (ahl-i-bait) were his real successore who kept alive the cardinal principles of the revolution that Islam had ushered in, and cherished the values which it had sought to establish. Grand palaces had sprung up around them, but they had continued to occupy their old, simple and unostentatous dwellings. Curtains of silk and other expensive fabrics adorned the entrances to the palaces but old and unpre-possessing curtains even now hung at their doors to ensure the privacy of their houses. Others went about draped in silk and velvet, but the ahl-e-bait were contented and happy with garments if expensive homaspun cloth. Others led a life of affluent plenty with wealth derived from conquests or subjugated lands but they considered it their duty to earn their livelihood by personal, physical toil. The wealth that came their way was distributed among the poor, the needy, widows and orphans. This contarts between their behaviour, and the conduct of the supporters of the counter revolution which aimed at the capturing of power for self aggrandisement, naturally resulted in conflict. The strife between Muawiya and Ali was the inevitable consequence.

Not only at this juncture, but later as well when a contest took place between the descendants of the prophet and their adversaries, the former could muster the support only of a minority of the people for reasons which were economic political as well as psychological and racial. As we are aware, Islam had arrived with the mission of annihilating all old divisions between man and man, so as to establish an egalitarian society. It based its hierarchy of merit solely on the degree of thoroughness with which men discharged their duties. The distribution of wealth acquired as spoils of war in ways which might foster favouritism and create inequalities were proceedings with which the genuine champions of Islam could have no truck. It was, therefore, impossible for the prophets' descendants to amass wealth in the public treasury and to acquire riches, or to lavish largesses on those considered to be useful to them. On the contrary, Ali used to distribute daily all that was received in the public treasury among the deserving, sweeping the floor clean. He then used to offer prayers on the spot so that the very ground under him may testify before God that he had brooked no delay in disbursing the wealth of the Musbvis amongst the deserving.[1]

1. Istiab, Vol. 2, p. 478.

Once contributions to the public treasury were received from Isfahan. Seven men were sitting with Ali at time, and deserved a share in them. Ali divided up everything received into seven equal shares, not excepting even the single loaf of bread received. It might, perhaps, be veiwed that such petty details need not have been taken into account, and the loaf of bread could have been included in one single share, without upsetting the evenness of distribution or offending against any requirement of the Islamic laws. It must, however, be remembered that men's thinking is strongly influenced by the attention paid to such minutiae. This, indeed, had been the practice of the prophet, and Ali sought to reveive it after years of neglect that followed the prophet's death.

Contrary to these scrupulous standards in dealing with what was public property, the ruler of Syria spent no thought whatever on these considerations. He lavished gifts from the public treasury on those expected to be willing to serve his ends. Why than should persons, or groups, accustomed to receive special favours, and disfinction, have had any hesitation in throwing in their lot with him ?

By and large, wealth alone is sufficient to confer distinction on, and inspire feeling of respect for, its possessor,. For most it is irrelevant whether the wealth benefits others or not. And Ali possessed no fortune. Indeed he once sold his swered from the pulpit to be able to purchase a garment for himself. This, according to Abdur Razzaq. the compiler of traditions, happened when Ali was the ruler of the whole Muslim world except Syria.[1] Every one, therefore, who had an eye to main chance, concluded that Ali, who was so short of funds for his personal needs, could obviously not mobilise resources to help others. People are taken in by show of pomp and circumstance but Ali did not consider it beneath him to sell dates at Maisim's shop to earn his living. Once he want, to the market and purchased two garments, one costing 7 and the other 5 dirhams. He handed over the more expensive one to Qambar, his slave, selecting the cheaper one for himself. When Qambar suggested that his master should use the costlior piece himself, Ali declined. A thoughtless person might have told Qambar that he had presented the more expensive piece of dress to the latter as he desired to propagate equality, and to improve the status of slaves. Even though something like this might have been in Ali's mind also, he did not couch his reply in these terms, for such a reply must have tended to remind Qambar of his humble begingings, and of the existence of the distinction between master and slave. Instead, Ali gave the thoughtful reply, as he would have given to one of his own children,

1. Istiab, Vol. 2, p. 478.

"Qambar, you are young, the expensive dress befits your age. As for myself, the other garment would do for me."

Islam put an end to the privileges granted to and special favours bestowed on those who had been enjoying these be fore the advent of Islam, Such persons or groups might have had differences and rivalries amongst themselves but they had all lost equally at the hands of Islam and were, therefore, always readily willing to make common cause in demolishing the real aims and guiding principles of Islam, and destroying its conspicuous features. Such pooling of resources and banding together alone could restore their lost prestige and revive their for feited privileges. Their past discomfitures must also have rankled in their hearts, and the desire to avenge Islamic themselves, must surely have prodded them. And then, Islam by its repudiation of the claims of the Arabs to be superior to the non-Arabs provided another weapon to the forces of reaction to unite to weaken the foundations of the faith. Islam had stressed the rights of the non-Arabs and as a result of the spirit of Islam to equalise all members of society, the non-Arabs had come to be treated at par with the Arabs. This must have surely tried the patience of the entire Arab community. The omayyads favoured the claims of the Arabs for a Superior status for reasons of race, and they tried to put down the non-Arabs. The natural result of this policy of discrimination followed by the Omayyads was that the Arabs were on most occassions on their side. A characteristic prouduct of the Omayyad rule was the eruption of the Arab versus the non-Arab question. The Hashimides could not, as true upholders of the principles of Islam, lend countenance to the claims of Arab racial superiority to the non-Arabs. The Hashimides had, therefore, usually to content themselves only with the support of a minority of the people against their rivals. This finds proof from the Hashimides e. g. the Abbasides finding most of their supporters from the ranks of the non-Arabs in their challenge to Omayyed authority.

The traditional leadership and respect enjoyed by the Hashimides could not but have stirred feelings of jealousy against them among other Arab tribal subdivisions. These sentiments must have received additional strength from the persisting vogue of tribal partisanship and prejudice. The result of all these factors, cumulatively, was that the descendants of the prophet could seldom command the support of the majority of the people which their opponents usually succeeded in enlisting for themselves.

Islamic repudiation of Arab claims for superiorty to nov Arabs provided to the disgruntted ethnic forum for uniting to assail the faith.

CHAPTER IX

HASAN'S TREATY WITH MUAWIYA AND ITS UNHAPPY SEQUEL

(40 A. H.—60 A, H.)

Before breathing his last, Ali had drawn up a will addressed to Hasan and witnessed, among others, by Husain and Mohammad. b. Hanafia. After Hasan, it was to be delivered to Husain.[1] By another testament addressed jointly to Hasan and Husain he bade them, "Know your duties and remember them. Never seek the world even if it may pursue you. Never regret any wordly loss. Speak always in support of the truth. Endeavour to earn merit, strive against iniquity and help the oppressed.[2] Live always in the fear of God. Remain united and resolve differences amongst yourselves peacefully and amicably. Be considerate to orphans, and always take care of them. Be thoughtful towards your neighbours, this has been enjoined by the prophet himself. Keep the Quran always in mind, nobody should excel you in acting upon it. Remember the daily prayers, the prop of your faith. Do not forget God's house (he Ka'ba) and never leave it unattended. When it comes to waging the holy war, wage it with your life, property and tongue. Be merciful and generous among yourselves. Never neglect to direct people to perform good deeds and eschew evil, so that the depraved may not obtain as cendency over you.[3] Ensure that the Hashimides do not embark upon a general massacre to avenge my assassination, for which, at the outside, only my murderer may be put to death and that too with one single stroke of the sword as he had dealt me. Let his dead body be not disfigured as the prophet has prohibited this, even regarding the carcass of a biting cur.[3]"

It was not that Hasan and Husain were not fully alive to what was virtuous in conduct and meritorious in the eyes of God; still, these words of an eminent father, who must be obeyed, and uttered in the poignantly doleful moments of his fast approaching death, must have made the deepest of impressions on both the brothers and vastly reinforced their own natural urge for practising the virtues detailed by him.

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1. Kafii, Vol. I, p. 184
2. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 89
3. Nahjul Balagha. Vol. II, pp. 78-79, Magatilut Talibin pp. 15—21 Tabari and Abul Farah Isfahani have inclubed many of these sentences in the will made to Hasan.
4. Tabari, Vol 6, p. 86, Nahjul Balagha, Vol. 2, p.

In general, people make wills concerning their personel affairs. To members of the prophets' house-hold, the faith and the Islamic code, the holy book and the customs, practices and regulations of the prophet were none other than their personal affair. Accordingly, Ali's testament dealt entirely with matters relating to the good of the community, moral conduct as enjoined by Islam, and the injunctions of God.

After Ali's death, Hasan was unanimously accepted as the caliph. Deeply moved as he had been by his father's assassination, Hasan spoke on the occasion mostly to dwell on the virtues and merits of his father, and his renunciation of the world. He broke into tears and was joined in this by the audience. Abdullah b. Abbas, stood up and exhorted people to swear allegiance to Hasan which every one freely and willingly did. This was on Friday, the 21st of Ramazan 40 A. H.[4] Hasan called upon people to explicitly agree to follow him in war or in peace, whichever course he chose to adopt. He then directed his attention to matters of the country's administration.

The country was still in mourning for Ali and Hasan had not completed his arrangements for the government of the land when Muawiya commenced making inroads into Hasan's domains. His secret agents started fomenting trouble there. A man of the tribe of Hamir was arrested from a butcher's house in Kufa, and another belonging to the tribe of Bani Qain was apprehended at Basra while in hiding amongst the tribe of Bani Saleem, both spying on the situation prevailing at these places, for the benefit of the authorities at Damascus, and in general making things difficult for Hasan. Upon this Hasan wrote to Muawiya, "you do not desist from making intrusions into my affairs. You have sent rabble-rousers to raise the country against me, and have spread a network of spies here. If, as it seems, you desire to indulge in war, prepare for it, for that stage might arrive soon enough. It transpires that on my father's death, you reviled him. This is unworthy of any one possessed of common sense. Death comes to everybody. If this calamity has befallen us to-day, it may as well confront you to-morrow. And, in fact, we do not look upon our departed ones as dead; they have merely shifted from one place to another, to sleep in comfort and peace." This letter was followed by an exchange of many communications between them.[1] It was, as a result, established that Muawiya's hostility to Ali was not a passing phase which should have ended upon the latter's death but an abiding animus against the members of the prophet' house.

1. Irshad, p. 92
1. Irshad p. 192-93

It became evident that the country abounded in hideouts for Muawiyas' secret agents and informers. Hasan, was however, ready to give battle to his adversary rather than compromise the principles of truth and justice. He was, undoubtedly, not without anxiety about the look of things in the country and Husain shared his uneasiness, for after the Kharijite faction had been subdued, dissension had raised its ugly head among the people of Iraq itself Many. seemingly wedded to Alis' cause, sympathised with the Kharijites out of considerations of kinship or friendship. Ali was himself so greatly tormented by their mutinous disposition wranglings and indiscipline that he had longed for death. All histories, especially the Nihjul Balagha contain his addresses, testifying to his agony of the sovl and utter disgust at these manifestations of disloyalty. He compalined, "You have filled my heart with pus, and my breast with sorrow and resentment."[1] On a different occasion he bewailed, saying, "I wish Muawiya could agree to exchange his followars with mine as gold for silver, and give me one of his men for ten of you."[2] Sometimes he would intone his deep anguish saying, "What a pity that the Syrians are united even though they tread a wrong path, and you lack cohesion even though you follow the correct course.[3] they follow their ruler who disobeys God, you defy your guide (Imam) who submits to Him.[4]" He would at other times bemoan, saying, "When you are called to join the holy war (jehad) in winter, you seek to be excused on aceount of the inclemancy of the weather, wanting time so that milder weather might set in. And in summer you ñght shy of participating in such a war, you point to the scorching heat. and plead for time so that the heat may abate Alas, if you are chary of the cold and the heat in such fashion, you would certainly fly before the sword."[5]

Such were the people with whom Hasan had to deal. He knew them inside out, and to be sure, the ruler of Syria must have learnt as much through his spies. He must have arrived at the shrewd conclusion that the feeling of awe inspired by Ali in all Arab hearts had till then not sprung up in anything like the same measure for Hasan. He was, therefore, encouraged to fall upon Iraq wholly unexpectedly and reached Jasr Manj. Hasan began to prepare for defence, and deputed Hajr, b. Adi, to go round the country to boost the morale of the functionaries of his government to meet the situation and to exhort people to join the religious war (jehad). Hajr, b. Adi,

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 214, Nihjul Balagha V. I, p. 78
2. Irshad, p. 164 : Nihjul Balagha Vol. 1, p. 205
3. Op. cit. pp. 148, 172
4. Op. cit. p. 164, p. 205
5. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 214, Irshad p. 151, Nihjul Balagha Vol. 1, p. 77

however, discovered the prospects of rallying people to Hasan's cause unexpectedly bleak. His endeavours met only with cold reception, and generally men remained unimpressed. Only a limited number of the people could be collected consisting, in part of Kharijites who, in any case, desired to enter the lists with Muawiya, in part as rowdies craving for loot. and some persons who, pressed by their tribal chiefs, had half-heartedly agreed to join up. There might well have been, among these troops, a sprinkling of those who were the Shias of Ali and Hasan, and loyal to the latter.[1]

Hasan despatched Qais b. Sa'd, b, Ebada Ansari with 20,000 man and himself stayed at Sabat, near Dair-i-Ka'b. Here he saw for himself the indifferencc, nay the treacherous hostility of bulk of his followers He told them, "There is no greater well-wisher of the people than I. I bear no Muslim any ill-will. Know, even if you do not cherish the idea, that unity and agreement are more desirable than discord and difference. Remember that I am better entitled to think of your good than you yourselves. You should not go against my advice, nor defy my direction." No sooner had Hasan concluded his speech than the audience was plunged into disorder amidst the shouts of the Kharijites. "He has recanted from Islam, andturned a heretic". Some assaulted him and snatched the prayer-cloth from under his feet and the sheet from his shoulder. He took at once to his horse and called out, "where are the people of Rabia and Hamadan." These two loyal tribes immediately rushed to his rescue and dispersed his assailants.[3]

Ibn-i-Jurdir records that some one spread the canard that Qais, b. Sa'd had been killed, which provided the cause for the violent commotion in Hasan's army. The tent in which Hasan had stayed, was pillaged, and even his bed was forcibly taken away from under him.[4]

Hasan then left for Madain where Jarah, b. Qabisa Asadi, one of the Kharijites, ambushed and wounded him with a dagger. The injury yielded to prolonged treatment, and Hasan resumed preparations to give battle to Muawiya. At this stage, Muawiya conveyed to Hasan his unqualified willingness to come to terms with him on whatever conditions he might wish to offer. He also furnished to Hasan the letters of those leaders of the latter's army who had conspired with him, and had invited him to attack their country, offering to deliver Hasan in captivity to Muawiya, nay even to assassinate him.[5]

1. Irshad p. 183
2. Tabari, Vol. FI, p. 92
3. Irshad, p. 194
4. Tabari, Vol. VI p. 92
5. Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 2 p. 71 ; Irshad, p. 195

Hasan was already aware of the treachery of his supporters and did not deem it expedient to prolong the hostilities. He however, wanted to arrange that no room should be left for the suspicion that he had given the least coun tenance to falschood and infamy. The members of his family had never evinced any partiality for power and authority, being concerned solely and exclusively with the good of God's creatures and compliance with His injunctions. When, therefore, Muawiyah offered to negotiate peace with Hasan on the latter's own terms, the latter did not reject this gestnre, and in line with the practice of his grand-father, the prophet and father, Ali, he signified his assent to come to a peaceful settlement with Muawiya. He drew up the terms of the accord, emdodying in it all due safeguatds for the protection of the principles of the faith, and the Islamic canon. The war ended after the treaty had been ratified by the parties.

Husain had been following these vicissitudes of fortune, not as a disinterested spectator, but as one possibly destined to deal with the after-affects of these developments. One thing, however, seemed to stand out prominently: the futility of placing one's trust in the numerical strength of one's followers. He had witnessed how his father's supporters had behaved with him, even threatening him with drawn swords. Now he found his elder brother, Hasan, wounded by a man of his own army, and his life seriously imperilled. Husain may not actually have been at his brother's side at the time of this treacherous attack on him, but on learning of it, he must have felt deeply concerned by the episode which must have started in his mind a chain of the gravest reflections.

Hasan's conduct must have recalled to Husain's mind that peace and harmony constituted the pre-requisites for ensuring the tranquillity of the world and that war came only as a bad second in achieving that and, remaining valid only till the prospects for amicable adjustment came into sight. This, indeed, was what had been already exemplified by the behaviour of the elder members of his family. It was, therefore, as it seemed to him, essential that the chances of a non-violent resolution of conflicts must always be kept in the fore-front of one's mind not only before engaging in a war, but also during the hostilities. Considerations of prestige and self-esteem should not be suffered to stall the opening of negotiations for peace, provided always that no cardinal principles, which must be protected, are compromised. Another moral which incidentally emerged from these developments was that in the furtherance of the cause of truth, if, as a last resort and final argument, it became necessary, even the extreme step of reposing trust in the words of an enemy may betried out.

The conditions of the treasty as fully recorded by b. Hajr, the Meccan, are :—[1]

(1) Muawiya would govern the Islamic lands according to God's holy book, the customs, practices and regulations of the prophet and those righteous caliphs who trod the path of rectitude.

(2) Muawiya would have no rignt to nominate his successor to the caliphate.

(3) Protection would be extended to all residents of Syria, Iraq, Hijaz, Yemen etc.

(4) The lives, properties, offspring and honour of all Shias of Ali, where ever they might be residing, would be safeguarded.

(5) Muawiya would not make any attempt on the lives of Hasan or Husain or of anybody else blonging to the family of the prophet, overtly or covertly, nor otherwise cause them any harm. None of these persons would beintimidated or terrorised.[1]

This treaty came into force in the month of Rabi I or Jamadi I, 41 A. H. and won Hasan all for which he had joined issue with Muawiya.

Members of the prophets' house, hold never fell out with anybody for personal reasons. Hasan's war with Muawiya stemmed solely from his desire to safeguard the principles of the *Shariat* and of the faith. Under the first condition of the treaty, Hasan made it obligatory for Muawiya to act in conformity with the injunctions of the Quran and the customs, practices and regulations of the prophet and his righteous successors. There by he focussed attention on the fact that the Government of the day had deviated from the laws of the *Shariat*. The descendants of the prophet had always striven to lay stress on this lest the ways of temporal rulers be mistaken to have the sanction of the Shariat. Through the treaty Hasan not only guarded against the danger but got his adversary Muawiya to concede that till then the Government of Syria had been offending against the Quran and theSunnat. It isobvious that only those matters are mentioned in a treaty which are basically at issue between the parties to the compact. If the actions of the Syrian government had been in accord with the injunctions of the holy book, and the prophets' practices and regulations, the insertion of this clause in the treaty would have been wholly pointless and superfluous.

The second article of the treaty, disentitling Muawiya from nomtnating his successor, was meant to preclude him from establishing in authority, after

1. Sawaig Muhriga : p. 81.
1. Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 97

himself, one whose conduct militated against the injunctions of the holy book and the customs and regulations of the prophet.

After the treaty, Muawiya's hold on all Islamic countries gained in strength, and he exercised sway, besides Syria and Egypt, over Iraq, Hijaz, Iran and other lands. As for Hasan, he was exposed to the contumely of many of his supporters. He put up with these insults and indignities with exemplary fortitude and forbearance. Some, who had hilherto addressed him as "leader of the believers", came to call him as 'humiliator of the believers' Hasan however, stuck to the treaty. Concerning Muawiya be it noted that when he went to Iraq after the end of the war and establishment of his autho rity, he told a gathering after the Friday prayers at Nakheela on the borders of Kufa, "It was no part of my aim in fighting the war that you should take to offering prayers, observing fasts, performing the hajj pilgrimage or paying *zakat* (charity). These are matters that you already attend to. My object was only to get my over-lordship acknowledged by you which has been attain ed by the graee of God, after this accord with Hasan, much as it may be distasteful to you. As regards the terms which I have offered to Hasan, they depend entirely upon my sweet will."[1] The gathering was dumbfounded, but who could take courage and speak out ?

The capture of power by Muawiya emboldened him to speak in vituperative language against Ali at Kufa in the presence of Hasan and his brother, Husain. The latter stood up to rejoin, but Hasan asked him to take his seat and himself gave a brief but comprehensive reply.[2] Such incidents must have been like straws in the wind to indicate the general trend of the objectives of the government, and must have provided Husain food for thought about how the challenge would have to be finally and adequately met. He was, however, not disposed to take any action in an undue hurry or without taking his responsibilities in the matter fully into account. He recognised that he had to prepare himself for the ultimate show-down and, in the meantime, howsoever painfully the march of events might tax his patience, he had to maintain, by the side of his brother, a restless inactivity, a disquieted silence.

Hasan ceased to show any interest in matters relating to the affairs of government and retired from Kufa to Medina, where Husain also joined him This harmony in the behaviour of the two brothers did not, however, deter the Omayyads from giving currency to an unfounded rumour that they were of different minds regarding the peace with Muawiya. The intention behind

1. Irshad, p. 196
2. Irshad, p. 196

the attempt was to try their hand at sowing the seeds of discord betwean the two brothers but their hopes were entirely belied.

Husain was entirely at one with his brother both in his statements and actions. He knew that Hasan had elected the renunciation of wardly authority and had gone into retirement only to eliminate all possibilities of war, though he too had not ruled out the likelihood of an appeal to arms becoming utilimately una voidable and had foreseen that the conflict could not be resolved except through the adoption of exceedingly perilou, and difficult measures. He may also have felt that Hasan would even be willing to go to extreme lengths if circumstances made this indispensable in his own lifetimes. Did not Hasan often repeat the following couplets, so clearly indicatives of his inner thoughts ?

من عاذ بالسيف فی فزصته عجبا　　موتا علیٰ عجل اوعاش منتصفا

لاترکبوا السهل ان السهل مفسدا　　لن تدرکوا المجد حتی ترکبوا عنفا

"Whoever makes the sword his shelter is rewarded with a peculiar Peace and freedom from care : either getting out of this worId quickly, or remaining in it in the enJoyment of just relief."

"Never seek fease ; it is a very unnesirable habit ; you cannot win respect except through undergoing difficulties."

In the circumstances in which Hasan found himself, Husain also subscribed to the opening of negotiations with Muawiya. Dinawari records that Ha jr b. Adi, and Obaida b. Amr, both opposed the treaty and told Husain, "Humiliation has been purchased in exchange for honour ; much has been surrendered to gain a pittance. Please lend your ears to our submisson this once, and hereafter pay no heed to anything from us. Leave Hasan to pursue the path of peace chosen by him for himself, but rally your supporters from Kufa and elsewhere around you. You will find that unknown to Muawiya we would ply our swords with might and main." Husain atonce said, "No, this cannot be. We have entered into a compact, and are bound to uphold it on our word of honour." Similarly, when Ali b. Mohamed b. Bashsr Hamadani accompanied by Sufian b. Abi Laila, visited Hasan at Medina and findin him with Musayyab, b. Ali Najba, Abdullah b. Waddak Tqmini, and Siraj b. Malik Khasami, accosted him as the humiliator of the delievers. Hasan greeted him and replied, "Be seated. I have not demeaned the believers. On the contrary I have safeguarded their self-respect and have spared them a

1. Kitabul Baladan, Ibnul Faqih Hammadani (Leydem) p. 53

blood-bath. I noticed that enthusiasm for waging the war was wanting, weak ness, was plainly showing, and that even if hostilities were prolonged, Muawiya's rule must have been established one day. These men then went to Husain who said, "Hasan has told you, the exact truth. It is necessary for everyone of you to retire into the seclusion of his house and to remain peaceful till this man (Muawiya) passes away." This last sentence was indeed, of far-reaching significance. Husain could, so to say, peer into the future and discern fairly clearly that Hasan's treaty would not be acted upon, and that it would have its last breath, with Muawiya's death, after he had nominatcd his successor. Then of course, he considered, would arrive the appropriate time for making the next and very different move. The premonition came literally true after 20 years, in 60 A. H.

After the conclusion of the treaty, the only impediment in the way of Omayyads got removed, and they found themselves free to do very much as they liked. All the articles of the treaty were therefore, scattered to the four winds, and not one of them was observed.

The first condition of the treaty, as already mentioned was that that the holy book and the customs, practices and regulations of the prophet and of the righteous caliphs would be strictly complied with. No sect among the Muslims, however, holds the view that this condition was adhered to. The views of the Shias in the matter are well-known and need not be referred to here. According to Muslims of the Sunni persuasion, the righteous (rashida) caliphate, subsisted only for 30 years after the prophet. This period of 30 years runs out with the signing of Hasan's treaty, and then begins the period of monarchy and government according to wordly standards. It is not counted as the period of the righteous (Rashida) Caliphate. If the first condition had been acted upon concerning conformity to the injunctions of the Quran and the practices of the prophet and his customs and regulations, there could have been little justification for the exclusion of Muawiya's rule from the period of the righteous (**Rashida**) Caliphate. It has been said of Omar b. Abdul Aziz that the period of his Caliphate bore some affinity to the times of the righteous (**Rashid**) Caliphs but he was not included in their category on account of the distance which separated him in time from the period of the righteous (**Rashid**) Caliphs. But a similarly favourable view has not been expressed by anybody regarding Muawiya's rule as a Caliph. It would seem that there is unanimity, to be inferred indirectly, that the first condition of the treaty was observed only in its breach.

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 222
2. Tabari, Vo. VI. p. 93

There are many instances also to prove that the first condition of the treaty was not at all complied with. It appears that on considerations of political expediency, Muawiya conferred upon Ziyad, b. Somayya, the status of being the former's brother, declaring Ziyad to be an illegitimate son of his own father, Abu Sufiyan. Such an issue cannot be accounted the son of an adulterer. It appears that to start with, Ziyad used to be called a son of Obaid who was the husband of Sommaya, Ziyad's mother, a slave-girl of Haris b. Kalda who had manumitted her. Obaid was a slave of a man of the Bani Saqeef tribe. Ziyad was born after his mother had been freed from the bond of slavery and, therefore, escaped being a slave himself. He grew up an intelligent and well-read youth under the fostering care of Mughira b. Sha'ba, who was made the governor of Basra by Omar, the second Caliph. When Ali became the Caliph, he made Ziyad the governor of Fars. After Ali's assassination Muwiya sent Ziyad a minatory note which the latter read out in public and said, "Does the son of the woman who ate the liver of Hamza and who is the centre of hypocrisy and the chief of the enemies of Islam mean to terrorise me, although the prophts' cousin, b. Abbas, and Hasan b. Ali are on my side with 90,000 supporters. By God, if he moves in this direction, he would find me ready to meet him, dwsro in hand. I would engage him in a stiff combat. Muawiye learnt that threats were of no avil against Ziyed who shut himself up in a fort appersepolis when Muawiya made peace with Hasan and his power got established.

Muawiya invited Ziyad to meet him and granted him amnesty. The latter betook himself to Muawiyas' court where his influnce so rose with the flux of time as to induce Muawiya to declare him to be his brother in 44 A. H. Obviously enough what higher prestige and station could the son of an unidentified father come by than to be raised all at once to a rank corresponding to that of a duke of the blood royal, according to the gradation of the British nobility ? Muawiya claimed that Ziyad was a son of his father, Abu Sufian. And who could stand witness for this belatedly discovered tie of blood ? Forsooth, none no other than one Abu Mariam Saluli, a tavern-keeper at Taif in the per-Islamic days, who stated, Abu Sufyan stepped into my tavern one night and requested me to procure for him a woman who would entertain him. I took Somayya to him, Thus commenced an illicit intimacy between them, and Ziyad came to be born." A man belonging to the tribe of Bani Mastalap deposed having overheard Abu Sufyan owning Ziyad as his issue. Ziyad's request to the Kufans, made earlier, to stand as

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1. Tabari, Vol. NI p. 97
2. Al Wuzara Wal Kitab, p. 17

his witnesses of the relationship he bore to Muawiya had met with a blank refusal. In disappointment he went to Basra where a man agreed to oblige him. This evidence was considered sufficient to establish the relatianship.

The recognition of this relaiionship between Ziyad and Muawiya caused a stir among the Muslims in general, and among the companions of the prophet in particular. It was common knowledge tnat the prophet had very often repeated that a child would be attributed to the real father and that only stones were the portion of the adulterer. Despotic Governments are however, deaf to the protest of the common people. Muawiya, therefore, took on notice of the general hue and cry, because nothing suited him better than to purchase the loyalty of Ziyad and his doscendants in perpetuity. Indeed, whenever Ziyhd showed any signs of getting refractcry, he was put out by reminding him of this favour conferred upon him. Once Ziyad came to see Muawiav with numerons costly persents, including an expensive neck-lace studded with precious stones and proudly declaimed, "May it please your majesty to notice how thoroughly I have trampled over Iraq and subdued every nook and cranny in it to your authority. I have placed at your feet whatever of value and excellence it would yleld." Even before Muawiya could say anything, Yazidr butted in with the words, "Surely, you have not achieved the imbossible. Have we not raised you from the slavery of Bani Sapif to the dignity of being one of the Quraish, bestowed upon you the distinction of being a son of Abu Sufiyan, instead of being the off-spring of Obaid, and elevated you from the position of a quill-driving clerk to a seat on the pulbit."

That such a snub administered by a youth like Yazid should have been tamely put up with by Ziyad bespeaks volumes about the inferiority complex from which, for obvious reasons, he naturally suffered. It was, therefore, far removed from probabiliiy that Ziyad or his descendants should ever turn against Muawiya or his progeny. This was the far-reaching advantage which flowed to Muawiya from declaring Ziyad to be his brother, howsoever strongly the Islamic law might frown at it.

Another instance to the same effect would, perhaps, not come amiss. The prophet had established brotherhood between one Hatat b. Zaid b. Alpama Tamimi Darmi and Muawtya, as he had once done between the Mahajirs (those who emigrated from Mecca with the prophet's departure from that place) and Ansars (Muslima of Medina amongss whom the prophet stayed

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3. Tabari, V. VI, p. 122

1. Tabari, V. VI, p. 123

after leaving Mecca and who ceme to his help.) Everybody knew that this brotherhood did not supersede the rights of inheritence to which ties of blood gave rise. The accepted practice, therefore, was that inheritence was governed by consanjuinity rather than by the fraternity established as a measure of expediency. On Hatat's death, while he staying with Muawiya, the latte appropriated to himself property left by the deceased claiming that Hatat was his brother. This transgression of the Islamic law generated much heat, and even the famous poet, Farazdap, condemned Muavipa for it in verse.

Many other practices, contrary to the Islamic laws also got currency. Thus Muawiya opined that the **fitra** (quantity of commodities given as charity on the occasion of Idul Fitr per head) was two muds (1 **muds** half a saer) as Eyrian wheat. Abu Sa'id Hazri, however, observed that the quantity fixed by Muawiya was unacceptable to him and was not adopted by him. He added that the measure of this charity had been, since the days of the prophet, one **Sa'** (1 **Sa'** 3 seers approximately of cheese, barley, dates, figs or dried grapes, and that it was observed by every body till Muawiya fixed it at 2 **muds** of Syrian wheat. Upon hearing Muawiya's view in the matter, b. Zubair observed, "It is very blameworthy to indulge iu evil after accepting the faith. The quantity of the charity of **fitra** is only one **Sa.**"

Miqdam b. Ma'di, requested Muawiya to tell him on eath whcthcr the prophet had not prohibited the wearing of gold, sitting on skins of carnivorous beasts and wearing them. Muawiys accepted that these practices had been prohibited by the prophet. Miqdam then asked him how these prohibited prectices had gained currency in Muawtya's own house and Muawiya's reply must have been the maintenance of silence.

Islam enjoins that while sitting to answer the calls of naturs, one should neither face nor turn one's back upon, the Ka'ba. When Abu Ayub Ansari visited Syria, he found all the seets in the privies facing the holy Ka'ba.

On the day of Arafa during the hajj oilgrimage, the formula of **talbia** used to be recited as part of the essential practices, to which the prophet and his companions had always conformed. Muawiya, howsver gave up, this recital and forbade it. Ibne Abbas enouired of Saeed on the day of Arafa the reason for not hearing the repetition of the formula and was told that it had been omitted on account of the fear of Muawiya. Ibne Abbas there upon went out of his tent and called out the **talbia** saying, "I would do so even if it be contrary to Muawiya's directions. They have given up the

1. Mulla Mohammad Main, Darasat ul Labib. p. 77 2. op. clt. p. 139

practice on account of their enmity to Ali who used to pronounce the formula on the day of Arafa." There are no less than thrse instances, recorded in the Kanzulummal, in which b. Abbas has anathematised the embaroy placed on the utterance of the **talbia** which Ali used to repeat on the day of Arafa.

The hostility to Ali, and the desire to contradict him gave rise to many alterations and modifications in the usages and regulations of Islam. Fakhr-uddin Razi, the great Sunni commentator and thinker, records that since Ali used to pronounce **biamillah** aloud during prayers, the Omayyads, on their accession to power, laid stress on banning the practice, seemingly in order to obliterate whatever was reminiscent of Ali. when leading the night (**Ishe**) congregational prayers at Medina, Muawiya omitted recitation of 'bismillah' and occasionally the calliug out of the **takbir (Allah o Akbar)** as well. When the prayere cencluded, the Mahajirs and Ansare protested, loudly charging Muawiya with spoiling the prayers or lapse of memory. He however, took no notice.[1]

Singers found grsat favour in the Court of Syria. Saib Khasir, a man given to evil pursuits sang his way into Muawiya's court to win all he had desired.[2] Small wonder then that these boginnings led to Yazid'f addiction to wine and passion for dance and music.

I bnul Faqih, the scholar, has recorded that Muawiyah was the first to ɔost sentimels and chowkidars, to appoint Khwaja Saras and to mass money in treasuries.[4]

Like secular Kings, he accepted presents on the occasions of the Persian festivals of Nauraz (New Years day) and Mahrgan which brought in up to ten million dirhame in some years.[5]

Muslim and Bukhari both record that after saying his prayers with Ali at Basra, Imran, b. Haseen, observed, "Ali reminded us of the prayers as said in the company of the prophet, calling out the **takbir 'Allah o Akbar'**, both before and after prostrating himself on the ground. "This was supported by Mutrif b. Abdullah.[6] Bukhari records that once Abu Darda, a companion of the prophet, came into his house in high dudgeon. On being asked the reason, he remarked, "I do not find in the people any trace of

1. Tafsir-i-Kabir V. I. p. 107
2. Kanzul Unimal, V. VI, p. 181
3. Tabari, V. 6, page 188
4. Al Baladan, p. 109
5. Al Wazara Wal Kitab p. 15
6. Bukhari, Vol 1. p. 91

their following Mohammad, except that they offer congregational prayers."

Malik records, "We do not see even one of the practices which were observed earlier, except that the call for prayers is given." Zahri records, 'I went to Ans b. Malik, and found him in tears.' When asked to explain the cause of his unhappiness, he said, "Except that prayers are offered, I do not notice any of the other Islamic observances in vogue in the time of the prophet. And the prayers too have gone to waste."

Even more surprising facts have been preserved in histories which point only to the one conclusion that the descendants of Abu Sufyan bore the Hashimides a hereditary ill-will which impelled them to endeavour to rub out all traces of such customs and practices as were cherished by the latter. They had the destruction of Islam itself in mind. This they were kept from accomplishing simply because their sway itself was founded upon that faith. They wers, therefore, unable to deny that the messenger of Islam was Gods' prophet. Even so. they were not animated by any zeal to cherish his memory or greatness. A wery revealing example of this lack of enthusiasm is afforded by a very ordinary incident. Muawiya once wished to meet the oldest man alive in order to gather from him how things used to be in the days of old. On learning that a man aged 360 years lived at Hazz Maut, Muawiya called him and asked him his name. "Abad b. Abad", came the answer. Muawiya then questioned him about Abdul Muttalib and Umayya. He then asked him, "Have you seen Mohammad ?" The old man was amazed to hear this name uttered by a Muslim so irreverently and asked. "who is Mohammad?" Muawiyah replied, "The one who was Cods' prophet." The old man delivered the reproof, "Why then did you not utter his name with the reverence to which God has entitled him and why did you not ask me, 'Have you seen Gods' prophet ?"

More astounding is the fact that Muawiya allowed himself to be greted as Rasooballah. Without ever administering a reproof, much less punishment to one who thus addressed him. It came about in this way. Amr b. Aas had once fallen out with Muawiya. He had, however, accompanied a party of Egyptians to the Syrian capital to have an audience with Muawiya. He advised the Egyptians not to greet Muawiya as the caliph, and as far as possible. deport themselves with an air of condescension in his presence, so that they might inspire in the court of Muawiya a feeling of awe for themselves. Upon learning of the arrival of the party. Muawiya shreddly anticipated some trickery by the clever Amr b, Aas, He, therefore, told the

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1. Kitab-ul-Muammarin, p. 87

keepers of the entrances to his court that he suspected that Nabighas' son (Amr b Aas) must have lowered him in the esteem of his visitors, so he directed them to be particularly harsh in their treatment of the visitors, so that the latter may be inspired with impending peril about their safety. The result was that the first man who presented himself befors Muawiya was so over awed that he greeted him as Gods' prophet. Taking their cue from their leader, the remeining members of the delegation followed his example

As the saying goes, psople follow the faith of their rulers, If the cunduct of the highest authority, the caliph, was of the descriptioh as disclosed by these stories that is, less than perfunctory, in relation to respect for Islam, its prophet and its observances, the kind of regard which the mass of people must have entertained for these matters of faith can well be imagined. Tue manner in which they witnessed government putting religion to auction and purchasing people's faith in return for petty favours could have hardly enhancad in their minds reverence for the prophet, and the religion which he had preached.

Once Hatat Majasha'i, Jaria b. Qidama, Ahnaf b. Qais, and Jaun b. Qatawa went to see Muawiya, who gave every one of them, except Hatat, a hundred ihousand dirhams. To Hatat he gave only seventy thousand dirhams. When Hatat learnt of this discriminatory treatment, he complained to Muawiya to be told that the amounts paid to others represanted the price of their faiths. Pat came Hatat's offer of the sale of his faith also for the price paid to others.

The few God-fearing Muslims who were left were tired of their lives. Makam b. Amr Ghaffari, governor of Yemen, collected some spoils of war in 50 A. H. He received orders that instead of distributing the booty among the soldiers, as had been the custom, it should be despatched to the government treasury. He summoned up courage enough to say in reply that the directive violated the injunctions of the Quran and excused himself from carrying it out. Having done so, he was seized with such terror that he begged God for his death, wishing to live no longer. Shortly aftwards he died.[2]

It was only to obliterate the memory of the Hashimides in one particular context, and as part of the Omayyad design to erase their remembrance from all spheres, that Muawiya tried to move the prophets' pulpit so as to transport it ultimately to Syria. The sun suffered a complete eclipse and a great

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1. Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 135, Usdul Ghaba p. 154
Tabari Vol. 6 p. 135, Istiab Vol. 1, page 154; Usdul Ghaba Vol. 1 p. 379.

2. Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 148-141

tumult arose among the people. Muawiya had to abandon the project, giving out that by moving the pulpit, he wished only to assure himself that it had not been damaged by white-ants. Jabir b. Abdullah Ansari described it as a great misadventure for which Muawiya would certainly come to grief. Muawiya was, indeed, struck with facial paralysis the same year.[3]

The enmity which Muawiya bore towards Ali arose from the latter's being the leading light of the Hashimides after the prophet, and a great upholder of the principles of Islam. Political exigencies, therefore, required that sentiments of hatred against him be excited among the masses. The imputation made against Ali of his having had a hand in the murder of Usman was purely politically motivated. Even the great Sunni scholar, b. Hajr of Mecca, has gone on record with the statement that Marwan, son of Hakam, had conceded that nobody was of greater assistance to Osman than Ali. Somebody, thereupon asked him, "Why then do you revile him from the pulpit?" He replied, "Because we cannot establish our authority without doing so."[1]

The breach of the first article of the treaty assumed proportions which have been indicated in the previous paragraphs. The transgressions of the second article will require a full chapter for their narration. The third article of the treaty provided that in Syria, Iraq, Hijaz and Yemen protection would be provided to people irrespective of the part of the country to which they belonged. This provision also met with grievous violation. The orgy of unrestrained blood-shed which Ziyad b. Somayya, indulged in, victimising chiefly the residents of Iraq, has been prominently recorded by history Ziyad was known for punishing people before they committed any offence, throwing them into prison without enquiry, on the merest suspicion, and putting them to torture on the slightest pretext. Killing people was a matter of no consequence whatever to him. He had given orders that anybody found on the streets after about midnight should be beheaded. Once an Arab, hailing from the countryside, was arrested on a public street during the prohibited hours. When produced before Ziyad, he pleaded ignorance of the orders, having arrived there from the countryside that very day. Ziyad thereupon said, "By God, I think you are telling the truth and are innocent. But it would be to the public good that you should be put to death." And put to death he surely was.[1]

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3. Kitabul Saladan p. 24, Tabari Vol. 6, p. 133

1. Sawaiq Muhriqa, p. 33

1. Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 126

Sumra b. Jundub, who succeeded Ziyad as governor of Basra was even a more bloodthirsty tyrant than Ziyad. Once he put 8,000 persons to the sword within six months. Abu Swar Adadi stated that Sumra had assassinated no less than 47 men of his tribe, and all of them knew the Quran by heart.

One day Sumra sallied out of the city with his troops. To his ill-luck, a man belonging to the tribe of Bani Asad, emerged from a street adjoining the settlement of the tribe, and one of Sumra's mounted soldiers lost no time in attacking him and mortally wounding him. Sumra passed by the dead body of the man, lying in a pool of blood, and his reaction to the incident was confined to the remark "When we go for a ride, manoge to escape our spears."

Muslim Ajli says that a man went to Sumra, paid the **zakat** (legal charity) due from him, went to a mosque and busied himself with saying his prayers. In the meantime another man arrived, killed him, the head falling apart from his trunk. On another occasion he saw many persons slain after they had repeated the Kalima, that is testified to the unity of God, and the prophethood of Mohammad-i-Mustafa, and had also declared that they shunned the Kharijites. All these strocities were perpetrated at Muawiya's instance. When Sumra was removed from his post long afterwards, he said, "If I had served God as faithfully as I served Muawiya, he would not have punished ma. May God destroy him."[3]

The fourth article of the taeaty stipulated that the lives, properties, children and honour of the Shias of Ali shall be protected from harm. It was unqualifiediy violated. The least hardship that the Shids of Ali were put to was that they were constrained to leave their homes at Kufa to make room for Muawiya's supporters.[1] The Shias of Basra and Kufa were exiled from their homes, and were forced to live in a military camp at Qinsareen in Syria, which was a desolate spot.

Hajr b. Adi, and his companions were called to Syria and assassinated, although they had declared that they were Muslims, and stood firmly by their plighted words, and were not insurgents.[2] Their only and most unforgivable offence was that they were devoted to the descendants of the

2. o. p. cit. p. 132
3. o. p. cit. p. 164
1. Tabari, Vol. 3, p. 240
2. o p. cit. Vol. 4, p. 260
3. o p. cit. Vol. 6, p. p. 148 and 153

prophet. They, in consequence, deserved no quarter, either out of mercy, or from the much advertised forbearance of Muawiya. Saifi b. Faseel Shebani, one of the notables amongst the comanions of Hajr b Adi was brought to Ziyad who questioned him about his opinion of Ali. He replied that he held about Ali the highest opinion which might be entertained about any man of God's creation At this Ziyad condemned him to merciless beating with a stick till he should fall flat on the ground Saifi under went the remorseless battering. Ziyad then cried a halt to the torture and again asked Saifi what he thought of Ali. Saifi replied that even if his flesh were minced with knives and razors, he would not desist from repeating what he has already said. Ziyad warned him that he would be decapitated if he did not curse Ali. Saifi answered, "Then why not behead me at once? I having nothing to say against this. Indeed I am agreeable to, and satisfied with it [4]

Ziyad sent twelve men in chains to Syria They were Hajr b. Adi, Arqam b. Abdullah Kindi, Shari [1] b. Shaddad Hizrami, Saifi b. Fasell, Qabaia b. Zabia Abasi, Karim b. Afif Khasani, Aasim b. Auf Bijli, Warqa b. Summi Bijli, Kadaam b. Hayat Ghazi, Abdur Rahman b. Hassan Ghazi, Mahraz b. Shihab Tamimi, and Abdullah b. Hawayh Sa'di.[1] Two others, Atba b. Akhnas Sa'di and Sa'd b. Nimran Hamadani, were also sent by Ziyad to Syria in fetters.[2] Of these 14 men, seven were released upon recommendations made for them, and six were put to death at Marj Azra.[3] As to the last of the number, Abdur Rahman b. Hassan Ghazi, Muawiya found his own hearilessness inadequate to give him due punishment. He, therefore, sent him back to Ziyad suggesting that since the man had proved himself to be the staunchest in his Shute persuasion among his companions, he should be done to death in the most cruel manner. He was, therefore, buried alivh.[4]

Hajr, b. Adi was among those murdered at Marj Azra. An ideal of the esteem in which he was held throughout the Muslim world might be had from the fact than when Aiyesha learnt of the adverss report made by Ziyad against him, she despatched Abdur Rahman b. Haris, b. Hisham to Muawiya with word that in relation to Hajr and his companions, he should fear God. The messenger, however, arrived too late, Hajr and his companions had been

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4. o.p. cit. p. 149
1. Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 149
2. o.p. cit, p. 192
3. o.p. cit, p. 154
4. o.p. cit, p. 155

already assassinated. Abdur Rahman, however, plied him with the questions, "Where had all the forbearance you are supposed to have inherited from Abu Sufyan vanished? Why did you not use it? You might better have confined Hajr and his companions in prison to die of the plague or other epidemic disease." Muawiya returned the sarcastic reply, "Because no adviser like you was around." Abdur Rahman reterted, "By God, your forbearance shall no longer be talked of in Arabia, nor may the justness of your judgement be accepted. You have assassinated those who had been sent to you as prisoners and were Muslims."

When Ayesha learnt of this tragic incident, she remarked, "If Muawiya had known that the Kufans still retained any vestige of courage in themselves he would never have had the audacity to call Hajr and his companions in chains to him at Syria, and to assassinate them. But the son of the woman who ate Hamza's liver knows that manliness has expired. By God, for their knowledge and attainments these men could well be lonked upon as the head and brains of Arabia. How aptly has the poet, Labeed, put it into two of his couplets meaning :—

"Gone are the men in whose safe-keeping a lifetime could be passed. I have been left among such pusillanimous company as resembles the skin of a camel, afflicted with scabies, useless and yielding no benefit. When they speak, their words are full of errors, no matter what hue and cry they raise.

When Muawiya came to Medina and called on Ayesha, the first thing the latter enquired of him was Hajr's fate. The conversation took such a serious turn that Muawiya cut it short saying, "Well then, leave Hajr and me alone. The matter will be sorted out before God."

When Abdullah b. Omar, a son of the second caliph, heard about Adis' death, he was in the market place and on account of great excitement he could not keep sitting. He stood up and raised loud lamentation.

Hasan of Basra, getting the news of the assassination of Hajr and his companions, queried, "Were funeral prayers said on their dead bodies? Were they draped in winding sheets? Were their dead bodies placed in their graves facing the Ka'ba? Getting an affirmative reply to all these questions, Hasan declared, "By God, their stand has been vindicated,"[1] implying that if the dead bodies of Hajr and his companions had been buried with all due Islamic observances, proof positive had been furnished that they were Muslim whose assassination could not be justified.

Rabi,' b. Ziyed Harisi, governor of Khorasan, i. e. speeking for the

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1 Tabari Vol. 6, p. 155

murder of Hajr b. Adi, and of the indifference and apathy of the Muslims to this grave incident after Friday prayers said, "I am fed up with my life and I now raise a prayer, and request you to say, 'Amen'. "Then he raised his hands in prayer and said, "O God, if there be with Thee aught of good for Rabi,' deprive him of life." He then left the mosque and had not gone fer when he collapsed and died.[1]

Later on, Muawiya himself realised that Hajr was innocent when assassinated. Once, when he was suffering the pangs of death, bdullah b. Yazid sadi, who was around, saw him in great agitation, ddressing Muawiyah very obsequiously he reassured him with the words, "Why should you be excited? If you pass away, you enter paradise. If you are spared, you will be the refuge of the Muslims." Muawiya replied, "May God bless your father. He forbade me from slaying Majr, son of Adi." Mohammad b. Sirin, reports that when the death of Muawiya drew near, and the death rattle set in, he was heard to say, "O Hajr, I would have to face a long da for your assassination." The period of sorrow and hardship appears to get unduly prolonged and Muawiya meant to say that he would have to face trouble and pain when it came to rendering his account to God on the day of judgement, by reason of Hajrs' assassinstion

Amr b. Hamaqal Khizai, was a venerable man, held in great esteem as the prophet had sent his greetings to mr. He was apprehended and, as directed by Muawiya, given nine thrusts with a spear, although he had been killed by the first or the second thrust. ccording to the records, his was the first head to be mounted on a spearhead.[3]

These events plunged the Shias of Ali into great commotion, and Husain was greatly distressed. Daniwari records that the assassination of Hajr b. di and his associates was received by the Kufans as a terrible calamity. Some of the prominent citizens of Kufa went to see Husain who repeated the Quranic verse, "Certainly we are for God and to him we return." Although the incident hurt Husain deeply, he did not deem it expedient to rush into any hasty action forthwith, preferring to wait, though with great unessiness, for further developments. Muawiya heard that people had complained to Husain against the assassination of Hajr and his friends and that Husain had been deeply grieved by the occurrence. pprehending that Husain might rise in revolt against him, Muawiya despatched to the former a letter full of

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1. Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 163
2. o.p. cit. p. 143
3. o.p. cit. p. 148

threats. In reply, Husain forsook his usual reserve, and recounted, one by one, all instances in which the terms of the treaty with Hasan had been violated. He made a very moving reference to the fate of Hajr, son of Adi, and strongly denounced his assassination.

The fifth article of the treaty made it incumbent upon Muawiya that no attempt, open or clandestine, should be made to cause any injury to Hasan, Husain or any one of the prophets' family. The provision was contravened with impunity, notwithstanding the fact that the descendents of the prophet dissociated themselves strictly from the affairs of the country. Hasan was harrassed in a variety of ways. False propaganda was unleashed against him and groundless charges were levelled against him to lower him in the eyes of the people. Realising that imputations based upon patent transgressions of the **shariat**, if made against Hasan, would earn no credence among men, the Omayyads chose, with considerable finesse, to invest practices permissible under Islamic law, with the unsavouriness associated with veritable offences, and charged Hasan with excessively indulging in them, the more readily to discredit him. He was, for instance, charged with excessive plurality of wives and over-indulgence in divorcing them. Insinuations of the existence of differences between him and Husain wire also part of the Umayyad propaganda to defame him. He was treated by the officials of the government with marked incivility. They sometimes descended to unabashed use of abusive language. The intention was to provoke Hasan or the Hashimides into violence so as to provide his enemy with an excuse to saddle him or his kirsmen with the responsibility for the breach of the conditions of the treaty, and justify their bloodshed Some idea of Hasans' unequalled forbearance may well be had from the words exchanged between Husain and Marwan when the latter was seen weeping by the side of Hasan's dead body. Husain said to him, "you shed tears today although earlier it was your wont to cause him great sorrow and give him reason for much resentment." Marwan replied, "This is true enough, but I had to deal with one who could support more than the mountains."

Hasan's life could not be saved from harm, despite all his forbearance. When open violence could not be used against him, the less obtrusive, but equally effective weapons in the arsenals of Omayyad diplomacy and graft were pressed into service. Ja'da, a daughter of Ash'as, one of Hasan's wives, was hired to poison him in return for a sum of a hundred thousand dirhams, and a promise to share Yazids' bed. When the poison had brought him to the verge of death, Hasan called Mohammad, son of Hanafia, his half-brother, to himself and bade him never to fall out with Husain who would

be the next Imam and to obey him. Mohammad readily and loyally agreed. Then, he told Husain to take his dead body, after the usual funeral preliminaries, to the tomb of his grandfather, the prophet, so that he might once again earn the merit of visiting it.[1] He added that the Omayyads would be expecting that he would be buried there and bade Husain to bury him near the grave of his grandmother, Fatima, daughter of Asad in Jannatul Baqi in case of resistance to his burial near the prophet, so that no drop of blood was shed.[1]

On the 28th Safar, 50. ., Hasan, the apostle of peace and forbearance passed away. When Husain took his dead body towards the prophets' tomb, the Omayyads, anticipating Hasan's burial there, turned out with Marwan at their head, to offer resistance. The Hashimides were greatly offended, but Husain felt himself bound by the directions of Hasan and his own sense of duty. He repeatedly gave vent to his resentment, saying, "By God, if I had not been prevented by Hasan's will and kept back by his principles, you would have seen how the wsord would have been wielded on this occasion."[2] The dead body of Hasan uas taken back and was buried in Jannat-ul-Baqi.[3] It was rumoured that Muawiya had expressed his happiness at Hasan's demise, making disparaging remarks about him. As luck would have it, b. bbas was there at Damascus and told Muawiya, "Rejoice not, you will not long survive Hasan."[4]

Hasan's death was a great catastrophe for the Hashimides and sent them into mourning spread over one full month.[5] Even after Hasan's death, Husain persevered on the path chalked out by Hasan, d sproving that he was opposed to his brother's policy which he had not followed from conviction.

After Hasan's death, the Shias of Iraq, who were in a great ferment, wanted Husain to accept their allegiance to him, as they would forswear it for Muawiya. Husain explained to them the impropriety of the proposal, as he was bound by the treaty with Muawiya, which it would be wrong to abrogate. He suggested that the matter might be reviewed after Muawiya's death.[6]

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1. Kafi, Vol. 1, pp. 185-187
1. Irshad, p. 198
2. Ibid, p. 199
3. Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 188
4. l Akhbar ut Tawal, p 224
5. Mustadrik Hakim Vol. 3, p. 173
6. Irshad, p. 206

Husain remained a patient witnesss of the contravention of all the conditions of Hasan's treaty as also of the atrocities committed by the government of the day. He, however, made a detailed referance to all these matters in his rejoinder to a threatening letter addressed to him by Muawiya in which he said, "I have received your letter in which you have mentioned hearing reports of my opposition which you did not expect of me. These reports have been made by your adulators and informers and are no better than tissues of lines and a series of false imputations. I have at the the moment uo intention of waging a war with you and I am silent. Take it from me, however, that I am not happy with this silcence on my part, which I apprehend, might dissplease God. My silence need, however, not arm you or your supporters with any sanction for your misdeeds. Are you not the person who assessinated Hajr, son of Adi, and who put to the sword those pious men who were devoted to the offering of prayers and disapproved of oppression, injustice and innovation and, in matters concerning their faith, were indifferent to the censure of any person ? You did not spare them from slaughter despite the fact that you had bound yourself with firm promises and which you had re-inforced with your solemn avowal. They had raised no mischief in the country, nor had risen in revolt against you were you not the one who assassinated me, son of Humuq, a companion of the prophet, who was such a virtuous and dutiful servaut of God that his body had shrunk from excessive offering of prayers, and his strength had languished, and his face had acquired pallor ? You first made him an offer of protection and backed it up with such strong promises that if a similar pledge had been given to a beast of the jungle, it would have come to you down from the heights of the mountains. You then brazenly went back on your pledges, and assassinated him notwithstanding the fact that he had committed no offence. You are not the one who admitted Ziyad, b. Somayya by Obaid, a slave of the tribe of Bani Saqif, into the relationship of a brother to you, and of a son to your father, completely ignoring the prophets' saying, "The son would be attributed to the real husband of a woman, and as far the adulterer, stones awaited him,"? And you did this, simply to serve your own ends. You made him the governor of Iraq so that he might maim people, severe their hands and feet, put out their eyes with burntng hot iron bars, and haug them by the branches of trees. are you not he one to whom Ziyad b. Somayya, had reported that the Hizremites followed the faith of Ali and you ordered that not one of them be spared alive ? Ziyad put up all of them to death, and also disfigured them. Regarding your advice that I should take due care of my life, faith, and the followers of Mohammad's faih, and not plunge them into a state of chaos, and should desist from creating division among the community, I imagine nothing provokes disorder here move than your

caliphate and rule. I do not conceive of anything to be of greater advantage to my life, faith and the well-being of the followers of the faith than to obstruct you, and if were to do so, I would certainly earn nearness to God, and if I keep myself from doing so, and maintain silence, I would pray to God to excuse me and grant me the strength to tread the right path."

This letter fully discloses the feelings of Husain and shown clearly that he was keenly alive to his reponsibilities for taking some decisive steps to prevent the prevailing crisis of the faith and corruption of moral standards. He, however, persisted in maintaining silence till the last breath of Muawiya had been heaved.

CHAPTER X

YAZID'S NOMINATION AS MUAWIYA SUCCESSOR

The length of Muawiya's life provided him with abundant opportunities to indulge in his desires and full scope to gratify his ambitions as the arbiter of the destinies of the Muslims, and to sample, without stint, all the pleasures that power and pelf have in their gift. "We have, "he acknowledged, "wallowed in the riches of the world and revelled in all the diversions under the sun for years on end."[1]

Pursuit of pleasure, however, did not exhaust Muawiya's desires. He also cherished the secret wish of passing on his son the same worldly authority as he himself possessed. His compact with Imam Hasan, to abstain inter alia from nominating his successor, however, militated against his longing, no less than Yazid's own unworthy conduct and loose morals placed a serious hurdle in the way of anything like an easy accomplishment of his father's wishes. In view, therefore, of the expected unfavourable reaction of Muslim opinion to his proposal, Muawiya eschewed convassing it openly, but set about preparing the ground for its acceptance with a thoroughness which brooked no scruples. One step in the furtherance of his designs was the liquidation of influential competitors for the office of the Caliph, who could possibly make a plausible bid to secure it for themselves. One such person was Abdur-Rahman b. Khalid b. Waleed. His father's exploits against the Romans were on everybody's lips in Syria whose people, so Muawiya apprehended, might well choose him for succession to the caliphate. He had therefore, to go. And indeed he was eliminated by Asaal's son who poisoned him[2] and earned as his reward perpetual exemption from the papment of taxes in addition to appointment as Collector of the tribute of Hams[3]: advantages which he did not live long to enjoy, being put to the sword, either at Damascus by Mahajir, Abdur Rahman's brother, or at Gams by the decesaseds' son, Khalid. The murderer of saal's son, whoever of the two assassins he might have been, got away lightly for wreaking his vengeance, being only beifly detained in prison by Muawiya and restored to

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1. Tabavi, vo 16, p.186
2. l wuzara w al Kitab, p. 16
3. Tabavi Vol 6, pp. 128-125

Liberty on payment of money for Asaal's blood in 45 A. H.[1] Those who were included in the inner circle of Muawiya's confidence had an inkling of the latter's plans for Yazdi's successsion, but they could entertain only less than dim hopes of the scheme ever going through. The astute and resourceful governor of Kufa was the first man who broke the ice in the venture and set the ball rolling in the desired direction. Mughira b. Sha'aba mentioned to Muawiya, possibly only to try to find out where he stood in the latter's esteem, his intention of resigning the governorship of Kufa. He anticipated not only the Caliph's vehement reluctance to the acceptance of the proposal, but also a solicitous expression of Muawiya's desire for Mughira to continue in his post. Things, however, turned out very differently, and Muawiya named another candidate for the governorship. In order to retain his post, Mughira tried another move. He saw Yazid and, in order to ingratiate himself with the latter, asked him, "why do you not press your father to declare you his successor."[2] It is more than likely that Yazid might have himself been secretly nursing this desire, although his youthful revels and drinking bouts had not yet given him the time to give a definite shape to such ambitions. The hint dropped by Mughira must have greatly stimulated Yazid's ill-balanced nature. He went to Muawiya, and like a spoilt and cherished son, pressed his father for his succession, and mentioned to him what Mughira thought of the proposal. Muawiya who had entertained no hope whatever of Yazid being proposed by any sensible person to succeed him, jumped at the idea, and sent for Mughira to talk the matter over with him. With great confidence, Mughira represented the undertaking as capable of a successful execution without any difficulty, and added that at Kufa he alone would be sufficient to win over people to Yazid's succession, and that Ziyad would be equally effective at Basra. Once these two localities had been brought round to favour Yazid, there was no other place where people could dare oppose him. Muawiya listened attentively to what he heard from Mughira and did not disturb him in the governorship of Kufa. Mughira lost no time to get to Kufa to busy himself with ensuring the success of the project. He wished to present the successful conclusion of his endeavours to Muawiya in order not only to be rewarded by the latter, but also to impress the Caliph with his loyalty. He, therefore, summoned to his presence those among the elite of Kufa who were noted for their pro-Ummayyad leanings, and acquainted them with his aim. He exhorted them to wait upon the Caliph in a deputation to urge for Yazid's nomination as his successor since, he added, the Caliph was regrettably uncertain about the people of Kufa subscribing to such a move.

1. Al Wuzara wal Kitab. p. 17, Tabari, Vol. 6. p. 129.,

The response to Mughira's proposal was, however, feeble, and not many persons offered to join the projected deputation, with the result that Mughira had to spend a sum of 30,000 dirhams either from his private resources or from the public exchequer to suborn the formation of a passible deputation from Kufa, and sending it to Muawiya under the leadership of his son, Musa. This body of men duly repeated to Muawiya what they had been tutored to say about Yazid s succession. Muawiya could not be taken in by appearances, and saw through the game, and after giving the usual assurances to the deputationists, asked Musa what his father had to spend to purchase their faith and belief. Musa said, "Thirty thousand dirhams", in reply. [1]

Obviously Muawiya could hardly feel reassured about Muslim public opinion, apprehending, indeed, public revolusion against and contempt for such a proposal. He then called Ziyad b. Abih, whom he had acknowledged as his brother on political considerations. Ziyad must have been aware of Muawiya's wishes since fairly long time and Muawiya's letter gave them pointed expression. He must have been fully alive to his duty in a situation like this , not only as loyal governor but also because his 'nephew' was involved . The delicacy of the issues involved, and a consideration of the various aspects of the proposal more than overwhelmed him. Accordingly he communicated his views to his confident Oboid b. Ka'b. Numari, whom he acquainted with all that the Caliph had written to him including the fears entertained by the lettar about the feasibility of the plan . He. requested K'ab to wait upon the Caliph on his behalf and suggest that as the due discnarge of the religious responsibilities which devolved upon the Caliph a matter of great import, and as Yazid was a self-willed libertine, much given to the chase, it would be appropriate that much circumspection be observed in arriving at a decision one way or the other and that it would be better to let the scheme stand over for some time than to rush in and court an unfavourable result. Obaid somewhat modified this approach and advised that Muawiya need not be given a cut and dried reply. He counselled that Yazid be contacted and told that if he desired to win over public opinion, he should reform his ways which did not endear him to the Muslims. To Muawiya ,Ziyad returned a brief reply that he should take it easy as undue haste[1] would be injurious to the object before them. It is said that after being duly admonished, Yazid did mend his ways in many respects[2] not, however, without latterly coming to entertain a certain measure of ill-will against Ziyad. There was possibly another reason also for

1. Kamil b. Aseer
2. Tabari, Vol. 6, P. 169

Yazid's displeasure. Ubaidullah b. Ziyad was of about the same age as Yazid who, therefore, suspected Ziyad's conduct to have been guided by Ubaidullah's envy at the prospect of Yazid's succession to the office of the Caliph of Islam. Accordingly he remained estranged from Ubaidullah also for quite some time.

Mughira died in 49-50 A. H. aged seventy years,[1] and Ziyad succeeded him for the governorship of Kufa. He had been made governor of Basra, Khorasan and Sajistan in 45 A. H. by Muawiya, who had latter on committed Bahrain and Omman as well to his charge.[2] Since Kufa and Basra, were the only two important places in the territories over which he ruled, he used to divide his time between these places spending half the year at each place, and delegating his authority over Basra to Sumra b. Jundub in in his absence.[3] In the Ramazan of the year 53 A. H. Ziyad also died.[4] Apprehending lest the remaining few of his principal supporters should also be picked up by death, Muawiya published a proclamation about Yazid's succession to the Caliphate, and the governed were made to agree to the arrangement.[5]

It appears from the shape subsequent events assumed that Mughira had largely accomplished the task of preparing the ground at Kufa for the favourable reception of Yazid's succession to the Caliphate, and at least won over the well-wishers of the Ummaids to subscribe to his object. At Basra, Ubaidullah b. Ziyad, had of necessity to make the scheme a success notwithstanding the views he might personally hold in this context. The people of Basra were so vastly smitten by terror both by his father and himself that opposition to his wishes was entirely unthinkable. And as for Syria, it was the Omayyad's own country where Abdur Rahman b. Khalid b. Waleed alone could be a source of some anxiety; but he had been already eliminated. Saeed, son of the murdered Caliph, Osman, had of course, protested against Yazid's succession to the Caliphate telling Muawiya that he had preferred his own son to the former for the office, knowing full well that the former's parents were better than Yazid's, and that the former himself was, in merit, superior to the Caliph-designate and that whatever advancement and power Muawiya had acquired were only gifts from the former's father. Muawiya acknowledged Osman's generosity towards him

1. Tabari, V. 6 P. 131
2. Ibid Page 124
3. Ibid P. 131
4. Al Wuzara wal Kitab, P. 16
5. Tabari, Vol. 6. P. 170

which he claimed to have requited by raising his voice to claim the price for the latter's blood and by wreaking vengeance on his murderers. He also conceded the superiority of Osman, as more nearly related to the prophet, and of Saeed's mother as the off-spring of the Quraish who were better than the Kalbis to whom Yazid's mother was related by birth. He however, took care to add drily, "as for your claim of superiority to Yazid, if I had my house full of individuals like you, they would not all collectively be Yazid's compeers."

This snub must have put Saeed out of countenance, but at Yazid's intercession he was later re-admitted into Muawiyas favour, and made governor of Khorasan.[1] Apprehensions from this quarter were thus set at rest. Having secured the acquiescence of Syria and Iraq to his aims, Muawiya turned his attention to Mecca and Madina which last had Marwan as its governor. Muwaiya wrote to him that he had declared Yazid as his successor and directed him that he should himself take the oath of allegiance to Yazid and also obtain similar oaths from the people of Medina. On receiving these orders, Marwan retired to his residence in a fit of rage. He communicated his disagreement with an anger at the proposal to members of his household and to the tribesmen of Bani Kanana, related to him on his mother's side, and left for Damascus in a dudgedn to seek an interview with Muawiya. He met Muawiya there, and so conducted himself towards the latter as kinsmen of equal rank behave with one another. He told Muawiya in a voice showing passionate disagreement to mind his steps in that he was promoting inexperienced youths to the position of chiefs. He counselled him to give up his plans, and to remember that in his clan there were others as well who had taken part in his deliberations and had helped him and acted as his ministers. Muawiya requested him not to get excited, adding that Marwan was undoubtedly the Caliph's equal and had always come to his help in all difficulties. He mollified him by saying that he had been made Yazid's successor. This stratagem appeased Marwan who returned to Madina well satisfied with the outcome of his mission. At Medina he called a meeting and made a mention of Yazid's succession to the Caliphate. He explained that Muawiya had directed Yazid's succession just as Abu Bakr had laid down Omar's succession. Hearing this, Abdur Rahman b. Abu Bakr flew into a rage, pointing out that Abu Bakr had not made a will in favour of his son whereas Muawiya's action followed the ways of the Caesars and imperial rulers. He forth rightly declined to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid whom he described as a debauched

1. Tabari, Vol. 6, Page 171

fornicator. These views were seconded by Imam Husain, Abdullah b. Zubair and Abdullah b. Omar and the incident was duly reported by Merwan to Muawiya Shortly afterwards, Muawiya left ostensibly for the Hajj pilgrimage with Yazid.

Muawiya must have been painfully alive to the importance which these objecetors to Yazid's succession enjoyed in the Islamic world, and it is a point worth remembering and of cardinal import, that all those who, among all the various Schools of Muslim thought, were considered to have inherited an interest in Muslim affairs, were united in their disagreement with the choice of Yazid as a successor to Muawiya. These persons included Imam Husain on the one hand and Abdur Rahman b, Abu Bakr; Aiysha. daughter of Abu Bakr; Abdullah b. Omar; Abdullah b. Abbas, and Abdullah b, Zubair on the other. These names also disclose that the sectarianism which bedevils current Muslim religious life lent no colour whatsoever to the dissent in principle to Yazid's succession, openly voiced by everybody who could be considered as representing the views of any school of Muslim thought. It is an entirely different matter that some stuck tenaciously to their view despite all manner of difficulties, and some allowed themselves to be forced by circumstances to abandon their stand.

Muawiya tried to silence these men or win them over both by the bait of fear and the lure of favour. So, on his first approach to Madina, when he met Husain. he accosted him with the words, "Let happiness and prosperity have no place in your lot, You ara a sacrificial lamb, whose blood is in a farment. and it shall assuredly be shed." Husain asked him to shut up as the words used by him were below the former's dignity. Muawiya rejoined that he deserved a worse manner of address. Next he met Abdullah b. Zubair, likened him to a burrowing iguana which waved its tail after putting its head into its hole and assured him that his tail would certainly be caught. He then ordered him to be driven away from his presence, and delivered a blow of his lash at Abdullah's mule, Then on meeting Abdur Rahman b. Abu Bakr, he chargad him with being far advanced in senile dotage, and ordered Abdur Rahman's dismissal from his presence by whipping his mule. Abdullah b. Omar, faired no better.[1]

Upon entering Medina, he held out threats to frighten and cow people into acquiescence with Yazid's succession.

When Aiysha heard the news, she visited Muawiya in great anger and told him that it was undesirable that he had murdered one of her bro-

1. Kamil ibn Asir, Vol. 3 P. 454

thers, Mohammad b. Abu Bakr, and committed his dead body to the flames, and that he was causing pain to her second brother. Abdur Rahman, and had treated him with harshness, and that he was trying to intimidate Husain, the Prophet's offspring as well as Abdullah b. Omar. and Abdullah, b. Zubair. She reminded Muawiya that he was one of those whom the Prophet had spared from being put to death at the fall of Mecca, and that his actions were wholly unworthy of him.

It would be of interest to give here an account of the conversation between Muawiya and Abdur Rahman b, Abu Bakr, as recorded by Tabari:–

Muawiya :	"With what manner of limbs do you dare to oppose me ?"
Abdur Rahman :	"Because for this position, I consider myself better entitled."
Muawiya	"In that case I intend to put you to the sword."
Abdur Rahman	"If you do so, you would earn damnation from God, and punishment in the world to come." [1]

When threats failed, the allurement of wealth was pressed into service. A sum of ten thousand dirhams was sent to Abdur Rahman b. Abu Bakr who sent it back with the remark that he would not barter away his faith for worldly gain, and left Mecca. In like manner, Abdullah b. Omar returned an equal amount saying that he had grown old, and that his faith was more precious than the amount offered. Similarly, Husain to whom many presents and large sums of money were despatched, refused to accept them.

Amongst the widows of the Prophet, Aiysha took a leading part in opposing Yazid's succession. Jalaluddin Seoti has recorded that once when Muawiya was obtaining the oath of fealty for Yazid at Madina, sitting on the Prophets' pulpit, Aiysha called out from her room. "Be silent. What are you doing? Did the previous Caliphs ever obtain oaths of allegiance for their sons?" Upon Muawiya replying in the negative, Aiysha plied him with the query, "Whom then do you follow?" At this Muawiya is said to have descended from pulpit shamefacedly.

About Yazid's unworthiness for the office of Caliph which was, in the last analysis, considered to be a religious one. Dr. Waheed Mirza says, "Since the beginning of Islam, the ruler of the Islamic world came to be looked upon as the head of the state as well as of the church. While it is open to dispute whether this concentration of religious and political power in one person was rationally justified, it had been generally accepted in principle that in addition to political acumen, the Caliph of Islam should also possess religious excellence and spiritual pre-eminence of the highest order. And

1: Tabari, Vol. 6 page 177

it was common knowledge that on these considerations Yazid did not qualify for the office by any manner of means. Accordingly all men of sense looked upon the steps taken to secure his nomination as inappropriate and ruinous."

Hasan of Basra says, "Muawiya did four things each of which was sufficient for his perdition. He took possession of the Caliphate with the assistance of ignorant nincompoops without consulting the whole community, even though the companions of the prophet and men of pre-eminent virtues were available. Then he nominated as his successor his son who was a drunkard and remained intoxicated, donned silk garments and played upon the tamboura. Thirdly he declared Ziyad as begotten by Abu Sufyan, his own father, despite the Prophet's words that parentage could be ascribed only to the real father, and that the adulterer merited only to be stoned to death. Fourthly he put the companions of Hajr to death.[1]

Another statement made by him was that two men were responsible for the downfall of the Muslims. One was Amr son of Aas, on whose advice the Quran was raised on spears, and the other was Mughira who advised Muawiya to take the oath of allegiance for Yazid, otherwise the rule of election would have subsisted for all time. Muawiya's successors took to obtaining the oath of allegiance for their sons in conformity with Muawiya precedent.[2]

This general view, prevalent among the Muslims had, as its representative spokesmen, men whose names are recorded by history.

It was not unknown to Muawiya that the most eminent person belonging to the group opposed to Yazid's succession was Husain. The first thing which he did on reaching Medina was to send for Husain and tell him that all had been won over to his scheme except five men of the Quraish under his leadership. Husain was surprised and asked him whether he was really thought to lead these men. Muawiya repeated charge. Husain suggested that he should call the others separately and demand the oath of allegiance for his son from them, and that if all of them complied with his request, Muawiya need not apprehend any danger from him alone. This temporarily averted a show-down, and resulted in the failure of Muawiya who returned to Syria. Husain's refusal to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid constituted a great rebuff to the authority of the government of the day, and Muawiya realised this. It must be reckoned as an instance of remarkable pre-

1. Kamil ibn i Asir Vol. 2, P. 25
2. Abul Fida, Vol. 1, P. 196, Tabari Vol. 6, P. 157

dence on the part of Husain that he confined his actions only to quiet dissent and reticence. He knew that his adversary would sooner or later resort to violence to force him to abandon this pacifist attitude of keeping one's counsel to oneself, and he was prepared for it. He, however, did not like that the charge of any aggressive proceeding should be placed at his door. Muawiya also did not consider it appropriate to take any overt steps for the time being. But hereafter neither Muawiya was oblivious of the necessity of taking suitable practical measures for the fulfilment of his desires nor was Husain unaware of the future developments. Husain's real purpose was that he himself should maintain peaceful silence and that his adversary should initiate the use of violence. Muawiya also was chary of being the first to resort to violence and banked upon Husain acting in a surge of righteous fervour in a manner which could be interpreted as disturbance of the peace.

For truth, the battle of Karbala had started at this very point in so far as its mediate causes went. It was, however, upto this stage a tense war of nerves which might have been prolonged for nobody knows how long, had not Muawiya's death and the accession of the immature, conceited and power-drunk Yazid to the throne of his father supervened.

CHAPTER—XI

MUAWIYA'S DEATH AND YAZID'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

In 50 A. H the ruler of Syria, Muawiya, was smitten by mortal disease. During his illness, and especially when recovery had all but been ruled cut, he painfully recollected the great hardships he had to incur in getting Yazid's succession accepted and the big sacrifices he had to make of his peace, comfort, fortune and above all, of his conscience, into the bargain, causing excruciating torture to his soul. He confided this to Marwan, and Ibn-i-Hajar Makki has recorded it in his book, Tathir ul Jinan Wailisan, written to commemorate the virtues and qualities of Muawiya. He writes that one day Muawiya started crying and on being asked the occasion for it, said, " I have enjoyed all wordly pleasures. and on account of old age, my bones are in a state of dissolution, and body feeble, but if love for Yazid had not completely over-whelmed me, I would have found out for myself the right course." [1]

Elucidating Muawiya's statement, Ibn-i Hajar notes, " In these words Muawiya has fully conceded that exceseive fondness for Yazid had blinded him to the path of righteousness and delivered the Muslims after his death, into the hands of such a sinner and scapegrace as Yazid who consigned them to perdition. " [2]

It is natural that solicitude for the success of an object should correspond in keenness to the arduousness of the sacrifices made for it, and that impediments to the success of the aim should be as intensely regretted. What countless steps he had taken to clear Yazid's path to the throne and what short-comings he still felt in the measures taken were communicated to Yazid by Muawiya himself at the commencement of the illness which ultimately proved fatal, " I have spared you the hardship of running about and have completed all the arrangements for you I have humbled your enemies and have made all the Arabs submit to your authority, and have made all agree to your succession. But in this matter concerning the caliphate which has all but been settled in your favour, I apprehend trouble from four persons; Husain, b. Ali, Abdullah b. Umar, Abdullah b. Zubair, and Abdur Rahman b Abu Bakr.[3]"

1. Marginal notes Sawaiq-i-Muhriga, P. 56
2. Op. cit. P. 58
3. Tabari, Vol. 6, P. 179

It is obvious that these linger
to Muawiya and that each day which
have, on this account, added enormou
present even at the bed side of his dyi
bacchanalian revels at Hawarin outside Da
his condition, Muawiya sent for Yazid, As h
Muawiya called his police chief, Zahhak b. Qa
the head of his personal bodyguard, and told th
message as from him, " Treat the people of the
Receive those of them who visit the capital g
respect; those of them who are pre-eminent, ve
distance from here should also be, from time to time,
after; treat the Syrians as your hands and arms, takin
not suffered to remain long outside Syria lest they sh
morals and manners of other lands. Know also that I apprec
you only from four persons. Husain b. Ali; Abdullah b.
Rahman b. Abu Bakr and Abdullah b. Zubair. "[3]

This last will and testament of Muawiya clearly indicates
on his deathbed he did not think either of his diseaes and afflict
of how he would fare in the hereafter but his sole engrossing passio
Yazid's future for which he descried four persons, the chief of whom
Husain b. Ali, as spelling great danger for his son.

Muawiya died in Rajab, 60 A. H,[4] He was given the governorship
of Syria of at the age of 38 years, became an independent caliph at the age
of 58 years, and died aged 78 years.[5] His age has, however, been variously
stated by historians as ranging from 73 or 75 to 85 years.[6]

Yazid received the news of his father's death in his hunting group
d left for Damascuss, arriving there only after his father had been
escended the throne and obtained the oath of allegianc
ll people of Syria.

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it. P. 182 2. Op. cit. P. 183
P. 180, Al Akhbarut Tawal P
l. 6, P. 180; Irshad, P.
adan
6.

ing thorns must have caused much pain
brought him nearer to his death must
Jy to his distress. But Yazid was not
g father,[1] being engrossed in his
nascus.[2] Realising the gravity of
is arrival was getting delayed,
s Fehri, and Muslim b. Aqba.
em to convey to Yazid this
Hejaz with due regard.
raciously and with due
nerable and live at a
ppropriately looked
g care that they be
ould imbibe the
end trouble for
Omar; Abdur

that even
ions, or
n was
was

CHAPT

YAZID

Yazid's mother, Maisoon, daughter o
product of the desert who hated th
had, however, won Muawiya's heart with her ex
for her a grand palace opposite Ghota which comm
of the adjoining country distinguished for its scenic
furnished the palace with expensive fittings and fr
plate and Roman carpets of variegated designs and s
placed a host of handsome young slave-girls at her dis
her. Housed in this palace amidst royal pomp,
more than indifferent to its lavish charms
nostalgic only about her wilderness
day when Muawiya was expected at
the best of her robes and wear
perfumed in the midst of h
gave on the beautiful
notes of many
bethought h
into a
re

ill-bred brute. He irrevocably divorced her, and asked har to take away with her every thing in the palace, and banished her to live with her kinsmen in Nejd, when she was enceinte. [1] She was delivered of the child, Yazid, in 22 A. H. [2], and a couple of years later, Muawiya, on getting the news. sent for him.[3] From early youth, Yazid gave himself up to evil ways and a dissolute life. History has preserved the stories of the pranks that he used to play with animals. Damiri records that Yazid, son of Muawiya, was the first man to make panther ride a horse[4], and that a monkey was trained to ride a she-ass and competed in horse races against reputed horsemen. When the monkey once beat all competitors, Yazid is said to have compoased verses advising the monkey to hold fast to the back of the she-ass when riding it since even its fatal fall from its back would not render he mount responsible for it. [5]

Yazid had named his favourite monkey as Abu Qais and gave it wine left in his cup. He used to describe the animal as a revered Israelite who had sinned and earned disfigurement. The feats of this monkey in races have been described elsewhere also. [6]

Yazid had won notoriety for addiction to liquor and Abdullah b. Zubair named him "Sukran". i. e. dead drunk.[7] He did not consider it expedient to curb this habit even on delicate missions. Accordingly, when he visited Mecca under Muawiya's orders, apparently for the performance of the hajj, in order to rally support for his succession to the Caliphate, he used to drink in the company of his boon companions.[8]

Waqidi quotes Abdullah b. Hanzala as saying, "By troth, during Yazid's rule we apprehended that stones would rain upon us from the sky. His lust did not spare even his stepmothers, daughters and sisters and he used liquor freely and neglected to offer his prayers.[9]

It was not that in practice alone he was an unprincipled sinner, his thoughts were also equally steeped in evil. Far from being ashamed of his

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1. Hayatul Haiwan, Vol. 2, P. 207
2. Tabari Vol 4, P. 259
3. Hayat-ul-Haiwan, Vol. 2, P. 207
4. Hayat-ul-Haiwan Vol. 2, P. 186
5. Ibid P. 201
6. Ibnul Fauti 'History'
7. Al Akhbar ut Tawal P. 261
8. Kamil, Vol. 4, P. 63
9 Sawaiq Muhriqa P. 135

conduct, he used to take pride in it. Eloquent testimony to this tendency is furnished by his verses making light of the directions of the Shariat laws, and exposing the traditions of the Prophet and the Quran to ridicule.

Comparing the rewards in the hereafter with songs and liquor he says,

معشر النّدمان قوموا واسمعوا صوت الاغانی
واشربوا كأس مدام واتركوا ذكر المعانی
شغلتنی نغمة العيد ان من صوت الاذان
وتعوضت عن الحور عجوزا فی الدّنان

"Get up my friends of the drunken carousal and hear the songs. Quaff cups of wine, and do not talk of anything. I have no time to spare from listening to the guitar and cymbals to hearken to the call for prayers, and I have elected the nymph of the cup instead of the houris of paradise.

He has even denied belief in resurrection after death :

علیها فاتی واعلنی وترنّمی بذالك انی لا احب لتناجیا
حدیث الی سفیان قد ماسما بها الی احد حتی اقام البواکیا
الا هات سقینی علی ذاك قهوة تخیّرها العنسی کرما شامیا
اذا ما نظرنا فی امور قدیمة وجدنا حلالا الشرب بها متوالیا
وان متّ یا امّ الاحیم فانکحی ولا تأملی بعد الفراق تلاقیا
فانّ الذی حدثت عن یوم بعثنا احادیث طسم تجعل القلب ساهیا
ولا بدّ لی من ان ازور محمّدا بمشولة صفراء تروی عظامیا

"O beautiful beloved, recite before me in loud notes of music. I do not like subdued voices in conversation. Sing to me Abu Sufyan's old story of exploits at Ohud where he plunged the house of enemies into mourning. Pass the cup round to the tune of this song; the cup of wine distilled from

yria. When we review our old customs, we find
lawful. If I die, sweet one, wed another and have
meeting each other after this parting. The stories you
about a second life are those old yarns which mislead
y meet Mohammad intoxicated with liquor which would
nto my bones."

erses would undoubtedly show that he was still swayed by
f the pre-Islamic period of darkness and that he entertained the
which moved the infidels of Badr and Ohad against the teachings
ophet. His verses composed after the martyrdom of Husain and on
casion of the arrival of the ladies and other members of the latter's
ehold as prisoners before him in Syria are also in the same vein. It was
oignant irony that such a man should have assumed not only the office
f the Caliph of Islam and the title of successor to the prophet, but also
been accepted as such by a majority of the Muslims. The inevitable resu
was that the followers of Islam generally became apathetic towards th
faith and even looked askance at it having fallen a prey to a life of sens
pleasure and easy virtue.

CHAPTER — XIII

HUSAIN'S NOBLE MANNERS, HIGH ATTAINMENTS AND PRECEIOUS SAYINGS

An Arab poet has very aptly said انّ العظائم تكفوها العظماء meaning, "great deeds require great men to perform them." Another poet has said :

على قدر اهل العزم تأتى العزائم

ويكبر في عين الصغير صغارها

وتأتى على قدر الكرام المكارم

وتصغر في عين العظيم العظائم

meaning, "The objects of the great are commensurate with and the virtues of the highly respected ones accord with In the eyes of small men, petty deeds get magnified, and great, even great deeds get dwarfed."

Petty-minded persons look upon small deeds a ssing the spirit to perform even petty deeds. If the plishing something, even though it be petty, they ring it to be a big achievement. In the eyes o great feats performed by them tend to appe accomplish even bigger exploits.

Viewed in the light of the above- that Husain was the protagonist of the tr of religious faith [reveals his surpassi the powers of historians to envision skill to adequately describe or faith res of that tragedy could not hav

high calibre been there to act them out nor could the tragic happenings, despite their uniquneess and significance, have acquired such immense effect had they not been associated with a towering personality like that of Husain. A man and his actions are so inter-related that his personality and his deeds act and react upon each others. Thus a notable deed gains in importance and weight from the high rank, name and pre-eminence of its performer whose own stature and personality in their turn, also rise to new heights and fresh distinction from that feat. While it is, therefore, indubitable that the happenings at Karbala could not have materialised or acquired that universal and enormous influence over the minds and hearts of all those who know and are fair-minded, irrespective of creed or race, which they excercise now, but for the indomitable resolution of Husain and the irresistible charm of his personality felt all over the world, it is equally true, that the pre-eminence of Husain among the spiritual leaders of mankind springs from his unequalled exploits at Karbala. It is for this reason that facts concerning his life before the events of Karbala have not been preserved by history with that jealous regard for detail which characterises records of facts about his life during the development of that event. Before the occurence of the tragedy of Karbala, historians could see in Husain what they saw in Hasan and other Imams, every one of them an embodiment of godliness, innocence and purity. References to Husain's generosity, devotion to prayers and aloofness from the world do find occasional mention, sometimes brief and at other times detailed, as in espect of Hasan and other Imams. Those who preserved facts for use in historical writings could by no means anticipate before the year 60 A.H. that Husain would then accomplish what would have no parallel in history. They could, therefore have had little urge to sedulously collect the details of his life from childhood onwards for oral transmission as material for history.

Character, it is held, takes shapes principally under the influence of three factors . family characterstics and ancient ancestral traditions; environment, education and upbringing; and important experinces in life. The first factor works, so to speak, in one's blood and forms the basis of one's capacities, ability and natural faculties; the second brings these powers and faculties into play, partially or fully, and the third ripens one's practical talent so as to make the maturity thus acquired a permanent part of one's distinguishing traits. In the formation of Husain's character all the three factors played their full roles. The traits of his family were not shared by the members of any other family and left no contender any opening to claim superiority to him except through the exercise of oppression, duress, violence

and cussedness. Husain's opponents had to concede his superiority due to irrepressible feelings of inferiority just as Yazid once accepted openly in his court that Husain's mother was better than his own mother, and his grandfather superior to his own grandfather.[1] Besides family traits which, by themselves, did hold out a promise of excellence of disposition, husain's upbringing ensured nobility of conduct and rafinement of nature. He had also to live though such a variety of conditions and self contradictory circumstances that he had to seek guidance from reason rather than allow himself to be led by emotions. This last habit naturally bred in him sober maturity, ready resourcefulness and steady firmness.

Even those who do not consider Husain to be above error will have to concede that he was not governed by his emotions, that he was sober and acted with judicious caution, moderation and forbearance, and was never impelled by anger or passion into any act violative of order, normal procedure or sanity of approach. It was, indeed, a settled trait of his character to remain silent in the most trying of circumstances provided such reticence did not injure those objects and ideals which were dear to himself, to his father and to his grandfather. It would, therefore, be easy enough to understand that such a forbearing, peace-loving man would not hestily take any precipitate steps likely to expose him and his associates to the peril of certain death unless there were reasons so compulsive and extra-ordinary as to make it his divinely ordained duty to court that danger. When such a person does embark upon such a dangerous mission, it only exalts the resoluteness of his soul, the maturity of his power of decision and the virtuous strength to sacrifice his personal feelings to the demands of duty. This is not given to every one to achieve.

Entire suppression of the ego and acting in accordance with the dictates of duty are qualities which comprehend in their ample compass more or less all the motivations of human conduct. Thus when men of realisation and knowledge attempted to portray Husain's qualities and attainments in brief accounts they could not help using the most eloquent expressions.

Ibne Abi Sheba, an authority on traditions, described Husain in these words :

كان عالما بالقرآن عاملا عليه زاهدا اتقيا ورعا جوادا فصيحا بليغا عارفا بالله ودليلا على ذاته تعالى

1. Tabari : Vol. 6, P. 266

meaning. "He was very well versed in the Quran and acted upon it He was God-fearing, abstinent, of pure habits, abstemious, generous, sweet of expression, eloquent, percipient of God and proof of God's exalted being." It would appear that in enumerating the qualities of Husain. Ibne Abi Sheba first confined himself to the usual complimentary expressions employed for the learned and the abstemious of even modest rank. He then felt those expressions wholly unequal to do justice to the pre-eminence enjoyed by Husain's merits. He then selected the last phrase as one approaching adequacy in eulogising Husain, "that he was a proof of God's being", which is praise of the highest order. Ibnul Arabi, realising the inadequacy of words in praising Husain, did not attempt to charge them with meanings higher than they could convey, and resorted to brevity to give adequate expression to Husain's exalted merit by only saying كان الحسين السبط اٰية من اٰيات الله meaning, "Husain, the grandson of the Prophet, was one of the signs of God."

Husain was undoubtedly a proof of God's being and one of his prominent sings and it is on Husain's account that some of those who do not believe in God feel a craving in their hearts to commence believing in him: Josh has aptly said :

ہاں وہ حسین جس کا ابد آشنا ثبات کہتا ہے گاہ گاہ حکیموں سے بھی یہ بات
یعنی درونِ پردۂ صد رنگِ کائنات اک کارساز ذہن ہے اک ذی شعور ذات

سجدوں سے کھینچتا ہے جو مسجود کی طرف
تنہا جو اک اشارہ ہے معبود کی طرف

Yes oh yes (do I speak of) that Husain whose unwavering sempifernal stead fastness whispers upto (the cars of) Thinkers the deep secret that working behind and within the many-splendoured tapestry of the Cosmos is an active intelligence of a universal mind – an entity – operating with planned discerument and wisdom.

Husain whose (bruised) brow bent low in (dying) a doration reveals upto the beholder the Adored one himself. Husain who by himself was an Emblem a beacon beekoning to the one(and only one) worthy of worship.)

Husain's piety–as usually conceived about pious men–his devotional worship—in its common connotation – were an example for the world. He used to be engaged in prayers for the better part of days and nights and observed fasts almost continuously. He performed the Haj twenty five times on foot. Yet his piety in reality transcended formalisms and ritualistic modes all his deeds of actions or quiescence stemmed from a deep urge to conform to the will of God. At the back of these day a profound sense of duty and accountabilitity to the Creator.

Our Knowledge about the circumstantial details of his Haj journeys is scanty. Still some vignettes are available.

For instance some chronicles say that once Husain set out for Haj with his father Ali, during the reign of the third Caliph. On the way he fell ill, between Saqia and Lerj. It appears Ali had gone ahead. He was informed and returned with Asma bint Umais. It was only after 20 days (or 40 according to other accounts) nursing that he could recover. He had to return to Madina However should this account be correct we have to exclude this from the count of his Haj pilgrimages.

Husain once left for hajj with his brother, Hasan, on foot. A caravan, journeying for the same purpose, met them on the way, and all its members dismounted when they saw the two brothers travelling on foot, and accompanied them on foot. They could not long sustain this trying mode of travel, and getting exhausted, they spoke to Sad b. Abi Viqas, an aged companion of the Prophet, about their embarrassment, as they did not feel like getting up their mounts to travel while the two brothers walked on foot. Sa'd met Hasan and explained to him the inconvenience felt by others in travelling on foot with them, and that they were averse to mounting for the journey while he and his brother proceeded on foot, Sa'd, therefore, suggested that the two brothers might also ride for the journey. Hasan explained to him that it was not practicable since they had taken it upon themselves to perform the journey on foot. He added that he did not wish to cause inconvenience to others and therefore, would give up the route they was proceeding along, and pursue a different one for the journey, which they did.[2]

An idea of the degree of Husain's deep rooted attachment to God's worship may be had from what Husain said in the afternoon of the 9th day of Moharrum at Karbala when preferring a request for the cessation of hostilities for a night. He remarked that they desired to spend the night in worship and remembering God who alone knew how devoted he was to

1. TahzibulAsma Nudi, Vol. 2 P.
2. Tabari : Tafsir Jama-ul-Bayan, Vol. 2, P. 240

both these forms of adoration. [1] The request was granted and Husain and his companions spent the night in the manner described in the words,

لهم دوی کدوی النحل

Their prayers and uncantations reverberated through the dark stillness of the night like the humming of bees at hive.

Again, Husain offered his prayers with his companions on time in the afternoon of the 10th of Moharrum at Karbala when the battle was at its thickest, death stalking the field of battle with blood amidst a rain of arrows in the intense heat of the day. Before offering prayers, Husain told off two of his companions, ready to sacrifice themselves, to stand before the row of those who prayed, in order to intercept the arrows aimed at them. No sooner had the prayers concluded than one of the companions, Saeed b. Abdullah Hanafi, felt to the earth and died of his wounds. Husain thus demonstrated the importance of the duty of offering prayers.

Husain was very open-handed. May instances of his munificence have been preserved by history. The Prophet himself found this trait so prominent in Husain's make-up even in his childhood that he remarked "Husain has my generosity and courage." [2]

While Husain was inspired to serve people and show them sympathy to the best of his ability, he taught that in conferring favours, attention must always be paid to the rank of the applicant for them, so that the greater claim he had to respect, and the higher the degree of his knowledge and percipience of God, the more liberal may be the measure of the kindness shown him, A striking instance of the application of this principle in actual practice may well be cited. A bedouin once called on Husain and offering him his salutations narrated his story. He mentioned having heard Husain's revered grandfather say that when in need, one should apply to a person answering to one of the four descriptions : a noble-hearted Arab, a generous chiftain, and upholder of the Quran or a handsome man. He aded that Husain squared exactly with to all the four descriptions. As regards being a noble Arab, the Arabs, as a nation, had acquired distinction from Husain's grandfather. As regards munificence it was in Husain's nature. As for upholding the Quran, it had descended in his house. In respect of personal grace, he heard Husain's grandfather say that whoever desired to see the Prophet, should look at Hasan and Husain. Hearing this well-informed statement, Husain asked him what he wanted. The bedouin wrote

1. Irshad P. 243
2. Irshad, P. 191

his prayer on the ground. Husain mentioned that he had heard from his father that a man was worth the skill he possessed, and from his grandfather that favours should be proportioned to the degree of percipicence of God shown by the supplicant. Accordingly Husain told the bedruin that he would put three questions to him and that for every correct answer he would confer upon him a third of his possessions consisting then of a purse of money received from Iraq. The bedouin requested that the questions be put to him, and prayed to God to help him. The conversation which followed was :

" What is the best thing to do ? "
" To believe in God. "
" What is the best means of man's deliverance from destruction ? "
" Trust in God. "
" What is man's ornament? "
" Knowledge associated with intelligence. "
" If this be not available ? What then ? "
" Wealth accompanied with generosity. "
" What, if this be out of reach ? "
" Poverty allied with patience. "
" What, if this too be not available ?"
" Let lightning strike and consume the man to ashes. "

Husain smiled and threw the purse to the bedouin. [1]

This mode of disseminating information was best suited to spreading knowledge, including that of religion and the sciences among the masses, because Husain, besides his other attainment was a man of great learning and was consulted by many respecting difficult and abstruss points concerning religion and other departments of knowledge. There is an Arabic adage النّاس اعداء لما جهلوا that is, "people are enemies of what they do not know. " The wealthy and the powerful, in general, do not have much learning, and in order to conceal this want in them, they keep the general level of emotion education among the masses low, and try to discredit knowledge and learning in the eyes of the people. The true leaders of Islam, however, always tried to maintain a high level of knowledge among the Muslims.

Beside the addresses and couplets attributed to Husain and deemed to be repositories of theology, metaphysics and knowledge about the

1. Tafsir Kabir, Vol, P. 272, Ghardibul Quran, Vol 1 P. 136

divinity, and the prayers and supplications ascribed to him, a collection of some of which, under the name "Sahifa-i-Husainia (Husain's Book) is extant, and is considerd unrivalled for descriptions of the relations between God and His creatures, a large number of Husain's dicta about Muslim law, theology, and metaphysics would be found in the various collections of traditions. It is noteworthy that even when Husain was pursuing his journey to Karbala, the poet Farazdak b. of Ghalib met him, and enquired of him many points concerning the offerings and various components of the observances of hajj. [1]

It is on account of Husain's profound erudition and extensive knowledge that in the list of his companions at Karbala, no men of ordinary attainments are noticed; it was indeed the flower of the then Muslim society and a complete treasure of knowledge and deed that was being sacrificed for Husain. His companions included men who knew the Quran by heart, were deeply learned and versed in it and were bearers of the traditions. They could not have been attracted towards anybody except one who occupied a much higher position in all their various attainments than they had achieved. Even those opposed to Husain's family conceded the elevation of his rank and superiority of his merits. Husain once passed by a gathering, including, amongst others, Abu Saeed Khadri, and Abdullah b. Omar Aas, in the prophet's mosque. As enjoined by Islam, Husain saluted them, and they all suitably responded, except Abdullah b. Omar Aas, who kept quiet. When every one else had resumed silence, Abdullah made his response to Husain's greetings, speaking out loud,

وعليك السلام ورحمة الله وبركاته "And peace be upon you, and

God's mercy and his blessing." He then asked the assemblage if he might acquaint them who, amongst the residents of the earth, was the dearest to the denizens of the sky. Everybody agreeing, Abdullah b. Omar Aas said. "He is no other than the person who has passed by this way. He has not spoken to me since the war of Siffin, and if by some means he gets reconciled to me, it would be dearer to me than red-coloured camels." [2]

This Abdullah was noted among the Umayyads for abstinence, fear of God, devoutness, and undertaking austerities but had participated in the war of Siffin along with his father, Omar b. Aes, against Ali. Husain

1. Irshad, P. 228
2. Usdul Ghaba, Vol. 3, P. 235

had given up speaking to him since then, but notwithstanding this rupture, Abdullah remained so greatly impressed with Husain's merits.

Truthfulness requires moral courage with which Husain was so sufficiently endowed that even in his boyhood he took exception to the second Caliph's occuping the pulpit saying, انزل عن مجلس ابی that is "Get down from my father's seat." Omar replied, O lad, you are right. The pulpit is indeed your father's seat, and not that of my father "

It is a self-evident proof of Husain's undaunted truthfulness that when he left Mecca for Karbala, he made no attempt whatever to conceal at any stage the dangers that attended his journey in order to keep the number of his sympathesers from declining. Instead, he continually informed them of all the discouraging and unhappy developments and repeatedly impressed upon them the certainty of the impending dangers overtaking them, and desired that they would do well to part company with him in order to save their lives and properties. He persisted in repeating warnings of danger till all possibility af any one adhering to him under any misconception whatever had entirely subsided.

Husain loved peace so much that as far as he could, he endeavoured to make peace with his enemies till the very last at Karbala. Yet he was also possessed of that resoluteness. steadiness and courage that he preferred to pay with his head for pursuing, without any the least digression, the course chosen by him, in the very beginning, for its rightfulness.

He obeyed his father, and his brother in a manner that betrayed not the least sign of half-heartedness on his part. And in the battle-field of Karbala, he so ably organised and led his small party that his talent for organisation and systemisation remains unapproached. His judgement of men was so immune from error that, amazingly enough, not one of those persons whom he had chosen to bear him company in this excessively arduous and periloss expedition spared himself from undertaking any act of loyalty to him or of sacrifice in his cause, and all, without a single exception, with unrivalled unity of purpose and will, devoted their energies, without any reservation whatever, to serve the right, till they had paid the supreme price for following his lead by sacrificing themselves for him.

The professions of most men in high positions often fall markedly short of their performance, but Husain's character and exploits were so unique and of such high order as to arrest the attention of the speakers

and writers of the world. No great effort was, therefore, spent on collecting his maxims which nevertheless one met with here and there in various books, both in prose and verse and represent his views on various facets of life.

Among his sayings are :

(1) من جاد ساد ومن بخل ذل "One who is liberal acquires eminence in leadership, the close-fisted earn humiliation.

(2) اجود الناس من اعطى من لا يرجوه "He alone is generous who confers favours even upon those who do not hope for them."

(3) من انعم الله منكم فليتنعم على غيره "Receipt of favours from God entails the obligation to do favour to others."

(4) حوائج الناس اليكم من نعم الله عليكم "That men come to you when indeed is in itself one of God's blessings.

(5)

اغن عن المخلوق بالخالق	تغن عن الكاذب والصادق
واسترزق الرحمن من فضله	فليس غير الله من رازق
من ظن ان الناس يغنونه	فليس بالرحمن بالواثق
او ظن ان الناس يكفونه	ذلت به النعلان من حالق

" Build your hopes only on the favour of the creator, and want nothing of his creatures, and you would be independent of the liar and the truthful alike. Beg for your daily bread of God's bounty, since there is none else who supplies the means of subsistence. One who imagines that men would supply his wants lacks trust in God and one who deems men to suffice for him hands, indeed for great humiliation. "

(6)

كلما زيد صاحب المال مالا زيد في همه وفي الاشغال

" whoever increases his possessions, increases his worries. "

(7) من وصل الى الله انقطع عن غيره "Attachment to God detaches men from all else."

(8) Ibne Kasir has recorded in the Bidayatun Nihaya on the authority of Ishaq b. Ibrahim that Husain once visited the tombs in Jannat ul Baqi and recited the following couplets.

ناديت سكّان القبور فاسكتوا - فاجابني عن صمتهم ترب الحشا
قالت اتدري ما صنعت بساكني - مزقت لحمهم وخرّقت الكسا
وحشوت اعينهم ترابا بعدما - كانت تاذى بالیسیر من القذا
اما العظام فانني مزقتها - حتى تباينت المفاصل والشوى
قطعت ذا من ذا ومن هذا كذا - فتركتها ممّا يطول بها النبا

"I called the occupants of tombs and they remained silent, but their mould said this to me, about their silence. "Are you aware how I have treated those who reside in their graves? I have decomposed their flesh, and cut their skins to pieces. I have filled their eyes with earth, although earlier a mote in their eyes deprived them of rest. As for their bones they have fallen apart, so that their joints and ligaments show clearly. I have disjoined them from one another. so that signs of decay and rottenness have become manifest.

(9)

ذهب الذين احبهم - وبقيت فمن لا احبّه
فيمن اراه ليستبني - ظهر المغيب ولا اسبّه
يبغي فسادي ما استطاع - وامره مما لا ادبّه
حتفا يدب الى الصغير - ء وذاك مما لا ادبّه
ويرى ذباب الشر بين - حولي ليطن ولا يدبّه
واذا خبا وغر الصد - ر فلا يزال به يسبّه
افلا يعيج بعقله - افلا يثوب اليه لبّه
افلا يرى ان فعله - مما يسر اليه غبّه
حسبي ربّي كافيا - ما اختشي وابغي حسبه
ولقل من يبغي عليه - فسا كفاه الله ربّه

"Men whom I held dear have passed away. I have been left among those

for whom I entertain no affection. They revile me at my back even though I do not speak ill of them at all, and they try to harm me as far as lies in their power, while I do good to them. When they see flies of mischief hovering about me, they do nothing to drive them away. Nay when the fire of enmity to me abates they fan it. Is it not possible that they use their common sense, or that common sense may return to them? Do they not realise that their actions would ultimately work their destruction ? Sufficient unto me is my creator and I do not entertain any fear so long as he is there. It is impossible that God may not come to help me since I am oppressed and persecuted. "

(10) On the authority of Ibne Khashshab, Ibne Sabba' Maliki in the Fusul Mohimma and Ali b. Isa Areli in the Kashful Ghumma have recorded the following couplets, ascribing them to Husain.

اذا ما عضّك الدهر فلا تخنع الى خلق
ولا تسأل سوى الله تعالى قاسم الرزق
فلو عشت و طوّفت من الغرب الى الشرق
لما صادفت من يقدر ان يسعد او يشقى

"When the fangs of time wound you, never bow to men. Never bag daily bread of any one other than God who dispenses the daily means of subsistanse, since even it you make a round of the earth from the west to the east, you would not come across any one who may mend or mar what is destined. "

(11)

وان تكن الدنيا لقد نفيسة فدار ثواب الله اعلى و ابقى
وان تكن الابدان للموت انشأت فقتل امرئ بالسيف فى الله افضل
وان تكن الارزاق قسما مقدّرا فقلة حرص المرء فى الرزق اجمل
وان تكن الاموال للترك جمعها فما بال متروك به المرء يبخل

" Even if it be supposed that the world is a desirable place, God's reward and recompense rank higher. when it is certain that death will overtake the body, it is better for a man to be put to the sword in the path of God. Since it is certain that every one's share in the daily bread has been allotted, it is desirable that a man may curb his avarice for it. When it is certain that wealth is hoarded to be left behind, would it not be unwise to act in a miserly manner about it ?

(12) Once a man wrote to Husain as king for advice couched in two sentences. In reply Husain wrote

من حاول امرًا بمعصية الله كان افوت لما يرجو واسرع لمجيئ ما يحضر

" Whoever desires to win his object through disobedience to God, would be frustrated in his hopes and would find himself nearer perils. " [1]

It is easy enough to get at import of the maxims quoted in the foregoing paragraph, and it would be unnecessary to dwell upon them further except, perhaps, by way of recapitulating, as in the paragraphs that follow, their principal themes.

I.

Hopes for gain or protection from evil or for the fruition of ambitious should be anchored on none but God in whom a love should absolute trust be reposed. Many may avow the belief yeh it is only the few that truly tread the path in life who attain for the state of Divine non attachment Lust for wealth and avariccoius apprehensions defeteed a man from virtue and truth. No power can however sway the one whose heart and mind are deeply seeped in the faith that Gods will alone ordains gain or loss.

Those who believe in God, hold him to be holy and pure, approving of goodness and anathematising evil. Confirmation in this belief would make it impossible for one to go near vice or oppression. Some one other than Husain, in the latter's position, and prone to the lure of wordly advantages shirking from worldly harm succeptible to caving in under the pressure of power and authority would have submitted to Yazid's overhelming might. Husain spent no thought on the worldly forces of compulsion and remained unmoved and undiverted from his chosen path of righteousness.

One should aim at doing good to people, and be of service to them without distinction, even without discriminating between friend ane foe. It would not be possible to get over this tendency to differentiate till our relations with one another are based on materialistic considerations, like proximity and distance in belief, views, ties of blood and friendship. The total subjugation of such divisive proclivities is feasible only when all men are looked upon as bound to the ond creator in a common bond, . For then alone would one be willing to do the utmost good to others without any distinction.

1. Kafi : Vol. 1, P. 552

Attention should be given to the dark side of material existence, so that wordly pleasures should lose their attraction and attached to godlines, we might consider the pursuit of the straight and narrow path of virtue as our greatest achievement.

These teachings acquire great importance and weight from the elevation of Husain's character and the matchl ssness of his performance which made his maxims lively expressions of his personality. Husain's sayings therefore, reveal not only his thoughts but also constitute virtually a record of the doings of a virtuous and practical human being.

These maxims did not find expression on any special occasion or casual opportunity, but formed part of Husain's daily routine of life.

One of his devotional compositions which he used to repeat in his prayers is as follows :-

اللّٰھم منک البداء ولک المشیئۃ ولک الحول ولک القوۃ اللّٰھم وانی مع ذالک کلہ عائذ
لاذ بک بحولک وقوتک راض بحکمک الذی سبق الی فی علمک جار بحیث اجریتنی
قاصد ما اضمنتنی غیر ضنین بنفسی فیما یرضیک غنی اذبہ قد رضیتنی ولا نا صر بجہدی
سواک الیہ ندبتنی مسارع لما عرفتنی شارع فیما اشرعتنی مستبصر فیما بصرتنی صراع
ما ازعتنی فلا تخلنی من رعایتک ولا تحرجنی من عنایتک لا تبعدنی عن حولک ولا
تحرجنی عن مقصد انال بہ ارادتک واجعل علی البصیرۃ مدرجتی وعلی الھدایۃ محجتی وعلی
الرشاد مسلکی حتی تستعملنی امنیتی وتحل بی علی ما بہ امرتنی ولہ خلقتنی والیہ ادیت بی

O God ! Thou art the originator of largess and beneficence, and whatever there is of power and strength is Thine and Thy will prevaileth. This being the case, I seek shelter of thee, and look to thy power and might for support. I submit to what Thou hast decreed for me since before. I would tread the path on which Thou hast set me and I intend only what accords with Thy pleasure. I do not in the least spare myself, nor do I, on my part, countenance any laxity in my endeavour to obey Thy commands. On the contrary I move with alacrity along the course Thou hast pointed out to me. I desire to discharge fully the duties Thou hast entrusted to me. Thou mayest Thyself now support me with Thy assistance, and deprive me not of Thy favour or Thy power, nor separate me from the object through which I desire to accomplish Thy pleasure. Let my behaviour be based on

prudence and my rule of conduct on true guideance. Let my path be directed towards the correct destination so as to lead me to the fulfilment of my desire, and to bring me to the journey's and which Thou hast intended for me and for which Thou hast created me, and towards which Thou hast directed my attention."[1]

Do not the words of this prayer connote a settled resolve ? Do they not briefly indicate that Husain had dedicated his life for some special object and that every moment in his life was spent in obedience to the Creator's suggestions ?

Till 60 A. H. these were Husain's sayings, in 61 A. H. they issued forth in the shape of his action.

Here is another such prayer which he used to recite in his prayers.

اللهم من اُدی انی مأدی فانت ما ، وای ومن نجا الی ملجا فانت ملجای احرسنی فی بیاتی من افتتان الامتان ولعبة الشیطان لحظتك التی لایشوبها ورغ نفس تبقین ولا وارد طیف تبطین ولا یلم بها فرح حتی تقلبنی الیك بارادتك غیر ظنین ولا مظنون ولا مراب ولا مرتاب

"O God ! if any body take refuge with some one other than Thou, let him do so. Thou art my refuge, my only refuge. If anybody look to any one other than Thou for support, he is free to do so. Thou art my support, my only support. Let thy greatness, which cannot yield to any sensual desire or prejudice and in which no casual prejudice or favour can have any say, protect me, in my trial, from getting involved in any mischief or overawad by any pack of devils till I go back to These as Thou wilt, my heart free from evil ideas, others entertaining no evil opinion of me, neither I entertaining doubts about others, nor others harbouring any doubts about me.

Husain used to repeat the following prayer in the mornings and evenings.

اللهم انی اسلمت نفسی الیك ووجهت وجهی الیك وفوضت امری الیك اللهم انك تکفینی من کل احد ولا یکفینی منك احد

1. Mahjud Dawat P. 71—71
2. Mahjad Dawat : P. 73

"O God ! I have entrusted my self to Thee, and have addressed myself to Thee, and have placed my hand in Thy hand. O God, Thou canst protect me from the mischief of every one else. but nobody except Thee may save me from Thy wrath."[1]

Is it possible for a man, who believes firmly in a doctrine like this and whose aim in life runs along these lines and who has spent his days and nights in reflecting on doctrine, which he repeats with his tongue frequently enough. to yield to the forces of insubordination to God, and in oblivion of God, the All mighty and the All powerful, bow to worldly grandour ? Yazid desired Husain to depart from the path of God, and bear him company in his Satanic course. but Husain, who had placed his life in the hands of God spurned his desire, because He was unmoved in his belief that Yazid could not occasion him the least harm. Even when Husain's body was being cut to pieces with swords at Karbala, he stood fast to his belief. When the real consequences of the battle of Karbala began manifesting themselves clearly for all to see, it turned out that Husains had been literally correct. Blood had, indeed, flowed from the severed necks of Husain and his companions. but it was verily the great artery of Yazid's might which had been rent asunder Husain achieved immortality and it was in fact, Yazid who was destroyed. This was wrought by the power of Husain's will, often reflected in his sayings. Shallow witted persons, inebriated with the pleasures of the world,consider raising the fear of death as the most potent means of overawing an opponent, but those how treat death, met in the path of righteousness, as the very object of their lives, remain impervious to such threats.

The philosophy of Husain's life was what his father Ali had taught him specially,

"Abide by the truth even if it be bitter'[1] With this instructlon Husain completely complied.[2]

1. Ibid : P. 241
2. Kafi, vol. 1, p. 412

CHAPTER—XIV

YAZID'S INSISTENCE UPON HUSAIN'S OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND THE LATTER'S REFUSAL

On ascending the throne, Yazid wanted nothing to lead a life of magnificence and splendour. He possesed all the pomp and circumstance of wealth and power, and slaves and slave-girls by the legion to minister to his needs and pander to his desire, and boon companions to beguile his leisure with song and liqour and revels. In the midst of this luxurious glitter and repose of his existence, one anxiety alone gnawed at this heart and robbed his mind of peace. It portended to impart a measure of uncertainty to his future, and sprang from the refusal of a few men, who could be counted on one's fingers, to pledge their fealty to him. The principal among these dissenters to his succession was Husain b. Ali. Yazid could not, of course, brook this defiance. The vaulting ambition of youth, aggravated by wine, the vainglory of authority gained without effort, thanks to the success of his father's designs, the sense of exultation induced by having all the Arab world at his feet, his immaturity, lack of political insight and the persistant recurrence to his mind of his father's last words, urging him to extort from these unwilling men the oath of obedience to himself, without loss of time, all combined to impel Yazid to endeavour posthaste to comply with paternal counsel.

It is more than obvious that Muawiya himself was not a little perturbed over the tacit dissent of these few men to sell their conscience in favour of Yazid, especially since Husain was one of them. But Muawiya could well discern the unsavoury consequences of forcing the pace in the attempt to plan Yazid's accession but Yazid could not do so.

It is sometimes said that had Muawiya lived longer, he would not have taken the unwise step taken by his son. But the father's word's and deeds could have accomplished nothing other than encouraging the son in following the line of action he had taken. Sample for instance, Muawiya's words with which he accosted Husain on reaching Medina, "you are a sacrificial lamb whose blood is a-boil. By God. this blood shall assuredly be shed."

Yazid's first political move was, accordingly, to write to his cousin Waleed b. Atba, b. Abi Safyan, governor of madina, to break the news of Muawiya's death to him, taking care to append with the letter a brief note

asking Waleed to coerce Imam Husain Abdullah b. Omar and Abdullah b. Zubair, into submission to him, and not to spare them till they had taken the oath of allegiance, to him.[1]

This note which opens upon a hint of harshness and violence foreboded the end of the course of silent non-cooperation with Yazid, so far adopted by Husain in his relations with him. This attitude had the two, fold advantage of affording Husain an opportunity of quietly dissociating himself from Yazid's iniquitous claims, and secondly sparing himself the charge of attempting to subvert the public peace which would naturally provide Yazid with a plausible excuse resort to violence and crush resistence to his designs. Husain now clearly saw that this negative attitude could no longer be sustained, and that the time for unmistakable and positive action had arrived unreserved acquiescarce in or unqualified rejection of Yazid's claims had to be signified, the latter plan of action entailing a host of far-reaching consequences.

Despite his close relationship with Yazid, Waleed was not without a respectful regard for Husain's greatness, and apparently lacked that ruthless cruelty which would predispose him to shed innocent blood. Yazid's directions induced a violent ferment in his inner-most sentiments, and he was unable to see how to comply with them. He therefore, consulted Marwan b. Hakam, who was then at Medina, even though his appointment as a ruler of Medina had put such a strain on his relations with Marwan that the latter had given up visiting him. Such was the pressure of circumstances, that he wanted to sound Marwan in order to find out whether the course he intended to adopt ran contrary to Omayyad thinking and also to obviate the chances of Marwan carrying tales against him to Yazid. Marwan who had even in the lifetime of the prophet acted so atrociously as to earn from the latterbanishment from Medina for his own father and himself, told him to entertain no anxiety concerning Abdullah b. Umar and Abdur Rahman b. Abu Bakr who would, in any case, make no bid for the caliphate. He however, cautioned him about Husain b. Ali, and Abdullah b. Zubair and asked him to demand of them the oath of loyalty to Yazid and to kill them if they declined to submit, and that all this should be gone through before the news of Muawiya's death came to be generally known, for he opined, if they became privy to the tidings of Muawiya's passing away, each one of them would openly defy Yazid, and endeavour to rally support for his claim. [2]

1. Tabari, Vol 6, P-188
2. Al Akhbarut Tawal, p, 229

Even though Waleed felt that he could not accept Marwan's advice in its entirety, he sent a youth, Abdullah b. Ama b. Usman at once to summon Husain and Abdullah b. Zubair. Both were in the prophet's mosque when they received the invitation. They could see that it was an unusual time for a summons like the one they had received, as Waleed did not receive visitors at that hour. They, therefore, sent back the emissary telling him that they would follow. Husain told Abdullah b. Zubair, that apparently Muawiya had breathed, his last, and that they were wanted simply in order that the oath of loyalty be secured from them, so that before the news of Muawiya's demise gained currency they should have been bound over. Abdullah shared this view and enquired about the steps to be taken, Husain told him that he would collect the strong men of his family and take them along with him to hold themselves in readiness at Waleed's door, and would himself go to see him. Abdullah b. Zubair, saw in these preparations danger to Husain's life, Husain, however, reasured him that he had calculated the odds, and would manage to preclude all danger to himself.

Husain collected his relations and others chosen friends and went to Waleed, leaving his followers at the latter's door, instructing them to enter Into Waleed's residence if called by him or when they heard Waleed raise his voice. Husain, who found Marwan and Yazid peacefully confabulating with each other, contrary to their usual behaviour, said, "Accord and harmony are better than dissent and conflict. May your relations with each other grow in cordiality." To this no answer was made and Husain sat down. Waleed read over Yazid's letter to him, only the portion relating to to Muawiya's death in all probability, and then made the request for the oath of allegiance to Yazid. Husain repeated the phrase, uttered on calamitous occasion. "We are surely for God, to Him we verily return"[1] and added, "May God give you patience in this misfortune. As regards the oath, I should think you would not deem it sufficient for a man like me to take it privately instead of publicly. Waleed assented. Husain then told Waleed to take the oath from him when the latter publicly announced Muawiya's death, and called upon all people generally to pledge their obedience to Yazid, for that indeed would be the opportune moment for this question to be finally resolved.[2] Waleed had probably anticipated that even upon a mention being made to him of taking the pledge for Yazid, Husain would at once voice his opposition and make a sharp response and

1. The Quran, Sura, Baqarah Vol. 156

2. Tabari, Vol 6, p. 189; Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 229

that he would then be confronted with the problem of deciding the manner in which compliance of Yazid s behest might be made. Upon hearing Husain's mild reply, he was relieved, and agreed that Husain might go back and see him again with all others. Marwan sat silently watching the proceedings, and noticing the accommodating attitude of waleed crieed out, "What a disastrous mistake. Waleed, are you committing? f Husain escapes from you this once without takihg the oath, you would never again get such an opportunity, unless it be after much bloodshed on both sides. It is better to arrest him here and now and prevent his return unless he takes the oath, or else to put him to the sword."

This greatly piqued Husain who got up saying, "Marwan, how can you dare assassinate me? By God you have spoken in error and committed a sin." Having said so, Husain departed for his residence with his friends and relations.[1] Marwan warned Waleed that he would never again get a like opportunity of his advice went unheeded. Waleed replied, "Reserve your advice for others. You had suggested a course which would have spelt the destruction of my faith. By God, I do not like to kill Husain even though all the wealth of the east and west be laid at my disposal. God be praised, shall I murder Husain for merely disagreeing to take the oath? By God, I believe that Husain's murderer would be pronounced a great loser on the day of judgment."[2]

Marwan told Waleed thut if that was his belief, he had done well in acting as he had done. It is quite likely that Marwan might have acquainted Yazid with the whole episode, picking at Waleed's handling of the situation. And it was possibly this which entailed Waleed's replacement in the governorship of Madina by Umar b. Saeed ul Ashdaq.

It is worth going behind Husain's unbending rejection of the demand to swear allegiance to Yazid. In order to appreciate the stand taken by Husain in this context. we would have to take into due account the moral responsibilities which had then devolved upon him as the senior-most descendant of the prophet and his representative charged with the highest responsibility for keeing up the traditions of his house in succouring Islam and upholding the truth. It would also have to be pondered how best Husain could acquit himself in the situation and why, after all, should Yazid have insisted with such relentless vigour upon obtaining Husain's word in his favour. In a democracy, the acknowledgement by a majority of the people of the lawfulness of a government is sufficient' and minority opinion is entirely ignored.

1. Tabari, Vol. VI. p. 189
2. Al Akhbar at Tawal, p. 229

It is also not required that the minority should be coerced to alter its view if it makes no overt attempt at subversion of the established authority. In all previous caliphates, there were people who did not take the oath of allegiance to the caliph. During the caliphate of Ali himself, Hassan b. Sabit, Ka'ab b Malik, and Zaid b. Sabit, among others, omitted to take the oath of allegiance to him, but this alone was not visited with any punishment. It is also manifest that howsoever numerous the crowd that Muawiya might have managed to collect at Mecca and Medina to swear odedience to Yazid, hundreds of persons at both these places might have stayed away from the the ceremony, not caring to leave their houses, and note of such defaulters were put under any pressure to take the pledge. Why then should the entire machinery of the Syrian government have been put into motion to extort the avowal of submission to Yazid from Husain, and only Husain. Such an expenditure of stupendous effort by the State points to the lone conclusion that Husain's plighted word was being sought, not as from a member, like any other, of the Arab community, but because a single individual, on occasions, is considered to represent a party and even a nation, and Husain was such a single personality who, in his person, represented the most venerable member of the prophet's family upon whom had devolved the duty of saving the true faith revealed by God, as indeed later it invartiably rested with other successors of the prophet from his ahle bait. It explains why nobody else from the prophets' family or deecended from Ali was asked to declare his allegiance to Yazid even though they, for instance Mohammad b. Hanafia; Abdullah b. Jafar, Abbas b. Ali and his brothers, to mention a few, had not taken the desired oath. And the reason is obvious, while Husain was there, none of them could be deemed to be clothed with that responsibility and invested with that trust which was associated with him and none other than him.

Yazid could, to a certainty, have done without Husain's word of obedience, if his pretensions had extended only to wordly power and mundane ascendancy. But the kind of hegemony he desired to win was that of over-lordship associated with the caliphate of Islam, amounting to succession to the prophet himself. His aim was that the sovereign should have full control of religion of which the laws should follow his wishes. He was, therefore, of necessity constrained to make the religious successor of the prophet of Islam subscribe to his authority. Husain realised that if they had been alive at this juncture, his brother, Hasan; his father, Ali; and even his grandfather, the prophet himself, would have been confronted with the same inexorable pressure to swear obedience to Yazid as now confronted him. He therefore, concluded that if he yielded to Yazid's wishes, it

would be as though all these, his distinguished predecessors, had given in to Yazid. It was with this feeling of responsibility now cast on him that he took it upon himself to offer unwavering defience to Yazid's demand, come what hardships may.

It was a question of upholding the dignity of faith and incidentally his self-respect and the superiority of his right as well. He, therefore, had taken a resolve to stand fast in his decision till the bitter end which he could fully foresee. While he did not announce his determination in any high-flown phrases, the seriousness of his purpose was not lost on those who attended to his words. Accordingly Abu Saeed Maqbari tells us that he saw Husain entering Medina placing his hands for support alternately on the shoulders of two men who accomopanied him and reciting the couplets of Ibne Mufarragh to the affect.

لاذعرت السوام في فلق الصبح مغيرا ولا دعيت يزيد
يوم اعطى من المهابة ضيما والمنايا يرصدنني ان احيدا

"May God not bring the day when the powers of death should spring upon me from their hiding places to endeavour to deflect me from my path, and I would for fear of them, put up with ignominy.

Abu Saeed says that he could atonce see that Husain had decided to take some grave step.

Two days after, Imam Husain left for Mecca.[1]

1. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 191

CHAPTER–XV

HASAN'S INACTIVITY AND HUSAIN'S ENTERPRISE

A question often convassed is whether anything would have gone greatly amiss if Husain had also struck an agreement with Yazid since, before him, Hasan had, after all, chosen to take this course with Yazid's father, Muawiya. Superficially, the modes of the conduct of the two brothers in similar situations appear to have been mutually at variance. And this tended to encourage some of those with pro-Omayyad learnings, to invent and give currency to stories of the di ferences which had allegedly arisen between the two brothers.

When circumstances c ange, reactions to them, on the moral plane, tend to assume different aspects. People in general are swayed by sentiments which often lead to immoderation in actions. Those, however, who have acquired the highest degree of moral excellence, deliberate where exactly their duty lies in the circumstances confronting them, and having once decided upon a course of action, they do not suffer themselves to be deflected from it by the opinions of those who sometimes criticise their ways as having fallen short or in excess of the requirements of the situation. Such single-minded, unwavering pursuit of a well-considered pattern of bahaviour is what distingu shed the prophet and Ali, and after them, the brothers, Hasan and Husain.

The treaty concluded by Hasan with Muawiya was, in essence, the prelude to the battle for the faith which later took place at Karbala.

Every step taken timely, is useful and affective, but if taken ahead of its time, it is not only harmful but often brands for ever him who takes it. In order to reform matters of great moment, the sacrifice of one's life is undoubtedly the most effective measure. It is however, a step to which one may turn as a final resort, when all other means have been tried and have failed. The supreme sacrifice. if offered pre-maturely, would be accounted an act of rashness, indiscretion and unperceptiveness. It would then lose cogency and fail to succeed.

In the context of a reformative drive, it is only part of wisdom that to begin with, recourse should be had to mild expedients like making remonstrances and complaints, striking bargains, making adjustments, opening negotiations, arriving at settlements and entering into engagements and pacts. If all such ouertures are unproductive of the desired improvement

in the situation, stringent steps may have to be pressed into service. Sanity always requiring gradualness in raising the speed and strength of the methods adopted. He who gets so intensely inflamed upon the occurrence of a disagreeable incident as to get down to laying down his own life or taking that of his adversary would be called crazy, and would hardly merit praise. On the contrary, a man who is driven to choose to sacrifice himself for winning an eminently worthy object, after he has exhausted all other means of achieving it, indeed, deserves the crown of martyrdom.

While it is true that the integrity and purity of Islam were in peril and that righteousness was at a discount under the Omayyads of Syria, the attempt to call a halt to this corruption called for sacrifice. It was, however, of the essence that peaceful means should first be tried to reverse the march of religious and moral corrosion, so as to provide a rational pralude and unquestionable justification for the offering of the supreme sacrifice as the culmination of the reformatory effort. If without allowing a host of events and circumstances to intervene between his rejection to swear allegiance to Yazid and his self-sacrifice, Husain had at once rushed to oppose Yazid, it would have amounted to courting inescapable disaster in view of the paucity of his supporters. The question then would surely and justifiably have been asked about the reasons which had prevented Husain from attempting to reform matters by employing milder remedies, at least to begin with; trying to win over others to his way of thinking and seeking their cooperation. And of course, the question mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter : "Why had Husain not attempted to gain his object by striking a treaty with Yazid on special terms"? would have been raised. Other questions that might have been asked were, "Why did he not dissociate himself from matters concerning the Government of the day, and remain at Medina" or, "Why should he have repaired to Karbala to invite trouble?"

If there had been no indisputabfe answer to these and similar questions Husain's sacrifice would undoubtedly have been attributed to rashness and would then have been as far from being creditable as it would have been removed from success. But Husain proceeded in such an integrated well-thought out manner that the consequential developments shaping themselves with the passage of years, through a series of inter-connected and well-knit events manifested themselves finally in between 60 A. H. and 61 A. H.

Matters which provided the occasion and furnished the justification for Husain's martyrdom at Karbala might be traced briefly to the absence of any overt act on the part of Ali for about the best part of a quarter of a

century to enforce his successian to the prophet; his acceptence of the caliphate, after a long interregoum on the great insistence of the people; the opposition of the Omayyads to his rule and the wars which ensued; Ali's martyrdom and the accession of Hasan to the caliphate and his abdication of the duties of governance through a special treaty with Muawiya; Husain's own close and prolonged study of the situation in s lent contemplation during the last ten years of Hasan's life; the advancing perversion of the Prevailing attitudes towards the faith; the lack of any response to his own oral and written protests ageinst the happenings in the land of Islam's birth and the practically complete abrogation of the treaty which Hasan had concluded with Muawiya.

The question of making any overtures to Yazid for the making of a fresh treaty with his could not now arise at all, considering the fate of the treaty concluded by Hasan with Muawiya. Indeed it was the breach of the conditions of that treaty which confronted Husain. Muawiya in his time, used to try to mitigate the brazenness of the non-observance of the terms of the treaty by concealing the breaches but now it was the government of his head strong son, Yazid, who was uninhibited by any scruples. If the treaty with Muawiya had come to naught, a treaty with Yazid would, as a forgone conclusion, come to less then naught.

Another difference in the circumstances in which Hasan had negotiated the settlement with Muawiya was that, the former was the caliph and that he had abdicated only the outward adjuncts of rulership under the treaty. It was, however, very far from being the case that he had dissociated himself from the Vice-regency of God and the leadership of the Muslim community. The omayyad, however, degraded it to an inbecile pact for non-interference and worKed it to bring about a disconnect complete deahotomy between spiritual primacy and temporal paramountcy. As the concept of spirtual primacy still continued even during the currency of the treaty, Husain's life could not remain safe. Had the government of Syria been content with the policy of non-intervention on the part of Husain, the question of demanding the oath of allegiance from him need not have arisen at all, since both Hasan and Husain consistently obstained from striving for temporal government leaving well enough alone was always adhered to by Hasan government.

The political strategy of Damascus at the time of the signing of the treaty with Hasan suffered the disjunction of the centre of spiritual power from the core of worldly power as the then prevailing compulsions had made such an arrangement expedient. For, without the treaty Hasan's

paramount position as the Chief of Islam could not be brought to an end. The treaty once concluded, Muawiya himself and, after him, Yazid, intensely desired that this thorn in their sides should be pulled out once and for all. The conquest of countries has little in common with the conquest of hearts, and he who subdues lands is ever in fear of him who wins hearts. It was exactly this apprehension which impelled the government at Damascus to direct its unkind attentions towards the descendants of the prophet, howsoever aloof from the affairs of the State the latter held themselves.

Obviously, then, there was no point in Husain's entering into negotiations with Yazid in the same sense as Hasan had done with Muawiya. If, as one of the parties responsible for enforcing compliance with the terms of the bilateral treaty, Husain could make a move, he would certainly have restored a peaceful balance.The issue was however different now: Husain was confronted with the demand of swearing allegiance to Yazid. This meant not only the annulment of the spiritual authority now centred in Husain himself, but also the acknowledgement of the validity of the entire socio-political system which was sought to be established by the rulers at Damascus. This was what could in no wise be acceptable to any descendant of the prophet, be he Hasan or Husain.

Again, in the past. while demanding the oath of allegiance from the people, the caliphs undertook to abide by the precepts of the Quran and the practices of the prophet, Yazid's overweening arrogance made the oath a downright acknowledgement, by him who swore it, that he was the slave of the caliph who enjoyed full proprietory rights over his life and property and off spring.

Indeed Yazid b. Abdullah b. Rabia b. Aswad was done to death at Medina for his refusal to take the oath in this form, while he was prepared to take the oath, as of old, i. e. allegiance to the caliph who undertook to abide by the precepts of the Quran and the practices of the prophet.

It was for these circumstances that while Husain was variously advised by his relatives and well-wishers to remain at Medina; to stay at Mecca; to repair to Taif or Yemen; or to retire to mount Uja, none ever thought of suggesting to him to subscribe to the oath of allegiance to Yazid, since it was recognised by them all that such oath-taking was entirely out of the question for Husain. Such an oath was destructive of all that was noble and high minded, and a negation of all the rights with which the Muslims had been invested.

Abdullaa b. Abbas Abdur Rahman b. Abu Bakr and Abdullah b. Zubair had not favoured Yazid's succession to the caliphate and they had told Muawiya that his attempts to instal Yazid as the caliph were wholly unwarranted. Husain, being a grandson of the prophet, had greater solicitude for the purity of the faith and was the better entitled to spurn Yazid's demands.

CHAPTER—XVI

HUSAIN'S STAND-AN INTERPRETATION

Settlement with Yazid being completely ruled out, what alternative remained available to Husain? To entrust the decision of the issues involved to the arbitrament of war could simply not be easily visualised. Ali had died twenty years ago. Even in his time, the Omayyads had grown so strong in Syria that their forces were almost equally poised at Siffin against Ali's might. Hasan had found the Omavyadds so powerful that he had preferred to come to terms with Muawiya in order to avert extensive bloodshed. Such was the look of things when the followers of Ali were still duly organised. After a lapse of twenty long years, the group of Ali's adherents had been put into disarray, the consciences of thousands had been purchased. many of those who had been steadfast in their loyalty to Ali had their heads severed,or had been thrown into prisons. Many had made themselves scarce in various directions, terror-stricken and despondent. In these circumstances, war could not possibly be thought of. Besides, Husain's object could not have been achieved by hostilities on the material plane.

What would Husain do in this situation? He had refused to swear subservience to Yazid. What course would he chalk out for himself? We could have failed in conceiving his plan of action, if he had not shown it by putting it through actually. He decided on war, but with a difference. In all wars might is opposed with might. It was Husain who first thought of a new technique of war: he would oppose force with nobility of character, confront power with powerlessness meet numbers with want of numerical backing, and defy oppression with suffering. The world had not witnesse this strategy earlier.

Husain realised that the teachings of Islam had suffered such a total eclipse that for ages, even till the end of time, the succeeding generations would fail to discover what really the culture and principles of social existence were which the prophet of Islam had presented to the world.

The principal source open to posterity to peer into the way things were in the past is to study thd chronicles and annals of the preceding times In the world of Islam, the pomp and power of Muslim monarchs constituted the most prominent feature. If the student of Islamic culture and civilisation took to works of history, he would have found, on their pages, records and descridtion of casties and palaces raised at Damascus

and Baghdad of lofty gateways massively built and richly embelished, of gilded halls with pillars and walls inlaid with precious stones of thrones heavily studded with jewels, of rows upon rows of slaves turned out in smart uniforms of cloth of gold, of bevies of young, handsome damisels attired in their resplendent finery, of measures of wines going the rounds for hours on end, of the enthralling music of expert singers heightened by the varlegated symphonies of their orchestras. He would, in all probability, also alight on instances of the calls for prayers drowned in the notes of mellifluous minetrelsy, and of the hours of prayers having struck without evoking any response in the courts of leaders of Islam. Would he then not ask himself whether these were the things which represented the culture and civilisation of Islam, of which the Muslims were so proud? Where in the pages of history could he find references to the dilapidated tenements in the quartor occupied by the descendants of Hashim at Medina where some old and young men and children had busied themselves with meditating upon their God, or to the doors where at the poor, the needy and the indigent had been provided with food by men who had themselves gone hungry and behind which slaves and Slave-girls had been treated with the same consideration as free man or faces had turned pale with the exhausting arduous labour performed by their possessers, or lips had dried up in raising prayers to God, and those object in life had been to uplift the poor, help the indigent and the friendless. to succour the oppressed and to fashion this world into an image of paradise by the excellence of their conduct.

To provide to the student with a picture of the conditions in a truly Islamic world was, indeed fhe end which Husain chose for himself in refusing to swear allegiance to Yazid. He set to work to avert the gaze of mankind from imposing castles, grand palaces and lofty towers and focus men's attention upon the transcending glory and surpassing splendour of true Islamic principles and practices. He decided to present the consummate perfection of his character in a manner which would make it shine like a start whose brilliance should make the impressive structures raised by powerful kings pale into dull insignificance. He planned to juxtapose power and principle, mundane authority and spiritual force, worldly wisdom and Islamic teachings and culture so as to throw into bold relief the irreconcilable disagreement that divided them. This was, in essence, not a new idea. It was what all prophets had in view, and all moral reformers had endeavoured to point out. But the manner in which Husain achieved this object was, indeed, unique. Nothing like it had been attempted before Husain, nor has ever been tried after him.

Those who have an insight into the political shifts and subterfuges to which all government the world over resort are aware that when oppression and tyranny desire to keep men in thrall, they adopt measures to deaden men's sensibilities, and to rob them of the courage to speak out. The Omayyads of Syria had concentrated their enegies upon achieving the twin objects. Else, how had it come to pass that Muslims who had been taught the principles of Islam and humanity with unremitting care by the prophet himself, who had themselves seen the utterly low esteem in which he had held material possessions, the tattered curtain before the entrance to the prophet's house, the hearth of the messenger of God cold for days on end, and everything brought to him distributed among the poor, should acquiesce in the royal treasury getting heaped with gold extorted from the needy end lavished on nothing more meritorious than merry-making in the caliphs' courts and bacchanalian revelries enlivening regal apartments? How could the Muslim view such revolting proceedings of their leader without demur, and continue to recognise him as their Caliph? This must have been contrived by depriving the people of their power to feel and of their spirit to bespeak their minds without inhibition.

There are many ways to induce a palsy of the power to feel and the urge to speak out. Men in general are a bundle of sentiments and are not usually overburdened with brains. Those who have a sufficiency of intellect are the leaders of public opinion or are otherwise conspicuous. If these prominent men can be won over or purchased, they may deal men in any desired direction, how-so-ever far it may take them from the right course. Accordingly, in democracies what is notionally the majority view does not really reflect the general will. Omayyad statecraft won over people of note by suborning some of them and striking terror into the hearts of others, if they betrayed any signs of disagreement with the ruling cilque. Some won lavish gifts of gold, others lost their lives or their freedom. The result was that people took leave of the perilous exercise of cerebration, reminding themselves of the dotleful end of those who had not resisted the temptation of allowing their minds to ponder upon contemporary happenings in their country and to arrive at opinions frowned at by their rulers.

Husain's chief instruments of opposition to the ruler of his day were reviving in the people the capacity to feel, awakening in them the power to think, restoring in them the ability to weigh consider and resuscicating in them the courage to give uninhibited expression to the still 'small voice within'. The question was how to reanimate this desire to think and resurrect this courage to speak out. It led to an examination of the causes of

the prevalent insensibility of the heart and stupor of the brain. Had people ceased to be Muslims? No, they still took pride in belonging to the fold of Islam. It transpired, however, that their Islamic susceptibilities had been everpowered by a deep swoon. In a fainting fit resort is had to splashing the face of the sufferer with water, the deeper the fit, the more vigorous the apattering. The man of course continues to breathe, but other manifestations of life get knocked out for the time being. In order, therefore, to restore the Muslims from their inertia, to win them back from the stupor of the heart and narcosis of the brain into which they had been decoyed by those in power, so that they should become fully alive to the prevalent injustice, corruption and erosion of faith, it was necessary that the reason which had facilitated the blockout of reason and senses be laid bare. If the group undermining the faith and undoing its teachings, draped in the formal habiliments of Islam and professing its adherence to its fold, had been avowedly non-Muslim, the Muslim would surely have been jolted out of their somniferous unconcern betimes. Husain, therefore, resolved to bear off the mask of Islam from the faces of those who formed this gang, and to reveal to the world the kind of men who had lurked behind the facade of Islam, untouched by any trace of the faith. This scheme had the triple merit of weaning contemporary Muslims from their misguiding mentors, delivering succeeding generations of Muslims from setting any store by the precedents created by them, and upholding the fair name of Islam, unsullied by any reproach, before the non-Muslim world, so that when ever the evil ways of the Omayyads came to be recounted to disparage Islam, the immaculate character and conduct of Husain could atonce be cited to save the Muslims from embarrasment, nay humiliation. If the conduct and handiworks of Yazid had borne any affinity to Islam, why should the prophets' grandsn himself have sacrificed his life to redeem the faith from Yazid's vicious example? These objects could obviously not be achieved by means of a war waged with material aid. Such a war could certainly result in the deaths of individuals, but surely not in the extermination of an ideology. Empires do get shaken by revolutions, but thereby the feelings and susceptibilities of men collectively hardly suffer violent upheavals. It was no part of Husain's objective to slay individuals, which would have been possible if circumstances had favoured. This would not have extinguished the ideas which were working havoc with the faith of Islam and in fact smothering it. The liquidation of Yazid and the annihilation of his armed might was not beyond the realm of possibility, but the uprooting of the way of thinking he had stood for, and the desolation of the road he had trodden could not have been accomplished if amidst the almost universal eclipse of perceptivity and reason then pre-

valent, Husain had joined issues with Yazid on the basis of military strength. For then the majority of the people could have hardly recognised the true nature of Husain's struggle, and would have put it down to be a trial of strength between two contenders for power. In such a view, Yazid's position might possibly have been considered as loss vulnerable in a political sense, since he had been, in fact, widely, if not universally, accepted as the ruler. Husain's success-an impossibility for obvious reasons-might have produced a passing revolutionary change in the centre of power. It would, however, have left the Omayyads still draped in the vestments of Islam, and might as well have furnished to his adversary the same excuse of lapse of judgement as he had trotted out in extenuation of the battle of Siffin fought against Ali. Also, in that event, the damaging disclosures of the inner workings of the Omayyad dispensation which have drained the human heart of all vestiges of sympathy for the Umayyids in general, could not have been, by any means, contrived.

If Husain had defeated Yazid's military machine with the help of physical force, the world would not have perceived the distinction between truth and power, and his victory would have been equated with the usual triumphs of kings. Husain's success would have been just another conquest, and no more, in the eyes of mankind, and would have fallen entirely short of discovering the essential features of Islam. He could not have ridden to such smashing triumph as he did, if he had opposed force with force. For then his greatest success would have brought to him the overlordship of what had been only reluctantly conceded to Ali, viz. the control of Iraq and the Hedjaz. Yazid would have remained in undisturbed possession of Syria. Both the powers would have remained mutually at loggerheads, and the lives and energies of the Muslims would have dissipated in wars of attrition between them. Husain had planned differently. He had in view a victory which would transcend the barriers of territory and the limitations of time.

It may possibly be argued that even after the martyrdom of Husain, heads of many Islamic governments have indulged in the same depravities as Yazid. It should, in this context, he remembered that Husain's struggle has so prominently demarcated the principles and spirit of Islam that their subsequent contraventions are symptematic only of individual aberrations and turpitude and do not get invested with the sanction of the Islamic religion and law. The danger that their scandaluos or vicious conduct might come to be looked upon as grounded in the accepted principles of Islam or

pertaining to the Islamic way of life has receded for evermore because Husain has erected an indestructible memoriel to the nobility, purity and greatness of Islam.

It would be clear from the foregoing discussion that one course, and one alone, was open to Husain for reaslising his goal, namely, the one he did adopt. That in treading his chosen course he would welcome death was shown by many of his words and observations. Thus, when he was departing from Macca he said, 'Death bears the same relation to man that a neck-lace does to a young woman's neck, this simply meant that death is the inescapable destiny of man. The strikingly agreeable associations with which Hussain has surrounded this bitter truth, besides indicating the refinment of his taste also show that in common with the traditions of his family, of which the members showed the atmost indifferance to death, Husain did not find anything repellent about death, it even assumed attractive links, When Faragdae, the poet, met Husain at the first stage of the latter's journey from Mecca, and describing the prospects at Kufa told him that while the hearts of people there were indeed with him, their swords would be on the side of the Omyyads, Husain observed, "you are right, but everything is in the hands of God. He does what he chooses and displays a new manifestation of His authority every day, If God's pleasure accords with our wishes, we would praisa Him and seek His assistance in expressing our gratitude to Him. If it be God's will to put restraints in our way, it is not least in merit that one's intentions should be pura, and one's conscience mindful of piety"[1]

On the way to Iraq, his words to Hur bore the impress of the same mould of his convictions. Hur requested Husain to take pity on himself for the sake of God, and warned him that wa rwith Yazid would surely spell his undoubted slaughter and ruin. Husain said in reply, "Do you wish to put me in fear of death ? Can you do more than slay me."[2] Then he recited a couplet of a poet of the tribe of Aus, meaning:—

"I would ramain steadfast in my resolve. Death holds no disgrace for him who is brave and whose intentions are pure and who fights to defend what is right."

An extra-ordinary thing, this ? Yes, outwardly, For to the common run of men, the last and final stage is reached with death. But Husain asks, "Can you do anything more than kill me", implying that death marks

1. Irshad p. p. 228
2. Op. cit-pp-236-237

only an intermediate stage in the struggle for truth, the final issue of triumph or defeat in such a strife gets decided later, lying beyond the stage of death.

At the stage of Zu Hasm, when Hur had arrived with a force to intercept the progress of Husain on his journey, he addressed his men. saying inter alia, "What shape things have assumed is plainly before your eyes. The ways of the world have, indeed, suffered a change. Virtue has departed from it. Nothing is left in the world except what is like the trace of water in the vessel from which the liquid has spilled. A mean existence is like poisonous weeds. Do you not perceive that the men's actions are divorced from the truth, and that falsehood has not suffered banishment ? In these circumstances, the truly faithful person desires to meet his Creator. To me, a great blessing like martyrdom lies in death, and life amidst these oppressors is a burden. [1]

He defined the duties and privileges of rulers and subjects and described the purpose of Government as fostering the improvement of the minds and performance of the people, and enforcing the precepts of faith. He observed that the government deserved respect only so long as it remained useful to the life of the community. On another occasion, he enumerated the qualities of a ruler as lying in the observance of the customs and ways of Islam, dispensing justice, remaining bound by righteousness, and contented with the will of God.[2]

The ways of the rulers drew protests from him were commented upon by Husain on several occasions. He told Hur's army, "The prophet remarked that whoever found an unjust ruler, contravening the injunctions of God and the precedents set up by the prophet, oppressing people and treating them with cruelty, and did not prevent him, by word or deed, from these iniquities, would himself be numbered amongst the high-handed rulers. Behold, the present government has struck a bergain with the devil and has turned its back upon obedience to God. It has engineered disorder and raised commotion and chaos: It has appropriated to itself all the wealth of the country."

Addressing the army of Omar-i-Sa'd at Karbala he enquired of them, "Do you not see that the goverment is behaving unrighteously and with oppresion, and does not forsake the ways of untruth and falsehood? It is indeed time that the truly faifhful should long for death. In these circums-

1. Tabari, Vol. 6 p. 229
2. Irshad p. 210

ances I look upon death as a piece of good luck and a source of relief. Life with the iniquitous is a torture."

On the eve of the tenth day of Moharrum, he told his supporters and helpers at Karbala, " I consider jife to consist in death with dignity and death to be synonymous with life spent in disgrace." On the day of his martyrdom, he told the enemy, " I vow not to surrender myself to you with humiliation, nor to run away tiom you like a slava." On another occasion he observed, " I seek sheltat from every one who is proud and conceited and does not believe in the day of judgement.[1]" This indeed was a slant on Yazid to heap dipgrace on his arrogance and nauteur.

1. Irshad. p. 240

CHAPTER XVII

DEPARTURE FROM MEDINA AND TAKING ASYLUM AT MECCA

To resume the thread of our narrative from where we left off in Chepter XIV, Husain considered it necessary for him to leave Medina.

It would betray ignorance of a long sequence of events to conceive that if Husain had stayed out at Medina, the resident of that town would have done their best to keep him from harm. Such a view is ruled out by the ascendancy which certain influences had come to acquire in Medina ever since the prophet's death. Here it was that Fatima, the prophet's dauhter, was exposed to innumerable indignities, disentitlements & wrongs after her great father's death, It was at Medina again that Ali had to put up, for twenty-five long years, after the prophet's demise, with the bitterest of disappointments, of deprivations and insults. And the Medinites had offered no solace. no help and no encouragement either to Fatima or Ali in their misfortune. And then it was at Medina itself that the dead body of Hasan had not been allowed to be taken to the prophet's tomb and that with an unabashed show of violence, and nobody belonging to Medina had come forward to raise his voice against this iniquity. Was not this occasion grave enough to cause of latter in Medina if it could still boast of a living conscience? These are only some examples of the callous indifference shown by the people of Medina towards the members of the prophets' family in the evil days on which they had fallan even before the perpetration of the indescribable brutalities and enormities at Karbala in 61 A. H. Even shortly after the martyrdom of Husain in that year, when the heart-rending details of the slaughter at Karbala had became known at Medina, the residents of that locality evinced no agonised impatience to give a call for the wreaking of vengeance for Husain's cruel slaughter. Iraq was convulsed; to all appearances, the Hijaz remained unruffled.

It was the natural consequence of Husain's sacrifice that public attention came to be focussed on the misdeeds of Yazid, and it was only in the following year, when the details of Yazid's inhuman atrocities had become common property that the Medinites could bring themselves to voicing their opposition to him. The occurrences at Hira, of which move would follow, were also in the same context.

Subsequently also there is a concatenation of events, spread over long spans of time, in which the descendants of Fatima were put to a

variety of the most gruesome tortures and scandalising inqiuities during the Omayadd and Abbaside regimes, but the Medinites do not appear to have ever befriended them. All the prominent men of the prophets' house hold, inculding the Imams from Zainul Abidin to Ali Naqi, had, in the beginnings of their careers, lived at Medina, and were, in their times, repositories of the teachings of the prophet. It was at Medina that some of them were poisoned. some incarcerated, and some called away to distant destinations. Did the residents of Medina ever raise their little finger to help or protect any of them ? Would it then be other than wishful thinking to suppose that if Husain had prolonged his residence at Medina, the people of that town would have come to his succour?

Among the knowledgeable in Arabia. the consensus about the character of the people of the Hijaz was that they wanted firmness in difficulty. Al-Kawa said to Muawiya about them, "The people of the Hijaz are in the fore-front of all mischief, but faint-hearted in taking its consequences. They are wholly useless in putting arduous undertakings through."[1]

These facts and later developments show that if Husain had not farsightedly left Medina, Marwan, who had suggested his murder to Waleed, and was greatly incensed at the rejection of his advice. would have complained to Yazid of Waleed's softness towards Husain. This would certainly have proovked Yazid to take very stiff action against Husain. And then, like Omar-i-Sad, Waleed would either have been forced by his cupidity, lust for power, or fear, or all these motives in combination, to fall in with Yazid's directions, or like Numan, son of Bashir, Governor of Kufa, he would have found himself replaced by Marwan, son of Hakam, or some like heartless tyrant and inveterate enemy of the prophets' family so that Husain's blood would have been shed in the prophets' city of Medina itself.

This danger was entirely genuine and the letters exchanged between waleed and Yazid show that the stage was all set for the murder of Husain. Writing to Yazid, Waleed said, "..... Husain does not acknowledge your caliphate and is not prepared to swear allegiance to you. Now all depends upon your pleasure." Yazid said in reply, "Comply with the directions given in this letter with speed. Send me a complete lists of all persons of note who have and who, have not subscribed to the oath of allegiance to me. The head of Husain, son of Ali, should accompany your reply." How could Waleed have withstood the compulsive impact of this peremptory order? It is entirely another thing that Waleed was deprived of the opportunity of carrying out Yazid's directions account of the depar-

1. Kitabul Baladan, p. 125

ture of Husain of Medina prior to the receipt of Yazid's missive. Even so, Waleed did not escape the caliph's displeasure and in the succeeding month of Ramazan, he was replaced by Amr b. Said, who continued as Governor of Mecca also.

And if Husain had been murdered at Medina, wouldhis sacrifice have gained the same unapproachable prominence as it won at Karbala? Omayyad statecraft would certainly have not suffered Husain's sacrifice to attain such dizzy heights. The government must certainly have striven to present his sacrifice in a variety of unflattering or inconsequential aspects. As in the context of Hasan's martyrdom, some contemptible agent like Jada daughter of Ashas, would have been hired to contrive it, or as in connection with Ali's martyrdom, some renegade from Islam like b. Muljim would have been engaged to do the killing, so that the blame for the crime may not be placed at the door of the government of Syria. Husain would have met his death at Medina, but the mask of Islam would have remained untorn from the face of the government. Husain was firmly resolved to prevent this from happening. It would have been prudent for Husain to continue living at Medina only so long as it was possible and compatible with safety. Since he had no intention of swearing allegiance to Yazid, it was part of wisdom that he should present for the editication of his countrymen, as indeed of the world, his principles, and object and offer his sacrifice on as elevated and prominent a plane as what was attainable only at Karbala. He did embark upon what was indeed on unusual journey. It meant the first step in the direction of Karbala, and on the road to the hereafter. On the night preceding his departure from Medina. Husain kept awake, and devoted his time taking touchingly melancholy leave of the tombs of his grand-father, the prophet, his mother, Fatima, and his brother, Hasan. The night was not yet over when Husain departed from Medina, leaving it desolate and bereft of its chief ornament, and the tomb of the prophet deprived of the candle affection used to light it up.

It was in 60 A. H. on the 28th of Rajab on a Sunday night that Husain left for Mecca, reciting the Ouranic verse

فخرج منها خائفا يترقب قال رب نجنى من القوم الظالمين

hwich recalls the occasion when Moses left Egypt for fear of thecruelty and oppression of the Pharoah Husain took the public highway which led to Mecca, although very shortly before him, Abdullah b. Zubair had taken unfre-quented routes to the same destination. Husain had been advised to proceed on his journey in the same furtive fashion, but he refused to do so being unwilling to impart any semblance and stigma of flight to his depar-

ture saying, "Let what pleases God happen."[1]

He took with him all the descendants of his grand father. Abu Talib, and his daughters, Zainab and Umm-i-Kulsoom. Besides all his brothers and nephews and other relatives also accompanied him except Mohamed, son of Hanafia[2], who had to be left behind on account of some insurmountable difficulty, or possibly as a matter of policy, and his father's sister, Umm-i-Hani, on account of her advanced years. Except these two, nobody alse from amongst the descendants of Abu Talib parted from Husain. It is also a fact that from amongst rhe descendants of Hashim, nobody was present on the battle field of Karbala, except the progeny of Abu Talib.

The fact that he took with him only his closest relatives made it patent that Husain was not leaving Medina intending to engage in any strife. He headed towards Mecca where, according to ancient Arab traditions and also special precepts of Islam, it is not permissible to deprive any creature of its life, even the uprooting of grass being prohibited.[3]

Getting to Mecca, Husain apparently behaved as if he had arrived at a haven of safety, and started living a life of peaceful quiet and inactivity, taking no interest in the affairs of the day to day administration or matters of state policy. He did not enter into communication with anybody, nor exhorted people to extend help to him. It is important to find out his object in taking up residence at Mecca where he arrived on the 3rd Sha ban 60 A.H. on a Friday night[4], reciting the verse of the Quran

ولمّا توجّہ تلقآء مدین قال عسیٰ ربی ان یھدینی سوآء السّبیل [5]

This verse also refers to Moses when he took asylum at Medina.

At Mecca, Husain took up residence in Sheb-i-Ali, Abdullah b Zubair. who had arrived at Mecca a few days earlier than Husain had begun to attract people to himself on account of his unexpected appearance there, and had therefore, acquired some sort of a central position. To his chagrin he was soon destined to lose this pre-eminence to Husain on the latter's arrival. People commenced gathering round Husain instead of Abdullah. who, realising he could not win the prestige that Husain commanded, deemed it expedient to visit Husain every morning and evening.[6]

1. Tabari, Vol. 6, page, 196
2. Al Akhbarut Tawal, p. 230, Tabari V-6, p. 110
3. Sahih Bukhari, V. 2, p. 40; Sahih Muslim, vol. 1 p.p. 438-439
4. Tabari, v. 6, p. 215. Irshad p 209
5. The Quran, Qisas, nerse 22
6. Al Akhbarut Tawal, p. 230

At Muawiya's death, Medina had, as its Governor, Waleed b. Aqba, son of Abu Sufyan; Mecca had Yahya b. Hakeem b. Safwan b. Ummayya as its governor and the governorships of Kufa and Basra were held respectively by Noman b. Bashir Ansari, and Ohaidullah b. Ziyad. Seemingly the government of Damascus did not repose much trust in Yahya b. Hakeem who was replaced by Amr b. Said b. Aas b. Umaiyya, at Mecca.[1] Amr b. Said also succeeded waleed npon the latters' coming to the adverse notice of Yazid, in part through a report submitted by Marwan. This was, however, a latter development. At a subsequent stage, the condubt of the governor of Kufa did not measure up to the expectations of the government of the day, and a change became necessary. The reason for these transfers of charges is not far to seek. Yazid's way of proceeding with Husain was so unjust and callously aggressive, that men who would be willing to execute his orders could not be easily found. Even Yazid's governors could not comply with his directions in the manner and to the extent jndicated by him. The way things were done shows that any functionary of the government batraying any tendency to go slow in dealing with Husain found himself removed from office in less than no time. A search was on for men whose hearts were untouched by any sympathy for the prophet's family so that all excesses committed by them at the instance of the government could, when so required by circumstances, be attributed to their own depravity enabling Yazid to escape getting saddled with the responsibility for them.

Husain resided at Mecca like a refugee, and this was according to the advice tendered by Mohamed, son of Hanafia and approved by the form ar. Mohamed, son of Hanafia had counselled that in the event of things turning out unpropitiouslyd or him, Husain should be-take himself to the deserts and the vast expanses of infertile land and submontane tracts and to shift from city to city till he could from a clear idea of people's attitudes, so as to be able to arrive at a final decision.[2]

Husain's stay at Mecca was, to all out ward view, permanent. He had before him no particular object to pursue. we wished to live and let live. we did not endeavour to rally any material support for himself nor did be attempt to raise the people against Yazid. Indeed, it cannot be shown that while staying at Mecca, he had made any oveitures, varbal or written, in either direction.

1. Ibid
2. Irshad p. 207-208; Tabari Vol. 6, p. 161

CHAPTER XVIII

INVITATIONS FROM KUFA AND MUSLIM'S EMBASSY

The site of Kufa was demarcated between the Euphrates and Hira when, after its success at Qadisia against the Persians and on other war fronts between 14 A. H. and 16 A. H.[1], the Muslim army was permanently stationed in Iraq as the climate of Madin did not agree with it. The site was selected under the directions of Sa'd b. Abi Viqas, and a mosque and quarters for the residence of the Muslim were laid out[2] In 17 A. H, Sa'd b. Abi Viqas shifted his headquarters from Medina to Kufa where he took up his residence.

In Arabic, 'Kufa' means a spot where pebbles and sand are found in admixture, and as the site answered to this description, it was named Kufa.[3]

On the opposite side. across the Sea, in the region called Arzul Hind, another city was founded- It was called Basra, and it is an unusual coinhidence that both Kufa and Basra were populated about the same time.[4] To begin with, houses were built of reeds and the roofs were thatched. The houses at both places were, however, burnt down in accidental fires, and brick-built houses followed.[5]

The population of Kufa at its inception was 1,00,000 soldiers..[6]

Talha and Zubair had made Basra the centre of their activities when they, in Ayesha's company, had led an army against Ali who had assumed the office of caliph. This uprising brought Ali to Iraq and the "war of the camel" ensued in which the Kufans supported Ali, and the people of Basra sided with Talha and Zubair. Ali made Kufa his capital some time later, arriving there on 12th Rajab, 36 A. H. It was suggested to him to take up residence in the palace which had been occupied by the preceding governors. Ali disapproved of the proposal, and resided in a house at Rahba.[7]

Later, the people of Kufa, for the most part, supported Ali in the wars of Siffin and Nahruwan against his opponents and, therefore, they

1. Tabari Vol. IV p. 148
2. op. cit. p. 142
3. op. cit. p. 189
4. op. cit. p. 149
5. op. cit. p. 191
6. op. cit. p. 292
7. Al Akhbar-ut Tawal, P. 154

came to be known as the "Shias of Ali". It was not that all of them looked upon Ali as the caliph between whom and the prophet of Islam no other caliphs had intervened, or that they did not recognise those who did so intervene as caliph's. They were, none-the-less, proud of being styled as the "Shias of Ali" as contradistinguished from the "Shias of the Omayyads. This was however, when Kufa overflowed with Shia residents. No sooner, however, than the Omayyads had come into power, and Ziyad b. Abih had taken over the office of the governor of Kufa, a veritable avalanche of tyrannous oppression crushed the Kufans, and there remained for them no room in Iraq. Every breath drawn by them forebode the approach of danger, and every moment that passed promised to be their last.

Such a state of affairs of complete dead-set against the Shias did not last for a month or two not even for a few years; it was spread over as many as 20 long years, rendering it impossible for any Shia Kufan to continue in any position of importance. On the contrary, the few who remained at Kufa after large numbers of them had been executed, impaled or exiled were reduced to spending their lives in seclusion and concealment. They could hardly evince any friendship for the members of the prophets' house without signing their own death warrants. Amidst these conditions of oppression and torture, Shiite belief was secretly confined to a small minority which was passing its perilous days in various cities of Iraq and the Hijaz in complete anonymity. Heads of families leaders of tribes and every body else who mattered were the creatures of the government of the day. As for the common people upon whom depends the seccess of all revolutions, in every country without exception, they follow power and trim their sails to the prevailing wind. Only a sudden development capable of creaing in them a ferment can dispose them favoutably towards revolution, and such a commotion may not be stirred up even after years of persuasion and propaganda, Illustrations of such upsets are always presented in the changes of governments, over-throw and installation of Kings, and most of them are the outcome of sudden developments.

The reason for the status que remaining unaltered for 20 years was undoubtedly the fact that there had happened during the period no event potent enough to turn, by its impact, the tide of popular feeling. into a torrent turbulently running against the established order and sweeping away every thing before it.

It was in Rajab, 60 A,H., that Muawiya died. He was succeeded by his son, Yazid, as nominated by him, in the office of caliph. Occasions like this often tend to unsettle mens' mind by inducing them to have a

closer look at the conduct and personal character of their new ruler, and people discuss these matters in the circles of their friends.

Yazid's ways and manners, his drink soddenness, lust, pnerile pursuits, love of fun and frolic and sport, pursuit of sensual pleasures and complete freedom from the restraints of religion and decency were by no means hidden from the people. A general feeling of dissatisfaction, abhorrence and disgust took possession of all men, and a mental search appears to have commenced for one who could undertake the task of deliveting the faithful from this caliph of evil repute and bad character.

It was also noised about that Husain b. Ali had refused to recognise Yazid as the caliph, and had therefore, left Medina for Mecca, determined not to take the oath of loyalty to Yazid, come what may. It was at this stage that a small group of Ali's friends, who could have hoped for God's mercy alone to be delivered from the oppressions which had made their lives worse then miserable during the preceding 20 years, must have espied a ray of hope amid the amassed clouds of despondency. Their judgement must have warned them that the maintenance of passive silence by them in the circumstances as they were then developing, would be indistinguishable from the commission of suicide, and that no better opportunity for improving their lot could be hoped for.

Thinking as indicated in the preceding paragraph, they all met at the house of Sulaiman b. Surd, a companion of the prophet, and an old, experienced man who had seen the prophet's ways, and was a veteran of many wars fought in Ali's company. He addressed the gathering thus :

"You should know that Muawiya is dead, and that Imam Husain has refused to swear allegiance to Yazid and has retired to Mecca. You are his as well as his fathers shias. If you are sure that you would, by no manner of means be ramies in rendering him assistance and in fighting against his enemies, you may well enter into correspondence with him. If you however, apprehend any slackness of effort or weakness of purpose on your part, for God's sake do not imperil his life by raising false hopes."[1]

Evidently Sulaiman made no attempt in his speech to achieve his object by momentarily exciting the emotions of his audience by the force of rhetoric, but wanted his hearers themselves to scrutinise the farthest reach of their existing fervour as also the widest range of their accomplishment in action. He wanted them to realise the delicacy of the situation and make on estimate of the perils that loomed in the future as well. It is

1. Tabari, Vol. Vi, p. 197, Irshad p. 208

however, natural that in the upsurge of feelings, men are hardly able to judge correctly the real extent of their powers. and are likely to err ie estimating the quality and degree of their steadfastness of purpose in trying situations. Sulaiman's words, uttared amidst the mounting to amult of the sentiments of the crowd, did what a splash of water does to the leaping flamas of fire; a unanimous cry burst forth from the whole congregation, "We will certainly fight against his (Husain's) foes, and lay down our lives at his feet."[1]

An idea of the number which made up this gathering may well be had by considering that it had not assembled in any open piece of land, or in the court of any big palace. On the contrary, the meeting had been convened in a small Arab house, that of Sulaiman, of which patterns may even now be seen in Arabic. Even so, it cannot be assumed offhand that all in the crowd were firm Shias of the staunch conviction that Ali was the prophets' testator and the rightful Imam.

In the question posed to the crowd, and in the answer returned to it there was certainly the quality of innertruth, and a sincere expression of the inner-most feelings of the speakers. It rested however, with the future to show how far these men would be able individually to face unexpected and sudden unfavourable turns of fortune.

After Sulaiman b. Surd had done his duty, a letter was addressed to Husain saying.

"This letter is being addressed to Husain b. Ali, on behalf of Sulaiman b Surd, Musayyab, b. Najba, Rifea b. Shaddad, Habib b. Mazahir and other friends from among the Muslim and believers of Kufa. "The letter then dealt with the death of Muawiya and the succession on Yazid and went on to say, " There is no guide at our head. Please come so that we might perhaps, unite in helping the truth because of you.[2] Noman, b. Bashir is present in the governor's house, but we do not join him in the Friday prayers, nor do we go to the Id-gah. If we hear that you are coming here, we will turn him out, forcing him to repair to Syria."

This letter was sent by Abdullah b. Sabi Hamadani and Abdullah b. Dal, and was the first to be received by Husain on 10th of Ramazan.[3] After the gathering at Kufa had dispersed, every one of its took to propogatine the movement in his sphere of influence so that with in a couple of days, no less then 53 petitions had been written, bearing the signatures of from one to four persons. Ali these letters were takenpersonally by Oais,

1. Tabari, Tol. 6, p. 197
2. Tabari vol. VI p. 197 Irshad p. 209)

b. Mushar Saidvi, Ab 'ur Rahman b. Abdul'a'i b. Kadn Arhabi, and Ar imara b. Abeed Salubi[1] to Husain. The unrest and spiritual excitement bred generally, without an distinction of eligion or school of thought by the succassior of Yazid to the caliphate caused the proposal made by these men to be received with welcome on all hands. Even those who did not subscribe to shiite co ictions, were seen to be actively in support of the proposal, not on acc unr of any faith in H sain's religion leadership, but on account of the be ief that he was decid dly better than a drunkard and e dissolute person li e Yazid. Observing these manifestation of support those who had reall initiated the moveme t were convinced that popular opinion was in their favour. This was, however, only an illusion. The sympathy of the gen ral public with the movement was like the flight of birds along the dir ction of a blowing sand-storm : short-lived and not stemming from any i ner affinity. The res lt of the mis-understanding was that whereas the words of the first letter, Perhaps God may unite us on account of you" were expressive both of hope and despondency, the letter which was written only two days later contains the strong hortatory expressions, " Please come soon as people await you, and are not prepared to accept any one else as their leader (imam). Please, therefore, expedite your arrival." This letter was transmitted to Husain by Hani b. Hani Sabii and Said b. Abdullah Hanafi.[2]

One may judge the force of public opinion and the direction of the prevailing wind from the fact that even those trfbal chiefs who were Yazid's own men, and who had not been associated with those who had originated the present movement thought it politically expedient to attune themselves to the voice of the people generally. Accordingly, independently of these group activities and after the despatch of the letter which was the last written in that strain, another letter was scribed from Kufa saying :

" The crops in the fields flourish, the fruit mature on the trees, and tanks overflow with water : You may come here whenever you may like to find a fully equipped army ready to help you."

This letter bore the signatures of seven persons : Shees b. Rabeei, Hajar b. Aljabr, Yazid b. Haris, Yazid b. Radeem, Azra b, Qais, Amr b. Hajjaj Zubedi, and Mohammad b. Umair Tamimi.[3]

This letter was, in its tone and accent, markedly at variance with the previous communications which were expressive of the sentiments of

1. Tabari vol. VI p. 197
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 197
3. Ibid, Irshad p. 210

friendship and devotion and a desire for seeking guidance. In the letter under review, however, prospects of material power and worldly benefits are held out, exhibiting the materialistic outlook of the writers of the letter and their ignorance of, and unfamiliarity with the nature of the addressee. In consequence, about all those responsible for the letter gathered at Karbala to fight against Husain. While the possible existence of political manoeuvring at the back of this letter cannot be ruled out, the compulsive force of the prevailing public opinion of the time is clearly discernible in this letter, as having impelled even such people to join the movement in favour of Husain as an expediant to secure their future. Dinawari records that all these massages and the messengers who had brought teem reached within two consecutive days, the letters making up a total which, a few days later, filled two wallets.[1]

The speech of Sulaiman b. Surd recorded earlier and a study of later events point to the following conclusions :—

1. Husain did not refuse to swear allegiance to Yazid, and did not leave Medina as a result of any extrinsic incentives or prior understanding with the Kufans.

2. When departing from Medina Husain had no idea whatever of going to Kufa, as far as may be ascertained from attendant outward circumstances.

3. Husain did not initiate any movement among the Kufans, nor did he send any letter to propagate his views there.

What should Husain have done when invitations, not a few nor stray ones, but extended by the entire people of Kufa, friend and foe alike, and as numerous as to fill two wallets were received by him, assuring him of help and assistance, of his spontaneous recognition as the leader and religious head (Imam) by the people, and soliciting his guidance? What was the course of action which the times and the occasion dictated?

The situation that prevailed then may be briefly reviewed. Husain did not intend to pledge his allegiance to Yazid then or at any future date. His stay at Medina was out of the question since Yazid had directed that he should either submit to the demand of swearing allegiance to him or be put to the sword. Stay at Mecca was possible, but its duration could not be indefinitely prolonged, especially since it would not be inconsonant with Yazid's ways of defiance of religious regulations to disregard the immunities of Mecca. Indeed the danger was very imminent that his stay at Mecca would entail an invasion of that city, and as there was no power

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there which could protect him. he would be responsible for blood-shed within and the profanation of, the precincts of that city.

Moreover despite the spread of the news of Husain's departure from Medina, no voice had been raised from Taif or Yemen, from Basra or Yamama, preferring him help and protection and extending him an invitation to repair to those places. Precisely of such a difficult and desperate occasion came such a reassuring summons from no less than an important centre (Kufa) of the most densely populated region (Iraq) of Arabia, And the call was not a casual one, it was backed by on less than 55 petition, & two wallet-fuls of letters and as many as seven messengers who had personally brought the pritions, following close upon each others, heels. Among the writers of these letters were some in whom Husain reposed implicit confidence, like Habib b. Mazahir, Sulaiman b. Surd and Rifaa b. Shaddad. What should Husain have done in this situation ? would it have been appropriate for him to reject these invitations ?

The truth is that even if Husain had stayed on at Mecca, it was inevitable that he should have been put to the sword, even as when Mecca was invaded and Abeullah b. Zubair was killed. Husain would in a similar manner, have shared zubair's fate. Those who now find fault with him for having gone to Kufa, would have condemned as manifestly unwise his sticking to Mecca and the rejection of the offers of help so persistently made and of help so persistently mad and invitations so cordially extended by the people of such a big locality as Kufa, whose residents had, before him, helped his father, and had avowed affection for him as well beside seeking his guidance and leadership. They would have added that both reason and prudence should have counselled acceptance of the invitations from Kufa, if only to test the reliability of the promise help mad, and evan if they may not have been substantiated, the kufans should have been left with no opening to argue themselves out of their responsibility, Husain, it would have been pointed out, failed to take advantage of suth a rare and precious opportunity and stumbled on the injudicious course of tarrying on at Mecca of which the soil was poor and infertile, the inhabitants mean-spirited, and the atmosphere indifferent and undependable and in the process not only lost his life, but also contrived to bring about the desecration of Mecca.

There were undoudtedly some who had tried to dissuade Husain from visiting Iraq in response to the invitations receeivad by him, since they thought that reliance would not be placed on the promises of the men of that region. They, however, seem to have overlooked that Husain's lingering on at Mecca could not have saved him from being put to death, Indeed.

if the realities of the situation are noticed on Husain would for certian have been done to death if he had prolonged his sojourn at Mecca in the circumstances then. On the contrary, in the event of his departure towards Kufa the question of death overtaking him was only problematical, since upon the extraneous look of thinge there was no proof that the promises made by the Kufans were hollow. Indeed such an unflattering estimate of the character of the residents of Kufa appeared to be very uncharitable. nay it appeared to be a prejudiced one. In either case it looked proof of its validity If Husain were killed at Mecca, his martyrdom would have hardly evoked any feeling of sympathy. By going to Kufa, however, in response to the wishes of the people of that town, and acceding to the renuests of so many human beings, even if Husain were killed, his end would have arrived in the performings of a great human duty, setting a splendid example of good breeding and benevolence, And all possible steps and precautions to ensure his personal safety and the preservation of the inviolability of Macca by parting from that place had been kept in view.

It was for these reasons that in reply to those who, like Abdullah b. Abbas, wished to dissuade him from directing his steps to Kufa, Husain never said that he reposed confidence in the promises of the people of Iraq, or that they would assuredly help him if he went to that town. He used mostly to reserve his opinion on the dependability of the word of the people of Iraq. confining himself to the expression of general and vague grounds for adhering to his views about the journey to Kufa, as when he spoke to Ibne Abbas.[1] Some times he explicitly hinteb that even if he prolonged his stay at Mecca, he would surely get killed. and that it would be on account of him tnat the Kaaba would be deseclated as when he told Abdullan d. Zubair, "I know of one who would be put to the sword like a sheep here, desecrating the place, I have no wish to be that sheep."[2]

On another occasion when Ibne Zubair whispered something into his ears and left, Husain asked some of his special companions, "Do you know what Ibne Zubair said to me? He told me not to leave Mecca, but to continue residing there. He added, " By God, it is much more agreeable to me killed one span outside than one span inside the precincts of the Kaaba, and by God, if I were to reside in the hole of an animal, these pople will bring me out of it so that they may do to me what they will. By God, these men will commit excesses against me just as the jews made transgressions

1. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal p. 283
2. Tabari, Vol. VI p. 217

sions against the Sabbath. "[1]

In these circumstances taking the external aspect of things into account, it was as ineluctable for Husain to go to Kufa as it was inappropriate for him to turn down the prayers addressed to him from that town. Even so, for obvious reasons he took the precautionary step of sending his cousin, Muslim b. Aqil, who had accompanied him from Medina,[1] to Kufa as his representative to take stock of the situation as it then obtained there. to this end, therefore, Husain wrote a letter to the people of Kufa and gave it to Hani b. Hani and Saeed b. Abdullah, the last messenger sent by the people of Kufa and directed them to precede Muslim on their way to Kufa.

This letter said, "Hani and Saeed have brought your letters to me, and both these men sent by you are the last messengers who have come to me. I have carefully read and understood what you have written to me. Most of you call me to yourselves, as you have no leader (imam) at your head, so that God might unite you because of me. Accordingly, I am sending to you my cousin, a son of my uncle, as one in whom I repose my special trust, to inform me about your affairs. If he sends me word that your ranks and those at the helm of your affairs are united about what you have said in your letters, I would presently join you. I may explain to you that 'Imam' does not stand for any one except a person who acts according to the book of God, abides by justice, pursues the right and dedicates his person to the will of God. "[2]

The words of this letter show that Muslim b. Aqil had not been deputed to make war or to reduce Kufa, but as Husain's representative only to assess the climate of public opinion prevalent at Kufa, and ascertain how the people there were disposed towards Husain and to acquaint Husain about such matters. As directed by Husain, Muslim left Mecca in the company of the messengers from Kufa, Qais b. Mus-har saidavi and Abdur Rahman b. Abdullah b, Kidan Arhabi, Going first, to Medina where he said his prayers in the prophet's mosque, and then bade good-bye to his relation and friends. He then took with him two Arabs of the tribe of Qais, familiar with the route to kufa, and left for that town. It was a strange misadventure that both the guides lost their way, although exccedingly well up in the knowledge of the route. In consequence, they strayed into the desert and were overwhelmed with thirst. At last they reached a spot from

1. ibid. Vol. VI p. 217
2. AlAKhbaiut Tawal, p. 132,
3. Tabari, Vol 9. p. 194 op cit. p, 232
4. Tabari Vol 6, pp, 197-198, 210, 211
5. Tabari Vol. 6 p. 198

which the thoroughfare was visble at a distance. Both of them were on the verge of collapse, but they managed to point out the highway with their hands. than one[2] or both[3] of them fell dead. Muslim and his companions too were in dasperate straits, but their extra-ordinary power of endurance enabled them somehow to betake themselves to the highway. They stayed at a spring named Mozique in the valley of Batn-i-Khadt and Muslim wrote a letter to Husain in which, describing his unusual reactions to the bad luck which had attended the beginning of the journey he said that his heart was not at all agreeable to undertake the journey to Kufa. Husain, however, repeated his direction to Muslim to proceed to Kufa as bidden, and Muslim was constrained to resume the journey, [4] Getting to Kufa, as instructed by Husain,Muslim behaved peaceably. The Governor was present in the government house, but Muslim offered him no opposition. Any one else, desposed to stir up a disturbance would have begun by taking possession of the government house. Muslim, however, made it clear by his conduct, that he had nothing to do with the affairs of the government and matters of state, being concerned only with finding out those in searce of guidance and with their religious and moral improvement.

Accounts relating to the arrival of Muslim at Kufa show that Sulaiman b. Surd Khazaai was not then present at Kufa, otherwise; since he was the moving spirit and the best known and most influential person of the new movement, Muslim would have stayed at his house. In his absence, Muslim was forced to put up at the residence of Mukhtar b. Abi Obaids Saqafa.[1]

The news of Muslim's arrival at Kufa spread quickly and was received with a general hearty welcome. People poured in to meet him in groups. When a sufficiently large number of persons had collected, Muslim read out Husain's letter to them. This created much enthusiastic fervour among those present. Aabis b. Abi Shabib Shakiri stood up and spoke, saying, " it is not for me to express my views about people in general, nor I am aware of what is passing in their hearts, and I do not wish to misdirect you by speaking on their behalf. I would, however, tell you what you I have determined in my heart to do. By God I would present myself to you whenever you call me to fight on your side against your enemies and would ply my sword till I part with this life to meet my God. My object in doing so would be none else than seeking God's pleasure."

1. Op. cit. p. 194
2. Op. cit p. 198
3. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 232, Tabari, Vol 6, p. 198
1. TaLari Vol. VI, p. 199 Vol. VII p. 58 Al Akhbar at Tawal. p.232 ;Irshad211

No sooner had this speech ended than Habib b. Mazahir stood up and addressing Aabis, said, " God bless you and reward you. With what economy of words have laid the truth bare."[1] Then addressing himself to Muslim, he said, "By God, in my personal capacity I am of the same view as Aabis b. Shabid has just now expressed, "Saeed b, Abdullah Hanafi also supported these views. The gathering then dispersed.[2] In the context of Husain-s' letter the object of these proceedings is plain enough; viz. To show that the engagement and alliance had not been made because Muslim intended to take any aggressive measures, or that the people of Kufa were making promises of rendering assistance to Muslim in any bellicose proceedings. Nor could the look of things as it appeared then afford room in any body's mind to the thought that within the space of a few days military aggression would be mounted against a solitary man-Muslim, and that the party, sponsoring the new movement should hold itself in readiness to meet such an unexpected and disastrous development. It was meant simply to be an expression, in advance, of the views of the people regarding the expected arrival of Husain, and also as a measure to give some idea of the intentions and purposes of these people in that context.

The alienation of the people from Yazid on account of his evil ways, the popularity of Husain not only due to the distinction of his family, but also due to the excellence of his character and attainments, the fair name and influential social contacts of the promotors of the movement in favour of Husain, and the attraction of whatever is fresh and novel for the generality of men. combined to draw within a week 12,000[3] or 18,000[4] Kufans to swear allegiance to Husain at the hands of Muslim. were all these persons of Kufa the friends of Ali? Could such large number of Ali's friends have been spared in Kufa during the rule, extending over no less than 20 years. of Ziyad and his descendants in the.course of which naked swords and hangman had been kept unremittingly busy in depriving men of their lives and the severing of head and feet, hands and tongues had been the order of the day? Certainly true Shias ware smail in number even earlier, and such of them as there were, had been almost annihilated by the slaughter carned out by Muawiya. Only the very few Shias who had managedt to conceal themselves might have been left alive. All other who counted Ali as the fourth caliph were, there fore, classed as Shias only in the literal sense of the word on account of their association

1. Tabari. Vo.l VI. p. 199
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 199
3. Op. cit p. 194
4. Op. cit. p. 211

with him. The number of even such shias was not large. In these circumstances, the conclusion is inescapable that the puplic opinion which had its roots in such superficial and changeable soil must have been devoid of all substance and stability. And since the promotors of the new movement, born and bred at Kufa, and experienced in the ways of their home town, had been misled in estimating the true worth of the public opinion prevalent at Kufa, it would be small wonder, indeed that Muslim, a stranger to the place should have been taken in by the warmth of the outward manifestation of the public mood.

Those who had promoted Muslim's interests, responded to his call before all others' offered to sacrifice their lives for the cause on the very first occasion when men had assembled to welcome Muslim, and had moulded public opinion in Husain's favour were undoubtedly pure, unalloyed and sincere sympathisers and friends. It was their function to shape public opinion in the town in favour of Muslim, and outwardly they had scored the desired measure of success in that direction. They could, however, not be saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that sudden and unexpected development in the future, would not be suffered to alter the public mood. As for as they were personally concerned, these friends, small in their numbers, stood faithfully by their plighted word and laid down their lives in a most graceful manner, in support of Husain.

Muslim b. Aqil found the shape of things propitious and in accord with peoples' profession and engagements. He therefore, wrote to Husain to expedite his arrival at Kufa. [1] The attitude of the local administration towards Muslim was one of tolerance. The ruler of Kufa, Noman b. Bashir ascended the pulpit and preached that people should shun faction, abstain from the disturbance of the peace and tranquillity and avoid dissension which would occasion blood-shed and destruction of property whether one liked it or not. He added that as far as he was concerned, he would take no action so long as his authority was not aggressively opposed.[2] It was hotly rumoured that the arrival of Husain b. Ali was imminent at Kufa. There were, there for, signs of unusual activity at Kufa and people, in their groups and in the circles of their friends aired their views about this development. They eagerly awaited the event. There was, however, a group in the town determined to defeat all these plans. It was made up of these supporters of Omayyads who feared that with the establishment of Husain's authority they would no longer get an opportunity of misappropriating public revenues and properties. One of

1. Tabari, Vol. VI p. 211, Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal, p. 243
2. Ibid p. 199

them, an ally of the Omyyads, Abdullah b. Muslim Hazrami, stood up immediately after Noman's speech and told him that his way of dealing with matters was ill advised and that he was showing uncalled for weakness, which drew from the latter the retort, "My seeming weakness, so long as I truly discharge my duty towards God, is preferable to any show of strength on my part In sinning against Him "[1] These words clearly reflected the working of Noman's mind and those intent on creating trouble could hardly urge anything further. On his return, Abdullah b. Muslim[2] wrote post–haste to Yazid, " Muslim b. Aqil has arrived at Kufa, and his supporters have taken the oath of allegiance to Husain on his hands. If you desire to retain Kufa in your possession depute a strong man here who would be able to carry out your orders, for Noman b Bashir is a weakling, and is deliberately showing want of strength."

Ummara b. Aqba and Omar b. Sa 'd also wrote to Yazid in the same strain [3] On receiving thess letters, Yazid consulted Sarjun b. Mansoor, a Roman Christian who had been a writer in the revenue department since Muawiya's time. [4] Sarjun suggested the name of Obaidullah b. Zayad. [5] Yazid had been displeased with Obaidullah, thinking that Ziyad had opposed his nomination as a caliph on account of Obaidullah or that Obaidullah aspired to succeed Muawiya as Caliph instead of the succession going to Yazid. For these reasons Yazid was considering the removal of Ziyad's son from the rulership of Basra as well. [6] Accordingly on hearing Obajdullahs name, Yazid disapproved of it, and desired approved of it, and desired that the name of some one else be proposed. Sejrun asked Yazid whether he would have accepted the same advice if Muawiya had been alive and had so advised him. Yazid agreed that çase he would undoubtedly have accepted it. Sarjun. thereupon produced a piece of writing saying that it was Muawiya's order, appointing Obaidullah b. Ziyad as the ruler of Kufa, which could not be carried out owing to Muawiya's demise. He therefore, advised that Qbaidullah be appointed the ruler both of Basra and Kufa.

1. Ibid
2. Daniwari had attributed this letter to Muslim b. Saeed Hazrami and Ammore b. Aqba, both allegedly Muawiya's spies. Al Akhbar ut Tawal. p. 233
3. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 199, Irshad 211-212
4. Alwuzara walkitab, p. 15
5. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 166
6. Idid, page 194

Accordingly Yazid wrote to Obaidullah saying, "My friends have written to me from Kufa that Aqil's son has reached Kufa and is raising an army so as to foment dissension and discord among the Muslims. Proceed to wards Kufa, as soon as you receive this letter, and after getting hold of Muslim. incarcerate, behead or exile him."[1]

An old historian, Jahsiyari has reported the contents of the letter, in extense, which, in the background of Yazid's displeasure with Ziyad's son, is somewhat conspicuous for its tone of admonition. It reads, 'Be it known, that what once won applause might at another time, be denounced and also that what might, on one occasion have been reprehended, might well be commended at another stage. A great office is at the moment being conferred upon you, and a greater honour may not come your way. As luck would have it, the campaign against Husain has fallen to you lot and within the four corners of territory committed to your rule. And of all the officers of the State, you alone have been placed in this trying situation. Now either your noble birth would assert itself and be proved or you would be adjudged just the slave you once were."[2]

The last sentence of this letter alludes to the anonymite of Ziyad's parentage and also to Muawiya's favour in acknowledging Ziyad as a son of Abu Sufyan. The letter would seem to have been calculated to urge Ziyad's son to vigorous action not only against Muslim, but also against Husain himself, any laxity in which regard was represented to him, in words both harsh and as calculated to tickle his vanity, as likely to blight his prospects.

This letter was sent to Ziyad's son along with the order appointing him as the ruler of Kufa, through Muslim b, Amr Bahli[3]. On receiving the communication, Obdaidullah lost no time in appointing his brother, Osman as the acting ruler of Basra, and made preparations for his departure to Kufa. He went to the mosque for congregational prayers and made a speech holding out threats of death not only to those who did anything to oppose him, but also to their successors-in-interest, and of punishment to their neighbours, the guilty and the innocent alike.[4] He left for Kufa the following morning.[5] This man was a son of Ziyad b. Abih, a nephew of Muawiya

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 200; Irshad, p. 212
2. Alwuzara Wal Kitab p. 19
3. Al-Akhbar ut Tawal p. 33. This Muslim was the father of Qutaiba b. Muslim, a well-known figure in history.
4. Al Akhbar at Tawal, p. 234
5. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 201; Irshad p.p. 212-213

as claimed by him and a scion of a family of which all members were past masters in the arts of trickery and deception. He took the preliminary precaution of keeping his movements entirely secret, so that his arrival at Kufa was both sudden and unexpected. On approaching Kufa he lightly wrapped a piece of cloth on his mouth as did the brave Arabs on occasions like war. This made the disclosure of his identity impossible. All of a sudden, withim the defensive walls of Kufa, sprung into view a chieftain mounted on an Arab horse and with a black turban, peculier to Arabs of rank, on his head and riding with dignity. He was followed by a spendid retinne of horsemen mounted on caparisoned chargers, well-appointed with saddles and reins. This impressive equipage and following confirmed the general anticipation, raised by reports already current, that Husain b. Ali had arrived, Every group by which Obaidullah passed bade him a respectful welcome' either on account of the influence which Husain's personally had already came to be associated with or in the hope of reaping future worldly advantages from the latest revolutionary changes. Obaidullah made no reply to these greetings, but pursued his way, carefully noting the voices and features of those who welcomed him. People came out of their houses in their multitudes to welcome the prophet's grandson and the throng swelled to such proportions as to impade Obaidullah's progress, and Muslim b. Amr Bahli who had accompanied him called out, "Make way, he is Obaidullah b. Ziyad."[1]

It is not exactly known what power these words were charged with that advancing steps came to a standstill, upraised hand fell down, and the tunes of joy were hushed. Unbroken silence gripped everything and everyone and the whole crowd melted away, so that when Obaidullah reached the government house, there wereonly ten persons left with him.[2]

It is not difficult to form an idea of the inner trepidation of the Kufans at this juncture, taking into view their natural pre-disposition. Events of which the occurrence is as sudden as it is unexpected often produce a thrill of opprehensiveness which, in the present instance, must have been many times aggravated by the obvious fact that everybody had veritably acted as a spy against himself by discovering his identity wholly and unmistakeably as a sincere ally of Husain, and that to none others then on inveterate enemy of the grandson of the prophet. Obaidullah b. Ziyad had himself noted their voices and features when they had greeted him mistaking him for Husain. It was under his father, Ziyad, that for 20 long

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 234, Tabari Vol. VI, p. 201
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 301

years, the throats of men had been slit, and countless men had been impaled or thrown into prison with impunity, and hangmen had plied their revolting trade freely. These savageries had left memories which were more then sufficient to raise people's hair even after the lapse of so many years and to make their hearts pound and thump in their breasts. And the same kind of brutal oppressions now seemed to threaten them, their descendants and relations Were not these prospects sufficient to benumb the hearts and minds of people, to enervate men and paralyse their spirits and overpower with affright and despondency those of whom the majority consisted of the ordinary run of people who had joined the new movement deeming it desirable only because it was new, without trying to grasp its full implications.

Obaidullah made an upbraiding speech in the mosque and announced his assumption of office as a ruler of Kufa. He occupied the government house and N'man b. Bashir left at once for his home in Syria.[1] He then sent for all the responsible persons of the various quarters of Kufa concerned with the office of arafat[2] and directed them to produce lists of persons residing in their parts of the town, specifying those who had arrived in the town only lataly, and those who posed a threat to the government of Syria. If, however, for any reason they should be unable to give the lists as directed in detail, they should furnish a security bond that no soul in their parts of the town would join in any subversive activity. If things turned out differently, the chief of that part of the city where the authority of the government was opposed, would be impaled in front of his door, and the office would be taken away from his family for ever.[3]

The drastic action taken could not fail to succeed Every nook and corner of Kufa became unsafe on account of a plethora of informers and spies. Men were afraid of stirring out of their houses to visit others, and it was out of the question for even a handful of men to meet and discuss a any matter or resolve upon any course of action.

This must have been the first occasion when Muslim b. Aqil might have sensed danger to his life and a mortal menace to his mission. He was, therefore, left with no other over-riding duty except the one of taking

1. Al Akhbar ut-tawal p. 234
2. In Arabia, the custom prevails even now that in the bigger cities there is a headof every mohalla, responsible on behalf of the local government for vital statistics, statistics about the marital status of the residents etc. This office was called 'arafat' then.
3. Tabari, Vol. 6, p. 201, Irshad, p. 214.

all possible measures to ensure his personal safety. That object, he thought, would be ill-served by his continued stay at the house of Mukhtar bi Abi Obaida as the place had become generally well-known. Also there was nobody there to help him in time of need. Of course, Mukhtar was a man of some prominence, but in status he was in no better position than that of a landlord. He was not even available at Kufa at the time.[1] Muslim, therefore, considered it expedient to remove himself to the house of Hani b. Urwa under the cover of the darkness of a night.[2] Hani was the chief of the tribe of Murad Muzhij, and used to be accompanied by no less than 12,000 iron-clad horseman when he went out. In seeking shelter with Hani, Muslim counted upon this obvious assistance of 12000 brave swordsmen who could affectively afford him succour and protection. Hani kept Muslim at his house and let nobody other than his closest and most trusted men into the secret. The small number of the friends of the prophets' household who had set on foot the movement to invite Husain, had by now, become fully alive to the fact that the times were wholly out of joint with the success of their plans. They, therefore, prepared to meet the situation with calm determination.

Under the compulsion of events, the whole approach to the situation, so far as those who had initiated the movement were concerned, underwent a radical change. From the earlier conception of Muslim b. Aqil being, in accordance with Husain's direction, his peaceful representative, charged with obtaining promises, from the people of Kufa, of firm support for Husain, and therefore, having no intention of collecting arms or preparing for war, the accent now shifted, in view of the imminent employment of aggression and use of violence against Muslim by the powers that be, to the making of preparations by those who had invited Muslim to protect him from mortal danger. The result was that the developments that followed were outside the scope of the directions given by Husain in his letter. The situation was one of grave emergency to meet which action on fresh lines had to be initiated, as of necessity. Accordingly Muslim b. Ausajah began obtaining from the people covenants for the assistance and protection of Muslim, and Abu Samama Seedi took upon himself the responsibility of collecting arms and the sinews of war.[3]

Obaidullah b. Ziyad was exceedingly anxious to trace the spot where Muslim b. Aqil had taken shelter. He deputed his slave, Moqil, to dig out

1. Tabari, Vol. 7, p. 58;
2. Al Akhbar ut-Tawal, p. 235; Tabri, Vol. pp. 195 203, Irshad p. 213
3. Tabari, Vol. 5, p. 205, Irshad p. 215

information about Muslim's place of refuge, and gave him a sum of 3000 dinars. Moqil went to the mosque of the big congregational prayers where as luck would have it, Muslim b. Ausajah was offering his prayers. Moqil kept him long under observation and bethought himself, as he later gave out, that since the Shias said numberous prayers, Muslim b. Ausajah could well turn out to be a Shia. He therefore, sat down and waited.[1] When Muslim had done with his prayers, Moqil approached him, representing himself to be a Syrian, a slave of Zul Kala, and by grace of God, a friend of the prophet's house hold. He added that he heard that some respecatble member of that family had then been obtaining the oath of allegiance from the people of Kufa for the prophets' grandson. Producing 3000 dinars which he carried on his person, Moqil gave out that he wished to hand over the amount to Husain's representative for such use as the latter might be pleased to make of it, if he could be informed of his address.

Muslim asked Moqil why of all others present in the mosque, the latter had approached him to seek the information. He was told that the marKs of virtue and abstinence on his face had given rise, in Moqil's mind, to the belief that he was a friend of the prophets' house hold. Muslim b. Ausajah was thus completely deceived by Moqil and after taking solemn promises from the latter not to divulge the secret to anybody, Muslim promised to take him to the house where Husain's representative was to be found. Moqil swore allegiance to Husain at the hands of Muslim b. Aqil and presented the amount of 3000 dinars to the latter. Thereafter Moqil used to spend his days in the company of Muslim b. Aqil about whom he contrived to gether detailed information which he conveyed every succeeding night to Ziyad's son [2]

Hani's acquaintance and association with Obaidullah b. Ziyad were of a long standing, but he had, on the pretext of indisposition, latterly tried to avoid him, lest the latter should have got wind of the stay of Muslim b. Aqil with him. Ziyad's son, however, grew impatient to see him and invited him to his house [3] Not apprehending any danger at the moment, Hani went alone to see Ziyad's son, without so much as even informing any one of his 12000 soldiers of his destination. Arriving at the house of Ziyad's son, Hani found that the latter's attitude towards him had completely changed. Indeed Obaidullah accosted Hani, repeating the Arab proved

1. Al Akhbar ut tawal p. 236
2. Al Akhbar-ut tawal p. 237
3. Al Akhbar-ut tawal p. 238; Tabari Vol. VI, p 204

purporting to signify that Hani had walked on his feet to his death. Turning to Qazi Sharih, Ziyad's son recited a couplet meaning, " I wish to save his life and he is after my blood. May God call your friend of the tribe of Murad to account."

Hani was not slow in taking the hint that the secret has been betrayed. He however, asked, "what is the matter, chief?" Obaidullah b. Ziyad replied in great passion, "How outregeous is it that you have made your house a hotbed of intrigue against the caliph of the day and against all Muslims. You have called Muslim b. Aqil and have been entertaining him at your house, collecting arms for him, enlisting men for his help and maintaining them in houses situated in your neighbourhood. Do you think that these things would remain concealed from me," Hani at first denied the truth of these allegations but when Moqil was presented before him and Hani realised that he was a spy, he had no answer to give. For a moment he seemed to be at a loss to make any reply, but collecting his wits about him, he spoke out, "Now hear the real facts from me and believe me. I call God to be my witness that I will say nothing but what is true. The fact is that I did not call Muslim b. Aqil, nor was I aware of any movement in his favour. He came to me of his own choice, and expressed a desire to stay with me. I could not in honour refuse to maintain him at my house. I therefore, received him as a guest to stay under my roof. However, I do promise that I would commit no act of aggression against you, and would give myself up to you presently. However, before I do so, I seek permission to tell Muslim to leave my house and go wherever he may have a mind to, so that I may be quit of my responibility of affording him shelter. I would then have nothing to do with him."

Obaidullah b Ziyad, however, did not agree to the request made by Hani whom he proposed to detain till Muslim b. Aqil had been produced before him. Hani made it plain that it was impossible for him to call his guest and deliver him to his death.[1] The exchange of words got so heated that Ziyad's son ordered Hani either to produce Muslim or get his head chapped off. Hani said that if he was beheaded, greet violence and confusion would break about the palace occupied by Obaidullah, hoping that his tribe would rally to his help. This answer supplied fuel to the fire of Obaidullah's anger and he ordered his soldiers to drag Hani near him, which being done, Ziyad's son aimed the blow of a stick at Ziyad's face. The stroke drew blood, and Hani's face was besmeared with blood. The aged but truthful Hani tried to snatch a sword from the hand of a soldier

1. Al Akhbar-ut tawal p. 243, Tabari Vol. VI p. 205 Irshad p. 216

standing near him at which Ziyad cried out, "So you have turned a Khariyite as well, and sheeding your blood is now permissible for us." Hani was mercilessly dragged by hangmen and thrown into prison. [1]

Amr b. Hajjaj, who was a brother-in-law of Hani b. Urwa and a chief of the tribe of Bani Zubeda, [2] led an attack on the rular's house at the head of numerous horsemen in armour when he heard that Hani had been killed. The sounds of the clanging of swords, of the thuds of tha hoofs of horses raised some hope of recovering his liberty in the heart of the unfortunate Hani. These hopes were unluckily shattered when, on being reassured by Qazi Sharih that Hani had not been killed, but had been taken into custody, for reasons of expediency, for a limited period only, this force withdrew.

Things were now most difficult for Muslim b. Apil. The firm and loyal Hani who had offered him shelter had been thrown into prison after sufferinq the humiliation of being subjected to personal violence, and the ladies of his family were bewailing their misfortune. Would it have been appropriate to have remained in concealment there even then and imperil the safety of another dependable friend by seeking the hospitality of his house, and go in hiding there. Both the courses were unacceptable under the code of Hashimide chivalry. Tabari has gone on record with the remark that Muslim b. Aqil went forth to fight for his life alone, without and previous arrangement and without giving any pevious information to his supporters that day. He went forth to the fight the moment he hard that Hani had been beaten and incarcerated. [5] Dinawari, however, says that it was only after Hani had been executed that Muslim b. Aqil broke cover and issued forth to give battle.[6]

Obaidullah b. ziyad gave another threatening speech in the mosque, and while he was still so occupied, pepople came rushing into the mosque with word that Muslim b. Aqil had arrived there. Obaidullah made a hasty descent from the pulpit and shut himself up in his palace.[7]

Considering how things developed most unexpectedly little hope could reasonable be enteratained that the 18,000 men who had sworn loyalty at the hands of Muslim b Aqil, would rally round him at this deli-

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 206, Irshad p. 217
2. Tabari, Vol VI, p.205
3. Tabari Vol. VI, p. p. 105, 206, 207, Irshad p. p. 217, 218
4. Ibid, p. 207, Ibid p. 218
5. Ibid, Vol. VII p. 58
6. Al Akbar-ut-Tawal p. 239
7. Tabari Vol. VI p. 207, Irshad

cate stage, and join him in the struggle, specially since the various quarters of town of Kufa were fairly distant from one another. That part of the town Muslim had taken shalter was, however, fairly well-populated and there lived in it about 4,000 of his sympathisers. As soon as they heard their distinctive war cry یا منصور امت raisad they turned up from feelings of embarrassment and shame. Having had next to no opportunity of preparing themselves, these man could obviously be in no condition to offer any resistance, worth the name. to the regular forces of the Government, specially since most of them were from the unthinking sections of society with no sincere convictions and no heart-felt aims and also since their love for the members of the prophet's house hold itself lacks proof.

Muslim arrayed this small force as best as he could and moved forward. He was still at some distance from the government house that his supportes started meliting away, and by the time he reached there, only 300 of them, bore him company.[1] Obaidullah, however, shut himself up in his place thinking that Muslim b. Aqil had a big supporting army at his back . Muslim besieged the palace with a party of Bani Murad. Others also gradually joined him so that Muslim had a sufficient number of men to support him. The hostilties continued from the afternoon to the evening.

The gathering which had associated itself with muslim in this siege must be dcemed to have been composed of a mixture of various tribes. The moving sprits of these tribes were, however, their leaders and prominent people, the sheikhs, who sympathised with the government. Obaidullah had taken the timely precaution, since the morning of having detained with him the leaders and the sheikhs of the tribes, so that he might use them as and when necessary. Obaidullah b. Ziyad had no soldiers in his palace. He had only 30 policemen and about 20 others, made up of his special companions and some chiefs of tribes.[3] The number of persons with him has sometimes been estimated at 200 at the outside.[4] He could, therefore, offer no resistance. However, besides ensuring that the doors of the palace were not opened, he despatched some persons in various directions to seal all points of access to the town, guard important points in it to

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 207
2. ibid
3. Tabari Vol, VI p. 207 ; Irshad p. 219
4. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 239

ensure that nobody could enter the town from outside to help Muslim and beter those in the town from joining hands with him.

As things stoods, no large bodies of men could be expected to arrive form outside to assist Muslim. Help, however, continucd to trickle in, and tiny and scattered groups would sometimes attempt to reach Muslim, often only to be intercepted, as happened to Abdul Ala b. Yazid Kalbi who, along with some young men of his family, was going to help Mnslim b. Aqil. He was arrested by Kaseer b Shahab. Similarly, Ammara b. Sulhab Azadi who had fully armed himself and was going to join Muslim was arrested by Mohammad b. Ash'as.[1] Both these brave men were executed after Muslim and Hani had been put to death.[2] In this manner all help was cnt off form raaching Muslim. Even devoted men of undoubted constancy like Habib b. Mazahir, Muslim b. Ausajah, and Abu Samma Saedi could not contact Muslim that fateful day. The various chiefs were directed to climb to the roof of the palace af Ziyad' son, and, to try to exhort the people, who had rallied round Muslim, to disperse. They called their various tribes by their names and declared upon their oaths that big armies would shortly be reaching Kufa from Syria and that then their lives and property would be lost irretrie-vably. News of the impending arrival of forces from Damascus was broadcast and as a result such consternation gripped the people that women went out of the privacy of their houses to press their fathers and brothers to go back to their house, representing that others were sufficient to do the fighting for Muslim. Fathers and brothers similarly persuaded their sons and brothers to abandon the struggle and return to the safety of their homes, saying that nothing would avail when the armres came from Damascus. The result was that only 30 men were left with Muslim by the evening, and even these men had disappeared when Muslim returned from a mosque where had gone to say his evening prayers.[3] Muslim now wondered alone in the bazars and market-places of Kufa with nobody to guide his steps. While thus walking the streets at night he reached the spot where the tribe of Kanda resided. A woman belonging to the tribe, by name Taua ;was waiting at her door for sons' return. She was a manumitted slave-girl of Mohammad b. Ashas. and had then married Aseed Hazrami by whom she hcd the son, Bilal, whose return she was awaiting. Muslim saluted her, and requestsd her to give him some water to drink. She was a God-fearing person and a cup of water with which Muslim quenched his thirst. He however, did not move away from

1. Ibid
2. Tabari Vol. VI p. 214
3. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 240

her house. Seeing this, she asked Muslim to go home as he had already satisfied his thirst. Muslim made no answer, and remained at her house still. When again advised by the women to get going to his home, Muslim told her that he had no home in the town to go to and asked her if she would earn merit in the eye of God by giving him shelter. He added that he might possibly be in a position to repay in future the kindness shown to him She was taken aback on hearing this, and asked him what bad luck had brought him to her door. Muslim then disclosed to her his identity and told her how he had been betrayed by men who had forsaken him after pledging him their help. On hearing this sad story, she took him to a room in her house, and spread a bed for him there. She also brought him food, which he declined to partake of. Sometime later her son, Bilal, arrived, His curiosity was aroused when he saw his mother going into one particular room of the house time and again, and he asked his mother what took her to that room so often. Taua tried to parry the question, but found it only gave a keener edge to his desire to know the reason which took her to the room so frequently. At last, she yielded and let him into the secret, enjoining him to keep it to himself. The son made no reply and waited for the night to run out.. 1

When Ziyad's son found that the danger had subsided, he directed his men to assure themselves that Muslim's men had not gone into concealment. When he was fully satisfied that those who had sided with Muslim had dispersed, he directed Amr b. Nafe' to have it announced in the town that it was obligatory for everybody to offer his prayers that night in the mosque, and that nobody should remain at his house at the hour of the night prayer, and that failure to comply with this command would absolve the ruler of all responsibility for the safety of the persons concerned. With in a short space of time, the mosque got filled with men. Ziyad's son took many precautions for his personal safety, including making two men stand on either side of him, and then led the night prayers. After the prayers he mounted the pulpit and said ' You have seen the sedition stirred up by Muslim b. Aqil. We shall not be responsible for the safety of any one in whose house he is found. Whoever bring him to me shall be paid his blood-money. He then ordered Haseen b Tameem to search every house in the town to trace out Muslim b. Aqil. Leaving Amr b. Harees in supervisory charge of the people, he retired for the night.[2]

Taua's son Bilal, went to Abdur Rahman, a youthful son of Mohammad b. Ash'as as soon as the day dawned and told him about the presence

1.
2.

of Muslim at his house. This youth at once went to his father who had gone to attend the council of Obaidullah b. Ziyad, and acquainted the latter with the news through his father.[1] Ziyad's son despatched an army under Mohammad b. Ash'as to capture Muslim, who, as soon as he heard the sounds of the hoofs of horses, inferred that it was the army coming to take him into custody. He came out of his room, sword in hand. In the meantime some soldiers had entered the house and Muslim fell upon them with such force that they were compelled to withdraw. They formed themselves again into a body and and re-entered the house to be turned out of it again. In this encounter, however, Muslim's upper lip was severed, his lower lip was lacerated and two of his teeth were dislodged by Bakr b. Hamran Ahmari with his sword, Muslim's enemies got convinced that it would be difficult to overpower him by the employment of the usual tactics. They, therefore, ascended the roof of the house, and pelted Muslim with stones besides hurling at him blazing sheaves of reeds. Noticing this dastardly manner of fighting, Muslim went out of the house into the street with his sword drawn. Mohammad b Ash'as called out to him that there was quarter for him and asked him to desist from fighting and plying his sword. Muslim, however continued to fight, reciting heroic verses meaning, "I have taken a vow not to be put to the sword except as a free man. Death is indeed unpleasant, but to every body come it must one day. I apprehend lest I should be told lies and be deceived. " Mohammad b. Ash' as repeated that he would neither be told what was false nor duped. Muslim had exhausted by the fighing and he asked whether quarter had really been qiven to him. Mohammad b. Ash' as and all his associates, except Amr. b. Obaidullah b. Abbas Salmi who denied knowing anything about the grant of any quarter to him. and stood aloof rom all others, assured Muslim that he was safe. Muslim then bade them bear in mind that he was putting his sword into its sheath only because he had been given quarter, otherwise he would not have delivred himself to them. In the meantime a mount was brought for Muslim, which Muslim bestrode. The soldiers surrounded him and deprived him of the sword fastened to his waist. This broke Muslim's heart and he called this the first betrayal of his trust. Mohammad b. Ash'as told him that he hoped no danger would come his way, Muslim quickly answered, "so now it is only hope that may be entertained, what has happened to the promise of quarter being extended to me? We are for God ' and to him we return." Saying this, Muslim began to cry. Amr b. Obaidullah b. Abbas Salmi who had in the very beginning refused to subs-

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p 241.

cribe to the promise of quarter being granted to Muslim remarked, "One who undertakes an enterprise such as you did should not weep at the sight of danger. " Muslim replied, " By God I do not cry for myself, but my heart melts for Husain and his companions who would set out for Kufa on receiving my letter." Addressing himself then to Mohammad b. Ash'as he said, "O servant of God, I am sure you would be unsucessful in obtaining clemency for me. Now be considerate enough to send a messenger to Husain to tell him on my behalf that I have been taken captive by my enemies, and expect to be put to sword by this evening. As for yourself, think not of coming this way and be not deceived by the Kufans whose promises are all false and whose covenants and engagements are all undependable." mohammad b. Ash'as then led Muslim to the entrance to the government house and went to see Ziyad's son, He gave him an account of the fighting and then mentioned having brought Muslim with him promising him quarter Obaidullah b. Ziyad asked him, " who were you to extend quarter to him? I had deputed you only to bring him to me."Mohammad b. Ash'as could not take courage to say anything in reply and kept quiet.[1]

At the time many men, the more prominent among them being Ammara b. Aqba, Amr b. Harees, Muslim b. Amr Bahli and Kaseer b. Shahab, were present at the entrance to the government house awaiting to be ushered into the presence of Ziyad's son. A flask of cool water was also kept there and Muslim who was very thirsty asked for some water to drink. This request which was very rudely rejected by Muslim b. Amr was, however, granted by Amr b. Harees who asked his slave to give a drink to muslim b. Aqil who tried thrice to drink the water but was prevented from doing so on account of the blood which flowed from his mouth and coloured the liquid. At last Muslim had to abandon the idea of quenching his thirst saying that water was no more included in his lot as a drink, when two of his teeth got dislodged and fell into his glass in the last attempt to drink. In the meantime an attendant arrived and asked Muslim to step in to the presence of the son of Ziyad. Muslim did not address Obaidullah as the ruler(ammeer). Obaidullah told Muslim that he could no longer escape and that he would be presently put to death. Muslim replied that he was prepared for that end. He, however, requested that he might be given an opportunity to acquaint somebody known to him, and in attendance there, with his last wishes. This was agreed to. When Muslim cast his eyes on those around him, he noticed Omar b. sa'd and told him that as the latter belonged to the clan of Quraish, he had some

1· Tabari Vol. VI p. 212

private matters to confide to him and requested him to hear them. This sycophant of the powers that be was not ready to give a hearing to Muslim. Then the son b. Ziyad himself admonished Omr b. sa'd. inquiring what harm would be caused to him if he listened to what Muslim might have to say. Hearing this Omr b. Sa'd stood up, and advancing a few steps with Muslim took his seat with him at a spot from which both Muslim and he would be visible to Obaidullah b. Ziyad. Muslim then began' "one thing I have to request of you is to arrange for the discharge through the sale of my sword and chain armour, of a debt of 700 dirhams which I have incurred since I came to Kufa. The second thing is that you may, after I am dead, obtain my dead body from the son b. Ziyad and get it buried. The third request I have to make is that you may send a messenger to Husain to tell him of what happened to me so that he might go back and not be deceived by the Kufans.

Muslim had said these things in confidence, but the faithless Omar b. Sa'd went to the son b Ziyad and told him all that had transpired between him and Muslim. This disgraceful conduct offended Obaidullah b. Ziyad himself who repeated the Arab saying, meaning, "A trustworthy man never commits a breach of trust, but sometimes a dishonest man mistakenly gets appointed as a trustee."[1] He then himself gave his decisions on the requests made by Muslim saying "I have no interest in your belongings which will be sold to discharge your debts As for as Husain is concerned, I would have nothing to do with him, if he does not come this way. I am unable to make any promise of considerateness in the disposal of your dead body since you rebelled against me and raised the people so as to create diasension and discord among them. [2]

The conversation between Muslim and Obaidullah b. Ziyad that followed the expression of the latter's reactions to the former's last wishes is remarkable in the context of the charge of rebellion placed at Muslim's door. Ziyad's son said, "Son of Aqil, you had come here to affect disunion and cause commotion amongst the people so as to breed strife among them and bring about a civil war."Replied Muslim, "No, I had no such purpose in mind in coming here. I came here since the people here had represented that the virtuous among them had been put to the sword by your father who had introduced among them the practices of Chosrose and Caesar and had obliterated the simple in formality of Islam. I, therefore, came with the object of improving their morals and habits and leading

1. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 241
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 212

them to cherish juctice and fair play and to act up to the teachings of the Curan. [1]

Since it was, indeed, a fact that Muslim had done nothing whatever against what he had then declared as his objects, the explanation should have more than sufficed for his defence against the charge of insurgency. Autocrats are, however, indifferent to reason and argument and Obaidullah b. Ziyad ordered Muslim to be taken to the roof of his palace, be put to the sword there and his body along with his head thrown to the earth below from there. Bakr b. Hamran Ahmari [2] who had wounded Muslim's lips and mouth with his sword earlier in the day was chosen for the commission of the crime. Muslim ascended the roof of the palace with surpassing patience and composure rehearsing the greatness of God and invoking His benediction. He was decapitated and his body was hurled down to the ground below. [3] Muslim had started his struggle on Tuesday, the 8 th Zilhij 61 A. H. [4] and was martyred the day following.[5]

After this incident, panic and terror reigned over the town and awe and alarm held complete sway over it. People avoided stirring out of their houses lest it should invite danger. Complete silence fell over the town and people could not keep track of each other.

The farthest limit of change was reached when Hani b. Urwa, who used to have 12,000 mounted soldiers in attendance upon him, and the false report of whose murder had brought about the siege of the government house by men going about with their swords drawn, was dragged to the market place, tied in ropes, and was calling aloud, "Where are the brave warriors of my tribe of Muzhij. Alack-a-day I do not notice the Bani Muzhij,"and no body was taking any notice of him, and a tarkish slave of Obaidullah b. Ziyad severed his head from his body.[6]

Obaidullah b. Ziyad sent to Yazid the severed heads of Muslim and Hani b. Abi jabd Hamadani and Zubair b. Arwan Tamimi, along with a brief report of the relevant events. These two messengers also gave Yazid

1, Tabari Vol. VI p. 212; Irshad p. 225

2. Al Akhbar ut-tawal p.222 where Daniwari gives his name as Ahmar b. Bakeer.

3 Tabari Vol, VI, p,213, Irshad p. 226

4. Tabari, Vol. VI p.215

5. Irshad. Daniwari gives the date as Tuesday the 3rd Zilhij, 60 A. H. which does not appear to be correct.

6. Tabari Vol. VI p.p. 213-214, Irshad p. 226

oral accounts of the happenings. Yazid sent his compliments and commendations to Obaidullah b. Ziyad telling him that he had acquitted himself in the matter as creditably as was only expected of him, adding that his performance in regard to Husain remained yet to be seen.[1]

1, Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 242

CHAPTER XIX

HUSAINS JOURNEY TO KARBALA AND ITS STAGES

The news of the drastic change in the moral and political climate at Kufa and of the martyrdom of Muslim b. Aqil and Hani b. Urwa could naturally not travel to Mecca quickly enough so as to serve as a timely caution to Husain who had only received Muslim's letter, telling him that everybody was prepared to do him obeisance and requesting him to hasten his arrival at Kufa, on 12 Ziqada[1] i.e. as many as 27 days prior to the tragic end of the writer. This communication made it necessary for Husain to undertake the journey to Kufa. Normally on such pressing expedition in commencing the jonrney had been indicated that Husain should have omitted the performance of the hajj and left Mecca even though only a day or two had been left for the performance of that religious duty falling due. The unexpected and precipitate manner of Husain's departure from Mecca is an unmistakable pointer to the sudden emergence at Mecca of a very difficult situation for him.

The bent of Husain's mind and his love of divine worship must assuredly have predisposed him to go through the ceremonies of a full hajj. possibly the last in his lifetime. what, then should have happened that even though such a hajj was to be performed only two days later, Husain converted his observance into an Omra (the lesser hajj) and left Mecca hurriedly?

There was no reason, ostensible at first sight. for the step that Husain so unexpectedly took. There were, indeed, no armies with in the precincts of God's House for the people to see, but soldiers masquerading as hajjis had arrived at Mecca to taken Husain captive, regardless of what he was doing at the relevant moment. This secret scheme was revealed when Husain had moved out of Mecca and Farazdak, the poet, asked him what had made him to leave in such a hurry that even the hajj could not be prformed by him. Husain told him that if he had not so moved, he would have been held at Mecca itself.[2] This was precisely what had compelled Husain to undertake the journey to Iraq so quickly.

Of his ultimate end, i. e. matryrdom, Husain was fully aware. The speech which he delivered at the time of his departure from Mecca bears

1. Irshad p. 230
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 218

this out completely. He said, "Death is like a wreath round a man's neck and I desire to meet my forefather as intensely as Jacob longed to see joseph. Very much to my liking is the place where I shall fall dead. I see clearly enough with my mind's eye the scene when the enemies of all humane instincts, like beasts of prey, would be tearing my body to pieces. There is no remedy against what has been fated. We, the members of the prophet's house hold acquiesce in God's pleasure, remain patient in trials decreed by Him, and earn the reward of those who resign themselves to God's will. Parts and parcels of his body cannot be separted from the prophet. Whoever is prepared to sacrifice his life with me and meet his God may accompany me on my journey. I shall leave next morning, God willing. "This was how he had spoken to those around him on the eve of his departure from Mecca. It may also be mentioned that in the course of journey, he would often remember the martyrdom of Yahya at every stage saying that in the eyes of God, it is sufficient to show the worthlessness of the world that the head of Yahya (john) b. Zackariah was severed from his body to be presented to an adulterer among the Israelites.[1] This really alluded to his future which he used to do time and again. Even so, it would have been improper for him to have allowed his action to overstep the limits of measure which could possibly be taken in self-defence. In view of the dangers that had arisen at Mecca, it had become inescapable for him to leave the place atonce. To what destination then he ought to have be taken himself? In reason, he should have gone to the place of which the inhabitants had been inviting him with great persistence. In the circumstances, if any body were to point out that such a course spelled danger to his life, it would have been futile. For danger to his life was in any case there but the question is whether, despite the existence of the peril, it would have been wiser to go where he would have been an uninvited guest or to a spot of which the people had been inviting him with much importunity and solicitation.

And what could 'danger' connote ? Simply that Husain's life would be lost ? The loss of his life was at all events, unavoidable. Why not, then, lose one ' s life by way of human sympathy, and performing a religious duty which could be termed as fulfilment of promise, clinching the argument for all seekers of guidance and redressing the grievances of men. It was for these reasons that Husain never controverted the opinion of those who did not believe in the trustworthiness of the kufans. Husain never expressed the view that he hoped they would their commitments. He however, always held firmly to the view that it was obligatory for him to go to the

1. Irshad, p. 268

Kufans. The risk of being apprehended even in the ka'ba presented itself to Husain somewhat in an assured manner when, as he told Farazdak, on his departure form Mecca, a body of soldiers, led by Yahya b. Saeed, came out of the town and obstructed his progress at the instance of the ruler of Mecca, Amr b. Saeed b. Aas, and attempted to force him to retrace his steps to Mecca. Husain refused to go back, and a brief skirmish ensued between the parties. Since Husain's companions were determined to valiantly resist all impediments, the opponets, were forced to withdraw and Husain 's caravan resumed its journey. [1] According to Dinawari, Amr, b. Saeed himself sent directions to his police officer to go back lest the situation should take an ugly turn.[2] This happened on 8th Zilhijja, 60 A.H., which synchronised with the confrontation of Muslim b. Aqil with the army of Ziyad's son at Kufa. The day following when Muslim b. Aqil was put to death and martyred, Husain had left Mecca and was journeying in a territory to which he was a stranger.[3]

During Husain's stay at Mecca, besides those of his principal relatives who had accompanied him from Medina were a few of his chief friends who, hailing from the Hijaz and Basra, had joined him. They also accompanied Husain on the journey.[4]

There are differences amongst historians about the stages on the journey where Husain had stayed. As far as could be ascertained the stages may chronologically be arranged as in the following paragraphs.

(1) **Safah** : It is the first place through which Husain is said to have passed after leaving Mecca. He did not stay here, but met Farazdak, the poet,[5] who giving an account of the situation at Kufa told him that the hearts of the Kufans would be on his side, and their swords on the side of the Omayyads. Husain confirmed his reading of the situation, and added that everything rested in the hands of God who did what pleased Him and exhibited a new aspect of his power every day. Husain went on to say that he would be thankful if God's decree would be in accord with his wishes, and would seek his help in expressing his thanks to Him, and that if the will of God hindered him, it should be no mean achievement for any man

1. Tabari Vol. 6, pp. 217, 218; Irshad p. 229
2. Al-Akhbar ut-tawal, p. 244
3. Irshad, p. 228. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 245, Dinawari thinks that Husain left Mecca the day on which Muslim b. Aqil was martyred.
4. Irshad p. 228
5. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal, p. 248

that his intentions were pure and his conscience clean.[1] This would mean that given righteousneess of object and purity of intention, let come what may. It is plain, enough then, that Husain had not entered the lists to submit himself to trial by deed, not because he depended on the promises made to him by anybody, but because he reposed his trust exclusively in God and in order to carry out the duty indicated by Him.

(2) **Tanoom** : Husain hired some camels here from a Yemen caravan for the transport of his effects and some of his companions, promising to pay full hire charges and some gratuity as well to those owners of camels who accompanied him right up to Iraq. Some of them accordingly agreed to do so.[2]

This bears out the view that Husain had left Mecca all at once with out any preparation, even without duly providing for the transport of his goods and friends. It was at this stage that he met Abdullah b. Jafar and Yahya b. Saeed b. al Aas. When Husain had set out from Mecca Abdullah b. Jafar was away at Medina which the former had departed from, ostensibly on account of the danger which arose to his life there on the receipt by the ruler of the place, of Yazid's order that if Husain did not pledge his loyalty to the caliph, his head should be sent to Yazid. From Mecca Husain took his leave owing to the danger posed to his life by the arrival there of soldiers in the guise of hajjis charged with doing away with him, or sending him as a captive to Syria by any possible device. It was then that Abdullah B. Jafar sent Husain a letter by his sons, Aun and Mohammad, asking him, for the sake of God, to go back to Medina as soon as possible on receiving his letter since he apprehended that Husain would be put to death and the members of his house hold would face destruction if he proceeded in the direction he intended. He added that if Husain left the world, the light of the world would go out, as he was the guide of seekers after the right path, and the centre of the hopes of those who believed, and repeated his request to Husain not to leave in a hurry, and told him he would himself shortly follow the letter. Aun and Mohammad came up with Husain and delivered the letter to him. Having despatched the letter, Abdullah b. Jafar went to see the ruler of Medina, Amr b. Saeed b. al Aas and succeeded[3] in obtaining from him a written order giving Husain

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 218, Irshad p. 228
2. Irshad p 229
3. Amr b. Saeed was the ruler of Mecca and Medina both. Apparently when Husain left Mecca, both Amr and his brother Yahya b. Saeed b. al Aas were present at Mecca, and a body of soldiers led by Yahya had obstructed Husain After Husain resumed on his journey, both of them went to Medina

quarter. As desired by Abdullah, he affixed his seal to it and also sent his brother, Yahya b. Saeed, with this written order and Yahya b. Saeed, and meeting Husain on the way, presented the order to him. Husain knew very well the worth of the quarter extended by a local ruler in the face of the policy of the central authority. Husain disagreed with the views of Abdullah b. Jafar and told him that it would not be appropriate for the former to remain in those parts of the country. He wrote a letter to Amr B. Saeed about the written quarter given to him, and handed it over to Abdullah b. Jafar[1] who could not accompany him on account of some compelling reasons. He however, directed his sons Aun and Mohammad to keep Husain company and himself went back to Medina.[2]

(3) Zat-l-Iraq : Sheikh Mufid, has recorded that after the departure of Abdullah b. Jafar, Husain speeded along his route to Iraq and stayed here.[3]

(4) Batnur Rima and Hajir : Betnur-Rima is the name of a valley and Hajir is a place in it. From this stage Husain despatched a letter to the Kufans by Qais b. Mushir[4] who was one of their messengers. The letter said, " ..... I have learnt of the good shape in which your affairs stand and your agreement upon helping me, from Muslim b. Aqil's letter. At this I prayed to God to bring the matter in which we are interested to a most successful conclusion, and give you the best of rewards. I have left Mecca on 8th Zilhijja. When you receive my letter, give the finishing touches to your arrangements quickly and put your organisation in order, since I would be arriving in your midst very soon."[5]

Some people hold that this letter was sent through Abdullah b. Yaqtar.[6] The drift of the letter shows that it had been written at the first stage at which Husain got an opportunity to think about his affairs in peace, otherwise, it would have been despathced earlier.

Qais set out with this letter to Kufa, but he was arrested at Qadisia by Haseen's army and sent to Ziyad's son who told him that if he wanted to save his life he should ascend the pulpit and speak against Husain b.

1. Tabari Vol. VI p. 219, Irshad p. 220
2. Irshad p. 229
3. I bid
4. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 245
5. Op. Cit. p. 247, Tabari Vol. V, p. Irshad p. 230
6. Irshad p. 230

Ali dwelling on his faults and short-comings. Qais went up the pulpit and the gathering was all ears to listen to what Husain's messenger would have to urge against him. Qais, however, considered this a possible opportunity to propagate the objects of Husain and after the usual praises of God said, "O ye people ! The best of God's creatures at this time is Husain b Ali, who is a son of the prophet's daughter Fatima. I have been sent to you by him. It is your duty to come forward to his help, and to sincerely and readily respond to his call. "Obdaillah b. Ziyad flew into a passion, and ordered that he be flung to the ground from the roof of the palace. This order was pitilessly executed and Qais's body was completely broken into pieces. [1]

On leaving this stage, Husain met Abdullah b. Muti who was coming back from Iraq. He enquired of Husain why he had left Mecca, and upon getting to know of the invitations received from Kufa, like all those who had advised Husain in the matter, he too disagreed with the plan journey to Kufa. [2]

(5) **Zarood** : Zuhair b. alqain who was on his way to Kufa on his return journey from Mecca, after performing the hajj, and was camping at a fountain near this stage. In the beginning he did not have affinity in faith with the prophet's family. On the contrary he was generally believed to subscribe to what was then known as the Osmani way. Husain's insight however, discerned his internal capabilities. He, therefore, sent word to Zuhair expressing a desire to call upon the latter. The general tendency to keep aloof from the prophet's family, sedulously fostered in men of the Osmani persuasion, initially disposed Zuhair to decline meet Husain. When, however, his wife, who had kept him company, heard of it. she pointed out the outrageous measure of incivility involved in his declining to meet the prophet's son, at the letter's own request. He was so moved that he went himself to see Husain who put his case before Zubair with such convincing clarity that the latter, returning to his camp happily, directed that his tents be removed to where those of Husain's companions had been pitched. He then divorced his wife, and adviced her to go back with her brother to her mother's place and told his associates, "I have taken a firm resolve to die with Husain. whoever amost you wishes to attain martyrdom with me may remain with me, others should make their exit here and now."

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1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, P. 245 ; Irshad P. 230
2. Ibid, p. 246; Tabari Vol. VI, p. 224

All of them, thereafter, forsook him.[1]

It is evident from the manner in which zubair had conducted himself after seeing Husain that the letter could not have held out to the former any rosy hopes of his prospects in the future. Indeed, it seems that Husain must have plainly laid bare before him his bleak prospects which had apparently escaped the notice of those who saw things only superficially. Can it even now be argued that Husain was taking the steps he did not observe the developments deeply, it looked that since Husain was going to the former capital of his father and brother in a land as rich in men of merit as Iraq, and that in response to the insistent invitations of the people of Kufa, the principal town of Iraq, the royal diadem and the throne, the soldiery and the army, magnificence of equipage and endless trains of attendants and servitors would greet him and he would be acclaimed king of Iraq, and that the spiritual and temporal supremacy would both meet in his person. Impalled by greed such people came trooping in to join hands with Husain. The small band of those who had comprised only the elite when Husain had left Mecca had, in the course of the journey swelled into a small army so as to make it appear as if a king were in progress towards his capital. Zarood was, however, the first stage where Husain was to be confronted with distressing developments. It was here that Abdullah b. Saleem and Mazri b. Musmael, both belonging to the tribe of Bani Asad, descried a man approching from the direction of Kufa, On seeing him, Husain made a halt in order to find out from him how matters stood at Kufa. The man, however. on seeing Husain's caravan, changed his course, at which Husain resumed his journey. The two Asadites however, went out posthaste to meet the man in order to ascertain conditions prevailing at Kufa. Tho man was an Asadite himself and disclosed that even before he had turned his back upon Kufa, Muslim b. Aqil and Hani b. Urwa had been put to the sword and that he had seen their bodies being dragged along in the bazar. It was a very painful news and the two Asadites did not deem it appropriate to break it to Husain, just then.

(6) **Sa'labia** : The two men of Bani Asad met Husain the following evening, and with his prior permission that nothing need be concealed from those who were in attendance upon him, fhey told him about the martyrdom of Muslim b, Aqil and Hani b. Urwa what they had learnt the day befofe.

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1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 244, Irshad p.p. 231-232; Al Akhbar ut-Tawal p. 246

It was agonising information for Husain, no less because it was about the tragic end of his trusted lieutenant, Muslim, than because it evidently dashed all his hopes for the future. The position of a leader of men so unhappily placed is one of great difficulty, since all those who are with him look up to him alone for solace and a way out. If he betrays any signs of discomposure or agitation, they all readily abandon themselves to despondency and demoralisation. On receipt of this sudden and tragic news, Husain only repeated the formulas, 'Surely we are for God and to Him, we return. May God's mercy be shown to them both" and resumed silence,[1] Daniwari says that Husain also said, "We render the account of our lives to God," meaning that we sacrifice our lives in His path and it is He who awards us recompense.

The two men of Bani Asad who had turned over in their minds this frightful development overnight, and had been deeply moved by it could no longer suppress their feelings. and addressed Husain, saying, "For the sake of God, do not expose the lives of your entire family to danger and return from this very stage as there is no one at Kufa to help or befriend you. On the contrary we apprehend that the whole of Kufa would be hostile to you. "It will be readily conceded that if in a moment of crisis such evidently sincere and sympathetic advice is sought to be met with arguments grounded in cold reason, it would be an exercise almost in futility. Husain, was, from the beginning, aware of the tragic conclusion of the journey on which he had set out, and the sad news, so far as he was personally concerned, made no difference. He therefore, thought it expedient to juxtapose the feelings of the Asadites with another kind of reaction to the situation. Addressing the offspring of Aqil he asked them, "What do you think, now that Muslim has been martyred?" All of them sprang to their feet and cried out, "By God we shall not return till we have avenged Muslim's death or have ourselves drunk of the cup of death as Muslim has done." Husain then told the Asadites. 'If they give up their lives, what purpose would my survival serve?"[2] Among those present somebody is reported to have remarked that it was by no means necessary that Husain should receive the same treatment as had been accorded to Muslim b. Aqil, to whom he was superior, and that the Kufans would rush to his help. Husain, however, did not confirm this optimism and made no comment.[3]

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1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 225; Irshad p.p. 231-233
2. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 246, Tabari vol. VI p. 235, Irshad p. 233
3. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 235, Irshad p. 234

The night was passed here, and equipping himself, with a sufficient supply of water, he left for Zabala.[1]

Zabala : At this stage Ayas b. Asl Tai, a poet, met Husain with a letter from Mohammgd b. Ash'as written in fulfilment of Muslim's last wishes on the eve of his death to dissuade Husain from going to Kufa where he would find no help.[2] The messenger also brougt the news of the slaughter of Qais b. Mushar.[3]

It appears that those who had heard the sad news of Muslim's martyrdom had kept it to themselves. At this stage however, Husain did not consider it appropriate to keep the information from the other members of the caravan since he was aware that many an Arab had joined him en-route under the wrong impression that he was going to country of which the people had recognised him as their ruler. Husain wished to disabuse their minds of this false notion so that they may not continue to bear him company under a misconception, and he might be left with only those faithful friends who believed in his aims and would be prepared to sacrifice their lives in rendering him assistance.

Accordingly he informed all the members of the caravan of the true aspect of things through the following address.

"I have received the painful news that Muslim b. Aqil and Hani b. Urwa have been put to the sword. Those who professed to be prepared to help us, have gone back upon their promises. Whoever of you, therefore, wishes to go back may do so; he owes no explanation to me."

The expected happened, and people melted away this way and that so that Husain was left mostly with those who had accompanied him from Medina.[4]

(8) **Batn-i-Aqiq**[5] : At this stage, Husain came across Amr b. Luzan[6] a man belonging to the tribe of Ikrama.[7] He gave the news that Obaidullah b. Ziyad had posted guards throughout Qadisia and Azib. He prayed Husain in the name of God to go back as nothing besides swords and

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 211
2. Op. cit, p. 203
3. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal p. 247
4. Al Akhbar ut-tawal p. 247, Tabari Vol. VI p. 246; Irshad p. 233
5. Sheikh Mufid calls it Bani-i-Aqba, Irshad p. 233
6. Irshad p. 233
7. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal p. 247

bayonets would greet him and warned him and warned him against reposing his trust in those who had written letters to him, since they would be amongst the first to turn out to oppose him. Husain gave him his blessings for his good wishes and resumed his journey.[1]

Upon hearing that military pickets had been posted at Qadisia, and that advancing in that direction would be tantamount to delivering himself up to the enemy, Husain slightly changed the direction of his journey and therefore, did not pass through Qadisia which lay on the usual route to Kufa, and where Qais b. Mushar had been held captive. He did not also come into conflict with the armed forces led by Haseen, and stationed within the bounds of Qadisia.

(9) **Surat** : After leaving Batni-Aqiq, Husain stayed for a night here. [2]

(10) **Sharaaf** : According to Tabari and Shaikh Mufid after passing through the stages of Sa'labia and Zabala, it was at Sharaaf that Husain caused all water-skins and leather bottles to be filled with water[3] and then left the place The moon of Moharrum 61 A.H. had probably been sighted by then. When Husain's caravan had advanced from Sharaaf, and was about three miles away from Qadisia,[4] somebody cried out "God is great." Asked the reason for this, he said that he could see date trees which betakened the proximity of some inhabited site. Others of the company denied having ever seen date trees there. Husain then asked them to try to have a closer look at what was visible, It was then that they described what they had seen as necks[5] and pricked up ears of horses.[6] Husain confirmed this.

(11) **Zu Jasm** : Noticing that forces of the enemy were heading for them, Husain asked his frieeds if there was in the vicinity a safe place to afford him protection against an attack from his rear, so that they might not get encircled on all sides. The mount of Zu Jasm, which lay on Husain's left was pointed out to him[7] as answering the purpose he had in mind, if he could make it before the enemy. Husain succeeded in getting

1. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal p. 247, Irshad p.p. 233, 234
2. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 247
3. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 226, Irshad p.p 233, 234
4. Tabari, Vol. VI' p. 220
5. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 227
6. Irshad p. 234
7. Daniwari Calls it Zu Jashm. Al Akbar-ut-Tawal p. 227

to it earlier than the advancing forces of the enemy, and his camp was established there without loss of time. When the opposing forces also arrived there, it transpired that Haseen whose troops had been stationed around Qadisia, had deputed Hur at the head of 1000 soldiers to obstruct Husain's progress[1] on learing that in order to avoid confrontation with the former's army[2] Husain had changed his route so as to by-pass Qadisia. Husain had adopted a course which was distant from the beaten track, and it appears that Hur was hard put to it to get to Husain in the hot summer noon,[3] moving with great speed in the desert. His difficulties mounted when supplies of water ran out, so that when his troops reached where Husain was, both the letter and his army were in great distress on account of thirst.

While Husain and his companions stood turbaned and with swords slung across their shoulders, Hur's soldiers and their horses made their appearance, panting and gasping on account of thirst. Full of human sympathy as Husain was he could not bear to see the enemy in such extremity of distress and he bade his men to give the soldiers and their horses water to drink as plentifully as their hearts destired, so that their thirst should get entirely quenched. This was promptly done.[4] Basins of water were put before the horses and removed only after the beasts had refused four or five times to have any further drink. A companion of Hur, Ali b. Taan Maharabi, the last to arrive, was in such deep distress on account of thirst that his senses were completely stupefied and he could not drink water which he spilled every time he tried to drink it. Husain, therefore, himself twisted the mouth of a goat skin of water and gave it to him to enable him to satisfy his own thirst as well as that of his horse.[5]

Deeply impressed as Hur must have been with Husain's nobleness of mind and ganerosity at the time, he could not probably just then muster the brazanness to disclose the unpleasant duty which had brought him to the laller. And on account of the natural serenity and composure of his mind and his firmness, Husain did not care to enquire of Hur the object of his arrival. Meanwhile the hour for the mid-day prayers arrived and the call for the prayers was given. Husain came out of his tent and

1. Ibid p. 247; Tabari Vol. VI p. 227
2. Tabari Vol. VI p. 227
3. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 247
4. Ibid Tabari Vol. VI P. 227 Al Akhbar ut Tawal, P. 247
5. Tabari, Vol. VI, P. 227, Irshad P. 234

asked Hur whether he would offer his prayers separately. Hur requested Husain to lead the prayers [1] and both he and his men joined in the prayers.

The prayers over, Husain addressed Hur and his soldiers saying, " Let me explain my position to you before God. I did not come towards you till letters reached me inviting me to furnish guidance to you, so that you might possibly unite in the path of righteousness through me. If you stand by your words, I am already here to fulfil my aim. If, however, you do not relish my coming to you I may go back where I came from. "No one made any reply to this speech [2] which was received in utter silence. In the evening Husain directed his men to prepare to resume their journey, and led the evening prayers as he had done the noon prayers, Hur and his men again following his leadership for the prayers. After the prayers Husain addressed the gathering and after paying the tribute of praise to God, said, " You would earn God's favour if you adopt the fear of God, and uphold the rights of the deserving ones, We, belonging to the prophets house hold, are in truth better entitled to govern the Muslims than those who claim this authority today, and oppress the Muslims. If however, you do not approve of us, and do not concede our claim and now hold an opinion different from what you conveyed to me in your letters and through your messengers, I would go back. " [3] Hur now broke his silence, saying, " By God, we are not aware of the letters to which you refer."

Husain ordered that the bags full of letters be produced. Two bags full of letters were brought forth and their contents were placed before every body. Hur said that he was not among those who had written the letters and disclosed that he had been charged to follow Husain so as to take him to Ziyad's son. On hearing this, husain said emphatically in a rsised voice, "Death shall be nearer to you." [4]

After this, Husain gave up the idea of going to Kufa and addressed his companions thus, " you see the shape things have assumed. The ways of the world have changed. Virtue has forsaken it, what remains is simply what negligible trace of water is left in a vessel from whioh the liquid has flowed out, or a disgraceful existence like poisonous weeds. Do you not see that right is cold-shouldered and that falsehood is sought after? In these circumstances, a believer certainly longs to meet God. I see in death

1. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal P. 247, Tabari Vol. VI P. 228
2. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal P. 248, Tabari Vol. VI P. 228
3. Tabari, Vol, VI, p. 228; Irshad, p.p. 235-236
4. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 248, Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 228

the blessings of martyrdom. It is a curse to live in the midst of these iniquitous people." The object of the speech may well have been once more to direct the attention of his companions to the ultimate end and dispose them again to scrutinise the quality of their steadfastness. It became, therefore, incumbent upon his friends to reassure him by giving positive expression to the purity of their intentions and the fixity of their purpose. Accordingly, Zuhair b. Qain stood up. Considering, however, that he was only a comparatively recent ally of Husain and that, in consequence, he should not precede his older friends of Husain in professions of his loyalty, he asked them if any one of them would speak or they would permit him to do so Being given the permission, he began thus, " Son of the prophet. may you achieve your object. We have heard what you said. By God, even if the world had lasted for us, and parting with it the consequence only of our assistance to and sympathy for you, we would have opted for assisting you rather than remaining eteranally alive in this world." Husain blessed Zubair and lauded his sentiments.[1] Nafe, b. Hilal then spoke," Son of the prophet, you know that even your vernable grandfather could not win the implicit devotion of people nor that degree of obedience which he could have wished. Many of his companions were hypocrites who promised him help, but secretly planned treachery towards him. Their words were sweeter then honey, but their hostile acts were exceedingly harmful in their effect. After him, your father had to face similar conditions. Some agreed upon rendering him assistence and in so doing fought against those who broke their oath of allegtance to him, or fell into iniquity or otherwise renounced their faith as In the battle of the camel, at Siffin and Nahrawan, and some opposed him. Now it is your turn and the same conditions confront us as those which confronted your father and grand father. Whoever breaks his promise and befouls his intentions, would wrong only himself and God would make you independent of his support. You are welcome to lead us anywhere, to the east or the west we are not afraid of what God may have decided for us, nor are we unwilling to meet our God. We are confirmed in our intentions and resolutions. We are devoted to you and to everyone who loves you,and we hold him as our enemy who is hostile to you."

Then Burair b Khazeer Hamadani spoke and said, "O son of the the prophet, by God it is His favour to us that he has given us an opportunity to fight on your side and get our limbs be severed from our body so that your great ancestor should intercede for us on the day of judgement. For those who put the grandson of their prophet to the sword can never

1. Tabari Vol. VI P. 229

win salvation. Woe betide them, how will they face their prophet, and what would be their condition when they would be raising laments in the fire of hell ?" [1]

After this, Husain ordered his men to mount their beasts and all, including ladies, got mounted He then ordered that they should go back along the way they had come. When Husain's companions wanted to retrace their steps, Hur's army impeded their movement. Asked about his intention. Hur said that he wanted to take Husain to Ziyad's son Husain swore by God that would not happen. Hur said that in that event he would not give up following him. These words were exchanged twice or thrice. In the end, Hur said that he had not been deputed to give battle to Husain. and that his orders were simply that he should accompany Husain till he arrived at Kufa. He added that since Husain had abandoned the idea of repairing to Kufa, he should adopt a course which led neither to Kufa nor to Medina, and that it appreared to him to be the only fair course, to be adopted till he had heard from his superior officer. Husain considered this to be a reasonable suggestion, and headed towards the left from the route to Qadisia and Azeb and Hur accompanied him. Azeeb is reckoned as having been 38 miles from this point.[2]

The conversations that Husain had with Hur enroute were very meaningful. Hur told him, " I request you for the sake of God to take pity on yourself. If you engage in a battle you would certainly enough get killed. and destroyed. " Husain asked him, "Do you put me in fear of death ? Can you do anything more than put me to the sword ? " Husain then recited a couplet of a poet balonging to tribe of Aus to the effect, " I shall stick to my resolution. A brave man is not shy of meeting death if his intentions be pure, and he fights for the truth. " Hearing this avowal of determination and constancy, Hur began pursuing him at some distance from Husain's entourage in a course parallel to the one followed by the latter. [3]

(12) **BAIZA** : At this stage, Husain made a speech refering to his duty in the light of the teachings of Islam. Addressing the soldiers of Hur's army and his own companions he said, " The prophet of Islam has observed that if one finds a ruler who oppresses and persecutes his subjects

1. Tabari Vol. VI, P. 229
2. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal p. p. 248-249; Tabari Vol. VI p. p. 228-229; Irshad p. 230
3. Tabari Vol. VI p. 229, Irshad, pp. 236-237.

permits what God has forbidden, breaks his vows to God, opposes the teachings and practices of the prophet, and acts sinfully towards God's creatures, and still allows these things to go unchallenged by his words & deeds and makes no attempt to mend matters, one would deserve being reckoned by God in the same category as the ruler. " Commenting on the situation as it then obtained, Husain said, " You might be aware that the Omayyads have adopted the ways of Satan, renounced submission to divine commands, misappropriated what belongs to the Muslims, permitted what God has forbidden and prohibited what God has allowed. In these circumstances, upon whom does the responsibility for improving matters rest more heavily than it does upon me?[1]

(13) Azibul Hijanat[2]: At this place the contingents of Hur and Husain stayed separately at a distance of the flight of an arrow from each other. Five mounted men and a riderless horse arrived from Kufa, led by Tirimmah b. Adi. These men were Amr b. Khalid Asadi Saidavi, his slave Sa'd, Mujamma b. Abdullah Aezi and his son, Aez b. Mujamma, and Janada b. Haris Salmani. Hur, who had been watching Husain's movements, said that since these men had not been among those who had already been with Husain, they would be arrested, or sent back to Kufa. Husain, however, claimed that since they had come to him, they must be deemed to be under his protection and to have joined the company of his friends and allies. Hur thereupon raised no further difficulty.

Husain learnt from Mujamma b. Abdullah Aezi that the important men of Kufa had been heavily suborned so that they had agreed upon opposition to the prophets's grandson He added that the hearts of others were with Husain, but that their swords would be lifted against him. They also gave an account of the martyrdom of Qais b. Mushar which made tears well up in Husain's eyes and he recited the Quranic verse.

فمنهم من قضى نحبه ومنهم من ينتظر وما بدلوا تبديلا

purporting to say that they had passed that way, and we also have to tread along that path. Tirimmah said that before leaving Kufa, he had seen such a huge army ready for inspection as he had never seen before, and that this army would be despatched to fight against Husain. He advi-

1. Tabari, vol vi. p. 229
2. The name of the pasture of the camels of Noman b. Munzir, King of Hira, Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 231

sed Husain that since it was impossible to successfully confront such a vast army, the latter should accompany him to mount Ija where the powerful kings of Ghassan and Hamir and Noman b. Munzir had not been able to vanquish them. He said that he undertook the responsibility of supplying him with 20,000 soldiers to help him. Husain gave him his blessings for his sincerity, but expressed his inability to act upon his advice.[1]

(14) Qasr-i-Bani Maqatil : Disgressing from the route to Kufa, Husain pursued a course to his right from Azibul Hijanat, and reached Qasr-i-Bani Maqatil and stayed there. Hur also camped here.[2]

Obaidullah b. Hur Ja' fi was also camping hers at the time. He was one of the brave horsemen of Kufa, and Husain asked for his support and assistance. Oqaidullah could not, however, then make up his mind and declined to assist Husain[3]. He regretted the omission all his life and joined those who rose to avenge Husain's slaughter.

Before leaving the place, Husain directed in the small hours of the night that water be stored for being transported with the caravan. This was done, and Husain left the place.[4] When they had gone some distance, Husain felt some drowsiness coming upon him and when he awoke, he was repeating the words. "Verily we are for God and to him we return. All praise be to him" Ali Akbar, Husain's son, went to him and asked him the reason. Husain said that he had dreamt that a rider was saying, " These men are pursuing their way, and death was drawing towards them."Husain said he thought that he had in this way been warned of his death. Ali Akbar said,"May God keep you from sorrow. Are we not on the right path? " Husain replied, "By God to whom every one has to return, we are certainly in the right." Ali Akbar said, "Since we are in the right, why need we care about death ? " Husain said, "My son, may God give you the best reward which a father may give to his son."[5]

This was a wonderful manifestation of self-respect, composure of mind and integrity of conscience.

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1. Tabari Vol. VI p p. 230-231
2. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal, p. 249
3. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 231, Al Akhbar ut-Tawal p. 249
4. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 231
5. Ibid ; Irshad, pp. 237-238

(15) **Nineveh** : Unmolested by the forces of Hur, Husain reached Nineveh where an armed rider was seen coming from the direction of Kufa, & everybody halted & awaited his arrival. When he arrived he saluted Hur & his soldiers, but considered it unnecessary to greet Husain or his companions. The man had brought Hur a letter from Obaidullah b. Ziyad saying, " You should prevent Husain from advancing further wherever this letter may reach you. You should make him encamp where water & grass may not be available, nor any fort or other place of refuge. I have charged the bearer of this letter to accompany you, and to inform me of the action you have taken[1] and not to leave you till my orders have been carried out."[2] Possibly Ziyad's son had got wind of the tolerant behaviour of Hur towards Husain, and had come to entertain doubts about Hur's loyalty. He, therefore, thought it necessary to get his order complied with under the supervision of his messenger. Hur was still a man of the world, and even though reluctantly, he felt bound by the orders freshly received. He acquainted Husain and his companions with the full contents of the letter received from Obaidullah b. Ziyad. Husain wanted to put the power of Hur's conscience to a further test and asked Hur to stay at a village, Ghazaria, or another village Shafiyya,[3] a little further away. Hur declined to grant these requests and referred to the latest orders received by him. This threw Husain's associates into an excitement, and Zuhair b. Qain said, "It is easier to fight against these men now than with those who would arrive later since they would be so numerous that we would not be able to fight against them with dry hope of success. Husain, however, declined to accept the suggestion, saying that he did not wish to take the initiative in opening the hostilities,"[4] Then he asked Hur to allow him to advance a small distance further, and Hur kept quiet.

(16) **Karbala** : Husain advanced a bit turning to the left when Hur's contingent stopped him from moving further and asked him to alight. where adding that the Euphrates was not far from there. Upon enquiry the name of the place was given out as Karbala Husain said, "This is the stage of Karb (distress) O (and) bala (trial), and got down from his horse."[5] It was the second day of Moharrum 61 A. H. and a Thursday.[6]

1. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal pp. 249-250
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 232, Irshad p. 238
3. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 250 where Daniwari call it Saqiyya
4. Ibid, Tabari Vol. VI p. 232; Irshad p.p. 238-239
5. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 232, Irshad p. p. 238-239
6. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal, p. 250 where Daniwari Says it was the Ist Moharrum, and a Wednesday.

Now that the journey's end had been reached for Husain, it would not be amiss if we discuss the various aspects of the journey in some detail.

It has already been mentioned that Husain's object was not to wage a war in the same sense as it is usually fought in the word. Husain did not wish to win territorial sovereignty for himself, nor directly to bring about Yazid's downfall. His aim was only to arouse the Muslims from neglectful apathy and indifference, and to work among them a mental revolution to enable them to see Yazid's conduct in its real significance and to be not taken in by his claim to be a Muslim. He, therefore, departed from Medina. If he had stayed on there and had fought against Yazid and sacrificed himself, both these acts would not have assumed the characteristics which Husain wished to invest them with. Either poison or the sword would have been pressed into service against him, but the sword would have been so used as to leave the government of Syria entirely unaccountable for it. Either some Kharijite could have been hired, like Muljim's son, who Killed Ali, or some arrow might have shot at him, not by men, but the jinn as happened with sa'd b. Abada who was done to death in Syria.These are the usual subterfuges adopted by wordly powers and are part of the diplomatic armoury or state craft. He left Medina so that the sacrifice his life may not be made to appear as a sudden unpremeditated and unexpected event, He left Medina, and where did he stay? He stayed at Mecca, the nerve-centre of the Arbaian peninsula to which every year were attracted Muslims from all directions, for the performance of the hajj, an observance obligatory, for every one having the means to perform it, under the Islamic law and kept for centuries even before the advent of Islam as an occasion for the coming together of the various Arab tribes. It was the venue of those well-known poetical symposia or gatherings and for sale and purchase of goods in what were called, 'Aswaqul Arab', (the Arab market-places) which were held between the months of Ziqada and Moharram. Husain was not an unknown person in the Arab world. Even though respect for religion had become a thing of the past, and Husain was no longar known for all the distinctions that he possessed, still nobody was unaware that he was a grandson of the prophet, a son of the ruler of the Hijaz and Iraq, the most open-handed of the Arabs from whose door so supplicant even returned disappointed the leader of the Bani Hashim and the most learned person in the Islamic world. Husain selected for his stay at Mecca the season in which the various Arab tribes used to assemble there. Even the unannounced stay of Husain here in silence was sufficient to spread the news in all parts of the country that

he had not taken the oath of allegiance to Yazid. This, Indeed, was the reason why his existence was so unwelcome in the political circles of the day that men were deputed in the guise of hajjis to hold or kill him.

Husain did not wish that he should be martyred at Mecca, for this would have meant violating the sanctity of the Ka'ba. It is also obvious that in the season of hajj all manner of men arrived at and around the Ka'ba, and it would have been simply impossible for Husain to employ persons to look after his safety while he was taking part in various observances of the hajj in Arafat, on Mina and at Mash'ar. It would have been easy enough at any of these places and on many other occasion for a murderous assault being made at him, and the assassin getting lost in the great commotion that would have ensued among the milling crowds that assemble on such occasions. Who then could have said that the murderer of Husain was Yazid's hired assasssin?

It was on account of this serious danger that Husain left Mecca, without completing the hajj but as Saiyid Hibatuddin Shahristani has recorded in his work the Nuhzatul Husain, the departure of Husain in this manner and at such a time sent a wave like that of electricity among the representatives of Arab tribes and question like, "Where has Husain gone?" "Why did he not perform even the hajj?," "Why did he leave his grandfather.s grave with all members of his family and relatives? and explanations like :

" On account of the danger from Yazid. "

" Why, what did Yazid want? "

" He wanted Husain to swear allegiance to him. "

" Impossible, How could this be so? A man like Husain who knew thoroughly what was right should pledge this allegiance to a drunkard and adulterer like Yazid! Why then did he not complete the hajj and stay at Mecca. "

" Husain apprehended danger to his life, Possibly some men had been sent from Syria to murder Husain "

" Could this cruelty and iniquity be exceeded. The prophet's son was allowed no respite at Ka'ba! " must have been widely raised and conavassed.

Everyone who returned from Mecca after the hajj must have carried, as the latest news, accounts of the movements of Husain with their reasons It does not however, mean that this publicity brightened the chances of

raising an army to espouse Husain's cause, but it did destroy the chances of the martydom of Husain getting attributed to unknown reasons. It certainly baulked the government of Syria of the opportunity of trumping up explanations for Husain's martyrdom agreeable to their political advantage. It mullified the chances of throwing into the shade the rightness and truth of Husain's stand, and the injustice and the wrong with which he was oppressed. If this had not been so, attempts on behalf of Yazid would have been made to offer a variety of explananations for Husain's murder, and the noble object which Husain had in offering his sacrifice, viz. preserving the laws and regulations and practices of Islam from utter destruction, would not have been so successfully achieved It was the result of the exceedingly prudent steps taken by Husain that as soon as he was put to the sword, it was conceded on all hands that he had been most unjustly put to death, and the ruler of Syria and his henchmen found no opening whatever to invent any charges against him, since much in advance of his martyrdom, by getting the reasons for his moves widely heralded in the Islamic world, Husain had shut the mouths of his enemies and got his righteousness universally acclaimed.

Judging from results, it may be said that the caravan which departed from Mecca under Husain's leadership was a silent mission for publicity. As it was the season of hajj, various tribes from Iraq, Yamen, Taif and other lands were pouring into Mecca while Husain was going out of that town with his family, relations, friends and allies and effects in the form of a small carvan. Those who have covered long distances travelling on horse-back or by similar means ot transport are aware that even if a small caravan of four or five members is met on the way. curiosity is naturally excited about who the persons met with are, whence they come and why and whither they are bound and many other similar matters. And when it is the splendid caravan of Husain and members of his family, other relatives and friends. advancing from the direction of Mecca, with only two days to go for hajj, it must have attracted attention, and strangers must have felt an irresistible urge to enquire about the persons composing the caravan, and other questions, like the ones already mentioned. And discussions on the lines hereinbefore suggested may well have started amongst those whom this caravan came across with. It was thus that Husain had met Farazdak and Abdullah b. Muti and Omar b. Abdur Rahman Makhzoomi who were proceeding towards Mecca while Husain was travelling in the opposite direction. It is obvious that Husain's caravan, while winding its weary way in the wilderness, might well have forced people from a far

to enquire into the real reasons for Husain's journey at a wholly unexpected time.

Coming out of Mecca, Husain headed for Kufa as it was wholly uncalled for that despite the persistent invitations which the inhabitants of that town had extended to him, Husain should reject their request on the basis of their supposed unreliability, especially since his emissary, Muslim, had, by personal observation, confirmed the ganuineness of the desire of the Kufans to have Husain in their midst to provide them with religious guidance. It is obvious that Husain had left Mecca under compulsion, conditions there being by no means reassuring. The journey from Mecca was, however, undertaken in the capacity of an invited guest of the kufans, and the high sense of consideration which inspires the Arabs in relation to their guests is, indeed, proverbial. It is true that when the occasion arose of extending assistance to Husain, the Kufans did not or could not come forward in any appreciable numbers to render help to their guest; but as a natural reaction to this indifference, especially amongst the Arabs, it was almost certain that a painful restlessness would grip the hearts of the Kufans that even though they had invited Husain, they had denied him assistance and succour, and this feeling would eventually grow and assume the form of a devastasting flood of which the waves would swell and mount and for ever destroy the ruler responsible for Husain's martyrdom. And this, in the long run, would spell victory for Husain and rout for the Omayyads. Considering the bitter enmity which the Omayyads had for Husain, and their vast resources as rulers, it must be conceded, as a forgone conclusion, that Husain must have been put to death wherever he might have gone in Arabia, but in its outward aspects, the result would not have been the same as it turned out to be in advancing towards Kufa. Those who had advised Husain to go back after the receipt of the news of Muslim's martyrdom were, indeed, well-intentioned people and were apparently right from their point of view. They had, however, little idea of the nature of the enterprise that Husain had in mind. If the journey to Iraq had been based upon any bright hopes, it should have certainly been abandoned, since those hopes had been completely blasted. Since, however, Husain had not been encouraged in undertaking that journey by any flattering hopes, but be had been impelled to do so only by the acceptance of the unusually pressing invitations sent to him by the Kufans, the news of Muslim's martyrdom alone might well not have been deemed by Husain as sufficient to unsettle him in his resolve. Steadfastness of purpose, unflinching determination and the duty of being as good as his word dictated that Husain should,

by his actions, prove that he had stood by his promise even though in so doing the risk of bloodshed and breach of the peace could not be ruled out. Besides, detailed information about the circumstances in which Muslim had been martyred was still not available, and judging from the outward shape of things, it was possible that Muslim might have met his death after an equal confrontation with the enemy, in which the Kufans might well have rendered him all possible help. It was just possible that the unfortunate event of the battle which Muslim had fought might have left in the hearts of the Kufans an impression that if Husain were to arrive himself, it would give them a new energy and fresh vigour which might well entirely turn the tables. In view of these possibilities, by no means imaginary, the return of Husain from the point where he received the news of Muslim's martyrdom would have shown great lack of courage and spirit in Husain, especially since the Kufans, might possibly have got into a scrape on his account. Husain did change his purpose but that only when he met Hur's contingent, and learnt that Hur had been ordered to take him to Obaidullah b. Ziyad. Husain could have persisted in his course only if it had been any part of his intention to fight his way to Kufa, to reduce the town and, after putting Obaidullah b. Ziyad to flight, to establish his rule there, or if he had been allowed to pursue his journey peacefully. This last course had been rendered impossible, since the arrival of Hur had made it plain that in advancing further, Husain would only be delivering himself into hands of the enemy towards whom Hur would undoubtedly have forced him to direct his steps. It was for this reason that Husain gave the very sharp reply to Hur, when the latter told him that he had arrived to take Husain to Ziyad's son, "Death will turn out to be nearer to you (than the realisation of your aim)".

The first alternative was certainly open to Husain, to attack Kufa and after vanquishing the enemy's forces there, to establish his rule. This course was, howeever, not feas ble for obvious reasons. He did not have at his command the requisite military support to engage the 30,000 disciplined soldiers of Yazid with any hope of success. While a defensive action against such heavy odds would have been fully consistent with bravery and courage but to take the offensive with such meagre support as 72 men would have been clearly indistinguishable from rashness and improvidence. Then it would have been against the course he had chosen for himself in order that the stand he had taken might not get mixed up with an attempt at rebellion and sedition. It was on accunt of this consideration that Husain had made it clear in his parleys with Hur that he had

come as an invitee, and would go back if he was unwelcome.

Accordingly, after the resistance offered by Hur, Husain abandoned the idea of going to Kufa, and accepted Hur's reasonable suggestion of taking another road which led him to Karbala.

The same principle of not taking the initiative in commencing a war was responsible for Husain's encamping just where Hur had asked not to proceed further at Karbala. It was not possible to advance without fighting for it, and as Husain did not have in view so pre-ominently advantageous a spot for his stay as to render it worthwhile for him to break a lance with the enemy over it, he agreed Hur's directive.

Husain, therefore, pitched his tents at Karbala a little removed from the Euphrates. What is now called Karbala is really a collection of the lands of several contiguous and distinct hamlets. The names of several places are heard in connection with the events at Karbala : Ninevah, Ghazirya, Shatt-i-Furat, Karbala, These are not the names of one and the same place, but of separte and distinct localities which came to be accounted as one as they adjoined each other.

Ninevah was a hamlet situated near the modern Saddai Hindia. By its side, lay Ghazirya, the place were resided Bani Ghazira, an off-shoot of the tribe of Bani Asad. It corresponds possibly to what is now known as Husainia. Hard by lay a hamlet, Shafiyya, and a piece of land called Karbala which lies to the south in the eastern part of the present town of Karbala. Adjacent to it lay a hamlet called Aqr-i-Babul to the north-west of the Ghaziriaa. It now contains ruins which are expected to lead to many important archaeological discoveries. It was situated just on the banks of the Euphrates. and on account of its natural physical features, consisting of encircling hillocks, it was like a fortress. Opposite to it, on the other side of the Ghaziryas was Nawavis, which, prior to the Muslim conquest, was a general grave-yard, In the middle of it lay the land of Heer, now Known as Hire, where Husain's mausoleum now stands. Heer was an extensive plain surrounded on three sides by adjoining hillocks of which the range, commencing in the north-east from the Babus Sidrah and Manarai Abd of the enclosure round Husain's tomb, spreads upto the Bab-i-Zainabia in the west and then turning towards the south ends at Dar-i-Qibla. These adjacent hillocks form a semicircle into which access may be had from the east where the path to the mausoleum of Abbas runs, It has been found upon investigation that in the traces of

the habitations around the tomb of Husain, the marks of the ancient ascending tendency are still to be found to the north and west, and that towards the east nothing except low-lying soft soil is met with. It appears, therefore, that the ancient lay out of this place was the same, i.e. level in the east, and with a semicircular ascent in the north and west. This was the semicircle in which Husain was surrounded and martyred. The Euphrates proper is not directly related to the site of Karbala. Its course ran through places like Hilla and Musayyab to the out-skirts of Kufa and a long distance lay between the river and Karbala. However, a small branch of the Euphrates separated itself from the main stream at a place called Rizwaniya, and passing through the north-east of Karbala, it made towards where lies the tomb of Abul Fazlil Abbas, the standard bearer of Husain's loyal band. Then running in the direction of the modern Hindia it met the main stream of the river north-west of the place called zilkifl. This branch of the river was called Alqama and, on account of its Origin, it was also sometimes called the Euphrates. 'Tuff' means the bank of a river and the term was particularly applied to that bank of the Euphrates which extended in the south from Basra to Heet, and therefore, it was also applied to that bank of the Alqama on which Karbala was situated, The events of Karbala are, therefore, also called the events of tuff and Karbala is also, called Shatt-i-Furat.

CHAPTER XX

MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT : TROOPS POUR INTO KARBALA

At Kufa, unbounded repression followed the death of Muslim b. Aqil Obaidullah b, Ziyad apprehended lest those who had sworn allegiance to Muslim, but had been kept from affording him help should raise an insurrection by rallying their forces. He instituted a search. therefore, for all those suspected to be partial to Husain, and either put them to the sword or into prison. Maisim, a vendor of dates, and Rashid Hajri met their deaths during this period.

Mukhtar b. Abu Obaida was not present at Kufa when Muslim was put to death. On hearing the tragic news he had hastened to Kufa but by the time he reached there the following day, all was over with Muslim. Amr b. Haris had raised a standard at Kufa and had announced that whoever sought shelter under it would be granted protection of life and property. In the circumstances then prevailing Mukhtar had considered it expedient to take advantage of the proffered safety. Even so, he was put into irons and thrown into prison. Abdullah b. Haris b. Naufil met similar attention.

On receiving at Damascus the news of the resistance set up by Muslim b. Aqil, and of his death and of Husain's departure from Mecca, Yazid wrote to Obaidullah b. Ziyad; " I gatner that Husain b. Ali has set out for Iraq. You should, therefore, engage spies, strengthen fortifications, and take action against those even suspected of disloyalty and detain them at once."

Nothing, was wanting for a reign of terror to be unleashed at Kufa. Gaols overflowed with prisoners and as Obaidullah b. Ziyad put it, " There is nobody even suspected of opposition to the government but finds himself behind the bars. "Having thus controlled the town he, turned his attention to matters outside it, fearing that people from Basra, Madain and other localities might head for Kufa to assist Husain. The outskirts of the town were, therefore, heavily guarded. Haseen b. Tamim, the Kotwal of Kufa, was despatched, with 4000 men under him, to Qadisia which was the meeting place of the highways from the Hijaz. Iraq and Syria. Troops were deployed from Waqisa to Qatqatana, La'la and Khafan

and on all sides of the highways running from Basra and Syria, so that entry into the territory thus garrisoned was as impossible as exit from it.[1] It was at Qadisa that Qais b, Mushar Saidavi, carrying Husain's letter to the Kufans, was arrested by Haseen. The news of the despatch of a contingent of 1000 men, led by Hur, from the army stationed at Qadisia with the object of intercepting him, led Husain to change the direction of his journey after he had passed through the stage of Batn-i-Aqiq. After forcing Husain to break his journey at Karbala. Hur informed Obaidullah b. Ziyad of it. Just then an insurrection had broken out at Dastbai, outside Arab territory' which the tribe of Dailam taken into their possession, and Omar b. Sa'd a son of Sa'd b. Abi Viqas, who had vanquished Iraq, was sent with 4000 men to quell the revolt. In return for the services that he was to render in this behalf, he was given a written order appointing him as the ruler of Rai. Dastbai and Dailam. The army had moved to go to Iran[2] and Omar b. Sa'd was in camp at Hammam Ai' yon and was on the point of marching out[3] that the matter of dealing with Husain assumed urgency. Obaidullah b. Ziyad accordingly, directed Omar b. Sa'd to undertake the successful conclusion of this campaign before leaving for Iran.[4]

Omar b. Sa'd was not a companion of the prophet, but he was at least a follower of the prophets' companions. He was born on the day Omar, the second caliph, had died.[5] Many companions of the prophet were alive when he came of age, and he must have heard those traditions of the prophet from them in which the messenger of God had spoken of Hasan and Husain. He must have heard incidents proving how fond the prophet had been of Husain. He must also have had an opportunity of observing Husain personally at close quarters, and getting aquainted with his personal qualities and noble manners when, during the Caliphate of Ali b. Abitalib, Husain used to live at Kufa with his father and Omar b. Sa'd himself could not have been too young to understand things. And even after his departure from Kufa and stay at Medina, he must have heard from those who used to arrive from that town many stories of Husain's abstinence, fear of God, devoted worship of God, nobility of character and generosity.

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p.p. 222-223; Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 223
2. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 251
3. Tabari, Vol VI, p-232
4. op. cit. p. 223
5. Taqrib ut Tahzib p. 190

It was possible for these reasons that he did not relish a confrontation with Husain, which he considered to be a sin. He therefore, wanted to excuse himself from undertaking the venture. Obaidullah b. Ziyad there upon demanded that the orders appointing him as a ruler of Rai be returned to him. It was a difficult choice. Omar b. Sa'd longed to be the ruler of Rai love of office and the voice of conscience made conflicting demands on him and in order to resolve this division of loyalties, he asked for a day's time. It was granted, and Omar b. Saad consulted his special friends and relations. Every one of them advised him not to accept the errand. Hemza b. Mughirab Sheba, a son of Omar b. Sa'ds sister said" Do not go out to fight against Husain, for in so doing you will not only commit a sin but also set at naught the claims of relationship. By God if all the world's wealth and government were to be in your possession, and were to be lost to you, it would be far better than that you should take upon yourself the task of shedding Husain's blood"[1] His sincere advisers gave him similar advice, but love of high office pulled him in the opposite direction. He was in great mental distress which was expressed by the couplets meaning,"Should I renounce the rulership of Rai,although I desire it with all my heart, or shall I put Husain to death and wear the collar of reproach round my neck? In putting him to the sword the fire of hell undoubtedly awaits one, but the country of Rai is to me the apple of the eye."[2] Some historians have quoted other couplets meaning, "The punishment for the crime of putting Husain to the sword would be meted out after one's death which, we do not know, may or may not be true. What sensible man would then forgo the rulership of Rai here and now reposing his trust in comfort and well being in the life hereafter?

In the end, however, the transient glamour of worldly position got the better of Omar b. Sa'ad's judgement and he agreed to fight against the prophet's son. For the last time, however, conscience again pinched him into trying to excuse himself to Ziyads' son, even though the wish may be weakly expressed, He therefore, said to Obaidullah b. Ziyad, "You have already directed me to go to Dastbai and to the territory of Dailam. and people have learnt of it. My army has also prepared itself to go in that direction. It would therefore' be best if you would despatch me in that very direction. You might as well send some one from amongst the people of rank at Kufa to give battle to Husain, as they are in no way less distinguished for their prowess and ability in the art of war." He also

1. Tabari Vol. 6 p. 233
2. Kitabul Baladan p. 271

named some persons of Kufa in this context, but this displeased Obaidullah b. Ziyad who told him that it was none of the formers' business to suggest names to the latter as no advice was needed on the point. Obaidullah said that Omar b. Sa'd should answer for himself, and that if he did not wish to fight against Husain, he should deliver back the written orders appointing him to the rulership of Rai. Omar b. Sa'ad understood it full well that he could not keep himself innocent of this sin except through the sacrifice which he was reluctant to give. He uttimately agreed to go to fight against Husain, and left for Karbala with his army, earlier intended for the advance upon Iran. He reached Karbala on the 3rd of Moharrum [1]

Together with the 1000 men under Hur, the strength of the army under Omar b. Sa'ad now, rose to 5000 men. This gave him more than sufficient numerical superiority to Husain's small band, but Obaidullah was so greatly overawed by the traditional valour of Husain's family, and the powerful influence of his truthfulness that he considered the largest army unequal to the task of confronting Husain. Accordingly the 3000 men left with Haseen b. Tamim in the garrison at Qadisia were also moved into Karbala. General recruitment to the army was then announced at Kufa, and Obaidullah b. Ziyad went out of Kufa to camp at Nakhila on the way to Karbala so that he might himself inspect the forces and despatch them to Karbala. without a break. Important leaders of Kufa like Hajar b. Abhar, Shees b. Rabii and Amr b, al Hajjaj were directed to go to Karbala with their adherents. Every one of them had to leave with a numerous army, and no excuse for non-compliance with these orders was accepted. Shees had pleaded indisposition, but he was told that he was only malingering, and that if he was loyal to his masters, he should go and fight against their enemies. He had, therefore. to go against his will. There were also some persons who only showed up before Ziyad' son and went back to Kufa. When he learnt about it b. Ziyad sent Sawid b. Abdur Rahman Munqari with a party of horsemen to Kufa to arrest everybody there who had not left the town till then to join up in the war against Husain. Sawid did so and ran into a Syrian who was on a visit to Kufa in connection with a disputed succession to property. Sawid sent nim under custody to Obaidullah b. Ziyad who got him beheaded. This struck terror into the hearts of all, and forth they went to fight against Husain.[2] It is, therefore, not necessary to look into history to find out the population of Kufa, nor to the various versions given by historians of the number of men 20,000

1. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 251; Tabari Vol. VI p. 330
2. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 252

according to Ibne Taoos, 30,000 according to Majlisi or 35,000 according to Ibne Shahr Ashob, or 1,00,000 according to others-who had turned out to fight against Husain. The measures taken to raise an army to give battle to Husain are sufficient in themselves to indicate that the whole population of Kufa, fit for military duty, was literally poured into Karbala which overflowed with troops.

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CHAPTER XXI

HUSAIN'S FRIENDS, THEIR DEFICIENCY IN NUMBERS AND ITS REASONS

It would sppear from what has been said in the previous chapter that by far a large majority of Husain's sympathisers, or those who could genuinely comprehend the duty of extending all assistance to him, had been put in irons and thrown into prison at Kufa. The access to Husain of the remnants of his friends from that town or the surrounding localities had been rendered exceedingly difficult by the heavy guards posted at all important or strategic points on the various routes.[1] Obaidullah b. Ziyad was in camp at Nakhila and anybody going to help Husain would have been arrested there or at Qadisia, Khafan, Qatqatana La' la' or any other stage.

Besides, the arrival of Husain at Karbala was unexpected and sudden and was unknown in the suburbs of Kufa, since it appears that even after Husain had been martyred and members of his family were being led away as prisoners, many men were wholly unaware of these unhappy developments. In these circumstances, it was simply impossible that any large number of men should have reached Karbala to assist Husain, especially since he had, from the beginning, made no attempt to add to the number of his followers. Even so, it is a historic achievement that the Shias of Kufa who had been responsible for the move to invite Husain to Kufa, or who had pledged their loyalty to Muslim b. Aqil and offered to lay down their lives for him, despite all the difficulties, did repair to Karbala, and did sacrifice their lives at Husain's feet, and that not one of them, who did not or could not go there, was found to have taken part against Husain in the battle at Karbala.

Nor was this all. Some, weak in their determination and infirm in their faith, who were so advanced in years as to be exempted from enlisting in the armies of Obaidullah b. Ziyad, were seen standing on a hillock outside Kufa when the battle was being fought at Karbala. They were crying and praying that God might send His help and succour to the members of the prophets' house and to their friends. This appears to have enraged an observer who said, "Luckless men, if these are your sentiments, why then

1. Tabari, Vol, vI p. 222

do you not go and assist them? "[1]

It is however, unreasonable to expect that everybody should animated by the strength of will and spirit and courage of Muslim b. Ausajah or Habib b. Mazahir. However, as compared to the weaklings of Kufa, the number of those loyal, devoted and brave souls of Kufa who helped Husain in conditions at once difficult and perilous, was by no means small considering how people generally behave in such circumstances.

This aspect of the matter was pointed out when Abu Bakr Hazli of Basra and Ibne Ayash of Kufa disputed before Abul Abbas Sifah the relative merits of Basra and Kufa. Speaking about bravery, Ibne Ayash named some brave horsemen of Kufa and Abu Bakr put his finger on the raw and derisively remarked, "Indeed the bravery of the Kufans is beyond dispute. All of them were either those who slew Husain or his relations and friends, or those who lent him no help or looted their effects or trampled on their dead bodies." Hearing this Ibne Ayash remarked, " You have omitted that side of the matter which is a source of pride to the Kufans, and confined yourself only to their denunciation. You, the people of Basra killed Ali, father of Husain (Ibne Muljim belonged to Basra). As far the people of Kufa, forty of them were with Husain, the total strength of his supporters being only 70 and none of the former came back alive from the battle, every one sacrificing his life for Husain, and killing some of his enemies before getting killed."

The truth is that the army of Omar b. Sa'd comprised the common people of Kufa and the tribes of the suburbs to whom only obedience to their chiefs mattered. Most of them had to serve in slaying Husain, no objects higher than compliance with the commands of the ruler, the fulfilment of their military obligation and the desire for reward. And some of them were not even willing to fight against Husain, but lacked the strength to resist the orders of the powers that be and act according to their free choice. It is also possible that there might have been in the army many young men who were wholly unaware of the important place occupied by Husain, and looked upon the whole transaction as an engagement, at the instance of the ruler, against a rebel. On the other hand all persons of Kufa who were with Husain constituted the brains and nerve centres of the population of that town, who proved themselves to be masters of their will and actions in the face of the various forces working against their

1. Tabari, Vol VI, p. 222

associating with Husain. And this is a great feat. Many of them were well-known among the people of Kufa, and wielded considerable influence among them. It was an inexplicable mystery for the Kufans in general how such prayerful and abstemious men had taken to war. These persons exercised such a powerful influence upon the opposing army that the latter got unnerved. In the history of the battle of Karbala one frequently comes across accounts of the flight of the enemy's army before the warriors of Husain's band. These hasty withdrawals were not occasioned by the martial strength of Husain's army, but by the prickings of a vulnerable conscience among the enemy.

In fact for the troops of the enemy it was a transaction into which they had been forced to enter and on this account, till the very last, the major portion of the army appeared to be inclined to surrender. It was due only to the stringent action taken by the officers, the impetus given by the promises of reward and allowances and the threats of governmental wrath which forced the army to advance, unsteady as the men composing it naturally were on account of the feebleness of the sentiments of truth and virtue in them. As against this, the discipline and organised action of Husain's warriors presented an unapproachable example. For them, when the object was to advance, no question arose of an advancing step retracing itself, nor was there any possibility of a step being advanced earlier than it was due. These warriors took no action rashly. They constantly watched out for the indications given by their leader, and so long as Husain had not finally satisfied himself about the validity of joining the war, no soldier in his army took any aggressive steps acting on his own or with impetuosity, since they all recognised what was right, had been disciplined by Husain and possessed excellent manners.

CHAPTER XXIII

PEACE PARLEYS

Omar b. Sad heartily longed to rid himself of the heinous crime in which he had got entangled on account of his greed for worldly gain. Accordingly, on reaching Karbala he tried to bring matters to a peaceful conclusion. He desired Azra b. Qais Ahmasi to contact Husain to find out tha object of his coming that way. Azra was, however, one of the seven men who, under the influence of the political climate then prevalent had also sent a letter to Husain inviting him to Kufa. This was, however, after such letters had already been sent to Husain by the Shias of Kufa. A sense of shame, therefore, stood in the way of his complying with the wishes of Omar b. Sa'd and he declined to see Husain, and speak to him as desired. At last Kaseer b. Abdullah Sheibi, an illmannered and cruel man came forward to go and see Husain. He offered even to murder Husain if that was required. Omar b. Sa'd told him that he had only to enquire of Husain what had brought him to that part of the country. The brave Abu Tamama Saedi was keeping watch over Husain's tent and from a distance saw Kaseer approaching. He told Husain that the worst of creatures, a curel-hearted man, was coming towards him, and himself advanced to meet Kaseer. Abu Tamama stopped him and asked him to lay aside his arms. Kaseer refused to oblige Abu Tamama saying that he had come to deliver a message, and wouldd so if given the opportunity, failing which he would go back. Abu Tamama then offered to keep his hand on the handle of Kaseer's sword and take him to Husain. Kaseer declined this also saying that he coud'nt suffer Abu Tamama even to touch his sword. He was then asked to give his message to Abu Tamama who would fetch him a reply from Husain. These exchanges led to a heated altercation between them and Kaseer went back to acquaint Omar b. Sa'd what had happened.

Omar b. Sa'd then sent Qarra b. Qais Hanzali on the same errand.[1] Seeing him approaching Husain asked if anybody knew him. Habib b. Mazahir said that he was one of the Bani Tamama and belonged to the tribe of Hanzala. He added that the man, known to him since long, was a sober and sensible man related to him on the mother's side. Habib added that he had not expected to see him on the side of the enemy. In the

1. Tabari Vol. VI p. 233. Daniwari gives the name as Qaira b. Sufyan Hanzali, Al Akhbar ut-tawal p: 251

meaatime Qarra arrived, and saluting Husain, gave him Omar's message. Husain replied that the townsmen of Qarra had written to invite him, and that since they did not like it now, he would go back. The reply was clear enough, and the messenged prepared to leave. Habìb b. Mazahir got an opportunity to deliver the message of truth to the man and said, " Qarra b. Qais, why do you go back to the side of the oppressor? Come and help this oppressed one whose ancestors have brought us the light of true guidance? " Qarra said that hewould first convey the reply to the message brought by him, and wouid then turn over in his mind what he should do in the matter. He trensmitted Husain's reply to Omar b. Sa'd who thought that it might bring peace. He communicated in full what had transpired between Husain and him to Obaidullah b. Ziyad. On receiving this letter. Obaidullah recited a couplet meaning. "Now that they are in the grip of our talons, they plead for release, They cannot escape from us," which fully expressed his vainglory, cruelty, blood-thirstness and wickedness. He wrote to Omar b. Sad in reply " I have received your letter and have gathered from it how things stand. You may now suggest to Husain that he, along with all his companions should take the oath of allegiance to Yazid. I shall consider the mattar again when this has been done,"[1]

This latter again blighted Omar b. Sad's hopes, It gave a clear enough picture of the malevolence of Obaibullah b. Ziyad's nature, In the first place it was wholly uncalled for to raise the question of Husain swearing loyalty to Yazid. In the second place. even if, for the saka of argument what was an impossibility were to be even granted, no promise of any favourable view being taken in the matter seemed to have been held out. It might as well have meant that the govèrnment could even then award to Husain what punishment it deemed fit.

It would appear from the letter of Obaidullah b, Ziyad that he could not get at the true import of Husain's reply to Omar b Sa'd based as it was on an attempt to put an and to all argument. He thought that Husain had been frightened by the big armies sent against him and that he had on this account offered to withdraw to where he had come from. Omar b. Sa'd was, however, observing Husain at close quarters and knew that the latters' reply was based simply on love of peace and absence of the spirit of aggression, and did not proceed from any kind of awe or dread. His first reaction at seeing the letter of Obaiddullah b. Ziyad was to say," I had

1. Al Akhbar ut tawal p. 252

already known that the ruler, Obaidullah b. Ziyad does not desire peace."[1] He sent the letter to Husain, whose reply was what had been anticipated by Omar. "This can never be so. The utmost that can befall me is death and I am prepared to welcome it."[2] Omar b. Sa'd sent this reply given by Husain to Obaidullan b. Ziyad.

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1. Tabari Vol, VI, p. 234, Irshad p. 239, Al Akhbar ut-Tawal p. 251
2. Al Aknbar ut-Tawal p. 252

CHAPTER XXIII

SUPPLY OF WATER TO HUSAIN STOPS : OVERPOWERING THIRST OVERTAKES HIS PARTY

Arrangements for the stoppage of the supply of water to Husain, his relations, friends and even small children had been envisioned in fact from the second day of Moharrum in the letter sent by b. Ziyad to Hur b. Yazid Riyahi directiong that Husain be treated with severity and compelled to camp where water may be scarce. Compliance of these orders was so punctually and peremptorily demanded that the messenger who had brought the letter was directed not to leave Hur till all the directions had been fully carried out. Hur, therefore, compelled Husain to camp at Karbala where water was scant and told Husain that as he had orders for doing so from his superiors, he had been left with no choice.[1]

The tents of Husain, his relations, friends, ladies and children were erected far from the river on a sandy patch of land which almost burned under the scorching sun of Arabia, the intense heat seriously trying the inmates of the tents, who had in their full view the flowing river and the forces of the enemy comfortably encamped beside it.

It is more than likely that the contents of b. Ziyad's letter may have become generally known to the soldiers of b. Sa'd's army and that the direction about Husain being compelled to stay where water should be scarce might have caught the eye and fired the imagination of the rank and file of the enemy's forces It is common experience that in order to curry favour with their superiors, the pettyminded amongst the functionaries in the lower reaches of big organisations, like the army, are often inclined to exercise greater harshness in the execution of malicious orders than might have been intended by those who issued them, As the orders in this case were specific about Husain heing forced to stay where water may not be available, it should not be difficult to expect that the underlings in the army should have rendered the supply of water to Husain and his friends not only difficult but also hazardous. It is possible that Hur may not have been personally disposed to be severe to Husain, since he was to a degree impressed by the latter's uprightuess. He was, however, still

1. al Akhbar-ut-tawal p.p. 249-250; Tabari; Vol. VI p. 232; Irshad, p. 213; Kamil Ibne Aseer, Vol. IV p. 268; Abul Fida, Vol. I, p. 190

toeing the official line, and could not, in consequence, openly discourage the use of ruthless tactics in the context of the supply of water to Husain and his companions. Accorddingly, whenever water had to be fetched from the river, it must have been an unpleasant experience which discouraged a repetition of the attempt still no choice, mostly due to aggravation of thirst had been left. Sometimes these attempts occasioned small skirmishes as well.[1]

On the 7th Moharrum, Omar b. Sa'd received another letter from b. Ziyad saying, "Cut off the supply of water from Husain and his friends so that they might not get a drop of it as was the case with Usman b. Affan.[2]

Omar b. Sa'd deputed Amr b. Hajjaj Zubedi with 500 mounted soldiers to guard the banks of the river with strict orders that not a drop water be allowed to reach Husain's camp. This was three days before the martyrdom of Husain.[3] The imposition of this embargo on the supply of water intensely aggravated the severity of thirst among members of Husain's party.[4]

Nor was this enormity the end of this aspect of the matter. Wounds were also orally inflicted upon Husain's sensitive heart by hurling at him snch darts as are contained in expressions like, "Husain ; do you see this bluish water running so plentifully here? You shall not get a single drop of it even at the time of your death."[5] "Husain, there is water here. Dogs dip their mouths in it and swine, asses and even wolves partake of it, but by God, you cannot taste a drop of it."[6]

It is likely that Yazid's armies might have entertained the notion that actual war with Husain would be superfluous since the torments of thirst in themselves would be more than sufficient to kill him. Accordingly once when Husain addressed them and dwelt on the close relationship which he bore to the prophet so as possibly to make the so-called Muslims alive to their duty towards him, they replied, "We know all this, but

1. b. Qutaibia: al Amat was-Siyasat p. 187
2. al Akhbar-ut-tawal, p. 252; Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 224, Irshad.
3. Ibid, Kamil b. Asir Vol. IV, p. 27; Sibte b. Jauzi; Tazkira khawas ul Ummat p. 140; Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 252.
4. Syed b. Taoos : Lahuf.
5. Tabari, Vol. VI, 234; Ibne Aseer, Vol. IV p. 27; Irshad; Tazkira Sibb b. Janzi p. 44
6. Tazkiri p. 141

would not spare you till you quit this world due to thirst." [1] The comrades of Husain, however, sometimes managed to forcibly fetch water from the river, as when after the reply mentioned above, Abbas successfully fought his way to bring water,[2] probably on the night preceding the 8th Moharrum. It is agreed that after this night Husain, his friends, relations and even children remained stricken with unrelieved thirst for three days.

It was an unequalled and memorable instance of the most devoted loyalty that even though some of Husain's relatives and friends did, on occasion, succeed in reaching the river, not one of them, did even so much as moisten his lips with water which Husain did not have to quench his thirst with. They all declared, " It is impossible that we should drink water while Husain went without it." [3] Husain's nobility of character did not admit of his resorting to force to obtain water. He contented himself with merely making requests for being allowed water for three days so as possibly to awaken the conscience of his enemies He permitted his friends also to make such requests. Burair Hamadani met Omar b. Sa'd and argued," What kind of a Muslim are you that you are prepared to kill the offspring of the prophet and also aggravate the crime by stopping Husain and the members of his family and his friends, now dying of thirst, from obtaining for their use the water of the Euphirates, freely drunk by dogs and swine? " Omar b. Sad pleaded inability to do anything in the matter unless he gave up rulership of the land of Rai which he could not contemplate at any cost whatever.[4]

In the morning of 10th Moharrum, when Hur had deserted from Yazid's army, and had gone over to Husain, he expressed his deep sense of disgust at the stoppage of supply of water to Husain. And this was only natural since shortly before this Husain had caused the thirst of Hur his men and horses to be quenched with a very plentiful supply of water. Since Hur had been a party to forcing Husain to fix his camp at a place far from the source of supply of water, he reckoned himself. in a manner, responsible for the torments of thirst to which Husain had then been exposed. He made a very moving reference to the thirst to which Husain and his party had been generally, and the women and children particularly exposed, when speaking to the opposing forces after Husain bad pardoned the speaker's own lapses.

1. Lubuf Ibne Taoos
2. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal p. 252; Tabari Vol. VI p. 224.
3. Tabari, Vol VI. p. 234
4. Kashf ul Ghumma, P. 189

When all forms of admonition and advice given to the enemy had proved to be of little avail in softening their cruel hearts, Husain and every one belonging to his tiny group proved, by their actions that no manner of torture used against them could unnerve them or shake the firmness of their purpose, and they put up with that severe trial through thirst, and after discharging their religious duty by waging a holy war, they welcomed, death, braving the extermes of thirst for no less than three days.

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CHAPTER XXIV

THE LAST ATTEMPT FOR PEACE AND HOW IT ENDED

Husain wanted to steer clear of the charge of desiring to see the Muslims engaged in mutual bloodshed, He therefore, opened the negotiations for peace himself as the last or a knock down argument and invited Omar b. Sa'd through Amr b. Qarza b. Ka'b Ansari, to a meeting to be held in the space which separated the two armies. Accordingly Omar b. Sa'd came out with about 20 mounted soldiers to meet Husain who was also accompanied by as many of his companions. When Husain drew near Omar b. Sa'd, he asked his men to retire. Omar b. Sa'd also left his men behind. The talks continued till very late at night after which Husain and Omar b. Sa'd both returned to their respective camps.[1]

This parley was conducted entirely in confidence. It was, however, briefly learnt that Husain was prepared to give up his stay in Iraq and if deemed necessary, even leave Arabia and retire to some remote place[2] This decision, if acted upon, would in reality have meant success for Husain in the achievement of his aim, since this self-imposed exile would have been tantamount to an unequivocal declaration of the object for which he had ultimately to lay down his life. Husain's conduct was however, so accommodating and mild that commander of Yazid's army, Omar b. Sad, had to concede without any hesitation that Husain wanted to tread the path of peace. He was, therefore, happy to write to b. Ziyad to inform him of the conditions accepted by Husain saying, "God be praised that the fire of mischief has been extinguished, a possibility of the muslims remaining united has emerged,and the affairs of the followers of Islam are on their way to improvement." He then gave his own opinion about the outcome of his talks with Husain and added that, to his mind, there remained no further cause for dispute and that the whole matter might be closed.[3]

It is reported that b. Ziyad also was inclined to fall in with the view expressed by Omar b. Sa'd and remarked that the latter's communication

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1. Tabari Vol. VI p. 235
2. Ibid
3. Tabari Vol. 6, p. p. 235. 236, Irshad p. 241

was a very well-meaning one. Shimr[1] was, however, violently opposed to the opinion expressed by b. Sa'd and said, "How can one who get such an opportunity afford to miss it ? Husain has now come in close proximity to you. If he escapes today without submitting to you. mark my words, power and honour would be his as of right, and weakness and humiliation would be your portion. In my opinion, his wishes should never be granted, since conceding them would be a matter of much humiliation and sign of weakness. He should certainly lay down arms unconditionally and bow his head to you. Then if you wish to severe his head for his crimes. that would be fully justified, and if you wish to pardon him, it would entirely be open to you. As for Omar b. Sa'd the less said about him the better. I gather that he spends whole nights in conversation with Husain."[2]

These words, at once adulatory and mortifying, mischievous and disturbing tended on the one hand to humour. b. Ziyad's superiority complex and self-admiration and to pamper his egocentricity. conceit and vainglory and on the other to render suspect in his eyes the sincerity and loyalty of Omar b. Sa'd. He now began to look upon Shimr as a genuine well wisher and sincere counsellor, and to grow impatient with Omar b. Sa'd who had gone to fight with Husain but had taken to spending his nights in parleying with him. He then thought that Omar b. Sad had already been won over and that he was only trying to put him on the wrong scent. He may have debated in his mind the advisability of retaining a person of such dubious loyalty in command of the army. It might as well have occurred to him to send Shimr to provide against Qmar b, Sad's activities and put an end to all parleyings for peace with Husain. It was in this disturbed frame of mind that he wrote a letter to Omar b. Sa'd, saying ,"I did not send you to Husain to pay attention, to him, or to prolong your proceedings or to give him hopes of survival or to make recommendations in his favour to me, Note it carefully that if Husain and his friends submit to me, and leave themselves to my mercy, send them quietly to me, and if they refuse to do so, advance against them.[3] Put them to the sword and tear them to pieces for this is what they deserve." Obaidullah

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1. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal p. p. 253 254, Shimr's name was Shirfil b. Amr b. Muaviya, He belonged to the progeny of Waleed Kalabi of Bani Amr b. Sama.
2. Tabari Vol. 6, p. 236
3. Al Akhbar-ut-tawal P. 253

b, Ziyad did not stop here, The following words which are a source of perennial shame to human kind and a matter of surprise to students of history, were added for none else than the beloved and truthful grandson of the prophet of Islam." If Husain is slain, his bosom and back should be trampled under the hoofs of horses since he is a rebel and an opponent of the government against which he contended. I know that this treatment after death would cause him no harm, but I add this since I have promised to deal with him in this manner if I got Husain put to the sword. If you execute these orders, you would be duly rewarded as a loyal and obedient officer. If you do not wish to do as bidden. hand over the charge of your office to Shimr who has been fully instructed about what has to be done." Obaidullah b. Ziyad then, handed over the letter to Shimr and told him orally that if Omar b: Sa'd did not use despatch in carrying out tne orders conveyed through his letter, he would be deemed to have been removed from office, and that Shimr would be treated as his successor. adding." Fight with Husain, and kill Omar-i-sa'd, and send his head also to me,[1]"

This peremptory and urgent order was sent to Omar b. Sad by the Shimr. It made the postponement of the battle almost impossible. Omar b. Sa'd knew fully that Husain would agree neither to swear loyalty to Yazid nor to make an unconditional surrender to b. Ziyad. Accordingly, as soon as he received b. Ziyad's letter from Shimr and read it, he said to Shimr, "Wretch, what is it that you have accomplished ? May God take you to account for this and destroy you as well as this message which you have brought to me. By God, I know that you alone have prevented b. Ziyad from acting on my advice, and thrown into disarray matters which promised fair to get resolved. By God, Husain, would never like to place himself at the tender mercy of b Ziyad, possessing as he done his father's heart in his bosom."[2] Shimr asked him to have done with such thoughts, and to tell him what he proposed to do to obey his master or to surrender the command to the former.

Pusillanimous and inordinately fond of the world, Omar b Sa'd was wont to ignore the promptings of his heart and the admonitions of his conscience whenever the question arose of his getting deprived of temporary worldly rank, wealth and honour. The danger of getting bereft of these mundame advantages had, indeed, drawn very near him and his

1. Tabari. Vol VI p. 236 Irshad pp 241–242
2. Irshad p. 242.

rival. Shimr, was there, facing him. Upon his affirmation or denial in reply to the question posed by Shimr depended the prospects for his own future, including not only the retention by him of his command, but in view of b Ziyad clear orders also the preservation of his life. It would have required that strong devotion totruth and justice which marks out those who sacrifice their lives for these values, to react with credit to the situation in which Omar b. Sa'd was placed, but he was made of softer stuff and entirely lacked irmness of mind In consequence he affirmed that he would carry out the task assingned to him [1] and offered to put Shimr in command of the infantry.[2] Thereafter, the presence of Shimr was a thorn in Omar b. Sad's side. In order to remove the bad impression which b Ziyad had come to form about Omar b. Sa'd, the latter had to furnish proofs of his loyalty and he, therefore thought it inappropriate to brook any delay in taking the offensive against Husain.

Preparations for the attack were, therefore, urgently ordered, and it was before the evening had set in on Thursday, the 9th of Moharrum, that an assault was led against Husain, without any prior notice. Husain was sitting at the door of his tent after the asr (evening) prayers, and was half-asleep when Zainab, his sister, heard the commotion caused by the army, and the sounds of the hoofs of horses. She was upset and called Husain, telling him of the approach of the enemey's forces. Husain replied, "I have just now dreamt that the prophet told me that I would meet him very shortly." This added greatly to Zainab's worries and she began to cry. Husain comforted her and asked her to remain quiet as God was the lord of everything. In the meantime, Abbas brought news of the charge of the adversary's army. Husain told Abbas to find out the reason for the assault at that hour. Abbas was told by the opponents army that b. Ziyad had sent orders that Husain and his party be asked to submit to b. Ziyad and that if they refused to do so, war be declared against them. Abbas told them not to be precipitate and promised that he would soon enough furnish them with an answer from Husain. He went to Husain and acquainted him with the situation[3] and the latter suggested that the enemy be asked to postpone the war, if possible, for the night so that they might spend it in prayers to God who knew how fond he was of saying his prayers, reciting the Quran and begging pardon of Him and imploring Him

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 253.
2. Tabari. Vol vi pp. 236-237.
3. Tabari, Vol, vi, p. 238.

for mercy. [1] On return from Husain, Abbas asked the enemy to postpone hostilities for the night.[2] Omar b. Sad's considered the presence of Shimr exceedingly dangerous for himself on account of the shape things had earlier assumed, and was, therefore, inclined to be harshar in his dealings with Husain than was called for. He, therefore, asked Shimr about the request conveyed by Abbas and was told that since he was in command, the matter lay within his discretionary powers, Omar b. Sa'd divined that Shimr's reply had been given ironically and therefore, opposed postponement of the hostilities. As he was, however, secretly against rejecting Husain's request, he looked to the other officers of the army for a helpful view of the matter. Amr b. Hajjaj Zubedi, the brother-in-law of Hani b. Urwa. who had launched an attack on the government house on hearing the false news that the latter had been killed, said "Good God ! Even if these men belonged to the tribes of Turks and Dailam and requested for this petty concession, you ought to grant it." Qais b. Ash'as also agreed, It must have taxed Abbas's patience greatly to have silently awaited the result of these discussions. At long last the question was resolved. and war was postponed for the night and Abbas accompanied by representative of Omar b. Sa'd, took this news to Husain. Omar b. Sad's representative also said that if Husain and his men laid down their arms the followlng day, they would be sent to b, Ziyad, otherwise the battle would then undoubtedly begin.

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2. Tabari Vol. vi pp. 237, 238 ; Irshad pp. 243, 244.

CHAPTER XXV

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE 10TH OF MOHARRUM

The respite for the night preceding the 10th of Moharrum had been obtained at the expense of so much effort neither to make any special preparation for the battle next day, nor to await the arrival of help from any quarter, nor to acquaint those who would survive him with Husain's' last wishes nor to make any provision for their safety after him. The only reason for suing for the truce was that given out by Husain viz. to spend the night in prayers. Accordingly Husain and his comrades spent the night in ceaseless prayers, soliciting Gods' indulgence and mercy, in tearful supplication [1]

The other great purpose behind the respite was that after the certainty of the danger with which the following day would be fraught had been confirmed end brought home to them, Husain wanted to give those who were associated with him yet another opportunity to search their hearts, and to impress upon them once again that whoever of them wanted to part company with him was completely free to do so, in order that in the hour of trial not a single soul be left who might feel that he had been forced against his will to cast his lot with him. Accordingly as soon as it was evening, he collected his friends and addressed them thus : All praise is for God. One should be grateful to Him in prosperity as well as in adversity. Let God be praised that he conferred upon us the privilege of having had a prophet among us who gave us the knowledge of the Quran and a treasure-house of information about our religion, and has gifted us with ears that hear, eyes that perceive and a heart that is sensible. Let it be known that I am not aware of the companions of anybody else who have been more loyal or better than my comrades, nor do I reckon the relatives of any one else to have been more virtuous and dutiful than members of my family. May God reward you all for my sake. Take notice that a battle will be most certainly fought tomorrow [2] I set you all free from your oath of loyalty to me, and I give you full permission, out of my own free will, to betake yourselves wherever you may like. Utilise the cover of night and go. Every one of you may also hold one of my relatives by the hand, and take him also away. For the enemies are thirsting only

1. Tabari Vol VI, p. 240
2. Irshaad' p p. 243, 244; Tabari Vol. VI p 238

for my blood, and once they have killed me, they would not look out for any one else.[1]

The first man who stood up after hearing this speech was Husain's brother, Abul Fazl-il-Abbas. He said, "Why should we do so? In order to live after you are dead? Not by any manner of Means I Would to God that we may not live to see such a black day." Husain's other kinsmen also spoke in the same strain. He then addressed himself particulary to the descendants of Aqil, and said, " It is sufficient for you that Muslim has sacrificed his life. You may go away. I give you leave. " They, however, replied unanimously, "We shall do nothing of the sort. Life would lose all its charm for us after you."

From amongst Husain's comrades, Muslim b. Ausajah stood up and said, " It is impossible that we should abandon you. By God I shall fight with my lance till it breaks in the bosoms of my enemies. I shall ply my sword till I can hold it by its hilt, and on no account shall I leave you. If I am deprived of weapons to fight your enemies with, I shall pelt them with stones and persevere in helping you till I have sacrificed my life at your feet." Then Saeed b. Abdullah Hanefi said, " By God, we shall not part company with you, till we have shown God that we have discharged, in regard to you, the duty we owe to the prophet in his absence. By God, if I get to know that I shall be put to the sword and again brought back to life, and would then be burnt alive, and my ashes dispersed in the air, and that I would be similariy treated 70 times, I will not leave you till for the last time too I die at your feet. Of what importance is this dying for you only once, as after it there is everlasting honour which would never end?" Zuhair b. Qain said, " By God, it is my earnest desire to be put to the sword, be resuscitated, and again done to death. This may be repeated a thousand time if the impending calamity may be averted from overtaking you, and these brave men of your family." Similar sentiments were expressed by the other comrades of Husain who were unanimous in declaring their adherence to him and sacrificing their lives for him, or in saying that it could only be after they were dead, and had done their duty that anything untoward might happen to Husain.[2] Husain blessed them and returned to his tent.[3]

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1. Irshad p.p. 243, 244; Tabari Vol. VI, p. 238
2 Tabari Vol. VI, p. 239
3. Irshad p. 244

This was an unexampled manifestation of the godliness of Husain. He was making no effort to retain his comrades with him by force of rhetoric or statements which stir men's emotions, or by raising hopes of any bright prospects. On the contrary, he was telling them the plain unvarnished reality of the situation, and was trying to banish from their minds all possible false expectations. Such an attempt was made by Husain even on the 10th of Moharrum when Bashr b. Amr Hazrami, one of his comrades, received news that the latter's son, Amr, had been held at the boundary of Rai, and Bashr remarked, "I leave him and myself also to God. Certainly I would not have liked his remaining under arrest if I had to live." When Husain heard this, he told Bashr that he had been absolved from his oath of allegiance and that he should go and take steps to obtain the release of his son. The loyal crusader replied, "Let carnivorous animals, devour me alive' if I were to leave you. How can this be ? Husain, then asked him to send his son, Mohammad, and give the latter five pieces of cloth worth about a thousand gold mohurs, to arrange for the release of his brother with the proceeds of their sale. After this, only those self-sacrificing persons could have been left with Husain who, knowing their death to be certain, were prepared with all their heart to help Husain, and whose behaviour admitted of not even a suggestion of infirmity or frailty.

Another purpose which Husain might well have had in view was to give the enemy yet another opportunity of reviewing their conduct so that if any one among them had in him the capacity to recognise the truth and accept guidance in the right direction, he might still make amends and come over to him. It was in this way that Hur b. Yazid Riyahi, an important officer of the army of Omar b. Sa'd, who had been responsible for compelling Husain to turn towards Karbala, responded to the voice of his conscience and deserted from the army of the enemies and, joining the ranks of Husain's comrades, sacrificed his life for him. Similarly, a few soldiers also came over to Husain's side to help his righteous cause.

It is indeed, to be reckoned a great success if one who invites people to a just and righteus cause is able to show the path of truth to even one man. Husain achieved a signal success in this respect by asking for a truce for a night.

Husain spent that night in prayers along with his comrades. He also took all possible measures for safety in the battle to be fought the following day, pitching the tents in close contiguity with one another,

and securing the supporting ropes of one tent by fastening them to those of the next tent. [1]

Besides, at the back of the tents there was a depression shaped like a drain. It was deepened. A moat was thus prepared and fire-wood was stacked in it so that when they might be set ablaze, a hotile attack could not be launched from that direction.

These preparations were completed in the night preceding the 10th day of Moharrum, and when a fire was lighted in the trench, the posibility of the enemy encircling Husain's little band and making an onslaught on them from all directions was removed.

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1. Irshad p. 245

CHAPTER XXVI

TENTH DAY OF MOHARRUM
THE ARGUMENT TO END ALL ARGUMENT AND THE OPENING OF HOSTILITIES

None of those who were with Husain had a wink of sleep on the night preceding the 10th day of Moharrum. The men, who longed for martyrdom, were engaged in prayers, the ladies were deeply agitated and the children greatly distressed, and more than anything else, overpowering thirst had robbed every one in Husain's camp of comfort. Not many might have welcomed sleep in the enemy's camp; preparations for the coming battle. inciuding the burnishing of weapons of offence, planning for the confrontation, and the anxious waiting for the dawn which held the promise of the fruition of their heartless schemes banishing sleep from their eyes.

Early at dawn, Husain offered congregational prayers with his friends, prayers which were to be followed by the jehad of Karbala.

Judging from normal human reactions to mortal dangers, Husain's comrades might well have been struck with deep despondency at this juncture, since there lay before their eyes a vast ocean of the hostile forces heaving and tossing and reducing their own existence, in strength and duration, to less than a bubble. On the contrary, their hearts overflowed with assurance, and their faces glowed with happiness. Indeed, they had never before been more cheerful. Burair b. Khizr Hamadani, one of Husain's companions, made some facetious remark that day to Abdur Rahman b. Abdi Rabbih Ansari, another of Husain's companions. The latter observed that such quips and cranks had better been reserved for happier moments. Burair replied "By God", the people of my tribe are fully aware that since early manhood, I have taken on interest in badinage. At the moment, however, my heart is oyerjoyed at my future prospects. By God what separates us from abiding felicity is simply the delay which the enemy make in falling upon us with their swords. I long for the hour when their swords start striking us." [1] A frame of mind like this can be induced only by implicit confidence in the justice and righteousness of one's stand and the certainty of success in the world here after.

1. Taberi, Vol. VI p. 241

In the meantime, Omar b. Sa'd's army took the field. The troops were deployed and the command of the various parts of the army was assigned to different persons. The right wing of the army was placed under Amr b. Hajjaj Zubedi, the left one under Shimr Zil Jaushan, the cavalry under Azra b. Qais Ahmasi, and the infantry under Shees b. Rabii, The standard of the army was given to Duraid, a slave of Omar b. Sa'd.[1]

Husain also led his small army into the field of battle. History has yet to know of the commander an army who might have arranged such a small number of people, as Husain did, to confront an army of at least 20,000 soldiers. According to some estimates Husain's army consisted of 32 cavalrymen and 40 men of the infantry, [2] and it is on this account that the figure of 72 is generally assigned to the number of those who sacrificed themselves at Karbala. From other facts which have transpired about the battle it appears that the number of those who fought on Husain's side exceeded 100, but was less than 200.[3]

It is just possible that the oftquoted figure of 72 for Husain's supporters represents the number of those soldiers only who had been regularly trained in warfare. In waging the jehad, however, those who could not be reckoned to be such combatants also participated.

Upon entering the field of battle, Husain made a supplication to God in words to which Jesus Christ's speech on the cross, "God, why hast thou forsaken me"? as mentioned in the New Testament, would hardly bear comparison Amidst the extremes of misery in which Husain found himself, he said, " God, Thou art my support in all hardships, and to Thee I turn with hope in all my troubles, and in Thee I repose my trust in all my trials. Many are the calamities which make the heart falter, and all resources prove inadequate to afford protection from them. Friends forsake and enemies fling taunts at one. I turn my back on them all. and make my submissions to Thee, since I know not where to turn except to Thee. Thou remedieth my troubles and providest me with relief. Thou art undoubtedly the dispenser of all blessings, the fountain-head of all beneficence and the last means for the attainment of all objects." [4]

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1. al Akhbar-ut-Tawal p. 254; Tabari Vol. VI, p. 241; Irshad p. 243.
2. Ibid
3. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 220; Ammar Dahni's version, quoting Abu Jafar.
4. Tabari Vol. VI p. 241, Irshad 246

Husain then arranged his small contingent, entrusting its right wing to Zuhair b. Qain, its left wing to Habib b. Mazahir, and the standard to Abbas b. Ali.

Besides showing the godliness and righteousness of the faith and its laws, the object of al the pains undertaken by Husain was to expose the conduct and character of his adversary so as to establish, what was indeed the whole truth, that the latter did not bear, even remotely, any relationship to Islam. It was, therefore, vital that Husain should not allow any of his actions to be capable of being so interpreted as to justify the use of violence against him. He, therefore, opened parleys for bringing about peace, expressed his willingness to leave Arabia and to lead an unsettled life elsewhere, and despite grave provocation given to his men and to him personally, resolutedly refused to take the initiative in opening hostilities A highly offensive remark mede by Shimr in the morning of the 10th of Moharrum when he noticed fire burning in the moat at the back of Husain's camp so greatly provoked Muslim b. Ausajah as to induce him to beg for Husain's permission to Kill Shimr with an arrow. Husain, however, refused to agree as he had no desire to be the first to make an appeal to arms. [1] The shooting of even a single arrow at this stage would have possibly altered the complexion of the battle, and was, therefore, disallowed by Husain.

Husain's second object was that the behaviour of his enemies against him should admit of no misleading gloss on and no slurring the facts. The most effective way of explaining away unpleasant facts is to plead ignorance of them. The Omayyads had propagated in the lands subject to their rule the falsehood that the prophet of Islam had died issueless leaving only them as his heirs. It was, accordingly, necessary that Husain should make his name and the names of his ancestors, the peculiar characteristi s of his family and the Islamic traditions concerning himself known so extensively and in so unmistakable a manner that not even a single soul might be left with room to plead ignorance about him, his family, and the Islamic traditions concerning him. This was of great importance so that the wickedness, cruelty and oppression to which he was being subjected should be self evident to every one. It was essential also in order that nobody ahould be able to deceive himself about the iniquities being perpetrated against him and find the slightest excuse to presume their validity in the absence of rebutting evidence. Husain had seen that before him his father had been offered strong and malicious resistance which had later

1.Tabari Vol. VI, page 242

been sought to be explained away as arising from a sheer error of judgement. If the slightest doubt could have found room in the minds of those who fought against Husain concerning his parentage, antecedents and rank, the friends of the Omayyads must have made the most of it, and should have caused great harm to the objects and interests of Islam. It was in order to ward off dangers like these that Husain did all that is sought to be conveyed by such expressions as providing the conclusive argument or furnishing the knockdown reasoning. The enemy's malafide pursuit of, and insistence upon wickedness and wrongdoing has, therefore been so palpably exposed as to foredoom to failure all attempts at lending the slightest countenance to, or putting any gloss upon the enemy's actions.

It appears from the records that after both the contending armies had been arrayed for battle in the morning of the 10th of Moharrum, the engagement did not commence for a pretty long time. This delay might be ascribed to the enemy's search for an excuse to begin the fighting. Husain wanted that the reason for the commencement of the battle should not be furnished by his side. Nay he even tried to peacefully guide the enemy to a righteous course and to furnish them once again with reasons for restraining themselves from pursuit of their intended cruelties. He mounted a camel, put the Quran before him. [1] and approaching the ranks of the hostile army called out loudly, "Gathering of men, listen to me and be not rash. Lat me discharge the duty of giving you the caution and guidance I owe you, and putting before you the real facts about my coming to you. If you believe my words and act fairly towards me, it would be fortunate for you, and you will know that you can have no reason whatever to oppose me. If, however, you do not trust what I may have to say, and do not deal justly by me, you are welcome to rally your forces. collect all who share your views, sp re no effort and put an end to my life using all your might, and without giving me a moments' respite. My Creator is sufficient for me. He revealed the Quran and He alone lends assistance to the virtuous among his created beings." As soon as the ladies in Husain's camp heard these words, they raised loud lamentations and Husain sent Abbas and Ali Akbar to assuage their feelings and silence them, adding that the time for crying had still to arrive," When the bewailing had subsided, Husain praised God and dwelt on His attributes. He then blessed the prophet and dealt at length with his excellent qualites. An observer noted

1. Tabari, Vol 6, p. 241

that he not come across any speaker, before or after Husain, who could excel him in fluency of speech or eloquence. Resuming his address, Husain said, "Ponder over my name and my ancestry, and try to realise who I am, and be ashamed. Consider whether it is legitimate for you to shed my blood or to degrade my high rank. Am I not the grandson of your prophet and the son of his cousin who was the executor of his will, the first to accept and vouch for Islam? Was Hamza, the leader of the martyrs, not my fathers' uncle, and Jafar-i-Tayyar not my own uncle? Have you not heard the prophets' well known saying about my brother and me that we were the leaders of the young men of paradise? If you accept what I tell you as true, and it is undoubtedly true, since I have never uttered a falsehood, nothing remains for me to add or explain. Should you, however, treat my statement to be untrue, there are still in the Islamic world people who would tell you the truth if you ask them. Ask Jabir b. Abdullah Ansari, Abu Saeed Hizrami, Sahl b. Saedi, Zaid b. Arqam and Uns b. Malik who would tell you that they heard with their own ears the prophet saying what I have told you. Is, it then, insufficient to deter you from shedding my blood?[1] At this stage, Shimr interrupted Husain's speech, declaring, "I worship God on one letter only, referring to the Quranic verse about the hypocrites,

ومن الناس من يعبد الله على حرف

meaning, "I am not a Muslim, but a hypocrite and I do not make out what you say."

Husain's companions who had been listening to his apeech in silence were greatly offended by Shimr's impudent intervention, and Habib b. Mazahir loudly exclaimed, "By God I know you worship Him on 70 letters, that is, with excessive hyprocrisy and I bear witness that you are unable to comprehend anything of what Husain says since God has sealed your heart." picking up the threads of his diecourse, Husain began, " If you doubt the authenticity of this tradition, do you make any doubt about my being a grandson of your Prophet? By God, neither in the west nor in the east, no grandson of the prophet other than me survives, neither amongs you nor in any other tribe. I am a grandson of your prophet. Just tell me why you are bent upon killing me. Do you wish to avenge the murder of any one amongst you that I may have committed? Do you want the restitution of any of your property I might have destroyed? Do you desire to take revenge for any injury I may have caused to any one of you?

1. Tabari, Vol. VI' p. 242

" Dead silence overtook the audience of which not one dared to make a reply.[1] It will be noted that Husain represented only one party and was pleading his innocence before thousands of persons who were opposed to him. Undoubtedly truth as stated by Husain should possess such overpowering strength, and one should have such towering confidence in one's truthfulness and excellence of conduct as Husain possessed. Unsupported and friendless, Husain was seeking to get his innocence acknowledged by a huge assembly of his enemies. A whole army was being invited to name even a single crime against Husain. Had there been so much as even a hint of such lapse, surely some one of the big concourse must have come out with it. It seems that truth has, indeed, that irresistible power to overwhelm the mind and tie the tongues that out of the thousands pitted against a single person, not one ventured to open his lips in accusation against Husain.

After noticing the hushed silence that had descended on the hostile hordes, Husain began calling out, one by one, by their names, all those who had put their signatures to the letters inviting him. These men were no common soldiers. Every one of them commanded no less than 500 men He called out Shees b. Rabi, Hajar b. Aljabr, Qais b. Ash as and Yazid b. Haris, and asked them if they had not invited him, saying, "The crops thrive in the fields, streams overflow water. Come, armies are ready to help you." Matters had grown exceedingly difficult and delicate for these persons. Four men were being named by Husain as having been amongst those who had invited him. The sedition and duplicity of their dealings was being exposed Yazid's army and its commandar, Omar b. Sa'd. These men were amongst Kufans and had been appointed to important positions by b. Ziyad. They had written to Husain, as conspirators do, to conform to the then prevailing currents of public opinion. They had observed Husain being invited from so many quarters. They had, therefore, calculated that if Husain did arrive, and circumstances did remain favourable to him, they must provide for the continuance of their prosperity under the new dispensation. With this object in view, they had joined in inviting Husain. As they were now being exposed by Husain in the presence of numerous witnesses, apprehensions were raised in their minds that after the engagement at Karbala, b. Ziyad would deal with them summarily, with-hold his favours from them, and that, in general, they would be lowered in the estimation of the Omayyad government. They,

1. Tabari, Vol VI. p. 243; Irshad p. 248
2. Tabari, Vol. VI p. 24Z, Irshad p. 248

therefore, brazenly mustered the courage to indulge in evident falsehoods and deny communicating with Husain as alleged by him. Husain thereupon observed, "What a shameless denial of the truth." You did write to me. And even if the truth of your denial, obviously impossible to concede, is granted for the sake of argument only, and if you did not really want me to come here, permit me now to go to some place where I might spend my life in peace and safety." Qais b. Ash'as, brother of Ja'da, who had conspired with the authorities at Syria to administer poison to Hasan, and of Mohammed b. Ash'as who was responsible for the slaughter of Muslim b. Aqil, remarked, " Why do you not swear allegiance to Yazid." Answered Husain," You would certainly suggest this !. Do you not deem it enough to have to answer for the murder of Muslim b. Aqil? I would not deliver myself into your hands with humiliation, nor would I flee from you like a slave to save my life. "

There was little hope of the enemies being influenced by the continuance of Husain's speech which was concluded, and Husain descended from the camel.[1]

Since by far the larger portion of Yazid's armies comprised the common people of Kufa, speeches made by prominent Kufans tended to carry great weight with them. However, Habib b. Mazahir who had been known to be a Shia of Ali, and as one of those who had invited Husain to Kufa, did not carry as much influence with the Kufans, and supporters of the Umayyads as did Zuhair b. Qain, who till very lately had been looked upon as belonging to Osman's group and had joined Husain only on the way between Mecca and Karbala. What on this account was believed to be Zuhair's comparative independence of Husain's influence led to the making of most of the speeches at Karbala by him. These addresses to the enemy served at least to furnish repeated arguments against the callous treatment that was being dealt to HUSAIN, Zuhair, mounted on a horse and clad cap-a-pie in armour, appeared on the scene after Husain had concluded his speech and calling the men of Yazid's army said, "Kufans, fear God's wrath. A Muslim owes it as a duty to a brother Muslim to give him good advice. We are brethen till we resort to arms, for then this fraternity between us shall abate spontaneously, and we shall be taken as followers of divergent creeds, God has, indeed, put you and us to the test through the descendants of His prophet, Mohammad, the selected one, so that He might see how we deal with him and how you

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 243, Irshad p. 248

conduct yourself towards them. We call upon you all to help them and cease obeying Obaidullah b. Ziyad. You will get nothing but evil from Yazid and b. Ziyad during the whole period of their rule. No good will accrue to you. They have always put your eyes out, amputated your hands and feet, hanged you and done to death such virtuous persons as Hajr b. Adi and his associates, who knew the Quran by heart, and such men as Hani b. Urwa,[1]

There is a marked contrast in the contents of the speeches made by Husain and Zuhair b. Qain, Husain's aim was to explain the realities of the situation and introduce himself fully to his audience. Zuhair's speech is a review in which the character of the government of b. Ziyad comes in for greater notice than Yazid himself for the reason that since the hearers were mostly drawn from Kufa, they must have acquired first hand experience of b. Ziyad's cruelty. Zuhair had in consequence to meet stiff resistance in the course of his speech, and the supporters and sycophants of b. Ziyad commenced not only to censure Zuhair himself, but also to pay tributes of praise to b. Ziyad, saying, "We shall not allow ourselves any rest till we have put your leader and all his comrades to the sword or sent them in custody to b. Ziyad." Zuhair, however, continued his harangue in order to guide them towards the right course till Shimr shot an arrow towards him exclaiming, "Be silent, may God silence your tongue." Zuhair still refused to be detetrred from his object when Shimr again interfered with his speech saying, "You would presently see that your leader and you would be put to the sword. ' Zuhair gave a very spirited reply from the strength of his belief, "You frighten me of death? By God, it is more to my liking to die with them than to remain alive with you for ever." He then again resumed his address, saying, "O men, allow not yourself to be misled by such slaves of riches. By God, the intercession of God's prophet shall not be theirs as they shed the blood of his descendants and put the latters supporters to death. Husain, finding that words spoken on his side brought arrows in reply from the enemy, and that conclusive arguments had been furnished to dissuade the enemy from their oppression, recalled Zuhair with the words, "If the believer amongst Pharoahs' men had discharged his duty by producing convincing arguments, you have also certainly done so. It is, however, of no avail.[2]

Whether Husain's intention of reforming the enemies and his truthful statements and enlightening instructions had succeeded in making any

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 234
2. Tabari, Vol. VI, p.p. 243-244

impact on the enemy remained entirely unknown till Hur, casting aside all dissimulation, went over to Husain's side. It will be recalled that it was Hur who had intercepted Husain with a force of 1000 men on the letter's way to Kufa forcing him to go towards Karbala. On receipt of b. Ziyad's letter, he had taken the harsh step of preventing the location of Husain's camp near the river. Hur's feelings' however, from the 2nd to the 10th day of Moharrum may be be judged from his own statements and the happenings between these dates. After taking Husain to Karbala and sending word to b. Ziyad of having done so, Hur had been keenly but silently watching the developments.

Even while on the way to Karbala, Hur had tried to establish some sort of epistolary rapport between Husain and Yazid or Obaidullah b. Ziyad, so that the relations between them might improve. After getting to Karbala, he had been hoping to discover some common ground between the parties which would obviate a confrontation between them. The frequent arrival of armies from Kufa must have posed no incertain threat to his expectations, but the behaviour of Omar b. Sa'd, who was himself parleying for peace, and wanted somehow to remove the chances of the butbreak of hostilities between the parties, had raised his hopes. At one stage Omar b. Sa'd had himself entertained the hope that the difficulties had been resolved and that occasion would no longer arise for a trial of strength between the parties. In circumstances like these Hur was quite unable to foresee the flaring up of an armed conflict between the contending sides, especially since Husain's manner was transparently mild and accomodating and he had suggested very reasonable terms for the conclusion of peace. These hopes must have supported him till the eyening of the 9th of Moharrum when, all of a sudden, with the arrival of the letter which b. Ziyad had sent to Omar b. Sa'd by Saimr b. Zil jaushan, all those hopes were dashed, since Omar b. Sa'd was obliged to mount an attack against Husain without losing a moment. Indeed. it had been with difficulty that Husain had been given a might's respite to offer prayers to God. It must have dawned upon Hur that all his actions till then had resulted in drawing death nearer to the persecuted and holy person that Husain undeoubtedly was. He must have realised that the obvious question which he had squarely to face was whether, in persisting in his present course, he should become a party to still graver crimes and openly participate in Husain,s unjustifiable slaughter. His conscience must have revolted at the idea and he might well have recalled that Husain had most openhandedly supplied water to the men and beasts alike of his contingent

when they were exceedingly distressed with thirst. He must have seen Husain and his small children sorely tormented by thirst on account of the stoppage of supply of water to them. He might well have pondered the possibility of obtaining pardon for his sins from Husain, and asking himself whether such a crime as his could be pardoned. He might well have also thought that if Husain were to reject his request for pardon, he would be doubly a loser, winning neither tnis world, nor the one to come. Husain's magnanimity might well have encouraged him to throw himself at the former's feet and to solicit the condonation of his very grave lapses. On the night preceding the 10th of Moharrum, Hur must have been mentally experiencing an uncontrollable agitation.

The night ended, but Hur had yet to watch further developments, and to ascertain whether a battle would really be fought. He patiently saw the armies being arranged for the battle, even heard that he had been named as the commander of a part of the army. He listened to the address given by Husain. Unequalled for the quality of its eloquence, it went straight to his heart. He waited to find out if it had influenced the the behaviour of Husain's enemies. He then heard Zuhair's speech, full of sound advice. He still felt that Yazid's armies had not changed their attitude at all, and that they were determined to engage in a fierce trial of strength. The cup of Hur's patience now overflowed, and the resolve he had made in his heart could no longer be kept in check. He saw Omar b. Sa'd and asked him if he really meant to try conclusions with Husain.[1] This single question expressed all the anxieties and misgivings which had robbed Hur's heart of rest for days on end. He had not considered it believable that a battle with the son of the prophet would really assume practical shape. He had been hoping against hope that in the end a fight between the parties will not materialise. Omar b. Sad was unaware of the inner workings of Hur's heart, and to the question asked of him, he returned an answer in typical miltary style, without the least hesitation, saying, "Yes, by God, there will be fought a battle of which the least result would be to bring down a shower of heads and severed hands on the earth." Hur then asked him whether none of the terms suggested by Husain for bringing about peace was, in his view, acceptable.[2] Omar b. Sa'd said," By God, if the decision had rested with me I would certainly have accepted Husain's proposals. What can I do, since your ruler does not agree."[3] Further discu-

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 244
2. Tabari, Vol. vI p. 244
3. Ibid

ssion appearing to Hur to hold no promise of good news, he thought that the time had arrived when he should give a concrete form to the resolution he had made after a great deal of heart-searching.

Hur had no doubt that if his intentions became known before he had parted from his army, he would forthwith be held captive and would not be able to achieve his object. Great caution had, therefore, to be exercised. Qurra b. Qais, one of his own tribe. happened to be with him at the time, and had, for obvious reasons to be got rid of. Hur sent him away reminding him to give water to his horse. Qurra sensed that his presence was unwanted and made himself scarce. Hur then started towards Husain's camp moving slowly and unobtrusively on his horse. He must have been in great agitation at the time, and his excitement was visibly aggravated when Mahajir b. Aus, a man of his own tribe accosted him with the words, "Hur, what are your intentions ? Do you want to launch an attack" [1] Hur kept silent, but a slight shivering went through his body. Mahajir was not slow to mark this unexpected reaction and asked, " " How do you do Hur ? I have never seen you in this state before this. Whenever I was asked to name the bravest man in Kufa, your name used to spring to my lips. What is behind this change ? " Hur saw that it was impossible to keep his secret any longer and replied, " I have before me the choice between paradise and hell at the moment and I would not prefer anything to paradise, even if I am torn to pieces and committed to the flames. Saying this, he lashed his horse and reached where Husain's comrades stood in a group. [2]

It was then that Hur realised that the manner in which he was going towards the companions of Husain on a speeding horse might possibly cause them worry, and they might try to offer him resistance. Accordingly, as soon as he approached them, he turned his shield, upside down [3] betokening that he had no warlike intentions being either charged with suing for peace or carrying a message. [4] He then presented himself before Husain without encountering any obstruction and said, "Son of the prophet, may my life be sacrificed for you. I am the guilty man who intercepted you on your way, dogged your steps during your journey and made you encamp here. By God, I never entertained the slightest notion that these men would turn down all your terms for peace, and that things

1. Ibid
2. Ibid
3. Tabari; Vol. VI p. 222
4. Absar ut Ain, p. 119

would come to this pass. I could see no harm in my remaining with them for the time being. so that it may not transpire that I had severed my connections with them. I was sure that sooner than later a stage would surely arrive when they would accept whatever terms you might choose to offer them. Else I would never have conducted myself towards you as I have done. Here I am now, throughly ashamed of myself and I beseech pardon of my God so that I might with all my heart and soul share your trials till I have sacrificed myself at your feet. Will my repentence be accepted if I do so ? " Husain at once replied that God would surely accept his penitence, and would bless him with forgiveness. Husain then congratulated Hur saying that he was Hur (free) as his mother had named him, and that he would be free (of blame) in this world as also in the world hereafter.[1] Husain then asked HUR why he had not alighted from his horse. Hur replied, " It is preferable that I remain mounted and prepared to assist you to my getting down. I wish to fight with these men awhile. Ultimately I shall have to come down from my horse, "Husain saw that Hur was pervently desirous of waging the Jehad and told him to do as he wished, praying for God's mercy to be always with him.[2] After obtaining Husain's forgiveness, Hur felt highly encouraged and thought himself to be entitled to give a few words of advice and admonition to the armies of Yazid to adopt the ways of righteousness. Accordingly he betook himself to the battle-field and addressing himself to the ranks of the Kufans said mildly. " Brothers, why do you not accept one of the terms offered by Husain so as to obviate an engagement with him. " The soldiers suggested that he should speak to Omar b. Sad in that context, which Hur did. Omar b. Sad told him that if he had the choice. he would have taken Hur's advice. This enraged Hur who thundered, " Men of Kufa, may God destroy you. You invited this highly venerable person here and upon his arrival you delivered him to his enemy. You had held forth the promise of sacrificing your life for him, and you have made it impossible for him to breathe freely, and are now bent upon strangulating him. You have encircled him and have kept him from going wherever he might choose, on God's spacious earth and he is like a prisoner in your hands. He has been rendered helpless and you have withheld from him, his ladies and children the running waters of the Euphrates of which the free enjoyment is open to the Jews, the fire-worshippers and the christians, and in which wallow the swine and dogs of Iraq. It is only Husain and his party who have been brought to death's

1. Tabari, Vol VI, p. 244; al Akhbar ut tawal p. 252
2. Tabari; Vol VI p. 245; Irshad p. 229

door on account of thirst. Reprehensible indeed is the treatment which you have given to Mohammad's descendants after him. May God not quench your uncontrollable desire for water on the day of judgement when consuming thirst would overtake you, if you do not reproach yourself for your deeds, and turn over a new leaf here and now."

Hur's speech could have had a very demoralising effect on the enemy, and, in consequence, arrows were released towards him, Hur went back to Husain.[1]

The desertion of Hur from Yazid's army, and his throwing in his lot with Husain was, indeed, a unique development. It marked an unexampled achievement for Husain even in his lifetime, in full view of the enemy, precisely at the commencement of the battle. For evidently whatever material stimuli could be provided to attract people were at work in favour of Yazid's hordes numerical strength, power, authority, certain prospects of success, material comfort and amenities, assured supply of provisions, allowances and rewards, and hopes of winning the favours of the powers that be. On the contrary, all that could make for discouragement had been the lot of the comrades of Husain, Hopeless numerical inferiority, scarcity of friends, paucity of resources, inevitability of ruin, wrath of the government and the killing thirst which had tormented them for three days, were all there to daunt not only those who were actually passing through the ordeal, but to appal even their successors, There is however, not a single instance of even one soldier, nay even of one child, who deserted Husain, and went over to the enemy, neither while Husain was alive or after he was no more. On the contrary, it was not an ordinary soldier, but an important officer of the army of Yazid who had deserted Yazid's camp to join Husain even before the battle had commenced. It was this unparalleled victory for Husain which must have dazed the hostile army and apparently finding his soldiers stunned and bewildered, the commander of the army ordered a shower of arros to great Hur.

It was broad daylight when Omar b. Sa'd directed his army to advance, He summoned Duraid, the standard bearer of his forces to bring the standard to him. He then shot the first arrow towards Husain's army and addressed the troops of Yazid and called upon them to bear witness that he had been the first to shoot an arrow.[2] The men of his army must

1. Tabari Vol. VI. p. 245 Irshad p. 250
2. Tabari, Vol, vi, p 245 Irshad. p. p. 250

naturally have taken their cue from their commanding officer, and thousands of arrows towards Husain.

The Commanders of Yazid's armies knew fully that even though the number of Husain's supporters was very small, the battle would not end in a day if hand to hand fighting started on the 10th of Moharrum. They also apprehended the prolongation of the battle to entail what might be very dangerous consequences. The news of Husain's departure from Macca had reached Basra, and help could possibly be expected to reach him from that quarter. Many men of Kufa who had not been able to rally to Husain's help must be restlessly seeking for an opportunity to go to his assistance. Iran was not very far, and some people from that country could reasonably be expected to be greatly interested in Husain's well being, specially since one of his wives came of the erstwhile royal family of the country, and racial partisanship might well dispose the people of Iran to extend help to Husain. The hills of Aja and Salma, strongholds of the tribe of Tai, were also not distant and Tirimmah b. Adi had promised Husain the support of thousands of young men of that tribe if only the latter would betake himself to the fastnesses there. Tirimmah had himself parted company with Husain near Karbala promising to join him after getting his harvest of grain properly stored at home, Yazid's army was, therefore, naturally in a hurry to have done with his campaign as quickly as possible

The arrows aimed at Husain's party did not cause much injury They only heralded the commencement of the engagement, Without betraying and signs of anxiety or fear, Husain addressed his friends thus, "Rise to welcome death which must of necessity arrive, Let Gods' mercy be with you. There are not arrows but the enemy's messengers sent towards you.

Husain's comrades who had not even slightly moved at the advent towards them of the arrows shot by the enemy's forces, thanks to their amazing sense of discipline and wonderful self control, prepared themselves for the jehad on getting Husain's permission. They also retaliated by sending a shower of arrows towards the enemy's forces. Obviously a hundred or two hundred arrows directed towards a numerous army would not accomplish much and cause any sizable damage but they must have conveyed that stiff resistance would be offered-an opposition that would require the enemy to draw heavily upon the strength of their hearts with which resource, on account of their unclean consciences, the armies of Yazid were not particularly well provided.

CHAPTER XXVII

HUSAINS' FRIENDS AND ASTOUNDING SACRIFICES

With the beginning of the battle at Karbala started a series of the most amazing sacrifices offered by Husain's friends. It may, therefore, not be amiss that side by side with giving an account of the progress of the engagement, the lives and characters of Husain's friends may also be briefly noticed, as in the following paragraphs, in the order in which they made war. More detailed information about them may be had from the Absar-ul-Ain fi Ansar-ul-Husain in Arabic or the Shuhada-i-Karbala published by the Imamia Mission, Lucknow.

(1) Abdullah b. Omair Kalbi was the first among Husain's friends to take to the field of battle. His full name was Abu Wahb Abdullah b. Omair b. Abbas b. Abd Qais, b. Aleem b. Khabab al Aleemi. He belonged to Kufa, and owned the house in which he resided. His wife, who belonged to the tribe of Namr b. Qasit and was known as Umm-i-Wahb, daughter of Abd,[1] used to reside with him. He was reputed to be very brave and noble, and cast in the heroic mould. He has been held by Sheikh Tusi as a companion of Ali. After the martyrdom of Muslim b. Aqil when b. Ziyad commenced preparations to put Husain to death, Abdullah b. Omair was spending his time at his place, wholly unaware of how things were going around him. It was only when b. Ziyad made Nakheela, not far from Abdullah's home, his headquarters for the inspection of troops before despatching them to Karbala, that the unusual look of things drew his attention and he learnt that the troops were being sent to give battle to Husain, and religious fervour was deeply stirred in his heart. He had always longed to fight against the polytheists, and he made no doubt that a fight against the polytheists, and he made no doubt that a fight against those engaged in hostilities with Husain would not be less meritorious than a jehad against those who believed in more than one God. Accordingly he decided to fight such infidels. He informed his wife of his intentions and well-grounded as she was in the tenets of her belief, she stimulated his religious zeal, and requested him to let her keep him company. Both of them left for Karbala of a night, and joined Husain and his friends.

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1. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 245

To signify the opening of the hostilities, arrows were shot at Husain and his associates by Omar b. Sa'ds army, and then Yasar and Salim, slaves of Ziyad and b. Ziyad respectively, entered the field of battle, throwing down the gauntlet to anybody to fight with them Habib b. Mazahir and Burair b. Khazeer, rushed towards them in great excitement, but they were stopped by Husain. Abdullah b. Omair, who was fired with the passion to wage a jehad, stood up but sought permission to take up the challenge. Husain looked at him closely, and, finding him tall and strongly built, considered him to be a brave and warlike young man, and told him to fight if he so desired. Upon Abdullah b. Omair's arrival in the battle field, he was asked by his antagonists to disclose his name and lineage which he did. The enemies told him that he was unknown to them, and demanded that Zuhair b. Qain, or Habib b. Mazahir or Burair b. Khazeer should have come out to meet them. This enraged Abdullah, and making a sharp reply, he launched the attack, killing Yasar with his first blow, While he was still engaged with Yasar, Salim attacked him with a sword which was just about to strike his head when Abdullah sensed the danger, and shielding himself with his left hand, he dispatched Salim [1] with a blow of his sword, but not before he had lost his own fingers. Wounded and successful, Abdullah recited verses meaning, " If you do not know me already get to know me now. I am scion of the tribe of Kalb As for my parentage, geneology and attainments it should suffice to say that I belong to the family of Aleem. I am a rough man, harsh of disposition and not mean-spirited in adversity. O Umm-i-Wahb I promise I would repeatedly advance to give thrusts of my lance and blows with my sword as becomes a dashing young man who believes in God. [2]

It is likely that Abdullah may have called his wife to bear witness to his exploits according to the custom then prevalent among the Arabs. She was different from the common run of women, possessing a lion's heart in which ruled unbounded devotion for her husband along with an extra-ordinarily passionate belief in God. It is possible that when she had requested Abdullah to take her along with himself to Karbala, she might have nursed a secret desire to fight bravely by the side of her husband in the battle-field, and that she had so far repressed her desire despite the ceaseless promptings of her heart as she saw that the observance of the tenets of Islam had kept the ladies of Husain's family from taking to the battle-field. The recital of verses by Abdullah b. Omair, besides showings

1. Tabari Vol. VI, pp. 245-246; Irshad, p. 250
2. Tabari, Vol VI p. 246

his ardour for the Jehad and passionate belief in God, also testified to the warmth of his affection for his wife of whose love the flame burnt undimmed in his heart even in the fateful exchange of blows during the engagement. It also indicated his desire to win her approbation for offering the supreme sacrifice. A sense of all these considerations appears to have overwhelmed Umm-i-Wahb who, casting alike inhibitions and self-control, rushed, into the battle-field calling out loudly, " My parents be sacrificed for you, Spare no effort in helping the descendants of the prophet[1], " Brave and jealous of his honour, the presence of his wife in the battle-field proved to be a great trial for Abdullah who tried to send her back to her tent at once, but she was in no mood to agree and said, " I would not leave you alone in the battle-field, not before I am also put to death. " Husain called out to her saying, " May God reward you both. Come back to the ladies of my house. and sit with them since Islam has exempted women from the duty of waging the Jehad. " Regard for the faith and the duty of obeying Husain deterred Unim-i-Wahb from persistance in waging the jehad and she came back to the ladies of Husain's family.[2] Abdullah b, Omair also came back from the battle-field. At a subsequent stage in the hostilities he joined battle in reppeling the attack on the left wing of Husain's army. and was killed after Muslim b. Ausajah.

(2) Hur b. Yazid Riyahi came of a family held in esteem in Arabia since antiquity. His full name was Hur b. Yazid b, Najia b. Qu'nub b. Itab b. Harmib b. Riyah b. Yarboo b. Harzala b. Malik b. Manat, b. Tamim-at-Tamimi al Yarbose ar Riyahi. Itab. fourth from Hur in the ascending order of the latter's lineage, was one of the special courtiers of Noman b. Munzir, king of Hira. He used to ride with the king as his companion. One of his sons, Qais. rose to his high office after him. The Bani Shebans fell out with him and the blood-bath of the war of Yaum-ut-Tahfa ensued. One of the descendants of Qais, Zaid b. Omar b. Qais b. Itab also called Akhwas, was a poet and a companion of the prophet. He was a cousin of Hur's father, Yazid, and an uncle of Hur.

Hur was one of the nobles of Kufa and an officer in the army of b. Ziyad. He was stationed at Qadisia to keep a strict watch on the roads there. Subsequently he was assigned the task of intercepting Husain who, as already mentioned, supplied Hur's contingent, man and beast alike. with

1. Tabari, Vol. VI. p. 246
2. Tabari, Vol VI p. 246

water with exemplary liberality. Later Hur forced Husain to proceed to Karbala where he deserted from Yazid's forces and joined Husain.

After Abdullah b. Omair Kalbi had killed Yasar and Salim both in single combat, Amr b. al Hajjaj, who commaned the right wing of Yazid's army, got so enraged that he mounted a concerted attack against Husain with all his forces.

At this critical hour, the crusaders of Husain's army dug their knees firmly into the earth and pointed their spearheads forwards. This halted the advance of the enemy's cavalry. It was at this stage that Hur bethought himself that it would be inappropriate that any one from Husain's friends should precede him in taking to the field of battle and meeting death. He, therefore, begged Husain to be allowed to sacrifice himself before all others, since it was he who had resisted him before any one else. Obtaining Husain's permission, Hur entered the battle-field and recited verses meaning, " I am Hur and I harbour my guests. I shall strike your necks with my sword on behelf of Husain who is the best resident of Mecca. I shall put you to the sword and deem it no cruelty. " Then he started his attack, plying his sword with great effect. Earlier, when Hur had left Omar b. Sa'd's army, yazid b. Sufiyan Tamimi, a soldier in the army, had remarked, " By God, if I had noticed Hur deserting from yazid's army, I would have done him to death with a single thrust of my spear." And now, Hur was pressing on alone against Omar b. Sa'ds' big army, wielding his sword and reciting the following couplet composed by Antara :

ماذلت ارمیھم بثغرۃ نحرہ ولبانہ حتی تسربل بالدم

meaning, " I continually thrust towards them the neck and chest of my horse, till it covered itself from head to feet with sheets of blood." [1]

The couplet was literally true of Hur's horse which had been wounded on the head and face, and blood was flowing freely from the wounds. Haseen b. Tameem, an army officer deputed to shut up the roads at Qadisia, remarked to Yazid b. Sufiyan, " Behold, it is same Hur whom you had a mind to kill." At which Yazid b. Sufiyan issued forth and enquired of Hur whether the latter would fight it out with uim. Hur agreeing, the two closed with each other in single combat about which Haseen said, " It appeared plainly enough that Yazid's life was completely at Hur's mercy. Yazid, was accordingly, dispatched instantaneously.[2] This was such an

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 248, Irshad p. 251
2. Tabari Vol, VI, p, 248-249

awesome spectacle that nobody cared to stir out from the enemy's side to give battle to Hur who then retired from the battle-field. At a subsequent stage Hur again fought and met his death after the hour of the noon prayers had arrived. Details of this engagement will presently follow.

(3) Muslim b. Ausajah Asadi occupied a distinguished place among the supporters of Husain. His full name was Abu Hajal Muslim b. Ausajah b. Sa'd b. Sa'labah b. Doodan b. Asad b. Khazeema Asadi Sa'di. He was an eminent person, much esteemed by the Arabs. Fond of worshipping God, and saying the midnight prayers, he had seen the prophet. She'bi, who occupies pride of place among the recorders of the traditions considered him to be dependable and a raliable authority about the traditions. He was a master horseman and had to his credit many an exploit in the field of battle. He had participated in the reduction of Azerbaijan in Persia in 20 A. H. and had put many infidels to the sword in that action. He was much advanced in years when he took part in the battle of Karbala.

In connection with the jehad fought by Husain at Karbala, Muslims activities had commenced much earlier than the first ten days of Mohrrum. He had acted as a special representative of Muslim b. Aqil at Kufa when b. Ziyad had established his authority there, and Muslim b. Aqil had stayed with Hani. Muslim b. Ausajah had undertaken the reorganisation of those who had taken the oath of allegiance to Husain at his cousin's hands. He also took from them promises of loyalty to the members of the prophet's household. It however, remains obscure where he had gone after the martyrdom of Muslim b. Aqil and how he managed to betake himself to Karbala to join Husain.

On the night preceding the 10th of Moharrum from amongst Husain's supporters it was Muslim b. Ausajah who, after Husain's relatives, was the first to give a memorable and spirited reply to the historic speech delivered by Husain exhorting his friends to depart and leave him alone to fight his enemies. Quoth muslim b. Ausajah, " Shall we leave you alone and not prepare ourselves to explain our conduct to God? This cannot be. By God I shall fight till I break my spear in their bosoms. I shall ply my sword so long as I am able to support it. I shall not get separated from you; even though I my be left with no weapons to fight with, I shall throw stones at your enemies in order to help you. I shall remain with you till I leave this world, "

It was Muslim b. Ausajah who sharply resented Shimr's disparaging quip against Husain on the morning of the 10th Moharrum upon noticing

fire burning in the trench behind Husain's camp, and offered to despatch Shimr with an arrow. He was. however, kept from doing so by Husain.

When the fighting commenced at Karbala, Muslim b. Ausajah could not be left behind the others in sacrificing himself for Husain, and was the first from amongst Husain's friends to meet his death and achieve martyrdom.

After Abdullah b. Omair and Hur, Nafe b. Hilal Jamali joined the battle, and killed Muzahim b. Harees.

The losses suffered by b. Ziyad's army at the hands of Husain's supporters greatly worried Amr b. al Hajjaj, who called out loudly to his troops, " Idiots, do you realise with whom you are at war ? They are the pick of the country's horsemen and have staked their lives. Do not meet them singly in combat. However, as their number is small, they will not live to fight for long, you may kill them even if all of you pelt stones at them." In order to boost the morale of the army, Amr b. al Hajjaj stepped forward and addressed the soldiers saying," People of Kufa, obey and remain loyal. Do not cut yourself apart from your party and do not have the least hesitation in killing these men who have gone out of the faith and oppose the present Imam, Yazid.

Husain considered it necessary to contradict these misleading words. He called out to Amr b. al Hajjaj and said, "you incite the people against me? Have we left the faith and do you adhere to it ? By God, presently you will depart from this world acting as you are now acting. You will then realise which of us had deserted the faith, and which of us had earned hell fire."

Amr b. al Hajjaj had, however, brought the army round to his way of thinking, and with its right wing, he made a full-blooded attack on the band of Husain's supporters who, however, resisted the onslaught with such determination and defiance that the enemy had to withdraw. When, however, the dust of the battle had settled, Muslim b. Ausajah was noticed rolling on the ground in his blood Husain atonce rushed him and found some life still left in him, He prayed for Muslim and recited the ouranic verse :

فمنهم من قضى نحبه ومنهم من ينتظر وما بدلوا تبديلا

meaning, " some of those who had to depart passed away and some await their turn and there was none among them but stood his ground.

Habib b. Mazahir who had accompanied Husain went near Muslim b. Ausajah and told him how painful it was for him to be separated from the latter. He added, "However, I congratulate you on winning paradise. Muslim replied in his weak voice,"I also congratulate you on attaining all manner of good and blessing." To this Habib replied, ' Had I not been sure that I would be following you presently, I would have asked you to let me know your last wishes so that I might carry them out." Muslim pointed towards Husain in reply and said, "Whatever last wishes I have concern only him, "implying that Habib should also sacrifice himself for Husain. "Habib answered," Sure enough. By God I would do as you desire."

The troops led by Amr b. al Hajjaj had taken pellmell to flight, unaware that Muslim b. Ausajah had been killed. Muslim's wife and other dependents were, however, there, and when the news of his death reached his tent, a slave-girl cried out loud," Alack-a day, Muslim is no more" Alas my master.

The cry was received with great jubilation in the enemy ranks. This enraged Shees b. Rabii and he burst out, "what an outrage; A man like Muslim b. Ausajah has been killed and you are rejoicing over his death"[1] By God, I have witnessed the feats he performed for Islam. During the war at Azarbaijan I saw with my own eyes that even before the Muslim army had been drawn out in battle order this brave man killed six infidels."

The success of the second concerted attack made by the army of b. Ziyad. in the shape of the death of Muslim b. Ausajah , boosted the morale of the soldiers of the enemy. Shimr Zil Jaushan, therefore, attacked the left wing of Husain's army and met with stiff resistance. Abdullah b. Omair of whom mention has already been made, exerted himself with great intrepidity and killed two soldiers of the enemy. He was, however, attacked by Hani b. Shees Hazrami and Bakeer b. Hai Timi, and killed, being the second supporter of Husain to met his end.[2]

Abdulah b, Umair's wife who had sacrificed her all for her passion for religion, hearihg that her husband was no more, and that he lay on the burning sands of the battle-field covered with his own blood, again betook herself to her husband in the agony of her grief. She was impelled by no desire to avenge her husband's death, or to fight, she only desired

1 Tabari, Vol VI. p, 249
2 ibid

to see his dead body by which she sat herself down and started removing dust blood from his face saying, "Be congratulated on winning paradise and promenading in it for pleasure Such, however was the degree of the enemy's cruelty that Shimr called his slave, Rustam, and bade him do the defenceless lady to death. He struck a blow on the head of this persecuted and broken-hearted lady killing her then and there.[1] To the blood-stained chromicle of Karbala was thus added the murder of a respectable lady.

(4) Burair b. Khazeer Hamadni belonged to Kufa and was an aged, devout companion of Ali b. Abi Talib. He knew the Quran by heart and belonged to the nobility of Hamadan,and a maternal uncle of the illustrious men erudite in the traditions, Abu Ishaq Hamadani. He used to instruct people in the Quran in the mosque at Kufa, and was called the chief of those who knew the Quran by heart, 'Saiyyid ul Qura 'He joined Husain somewhere in the course of the latter's journey. He also Gave a brief reply to the speech delivered by Husain, after Zuhair b. Qain and Nafe b. Hilal had done so. Mention has already been made of how, when his quips on the 10th of Moharram had been considered as unseasonable by Abdur Rahman, Burair had replied that, although known from his manhood to have on partiality for indulging in persifilage his, light-heartedness then had proceeded from his unbounded happiness about his future, since the battle, once started, would undoubtedly bring to him everlasting life and good fortune in the hereafter, It only shows how intensely desirous Burair was to attain martyrdom, and why he desired to be the first to engage in the battle with enemy. Accordingly he and Habib had accepted the challenge to fight thrown in the very beginning by two slaves of Ziyad and his son. Both he and Habib were however, prevented by Husain from engaging in the fight with the slaves. Later, however, when Yazid b . Moqil issued forth from Yazid's army to challenge anybody from Husain's side to meet him in single combat, Burair accepted the challenge as Yazid b. Moqil was his old acquaintence, and the following verbal exchanges took place between him and Burair.

" You have seen how God has dealt with you ?" " God has treated me very well. What about yourself ? You have turned out to be remarkably unfortunate."

" You have spoken a lie against your want, However, let that pass, Do you remember the day when both of us were walking along the street

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 251

of Bani Lozan and you remarked that Osman was sinful, and that Muawiya himself had strayed from the right path and had misled others also and that only Ali b. Abi Talib was the rightful Imam."

"I am still of the same conviction".

"I bear witness that you have aberrated."

"Get ready to fight with me, Let us both Pray God to curse whoever of us lied and get him killed by the other. Yazid b. Moqil agreed. Both the antagonists then lifted their hands in prayers to God. They then started fighting with each other, and there was an exchange of two blows only. Yazid aimed a blow with his sword which struk Burair only slightly and did not cause him any Injury. Then Burair gave Yazid a blow with his sword which cut through his iron helmet and reached his brain. He fell off his horse as Burair's sword had cut its way through Yazid's scalp, and the former was pulling his weapon out of the wound. At this stage Razi b. Munqiz attacked Burair and grappled with him. Burair threw him to the ground and mounted his chest. The mean-spirited and dastardly enemy raised a cry for help, and all of a sudden Ka'b b Jabir b. Amr Asadi came forward and attacked Burair. The other soldiers of Yazid's army bade him desist from attacking Burair who knew the Quran by heart, and taught others in the mosque how to commit it to memory, Ka'b was however, not deterred and gave Burair a thrust with his lance from behind, and the weapon broke through Burair's bosom, bringing him down to the earth. Then he put Burair to the sword.[1]

(5) Munhij b. Sahm. Slaves, are adequately represented among those who laid down their lives for Husain, and the first among them to be martyred at Karbala was Munhij. Considered as a companion of Husain, Zamikshari, however, records that he was a son of Husainia, a slave-girl of Husain who had purchased her from Naufil b. Haris b. Abdul Muttalib and had given her away in marriage to Sahm. She used to work at the house of Ali b. Husain (Zainul Abidin) and accompanied Husain to Karbala. Munhij was put to the sword by Hassaan b. Bakr Hanzali in the very beginning of the hostilities at Karbala.

(6) Omar b. Khalid, whose full name was Omar b. Khalid b. Hakeem b. Hizam ul Asadi us Saidavi was among the elite of Kufa, and was sincerely devoted to the members of the family of the prophet (ahl-i-bait). To begin with he had come out to support Muslim b. Aqil, but when

1. Tabari, Vol VI, p. 247

the Kufans deserted the latter and the success of his cause appeared to be impossible of achievement, Omar b. Khalid went into hiding. When Husain reached the boundaries of Iraq, he deputed Qais b. Mushir Saidavi to go to Kufa with news of his arrival. Qais was intercepted and his death was decreed, but even while on the point of death, he discharged his duty as Husain's emissary by announcing that whoever wanted to go to Husain might do so as the latter had reached a place named Hajir. The news reached Omar b. Khalid who, along with his slave, Sa'd and three others sped along obscure routes to join Husain at the stage known as Azeeb ul Hijanaat. when Hur b. Yazid Riyahi overtook Husain in order to keep a watch on his movements, he objected to the presence of Omar b. Khalid and his fellow-travellers in Husain's company as they had not been with Husain from Mecca. Hur threatened either to arrest them or send them back to Kufa. Husain, however, declined to surrender the men to Hur since they had reached him and he had taken them in his shelter.

In the battle on the 10th of Moharrum, Omar b. Khalid and his four companions launched a combined attack upon the enemy troops. Having broken the ranks of the enemy's army, they took to attacking the adversary with their swords. Yazid's soldiers surrounded these five men, and isolated them from the band of Husain's supporters,. Noticing this Husain sent his brother, Abbas, to their rescue. Abbas attacked and drove away the enemy all by himself and setting these men free was riding back with them to safety when he saw the enemy pursuing them hotly, Abbas made these gallant men ride their mounts and proceed ahead of him in order to keep them safe from injury, However, as soon as these men, injured as they were, saw their foes following them, they flared up with uncontrollable passion, and bidding good-bye to the safety provided to them by Abbas, they rushed at their pursuers whom they attacked with great force despite their much reduced strength on account of their wounds, and they all died fighting at the same spot.[1] Husain was informed of these developments later, and prayed to God many times for His mercy to be shown to these brave men.

(7) Sa'd, a slave of Omar b. Khalid, joined Husain with his master at the stage of Azeeb ul Hijanaat. He was a noblehearted and courageous warrior.

(8) Mujame b. Abdullah's full name was Mujame b. Abdullah b. Mujame b. Malik b. Iyas b. Abd-i-Manat b. sa'd ul Ashirat al Muzhiji al

1. Tabari Vol, VI, p, 255

Aaezi. He was among the successors of the companions of the prophet. He was born during the lifetime of the prophet. and his father had the distinction of being a companion of the prophet. He was among the companions of Ali b. Abi Talib, and his name occurs among those who fought in the battle of siffin. He was among the five men who joined Husain at Azeeb ul Hijanaat. When Husain esked him about conditions at Kufa, he described them saying, "The leading men there have been suborned, both in cash and kind to secure their loyalty for the government. They are all, therefore, against you. As regards the common people, their hearts are inclined towards you, but on the morrow their swords would be raised against you."

On the 10th day of Moharrum he also fought with his group of men, and died fighting for Husain."

(9) Aaez b. Mujame was a son of Mujame b. Abdullah Aaezi and meeting Husain at Azeeb-ul-Hijaratt attained martyrdom, getting killed with his associates in fighting for Husain.

(10) Janada b. Haris Salmani was a leading Shia of Kufa and came of an offshoot, Murad, of the clan Muzhij, Salman being a branch of the clan of Murad. He had been born during the lifetime of the prophet and participated in the battle of Siffin on Alis' side.

When Muslim b. Aqil was obtaining the pledge of loyalty for Husain at Kufa, Janada sincerely avowed his allegiance to Husain, and fought with Muslim against Ziyad's army. However, when events turned out disastrously against Muslim's mission; Janada concealed himself as others had done. Ultimately, however, he joined Husain, being a member of the group of five men who met Husain at Azeet-ul-Hijanaat and attained martyrdom fighting for Husain on the 10th of Moharrum.

(11) Jundub b. Hajr Kindi Khoolani was a distinguished Shia of Kufa, having been a companion of Ali b. Abi Talib. He had commanded the regiments of Kinda and Azd in the battle of Siffin. He met Husain when the latter was on his way to Kufa and before Hur had arrived to intercept his progress. He died fighting for Husain in the early stages of the battle on the 10th of Moharrum at Karbala.

(12) Yazid b. Ziyad b. Mahasir Abushi Shaʻsa Kindi Bahdili was a brave warrior from amongst the Shias of Kufa. He presented himself for service to Husain before the latter had met Hur. He remained with Husain, and when near Karbala, a messenger from b. Ziyad brought a letter for Hur

requiring him to compel Husain to break his journey as soon as he received the letter, Abush Shasa recognised the emissary as Malik b. Nasr Kindi. Himself belonging to the clan of Kinda, Abush Shasa thought he owed it to Malik to give him words of good advice. Quoth he, "What is this that you have done? You have come on this errand." "Malik replied that he had done his duty by his imam. Abush Shasa replied, "In being dutiful to your imam you have disobeyed God's commands, and prepared yourself for your destruction, and earned perpetual disgrace, and the fire of hell. God has said, 'some imams (spiritual guides) invite people towards the fire of hell, and on the day of judgement, their followers would not get a hearing. Undoubtedly your imam is one such.'"

He was a master bowman, and on the 10th of Moharrum he sat before Husain, releasing eight arrows of which five hit their targets, and killed five men of the enemy. Arrows getting exhausted, he stepped into the field of battle with his sword, and recited verses meaning, " I am Yazid, son of Mahasir, braver than a lion of the wilderness, God be my witness, I am a supporter of Husain and have given up all connection with b. Sa'd. Ultimately he was killed in the beginning of the battle of Karbala. [1]

THE FIRST CHARGE

It is, indeed a memorable and astonishing episode in history that as against an army, 30,000 strong, 72 or, at the outside, 150 men, suffering from pangs of hunger and thirst for three days, should have repeatedly defeated their adversaries who were at the ends of their wits about the steps they should take to stay the tide of their bad luck, and that such an unequal fight should have dragged on from the morning till noon, with Husain's friends and supporters remaining unmoved like a wall of iron. The armies of Yazid had fallen into such a state of disarray that its officers could not decide upon one well-considered plan of conducting the operations. It has been reported that Husain's friends fought with fierce persistence, and that their horsemen, numbering no more than 32 made attacks after attacks upon Yazids' army in unbroken succession, putting to flight the troops they assaulted.[2] When Ghurra b. Qais, who commanded the cavalry in Yazid's army, saw this, he sent Abdur Rahman b. Hasn to Omar b. Sa'd with the message, "You see the sad plight to which this group of a handful of men has reduced my army since the morning. Send the infantry and some regiments of expert archers to

1. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 255
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 250; Irshad p. 252

confront them. "Shees b. Rabii, who commanded the infantry received a peremptory message from Omar b. Sa'd saying, "Why do you not advance?" Shees gave a contemptuous reply, "It is a pity that in order to carry out this operation successfully, such a big body of cavalry should be considered inadequate, and an officer holding a high rank like me should be bothered about it and archers should also be in demand. Is there none else available to undertake the job except me?" Hearing this, Omar b. Sa'd was obliged to direct Haseen b. Tameem to advance with the army which had been deployed to shut up the roads at Qadisia. He was also given a supplementary force of 500 archers to rain arrows on Husain's camp[1] which is a dartardly manner of waging a war.

Arrows were now discharged at Husain and his supporters from as close quarters as practicable, so that a veritable driving rain of pointed steel must have fallen on Husain and his friends or a tornado of steel splinters must have enveloped them from all sides, allowing no means of escaping serious injury to any one of the men caught in its course or compass, Husain's supporters, however, braved this onslaught using their bosoms as their shields, and started fighting with their swords, falling in a determined attack on the adversary's troops.

This great on slaught which saw fierce and grim fighting is called the first charge or assault. It took place about an hour before noon (Zuhr).

Husain's supporters once again inflicted a severe defeat on the adversary, pushing his army back. This success was, however, achieved at the expense of as many as 50 warriors of Husain's small band of supporters, mostly killed by the arrows hurled at them. Husain's friends lost all their horses which were killed, so that none of them had any mount during the rest of the fighting.[2]

The horse of Hur b. Yazid Riyahi which had been wounded earlier was maimed and disabled by Ayyub b. Mushareh who says that, struck by an arrow shot by him, the animal tumbled to the ground all trembling and Hur jumped off its back as a lion. Catching hold of his sword, Hur took to reciting verses meaning, "It matters not that you have maimed my horse. I am a scion of a noble family, braver than a lion."

It is not possible to record the order in which the fifty supporters of Husain whose names are given at serial number 13 to 62 in the succeeding paragraphs were killed in this assault and achieved martyrdom:–

1. Ibid, p. 250

1. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 250; Irshad, p. 252

(13) Qmayya b. Sa'd b. Zaid Taee was a brave war veteran belonging to the clan of Tai. He was reckoned amongst the companions of Ali and joined the latter in the battle of Siffin. He then settled at Kufa and when the proposals for peace made by Husain were still being considered, he reached Karbala and joined Husain and met a martyr's fate.

(14) Janada b. K'ab b. Haris Ansari Khazraji accompanied Husain from Mecca to Karbala with his dependents.

(15) Javeen b. Malik b. Qais b. Sa'lbah Teemee came to be associated with the Bani Teem clan as he used to reside among people of the clan. When men of all tribes residing at Kufa were being enlisted in the army to give battle to Husain, Javeen also went with Omar -i-Sa'd's army to Karbala. When Husain's terms for conclusion of peace between the parties were rejected, and it became evident that war must follow, Javeen deserted from Omar.i-Sad's army and joined Husain to achieve martyrdom.

(16) Haris b. Amraul Qais b. Aabis Kindi was one of the brave men of his times and a devout person, shirking worldly pleasure. An idea of his religious zeal and constancy may be had from the fact that when at the siege of the fort of Majbar, in which he also had participated, the apostates were being led out of the fort to their deaths, he attacked his own real uncle. When his uncle pleaded his relationship with Haris in his defence, the letter replied, "But God is my creator, and His commands take precedence . "Saying this, he put his uncle to the sword. He also reached Karbala with the army of Omar-i-Sa'd but deserted and joined Husain's supporters when the terms of peace offered by Husain did not find acceptance.

(17) Haris b. Banhan was a son o f Banhan, a slave of Hamiza b. Abdul Mutalib. A brave horseman, Banhan died a couple of years of after Hamza's assassination in the battle of Ohad, and Haris remined in the service of Ali b. Abi Talib, and then of Hasan and Husain leaving Medina for Mecca with the latter whom he accompanied to Karbala also,

(18) Habshah b. Qais Nahmi was, according to b. Hajr, a grandson of a companion of the prophet, Salma b. Tareef, and was himself a narrator of Hadis.

(19) Hajjaj b. Zaid S'adi Tameemee was a resident of Basra and belonged to the clans of Bani S'ad b. Tameem. On leaving Mecca, Husain had sent letters to some influential men of Basra. One of them, Masood b. Amr Azdi gathered the members of all branches of his clan, Bani Tameem,

Bani Hanzala, Bani S'ad and Bani Aamir and exhorted them to support Husain, A number of them promised to help Husain. Masood wrote a letter to Husain telling him what he had been able to do, and dispatched it to Husain by Hajjaj b. Zaid S'adi who joined Husain at Karbala, and was martyred.

(20) Zahir b. Amr Aslami Kindi was a companion of the prophet and a narrator of hadith and had to his credit participation in the oath, called Baiat-i Rizwan. He fought in the holy crusade of Khaibar. Distinguished for his bravery and devotion to the members of the prophet's house- hold (ahl-i bait), he had joined Amr b. Humuq when the latter revolted against b. Ziyad b. Abih, appointed by Muawiya as governor of Kufa. He however, escaped arrest, He performed the hajj pilgrimage in 60 A. H. , and, meeting Husain, accompanied him to Karbala.

(21) Zaheer b. Saleem b. Amr Azadi joined Husain deserting from Yazid's army the night when it was resolved finally to put Husain to death. He died fighting on Husain's side.

(22) Saleem, a faithful slave of Hasan, died fighting for Husain and achieved martyrdom.

(23) Sawar b. Abi Omair Nahmi was a narrator of hadith. He reached Karbala when the terms of peace with Husain were under consideration. Falling down injured on the 10th Moharrum, he was taken into custody to Omar-i-S'ad, who intended to put him to death, but was prevented from doing so by his soldiers who led him away to safety. His wounds did not yield to treatment, and he died six months later.

(24) Shabib b. Abdullah, a slave of Haris b. Sari, Hamadani Jabri and a companion of the prophet had fought on Ali's side in the wards of the camel, Siffin and Nehrwan. He belonged to Kufa and betook himself to Karbala with Saif b. Haris b. Sari' and Malik b. Abd b. Sari, descended from his master.

(25) Shabib b. Abdullah Nahshali was among the followers of the companions of the prophet, and a companion of Ali b. Talib on whose side he had fought the wars of the camel, Siffin and Nehrwan. Later he was reckoned among the companions, successively, of Hasan and Husain and their trusted supporter. When Husain left Medina for Mecca and travelled towards Kufa, he kept Husain company.

(26) Abdur Rahman b. Abd-i-Rab Ansari Khazraji was a companion of the prophet. He had witnessed the proceedings at Ghadeer which

he used later to narrate. He was a favourite student of Ali b. Abi talib who had himself instructed him in the Quran, and had also imparted him training in other subjects as well. Burair's light-hearted conversation with him in the morning of the 10th of Moharrum has already been referred to.

(27) Abdur Rahman b. Abdullah b. Kadn Arhabi was a brave and distinguished warrior among the followers of the prophet's companions The second deputation which had waited upon Husain from Kufa, bringing with it 53 applications, each signed by three or four persons, had him as one of its members together with Qais b. Mushir Saidavi and Ammara b. Abeed Saluli. He along wi.h Ammara had accompanied Muslim b Aqil to Kufa. Later, he managed to leave Kufa and reach Karbala to join Husain's friends and supporters.

(28) Abdullah b. Bushr Khas'ami's father, Bushr b' Rabia, was a well-known person of his time, and a veteran horseman. The famous compound, " Jabaz Bushr" at Kufa was called after his name. His name finds prominent mention in the history of the battle of Qadisia. He son, Abdullah, inherited his barvery and courage, got to Karbala with the army of Omar-i-S'ad, and secretly joined Husain's friends and supporters.

(29) Ammar b. Abi Salmah Dalani had been born, according to b. Hajr, in the lifetime of the prophet, and fought on Ali's side in the battles of the camel, Siffin and Nehrwan.

(30) Ammar b. Hassaan Taee was a distinguished and chosen Shia of Ali. He was a brave and famous warrior. His father, Hassaan b. Sharih, a companion of Ali, died fighting for Ali in the battle of Siffin. Ammar had accomanied Husain on his journey from Mecca,

(31) Amr b. Zabi'ah b. Qais b. Sa'labah Zabiee Teemi, a brave and skilled horseman, was celebrated for his war like exploits. Reaching Karbala with Omar-i- S'ad army, he joined Husain's friends and supporters.

(32) Qaarib, a slave of Husain, was a son of Abdullah b. Ariqat Laisi Deali by Fakiha, a slave-girl of Rabab, mother of Sakina, in Husain's household. He accommpanied his mother who went with Husain from medina to Mecca and thence to Karbala,

(33) Qasim b. Habib b. Abi Bushr Azdi was an expert horseman, brave and courageous, from Kufa. He got to Karbala with the army of Omar-i-S'ad and secretly joined Husain's supporters.

(34) Kanana b. Ateeq Taghlabi was a brave man of his times and a devout person who knew the Quran by heart. He reached Karbala before the commencement of the hostilities.

(35) Muslim b. Kaseer Sadafi Azdi had been born in the prophets lifetime. He fought in the battle of the camel on Alis' side when an arrow hit him in the leg crippling him. He resolved to support Husain and leaving Kufa joined him at Karbala.

(36) Nasr b. Abi Naizar had sprung from the stock of Najashi, ruler of Abyssinia or some other country outside Arabia, His father conceived a desire to embrace Islam in his youth, and presented himself to the prophet and accepted Islam at the latter's hands. He was nurtured by the prophet after whom he remained with Ali and looked after the management of an oasis of which Ali was the proprietor, His son, Nasr. remained with Ali and Hasan during his youth and manhood, and spent the remainer of his life with Husain, accompanying him on the journey to Iraq from Medina to Mecca and thence to Karbala.

(37) Naeem b. Ijlan Ansari along with his brothers, Nazr and Noman, was a companion of Ali, and the three brothers were accounted among the brave men and poets of their times, and performed outstanding exploits in the battle of siffin. After removing Amr b. Abi Salma from the governorship of Bahrain, Ali had appointed Noman to that office. Nazr and Noman died during the period of Hasan's caliphate, and Naeem settled at Kufa, When Husain reached Iraq, Naeem managed some how to reach Karbala from Kufa, and joined Husain's supporters.

(38) Hulas b. Amr Azdi Raasbi and

(39) Noman b. Amr Azdi

were brothers and companions of Ali b. Abi Talib. Noman had fought on the side of Ali in the war of Siffin and Hulas had worked as a police officer during Ali's caliphate. Both of them reached Karbala with the army of Omar-i-S'ad and on the failure of the overtures for peace, they joined the friends and supporters of Husain.

(40) Abdur Rahman b. Masood and

(41) Masood b. Hajjaj Temi, his father belonged to Kufa, the latter being an eminent, Shia of Ali. He had seen many wars. Both father and son reached Karbala with the troops of Omar-i-Sa'd and on the 7th Moharrum they went to Husain to present their compliments, and remained with him.

(42) Ibad b. Mahajir b. Abil Mahajir Jehni,

(43) Aqba b. Salat Jehni and

(44) Muyamme b. Ziyad b. Amr Jehni belonged to the desert clans settled in the vicinity of the springs known as Miyah and Jehnia. Many of these clansmen joined Husain on his journey from Mecca to Kufa in the hope of acquiring worldly gains. Upon getting news of the assassination of Muslim b. Aqil and Hani at Kufa, Husain informed his followers at Zabala of his bleak prospects and warned them against keeping him company. In consequence many of his followers parted company with him. These three men, however, refused to forsake Husain as did those who had travelled with him from Medina.

(45) Qasit b. Zaheer b. Haris Taghlabr

(46) Kardoos b. Zaheer b. Haris Taghlabi and

(47) Muqsit b. Zaheer b. Haris Taghlabi were companions of Ali b. Abi Talib for whom they fought many wars. Then they attached themselves to Hasan till he left for Hijaz. The three brothers then settled down at Kufa, and when Husain reached KARBALA, the three brothers contrived somehow to join him.

(48) Jaabir b Hajjaj Teemi, a manumitted slave of Aamir b. Nahshal.

(49) Jabla b. Ali Shebani

(50) Rabab b. Aamir b. Ka'le Teemi and

(51) Zarghama b. Malik Taghlabi had taken the oath of allegiance to Husain at the hands of Muslim b. Aqil but after his assassination at Kufa, they went into hiding among their clansmen. Reaching Karbala with the armies of Omar-i-Sa'd they joined the friends and supporters of Husain.

(52) Habab b. Haris

(53) Hanzala b. Omar Shebana

(54) Zaheer b. Bushr Khas'ami

(55) Imran b. K'ab b. Haris Ashjaee and

(56) Mani b. Ziyad have been mentioned among the martyrs, but no further information about them is available.

(57) Adham b. Omayya Abdi Basn,

(58) Saalim, slave of Aamir b. Muslim al Abdi

(59) Aamir b. Muslim (60) Saif b. MaliK abdi Basn

(60) Abdullah b. Yazid b. Sabeet Qaisi and his brother

(61) Obaidullah were Shias of Ali at Basra and they used to assemble there at the house of a Shia lady, Maria, daughter of Munqiz Abdia who was greatly devoted to the members of the prophets' household. When Husain decided to proceed to Kufa, the governor of Basra who had replaced b. Ziyad shut up the roads of Basra to prevent any one going to Husain's help from Basra. Meanwhile b. Ziyad had taken over as governor of Kufa. Yazeed b. Sabeet then made a plan of going to help Husain–a proposal fraught with much danger. Only these men accepted his suggestion and only two of his own sons out of ten, agreed to incur the risk. These men succeeded in joining Husain at Atbah within the precincts of Mecca and accompanied him on his journey to Kufa.

THE ATTACK ON HUSAIN'S ENCAMPMENT

The troops of the enemy found it impossible to make any headway so long as the number, howsoever small, of Husain's supporters remained undiminished. After the first assault which had carried off no less than 50 supporters of Husain, and deprived his remaining friends of their mounts, the adversary mustered up the courage to direct their unfriendly attention to Husain's encampment. Even though their ranks had greatly thinned out, the outstanding bravery of Husain's friends enabled them to put up the fiercest fight yet witneseed in the world and keep the enemy at bay till the noon.

Yazid's forces attempted to outflank and encompass Husain's dauntless warriors who had, in their rear, the rows of their tents which had been so closely fastened with each other by means of their supporting ropes that they stood like a strong protective wall or defensive fortification, and made an attack on Husain's supporters from their back impossible. Noticing this arrangement, Omar-i-Sa'd ordered the ropes wich held the tents together to be cut, and the tents to be pulled down so that Husain's band of warriors might be completely beleagured. They, however, retired into their tents to ambush and kill intruders, throwing their dead bodies into the open. His designs thus thwarted, Omar-i Sa'd ordered the tents to be set ablaze. [1]

1. Tabari, Vol. VI. p. 250

The tent occupied by Husain himself and those occupied by the ladies' of his family were at some distance from the rows of his supporters' tents, When the tents were being set on fire, Husain directed that it was unnecessary to take any measures to foil the enemy, since the flaming tents would of themselves present insurmountable barriers to those who sought to launch an attack upon Husain's supporters from the rear. This calculation proved to be wholly correct. Repeated failures to encircle Husain's supporters so exasperated Shimr that striking Husain's tent with his spear, he shouted, " Bring me some fire so that I may set this tent on fire along with its occupants." This threat caused great distress among the ladies who raised loud lamentations. Husain administered a strong reproof to Shimr saying, " Shimr, you want to set my tent on fire so that the members of my family and I might be burnt to death. May God consume you in fire. "some officers of Yazid's army dissuaded Shimr from putting his intention into effect, and Shees b. Rabii told him, "I have not yet heard a more shameful thing uttered, nor seen a worse step taken than what you have done. He was deterred in executing his heartless designs by the opposition expressed by men of his own party, and moved away from the door of Husain's tent.

Meanwhile, Zuhair b. Qain had made such a devastating onslaught upon the enemy with the help of his friends that he pushed Shimr and his troops far away from the tents, and killed Abu Ghizza Zubali, one of Shimr's select men, This provoked the enemy to open a counter-offensive of great violence, causing much blood-shed, but ending in their repulse once again. The vast numerical strength of Yazid's troops enabled his armies to absorb the shock of the losses in their ranks with unconcern[1] while the death of even one warrior on Husain's side made a big difference.

In the following paragraphs are given the names and brief accounts of those supporters of Husain who sacrificed themselves for him in the first assault till the noon on 10th Moharrum.

(63) Bakr b. Hai Teemi had arrived at Karbala as a member of the armies of Omar-i-Sa'd. but after the commencement of the battle, joined Husain for whom he died fighting.

(64) Amr b. Janada b. Ka'b Khazraji was a son of Janada b. Ka'b mentioned earlier at serial no. 14 as one martyred during the first assault, Amr, a lad hardly ten years of age, had accompanied his parents to Karbala. After his father's death, his mother, Bahria, daughter of Masood,

1. Taberi, Vol. VI p. 251

bade her son to go and fight for Husain. The boy accordingly prayed Husain for leave to do battle for him. Husain withheld his permission thinking that it would be very hard for the lad's mother to lose her son so soon after her husband had been killed, Amr told him that it was his mother herself who had sent him to seek his permission to fight and had dressed him up for the battle. He was then allowed to go and fight as he wished and he was killed. A cruel soldier of Yazid's army beheaded the boy, and threw his head towards Husain's contingent. Brave as a lion, his mother picked up his head saying, "Well done! my son! You have rejoiced my heart by sacrificing yourself for Husain. "She then threw back the head towards the enemy's army, and picking up an iron club, she opened an assault on the adversary. Since Husain did not approve of it, she went back to her tent.

NOON AND THE OFFENSIVE AT THE TIME OF THE NOON PRAYERS

Yazid's army now desired to bring the battle, somehow, to a successful conclusion. In the mean time, the hour of noon struck. Abu Samama Amr b Abdullah Saedi, a companion of Husain submitted to him that the enemy had drawn up very near him, and that since it was certain that before any injury could be caused to him, the speaker himself would have been killed, his wish to say his last prayers with his master, for which the time had arrived, might be granted, before he presented himself before God. Husain scanned the sky and said," You have remembered prayers. May God account you as one of those who prayed regularly "He added, "Ask these men of the enemy to stay their hands from fighting till we have said our prayers, "[1] What a lamentable change ! The prophet's son, in whose house the institution of saying prayers was founded, pleading to be given time to offer prayers and the request not only getting rejected, but Haseen b. Tameen emerging from the ranks of the army and saying, "Your prayers would not be acceptable,"[2]

(65) Habib b. Mazahir Asadi, also known as Abul Qasim, was a first cousin of the celebrated Arab horseman, Rabia b-khoot b. Rea' b. According to b Kalbi, he was a companion of the prophet. Toosi has, however, put him down as a companion successively of Ali, and his sons, Hasan and Husain, Like Maisim-i-Tammar and Rasheed Hajri, he was among the select band of Ali's disciples whom he had specially instructed in the accult sciences.

1. Tabari, Vol, VI p. 251
2. Tabari. Vol VI, p. 251

When the news of Muawiya's death first reached Kufa. and the idea of inviting Husain there occurred to some people of the town, Habib. b. Mazahir took a leading part in the deliberations held at the house of Suleiman b. Sard Khizaee. Accordingly, the first letter addressed by the Shias of Kufa to Husain prominently bore Habib's name with the names of Suleman and others. When Muslim b. Aqil read over Husain's letter to the Shias of Kufa at the house of Mukhtar b. Abu Obaida Saqafi, Habib had supported the opening speech of Aabis adding that while he took no responsibility for others he was himself prepared to extend all support to Husain.

On reaching Karbala with Husain, he was always keen to find an opening to speak, to the enemy so that he might suitably admonish them. When Qurra b. Qais prepared to return to Omar b. Sa'd after conveying the latter s message to Husain, Habib said, "Why do you go back to men of iniqulty. Support this venerable person, (Husain) to whose grandfather we owe the privilege of subscribing to Islam. Qurra replied, "I would ponder over this question after I have delivered Husain's reply to Omar-i Sa'd.[1] Habib's speech must have moved Qurra's heart as he used to say latter. " If Hur had disclosed his intention to me of joining Husain, I would also have gone with him to Husain's help."[2]

In the evening of 9th Moharrum, when Yazid's army mounted an unexpected attack against Husain, the latter deputed his brother, Abbas, to find out the reason for this move. He was told that an order had been received from b. Ziyad that either Husain should swear allegiance to Yazid or be attacked and battle be joined with him. Abbas went to apprise Husain of the position. Habib b. Mazahir and Zuhair Qain were left behind. Habib utilised the opportunity to admonish the hostile forces and said, "Think of the evil consequences which would ensure before God for those who return to him, with the blood of the prophet's progery and those prayerful and devout men of the country who rise up in the smallhours of the morning and pray to God countless number of times, on their hands."

Arza b. Qais who was a frivolous mounte-bank chipped in with the quip, "Habib, you spare no opportunity of referring to yourself as a very devout person." Zuhair flew into a passion on hearing this unseasonable interposition and said, "Azra, does this admit of any doubt ? Habib's

1. Irshad, p. 240
2. Irshad, p. 249

soul has indubitably been purified by God who has conferred upon him the grace to follow the right path.[1] "

In the night preceding 10th Moharrum, Habib b. Mazahir obtained Husain's permission to go to the clan of Bani Asad who resided in the neighbourhood of Karbala, to invite them to Husain's help. He went to them and exhorted them to recognise the duty of supporting Husain. Moved by his words, Abdullah b. Bashir Asadi was the first to accept Habib's advice. Others followed his lead, and they set out to join Husain. Omar -i-Sa'd had, however, got wind of Habib's mission and had sent 500 mounted soldiers to intercept any help he might be able to enlist for Husain. Unable to resist the force sent by Omar-i-Sa'd the party of the Bani Asad went back, leaving Habib to go back alone.

In the morning of 10th Moharrum when Husain delivered his historic address to Yazid's army, Shimr interrupted him shamelessly many times saying, " I am a hyprocrite (Munafiq) and worship God with my tongue only. I do not at all understand what you have said." It was Habib b. Mazahir who made a reply to Shimr's insolent intervention, saying, "By God, I know that you worship God on 70 letters, that is, inconstantly and insincerely. I also bear witness that you are telling the truth in saying that you do not understand what Husain was speaking about, since your heart has been sealed."[2]

When Husain arranged his small band of supporters for the battle on 10th Moharrum, Habib was given the command of the left wing of Husain's force.[3]

When Muslim b Ausajah fell down mortally wounded in the battlefield. Husain went to where he lay, accompanied by Habib. The latter congratulated Muslim b. Ausajah on achieving martyrdom and added, " If it was not certain that I shall soon enough join you in the next world, I should have asked you about your last wishes so that I might carry them out in order to discharge the duty imposed upon me by our relations and religious affinities. Pointing towards Husain, Muslim said, "I have no last wish except to ask you not to stint on supporting him," pointing to Husain. Obviously this expression of loyalty must have strengthened and excited Habib's own yearning to lay down his life for Husain. How could then

1. Tabari, Vol. Vi, p. 237
2. Irshad, p. 248
3. opsit, p. 246

Habib tolerate the insolence of Haseen b. Tameem over the request made for the suspension of hostilities so that Husain might offer his noon prayers? Repeating Husain's concluding words, he said," Not acceptable? Do you imagine that the prayers of the son of God's prophet are not and your prayers are acceptable?" This provoked Haseen into making an attack and Habib stood up to him in combat, dealing a blow at the mouth of his horse which made it rear itself on its hind legs, and throw Haseen off its back. Haseen was, however, saved by the soldiers who had accompanied him and led away to safety,

Habib had now entered the lists The surge of faith within him, the stimulus of bravery, anger at the insolence and effrontery of the enemy and sorrow at the latter's managing to escape with his life combined to Impel Habib to recite a couplet meaning, " I swear if we had been equal to you in numbers, or even half as many as you. You would have certainly run for your life from us, O worst of God's creatures, both by descent and breeding.[1] " He went on to recite couplets signifying, " I am Habib. Mazahir was my father, I am a master horseman in the battle-field when the fire fo war rages hard and hot. You are superior to us in numbers and war equipment, but we stand by our word with greater constancy and face hardships with greater endurance. Besides our cause is noble, our rightfulness self-evident, the discharge of our duty by us is more thorough and our hands are clean.[2] "

Habib fought with great force and dispatched a Tamimite athlete with a single blow of his sword. Just then another Tamimite warrior gave him a thrust with his spear bringing Habib to the earth. While he was still trying to regain his feet, Haseen b. Tameem delivered a blow with his sword at his head, killing him. When the Tameemite soldier who had felled Habib with a thrust of his spear, approached Habib's body to severe his head, Haseen claimed to have had a share in killing Habib. This was denied by the soldier who claimed to have dealt the mortal blow himself. At last Haseen temporised saying, " Let me only fasten Habib's head to the neck of my horse, and go round in the army but once, so that people might get the impression that I also had a hand in killing him. You may then take possession of the head, take it to b. Ziyad and I would claim no part of the reward you might receive from him." To this suggestion, the soldier agreed with reluctance.

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1. Tabari Vol p. 251
2. ibid

Habib's death noticeably affected Husain.

Hur's Martyrdom.

An account of Hur's fight has already been given and it has been mentioned that he had been deprived of his horse. After Habib had met his death, Hur resolved to sacrifice himself. Going to the battle-field he commenced reciting verses meaning, " I vow that I shall not be slain till I have slain men of the enemy, and would not meet death except when I would be on the offensive. I would deal decisive blows with my sword. I shall never fall back nor betray any sign of weakness." Sometimes he would say, ' I shall wield my sword in the cause of that best of all men whose stay has lent honour to Karbala. ' He started fighting jointly with Zuhair b. Qain, each helping the other out of difficult or dangerous situations. This worked only for a brief spell after which the soldiers of the enemy's infantry encircled Hur tightly[1] and Zuhair's attempts at driving away the hostile troops proved of no avail. A big multitude of soldiers fell upon Hur, and one of the master horsemen of Kufa joined Ayyub b. Musreh in killing Hur.[2] Husain did Hur the honour of himself removing the dust and blood which covered his face, and in the process of doing so, saying," Hur you are indeed Hur (a free-man). Your parents most aptly named you Hur. You are Hur (a free-man) in this world as also in the world to come. " Husain meant to convey that the independence and nobility of a man are exhibited in his deeds and that he who gets ensnared by worldly desires and loses sight of the dividing line between right and wrong cannot possess these sterling qualities. Hur proved himself a free-man by spurning worldy desires and treading the path of righteousness.

(66) Abu Samama Saedi was the filionymic of Amr b. Abdullah b. Ka'b us Saed. He was one of the ace horsemen of Arabia and a distinguished Shia of Ali. He had the privilege of being a companion of Ali, whom he joined in all the wars fought by the latter. He then joined Hasan's company and when Hasan left for Medina, he stayed back at Kufa. He actively supported Muslim b. Aqil on the latter's arrival at Kufa as a representative of Husain. However, when b. Ziyad established his authority at Kufa, and Muslim noticed that a blood-both was likely, he entrusted to Abu Samama the custody of the funds raised to render assistance to Husain and also the duty of purchasing arms, being an expert in that line.

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1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 252
2. op cit. p. 204, Irshad p. 215

After Muslims' martyrdom, Abu Samama left Kufa secretly and with Nafe' b. Hilal joined Husain on the latter's way to Iraq.

A memorable incident showing his loyalty and great devotion to Husain is that when Omar-i-Sa'd sent Kaseer b. Abdullah to convey his message to Husain, Abu Samama asked the emissary to leave his sword outside the tent. Kaseer did not accept the proposal. Abu Samama then asked Kaseer to allow him to keep his hand on the hilt of the latter's sword. This proposal was also unacceptable to Kaseer who had to be replaced by another messenger.

When the hour of the noon prayers arrived, Abu Samama's strictly punctual performance of his duties was strikingly manifested. Even at that hour of extreme peril and despondency, it was his heart's desire to join prayers led by Husain before going to meet his God. This pleased Husain so highly that he blessed Abu Samama, saying, " You have remembered the offering of prayers at this moment. May God reckon you among those who offer prayers regularly."

Husain then desired his companions to sue for the suspension of the hostilities so that he might offer the noon prayers. This request touched off an out-break of violence in which Hur was killed and Abu Samama's wish remained unsatisfied. He was slain by a soldier of his own clan who served in Yazid's forces.

The Noon (Zuhr) Prayers

The fighting was not suspended. For such dangerous situations, prayers called **Namaz-i-Khauf** (prayers at a time of danger and fright) might be offered in a special manner prescribed by the Muslim law. The army is divided into equal halves, half the men continue the fight with the enemy while the other half join the prayers being led by an Imam (leader). After saying one **Raka't** (bowing one's body in prayers from the waist) of the prayers behind the leader of the prayers, the men withdraw and complete the remaining part of the prayers separately with some abridgements of the regular form of prayers. Then they join the fighting, relieving the other half who then leave the battle field and join the leader in offering their prayers. It would have been feasible to say the prayers in this way if Husain's army had been numerous enough to admit of its division into two viable halves, one continuing the fight and the other saying prayers, by turns. Husain's supporters were, however, vastly outnumbered by his enemies. placing full confidence in the constancy and bravery of his friends.

Husain directed Zuhair b. Qain and Saeed b| Abdullah Hanafi to stand in front of him so that he might ofter the noon prayers. Both these self-sacri-iicing companions of Husain advanced with-about half the number of his supporters and shielded him from arrows by standing in front of him for the duration of the prayers, [1]

(67) Saeed b. Abdullah Hanafi was one of the prominent Shias of Kufa, known for his bravery and devotion. With Hani,b. hani he had from broughtKufa the last letter addressed to Husain[2], and the reply to the latter had also been made over to them.

He was also one of those who had pledged their support to Husain when Muslim b. Aqil had read over the latter to an assembly of the resi-dents of Kufa at Mukhtar's house.

On the night precedlng the 10th Moharrum when Husain recalled the cath of allegiance to himself. and bade his friends and snpporters to go wherever they liked, Saeed was also one of those who refused to forsake Husain, in an impassioned speech. Quoth he, "By God we shall by no manner of means part company with you, If I am slain, brought back to life butnt alive, my ashes scattered to the winds, and the process is repeated 70 times, I would still not leave you till I die finally at your feet,"

Saeed got the opportunity of proving the genuineness or his claim when Husain said the noon prayers on 10th Moharrum. He stood before Husain along with Zuhair Qain, protecting Husain from arrows shot by enemy at him, stopping every arrow with his own body till he collapsed and died, no less than 13 arrows sticking to him body.

(68) Zuhair b. Qain b. Qais Bijli belonged to the nobility of Kufa and was a brave veteran who had fought in many a wars of 'camel' and Siffin, the Muslims got divided, into two groups, the 'Alavees', siding with Ali, and the' Usmanis,partil to Muawiya. Zuhair was generally coun-ted among the Usmanis, and did not appear to be in sympathy with the members of the prophets' household.

He was returning with the members of his family after performing the hajj in 60 A. H. and on his way towards Kufa came upon Husain. Although Zuhair had not evinced any special regard for Husain, he had

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 252; Irshad p. 252
2. Irshad p. 209

been impressed by the eminence of Husain's family and doubted his own ability to reject the request for help if made by Husain. He, therefore, steerd clear of Husain's caravan. Being aware of Zuhair's native good qualities' Husain invited him at the halting stage of Zarood to see him, and Zuhair was a changed man after this meeting, and had been completely won over by Husain.

At the stage of Zu Hasm, when Hur's army had arrived to intercept Husain's progress towards Kufa. Husain addressed his supporters and Zuhair made a reply which was full of impassioned expressions of his intention to sacrifice himself in Muslim's cause. Later, when Hur tried to obstruct Husain in proceeding beyond Karbala and setting up his camp in the vicinity of the river. Zuhair requested Husain to permit his supporters to give battle to the enemy just then as later the enemies would receive such large re-inforcement in troops as would make resistance to them hopeless. Husain. however, refused to take the initiative in opening hostilies.

In the evening of 9th Moharrum, when Azra b. Qais impudently interrupted the monitory speech of Habib b, Mazahir addressed to Yazid's' army, it was Zuhair who cried out,"Undoubtedly Habib's soul has been purified by God who has bestowed guidance upon him. Azra. I advise you not to ally your self for God's sake with misguided man who put to the sword men whose hearts are pure."Zuhairs' voice was heard with surprise and recognising it, Azra said, "you were not a Shia of that family but belonged to group of Usmanis." Zuhair replied, "My standing here should have you that I am a Shia of Ali, By God, I had never written or sent any oral message or promised any help to Husain, but I came up with him on the way and was reminded of the prophet and the distinction of Husain's family. I felt that in truth, Husain had been subjected to tyranny and oppression by his foes. I, therefore, resolved to help him, join the ranks of his associates and sacrifice myself for him in order to discharge the duty I owe to God and His prophet, a duty which you have ignored and contemned."[1]

On the night preceding 10th Moharrum, when Husain announced to his companions that he had rescinded the oath of allegiance to him taken by them, Zuhair also made a spirited speech, saying," By God, I would much prefer to be put to the sword, brought back to life, done to death again and the process repeated a thousand times, so that these

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 237

young men of your family and you should be spared from slaughter.[1]

Zuhair was put in command of the right wing of Husain's forces in the morning of 10th Moharrum, and he delivered a forceful speech before the contending armies. He was considered by the enemy to occupy an eminent position among Husain's supporters so that when Abdullah b. Omair had emerged to answer the challenges held out by Yasar and Salim they had told him," We do not know you, Zuhair b. Qain, or Habib b. Mazahir or Burair should have taken up our challenge."

Zuhair performed many deeds of conspicuous valour since the morning on 10th Moharrum till noon the same day. Just before noon, when Shimr had attacked Husain's tent, striking his spear it and saying, "Bring some fire to me, so that I may set this tent on fire with its occupants," Zuheir rushed at him with ten of his brave associates and drove Shimr and his troops away[2]

When Habib had met his death, Zuhair commenced fighting with Hur jointly. Subsequently, along with Saeed b. Abdullah, he was asked by Husain to stand in front of him to ward off the arrows being shot by his enemies, so that he might say his noon prayers. Zuhair and Saeed performed this dangerous duty, but by the time Hussin had said his prayers, Saeed had been so profusely wounded that he succumbed to his injuries. Zuhair too had been grievously hurt and incapacitated for fighting, but when he saw that the enemy had drawn very near Husain, he made his last charge and proclaimed with great emotion and ardour," I am Zuhair, son of Qain. I shall drive away enemies with my sword from getting near Husain." After some time, while Zuhair was fighting, sword in hand, Kaseer b Abdullah She'bi and Mahajir b. Aus jointly set upon him and killed him. [3]

(69) Salman b. Mazarib b. Qais at Bijli was a cousin of Zuhair b. Qain, and was travelling with him when they had met Husain. He accompanies Zuhair to Karbala and sacrificed himself for Husain.

(70) Amr b. Qarza b. Ka'b Ansari was a son of Qarza b. Ka'b, a companion of the prophet, who took part in the battle of Ohad and the succeeding battles. In 23 A.H., Qarza had reduced Reh during the rule of

1. Irshad p. 244
2. Irshad p. 294
3. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 245-253

ed. In the afternoon, he commenced shooting arrows saying, "I am a Jamali, and follow Ali's faith. He killed 12 men of the enemy besides wounding many others. The enemy then surrounded him and struck at him from all directions, He was then captured and with both his arms broken, he was taken by Shimr to Omar-i-Sa'd, blood dripping from his beard. Omar accosted him with the words, " What have you done to yourself? Nafe said, "God knows about my conscience. By God, I have killed 12 of your men and wounded several others. I am happy I have not been found wanting in the due discharge of my duty. If my arms had not been broken you could not take me captive as you have done."Shimr suggested that Nafe should not be spared from death to which Omar-i-Sa'd replied that Shimr was free to deal with Nafe' as he wished having brought him under arrest, When Shimr advanced toward Nafe, sword in hand, the latter remarked, "If you had been a muslim you would not have stained your hands with our blood. God be thanked for having pecreed that we should die at the hands of those who are the worst of God's creatures, petty-minded and mean-spirited Shimr felt like triumphing when he assassinated this wounded and defenceless crusader and reciting verses customary in war opened an assault on the remaining supporters of Husain.[1]

(72) Shozib b. Abdullah A branch of the clan of Hamadan was related to the offspring of the slaves of the clan of Shakir as also to Aabis b. Abi Shabeeb Shakri. They were prominent among the Shias of Kufa for their accomplishments They were ace horsemen in the field of battle and knew the traditions by heart Having received the benefit of Ali's teaching, they were frequently referred to at Kufa and people visited them to be instructed in the traditions by them,

When Aabis left Kufa for Mecca carrying a letter written by Muslim b Aqil to Husain, Shazib was with Aabis and accompanied Husain from Mecca towards Iraq and to Karbala.

On 10th Moharrum, Aabis asked Shazib, his faithful slave, what he intended to do. "What do I intend doing? queried Shozib, "Why, what other than to fight for the prophets' son with you and get killed? "Aabis praised him and said, "step forward and lay down your life for Husain so that he might witness the calamity of death befall you just as he has beheld it befalling his other companions and I should also earn reward for enduring the grief of your death, Certainly, if at the moment there was anyone else over whom I had greater authority than I possess over you, it

1. Tabari, Vol. VI, p, 253

would have given me pleasure that he should get killed before my eyes so that I may have to put up with the sorrow of losing him, since today is the time when one might earn all the merit and reward one might possibly win, since with today will close the book of our deeds and nothing else would be left us except the rendering of our accounts.[1]

In times of peace and tranquillity, words like these might well be uttered as a rhetorical flourish, but giving expression to them right in the midst of calamity and disaster and following them up with deeds which establish their truthfulness is, indeed, very difficult. These words disclose such a desire to court hardships and put up with misery in the path of righteousness as impels the speaker to take practical steps to satisfy it. Shozib advanced, saluted Husain and bade him farewell. He then died fighting for the prophet's son.

(73) Aabis b. Abi Shabeeb Shakri was a scion of the clan of Bani Shakir which was an offshoot of the Hamadan tribe, and it was about them that on the occasion of the war of Siffin Ali b. Abi Talib had said, "If their number grows to one thousand, God would be worshipped as He ought to be worshipped."

These men were very brave and warlike and were known as 'Fityan us Sabah, 'meaning, the brave men of the morning, since warlike contests and plunder mostly began in the morning. Aabis was the leader of the Shias of Kufa, a man of valour, a practised speaker, given to devotions and accustomed to keep awake at night. He had performed noteworthy feats in many wars and had impressed upon the hearts of people the stamp of his valour.

When Muslim b. Aqil had first arrived at Kufa, as a representative of Husain, and had read out the latter's epistle to a gathering of the residents of Kufa, Aabis took the lead in making a speech to reassure Muslim of his help so long as he lived, taking care to mention that he took no responsibility about what others would do.

His speech was so full and pointed that Habib b. Mazahir gave it his draise, and supported him by pledging his own loyalty and help ro Husain.

After about 18,000 Kufan had sworn allegiance to Husain at his hands, Muslim, well satisfied with the success of his mission, addressed a letter to Husain, sending it to him by Aabis who, having carried out the

1. Tabari. Vol, VI p. 254

errand never parted company with Husain. His slave Shozib was with Aabis who sacri ficed the former for Husain. After Shozibs death, Aabis submitted to Husain, "God be my witness that I love nobody on earth mo e than you. If I could present you with anything dearer to me than my life, I would have readily done so. permit me now to fight for you. I offer you my last greetings, and call upon God to testify that I adhere to the faith professed by your father and you."

Aabis then bade Husain farewell, approached the ranks of the enemy's army, his drawn sword in his hand. He carried on his forehead the scar of a wound received in some earlier engagement. Rabi b. Tamaem, a soldier in the army drawn from Kufa, who had known Aabis in earlier wars, recognised him. and warned his friends, " Beware of his prowess ! This man is a lion of lions. He is Abi Shabeeb. Take care that none of you goes out to meet him in battle. " Aabis commenced daclaiming, "Is there any hero of the battle-field here who might come forward to confront another hero of war?" No one from Yazid's army, however, dared to takeup the challenge. Omar-i-Sad then directed, " Do this brave warrior to death with stones," Accordingly stones began raining on Aabis from all sides. Noticing this strange mode of fighting, Aabis doffed his steel helmet and armour and flung them away. He then charged the enemy, flourishing his naked sworn, and drove hundreds of soldiers pell-mell before him in whatever direction he charged. After some time a large section of the army surrounded him and falling upon him, slew him. His head was severed from his body and since every one claimed the credit of having killed him, a heated dispute broke out among the soldiers of the enemy. Omar-i-Sad managed to bring the wrangling at an end by remarking, "Do not quarrel. This man could not have been killed by any one of you singly. All of you killed him."[1]

(74) Abdullah and (75) Abdur Rahman b. Urwa b. Haraq Ghafari. They were grandsons of Haraq Ghafari who belonged to the clan of Abu Zar and was a companion of Ali on whose side he had fought in the wars of the camel, Sitfin and Nehrwan.

Abdullah and Abdur Rahman were both among the nobility and men of prowess of Kufa, and also occupied a distinguished place among the Shias of Ali. Both of them joined Husain at Karbala and died fighting for him.

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1. Tabaii, Vol VI. p 253

In the afternoon, matters became more difficult for Husain, and disaster threatened to overake his supporters, every one of whom began to try to sacrifice himself for Husain before others, Accordingly these cousins begged Husain to accept their parting salutations declaring that they wished to get killed before him so as to acquit themselves fully of the duty of extending all possible help to him, since they found themselves helpless in resisting the hostile army in its pressing onrush. Husain prayed to God to reward them, and bade them to draw near him. Both of them, however. got engaged in grappling with the enemy's soldiers near where Husain stood, loudly intoning verses, meaning " All clans of Bani Gaaffar, Khandaf and Bani Nazar know that we would rush at the evil-doers and the wicked with our sharp-edged and gashing swords. My comrades, spare not yourselves in helping the prophet's descendants, with your spears and swords. " Then both of them fell fighting.[1]

(76) Hanzala b. As'ad Shabami. He was eminent among the Shias of Kufa, a good speaker and a brave man who knew the Quran by heart. He joined Husain after the latter's arrival at Karbala. He acted many times as Husain's messenger during the peace parleys with Omar-i-Sa'd.

On the 10th Moharrum, after several of Husain's friends had fallen in battle, he approached Husain, and standing near him, harangued the enemy " My people I fear that you would meet the same unenviable fate as overtook the people of Noah and the tribs of Aad and Samud. God does not deal unjustly with men, but only gives them the wages of their sin. I am afraid that on the day of judgement when you shall have left this world, there would be nody to save you from God's wrath. Who may guide him from whom God with-holds His guidance? My people, do not slay Husain, else God would visit you with His wrath. Those who speak lies and up in discomfiture."[2]

A speech like this was very far from making the least impression upon the enemy and Husain called out, " B. As'ad, may God send you His mercy. These men earned God's wrath the moment they did not accept the truth and marched to fight with you. Now that they have even killed some of your virtuous companions, worse punishment have they not earned?"

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1. Tabari Vol, VI, p, 253
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 254; Irshad, p. 252

Hanzala remarked at this, " you have spoken the truth my master and who may understand these things better than you. permit me to go to God and meet our companions," He received Husain's permission to go to fight and ' proceed to win merit in this world and the next and to acquire that kingdom which would suffer no decline. ' Hanzala then offered his parting greeting and died fighting in the battle-field.[1]

(77) Saif b. Haris b. Saree' and (78) Malik b. Abd b. Saree' b. Jabir Hamadani.

They were first cousins to each other, and were the sons of the same mother.[2] They joined musain at karbala when parleyings for peace were still in progress. Their slave Shabeeb was also with them, and died in the course of the first assult.

On the 10th of Moharrum when the battle was raging fiercely, both of them stood near Husain crying, as they were unable to speak on account of excessive sorrow. Seeing this, Husain asked them, " My nephews, why do you cry? Have patience end presently you would find only what would rejoice you." They replied that they did not weep except on account of seeing Husain helplessly surrounded by the enemy and finding themselves unable to arrange for his safety. Husain prayed God to give them the best of rewards for the grief felt by them on his account, and the sympathy that they felt for him.[3] They both died fighting for Husain after Hanzala b. As'ad.

(79) Jaun, slave of Abu Zar Ghafari. He was an Abyssinian slave of Fazl b. Abbas b. Abdul Muttalib and had been purchased by Ali b. Abi Talib for 150 gold mohurs and had gifted him to Abu Zar for the latter's service. Jaun had accompanied Abu Zar in his exile to Rabza.

In 32 A. H, Abu Zar died and Jaun returned to Medina there to successively serve Ali, Hasan and Husain." On the 10th Moharrum. when the battle had been joined, Jaun also requested Husain to give him leave to participate in the jehad, "You came to me to have some rest, "replied Husain. "why should you now invite trouble for my sake?" Jaun fell down at Husain's feet, saying, "son of the prophet, how is it possible that supported by you in the days of your felicity, I should part company with you

1. Tabari. Vol, VI, p. 254, Irshad p. 252
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 253
3. op. cit, p. 252

in the days of your adversity? By God, my blood smells disagreeably, my birth is humble and my colour black. Make me deserve paradise for your sake so that my unpleasing ordour should turn into fragrance, my lineage acquire dignity and my colour turn fair. By God, I shall not forsake you so long as my blood does not commingle with the fair blood of your ancestors. "Getting permission to fight, Jaun started reciting verses, meaning, "let the infidels witness how a black Abyssinian slave wages war to defend the progeny of the prophet". After some fighting, he was slain. Jaun's words had, however, made a deep impression on Husain who, going where Jaun lay dead, prayed "O God, brighten up his countenance, turn his unpleasant smell into gratifying aroma, place him in the compsny of the good and count him among those who truly knew Mohamed and his progeny. "

(80) The Turkish slave. He was Husain's slave. gifted by him to his son, Ali. He knew the Quran by heart. When he requested Husain for leave to wage war, he was told to seek his master's permission, which he successfully did. Giving has parting greetings to the ladies of Husain's family, he entered the field of battle and raising his voice, he commenced intoning verses, signifying, "My lance and sword set the ocean on fire, and space gets congested with the flight of my countless arrows. When my sword Shimmers in my hand, the hearts of the proud and the envious break "

He killed many soldiers of the enemy and at last fell down wounded. Husain went where he lay, and put his arms round the dying martyr's neck, and his cheek, against his cheeks. The Turkish slave opened his eyes, and perceiving the honour shown to him, departed from this world, smiling.

(81) Uns b. Haris Asadi. He was among the prophet's companions and used to recount the traditions Having heard the prophet prophesying Husain's death, he awaited the day in order that he might help Husain.

He was far advanced in age when the battle of Karbala happened. He was, however, so staunch in his belief that he accompanied Husain to Karbala. On the 10th Moharrum, having obtained Husain's permission to fight, he raised his sagging eyebrows which hid his eyes, and secured them with a handkerchief, and girded his waist tightly with his turban. Noticing the old warrior so carefully preparing himself for the battle, Husain's heart melted and he said, "my aged warrior in this jehad, may God set a high value upon this excellent deed of yours. "He died fighting for Husain and achieved martyrdom.

(82) Hajjaj b. Masrooq Ja'fi. He was a respectable Shia of Kufa, and had been Alis' companion. When Husain was staying at Mecca, Hajaj betook himself to Husain from Kufa and accompanied him on his journey from Mecca. He sometimes gave the call for prayers, and it was he who gave the call for prayers when Husain had met Hur. On 10th Moharrum, he fought after obtaining leave for doing so from Husain. Having consigned many soldiers of the enemy to death, he fell fighting and achieved martyrdom.

(83) Ziyad b Arib Hamadani. His father had the honour of having met the prophet. Ziyad was a very devout man who abstained from worldly pleasures, kept awake at nights and offered the nocturnal prayers, He was highly esteemed for his prowess.

He put up a spirited fight on the 10th Moharrum and was then killed.

(84) Saalim b. Amr b. Abdullah, slave of Bani Madinat-ul Kalbi.

The Bani al Madina were a branch of the clan of Kalb Qaza'a and Saalim was a slave of this family. He was reckoned among the Shias of Kufa. He had joined Muslim b. Aqil when the latter had made a charge in selfdefence. He was arrested after Muslim's death, but managed to escape and concealed himself among his clansmen. He joined Husain's supporters, arriving at Karbala with some other men of the clan of Kalb, and fell fighting for Husain to achieve martyrdom.

(85) Said b. Haris, slave of Ali b. Abi Talib. After Ali's martyrdom, said remained with Hasan and they with Husain whom he accompanied to Karbala frem Medina. On 10th Moharrum, he laid down his life for Husain.

(86) Omar b. Jundub Hazrami A Shia of Kufa, he had fought on Ali's side in the battles of the 'camel' and Siffin. He supported Hajr b. Adi when the latter fell foul of the Umayyad government, but went into hiding when Hajr was arrested, returning to Kufa after the death of Ziyad b. Abih. Upon the arrival of Muslim b. Aqil at Kufa, he joined the former's supporters, and secretly joined Husain after Muslim had died a martyr's death. He was killed on 10th Moharrum.

(87) Qu'nub b. Amr un Namari. He was a Shia of Kufa who presented himself before Husain in the company of Hajjaj b. Zaid Sa'di and was killed on 10th Moharrum with Husain.

(88) Yazid b. Sabeet ul Abdi. He was a Shia from Basra and a companion of Ali's disciple, Abdul Aswad Dauli. When Husain started upon his journey to Iraq from Mecca, Ibne Ziyad alerted his deputy at Basra to guard against anyone from Basra stirring out of that town to help Husain. Maria, daughter of Munqiz, of the clan of Abd Qais, was a Shia lady of Basra, greatly devoted to the members of the prophet's household. At her house used to assemble the Shias of Basra, and it was at a meeting held there that Yazid b. Sabeet disclosed his intention of going to Husain's help. He tried to persuade his ten sons to follow his example, but only two of them, Abdullah and Obaidullah, (of whom mention has already been made at serial numbers 61 and 62 in the list of martyrs in this Chapter) followed his advice. Many of those present on the occasion tried to dissuade Yazid b. Sabeet from carrying his intention into effect but he adhered to his resolution and set out with some others to come up with Husain who had reached Abtah on the road to Iraq. When these men arrived at Husain's tent, they found that he had already left by another route to see them at their camp, and had stayed on there, waiting for them On return to their camp, they were exceedingly happy to find Husain awaiting their return. They recited the Quranic verse saying that the believers should rejoice at God's blessings and a beneficence. Tney then greeted Husain and told him that they intended to help him. Husain gave them his blessings. On 10th Moharrum Yazid b. Sabeet sacrificed his two sons and himself for Husain . [1]

(89) Yazid b. Mughfil Ja'fi He was one of the companions of Ali b. Abi Talib and had fought on the latter's side in the war of Siffin. He commanded the right wing of the army sent out by Ali under Muqil b. Qais to suppress the revolt of Khareet b. Rashid Naji in the territory of Ahwaz.

Marzbani has mentioned him in the Mojmaush Shuara and has noted that he was a follower of the prophet's companions, one of whom was his own father. He fought for Husain on 0:h Moharrum, reciting verses meaning, " If you do not know me already, know that I am a son of Mughfil. I am an ace horseman in the field of battle and carry with me a complete set of arms. I carry a sword in my hand, and amidst the dust and din of battle, I lift it at the heads of ace horsemen among the enemy. Eventually he died a martyr's death.

(90) Rafe b. Abdullah, slave of Muslim al Azdi. He was a slave of Muslim b. Kaseer, the cripple. He had arrived at Karbala with his master,

1. Tabari, Vol, VI, p. 198

and was killed on 10th Moharrum in the afternoon while fighting for Husain.

(91) Bushr b. Amr b. al Ahdoos al Hazrami al Kindi. He was orginally a resident of Hazr Maut, but as he used to reside at Kufa in the quarter of Bani Kinda, he came to be called Kindi. He had joined the band of Husain's supporters when the peace parleys were still in progress.

On the 10th Moharrum he learnt that his son Amr had been apprehended within the boundaries of Ray, and Husain extended to him a special exemption from the allegiance the former had pledged to Husain, in order to enable him to arrange for the release of his son. His religious fervour, however, did not permit him to leave Husain's company, and he was about the last martyr from amongst Husain's friends who laid down his life for Husain.

(92) Saweed b. Amr b. Abil Mataa'al Khas'ami. Advanced in years, devout and abstemious, he was greatly fond of his devotions. He had performed many notable feats in several wars.

He participated in the battle on 10th Moharrum and was the last amongst Husain's friends[1] to be left after Bushr b. Amr Hazrami. He fell down so profusely wounded in the battle he was presumed to be dead. In fact, however, life had lingered in his body, and it was only after Husain had been martyred that he regained his senses. When the cry that Husain had been martyred reached his ears, he raised himself with uncontrollable emotion. His sword had been taken away from him, but he had a big knife still left with him, and he attacked those enemies who were nearest to him. He was then set upon by the enemies, and beheaded.

Having finished the account of the fighting done by the group of Husain's friends outside the descendants of Hashim, it would be of assistance to have a second look at the nature of this group, its composition and status.

One thing tends to stand out. This group did not comprise obscure and unknown persons, indeed eight of them were amongst the companions of the prophet viz. (1) Muslim b. Ausajah, (2) Zahir b. Amr Aslami Kindi, (3) Shabib b. Abdullah, slave of Hamadan, (4) Abdur Rahman b. Abd Rab Ansari Khazraji, (5) Amimar b. Abi Salama Dalani, (6) Muslim b. Kaseer Sadafi, (7) Habib b. Mazahir and (8) Uns b. Haris Asadi.

1. Tabari, Vol. VI. p. 256

The battle of Karbala took place 50 years after the prophet's death, and none of the afore-mentioned companions of the prophet may be deemed to have been less than 55 or 60 years of age, some of them must certainly have been older in age e. g. (1) Muslim b. Ausajah (2) Abdur Pahman b. Abd Rab Ansari, (3) Habib b. Mazahir, (4) Uns b. Haris and (5) Saweed b. Amr Khas'ami.

According to what we know of Human nature in general it cannot be said of even one of these old participants in the jehad, that they had been drawn into the fight by any sudden or temporary impulse or passion for war.

Amongst those who sacrificed themselves for Husain, the following were companions of Ali b. Abi Talib who are technically reckoned among the followers of the companions of the prophet (tabe'een), and rank in merit only lower than the prophets' companions alone :— (1) Abdullah b. Omair Kalbi (2) Mujamme b. Abdullah Muzhiji (3) Janada b. Haris Jalmani (4) Jundub b. Hajr Kindi (5) Omayyah b. Sa'd Taee (6) Haris b. Banhan (7) Shabib b. Abdullah Nahshadi (8) Naeem b. Ijlan Ansari (9) Hulas b. Omar Azdi (10) Noman b. Omar Azdi (11) Qasit b. zaheer Taghlabi (12) Kardoos b. Zaheer Taghlabi (13)Muqsit b. Zaheer Taghlabi (14) Jabla b. Ali Shebani (15) Abu Samama Saedi (16) Shozib b. Abdullah (17) Jaun, slave of Abu Zar Ghafai (18) Hajjaj b. Masrooq (19) Sa'd b. Haris (20) Amr b. Jundab Hazrami and (21) Yazid b. Mughfil Ja'fi.

Many of these men had fought in the battles of the camel, Siffin and Nahrwan, and some had held public posts during Ali's caliphate, and some of them had been his disciples.

Of the martyrs, the following knew the Quran by heart :- (1) Burair b. Khazeer Hamadani (2) Abdur Rahman b. Abd-i-Rab Ansari (3) Nafe' b. Hilal Bijli (4) Hanzala b. As'ad Shabami (5) The Turkish slave and (6) Kamana b. Atiq Taghlabi and the following men were among the learned men (ulema) and sources of traditions :- (1) Muslim b. Ausajah (2) Habshah b. Qais Nahmi (3) Zahir b. Amr Aslami (4) Swar b. Abi Nameer Nahmi (5) Abdur Rahman b. Abd-i-Rab Ansari (6) Habib b. Mazahir Asadi (7) Nafe' b. Hilal Jamali (8) Shozib b. Abdullah and (9) Uns b. Haris Asadi.

Naturally enough brave warriors and doughty soldiers noted for their feats of valour on the field of battle were well-represented among

those who sacrificed themselves for Husain e. g. (1) Hur b. Yazid Riyahi (2) Muslim b. Ausjah (3) Haris b. Amraul Qais Kindi (4) Abdur Rahman b. Abdullah b. Kidnan Arhabi (5) Masood b. Hajjaj Teemi, (6) Saeed b. Abdullah Hanafi (7) Zuhair b. Qain Bijli (8) Aabis b. Abi Shabeeb Shakri (9) Ziyad b. Areeb Hamadani and (10) Saweed b, Amr b. Abil Mata' Khasami.

Many of those whose names have been given under various headings in the foregoing paragraphs were reputed for their devotions, abstemiousness and fear of God also, like Aabis b. Abi Shabeeb and Ziyad b. Areeb who have been specifically mentioned in history as those who used to keep awake at night. Saeed b. Abdullah b. Hanafi has been specially recorded as given very much to prayers.

All these men lent credit to their times in their various ways. Their lives were in all respects exemplary and afforded living instances of Islamic morals and qualities.

Husain wanted men like them to be with him at Karbala. He knew very well the many embarrassments which a leader has often to encounter on account of his followers. He was, therefore, averse to having about him a crowd of men of ordinary calibre. He endeavoured, during his journey to Iraq and stay at Karbala, and even on the 10th of Moharrum, and on all other possible occasions, that all those who suffered even from the slightest weakness, should part company with him. And, indeed, for the fulfilment of an object as important as he had in view, he could not depend upon the common run of people.

The kind of confrontation which Husain contemplated was one which could not be understood by those who took only a superficial view of things, for in all earlier battles, the object had been to defeat the adversary of the material plane. This object is not last even if a hundred out of a thousand warriors persevere in the fight and achieve success on account of their valour. Husain, however, did not propose to oppose might with might, but to oppose it with strength of character, to confront false-hood with truth and to face oppression with resolution. He had to awaken, with the shedding of his blood, a world which had been lulled into a stupor of the senses. He desired to present to the world such models of character and deed as would stand out as the guiding lights for their contemporaries and succeding generations. This was, indeed, an undertaking as delicate as it was difficult and the question of selecting his companions, therefore, acquired unusual importance.

Husain could, therefore, select as his companions only the pick of the devout, abstemious and God-fearing men of Arabia. He took with him some old men whose life had been devoted to prayers, for the stepping of such men alone into the battle field, ready to fight it out to the bitter end, could possibly open the eyes of the Muslims, and force them to ponder the plight to which Islam had been reduced.

The immense prestige which those associated with Husain enjoyed in the country, exerted great influence not only on those Muslims who were unbiassed or nautral, but even on members of Yazid's forces who were impelled by avarice and ambition or were bound to follow blindly the orders of the powers that be. Quite a few instance of such upsettings influence on the enemy's troops may be cited. After the assassination of Muslim b. Ausajah, when the armies of Yazid were found making merry over the event, Shees b. Rabii exlaimed, " What a pity ! A man like Muslim b. Ausajah is killed and indulge in expressions of happiness. I have myself witnessed the feats he performed in the cause of islam. " When Burair Hamadani was busy fighting, and a man emerged from Yazid's army to attack him, other in the army dissuaded him, saying, " He is Burair who knows the Quran by heart. He used to instruct disciples in the mosque to learn the Quran by heart. " Cr when Aabis b. Abi Shabeeb entered the field of battle, the cry went up from the hostile army, " He is a lion of lions. He is Aabis b. Abi Shabeeb. "

Obviously traditions like these have been transmitted to us by those who could not have been keen to add to the credit and glory of Husain and his companions. And not many such anecdotes might have been reported. However, these stories succeed in bringing home to us pointedly the awe which the crusaders in the cause of Husain inspired in the hearts of the armies of the enemy. The participation of such friends was necessary to show the true nature of the battle of Karbala. If Husain had gone to Karbala with the members of his family alone, it might have been said, as is generally sought to be made out, that the battle was a family fued between two branches of the same family– the Hashimites and the Omayyads, who were perpetually at war with each other. But Husain had with him eminent and distinguished persons drawn from almost all the tribes and places of Arabia, the common and uniting factor among whom could have been no other than respect for principles and religious duty.

The importance of this common principle and object was thrown into the greatest prominence by Husain's pressing everyone of his compa-

nions to part company with him, and leave him alone to confront the enemy. Husain adopted this method since the general run of mankind is fickle in its opinions, and it is the opinion of the leaders which ultimately prevails. If Husain had not been at pains to make every one of his companions fully aware of the true significance of the circumstances then prevailing, the entire episode of Karbala would have been considered to have been Husain's enterprise and performance, others having cooperated with him only on account of his influence and authority. Husain, however, desired that everybody should be made to think for himself, and be impelled into action out of his own choice, and take full responsibility for his acts. It was not a case of Husain presenting all these men as sacrifices for the achievement of his objects, but in veritable truth, everyone of these men, out of his free volition, sacrificed himself for the objects which Husain had in view. The stimulii for their acts, individually and jointly, were provided by the voice of everybody's own conscience, and this was in fact the major reason for their constancy and determination.

CHAPTER—XXVIII

THE SACRIFICES OFFERED BY THE RELATIONS OF HUSAIN THE HASHIMITES

After all friends of Husain had achieved martyrdom, the turn arrived for the Hashimites, that is, his relations to offer their sacrifices. It is a rare tribute to the devotion and loyalty of Husain's associates that so long as even one of them remained alive, not even one of the Hashimites was suffered to come to any harm, although it was a losing battle in which Husain's companions were engaged amidst a shower of arrows.

An Account of the martyrdom of Husain's sons, brothers, and nephews follows in chronological order.

(1) ALI AKBAR

Ali Akbar was a son of Husain and the first among the Hashimite martyrs.[1] His mother, Laila was a daughter of Abi Murra b. Marwa b. Masood b. Ma'bad Saqafi, and her mother was Maimoona, daughter of Abi Sufyan b. Harb. Ali Akbar was, accordingly, a Hashimite on his father's side, and related to the tribe of Bani Saqeef on his mother's side. His mother was a daughter of a sister of Muawiya b. Abi Sufyan, ruler of Syria, and a cousin of Yazid. Ali Akbar was therefore, held in high esteem by friend and foe alike and was talked about in the court of the ruler of Syria. Once Muawiya asked his courtiers to name whom they thought to be best entitled to the caliphate. They complimented Muawiya by replying that he had the best claim to that office. Muawiya, however, contradicted them saying that the most rightful person for the caliphate was Ali b. Husain whos grandfather was the prophet as in him combined the bravery of the Hashimites, the liberality of the Ummayyads and the self-esteem of the tribe of Saqeef.

Some contemporary Ummayyad poets composed verses in his praise Abu Obaida and Khalaf Ahmad, two important men of letters, have quoted verses composed to eulogise Ali Akbar.

It is just possible that the Ummayyad politicians had high hopes of him, and by emphasising the qualities which he was supposed to have inherited from his mother's side, and lauding his character and achieve-

1. Tabari, Vol VI p. 256, Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal P. 254

ments, they wished to awaken in him a feeling of possessing, among the Hashimites, a personality and status distinguised from those of the rest of them, in order to sow the seeds of discord among the descendants of Hashim.

If there had been a weak-minded person in place of Ali Akbar, he might have fallen a prey to these intrigues of the politicians, but a high-souled and pure minded person like him could not be taken in by these machinations. Never once did he design to have anything to do with such base considerations and put an abiding seal on the utter discomfiture of such Ummayyad designs with his blood by laying down his life for Fatima's son. His mother, Laila, by patiently putting up with all the soul-consuming calamities which befell her with other members of the prophets household, exhibited such complete unity of heart and identity of purpose with them that it puts a strain on one's feelings to learn about the truth that she was very closely related to the Umayyads.

Ali Akbar took after the prophet both in his features and behaviour, bearing him a very pronounced facial resemblance. He was for this reason, especially dear to Husain.

According to Sheikh Mufid, Ali Akbar was 19 years of age when the tragedy of Karbala unfolded itself. He was unmatched in beauty and grace, [1] and was called Ali Akbar because he was older than his brother Ali Asghar, who was martyred at Karbala. He was, however, younger than his brother, Zain ul Abidin. Husain had gifted his horse, Lahiq, to him at Karbala. [2]

When all friends of Husain had paid with their lives for their devotion to him, Ali Akbar was the first of his relatives to have requested him for permission to participate in the jehad. [3] Husain did not hesitate in giving him the leave asked for, but the fact was that he was very deeply moved. Raising his hands towards the sky and invoking the Almighty, he said, " God ! Be my witness of the oppression of these men towards whom now goes that handsome youth who most of all resembles Thy prophet in looks and deportment. When we longed to see Thy prophet, we used to look at his face. " It is obvious that this brief prayer as completely expressed that untold anguish which at the moment must have been felt by Husain as it faithfully manifested the elevation of his mind

1. Irshad, p. 253
2. Tabari, Vol VI p. 242
3. Irshad, p. 253

and his restraint. The poignancy of the situation must have been aggravated by the fact that Husain was parting with the likeness of his grandfather. His words, " now goes that handsome youth " conveyed by implication his consent to Ali Akbar to engage in the fight, and the meaning was not lost upon his son who left for the battle field, reciting verses, signifying, " I am Ali b. Husain b. Ali by the God of Ka'ba. we have the best claim to succed his prophet. By God, the progeny of one born in adultery cannot decide matters about us. " [1] These words were different from those commonly used on such occasions when warriors were generally apt to proclaim their bravery or rededication to the cause dear to them. The words used by Ali Akbar had an evangelistic purpose and briefly underlined his relationship with and right of succession to the prophet, the infamous origin of his adversery, and the refusal to submit to him. It was, indeed an announcement of the objectives for which Husain had decided to fight.

Ali Akbar attacked the enemy several times, [2] repeating the words already mentioned all the time. Although profusely and seriously wounded, he persisted in taking the offensive. A soldier in the hostile army, Murra b. Munfid b. No'man Abdi told his associates, " If this youth attacks again and rides towards me, I shall certainly make his father mourn his loss." When Ali Akbar was attacking the enemy with his sword Murra got his opportunity and struck Ali Akbar with his lance in the chest so forcefully that it pierced his body and the victim fell down to the ground and was surrounded on all sides by enemies who cut his body to pieces.

Ali Akbar's death was naturally a great catastrophe for Husain who exclaimed, " May God destroy the men who killed thee, my son. [2] How impudent these men have grown towards God and His prophet. Life after thee is as worthless as dust. " [3] He then called upon the young men among the Hashimites to raise the body of Ali Akbar, their brother, and it was placed before the tent which was treated as the central station of Husain's army.[4]

1. Tabari Vol VI p. 256, Irshad, p 253
2 Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 254, Tabari Vol VI p. 256
3. Tabari Vol VI p. 256, Irshad p. 254
4. Tabari Vol VI p. 256

(2) ABDULLAH b. MUSLIM b. AQIL

Abdullah's mother was Ruqaiyya, daughter of Ali b. Abi Talib by Umm-i-Habib, daughter of Ebad b. Rabia b. Yayha b. Alqama Taghlabia. Ali had purchased her from amongst the prisoners of the war of Yamama or Ain-ut-Tamar. Abdullah was. therefofe, a son of Husain's cousin and also his sister's son.

Husain had been deeply touched by the death of Muslim b. Aqil and on the night of the 10th of Muharrum, speaking to a gathering of his friends, he concluded by saying to Aqil's descendants in particular, " Muslim's death is sufficient for you. You may go away and I permit you to do so. " They all, however, replied with one voice, " This is impossible, we shall also sacrifice our lives for you." [1]

The first Martyr at Karbala from amongst Aqil's progeny was Abdullah who appears to have been very young at the time. The loud lamentation that followed Ali Akbar's death so agitated and confounded young children that they went out of the tent, giving an opportunity to Amr b. Sabih Sadaee to shoot an arrow towards Abdullah[2] who put his hand over his forehead to ward off the bolt. The dart pierced his hand and forehead both and a second dart pierced his chest and killed him[3] Another version is that a heartless soldier attacked him with a spear and killed him. [4]

(3) MOHAMMAD b. MUSLIM b. AQIL

Mohammad was a brother of Abdullah by a different mother, a slave-girt, according to Ibne Jauzi. After Abdulla's death, Aqil's descendants made a concerted attack upon the enemy and Husain exhorted them saying, " Sons of my uncle, triumph over death. " Mohammad b. Muslim was killed by Marham Azdi and Laqeet b. Ayas Jehni.

(4) JAFAR b. AQIL

Jafar engaged in the fight after Abdullah's death and recited verses meaning, " I am a resident of Mecca and belong to the family of Talib, the stock of Hashim and the house of Ghalib. Assuredly we are the leaders

1. Irshad, p. 254
2. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 254
3. Tabari Vol, VI, p. 256; Irshad p. 252
4. Irshad p. 253

of all tribes, and Husain is the purest of pure men." He was killed with an arrow shot by Abdullah b. Urwa Khasami.[1]

(5) ABDUR RAHMAN b. AQIL

He came to the field of battle and recited the usual war verses, getting killed by Usman b. Khalid Jehni and Bushr b. Khoot Hamadani.[2] Another report has it that an arrow shot by Abdullah b. Urwa Khas'ami killed him.[3]

(6) MOHAMMAD b. ABI SAEED b. AQIL

He fought in the battle of Karbala and was mortally wounded in his forehead with an arrow shot by Laqeet b. Yashir Jehni.

(7) MOHAMMAD b. ABDULLAH b. JA'FAR b. ABI TALIB

He was a son of Husain's uncle's son. His mother was Khoosa, daughter of Hafsa b. Saqeef, and she belonged to the tribe of Bakr b. Wael. Mohammad and his brother, Aun, who was a son of Zainab, daughter of Ali, had been sent by their father, Abdullah b. Ja'far and they joined Husain on his way to Iraq shortly after he had left Mecca. He entered the battle-field after Abdur Rahman b. Aqil and was killed by Aamir b. Nahshal Tameemi.[4]

(8) AUN b. ABDULLAH b. JA'FAR

He was a son of Zainab, daughter of Ali, and was, therefore, a son of Husain's full sister. He engaged in the battle of Karbala after his brother Mohammad and was killed by Abdullah b. Qatba Taee.[5]

(9) QASIM b. al HASAN

Qasim was a son of Husain's elder brother, Hasan, and was still a minor when the battle of Karbala took place. He was so beautiful that a soldier of the enemy described his appearance in the battle-field as the glimpse of a bit of the moon. He was not wearing a coat of mail when he came to fight, and the strap of one of his shoes was broken,[6] which

1. Tabari, Vol VI p. 256
2. Ibid
3. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 254
4. Tabari, Vol VI, p. 256, Irshad p. 253
5. Ibid
6. Ibid

clearly indicated that he had not been armed for the battle and had gone out to fight in his eagerness to help Husain.

When Omar b. Sa'd b. Nafeel Azdi saw Qasim he said he would kill the lad. He did not listen to those who tried to dissuade him from his purpose and dealt a blow at Qasim's head with his sword Qasim fell down from his horse and called out to his uncle for help. Husain rushed to his rescue like a furious lion and reached near him. Finding Qasim's assassin hard by, Husain severed his forearm from near his elbow with a blow of his sword. The hostile army charged at Husain to save Omar but they did so in such disorderly a manner that the assassin was trampled to death by the horses of his rescuers.

The crowd having despersed, Husain stood near Qasim's head, struck with inexpressible misery and sorrow. He said, "it is very hard upon your uncle that being summoned by you, he should be unable to look after you and be unable to be of help to you after responding to your call. "Husain then lifted Qasim's dead body, his breast against Qasim's breast and the latter's feet dragging along the ground. He put Qusim s dead body where those of Ali Akbar and his other relatives had been kept.[1]

(10) ABU BAKR b, al HASAN

He was a son of Hasan by Umme Ishaq, daughter of Talha Tamimi. An arrow shot by Abdullah b. Apba Ghanavi killed him.[2]

(11) MOHAMMAD b. ALI b. ABI TALIB

He was a son of Ali b. Abi Talib, younger then Mohammad b. Hanafia, and was, therefore, known as Mohammad Asghar. According to one report, his mother was Asma, daughter of Omais Khas'amia ; according to another version, she was a slave-girl,[3] and according to a third tradition, she was Laila, daughter of Masood Darmia.[4] After Ali's death, he remained with his brother Hasan and after Hasan, with Husain. On the 10th of Moharrum he participated in the jehad at Karbala, dispatching many men of the enemy. At last a man of the tribe of Bani Aban b. Darim killed him with an arrow shot at him. The assassin severed his head from

1. Tabari, Vol VI, p. 256; Irshad, p. 254.
2. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal, p. 354; Iashad p. 254
3. Tabari Vol. VI; p. 89
4. Irshad, p. 189

his body and took it to Omar Sa'd.[1]

(12) ABDULLAH b ALI. Abdullah's mother was Ummul Banin Fatma, daughter of Abul Ajl b. Hizam b. Khalid b. Rabia b. al Waleed b. Ka'b b. Aamir b. Klaab.[2] Ali had desired his brother, Aqil, who was fully conversant with the geneologies of the Arabs, to suggest for him a consort who might belong to the family of eminently brave men among the Arabs, so that the issues by her may also be very brave and warlike. Aqil suggested that he should marry Ummul Banin al Kalabia whose father and grand father were men of valour.

Malaib ul Asna, Abu Bara, Tufail Fars Qarzil and Aamir b Tufail, great war heroes among the Arabs, had been among her ancestors.

Labid b. Rabia, an author of one of the panegyrics (qasidas), hung at the Kaaba, also belonged to her family, and had expressed his pride in the special distinctions of his family before the full court of Noman b. Munzir, King of Hira, in the following words .

نحن بنو ام البنين الاربعه ونحن خير عامر بن صعصعه
الضاربون الهام وسط المجمعه

His voice had been heard in silence by the representatives of all the Arab tirbes, which meant that even in earlier times there had been in the family a famous lady, called Ummul Banin who had four sons all enjoying great fame.

Ali had four sons by Ummul Banin (1) Abul Fazl-il Abbas, the eldest, (2) Abdullah (3) Osman and (4) Ja'far, the youngest.

Abdullah b. Abil Mahl b. Hizam b Khalid b. Rabia b. Aamirul Waheed a nephew of Ummul Banin, one of the notables of Kufa, happened to be present in the court of Obaidullah b. Ziyad when Shimr left for Karbala with the latter's missive. He requested Obaidullah to write a note of safety for the sons of a lady of his family who were with Husain. The request was granted and Obaidullah gave a letter giving security to Abbas and his brothers and it was sent by Abdullah to Karbala through Karnaan, his slave, who delivered it to the four brothers, adding that it had been obtained for them by their maternal cousin. They, however, with one voice, asked Karnaan to give their greetings to their cousin and tell him

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 267
2. Opcit p.p. 89 and 236

that they did not stand in need of quarter given by Ibne Ziyad, the security given by God being more than sufficient for them.[1] Shimr Zil Jaushan himself belonged to this family i. e. the descendants of Waheed Kalabi of the stock of Aamir b. Sa'sa'a, and therefore, the first thing he did on getting to Karbala, after delivering Ibne Ziyad's letter to Omar Sa'd was to go to the band of Husain's supporters and call out, "where are the sons of my sister?" Hearing this, Abbas and his brothers came forward and asked him what he had to tell them. He said, "You are given quartar," These crusaders burst forth, "A plague be upon thee and the quarter thou hast brought! Quarter for us, and not for the prophet's son,!"[2]

On the 10th Moharrum, everyone from amongst the associates and relatives of Husain endeavoured to sacrifice in his lifetime for Husain all his nearest and dearest parsons. Accordingly, Abbas also sent his brothers one by one to fight before he went to engage in the battle, saying, "Go and sacrifice yourself for your master,[3] so that I should see you dying before my own eyes to equip myself the better for the life hereafter for you have no offspring."[4] Abbas meant to say to his brothers that if they hed any issues fit for the combat, they would have awaited their death in the combat before going out to the battle themselves, Accordingly, Abdullah who was the eldest brother after Abbas went to the battle-field to fight and after a fierce fight he met his death at the hands of Hani b. Sabeet.[5]

(13) OSMAN b. ALI

He was the second brother of Abbas. At his birth, Ali named him Osman after the name of Osman b. Mazoon, a high-ranking companion of the prophet who died during the prophet's lifetime and was buried in Jannat ul Baqi at the prophet's instance.

Abbas sent him to the battle-field after Abdulah. He fought there and at length he fell down wounded by an arrow shot by Khooli b. Yazid Asbahi, and a man of the Bani Aban b. Darim severed his head from his body.[6]

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 236
2. Tabari, Vol. Vi, p. 237; Irshad p. 242
3. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 255 4. Irshad. p. 255
5. Tabari Vol. VI, p 257; Irshad p.p. 255, Daniwari gives Saweed as the name of Hanis father on p. 255 of the Al Akhbar ut Tawal.
6. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 257; Irshad p. 255

(14) JA'FAR b. ALI

He was the youngest of Ummul Banin's sons After Osman's martyrdom Abbas said to him. 'Go, let me put up with the grief of your death as I have endured the misery of the deaths of your two brothers, as none of you has issues.

Accordingly Ja'far also waged the holy war and was in the end killed at the hands of Hani b. Sabeet Hazrami.[1] According to one account Jafar was martyred after Abdullah and Osman after Ja'far.[2]

(15) ABUL FAZLIL ABBAS b ALI

The distinction of the famliy of his mother, Ummul Banin has been described earlier.

Abbas was born in 26 A H. and grew up to be 14 years in age under the fostering care of his father. After Ali's martyrdom in 40 A. H., he was looked after by his brother, Hasan till 50 A.H. when the latter died of poison. Abbas spent the remaining period of his life till the 10th of Moharrum 61 A'H. in Husain's company. He was 34 years of age at the time of the tragedy of Karbala.

Abbas was noted for his beauty and grace, strength and valour, and was know as the "full moon of the Bani Hashim" He was so tall that although he rode a horse with two stirrups, his feet used to leave marks on the earth.

Imam Ja'far-i-Sadiq said of him, "my uncle, Abbas, was very devoted to his faith and perfect in his belief He performed many conspicuous deeds at Karbala in assisting Husain and at last achieved martyrdom."

After the army of enemy had obtained control over the river, Abbas was deputed to bring water from it for the children in Husain's company who were overwhelmed with thirst. Husain had sent 30 horse and 20 foot with Abbas, and they carried 20 Water-bags. Upon the party's approach to the river, Amr b. Hajjaj put up a stiff resistance. Abbas encountered him with his horsemen, and directed the men of the infantry to fill up their water-bags quickly. Under Abbas's leadership water was brought to Husain's camp. It was on account of this episode that Abbas earned the title of 'Saqqa" (Watercarrier).

1. ibid
2. Al-Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 255
3. Al Akhbar ut-Tawal p. 253

It was a great act of loyalty on the part of Abbas to spurn the written quarter given him by Ibne Ziyad. While it is true enough that all his brothers had joined him in this act. still since his brothers were bound to obey him, it must be conceded that Abbas's own surpassing firmness and faithfulness must have not a little contributed to the constancy of his brothers.

It was Abbas whom Husain deputed to find out the reason for the sudden assault made by Omar Sa'ds army on Husain's associates in the afternoon of the 9th of Moharrum.[1] This shows that Husain reposed great trust in the sobriety discretion, loyalty and valour of Abbas who managed to carry his point and win suspension of the hostilities for the night by the exercise of great restraint and sangfroid.

It will be recalled that when on the night preceding the 10th Moharrum, Husain told a gathering of his friends and relatives that he had freed all of them of their vows of loyalty to him, and that everyone of them might go wherever he liked and also take with him one of his relatives. Hearing this, Abbas was touched to the quick and was the first to express how strongly he felt in the matter, saying," Why should we do so? In order to live after you? Never! May God not spare us for that black day."[2]

When Husain arranged his small contingent in battle array, he conferred the rank of the standard-bearer to Abbas, in the morning of the 10th Moharrum. Abbas maintained the dignity and glory of the standard with valour and distinction, memorable in the history of the world.

In the field of battle, Abbas and Ali Akbar followed Husain like his shadow. When Husain mounted a camel and addressed the ranks of the enemy's army in order to give them the last arguments for desisting from their course, the ladies of his house broke into laments on hearing his voice. Husain asked Abbas and Ali Akbar to go and silence them that the occasion for crying would arrive later.

An unparalleled manifestation of Abbas's valour was presented when Omar b. Khalid Saidavi and three others, who had made a concerted attack upon the enemy vigorously plying their swords, were surrounded on all sides by their enemies and entirely isolated from the party of

1. Irshad p. 243
2. Opcit p. 244

Husain's associates. Noticing their predicament, Husain sent Abbas to their rescue and he so affectively used his sword unaided that the opposing army was thrown into disorder and Abbas succeeded in leading these men back to safety.

Abbas was the last of Husain's associates and relatives to be martyred. Daniwari has recorded that Abbas stood alone in front of Husain to protect him and to that and turned in any direction that Husain turned till he was Killed. Husain was then left alone.[1] Another account says that when Abbas had sacrificed his three brothers for Husain and no one was left who might fight on his side, Abbas requested for his leave to wage the war. Husain looked at his brother from head to foot in great misery and despondency and reminded him that he was the standard -bearer of his brother's contingent. Abbas then submitted that his patience had been wholly exhausted and that life had become an entirely unbearable. burden to him. Husain then said to Abbas, " As you are now going, would you care to obtain some water? , Abbas took a water-bag and proceeded towards the river. He was obstructed by the opposing forces and he launched an attack to carve a passage for himself to river. He succeeded in reaching the river and filled the water bag with water. Since he was himself exceedingly thirsty, he took a handful of water, and brought it near his lips as if to drink of it. He was, however, at once reminded of Husain's thirst and that of his children and he spilled the water. He emerged from the river carrying the water-bag on his shoulders and made for Husain's camp. The hostile army had been put to shame for avoiding to engage a single man in combat, and had now determined not to allow water to reach Husain. Abbas was, therefore, encircled on all sides, labouring, as he then was, under many handicaps. The water-bag on his shoulder prevented him from fighting freely. One of his hands was engaged in keeping Husain's banner aloft, but owing to his unexampled courage and bravery. Abbas started making vigorous attacks upon the enemy despite all the impediments. He was reciting verses meaning, " Let death shout out as many times as it may, I never get frightened of it before I am thrown on the earth in the shadow of swords. My name is Abbas; I shall carry the water-bag with me. Surely I shall carry it away and not care for death during the battle."

Hakim b. Tufail Sanbasi gave a blow with his Sword on Abbas's right hand. Longing to maintain the dignity of the standard more than to save his life, Abbas kept the standard from falling down. He supported it on his left shoulder and cried out, "Although you have severed my

1. Al Akhbar ut-tawal p. 255

right hand, do not think that I shall be unable to assist my faith. By God. I shall continue discharging this duty for eve.."

Zaid b. Warqa Jehni then struck his sword on Abba's left hand and severed it also. Abbas then tried to support the standard against his breast by stooping over the back of his horse. Just then a man of the tribe of Tamim gave a blow with his club on Abbas's head which Felled him to the ground and he cried out loudly, "Brother, come to my help."

Husain swooped towards the dead body of Abbas like a falcon and found him shattered with wounds, both his hands cut away from his body, his forehead fractured, one of his eyes pierced with an arrow and heaving the last gasp of death. Husain sat down near his head in great anguish and Abbas passed away. Getting up, H sain took his sword from its sheath and started chasing, the enemies right and left. When they fled before him, he cried out, "Where are you running away? Yoh have killed my brother. Where do you flee? You have broken my arms". He then went back and stood where he had stationed himself.

Upon a superficial view the order in which Husain sent his supporters to fight and die would appear to be contrary to expectations. Practical leadership should have counselled Husain to lead the men of his party to the battle-field, followed next by his relatives and last of all by his comanions not belonging to his family. This indeed, was the order noted by Ali in his Nahjui Balagha, to have been adopted by the prophet who used to keep the members of his household and other relations in the fore-front of battle on all occasions fraught with danger, using them to shield his companions. At Karbala the order was reversed: Husain's associates going to fight first, followed by his relatives, and last of all went Husain to the field of battle. A close examination of the matter would reveal that there was a radical difference between the nature of battle at Karbala and other wars. On all other occasions, it was certain that some of the combatants would remain safe and alive at the conclusion of the engagement. It was, therefore, attempted that most hazardous situations should be met by the prophet's relatives, and that the others should be among the least exposed to risk. At Karbala on the 10th Moharrum, however there was left no manner of doubt that every member of Husain's party must die, and none of them would survive. So far as keeping his men from danger was concerned, a vigorous endeavour hed been made by Husain the preceding night, when he had

tried his best to persuade his supporters to leave him to his fate to face death alone, and not to imperil their lives. Every one of his relatives and associates had categorically refused to part company with him. Indeed they had emphatically declared that they were determined to sacrifice their livesfor Husain. The question no longer was who should get killed and whose life should be saved. The question that remained for resolution was much simpler. It was the order in which men of Husain's small band should offer the sacrifice of their lives. The charms of worldly existence had been discounted and spurned much earlier, and everybody had before him the indubitable prospect of death, and death alone. The circumstances at Karbala were, obviously enough, such that the passage of every minute made the trial of Husain's warriors increasingly arduous. The supply of water in the burning weather had already been stopped for Husain's faithful supporters and as the day advanced and grew brighter, the sun burned hotter, so that the torments of thirst gained in severity from moment to moment. Faced with the unequal fight against the overwhelming numbers of the enemy, and the anguish of eternal parting with friends and relatives, every postponement of death, every thing that made for delay in meeting the end, only added to the poignancy of the ordeal of Husain's warriors.

While Husain could well have reposed any amount of confidence in the constancy and faithfulness of his friends and relatives he did not consider it fair to leave them to confront trials and tribulations so severe as to put avoidable strain on their powers of endurance. It was, therefore, only natural that he should have decided about sending them to battle in the order thar he did, in the full knowledge of their, and his own powers of endurance.

In reality it would have been quite simple for Husain to offer the, sacrifice of his own life first of all in the path of the truth. In that case, however, his sacrifice would have amounted to no more than the sacrifice of his own life, and would have ranked on higher than the sacrifice, by any martyr, in the way of truth, of his own life, e. g., the sacrifice, according to the Christians of Christ, said to have been crucified for propagating true faith, or that of Socrates who had to take poison in defence of his principles. It would have posed no problem to Husain to sacrifice his life, since he was a son of the father who had observed, "It is immaterial whether death overtakes me or I overtake," death, and " I am more familiar with death than an infant is with its mother's breast " He belonged to a family of which the youth held death to be sweeter than honey. Indeed

all the brave ones amongst the Arabs in those times considered death encountered in the shadow of swords to be a matter of pride.

The special distinction and significance which attaches to Husain's martyrdom stem from the fact that he sacrificed everyone of his associates, relatives and friends, before his own eyes. To part with one's comrades one by one, for ever, to see one's nephews dying before one's eyes, to witness one's grown-up son suffering the rigours of death on the bare earth, and one's young faithful brothers fall into the parpetual slumber of death were, indeed' calamities of which every one was more unbearable to everyone than one's own death. Husain's crowning feat was not that he sacrificed his life in the caues of truth at the appropriate time and oppertunity; his greatest exploit was that for the pleasure of his God, he sacrificed, one after another, persons who were dearer to him than his own existence and that he kept himself from offering the sacrifice of his own life till he had gone through all these harrowing experiences.

Nobody alse seems to have attained to this towaring degree of patience and fortitude. Could such elevation of soul be, in reason, expected by Husain of anybody whom he should have left to die after him?

(16) THE SUCKING

After all friends and relatives of Husain had been put to death, his enemies might have thought that his patience had been tried to its limits as, indeed, the violence exercised against him had crossed all bounds. Another act of revolting oppression, however, had remained uncommitted by Husain's enemies, and he had yet to present a sacrifice so telling in its significance that all human beings, without distinction creed or clime, would pronounce the perpetration of the crime as devoid of all vestiges of humanity.

The suckling, Abdullah,[1] better known as Ali Asghar, born of Rabab, daughter of Amraul Qais b. Adi Kalabi and a full brother of Sakina, daughter of Husain,[2] was held by Husain in his hands when an arrow flung by a man of the tribe of Bani Asad[3] Killed him while still in his Father's hands.[4]

According to another report Husain raised the infant on his hands to beg water for it when, at Omar Sa'd's bidding Hurmula b, Kahil Asadi made him the target of his arrow.

1' Tabari, Vol. VI p. 257, Irshad 269 2. Irshad, p, 269
3. Tabari, Vol, VI, p. 257, Irshad p. 254, Al Akhbar ut-Tawal p. 255
4, Tabari Vol. VI, p. 220

CHAPTER XXIX

THE LAST JEHAD AND MARTYRDOM OF HUSAIN

Husain's companions had left him one after another and been slain. His relatives also had parted company with him and gone to die. His son, nephews and brothers had been put to death. While thus surrounded with death and destruction, Husain had not yet fought in a manner and on a scale to be appropriately called his fight. One deceived by appearances might have been misled into thinking that Husain wanted the spirits to fight, that he did not possess the ardour to take recourse to arms. In truth, Husain's combat would indeed have been undoubtedly spectacular if there been with him Abbas and Ali Akbar to display their feats of might and valour and his associates to defend him. The scene would then have been altogether different. Husain had, however, suffered them to leave him to embrace death and had not engaged in war in their company. Now that the heat of the sun had oppressed him the livelong day and the untold shock of being for ever separated from his friends and relatives had complete by broken his heart, and the strength of his body had been drained by the death of Abbas and his eyesight had been dimmed by the death of Ali Akbar, could this old warrior, no less than 57 years of age, be expected to bring his sword into effective action in a life-and-death struggle? Apart, however, from undauntedly passing through all the arduous stages of the trial of his patience, Husain had, at Karbala, also to demarcate the remotest bounds of carrying out one's duties. He had to safeguard the Islamic rules of law for whose vindication he had entered upon the war. Knowing that surrendering oneself to one's enemies was against the Islamic canon which required that everything possible should be done to defend oneself, Husain carried out this duty according to these rules in circumstances in which no other man could have done so.

After Ali Asghar's death only one thing had remained for Husain to do, and that was easy enough. Indeed Husain had himself made that last act more and more difficult of achievement. Now that all the hardships had been overcome and all the intervening obstacles in the path of the achievement of the goal of his activities had been got over, and when obstensibly and obstensibly only, nobody was more broken-hearted than Husain; in reality nobody had better reason to be happier

than him in the knowledge of his success. He had trodden that path with unmatched firmness of which the very thought might well have made the steps of all others to falter.

It would have been exceedingly easy for Husain at this stage to present his head to the enemy's sword after a nominal engagement. If he had not been a grandson of the prophet or a son of Ali, he would have suffered the enemy to severe his head from his body after a feeble resistance. For this was what he knew would necessarily happen later. But why not make the field of battle reflect, in some measure at least, the conditions that prevailed on the battle-fields of Badr, Ohad, Khandaq and Sitffin? Why should not a world that had forgotten Ali, be reminded of him? Why should a representation of the exploits of Hamza and Jafar not be exhibited before those who had not seen them? Thoughts like these might well have crossed Husain's mind at this juncture.

Now, indeed, had arrived the day when an opportunity had presented itself to Husain to prove the truth of his grand father's words that he had inherited his valour and generosity. While he had exhibited the prophet's open handedness on several occasions, the chance to display his valour had come only now. In truth, the prophet had in no battle taken the opportunity to physically participate in the jehad, sword in hand, since his supporters were always there at hand, to do the fighting. At Karbala Husain had also remained a true representation of his grandfather so long as even one warrior had remained with him to join the battle. Now that he had been left friendless, Husain showed the valour and bravery which would have been exhibited by his grandfather in battle, should occasion have demanded it of him.

He went to his tent to take his last leave and tore a Yamen sheet at several places and put it on below his other garments,[1] next to his body. This he did possibly to ensure that this rent and tattered covering might possibly left on his body when it was deprived of other garments after his death. He then left for the battle-field.

Woe-begone, broken-hearted, thirsty and famished as Husain was, history bears witness that when all by himself, sword in hand, he charged at the opposing forces, the feats of all earlier war herores came to be forgotten, a representation of Husian's bravery getting indelibly impressed upon the memory of the world.

1. Tabari. Vol, VI p. 240

This vastly unequal combat was quickly drawing to its conclusion, for a single man could not long sustain a fight with thousands of enemies, but the awe that Husain had inspired in the hearts of his foes deprived everyone of them of the courage to meet him in combat. Noticing this mortifying demoralisation among the armies of Yazid, Shimr tried to put heart into them. He rearranged the ranks afresh, put the infantry in front of the cavalry and commanded the archers to rain arrows in the direction of Husain. So copiously were arrows showered on him that Husain's body resembled that of a porcupine.[1]

Shimr then exhorted his soldiers to put Husain to death, saying, "What are you doing there, standing and looking on? Kill Husain may your mothers sit in mourning for you."

Upon being thus put to shame, the innumerable hordes attacked Husain from all sides[2], and arrows, blows of swords and thrusts of spears rained upon him. His horse must have been considerably wounded in the attack and Husain dismounted. He, however, continued to attack his enemies even though he was now on foot.

During the jehad a time came when Husain put the entire army to flight and approached the river. Apprehending lest Husain's thirst should get quenched, Hasgen b. Tamim hit Husain's mouth with an arrow. Blood gushed out and Husain took it in one of his hands, threw it towards the sky and thanked God.[3]

In the meantime a detachment of Yazid's army proceeded under Shimr towards the tents of the ladies of Husain's family with intent to plunder them so as to make amends for the shame they had covered themselves with in having suffered a rout at Husain's hands. They took up a position between Husain, and the ladies' tents. Husain addressed the men of the army thus, "If you have no regard for religion and no idea of the world to come, still you should conduct yourself with your wonted national chivalry. I am still alive. Do not commit any trespass against my tents.' Shimr was ashamed of his proceedings and went back from the tents.[4]

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1. Irshad, p. 257
2. ibid
3. Tabari, Vol, p. 258
4. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 255

Shimr now surrounded Husain with his infantry who, however, were driven away from their positions in whichever direction Husain used to turn his face.[1] It was probably this which a soldier of the enemy's army had in mind when he said, "I have not seen any man who had been wounded, whose oppspring, relations and associates had all been put to the sword and who still appeared to be steady and unruffed and who confronted his enemies with such conspicuous courage and valour as Husain. Men of the infantry surrounded him on all sides, put whenever he charged at them with his sword, they used to flee to the right and the left as sheep are put to flight by a charging wolf "[2]

Husain was in the meantime repeating words which at once gave guidance and clearly foreshadowed the aftermath of the battle. "Remember that God would be exceedingly displeased if you put me to death. I swear that God would confer honour upon me if you put me to disgrace, and I shall be avenged in a manner which you would not have even imagined. Remember that after you have killed me, dissension would break out amongst yourselves. There would be civil wars and in the end your blood would also be shed. And then yours would be the punishment in the world to come which would be worse than your slaughter."[3]

Then powerful assaults were repeatedly made on Husain who fell down on the ground, profusely wounded, with no strength left even to stand up.

(17) ABDULLAH b. AL HASAN

He was a son of Hasan b. Ali, younger even than his brother. Qasim. His mother was Ummur Rabab, daughter of Amraul Qais, and a sister, named Rabab, of the mother of Sakina and Ali Asghar.

After Husain had fallen down, exhausted by the multiplicity of his wounds, Abdullah went out of the tent and proceeded towards Husain. Zainab, daughter of Ali tried to intercept him, but he forced himself free and went running towards his uncle. Bahr b. Ka'b b. Obaidullah Teemi was just then going to attack Husain with a sword. Abdullah reproved him saying, "Son of a corrupt woman, will thou kill my uncle. When

1. opcit, p. 259
1. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 259; Irshad p.p, 256-257
2. op. cit, p. 260

Bahr did not stay his hand, Abdullah tried to intercept the sword with his hand which was severed right up to the skin on the opposite side and his hand began to dangle. The spontaneous cry, "My mother" escaped Abdullah's lips. Husain pressed him to his breast saying, "Son; be patient at this calamity and wait to be rewarded for it, You are also about to meet your predecessors, the prophet, Ali b. Abi Talib, Hamza Jafar and Hasan. Husain was still saying this when Hurmula killed Abdullahwith an arrow he shot from his bow.

(18) HUSAIN'S MARTYRDOM

Husain survived fairly long after he had fallen down from his horse. He was bodily shattered and profusely wounded and there was ostensibly nothing between him and death but everybody tried to avoid partaking in the supremely heinous crime of doing him to death.[1] At length Shimr called out to his men "What are you now waiting for?' At this Malik b. Nasr Badi stepped forward and dealt a blow with his sword on Husain's head which pierced through his scalp[2] and finally the sword of Zaraa b. Shareek,[3] the spear of Sinan b. Uns[4] and the dagger of Shimr Zil Jaushan put an end to the life of that embodiment of righteousness, and the head of the martyr for truth, the martyr of mankind and martyr of the path of God, was raised on a spearhead.

It was on the 10th Moharrum 61 A. H. on a Friday that this momentous event in human history took place.

1. Irshad, p. 257; Al Akhbar ul Tawal, p. 255. 2 Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 250
2. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 235; Tabari p. 257
3. Al Akhbar ut Tawal. p. 255
4. Tabari, Vol. VI. p, 260; Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 258

CHAPTER XXX

AFTER HUSAIN'S MARTYRDOM

Even after all of his supporters and kith and kin and Husain himself had been martyred, the outrageous oppressions perpetrated against him did not cease; his dead body was robbed of the garments he had worn last. Ishaq b. Hiva Hazrami took his shirt, Bahr b. Ka'b took his undergarments'[1] Ahnas b. Mursid took his turban, a man of the Bani Darim took his word[2] and Qais b, Ahnas took his qatifa, (Yamen sheet), which gave him the name of "Qais qatifa"[3] at Kufa. The armies of Yazid then pillaged the tents occupied by the ladies of Husain's family and deprived the ladies of all their belongings[4], snatching even sheets from their heads.[5] The tents were then set ablaze and Omar Sa'd called out to his soldiers to enquire who among them were prepared to trample Husain's dead body under the hoofs of horses. Ten men volunteered to perform this act of infamous tyranny and persecution, and carried it out.[6] Husain's severed head was the first to be despatched to Obaidullah b. Ziyad In the custody of Khoali b. Yazid Asbahi.[7] The heads of some other martyrs were also sent to him with Shimr Zil Jaushan, Qais b. Asha's as, Amr b. Hajjaj and Azra b. Qais.[8]

Among Husain's survivors were only an ailing son. Ali b. Husain. some ladies who observed purdah and some children. They passed the night in the open plain where the battle had raged during the day.

On 11th Moharrum Omar Sa'd collected the dead bodies of the men of his army and having said the funeral prayers for them, buried

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1. Tabari Vol VI p. 259
2. Irshad p 257
3. Tabari Vol. VI, p 260, Kitab ul Baladan, p. 172
4. Where the name of the man's given as Abdur Rahman b. Ashas
4. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 256
5. Tabari, Vol. VI p. 260
6. I bid, p.p. 261-262, Irshad p. 259
7. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 256
8. Irshad p 258

them,[1] leaving those of the martyrs in the cause of truth uncared for. At the approach of the evening, he took with him members of the prophet's house-hold as prisoners and proceeded to Kufa. The heads of the remaining martyrs where also raised on spearheads and carried away.[2]

After Yazid's armies had departed from Karbala, the headless bodies of the martyrs were buried by the tribe of Bani Asad, residing at a small distance from Karbala.[3] Husain is said to have been buried where his grave now lies. Ali Akbar was buried towards his feet. Abbas was buried near the Euphrates on the way to Ghazirya, where he was martyred, Husain's friends and other relatives were buried in a common grave and it is not possible now to find out the exact place of the burial of every one of them. We only know that they all lie buried around Husain's grave and that the compound of Husain's mausoleum contains their tombs.[4]

When the heads of the martyrs reached Kufa, they were presented by Shimr to Obaidullah b. Ziyad[5] who had the insolence to strike Husain's lips and teeth with a cane stick. Zaid b. Arqam, a companion of the prophet, could not tolerate this impludence and exploded, "Have done, these are the lips and teeth which I have seen the prophet kissing with his lips. "He then started crying, Obaidullah said to him, "If you had not lost your wits on account of your old age, I would have forthwith ordered that your head be chopped off". Zaid got up and left cursing Obaidullah b. Ziyad and the Muslims for accepting him as their ruler.[6]

The plundered caravan of the members of the prophet's household was wending its gloomy way towards Kufa, the erstwhile seat of the government of Ali b. Abi Talib, where his daughters, Zainab and Kulsoom had lived as princesses, It had not yet entered the town when the ruler of the town proclaimed that nobody should stir out of his house with arms or move on the streets of Kufa carrying arms. Guards on foot and mounted on horses were also posted at a number of points on account of some special apprehension. Some of the spectators were aware of

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p.
2. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 256
3. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 260, Irshad p. 258; Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 257
4. Irshad, p. 265
5. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 257
6. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 257, Tabari Vol. VI, p. 262

a rhymist." Considering it inappropriate to keep silent. Zainab returned the answer, What has a woman to do with poetry and rhyming. I am in no condition to think of rhyming. It was the voice of my heart which escaped my lips."[1]

Obaidullah then turned to Husain's aillng son to ask his name.

"What is your name?"

"Ali b. Husain",

"Has God not put Ali b. Husain to death?"

Receiving no reply, asked?"

"Why do you not speak?"

"The name of one of my brothers was also

"Ali b, Husain and he was killed by men."

"No, God put him to death,"

" (a Quranic verse الله يتوفى الانفس حين موتها

meaning, "It is God who witholds the spirit at the time of death)" That however, was a different matter,"

"He is not a youthful lad. He thinks maturaly. Take him away and kill him as well."

Hearing this Zainab rushed towards her nephew and clung to him asking to be put to death with him. This anguished restlessness of Zainab made the cruel tyrant to relent and ordered Ali b. Husain to be spared so as to take the woman away with him.[2] The sick young man who would triumph over death said with great composure,

> "Son of Ziyad do you try to cow me down with the threat of death? Do you not know that it is our way to get slain and that martyrdom is our distinction?"

This dignfied reply reverberated in the hall of audience of Obaidullah b, Ziyad. and was listened to with awe by everybody. Obaidullah felt greatly ashamed, and dismissed the Court. He directed that the prisoners be kept in captivity till the return of his emissary from Damascus where he had sent a gratulatory message. He then ordered that all

1, Op. cit, p 263; Irshad p. 259

1. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 263

residents of Kufa should assemble in the principal mosque of the town where, ascending the pulpit, he publicly announced his victory:

الحمد لله الذی ظهر الحق و اهله و نصر امیر
المومنین یزید بن معاویة و حزبه و قتل الحسین بن علی و شیعته

and followed it up with the most disparaging references to Ali b. Abi Talib and Husain. Hearing this, stood up Abdullah b. Afif, a Shia of Ali, who had lost his left eye in the 'battle of the camel' while fighting for Ali, and his left eye in the bettie of Siffin, fighting again on Ali,s side, It was his routine to repair to the principal mosque in the morning, busy himself with prayers there all day and then retire to his house. Contradicting Obaidullah b. Ziyad, he said, "Son of Marjana! You are a liar as was your father, the man who made you a ruler and his father, Son of Marjana! You have the arrogance to speak like truthful men after you have slain the prophet's progeny. "Flying into a rage, Obaidullah b. Ziyad ordered the soldiers to arrest Abdullah b. Afif who called out to the men of his tribe for help. Seven hundred warriors of Abdullah's tribe were present at Kufa at the time, and some brave men amongst them arrived to help Abdullah and freed him from the soldiers and took him to his house. Obaidullah b. Ziyed, however, managed to get him secretly arrested from his house the same night and he was pitilessly done to death. His body was impaled as a warning to others.[1]

Next day, Husain's head was paraded in the streets of Kufa and in the market and was taken round among all the tribes of that town at the bidding of Obaidullah b. Ziyad, and hung on the entrance to his palace. "[2]

When the prophets, progeny ware in the prison at Kufa, it was generally expected that Yazid would order all of them to be put to death. Somebody threw a stone into the prison one day with a message tied to it saying that a man had been sent to Yazid with a letter concerning them, and also mentioning the probable date of his return. The prisoners were forewarned that if they heard the call "Allah-o-Akbar" raised at an old hour, they should conclude that they had been ordered to be put to death, and that if they heard no such call, they should consider themselves safe. The call was never heard since Yazid had ordered the prisoners to be despatched to Damascus.[3]

1. Tabari, Vol, VI pp, 263-264; Irshad, p. 260
2. Irshad, p. 260
3. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 266

ladies better than all women and your stock is better than all stocks and cannot be disgraced or humiliated."

Zainab was followed by Fatima b. Husain Umme Kulsoom, daughter of Ali and Ali b. Husain (Zainul Abidin) in addressing the people. This opened the eyes of the men of Kufa, and spell of bluffing the people and keeping them in the dark about things, woven by the government of the day was shattered.

The influence of Husain's personality was so powerful that a man, who had taken Husain's head with him, went to the court of Obaidullah b. Ziyad, and described Husain's personal and family attributes in the following verses.

املأ ركابي فضة وذهبا فقد قتلت الملك المحببا
ومن لصلبي بقبلتين في النصا وخيرهم اذ يذكرون النسبا
قتلت خير الناس امًا وابا

meaning, "Fill the saddle of my camel with gold and silver, In order to please you, I have killed a great king, held high in esteem, who had in his youth said prayers facing both the qiblas, and was better than all the world both on his father's and mother's side. I have killed him who was better than all persons in the world," This was the voice of his conscience which unwittingly escaped his lips in complete oblivion of the damage it would cause to Umayyad politics. In the result, Obaidullah b. Ziyad flew into a passion and said, "If you esteemed them so highly, why did you participate in their slaughter? You should not expect any favour of me and I shall myself dispatch you to meet them, "Accordingly the man was put to death at once.

Obaidullah b. Ziyad directed Husain's survisors to attend his durbar. The members of the prophet's family were, therefore, made to stand as prisoners before him. In order to cause them pain, he commenced hitting Husain,s lips and teeth with a stick. Incensed at this insolence, Zaid b. Arqam, a companion of the prophet said, "These are the lips and teeth which the prophet used to Kiss. According to another report. Uns b, Malik was present in the court and seeing this imqudent behaviour, he started sobbing and weeping saying, "Husain most resembled the prophet.

1. Sahih Bukhari Vol. 2, p. 188

Zainab, daughter of Ali b. Abi Talib had put on a specially cheap and ordinary dress on this case and her maids surrounded her[1] Natural eminence and dignity, however, cannot be long concealed. Pointing towards Zainab, Obaidullah enquired, "Who is she? "He repeated the question thrice, but received no answer, At last one of the maids said, "She is Zainab, daughter of Fatima. "Upon hearing this, Obaibullah b. Ziyad, drunk with success and victory as he was, addressed her, saying, "God be thanked that He has humiliated you, Killed you, and exposed your falsehood."

The sentence as it had been worded comprehended much in its ambit, for in it was concealed the denial of the Quran, the traditions, prophethood, and the divine revelation. Zainab, therefore, did not consider it expedient to keep quiet. She returned the reply, "Praised be God who conferred honour upon us by sending amongst us Mohammad-i-Mustafa and declared us as pure as purity itself could wish. We are not what thou suggestest. Disgraced is one who is sinful and unchaste. The untruth is exposed of one who does not always have the truth as one's goal, Others and not we are such persons." If Obaidullah had even a touch of the sense of shame in his nature he ought to have felt abashed at receiving this answer, but in order to cause greater pain to Zainab, he remarked, "Have you seen what God has done to your brother and other relatives?" Touched to the quick as Zainab was by these words. She returned the sober reply, "I have seen that God has dealt with them only favourably. They were the chosen men of God whose destiny it was to attain the high rank of martyrs. They walked to the altar of sacrifice with their feet. The day is not far off when you would be confronted with them before God to answer for your misdeeds."[2]

Angered by this answer, Obaidullah b. Ziyad thought of applying the whip to Zainab, but he was dissuaded from doing so by Omar b. Hadees and others. He, however, said to her "God has fulfilled my heart's desire by destroying your refractory brother and your other recalcitrant and rebellous relatives. "These words hurt Zainab's heart, and bears welled up in her eyes. Controlling herself, she replied, "Yes, you have certainly put my kith and kin to death, lopped off my branches and pulled out my roots. If this satisfies your desires, please yourself with it. "Obaidullah remarked, "This woman is a great rhymester.; her father was a poet and

1. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 262, Irshad p. 259
2. Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 262

the real facts about the approaching caravan, others were not in the secret, and taking the government at its words, believed that a body of the enemies of Islam had been vanquished and that their captive women folk were approaching. Sahl Shahrzori had just then reached Kufa after performing the hajj, and finding the market decorated, most of spectators happy and some of them sorrowful, he enquired the facts of the situation of an old man who took him aside and tearfully acquainted him with the truth about the wiping out of the prophet's family in the following elegiac couplets:

الم تران الشمس اضحت مريضه بقتل الحسين والبلاد اضمحلت
وكانوا غياثا ثم اضحوا مرزيه لقد عظمت تلك الرزايا وجلت
وان قتيل الطف من آل هاشم اذل رقاب المسلمين وذلت

which means, "Have you not noticed that the sun has suffered an eclipse on account of Husain's slaughter and all populated sites have been plunged into grief, Alack, the members of the prophet's family who used to listen to the complaints of the people are now themselves in the grip of misfortune. In truth very great and severe were their hardships. Verily the death of the martyr of Karbala has thrown a collar of disgrace around the necks of the Muslims and they have been really humiliated,"

This elegy had not been concluded when the woebegone caravan of the members of the prophet's family entered the town with a fanfare of trumpets. The heads of the martyrs, raised on spearheads, led the procession, followed by the prisoners belonging to the prophet's family. A moman who had been witnessing this spectacle from the roof of her house asked the prisoners about the stock and tribe to which they belonged. Being told that the prisoners were the descendants of Mohammad she, and with her the entire throng of spectators, broke into loud wails and lamentations which rent the air.

Those who take a superficial view might be of the view that this scene spelled great disgrace for the members of the prophet's household. In reality, however, the cause which Husain had made his own was then being most effectively propagated, and the area of the appeal to truth and righteousness was being greatly extended.

On one side Husain's head raised on a spearhead, resplendent this forehead bearing the mark of having been put on the ground for years

and years in adoration of God, on the one hand, and the pure ladies of his family, their faces bereft of veils and heads deprived of sheets, standing embarrassed in the press of strangers, embodiments of feminine modesty, pictures of the flawless life of Mohammad, screened by are aura of grandeur and dignity from the public view, on the other hand, infused fresh life into the truth of which the effulgence rent asunder the covering layers of ignorance and error.

Even a heart of stone would have melted at the sight of the ravaged caravan of Mohammad's family friendlessly passing through Kufa. The women of the locality started sobbing and crying and Ali b, Husain in his weak, trembling voice told the people, "It is you who have shed our blood, and now your women shed tears at our misfortunes. God will decide between you and us." This aggravated the emotions of grief in the crowd and men and women all burst into tears, Ali b. Husain then asked them, "You lament the calamities which befell us. Who, then, has in the final analysis destroyed and killed us. "Bashir b. Hazeem Asadi says that at this stage Zainab daughter of Ali, turned towards the mulitude and started addressing it. He adds, "I have never seen a lady, who obeerved purdah, delivering such a forceful speech. It seemed quite as if her father, Ali b. Abi Talib, was speaking. She signed the people to keep quiet, and all sounds were hushed everywhere. She said, "Praise be to God and blessings and peace are specially meant for my vanerable father, Mohammad-i-Mustafa and his family. People of Kufa; Men of perfidy and imposture; You weep? May God never stop your tears. Let not the sounds of your lamentation be silenced. Are you truly weeping and screaming in lamentation? Really it is good for you that you should weep more and laugh less. Did you ever try to find out how you have rent the heart of God's prophet, exposed the respectable ladies of his family to the view of strangers and insulted them? Are you surprised that the sky shed tears. This is nothing compared to the punishment in the life to come which would indeed be very severe. There would then be nobody to help you. Do not be happy with this brief respite. God has no need to act in haste since He does not apprehend that He would miss the opportunity of punishing you. Undoutedly He will leave you to yourselves for a time". It has been reported that during this moving speech, tho whole audience, remained greatly agitated and people holding their fingers beween their teeth, were all crying. An old man was seen saying,"Let my parents be sacrificed for you, your old men are better than all old men in the world, your young men better than all other young men, your

Obaibullah b. Ziyad directed that Husain's head be raised on a spearhead and be taken round the city. He then entrusted the heads of the other martyrs to Zuhr b. Qais and some others and sent them to Damascus. With an iron collar round his neck followed the ailing Ali b. Husain on foot and the ladies mounted on camels, under the supervision of Mahzar b. Sa'laba Aedi and Shimr Zil Jaushan.[1]

In order to give publicity to the overthrow and collapse of the prophet's family and their own victory, the Umayyads selected for the journey of Husain's survivors, from Iraq to Damascus, a route on which lay the largest number of inhabited sites and townships. Throghout the journey, Zainul Abidin walked on foot silently, speaking not a word.[2] Expressions of sorrow and anger were voiced at many places at the humil ating manner in which Husain's survisors were being led about and signs of great excitement and displeasure were noticed on many occasions. After enduring countless hardships, Husain's survivors entered Damascus at daybreak. The bazars of the town had been specially trimmed and decked for the day, and the multitude of spectators was so great that it was not earlier than the afternoon that the caravan of the members of the prophet's family, weary and exhausted, reached Yazid's durbar.

When the caravan was in progress through the market place, Ibraim b. Talha b. Abdullah sarcastically asked Ali b. Husain, "Who achieved victory?" Ali b. Husain told him that he would learn about who had won and who had lost when he would repeat the 'azan' (call for prayers) or the iqamat, (words repeated to announced the actual commencement of prayers).

At the arrival of the members of the prophet's household near the gate of the mosque at Damascus as prisoners, an old man, seeing them, said "Praised be God for putting you to death, and banishing your men from countries and cities to restore the peace, and granting victory to the ruler of Muslims, Yazid, over you."

Ali b. Husain replied, "Respected old man have you ever read the verse قل لا اسئلكم عليه اجرا الا المودة فى القربى in the Quran?

(meaning, "Tell them, (Oprophet); Except love for my relatives, I do not ask of you any return for bringing to you the divine message")

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal 257, Tabari Vol. VI, p. 264, Irshad p. 260
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 264

"I have read it. "

Those relatives whom you have been enjoined to love are we ourselves. Have you read in the Quran verse

(Remember whatever profit you may make, and whatever you earn without labouring for it, a fifth of it must be set apart for God, His prophet and the latter's Kith and kin."

"I have read this also."

"We are those relatives for whose benefit it has been made obligatory to set apart one fifth of your profits. Have you read in the Quran the verse :

انّما یرید اللّٰه لیذهب عنکم الرّجس اهل البیت ویطهّرکم تطهیرا

"I have certainly read this verse."

"We are those members of the prophet's household whom God purified of all evil and innocent."

The old man was amazed to hear all this, and to reassure himself about what he had heard, he again enquired of Ali b. Husain. "Was really what you claim yourself to be correct? "Ali b. Husain swore by God and emphatically told him that he had heard the truth. Hearing this, the old man burst out weeping, threw down his turban and raised his head towards the sky, saying, "May God bear witness that I abhor and shun every enemy of Mohammad's progeny whether he be a human being or a jinni." Turning to Ali b. Husain, he asked,

"Can my repentence be accepted. ?,"

"Yes, if you repent. your repentence will be accepted, and you will be reckoned among our companions. I am full of remorse for the lack of respect I showed you, not knowingyou ."

This incident shows how the false propaganda of the Ummayyads carried on for 50 years had alienated people from members of the prophet's family and kept men unacquainted with them.

Ibnul Qifti has recorded in his history that when the heads of the martyrs together with the prisoners belonging to the prophet,s family were

entering Damascus, Yazid was witnessing the spectacle from the roof of his palace at Jeeron, and that no sooner had his eyes alighted on the heads of tha martyrs, he had repeated the following couplets.

لما بدت تلك الحمول واشرفت تلك الرؤس على ربى جيرون نعب الغراب
فقلت قل او لا تقل فلقد قضيت من الرسول ديونى

meaning, "When those conveyances came into my view and the shadows of their heads fell upon the hillocks of Jeeroon and the crow began to caw, (signifying unauspiciousness) I said, "Thou mayst caw or not, I have squared my accounts with the prophet."

These couplets very clearly show Yazid's depravity which equated the persecution and oppression of Husain and his associates with retaliatory action taken against the prophet himself. After entering Damascus, the caravan was halted at the gate near the royal audience chamber and was admitted into Yazid's presence after a considerable period of waiting. The court had been specially adorned for the occasion The members of the prophet's family were presented before Yazid like Abyssinian slaves and slave girls from Turkey and Dailam. Husain's head was presented to him on a platter of gold.

Zuhr b. Qais gave a very misleading account of the war to Yazid and a highly coloured version of the bravery of his men and the helplessness of Husain's supporters [1] Yazid was engaged in playing chess all the time with his boon companions and was intoning the following couplet in a state of intoxication:

اذ كاسا ونادلها الا يا ايها الساقى

His disbelief mounted with his inebriation and he started reciting these couplets.

ليت اشياخى ببدر شهدوا جزع الخزرج من وقع الاسل
لاهلوا واستهلوا فرحا ولقالوا يا يزيد لا تشل
لعبت هاشم بالملك ولا خبر جاء ولا وحى نزل

meaning, "Would that my elders of the battle of Badr had been alive and

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 264; Irshad, p. 261, Daniwari's Akhbar ut Tawal, p.p. 257–258 whele the speech has been ascribed to Shimr.

witnessed how the supporters of Mohammad's faith were thrown into confusion by blows dealt with spears, for then they would have happily greeted me with blessings and would have said, 'May Yazid never get tired".

The Bani Hashim played a trick to win power. In truth no intimation came to them nor was any revelation made."

Hearing this Zainab stood up and commenced a very forcible speech exposing the hallowness of the foundations of Yazid's high rank and dignity. She thundered, "How true is the statement of my God, "The evil doers at length came to falsifying and ridiculing divine symbols." Yazid ! do you imagine that since you have barred all exists upon us, in the sky and on the earth, and have brought us to the pass that we have been brought before you like prisoners, we are in the eyes of God also contemptible and you are honourable, or that this ostensible success has been given to you due to your being near God. Happy in this thought you glance at your shoulders since at the moment you only see the world subject to your commands, the affairs of your country in due order and good shape, and your rule and government made safe from all dangers. Have you forgotten God's warning, "Let not the unbelievers take it that the respite we give them would do them any good. We allow them time only in order that rhey might indulge in sin to their hearts' content, for in the end, humiliating punishment has been kept ready for them."? Does the excellence of the Islamic sense of honour require you to preserve the purdah of your wonen and even of your slave girls and imprison the granddaughters of your prophet and make them go about from pillar to post? Do you still have the cheek to say as if you to wish to be patted on the back by your unbelieving forebears? Do not take leave of your senses, for very shortly you would also fare thus. You will then long that your hands had been bereft of motion and your tongue deprived of speech; that you had left undone what you did and left unsaid what you said. What can be worse for you that on the day of judgement, God will be the arbiter of your case, Mohammad-e-Mustafa the complainant and Gabrial his witness. Then Those also who have aided and abetted you in your misdeeds and supported you in winning power over the Muslims, learn how terrible is the revenge taken from tyrants and oppressors. Although the changes wrought by time have reduced me to the unenviable position of having to address such a one as you, wholly unworthy as you are in my eyes. I I consider it a piece of great misfortune even to reprimand you. but I am unable to control myself. My heart is full of woe and a fire is raging in it What a great pity that those who worship God should meet their deaths

at the hands of the devil's hordes Yazid! take a vow not to leave any stone unturned or any effort unmade, but by God, you shall not blot out our memory nor wipe out our existence nor succeed in damaging our real object. The stain of this unjust bloodshed shall stick to you till doomsday and you shall never be able to wash it away. Your judgement is undoubtedly pervese, your life brief, and the crowed of those who surround you would soon vanish into thin air. The day is very near when it will be proclaimed, 'God's curse lies on oppressors'. Thanked be God who ordained that the end of our venerable predecessors should be in dutifulness and that of our last departed venerable soul in martyrdom and His mercy. He alone is sufficient unto us and is the best supporter and source of help."

Now Yazid turned to Ali b. Husain and in order to hurt his feelings recited the verse :

وما اصابكم من مصيبة فبما كسبت ايديكم

from the Quran, Meaning, "Whatever of misfortune befalls you is of your own making. Ali b. Husain told him that this verse did not apply to him and his party, and that the verse of the Quran which applied to them was :

ما اصاب في الارض ولا في انفسكم الا في كتاب مبين من قبل ان نذلك

meaning that the mistortune which overtook them was in fulfilment of a plighted word which had been written from the beginning of the world, and of which the fulfilment was necessary.[1]

A succession of the declarations of the truth pushed back the screen of falsehood from before the eyes of the people and also produced in them the courage to speak out.

Accordingly, when b. Ziyad scandalously insulted Husain's lips and teeth at Kufa, Zaid b. Arqam lodged a strong protest against his conduct, Assuming that at Damascus nobody would make bold to take exception to what he did, Yazid repeated b. Ziyad's insulting treatment of Husain's lips and teeth at Kufa. His experience was, however, no better than that of b. Ziyad. Abu Barza Aslami was on his feet to remind Yazid that Husain's were the lips and teeth he had often seen the prophet

1. Kafi Vol. I p. 503

kissing. He added that on the day of judgement only b. Ziyad would interceded on Yazid s behalf. ?[1]

Yazid's arrogance and effrontery, however. encouraged people to behave with Husain's survivors with scant respect. A red-coloured Syrian asked Yazid to grant him Fatima, daughter of Husain. The lady began to tremble with anger and sorrow and clung to Zainab who soothed her and said to the Syrian,

> "Stuff and nonsense ! This cannot be even if you perish. Nor can Yazid do so. "Peeved at Zainab's reference to him, Yazid exploded, "You speak untruly. I have authority to do so, and would certainly do so if I wish "So long as you claim to belong to the fold of Islam, you cannot do so. It would be different, however, if you openly retract from that faith and embrace a different creed said Zainab.

Getting more excited, Yazid blustered, "You say this to me. Your brother and father were, indeed, outside the fold of Islam."

Zainab rejoined saying, "It was by ostensibly adopting the faith of my father and brother that your father and you yourself came to be called Muslims.

This increased Yazid's truculence and he broke out in harsher words. Unable to do anything, Zainab said, "you are a heartless tyrant and want to subdue our spirit with your violence."

Yazid was shamed by the reply and made no answer. and when the syrian repeated his request, he scolded him saying, "Out with you, may God destory you."[2]

Addressing Ali b. Husain in his court, Yazid once said to him, "Your father did not pay any regard to my relationship with him, ignored my rights and disputed my authority. God, therefore, did to him what you see. In reply, Ali b. Husain repeated the verse of the Quran :

ما اصاب من مصيبة فى الارض ولا فى انفسكم الا فى كتاب المبين من قبل ان نبرأها

implying that changes take place in the world, one achieves success, and the other loses. Success and defeat should, however, not be treated as proofs of rightfulness or justice.

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 267
2. Ibid, p. 265, Irshad p. 262

The flush of success stepped up Yazid's natural arrogance. but he knew that in his own court, everyone considered him to be guilty, In his attempt to defend himself, Yazid exposed the depravity of his nature, And, what is more, he nullified the effect of the policy, long pursued by the Ummayyads, of keeping people in general unacquainted with and forgetful of the prophet's family. He asked people, "Do you know why calamity befell Husain, "and went on to supply the answer himself, "Just because Husain thought that his father, mother, and grandfather were superior to my father, mother and grandfather. Now, these questions are set at rest by the fact that when his father fought against my father, the world knows in whose favour the verdict of war ment. It is, however, true that his mother was better than my mother and also that his grandfather was better than my grandfather since no muslim may consider any other as an equal of the prophet. They however, lost sight of the verse of the Quran meaning, "God is owner of soverignty, and gives sovereignty to whom He wills and withdraws sovereignity from whom He wills; exalts whom He with and abases whom He wills. He is able to do all things."

It would appear from this speech that in the possession of attributes which make for distinction, Yazid did admit his inferiority to Husain. He however, based his final argument to establish his superiority on conquest and the capture of power, This argument may possibly be pressed into service to prove known tyrants and oppressors of mankind as innocent. Nor does the verse of the Quran make the attainment of power and victory the criterion of righteousness.

An Umayyad, Yahya b, al Hakam, was so greatly affected by the calamity which had overtaken those who belonged to the prophet's household that he started openly to express his grief at Husain's martyrdom and to speak ill of b. Ziyad. Yazid struck Yaha's chest saying, "Keep quiet"[1] Yazid's wife, Hind b. Abdullah b, Aamir rushed into the full Court of Yazid lamenting, "What! the head of the darling of Fatima, the prophet's daughter, in this condition!"[2] Even then, the survivors of Husain were not quickly sent to Madina. They remained for long in captivity at Damascus. When the sings of restlessness and dissatisfaction manifested themselves in no uncertain fashion, and the Umayyads realised their political miscalculation, Yazid set Husain's survivors free and provided them with

1. Tabari Vol. VI. p. 265
2. Tabari, Vol, 6, p. 567

a house. The women of selected families in Damascus repaired to this house to condole Husain's death, and mourning was observed there for three days..[1] Noman b. Bashir Ansari, who had been removed from the governorship of Kufa for not having treated Muslim b, Aqil with harshness, and had been kept virtually under arrest since then at Damascus, was directed to arrange for the journey of Husain's survivors to Medina, as he was thought to be partial to the prophets' descendants. Noman took them to Medina,

Yazid now started trying unsuccessfully to absolve himself of Husain's slaughter. He called Ali b. Husain to himself and told him in privacy, "May God curse Marjana's son. If I had met your father directly, I would have agreed to whatever he had wished, and would never have consented to his death, In any case, whatever had been decreed by God has come about. Now you may go to Medina, correspond with me and let me know what you stand in need of.[3] He also sent 30 of his men with Bashir to take the descendants of the prophet to Madina with due dignity and consideration.[4]

Tumultuous scenes of mourning were witnesses at Medina at the arrival of the remants ot Husain s pillaged caravan there, Purdah observing ladies rushed out to their houses in excess of grief. A lady belonging to Abdul Muttalib's family, her hair dishevelled, was heard reciting a woeful dirge meaning, "What answer would you make to God's prophet when he asks you on the day of judgement, "How did you behave with my descendants after me who have now been reduced to such a state that some of them are captives, and some of them have had their blood spilled, and are covered with dust. Was this the reward for my services that you should treat my progany in this fashion? "[5]

1. op. cit, p. 267
2. op cit. p. 565
3. op. cit. p. 266, Irshad p. 263
4. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 298
5. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 221

CHAPTER - XXXI

A DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF THE CAPTIVITY OF THE LADIES OF HUSAIN'S FAMILY

The events narrated in the preceding chapters leave on doubt that Yazid's object was not only to slay Husain on the prextent of his refusal to pledge his fealty to the former, but also to destroy that spiritual centre which, being the guardian of Islamic teachings, could not cooperate with any party in the exercise of unlawful authority. The responsibility for all the tragic events which culminated in the captivity of the ladies of Husain's family lies squarely on the central government at Damascus which, in order to achieve its ends, decreed that Husain should either pledge his loyalty to the ruler or pay for his refusal with his head, removed Waleed from the governorship of Medina, sent soldiers disguised as hajjis to Mecca, made b. Ziyad the governor of Kufa, and gave him pleeary powers to bring the campaign against Husain to a successful conclusion. If all rhese steps had not been taken at the instance of Yazid himself, b. Ziyad may not have sent the ladies of Husain's family in captivity to Damascus, he might have detained them only at Kufa. If Yazid had really not wished to humiliate the members the prophet's household, he had no reason to call them to Syria instead of directing that they be sent to Medina. So long as Husain had not been slain, it might have been open to consider, if only as an impossible Probability, that Yazid was unaware of the tragic development concerning Husain whose slughter was an independent act of b Ziyad. But after the halocaust of Karbala, b. Ziyad detained Husain's survivors at Kufa expressly to obtain the orders of Yazid himself about them. What-ever, therefore, happened thereafter must, be put down to the orders made by Yazid himself. Is there any room to suppose that the despatch to Damascus, of the heads of martyrs, raised on spearheads and of the survivors of Husain's family under duress was the personal act of b. Ziyad and not a scandalous proceeding planned and executed at the dictation of Yazid himself?

Again if Yazid had not, maliciously and without the least provocation meant to abase Husain's survivors, he could very well have arranged that they should be provided with a proper residence on thier arrival at Damascus. He should have taken the earliest opportunity to meet Ali b, Husain with due courtesy. Histories are, however, unanimous that the

ladies of Husain's family were called to Damascus as prisoners, presented to Yazid in his audience chamber packed with strangers. This in itself, if no other offence had been given by Yazid, would have been disgrace enough for Husain's survivors at Yazid's hands. This however, was not all. It was followed by a piece of unmatched enormity: the striking of Husain's lips and teeth with a stick by Yazid which called forth protest even from the Christians present on the occasion.

It is sometimes held that Husain himself provided the opportunity for the commission of barbarities against the ladies of his house by taking them with him to the battle-field. This has been thought to be the most vulnerable part of the steps Husain took in his campaign since all those who had given him counsel had tried to dissuade him from doing so, Husain, however, considered it necessary to keep the ladies with him.

The presence of women and children with a belligerent is, far obvious reasons, a great drawback, adding greatly to the difficulties of defence against the enemy, and providing the latter with undeniable advantages in attacking an adversary so encumbered. Why then did Husain take the ladies with him?

As far as one may gather from histories, it does not appear that Husain contradicted anyone who advised him against taking the ladies and children with him and warning him against the dangers which would confront him on account of their presence with him Even so, he remained firm in his decision, sometimes saying that it was God's dceree that they should be made captives, at other times remarking that whatever had been fated must, in any case, come to pass. This attitude shows that knowing full well all the dangers and disadvantages of the presence of ladies with him on so hopeless a journey as his, Husain chose to be accompanied by them. One is, therefore, led to oonclude that possibly Husain thought that the presence of ladies with him would serve as an essential factor in the achievement of his object.

It formed no part of Husain,s intention to engage in battle on the strength of material resources to provide himself with worldly pleasures. He had refused to pledge his fealty to Yazid simply to safeguard truth and righteousness and to escape the imputation of countenancing evil and unrighteousness. He had resolved to stick to his refusal till the last breath of his life, so that his denial might serve to show the truth clearly and unmistakably to all the world, so that men should never be led to

hold Yazid's deeds and conduct as carrying the sanction of Islam or in any manner related to that faith It was of the last importance for the fulfilment of his object that his enemy should find it impossible to misinterpret any of his acts, or that his great martyrdom should be misconstrued as proceeding from some "mysterious misadventure" for, in either case, the enduring bulwark which he wished to raise for the protection and safe-guarding of righteousness would remain vulnerable to assault. This object of Husain was most successfully achieved by the presence of the ladies of his house with him at Karbala and his righteousness and the untold oppression and countless wrongs which he endured shone out with such brilliance that no amount of gloss, misinterpretation, special pleading or political management could throw the least suspicion or doubt on them.

It is a well-known historical fact that the Umayyads had employed against the Hashimites the very effective stratagem of presenting Osman as a wronged and persecuted caliph and placing the responsibility for his murder on the Hashimites in general and on Ali b. Abi Talib in particular. In order to lend strength to the propaganda, Osman's bloodstained shirt and the savered fingers of his wife, Naila, were exposed to public view in the principal mosque at Damascus over a long period of time. Large crowds used to busy themselves with crying and beating their heads and breasts in mourning for the departed caliph. Large numbers of the people were alienated from the prophets' descendants by this device. The off-spring of Abi Sufyan won the sympathy of the people by posing as the successors of Osman and demanding retaliation for his blood The baneful effect of this false propaganda could not have been dissipated unless the descendants of the prophet suffered some similar misfortune at the hands of the successors of Abi Sufyan, which should be patent enough to transfer popular sympathy from the Omayyads to the Hashimites. By slaying Husain, the enemy unwittingly accomplished such a revolution in the people's hearts and revulsion in public sentiment in favour of the prophet's progeny. The Omayyads, drunk with success as they were took long to realise this complete and sudden reversal of pubic feeling till the 10th of Moharrum, they used to refer to the murder of Osman as justifying their actions, The cutting of the supplies of Water to Husain and his associates used to be referred by them as retribution for the stoppage of water to Osman, although the Hashimites had in fact no hand in the stoppage of the supplies to the dead caliph. But this had been the line of Omayyad propaganda. The enormi-

ties practised at Karbala beginning with the merciless slaughter of the associates and relatives of Husain, Young and old alike, and culminating in the heartless killing of Husain's infant son, aged six months, were so revoltingly cruel that Osman's murder became wholly disproportionate and unequal in comparison, The captivity of the members of the prophet's family mostly ladies, pushed the persecution of the prophets' descendants to such scandalous depths of obloquy that the tongues of the friends of the Umayyads were completely silenced and they began to be not a little embarrassed at speaking of Osman's misfortunes in the same breath as tha happenings ot Karbala and their sequel.

It would be of interest to observe that while Osman's bloody shirt and Naila s fingers were displayed by men who belonged to the dead caliph's party and carried with them no evidence to point out the perpetrators of the crime, Husain's severed head and the captive members of his family were led about by those heartless murderers themselves who were responsible for these crimes, making it unnecessary for any complex and time consuming investigation to be made to ascertain the criminals or locate them. The result was that the sympathies of even those who, on account of their partiality for Osman, had sided with the descendants of Abu Sufyan, were alienated from the latter and transferred to the descendants of Hashim. If Husain had not taken the ladies of his house with him, it would have been impossible that the tragedy of Karbala should have been so widely and effectively publicised in so short a time, and the depravity of the Omayyads made so manifest to the people. It is important that the truth came to be known and recognised in this instance for cases are not wanting in Islam, as indeed elsehwere, in which the light of truth about an incident has been smothered or made to glimmer with an uncertain flame, and nobody has been able successfully to pierce the enveloping gloom to get at the truth. Hasan b. Ali was poisoned but even till now histories written by those overawed by the Omayyad rulers or taken in by their political manoeuvrings treat of the idenity of the persons involved in the conspiracy against Hasan in such a manner as to leave a large area of doubt about the question. In like manner, if 72 or 125 persons, the estimated number of those who sacrificed themselves for Husain and his principles at Karbala, had been killed in that arid plain, walled in by the iron curtains of the weapons of Yazid's horders, so securely isolated from the rest of the world that, not to mention the possiblity of human access to it, even the percolation of news to and from it had been made impossible. it would have been very easy to give any twist to the event, even if it was

considered necessary to mention it, or if some hint of the happening of such an event had got abroad For only the tongues of the murderers themselves would have been there to give the event such colour as suited their purposes or took their fancy. who would have convincingly given the lie to the falsehoods doled about the event? The conduct of Husain could well have been presented in a totally different light contemptuous defiance of established authority for instance being alleged against Husain at doubt must have been cast on Husain's motives and conduct. He would have sacrificed literally his all, including his near and dear ones, associates and kith and kin, to bring about the renaissance of virtue righteousness, but in the pages of history, Yazid might well have been shown as having undertaken a jehad in defence of Islam, and Husain represented as a rebel and a mischief maker. Indeed righteousness would have died with him which would have been worse than Husain's defeat.

To Husain there could possibly have been available. for the propagation after him of the philosophy of martyrdom, and the dissemination of righteousness and truth, no substitute for these friendless, pure and unblemished ladies of his family, led about from city to city as prisoners, their hearts afire with sorrow and passion, the bloods of Ali and Fatima coursing excitedly through their views and their tongues giveing utterance to the most touching of speeches, couched in words and phrases remarkably moving and telling and reminiscent of the eloquence of the prophet and of Ali. Or there was Ali, his son, to carry out this object, having been preserved by God for it, by exempting him from participating in the jehad of the 10th of Moharrum on account of an incapacitating illness.

Husain fully knew that whatever depths of inhumanity the Umayyads might stoop to, they would not dare to put the friendless ladies to death whose utmost fault might have been said to consist in the raising of their plaintive voices gainst the government of the day, under the stress of unbearable grief and uncoutrollable excitement. Nor could the prevailing atmosphere of public feeling have tolerated a resort to such extreme measures. Illustrative of this is the fact that when, after a speech delivered by Zainab, daughter of Ali, exposing the depravity and the corruption of the Ummayyad government. b. Ziyad had thought of punishing her with stripes, Amr b. Harees had prevented him from doing so.

The attempts latterly made by Yazid to shift the blame for Husain's slaughter to the shoulders of Obaidullah b. Ziyad was nothing short of

being an indication of his feelling guilty and defeated himself, Since. however, the ladies of Husain's family had been most cruelly treated after Husain's martyrdom, there had been left no room for doubt about the motives which informed Yazid's actions and historians were driven to conclude that if he had not been impelled by pre-Islamic hostilities and the memories of the war of Badr, he would have respected Husain's head and buried it and treated the ladies of Husain's family with due sympathy.

CHAPTER - XXXII

BRIEF NOTES ON THE PRISONERS BELONGING TO HUSAIN'S FAMILY

Now that the events of the captivity of Husain's survivors have been described and their consequences discussed, it seems appropriate that, like notes given in some earlier Chapters about those martyred at Karbala. brief notices about the more prominent among those held as captives there should also be given, as in the following paragraphs.

1. ALI b. HUSAIN :

Zainul Abidin and Saiyid-i Sajjad were his well known titles. He was Husain's eldest son in whom met the excellent qualites of the Arabs and the non-Arabs, for his mother, Shahr, Bano, was a daughter of the last Persian King, Yazdgird.

He was born in 28 A. H.[1] during the caliphate of Ali b. Abi Talib and was less than 3 years of age when the latter was murdered on 21st Ramazan, 40 A. H. His uncle, Hasan, died of poison on the 28th Safar, 50 A. H,

He was slightly over 22 years of age when on 28th Rajab 60 A.H., he accompanied his father on the latter's journey to Iraq. It is not precisely known when during, or at the conclusion of, this journey he was taken ill; on the following 10th of Moharrum 61 A. H. the illness had rendered him too weak even to sit up, and the embargo placed on the supply of water to Husain and his men must have greatly added to his discomfort. He could not. therefore, go to his father's help and fight for him. He was destined to undergo the excruciating experience of being led about on foot, in chains, from Karbala to Kufa and thence to Syria with his captive mothers, aunts, sisters and other ladies ef his family and to attend the courts of b. Ziyad and Yazid in highly humiliating circumstances after the 10th Moharrum, 61 A.H. After he was set at liberty, in Syria, he went to Medina where he spent the remaining years of his life in offering prayers to God, It is said that whenever he commenced the ablutions preparatory to prayers, this face used to turn pale. When asked the reason for this condition, he used to ask. "Are you not aware of Him

1. Kafi Vol. 1, p 296; Irshad p. 200

before whom I am going to appear?[1] In abstemiousness and in leading a simple life, he represented the qualities of Ali b, Abi Talib. He quietly instructed people in Muslim law and in the departments of knowledge specialised in by the members of the prophet's household. He used to carry provisions secretly at night to the poor and the destitute who remained ignorant of the purveyor till his death; getting to know that it was he when the supplies stopped.[2]

Farazdak's eulogy of him in verse (qasida), when he was performing the hajj, is a clasic in Arabic letters. A collection of his own supplications and prayers known as the Sahifa-i-Kamila, also known as the Zaboor-e-Aal-e-Mohammad, is very well-known in the Islamic world for its deep insight into divinity. He died in 96 A. H., and was buried near the grave of his uncle, Hasan, in Jannatul Baqi.[3]

2. ZAINAB, DAUGHTER OF ALI B. ABI TALIB

She was the eldest daughter of her parents, Ali b. Abi Talib and Fatima. daughter of the prophet. She, therefore, occupied the most conspicuous position among the survivors of Husain. She was very young when her grandfather and her mother died and was broutht up by her father who gave her in marriage to Abdullah, a son of his brother, Ja'far.

Ali b, Abi Talib showed almost the same affection to Zainab as he did to Hasan and Husain. Accordingly in the month of Ramazan preceding his murder, he used to break his fast on successive nights at the houses of Hasan, Husain and Abdullah b Jafar, husband of Zainab.[5]

In about 50 Years of her existence before the battle of Karbala, Zainab had witnessed at least three events which had called forth all her powers of patience and which she had faced with great fortitude, and her character had been shaped by these events on such strong foundations that she betrayed no signs of weakness and trepidation in the catastrophic developmen s of Karbala,

From Medina to Karabala, Zainab was present with Husain at every stage of his journey, and what has so far been said here may as well be taken as a record of Zainab's life also.

1, Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 256; Irshad p. 275
2. Irshad, p. 272
3. Irhsad, p. 276 4. Irshad, p. 270
5. Irshad p. 8

Zainab's name finds conspicuous mention in connection with certain events at Karbala. When she heard Husain reciting at Karbala couplets meaning that it was the way of the world, morning and evening, that some one was snatched away by the hand of death, that everything had to die, Zainab felt that her brother was communicating the news of his own death to her. She ran to him in anguished excitement saying, "Woe to me, how I wish I had been dead. I feel as if I am being bereft of my mother, my father and my brother. Hasan today because you succeeded them all. "Husain comforted her and she asked him if he had finally prepared himself to meet his death. Husain told her that he could do nothing else as there was no alternative left to him This shocked Zainab tremendously who interpreted it as meaning that his brother would be forcibly laid hands onand she slapped her face,tore the collar of her shirt, and fainted.Husain managed to restore Zainab to her senses, and told her to be patient. He adjured her not to tear off her dress or scratch her face or bewail him loudly after his death. He then took her where Ali b. Husain lay ill so that she might get diverted from her sorrow in attending to his ailing son.

Zainab took to heart her brother's instructions and in the most trying of situations, she did not betray signs of such adject trepidation as to give occasion to her enemies to rejoice at her sufferings. It was she who handed over to Husain the garments he last put on his person on the 10th Moharrum, tearing them at several places in order to render them so undesirable as booty as to be left on his body after his death, She then witnessed those terrible scenes which would have daunted the bravest of spirits the death of her brother, the loot and burning of Husain's camp and the captivity of Husain's survivors. Zainab, however, confronted all these moments of surpassing gloom and woe with great self-control and fortitude.

On the 11th Moharrum, when the despoiled caravan of the remnants of Husain's family and those ladies who had been left with them, proceeded towards Kufa, it passed through the battle-field strewn with the dead bodies of the martyrs unwashed, uncovered, besmeared with blood and dust while those killed from among the armies of Yazid had been duly buried. Upon noticing this heart-breaking sight Ali b. Husain was moved to such distress that Zainab called out, "O reminder of the dear parted ones! How is it with you that you seem to be on the verge of collapse and death?"

Ali b, Husain replied, "How can I endure looking at this scene with my father, uncles. brothers, indeed all my relatives, lying dead, bathed in

their blood, their dead bodies unprovided with shrouds and graves, and lying uncared for ?" Zainab consoled her nephew at this critical moment.

The caravan had then to pass through the bazar of Kufa. In surroundings entirely unfriendly and circumstances exceedingly depressing and embarrassing, Zainab delivered a forcible speech in which she did not dwell on her woeful condition, nor begged for mercy, but scathingly reviewed the scandalous deeds of her enemies and asked them to look into their hearts and ponder over their atrocious crimes. All eyes that had been raised to witness the misery of the prisoners were bent towards the earth in shame and everyone in the crowd was convinced of his guilt. She repeated this feat of her eloquence at Damascus in Yazid's court. It was her achievement that she arranged the first assembly to mourn Husain's death at the house allotted to his survivors at Damascus.

3. UMM-E-KULSOOM

Her name was Zainab-e-Sughra and her filionymic appellation was Umme-e-Kulsoom.[1] Daughter of Ali b. Abi Talib and Fatima, she was younger to Zainab and was born towards the end of the prophet's life, losing her grandfather two years after her birth and her mother shortly afterwards by death. She was married to her cousin, Mohammad b. Jafar b. Abi Talib.

After the death of her husband, she lived with her brothers. The death of her father left her heart-broken. On the last night of his existence, Ali b. Abi Talib was her quest and she was the source of information of all accounts relating to this fateful night, when her father was mortally wounded on the head with a sword treated with poison. When the poison began to show its deadly effect, she was conspicuous for crying for her father.[2]

Daniwari has specifically recorded that when Husain gave up residence at Medina and left for Mecca, both his sisters, Zainab & Umme-Kulsoom, were with him.[3]

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1. Irshad, p. 189
2. Op. cit, p. 8-9
3. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal, p. 220

4. RUQAYYA, DAUGHTER OF ALI B. ABI TALIB

Ruqayya's mother. Umme-e-Habib, daughter of Rabia[1] gave birth to her and a son, Omar, as twins,

She was married to Muslim b. Aqil and had left Medina with Husain and Muslim b. Aqil, She however, continued on her journey with Husain, when Muslim b. Aqil was sent to Kufa. She received the news of the death of her husband on her way to Kufa. On the 10th Moharrum she secrificed her son, Abdullah b. Muslim b. Aqil for Husain at Karbala. She remained with her sisters, Zainab and Umm-e-Kulsoom, sharing with them all their hardships and privations and went back to Medina with them.

5. LAILA SAQAFIA

She was the mother of Ali Akbar b. Husain. An account of her family has been given in the note concerning her son, Ali Akbar. She was with Husain at Karbala and shared captivity with the daughters of Ali b. Abi Talib. History makes no mention of her at any subesquent period.

6. RABAB, DAUGHTER OF AMRA-UL QAIS KALBI

Rabab was the mother of Sakina, daughter of Husain and her brother, Ali Asghar. She was present at Karbala and suffered captivity with other survivors of Husain. She refused to go back to Medina after her release from captivity, staying in a tent at Husain's grave for an year as an attendant and kept up holding gatherings of mourning day and night and spent her time in lamenting for Husain,[2]

She went back to Medina after a year where also she observed rites of mourning for Husain, and it was for long that she, her slave-girls and other women attached to her, kept themselvas busy with lamentations for Husain.[3]

7. FATIMA, DAUGHTER OF HUSAIN

Her mother was Umm-e-Ishaq, daughter of Talha b. Abdullah Timiyya.[4]

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1. Irshad p. 189
2. Asaba (Egypt) Vol. 1, p. 113
3. Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 296
4. Irshad, p. 269

Sheikh Mufid has recorded that Hasan's son, Hasan Musanna, begged his uncle, Husain, to give him one of his daughters in marriage. Husain left the choice to Hasan Musanna, but the latter made no reply out of modesty. Husain then selected Fatima, his daughter, for his nephew's wife saying that his choice had fallen on her as she greatly resembled his own mother, Fatima [1]

Husain reposed so much trust in Fatima, his daughter, that since Zainul Abidin was not in possession of his senses on account of his sickness when Husain left to wage his last jehad at Karbala on the 10th Moharrum, he left the special written documents entrusted to him, and his will in a closed cover with Fatima to be delivered to Zainul Abidin. These things were later made over by Fatima to her brother.[2]

She survived the holocaust of Karbala for long and is accounted among the reporters of hadith (traditions) and her son Abdullah Mahz used to recount traditions on her authority.[3] She was devoted to her brother, Zainul Abidin, and used to direct her sons to keep company with him, and derive instruction from him.[4]

In the end, she had to suffer bereavement of her husband, Hasan b. Hasan. She kept fasting in the day and offering prayers at night in a tent pitched at his grave for an year.[5] Then she went back to Medina.[6]

8. SAKINA, DAUGHTER OF HUSAIN

She was a daughter of Ali Asghar's mother and was very young when the battle of Karbala was fought. The accounts of her life, after that event, now current, lack authentic corroboration.

It would not be inappropriate to make brief references here to ladies, each of whom had important connections with the events of Karbala, though they were themselves not present there.

1. UMM-E-SALMA, WIDOW OF THE PROPHET

Umm-e-Salma was an exceedingly good natured and revered lady among the wives of the prophet who had married her in the second year

1. Irshad, p. 201
2. Kafi, Vol. I, p p, 179 and 188
3. Op. cit, p. 294 and Ibn Hisham Vol. I, p,153
4. Irshad, p. 202
5. Bukhari, Vol. I, p. 147
6. Irshad, p. 203

after leaving Mecca, and after the battle of Badr had been fought. She remained particularly devoted to members of the prophet's household-Ali b. Abi Talib, Hasan and Husain. even after prophets' death, Accordingly when she heard of the preparations made by Ayesha, another widow of the prophet, to fight against Ali b. Abi Talib, She told the latter that she would have accompanied him in his struggle against Ayesha, if she had not been prohibited from stirring out of her house and had not been sure that Ali would not countenance such trangression on her part. She however, sent her son, Omar, to fight for Ali. He always Kept Ali's company and was made ruler of Bahrain by Ali and continued for long in that capacity.[1]

Tirmizi mentions a report that Umme-Salma dreamt of the prophet on the 10th Moharrum and saw him crying, his head and beard covered with dust, and on being questioned by her about this she heard him say "My Husain has been slain just now."

According to a report mentioned in the Sahih Muslim, Umm-e-Salma was alive till 63 A.H., but according to another report, she, died on the day of Husain's martyrdom, 10th Moharrum, 61 A.H.

2. UMMUL BANIN, WIFE OF ALI B. ABI TALIB

Her name and lineage have been mentioned in the notes concerning Abul Fazl-il Abbas.

How may one describe the reactions of a mother, like her, losing four valiant sons at the same time. In the commentary on the Kamil, an eminent man of letters of Arabia, Abul Hasan Akhtash, has been quoted as reporting that after hearing of the events at Karbala, Ummul Banin used to go to Jannat-ul-Baqi with a young son of Abbas, Obaidullah by name, and to recite an elegy about his father there, which was so agonising that men of Medina used to assemble there, even a great enemy of the prophet's family, like Marwan, being often seen in the crowd. Her insupportably distressing elegy used to bring spontaneous tears into people's eyes,

Her verses were not only afflicting, they also manifested that strength of spirit which showed that she was the mother of such a great fighter for righteousness as Abbas. The meanings of some of her verses. which have come down to use are given below:-

1. Tabari Vol. V, p. 167

"Where are they who witnessed my lion-hearted Abbas making an ossault on the herd of sheep (the enemy), followed by many other lions, the offspring of Ali b. Abi Talib. Alas! the head of my son was crushed with a heavy iron club when his hands had been severed. O Abbas! I have no doubt that none could have made bold to approach you if you had a sword in your hand.

"Do not call me Ummul Banin, 'mother of sons' now, I am reminded of my lions. Time was when I was called by a name referring to my many sons. Now my sons are no more. All the four of them who were like hunting hawks have embraced death, spears have torn them to pieces and they have all fallen dead on the earth. Is it, indeed, true that even Abbas's hands had been severed?"

It seems only proper that brief notes might be added here about those ladies also who, being related to Husain's friends, did something which has found mention in the history of the events of Karbala, so that an idea may he had of the notable part played by women in that tragic episode.

1. DALHAM, DAUGHTER OF AMR

She was Zuhair Qain's wife to whom reference has been made in the account of Husain's stay at Zarood on his journey to Iraq.

She had accompanied her husband for hajj in 60 A.H. Till then, her husband had no special relations with tne members of the prophat's family and was commonly known to be among Osman's partisans. She appears ' however, to have entertained great regard for the members of the prophet's household, even though, unobtrusively. Accordingly when Zuhair Qain showed some reluctance to go to Husain upon being called by him, she said to her husband, "How strange that the prophet's son should send a messenger to call you, and you should refuse to call on him! It is very undesirable. Go to him and hear what he may have to say" Thus exhorted, Zuhair went to Husain and returned a changed man, determined to help Husain. Dalham did not get any opportunity to take any part herself in the battle of Karbala, as she had been divorced by Zuhair and sent by him to her mother's place, It was, however, solely on account of her that Zuhair had joined Husain.

2. UMM-E-WAHB. DAUGHTER OF MA'BAD

She was the wife of Abdullah b. Omair Kalbi who belonged to the clan of Namr b. Qasit and resided near Bair ul Ja'd where the clan of

Hamadan had settled outside the thickly populated quarter of Kufa, within the limits of Nakheela near the groves of date-palms, When b, Ziyad made Nakheela the headquarters of his armies upon getting news of Husain's arrival at Karbala and Abdullah heard of these millitary preparations, he expressed his intention of going to help Husain to his worthy and faithful wife, Umm-e-Wahb. She unhesitatingly encouraged her husband approving the idea and exhorting him to act upon it. She also begged him to take her with him. Accordingly both of them left to join Husain of a night and met him and his friends at Karbala. She was the only woman killed at Karbala and her innocent blood spilled on the sands of Karbala added significantly to the heart-breaking dolefulness of the battle fought there,

3. WIFE OF MUSLIM B. AUSAJAH

Muslim b. Ausajah was one of the three friends of Husain who had taken their families with them to Karbala. Others who had accompanied him from Medina did not take their, families with them as they had personally seen that the circumstances in which Husain was leaving Medina to avoid pledging his fealty to Yazid, were far from reassuring. Those of his friends who had joined him in the course of his journey to Iraq, or at Karbala, could not have brought their families with them as it had been with great difficulties that they had escaped the guards posted to prevent people from moving about and joining Husain, and they had managed to do so at great risk to their lives.

Muslim pitched his tent near Husain's tents at Karbala, and sent the ladies of his family to those of Husain's family. He was martyred before noon on the 10th Moharrum and it was only when one of his slave-girls cried saying, "Alack! my master! Alack Muslim b. Ausajah! "that the Syrian army learnt of his death.[1]

4. BAHRIA, DAUGHTER OF MASOOD

She was the wife Janada b. Ka'b, and had come to Karbala with her husband and a son, with Husain's caravan. When Janada had been slain, she sent her youthful son. Amr b. Janada, to help Husain by fighting for him. Husain hesitated in giving him permission to go to the battle-field to fight, thinking that since his father Janada, had shortly before been killed and that it would sorely try the patience of his widow to

1. Absarul Ain, p. 128

part with her son, The lad, however, told Husain that it was his mother herself who had dressed him for battle and had sent him to seek his permission.

Standing at the door of her tent, the lady watched her son fighting and sacrificing himself, The enemies mercilessly beheaded him, and flung his head towards Husain's forces. Bahria picked up her son's head and said, "Well done, my son. You have gladdened my heart and applied a balmy eye-slave to my eyes. "Saying this, she threw her son's head towards the enemy and herself charged at them with an iron club in her hand. Husain reminded her of the Islamic law prohibiting women from participation in a jehad, whereupon she dutifully withdrew from the field and took her seat with the ladies of Husain's family. The learned Samavi has found that the wives of Muslim b. Ausajah and Janada b. Ka'b accompanied the ladies of Husain's family in captivity upto Kufa only, where their kinsmen secured their release and took them away.[1]

1. Absar ul Ain, p. 122

CHAPTER - XXXIII

HUSAIN'S PERSONALITY AND ACHIEVEMENTS REVIEWED

Many a sacrifice hed been offered for truth and righteousness before the tragedy of Karbala, but all of them had been made individually, e. g. the drinking of a cup of poison, by Socrates, the martyrdom of Zachariah and John, the crucifixion, according to the christians, of Christ and the assassination of many other prophets and messengers of God. The sacrifices offered at Karbala were. on the other hand, the collective performance, under Husain's leadership, of a group of men and women, including the old, the young, freemen and slaves, Arabs and non-Arabs, belonging to all reputable strata of society who had, between them. no common meeting point other than community of purpose. There is no gainsaying that so many persons, united in heart and speech, likeminded and like-intentioned have never converged to one single point. impelled by one common motive, either before or after the events of Karbala.

Human sentiments and reactions to stimuli diverge very widely according to differences in the backgrounds and ages of individuals. The adults and the young are prone to be forward and to rush into action, the old tend to be forbearing and deliberative before acting, women, usually weak-hearted, often tend to demoralise men in the face of danger by the intensity of their reactions to it and children are inclined to indulge in crying or fretfulness. Accordingly, if a mature man, an adult woman, an old man and a child were together faced with serious peril, their reactions would be so dissimilar that a responsible man among them would be hard put to it to plan a common line of action for them and lead all of them along that course. How arduous would this task grow if one is called upon to manage and lead a party of 100 or 150 persons, consisting of many old men, many adults, many youths, many children and many women drawn from various nationalities and background? If all such persons work in complete unison with one another, without betraying any signs of mutual disagreement of tension, in the most desperate of situations, one would be driven to the only conclusion that their leader did surely possess marvellous powers of moderating the impetuosity of the adults and youths to enable them to go slow and work with old men, of energising the old to enable them to keep pace with younger men, of strengthening women's hearts to enable not to lose their nerves or abandon themselves to alarmed

agitation in confronting the most harrying forms of persecution and the cruellest oppressions, of breathing the spirit of maturity into children to enable them to smile instead of melting into tears in the face of the most dreadful perils.

The kind of leadership shown by Husain remains, in reality, a close secret. For while he addressed many speeches to his enemies to provide them with conclusive arguments to deter them from oppressing him, he did not, even once, speak to his friends and relations to enthuse them to his vigorous support. On the contrary, he continually tried to discourage them from keeping him company while they, as constantly, persisted in professing for him the strongest sentiments of affection. Nothing can be said about this phenomen except that it was the quality of the mental training given by Husain to his followers which had made the sense of the worth and value of truth and righteousness strike such deep roots in their hearts that, irresistibly impelled by the promptings of their conscience, they pressed onward to his assistance. Husain's graciousness to them, their own civility and regard for him or the exertion of any pressure on them had simply nothing to do in this context. They were people who were treading the path of righteousness for its own sake. And really Husain stood in need of such associates. And for this reason alone he had made it a permanent feature of his conduct ever since he had left Medina to the night preceding the 10th, Moharrum, to warn his associates time and again, at every opportunity that came his way, of the obviously tragic consequences for him of the resistance he had chosen to put up. And this is what made his struggle such a marvellous success.

It is quite possible that an inhabited locality might be completely wiped out as a result of hostile action against it, for instance, by way of bombardment, and not a soul be spared to tell the harrowing tale. It is, however, unimaginable that the inhabitants, to a man, should have been anxious to court the calamity, and voluntarily chosen to be its victims. On the other hand there are chances that all or most of them would have tried to save themselves at all costs In the battle of Karbala, however, every one of those who were with Husain stepped forward willingly to meet death looking it straight in the face, thoroughly confident of the righteousness of his cause, his performance remaining entirely unaffacted by even so much as a suggestion of and blemish.

Leaving treachery and downright opposition out of consideration, it is not deemed to be open to exception that members of any party

should concientiously differ mutually in their views. However, since unity of thought and spirit gets disrupted, the quality of the outcome of the activities of the party does get spiled, and the success achieved by it is at least partially vitiated, Among members of Husain's party, there was no trace of any difference of opinion, Indeed, all of them had voluntarily and with express resolve and choice merged their thoughts, intentions, ambitions and actions in the thoughts, intentions and actions of one single leader. It is, therefore, entirely justified to say that the world has no leader and group of men to show who might even remotely approach Husain and his followers respectively.

Every man of the group of Husain's devoted associates was sacrificing himself for his leader and his principles after having independently satisfied himself of the faultlessness of both, and the leader, after putting up with the adversity of witnessing every one of his followers perish before his own eyes, was finding himself prepared to undergo the most harrowing of trials of which the occasion arrived when Husain had been left alone, all by himself. Even then the resolve and determination of this lonesome figure were characterised by the same inflexible firmness, dignity and nobility of bearing as when his associates were alive and at hand. The lamp had been put out but it had left behind it a light which burned brightly, manifesting itself through many curtains of enveloping darkness. The fire of oppression and violence has undoubtedly consumed and reduced to ashes countless peopled places since the beginning of the world. but such discernment, mastery, sway, unruffled composure and dignity in carrying out their duties have never been displayed by the persecuted and oppressed as at Karbala.

The archetype of a war fought without power and military equipment against might and power was presented at Karbala, Earlier, might had invariably been met with might, never with strength of character. A faint and insufficient image of the kind of struggle in which Husain engaged at Karbala was presented in the fight for India's freedom. However, even though the degres of the oppression and violence of the adversary here fell much short of causing general destruction of precious human lives, that unity and accord which were displayed by Husain's followers were not in evidence in India while the secret of the complete success of such a struggle lies in such harmony and concord.

Another distinguishing feature of the battle of Karbala was that inspite of their helplessness and want of power, Husain and his followers did

not meekly surrender themselves to the enemy. On the other hand, the natural right of self-defence, which is one of the fundamental provisions of the Islamic code was fully exercised so that the enemy may not be encouraged to persist in wrong-doing with impunity. On this account too, the struggle of Karbala occupies a unique position and remains without a parallel. Husain had also brought with him the ladies and children of his family to Karbala, and within their respective spheres of activity they also took a conspicuous and organised part in the great jehad, and this made a considerable addition to the peculiar features of the events of Karbala.

In truth, the old and the young the women and children who were with Husain at Karbala to succour, safeguard and protect righteousness, performed the tasks peculiar to their conditions, with full and lively consciousness of their duties and in consequence, the episode of Karbala has survived not only as a tragic and soul-corroding episode. but also as a peerless piece of moral and religious instruction which would have merited the highest esteem even if it had been put together in a time of peace and well-being and which has acquired the attributes of the miraculous by reason of its practical demonstration in moments of such extreme distress and calamitous developments as impair the very processes of human thought.

The unmatched Eminence of Husain's Personality.

Husain would have been unapproached in the nobility of his character if he had raised his lonely voice against the caliphate of Yazid after it had been acquiesced in by most people in the then Islamic world, but he rose to higher eminence when he stuck to his challenge in the face of countless swords, spears and arrows.

Husain would have been unexcelled if he had sacrificed only his own life, but he acquired a higher merit by offering the sacrifice of 72 other lives with his own.

Husain would have undoubtedly stood unequalled if he had been able to retain his followers with him by enlisting their support through hortatory speeches, but he rose to greater heights by making no attempt to win the loyalty of his associates through any such device. Instead, he put the stamp of his own righteousness so deep on their minds that everyone of them acquired the impress of his own firmness and resolution. Ordinarily it is considered an achievement in itself if one is able to remain in full

possession and control of one's own mind and heart and unshaken in the stand taken by one, but Husain made the minds and hearts of 72 men come to a centre and placed his own heart in the bosom and his own steadiness and fortitude in the heart of everyone of them. In other words, Husain did not step into the battle-field of Karbala alone but with 72 men, who despite differences of race, clan, colour and age, possessed one spirit which was none other than Husain's own spirit, and offered themselves for sacrifice.

Husain would have remained incomparable if he had courted death before his friends and relatives had been slaughtered, but he ascended to a higher station by sacrificing everyone of them for truth and righteousness before his own eyes.

Husain would have certainly occupied a position peculariy his own in eminence, if after the sacrifice of all his friends and relations, he had chosen to die without defending himself by offering a hopeless resistance, but he attained to a higher degree of distinction by taking up the sword in his hands which, a moment before, had carried the dead body of his infant son, and though alone and unassisted, fighting manfully, charging at thousands of his enemies in a manner which brought back to life the traditions of the war of Hamza, Jafar and Haider-i-Safdar (one who tore through the ranks of armies).

Husain added to his stature by unfailingly observing every teaching of Islam and performing every duty enjoined by it even when subjected to the most agonising afflictions and calamities. He conformed to Islamic eqalitarianism by carrying the dead bodies of the slaves who had sacrificed themselves for him in the same manner from the battle-field as those of his dearest associates and nearest relatives He complied with the duty of offering prayers at the appointed time by offering them at the head of his followers when the fight was at its fiercest and death was picking off his friends one by one, Husain was thus performing a jehad and at once publicising its objects by practical demonstration,

Husain would have suffered no diminution in his greatness if he had met death only with his friends and relatives and had closed his jehad with the end of his own life, He however, added to his greatness by taking care to provide for the publication of the objects of his martyrdom after his death by taking with him to Karbala the ladies of his house and his small children, everyone of whom was so deeply infused with the sense

of the recognition of his duties and upholding righteusness that even in the court of b. Ziyad at Kufa, and the audience hall of Yazid at Damascus, not a single man, woman or child from amongst his survivors bowed his head before the Omayyad authority, and the defiance hurled by Husain at Yazid which culminated in his head ascending a spearhead held out the standard-bearers of this part of the struggle after Husain being not only Ali b. Husain, Zainab and Umm-e-Kulsoom, but also young children like Sakina and Mohammed b. Ali b. Husain,

To everyone of the various manifestations, mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, of the immeasurable loftiness of Husain's character and performance, humanity bows its head in homage deeming it to be the acme of what human resourcefulness and achievement may rise to, but Husain's performance appears to have an edge even on this acclaim and, in the final appraisal of his greatness, it has to be acknowledged that Husain adds to history a new human concept–a concept of which the outlines alone have kept the world busy for 1300 years to get demarcated, even though inadequately, and of which much more has to be comprehended before it might, if at all possible, be put down in words.

CHAPTER—XXXIV

WHO WON AT KARBALA ?

Upon purely superficial considerations it might be claimed that Yazid came out of the battle of Karbala as the victor and Husain as the vanquished. In no language, however, victory has been defined as 'killing,' nor defeat as 'being killed,' On the contrary, victory connotes success, and defeat signifies failure in the achievement of one's object. It is, therefore, necessary to try to apprehend the aims of these two contestants at Karbala before pronouncing our verdict on the upshot of the battle fought there Husain did not oppose Yazid out of any personal animus. If Husain had desired only to live, or if Yazid had found it consistent with the security of his power that Husain should simply leave political matters severely alone, no chances of any clash arising between the two of them need really have cropped up The fact of the matter, however, was that notwithstanding his having been foisted as a caliph upon the Muslims, Yazid also claimed succession to the prophet of Islam and looked upon Husain as a stumbling-stone in the universal recognition of his pretensions even though the latter might quietly avoid pledging allegiance to him. Yazid actively promoted the revival of pagan materialism of pre Islamic times, but Husain was the bulwark of spiritualism and worship of God. Yazid practised and abetted repression and tyranny, but Husain had been charged with upholding the truth and righteousness. Yazid was determined to destroy the laws and the distinctive features of Islam which Husain deemed his duty to uphold and defend. Accordingly, in explaining his objectives in joining issue with Husain at Karbala, Yazid discovered his imperialistic outlook by observing that Husain had made the people aware of their rights and had thereby exposed to peril the existence of imposing mansions and grand palaces and the paraphernalia of luxury, and that he had. therefore, to give battle to Husain in order to protect his regime and safeguard his wealth. Husain, on the other hand, set forth the nature of his struggle against Yazid in the following couplets,

الله یعلم ان ما ؛ بیدی یزید نیرہ وبانہ لم یکتسبہ ؛ بخیرہ وبمیرہ
لو النصف النفس الخنو ؛ ن لقصرت من سیرہ ؛ ولکان ذالک منہ اد ؛ نی لنشرہ من خیرہ

meaning, "God is well aware that whatever Yazid possesses belongs

wholly to others, He had no right to appropriate it to his use. If, embezzler as he is, he had chosen to act fairly, he would have changed his ways and mitigated his mischief."

Such views as those held by Husain could well have spelled Yazid's destruction if they had gained currency among the people.

As already mentioned, all tyrants aim at paralysing the sensibilites of the people and crippling their spirit to speak out. The government of Damascus also worked on these principles so that people had given up exercising their brains and reflecting upon the rightfulness or unrightfulness of the claim of their ruler to power. Even if they chanced to think of such matters, and saw through things, they were woefully lacking in the courage to call a a spade. Husain's object was that men's sensibilities which had been deadened and their spirit to be plainspoken and frank which had been sapped, should be revived and restored. Husain wanted to usher in a general awakening among the people by his high-minded "firm and continuous desire to render to everyone that which is his due", so that right and truth might not come to be looked upon as the attributes of power, and that the capacity to appreciate and esteem truth for its own sake and the will and courage to follow it be created among the people. For obvious reasons, Public opinion once moulded in any particular form does not usually lend ifself to easy alteration unless men's minds are jolted out of the rut of generally accepted ways of thought by some great event which violently disturbs them.

In 60 A, H. the Muslims very frequently witnessed the iniquities and transgressions of the government of Syria but they had fallen a prey to the prevailing mental and spiritual apathy and torpor. This was among the major reasons why the number of those who fell in with Husain was so small. The need of the hour naturally was the occurrence of such an unexpected and unusually important event as would shake men up and rouse their sensibilities. Husain's martyrdom accomplished this with eminent success. His noble struggle against Yazid provided the people with an example which gave them the courage of expression, for hesitation to act in a certain manner is got over by the concrete examples of men who had so acted.

Noticing with their eyes that not Husain alone, but the old and the young, the women and children who had been with him had also sacrificed their lives with complete composure and serenity, or hearing reports

of such behaviour with their ears, made death seem much easier in a righteous cause than before.

It may be noted that overdoing often produces consequences quite the reverse of what is desired as said in the Arabic adage

الشیٔ اذا تجاوز عن حدہ رجع الیٰ ضدہ

that is, when anything goes beyond its proper bounds, it approaches its opposite, Accordingly when a tyrannous government forcibly stifles the voice of dissent, its voilence often tends to overreach itself and then the suppressed demur of the down-trodden people issues forth in a loud and irrepressible shriek which proves much more damaging.

Yazid was piling oppression upon oppression against Husaln in order that the latter's miserable end should act as a warning to others inclined to oppose him, but Husain confronted all the cruelties and inhumanities employed against him with such unruffled serenity and patience that, in his obsession with violence, Yazid failed to recognise the limits to which people could possibly put up with oppression, and beyond which their dormant, benumbed sensibilities would get aroused with such vehemence as to make oppression recoil upon and destroy itself.

Husain was supremely confident that in order to succour and defend righteousness, he would face calamities in so extraordinary a fashion that his powers of endurance would maim and incapacitate the powers of repression themselves.

It was in order to terrorise potential opposition and warn off all resistance to his deeds that Yazid caused the survivors of Husain to be led out from place to place and from city to city, but history bears it out that the result was entirely at variance with his hopes. Hur b. Yazid Riyahi fell off from Yazid's army just before the battle of Karbala. On the third day of the slaughter of Husain and his supporters, when b. Ziyad showed disrespect to Husain's head, Zaid b. Arqam, an old companion of the prophet, stoutly remonstrated against it, showing that the spirit to speak out one's mind was not crushed by the inhumanities practised at Karbala, but strengthened. No sooner had Husain and his father, Ali b. Abi Talib, been irreverentially mentioned in the principal mosque at Kufa before an assembly of those loyal to Yazid, got together to hear b. Ziyad proclaim the victory over Husain, than the quiet orderliness of the proceedings was disturbed and rang out the voice of the old and blind Abdullah b. Afif to censure b

Ziyad in words of memorable candour and courage. When Yazid tried to repeat b. Ziyad's hideous incivility to Husain's head at Damascus, not only Abu Barza Aslami, but the Christian ambassador of the king of Rome also berated him roundly,

This was Husain's victory, Falsehood and untruth came to be openly challenged and provoked spontaneous dissent, and even non-Muslims began to express themselves freely and frankly about the lapses of the powers that be.

Before the battle of Karbala, who could dare refer to Husain with respect in the court of Yazid ? After Husain's ruined and plundered survivors had been presented in his court as prisoners, Yazid had to listen quietly to praise lavished on Husain.

The inevitable result of getting ashamed and smitten by remorse is that one resiles from what one earlier held important and dear. The differences between Husain and Yazid had arisen since the latter had insisted upon obtaining from the former a pledge of obeisance to himself. Husain refused this with the greatest firmness. It is now a settled fact that Husain held his ground on this point, otherwise his head need not have been raised on a spearhead. What remains, therefore, to be ascertained is whether Yazid stood fast in his demand or revoked it, Yazid wished to obtain from Husain the oath of loyalty to him not in the latter's capacity as an individual but in his capacity as the spiritual legatee of the prophet. After Husain's death, his son, Ali b. Husain, was in exactly the same position as Husain was during his lifetime. Moreover, Ali b, Husain and all other survivors of Husain after the battle of Karbala had been reduced to the status of a prisoners when they were presented to Yazid in the latter's court, Husain had never suffered that humiliation as he had never been held captive by Yazid who lived at Damascus and Husain lived at Medina, Mecca or at Karbala just before the end of his days. Had Yazid not yielded on the question of the oath of loyalty, he ought to have repeated the demand to Ali b, Husain. Nothing like it was even suggested to any survivor of Husain which shows that Yazid had retreated from his earlier stand. Oppression is usually employed to overawe and frighten the weak. However, once when Omar b. Sa'd threatened Ali b. Husain with death, the latter changed colour and in a voice weak but firm with resolute defiance queried, اما علمت ان القتل لنا عادة وكرامتنا الشهادة -

meaning, "Hast thou been unable to understand even now

that it is our habit to get assassinated and our distinction to attain martyrdom ?" This shows that one oppressed, and the target of inhuman atrocities did not get unnerved by or frightened of the cruelties employed against him, it were the oppressors who got demoralised by the fortitude and steadfastness of the oppressed. Accordingly despite all his power, Yazid could not muster the courage to put the question of the oath of loyalty to him to any other of Husain's survivors, since Husain's severed head was there before him and in his ears reverberated the sounds of the battle of Karbala and he knew full well that if the question was again put to Husain's survivors the sanguinary episode of Karbala would be repeated.

While, therefore, other forms ef persecution continued against Husains survivors, the question of the oath of fealty was not once raised. Is any great proof need to establish that victory belonged to Husain and defeat to Yazid ?

CHAPTER-XXXV

THE GUILTY FEEL ASHAMED

What especially distinguishes victory from defeat is the pride of the victor in his achievement and the shame of the vanquished at his performance. Husain adhered to the course he had chosen for himself, and neither he nor his survivors ever regretted what he had done or its consequences. Nor were any of his survivors, including even small children, his progeny and those who contemporaneously or latter yielded obedience to him abashed at Husain's conduct which had ended in disaster. On the contrary, not only his assassins and enemies, but those who had not actually attended to the duty of going to his aid were struck with shame at having omitted to do so.

The expression of shame assumes different forms, offering of explanations and excuses for one's conduct, shifting of the responsibility for one's lapse to others and the best, the acknowledgement of one's fault and the making of amends.

The really well-timed and highly laudable manner of expressing one's shame was that of Hur b, Yazid Riyahi who washed away with his blood the stain of guilt from his conduct and earned the merit of martyrdom of sincerely carrying out the most important duty of rendering assistance to Husain on the 10th Moharrum, The expression of their sense of shame by others, after that crucial moment, was behind time.

Those who could not or did not attempt to reach Karbala to assist Husain, after pledging their loyalty to him at the hands of Muslim b. Aqil, were guilty of a comparatively less serious lapse than others. The sincerity of their remorse was manifested very shortly after the tragedy of Karbala and, on account of their exertions in wreaking vengeance for Husain's blood, earned for themselves the estimable title of "the penitents".

Among those who had been remiss in performing the duty of extending assistance to Husain was Abdullah b. al Hur al ja' fi whose aid had been asked for by Husain himself on his way to Kufa, Abdullah had however, offered excuses, for inability to comply with Husain's wish, and saved his life.[1] Shame pursued him throughout the remainder of his existence

1. Irshad, P. 237

and he expressed his remorse in the following couplets:—

فيا لك حسرة ما دمت حيّا ... تردد بين حلقي والتراقي ،
حسين حين يطلب بذل نصري ... على اهل العداوة والشقاق
فما انسى عداة بقول حزنا ... اتتركني وتزمع للطلاق
فلو فلق التلهف قلب حيّ ... لهم القلب مني بانفلاق

meaning, "I shall continue to feel sorry that Husain asked me to go to his aid and I did not earn this blessing.[1] After the tragic happenings at Karbala when b, Ziyad complained to Abdullah about the latter's long absence and neglect to accompany him in the fight against Husain and also made[2] hint to the suspicion that Abdullah sympathised with the former's enemies, Abdullah's emotions burst forth and he recited couplets of which two follow:-

الا كنت قاتلت الشهيد بن فاطمة ... يقول امير غادر حق غادر
الا كل نفس لا تسدد نادمة ... فيا ندمي الا اكون نصرته

meaning, "That ruler who is a past master in perfidy asks me why I had not joined in the battle against Fatima's son, while I am struck with shame for omitting to go to Husain's aid. Indeed, he who does not choose the right course must feel ashamed. "He then left Kufa and went to the mountainous regions.[3]

The guilt of those who had enlisted themselves in the army of Yazid to fight against Husain at Karbala was even more serious. The pages of history have transmitted to us the stray sayings of some of them, expressive of their sense of shame. For example, Qurra b. Qais who had met Husain as Omar b. Sa'd's messenger used to say later in his life that if Hur had communicated to him his intention to quit Yazid's service and join Husain, he would certainly have accompanied Hur.[3] Similarly Razi b. Munqiz Abadi who had attacked Burair Hamadani in the battle of Karbala and, getting the worst of it, had called Ka'b b. Jabir b. Amr Azdi to his help who put Burair to death, used to acknowledge his shame in couplets meaning, "If it had not been so fated, I would have joined this battle

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 268
2. Tabari, Vol. VI, p, 270
3. Irshad p. 249; Tabari, Vol. VI, p. 244

to get beholden to b. Jabir. That day brought lifelong disgrace and humiliation not only for me but has also placed many generations of my family under a great stigma. I wish I had been dead and buried before the assassination of Burair and the battle against Husain.[1]

Shees b. Rabii, who was one of the important commanders of Omar b. Sa'd's army was heard saying, "God will do no good to the people of this country. How atrocious was it that for 5 years we fought against the progeny of Abi Sufyan on the side of Ali b. Abi Talib and his son (Hasan), and then, we joined the progeny of Muawiya and Ziyad in making an assault against Husain who, for his personal accomplishments, was superior to everybody on the earth. This was an aberration which remains unequalled."[2]

Much after the battle of Karbala Ayyub b. Mushreh Haiwani who had killed Hur b. Yazid Riyahi's horse with an arrow was once recounting the incident when some of his hearers asked him if he had also killed Hur. He replied, "No, by God, I did not put him to death, nor did I like doing so. "One of the audience, Abul Wadak, asked him why he had not liked to kill Hur Ayyub replied. "He was generally thought of as a man of virtue in his conduct. If it was a sin to raise one's hand against them, my sin extended only to wounding them and opposing them. It was better than my assassinating any one of them." Hearing this Abul Wadak flew into a passion and said. "As I see it. God will call you to account for the assassination of all of them. At some you shot arrows, of one of them you maimed the horse, with some of them you engaged in single combat, sometimes you made the attack yourself and sometimes you incited others to do so, and if you did nothing else, you at least added to the strength of the army by your presence and did not prefer to run away from the field of battle when attacked and like you, others also did these things, you are all therefore, equally guilty of the assassination of all those martyrs add shall all be punished for this crime." Ayub had no reasonable answer to make and he irascibly replied, "All right, if you are entrusted with adjudication on the day of reckoning, never pardon me."[3]

1. Tabari Vol. VI, p, 248
2. Op. cit-p-250
3. Tabari Vol, VI. p. 250

Greater than these men in his crime was the commander of Yazid's forces, Omar b, Sa'd. Hameed b. Muslim, a friend of Omar b. Sa'd, has reported that on Omar's return from Karbala he had gone to see Omar and asked him about what had happened there. Hamid than adds that Omar replied "Do not ask of me anything. No traveller will arrive at his destination heading for such an evil end as I. I made the proximity of relationship of mighty little consequence and committed an enormity."[1]

The crime of Obaidullah b, Ziyad, governor of Kufa, was even more heinous. He sent all the armies to Karbala under his own supervision. and ordered Omar b. Sa'd to assassinate Husain. For this act on his part, he used to place the responsibility on Yazid. Accordingly, when upon Yazid's death, a general uprising broke out throughout Iraq, b. Ziyad had to flee from Basra, He took with him a man of the clan of Bani Yashkar as a guide. During the journey, noticing b. Ziyad sitting with his head bent down for long, the guide took him to have fallen asleep and called out to him. b. Ziyad told him that he had not fallen asleep, but had been pondering over a grave matter. The quide told him that he knew what that matter had been. On being questioned about it by b. Ziyad, the guide said, "You were feeling remorse for the slaughter of Husain b. Ali b. Abi Talib and were also thinking of the "Qasr-i-Abyaz (white palace) you had built for yourself at Basra in which you have been unable to reside for a day, or you were feeling remorseful for the murder of the Kharijites of Basra on the basis merely of suspicion and conjectures,"Obaidullah b. Ziyad replied, "Nothing you have said is correct. Since Husain b. Ali had opposed the rulling king and the latter had ordered me to put Husain to death, the responsibility for his assassination must rest with Yazid b. Muawiya and not with me."[2]

It was however. on account of remorse that, when Yazid wished to send an army to attack the Hijaz and wrote to b. Ziyad to go and give battle to Abdullah b. Zubair he refused to oblige Yazid saying, "I have slain the grandson of the prophet at the bidding of this malefactor and I cannot now mount an attack on the Ka' ba,"[3]

The greatest criminal of all was Yazid b. Muawiya. This is borne out by the statement of b. Ziyad. quoted already, as also by the fact that

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 257
2. Tabari, Vol, VII, p. 29
3. Tabari Vol. 7, p. 6

upon learning Husain's intention to go to Kufa, he made b. Ziyad the governor of that place being sure in the knowledge that the new incumbent would be disposed to deal with Husain with the greatest harshness. Again,when b. Ziyad had put Muslim b. Aqil to death and sent his head to Yazid, the caliph had expressed his happiness at Muslims' assassination and acknowledged the services of b. Ziyad, instructing him to deal similarly with Husain.

And then it was only after ascertaining the agreement of Yazid that on the conclusion of the battle of Karbala, b. Ziyad had sent the survivors of Husain. and the heads of the martyrs from Kufa to Damascus. And even after getting to knew all the barbarities brought to bear against Husain at Karbala, Yazid did not communicate to b. Ziyad his displeasure much less visit him with his wrath for his misdeeds. On the contrary, so long as he was alive, Yazid allowed b. Ziyad to continue in the governership of Kufa and even lavished greater-favours upon him as also on other descendants of Ziyad. A brother of Obaidullah, Abdur Rahman b. Ziyad, who had been the governor of Khorasan since 56 A.H,. left for Damascus after the martyrdom of Husain and got the 20,000,000 dirhams. represented by him to have accumulated in the public treasury of Khorasan, assigned to himself.[1] After Abdur Rahman, the governorship of Khorasan was conferred upon his brother, Muslim b. Ziyad.[2]

These facts are more than adequate to establish that it was incompliance with Yazid's wishes and orders that Husain had been put to death. Accordingly, in the beginning he greatly rejoiced at the tragic event. When. however, the signs of the brewing of a revolution began to be unmistakeably noticeable, Yazid regained his wits and used to lament,"Alas, by putting Husain b. Ali to death b. Ziyad disgraced me and made me the object of hatred in the eyes of the Muslims. He has sown the seeds of enmity and rancour against me in their hearts, The good and the bad alike among the Muslims look upon Husain's assassination as he vilest crime and they detest me to a man. What alas has the son of Marjana (b. Ziyad) done ! May God curse him !"[3]

These are the revealing words of a confession made by Yazid of the shame and remorse that he felt at the slaughter of Husain. It is evident

1. Al Wuzara Wal Kitab, p, 18
2. Op-cit. p. 19; Tabari Vol. VI, pp. 271-272
3. Tabari Vol. VII, p. 19

that everybody who had anything to do with causing the tragedy at Karbala found his steps dogged by a sense of shame and remorse of which the degrees grew in strength and intensity in proportion to the extent to which the person concerned had a hand in that wanton blood-shed of innocent men of virtue and truth.

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CHAPTER-XXXVI

THE REACTIONS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD

A storm of grief and anger raged in every heart in the Muslim world when the details of the events of Karbala became known, and those considered responsible for the commission of the inhuman cruelties there came to be abominated and Husain s assassination put upon them the seal of infamy.

As the people of Kufa appeared to be closely connected with this great tragedy they came in for such disrepute as took centuries to be lived down. When about three-quarters of a century later, the relative merits of Basra and Kufa were being disputed before Abul Abbas Sifah, the first Abbaside caliph, pointed reference was made by Abu Bakr Bazli to Husain's assassination in disparagement of the latter city.

Abu Usman Nahdi, who used to reside at Kufa, shifted to Basra after the tragedy of Karbala,declining to stay in a place where the prophet's grandson had been put to death. The disgrace arising out of the tragedy did not remain confined to Kufa alone, but since Kufa and Karbala both were situated in Iraq, the ignominy extended to the whole of Iraq. When some one belonging to Iraq asked Abdullah b. Omar whether the killing of a mosquito was lawful after one had put on the garments of a pilgrim at Mecca, the latter railed at him, "Look at the people of Iraq, they shed the blood of the prophet's grandson ungrudgingly but enquire about the lawfulness of killing a mosquito ! And this, notwithstanding the prophet's statement, that Hasan and Husain both were his posies in the world;"[1]

As to individuals, those who had slaughtered the martyrs of Karbala were abhorred by the members of their own families. It was the wife, or, perhaps, the sister of Ka'b b. Jabir who told him that she would not speak to him for the rest of her life since he had participated in the battle against Fatima's son and assassinated Burair Hamadani, the chief of the reciters of the Quran.[2]

Even before Yazid had found it politically expedient to shift the responsibility for the assassination of Husain to b. Ziyad and to begin to speak ill of him, some of his courtiers had already begun to vilify b. Ziyad for having dispatched troops to Karbala, and make contemptuous references to his mother, Sumayya, and Yazid had to listen to these aspersions in

1. Bukhari, Vol. II, p. 188, Vol. IV p. 32 2. Tabari, Vol. II, p. 247

silence. Yahya b. al Hakam, while sitting with Yazid, recited the following couplets

لها بجنب الطف اد نى قرابة من ابن زياد العبد ذى الحسب الدنى
سمية اضحى نسلها عدد الحصى وبنت رسول الله ليس لها نسل

meaning, "The heads severed from their bodies in the plain of Karbala were more closely related to us than b. Ziyad, born of a slave. sprung from a contemptible stock. Alas, Sumayya's progeny have multiplied like gravel and the descendants of the prophet's daughter have been wiped out,[1] Even Sumayya herself cursed her son. b. Ziyad for this atrocious act.[2]

A thorough idea of the opprobrium incurred by Yazid on account of Husain's assassination is conveyed by his own statement that b. Ziyad had covered him with obloquy and rendered him odious to the Muslims. and that the good and the bad alike execrated him.

Not only did Yazid's contemporaries hold him in disfavour and vilified him, but the succeeding generations also entertained sentiments of anger and resentment againt him on account of his misdeeds, and even his Umayyad successors did not tolerate any deferential references being made to him. His own son, Muawiya b. Yazid publicly acknowledged the misdemeanours of his father from the pulpit and refused to occupy the throne vacated by him. These sentiments of repugnance persisted for Yazid till the beginning of the second century of the Hejira. Omar b. Abdul Aziz, an Omayyad caliph, flew into a passion when some one in his court prefixed the words 'Amir-ul-Momineen' (Commander of the faithful) to Yazid's name and said, "you call him amirul momineen ?" He sentenced the man to flogging and the sentence was duly carried out.

The disgrace abided and came to be associated with the followers of Islam in general. The assassination of Husain and the rule of Yazid as a caliph were considered by the well-known philosopher-poet of the fourth century of the Hejira as casting a slur on the Muslims. as the following couplets would show:-

امرى الايام الفعل كل كرة فما انا بالعجائب مستزيد
اليس قريشكم قتلت حسينا ، وكان على خلافتكم يزيد

meaning, "The changes of the times present to me sights so strange that

1. Irshad. pp, 261-262 2. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 6

I have lost all desire to witness them. Why ? Did not your Quraishites assassinate Husain, and did not a malefactor like Yazid mount the throne of your caliphate"?

Obviously, hatred as widespread as it was persistent, and entertained by the people in general against the assassins of Husain could not have been barren of the gravest consequences and must have irresistibly heralded a revolution.

CHAPTER–XXXVII

THE SIGNS OF REVOLUTION

Revolutions occur when two preconditions are satisfied : the development among the people of a lively sensibility and the irrepressible courage to speak out. Both these qualities had been bred among the Muslims as the inevitable consequence of the martyrdom of Husain.

The signs of revolution had commenced manifesting themselves ever since the survivors of Husain were being led about as prisoners in the bazaar of Kufa, Even though the captives were not allowed to cry, and all arrangements had been made by the government for the joyous celebration of the occasion, loud lamentations of the spectators greeted the sad and slow procession of the wornout, broken-hearted survivors of Husain and the powerful speeches of Zainab, Umm-e-Kulsoom and Ali b. Husain. This was the first spontaneous expression or public opinion which could not be suppressed by any exercise of power.

The gates of many cities were shut upon Yazid's officials at many stages on the route from Kufa to Damascus when the remnants of Husain's family were led to Syria. At many places people came out to offer armed resistance and at many points resort was actually made to violence, These beginnings were obvious preludes to a revolution.

Medina and Mecca were the nerve-centres of the Muslim world. Medina was the city of the Hashimites of whom many were descended from Abu Talib and had left the city with Husain. Other members of the family were, however, all there at Medina. Even from among the progeny of Abu Talib, Mohammad b. Hanafia and Abdullah b. Jafar and many ladies had been left behind at Medina. Howsoever insensitive the people of Medina might have been, but how long could the heart-breaking grief of so many sorely afflicted hearts leave them coldly unresponsive ? Just when b. Ziyad had dispatched Husain's head to Damascus, Yazid sent Abdul Malik b. Abil Hadees Salmi to Medina with the news of Husain's assassination to Omar b Saeed b. Aas. the governor of Medina. When Abdul Malik was nearing Medina some body asked him what had brought him to Medina. He replied that this could be known from the governor. The enquirer atonce repeated the verse of the Quran

انّا للّٰه وانّا اليه راجعون

(surely we are for God and to Him we surely return and said we are for God and to Him "By God Husain has been assassinated"

Saeed bade Abdul Malik announce Husain's death at Medina. When the news was broken, such loud out-burst of wailing and lamentation sprang up from the Hashimite houses as had never before been heard by Abdul Malik when he returned to Saeed, the latter smiled and recited Amr b. Ma'oi Karb's couplet :

عجيت نساء بني زياد عجة كعجيج نسوتنا غداة الارنب

saying that the mourning of that day was the retribution for the lamentation of the umayyad women over Osman's death. He then himself went to the mosque and informed people of the death of Husain.[1]

Mohammed b. Hanafia was performing the ablutions customary before the offering of prayers when he heard the news, and tears fell fast and thick from his eyes into the basin of water,, Abdullah b. Jafar received the news of the deaths of his two sons with that of Husain's death, and recited the verse انا لله وانا اليه راجعون His slave, Abus Salasil, who was ignorant of Husain's greatness and had been moved by the deaths of the sons of his master remarked " 'We have seen this black day on account of Husain "Hearing this, Abdullah b, Jafar flew into a rage and struck him with his shoe saying, "Wretch ! thou sayeth so about Husain. By God, if I had been with him, I would have sacrificed my life for him. I have been indeed, in some measure consoled by the fact that both my sons gave their lives with patience and steadiness, fully discharging the claims which my brother had upon their loyalty. " Addressing those who were present, he said, " If I could not myself render any help to Husain, both my sons did so in full measure. "[3]

Umme Loqman, Umme Hani, Asma, Zainab and Ramla, sisters of Muslim b. Aqil, while not adverting to their grief at the death of their brother, Muslim, were lamenting for Husain touchingly and saying." Muslims, what answer would you make when the prophet would ask you how you had dealt with his progeny and the members of his household,

1. Irshad, p. 263
2. Tabari Vol. VI, p. 223
3. Irshad, p. 264

so that some of them had been made, prisoners, and some had been slain and lay besmeared with blood and dust. He would ask you if this was the reward for his good wishes for you and the services he had rendered to you."[1]

Sentiments, heart-felt, like these could not but produce far-reaching consequences. The Medinites awoke to the urgent necessity of examining the conduct and actions of Yazid. Accordingly, in 64 A. H., a commission, consisting of some of the leading men of Medina including Abdullah b. Hanoola, Ghaseel-ul-Malaika, went to Syria to enquire into Yazid's character. On their return, the members of the commission disclosed the many transgressions made by Yazid against religion, even though many transgressions made by Yazid gainst religion even though they had been paid large sums as hush-money. They said, "We have come back from one who follows no faith, drinks, plays the tambour, listens to music sung by female singers, sports with dogs and spends his time with drunkards and debauchees in idle chitchat, We, therefore, disavow the allegiance that we had pledged to him."[2]

Jalaluddin Seoti has recorded in the Tarikhul Khulafa that the members of the deputation stated "We elected to oppose Yazid when we apprehended that God's punishment would assume the form of stones raining upon us from the sky, since he is one who deems it lawful to sleep with slave-girls who had shared his father's bed, and with his daughters and sisters, drinks and omits to say his prayers."

Even though all those shifts and subterfuges had been resorted to on this occasion also, which had been successfully employed by the government of Syria on earlier occasions, to keep under the control of the authorities the actions of the members of the delegation who visited Damascus, yet so overwhelming was the impact of the martyrdom of Husain that all those expedients proved to be of no avail. A member of the delegation, Munzir b, Zubair said, "Yazid has paid me 1,00,000 dirhams which would however, not deter me from acquainting you with the true facts. I tell you plainly that he drinks himself so drunk as to miss saying his prayers." He also corroborated what had been stated about Yazid by other members of the delegation.

1. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 4, Kamil Vol. IV, p. 52
2. Ibid

Accordingly, at the commencement of the year 62 A. H. the people of Medina unitedly turned out the governor of Medina, Osman b. Mohammed b. Abu Sufyan, a cousin of Yazid and beleagured the Umayyads in the town, even though they numbered as many as about 1000,[1] and these incidents touched off a series of repressive measures, taken by Yazid in retaliation, followed by demonstrations of abhorrence and hatred by the Muslims. Yazid sent an army under Muslim b. Aqba to suppress the rising in Medina and in the excessive anger which gripped him, he ordered that for three days on end Medina should be given over to rapine and murder and that the army might appropriate to its own use whatever it might capture including the prisoners of war.[2]

Daniwari has reported that the instructions to Muslim b, Aqba were, "If you obtain victory over the people of Medina, plunder the town for three days without break.[3] Accordingly on the 28th Zilhij 63 A. H. these orders were carried out[4] and for three full days and nights, Medina was given over to plunder.[5]

The captives at Medina could obviously have not been jews or Christians; they must have been the womenfolk and children of the prophet's companions and their followers. Yazid's orders were clear that they would be divided among the soldiers of the army, The forces of untruth had then gained such ascendancy that the remaining citizens of Medina vowed allegiance to Yazid specifying that they would be the slaves of Yazid who would possess plenary powers over their lives, property and dependents,[6] so that when Yazid b. Abullaha b. Rabia b. Aswad, a daughter's son of the prophet's widow, Umme Salma refused to take the oath of allegiance in this form, he was forthwith put to the sword.[7] when Yazid heard the accounts of these incidents, he expressed happiness, instead of regretting them and recited the couplets[8] :

لیت اشیاخی ببدر شهدوا ... جزع الخزرج من وقع الاسل
حین حکّت بقباء برکها ... واستحر القتل فی عبدالاشل

which mean that the onslaught at Medina and its residents had been made by way of revenge taken from the prophet of Islam.

1. Tabari Vol. VI, pp. 273-274
2. Ibid, Vol. VII, pp. 6-7
3. Al Akhbar ut Tawal. p. 260
4. Tabari, Vol, VII. p. 8
5. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 261
6. Tabari, Vol, VII, pp. 12-13
7. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 261
8. op. cit p. 263

The Meccans too had been aroused. On learning about Husain's assassination at Karbala and noticing the people full of anger and abhorrence against Yazid and the Umayyads, Abdullah b. Zubair, who had long yearned to secure the office of caliph for himself, considered it an opportune moment to advance his interest and delivered a forcible speech, decrying the inconstancy and cruelty of the residents of Kufa and the people of Iraq at great length, and paying rich tributes to the truthfulness and righteousness of Husain. He said, "By God, Husain preferred to die with honour and grace to living with humiliation and ignominy. After Husain s assassination, we shall never be satisfied about the credential of these people. By God, they have put to death a saint who slept little and fasted much, stood long worshipping God at nights and observed fasts by day. He was superior to all men in glory, eminence and faith, and merited to be a caliph more than anybody else. By God, he never misinterpreted the Quran, cried much for fear of God, and far from taking wine, he always observed fasts and instead of keeping hunting dogs as pets, he frequently held assemblies at his house for the recital of the praise and names of God." As a result of this speech, the Meccans got alienated from Yazid and agreed to pledge their allegiance to Abdullah b. Zubair.

These developments gave cause for much anxiety to Yazid who tried hard to win allies from among the notables of Mecca, but the crime of putting Husain to death was so egregiously heinous that even those who did not wish to swear allegiance to Abdullah b. Zubair, held Yazid in obhorrence. Abdullah b. Abbas, among the notables of Mecca, refused to pledge his fealty to Abdullah b. Zubair and to him Yazid directed his attention, writing to him, "I gatther that you were called by that impious man (meaning, Abdullah b. Zubair) to God s House to swear allegiance to him, but you have proved your loyalty to me by not obliging him, You may now keep your compatriots and others who visit you informed of your genuine views about b. Zubair and me, since b. Zabair, after obtaining the pledge of your allegiance to him, wanted to make you share his sins and falsehood. Be continuing in the allegiance pledged to me, and remaining obedient to me you have proved yourself entirely true to your pledge. May God reward vou for maintaining our connection in due regard. For my part, I shall not forget this kindness and the due obervance of the ties which bind you to me and I shall soon enough send you have merited. I may repeat my request that you may warn your visitors against the vices of b. Zubair and the plausibility of his speech, since people generally set much store by your opinions."

Abdullah b. Abbas sent the following reply to Yazid, "your letter has reached me. As for your presumption that I refused to pledge my allegiance to Abdullah b. Zubair, on account of any loyalty to you, it is wrong. You ought to know that I never spoke well of you nor ever wished you well. Do you imagine I shall ever forget that it was you who put Husain to death, or that the awful spectacle of the dead bodies, besmeared with blood and dust, of the young men descended from Muttalib, depried even of their garments after their death and left unshrouded and unburied on burning sands, the duty of covering whose nakedness with dust was performed by the gusts of wind, and the obligation of protecting whom was discharged by wild animals, till God arranged for their due burial through a tribe. will ever be washed away from my mind ?

Surely, Yazid, I can never forget that you forced Husain to depart from God's House and the prophet's home, and deputed b. Marjana to slay Husain. I do hope that God, the real Avenger, will suitably punish you for your misdeeds, and visit you with His wrath for the slaughter of His prophet's progeny and for acquiescing in this atrocity. You write to tell me that you would treat me with kindness and favour me with rewards, You may as well keep these favours for yourself. I have no use for them. In regard to your request that I should try to incline people towards you and estrange them form Abdullah b. Zubair, I may only say, "Let no good or prosperity come your way." You hope for my help and countenance although you have put to death my cousin and have slain those members of the prophet's household who were the lamps of rectitude and were like bright stars in a dark night. Alas ! the dark clouds of your armies have enveloped them ; Yazid ! did you not send your henchmen to God's house to slay Husain in those holy precincts ? Did you not continue to hold out threats to Husain till he was forced to undertake the journey to Iraq. You did all this, and did so, because your heart is confirmed in antagonism to God, the prophet and the latter's progeny regarding whom God sent down to verse of purification (tathir). This verse applied to the progeny of the prophet and not to your father and forefathers who were tyrants, sinners, insurgents and enemies of God and His prophet. Can you entertain any hopes of good from me after such misdeeds and misconduct? Yazid[1], your supreme transgression was that you bared the heads of the prophet's granddaughters and led them about from Iraq to Syria as captives in order to impress the people with your might and power, and show them how you had apparently succeeded in vanquishing and subduing the members of the

1. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 14

prophet's family. And you take pride in avenging yourself on the prophet's descendants for the slaughter, in the battle of Badr, of your unbelieving, sinful and unchaste forebears, The rancour then generated in your hearts lay hidden but alive like embers buried in ashes."

Sibt-i-Jauzi says that Yazid was thrown into a fury of anger on reading this latter, He even thought of having b. Abbas killed, but getting engaged in hostilities with b. Zubair, he could do little b. Abbas. Ibne Aseer has also quoted this correspondence in more or less the same words in his history (Vol IV, P. 62 Egypt). After the massacre and ravage of Medina, Yazid's deputy, Muslim b. Aqba advanced on Mecca as directed by Yazid but was still on his way to Mecca when in Moharrum 64 A. H. he was picked up by death ! Before his death Muslim b, Aqba had made Haseen b. Nameer Skoni the head of the army as directed by Yazid and asked him not to interfere with anything that the Syrians wished to do. , Haseen invaded Mecca and laid siege to the Kaaba, and finally on the 3rd Rabi 1, 64 A. H. , not only stones but also fire were catapulted at God's House which caught fire. [2]

This was Yazid's last act after which on Tuesday, 14 th Rabi 1, 64 A. H, he died. [3] Haseen b. Nameer then sent word to Abdullah b. Zubair that since the man who had deputed him to fight with the latter was dead, the hostilities between them had also concluded. Haseen, therefore, reqeusted that the gates of the city be thrown open so that he might go round the Ka'ba and depart. This request was accepted, and the army went back [4]

Al Fakhri says, "The total period of Yazid's rule was three years and a half. In the first year of his term, he put Husain b. Ali to death: in the second, he invaded Medina and abandoned it to sack and pillage for three days and, in the third, he led an expedition against Mecca. Of these three atrocious crimes, the calamity of Karbala gave such a frightful shock, especially to the Muslim world that no sensible person who learnt the details of the tragic episode could help being affected by it, since the action of Yazid constituted not only a sin and a crime, but was a flagrant political blunder by reason of which Yazid and his depraved and contemptible advisers like b. Ziyad and Shimr antagonised even those who, despite their

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 263
2. Sahih Muslim Vol. I, p. 420 : Tabari Vol, VII, p. 14
3 Tabari Vol. VII, p. 15
4. Al Akhbar ut tawal p. 263

belief in the greatness of God's prophet and attachment to the faith of Islam wished to stick to the last to their policy of non-interference with and toleration of the Omayyad government, even though they entertained no sentiments of attachment or loyalty to it.

After Yazid's death in 64 A.H., the pent up feelin gs of revulsion entertained by the people of Iraq against b. Ziyad were released with such violence that he had to flee from Basra unattended and unaccompanied.[1] He got an idea of the disgust people felt for him when during his journey he heard a camel-driver chanting to his dromedary the following verses :

يا رب رب الارض والعباد العن زياد او بني زياد
كم قتلوا من مسلم عباد جم الصلوٰة خاشع الفؤاد
يكابد الليل من السهاد

O God, execrate Ziyad and his progeny who put to the sword, without any crime or fault on their part. many muslims who used to offer devotions regularly, keep awake at night and were God-fearing and abstemious.[2]

The people of Iraq felt so highly outraged by the misdeeds of b. Ziyad that when his pursuit did not end in his capture, they attacked the governor's house, and plundered all his personal belongings.[3]

The state of affairs at Kufa might be judged from the fact that when after Yazid's death, a move was set on foot that b. Ziyad be recognised as the ruler, Yazid b. Haris b. Radeem Shebani, who had himself been at Karbala as a member of Yazid's army, opposed it, saying, "We desire to get rid of Sumayya's son, Certainly we cannot accept his rule."[4]

Such was the state of the abhorrence in which the atrocities committed by b, Ziyad were held by one who was an erstwhile partner in them. The women of Hamadan lamenting for Husain. and their men, carrying swords in their hands entered the mosque to register their protest against the installation in authority any further of men who had shed the blood of the prophet's son at Karbala.[5]

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1. Al Akhbar-ut Tawal p. 276. 277; Tabari. Vol. VII, p. 21
2. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 278
3. Tabari, Vol. VII, p, 28
4. Op. cit p. 30
5. Sawaiq Mohriqa, p. 134; Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 30

The climax in the expression of disgust with Yazid was reached when his son and successor, Muawiya b. Yazid, who had been accepted as the ruler after Yazid, mounted the pulpit and said. "O men I the institution of the caliphate was God's strong rope, but my grandfather, Muawiya b. Abi Sufyan, disputed the title to it with Ali b. Abi Talib who, in the truest sense, was the best entitled to it, and adopted the reprehensible ways which are known to you all. In any case, he has reached his grave surrounded by his sins. The office of caliph then went to my father, Yazid, who also did not at all deserve it. He put Husain, a son of the prophet's daughter, to death, Finally he too reached the end of his days and his grave, trapped in his sins. He then broke down and cried, saying, "The greatest misfortune for us is the fealing within us that he came to an ignominous and since he put the progeny of the prophet to the sword, validated drinking and profaned the sanctity of God's House Now, since I have been a stranger to the pleasures of the caliphate so far, why should I taste its bitterness? Fend for yourself and your affairs. I have nothing to do with the caliphate. Even if the world is desirable and a blessing, we have already had enough of it, and if it in reality undesirable whatever we have been receiving as our share of it is more than sufficient."

He then retired into the palace and forty days later he left this world.[1] Some historians are of the view that he was poisoned.[2] After the death of Muawiya b. Yazid some turbulence manifested itself in Khcrasan as well and the , governors there were turned out, and people engaged themselves in strifes and fighting.[3] The office of caliph was lost to the descendants of Abi Sufyan for ever, and in Syria, the old Marwan b. al Hakami received the pledge of allegiance and the office of caliph was for long held by his progeny.

1. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 30; Sawaiq Mohrlqa p. 124
2. Opcit. p. 24
3. Tabari Vol. 7 p. 44

CHAPTER—XXXVIII

THE PENITENTS

After Husain b. Ali had been put to death and b. Ziyad had returned to Kufa from his camp at Nakheela, the Shias of Ali, according to Tabari were stung with shame at their faint-heartedness. They took to mutual recrimination as they painfully realised the enormity of neglecting to go to Husain's help, and thereby leading him to his death in their close neighbourhood, since he had come to Iraq only on their invitation and promises of help. They concluded that this stain on their fair name could not be obliterated except by their putting to death all who had taken part in the assassination of Husain and his associates, or by laying down their lives in the attempt to accomplish this object. They therefore, got into touch with five persons friendly to the members of the prophet's household: Sulaiman b. Sard Khazaii. a companion of the prophet, Musayyab b. Najba Fazari, a distinguished companion of Ali b, Abi Talib, Abdullah b. Sa'd b. Nafeel Azdi, Abdullah b. Dal Teemi and Rifaa b. Shaddad Bijli. These and many other prominent persons met at the house of Sulaiman b. Sard where Musayyab b. Najba made a speech, saying,[1] "We used to plume ourselves on our truthfulness and the strength of our association, but when God put us to the test, we discovered that our claims were entirely unfounded. We invited Husain sending him messages to come to us. we saved our skins, and we defaulted in the discharge of our duty to help him with our lives, our property and with our tongues. Nor did we persuade our clansmen to do so, What answer now shall we make to God and the prophet since no excuse would be acceptable? There is, however, one way out. We should put to the sword all those who have any hand in the assassination of Husain, or lay down our lives in making the attempt, in the event of our failure. You may now elect a principal from amongst yourselves who would guide us in carrying out this mission."

Rifaa b, Shaddad followed with a speech supporting Musayyab. He suggested that if Musayyab agreed to head the enterprise, he may do so. In the alternative he suggested that if the others agreed, the eldest member of the group, Sulaiman b. Surd, be entrusted with the leadership. As he was a companion of the prophet, and his exploits in the cause of the faith

1. Tabari, Vol. VII. p. 47

were known to everybody and his sobriety of judgement and insight were entirely dependable. Abdullah b. Dal and Abdullah b. Sa'd in their speeches supported these views and acknowledged the suitability of Musayyab b. Najba and Sulaiman b. Surd both for the leadership of the group. After the concluding speech of Musayyab b. Najba, Sulaiman b. Surd was unanimously elected to the leadership of the group.

Sulaiman now stood up and made a very powerful speech which he used later to repeat on every Friday.[1] A summary of it is, "we used to crane our necks eagerly in looking for the arrival of the members of the prophet's household, but when they arrived, we acted with such indifference and laxity that in our land and not far from us, the prophet's son was put to the sword. When he raised his voice in demanding justice and help, there was none to respond to him and say, "Here I am, standing in thy service". The men of sin made him the target of their arrows and spears, and killed him. They did not stop at this, but divested him of his garments after his death. Now if you wish to get up, rise! God's wrath has been stirred. Resolve here and now not to return to your wives and children till you have taken steps to win God's pleasure, By God, I conceive. He will not be pleased with you so long as you have not paid the evil-doers in their own coin or have sacrificed yourselvelf in the endeavour. Be forewarned. Be not afraid of death, for whoever fears death, loses honour. Remember how the contrition of a party of Israelites was accepted when they had sinned by taking to the worship of a calf. They were told to prepare to kill themselves. What did they do? They sat down with necks outstratched, prepared for God's decree to take its course, for they fully realised the grossness of their transgression and knew that their penitence could in no other manner be accepted. Now that you consider yourself sinners similarly, prepare yourself for a like sacrifice. Sharpen your swords and straighten your spear-heads and sit down fully ready, awaiting the receipt of the summons for you and then come forward at once and make no delay."

A great upsurge of emotion seized the assembled penitents when they heard this moving speech. Many speakers stood up to express their own views and voice their own resolution to take part in the jehad. Abdullah b, Dal Teemi was appointed the treasurer and it was resolved that the funds of the party be kept with him, The assembly then broke up on a note of enthusiastic resolution.

1. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 48

Sulaiman wrote letters to Sa'd b, Huzaifa b, Yaman in Madain and to several others at various other places.[1] An important extract from these letters is given below :–

"The Shias of the members of the prophet's household have pondered over matters concerning the son of the prophet who arrived here when invited, who was denied help when he called for it, who was obstructed in going back when he desired to do so, who was refused quarter when he asked for it, who was not spared when he desired to be left alone, who was attacked and killed, whose garments were plundered after his death, and whose sacred dead body was left uncovered. Our group has now throught about this woeful incident and has been overwhelmed by the conviction that in withholding assistance from this innocent personage we have perpetrated an outrage which cannot be expiated except by our putting to the sword his assassins or by sacrificing our own lives in the attempt to do so. We are now ready to act according and all of you should also prepare yourselves like us. We have fixed a date and place for all to assemble to launch the enterprise, The date is Ist. Rabi II, 65 A.H. and the place is Nakheela.

Sa'd received this latter and he read it over to the Shias of Madain. He said,[2] "It is a fact that you had with one voice resolved to help Husain, and intended to present yourself before him immediately upon receiving news of the arrival. You however, unexpectedly, got news of his slaughter which left you helpless. You would, in any case, earn the reward for your intentions from God. The position now is that your brethren in faith request your help in the strife against the unrighteous. We have to consider now what to do in the context," Everybody agreed to lend assistance in the members of the prophet's household. Accordingly, Sa'd sent a reply to Sulaiman with promises of help. Similar replies were received from others also. All these steps were taken in absolute secrecy and a sufficiently large number of persons secretly fell in with the proposed movement. However, from 61 A.H. to Rabi I, 64 A.H. i.e. till Yazid's death, no opportunity favourable to the taking of practical steps, as visualised. had offered itself.[3] The movement, however, gained momentum after the demise of Yazid after when it came to be openly canvassed. It reached Egypt also and great enthusiasm was created for it by the series of

1. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 49
2. Ibid, page 50
3. Tabari Vol. VII, p. 51

speeches delivered in support of it by Obaidullah b. Abdullah Misri who made a mention of Husain's assassination in them in very moving expresions.[1]

On Ist. Rabi II, 65 A.H. the participants in the movement assembled at Nakheela as decided previously. It was, however, disheartening to find that out of 16,000 persons, whose names had been entered in the lists as having promised to turn up to participate in the movement only about 4000 men had actually presented themselves [2] These men were, however, firm in their resolution, and without caring overmuch for the smallness of their numbers, they decided to give practical shape to the movement.

Some of them thought that those who had killed Husain were present at Kufa itself and should, therefore, be dealt with them and there. Sulaiman, however, was inclined to be of the view that since the biggest criminal of them all was b. Ziyad who had rejected all conditions for peace and had ordered that no quarter should be given to Husain unless he offered unconditional obedience to Yazid, he should, in consequence, be the first to be tackled. He thought that if this attempt succeeded, it should hardly be difficult to deal with smaller criminals. Everybody agreed with these views.[3] Accordingly these men started for Syria on the night of Friday, 5th Rabi II, 65 A.H. before the crack of dawn, while it was still dark.[4]

First of all these men visited Husain's grave and their wailings and lamentations were of an indescribable poignancy. Everyone was possessed by an exceedingly restless craving to have achieved martyrdom in the service of Husain on 10th Moharrum. They spent a day and night in crying over Husain, in prayers and supplications and in expressions of penitence and seeking God's pardon. After this the whole gathering took leave of Husain's grave in a state of excessive emotitional ferment which was heightened by the telling speeches of Sulaiman b. Sard and other leaders.[5]

These crusaders, passing through stage after stage reached Ainulward and there arranged themselves in lines of battle, The Syrian forces under Zil Kala, and Haseen b. Nameer arrived after five days to confront them.

1. Ibid, p. 62
2. Tabari, Vol. VII, p 67
3. op-cit, p. 68
4. op-cit, p. 69
5. Tabari, Vol. VII. p. 70

Sulaiman b. Sard made his last arrangements and announced that in the event of his death Musayyab b. Najba would succeed him, followed in his turn by Abdullah b Sa'd b. Nafeel, Abdullah b. Dal and Rifaa b. Shaddad in the order in which their names are given.

The first encounter between the two parties took place on Thursday, 8th Jamadi I. Although the penitents numbered only 4000 against 16000 man of the enemy[2], the former emerged victorious from the fray. The day following, however, the enemy received a strong reinforcement of 8000 troops sent by b. Ziyad. A fierce battle ensued which continued to rage till late in the night and the crusaders suffered heavy casualties in wounded soldiers. The following day the position of the crusaders worsened on account of the marked numerical superiority of the enemy. The former fought very bravely and the enemy commenced sending a shower of arrows at them, killing Sulaiman b. Sard. The standard of the army was then passed on to Musayyab b, Najba and he made several advances but he too was ultimately killed.[3] Abdullah b. Sa'd b. Naufil then took the standard and started fighting with the help of the men of the clan of Azd. In the meantime three horsemen brought the news from Madain that reinforcements for the crusaders would be shortly arriving from Mada'in and Basra. The fighting strength of the crusaders had, however, so greatly deteriorated that the arrival of the reinforcements could not be hoped for during the lifetime of those engaged in fighting, The lately arrived mounted soldiers therefore, also joined in the fighting and were killed.[4] Then Abdullah b. Sa'd and Abdullah b. Dal were also killed one after the other.[5]

As evening had fallen now, the battle was suspended. Of the chiefs nominated to lead the penitents only Rifaa b. Shaddad had been left alive with only a few hundred soldiers, many of them wounded or otherwise incapacitated for fighting. Seeing no hope of success in keeping up the battle, these men beat a retreat in the night.[6] Thus ended the first attempt to take revenge from the assassins of Husain.

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1. Tabari, Vol, VII, p, 74
2. op.cit, p, 75
3. op.cit, p. 76
4. op.cit, p. 77
5. op.cit, p 78
6. Tabari, Vol. VII, p, 80

CHAPTER—XXXIX

REVENGE FOR THE UNJUST BLOODSHED

The party of the penitents led by Sulaiman b. Sard Khazaii had attempted to take revenge from those who had slaughtered Husain They embarked upon a course of direct action against Yazid's government, but due to their numerical weakness they could not paralyse Yazid's administration so as to be able to wreak vengeance on those responsible for the crime. Those who had committed the crime were, however, not destined to enjoy a long reprieve, and Mukhtar b, Abi Obaida Saqafi appeared on the scene as the avenger.

Mukhtar was among the chiefs of Arabia. His father, Abi Obaida, had taken part in many engagements during the conquest of Persia by the armies of Islam, The battle of Jasr-i-Abi Obaid, for instance, had been named after him. He had earned a special name for himself as a sympathiser of the members of the prophet's household, Even though not mentioned by name in the letters sent to Husain inviting him to Kufa, Muslim b, Aqil had stayed at his house at Kufa for a while.[1] When b Ziyad established his rule there, and the prospects of Muslims' success became dim, Mukhtar was not present at Kufa, having gone out to some village in his estate. Muslim, therefore, shifted to Hani's place. After Hani's arrest, Muslim had to break cover and fight for his life. Ultimately both Muslim had Hani were put to death. Mukhtar returned to Kufa only after these tragic developments when Amr b. Harees had raised a standard to guarantee the safety of the life and property of everyone who took shelter under it. Mukhtar also sought shelter under the standard but the government of the day so highly suspected his credit, that he was refused quarter and summoned by b. Ziyad to his court and treated to such lavish application of the latter's stick to his face, that one of Mukhtar's eyes was seriously injured. He was then thrown into prison, and at the time of Husain's assassination, Mukhtar was in gaol. He would, in all likelihood, have been murdered, but was spared as his sister was the wife of Abdullah b. Omar who also had initially refused to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid. After Husain's slaughter, his spirit had been damped, and he had betrayed signs of leaning towards Yazid who, on his part, was so pertur-

1. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 58, Irshad, p, 211

bed by the disgust of the Muslim world with him that he wished to propitiate and appease everybody who could be prevented from decrying his government. He, therefore, deemed it wholly inexpedient to annoy Abdullah b. Omar by rejecting any request made by him.

Accordingly, when Abdullah b, Omar, pressed by his wife, recommended Mukhtar's release to Yazid, peremptory orders were issued to b. Ziyad to set Mukhtar at liberty. Obaidullah b. Ziyad, however, freed Mukhtar on his undertaking to quit Kufa within three days whereafter his assassination would become lawful. Mukhtar, therefore, left Kufa as stipulated,[1]

For more than an year, Mukhtar moved about in the Hijaz, visiting different places, all the time announcing his intention to take revenge for Husain's slaughter and to allow himself no rest till he had done so.[2] Mukhtar was at Mecca when the armies of Damascus led by Haseen b. Nameer, marched against Abdullah b. Zubair and laid siege to Mecca. When on 3rd Rabi I, 64 A. H. the Ka'ba was set on fire, and the Syrian armies entered Mecca, Mukhtar fought with great bravery and courage almost single-handed against the Syrians[3] who were defeated. In the meantime the news of Yazid's death arrived, and the Syrians went back. Mukhtar, however, stayed on with Abdullah b. Zubair for slightly over 5 months.

During the interval, a revolution had taken place at Kufa whose inhabitants had turned out b. Ziyad's deputy Amr b. Harees and had temporarily installed Aamir b. Masood, who had pledged allegiance to Abdullah b. Zubair, as the governor of Kufa. Aamir had brought round the Kufans to accept Abdullah b. Zubair as the caliph. Things had, however, not settled down and Mukhtar considered it to be the appropriate time for implementing his plans of taking revenge from the assassins of Husain and left for Kufa,[4] where he exchanged views about his mission with prominent Shias, many of whom fell in with him.[5]

When Sulaiman b. Sard Khazaii appeared with his company of the penitents to confront the Syrians. Mukhtar was arrested at Kufa and sent

1. Tabari Vol, VII, p, 59
2. op. cit, p. 62
3. op. cit, p. 63
4. Tabari, Vol. VII p. 63
5. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 64

to prison[1] and remained there till after the death of Sulaiman, the remnants of the penitents returned to Kufa with Rifaa b. Shaddad.[2] Abdullah b. Omar again wrote to Abdullah b. Zubair and Ibrahim b. Mohammad b. Talha whom the latter had appointed governor of Kufa, recommending Mukhtar's release from incarceration. After swearing loyalty to the government of the day, Mukhtar succeded in obtaining freedom. The governor was then removed, and Abdullah b. Zubair made Abdullah b. Muti' governor of Kufa, and the latter arrived there on 25th Ramazan, 65 A. H.

By now many prominent and brave men had made common cause with Mukhtar, only Ibrahim b. Malik-i-Ashtar, a very important Shia, remaining aloof from the movement sponsored by Mukhtar. Ibrahim's cooperation in the movement seemed to be indispensable. The objects of the movement were, therefore, fully explained to Ibrahim and he was won over to it, which meant a great accession of strength to the cause.[3]

Mukhtar used to exchange visits with Ibrahim almost daily and their confabulations used sometimes to be prolonged far into the night. It was finally decided that on the night of Thursday, 14th Rabi I, 66 A.H. practical shape may be given to the movement.[4]

It was felt that it was unnecessary to go to Damascus to take revenge from the assassins of Husain as they were available at Kufa itself and vengeance might be taken there. This course, however, necessitated confrontation with the government of Abdullah b. Zubair since Husain's assassins had their bases at Kufa although functioning directly under the government of Syria. Taking revenge from them, therefore, meant taking the law into their own hands by the sponsors of the movement. The government of the day was bound to ensure the safety of the persons concerned, since they were residents of Kufa, in order to preserve the integrity of its territory. It, therefore, became impossible for Mukhtar and his associates to take vengeance on the murderers without superseding the then government of Kufa and establishing an independent government there. War with Abdullah b. Zubair became inescapble, and Abdullah b. Muti, the governor of Kufa, unable to resist the pressure on him, fled before Mukhtar who set up his own government there, thus exposing himself to the fury of two governments: those of Syria and of Abdullah b.

1. op. cit, p. 65
2. op. cit, p. 80
3. Al Akhbar-ut-Tawal, pp 282-283, Tabari Vol. VII pp. 98-99
4. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 100

Zubair. the one directly interested in the well-being of Husain's assassins. and the other keen on re-establishing its authority at Kufa.

It is only when all these factors are taken into account that it may be correctly judged how far the accusations levelled against Mukhtar in popular histories might be deemed to be well-founded. The allegations include his claim of knowing things concealed or such as belong to the future, that Gabriel used to visit him that he falsely claimed to represent Mohammad b. Hanafia after proclaiming him the Mehdi and that he won over Ibrahim b. Malik-i-Ashtar by forging a letter as written to him by Mohammad b. Hanafia. The allegations appear to us to have been made against Mukhtar as part of the propaganda of the two governments to malign him. Instances of such trumped up charges being levelled against enemies are by no means scarce, to wit,Yazid and his supporters are reported to have called Abdullah b. Zubair an upostate from Islam. How then may the charges against Mukhtar be taken as genuine ? Indead, the falsehood of such allegations becomes manifest simply by taking into consideration the status and rank of the persons who belonged to Mukhtar's party and worked with him over appreciably long periods of time, such as Abu-t Tufail Aamir b. Wasla b. Asqa Kinani, a companion of the prophet,[1] and Abu Osman Nehdi, Rifaa b. Shaddad, Yazid b. Uns, Abdur Rahman b. Sai'd b. Qais, Warqa b. Aazib and Ahmar b. Shameet who were all men of discernment and religion.

Granting tnat Ibrahim b. Malik-i–Ashtar had been won over by Mukhtar by means of a forged letter, does it stand to reason that Ibrahim would not have disowned the latter after gaining an insight into his real beliefs and doings which Ibrahim must have acquired in the course of his long and close association with the latter ? And if Ibrahim, with all his advantages for getting fully acquainted with Mukhtar, could not peer into his grave faults of character, how could Mukhtar's accusers discover his failings since they had never been on such intimate terms with him as Ibrahim ?

Mukhtar's sincerity is amply borne out by the very fact that even after his occasion to power, neither he nor his associates ever lost sight of their object, and started picking up one by one Husain's assassions for being put to the sword. Their actions were always fully in consonance with their slogan يَا ثَارَاتُ الْحُسَيْن [2]. His carried out his task

1. Sahih Muslim Vol. II, p 258. He was the last of the companions of the prophet to die in 100 A. H.
2. Tabari Vol. VII, p. 120

courting a series of confrontations with his enemies. Obaidullah B Ziyad invaded Mosul at the head of a Syrian army and Mukhtar sent Yazid b Uns with 3,000 men to give him battle.[1] The troops of the enemy were defeated,[2] but Yazid b. Uns, who had been ailing since before the commencement of the hostilities, died during the battle. After the death of the commander, Warqa b. Aazib decided to suspend the fighting till the arrival of reinforcements from Kufa, in view of the numerical superiority of the adversary's forces.[3]

On getting this information, Mukhtar dispatched Ibrahim b. Malik-i-Ashtar to Mosul at the head of 7,000 troops to relieve Warqa. The chiefs of Kufa, who were almost all those who had participated in the battle of Karbala against Husain, finding that Ibrahim had gone out of Kufa and Mukhtar had been left almost alone, thought it to be an excellent opportunity of staging a revolt against Mukhtar. They launched an offensive againct him.[4] Prominent among these chiefs of Kufa were Shaes b. Rabii, Shimr Zil Jaushen, Mohammad b. Ash'as. Zuhr b. Qais, Hijar b., al Zabr. Yazid b. Haris b. Radeem Shebani and Amr. b. Hajjaj Zubedi.[5] None of these names is unknown to these who have studied the happenings at Karbala.

Mukhtar kept on the fight with these men along usual lines and sent a messenger to Ibrahim b. Malik-i-Ashtar calling him back to Kufa. urgently, and Malik returned to Kufa on the third day.[6]

The stage had now arrived for punishment to be meted out to the enemies of the prophet's descandents and their arrests commended.

When the first group of 500 of the arrested men was produced before Mukhtar, he asked that those who had been present at Karbala at the time of Husain's slaughter should be pointed out to him, adding that their lives would not be spared. He also said that the others would be let off. Accordingly those against whom the charges were established were put to the sword, and the rest were released after affirming their loyalty.[7]

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1. Tabari Vol. VII, p. 113
2. op, cit, p. 114
3. op. cit, p, 115
4. op. cit. p. 116
5. op. cit, pp. 116–117
6. Tabari, Vol. VII, p. 118
7. Tabari Vol, VII, p. 121

On Wednesday, 24th Zilhij 66 A.H.[1] it wes announced on behalf of Mukhtar that those who shut their doors and stay within their houses would be given quarter provided they had not taken part in the slaughter of the prophet's descendents,[2]

Since the murderers of Husain had also concealed themselves in their house, Abu Amra Kaisan, a police officer, who knew them thoroughly was despatched with 1000 labourers to demolish the houses of all those who had participated in the inhumanities of Karbala. A large number of houses were then demolished and many enemies of the members of the prophet's household were put to the sword,[3]

Now those prominent among the assassins of Husain were put to the sword. They included Shimr Zil Jaushan,[4] Abdullah b. Asad Mehni: Malik, b. Nasr Badi, Haml b. Malik Maha-abi,[5] Ziyad b. Malik, Imran b, Khalid. Abdur Rahman b. Abi Khushkara Bijli, Abdullah b. Qais Khoolani, Abdullah b. Salkhab. Abdur Rahman b. Salkhab. Abdullah b. Wahb, Osman b. Khalid Jehni, Bashar b, Soot. Qabiz.[6] Khooli b. Yazid Asbahi,[7] Omar b. Sa'd[8], Hakeem b. Tufail Taee Shabsi[9] Zaid b. Rifad Jehni, Hurmula b. Kahil Asadi, Amr b. Sabeeh Sadaii[10] and Qais b. Ash'as[11].

After concluding his task at Kufa, Mukhtar again dispatched Ibrahim to engage with b. Ziyad[12] After a hotly contested battle at Khazir about 70 miles from Mosul, the Syrian army was defeated and b. Ziyad perished at Ibrahim's hands. Haseen b, Nameer Skoni and Sharjil b. Zilkala two well known Syrian chiefs, were also killed.[13] Ibrahim severed b. Ziyad's head

1. op, cit, p. 124
2. op, cit, p. 121
3. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p 286
4. Tabari, Vol, VII, p. 122
5. op. cit, p. 124
6. op. cit, p. 125
7. op. cit, p. 126
8. op. cit, p. 127
9. op, cit, p. 128
10. op. cit, p. 129
11. op. cit, p. 139
12. Al Akhbar ut Tawal p. 139
13. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p, 238, Tabari Vol, VII, pp, 144-145.

and sent it to Mukhtar who forwarded it to Mohammad b. Hanfia[1]. Ibrahim then reduced Mosul and its surrounding country and posted officers to administer it. He went to stay at Neseebeen[2] and Mukhtar alone remained at Kufa. Enmity had already sprung up between him and Abdullah b. Zubair who was still in possession of Basra in Iraq. Not satisfied with the officer who was in authority at Basra, b. Zubair replaced him with his brother, Musa'b b. Zubair, possibly because he contemplated attacking Mukhtar.

The murderers of Husain who had managed to escape death at Mukhtar's hands, like Shees b. Rabii, Mohammad b. Ash'as Murra b. Munqiz Abdi, Sinan b. Uns and Abdullah b. Urwa Khasami fled from Kufa and went straight to Abdullah b. Zubair at Basra[3] They persuaded him to fight with Mukhtar. Shees b. Rabii and Mohammad b. Ash'as gave very exaggerated accounts of the persecution to which they had been subjected' and they tearfully implored him to invade Kufa,[4] Daniwari says that gradually about 10,000 residents of Kufa left for Basra, and led by Mohammad b. Ash'as, they assured b. Zubair of victory.

In the meantime, Abdullah b. Zubair had thrown Mohammad b. Hanafia. his dependents and those residents of Kufa who were present at Mecca into prison, and had indicated a time limit by which they should swear allegiance to him failing which they would be burnt alive. Mohammad b. Hanafia sent word of this to Mukhtar who dispatched an army to Mecca which set him and the others with him free. These men were prepared to put b. Zubair to death. but Mohammad b. Hanafia sternly forbade them from shedding blood within the precincts of God's house, They then led him to safety and went back.[5]

At length, most probably at the instance of his elder brother, Musab b. Zubair attacked Kufa at the head of a big army, Mukhtar prepared to put up a stiff resistance, but God's will had ordained otherwise. Mukhtar had completed the task of his life. His strength stood divided as Ibrahim b. Malik-i-Ashtar was at Naseebeen, unaware of the developments, Beside having a large army at his command, Musab was accompanied by

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1, op, cit, p, 288
2, op, cit, p, 289
3, Tabari Vol, VII, pp, 124, 129 to 130 and 141
4, op, cit, p, 146-147
5. Tabari, Vol, VII, p, 136-137

important chiefs of Kufa like Mohammad b. Ash'as who attracted to Musab's side Kufans who had so far been kept down. Mukhtar was also charged with having made Arabs subservient to the non Arabs.[1] All these factors led to weaken Mukhtar's power. However, he fought very bravely against Musab b. Zubair for several days with the troops available. Many outstanding chiefs of Mukhtar's armv, like Ahmar b, Sameet and Abdullah b. Kamil, fell in the battle.[2] A prominent enemy of the prophet's descendants. Mohammad b. Ashas, also perished in the battle,[3]

At last all the faithful associates of Mukhtar were killed, the common people thrown into confusion and disorganised, and he was himself beleaguered in his fort, Then Mukhtar emerged from his fort accompanied by his death defying companions and fought his last battle with great bravery and laid down his life fighting on 14th Ramazan 67 A.H. aged 67 years.[4] The enemity and callousness of the enemies was climaxed by the public slaughter of Mukhtar's widow, Amra, daughter of Noman, for her refusal to revile her husband,[5]

Mukhtar was fortunate enough to have achieved the object of his life in dying as he did. Indeed, he did not die but achieved an eternal life and of his death, it might be truly said.

هرگز نمیرد آنکه دلش زنده شد به عشق ثبت است بر جریدهٔ عالم دوام

("One whose heart is animated by love never dies, my immortality is stamped in the world's register,")

1, Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p, 295
2, Tabari Vol, VII, pp, 148-149
3, Al Akhbar ut Tawal p, 297, Tabari Vol, VII, p, 151
4, Tabari Vol, VII, p, 155-161
5, op, cit p, 158, Al Akhbar ut Tawal p, 300

CHAPTER-XL

THE FALL OF THE OMAYYADS

It is a fact, borne out by history, that when any group of men acquires the degree of influence and power which provides its leading members not only with the necessities of life but also with a superfluity of luxuries, it gets posessed by the desire for pleasure and enjoyment and love of status and rank It gets mean-spirited, self-seeking and listless, and is well set on the road to decay as stated in the Quran :

واذا اردنا ان نهلك قرية امرنا مترفيها ففسقوا فيها فحق القول عليها
فدمرناها تدميرا

"When we wish to destroy any inhabited site, we multiply the well-to-do among its residents. They indulge in sin and vice. Our law is then vindicated in relation to it, and we destroy it,"

The material progress achieved by the Omayyads from the prophet's death to Yazid's time is common knowledge. In wealth and splendour, in extent of territory, in excellence of equipage and grace of paraphernalia, in number of retainers and smartness of their turn out, they vied with the Roman and Persian emperors, but in self-indulgence and sensuality they far exceeded the latter. In conformity with the law of nature, therefore, the hour of their decline was steadily drawing near, when, to precipitate their doom, the short-sighted Yazid, drunk with power, put Husain to the sword, heedless of the latter's spiritual greatness and the invincible power put Husain to the sword, heedless of the latter's spiritual greatness and of righteousness. The inevitable consequence was that the decadent Omayyad power sped fast and sure to its grave.

It was the unjust assassination of Husaln which, while it provided the excuse for challenging Yazid's authority to Abdullah b. Zubair on the one hand, turned the erstwhile indifferent residents of Medina against him on the other. The urge to take revenge for Husain's slaughter raised the party of the penitents to open a vigorous, though unsuccessful, military compaign against his murderers prompted Mukhtar to engage in a number of battles with fatal consequences for a large number of the former henchmen of Yazid, concerned with the tragedy of Karbala and drove Zaid b. Ali b.

Husain in 118 A.H. to rebel against the Omayyads'[1] and though unsuccessful he succeeded in leaving after him a permanent party, potentially highly damaging to Omayyad power. Later, it was the same craving for retribution which lent credibility to the specious Abbaside propaganda[2] in manoeuvering for the capture of power for themselves in order to crush the Omayyads.

It would be seen that all these movements against Yazid did not stem from altruistic motives or genuine sorrow for Husain. Some of them were, indeed purely political drives from which Husain's descendants kept themselves severely aloof. Indeed they used to forbid the founders of such movements from launching them. The law of nature, however, had to be and was vindicated.

When Abu Muslim Khorasani raised a black standard at Merv with the declared object of taking revenge for Husain's slaughter, thousands of men rallied under his banner and eventually the last Omayyad king. Marwan b. Mohammad was killed in the battle of Zab[3] and with him perished the Omayyad power for ever.

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1. Irshad, p. 126
2. Tabari, Vol. VIII, p. 135
3. Al Akbhar ut Tawal, p. 210. The movement was set on foot about the end of 100 A.H. or the beginning of the following year by Mohammad b. Ali b. Abdullah b. Abbas, In 104 A.H., Ab.l Abbas(Safah) Abdullah b. Mohammad b. Ali was born (Tab ari), Vol. VIII. p. 174) Marwan b. Mohammad ascended the throne in 127 A. H. (Tabari Vol. IX, p. 54) and in 129 A.H. the propaganda for taking revenge came to be openly made. (Tabari Vol. IX, p, 83)
4. Tabari, Vol. IX, p. 136

CHAPTER-XLI

Sometime after the martydom of Husain, the descendants of Abbas, the prophet's uncle, sounded the call for taking vengeance for the tragedy. The movement gradually gathered strength till Abu Muslim Khorasani gained ascendancy in Khorasan and all Muslim territory from Persia to Iraq was raised against the Omayyads in the name of the prophet's descendants.

Although black was adopted as their distinctive colour by the Abbasides, it had nothing to do with grief for the martyrs of Karbala, but was a mark of mourning for the death of the founder of the Abbaside movement Mohammad b. Ali b. Abdullah b. Abbas,[1] and the murder of the leader of the movement, Ibrahim b. Mohammad.[2] Those who were unaware of the real position mistakenly thought it to be a token of mourning for Husain. This thought found confirmation from the date, 10th Moharrum, of the rally of the Abbasides wearing black, in the principal mosque at Kufa, staged in 132 A.H. after the murder of the Omayyad caliph, Marwan, which coincided with the date of Husain's assassination.[3]

It was sought to attract men to the movement by referring to and in the name of, the superior merits and claims of the members of the prophet's household and family to the caliphate. After the issue of the proclamation inviting people in general to join the movements, one of its principal promotors, Abu Daoud Khalid b. Ibrahim addressed a gathering putting a number of questions & asking the audience to give him the answers. The questions asked by him were, "Does any one of you entertain any doubt about God's selection of Mohammad for the office of prophet for all creation ?" "Is there any doubt that God sent down his book on Mohammad by Gabriel and that the Quran tells of what is lawful and what is unlawful ?' Does it admit of any doubt that when the prophet left the world, he had discharged the duties of prophethood to the full" ? "Did the knowledge which had been bestowed on the prophet remain in world after him, or did it go back after his departure? "If it was left behind in the world, could it be in the possession of any one other than the members of his house-

1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, p. 324
2 op. cit, p. 243
3. op. cit, p, 344

hold and family ?" and finally, "If the possibility arises of the rulership of Islam passing into the hands of the members of the prophet's household and family, would anybody of you like it to pass into other hands.[1]"

To every one of these questions, the answer returned was in the negative,

In 130 A.H. Toreed b. Shafeeq Salmi, in a speech delivered by him in connection with the preparation of a battle with Nasr b. Siyar said, "The clan of Muzir are the assassins of the prophet's descendants, and allies and supporters of the Omayyads."[2]

The oath of allegiance which used to be taken from the people by the Abbaside propagandists was not for any named ruler, but in the following from:-

ابایعکم علی کتاب اللہ عزّ وجلّ وسنّۃ نبیّہ والطاعۃ لمن رضا من اھل بیت رسول اللہ

"I take the oath of allegiance from you for obedience to God's book, the practices and sayings of the prophet and the person approved of by the members of the prophet's household."[3]

In a speech addressed to the people of Khorasan, Qahtaba said, "The Omayyads intimidated and terrorised the good and the abstemious in the family of the prophet. God has now chosen to take his revenge from the Omayyads through you."[4]

When on the 11th Moharrum, 132 A.H., the establishment of the Hashimite rule was proclaimed, Abu Salma Hafs b, Sulaiman, a friend of the prophets' household was appointed a minister. He was known as the Minister of the prophets' descendants (Wazeer-i-Aale-Mohammad) and Abu Muslim Khorasani as the trusted one of Mohammad s descendants (Ami-i-Aal-e-Mohammad).[5]

The responsible descendants of the prophet were well aware of the real position and they knew that their name was being invoked only to

1. Tabari, Vol. IX, p. 87
2. op cit, p. 97
3. op. cit, p, 99
4. op. cit, p. 106
5. Tabari Vol IX, p. 142

serve the political objects of the sponsors of the movement. Accordingly, when a letter was received by Imam Jafar b. Mohammed Sadiq, offering him the caliphate, he consigned it to the flame of a lamp in front of the messenger, saying that the people of Khorasan were not Ali's genuine Shias, Abu Salma had been deceived and would be murdered.[1]

This was what actually happened. Shortly after the accession of Abul Abbas Safah b. Mohammad b. Ali b. Abdullah b. Abbas to the caliphate had been announced, Abu Salma was put to the sword.[2] And after Safah, the descendants of the prophet received from time to time the bad treatment they had received from the Omayyads. That, however, does not take away from the fact that the sympathies of the people in general were enlisted against the Omayyads by invoking the name of Mohammad's progeny because of the feelings of harted which had been aroused against the Omayyads after the slaughter of Husain.

1. Al Wazara Wal Kitab. p. 57
2. op. cit. p. 60

CHAPTER—XLII

THE CHANGE OF MENTALITY

It was no part of Husain's immediate object to destroy the power of the Umayyads or Yazid's rule materially, for if that had being his object, he should have, from the very beginning, collected appropriate military support and other material means to ensure its fulfilment. His endeavour was, in fact, directed towards bringing about a mental revolution. Armies kill men but not ideas nor do they alter men's mental outlook. Husain did not therefore, give thought to arming himself for military action but made it the sole object of his care to produce an enduring change in the mental attitude of the people How far did he succeed in achieving his object ?

It is generally known that the majority of the Muslims regard the caliph as a person in authority and has made obedience to him as obligatory as obedience to God and the prophet, A certain degree of power to frame even religious laws has been conceded to him. Accordingly any path trodden by the caliph should have been accepted as rightly guided, but we find that the majority of the Muslims-barring, of course, the Shias who do not accept the generally received modes of the installation of caliphs at all—the Sunnis, divide the caliphate into two categories· the right guided caliphate' and the' other than right guided caliphate.' Generally speaking, the caliphate of Ali and then the period of Hasan's caliphate prior to his treaty with Muawiya are supposed to mark the end of the right-guided caliphate, and Muawiya Yazid and the other Omayyad and Abbaside caliphs are all categorised as other than right-guided caliphs.' This distinction and down-grading, clearly and unmistakably must be accounted as the product of Husain's grand protest and distinctive manner of jehad.

After the resistance offered by Husain at Karbala, it was settled for all time that no caliph possessed the power to make religious laws and that the evil deeds of a caliph are as much sinful, or even more sinful, than similar deeds of ordinary men. It was also decided that the duty of remaining obedient to the person for the time being in authority, for the preservation of public peace, extended only up to the point where contravention of the divine purpose did not supervene, and that when the

requirements of the divine law might be satisfied only by offering resistance to the powers that be, it became the duty of everyone to prepare to offer such resistance as required for the carrying out of the divine laws and purposes.

In this way Husain imparted to contemporary society. plagued with an orderless muddle and undiscriminating confusion, a sense of obligation to keep in countenance at least the cardinal moral values and an awareness of the right to call a tyrannous ruler to account, so that after the events of Karbala, no government has cared to allow itself to relapse into indifferent somnolence.

Again, Husain's patience and steadiness became an abiding example to remember in all adversities and have lent stability and resolution to wavering hearts. Accordingly, when in 71 A.H. Abdul Malik b. Marwan led an expedition against Mus'ab b. Zubair throwing the latter's forces into disarray and demoralisation on account of his superior numerical strength, Mus'ab called Urwa b. Mughira b. She'ba to himself and asked him to recount how Husain had refused to obey the orders of b.Ziyad and steeled himself to carry out the jehad. Upon Urwa's giving him the account, Mus'abs courage was restored and lashing his horse, he recited the couplet :

فان انی بانطف آل هاشم تاسوا فسقوا للکرام التاسیا

"The members of Hashim's family have set an example a Karbala which is the best for the noble-minded"), He then confronted the enemy with all his strength and met his death fighting on 15th Jamadi I, 72 A.H.[1]

Likewise the gifts made by Husain of the power of endurance and the courage to speak out have ever since been sources of danger for the powers of tyranny and iniquity, and this message, which has awakened human sensibility, is with us today and will endure for ever, as has been aptly described by Josh :

یہ آج جو اک گونج ہے آزادی کی یہ بھی ہے حسین ابن علی کی آواز

"The reverberation of liberty heard today is but the voice of Husain b. Ali."

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1. Al Akhbar ut Tawal, pp. 301-302, Tabari VIII, b. 184

CHAPTER-XLIII

MORAL CONSEQUENCES

The real and abiding significance of the events of Karbala is wholly at variance with and removed from the reactions and political revolutions which came in their wake as their inevitable consequences. It is intimately bound up with that moral courage which may fully guarantee, for mankind, the fostering of a sound mentality and the provision of a perfect lead,

It would be going against the spirit of Islam which is implicit in denominating the Creator as the support of the universe to confine Husain and his ever lasting achievements to one any particular group in regard to the real benefits and blessings which flow from them. Since God's authority canot be considered to be restricted to any particular section of humanity, it would be entirely wrong to limit the purpose of the sacrifice of one martyred in the way of God, like Husain, to any one portion of mankind. The benefit of Husain's sacrifice extends to all those who wish to learn about the righteous conduct of human existence from him.

In the following pages will be described the benefits which accrue to religion, humanity and Islam from the happenings of Karbala.

DEMONSTRATION OF THE POWER OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALISM

Matter and spirit have always been in confliot with each other. Religion upholds spiritualism. Now that the world has turned away from spiritualism, it tries to belittle the importance of religious beliefs by calling them superstitions. Religion however, always tends to get its power acknowledged.

The battle of Karbala was a great confrontation between religion and materialism. On the one side were arrayed all the manifestations of material power, visible to the eye, and sufficient to exert powerful influence on men and over-awe them into taking the oath of allegiance to Yazid. On the other side were marshalled the invisible realities in which the human mind is confirmed by religion, and the world saw that the exhibition of material might proved futile in making any impression on Husain and his brave associates, and that his refusal to swear allegiance to Yazid, which sprang from belief in a hidden power, stood unshaken in all its solemn grandeur

till the last, and in the end triumphed, providing an enduring testimony of the triumph of spiritualism.

THE CONFIRMATION AND PROPAGATION OF ISLAM'S TRUTHFULNESS

The great mark of the truthfulness of a religion is the unperturbed composure and calm steadiness of its founders in standing up to hardship and adversity and their adherence to their principles till the end.

If the common followers of any religion offer themselves up to braving afflictions or sacrifices, it would not be a conclusive proof of the truthfulness of the faith, for they are often unaware of the reality, being actually victims of deception They may very possibly have been taken in by appearances and in their misguided ignorance they may be prepared to stake their misguided ignorance they may be prepared to stake their lives in vindication of their faith. It is, however, a sure indication of the sincerity of their professions and the validity of their principles if the founder of a creed himself, his principal confidents and members of his family, who are intimately privy to the secrets of his personal life, the state of his morals and the qualities of his head and heart, undertake to face trials in support of their principles and, if necessary, to lay down their lives, without flinching, in vindication of the tenets of their faith.

It was for this reason that the pattern of the conduct of wars by the prophet was, as described by Ali In the Nahjul Balagha, to advance the members of his family to defend his followers from the deadly attacks of enemy when bloodshed tended to induce people to retreat. The result was that the prophet's first cousin, Obaida b. Haris b. Abdul Mutalib was killed in fhe battle of Badr, the first battle of Islam, his uncle, Hamza b. Abdul Muttalib was slain in the battle of Ohad, and another of his first cousins, Jafar b. Abi Talib, a full brother of Ali, fell in the battle of Mota. Ali himself was always conspicuous in all dangerous situations by being in the forefront of the army, challenging death.

The conduct of the prophet shows how dear the divine faith was to him, and what precious lives he was prepared to sacrifice for it. Finally, the need was felt for a martyr who should in his sacrifice exemplify one exposed to the greatest persecution and oppression, and the want was supplied by one who was no other than a bit of the prophet's own heart, Husain.

Husain's sacrifice was neither silently offered nor inarticulately suffered. He continued steadily to invite people to the genuine Islam, and to impress the greatness of its principles on men's hearts, by the example of his own conduct. At Karbala he did not omit to utilise any opportunity to disseminate the truth. Even when his bloodthirsty foes had blocked his exit from all sides with their multitudinous hordes, and an army of 30,000 men had bidden a long farewell to all religion, righteousness and even humanity, and had prepared itself to shed his blood leaving no prospect of forsaking its misguided conduct, of which Husain was fully aware. he continued to raise hic voice in propagating the truth and calling people to it till the very end. as one who undertakes to spread a religion and invite people to the truth is in duty bound to do

On 9th Moharrum, when the blood thirsty hostile army had entered upon an unannounced attack to kill Husain and the small group of his associates, Husain asked his brother, Abbas, to sue for a night's truce with the sole object of spending the night in keeping awake to offer his last devotions to God. And Husain and his followers did spend the night as given out by him, لهم دوی کدوی النحل "the voices of this group in remembering God and reciting. His praises filled the air as do the sounds which emanate from a bee-hive." In acting thus, they demonstrated how in the blackest hour, the articles of faith have to be kept foremost in view, and that spiritual force is above all wordly power.

A still more difficult occasion was when war had commenced on 10th Moharrum, and many members of Husain's small group had been slain, resistance to the enemy markedly enfeebled and arrows were still raining, the midday prayers were offered in congregation. This prayer, so offered, remained unmatched in the world.

Husain stood facing the Kaaba, with rows of his crusading followers drawn up behind him and two brave souls standing and front of him to ward of with their bodies arrows aimed at him. With the conclusion of the prayers fell one of Husain's brave sentries, Saeed b. Abdullah Hanafi, writhing in his blood and died.

These were the demonstrations of the truthfulness of the teaching of Islam which made the world echo to the clarion cell to righteousness, awakened Muslim conscience by administering to it a severe jolt and exposed the cruelty of Yazid and his hirelings and their anatagonism to Islam.

History bears witness that in the battle of Karbala, every member of Husain's party acted as a missionary. Burair's contest with Yazid b. Moqil in invoking God's imprecations upon whoever of them spoke lies, the dialogues of Habib b. Mazahir with Qurra b. Qais, Shimr and Haseen b. Tameem, his addressed to Yazid's army, the speeches of Zuhair b. Qain and the recitations of their credentials, before engaging in battle, by Husain's friends and relatives, all made for the thorough elucidation of the reasons which had constrained Husain to take the course he had taken. It does not matter whether these efforts yielded immediate success or not. For the duty of a missionary consists solely in calling people to the truth of his mission even in the most disheartening of circumstances and amidst the severest hardship and adversity. Even when all the members of Husain's party, old and young alike, had been put to the sword, and only he had been left, oppressed and persecuted, overwhelmed with grief and the world engulfed in gloom in his eyes, Husain never once forgot his mission and left nothing undone in giving tongue to the truth, and persevered in discharging his duty to his end. Nay, even when Shimr's dagger had approached his neck, often kissed by the prophet and the flame of Husain's existence was on the point of being snuffed out, Husain did his duty by his assassin, and also proved the truthfulness of his grandfather. He asked Shimr to remove the mask from his face for a moment, and when Shimr had done so, Husain observed, "My grandfather the prophet, had foretold truly that my assassin would be a leper."

MORAL AND SOCIAL LESSONS

Simultaneously with being the very embodiment of afflictions, sufferings and tribulations, the incident of Karbala, which is not an invitation to lamentation and the shedding of tears alone, instructs and edifies so as to exalt human existence to the highest levels of grace and godliness.

Although generally every action has a moral to convey, the incident of Karbala in spite of its brevity in time, is the focal point of all cardinal teachings, of which some have been noted and illustrated under the following heads to give an idea of the wide spectrum of human excellence which that occurrence unfolds.

LIBERTY

Liberty is not independence to act as one would wish. It means freedom to act according to the dictates of one's conscience, without let or hindrance. Among the hindrances to such actions is the fondness for one's pleasures and love of things which are jeopardised by

following one's conscience. If one attains emancipation from one's desires, no power on earth can enslave him. By acting according to the precepts of his conscience, Husain showed his freedom from desires in circumstances of such forbidding severity that the mere throught of them enervates men. It is this kind of freedom which was meant by Husain when he certified Hur b. Yazid Riyahi as a freeman, exactly as named by his mother

انت کما سمتک امک

When the latter forsook the forces of iniquity to join the company of the righteous Husain told him انت حرّ فی الدنیا والآخرة

"You are a freeman in this and in the other world."

This liberty is entirely different in its connotation from the meaning which in current political parlance attaches to it or which signifies the absence of it, "slavery". According to the import which Husain's struggle gave to liberty, the citizens of a free country are in reality slaves if they pursue evil objects, falling a prety to false allurements, and the citizens of a slave country are indeed free, if despite suffering oppression and violence, they do not lose sight of their duty to follow the right and worship God.

STEADFASTNESS :

It is steadfastness if in treading a path both arduous and dangerous one's steps do not falter and one preserves one's calmness and serenity, unperturbed by hardships. In the possession of these attributes, the martyrs of Karbala occupy the foremost position.

Things are sooner said than done. In the last two world wars many nations were deprived of their liberty, Before they jumped into the fray, all belligerent nations had declared their resolve to defend their liberty till the last drop or their blood. However, it cannot certainly be claimed that when these nations ware enslaved, not a soul fit for offering combat had been spared among them, Indeed, a very large number of persons, fit to wage war were always left in every one of the enslaved nations, but confronted with suffering all such persons laid down their arms, preferring loss of liberty to loss ot life,

However, turning to Karbala, we find that even children proved true to their world, what the leader of the party and his associates had declared

was literally translated into action. When Husain had refused to pledge his allegiance to Yazid, little did the world imagine the full import of his denial, since the extremes to which events were later on pushed far outstripped the capacity of the human mind to envision. The world was entirely unaware of the degree and quality of the determination to face suffering which was latent in Husain's denial, but when declaring rejection of Yazid's demand, Husain had done so after probing the depths of his heart and after weighing in the inmost recesses of his mind the perils of the situation and after satisfying himself that howsoever high the severity of his afflictions might mount, the firmness of his resolve would remain unshaken. And the world witnessed the strength and sway of Husain's refusal.

On Husain's way to Kufa when Hur met him, he asked the former to have pity on himself, since Hur could foresee Husain's assassination if he proceeded in the direction he had chosen. Husain asked Hur if there was anything more than assassination in store for him and observed that if one stood by righteousness, death ceased to matter. And this is exactly what Husain's son, Ali Akbar, had once observed.

Husain's enemies knew the strength of Husain's resolution When, on 9th Moharrum, Shimr delivered to Omar-i-Sa'd, a letter from b. Ziyad directing that unconditional allegiance to Yazid be obtained from Husain or battle be given him, Omar-i-Sa'd lost no time in observing, "Husain will never submit in this manner. He harbours in his breast his father's heart." And everybody saw that Husain, like a bulwark of steadfastness and resolve, withstood and hurled back the deluge of suffering and affliction which had engulfed him in the battle-field. It seemed as if in the midst of his tribulations, Husain was reciting the couplet :—

اِن کان دین محمد لم یستقم ۔۔۔ اِلّا بقتلی یا سیوف خذینی

("If my grand father's religion cannot be preserved except through my slaughter, come, O swords, my body is here").

Even when all his friends and supporters had been killed and nobody had been left to assist him, and Husain was being attacked from all sides, and had been exhausted on account of the profusion of his wounds, his brow remained unruffled. A soldier of Omar-i-Sa'd army remarks, "By God, I have not seen, before or after Husain, a heart-broken man, wounded and bereft, by slaughter, of his sons, brothers, relatives and supporters, who was more serene, steadfast, resolute and courageous than him."

GROUP ORGANISATION :

Groups get organised through community of thoughts, objects and actions. Even if one acts with singleness of purpose all by himself, it is not necessary that one should be able to attract associates who go all the way with him, to a man. Even the greatest man cannot guarantee the steadfastness of his followers.

We have before us the accounts of the prophets. We know the many favours which Moses conferred upon the Israelites, delivering them from persectuion, leading them from Egypt to safety and getting them ready to capture the holy House (*Bait-ul-Muqaddas*) at Jerusalem, but when the Israelites were called upon to fight, being confronted with the very brawny men of Palestine, they did not hesitate to tell Moses, "A very powerful people dwell there, We will not go in the land till they go forth from there. When they go forth, then we will enter and not till then." In the big crowd which was with Moses only two men abided by their word and said, " Enter in upon them by the gate, for if you enter by it, you will be victorious. So put your trust in God if you are indeed believers." Others, however, paid no heed and, in very discouraging words, said, "We will not enter the land while they are in it. So go you and your God and fight. We will sit here."

The account of the disciples of Christ is also available to us. The number of those who accepted faith at Christ's hands was small, and they were such that it was one of the disciples who betrayed him and got him arrested.

The Bible tells us that Christ told his companions that there would be none among them who would not fall into error about him. One of the very select disciples, Peter, said, "Father, others may fall into error but I will not be led astray." Jesus Christ said, "Thou wilt deny me thrice before the cock crows." And this was exactly what happened. When they took away Christ with them under arrest, Peter followed him to watch further developments. Suspecting him to be one of Christ's followers, the enemies of Christ questioned him, and he refuted the suspicion. He even denied knowing Christ. Later, on being again questioned, he repeated his earlier denial. Questioned for third time, Peter even spoke disparagingly of Jesus Christ, and the cock crowed, attesting Christ's prophecy. The other disciples also extended no help to Christ, and did not hold out on the path of righteousness.

. Similar events happened on several occasions in the lifetime of our prophet, quite a few of which have been recounted in the Quran. One such incidents relates to the battle of Ohad. Fifty men had been placed under Abdullah b. Jabeer to stand guard at the pass in mount Ohad, with specific orders not to leave their post whether the Muslim forces won or lost the battle. The Muslims won the day, but not withstanding Abdullah b. Jabeer's repeated commands, his men, barring a few exeptions, abandoned their posts, and engaged themselves in plundering the enemy. The result was that the victory soon turned into defeat, and the majority of the Muslims were shown to be wanting in steadfastness.

Such examples are legion in history. but among Husain's friends and supporters in Karbala, there was not even one whose words were even slightly at variance with his deeds. Husain was, therefore, rightly proud of his companions and claimed that nobody also had ever gathered around him such faithful and devoted supporters and associates.

SELF RESPECT :

Life is undoubtedly priceless, and is accounted so dear that no pains are spared to preserve it. Islam also recognised this human instinct to save life, and made self-defence obligatory in the words of the Quran :

"Do not place your life in peril,") لَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

Occasions, however, arise when life with all its pleasures and charms, appears so odious and revolting that one finds it more agreeable by far to end it. This state of feelings is sometimes induced by considerations which are grounded in ignorance, rashness, lust, narrowness of vision and other such undesirable attributes. Death courted under the impulsion of these failings is naturally unenviable and receives no praise. Sometimes, however, the choice is limited between a life worse than death and a death better than life, self-respect is pitted against death, preservation of life hinges upon its destruction and the fullest deliberation gives primacy to death over life, those who then expose themselves to death earn an eternal life. The path chalked out by Husain for himself for the due discharge of his duties conformed to the principle phrased by him in the

words: الموت خير من ركوب العار ("Death is preferable to humi-

liation and disgrace") and الموت فی عز خیر من حیوۃ فی ذل ("An honourable death is better than life in infamy") These words are not confined in their application to the climate of Karbala, they form the foremost maxim of the self-respecting nations of the world.

To these brief phrases, charged with nobility of mind and quick with self-respect, Husain added the weight of his of his own example. and presented them to the world for its edification.

PATIENCE :

The quality of patience has been so completely identified with Husain that he has been entitled, *'Saiyyed-us--Sabirin'* "the leader of those who exercise patience." To endure calamities which fortuitously befall one might well be forced upon one, no choice or alternative being available. At Karbala, however, the devotees of truth used to welcome suffering. The fact that Husain sent all his followers, friends and relatives to the battle-field to do their duty and die, without himself engaging in the fight was an ordeal which called for the ultimate in the power of endurance. This was the spirit which was fully shared by all associates of Husain.

The dialogue between Aabis, one of Husain's supporters and his slave, Shozib, on the 10th Moharrum affords a characteristic illustration of the exercise of the power of endurance by Husain's followers :

AABIS : "What do you intend to do, Shozib."

SHOZIB "Just to be with you, fight in the cause of the prophet's son and get killed."

AABIS "Bravo! This is exactly what I had hoped for you. Well then go forward and sacrifice yourself for your Imam, so that he might witness the calamity of death overtaking you just as he has seen it befalling his other associates, and I might also get entitled to the reward for suffering the grief of your death. If there had been with me at the moment some one over whom I had greater authority than I have over you, it would surely have been a source of happiness to me that he should get killed in the jehad before my eyes so that I might bear the sorrow of his demise. For today one should earn as much reward for

> virtuous acts as possible, because when the day is done, shut will be the register of acts of virtue, and one would be left with nothing else to do except to render one's account to God."

These are words which might well be uttered in moments of peace and tranquility by way of rhetorical flourishes, but speaking them actually right in the midst of the stress of the blackest calamity is extremely difficult. It seems as if eagerness to endure suffering automatically impelled these men to perform such deeds.

Abul Fazi-il-Abbas's exhortation to his brothers, "Go forward, so that I might witness your getting killed," is expressive of the same urge to suffer with complete resignation.

BRAVERY :

An admixture of all human faculities in moderate proportions is held to be the foundation of the excellence of human character, It is wholly mistaken to call one brave who is inclined to fight in season and out of season. True valour consists in putting up a fight only when it Is appropriate to do so, and the occasion calls for it. One should then fight with intrepidity and do all that duty might suggest, regardless even of deadly consequences. True valour consists also in exercising patience when fighting would be inappropriate, and only nonchalance and indifference would do, even though such a course might entail a host of difficulties and confront one with no end of ugly situations.

People in general go by appearances without stopping to look into the real causes of things, Accordingly, very limited is the number of those who understand the real importance and greatness of the manner and occasion of Husain's sacrifice at Karbala, Everyone is, however, disposed to refer unfailingly to Husain's achievement at Karbala,though indiscriminately on all sorts of occasions when it is intended to stir emotions, as if every situation is comparable to that which obtained at Karbala or everyone persecuted bears resemblance to Husain. It should, however, be clearly understood that the reasons which give rise to, and the requirements of, various situations always differ.

It is only one aspect of Husain's bravery which the events of Karbala highlighted, its other aspect was presented by him earlier by observing by for no less than ten years the terms of the tre aty concluded by his brother, Hasan. During this period, many painful incidents took place, but Husain

put up with them without doing anything to exacerbate an already distressing situation. It was indeed, only when he thought it to be his duty to throw a challenge and give battle to the forces of iniquity that he outdid the mountains in steadiness and imperturbability.

Both aspects of Husain's courageousness are without parallel, but since motion is seen by the eye more easily than rest and the affirmative is sooner comprehended than the negative, the former aspect of Husain's valour has made a much deeper impression upon the world than the latter, and has been acclaimed as unequalled. And in this respect, it is not only Husain but his associates also who remain unapproached.

The demonstrations of surpassing heroism presented at Karbala appal men even today. Recall the noon prayers offered by Husain on the 10th Moharrum, Husain and his followers saying their prayers behind him in rows, Saeed b. Abdullah Hanafi standing before them to shield them from the arrows shot at them from the right and the left, till Saeed falls dead on account of the profusion of his wounds.

Again, think of the time before noon, the same day when after the first onslaught, no less than fifty associates of Husain were simultaneously killed. Encouraged by this, the hostile forces strove to bring the compaign to a quick end. It was, however, Husain's unmatched conduct of the war and the peerless gallantry of his associates which foiled every hostile attack. At last, when Shimr specially attacked Husain's tent, striking his lance at it, and calling for fire to set it on fire along with its occupants, and when the lamentations of ladies were heard emanating from it that a party of no more than ten death-defying associates of Husain, led by Zuhair b. Qain, pushed Shimr and his forces far back from Husain's camp.

Recollect, again, the battle of Amr b. Qarza who after doing jehad with his sword for sometime went back to Husain to stand before him and stop the arrows shot at him with his breast and shield him from all sides. At last when greatly wounded he asked Husain, "Son of the prophet, have I discharged my duty thoroughly?" to be told, "you will enter paradise before me," the valiant warrior then fell dead,

Again, call to mind the occasion when with a drawn sword in his hand, Aabis fell on the enemies who, dastards as they were, commenced pelting stones at him, Aabis then took off his steel helmet and coat of mail, and launched a vigorous attack on the enemies with his sword.

Undoubtedly every one of these events was a memorable feat of bravery and was surpassed only by the manifestation of his own bravery by Husain who, friendless and alone, broken-hearted and bent with grief, put thousands of the enemies to flight before him.

The instances of bravery furnished by all who fought in the jehad of Karbala, and the valour exhibited by Husain himself were long remembered even by their foes, and continued to find expression by them over the years. Ka'b b. Jabir, Burair Hamadani's assassin, says in his couplets about Husain and his followers, "I have not seen in recent times, nor in the early years of my life any party of men who fought so fiercely. They showed extraordinary steadiness in fighting without coat of mail. It is a different matter that it proved of no avail." This last clause of Ka'bs tribute reflects the crudementality of the man who considered victory to be merely material success. For the future proved that Husain's valiant group achieved real success and it was their opponents who earned such everlasting defeat that history has no similar instance to offer.

SELF - DENIAL :

Self-denial means according precedence to the needs of others over one's own in respect of things required in common. The finest examples of this quality were presented by Husain and others who supported him at Karbala.

Husain showed that in distress priority should be given to the wants of others, even enemies, in preference to one's own. He taught this when, on his way to Iraq, without taking any care for his own future needs, he placed all the store of water with him at the disposal of Hur and his men who had arrived only to obstruct Husain's progress towards Kufa.

At Karbala, everyone of his associates and relatives attached such primacy to the preservation of Husain's life as against their own lives that they behaved as if they had already lost them. Saeed's standing before Husain at the mid-day prayers, while the battle had been joined on the 10th Moharrum, and shielding him from arrows with his breast is an unforgetable instance of self-denial,

Everyone of Husain's followers tried to lay down his life in sacrifice ahead of others in order to save their lives, even though it be for the briefest moment. All were aware that none of them would survive, still everyone tried to keep the others out of harm's way so long as he lived.

They neither cared for nor grieved over themselves. If they were unhappy it was for Husain's sake. If they were anxious it was due to Husain's lonesomeness. Recall that the brothers, Saif b. Haris and Malik b. Abd approached Husain and started crying. When asked the reason, they told him that the tears had not been shed for themselves, but because seeing him surrounded on all sides, they had founds themselves unable to provide effectively for his safety, and their hearts had melted at Husain's friendlessness.

Similar in the quality of self-denial was the conduct of Bashir b. Amr Hazrami who had remarked that it was impossible for him to leave Husain even if carnivera were to devour him alive, when news came that his son, Amr, had been apprehended in Rai and Husain bade him go and arrange for his son's discharge from custody, and also absolved him of his oath of fealty.

Opportunities of saving the lives of individuals were spurned simply in order that the duty of remaining loyal to Husain be well and truly discharged. Abbas and his brothers had received two offers of quarter one through Abdullah b. Abil Mehl, their mother's nephew, and the other through Shimr, who also belonged to the same family as their mother. Both these offers were turned down with contempt. It is no ordinary manifestation of the spirit of self-denial to court death for the sake of another when the road to safety is wide open. It was Husain's and his followers' self-denial at Karbala that in order to defend the faith and deliver humanity from tyrannous persecution they sacrificed their all, without taking the least thougt for everything that is held dear by men.

COMPASSION :

Sympathising with others in their troubles and sharing their afflictions constitute compassion. Husain and his friends presented at Karbala unexcelled instances of compassionate behaviour.

There was no instance in which Husain did not unreservedly share the misfortunes of his supporters and friends. The circumstances in which they met their end were in many ways different from the conditions under which Husain was put to death, since the latter comprised not only one form of cruelty but all manner of brutal persecution & in human opression which might be pressed into service against a friendless, lonely, broken-hearted person. The compassion shown by Husain's supporters for him accordingly remains matchless. They were not only laying down their

lives for him but were giving the world an unforgetable lesson in unsurpassed commiseration and compassion.

PERFECTION IN SOCIAL INTERCOURSE :

Husain has provided us with the most flawless guidance in how to treat one's friends, and how to accord equal consideration to the claims, upon one's sympathy, of one's kith and kin.

In times of prosperity and absence of danger, social decencies are more or less generally observed by everybody It was, however, Husain alone who, in the pressure of the desperate circumstances and mounting afflictions at Karbala, managed to fulfil to a nicety the exacting demands of perfection in social intercourse, by never losing sight of the claims of any one of his followers, as diverse in description as supporters, friends and relatives, upon his regard and sympathy, showing undue partiality to none nor with-holding individual recognition where rank and status provided the justification.

The battle-field was at a considerable distance from Husain's camp. Whenever he permitted any one of his supporters or friends to go to the battle-field, he used to watch the latter's fight, and when he fell down wounded, Husain used to visit him. It must have gone exceedingly hard with Husain to go all the distance from his camp in the hot sun to visit his supporters, all of whom fell in the battle. Husain was, however, their leader, and the refinement of his social behaviour manifested itself in treating veryone them as his own red and with equal regard

In the difficult and perilous moments through which Husain was passing at Karbala, when the human mind loses control over its workings. It was Husain's achievement alone that he paid the fullest attention to and discharged in the most thorough-going fashion, the obligations of the social proprieties. We may recall that when, on the 10th Moharrum, news arrived of the arrest of a son of Bushr b. Amr in Rai, Husain asked him to go and try to get his son released, and Bushr categorically refused to leave Husain's company. Husain then asked Bushr to send his son, Mohammad, to seek to get his brother freed, and gave him five pieces of cloth valued at about 1000 gold mohurs, suggesting that the safe proceeds of the cloth be utilised in obtaining the release of his son. People are generally inclined to excuse themselves from troubling themselves about others on very slight pretexts, and, to all appearances, on the 10th

Moharrum, nobody could have been farther from the end of his resources than Husain. He was not in his home town, but on a journey, apparently without ready money, beleagured by his enemies and wanted even food and drink and was face to face with his own death, and the slaughter of all his supporters and friends. Amidst these hardships, if Husain had contented himself only with an expression of sympathy for Bushr in the latter's misfortune, nobody could have found fault with Husain's behaviour. But Husain set up a model of perfection in humane social behaviour, and even in the more than soul-consuming and desperate circumstances, when he was apparently bereft of all resources, he extended all such help to Bushr as he possibly could.

Just in the thick of the battle, Husain's associates and relatives often called Husain for help in a variety of ways at Karbala and such requests were never once ignored by him, We might recollect the occasion when Amr b. Khalid Saidavi, Mujame b. Abdullah, Janada b. Haris and two others from amongst Husain's associates intruded into the ranks of the enemy's army and started attacking them with their swords. The enemy troops surrounded them and inflicted many injuries on them. No sooner had Husain found this out than he dispatched his brother, Abbas, to their succour, and the latter, all by himself, attacked the enemy and extricated the five men from their duress. Abbas, be it noted, was one whose life was so precious to Husain that so long as even one of his followers or relatives had been left with him, he did not give permission to Abbas to go and fight his last battle. Husain,however, valued the lives of his associates so greatly that he sent so dearly loved a brother to fight for their sake,

It was also a kind of assistance when, while Abdullah b. Umair was fighting, his faithful wife, Umm-i-Wahb went to the battle-field, club in hand, and cried out,"Let my parents be sacrificed for you, spare not yourself in assisting the prophet's descendants," and Abdullah could do nothing to send her back to her tent, Husain called out to her, "O lady, full of belief as thou art, go back to thy tent as women have been absolved of the duty of doing jehad." Hearing this order she returned to her tent.

Whenever anyone from amongst Husain's associates and relatives fell down from his horse during the battle, he mostly called out to him to look for and get to him:

يا اباعبدالله ادركنى and Husain thought it to be his duty to res-

pond to such a summons and give such assistance as was possible. He also endeavoured that the head of none of his associates might be severed from his body. It is a fact also that except those who could not call out to Husain, none of his associates was beheaded.

Husain tried as best as he could to ensure that the dead bodies of his associates were accorded due respect. When his associates perished, Husain was usually accompanied, by other supporters who arranged for the self-keeping of the dead bodies of their friends. When, however, Husain's relatives commenced sacrificing themselves,the duty of arranging for the transference of their dead bodies from the battle-field to his tent mostly devolved upon Husain himself. Thus Husain made some young Hashimites responsible for taking the dead body of Ali Akbar to his tent from the field of battle, and Husain himself carried Qasim's dead body to where the dead bodies of other Hashimites had been kept. He must certainly have wished to bury the dead bodies, but got no opportunity to bury the remains of the grown-up men. Still he did not leave the duty of burying the dead wholly unperformed. He himself interred the small dead body of Ali Asghar, proving that even in the most trying moments of affliction, he neither forgot nor neglected any moral and social duty.

HUMAN SYMPATHY :

It is only natural that one should treat one's friends with tenderness and consideration and it is not given to everybody to behave towards his enemies and those thirsting for his blood with kindness. This was, however, what Husain taught.

The remarkable liberality with which Husain treated Hur b. Yazid Riyahi on his way towards Kufa might well be recalled. Hur had been deputed to obstruct Husain in his journey towards Kufa, and did obstruct him. However, when Hur and his troops were on the verge of collapse on account of thirst, Husain offered every man and beast of Hur's contingent liberal supplies of water to drink to their heart's content, caring little for the requirements of water of his own caravan.

Till the very end at Karbala, Husain, never stinted on giving sincerely good advice to his enemies. His associates also followed in his footsteps and everyone of them performed this duty of admonishing his enemies and inviting them to the right path. The speech made by Zuhair-i Qain at Karbala to the hostile army was meant to perform the same duty. He said, "Look ! Every Muslim owes to every brother Muslim the duty of

tendering due admonition to him and giving him true advice. We are still brethren, and follow the same religion and the same creed. You have a right to receive due admonition and sincerely correct advice form us till war breaks out between us."

In reality Husain was not an enemy even of this foes. He was their friend and tried to lead them to their deliverance.

PLAIN-SPEAKING :

When launching any movement to obtain their ends, the politically-minded and aspirants to mundane leadership holdforth all manner of tempting promises to those whose sympathies they wish to enlist for their cause. Stories of swift and sure triumph and bright prospects of capturing power and amassing wealth are given currency to rally people round them. Nobody would think of disclosing the weakness of his position, the hopelessness of his situation and the reversal of his hopes to those whom he wishes to utilise to promote his interest, let alone palinly asking them to forsake him or tell them not to imperil their safety and throw into jeopardy their lives for him.

The truth, however, is that a man's truthfulness, integrity and cradibility are seriously compromised if he wins the support of others by raising in their minds false hopes or suffers them to labour under a misconception by maintaining silence.

Husain's endeavour from the beginning to the end of the tragedy of Karbala was to disabuse the minds of people of all erroneous notions about himself so that false hopes may not beguile people into supporting him. He used to tell people over again the truth about his dim prospects and to repeatedly declare that the final outcome of his journey would be his death.

Even when Husain had not left Medina and only his kinsmen had expressed the desire to accompany him on his journey, he used to speak in a way which itself prognosticated his readiness to meet death, Abu Saeed Maqbari who was at Medina in Rajat 60 A.H., about the time when Husain left the place, recounts that he saw Husain going to the prophet's mosque and repeating the couplets of b. Mughfil, the poet : (meaning, " It is impossible that I should put up with disgrace for fear of death and that I should step back when death lies in wait for me.")

This was neither a speech, nor a declaration, but one who had overheard Husain later said that on hearing these couplets he had thought in his mind that Husain had most certainly some specially important undertaking in view, Two days later, he left Medina.

The time drew near when Husain prepared to leave Mecca People had by then built many rosy hopes about his future,since Kufa, a big centre and capital of Iraq had been Ali's capital also and they calculated, wrongly though, that it should be swarming with the friends of Ali and of his progeny. They had also heard that 1200 letters had poured in from Kufa inviting Husain and promising that the Kufans would help him with the last drop of their blood, and that Muslim who had been sent to Kufa had informed Husain that no less than 18,000 men had taken the oath of fealty to Husain at his hands. The departure of Husain from Mecca with all these favourable developments in the background should have led people in general to hope that Husain would be crowned as a king at Kufa, They were tempted to attach themselves in large numbers to him to bask in the sunshine of his power and feather their nests as he was going to a fertile land, Indeed, the number of his adherents should have swelled to the proportions of an army if he had left Mecca on this note of optimism. Husain, however, did not like that people might be misled by appearances Indeed he felt it to be necessary that they should be told that their hopes were wholly unfounded.

A day before leaving Mecca. Husain delivered a historic address saying, "Death follows men like the wreath round his neck, and I desire to meet my forefathers as intensely as Jacob longed to see Joseph. Very dear to me is the spot where, upon my assassination, I shall fall down, I clearly visualise the scene when beasts of prey would be tearing me limb from limb, and quenching their thirst with my blood, and fulfilling their heart's desires with my slaughter. There is no escape from the day appointed by fate, nor any remedy for what has been destined, We, the members of the prophet's household, acquiesce in God's pleasure, and endure with patience the trials decreed by him and earn to the full the reward of those who resign themselves to God's will. Bits of the prophet's heart cannot be separated from him. They will get together with him in God's holy presence in the highest paradise and provide his eyes with balm, and their promise will be fulfilled. Whoever wishes to sacrifice his life with me and is ready to die may accompany me. I shall depart next morning."

Consider the words with which Husain invited others to accompany him Can there be any better proof of plain-speaking, truthfulness and candour ? Those who actually accompanied Husain were, therefore, only those who were ready to sacrifice themselves, were steadfast and for whom no worldly hopes or earthly pleasures had any attraction. These words banished the mask of illusion from the face of reality in their search for genuine life which they thought as attainable only through death.

After Husain had left Mecca, the Arabs of the wilderness, the nomadic tribes, the bedouin and other ignorant persons saw him travelling with a number of people like a caravan, and learnt that he was going to Iraq upon invitations received from there. Most of them therefore, considered it appropriate to accompany him, so that although the number of those who had accompanied Husain from Mecca was small, various kinds of people joined him on the way and imparted to what was initially no more than a small caravan, the dimensions of an army.

To any one other than Husain, this uninvited crowd would have come as a boon,and he would have endeavoured to continue to hold their affections by all manner of means, and not to suffer them to fall off. Husain however, did not allow the misconception to subsist for any length of time, and just when the news of the assassination of Muslim b, Aqil, Hani b. Urwa, and Abdullah b. Yaqtar, his messenger, had arrived, he halted at the stage of Zabala, and read over to the assembled caravan a piece of writing, corresponding to what may now be called the official communique. It said. "We have received the painful tidings that Muslim b. Aqil, Hani b. Urwa and Abdullah b. Yaqtar have been assassinated, and that those who protested friendship for me have forsaken me. After these developments, whoever of you wants to go back may do so, and I shall not hold him accountable for this."

After this speech, people began to leave till only those had been left with Husain who had accompanied him from Medina. They had heard his speech there and were really ready to die.

Again, on the night of the 10th of Moharrum at Karbala when the negotiatrons for peace had broken down, and a request for a night's truce, made by Husain, had been grudgingly conceded, and the number of his adherents could be counted on fingers, Husain wished to give them another opportunity to reconsider their choice to remain with him when actu-

ally face to face with danger, even though they had repeatedly heard of the certainty of their death He therefore,delivered a long and memorable speech in which he said in unmistakable terms, "Tomorrow shall be a historic day between me and them, my enemies. I have thought about you and have concluded that all of you may depart forthwith. You have concluded that all of you may depart forthwith. You have my permission to leave me. I will not call you to account for this Look! The concealing darkness of the night has come. Deem it a boon for yourself and turn it to your advantage. Go yourself and in addition, every one of you may lead one of my relatives away from here with him, and then get dispersed in your villages and towns till you are restored to liberty and get rid of the rule of the Omayyads. These enemies want me alone, and when they get me and assassinate me, they will not care to put anybody else to the sword.

This was the last appeal made by Husain to dissuade his followers from keeping him company and longer. Addressed as it was to those who had not thrown in their lot with him under any illusions regarding his prospects, his friends no less than his kindred, categorically refused to forsake him.

Husain thus taught that righteousness, purity of conscience and integrity should ever guide one's conduct, and that advantage should never be taken to turn misconceptions under which others might be labouring to one's own advantage, that false hopes should never be raised to gain one's selfish ends,and that the sympathy only of genuine friends is worth having.

PACIFISM AND TOLERANCE :

Peace, tranquility and the policy of "living and letting live" are matters to which the word, "Islam" itself is a pointer, for it is derived from *'Salm'* which means pacifism. Likewise *'Iman'* (faith. confidence) is only an exalted quality of *'amn'* which also connotes, pacifism, and from which is derived the word *'Iman'* A true Muslim is one whose hands and tongue provide others with safety from harm. Islam requires its adherents to cause no injury to others, nor to foment trouble, nor to fall out with others without reason. A concomitant principle of Islam is that wrong and iniquity should never be countenanced and that right should never be allowed to come to grief by one's actions.

Pacifism and setting one's face against wrong sometimes require taking the lead against and standing up to tendencies which are fraught

with unwelcome consequences. While one must maintain peace and quiet so long as one does not incur the imputation of keeping wrong in countenance, but however servere be the losses one may have to incur, or however disagreeable the conditions with which one man have to put up, the moment right is threatened with injury and one is likely to be saddled with the responsibility of according approval to wrong. one should abandon silence and taking suitable deterrant action against evil. whatever sufferings and afflictions one may have to encounter.

These principles are exemplified in the lives of the prophet, of Ali and of Hasan and of Husain. We have referred in an earlier chapter of this book to how the prophet upheld these principles, especially at the time of the treaty of Hudaibia, and how Ali had acted up to them during his lifetime and how Hasan's treaty with Muawiya was again an instance of the same principles, Husain spent 10 years of his life with tolaration and quiet after the conclusion of Hasan's treaty with Muawiya during Hasan s lifetime, and also 10 years after his brother's death, although during this long period many situations had arisen which sorely taxed Husain's patience. It was nothing but a manifestation of extreme toleration that Husain, who latter presented an unforgetable feat of bravery at Karbala, quietly agreed to put up with the prohibition of the burial of Hasan's body in the prophet's mausoleum.

The various measures taken by the ruler of Syria to get his son, Yazid, unlawfully installed as caliph after him, such as convening meetings and conferences, sending emissaries to Muslim countries and coercing people to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid did not provoke Husain to have recourse to counteracting activities like entering into communication with Muslim cities to spread word against Yazid, holding meetings to protest against Muawiya's moves or to raise Muslims against them by his writings. The first and the last step which he did take was to refuse to pledge his allegiance to Yazid, for Husain thought that if any sensibility had been left in the Muslims, the mere fact that he had refused to swear fealty to Yazid would more than suffice to lay bare to them the whole truth, and that if the Muslims had been bereft of all powers of discrimination and apprehension he, for his part, would not be exposed to the aspersion of having sanctioned iniquity and wrong. He might have felt unconcerned about how the world reacted to Muawiya's endeavours, it may accept Yazid as a king or as a caliph provided it did not trouble him about these questions, and did not require him to pledge his allegiance to Yazid. This had been Husain's stand from the very beginning and to this he adhered to his end. It was in view of this guiding principle of Husain's life that Muawiya, in

the ripeness of his judgement, had not deemed it appropriate to take any harsh steps against him, because he knew that Husain would uphold peace, and adhere to a peaceful course so long as he was not forced to pledge his plight to Yazid.

Muawiya's successor was different from his father in temperament and again demanded for Husain's pledge of allegiance to him, and the governor of Medina conveyed the demand to Husain brusquely.

When a ruler dies, the people are generally in a state of confusion and the administrative machinery also slackens At Muawiya's death there was no worthwhile army with the governor of Medina, Waleed, and if Husain had wished he could get Waleed and Marwan both killed and could have for the time being established himself as a ruler at Medina. He could then have been in a position to get together an army for himself by sending for people from all directions. In that case, however, he would also have incurred the responsibility for preparing the ground for a prolonged war, and even so the outcome of his efforts could by no means have been certain.

Husain had chosen to depart from Medina in order to avoid bloodshed, and went to Mecca to make it clear that his real object was to steer clear of holding with wrong as also to save his own life and the lives of his dependents since Mecca was considered to afford shelter and safety to all.

After getting to Mecca, Husain is nowhere reported to have done anything to rally people to him, or to have invited any one from outside to join him, at Mecca, or to have taken any measures to collect an army.

Abdullah b. Zubair did not obviously enjoy that degree of the esteem of the people of Mecca which Husain did on account of his close relationship with the prophet. It is on record that before Husain's arrival at Mecca, people used to attend upon Abdullah b. Zubair and that after Husain s arrival there, he himself became the centre of attraction for the people who gave up waiting on Abdullah b. Zubair Accordingly, if it was possible for Abdullah b. Zubair to improvise for himself a military machine strong enough to keep the established government engaged in a trial of strength for pretty long, it would have been much easier for Husain to collect a viable army at Mecca. Husain, however, stayed peacefully there and showed that his sole desire was to have peace with freedom to

follow his chosen path of righteousness so that his twin objects of maintaining peace and not upholding iniquity might be simultaneously served.

When the people of Iraq learnt how Husain had refused to swear allegiance to Yazid, they addressed him letters of which the number rose to hundreds. Some of these epistles added that if Husain so desired, the people would turn out Noman and instal Husain as the governor in his place. In the replies Husain sent to them, he penned the memorable sentence, "An imam is only one who acts according to God's book, is bound by justice, makes righteousness the principle of his life and devotes himself exclusively to winning God's pleasure."

All this clearly signified that Husain did not wish it to be understood that he had undertaken the journey to Iraq in order to make an appeal to arms against anybody or to capture power, but that his sole objects was to bring guidance to the people and to bring God's book and the prophet's practices and regulations into force among the people. There is no hint whatever in Husain's letter that as a pre-condition of his betaking himself to Kufa, the people there should banish the local governor upon the advent of his envoy who should be put in charge of the government of the place.

Muslim who was a special confident of Husain and was not in the least inclined to depart from his instructions, furnished the proof of the altruistic nature of Husain's mission by acting up to the spirit of his cousin's letter so long as circumstances allowed him to do so.

It was a nephew of Ali, an emisasry of Husain, who entered Kufa, unannounced, without any pomp, unattended upon by any retinue and dressed indifferently like the poorest of the poor. Noman b. Bashir stayed where he was at the government house, representing the ruler. Muslim had nothing to do with him and struck no attitudes of aggression against him. Muslim put up with one who was then an inconspicuous member of the landed gentry, Mukhtar b Abu Obaida Saqafi. When people assembled there, Muslim contended himself simply with reading out to them Husain's letter. People pledged their allegiance to Husain and Muslim accepted their oaths, not in order to set on foot a revolution or to found any fresh political power, but only as a token of the people's willingness to follow Husain and their resolve to assist and protect him. Muslim took no steps which would have brought him into a clash with the established governmental machinery, even when 18,000 Kufans had taken the oath of allegiance to Husain. Muslim continued residing with Mukhtar, and Noman b.

Bashir remained in control of the administration as before. Noman himself felt that Muslim's behaviour towards him was not that of an antagonist so that when people rated Noman with inactivity even though people in large numbers were pledging their loyalty to Husain, Noman replied that he would fight only with one who fought with him, and attack one who attacked him, and would not act on mere suspicion. This establishes that Noman had no feeling that Muslim was fomenting trouble.

Later on, for reasons which have been mentioned earlier, Noman b. Bashir was removed from the governorship of Kufa, and Obaidullah b. Ziyad was appointed to succeed him, and Muslim who had maintained peace had remained quiet and had sequestered himself was put to the sword.

Husain had not yet received the news of Muslim's assassination when he left Mecca. His sudden and untimely departure itself speaks volumes about the imminence of the danger which Husain felt for himself in remaining at Mecca. That a Man who was so devoted to God's worship that even when he was so near death as on the night preceding the 10th Moharrum, he asked for a night's truce to say his last prayers to God, should abstain from performing the hajj just when the time for it was no more than a couple of days ahead shows in no uncertain manner how strong the danger was which Husain felt himself to be exposed to in prolonging his stay at Mecca. The only way to provide against the danger was to take measures in self-defence but this should have brought the possibility of conflict very near, Husain, therefore, left Mecca exactly when a day separated him from the due date for the performance of the hajj, in order to show that he had no wish to fight exactly as he had shown this by leaving Medina.

Did Husain take with him any material required in waging a war ? Did he otherwise make any preparations for a war when he left Mecca ? No, he did nothing of the sort. On the contrary he took with him the ladies of his house, and his children as a silent but sure indication of his pacific intentions.

Later, on his way to Kufa when Hur's army was seen approaching towards him, and bloodshed appeared to be in the offing, Husain changed his route and turning to the right took his position at the foot of mount Zu Hasm. Hur was, however, disposed to resort to violence, and followed Husain.

The fact that Husain gave very liberally of his supplies of water to Hur's army to drink and quench their thirst was in itself a big pointer towards the absence, from Husain's mind, of any aggressive intention. At the noon prayers, Husain addressed Hur and his army, saying, "I did not think of coming to you till your letters and messengers came to me telling me that you were without an imam and inviting me to you so that you might possibly get united in your search for righteousness on account of me If you abide by your words, bind yourself to me with firm promises and engagements, and I am prepared to go with you to Kufa. Should you, however, not choose this course, and do not favour my arriving here, I would go back where I came from."[1]

Could there have been a more convincing example of tolerance ? When the afternoon prayers had been said, Husain repeated that he would go back if his coming to them was not to their liking. Hur, however, did not agree, and in the end it was decided that Husain should adopt a course which led neither to Kufa nor to Medina, and Husain resumed his journey accordingly.[2] But when Husain, approached Karbala, a threatening letter was received by Hur from b. Ziyad enjoining that Husain should be treated with severity and forced to alight on arid soil, devoid of shelter and wanting in water to drink.

This letter so hardened Hur's attitude towards Husain that he declined to permit the latter to get down in any of the villages heard by, namely, Ninevah, Ghaziria and Shafia and said that he had been ordered to make Husain alight not at any inhabited site, but on a desolate plain where even water should not be at hand. Husain's friends and supporters suggested to him to fight with Hur as the enemy then lacked strength in numbers, which would soon enough get augmented. Husain, however, did not accept the advice saying that he would on no account take the initiative in resorting to violence.

On getting to Karbala, Husain spent quite a few days in parleying for peace and understanding with Omar-i-Sa'd. One night Omar-i-Sa'd proceeded to meet Husain in a tent pitched between the two armies for the purpose. He had taken 20 mounted soldiers with him by way of precaution, but Husain, upon his arrival there, dismissed those of his associates who had accompanied him, saying that he would meet Omar-i-Sa'd alone.

1. Irshad, p. 235
2. Ibid, p. 236

The intention was to show that he wanted to talk over things with Omar-i-Sa'd in an atmosphere of confidence, peace and sincerity. Observing this, Omar-i-Sa'd also dismissed his attendants Husain spoke at the meeting with transparent peacefulness and suggested that he would go back to Medina, that he might even betake himself out of Arabia if permitted, or even to remote destinations to spend his days there. In brief Husain evinced his willingness to undertake all sorts of hardships in order to maintain the public peace and tranquility if he was not forced to accept Yazid as the legitimate caliph or a true representative of Islam, which he would never do.

Husain's behaviour and intention were so pacific and transparently sincere that Omar-i-Sa'd wrote to Obaidullah b. Ziyad, "May it bring good fortune ! God has extinguished the fire of this mischief and united the Muslims and mended their affairs. Husain is prepared to make peace and his terms are such that we may accept them without demur.!!

Obaidullah b. Ziyad had also become disposed to eschew violence, and it was the mischievous intervention of Shimr alone that led b. Ziyad to discard this last hope of a peaceful resolution of the impasse. "I have not sent you to open nagotiations or discuss the terms of a settlement with Husain, "w ote b. Ziyad to Omar-i-Sa'd, "but in order that you should demand unconditional obedience of him, and upon his refusal to do so, to give him battle." As soon as Omar-i-Sa'd received this letter, he ordered his army to fall on Husain who, however, managed to obtain a respite from bloodshed for a night.

When the day dawned on the catastrophic 10th Moharrum, things had advanced beyond recall on their tragic course, and all hopes of peace lay shattered, but Husain persisted in his pacific behaviour, refusing to open hostilities. While standing silently at the door of his tent behind which fire was burning in an encircling pit, Shimr accosted him with the very biting remark, "you have provided yourself with fire here in life in anticipation of the fire in the life thereafter." which infuriated even the old Muslim b. Aasajah who asked for Husain's permission to kill him with an arrow. Husain withheld his consent and asked him to desist from doing so, as he was averse to begin the fight himself.

Husain was thus exhausting all devices to convince the enemy of his peaceful intentions. For a man like him, who entertained no fear for his own life, who knew death to be waiting for him that day, who had repea-

tedly said this, who was prepared to welcome death with open arms, this pacifism, this yearning for peace, this avoidance of violence, this exercise of restraint, this application of curbs on the fervour of his associates was, indeed, more of a jehad with his own self than waging a jehad against the enemy with the sword.

Even though everything which could make one's blood boil had happened when Husain set foot in the battle field in the morning of the 10th Moharrum, he did not manifest any war-like preparation. He did not even ride a horse which is a mount used in battle, instead he rode a camel which is a symbol of peace. He then delivered a historic address, mentioning his name, describing his descent, and furnishing proof of his innocence with detailed reasons. At the end of the address, he announced to the entire hostile army. "If you do not relish my coming here, let me go back to where I came from." This is exactly what he had told Hur and Omar-i-Sa'd. Now he reiterated it in front of all the accumulated armies. These potent manifestations of love of peace compelled Hur to forsake Yazid's army.

Warriors all over the world put on coats of mail when fighting, but Husain went out to fight wearing simply a thin loose shirt and turban,[1] which naturally provoked the questions, "Is this how preparations for battle are made, and does one who intends to fight in the battle-field deck himself out thus?"

SACRIFICE :

Husain sacrificed himself according to a well-planned system. If he had sacrificed himself ahead of all others, it might well have been ascribed to alarmed bewilderment produced by his afflictions. He arranged that his turn for sacrificing himself should come closer to him gradually in order to prove that his self-sacrifice was not the outcome of any momentary surge of emotion but the result of profound thought and plain recognition of his duty.

Husain's object was to sacrifice, with his own hands, all he held dear, and to offer his own self in sacrifice when he had nothing else to sacrifice.

On the 10th Moharrum he sacrificed his supporters, helpers and the play-mates of his childhood first of all. He then sacrificed his kith and kin one by one : a son like Ali Akbar who was the light

1. Tabari, Vol, VI, p. 259

of his eyes, the strength of his heart and the prop of his old age, a nephew like Qasim, a faithful brother like Abbas, and then an infant child an unopened rose-bud like Ali Asghar whose neck was transfixed with a brutal arrow, After all bits of his heart had been offered in sacrifice, the stage arrived of his offering his own self in sacrifice. Every part of his body having been given up to lacertion, every drop of his blood spilled in sacrifice so that the arrows, swords and lances of the enemy could hardly find any unwounded part of his body to strike, and Husain remaining with nothing more to sacrifice, the easiest part of his task, the offering of his own life, remained undone. And by the afternoon this offering had also been made, and Husai 's head was severed from his body, the flickering light of his life having been snuffed out.

Never again will such a grand, thorough, systematised and well-ordered sacrifice be offered.

SOME MISCELLANEOUS TEACHINGS :

It is a distinguishing feature of the happenings at Karbala that in the midst of the confusion and alarm that charged the atmosphere there, Husain did not negiect to observe those minor regulations of life which, even on occasions of much smaller anxiety, tend to be ignored by the general run of people without inviting to themselves any severe censure. He continued to comply with these precepts in moments of the greatest sorrow and peril as strictly as in times of tranquillity. Some of these rules are dealt with below :—

PURDAH :

The Islamic law differentiates the duties, ways of individual life and of social intercourse of men and women. For instance, under appropriate conditions, it is mandatory for men to wage jehad which however, has been excluded from amongst the duties of women. In a like manner, while men are expected to go about in the open, women are required to observe purdah to the best of their ability.

Just as the members of the prophet's family were distinguished for their devotions, they were also known for the great importance they attacked to observing purdah. The ladies of the family naturally adopted Fatima, daughter of the prophet, as their model in the conduct of their lives, including the observance of purdah, about which Fatima had been

so strict that she took care to ensure that strangers may not witness her dead body being taken out for burial.

Almost all the ladies of this holy family were with Husain at Karbala : Zainab and Kulsoom, the prophet's granddaughters, Fatima and Roqayya, Ali's daughters, Hasan's widow, Laila and Rabab, his own wives. Fatima and Sakina, his own daughters, other women related to him, and slave-girls Some asscciates of Husain, like Muslim b. Ausajah, Abdullah b. Omair and Janada b. Ka'b had also brought their wives with them.

Husain unfailingly took all measures to ensure the sanctity of the privacy of the ladies of his house. While still on his way to Kufa, on noticing Hur's army approaching towards him, Husain betook himself quickly to Mt. Zu Hasan so that the tents of the ladies of his house might be so pitched that their backs should face the hills to provide for privacy. The arrangement had been made and the ladies accomodated in their tents before Hur's army came up with Husain's party.

At Karbala also Husain selected a range of sand-dunes for the site of his camp. On the night preceding the 10th Moharrum, the supporting ropes of all the tents in his encampment were so firmly inter-twined with one another that no tent could be felled to the ground if only its ropes were snapped. Fire had also been lighted in a most around the tents so that enemy might not attack the tents from the rear and violate the privacy of the ladies.

When the war started the ladies of Husain's family stayed in their tents, and their men busied themselves with the fighting. Is it possible to estimate the degree of the fever of excitement which must have raged in the hearts of the ladies of Husain family ? An unrelenting shower of arrows descending on Husain's army, the earth atremble under the pounding of horse's hoofs, a cloud of dust casting a gloom all round, and an atmosphere of the utmost affliction and the most imminent danger enveloping them, it is only natural that sisters should have got insupportably alarmed and agitated for the safety of their brothers, mothers for the safety of their sons, and wives for the safety of their husbands, but not one of the ladies of Husain's family even once stirred out of her tent.

Specially trying must have been the moments when a mother got news of her son getting engaged in battle or a sister learnt that her brother was being attacked, or a wife heard that her husband had been encircled by the enemy. In such exciting moments it must have gone excedingly

hard with the brave Hashimite ladies, heirs to Ali's valour, to stay within the confines of their tents when only the screens hung on the doors their tents separated them from the battle-field where their near and dear ones were confronting the most arduous trials.

Of special poignancy must have been occasions when the ladies heard that their son, brother or husband had fallen down mortally wounded in the battle-field and was appealing to Husain for help in the agony of death. What uncontrollable tumult of agony must have been raised in the hearts of the ladies of such occasions ?

On such occasions the wives of some of Husain's associates like Abdullah b. Omair, Janada b, Ka'b took to the battle-field impelled by the intensity of their desire to help Husain who, however, resinded them of their disability, under the Muslim law, to participate in a jehad, and sent them back to their tents.

May it be claimed that these ladies were endowed with a greater measure of courage and valour than Zainab and Umme-Kulsoom, Husain's sisters, who had inherited these qualities from their father. Ali b. Abi Talib ? The answer must obviously be in the negative, but the fact that they never allowed themselves to transgress the limitations imposed upon them as women only shows how strongly they had taken the performance of their duties to their hearts,

The anguish and heart-break of the ladies of Husain's family must have climaxed when Husain himself fell down from his horse on the burning sands of the battle field of Karbala, but unbounded was their devotion to the observances prescribed by the Muslim law even at that black hour. Abdullah b. Hasan getting his skirt freed of Umm-e-Kulsoom's grip rushed into the battle-field saying that he would not leave his uncle alone. The venerable lady was prevented from following the child into the battle-field due to her respect for purdah which kept her confined to her tent.

If the Muslim law had allowed the least degree of latitude for ignoring the claims of purdah in any circumstances, all the Hashimite ladies would have rushed with swords into the battle-field when Husain had been so profusely wounded as to be almost at the door of death, and they would have certainly saved his life for some time at least. But neither Husain could favour such a step, nor were the ladies themselves prepared to make the least departure from the scheme of war visualised by Husain, be the

urge of their emotions never so uncontrollable, and the impulsion of their affections never so ungovernable. They witnessed Husain reduced to friendlessness, and the onrush of the attacks of the enemy, heard the trumpets blaring the news of the enemy's triumph and even the catastrophic announcement, قتل الحسين

("Husain has been put to the sword)"

but they stayed where Husain had left them It was only when the tents had been set on fire that they were obliged to go into the open, and that too under the directions of Imam Zainul Abidin. They kept themselves screened from public view so long as the sheets that covered their heads had not been snatched from them, after which they tried to cover their faces with the locks of their hair, When constrained to speak in Yazid's durbar, they woefully complained of the violation of their privacy by referring to Yazid's maintaining the purdah of his womenfolk and slave girls, and suffering the ladies of the prophet's family to be led about in the streets, their faces exposed to public view.

WILL AND TESTAMENT :

The Islamic law invests the duty of executing the will of a deceased person with great importance. The directions given in some wills may be personally distasteful to the executor, but respect for the feelings of the testator constrains him to carry out the will. Sometimes it becomes difficult or inexpedient to execute a testament in view of the developments that happen after it had been made, but an executor, true to his duty, gives precedence to the implementation of the will over what appears to be advisable in the light of later events.

The manner and circumstances in which Husain implemented the wills of his predecessors provide an unforgetable lesson. He was very young when the prophet died, but religious traditions are unanimous that having made an appraisal of Husain's capabilities, the prophet had willed that this grandson of his should safeguard Islam from harm when called upon to do so in future. Even if this tradition may not be considered literally authentic, there is little room to question that the great tenderness with which the prophet had cherished Husain and the readiness with which he had been willing to make whatever sacrifices might be necessary to save and uphold Islam, constituted a veritable will for Husain, directing him not to spare even his life in protecting Islam if it was ever in peril. And Husain acted upon this direction till the last breath of his life, and the

incident of Karbala was the result of the carrying out of this direction by Husain.

Ali b. Abi Talib had, before his death, appointed Hasan as his successor and willed that Husain should obey his brother. Husain did so with faultless faithfulness.

It was Hasan's will that, as a token of bidding farewell to his grandfather's tomb, his dead body should be carried to it, and that if obstructed, no blood should be spilled and it should be taken to Jannat-ul-Baqi' for burial. Upon Hasan's death, Husain did exactly as his brother had willed. When Ayesha and Marwan opposed the taking of Hasan's dead body to the prophet's tomb and arrows were shot at it, the Hashimites got greatly infuriated, but against even his personal inclination, Husain upheld his brother's will and taking back the latter's body to Baqi', buried it there.

It was only in order to implement his brother, Hasan's will that, on the 10th Moharrum, Husain gave a dear nephew like Qasim b. Hasan, permission to fight at Karbala, although he himself hesitated in according him the permission, as Qasim was a minor and was not bound to take part in the Jehad. It was again out of consideration for Hasan's will that Husain gave his daughter in marriage at Karbala to Qasim b. Hasan.

PATIENCE :

The shedding of tears when the afflictions of the great godly men are narrated is only a way of according recognition to the worth and merit of the excellent qualities which were lost to the world with them. That one, however towering one's personality might be, should be beside oneself in grieving over one's own misfortunes, especially if this should afford one's enemies an opportunity of holding up one to ridicule, detracts from the nobility of one's spirit.

If one has to encounter hardships in the pursuit of truth and righteousness, putting up with them quietly and patiently discovers firmness and steadfastness of purpose and adds lustre to one's greatness.

Imam Husain was himself the prime subject of miseries and hardships, and after his martyrdom this primacy passed on to the ladies of his family, principally Zainab and Umme-e-Kulsoom, his sisters. Zainab bore an unusual degree of affection for Husain. It was a source of great anxiety to Husein lest the ladies of his family, especially Zainab, should get overwrought in their grief for him, after his death, and their distraction

should invite the cruel flings of his enemies. He therefore, forcefully bade his elder sister, Zainab, as his last wish, not to tear off the collar of her shirt, nor slap her face, nor raise loud lamentation[1] in her sorrow and misery on his death.

Mourning could certainly have with justification, assumed all these forms in grieving over a person like Husain, but in her capacity as the principal mourner, Husain wished to make his sister such an embodiment of patience and serenity in the frightful and disconcerting atmosphere of her captivity in the press of the enemies that she should serve as a shining example of patience for those in distress. Zainab carried out her brother's will to such perfection that for from betraying any sings of getting distracted, she consoled & comforted Imam Zainul Abidin when he was shocked almost to death at seeing the dead body of his lying unburied.

REVERENCE FOR THE INDICATIONS OF GOD :

It was in order to spare the sancity of the Kaa'ba from violation that Husain abstained from performing the hajj and chose to proceed on a journey to Kufa on 8th Zilhij 60 A.H. as her himself stated.

REMEMBERING ONE'S FOR BEARS :

Husain never forgot his ancestors. Whe the decision was finally taken that her should leave Medina, he had specially set apart the last night of his stay there for visiting the tombs of his forebears.

When Husain left Mecca, he said in the course of an address that he was as desirous of meeting his ancestors as Jacob had been for seeing his son, Joseph.

On the 9th Moharrum, when awakened by Zainab at the launching of the attack upon him by the enemy, Husain, who was half asleep, arousing himself had said, "I have seen my grandfather in my dream, telling me that I was about to go to see him."

On the 10th Moharrum, when according permission to his son, Ali Akbar, to go and fight, Ausain raised his hands in prayer to God and said, "Be witness, O God, that now leaves for the battle-field the young man who in his face, conduct, speech and gait resembles thy prophet. Whenever we desired to see thy prophet, we used to look at Ali Akbar's face.

1. Irshad, p. 245

While thus grieving for parting with Ali Akbar, Husain pointed out the reasen-love for his grand-father depth of his sorrow.

SELF RESPECT :

Men in general are inclined to entreat and supplicate when confronted with even small difficulties, and take to shifts which are unworthy of self-respecting men. Throughout his life, Husain did not behave in any manner derogatory to self-respect.

When he was leaving Medina, it was suggested that he should refrain from using the highway like Abdullah b. Zubair, and proceed along unfrequented courses to ensure his safety. Husain refused to follow this advice remarking that he would not depart from Medina like thieves.

The supply of water to Husain at Karbala had been stopped from the 7th Moharrum. According to Sheikh Jafar Shoostari he had no provisions either. Husain and the ladies of his house, therefore, want without food and water for three days. Even though he was thirsty and equally hungry, no history records that either Husain or anyone of his dependents and supporters ever once asked for food, although Husain repeatedly requested for the supply to him of water to drink. The reason is that it is not deemed to militate against one's self-respect to ask others for water to drink, while asking for food or referring to one's hunger as an indirect request for food are considered dishonourable and unseemly. Accordingly not even once did Husain or anyone of those with him stoop to ask for food of anyone.

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GLOSSARY

A. H. = *anno Hegirae*, in the year of Hegira, i. e. from the date when the prophet, Mohammad, left Mecca to take up residence at Medina.

b. = Son of

ibne = Son of

NOTE : In this book, the phrase *'ahl-i-bait'* or *'ahl-i-bait-i-rasool'* has been translated as 'members of the prophet's house/household' and the phrase, *'ahl-i-haram'* as 'ladies of Husain's family'.

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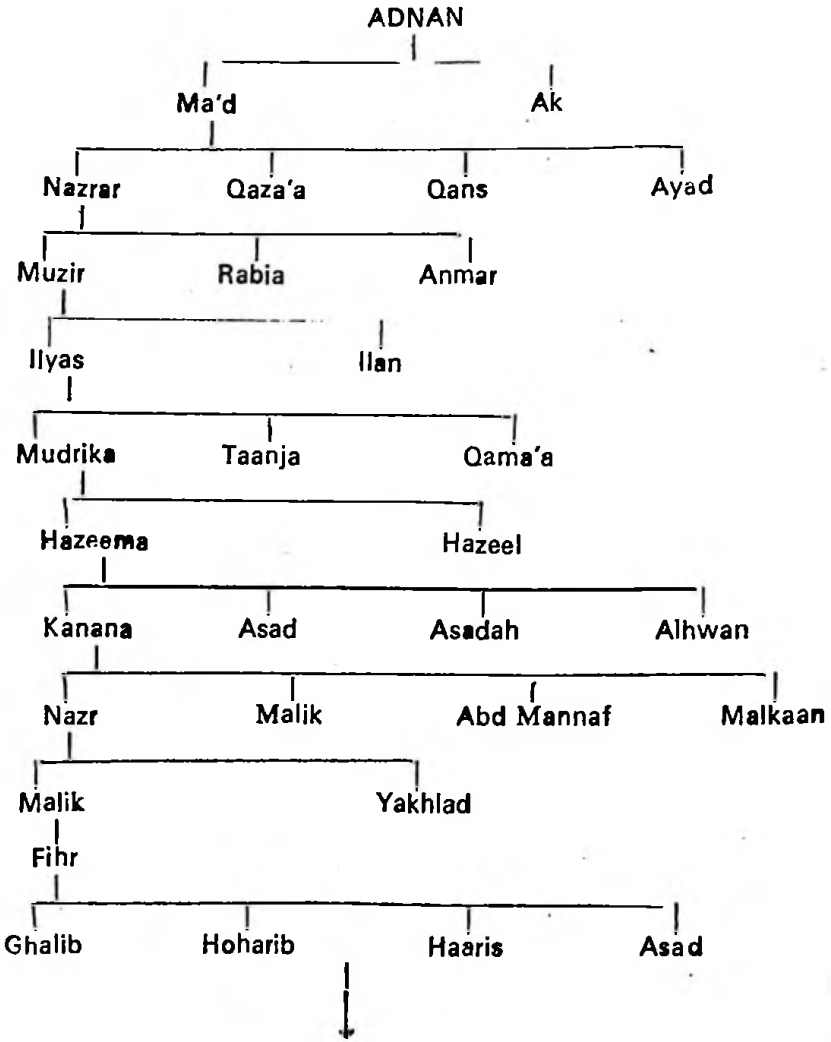
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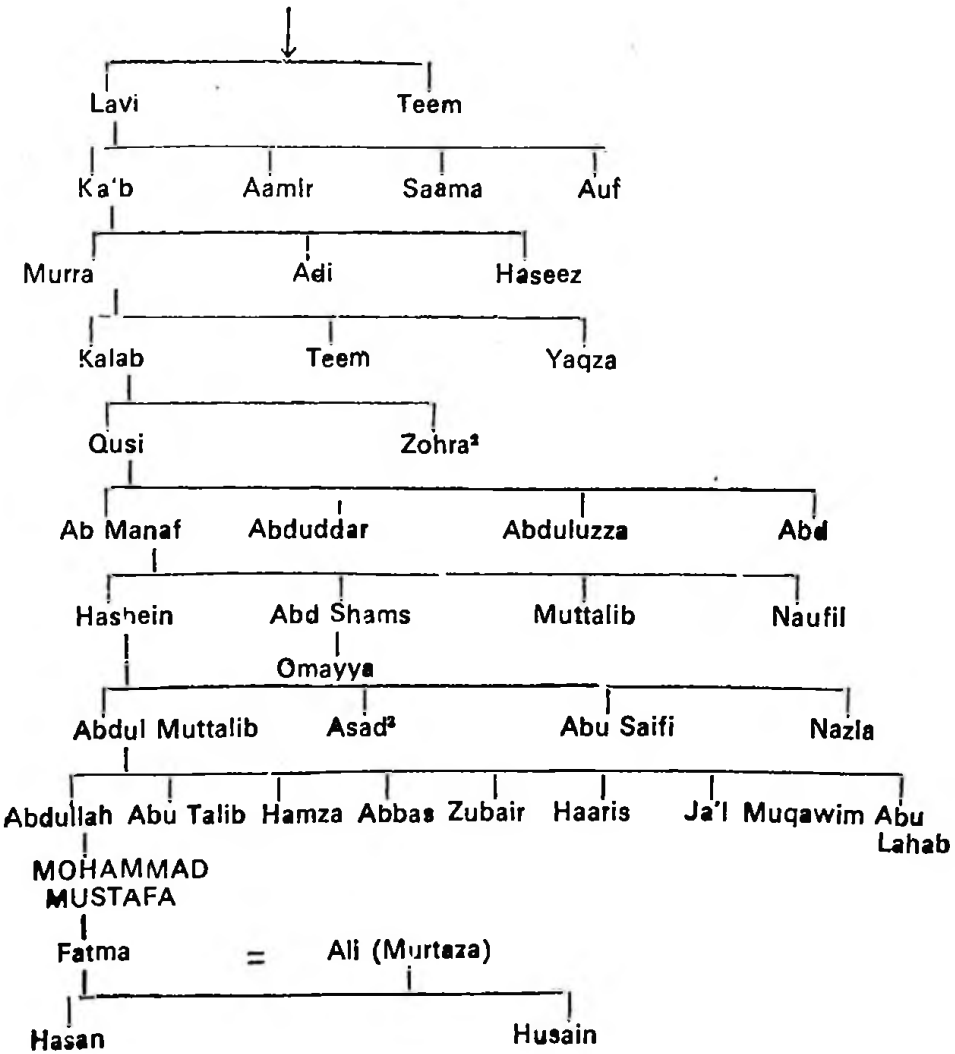
Usul Kafi

APPENDIX A

GENEOLOGY OF ADNAN'S DESCENDANTS

(ABRIDGED)




Lavi
Teem
Ka'b
Aamir
Saama
Auf
Murra
Adi
Haseez
Kalab
Teem
Yaqza
Qusi
Zohra²
Ab Manaf
Abduddar
Abduluzza
Abd
Hashem
Abd Shams
Muttalib
Naufil
Omayya
Abdul Muttalib
Asad²
Abu Saifi
Nazla
Abdullah
Abu Talib
Hamza
Abbas
Zubair
Haaris
Ja'l
Muqawim
Abu Lahab
MOHAMMAD MUSTAFA
Fatma
=
Ali (Murtaza)
Hasan
Husain

