

# The Third Imam, Husayn Ibn 'Ali (as); A Detailed Biography of (.Imam Husayn (A.S

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Second son of Fatima (sa) and 'Ali (as) Husayn (as) was born on 3rd Shabaan, 4th year of Hijri (10.1.626 AD) When he was born the Holy Prophet was given the news of the birth of his 2nd grandson. He arrived at the house of his daughter, took the little baby in his arms, said the Azan and Iqamah in his ears.

People around the Prophet saw tears in his eyes. Fatimah asked what was the reason for this, he told her that this boy of hers will achieve martyrdom, but consoled her by adding that God will create a nation who will mourn Husayn till the Day of Judgement. Another famous saying of the Prophet at the same time became synonymous with the name of his grandson Husayn. "Hussian-o-Minni wa Ana Minul Husayn". Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn. One can explain this Hadith that Husayn, being the grand son of the Prophet was from him biologically.

How a grandfather was from his grand son needs to be explained. Prophets of God speak spiritually rather than materially.

He was talking about Islam the Deen he was assigned by God to propagate God's religion.. He was for Islam and his whole life was for Islam and its establishment on earth. Any break in this mission would subvert this mission which was the purpose of his creation. The message of the Holy Prophet in this saying was that Husayn will, in some near future save this mission from destruction, hence the very purpose of his being will be saved by the sacrifice of his grandson. He was giving the news of a future occurrence. The story of Karbala' unfolds.

*Shah Usto Husayno Badshah Usto Husayn*

*Deen Uato Husayno Deen Panah Usto Husayn*

*Surdad, Nadad Dust Dur Dueste Yazid*

*Haqqa Ke Benate La Ilah Husto Husayn*

*Husayn is the king , indeed he is the king of kings,*

*Husayn is Deen and also the protector of Deen,*

*He gave his head but not his hand of allegiance in the hand of Yazid.*

*Indeed he was the founder (Like his grandfather) of the concept of One God.*

This quartet of Shah Moinuddin Chishty Ajmeri is the exact meaning of the Hadith of "Husayno Minni" as mentioned above. Imam Husayn (as) has saved Islam from oblivion by offering his timely sacrifice to draw the line of demarcation between Truth and Falsehood, between good

and evil, between Right and Wrong, that after this event in Karbala' in 61 Hijri, no one inside or outside Islam dare to challenge the truth of the Holy Qur'an or try to subvert its meanings. The story of Karbala' begins with the birth of Husayn. The Holy Prophet had shown affection and love for his grandson as any grandfather should show, but there was something more positive and profound in this love.

Several times when Husayn entered the mosque as a small child the Holy Prophet will put him in his lap and tell his companions that this is Husayn, look at him and remember him. The Prophet's insistence to remember Husayn shows that those who will forget this event will cause trouble in Islam.

It was just seven years of his life with his grandfather that the Holy Prophet died and soon after, Husayn's mother Hazrat Fatima (sa) also died.. The next 25 years of his life in Madinah was with his father 'Ali, his brother Hasan and many other brothers and sisters in the family. He grew up to be loved by the companions of the Holy Prophet.

During the period of 2nd Khilafat-e-Rasheda, Omar Ibne Khattab had always shown his love and respect for Husayn. Whenever Husayn entered the mosque, the Caliph would let him sit beside him and tell the companions to listen to what this young man says. They all valued his advice even at that young age.

His main activity in Madinah was to see that the people there know true Islam. He also managed the Trust set up by his father, to help the poor of the city by giving them food and many necessities of life. This was the true Islamic Welfare State in progress where every hungry mouth must have food, every naked person must have clothes and a shelter over his head.

Apart from administering the Trust set up by his father 'Ali (as) , Husayn's (as) main occupation during these 25 years in Madina was to teach the newly converted Muslims real Islam through the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet. He has performed Hajj 24 times during this period. He has also travelled to Yemen and most of the southern part of Hejaz and Najd. It is clear that he did not take any part in any of the expeditions by the Muslim forces under the directions of the three Kholafa. After the death of the 3rd Caliph Osman, Husain's father 'Ali (as) was compelled by the people of Madinah overwhelmingly to take the reigns of power. 'Ali (as) was reluctant and waited for three days before accepting the mantle of worldly power along with the authority of Imamah. (see life of Imam 'Ali ) (as) .

Circumstances changed rapidly and within the first 6 month of 'Ali's Khilafat he had to leave Madinah for Basra and the battle of Jamal took place. We see that Husayn (as) who took no

part in any battles before was a commander of 'Ali's forces in this first battle under his father's leadership. Fighting began and ended in just one day, the battle was over, 'Ali (as) performed funeral prayers on dead of both sides and buried them. Victors and vanquished were treated the same way.

Hazrat Ayesha was returned to Madina under the escort of her brother Muhammad Ibne Abibakr and 40 other men. She repented her participation in the battle all her life and never forgave Talha and Zubair who deceived her into this battle against 'Ali (as).

She also realized that the true instigator of this battle was Muawiya under whose directions both Talha and Zubair started this whole adventure against the legitimately elected Caliph of Islam.

It was to destabilize the power base of Islam which was the Khilafat of 'Ali (as) When he did not succeed in this he began other tactics to do the same. His bands of soldiers raided many parts of Iraq to burn and loot villages and destroy communities. 'Ali (as) had no choice but to prepare for battle with Muawiya.

The battle of Siffin took place in the 2nd year of 'Ali' (as) Khilafat and Husayn (as) took full part. He was the commander of a garrison of 10,000 men along with his elder brother Hasan (as) and Muhammad (Hanafiya). It was 'Ali's practice to put his other son Muhammad-e-Hanafiya in the forefront and save the lives of these two grandsons of the Prophet.

Nevertheless they took full part in these battles and fought with great bravery.

The 3rd battle during the Khilafat of 'Ali (as) was the battle of Nehrwan fought against the Khawarij. This was also over in just one day with total defeat of Khawarij. 'Ali (as) returned to Kufa and the main administration of the Islamic Welfare State began. Both brothers were the chief administrators of this Welfare State where they would seek out those poor and destitute within the state and provide them with the necessities of life.

While living with his father in Kufa, Husayn (as) visited various northern part of the Islamic State. One story goes to say that he visited Azerbaijan and part of Iran of that time. Four years and 10 months of his father's Khilafat were over quickly and his life with his elder brother Hasan (as) began in Madina. They still have the Trust state which was established by his father and both brothers administered it jointly.

Husayn (as) visited Makka and performed Hajj 9 times during the life time of his brother. After the martyrdom his brother Hasan (as) Husayn (as) took the mantle of Imamate and spiritual guidance of the Ummah. It is during this period that during one of his journeys to Makka for pilgrimage, his famous Duas (Supplication) of Arafah became famous.

This is a Dua which at the place of Arafat during the Hajj ritual that Imam recited and many

pilgrims heard it and instantly memorised it as was the practice of the people of that time. Qur'an was also memorised in the same manner and many Sermons of Imam 'Ali (as) were also memorised by people.

This Dua of Arafat became famous because of its deep insight into the realms of spirituality of Islam and its total dependence upon Allah's Will and Power. This also gives insight into the reasons why Imam Husayn (as) left Makkah for Karbala'. The following extract shows this feeling of the Imam towards reform of the Umma of his grandfather, "O'God you know that our struggle, moves, protests, and campaigns have not been, and are not, for the sake of rivalry and for obtaining power, neither are they for the sake of personal ambition nor for worldly ends, nor for the purpose of accumulating wealth and acquiring worldly advantages. "Then what is their purpose Imam states the purpose in these words. "To establish the landmarks of Your Deen, to make reforms manifest in Your lands, so that the oppressed among Your servants may have security, and Your laws, which have been suspended and cast into neglect, may be reinstated."

Further on in this same Dua the Imam calls upon his creator to show his total dependence upon Him.

O'He, upon whom I called when I was sick and He healed me, when naked, He clothed me, when hungry He fed me, when thirsty He gave me drink, when abased He exalted me, when ignorant, He gave me knowledge, when alone He provided companion, when away from home He returned me home, when empty handed He enriched me, when in need of help He helped me, when rich He took not from me".

This kind of complete dependence upon God which is the Hallmark of Islamic teachings, was taught by the Imam to the people of Madinah and Makkah, and the whole of Hejaz he visited..

Once a Bedouin asked Imam what is the best thing to do. Imam replied," Belief in God". He asked again, what is the best means of deliverance from destruction, Imam said, "Trust in God". The man asked, what man's ornament is, Imam replied," knowledge associated with intelligence".

The man insisted, if this be not available, what then, Imam replied," Wealth accompanied with generosity". What if this is out of reach, Imam said, "Poverty allied with patience". What if this be not practicable, Imam smiled and said, let the lightning consume the man to ashes. He then gave whatever money he had with him to fulfill his needs.

It was in the month of Rajab 60 Hijri that Moawiyah died and his son Yazid succeeded his father on the throne of the Arab Empire with Damascus as its capital. Moawiyah in his cleverness had told Yazid that " whatever you do when you become ruler after my death, do not ask Husayn

Ibne 'Ali for the oath of allegiance. Leave him where he is and you will have no problems.” But Yazid in his arrogance of power did not bother to remember the wishes of his father. The very first thing he did was to write a letter to his Governor in Madinah informing him of his succession to the throne of his father and ordering him to take the Oath of Allegiance from Husayn Ibne 'Ali (as).

Yazid realized that although he had full temporal power and is the virtual ruler of the Arab Empire, but he has no spiritual strength unless the grandson of the Prophet accepts him as such. People in Makka and Madinah would still regard Husayn (as) as their leader if only spiritually. Walid Ibne Ataba the Governor of Madinah receives this letter on 26th of Rajab 60 Hijri.

It was dusk and people were getting ready for Maghrib prayers. Walid immediately sent a messenger to Imam's house and called him to the palace. Imam realized the seriousness of the situation and took his brothers and sons with him. When they arrived at the gate of the palace Imam asked to stay outside and wait and only enter the gates when they hear Imam speak loudly. After these instructions Imam entered the palace. There was Walid sitting in his high chair with Marwan Ibnul Hakam by his side. Imam asked, “What is the matter that I was called at this hour”. Walid mentioned Moawiya's death, Yazid's accession to the throne and the demand for Imam's oath of allegiance. Imam replied that this is not the matter which can be done in the solitude of the palace, let this matter be brought before the people of Madinah next day in the mosque of the Prophet.

Imam stood up to leave while Marwan who was listening to this conversation did not like it and warned Walid that if he lets Husayn go he will loose him. Take the oath now or cut his head off as Yazid suggested in his letter. Imam after hearing this remark from Marwan told Walid loudly, “A person like me would not give the oath of allegiance to a person like Yazid who had violated all tenets of Islam”. As Imam said these words loudly, his brothers and sons entered the palace and they all left safely.

Imam realized after consulting his friends and relatives that the life of peace for them in Madinah was over.

A question is asked sometimes, that why Imam Husayn (as) had not chosen to come to terms with Yazid as his elder brother, Imam Hasan (as) had done earlier while dealing with Moawiya.

The question does not take into account the difference in the situations of the two brothers. 'Ali (as) as the Imam left his elder son the mantle of Imamate which he at the time of his death passed it on to his brother Imam Husayn (as).

Imam Hasan (as) had also been installed as the Caliph. Finding that Moawiya had succeeded in,secretly, sowing the seeds of discord and dissent among the Muslims, and had induced the feeling of great insecurity by undermining the machinery for the maintenance of peace, law and order, Imam Hasan (as) had deemed it expedient to enter into a treaty with him under which the Imam abdicated in favor of his adversary only the adjuncts of worldly power. He did not dissociate himself from the spiritual primacy at all and continued to be the spiritual leader and the Imam of the Ummah.

Second point which is equally important is that when Yazid enforced his oath of allegiance over the Muslims, he insisted the people must swear allegiance to him which was totally different from the oath of allegiance of Kholafae Rashidoon. Previously they swore the oath of allegiance that the Khalifa should rule according to the verdict the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

But Yazid's impertinence and arrogance made it an abject acknowledgement by the swearer that he was the slave (ABD) of Yazid who would dispose off his life, property and offspring in any manner deemed fit. One of the companions of the Prophet in Madinah named Ibn Rabia Al Aswad was prepared to swear allegiance to Yazid in accordance with the old practice but refused to swear allegiance in the form proposed. He was summarily executed. This happened inside the city of Madinah.

Where then was there any point in Imam Husayn (as) trying to make up to Yazid. This is where Imam Husayn (as) found himself placed in circumstances which were markedly different from those which confronted his elder brother who had abdicated only his temporal power in favor of Moawiya for the restoration of peace and order on the domain of Islam.

This kind of oath was entirely out of question for Imam Husayn (as) to accept. This would have totally degraded Islam as ordained in the Qur'an and as it was practiced by the Prophet of Islam. When settlement with Yazid being wholly out of question, the only alternative course open to Imam Husayn (as) was to oppose Yazid to save and protect the values of Islam from further degradation and to protect the faith itself from destructive inroads of pre-Islamic revivalism.

He could, however, have entertained no illusions about the kind of support he could hope to enlist for himself in any conflict with Yazid. The exceedingly unhappy position in which his elder brother had found himself through the treacherous withdrawal of the support given to him in his confrontation with Moawiya, Imam Husayn (as) therefore thought of entirely new strategy of war with Yazid, for in any case war it had to be. He made no attempt to meet Yazid's military might with his own martial strength. He built no

hopes on numerical strength for the success of his cause which was entirely the cause of Islam and saving Islamic values. Imam decided to battle with Yazid on the spiritual plane, to oppose Yazid's might with his nobility of character, confront power with powerlessness, meet multitudes with want of material support and defy oppression with suffering and martyrdom. The proof of this line of thought became so clear in Imam Husayn's sermons and letters to his brother Muhammad-e-Hanafiya when the Imam was leaving Makka for Iraq.

Imam, after leaving Madinah in the month of Rajab, stayed in Makka for about 5 months. It was in the month of Zilhijja 60 Hijri when he noticed that there were Yazid's soldiers in Makka in the garb of Ahram to kill the Imam inside the Masjidul Haram. Imam changed the rituals of Hajj into Umra and decided to leave Makka. The date was 8th of Zilhijja 60 Hijri. When people saw the Imam leaving before completing the Hajj they began to ask questions as to why he was leaving in such a hurry. Some doubted his motives, saying that he might be leaving Makka for Iraq to confront Yazid and take power into his hands. To quell these doubts he left a letter with his brother Muhammad-e-Hanafiya which clearly states his purpose of leaving Makka.

He wrote in the letter, "I have not come out to stir emotions, to play with discontentment, to provoke dissension or to spread oppression. I wish to bring the Umma back to the path of Amr-bil-Ma'arouf and Nahyi Unil Munker. I wish to bring them back to the path of my grandfather the Messenger of Allah and of my father 'Ali Ibne Abi Talib".

The momentous journey of Imam Husayn (as) begins from Makka towards an unknown destination which eventually ended at Karbala'.

The Map on the next page showing the Route of Imam Husayn (as) from Makka to Karbala' was prepared by the writer of this book in 1984 and was presented at the Imam Husayn Seminar organized by the Muhammadi Trust. This map has been regarded as a pioneering effort and a land mark in Islamic history.

The journey which began from Makka on the 8th of Zilhijja 60 Hijri ended in Karbala' on 2nd of Muharram 61 Hijri and took about 22 days in all. Imam stopped at 14 places on his way to Karbala'. He met various people and delivered various sermons. What the Imam talked about to these people he met and said in his sermons at various places reflects the true motives he had in his mind.

The names of these places Imam passed were mentioned in history books but their exact locations were not traceable in modern geographical maps. After searching in the archives of the British Museum Library a map of 9th Century Hijri was found in which all these names were clearly shown.

The reader will see in the following pages the exact map of Hejaz and Iraq of that time and the exact route the Imam and his Caravan took in 60 Hijri.

Map of Hejaz and Iraq showing the Route of Imam Husayn from Makka to Karbala'.

There were 14 places in all where the Imam was known to have passed during this journey. The first place was called Saffah. Here the Imam stayed for the night. The next morning when he was preparing to leave for his next Manzil that he met the famous poet Farazdaq who was coming from Iraq and was going to Makka for pilgrimage.

When he learnt that Imam was proceeding for Iraq he tried to persuade him not to go there. Imam asked Farazdaq about the conditions in Kufa and the poet replied, "People's hearts are with you but their swords are against you." Imam told him, "Allah does what he wishes, I leave it to Him who proposes the just cause". Farazdaq left the place for Makka and Imam's caravan proceeded towards its next Manzil. The 2nd Manzil was Dhatul - Irb.

Here the Imam stayed the night. Here he met Abdullah Ibn Jaafar who was Imam's cousin and husband of his sister Hazrat Zainab. Abdullah brought his two sons Aun and Muhammad to accompany the Imam. Abdullah also tried to persuade the Imam to postpone his journey and return to Madina.

But Imam replied, "my destiny is in the hands of Allah" These words which mention his destiny were repeated at many places during this journey and clearly indicate that he had a mission in his mind and he was proceeding towards that mission without fail.

The 3rd stage in the Imam's journey was the small town called Batn-ur-Rumma. From here the Imam sent a letter to one of his friends in Kufa asking about the situation there. Qais Ibn Mushahir took the letter for the Imam. He also met Abdullah Ibn Mutee who was also coming from the troubled land of Iraq.

He also tried to persuade the Imam not to proceed any further. He said that Kufans were not faithful to anyone - "Al Kufi La Yufi" - they could not be trusted. But Imam continued with his fateful journey with the same words that his destiny is in the hands of Allah.

The 4th Stage of Imam's journey took him to Zurud. This was a small town just over the hills of Hejaz separating from the province of Najd. From here the mountains change into arid desert. At this place Imam met Zohair Ibne Qain. Zohair, until that time, was not the follower of Ahlul-bayt.

He was undecided and considered himself as a person in middle not able to decide which side was the right one. Imam saw Zohair's tent pitched in the distant and sent his emissary with a note. Zohair read the note, realized for the first time in his life that time for decision to choose the right path has arrived.

Something happened to him inside that has changed his entire life.

What was written in the note is not clear, but Zohair told his friends to take his wife and children back to his tribal lands, and he himself set out to join the Imam and his caravan.

Here it is important to mention that when the Imam was leaving Makka he was trying to persuade the hordes of people who wanted to come out with him, to go back to their homes..

Imam was telling them that there is no reward of worldly goods at the end of the journey. But at the same time he wrote letters to some people inviting them to accompany him to the end of his journey.

One of them was Zohair as mentioned above. Imam wrote another letter to his childhood friend Habib Ibn Mazahir al -Asadi in Kufa inviting to join him in his journey of destiny. Habib was an old companion of the Prophet, was much older than the Imam. Some historians mention Habib's age at 82.

Another important point worth mentioning here is that these additional people invited by the Imam were each from different tribes of Arabia. Out of total number of 72 male warriors with the Imam, 18 were from his own family, all descendants of Abu Talib. But the rest of the martyrs were from all places and all creeds, almost from all Islamic lands of that time.

There were men from Sham (Syria), from Jaba el Amul (Lebanon), from Armenia, from Azerbaijan, from Yemen, Abyssinia and Egypt. It appears that Imam was taking special care that whoever is martyred with him on the Day of Ashura comes from different tribes and different lands, different culture and creed so that the message reaches all corners of the Islamic lands through their relatives and friends.

The 5th stage of Imam's journey was a small town called Zabala. Here the Imam learnt from two tribesmen coming from Kufa, about the death of Hazrat Muslim Ibn Aqeel. Imam uttered the words,"InnLillahe wa Inna Ilaihe Rajeeon", loudly that all around him hear these words and know that something momentous has happened.

When all his companions gathered around him he said,"Indallah Nahtasib Unfosana", which means that before God we all are accountable to our actions and deeds". Asadi Tribesmen tried to dissuade the Imam from proceeding any further, but to no avail. He told his companions of the death of his cousin Hazrat Muslim.

In a very touching way he told Hazrat Muslim's 4 year daughter of the death of his father. He called her, put her on his lap and gave her a pair of ear rings to put on. She asked why then she replied herself, it looks like that her father has died and that she is an orphan now. Imam hugged her, consoled her and told her that he will look after her in place of her father. There was a commotion inside the ladies camp as they all realized that Kufa cannot be their

destiny any longer. They also learnt that with Hazrat Muslim, his two small children and his friend Hani were also killed along with many friends of Ahlul Bayt.

Hordes of tribesmen who were still with the Imam's party left him as they all realized for sure that there was not going to be a war for victory over Yazid but the purpose was something else.

By this 5th stage only about 50

people were left with the Imam and many of them were women and children.

Imam left Zabala and arrived at Batn-e-Aqiq at his 6th Manzil. Here the Imam met a man from the Tribe of Akrama who told him that Kufa was not a friendly town, that Yazid's army has surrounded this garrison town, no one was allowed to leave or enter the town. But Imam carried on toward his destiny.

The 7th Manzil was Sorat. Imam stayed the night here and in the morning after Fajr prayer he asked his companions to store as much as water as possible in all possible containers and sheep skins they had. The Wells were underground, and the Imam's companions filled all possible containers, jars, sheepskins with water.

The next day they arrived at a place called Sharaf. While the Imam was passing from this valley that one of his companions called out that he could see the approach of any army through the dust storm. Imam asked for a safe place, preferably a hill at their back. A guide took them near a hill where Imam asked everyone to dismount while kept the hill at their back. The name of the place was Zuhasm. It was here that Imam met Hur's army of 1000 men.

They were coming from Kufa and appeared to be without water for sometime. Imam asked his companions to give them water in spite of the fact that they were hostile to Imam's party. Everyone drank to their fill, even horses and camels drank. One soldier was so thirsty that he was unable to drink the water himself and the Imam went to him and poured water in his mouth.

Hurr who was the leader of that brigade from Kufa came to the Imam and wanted to get hold of the reins of his horse to which Imam replied not to be impertinent. Hur then refrained from doing that, but told the Imam he will take him to Kufa under escort to which Imam did not agree.

While they were discussing these matters that the time for the Zohr arrived and all of them, friends and enemy alike stood behind the Imam to complete their prayers. After the prayers Imam told Hurr and his soldiers that he had received many letters from Kufa inviting him to go there as an Imam and guide in all matters religious or secular. The actual words of Imam's Khutba as mentioned by Tabari is as follows.

"O'people of Kufa, you sent me delegations and wrote me letters that you had no Imam and

that I should come to unite you and lead you in the way of God. You replied that we Ahlul Bayt are more qualified to govern your affairs than those who claim things to which they had no rights and act unjustly., But if you have changed your mind, have become ignorant of our Rights and have forgotten your promises, than I shall turn back”.

But the Imam and his companions were denied by Hur’s soldiers to turn back. Imam did not wish to go to Kufa now, and Hur’s army did not want them to return to Madina. So a compromise was reached by both parties to by- pass Kufa and turn towards north. Imam and his party was leading and the Hur’s army was behind them. In two days journey they arrived at a place called Baiza.

Baiza was the 10th Manzil. At Baiza Imam delivered his most memorable sermon. History recorded this sermon fully. The words of this sermon clearly indicate the very purpose of the Imam for leaving Makka and his reasons of opposing the oath of allegiance to Yazid.He said, O’People,The Prophet of Islam has said that if a believer sees a tyrannical ruler transgressing against Allah and his Messenger and oppressing people, but does nothing by word or action to change the situation, then it will be just for God to place him where he deservingly belongs. Do you not see to what low level the affairs have come to.., do you not observe that truth has not adhered and falsehood has no limits. And as for me, I look upon death but a means of attaining martyrdom. I consider life among the transgressors an agony and an affliction”.

This Khutba of the Imam at Baiza is a landmark in history. This was 60 Hijri, about 681 AD. Twelve hundred years later in Gettesburg Abraham Linclon delivered a speech in which he said, “To suffer in silence while they should protest makes cowards of men”. These words of Lincoln reflect exactly what Imam said some over 1200 years ago that oppressors and transgressors from the true path of justice will emerge all the time.

If there remains no one on earth to object over their transgressions that they will go unchecked. One should always point out to these tyrants of the Right path of justice. This is the lesson we should all learn from Imam Husayn (as).

The next Manzil was Uzaibul Hajanat. Here Imam stayed away from the escorting army of Hur.

He met Trimmah bin Adi. After having known about the Kufan abandonment of his envoy Hazrat Muslim, it became clear that Imam had no hope of support or even survival in Kufa. Nevertheless, he refused an offer of safety extended to him by Trimmah bin Adi. Ibn Adi was the leader of a powerful Tribe of Adi in the area. He pleaded the Imam to accept his offer of 20,000 armed soldiers from his Tribe to help him if he wishes to go to Kufa to fight with the army of Yazid.

Adi even offered the Imam and his small entourage to a hideout in the Tribal hills away from

Kufa. But Imam rejected all such offers of safety and indulgence in war. Imam replied to Ibn Adi, "Allah will bless you and your people for your good intentions. I cannot go from my word. Things are destined".

It is clear from this reply that the Imam was fully aware of the impending dangers he and his family and friends would face if he continues with his journey without any help from outside forces. He had a certain strategy and plan in his mind to bring about a revolution in the conscience of the Muslim Ummah.

He did not mobilise military support which he could easily have mustered in Hedjaz, nor did he try to exploit whatever physical strength was available to him. On the other hand he was discouraging any such suggestions of an army to fight physically.

Imam's twelfth Manzil was Qasre- Bani Maqatil. It was evident here that Kufa was no more his destination. As Hur did not want him to leave for anywhere else, a compromise was reached and they bypassed Kufa and took a new route. Resting in the heat of the afternoon, Imam uttered a sentence which is said in circumstances when someone hears of death.

His elder son 'Ali Akbar came forward and enquired about this sentence. Imam replied that while he was half asleep he saw in his dream that some one was shouting loudly that this caravan was destined towards death. 'Ali Akbar asked, are we not on the Right Path.

An unusual question so it seems. But when the Imam replied that they were indeed on the Right Path, his son's reply was again typical of this family of the Prophet. Father, when we are on the Right Path," we have no worries whether death takes us or we fall upon death".

The young son of the Imam was satisfied as long as their Paths were Right. Death meant nothing to them for they were fully aware that death of this kind transforms into the glory of martyrdom. Their Thirteenth Manzil was Nainawah. At this place a messenger from Ibn Ziad the Governor of Kufa came to meet the army of Hur and told them not to leave the Imam and his party under any circumstances. The battered Caravan passed through Ghaziriyah and arrived at a place by the river Banks of the Euphrates.

Imam asked the name of this place and he was told the name "KARBALA". Imam replied, this is the place of Kerbin-wa-bala, i.e. the place of torture and pain. Let us stop here, Imam ordered to dismount. We have reached our destination. Tents were pitched near the River Bank. The date was 2nd of Muharram 61 Hijiri (3rd October 681 AD).

Hur's soldiers surrounded the Imam's camp. but no one knew what was going to happen until two days later on the 4th of Muharram that another contingent of 4000 men arrived from Kufa.

The next day Shimr arrived with another 10,000 men to fight an army of about 40 people,

among them were men of over 80 and children of 13 and 11 and even a 6 month old baby, the youngest son of the Imam who was only a month old when Imam left Madina in the Month of Rajab 5 months ago.

Shimr ordered the Imam and his entourage to leave the River Bank and pitch their tents away from it. Imam's brother Abbas and others refused, but Imam told them to move the tents. The tents were moved about 200 yards away from the River Bank and the river was immediately occupied by the soldiers of Yazid newly arrived from Kufa.

Next day 7th, All water supply was stopped for the Imam's party and soon the cry of thirst heard from the children in the camp. ~Whatever water they would have stored was finished within a day and by the 8th there was no water left in the camp. In the scorching heat of the desert even a few hours without water was impossible yet for three days these people were without water.

On the afternoon of the 9th, Yazid's army moved forward in a formation of attack. Imam was informed and he sent Abbas and 'Ali Akber to enquire about this. The reply was that orders were from Kufa to commence fighting and finish off with the family of the Prophet. Imam asked them to give them a stay of one night for they all wished to spend their last night in meditation and prayers to God.

The night was dark and horrible, flickering lights from the Camp of the Imam was showing few people busy in prayers. The sound of their prayers in unison was coming out of the camp as if Honey bees were busy to build their nest. Whereas on the enemy side music and dancing had gone on all night. Many soldiers from Yazid's army saw this difference and realized in awe who was on the path of God and who was not.

Some soldiers slipped away from Yazid's camp towards the Imam's camp knowing fully well that if fighting started the next morning they would surely perish. About 30 such people moved to Imam's camp. Imam held a meeting of his battered and thirsty companions and told them that the enemy wanted only his life. They have no animosity with anyone else.

When no one moved Imam asked that the candles should be put off, in case some of them were ashamed to show themselves running away from the Imam. The Imam also said that he was taking away the burden of the Oath of allegiance from them and made them free to go. "Take few of my relations with them" But when the candles were lit again, all were there, no one moved.

One of the older companions named Muslim Ibn Awsajah came forward and declared that they were all one solid rock to fight for the Imam. If they were killed 70 times and then were made alive again they would still prefer to achieve martyrdom with the Imam rather than live with the

oppressive rulers like Yazid.

Morning appeared and before Sunrise 'Ali Akber gave the Azan and all of them completed their morning prayers behind their Imam.

Imam made his brother Abbas as the flag bearer of the tiny army of 70 persons in all when all of a sudden two more soldiers defected from Yazid's army. One was Hur who was the leader of the contingent who brought the Imam's party to Karbala' and also his son. Both of them arrived with their hands tied to apologize to the Imam for what they had done and asked his permission to fight for them and become first martyrs.

Imam did not give orders to commence fighting until arrows came from the enemy camp. Then Hur went out to fight. Overwhelmed by the numbers on the other side, he soon died. His son went and he also died.

Then one by one each companion of the Imam went and died until Zohr time when Saeed ibn Abullah al Bijilly came forward and informed the Imam that it was prayer time for Zohr. Battle was raging, arrows were coming towards the Imam's camp, how could they have formed lines for prayers.

But they stood in single foil to perform their last prayers while two companions of the Imam Saeed and Zohair stood in front of this line to hold back all the arrows that were coming towards them. Once the Imam finished the last words of the prayers these two soldiers died of exhaustion. The Last of the companions of the Imam died and only the relatives remained. First to go was Imam's son 'Ali Akber who fought bravely but thirst for three days was the most important factor in the fall of these martyrs. He was also killed and then Imam's nephew Qasim went and was killed. Then four of his brothers, Osman, Jafar, Abullah and Abbas were killed. Imam then brought his 6 month old son 'Ali Asgher. He brought him in his arms under the shade of his cloak. He told the audience, this baby has not done any harm to you. He is thirsty, give him some water. The Commander of Yazid's army ordered Hurmula who was the best marksman to kill the baby. Hurmula pulled the bow and the arrow killed the baby instantly. Imam brought the baby near the camp, informed his mother of the martyrdom of the baby. He then buried the baby in the sand. Afterwards Imam himself went for battle. But before that he introduced himself again that he was the grandson of the Prophet in case anyone had any doubts about him and that his guilt was only to refuse to accept the Oath of allegiance of the Tyrannical ruler Yazid. The enemy was thirsty for the blood of the Imam, they were blind in their eagerness to kill the last of the family of the Prophet. They fell upon his injured and tired body like blood hounds and soon the Imam was also killed. The battle ended in one day.

The evening of the 10th was the darkest for the women and children of the family of the Prophet. Camps were set alight and burnt, their possessions were looted. It was Late at night while they were huddled together waiting for further tortures from the enemy side, that they saw the wife of Hur coming towards them with food and water.

They were hungry and thirsty but none of them was keen to take anything, not even the youngest of the children. Imam Husayn's youngest daughter Sakina took the tumbler of water and ran towards the open field. Her aunt Zainab asked where was she running to and she replied, her little brother 'Ali Asgher was thirsty, she was taking some water for him, not knowing that little 'Ali Asgher was already dead, being the victim of Hurmula's arrow. Night passed and the morning came with more pain and grief when they saw that the bodies of the enemy were buried but the grandson of the Prophet with all his sons and brothers and companions lie unburied on the desert sand. The Women and children were taken prisoners with the ailing son of Imam, the 22 year old 'Ali, leading this battered caravan towards Kufa as the Imam of the family. He was now the 4th Imam. The Bodies of these Martyrs were buried on 3rd day by tribesmen of Bani Asad, guided by the .fourth Imam who was with them miraculously while in prison in Kufa