Sorrow and Sufferings

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A Collection of Poems on the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a), and ‘what others have to say about Imam Husayn (a)

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(1) The Scene Prior To Islam

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

The home of the Arabs; wild ferocious and manly

They worshipped the idols; they loved to fight

Life to them was wine, women and might

The number of wives, the cattle they owned,

The number of slaves, one's house adorned,

Was a sign of rank in wealth and might;

It was a society, where Might was Right.

Two qualities they had, which were good

The guests they honored, with best of food

Poetry to them, was an art supremely sublime

They were literary geniuses of their time.

They killed female babes, they buried them alive

They married the widows, their father's wives

Vengeance was a passion, cruel the strife

These sons of desert, such was their life.

Morals they had none; wild was their lust

Women were cattle, treated like dust

Enjoyment of life was their sole goal

Woman, they believed, had no soul.

They had no belief in the life Hereafter

Life to them was all fun and laughter

Prophets had come and prophets had gone

Still, this land was of truth shorn.

Judaism was dead; Christianity was in name

Sickly and forlorn, the world remained

Vengeance, to them, was an article of faith

Blindly, they relished their creed of hate.

The priests were interpreters of heavenly laws

They commanded respect and were held in awe

Things that were unlawful, to them were allowed

A privileged class; they were haughty and proud.

In span of four thousand and odd years

Innumerable religions had been reared

With passage of time, they were polluted

Beyond recognition, each got diluted.

The true religions were only in name

It was virtually a devils reign

Truth was at a discount; honesty had fled

Virtue was scoffed at; goodness was dead.

This land was thus chosen for God's last message

It was the crossroad of international passage

The last of message was thus destined,

To stay forever and cover all mankind.

(2) Birth Of Islam

God chose the Hashemites, a tribe of Quraish

They were among men, the noblest of race

He raised among them, a self-literate boy

To deliver His message; to bring them joy.

Muhammad was his name, whom God had chose

Al-Amin (the truthful) called him his foes

The keeper of KAABA, was his grand sire

A rank than which, there was none higher.

Adam, Nooh, Ibrahim, Ismail, Moosa,

Daa-ood, Eesa and other Prophets of Allah

Testified that, from time immemorial, Muhammad Mustafa,

Had been proclaimed the seal of Prophets of Allah

He lost his sire, ere he was born

Five years later, his mother was gone

Abd-al-Motalib was his grand sire,

Two years later, he too expired.

The orphan boy was now his uncle's charge

Abu Talib was glad, this responsibility, to discharge

He looked after the boy as his own son

So long he lived, dared touch him none.

He was of a reserved bent of mind

With burning desire, solace he tried to find

In the marvels of nature and forms diverse

He tried to fathom the mysteries of universe.

At twenty-five, he married a noble widow;

Khadija had watched him by a cloud over-shadow

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

Twenty-five years long was their married life.

One daughter they had, named Lady Fatima

Through her were born guardians of KALIMA

She was married to Ali, Abu Talib's son

He was renowned in courage like a lion.

In the House of God was Ali born

It's walls the idols then adorned

They were a hapless witness to his birth

A man who would soon smash them to earth.

These gods of Arabs could find no way

Powerless were they, while Ali in cradle lay

This mortal foe of theirs, was something divine

His luster made their eyes turn blind.

On Muhammad, he first cast his eyes

He was destined with him all his ties

He sucked his tongue, in solemn gait

In one mould they were cast by fate.

Ali grew in the Prophet's care

His joys and sorrows, he shared

He imbibed qualities that are rare

With him, he made a heavenly pair.

Thus Imamat was born as adjunct to Nubuwat

Beyond scope of political intrigues and Satan

Twelve successors were named, by Divine Grace

To guide, for all times, the human race.

(3) Preachings And Initial Struggle

He preached Islam, as ordained by God

Pure and simple is the MESSAGE of Lord

"There is no God but God,

Muhammad is the Messenger of Lord!"

A most practical religion of selfless love is Islam

To develop body and soul, without causing anyone harm

Most rational and logical in concept

Viewed from every angle, even in depth.

Five fundamental principles he, steadfastly proclaimed

Ten holy commandments he, unambiguously, named

Monotheism, Divine Justice, Prophethood, Imamat

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

Five times Namaz, one must pray

A month's fasting, during the day

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

Who fulfilled the conditions, he proclaimed.

Defend the honor of Islam and self, he commanded

Disassociate yourself from its enemies, he demanded

Pursuit of missionary activities, out of love and not hate

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

He taught them the 'Unity of God'

And the diverse attributes of the Lord

He was the giver of daily bread

On the Judgement Day, He would raise all dead.

God is the focal point of all life

Through Him flows peace, driving out strife

If man joyfully submits himself to Him,

This life, and hereafter, he would win.

God created human beings, out of His Grace

Best of creation was the human race

He endowed it with such guiding light,

To discern the wrong from the right.

A heavenly reward for the doer of good

And for those, who for truth stood

A blazing hell for the doer of evil

Who shall dwell with the king of the devils.

He cultivated the values of life

Equal partners were man and wife

A man was brother, one to another

Respect they should, their father and mother.

Those who look after the needy orphans,

The anger of God would be softened

Those who care for the uncared widows,

Can aspire for heaven's meadows.

And those who treat their slaves well,

Shall not normally taste the fire of hell

Those who free them from bondage,

Shall generally be immune from hell's rage.

Truth was the base of all his teachings

Unity of God, a constant theme of his preaching

Charity, love and faith were to him most sublime

Brotherhood, was his solution for the ills of mankind

His offer was not of sensual heaven,

As alleged by biased heathens

But a bliss of highest spiritual essence

Of enjoying the radiance of Divine presence.

Live in this world and yet be out of it

Self discipline; not celibacy is the holy writ

Physical body is, indeed, perishable but not the soul

Service before self should be life's goal.

He first invited his near if kin

And declared to them his mission

He asked whether he had ever told a lie

"No never"! In one voice, was their reply.

He invited them to the path of 'truth'

A path which in heaven had its roots

Blessed would they be, in this world and the next

Most fortunate possessors of the Divine text.

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

And with me God's mission share."

They exchanged glances; they ridiculed and scorned

Only Ali stood by him, alone and forlorn.

Thrice did he repeat his request

Each time only Ali rose to his behest

Holding him by his hand, he declared,

"Behold, he is my brother and heir!"

In public he now started to preach

But soon a stage was reached

When like a fugitive he was stoned

And place to place, forced to roam.

For years was thus his plight

Only Ali aided him in his fight

Far and few were the conversions

So fierce was the persecution.

In burning sand, with stones on his chest,

A new convert stood his gallant test;

"Ahadun! Ahadun!" (One God) Bilal cried,

But refused his faith to be decried.

Such were the tortures they had to face,

For believing in God and the new faith

Handful were they, old men, mostly slaves

With courage, all difficulties they braved.

A day soon came, when it was declared

That those who could, to Abysinia, should migrate

Few persons made up the small group

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

The Quraish were furious; they sent their envoys

They requested the king to return the exiles

The king was just; he rejected their plea

He sheltered the poor Muslim refugees.

The wrath of Quraish reached the boiling point

To murder Muhammad, they planned conjoint

They chose a person, one from each tribe

So that no vengeance could take the Hashemites.

The plans to Muhammad, God soon revealed

And desired, that he should ward the evil

And leave for Medina, the same very night

Letting Ali sleep in his bed and aid his flight.

Soon was the house surrounded by those,

Armed cap-a-pie were each of the foes

With handful of dust, Muhammad blew his fist

And calmly walked through their midst.

They raided his house, ere it was morn

Surprised to see Ali, the bed adorn;

"Where is Muhammad?" they demanded, "where is he?"

"Did you entrust him to me, that you ask of me?"

Foiled in their attempt, they started a search

"Dead or alive, capture him", they urged

Thus started a hunt, for three days long

They searched all over, including caves.

The Prophet's companion became scared

As enemies' shouts increasingly filled the air

"We are lost, we two", helplessly, he cried

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

Tired and forlorn, he slept under a tree

When rushed a foe: " who will now save thee?"

"God", was the reply; it thunder struck the foe,

Trembling, he dropped his sword and bowed.

"Who will now save thee?" Muhammad cried

"Alas, none!" the foe imploringly replied

"Learn from me to be merciful" he said

As was his want, he pardoned him instead.

He reached Medina, a poor fugitive

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

Yet, he was welcomed with open arms

This was a turning point for Islam

He paired them, one with the other

And showed the brotherhood, how to further

Himself with Ali, he lovingly paired

Because the same heavenly light, they shared.

(4) The Origins Of Karbala's Tragedy

Life is an eternal conflict of truth and evil

God having granted power to the devil

To rule the hearts of those who love this world

And care not the banner of truth to unfurl.

The forces of darkness were perturbed

For soon their kingdom would be disturbed

At first, they ridiculed and scoffed

To their dismay, they found themselves dwarfed.

They fumed and fret; threatened and cajoled

They offered Muhammad a chief's role

They asked him to stop preaching Islam

Or else they would cause him bodily harm.

Abu Sufyan was their chief - a mortal foe

The grandson of Ommaya, the lowest of low

The progeny of Abd Shams, the brother of Hashim

They were steeped in enmity, which was ever lasting.

Envious were they, of the position of Hashim

Whom God had honored with things everlasting

Muhammad was thus their bitter foe

Whom they longed to see cast low.

Karun, Firaun, Namarood and Suddad

The four aces of arch-devil Iblis' cards

Were the brains behind the notorious Abu Sufyan

To destroy Islam and cause Muhammad harm.

Harut and Marut, the two fallen angels, were glad

The four Aces had mastered everything evil and bad

Abu Sufyan became their living agent

To them his services he joyfully lent.

They issued the call, they summoned aid

Each helper, they said, would be well paid

Thus started persecution of the new faith,

With all means that symbolized envy and hate.

They thought to themselves, the easiest way,

We are Muslims why not say?

Hit from within the Hashemites

That would throttle Islam, without a fight.

The decree of God none can stop

It flows like a river, with a drop to start

None can withhold its onward march

Be they friends or foes at large.

And so was the case with Islam's flow

Many became Muslims, just for show

Pagans at heart, they hid their line

To wreck vengeance, in course of time.

They behaved as friends; they cloaked their pretense

For Muslims in name, were they from hence

They spread their tentacles, in many homes

They tightened their grip over Islam's dome.

Ali, they knew, was the seedling's strength

To guard it, he would go to any length

He would with pleasure sacrifice his rights

Rather than see Islam hurt in a fight.

They knew, that Ali was just a lad

When his mission, the Prophet declared

He was among the first to profess Islam

And stand by the Prophet through storm and calm.

When others ridiculed and threatened

He stood, by him alone, and unfrightened

He declared him his brother and heir

Destined to serve and his mission share.

They had heard Muhammad at Khybar declare

"This Alam is for one whose qualities are rare

He is the beloved of Muhammad and his God

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

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

It left, for doubt, hardly any room

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

Assigned to keep Islam pure and free.

They had watched him even before

How Ali in stature grew more and more

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

While hundreds lay in ambush, each with a knife.

The Prophet's end was drawing near

The dissension started, as he had feared

He ordered the dissenter's to go to war

But they guessed what the order was for.

Death of the Prophet was a grievous blow

Old enmities erupted like a volcano

Busy with the funeral were the Hashemites,

Unheedful of the maneuverings and internal strife.

Abu Bakr was declared Caliph in the interim

He soon nominated Omar, to succeed him

The Caliphate became, thereafter, Othman's turn

Before the mantle, despite opposition, on Ali dawned.

Ali, with his characteristic zeal, lost no time

He acted sternly, to save Islam from further decline

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

And dared the simple and straightforward Ali for a showdown.

The hero of Islam knew neither malice nor fear

Renowned warriors had fled before him from the rear

He defeated the crafty Moawiyah, time and again

But alas! Treachery and trickery ultimately gained.

The internal rot had spread too deep, alas!

Corruption and nepotism was practiced en-masse

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

Engrossed in prayers, he was struck with a knife.

And so was the case with his eldest son,

Most generous of all men was Hassan

He was fond of recluse and quietude

He was the symbol of patience and fortitude.

The roots of seedling were still shallow

A little shake up would render the ground fallow

Muhammad's labor would thus be wasted

Before the world its fruit had tasted.

And thus the treaty with Moawiyah Hassan chose

Rather than fight him like an open foe

The time was not ripe for the showdown

A lot remained for preparing the ground.

This he knew would fall to Husayn's lot

To put his foot down and stop the rot

It would cost his life there was no doubt

But it had to be timed the tyranny to oust.

(5) Yazid's Demand For Allegiance

In the treaty which Hassan and Moawiyah signed

Moawiyah had himself agreed; it was underlined

The question of successor, would not be imposed

But be left to Muslims as they pleased to dispose.

No sooner was the said treaty signed

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

And to build up Yazid, against people's voice

As heir to the Caliphate, the best of choice.

With rise of Moawiyah, virtue was shamelessly replaced

The democratic rule of Islam, was likewise displaced

The oligarichal rule of heathen was triumphant

The attendant vice and immorality were rampant.

The wealth from his subjects, he pitilessly extracted

He lavished on the mercenaries, who were fully protected

They, in turn, helped to repress ruthlessly all murmuring

With fraud and treachery, were smashed all rumblings.

Before he died, Moawiyah summoned his aides

The oath of fealty to Yazid, he made them take

This was Yazid's solitary title to the Caliphate

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

Cruel and treacherous was he, as notorious as his father

He lacked pretence, to cloak the game of murder

His depraved nature knew absolutely no pity or justice

He was addicted to the vilest and grossest of vices.

His friends were outcasts of both sexes

He killed and tortured for pleasure and taxes

Such was the Caliph, Commander of the Faithful

A being, whose entire bearings, was most hateful.

Husayn was in Medina; a message was received

By the local governor, in an envelope sealed

Obtain his allegiance, was the strict command

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

The governor was unnerved, he was perplexed

To kill Husayn in Medina was no easy t ask

He consulted Marwan; he summoned Husayn

Who well knew Yazid's dirty and nefarious game.

Husayn point blank refused to acknowledge

The title of tyrant; of falsehood and subterfuge

His character, he regarded with contempt and abhorrence

His vices he despised, no less than his arrogance.

He returned to his grandfather's earthly abode

He dreamt of the Prophet, in tearful voice he spoke

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

The enemies are bent to torment and slay thee."

Accompanied by Zainab he visited the tomb of his mother

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

It was Husayn's last farewell before the fateful journey

Guided by the unseen hand of - shall we say, Destiny

The fateful hour had arrived for the long awaited fight

Between forces of darkness and Angels of Light

Husayn knew that from childhood he had been reared

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

"For Mecca I leave, and then for a place beyond"

For a farewell pilgrimage, the plans were drawn

Hurried preparations were made for the journey

An unknown destination was on the itinerary.

(6) The Journey To Mecca

It was 26th of Rajab sixty-first of Hijri

The heat was unbearable, boiling point the degree

The caravan was ready with young and old

This was the day, the Prophet had foretold

"A day will soon came when my dearest Husayn

Will leave Medina, in indescribable grief and pain

To meet his fateful destiny, in a far off land

With his family and few friends, a tiny band"

With grief in the air, the atmosphere was surcharged

With heavy hearts the Medinites silently watched

Can it be true that their most beloved Husayn,

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

They pleaded with him to drop the risky journey

He was priceless in all terms, including money

Or take with him their strong young men with arms

Who would ensure him against any possible harm

They also pleaded that Ali Akbar be left behind

So that, when memory of Prophet came to their mind

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

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

Husayn was silent, how could he explain?

Islam was sinking! There were many to be blamed!

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

The plan of God to erase the cancerous evil.

He apologized; to grant their wish he was not able

Such love, such feelings were indeed laudable!

He would, however, remember them in his prayer

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

Seriously ill, she cried her heart out

They were leaving her, she had no doubt

Destiny's hand was beckoning the Imam

Proceed he must, was God's command!

Towards holy Mecca the caravan slowly proceeded

A farewell journey: no explanation was needed

The guardian of truth was himself out to uproot

The weeds of untruth, with his devil destroying boots.

From Kufa they sent an urgent pathetic appeal

In the name of God, from the helpless people

"Truth is being trampled, we look to you

To oust this tyranny, come to our rescue."

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

And save Islam, from its impending downfall

There is no time to lose, we anxiously await

Please come at once and do not be late."

He knew that treachery is a satanic vile

And the Kufians in this were ahead by miles

Time and again, Ali they had shamelessly betrayed

Fickleness and shifting loyalty, was their trait.

They had addressed him as their Imam

He was, therefore, in painful duty bound

To heed their call, despite past experience

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

Ordinary spiritual beings can easily foretell

The coming events, as well as, misfortune dispel

The fountainhead of spiritualism knew much more

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

He was so attuned to the will of Almighty God

His every act bore the stamp of the Merciful Lord

Destiny's plan had to be implicitly carried out

By none other than Husayn there was no doubt.

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

To see things for himself; their pulse to feel;

He received a hearty welcome he wrote to Husayn

Little did he realize their vile, treacherous game.

(7) The Betrayal

Pin drop horrifying silence prevailed all round

The mosque of Kufa stood on hallowed ground

Treachery it had witnessed time and again

It was the mosque where Ali had been slain.

The town crier was reading the Governor's decree

"To associate with Muslim will not go free

He is an emissary of Prophet's grandson, Husayn

Who has refused allegiance to Yazid, with disdain."

When the prayer was over, Muslim looked back

The mosque was empty, earlier it was packed

He glanced at his host, Hani Ibn Urwah

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

The packed mosque had just witnessed jubilant scenes

So great was the rush to swear allegiance to Muslim

They had madly jostled and vied with each other

In honoring Muslim, as Husayn's cousin brother.

They exchanged glances, the picture was clear

For their own lives they had absolutely no fear

To inform Master Husayn was the sole prime need

Whom could they trust? No, none, indeed!

Hani rushed out, choked to the brim

He had in his house, two sons of Muslim

He whisked them out by the back door

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

Muhammad and Ibrahim, two innocent lads

Were anxiously awaiting return of their dad

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

The cruel treacherous world was now their home.

Soon was Hani's house completely surrounded

The hopes he had nourished were soon grounded

He fought the armed troops of upstart Obeidullah

The odds were too heavy; he prayed to Allah!

He was soon overpowered and chained

There was now no hope which remained

His only thought was to inform post haste

To Husayn, of the events and breach of faith

After Hani's departure, he reflected a while

A train of thoughts flowed, mile after mile

Hani was sincere, there was no iota of doubt

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

He thought of his sons, the two young kids

In the house of Hani, he hoped they were hid

He prayed to God to spare him for a little while

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

It was night, he had no place to go

Tired and forlorn, his walk was slow

Curfew was imposed, no soul stirred out

The search was on in all possible hideouts.

He sat for a while and leaned against the door

The door of a house with an old muddy floor

An old lady came out to see who it was

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

"Do you not have a wife nor children?

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

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

"I come from the house of the Prophet," he replied.

The venerable old lady was in shocking pain

"My God! You are Muslim, the Emissary of Husayn,

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

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

She hid him on the old wooden attic floor

Extinguished the lights and shut the door;

Her son soon returned from his usual rounds

He was in the army of the Yazidi hounds.

"Hani has been beheaded," he declared,

"The search is now on for Muslim and his lads."

The simple old lady was moved to tears

And confided to her son, her own gnawing fears.

The son was elated at the fortunate news

He pretended sorrow, as a deceitful ruse,

"I will soon be back with the two young lads"

And rushed to his Master, Obeidullah Ibn Ziad.

The sound of horses hoofs were approaching near

Muslim was in his prayers; he knew no fear

He immediately realized, he had been betrayed

His time was up; he would soon be dead!

The noble lady was aghast! How could she explain?

It was her son who had brought her everlasting shame

Muslim assured Taha that he was absolutely sure,

She was a lover of Husayn and his grandsire!

The lane was narrow, it had no width

Two horses abreast could hardly breath

It was an ideal ground for single combat

Like lion, Muslim ferociously fought.

To the enemy, it soon became abundantly plain

It was a futile and sure loosing game

From housetops, they hurled missiles and stones

Seriously wounded, M7uslim left his vantage position.

He desperately moved forward; they all fell back

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

To stop him, they thought of a clever ruse

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

He rushed on wielding his sword dexterously

He fell in the trench, as planned treacherously;

The retreating hounds soon swooped down

In no time, he was heavily chained and bound.

In the streets of Kufa, he was soon paraded

Those who had sworn him allegiance, were delighted

They were watching him with perfect equanimity

As if he was an utter stranger; what rascality!

"As per Arab custom, I shall fulfill it

Your last wish if you shall reveal it."

A glint of hope came to Muslim's eyes

Why not accept and make this final try?

Obeidullah, if you are true to your word,

Fulfill my last wish and inform my lord

To return to Medina, before it is late

As coming to Kufa, would be a sheer waste.

The crafty Obeidullah was absolutely flabbergasted

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

He could not even imagine, how could a person

Think of his master, when doomed were his sons.

Muslim's last wish did not go in vain

Merciful God kindled the heart of one of them

He left Kufa post-haste to fulfill his mission

And informed Husayn of Muslim's martyrdom.

Husayn wept bitterly, as never before

Muslim's daughter realized her father was no more

One pair of earrings, he lovingly gave to her

And another to Sakina, his child most dear.

"Are you returning back?" the messenger inquired

"No! I am not," Husayn, very sadly replied

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

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

(8) The Gems

On Ashoor night, he called his friends

So pure and noble, each was a rare GEM

To induce them to leave, with their dear ones

For his sake, he declared, should suffer none.

With rolling tears and heads bent down

Their love for Husayn knew no bound

Their burning desire, their goal of life

Was to defend Husayn, in this strife.

"It is my life that Yazid desires

I permit you, one and all, to retire

The sufferings, you have so far faced,

Speaks volumes for your loyalty and faith!"

To avoid embarrassment, he put out the lights

For dark was the night, to aid their flight

When the lights were lit, after quite sometime

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

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

Without you, life is nothing!" they exclaimed

"Not merely we love, venerate, and adore, he put out the lights

For dark was the night, to aid their flight

When the lights were lit, after quite sometime

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

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

Without you, life is nothing!" they exclaimed

"Not merely we love, venerate, and adore you,

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

Habib, Muslim, Buraire and Zuhair Ibn Kain

Expressed these sentiments, all in one strain

Such devotion, such ecstasy, the world had not seen

Even among companions of 'Hayder' nor of 'Al Amin'.

What brave souls were these followers of Husayn?

What unique attachments of theirs, he had gained?

From different walks of life they came

Their object was, absolutely, one and the same.

With what simplicity, the noble Jaun exclaimed

"O, my lord, I am a Negro slave" he maintained

"Let my blood mingle with the martyrs blood,

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

In the face of trials and tribulations,

He had only one solace and consolation;

A band of faithful and fearless human beings

The like of whom, the world had not seen.

Habib Ibn Mazahir, was a childhood devoted friend

He literally followed Husayn, wherever he went

He veneratingly kissed the ground, Husayn tread

He was loved by the Prophet and lovingly caressed.

He was in Kufa, when he heard of Husayn's plight

"For Karbala, I shall leave the very same night."

With encouragement from his wife, a noble lady

His faithful slave, kept for him all things ready.

Kufa, was agog with numerous rumors afloat

Treachery was afoot, for sacrificial goats

Such was the risk, with spies all round

Yet he ventured; such was the magnetic bond.

He reached Karbala on 9th of Muharram night

Husayn was distributing arms for the fight

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

"Habib, my dearest friend, is sure to come."

Wahab, was the son of a noble and virtuous lady

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

For praising Ali, she had incurred Moawiyah's wrath

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

Returning home, with his mother and wife,

He saw an army poised like a murderer's knife

A small group, mostly women, babes and old folks

Were the victims of these cruel merciless foes.

He soon learnt, Prophet's grandson, Husayn Ibn Ali

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

He rushed to the side of Imam's small group

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

When Husayn learnt Wahab had married only day before

He insisted on his leaving with his wife and mother

With unflinching resolve, imploringly he pleaded,

Till Husayn gave in and to his joining agreed.

Muslim Ibn Ausaja, had witnessed rights being trampled

Bent with age, his love for truth was undampened

Venerable companion of the Prophet, a most saintly soul

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

Physically withered by age, being four score ten,

His anxiety to help was a heroic gesture to men

For he had witnessed on countless occasions

The undying love, which the Prophet bore for Husayn.

Buraire Hamadeni, was a warrior of repute

His name caused shivers in adversaries boots

He was itching to display his terrific might,

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

Husayn calmed him down and explained

To fight them is not at all our aim

But to defend and die like a martyr

Was the supreme test of each fighter.

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

Buraire urged his friends to show their mettle

And guard the Imam against the enemy's surprise raids

For crafty was the enemy, unscrupulous, and debased.

Unbearable it was, the cry of thirsty children for water

Even savages watered their victims, before slaughter

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

Filled a bag and returned with the precious life giver.

With what dejection and dismay, he witnessed the sight

The thirsty children threw themselves in mad delight

The bag opened, under the weight of the terrible crush

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

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

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

The thirst of the children remained unquenched

Though the earth, in water, was fully drenched.

Hur Ibn Yazid Riyahi, a strict disciplinarian

In the army of Yazid, he commanded a battalion

With thousand soldiers, he blocked Husayn's path

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

Hoping that a peaceful solution would be found

He forced Husayn towards Karbala, as in duty bound

Little did he realize that his very men

Would dare spill the blood of Prophet's GEM.

(9) The Supreme Sacrifice

The sad day dawned, the heavens were aghast

Truth was at stake; the die had been cast

Never had they witnessed, so supreme a test

Between falsehood at its worst and truth at its best!

For three torturous days and three miserable nights

Husayn's small band, were in a waterless plight;

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

Parched and thorny, they weepingly let it hung.

His faith in God was sublime, beyond any dream

His patience, spoke of complete surrender to Him

Even in his worst hour, from the material eye,

He was calm and unperturbed, not afraid to die!

Husayn was fully alive to things at stake

He well knew what would be his family's fate

He was aware that 'twas his martyr's cup

He showed absolutely no grief when his time was up.

He endeavored to make a last attempt

But the foes were all determined and bent

To spill his blood, they thought it an honor

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

"Speak, O, you Kufi's, is this how

You invite your guests and treat them now?

You summoned our aid, you one and all

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

"Truth is being trampled, we look to you,

To uphold the flame, come to our rescue

Treachery is, indeed, a satanic vile

But in this you are ahead by miles."

"I beg you ponder what you do

Verily, those that can see, are few

Three honorable offers, I have to make

For no blood should spill for my sake."

"If my life is what Yazid desires

Why should Muslims' blood, be the hire

To Yazid, I request, you do me lead

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

"Or let me, to Jihad, go and die

For this life, no fear have I

I will fight in the cause of God

Till death, descends from my Lord."

"If not, let me to Hejaz return

You will Muhammad's pleasure earn

For was he not my Grand Sire?

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

"Know for sure, that I am he

Whom God has granted Heaven's key

We live for the Lord and His pleasure

We seek not the world, nor it's treasure."

"The flame of truth, is what we hold

Let none of you, I pray, make bold

To subdue the flame not those that hold

Though your heart may yearn for gold."

The foes were silent, their mouths were shut

Only thirty of them felt genuine hurt

They demanded to know why Husayn's fair offer,

Could not be accepted and considered as proper.

In disgust, they left the enemy's rank

And joined the Imam's small faithful band

Too glad were they to fight for him,

Though chances of success, they knew were dim.

The rest were unmoved; their hearts were sealed

They danced and mocked, till their heads reeled

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

To save his life, was not his object nor aim.

Omar Ibn Saad, discharged the first villain's arrow

Proud, that he had had started this battle of sorrow

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

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

They fought courageously like lions, one by one

Though outnumbered, they made them run

Till the archers took their inevitable toll

Claiming fifty, from Husayn's small fold.

Bent with grief, he surveyed the tragic scene

Tears welled up, his sorrowful eyes did glean

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

Whether none sympathized with the Prophet's child.

Hur Ibn Yazid Riyahi felt this as a jolt

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

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

And begged for forgiveness at his merciful hands.

Forgiven were they, unreservedly, one and all,

By the generous Husayn and his noble 'Aal'

They fought for him, till they were slain

Their lives they lost, but heaven gained.

Corpses flowed in regular stream of these brave soldiers

Husayn, and his friends, carried them on their shoulders

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

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

Wahab Ibn Abdulla Kalabi, was the last to go

The newly married warrior, his spirit was low

Time and again, he had sought for permission

"Not yet!" was Husayn's firm decision.

"First seek permission of your mother and wife

Their claim is far greater on your invaluable life

Exclaimed, the mother of Wahab, standing nearby

"I will deem it an honor, for my son to die!"

With tears in her eyes, his wife pleaded

"Do defend Husayn in his hour of need

Only one request I have, reluctantly, to make

The security of Husayn's family, may we partake."

Little did she know, what fate had in store

For ladies of Husayn, when he was no more

She never could imagine, that it was likely

The enemies would dare behave so dastardly.

History of mankind, numerous instances can cite,

Where brave persons have scaled great heights,

And endured hardships, out of love and affection,

Or died out of duty and self consuming devotion.

But never before, the world had ever witnessed,

Such deeds of selfless devotion and self abnegation

In this transitory world, though nothing endures,

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

And now were left, those tied by blood

Who cared a nought, for this mould of mud

Eager were they to offer their worldly lives

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

Abbas Ibn Ali, was the TRUTH'S standard bearer

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

He called him "Lord", though his foster brother

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

Ali Akbar, was his most beloved second son

More brave, more handsome, there was none.

Eighteen summers old, flower of youth,

An image of Prophet, from head to foot.

Qasim, was his brother Hassan's child

He was, like his father, by nature mild

His father had willed before he had died

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

It only be read, was his wish dear

By Husayn, when his end was near

He remembered this will of his brother

Now that he would soon be murdered.

It was willed that Qasim should wed

Fatema Qubra, ere his blood was shed

Husayn's darling daughter was she

To wed her to Qasim, too glad was he.

A wedding with dowry as widowhood!

A feast without water and food!

A bridegroom with few hour to live!

A bride with only tears to give!

Such was the wedding in Karbala's field

Which Husayn, with his blood, would till

So that the plant of Islam may live anew

For sake of lovers of God, though very few.

Husayn wished that Ali Akbar, his dearest son,

Should be the first to go to the battleground

His devoted friends and followers were aghast

They refused to entertain such idea - first or last.

Now were left with Husayn, only the next of kin

Ali Akbar, bowed reverentially and stood before him

Husayn, looked at his face; was he daydreaming?

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

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

With considerable effort, he whispered, with downcast eyes

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

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

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

Knowing that none have returned, not even one!

The call of duty, however, makes me helpless

Ask you mother and aunt, who are restless."

His aunt, Zaynab and Umm Layla, his mother dear

Knew that it was now the turn of all those near

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

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

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

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

He looked at her face and that of his mother

They were speechless at the thought of his murder.

"Let it not be said of my respected father Husayn,

He spared me till his brothers and nephews were slain,

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

Let me die first and quench my thirst, at Houz-e-Kawther."

"May God be with you, my son", Umm Layla said,

"With you, I shall loose all I have, my lad

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

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

Death was now beckoning Ali Akbar, "come, my son, come!"

Amidst war-like shouts of enemy, amidst battle drums

The cries of the ladies and children, were most woeful

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

Ali Akbar was now facing the enemy's forces

He was addressing them with such eloquence

The older ones were blinking their eyes in amazement

Has Prophet descended from heaven, his son to lament?

Omar Saad saw the magic spell, the words had cast

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

He exhorted his men; he whipped their gold lust

"Emaciated is he by three days of hunger and thirst."

He met the hounds in battle, one by one

Was this Ali himself? Each battle he won.

The winds were whispering "La Fatha Illa Ali

La Saif Illa Zulfiqar" most solemnly.

Such was the skill and prowess in fighting

Heads rolled on with speed of lightening

None dared come forward from the enemy's rank

Cowards were they; their hearts had shrank.

Through wounds, though victorious, in single fights

The blood was gushing; thirsty was his plight

He had left his mother, in a dazed condition

Irresistible was the urge, to see his dear ones.

His father was anxiously watching his son's heroic deeds

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

They watched his face; it reflected the progress of fight

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With an exclamation of joy and relief they clung to him

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

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

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

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

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

Ali Akbar, met his family including mother and father

The second parting was equally sad, perhaps even sadder

Fizza, the faithful maid, was disconsolate with grief

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To defend the cause of righteousness and truth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Torrential tears were flooding his eyes; it was awesome!

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

He was sobbing; uncontrollable and tragic was his condition

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

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

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

To the side of his master, Abbas soon came rushing

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

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

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

Writhing in unbearable pain and digging his feet in sand

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

A gurgling sound was coming, from his parched throat

An uneven struggle with death, a fast sinking boat!

And so passed away the brave one, the angelic soul

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

Leaving Husayn back-broken and utterly inconsolable

God was a witness; the sacrifice was without parallel!

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

To some, life is doled out in a different measure

Surging, in young hearts, are the hopes and feelings

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

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

Before they have an opportunity to blossom and bloom

Such was the destiny of Husayn's three beloved nephews

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

Three innocent lads, barely in their teens

Husayn's nephews - Aun, Muhammad and Qasim

Were closeted together to discuss their role

For that fateful day, clear was their goal!

To seek Husayn's permission, was their main task

What should they say? How should they ask?

Seriously they discussed for quite some time

To die as martyrs, was in their family line.

How commendable was the behavior of these three young ones

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

They were neither nervous nor, in any way scared

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

Qasim, abruptly left; he entered the tent

Umm Farwa, his mother, her head was bent

Engrossed in her thoughts - Hassan's widow

Was thinking of her son and the morrow.

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

To remind you of your duty to your uncle Husayn

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

More than what children are to their father and mother.

He wanted you to deputize for him, on this day

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

You should stand by Husayn, through unflinching devotion

To defend Husayn, should be your life's sacred mission."

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

To have provided for this situation, and one still harder

A letter for Husayn, containing his dying desire

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

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

Zaynab's near and dear ones will be no more.

All the vendetta nurtured, all these years,

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

"I want both of you, my dear beloved sons

To defend uncle Husayn and his priceless children"

How relieved they felt, and what a pleasant surprise

The hurdle was over; they had hardly surmised.

After a pause she added, "when I was leaving Mecca,

It was the wish of your father, Abdulla

You my son, Aun, should deputize for him

] And you my child, Muhammad, be my offering."

With folded hands, Zaynab addressed her brother

"In my whole life, have I asked for a favor?

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

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

"Go forward my children and fulfill your desire

Die like heroes and from physical world retire

I shall soon join you on your journey to eternity

Convey my salutations to the Heaven's fraternity."

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

The two darling youngsters marched like lion cubs

Brave was their bearing, brave the stance,

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

The dust lifted itself to give a clearer view

Enemy soldiers were battling with Husayn's nephews

"Bravo! My sons," was it the voice of Ja'far-e-Tayyar?

Watching from the heavens, was the famed winged warrior!

And why not? It was Muhammad his grandchild

It was a heroic fight, with numerous corpses piled

Some distance away, was his younger brother, Aun

Fortunate were they, to whom such sons were born.

Against heavy odds, as was obviously expected

Both fell heroically fighting; so it was fated

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

Only the brave heart of Zaynab could endure the dart.

As was the practice, they started beating the battle drums

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

The usual cry, challenging the young defenders of faith

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

Qasim, rushed with letter to his uncle dear

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

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

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

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

Aided by his mother, he pushed forward, taking courage

With letter in hand, he respectfully presented himself

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

He read the letter of his beloved brother

He wept bitterly; he could read no further

His last desire, how could he not honor

When his love had permeated, every nook and corner.

Qasim fought bravely, though a youth of fourteen

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

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

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

Falling from the saddle, he gave a gallant valiant cry

Crushed under horses' hoofs, scattered the pieces lie

Husayn, the immortal Husayn, collected the mortal remains

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

One against thousands - can it be called a fight?

Killing an innocent lad, it caused them delight

They thought they were doing something great

It was a spillage of their past game of hate.

Smeared with blood, on the shifting sand dunes of Karbala

Lay a figure of youth, on the banks of Alkoma

The crimson life tide was ebbing fast, very fast

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

Through his parched throat, he was feebly calling somebody

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

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

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

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

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

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

A beautiful specimen of manliness; a glorious sight!

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

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

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

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

He was in reverie, for quite sometime,

Scene after scene, passed the memory's mind

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

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

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

Like a knife piercing butter, he had reached the riverbank

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

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

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

For his dear little Sakina, Husayn's youngest daughter

Both his hands were cut, while on his way back

Pierced with arrows, empty was the leather bag.

He tossed on the burning sand; unbearable was the pain

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

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

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

At last, he heard Husayn's voice, a half sob, a muffled cry

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

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

He was sobbing; his breath was now much faster.

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

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

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

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

"My Master, I have some last wishes to express"

Completely drenched in blood was his dress

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

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

"Please clear the blood from my one eye

Let me fulfill my last wish, before I die

Do not carry my body to the KHAIMAGA

I had promised to bring water for SAKINA."

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

Nor bring Sakina here, to see her uncle's miserable fate"

The flow of Furrat became turbulent and dark as winter

A murmur arose, at the cruel and unwarranted slaughter.

"Abbas, I too have a wish to be fulfilled

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

Since childhood, you have always called me Master

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

The blood was cleared; the pierced arrow removed

One brother looked long at another, along lingering look

Abbas was heard to whisper, "My brother, my brother!"

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

Though ten months old, he looked barely six

Famished and thirsty, his stare was fixed

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

Small were it's wants; a little water to sip!

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

It tore asunder, the hapless mother's sinking plight

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

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

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

Wrapped under his robes, they thought it was holy Quran

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

They threw arrows instead, to their everlasting shame.

What cruel men were these heartless brutes?

An innocent child, what harm could it do?

An arrow pierced its parched and thirsty throat

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

Anxious was the mother, for the return of the child

Husayn's face was dripping with blood; a gruesome sight!

Her heart sank; shattered were her hopes, forever

The picture was clear; Ali Asghar was no more!

Alone, all alone, with none to befriend him

It was all clear; it needed no special vision

The time was up for the long awaited supreme test

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

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

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

It's difficult to imagine nor can be explained

Subject to such supreme test himself was Husayn.

The challenges of the enemy were growing in tempo

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

Few words of advice, he gave most lovingly to each

A touching farewell, a most cherished deed!

The farewell between Husayn and Zaynab

Was as sorrowful as between a mother and cub

Parting with Sakina, was no less difficult

It was a heart-rending episode, poignantly built!

Standing near Husayn, looking at his face

His darling child was speechless and dazed

All his courage could not steel his heart

To tell Sakina, he was leaving her, alas!

Leaving her to the world, unkind to her

To fate, with only sufferings in store

He kissed her cheeks, wet with tears

To be slapped for mourning her father dear.

Putting Sakina down, he hurried to the tent

Ali Zainal Abedeen was lying full bent

He was unconscious, his twenty-five years old son

Chosen to live with death, he was the one.

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

Aroused from stupor, he was shocked, beyond dream

Husayn's transformation was beyond any description

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

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

Where is uncle Abbas, my brother, Ali Akbar

And my cousins, Qasim, Aun and Muhammad?"

He inquired; unaware, that they were all dead.

Husayn explained to him all things he knew

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

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

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

Husayn gently put him down; he could not even sit

Burning with fever, he was famished and seriously sick

"You shall remain in bed, my beloved ailing son

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

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

Undescribeable trials and tribulations, you shall undergo

Destiny has singled you out, my son, to demonstrate

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

"Accompany your mother and other ladies in captivity

Bound in chain, suffer insults and indignities

Through Kufa and Damascus, you will be soon paraded

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

"Your sufferings will be far worse than death

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

He clasped his son, in a loving lingering last embrace

Unbearable grief, Zainal Abedeen was unable to face.

He fell unconscious; the agony he was spared

Of seeing the departure of his father aged

How merciful is God; no, none can dispute it

Through trials and tribulations, virtues he highlights!

Husayn spurred his horse, Zuljanah, to move on

Glued to the spot, it did not budge nor respond

Famished, hungry, wounded, it was no doubt

It's behavior was inexplicable; it could not shout.

It bent its head towards the burning ground

Sakina was clinging to its hoofs, Husayn soon found

"Do not take my Dad to the battlefield!"

She was imploring the aged faithful steed.

Exhausted, her moaning was hardly audible

Her condition was extremely sad and pitiable

Husayn jumped down; both clung to each other

Choked with sobs, they cried their hearts together

To sleep on his chest, was her last desire

Before he departed to face the enemies' fire

His chest, was her nest since birth

What was now left, save this little comfort?

She clung to him, as she had never done before

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

With supreme effort, Husayn controlled his feelings

Shocked, she was beyond imagination, by gruesome killings.

He consoled his child, as best as he could

What was at stake, she soon understood

He promised her, he would pray to God,

To join her soon in the heavenly ward.

So eloquent was his speech; they remembered Ali

Greed was overpowering; their minds were sullied

Their task was nearing completion; they were elated

Extravagant rewards, for annihilation, they were bated.

He earnestly implored them, again and again

To save themselves from ever-lasting shame

And not be partners in Yazid's foul game

As posterity would condemn their names,

Now that his job was more than done

He called to witness, all and one

Lest on Judgement day, they should plead

Their blindness to the foul deed.

Omar Saad was perturbed; he tried to act tough

"Husayn, in your condition, my weakest soldier is enough.

Accept the one and only condition, we have imposed;

Accept Yazid's competence, religious matters to dispose."

The taunting words aroused Husayn's wrath

The Hashemite blood was raging and boiling hot

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

Fierce was his ire; the devils were aghast.

"Omar Saad, I accept your challenge," you knave

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

Shaken by Husayn's words, none dared come forward

Courage they had none; they were all cowards.

He faced the foes, they were all scared

To meet him in single combat, not one dared

They attacked enmasse, the cowardly ones

Little they realized, it was Ali's son.

The archers fired a volley of deadly arrows

Swords, scimitars and daggers, flew like sparrows

Sword in hand, he cut through each flank

Utter confusion prevailed in enemies' ranks.

Swift was his movement; well trained his charger

With incredible speed, he did them scatter

The hounds retreated; they licked their wounds

Their boastful shouts, whimpered without a sound!

The road to the rivulet was now clear

There lay the corpse of his dear brother

"Abbas, did you see your brother's last fight?

Why don't you say bravo, to me, heavenly light!"

Husayn looked at the sky, the sun was declining

It was time for prayers, the world was reclining

Availing of the respite, he sheathed his sword

Though he knew full well, he could ill afford.

Their fiendish minds could hardly understand

To think of prayers, how could any man,

In such circumstances, even think, or dream

The like of Husayn, they had not seen!

After hurried consultations, from a safe distance

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

Accompanied by stones, missiles and burning coal

To kill him somehow, clear was the goal.

Wounded all over, the missiles kept on showering

With blood oozing fast, dizziness was overpowering

His mission was complete; the fight was over!

To hide from Zaynab, he looked around for cover.

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

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

Such was the understanding of his master's wishes

It immediately bolted to a place free of crisis.

Realizing his master was unable to dismount

It knelt and slid him gently to the ground

From a small hillock, Zaynab watched her brother

Seeing him unconscious, she darted like a mother.

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

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

The Prophet was in tears, Fatima was disconsolate

Ali and Hassan, were helplessly watching his fate.

On his burning forehead, he felt something cool

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

His senses revived; he opened his blood-red eyes

Zuljanah was shielding him, the sun was high.

He remembered, why he has stopped his fight

To offer prayers, despite his vulnerable plight

With prostrated head, he addressed his CREATOR

The world had not witnessed such a WORSHIPPER.

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

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

Without squirming, faltering, complaining, O' God,

To Thy decree, and Thy dispensation, I submit, O' Lord!"

While Husayn was still in prayer, Omar Saad pondered

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

Willing to wound, but mortally afraid to strike

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

He himself went forth, by his side was Shimr

Husayn was lying prostrate, his head in prayer

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

They bent over to hear what he was saying.

"I beseech Thee, with all humility, O' Allah!

Forgive, the erring ones, of their trespasses

Thou art, the most BENIFICIENT, the most FORGIVING!"

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

The prayers were almost concluded, they were afraid

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

Shimr jumped on his back, with sword in one hand

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

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

Then accomplish your task." However dirty

Zaynab rushed out, she was on the scene

"Save my brother!' she imploringly screamed.

She appealed to Omar Saad, again and again

To give little water, to save the life of Husayn

He contemptuously turned his face, in utter disdain

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

Her humiliation was watched by Husayn

He was in greatest of agony and pain

"For the sake of love, you bear for me

Please return to the camp immediately."

She rushed back to her nephew, Ali Zainal Abedeen

Shaking him from stupor, she narrated the scene

In the dusty panorama, they soon saw a spear

Husayn's head was on it, without malice, without fear!

(10) The Loot

Eerie silence hung over the battleground

Broken occasionally by drum beating sounds

The carnage, the massacre, of saintly souls

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

The massacre being over, they raided they tents

To loot and destroy, they were all fiendishly bent

Helpless ladies and children, they mercilessly pashed

Young innocent babes, to the ground they dashed.

Daughters of the Prophet, simple lives had led

Coarse and patched clothes, were all they had

Woven by Fatima, they were immensely treasured

In terms of money, none could be measured.

They were shamelessly looted of even their veils

The Yazidi hordes outclassed, themselves, the devils

Earrings were snatched of the child of Husayn

She was slapped mercilessly, for crying in pain.

In stupor, lay the only surviving adult male

Ali Zainal Abedeen was flogged as in horror tales

After the looting, the tents were set on fire enmasse

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

Zaynab was perplexed, she was lost

Perish in flames or face still worst

This hour of trial, whom to consult

Her nephew was unconscious, lying in dust.

"Ali Zainal Abedeen, I appeal to you

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

He opened his eyes, burning with fever

With utmost effort, advise he delivered.

"To save our lives is a religious duty

Go in the open and seek security."

Ladies and children, they left the tent

Salvaging what they could, as they went.

The loot, the pandemonium, was soon over

Burning embers of fire only hovered

A partially burnt tent was all that remained

A solitary witness of torture and blood stain.

The Ahl Bait cuddled together therein

Shattered in mind and body, beyond dream

The time had come almost to a standstill

The night was in sorrow; one could feel.

The mourning widows of Husayn's friends

Their anguished hearts, who could mend?

Zaynab and Kulthum consulted each other

The orphaned children, they had to mother.

Zaynab counted the children; one was missing

To her dismay, it was Sakina, her darling

"Tell me Sakina, where are you my child?"

In wilderness, the echo was the only reply.

Frustrated, she ran towards the battlefield

"Sakina is lost, your darling child

Husayn, where shall I look for her?"

She imploringly sobbed, in utter despair.

The silvery moon, behind the clouds was hid

The clouds dispersed, the ground was lit

Lying with her head on Husayn's chest

Little Sakina was sleeping in her usual nest.

"Sakina, my child, I have come here

After searching the desert, my dear

Your father's beheaded body, how could you find

In this dark night, with your frightened mind?"

"An irresistible urge seized me, though dampened

To tell my father all that had happened

How they snatched my earrings, after his death

The slaps I received, the treatment we met."

"Running aimlessly in the desert I cried

Tell me dearest father, where do you lie

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

I heard him calling and found my father dear."

"I narrated to him, all I had endured

It lightened my heart: I was re-assured

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

I placed my head in the nest of mine."

With Sakina, Zaynab hurried to the camp

Again it was dark; there was no lamp

All were anxiously waiting in the ghostly night

Praying silently to God, the Eternal Light.

She placed Sakina in her mother's arms

She had several other duties to perform

No, not to protect any worldly treasure

The children had suffered, beyond measure.

Advancing towards them, she saw a group

"There is nothing left, which you can loot

Pray, do not disturb the children in sorrow

If you want something, come in the morrow!"

"We do not want anything from you

We know, what you have said is true

We have brought some water and food

We know, you are in a sorrowful mood."

Zaynab was surprised; so polite was the speaker

It was the widow of Hur, the truth seeker

"Soldiers of Omar Saad have deputed me

To carry food and water for thee."

"Lest you perish, due to hunger and thirst,

Before Yazid, they want to take you first

That is why they have sent water and food

Not because they have suddenly turned good."

"O, sister, we are indebted to your husband

For his precious life, in defending Husayn

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

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

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

But eighteen members to death, were done."

They offered condolences to each other

Zaynab was large hearted like her mother.

"At last there is water for you

Wake up, Sakina, see it is true

Wet your throat, sobbing will stop."

For days, she had not even a drop.

"Let Ali Asghar drink first, he is the youngest

My dear brother died of sheer maddening thirst

Now that water is available, give him first

Before I can taste it and quench my thirst."

Guarding her folks, with a half burnt pole

Alone, all alone, with no waking soul

Due to exhaustion, Zaynab fell in a swoon

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

One person came galloping in her dream

"O' Shaikh, please go back" she screamed

"I am daughter of Hazrat Ali and Fatima

We are guardians of the holy 'Kalima '!

The person lifted the veil from his face

It was her father Ali himself, by Divine Grace

She poured out her mutilated and bleeding heart to him

The outpourings caused convulsions, ending the dream.

Lying on the desert sand, clothes wet with tears

The dawn was breaking, time of prayer was near

Events of previous day, she recalled with pain

Ali Akbar had given Azan; prayers led by Husayn.

Finishing her prayer, she laid her head

Prostrate before God of the living and dead

To give her courage, to carry on the mission

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

(11) The Journey To Kufa

The sun rose, crimson-red was its color

Downcast with shame, the world looked duller

Ladies and children, huddled with shambled remains

The victors rejoiced, without compunction or shame.

Vying with one another, to torture and torment

They took delight, in causing them lament

Marching them, by the bodies of their dear ones

Before being taken to Kufa, in a caravan.

Without any saddles, on camels' bare-backs

The ladies were put in a sheep like pack

Bound hand and foot, with ropes and chains

Children's necks were tied with their hands.

Burning with fever and heavily chained

Zainal Abedeen was marched, though in pain

The heads of the martyrs, carried on spears

Headed the procession of Muhammad's dears.

Kufa was reached in a few hectic hours

Shimr and Khooli gloated, over and over

To the governor was sent a courier

The caravan stopped at a barrier.

Zaynab and Kulthum had resided for four years

In Kufa as daughters of Islam's ruler

Now, they were captives of those Muslims,

Who were steeped in vices and sins.

The grand daughters of the Prophet of Islam

Were too noble, to cause anyone least harm

Helpless victims of those followers of Muhammad;

The lofty principles of Islam were thrown in mud.

O' Kufa, recall the days of glory of Zaynab!

The honored daughter of the noblest of Arabs

For four years, Kufians vied with each other

Every wish of theirs to fulfill like a mother.

The same Kufa now wore a festive look

People gathered in every corner and nook

To watch the grand daughters of Muhammad

People of Kufa were now thirsty for their blood.

Heading the caravan, the town crier was crying aloud

The prisoners are Zaynab and Kulthum, beyond doubt

Husayn and his followers have all been slain,

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

All who question Yazid, such is their fate

Beware, lest you be subjected to such hate

If you obey Yazid, without any question

Rewards will be plenty and pleasingly handsome.

When the identity was revealed, some were sad

Ladies and children of the house of Muhammad;

Could they be captives and his grand-son murdered?

None, however, dared protest; they merely shuddered.

It was noon, the sun increasingly blazing

Continuous pleading for water, Zaynab was facing

It was futile, to ask the brutes for water

Zaynab was explaining to Husayn's daughter.

A lady in balcony, saw the plight of Sakina

Rushing down with water, she was in a dilemma

She went to Sakina, breaking the police cordon

A tumbler of cool water; O' merciful heaven!

Was it Umm Ayman? Zaynab was not sure

Two decades had passed, since the days of yore

"I am thankful for your noble gesture,

May God, on you, His blessings shower."

She was astonished and completely dazed

Zaynab brushed aside the hair, from her face

The same Zaynab, whom she adored and venerated,

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

Kissing Zaynab's feet, out of reverence

Umm Ayman, weepingly, asked for forgiveness;

Lest, such display rouse public sympathy

The guards pounced and whipped, Ayman, mercilessly.

Thrown aside, she weepingly complained to Allah

The caravan proceeded to the court of Obeidullah

Seated on a throne, holding his royal court

The prisoners were marched in the villain's fort.

Seeing Zaynab and Kulthum, he ordered his men

To place at his feet, the head of Husayn;

He mockingly inquired, the son of a bitch'

"Are these slave girls or children of Prophet?"

as per the parting promise given to Husayn

Zaynab, who was controlling herself, lost restrain

"We are grand-daughters of your acknowledged Prophet,

Sisters of Husayn, whom your henchmen murdered!"

In frenzy, she gave him a bit of her mind

"You are the stooge of Yazid, O' you fiend!

He has flouted all the principles of Islam

The house of Prophet, he has unjustifiably harmed!"

"He has trampled all ethical concepts

reduced all beings to a condition abject

your success, is ephimeral, be sure

very soon, God's wrath, you will endure."

Ibn Ziad, was stunned by this bold rebuke

His embarrassment was apparent, though he fumed

The awe inspiring atmosphere of the court

Held no terrors for Zaynab and Kulthum, both.

He looked around to see the devastating effect

If she went on, the masses would defect

He shouted at the top of his heartless voice

Undaunted by threats, Zaynab dared him twice!

She projected the issues, the sacrifices of Husayn;

Most poignantly, she recalled his piety and fame

A blind companion of the Prophet, Ziad bin Arkan

Protested at the indignities on founders of Islam.

Ibn Ziad, shouting him down, ordered his removal

By nature, he was crafty and vindictively cruel

He hurriedly dismissed the corrupt court

"Carry the prisoners to Damascus", he roared.

(12) The Devil's Den

Through the desert of Mesopotamia they marched on

Falling every few feet, due to sheer exhaustion

Ali Zainal Abedeen was mercilessly whipped

Even if he stumbled, even if he tripped.

Sakina fell down from the camel's bare-back

Zaynab raised an alarm; she was taken aback

The soldiers were intoxicated, they paid no heed

Without any succour, she would perish indeed!

In desperation, Zaynab turned towards the spear

"Husayn, fallen down is your daughter dear;

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

The spear, with Husayn's head, got planted down!

Khooli jumped down, to uproot the spear

The stooges rushed forth, from far and near

The spear remained stuck as if cemented

The impact would be great, if soldiers got scent.

Shimr approached Ali; his anger was boiling

The Imam looked at the head; tears were trickling

He turned his gaze, Zaynab caught his weeping eye

"Sakina has toppled over, the child may die!"

Shimr picked up the unconscious exhausted child

Dumping her in Zaynab's arms, rushed the hostile

Khooli could now lift the spear from the ground

The caravan proceeded quietly, onwards bound.

The Syrian desert was strewn with prickly thorns

Marching bare foot, like on painful corns

The torture was borne, with patience and calm

God was the healer, soothing was his balm!

For few hours they halted, each tiresome night

Feasting, the vulturous soldiers were a sight

Food and water, for prisoners was rationed

Barely enough to sustain them, was the caution.

They reached a mountain top, quite secluded

A hermitage of a holy and pious recluse

The heads of the martyrs, Shimr gave

For safe custody, in his solitary cave.

The prophets descended to guard the head

Startled and baffled, he awoke from his bed

Rushing out of the monastery, Shimr he awoke

"Whose heads are these?" boldly he spoke.

"The grandson of Prophet Muhammad had defied

The authority of Yazid ibn Moawiyah" Shimr cried

"For refusing to accept his spiritual suzerainty

He had been butchered at Karbala, ruthlessly."

The hermit was shocked, beyond any words

"You cursed people, fie upon you cowards

Beheading your own Prophet's beloved grandson,

His helpless family you now hold at ransom!"

Shimr lost his temper, he was enraged;

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

For Islam's injunctions, he had scant regard

To grant protection to those dedicated to God.

The city of Damascus was soon in sight

Through hurried marches, by day and night

Near the gate of the fortress, the caravan halted

In blazing sun, the prisoners sweated.

The scenes in Kufa, had reached Yazid's ears

To disclose their identity, he now feared

He announced, that a rebel had been defeated

A day of rejoicing, it should be treated.

The city was assuming a gay and festive look

Festoons and buntings hung from every nook

The victims were scorching under the burning sun

To the onlookers, it was all laughter and fun.

Sacrificial dates, they threw at them

To ward off evil from their dear ones

The hungry children tried to eat them

Zainab was perplexed and at her wit's end.

"Prophet has forbidden his own family

To eat sacrificial offerings, O' you ladies,

Do not throw such offerings at our children;

Pray, do not increase our pain and burden!"

Can it be, they are the family of Muhammad?

Their faces and bodies were smeared with mud

From some princely family of noble stock

Their bearings revealed, without any doubt.

After one full hour, the imperial orders came

Bring in the prisoners, the followers of Husayn

An elevated throne, lavishly decorated with gold

Seven hundred gilded chairs surrounded it, all told.

In tattered rags, with dirt and mess

Blood oozing from lash-wounds in the flesh

Tightly tied in ropes and heavy chains

Were the daughters and sisters of Husayn.

On a gold salver, the head of Husayn,

At the feet of Yazid, was vindictively laid

He could not for a moment believe his eyes

These people claimed with Muhammad, blood ties.

Yazid was fully drunk; he quivered with rage

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

These are not the ladies of Husayn."

His eyes displayed a thirst for slaying

Flinging himself abjectively at Yazid's feet

"Mercy, O' Commander of Faithful", he pleaded,

"I have carried out your august command,

Nay, your every wish, your every demand."

"The prisoners are Zaynab and Kulthum,

for any doubt, pray have no room,

The ailing man is Ali Zainal Abedeen,

Other members, may also please be seen."

Raising his eye brows, he watched Yazid's face

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

falteringly, he replied, afraid of being snubbed

"The old lady is Fizza; behind her is Zaynab."

"None, shall protect the prisoners from me;

Throw aside Fizza, so that Zaynab I can see."

Fizza turned to the slaves, behind the throne

With naked swords, as bodyguards they roamed.

"O brothers, from Abysinia, my own native land

with folded hands why do you passively stand?

Your aged princess demands from you protection

This tyrant's blood thirst is his obsession!"

The slaves stepped forward and addressed Yazid

"Your Majesty, please desist from the foul deed;

if Shimr proceeds to do anything to her,

blood will flow right now, like water!"

Yazid, was flabbergasted at this affront

He fully realized, they said, what they meant

In the light of chandeliers, their swords glistened

The coward in him panicked, as he shiveringly listened.

"Shimr, withhold your lash; stay where you are

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

My good fellows, your devotion to me, is such

Your sense of honor, I will not touch.

The courtiers and others, saw his humiliation

To display his triumph, was his fascination

Beating Husayn's head, with a cane of gold knob

He rejoiced with glee, as the prisoners sobbed.

Using the cane, on the lips of Husayn

He chuckled, wickedly, without any shame

"Were not these lips, receiving kisses from Muhammad

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

"How delighted my fore-fathers must be

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

I have avenged them, for all their defeats

By butchering Husayn; a daring feat."

"Whose head is this, may I ask, O' King?

What crime, had committed, this human being

To deserve, this treatment, even after death

Woeful is the punishment, his family has met."

An ambassador, of a foreign country, Abdul Wahab

Inquired of Yazid, on seeing the holocaust

"The head is of Prophet's grandson Husayn;

He, with his supporters, were all slain."

"These are the ladies of the house of Prophet

Watching them in distress is, to me, a treat

Husayn, and his friends, were put to sword

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

"I shall subject them, to such punishment

To the world, it would be a valuable lesson

None, shall question my sovereignty, hereafter

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

"You have committed the greatest sin, O' King!

I have not heard of such tortures and killings;

My people treat me with highest respect,

For being a descendent of their Prophet."

He then turned toward Zainal Abedeen

"Ali, from what I have heard and seen

Your father, indeed, was the noblest soul

To fight this tyrant, was a courageous role."

"I declare, my faith, in your esteemed religion

fully aware of the consequences of the decision,

I denounce the usurper, the incarnation of 'devil';

He is the fittest epitome of the highest evil."

Yazid was mad with rage, smarting under insult

Most unexpected was the rebuke, staggering the result

"Drag away the Ambassador," Yazid angrily demanded

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

Pin drop silence prevailed; everyone was reserved

Gulping down cups of wine, to soothe his nerves

"You there," he shouted at Imam Zainal Abedeen

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

"You shall pay dearly for his sins

for the insults and rebukes, flung by him

I shall chop off your head, here and now

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

On second thought, he added, trying to be tough

"No, no; killing you will not be enough

Your life, will be a living death, everyday

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

In a feeble, but clear ringing voice,

Said Zainal Abedeen, "O' tyrant do not rejoice

Worst torture, is to make our ladies stand,

Without any veils, in this Islamic land."

"I am not frightened by your threats

The descendents of Prophet, have no fear of death

Those who love God, are severely tried by him,

To display their true faith and heaven win."

The retort evoked spontaneous whispers of admiration

Despite his cunning nature, Yazid was visibly shaken

He feigned loud laughter to cover his embarrassment

He still tried to justify the unparalleled harassment.

"God inflicted this punishment on you all

for your father's obduracy and defiance of my call

to accept my lawful authority, you are reluctant still

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

"O' tyrant, do not distort the words of God

to act with justice or to ride rough shod,

he gives opportunities to all women and men;

punishment ultimately over takes those with evil in them."

Yazid was speechless; he could not reply

His mouth was sealed, much as he did try

A subservient courtier, anxious to curry favor

Bowed before him, thinking himself too clever.

"Your Majesty, your indulgence I crave

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

Zaynab standing nearby, with her head bowed

Was furious, and infuriated as never before.

"You, wretched soul; no shame you have

Prophets grandchild, you wish to enslave

Is there none amongst you, even to protest

Against the shocking and shameless request."

A gold embroidered curtain only ruffled in shame

Hind, Yazid's favorite wife, entered the harem

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

A devout lady, a believer in Almighty Rab.

She still remembered Zaynab, with devotion

Yazid knowing this had concealed his intention,

To kill Husayn and his family's enslavement;

She was unaware, of the tragic development.

Hearing Zaynab's voice, and talk of enslavement,

She rushed out, without veil, in a frenzied moment

"What is all this about, do let me know

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

The action of his wife, was a daring feat

Coming without a veil, was against custom, indeed

Yazid, hurriedly shouted orders, dismissing the court

"Carry the captives to the darkest dungeon in the Fort."

The good lady kept on questioning her husband

Who the prisoners were, she enquired and so on,

He gave her evasive replies, to allay her fears

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

(13) A Rose Bud Fades Away

In the dark desolate dungeon, the caravan halted

The scorpions and snakes took fright and bolted

Zaynab and Zainal Abedeen, prostrated themselves in prayer

Without a word of complaint, without any demur.

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

The stone walls were damp, crumbling with decay

Looks of sorrow and despondency, was on each face

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

The faces depicted sufferings, beyond human endurance

Prayer was the solace, they enjoyed, without hindrance

A few stale morsels of bread and a little water

Was their daily ration, in these horrible quarters.

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

Was equally true in that merciless land and cruel age

Though in shackles, every night their spirits soared high

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

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

She had seen her father's heavenly soothing light

"O' Sakina, you have suffered enough, come with me

the days of your sufferings are over; O' where is he?"

It was just a dream, what a disappointment!

It was not a reality, to her bewilderment

Her uncontrollable lamentations, gathered a crowd

The ladies also lost control and wailed aloud.

Hearing the wails, Yazid sent slaves to inquire

Pacing up and down, he had not yet retired

On knowing the cause, his crooked mind strived

A devilish scheme, he soon mischievously contrived.

Yazid's men entered with a covered tray,

"I do not want food, please take it away

I want my father; promises he did give

Without taking me, why did he leave?"

They removed the cloth; Sakina beheld the face

Even in death, it was full of heavenly grace

With a cry, she flung herself on the wooden tray

Hugging to her heart, she snatched the face away.

Inconsolably, she bent down over the head

Putting, her cheeks, against that of her dad

Within a few moments, her sobbing had stopped

Her mortal remains, she had quietly dropped.

"How long will you lie on your father's head?"

Zaynab touched her hand; she was shockingly dead

Sakina had gone with her father, never to return

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

(14) The Triumph Of Truth

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

The jailors were puzzled; what could be the reason

The Queen of Damascus, was visiting the prison

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

Zainal Abedeen was in prayers, a guard entered the cell

Fizza, the oldest amongst prisoners, he turned to tell

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

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

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

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

With bowed heads, and faces covered with long tresses,

The ladies were sitting, with torn and tattered dresses.

An emaciated figure, with heavy chains and manacles

Was busy with prayer, though unable to stand in shackles

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

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

Hind, was perplexed; she was dumb-founded

Approaching the grave, the lady she sounded

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

For what crimes, you are behind the bar?"

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

Untold sufferings, your sorrowful face reveals."

The lady burst into sobs; her lips were sealed

Gently stroking her head, Hind herself kneeled.

Another lady sat in a corner, surrounded by others

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

This was the lady, who had roared like a lion

To hurl defiance at the court of the tyrant.

"What are the reasons for your sufferings and plight"

Hind inquired of Zaynab; her tone was so polite

"My husband is evading, annoyingly, my repeated inquiries

On grounds, that they relate to governmental diaries."

"Lady Fatima, I am seeing frequently in my dreams

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

I am perplexed, I am unable to understand

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

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

Tortures, beyond human endurance, my children are facing;

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

To my near and dear ones, and my beloved son, Husayn."

"My Lady's coming and her constant lamentations

has it any connection with your incarceration

I really wonder, how can it at all be true

Prophet's family, to do anything with you."

The eyes of the two ladies met, for a moment

One depicting a soulful of agony and torment,

The other reflecting bewilderment and inquiring

Zaynab burst into sobs, trying to control her feelings.

She had not recognised her, so much the better

It saved her the humiliation, to narrate the torture

She partially covered her face, with her long hair

Hoping that Hind would soon go away and leave her.

Hind, suddenly remembered that, she had seen

In better times, the venerable lady had been

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

Is that Lady Zaynab, O' no! how can it be?"

"How can I, even entertain such a thought?

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

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

Are you related to Lady Zaynab? Is it true?"

"Hind, Zaynab died long ago on Karbala's plain,

with youths of her family, who were slain;

the shadow of Zaynab, is now before you

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

Covering her face, her tears, she tried to hide

Falling prostrate at her feet, Hind cried

"Lady, forgive my utterly unpardonable neglect"

begging forgiveness, she expressed profound regret.

Zainal Abedeen had just completed his prayers;

Turning to him, "O' my Imam, your forgiveness I crave,

It was sheer thoughtlessness, for not probing deep

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

"When my suspicion was aroused, on that first day

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

she must be the beloved daughter of my Lord Husayn.

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

Zaynab stood up and going slowly towards Hind

"In vain, you are looking for my beloved Sakina

she is sleeping peacefully in that yonder grave

relieved of sufferings, she had courageously braved."

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

this fragrant rose bud withered away, unsung, unwept

she narrated the sufferings, she had bravely endured

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

Recounting her sufferings, Zaynab and others were crying

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

Seeing her loosing consciousness, Zaynab immediately rushed

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

Hind, ordered cold water, from her nearby palace

She sprinkled it on Umm Rabab's ash white face

Opening her eyes with a dazed look, she glanced

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

Her grief stricken mind had created a protective shield

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

To escape the grief laden atmosphere around the grave

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

Zaynab felt, she must be awakened from this stupor

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

She gently explained, that Sakina had joined her father,

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

Hind, excusing herself, to the palace she hurried

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

Only they had access to him, without announcement

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

Yazid was surprised to see Hind's hair disheveled;

Her eyes full of tears, charges she defiantly leveled

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

"Set free this very day, the family of Imam Husayn."

The cup of cruelty had got filled to the brim

Yazid was aware, the situation was getting grim;

Realization had dawned that time was running out

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

He was having nightmares, with Prophet upbraiding him

Everyday, he was having most horrifying and frightening dreams

"O' Yazid, what had my Husayn done to deserve your vengeance

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

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

Such tortures, you are inflicting, as can not be narrated."

He was brooding about ways, to resolve the dilemma

Which was his own creation, a self created drama!

Now his own son, his own flesh and blood

With Queen Hind, was flinging at him mud

The time was now ripe to act with grace

A little delay, and he would loose the race.

"A strange way for pleading for mercy, you have

Could you not find, a better way, to remonstrate

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

I shall summon my court and announce my decree."

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

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

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

"Can we ever have peace, after knowing what has transpired."

"For these unforgivable atrocities and unpardonable sins

Make best amends, to Lady Zaynab and Zainal Abedeen

Restore them to the place of honor, which is their right."

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

Decked, in a jeweled dress of silk and brocade

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

With full display of regalia, of Ommayad's courts

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

With all solemnity, the ushers announced in the Fort

The grandson of Prophet Muhammad, was entering the court

His garments tattered, but with dignity in his bearing

Zainal Abedeen entered, with everyone admiring his daring.

There was a radiance on his countenance; a "halo" on his face

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

Yazid got up from his throne, seei9ng the spontaneous gesture

Impelled by an uncontrollable force of undiscriminating nature.

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

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

The rustling of the curtain, indicated the ladies had entered

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

Yazid offered condolences; his words sounded hollow

Cursing his lieutenants; he tried to paint a "halo"

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

He expressed profound regret, for all that happened.

He told the Imam, that they were all know free

He offered any amount, they wished as blood money

Seeing the Imam's face turning red with rage

He urged it in the name of religious usage.

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

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

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

It is not for us, to accept any money, for the Martyr's blood!"

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

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

He changed the subject and addressing Zainal Abedeen

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

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

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

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

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

Yazid, expressed extreme surprise, at the simple request

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

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

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

He ordered restored of all their belongings, forthwith

He endeavored their every desire, every wish, to meet

Medina, via Karbala, they wished, to immediately return

Canopied camels and best horses; the purchase was done.

The local citizens paid their respectful condolences

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

"Stay on in Damascus, for sometime", they all jointly pleaded.

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

The entire city turned out to bid them adieu

Hind, had remained all along with Zaynab, now knew

Time of parting was near; was unimaginably sad,

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

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

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

Umm Rabab expressed, to Zaynab, her departing wish

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

The disconsolate mother fell on Sakina's tiny grave

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

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

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

(15) The Savior Of Islam

Sweet melodies blew the heavenly horn

A joyous tiding; Husayn was born

The sun rejoiced; the moon was gay

Each in its orbit, each did away.

The waters rippled; the wind was all play

Never were they, so happy and gay

It was Muhammad's light and Ali's ray

The Savior of Islam, had come to stay.

A gift to Muhammad, from his Lord

A son to Ali, the sun of God

A fruit of love, to the Lady of Light

A brother to Hassan, to cause him delight.

Born was he, out of God's grace

A beacon light, to the human race

A soul of souls, whom God made pure

With heavenly love, the world to cure.

The Prophet rejoiced; his eyes shed tears

For here was one, to him most dear

For here was one, for Islam's sake

His life and all, would one day stake.

For truth and justice, he would fight

In cause of God, without respite

For he was one, decreed by God

To lay his life, for the love of Lord.

The heavens were glad, for such a one

The Lord should choose, Ali's son

For best was he; the world had seen

Whose vision one craves, even in dream.

"Fed with love, by the Lady of Light"

he got the best, of what was right

and from his father, the 'Godly Knight'

he drew his strength and his might.

But Muhammad did give, beyond measure

All that he had, as his treasure

For he was his treasure, beyond doubt

As he often publicly proclaimed aloud.

"Love them my Lord, I do implore,

Who love Husayn and him adore

He is of me and I of him"

Such a bond, the world had not seen!

He sucked his tongue, in playful jest

His breast he made, a place of rest

The reins he made, his curls of hair

His back he made, a stately mare.

Such was the love, the Prophet bore

For he was his grandson, and more

An anchor sheet, to all who care

To live and be, 'just and fair.'

The life he lived; the path he led

He earned by sweat; the poor he fed

Not a pie had he, that he kept

But the poor he gave, ere he slept.

A king of kings, in simple attire

The crowns of world, he never aspired

To the uncared widow, and the needy orphan

He gave his all, and all so often.

Many a day, he tightened his loins

To buy his own bread, he had no coins

So noble of heart so pure a soul

To please his Lord, was his goal.

He lived for Lord and His delight

He toiled by day and prayed by night

The simplest of life, he liked to live

The best of things, he liked to give.

His life was such, a guiding light

To know the wrong and know the right

And such a soul, was asked to bow

To one who was, the lowest of low.

Yazid, the godless son of a crafty father

Was proclaimed a king or Caliph rather

Money and wine, most lavishly flowed

Till all the worldly heads had bowed.

But not the heads, who had bowed

To God alone, who had showed

The path of right, through Islam's ray

Eighty and odd, among them, were they.

To save Islam from its sinking depth

Too glad were they, to face death

But to the ungodly one, they refused to bow

Undaunted and unnerved, they faced the foe.

It was not a fight, for a kingdom

Nor a family feud, as is not seldom

It was a fight for principles and truth

As imbibed by Islam, in its holy book.

If he had bowed to the ungodly one

Riches and honor he would have won

Islam would then have been in name

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

The time soon came for their test

They were ready to lay their best

With women and babes, handful were they

Ready to face thousands, in battle array.

To cut off water, was the only way

To weaken them, they thought, for the fray

So frightened were they, of Ali's son

To fight them they knew, was no fun.

Husayn was fully alive, to things at stake

He knew well, his family's fate

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

His end was near, his time was up!

The sad day dawned; the heavens were aghast

Truth was at stake; the die had been cast

Never had they witnessed, so supreme a test;

Falsehood at its worst versus truth at its best.

The wind was aggrief, it tore each leaf

Wild was its anger, wild with grief

It shook the river by its throat

The waves, it tossed all things afloat.

The sun glared down, wild with fire

It burned with rage; fierce was it's ire

If only it could make itself somehow free

From the chains of bonds of heaven's decree.

The river was ashamed; hapless was it's plight

Destiny's decree, how could it dare fight

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

Who cared a nought, for wrong or right.

They guarded the river; they threw a ring

To deny water was worst of a vindictive thing

The hounds, they drank, and so did the drunks

Innocent babes; parched were their tongues.

For three torturous days and three night

Muhammad's beloveds were in waterless plight

Young babes of most holy and innocent fare

Wailing and whining, the torture they share.

O' Lord of Lords! What a pathetic sight

Yazid's hordes, displaying their might

Thousands and thousands of blood-thirsty hounds

Waiting to pounce on eighty odd crowns.

While handful of souls, engrossed in prayer

Unheedful of them; a sight so divinely rare

Young and old, they prayed to Merciful God

With humble devotion, His help they sought.

To give them strength; no, not to fight

But to be content, in whatever plight

For well they knew, their role of life

Was to save Islam, from being knifed!

The battle he lost, the fight he won

Yazid's title of sanctity was shorn

Islam's plant survived the onslaught

Husayn's blood had watered the drought.

The revenge was complete, so it seemed

Abu Sufyan's pledge to Satan was redeemed

The worldly eyes could, however, hardly see

Husayn's blood had kept Islam pure and free.

(16) Tributes And Prayers

My respectful condolence to the dearest sister of Husayn

My tearful home, to the wife of Abdulla Tayyar, O' Zaynab

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

As the daughter of Ali and Fatima, O' Zaynab!

Aun and Muhammad, two unblossomed flowers of youth

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

You sacrificed them all, at the altar of truth,

So that, Islam may be rid of the Satan's hold, O' Zaynab!

The tortures you bore; the insults you faced,

Would have torn asunder any heart, O' Zaynab

You did not flinch, even in grace,

To the worst of ignominies and cruelties, O' Zaynab!

Your unique faith in God; your invaluable support,

Enabled Husayn to sacrifice his all, O' Zaynab

Between brother and sister, never was such a rapport

Your indomitable will, sustained his mission, O' Zaynab!

Your heroic efforts, saved his sacrifices from going in vain

Your courage, saved his lineage from extinction, O' Zaynab

You presented the issues involved, in the sacrifices of Husayn

Most eloquently, and in proper perspective, O' Zaynab!

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

You will be mourned and gratefully remembered, O' Zaynab

Pray to God, to grant my wish to serve Husayn

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

AMEN

Names Of Martyrs Who Sacrificed Their Lives At Karbala For The Sake Of The Lofty Principles Of Islam As Mentioned In "Ziyarah Al-Nahiyyah"

1.Imam Husayn ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)

grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a)

(killed by Shimr Dhiljaushan)

2. Ali al-Akbar ibn Husayn ibn Ali

(killed by Murrah bin Munqiz bin Noman al Abdi)

3. Abdullah (also known as Ali al-Asghar) ibn Husayn ibn Ali

(killed by Harmala ibn Kahil al Asadi)

4. Abdullah ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)

(killed by Hani bin Thubaet al Hadhrami)

5. Abul Fadhl al Abbas ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)

(killed by Yazeed bin Ruqaad al Heeti and Hakeem bin Tufail al Taai)

6. Ja'far ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)

(killed by Hani bin Thubaet al Hadhrami)

7. Uthman ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)

(killed by Khooli bin Yazeed al Adhbahi al Ayadi and Abaani al Daarimi)

8. Muhammad ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)

(killed by Abaani al Daarimi)

9. Abi Bakr ibn al Hassan ibn Ali

(killed by Abdullah bin Aqabah al Ghanavi)

10. Abdullah ibn al Hassan ibn Ali

(killed by Harmala bin Kahil al Asadi)

11. Qasim ibn al Hassan ibn Ali

(killed by Umar bin Sa'd bin Nufail al Azdi)

12. Aun ibn Abdullah ibn Ja'far al Tayyar

(killed by Abdullah bin Kutayya al Nabahani)

13. Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Ja'far al Tayyar

(killed by Aamir bin Nahshal al Tameemi)

14. Ja'far ibn Aqeel

(killed by Khalid bin Asad al Johani)

15. Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Aqeel

(killed by Aamir bin Sa'sa'ah)

16. Abu Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Aqeel

(killed by Amr bin Sudaih Saedavi)

17. Muhammad ibn Abu Saeed ibn Aqeel

(killed by Laqeet bin Naashir al Johani)

18. Sulaiman, slave of Imam Husayn

(killed by Sulaiman bin Auf Hadhrami)

19. Qaarib, slave of Imam Husayn

20. Munjeh, slave of Imam Husayn

21. Muslim ibn Ausajah al Asadi

(killed by Abdullah al Dhubabi and Abdullah Khashkara al Bajali)

22. Saeed ibn Abdullah al Hanafi

23. Bishr ibn Amr al Khadhrami

24. Yazeed ibn al Haseen

(reciter of Qur'an)

25. Imran ibn al Kalb al Ansari

26. Na'eem ibn al Ajlan al Ansari

27. Zuhair ibn al Qain al Bajali

28. Amr ibn Qurzah al Ansari

29. Habeeb ibn Madhahir al Asadi

30. Hurr ibn Yazeed al Reyahi

31. Abdullah ibn al Umair al Kalbi

32. Nafe ibn al Hilal al Jamali al-Muradi

33. Anas ibn Kahil ibn al Harth al Asadi

34. Qais ibn al Mussahar al Saedawi

35. Abdullah ibn Urwah ibn al Harraaq al Ghifaaree

36. Abdul Rahman ibn Urwah ibn al Harraaq al-Ghifaaree

37. Shabeeb ibn Abdullah Nahshali

38. Jaun, slave of Abu Dharr al-Ghifaree

39. Hujjaj ibn Zaid Sa'di

40. Qasit ibn Zuhair al-Tha'labee

41. Kursh (Muqsit) ibn Zuhair al-Thalabee

42. Kinaanah ibn Ateeq

43. Dhargham ibn Maalik

44. Jowain ibn Maalik al-Dhabaai

45. Zaid ibn Thubait al-Qaesi

46. Abdullah ibn Zaid ibn Thubait al-Qaesi

47. Ubaidullah ibn Zaid ibn Thubait al-Qaesi

48. Amir ibn Muslim

49. Qa'nab ibn Amr al-Namari

50. Salim, slave of Amir ibn Muslim

51. Saif ibn Malik

52. Zuhair ibn Bashi al-Khath'ami

53. Zaid ibn Me'qal al-Jo'afi

54. Hujjaj ibn Masrooq al-Jo'afi

55. Mas'ood ibn Hajjaj

56. Son (name not known) of Mas'ood ibn Hajjaj

57. Majma' ibn Abdullah al-Aezi

58. Ammar ibn Hassan ibn Shuraib al-Taai

59. Hayyan ibn Haarith al-Salmaani al-Azdi

60. Jundab ibn Hujair al-Khanlani

61. Umar ibn Khalid al-Saedaawi

62. Saeed, slave of Umar ibn Khalid

63. Yazid ibn Ziad ibn Mazahi al-Kindi

64. Zaahir, slave of Amir ibn Humuq al-Khuzaa'ee

65. Jabalah ibn Ali al-Shaybani

66. Saalim, slave of Bani Medinat al-Kalbi

67. Aslam ibn Khateer al-Azdi

68. Zuhair ibn Sulaim al-Azdi

69. Qasim ibn Habeeb al-Azdi

70. Umar ibn al-Ohdooth al-Hadhrami

71. Abu Thamaamah, Umar ibn Abdullah al-Saaedi

72. Hanzalah ibn As'ad al-Shaami

73. Abdul-Rahman ibn Abdullah al-Arhabi

74. Ammaar ibn Abu Salaamah al-Hamdaami

75. Aabis ibn Shabeeb al-Shaakiree

76. Shaozab, slave of Shaaki

77. Shabeeb ibn Haarith ibn Saree

78. Maalik ibn Abdullah ibn Saree

79. Sawwar ibn Abi Uman al-Nohami al-Hamdani\*

80. Amar ibn Abdullah al-Junda'i\*\*

\* Wounded Martyr who was captured and died in prison

\*\* Pierced together with Martyr No. 79

Opinions Expressed By Distinguished Non-Muslims on The Martyrdom of Husayn Ibn Ali (A.S)

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

- E.G. Browne (A Literary History of Persia)

"In a distant age and clime the tragic scene of the death of Husayn will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader." "In the history of Islam, especially the life of Imam Husayn stand unique, unapproached and unapproachable by anyone. Without his martyrdom, Islam would have extinguished long ago. He was the saviour of Islam and it was due to his martyrdom that Islam took such a deep root, which it is neither possible nor even imaginable to destroy now."

- Edward Gibbon (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire)

"The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Husayn and his followers were the rigid believers of God, they illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to truth and falsehood. The victory of Husayn despite his minority marvels me."

- Thomas Carlyle (Hero and Hero-worship)

"If Husayn fought to quench his worldly desires, (as alleged by certain Christian critics) then I do not understand why his sisters, wives and children accompanied him. It stands to reason therefore that he sacrificed purely for Islam.’

- Charles Dickens

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

- Washington Irving

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