

BISMILLA HIR RAHMAN IR RAHIM

PREFACE

The Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust has the honour of presenting hereby this treatise on the biographical sketch of Hazrat Abbas Ibne Ali (A.S.), the Alamdaar-e Husaini, i.e. the standard-bearer of Imam Husain (A.S.)'s small band of 72 persons who faced the enormous enemy force of thirty thousand strong on the field of Karbala in the year 61 A.H. and laid down their lives with the aim to defend Islam against being made subservient to the wishes and whims of the ruler in power.

It must be admitted at the outset that despite the fact that Hazrat Abbas is much talked of in connection with commemoration of the tragedy of Karbala, since leaving aside Imam Husain (A.S.) he was the most important character looming large in all the events connected with that great event, yet it is unfortunate that very little details of the life of this great hero of Karbala are found in the relevant books of history, biography or chronicles. There are several apparent reasons for this lack of literature about him. First, he was just in the prime of his youth when his life came to an end at Karbala, nibbling in the bud this highly promising youth of the Holy Prophet's family. Secondly, he was the younger brother of the chief hero of Karbala, namely Imam Husain (A.S.) and was ardently devoted to him, while Imam Husain (A.S.) was very highly revered and respected as the sole representative of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) embodying in himself all the Islamic ideals in their optimum form. Consequently, throughout his life Hazrat Abbas remained shadowed by the towering personality of Imam Husain (A.S.). Thirdly, Hazrat Abbas himself doted on Imam Husain (A.S.) so ardently that he is hardly found away from the Imam's company so that his own activities are all found linked with and around those of the Imam (A.S.).

Nevertheless as many details about his life covering his birth, childhood and adolescence etc. have been taken into account as could be gleaned from here and there in the books dealing with his own life, the life of his parents, brothers and other near relations, as well as the political and other events of the periods concerned. In doing so care has been taken to abide by the cardinal principle of biography-writing that while dealing with the life achievements and character of the subject personality focus should remain concentrated only on such events with such details and aspects thereof as have either been contributory to the building up of the ideas, notions, and character of the subject personality or were influenced by his actions and behavior.

No doubt several aspects of his life are quite sufficiently discussed in almost every book or writing on the tragedy of Karbala or on the life of Imam Husain (A.S.) or other characters of that great event, such as Bibi Zainab, Imam Zainul Abedeen (A.S.). etc., yet it has been considered necessary to present his life-sketch separately in order to show his individual contribution and achievements independently.

Hazrat Abbas's personality looms large in all the events connected with the tragedy of Karbala right from the time when on Muawiya's death Imam Husain was called upon by the local governor of Medina to swear allegiance to Yazid as caliph in succession to his

father Muawiya up to the moment he sacrificed his life in the field of Karbala, since he is found to be serving as the right hand supporter of Imam Husain (A.S.), obeying his commands, working for him, carrying out his orders and executing his plans diligently and faithfully. As such the devotees of Ahl ul Bait ('Alaihim-us-Salaam) also invoke his intercession while seeking from Allah the fulfillment of their desires. They rely on him for coming to their rescue from distresses and troubles. It is but natural that they should like to get acquainted with the life and sublime character of this hero of theirs in details. It is hoped that this book would meet their wishes to some extent.

PEERMAHOMED EBRAHIM TRUST

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PRELIMINARY

Hazrat¹ Abbas was a son of Imam Ali (A.S.)². The first two sons of Imam Ali (A.S.) were Imam Hasan (A.S.) and Imam Husain (A.S.). They were born of his first wife Bibi Fatema (S.A.) the daughter of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.)³ Being the grandsons of the Holy Prophet and specially because the Holy Prophet had taken out both of them for the historic event of Mubahela, the religious contest with the Christians, as his sons, they have better been known in the world of Islam as the sons of the Holy Prophet.

After the death of Bibi Fatema (A.S.) Imam Ali (A.S.) married several other wives. Hazrat Abbas was born of one of them who attained immortal fame because of Hasrat Abbas's staunch adherence to Imam Husain and his unique services rendered during and in connection with the great tragedy of Karbala, of which Imam Husain is the chief figure.

In the battle-field of Karbala when Imam Husain (A.S.) arrayed his men against the enemy, on the 10th of Muharram, 61 A.H. -commonly known as the day of Aashoora, he assigned the standard of the force to Hazrat Abbas. He is therefore also known as Alamdaar; 'Aalam' means standard and 'daar' means bearer; thus Alam-daar means bearer of the standard.

Further, in Karbala from the 7th of Muharram, the enemy stopped Husain (A.S.) from taking water from the river Euphrates all approaches to which were strictly guarded. On the day of Aashoora when the children were extremely thirsty and were clamoring for water, Imam Husain's daughter Sakeena approached Hazrat Abbas and requested him to fetch some water for herself and the other children.

With Imam Husain's permission Hazrat Abbas took a water-skin and proceeded towards the river bank to bring water after due fighting if necessary. There was fierce fighting. Nevertheless Hairat Abbas succeeded in filling his water-skin but on .his way back towards the tents of Imam Husain he was overpowered. Both his hands were severed while the water-skin was also destroyed by arrows and he was eventually killed. For this reason he is also called Saqqa-e Sakeena, Saqqa-e Haram; Saqqa means water-carrier, and Haram means the women of the house. Saqqa-e Sakeena means the water

fetcher for Sakeena and Saqqa-e Haram means the water fetcher for the women and children of the house.

Still further, because of his extremely valorous performances and other unique services on the day of Aashoora the poets, particularly Persian and Urdu poets writing about the events in Karbala have used many other qualitative appellations for Hazrat Abbas, such as:

GHAZANFAR, lion,
SAFDAR, splitter of enemy lines,
SAF-SHI KAN, disturber of enemy lines, WAFADAAR, loyal,
PAIKAR-E WAFI, embodiment of loyalty,
DILAWAR, brave, ETC.

Hazrat Abbas's personality is so closely associated with the tragedy of Karbala that soon on thinking, reading or hearing of his name the whole scene of that tragedy automatically comes to the mind in the same way as is the case with the name of Imam Husain (A.S.) who is, of course the chief figure of that tragedy.

BIRTH

There is no difference of view among Hazrat Abbas's biographers that he was born in the year 26 A.H.; but with regard to the exact date and month of his birth in that year there are several views. However the most authentic view is that he was born on the 4th of the lunar month of Sha'baan; and it is this date on which his birth anniversary is generally celebrated by the adherents of Ahlul Bait. It is noteworthy that, as is well known, Imam Husain (A.S.) was born on the 3rd of Sha'baan in the 3rd year of Hijra, Hazrat Abbas was full 23 years younger than Imam Husain and their birth anniversaries are observed on two consecutive days.

Hazrat Abbas's mother's name was Fatema, and since she belonged to the clan of Kilab she was known as Fatema Kilabiya. On becoming Imam Ali's wife she gave birth to four sons, one after the other, of whom Hazrat Abbas was the first, she came to be known as Ummul Baneen, meaning mother of sons; and it is this name that is generally used for her in the books of history, biography, etc.

About Bibi Ummul Baneen's marriage with Imam Ali (A.S.) it is related that Imam Ali (A.S.) had a keen desire to marry a woman of a clan famous for valour and bravery so that a brave son may be born of her and serve as a reliable supporter of Imam Husain (A.S.). Imam Ali's brother Aqeel was an expert in the knowledge of the genealogies of Arab families, so Imam Ali (A.S.) asked him to suggest a girl of a brave and valorous family whereupon he gave the name of Fatema Binte Hizaam Kilabiya. After the usual preliminary overtures and arrangements the auspicious marriage was materialised and by Allah's Grace, in due course, Hazrat Abbas was born.

On being informed of his birth, Imam Ali (A.S.) bent down in prostration as a mark of thanksgiving before Allah and must have felt satisfied that he had received a son for the

support and help of Imam Husain (A.S.) as he had wished. It is related that it was Imam Husain who recited Azaan and Iqamat in the ears of Hazrat Abbas, and also that it was Imam Husain's face which Hazrat Abbas saw on first opening his eyes after birth. It appears that from the very beginning nature had earmarked Hazrat Abbas for devotion and service of Imam Husain (A.S.) as is amply proved by the entire life of Hazrat Abbas.

On the 7th day of Hazrat Abbas's birth his AQEEQA ceremony was performed, which is a rite highly recommended in Islam. On this occasion the new infant was given the name "ABBAS" which means 'Lion'. Imam Ali (A.S.) is the Lion of Allah, while Hazrat Abbas is the lion of Imam Ali. So he is lion of the lion. Surely infant Abbas was named so as a wish of his revered father Imam Ali (A.S.) who desired him to grow up as brave as a lion, and he factually grew up to be proverbially handsome as well as exceedingly brave as will be seen from his life account hereafter.

DEVOTION TO IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

From his early age Hazrat Abbas was intimately attached to Imam Husain (A.S.) and on growing to be a boy, took great pleasure in serving him as a servant or a slave serves his master. Several anecdotes from his life go to prove his staunch devotion to Imam Husain (A.S.). One such anecdote has been commonly related in the books of history which deal with his life. It is said that once Imam Husain (A.S.) was sitting with Imam Ali (A.S.) and Hazrat Abbas was also there. Imam Husain happened to ask Oambar the well known freed slave of Imam Ali (A.S.) to bring for him water to drink. Before Oambar could comply with it Hazrat Abbas who was a small boy at the time rushed to get the water for Imam Husain (A.S.), but while he was bringing the water in the drinking cup he could not balance the cup in his hands properly and spilt a lot of water over himself, so that on reaching Imam Husain (A.S.) his clothes were drenched. This anecdote is illustrative of the ardent love Hazrat Abbas bore for Imam Husain (A.S.) even from his early age. With the advance of age this love developed into a deep-seated passion for offering every sort of sacrifice for Imam Husain (A.S.), as was eventually proved in the battle field of Karbala on the memorable day of Aashoora in the year 61 A.H., as will be seen hereafter.

FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE

The period when Hazrat Abbas was passing from boyhood to adolescence was very tumultuous for Imam Ali (A.S.) and his family. Hazrat Abbas was about ten years of age when on the death of Caliph Usman, Imam Ali (A.S.) formally assumed the caliphate and governance of the Islamic state. Soon thereafter he was entangled in political upheavals engendered by his opponents. From that very tender age Hazrat Abbas must have been noting that the entire atmosphere in the whole of the Islamic world was steadily becoming hostile to his revered father and his family. History is clear on the point that Talha Sin Ubaidullah and Zubair Bin Awam, two prominent citizens of Medina and counted among the prominent companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) were among the first who paid allegiance to Imam Ali (A.S.) as new caliph after Caliph Usman had been killed. Ironically, however, soon thereafter these very two persons rose against Imam Ali (A.S.) and, along with Ummul Momineen Ayesha, the well-talked of wife of the Holy

Prophet (S.A.), began to mobilise men and opinion against him so as to dislodge him from the Caliphate. Imam Mi (A.S.) tried his utmost to avoid any armed conflict with anyone in the Muslim Ummah but the opposite group was adamant in their plan and did not listen to his counsel. After mobilising a sizeable force on the pretext of proceeding to seek revenge of Caliph Usman's murder they gathered in Basra in Iraq, overpowered Imam Ali's governor of that area and took possession of the local treasury. Imam Ali (A.S.) was thus forced to react and proceeded towards Basra to encounter them. Even then he continued trying to avoid a down-right clash with them since he was keenly averse to getting involved in a civil war within Islam itself. But on getting news of their killing his men in the outpost of Basra, ransacking of the treasury there and other atrocities committed by them he could not keep quiet any longer. The enemy had collected at an open place in Basra where eventually a pitched battle took place between the forces of the opponents under the guidance and command of Ummul Momineen Ayesha with Talha and Zubair as her chief advisers and executives on one side and the rightful Caliph Ali (A.S.) and his supporters on the other side. This battle is known in history as the Battle of Jamal or Battle of the Camel, Jamal in Arabic means a camel. It is so named after the camel on which Ummul Momineen Ayesha was riding while personally taking part in the battle. The encounter resulted in a clear victory for Imam Ali (A.S.). Both Talha and Zubair were killed while Ummul Momineen Ayesha was, after being defeated, escorted, under Imam Ali's orders, to Medina with all the reverence due to her as a wife of the Holy Prophet (S.A.), to live in peace.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE BATTLE OF JAMAL ON HAZRAT ABBAS (A.S.)

No doubt at this time Hazrat Abbas was just a boy, but this event with all its causes and consequences must have been subject of every day discussion within the house as well as outside it and must have made serious impressions on his growing mind as is usual in the case of children growing in families connected with the affairs of the state. He must have noted that Imam Ali (A.S.) was not at all involved in the murder of Caliph Usman, that actually he had been helping him and protecting him from the insurgents and that the excuse of taking revenge from him for the Caliph's murder was quite unfounded and only a subterfuge for wresting the Caliphate from him, because he had deprived Talha and Zubair (and many others) of the many favours that they had been enjoying during the previous regimes, particularly during that of Caliph Usman.

The Battle of Jamal was, after only a short gap of time, followed by the Battle of Siffin, by which time Hazrat Abbas had grown up to be an adolescent youth of 12-13 years. Taking cue from the Battle of Jamal, Muawiya Bin Abi Sufian also rose against Imam Ali (A.S.) under the same excuse that was adopted by Ummul Momineen Ayesha, Talha and Zubair for the Battle of the Jamal, namely the taking revenge for Caliph Usman's murder.

Muawiya who has a record of ancestral opposition and enmity against Islam and the Holy Prophet and his family particularly against Imam Ali (A.S.) had been the governor of Shaam (now known as Syria in English and Surya in Arabic) with Damishq (now Damascus) as his headquarters, from the days of the second Caliph Umer. Muawiya

was a scion of the Umayya dynasty. It is well known that during the reign of the third Caliph Usman members of this dynasty were greatly in power since the Caliph himself belonged to that very dynasty. Taking advantage of the rise of his dynasty he started planning to acquire the high office of the caliphate for himself. A close study of the history of those days shows that even when Caliph Usman was, during the last days of his life, surrounded by insurgents and asked Muawiya as the governor of Shaam for help, the latter evaded sending him any re-inforcement from his area or affording him relief in any other manner. After the assassination of the Caliph, Muawiya found a fertile ground for the achievement of his ambition. When he came to know that Imam Ali (A.S.) had been accepted as Caliph he refused to acknowledge him as such.

In the meantime the Battle of Jamal took place. Muawiya was shrewd enough not to take active part in it as, apparently, he was still weighing the pros and cons of the matter. Nevertheless senior members of the Umayya dynasty took part in the Battle on the enemy's side.

BATTLE OF SIFFIN

After the Battle of Jamal Muawiya himself took up the excuse of seeking revenge of Caliph Usman's murder and began preparing the atmosphere in his sphere of influence against Imam Ali (A.S.), by all possible means that are usually employed by crafty politicians and rulers in such circumstances, such as liberal grants, high promises, or intimidation and secret killing where grants or promises might be ineffective or inappropriate. In this way in a short time of a year or so Muawiya was able to create in the area of his influence namely Shaam and suHurbs, an atmosphere quite hostile to Imam Ali (A.S.). Then he mobilised a big force to fight against the rightful Caliph under the excuse of seeking revenge of Caliph Usman's murder and marched towards Iraq. Getting the news of Muawiya's movements Imam Ali (A.S.) also came with his men and the two armies met at a place called Siffin.

HAZRAT ABBAS IN THE BATTLE OF SIFFIN

Now this is the first battle in connection with which the name of Hazrat Abbas is found mentioned in history. Hazrat Abbas was now between 13 and 14 years of age. Since Muawiya had reached earlier, his men took control of the river that flowed nearby and denied the use of its water by Imam Ali's men. When Imam Ali's men reached there they had no source of water. With the Imam's permission Malik Ashtar and a small party of men proceeded to secure water. Considering Ashtar's men to be insufficient Imam Ali also allowed Imam Husain (A.S.) to join them after a little while. Some writers state that when Imam Husain (A.S.) set off for the purpose Hazrat Abbas also accompanied him and took part in the fighting which took place for gaining control over the river.

Apparently this is the first known account of Hazrat Abbas's fighting recorded in history. How significant it looks to us now when we are fully aware of his later role in Karbala as

Saqqa-e Sakina or Saqqa-e Haram that even his first fighting with an enemy at the adolescent age of 13-14 years was for securing water. It seems that even from this early age Allah was giving him training in the tactics of fighting for water, as he was to be known in history forever as the water-carrier for the children of his immortal master-Imam Husain (A.S.).

There is one more occasion when during the Battle of Siffin we come across the name of Hazrat Abbas. Once when the battle of Siffin was in full swing Imam Ali (A.S.) intended to go out to face an enemy in single combat in response of his challenge, but he did not like to disclose his identity and decided to change his apparel and horse with that of his son Abbas; and putting on Hazrat Abbas's apparel and riding his horse Imam Ali (A.S.) went to encounter the foe and killed him. It may seem unbelievable that Hazrat Abbas's apparel should have fitted his father when the former was only 13-14 years in age. This doubt would be dispelled if it is kept in view that according to almost unanimous view of all the historians when Hazrat Abbas had fully grown up he was so tall that while riding a horse his feet would touch the ground, and also so huge in physique that he looked like a mound placed on the horse-back. Keeping this in view it seems no wonder that at the age of 13-14 years he should have been tall and sturdy enough for his apparel to fit his revered father Imam Ali (A.S.).

Some writers have said that the person whose attire and horse Imam Ali (A.S.) used on this occasion was not Hazrat Abbas but some other man named Abbas and this confusion arose because of the common name.

Unlike the Battle of Jamal, the Battle of Siffin ended without a clear result from the military point of view. What happened was that the fighting continued for quite a long time and was very fierce at some moments, but towards what should have meant its final end, and when Imam Ali's army was almost on the point of winning the field, Muawiya played a crafty trick. In order to side-track his on-coming defeat he got countless copies of the Holy Quran raised on spearheads with loud-spoken demands from his soldiers that fighting should be stopped and solution of dispute should be sought from the Holy Book instead of the sword. The people on Imam Ali's side fell in the trap and being sentimentally bewitched by the reference to Quran forced the Imam (A.S.) to agree to the enemy's demand. Hostilities ceased and the matter was entrusted to two arbitrators, one from each side. After nomination of the arbitrators from both sides the two armies retired to their respective headquarters. Then there were protracted discussions between the two arbitrators at the end of which the agreed decision was to be announced by them before the people in a general gathering. At the time of making the announcement of the agreed decision Imam Ali's man was outwitted by Muawiya's representative who, at the time of the public announcement of the mutually agreed finding of both, craftily got Muawiya declared as the caliph obviously contrary to what had been agreed upon. Imam Ali's representative vehemently protested against the announcement being in violation of the agreed view but in the applause of Muawiya having been declared caliph no one listened to him and eventually he too left the scene in utter disgust.

All these events were observed by Hazrat Abbas under the instructive umbrella of Imam Ali's inspiring guidance and must have created their indelible impressions on his mind making him realize how real Islam was being turned by interested persons into just a

movement for grabbing the power to rule without any regard to the moral and spiritual values of the Religion, In other words by the impact of these events on his impressionable mind Hazrat Abbas was getting grounded in the high traits of firmness of determination, steadfast adherence to truth and virtue and for defense of the real Islam at any cost, even that of his life if need so arose.

About over two years after the Battle of Siffin's uncertain end Imam Ali (A.S.) was killed by one Abdur Rahman Ibne Muljim Muradi who is said, by some writers, to be a Kharji, i.e. one of those who having deflected from Ali's side during the Battle of Siffin on the issue whether or not arbitration should be resorted to had become his deadly enemies and a large number of them were killed in an encounter with Imam Ali's force at Nahrwan. Whether or not Ibne Muljim was a Kharji, it is, in any case, an established fact of history that Imam Ali's assassination at his hands was engineered by Muawiya. Evidently Muawiya fully well knew that so long as Imam Ali was alive his dream to become the full-fledged Caliph of Islam could not and would not materialise. As a man bent on achieving his aim by any means, fair or foul, straight or crooked, he was on the look out as to how to do away with Imam Ali (A.S.) so as to clear the scene for his own caliphate. To accomplish his cherished aim he picked up Ibne Muljim who was in love with a woman who was herself a dire enemy of Ali (A.S.). He made this woman tell Ibne Muljim that she would marry him if he would kill Imam Ali (A.S.) and also that if he does so Muawiya would pay her dower money on his behalf. Ibne Muljim agreed. Accordingly, on the dawn of 19th of Ramazan of the year 40 A.H. when Imam Ali (A.S.) was offering Namaz in the central mosque of Kufa and was in prostration Ibn-e Muljim gave a pre-planned and well-balanced sword-stroke on the Imam's head. Ibn-e Muljim's sword was smeared with lethal poison, and so the stroke proved fatal. Imam Ali passed two days in agony and on the morning of the 21st of Ramazan his sacred soul left for its eternal rest. INNAA LILLAHH-E WA INNAA ILAIH-E RAAJE-'OON.

Here is a very significant anecdote concerning Hazrat Abbas. It is almost unanimously related by all writers that before his death Imam Ali called for Imam Hasan and all other sons and inmates of the house and entrusted each one of them, leaving out Hazrat Abbas, to the care of Imam Hasan whom he declared to be the Imam after himself and directed Imam Hasan to take full care of them all. As for Hazrat Abbas, Imam Ali (A.S.) turned towards Imam Husain and giving Hazrat Abbas's hand in Imam Husain's hand entrusted him to Imam Husain (A.S.) and directed him to remain watchful of Imam Husain's welfare so that if there was ever any danger to his life he should do his utmost to ward off the danger even to the point of sacrificing himself for Imam Husain. As has been shown in the previous pages Hazrat Abbas was already fervently attached to Imam Husain (A.S.) and used to serve him as a loyal slave. With his revered father's will to sacrifice his life for the Imam he became firmly determined never to let any harm come to the Imam so long as he himself was alive.

With Imam Ali's death the scene was somewhat clear for Muawiya to advance his machinations for the caliphate further. Accordingly soon after Imam Ali's death he launched a large-scale attack on Imam Hasan (A.S.) who had been proclaimed Caliph by Imam Ali (A.S.) before his death and accepted as such by all those who owed fealty to Imam Ali (A.S.). Imam Hasan (A.S.) was taken almost by surprise, nevertheless he too came forward to face the enemy. Marching out from Kufah he halted at a place

called Rabaat and sent a contingent of twelve thousand under his commander Qais bin Sa'd bin Ibada to confront Muawiya's force. At this time Muawiya adopted another device so as to shatter Imam Hasan's fighting strength and got busy creating split in the Imam's army by various means. To some of the Imam's leading men Muawiya offered heavy bribes, cash or otherwise with or without promises of high positions in government and thus roped them in to his side. He tried the same with Qais bin Sa'd but he was too staunch a supporter of Imam Ali (A.S.) to be trapped in this way. Apart from dealing with leading men of Imam Hasan (A.S.) individually Muawiya played another trick with Imam Hasan's army as a whole. He secretly, through his spies, got the news spread in the Imam's army that the Imam had concluded peace with Muawiya and was negotiating its final terms. This news created sharp dissensions in the Imam's army and a large number of them rose up in a state of mutiny against him, so much so that some of them tried to hand him over to Muawiya. His tent was raided and most of his belongings were snatched away. Being extremely disgusted with this state of affairs Imam Hasan (A.S.) made his way towards Mada-en to stay with his governor there. On the way he was attacked and wounded severely in the thigh. However, he continued his march towards Mada-en where his wound was treated. He observed that with the disruption created by Muawiya in the ranks of his army as a result of which many of his trusted generals together with their contingents had gone over to the enemy he was left with a force that was hardly enough to have a successful deal with the enemy. On the other hand Muawiya was now sure that by creating split and desertions in the Imam's army he had so weakened him that it was hardly possible for him to offer any resistance and that he would be on the verge of coming to terms with him. Therefore he himself offered to the Imam to negotiate peace terms to which the latter agreed after some deliberations. Thus within a period of a few days over six months from the death of Imam Ali (A.S.), Imam Hasan (A.S.) abdicated from the Caliphate and handed it over to Muawiya on certain agreed terms which it is not the occasion to discuss here.

Not much is known about Hazrat Abbas's role during this period. Of course he was yet too young to take any direct part in such matters. Nevertheless it can very well be imagined that these turbulent events whereby the caliphate shifted from Imam Ali (A.S.) to Muawiya whose ancestors had been the archenemies of Islam and of the Holy Prophet (S.A.), must have had profound effect on his mind. He was now over 14 years in age and was surely able to discern between good and evil after making his own study of the events and matters. He must have observed that the most important and the leading term of the treaty of peace between Imam Hasan (A.S.) and Muawiya was that the latter would rule according to Quran and Sunnah. This was all that Imam Ali (A.S.) and anyone on his side desired and cared for. In other words it was the interest of Islam and Islam alone that his revered father Ali (A.S.) and brother Hasan (A.S.) cared for regardless of whether or not they possessed temporal authority to rule as caliph and head of the Islamic state. Passing through these epoch-changing events at this developing age Hazrat Abbas was being confirmed in the idea that for him as for other members of the family of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) it was the unimpaired safety of Islam that mattered, no matter whatever sacrifice one had to make for its sake.

The conclusion of peace between Imam Hasan (A.S.) and Muawiya was followed by a period of comparative calm for the members of Ahlul Bait (A.S.), only in the sense that Imam Hasan (A.S.) and other members of the household retired to Medina and busied themselves in the spread of the teachings of Islam and other spiritual pursuits. But on the

other side Muawiya renewed his campaign to turn the minds of the people at large deadly against the Ahlul Bait (A.S.). Some of the steps taken by him to this end were these:-

1. He ordered that Imam Ali (A.S.) and his Progeny should be publicly rebuked and cursed in the sermons to be delivered from the pulpits of mosques throughout the Islamic realm during the Friday and other prayers.
2. A general directive was issued to government offices and the public men at large that anyone coming up with a tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet (S.A.) in praise of either of the first three caliphs and in disparagement of Ali and his progeny would be rewarded copiously. The result was that countless such traditions were fabricated and made current among the people, and are still found in the collections of traditions held to be genuine by many credulous Muslims.
3. He ordered that any body found to be favoring Imam Ali (A.S.) or his cause should be severely persecuted.
4. A number of the adherents of Imam Ali (A.S.) were killed under the direct orders of Muawiya, such as Hajr Bin Adi and his twelve companions, and countless others were killed, imprisoned for life or banished from their homes and subjected to myriad sorts of atrocities by Muawiya's governors and local administrators in their respective areas, in order to gain his approbation and consequential rewards and high positions.

The irony of it all is that for this generous distribution of rewards and high positions to his sycophant governors, courtiers and others from the general public by misusing the Baitul Maal (the public treasury) normally meant for the welfare of the Muslims in general, Muawiya was applauded as the most astute and generous ruler. In the glitter of this showering of wealth on a few the atrocities perpetrated by himself and by his governors, administrators and other officers of state with his approbation are complacently ignored and hushed up. However, history is a hard task-master and seldom lets go an oppressor or a tyrant unheeded. Even the dark deeds of his regime are found recorded by historians, though they have to be assiduously gleaned from here and there.

The anti-Ali propaganda and the atmosphere of killing, persecution and intimidation of the Ahlul Bait must have assured Hazrat Abbas that some day or other Imam Hasan and Imam Husain too would be made the target of Muawiya's enmity towards them and therefore he himself should remain on the vigil so as to defend them against all odds even at the cost of his own life, if so necessary, as had been willed by his revered father, Imam Ali (A.S.).

It is clear that as time passed on with increasingly critical atmosphere against the Ahlul Bait, Hazrat Abbas must have been developing a definite determination in his mind to face any untoward situation with exemplary courage worthy of his high lineage and with a sense of loyalty coupled with a spirit of sacrifice of the highest order.

A meticulous study of the connected events makes it clear to any student that right from after the death of Imam Ali (A.S.) followed by the cleverly engineered peace treaty with Imam Hasan (A.S.), Muawiya had been looking for a chance to do away with Imam Hasan as well, though he took it to be against his overall interest to kill him openly, as that would expose his hidden animosity towards the Holy Prophet's progeny, and might evoke revolt by some sections of the population as the members of that holy family were

still held in reverence and veneration by quite a large number of the people. After all, time came when he found a way of secretly killing Imam Hasan (A.S.). There was a wife of Imam Hasan (A.S.) named Jo'da daughter of Ash-'ath. Ash-'ath was well-known for his enmity towards Ahlul Bait. After some ingenious overtures Muawiya succeeded in making this woman agree to kill Imam Hasan (A.S.) by administering him in some drink lethal poison to be supplied by Muawiya, on promise of getting her married to his son, Yazid, after Imam Hasan's death. Jo'da having consented, the plot was put into effect. The poison was supplied by Muawiya as pre-arranged and Jo'da mixed it in a drink which she offered to Imam Hasan. The dose had its desired effect and the Imam, after vomiting out blood mixed with pieces of his affected liver, expired to join his revered father, mother and grandfather, the Holy Prophet (S.A.) in Paradise. INNAA LILLAAH-E WA INNAA ILLAIH-E RAAJ-‘OON.

Again, we find no mention of Hazrat Abbas in the account of these events in the books of history and have to content ourselves with assuming that as a close inmate of the house with strong attachment to Imam Hasan (A.S.) and Imam Husain (A.S.) he too must have been intensely affected by the dire effect of all these happenings and becoming more and more firm in his determination to face any adverse situation however hard it might be without demur or slackness of any kind.

Imam Hasan (A.S.) expired on the 28th Safar, 50 A.H. when Hazrat Abbas was 24 years old, that is, of the fully grown up age. The period after Imam Hasan (A.S.) was quite tough for Imam Husain as well as Hazrat Abbas. Imam Husain (A.S.) was now the only person out of the Holy Five members of Ahlul Bait covered by the verse of purification of the Holy Quran:

INNAMAA YUREEDUL LAAHO LE YUZHIBA
, ANKUM-UR RIJSA AHLAL BAIT -E
WA YUTAHHIRA KUM TATHEERAA
[Surely Allah intends to keep away from you, O
Ahlul Bait, all uncleanness and to keep you
Thoroughly purified. (Al Quran 33 : 33).]

All the adherents of Ahlul Bait now concentrated their hopes and attention on Imam Husain (A.S.) as the sole custodian of true Islam, being the only direct descendent of the Holy Prophet fully conversant with the true tenets, teachings and practices of Islam and carrying in his mind the full sense of responsibility to save Islam's pristine character and to immunise it against the danger of its admixture with un-Islamic innovations. As for Muawiya the field was now clear for him to rule without fear of opposition of any serious nature, and he was now anxious to perpetuate his rule. For this purpose he had been preparing the ground from before. First by regular and sustained propaganda against the Ahlul Bait he had undermined their position in the eyes of the Muslims in general to such an extent that he could be certain that, barring a few staunch adherents of Imam Ali (A.S.), no one from the Muslims in general would have the courage to support Imam Husain (A.S.) if he ever rose against him.

Secondly, as already alluded to, by his policy of generous showering of money and high positions on his sycophant supporters he had so darkened the conscience of the community that no one even felt or realised the evil nature of his un-Islamic and anti-Islamic innovations.

Thirdly, by ruthless persecution and intimidation of his opponents who were mainly those continuing their adherence to the holy Ahlul Bait, he had created an atmosphere of all-pervading fear throughout the realm and had thereby curbed the peoples' power of expressing their real feelings against his rule.

Feeling assured of a secure rule for himself he now turned to bequeathing it to his son Yazid making him the heir-apparent to succeed him as caliph when he himself died. But he knew full well that it was very difficult to accomplish this task because of the evil habits and the un-Islamic character of Yazid which were well known to everyone. For fear of open opposition he had not yet made his desire known, but those very close to him could see what Muawiya had at his heart.

There is never dearth of sycophants and self-seeking courtiers at such junctures. The man who initiated the matter for Muawiya was Mugheera Bin Sha 'ba who was his governor at Kufa. For some personal reasons of his own he prompted Yazid to ask his father to nominate him as his would-be successor as caliph. Yazid did accordingly. As for Muawiya when he saw that his heart's wish was now starting on its way to ultimate satisfaction he was much pleased with the suggestion and settled with Mugheera that the latter would first secure the allegiance of the people of Kufa for Yazid as heir-apparent, while Ziad the governor of Basra was to do the same in that area. It took a few years before Muawiya was emboldened to make a public announcement of Yazid's heir-apparency through a written edict read out by him at a public meeting in his capital Damishq after making sure of smooth sailing of the function, not only in Damishq which was thoroughly loyal to him but also in Iraq and Khorasan both of which were under his trusted man Ziad whom he had already obliged by acknowledging him to be his brother through his father Abu Sufian who had committed adultery with his mother Sumayya, a woman of bad character, while her husband Thaqif was alive. As for Hejaz, that is, the area containing the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, Muawiya 's idea was to present to the people of those places a fait accompli in the matter.

For this purpose he went to Medina himself, but when he mooted out the idea to the people it was opposed by five important personalities. They were:-

- 1.Ummul Mornineen Ayesha, wife of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and daughter of the First Caliph Abu Bakr
- 2.Imam Husain Ibne Ali (A.S.).
- 3.Abdullah Ibne Umer, son the Second Caliph Umer.
- 4.Abdur Rahman Bin Abu Bakr, son of the First Caliph Abu Bakr.
- 5.Abdullah Ibne Zubair , son of Zubair Bin Awam, the well-known figure of the Battle of Jamal.

It is noteworthy that the people who opposed the proposed appointment of Yazid as heir-apparent were all persons of consequence who wielded good influence and respect. They included all those who had the right to speak in matters of politics of those times by virtue of one reason or the other. They might have been differing in other matters but on this issue they were all unanimous in their opposition to the nomination of Yazid.

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Yazid's nomination was opposed because according to all shades of opinion and schools of thought it was against the principles and practice of Islam. It was also against Muawiya's treaty with Imam Hasan (A.S.) as that treaty provided that Muawiya would not nominate anyone to succeed him as caliph. Further, from the early days of the caliphate its incumbent was considered to be the religious as well as temporal head of the Islamic polity. It was therefore assumed that he should combine in himself a good degree of superiority in religious as well as other state matters and that his character should fairly be in keeping with the Islamic standards. About Yazid, on the other hand, it was well known that he was a drunkard, adulterer and a profligate and thus thoroughly un-Islamic in his practical life.

Muawiya well realised that among those who opposed Yazid's nomination Imam Husain (A.S.) was the most important. Imam Husain's refusal to accept Yazid as the future caliph was a great blow to the political game of Muawiya. On the other hand it was a master stroke of Imam Husain (A.S.) that he confined himself to a passive refusal in the matter. He knew that time would come when violence would be resorted to by the other side and he was determined to face it, but he was cautious enough not to initiate any aggression from his own side.

At this stage Muawiya too did not consider it proper to bring any serious pressure on Imam Husain (A.S.); but his game was to rouse the Imam's feelings to a degree that he might commit some act of violence so that he could be dealt with harshly on that pretext. In fact it is clear that the clash that occurred later between Muawiya's successor Yazid and Imam Husain (A.S.) at Karbala had really begun at this very stage, though yet it was in the form of a war of nerves only.

It can only be imagined how trying this period must have been for Imam Husain (A.S.). The adherents of Ahlul Bait looked to him for help and guidance for delivering them from these hardships while he was himself also quite conscious of his impelling responsibility as the last living representative and scion of the Holy Prophet (S.A.), to help them out of these tribulations, and to put Islam on the right track, guaranteeing Islamic justice without class distinctions for favour or persecution. The adherents of Ahlul Bait would often urge Imam Husain (A.S.) to rise against Muawiya but he would decline to do so on the ground that he was bound by the treaty with Muawiya and advised them to wait till Muawiya died. Obviously all this time he was closely watching the breaches of the terms of the treaty by Muawiya. On his side Muawiya was not at all mindful of those terms. He was flagrantly violating them at will without demur or hindrance. Eventually, however, there arose an occasion when Imam Husain (A.S.) got a chance to enumerate before him the various breaches of the treaty committed by him, and to show what atrocities he was perpetrating on virtuous people. The occasion for so doing was provided by Muawiya himself as he wrote a letter to Imam Husain (A.S.) whose reply to it is almost self-explanatory. A gist of the Imam's reply is given here:

I am certainly keeping quiet with no intention to come into conflict with you for the present, but I am not happy at this attitude as I feel apprehension that Allah may take me to task for my acquiescence in your misdeeds and atrocities.

Are you not the murderer of Amr Bin Humuq Khazaa-ee, a companion of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and a virtuous man, after having given him staunch promises for safety? You got him arrested on mere suspicion and murdered him in cold blood.

You drive virtuous people out of their homes to strange lands and put them to all the hardships involved in being forlorn.

Did you not declare Ziad as your brother through your father against the rule of law laid down by the Holy Prophet (S.A.) since he was born of Surnayya in the house of her legal husband while your father had committed illicit intercourse with her?

Did you not make over pious and virtuous persons to this Ziad to slaughter them, to mutilate them to maim them, to blind them by destroying their eyes or even to hang them on date-palm trees?

Did you not order Ziad to slaughter the Hazrami people when he wrote to you that they adhered to Ali (A.S.) and he killed them one to all?

I firmly hold that no mischief in Islam is worse than your rule.

You have not implemented a single term of the treaty.

You forced the people to pay allegiance to Yazid your profligate son, as your heir-apparent.

Although Hazrat Abbas is not specifically mentioned by the historians in connection with this exchange of letters between Muawiya and Imam Husain (A.S.), but since Hazrat Abbas is now a grown up man of 24 years of age and has from early childhood been intimately attached to Imam Husain (A.S.), it is more than evident that he must have been thoroughly acquainted with what was passing on between the Imam and Muawiya, and must have been keeping a vigilant mind on the causes and consequences of these events.

Ten years of exacting patience and trial on the part of Imam Husain (A.S.) had passed after the death of Imam Hasan (A.S.) when on the 22nd of the lunar month of Rajah in the year 60 A.H. Muawiya died.

And now begins the awaited chapter of the history from where Hazrat Abbas shines as the embodiment of loyalty, love, obedience to the Imam, daring, valour, prowess, rage where challenged, coupled with exemplary restraint where necessary and in short all those high qualities of human character which have been valued by mankind throughout the ages. In fact for those who are acquainted with his life and character the very word "Abbas" has become the symbol of these qualities, and tears uncontrollably begin to flow

from their eyes to recall how this great hero of the family of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) laid his life for the sake of his master Imam Husain (A.S.) in Karbala in defence of true Islam.

When Muawjya was in the grip of his fatal illness Yazid happened to be away on a hunting trip, and did not come back till Muawiya's death. Finding Yazid absent from his side Muawiya expressed his dying will to his police chief Zuhak and to the head of his chamberlains. In that will he said, inter alia, that Yazid should be told that there was apprehension for him from a few persons the most important among whom was Imam Husain (A.S.). So on occupying the throne of caliphate Yazid had one severe pinching in his mind. This was the question of the allegiance from those persons and in particular from Imam Husain (A.S.). Accordingly the first important political step that Yazid took as caliph was that he wrote a letter to his governor at Medina, Walid Bin Utba, wherein he formally informed him of Muawiya's death and at the same time directed him to seek allegiance for him as caliph from Imam Husain (A.S.) and to behead him if he refused to pay allegiance.

It is clear that the silence that had so far existed between Muawiya and Imam Husain (A.S.) on this issue was now broken with all possibilities of full-fledged violence from Yazid and that it was no more possible for Imam Husain (A.S.) to continue the passive attitude he had so far maintained. The stage of definite active move had arrived; a final yes or no to the demand for allegiance was now clearly required. And if it is a NO then it is fraught with a world of serious consequences.

In compliance with the directive contained in Yazid's letter Walid sent for Imam Husain (A.S.) through his official errand-carrier. It was quite a late hour of the night, but Imam Husain (A.S.) was still in the Prophet's mosque along with Abdullah Bin Zubair, while all other persons had left. Abdullah Bin Zubair felt surprised to have been called by the governor at this unusual hour but Imam Husain told him that he thought that Muawiya must have died and the governor should be seeking allegiance in favour of Yazid before the general public came to know of the event.

In any case, Imam Husain (A.S.) agreed to see Walid as required by him; but while going he prepared himself for any untoward incident that could happen in view of the serious situation.

Accordingly he took with himself a party of the young men of his family known as Bani Hashim. Quite naturally this party of Bani Hashim was headed by Hazrat Abbas who was regarded as the bravest of all of them in addition to being the most handsome in features and the tallest in stature. In fact because of his high qualities of head and heart and his shining countenance he was befittingly known as "QAMAR BANI HASHIM", meaning the "moon of Bani Hashim". In addition, as has been shown in the previous pages, Hazrat Abbas fervently doted on Imam Husain (A.S.) and was ever not only ready but eager to serve him in whatever capacity an occasion might demand. Evidently he must have accompanied the Imam at this time with full determination to protect him from any danger that might appear to him from the side of Walid. This could be the first occasion when his unflinching loyalty to Imam Husain (A.S.) and his innate courage might find an opportunity to come to light to some extent. With him at the head, the other members of the party should also be having a feeling of strength and passion to do their bit as the situation might require.

While entering the government house Imam Husain (A.S.) left Hazrat Abbas and the party at the gate with directions to enter only if they heard exchange of loud voices from inside. Walid read out to the Imam Husain (A.S.) the contents of the letter from the caliph. As anticipated by the Imam it first gave the news of Muawiya's death and then demanded allegiance of Imam Husain to Yazid as caliph. On hearing the news of death Imam Husain (A.S.) first recited the usual verse of the holy Quran: "INNAA LILLAAH-E WA INNAA ILAIH-E RAAJE-'OON". Then with regard to the demand for allegiance he said:

As for allegiance I think for a man in my position you would not deem it enough that I offer allegiance in this secret manner. When you make public announcement of Muawiya's death and invite the others to swear allegiance to Yazid you ask me too for it so that the matter is settled once for all.

Walid was perhaps anticipating a flat refusal and hot attitude from Imam Husain (A.S.) but when he heard this polite and apparently logical reply from him he was not only surprised but accepted it complacently saying:

"Quite so, you may go now only to come again with others". At this moment Marwan, the veteran member of the Ummayyads who was also present there interrupted and turning to Walid spoke thus: "Walid! What are you doing? If Husain is let off now without swearing allegiance you will never have such a favourable chance without goodly bloodshed on either side. Better finish him before he leaves". At this Imam Husain (A.S.) addressed Marwan in a raised voice and stood up saying:

How dare you or Walid kill me. By Allah you have uttered non-sense and committed a sin

Soon on hearing the raised voices from inside Hazrat Abbas along with his men who were on vigil at the gate thrust, it open and entered with hands just ready to draw out their swords, but Imam Husain (A.S.) did not allow them to indulge in any act of violence and came back to his house along with all his men. The Imam's action was based on his considered policy of no violence from his side, while Hazrat Abbas's behaviour on this occasion shows how obedient he was to the Imam (A.S.) and also that despite exuberant daring of spirit he could exercise appropriate restraint in its use when the occasion or the Imam's command so demanded.

In passing, it seems quite pertinent to see why Yazid was so insistent on securing Imam Husain's allegiance in his favour and also why Imam Husain (A.S.) was so reluctant to swear it. Yazid insisted for it because he realised that at the juncture Imam Husain (A.S.) was not merely an individual but carried with him the entire heritage of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) with regard to the responsibility for safeguarding and protecting the high standards of Islam. In the eyes of the people also Imam Husain (A.S.) as the sole direct descendant of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) then living was deemed to carry that grave responsibility. Further, Imam Husain's high position in Islam had been declared by the Holy Prophet (S.A.) in numerous announcements which were well known to all the people of consequence in the world of Islam. For example, there were many eminent companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) still living who had heard him uttering the following sayings about Imam Husain (A.S.):-

AL HASAN-O WAL HUSAIN-O SAYYEDAA SHABAAB-E AHLIL JANNAT.
[Hasan and Husain are the chiefs of the youths of Paradise.]

AL HASAN-O WAL HUSAIN-O IMAAMAANE, QA-' ADAA AU QAAMAA.
[Hasan and Husain both are Imams whether they sit (make peace) or rise (to confront the foe).]

HUSAIN-UN MINNEE W A ANAA MIN-AL HUSAIN
[Husain is from me and I am from Husain.]

On the other hand, Yazid considered himself as the head of the Islamic polity but was also conscious of Imam Husain's high position in Islam. Therefore he desired to secure Imam Husain's approval and sanction to his caliphate so that he could then effect whatever changes in the precepts of the religion he liked to make to suit his free will. For this reason he was keen in securing Imam Husain's allegiance to him as caliph.

From this it is also clear why Imam Husain (A.S.) was reluctant to swear allegiance to Yazid. Yazid's profligate character and flagrantly un-Islamic habits and pursuits were an open challenge to the sanctity and inviolability of the laws and practices of Islam and therefore his position as a caliph could not be acquiesced in by Imam Husain (A.S.) as a self-conscious representative of the Holy Prophet (S.A.). Accordingly Imam Husain (A.S.) took a firm decision not to swear allegiance to Yazid in any circumstance, come whatever may in its wake.

Soon on coming back from Walid's audience Imam Husain (A.S.) took the decision to leave Medina. The inmates of the family including all the members of Bani Hashim were informed of the decision. Brisk preparations were made for the final exit from the town so as to leave it within two days. Hazrat Abbas was made in-charge of the arrangements for the preparations as well as for the journey. On the 28th of the lunar month of Rajab of the year 60 A.H. Imam Husain (A.S.), accompanied by members of the family including women and children, certain members of Bani Hashim, and close associates, slaves and servants left Medina after bidding befitting farewell to the Holy Prophet and his revered mother Bibi Fatema (A.S.) at their grave, and set off towards Mecca. It can very well be imagined with what respectful manner and comfortable ways the womenfolk and children must have been made to ride their respective camels for this long journey under the guidance and supervision of the Imam (A.S.) and practical arrangements of Hazrat Abbas. For anyone who is acquainted with the abject treatment meted out to these very women and children by the enemy after the massacre of Imam Husain (A.S.) and his men in Karbala it is impossible to hold back his tears when visualizing their respectable and comfortable departure at this commencement of their journey. When Imam (A.S.) left Medina he was reciting the verse of the Holy Quran about Prophet Musa (A.S.):

FA KHARAJA MINHAA KHAA-EFAN YATARAQQABU: QAALA RABBE
NAJJENEE MIN-AL QAUM-IZ ZAALIMEEN

[So he went forth in fear, looking about, and said he: O my Lord, deliver me from the unjust people. Al Quran: 28:21]

Before Imam Husain (A.S.) left Medina as well as when he was staying in Mecca several people including his brother Mohammad Hanafia who was a son of Imam Ali (A.S.) by his wife Hanafia, and his cousin Abdullah bin Jafar who was very dear to him, advised him not to leave Medina or proceed towards Iraq where he decided to go from Mecca, but the Imam declined to accept any such counsel. It is however noteworthy in this connection that in no book of history on this subject do we find anything to show that Hazrat Abbas ever suggested anything contrary to his master's will or intention. He was so respectfully obedient and loyal to Imam Husain (A.S.) that he would never dare risk his own view before him in any matter whatsoever.

While in Mecca Imam Husain (A.S.) received countless letters from the people of Kufa in Iraq inviting him there for guidance as Imam. In order to have a proper assessment of the position in Kufa he sent his cousin Muslim Bin Aqeel as his envoy or representative to meet the people there and report to him the situation as to whether he should leave for that place. Before long he came to know that men had been sent to Mecca by Yazid robed as Hajjis to kill him. Therefore, despite the day for Hajj being close by he left Mecca towards Iraq just one or two days before the rites of Hajj were to commence. On the way again he was met by several important persons who advised him not to proceed towards Iraq but he continued his march undeterred as though he was on some high mission. When Imam Husain (A.S.) reached the stage of Thalabia he got the news by two men coming from Kufa that his cousin and envoy plenipotentiary Muslim whom he had sent to assess the position in Kufa had been killed and that the entire situation in that area had changed and was against the Imam (A.S.). Nevertheless he continued his journey till at the stage of Lee Hasam he was intercepted by Hur Bin Yazid Riahi at the head of a contingent of four thousand soldiers. Here again we find Hazrat Abbas associated with the task of providing water to the thirsty. When Hur and his contingent met Imam Husain (A.S.) they were extremely thirsty as they had exhausted all the quantity of water they had with them and for some long time they had not been able to procure any water from anywhere at all. Observing their pitiable condition Imam Husain (A.S.) ordered Hazrat Abbas to provide the entire contingent water from their own stock. Hazrat Abbas readily gave water to all of them including their animals. Imam Husain (A.S.) was also personally watching water being supplied to them and noted that one of the men was so out of his senses on account of extreme thirst that he could not drink water from the water-skin by opening it, whereupon Imam Husain (A.S.) himself went to him and helped him in quenching his thirst.

Hur had been sent by Ibne Ziad, the governor at Kufa, not to let Imam Husain (A.S.) and his party go to Kufa. Imam Husain (A.S.) did not want to commit any act of violence or give Yazid or his men any pretext to proceed against him. As such he now continued proceeding in the direction allowed by Hur till he reached the place whose name has since then been immortalized, namely 'KARBALA. On arriving here Hur received orders from Ibne Ziad not to allow Imam Husain (A. S.) to proceed any further. This was the 2nd of Moharram of the year 61. A.H. Imam Husain (A.S.) and his party encamped on the bank of the river Euphrates which flowed close by, but the next day or the day after that Ibne Ziad sent orders not to allow Imam (A.S.) to encamp on the river bank but

away from it. When these orders were conveyed to Imam (A.S.) for compliance Hazrat Abbas got enraged and was ready to give a fight to the enemy but Imam (A.S.) quietened him down and asked him to accede to the enemy's wishes. The Imam's command to Hazrat Abbas must have been a matter of serious trial for him because he carried the reputation of being a highly courageous and extremely brave warrior and a young man of exemplary daring and also quick of temper. He very well saw that to remove the tents from the river bank to a distant place away from the river meant handing over control of the water supply in the hands of the enemy with the sure risk of facing paucity of water when their own store of it would get exhausted. As a man brimming with courage and physical strength Hazrat Abbas would not agree to create such a situation with complacency. The intrepidity of his spirit was prompting him to have a deal with the enemy then and there so as to settle the issue once for all by dint of sword. In order to appreciate fully the severity of the pinch that must have been felt by Hazrat Abbas it may be recalled that his very first chance of taking part in a battle at the tender age of fourteen years was the question of control of the river as a source of water. Just at the beginning of the battle of Siffin Muawiyah's men had taken control of the river bank as they had reached there before Imam Ali's army arrived at the scene. When Muawiyah's men did not allow Imam Ali's men to take water from the river, Imam Ali sent a small contingent of his men to wrest the control of the river bank from the enemy by force. Along with this contingent Imam Husain (A.S.) also went there with his men to take part in the fighting. At this time Hazrat Abbas also accompanied Imam Husain (A.S.) Eventually Imam Ali's men succeeded in ousting Muawiyah's men from the river bank and assumed full control of it. Hazrat Abbas must have vividly recollected this event and felt an intense urge not to shift the Imam's tents from the river bank and to retain undisputed control over the river, so as not to fall short of water at any stage. But the Imam's command was explicit and Hazrat Abbas could not but carry it out, however painful it might be to his own feelings. It should be clarified here that Imam Husain (A.S.) agreed to the enemy's view because he was not in favour of indulging in an armed conflict with the enemy at this stage for any cause whatsoever since his aim was to have it clearly established beyond any shadow of doubt that the only ground of his opposition was that he would not pay allegiance to Yazid as caliph. Accordingly in obedience to Imam Husain (A.S.) Hazrat Abbas curbed his raging passions and bowing submissively before the Imam's command got the tents of the Imam's party shifted away from the river bank.

THE GREAT OBJECT OF IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)

Now that Imam Husain (A.S.) has reached Karbala and his historic journey has come to its close it seems quite pertinent that a glance should be had on the great objective behind this unique move. It is necessary to do so also because Hazrat Abbas too laid down his life for the same cause and objective.

It has already been shown that Imam Husain (A.S.) intended to face Yazid in a way different from the routine modes yet known to the world, since he did not aspire to secure the power to rule over any area or even to oust Yazid from his throne of authority. On the other hand, his aim was to shake the Muslims from their slumber so as to kindle a mental awakening among them whereby they should be in a position to see Yazid's character in its true colours and should not get duped by the outward cloak of Islam worn by him.

With this end in view Imam Husain (A.S.) left Medina. The circumstances that led him to take the decision to leave the sacred city where his holy grandfather the Prophet (S.A.), his revered mother, the chief of the ladies of the world~, as well as of Paradise viz. Bibi Fatema (A.S.) and his elder brother Imam Hasan (A.S.) lie Huried in their eternal rest, have been shown in the previous pages. It is clear therefrom that if he had stayed in Medina he would have been arrested by the governor Walid, and either killed by that man or would have been despatched to Damishq where he must have been killed by the caliph himself. In such a case no one could have known why he refused to swear allegiance and exposed himself to be killed, and the Imam (A.S.) would not have achieved the ultimate aim before him. Imam Husain (A.S.) did not like that his death should be ascribed to some sudden development or to have been the result of some ill-considered step or move on his part.

Leaving Medina Imam Husain (A.S.) went to Mecca and stayed there for near about four months. The importance of Mecca is well-known. Being the seat of Ka'ba, the House of Allah, it was the rendezvous of all the tribes of Arabia as well as of the Muslims of the whole Islamic realm, not only because of the annual Hajj but also because it had been the centre of all inter-tribal meetings and activities from pre-Islamic days.

On the other hand Imam Husain (A.S.) was not an unknown personality in the Muslim world. Even though some people might not have been acquainted with the intrinsic merits of the Imam (A.S.) yet he was at least well-known to the Muslims at large as the grandson of the Holy Prophet, as the last living member from among the Five Holy Ahlul Bait, as the son of Ali (A.S.) who was well known for his high position and achievements in Islam, as the scion of the great family of Bani Hashim noted for the sublime qualities of generosity, high ideals of living, general love for humanity etc., and as the greatest living scholar of Quran, traditions and Sunnah etc. His stay in Mecca was not a secret affair. As individuals and tribes reached Mecca for the approaching Hajj and they came to know of Imam Husain's holy presence there they would respectfully visit him and pay homage to him. This was the time when huge crowds of Muslims were entering Mecca for Hajj from all sides, and they must have noted that Imam Husain (A.S.) was going out of that sacred city with his family and followers without performing Hajj which was only a day or two ahead. This strange action of the Imam must have raised questions in the mind of everyone who came to know of it as to why the grandson of the Prophet (S.A.) was leaving Mecca just on the eve of the Hajj although he had come there months in advance and was known to have a great longing for Hajj and was also regarded as the highest religious personality then living, being an

embodiment of the teachings of Islam in their true and pure form. As in the matter of leaving Medina so in the case of leaving Mecca the prime reason was that Imam Husain (A.S.) did not like to be killed in a manner that the real killer might remain hidden and undetected. If he had remained in Mecca for the Hajj the sure possibility was that he must have been killed by men deputed for the purpose by Yazid either in the process of Tawaf, or kissing the Hajar Aswad, the Black Stone of Ka'ba, or while staying in Arafat; in short, during the performance of any of the rites of Hajj; and in the huge rush of the people busy in the performance of the same rites it would have been impossible to apprehend the killer and particularly to pin-point the real killer behind the curtain.

Further, Imam Husain's ultimate aim was to expose Yazid in his un-Islamic colours. His departure from Mecca just on the eve of Hajj without performing it raised questions in the minds of the people such as:

Why does he leave Mecca?
For fear of Yazid?
What does Yazid want from the Imam?
Allegiance!
Why does not Imam swear it?

The answer to the concluding question would itself occur to the minds of the people -O, no; how can the grandson of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) being the embodiment of Islam swear allegiance to a profligate, a drunkard and a debauchee like Yazid !

In this way the topic why Imam Husain (A.S.) refused allegiance to Yazid came to the forefront of discussion among all individuals and groups who had assembled for Hajj and had noticed that Imam (A.S.) left Mecca without performing Hajj. This made every one realise and appreciate the difference between the sublime character and ideals of Imam Husain (A.S.) and the low and un-Islamic ways of Yazid. If Imam (A.S.) were to be killed hereafter it would be easily assumed that the offended Yazid must have arranged his killing, and this is what actually happened after the great tragedy of Karbala, namely that Yazid stands clearly, openly and directly exposed as the perpetrator of the heinous crimes which formed part of that tragedy; and his anti-Islamic ideas, beliefs and actions too lie exposed to the world. Further, the very people who had been silenced by fear and awe of the ruling tyrants were so moved to the core of their hearts by the tragic events of Karbala that they began picking up courage to express themselves against Yazid and his band of oppressive lieutenants with the result that in a very short time there was a widespread uproar of protests and revolts against him and his rule. This was possible only because of the superb way in which Imam Husain (A.S.) carried out his plan of meeting Yazid's violence with the strength of his character.

As has been already mentioned, Imam Husain (A.S.) reached Karbala on the 2nd of Moharram. From the 4th enemy forces commenced arriving there in large number till a strong army of thirty thousand men gathered there to attack the small party of Imam Husain (A.S.) consisting of not more than 32 horsemen and 40 others. From the 7th

Moharram the enemy blocked all sources of supply of water to Imam Husain (A.S.) and put strict guard on the river bank for this purpose. On the 9th Moharram Umar Bin Sa'd, the officer in command of the enemy army in Karbala received orders from Ibne Ziad, the governor in Kufa, not to delay the attack on Imam Husain (A.S.) any longer and to proceed against him without further delay. These orders were sent by Ibne Ziad through another officer Shimr who was to take over the command from Umar Bin Sa'd if he was not willing to carry out the orders to launch the attack immediately. This is because news had reached Ibne Ziad that Umar Bin Sa'd was wavering in the matter. On the other hand Ibne Ziad had secured a promise from Yazid that in case Umar Bin Sa'd was successful in killing Imam Husain (A.S.) he would be favoured with the governorship of the fertile and rich province of Rayy. In those days governors were not paid fixed salaries but were allowed a percentage of the revenues of the area under their control, so that the richer an area and the higher its revenues the more would be the remuneration of the governor for its administration. Umar Bin Sa'd realised that to kill Imam Husain (A.S.) was a serious crime from the religious angle but the governorship of Rayy was much alluring to his eyes. That is why he was till now hesitant in the matter. On receipt of the new orders from Ibne Ziad through Shimr he decided to attack Imam's party at once, and ordered his men to march towards the Imam's tents. Coming to know of the enemy soldiers advancing towards his tents Imam Husain (A.S.) asked Hazrat Abbas to go forward and enquire about the intention of these men. Hazrat Abbas quickly put on his arms, and went forward. Those men told him that Ibne Ziad had asked for unconditional surrender by Imam Husain (A.S.) or immediate battle. Hazrat Abbas informed Imam Husain accordingly.

Thereupon Imam Husain (A.S.) asked Hazrat Abbas to meet Umar Bin Sa'd and ask him to give them time of one night before commencing the battle so that he and his party could offer prayers and seek forgiveness from Allah during that night before going before Allah the next morning, adding:

Allah, alone knows how much I love prayer and reading of Quran

This was again an occasion when Hazrat Abbas must have found himself on the throes of severe trial. It is well-known that a brave man gifted with high degree of courage and daring and who is fully conscious of his physical strength and of ancestral reputation of subduing even the bravest of foes would hardly condescend to go before an enemy for any kind of negotiations much less to ask for any favour from him, because such a position would mean acknowledging the superior status of the enemy which is against the spirit of a brave soldier. It is in recognition of this soldierly spirit of the warriors that normally if peace is to be negotiated after a fighting its terms are determined by leaders of either side other than the fighting combatants, although the latter may be allowed to be present at the negotiating table. But Hazrat Abbas was ever faithful and submissive to Imam Husain (A.S.) whom he regarded as his master. Despite his soldierly urge not to go before the enemy to make a request he again bowed before the Imam's behest and proceeded to place before Umar bin Sa'd the Imam's desire for a night's postponement of the battle. It is related that when Hazrat Abbas put the proposal before Umar bin Sa'd at

first he showed reluctance to accede to it perhaps because he was afraid of Ibne Ziad's displeasure, but before giving a final reply he consulted his officers whereupon his lieutenants' Amr Bin Hajjaj Zubaidi and Qais Bin Ash-ath advised him to grant the time saying that such a request could not be refused even if made by slaves. The respite for a night was allowed on the express understanding that the next morning was the final day for the battle if Imam Husain (A.S.) did not consent to surrender along with his men.

THE EVENTFUL NIGHT BEFORE ASHOORA

Imam Husain (A.S.) had asked for this night's time before actual engagement with the enemy not to make any preparations for fighting, nor in anticipation of the arrival of anyone to support him, nor to give any parting directions to the women of his family, nor even to make any preparations for their future safety and protection. His purpose in asking this time was two-fold. First, as he told his brother Abbas when he deputed him to ask for it, the idea was that he and his companions might be able to spend this night in devotion and prayers before Allah seeking His forgiveness and praying for steadfastness so as to remain firm in their adherence to Truth and Righteousness. Secondly his idea was to give another opportunity to his own men to assess their selves to make sure that they would not hesitate in facing death the next morrow or else to leave him during cover of this night.

When it was finally known that the battle had been put off for the night Imam Husain (A.S.) gathered his relations and companions and addressed them. After offering Praise of Allah he said to them what may be summed up as this:

O Believers, I do not know of anyone who had followers more patient and devoted than you are to me, nor of any family more trusted and exalted than mine. May Allah give you the recompense that I owe you. I realise that this is our last night in this world. After this I shall have to face the army of the tyrant. Therefore I allow you to leave me. I relieve you of all the obligations of your loyalty towards me. The darkness of night now encompasses us. Each one of you may take a member of my family along with you and go away leaving me here to face the enemy whose target is me alone and no one else. I have trust in Allah Who will ward off all evil from you as well as from me.

HAZRAT ABBAS REPLIES

On hearing these words of Imam Husain (A.S.), Hazrat Abbas was the first to rise and speak on behalf of the relations, and he said:

You ask us to leave! Why should we do so; only to survive after you. By Allah we may not live to see such an evil day when you are not among us in this world.

After Hazrat Abbas had finished his speech the other relations also spoke in similar words. Thereafter came the turn of the Imam's companions. Among them first of all Muslim Bin Ausaja rose to speak. He said :

We can never leave you alone. By Allah I shall fight these enemies with my spear till it gets broken in their chests, and with my sword so long as I am able to hold it. In any case I shall never leave you. If I shall have no weapons I shall hit the enemy with stones and continue fighting to protect you till I lay down my life for you.

Several other companions of the Imam (A.S.) took part in addressing the Imam in reply to his magnanimous offer. Surely this offer was Imam Husain's practical demonstration of what is the most sublime in human conduct never seen in the world before or after that.

NIGHT BEFORE ASHOORA AND HUR BIN YAZID RIAHI

Another objective of Imam Husain (A.S.) in seeking time to put off fighting for one night must have been to allow time to the men in the enemy ranks also to take stock of their conscience and to examine once again whether it was right and justified to take part in killing Imam Husain (A.S.) and his men. This stock taking did actually prove effective in the notable case of Hur Bin Yazid Riahi who had brought Imam Husain (A.S.) and his party to Karbala. Hur, an officer in command of a contingent of four thousand men on the enemy's side kept thinking over the position of Imam Husain the whole night before Ashoora and came to the conclusion that it was not at all proper to be a party in killing him. Accordingly as soon as the morning of Ashoora dawned Hur, along with his son and slave, left the army of Umer bin Sa'd and galloped over to the side of Imam Husain (A.S.). In this way this respite of the night before Ashoora saved Hur from eternal damnation at the last moment.

THE FATEFUL DAY OF ASHOORA THE 10TH OF MOHARRAM

According to routine standards this morning should have been of much mental worry for the members of Imam Husain's party as also for their womenfolk as the enemy forces had assembled in huge numbers for attacking them and there was no question of any male member of the Imam's party to survive on that day; and the, women should also have been extremely perplexed about their own fate when the men had been killed. But strangely enough it was not so. There was no sign of consternation or hopelessness on the faces of the male members nor any perplexity among the women. The children were of course crying for water as they were extremely thirsty because water-supply had been stopped to the Imam's party for the preceding three days, but there is not a single word in any book of history of this great tragedy showing that any adult male or female member ever cried for water during these days of severe trial.

HAZRAT ABBAS BECOMES STANDARD BEARER

In the morning of Ashoora the army in the enemy camp became ready for the battle. While arraying his men Umer Bin Sa'd, the first officer in command, placed Arnar Bin Hajjaj on the right flank, Shimr Zil Joshan on the left flank, Azra Bin Qais at the head of the cavalry and Shis Bin Rabi' at the head of the infantry.

As already mentioned previously, the Imam 's party was so indescribably small in number that it could hardly be called an army. Nevertheless, Imam Husain also got his men prepared for proper defence and arrayed them in the form of an army. He placed Zuhair Bin Qain on the right flank, Habib Bin Mazahir on the left flank, and Hazrat Abbas in the middle as the standard bearer of his small army of holy warriors, determined to lay their lives for the cause of Islam.

The position of the standard bearer-ship has always been considered a unique honour in the system of Arab warfare. The conferment of this honour on Hazrat Abbas in Karbala was unusually unique. It was an ancestral honour for him. His revered father Imam Ali (A.S.) had been the standard bearer almost in every battle in which the Holy Prophet (S.A.) personally took part, with the sole exception of the battle of Tabook, when the Holy Prophet (S.A.) had left Ali (A.S.) behind to look after the affairs of Medina. But at the same time on this occasion the Holy Prophet (S.A.) conferred on him a distinctive honour by declaring:

a Ali! You are to me in the same position as Haroon was to Moosa, except that there is no other prophet after me.

Then on the occasion of the Battle of Khyber the Holy Prophet (S.A.) assigned the standard to Ali (A.S.) by declaring on the previous day that:

Tomorrow I shall give the standard to a man who repeatedly attacks the enemy, never runs away, loves Allah and His Prophet and Allah and His Prophet love him.

Further, Hazrat Abbas's uncle, that is, Imam Ali's brother Jafar also enjoyed this high distinction of being the standard-bearer in the battle of Mauta, which was the most bloody battle fought during the life time of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) though he was not himself present in it. Hazrat Jafar was killed in this battle after both his hands had been cut away. On hearing this tragic news the Holy Prophet (S.A.) was much grieved and thereafter he declared that in lieu of his two hands Allah had given Jafar two wings with the help of which he flies about in Paradise, in the company of the angels. On this very occasion the Holy Prophet (S.A.) also announced for him the title "Tayyaar" meaning "the Flier". He is therefore known in Islamic history as Jafar Tayyaar. Thus while bearing in his hands the standard of Imam Husain's holy army in Karbala, Hazrat Abbas carried with himself the moral and spiritual support and backing of his heroic father Imam Ali as well as that of his valorous uncle Jaffar Tayyaar and accordingly that of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) himself. Although on the day of Ashoora the wings of death were hovering on all the male members of Imam Husain's party yet the handing over of the standard of the

battle by the Imam (A.S.) to his brave brother Abbas must have infused great confidence and sense of protection in the hearts of all the men as well as of the women and children.

IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.) ADDRESSES THE ENEMY

After the two incomparable sides had ranged themselves opposite each other there was pause for a considerable time. Imam Husain took this opportunity by sending for his she-camel and rode upon it placing a copy of the Holy Quran in front of him. It is to be noted that the camel was regarded to be an animal for riding at the time of peace while a horse was an animal for fighting. Then Imam (A.S.) addressed the enemy ranks thus:

Listen to me. Do not act in hurry. Let me do my duty by bringing home to you the Truth and make my position clear to you. Why did I move towards this side? If you believe my statement in fairness to me then it is all right. You will realise that there is no earthly reason why you should be hostile to me. If you do not believe me and are not prepared to be fair to me, then you gather all forces, collect all people who subscribe to your view, and finish me with all your might without giving me any respite. Allah is enough for me Who revealed the holy Quran and helps those of His servants who stick to righteousness and truth. O people take heed as to who I am and realise how far you are justified to ignore my status. Ought you to kill me when I am the grandson of your Prophet and the son of his successor Ali (A.S.) who was the foremost Muslim and the one who was the first to testify Islam. Is not Hamza, the chief of the martyrs, the uncle of my father? Is not J afar, the Flier in heaven my uncle? Have you not heard my grandfather the Holy Prophet's saying about me and my brother Hasan that we two are the chiefs of the youths of Paradise? Do you not remember the Holy Prophet's declaration that he was leaving behind two invaluable guides for you people-the Book of Allah and We, the Ahlul Bait? If you believe what I say then it is nothing but just and right. If you do not believe me then ask Jabir Bin Abdullah Ansari, Abu Sayeed Khadri, Sahl Bin Sayeed, laid Bin Arqam and Anas Bin Malik, for they themselves have heard the Holy Prophet (S.A.) saying what I have just asserted.

After a small interruption by Shimr, Imam Husain (A.S, resumed his speech and said:

Even if you doubt this tradition of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) then tell me "can you find today any other grandson of your Prophet other than myself even if you search in the whole universe. Tell me why you are bent on killing me. Do you want to retaliate for any murder committed by me, or you demand any property of anybody grabbed by me? Or you want to revenge for any injury caused by me to any body?

There was complete silence in the enemy ranks and no body opened his lips. Imam Husain (A.S.) was followed by a speech by Zuhair Bin Qain but without any effect on the enemy. In the end Imam (A.S.) called him back saying that preaching would hardly benefit them.

It was about this time on the morning of Ashoora that Hur Bin Yazid Riahi who, as an officer in command of a force of four thousand men from the side of Ibne Ziad had been instrumental in forcing Imam Husain (A.S.) to change the direction of his journey and to encamp at Karbala, deserted the enemy ranks and joined Imam Husain's party, as has been mentioned earlier. It was not an ordinary decision. In fact it was turning from Hell towards Paradise. When in the employ of Ibne Ziad Hur was in command of a force charged with the task of fighting against Imam Husain (A.S.) and as such he was certainly on the wrong heading towards Hell. Nevertheless he seems to have had the realisation in his inner self that Imam Husain (A.S.) had risen for a right cause, that he was striving to save Islam from falling into the clutches of rulers like Valid, that it was a serious sin to kill him because at that time he was the most meritorious person in Islam directly representing the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and also being the last of the Holy Five covered by the verse of purification. On the other hand he was observing that to be with Imam Husain at this critical moment meant sure death without any shadow of doubt. Even from the start of his journey from Mecca towards Iraq Imam Husain had been making it clear whenever he found an occasion to do so that he was proceeding almost towards death, that only those who were prepared to meet death with pleasure should join him, otherwise not. Particularly in his speech in the night preceding Ashoora Imam Husain (A.S.) made it clear beyond any doubt that the next morning would usher a day of death for every one on his side and that any one not willing to meet death should leave him and go away in the darkness of the night to save himself. Hur was thoroughly conscious of this situation.

Further, since he was himself commanding a contingent of the enemy he was well aware that the incredibly small number of seventy two men on Imam Husain's side had no comparison with the enemy's force of thirty thousand men. He was also observing that Umer Bin Sa'd had planned to launch a full fledged attack on Imam Husain (A.S.) on the morning of Ashoora as soon as the night of respite allowed by him to the Imam (A.S.) would expire. He was also dead sure that this attack would wipe away everyone on the Imam's side including Imam Husain (A.S.) himself. He realised that if he remained on Ibne Ziad's army he would be a party to all the trials and tribulations to which Imam (A.S.) was being subjected.

Looking at Imam Husain's status and high position in Islam he saw that the path adopted by Yazid, Ibne Ziad and their followers was leading to Hell, though for the present it meant worldly position of honour, wealth and ease of life for him and his family, while the path of being on the side of Imam Husain was leading to Paradise but for the present it meant not only loss of his present honour, high position and enviable ease of life, but also immediate death at the hands of the ferocious enemy. Thus he found himself standing at the cross-roads of Hell and Paradise and it was for him to choose which path he should adopt and follow. It was of course not easy to exercise the choice at this cross-roads. If he chose the path to Paradise he was to face death within a few hours and his family would fall victim to untold misery and hardships. On the other hand the road to Hell was full of alluring attractions and enjoyments immediately available without going through the ordeal which the road to Paradise involved. It is very very very highly creditable to Hur that after weighing the pros and cons of the troublesome matter

throughout the night preceding Ashoora he decided to adopt the road to Paradise. In the morning making up his mind to join Imam Husain (A.S.) at the cost of facing all ~hat was destined for every one on the Imam's side he left the enemy's side and galloping towards the Imam (A.S.) with hands tied with his handkerchief as that of a captive flung himself at the feet of Imam Husain (A.S.) crying:

O my master, is the door of pardon still open for me?

Imam Husain (A.S.) raised up his head and kissing him on the forehead assured him:

O my brother you are Hur in this world and would be "Hur" in the next world also, INSBALLAB (if Allah wills}. "Hur" meaning emancipated.

Soon thereafter Umer Bin Sa'd shot the first arrow towards Imam Husain's side as a token of having commenced the battle. After Umer Bin Sa'd others on his side followed suit, and in a few minutes countless arrows were flashing in the direction of Imam Husain's tents. No serious loss was however, caused by them as they only indicated commencement of fighting.

First, single combats began between individuals as was the custom in Arab warfare. Accordingly, beginning was made by two slaves of Ibne Ziad who came out from the enemy ranks challenging in the usual way. From the Imam's side Abdullah Bin Umair Kalbi went out to confront them and dispatched them to Hell instantly. Then Hur sought Imam's permission to go out and challenge for a single combat. He was confronted by Yazid Bin Uthman Tamimi who had shortly before been bragging among his men to kill Hur if he got a chance to face him because he had deserted Ibne Ziad's army and gone over to Imam Husain (A.S.). When Hur went out and challenged the enemy they sent this man to confront Hur so that he should now satisfy his wish to kill Hur. But the power of true Belief is far stronger than one can imagine. To the amazement of all Yazid Bin Uthman Tamimi lost his life within a moment of his confrontation with Hur. This astounded the enemy ranks so much that thereafter no individual combatant from their side dared face Hur at all. There were one or two more individual combats in each of which Imam Husain's men killed their opponents. Thereupon the enemy decided not to allow anyone on their side to engage in single combat and so the head of their cavalry Amr Bin Hajjaj ordered an attack on the front side of Imam Husain's handful band of companions. This is known as HAMLAT-UL-OOALA -the first General Attack in which several of the Imam's companions lost their lives. Thereafter fighting continued and by and by all the companions on the Imam's side were killed, each having fought heroically and killing large numbers from the enemy side before falling down.

All this while Hazrat Abbas, as the standard-bearer and chief man in the field on the Imam's side was busy guiding those who got engaged in fighting, guarding the tents of the women and children against any possible attack from the enemy's side, and constantly assisting the Imam (A.S.) in bringing out the dead bodies of the companions from the battle field whenever any of them fell. It was necessary to remove the bodies from the battle-field so that they were not trampled by the horses of the fighting combatants, since trampling of a dead body under horses' hoofs was considered a serious insult as it meant the dead man had no status on his own side and no body cared for him.

After the companions it was the turn of the blood relations of Imam Husain (A.S.) to face the enemy. The exact order in which they followed each other to court death at the hands of the enemy is not known. According to the most accepted version Hazrat Abbas Was the last whom Imam Husain (A.S.) gave permission to go. It is also related that before Hazrat Abbas himself went out he sent out his brothers one by one to sacrifice their lives in defence of the Imam (A.S.) As has been mentioned earlier Imam Ali (A.S.) had four sons through his wife Fatema Kilabia known as Ummul Baneen. They were Hazrat Abbas, Abdullah, Uthman and Jafar. Since Shimr, the second in command of the enemy force in Karbala also belonged to the clan of Bani Kilab to which Bibi Ummul Baneen belonged, he had secured amnesty for all these four brothers from Ibne Ziad. On the day of Ashoora (or according to another version on the night preceding Ashoora) he

approached Hazrat Abbas and offered this amnesty in favour of all four of them, but Hazrat Abbas turned it down with deserved contempt saying:

Hell to you, O Shimr, and to your amnesty when it is denied to our master Imam Husain (A.S.), the descendant of the Holy Prophet (S.A.).

It is related that when Qasim Bin Hasan (A.S.) had been martyred Hazrat Abbas betokened to his brothers Abdullah, Uthman and Jafar to advance towards the enemy to sacrifice themselves for the Imam (A.S.). They went forward one after the other, fought in defence of the Imam (A.S.) each killing a good number from among the enemy and eventually fell as martyrs, like the others on Imam's side. After the brothers Hazrat Abbas sent his two adolescent sons to the front. They too fought very bravely killing many men on the enemy's side before they fell as martyrs.

HAZRAT ABBAS – THE FINAL SCENE

After all the brothers and sons of Hazrat Abbas had fallen as martyrs he alone was left in Imam Husain's party to offer himself for the defence of the Imam (A.S.), while the enemy's pressure to kill him was increasing every moment. Hazrat Abbas now felt that he too should seek the Imam's permission to advance towards the enemy.

Accordingly Hazrat Abbas sought Imam's permission but he said:

Abbas! How can I allow you since you are the standard-bearer of my army?

Hazrat Abbas respectfully retorted:

My master, where is the army now; each one of it has joined your grandfather, the Holy Prophet (S.A.). in Paradise.

In the meantime Hazrat Abbas heard the voices of children crying for water. Bibi Sakina the youngest daughter of Imam Husain (A.S.) was ahead of them. Hazrat Abbas could not bear the sight of thirsty children and on Bibi Sakina's asking him to procure some water to drink he agreed and promised her to get water for her. Armed with the aim of fetching water for the thirsty children he again approached Imam Husain (A.S.) and sought his permission to proceed to the river to get water for the children. After getting the permission he took hold of a water-skin and attaching it to his standard which he was still holding he proceeded towards the river bank where a contingent of seven thousand strong stood guard not to allow anyone from Imam Husain's side to take a drop of water at all. This was the only opportunity in Karbala for Hazrat Abbas to make use of the ancestral bravery that ran in his veins and for which he was reputed throughout the family of Bani Hashim and outside. As soon as he directed his horse towards the river bank and the enemy guard sighted him they offered serious resistance. On his part Hazrat Abbas was determined to reach the river and therefore making his way with desperate courage and smashing everyone who tried to come in his way he reached the brink of the bank where water flowed beneath his feet having scattered the enemy away from the bank. Making his horse enter the water he first filled the water-skin to the brim and then took a handful of it as if to drink but recalling the thirst of Imam Husain (A.S.) and his children who had all been clamoring for water he threw it down and commenced his return trip back to the Imam's tents. But the enemy was bent on preventing any drop of water from going to Imam Husain's camp. It is not very difficult to imagine Hazrat Abbas's position at this juncture. He was carrying the Imam's standard in one hand and also holding a heavy water-skin full of water on his shoulder. In this state he had to face the enemy and to overcome them before he could be able to make his way to the Imam's tents with water for the children. It looks unbelievable but it is a hard fact that in spite of all these adverse factors Hazrat Abbas commenced his return march from the river towards the tents successfully facing stern enemy resistance with unparalleled bravery.

The picture of Hazrat Abbas marching back towards the Imam's tents after filling the water-skin with water and the resistance of the enemy has been very exquisitely drawn by an Urdu poet in a stanza of six lines thus:

JAB MASHK BHAR KAR NAHR SEY ABBAS-E GRAZIGHARCHALEY
EK JAAM-E KAUTHAR BHAR LIYAA AUR KHULD SEY HAIDER CHALEY
HAMRAAH PAIGHAMBAR CHALEY HAMZA CHALEY JAFAR CHALEY
GHAAZI KAA RASTA ROKNEY KUFFAAR KE LASHKAR CHALEY
ABBAS NIKLAA SHER SAA TEYGH-E DODAM TOLEY HUWEY
AA-EE GHAT AA SEE F AUJ-E KEEN KAALEY ALAM KHOLE HUWEY

[When the valiant Abbas filled his water-skin with water from the river and set off toward the Imam's tents it seemed as though Imam Ali had filled a cup from the Kauthar (the cystern of water in Paradise) and was coming from Paradise to feed Imam Husain's children.

At that moment the holiest personalities of Islam came out and accompanied Hazrat Abbas for spiritual and moral support and encouragement. They included the Holy Prophet (S.A.), his uncle Hazrat Hamza who was killed in the Battle of Uhud and was announced by the Holy Prophet to be Syedu-us- Shuhada (Chief of martyrs) and Imam Ali's valorous brother Jafar who was the standard bearer in the battle of Muta where he was killed after both his hands had been severed and the Holy Prophet (S.A.) had said that he had been given two wings by Allah to fly about in Paradise and he was therefore called Tayyar, the Flier.

At the same time enemy contingents came out to obstruct Hazrat Abbas's advance. Hazrat Abbas was advancing like a lion with a double- powered sword in hand even though the enemy army was proceeding towards him with black flags fluttering about].

Being baffled by the utter fearlessness of Hazrat Abbas and his continued advance towards the Imam's tents the enemy stooped down to cowardly devices to overpower him. One Hakeem Bin Tufail gave a sword stroke on his right hand and severed it. right hand and severed it. Hazrat Abbas who was caring more for his standard and the water-skin than for his life soon shifted the standard to his left shoulder. At this very moment an arrow struck his water-skin and the water flowed out of it to his utter despair. The enemy was now after his second hand so as to sever it as well. This time it was one Zaid Bin Warqa Jehni who somehow got the chance to cut Hazrat Abbas's left hand also. Hazrat Abbas was just trying to support the standard with his chest when a man from Bani Tamim hit him on the head with a heavy cudgel. Hazrat Abbas could no more balance himself on the horseback and fell on the ground calling out to Imam Husain (A.S.):

O my Master, come soon; I am finished

Imam Husain (A.S.) rushed to him like an eagle and saw him writhing with both his hands cut off, forehead smashed and one eye struck with an arrow. Hazrat Abbas expressed his dying will to Imam Husain (A.S.) saying in extremely feeble words:

O my Master, I implore you not to take my dead body into the tents of the womenfolk as I feel ashamed to appear before Bibi Sakin since I have not been able to provide her water to drink as I had promised.

He had hardly finished his words when his sacred soul left for its eternal abode in Paradise to live in the company of his holy elders, namely his brother Imam Hasan, his father Imam Ali, and the Holy Prophet (S.A.). Reciting INNA LILLA AH-E W A INNAA ILAIH-E RAJEE- OON Imam Husain (A.S.) uttered the most pathetic sentence which is repeated in all books of history on the tragedy of Karbala, namely:

AL AANA INKASARAT ZAHRI WA QALLAT HEELATI-

[This moment my back-bone has been smashed and all chances of support have vanished.]

It is no doubt a fact that Hazrat Abbas was a centre of complete reliance for every one on Imam Husain's side. Imam Husain himself relied on him as the most loyal, the most dependable, the most loving and the most valorous brother ready and willing to serve him in every possible way and manner and in every need, peril and hour of trial. The companions of the Imam relied on him for complete; safety and protection against all odds. He was a great source of solace and satisfaction for everyone in the family as well as out of it.

It is related that long after the tragedy of Karbala Bibi Zainab (S.A.) the sister of Imam Husain (A.S.) related that when she was young once her father Imam Ali (A.S.) kissed her arms and started weeping. On asking him of the reason of his kissing and then weeping he said that there would come a day when she would be made captive with her arms tied with a rope. Bibi Zainab (S.A.) said that at that time she wondered how could she be made captive with her arms tied with a rope when she had a brave and chivalrous brother Hazrat Abbas, but when in Karbala Hazrat Abbas was killed she could very well understand that now any evil could occur and that there was no impediment to her father's statement becoming true. This story may not be exactly true but it shows what confidence Bibi Zainab had in the courage and valour of Hazrat Abbas and how safe she felt to have him as her brother.

Complying with Hazrat Abbas's dying wish Imam Husain (A.S.) took only the standard and not his body to the tents. What grievous effect the sight of the blood-soaked standard of Hazrat Abbas taken by the Imam must have produced on the women and children particularly the children who were all expecting him to fetch water for them cannot be described in words. The effect has been so deep and lasting that the name of Hazrat Abbas has become permanently associated with the words "Alam"- standard, and "Mashk"-the water-skin as also with that of the name of Bibi Sakina and her thirst since Hazrat Abbas had promised to fetch water for her from the river. For the lovers and followers of Ahlul Bait it is not now possible to think of Hazrat Abbas without the idea of Alam, Mashk, Bibi Sakina and her thirst automatically coming to their minds.

After the death of Hazrat Abbas much time had not passed when on the same day of Ashoora at Asr time {advanced afternoon} the immortal hero of the tragedy of Karbala namely Imam Husain {A.S.} was also massacred after he had put in heroic fight in self-defence. After that the scene at Karbala came almost to a close. After Imam Husain's massacre the enemy set fire to the tents and took the women and children as well as Imam Zainul Abedin who was the only surviving male adult on Imam Husain's side, as captive, and took away all their belongings including the head-covers of the women which was in those days regarded as the most abject insult that could be inflicted on women.

The enemy hurried the dead bodies of those killed on their side but left those of the men killed on Imam Husain's side lying in the battle-field unburied. The next day the enemy left for Kufa along with the captive women and children with Imam Zainul Abedin in chains at their head. On the third day men of Bani Asad, the nearby tribe, came there and after making sure that the enemy had left and there was no danger from their side, they hurried the dead bodies of all the martyrs. They hurried Imam Husain's body in one grave with Hazrat Ali Akbar towards his feet. In a close-by grave was buried Imam's close friend and companion-Habib Ibne Mazahir. All the other remaining martyrs except Hazrat Abbas and Hazrat Hur Bin Yazid Riahi were hurried in one mass grave, a little apart from Imam Husain's grave. At present the graves of Imam Husain (A.S.) and Habib Ibne Mazahir and the mass grave of the other martyrs lie under the cover of one grand mausoleum with superbly built corridors, arches and dome flanked by tall minarets etc; all exquisitely embellished on the walls and ceilings and richly carpeted on the floors.

HAZRAT ABBAS'S GRAVE

Hazrat Abbas was buried in a separate grave at the very place where he fell as martyr close to the river bank. The spots where his severed hands fell one after the other were also marked appropriately and can still be visited for paying homage to the limbs separately. Hazrat Abbas's grave is in close proximity of Imam Husain's grave and it is also covered by a separate magnificent mausoleum as equally decorated, embellished and carpeted as that of his great master Husain (A.S.) whom he served so loyally and devoutly that the word loyalty has become inseparably linked with Hazrat Abbas's name.

It seems befitting to the highly praiseworthy sacrifice of Hazrat Hur Bin Yazid Riahi to add here that his grave with a beautiful mausoleum built over it lies about six miles away from the Imam's holy grave. Although a score or so years ago the mausoleum was not in good shape nor was the road leading to it from the Imam's mausoleum properly motorable, but it is learnt that the mausoleum has now been renovated and properly decorated

and embellished. The road leading to it from the Imam's mausoleum has also been tar-carpeted and provided with 'side-lights

AFTER KARBALA

The members of the Holy Prophet's family and other women and children of Imam Husain's party taken captive in Karbala were first taken to Kufa to be presented before Ibne Ziad, the governor. Thereafter on receipt of Yazid's orders from his capital Damishq they were taken there to be presented before him at a time when he was in full court. No specific mention of the wife or any child of Hazrat Abbas is found in the books of history during the period of captivity of these people. However, when on release these captives were allowed to go back to Medina and on reaching near the town the leader of their escort contingent Bashir Ibne Jazlam announced in the streets of Medina about their arrival, it is related that on hearing the news Hazrat Abbas's mother Bibi Ummul Baneen rushed out of her house together with a son of Hazrat Abbas. The shocking grief of the people of Medina on getting the news of the massacre of Imam Husain and party in Karbala was so great that the uproar produced by their wailing and crying rose so high that the like of it was never witnessed in the history of that town except at the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S.A.). The first thing that Bibi Ummul Baneen enquired on learning that Imam Husain had been killed was whether her sons Abbas and others sacrificed their lives for Imam Husain (A.S.). On being informed that they all were killed one by one in defence of Imam Husain (A.S.) she felt satisfied that she would not now feel ashamed before Bibi Fatema (A.S.) on the Day of Judgment. Her natural grief over the death of her sons was, of course, unbounded. It is related that she used to go to Jannat ul Baaqee' in Medina and recite pathetically heart-rending words, phrases and couplets about her brave children and expressing satisfaction that they all sacrificed their lives for Imam Husain (A.S.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and the choicest of the choice in the world.

HAZRAT ABBAS'S WIFE AND CHILDREN

From the books of history it appears that Hazrat Abbas had only one wife. Her name was Lubaba. She was the daughter of Ubaidullah Bin Abbas Bin Abdul Muttalib. About the number of his children there is some difference of view but the most acceptable view is that he had three sons and no daughter. The sons were Fazl, Qasim and Ubaidullah. Fazal and Qasim were present in Karbala and sacrificed themselves one after the other for Imam Husain (A.S.) like their three uncles who had preceded them at the behest of Hazrat Abbas. The third son Ubaidullah is apparently the one who had remained in Medina with his grandmother Ummul Baneen and survived the tragedy of Karbala. It is through him that the line of Hazrat Abbas continued. He rose to be a great scholar of his age and commanded high respect and prestige among the religious scholars of the times. He died at the age of about 99 leaving his son Hasan. Hasan too was a renowned scholar of religious sciences and enjoyed great honour as such. He left five sons all of whom were similarly learned and reputed in piety and high manners. In short all the descendants of Hazrat Abbas how-low-so-ever, so far as known, were conspicuous in learning, piety and manners etc, and commanded good respect among their contemporaries in their respective times.

ZIARAT OF HAZRAT ABBAS

The devotees and lovers of Ahlul Bait have been as eager and covetous of paying homage to and visiting the sacred grave of Hazrat Abbas as that of Imam Husain (A.S.). Royal personages among such devotees have taken equal interest and zeal in constructing, embellishing and decorating the mausoleums of Imam Husain (A.S.) and Hazrat Abbas throughout the last 14 centuries. Every one who goes to Karbala to pay homage to Imam Husain (A.S.) by visiting his sacred grave also visits the sacred grave of Hazrat Abbas and pays homage to him as well. The same holds true about Hazrat Hur Bin Yazid Riyahi, namely that whoever visits the sacred grave of Imam Husain (A.S.) also visits the grave of Hazrat Hur. It is related that a certain devotee of Ahlul Bait used to pay visit to the sacred grave of Imam Husain (A.S.) but did not visit the sacred grave of Hazrat Abbas. Once he saw Bibi Fatema (A.S.) in a dream when she asked him why he did not pay a visit to her son Abbas when he paid a visit to her son Husain (A.S.). From that day onwards this man started paying homage to Hazrat Abbas as well by visiting his grave whenever he paid a visit to the grave of Imam Husain (A.S.). It is also related that on the Day of Judgment Bibi Fatema would go in Allah's Court of Justice for intercession in favour of the devotees of her son Husain (A.S.) With the severed hands of Hazrat Abbas in her hands as a token of the great atrocities committed on her progeny by the enemies.

About Hazrat Hur also it is related that Imam Husain (A.S.) directed during a dream one of the devotees who used to pay homage to his sacred grave that he should also visit the grave of Hazrat Hur so as to pay homage to him also whenever he visited the Imam's sacred grave. This shows that a visit to Hazrat Hur's Rauza (mausoleum) should not be missed when visiting the sacred graves of Imam Husain (A.S.) and Hazrat Abbas.

When paying homage to Hazrat Abbas (A.S.) by a visit to his holy mausoleum, or otherwise from any place where the devotee may happen to be, usually the following Ziarat (Salutation) is recited with one's face towards the direction of his sacred grave in Karbala.