



BIOGRAPHY OF
IMAM ALI BIN HUSAYN
AL ZAYN AL ABIDIN

عليه السلام

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BY
MRS. ZIA ALI

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HAJI HASSANALLY P. EBRAHIM

founder chairman, who, with a dedicated pioneering commitment, through printed books, established a permanent source of religious knowledge to communicate to the English speaking faithfuls, growing more and more, each day, all over the world, the message of Islam.

FOR IDENTIFICATION OF
BAJI HASANALLY P. MOHAMMED EBRAHIM

BISMILLAAHIR RAH'MAANIR RAH'EEM

INTRODUCTION

Today we live in an era, where supremacy of matter prevails and we experience the burden and oppression caused by it. A terrible blindness has overwhelmed the world at present. In the darkness and gloom of today we are enlightened by a personality, none the less than our fourth Imam - Ali ibn al Husayn ibn Ali ibn abi Talib, best known as Imam Zayn al Abidin - the ornament of worshippers.

It was only after the tragedy of Karbala in 61 *hijra*- 680 which shook the Islamic world and left the Imam in grief and constant weeping - that the revelation of *Imamat* turned him into a *sarban*. The Umayyad troops massacred Husayn (a.s.) and his male followers, then looted the women and put fire to their tents.

Imam Zayn al Abidin (a.s.) was taken a prisoner made a *Sarban*, fettered, leading the caravan of widows and orphans on bare backed camels and beheaded heads of martyrs raised on spears ahead of him, walking on foot with his head bowed down, his eyes downcast in humility and oppression. The caravan was thus taken to the caliph in Damascus and then was to return to Madina.

The tragedy of Karbala and the tragic beginning of *Imamat* instead of having negative effects of despondency and despair brought a

revolution and bloomed into *Sajda* after *Sajda* thanking Allah the Almighty for all the bounties that were bestowed upon him and his family here and the hereafter instead of aggression and revolt he totally devoted his life to learning and worship and finally became an authority on prophetic traditions and law. Among the Madina scholars Imam Zayn al Abidin was considered as an eminent traditionist of his time.

Imam Zayn al Abidin a.s. emerged above all calamities of existence and was in search for spiritual satisfaction. Only an Imam, as Imam Zayn al Abidin could have been over and above all worldly things. An emblem of sincerity and humility! Numerous reports recorded by both Sunni and Shia authorities prove that the Imam was widely respected for his extraordinary qualities like his long duration of prayers, his piety, his forbearance, his learning and generosity.

His Sahifa is a book of great veneration placing it after the Holy Quran and Nahj al Balagha.

In spite of the tyrannies of life which he faced we find in him a man where love prevails over hatred, justice over injustice, mercy over tyranny, loyalty over betray and goodness and truth over falsehood. Here is an exemplary image of a human being to follow and to idolize!

OUR FOURTH IMAM

Name	Ali Ibn al Husayn
Agnomen :	Abu Muhammad, Abul Hasan, Abul Qasim
Title :	Zayn al Abidin, Sayyed us Sajidin, Sajjad, Abid
Birth:	15 th Jamadi ul Awwal 5 th Shaban
Birth Place :	Madina
Father :	Imam Husayn
Mother :	Shahr Bano Bint-i Choesroe Yazdigard
Wife :	Fatima Binti Imam Hasan
Brothers :	Hazrat Ali Akbar, Hazrat Ali Asghar, Muhammad, Abdullah, Jaffer.
Sisters :	Sayyeda Zaynab, Sayyeda Sakina, Sayyeda Fatima Sughra.
Sons:	Imam Muhammad Baqir, Hasan, Zayd Shaheed, Abdullah, Abdur Rehman, Sulayman, Umer Ashraf, Muhammad Asghar, Husayn Asghar and Ali
Daughter :	Khadija, Zaynab, Ume-Kulsum, Aliya, Umul Hasan, Umul Husayn.
Martyrdom :	25 th Muharram
Cause of Martyrdom:	Poisoned by Waleed bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan.
Age :	57 years.
Duration of Imamat :	34 years

FOR ISAL-E-SAWAB
HAJI HASANALLY P. MOHAMMED EDBAHIM

BIRTH AND DESCENT

Imam Zayn al Abidin a.s. was born in Madina according to most sources on:

- (i) 15th Jamai ul Awwal
- (ii) 5th Shaban

Imam Zayn al Abidin a.s. was the son of Imam Husayn, the great martyr; grandson of Imam Ali and Sayyida Fatima (the daughter of the Prophet) and the great grand son of the Prophet (s.a.).

His mother was Shah Zanan or Shahr Bano daughter of Choesroe Yazdigard bin Shahryar bin Khusro, the last Sasanian king of Persia, and descendent of Nausher-wan-e-Adil (Nausherwan the just). Thus he was said to be al Khiyaratayn; the son of the best two; meaning the Quraysh among the Arabs and the Persians among the non-Arab.

THE BATTLE OF QADSIA

This battle was fought between king Choesroe Yazdigard and Arabs - Muslims from Hijaz.

King Choesroe Yazdigard (the then king of Persia) had a well equipped army of four thousand soldiers, whereas the Muslim army from Hijaz consisted of only a few faithfuls of Islam with sincere intention to bring about a revolution to destroy and eradicate evil.

Choesroe Yazdigard lost the battle and fled to Rai, then Khorasan and then Merv. In Merv he was murdered and buried in the royal cemetery of Estikhar (Persian military camp).

There was a large scale rebellion in Merv. It was to pacify this that Imam Ali a.s. sent Khalid Ibni Qurra Yarboobi. The Muslims were victorious and the two daughter of Choesroe Yazdigard - Shahr Bano and Gaihan Bano were taken as captives at Madain (Taisfoon) and brought to Madina during the caliphate of Hazrat Omar who wanted to sell them.

While the royal princesses were traveling in very ordinary clothes on the bare backs of the camels towards a destination unknown to them the royalty the grander the magnanimity was no more.

What an irony of fate - Shah-e- Zanan (Shahr Bano the mother of an Imam to be) leading the caravan of captives - A wee reflection of what her son Imam Zayn ul Abidin will go through. A captive princess (a mother of an Imam) will give birth to a son our fourth Imam Zayn al Abidin - who will also lead a caravan of captives and will bear greater humility and torture than borne by his mother.

A ray of hope appeared when the two sisters were brought to Madina (the fort of Islam) as captives during the caliphate of Hazrat Omar the prisoner on reaching Madina were to be sold as planned by Hazrat Omar but fortunately Hazrat Omar consulted Imam Ali and left the descretion to him. Imam Ali at once took a final decision and said "Princesses are never sold according to Islam." This announcement at once boosted the moral of the two daughters of king Choesroe Yazdigard. Imam Ali further announced that they should be first set free and then given the liberty to choose their partners amongst the Muslims for marriage and their dower should be paid from Bayt al Mal - the Public Treasury.

Providence guided her and Princess Shahr Bano's eyes amongst the so many young Muslims fell on Imam Husayn son of Imam Ali the great, and the most exemplary from the Ahl ul Bayt.

Thus she was wedded to Imam Husayn which indeed was a great honour for the Royal family of Iran, and Bibi Shahr Bano also secured a good position in the eyes of the Ahl ul Bayt. Her sister Gaihan Bano was married to Imam Ali's disciple Muhammad bin Abi Bakr.

IMAM'S CHARACTER SINCE CHILDHOOD

The holy Imam Ali Zayn al Abidin spent two years of his infancy in the patronage of his grandfather Ali ibn abi Talib; after which for twelve years he had the guidance of his uncle Imam al Hasan ibn Ali, and his father Imam Husayn. Ali ibn al Husayn was too younger to have remembered his grandfather Ali who was martyred but certainly he benefited the patronage of his uncle Imam Hasan and his father Imam Husayn.

His grandfather Ali ibn Abi Talib the Prophet's cousin and son in law was adopted by the Prophet in his childhood and grew up under the personal care and guardianship of the founder of Islam. Thus Imam Zayn al Abidin derived his religious and spiritual authority and his divine knowledge in the most intimate way through his father and grandfather from the founder of Islam the Apostle of Allah.

Since the childhood he was very well known for his nobility of character and his piety. As quoted by Allama Majlisi, once Imam Zayn al Abidin fell ill when he was quite young. Imam Husayn inquired if he had any desire to which he replied: "I wish Allah includes me among those who do nothing against His Will!" Imam Husayn was delighted to hear this from a child so young.

Imam Zayn al Abidin performed 25 Haj altogether and every time on foot. Allama Majlisi narrates about his first Haj in childhood

when Ibrahim bin Adam saw a blooming boy in a jungle while he was going for Haj with a caravan. This boy was all alone, no companion, no luggage, no provision. Ibrahim bin Adam inquired about his caravan, provision and his destination to which this young boy replied with confidence:

“The provision of my journey is piety and faith. My conveyance are my two feet. My destination is my creator and I am going for Haj.”

“But you are too young and Haj is not obligatory for you.”

“You are right” said the boy but have you not seen children much younger to me die.”

“What about your food young man.” “Do you take food when you are a guest of somebody, I am the guest of Allah and he is responsible for my food,” replied the young boy.

His deep understanding and firm belief had always been -

- 1) The whole universe is Allah's property.
- 2) Every creature is the slave of Allah.
- 3) The means and sustenance are controlled by Allah.

Imam Zayn al Abidin was of average height, lean and slender. He was very handsome and impressive. His looks always demanded immediate respect.

According to Imam Jafar as Sadiq, Imam Zayn al Abidin was never tempted towards what was forbidden, throughout his life. None of the Ahl ul Bayt resembled the Prophet of Allah so much as Ali ibn al Husayn.

He was known as the Lord of worshippers. His spirituality was so great and his relationship to Allah so close that he was given quite

a few titles:

ZAYN AL ABIDIN

The best of the worshippers. The messenger of Allah once said: "On the day of judgement a voice would call addressing us - 'And where is Zayn al Abidin?' 'It is as if I am looking at my son Ali bin Husayn striding between the rows of people.'"

AL SAJJAD

One who prostrates himself so much - Sajda after Sajda in gratitude to the blessings bestowed upon him by Allah. Never did he succeed in bringing about a reconciliation between two persons without making a prostration. Marks of prostration were clearly seen on his body which touched the ground during prostration. It was for these reason that he was called Sajjad.

THUL THAFANAT

The one with swollen knees. Parts of the Imam's body which touched the ground during .prostration were as thick as those of a camel.

Imam Baqir reports that Ali bin Husayn stood in prayer the way a very humble servant of Allah would do in the presence of the owner of the universe - the Mighty and the exalted. He would literally tremble in the way of a worshipper who is not certain to perform it once more. Even when he performed ablution his face turned pale for he earnestly realized that he was preparing to pray to the Almighty.

His analysis for worship was that it would be in three ways:

- 1) Worship for fear is like servants.
- 2) Worship for gains is like merchants.
- 3) Worship for thanks giving - Is real worship.

He would always say - worship for the hereafter and not for worldly gains. The perfect Islamic education and religious environment built up his noble character. His character was so holy and divine not only in thought and speech but also in principals and action. While offering his prayers near the Black Stone of Kaba he was heard saying:

“O Lord your insignificant slave is in Your court,
Your petitioner is in Your court
Your beggar is in Your court.

People tried to repeat these words in their prayers in Sajda and found them very effective their wishes granted and their earnest desires fulfilled.

His charity was unassuming and hidden. In Madina there were innumerable houses that received their sustenance from sources unknown. Our Imam would go out in the darkness of the night with his face covered, humbly carrying bags of flour, and provision on his back, knocking from door to door and delivering the contents from his bag. Thus he provided for the poor and the needy. It was only after his death that hidden charity ended.

Only when his body was being washed to take him to his eternal abode, marks on his body were a testimony to the fact that it was he who carried the heavy bags of flour and other eatables and delivered them from house to house. He used to receive the needy in these words -

“Welcome, you who carry my provision to the other world.”

He was also a SLAVE EMANCIPATOR. He used to buy many slaves from cruel masters, treated kindly and then set them free. His greatest desire was to please Allah. He knew Allah loved the charitable.

He heard patiently to the people who backbitten him and said in reply - “If you have said the truth, may Allah forgive me and if you have lied, may Allah forgive you.”

Perhaps it would not be out of place to mention over here an incident to prove the zenith of his character and his exalted position in the eyes of the people of Makka. When the famous ode was composed in his praise by FARZDAQ eminent poet of his time. It was when the personality of caliph Hisham bin Abdul Malik was tarnished and overshadowed by the respect which the people of Makka showed towards the great grandson of the Prophet. It was at the time of Haj when the caliph Hisham was desperately struggling in vain to reach the BLACK STONE when he saw to his humiliation that people gave way to Imam Zayn al Abidin. This, much offended Hisham and he in a sarcastic tone inquired about the person who had received so much respect. Farzdaq (a famous poet) who was present at that moment, at once composed an ode and recited it.

It is someone whose footsteps are known by every place,
 And it is who is known to the Bayt (Kaba)
 the most fragmented sanctuary;
 And it is he who is the son of the best of all men of Allah,
 And it is who is the most pious and devote,
 the purest and most unstained
 the chestiest and the most righteous
 a symbol (for Islam)

This is Ali bin Al Husayn whose parent is the Prophet
 He is the son of Fatima, if you do not know who he is;
 whosoever recognizes his Allah knows also the primacy and
 superiority of this man
 Because the religion has reached the nations through his house.

In fact Imam Zayn al Abidin was not different from any of the
 infallibles. They were all of the same fabric. Their thinking, their
 generosity and fear of Allah was the same.

THE TRAGEDY OF KARBALA

The tragedy of Karbala shook the Islamic world and left a deep,
 imprint on the Muslims. We remember not only the great tragedy
 in which the whole family of Imam Husayn (a.s.) was enshrouded
 but mourn him to this day after a lapse of 1500 years.

Muawiyah had asked allegiance from the well known but did not
 impose this from Imam Husayn. He had especially mentioned in
 his will to Yazid that if Husayn refused to pay allegiance he should
 overlook the matter, for he realized its disastrous consequences.
 But Yazid neglected his father's advise and immediately after his
 father's death ordered the governor of Madina either to force a
 pledge of allegiance from Imam Husayn or send his head to
 Damascus.

Husayn would not give allegiance to Yazid - the corrupt son of
 Muawiyah and let him undo what his grand father - the Holy
 Prophet had established. Hence Yazid could not leave Imam Husayn
 in peace. Imam Husayn had to leave Madina and find refuge at
 Makka, but Yazid plotted to murder him in the very precincts of
 the great sanctuary of Kaba. In order to safeguard Kabah Imam
 Husayn decided to leave Makka for Kufa, just a day before the

Haj Pilgrimage. People inquired the reason for this mysterious departure from Makka foregoing the pilgrimage. Imam Husayn said that this time his pilgrimage would be in a desert named Karbala, 70 kilometers from Kufa, whereby the sacrifices would be not of animals but of his closest, dearest ones - he even mentioned the names who would lay down their lives with him for this whole cause in this great sacrifice at Karbala - the land about which his grandfather the Holy Prophet had foretold and his prophecy would certainly be fulfilled. This is the land of sufferings and tortures not only for the men folk who will lay down their lives at the great altar and be relieved to enter the blessings of Allah; but worse for the women, children and then the Imam Zayn al Abidin who survived and faced the worst aftermath of the battle of Karbala.

The 10th of Muharram the day of Ashura dawned upon the holy Prophet's family to fight a holy war against the enemies of Islam with courage and valour. To Imam Husayn and his family death was nothing but a bridge to cross after trials and tribulation of this prison the mortal world, and then enter the peace and sanctity of Paradise.

When all his men and children had laid down their lives Imam Husayn brought Ali Asghar - his six month old baby - the last martyr to lay down his life for the cause of Islam and addressed Allah thus:-

“O Lord, Husayn has offered all that he was blessed with. Accept this last sacrifice and bless us with acceptance.” Lastly he laid down his own life. His head was severed from his body and raised on a lance.

The severed head was glowing on the lance saying Allahu Akbar. All glory be to Allah - The Greatest.

IMAM HUSAYN'S DEPARTURE FOR THE BATTLE FIELD OF KARBALA

Imam Husayn asked his sister, Zaynab, to wake up Syed-e Sajjad though he be unconscious due to his illness, and make him aware of the fact that after my martyrdom he will be the Imam. So prepare him for the iron bands to be fettered and to lead his caravan as a *sarban* of the womenfolk and orphans, to be taken from place to place as prisoners, through the streets of Kufa and Damascus, even to the court of Yazid, and Ibne Ziyad. His father's efforts should be crowned with patience and forbearance. He should announce that there is only One Allah - and fulfill his promise. Finally when he completes his torturous journey with patience and elegance and reach Madina, pay our respects to our beloved ones, tell them to remember us when they find cold water to drink and quench their thirst. The Imam Husayn (a.s.) went near him and gave the authority of Imamat.

After this merciless tragedy at the hands of Yazid, where by Imam Husayn himself, his kinsmen and all 72 followers gave their lives in the battlefield of Karbala suffering from hunger and thirst for 3 days - the women, children and only 3 male members were spared - the ailing son of Imam Husayn himself only 22 years old, his 4 years old son Muhammad Baqir (who became the 5th Imam) and Hasan Muthanna, son of Imam Hasan the second Imam, also the son in law of Imam Husayn.

So Imam witnessed this gruesome tragedy of the massacre of his father, his uncles, his brothers, his cousins and all the faithful companions of his father; and then suffered captivity and imprisonment at the hands of Yazid.

So, on witnessing a terrible scene fierce winds, dark clouds and a

gloom that prevailed all over Sayyida Zaynab lost no time and ran in despair to Imam Zayn al Abidin and said: "Look what's happening." The feeble Imam could not stand up right and requested his aunt Zaynab for support who took him to the door of the camp.

On reaching there he witnessed a terrible scene His father Imam Husayn's head was on the spear and he said: "Assalam Alayka Ya Aba Abdillah" and turned to support Sayyeda Zaynab who had fallen down unconscious the tents were now on fire.

After Imam Husayn, Imam Zayn al Abidin became the Imam of the time, and thus Sayyeda Zaynab asked him whether they should remain in the burning tents or go out to save their lives. The Imam (a.s.) said that it was *wajib* (obligatory) to save their lives and leave the burning tents immediately.

Only on the tragic night of Sham-e-Ghariban we find the Imam prostrating, offering *salat al tahajjud*.

After three days of this tragedy, Imam Zayn al Abidin collected all his spiritual strength and buried the bodies of the martyrs (their heads being still in the custody of the army).

Now the *sarban*, no one else but Imam Zayn al Abidin himself leads the caravan of ladies, children on bare backs of camel and the martyrs heads raised on lances. The Imam himself ill and tormented, put in heavy chains with iron rings round his neck and ankles, is made to walk barefooted on the hot and thorny plain from Karbala to Kufa and then to Damascus.

I fail to understand as how this looted caravan of women, children and the Imam himself tolerated all this mental, spiritual and physical agony. Your heart sinks and you wonder as to how all this torture

could be inflicted on none but the Ahl ul Bayt the most pious of all - how, man can become so barbaric, so cruel, so brutal and shortsighted to inflict all this tyranny on the looted caravan. Widows, orphans and the poor Imam himself? Just for a temporary worldly gain.

I am totally lost and ponder on the fact -; what a beginning of *Imamat* it was for Imam Zayn al Abidin and how he forbore all this marching on, only to uproot injustice and tyranny on the path of truth all for the salvation of Islam. From where did he get this energy, forbearance, patience and valour only in the name of Allah!

**IN FACT THE PLEDGE WAS MADE
BY IMAM ZAYN AL ABIDIN BEFORE
STEPPING INTO THIS MORTAL WORLD.**

On the very first day, Allah summoned all the souls in heaven and extended a challenge to accept a great martyrdom for the sake of Islam. All the souls in heaven refused. There was great reluctance and a pause. It was a gathering of all great souls Prophets, learned men and even angels. "Who will bear this burden?" said a voice. Silence prevailed they all failed to accept this challenge and finally refused. We are incapable of bearing this burden. Then suddenly a soul an exceptional soul stood up - the parents and the grandfather were pleased - this was Husayn's soul, who said "I accept THE CHALLENGE. But Allah's voice clarified to Husayn and said: "These are not easy trials and tribulations. Husayn consider it deeply. It is a big ordeal to carry out." ("Yes, I accept it." said Husayn.) You will have to abandon the comforts of your home. You'll have to undertake a journey - through deserts, your friends will be slaughtered, and eighteen *Bani Hashim* will sacrifice their lives; you will have to pull out a dagger from the chest of your eighteen year old son, you will ever have to carry the mortal remains

of your 6 months old son, and in the end you will be beheaded and your dry throat cut asunder. Think over all these tests and tortures- Will you be able to make it?" said the voice.

"Yes I accept the challenge, for the sake of Islam," said Husayn. There was great applause from the congregation of souls.

Allah's voice further warned: "But now there are two more conditions to be considered. Your sisters and other womenfolk will be deprived of their veil and have their hands tied up with ropes and as prisoners they will be taken out in a procession from place to place."

On hearing this Husayn bowed down his head and downcast his eyes in agony and in despair and uttered no words made no promises silence prevailed.

Every soul was quiet, till a soul said "Accept it, my father I will take this undertaking, I will bear this insult, and humiliation and lead the womenfolk and children as prisoners from place to place." This was Imam Zayn al Abidin's soul.

SERMON BY IMAM ZAYN AL ABIDIN AT KUFA

The life of Imam is shrouded in the tragedy of Karbala and Umayyad, political intrigues.

Imam Husayn and his chosen followers carried out their special mission in the best way. The Umayyads were aware of Imam Husayn's and Ahl ul Bayt's unmatched qualities, so they did their best to screen Imam's good deeds, so that they could absorb any expected reaction from the people particularly Syria their main

stronghold. They, however, were successful in their aim. People believed in their false story that Imam Husayn (a.s.) had rebelled against his legitimate ruler.

It was in fact Imam Zayn al Abidin who decided to foil the Umayyad's rumours and present to the people the intention of Imam Husayn's truthful revolution.

Hence Imam Zayn al Abidin and the honourable ladies of the Ahl ul Bayt like Sayyeda Zaynab, Umme Kulsum embraced the policy of unmasking the Umayyad's false policy, and intrigues and making the Ummah realize their historical responsibility. They focused on awakening the people's conscience. The Iraqis knew Imam Husayn well - but both the fear and the desire for worldly gains refrained them from supporting the Imam.

THE SERMON AT KUFA

Imam Zayn al Abidin a.s. addressed the people of Kufa as follows in the court of Ibn Ziyad.

“O People who recognize me know me, but for those who do not know I introduce myself. I am Ali bin Husayn bin Abi Talib. I am the son of a person whose dignity, honour and image was tarnished, wealth looted, property plundered and his family taken captive. I am the son of the one who was slaughtered near the river Euphrates without doing anything wrong, or killing anyone. I am the son of the one who was killed while painfully thirsty - and these are thought provoking happenings and points to ponder.” O people! I plead to you before Allah: Are you aware that you only had written to my father, given him your promises, covenants and pledges of allegiance, but then you deceived him and fought with him. Woe to you for what you have done to yourselves. Shame on you for

your choice. How will you ever face the Prophet of Allah when he will reproach you saying: ‘You killed my progeny and violated my prestige and dignity. You are no longer from my Ummah.....’

Besides, speeches of Imam Zayn al Abidin, Sayyeda Zaynab, Umme Kulsum and Fatima (daughter of Imam Husayn) had the same theme on which the speeches of the Imam centered.

INTERCEPTION OF THE CARAVAN ON ITS WAY FROM KUFA TO DAMASCUS

When the caravan moved on from Kufa towards Syria it was intercepted at the following places and the people showed resistance and resentment in the passing through their cities.

MUSAL

The public resented the procession and the army of Yazid to enter their city and the ruler had to stop them on the outskirts, where they camped.

TARKREET

There was a similar unrest in this place, hence the army of Yazid could not proceed and had to stay out of it.

CITY OF LAYA

The people actually attacked the army of Yazid; the army retaliated, and after a serious battle could only make their way into the city.

CITY OF QANSAREEN:

The army was not allowed to enter the city. The army

had to stay out.

SHARIZ

The army of Yazid was forbidden and forcefully stopped outside to take this route.

ARZ SABOOR

A severe battle took place, Yazid's army lost 600 soldiers and several civilians. The people of Al-Saboor did not allow them to enter their city, the army of Yazid had to quiet and proceed in a different direction.

HAATH

No entry was possible.

HAMS

The army of Yazid got the permission to enter the city by the ruler but the people revolted and the army had to leave.

DARR-E RAHIB

An amazing incident took place. The head of the martyrs were enclosed in a box; while the soldiers were busy in drinking and marry making, people witnessed that a hand appeared from the wall; it wrote a few lines, condemning opponents of Imam Husayn, warning them of their disastrous fate.

Secondly a Jew named Rahib saw a sublime light being emitted from the box that contained the heads of the martyrs and also heard some voices. Rahib requested the soldiers to open the box but they refused. However, a payment of 1000 *dinars* settled the matter and e box was opened. On witnessing the contents of the box he

embraced Islam.

CITY OF HURRAN

In another instance a Jew educationist* Yahya Hurrani on discovering the identity of the heads of the martyrs, also embraced Islam. He tried to offer a gift of some sheets for the womenfolk of the Ahl ul Bayt but was opposed and he died fighting. He was since then known as Hurrani the martyr, and was buried at the entrance of the city of Hurrani.

This was the last place where the caravan was stopped after which they entered Syria.

IMAM ZAYN AL ABIDIN IN THE COURT OF YAZID

The people of Syria in the court of Yazid were much more in the dark about the virtues of Imam Husayn and the Ahl ul Bayt and it was a tougher mission to convince the Syrians. However the Ahl ul Bayt in their speeches aimed at enlightening the people and awakening them to the objectives of Imam Husayn, explaining their suffering; with much convincing they won the people on their side. Besides, the speeches they also introduced the captives to the Syrian people who were none but the family of the Prophet of Allah (s.a.). They revealed the true nature of the Umayyad rule to the people of Syria who were in fact deceived by them..

The Ahl ul Bayt along with the heads of the martyrs, at last, were brought to the court of Yazid. Yazid was so engrossed in playing chess and drinking and pouring the left over remains on the head of the Imam that he hardly noticed the Ahl ul Bayt. Imam Zayn al Abidin asked Yazid to allow him to say a few words, "you may"

said Yazid, but to the point only. "I have attained a position whereby a man says nothing which is not necessary" replied the Imam "I ask you in the name of Allah in your opinion what would the Prophet say seeing us in this condition in which we are."

"Son of Husayn", replied Yazid, "Your father refused to accept my allegiance. He spread dissatisfaction, opposed me and broke the peace of my state. You have seen what Allah did with him as a result."

The Imam replied, "You are faced with afflictions in this world and they are predestined for you."

Yazid again started with these words "All praise to Allah who caused your father to be killed."

"Allah's curse on him who killed my father," said the Imam. On hearing this Yazid ordered to behead him.

"Yazid if you kill me who will take the ladies of the Prophet's household to their home town."

These words of the Imam were uttered in great despair everybody wept and finally Yazid withdrew his orders.

On the following day the captives were again brought to the *darbar* (court) and Yazid said, "O' son of Husayn ibn Ali, your father and grandfather strove hard to secure the government but Allah be thanked their blood was shed." The Imam replied: "O' son of Muawiyah and Hinda the standard of the Prophet's army was in the hand of my grandfather in the battle of Ohad, Badr and Khandaq. Woe be upon you, had you an inkling of your atrocious behaviour towards my father and my uncle and my cousins in inflicting upon

them inhuman brutalities you would have run away and hidden yourself in jungle and spent the rest of your life in sorrow and grief. "O Yazid be ready to taste the fruit of your black deeds. Indeed nothing but torturous punishment awaits you on the day of judgement."

Yazid became extremely furious on hearing this and ordered once more to behead the Imam. The executioner advanced to carry out the order and drew the sword, but his hand got paralyzed.

All the courtiers were stunned with fear. Yazid's body trembled and he immediately withdrew his order. The executioner pleaded the Imam for forgiveness. Imam prayed and the executioner was cured.

Yazid realized that with such happenings, resentment and hatred in his subjects was increasing and he sent the Ahl ul Bayt immediately back to the prison.

SERMON OF THE IMAM IN SYRIA OR DAMASSCUS

True Islam, represented by Imam Husayn and the Ahl ul Bayt firmly rejected the Umayyad rule which had distanced itself from Islam.

Virtually Syria was cut off from the rest of the Muslim homeland by the Umayyads so as to keep it under its control. Hence it was necessary to lay bare the intrigues of the Umayyads who had presented a totally false version of the battle of Karbala and the captive of Syria, in truthful speeches.

Hence Imam Zayn al Abidin stood up with great courage to deliver his never forgotten speech in the stronghold of the Umayyad rule,

in the presence of Yazid bin Muawiyah and his evil chiefs. It was in his speech that he criticized their policy and evil intentions. He also introduced the captives and proved their elevated status in the sight of Allah.

The speech is as follow:

'O' People! Who know me, know me, and who do not know me should know that

I am the son of Zamzam, and Safa.

I am the son who carried the Black Stone with a mantle.

I am the son of the best who circumambulated the Kaba, walked to and fro seven times between Safa and Marwa and the best who performed the pilgrimage and said 'Here I am, my Lord, here I am, O' You who has no partner. Certainly praise, favours, and the world are all yours, O, You who has no partner.

I am the son of the man who was carried on al-Barq and who Jibrail led to the *sidra* - Tree (beyond which no creature may pass) and came down within two bows' length or even closer.

I am the son of the one who led the angles of heaven to prayer.

I am the son of the one to whom the Almighty had revealed what he had revealed.

I am the son of Sayyeda Fatimah, the chief of all women, and the son of the Great Lady, Khadijah.

I am the son of the one who was slain in Karbala. Husayn who was unjustly killed, whose head was severed from behind and who died thirsty, who was robbed after death and over whom the angles mourned in Heaven, and genii and men on earth even the beast and birds cried in this world;

I am the son of the one whose head was raised on a lance and carried from city to city and his family members were taken captive from Iraq to Syria and humiliated.

O' People you remain a witness that I am grateful to the Almighty who put us into this test and we chose the right path whereas other

party was misled and disgraced.

O' men Allah has been bountiful on us, since He put the standard of guidance amongst us and placed the flag of ruin among other than us and gave excellence over all the creatures and confessed on us what He never conferred on anyone else. He has distinguished us with five things not to be met within all the creation taken together namely -Knowledge, courage, generosity *vilayat* and love of Allah and His Apostle. We are preferred over others by the chosen Prophet the truthful and the lion of Allah and his messenger all from us, Ahl ul 'Bayt. The chief of the women of the world Fatima and the 2 grandsons of the Prophet (s.a.) are from us."

At this point panic swept over the audience. They broke into tears at the vivid truth. Yazid helplessly ordered for *azan* the only solution to interrupt the Imam's speech. When the *azan* reached the point "I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah" Imam Zayn al Abidin turned towards Yazid and asked:

"Is this mighty and noble messenger of Allah, your grandfather or mine? If you say that he is your grandfather then every body will know that you are a liar. And if you say that he is my grandfather, then why did you slaughter my father unjustly and aggressively? Why did you plunder his property, and take his women captive? - Woe to you on the day of judgement."

Yazid was confounded and the general feeling rose against him for the atrocities he had committed, and he ran away to his palace. Even the women of the Ahl ul Bayt rebuked the Umayyads and laid bare their false pride before the Ummah which they were ruling.

DEATH OF SAYYEDA SAKINA IN THE PRISON OF DAMASCUS

While in the prison in Damascus Sayyida Sakina dreamt that she

was sitting with Sayyida Fatima and relating her tragic story of Karbala. On waking up she burst out into tears and asked Sayyeda Zaynab as to where her father was? At this all the ladies and children in the prison wept bitterly and there was great lamentation.

On hearing this, Yazid got very nervous, as he was already very upset by the sermons at the court. He immediately sent the Imam Husayn's head to Sayyeda Sakina in the prison to calm her down. But, Sayyida Sakina instead, got overwhelmed with grief on seeing her father's head and shrieked and fell dead. Every body mourned her death and Yazid got more discomposed. He made all necessary arrangements for a quiet and quick burial and Imam Zayn al Abidin buried her with in the four walls of the prison, for permission was not given for the funeral to be taken out of the prison and getting a lot of public attraction.

HINDA'S DREAM

A third incidence totally shattered Yazid's image. This was his wife Hinda's Dream, whom he loved dearly. He knew very well that his wife had great regard for the Ahl ul Bayt. She dreamt that the portals of heaven opened and an army of angels descended from them, and marched towards the head of the Imam, and saluted the Imam. Then she saw a cloud descend and from it emerged some remarkable personalities. One of them had a very luminous face - like a full moon. He bent down and kissed the lips and the teeth of the Imam and said sobbingly: "O, you my son, Alas! Alas! None recognized your grand status, nor did they give you drop of water and slaughtered you after keeping you thirsty for three days. I am the messenger of Allah, your grandfather; and here stands by me, your father Ali and your mother Fatima."

At this point she woke up but could see nothing but a head emitting

brilliant light. In her grief depression she left the place and went to Yazid to relate to him her dream and to know the bare truth.

She found him in a dark room, his face towards the wall and murmuring in agony:

“O, Husayn why did I kill you. On hearing this she broke his solitude, related her dream and inquired its meaning. At last Yazid could hide the tragic happening no more, and had to disclose his brutality - the tragic martyrdom of Imam Husayn, an his kith an kin and that ‘the members of his family were brought as captives to Damascus.’”

On hearing this Hinda became very furious, showed contempt for his cruelty on the Ahl ul Bayt and left for the prison, where she herself heard the whole tragedy from the women of the Ahl ul Bayt. This tragic massacre overwhelmed her with grief and after sometime she went to Yazid and made him to order the immediate release of the Ahl ul Bayt from the prison.

After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn - and the great tragedy of Karbala Yazid indeed showed great repentance and tried to compensate for the blood of Imam Husayn by as much wealth as Imam Zayn al Abidin would demand. But the Imam replied: “It is too late indeed. You may give this compensation now on the day of resurrection to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Ali and Sayyeda Fatimah. His blood cannot be compensated by any amount of wealth.

After the release from the prison Imam Zayn al Abidin, took the heads of the martyrs went to Karbala to bury the heads with each body. Jabir bin Audullah al Ansari, a companion of the holy Prophet, came to meet the Imam - but he could not recognize him

due to the condition in which he was.

It was actually after one whole year that the martyrs got the final burial. Sayyeda Zaynab and the other grief stricken ladies wept bitterly and were in no mood to leave the graves but Imam Zayn al Abidin persuaded them and took them back to Madina, where people inquired as to where he suffered most and always said with tears - Ash Sham Ash Sham Ash Sham. For it was in Sham (Syria)- where they were indeed put to so much disgrace and dishonour - as compared to Karbala - It was here that they had to face Yazid in the court with no scarf and hands tied to their necks.

The Imam and his Ahl ul Bayt remained captive for one complete year - till this tragedy spread all over the Muslim world. The Imam then was allowed to leave Syria and proceed to Madina through Iraq, where he started to bring reforms in a totally different way.

SERMON OF THE IMAM AT MADINA

The Ahl ul Bayt on their release from the prison of Damascus went first to Karbala and after bidding farewell to the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.) set out towards Madina.

Muhammad Hanafiyya was the first person to receive them at Beeroon - but on seeing the black banner was in deep grief and at once inquired about his brother - Imam Husayn the light of his eyes - the successor to the Imamate of his father.

Imam Zayn al Abidin replied that he had come back as an orphan, with his men massacred and ladies and children taken captive and as to how Imam Husayn appealed to them for help - but none would come, and ultimately he was martyred thirsty.

On entering Madina when the Ahl ul Bayt saw the tomb of the

Prophet (s.a.) they burst out into great lamentation.

After sometime they left the tomb and came to their house. Muhammad Hanafiyya and many others called on upon them. The house echoed with loud cries of grief. At this moment again the Imam - gave the following speech:

“I praise Allah to whom everything belongs and Allah is such that if He distances away from us, he distances away beyond the heavens, and if He comes close to us he becomes the closest to us. I glorify His greatness and grandeur.

O’ People, Allah has tested us by great hardships. Our hardships are Islam’s hardships.

O’ people Imam Husayn was murdered and his family and kinsmen were made captive. There were some who were pleased at the plight and others who shed tears. Seven heavens mourned on his martyrdom, the ocean mourned; the earth heaved, and so did the trees. Even the fish of the ocean joined them in this mourning over him.

Had the messenger of Allah told them to kill us instead of enjoining them to stand by us, they could not have inflicted more cruelties than the cruelties they have inflicted upon us. The reward of all woe inflicted upon us is with Allah for He is the greatest of all the rewarders.”

EVIDENCES OF IMAMAT FOR IMAM ZAYN AL ABIDIN

The proof of his Imamat is best exhibited by the Hajr al Aswad itself.

Muhammad-e-Hanafiyya and Imam Zayn al Abidin sat together in Makka and started talking about the question of Imamat.

Muhammad Hanafiyya said that he was more entitled for Imamatus, as he was the immediate descendent of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) and so the sacred possessions of the Holy Prophet be handed over to him. Imam Zayn al Abidin said:

“O uncle! Fear Allah and do not claim a thing which you do not deserve.”

Muhammad-e-Hanafiyya, however insisted on his claim. Imam Zayn al Abidin therefore suggested that they go to Hajr al Aswad for the final word and that he would be regarded as the Imam of the age for whom the Hajr al Aswad - the Holy stone gave the evidence. Both of them agreed; Imam Zayn al Abidin requested Muhammad-e-Hanafiyya to take the initiative, and ask Allah Almighty so that Hajr al Aswad may give its verdict to his Imamatus. When Muhammad-e-Hanafiyya raised his hands in prayer no reply was heard from the Hajr al Aswad. Then Imam Zayn al Abidin was asked to do the same performance, so he then prayed to Almighty Allah and asked the Hajr al Aswad about the successor of the Holy Prophet after Imam Husayn. As the Imam prayed the stone moved and it appeared as if it would come out of its place and Allah Almighty made it speak. It said,

“Verily Imamatus has been handed over after Imam Husayn (a.s.) to Ali Ibn ul Husayn (a.s.). Ali son of Husayn is the Imam.”

When Muhammad Hanafiyya observed this strange phenomenon he accepted the decision.

This is universally acknowledged.

PUTTING THE SEAL OF IMAMATUS ON A STONE

As mentioned in Usul-e-Kafi a very old woman aged 113 years

approached Imam Zayn al Abidin she had a stone on which Ali (a.s.), Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.) had put their seals of Imamah. On her arrival the Imam at once asked her to hand over the stone so that he could also put his signature upon it. The women gave the stone and the Imam put his seal on it; with the miracle that her old age was at once transformed into youth.

Of Husayn's heroic army, the only individual that survived the massacre was his son Ali ibn al Husayn(a.s.). It was his severe illness at that time that did not allow him to wear arms, and also it was in reverence to his father's parting command which restrained him from giving his life in the battle field of Karbala. Imam Husayn when bidding farewell to the women and children told Imam Zayn al Abidin that now he had to take over as the next Imam. Thus he was clearly instructed by the Imam himself to be the Fourth Imam.

Hazrat Umme Salma was also handed over the sacred possession of the Holy Prophet in Madina by Husayn Ibn Ali on his departure for the battle of Karbala and given clear instructions that they may be in turn handed over to Imam Zayn al Abidin the Imam of the age.

AFTER THE TRAGEDY OF KARBALA

The Holy Imam Zayn al Abidin lived for about 34 years after his father and all his life he passed in prayers and supplications to Allah and in remembrance of his martyred father and kith and kin. He was the only son of Imam Husayn to survive, for his other three brothers, Ali Akber aged 18, Jafar 5, and Ali Asghar only six month old, were martyred during the battle of Karbala. The Imam could not participate in fighting for he was severely ill and he remained to be the sole male survivor of the Ahl ul Bayt who could take charge of the widows, girls and orphans and lead them to

Kufa and Syria and then finally to Madina.

It was after a period of one complete year that they were released from the prison at Damascus and sent to Madina with honour, since Yazid wanted to reconcile his position in the public opinion.

But for a second time by the order of the Umayyad caliph Abdul Malik he was again chained and sent from Madina to Damascus and then again sent back to Madina.

Imam Zayn al Abidin a.s. upon returning to Madina, totally retired from public life, closed his house to strangers and spent most of his time in worship and in remembrance of the worst tragedy that befell him at Karbala. He was in contact with only the elite among the Shiites who disseminated among the Shiah the religious knowledge they learned from the Imam (a.s.). This was the only way the teaching of the Imam spread.

REFORMS

Anyone who has closely studied the history of the Imam (a.s.) and the conditions that prevailed would realize that there was no choice before the Imam but to bring these reforms very quietly. It was a time when the aggressions of the tyrant rulers of his age had reached a climax. There was loot, plunder and murder everywhere. The teachings of Islam were solely neglected. The movement of the Imam was totally restricted and his meetings were totally banned. Spies were employed to trace out people who had any respect and love for the Ahl ul Bayt.

Imam Zayn al Abidin was watched very closely, his activities and his sermons prohibited. He therefore adopted a very different and a peaceful way to pave the way for the real Islamic teachings.

REVIVING AND KEEPING ALIVE THE TRAGEDY OF IMAM HUSAYN (a.s.) AND HIS FOLLOWERS ITS PURPOSE

The martyrdom of Iman Husayn (a.s.) and his followers was kept fresh and alive in the minds of the *Ummah*, so that their conscience was enlivened and their anger and discontent against Umayyads developed.

Ali ibn al Husayn was full of grief and kept weeping for the rest of his life for about 34 years after the tragedy of Karbala, when people asked him to stop weeping he would say -

“Yaqub (Jacob) the Prophet had twelve sons. When only one of them was out of sight he was in deep. Grief; his eyes almost became white, he lost his sight, his back bent with sorrows, though his son was alive. While I watched helplessly and saw my father, brothers, uncle and seventeen men of my family slain. How can my grief end?”

He had allocated a special place in his house whereby the battle and the martyrs of Karbala were remembered. He repeated what he had witnessed and expressed his sadness and unbearable pain, mourning them.

He is also believed to have said:

“Whosoever, sheds tears over the sufferings caused to us by our enemies in this life, would certainly be granted the degree of saints by Allah. And whoever is hurt because of us and tears roll down his cheeks out of pain we suffered his face would certainly be spared by Allah, the pain of the fire on the day of judgement.”

He worked continuously to commemorate the lives and deaths of

the heroes of Karbala. That served to broaden the gap between the Umayyad and the Muslim masses. Imam's efforts proved fruitful. He urged his followers to revive the tragedy and to fully highlight its cause and effect, which is done to this day.

If the Imam could not publicly oppose the Umayyads, it was the most effective way by which the Imam expressed his feelings and aroused the discontent in the people against the Umayyad rule.

In fact it was only Imam Zayn al Abidin who kept the memory of the tragedy of Karbala alive to this day. The oppressed and the grieved always fall back on this tragedy and repeat and remember this brutal massacre whenever in pain and distress in the face of aggressors.

SUPPLICATION

Our Imam has enriched us with a beautiful collection of supplications those are the zenith of perfection and eloquence.

All men in all ages have made the best use of prayers for it is the prayer that makes the character great, noble and so close to Allah. It is his prayer which brings about so strong a connection between him and his creator. This is the greatest moment to man.

When one is faced with the worst of times, it is only Allah to whom he falls back; it is only Allah who alone can do and undo things and give man greater strength that Allah is with him guiding him and soothing him.

I am sure any tension is only released, any disease cured, and a moral of a person boosted by trusting and confiding in Him alone. It is the one who devotedly pray and establishes a close connection with his creator - that he receives endless fortitude and guidance.

When we lift our hands and cry to him from the depth of our heart then new floods of the Holy spirit flow over us from Him, calming us, soothing us and uplifting our morals to march on!

But the supplications of our Imam were not only to comfort us or to relieve us from our tensions in fact each of Imam had his own way, his own approach to reform the society and had to take into consideration ideological, political and social conditions in which the Muslim Ummah lived in that particular period. Hence we see a great diversity in the approach of every Imam. The policy of reform was always based on the teachings of Islam.

The Sahifa al Kamila therefore encompasses the principles of Islam in the form of Duas. His supplications reflect his intimate nearness to Allah. His relationship with Allah indeed was so firm it is hard to express.

The Sahifa has been called the Prayer Manual or as:

- 1) **Sahifa-e-Sajjadiyah**
- 2) **Sahifa al Kamilah** - i.e. the perfect or the complete the word Kamila refers to the perfection of style and contents.
- 3) **The Psalms of Islam** or The Psalms of the household of the Prophet.

It consists of 57 prayers concerning and covering every aspect of Islamic ideology and the subjects of life. It is the oldest prayer manual in Islamic sources and the work of Islamic spirituality.

Imam Ali said four things work to a man's benefit and not against him:

- 1) **FAITH AND THANKSGIVING**

For Allah says - What would Allah do with chastising you, if you

are thankful and have faith?, asking forgiveness, for He says: "Allah would never chastise them with the among them; Allah would never chastise them while they prayed forgiveness.

2) SUPPLICATION

For He says: "My Lord esteems you not at all were it not for your supplications."

Imam Husayn (a.s.) said:

"The Prophet used to raise his hands when he implored and supplicated, like a man in misery begging for food."

Imam Muhammad al Baqir a.s. said:

"Allah loves nothing better than that His servants ask for Him."

In short supplicating or calling upon Allah is to address Him with one's praise, thanksgiving, hopes and needs.

I quote here from Sahih Muslim about supplication:

When one of you supplicates he should not say 'O Allah forgive me if You will', but he should be firm in his asking and make his desire great; for what Allah gives is nothing great for Him. [Muslim]

Imam Zayn al Abidin (a.s.) himself on the one hand in his supplications accepts his own inadequacy and sinfulness actions acknowledging that he deserve nothing but Allah's wrath. On the other hand he repeatedly takes refuge in Allah's mercy and in Allah's own Quranic statements concerning his forgiveness, asking Allah to take him as worthy of mercy and not as he himself deserves:

"Act towards me the forgiveness and mercy of which You are worthy. Act not towards me with the chastisement and vengeance of which I am worthy."

Another little quotation from the Sahifa.

"May Allah my sins do not harm You and Your pardon does not impoverish You. Then forgive me what does not harm You and give me what You will not miss."

The specific attitude of the Imam in his Duas is precisely to emphasize on the reality of Allah's infinite mercy and forgiveness as revealed in various Quranic verses.

Lines quoted from the Sahifa also say:

"You are the generous Lord for whom the forgiveness of great sins is nothing great."

Or

"Pardoning great sins is nothing great for You, overlooking enormous misdeeds is not difficult for You, putting up with indecent crimes does not trouble You."

In fact the Sahifa like Imam Ali's Nahj al Balagha deals with three dimensions then most dimension of Islam the individual comes before the social, the spiritual before the practical and knowledge before action. Each individual has a long series of social duties but these depend upon his more essential duties, which are first faith in Allah and second having a very close relationship with the divine reality.

In fact placing one's wants and needs before Him is the source

strengthening the relation between the creator and the created and the Lord and the servant and Preserver and the preserved and in turn our belief is that our desires are fulfilled through his grace and kindness.

In short we find the fundamentals of Islam preserved in this Sahifa in the form of Duas.

According to Bacon "Some books are to be tasted others to be swallowed and a few are to be chewed and digested; some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read but not curiously and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention." So Sahifa is a book which deserves to be chewed and digested; that it is to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. In fact it ought to be read regularly and thoroughly enjoyed, for separation leads to appreciation and in appreciation lies the secret of enjoyment.

I quote here some of the Imam's supplications (originally in Arabic) which are indeed untranslatable. However, Dr. Chittick - has done an excellent job in translating them.

He has tried to grasp the inner meaning and the feelings hidden in the heart.

DU-A IN SEEKING NEEDS FROM ALLAH

- Allah, O ultimate object of needs!
- He through whom requests are attained!
- He whose favours are not bought by prices!
- He who does not muddy His gifts by the imposition of obligations!
- He along with whom nothing is needed and without whom

nothing can be done!

O He towards whom desire is ever directed and never turned away!

O He whose treasures cannot be exhausted by demands!

O He whose wisdom cannot be altered by any means!

O He from whom the needs of the needy are never cut off!

O He who is not distressed by the supplications of the supplicators!

You have lauded Yourself for having no need for Your creatures, and it suits You to have no need for them,

and You have attributed to them poverty, and it suits them to be poor towards You.

So he who strives to remedy his lack through what is with You and wishes to turn poverty away from himself through You has sought his need in the most likely place and come to his request from the right quarter.

But he who turns in his need toward one of Your creatures or assigns the cause of its being granted to other than You, has exposed himself to deprivation and deserves to miss Your beneficence.

O Allah, I have a need of You: My exertion has fallen short of it and my stratagems have been cut back before reaching it. My soul induced me to present it to him who presents his need to You and can do nothing without You in his requests, but this is one of the slips of the offenders, one of the stumbles of the sinners!

Then through Your giving success, I stood up from my slip, and through Your pointing the way, I returned and withdrew from my stumble.

I said: Glory be to my Allah! How can the needy ask from the needy? How can the destitute beseech the destitute?

So I went straight to You, my Allah, in beseeching, and I sent You my hope with trust in You.

I came to know that the many I request from You are few before Your wealth, the weighty I ask from You is vile before Your plenty? Your generosity is not constrained by anyone's asking. Your hand is higher in bestowing gifts than every hand!

O Allah, so bless Muhammad and his *ahl ul bayt*, take me through Your generosity to Your gratuitous bounty and take me not through Your justice to what I deserve! I am not the first beseecher to beseech You and You bestowed upon him while he deserved withholding, nor am I the first to ask from You and You were bounteous towards him while he merited deprivation.

O Allah, bless Muhammad and his *ahl ul bayt*, respond to my supplication, come near my call, have mercy on my pleading, listen to my voice,

Cut not short my hope for You, serve not my thread to You, turn not my face in this my need, and other needs, away from You, Attend for my sake to the fulfillment of my request, the granting of my need, and the attainment of what I have asked before I leave this place through Your making easy for me the difficult and Your excellent ordainment for me in all affairs!

Bless Muhammad and his *ahl ul bayt* with a permanent, ever-growing blessings, whose perpetuity has not cutting off and whose term knows no limit, and make that a help to me and a cause for the granting of my requests!

You are Boundless, Generous!

And of my needs, My Allah such and such

**HERE YOU SHOULD STATE YOUR LEGIBLE NEEDS,
THEN PROSTRATE YOURSELF, AND SAY IN
PROSTATION**

Your bounty has comforted me and Your beneficence has shown the way, So I ask You by You and by Muhammad and his *ahl ul bayt* (Your blessings be upon them) that You send me not back in disappointment.

DU-A IN ASKING PARDON

O Allah, I ask pardon from You for the person wronged in my presence whom I did not help, the favour conferred upon me for

which I returned no thanks, the evildoer who asked pardon from me and whom I did not pardon, the needy person who asked from me and whom I preferred not over myself, the right of a believer who possesses a right incumbent upon me which I did not fulfill, the fault of a believer which became evident to me and which I did not conceal, and every sin which presented itself to me and which I failed to avoid.

I ask pardon, my Allah, for all of these and their likes, with an asking of pardon in remorse which may act as an admonisher against similar thing ahead of me.

So bless Muhammad and his *ahl ul bayt* and make my remorse for the slips into which I have fallen and my determination to refrain from the evil deeds which present themselves to me a repentance which will make Your love for me obligatory, O lover of those who repent!

THE WHISPERED PRAYER OF THE REMEMBERERS

My Allah, were it not incumbent to accept Your command, I would declare You far too exalted for me to remember You, for I remember You in my measure, not in Your measure, and my scope can hardly reach the point where I may be locus for calling You holy! Among Your greatest favours to us is the running of Your remembrance across our tongues and Your permission to us to supplicate You, declare You exalted, and call You holy!

My Allah, inspire us with Your remembrance alone and in assemblies, by night and day, publicly and secretly, in prosperity and adversity! Make us intimate with silent remembrance, employ us in purified works and effort pleasing to You, and reward us with the full balance!

My Allah, love-mad hearts are enraptured by You, disparate intellects are brought together by knowing You, hearts find no

serenity except in remembering You, souls find no rest except in seeing You. You are the glorified in every place, the worshipped at every time, the found at every moment, the called by every tongue, the magnified in every heart I pray forgiveness from You for every pleasure but remembering You, every ease nearness to You, every occupation but obeying You!

My Allah, You have said – and Your word is true – *O you who have faith, remember Allah with much remembrance and glorify Him at dawn and in the evening* You have said – and Your word is true – *Remember Me, and I will remember you* You have commanded us to remember You, and promised us that You will remember us there by, in order to ennoble, respect, and honour us. Here we are, remembering You as You have commanded us! So accomplish what You have promised, O remember of the remembers! O Most Merciful of the merciful!

ABDUL MALIK AND THE CONFINEMENT OF IMAM ZAYN AL ABIDIN FOR THE SECOND TIME

Once again the Imam was handcuffed and fettered and put in prison by Abdul Malik son of Marwan, after he had led a peaceful life for sometime in Madina. However, he was not very safe from the intrigues of the enemies and for second time the Umayyad caliph Abdul Malik sent him from Madina to Damascus and then finally returned him back to Madina.

The following happening is quoted from Sawaiq-e-Muhriqqa - Zahri says:

“When I went to see the holy Imam in the prison with fetters, I began to weep and told him that it would have been far better had I been confined instead of him.”

To which the Holy Imam said:

“Do you think I am in captivity? If I want I can get rid of this confinement now. Can anyone confine the slaves of Allah? It is only to remember the chastisement of the hereafter.”

Having said this he removed the shackles from his feet. It made Zahri wonder struck.

The fourth day Abdul Malik's guards who were appointed to keep a strict watch on him came back to Madina and began searching for the Holy Imam (a.s.) but in vain, only his fetters could be found. Zahri says, he went to Abdul Malik who told him,

“When the Imam (a.s.) escaped my guards he came to me the same day and asked me what enmity there was between him and me for which I tortured him. I asked him to stay with me. He refused the offer and went away. I was so frightened of his face at that time, when I glanced at him that my whole body began to tremble.”

After that Abdul Malik wrote to Hajjaj that he should refrain from spilling the blood of Bani Abdul Muttalib and that he should not disclose to anyone the miracle of Imam Zayn al Abidin that he had written to him.

Imam Zayn al Abidin in turn wrote to Abdul Malik that he (Abdul Malik) had written a secret letter to Hajjaj and even wrote the contents of his letter to Hajjaj. And Zahri says, when the contents of the Imam's letter were compared they were found to be the same as the letter sent to Hajjaj. I believed in his miracle from the same day.

This event clearly proves the miraculous and supernatural powers of the Imam.

THE MARTYRDOM OF IMAM ZAYN AL ABIDIN (a.s.)

The demise of the Holy Imam took place on 25th of Muharram 95 A.H. He was 57 years old. It was Waleed bin Malik who got him poisoned. He was buried near his uncle Imam Hasan (a.s.) in the graveyard of Janat ul Baqee.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) states that before his death, he performed ablution and said to him”

“O, my dearest son! This is the night I am ordained to die:”

According to Imam Raza (a.s.):

Imam Zayn al Abidin recited the chapters “Waqiyah” (The Event) and al Fat-ha (The Victory) of the Holy Quran and then breathed his last, and his soul departed to the place of eternal bliss.” We are for Allah and to Him we shall return.

Whom do we say farewell to:

SAYYID AS SABIRIN

Known for his patience, tolerance and forbearance; for no other Imam (a.s.) was tortured and grieved so much as Imam Ali Ibn Husayn. The aftermath of the tragedy of Karbala was to be his destiny, for which he lived and wept for 34 long years.

OR

Do we bid farewell to
SAYYID AS SAJIDIN

The chief of those who performed *Sajda* after *Sajda* in praise of

Allah, expressing his gratitude for the little blessings that were bestowed upon him, and yet not satisfied with his worship; for Allah was great and he so weak and frail.

OR

do we bid Adien to:

ZAYN AL ABIDIN

The ornament of the worshippers. Fasting during the day and keeping awake at night to complete as many as 1,000 *Rak-at* of prayers and still so absorbed and overawed by the sense of Allah's goodness, mercy and majesty that he trembled and his colour became pale as soon as he performed ablution.

For Allah was all and he non-existent in His presence - His Creator. It is difficult to think that an Imam so pious so holy, so noble, when he stands before His Creator he expresses his loneliness and yearning for completion and perfection;

OR

We say goodbye to:

AN IMAM

whose *Imamat* was confirmed by none but Hajr al Aswad itself.

OR

Farewell to a person for whom the public gave way and made room for him to reach the Hajr al Aswad while Hisham bin Abdul Malik waited in humiliation, and Farzdaq, the famous poet, recited an extempore ode in praise of the Imam (a.s.) for which he was imprisoned.

OR

Should we weep for the Imam (a.s.) who showed his benevolence to Marwan at Harra, and gave him shelter, whom his own friends had bluntly refused him.

I don't know how to pen down my feelings for the IMAM, who indeed was a symbol of magnificence, nobility and gentleness.

No he dies not, he lives and lives forever for in his supplications are hidden the treasures of Islamic spirituality. The religion of Islam which deals with the practical and lived realities and the personal relationship between man and Allah.

Our Imam, in fact was one of the luminaries of Islam, a torch bearer, a personality so great - which gave specific contours to our religion and taught us how to ask the Almighty for his forgiveness in solitude!

Peace be upon him and may we gain courage by his work and his guidance!

Martyrs do not die;

They live and live on and enlighten the world with their exemplary deeds!

COMBINED ZIYARAT MUTLAQAH OF THE HOLY IMAMS IN JANAT UL BAQI

Peace be on you,
O Guides who show the Right
Path!

Peace be on you,
O the embodiments of piety!

Peace be on you,
O the manifestations of true
evidence for the mankind!

Peace be on you,
O those who remained among
the people to establish justice and
fairplay!

Peace be on you,
O the personifications of purity!

Peace be on you,
O descendants of the Messenger
of Allah.

Peace be on you,
O those who are fully aware of
the secret communications!

I bear witness that, verily, you
explained the truth and gave
sincere advice,

exercised self-control in the way
of Allah,

(whenever) people contradicted
you and took liberties with you,
and had forgiven them.

I bear witness that, verily, you
are the rightly guided Guides who
show the right path;

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّمَّةَ الْهُدَى

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ التَّقْوَى

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْحُجُجُ عَلَى

أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّهَا

الْقَوَامُ فِي الْبَرِيَّةِ بِالْقِسْطِ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الصَّفْوَةِ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ النَّجْوَى

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكُمْ قَدْ بَلَغْتُمْ وَ

نَصَحْتُمْ وَصَبَرْتُمْ فِي ذَاتِ اللَّهِ

وَكَذَّبْتُمْ وَأُسِيحِي إِلَيْكُمْ

فَغَفَرْتُمْ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكُمْ

الْأَيُّمَّةُ الرَّاشِدُونَ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

verily, it is obligatory to obey you;

verily, that which you had said is true;

verily, you invited the people, but they did not pay attention; you gave instructions, but they did not obey;

verily, you are the mainstay of the religion,

you maintain the earth, do not let it depart from Allah's original model,

Allah preserved you in the pure loins, from the beginning to the end,

He transferred you from one chaste womb to another, did not let the dirt of ignorance (even) touch you,

did not let the disorder of vain desires come near you to stir up trouble,

purified you [excelled you in knowledge] and thoroughly cleansed your substance [rendered your source qualified and effective

perfection],

and through you made it possible for us to obtain recompense on the "day of requital"

so, with Allah's consent [all of] you are privileged to glorify and praise [make known the true meaning of] His attributes,

وَأَنَّ طَاعَتَكُمْ مَفْرُوضَةٌ

وَأَنَّ قَوْلَكُمْ الصِّدْقُ

وَأَنَّكُمْ دَعَوْتُمْ فَلَمْ تُجَابُوا

وَأَمَرْتُمْ فَلَمْ تُطَاعُوا

وَأَنَّكُمْ دَعَايُمُ الدِّينِ وَأَرْكَانُ

الأَرْضِ لَمْ تَزَلُوا بَعَيْنِ اللَّهِ

يَسْخَحُكُمْ مِنْ أَصْلَابِ كُلِّ مُطَهَّرٍ

وَيَنْقُلُكُمْ مِنْ أَرْحَامِ الْمُطَهَّرَاتِ

لَمْ تَدْنَسْكُمْ الْجَاهِلِيَّةُ الْجُمْلَاءُ

وَلَمْ تَشْرِكْ فِيكُمْ فِتْنُ الأَهْوَاءِ

طَبَّتُمْ وَطَابَ مَبْنَعُكُمْ

مَنْ بِكُمْ عَلَيْنَا دِيَانُ الدِّينِ

فَجَعَلَكُمْ فِي بَيُوتِ آذِنِ اللَّهِ

أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا أَسْمَاءُ

and the blessings we invoke for you (Salawaat), in fact, becomes a mercy for ourselves.

and an atonement of our sins,

because Allah has chosen you for us,

refined our nature and manners through that which He, as a favour, has provided us—our love for you;

by knowing you, we, before Allah, are considered exalted,

we are included among those who "profess the true faith" because we believe in your truthfulness

This is the place where one, who has exceeded the bounds and has done wrong, discovers his own sorry plight, and taking advantage makes a clean confession and hopes to obtain salvation,

and finally is saved from the danger through you,

and thus the condemned escape the total destruction.

Therefore, you are my intercessors.

I have come to you,

usually people run away from you,

and laugh at the signs of Allah,

treat them with haughtiness.

O He who is Ever-Vigilant, never forgets one thing over another;

وَجَعَلَ صَلَاتِنَا عَلَيْكُمْ رَحْمَةً لَنَا

وَكَفَّارَةً لِّذُنُوبِنَا

إِذِ اخْتَارَكُمُ اللَّهُ لَنَا

وَطَيَّبَ خَلْقَنَا بِمَا مَنَّ عَلَيْنَا

مِنْ وِلَايَتِكُمْ

وَكُنَّا عِنْدَهُ مَسْتَبِينَ

بِعِلْمِكُمْ مُعْتَرِفِينَ بِتَصَدِيقِنَا

إِيَّاكُمْ

وَهَذَا مَقَامٌ مِنْ أَسْرَتٍ وَأَخْطَأَ

وَأَسْتَكَانَ وَأَقْرَبَ مَا جَنَى وَرَجَى

بِإِقَامِهِ الْخَلَاصَ

وَأَنْ يَسْتَنْقِذَهُ بِكُمْ

مُسْتَنْقِذُ الْهَلَكَى مِنَ الرَّدَى

فَكُونُوا إِلَى شَفَعَاءَ فَقَدْ وَقَدَّتْ

إِلَيْكُمْ إِذْ رَغِبَ عَنْكُمْ

أَهْلُ الدُّنْيَا وَأَخَذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ

هُنَّ وَأَوَّاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا

يَا مَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ لَا يَسْهُوُ

(who is) Everlasting Eternal,
never passes away the time (free
from space-time),

surrounds ^{كُلِّ شَيْءٍ} keeps under control
all things,

(all) bounties belong to Thee,
through which, Thou prospers and
assists me,

and made me know that (love of
Ahl ul Bayt) which binds me
securely with Thy bounties,

whereas (some of) Thy servants
turn aside,

and ignore it due to lack of
knowledge,

carelessly make light of its
obligation,

and turn to mediocrity instead of
making use of it (love of Ahlul
Bayt);

so, do a favour to me and include
me among the special group which
stay closely attached with them
(the Ahl ul Bayt).

(All) praise be to Thou, because
I am here, duly thought of and
summoned up,

so, do not deny me that which
I long for.

do not let me fall short of that
for which Thou has invited me,
in the name of the sanctity of
Muhammad and his pure
descendants;

blessings of Allah be on
Muhammad and on the children
of Muhammad.

وَدَائِمَةً لَا يَلْمُهُو

وَمُحِيطٌ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

لَكَ الْمَنُّ جَمًّا وَقَفَّتَنِي

وَعَرَّفَتَنِي بِمَا أَقَمَّتَنِي عَلَيْهِ

إِذْ صَدَّ عَنْهُ عِبَادُكَ

وَجَاهَلُوا أَمْعِرَتَهُ

وَاسْتَخَفُّوا بِحَقِّهِ

وَعَالُوا إِلَى سِوَاهُ

كَكَانَتِ الْمِنَّةُ مِنْكَ عَلَيَّ مَعَ

أَقْوَامٍ خَصَّصْتَهُمْ بِمَا خَصَّصْتَنِي

بِهِ

فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ إِذْ كُنْتُ عِنْدَكَ

فِي مَقَامِي هَذَا مَذْكُورًا مَكْتُوبًا

فَلَا تَحْرِمْنِي مَا رَجِبْتُ

وَلَا تُخَيِّبْنِي فِيمَا دَعَوْتُ بِحُرْمَةِ

مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الْبَاطِهَرِينَ

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ



Imam Ali bin Husayn Zayn al Abidin took over the spiritual responsibility of guiding the people to the right path after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn bin Ali in the year of 61 Hijra.

To keep intact the spiritual purity derived from belief in Allah, as preached by his grandfather, the Holy Prophet, he taught the Muslims the essence of Islamic spirituality through his supplications, which are not, however, merely supplications; they embody satisfying answers to many questions with which the man of his time and the man of our time are confronted. They deal with the crises through which any Muslim or any intelligent human being has to pass, which result from a variety of stresses and strains, and which arise from sources both inward and outward.

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