

The Martyrdom
of
Imam Husain

grandson
of the
Holy Prophet.

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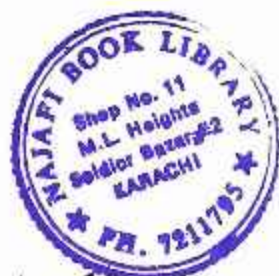
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This is by the Grace of God



The Martyrdom
of
IMAM HUSAIN

Grandson of
the Holy Prophet

209 38(a)
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YOUSUF N. LALLJEE

**"And perfect is the Word of thy Lord in Truth and Justice,
There is none who can change His Words,"**

December 1980

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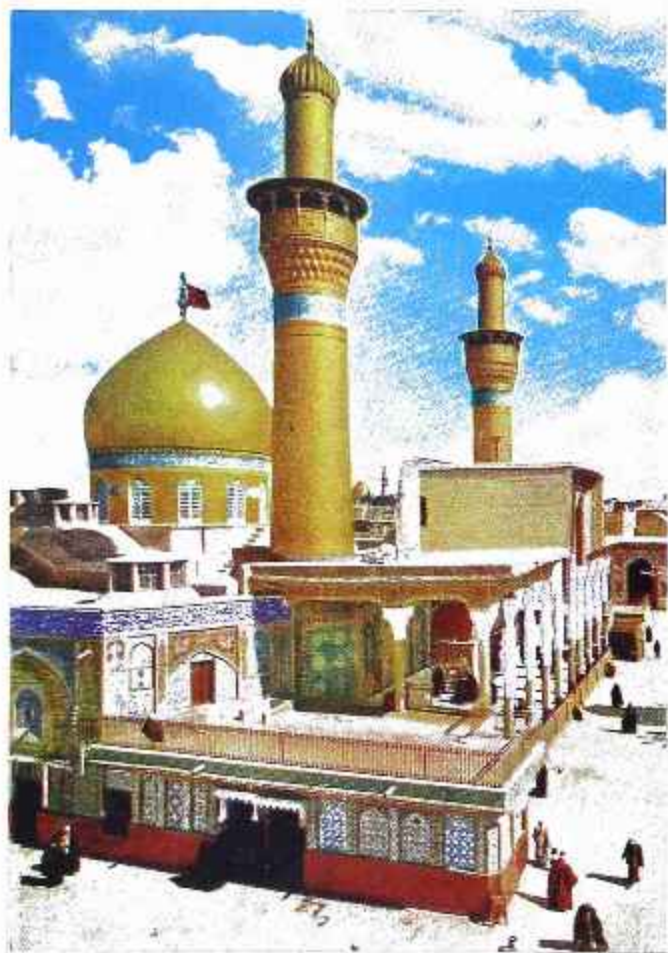
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MAUSOLEUM OF IMAM HUSAIN A. S. AT KERBALA

زيارت حضرت امام حسين عليه السلام

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ
 رَسُولِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 وَابْنَ سَيِّدِ الْوَصِيِّينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ فَاطِمَةَ
 الزَّهْرَاءِ سَيِّدَةِ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَ
 وَعَلَى جَدِّكَ وَأَبِيكَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى أُمِّكَ
 وَأَخِيكَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى تِسْعَةِ الْمُعْصَمِينَ
 مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِكَ وَبَنِيكَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا سَادَاتِي جَمِيعًا
 وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Transliteration

Assalaamo Alaika ya Aba Abdillah — Assalaamo
 Alaika yabna Rasoolillah — Assalaamo Alaika yabna
 Amceril Momeneen wabna Syedil wasee-ecn — Assalaamo
 Alaika yabna Fatimataz Zahraa-ay Syedatay nisa-il aala-
 meen — Assalaamo Alaika wa alaa Jaddayka wa a-beek —
 Assalaamo Alike wa ala oommayka wa a-kheek — Assal-
 aamo Alaika wa alaa tis-atil maasoomeen min zoorree

yatayka wa banik — Assalaamo Alaikoom ya saadaate
jamee-an wa rahmatoollahay wa barakaatoh.

Translation

Peace be unto thee O Aba Abdillah — Peace be unto thee O son of the Holy Prophet of God — Peace be unto thee O son of Ameeril Momeneen — the leader of the righteous — Peace be unto thee O son of Janab-e-Fatima — chief of the women of the world — Peace be unto thee and upon your great father — Peace be unto thee and upon your mother and brother — Peace be unto thee and on the nine Masooms who are from you and your pure progeny — Peace be unto thee O our Leader and may Allah shower His blessings upon thee.

SALUTATIONS TO ALL THE MARTYRS
OF KERBALA

کربلا کے تمام شہیدوں کی زیارت

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ وَلِحَبَائِهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ
يَا أَصْفِيَاءَ اللَّهِ وَأَوْدَادَهُ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَنْصَارَ
دِينِ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَنْصَارَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَنْصَارَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلَامُ
عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَنْصَارَ فَاطِمَةَ سَيِّدَةِ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَنْصَارَ أَبِي مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ
عَلِيِّ بْنِ الزَّكِيِّ النَّاصِحِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَنْصَارَ أَبِي
عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بِأَبِي أَنْتُمْ وَأُمِّي طِبْتُمْ وَطَابَتِ الْأَرْضُ
الَّتِي فِيهَا دُفِنْتُمْ وَفُرُتُمْ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا فَيَا
لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَكُمْ فَأَفُوزَ مَعَكُمْ.

Transliteration

Assalaamo Alaikoom ya awalyaa Allah hay wa a-hibbaa-ah — Assalaamo Alaikoom ya asfaya Allah hay wa a-widdaa-ah — Assalaamo Aliakoom ya ansara deenillah — Assalaamo Alaikoom ya ansara Rasoolillah — Assalaamo Alaikoom ya ansara Amiril Momeneen — Assalaamo Alaikoom ya ansara Fatimatah Saiyadetay nisa-il aalameen — Assalaamo Alaikoom ya ansara abee Muhammadeenil Hasanibnay Ali-ye-nizzakee-innaseh — Assalaamo Alaikoom ya ansara Abi Abdillahay bay abi antoom wa oommee tibtoom wa taabatil arzoollatee feeha doofintoom wa fooztoom fauzan azeeman fa-ya laitane koontau ma-aakoom fa-aafoo zama-akoom.

Translation

Peace be unto all of you — O the righteous servants of God, and those who love God.

Peace be unto all of you — O the selected ones of God and the dearest.

Peace be unto all of you — O the helpers of the true faith.

Peace be unto all of you — O the helpers of Ameeril Momeneen.

Peace be unto all of you — O the helpers of Janab Fatima Zahra the chief of the women of the worlds.

Peace be unto all of you — O the helpers of Abu Muhammad Hasan the son of Ali who was pure and the giver of advice.

Peace be unto all of you — O the helpers of Abu Abdillah (Imam Husain).

May my parents be sacrificed upon you. You have been purified and the earth where you have been buried has also become pure, and all of you have attained success and become martyrs and you have reached great heights and I wish I could have been there to share this great triumph.

The following supplications should be recited after the above Salutations:

”دُعَا بَدْرِ زِيَارَت“ واسطے پوری پونے حاجات کے
 يَا اَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ اَشْهَدُ
 اے میں، میں اس میں گواہی دیتا ہوں کہ

اَنْتَ تَشْهَدُ مَقَامِي وَتَسْمَعُ كَلَامِي وَاَنْتَ حَيٌّ عِنْدَ
 آپ لا نظر فرماتے ہیں، جہاں میں ہوں اور آپ ہماری عرض سننے میں اور آپ زندہ ہیں اور اپنے

رَبِّكَ تُرْتَقُ فَاَسْأَلُ رَبَّكَ وَرَأَيْتِي فِي
 اللہ سے روزی پارہے ہیں پس آپ دعا کریں اپنے اللہ سے اور میرے اللہ سے

قَضَاءِ حَوَائِجِي
 میری ضرورتوں کے برآئے کے لئے

Transliteration

Ya Aaba Abdillahay ash-hado annaka tash-hado
 makaamee wa tasma-oo-Kalaamee wa annaka hai-yoon inda
 rabbayka toorzaqoo fas-al rabbaka wa rabbee fee quazaa-
 ay hawaa-ay-jee.

Translation

O Aba Abdillah — I bear witness that you are watch-
 ing over me and hearing my plea, You are alive and you

are obtaining your sustenance from God. I pray that you plead with God, who is my Lord, to fulfill my needs and request you to recommend my cause.

Another Supplication :

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي شَفَاعَةَ الْحُسَيْنِ يَوْمَ الْبُورِودِ
 خداوندا نصیب کر تو مجھ کو شفاعت امام حسینؑ کی قیامت کے دن
 وَثَبِّتْ لِي قَدَمَ رُكْحَ سَاجِدٍ بِرُكْحِكَ اِمْرَأَةَ الْحُسَيْنِ وَ
 اور ثابت قدم رکھ ساجد پر بھکر اپنے نزدیک ہمراہ امام حسینؑ
 اصْحَابِ الْحُسَيْنِ الَّذِينَ بَدَلُوا مَهْجَهُمْ دُونَ
 اصحاب امام حسینؑ کے جنہوں نے حضرت امام حسینؑ کے ساتھ ان کی نصرت میں
 الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ
 اپنی جائیں دیں

Transliteration

Allah hoommar zooqnee shafa atal Husain yaumal boor-ooday wa sabbitlee qa-da-ma sidqin indaka ma-al Husain wa asaabil Husain. Al-lazeena bazaloo moohajahoom doonal Husain alaihis salaam.

Translation

O God! on the day of resurrection I plead for the intercession of Imm Husain and keep me on the path of Imam Husain and his companions who have sacrificed their lives for Imam Husain (may the peace of God be upon him).

THE BIRTH OF IMAM HUSAIN A. S.

In the house of the Holy Prophet, which presented the best image of both the worlds — the heaven and the earth — a child who benefited humanity as if he was a Divine Impression reflecting the earth, was born in the month of Shaban. His father was Hazrat Ali, the best model of kindness towards his friends and the bravest against the enemies of Islam, and his mother was Janab-e-Fatima, the only daughter and child of the Holy Prophet, who had as universally acknowledged, inherited the qualities of her father.

Imam Husain, the third Apostolic Imam as the child came to be known, was born on 3rd of Shaban 4 A.H. in Medina. When the good news of his birth reached the Holy Prophet, he came to his daughter's house, took the newly-born child in his lap, mysteriously placed his tongue in the mouth of the baby, and the child began sucking it, and thus the Holy Child was fed by the saliva of the Apostle of God, his first sustenance. Then he recited the Azan and the Eqamat (calls of prayer) in his right and left ears respectively, and on the 7th day of his birth, after performing the rites of Aqeeqa, named him Husain, in compliance with God's command.

Abdulla Bin Abbas relates: "On the very day when Imam Husain was born, God ordered Angel Gabriel to descend and congratulate the Holy Prophet on His behalf and on his own. While descending, Gabriel passed over an island where the angel 'Fitrus' had been banished due to his delay in executing a commission assigned by God. He was deprived of his wings and expelled to the island, where

he remained for several years, praying and worshipping God and asking for His forgiveness.

When the angel Fitrus saw Gabriel, he called out, "Where are you going, O Gabriel?" To this he replied, "Husain, the grandson of Muhammad is born, and for this very reason God has commanded me to convey His congratulations to His Apostle." Thereupon, the angel said, "Can you carry me also along with you? May Muhammad recommend my case to God." Gabriel took the angel along with him, came to the Holy Prophet, offered congratulations to him on behalf of God and himself and referred the case of the angel to him. The Holy Prophet said to Gabriel, "Ask the angel to touch the newly-born child and return to his place in Heaven." On doing this, the angel regained his wings instantly, and praising the Holy Prophet and his newly-born grandson, ascended towards Heaven.

This then was the person chosen by God for the Greatest Sacrifice—he was the beloved of the Holy Prophet of Islam and for whom the Prophet said:

حُسَيْنٌ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنَ الْحُسَيْنِ

'HUSAINUN MINNI WA ANA MINAL HUSAIN.'

'Husain is of me and I am of Husain.'

MOHARRAM

Moharram is the first month of the Islamic Year. But the crescent moon of the Muslim New Year rises as a moon of grief; for it vivifies human memory about an event which occurred some 1,390 years ago on the Plains of Kerbala, situated on the Bank of the Euphrates, some miles from Baghdad, in Iraq. It was on the 10th of this month that Imam Husain, the choicest scion of the family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustafa S. A., fell a martyr under the most calamitous conditions ever chronicled in the annals of the civilized world.

The New Year is not ushered in by the ringing of bells, or by the display of flags and buntings, but by mourning the sad events of Kerbala. This heart-rending tragedy brings home to Muslims of all shades of opinion, and indeed to all other people, the innocence and righteousness of Imam Husain, "The Prince of Martyrs" and grandson of the Holy Prophet of Islam. The great Arab historian al-Fakhri, writes: "This is a catastrophe whereof I care not to speak at length, deeming it alike too grievous and too horrible. For verily, it was a catastrophe than that which naught more shameful has happened in Islam. . . . There happened therein such foul slaughter as to cause man's flesh to creep with horror. And again I have dispensed with my long description because of its notoriety, for it is the most lamented of catastrophes."

When Hazrat Ali the son-in-law of the Prophet, who succeeded by right to the Imamate in direct succession to the Prophet, also received the Caliphate or the rule of the Muslim Empire, he endeavoured to remedy the evils which had crept into the administration under his aged pre-

decessor. These acts of his, as may be expected, ranged against him a host of enemies. Muawiya, an Umayyad by descent who held the Governorship of Syria raised the standard of revolt. Ali proceeded to crush the rebellion, but after an undecisive battle was struck down by the hand of an assassin whilst at his devotions in the Mosque of Kufa in Iraq.

After Hazrat Ali, his eldest son Hassan succeeded to the Imamate and also became the Caliph. By this time Muawiya who had consolidated his position, was powerful enough to openly covet the rule of the Muslim Empire as a whole, not only for himself but for perpetuating the Caliphate in his dynasty. Adding fuel to his lust for power was the Umayyad blood's traditional hostility towards the Hashimites, the Prophet's dynasty. For was not this Muawiya the son of the same Abu Sufiyan who had earned for himself a special place in the enmity against Islam and the Holy Prophet?

Muawiya in his hostility to the House of the Apostle of God, now hired mercenaries to cause trouble in different parts of the Empire. The intelligentsia among the subjects including the jurists had been purchased by the state, hence the matter of winning over the general masses was not difficult. Corruption was the order of the day.

People opposing this corruption were plundered and mercilessly massacred. There was no safety or security of life or property, particularly of those who were loyal to the House of the Holy Prophet, who called themselves the Shias or the devotees of the Ahl-ul-bait. Preachers were ordered to curse Hazrat Ali openly in their sermons from the pulpits.

Imam Hasan, who was more concerned with the welfare and safety of the people knew fully well that all the troubles in the land centered around the seat of the Caliphate; did not need any formal throne to pursue his life's work. In an attempt to secure peace therefore, he relinquished the Caliphate to Muawiya, under a treaty amongst the terms of which were: (a) that all imprecation against Hazrat Ali should cease to form part of prayers; and (b) that Muawiya would have no right to nominate his successor.

Having relieved himself of the administrative responsibilities, Hasan as the Holy Imam then devoted himself to the propagation of Islam.

No sooner was a truce settled than the ill intentioned Umayyad began to go back on his pledges. In direct contravention of the covenant, Muawiya shamelessly went about extorting allegiance from the people in favour of his son Yezid, of whose satanic propensities and licentious debauchery he was perfectly aware. He caused many traditions to be concocted with a view to indicating his personal piety and his dynasty's greatness, at the expense of those numerous words uttered by the Prophet concerning the spiritual and temporal superiority of his House (Ahl-ul-Bait).

Commenting on the prevailing state of affairs, Ameer Ali in his 'Spirit of Islam' says: "With the rise of this self-styled first monarch in Islam, the oligarchical rule of the heathen times displaced the democratic rule of Islam. Paganism, with all its attendant depravity, revived and vice and immorality followed everywhere in the wake of Umayyad Governors and the Syrian soldiery".

Whilst Imam Hasan remained alive, Muawiya's great hope of having the way cleared for his son Yezid succeeding him could not be realised. Many attempts on the life of the Imam were therefore made. Eventually, a plot to have him poisoned by one of his wives achieved the desired result and the news of his consequent passing away made Muawiya so happy that he jubilantly prostrated himself in a prayer of thanksgiving.

Lest it be considered that our estimate of Muawiya's character is actuated by prejudice, we give the words of a historian who cannot be accused of bias in favour of either side. "Astute, unscrupulous, and pitiless", says Osborn, "the first Khalif of the Ommayyads shrank from no crime necessary to secure his position. Murder was his accustomed mode of removing a formidable opponent.

The grandson of the Prophet he caused to be poisoned; Malek-al-Ashtar, the heroic lieutenant of Ali, was destroyed in a like way. To secure the succession of his son Yezid, Muawiya hesitated not to break the word he had pledged to Husain, the surviving son of Ali and Fatima".

The wealth which he pitilessly extracted from his subjects, he lavished on his mercenaries, who in return helped him to repress all murmurings. Before his death, Muawiya convened the chief officers of his army and made them take the oath of fealty to his son Yezid, whom he designated as his successor to the throne. This was Yezid's title to the Caliphate. As cruel and treacherous as Muawiya, Yezid did not like his father possess the capacity to clothe his cruelties in the guise of policy. His depraved nature knew no pity or justice. He killed and tortured for the pleasure he derived from human suffering. Addicted to the

grossest of vices, his boon companions were the most abandoned of both sexes. Such was the Caliph—the commander of the faithful! In the terms of the peace treaty signed between Muawiya and Imam Hasan, the right to the Caliphate had been expressly reserved for Imam Husain. Imam Husain could never have deigned to acknowledge the tyrant of Damascus, whose depraved thinking and evil ways were so radically opposed to the high principles and noble ways which were the tradition of the Prophet's Household.

Immediately Yezid came to power, he began acting in full accordance with his devilish character. He started interfering with the fundamentals of the faith and practised every vice and wickedness freely with the highest degree of impunity and yet held himself out as the successor of the Holy Prophet, demanding allegiance from Imam Husain.

The Arabs were already once again in danger of slipping back into barbaric ways which ruled their lives before the dawn of Islam. The light that was brought to them by the Messenger of God was in danger of being extinguished.

The task of keeping alive the new religion in its original purity now centered on Imam Husain, his family and his small band of followers. The Holy Prophet had also left the Holy Quran with them and had said that if anyone wanted Islam in its truest form and the Holy Quran with correct interpretation, he could have them from his Ahl-ul-Bait, regarding whom he had further said: "The likeness of my Ahl ul-Bait is that of the Ark of Noah. Whosoever got into it was saved and whosoever turned away from it got drowned and was lost."

The hero of Kerbala who was a perfect picture of his grandfather, could never be expected to submit to that usurpation. The rank of Imamat put upon his shoulders the responsibility of protecting the integrity of Islam and all the spiritual values that it stood for and saving this perfected faith for posterity which would otherwise be lost forever. The issue was of much greater importance than the honour of a family or clan. Imam Husain's submission to the terror of Yezid would have resulted in the installation of the Yazidian vices as Islamic virtues. Possessed as he was of the purest virtues and chivalrous disposition he inherited from his valorous father, he could not possibly accept a rake and a debauchee like Yezid as commander of the faithful. It is around this conviction of his that the entire history of events at Kerbala is centered. The people of Kufa had written numerous letters to Imam Husain asking him to come to Kufa and guide them. At the same time, Yezid was bent on compelling the Imam to acknowledge his right to the Caliphate. Husain decided to guide the Kufans and assert his right of dissent to Yezid's succession. He staked his moral force against all the material resources of a powerful King. He therefore decided to depute his cousin Muslim Ibne Aqeel to inform the Kufans of his intention to visit them after the Hajj pilgrimage.

MEDINA

Medina was humming with activity. People were wondering when the caravan of the beloved grandson of the Holy Prophet was going to leave. The elders of the town were talking to each other in hushed tones, recalling the words of the Prophet, that a day would dawn when his

beloved grandson, Husain, would leave Medina with his sons, brothers, nephews and kinsmen, never to return. There were tears and sadness on the faces of all, young and old. The elderly people were aghast at the thought of Husain going away forever. The youths were saddened by the thought of losing Abbas and Ali Akbar and Qasim. Their anxious enquiries could elicit no more information than that Husain and his kinsmen were going for Hajj and from there to an unknown destination.

The people of Medina went to the tomb of the Holy Prophet to pray to God with the invocations of His Prophet, that they may be spared the ordeal of separation from Husain and his family. At the tomb, they saw Husain and his sister Zainab prostrated with grief and sorrow, bidding farewell to their grandfather; then saw them both in a touching scene, visiting the graves of Fatima and Hasan.

After long consultations, they decided to go in a delegation to Imam Husain and appeal to him to give up this journey of no return. Some venerable companions of the Holy Prophet appraised Husain of their forebodings and their recollections of his grandfather's prophecy, that if Husain migrated from Medina with his family, he would not return. They reminded him of the treacherous atmosphere in the neighbouring regions. They reminded him of the love and affections they had for him and begged with all their humbleness. Imam Husain was moved to tears and replied: "My beloved people, my heart is bleeding at this parting from you; from the graves of my grandfather, mother and my brother and from the wonderful friendly city of Medina where I was born. Had it not been for the

call of duty for which my grandfather, the Holy Prophet has groomed me, I would have abandoned the thought of leaving Medina. God Almighty has so willed that I should undertake this journey and fulfill the mission of my life." "O Husain," they entreated, "we cannot bear the thought of parting with your son Ali Akbar. He is the very image of the Prophet. Whenever we feel overcome by the remembrance of our dear Prophet, we go to have a look at Ali Akbar. We shall look after him better than we would look after our very own. His noble character and exemplary life has been an object lesson for our sons, who are devoted to him and look upon him as their hero." With pathos in his voice and tears in his eyes, Imam Husain said, "I only wish I could do even that much for you all, but alas, Ali Akbar has to play an important role, the importance of which time alone will tell. I shall always remember your kindness and love for me and all the members of my family."

When the heavens were glowing red, the caravan started to leave on its long journey to Mecca. Soon darkness descended upon Medina, as a visible manifestation of the darkness and gloom which the departure of Husain and his family had cast on the city associated with loving memories.

MECCA

After performing Hajj, it was the Imam's decision to leave for Kufa. But soon after arriving in Mecca, the Imam was informed that a conspiracy was afoot to assassinate him whilst engaged in the performance of the Hajj ceremony. The Holy Imam to safeguard the great sanctuary, therefore decided to leave Mecca for Kufa just a

day before the Hajj festival. When asked the reason for the mysterious departure from Mecca, foregoing the pilgrimage which was just the next day, Imam Husain said that he would perform the year's pilgrimage at Kerbala, offering the sacrifice not of any animals, but of his kith and kin who would lay down their lives with him in the great sacrifice. On the way to Kufa, the heart-rending news of Muslim Ibne Aqeel's murder was conveyed to Imam Husain and the members of his caravan.

Soon after, Hur Ibne-Yezid-e-Reyahi arrived on the scene at the head of a contingent of cavalry with instructions from Obaidulla-Ibne-Zeyad, the Governor of Kufa, to keep a strict watch on Husain and stop him from taking any other road than the one to Kufa.

When Hur arrived, he as well as his soldiers and their mounts were extremely thirsty. Seeing their plight, Husain placed all the water available in his camp at their disposal and all of them including their horses drank to their fill. Then, and not before, Husain questioned Hur on the object of his journey and was informed that if he (Husain) continued any further he would be a prisoner of Ibne-Zeyad. "I have been instructed to take you to Kufa and I, in the face of the Governor's orders cannot allow you to go back." Imam Husain flatly refused to accede to his wish. As a compromise, Hur then suggested: "Under the circumstances you may if you choose, adopt a third course, with the condition that I will keep a watch over you." So, together they—the captor and the captive, took a different road from either of those leading to Kufa or Mecca.

On the second day of Muharram, 61 A.H., they reached a spot where, Husain's horse mysteriously stopped and

would not move any further. Upon this, the Holy Imam declared: "This is the land, the land of sufferings and tortures." He alighted from his horse and ordered his followers to encamp there, saying: "Here shall we be martyred and our children killed. Here shall our tents be burned and our family arrested. This is the land about which my grandfather, the Holy Prophet had foretold."

At this juncture, a despatch rider was seen coming from the direction of Kufa. Presently, the rider came and gave a letter from Ibne Zeyad to Hur. It read: "As soon as you receive my messenger who carries this letter to you, halt Husain and exert pressure upon him and let him encamp in a place where there is neither grass nor water. I have commanded my messenger to stay with you and watch over you, to ensure that my instructions are carried out." Hur showed the letter to Imam Husain, who said that he would prefer to encamp in one of the nearby oases, but, Hur was no longer master of his own troops. He found himself being watched carefully and had to deny Husain the chosen site. At this stage the companions of Imam Husain were infuriated and asked the Imam to give them permission to fight the enemy. But Imam Husain refused, saying, "we shall not be the aggressors." The Imam asked his followers "What is the name of this place?" and they replied "Kerbala" and the Imam said, "I seek refuge with God from Kerb and bala," (meaning trial and agony). He then ordered his followers to halt at this place and set up their camps.

KERBALA

Meandering through the desert, the caravan had now reached its destination—a destination which Allah had willed for it. The march of Husain and his kinsmen in this world had ended; but it was just the beginning of their march towards their real goal.

More and more platoons kept arriving in this expansive plain. Hur was hoping against hope that some agreement would be reached between the Imam and the Yazidian forces. When Umar Ibne Sa'd arrived with a large force, he opened negotiations with the Imam. But all efforts proved fruitless due to Yezid's obsession for extracting allegiance from Imam Husain—a declaration that would mean compromising with the devil—and this the Imam could never do.

The conflict at Kerbala was the primeval conflict of right against wrong, godliness against devilry. It is common knowledge that the path of virtue has always been strewn with the thorns of oppression and persecution, and those on the right have had to wage not a battle of survival of themselves, but in sacrificing their own lives have hastened the extinction of those on the wrong. History records various instances of God-fearing persons caring little for their priceless lives when occasion demanded them to stand face to face with heathen forces. But no anniversary of their sufferings ever pervades our mind to the extent which Kerbala does. His method of dying for truth was sui generis. He selected his most dear and near ones for the performance of this duty. He thus placed at the altar of sacrifice all that was close to his heart and then finally made an offering of his own life and through his death he

has earned a deathless fame. The martyr is remembered for the firmness and patience, courage and endurance which he displayed under the most tragic circumstances on the scorching plains of Kerbala.

Some of the books in which the details of this gruesome tragedy, which are well-known to all, are given here :

Husain The King of Martyrs by S. V. Mir Ahmed Ali, Life of Husain (The Saviour) by Ghulam Abbas Ali Sahib, And several publications from the Madrasat-ul-Waizin, Lucknow.

This grim tragedy does not stop here. The continuation will be found in the book 'TEARS'. For the "CAPTIVES CARAVAN", after facing the gruesome massacre of Imam Husain and his companions, is now faced with a second tragedy. — The March to Damascus.

THE DEVOTION AND HOMAGE OF WAHAB

Wahab bin Abdulla-i-Kalbi was a Christian in Yazid's camp at Kerbala. Having heard and seen Imam Husain, there was just one thing left for him to do — to walk out of Yazid's camp and go over to the camp where salvation awaited him and to embrace Islam. Accordingly he with his mother and wife, went over to the Imam's camp, where they were welcomed by the Imam and the members of his family.

Wahab could not bear the miseries and suffering of the Imam and his family, and was longing to attack the enemy. On the day of Ashoora, permission was given to him by the Imam to fight.

He rushed on the enemy and created great havoc. After a short engagement, he came back to his mother and asked if she was pleased with his valour, and the work he had done to keep the enemy at a distance from Husain. 'No' replied she, 'nothing but your death in the presence of Husain will ever please me.'

Just a fortnight had elapsed since Wahab was married. The bride, who was now standing by Wahab's side, was shocked to hear the advice given by his mother and cried to her husband in a pathetic voice, 'Throw not thyself in the way of a serpent. Have pity on thyself and do not make me a widow.' The mother at once adjured the son, 'Beware! Do not be led astray by the words of your wife, and refrain not from supporting Husain, the God-sent guide of the world.' When the bride heard this, she said to her husband, 'Surely thou wilt enter paradise after thou attainest martyrdom in supporting Husain, but I fear the pleasures of Heaven may prevent thee from thinking of me, hence take me along with thee to Husain and make a promise before him that thou wilt not leave me alone, but wilt take me along with thee into Paradise. My second desire is, that after your death, as there will be none to whom I can look for refuge and support, I should remain with the ladies of Husain to share their lot in all their sufferings.' The bride and bridegroom then went to Husain and the latter reiterated before him the words of the former and made the required promise. The lady was sent to Zainab, and Wahab left again to face the enemy. As he had now come more prepared to die than to win, he made such desperate attacks that the enemy fled panic-stricken in all directions, and in a short time, twelve of the infantry and thirty horsemen were counted among the killed. In the

meantime, one of the Kufians came slyly from behind and severed Wahab's right arm by a sharp blow of his sword. Wahab caught the falling sword with his left hand and charged the enemy with it, unmindful of the loss.

Wahab's wife who was watching this ghastly scene, ran out of her tent towards her husband, and said to him 'fight as much as you can, till there is life in you to keep the tyrannical multitude at a distance from the Prophet's family and support the cause at any cost.' Wahab was much surprised to find this change of attitude in his wife, and forgetting his pain, asked her what had melted her heart. She replied, 'the acute suffering in the camp and the nobleness of the Imam and my belief in his authority, make me feel that it is not worth living after he and his men are slain; so let us both go on fighting until we fall together and roll in our own blood.' Shortly after this a man from the tribe of Kanda came from behind and severed the left arm of Wahab. He shouted out to the Imam to advise his wife to return to the camp.

Husain sent some of his men to call her back, saying that women in Islam were not allowed to fight. She replied, 'I prefer death to falling a captive in the hands of the Omiades.' However, Husain's men were successful in taking her back to the camp.

In the meantime, Wahab fell to the ground and his head was severed from his body. A pitiless tyrant took up the head and threw it towards Husain's tents. Wahab's mother picked it up and threw it back, saying that she considered it a bad omen to get back a thing that was sacrificed for Husain. Wahab's bride, in the fulness of her heart,

picked it up and sat down holding it in her lap. She cleaned her husband's face with her cloth, removed the blood from it, and placed her own cheek on the martyr's face, weeping bitterly for their short-lived union. Suddenly, a slave of Shimar, at the orders of his master, hurried to the spot and ruthlessly struck her head with a steel club and she at once succumbed to the blow. Historians state that this was the first lady that suffered death at Kerbala while supporting the cause of the Prophet's family. Husain dragged himself to the place where the poor lady lay lifeless with her bridegroom's head in her lap, holding his beard with her right hand; he nodded his head and said:— "How honest Wahab has been and how faithfully he has fulfilled his promise! He did not enter Paradise without his loving wife."

Then Wahab's mother attempted to charge the enemy with a tent pole, crying, 'O false Muslims! The Christians in their Churches and the Jews in their synagogues are far superior to you. I thank God, He kept my face radiant with the sacrifice I made of my son.' Husain requested her to return, saying that Islam does not enjoin fighting on the weaker sex. He then told her, 'Thou and thy son will stay in Paradise in the company of my grandfather, the Apostle of Allah.' She lifted up her hands and prayed, 'O Lord! do not disappoint me and do not frustrate my hopes.' 'Certainly,' replied Husain, 'He will never disappoint thee nor will He frustrate thy hopes.'

THE GREATEST SACRIFICE

Husain on the Battlefield to offer the Greatest Sacrifice

Husain first preached to his enemies, the love of God, obedience to the Holy Prophet and abstinence from vice and wickedness, and at last asked the people:—

“Why do ye desire to kill me?”

“Did I commit any sin or crime?”

“Did I plunder anybody?”

“Did I interfere with any one’s affairs?”

All stood dumb and none answered. Then the Holy Imam continued:—

“Then why do ye desire to kill me? What answer have you to give to God, and to the Holy Prophet on the Day of Judgment?”

When no answer came from Yazid’s forces, the Holy Imam said:—

“You have killed all my companions, my children, my brothers and even my little baby; now I tell you to leave me. I will migrate to Yemen, to Iran or even to the far off Hind (India). Stain not your hands with my blood, which is the blood of the Holy Prophet himself, for you will not have salvation. It is for you to decide. I tell you, shed not my blood and save yourselves.”

This last offer of the Holy Imam was superb and matchless and yet the devils did not avail of it. It was in fact the fulfilment of the ‘Hujjat’ or the argument to give

the last chance to the devils to save themselves from the wrath of God.

The last call of the Holy Imam in the way of the Lord

Lest later any one in Yazid's forces should say that he was neither called nor given any opportunity to serve the cause of defending the Truth by helping the Holy Imam who was fighting for it, Husain now standing all alone, bleeding from innumerable wounds from head to foot, having lost one and all of his godly comrades, having offered the last and the greatest of his offerings in the way of the Lord, the six months babe Ali-e-Asghar, gave his last call to humanity around him, inviting them to join him in the way of the Lord, saying:—

“Hal min Nasirin Yansorona?”

“Is there any helper to help us?”

“Hal min zabbin yazubbo an Harame Rasoolullah?”

“Is there any defender to repulse the enemy from approaching the tents of the family of the Holy Prophet?”

When there was no response from any one of the thousands standing around him, he then said aloud:—

“Alam Tasma'o? Alaisa fikum Muslimu?”

“Do ye hear me not? Is there not even a single Muslim among you?”

Yet there was no response

When Husain gave his final call to the world around him inviting the people unto the way of the Lord, Husain's son Ali Zainul Abedeen who was confined to bed with high

fever, and who had just a little while before received the charge of the Imamat from his father, got up and leaning on a staff, dragged himself out of his tent and walking towards the Holy Imam, he said in a feeble voice:—

“Labbaik Ya Abata, Labbaik!”

“Yes. Here I am O Father dear! Here I am.”

Husain seeing his ailing Ali coming out tottering and burning with high fever, bade him:—

“Please go back O son! My progeny is to spring from thee.”

It is reported that in response to the call from the Holy Imam, some mysterious voices saying “Labbaik! Labbaik! (Yes we are here O son of the Holy Prophet) were heard from the spiritual world above, to which the Holy Imam replied ‘Thanks to you all, but my concern here today is only with the living in the physical world.’ For the Holy Imam knew that he would be martyred by the devil’s forces surrounding him.

The unique unparalleled Prayer (Namaz)

Every awakened mind will surely confess that it is not possible for any mortal to understand the great heavenly personality which enacted the absolute submission to the Lord on the field of Kerbala.

Having lost every one of his faithful comrades including his baby son, himself fully wounded from head to foot with arrows struck in his holy body, with his blood flowing from the wounds, his clothes drenched with the blood of his comrades, his kith and kin whose dead bodies he

removed from the field of massacre to a tent in his camp to spare them from being trampled under the hoofs of the cavalry of the heartless enemy, hungry and thirsty for the last three days, Husain was seen seated on his horse the Zul-Jinah, looking every now and then towards Heaven with prayers for the acceptance of his sacrifices. In the midst of the indescribable miseries, sorrow and grief, and under the indefinable agony the Holy Imam ever remained mindful of the Lord and his submission to Him with the desire not to leave the world without offering a single one of the prayers (Namaz) prescribed by Him for man in this world.

Husain's condition was such that by now he could not of his own efforts get down from his horse. Husain hinted to his horse saying:—

“Wilt thou my dear Zul-Jinah kneel down a little to enable me to roll myself down to the ground? I know thou hast also been hungry and thirsty along with me. Pardon me my dear Zul-Jinah for Husain is helpless. May the Lord bless thee.”

The faithful animal which was itself hungry, thirsty and wounded, spread its legs in such a way that the godly soul, one of the most brilliant stars of the heaven of divinity, slid himself down.

Now lying with his bleeding wounds on the flaming sand of the burning desert, Husain, desirous of offering his prayers, gathered the sand in front of him and engaged himself in his last prayer (Namaz) on earth, resting his wounded forehead on a heap of the burning sand. Thus ultimately the wounded Holy Imam lay in communion with the Lord.

From the camp, Zainab was watching her brother's last battle. She was lost in admiration at the brave fight put up by him. She had seen him scattering the enemy's hordes, then halting in his march and finally, riding away very fast on his horse to a place from where she could not see him. In a veil covering her from head to foot she rushed out towards a hillock near the camp so that she could have a full view of the battlefield. From this hillock known ever since as "Zainab's Hillock" she saw her brother lying unconscious on the burning sands and Zul-Jinah standing guard over him with its head bowed. She was at a loss to understand what was happening there.

Husain was now in a semi-conscious state. In this condition he felt that all the prophets of the bygone ages had come over to witness his ordeals—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus and all the other prophets of yore. He saw then retreating one by one, saying to one another that they could not bear to see his plight. He saw his own grandfather Prophet Muhammad, his father Ali and his brother Hasan weeping at his condition. Then in his sub-conscious state he saw his mother Fatima come over weeping and wailing, and saying: "My Husain, what have they done to you. My child, none of them had any pity for you! Did no one amongst them recognise that you were the Prophet's dearest child? My Husain there is nobody to be near you in your last hour, but my child, I am here with you. I will not let your head lie on the burning sands of Kerbala. I will hold it in my lap, till the last."

He felt as if she had come near him and put her tender hand on his forehead, as she used to do during his childhood. On his burning forehead he felt something cool and

comforting—he thought it was his mother's hand wiping the blood and sweat from his forehead.

His senses revived at this sensation and he opened his eyes. He saw his horse Zul-Jinah trying to shield him from the hot rays of the sun.

The realisation dawned on him that he had stopped the fight, so that he could finish his evening prayers. He felt that unless he hurried with it, the enemy would not give him time to complete it. There was no water available anywhere for ablution, so he cleansed his hands and face with the burning sands of the desert and began his prayers. He finished his prayers and with his head prostrated in prayers, he addressed his Maker: "My Allah. Thou art my witness that I have fulfilled my mission in life without any hesitation, without faltering, without complaining. My Lord and Lord of the Universe, I submit unreservedly to Thy Decree and resign myself to Thy Dispensation."

"O All-Merciful Lord of the Universe, accept the humble sacrifice of Thy Husain, who has submitted in Thy way all that Thou hast given him. If this son of Thy Holy Prophet had anything more, he would have submitted that also to Thee—But O' Lord forgive the sinners. O' All-Merciful One."

Whilst he was still offering his prayers, Amr Saad called upon his warriors to cut off Husain's head. They were so cowardly and scared of his sword that none could muster enough courage to go near him and carry out their commander's orders. Even Amr Saad's coaxing and cajoling could not instil sufficient courage in them to venture near him. Amr Saad then asked Shimr to go forth and behead

Husain whilst he was still engaged in prayers. He offered him highest rewards, and to give him courage he even offered to accompany him and stand by him, sword in hand. The two of them marched towards the place where Husain was lying, his head prostrated in supplications to the Almighty God of the universe.

When the two of them reached the spot, they heard murmurs from Husain's lips. Shimr thought that he might be cursing those who had done everything to exterminate his family and friends, who had so brutally and mercilessly treated him. He bent over the Imam's prostrated body to hear what he was saying, when he caught these words: "O Allah, I beseech Thee with all humility to forgive the trespasses of the erring ones for Thou art the Most Beneficent, the Most Forgiving."

Seeing that Husain had concluded his prayers and he might get up to defend himself with whatever strength was left in him, Shimr decided to hurry up with his most dastardly act. He mounted on Husain's back and with the sword he was carrying, he prepared himself to cut off Husain's head. Husain was now too weak with the loss of blood to raise his head.

Zainab, who was watching the events as they were happening before her, saw Amr Saad and Shimr reaching the place where her brother lay. She saw Shimr mount her brother's back with sword in hand. In sheer desperation, as a last attempt to save her brother's life, she rushed forth, to the place where Husain lay and going before Amr Saad, she said: "O Amr Saad, I appeal to you as the granddaughter of the Prophet of Islam to save my brother's life." He turned his face away from her and so she went over

to the other side and said: "O son of Saad Bin Wakkas, will you stand here and watch my brother being slaughtered so mercilessly without a drop of water? In the name of God, I appeal to you to save Hussain's life." He still remained silent as if he was completely oblivious to her pleadings and appeals.

All this was seen by Husain and great as his agonies and pains were, he could not bear to see his sister being humiliated by the utter disdain of Amr Saad. He also knew that his sister would not be able to bear the sight of his head being severed in front of her. Mustering all the strength that was left in him, he raised his voice and said to Zainab: "My Sister, I appeal to you to return to the camp immediately. For the sake of the love you bear for me, hasten to the tent. It will give me the greatest pain if you remain here any longer."

Zainab rushed back to the camp weeping coplously and lamenting. On reaching the camp she rushed to the tent where her nephew was lying on his sick bed. She shook him up and told him what she had beheld a moment earlier. Supporting him she brought him to the exit of the camp. Both of them stood there silent and speechless. They felt that nature itself was sharing their grief, because a strong gust of wind arose and carried with it the red particles of burning desert sand. It ruffled up the waters of the Euphrates and an angry murmur arose from the torrents that were flowing by. In the distant dusty panorama they saw a spear with Husain's head on it. They heard the drums of Yazid's army proclaiming the end of the battle. Zainab with a shriek wailed: "O my brother Husain, my brother Husain! At last they have killed you, they have

beheaded you without a drop of water." With these words she fell unconscious into the arms of her nephew. He gently put her down on the floor and prostrating his head on the ground, exclaimed: "O God, we mortals resign ourselves to Thy Will." From Thee we have come and unto Thee shall be our return."

"INNA LILLAHEY WA INNA ILAIHEY RAAJEYOON."
(The Holy Quran:2:156)

The severed head of Husain glorifies God

The moment the Holy Imam's head was severed from his body and raised on the point of a lance, the severed head began to glorify God aloud in clear words saying:—

"Allaho Akbar" (God is the Greatest).

Thus Husain won an everlasting victory over the devil who could not annihilate Truth with the massacre of the Holy Imam, for Husain continued the glorification of the Lord even after his head was severed, and mounted on the point of the very lance in the hands of his enemy.

Thus the Holy Imam by his own example has made it openly known how abhorrent is falsehood and godlessness, how far it should be defied, what value to humanity has truth and godliness. How dear it must be to every faithful one and at what cost it must be defended and upheld. And how death in the cause of Truth, unfailingly earns Eternal Bliss.

THE ROLL CALL OF MARTYRS

(A list of the immortal heroes who laid down their noble lives in support of the grandson of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, namely, Husain ibn Ali and for the lofty principles of human dignity and justice.)

Imam Husain's unparalleled championship of the rights of Man on the sacred sands of Kerbala, on the tenth of Muharram, 61 A. H. was by no means an isolated stand taken by an individual. It was a movement, which attracted people of the same mode of thought, from all walks of life—people of different ages, ranging from the infants upto the youths, and from youths upto the very old. It attracted slaves and free men, soldiers, cavaliers and officers. They hailed from different parts of Arabia, Iraq, Turkey and other nearby lands. But they were all unanimous in the zeal and ardour to die for a just and honourable cause along with their leader, Imam Husain.

One of the most important sources of the names of these heroes and martyrs is a Ziarat, taught by the Twelfth Imam, known as the Ziarat-e-Nahia, which has been copied by all the great authorities in their reliable books.

The Ziarat-e-Nahia, as it has come down to us, omits certain names of martyrs, although they are well known for their participation in the holy struggle at Kerbala. This omission may be due to some lapse of memory on the part of reporters or inaccuracy or inadvertence of copyists.

A translation of the Ziarat is given below, for those who are not acquainted with Arabic. It is the only Ziarat which mentions the martyrs of Kerbala name by name, and in some cases it also gives the names of those who slew them and throws light upon some of the circumstances of their martyrdom.

A number of footnotes have been added for the enlightenment of the layman who is interested in the details.

THE ZIARAT-E-NAHIA

1. Peace be unto thee, O first of the martyrs from among the scions of the noblest descendants of the Prophet Abraham, the Friend.¹

God bless thee and thy father, who at thy death lamented: "O my son, what made them so bold against the Merciful as to commit such sacrilege against the Holy Prophet. God slay the people who slew thee. After thee the world is worthless."

I salute thee as if I were with thee, in thy vanguard, whilst thou didst fight against the disbelievers, exclaiming:

"I am Ali bin Husain bin Ali;

By the House of God, we are the Prophet's nearest kin.

I will keep attacking you with my lance till you mow me down;

1 The noblest descendants of the Prophet Abraham Khaleelullah here means the Beni Hashim. Abraham was the father of many prophets, through his son Isaac, and of the final and greatest prophet, Muhammad through his son Ishmael. The Biblical prophecy about a great nation going to be raised from Abraham through Ishmael, predicts the ultimate appearance of the prophet of Arabia. He hailed from the branch of Hashim, and his cousins shared the natural abilities of a most remarkable family.

From the words of this Ziarat it appears that the first person to shed his blood for the defence of the principles of Truth and Justice was the eighteen-year-old son of Imam Husain, known as Ali Akbar. He bore a striking resemblance to Prophet Muhammad in physical features, gait and voice. Heaven knows that the life of this young man, so callously ended in the prime of youth by the ruthless minions of Yazid, would have proved a model for the followers of Islam, had it been spared to reach fruition.

I will strike you with my sword bestowed on me by my sire.

With the strokes of a Hashimite youth,

By God, the son of adultery² shall not rule over us."

Until at last, you fulfilled your promise and went to meet your Lord, I bear witness that thou art most preferable to God and His Messenger; and thou art a child of God's Proof and God's Trustee. May God judge thy murderer, Murrah bin Munqiz bin Noman al Abdi; the curse of God be on him and on whomsoever was his accessory in thy murder, or helped the miscreants against thee. May He consign them to Hell, and what an awful place it is! and may God make us one of those who will meet thee and befriend thee, and who are loyal to thy grandfather, father, uncle, brother and thy mother who was oppressed. I dissociate myself for God's sake from thine enemies, most stubborn in rebellion. Peace be unto thee, and the Mercy and Favours of God.

2. Peace be unto ABDULLAH³ the son of HUSAIN, the infant, who was sucking milk, whose blood was shed and the blood was taken upto heaven; whose throat was slit by an arrow, while he rested in the arms of his father.

2. The father of Yazid's governor Ibn-c-Zaid, was of unknown parentage. Muawiya in a bid to win over the notorious Ziad ibn Abih (i.e. son of his father) proclaimed that his (Muawiya) father had begotten Zian. These were the shameless tactics of those who had captured the power in the Islamic State.

3. Imam Husain's infant son, only six month old, who was dying of thirst, but instead of giving him water, the enemies shot him, is known as Ali Asghar, but here, his name is given as Abdullah.

God curse the archer who shot and killed him. Harmalat ibn Kahil al Asadi.

3. Peace be unto ABDULLAH, the son of Amir-ul-Momineen the sufferer of calamity, holder of the title of Divine Love, hero of the field of Kerbala, who was struck by the foes from before and behind. God curse his murderer, Hani bin Thubaet Al-Hadhrami.

4. Peace be unto ABUL FAZAL AL-ABBAS son of Amir-ul-Momineen, defender of his brother (Imam Husain) with his life and soul, who prepared for the fateful morning since the day before, and laid down his life for Husain, faithful unto death; and who strove to bring water for him and his children, but whose both arms were cut off. God curse his murders, Yazeed bin Ruqaad al-Heeti and Hakeem bin Tulfail at-Taai.

5. Peace be unto JA'FAR, son of Amir-ul-Momineen the patient and circumspect soul, who parted from his home in the search for nearness unto God, and was resigned to his fate on the battlefield; who was in the front rank of advance, but fell, outnumbered by the foemen. May God curse his slayer, Hani bin Thubaet al Hadhrami.

6. Peace be unto USMAN, son of Amir-ul-Momineen, named after Usman ibn Maz'oon. May God curse those who shot at him, namely, Khooli bin Yazeed al Adhbahi al Ayadi and Abaani ad Daarimi.

4. Hazrat Abbas, Abdullah, Jaffar and Usman, sons of Amir ul Momineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (alaihis salam), from his marriage with Umm-ul-Baneen and Hazrat Muhammad son of Ali ibn Abi Talib were among the bravest of the brave who laid down their lives in support of the principles of Imam Husain.

7. Peace be unto MUHAMMAD son of Amir-ul-Momineen, who was slain by the accursed Abaani ad Darimi. May God increase the dire punishment for his slayer, and may He bless thee. O Muhammad and the patient people of thy house.

8. Peace be unto ABI BAKR, son of Imam Hasan, the pure and saintly, who was struck down by a deflected arrow. May God curse his slayer, Abdullah bin Aqabath al Ghanavi.

9. Peace be unto ABDULLAH, son of Hasan, the pure, and the curse of God be on his slayer, Harmala bin Kahil al Asadi.

10. Peace be unto QASIM, the son of Imam Hasan, mortally wounded and distressed, when he called out to his rescue, but alas, he found his young nephew in convulsion rubbing his heels upon the sand. Then the Imam exclaimed: "Away with the people who have killed thee (They will be arraigned by thy father and grandfather, on the Day of Judgment. Greivous indeed it is that I was unable to respond soon enough to your cry for help, so that by the time I could reach you it was too late, and you were already martyred. Truly, this is a day whereon the killers are many, and the helpers are few." "Therefore, O Qasim ibn-ul-Hasan, may the Lord join us with you on the Day of Resurrection and make your home our resort; and may He curse your murderer, Umar bin Sa'd bin Nufail al Azdi and send the culprit to hell and punish him with a painful torment."

11. Peace be unto AON, son of Abdullah ibn-e-Jafarat-Tayyar, the winged martyr who flies about in paradise,

loyal supporter of the faith, guest of his saintly kinsmen, giver of good advise for the Merciful's sake reciter of the "seven oft-repeated" and the Quran. The curse of God be on his slayer Abdullah bin Kutayya an Nabahani.

12. Peace be unto MUHAMMAD, son of Abdullah ibn Ja'far-at-Tayyar who achieved martyrdom in place of his father, and who seconded his brother on the battlefield, shielding him with his body. The curse of God be on his slayer. Aamir bin Nahshal-at-Tameemi.

13. Peace be unto JA'FAR, son of Aqeel, and the curse of God be on his slayer, Khalid bin Asad al Johani.

14. Peace be unto the martyr, son of the martyr, ABDULLAH, son of Muslim ibn e-Aqeel, and the curse of God be on the culprit who shot and killed him, namely Aamin bin Sa'sa'ah.

15. Peace be unto ABU ABDULLAH, son of Muslim ibn-e-Aqeel, and the curse of God be on his slayer, Amr bin Sudaih Saedavi.

16. Peace be unto MUHAMMAD son of Abu Saeed ibn-e-Aqeel, and the curse of God be on his slayer, Laqæt bin Naashir al Johani.

17. Peace be unto SULAIMAN, slave of Imam Husain and the curse of God be on his slayer, Sulaiman bin Aof Hadrhrami.

18. Peace be unto QAARIB slave of Imam Husain.

19. Peace be unto MUNJEH, slave of Iman Husain.

20. Peace be unto MUSLIM, son of Aosajah al Asadi, who declared to Imam Husain on the occasion

when the Imam permitted him to depart from his camp, "Should we desert you? What excuse shall we put forward before the Almighty regarding our duty to you? No, by God, I shall fight against your foes until I pierce their breasts with my lance, and cut them with my sword so long as it remains firm in my grip, rather than leave your service; and even if I have no weapon left, I will hurl stones at them, but I can never leave you until I am killed for your defence." And true to your word, you were the first to lay down your life, and you were the first of the martyrs for the sake of God. By the Lord of the Holy Ka'bah you attained success. God reward you for taking the initiative and for your fidelity to your leader, who stood by you as you lay wounded on the battle-field, and exclaimed, "God have mercy on you. O Muslim ibn-e-Aosajah, and then he recited the verse of the Quran:" Among the faithful are some who have fulfilled their promise (of life) unto God, and some whose period has ended, and some who are waiting to fulfil it — and they shall not change their course.

The curse of God be on the two who joined in killing you namely, Abdullah-ad-Dhubabi and Abdullah Khashkara-al-Bai Ali.

21. Peace be unto SA'EED son of Abdullah al Hasafi, who exclaimed unto Imam Husain, when the Imam gave him permission to depart, "No, by God, we will never desert you, until God will see that we have defended the Holy Prophet by defending you; by God, if I knew that I would be killed and then made alive again and burnt, and my ashes strewn upon the winds and if I were made to suffer all this seventy times, even then I would not desert

you but I would meet my fate along with you (not apart from you); and why should I not do so knowing that I have to die or be killed only once, and after that there awaits me honour and reward for days without end, eternally?" So thou didst go forth to meet thy destiny and to help thine Imam; and thou didst attain honour from thy Lord, in the everlasting abode. May God revive us with you, among the seekers of martyrdom, and may He bestow upon us the grace of your friendship in the regions of the highest of the high.

22. Peace be unto BISHR Ibne AMR-e-Khadhrami. May God reward thee for thy saying unto Husain, when he permitted thee to leave him. "May the beasts of the wilderness devour me alive, if I desert thee, or ask thee to provide me with any conveyance. In order to leave thee, while thy helpers are so few; no, that will never be!"

23. Peace be unto YAZEED ibn-e-Haseen, the reciter of the Quran, who was the target of the enemy's onslaught.

24. Peace be unto IMRAN ibne Kalb al Ansari.

25. Peace be unto NA'EEM ibn-e-Ajlan al Ansari.

26. Peace be unto ZUHAIR ibn-ul-Qain al Bajali, who said to Imam Husain, when the Imam permitted him to depart. "No, by God, this I shall never do. What? Me a deserter of the child of God's Messenger (blessings be on him and his children) forsaking him while he is a prisoner in the hands of his enemies and saving my own life! May God not let me live to commit such disloyalty."

27. Peace be unto AMR ibn-e-Qurzah al Ansari.

28. Peace be unto HABEEB ibn-e-Mazahir al Asadi.
29. Peace be unto HURR ibn-e-Yazeed ar-Reyahi.
30. Peace be unto ABDULLAH ibn-e-Umair-al-Kalbi.
31. Peace be unto NAFE' ibn-e-Hilal-e-Jamali-e-Muradi.
32. Peace be unto ANAS ibn-e-Kahil ibn-e-Harth al Asadi.
33. Peace be unto QAIS ibn-e-Muss-hir-e-Saedawi.
34. Peace be unto ABDULLAH
35. and ABDUR RAHMAN sons of Urwah ibn-e-Harraaq al Ghifaaree.
36. Peace be unto SHABEEB ibn-e-Abdullah Nahshali.
37. Peace be unto JAUN, slave of Abu Zarr al Ghifaaree.
38. Peace be unto HUJJAJ ibn-e-Zaide-Sa'di.
39. Peace be unto QASIT and KURSH (Muqsit) and
40. the sons of Zuhair, the Tha'labees.
41. Peace be unto KINAANAH ibn-e-Ateeq.
42. Peace be unto ZARGHAMAH ibn-e-Maalik.
43. Peace be unto JOWAIN ibn-e-Maalik and Dhaba'i
44. Peace be unto ZAID ibn-e-Thubait al Qaesi.
45. Peace be unto ABDULLAH

46. and UBAIDULLAH, the sons of Zaid ibn-e-Thubait al Qaesi.
47. Peace be unto AMIR ibn-e-Muslim,
48. Peace be unto QA'NAB ibn Amr al Namari.
49. Peace be unto SALIM, the slave of Amr ibn Muslim.
50. Peace be unto SAIF ibn Malik.
51. Peace be unto ZOHAIR ibn Bashi al Khath'ami.
52. Peace be unto ZAID ibn me'qal al Jo'afi.
53. Peace be unto HUJJAJ ibn Masrooq al Ja'afi.
54. and 55. Peace be unto MAS'OOD ibn Hajjaj and his son.
56. Peace be unto MAJMA' ibn Abdullah al Aezi.
57. Peace be unto AMMAR ibn Hassaan ibn Shuraib at Taa'i.
58. Peace be unto HAYYAN ibn Haarith as Salmaani al Azdi.
59. Peace be unto JUNDAB ibn Hujair al Khanlani.
60. Peace be unto UMAR ibn Khaalid as Saedaavi and
61. Peace be unto his slave, SA'EED.
62. Peace be unto YAZID ibn Ziad ibn Mazahi al Kindi.
63. Peace be unto ZAAHIR the slave of Amir ibn-ul-Humuq al Khuzaa'ee.

64. Peace be unto JABALAH ibn 'Ali ash-Shaebaani.
65. Peace be unto SAALIM the slave of Bani Medinat al Kalbi.
66. Peace be unto ASLAM ibn Khatteer al Azdi.
67. Peace be unto ZUHAIR ibn Sulaim al Azdi.
68. Peace be unto QAASIM ibn Habeeb al Azdi.
69. Peace be unto UMAR ibn-ul-Ohdooth al Hadhrami.
70. Peace be unto ABU THAMAAMAH Umar bin Abdullah as Saa'edi.
71. Peace be unto HANZALAH ibn As'ad ash Shaami.
72. Peace be unto ABDURRAHMAN ibn Abdullah al Arhabi.
73. Peace be unto AMMAAR ibn Abu Salaamah al Hamdaami.
74. Peace be unto AABIS ibn Shabeeb ash Shaakiree.
75. Peace be unto SAAOZAB the slave of Shaaki.
76. Peace be unto SHABEEB ibn Haarith ibn Saree.
77. Peace be unto MALIK ibn Abdullah ibn Saree.'
78. Peace be unto the wounded martyr, who was captured and died in prison, SAWWAR ibn Abi Uman an Nohami al Hamdaani.
79. Peace be unto the martyr who was pierced together with him: AMAR ibn 'Abdullah al Junda'i.

Peace be unto all of you, the best of helpers.

Peace be unto you for all who suffered patiently; behold how good is the ultimate abode!

May God treat you as He treats the virtuous.

I bear witness that through you God has lifted the curtain and prepared for you penetration (into the Truth) and beautified for you His award; and you clung faithfully to the Truth without faltering.

You infuse us with zeal and we shall mingle with you in the Abode of Immortality.

So Peace, and the mercy and Blessings of God be upon all of you.

By M. A. Haider Khan.

CHRONOLOGY OF IMAM HUSAIN'S SHRINE AT KERBALA

Mohammadan Era.	Christian Calendar	EVENTS
61	1st October, 680	Imam Husain was buried at this sacred Spot.
65	18th August, 684	Mukhtar Ibne Abu Obaidah Thaqafi built an enclosure around the grave, in the form of a mosque and erected a dome over the grave.

There were two entrances to this building.

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|-----|----------------|-----|--|
| 132 | 12th August, | 749 | A roof was built over a part of this mosque and two entrances were added during the reign of as-Saffah. |
| 140 | 31st March, | 763 | The roof was demolished during the reign of al-Mansoor. |
| 158 | 11th November, | 774 | During the reign of Mahdi the roof was reconstructed. |
| 171 | 22nd June, | 787 | During the reign of al-Rashid the dome and the roof were demolished and the plum tree which stood near the grave was cut down. |
| 193 | 25th October, | 808 | During the reign of Amin the building was reconstructed. |
| 236 | 15th July, | 850 | Mufawakkil demolished the buildings and ordered that the land should be ploughed. |
| 247 | 17th March, | 861 | Muntasir built a roof over the grave and set up an |

- iron pillar near it, to serve as a landmark for the pilgrims.
- 273 8th June, 886 The roof was demolished again.
- 280 23rd March, 893 The Alid representative built a dome in the centre, with two roofs on either side and an enclosure with two entrances.
- 307 19th August, 977 Adzd ibn Boweih rebuilt the dome, the surrounding galleries and constructed a screen of teak wood around the sepulchre. He also constructed houses all round the shrine and erected the boundary wall of the city. At the same time Imran ibn Shahin built a mosque adjacent to the tomb.
- 407 10th June, 1016 The buildings were damaged by fire and the Vizier, Al Hasan ibn al Fadl rebuilt them.
- 620 4th February, 1223 Nasir-le din-Allah reconstructed the screens of the sepulchre.

757	18th Sept.,	1365	Sultan Owais ibn Hasan Jalairi remodelled the dome and raised the walls of the enclosure.
780	24th February,	1384	Ahmad ibn Owais erected two minarets covered with gold and extended the courtyard.
920	26th February,	1514	When Shah Ismail Safavi visited the holy shrine he built a sarcophagus of inlaid work over the grave.
1032	5th Nov.,	1622	Shah Abbas Safavi constructed the screens (zarih) of brass and bronze and decorated the dome with Kashi tiles.
1048	15th May,	1638	Sultan Murad IV when he visited the holy shrine, whitewashed the dome.
1155	8th March,	1742	Nadir Shah visited the holy shrine and decorated the building and offered valuable presents to the treasury of shrine.
1211	7th July,	1796	Shah Mohammad Qachar covered the dome of the shrine with gold.

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|------|----------------|------|--|
| 1216 | 14th May, | 1801 | Wahhabis attacked Kerbala, spoiled the screens and portico and looted the shrine. |
| 1232 | 21st Nov., | 1817 | Fatch Ali Shah Qachar repaired the screens and plated them with silver. He also plated the centre of the main portico with gold and repaired the damage done by the Wahhabi robbers. |
| 1283 | 16th May, | 1866 | Nasiruddin Shah Qachar extended the courtyard of the shrine. |
| 1358 | 21st February, | 1939 | Dr. Syedna Taher Saifuddin, 51st Dai-el-Mutlaq of the Dawoodi Bohra community offered a set of screens of solid silver which are fixed in the shrine. |
| 1360 | 29th January, | 1941 | Dr. Syedna Taher Saifuddin, 51st Dai-el-Mutlaq of the Dawoodi Bohra community rebuilt the western minaret. |
| 1367 | 20th Dec., | 1948 | Syed Abdul Rasul Khalsi, Administrator of Kerbala acquired the houses |

in the neighbourhood of the courtyard according to the price fixed by the government, to build a road around the holy mausoleum and to extend the courtyard,

PROPHECIES

Husain's Martyrdom Prophesied

When Husain was born, Gabriel the Messenger Angel appeared before the Holy Prophet and after paying his respects to the Apostle of God, said:—

"O' the most beloved one of God; The Almighty Lord presents His blessings and felicitations to thee, and wills that thou shouldst felicitate Ali and Fatima on the birth of the baby, and the baby be named Husain, for he is known in the heavens by this name."

Saying this the angel stopped with some symptoms of concern. The Holy Prophet said:

"Brother Gabriel, if this be a felicitation to us, what is the other matter of serious concern?"

The Angel continued saying:—

"O' Prophet of God, it is for the newly born son of Janab-e-Fatema, for he will suffer innumerable difficulties, miseries, tortures, wounds and pains of bitterest nature. He will ultimately be martyred with all his faithful supporters in a desert called Kerbala on the banks of the

Euphrates in Iraq, it will be a time when Islam will be in a crisis and the existence of this revealed religion for Mankind will rest upon the sacrifices of Husain, your grandson."

The Medinites are informed of the tragedy of Kerbala

The Holy Prophet ascended the pulpit and delivered his sermon to the people, while Hasan and Husain were sitting before him. After he had finished his address, he put his left hand on Husain and raised his head towards heaven saying, "O Lord! I am Muhammad, Thy Slave and Thy Prophet and these two are the most distinguished and pious members of my family who will fortify my cause (religion) after me. O Lord! Gabriel has informed me that this son of mine will be killed forsaken. O Lord! bless my cause in recompense for his martyrdom and make him the leader of the martyrs. Verily Thou hast absolute authority over everything. O Lord!

The Ancient Prophets-Informed of the Great Sacrifices

On the authority of Ibne Shahr Aashoob and Shaikh-e-Tabarsi—it is reported that the ancient Prophets—viz. Adam, Zachariah, Abraham and Ishmael, Solomon, Moses, and Jesus, were informed by God, about the Great Sacrifices Husain was to offer to re-establish the religion of God on earth.

(Tafseer-e-Ali Ibne Ibrahim—Kashful Ghumma—Tazkira-e-ibne Jawzi Mataalebus So'ol).

Interpretations from the Quran

It is said that one of the interpretations of the symbols, Kof Ha Ya-Ain-Saad, in the Holy Quran is that:

Kof stands for Kerbala.

Ha stands for Halakat—destruction—Death.

Ya stands for Yazeed.

Ain stands for Atash—Thirst.

Saad stands for Sabr-e-Husain—Patience and the fortitude of Husain.

It is reported by the Shahr Aashoob and Shaikh-e-Tabarsi that Syeed ibne Abdullah-e-Ash'ari reported that the Eleventh Holy Imam, Hasan Ibne-Ali-Al Askari said that the Holy Prophet was informed of the tragedy of Kerbala and it is confined in these symbols in the Holy Quran.

Husain's Martyrdom Prophesied in the Old Testament

"For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries, and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood for the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates."

Jer. 46 : 10

(The Old Testament)

AUTHENTIC QUOTATIONS

"Husain marched with his little company not to glory, not to power or wealth, but to a supreme sacrifice and every member of that gallant band, male and female, knew that the foes around were implacable, were not only ready to fight, but to kill, Denied even water for the children, they remained parched under a burning sun, amid scorching sands yet not one faltered for a moment but bravely faced the greatest odds without flinching."

(Dr. K. Sheldrake)

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

(Charles Dickens)

The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Kerbala is that Husain and his companions were the rigid believers of God. They illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to Truth and Falsehood. The victory of Husain despite his minority marvels me!

(Thomas Carlyle)

In a distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Husain will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader.

(Gibbon)

The tragedy of Kerbala decided not only the fate of the caliphate, but of Mohamedan Kingdoms long after the caliphate had waned and disappeared. Who that has seen the wild and passionate grief with which, at each recurring anniversary, the Muslims of every land spend the live-long night, beating their breasts and vociferating unweariedly the frantic cry—Hasan Husain! Hasan, Husain—in wailing cadence can fail to recognise the fatal weapon, sharp and double-edged, which the Ommeyyad dynasty allowed thus to fall into the hands of their enemies."

(William Muir)

"There is no house-hold in the world which presented so many martyrs as Husain's. The number of his companions counted, his might measured, his fame assessed and his family appraised, he stands unique in the history of

the world. Being a martyr, the son of a martyr and the father of martyrs, indeed, he is the Lord of Martyrs."

(Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad in
Abu-al-Shohada)

"Imam Husain uprooted despotism forever till the day of resurrection. He watered the dry garden of freedom with the surging wave of his blood, and indeed he awakened the sleeping Muslim nation. If Imam Husain had aimed at acquiring a worldly empire, he would not have travelled the way he did. Husain weltered in blood and dust for the sake of truth. Verily he therefore, became the foundation of the Muslim creed 'La Ilaha Illallah'."

(Sir Mahamed Iqbal)

شاه است حسین بادشاه است حسین

دین است حسین دین پناه است حسین

سرِ داد و نداد دَرست و رِ دُستِ یزید

حَقِّتِ که بنائِ لا اله است حسین

خواجہ مصین الدین چشتی اجیری

Indeed, Husain is the king and the king of kings,
He himself is the religion and one who gave refuge to
religion.

He gave his head in the way of God but did not surrender to Yazid.

Verily the foundation of Islam is Husain.

—**Khawaja Moeenuddin Chisti**

A reminder of the blood-stained field of Kerbala, where the grandson of the Apostle of Allah fell at length, tortured by thirst and surrounded by the bodies of his murdered kinsmen, has been at any time since then sufficient to evoke, even in the most lukewarm and heedless, the deepest emotion, the most frantic grief and an exaltation of spirit before which pain, danger, and death shrink to unconsidered trifles. Yearly on the tenth day of Muharram, the tragedy is rehearsed in Persia, in India, in Turkey, wherever a Shia community or colony exists. As I write it all comes back; the wailing chant, the sobbing multitudes, the white raiment red with blood from self-inflicted wounds, the intoxication of grief and sympathy."

—(**Browne**)

The Great Sacrifice

One of the significant facts of history is the great and abiding influence of the Tragedy of Kerbala on the human world. Strange that through these long centuries this powerful impress should have influenced hundreds and millions and drawn forth the sympathy of vast numbers of others; and yet it is not strange, for sacrifice in a cause has always moved mankind and the purer the sacrifice and the nobler the ideal the further it goes echoing through the corridors of time and affecting the lives of men and women. It is inevitable that a tragedy should arouse sorrowful feelings. Still out of that sorrow itself comes a feeling of triumph—the victory of the human will over the

most adverse circumstances. And thus out of sorrow and defeat come joy and victory. And it is well that we remember this and take inspiration from it.

—**Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru**

The Kerbala tragedy is a historical event of human martyrdom of such importance that it can never be forgotten. It shall continue to influence the lives of billions of men and women of the world throughout the ages. The event is commemorated in India with complete reverence, not only Muslims participate in the rites, but also the non-Muslims evince great interest therein equally well.

— **Dr. Rajendra Prasad**

But for the sacrifices of the great martyrs, the world would have remained unacquainted with the values of morality, religion and truth. The world owes those martyrs great debt of gratitude, who preferred death to dishonour. Imam Husain belongs to the class of martyrs who laid down their lives in the service of humanity. We should actualise his memory in our own conduct and we should learn a lesson from his sacrifice.

—**Dastoor Kalkhusro Mahyar Kator**

HUSSAIN THE LEADER OF THE ENTIRE HUMANITY

(By **PANDIT RAGUNANDAN PRASAD, B. A.**)

"The Tragedy of Kerbala is a most stupendous event in the world of History, in which, were ranged on the one side, all forces of Right and Truth, Patience and Constancy, Forbearance and Fortitude, Humanity and Man-

liness, Tolerance and Suffering, and on the other all the evil influence of tyranny and bigotry, oppression and vengeance, selfishness, false pretence, cunningness, material pomp, splendour, obstinacy. In this decisive contest, in which apparently the victory rested with the champions of the latter, yet success was really destined for Right and Truth."

"In this grand fight, the majestic way in which walked the greatest champion of Tolerance and Humanity, the standard bearer of Truth and Righteousness, has surely won for himself a place in the heart of every human being who is even a little aware of his pitiable circumstances."

"Into the mouth of sure death and destruction bravely walked the grandchildren of the Prophet in order that Truth and Justice may be vindicated, and the face of heathenism masquerading as Islam may be exposed in all its ugly nakedness." (B. N. Sarga).

The martyrdom of Husain signifies victory of religion over heathenism, good over evil, truth over falsehood and spirit over matter. And therefore the entire humanity might claim Husain as their own, without distinction of age or clime, colour or country.

"After the memory of every Kerbala," wrote the late Maulana Mohammed Ali in a beautiful couplet in Urdu: "Islam emerges strengthened with renewed life."

But why Islam only: why not the whole world of humanity, for even as an English writer has said that Husain is not only the Husain of Islam and the Muslims, he is the Husain of the whole world of humanity. We should cease to think of Husain in terms of religion. We

should think of him as a man, a human being who offered everything he had, even his life, and his whole family under the most heartless and torturous circumstances, because he was fully conscious of the fact that his death in the cause of Righteousness at this stage would save a noble culture and a correct way of life for the people of the world. It is unfortunate that the name of religion should blur our outlook, and give us a sort of prearranged prejudice.

"If ignorant prejudice does not blur our vision, we cannot fail to appreciate whatever religion we may profess, the sacrifice of the martyrs of Kerbala in the cause of Truth and Justice, for the appeal of Truth and Justice is universal, it is not bound by geographical or creedal limitations." (Pandit B. N. Sarga).

"Such deeds should be regarded as, and they really are, the common heritage of all mankind. Just as a rose is a rose, whether in Arabia or in ancient Egypt, similarly such great and noble sacrifices are things of which all mankind, for all time, may be equally proud." — Pandit Sunder Lall.

"Let the whole world then join in common love and reverence to glorify the name of this perfect man and let the anniversary of this grandest and sublimest event in history be fittingly celebrated. As to keep green the commemoration of this great sacrifice is to water the roots of love and peace, truth and honesty, liberty and fidelity amongst the entire humanity."

— Dastoor Kaikhusro Mahyar Kator

THE EVENT OF KERBALA AND ITS RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL EFFECTS

(By M. A. AL HAJ SALMIN)

The event of Kerbala is such that it demands the attention of the philosopher, the physician, and the historian alike. In Islam, there is no event greater in religious and social significance than this. The learned know that it is closely related to social, religious, and political thought alike. All individuals, whatever their station in life, are concerned with this in their affairs of everyday life. Being a man and not have the qualities of man, does not entitle one to be called a man. God has granted two lives to the human being, one the apparent which consists of body, and the other hidden in which the organs of morality play a part. The organs of morality themselves are of two kinds, one true, and the other false or wrong. The true are those without which man would be like an animal, while the false ones are not so effective because they degenerate the man. The study of the event of Kerbala shows that it was morally a great lesson. The true morals are tolerance, kindness, forgiveness, love, generosity, faithfulness, and eschewing in justice. The false ones are miserliness, cruelty, injustice, greed, anger, malice, etc. The event of Kerbala is such that by the study of it men can become models of virtue. If the virtues of sacrifice, kindness and generosity of Husain were of the highest order, the baseness, brutality and cruelty displayed by the enemy were the other extreme. Husain in his kindness and greatness of heart gives water to Hur and his men and beasts who were sent to capture him, but the men of Yazeed on the banks of Euphrates refuse even a drop of water to Husain; instead

they send forth an arrow that kills the six-month old son of Husain. Thousands of little instances can be cited to show the true morals of Husain and his men, and the false ones of the enemy.

Domestic economy and relations are as important in the life of man in the battlefield as in the peace of the house, and the State. A critical study of the event of Kerbala is a living commentary on this section of human life. It abundantly gives lessons for the relations between husbands and wives, masters and slaves, friends and foes, etc. The events of Kerbala have thrown a flood of light on political questions as well. Today diplomacy, and expediency, are the basis of international relations. Husain could have also employed these to save his life, but he was above all this in his purity and honesty of purpose. For the sake of worldly power he did not make use of a false action. His acceptance of Yazeed's Caliphate would have made the world think that Husain the grandson of the Prophet allowed and accepted the false instead of the true; but Husain was for right and truth, and he sacrificed all for it.

The battle of Kerbala was not an ordinary battle, that is, for material possessions, but it was a battle for the upholding of Truth against falsehood. It was a fight between Light and Darkness, in which the ultimate and the everlasting success was that of Truth and Light. Today Islam owes its position to this battle that ended hypocrisy, and dispelled darkness from it forever. Husain the beloved son of Ali, and the grandson of the Prophet was the cause, the means, as well as the end which, in one, brought about the everlasting triumph of Islam. Islam owes him an obligation from which it would never be able to free itself.

Centuries have rolled by since the Great Tragedy of Kerbala, and yet the memory of Husain is celebrated in a way as if the event had occurred but yesterday. The grief expressed on the recurring anniversaries of Husain is not insincere but a genuine one. Those who have eyes to see cannot but observe that on the occasions of mourning meetings held during Moharram such an atmosphere is created that not only the inmates of the earth but those of the sky seem to mourn. Why is this? Because it is the mourning of the beloved grandson of the Prophet of God (Peace be on him) for whom the earth and the sky were created. Husain's was the most cold-blooded murder.

— Syed Wizarat Ali

It is an undeniable fact that no human being known to history underwent such sufferings and sacrifices to uphold his ideals as did the great Martyr of Kerbala. But should this fact excite our marvel? I think not. If a tiger acts bravely no one is surprised. He cannot but be brave. When we know who Hazrat Imam Husain was, we will not be surprised when we read an account of his sufferings and sacrifices.

Hazrat Imam Husain was the son of Hazrat Ali, the Lion of God. The son of the Lion of God should necessarily be brave. But Hazrat Ali, though called the Lion of God, was not ferocious. There was none whose heart was so kind as that of Hazrat Ali. Courage and kindness may seem diametrically opposite things. But Hazrat Ali had both these qualities in copious abundance. He showed his courage when he fought the enemies of Islam whom he vanquished, and he showed his kindness by forgiving them. Hazrat Imam Husain inherited all the noble qualities of his

illustrious father. His mother was Bevi Fatima, the lady of the Light, the Queen of the Mundane, and the Celestial worlds. She was a paragon of virtue. Hazrat Imam Husain imbibed all the qualities of his revered mother. Who was his grandfather? No less a personage than Prophet Mohamed himself. The Prophet knew what was in store for Hazrat Imam Husain and therefore devoted special care and attention to his upbringing. When one knows these facts and reads the Tragedy of Kerbala, one is not surprised at the courage, spirit of sacrifice and generosity of the Imam but says : "The Son of Ali and Fatima and the grandson of the Prophet could not have acted otherwise."

—Mr. S. M. Fossil

"The hardships and humiliations to which the Imam and the members of his family, men, women and children were subjected to are indescribable. When one reads an account of them, even though one may have a stony heart, it melts."

—Mr. S. M. Fossil

"It will not be possible to search out a parallel to the heartrending tragedy of the plain of Nainwa (Kerbala), not only in the Islamic regions but rather the whole world, from the beginning of the world to this day. This tragedy can only be its own example in view of its importance and uniqueness. This is the incident of history which can be a guide and a lesson to humanity in its search for perfection.

There is not a single point in this tragedy which may be wanting to make it perfect for the attainment of the noble qualities and the abandonment of the ignoble habits. It is this tragedy which illustrates all the good attributes in

the morals of mankind, Sympathy, humanitarianism, valour, benevolence, devotion, piety, fear of God, love, sincerity, varacity, kindness, and many other qualities find practical expression there. Looking into the details of this tragedy gives one an access into the whole field of ethical culture. Is there a heart that does not feel pain at this tragedy? NO! but rather every heart feels the pinch of a thorn whenever he hears about it. The steadfastness and unflinching willpower with which Husain pitched the banner of truth and righteousness, could have been possible only by one who has been gifted by God with a brave heart.

To propagate the aims which Husain had in his mind, it was incumbent on people to commemorate the tragedy. And so it happened. The wise men of the world expressed their grief in different ways to keep afresh the memory of Husain. They kept on talking about the Tragedy of Kerbala only to broadcast those aims and objects which Husain had put forth before the world as perfect lessons, by carrying the tragic incidents to the extreme limits.

The martyrdom of Husain is such a great occurrence in history that nowhere — not even in the History of Islam — an equal can be found. No martyr or a series of martyrs can stand in comparison to the greatness and the nobility of action of Husain, even if we accept the history of the past in the very shape in which we find it. The sufferings of the saints of all the religions shall pale into insignificance on examining the hundreds of calamities that befell Husain. A few nails in the body of one crucified shall look trifling before the thousands and thousands of wounds of spears and arrows in the sacred body of Husain.

No one was left who could have written a sympathetic account of Husain's martyrdom but these facts have been given to us by the tongues and pens of the enemies themselves. One who could have written a true account was either Ali, the son of Husain or the revered Ladies of the House of the Prophet; but Ali (Imam Zainul Abedin) was confined to bed even before his capture at the hands of the enemies; and the ladies were mostly unaware of the external facts during the lifetime of Imam Husain. After the slaughter of Husain not only was Ali dragged from his bed to see the after-happenings but the ladies were also exposed to the gaze of the public against the code of modesty and decency.

The martyrdom of Husain has thrown a flood of light on the History of Islam, past and future. It has presented the historical incident in its true colours and has proved that the enemy did all the ignominious things to ruin the house of the Prophet.

All that I have to do in connection with this sad duty (of writing about the tragedy) does not end with merely contenting myself with the claim that the martyrdom of Imam Husain is a great incident. What I have before me, is to show that in reality it is a colossal tragedy and a glorious episode not only in Islam but in the whole history of the world."

— **His Excellency Maharaja Sir Kishen Prasad**

We have the light of history to prove that the Great Imam led the life of a recluse. He was proverbial for his simple and unostentatious mode of life. He shunned worldly pomp and grandeur. The honour of his belong-

ing to the family of the Great Prophet (Peace be on him) was of utmost importance to him. He had no need to aspire to any other honour, however great from the worldly point of view.

He was patron to the poor and needy. What he possessed went to feed this class of people. He took special delight in it. His devotion to God and fear of Him was also proverbial.

—**Syed Wazaratali Gujgaon.**

"The sacrifice that Imam Husain gave in the Desert of Kerbala is an example to us all, giving us impetus and instruction to do our bit when circumstances oblige us to face evil against truth.

Imam Husain with his 72 followers achieved everlasting victory in his defeat which it is impossible for any great force to acquire at any cost. Imam Husain proved to the world for all times that numbers do not count when the real spirit is in action with a definite purpose and determination."

—**Sir Byramjee Jeejeebhoy.**

Imam Husain, together with a small band of faithful and devoted followers, laid down his life with cheerfulness and unquestioning obedience to the will of God in the cause of right as against might, thereby saving Islam from the greater disaster of having to follow a wrong lead.

The best way, to remember this celebrated event is for Muslims to take to heart the lesson which Imam Husain has taught them by his example, which is to walk fearlessly in the path of righteousness."

—**Nawab Sir Mir Osman Ali.**
Nizam of Hyderabad.

"There cannot be a better and more illustrious example than that of Husain who was the greatest embodiment of courage, conviction and sacrifice and every Mussalman in particular should take the great example of his life and service and follow it."

—Mr. Mahomed Ali Jinnah

"The tragic story of Kerbala, is as fresh, as poignant and heartbreaking as on the day when the greatest Saint of Islam was slain; but after thirteen centuries, the inspiration of Imam Husain's example still shines, in undimmed splendour, to guide countless seekers after truth and freedom.

He stands high above all conflicts and the challenge of time, the immortal symbol of Victory over wrong and unrighteousness.

Mowlana Maohmed Ali "Jauhar:"

"Qat-le Husain Asl me Mar-ge-Yazeed hai
Islam Zinda hota hai har Kerbala ke bad."

—Smt Sarojini Naidu

ELEGIES

THE NIGHT OF MARTYRDOM

*Black-robed, bare-footed, with dim eyes that rain
Wild tears in memory of thy woeful plight.
And hands that in blind, rhythmic anguish smite
Their blood-stained bosoms, to sad refrain
From the old haunting legion of thy pain,
Thy votaries mourn thee through the tragic night
With mystic dirge and melancholy rite*

*Crying to thee Husain! Ya Husain!
Why do thy myriad lovers so lament?
Sweet saint is not thy matchless martyrhood
The living banner and brave covenant
Of the high creed thy prophet did proclaim
Bequeathing for the world's beatitude
Thy enduring loveliness of Allah's name!*

Mrs. Sarojni Naidu

HUSAIN OF KERBALA

Men weep for you today in many lands,
And on their breasts in bitter anguish beat,
And in sad, mournful tunes, the tales repeat of how you
lost your life upon the sands.
You nobly spurned the tyrant's base demands and chose
death to prevent your soul's defeat,—
Became a martyr with unflinching feet—
For these well may one weep who understands.
This sorrow at your death, despite the years is still as fresh,
which Time has failed to quell.
In every heart this day new pain appears
And of your sufferings men each other tell.
They see a vision through slow falling tears of that lone
battle where athirst you fell.

—Ameen Khorasane

THE CONQUEROR OF KERBALA

The tremendous surge from mid-deserts
Had just reached the brink
On its victorious onwards march
And, there for a while it stopped.

For a while it was touch and go
For a while it seemed
Desert born desert contained.
That was not to be
It was not so decreed
Muhammad's own blood
Was there to answer the call.
At Kerbala the faith was reborn
And Husain's martyred blood
Blossomed forth and
Lo, there was universal Islam.
To the last day—last minute
Shall shine the immortal deeds
Of Husain and his co-horts
The Faithful Few
Yes the Great one himself was on trial
The Last Prophet's own blood
His darling and his heir
Husain himself had to fall
Before the grand message spread.
The mouths that had fed
Bit the hands that held
The ungrateful serpents' bite
That was a Prophet's reward.
Bereft of gold, bereft of home
Bereft of food and water itself
But full of Muhammad's blood
Full of pluck full of faith
The Courageous led on.
Led on the last seventy-two
Seventy and two of the grand host
Spiritual ancestors of the like
Who from ages keep the faith alive

Those that do not quit.
Thrones are usurped, gold stolen
But not the thorny Crown
That always rests on the brows of a rare Jesus.
That was Husain's heritage
That went back of Christ
A heritage to stand like rock
To suffer to strive and to die
To die and cease to be
So that Truth for ever be.
They don't die
The heroes of Kerbala
They who go through fiery furnaces and walk in the valley
of shades
For the end they emerge
In shining armours radiating
Light of truth for ever.
In vain, in vain did Yazid foam
In vain, did his armies storm
For the field was theirs
Who had their precious lives lain
The conqueror of Kerbala was Husain.
Here the unmatched became invincible
Here the price for the perfect was paid
What father had conceived
The brave son had fulfilled.
Ye, fields of Kerbala
Stand us in need
Muslims are again on trial
There is no Husain to lead.
Ya, Muhammad Mustapha
Grant us thy son's spirit
Let Kerbala be our beacon

For we have only to repeat
The original deed is done
Can we not just repeat?
Yazids are yet all about
Within us and also without
His tribe does not die
Ye, waters of old lady Furat
Tell us how Husain fought
Tell us how he won
For again have we to win
And leave an example behind
That the message of Muhammad
The sacrifice of Husain
Shall not be in vain
Islam, Allah's noblest gift
Has to be earned again and again.

— A. K. Esmail

THE HERO OF KERBALA

Many, many years ago,
On bloody field of Kerbala,
A noble hero faced his foe,
As champion of God's Faith and Law,
Ov'erhead there was a scorching sun,
There were no shady trees,
Beneath a burning sandy plain,
With no refreshing breeze.
A scion of Hashim's noble line;
Of Heroism a model,
Son of Ali, the Lion of God,
Grandson of God's Apostle.
His comrades few but loyal and brave,

Some young and some advanced in age,
The record of whose actions gave,
To History its brightest page.
Of worldly comforts they had none,
Nor couch nor rosy bed,
To comfort their afflicted hearts,
The Holy Word of God they read.
Three days they every distress bore,
Deprived of drink and food,
The world does still wonder at,
Their unexampled fortitude.
They fell around him one by one,
Firm in their righteous ways,
And for their loyalty have won,
From friend and foe a world of praise.
His friends with loving grief he eyed,
Lying dead in sun's scorching rays,
To justify his aim he tried,
To deal with foes in peaceful ways.
He brought in arms his baby son,
Asked them to give him water,
Said he, "The babe no harm has done,
To die of thirst or slaughter."
Stones they threw and arrows shot,
Obedient to Yezid's behest,
And in their fury spared not,
Ev'n life of baby at the breast!
A little before his enemies were,
For water sorely passed,
Relief he gave them then and there,
And could not see even foes distressed.
He humbly prayed and praised the Lord,
The Giver of Spiritual beauty,

And though midst danger never failed,
To do his sacred duty.
Wickedness can no further go,
Cruelty needs no greater proofs,
His sacred body, after death,
Was trampled under horses' hoofs!
Victory, though mean, they gained, but still,
No bounds knew their ire.
Orphans and widows they captives made,
And set their tents on fire.
The captives saw with choking grief,
And eyes dimmed with tears,
The tragic sight of Martyrs' heads,
Uplifted on spears!

— *Syed Ahmed Ali Mohani (B. A.)*

ELEGIES FROM MIR ANIS

A glorious scene is described in the opening, by Mir Anis in his elegy. He has first tried to excite the vanity of the audience and then its curiosity. He gradually unfolds scenes leading to the final tragedy in the death of the two young princes who were the sons of Husain's sister Zainab.

He begins with the description of the small band of devotees of Husain, who on the tenth day of Moharram 61 Hijri, when all hopes of a peaceful settlement had been frustrated, arranged themselves in battle array:—

How the army of God proceeds to the battle-ground trim and with pomp!

They have tightened their belts — these soldiers of Mushkil Kusha:*

* Mushkil Kusha is title of Ali and means one who solves problems.

The army of the chief stands in battle array line, after line.

It has fixed Paradise as its goal,

On the royal portal the swarm of angels, men and genii stand waiting.

As the banner is expected any moment to be brought out of the tent.

From dawn the faithful followers are waiting at the door,

The most honourable comrades are seen loitering about,

The infantry stands at ease in a row,

The horsemen are sitting on the saddle covers on the ground.

All are eager to behold the royal standard of the army,

Every eye is turned in fond expectation towards the door.

The description after mentioning the general outline of scene proceeds to give the individual emotional state of the gathering. The theme starts with eager expectation to salute the flag and this stirs the soldiers and the ardent followers with genuine martial enthusiasm.

Anis says:—

Faces of some are flushed with the fervour of chivalry,

Some are putting on their weapons with the vanity of self-adornment,

Some bend down to tighten the belts of saddles.

Some try their arrows on their bows though they are famished.

There are seen others tilting their spears in martial ecstasy,

Some stand erect after kissing the hilts of their swords,

The Young ones embrace one another smiling,

They are happy because they intend to go to Paradise.

With ruddy faces, they are bursting with courage and resolution,

They pray to Almighty not to let their feet leave the battlefield,

And to let the love of Haidar reign in their hearts even after death.

And whether they get water or not he may bestow honour on them.

Zuljinah (the royal charger) stands in readiness,

Its head is adorned with a crest which looks like a cluster of stars,

Attendants surround it with whisks

Behind it stand the horses of the royal princes.

The horses that accompany the royal charger

Look like a group of fairies around the throne of Solomon.

The guards on the gate proclaim :—

His Royal Highness is approaching!

Abbas the renowned one is putting on his livery,
The devoted ones must be ready to offer felicitations.
The elder brother is like a father

One young son has devolved the high rank of the
father.

The army hailed the news with delight.

The comrades flocked towards the gate in respectful
suspense,

Habib Ibne Mazahir exclaimed:

"Thanks God!"

Valiant soldiers! now it will be a pleasure to go
through the ordeals of this war.

Earn Paradise in exchange for your heads,

Let us see who dies beneath the flag.

There is no compeer of this youth in this universe

His powerful shoulders alone can uphold the glory
of this flag.

He is the stalwart lieutenant of our noble master and
the soul of Ali.

He is the patron of the aged and an admirer of youths,

The Saint of God had the virtues of the Prophets

He has all those attributes which distinguished Ali.

He is endowed with the same modesty, affection,
clemency and fidelity.

He is actuated by the same sense of duty, dignity and piety,

He is benevolent, generous and very kind

He has the same lofty courage, martial zeal and awe-inspiring personality.

Who on earth is his equal in valour?

Ali himself testified that Abbas was a lion.

Though all the royal princes are matchless,

Yet God has given him an unique dignity,

Just as the Lion of God was a remarkable figure in the Prophet's armies.

So he is peerless amongst the devotees of our Lord,

He is above the whole rank and file

After the Lion of God this high rank comes to him in succession.

When the forces waited outside for the flag

The royal master was putting on his war dress

All the near relations stood ready fully armed

Abbas the exalted one was in the front with the flag.

He was there in full glory of his rank

And it seemed as if Ali stood well-prepared to start for a holy war.

The helmet of the Lion of God adorned his head

In which the plume looked like the feathers of the Phoenix

The forehead was like moon emerging out of cloud.
The eye-brows were like the sword of the arm of God.
The red veins in the eyes seemed
As if blood stained swords were flashing.
His delight in getting the flag of the Prophet
Made his cheeks rosy like two red flowers
His stature added to the beauty of his form, it was
neither short nor improperly high.
His lips gave a freshness to the souls of those who
beheld them
They were so well-known for their sweet beauty in
the world
That the houries of Paradise became eager to kiss
them.
When his brave kinsmen offered their felicitations to
him
Abbas bowed smiling
Due to his extreme happiness his face shone like the
moon
The splendour of his face vied with that of the flag.
That flag rose to heaven in lofty glory like its chief
It was said lo! there are two suns at a time.
Zainab after fond caresses said:
Congratulations to you on your elevation, the heir of
the Lord of the valiants.

Abbas with folded hands said :

Take me to be just a servant of Aun and Mohammad
(the sons of Zainab)

I hold charge of the command on their behalf

The two princes are the masters and I am their
steward.

The daughter of the lady of the universe said :

Why this humility, you are their patron

It would be bliss if this crisis is avoided.

It will think that the miserable ones received a fresh
lease of life

They have besieged the Lord of creation who is
innocent,

All of you must combine to save him.

After depicting the delight of the hero on his elevation and the brief ceremony of congratulation, and the short dialogue of the elder sister and the brother, the poet proceeds to describe an enchanting scene of juvenile ambition and grand motherhood. The young princes claim the rank as a matter of heredity. Their grand-father Jafare Tayyar had held that high office in the days of the Prophet and enhanced the prestige of the flag, and their maternal grand-father Ali had invariably borne it in his glorious career in all the perilous engagements of Islam against pagans. The princes justified their insistence to be given the honour of upholding it in this mortal combat, as they were equally fearless and devoted to the Cause of Islam, like their renowned ancestors.

All in the camp of the virtuous Lord were happy
The sons of Zainab were sulky and frowning,
They neither looked towards their mother nor
towards the flag
With tears in their eyes they sat with their heads
hanging down
Sweat on their resplendent faces
Looked like drops of dew on roses.

When the mother turned to look at them
She at once knew that they were disappointed for not
getting the flag.

She went aside and beckoned them to come
The well-bred children came from behind Husain
She said I am upset
Why were you looking so morose?

The righteous sovereign has put on his weapons
You have not yet donned the proud attire.
Those who are manly do not dread death.
Go like bridegrooms to the Imam.
Your clothes are a little dirty
Come let me change them and anoint your eye-lids
with black powder and dress your curls.

From dusk till dawn you prayed constantly
That you might find honour in death before all else.
What is now the reason of indignation
With tears in the eyes, frowns

And beads of sweat on your faces,
You have neither the vivacity nor your sweet speech.

I find now that your moods are completely reverse,
Your mother is in distress, your maternal uncle is
surrounded by oppressors,

Dear children you ought to think of our plight,
You were never so easily offended and gloomy
But now you are plotting and thinking in a strange
fashion,

Your hearts are not the same, your looks and
attitudes are changed.

Apart from others you are oblivious of me even,
You do not care for your mother; true
Love is tested in adverse circumstances.

You are the product of ten
Years labour of mine;

Who else can know your minds better than I do.

I know the reason of your resentment;
Do not I read in your angry looks their meaning?
If it is something secret come away and tell me.

Both of them answered: it is nothing,
Except that the virtuous Lord forgot us today,
He is extending his patronage to others and omits us.

Were we not the heirs of Jafare Tayyar?
Were we not eligible for this lofty rank?

The mother put her finger between her
Teeth and said 'Ha'

Why talk about what is a 'fait accompli'
See that the wife of Abbas the faithful does not over-
hear you.

Tell me is it really a matter of delight for us all or
something to complain about;

Never be jealous in matters calculated to do good.
Why, neither you are nor he (Abbas) is a stranger.
If even a single person knows what you say
Take it that it will be a source of great grief to me,

(Upon this) the children folded their little hands
And said,

We are faithful servants; it is impossible to disobey.
Punish if we frown again, and
If ordered we are ready to throw ourselves
On the feet of our younger uncle (Abbas).

Zainab after caresses said; you both
Are good, virtuous and faithful
May God give such sons to all in this world
Honourable, competent, intelligent and noble.
You ought to accept whatever duty is entrusted to
you,

You are respected by those who are junior to you but
you have to respect your seniors.

Then she dressed them and put on them the weapons
of war, and when they were ready she wept.

When she brought them to the Imam he embraced
them and inquired whether she intended to send them
also to the battlefield, as they were like two moons in the
house of the Lion of God.

The Imam dissuades his sister in these words:
They have not yet gone abroad in any adventure,
If it comes to a clash it will be a terrible engagement.
The whole of the wilderness of Kerbala is resounding
with the din of the forces,
Twenty million swords flash for a single head.
When the arrows discharged by the cruel enemies
attack us.

How will I live if they are wounded,
The daughter of Ali submitted with humility;
I have nothing else O the Lord of the land and seas,
Myself and these dear children are all I have,
They are my riches, my property and my wealth,
I must repay the kindness of your patronage.

If I spare them who else should I offer for the
sacrifice,
She further argued, O the victor of the fortresses,
oceans,
Do not be anxious due to their tender ages,
They have been suckled by the daughter of the Lion
of God

When the arrows come (thick and swift) they will
stop them on their chests
Let the sword flash, let surging rivers of blood roll on.
I hope they will be in the vanguard of the forces,
They dare not speak in your holy presence
Therefore their state of lofty resolution is unknown
to you;
They have the stern looks, majestic demeanour and
high valour of their grand-father.
In the dexterous handling of sword and shield they
resemble the movements of Ali,
Looking to their age they are indeed youngsters.
But in fortitude they are young and in gravity they
are mature persons;
When last night I was shedding tears of despair,
Both of them sat by me to console and cheer me up.
They said why are you so despondent?
Is it so easy to kill our sovereign?
Tomorrow, lions will prowl about this plain.
And you will see that not a soul breathes,
Through the grace of God our Lord has such brave
companions with him
Whose war-cries send away the lions trembling.
It is most probable that casualties
Will be heaped right up to Kufa.
We will force the most powerful persons to surrender.

Even those whom you take to be children, are
off-springs of lions.

Do you think that uncle is alone?

If slightest injury is done to him

Cut off our heads,

We are the heirs of valiant ancestors,

Our wrists are like those of Ali.

Our arms are those of a lion,

In that horde of millions there are not even ten men,

Similar to us in grace and gallantry.

They are all to protect the vocal scripture

When they advance to attack

There will be a terrible devastation.

Each will lay down his life after killing hundreds.

After us will happen whatever is destined.

Do not take our bold assertions as empty boasts,

We will hurl ourselves on the swords;

We are fed with the milk of the daughter of Fatima

We are longing for the clash.

With our flashing scimitars we will risk our lives

Our victims will be low and their blood will sprout
high up to heaven.

When they pleaded so eloquently

I became confident of victory

I got a new life in me

I exclaimed in sheer delight of a mother.

He is a benefactor who helps my brother
May God make it true what you say!
For the last couple of days I have been watching them
carefully
They say, O, it is intolerable oppression,
We will truly rest after subverting the vicious rule
of Yazid.
The coins are stamped with the name of Husain.
And sermons, on pulpits proclaim him as the
sovereign,
They are still in their teens
It is the age of frolic and sleep.
The impending terrible danger has perturbed the aged
ones
But I am quite sure that they will not waver,
When they gallop on their horses to attack.
I am certain that they will not retreat alive.
Your Highness will laugh to learn the prattles of the
younger
Brandishing his scimitar; says he,
He is a coward who does not fight today,
He will neither get a palace nor a Hoor in heaven
It is enough that I lived for some days in this
wretched world.
Tomorrow I will be the first to enter heaven,
Rolling up the tiny sleeves of his shirt

He says the wicked cannot stand to fight the valiants.
The sons of Ali are furious lions.
They are ready to die a thousand times for Husain,
Tomorrow these scimitars will seal the fate of the
foes.

My mother weeps; the world is a vast gloom to me,
Merrily they were just telling me
That your Highness did not entrust the royal standard
to them

I said "have your feeble arms gained strength"
They said let the test come
We are with the matter of the world.

These feeble hands are to force the gate of Kufa,
The king said, 'who can doubt their fortitude?
'These faithful children are the heirs of the Lion
of God'

'Alright, let one come with me and the other should
live with you Zainab.'

How will you live after losing both,
You need a son when you are plundered.

Zainab said; It is my fervent desire that both should
die to save you; I want spiritual merit and they seek
honour in death.

It is destined that I should be bereaved of both
Like Lady Fatima,
They have not suffered separation from infancy,

They played together in one place and grew up together.

Their attachment is well admired by all in the family,

They are really a single soul in two bodies.

I invite the attention of the readers to the following lines of Shakespeare when he expresses himself on the same human sentiment and brotherly love and affection in two small children:—

We still have slept together,

Rose at an instant, played and ate together,

And wheresoever we went, like Juno's Swans.

Anis proceeds:—

One who frets to compose after quarrelling with his brother,

How will he live if parted from him?

Brief separation makes them weep,

They weep so bitterly that they make me sad,

They eat their food when they are together,

They go to learn together and return in company.

If the brother receive wounds from swords and arrows

Truly Sire will not the other die of grief.

Early Morning in Kerbala

Starlit dawn!

The Light that at Sinai sent Moses into a swoon,

The choir of birds singing in flower-scent'd woods,

Desert grass rippling in the morning breeze,

Rose petals cupped and filled with dew
To slake the thirst of the Cypresses of Fatima's Grove.

Arrival of Husain in Kerbala

Like the Full Moon come to earth
Husain advanced towards his steed,
Ali's angelic breed around him like a cluster of stars.
Tresses streaming in the wind,
Hand in hand,
Heads held high,
The gallant lads walked in majesty and pride.
Suddenly the desert became dark as the night,
Battledrums boomed across the sands.
The earth shook under the horses' hooves.
The enemy had reached the river's edge
Each one like a dreadful orge.
Said Abbas to his men, "Go ask them what they
want."
Tell them: "Take care, remember, the daughters of
the Prophet rest inside these tents."
They answered: 'We've come to block your access to
the river.
Tonight General Shimr shall cross the marsh.
At this Abbas roared, the Lion in the vale,
Raised his eyebrows, looked at the hilt of his sword—
No less in might than Ali's scimitar—
And charged
As a tiger springing from his lair.

Husain's Farewell to his Daughter Sakina

This world is a play of shadow and light,
Of joys and grief,
Of sunrise and dusk.
The end of every beginning never is the same.
Little lass, once you laid your head in my lap,
Now don't be stubborn, don't you cry all night,
When I'm gone don't you sleep on the dust,
my elfin child.

Husain Rides his Brave Steed

He bent his forelegs and knelt down
To let his hallowed Master mount,
Who sat erect in his saddle
Like a jewel set in a glowing crown.
From East to West rose the cry, Hail, Hail, Hail
The shouts of hosanna echoed thro' hill and dale.
The horse turned into a flash of lightning,
The Lady Moon opened her parasol of rays,
The dawn wind came running with the scent of
Paradise.
Flowers of the desert sprinkled their pollen-gold.
Husain, the Imam, is the son of the Imam,
His shield and sword carry Salvation's grace
The worlds shall perish if he is enraged.

Abbas's Charger

Famished and thirsty for two nights and days
The dumb creature looked at the twinkling river
and neighed
His muscles quivered and twitched as Abbas
stroked his proud and fiery mane.

But the sound of rippling water made him restive
again,
And he turned his head and looked at his Rider.

The Morning of the Martyrdom

The Lord of Faith had prayed all night,
At daybreak he said to Akbar, his son,
"The morning of murder is come, arise.
Call out for prayer, the night is done."
The Lord's beloved then called the faithful to prayer,
And the people recalled the Prophet's own voice.
In the Forest of Terror the trees in ecstasy swayed.
As the nightingale of Truth sang out in the glade.

In the Battlefield

Suddenly he glanced at his young son's body,
And cried the Sultan of Earth and Sea,
"Akbar arise, your father is about to fall;
You have forgotten him, as cheek on the dust,
you lie fast asleep.
Come hither Abbas†, come back from the river's bank,
If you find some water sprinkle it ov'r my burning
coat of mail.
Come, say Adieu, for I'm on my way to Eternity.
I've helped everyone, wept and mourned,
I, your brother, have not rested all the day,
Surrounded by the Tyrant's cavalry.
Wake up, Ali Akbar, the hot sun is on your face.
I've fought and bathed in blood;

† Hussain's devoted step brother who was martyred
while trying to fetch water for Sakina.

In my old age I've carried the corpses of strapping
young men.

God, let me not shed tears over my dead sons,
God, let me die remembering only Thy Name."

The Tenth Day of Moharrum

As Husain's little band fell one by one
That caravan of thirsty soldiers left for the Heavenly
Spring.

The family cut down,
Clouds of sand rising,
Brothers, comrades, children all gone,
Two sisters left behind to mourn,
And Husain alone,
Hot winds, noonday heat,
The tents' curtains flapping in the dusty gale.

Before His Martyrdom

He who could have said he was the Lord of the East,
Merely bowed his head and said, "I am Husain".

The End of Husain and his Faithful

Pitched upon the scorching desert,
The tent of Husain lay,
Encompassed round with Satan's hounds
Upon that black sad day.
They numbered less than eighty strong,
Women and children too,
While Yezid's thousands stood around,
Awaiting the fiend's might.
Driven away from the cooling stream,

His children waiting for water,
Awaiting with patience extremely sublime
Like sheep for the butcher's slaughter,
Oh! How valiantly fought that pitiful few,
Against Yezid's wild murderers,
Fought with a courage unequalled in time
Fought with a fierceness that was surely divine.
The earth quaked and trembled as noon drew near.
But still the survivors knew no fear
But fewer grew that pitiful band,
For Islam, God, and Husain they stand.
At last, all were dead, the devil had won,
Blood red sank down the merciless sun,
Trampled and torn lay the gallant Husain,
For Islam, and God, the faithful were slain.

H. Wells

TERMS & SYMBOLS

The Panja :

The Panja or the human palm with five fingers upright, represents the "Panjetan Pak" or the Holy family: Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain. Made of gold, silver or other metal, with the names of Allah and the Holy Five engraved upon it, the Panja stands in the Imambaras as a sacred standard and is taken out in the Moharrum processions along with the Alams or heraldic standards of Imam Husain.

The Alam or the Emblem :

The Alam is a replica of the Banner or Standard of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Imams. It is not worshipped in

any way and is symbolic of the Holy Standard of Truth carried by Imam Husain, these Alams are carried in Mohurram processions, and they are also kept in 'Ashurkhanas' or Imambaras.

Matam :

This is the beating of their breasts and heads by the mourners, for the great Martyrs of the Ahl-ul-Bait, whilst listening to the terrible sufferings of Imam Husain, his companions and his family members.

Azadars :

The mourners of Imam Husain are known as 'Azadars.' (Aza means mourning). The traditions connected with this mourning are collectively known as 'Azadari'.

Majlis-e-Azadari :

A gathering where the events of the martyrdom of Imam Husain and his companions; and other hardships and sufferings of those of his family who survived Kerbala, are recalled. The origin of this Majlis dates back to the days when the family members of Imam Husain were taken to Damascus. Here Janab-e-Zainab, the sister of Imam Husain held the first Azadari Majlis. These Majlis were further given great importance during the times of Imam Reza (the eighth Imam). They have become occasions for the imparting of religious and moral instructions followed by the narration of the sufferings of the Holy Imams and their companions.

Taziah :

The Taziah is a miniature of the Holy Tomb of Imam Husain, made of gold, silver, brass or wood. For the sake

of economy and facility it is also constructed of bamboos, coloured paper and tinfoil. It is a consolatory symbol for quenching to some extent the thirst of the devotees to reach the tomb in Kerbala, and it is respected in pious remembrance. On the 10th Mohurram it is taken out in a procession by the devotees of Imam Husain.

Mashk :

A Mashk is the Arabs leather water-bag. A metal reproduction is made in remembrance of the gallant Hazrat Abbas who unable to bear the sufferings of Imam Husain's children dying of thirst, forced his way through the opposing hordes of Yezid and succeeded in reaching the river bank. He filled the bag with water and was on his way to Imam Husain's camp when he was attacked on all sides and his arms were cut off and the water-bag was pierced with an arrow and all the water leaked out. At the same time he was struck a mortal blow on his head, and he rolled down from his horse. The Mashk and the Alam stayed linked with each other and never got separated. Hence one so often sees an Alam with a Mashk attached to it.

Tabut :

Tabut is a sort of bier or coffin in which a dead body is carried to the grave. It is an expression of sorrow and regret, for when Imam Husain and his companions had attained martyrdom, their bodies were left unburied by the men of Yezid's army.

Zuljanah :

This is the name of Imam Husain's faithful steed that bore him to the battle-field. After the brutal murder of

Imam Husain, the horse was wandering here and there for its master, and with a thundering neigh searched for the body of Husain. Having found the body, the horse dipped its forehead in the blood of the Holy Imam and began to dash sometimes its own head and sometimes its fore feet on the ground with extreme grief and despair. When Omar bin Saad saw this, he ordered his men to catch it. But the horse killed several of them by his kicks. Like one rendered mad, it ran away to the family of the martyrs.

Gahwarah or Jhula :

This is the name for a cradle in which the six month old infant of Imam Husain, named Ali-Asghar slept. This child was killed by an arrow which stitched the child's neck to the arm of the Imam. This three headed arrow was aimed at the child by Hurmalah.

Sabeel :

In Mohurram, to commemorate the Martyrs of Kerbala who fought and died thirsty in the scorching heat, an arrangement is made at various places of drinking water for those who happen to pass by that way, is known as 'Sabeel'. Everyone who drinks there is reminded of the great sufferings of Imam Husain and his companions and children who could not get a drop of water for three days.

INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH THE SEVERED HEAD OF IMAM HUSAIN

Simon Oakley records the following incidents connected with the severed head of Imam Husain:—

Haula (Khooli) who had the Imam's head went away with it to Obeidulla, but finding the castle shut, he carried it home to his house and told his wife that he had brought her the rarity of the world. The woman was in a rage and said, "Other men make presents of gold and silver and you have brought the head of the son of the Prophet's daughter. She was not able to sleep all that night, because of a light which she saw steaming up towards Heaven from the place where Husain's head lay and white birds continually hovering about it. Haula (Khooli) the next morning carried the head to Obeidulla, who treated it with great indignity and even struck it over the mouth with a stick; upon which Ziad, the son of Arqom, said to him, "Cease striking with the stick for I swear by Him, besides Whom there is no other God, I have seen the lips of the Apostle of God (peace be upon him) upon these lips." Obeidulla angrily replied that if he was not an old man and out of his wits he would strike his head off.

Husain's head was set up in Kufa, but a threatening revolution compelled Obeidulla to send it as early as possible to Yezid. Khooli was ordered to take the heads of the martyrs and the captives to Damascus under the escort of a thousand and five hundred horsemen. Khooli started for the capital of Yezid and proceeded via Mosul. But, wherever the heads were carried, thousands of people,

males and females, adults and children, greeted them with loud mournings.

When the heads reached the borders of Seebore an old, revered gentleman of the place collected his countrymen and addressed them, saying, "This is the head of Husain whom these accursed people have killed. By God, they ought not to pass through our land." Upon this, the noblemen and officers of Yezid replied, "Let us not create any mischief. These heads have passed through many towns and villages. Let them go past your place also." But the young men admired the first address and rejected the words of the nobles and officers. Clad in armour and well equipped with weapons, they obstructed the way of Yezid's cavalry carrying Husain's head. Just at the bridge leading to the town, the two parties met and a severe skirmish ensued. No less than six hundred of Yezid's men were slain in the conflict. Khooli was forced to take another route, abandoning his idea of passing through Seebore.

Mr. Taylor, in his book "*Muhammadanism*" records a curious tradition respecting Husain's head. He writes:—

"When Husain's head was sent to be presented to Yezid, the escort that guarded it, halting for the night in the city of Norwil, placed it in a box, which they locked up in a temple. One of the sentinels, in the midst of the night looking through a chink in one of the doors, saw a man of immense stature with a white and venerable beard, taking Husain's head out of the box, kissing it affectionately and weeping over it. Soon after, a crowd of venerable sages arrived, each of whom kissed the pallid lips and wept bitterly. Fearing that these people might convey the head away, the sentinel unlocked the door and entered. Imme-

diately, one of their number came up, gave him a violent slap on the face and said, "The Prophets have come to pay a mourning visit to the head of this martyr; whither dost thou venture so disrespectfully?" The blow left a black mark on his cheek. In the morning, he related the circumstances to the commander of the escort and showed his cheeks on which the impressions of the hand and fingers were plainly perceptible."

Sahl says, "As the heads passed under a lofty balcony, on which were seated five ladies in attractive costumes, accompanied by a slave girl, one of the number picked up a stone and flung it at the head of Husain. This pained me so much that I prayed to God that she and her companions who rejoiced at her action might all be destroyed. Suddenly, the balcony came down, smashing all its occupants to pieces."

The Severed Head of Imam Husain Glorifies God

The moment the Holy Imam's head was severed from his body and raised on the point of a lance, the severed head began glorifying God, aloud in clear words saying: "**Allaho Akbar**" (i.e. God the Greatest).

Thus Imam Husain won an ever-lasting victory over the devil who could not annihilate Truth with the massacre of the Holy Imam, for Husain continued the glorification of the Lord even after his head was severed, from the point of the very lance in the hands of his enemy.

The Divine Punishment

It has been related from reliable sources that, (while Yazid's army commenced its journey to Damascus) a man

fastened Imam Husain's holy head to his horse's neck. Later he was seen with his face turned black. He was asked as to why the colour of his face had changed while he was one of the most handsome Arabs. He replied, "Not a single night passes since I carried the sacred head (of Husain) without my suffering a nightmare in which I see myself being arrested by two persons who keep forcing me into Hell headlong. My present condition is due to this." Then he died a very miserable death.

(Sawayeq-e-Mohereqa p. 194)

The End of the murderers of Imam Husain

Not a single person who participated in the murder of Imam Husain has been spared its consequences. Some were killed, and faces of some turned black, some became victims of leprosy (which remained in their heritage), some lived abnormal lives, some became paralytics, some had their powers stripped in a very short time, and some became insane.

Mukhtar Bin Abi Ubaidat-al-Saqafi established his kingdom in Kufa in order to take revenge on the murders of Imam Husain. Of those he killed, the chiefs were Bin Ziad, Bin Saad, Shimr, Harmala and Sanan bin Annas.

Shimr

On receiving the news that Mukhtar was in search of him, this murderer of Imam Husain fled to the outskirts of Kufa. Aba Amra was informed of his hiding place, and along with a few of his regiment, marched towards it. A fierce battle took place between him and

Shimr in which Shimr was badly wounded. Aba Amra sent him prisoner to Mukhtar, who killed him as mercilessly as his crime demanded.

(Al-Bihar Vol. X Page 279)

Yazid

After killing Imam Husain, Yazid did not live long. He fell drunk and unconscious one night, and the next morning was found dead. His body putrified and seemed as if it was painted with tar.

(Al-Bihar Vol. X Page 154).

Khooli

Mukhtar, in pursuance of his taking revenge from the murderers of Imam Husain and his companions, looked for Khooli (who was one of the persons who carried the severed head of Imam Husain on a lance) and caught him. When Khooli was brought, Mukhtar asked him, "Let us hear the account of your evil deeds at Kerbala!" Khooli replied. "After the murder of Husain, I went to Ali Bin Husain (Imam Zain-ul-Abedin) and looted the bedding under him. Then I took the covering of Zainab, the daughter of Ali, and snatched her earring as well." Mukhtar could not hold his tears, and further asked him, "What did Zainab say to you?" Khooli replied that she said to me, "May God sever your hands and feet and put you in the fire in this world before the next." Mukhtar said, "I swear by God that I shall fulfil the curse of Zainab." Then Mukhtar cut his hands and feet and burnt him.

(Abu Mikhnaf Page 98)

Harmala

Minhal relates: I visited Ali Bin Husain (the fourth Imam) on my journey back from Mecca. The Imam asked me, "O Minhal, what is the news of Harmala?" I replied that I left Kufa while Harmala was still alive. Hearing this, the Imam raised his hands praying, "O God! Let Harmala taste the fire of the iron, and the fire of Hell!" (Minhal says). "Then I came back to Kufa and found Mukhtar in power. I stayed in my house for a few days, busy in receiving my visitors. Then I went to Mukhtar with whom I had friendship too, and found him. When Mukhtar saw me, he complained, "O Minhal, why did you not come to me before and congratulate me on my sovereignty and participate in my activities (against the murderers of Husain)?" I told him that I had been to Mecca and had returned recently. I then began to talk with him. Meanwhile some people came and whispered to him. He stopped as if he was waiting for something till Harmala was brought before him in chains.

When Mukhtar saw Harmala, he said, "Praise be to God who made it possible for me to take revenge on you." Then he ordered that Harmala's hands and feet be cut and he be thrown in the fire.

On witnessing this I praised God. There upon Mukhtar asked me, "O Minhal, to praise God is a very good act, but about what have you praised Him just now?"

I told him that on my way back from Mecca, I visited Ali Bin Husain who asked me about Harmala, and on my informing him that Harmala was still alive, he prayed to God to let Harmala taste the fire of iron and the fire of

Hell. To see Harmala imprisoned and thrown into the fire, I praised God as the prayer of the Imam had been so soon accepted. Mukhtar, alighted from his horse and prayed to God for a long time.

(Al-Bihar Vol. X, page 278)

Sanan

Sanan Bin Annas fled to Basra hoping to take refuge there, but his house was destroyed and he was compelled to leave for Qadsia. There he was spied on and was taken prisoner by Mukhtar between Azib and Qadsia. Mukhtar punished him severely and killed him.

(Al-Bihar Vol. X, page 290)

The Reward of a Killer

When Imam Husain's head was placed before Bin Ziad, his killer came forth reciting loudly: "O Amir, where is my reward? Fill my purse with gold and silver, for I have killed one, who was a king, whose lineage was the most praised, whose parents were the most distinguished and whose prayer was directed to the two great Mosques (Bait al-Moqaddas and Kaaba) in his infancy."

Bin Ziad was angry and said to him, "When you regarded Husain as the holder of these qualities, why then did you kill him? I swear by God that you will get no reward from me. On the contrary I shall make you meet Husain very soon." Then Bin Ziad had him beheaded.

(Sawayeq-e-Mohreqa, page 196)

ELEVEN MAJLISES

THE FIRST MAJLIS

Tonight the new moon has appeared which marks the beginning of the period of mourning for the greatest of all martyrs, Imam Husain. Tomorrow will be the first of Moharram.

Many many years ago, at this moment Imam Husain was on the way to Kerbala. He had been forced to leave his home in Madina for two reasons. Firstly, because Yazid's men had planned to kill him in Madina, and secondly because the people of Kufa had written hundreds of letters to him, asking him to come and guide them and promising to stand by him through thick and thin.

Yazid's subjects were not happy, because Yazid was a cruel and wicked man who had no respect for the commands of God and no regard for the Holy Prophet's family. He oppressed the poor and robbed them of their money and left them to starve, while he himself spent all the money in drinking, gambling and leading a loose life. So Imam Husain was eager to guide all those who asked for his help and guidance. He could not bear to see Yazid ruling over the Muslims. His grandfather, the Holy Prophet, had made the people free. He could not let them become the slaves of a tyrant.

So, Imam Husain, accompanied by the women and children of his house and a few relatives and chosen friends, set off towards Kufa. It was a hard and weary journey in those days. They had to travel in a caravan, on horses and camels. For miles around them they could see nothing but a vast and arid desert. There was no

shade, no trees, not even grass, except in the oasis, and water was very scarce. The heat of the Arabian summer, scorched their skins, but the brave Imam and his party travelled on and on, urged by his duty to God and mankind. On the way, he asked his cousin, Muslim Ibne Aqil to go ahead of him to Kufa and tell the people that the Imam had received their letters and was on his way. Muslim took a swift horse and with two of his sons, aged about seven or eight he galloped towards Kufa. When he arrived there, the people gave him a rousing welcome and swore allegiance to Imam Husain in large numbers. Every day Muslim used to lead the prayers in the mosque and give a speech in praise of the Islamic faith and Imam Husain.

When Yazid came to know of this he feared that the Kufans would get out of his control and so he sent a new governor to Kufa. This new governor was Obaidullah Ibne Ziad. He was as cruel and ruthless as Yazid himself. When Ibne Ziad came to Kufa he began to win over most of Muslim's supporters by threats, bribes and cunning tricks. As a result of this, most of the people left Muslim and joined Yazid's party.

Muslim was now left almost alone, but there was one man who remained true to his word and his name was Hani. He kept Muslim as a guest in his house and continued to support the good cause for which Muslim was working.

As Hani was the chief of his clan, Ibne Ziad at first felt rather afraid to injure Hani in any way, but one day Ibne Ziad decided to put an end to Imam Husain's supporters. He arrested Hani and demanded that Muslim

should be brought before him but Hani said he would rather die than betray his guest. So Hani was locked up in a prison. At this time Muslim fled from house to house, seeking shelter in that city which, only a few days before, had seemed to have been full of his friends and supporters. At last Ibne Ziad's spies found out where he was, and a regiment of soldiers was sent to capture him. He was in the house of a faithful woman named Tao'ah. Ibne Ziad's soldiers surrounded the house and broke open the door. Muslim bravely fought single-handed against the whole regiment and held them at bay until he came out of the house and started fighting in a lane. There the soldiers of Yazid scored an advantage over him. They climbed on to the roofs of the adjoining houses and showered stones and arrows upon the lonely hero. At last, severely wounded and completely exhausted, Muslim was captured and taken to the governor's court. The governor, Ibne Ziad tried him summarily. But Muslim was so convinced that right was on his side that he answered all the governor's charges truly and fearlessly. In the end he condemned Muslim to be killed without any mercy. By his order, he was taken to the roof of the governor's palace where his head was cut off and his body thrown down into the street below. They gave him no food or water before they killed him and his head was displayed on the gate of the palace. After the death of Muslim his friend Hani was also slain by the order of Ibne Ziad.

These tragic events took place on the 8th of last month and the news reached Imam Husain on the way to Kerbala. Muslim's wife, Ruqayya and two sons and a daughter were with Imam Husain. When they heard

the harrowing tale of Muslim's martyrdom they were filled with grief, but their grief was not without pride and admiration for his loyalty and courage of that great hero who stood against so many enemies and undaunted until death.

THE SECOND MAJLIS

1st Moharram

When Muslim set off towards Kufa he took two of his sons with him. They stayed in Kufa with their father until Ibne Ziad began to persecute the followers of Imam Husain. When Muslim was taken prisoner the two boys were separated from him. They were only eight years old, and so they could not fight to save their father. They fled through the narrow streets of the city and hid themselves for some time. After the martyrdom of Muslim the soldiers began to look for the boys. Unable to run away from the city, the two boys were at last taken prisoner. The prison-keeper was ordered to lock them up in a dark and dismal dungeon where they had to sleep on the hard stone floor and were given dried bread and very little water to live on.

Their father had taught them all the virtues of Islam and so the two young boys bore their sufferings with courage and patience, praying to God five times a day and never complaining against the ill-treatment, because they knew that God would help them and punish their enemies on the Day of Judgment.

They remained in the dungeon for about a year. At last, one day, when one of the prison warders came to

give them their food and drink, they said to him, "How long are we going to be kept in this prison? You know we are innocent. We have done no wrong. We have never complained to you, but now we cannot endure this suffering any longer. The warder was a kind-hearted man and was deeply touched by this plaintive appeal. The boys then asked him, "Do you know Mohammad?" and the warder replied, "Of course, I believe in him as the Messenger of God". Then they asked, "Have you heard of Ali?" and he said, "Why, I am a follower of Ali because he was the Prophet's cousin and successor. He was the best and bravest of men after the Prophet." So the boys continued to tell the warder that they were the orphans of Muslim who had been slain by Ibne Ziad and that Muslim was the son of Aqil the brother of Hazrat Ali, and the warder took pity on them and allowed them to escape. He tried to give them some money for their expenses on the Journey, but they thanked him for his kindness and said, "We do not want any money. You have given us our freedom and we shall always pray for you."

So saying, the boys escaped from the city of Kufa and wandered about the neighbouring villages, hoping to find their way home. Presently, they saw an old woman standing at the door of her house and asked her if she would give shelter to two weary travellers for one night. The old woman said that she would be only too glad to give them shelter, but the house belonged to her son-in-law who was a fierce and greedy man. The boys had wandered for days and were desperately in need of some place to sleep and so they said, "We have no place to go and we are almost fainting through exhaustion." So the old woman took pity on them and hid them in a little

room in the house. There the boys lay down on the floor and soon fell asleep.

In the evening the master of the house came home and began to shout at his mother-in-law. He was in a bad temper that day because he had gone out in search of plunder and had found nothing. At last Harith (for that was the man's name) went to bed without eating any supper, for he was thoroughly disgusted with himself, and lay tossing in bed without a wink of sleep. Later on in the night he heard the voices of the children. "Who can this be?" he thought to himself, and crept slowly towards the room in which the boys had been sleeping. There he saw the two boys and asked them, "Who are you?" The boys were terrified, but at last they said, "Will you promise not to hurt us if we tell you who we are?" When the man promised, they told him that they were the sons of Muslim and had only taken shelter in his house for the night. "Ho, ho", thought Harith, now I can get a rich reward from Ibne Ziad, and he tied the two innocent children to a pillar and waited for the morning. Just before sunrise he took the boys towards the river. As he was taking them out of the house his mother-in-law tried to stop him, but he struck a blow with his sword and killed her on the spot.

By the side of the river Euphrates the wicked, Harith prepared to kill the two innocent boys in the hope that if he would take their heads to Ibne Ziad he would get a big reward. How the boys begged him to spare their lives. "If all that you want is money", they said, "Why not take us to the market and sell us into slavery?" but Harith showed them no pity. When they said, "At least spare us for five minutes that we may say our prayers

for the last time," Harith laughed and said, "Prayers can't save your lives." And so, that infidel drew out his sword and cut off their heads most brutally, and threw their bodies in the river, where they were picked up and buried later on by some kind-hearted people. Their tomb is situated at Musaiyib, about ten miles from Kerbala and is visited by pilgrims on their way to Kerbala.

This sad and heart-rending story shows how brutal and inhuman the enemies of Imam Husain were. They turned their hearts from God and the Prophet and showed no pity even to the innocent children. But on the Day of Judgment they shall surely know what a grievous doom awaits them.

THE THIRD MAJLIS

2nd Moharram

The Holy Prophet loved his two grandsons, Hasan and Husain more than anyone else. He loved them not only because they were the sons of his only daughter Fatima and his cousin Ali, but also because he had great hopes in them. He knew that they would stand up for the cause of Islam when all the others would forget, and that they would lay down their lives so that Islam should live.

When Imam Husain was born, the angel Gabriel came to the Prophet and said, "This boy will die a martyr for the sake of Islam at Kerbala." Therefore the Holy Prophet loved Imam Husain still more. He often used to say, "Husain is from me and I am from Husain." He wanted his followers to know that after his death when the peo-

ple would be misled into evil ways they must not do anything to hurt Husain, and so he used to say, "Whoever hurts Husain hurts me and whoever hurts me hurts God". He also used to say, "Hasan and Husain are the Princes of the youth of Paradise."

One day a man brought a young deer as a present for the Prophet. The Holy Prophet took the deer and gave it to Imam Hasan to play with. When Imam Husain saw his elder brother playing with the deer he felt very unhappy and came to his grandfather and said, "It seems that you do not love me as much as you love my brother, because you have given him a deer but you haven't given me one." Imam Husain felt so unhappy that he was about to start crying, and so the Holy Prophet prayed to God. At once God listened to the Holy Prophet's prayer. There was a doe, sitting with her young one in the desert nearby, and God said to her, "Go to the Prophet's house at once and take your young one with you." The doe at once started running and her young one ran along with her until they reached Medina and came and stood before the Prophet. All this took place in such a short time that Imam Husain had not started crying. He immediately felt happy again and took the other young deer with him. All those who were present marvelled at this wonderful incident, but the reason for it was that God and the Prophet did not want Imam Husain to be unhappy for even a single moment.

"Just as God loved Imam Husain so did Imam Husain obey and adore God. One day, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain made a nazr (i.e. : a vow) that they would fast for three days. Accordingly they fasted on the first day, but when the sun went down and they were about to break

their fast a poor man came at the door of their house begging for bread. The Holy Family could not let the beggar go away hungry, and so they took all the bread that was in the house and gave it to him and went without food that day. The next day they fasted again, and this time in the evening an orphan came begging at their door. Again they gave him all the food that was in the house and had nothing except a little water to drink. On the third day they fasted once more and this time a prisoner came begging at their door. Once more the Holy Family gave away all their food and decided to go to bed hungry. By this time they had become very weak, but they praised and glorified God and thought nothing of their discomfort since it was in a good cause. At this God revealed the Surah Hal Ata, Quran, Chp. 76, on the Prophet, in which the praises of the Holy Family have been recorded for all time to come.

From these incidents we can see a little of the greatness of Imam Husain. We can see how pious and kind-hearted he was and how well he was brought up to lead a holy and good life and to lead the people in the path of God. But, alas, after the Holy Prophet the followers of Yazid persecuted our great Imam. They made him leave his hearth and home to wander in the desert in the scorching heat of the Arabian summer.

When Imam Husain was on the way to Kerbala one day a doe came running towards him. He pulled up to let the doe come near and it placed its fore-legs on the side of the Imam's horse and began to say:— "O Imam, I am in great distress. A hunter has captured my little child. I have no other child. What am I to do?" The Imam knew exactly what the doe was saying, because he could

understand the language of all the animals. At once he rode towards the nearby village and went to the house of the hunter and said to him, "Where is the young deer you have caught?" "When the hunter brought the deer the Imam bought it from him and gave it to its mother. And the doe went away happily with her young one. Such was Imam Husain's kindness. He could not bear to see even animals in distress. But the soldiers of Yazid showed no pity to such a kind Imam. They showed no mercy even to his children. They killed Ali Akbar with a spear and they killed the Imam's infant son, Ali Asghar who was only six months old with an arrow. They imprisoned his daughter Sakinah and scolded and slapped her, and they did not give them any food or water. Those cruel men forgot how dearly the Prophet loved Imam Husain. They had no regard for the laws of Islam which forbid us from being cruel to men, women, or children and which require us to be kind and merciful to animals.

THE FOURTH MAJLIS

3rd Moharram

Imam Husain travelled on and on until, one day he saw a regiment of cavalry coming towards him from Kufa. It was a very hot day and when the regiment came nearer he saw that they were all very thirsty. The captain of the regiment, a man called Hur, came near the Imam and saluted him and begged for water. Imam Husain at once asked his companions to bring water and, even though he knew that these men were in the army of his enemy Yazid, he gave them as much water as they wanted to drink. Then he ordered that the horses and camels of the regiment should also be given water. When they had all quenched

their thirst, the Imam asked Hur why he had come and Hur told him that he had been sent to stop the Imam from going towards Kufa. At this, Hazrat Abbas, Ali Akbar and all the other companions of the Imam grew angry and wanted to fight against Hur's men then and there. But Imam Husain remained calm and patient. He did not want to be the first to attack his enemies. He wanted them to attack and he would only defend. So Imam Husain asked Hur to let him go his own way. But Hur said that his orders were to take Imam Husain towards the Euphrates. Imam Husain did not want bloodshed, and so he went where Hur wanted him to go.

At last, on the 3rd of Moharram, Imam Husain arrived at a place in the desert where a canal of the Euphrates ran on one side and on the other side there were sand dunes. There he halted and asked, "What is the name of this place", and was told, "This is Kerbala." At first he wanted to pitch his tents near the canal, but Yazid's soldiers prevented him from doing so. Again his companions, including Hazrat Abbas grew angry, but once more the Imam counselled them to have patience. He did not want bloodshed if he could possibly avoid it. So he pitched his tents on one of the sand dunes, far from the water while Yazid's army camped by the canal.

Two days later, more and more armies began to arrive at Kerbala. Umar Ibne Saad came on the 5th of Moharram and with him came many thousand troops.

On the 7th of Moharram Ibne Saad received an order from Ibne Ziad that Imam Husain should not be given any water from the canal. So, from the 7th of Moharram the Imam and his party were not allowed to take any water.

The banks of the canal were heavily guarded. Very soon the Imam's children began to suffer from thirst. The Imam then went to Ibne Saad's camp and addressed the enemy's soldiers as follows :

"I am the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad. I am the son of Ali and Fatima. You claim to be Muslims and to follow the Prophet Mohammad and yet you want to shed my blood. You know that I have done no wrong and yet you have surrounded me and stopped our water supply. How can you justify this?"

But the accursed enemies hardened their hearts and said, "We know that you are the Prophet's grandson but we are going to kill you."

This shows that the Imam's enemies had no religion and no regard for anyone. They did not even have any common human decency. In short they were worse than animals, and Imam Husain wanted to guide them and to remind them of the teaching of Islam so that they should become good and kind-hearted men, but they did not listen to him.

THE FIFTH MAJLIS

4th Moharram

On the eve of their martyrdom while Imam Husain and his followers prayed and asked God to give them patience and courage, and while the soldiers of Ibne Saad sharpened their swords and spears and prepared themselves for the fight, Hur sat thinking in his tent. He was thinking of all the events which had taken place so far and was trying to make up his mind what he should do the next

day. Should he fight against Imam Husain and lead his men to attack the Holy Prophet's kinsmen? No, thought Hur, I will never do that. Only a few days ago, when we here fainting with thirst in the desert did not Imam Husain save our lives? And now for the last two days the Imam's children are crying for water and no one takes pity on them. I know that the Imam did not come this way for war. He stands for peace, but these people have forced him to defend himself. When I stopped him from going to Kufa, he told me that he wanted to be allowed to go back to Medina or to India. He did not want to fight Yazid. I have brought him here because Ibne Ziad ordered me to do so and now they have sent two hundred thousand troops to surround and kill him. I will not stain my hands with the blood of the innocent Imam. I have wronged them by delivering them into the hands of their enemies. How can I save them now? They are the Prophet's own flesh and blood. How can I take up arms against them?"

Hur was troubled by these thoughts throughout the night and he kept awake thinking about all these matters until dawn.

At last the sun rose and Ibne Saad began to arrange his army in the field. The drums beat and the trumpets blew and the black banners of Yazid were unfurled. On the other side, Imam Husain, after saying the morning prayers arranged his seventy-two faithful followers and mounted his horse. "What brave men," "to face two hundred thousand enemies with a small force of only seventy-two. But see how cheerfully they advance to embrace martyrdom. Surely, they must be right. What glory awaits those who are on their side!"

When the Imam and his followers came near the army of Yazid, the Imam pulled up and addressed them as follows : "You know that I am the Holy Prophet's grandson, the son of Ali and Fatima. There are many among you who have heard the Prophet say that all Muslims should love me and no one should injure me. O people of Kufa, you sent letter after letter begging me to help you. Now that I have come here I find that you want to kill me. It is one of the rules of chivalry that when two armies fight, they never prevent one another from taking water from the river. But you have posted your guards on the canal and you do not let us draw any water. Look, even the birds of the air and beasts of the desert come and drink water, but my children have not had a drop of water for three days. Is there no pity in your hearts? I warn you that if you will not listen to me and if you will fight against me, knowing that I am the grandson of the Prophet, you will receive the severest punishment on the Day of Judgment. Tell me, have I done you any harm? Have I killed anyone of you? Have I taken anything from you? If I have not, then why do you want to fight against me?"

All this while Hur stood listening to the Imam's address. He believed every word the Imam had said and when the address came to an end no one could say a word in reply. But Hur went to his general, Ibne Saad and pleaded with him not to fight against Imam Husain. Ibne Saad, however, would not listen to Hur. So Hur took his final decision asked his brother and his son and a slave who was in his service if they would join him, and when they all agreed, they spurred their horse and galloped towards Imam Husain, asking his pardon and offering to

join him against Yazid's army. When Hur came to Imam Husain, the Imam blessed him and assured him that his past mistakes would be forgiven. Then Hur and his brother and his son and the slave who was in his service all went out to fight against Ibne Ziad's army and fought bravely until, one by one, they fell in the battle in the defence of Imam Husain. When Hur was mortally wounded the Imam went to his rescue. Hur had received a deep wound on his head, and the Imam tied a handkerchief over the wound, soon Hur's soul departed from his body. Then Imam Husain said, "Rightly did your mother call you Hur, for Hur means 'free' and you are free in this world and in the hereafter.

THE SIXTH MAJLIS

5th Moharram

Janab-e Zainab, the sister of Imam Husain had two sons, Aun and Mohammad, the sons of Abdullah Ibne Ja'far-e-Tayyar. Zainab was a very brave lady and her sons were equally brave. Ja'far-e-Tayyar was Hazrat Ali's brother and carried the banner of Islam in many a battle in the Prophet's lifetime. He was the standard-bearer of the Muslim army in the battle of mutah and in that battle both his arms were cut off and he was killed. Hazrat Ali was also the standard bearer of the Muslim armies in many battles. Aun and Mohammad therefore went to their mother and asked her to speak to Imam Husain so that they may have the honour of carrying the banner of Islam in the battle of Kerbala. But Janab-e-Zainab knew that there was only one man who was best suited for the honour of carrying the standard of Islam and that was Hazrat Abbas. So she told her sons that they could not

be given the banner. When she believed that it would not be right to ask for a certain thing she would not do so even to please her own sons. So, she explained the matter to her sons and they understood and obeyed her and did not again ask for the standard to be given to them.

On the morning of the 10th of Moharram, after all the companions of Imam Husain had fallen in the battle one by one for the cause of Islam, and when the two sons of Muslim who were with the Imam had also been killed, Aun and Mohammad decided to go out and fight. They first asked their uncle, Imam Husain and then went to their mother and asked her permission. Janab-e-Zainab loved her brother deeply. Moreover, she knew that it was the duty of every true believer to take up arms in defence of the Imam in that perilous hour, and so she gladly gave them permission to go and fight and lay down their lives for the cause of Islam.

Happily, Aun and Mohammad came out of the tent and the Imam embraced them and they plunged into the armies, brandishing their swords and killing the foes until they were surrounded and outnumbered. Then, covered with wounds and weakened by thirst, the two brothers were surrounded by the enemies. They fell from their horses and their foes redoubled their furious attacks. They cried out to their uncle, Imam Husain, for help and the Imam dispersed the enemies but it was too late. Aun and Mohammad were mortally wounded. They soon departed from the world and the Imam carried their bodies to the place where the bodies of all the other martyrs lay, and prayed to God, saying, "O Allah, accept this sacrifice from me."

Thus did the grandsons of Ja'far-e-Tayyar uphold the banner of martyrdom on the fateful day of Ashoora following in the footsteps of their glorious ancestors.

THE SEVENTH MAJLIS

6th Moharram

Ten years before the tragedy of Kerbala Imam Husain's elder brother, Imam Hasan was poisoned by a wicked woman at the instance of Moawiyah, the father of Yazid. As Imam Hasan lay on his death-bed he called his sons and charged them to obey and serve Imam Husain at all times and in every possible way. Then he called Imam Husain and whispered something in his ear, and then he called his son, Qasim and tied something round his arm, saying, "When you are in great distress, open this amulet and read it and do what is written in it." After this Imam Hasan breathed his last.

On the eve of Ashoora, when the armies of Yazid had surrounded Imam Husain's camp on all sides and everyone was certain that next morning the Imam's enemies would carry out their evil plans, all the friends and relatives of the Imam made up their minds to defend him with all their might. But Imam Husain said to each of them one by one that they should escape and save their lives because Yazid's armies wanted only to shed the Imam's blood. The seventy-two loyal followers however would not think of deserting their leader in such a grave danger. One by one they expressed their grim determination to stand by him, come what may. Among them was also Qasim. The Imam could not bear the thought of seeing his dear, beloved nephew suffering death, and tried to persuade him not to

fight. But Qasim was very unhappy to think that he would be deprived of the chance to do his duty to the Imam. In that moment of despair he remembered the amulet which his father had tied round his arm. "What greater distress can I be in," thought Qasim, "this is surely the time for me to open the amulet and read it and see what my father wants me to do." So he opened the amulet and read his fathers' dying wish, which was as follows: "O Qasim, when your uncle shall be surrounded by enemies, do not hesitate for a moment to lay down your life for him." Happily he took the writing to his uncle and begged to be allowed to fight, and the Imam agreed.

However, at last, next day, when all the friends and supporters of the Imam had been slain and when Aun and Mohammad, the sons of Janab-e Zainab had fallen in the battlefield, only three men were left who were capable of taking up arms in defence of Imam Husain. They were Qasim, Abbas, and Ali Akbar. At this time Qasim stepped forward and asked the Imam's permission to fight and when the Imam gave his permission, Qasim went forth to fight. He was about fourteen years of age at the time. But he fought and killed the renowned warrior Azraq and his four sons. At last he was surrounded by thousands of troops and severely wounded, He cried out for help and the Imam rushed to his rescue, but he had fallen from his horse and by the time the Imam reached him, the dispersing horsemen had trampled his body under their horses' hoofs. So died Qasim, the son of Imam Hasan, in defence of Imam Husain.

THE EIGHTH MAJLIS

7th Moharram

Imam Husain's second son, Ali Akbar was so handsome and good natured that all those who had seen the Holy Prophet used to say that Ali Akbar resembled the Holy Prophet more than any one else. People used to come from far and wide just to see Ali Akbar's face, because they knew that nature had made a living picture of the Blessed Messenger of God, and it was an act of piety to see the face of Imam Husain's lovely son. Ali Akbar had a beautiful voice too, and so at the time of prayer, he used to stand up and recite the Azan. For all these reasons Imam Husain was rightly proud of his son, and he was the delight of his mother's eyes. Above all, his aunt Zainab loved Ali Akbar with all her heart and soul. Hence it was that on the day of Ashoora, when the Imam's friends and relations went out one by one to fight and die for the defence of the faith, Imam Husain and all the ladies of his house were very unhappy at the thought that soon Ali Akbar would also have to part from them. They would have given their own lives to save Ali Akbar but in Kerbala everything was different. There it was a question of putting duty above all other considerations. Imam Husain had prepared to make every possible sacrifice in order to make sure that the belief in God's Unity, the mission of Mohammad, and the high and lofty ideals of Islam should be preserved forever, and therefore if the Imam had seventy sons, he would gladly agree to sacrifice them all for the cause.

Imam Husain's sister, Zainab, though she realised this duty as much as anyone else was naturally rather upset at

the thought of losing her beloved nephew. She loved him more than her own sons, and being a woman she had stronger feelings about the parting of Ali Akbar. From the time of his birth she had brought him up, and now, the thought of losing him broke her heart. But when Ali Akbar pleaded with her, begging and beseeching her not to deprive him of the honour of martyrdom, she also agreed, and so did Ali Akbar's mother, who was also deeply grieved. So, at last, Ali Akbar mounted his horse and departed towards the battle-field. At this moment, Imam Husain lifted up his hands towards heaven and said, "O God, be my witness that I am sending my son to fight and perhaps to die in Thy service. He of all my sons, resembles Thy Prophet more than any man alive and that whenever we wanted to see the Holy Prophet's face we only had to look at his face to be reminded of those exquisite features.

Ali Akbar, however, plunged into the fight, dealing death and destruction on all sides, and facing the hordes of Islam's enemies single-handed. After a while he was overcome by thirst and rode back to his father and said, "O Father, I am dying of thirst, my coat of mail burns in the heat of the sun, and the strain of battle has made me still more thirsty." At this, Imam Husain could not help weeping because he knew that he was helpless and could not get a drop of water to give to his dying son. So the Imam replied, "You know, I have no water to give you, but go now and fight for another few moments and in the end your grandfather, Hazrat Ali will give you water from the stream of Kausar in paradise."

Then Ali Akbar went to fight again and soon disappeared in the multitude of the enemies. As he was

fighting, a man called Khooli struck him in the chest with a spear, so that he fell from his horse. At this moment he cried out to his father for help. When Imam Husain came to his support, he found the young martyr mortally wounded. So the Imam took Ali Akbar in his arms and blessed him and Ali Akbar breathed his last. Alas, a life so dear and full of promise was nipped in the bud at the early age of eighteen. The Imam also wept and said, "My son my child, what is the use of life to me now that you are gone?"

THE NINETH MAJLIS

8th Moharram

One of the bravest of the Holy Prophet's followers was Ja'far-e-Tayyar, the brother of Ali. In the battle of Mutah, Ja'far-e-Tayyar carried the banner of Islam, and in that battle he was outnumbered by the enemies and killed. When the news reached the Holy Prophet, he cried and prayed for Ja'far's soul and the angel Gabriel came down and consoled the Prophet, saying "Ja'far was a brave and loyal soldier. God has given him everlasting life, and in place of his two arms which were cut off in the battle, the Lord has given him a pair of wings." Hazrat Ali who was sitting near the Holy Prophet at that time said, "Please pray to God that I should also die fighting for the cause of Islam and become a martyr." But the Holy Prophet said, "O Ali, your death has already been decreed. You shall die in the mosque during your prayers, but the Almighty will give you a son who will die in the battle on Ashura day." From that time Ali eagerly awaited the birth of that son. After the death of Hazrat Fatima, Hazrat Ali looked for a daughter of one of the bravest of

Arab clans and found Umm ul Banin and married her, and after some time God blessed him with a son whom he called Abbas.

Abbas grew strong and brave and learnt all the arts of war and became an expert in fighting with sword, spear and lance. When Hazrat Ali was about to die, he entrusted all his sons to the care of Imam Hasan, but he gave the hand of Abbas to Imam Husain and said, "My son, it is my dying wish that you should protect and defend Husain with your life." So Abbas continued to serve Imam Husain and never parted from him as long as he lived.

(Many years later, when Imam Husain was forced to leave his home and pitched his camp at Kerbala and was surrounded by thousands of Yazid's soldiers, Abbas was with Imam Husain, faithful unto death.) One the eve of Ashura, as he sat sharpening his sword in his tent, his sister, Umme Kulsum came to him and said, "What am I to do? My brother, the Imam has been surrounded by enemies. Zainab has two sons, and she is going to offer them for the martyrdom; Qasim is going to die instead of his father, Imam Hasan; Umme Lailah is preparing to send her son, Ali Akbar into the battle-field; even Rabab is going to sacrifice her infant son, Ali Asghar; but I have no children, and being a woman I am not permitted to fight. Men will remember all these brave ladies, and sing their praises, but I have no one whom I can offer on my behalf. What am I to do?" At this, Hazrat Abbas consoled her and said, "Do not be unhappy, my dear sister. Those who do not have children keep slaves. You have brought me up since childhood and you have loved me like a mother.

I am your slave and I am ready to sacrifice myself on your behalf."

So next morning Janab-e-Umme Kulsum took her brother Abbas and said to Imam Husain, "Let my brother fight for you on my behalf." From sunrise up to the afternoon that day, Hazrat Abbas followed the Imam all the time and as long as he lived he did not allow a single wound to be inflicted on the Imam. After Imam Hasan's son Qasim was killed, there was great weeping and wailing in the tents of the ladies and Hazrat Abbas's beloved niece Sakina was almost fainting with thirst. So Hazrat Abbas took a leather bottle and said, "I am going to try and get some water for you." He tied the bottle to the banner which he carried, for he was Imam Husain's standard bearer, and went towards the Euphrates canal. The armies tried to stop him but his prowess and courage proved too much for them. Hundreds of men ran helter skelter to save their lives, because no one could stop Abbas, the son of Ali. Alone and all by himself he was more powerful than a whole army. At last Hazrat Abbas reached the bank of the canal and plunged in with his horse and filled the leather bottle with water. He was thirsty too, but he did not like to drink any water, because he thought of his brother, Imam Husain and said to himself, "How can I drink water while my master is thirsty?" So Hazrat Abbas took the water and tried to return to the camp. But by this time the armies which had fled, came back and resumed their attacks. Again he started fighting them, but this time he had to protect the water bottle as well as himself and this was a difficult task. Someone aimed and shot an arrow at the leather bottle and the water started flowing out. This broke Abbas's heart. "What is the

use," thought he, "if I cannot take the water for the children?" At this moment someone struck a blow at his right arm and cut it off. Then he took the sword in his left hand and started fighting, but very soon his left arm was also cut off. Then someone struck a blow with a mace and wounded his forehead, and he staggered and fell from the horse.

The Imam was watching this battle, and when he saw the banner falling on the ground, he rushed to the rescue, but Abbas had been fatally wounded. So Hazrat Abbas died and was buried on the spot where he fell, near the Euphrates canal. His tomb stands near the bank of the canal to remind us all how he died in his effort to bring a little water for the Imam's children.

THE TENTH MAJLIS

9th Moharram

Two days had passed since the water of the canal was banned, and the Imam's camp presented a sorrowful sight. Children cried for water, but there was nothing with which they could quench their thirst, and the parched lips of the faithful uttered no sound except thanks to the Almighty. That day, Ibne Sa'd received further orders from the governor of Kufa, saying that they must start fighting against Imam Husain at once. So the army of Yazid took up its positions in the battlefield, but Imam Husain, anxious to avoid bloodshed, and hoping that tempers may cool down, sent his brother Hazrat Abbas and asked for a day's respite. The Imam asked Ibne Sa'd to postpone the battle until the next day, so that he and his followers may spend the last night of their earthly existence in praying and glorifying God.

Hazrat Abbas went to Ibne Sa'd and said "Imam Husain has asked me to tell you how devoted he is to the duty of glorifying God and would therefore like to spend the night in prayer along with his followers, will you, then, give him leave for a night?" Ibne Sa'd was unwilling to give leave, but one of his officers stood up and said. "O General, surely, there is no harm in granting this request. It is a convention among soldiers that even if the enemy is a kafir and asks for respite, the battle should be postponed for a day. How, then, can you refuse such a request from the Holy Prophet's grandson?"

At last, the battle was postponed, and the Imam and his friends spread their prayer mats on the ground and spent the whole night in praying and chanting the Quran. Meanwhile, the ladies also prayed in their tents that the battle may be averted, and they were prepared to part with their sons and brother if by doing so they could save Imam Husain's life.

That night Imam Husain was afraid that the enemies may attack his camp at a night. So he dug a trench around his camp and lit a fire in it to protect the camps from the attacks of riders. The heat of the fire made the camp-dwellers all the more thirsty.

At last, the day of Ashoora began to dawn, and the Imam said his morning prayers along with his followers. Meanwhile, Yazid's armies began to beat their drums and prepared for the battle.

Imam Husain rode forward and tried to make them understand what a great wrong they were going to do, but they turned a deaf ear to all his words and the battle began.

By the time of the afternoon prayer, all the followers and relatives of Imam Husain had been killed. the Imam stood alone and undaunted amidst thousands of foes. Qasim, Abbas and Ali Akbar were dead. There was not a soul to defend him, but he prepared to fight until the bitter end. At this moment he heard the sound of someone crying in his tent. He went there and found that his six months old baby, Ali Asghar had fainted from thirst. "The child will die in any case," thought Imam Husain, "so, why not ask Yazid's men to give him a few drops of water? Perhaps someone may take pity on this child and thus his life will be saved." So Imam Husain took Ali Asghar in his arms and stood before his enemies and said, "If you think that I deserve to die, at least you should take pity on this innocent child and give him a little water". At this, even the cruel soldiers of Yazid broke into tears, but the heartless and brutal Ibne Sa'd ordered Hurmula to shoot an arrow at the child. At once an arrow hissed through the air and struck the innocent infant, Ali Asghar on the neck, and the child died in his father's arms. Then Imam Husain took the little child and dug a little grave with his sword and buried him there, saying, "O God, the murder of this child is no less than the slaughter of the Prophet Saleh's camel-foal."

This is an allusion to chapter XCI of the Quran:—

Thamud called the apostle a liar in their outrage,
When rose up the worst wretch among them (with mischief),

"This is God's she-camel ! So give it to drink.

But they called him a liar and hamstrung her.

But their Lord destroyed them in their sins and served them all alike;
And He fears not the result thereof."

THE ELEVENTH MAJLIS

10th Moharram

This is the day on which Imam Husain, with his small band of faithful friends and relatives took his stand against thousands of soldiers of Yazid on the sandy plain of Kerbala. This is the day on which the Holy Prophet's rightful successor fought against those cruel armies who wanted to crush the spirit of Islam. This is the day when Husain, aided by only seventy-two chosen men shed his precious blood in order to awaken the spark of divine love in the hearts of men, women, and children for all time to come.

Imam Husain fought to uphold right against might. Yazid wanted him to bow down before himself, but Husain knew that if he did so, the world would be misled to believe that Yazid's character was an example of righteousness, whereas really Yazid was a gambler, drunkard and libertine and was the most cruel and wicked of men. Therefore Husain made up his mind that, whatever happened, he must not give any support to Yazid. It was Husain's duty to tell the world that Yazid was wrong, and Husain gave this message to us, not by words but by deeds so that whoever hears the story of Husain's heroic stand at Kerbala should clearly know what good men ought to do when their ideals are in danger.

One by one, the seventy-two followers of Imam Husain fought against the evil forces and met their death with a

smile on their bright faces. They included Husain's friends, boon companions, brothers, cousins, nephews and children. The enemies proved their own wickedness by showing no pity to any one of them—not even to the infant Ali Asghar who was only six months old. After Ali Asghar's death their was no further need to prove the wickedness of the enemies. Imam Husain then drew out his sword and attacked the soldiers of Yazid. He had the strength of faith in his arms and he fought desperately without any fear of death because he knew that death was more desirable to a righteous man than the bosom of the mother was to a child. Moreover, God was on his side and if he so wished God would destroy his enemies and save him from them. But Husain loved Islam more than his own life. By saving his own life he would not have been able to give us his message so forcefully as he did by suffering a most cruel death. If he had defeated Yazid in battle he would have become a good and just ruler, but the difference between right and might would not have been illustrated so clearly. If Husain had lived by escaping from the battlefield he would have led a great and noble life. But men would soon forget what were the issues upon which Husain had taken his stand against Yazid. For all these reasons it was necessary that Husain should die on that day. So having shown his power and bravery Husain himself stopped fighting and prepared to offer his sacrifice. It was the time for the 'Asr prayer and so the brave Imam turned his face towards the Qibla and began to remember God even though he knew that his murderers would get an easy chance to do their worst. At this time the fleeing armies came back and began to throw spears and arrows at him. At last, wounded by thousands of spears and arrows he fell down on the burning sand. But all this

while he continued to pray. His enemies knew that it was not right for one Muslim to kill another, and it was still a greater wrong to kill the beloved grandson of the Prophet, and above all it was the height of wickedness to kill such a man when he was saying his prayers. But the enemies had no moral sense at all, they worshipped gold and they had sold themselves to Yazid for his gold. So the brutal Shimr stepped forward and cut off the Imam's head with his dagger and thus Imam Husain fulfilled the promise which he had made to his grandfather in his early childhood that he would water the withering garden of Islam with the blood of his heart.

CONCLUSION

Centuries have passed and prodigious and momentous events have taken place in world's history during these long intervals. Nations after nations rose and fell. Mighty royalties, with all their temporal dignity and power, came into existence and then became extinct. Many a sceptre and crown thus tumbled down, passing into the region of complete oblivion. Many a black chapter of history chronicles disgusting and distressing wars and feuds, marring and barring man's real progress towards the higher ideal. And in the name of religion and State, rivers' of precious human blood was spilt. Man, considered the noblest of Allah's creations has not hesitated to commit the most heinous and heinous crimes, filling this earth, a charming paradise, with his oppression, descension, hatred, and what not? All kinds of outrageous deeds, exhibiting the beast in man in its worst aspect, have darkened those pages of history ! How many of his humble followers were forced to become prey to the

relentless and bloody sabre of oppression and tyranny ! How many such innocents were hanged or put to death, after subjecting them to prolonged and taxing tortures ! If a fresh enquiry is held into all such perpetrations of the past, every inch of the sky above shall bear witness to this effect, and every particle of the earth's surface shall appear to be weeping over the helplessness of human beings. All these have happened, and will keep on happening — manifestation of man's sheer helplessness on one side, and the exhibition of his heartlessness and ferocity on the other. This sort of conflict between might and right reached its typical climax at Kerbala. The heart-freezing tragedy that was enacted on the bank of the Euphrates is a long tale of blood without a precedence in world history.

It was in that barren desert of Kerbala, with the scorching and choking heat of the sun ! On one hand, all false forces of oppression, cruelty, and beastly tyranny were concentrated and personified in Yezid. While Husain and his small band of holy followers represented in the best form those virtues of love, self-sacrifice, fortitude, and complete submission to Divine Will. Blind vanity and base autocracy sternly demanded that Truth and Righteousness should stoop down to wicked material might and power. Tyranny, backed by sheer material power and resources, tried its utmost to strangle to death the Divine spirit and Virtues in man, trifling with religion and God, and setting at nought those high ethical principles. Unwarranted and self-imposed authority, with its might and wickedness, wanted to reign Supreme. Vice and wickedness, with its numerous adherents, wanted to overpower the small band of God's people who stood by virtue and righteousness

through thick and thin. It was a life and death struggle for Husain and his party. Only death and martyrdom could yield victory and lasting glory. There was no question of hesitation or yielding. Every head that was lifted in supporting Right, could find no way to bend before tyranny and oppression; it may be smashed or beheaded, and it was ever ready for that sort of bold sacrifice. That throat, through which a voice for freedom and true democracy was raised, was restless and anxious to quench its three days' thirst with its own holy blood, flowing from the sabre of undiluted oppression. And that hand, which raised the standard of Truth, on behalf of the oppressed and innocent, could never let it go into the unholy hands of the oppressor for an abject pledge of slavish obedience. It was nothing short of selling one's own soul and conscience to the devil. Many yielded to the irresistible temptation, but Husain and his people-never, never. The invincible and immortal spirit decidedly triumphed over the so-called might of materialism and rank atheism. Islam was placed thenceforth on an unshakable foundation. We can now very well understand with Husain's unique martyrdom was something unavoidable and inevitable, decreed by Divine Will. Eternal glory be to God's martyrs! The cry of "Ya Husain" has rung through the ages, and will undoubtedly ring till the end of time. Truly, "there is not a single event so awe-inspiring and unimaginable as the commemoration of Husain's martyrdom."

We always see the hearts of the world of Islam becoming dejected and melancholy during the first ten days of the month of Moharrum. And everywhere, in commemoration of the martyrdom of this faithful leader, millions shed tears in accompaniment to lamentations and

recitations of elegies, thus exhibiting universal condolence and displaying genuine sympathy towards the unequalled afflictions of the Hero of Kerbala. *But how many hearts are there, in fact, which having learnt again and again this saddest tale of horrors, feel moved to their very depths, and how many eyes are there, whose tears on such occasions have flown deep into innermost recesses of the mourners' hearts, cleanly washing all impurities? This is the real mourning, the deep purport and purpose of that grand martyrdom that we should be good Muslims.* The life of this world is but empty. What is serious, is the life hereafter. The teacher of God's Truth is not balked by frivolous objections or insults or persecution. The wicked will be cut off to the last remnant. God's wisdom pervades the whole of His Creation, and in His hand are the keys of the unseen, and the secrets of all that we see.

Are not right and wrong still at war with each other, despite, the boasted evolution of man towards a higher civilisation and culture? The beast and the devil in man are still pre-dominant, and there are any number of Yezids and Shimars. But the darkest cloud has its silver lining. God's good earth will always have a good share of his holy persons to guide mankind through the right path. One Husain was enough to illuminate the whole world, and he is still spreading light, life and culture everywhere. He resisted evil, wickedness, autocracy and rank irreligiosity with an iron will, sacrificed his sacred life, and the life of his noble companions including his six month old child.

SAYS THE HOLY QURAN

What is the life of this world
But play and amusement ?
But best is the Home
In the Hereafter, for those
Who are Righteous,
Will ye not understand ?

A grim reminder comes from Browne from the History of Persia; "A reminder of the blood-stained field of Kerbala, where the grandson of the Apostle of Allah fell at length, tortured by thirst and surrounded by the bodies of his murdered kinsmen, has been at any time since then sufficient to evoke, even in the most lukewarm and heedless, the deepest emotion, the most frantic grief and an exaltation of spirit before which pain, danger, and death shrink to unconsidered trifles. Yearly on the tenth day of Muharram, the tragedy is rehearsed in Persia, in India, in Turkey, wherever a Shia community or colony exists. As I write it all comes back; the wailing chant, the sobbing multitudes, the white raiment red with blood from self-inflicted wounds, the intoxication of grief and sympathy."

(BROWNE IN "HISTORY OF PERSIA")

SALUTATION

"Peace be upon thee, O Imam Husain, and upon the souls who laid down their lives for thee.
Unto thee, from me, be peace eternal, so long as I live, and so long as the days and nights of this world endure.

And I pray to God for sake of the glory that you enjoy
from Him,

That He may bestow upon me the best recompense that
He has bestowed upon the sufferers of sorrow,

For no sorrow and no calamity can be greater than
this in the world

O God, make me, as I stand in this, place, one of those
who receive Thy Blessings, Mercy and Forgiveness.

Peace be upon thee O Imam Husain and on thy com-
panions, and the Mercy of God and His Bounties."



ZIARAT (Salutation)

"Peace be upon thee O Imam Husain, and upon
the souls who laid down their lives for thee.

Unto thee, from me, be peace eternal, so long as
I live, and so long as the day and nights of
world endure.

And I pray to God for sake of the glory that you
enjoy from Him.

That He may bestow upon me the best recompense
that He has bestowed upon the sufferers of
sorrow.

For no sorrow and no calamity can be greater
than this in the world.

O God, make me, as I stand in this place, one of
those who receive Thy Blessings, Mercy and
Forgiveness.

Peace be upon thee O Imam Husain and on thy
companions, and the Mercy of God and His;
Bounties."



