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Sorrow and Sufferings

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

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Category:

- Imam al-Husayn and Karbala [4]

Topic Tags:

- Poem [5]
- martyrdom [6]
- Karbala [7]

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http://www.al-islam.org/gallery/kids/Books/sorrows/

Person Tags:

- Imam Husayn (a) [8]

(1) The Scene Prior To Islam

It was a desolate land: sandy, barren, and unfriendly
The home of the Arabs; wild ferocious and manly
They worshipped the idols; they loved to fight
Life to them was wine, women and might
The number of wives, the cattle they owned,
The number of slaves, one's house adorned,
Was a sign of rank in wealth and might;
It was a society, where Might was Right.
Two qualities they had, which were good

The guests they honored, with best of food
Poetry to them, was an art supremely sublime
They were literary geniuses of their time.
They killed female babes, they buried them alive
They married the widows, their father's wives
Vengeance was a passion, cruel the strife
These sons of desert, such was their life.
Morals they had none; wild was their lust
Women were cattle, treated like dust
Enjoyment of life was their sole goal
Woman, they believed, had no soul.
They had no belief in the life Hereafter
Life to them was all fun and laughter
Prophets had come and prophets had gone
Still, this land was of truth shorn.
Judaism was dead; Christianity was in name
Sickly and forlorn, the world remained
Vengeance, to them, was an article of faith
Blindly, they relished their creed of hate.
The priests were interpreters of heavenly laws
They commanded respect and were held in awe
Things that were unlawful, to them were allowed
A privileged class; they were haughty and proud.
In span of four thousand and odd years
Innumerable religions had been reared
With passage of time, they were polluted
Beyond recognition, each got diluted.
The true religions were only in name
It was virtually a devils reign
Truth was at a discount; honesty had fled
Virtue was scoffed at; goodness was dead.
This land was thus chosen for God's last message
It was the crossroad of international passage
The last of message was thus destined,
To stay forever and cover all mankind.

(2) Birth Of Islam

God chose the Hashemites, a tribe of Quraish
They were among men, the noblest of race
He raised among them, a self-literate boy
To deliver His message; to bring them joy.
Muhammad was his name, whom God had chose
Al-Amin (the truthful) called him his foes
The keeper of KAABA, was his grand sire
A rank than which, there was none higher.
Adam, Nooh, Ibrahim, Ismail, Moosa,
Daa-ood, Eesa and other Prophets of Allah
Testified that, from time immemorial, Muhammad Mustafa,
Had been proclaimed the seal of Prophets of Allah

He lost his sire, ere he was born
Five years later, his mother was gone
Abd-al-Motalib was his grand sire,
Two years later, he too expired.
The orphan boy was now his uncle's charge
Abu Talib was glad, this responsibility, to discharge
He looked after the boy as his own son
So long he lived, dared touch him none.
He was of a reserved bent of mind
With burning desire, solace he tried to find
In the marvels of nature and forms diverse
He tried to fathom the mysteries of universe.
At twenty-five, he married a noble widow;
Khadija had watched him by a cloud over-shadow
Though forty, she remained in her lifetime, his only wife
Twenty-five years long was their married life.
One daughter they had, named Lady Fatima
Through her were born guardians of KALIMA
She was married to Ali, Abu Talib's son
He was renowned in courage like a lion.
In the House of God was Ali born
It's walls the idols then adorned
They were a hapless witness to his birth
A man who would soon smash them to earth.
These gods of Arabs could find no way
Powerless were they, while Ali in cradle lay
This mortal foe of theirs, was something divine
His luster made their eyes turn blind.
On Muhammad, he first cast his eyes
He was destined with him all his ties
He sucked his tongue, in solemn gait
In one mould they were cast by fate.
Ali grew in the Prophet's care
His joys and sorrows, he shared
He imbibed qualities that are rare
With him, he made a heavenly pair.
Thus Imamat was born as adjunct to Nubuwat
Beyond scope of political intrigues and Satan
Twelve successors were named, by Divine Grace
To guide, for all times, the human race.

(3) Preachings And Initial Struggle

He preached Islam, as ordained by God
Pure and simple is the MESSAGE of Lord
"There is no God but God,
Muhammad is the Messenger of Lord!"
A most practical religion of selfless love is Islam
To develop body and soul, without causing anyone harm
Most rational and logical in concept

Viewed from every angle, even in depth.
Five fundamental principles he, steadfastly proclaimed
Ten holy commandments he, unambiguously, named
Monotheism, Divine Justice, Prophethood, Imamat
And the day of Resurrection, were the five pillars of Islam's Hut
Five times Namaz, one must pray
A month's fasting, during the day
Zakat, Khums, Pilgrimage, for them, he ordained,
Who fulfilled the conditions, he proclaimed.
Defend the honor of Islam and self, he commanded
Disassociate yourself from its enemies, he demanded
Pursuit of missionary activities, out of love and not hate
Love and loyalty, he sought, for his "Ahle-bait".
He taught them the 'Unity of God'
And the diverse attributes of the Lord
He was the giver of daily bread
On the Judgement Day, He would raise all dead.
God is the focal point of all life
Through Him flows peace, driving out strife
If man joyfully submits himself to Him,
This life, and hereafter, he would win.
God created human beings, out of His Grace
Best of creation was the human race
He endowed it with such guiding light,
To discern the wrong from the right.
A heavenly reward for the doer of good
And for those, who for truth stood
A blazing hell for the doer of evil
Who shall dwell with the king of the devils.
He cultivated the values of life
Equal partners were man and wife
A man was brother, one to another
Respect they should, their father and mother.
Those who look after the needy orphans,
The anger of God would be softened
Those who care for the uncared widows,
Can aspire for heaven's meadows.
And those who treat their slaves well,
Shall not normally taste the fire of hell
Those who free them from bondage,
Shall generally be immune from hell's rage.
Truth was the base of all his teachings
Unity of God, a constant theme of his preaching
Charity, love and faith were to him most sublime
Brotherhood, was his solution for the ills of mankind
His offer was not of sensual heaven,
As alleged by biased heathens
But a bliss of highest spiritual essence
Of enjoying the radiance of Divine presence.
Live in this world and yet be out of it
Self discipline; not celibacy is the holy writ

Physical body is, indeed, perishable but not the soul
Service before self should be life's goal.
He first invited his near if kin
And declared to them his mission
He asked whether he had ever told a lie
"No never"! In one voice, was their reply.
He invited them to the path of 'truth'
A path which in heaven had its roots
Blessed would they be, in this world and the next
Most fortunate possessors of the Divine text.
"Who, among you, will be my brother and heir
And with me God's mission share."
They exchanged glances; they ridiculed and scorned
Only Ali stood by him, alone and forlorn.
Thrice did he repeat his request
Each time only Ali rose to his behest
Holding him by his hand, he declared,
"Behold, he is my brother and heir!"
In public he now started to preach
But soon a stage was reached
When like a fugitive he was stoned
And place to place, forced to roam.
For years was thus his plight
Only Ali aided him in his fight
Far and few were the conversions
So fierce was the persecution.
In burning sand, with stones on his chest,
A new convert stood his gallant test;
"Ahadun! Ahadun!" (One God) Bilal cried,
But refused his faith to be decried.
Such were the tortures they had to face,
For believing in God and the new faith
Handful were they, old men, mostly slaves
With courage, all difficulties they braved.
A day soon came, when it was declared
That those who could, to Abysinia, should migrate
Few persons made up the small group
Ja'far, Ali's brother, commanded this troop.
The Quraish were furious; they sent their envoys
They requested the king to return the exiles
The king was just; he rejected their plea
He sheltered the poor Muslim refugees.
The wrath of Quraish reached the boiling point
To murder Muhammad, they planned conjoint
They chose a person, one from each tribe
So that no vengeance could take the Hashemites.
The plans to Muhammad, God soon revealed
And desired, that he should ward the evil
And leave for Medina, the same very night
Letting Ali sleep in his bed and aid his flight.
Soon was the house surrounded by those,

Armed cap-a-pie were each of the foes
With handful of dust, Muhammad blew his fist
And calmly walked through their midst.
They raided his house, ere it was morn
Surprised to see Ali, the bed adorn;
"Where is Muhammad?" they demanded, "where is he?"
"Did you entrust him to me, that you ask of me?"
Foiled in their attempt, they started a search
"Dead or alive, capture him", they urged
Thus started a hunt, for three days long
They searched all over, including caves.
The Prophet's companion became scared
As enemies' shouts increasingly filled the air
"We are lost, we two", helplessly, he cried
"No! We are three, for God is with us". Muhammad replied.
Tired and forlorn, he slept under a tree
When rushed a foe: " who will now save thee?"
"God", was the reply; it thunder struck the foe,
Trembling, he dropped his sword and bowed.
"Who will now save thee?" Muhammad cried
"Alas, none!" the foe imploringly replied
"Learn from me to be merciful" he said
As was his want, he pardoned him instead.
He reached Medina, a poor fugitive
Except a new way of life, he had nothing to give
Yet, he was welcomed with open arms
This was a turning point for Islam
He paired them, one with the other
And showed the brotherhood, how to further
Himself with Ali, he lovingly paired
Because the same heavenly light, they shared.

(4) The Origins Of Karbala's Tragedy

Life is an eternal conflict of truth and evil
God having granted power to the devil
To rule the hearts of those who love this world
And care not the banner of truth to unfurl.
The forces of darkness were perturbed
For soon their kingdom would be disturbed
At first, they ridiculed and scoffed
To their dismay, they found themselves dwarfed.
They fumed and fret; threatened and cajoled
They offered Muhammad a chief's role
They asked him to stop preaching Islam
Or else they would cause him bodily harm.
Abu Sufyan was their chief - a mortal foe
The grandson of Ommaya, the lowest of low
The progeny of Abd Shams, the brother of Hashim
They were steeped in enmity, which was ever lasting.

Envious were they, of the position of Hashim
Whom God had honored with things everlasting
Muhammad was thus their bitter foe
Whom they longed to see cast low.
Karun, Firaun, Namarood and Suddad
The four aces of arch-devil Iblis' cards
Were the brains behind the notorious Abu Sufyan
To destroy Islam and cause Muhammad harm.
Harut and Marut, the two fallen angels, were glad
The four Aces had mastered everything evil and bad
Abu Sufyan became their living agent
To them his services he joyfully lent.
They issued the call, they summoned aid
Each helper, they said, would be well paid
Thus started persecution of the new faith,
With all means that symbolized envy and hate.
They thought to themselves, the easiest way,
We are Muslims why not say?
Hit from within the Hashemites
That would throttle Islam, without a fight.
The decree of God none can stop
It flows like a river, with a drop to start
None can withhold its onward march
Be they friends or foes at large.
And so was the case with Islam's flow
Many became Muslims, just for show
Pagans at heart, they hid their line
To wreck vengeance, in course of time.
They behaved as friends; they cloaked their pretense
For Muslims in name, were they from hence
They spread their tentacles, in many homes
They tightened their grip over Islam's dome.
Ali, they knew, was the seedling's strength
To guard it, he would go to any length
He would with pleasure sacrifice his rights
Rather than see Islam hurt in a fight.
They knew, that Ali was just a lad
When his mission, the Prophet declared
He was among the first to profess Islam
And stand by the Prophet through storm and calm.
When others ridiculed and threatened
He stood, by him alone, and unfrightened
He declared him his brother and heir
Destined to serve and his mission share.
They had heard Muhammad at Khybar declare
"This Alam is for one whose qualities are rare
He is the beloved of Muhammad and his God
Ever victorious is he, in the cause of Lord."
They had had also heard the sermon at Ghadir-e-khum
It left, for doubt, hardly any room
Ali was Muhammad's heir, by God's decree

Assigned to keep Islam pure and free.
They had watched him even before
How Ali in stature grew more and more
He slept in Prophet's bed in the midst of strife
While hundreds lay in ambush, each with a knife.
The Prophet's end was drawing near
The dissension started, as he had feared
He ordered the dissenter's to go to war
But they guessed what the order was for.
Death of the Prophet was a grievous blow
Old enmities erupted like a volcano
Busy with the funeral were the Hashemites,
Unheedful of the maneuverings and internal strife.
Abu Bakr was declared Caliph in the interim
He soon nominated Omar, to succeed him
The Caliphate became, thereafter, Othman's turn
Before the mantle, despite opposition, on Ali dawned.
Ali, with his characteristic zeal, lost no time
He acted sternly, to save Islam from further decline
Firmly entrenched in power by now, the Ommayad's frowned
And dared the simple and straightforward Ali for a showdown.
The hero of Islam knew neither malice nor fear
Renowned warriors had fled before him from the rear
He defeated the crafty Moawiyah, time and again
But alas! Treachery and trickery ultimately gained.
The internal rot had spread too deep, alas!
Corruption and nepotism was practiced en-masse
Ali, had soon to pay with his dear and precious life
Engrossed in prayers, he was struck with a knife.
And so was the case with his eldest son,
Most generous of all men was Hassan
He was fond of recluse and quietude
He was the symbol of patience and fortitude.
The roots of seedling were still shallow
A little shake up would render the ground fallow
Muhammad's labor would thus be wasted
Before the world its fruit had tasted.
And thus the treaty with Moawiyah Hassan chose
Rather than fight him like an open foe
The time was not ripe for the showdown
A lot remained for preparing the ground.
This he knew would fall to Husayn's lot
To put his foot down and stop the rot
It would cost his life there was no doubt
But it had to be timed the tyranny to oust.

(5) Yazid's Demand For Allegiance

In the treaty which Hassan and Moawiyah signed
Moawiyah had himself agreed; it was underlined

The question of successor, would not be imposed
But be left to Muslims as they pleased to dispose.
No sooner was the said treaty signed
A campaign was re-started, Ali's name to malign
And to build up Yazid, against people's voice
As heir to the Caliphate, the best of choice.
With rise of Moawiyah, virtue was shamelessly replaced
The democratic rule of Islam, was likewise displaced
The oligarichal rule of heathen was triumphant
The attendant vice and immorality were rampant.
The wealth from his subjects, he pitilessly extracted
He lavished on the mercenaries, who were fully protected
They, in turn, helped to repress ruthlessly all murmuring
With fraud and treachery, were smashed all rumblings.
Before he died, Moawiyah summoned his aides
The oath of fealty to Yazid, he made them take
This was Yazid's solitary title to the Caliphate
It was assumed, as if it was his father's heritage.
Cruel and treacherous was he, as notorious as his father
He lacked pretence, to cloak the game of murder
His depraved nature knew absolutely no pity or justice
He was addicted to the vilest and grossest of vices.
His friends were outcasts of both sexes
He killed and tortured for pleasure and taxes
Such was the Caliph, Commander of the Faithful
A being, whose entire bearings, was most hateful.
Husayn was in Medina; a message was received
By the local governor, in an envelope sealed
Obtain his allegiance, was the strict command
Kill him on the spot, if he refuses the demand.
The governor was unnerved, he was perplexed
To kill Husayn in Medina was no easy t ask
He consulted Marwan; he summoned Husayn
Who well knew Yazid's dirty and nefarious game.
Husayn point blank refused to acknowledge
The title of tyrant; of falsehood and subterfuge
His character, he regarded with contempt and abhorrence
His vices he despised, no less than his arrogance.
He returned to his grandfather's earthly abode
He dreamt of the Prophet, in tearful voice he spoke
" O, son of mine, O thou art a part of me,
The enemies are bent to torment and slay thee."
Accompanied by Zainab he visited the tomb of his mother
What a heart rending scene it was; it caused a shudder!
It was Husayn's last farewell before the fateful journey
Guided by the unseen hand of - shall we say, Destiny
The fateful hour had arrived for the long awaited fight
Between forces of darkness and Angels of Light
Husayn knew that from childhood he had been reared
To perform this sacred mission, he knew absolutely no fear.
"For Mecca I leave, and then for a place beyond"

For a farewell pilgrimage, the plans were drawn
Hurried preparations were made for the journey
An unknown destination was on the itinerary.

(6) The Journey To Mecca

It was 26th of Rajab sixty-first of Hijri
The heat was unbearable, boiling point the degree
The caravan was ready with young and old
This was the day, the Prophet had foretold
"A day will soon came when my dearest Husayn
Will leave Medina, in indescribable grief and pain
To meet his fateful destiny, in a far off land
With his family and few friends, a tiny band"
With grief in the air, the atmosphere was surcharged
With heavy hearts the Medinites silently watched
Can it be true that their most beloved Husayn,
With his family and friends, would all be slain?"
They pleaded with him to drop the risky journey
He was priceless in all terms, including money
Or take with him their strong young men with arms
Who would ensure him against any possible harm
They also pleaded that Ali Akbar be left behind
So that, when memory of Prophet came to their mind
They could look to him, for he was his very image,
From head to foot, in looks, mannerism and gait.
Husayn was silent, how could he explain?
Islam was sinking! There were many to be blamed!
It was his martyr's cup, how could he reveal
The plan of God to erase the cancerous evil.
He apologized; to grant their wish he was not able
Such love, such feelings were indeed laudable!
He would, however, remember them in his prayer
His daughter, Sugar, he was leaving to their care.
Seriously ill, she cried her heart out
They were leaving her, she had no doubt
Destiny's hand was beckoning the Imam
Proceed he must, was God's command!
Towards holy Mecca the caravan slowly proceeded
A farewell journey: no explanation was needed
The guardian of truth was himself out to uproot
The weeds of untruth, with his devil destroying boots.
From Kufa they sent an urgent pathetic appeal
In the name of God, from the helpless people
"Truth is being trampled, we look to you
To oust this tyranny, come to our rescue."
"You, as our Imam, must heed our solemn call
And save Islam, from its impending downfall
There is no time to lose, we anxiously await
Please come at once and do not be late."

He knew that treachery is a satanic vile
And the Kufians in this were ahead by miles
Time and again, Ali they had shamelessly betrayed
Fickleness and shifting loyalty, was their trait.
They had addressed him as their Imam
He was, therefore, in painful duty bound
To heed their call, despite past experience
It was a supreme test for Imam's holy license.
Ordinary spiritual beings can easily foretell
The coming events, as well as, misfortune dispel
The fountainhead of spiritualism knew much more
The things, that were destined for him, in store.
He was so attuned to the will of Almighty God
His every act bore the stamp of the Merciful Lord
Destiny's plan had to be implicitly carried out
By none other than Husayn there was no doubt.
As his emissary, he sent his cousin, Muslim Ibn Aqil
To see things for himself; their pulse to feel;
He received a hearty welcome he wrote to Husayn
Little did he realize their vile, treacherous game.

(7) The Betrayal

Pin drop horrifying silence prevailed all round
The mosque of Kufa stood on hallowed ground
Treachery it had witnessed time and again
It was the mosque where Ali had been slain.
The town crier was reading the Governor's decree
"To associate with Muslim will not go free
He is an emissary of Prophet's grandson, Husayn
Who has refused allegiance to Yazid, with disdain."
When the prayer was over, Muslim looked back
The mosque was empty, earlier it was packed
He glanced at his host, Hani Ibn Urwah
No words were needed, only a breath choking, Ah!
The packed mosque had just witnessed jubilant scenes
So great was the rush to swear allegiance to Muslim
They had madly jostled and vied with each other
In honoring Muslim, as Husayn's cousin brother.
They exchanged glances, the picture was clear
For their own lives they had absolutely no fear
To inform Master Husayn was the sole prime need
Whom could they trust? No, none, indeed!
Hani rushed out, choked to the brim
He had in his house, two sons of Muslim
He whisked them out by the back door
For safety's sake, there was no other go.
Muhammad and Ibrahim, two innocent lads
Were anxiously awaiting return of their dad
They were now on the road; alone, all alone!

The cruel treacherous world was now their home.
Soon was Hani's house completely surrounded
The hopes he had nourished were soon grounded
He fought the armed troops of upstart Obeidullah
The odds were too heavy; he prayed to Allah!
He was soon overpowered and chained
There was now no hope which remained
His only thought was to inform post haste
To Husayn, of the events and breach of faith
After Hani's departure, he reflected a while
A train of thoughts flowed, mile after mile
Hani was sincere, there was no iota of doubt
But if in danger, whom could he for help shout.
He thought of his sons, the two young kids
In the house of Hani, he hoped they were hid
He prayed to God to spare him for a little while
So that, to Husayn, he could send the secret file.
It was night, he had no place to go
Tired and forlorn, his walk was slow
Curfew was imposed, no soul stirred out
The search was on in all possible hideouts.
He sat for a while and leaned against the door
The door of a house with an old muddy floor
An old lady came out to see who it was
"My son! Why do you not return to your house?"
"Do you not have a wife nor children?
Go and rest, in peace, in your own garden!"
A lump came to his throat: yet, he sadly smiled
"I come from the house of the Prophet," he replied.
The venerable old lady was in shocking pain
"My God! You are Muslim, the Emissary of Husayn,
How did I fail to recognize you, O, My Lord!
What reply will I give to my Most Merciful God?"
She hid him on the old wooden attic floor
Extinguished the lights and shut the door;
Her son soon returned from his usual rounds
He was in the army of the Yazidi hounds.
"Hani has been beheaded," he declared,
"The search is now on for Muslim and his lads."
The simple old lady was moved to tears
And confided to her son, her own gnawing fears.
The son was elated at the fortunate news
He pretended sorrow, as a deceitful ruse,
"I will soon be back with the two young lads"
And rushed to his Master, Obeidullah Ibn Ziad.
The sound of horses hoofs were approaching near
Muslim was in his prayers; he knew no fear
He immediately realized, he had been betrayed
His time was up; he would soon be dead!
The noble lady was aghast! How could she explain?
It was her son who had brought her everlasting shame

Muslim assured Taha that he was absolutely sure,
She was a lover of Husayn and his grandsire!
The lane was narrow, it had no width
Two horses abreast could hardly breath
It was an ideal ground for single combat
Like lion, Muslim ferociously fought.
To the enemy, it soon became abundantly plain
It was a futile and sure loosing game
From housetops, they hurled missiles and stones
Seriously wounded, M7uslim left his vantage position.
He desperately moved forward; they all fell back
So fierce was the charge, they all fled in a pack
To stop him, they thought of a clever ruse
They dug a trench and had it covered, as subterfuge.
He rushed on wielding his sword dexterously
He fell in the trench, as planned treacherously;
The retreating hounds soon swooped down
In no time, he was heavily chained and bound.
In the streets of Kufa, he was soon paraded
Those who had sworn him allegiance, were delighted
They were watching him with perfect equanimity
As if he was an utter stranger; what rascality!
"As per Arab custom, I shall fulfill it
Your last wish if you shall reveal it."
A glint of hope came to Muslim's eyes
Why not accept and make this final try?
Obeidullah, if you are true to your word,
Fulfill my last wish and inform my lord
To return to Medina, before it is late
As coming to Kufa, would be a sheer waste.
The crafty Obeidullah was absolutely flabbergasted
Spare the lives of my two sons, he could have suggested
He could not even imagine, how could a person
Think of his master, when doomed were his sons.
Muslim's last wish did not go in vain
Merciful God kindled the heart of one of them
He left Kufa post-haste to fulfill his mission
And informed Husayn of Muslim's martyrdom.
Husayn wept bitterly, as never before
Muslim's daughter realized her father was no more
One pair of earrings, he lovingly gave to her
And another to Sakina, his child most dear.
"Are you returning back?" the messenger inquired
"No! I am not," Husayn, very sadly replied
"As ordained, I am going to meet my destiny,
And so are my faithful friends, who are with me."

(8) The Gems

On Ashoor night, he called his friends

So pure and noble, each was a rare GEM
To induce them to leave, with their dear ones
For his sake, he declared, should suffer none.
With rolling tears and heads bent down
Their love for Husayn knew no bound
Their burning desire, their goal of life
Was to defend Husayn, in this strife.
"It is my life that Yazid desires
I permit you, one and all, to retire
The sufferings, you have so far faced,
Speaks volumes for your loyalty and faith!"
To avoid embarrassment, he put out the lights
For dark was the night, to aid their flight
When the lights were lit, after quite sometime
None had moved, even an inch, from the line.
"You are to us everything; how can we explain?
Without you, life is nothing!" they exclaimed
"Not merely we love, venerate, and adore, he put out the lights
For dark was the night, to aid their flight
When the lights were lit, after quite sometime
None had moved, even an inch, from the line.
"You are to us everything; how can we explain?
Without you, life is nothing!" they exclaimed
"Not merely we love, venerate, and adore you,
Each single act of yours kindles truth and love anew!"
Habib, Muslim, Buraire and Zuhair Ibn Kain
Expressed these sentiments, all in one strain
Such devotion, such ecstasy, the world had not seen
Even among companions of 'Hayder' nor of 'Al Amin'.
What brave souls were these followers of Husayn?
What unique attachments of theirs, he had gained?
From different walks of life they came
Their object was, absolutely, one and the same.
With what simplicity, the noble Jaun exclaimed
"O, my lord, I am a Negro slave" he maintained
"Let my blood mingle with the martyrs blood,
To prove that we too are of the same mud."
In the face of trials and tribulations,
He had only one solace and consolation;
A band of faithful and fearless human beings
The like of whom, the world had not seen.
Habib Ibn Mazahir, was a childhood devoted friend
He literally followed Husayn, wherever he went
He veneratingly kissed the ground, Husayn tread
He was loved by the Prophet and lovingly caressed.
He was in Kufa, when he heard of Husayn's plight
"For Karbala, I shall leave the very same night."
With encouragement from his wife, a noble lady
His faithful slave, kept for him all things ready.
Kufa, was agog with numerous rumors afloat
Treachery was afoot, for sacrificial goats

Such was the risk, with spies all round
Yet he ventured; such was the magnetic bond.
He reached Karbala on 9th of Muharram night
Husayn was distributing arms for the fight
He had kept aside, for him, one set of arms
"Habib, my dearest friend, is sure to come."
Wahab, was the son of a noble and virtuous lady
From Damascus, she was externed, when he was a baby
For praising Ali, she had incurred Moawiyah's wrath
Such was the fate, at that time, of all lovers of God.
Returning home, with his mother and wife,
He saw an army poised like a murderer's knife
A small group, mostly women, babes and old folks
Were the victims of these cruel merciless foes.
He soon learnt, Prophet's grandson, Husayn Ibn Ali
Surrounded by Yazid's hordes, were he and his family
He rushed to the side of Imam's small group
And begged of him, to let him join his troop.
When Husayn learnt Wahab had married only day before
He insisted on his leaving with his wife and mother
With unflinching resolve, imploringly he pleaded,
Till Husayn gave in and to his joining agreed.
Muslim Ibn Ausaja, had witnessed rights being trampled
Bent with age, his love for truth was undampened
Venerable companion of the Prophet, a most saintly soul
To fight for truth, was his life's sole object and goal.
Physically withered by age, being four score ten,
His anxiety to help was a heroic gesture to men
For he had witnessed on countless occasions
The undying love, which the Prophet bore for Husayn.
Buraire Hamadeni, was a warrior of repute
His name caused shivers in adversaries boots
He was itching to display his terrific might,
To Yazid's mercenaries, in single battle and fights.
Husayn calmed him down and explained
To fight them is not at all our aim
But to defend and die like a martyr
Was the supreme test of each fighter.
On the eve, prior to the day of fateful battle,
Buraire urged his friends to show their mettle
And guard the Imam against the enemy's surprise raids
For crafty was the enemy, unscrupulous, and debased.
Unbearable it was, the cry of thirsty children for water
Even savages watered their victims, before slaughter
Buraire, with his friends, fought their way to the river
Filled a bag and returned with the precious life giver.
With what dejection and dismay, he witnessed the sight
The thirsty children threw themselves in mad delight
The bag opened, under the weight of the terrible crush
And out poured the water, in a mighty and mad gush.
Moved to tears, the brave warrior's eyes welled up

No water was left, O, merciful heaven, not even a cup!
The thirst of the children remained unquenched
Though the earth, in water, was fully drenched.
Hur Ibn Yazid Riyahi, a strict disciplinarian
In the army of Yazid, he commanded a battalion
With thousand soldiers, he blocked Husayn's path
Not realizing, that it would lead to a blood bath.
Hoping that a peaceful solution would be found
He forced Husayn towards Karbala, as in duty bound
Little did he realize that his very men
Would dare spill the blood of Prophet's GEM.

(9) The Supreme Sacrifice

The sad day dawned, the heavens were aghast
Truth was at stake; the die had been cast
Never had they witnessed, so supreme a test
Between falsehood at its worst and truth at its best!
For three torturous days and three miserable nights
Husayn's small band, were in a waterless plight;
The babes, they licked, their mother's tongues,
Parched and thorny, they weepingly let it hung.
His faith in God was sublime, beyond any dream
His patience, spoke of complete surrender to Him
Even in his worst hour, from the material eye,
He was calm and unperturbed, not afraid to die!
Husayn was fully alive to things at stake
He well knew what would be his family's fate
He was aware that 'twas his martyr's cup
He showed absolutely no grief when his time was up.
He endeavored to make a last attempt
But the foes were all determined and bent
To spill his blood, they thought it an honor
Such is the fate of all the world's warners.
"Speak, O, you Kufi's, is this how
You invite your guests and treat them now?
You summoned our aid, you one and all
You, as our Imam, must heed our call."
"Truth is being trampled, we look to you,
To uphold the flame, come to our rescue
Treachery is, indeed, a satanic vile
But in this you are ahead by miles."
"I beg you ponder what you do
Verily, those that can see, are few
Three honorable offers, I have to make
For no blood should spill for my sake."
"If my life is what Yazid desires
Why should Muslims' blood, be the hire
To Yazid, I request, you do me lead
No share, you have, in this foul deed."

"Or let me, to Jihad, go and die
For this life, no fear have I
I will fight in the cause of God
Till death, descends from my Lord."
"If not, let me to Hejaz return
You will Muhammad's pleasure earn
For was he not my Grand Sire?
Verily, a shield against hell's fire!''
"Know for sure, that I am he
Whom God has granted Heaven's key
We live for the Lord and His pleasure
We seek not the world, nor it's treasure."
"The flame of truth, is what we hold
Let none of you, I pray, make bold
To subdue the flame not those that hold
Though your heart may yearn for gold."
The foes were silent, their mouths were shut
Only thirty of them felt genuine hurt
They demanded to know why Husayn's fair offer,
Could not be accepted and considered as proper.
In disgust, they left the enemy's rank
And joined the Imam's small faithful band
Too glad were they to fight for him,
Though chances of success, they knew were dim.
The rest were unmoved; their hearts were sealed
They danced and mocked, till their heads reeled
Husayn still felt it his duty, to make it plain,
To save his life, was not his object nor aim.
Omar Ibn Saad, discharged the first villain's arrow
Proud, that he had had started this battle of sorrow
And soon to his dismay, he found Ali's sons
To fight them, he learnt, was no laughter and fun.
They fought courageously like lions, one by one
Though outnumbered, they made them run
Till the archers took their inevitable toll
Claiming fifty, from Husayn's small fold.
Bent with grief, he surveyed the tragic scene
Tears welled up, his sorrowful eyes did glean
He made a plea, to the enemy's rank and file
Whether none sympathized with the Prophet's child.
Hur Ibn Yazid Riyahi felt this as a jolt
The words to him were, as from heaven, a bolt
He, with his slave and son, joined the Imam's band
And begged for forgiveness at his merciful hands.
Forgiven were they, unreservedly, one and all,
By the generous Husayn and his noble 'Aal'
They fought for him, till they were slain
Their lives they lost, but heaven gained.
Corpses flowed in regular stream of these brave soldiers
Husayn, and his friends, carried them on their shoulders
In the distant lands, they had no families to mourn them

The ladies of Husayn wept, as for a bother or son.
Wahab Ibn Abdulla Kalabi, was the last to go
The newly married warrior, his spirit was low
Time and again, he had sought for permission
"Not yet!" was Husayn's firm decision.
"First seek permission of your mother and wife
Their claim is far greater on your invaluable life
Exclaimed, the mother of Wahab, standing nearby
"I will deem it an honor, for my son to die!"
With tears in her eyes, his wife pleaded
"Do defend Husayn in his hour of need
Only one request I have, reluctantly, to make
The security of Husayn's family, may we partake."
Little did she know, what fate had in store
For ladies of Husayn, when he was no more
She never could imagine, that it was likely
The enemies would dare behave so dastardly.
History of mankind, numerous instances can cite,
Where brave persons have scaled great heights,
And endured hardships, out of love and affection,
Or died out of duty and self consuming devotion.
But never before, the world had ever witnessed,
Such deeds of selfless devotion and self abnegation
In this transitory world, though nothing endures,
The deeds of Husayn shine, with ever-increasing luster!
And now were left, those tied by blood
Who cared a nought, for this mould of mud
Eager were they to offer their worldly lives
In cause of God, so truth may, forever, thrive.
Abbas Ibn Ali, was the TRUTH'S standard bearer
Husayn to him, was a jewel, nay, even more dearer
He called him "Lord", though his foster brother
Such was the regard, they had, one for the other.
Ali Akbar, was his most beloved second son
More brave, more handsome, there was none.
Eighteen summers old, flower of youth,
An image of Prophet, from head to foot.
Qasim, was his brother Hassan's child
He was, like his father, by nature mild
His father had willed before he had died
A tawiz he prepared and, to his hand, he tied.
It only be read, was his wish dear
By Husayn, when his end was near
He remembered this will of his brother
Now that he would soon be murdered.
It was willed that Qasim should wed
Fatema Qubra, ere his blood was shed
Husayn's darling daughter was she
To wed her to Qasim, too glad was he.
A wedding with dowry as widowhood!
A feast without water and food!

A bridegroom with few hour to live!
A bride with only tears to give!
Such was the wedding in Karbala's field
Which Husayn, with his blood, would till
So that the plant of Islam may live anew
For sake of lovers of God, though very few.
Husayn wished that Ali Akbar, his dearest son,
Should be the first to go to the battleground
His devoted friends and followers were aghast
They refused to entertain such idea - first or last.
Now were left with Husayn, only the next of kin
Ali Akbar, bowed reverentially and stood before him
Husayn, looked at his face; was he daydreaming?
He has come to seek permission; the words were ringing!
He tried to say something, amidst the enemies' war-like cries
With considerable effort, he whispered, with downcast eyes
"Akbar, my beloved child, you wish me to see you slain
What I am experiencing, at this moment, I can hardly explain!"
"How can I grant you permission, Akbar, my son?
Knowing that none have returned, not even one!
The call of duty, however, makes me helpless
Ask you mother and aunt, who are restless."
His aunt, Zaynab and Umm Layla, his mother dear
Knew that it was now the turn of all those near
Who went first to the battlefield, and who went last,
Was a matter of time, which was running very fast.
Akbar, knew the affection his aunt, Zaynab had for him
Of the pangs of sorrow, she was, since morn experiencing
He looked at her face and that of his mother
They were speechless at the thought of his murder.
"Let it not be said of my respected father Husayn,
He spared me till his brothers and nephews were slain,
I implore you, by the love you bear for your brother,
Let me die first and quench my thirst, at Houz-e-Kawther."
"May God be with you, my son", Umm Layla said,
"With you, I shall loose all I have, my lad
What destiny has in store for me, I am fully aware
After you, for pleasure and pain, I shall not care."
Death was now beckoning Ali Akbar, "come, my son, come!"
Amidst war-like shouts of enemy, amidst battle drums
The cries of the ladies and children, were most woeful
To die in the prime of youth, even death was mournful!
Ali Akbar was now facing the enemy's forces
He was addressing them with such eloquence
The older ones were blinking their eyes in amazement
Has Prophet descended from heaven, his son to lament?
Omar Saad saw the magic spell, the words had cast
All would soon be lost, if he allowed this to last
He exhorted his men; he whipped their gold lust
"Emaciated is he by three days of hunger and thirst."
He met the hounds in battle, one by one

Was this Ali himself? Each battle he won.
The winds were whispering "La Fatha Illa Ali
La Saif Illa Zulfiqar" most solemnly.
Such was the skill and prowess in fighting
Heads rolled on with speed of lightening
None dared come forward from the enemy's rank
Cowards were they; their hearts had shrank.
Through wounds, though victorious, in single fights
The blood was gushing; thirsty was his plight
He had left his mother, in a dazed condition
Irresistible was the urge, to see his dear ones.
His father was anxiously watching his son's heroic deeds
His mother and aunt were behind, to attend to his needs
They watched his face; it reflected the progress of fight
If any calamity befell Ali Akbar, dim would grow the light.
"O, Allah, who brought back Ismail to Hajra!
O, Allah, who listened to the mother of Moosa!
O, Allah, who reunited Yakub with Yusuf, his son!
Grant us our wish, to see Ali Akbar, for once."
Was it the effect of these prayers, of his mother and aunt
That brought Ali Akbar back to his father's tent?
With an exclamation of joy and relief they clung to him
"Bravo, my son! Such a fight the world has not seen!"
"Father, the thirst is killing me; Ah, these wounds!
For victories in combat, it is usual to ask a boon
A refreshing cup of water, is all that I ask and need
But alas! I know not even a drop, you can feed."
Ali Akbar, met his family including mother and father
The second parting was equally sad, perhaps even sadder
Fizza, the faithful maid, was disconsolate with grief
And so were Zaynab and Umm Layla, to be very brief.
As he rode away, Husayn walked for some distance behind him
Was it his sacrificial lamb? O, what a heart rending scene!
When Akbar disappeared from his sight, he turned heaven-wards
"O, Allah, be thou witness, your plans, I have not disturbed."
"O, Allah, Thou art, my witness, on this mournful day
One, whom I loved, and cherished most, I have sent away
To defend the cause of righteousness and truth
And to fight the forces of the devil and his brutes."
He sat on the ground; he looked all round in vain
He received a wailing call, a call of anguish and pain
Though Husayn, and his people, were expecting such a call
A ghastly effect, it had on all of them, one and all.
"Father, Akbar, is with a mortal wound, in his chest
Father do come to me, please hurry, and try your best
If you are unable to reach me, your dear son,
I convey my salutations, to you and my dear ones."
He rose from the ground and fell; he rose again and fell again
He struggled to his feet; his heart was in terrifying pain
Torrential tears were flooding his eyes; it was awesome!
He rushed hither and thither; from where had the cry come?

He was sobbing; uncontrollable and tragic was his condition
"Akbar, give me a shout, so that I can follow its direction
Akbar, my sight is gone; Akbar I van hardly hear your cry
Is there nobody in this world to guide me, to where you lie?"
To the side of his master, Abbas soon came rushing
Holding his hand, he led him to where Akbar was lying
Ah, the tragic sight! Akbar, lying in a pool of his own blood
Blood, blood, blood all around; the blood itself was in flood!
Writhing in unbearable pain and digging his feet in sand
His breathing was now heavier; on his heart was his hand
A gurgling sound was coming, from his parched throat
An uneven struggle with death, a fast sinking boat!
And so passed away the brave one, the angelic soul
With a smile on his face, he reached his heavenly goal
Leaving Husayn back-broken and utterly inconsolable
God was a witness; the sacrifice was without parallel!
The days of our youth, are the days of our treasure
To some, life is doled out in a different measure
Surging, in young hearts, are the hopes and feelings
With every nerve and sinews, quivering with joy of living.
Some budding flowers are swept away, by the winds of doom
Before they have an opportunity to blossom and bloom
Such was the destiny of Husayn's three beloved nephews
Such rare Gems, they were limited, and sparingly a few.
Three innocent lads, barely in their teens
Husayn's nephews - Aun, Muhammad and Qasim
Were closeted together to discuss their role
For that fateful day, clear was their goal!
To seek Husayn's permission, was their main task
What should they say? How should they ask?
Seriously they discussed for quite some time
To die as martyrs, was in their family line.
How commendable was the behavior of these three young ones
There was no sign of childishness or immaturity; no, none!
They were neither nervous nor, in any way scared
The chances of survival was nil, they were fully aware.
Qasim, abruptly left; he entered the tent
Umm Farwa, his mother, her head was bent
Engrossed in her thoughts - Hassan's widow
Was thinking of her son and the morrow.
"Do you know, why I called you, Qasim, my son?
To remind you of your duty to your uncle Husayn
Hassan and Husayn, were so much devoted to each other,
More than what children are to their father and mother.
He wanted you to deputize for him, on this day
It was your father's wish that, come what may,
You should stand by Husayn, through unflinching devotion
To defend Husayn, should be your life's sacred mission."
A load was of his head; how thoughtful of his father
To have provided for this situation, and one still harder
A letter for Husayn, containing his dying desire

"Qasim, shall deputize for me, since I have from the world retired."
"My children! Do you know what tomorrow has in store?
Zaynab's near and dear ones will be no more.
All the vendetta nurtured, all these years,
Will rise like snakes; strike them down without fear!"
"I want both of you, my dear beloved sons
To defend uncle Husayn and his priceless children"
How relieved they felt, and what a pleasant surprise
The hurdle was over; they had hardly surmised.
After a pause she added, "when I was leaving Mecca,
It was the wish of your father, Abdulla
You my son, Aun, should deputize for him
] And you my child, Muhammad, be my offering."
With folded hands, Zaynab addressed her brother
"In my whole life, have I asked for a favor?
For the first time, grant me, my one wish,
Let my sons follow Ali Akbar, to the abode of bliss."
"Go forward my children and fulfill your desire
Die like heroes and from physical world retire
I shall soon join you on your journey to eternity
Convey my salutations to the Heaven's fraternity."
My humble tributes to your dear ones, O, Zaynab!
The two darling youngsters marched like lion cubs
Brave was their bearing, brave the stance,
Tiny little swords, soon clashed with enemy's lance.
The dust lifted itself to give a clearer view
Enemy soldiers were battling with Husayn's nephews
"Bravo! My sons," was it the voice of Ja'far-e-Tayyar?
Watching from the heavens, was the famed winged warrior!
And why not? It was Muhammad his grandchild
It was a heroic fight, with numerous corpses piled
Some distance away, was his younger brother, Aun
Fortunate were they, to whom such sons were born.
Against heavy odds, as was obviously expected
Both fell heroically fighting; so it was fated
What a heart rending scene it was, O Merciful God!
Only the brave heart of Zaynab could endure the dart.
As was the practice, they started beating the battle drums
The butchery of two innocent lads, to them it was fun
The usual cry, challenging the young defenders of faith
To come out in the battlefield, to face their fate.
Qasim, rushed with letter to his uncle dear
There was a crowd round him, how could he go near?
The corpses of Aun and Muhammad, had just been brought in
Such wailing and weeping, he had neither heard, nor seen.
Clad in his father's clothes, he looked his very image
Aided by his mother, he pushed forward, taking courage
With letter in hand, he respectfully presented himself
The weeping Husayn looked up; had Hassan come to help?
He read the letter of his beloved brother
He wept bitterly; he could read no further

His last desire, how could he not honor
When his love had permeated, every nook and corner.
Qasim fought bravely, though a youth of fourteen
He hurled the enemy one by one; what a wonderful scene!
Swords, spears, daggers and arrows, flew from all sides
Wounded from head to foot, he did not run or hide.
Falling from the saddle, he gave a gallant valiant cry
Crushed under horses' hoofs, scattered the pieces lie
Husayn, the immortal Husayn, collected the mortal remains
It was his dear Hassan's offerings, in the cause of Islam.
One against thousands - can it be called a fight?
Killing an innocent lad, it caused them delight
They thought they were doing something great
It was a spillage of their past game of hate.
Smeared with blood, on the shifting sand dunes of Karbala
Lay a figure of youth, on the banks of Alkoma
The crimson life tide was ebbing fast, very fast
He was anxiously awaiting somebody, ere he breathed his last.
Through his parched throat, he was feebly calling somebody
His master had heeded the call, since morn, of everybody
To rush to the side of his dying friends, was his image
Despite thousand shocks, and famished body, he had not budged.
Who is this man, with indomitable courage, one may ask?
He is the standard bearer of forces, that are no more, alas!
A pillar of strength, the full moon of the Hashemites,
A beautiful specimen of manliness; a glorious sight!
Before a man's death, all past events fly in a flashback
Abbas, was seeing them, lying on the burning sand tracts
How, as a child, he followed his Master, Husayn
To attend to his every need; to see that none caused him pain.
He was in reverie, for quite sometime,
Scene after scene, passed the memory's mind
He suddenly remembered, Sakina, with forty-two other kids
Had urged him for water, to meet their barest needs.
How like an enraged lion, he had charged at the enemies' ranks
Like a knife piercing butter, he had reached the riverbank
He had filled the bag of water, without tasting a single drop
His horse also refrained, though it was not at all stopped.
One thought was in his mind; how to reach water,
For his dear little Sakina, Husayn's youngest daughter
Both his hands were cut, while on his way back
Pierced with arrows, empty was the leather bag.
He tossed on the burning sand; unbearable was the pain
Life was ebbing fast out; his wish to see his master remained
"O, my master! I beseech you, do come before I die"
One eye was pierced with an arrow; blood was in the other eye.
At last, he heard Husayn's voice, a half sob, a muffled cry
"Abbas, my brother, what have they done to you!" he cried
Uncontrollable was his grief, "You have come, at last, my Master!"
He was sobbing; his breath was now much faster.
Husayn lifted his head; Abbas put it back on the sand

"My Master! When your life will be wrung by cruel hands
Nobody will be there, in this world, to comfort thee
Let my head remain, in the same position, as yours would be!"
"My Master, I have some last wishes to express"
Completely drenched in blood was his dress
"When I was born, I had a first look at your face
When I die, on your face, I want to fix my gaze."
"Please clear the blood from my one eye
Let me fulfill my last wish, before I die
Do not carry my body to the KHAIMAGA
I had promised to bring water for SAKINA."
"Since I have failed, I cannot face her, even in death
Nor bring Sakina here, to see her uncle's miserable fate"
The flow of Furrat became turbulent and dark as winter
A murmur arose, at the cruel and unwarranted slaughter.
"Abbas, I too have a wish to be fulfilled
You know well, I too have not much time to live
Since childhood, you have always called me Master
For once, with your dying breath, call me Brother."
The blood was cleared; the pierced arrow removed
One brother looked long at another, along lingering look
Abbas was heard to whisper, "My brother, my brother!"
With these words, he surrendered, his soul to his CREATOR.
Though ten months old, he looked barely six
Famished and thirsty, his stare was fixed
Taking out his parched tongue, he turned it on his lips
Small were it's wants; a little water to sip!
Ali Asghar uttered a heart rending moan; a tragic sight!
It tore asunder, the hapless mother's sinking plight
"Sire, dying of thirst, is my small innocent child
Do something to save him, Umm Rabab frantically cried."
To Yazid's force, he carried Ali Asghar in his arms
Wrapped under his robes, they thought it was holy Quran
A little water for the child, he appealed, again and again
They threw arrows instead, to their everlasting shame.
What cruel men were these heartless brutes?
An innocent child, what harm could it do?
An arrow pierced its parched and thirsty throat
Providing water is a must, even while killing a goat!
Anxious was the mother, for the return of the child
Husayn's face was dripping with blood; a gruesome sight!
Her heart sank; shattered were her hopes, forever
The picture was clear; Ali Asghar was no more!
Alone, all alone, with none to befriend him
It was all clear; it needed no special vision
The time was up for the long awaited supreme test
Husayn was not found wanting; he was at his best.
How can a man, in midst of such calamities and disastrous times
Retain his faith in God, and maintain the balance of his mind,
It's difficult to imagine nor can be explained
Subject to such supreme test himself was Husayn.

The challenges of the enemy were growing in tempo
The sun was now declining, there was no time to go
Few words of advice, he gave most lovingly to each
A touching farewell, a most cherished deed!
The farewell between Husayn and Zaynab
Was as sorrowful as between a mother and cub
Parting with Sakina, was no less difficult
It was a heart-rending episode, poignantly built!
Standing near Husayn, looking at his face
His darling child was speechless and dazed
All his courage could not steel his heart
To tell Sakina, he was leaving her, alas!
Leaving her to the world, unkind to her
To fate, with only sufferings in store
He kissed her cheeks, wet with tears
To be slapped for mourning her father dear.
Putting Sakina down, he hurried to the tent
Ali Zainal Abedeen was lying full bent
He was unconscious, his twenty-five years old son
Chosen to live with death, he was the one.
"My appointed hour is near; wake up, Zainal Abedeen!"
Aroused from stupor, he was shocked, beyond dream
Husayn's transformation was beyond any description
Gaping wounds, snow-white hair, bent back; ah these fiends!
"O, God! What have the enemies done to my father?
Where is uncle Abbas, my brother, Ali Akbar
And my cousins, Qasim, Aun and Muhammad?"
He inquired; unaware, that they were all dead.
Husayn explained to him all things he knew
It was now his turn, he had come to bid adieu
"Father, so long, I live, you cannot go and die
Let me go instead; let me hold the banner high."
Husayn gently put him down; he could not even sit
Burning with fever, he was famished and seriously sick
"You shall remain in bed, my beloved ailing son
As you father, and spiritual head, I command."
"This is the beginning, not the end, of your terrible woes
Undescribeable trials and tribulations, you shall undergo
Destiny has singled you out, my son, to demonstrate
Faith, in the trial hour, is the real crusade!"
"Accompany your mother and other ladies in captivity
Bound in chain, suffer insults and indignities
Through Kufa and Damascus, you will be soon paraded
In the court of the tyrant, you will be humiliated."
"Your sufferings will be far worse than death
Death is a reliever of things, destined by fate."
He clasped his son, in a loving lingering last embrace
Unbearable grief, Zainal Abedeen was unable to face.
He fell unconscious; the agony he was spared
Of seeing the departure of his father aged
How merciful is God; no, none can dispute it

Through trials and tribulations, virtues he highlights!
Husayn spurred his horse, Zuljanah, to move on
Glued to the spot, it did not budge nor respond
Famished, hungry, wounded, it was no doubt
It's behavior was inexplicable; it could not shout.
It bent its head towards the burning ground
Sakina was clinging to its hoofs, Husayn soon found
"Do not take my Dad to the battlefield!"
She was imploring the aged faithful steed.
Exhausted, her moaning was hardly audible
Her condition was extremely sad and pitiable
Husayn jumped down; both clung to each other
Choked with sobs, they cried their hearts together
To sleep on his chest, was her last desire
Before he departed to face the enemies' fire
His chest, was her nest since birth
What was now left, save this little comfort?
She clung to him, as she had never done before
"No, father, to the battle field, I will not let you go!"
With supreme effort, Husayn controlled his feelings
Shocked, she was beyond imagination, by gruesome killings.
He consoled his child, as best as he could
What was at stake, she soon understood
He promised her, he would pray to God,
To join her soon in the heavenly ward.
So eloquent was his speech; they remembered Ali
Greed was overpowering; their minds were sullied
Their task was nearing completion; they were elated
Extravagant rewards, for annihilation, they were bated.
He earnestly implored them, again and again
To save themselves from ever-lasting shame
And not be partners in Yazid's foul game
As posterity would condemn their names,
Now that his job was more than done
He called to witness, all and one
Lest on Judgement day, they should plead
Their blindness to the foul deed.
Omar Saad was perturbed; he tried to act tough
"Husayn, in your condition, my weakest soldier is enough.
Accept the one and only condition, we have imposed;
Accept Yazid's competence, religious matters to dispose."
The taunting words aroused Husayn's wrath
The Hashemite blood was raging and boiling hot
He was the son of Ali, the Lion of the Almighty God
Fierce was his ire; the devils were aghast.
"Omar Saad, I accept your challenge," you knave
"In single combat, I will fight your bravest of brave."
Shaken by Husayn's words, none dared come forward
Courage they had none; they were all cowards.
He faced the foes, they were all scared
To meet him in single combat, not one dared

They attacked enmasse, the cowardly ones
Little they realized, it was Ali's son.
The archers fired a volley of deadly arrows
Swords, scimitars and daggers, flew like sparrows
Sword in hand, he cut through each flank
Utter confusion prevailed in enemies' ranks.
Swift was his movement; well trained his charger
With incredible speed, he did them scatter
The hounds retreated; they licked their wounds
Their boastful shouts, whimpered without a sound!
The road to the rivulet was now clear
There lay the corpse of his dear brother
"Abbas, did you see your brother's last fight?
Why don't you say bravo, to me, heavenly light!"
Husayn looked at the sky, the sun was declining
It was time for prayers, the world was reclining
Availing of the respite, he sheathed his sword
Though he knew full well, he could ill afford.
Their fiendish minds could hardly understand
To think of prayers, how could any man,
In such circumstances, even think, or dream
The like of Husayn, they had not seen!
After hurried consultations, from a safe distance
The archers fired arrows, from all sides, all at once
Accompanied by stones, missiles and burning coal
To kill him somehow, clear was the goal.
Wounded all over, the missiles kept on showering
With blood oozing fast, dizziness was overpowering
His mission was complete; the fight was over!
To hide from Zaynab, he looked around for cover.
"Zuljanah, take me far away to a low lying ground
My family should not see my head being cut", by hounds
Such was the understanding of his master's wishes
It immediately bolted to a place free of crisis.
Realizing his master was unable to dismount
It knelt and slid him gently to the ground
From a small hillock, Zaynab watched her brother
Seeing him unconscious, she darted like a mother.
In his sub-conscious mind, he saw the Prophets of Yore
Wailing and whining for him were those, who were no more
The Prophet was in tears, Fatima was disconsolate
Ali and Hassan, were helplessly watching his fate.
On his burning forehead, he felt something cool
Was it the hand of his mother or the blood pool?
His senses revived; he opened his blood-red eyes
Zuljanah was shielding him, the sun was high.
He remembered, why he has stopped his fight
To offer prayers, despite his vulnerable plight
With prostrated head, he addressed his CREATOR
The world had not witnessed such a WORSHIPPER.
"Thou art my witness, O, my most beloved God,

I have fulfilled my mission, without hesitation, my Lord;
Without squirming, faltering, complaining, O' God,
To Thy decree, and Thy dispensation, I submit, O' Lord!"
While Husayn was still in prayer, Omar Saad pondered
"Cut off his head," he thought to himself and soon ordered
Willing to wound, but mortally afraid to strike
None could master the courage, so great was the fright.
He himself went forth, by his side was Shimr
Husayn was lying prostrate, his head in prayer
His lips were moving; can it be he was cursing?
They bent over to hear what he was saying.
"I beseech Thee, with all humility, O' Allah!
Forgive, the erring ones, of their trespasses
Thou art, the most BENIFICIENT, the most FORGIVING!"
Can there be a being, more compassionate, more loving?
The prayers were almost concluded, they were afraid
He was Ali's son, none could dare under-estimate
Shimr jumped on his back, with sword in one hand
Too weak with loss of blood. Only his head he turned.
"O, Shimr, give me water, I am thirsty
Then accomplish your task." However dirty
Zaynab rushed out, she was on the scene
"Save my brother!' she imploringly screamed.
She appealed to Omar Saad, again and again
To give little water, to save the life of Husayn
He contemptuously turned his face, in utter disdain
O' you fiend! O' you slur on Islam's name!
Her humiliation was watched by Husayn
He was in greatest of agony and pain
"For the sake of love, you bear for me
Please return to the camp immediately."
She rushed back to her nephew, Ali Zainal Abedeen
Shaking him from stupor, she narrated the scene
In the dusty panorama, they soon saw a spear
Husayn's head was on it, without malice, without fear!

(10) The Loot

Eerie silence hung over the battleground
Broken occasionally by drum beating sounds
The carnage, the massacre, of saintly souls
Caused a shudder, in Islam's true believers' fold.
The massacre being over, they raided they tents
To loot and destroy, they were all fiendishly bent
Helpless ladies and children, they mercilessly pashed
Young innocent babes, to the ground they dashed.
Daughters of the Prophet, simple lives had led
Coarse and patched clothes, were all they had
Woven by Fatima, they were immensely treasured
In terms of money, none could be measured.

They were shamelessly looted of even their veils
The Yazidi hordes outclassed, themselves, the devils
Earrings were snatched of the child of Husayn
She was slapped mercilessly, for crying in pain.
In stupor, lay the only surviving adult male
Ali Zainal Abedeen was flogged as in horror tales
After the looting, the tents were set on fire enmasse
Hell was let loose, with a vengeance, quick and fast.
Zaynab was perplexed, she was lost
Perish in flames or face still worst
This hour of trial, whom to consult
Her nephew was unconscious, lying in dust.
"Ali Zainal Abedeen, I appeal to you
As our Imam, tell us what are we to do?"
He opened his eyes, burning with fever
With utmost effort, advise he delivered.
"To save our lives is a religious duty
Go in the open and seek security."
Ladies and children, they left the tent
Salvaging what they could, as they went.
The loot, the pandemonium, was soon over
Burning embers of fire only hovered
A partially burnt tent was all that remained
A solitary witness of torture and blood stain.
The Ahl Bait cuddled together therein
Shattered in mind and body, beyond dream
The time had come almost to a standstill
The night was in sorrow; one could feel.
The mourning widows of Husayn's friends
Their anguished hearts, who could mend?
Zaynab and Kulthum consulted each other
The orphaned children, they had to mother.
Zaynab counted the children; one was missing
To her dismay, it was Sakina, her darling
"Tell me Sakina, where are you my child?"
In wilderness, the echo was the only reply.
Frustrated, she ran towards the battlefield
"Sakina is lost, your darling child
Husayn, where shall I look for her?"
She imploringly sobbed, in utter despair.
The silvery moon, behind the clouds was hid
The clouds dispersed, the ground was lit
Lying with her head on Husayn's chest
Little Sakina was sleeping in her usual nest.
"Sakina, my child, I have come here
After searching the desert, my dear
Your father's beheaded body, how could you find
In this dark night, with your frightened mind?"
"An irresistible urge seized me, though dampened
To tell my father all that had happened
How they snatched my earrings, after his death

The slaps I received, the treatment we met."
"Running aimlessly in the desert I cried
Tell me dearest father, where do you lie
Sakina, my darling Sakina, come here, come here!
I heard him calling and found my father dear."
"I narrated to him, all I had endured
It lightened my heart: I was re-assured
An urge to sleep on his chest, for the last time
I placed my head in the nest of mine."
With Sakina, Zaynab hurried to the camp
Again it was dark; there was no lamp
All were anxiously waiting in the ghostly night
Praying silently to God, the Eternal Light.
She placed Sakina in her mother's arms
She had several other duties to perform
No, not to protect any worldly treasure
The children had suffered, beyond measure.
Advancing towards them, she saw a group
"There is nothing left, which you can loot
Pray, do not disturb the children in sorrow
If you want something, come in the morrow!"
"We do not want anything from you
We know, what you have said is true
We have brought some water and food
We know, you are in a sorrowful mood."
Zaynab was surprised; so polite was the speaker
It was the widow of Hur, the truth seeker
"Soldiers of Omar Saad have deputed me
To carry food and water for thee."
"Lest you perish, due to hunger and thirst,
Before Yazid, they want to take you first
That is why they have sent water and food
Not because they have suddenly turned good."
"O, sister, we are indebted to your husband
For his precious life, in defending Husayn
He was our guest, but at a time, alas!
We had not even water; no, not a glass!"
"My lady, I am grieved, you lost not one
But eighteen members to death, were done."
They offered condolences to each other
Zaynab was large hearted like her mother.
"At last there is water for you
Wake up, Sakina, see it is true
Wet your throat, sobbing will stop."
For days, she had not even a drop.
"Let Ali Asghar drink first, he is the youngest
My dear brother died of sheer maddening thirst
Now that water is available, give him first
Before I can taste it and quench my thirst."
Guarding her folks, with a half burnt pole
Alone, all alone, with no waking soul

Due to exhaustion, Zaynab fell in a swoon
O' Merciful God, it was, indeed, a boon!
One person came galloping in her dream
"O' Shaikh, please go back" she screamed
"I am daughter of Hazrat Ali and Fatima
We are guardians of the holy 'Kalima '!
The person lifted the veil from his face
It was her father Ali himself, by Divine Grace
She poured out her mutilated and bleeding heart to him
The outpourings caused convulsions, ending the dream.
Lying on the desert sand, clothes wet with tears
The dawn was breaking, time of prayer was near
Events of previous day, she recalled with pain
Ali Akbar had given Azan; prayers led by Husayn.
Finishing her prayer, she laid her head
Prostrate before God of the living and dead
To give her courage, to carry on the mission
Which, to the world, would be an everlasting lesson.

(11) The Journey To Kufa

The sun rose, crimson-red was its color
Downcast with shame, the world looked duller
Ladies and children, huddled with shambled remains
The victors rejoiced, without compunction or shame.
Vying with one another, to torture and torment
They took delight, in causing them lament
Marching them, by the bodies of their dear ones
Before being taken to Kufa, in a caravan.
Without any saddles, on camels' bare-backs
The ladies were put in a sheep like pack
Bound hand and foot, with ropes and chains
Children's necks were tied with their hands.
Burning with fever and heavily chained
Zainal Abedeen was marched, though in pain
The heads of the martyrs, carried on spears
Headed the procession of Muhammad's dears.
Kufa was reached in a few hectic hours
Shimr and Khooli gloated, over and over
To the governor was sent a courier
The caravan stopped at a barrier.
Zaynab and Kulthum had resided for four years
In Kufa as daughters of Islam's ruler
Now, they were captives of those Muslims,
Who were steeped in vices and sins.
The grand daughters of the Prophet of Islam
Were too noble, to cause anyone least harm
Helpless victims of those followers of Muhammad;
The lofty principles of Islam were thrown in mud.
O' Kufa, recall the days of glory of Zaynab!

The honored daughter of the noblest of Arabs
For four years, Kufians vied with each other
Every wish of theirs to fulfill like a mother.
The same Kufa now wore a festive look
People gathered in every corner and nook
To watch the grand daughters of Muhammad
People of Kufa were now thirsty for their blood.
Heading the caravan, the town crier was crying aloud
The prisoners are Zaynab and Kulthum, beyond doubt
Husayn and his followers have all been slain,
By Yazid's might and power, on Karbala's plain.
All who question Yazid, such is their fate
Beware, lest you be subjected to such hate
If you obey Yazid, without any question
Rewards will be plenty and pleasingly handsome.
When the identity was revealed, some were sad
Ladies and children of the house of Muhammad;
Could they be captives and his grand-son murdered?
None, however, dared protest; they merely shuddered.
It was noon, the sun increasingly blazing
Continuous pleading for water, Zaynab was facing
It was futile, to ask the brutes for water
Zaynab was explaining to Husayn's daughter.
A lady in balcony, saw the plight of Sakina
Rushing down with water, she was in a dilemma
She went to Sakina, breaking the police cordon
A tumbler of cool water; O' merciful heaven!
Was it Umm Ayman? Zaynab was not sure
Two decades had passed, since the days of yore
"I am thankful for your noble gesture,
May God, on you, His blessings shower."
She was astonished and completely dazed
Zaynab brushed aside the hair, from her face
The same Zaynab, whom she adored and venerated,
Was now a picture of woe, a victim of fate.
Kissing Zaynab's feet, out of reverence
Umm Ayman, weepingly, asked for forgiveness;
Lest, such display rouse public sympathy
The guards pounced and whipped, Ayman, mercilessly.
Thrown aside, she weepingly complained to Allah
The caravan proceeded to the court of Obeidullah
Seated on a throne, holding his royal court
The prisoners were marched in the villain's fort.
Seeing Zaynab and Kulthum, he ordered his men
To place at his feet, the head of Husayn;
He mockingly inquired, the son of a bitch'
"Are these slave girls or children of Prophet?"
as per the parting promise given to Husayn
Zaynab, who was controlling herself, lost restrain
"We are grand-daughters of your acknowledged Prophet,
Sisters of Husayn, whom your henchmen murdered!"

In frenzy, she gave him a bit of her mind
"You are the stooge of Yazid, O' you fiend!
He has flouted all the principles of Islam
The house of Prophet, he has unjustifiably harmed!"
"He has trampled all ethical concepts
reduced all beings to a condition abject
your success, is ephimeral, be sure
very soon, God's wrath, you will endure."
Ibn Ziad, was stunned by this bold rebuke
His embarrassment was apparent, though he fumed
The awe inspiring atmosphere of the court
Held no terrors for Zaynab and Kulthum, both.
He looked around to see the devastating effect
If she went on, the masses would defect
He shouted at the top of his heartless voice
Undaunted by threats, Zaynab dared him twice!
She projected the issues, the sacrifices of Husayn;
Most poignantly, she recalled his piety and fame
A blind companion of the Prophet, Ziad bin Arkan
Protested at the indignities on founders of Islam.
Ibn Ziad, shouting him down, ordered his removal
By nature, he was crafty and vindictively cruel
He hurriedly dismissed the corrupt court
"Carry the prisoners to Damascus", he roared.

(12) The Devil's Den

Through the desert of Mesopotamia they marched on
Falling every few feet, due to sheer exhaustion
Ali Zainal Abedeen was mercilessly whipped
Even if he stumbled, even if he tripped.
Sakina fell down from the camel's bare-back
Zaynab raised an alarm; she was taken aback
The soldiers were intoxicated, they paid no heed
Without any succour, she would perish indeed!
In desperation, Zaynab turned towards the spear
"Husayn, fallen down is your daughter dear;
I am helpless, my feet and hands are bound."
The spear, with Husayn's head, got planted down!
Khooli jumped down, to uproot the spear
The stooges rushed forth, from far and near
The spear remained stuck as if cemented
The impact would be great, if soldiers got scent.
Shimr approached Ali; his anger was boiling
The Imam looked at the head; tears were trickling
He turned his gaze, Zaynab caught his weeping eye
"Sakina has toppled over, the child may die!"
Shimr picked up the unconscious exhausted child
Dumping her in Zaynab's arms, rushed the hostile
Khooli could now lift the spear from the ground

The caravan proceeded quietly, onwards bound.
The Syrian desert was strewn with prickly thorns
Marching bare foot, like on painful corns
The torture was borne, with patience and calm
God was the healer, soothing was his balm!
For few hours they halted, each tiresome night
Feasting, the vulturous soldiers were a sight
Food and water, for prisoners was rationed
Barely enough to sustain them, was the caution.
They reached a mountain top, quite secluded
A hermitage of a holy and pious recluse
The heads of the martyrs, Shimr gave
For safe custody, in his solitary cave.
The prophets descended to guard the head
Startled and baffled, he awoke from his bed
Rushing out of the monastery, Shimr he awoke
"Whose heads are these?" boldly he spoke.
"The grandson of Prophet Muhammad had defied
The authority of Yazid ibn Moawiyah" Shimr cried
"For refusing to accept his spiritual suzerainty
He had been butchered at Karbala, ruthlessly."
The hermit was shocked, beyond any words
"You cursed people, fie upon you cowards
Beheading your own Prophet's beloved grandson,
His helpless family you now hold at ransom!"
Shimr lost his temper, he was enraged;
With one sweep of the sword, he chopped his head.
For Islam's injunctions, he had scant regard
To grant protection to those dedicated to God.
The city of Damascus was soon in sight
Through hurried marches, by day and night
Near the gate of the fortress, the caravan halted
In blazing sun, the prisoners sweated.
The scenes in Kufa, had reached Yazid's ears
To disclose their identity, he now feared
He announced, that a rebel had been defeated
A day of rejoicing, it should be treated.
The city was assuming a gay and festive look
Festoons and buntings hung from every nook
The victims were scorching under the burning sun
To the onlookers, it was all laughter and fun.
Sacrificial dates, they threw at them
To ward off evil from their dear ones
The hungry children tried to eat them
Zainab was perplexed and at her wit's end.
"Prophet has forbidden his own family
To eat sacrificial offerings, O' you ladies,
Do not throw such offerings at our children;
Pray, do not increase our pain and burden!"
Can it be, they are the family of Muhammad?
Their faces and bodies were smeared with mud

From some princely family of noble stock
Their bearings revealed, without any doubt.
After one full hour, the imperial orders came
Bring in the prisoners, the followers of Husayn
An elevated throne, lavishly decorated with gold
Seven hundred gilded chairs surrounded it, all told.
In tattered rags, with dirt and mess
Blood oozing from lash-wounds in the flesh
Tightly tied in ropes and heavy chains
Were the daughters and sisters of Husayn.
On a gold salver, the head of Husayn,
At the feet of Yazid, was vindictively laid
He could not for a moment believe his eyes
These people claimed with Muhammad, blood ties.
Yazid was fully drunk; he quivered with rage
"Omar Saad, how dare you cheat me, your sage!
These are not the ladies of Husayn."
His eyes displayed a thirst for slaying
Flinging himself abjectively at Yazid's feet
"Mercy, O' Commander of Faithful", he pleaded,
"I have carried out your august command,
Nay, your every wish, your every demand."
"The prisoners are Zaynab and Kulthum,
for any doubt, pray have no room,
The ailing man is Ali Zainal Abedeen,
Other members, may also please be seen."
Raising his eye brows, he watched Yazid's face
"Ah, there, who is trying to hide from my gaze?"
falteringly, he replied, afraid of being snubbed
"The old lady is Fizza; behind her is Zaynab."
"None, shall protect the prisoners from me;
Throw aside Fizza, so that Zaynab I can see."
Fizza turned to the slaves, behind the throne
With naked swords, as bodyguards they roamed.
"O brothers, from Abysinia, my own native land
with folded hands why do you passively stand?
Your aged princess demands from you protection
This tyrant's blood thirst is his obsession!"
The slaves stepped forward and addressed Yazid
"Your Majesty, please desist from the foul deed;
if Shimr proceeds to do anything to her,
blood will flow right now, like water!"
Yazid, was flabbergasted at this affront
He fully realized, they said, what they meant
In the light of chandeliers, their swords glistened
The coward in him panicked, as he shiveringly listened.
"Shimr, withhold your lash; stay where you are
I will chop off your head, if you harm her;
My good fellows, your devotion to me, is such
Your sense of honor, I will not touch.
The courtiers and others, saw his humiliation

To display his triumph, was his fascination
Beating Husayn's head, with a cane of gold knob
He rejoiced with glee, as the prisoners sobbed.
Using the cane, on the lips of Husayn
He chuckled, wickedly, without any shame
"Were not these lips, receiving kisses from Muhammad
The same lips, which are now lying in mud."
"How delighted my fore-fathers must be
How happy, their souls, must be today, to see
I have avenged them, for all their defeats
By butchering Husayn; a daring feat."
"Whose head is this, may I ask, O' King?
What crime, had committed, this human being
To deserve, this treatment, even after death
Woeful is the punishment, his family has met."
An ambassador, of a foreign country, Abdul Wahab
Inquired of Yazid, on seeing the holocaust
"The head is of Prophet's grandson Husayn;
He, with his supporters, were all slain."
"These are the ladies of the house of Prophet
Watching them in distress is, to me, a treat
Husayn, and his friends, were put to sword
Opposition to my Caliphate, I can ill-afford."
"I shall subject them, to such punishment
To the world, it would be a valuable lesson
None, shall question my sovereignty, hereafter
Their punishment, will be, no fun and laughter."
"You have committed the greatest sin, O' King!
I have not heard of such tortures and killings;
My people treat me with highest respect,
For being a descendent of their Prophet."
He then turned toward Zainal Abedeen
"Ali, from what I have heard and seen
Your father, indeed, was the noblest soul
To fight this tyrant, was a courageous role."
"I declare, my faith, in your esteemed religion
fully aware of the consequences of the decision,
I denounce the usurper, the incarnation of 'devil';
He is the fittest epitome of the highest evil."
Yazid was mad with rage, smarting under insult
Most unexpected was the rebuke, staggering the result
"Drag away the Ambassador," Yazid angrily demanded
"Chop off his head," like a mad cap, he next commanded.
Pin drop silence prevailed; everyone was reserved
Gulping down cups of wine, to soothe his nerves
"You there," he shouted at Imam Zainal Abedeen
"Your punishment shall be such, the world has not seen."
"You shall pay dearly for his sins
for the insults and rebukes, flung by him
I shall chop off your head, here and now
To wreak vengeance, I have the know-how."

On second thought, he added, trying to be tough
"No, no; killing you will not be enough
Your life, will be a living death, everyday
You will pine for death, even while you pray."
In a feeble, but clear ringing voice,
Said Zainal Abedeen, "O' tyrant do not rejoice
Worst torture, is to make our ladies stand,
Without any veils, in this Islamic land."
"I am not frightened by your threats
The descendents of Prophet, have no fear of death
Those who love God, are severely tried by him,
To display their true faith and heaven win."
The retort evoked spontaneous whispers of admiration
Despite his cunning nature, Yazid was visibly shaken
He feigned loud laughter to cover his embarrassment
He still tried to justify the unparalleled harassment.
"God inflicted this punishment on you all
for your father's obduracy and defiance of my call
to accept my lawful authority, you are reluctant still
you got what you deserved, according to his will."
"O' tyrant, do not distort the words of God
to act with justice or to ride rough shod,
he gives opportunities to all women and men;
punishment ultimately over takes those with evil in them."
Yazid was speechless; he could not reply
His mouth was sealed, much as he did try
A subservient courtier, anxious to curry favor
Bowed before him, thinking himself too clever.
"Your Majesty, your indulgence I crave
Bestow that girl, Sakina, on me as a slave."
Zaynab standing nearby, with her head bowed
Was furious, and infuriated as never before.
"You, wretched soul; no shame you have
Prophets grandchild, you wish to enslave
Is there none amongst you, even to protest
Against the shocking and shameless request."
A gold embroidered curtain only ruffled in shame
Hind, Yazid's favorite wife, entered the harem
Once, she had been a lady-in-waiting, to Zaynab
A devout lady, a believer in Almighty Rab.
She still remembered Zaynab, with devotion
Yazid knowing this had concealed his intention,
To kill Husayn and his family's enslavement;
She was unaware, of the tragic development.
Hearing Zaynab's voice, and talk of enslavement,
She rushed out, without veil, in a frenzied moment
"What is all this about, do let me know
Who can enslave them, except the lowest of the low."
The action of his wife, was a daring feat
Coming without a veil, was against custom, indeed
Yazid, hurriedly shouted orders, dismissing the court

"Carry the captives to the darkest dungeon in the Fort."
The good lady kept on questioning her husband
Who the prisoners were, she enquired and so on,
He gave her evasive replies, to allay her fears
The prisoners are not the Prophet's near and dear.

(13) A Rose Bud Fades Away

In the dark desolate dungeon, the caravan halted
The scorpions and snakes took fright and bolted
Zaynab and Zainal Abedeen, prostrated themselves in prayer
Without a word of complaint, without any demur.
It was dark inside, despite the sun's bright rays
The stone walls were damp, crumbling with decay
Looks of sorrow and despondency, was on each face
Of joy and laughter, there was not even a trace.
The faces depicted sufferings, beyond human endurance
Prayer was the solace, they enjoyed, without hindrance
A few stale morsels of bread and a little water
Was their daily ration, in these horrible quarters.
"Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage,"
Was equally true in that merciless land and cruel age
Though in shackles, every night their spirits soared high
To heights sublime, beyond all plains, in the heavenly sky.
Sakina, woke with a shriek, in the dead of the night
She had seen her father's heavenly soothing light
"O' Sakina, you have suffered enough, come with me
the days of your sufferings are over; O' where is he?"
It was just a dream, what a disappointment!
It was not a reality, to her bewilderment
Her uncontrollable lamentations, gathered a crowd
The ladies also lost control and wailed aloud.
Hearing the wails, Yazid sent slaves to inquire
Pacing up and down, he had not yet retired
On knowing the cause, his crooked mind strived
A devilish scheme, he soon mischievously contrived.
Yazid's men entered with a covered tray,
"I do not want food, please take it away
I want my father; promises he did give
Without taking me, why did he leave?"
They removed the cloth; Sakina beheld the face
Even in death, it was full of heavenly grace
With a cry, she flung herself on the wooden tray
Hugging to her heart, she snatched the face away.
Inconsolably, she bent down over the head
Putting, her cheeks, against that of her dad
Within a few moments, her sobbing had stopped
Her mortal remains, she had quietly dropped.
"How long will you lie on your father's head?"
Zaynab touched her hand; she was shockingly dead

Sakina had gone with her father, never to return
Husayn had kept his promise, as he had always done!

(14) The Triumph Of Truth

A day dawned, when there was a stir in the prison
The jailors were puzzled; what could be the reason
The Queen of Damascus, was visiting the prison
To even imagine such a thing, was an act of treason!
Zainal Abedeen was in prayers, a guard entered the cell
Fizza, the oldest amongst prisoners, he turned to tell
About the visit of Her Highness, Queen Hind, and to ensure,
That not a word of complaint was uttered, by way of censure.
With her ladies-in-waiting, Hind entered the cell
Gloomy, was the dungeon, unventilated and dark, as hell
With bowed heads, and faces covered with long tresses,
The ladies were sitting, with torn and tattered dresses.
An emaciated figure, with heavy chains and manacles
Was busy with prayer, though unable to stand in shackles
A lady, with her head, lay prostrate on a small grave
In a corner of prison, portraying the sad and pitiable tale.
Hind, was perplexed; she was dumb-founded
Approaching the grave, the lady she sounded
"My good lady, do let me know, who are you
For what crimes, you are behind the bar?"
"Which family you belong to? Whose grave is this?
Untold sufferings, your sorrowful face reveals."
The lady burst into sobs; her lips were sealed
Gently stroking her head, Hind herself kneeled.
Another lady sat in a corner, surrounded by others
She must be the one, who was, perhaps, their elder
This was the lady, who had roared like a lion
To hurl defiance at the court of the tyrant.
"What are the reasons for your sufferings and plight"
Hind inquired of Zaynab; her tone was so polite
"My husband is evading, annoyingly, my repeated inquiries
On grounds, that they relate to governmental diaries."
"Lady Fatima, I am seeing frequently in my dreams
In a most disconsolate state, she is, so it seems;
I am perplexed, I am unable to understand
What all this means. Explain to me if you can"
"In the laps of luxury, Hind, you are comfortably living,
Tortures, beyond human endurance, my children are facing;
You are, no doubt, utterly in the dark of what has happened,
To my near and dear ones, and my beloved son, Husayn."
"My Lady's coming and her constant lamentations
has it any connection with your incarceration
I really wonder, how can it at all be true
Prophet's family, to do anything with you."
The eyes of the two ladies met, for a moment

One depicting a soulful of agony and torment,
The other reflecting bewilderment and inquiring
Zaynab burst into sobs, trying to control her feelings.
She had not recognised her, so much the better
It saved her the humiliation, to narrate the torture
She partially covered her face, with her long hair
Hoping that Hind would soon go away and leave her.
Hind, suddenly remembered that, she had seen
In better times, the venerable lady had been
With a gasp, she cried, "Are my eyes deceiving me?
Is that Lady Zaynab, O' no! how can it be?"
"How can I, even entertain such a thought?
I feel, I am getting demented, O' my Lord!
For the sake of Lady Fatima, I, beseechingly, implore you
Are you related to Lady Zaynab? Is it true?"
"Hind, Zaynab died long ago on Karbala's plain,
with youths of her family, who were slain;
the shadow of Zaynab, is now before you
Those who can recognise her are, indeed, few."
Covering her face, her tears, she tried to hide
Falling prostrate at her feet, Hind cried
"Lady, forgive my utterly unpardonable neglect"
begging forgiveness, she expressed profound regret.
Zainal Abedeen had just completed his prayers;
Turning to him, "O' my Imam, your forgiveness I crave,
It was sheer thoughtlessness, for not probing deep
I do not know how I could eat, drink or even sleep."
"When my suspicion was aroused, on that first day
when someone demanded, the young girl, Sakina as a slave;
she must be the beloved daughter of my Lord Husayn.
Was she enslaved, by some brute, with a wicked brain?"
Zaynab stood up and going slowly towards Hind
"In vain, you are looking for my beloved Sakina
she is sleeping peacefully in that yonder grave
relieved of sufferings, she had courageously braved."
"May I ask, what was the cause of her untimely death?"
this fragrant rose bud withered away, unsung, unwept
she narrated the sufferings, she had bravely endured
how her earlobes kept bleeding, how her body turned blue.
Recounting her sufferings, Zaynab and others were crying
Only one lady, sitting near the grave, was quietly lying
Seeing her loosing consciousness, Zaynab immediately rushed
Putting her head on her lap, she was very carressingly brushed.
Hind, ordered cold water, from her nearby palace
She sprinkled it on Umm Rabab's ash white face
Opening her eyes with a dazed look, she glanced
She faintly uttered, as if she was in a trance.
Her grief stricken mind had created a protective shield
To resist the cruel impact, of what fate had purposefully built
To escape the grief laden atmosphere around the grave
Of her darling daughter, who had, all sufferings braved.

Zaynab felt, she must be awakened from this stupor
Or else she would loose her sorrowing mind, for ever;
She gently explained, that Sakina had joined her father,
At this, she returned, to the word of reality with a shudder!
Hind, excusing herself, to the palace she hurried
Moawiyah, her son, was the only male issue of Yazid
Only they had access to him, without announcement
They found Yazid, pacing up and down, himself denouncing.
Yazid was surprised to see Hind's hair disheveled;
Her eyes full of tears, charges she defiantly leveled
Both mother and son, spared no words to make it plain,
"Set free this very day, the family of Imam Husayn."
The cup of cruelty had got filled to the brim
Yazid was aware, the situation was getting grim;
Realization had dawned that time was running out
Nemesis might overtake him, unless he had stopped the rot.
He was having nightmares, with Prophet upbraiding him
Everyday, he was having most horrifying and frightening dreams
"O' Yazid, what had my Husayn done to deserve your vengeance
What made you bestow upon my family such inhuman penance."
"Is your hatred, for me and my family, not yet satisfied
Such tortures, you are inflicting, as can not be narrated."
He was brooding about ways, to resolve the dilemma
Which was his own creation, a self created drama!
Now his own son, his own flesh and blood
With Queen Hind, was flinging at him mud
The time was now ripe to act with grace
A little delay, and he would loose the race.
"A strange way for pleading for mercy, you have
Could you not find, a better way, to remonstrate
I accede, to your request, to set the prisoners free
I shall summon my court and announce my decree."
"Now, both of you may rest, in peace, till they are free
Let me have some respite, after the shock you have given me."
"Peace, did you say?" in surprise, Hind burst out and cried
"Can we ever have peace, after knowing what has transpired."
"For these unforgivable atrocities and unpardonable sins
Make best amends, to Lady Zaynab and Zainal Abedeen
Restore them to the place of honor, which is their right."
It is through them, that God sheds His Merciful Light!
Decked, in a jeweled dress of silk and brocade
Yazid sat on the throne; of solid gold it was made
With full display of regalia, of Ommayad's courts
It was late in the evening, all had assembled in the Fort.
With all solemnity, the ushers announced in the Fort
The grandson of Prophet Muhammad, was entering the court
His garments tattered, but with dignity in his bearing
Zainal Abedeen entered, with everyone admiring his daring.
There was a radiance on his countenance; a "halo" on his face
It inspired awe in their hearts; they stood up out of grace
Yazid got up from his throne, seei9ng the spontaneous gesture

Impelled by an uncontrollable force of undiscriminating nature.
With a slow halting gait, Zainal Abedeen walked to the pulpit
His aching lacerated legs, made walking an ordeal, a bit
The rustling of the curtain, indicated the ladies had entered
Seated behind the pulpit were the ladies, with Zaynab centered.
Yazid offered condolences; his words sounded hollow
Cursing his lieutenants; he tried to paint a "halo"
He pleaded innocence, as if he had in it no hand
He expressed profound regret, for all that happened.
He told the Imam, that they were all know free
He offered any amount, they wished as blood money
Seeing the Imam's face turning red with rage
He urged it in the name of religious usage.
Zaynab, who was listening from behind the curtain, cried out
"On the day of judgement, you shall be answerable, no doubt
You offer, what you possess, on that day, to Prophet Muhammad
It is not for us, to accept any money, for the Martyr's blood!"
Yazid was abashed by the daughter of Ali's bold retort
He had seen her courage, even as a prisoner in his court
He changed the subject and addressing Zainal Abedeen
He declared, "You are free to demand from me anything."
"At your disposal, is a house of status and position befitting
Highest honor and respect will be extended to you beings."
"All we want is the severed heads of our near and dear ones
Our looted property and clothes, though tattered and torn."
Yazid, expressed extreme surprise, at the simple request
They had not even ornaments, at the time of their arrest
He could not see anything of value, in the things looted;
The immense sentimental value, which in them, was rooted.
He ordered restored of all their belongings, forthwith
He endeavored their every desire, every wish, to meet
Medina, via Karbala, they wished, to immediately return
Canopied camels and best horses; the purchase was done.
The local citizens paid their respectful condolences
To serve them, they vied with one another, for chances
"Stay on in Damascus, for sometime", they all jointly pleaded.
For burial rites, their presence in Karbala, was needed.
The entire city turned out to bid them adieu
Hind, had remained all along with Zaynab, now knew
Time of parting was near; was unimaginably sad,
When you live and venerate someone, more than your dad.
She begged for forgiveness, for the past neglect, from each one
She was about to leave, when came a call from someone
Umm Rabab expressed, to Zaynab, her departing wish
To visit the grave of Sakina, to bestow a farewell kiss!
The disconsolate mother fell on Sakina's tiny grave
With a heart-rending shriek; vent to her feelings she gave
Turning to Hind, and other ladies of the unhappy town,
"Occasionally, offer Fateha," she cried, and fell in a swoon.

(15) The Savior Of Islam

Sweet melodies blew the heavenly horn
A joyous tiding; Husayn was born
The sun rejoiced; the moon was gay
Each in its orbit, each did away.
The waters rippled; the wind was all play
Never were they, so happy and gay
It was Muhammad's light and Ali's ray
The Savior of Islam, had come to stay.
A gift to Muhammad, from his Lord
A son to Ali, the sun of God
A fruit of love, to the Lady of Light
A brother to Hassan, to cause him delight.
Born was he, out of God's grace
A beacon light, to the human race
A soul of souls, whom God made pure
With heavenly love, the world to cure.
The Prophet rejoiced; his eyes shed tears
For here was one, to him most dear
For here was one, for Islam's sake
His life and all, would one day stake.
For truth and justice, he would fight
In cause of God, without respite
For he was one, decreed by God
To lay his life, for the love of Lord.
The heavens were glad, for such a one
The Lord should choose, Ali's son
For best was he; the world had seen
Whose vision one craves, even in dream.
"Fed with love, by the Lady of Light"
he got the best, of what was right
and from his father, the 'Godly Knight'
he drew his strength and his might.
But Muhammad did give, beyond measure
All that he had, as his treasure
For he was his treasure, beyond doubt
As he often publicly proclaimed aloud.
"Love them my Lord, I do implore,
Who love Husayn and him adore
He is of me and I of him"
Such a bond, the world had not seen!
He sucked his tongue, in playful jest
His breast he made, a place of rest
The reins he made, his curls of hair
His back he made, a stately mare.
Such was the love, the Prophet bore
For he was his grandson, and more
An anchor sheet, to all who care
To live and be, 'just and fair.'

The life he lived; the path he led
He earned by sweat; the poor he fed
Not a pie had he, that he kept
But the poor he gave, ere he slept.
A king of kings, in simple attire
The crowns of world, he never aspired
To the uncared widow, and the needy orphan
He gave his all, and all so often.
Many a day, he tightened his loins
To buy his own bread, he had no coins
So noble of heart so pure a soul
To please his Lord, was his goal.
He lived for Lord and His delight
He toiled by day and prayed by night
The simplest of life, he liked to live
The best of things, he liked to give.
His life was such, a guiding light
To know the wrong and know the right
And such a soul, was asked to bow
To one who was, the lowest of low.
Yazid, the godless son of a crafty father
Was proclaimed a king or Caliph rather
Money and wine, most lavishly flowed
Till all the worldly heads had bowed.
But not the heads, who had bowed
To God alone, who had showed
The path of right, through Islam's ray
Eighty and odd, among them, were they.
To save Islam from its sinking depth
Too glad were they, to face death
But to the ungodly one, they refused to bow
Undaunted and unnerved, they faced the foe.
It was not a fight, for a kingdom
Nor a family feud, as is not seldom
It was a fight for principles and truth
As imbibed by Islam, in its holy book.
If he had bowed to the ungodly one
Riches and honor he would have won
Islam would then have been in name
Its seal., would have adorned, the devil's reign.
The time soon came for their test
They were ready to lay their best
With women and babes, handful were they
Ready to face thousands, in battle array.
To cut off water, was the only way
To weaken them, they thought, for the fray
So frightened were they, of Ali's son
To fight them they knew, was no fun.
Husayn was fully alive, to things at stake
He knew well, his family's fate
He was aware, that his was the Martyr's cup

His end was near, his time was up!
The sad day dawned; the heavens were aghast
Truth was at stake; the die had been cast
Never had they witnessed, so supreme a test;
Falsehood at its worst versus truth at its best.
The wind was aggrief, it tore each leaf
Wild was its anger, wild with grief
It shook the river by its throat
The waves, it tossed all things afloat.
The sun glared down, wild with fire
It burned with rage; fierce was it's ire
If only it could make itself somehow free
From the chains of bonds of heaven's decree.
The river was ashamed; hapless was it's plight
Destiny's decree, how could it dare fight
It's waters were controlled, by the rule of might
Who cared a nought, for wrong or right.
They guarded the river; they threw a ring
To deny water was worst of a vindictive thing
The hounds, they drank, and so did the drunks
Innocent babes; parched were their tongues.
For three torturous days and three night
Muhammad's beloveds were in waterless plight
Young babes of most holy and innocent fare
Wailing and whining, the torture they share.
O' Lord of Lords! What a pathetic sight
Yazid's hordes, displaying their might
Thousands and thousands of blood-thirsty hounds
Waiting to pounce on eighty odd crowns.
While handful of souls, engrossed in prayer
Unheedful of them; a sight so divinely rare
Young and old, they prayed to Merciful God
With humble devotion, His help they sought.
To give them strength; no, not to fight
But to be content, in whatever plight
For well they knew, their role of life
Was to save Islam, from being knifed!
The battle he lost, the fight he won
Yazid's title of sanctity was shorn
Islam's plant survived the onslaught
Husayn's blood had watered the drought.
The revenge was complete, so it seemed
Abu Sufyan's pledge to Satan was redeemed
The worldly eyes could, however, hardly see
Husayn's blood had kept Islam pure and free.

(16) Tributes And Prayers

My respectful condolence to the dearest sister of Husayn
My tearful home, to the wife of Abdulla Tayyar, O' Zaynab

Never was a woman, subjected to such sorrow and pain,
As the daughter of Ali and Fatima, O' Zaynab!
Aun and Muhammad, two unblossomed flowers of youth
Ali Akbar, was no less dear, than your own sons O' Zaynab
You sacrificed them all, at the altar of truth,
So that, Islam may be rid of the Satan's hold, O' Zaynab!
The tortures you bore; the insults you faced,
Would have torn asunder any heart, O' Zaynab
You did not flinch, even in grace,
To the worst of ignominies and cruelties, O' Zaynab!
Your unique faith in God; your invaluable support,
Enabled Husayn to sacrifice his all, O' Zaynab
Between brother and sister, never was such a rapport
Your indomitable will, sustained his mission, O' Zaynab!
Your heroic efforts, saved his sacrifices from going in vain
Your courage, saved his lineage from extinction, O' Zaynab
You presented the issues involved, in the sacrifices of Husayn
Most eloquently, and in proper perspective, O' Zaynab!
Your virtues are endless, as eternity, and so, till then,
You will be mourned and gratefully remembered, O' Zaynab
Pray to God, to grant my wish to serve Husayn
And you, my lady, in this world, and the next, O' Zaynab!

AMEN

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

1.Imam Husayn ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)
grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a)
(killed by Shimr Dhiljaushan)
2. Ali al-Akbar ibn Husayn ibn Ali
(killed by Murrah bin Munqiz bin Noman al Abdi)
3. Abdullah (also known as Ali al-Asghar) ibn Husayn ibn Ali
(killed by Harmala ibn Kahil al Asadi)
4. Abdullah ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)
(killed by Hani bin Thubaet al Hadhrami)
5. Abul Fadhl al Abbas ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)
(killed by Yazeed bin Ruqaad al Heeti and Hakeem bin Tufail al Taai)
6. Ja'far ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)
(killed by Hani bin Thubaet al Hadhrami)
7. Uthman ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)
(killed by Khooli bin Yazeed al Adhbahi al Ayadi and Abaani al Daarimi)

8. Muhammad ibn Ali (Amir al Mu'mineen)
(killed by Abaani al Daarimi)
9. Abi Bakr ibn al Hassan ibn Ali
(killed by Abdullah bin Aqabah al Ghanavi)
10. Abdullah ibn al Hassan ibn Ali
(killed by Harmala bin Kahil al Asadi)
11. Qasim ibn al Hassan ibn Ali
(killed by Umar bin Sa'd bin Nufail al Azdi)
12. Aun ibn Abdullah ibn Ja'far al Tayyar
(killed by Abdullah bin Kutayya al Nabahani)
13. Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Ja'far al Tayyar
(killed by Aamir bin Nahshal al Tameemi)
14. Ja'far ibn Aqeel
(killed by Khalid bin Asad al Johani)
15. Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Aqeel
(killed by Aamir bin Sa'sa'ah)
16. Abu Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Aqeel
(killed by Amr bin Sudaih Saedavi)
17. Muhammad ibn Abu Saeed ibn Aqeel
(killed by Laqeet bin Naashir al Johani)
18. Sulaiman, slave of Imam Husayn
(killed by Sulaiman bin Auf Hadhrami)
19. Qaarib, slave of Imam Husayn
20. Munjeh, slave of Imam Husayn
21. Muslim ibn Ausajah al Asadi
(killed by Abdullah al Dhubabi and Abdullah Khashkara al Bajali)
22. Saeed ibn Abdullah al Hanafi
23. Bishr ibn Amr al Khadhrami
24. Yazeed ibn al Haseen
(reciter of Qur'an)
25. Imran ibn al Kalb al Ansari
26. Na'eem ibn al Ajlan al Ansari
27. Zuhair ibn al Qain al Bajali
28. Amr ibn Qurzah al Ansari
29. Habeeb ibn Madhahir al Asadi
30. Hurr ibn Yazeed al Reyahi
31. Abdullah ibn al Umair al Kalbi
32. Nafe ibn al Hilal al Jamali al-Muradi
33. Anas ibn Kahil ibn al Harth al Asadi
34. Qais ibn al Mussahar al Saedawi
35. Abdullah ibn Urwah ibn al Harraaq al Ghifaaree
36. Abdul Rahman ibn Urwah ibn al Harraaq al-Ghifaaree
37. Shabeeb ibn Abdullah Nahshali
38. Jaun, slave of Abu Dharr al-Ghifaree
39. Hujjaj ibn Zaid Sa'di
40. Qasit ibn Zuhair al-Tha'labee
41. Kursh (Muqsit) ibn Zuhair al-Thalabee
42. Kinaanah ibn Ateeq
43. Dhargham ibn Maalik
44. Jowain ibn Maalik al-Dhabaai
45. Zaid ibn Thubait al-Qaesi

46. Abdullah ibn Zaid ibn Thubait al-Qaesi
47. Ubaidullah ibn Zaid ibn Thubait al-Qaesi
48. Amir ibn Muslim
49. Qa'nab ibn Amr al-Namari
50. Salim, slave of Amir ibn Muslim
51. Saif ibn Malik
52. Zuhair ibn Bashi al-Khath'ami
53. Zaid ibn Me'qal al-Jo'afi
54. Hujjaj ibn Masrooq al-Jo'afi
55. Mas'ood ibn Hajjaj
56. Son (name not known) of Mas'ood ibn Hajjaj
57. Majma' ibn Abdullah al-Aezi
58. Ammar ibn Hassan ibn Shuraib al-Taai
59. Hayyan ibn Haarith al-Salmaani al-Azdi
60. Jundab ibn Hujair al-Khanlani
61. Umar ibn Khalid al-Saedaawi
62. Saeed, slave of Umar ibn Khalid
63. Yazid ibn Ziad ibn Mazahi al-Kindi
64. Zaahir, slave of Amir ibn Humuq al-Khuzaa'ee
65. Jabalah ibn Ali al-Shaybani
66. Saalim, slave of Bani Medinat al-Kalbi
67. Aslam ibn Khateer al-Azdi
68. Zuhair ibn Sulaim al-Azdi
69. Qasim ibn Habeeb al-Azdi
70. Umar ibn al-Ohdooth al-Hadhrami
71. Abu Thamaamah, Umar ibn Abdullah al-Saaedi
72. Hanzalah ibn As'ad al-Shaami
73. Abdul-Rahman ibn Abdullah al-Arhabi
74. Ammaar ibn Abu Salaamah al-Hamdaami
75. Aabis ibn Shabeeb al-Shaakiree
76. Shaozab, slave of Shaaki
77. Shabeeb ibn Haarith ibn Saree
78. Maalik ibn Abdullah ibn Saree
79. Sawwar ibn Abi Uman al-Nohami al-Hamdani*
80. Amar ibn Abdullah al-Junda'i**

* Wounded Martyr who was captured and died in prison
** Pierced together with Martyr No. 79

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

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

danger and death shrink to unconsidered trifles."
- E.G. Browne (A Literary History of Persia)

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

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

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

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

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