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# Remembering Karbala Once Again

Selected Marsias of Meer Anis and Mirza Dabeer

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Selected elegies (Marsias) of Meer Anis and Mirza Dabeer

### Translator(s):

- Syeda B. Raza [3]

### Publisher(s):

- Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project [4]

### Category:

- Imam al-Husayn and Karbala [5]

### Topic Tags:

- Muharram [6]
- Marsia [7]
- Karbala [8]
- Elegies [9]

### Person Tags:

- Imam Husayn (a) [10]

# Acknowledgements

I am eternally indebted to my parents, Sayyid Muhammad Raza and Maleka Zainab Banu, who raised me to love the Ahlul Bayt and who taught me the Urdu language; I have also learned much, both in terms of inspiration and guidance, from Hasan Abdullah Moosavi, an Urdu poet (*Al Mir*), residing in Hyderabad, India and who also happens to be my maternal

uncle;

My children, Mehdi and Abiha, inspired and motivated me to translate the marsias and continually oblige me by struggling to learn Urdu; It would be inexcusable to not mention my sisters, Sarah Naqvi and Soghra Raza, who have always encouraged my poetic blabber and listen patiently (or at least pretend to listen) to my ramblings; their respective husbands, Luthfe Naqvi and Sayyid Qayem Husain have also assisted in the circulation of this book; Finally, my many thanks to the readers of Meer Anis' and Mirza Dabeer's marsias in Hyderabad, India, whose beautiful recitation of the marsias fostered in me a love for the poetry, the reading of which I continue to enjoy to this day.

# About the Translator

Syeda B. Naqvi was born in Hyderabad, India. She migrated to the United States in 1987 and has since lived in Maryiand. She is a mother of two children, Mehdi and Abiha. She is also an attorney practicing in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

# Introduction

Meer Anis or Mirza Dabeer need no introduction. The translation of their immortal marsias perhaps does. The Urdu-speaking Shias who have had the pleasure of reading and hearing Meer Anis' and Mirza Dabeer's marsias can attest that nothing else can evoke with such clarity and such depth the memory, the emotion and the pathos of Karbala, as do these marsias. In Hyderabad, India where I grew up, Muharram and these marsias are synonymous. The recitation of the marsias there has reached an art form, passed on for generations, refined and evolving with every new reader.

The Shias owe much to Meer Anis and Mirza Dabeer who put into words for them, in a heart-wrenching, exquisitely human form, the Divine glory of Prophet's Muhammad's household, the tragedy of Karbala, the clash between good and evil, and the ultimate triumph of good. A Majlis in the Urdu-speaking Shia community without the marsias of Meer Anis or Mirza Dabeer is inconceivable.

Yet those of us who live in the West have been forced to accept the undeniable fact that our children will probably never experience the beauty of Meer Anis' or Mirza Dabeer's words. The thought is painful; the loss of significant proportions. Who, if not Meer Anis or Mirza Dabeer, can bring Karbala to life for our children.? Who will tell the tale as well as they did? A tale told in a manner so as to evoke within us grief, pain, and above all, love for the Ahlul Bayt? I lamented at the thought that nobody can do all this as well as Meer Anis or Mirza Dabeer. I continue to believe that this will remain true forever.

The idea of translating Meer Anis' and Mirza Dabeer's marsias was born from this sense of loss; after all, if our children cannot understand the words of these memorable poets because they don't know Urdu, why not bring the words to them in the language that they do understand? This book is a humble attempt to accomplish this task

I must apologize to the reader, however, for the numerous deficiencies in my translation. while I have tried to adhere to Meer Anis' and Mirza Dabeer's words as much as possible, in my attempt to maintain a rhythm in the verses, I have often lapsed in this effort. I also apologize for the mistakes, the incongruities, or the gaps with which the reader may find my translation to be riddled. Despite all this though, it is my hope that the translation gives the reader a sense, *albeit* slight, of the beauty of Meer Anis' and Mirza Dabeer's memorable poetry

# The Journey of Imam Husain (‘a) Leaving Medina

("Ghar Sejab Behre Safar Sayyid-a Aalam Nikle")
When the Noble Prince left His home
His eyes were teary and His heart did mourn
As friends and sons followed behind
He cried out "Destiny, here I come."
"I've heard the cries of Zahra all night
The forsaken wilderness is in my sight"
Then towards the Prophet's tomb He glanced
He bowed His head in a respectful stance
Then approaching the tomb, He knelt and bowed
"Do I have Your permission to leave?" He asked
"Today I depart from this home and this land
Your grandson leaves this country's sands"
"Though mankind sleeps with peace in its homes
This peace is denied to me alone
The cry of my family breaks my heart
Where must we go with babes in our arms?"
"Neither jungle nor city can shelter me now
To send me to my grave, they've taken a vow'
"The enemy swords await my neck
On my friends and family havoc will wreck
You had warned my Mother of these days my Lord
She had cried and Her heart had filled with dread"
"But pray do not forget this forlorn Grandson
Who'll be beheaded under the blazing sun"
"In this heat, even birds stay close to their nests
it's the month of fasting, but leave I must
For danger lurks wherever I stop
My children or family can find no rest"
"My Lord, I've tired of living thus
Come, take me, hide me in Your grave's dust"
Inconsolable He wept at His Grandfather's tomb
The tomb did tremble and darkness loomed
Then the voice of the Prophet filled the air
"My noble son, your foes are doomed"
"Forgetting how much I hold you close
They seek to kill you, your wretched foes"

"My patient, my noble, my pious Grandson
My virtuous, my truthful, my brave Grandson
Woe to the people who forsake You now
My honor, my pride, my dearest Grandson"
"I'll be Your company, forever and now
Abandoning my tomb with You I will go"
Heartened, the Grandson rose and bowed
And His noble sister cried out loud
"Let us go my Brother to our Mother's grave
To bid farewell and kiss the shroud"
"Why must I weep here in the palanquin?
With strangers around and in this din?"
So He led His family to Zahra's grave
And Zainab alighted at a somber pace
And they bowed and kissed their mother's tomb
And around Him He felt His Mother's embrace
And He heard His Mother weep at His plight
"O Mother," He cried, "Bid me farewell tonight"
"Not yet," She cried,,, I must see Abbas,,
"Then I will bid you farewell soon alas!
He's born of another, but my son no less"
Hearing this Husain called "Hither Abbas"
"Do not proceed we leave not yet
My mother summons you to her grave instead"
Hearing this Abbas slowed his horse's pace
And came and knelt at the foot of the grave
And Zahra cried "My beloved son"
"I leave Husain's safety up to you beware!"
"You are a friend to Husain in these lonely times
Farewell, protect him from his enemies' designs"

# The Warrior Friend of Imam Husain (‘a) Respected Hurr

("Run mein jab Shah Id taraf se Hurr-a Deendaar Aaya")
When Hurr left the camp of the Noble Prince
And came to battle His enemies thence
A murmur rippled through Yazid's camp
"Here comes a friend of Hyder's clan"
"A strange light lights up his path
As though angels in his company he hath"
Hearing this, the son of Saad cried
"Rain arrows and spears with a measured tide"
The army geared for a massive attack
And the lone soldier held his spear by his side
Seeing Hurr tremble with rage and might
The murderers scurried like rats in the night
Abbas applauded Hurr's battle skills
And Akbar admired, standing still

Qasim cried often "Bravo dear Hurr"
And the Noble Prince himself would smile
Listening to the applause from his Master's camp
Hurr would smile and bow at every chance
Alas as he bowed, the army slacked
And assailed the soldier from behind his back
And thousands surrounded the lonely Hurr
As he braced, the massive army attacked
Close by his heart he felt a spear
And he sensed that Death was very near
The arrows poured at his lurching chest
He doubled over seeking some rest
Watching Hurr's state, Alder cried
"May I go my Master to save our guest?"
"The devoted servant of Zahra and Ali
Now falls to the ground without a plea"
The Noble Prince seeing Hurr's plight
wept with sorrow at the sight
And replied to Akbar "Not you my son"
" I will be the one to go by his side"
"To whom can I express the sorrow I bear?
He is my guest and I must take his care"
Saying this Shabeer then mounted His horse
In a glimpse the battlefield He crossed
There Hurr fell on the scorching sand
And the Prince found him breathing his last
He held His guest and wept in pain
And watched Hurr rub his heels in the sand
He wiped Hurr's brow and held him close
And watched in misery as the blood flowed
And cried "Your wounds have broken my back"
"Yet another friend I've lost in my woes"
"You fell to the ground but didn't call for help
Come open your eyes my brother, my friend"
Hut opened his bruised and bloodied eyes
Saw the glorious face of the Prince in sight
Saw his head cradled in the Prince's lap
And smiled at his fortune and in delight
The Prince then asked "What do you sees"
Hurr replied "The heavens have opened to me'
“I see angels descend from the skies for me
Even in Death's face, a love I can see
Here comes Hyder Oh my good fortune!
I see Shabbar with him, boundless is my glee!"
"I see Muhammad’s Daughter bareheaded in grief
And Muhammad Himself comes to me receive"
Then Hurr's face contorted in pain
He looked at Husain and whispered His name
And the Prince cried "So you depart my friend"
Hurr's soul departed and his body went limp
Even in death his glance toward Husain

A smile on his lips, forgotten the pain.

# The Sacrifice of Zainab’s Sons Most Reverred Aon and Muhammad (‘a)

("Jab Zainab-e-Ghareeb ke run mein pisar lade" )
When in Karbala Zainab's children fought
The two alone with the massive army fought
With the courage and valor of Ali they fought
Oh like lions the grandsons of a Lion fought
Gallantry inherited from the Grand Amir
Such vigor can come only from Zainab and Ali
Zainab waited barefoot by the door
And Abbas reported their progress in the war
"Noble sister do not cry nor worry for them
Your sons have vanquished thousands more"
"Their strength reminds the world of Khyber today
Victorious they will return, the enemy they will slay"
With tears in her eyes Zainab replied
"May Allah bless them with success and might
The two are alone, fighting thousands today
Their fate rests with God, He will do what is right"
"Though helpless, I trust the Almighty God
He will grant me the wish I've always sought"
"Oh my brother, I do not fret for them today
They may die or get trampled by the army, yet I say
`If a thousand sons I had, let them all so get killed
To save the Son of Fatima, this price I will pay'
"In Husain's stead, let me bear all the pain
Even if nobody lives, yet live my Husain"
As Abbas and Zainab spoke thus, Husain cried
"Oh Abbas, the children are gone from my sight"
Abbas charged at the battlefield
On his way he heard Ali Akbar's cries
"We live to witness this day and to weep?
Let us get their bodies, on the sands they sleep"
Abbas charged, by his side his spear
And Husain grief-stricken, bare-headed was near
The army retreated seeing them approach
Dying on the sands lay the youth so dear
Though apart in battle, yet together in death
Still clutching their swords, wounded their chests
Seeing His sister's sons in this state
Crushed like flowers, trampled in haste
Their brow and long hair matted with dust
Lips blue with thirst, bruised the face
Their brows gashed and battered, their clothing torn
Ribs mashed and broken by the enemy swords
Husain cried, holding their bodies close

"Come open your eyes, watch my tears floes'
In Death' slumber, heavy-lidded were their eyes
Abbas felt their pulse and wept in woe
"Raised in my lap, yet dying in my sight?"
Husain held the dear boys in His arms and cried
Alongside Abbas in sorrow wept
And cried "Oh here comes the shadow of Death"
And weeping in pain, Husain replied
"The two now depart to eternally rest"
"Within the camp, the hopeful mother waits
Now we take their bodies to her in this state"
But Zainab's heart knew that they lived no more
Quiet in grief, she sat down by the door
And Husain brought in her blood-soaked sons
And said "Oh Zainab, my heart is torn"
"What has happened, what is lost, how can I say?
I hoped they would live, but they died on the way"
Hearing this Zainab rose, weeping in pain
And hugged their bruised bodies, uttering their names
She praised their valor and their sacrifice
And cried "Come wake up now, weeps my Husain"
" Wake up, walk bravely and show me your swords
The Imam needs you, so sleep no more."

# The Slaughter of a Baby Most Revered Ali Asghar (‘a)

("Banu ke sheerquar ko haftum se pyaas hai")
Banu's son has had no water for days
His pulse is weak and his mother prays
No hope in sight of getting water or milk
Helpless, she lingers by his cradle in a daze
"Pray tell me, what shall I do now Ya Husain?
The baby's eyes now roll back in pain"
"Oh Ya Ali, Ya Ali where can I go?
I cannot watch my baby suffer so
How do I find a way to make him lives
Ya Ali he needs water, that I cannot give"
" Last night I saw him open his eyes
But today he lays still, doesn't move, doesn't cry"
Then everyone said, "Lets call the Imam
For God's sake somebody, go get the Imam
The baby is dying, go tell the Imam
His face is blue, his body calm"
"Taking Alder's body to lay it to rest
The Imam is on his way, with grief beset"
His face stained with the blood of His 18 year old
The Imam entered, His head bowed
And everyone led Him to the baby's crib

And showed Him the baby's still fingers and toes
"He barely breathes Oh Noble Prince" they cried
"Sometimes you would think he had already died"
At the head of the crib, the Prince knelt down
in the baby's ear He whispered, head bowed
Hearing the Prince's voice, the baby smiled
Toward Husain he extended his arms and glowed
"It's a miracle my father," Sakina cried
"Oh mother, my brother has opened his eyes"
The baby in His arms, the Prince left the camp
And Death followed, eyeing them askance
To shelter her baby from the midday sun
The mother draped a sheet over the Imam's arms
Holding Asghar close, Husain walked, head bowed
in the arms of the heavens, a snow white cloud
As He neared the lowly enemy, Husain paused
Couldn't ask for water, couldn't utter the words
with embarrassment He paled and His body tensed
So He removed the sheet from the baby's face
Head bowed, he said, "I've brought my son to you
Seeking water Asghar now has come to you"
Then He kissed His baby's parched lips and looked
And whispered "My son I've said what I could
There is nothing else to say now Oh my son
maybe you can show them your dry, parched tongue"
And the baby obeyed, licked his lips dry
And Husain shuddered and looked up to the skies
And as Husain looked to the heavens so
The cursed Hurmula strung an arrow in his bow
And aimed the arrow at Asghar's throat
Pulling taut the bow, let the arrow go
As the tiny neck the arrow gashed
Asghar lurched and clung to his dad
A six month baby and an arrows force
Blood poured from the tiny, thirsty throat
Once more he lurched and then went still
His cap fell to the ground and he breathed his last
The tiny fists curled over his chest, body numb
A minute ago he was sucking his thumbs
And the desolate Father, watched His son
saw the devastation the enemy's arrow had done
And watched the baby in the throes of death
The tiny hands groping at the injured neck
The lifeless eyes rolling back in the head
Blood gushing forth from the battered neck
Gently pulling out the arrow from the neck
Husain lifted His son toward the heaven and said
"My God please accept my last sacrifice
For your cause, in your path, my son is now dead"
"Little in age but magnanimous in deeds
Thus are the children of Allah's creed"

# Husain’s Eighteen Year old Soldier Most Revered Ali Akbar (‘a)

("Daulat koi dunya mein pisar se nahin behtar")
No greater wealth than your children in this world
No greater peace than their peace in this world
just as no better flavor than a freshly picked fruit
Or the fragrance of a rose with dew in its swirls
Soothing your troubled heart, they make you whole
They are your comfort, they calm your troubled soul
Ask a master of the loss of a household destroyed
Ask the members of the household who can only cry
Ask a parent of the ruin the death of a child brings
Ask Husain of Akbar's parting, the answer is in his sighs
May a parent never so suffer, nor a child thus part
In the tears of a mourning parent, is the blood of a bleeding heart
When the dastardly arrows pierced Akbar's heart
His breathing became labored and almost stopped
He thought of Husain, as he fell from his horse
And he cried out "Oh Father from you now I part"
"Pray come to this wounded son, so alone, so bruised
Come help your Ali Akbar, whom you're about to lose"
Hearing His son's cries, Husain's heart sank
His legs gave way, He dropped often to the sands
With every breath He felt He could breathe no more
"Oh Asadullah" He cried, clutched His heart in pain
With shock His face ashen, desert dust in His hair
Trembling, He rose again; blinded, He stared
He shouted "Oh Ali Akbar, which way do I comes
Do I search in the sand dunes under the blazing sun?
My heart palpitates, do I seek the enemy's help?
I will come to you, I'll find you, to me you cannot come"
"Your loss has robbed your parents of every wish to live
Me you were supposed to bury, the job to me you give"
"Alter, call out my name, ask me once more to come
Call your desolate father, call me, my precious son
Call for your isolated, your heart-broken father now
Call your anxious father so that I may come"
"whatever God wills must happen, let it be, let it be
So I must be beheaded, so what, let it be"
Stumbling and falling, Husain found His injured son
Lodged in Akbar's heart was an arrow, damage done
He felt as though the arrow had pierced His own heart
He clutched at His chest, Oh Akbar, so young
He heard Akbar's labored breath, his toil to hide the pain
The son dying before His eyes, the Father watched in vain
Lips dry, ashen faced, hair matted with dust
in his eyes a distant look, his body bruised and cut

Shoulders and neck wounded with arrows and swords
Blood smeared on his face, on his cheeks tears of hurt
His lips whispering, "My master hasn't come yet
My Father isn't here and I'm so close to my death"
"Oh listen my fluttering heart, beat till He gets here
Stay Oh parting life, the Lord of Gin and men is near
Linger Oh departing soul, the Imam must come
Await Him Oh Death, do you hear?"
"It is my wish to see Him once then I may die
In His laps, in His arms, once more I wish to lie"
"I am here Ali Akbar," said Husain, "I have come"
"Get up my beloved, my dearest, lovely son
You're waiting for me, your eyes searching the battlefield
Your forlorn father is here, your wait for me is done"
"Say something Akbar, open your eyes, look at me
I'll hold you so my miserable face you can see"
"You moan in pain, in your neck an arrow is stuck
Does it hurt to moves Should I let your rest on the dust?
My world has come crashing down on me today
I've raised you in my lap, do I watch you die thus?"
"Your liver comes gushing out of your wounded chest
Through the open wounds I see your broken ribs no less"
"Oh Ali Akbar, Ali Alter, say something, talk to me
Open your eyes Ali Akbar, so my face you can see
If you're leaving, say goodbye, do not so quietly go
You must die and I live, how can it be? "
"Even tired grooms do not sleep soundly as you do
I weep for you in pain, and yet you do not move"
In his unconscious state Akbar heard Husain's cries
The obedient son opened his arms and sighed
Husain held Akbar to His chest and wept in pain
Showed the thirsty son, His own tongue, parched and dry
And said "Oh dearest Akbar, not a drop I could find
I couldn't get any water, Oh dearest son of mine"
Tears flowed from Akbar's bloodied eyes
He looked at Husain heard his father's cries
And whispered "Mother Zahra has come for me"
He took his last breath, shuddered and sighed
Eyes open toward Husain, Ali Akbar passed away
Resting in his Father's arms, nothing more did he say
Historians say that the moment Akbar died
Zainab left the camp, "Oh my Ali Akbar" she cried
Her chador now forgotten, so intense was her grief
The ladies followed her, wailing, teary-eyed
The desert air echoed with their grief-stricken cries
"Oh Ali Akbar, Ali Akbar" in unison they cried
"Take me to Akbar, show me where he lies
Have mercy on me, guide me, hear my painful cries
My Brother sits alone with His wounded, youthful son
Behind a cloud hides my moon, show me" Zainab cried
"In grief I'm now blinded, where must I go?

I'm searching for my son, look at my tears flow"
Hearing Zainab's cries Husain ran to her side
Covering her with His cloak, her face He tried to hide
And said "My Zainab, why did you leave the camp?
Oh daughter of Ali, dead is my joy and pride"
"Bruised with spears, he lies on the desert floor
What do you wish to see Oh Sister? Akbar is no more"

# Imam Hasans Pride and Joy Most Revered Qasim (‘a)

(" Zaqmee jo run mein Qasim a gulpayrahun hua")
When in the battle of Karbala Qasim fell from his mount
Blood soaked his garments, that became his shroud
The heavens shook with the Prophet's mournful cries
And the army's gleeful cries could be heard loud
They shouted " We've trampled the garden of Husain
Come soldiers, douse the light of Hasan's lamp"
Upon hearing the shouts, to Abbas Husain turned
And said "For Qasim now we must mourn.?
The battle is over, Qasim's fate is sealed
Death's shadow now approaches the child of Hasan"
"Call for Ali Akbar now, let us pray, let us pray
Bare headed we will pray that death be stayed"
Toward Kaaba then the imam faced
To the heavens He looked, His hands raised
And cried out "Oh my wondrous, almighty God
From the hands of the enemy may Qasim be saved"
"You are the protector of all, Oh merciful God
Save the fatherless child from the evil swords"
And everyone prayed for Qasim, Hasan's son
in grief Zainab's hair was hastily undone
And Banu’s heart trembled and wept for Qasim
And his mother cried "Tell me, how is my son?"
with shock, Abid's feverish body turned cold
And Qasim's little brother paled as fear took hold
While adults and children in the camp prayed
The army surrounded Qasim, ready to slay
Their arrows and spears blocked his way, circled him
And thousands of swords flashed in the air
His face flushed, chest ridded with wounds
Blood dripped from his body, like sweat at high noon
He leaned over his horse, weak and giddy with thirst
Then a deadly arrow his chest pierced
The evil Sheesh stabbed a spear into his heart
As Qasim fell, at his back an arrow lurched
Tariq's spear assaulted, Qasim cried out in pain
"Oh Imam, I've fallen, Oh come now dear Husain"
With Zulfiqaar in hand, Husain charged at the field

Seeing Him, the evil army trembled and keeled
In terror the soldiers scattered, their horses neighed
The killers panicked and fled, took to their heels
As the army took flight, trampled and rushed
With the hooves of a thousand horses, Qasim's was crushed
When Husain reached Qasim, what a sight He saw
His lips parched with thirst, with pain his body raw
Grief-stricken Husain wrapped Qasim in His arms
Qasim's soul departed, not a breath did he draw
Husain gathered Qasim's body, the limbs crushed, torn
Marked with hooves the body of the thirteen year old

# Imam Husain’s Beloved Brother and Standard Bearer of the Army Most Revered Abbas ibn Ali (‘a)

("Jab Ibne Bu Turaab ba rue zameen gira" )
When to the ground the son of Abu Turaab fell
With arms severed, the brave warrior fell
And the banner he held fell with him to the ground
And Fatima cried out as he lay still
"Any moment now, behead him they will
A living symbol of Ali, surely they will kill"
The Prince heard the cry, to the battlefield He ran
In His haste, He stumbled falling often to the sands
His legs trembled, He grabbed His young son's arm
And cried "O Akbar, lead the way in this new land"
"Pray, move the crowding army from the river barks
Lead me to my brother, the delay I cannot stand"
"Oh Akbar, my life is ruined alas
My back is broken, this pain shall never pass
It's as though I've lost my Father once again
Oh the pain, like a knife, cuts right through my heart"
"Condolences to my Father, turn me toward Najaf
And let go my hands so I can mourn thus"
Akbar led Husain to His brother's side
And Husain saw that Abbas was ready to die
But hearing Husain's wails, Abbas opened his eyes
Akbar showed Husain the severed arms by his side
Seeing the severed arms, Husain fell to the ground
And hugged His brother, looking helplessly around
And Abbas stirred and opened his eyes
And cried, "Oh my Lord, have I lost my sight?
Why don't I see you, where are you Oh my Lord”
Husain said, "My brother in your stead I will die"
"Look at my plight, as you depart from me
This parting of brothers, how can it be? "
"Your beloved Sakina waits for you by the camps

And the thirsty children surround her, holding hands
And Sakina counsels them patience and says
"Look at Ali Asghar, toward the door his glance"
"For three days there's no water in the camps
My Ammu will come soon from the river banks"
But Abbas answered, "My Imam I depart
It is my will though that once I've passed
Please leave my body on the shores of Furat
Here will be my grave, that's a wish of my heart"
"Do not carry my body back to the camps
Hyder's son will stay forever on the banks."
"May I make another wish, Oh my beloved Lord?
I wish the ladies not leave their abode
And Sakina not see my injured body so
And a last dying wish grant to me my God"
"That your presence, Oh Imam illumine my grave
And your cloak be my shroud, it's a wish I crave"
So Husain draped Abbas in His cloak
"Are you happy my brother?" He asked tear-soaked
" But the army will rob you of this cloak tonight
You won't have it for long, such is destiny's stroke"
"The enemy will loot everything tonight
Without chadors, our women will caulk in daylight"
Hearing this Abbas shuddered and opened his eyes
On the Imam's feet he rested his sight
In the throes of death, then he glanced at Husain
Dread at Husain’s words now in his dying eyes
Then Abbas went still as Husain watched
A brother lost his life as a brother watched

# The Prophet’s Grandson Most Revered Imam Husain (‘a)

("Jab qaatema ba qaer hue foj a Shah kaa" )
When the army of the Prince was no more
Thirsty, it had departed to Kausar's shores
His friends murdered, His family destroyed
The home of the Prophet was plundered to the core
No brother or friend or loved ones remained
Two sisters to mourn, and there was Husain
Earlier in the day, sons and friends were around
But by the afternoon, everyone was gone
The sun blazed, wind blew, the desert scorched
The tents flapped with a desolate sound
Husain was surrounded, alone in His pain
A commander but no army, all had been slain
"Why delay oh Death" in misery He asked
"Why must I live after Alder has passed?
Every moment feels like a lifetime to me

Only in Death will my pain pass"
"I should have died when Akbar was killed
I should've been beheaded, that is my will"
"Yet I remain, I live, after everyone has died
Alone I shed tears with no one by my side
Enduring the loss of my sons in this war
In my old age to bury them, to struggle and cry
"No son by me when I succumb to death
No support if I stumble, no place whereon to rest"
He glanced at Akbar's body on the desert sand
He clutched His chest and cried out in pain
"Oh Akbar you rest, your hair on the dust strewn
Come help me, I am falling, rise from Death's daze"
"In Death's slumber you forget your father my son
Say your Namaz (Salat) alongside under the blazing sun"
"From the banks of the Furat, Abbas come to me
My wounds burn with the heat, I'm thirsty, come see
Sprinkle on my body, water if you can find
I'm dying, say goodbye, come to me, come to me"
"In death you sleep soundly, what can Shabeer say?
May no one be as wretched as me I pray'
"Since you've left, every bone inside me hurts
My brow, neck, eyes, my joints, and head hurts
My heart, back, chest, every muscle is full of pain
Distraught I am my son, every vein within me hurts"
"I've battled a thousand soldiers, I'm soaked in blood
Young ones I've buried, with pain my heart floods"
Impatiently Saad's son addressed the army thus
"Come on brave soldiers, surround Husain we must"
They turned toward Husain, attacked and besieged
Thousands bearing arrows, armed with swords the rest
midst archers, stone throwers, Husain stood alone
Spears flashed in the sun, thousands against one
Surrounded by the massive army, all alone
Spears and swords charged, He stood all alone
Arrows inflicted fatal blows, Husain was all alone
Target of a thousand blows, Husain was all alone
in the gloom of Shaam's army, like the moon His Being glowed
The world had turned against Him, toward Him its fury flowed
Alas the wretched army knew not a Sayyid's worth
They pierced His noble body with arrows and spears
Aiming at Him their swords, they sought to massacre Him
They circled, surrounded Him, each seeking to kill him first
These were the Prophet's followers, they attacked His own Grandson
Your Imam was unaided under the scorching sun
Husain fell from His horse, no friend to aid His descent
No one to pull the arrows from His riddled chest
His friends and loved ones dead, Husain now all alone

Weak with thirst and hunger, nowhere to go, no rest
Facing a treacherous army, drowning in their flood
in every face around Him, a hunger to spill His blood
It felt as though the heavens fell to the earth that day
Wounded the son of Fatima, on His horse swayed
The in-um of the universe, the Prophet's dear Grandson
Precariously He swayed and fell to the earth that day
Oh the thousand bruises on His body as He fell!
Imagine the pain and hurt when to the sands He fell!
Fizza took the news to the ladies within
"The Imam is surrounded Oh what a sin"
Hearing this Abid stood up from his bed and fell
in panic the ladies ran out into the din
With Zainab's cries heaven and earth quaked
Stumbling she ran into the field, her eyes seeking Husain
" Where is my brother? " She cried, running every way
"All's wealth is lost, plundered here today
Show me the way to the river, take me to the battlefield
Show me where my Brother lies, wounded, show me pray'
"The heavens are no help, let me pass Oh blessed earth
I've come searching for Husain, wounded, alone, He hurts"
"I'm Syeda have mercy, help me find the way to Him
I'm Ali's daughter help me, save yourself from sin
May you live happily, find peace after death
Show me where the Sayyid lies, pray take me to Him"
"We've lost everyone, we're ruined in this new land
We're residents of Medina, against thousands today we
stand"
Then she heard Husain's groans, sensed her Brother near
And Zainab ran to where a the sound came clear
She watched in disbelief as Shimer beheaded Husain
She covered her face, fell to the earth, in shock and fear
With grief her heart shattered, she silently prayed
The severed head of her Brother, she saw on a spear raised.

# Hind, Wife of the Cursed Yazid Visits the Prisoners of War

(" Qaid qaane mein talatum hai ke Hind aatee hai" )
The prisoners are informed that Hind is on her way
Beset with humiliation is Zainab's state
Agitated, distraught, embarrassed, distressed
Beside herself with grief, she cries out her prayers
"Unyielding the earth, distant the sky
Come pray Oh ladies that I rather die"
"What must I do now in this moment of sham
Save me from humiliation in Akbar's name
Make a circle around me, conceal me in your midst
Hide me in a corner, away from such disdain"

"I'm bare headed, no chador, hide me you must
Hind is coming, cover me with the prison's dust"
"At Hind's arrival, why mustn't I be dismayed?
I'm the daughter of Ali, now in prison I stay
The prison walls I wish would part, wrap me within
Or escape to Karbala, where my dear Brother lays"
"In the desert of Karbala, I will feel no disgrace
Un shrouded is my Brother, uncovered my face"
Then Fizza cried out "My Lady, I see her now'
"With glory and fanfare Hind comes, people bow
Her maids in chador, yet Hind's head is bare
Accompanied by guards, the trumpets play loud"
"Her pace is unhurried, she pauses often times
Frequently she stops to weep at the prison sights"
Hind cries "At the prisoners' sobs, I'm distraught"
"Their wails of `Yaa Husain' with pain are fraught
who killed their leader, why do these prisoners weep?
Was he a Sayyid? Tell me, keep from me not"
"My heart is burdened, I weep in pain
I see Fatima, bare headed in grief, complain"
"I am certain a terrible wrong has been done
The angels grieve, grieve the moon and the sun
I must go to Najaf, I find no peace these days
Only Ali can help me, he is the one"
"If all is well, my Maula sleeps in peace
if not, then restless in his grave, he weeps"
Just then Hind's entourage drew closer in
And saw a Noble Youth bound in chains, laying still
Gaunt and withered for lack of water or food
His face and body bruised with spears and whips
As He quivers with weakness starvation brings
A rattling is heard from His shackles and chains
The royal maidens turned to Hind and cried
"In this dark prison, He glows like a light
Engrossed in prayer, He's oblivious to us all
Why imprison Him.? He most certainly will die"
"Who bound Him in shackles, ropes and chains?
To Maula Ali He's related we're certain Oh Hind"
Hind approached the imam in great distress
moving the chains, her head on His feet she placed
"Who is it?" He called and Hind replied
"A servant of Shabeer, my salaam to you I say"
"Oh Prisoner its time to state Your last will
You're close to death, are You prepared still?"
"Your last will 1 will honor, do not fret Oh dying one
I'll walk with Your coffin, barefoot under the sun
Pray tell me about You, tell me Your name"
He replied "For forty more years live I must"
"You can call me a captive, a helpless soul
I'm a prisoner in shackles, I'm ill, such is my lore"
"What ails You?" She asked "Orphan hood" He replied

"The cures" Hind inquired "His mourning" He cried
"And Your homes" asked Hind, "Nowhere" said the imam
"Your caretaker?" She asked "Oblivion" He replied
Hind asked Him the reason for His mournful sighs
He showed her the bruises on His back in reply
"Why do they punish You so?" Hind cried
"Not a faulty deed have I done," He replied
Hind then asked, "Since when are You so chained"
"It was the 10th' of Muharram when they bound me" He sighed
"For my shroud I own not a piece of cloth
My Father's body I've left on the sands, burning hot"
Hind then turned toward Zainab and cried
"Looks like Fatima in prison, Oh what a plight"
She then stared at Banu, and in amazement said
"It's a princess from Iran in prison, what a sight"
"I'm speechless at the sights I have seen today"
"Kulthum and Zainab in prison.? Oh what a day'
Zainab cried "Oh Hind, do not mention these names"
"Would such ladies be in prison? Imagine the shame"
"Of Fatima's daughters, do not so speak
"Hold your speech, seek pardon in Allah's name"
"with reverence of whom the Prophet did speak
Will the Muslims capture them, their chadors steal?"
"The Lady who was buried in the dark of the night
Bare headed her daughters would roam in daylight?
Of whom the Prophet spoke highly, with love
The Muslims will loot and with them they will fight?"
"Oh Hind, in public the kin of Muhammad parade
The heavens didn't fall and the earth didn't quakes"
Horrified, in distress, Hind fell on Zainab's feet
"Pray forgive me" She cried, "Do not sit still"
"Behead me for speaking with such disrespect"
"Curse me," Hind cried "Of me speak ill"
"When I mention Shabeer's name, you weep in pain
When I ask your names, you bow your heads in shame."

# The Imam’s Beloved Daughter Most Reveled Sakina (‘a)

(" Bevon kaa mulke Shaam mein jis dum guzar hua" )
When in Shaam the caravan of widows arrived
In embarrassment they bowed their heads and cried
Seeing the spectators lined up on the streets
Tears of humiliation filled their eyes
Having trailed through the roads, shops and streets
The Queens reached the court of the infamous Yazid
There Yazid conversed with Abid at length
Hearing Abid's responses, the attendees wept

Disgraced, Yazid brought the confrontation to a close
Enraged at Sajjad's character and strength
while all spectators went back to their homes
To prison the kin of the Prophet went on
In the dark prison, they sat heads bowed
Frightened of the darkness, Sakina looked around
So exhausted was Abid from His journeys on foot
He dropped to the floor without a sound
Many nights He had stayed up, many miles He had walked
He slept now, resting His ahead on the wall
"why is it so dark" Sakina wanted to know
"What place is this mother, where no air flows?
The darkness is smothering, I can't see a thing
Not the earth beneath or the sky above"
"We cannot stay here, no one will survive
Won't lamps be lit when evening arrives?"
"If it stays this dark, I will certainly not last
I'm convinced that this night will not pass
My Father would cradle me on his chest at night
Now sleep on the dirt? I cannot alas"
"If a lamp blew out, I'd wake with a start
Have I ever, Oh Mother, slept in the dark"
Her mother replied, wiping Sakina's tears
"Hush my little one, lest the guards hear
Morning will come soon, the dark will be gone
The moon will illumine this place my dear"
"The breeze will flow, the night will cool down
I'll hold you in my arms, rest Oh little one"
Thus the mother consoled, cajoled and calmed
The girl was restless, the night stretched on
Sakina sobbed and wept through the night
Weary she curled up in her mother's arms
Her frail body weak and drowsy, she slept
And Banu held Sakina in her arms and wept
Within moments Sakina was restless again
She dreamt of her Father, His presence she felt
Stretching wide her arms, she woke with a start
And peered in the darkness, her eyes seeking Him
She cried "Oh Mother, not a thing I can see
My Father was here, tell me where is Hue"
Everyone wept at Sakina's state
And so did the prison guard, hiding his face
And Yazid learned of Sakina's distress
That she's crying for her Father, for Him she prays
Inconsolable she weeps, nothing calms her down
She wants her Father, she wants Him now
"Then take His head" Yazid ordered his men
And Husain's severed head was carried thence
Its glory and radiance lighting the path
Fragrant and glorious Its noble presence
Sensing the approach, the prisoners hastily rose

impatiently Sakina waited by the door
Anxious to see Him, smiling through her tears
The air grew fragrant as His head drew near
With His halo the prison aura transformed
Gone with the gloom was Sakina's fear
In reception the prisoners lined up at the door
in respect and salutation Abid arose
To receive her Father, Sakina held out her dress
And hugged His head close to her chest
She kissed His forehead, His cheeks, His lips
The prisoners circled her in awe and respect
Where Zainab stood hair strewn, head bare
Husain's glance was affixed to her face
Holding her Father's severed head
Sakina sat on the floor and said
Words of love, of her loss, her pain
Then unconscious she was, close to death
Her face resting on her Father's face
She sighed, shuddered and took her last breath
Her silence at first gave no one alarm
For everyone thought she was feeling calm
But as the silence stretched, the mother said
"Wake up dear Sakina, pass the head to you Aunt"
Hearing no response, terror filled Banu’s heart
"She's fainted" said everyone, "Banu take heart"
Banu lifted Sakina into her arms
Saw the lifeless limbs, eyes shut, face calm
Neck limp, face drooping to her chest, not a sound
"what is this?" She cried, "What is this now?"
"What healer do I consult, where do I go?
The prison door is locked my dear, what do I do?"
She fanned Sakina's chest, lifting her shirt
"Pray my lady," she turned to Zainab and urged
She called out for Abid to come to her aid
"Come here my Son, Your sister won't stir"
"I'm trying to rouse her, I see no response
She's passed out I gather, but her breathing has stopped"
Feeling her pulse Abid moaned and tensed
And the mother cried "I have no more strength"
"Yet I'll face the truth, do not hide from me Son"
Abid replied "Dear mother, she is dead"
"Lay her down on the sand, let her rest
Her body is bruised, yet she's peaceful in death"
"In this dark prison my daughter is dead"
Banu cried "This death I will never forget"
And Fizza went to the prison door and asked
The guards for a lamp for the house of the dead
"No one keeps a body laying so in the dark
Yet our little girl lies in the prison night black"
With the light of dawn, the prison was lit
And Banu bent over Sakina and looked

Saw the bruised ears, dried blood on her neck
Her dress blood-stained, tattered and burnt
Pale and gaunt, resting on the prison floor
Hair laden with dust, crying no more
"My dearest" She cried, "Wake up now
Its time for Namaz (Salat), your head you must bow
"You've never needed my help to wake up before
You'd wake on your own, what's happened now?"
"You know the guards' fury, do not so doze
This isn't home Sakina, they'll come to the door"
"The darkness troubled you, you couldn't rest
You'd pray for a breeze, you'd get upset
The breeze from heaven gill cool you tonight
in your new home Sakina my dear, sleep well"
"I hope you find comforts you couldn't find here
The grave is roomier than this prison my dear"

# Most Reverred Zainab (‘a) Returns to Karbala Chehlum

("Chehlum jo Karbala mein bahattar ka ho chuka")
The Chehlum[1] for seventy two martyrs was done
And the bodies and the heads had finally become one
And Husain's slain army was remembered by all
And the children of Muhammad lamented His son
For three days and nights in the desert they mourned
Embracing His tomb as though never to be torn
Hearts lit like candles, their love for Him bloomed
Their sons, like flowers, scattered around His tomb
Remembering those killed, they cried out in grief
And clutched at their hearts and in pain swooned
" Where are those who would protect us?" they cried
"Now we wander, heads bare in broad daylight"
The air fraught with sobs as the widows wept
And the Noble Sister's face on His tomb did rest
And cried "Oh my beloved brother dear Husain
For three days and nights I've been Your guest"
"Heartbroken and forlorn is this Prophet's grandchild
For my services You didn't accept, what a plight"
"The will of the imam, I will gladly accept
But the bruises on my arms I haven't shown You yet
I am alone today, no friend in sight
Without You I am nothing, how can You forget?"
"I've lost sons and brothers and You in this war
my back is bruised with the tip of the spear"
"I cared for the orphans, the fathers lay dead
Their frail ages and captivity, the pain and the dread
To divert them from their misery, I narrated your tale
I was their mother, their aunt, or their father instead"

"And I will live on to see them suffer and die
For it is not my destiny to see beloveds thrive"
" I had imagined pilgrims surrounding Your tomb
And the throng of the angels had lifted the gloom
And in Your memorial, we would all gather here
Yet I see not a soul, I am here alone"
" By your graveside I sit my Brother, and weep
And console my heart though my pain is deep"
Saying this, Zainab inconsolable, sobbed
And the tomb of the Prince shuddered and rocked
And Basheer approached the Prince's son and said
"Oh Imam shall we leaves Your aunt is distraught"
And Abid toward His Aunt did turn
And asked "Dear Aunt shall we return."
And Zainab replied, "As you wish dear Imam"
The preparations to leave for Medina began
The tents were untied and the camels lined up
And around the graves gathered Ali's clan
Bidding farewell to those who slept in their graves
The old and the young stood around in a daze
At the thought of leaving her Brother's tomb
Distraught, Zainab cried " How can I leave You along
In this forsaken desert away from us all
This empty, desolate city now Your home"
"where nothing grows and nothing lives
Such a place You've chosen to gather and rest"
"Oh Noble Lord of Karbala, farewell
Oh the sands that cradle His shroud, farewell
Dear grave of the noble, lofty Prince, farewell
My Brother Your sister departs now, farewell"
"This Prophet's grandchild is unfortunate indeed
For You're not pleased with her deeds"
"How do I face Medina having left You herd
What if the Prophet questions, how can I bear?
If I go to Najaf, the same question I will face
`Where is Husain?' That is all I will hear"
"You've asked me to leave, so how can I stay?
But where must I go, where must I stay?"
"won't You come, hold my hand as I alight?
Won't You shelter me from strangers' sights?
Won't Abbas or Alder come to bid me farewell?
Won't You bring Asghar for whom Banu cries?"
"You're our leader come lead us ahead
we're ready, yet You sleep, the grave Your bed"
"Although I weep and call out Your name
You do not answer Oh Prince, I'm amazed
if only You would embrace me now
I will leave for Medina, though never the same"
The Prince then answered "My dear Zainab farewell
Give my love to Soghra, my daughter who is ill"

1. The word "Chehlum" or “Arba’in” in Arabic, denotes the traditional memorial held on the 40th day after death.

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