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Tears For Karbala

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Presenting children with traditional majaanis (lectures) of the twelve days of Muharram. Detailed biographies of companions and family members of Imam Husayn (a), and accounts of the events before and after the day of 'Ashura.

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Preface

This book is my attempt to present our children with traditional majaanis of twelve days of Muharram as recited for generations by Zakirs and Zakeeras.

The story of the Martyrs of Karbala' is described in more detail than one would find normally in history books of Karbala'. The events of Karbala' are described differently by different Zakirs and Zakeeras, who convey them in their individual styles. The important point to grasp is that the Martyrs of Karbala'

sacrificed their lives willingly with one aim only – to please Allah (s.w.t.) and to save Islam. They died in battle, but by doing so they achieved the biggest victory in the history of mankind. They were victorious in saving Islam and destroying the evil way of life promoted by Yazid.

The book is written in clear and simple English so that children can understand it with ease. I also hope that the youths will find it informative too. In the introduction, I have briefly summarised the events before, on and after ‘Ashura’ day. The first two majaanis describe the concept of majaanis and the arrival of Imam Husayn's caravan in Karbala’. The next ten majaanis describe in detail the way some of the martyrs were killed mercilessly on the day of ‘Ashura’.

I am grateful to Mulla Mohsin Ja’far, Mohamed and Layla Dawood, Hassanain Kara and my secretary Nicky Busby, for their help in producing this book. I am also indebted to my family for their help and patience while I was working on this project. My wife Gulzar helped me translate the Urdu recordings. My children, ‘Ali, Zishaan and Sofia, read the draft and encouraged me that by reading the book both children and youths would understand and mourn the tragedy of Karbala’.

I hope Allah (S.W.T.) accepts this small service for it is only He who gave me the energy and will to produce this book.

Liaket Dewji

Introduction

The evil seeds which lead to the tragedy of Karbala’ were planted years before by Muawiya's cunning, who ruled over Muslims for twenty years.

Muawiya was an evil ruler. He was the son of Abu Sufyan and Hinda who, both, were the arch enemies of the Holy Prophet. Muawiya and his father became Muslims when they were left no alternative but to accept Islam.

When Hazrat ‘Ali became Khalifa, he dismissed Muawiya and other Governors for corruption and anti-Islamic behaviour.

Soon after the death of Hazrat ‘Ali, Muawiya, using methods of bribery and treachery, succeeded in becoming the Khalifa.

Muawiya was not interested in Islam. He only used Islam for his power and glory. He broke the laws of Islam. When any saying of the Holy Prophet did not suit him, he ordered it to be struck off all records. He made up ahadith to favour him and his policies.

Muawiya hated Hazrat 'Ali and his family. Under his Rule, Sh'ias were put to death or thrown into prisons just because they were followers of Hazrat 'Ali and his family. Muawiya died in 60 A.H.

Before his death, he appointed Yazid, his son, as the next Khalifa. Yazid was even worse than his father. He was an evil ruler and openly mocked Islam. He was often drunk and sang songs which made jokes of Salaat, the Holy Prophet and his family.

The difference between Yazid and his father Muawiya, was that Muawiya used Islam for his personal glory while Yazid was determined to destroy Islam.

As soon as Yazid became Khalifa, he wrote to his Governor in Medina to ask Imam Husayn to do the impossible. He was asking the Imam to accept him as the Khalifa of Islam.

Imam Husayn could not even consider accepting such an evil man, Yazid, who openly broke the laws of Islam and was determined to destroy Islam, as the Khalifa.

It was not a matter of pride or Husayn's right to Khilafat. Accepting Yazid as a Khalifa would mean Imam approved of his way of life and this would have meant a definite end to Islam.

How can a grandson of the Holy Prophet, son of 'Ali and Fatimah, allow that to happen?

It was Imam's duty to defend and save Islam. He refused to accept Yazid as a Khalifa of Islam. Yazid was full of anger and planned to have the Imam killed in Medina.

By staying in Medina, Imam would have the advantage of having all his own relatives as well as the people of Medina fighting on his side.

After consultations with his family and companions, he decided to leave Medina and move to the Holy City of Mecca.

Why did he leave Medina when he had 'home advantage'?

This is because he did not want to put his friends in Medina in the danger of being killed. Secondly, although Yazid may be defeated, history would look upon the battle in Medina between Yazid and Husayn as a battle for Khilafat. Even if Yazid were to be killed, the injustice, oppression and un-Islamic way of life which Muawiya and Yazid promoted would not die.

Imam Husayn's promise and mission was to destroy the way of life that these two evil men had started, to destroy Islam. By staying in Medina and fighting with Yazid he would have not achieved this. This is why he decided to leave Medina.

On 28th Rajab 60 A.H., Imam Husayn's caravan left Medina with his family, his sisters, Bibi Zainab and Bibi Kulthoom, his brother 'Abbas, a few other relatives and a number of faithful companions.

On 4th Shabaan, Husayn's caravan reached Mecca. Imam had not yet made up his mind on where to go from here. For the time being he decided to stay in Mecca at least until the month of Dhul-Hajj and to perform the duty of Hajj.

To keep the sanctity and grace of the Holy Ka'aba, the bloodshed of any human life had been prohibited by the Holy Prophet. But did Yazid care about the Holy Prophet's sayings?

While in Mecca, Imam Husayn received many letters and messages from the people of Kufa persuading him to go to Kufa.

Imam decided to send Hazrat Muslim Ibn Aqeel, his cousin, to Kufa to study the situation there and report to Imam.

As Hazrat Muslim was preparing for the journey, Imam Husayn went to him and said:

“Muslim, the whole world knows that you are one of the bravest warriors. It is just possible that seeing you in Kufa, some people may think that our intention is to fight Yazid. Take your two sons, Mohamed and Ibrahim with you. When they see you with your young children, they will know that our intentions are peaceful”.

Hazrat Muslim and his two young sons left Mecca. They arrived in Kufa towards the end of Dhul-Qaad. They were received well by the people of Kufa. Thousands of people appeared before Hazrat Muslim.

They pledged their allegiance to Imam Husayn as their Imam. They wanted him to teach them the contents of the Holy Qur'an and true sayings and traditions of the Holy Prophet.

People of Kufa had long suffered under Muawiya and they feared even greater suffering under Yazid. They knew that the greed for power and glory of these two men was slowly destroying the true Islam.

Hazrat Muslim reported back to Imam Husayn that most of the people in Kufa wanted him as their Imam to guide them and also advised him to come to Kufa.

Yazid had spies in Kufa. He heard from them, about invitation to Imam Husayn and the arrival of Hazrat Muslim in Kufa.

Being an evil man, Yazid was full of anger, and he replaced the Governor of Kufa with one of his own men – Ibn Ziyad. Ibn Ziyad was told to arrest Muslim and kill him and do all that was necessary to suppress the Shi'as in Kufa.

Ibn Ziyad was a cruel and unjust man. As soon as he arrived in Kufa, he threatened the people of Kufa with death punishment if they were found to engage in any activity against Yazid. He ordered them to surrender Hazrat Muslim to him.

On 8th Dhul-Hajj, soldiers of Ibn Ziyad arrested Hazrat Muslim.

He was chained and dragged to the Court of Ibn Ziyad. He then ordered Hazrat Muslim to be taken to the roof of the palace to be killed, and his body thrown to the ground.

Hazrat Muslim was dragged up the steps. He was killed and his body was thrown to the ground.

Hazrat Muslim's head was cut off and hung on the City gate to remind and scare the people of Kufa.

Hazrat Muslim's two sons, Muhammad and Ibrahim, were also arrested and killed mercilessly.

In the meantime, Imam Husayn and his companions in Mecca were preparing to perform the duty of Hajj when his friends in Mecca informed him that Yazid's men were planning to have him and his followers murdered during the Hajj.

Imam Husayn did not wish the House of Allah to be turned into a battlefield. Therefore, he decided to leave Mecca without performing Hajj.

On 8th Dhul-Hajj, the very day on which Hazrat Muslim was murdered in Kufa, Imam Husayn's caravan left Mecca. Imam Husayn did not know of Hazrat Muslim's death.

The journey was made on camels and horses. The weather was extremely hot at that time of year. The Imam, his children, ladies and friends suffered great hardship during the journey.

During the journey, Imam learned of the death of Hazrat Muslim and the cruel way in which he had been killed.

When Yazid came to know that Imam Husayn was heading towards Kufa, he immediately sent Hurr, at the time one of his army commanders to stop the Imam from joining his followers in Kufa.

Hurr, with 1,000 horsemen, met Imam Husayn and his companions at a place a few miles outside Kufa. Hurr and his men forced the Imam to take the road to Karbala' which was situated on the banks of the River Euphrates (River Furaat).

Imam Husayn could have fought Hurr and his soldiers and forced his way into Kufa, but it was not Imam Husayn's intention to start any battle.

On 2nd Muharram, 61 A.H., the Imam, his family and his faithful companions arrived in Karbala'. Yazid's armies had already arrived in the area long before the Imam's arrival. It was a huge army consisting of thousands of soldiers.

By the 7th of Muharram, Yazid's army had increased further in number. Now there were 20,000 of Yazid's soldiers surrounding Imam Husayn's 72 men from all comers. They were scattered over miles on the sands of the river bank.

On the 7th of Muharram, Yazid's soldiers were told to guard the bank of the River Euphrates so that

Imam Husayn, his family and companions could not take any water.

Heat was intense in the desert and hot winds blew all day. Imam's family and friends suffered without water and food for three days.

On the 10th of Muharram, 61 A.H., the battle took place. One-by-one all the Imam's men were martyred except our 4th Imam 'Ali Zainul Abideen who was very ill at that time and could not take part in the battle.

After the battle was over, Yazid's soldiers set fire to the Imam's tents and looted the camp. They even took the veils away from the Holy ladies. They beat the children and took away all their belongings. They snatched and pulled away Bibi Sakina's earrings and let her little ears bleed for a long, long time.

The Shi'as hold a majlis every day for the twelve days of Muharram. We remember, cry and do matam for the brave martyrs of Karbala'.

The story of a brave martyr of Karbala' is recited on each day of the twelve days.

Thanks to Imam Husayn, his family and his faithful friends. Their great sacrifice in Karbala', saved Islam, our great religion.

Majlis 1: Majaalis al-Husayn

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Today is the first night of Muharram – the start of a new Islamic year.

We do not greet it with merry-making, nor celebrate it by holding parties. Our hearts are filled with sadness and grief because we remember those martyrs who were killed in Karbala'.

For the next twelve days and nights, we hold Majaalis al-Husayn to mourn the death of Imam Husayn, his family and companions.

The word 'majaalis' means seatings where people gather and sit.

In Majaalis of Muharram, we recall the events of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, his family and companions, and the hardship and suffering of those in his family who survived the tragedy of Karbala'.

The first Majlis al-Husayn was started by his sister, Bibi Zainab, as soon as they were set free by Yazid. Since then all the Imams and Shi'as have continued the Majaalis al-Husayn regularly.

Why do we hold these Majaalis?

To thank Imam Husayn, his family and companions for the great sacrifice in Karbala' for saving us and Islam. We hold these Majaalis because we love our Imam and feel sad to hear about his hardship and suffering in Karbala', and also to comfort and please Bibi Fatimah – Imam Husayn's mother.

Bibi Fatimah comes to Majaalis al-Husayn. Though we cannot see her, she prays for us and our families' safety. She collects our tears when we cry for Imam Husayn and his family. On the Day of Judgement she will return all those tears we have shed for her family. These tears will protect us from the Fire of Hell.

I would like you to think about what I have just said.

Examine your deeds and see if they are good enough for you to face Bibi Fatimah on the Day of Judgement. If you are not praying your wajib Salat (Prayer) regularly, how would you be able to face Bibi Fatimah on the Day of Judgement?

You have come to the Majaalis al-Husayn because you are thankful for what Husayn did to save your religion. You cry and do matam for Husayn because you love him. If you really love someone then you surely want to please him.

How can you please Husayn if you are not praying Salaat regularly?

Majaalis al-Husayn will continue till the Day of Judgement.

It is not because of us. We are the only means through which Allah (S.W.T.) keeps Husayn's great sacrifice alive. Husayn died saving Allah's religion and Allah (S.W.T.) has promised to keep alive Husayn's name and his great sacrifice, till the Day of Judgement.

Majaalis al-Husayn! Matam al-Husayn!

Enemies of Islam can never stop majaalis and matam, even if they try thousands of times to do so.

On the 1st of Muharram, Imam Husayn's caravan had reached just outside Karbala'. They pitched their tents for the night.

Husayn and his sister, Zainab, were standing talking outside Husayn's tent.

Together they both sighted the moon of 1st of Muharram.

Tears flowed from Husayn's eyes.

Zainab grew worried and asked her brother:

“My dearest brother Husayn, why are there tears in your eyes?”

“Zainab! My sister Zainab! Please pray for me that I keep my promise to Allah (S.W.T.). Pray, my sister, that I succeed in completing my mission to save Islam. Zainab! Pray for me that I do not hesitate in giving up my life for Islam.”

Husayn was not crying because he was worried about dying. Husayn did not ask his sister to pray to Allah (S.W.T.) to save his life. All he was concerned about was saving us and Islam.

Bibi Zainab's eyes were filled with tears when she heard what Husayn asked her to do.

“My beloved sister Zainab! Don't cry! You will have to perform a greater duty after my death. Be brave and patient!”

Bibi Zainab went to her tent. ‘Ali Akbar joined his father, Husayn.

“My son, ‘Ali Akbar! I saw a dream last night. I saw a group of people heading for a place where death was waiting for them. I saw them all killed, one-by-one.”

“Father! I know these people. Those people are us. But, tell me father, are we on the right path?”

“Yes, my son Akbar, yes We are on the right path.”

“Then let us not worry? Father, if we are on the right path, then let us die happily. We should continue our journey and greet our death with a smile.”

“I am proud of you, my son Akbar!”

Matam Al-Husayn!

Majlis 2: Arrival In Karbala’

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Today is the 2nd night of Muharram.

On the 2nd day of Muharram, Husayn's caravan reached Karbala’. Thousands of Yazid's soldiers were already there, having arrived long before the Imam.

The small tribe living in Karbala’ gathered around Husayn's caravan. Imam Husayn enquired about the price of the land in Karbala’. He then bought the entire land.

Then, he first spoke to the menfolk of the tribe.

“O, menfolk of Karbala! We have not come here to fight. Yazid's soldiers will fight with us and we will be killed. They will not bury our bodies and our bodies will be left to the wild animals of the desert. I request a favour from you. Please, bury our bodies.

Imam Husayn then turned to the womenfolk of the tribe.

“Ladies of Karbala! Your menfolk, out of fear of Yazid's soldiers might not bury our bodies. Ladies! When your men are working in the fields, please come out of your houses and bury our bodies.

Somehow Imam Husayn did not feel the men nor the women would carry out his request.

Sadly, he turned to the children who had gathered and spoke gently to them.

Children! If your father or your mother are unable to bury us, I beg you to throw a fistful of sand over our bodies while you are playing in the fields. That way, children, our bodies will slowly get buried.”

Then, he turned to everyone who had gathered around and spoke again.

“My second request to you all is to look after the people who will come to visit our graves after our death. They will be my guests so please look after them and feed them for three days.”

Imam then ordered the tents to be pitched by the river. It was very hot in Karbala' and the supply of water was absolutely essential for survival.

‘Abbas, commander of Husayn's army, with his men, started to pitch the tents by the river. The commanders of Yazid's army ordered their men to pull out Husayn's tents. They stopped Husayn's tents from being pitched by the river.

‘Abbas became very angry. He pulled out his sword and wanted to kill the enemies.

‘Abbas, the lion son of ‘Ali, was like his father. He was very brave and strong. The enemies feared him. If he wanted the tents to be pitched by the river, then Yazid's men even though in thousands, would not be able to stop him.

Husayn saw what was happening and quickly intervened. He knew his brother's temper and strength.

“‘Abbas! My brother ‘Abbas! Put your sword back. ‘Abbas, we have not come here to fight. Later on, people will say that we started the battle for water. ‘Abbas! My brother ‘Abbas! Calm down and put your sword back! Let us move away from here. We will pitch our tents elsewhere.”

‘Abbas considered his brother to be his master and always obeyed his commands. He put his sword back and ordered his men to pitch their tents away from the river.

This was the 2nd of Muharram. As nights and days passed by, the scene in Karbala' changed.

Day by day Yazid's army increased in number. Nearly 20,000 of Yazid's soldiers surrounded Husayn's tents.

Why so many to fight no more than 72 men in Husayn's army?

Despite having so many men in Yazid's army, his commanders were still worried because the 72 men in Husayn's army were no ordinary men. They were brave, faithful and did not fear death.

Yazid's soldiers knew this and therefore thought of a way to weaken Husayn's army.

On 7th Muharram, Yazid's commanders ordered their men to stop water from reaching Husayn's tents.

There were many ladies and children with Husayn and they suffered a lot without water and food.

For three days, one could here children crying for water

“Al-Atash! Al-Atash! Al-Atash! Water! Water! Water! Thirst! Thirst! Thirst!”

‘Abbas could hear this. He could hear his beloved Sakina crying for water. ‘Abbas loved Sakina dearly and always got her anything she wanted.

Every time ‘Abbas heard Sakina crying for water, he shook with grief.

‘Abbas! Poor ‘Abbas, could not bear to hear Sakina crying.

“Al-Atash! Al-Atash! Al-Atash!” echoed through the land of Karbala' for three days and nights. Many little children died from thirst and hunger.

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam Al-Husayn!

Majlis 3: Janabe John

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Today is the 3rd night of Muharram.

Majaalis al-Husayn continues. As the nights of Muharram go by, our hearts are weighed down with more

and more grief. We continue to hear the majaalis about the tragedy of Karbala’.

‘Ashura’ day is not far away We will recite more marshias and nawhas. Our matam will increase. Our eyes will continue to shed tears for the Martyrs of Karbala’.

“Husayn! Muharram! Karbala’! ‘Ashura’! Marshias! Nawhas! Taboot! Alam! Mashk! Matam!”

When Bibi Fatimah hears these words, she joins us. She cries with us. She cries for ‘Aun and Muhammad, Qasim, ‘Abbas, ‘Ali Akbar, ‘Ali Asgar and Husayn, who are her family. She also cries for, and is thankful to those martyrs of Karbala’ who were not related to Husayn. She especially cries for them because they died in Karbala’ helping her son Husayn save Islam.

Among those not related to Husayn were sixteen slaves. Most of them were from Ethiopia. Some belonged to Imam Husayn’s family and others to the companions of the Imam.

On the night before ‘Ashura’, Imam and his companions had freed these slaves and urged them to go away to seek their safety. But none of the sixteen slaves left Imam Husayn. They understood Imam’s mission and preferred to die in Karbala’ with Husayn. They knew they would be rewarded with a place in Heaven.

Amongst them was a slave called John.

Today let us remember Janabe John and cry with Bibi Fatimah for his sacrifice in Karbala’.

Janabe John was sent as a gift from Abu Dharr Ghiffari, to the household of Hazrat ‘Ali and Bib Fatimah. In the company of Hazrat ‘Ali he learnt the tafseer of the Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet. He also knew the Holy Qur’an by heart. When Hazrat ‘Ali was martyred, John stayed with Imam Hassan and after Imam Hassan’s death he stayed on with Imam Husayn.

Janabe John was blessed to be with the three Imams. What a lucky man!

When Imam Husayn left Medina John insisted on joining him.

On the night before ‘Ashura’, John spent the whole night sharpening his sword whilst reciting the Holy Qur’an.

The next day was the tragic day of ‘Ashura’. At dawn ‘Ali Akbar gave the Adhan.

“Allahu Akber! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akber!”

This was the last Adhan by ‘Ali Akbar. It was recited with great emotion. Tears flowed from ‘Ali Akbar’s eyes.

The sun rose from the east. By 10 am, the desert was like a furnace. The friends and family of Husayn

were suffering great hardship. They have been without water for three days now.

Yazid's soldiers blew the trumpets to start the battle.

The battle of Karbala' started.

One-by-one, Imam's friends took permission to go for Jihad.

One-by-one Husayn's companions were martyred. All of them fought bravely and died a hero's death.

Husayn, with his brother 'Abbas and son 'Ali Akbar, went to the battlefield and carried their bodies to the tent.

At midday, after Dhuhr prayers, Janabe John came to Imam Husayn. He stood silently with arms folded.

Imam Husayn looked at John and said:

“John! My friend John! What is the matter?”

“My master! Enough is enough I cannot bear to see any more suffering. I cannot bear to see the children of Bibi Fatimah killed in front of me. Please Master! Allow me to go to the battlefield.”

“John, you are an old man! Jihad is not wajib for an old man like you. No, John, no! I cannot allow you to die.”

John was determined to get permission.

“Master, I know why you are not letting me go to the battlefield. Is it because I am a black slave and you do not want the blood of a black slave to mix with the blood of the Holy family?”

Husayn was deeply shocked to hear this.

“John! My friend John! Do not say that! You know we do not keep such differences.”

“Go, John, go! Allah be with you!”

Husayn himself then helped dress John for the battle. He mounted John on the horse and said:

“Fi aman Allah, John!”

John was very pleased with himself as he headed for the battlefield.

On his way to the battlefield he remembered his time with the Holy Prophet. He remembered how dearly the Prophet loved his grandson, Husayn.

John remembered how the Prophet himself used to nurse Husayn's injuries, sustained whilst playing.

John remembered the day when Husayn climbed on the Prophet's back while he was praying Salat (Prayer). The Holy Prophet stayed in sajda till Husayn came off his back. The Holy Prophet did not want to hurt his beloved grandson.

John's eyes were full of tears as he reached the battlefield.

He spoke to the soldiers on the other side:

“Look at me! You have seen me with the Holy Prophet. Remember the Holy Prophet by looking at me. You say the Holy Prophet is the messenger of Allah. You call yourselves Muslims. Do you think the Holy Prophet will be pleased with you for killing his beloved grandson?”

He continued:

“What has Husayn done to you? He is innocent. Leave him alone. Save yourselves from the Fire of Hell.”

Yazid's soldiers were evil. They were not Muslims. They were not prepared to listen to the truth.

Janabe John was attacked. Arrows were fired from all directions. John fought the Jihad bravely. He sent many to the Fire of Hell.

Alas, how much can an eighty year old man take, thirsty and hungry for three days?

As he fell from his horse, he cried out:

“My Master! Come to see me! Let me see you for the last time.”

Imam Husayn heard John calling him and he rushed to the battlefield. ‘Abbas and ‘Ali Akbar accompanied him.

Husayn, ‘Abbas and ‘Ali Akbar reached the battlefield where John was lying wounded and taking his last breaths.

Imam Husayn placed John's head on his lap. Tears poured from Husayn's eyes.

“John! I am very sorry! You are leaving my home without food or water for three days. John! Please forgive me!”

“Master! Why are you sorry? You have done me a big favour by letting me fight and sacrifice my life for Islam.”

Janabe John continued:

“Look, Master, look! Who has come to receive me? The Holy Prophet himself is here. Bibi Fatimah is

here. Master ‘Ali and Master Hassan are here!”

Janabe John's soul was taken away to Heaven.

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja’oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam al-Husayn!

Majlis 4: Janabe Hurr

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Today is the 4th night of Muharram.

Our majlis continues. We will recite nawhas to mourn the great loss in Karbala’. Our eyes will shed more tears and our matam will increase.

Let us focus our minds on Husayn in Karbala’.

He has hardly 72 men with him. While, day-by-day, Yazid's vulture-like men are gathering in large numbers to kill Husayn.

On 9th Muharram, Yazid's commanders decide to fight Husayn and his men. They blow the trumpets to start the battle.

Husayn was not ready to fight. He called his brother, ‘Abbas, the commander of his small army.

“‘Abbas! Go to the commanders of Yazid's army and ask them to give us one more night. We will be ready tomorrow.”

‘Abbas went with Husayn's request. It was granted. Why did Husayn ask for one more night?

To pray? To spend one more day with his children? To spend one more day with his darling daughter, Sakina?

No Husayn was waiting for a special guest – **Hurr!**

Who was Hurr?

Hurr was a captain of Yazid's army. He was the captain who stopped Husayn from going to Kufa. He,

with his 1,000 men, forced Husayn to come to Karbala'.

Hurr, the name means to be free. Hurr lived up to his name. He freed himself from the Fire of Hell before it was too late.

The events in Karbala' teach us many lessons.

Hurr taught us a lesson. He set an example for us.

We should think of Hurr all the time during our life. Hurr had a choice between Hell and Heaven. He had a choice between glory in this world or happiness in the world hereafter.

It is never too late to ask for forgiveness. Hurr chose Heaven. He chose happiness in the world hereafter.

In our lifetime, there are many times when we have to make a choice between good and bad, between Halal and Haram, between right and wrong, between Hell and Heaven.

Be like Hurr, choose good deeds! Choose Halal things, go for truth and choose to be in Heaven. Happiness and glory in this world are short lived, while the happiness in the world hereafter is everlasting.

On 9th Muharram, Hurr could hear the cry:

“Al-Atash! Al-Atash! Al-Atash!” “Thirst Thirst! Thirst!”

The children in Husayn's camp were crying for water.

Hurr was very restless. He kept on thinking what a grave mistake he had made by bringing Husayn to Karbala'.

“What have I done? Why? Why did I put the son of Fatimah in this position? Will Husayn forgive me? Will Allah forgive me? Will Bibi Fatimah forgive me? How can I ask for forgiveness?”

Hurr could not sleep the whole night. He spent the night weeping and begging Allah to forgive him.

The 10th of Muharram came! It was very early in the morning. Horses in Yazid's camp were hot and uncomfortable.

They were jumping up and down. They could not keep their hooves on the ground because it was so hot.

Yazid's soldiers poured buckets of water on the horses' hooves to cool them and calm them.

Hurr watched as gallons of water was poured on the horses. He thought:

“So much water for the animals, while the children of Bibi Fatimah are crying for a few drops of water. There is so much water for the animals but none for the grandson of the Holy Prophet.”

“Al-Atash! Al-Atash! Al-Atash!”, echoed through Hurr's ears.

Hurr could not take it anymore. He called his son and said:

“My son, I have made a terrible mistake. I have brought such a pious and truthful man here to be killed. Please, my son, quickly take me to Imam Husayn. I want to beg him to forgive me before it is too late. I am ashamed of myself. Will Husayn forgive me? How can I face him?”

Hurr continued:

“My son, before you take me to Husayn, tie my hands and cover my face, so that I do not have to face him while I ask for his forgiveness.”

Hurr's son did what his father had asked him to do. He tied Hurr's hands and covered his face.

Hurr and his son mounted their horses and headed towards Husayn's camp.

‘Abbas, who was guarding the tents, saw the two men coming towards him. He thought they were coming to attack them. He pulled out his sword and warned them to stop where they were.

Imam Husayn also saw the two men.

“‘Abbas, my brother ‘Abbas! Put your sword back! Those two men are not coming to fight us. That is Hurr, my special guest. I have been waiting for him. Let us go and receive them, ‘Abbas.”

Imam Husayn and ‘Abbas went to meet Hurr.

“Welcome, Hurr, welcome. I have been waiting for you.”

Hurr threw himself at Husayn's feet.

“My master, please forgive me. Please forgive me. I am extremely sorry for what I have done. I am ashamed of myself.”

Imam Husayn took Hurr in his arms and said:

“Hurr, my friend, I forgive you. I assure you that my grandfather, my father and my mother have also forgiven you. Come with me, Hurr.”

Imam Husayn, ‘Abbas, Hurr and his son rode back to the tents.

It was Fajr time. ‘Ali Akbar gave Adhan. They all prayed the Fajr Salat (Prayer).

Soon after that, Yazid's soldiers blew the trumpets to start the battle.

Hurr asked Imam Husayn for permission to go and fight the enemies of Islam.

“Hurr, you are my guest. You have only been with me for a short time. I have not been able to look after you properly. I have neither fed you nor have I been able to give you water. At least spend some time with me. No, Hurr, no. I cannot let you die! You are my guest.”

Hurr did not give up. He kept insisting on being the first to go to battle.

Imam Husayn then thought that, the longer Hurr stayed with him, the more he would suffer from thirst and hunger.

Imam Husayn gave permission to Hurr.

“Go, Hurr, go! Fi aman Allah, Hurr.”

Imam Husayn himself mounted Hurr on his horse.

Hurr went to the battlefield.

He was a strong and brave man. He fought the battle gallantly and sent many of Yazid's men to Hell.

Eventually, Hurr came off his horse. Severely wounded, he called for Husayn.

“Master, Master! Come quickly. Let me see you for the last time.”

Hurr was taking his last breaths. Imam Husayn placed Hurr's head on his lap.

“**Fi aman Allah, Hurr.** Go, Hurr, go! My grandfather is waiting for you. My father and mother are waiting for you. We will be joining you soon in Heaven. Fi aman Allah, Hurr”

Imam Husayn, with tears in his eyes, prayed to Allah:

“Ya, Allah! Please forgive Hurr and grant him a place in Heaven.”

Hurr died on Imam Husayn's lap and ‘Abbas and All Akbar helped Imam carry Hurr's body to the tent.

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja’oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam al-Husayn!

Majlis 5: Habib Ibn Mazaahir

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Today is the 5th night of Muharram.

Our majalis continue. We will recite more nawhas to mourn the great loss in Karbala'. Our eyes will shed more tears and our matam will increase.

Day-by-day, the scene in Karbala' is changing. More and more soldiers join the enemy's camp. Thousands have gathered to kill Husayn – the grandson of the Holy Prophet.

Bibi Zainab said to her brother:

“Brother Husayn! Thousands of soldiers are gathering to fight you. We have hardly 72 men with us. Do you not have anyone to come to your help?”

“My sister Zainab, many wanted to join me during the journey from Medina to Karbala'. I politely discouraged them because their intention was not truthful. Many joined and have run away during the journey because they were scared of dying.”

He continued:

“Zainab! My sister! Falsehood can buy many supporters, but truth has only a few friends. The soldiers on the other side have been bought. They prefer happiness in this world than in the world hereafter. My 72 truthful men prefer happiness in the world hereafter and that is why they are with me.”

That night, Imam Husayn wrote a letter to his childhood friend, Habib Ibn Mazaahir, who was in Kufa.

Kufa was blocked off and nobody was allowed to leave.

Habib Ibn Mazaahir did not know the whereabouts of Imam Husayn until the letter from Husayn arrived at his house. At the time he was having breakfast with his wife and a young son.

Habib read the letter from Husayn. He kissed it and tears began to flow from his eyes.

His wife asked him what was wrong. Habib said:

“I have received a letter from my master, Husayn. He has asked me to join him in Karbala'. Yazid's soldiers have surrounded him and are after his life.”

Habib's wife said:

“Habib! Your childhood friend has called you. Your master needs your help. What are you waiting for? Go Habib, before it is too late!”

Habib's worry was how to escape from Kufa without being seen.

He instructed his slave to take his horse to a farm outside the city and to wait for him there. The slave did as he was told.

The slave took Habib's horse to a farm outside the city. He waited for his master. His master was delayed.

The slave started talking to the horse:

“O horse! Master Husayn is in trouble. He needs help. He has asked my master Habib to join him. Master Habib is late. Horse If he does not manage to escape from Kufa, I will ride on you and go to Husayn's help.”

At Asr time, most of the men were in mosque. Habib managed to reach the farm where his horse was waiting.

He quickly mounted his horse and said to his slave:

“Go, my friend, Go! I am freeing you from my services”

“Master! You are not being fair. I have served you faithfully for years. Now, I have a chance to serve the son of Bibi Fatimah, and you are asking me to go. Why are you denying me a place in Heaven'?”

Habib was taken aback by the words of his slave. He was pleased to hear that he had recognised the difference between the truth and the wrongful. He wanted to sacrifice his life for truth.

Habib asked his slave to mount his horse. Together they galloped towards Karbala’.

Habib reached Karbala’ late in the evening. Imam Husayn greeted him with great affection.

Bibi Zainab heard that Habib had come. She asked her maid, Fizza, to convey her greetings to Habib.

When Habib heard that Bibi Zainab had sent greetings to him, he screamed out in grief and anger. He threw his turban down on to the ground. He slapped his face. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he spoke:

“What a sad day! What has happened to the household of Bibi Fatimah? The princess! Grand-daughter of the Holy prophet, the daughter of ‘Ali and Fatimah is sending her greetings to an ordinary person like me! Yazid! You beast, you tyrant! What have you done to the household of Bibi Fatimah?”

Days and nights of Muharram passed by, and ‘Ashura’ came.

At dawn, 'Ali Akbar gave Adhan for the last time.

Yazid's soldiers blew the trumpets to start the battle.

One-by-one, Husayn's companions went to the battlefield and gave their lives for Islam.

Husayn, 'Abbas and 'Ali Akbar were busy from dawn to mid-day, collecting bodies from the battlefield,

Between Dhuhr and Asr time, Habib Ibn Mazaahir came to Husayn. He said:

“My Master, Husayn, allow me to go to the battlefield. Let me sacrifice my life for Islam.”

“Habib, my childhood friend. Stay with me. You give comfort to me, my friend.”

Habib persisted with his request. Eventually Husayn gave his permission.

Husayn mounted his friend, Habib, on the horse. Habib Ibn Mazaahir rode into the battlefield.

He fought bravely but was finally over-powered. He fell to the ground.

As Habib Ibn Mazaahir fell to the ground, an enemy soldier came over and cut off his head.

All the martyrs of Karbala' had their heads cut off, but Habib's was the first to be cut off by the enemy.

Habib's head was not hung on the spearhead like that of the other martyr's. Habib's head was tied to a horse and pulled along the land of Karbala'.

Later on, in Shaam, Habib's head was tied to a horse's neck. A young boy, called Qasim, followed the horse wherever it went.

One day, the man riding the horse asked the young boy Qasim:

“Why are you following me around? What do you want?”

Qasim just looked at the head hanging from the horse's neck. The man asked again:

“Why are you staring at the head”.

“This head is the head of my father, Habib Ibn Mazaahir. please give it to me so that I can bury my father's head.

Habib's head seemed to look at his son and say:

“My son Qasim, you are thinking of burying my head. What about the head of Husayn on that spearhead?”

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam al-Husayn!

Majlis 6: 'Aun & Muhammad

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Today is the 6th night of Muharram.

Our majalis continue. Insha'Allah, our eyes will shed more tears for the martyrs of Karbala'.

We will do more Matam al-Husayn.

“Husayn! Karbala'! Matam! Majaalis!”

When these words echo from the walls of our mosque, a lady in black hijab joins us. She is Bibi Fatimah. She watches us. She cries with us. She collects our tears.

Cry! Cry for Husayn! Inshallah, our tears will not be wasted. Our tears for Husayn will become our weapons against the hardships in our grave and on the Day of Judgement.

Husayn is in Karbala'. He hardly has 72 men with him. They are not all grown up adults. Some of Husayn's men are children. 'Aun and Muhammad, Bibi Zainab's young sons are there. 'Aun is only 13 years old. Muhammad is only 11 years old.

Tonight is the night of these two children, 'Aun – Muhammad.

First, let us send our greetings to those mothers of Karbala' who sacrificed their children for Islam. Lucky are those mothers of Karbala' whose children willingly and happily sacrificed their young lives for Islam.

Tonight, let us first comfort those mothers of Karbala' who were proud to sacrifice their children for Islam.

Mothers of Karbala'! Mother of 'Aun – Muhammad, Bibi Zainab; mother of Qasim, Umm Farwah; mother of 'Ali Akbar, Umm Laila; mother of Al Asghar, Umm Rubab.

Mothers of Karbala' were proud of their children. They loved their children. Of course, like any mother they had the heart of a mother. A mother loves her children the most.

“Why then, did the Mothers of Karbala' let their children die in Karbala'?”

They knew Husayn was on the Right Path. They knew their sacrifices would help save Islam and us from the Fire of Hell.

Mothers of Karbala' squashed their motherly love and sacrificed their children for Husayn – **for Islam!**

How can we, the Husayni, ever forget those Mothers of Karbala'?

Why shouldn't we cry and do matam for the Mothers of Karbala' and their children 'Aun – Muhammad, Qasim, 'Ali Akbar and 'Ali Asghar.

Majaalis al-Karbala' will never die. Matam al-Karbala' will never die. Yazids of yesterday have failed to stop it.

Yazids of today will not be able to stop it. Yazids of tomorrow may try thousands of times to crush it, but Majaalis al-Husayn, Matam al-Karbala', will not die. Allah Himself has promised to keep the name of Husayn alive till the Day of Judgement.

Let us now focus our minds on Karbala'.

Days and nights of Muharram unfolded on the land of Karbala'.

The night of the 9th of Muharram came. 'Ashura' night, a very tragic night and the last night of the martyrs of Karbala'.

No-one in Husayn's camp slept on 'Ashura' night.

Men spent the whole night praying, reciting duas and the Holy Quran.

Mothers of Karbala' were preparing their children.

The next day was 'Ashura' day. The day of the battle of Karbala'.

What were the mothers telling their children? To be careful? To hide and save their lives?

No! They were telling their children to sacrifice their lives.

They were telling them to die! Didn't they love their children? Or course they did! They had the heart of a mother. They were proud of their children. They loved their children very much. Then why were they telling their children to sacrifice their lives? To die?

Because, **THEY KNEW HUSAYN WAS ON THE RIGHT PATH!**

Because, **THEIR SACRIFICE WOULD SAVE ISLAM!**

Because, **Allah would be pleased with them!**

Now, let us listen to what the mothers of Karbala' were telling their children on the night of 'Ashura'.

Umm Laila is with her son, 'Ali Akbar.

"My darling son, 'Ali Akbar, tomorrow is the day of the battle. My son, 'Ali Akbar, remember your life is not more important than the life of your father. Your father's life will be in danger tomorrow. My darling, don't hesitate to give your life to protect your father's life."

Umm Rubab is with her baby, 'Ali Asghar.

"My baby Asghar, I wish you were a young man. I would have sacrificed your life to save your father's life."

Umm Farwah is with her son, Qasim.

"Qasim! My son, my darling. If your father was alive today, he would have sacrificed his life first. My darling, don't embarrass me in front of your father on the Day of Judgement. Qasim, my son, do not hesitate to sacrifice your life to protect your uncle's life."

Umm Kulthoom, Imam Husayn's sister, was sitting alone, weeping.

'Abbas, her brother, heard her crying. He came to her tent.

"My sister, Kulthoom, why are you crying? What's the matter?"

"'Abbas! Tomorrow is the day of sacrifice. I have no children to sacrifice."

"My sister, Kulthoom! Don't cry. 'Abbas is still alive. Tomorrow I will sacrifice my life as a gift on your behalf. I will be your sacrifice,"

Bibi Zainab is with her two sons, 'Aun – Muhammad.

"My sons, 'Aun – Muhammad, tomorrow is the day of battle. Your uncle, Husayn's life will be in danger. My darlings, if anything happens to Uncle Husayn, while you are still alive, I will be filled with shame. My 'Aun – Muhammad, I will not be able to face your grandmother, Bibi Fatimah, on the Day of Judgement. Please, my dearest sons, don't let me down. Be the first ones to sacrifice your lives."

'Ashura' came.

'Ali Akbar gave the Adhan. Imam Husayn led the Fajr prayers.

The day was already very hot. The battle began.

Imam Husayn's army of 72 thirsty and hungry men, against 20,000 of Yazid's men.

Hurr went to the battlefield and was martyred by Yazid's beasts.

One-by-one, Husayn's companions went to the battlefield and were killed.

Since dawn, Bibi Zainab was watching the bodies being brought to the tent – one-by-one.

She called her sons, 'Aun – Muhammad.

“My sons, what are you waiting for? Why have you not been to the battlefield yet? Go and fight the enemies of Islam.”

“Mother, since dawn, we have been to Uncle Husayn many times for permission to fight. He keeps refusing us. Mother, you help us. Ask Uncle Husayn to give us permission to fight Jihad.”

Bibi Zainab called her brother, Husayn, to her tent.

“Brother Husayn! I have been like a mother to you, haven't I? Husayn, your mother is begging you to let 'Aun – Muhammad go to the battlefield.”

“Zainab, my sister, Jihad is not wajib on children. How can I let my sister's sons be killed while I am still alive? No, Zainab, no!”

“Husayn, my brother! If 'Ali Akbar dies before 'Aun– Muhammad, how will I be able to face our mother on the Day of Judgement. My brother, I will be filled with shame. Please, brother! Let them go.”

Husayn saw the disappointment on Zainab's face. Her eyes were filled with tears.

Husayn put his arms around 'Aun – Muhammad and led them to their horses. He kissed them and helped them mount their horses.

“Go, go and show those beastly men that you have the blood of Ja'far and 'Ali in your veins.”

'Aun – Muhammad looked at their mother and said:

“ Fi aman Allah, mother! Fi aman Allah, mother!”

“Fi aman Allah, my sons.”

'Aun – Muhammad rode out on to the battlefield. They fought bravely together. They were the grandsons of Ja'far and 'Ali. They pushed the enemies back. Hundreds of Yazid's men were killed.

'Abbas and Husayn watched the two brothers fight so fiercely despite being thirsty for three days.

'Abbas, who had trained 'Aun – Muhammad in the art of sword fighting, was filled with pride.

Umar Saad, Yazid's commander, got worried. He ordered his soldiers to separate the two brothers and

then attack them from all sides.

‘Aun – Muhammad were separated. Each one was then surrounded by Yazid's soldiers.

The two brothers were attacked by horsemen running from one side to another. ‘Aun – Muhammad were attacked with arrows, swords, spears and daggers from all sides.

How much can two young children, thirsty and hungry for three days take? As they fell, they called out for their uncle.

'Uncle! Come quickly! Uncle, come and help us.”

Husayn and ‘Abbas rushed to the battlefield.

The children were severely wounded. They were taking their last breaths.

“Uncle, give our salaam to our mother. Uncle, please tell our mother that just as she had told us, we did not go towards the river”.

Imam Husayn and ‘Abbas carried the two young bodies to the tent.

‘Ali Akbar cried out:

My brothers, ‘Aun – Muhammad, have been killed.”

Zainab heard the cry from her tent. She did not cry. She laid her muslah and performed a sajdah.

Ya, Allah I thank you for accepting my sacrifice. Ya, Allah! I am proud of my two sons who have given their lives for Islam!”

‘Aun – Muhammad’s bodies were laid on the floor. The ladies gathered around. They cried and did matam.

“ Ya ‘Aunna, ya Muhammada! Ya ‘Aunna, ya Muhammada!”

Zainab did not cry. She did not do matam for ‘Aun– Muhammad.

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja’oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam al-Husayn!

Majlis 7: Hazrat Qasim

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Tonight is the night of 7th Muharram. Our Muharram majalis continues. We shall shed more tears for Karbala'. We will continue our matam. We will give money in the name of Hazrat Qasim. Volunteers will serve the mourners of Karbala'.

Tears! Matam! Donations! Volunteers!

Bibi Fatimah is watching all of us. Everyone will be rewarded on the Day of Judgement.

Our tears, our matam, our donations, and our volunteer work for Husayn will not be wasted. Husayn will reward us. Bibi Fatimah will protect us. Allah will be pleased with us.

Husayn, his companions and his family are in Karbala'.

The 7th of Muharram is a very tragic day in the event of Karbala'.

On this day, water was stopped from reaching Husayn's camp. It was very hot in Karbala'. As the days went by, the children became very thirsty.

The cry of, "Al-Atash! Al-Atash! Al-Atash!" became more frequent.

Tonight is the night of **Shah Qasim**, the 13 year old son of Imam Hassan and Umm Farwah.

'Ashura' came to the land of Karbala'.

'Ali Akbar gave the Fajr Adhan. Everyone prayed the Fajr Salat (Prayer).

One-by-one Husayn's companions went to the battlefield and gave their life for Islam. They all became Martyrs! Shaheed! Shaheed Al- Karbala'!

By Zuhr time, Imam Husayn was left with only his family, 'Aun-Muhammad. Qasim, 'Ali Akbar and 'Abbas.

The companions of Imam Husayn whilst they were alive did not let Imam Husayn's family go to the battlefield.

No one was left now.

'Aun - Muhammad were keen to help their uncle save Islam. They went to the battlefield and never returned.

Qasim took permission from his mother, Umm Farwah, to fight.

Then he went to his uncle, Husayn to ask for his permission to fight.

How can Husayn give permission to his brother's son to die? How can he allow a young child to die?

“Qasim, you are young. You are the only child of your mother. Qasim, you are my brother's son. I have promised my brother to look after you. My darling Qasim, you are the image of my brother. You remind me of Hassan. No, Qasim, no. I cannot allow you to die.”

Qasim was very disappointed. He went to his mother for help. His mother reminded him of the taveez his father had tied to his arm.

Qasim opened the taveez, and placed inside found a letter for Husayn. Qasim was pleased to see the letter. He took the letter to his uncle, Husayn.

Husayn read the letter from his brother, Hassan:

“Brother Husayn, a day will come when Islam will need to be saved by sacrifice. Husayn, I will not be alive on that day, however my son, Qasim will be there. It is my wish that Qasim should represent me on that day.”

“My dearest Qasim how can I stop you now. Go, Qasim, go.” He took Qasim to Bibi Zainab.

“Zainab, bring me Hassan's abaa and his turban.” Husayn dressed Qasim with Hassan's abaa (cloak) and turban.

“Zainab! Look at Qasim, doesn't he look handsome? He looks just like our brother Hassan.”

Tears flowed from Husayn's and Zainab's eyes as they remembered their brother.

Husayn then dressed Qasim with the battlefield uniform and gave him the weapons.

A young child with adult weapons! Qasim was so young that his sword touched the ground as he walked.

He could not mount his horse on his own. ‘Abbas, his uncle helped him mount the horse.

The young fighter Qasim rode to the battlefield. A rider whose feet did not reach the stirrups, the foot straps on the horse, but he was keen to save Islam.

He was the young son of Hasan, the grandson of ‘Ali and he was trained by ‘Abbas.

Qasim fought gallantly, he fought a battle history will never forget. The enemy could not overpower him. One of Yazid's cowardly soldiers came from behind and hit Qasim on the head with a sword.

Qasim was covered in blood.

The young Qasim, thirsty for three days, could not take it anymore. He fell from his horse. As he fell he cried out;

“O, Uncle! Come Quickly! Help me, Uncle!”

Husayn and ‘Abbas rushed to the battlefield.

Dreadful events then took place. The enemies of Islam thought that Husayn and ‘Abbas were coming to attack them. They got scared. There was confusion.

Horses ran from one side to another, from here to there! From there to here!

The horses ran over Qasim, who was lying wounded on the ground. He got trampled on.

Husayn and ‘Abbas were searching for Qasim.

My darling Qasim, where are you? Qasim! speak to your uncle. Qasim! Qasim! Where are you my son?”

Qasim could not reply. Qasim had stopped breathing.

When the enemies withdraw, what did Husayn see?

Qasim was not in one piece. The horses had trodden on him and torn him to pieces.

Imagine Husayn's feelings! His brother, Hasan's son lying trampled into pieces.

Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!

What shall Husayn do now? What shall Husayn do now'?

Qasim torn into pieces! His arms and legs scattered on the sand of Karbala’.

Husayn took off his abaya and spread it on the ground. He gathered the pieces of Qasim’s body and placed them on his abaya.

He then tied the abaya into a bundle.

‘Abbas helped Husayn carry Qasim's trampled body.

When Husayn reached the camp, he cried out:

“Z-A-I-N-A-B! Help m Zainab. My heart is broken, Zainab. I have no strength left to carry Qasim's body to the tent. Zainab, ask Amma Fizza to help you take Qasim to the tent.”

The ladies cried and did matam for Qasim.

“Ya Qasima! Ya Qasima! Ya Qasima!”

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam al-Husayn!

Majlis 8: Hazrat ‘Abbas

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Tonight is the night of 8th of Muharram.

Surely tonight, we will shed more tears. We will do more matam.

Tonight is a very tragic night, it is the night of Hazrat ‘Abbas.

‘Abbas! Who was ‘Abbas?

‘Abbas, the Captain; ‘Abbas, the Commander; ‘Abbas, the brave and strong warrior; ‘Abbas, the Alamder – flag bearer; ‘Abbas, the faithful brother; ‘Abbas, the guardian of Umm Kulthoom and Bibi Zainab; ‘Abbas, Sakina's dearest uncle; ‘Abbas, son of Ummul Baneen; ‘Abbas, the lion son of ‘Ali.

‘Abbas was like his father, ‘Ali. He had all the qualities of his great father. ‘Abbas was brave, strong, wise, loving, obedient and faithful.

His father, ‘Ali, on his dying bed, gave ‘Abbas' hand to Husayn said:

My son ‘Abbas, Husayn is the son of Bibi Fatimah. ‘Abbas, you are my son. ‘Abbas, Husayn is your master. You are Husayn's slave. ‘Abbas, take care of Husayn.”

Since that day, ‘Abbas had fulfilled Husayn's every wish like a faithful slave.

‘Abbas treated Husayn like his master.

He always treated Bibi Kulthoom and Bibi Zainab with great respect.

He followed Husayn like a shadow.

‘Abbas was with Husayn in Karbala’.

Husayn knew 'Abbas was like their father, 'Ali, a brave and strong warrior.

He would tell 'Abbas:

“My brother 'Abbas keep your sword in its place. Don't take your sword out to fight. We have come to save Islam. 'Abbas, we have come to teach true Islam. We will teach Islam – not with our swords but with our character. Patience 'Abbas, patience”

When Yazid's men pulled out Husayn's tents from the river bank, 'Abbas became very angry. He pulled out his sword and wanted to fight there and then. Husayn said:

“No 'Abbas, no! Be patient. We have not come here to fight, 'Abbas.

Imagine a warrior like 'Abbas, asked not to pull his sword out, after being treated so badly. That needs great patience.

'Ashura' came. 'Ali Akbar gave his last Adhan. Everyone in Husayn's camp prayed Fajr Salat (Prayer).

The battle of Karbala' began. One-by-one, Husayn's companions went to the battlefield and were martyred.

Everytime a body was brought to the tent, 'Abbas went to Husayn and said:

Master, now allow me to go to the battlefield. Enough, Master, enough. Let me go and fight those beastly men, Master.”

Every time, Husayn calmed 'Abbas down by saying:

“No 'Abbas, no! How can I let you go? You are the captain of my army. You are my right hand man, 'Abbas. You are my support, 'Abbas. Where would I be without you, 'Abbas? No 'Abbas, no.”

'Abbas' three brothers went to the battlefield and were martyred.

'Aun – Muhammad went to the battlefield and were martyred.

Qasim went. His body was trampled and torn to pieces,

'Abbas became very restless and could not take it anymore. Somehow, he must get permission.

'Abbas walked to Umm Kulthoom and Zainab's tent and then turned back.

He knew they won't let him go.

'Abbas walked to Husayn's tent several times and back again. How could he persuade Husayn to let him go?

‘Abbas is restless. ‘Abbas wants permission to fight.

Just then, little Sakina, with her mashk, came to ‘Abbas. “Uncle ‘Abbas, look at my mashk. It is very dry. Al-Atash, uncle. Sakina is very thirsty, uncle ‘Abbas.”

‘Abbas thought of a way to get permission from Husayn.

He picked up little Sakina and went to Husayn's tent.

‘Abbas sat in front of Husayn, with Sakina on his lap.

‘Abbas didn't have to say anything.

Husayn looked at ‘Abbas and then at Sakina and her mashk.

Husayn understood ‘Abbas' expression.

“‘Abbas, how can I say no, now? You have brought Sakina with you. Go ‘Abbas, go. Go and fill Sakina's mashk with water.

One request, ‘Abbas, leave your sword with me!

Remember, ‘Abbas, you are not going to the fight. You are just going to get water for Sakina.”

‘Abbas gave his sword to Husayn. He kissed Sakina and put her down. He said:

“Sakina, pray for me, pray that I get water for you.”

‘Abbas then went to Zainab.

“Sister Zainab, give me permission to go to the battlefield.”

“Brother ‘Abbas, I used to hear that my hijab would be looted. ‘Abbas, I used to say, how dare could anyone snatch my hijab when I have eighteen brothers. Now ‘Abbas, that you are going, I believe that my hijab will really be looted.”

‘Abbas went to the battlefield.

In one hand ‘Abbas carried the Alam of Husayn's army and in the other he held a spear and Sakina's mashk. He had no sword to fight but had a spear for protection. He headed for River Furaat.

Yazid's soldiers saw ‘Abbas coming. They had seen ‘Abbas fight and knew he was like his father, ‘Ali. They were scared,

The few who dared to attack ‘Abbas were killed by his spear.

‘Abbas reached the river and filled Sakina's mashk.

He then asked his faithful horse to drink water. The horse looked towards Husayn's camp and seemed to say:

“Master, are you sure that the water will reach Sakina? Master, how can I drink when Sakina and ‘Ali Asghar are thirsty? Let us first give them water, and then I will drink some.”

‘Abbas, with his Alam in one hand and his spear and Sakina's water-filled mashk in the other, rode back.

Umar Saad, Yazid's commander, ordered his men to stop ‘Abbas taking water to Husayn's tents.

The enemies surrounded ‘Abbas. They fired arrows from all directions.

‘Abbas was hit with many arrows. He was bleeding.

Just then, a soldier came from behind and struck his sword on ‘Abbas' shoulder. ‘Abbas gripped the mashk with his teeth, as his arm and spear fell to the ground.

Another soldier came and struck his sword into ‘Abbas' other shoulder. The Alam and the other arm fell to the ground.

Imagine, ‘Abbas on his horse – No arms – holding Sakina's mashk between his teeth.

Water must reach Sakina. ‘Abbas, still had the strength to go on.

Sakina's mashk is still filled with water.

An arrow was shot. It hit Sakina's mashk. The water began to pour out.

Poor ‘Abbas lost all his strength as the water poured out from Sakina's mashk. He fell from his horse and cried out:

“Master, come to me. Master let me see you for the last time.”

Husayn heard ‘Abbas. He was heartbroken. With his hands on his back he cried out:

“Son, ‘Ali Akbar, my back is gone. My support is gone. My Alamdar is gone.”

Husayn and ‘Ali Akbar rushed to the battlefield.

Husayn saw his brother lying on the ground.

Imagine how Husayn felt when he saw his brother lying on the ground – covered with blood, both arms severed.

He placed 'Abbas' head on his lap.

My brother, 'Abbas? You are leaving me too. 'Abbas, what will I do without you? My support, 'Abbas, I am finished without you. My brother 'Abbas, can I do anything for you?"

"Yes, Master. When I came to this world, I saw your face first. Now, as I am going from this world, Master, I would like to see your face for the last time."

'Abbas, why can't you see me?"

"Master, my eyes are covered with blood."

Imam Husayn cleaned 'Abbas' eyes. 'Abbas gazed at Husayn.

"'Abbas, I have a wish too. All your life you have called me Master. Once, brother 'Abbas, just once, call me brother."

'Abbas said:

"Husayn, my brother, do not take my body to the tents. I am ashamed of myself. I don't want Sakina to see me. I don't want my sisters Kulthoom and Zainab to see me like this. I don't want Kulthoom and Zainab to cry."

'Abbas took his last breath and died on Husayn's lap.

Poor Husayn? What should he do now?

Husayn picked up the Alam and tied Sakina's mashk to it.

Sakina saw the Alam coming. She shouted:

"Children, come children. My uncle 'Abbas is coming with water. I will give all of you water. Come children, come."

Husayn reached the tent. He cried out:

"Z-A-I-N-A-B.....Help me, Zainab.....The Alam has come.....But the Alamdar has not..."

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam al-Husayn!

Majlis 9: Hazrat 'Ali Akbar

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Tonight is the night of 9th Muharram.

It is the second night without water.

It is very hot in Karbala'. Children cannot sleep.

How can they? They are very thirsty and hungry.

The sound of "Al-Atash! Al-Atash! Al-Atash!" breaks Husayn's heart.

What can Husayn do? He is patient.

For the sake of Allah, he is bearing it all.

More is to come. Husayn's patience and sacrifice will be tested further.

On 'Ashura' day.....Husayn sacrificed all his faithful friends but remained patient.

'Aun – Muhammad were killed. Yet Husayn remained patient.

Qasim was torn to pieces. Yet Husayn remained patient.

'Abbas' arms were severed. Yet Husayn remained patient.

How much can Husayn bear? How much more can he sacrifice?

My fellow Husayni for the sake of Islam, Husayn, our Imam, sacrificed the most precious thing in his life

– His teenage son, his 18 year-old son – 'Ali Akbar!

Tonight, my fellow Husayni, we will cry more and we will do more matam.

Bibi Fatimah will cry with us. Mawla 'Ali will join us. Husayn will pray with us. Husayn and Zainab will cry with us.

Tonight, is the night of the teenage son of Husayn, the life of Husayn, the darling of Zainab and Umm Laila, the image of the Holy Prophet – Tonight is the night of 'Ali Akbar!

The day of 'Ashura' unfolded on the land of Karbala'. It was Fajr time. Husayn called his son, 'Ali Akbar.

"My son, 'Ali Akbar, go and give the Adhan. 'Ali Akbar I want to hear the voice of my grandfather. 'Ali

Akbar, you sound so much like your great grandfather, the Holy Prophet.”

“Allahu–Akbar, Allahu–Akbar…….”

‘Ali Akbar's Adhan echoed through the land of Karbala’.

‘Ali Akbar's last Adhan…….It was no ordinary Adhan…….

It was filled with emotion…

Husayn began to cry. He remembered his grandfather.

All the ladies in the tents began to cry. Zainab burst into tears.

Everyone prayed Fajr Salat (Prayer).

Soon after, the battle of Karbala’ began.

One–by–one, Husayn's companions went to the battlefield and were martyred.

‘Aun – Muhammad went. They were martyred too.

Qasim went. He was torn to pieces.

‘Ali Akbar and ‘Abbas helped Husayn, carry the bodies to the tent.

Sakina was thirsty. ‘Abbas went to get water. ‘Abbas did not come back.

Husayn is alone with ‘Ali Akbar.

Heartbroken. Full of grief! So many dead in one day.

How much can Husayn take? Enough – enough – enough.

No, my fellow Husayni more is to come. The greatest sacrifice in history, is to come…….

‘Ali Akbar – the life of Husayn – the teenage son of Husayn – the darling of Husayn – came to his father and said:

“Father, may I now have permission to go for Jihad?”

Allahu Akbar! My fellow Husayni, imagine the scene! Put your hand on your heart and think of what is happening?

A teenage son has come to his old father for permission to DIE! How does a father allow his teenage son – 18 years old – to die?

Poor Husayn! What does he do now? How does he allow his teenage darling son to die?

Husayn is helpless. His promise to Allah had to be honoured.

“My son, ‘Ali Akbar, go, you have my permission, but Akbar, my darling, go and ask permission from your mother. Go and ask permission from Zainab, your auntie who has brought you up. Go, son, go.”

‘Ali Akbar took permission from his mother, Umm Laila.

‘Ali Akbar then went to his auntie, Zainab.

“Auntie Zainab, tell me one thing. Whose life is more important? Your ‘Ali Akbar's, or Bibi Fatimah's son, Husayn's?”

“My son, ‘Ali Akbar, I would sacrifice a thousand lives to save Bibi Fatimah's son – Husayn's life.

Then auntie, do not stop me. Grant me permission. No one is left to save Husayn. Let me go, auntie, let me go.”

“Bismillah, my son. Go my ‘Ali Akbar, go.”

‘Ali Akbar mounted his horse.

Husayn was crying. Umm Laila was crying. Bibi Kulthoom was crying. Zainab was crying.

“Fi aman Allah, mother. Fi aman Allah, father. Fi aman Allah, auntie Kulthoom. Fi aman Allah, auntie Zainab.”

‘Ali Akbar rode to the battlefield.

He heard footsteps following him. He stopped and looked back. What did he see?

His father Husayn, was following him.

With his hands on his back, Husayn was running behind ‘Ali Akbar.

“Father, where are you going? Please father, go back to the tent.”

“My son ‘Ali Akbar, I want to see you as long as I can. I will stop here, my son, but promise me, you will keep on looking back after every few steps. Akbar, my darling, your old father wants to see you as long as he can.”

‘Ali Akbar continued.....He looked back every few seconds. Husayn was there watching him.

He reached the battlefield.

'Ali Akbar fought bravely. He killed many well-known warriors.

'Ali Akbar came back to his father.

"Father, did you see me fight? I wish uncle 'Abbas was here to see me. Father, a few drops of water....., father, I am very thirsty. If I could just have a little water, I would send the entire army of Yazid to Hell."

"My son. come near me. Touch my tongue. See if you can get some comfort from me."

'Ali Akbar touched Husayn's tongue.

"Father, your mouth is much drier than mine. Father, you must be more thirsty than myself."

'Ali Akbar returned to the battlefield.

Umar Saad ordered his soldiers to kill 'Ali Akbar.

While a few soldiers together attacked 'Ali Akbar, one crept up to him and thrust a spear into 'Ali Akbar's chest.

Allahu Akbar! The spear penetrated Akbar's chest. The handle broke. A sharp blade stuck into Akbar's heart. He felt faint.

'Ali Akbar fell off his horse. He cried out:

"O Father, accept my last salaam to you."

'Ali Akbar did not call his father to come to see him.

Husayn was alone and 'Ali Akbar did not want to bother his old father.

Husayn rushed to the battlefield.

"My son, my darling, my 'Ali Akbar, where are you? Speak to your father, my son. Akbar..... Akbar.... My darling... Where are you?"

Husayn saw his son, 'Ali Akbar. His son was lying on the sands of Karbala' with both his hands on his chest.

'Ali Akbar was taking his last breaths.

Poor Husayn! What shall Husayn do now? A father facing his teenage son, dying!

He placed 'Ali Akbar's head on his lap.

“My son, ‘Ali Akbar, my darling, ‘Ali Akbar, why are you covering your chest? My son, is your chest hurting? Let me look at it, my son.”

“No, father, no! Don't remove my hands from my chest. You will not be able to bear it, father.”

Husayn gently moved ‘Ali Akbar's hands.

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar! What did Husayn see?

What did a father see?

The blade of the spear stuck deep into ‘Ali Akbar's chest. ‘Ali Akbar was in a lot of pain.

What shall Husayn do now? What shall Husayn do now?

Husayn put both his hands on the blade and looked towards Najaf. He cried out loudly:

“Baba, Ya Mushkil Khusha! Help Me!... Baba! It was easy for you to pull out the gates of Khyber... Baba! It is difficult for me to pull out the blade from my son's chest..... Baba! Help me, Baba!”

With a cry of “Ya ‘Ali”, Husayn pulled the blade out.

Blood gushed out of ‘Ali Akbar's chest. Husayn was covered with his son, ‘Ali Akbar's blood.

‘Ali Akbar took his last breath.

What does Husayn do now?

“Aun – Muhammad, help me carry your brother's body. Qasim, help me. ‘Abbas, I need your help. Where are you, ‘Abbas?”

Husayn was alone. How does he carry ‘Ali Akbar's body?

Husayn alone could not carry ‘Ali Akbar's body.

He put ‘Ali Akbar's hands around his neck.....

Husayn carried his 18 year old son's body with great difficulty.

‘Ali Akbar's feet dangled, touching the sand of Karbala’.

Poor Husayn! So much patience! So much sacrifice!

As he reached the tent.....he cried out:

“Z-A - I - N - A - B.....Help me, Zainab. Take our ‘Ali Akbar.”

“U-M-M-E - L-A-I-L-A.....Help me. Take your darling....

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam al-Husayn!

Majlis 10: Hazrat 'Ali Asghar

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Tonight is the 10th night of Muharram. Tonight is the eve of 'Ashura'. A very tragic night. A very sad night. The last night for the 72 martyrs of Karbala'.

The last night for brothers to be with their sisters. The last night for sisters to be with their brothers. The last night for fathers to be with their children. The last night for mothers to be with their children. The last night for little Sakina to be with her beloved uncle 'Abbas and dearest father Husayn.

Indeed, a night never to be forgotten.

A night to shed more tears. A night to do more matam.

The Night of 'Ashura' on the Land of Karbala'

Mothers are sitting with their children. Umm Laila is with 'Ali Akbar, Umm Farwah is with Qasim, Bibi Zainab is with 'Aun- Muhammad.

What are these mothers of Karbala' telling their beloved children?

They are preparing them for Jihad. They are preparing them to sacrifice their lives. Preparing them to die!

Why? Because they know Husayn is on the right path. The right path to save Islam!

Let us send our salaams to those mothers of Karbala' for sacrificing their most precious for Islam.

'Abbas the Alamdar! Like every night, 'Abbas was guarding the camp.

Where was Husayn?

Husayn had gathered all his friends and companions in his tent.

“My friends, my companions, tonight is the last night. Tomorrow is the day of ‘Ashura’. Tomorrow is the day of Shahadat – martyrdom! None of us will be spared by Yazid's soldiers.”

Imam Husayn continued:

“My friends, my companions, you have suffered enough. There is still time to save your lives. Escape in the darkness of the night. I will have no objections. I will forgive you. Go, my friends! Go, my companions!”

Imam Husayn blew the candles off. There was total darkness.

Anyone could have escaped without being seen or embarrassed.

After a while, Husayn lit the candles.

How many ran away? One? Two? Five? Ten?

No one! Why did they not run away to save their lives?

Because, my fellow Husayni, they had recognised the truth.

Because they knew Husayn was right.

Because they knew Husayn was on the true path.

Because they knew their sacrifice would save Islam.

Husayn was lucky to be blessed with true friends and best companions, – faithful, truthful and pious!

Our greetings to those 72 martyrs of Karbala’ for their great sacrifice for Islam.

Imam Husayn made the biggest sacrifice.

In one day, he sacrificed his brothers, nephews and children on the land of Karbala’.

He remained patient after seeing so many dead in one day.

Did Husayn complain?

No, never!

On the contrary, after sacrificing his 18 year old son ‘Ali Akbar he looked up at the sky and said:

“Ya Allah, give me more patience. Ya Allah, is there anything else I can give for Your sake?”

Allah's will was Husayn's command. Husayn was prepared and willing to sacrifice his family. He never

prayed to Allah to save his family.

Instead he prayed for Patience! Patience! And more Patience!

Allah! What a big Heart Husayn had in Karbala'!

'Aun – Muhammad had been killed. Qasim was trodden to pieces. 'Abbas was lying on the bank of River Furaat. 'Ali Akbar's chest was torn open with a spear.

Is there anymore to sacrifice?

Tonight is the night of 'Ali Asghar. The little Mujahed – the little soldier and the youngest Shaheed.

'Ashura' came to the land of Karbala'.

One-by-one, Husayn's friends and companions were martyred.

'Aun – Muhammad, Qasim, 'Abbas and 'Ali Akbar went to the battlefield and were martyred.

By Asr time Husayn was left alone.

The time had come for Husayn to go to the battlefield. Husayn said Fi aman Allah to everyone.

Husayn, with his sword Zulfikar on his waist, mounted Zuljiana, his horse.

Husayn rode his horse to a small mount, he then called out loudly:

“Is there anyone to help me? Is there anyone to help the grandson of the Holy Prophet?”

With this call, the grandson of the Holy Prophet, was giving one last chance to Yazid's men, the men who called themselves Muslims – the followers of the Holy Prophet.

Hypocrites! That's what Yazid's men were.

No one answered Husayn's last call. But Husayn heard the sound of crying coming from his camp.

Husayn turned around and returned to his tents.

“Zainab, your brother is still alive. Why are you crying?”

“My brother Husayn, when you called out, **“Is there anyone to help me?”**, 'Ali Asghar fell from his cradle.”

Husayn knew what 'Ali Asghar was trying to say.

Husayn went to Umm Rubab. 'Ali Asghar was on her lap.

He was crying and Umm Rubab was trying to comfort him.

Husayn picked up baby 'Ali Asghar and whispered in his ear. 'Ali Asghar stopped crying. He looked up at his father and smiled.

“Umm Rubab, I am taking 'Ali Asghar to the battlefield with me so that I can get some water for him.”

What did Husayn whisper in 'Ali Asghar's ear? What made 'Ali Asghar stop crying, and to smile? Husayn had whispered:

“My son, 'Ali Asghar, do you want to come to the battlefield with me? Asghar, do you want to show your strength on the battlefield? Come, let us go, my little Majaheed, my little soldier, Asghar.”

Umm Rubab changed 'Ali Asghar's clothes.

Imam Husayn carried 'Ali Asghar to the battlefield. It was very hot. 'Ali Asghar was thirsty. Husayn covered baby 'Ali Asghar with his abaa, to protect him from the scorching sun.

Yazid's men saw Husayn approaching with something in his hand.

“Look, Husayn is coming with the Quran. He has no one left to help him. With the help of the Quran he is hoping to win.”

Husayn walked to Yazid's soldiers. By moving his abaa he uncovered 'Ali Asghar.

He held 'Ali Asghar high with both his hands and said:

“O soldiers of Yazid, you feel I have offended you, but what has this little child done to you? His mother's milk has dried up. He has not had a drop of water for three days. He is dying of thirst. I beg you to give water to this innocent little child.”

Not one of Yazid's soldiers brought any water for 'Ali Asghar.

Once more Imam Husayn begged:

Maybe you think that when you bring water for this child, I will drink it too. I will put this little child on the ground. You can come and give him water yourself.”

Husayn placed 'Ali Asghar on the burning sand of Karbala'.

'Ali Asghar lay quietly on the hot sand of Karbala'. His turned his head and stared at Yazid's men.

No water came for 'Ali Asghar.

Husayn picked up 'Ali Asghar and said:

“My son ‘Ali Asghar, my darling, you are too young to fight with a sword or a spear. My little Mujaheed, my little soldier, you are a grandson of ‘Ali. ‘Ali Asghar, fight your Jihad with your tongue.”

Little Asghar stuck his dry tongue out and moved it over his dry lips looking towards Yazid's men. He fought Jihad with his tongue.

The little soldier shot a strange arrow – his dry tongue.

It hit the hearts of Yazid's soldiers who had children of their own. They became restless. Some started crying.

They spoke amongst themselves:

“Husayn is saying the truth. What has this child done to us? Why is he punished like this? Let us give him some water.”

Umar Saad got worried that his soldiers will turn against him.

The little soldier's fight was very effective. Little ‘Ali Asghar was fighting Jihad his way.

Umar Saad ordered his best archer:

“Hurmullah! What are you waiting for? Silence the little child! Don't you know he is a grandson of ‘Ali? Hurry, shoot your arrow, before it is too late.”

Hurmullah aimed an arrow at ‘Ali Asghar. A small arrow for a little child? No! An arrow not with one head, not with two heads, but with three sharp heads.

Why? Why an arrow with three heads for such a small child?

My fellow Husayni! You will not be able to stop crying when you hear what happened next.

An arrow with three sharp heads flew across the desert of Karbala'. It was heading for ‘Ali Asghar. Husayn saw the arrow coming. He covered ‘Ali Asghar with his arms.

The arrow reached Husayn.

The arrow went through Husayn's arm and lodged in the tiny neck of ‘Ali Asghar.

‘Ali Asghar died instantly.

Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!

Poor Husayn, the poor father, who came to get water for his little child.

Instead of water, ‘Ali Asghar got an arrow in his neck.

What shall Husayn do now? What shall Husayn do now?

Husayn gently pulled the arrow from 'Ali Asghar's tiny neck.

My fellow Husayni, put your hand on your heart and imagine the scene – a father removing an arrow from his child's neck. What a tragic scene!

Blood gushed out from 'Ali Asghar's neck.

A voice came from the ground:

“No, Husayn, do not let 'Ali Asghar's blood fall to the ground, otherwise no crops will ever grow from this earth.” Husayn looked up at the sky.

A voice came from the sky:

“No Husayn, do not let the blood gush towards the sky, otherwise, no drop of rain will ever fall from this sky.”

What shall Husayn do now? What shall Husayn do now?

The sky is refusing, the earth is not happy to accept Asghar's blood.

Poor Husayn wiped 'Ali Asghar's blood on his face.

Husayn started walking towards his tents.

He saw 'Ali Asghar's mother – Umm Rubab – standing by his tent. A mother anxiously waiting for her baby.

Husayn thought:

“How can I face Umm Rubab? What shall I tell her? How can I tell her that her baby has been martyred without water? How? How?”

Seven times, Husayn went forward and then turned back,

Saying:

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

He finally reached the tent where Umm Rubab was standing. “Rubab, come and take your 'Ali Asghar. Rubab, your little soldier has died for the sake of Allah.”

Umm Rubab took her little child, 'Ali Asghar. She hugged him and cried her heart out.

“Come with me Rubab. Enough, Rubab, enough. Let us bury our baby Asghar”

Husayn and Umm Rubab walked to the back of the tents.

Husayn dug a small grave with his sword, the Zulfikar.

Umm Rubab placed ‘Ali Asghar in the small grave.

My fellow Husayni why should we not cry tonight? Why should we not do matam tonight?

Have we ever heard of any other father and mother digging a grave and burying their own child?

Where can Husayn get water to sprinkle on ‘Ali Asghar's grave? There is no water to sprinkle on ‘Ali Asghar's grave.

Husayn sat by the grave crying.

Tears poured on the grave. ‘Ali Asghar's grave was sprinkled with Husayn's tears.

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Majlis 11: Imam Husayn

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Today is ‘Ashura’ day! Today is the day of the 10th of Muharram.

‘Ashura’ day is the most tragic day for all Muslims, in particular Shi'as.

The Day of ‘Ashura’...

The day, when 72 brave and faithful men were martyred... The day of great sacrifice... The day Islam was saved from destruction.

The Day of ‘Ashura’...

The day the Holy Prophet leaves Heaven to join us in mourning, the day Mawla ‘Ali leaves Heaven.....The day Bibi Fatimah leaves Heaven, to cry with us, for the 72 martyrs.

The Day of ‘Ashura’.....A very sad day.....A day full of tragedy.

What shall we recite today? Which tragedy shall we remember today? So much suffering! So many dead! So much sacrifice! So much patience!

Who shall we cry for today? Who shall we do matam for today?

So much to cry for. So much to do matam for.

My friends, if we do not cry today, when else would we cry?

If we do not do matam today, when else would we do matam?

Traditionally, we recite the Shahadat of Imam Husayn today. My fellow Husayni! I have neither the courage nor the heart to recite in detail the Shahadat of Imam Husayn.

Bibi Fatimah is with us. She would like us to recite the last farewell of Husayn from Sakina, Zainab, Kulthoom and the other ladies.

'Ashura' came to the land of Karbala'.

'Ali Akbar gave the Adhan. Everyone prayed Fajr Salat (Prayer).

Yazid's men blew the trumpets to start the battle.

The battle began.

One-by-one, Husayn's friends and companions went to the battlefield and gave their lives for Islam.

By Zuhr time, all the friends and companions were martyred.

'Aun – Muhammad, Bibi Zainab's young sons, went to the battlefield and were martyred.

Qasim, Bibi Farwah's only son, went to the battlefield and was martyred and trampled by the horses.

'Abbas could not bear the sad cries of "Al-Atash! Al-Atash! Al-Atash!", from his beloved niece, Sakina. He went to get water and did not return. His arms were severed.

'Ali Akbar, the 18 year old youth, went to the battlefield and was martyred with a dreadful wound in his chest.

Since dawn, Imam Husayn had carried 72 bodies to the camp.

Husayn was thirsty, tired, heartbroken.....but he kept on!

Patience was his prayer. And sacrifice to save Islam was his goal.

All Husayn was worried about was saving Islam.

By Asr time, Husayn was left with his baby 'Ali Asghar and his son, Sayyid al-Sajjad – Imam Zainul Abideen who was ill.

'Ali Asghar was very thirsty. Husayn took his baby son to get some water.

'Ali Asghar, the young soldier, did not get any water. Instead he got an arrow in his neck.

Imam Husayn and Bibi Rubab dug a grave themselves and buried 'Ali Asghar.

Our poor Imam inflicted with so much suffering in just one day!

So many dead in one day!

Husayn is all alone, thirsty, tired and heartbroken. he stood in the centre of the camp and cried out:

“My salaam to you, O Zainab, O Umm Kulthoom! My salaam to you O Ruqayya! O Kubra! O Sakina! My salaam to you O Rubab! O Laila! O Umm Farwah! O Amma Fizza!..... Fi aman Allah! Fi aman Allah!”

All the ladies gathered around Husayn. They all cried and cried as they said their last farewell to Husayn.

“Zainab Take me to my son, Zainul Abideen. Zainab, let me say Fi aman Allah to my son, Sayyid al-Sajjad.”

Husayn and Zainab went to Imam Zainul Abideen's tent.

Sayyid al-Sajjad was lying unconscious on his bed. Bibi Zainab shook his shoulder and said:

“Son, Sajjad! Your father has come to see you.

Sayyid al-Sajjad opened his eyes. He saw his father, who was wearing white clothes, marked with blood spots everywhere. “My son Sajjad! I have come to say Fi aman Allah. I am going to the battlefield.”

“Why you Baba? Where is Habib Ibn Mazaahir?”

“Qutil, my son! Habib has been killed, my son.”

“Baba! Baba! ainna aaina, 'Abbas? Baba, where is uncle 'Abbas?”

“Qutil, my son, qutil. 'Abbas has been killed, my son.”

“Baba...., ainna ainna 'Ali Akbar? Where is 'Ali Akbar?”

“Qad qutil 'Ali Akbar has been killed, son Sajjad.”

Tears poured from Husayn's and Zainab's eyes, as Sayyid al-Sajjad enquired about 'Ali Akbar.

“Son Sajjad! Don't ask me about anyone else! My son, everyone is dead, except for you and me”

Sayyid al-Sajjad tried to get up from his bed. He said:

“Auntie! Auntie Zainab! Give me my sword. I will go to the battlefield. I will save my father's life.”

“No, son Sajjad, no! You are too sick for Jihad. Son Sajjad, your Jihad is still to come.”

Imam Husayn continued.....

“Son Sajjad, you will have a lot of work to do after my death. You will face lots of hardship and suffering, my son. Sajjad! Stay on the true path. Son Sajjad, do not be afraid to fight for truth and justice.

Sajjad.....Just be patient! Son Sajjad, maintain your patience at all times. Son, Allah is with people who remain patient. Patience, my son, patience.”

Imam Husayn continued:

“My son Sajjad, convey my salaam to all my friends, my Shi'as, when you reach Medina. Son Sajjad, do tell them Husayn died for truth and justice. Lastly, my son, tell my Shi'as to remember me whenever they drink water, Fi aman Allah, **my son**, Fi aman Allah.”

Imam Husayn and Bibi Zainab left the tent.

“Sister Zainab! My last will to you. Zainab, I am leaving you in charge of this caravan. Sister Zainab, take care of Sayyid al-Sajjad. My sister, Zainab, I am leaving Imamatus under your protection. Zainab....., O my sister Zainab! Look after my little Sakina. She will cry a lot after my death.”

Tears flowed from Husayn's eyes as he spoke about Sakina.

“Sister Zainab, be patient. Patience, my sister, patience. My sister Zainab! Fi aman Allah!”

Imam Husayn walked to his horse. Husayn had helped everyone to mount their horses, but now.....Husayn is alone. There is no-one to help him mount his horse.

Bibi Zainab saw her brother struggling to get on the horse.

“Brother Husayn, bring your horse nearer my tent. My brother, let me help you.”

Bibi Zainab held the reins as Husayn mounted his horse, Zuljiana.

Zuljiana moved a few steps and stopped. Husayn gently stroked the horse's neck and said:

“My faithful horse, I know you are thirsty. I know you are tired.

You have been helping me carry the bodies from the battlefield since dawn.

My faithful horse, for the last time, take me to the battlefield. I will not bother you after that. Please Zuljana, let us go.

With tears in his eyes, the horse turned his neck and looked down at his legs.

What did Husayn see?

My friends, you will not be able to stop the tears flowing from your eyes.

Husayn saw his beloved daughter Sakina clinging to the horse's legs. Sakina – only four years old. Sakina – the answer to Husayn's prayers for a daughter – Sakina who loved Husayn like Bibi Fatimah loved Husayn.

Sakina, the delight of Husayn's heart.

Little Sakina was crying and saying:

“O horse! Do not take my father away. No, horse, no. You will not bring my father back. Since dawn, everyone who has gone to the battlefield has not come back. Please, horse, do not take my father away. I will not be able to live without my father. Please, horse, please.”

What a tragic scene. This is when Bibi Fatimah cries most. She knows how Husayn felt. Husayn loved Sakina very much.

Husayn got off his horse.

“My darling Sakina. Do not cry my love! Did you not give me permission to go? Sakina.....go, my darling, go. Go and recite duas with your auntie and mother. Your grandmother is waiting for me.

“Father, I am so used to sleeping on your chest every night. Tell me, father, how will I go to sleep without you. Father, one last request! Please let me lie down one more time on your chest, father.”

Husayn laid down on the sands of Karbala⁷. Little Sakina put her head on her fathers chest.

After a few seconds, Sakina got up and said:

“Go, father, go. Fi aman Allah, father.”

Husayn mounted his horse and headed for the battlefield. Thirsty, tired, wounded and heartbroken.....

Husayn was not a coward. He was brave and strong. Husayn was the son of ‘Ali.

Husayn fought the battle with his greatest might.

One-by-one, Husayn killed the best warriors of Yazid.

The enemy were pushed back by the mighty Husayn.

Our great Imam fought like a lion. He was the best.

No-one dared come near our Imam.

Imam Husayn reached the banks of River Furaat. He saw 'Abbas lying there.

“'Abbas! My brother, 'Abbas! Did you see me fight? 'Abbas, did you see my Jihad? My brother, 'Abbas, I wish you were with me. We would have fought the battle together, 'Abbas.”

At that moment, Angel Jibrael appeared in the sky and said:

“O Husayn! Allah is very pleased with your bravery. Husayn! The time has come to put your sword down. Enough, Husayn, enough. Come to us, Husayn, we are waiting for you.”

Husayn heard Allah's command. He put his sword down.

The enemies saw Husayn put his sword down. They attacked our Imam from all sides.

Arrows were shot at Husayn. Husayn was attacked with swords.

People who did not have arrows or swords, threw stones at Husayn.

Allahu Akbar! Our poor Imam.....With a thousand wounds...Bleeding...Blood gushing out of the wounds.

Husayn could not stay on his horse. He fell from his horse.

My fellow Husayni! Our Imam is covered with arrows.

Imagine his fall on the land of Karbala'!

He falls but his body does not touch the ground.

Husayn's body rests on the arrow blades.

Enough! Enough! Enough!

A black slave from Yazid's camp comes to Husayn.

He has a dagger in his hand. He wants to cut off Imam Husayn's head from his Holy body. Imam Husayn looked at the slave and said:

“My friend, you look so much like Bilal, the Holy Prophet's companion. Have you prayed the Dhuhr Salat (Prayer)?”

The black slave threw away the dagger and ran off screaming:

“What am I doing? How can I cut off this man's head? Such a pious man He is dying but still remembers to remind me of Salat (Prayer).

Shimr, the most evil of Yazid's men, walked to Imam Husayn. He had a big dagger in his hand. Imam made a request to him.' “O Shimr, I know your intention. I beg of you to give me a little time to do two sajdah.”

Husayn did the first sajdah on the **musallah of arrows:**

“O Allah! All Praise is to You and You Alone!”

Husayn lifted his head and went down to perform his second sajdah.

Shimr did not let Imam Husayn lift his head from this last sajdah.

The earth trembled. The sky turned black.

Jibrael cried out:

“Husayn has been killed in Karbala! Husayn has been killed in Karbala!”

Bibi Zainab saw her brother's head on a lance, She cried out:

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Ya Husayn! Ya Husayn! Ya Husayn!

Majlis 12: Shaam al-Ghariba

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

Karbala! Karbala! Karbala!

In one day 72 men dead! Companions of Husayn lay dead!

'Aun – Muhammad are dead. Qasim is dead. 'Abbas is dead.

'Ali Akbar is dead. 'Ali Asghar is dead. Husayn is dead.

Lying on the sands of Karbala' are 72 dead men. Their heads severed from their bodies. No ghusl! No kafan! No burial!

Lying on the sands of Karbala' are 72 dead men! Their bodies trampled by Yazid's horses.

The sun was setting in the horizon. River Furaat flowed turbulently breaking its bank.

Another night fell on the land of Karbala'. The night of **Shaam Al-Ghariba**. What a lonely night? What a tragic and sad night? No fire! No light! Night of darkness!

The air was filled with sounds of ladies and children crying.

Widows crying for their husbands. Sisters crying for their brothers. Mothers crying for their children. Little orphans crying for their fathers.

Bibi Zainab is not crying. No tears were flowing from her eyes.

Husayn is not there to comfort the mothers and orphans but Bibi Zainab is there. She is comforting the mothers and the little orphans.

'Abbas or 'Ali Akbar are not there to guard the tents but Bibi Zainab is there. She is guarding the tents.

Enough! Surely Yazid's beastly men would leave the ladies and children to mourn their dead ones in peace.

But no, they did not.....

They came to the tents. They looted all the belongings of the Holy ladies. They even snatched away the ladies' hijab. Fatimah's daughters were left bare-headed.

Shimr, the most evil of Yazid's men, came too. Sakina was crying for her father. Instead of comforting words, Shimr slapped Sakina's face and pulled off earrings from her ears. Blood poured from little Sakina's ears.

Surely they would stop now. But they did not.

One-by-one they set fire to the tents. The helpless ladies and children ran from one tent to another

Little Sakina ran from one tent to another. Her dress was on fire, Her ears were bleeding. All Sakina wanted was her dear father.

She ran to the battlefield screaming:

“Father, where are you? Father, father....., speak to me father.”

The seventh tent, which was the last was set on fire. Our 4th Imam, Imam Zainul Abideen was lying unconscious in the bed. Zainab got worried. She had to save the Imam of the time, our 4th Imam. So she rushed to the tent and rescued Imam Zainul Abideen to safety.

All the tents were burned down. The Holy ladies and children were left homeless.

Tonight is the night of **Shaam Al-Ghariba**. The night of the homeless.

The children were frightened so they ran away to escape the fire, the restless horses and the beatings.

Bibi Zainab and Umm Kulthoom went in search of the children. They found some dead, trampled by the horses or burnt by the fire.

Zainab and Umm Kulthoom gathered the ladies and children together in a small space, where our 4th Imam was lying.

Sakina could not be found. Umm Kulthoom stood guard, while Zainab rushed to the battlefield screaming:

“Sakina! Darling Sakina! Where are you? Sakina! Sakina!”

Whilst searching, Bibi Zainab reached the area where Husayn's body was lying.

There with her head buried in Husayn's chest, lay Sakina deep in sleep! Bibi Zainab gently picked up Sakina and took her back to her mother.

Bibi Zainab settled all the ladies and children. She then stood on guard with a broken spear in her hand.

Bibi Rubab kept waking up. Zainab said to her:

“Rubab! Do not worry. Rest peacefully as the daughter of ‘Ali is on guard. You have nothing to fear, Rubab!”

“Zainab, I am not worried but I keep hearing my baby crying. I hear my dearest ‘Ali Asghar crying.”

Poor Rubab. Poor mother. She was spending the first night without ‘Ali Asghar, her baby. How can she sleep comfortably when ‘Ali Asghar, her baby was lying alone under the sands of Karbala? Bibi Rubab did not stop crying for her baby.

Late that night, Zainab had a vision. She saw a man on a horse, riding towards her. She cried out:

“O man on the horse! Please do not come any nearer! I have just managed to get the children to sleep. We have nothing left. Please go away!”

The rider continued riding towards her. Zainab got very angry. She lifted the broken spear and warned the rider:

“Stop! Stop, just there! Do not come any nearer! I am the daughter of ‘Ali! I am warning you to stop just there!”

The man on the horse continued to ride towards her. He spoke to Zainab:

“Daughter Zainab! Do you not recognise your father, ‘Ali?”

Zainab rushed to her father. She threw herself to her father's feet and said:

“Baba! I am glad you have come. But you are very late.”

She continued:

“Baba! Where were you when ‘Ali Akbar was being killed?

Baba! Where were you when ‘Abbas was being killed?

Baba! Where were you when Husayn was being killed?

Baba! Where were you when our tents were burned down?

Baba! Baba! Where were you when our hijab was taken?

Baba! Where were you? Where were you? Baba!”

“Zainab, my daughter Zainab, you are very tired! I have come to guard your tents. My daughter, Zainab, you have a lot to do tomorrow. Zainab, you will have many sleepless nights. Tonight, my daughter Zainab you rest. I will guard the tents. Go to sleep my daughter, Zainab.”

Ya Husayn! Ya Husayn! Ya Husayn!

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