

The First Campaign

‘Umar Ibn Sa’d advanced towards al-Husayn's troops and shot an arrow saying, “Testify for me with the governor that I shot the first arrow.” Others followed suit. 1 Hardly any of al-Husayn's men escaped being shot at by an arrow.2

The Imam (‘a) said to his companions, “*Stand, may Allah be Merciful unto you, and meet the imminent death, for these arrows are messengers of these people to you.*” He and his companions charged together3 and fought for a while. By the time the cloud of dust dissipated, fifty men had been killed.4

It oppressed even as the desert crushed its valiant ones
And the face of the morning its battle curiously examines.
Their faces were with the battle elated.
How many faces of valiant men then turned grim?
Pleased they are when the lances come to them
And music it is to their ears to hear swords' clamour.
Dignified, they are, yielding in hardship to none,
Nor do they fear any calamity,
Only to glory their souls yearn
Only glory do their souls earn,
So if glory in a star does reside,
They would have gone to that side,
And the men of honour always seek
What is honourable and what glorifies.
So their swords on the battle day drip of blood,
And their hands are with glory always dyed.
Their flesh is always with the swords' brink,
And from its blood do the spears always drink,
Till they, like stars, to the ground did fall,
Though after them I wish no star remains at all.

They fell, so say that the brightest stars are no more
They fell, so say the mountains were crushed to the core.⁵

Yasar, Ziyad's slave, and Salim, a slave of 'Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad, came out and challenged anyone to fight them in a duel. Habib and Burayr leaped to meet their challenge, but al-Husayn ('a) did not permit them. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Omayr al-Kalbi, of Banu 'Alim, who was known as "Abu Wahab," a tall and masculine man with broad shoulders, a man who was held with very high esteem among his people, and a man of courage and martial experience, stood up.

Al-Husayn ('a) permitted him saying, "I believe he is a match for both of them." "Who are you?" the challengers inquired. He identified himself to them, but they could not recognize him. One of them said, "We do not know you; let either Zuhayr or Habib or Burayr come out." Yasar stood nearby. The latter said to him, "You son of the adulteress! Do you not wish to fight me?!" then charged at him and engaged him in a sword duel.

Meanwhile, Salim attacked him, so his companions warned him saying, "The slave is now charging at you!" But he did not pay attention to him, so Salim hit him with his sword.

'Abdullah tried to protect himself from it with his left hand, getting his fingers cut off in the attempt. Then 'Abdullah swiftly turned to him with his own sword, killing him instantly. Having killed both men, he went back to al-Husayn ('a) reciting *rajaz* (martial) poetry.

Having seen how her husband so valiantly fought, Umm Wahab daughter of 'Abdullah, who belonged to al-Nimr Ibn Qasit, took a rod and came to him saying, "May both my parents be sacrificed for you! Do defend the good ones, the offspring of Muhammad, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny!"

He wanted to take her back to the tent, but she kept persisting, holding to his clothes and saying, "I shall not leave you till I die with you!" Al-Husayn ('a) called out to her saying, "May you be well rewarded on behalf of your Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt ('a)! Go back to the tent! Women are not required to fight!" She did.⁶

Duels Between Two or Four Warriors

When the rest of al-Husayn's companions saw the large number of those who had been killed from their camp, two, three, or four men simultaneously sought al-Husayn's permission to let them defend him and his ladies. Each member of these groups tried his best to protect the other or others as they fought.

Two men, both with the last name of al-Jabiri, namely Sayf Ibn al-Harith Ibn Sari' and Malik Ibn 'Abd Ibn Saree', both cousins, came out weeping. Al-Husayn ('a) asked them, "Why are you weeping? I hope after a short while you will see what will cool your eyes!"

They said, "May Allah accept us as your own sacrifice! We are not mourning our own death, but we are weeping only because we can see how you are thus surrounded while we cannot do much for you." Al-Husayn ('a) prayed Allah to reward them both with goodness.

They both fought near him till they were killed.⁷ 'Abdullah and 'Abdul-Rahman, sons of 'Urwah al-Ghifari, came and said, "People have driven us to you [against our wish]." They kept fighting al-Husayn's enemy till they were both killed.

'Amr Ibn Khalid al-Saydawi and his slave Sa'd, as well as Jabir Ibn al-Harith al-Salmi and Majma' Ibn 'Abdullah al-'A'ithi⁸, came out and collectively attacked the Kufians. Once they were in the latter's midst, they were soon circled.

Al-Husayn ('a) asked his brother al-'Abbas to go to their rescue, which he did, but not before all those men received heavy wounds. On their way, the enemy came close to them. Despite their wounds, they kept fighting till they were all killed at the same place.⁹

An Appeal for Help and Guidance

When al-Husayn ('a) saw that a large number of his companions had died, he took hold of his sacred beard and said, "*Allah's Wrath intensified against the Jews for having attributed a son to Him, and His Wrath intensified against the Christians who made Him one of three [Triune], and His Wrath also intensified against the Zoroastrians who worshipped the sun and the moon instead of worshipping Him.*

*And His Wrath intensified against people who collectively agreed to kill the son of their Prophet's daughter. By Allah! I shall never agree with them about anything they want me to do till I meet Allah drenched in my blood." Then he called out, "Is there anyone who would defend the ladies of the Messenger of Allah?!"*¹⁰

Hearing him, the women cried and wailed.

Two Ansaris, Sa'd Ibn al-Harith and his brother Abul-Hutuf, heard al-Husayn ('a) pleading for help, and they also heard the cries of his children. They were both with the army of 'Ubaydullah Ibn Sa'd. They suddenly turned against al-Husayn's enemy around them and kept killing them till they themselves were killed.¹¹

The Right Wing Remains Firm

Having seen how the number of their fighting men became so small, al-Husayn's companions resorted to fight individually, i.e. in duels. Thus, they were able to kill a large number of the Kufians. 'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj then shouted loudly at his men, "Do you really know who you are fighting?!"

You are fighting the land's knights, the people of vision, those who stay firm till death. None of you comes out to fight them except that he gets killed despite their small number. By Allah! If you throw rocks at them, you will be able to kill them all!"

'Umar Ibn Sa'd said to him, "Yes, you have said the truth Your idea is the sound one; so, send word to everyone and tell them not to come out to them for any duel. True, if you fight them singly, they will finish you."¹²

'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj attacked al-Husayn's right wing, but the men were able to maintain their ground, kneeling down as they planted their lances. They were thus able to frighten the enemy's horses. When the horsemen came back to charge at them again, al-Husayn's men met them with their arrows, killing some of them and wounding others.¹³

'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj kept saying the following to his men, "Fight those who abandoned their creed and who deserted the *jama'a*!" Hearing him say so, al-Husayn ('a) said to him, "Woe unto you, O 'Amr! Are you really instigating people to fight me?!"

Are we really the ones who abandoned their creed while you yourself uphold it?! As soon as our souls part from our bodies, you will find out who is most worthy of entering the fire!"¹⁴

Muslim Ibn Awsajah

'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj attacked from the Euphrates' side, fighting for a while. This engagement involved Muslim Ibn 'Awsajah. Muslim Ibn 'Abdullah al-Dababi and 'Abdullah Ibn Khashkharah al-Bijli attacked him, causing a huge cloud of dust which, once dissipated, showed Muslim lying on the ground drawing his last breath.

Escorted by Habib Ibn Muzahir, al-Husayn ('a) walked towards him and said, "May Allah be Merciful unto you, O Muslim!"

'Among them are those who died, and among them are those who wait, and they never changed aught in the least' (Qur'an, 33:23)."

Habib came closer to him and said, "Your being killed is truly devastating me, O Muslim! Receive the glad tidings of Paradise!" In a very faint voice, the dying hero said, "May Allah convey to you, too, such

glad tidings!” Habib said, “Had I not known that I will soon be following you, I would have liked you to convey your will to me with regard to anything on your mind.”

Muslim said, “All I want you to do is to look after this man,” pointing to al-Husayn (‘a), adding, “and to defend him till death” Habib said, “I will *Insha-Allah* do exactly so.” It was then that Muslim breathed his last as he was lying between both men. His woman cried out, “*Wa Muslimah* [O Muslim!] O master! O son of ‘Awsajah!”

Ibn al-Hajjaj, feeling elated about Muslim's martyrdom, kept shouting in excitement that they killed Muslim.

Shabth Ibn Rab'i said to those around him, “May your mothers lose you! Do you really feel elated when a man such as Muslim is killed?! A great stand which I saw with my own eyes involving him was in Azerbaijan where he killed six polytheists even before the Muslim cavalry had enough time to form its ranks!”¹⁵

The Left Wing

Al-Shimr and his company attacked the right wing of al-Husayn's army, but the latter was able to stay firm in their positions, forcing the attackers to withdraw.

In that engagement, ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Omayr al-Kalbi participated, killing nineteen horsemen and twelve footmen. Hani Ibn Thabit al-Hadrami charged at him, cutting his right hand off¹⁶ as Bakr Ibn Hayy was cutting his left. He was taken captive and instantly killed.¹⁷

His wife, Umm Wahab, walked towards his corpse and sat at his head, wiping the blood from it and saying, “Congratulations for having earned Paradise! I plead to Allah Who blessed you with Paradise to make me join you.” Al-Shimr heard her and told his slave Rustam to hit her head with a rod, which he did. She died there and then. She was the first woman to be martyred from among al-Husayn's companions.¹⁸

‘Abdullah's head was cut off then thrown in the direction of Husayn's camp. His mother took it, wiped the blood from it then grabbed the pillar of a tent and ran in the direction of the enemy's camp.

Imam al-Husayn (‘a) sent her back saying, “Go back, may Allah have mercy on you, for you are exempted from participating in *jihad*.” She went back saying, “O Allah! Do not disappoint me!” Al-Husayn (‘a) said to her, “May Allah never disappoint you!”¹⁹

Al-Shimr now attacked, piercing al-Husayn's tent with his lance and loudly shouting, “Give me a torch of

fire to burn the tent and everyone in it!” The women inside the tent screamed in peril as they fled. Al-Husayn (‘a) called out to him saying, “O son of Thul-Jawshan! Are you calling for fire to burn my Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)?!

May Allah burn you with His fire!” Shabth Ibn Rab’i asked Shimr, “Have you sunk so low so as to be one who thus frightens women?! I have never seen anyone doing a worse thing than what you have done, nor a situation more ugly than yours.”

The rogue felt ashamed of himself, so he went away. Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn, heading a company of ten fighters, attacked al-Shimr's company till they succeeded in distancing them from their quarters.²⁰

‘Izrah Requests More Re-enforcements

When ‘Izrah son of Qays, who was head of the cavalry division, noticed how weak his fellows were and how they failed in their mission whenever they charged, he sent a message to ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d asking for more men.

‘Umar Ibn Sa’d said to Shabth Ibn Rab’i, “Why don't you attack them?”

He answered: “*Ya Subhan-Allah!* [Praise to Allah] Are you asking the dignitary of the land to shoulder such a responsibility while there are with you those who can spare him such a task?!” Shabth Ibn Rab’i, in all reality, remained all the while too reluctant to fight al-Husayn (‘a).

He was even heard saying, “For five years did we fight the offspring of Abu Sufyan on the side of ‘Ali Ibn Abu Talib (‘a) then on the side of his son [al-Hasan] after him, then we transgressed on his son [al-Husayn] who is the best man on the face of earth, fighting him in support of Mu’awiyah's offspring and in support of the son of Sumayya, the adulteress!

How we have strayed! By Allah! The people of this country will never be granted goodness, nor will they ever be rightly guided!”²¹

Yet he sent him al-Hasin Ibn Namir in charge of five hundred archers, and fighting intensified. Al-Husayn's companions suffered most of the wounds, their horses were hamstrung. The riders were thus forced to fight on foot²².

Yet the enemy forces failed whenever they attacked them from any direction due to the fact that their homes were close to one another. Ibn Sa’d, therefore, dispatched men with instructions to demolish those homes then surround them. Each group of three or four persons from among al-Husayn's band would stand before each tent.

They would attack and kill every man as he attempted to plunder, shooting him with an arrow from a close distance.

Ibn Sa'd issued his order to burn all the tents. His order was carried out. Women screamed in fright; children were dumbfounded. Al-Husayn ('a) said, "Let them burn them, for once they have done so, they would not touch you with any harm. And so it was."²³

Abu al-Sha'tha'

Abu al-Sha'tha', namely Yazid Ibn Ziyad al-Kindi, was first fighting on the side of 'Umar Ibn Sa'd. Having seen what happened to the women and the children, he defected and joined al-Husayn's camp.

He was an excellent archer; he knelt down in front of al-Husayn ('a) and shot at least a hundred arrows as al-Husayn ('a) kept supplicating, "*O Allah! Guide his shots and reward him with Paradise!*" Having run out of arrows, he stood up and said, "It is clear to me that I have killed five of them."²⁴ Then he charged at the enemy and killed nine more before he himself was killed.²⁵

At the time of Zawal

Abu Thumama al-Sa'idi²⁶ looked at the sun and saw that it was already after-noon, so he said to al-Husayn ('a), "May I be sacrificed for your sake! I can see that these folks have advanced towards you. No, by Allah, you shall not be killed before I die defending you, and I love to return to Allah after having performed the prayers whose time has approached."

Al-Husayn ('a) raised his head to the heavens and said, "*You have remembered the prayers, may Allah count you among those who uphold the prayers and who remember Him often. Yes, this is the beginning of its time. Ask them to leave us alone so that we may perform the prayers.*" Al-Hasin, who had heard the Imam ('a) say these words, commented by saying, "It [your prayer] will not be accepted!"²⁷

Habib Ibn Muzahir

Habib Ibn Muzahir heard what that rogue had said, so he responded to him by saying, "Do you claim that prayers are not accepted from the Prophet's Family but yours are accepted, you ass?!" Al-Hasin charged at him, so Habib slapped the face of al-Hasin's horse, causing it to leap and throw its rider on the ground. Al-Hasin's men had to rush to his rescue and to carry him away to safety.²⁸

Habib, despite his advanced age, fought them valiantly, killing as many as sixty-two men. Badil Ibn Sarim attacked him and dealt a sword blow to him as a man from Tamim hit him with his lance. Habib now fell on the ground.

As he attempted to stand up again, al-Hasin hit him with his sword on the head, causing him to fall

again on his face. The man from Tamim alighted and severed Habib's head. Habib being thus killed shook al-Husayn ('a) who said, *"It is only to Allah that I complain about what has happened to me and to my companions."*²⁹ For a good while, the Imam ('a) kept repeating the statement: ***Inna-Lillahi wa inna ilayhi rajia'un*** [We belong to Allah, and to Him is our return].

al-Hurr al-Riyahi

After him, al-Hurr Ibn Yazid al-Riyahi came out accompanied by Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn who was protecting him from the rear. Whenever one of them attacked and the situation became critical, the other would attack to rescue him, and they kept doing so for a while.³⁰

The horse on which al-Hurr was riding received hits on its ears and eyebrows, and it was bleeding as its rider was quoting the following verse by Antar Ibn Shaddad al-'Abasi:

I kept shooting them at its very mouth,
At its chest, till blood drenched it all.

Al-Hasin said to Yazid Ibn Sufyan, "Is this al-Hurr whom you wished to kill?" "Yes," said Yazid, so the first came out and challenged al-Hurr to a duel. It turned out that al-Hasin was asking for a swift death, for it did not take al-Hurr long to kill him!

Ayyub Ibn Mashrah al-Khaywani shot al-Hurr's horse with an arrow, hamstringing it. The poor horse leaped, so the rider leaped from it like a lion,³¹ holding his sword in his hand. He kept fighting on foot till he killed more than forty men.³²

A company from the footmen fiercely attacked him and killed him. Al-Husayn's companions carried his body and put it before the tent in front of which they were fighting. They were doing so whenever a man was killed, and al-Husayn ('a), each time, kept repeating this statement: *"He has been killed as prophets and the offspring of prophets are killed."*³³

Al-Husayn ('a) turned to al-Hurr, who was breathing his last, and said to him, as he wiped out the blood from his face, "You are al-Hurr [which means: the free man], just as your mother named you, and you are free in this life and in the life hereafter."

One of the companions of al-Husayn ('a), who some say was [al-Husayn ('a)'s son] 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn,³⁴ eulogized him with the following verses which some people claim the Imam ('a) himself had composed:³⁵

How good al-Hurr of Banu Riyah!
How patient when the lances intertwined!
How good al-Hurr when he defended Husayn!
And in the morning his life he sacrificed!

Prayers

Al-Husayn ('a) stood to perform his prayers. It is said that he led the prayers' service before the survivors from among his companions. It was a special prayer called *Salat al-khawf*, the prayer said by one fearing for his life. In front of him stood Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn and Sa'id Ibn 'Abdullah al-Hanafi and half of the surviving companions.³⁶

Other historians say that he and his companions offered their prayers individually.³⁷

Far away it was from being a prayer in fear,
For it was not of death frightened,
Though death was from it quite near.
But the bloody stand did not cause it to bend,
Nor did the army stop it from near or from far.
It charged, though thirsty,
And the sun was burning,
From it the ground was as though on fire.
It shook the hosts so it was as though
Al-Taff's plains and valleys were not vast at all.
Ask the battlefield about it and you will see
How it stamped it with stabs and with blows,
How it defended Allah's every sanctity
So it did not harm any glory at all
Nor did it in fear flee.
How it defended Allah's creed,
The guided ones were few.
Their enemies filled the place
They had arrows and swords but no grace,
About them wrote history:
Their mischief filled the valley.³⁸

When Sa'id's wounds became overwhelming, he fell on the ground as he was supplicating thus: "O

Allah! Curse them as You cursed the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud and convey my *Salam* to Your Prophet (S) and tell him about the pain of the wounds which I have received, for I desired Your rewards when I supported the offspring of Your Prophet, Peace of Allah be upon him and his progeny.”³⁹

He turned to Imam al-Husayn ('a) and asked him, “Have I carried out my obligation, O son of the Messenger of Allah?” “Yes,” said the Imam ('a), “and you shall reach Paradise before I do.”⁴⁰ Then the hero died.

As many as thirteen arrows were found planted in his body in addition to the blows which he had sustained from swords and lances.⁴¹

Having finished his prayers, al-Husayn ('a) addressed his companions thus:

O honourable men! Here is Paradise with its gates wide open for you, with its rivers joining one another, with its fruits ripened, and here is the Messenger of Allah and the martyrs who were killed in the Cause of Allah: they all are waiting for you to join them. They are congratulating one another on your account; so do defend the religion of Allah and of His Prophet (S), and do protect the women of the Messenger of Allah (S).

They all said to him, “May our lives be sacrificed for yours, and may our blood protect yours! By Allah! So long as blood flows in our veins, no harm shall reach you or your ladies.”⁴²

The Horses Harmstrung

'Umar Ibn Sa'd dispatched 'Amr Ibn Sa'id in charge of a company of archers to shoot arrows at al-Husayn's companions and to hamstring their horses.⁴³ Not a single horseman remained with al-Husayn ('a) except al-Dahhak Ibn 'Abdullah al-Mashriqi who recounted this report:

“ Having seen how the horses of our fellows were being hamstrung, I came with my horse and entered a tent belonging to our fellows. They fought most fiercely.⁴⁴

Whoever wanted to come out to fight would bid al-Husayn ('a) farewell and say, “Peace be upon you, O son of the Messenger of Allah!” Al-Husayn ('a) would then respond to him by saying, “And upon you, too, be peace, and we shall soon join your company.” Then he would quote the Qur'anic verse saying,

“... so of them is he who accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed in the least” (Qur'an, 33:23).⁴⁵

Abu Thumamah

Abu Thumama al-Sa'idi came out and fought till he was very heavily wounded. He had a cousin named Qays Ibn 'Abdullah who was fighting with 'Umar Ibn Sa'd, and there was a great deal of enmity between them both. The latter attacked him fiercely and killed him.

Zuhayr and Ibn Mudarib

Salman Ibn Mudarib al-Bajali, a cousin of Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn al-Bajali, came out and fought till he was killed. He was followed by Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn who put his hand on al-Husayn's shoulder and sought permission to fight with these verses:

Advance, may you guide, O guided one!
For today shall I your grandfather the Prophet meet!
And I shall meet al-Hasan and 'Ali the pleased one!
And the one with Two Wings, the valiant youth greet,
The lion of Allah, the living martyr!
Zuhayr am I and the son of al-Qayn
With the sword do I defend Husayn!

Al-Husayn ('a) responded by saying, "*And I, too, shall follow.*" As he fought, Zuhayr kept reciting this verse:

Zuhayr am I and the son of al-Qayn
With my sword do I defend Husayn!

He killed a hundred and twenty men. Kathir Ibn 'Abdullah al-Sa'bi and al-Muhajir Ibn Aws jointly attacked and killed him. It was then that al-Husayn ('a) stood up and said,

"May Allah never keep you distant from us, O Zuhayr, and may He condemn those who killed you as He had condemned those whom He turned into apes and pigs".⁴⁶

'Amr Ibn Qarzah

'Amr Ibn Qarzah al-Ansari⁴⁷ came and stood before al-Husayn ('a), protecting him from the enemy and exposing his own chest and face to their arrows. Thus, al-Husayn ('a) was not harmed. But when his

wounds overpowered him, he turned to Abu 'Abdullah ('a) and said, "Have I carried out my responsibility towards you, O son of the Messenger of Allah?"

The Imam ('a) said, "Yes, indeed, and I will be the next person to be in Paradise; so, convey my Salam to the Messenger of Allah (S) and inform him that I will soon follow." Having heard these words, the man fell dead.⁴⁸

His brother, who was fighting on Ibn Sa'd's side, shouted, "O Husayn! You liar! You deceived my brother till you got him killed!" The Imam ('a) said, "*I did not deceive your brother; rather, Allah is the One Who showed him the right guidance while leaving you to stray.*" "May Allah kill me," the man responded, "if I do not kill you!"

Having said so, he attacked al-Husayn ('a) with the intention to stab him, but Nafi' Ibn Hilal al-Jamali intercepted and stabbed him seriously but not fatally. His friends carried him away and treated him till he was healed.⁴⁹

Nafi al-Jamali

Using poisoned arrows, Nafi' Ibn Hilal al-Jamali al-Mathhaji shot arrows on which he had written his name⁵⁰ as he recited these verses:⁵¹

I shoot it, and its tips trained
In poison, on the wind borne,
To fill the earth with shots, and the soul
Is not benefitted by fear at all.

He killed twelve men, not counting those whom he injured. Having run out of arrows, he pulled his sword to fight them, but he was hurled with stones and spearheads till his arm was broken, and he was taken captive.⁵²

Al-Shimr and those in his company dragged him away. ['Umar] Ibn Sa'd asked him, "What caused you to do to yourself what you have done?" He said, "My God knows what I want." A man who saw how blood was pouring down his face and beard said to him, "Can't you see in what condition you are?"

He said, "By Allah, I have killed twelve of your men, not counting the ones I injured, and I have no regret at all for resuming the *jihad* against you if I remain alive and if I have any strength at all, had you only not taken me captive."⁵³

Al-Shimr pulled his sword out of its scabbard to kill him, but Nafi' said to him, "O Shimr! Had you been Muslim at all, you would have found it very hard to meet Allah stained with our blood; so, all Praise is due to Allah Who caused our death to be at the hands of the very worst of His creatures." Al-Shimr pulled him and struck his neck with his sword.⁵⁴

Wadih and Aslam

When Wadih, a Turkish slave of al-Harith al-Mathhaji, received a heavy blow, he sought the help of al-Husayn ('a) who came to him and hugged him. Having seen that, he retorted saying, "Who can be as lucky as I am when the son of the Messenger of Allah (S) puts his cheek on mine?!" Having said so, his pure soul parted from his body.⁵⁵

Al-Husayn ('a) walked to Aslam, his slave, and hugged him. He was breathing his last and was able to smile. He felt proud and died with a smile lighting his face.⁵⁶

Burayr Ibn Hudayr

Yazid Ibn Ma'qil⁵⁷ called out, "O Burayr! How do you see what Allah has done to you?!" Burayr answered: "Allah has done very well to me while afflicting you with evil." Yazid said, "You have lied, and before today you were never known to lie.

Do you remember the day when I was walking with you in the quarters of Banu Lawthan,⁵⁸ when you said that Mu'awiyah had strayed and that the Imam of guidance is 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib?"

Burayr answered: "Yes, I testify that such is my view." Yazid said, "And I bear witness that you are among the misguided!" Burayr then challenged him to a *Mubahala*; they both raised their hands and supplicated to Allah, Glory to Him, invoking Him to curse the liar and to kill him. Then they fought one another.

Burayr hit the man on his head with his sword, splitting it in two halves. Yazid fell as Burayr's sword was still planted in his head. As he was trying to take it out, Radiyy Ibn Munqith al-'Abdi attacked Burayr and engaged him in a fight for some time. Burayr subdued this one, too, sitting on his chest.

The loser screamed for help, whereupon 'Afif Ibn Zuhayr Ibn Abu al-Akhnas shouted at him saying, "This is Burayr Ibn Hudayr, the *qari* who used to teach us the Qur'an at Kufa's mosque," but he did not pay him any attention and stabbed Burayr in the back.

Burayr fell on Radiyy and bit him on the face, cutting the tip of his nose off. Ka'b used his lance to

remove him from the man's chest then hit him with his sword, killing him.

The al-'Abdi man stood up to remove the dust from his clothes saying, "O brother of the Azd! You have done me a favour which I shall never forget."

When Ka'b Ibn Jabir returned to his family, his wife, al-Nuwar, rebuked him saying, "You have sided with the enemies of Fatima's son and killed the master of [Kufa's] *qaris*...; you have done something monstrous... By Allah! I shall never speak to you a word." He said in his answer the following verses:

Ask about me and you will be told,
Even if you may be held in low esteem,
How al-Husayn fared when the lances were bold
Did I not do the most of what I did seem?
Hate and no fear did I feel from what I did.
With me was my sword never disappointed,
White, sharp edged, cutting,
So I unsheathed it against a gang
Whose creed is not mine at all.
And I know who the son of Harb and call
Him what he really is. Never have eyes
Seen anyone like them in their time
Nor before their time even in my youth
More striking with the sword on the battlefield,
Except one who protects his honour to the extreme.
They for the blows and the stabs persevered
Though they had none to protect,
And they would have dueled, had it been of any use.
So tell 'Ubaydullah if him you meet
That I obey the caliph, that I hear and obey.
Burayr did I kill: a bliss I carried, became excited,
Of Abu Munqith when he to duel invited.
Radi son of Munqith al-'Abdi responded to him with these verses:
If my Lord willed, I would not have fought them at all,
Nor Jabir's son would have sought my bliss.
That day was nothing but a curse and a shame
Sons after friends will call it by its name;
So how I wish before killing him I better knew
And on Husayn's Day was in the grave, too.⁵⁹

Hanzalah al-Shabami

Hanzalah Ibn Sa'd al-Shabami called out, "O folks! I fear for you the like of the day of al-Ahzab, the like of the people of Noah, of 'Ad, of Thamud, and of those who came after them. Allah never intends to deal unjustly with His servants.

O people! I fear for you the Day of Arguing, when you go without having anyone to protect you from Allah. Whoever Allah permits to stray, none can guide him. O people! Do not kill Husayn else Allah should chastize you with a terrible chastisement, and those who falsify shall be disappointed."

Al-Husayn ('a) prayed Allah to reward him well for having made such a statement saying, "*May Allah have mercy on you! They have now become worthy of the chastisement because they rejected your call to the truth and rose to spill your blood and that of your companions; how is it now that they have killed their righteous brethren?*"

Hanzalah said, "You have said the truth, O son of the Messenger of Allah! Are we not going to the hereafter?" Al-Husayn ('a) then permitted him to go to perform *jihad*, so he bid al-Husayn ('a) farewell and advanced. He fought till he was killed.⁶⁰

'Abis

'Abis Ibn Shabib al-Shakiri came to Shawthab⁶¹, a slave of Shakir. Shawthab was a sincere man whose house was always frequented by the Shi'as; it was there that they discussed the merits of Ahl al-Bayt ('a). He said, "O Shawthab!

What do you intend to do?" Shawthab said, "I shall fight on your side till I am killed." He prayed Allah to reward him well then said to him, "Advance to greet Abu 'Abdullah ('a) so that he may pray for you just as he prayed for the others, for this is a day when we seek as much reward as we can."

Shawthab advanced and greeted al-Husayn ('a) then fought till he was killed.

'Abis stood before Abu 'Abdullah ('a) and said: "None on the face of earth received the night, be he a near or a distant kin, who is dearer to me than you. Had I been able to ward off injustice from you with anything more precious than my life, I would have done so. Peace be with you, and I testify that I am on your and your father's guidance!"

He walked towards the enemy with his sword raised despite a wound which he had already received on his forehead. All men who saw him shouted, "O men! Stay away from him!"

They knew very well that he was most courageous. Observing the situation, 'Umar Ibn Sa'd shouted, "Kill him with your stones!" He became the target of a shower of stones. Having seen that, he put down

his shield and charged, causing as many as two hundred men to flee away from him. Soon they surrounded him from all directions and killed him.

A number of them disputed with one another about who among them would take his head covering as a booty. Ibn Sa'd said, "This man was not killed by one single person." He distributed the slain hero's head-gear among them.⁶²

John

John⁶³, a slave of Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, stood before al-Husayn ('a) requesting him to grant him permission to fight.

The Imam ('a) said, "*O John! You followed us seeking your good health, so you are excused.*" But the old man fell on the Imam's feet kissing them and saying, "I in the time of prosperity lick what is served on your tables; so, should I in the time of hardship betray you?"

My smell is surely bad; my lineage is lowly; my colour is black; so do bestow upon me a breeze from Paradise so that my smell will be good, my lineage will be honoured, and my colour will be whitened! No, by Allah, I shall never abandon you till this black blood mixes with yours!" Al-Husayn ('a), therefore, granted him permission.⁶⁴

He killed as many as twenty-five men before he himself was finally killed. Al-Husayn ('a) stood by his corpse and supplicated saying, "O Lord! Whiten his face, make his smell good, join him with Muhammad (S) and link him to the progeny of Muhammad (S)!"

Whoever thereafter passed by the battleground was able to smell his corpse emitting a fragrance sweeter than that of musk.⁶⁵

Anas al-Kahili

Anas Ibn al-Harith Ibn Nabih al-Kahili was an old man and a renowned *sahabi* who had met and listened to the *hadith* of the Prophet (S) and fought in his company the battles of Badr and Hunain. He, too, sought al-Husayn's permission to go and fight.

He came out tying his waist with a turban, his forehead bandaged. Having seen him looking like that, al-Husayn ('a) cried and said, "May Allah thank you, O *shaikh*, for what you are doing for us!" Despite his old age, he killed eighteen men before being finally killed.⁶⁶

‘Amr Ibn Junadah

‘Amr Ibn Junadah al-Ansari came out after his father had been killed. He was only eleven years old. He sought al-Husayn's permission to fight, but al-Husayn (‘a) refused saying, “This is a young boy whose father was killed in the first campaign, and perhaps his mother hates to see him go, too.” But the boy said, “It was my mother who ordered me to do so!”

It was then that the Imam (‘a) permitted him to fight. It was not long before he was killed and his head was thrown in the direction of Husayn's camp. It was taken by his mother who wiped the blood from it and used it as a weapon to hit a man nearby, killing him instantly.⁶⁷

She went back to the camp and took a rod or, according to other accounts, a sword, and recited these verses:

An old woman and a weakling am I
Crumbling, skinny, and old;
Yet I with force strike you and try
To defend Fatima's son, the honourable and bold.

Al-Husayn (‘a) took her back to the tent after she had killed two men using a tent pole.⁶⁸

al-Hajjaj al-Ju’fi

Al-Hajjaj Ibn Masruq al-Ju’fi fought till his body became soaked with blood. He went to al-Husayn (‘a) reciting:

Today shall I meet your Grandfather, the *Nabi*,
Then your father, the generous one, ‘Ali,
The one we know as the *wasi*.

Al-Husayn (‘a) responded by saying, “*And I, too, shall meet them soon after you.*” He, therefore, went back and fought till he was killed.⁶⁹

Suwar

Suwar Ibn Abu Humair, a descendant of Fahm Ibn Jabir Ibn ‘Abdullah Ibn Qadim al-Fahmi al-Hamdani, was involved in a fierce engagement till he was overwhelmed with wounds⁷⁰ and was taken captive. Ibn Sa’d wanted to kill him, but his people sought to intercede on his behalf, so he stayed with them as long as he was wounded; he died six months later.⁷¹

When people go for the *ziyara* of the sacred places, they recite the following:

“Peace be upon you, O wounded captive, O Suwar Ibn Abu Humair al-Fahmi al-Hamdani, and upon the bereaved one, ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdullah al-Junda’i.”

Suwayd

When the wounds inflicted upon Suwayd Ibn ‘Amr Ibn Abul-Muta’ became too much to bear, he fell on his face, and people thought that he had died. When al-Husayn (‘a) was martyred and he heard people talking about it, he took out a knife that he had with him whereby he fought till he was overwhelmed by their masses and killed. He was the last of the companions to die after al-Husayn’s martyrdom.

The refuge of the asylum seeker they are
When in fright, and the hope of the hopeful.
If the fire of the battle dies down,
With their swords they would light and say:
Ignite! Heavy in steps but for the battle light,
With swift steps, sure of their march
If they raise their lances you would think
They are stars in the light of the pitched dark,
Or if under the dust clouds the regiments collide,
One after another they would seek death
They charged even when the steps of the valiant stray
And the person of death under the dust makes its way.
They turned away from injustice so they
On the ground they did fall:
A master after a master, each and all.
They fell to the ground and the swords on them feasted.
Their bodies bare, by their virtues attired,
The Grandson kept turning his eyes
Seeing only their corpses on the ground lying

Seventy thousand surrounded him so he
Kept them at bay: like ostriches did they flee,
And the unsupported one stood among their crowds
Alone defending Muhammad's law,
Till he fell on the ground, may they first be paralyzed
And his heart could not quench the fire of thirst.
He fell, so *Tawhid* did fall down
And guidance was obliterated, losing its crown,
And the pillars of the creed crumbled and fell
Though before they had stood very well.
Allah support him, how his heart yearned for water
But was spent on the ground that burnt like fire.
He fell in the burning heat of the sun
With his face dusted, shaded by the spears
And the steeds kept on his chest going back and forth
Going to battle and returning therefrom,
And a woman cried from the side of her tent
She lost her protector, beating her cheek she kept.
The whips hurt her, so she under them bends;
She cries, and her voice oft
Causes even the stones to get soft.
She was carried on lean beasts in captivity
From a place to place displayed as booty.
She went away led by asses: Umayyad,
From one apostate to another she was led.⁷²

1. al-Maqrizi, *Khutat*, Vol. 2, p. 287.

2. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, *Maqatal al-'Awalim*, p. 84.

3. Ibn Nama, *Al-Luhuf*, p. 56.

4. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, where Muhammad Ibn Abu Talib is quoted.

5. Excerpted from a poem by the authority Shaikh Muhammad Husayn Kashif al-Ghiṭā', may Allah sanctify his soul. It is published in my book *Qamar Bani Hashim*.

6. al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 245. Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, p. 37.

7. Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, p. 29.

8. On p. 94, Vol. 3, of *Al-Isaba* (of Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani), Part 3, it is stated that Mujma' Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Mujma' Ibn Malik Ibn Iyas Ibn 'Abd Manat Ibn Sa'd was killed with al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, peace be upon him, during the Battle of Taff.

9. al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 255.

10. Ibn Nama, *Al-Luhuf*, p. 57.

11. *Al-Hada'iq al-Wardiyya*, a manuscript.

12. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 249.
13. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 4, p. 27.
14. Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya, Vol. 8, p. 182.
15. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 249.
16. Ibn Shahr Ashub, Al-Manaqib, Vol. 2, p. 217.
17. This is how it is recorded by Ibn al-Athir. On p. 13, Vol. 2, of his book Maqatal al-Husayn, al-Khawarizmi, however, says that his left hand was cut off after his right hand had already been cut off.
18. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 251. Ahmad, Musnad, Vol. 2, p. 100 (Egypt: first edition). It is stated in the latter reference that the Messenger of Allah (S) passed, while on a military expedition, by the body of a woman who had been killed and banned the killing of women and children.
19. Radiyy ad-Din al-Qazwini, Tazallum al-Zahra', p. 113.
20. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 251. This incident is abridged when narrated by al-Khawarizmi on p. 16, Vol. 2, of his book Maqatal al-Husayn.
21. Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 251.
22. al-Tabarsi, l'lam al-Wara, p. 145. Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, p. 28.
23. Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, p. 28. al-Khawarizmi, Maqatal al-Husayn, Vol. 2, p. 16.
24. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 255.
25. as-Saduq, Al-Amali, p. 17, majlis 30. According to Thakhirat al-Darayn, he killed nineteen men.
26. According to p. 373 of Ibn Hazm's book Jamharat Ansab al-'Arab, and also according to p. 97, Vol. 10, of al-Hamdani's book Al-Iklil, the name of Abu Thumama was Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Arib Ibn Hanzalah Ibn Darim al-Sa'idi. He was killed defending al-Husayn ('a). On p. 151, Vol. 6, of al-Tabari's Tarikh, and according to the text of the ziyarat of that sacred area, and also according to p. 46, Vol. 2, of Ibn Athir's book Al-Lubab, al-Sa'idi was named after Sa'id, a branch of [the tribe of] Hamdan. Sa'id's real name was Ka'b Ibn Shurahbil.
27. According to p. 247, Vol. 1, of Al-Wasa'il, chapter 41, which deals with prayer times (published by 'Ayn al-Dawlah), the Commander of the Faithful ('a) was very much engaged in battle, yet he remained mindful of the prayer time, so Ibn 'Abbas asked him, "What are you doing, O Commander of the Faithful?!" "I am watching the sun," said the Imam ('a). "But," responded Ibn 'Abbas, "we are distracted by the battle from the prayers." "We fought them," the Imam ('a) said, "on account of establishing the prayers." He never stopped performing salat al-layl till the very last night during which he ('a) died.
28. al-Khawarizmi, Maqatal al-Husayn, Vol. 2, p. 17.
29. Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, p. 29. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 251. Al-Khawarizmi, Vol. 2, p. 19, where the author says, "Al-Tamimi cut off Habib's head. Some say that it was done by Badil Ibn Sarim. The severed head was hung around a mare's neck. When the people of Kufa saw that, one of them, the son of Habib Ibn Muzahir, a young teenager, assaulted its rider and cut his head off."
30. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 252. Al-Bidaya, Vol. 8, p. 183.
31. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, pp. 248 and 250.
32. Ibn Shahr Ashub, Manaqib, Vol. 2, p. 217 (Iranian edition).
33. This text is quoted from p. 118 of Tazallum al-Zahra' of Radiyy ad-Din al-Qazwini, from p. 135, Vol. 13, of al-Nu'mani's Ghayba. According to p. 256, Vol. 6, of al-Tabari's Tarikh and p. 30, Vol. 4, of Ibn al-Athir's book, as well as al-Mufid's book Al-Irshad, a tent was placed on the battlefield, but these authors did not mention al-Husayn ('a) by name due to the magnanimity of the situation.
34. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqatal al-'Awalim, p. 85. al-Khawarizmi, Maqatal al-Husayn, Vol. 2, p. 11.
35. 'Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Fattal al-Naishapuri, Rawdat al-Wa'izin, p. 160. as-Saduq, Al-Amali, p. 97, majlis 30.
36. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqatal al-'Awalim, p. 88. al-Khawarizmi, Maqatal al-Husayn, Vol. 2, p. 17. In my view, al-Husayn's prayer was performed as qasr because he had arrived at Karbala' on the second of Muharram. Due to the knowledge which he had received from his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (S), in addition to his knowledge that he was going to be killed on the tenth of Muharram, he could not intend to stay there for ten days or more. Those who are not familiar with all of this presumed that he had performed salat al-khawf (prayer of one who fears for his life).

37. Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 44.
38. This poem was composed by the authority Sayyid Muhammad son of Ayatullah Sayyid Jamal Gulpaygani.
39. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqatal al-'Awalim, p. 88.
40. Thakhirat al-Darayn, p. 178.
41. Ibn Nama, Al-Luhuf, p. 62.
42. Sayyid Ka'im al-Ha'iri, Asrar al-Shahada, p. 175.
43. Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 34.
44. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 255.
45. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqatal al-'Awalim, p. 85. al-Khawarizmi, Maqatal al-Husayn, Vol. 2, p. 25.
46. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 253. al-Khawarizmi, Vol. 2, p. 20.
47. According to p. 345 of Ibn Hazm's book Ansab al-'Arab, he was a descendant of 'Amr Ibn 'Amir Ibn Ziyad-Manat Ibn Malik al-Aghar. His father is the poet whose poetry overflows with praises, namely Qarzah Ibn Ka'b Ibn 'Amr, [the latter is] also a poet. Qarzah had two sons: 'Amr, who was killed while fighting on the side of Imam al-Husayn ('a), and another son who fought on the side of Ibn Sa'd and whose name the said genealogist does not mention.
48. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqatal al-'Awalim, p. 88.
49. Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, p. 27
50. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 252. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 4, p. 29. Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya, Vol. 8, p. 184.
51. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqatal al-'Awalim, p. 90. On p. 184, Vol. 8, of his book Al-Bidaya, Ibn Kathir cites portions of these verses, and so does as-Saduq in his book Al-Amali, though the latter provides the name of Hilal Ibn Hajjaj as the poet.
52. al-Khawarizmi, Maqatal al-Husayn, Vol. 2, p. 21.
53. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 253.
54. Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya, Vol. 8, p. 84. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 253.
55. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqatal al-'Awalim, p. 91. Ibsar al-'Ayan, p. 85. al-Khawarizmi, Maqatal al-Husayn, Vol. 2, p. 24. In the latter reference, the author says that the Turkish slave was one of the slaves of al-Husayn ('a) who used to recite the Holy Qur'an and was familiar with Arabic. When he fell, al-Husayn ('a) placed his own cheek on his, so the dying slave smiled.
56. Thakhirat al-Darayn, p. 366.
57. According to p. 247, Vol. 6, of al-Tabari's Tarikh, he belonged to Banu 'Umayr Ibn Rabi'ah and was an ally of Banu Sulayma Ibn Banu 'Abd al-Qays.
58. In Taj al-'Arus and under the word "lawth," his name is given as Lawthan Ibn 'Abd-Wudd Ibn Zayd Ibn Jasham Ibn Hashid.
59. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 248.
60. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 254.
61. According to p. 145 of al-Tabari's book l'lam al-Wara, his name appears as Shawthan, but the text recorded by al-Mufid, in his book Al-Irshad, agrees with ours here.
62. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 254.
63. On p. 239, Vol. 6, of al-Tabari's Tarikh, his name exists as "Hoy," and on p. 218, Vol. 2, of his book Al-Manaqib, Ibn Shahr Ashub calls him Juwayn son of Abu Malik, slave of Abu Tharr al-Ghifari. On p. 237, Vol. 1, of his book Maqatal al-Husayn, al-Khawarizmi calls him John, a black slave of Abu Tharr al-Ghifari. [The Translator of this book is of the opinion that his name, the Christian that he was, may very possibly be "John." N. Tr.]
64. Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 33 (Iranian edition). Ibn Nama, Al-Luhuf, p. 61.
65. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqatal al-'Awalim, p. 88.
66. Thakhirat al-Darayn, p. 208. In his book Muthir al-Ahzan, Ibn Nama details his duel and recitation of rajaz poetry. On p. 68, Vol. 1, of Al-Isaba (of Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani), reference is made to the fact that both he and his father had been companions of the Messenger of Allah (S) who narrate from him the following hadith: "My son shall be killed in the land of Karbala'. Whoever comes to know about the battle should support him." On p. 125, Vol. 2, of his book Al-Khasa'is, al-Suyuti discusses him, and so do both al-Jazri on p. 123, Vol. 1, of his book Usd al-Ghabah and Abu Hatim al-Razi on p.

287, Vol. 1, of his book *Al-Jarh wal Ta'dil*.

67. This is recorded by both Ibn Shahr Ashub on p. 219, Vol. 3, of his book and al-Khawarizmi on p. 22, Vol. 2, of his book *Maqatal al-Husayn*. This should not strike the reader as far-fetched especially if he reads p. 137 of the book written by the great mentor al-Mufid about the Battle of the Camel (second edition). There, the author says, "Once his leg was cut off, he used it to hit a man, instantly killing him." Both al-Tabari, on p. 180, Vol. 5, of his *Tarikh*, and Ibn al-Athir, on p. 35, Vol. 3, of his book *Al-Kamil*, cite him reciting the following poetic lines after having killed that man:

Do not mind, O thigh,
I do in earnest beg,
The fact is that with me is my
Arm whereby I save my leg.

On p. 140, Vol. 2, of his book *Al-Kamil*, Ibn al-Athir says, "A man from among the followers of Musaylamah [the Liar] cut off the leg of Thabit Ibn Qays, so Thabit took it and hit the same man with it, instantly killing him."

68. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 10, p. 198. al-Khawarizmi, *Maqatal al-Husayn*, Vol. 2, p. 22. The author of *Al-Isaba* (Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani), who details the biography of Asma' daughter of Yazid Ibn al-Sakan, says that during the Battle of Yarmuk, she killed nine Roman soldiers using a tent post.

69. al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 10, p. 198, where al-Ha'iri's *Maqatal* is cited.

70. al-Hamdani, *Al-Iklil*, Vol. 10, p. 103.

71. *Al-Hada'iq al-Wardiyya* (a manuscript). Its text agrees with what is stated by *Al-Iklil*, that is, that he died because of his wounds, but the author does not refer to his captivity.

72. *Al-Hujjah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Kishwan*, may Allah have mercy on his soul, composed this poem.

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