

YOUNG READERS 7

IMAM ALI ZAYN AL-ABIDIN (AS)

SAKINA HASAN ASKARI



خکر

Chapter 1

Introduction

Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin (AS) is our fourth Imam. Like all the 12 Imams, he was a Masoom, one who did not commit any mistake or sins. He was the best in his time in knowledge, wisdom, piety and the worship of Allah.

His grandfather the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) gave him the title Zayn al-Abidin, which means the Ornament of the worshippers. The Imam was given this title because he worshipped Allah a great deal. No one before or after him has been called in this way. Indeed he is the pride of those who obey Allah, the Glorified.

He spent his days fasting, and he passed his nights in prayer.

Another of his titles is Sajjaad for he was always in sajda. He would thank Allah by bowing down low, touching the ground. Whenever he heard good news, he would bow down in "sajda" to praise and thank Allah. Whenever his wishes were granted he would go in sajda. Whenever his problems were solved he would go in sajda. He remained in "sajda" for long hours and became known as "Sayyid us Saajideen", the leader of those who do "sajda".

He was given the name Zaki or the pure one; because Allah purified him. Like his grandfather Prophet Muhammad (SAW) he is famous as Ameen or the trusted one.

Another of his titles is Ibn al-Khiyaratayn or the son of the best two. He said: "I am the son of the best two" the Qureish from the Arabs and the Persians from the non- Arabs.

After the tragedy of Karbala, the Imam spent many hours weeping for Imam Husain (AS). His eyes were always tearful.

So he was called Raees ul Bakkaeen, Lord of those who weep.

Chapter 2

Early Life

Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin (AS) was born on 5th Shabaan 38 A.H. (658 A.D) in Madinah. His father was Imam Husain (AS) and his mother's name was Shahrbanu.

Imam Ali (AS), his grandfather, loved him dearly and recited the azaan and iqama when he was born. Time and again Imam Ali (AS) would hug him and say, "you are Zayn al Abidin." His grandmother was Hadhrat Fatima (AS) the Leader of all the Women of the world. His father, Imam Husain (AS) was the grandson of the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and one of the two leaders of the Youth of Paradise.

His mother, Bibi Shahrbanu was a princess from Iran, the daughter of Yazdgard II, the last king of Pre-Islamic Iran. She was brought before Imam Ali (AS) who freed her. She then married Imam Husain (AS). Imam Ali told him: "Treat Shahrbanu kindly, for she will bear you the best of the people of the earth after you." Imam Husain (AS) took care of her and Shahrbanu found respect and honour.

When Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) was only one and half years old, one day he was with his grandfather Imam Ali (AS). He started praying exactly in the same way as Imam Ali (AS) did. On completing his prayers, Imam Ali (A.S) said, "How truthful was the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), when he said our young and our old are all the same" all being Muhammad: "Kullunaa Muhammad."

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) was only two years old, when his grandfather Imam Ali (AS) was martyred in the masjid e Koofa. A little later he saw that his uncle Imam Hasan (AS) had to give up his position as the leader of the Muslims and return to Madinah to live a quiet life. The Ahlullbait were not allowed

to live in peace even in Madinah. Imam Hasan (AS) was given poison in 50 A.H.

Chapter 3

Karbala

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) now lived under the care of his father Imam Husain (AS). When Yazeed took power in Damascus in 60 AH, he insisted on bayat from Imam Husain (AS). To agree to this demand would have meant the end of Islam.

So Imam Husain (AS) with the Ahlullbait had to leave Madi-nah and go towards Makkah. But here too spies were sent and they were forced to leave. He went so he could reform the Muslims and bring them back to the true message of Islam. The Imam with his family went towards Koofa. On their way there, they were surrounded by Yazeed's army near the banks of the River Euphrates in the month of Muharram 61 AH. Water was denied to the young and old in the camp of Husain . During this time, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) fell ill and he was so sick that he fainted.

A fierce battle took place in Karbala on the 10th Muharram. His severe illness prevented him from taking part in the battle on the day of Ashoora. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) says "There was no day like the day of Al Husain when 30,000 men advanced against him." The battle started at dawn but by the time of Asr, there was no one left.

Imam Husain (AS) called out from the battlefield "Hal min nasir yan suruna?" (Is there anybody to help me?) Our brave fourth Imam though he was very, very ill, stood up and was ready to go towards the battle ground. He asked for a dagger but his aunt Bibi Zainab (AS) stopped him. He was so weak from his illness that he fell unconscious.

When Imam Husain (AS) entered the tent for the final farewell, his father gently woke him up, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) opened his eyes.

He tried to stand up but was not able to. He leaned against his aunt Hadhrat Zaynab (AS) and asked his father: "Aina Aina Abbas? Where is Abbas?"

He heard his father say "Abbas has been killed!" Aina Aina Habeeb? Where is Habeeb? "Habeeb has been killed!"

Aina Aina Qasim? Where is Qasim? "Qasim has been killed!" Aina Aina Ali Akbar? Where is Akbar?"

Imam Husain (AS) hugged his son and said: "O my son Sajjad,. Now there is no one among the men, except you and me."

Finding out that he was the only male member of the family alive and that all his uncles, brothers, cousins and friends had been killed came as a big shock. How did he bear the loss of all his loved ones! Now his dear father Imam Husain (AS) was leaving him. Imam Sajjad (AS) started to lament:"O father shall I watch while you are killed?" Imam Husain (AS)left all the ladies in the care of his son and went out. The battle raged.

Soon a voice was heard calling: Husain has been killed in Karbala! The army of Yazeed began beating their drums. The ground shook. The sky wept tears of blood. The head of Imam Husain (AS) was raised up on a spear. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) pointed towards the head and said As Salam o alaika Ya Ababdullah Husain"

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) was now the Imam of the time. The army of Yazeed now dashed into the camp and put heavy chains around the Imam's neck and his ankles. The mat that he lay on was pulled away. Shimr wanted to kill him, but his aunt Hadhrat Zaynab (AS) hurried to save him and clung to him saying "You will not kill him before killing me first. " So his life was spared. Then they set fire to the tents. No other Imam began his Imamate in a more tragic atmosphere. As the flames rose high, the Imam was asked by his aunt Hadhrat Zaynab (AS),"O my son, you are the Imam! Tell us what do we do? Do we go out or remain inside?" He replied "O my aunt, we have to go out of this burning tent!" They came out to spend the night in the darkness on the sand of Karbala. The fourth Imam recalled the scene for many years with tears in his eyes. He said "Whenever I look at my aunts and sisters, tears come to my eyes. I remember the time when they were running from one tent to another while the enemies were shouting. "

On the 11th of Muharram, the Imam saw that Umar ibn Saad's army buried their own dead, but did not allow him to bury his father, Imam Husain (AS) nor any of his family and friends. Then he was bound in chains and taken by the very place where the unburied bodies lay on the burning sand. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) nearly fainted of grief.

The Imam, who was so ill that he could hardly walk, was made to hold the reins of the camels. His aunts, sisters and other ladies of the holy family were put on camels that had no saddles and taken as captives to Koofa.

Chapter 4

Koofa

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS), though so ill and weak, was bound in heavy chains and made to follow on foot. The heads of the martyrs were carried on spears. Soon they reached the outskirts of Koofa.

The governor, Ibn Ziyad, ordered that the family of Imam Husain (AS) should be taken through the streets of Koofa. The people had been told that a rebel had been defeated by Yazeed in Karbala. They came out in their hundreds and climbed on to rooftops to get a glimpse. There was widespread celebration.

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) knew that he must let everyone know the Truth. He had to save the message of Islam. Though his hands were tied with ropes and his neck was bleeding, he spoke to the people of Koofa "

O people! Whoever knows me knows me, and he, who does not know me, should know that I am Ali, the son of Husain who was killed thirsty near the river Euphrates... ..

I am the son of the one who was killed cruelly... ..

I am the son of the one who was dishonoured and whose entire belongings were looted and plundered, I am the son of the one whose women and children were made prisoners... .. "

The Imam reminded them that they were the very people who had invited his father Imam Husain (AS): "O people! I put you on your oath to tell me in the name of Allah, whether you know that at one time you wrote letters to my father and then deceived him. You made firm promises with him and then rose to fight against him. How will you face the Prophet of

Allah when you are brought before him on the Day of Judgment?"

The Imam's sermon changed the thinking of the people of Koofa. They blushed with shame. They tried to control themselves but could not. They started to sob and moan. Then they started to weep loudly.

Then they began blaming one another. Some cried out: "O son of the Prophet of Allah! All of us will hear what you say and obey your orders. We will honour the promises made with you. We will not forsake you and will not side with anyone else." But the Imam knew that these words were not true. They were just like the false promises that they had made to his father, Imam Husain (AS).

Imam Sajjad (AS) said: "O unfaithful and inconstant people! You will never prosper. Do you want to behave towards me in the same manner in which you behaved towards my forefathers? No, it cannot be so."

Then the family of Husain (AS) was brought before Ibn Ziyad, the governor of Yazeed. The tyrant turning towards the Imam, asked, "Who are you?" "Ali ibn Husain" came the reply. "Didn't Allah kill Ali Ibn Husain!" shouted Ibn Ziyad.

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) corrected him: "I had a brother who was named Ali Ibn Husain and he was killed by people."

"Rather Allah killed him!" insisted Ibn Ziyad.

The Imam quoting a verse from the holy Quran said "Allah takes the souls at the time of death" Ibn Ziyad was furious and shouted: "Take this man and cut his head off!"

But Hadhrat Zainab (A.S) placed her hand on the neck of Imam Sajjad (AS) and said to Ibn Ziyad, "If you intend to kill him, you have to kill me with him." There was such uproar in the court that the tyrant could not do him any harm.

Chapter 5

Shaam

The journey from Koofa to Shaam took three weeks. The caravan of captives, the orphans, the ladies tied up in ropes and Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) in chains, was given very little food and water. In the blazing sun of the desert, the chains would get hot and burn his skin but the Imam never complained.

The desert was so hot that the water would often dry up inside the water skins. The Imam was ill, and without water and hardly any food, he would collapse from the severe heat and thirst. In spite of his suffering, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) did not let his grief stop him from spreading the true message of Islam. At every stop he would give a speech so that people learned about Karbala and what had happened there. They learned about sufferings of Imam Husain (AS) and the Holy Ahlulbait.

The captives reached the city of Damascus on the 1st of Safar 61 A.H. The caravan was made to wait for several hours, so that people could complete their decorations as they rejoiced at the "victory" of Yazeed over the grandson of the Prophet.

Whenever our fourth Imam was asked "Where did you suffer the most?" he replied "Ash Shaam! Ash Shaam! Ash Shaam!"

Perhaps the reason the Imam said "Shaam" three times was the fact that there were three places where the Imam had to suffer deep sorrow and agony:

1. The Bazaar-e-Shaam, the streets where the Ahlulbait were taken through.
2. The Darbaar-e-Shaam when the Imam and the ladies of the holy household were brought before Yazeed.

3. The Zindaan-e-Shaam where the Imam and the family of the Prophet were kept in prison.

As they were led through the bazaar, an old man came to Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) and said "Praise be to Allah that He destroyed you and made Yazeed the victor."

The Imam looked at him and knew that he had been deceived by the false propaganda of Yazeed. So he asked the old man "Sheikh, have you read the Quran?" "Yes" answered the man.

The Imam then continued "Do you understand the verse, "Say, I do not ask you any reward for the message except the love for my Near Ones"

"Yes I do," replied the old man. Have you read Ayat 26 of the Surah Bani Israil in which Allah says,

"And give the Near Ones their rights."

"Yes I have read it" said the man again. The Imam continued "We are the ones referred in the Ayat and the verse about giving the Khums.

Have you read the verse:

"Indeed Allah wishes to keep away all evil from you o people of the House and purify you with a thorough purification." The old man said "Yes, I have" Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) said,

"By Allah we are the kinsfolk referred to in these verses. We are the Household mentioned in these verses. The Messenger of Allah is our grandfather"

The old man started to weep and fell on the Imam's hands, kissing them. He wept so much that tears flowed down his cheeks. He took off his turban and raised his head towards the sky. He said "O Allah, I avoid the enemies of the Ahlulbait" and begged the Imam to forgive him.

As the caravan passed through the street, a man in the crowd jeered at the Imam saying "Now, who has become victorious!"

The Imam said to him, "Wait till the time of the Azaan. Then you will see who the victor is. As long as Islam exists, glory belongs to us"

Finally it was time for the Ahlulbait to be taken to the darbar of Yazeed. A rope was brought. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) and his aunts and the rest of the ladies were tied with their hands behind their necks. They were then dragged along.

Yazeed turned to Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) and threatened that he would be put to death. The young Imam boldly replied, "For me the worst possible torture has been my standing here with my mothers and sisters, with my aunts and cousins, without any veils to cover their heads and faces. Do not for a moment think that I am frightened by your threats. We, the descendants of the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace be on Him, have been trained from childhood to face sufferings."

Yazeed next ordered a speaker to mount the pulpit and publicly abuse Imam Ali (AS) and his descendants including Imam Husain (AS). Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) said to the man "Woe into you. To please a creature, you have displeased your Creator." Yazeed asked, "And what would please the Creator?"

"Let me go on these planks of wood and I will tell you." Yazeed was not keen, but the people wanted to hear the Imam, so he had to allow it. The Imam went on the mimbar (pulpit) and after praising Allah, he introduced himself:

Those who know me, they know me... And those who do not know me listen From among us is Muhammad the chosen Prophet (SAW), From among us is The truthful one (Imam Ali) From among us is Fatimah the Mistress of all the Women From among us is Tayyar (Jafar)

From among us is The Lion of Allah (Hamza) From among us are the two grandchildren of the Prophet Hasan and Husain.

Having introduced his family, he continued his speech

I am the son of Makkah and Mina

I am the son of Zamzam and Safa

I am the son of the noble one who placed the black stone in the Kaaba

I am the son of the one who was taken from Masjid ul-Haram to Masjid ul-Aqsa

I am the son of one on whom Allah sent revelations

I am the son of Muhammad Mustafa;

I am the son of Ali Murtuza I am the son of the best of believers

I am the son of Ameerul momineen I am the son of light of the mujahidin

I am the son of the best of the family of Yaseen

I am the son of the first from among the believers

I am the son of Fātimah Zahrā

I am the son of Khadija tul-Kubra I am Ali the son of Husain,
who was killed unjustly in Karbala

I am the son of him, whose head was severed from the neck

I am the son of the one, who was killed and left in a pool of
his own blood;

I am the son of the one, who was killed thirsty

I am the son of him over whom the angels wept

I am the son for whom the birds in the air cried”

His fearless speech moved everyone to tears. The people
began to weep. Yazeed

wanted to stop the Imam but couldn't. So he ordered the
muezzin to call out the azaan.

“Allah o Akbar! Allah o Akbar!”

The Imam said, “Allah o Akbar There is nothing greater than
Allah” The muezzin said “La ilaha illallah”. The Imam said

“My hair, my skin, my blood, my brain, my bones, all
bear witness there is no God but Allah.”

The muezzin said “Ash hadu anna Muhammadan
Rasoolillah”

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) turned to Yazeed and asked

“Is Prophet Muhammad (SAW) your grandfather or mine? If
you say he is yours, you are a liar. If you say he is mine, then
why did you kill his family?”

Yazeed was stunned and silent, unable to answer. He could
no longer hide the facts from the people. The Imam's
speech showed the great position of the Ahlulbait.

Yazeed started to hit the head of Imam Husain (AS) with a
cane. Yahya ibn Hakam, a companion of the holy Prophet
shouted, “Yazeed! Stop hitting Husain. By Allah! I have seen
the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) kiss these lips.” Yazeed
angrily expelled Yahya from the court. The family of Imam Hu-
sain (AS) was sent to the prison.

The prison was a dark cell which let in very little light. Imam
Zayn al-Abidin (AS) and the ladies of the holy household spent
their time in mourning for their loved ones and in prayer. Food
and water sent for them was not enough to feed them all.
When Bibi Sakina (AS) his four year old sister died in the pris-
on, it was Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) who had to dig her grave
and bury her. The news of her death spread through

Damascus. People started asking questions. They were turning against Yazeed.

So Yazeed called the fourth Imam and told him that he was free to go. Yazeed asked the Imam what he wanted to do next. The fourth Imam said, "We wish to return to Madinah via Karbala, but before that, we would like to mourn my father.

Imam Husain (AS) and the martyrs of Karbala. We have not been yet allowed to grieve for our dear ones. Give us back the belongings you looted from us. Give us back the heads of the martyrs so that they can be buried."

Right in the city of Damascus where Yazeed ruled, the first majlis to mourn Imam Husain (AS) was held. A house was made available for the Ahlulbait. The people of Damascus, dressed in black, came to find out what had happened in Karbala. The message spread.

The majlis created a stir in the city and the sound of crying and wailing made Yazeed fear the turn of events. He wanted the Ahlulbait to leave Damascus as soon as possible.

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) and the widows, who were overcome with grief, reached Karbala on the day of Arbayeen. He was met there by Jabir ibn Abdullah, the famous companion of the holy Prophet and the first zaer (pilgrim) of Imam Husain (AS). The fourth Imam looked at Jabir and said "O Jabir, this is the very place where our men were killed, our women taken prisoner and our tents set on fire."

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) buried the heads with the bodies of the martyrs. Bibi Zaynab (AS) and the ladies of the family wept continuously. They sobbed at the graves of their dear ones. They recalled all that had happened on the day of Ashoor. After spending three days in Karbala, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS), seeing the distress of the Ahlulbait, they decided to prepare for the return journey to Madinah.

"O Husain, O beloved of the Holy Prophet

O Husain o son of Fatima and Ali

O Husain! O Husain! O Husain!

O Karbala! We leave you with pure bodies buried in your midst.

O Karbala! We, together with our guardian Sajjad, bid you farewell."

Chapter 6

Madinah

As they arrived on the outskirts of the city of the Prophet, the fourth Imam asked that their tents be pitched outside the city.

He sent Noman ibn Bashir to announce their return:

“O the people of Madinah, Husain has been killed Shed tears for him

His body lies on the plains of Karbala O people I am a messenger of Ali ibn Husain. He has arrived with his aunts and sisters; he camps at the outskirts of Madinah.” People rushed out to receive the Imam and the women of the Holy Household. Cries of “Ya Husain, Ya Muhammad” filled the air.

Surrounded by his friends and relatives, with tears rolling down his cheeks, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) said “Praise be to the Merciful Lord, O people! Abu Abdullah Husain has been killed; his women and children were taken as captives. His head and those of his companions have been carried on spears from town to town. O people, our hearts are sad at the loss of Husain and broken to pieces at his suffering. Eyes are filled with tears at his tragedy. The universe and its inhabitants weep for him. Indeed we leave our affair in the hands of Allah for He is the Mighty and He is the One that takes revenge for the innocent.”

He looked at the empty houses of his father and the rest of the family. There was no Abbas, Akbar, Qasim or Aun o Mohammad. Even the cradle of Ali Asghar was empty. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) looked at his aunts. “May Allah grant you the patience of Fatima Zahra (AS) and the courage of Ali (AS)” he prayed.

Chapter 7

Tears for Karbala

Yazeed had given Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) his freedom to return home to Madinah not out of love but out of fear. The Imam, therefore, was still not out of danger. But Yazeed could not stop the Imam from weeping for his father.

On his return to Madinah he continued to shed tears for Imam Husain (AS). Not a day passed without the Imam crying in memory of his father and the martyrs of Karbala. His followers also joined him as often as they could. The grief of the Imam brought the community together as they remembered the tragedy.

The Imam wept for his father near the grave of the Prophet. He also held regular majlis in his own house. Those who attended these sessions would then be served with food in the name of his father, Imam Husain (AS).

Sometimes, he would weep so much that he fainted. When water was brought to him, he wept as he recalled the thirst his family suffered in Karbala. He continued to weep till his eyes were sore.

He would say, "Why should not I cry, when my father was denied the water which was free to the beasts and animals? Never do I remember the massacre of the children of Fatimah but that tears strangle me." When food was placed in front of him, he would weep as he remembered the hunger and thirst on the day of Ashoor.

The Imam wept when he saw the butcher taking a goat for slaughter. He would ask, "Have you given this animal food and water?" The reply would be "We always do." On hearing this, the Imam would weep, saying, "Ya Husain! You were killed on the day of Ashoor, hungry and thirsty."

One day somebody asked him. "O son of Allah's Messenger! How long will you weep like this?" The Imam replied "O servant of Allah. Prophet Yaqoub had twelve sons. But when only one of them (Yousuf) was taken away from him, he wept so much and for so long that his eyes turned white, his head turned grey and his back was bent although his son Yousuf was still alive. I have watched my father, my brother and seventeen members of my family being slaughtered all around me. How then can my sorrow come to an end?"

People learnt about the events of Karbala. They found out about the hardships of the Ahlulbait in captivity. Turmoil and unrest against the Ummayyad regime grew.

Chapter 8

Umayyad Terror

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) lived in Madinah for 34 years after Karbala. Our fourth Imam lived during the time when the rulers of Bani Ummayya were in power:

Yazeed, Marwan, Abdul Malik ibn Marwan and Waleed ibn Abdul Malik. They were all cruel and wicked rulers. When Yaz-eed sent his soldiers to Madinah in 62 AH, thousands of Muslims were killed including many companions and hafiz e Quran. The masjid of the holy Prophet was turned into a stable. Women were attacked. During this difficult period, Marwan who was an enemy of the Ahlulbait came to the Imam asking for help. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) gave him and his family shelter. He was kind even to his enemies and his house was open for anyone who came seeking for protection at this time.

Then Yazeed went towards Makkah. The people of Makkah closed the doors of the city. Before Yazeed's forces could break into Makkah, Yazeed died in 64 A.H. Yazeed's army then returned to Damascus.

When Yazeed died, his son Muawiya became the next ruler. But he was not like Yazeed; and he was not happy with what his father and, grandfather had done. He was not even ready to rule. He died within six months of his father's death. His younger brother Khalid was too young to rule. As a result, Marwan ibn Hakam became the next ruler.

Marwan was succeeded by his son Abdul - Malik who ruled for about twenty two years. Before becoming the ruler he was a pious person. But he changed to become a wicked man and turned to all the pleasures of the world, including drinking wine. Anyone who came in his way was killed. Abdul Malik's announced his policy saying, "I am not weak like

Uthman or tricky like Muawiya or stupid like Yazeed. I will bring down with my sword the head of anyone who raises it against me!"

The Imam (AS) too was put in prison for a short time by Abdul Malik. But the Imam spent so much time in prayers that Abdul Malik had to free him fearing that his own people would turn against him if he harmed the Imam (AS).

Mukhtar Saqqafi rose in Iraq in 65AH. He took Koofa and put to death all those who had fought against Imam Husain (AS) and his followers in Karbala. Abdul Malik sent an army under the command of Ibne Ziyad to fight against Mukhtar. But Mukhtar proved successful. When news reached the city of Madinah on 9th day of Rabi-ul-Awwal that Ibn Ziyad had been killed, the Ahlulbait celebrated. Our fourth Imam named the day as Eid-e-Zahra.

But soon after that, Mukhtar was martyred in a separate battle. With Mukhtar out of his way, Abdul Malik sent a huge army to Makkah under the command of Hajjaj Bin Yusuf. Hajjaj was very cruel and put to death nearly 150,000 men, many on false charges. At the time of his death 50,000 people were found rotting in his prisons.

Abdul Malik at last died in 86 AH and his son Waleed became the ruler. He continued to let Hajjaj rule and his worst crime was that he poisoned the Imam in 95 AH.

Chapter 9

The Stone Speaks

Another difficult task before Imam Zayn al Abidin (AS) was to announce his Imamah publicly. This took the form of a family dispute: Some people claimed that his uncle, Muhammad e Hanafiya, was the Imam. It became necessary to remove this misunderstanding.

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) suggested that they go to the "Black Stone" (Hajr-e-Aswad) of Kaaba and ask there for an answer. Therefore, the Imam (AS) and his uncle, Muhammad Hanafiya decided to go together to Makkah for Hajj.

The news spread like wild fire that Ali ibn Husain (AS) and Muhammad al-Hanafiyah wanted the Black Stone to judge between them. They went up to the Kaaba. The uncle and the nephew slowly advanced towards the Black Stone.

At first, Muhammad Hanafiya addressed the Hajr asking it to confirm who the Imam was. But there was no reply. Then Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) prayed to Allah and then asked the Hajr to declare who the Imam was. There was a tremor in the stone then a loud and clear voice came from Hajr e Aswad,

"O Allah, verily Wisayah and Imamah, after Husain ibn Ali, is for Zayn al-Abidin Ali ibn Husain, son of Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatimah bint Rasulillah."

Muhammad al-Hanafiya himself publicly accepted Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) as the Imam. He had never himself ever claimed to be the Imam. He had come to the Kaaba only to let the people see who the real Imam was.

The news of the miracle spread throughout the Muslim world.

Chapter 10

Sahifa e Kamila

Sahifa e Kamila is also known as the Sahifa e Sajjadia. It is a wonderful collection of duas taught by Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS). These were written down by his two sons, Mohammad and Zaid. It shows us how to pray to Allah for all our needs. But it is much more than a book of prayer.

The Imam lived at a time when he could not openly teach people about Islam. So he used duas through which he could teach people about Islam. He used to go to the mosque of the Prophet and sometimes prayed there all night.

The duas were used by him to guide Muslims towards Allah's message. With the help of these 'Duas', Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) taught Muslims not only how to pray to Allah but also what Islam is. The duas teach us about Allah, the Prophet and the Ahlulbait. It guides us to the kind of life we should lead. So beautiful are the duas that some describe the book as the Psalms of Islam.

The duas taught by our Imam bring comfort to us when we face problems. They teach us to be patient and guide us to keep faith in Allah's mercy.

The Imam has also taught us how to live our life according to the teachings of Islam. For example in the Dua for Parents, he says "O Allah, let me fear my parents and let me be kind to them. Make me enjoy obeying them. Make me prefer their wishes above my wishes O Lord, make me speak softly to them and make my heart kind towards them...O Lord reward them for bringing me up, and take care of them as they took care of me when I was an infant"

His deep knowledge can be seen when he teaches us to praise the Lord:

“Lord I glorify Thee, You see what is in the lowest depth of the ocean. You hear the breaths of the fish in the lowest depth of the ocean. You know the weight of the heavens and earth and of the Sun and the Moon and of Darkness and Light and of the shadow and air. You know the weight of every gust of wind and how many times it is greater than the weight of a dust mote!

Treatise of rights

The Imam wrote the Risalat al Huquq (Treatise of Rights) and in this wonderful document is a list of 51 rights.

For example, the Imam said: “The right of hearing is to keep it pure from listening to backbiting and listening to that which is unlawful to listen. There is no strength save in Allah.”

Through his words and teachings found in the Sahifa e Kamila we can see the Imam’s perfect faith, his vast knowledge and pure character.

Chapter 11

Noble Traits

The Imam regularly visited the poor and the sick and provided for them without their knowledge. In the darkness of the night, he would carry on his back, bags of bread and food, cover his face so that no one could recognize him and go from door to door of the needy and serve them food. No one realised that this person was Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) until his death.

He was patient and forgiving. Once a slave girl, while serving him, dropped on him a heavy jug full of water and cut his face. She said to him, "Allah, the most high says: those who control their anger." "Before she could complete this verse of the Qur'an, he said, "I have controlled my anger." She continued, saying, "And those who forgive the people.." He replied. ""May Allah forgive you." She went on, saying, "Allah loves those who do good." He replied, "Go, you are a free person in the presence of Allah, The High, The Mighty."

A person once spoke very harshly to the Imam and wrongly blamed the Imam for things he had never done. The Imam listened quietly and without answering him. The man got tired and went away.

The Imam went with his followers to the man's house. On his way the Imam started reciting the Qur'an: "Those who control their anger and forgive the people, Allah loves those who do good." (3:133). His companions immediately knew that the Imam would forgive the person.

The person was sure that the Imam had come to punish him. However, the Imam addressed him very gently saying, "Brother, you said things about me, if truly I have those faults, then I pray to Allah to forgive me. If, however, I do not have those faults, I pray to Allah to forgive you." The man was put to

shame. He said, "You are free from all those faults. May Allah forgive me for making those false claims against you." The Imams patience change the man's attitude who realized his mistake.

Chapter 12

Presents

The Imam continued to live a quiet life in Madinah. Most of the people were afraid to openly meet the Imam as the rulers kept a close watch on him. Some of his Shia however would come and visit him especially after they had completed their Hajj. One such sincere friend was a man from Balkh who went for Hajj every year then travel to Madinah to meet the Imam. He would always bring a gift for the Imam.

One year as he was leaving his hometown, his wife said to him, "You always take a present for your friend in Madinah. Does he ever give you one?" The man was shocked to hear such words from his wife. "What are you saying!" he said to her. He left for Hajj and as usual went to Madinah to see the Imam.

When he entered, the Imam welcomed him and asked him to join him at his meal. After they finished eating the Imam said "Let me help you to wash your hands."

The man said "Maula you are my Imam. I wish to help you wash your hands." The man started to pour water as the Imam washed his hand. As the water touched the Imam's hand and flowed into the basin, the man was amazed to see that the drops of water changed into pearls. Then he saw that the basin was filling up with rubies and emeralds as water passed through the Imam's fingers!! "Give these as our gift to your wife!" said the Imam.

The man returned home and gave the jewels to his wife saying "See what the Imam has sent for you!" She was amazed and wanted to visit the Imam herself. So they both travelled to Madinah. But before they reached Madinah, she died.

The man would not bury her. Instead he went to Madinah to meet the Imam and asked him to pray that his wife be restored to life. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) prayed two rakat namaz, and prayed for her. He returned to find that She woken up as if from sleep. Both of them then together went to see the Imam. She had never ever seen the Imam before but when she entered the Imam's presence she cried: "This is the very person on whose order my life has been given back to me. "

Chapter 13

Poem of Praise

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) went for Hajj many times. He would sometimes join groups of pilgrims who did not know him so that he could serve them without being recognised.

One year Hisham, the son of the ruler, came to Makkah for Hajj. But he found that there was such a huge crowd of people around the Kaaba that he could not reach the Hajr-e-Aswad. So he and his rich Syrian friends sat in a corner, waiting for the crowd to decrease.

Then came a person dressed in simple clothes. He went towards the Kaaba very slowly. When the crowd saw him, they called out "Allahu Akbar" making way for him. The man slowly and with ease went round the Kaaba seven times, kissed the "Hajr-e-Aswad" and went away.

Hisham could not believe what he saw. Wasn't he the prince? Why had he to wait! He was jealous and furious. One of his courtiers asked Hisham "Who is this that the crowd makes way for him? Hisham said "I don't know"

Farazdaq, the great Arab poet was there and could not keep quiet. He burst out "Yes you do know him" He then recited a long poem in praise of the Imam which he composed right on the spot saying,

This is the Ali the son of Husain, the son of Fatima, daughter of the Messenger through whom darkness scattered This is he whose ability the valley of Makkah recognises

This is the son of the best of Allah's servants This is the pure pious man, the pure eminent man It is he who is the son of the best of all men of Allah and it is he who is the most pious and devout, the purest and faultless the most chaste and the most righteous When he comes to the Kaaba, it almost grasps

the palm of his hand The light of guidance comes out of
the light of his forehead, Your words "Who is this" do not harm
him The Arabs and non Arabs recognise him who you deny

Hisham burned with jealousy. He got the poet Farazdaq sent
to prison for praising the Imam (AS)

Chapter 14

Martyrdom

The Imam's purity made him popular with the people. He was getting old and weak but people loved him. Walid, the Umayyad ruler was full of spite and made up his mind to kill the Imam. "I cannot rest as long as Ali ibn Husain is in this world" he said. He sent poison to his governor of Madinah and ordered him to give it to the Imam.

When poison was given to Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS), he suffered severe pain. He became very ill. His wife Hazrat Fatima binte Hasan was by him. When people came to visit him, he told them that they must follow his son Muhammad Baqir (AS) who was to be the next Imam. He turned to Muhammad Baqir (AS) and told him to take special care of the camel that he had used for Hajj for twenty years yet had never whipped it. He knew the animal would feel his loss. He told them to set it free and let it do what it pleases.

The poison took effect and the Imam then fainted three times. When he woke up, he recited the Sura e Fatiha and the Sura Inna fatahna and verses of the Holy Quran. Then his soul went to his Creator. It was the 25th day of Muharram 95 AH. At that time of martyrdom, the Imam was 57 years old. He was buried in the graveyard of Jannatul Baqee in Madinah next to his uncle Imam Hasan (AS). The camel belonging to the Imam was set free. It went straight to the grave of the Imam and started shedding tears. It remained in this condition till it died.

The Imam's grave which had a dome over it was destroyed in 1926 by the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia. Muslims who go to Madinah cannot help cry when they see the poor condition

in which the grave of the Imam is today. We pray that it is restored to its glory soon.

Chapter 15

Salams

Salam on you Ali the son of Husain (AS)
Salam on you the Lord among worshippers
Salam on you the Ornament of the Worshippers
Salam on you the One who was often in sajda
Salam on you the One who was pure
Salam on you the One who was Trusted
Salam on you the Son of the Best Two May Allah's blessings
be on you.

Chapter 16

What we learned

Our fourth Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS) is a wonderful role model for us. He has taught us to live our life in the worship of Allah.

He showed us that we must never lose hope in Allah's mercy.

He spoke out boldly against evil and was never afraid to uphold Islam. We too must not be afraid when people try to harm our religion.

The Imam was always ready to help the poor and needy. We should try our best to help others.

The fourth Imam spent long hours in duas and prayer. We must never miss our prayers.

The Imam always remembered Karbala and told people about Imam Husain (AS). We must do majlis and spread the message of Karbala.

Chapter 17

Do you remember?

Choose from these words to fill up the blanks: Karbala Shaam Koofa Sahifa-e-Kamila Farazdaq Sajjad Shahr Banu Zayn al-Abidin Baqee

..... means the Ornament of the worshippers. The Imam was given this title because he worshipped Allah a great deal.

His father was Imam Husain (AS) and his mother's name was.....

The fourth Imam was unable to fight on the day of Ashoor as he was very ill in When he was asked to name the place where he had suffered the most, the Imam replied three times.

..... is a wonderful collection of duas taught by Imam Zayn al-Abidin (AS).

The poetrecited a long poem in praise of the Imam in Makkah.

The Imam spent long hours in sajda so he became known as The Imam was buried in Jannatul by his son Imam Muhammad Baqir (AS).

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*"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer,
let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

Imam Ali (as)