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# Mukhtar

*How he avenged the Kербala perpetrators  
(61 - 67 ah)*



xkps

# Chapter 1

## SUMMARY

The book begins by introducing Mukhtar and traces his life from the moment he first welcomes Muslim Aqeel, the cousin of Imam Husein (as), who was sent to assess the situation in Kufa.

Mukhtar is subsequently imprisoned by the authorities because of his love and support of Imam Husein (as). Mukhtar manages to get himself released through the help of a Kumayl Hamadani. Meanwhile, the atrocities of Yazeed continues and because of the Kerbala effect, the political situation in the region also changes dramatically.

After Yazeed's death, and parallel to Mukhtar's activities, a group called the Tawwabuns (the Penitents), led by Sulayman Surad Khuzai, organise themselves to punish the Kerbala perpetrators. The Tawwabun decide to first punish Ubaydallah Ziyad, one of the leaders of the planning of the Kerbala massacre. However, the Tawwabun are heavily crushed by the forces of Ubaydallah Ziyad.

Mukhtar tries to form an alliance with a friendly governor in the region in order to start avenging the Kerbala perpetrators, but is rebuffed. He therefore teams up with another valiant supporter of the Ahlal-bayt, Ibrahim Malik Ashtar. Together, they lead a group of people in taking the control of the Governorship of Kufa.

Once in power, Mukhtar has to defend himself from his enemies who want him dead, for the fear of being hunted out for their part in the atrocities they carried out at Kerbala.

Having consolidated his power and his hold in Kufa, Mukhtar begins his mission in earnest. He starts searching for the

perpetrators of Kerbala, puts them on trial and punishes the guilty.

Finally, the booklet traces the events leading to the martyrdom of Mukhtar.

# Chapter 2

## Who Was Mukhtar?

- His full name: Mukhtar Abu Obaida Masood Thaqafi of Banu Hawazin tribe; he was born in 1 AH.
- His mother's name was Husna (some sources say Hilya) and his father's name was Abu Obaida Thaqafi.
- He had one sister named Safiya who was married to Abdulla Omar, the son of the so-called second Khalifa Omar; another sister was married to Umar Saad, the chief commander of Yazeed's army in Kerbala; one of his daughter was married to Imam Zainul Abideen (as) to have a son named Omar.
- Due to his successful mission of avenging the enemies of Imam (as), there were many false accounts and distortions of his life at the time; for example, that he was of a "low" family, not to be respected, etc; but some eminent people of the Banu Hawazin tribe are:
  - Maimoona - wife of Prophet Muhammad (saww)
  - Ummul Baneen - wife of Imam Ali (as), mother of H Abbas
  - Laila - wife of Imam Hussein (as), mother of Ali Akbar
  - Labeed - a great poet of Arabia; author of one of the seven poems at one time hung at Kaaba
- Abu Obaida Thaqafi always wished for a son who would do an honourable and memorable deed in this world, and only marries when he is convinced of the right partner to give him such a son; once he has a dream to choose a certain girl from a brave family of his tribe, named Husna.
- During the pregnancy of Mukhtar, Husna dreams of a horse rider descending from the sky and congratulating her for a brave son to come; on the night following the

birth of Mukhtar, Husna dreams again of the same horse rider descending from the sky and congratulates her on the actual birth of the baby that would grow to be a firm follower of the Prophet Muhammad (saww), the Ahl-al-bayt and avenger of Imam Husein's (as) killers and enemies.

- Abu Obaida, Mukhtar's father, was the commander of an army unit which invaded Iran under the orders of Omar (the "second" Khalifa); the Iranian troops had elephants which Abu Obaida's people never saw before and were frightened of them, thus affecting their battle performance, but Abu Obaida fights gallantly and makes inroads to the territory; Abu Obaida dies in this battle in 13 AH when Mukhtar is 12 years old.
- The battle command is then taken over by Abu Obaida's brother, to finally win the whole battle and bring the area fought under his influence.
- Meanwhile, Mukhtar is brought up by his mother and uncle; his uncle is made governor of Madayn by Omar; during the time of Muawiyah, when there is a cease-fire between Imam Hasan (as) and Muawiyah, Mukhtar's uncle, till then the governor of Madayn, is transferred to the governorship of Mosul. (Madayn is where Salman Farsi, Jabir Abdulla Ansaree and Huzayfa Yamani are buried; also in Madayn is the Take Kisra.)

# Chapter 3

## Mukhtar's First Imprisonment

- When Muslim Aqeel arrives in Kufa in 60 AH, sent by Imam Husein (as) from Mecca, Muslim stays at Mukhtar's house; Mukhtar is the first person to pay homage to Muslim Aqeel.
- Mukhtar goes out of Kufa to raise, from the followers of his tribe, an army of supporters for Muslim Aqeel, who is representing Imam Husein (as).
- After Ubaydallah Ziyad's arrival in Kufa and the trouble which ensues, Muslim Aqeel goes to Hani Urwa's house where he is finally tracked down and then publicly executed by the order of Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- Mukhtar is out of Kufa at the time when Muslim Aqeel is murdered by Ubaydallah Ziyad; Mukhtar returns to Kufa with his men and on the way in, hears about unrest in Kufa.
- He meets with travellers and hears about Muslim's murder; he also fights and kills some of the road interceptors sent by Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- Mukhtar disperses his assembled army, disarms and makes a diplomatic move to join the group of Omar Haris (a government officer), stationed just outside the Kufa boundary, offering amnesty to people who initially supported Muslim Aqeel but would now not oppose Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- Chiefs of Kufa are summoned to the court of Ubaydallah Ziyad and Mukhtar is one of them; one source says Mukhtar does not salute Ubaydallah Ziyad and is hit by bodyguards to have one eye badly bruised, whereas

another report says Mukhtar salutes Ubaydallah Ziyad but is snubbed by not getting a reply.

- Mukhtar is questioned by Ubaydallah Ziyad about his allegiance to and motives of Muslim Aqeel staying with him initially; he is also queried about the dispersal of his followers after hearing of Muslim's murder; Omar Haris vouches for him as having surrendered alone without any supporters.
- Widows' of the road interceptors killed by Mukhtar arrive in the court; Mukhtar is questioned why he killed, not only one but about twenty to thirty soldiers of Ubaydallah Ziyad, if his intention was friendly; Ubaydallah Ziyad orders to imprison Mukhtar for the killings of his soldiers and for supporting and hosting Muslim Aqeel.
- Mukhtar is jailed in a dungeon together with other four thousand to five thousand Shias already there; (it was the intention of Muslim Aqeel to try for the release of these prisoners); the dungeon is about seventy five feet below ground level; Mukhtar's hands and waist are chained, his legs are chained to a heavy cannon-ball requiring about twenty people to lift; the dungeon is very dark underground with no sunlight and very little air; Mukhtar is ordered to be kept at an extreme corner so as even to deny him any fresh air from the opening of a door; his diet is malnourished food; the dungeon is always patrolled by about forty guards at a time working in shifts.
- Ashura day massacre occurs whilst Mukhtar is in prison in Kufa, but he is brought out from the dungeon to witness the arrival of the heads of Martyrs and survivors in the court of Ubaydallah Ziyad. Here, he makes a vow to himself that he will not rest until he has avenged the perpetrators of Kerbala.
- In prison, Mukhtar meets Maythame Tammar, a close companion of Imam Ali (as) who taught Maythame Tammar "ulumul balaya wal manaya": "knowledge of dream interpretation and of predicting some future events"; Maythame Tammar informs Mukhtar of his coming release and his fulfilment of the wish to avenge Imam Hussein's (as) killers and enemies.

# Chapter 4

## **Imprisonment and Release of Kumayl Hamadani**

- Kumayl Hamadani (other sources name him as Kathir Hamadani) was 70-80 years old in 60 AH; he was a mad-ressa teacher in Kufa, a Maalim who taught Quran to many people since the time of Imam Ali (as); he was a staunch supporter of Ahlal-bayt, but he was hiding his faith, like many others, due to the political climate at the time.

(Note that this is not the same man as Kumayl Ziyad, after the famous Dua-e-Kumayl.)

- Once, when conducting his class, Kumayl feels thirsty (considering his age, the heat in Kufa and his job requiring him to continually use his voice), when a water seller passes by; Kumayl buys some water and before drinking, remembers the Martyrs in Kerbala and loudly curses Imam Husein's (as) killers.
- Amongst the children present in Kumayl's class is Sinan's son; he challenges the Maalim that the killers did Yazeed and his government a favour; Sinan's son finishes his class, and then on his way home, beats himself with a stone to bleed and tears his clothes.
- At home, his mother enquires to the bloody state, and the son says that the Maalim beat him up because he objected to the Maalim cursing his father and Yazeed; the mother gets angry, and when Sinan returns home, she demands an immediate retaliation of the Maalim, saying that he lives under our government but harbours animosity against us.



- Sinan immediately goes to Ubaydallah Ziyad who sends for Kumayl; Kumayl protests that he did not harm the boy, but Ubaydallah Ziyad chooses to believe Sinan's son, and imprisons Kumayl in the same dungeon where the rest of the Shias and Mukhtar were kept.
- Kumayl meets with Mukhtar; Mukhtar tells Kumayl that he was awaiting Kumayl's coming as foretold by Maythame Tammar; Kumayl is very apprehensive of his imprisonment, but Mukhtar assures him of his freedom and his help in getting Mukhtar out, again as predicted by Maythame Tammar.
- Now, one of Kumayl's niece, Bostan, was a nanny to the grand-son of Ubaydallah Ziyad (his daughter's son) and the nanny implores Ubaydallah Ziyad's daughter to use her influence to get her uncle (Kumayl) released for the alleged beating on Sinan's son.
- In the evening, the daughter goes to Ubaydallah Ziyad and explains that Kumayl is an uncle of the nanny and that Kumayl is an old, feeble and honest man whom Kufa owes a gratitude for his teachings; Ubaydallah Ziyad agrees to free Kumayl the next day, but she insists it be done the same evening and she herself would go to the prison to convey the order.
- At the dungeon, the guards change for the evening shift, on the eve of the day Kumayl was to be released (as told to him by Mukhtar on Maythame Tammar's predictions); Kumayl loses any hope of release that day because an evening change of guards meant the prison doors do not get opened until the day shift arrives; Mukhtar reassures Kumayl to have faith on Maythame Tammar's prediction; it is the same evening that Ubaydallah Ziyad's daughter arrives with the order to get Kumayl released.
- Kumayl bids Mukhtar farewell, upon which Mukhtar requests him to find means of getting to him pen and paper; Kumayl promises to do so.

# Chapter 5

## **Kumayl Smuggles Pen and Paper to Mukhtar**

- On his release, Kumayl is warned by Ubaydallah Ziyad not to repeat the crime of cursing Yazeed or his government; Kumayl promises to lead a quiet life and to teach no more at the madressa.
- Kumayl thinks of a plan to smuggle pen and paper into the prison and realises that secrecy is of utmost importance should Ubaydallah Ziyad suspect anything; he explains the plan to his wife, who is also a staunch Shia, and she helps him (other sources say he divorces his wife so as to maintain complete secrecy of his movements).
- The plan involves befriending the warden and at night he takes money and good food to the warden's home; the warden is on night duty, so Kumayl explains to the warden's wife that it was his vow to give such gifts to the warden upon being released; the wife accepts it and gives them to her husband in the morning; the warden immediately realises that Kumayl is seeking a favour.
- Same thing happens on the second night; on the third night the warden is in; he questions Kumayl of his motive and does not believe the vow story; finally, the warden pleads on behalf of the Panjatan that if Kumayl somehow wants to help Mukhtar, the warden was willing; Kumayl is now at ease knowing that the warden has sympathy for Mukhtar, and tells the warden of his intention to smuggle pen and paper to Mukhtar.
- The warden comes up with a plan:
  - he says that there are total of forty guards with him as the chief, but all the guards are chosen carefully,

each having animosity to each other, so that there is no lax in security due to bribes, influence etc, and all guards report directly to Ubaydallah Ziyad.

- the warden advises Kumayl to prepare the best and delicious of food (as per the Arab custom at time), to buy fruits and almonds; in one fruit hide a pen in it; in another fruit hide some thin small paper; and in selected almonds, insert ink; these should be marked from others so the warden would know which should go to Mukhtar.
- the warden tells Kumayl: come to the prison when I am on duty and tell of your vow to feed the prisoners on your release; I will get extremely angry at your gesture, and beat you up violently and harshly, so as to get the other guards take pity on you (who will then act against my apparent wish, for as always, we all oppose each other) as an old, feeble, honest Maalim with an apparent innocent vow to bring in good food.
- when the other guards then permit you to send in the food, I will ensure Mukhtar gets the marked foods.
- The next day, Kumayl prepares and goes to the prison where the scheme goes into action as planned; the warden warns his subordinates that Ubaydallah Ziyad may not like it, but they see no harm in letting the food through especially after the warden's beating to Kumayl.
- The food gets into prison and Mukhtar gets the marked ones, which he hides successfully for Ubaydallah Ziyad arrives suddenly with about thirty personal guards (other sources say that Ubaydallah Ziyad arrives with the personal guards just before the food gets into the prison).
- Ubaydallah Ziyad orders all the forty prison guards to be beaten up severely, after which the guards (including the warden who knew of the misdeed) ask as to the reason for Ubaydallah Ziyad's sudden arrival and punishment.
- Ubaydallah Ziyad says he knows of the plot to smuggle pen and paper to Mukhtar, whereupon the warden, hoping for the best with prayers, challenges Ubaydallah Ziyad to find any pen/paper in the food; his personal guards

perform a through search in all the foods but are unable to find any pen or paper, for Mukhtar had by then successfully hidden away the marked food (other sources say they did not think of looking into the fruits/almonds).

- With the warden's prayers answered, and no trace of pen/paper found, he enquires of Ubaydallah Ziyad as to how he got the "false" information; Ubaydallah Ziyad says it was the warden's son who came to report of the plot (the son was eavesdropping on the conversation between Kumayl and his father, but did not overhear the last part about hiding the pen/paper/ink etc as the two were then whispering so as not to be overheard by passers-by going for the Fajr prayers).
- The warden explains that the boy is not his real son, but adopted him from the streets where he was abandoned, and in trying to discipline the child, the child bore grudge against him and hence falsely reported and wasted Ubaydallah Ziyad time; Ubaydallah Ziyad gets very angry and orders the immediate execution of the boy.
- Ubaydallah Ziyad and his personal guards go away, Kumayl goes home, and Mukhtar gets the pen/paper/ink.

# Chapter 6

## **Kumayl Meets Abdulla Omar**

- From the prison in Kufa, Mukhtar writes two letters: one to his sister Safiya, and another to Safiya's husband Abdulla Omar, who are both in Medina; the letter explains his imprisonment and its harsh conditions, and asks Abdulla Omar to use his influence to get him released (Abdulla Omar was a very prominent and influential person, the son of "Khalifa" Omar, respected by Meccans, Syrians and Kufians).
- Mukhtar gives the letters to the warden who forwards them to Kumayl.
- Kumayl thinks of a way to reach Medina without incurring the suspicion of Ubaydallah Ziyad, for Ubaydallah Ziyad is well aware of Abdulla Omar's (Mukhtar's brother-in-law) influence on Yazeed to order Mukhtar's freedom; so Ubaydallah Ziyad wants a news blackout on Mukhtar's imprisonment.
- Kumayl decides it is best to leave with the blessings of Ubaydallah Ziyad least he be caught when he is out of Kufa, is forced back and imprisoned again; also, a state of emergency was in force in Kufa and an exit visa was required.
- Kumayl dresses up in Ehram and goes to Ubaydallah Ziyad's court, where he recites the Talbiya (Labek, labek, Allahuma laka labek) loudly; Ubaydallah Ziyad enquires of this Talbiya in the Hajj off-season and is told that it is Kumayl, who also wishes to see Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- Kumayl explains to Ubaydallah Ziyad that he vowed to perform Umra on release but Ubaydallah Ziyad is suspicious, recalling the vow to feed the prisoners, and asks

how many vows were there, and whether Kumayl intends to go to Mecca only, or also to Medina; Kumayl could not say Medina for he would surely not be given permission to leave; he answers that he is to perform “Mukkamal Ha-jj” implying the visiting of Prophet’s tomb in Medina; Ubaydallah Ziyad does not catch the significance of Kumayl’s reply and allows him to go with his blessings, being under the impression that Kumayl is to visit Mecca only.

- Kumayl leaves Kufa but instead of going to Mecca, he heads straight for Medina to Abdulla Omar’s house; he arrives there at lunch time with Abdulla Omar serving good food (as befits his position); Safiya refuses to partake in such good lunches for any lack of news of her brother Mukhtar.
- On hearing of a traveller’s arrival from Kufa, Safiya urges her husband Abdulla Omar to meet with him to get any news of Mukhtar; Kumayl introduces himself to Abdulla Omar and produces the two letters from Mukhtar; on reading the letter, Safiya is distressed and asks for details directly from Kumayl and he relates the miserable condition of Mukhtar and how Mukhtar hopes for imminent release to avenge Imam Husein’s (as) killers.
- Due to her sorrow and distress, Safiya gets hysterical and shaves some of her head hair (as custom at the time to indicate deep grief); her daughters also do the same on seeing their mother’s grief; Safiya asks her husband Abdulla Omar to write a letter to Yazeed in Damascus to decree the release of Mukhtar; Abdulla Omar agrees, and Kumayl volunteers to travel immediately to Damascus and hand deliver the letter to Yazeed.
- Abdulla Omar gives Kumayl the letter and a wallet containing Safiya’s lock of hair as evidence of his wife’s grief; the letter says: release Mukhtar in Kufa, or Abdulla Omar will use his influence to destabilise the government of Yazeed in all areas, which Abdulla Omar was capable of doing.

# Chapter 7

## **Kumayl Meets Yazeed**

- Kumayl enters the Syrian border and proceeds directly to Damascus city, and rents a room belonging to a shopkeeper.
- In view of the political climate at the time, no Shia would show himself up, so Kumayl had to tread carefully about the purpose of his visit.
- He goes past Yazeed's palace daily in the hope of somehow getting in, but is refused entry by the guards; this goes on for eighteen days; he goes daily to the local mosque for prayers, and asks of his fellow Namazee to pray to Allah for the granting of his wish without specifying any details.
- On the eighteenth day, the local mosque prayer leader, Imamul-jamaat, (other sources say it was the shopkeeper from whom he had a rented a room) asks Kumayl the purpose of his visit as for the last eighteen days he has been trying to get into Yazeed's palace.
- Kumayl is very apprehensive and only after establishing that the person was sympathetic to the Shias, does he say that he has a personal message for Yazeed from Abdulla Omar regarding Mukhtar in Kufa.
- The prayer leader says he will show Kumayl of a way to get into Yazeed's palace since the visit is to help avenge the killers of Imam Husein (as); he also says that he would have told this to Kumayl earlier had Kumayl confided in him.
- The prayer leader tells Kumayl - in Yazeed's palace, there is a household help, who is a Shia, whom you have to see in order to meet Yazeed; since Kerbala, this helper is

always dressed completely in black, is in mourning at all time and does not take subsistence from Yazeed but from his own income of knitting; you need to see this person for Yazeed promised to grant him one wish in his life which he has not as yet asked for, and if your wish is concerning Imam Husein (as) then this person will ask of it from Yazeed.

- Question: why would Yazeed allow such an obvious Shia to remain with him? - Shahr Banoo, the first wife of Imam Husein (as) was a princess brought from Iran after a war victory there; she came with her maids, and one of these was Hinda; during Shahr Banoo's lifetime, Hinda stayed with her, but after Shahr Banoo's death, Imam Husein (as) allowed all Shahr Banoo's maids to go, except for one who was looking after Imam Zainul Abideen (as) (who was just under two years old at the time).
- Hinda was extremely pretty and beautiful, and Yazeed was deeply infatuated with her, despite knowing her loath for him; Yazeed wants to marry her but she adamantly refuses; she is forced into marriage with Yazeed; (it is this same Hinda who visits the Kerbala survivors in Damascus prison, to discover that they are the Ahlal-bayt, and not ordinary rebels as maintained by Yazeed).
- Now, Hinda had her servants/helpers and one of them was this person who Kumayl was to meet in Yazeed's palace; Yazeed kept this helper (of Hinda) and granted him the privilege of any single wish to be honoured, out of Yazeed's love for Hinda.
- So Kumayl was to see this person in Yazeed's palace and the prayer leader explains to Kumayl the way to get to meet this helper in Yazeed's palace. Kumayl was to pass through the various security barriers with confidence and act as if he is a frequent visitor to the palace and knows his way around.
- The prayer leader tells Kumayl to:
  - dress yourself completely and fully in white, as this is the uniform of the authorised people to gain entry into the palace
  - do not hesitate at all at the main gate (other sources say it was the tradesman side entrance) but



- just walk straight through as if you know your way and are a frequent visitor
- 1st courtyard - there will be about a thousand cavalry; walk through confidently and do not answer any questions from the guards, as authorised personnel do not answer back
  - 2nd courtyard - there will be more cavalry; walk through confidently
  - 3rd courtyard - there will be even more cavalry: walk through confidently
  - 4th courtyard - five mounted soldiers will be guarding the entrance to Yazeed's inner court; walk through confidently
  - 5th hall - there will be more soldiers; walk through confidently
  - 6th hall: this will be an office full of people busy in their administration works; walk through confidently
  - 7th hall - gallery on both sides, marble and gold floor, glasses of gems and jewels filled with liquor, three people on either gallery lounging leisurely; these six people are called "Tashtiya" (tear bearers) for they personally carried the tray containing Imam Husein's (as) head finally to Yazeed, and so Yazeed allows them to lounge all the time as their reward; walk through confidently
  - 8th hall - again, two galleries on either side, hall more decorous than the 7th, where all things are decorated with gems, gold and jewels; there will be nobody there; do not pause to admire the beauty, for anyone pausing is surely a first time visitor, and will be questioned by security guards who are watching from hidden positions; walk through confidently
  - 9th hall - empty and completely stripped of any decoration; this is to provide a complete contrast to the previous decorated halls; do not stop to wonder why the sudden contrast as this again is a trap for the first time visitors; just walk straight through without any pause

- 10th hall - you will meet a person fully dressed in black; he is the one (Hinda's help) whom you have to meet
- Next day Kumayl goes to Yazeed's palace and follows the instructions of the prayer leader; he passes through all the nine halls and to the tenth to meet the person dressed in black; this person greets Kumayl by name saying he has been waiting for eighteen days to meet Kumayl; Kumayl is immediately apprehensive thinking that it is a trap and his identity is discovered; Kumayl enquires how this person knew of his name and that he was in town for eighteen days.
- This person says - eighteen nights ago, Imam Husein (as) came to my dreams saying that a Maalim named Kumayl from Kufa will come with a request which I should honour as it involves the avenging of the perpetrators of Kerbala; Imam Husein (as) also came to my dreams last night to tell me that you will come today, and to convey his thanks to you and to myself for the work undertaken.
- Just then, about a hundred people pass through with an aroma of various perfumery and incense to fragrant the air on the way to the bathroom where Yazeed is scheduled for a bath; they are followed by a number of pages (young children) all dressed in golden clothes; the pages are followed by personal bodyguards of Yazeed; Yazeed then follows pompously, wearing a golden crown, carrying a golden stick and wearing golden shoes decorated with gems.
- Hinda's help goes to Yazeed to tell him that the time has come for the granting of his one request: to meet the person from Kufa who has a got a message from Abdulla Omar in Medina; Kumayl hands over the letter and the wallet containing Safiya's lock of hair; Yazeed asks Kumayl - who are you? are you a Shia? do you have any animosity to the killers of Imam Husein (as)?; Kumayl is frightened, but Hinda's help intercedes saying that all these questions are irrelevant to his one wish.
- Yazeed orders for pen and paper and writes to Ubaydallah Ziyad in Kufa a decree to release Mukhtar immediately on receipt of the order; Yazeed's letter is given to

Kumayl; Yazeed says to Hinda's help - alas, I would have willingly given you any amount of money if it were your wish, but for my promise to you for the love of Hinda, together with Abdulla Omar's threat of destabilising my kingdom, I have had to issue this decree knowing it will cause my downfall.

- Kumayl rushes back to his rented room, collects his belongings and goes straight to Medina to Abdulla Omar; Kumayl informs him of the decree but Abdulla Omar does not tell Safiya, least Mukhtar is not freed by Ubaydallah Ziyad and she gets disappointed.

# Chapter 8

## Mukhtar's Release

- Kumayl travels from Medina to Kufa; on his way he wonders if Ubaydallah Ziyad has got wind of the developments and has sent soldiers to intercept him and kill him, thereby not receiving Yazeed's decree for freeing Mukhtar.
- Near the gates of Kufa (boundary into Kufa), Kumayl covers his face (as was the customary dress to protect against the desert winds) and rides through in an energetic manner, to give the impression of a young rider so as to fool any soldiers looking for an old person.
- Kumayl finally reaches Ubaydallah Ziyad's court and says that he has got message to deliver to Ubaydallah Ziyad; Ubaydallah Ziyad reads the decree and recognises that Mukhtar's freedom will finally be the cause of his downfall and death, but dare not oppose Yazeed's order.
- A blacksmith is ordered to cut off Mukhtar's chains, his wounds are attended to by a doctor, then he is brought to Ubaydallah Ziyad; (one source says that Mukhtar's one eye turned blind during the imprisonment and it was the eye damaged by the guards when Mukhtar did not salute Ubaydallah Ziyad in the presence of all the other Chiefs); Ubaydallah Ziyad orders Mukhtar to leave Kufa within three days, or he will be imprisoned again.
- Mukhtar advises Kumayl that it is best for Kumayl also to leave Kufa, and they both leave Kufa the next day; Mukhtar tells Kumayl of his plan to raise an army to avenge the perpetrators of Kerbala; they part company just outside Kufa; Kumayl goes to his tribe of Bani Kanda and Mukhtar heads for Medina.

- Mukhtar arrives at Abdulla Omar's house and meets his sister Safiya (my deduction: Mukhtar is released in late 61 AH/very early 62 AH, for if Kerbala survivors were in Medina after Chehlum of 62 AH, surely Mukhtar would have visited them); brother and sister are both very happy at the reunion and Safiya is overcome with joy to an unconscious state; Safiya does not regain consciousness and dies.
- Mukhtar now sets out to start his planning for avenging the perpetrators of Kerbala; he goes to Mecca to meet Abdulla Zobayr:
- Abdulla Zobayr was one of the three prominent people who refused Bayat to Yazeed (Imam Husein (as), Abdulla Zobayr, Abdulla Omar)
- Abdulla Zobayr was in Mecca, ambitious to assume power and was inciting people in Medina/Mecca to rebel against Yazeed in the guise of sympathy of Imam Husein (as), saying that he (Abdulla Zobayr) was related to Prophet Muhammad (saww) (he was actually related through Lady Khadija: Abdulla Zobayr's grandfather's sister was Lady Khadija).
- Mukhtar sees that Abdulla Zobayr also appears to want to avenge Imam Husein's (as) killers, so he goes to Abdulla Zobayr and asks him to join forces to avenge Imam Husein's (as) killers; Abdulla Zobayr does not commit himself positively and Mukhtar seeing no support forthcoming, leaves Mecca for Taif to his tribesmen where he spends one year (my deduction: most of 62/63 AH) trying to materialise a plan.

# Chapter 9

## Rampage in Medina

- Meanwhile in 62 AH, there is a Commission of Inquiry in Medina following the return of Kerbala survivors; in the committee of prominent Medinites is Amir Zobayr (Abdulla Zobayr's brother) and Abdulla Hanzala.
- The Commission goes to Damascus to investigate and reports back on the damning conduct of Yazeed: that he is immoral, a drunkard, a gambler and is openly flouting Islamic ways; the Commission was offered large bribes to give a favourable report, but they did not accept any favours and reported the truth.
- The Commission's conclusion was - it is immoral and unforgivable for the people of Medina to have given and to continue giving their allegiance to Yazeed; the Medinites now denounce and withdraw their allegiance from Yazeed, and transfer their allegiance to Abdulla Hanzala, who becomes the Governor of Medina.
- On hearing of Medina's rebellion, and with Mecca under the control of Abdulla Zobayr, and of unrest in other areas, Yazeed sends troops, first to Medina and then to proceed to Mecca; the army units are under the command of Muslim Aqaba, who is a very staunch supporter of Yazeed and a bitter enemy of the Ahlal-bayt.
- Yazeed gives Muslim Aqaba a completely unrestrained rules of engagement and uninhibited orders to bring Medina and Mecca back into Yazeed's rule; the only exception to the orders was that Imam Zainul Abideen (as) and his family should not be touched as Yazeed did not want another Kerbala effect.

- Furthermore, if Muslim Aqaba were to die in service, then the command should pass on to Haseen Nameer; Haseen Nameer was the Chief of police in Kufa responsible for tracking down Muslim Aqeel; he was responsible for setting up road blocks to stop Imam Hussein (as) entering Kufa; he was one of the army commanders at Kerbala who headed the units of expert archers; he delivered the fatal lance at Ali Akbar (other sources say it was Kurra Munkidh who delivered the fatal lance).
- So in Zilhaj 63 AH Muslim Aqaba with his army advance towards Medina.
- Meanwhile, the people of Medina's allegiance is now to Abdulla Hanzala who is their Governor, and there is a lot of unrest against Yazeed's supporters; the people attack all known Yazeed's sympathisers.
- Marwan Hakam (who advised Walid, the then governor of Medina, not to let Imam Husein (as) leave without extracting the oath of allegiance there and then from him, as called for by Yazeed), a bitter enemy of the Ahlal-bayt, and a staunch supporter of the Umayyads (he was an Umayyad himself) is under attack from the people of Medina; Marwan sends all the womenfolk in his household to Imam Zainul Abideen (as) for protection (notice the irony in the circumstances); Imam Zainul Abideen (as) willingly and humbly accepts all people who ask for his protection, including his enemies (some reports say a total of about four hundred women, whilst other reports say about four thousand women, took refuge in Imam Zainul Abideen's (as) house/farms).
- Marwan himself runs from Medina at night to avoid being lynched by the people; Yazeed's supporters are told to leave Medina for their own safety; outside Medina, Marwan Hakam meets Muslim Aqaba and his army, and Marwan advises Muslim Aqaba that although a revolt is in progress in Medina, the defence is non-existent, and so it is a good opportunity to mount an attack now.
- Muslim Aqaba and his army proceed to Medina; on entering the city outskirts, menfolk come out to fight them but stand no chance against the might of Muslim Aqaba; a number of Medinites are killed.

- Muslim Aqaba moves into Medina city on 28 Zilhaj 63 AH; people take refuge in the Prophet's Mosque, for all knew that at the Prophet's grave and in the courtyard of the Prophet's Mosque, there is no harassment and everybody is protected; but Muslim Aqaba knows no sanctity of the Prophet's Mosque and the Prophet's grave; he orders his soldiers into the mosque and they kill the people therein.
- The Prophet's grave and the Prophet's Mosque are abused to the extreme, with drinking, rape, human and animal foulings, bloodshed; dogs were put on the Mimbar and fouled it; this continued for three days and nights; simultaneously, there is a rampage in the city for three days and nights; the army is given complete freedom to loot, pillage, rape and kill (reports show that about one thousand illegitimate children were born as a result of rape in three days); the whole city was affected (except for Imam Zainul Abideen's (as) household).
- After the rampage, Muslim Aqaba asks for allegiance from the people of Medina (except for Imam Zainul Abideen's (as) household) to be transferred back to Yazeed; nobody amongst the common populace dare refuse.
- After putting a puppet governor back in power in Medina, Muslim Aqaba and his army leave for Mecca; on the way, Muslim Aqaba becomes ill and dies; Haseen Nameer takes over the command of the army and they advance to Mecca.
- Meanwhile in Mecca, just before the rampage in Medina, Abdulla Zobayr now sees that even Medina has fallen from Yazeed's grip; being ambitious, he wants to take advantage of the situation and destabilise the regimes in nearby areas to bring them under his rule; he sends for Mukhtar to come and help him to consolidate Abdulla Zobayr's power.
- Mukhtar meets with Abdulla Zobayr and agrees to join forces with him on two conditions:
  1. when Abdulla Zobayr's rule is established, Mukhtar must be consulted in all matters and be given unhindered access to Abdulla Zobayr



2. the first priority on establishing Abdulla Zobayr's rule is to avenge the perpetrators of Kerbala.
  - Abdulla Zobayr agrees to the first condition; he now says that the second condition is also his purpose (with the excuse that he refused to support Mukhtar earlier as the rebellions were then only just starting and their plans could have backfired).
  - Abdulla Zobayr, with the bravery and military exploits of Mukhtar, establishes his rule in Mecca and surrounding areas (my deduction: mostly during late 63/early 64 AH).
  - After seeing the state of Medina is left after the rampage, and on hearing of the advance of Haseen Nameer to Mecca, Abdulla Zobayr is frightened and flees to hide in the mountains; it is left up to Mukhtar to defend Mecca; Mukhtar leads the army units and they go just outside Mecca to try and stop the advance of Haseen Nameer into Mecca city and Kaaba.
  - The attack on Mecca starts on 4 Rabil Awwal 64 AH (about two months after the Medina attack)
  - The sheer determination of Mukhtar and his outnumbered men slows down, but does not stop, Haseen Nameer's progress into the city; when they are outside the range of Kaaba, they make "petrol" bombs and throw them at the Kaaba; the Kaaba burns; Mukhtar and his men just manage to hold back Haseen Nameer and his men getting near to the Kaaba.
  - At this point, news gets to Haseen Nameer that his chief commander of his army, that is Yazeed, has died in Damascus (on 14 Rabil Awwal 64 AH); Haseen Nameer and his army pull back and retreat to Damascus to await developments and fresh orders; the date of retreat is a few days after 14 Rabil Awwal, for the Mecca assault started on 4 Rabil Awwal and allowing a few days from 14 Rabil Awwal for the news to get through to Mecca.

# Chapter 10

## Yazeed's Death

- After Kerbala, Yazeed never got peace of mind nor sound sleep; he had a constantly undying and unquenching thirst, and was always feeling hot within his body; his doctors advised him that there was no cure, but to relieve his claustrophobia, he should spend time out in the open, and pass the time in his favourite hobby, for distraction purposes: hunting; so at intervals, he used to go hunting in the wilderness.
- Yazeed was in no doubt that his incurable illness was due to his atrocities against Imam Husein (as) at Kerbala, for he was often heard saying: "Mali min-al Hussein" (How has Hussein wronged me?).
- Yazeed takes one of his frequent hunting trips, to Harwan in this case, with about ten personal bodyguards on 12 Rabil Awwal 64 AH; he spots a handsome deer the like of which he had never seen before and orders his group to hold back, while he alone tries to hunt the deer; he runs after her but cannot trap her for the deer always alluded him; this goes on for two days (to 14 Rabil Awwal 64 AH).
- When Yazeed does not return to his bodyguards, they go searching for him for two days but find no trace and they decide to return to the city; on the way back they spot Yazeed's horse with Yazeed's thigh enclosed in his clothes, and they conclude that Yazeed had been killed.
- Other reports say that when the bodyguards searched, they found Yazeed's body.
- Whatever the case, the bodyguards return to Damascus and relate the tale, with Yazeed's horse and his thigh, or Yazeed's body, as evidence; Yazeed's thigh/body is

buried; to-date, there is no trace remaining of his grave or its location.

- After Yazeed's death, the Caliphate is offered to his son Muawiyah, who publicly refuses such an office due to the shame he felt of the abuse of the office by his father; he is nevertheless forced to accept it but does not step out of the palace due to the shame felt; after about eighteen days (some reports say forty days) Marwan Hakam engineered his murder for fear of the Caliphate slipping away from the Umayyad family dynasty.

# Chapter 11

## **Mukhtar's Permission from Imam Zainul Abideen (as)**

- Meanwhile in Medina, on hearing of Yazeed's death, the Governor imposed by Muslim Aqaba is ousted and thrown out by Medinites; Abdulla Zobayr takes the opportunity to consolidate his power over Medina, and sends Mukhtar to oversee things.
- Mukhtar goes to Mecca to Abdulla Zobayr to make detailed plans of avenging the Kerbala perpetrators; Abdulla Zobayr however is no longer very responsive to the idea, saying they should take on the task of avenging when the time is right and not now.
- Mukhtar is very disappointed and reminds Abdulla Zobayr of his promise, when he solicited Mukhtar's help in establishing Abdulla Zobayr as a ruler, and the moral duty to please the Ahlal-bayt, but Abdulla Zobayr does not listen.
- Abdulla Muti, a friend of Mukhtar and the prime minister of Abdulla Zobayr, advises Mukhtar to leave Mecca for the safety of his life, as otherwise Abdulla Zobayr would have Mukhtar killed if he were to remain in Mecca; Abdulla Muti gives Mukhtar money and transportation to help him get out of Mecca.
- So Mukhtar alone (since Abdulla Zobayr has now turned) now has to effect a scheme planning for the avenge of the perpetrators of Kerbala; but first he wants the blessings for the mission from the Imam of the time, Imam Zainul Abideen (as).
- Mukhtar goes to Medina to see Mohamed Hanafiya with whom he was in good terms; he requests Mohamed

Hanafiya to accompany him to Imam Zainul Abideen (as) to seek his permission and blessings for the mission; Mohamed Hanafiya was the stepbrother of Imam Husein (as) and so he was the uncle of Imam Zainul Abideen (as).

- Mohamed Hanafiya and Mukhtar go to meet Imam Zainul Abideen (as); Mohamed Hanafiya explains to Imam Zainul Abideen (as) the mission that Mukhtar is taking on.
- Imam Zainul Abideen (as) says to Mohamed Hanafiya: the work of avenging Imam Husein's (as) killers is a right and Wajib for everyone to perform; I cannot do it myself because of the political situation at present and it is in the overriding interest of spreading Islam that I do not take on the task myself (this is Imam's knowledge and assessment); however, I leave this matter in your (Mohamed Hanafiya) hands and you have my full blessings.
- Both, Mohamed Hanafiya and Mukhtar understood the implicit permission of Imam Zainul Abideen (as), but because of the political situation, Imam Zainul Abideen (as) could not say so openly, but delegated the responsibility to Mohamed Hanafiya; Mohamed Hanafiya consents to Mukhtar's mission, and Mukhtar, with the consent of Mohamed Hanafiya as an attorney of Imam Zainul Abideen (as), sets out on his mission.

# Chapter 12

## **The Tawwabun (The Penitents)**

- During Ubaydallah Ziyad's rule in Kufa, the Shias did not openly declare their faith for fear of the wrath of Ubaydallah Ziyad; on hearing of Yazeed's death, the Shias gain confidence and come out to attack Ubaydallah Ziyad's palace; they are joined by other non-Shia people who are against Ubaydallah Ziyad's rule.
- At the time of the attack, Ubaydallah Ziyad is in Basra, for he was the governor of Kufa and Basra, and used to spend six months in each city.
- Ubaydallah Ziyad's palace in Kufa is taken over and the infamous prison (the one that Mukhtar was in with the other four to five thousand Shias) is thrown open and all prisoners are freed; most prisoners are not even aware of the massacre at Kerbala due to the news blackout; these prisoners feel deeply aggrieved and remorse that they could not get to Imam Husein (as) when they were needed most.
- They meet at Sulayman Surad Khuzai's house, who is about ninety years old; he was a companion of the Prophet Mohammed (saww) and Imam Ali (as); Sulayman talks to the Shias: we have failed our Imam Husein (as), for we had invited him and we were not able to help him for one reason or another; but now we can help by seeking to avenge the perpetrators of Kerbala; the people agree.
- Sulayman Surad Khuzai manages to recruit more people to the cause, totalling to about sixteen thousand; this group became to be known as the Tawwabun (The Penitents), the people who felt sorry.

- Sulayman Surad Khuzai is unanimously chosen to be the leader of the Tawwabun; the Tawwabun are fully aware that many of the Kerbala's killers are in Kufa (people like Sinan, Shimr, Khooli, Umar Saad, Hurmala), but the strategy was to go first after the main architect of the Kerbala tragedy, that is Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- Also, the Kerbala killers in Kufa were in powerful positions with influential and powerful local connections, and the Tawwabun's thinking was that the killers could be sought later when the Tawwabun group has had more time to mature to a position of strength.
- On hearing that Ubaydallah Ziyad's palace in Kufa has been taken over by the Kufians, Abdulla Zobayr from Mecca sends Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree to Kufa to become his governor there; the new governor is well aware of the Tawwabun movement, but makes no attempt to stop the activities for they were not directed against the Kufians, but directed against Ubaydallah Ziyad, whom Abdulla Zobayr wanted out of the way anyway.

# Chapter 13

## Ubaydallah Ziyad Flees Basra

- There is a crisis of succession to the office after Yazeed's death, especially when his elder son Muawiyah denounces the office, and who is soon murdered for his defiance.
- So, who now takes over the office? The government of Damascus consider three candidates:
  1. Umar Bashir Ansaree - he is one of the most prominent in the government circles in Damascus
  2. Khalid Yazeed - a twelve year old son of Yazeed; this would keep the dynasty going
  3. Abdulla Zobayr in Mecca - as he has already got Mecca and Medina under his control.
- Marwan Hakam writes a letter to Ubaydallah Ziyad informing him of Yazeed's death, and telling him to come to Damascus to discuss the question of succession to the office; Marwan Hakam sends the letter to Kufa.
- When the letter gets to Kufa, Ubaydallah Ziyad is at that time in Basra for the six month administration cycle between Kufa and Basra; his son Omar is left in charge of Kufa; with a homing pigeon, Omar passes Marwan Hakam's letter to Basra together with the news of the unrest going on in Kufa as the news of Yazeed's death was now public knowledge in Kufa.
- Ubaydallah Ziyad gathers the Basrites at a public meeting; he tells them of Yazeed's death (other reports say he does not); and says: I am leaving Basra to go to Damascus immediately of the unrest there; there should be no unrest here while I am away, and my deputy will be in



charge; anyone who opposes my deputy will be executed together with his family.

- Ubaydallah Ziyad then asks if there are any persons who will ensure his speedy and safe journey to Damascus for a very large fee.
- Umar Jaru (another source says Umar Haris) was an experienced and a professional desert guide and it was his job to escort merchants and people from area to area; he had five sons (another source says twenty one sons), each experienced in the ways of desert travelling and guide, and each son had about thirty assistants.
- Umar Jaru and his group escort Ubaydallah Ziyad to Damascus; Ubaydallah Ziyad packs up all the monies, jewels and valuables from his palace and these are sent by a different route (from the one he will be taking) to Damascus to avoid an ambushed robbery on the way.
- The entourage of Umar Jaru with Ubaydallah Ziyad has about a hundred camels carrying people, luggage and water; many of the camels were water carriers stocking for the long journey ahead; and so Ubaydallah Ziyad sets out for Damascus.
- Sulayman Surad Khuzai and the Tawwabun (numbering about four and a half thousand), who are now just outside Kufa, hear of Ubaydallah Ziyad entourage going to Damascus; the Tawwabun therefore position themselves at the crossroad from Basra to Damascus.
- Umar Jaru's group were experienced and professional guides, and an advance party was always sent to watch out for any ambush etc; they report that a huge force of people are blocking their way to Damascus, and are carrying a banner "Ya ala siratil Husein" (those who are in the path of Husein).
- They report back to Umar Jaru, who in turn questions Ubaydallah Ziyad: why is there such a force blocking our way? Ubaydallah Ziyad now has to confess of Yazeed's death, and that his visit to Damascus is to influence the question of succession to Yazeed, and that the force ahead is of the Tawwabun who are after him; Ubaydallah Ziyad now promises Umar Jaru an even bigger fee if he (Ubaydallah Ziyad) could reach Damascus alive.

- Umar Jaru comes up with a plan, which Ubaydallah Ziyad first refuses, but later has to accept in order to save himself; the plan is to tie Ubaydallah Ziyad completely under the belly of a camel, and then cover him with the hanging water carriers all around the camel; this way, with so many camels having water carriers around them, Ubaydallah Ziyad's chance of being spotted would be very small.
- Sulayman Surad Khuzai and the Tawwabun arrive; Sulayman tells Umar Jaru that they are not interested in robbing him of his belongings etc, as they are just after Ubaydallah Ziyad, whom Umar Jaru was escorting to Damascus; Umar Jaru naturally denies, saying he is just transporting luggage and Ubaydallah Ziyad is not with them; Umar Jaru gives permission for a search for Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- The Tawwabun search but do not for one moment think of looking low under a camel's belly, although they did spread the water carriers of some of the camels; Sulayman Surad Khuzai and his men therefore go back towards Kufa thinking Ubaydallah Ziyad played a trick of decoy and managed to escape them.
- After some distance, Ubaydallah Ziyad is untied and he finally reaches Damascus unchallenged.

# Chapter 14

## Ubaydallah Ziyad in Damascus

- On reaching Damascus, Ubaydallah Ziyad meets with Marwan Hakam to discuss the question of Yazeed's succession; Marwan Hakam informs him of the three candidates (Umar Bashir Ansaree, Khalid Yazeed and Abdulla Zobayr).
- Marwan tells Ubaydallah Ziyad that the consensus in Damascus is that the local Umar Bashir Ansaree should be offered the office of the Khalifa.
- Ubaydallah Ziyad is against Khalid Yazeed (Yazeed's twelve year old son) to be the Khalifa as Khalid would betray them as his father (Yazeed) did; Ubaydallah Ziyad says that Yazeed had sent an order in writing to him not to spare Imam Husein's (as) life at any cost, but after Kerbala, Yazeed denied issuing any such orders alleging that the massacre at Kerbala was not of his orders, but the doings of Ubaydallah Ziyad and Shimr etc, and this betrayal displeased Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- Ubaydallah Ziyad wants Marwan Hakam to be the Khalifa instead of giving the office to anyone else; Marwan Hakam initially refuses saying that he will not get any support, but Ubaydallah Ziyad offers his support which should in turn give credence to his candidature; he would also give to Marwan Hakam the treasures which he brought from Kufa, together with the hidden treasures of Yazeed that Ubaydallah Ziyad knew of, to be used for bribing the prominent people for their support; the condition for Ubaydallah Ziyad's help is that he should be made the Commander in Chief of the army.
- Marwan Hakam agrees and Ubaydallah Ziyad immediately swears allegiance to Marwan Hakam; Ubaydallah

Ziyad shows Marwan Hakam the hidden treasures of Yaz-eed, which is now transferred to Marwan Hakam's safekeeping.

- Ubaydallah Ziyad takes to his ways of forcing people to swear allegiance to Marwan Hakam or face persecution and execution; in the midst of prevailing persecution, one Zufar Haris escapes from Damascus to Qarqisiya, which is a town between Damascus and Kufa; from Qarqisiya, Zufar Haris, who was a supporter of Abdulla Zobayr in Mecca and against Ubaydallah Ziyad, tries unsuccessfully to remove Ubaydallah Ziyad's and Marwan Hakam's influence in Damascus.
- Ubaydallah Ziyad advises Marwan Hakam to marry Yaz-eed's widow, Khalid's mother, in order to consolidate Marwan Hakam's power; having established his authoritative influence with Marwan Hakam in Damascus, Ubaydallah Ziyad sets out to seek Sulayman Surad Khuzai and his group of the Tawwabun.

# Chapter 15

## **The Tawwabun's Mission**

- Now, when the Tawwabun could not find Ubaydallah Ziyad personally with the Umar Jaru's group, Sulayman Surad Khuzai and his group of about four and a half thousand return to Kufa, where he recruits more men to a total of about sixteen thousand.
- On 1 Muharram 65 AH, the Tawwabun under Sulayman Surad Khuzai camp at Nukhaila, just out of the Kufa boundary; Sulayman sees that of the sixteen thousand recruited, only about three thousand are actually present; he goes back into Kufa with the message of "Ya ala siratil Hussein" and manages to rally another one and half thousand volunteers, making a total force of about four and a half thousand men.
- Before setting off in earnest to hunt down Ubaydallah Ziyad, the Tawwabun go to Kerbala where they spend a whole day and night in lamentations and Ziyarat; as the Tawwabun leave Kerbala for Damascus, Ubaydallah Ziyad leaves Damascus for Kufa.
- The Tawwabun reach Qarqisiya at night, where Zufar Haris (who ran away from the purge of Ubaydallah Ziyad in Damascus) is now the ruler of Qarqisiya; Sulayman sends his deputy Mosayab Najaba to tell Zufar that they have not come to invade Qarqisiya, but are on their way to find Ubaydallah Ziyad; Zufar is happy that Ubaydallah Ziyad is being hunted down and orders the shopkeepers to open at night and stock up the Tawwabun free of charge.
- Ubaydallah Ziyad's group is 300,000 strong total, including an advance party of 100,000; the Tawwabun are 4,500 men.

- The two groups meet at Ayn al-Warda where the battle occurs.
- The first round of battle lasts for two days between the Tawwabun and the advance party of Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- The second round of battle between the Tawwabun and the whole of Ubaydallah Ziyad's army lasts for seven days.
- In Sulayman's group of the remaining 75 men, are the five commanders who are to take up the position of Chief Commander in the case of the previous commander's death: Sulayman Surad Khuzai, Mosayab Najaba, Abdulla Saad, Abdulla Walin, Rufa' Shadad.
- On the last night of the battle, some of the Tawwabun say that they should retreat considering their small number of men who are extremely fatigued, wounded and thirsty (for the water supply is guarded by Ubaydallah Ziyad's soldiers), compared against the remaining well equipped army of 150,000 men; Sulayman says the aim is to avenge Imam Husein's (as) killers and if that is not possible, then it is better to die in battle for the mission rather than retreat.
- After prayers, during the night, Sulayman Surad Khuzai nods off and dreams: he is in a pretty and most beautiful gardens full of flowers and tree, and a golden house is in the middle; a lady in Chaddar comes out of the palace; Lady Khadija, conveys Salaams from the Panjatan and Imam Husein's (as) congratulations to the Tawwabun for their work so far, and informs Sulayman of his martyrdom the next day; Lady Khadija takes a pot of water and gives it to Sulayman to sprinkle on all their wounds for the battle the next day.
- Sulayman wakes up and sees the pot of water next to him, and offers prayers of thanks; he sprinkles the water on the wounds of the remaining Tawwabun, who are asleep; the heavenly water completely heals all the wounds and removes all fatigue; the water pot disappears when Sulayman is in prayers; when the rest of the group wake up, Sulayman informs them of the miracle.
- Next day, the Tawwabun put up a resilient fight against the 150,000 soldiers of Ubaydallah Ziyad who expected a

- very 37 feeble resistance; Sulayman is killed at about noon; Mosayab Najaba takes charge and he is also killed; Abdulla Saad then takes charge and he is also killed; next, Abdulla Walin takes charge and he is killed; finally, Rufa' Shadad takes charge and with the 10 remaining Tawwabun, they retreat to Kufa to try and regroup.
- On winning the second round of battle, and having decisively crushed the Tawwabun, Ubaydallah Ziyad goes to Basra.

# Chapter 16

## **Mukhtar's Second Imprisonment and Release**

- Meanwhile, after getting permission from Mohamed Hanafiya on behalf of Imam Zainul Abideen (as), Mukhtar leaves Mecca for Kufa; at the crossroads of Qadisiya, he makes a detour to Kerbala for Ziyarat, where he pledges to Imam Husein (as) to avenge the perpetrators of Kerbala.
- Mukhtar then comes to Kufa, publicly proclaiming his entry so that the population, the governor (Abdulla Yaz-eed Ansaree) and the local Kerbala perpetrators are all aware of his presence.
- It was while Sulayman Surad Khuzai was recruiting in Kufa, that Mukhtar arrives from Kerbala; they meet to discuss tactics; the Tawwabun first aim is to hunt down Ubaydallah Ziyad, while Mukhtar's first aim is to seek avenge from the perpetrators of Kerbala who are in Kufa, as the majority of them were still living in Kufa.
- With Mukhtar's arrival in Kufa, the local Kerbala perpetrators feel threatened with his declared aim, whereas they were under no immediate threat from the Tawwabun; these local killers are in powerful positions and are of influence in Kufa; they therefore advise the governor, Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree, to imprison Mukhtar lest he causes any troubles for them; so under pressure from these powerful and prominent Kufians, Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree imprisons Mukhtar; Mukhtar is now serving his second imprisonment term in Kufa.
- Rufa' Shadad (from the Tawwabun) reaches Kufa and hears of Mukhtar's imprisonment; unlike his first imprisonment under Ubaydallah Ziyad, Mukhtar is now able to



have visitors, he is not chained and letters are allowed in and out; on hearing of Tawwabun's crushing defeat, and of Rufa's return, Mukhtar writes to him not to lose courage and to wait for Mukhtar's release to come up with a plan.

- Rufa' comes to prison and offers to break out Mukhtar from prison; Mukhtar refuses any illegal moves but assures Rufa' of his impending release by legal means; Mukhtar sends one of his men to go to Medina and inform Abdulla Omar (his brother-in-law) of the situation.
- Abdulla Omar writes to Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree in Kufa explaining of his relationship to Mukhtar and demanding his immediate release; Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree gets the letter and is aware of Abdulla Omar's influence; Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree reasons that the imprisonment of Mukhtar was not a decree from his master Abdulla Zobayr in Mecca, but was due to intense local pressure; so releasing Mukhtar was not a violation of any decree from Abdulla Zobayr.
- The local perpetrators of Kerbala are against Mukhtar's release for fear of their own lives; Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree is torn between the order from Abdulla Omar and the protests of these locals; he finally decides to release Mukhtar with some conditions for his freedom.
- Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree sends for Mukhtar and makes him promise that he will not try stirring up any opposition against himself (Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree), or the penalty will be the sacrifice of a thousand livestock and the freeing of all Mukhtar's slaves.
- Mukhtar promises in front of witnesses to agree to the conditions and he is released; on giving the promise in order to be released, Mukhtar was confident that the sacrifice of a thousand livestock and the freeing of his slaves was of little material significance to him compared to the pursuit of the Kerbala perpetrators.
- One source says that Mukhtar was imprisoned again for the third time and manages to obtain his freedom once more.

# Chapter 17

## **Abdulla Muti Tries to Imprison Mukhtar**

- Now, Abdulla Zobayr in Mecca replaces the governor of Kufa from Abdulla Yazeed Ansaree to Abdulla Muti, who was his prime minister in Mecca; Abdulla Zobayr thinks that by making Abdulla Muti the governor, Mukhtar would not cause any opposition due to his friendship with Abdulla Muti.
- Abdulla Muti was the one who intercepted for Mukhtar when Abdulla Zobayr, after having consolidated his power with the help of Mukhtar, broke his promise to help Mukhtar in avenging the perpetrators of Kerbala; Abdulla Muti, who was the prime minister of Abdulla Zobayr at the time, tried unsuccessfully to influence Abdulla Zobayr's decision not to allow Mukhtar into his courtyard for any discussion; then Abdulla Muti advised Mukhtar to leave Mecca for the safety of his life and Abdulla Muti gave him money and transportation to see himself out of Mecca.
- With the new governor installed, the local Kerbala killers go to Abdulla Muti and advise him that he should imprison Mukhtar for if he is left free, Mukhtar would carry out his threat of avenging these killers who are in prominent and influential positions in Kufa; if these prominent and influential people are threatened, then that in itself could lead to the overthrow of Abdulla Muti himself.
- Abdulla Muti says he just cannot imprison Mukhtar without him having committed any crime, and furthermore he was a good friend of Mukhtar; but Abdulla Muti is under intense pressure to take some action against Mukhtar; at the time when Abdulla Muti came to Kufa,

Mukhtar had purposefully gone out of Kufa as a pretext to avoid Abdulla Muti.

- Abdulla Muti finally decides to imprison Mukhtar; Ayaz Mazarib, the chief policeman in Kufa, advises Abdulla Muti: that the best way to trap Mukhtar is to first lure him to come to the palace to meet you as you are his friend; the message should be sent by two people whom Mukhtar could not associate with you (Abdulla Muti), as neutral messengers, and this should not raise any suspicion with Mukhtar.
- Zaida Qudama and Husein Abdulla are chosen and they go to Mukhtar's house with the message that Abdulla Muti needs consultation on certain matters of state and is seeking Mukhtar's advice.
- On reaching Mukhtar's house, they see him busy reciting Quran, and this influences Zaida into not wanting to see Mukhtar enticed into a trap; they pass on the false message of Abdulla Muti, but Zaida also talks about the wonders of Quran and recites a verse from a Sura clearly warning Mukhtar of the danger ahead; Zaida had to pass this coded message to protect himself from getting into trouble with Abdulla Muti if his partner Husein Abdulla reported him.
- Mukhtar gets the message, feigns illness and tells them to tell Abdulla Muti that he is presently not well but will visit Abdulla Muti as soon as he gets better.
- The two messengers leave, and Husein Abdulla tells Zaida Qudama: I understood the coded message you passed to Mukhtar, but I will not report you to Abdulla Muti; I have heard a story from people who heard the Prophet (saww) say that Mukhtar was to avenge the killers of Imam Husein (as), and I would rather be with Mukhtar than Abdulla Muti.
- Mukhtar realises that it will not be long before Abdulla Muti makes another attempt to imprison him, and therefore has to hasten his planning; due to the urgency now, he also realises that the plan will only work if he can find a partner who is as firm in his conviction of avenging the Kerbala perpetrators as himself.

# Chapter 18

## **Mukhtar Teams With Ibrahim Malik Ashtar**

- Mukhtar let it be known throughout Kufa and beyond that he is looking for a person to team up with to avenge the killers of Imam Husein (as); such a person should be strong, courageous, brave, a Shia, and with a dedicated desire to see the perpetrators of Kerbala avenged; such a person with these qualities was needed to counteract the power, influence and positions of the Kerbala perpetrators living in Kufa.
- Such a person is Ibrahim Malik Ashtar, the son of Malik Ashtar who was a staunch Shia and a firm supporter of Imam Ali (as); Mukhtar goes to Ibrahim saying it is the first time he has gone to one's house to recruit for this cause, for usually people come to him to join up.
- Ibrahim accepts to team up with Mukhtar on the condition that he (Ibrahim) is made the Chief Commander; this is not with the intention of being power hungry, but to ensure that his bravery and talents would not be exploited to bring someone else in power; for with the army under his direct command, he can assure that abuse does not happen.
- Mukhtar shows Ibrahim the authorisation of Mohamed Hanafiya as an attorney of Imam Zainul Abideen (as); one report says that on seeing the written authority, Ibrahim and his whole clan immediately swear allegiance to Mukhtar; another report says that Ibrahim asks for a few days to decide, for he sends his people to Medina to check the authenticity of the letter and to see Mohamed Hanafiya in order to verify Mukhtar's version.

- These people then go back to Kufa to Ibrahim; one source says that when the group reaches Qadisiya (about 20/25 miles from Kufa), they meet Khayr from the household of Mukhtar who asks of their answer from Medina; Khayr immediately rushes back to Mukhtar to tell him of Mohamed Hanafiya's confirmation and blessings, to which Mukhtar offers prayers of thanks.
- Another report says that the group returns directly to Ibrahim to inform him of Mohamed Hanafiya's confirmation, and Ibrahim does not give his answer immediately to Mukhtar; when there is no immediate reply from Ibrahim, Mukhtar assumes that Mohamed Hanafiya did not sanction the mission and Ibrahim has therefore refused; after a few days Mukhtar comes to know it is otherwise and immediately goes to Ibrahim who agrees to team up with Mukhtar.

# Chapter 19

## **Mukhtar Becomes Governor of Kufa**

- Mukhtar and Ibrahim decide that the best way to get the local perpetrators (of Kerbala) in Kufa, taking into account that these killers are now influential and prominent in Kufa, is to gain control of the government, and this meant storming the governor's (Abdulla Muti) palace.
- A plan is agreed that on the eve of 14 Rabil Awwal 66 AH, Thursday night, all of Mukhtar's and Ibrahim's supporters will leave their homes and assemble at the governor's palace to overthrow him; the signal will be a torch lit on Mukhtar's roof and the sounding of war drums; after seeing the first torch, a chain of torches will be lit on the supporters' house roofs to spread the signal; each group of supporters is to carry the banner: "Ya ala siratil Hussein"; the men were warned not to be fooled by a possible enemy ploy and hence nobody should come out before the agreed Thursday night.
- Ayaz Mazarib, the chief policeman of Kufa, gets reports that for the past few nights, Ibrahim and a group are meeting at Mukhtar's house; he suspects that something is being planned and reports to Abdulla Muti on 13 Rabil Awwal, the night before the planned revolution day; on the same night of receiving Ayaz's report, Abdulla Muti orders checkpoints at all (about ten) districts in Kufa.
- In those times, the geographical layout of a city was such that towns, districts, areas, and even clans had distinct boundaries with only one road to a neighbouring district; this ensured that there was free movements within the area but going from one area to the next required to pass through the only interconnecting road; this layout was a

security precaution against the frequent hostile incursions at the time.

- The guards were therefore posted at these main inter-connecting roads, to restrict movement of people from one area to another.
- Ibrahim and his group leave their locality to go to Mukhtar's house in another district to finalise plans for the next night's attack; they are challenged by Ayaz Mazarib, the chief of police, at a checkpoint and in order to get through, Ibrahim kills Ayaz; Ayaz's subordinates escape to report back to Abdulla Muti.
- More checkpoints are encountered by Ibrahim and his men, and after fighting their way through, they finally reach Mukhtar's house; Ibrahim informs him of the checkpoints and the killing of Ayaz Mazarib, the chief policeman; they bring the plan forward by a night in order to succeed, otherwise Abdulla Muti can squash any opposition by morning after realising that a revolution was in the making.
- Mukhtar lights the torch on his roof and starts beating the war drums, but there is no response, for people were warned against premature signals; so they are under the impression that it is an enemy ploy, for the expected call was for the next night.
- Now, Abdulla Muti is under the impression that Mukhtar and Ibrahim must have assembled a large force to try an overthrow; in reality, Mukhtar and Ibrahim had very little manpower this night for the planned attack for was for the following night.
- Rashid, the son of Ayaz Mazarib gets to hear of his father's death and comes to Abdulla Muti crying; Abdulla Muti says there is no use crying and that he should avenge his father's death; Abdulla Muti gives him a unit of men to go and fight Ibrahim and Mukhtar.
- Abdulla Muti sends for Shabath Rabi (one of the army unit commanders at Kerbala) with about a thousand men to confront Mukhtar and kill him; Shabath Rabi advises it is best to wait until daylight when the attack would be most beneficial; Abdulla Muti refuses for he does not

want to take any chances, in case of an attack by Mukhtar during the night.

- The checkpoint to Mukhtar's district is under the command of Hijab Hurr with about seven hundred men; when he sees the force of Shabath Rabi advancing towards Mukhtar's house, he assumes that they are Mukhtar's reinforcements for it was dark; the two units do not identify each other for want of a surprise attack and in the ensuing battle, each side loses about half of their men; the two commanders, each thinking he has repelled the enemy, report back to Abdulla Muti the same night, only to realise their mistake. This now leaves the checkpoint to Mukhtar's house unguarded.
- Mukhtar and Ibrahim realise what has happened outside, and in view of the developments, they decide that they must go out to call on their men in other districts; Mukhtar has to get word to his supporters of about fourteen hundred men in the Sakariya district; Ibrahim decides to go out to various other districts to inform the supporters of the change of plan.
- Mukhtar is advised not to venture out himself for he will be immediately recognised; one Bashir volunteers to go to Sakariya; he goes out in tattered clothes and at the Sakariya checkpoint, he is stopped and questioned as to how come he is out during the curfew; he explains that he is a visitor from outside Kufa and is coming to meet his relative in Sakariya; but on the way, he was robbed by Mukhtar's men who stole his luggage, and curses Mukhtar and his men; this cursing finds favour with the guards and they let Bashir through.
- Once in Sakariya, Bashir informs the district leader of the change of date due to the events; least it be a trap, the leader questions Bashir in detail to prove his identity and asks for a password, the answers to which only a man in Mukhtar's inner group could have given; once convinced, the Sakariyans come out and battle at the checkpoints, on their way to the agreed meeting point; some people venture into other districts to spread the news of the change of plan.



- Ibrahim goes to the various checkpoints in turn, which are manned by prominent Kerbala killers, and eliminates the main guards who are either killed or run away; for example, at a first checkpoint, Umar Hajjaj is with about five hundred soldiers; Ibrahim kills Umar Hajjaj and some of his men, but most manage to escape; at a second checkpoint, Ibrahim kills Zahr Qays.
- Ibrahim proceeds from district to district, but his force of initially five hundred men is decreasing due to the battles fought, but the opposite side's force was being increasingly reinforced.
- Meanwhile, the word has spread among Mukhtar's supporters of the change of plan, and they all come out to meet at the governor's palace; Ibrahim is busy mobilising, and in some cases, he encounters units carrying the banner "Ya ala siratil Husein", who tell Ibrahim that they know of the change of date because the people from Sakariya came to their districts to inform them.

# Chapter 20

## Mukhtar Rules Over Kufa

- At dawn, Mukhtar sends a spy named Saeed to assess Abdulla Muti's position; he reports back that Abdulla Muti and his army are gathered at a mosque near the palace.
- It is the dawn of Thursday, 13 Rabil Awwal 66 AH; both sides are prepared for battle with the war drums beating everywhere.
- Whilst the battle between the two sides is going on, Abdulla Muti runs away to the relative safety of his palace and is protected by his personal guards; Mukhtar makes no attempt to invade the palace, but adopts the policy of wait-and-see; after three days, the palace is running short of food and Abdulla Muti sends a letter to Mukhtar.
- Abdulla Muti tells Mukhtar: I remind you of our friendship, of working together to bring about the rule of Abdulla Zobayr in Mecca and Medina; I tried to use my influence to convince Abdulla Zobayr of fulfilling his promise to avenge the Kerbala killers; I gave you transportation and money to leave Mecca in order to save your life; and so having saved your life once, you should now save mine and let me go free.
- Mukhtar replies: I am aware of your debt, but by such arrogant reminder of yours, you have nullified any good you did to me; nevertheless, I have given you three days of no battle against you; since you became the governor here, you have sought advice only from the anti-Shia, but had you teamed up with me, we would have indeed by now avenged the perpetrators of Kerbala; you are not intent on helping me in this mission and your actions have caused many deaths to my supporters and Shias.

- Abdulla Muti now replies in a very humble way: I am now at your mercy; I have had no part in Kerbala; please forgive me for my actions in siding against you and let me at least get out of Kufa alive; I will not cause any more trouble for you.
- Mukhtar seeks Ibrahim's advice, explaining to him of the friendship between himself and Abdulla Muti; Ibrahim says he will support Mukhtar whatever the decision; Mukhtar decides to let Abdulla Muti go alive and sends a message saying that he will be allowed to leave the palace that night.
- At night, Abdulla Muti disguises in a woman's clothes, leaves the palace and Mukhtar tells him that this freedom effectively pays off his debt when Abdulla Muti saved Mukhtar's life; Abdulla Muti escapes into the night looking for shelter in Kufa, but no one is willing to take him in; at last one Abu Musa Asha'ri is willing to shelter him.
- Abdulla Muti now has no money and transportation, and Mukhtar provides both to enable Abdulla Muti leave Kufa alive; Mukhtar also sends the message that this completely pays off any debt he owed to him when Abdulla Muti provided transportation and money to Mukhtar to escape quickly from Mecca from Abdulla Zobayr.
- Abdulla Muti manages to escape from Kufa alive, and Mukhtar is now the governor of Kufa.
- On taking the office of governorship, Mukhtar calls for a public meeting and informs the people that his aim in fighting for the office was to enable him to avenge the Kerbala killers; he will not harass innocent people, nor will he tolerate any harassment between the people themselves; he would administer justly and according to Islamic rules.
- Mukhtar's immediate actions are humanitarians; he releases prisoners, helps the poor into better housing and better medical care for the sick; he specifically ensures that the Banu Hashim in Kufa are now well treated after years of persecution, and also that the Khums Sehme-Sadaat is rightfully paid.
- The revolution in Kufa took place in Rabil Awwal 66 AH, and after the Hajj of that year (in Zilhaj 66 AH), Minhal

Kufi went to Medina and met Imam Zainul Abideen (as); Imam Zainul Abideen (as) asks Minhal of the situation in Kufa, to which Minhal replies that with Mukhtar in power, the Kerbala perpetrators are rounded up and executed; this news very much pleased Imam Zainul Abideen (as).

# Chapter 21

## **Abdulla Muti Joins Forces with Masa'b Zobayr**

- Abdulla Muti reaches Basra where Masa'b Zobayr (the brother of Abdulla Zobayr) is the governor; Masa'b wants Mukhtar out of the way, and he convinces Abdulla Muti to fight against Mukhtar to take his revenge; so they both agree to go after Mukhtar and his people; Masa'b tells Abdulla Muti to go ahead with an army unit and that he will follow with more reinforcements after a few days as he has some unfinished business in Basra.
- Abdulla Muti's side comes up against Ibrahim and his army outside the Kufa boundary, for they form the first line of defence to the city of Kufa; Abdulla Muti's and Ibrahim's armies meet at Nahrawan; a battle ensues and Abdulla Muti's side suffer a heavy loss.
- At night, Abdulla Muti sends a spy to Ibrahim's side to assess the position; the spy is caught and questioned by Ibrahim. The spy says he was conscripted into the army in Basra and did not wish to be involved in any battle.
- Ibrahim explains their mission to avenge the perpetrators of Kerbala; on knowing the truth, the spy changes side and offers to take Ibrahim back to Abdulla Muti's camp to ambush and kill Abdulla Muti
- Ibrahim disguises himself and together with the spy, they head for Abdulla Muti's tent; they are stopped by guards on the way enquiring about the spy's companion; the spy says it is his friend, but the guards refuse to let him through without Abdulla Muti's permission.
- The guards go into the tent to ask for permission, but Abdulla Muti was just about to sleep and answers to let the

spy and his unknown friend through, for he is eagerly awaiting news about Ibrahim's positions.

- By the time the spy and Ibrahim get to Abdulla Muti's tent, he was fast asleep; Ibrahim was just about to take his sword from its sheath to strike Abdulla Muti, when a noisy arrival was heard just outside the tent, and so Ibrahim could not kill Abdulla Muti.
- It was the arrival of Masa'b Zobayr and his men, having come to reinforce Abdulla Muti's side; Ibrahim was not recognised, and he and the spy managed to get back unchallenged.
- The next day, battle resumes, and Ibrahim manages to kill Abdulla Muti in the battle; Masa'b Zobayr runs back to Basra.

# Chapter 22

## **Ibrahim Malik Ashtar Captured and Escapes**

- In Basra, Masa'b Zobayr writes to his brother Abdulla Zobayr in Mecca about his defeat against Ibrahim and the death of Abdulla Muti; Abdulla Zobayr replies that he is occupied with his own troubles at home and cannot spare any reinforcements.
- Masa'b Zobayr then writes to Abdul Malik Marwan Hakam in Damascus (who is now the governor there), and gets a favourable reply; Abdul Malik sends an army of seventy thousand men under the command of Amir Rabia to Kufa to confront the army of Mukhtar and Ibrahim; Amir Rabia camps just outside of Kufa.
- Now, there was a squad of fourteen killers planted in the army of Mukhtar for an opportune moment to kill Mukhtar.
- Amir Rabia sends a spy to Mukhtar's army to convey the written order to this squad that they should now make an attempt on Mukhtar's life.
- This spy is sent under the guise of a soldier thrown out from his own side; he dresses himself in tattered clothes with the story that Amir Rabia tried to kill him but managed to escape and comes to find refuge with Mukhtar.
- Mukhtar takes pity on this spy and gives him new clothes and money and sets him free; the spy is overwhelmed with Mukhtar's sincerity and generosity and has a change of heart; he shows the written orders of Amir Rabia to Mukhtar and tells him of the squad of fourteen killers planted in Mukhtar's group; the fourteen killers are identified and executed.

- The spy then suggests a plan to Mukhtar that he would take Mukhtar, in a disguise, back to Amir Rabia's camp; the spy would say to Amir Rabia that the order has been delivered, and at a distance away, one of the fourteen squad members has come to personally verify the order with Amir Rabia himself; this squad member would not come to the main camp site so Amir Rabia should go to him; this way Amir Rabia would be lured away from his guards, and can then be attacked easily.
- Mukhtar refuses to this plan on the grounds that he would be instantly recognised by the opposite side; however, Ibrahim likes the plan and the next day, the spy and Ibrahim (in disguise), leave to go to Amir Rabia's camp, without the knowledge of Mukhtar.
- The spy and Ibrahim are stopped by the guards of Amir Rabia; they recognise the spy as being one of their own man, but not the accompanying man; so they are both arrested and brought to Amir Rabia; Amir immediately recognises Ibrahim through his disguise and orders for his execution, but his adviser tells him to imprison Ibrahim overnight so that the public can see the execution of this gallant person the next morning.
- Ibrahim and the spy are therefore imprisoned, where they are chained and the chains in turn are nailed to the ground, ready for execution the next morning; the guard nods off and has a dream seeing Imam Husein (as) and as result, becomes sympathetic to the prisoners and now does not wish to be responsible for keeping Ibrahim in prison.
- The guard therefore removes all the chains and frees Ibrahim and the spy, and tells them to run as fast and far as possible; after some time, the guard raises alarm saying on checking the cell, he found the prisoners gone.
- Ibrahim and the spy keep running but each takes a different route to throw off their trail; Ibrahim keeps running, and during daylight, he comes across the army searching for him, so he hides himself on a high tree; here he sees a soldier, of high rank judging from his uniform, taking shelter under the tree, and cursing the Shias.



- Ibrahim gets angry, climbs down from the tree, and confronts the soldier only to see that it was one of the notorious commanders of the Syrian army who was with Amir Rabia; Ibrahim kills him and beheads him, taking the head with him back to Kufa.
- Meanwhile, Mukhtar is worried, for Ibrahim had left without leaving any word, and had not returned for three days; Mukhtar groups an army of thirty thousand men to go in search and to the aid of Ibrahim.
- Just as the group was about to depart, Ibrahim rides in with the head of the commander whom he had confronted under the tree, and relates developments to Mukhtar; soon after, the spy rides in with the head of one of the executioners (of Amir Rabia's unit) whom he had engaged in fighting.
- Both Mukhtar and Ibrahim are happy that they have managed to eliminate two notorious people, but Ibrahim says he must go back to help the guard who had freed him, for the guard would surely now be in trouble.
- Before Ibrahim could set off, the same guard is seen riding in and relates his escape: after releasing Ibrahim, and raising the alarm, Amir Rabia naturally suspected him for treachery, but the guard made up a story that it was in fact Amir Rabia's adviser, the one who had asked for the execution of Ibrahim to be held the next morning, who was in fact responsible for Ibrahim's escape for it was the adviser after all who requested the postponement of the execution.
- This guard knew very well that Amir Rabia was not as dangerous as that adviser who directed everything, so it was advantageous to get rid of this adviser who was a threat to Mukhtar and Ibrahim; Amir Rabia was angry at the apparent double-cross of his adviser, and despite the protests of his innocence, he gets the adviser executed.
- Ibrahim then takes his army to go and finish the battle with Amir Rabia; Ibrahim and his men come back victorious.

# Chapter 23

## Control for Mosul

- Ibrahim advises Mukhtar that before embarking on the mission in earnest for tracking down the Kerbala perpetrators, they should first bring under their influence the surrounding areas to consolidate their government.
- Mosul was of a strategic importance, and they decide on a tactic to bring it under their control; at the time, Mosul was under the rule of Mohamed Ashath who was a staunch anti-Shia; his father Ashath Qays caused a lot of problems for Imam Ali (as), and his sister Joda Ashath, who was a wife of Imam Hassan (as), poisoned Imam Hassan (as).
- So Mukhtar and Ibrahim are aware of the opposition they would face against Mohamed Ashath; the plan is first to call in prominent Kufians and the commanders of the army units who were in Kerbala, the majority of whom were living in Kufa.
- These people are called in and Mukhtar tells them that his earlier statements of wanting to avenge the killers of Imam Husein (as) were just a front to gain him power; and now he has got power, he is only interested in keeping it and amassing wealth. He gives them a lot of money and gifts to convince them of his greed for wealth, and a promise to share out any more war booty.
- After a few days, Mukhtar calls in Mohamed Ashath's son Abdu Rahman, who was residing in Kufa; Mukhtar treats him like royalty and gives him lots of money and gifts, telling him the same story as he told the other Kufians.
- After a few more days, Mukhtar calls for Abdu Rahman again, asking him to take a personal message to his

father Mohamed Ashath in Mosul; the message says: let Mohamed Ashath swear his political allegiance to Mukhtar and in return Mohamed Ashath will get the governorship of Madayn, which is a larger and a more powerful province than Mosul.

- Abdu Rahman travels to Mosul and meets with his father and conveys Mukhtar's message; Mohamed Ashath is very surprised that his son should bring such a message, but Abdu Rahman explains the apparent change of heart by Mukhtar; he assures this to his father by the evidence of gifts and money to him and to the perpetrators of Kerbala living in Kufa.
- Mohamed Ashath consults his advisers and is told that the offer is too good to refuse for two reasons; firstly, Madayn is indeed a greater province, but secondly, and more importantly, if Ubaydallah Ziyad who is on his way to Mosul to consolidate Abdul Malik Marwan's (who is now the new ruler of Damascus) power, then Mukhtar and Ibrahim will come after Ubaydallah Ziyad even in Mosul, with or without the support of Mohamed Ashath, in which case then Mohamed Ashath will be unwillingly dragged into the battle.
- So Mohamed Ashath takes an army of four thousand men and leaves Mosul to go to Mukhtar in Kufa; the Mosulians are angry that he now runs away with all their money with him which they paid as taxes; they confront Mohamed Ashath with his army; a battle ensues and the public get all their money back and only then allow Mohamed Ashath to leave Mosul; with no money and power base now, Mohamed Ashath is forced to accept Mukhtar's offer.
- On reaching Kufa, Mukhtar receives Mohamed Ashath with honour and gives him a lot of money and a house, telling him that he would soon make arrangements for his Madayn's governorship.
- Mukhtar appoints a man named Abdu Rahman to become the governor of Mosul (note that this is not Mohamed Ashath's son who is of the same name).
- Meanwhile Abdul Malik from Damascus sends Haseen Nameer with an army to Mosul to overthrow Abdu

Rahman; Haseen Nameer's unit was to be an advance party, to be followed by reinforcements led by Ubaydallah Ziyad himself; Ubaydallah Ziyad was presently busy enforcing the consolidation of Abdul Malik's rulership in Damascus.

- On hearing of Haseen Nameer's coming, Abdu Rahman runs away from Mosul to Tikrit, with a letter sent to Mukhtar saying he cannot face Haseen Nameer and Mukhtar should send another governor.
- In Kufa, Zaeed, who is old and sick himself, is more than willing to travel to Mosul to confront Haseen Nameer, for Zaeed particularly wanted to personally avenge Haseen Nameer for delivering the fatal lance to Ali Akbar.
- Zaeed with his units head for Mosul to confront Haseen Nameer, whilst at the same time, Ubaydallah Ziyad and his units leave from Damascus heading to Mosul to reinforce Haseen Nameer.
- The two armies meet en-route to Mosul and a battle ensues; here Zaeed dies of his illness, and his side is defeated, with Ubaydallah Ziyad victoriously heading for Mosul.
- Back in Kufa, Mukhtar gets the news of the battle and the defeat of Zaeed; Mukhtar and Ibrahim now make strategic military decision that instead of going for the local perpetrators of Kerbala, now is the best opportunity to get Ubaydallah Ziyad in Mosul, for after all, Ubaydallah Ziyad was the main architect of carrying out Yazeed's order for the Kerbala massacre.
- A huge army using all the reserves is assembled in Kufa with Ibrahim as its commander to head for Mosul, with the intention to finish off Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- Ibrahim is worried though that with all the reserves out of Kufa, Mukhtar is left unguarded with so many enemies within; they decide that it is best to ask the prominent Kufians and the killers of Kerbala to have their household helps in Mukhtar's palace with the pretext of guarding Mukhtar, thereby reducing the chances of these killers mounting a surprise attack; the killers agreed to the plan for they had an ulterior motive of having reliable inside information on Mukhtar's activities.

- Ibrahim and the assembled army of all the reserves leave for Mosul to confront Ubaydallah Ziyad.

# Chapter 24

## **Attempt on Mukhtar's Life**

- With Mukhtar left unguarded, Shabath Rabi (who was one of the army unit commanders at Kerbala, and also sent by Abdulla Muti to fight Mukhtar's men on the night of the revolution in Kufa), goes to Umar Saad saying now is the best time to kill Mukhtar, for he is unguarded; they realise that if Ibrahim were to return victorious, then Mukhtar would become even more powerful, and hence more difficult to kill him then.
- Umar Saad calls all the other army unit leaders who were in Kerbala and asks of their opinions; they all go to Mohamed Ashath (who is in Kufa) for consultation and approval; Mohamed Ashath does not approve for he thinks Mukhtar must have an undeclared reserve unit for his defence.
- Mohamed Ashath also thinks that they should not attack Mukhtar for he has enough powerful enemies who are after his life: Ubaydallah Ziyad, Abdulla Zobayr, Abdul Malik, Masa'b Zobayr, and that it is only a matter of time before these people get Mukhtar.
- Umar Saad and his group decide to check out if Mukhtar has an undeclared reserve unit; the plan is for one of them to go to Mukhtar telling him that his governorship is illegal and not sanctioned by Abdulla Zobayr and the Kufians want to swear allegiance to Abdulla Zobayr; if Mukhtar answers humbly, then he is afraid to antagonise anyone at the moment implying he has no reserves; if he answers uncompromisingly, then he does indeed have reserves.

- Three days after Ibrahim has left Kufa (purposely waited for three days to allow Ibrahim and his men to be well away from Kufa so that Mukhtar cannot recall Ibrahim back in a hurry), Shabath Rabi goes to Mukhtar's palace; he tells Mukhtar that the Kufians do not want his governorship and that he should leave office; Mukhtar asks what is it that they are objecting to; Shabath Rabi says for example, that they are not happy with Mukhtar keeping their household help in his palace; Mukhtar says that they are most welcome to recall their people, and Mukhtar would willingly let them go.
- Shabath Rabi reports back to his group that Mukhtar's answer was humble and accommodating, implying there are no reserves for his protection.
- Mohamed Ashath is now also convinced that Mukhtar has no hidden reserves, and agrees with the killers that now is the time to launch an attack on Mukhtar; the same night, Umar Saad and his group call on their supporters to assemble outside Mukhtar's palace, and are also hoping that their people in the palace will side with them.
- Meanwhile, Mukhtar in the palace calls for the helpers and tells them their masters want them back and he is ready to let them go; the people refuse saying now that they have managed to get out of the grips of their masters, they will not return to them, but will only remain with Mukhtar; Mukhtar tells them that might mean fighting to death, which they readily accept.
- Mukhtar sends his help Khayr to Ibrahim with the message: wherever you are, whatever you are doing, whatever the circumstances, leave everything and come directly back to Kufa in a hurry, for the situation here has worsened and my life is in danger; I fear that should I be killed, Imam Husein's (as) killers will not be avenged.
- When Ibrahim gets the letter, he immediately heads back with his army; he has the minimal of rest for himself, his army and the horses, and makes the outward three days journey back in one day.
- Mohamed Ashath, Umar Saad and his group have surrounded Mukhtar's palace and Mukhtar tries hard to hold

back the assault; Mukhtar himself comes out fighting but is greatly outnumbered.

- At this point, Ibrahim and his men arrive; they were not expected to be back for another two days by the enemies (for the outward journey was three days before Shabath Rabi came to Mukhtar) and this sudden arrival too takes the opposite side by surprise.
- Ibrahim and his men are exhausted by the quick journey home, but they immediately do battle with the enemies; Ibrahim asks Mohamed Ashath for one-to-one battle but Mohamed Ashath is fearful of this and refuses; out of fear, none else is willing to face Ibrahim alone.
- Mohamed Ashath and a few men manage to escape and retreat to Qadisiya, with Ibrahim and some of his men giving chase; Mohamed Ashath takes refuge in one of the houses where he is put under house arrest for the moment, whilst Ibrahim rushes back to Mukhtar in Kufa.
- At night, Mohamed Ashath disguises as a woman, mounts a donkey and leaves unchallenged by the back door to escape to Basra.



# Chapter 25

## **Mukhtar Goes After the Perpetrators of Kerbala**

- When Ibrahim arrives back in Kufa, Mukhtar decides to leave Ubaydallah Ziyad for a while as he sees it is tying up too much of his resources with no quick results.
- So Mukhtar tells Ibrahim that the time is now right to go after the local people who participated in the killings at Kerbala; they will also be caught unaware for they think we are determined to catch Ubaydallah Ziyad first.
- Mukhtar calls for one of his most able commanders, Abdulla Kamil and gives him complete authority with the order: blockade Kufa utterly tight with nobody able to go out or come in without by-passing our soldiers.
- With the effective blockade in force, Mukhtar and Ibrahim are in the governor's palace, and the order goes out that all those who participated in the Kerbala massacre should be rounded up and brought to the palace.
- The perpetrators of Kerbala were taken by complete surprise, for as Mukhtar had thought, they did not expect a blockade around Kufa when it appeared that Mukhtar and Ibrahim were busy chasing Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- Whenever the people who participated in the crimes at Kerbala were caught, Mukhtar used to ask them to relate exactly what they did there; this way, no innocent person was executed, and also, this is how we have got so much details of the atrocities in Kerbala directly from the perpetrator's own mouth; also the excuse of "I was under orders" was not accepted by Mukhtar for people had the chance to change sides, as some did (notably Hurr).

- The first two people caught are Abdulla Asaad and Malik Bashir; Abdulla was amongst those who burnt the tents and robbed Imam Husein (as) of his turban after his death; Mukhtar orders his hands and legs to be cut whereby Abdulla thrashes to death in agony; Malik Bashir was the one who robbed Imam Husein's (as) sword and Mukhtar orders that Malik be similarly killed.
- Next, Nafee Malik is caught; he was one of Umar Saad's commander who was in charge at the bank of river Euphrates to ensure that no drop of water gets to Imam Husein's (as) side; and it was on his order that an arrow was aimed at the water bag carried by Hazrat Abbas; Mukhtar orders Nafee's executed.
- Over the next few days, a number of perpetrators are caught, tried and the guilty are executed by the orders of Mukhtar; Abdulla Kamil is now after the major killers like Khooli, Sinan, Hurmala, Shimr, Umar Saad.
- Abdulla Kamil and his men go to search Khooli's house but he is not there; Khooli has two wives, one Kufian and one Syrian; the Syrian wife, who is anti-Shia, is questioned by Abdulla Kamil and she says Khooli is out of town; the Kufian wife, a Shia, also says the same but she discreetly points her finger to a secret attic (another report says she points to a basement toilet); further detailed searching in the attic revealed Khooli crouched therein.
- Abdulla Kamil takes Khooli and his two wives to Mukhtar, where Khooli is put into prison whilst his two wives are questioned by Mukhtar; he asks the Kufian wife why she gave Khooli's hideout away; she says she is a Shia and once, the Syrian wife came to her singing and dancing saying that she is very happy, for Khooli has brought the head of Imam Husein (as) which she has put in the hot pit; the Kufian wife goes and takes Imam Husein's (as) head out of the pit and laments over it.
- Mukhtar then questions the Syrian wife who admits to the alleged deed and says that Yazeed was her Khalifa; Mukhtar orders her body to be dismembered and then cut into pieces; the Kufian wife is given money and set free.

- Khooli is then brought to the court, and after the initial excuse of “I was just obeying orders” etc, he admits to the following, amongst other crimes: controlled the unit of archers and gave the order to fly the arrows; stripped Sukaina’s veil, and pulled her earrings off her lobes; beat up Imam Zainul Abideen (as) from his unconscious state with a cane, rolled the Imam to the ground from the makeshift bed, and stole the blankets covering the sick Imam; stripped Lady Zainab of her veil and earrings.
- Mukhtar orders Khooli’s hands and legs be cut and then thrown alive into the fire to burn to death.
- Next, the ten leaders who trampled on Imam Husein’s (as) body are caught; they are tied and pinned to the ground and then trampled with horses until they die.
- Many other perpetrators of Kerbala are brought before Mukhtar, interrogated and the guilty are executed; for a short time, no more perpetrators are apprehended despite the search, as the prominent and powerful people of Kufa were protecting them by giving shelter in their homes; Mukhtar gives the order to go and arrest the perpetrators even if they are in the homes of these powerful and prominent people.
- Abdulla Kamil gets the information that Hakim Tufayl, a killer of Hazrat Abbas, is under the protection of Adi Hakim Tai, a very powerful and prominent person in Kufa; Abdulla Kamil and his men goes to Adi Tai’s house and arrests Hakim Tufayl; at the time, Adi Tai is not in but he soon gets news of the arrest.
- Adi Tai goes straight to Mukhtar demanding the release of Hakim Tufayl saying he was under his protection; just then, Abdulla Kamil walks in with the head of Hakim Tufayl, explaining that on the way, when people heard of Hazrat Abbas’s killer being arrested, they could not restrain their anger and immediately killed him; other reports say that the people were aware that should Hakim Tufayl go into the courtyard alive (especially when Adi Tai is already in the court to protest Hakim Tufayl’s arrest), he was likely to be pardoned because of the pressure Mukhtar would be in, under the influence of the very prominent Adi Tai.

- After seeing the ineffectiveness of the intervention of a prominent like Adi Tai, the rest of the major killers (like Shimr, Sinan, Hurmala, Umar Saad) were very worried about their lives.
- Sinan manages to escape from Kufa to a town of Zihad where he asks the people there for their protection; the people refuse for if they were found harbouring any killer, they knew Mukhtar would not spare them, so Sinan left.
- After his departure, other people in the town objected to not giving protection to Sinan, so they went after him to bring him back to their town; Sinan sees a group of people running after him and thinks it is Mukhtar's soldiers, so he starts firing arrows; these people become angry for they were offering Sinan sanctuary, and he dares attack them, so the people fire back at Sinan, arrest him and take him to Mukhtar.
- Sinan confesses in Mukhtar's court that amongst other crimes, he tried to steal a belt from Imam Husein (as) when he had fallen from his horse during the last few moments of his life; but the Imam repeatedly used his hands to cover the belt which was sewn by Lady Fatema (as), and Sinan cuts off Imam Husein's (as) hands in order to get to the belt; Mukhtar orders that Sinan's fingers should cut one at a time, then his elbows be cut, then his arms, his legs, and then finally thrown into fire until burned to death.
- The other major killers are now shaking with fear after seeing the fate of Hakim Tufayl and Sinan; they meet together to make a plan to escape out of Kufa.
- Shimr tries to escape from Kufa but he is tracked down and executed.
- Hurmala is caught and brought to the court of Mukhtar; Hurmala confesses that amongst other crimes, he pierced with an arrow the water bag that Hazrat Abbas was carrying, he fired the fatal three pronged arrow at Ali Asghar's tender neck, and also fired an arrow at Imam Husein's (as) forehead in his last moments thereby causing the Imam to fall to the ground; Mukhtar orders

that Hurmala's hands and feet be dismembered and then showered with arrows to his death.

- Umar Saad says he has since sought the protection of Abdulla Joda Hubayra, a close friend of Imam Ali (as), and so Mukhtar would respect that patronage; when Abdulla Joda Hubayra intervenes for Umar Saad, Mukhtar (with a plan in mind) reluctantly agrees to Umar Saad's pardon provided Umar Saad does not involve himself in any further mischief and would not leave Kufa.
- However, Mukhtar later instructs Abdulla Kamil to arrest a perpetrator of Kerbala, fitting a certain description (of Umar Saad), but not mentioning him by name; a relative of Umar Saad who is in the court at the time, overhears Mukhtar's description and sends word to Umar Saad to run for his life for the order of his arrest was out.
- Umar Saad is in search of someone who will help him get out of Kufa secretly; someone suggests that there is alive an engineer from Banu Tamim tribe, who was involved in the planning of Kufa, and he could get Umar Saad out; this engineer is approached but he is not told the reason or the identity of the person wishing to get to the borders of Kufa.
- The engineer takes Umar Saad to the border where people there advise Umar Saad to return to Kufa as running away was a breach of the promise of his protector that Umar Saad would remain within Kufa, and Mukhtar would then surely track him down.
- The engineer then realises the trick played on him, and says he would report back to Mukhtar; so Umar Saad reluctantly comes back to Kufa and to his protector, Abdulla Joda Hubayra.
- Hubayra, who now refuses to extend his patronage to Umar Saad for he has broken the promise of not leaving Kufa.
- Mukhtar having got all the detail reports, comes to Abdulla Joda Hubayra and says that Umar Saad can now be arrested as there is a breach of promise that Umar Saad will not attempt to leave Kufa.
- Umar Saad now uses another tactic to stay alive; he goes to one of his wives, who is a sister of Mukhtar, and asks

her to intervene for him; she says she hasn't seen Mukhtar for a long time because of Umar Saad's doings, but Umar Saad pleads with her to give it a try.

- Mukhtar's sister comes to Mukhtar, but he is very surprised to see her for they had not maintained contacts while she was till married to Umar Saad; he tells her that she should be ashamed to remain married to Umar Saad.
- The sister replies that he did indeed think of killing Umar Saad when he was against the Shias and following Ubaydallah Ziyad; but then Mukhtar was in prison under the orders of Ubaydallah Ziyad, and had she killed her husband, Ubaydallah Ziyad would have never forgiven and released Mukhtar even on Abdulla Omar's recommendation.
- Mukhtar advises his sister not to return to Umar Saad for he is to be arrested soon.
- Umar Saad, who was the Commander in Chief at Kerbala, is arrested and Mukhtar orders that he first be immersed in boiling oil, then let out, have his nails removed, and Mukhtar himself gorges Umar Saad's eyes and cuts the flesh from his thighs which he forces Umar Saad to eat, and then Mukhtar calls for lancers to probe Umar Saad violently to his death.

# Chapter 26

## Tracking Down Ubaydallah Ziyad

- Mukhtar now concentrates on catching Ubaydallah Ziyad, for he was the architect of the massacre at Kerbala; with Ubaydallah Ziyad were Haseen Nameer and Shabath Rabi.
- Mukhtar tells Ibrahim to mobilise an army and head for Mosul to catch Ubaydallah Ziyad; Ibrahim and the army get a huge send-off from the Kufians for they were all praying for a victory in catching Ubaydallah Ziyad.
- On the way to Mosul, Ibrahim does battle with people who are vehemently anti-Shia and are openly supporting and praying for Ubaydallah Ziyad's victory and Mukhtar's defeat.
- Ibrahim is now preparing for a battle with Ubaydallah Ziyad's side and sets up camp about fifteen miles from Mosul, near a small town Mawari where Nasiben, - the local chief of the Hanzala tribe, appears very happy to see him for the ruler is a Shia sympathiser; Nasiben tells Ibrahim that just two hours earlier, Ubaydallah Ziyad had passed through the town and had asked Nasiben to put up Ubaydallah Ziyad's family in a safe house, as he (Ubaydallah Ziyad) was going to battle with Ibrahim and did not want his immediate family come to any harm.
- Nasiben, who also wanted to see the crimes of Kerbala avenged, takes Ibrahim to the safe house; in the house were Ubaydallah Ziyad's three wives, four elder daughters, two young daughters, four sons and one hundred and twenty household helps.
- Ibrahim orders that all of them come out, and executes the eldest son of about twenty years old, in avenging the

death of Imam Husein's (as) sons; Ibrahim's men immediately execute all the rest.

- Nasiben then has a plan to take Ibrahim alone to Ubaydallah Ziyad's tent where he (Ubaydallah Ziyad) could be killed, thereby avoiding a big battle.
- Nasiben and with Ibrahim in disguise, go towards Ubaydallah Ziyad's camp; Hanzala tells Ubaydallah Ziyad that he has come with the news of his family; Ubaydallah Ziyad asks Nasiben and his companion (Ibrahim in disguise) to come to his tent.
- Nasiben engages Ubaydallah Ziyad in conversation, in order to give an opportunity to Ibrahim to strike; Nasiben tells Ubaydallah Ziyad that since his departure, Nasiben has heard that Ibrahim was on the way, and that Nasiben feared for the safety of Ubaydallah Ziyad's family; Ubaydallah Ziyad says that he will send reinforcements to cordon off the safe house.
- Nasiben sees that Ibrahim has made no attempt to strike, and they therefore leave; Ibrahim explains that it was not possible to strike Ubaydallah Ziyad without the outside guards coming in immediately to Ubaydallah Ziyad's rescue, and so any attempt then would have been suicidal.
- Ibrahim returns to his camp; both sides prepare for battle the next day; next day, the battle starts and continuous during daylight for three days.
- Amongst the men killed during the three days of fierce fighting is Haseen Nameer, one of the commanders in Kerbala, and who fatally injured Ali Akbar.
- The fourth day of battle is 10 Muharram 67 AH; the place is by the bank of river Tigris near Mosul; the battle continues; the final casualty was: Ubaydallah Ziyad's loses about eighty thousand of his men out of the initial number of one hundred thousand men, and the remaining twenty thousand retreat; Ibrahim loses seven thousand men out of his force of twenty four thousand men.
- Ubaydallah Ziyad's execution is reported by two sources. The first report says that Ibrahim sees a rider retreating fast, he goes after him and smells the fragrance of Misk and Ambar; only Ubaydallah Ziyad would adorn perfumery in battle; (when Ubaydallah Ziyad had kept the



head of Imam Husein (as) on his leg, a blood drop from Imam Husein's (as) head fell on Ubaydallah Ziyad's thighs, which since had caused a septic wound giving off a foul odour; Ubaydallah Ziyad thus used heavy perfumery to neutralise the odour).

- Ibrahim realises it is Ubaydallah Ziyad running away, and immediately kills him; after the battle is finished, Ibrahim and his men then go to verify that it is indeed Ubaydallah Ziyad and then behead him.
- The second report says that Ibrahim and Ubaydallah Ziyad have a one-to-one battle, and Ubaydallah Ziyad is taken in alive; he has his two legs broken, knee caps broken, hip joints broken, hands cut, head shaved, eyes gorged out, lips cut, cheeks cut, his flesh forced into his mouth, and finally lances are violently probed into him until his whole body is in little pieces.
- Ibrahim and his men go into Mosul victorious and are warmly welcomed by the people.
- Ibrahim sends the head of Ubaydallah Ziyad to Mukhtar in Kufa; Mukhtar treats the head of Ubaydallah Ziyad in the same way as Ubaydallah Ziyad did for Imam Husein's (as) head; he mounts it on a javelin and parades it through the town, and then for three days mounts it on the same door in the courtyard for the public to see; eye witnesses report that for the three days, they saw a snake slithering from Ubaydallah Ziyad's mouth through to the noise, nipping flesh as it went along.
- Mukhtar sends the head to Mohamed Hanafiya in Mecca; at the time Imam Zainul Abideen (as) was also in Mecca and Mohamed Hanafiya sends the head to Imam Zainul Abideen (as); it was 9 Rabil Awwal 67 AH.

# Chapter 27

## **Mukhtar Martyred**

- When Masa'b Zobayr, with Abdulla Muti, was defeated against Ibrahim Malik Ashtar, Masa'b Zobayr had retreated to Basra; Mohamed Ashath had joined him at Basra.
- Mukhtar wishes to see that Mohamed Ashath is caught, but he has no quarrel with Masa'b Zobayr; Mukhtar sends a letter to Masa'b Zobayr asking for the extradition of Mohamed Ashath or a battle will ensue.
- Masa'b Zobayr sends the reply that he will not release Mohamed Ashath and he also writes to his brother, Abdulla Zobayr, the ruler in Mecca, that he needs help to repel Mukhtar's army when it comes.
- Abdulla Zobayr sends reinforcements of about fifteen thousand men under the command of Muhlab, one of the governors of a province under his rule; Muhlab advises Masa'b Zobayr to bide time for sooner or later, Abdul Malik in Damascus would take his revenge on Ibrahim, and without Ibrahim, Mukhtar would be a relatively easy target.
- Masa'b Zobayr dismisses the idea, but writes to Ibrahim, offering him money and position if Ibrahim sides with Masa'b Zobayr against Mukhtar; Ibrahim obviously refuses and sends his reply back to Masa'b; Ibrahim also sends a message to Mukhtar informing of the impending war preparations from Masa'b Zobayr.
- Masa'b camps with his army just outside Basra; Mukhtar camps with his army just outside Kufa and waits for Ibrahim whom he had requested to come and join the force.

- Ibrahim replies that he cannot come for Abdul Malik has surrounded Mosul and is heading there with about forty thousand men; Ibrahim advises Mukhtar not to leave Kufa but to send a deputy to lead the army against Masa'b Zobayr; this way Kufa will be contained by Mukhtar and Mosul will be contained by Ibrahim.
- Mukhtar appoints Ahmer Shomit and Abdulla Kamil as his commanders and sends them off towards Basra, while Mukhtar returns back to Kufa; the date is Jamadil Awwal 67 AH.
- Masa'b and his army also advance forward and both sides camp near Madar, about three-quarters way from Kufa to Basra.
- Next day, the battle starts and Ahmer Shomit has two rounds of victory in killing and repelling Masa'b Zobayr's forces.
- Masa'b then sends a spy to assess the numbers on Mukhtar's side and whether Mukhtar himself is present; the spy reports back the relatively smaller number of men and the absence of Mukhtar, both of which pleases Masa'b Zobayr.
- Abdulla Kamil then takes to the battle field, and he manages to inflict damage on Masa'b Zobayr's forces; Mohamed Ashath is injured and flees from the battle field.
- Ahmer Shomit and his unit of men then come back to the field; Masa'b Zobayr then targets Ahmer Shomit and orders his men to surround and attack simultaneously on Ahmer Shomit, who gets killed.
- Abdulla Kamil and his men are disheartened by Ahmer Shomit's death, but bravely fight on; Masa'b Zobayr though launches a two pronged attack, from the front and back, which effectively wins him the battle.
- Abdulla Kamil with his men return to Kufa, defeated.
- Masa'b Zobayr is now victorious and confidently heads towards Kufa; the Kufians are dejected by the defeat and death of Ahmer Shomit, despite Mukhtar's encouragement.
- Masa'b Zobayr sends a letter to Mukhtar telling him to surrender now; Mukhtar and his commanders in Kufa refuse to do so and are willing to fight on.

- Mukhtar sends the reply that there is to be no surrender; he takes about twenty thousand men and camp on the Kufa border at Harura; both sides are now ready for the ensuing battle.
- Mukhtar lays a trap for Masa'b Zobayr's men, in order to reduce the number of men on Masa'b Zobayr's side; Mukhtar is to argue very loudly with Mohamed Saad, one of his commanders, to go and immediately attack Masa'b Zobayr's side to which Mohamed Saad refuses, and then deserts Mukhtar and walks away with his units of men; the plan was that Masa'b would hear about the disagreement and desertion and would follow Mohamed Saad, at which point they would be attacked by surprise from behind.
- Next day, the plan goes into action and Masa'b Zobayr falls for the trap and sends one of his commander Rabia with about five thousand men to attack Mohamed Saad; they are ambushed from behind by Mukhtar's men and all of them are killed.
- A fierce battle between the two sides takes place but neither side wins convincingly.
- On the second day, the battle continues.
- On the third day, Mukhtar himself is in the battlefield fighting; Mohamed Ashath is killed; Masa'b Zobayr then launches a concentrated attack on Mukhtar's men; Mukhtar loses a number of his men and has to retreat to Kufa with only about six thousand men remaining in his army.
- Masa'b Zobayr follows them and blockades the city of Kufa at the borders; no supplies are getting through and people become despondent; they refuse to answer the call of Mukhtar to fight on and would now rather submit to Masa'b Zobayr than continue facing the hardships.
- When Masa'b Zobayr hears about the demoralised Kufians, he enters the city wanting to surround Mukhtar's palace.
- Abdulla Hatim was a local Chief with about four hundred gallant men; they manage to slow down Masa'b Zobayr's entry at the district of Kanasa within Kufa, killing about

one thousand of Masa'b Zobayr's men before the Chief himself and all his men are killed.

- In the governor's palace, Mukhtar has only a small number of his close friends, about thirty in all, (the six thousand men who came back to Kufa with him had deserted but were subsequently killed by Masa'b Zobayr's men) ready to defend Mukhtar; they all fight valiantly to their death.
- Mukhtar continues to fight until he is the last one from his side, when he is finally set upon and has his head cut; the date was 14 Ramadhan 67 AH (Mukhtar became the governor of Kufa, with the aim to avenge the Kerbala perpetrators on 14 Rabil Awwal 66 AH).
- Mukhtar is buried behind Muslim Aqeel in Kufa, adjoining the Kufa Mosque, where pilgrims go to pay homage.
- It is reported that Mukhtar managed to bring to justice about eighteen thousand perpetrators of Kerbala during his time as governor.
- Masa'b Zobayr then sends the head of Mukhtar to Abdulla Zobayr in Mecca.
- History reports that later on, Masa'b Zobayr is in turn killed by the forces of Abdul Malik Marwan Hakam, the governor of Damascus; Masa'b Zobayr's head is then sent to Abdul Malik who is in the governor's palace in Kufa.
- An old man at the courtyard in Kufa, who witnessed the going-ons, said: in this very court yard in Kufa, I saw Imam Husein's (as) head before Ubaydallah Ziyad, the head of Ubaydallah Ziyad before Mukhtar, the head of Mukhtar before Masa'b Zobayr, and now the head of Masa'b Zobayr before Abdul Malik; on hearing this, Abdul Malik regards the courtyard in the palace as a bad omen and orders that the governor's palace be burnt down.

# Chapter 28

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## **About the Book**

There is no Shia who has not heard of Kerbala and of the events leading up to the Ashura day. Also, many people know that a personality called Mukhtar had managed to avenge (in this world) the people who were responsible for the massacre at Kerbala.

However, many people are not familiar with the historical details as to how Mukhtar came about to avenge the Kerbala perpetrators. This book sets out to explain just that.

The book is written in a narrative points form, in short chapters and story-like fashion. This is done purposely to make the reading easy and interesting.

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