

YOUNG READERS 5

(SA)  
SYEDA ZAINAB  
SAKINA HASAN ASKARI



حکرو

# Chapter 1

## **Introduction**

Bibi Zainab (AS), is the granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad, SAW, the Best of Creation. Her mother is Bibi Fatima (AS), the Best of all the Women and her father is our first Imam Ali (AS) excellent in every way. Her brothers Imam Hasan(AS) and Imam Husain (AS) are the Masters of the Youth of Paradise. She is a wonderful example for us to follow. She lived the teachings of the Quran and has shown us how to live as true Muslims. Bibi Zainab (AS) took an active part in Imam Husain's mission to reform the Muslims. She offered all she had to support him in his efforts to save the message of Islam.

# Chapter 2

## Birth

The house of Bibi Fatima (AS) and Imam Ali (AS) was blessed with two sons, Hasan (AS) and Husain (AS), who the Prophet Muhammad SAW loved dearly. Together these five are the Panjatan Pak, kept pure by Allah himself. Angels often came to bring Allah's blessings and mercy. Into this house in Madina, on the 1st Shabaan 7A.H. a daughter was born.

Why were they sad when Bibi Zainab was born? When her father, Imam Ali (AS) saw her for the first time, Imam Husain (AS) who was three years of age at that time was with him. The young child exclaimed in delight: "O father! Allah has given me a sister". At these words, Imam Ali (AS) began to weep. Imam Husain (AS) asked him "Why do you cry?" He said, "My son! You will soon find out". When the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW saw the baby, he named her Zainab: made up of Zain (ornament) and ab (father) She was indeed the pride of her father Imam Ali (AS). Tears welled up in his eyes. Bibi Fatima (AS) asked "Why do you cry?" The Prophet replied, "This child will face trials and troubles from a very young age. She will first weep over me; then she will moan her mother; then her father; and then her brothers Hasan and Husain. There after, she will face trials in Karbala, which will turn her hair grey and her back will be bent". When the family heard this, they all broke down in tears. Imam Husain (AS) now understood why his father had also wept. She was called Ummul Masaeb (mother of misfortunes.)

Two years later Bibi Fatima (AS) had another daughter, equally beautiful. It was the 18th of Rabiulaval 9 A.H. Again it was the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW who named her: Kult-hoom. She was known as Saniye Zainab or Zainab e Sugra.

Raised up in the home of the Panjatan e Pak, the purest of Allah's creation, they grew up together.

Bibi Zainab (AS) resembled her grandmother Hadhrat Khadija, said the Prophet. In her personality she was so much like her mother that she was called Saniye Zahra. She was known as Shareekat-ul Husain, a partner in his divine mission. She was aware of his noble character, his merit praised by Allah in the Quran. He knew her virtue and excellence. There was a special bond between them. Bibi Zainab (AS) had many titles, which describe her: Sabira (Patient) Aqeela e bani Has him (The most Intelligent Lady of Bani Hashim),

Aalima ghairi muallima (Learned without being taught)

Aabida (Worshipper)

Faadilah (Virtuous)

Kaamilah (Perfect).

# Chapter 3

## Childhood

Happy Times As days passed into months and the months into years, Bibi Zainab and Bibi Kulthoom, the daughters of Fatima (AS) and Ali (AS) grew up in the lap of the Holy Prophet. They saw Islam grow before their very eyes. More and more people became Muslims and accepted the word of Allah.

Life for Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) was happy. When Prophet Muhammad SAW gathered his family around him under the Kisa (blanket), Allah sent the Ayat e Tatheer in praise of the Panjatan Pak. When the Prophet had to take people with him to face the Christians in Mubahalah, it was again the Panjatan who were chosen by Allah.

Hadhrat Jafar e Tayyar (AS), their uncle, returned from Abbysinia after twelve years. The Holy Prophet welcomed him back happily. In the battle of Khaibar, it was their father Imam Ali (AS) who was given the flag of victory. The final glory was the event of Ghadeer, when all the Muslims on the way back from Hajj learnt that Imam Ali (AS) is the Maula (Master) of all. The message of Islam was completed and religion made perfect with this announcement. The Holy Prophet would often visit the house of his daughter Fatima and loved to be with his grandchildren.

Sad Times One day the Prophet Muhammad SAW found his granddaughter Bibi Zainab (AS) in tears. She had seen a very frightening dream. She saw a violent wind rise in the city and darken the earth and the sky. She was tossed in the air and suddenly she found herself stuck in the branches of a huge tree, but the wind was so strong that it had uprooted the tree. She caught hold of its branches but they broke. She then

grabbed two twigs but these too gave way and finally she fell down.

What did the dream mean? The Holy Prophet hugged her close, wept and said, "O my Zainab! That tree in your dream is me; I will shortly depart from this world. The branches are your parents Ali and Fatima and the twigs are your brothers Hasan and Husain. They will all die before you and you will suffer their separation and loss". The words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW came true. Bibi Zainab (AS) was hardly five years and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) hardly three when the Prophet Muhammad SAW died. The message of Ghadeer was forgotten, Imam Ali's rights were taken away. Bibi Fatima (AS) was not even allowed to weep for her father.

Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) saw their mother Bibi Fatima (AS) being attacked in her own house, when fire was brought to her door. They saw their father Ali (AS) dragged outside with a rope round his neck. They did not leave the side of their mother, who was soon to leave them forever. Madina changed. The city which had once welcomed the family of the Prophet forgot his words.

When Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) wanted to visit the tomb of their grandfather, the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali (AS) and their brothers would go with them. The lamps would be put out as the daughters of Bibi Fatima did not like to be seen.

### **Why did the Imam stand up?**

One day, Imam Husain (AS) was reading the Quran, when his sister Zainab (AS) walked into the room. He stood up to show his respect to her in the same manner as the Prophet Muhammad SAW used to stand up for his daughter Fatima (AS). Our salams to the lady who has this status in the eyes of the Imam.

# Chapter 4

## Married Life

Time passed and the daughters of Ali(AS) were ready for marriage. Imam Ali (AS) knew that his brother Hadhrat Ja'far Tayyar (AS) was brave and pious. He was martyred in the battle of Mautah and the Holy Prophet gave him the title of Tayyar, the Winged Martyr of Islam.

### **Who did Bibi Zainab and Bibi Kulsoom marry?**

Looking at his children the Prophet had said "Our daughters are for our sons and our sons are for our daughters" Hadhrat Jafar e Tayyar AS had eight sons. His son Abdullah approached Imam Ali (AS) for the hand of Bibi Zainab (AS) and his son Muhammad for Bibi Kulthoom (A.S). They were famous in Madina for their bravery, courage and generosity. The daughters of Imam Ali (AS) married the sons of Jafar e Tayyar.

The marriage of Bibi Zainab (AS) did not lessen her strong attachment to her family. Two conditions were written into the Nikaah, marriage contract: a) That Bibi Zainab AS would be allowed at least once every day to go and see her brothers. b) That she would go with Imam Husain AS when he went on a journey.

### **How did the daughters of Bibi Fatimah help Muslims?**

Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) lived in Madina. They were learned and knew the Quran and Hadeeth, the teachings of the Holy Prophet. They remembered their mother Bibi Fatima's Khutba word for word. In Madina it was Bibi Zainab's practice to hold regular meetings for women to teach them about Islam as laid out in the Holy Quran. Many women came to learn from her.

# Chapter 5

## In Koofa

In 34 A.H. the people came to Imam Ali(AS) and recognised his right as the successor to the Prophet. Soon after, the Imam had to face enmity and fight three battles: Jamal, Siffeen and Nahrawan.

The brave sons of Hadhrat Jafar Tayyar, Hadhrat Abdullah (AS) and Hadhrat Muhammad (AS) took part in the battles with Imam Ali (AS) and fought against the enemies of Islam. Hadhrat Abdullah(AS) led 10,000 troops and Hadhrat Muhammad (AS) was sent personally to Koofa by Imam Ali (AS) to tell the people there to join him. Why did the women of Koofa come to Bibi Zainab? When Imam Ali (AS) moved from Madinat o Koofa, the Ahlebait including Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) moved there too. As the daughters of the ruler, they played an important part in teaching people about Islam.

Women of Koofa had already heard of Bibi Zainab's excellent knowledge and teaching, so many of them would often come to learn the Quran and tafseer (detailed explanations) from her. They used to greet Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) with great respect as 'the daughters of Ameerul Momineen' and 'the daughters of Rasool Allah'. What happened in Ramadan 40 A.H.?

Imam Ali (AS), on the eve of his shahadatin 40 A.H. was at the house of Bibi Kulthoom (AS) for iftar. She placed three items in front of him: milk, bread and salt. Her father looked at the food and said, "You know, my dear daughter, I never eat more than two items of food a time meal. Take one away."

Bibi Kulthoom(AS) wanted to take the salt away but was asked to remove the milk. Bibi Kulthoom (AS) relates that her

father was very restless that night. He kept going out into the courtyard, looking at the night sky and coming inside. When she asked him the reason, he said, "The moment comes closer when I will be shaheed." On hearing this, she began to cry. The next morning was the 19th of Ramadan. Imam Ali (AS) was attacked with a poisoned sword while he was praying namaz e fajr, in masjid e Koofa. His head had been split open. Imam Ali (AS) was brought home by his sons. As they came near his house, he asked the people to leave. He knew that the daughters of Fatima would be weeping and did not wish their voices to be heard..

Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) wept as they realized that their father would not recover from the wound. Imam Ali (AS) hugged his daughter, Zainab and kissed her arms. "These arms will be tied with ropes one day" he said.

# Chapter 6

## In Madina

After Imam Ali (AS), our second Imam Hasan (AS) was not left to rule Koofoa in peace. He had to sign a treaty to protect the interests of the Muslims. He left Koofoa and retired to Madina. The Holy family of the Prophet went back to Madina with him.

### **How was Imam Hasan(AS) killed?**

Even in Madina, Imam Hasan (AS) was not left alone. His wicked wife Jo'dah was used by Moaviya in 50 A.H. to give poison to him. The Imam felt sick and started to vomit blood. His son Qasim ran to call his aunts Bibi Zainab AS and Bibi Kulthoom(AS), who lived nearby.

The daughters of Imam Ali were about to start their namaz e shab (midnight prayer) when Qasim knocked at the door. They saw Qasim's torn clothes and understood that there was a crisis. They went to Imam Hasan's house straight away. They saw their brother in a lot of pain, throwing up blood. Why were arrows thrown at the coffin?

Imam Hasan (AS) gathered his family around him, told them that his brother Husain will be the next Imam. He wanted to be buried by his grandfather, Prophet Muhammad SAW. But Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) saw that this was not allowed. Instead arrows were shot at his coffin. They wept. Now they had only Imam Husain (AS) left from the Panjatan.

# Chapter 7

## Leaving Madina

Moaviya died in Rajab 60 A.H., but before his death (going against the terms of the treaty with Imam Hasan AS) he chose his son Yazeed to be the next Khalifa.

### **Why did Imam Husain (AS) leave Madina?**

Yazeed was an evil man who had no respect for Islam and the Prophet. He did not obey any of the rules yet now wanted all Muslims including Imam Husain (AS) to accept him as the leader and guide.

The Imam knew that bayat with Yazeed would mean the end of Islam. He refused. Imam Husain (AS) decided to leave Madina and go to Makka.

### **Why did Imam Husain (AS) take his family with him?**

The Imam knew that his mission of saving Islam needed that his family, especially his sisters went with him. After Karbala, it would be Zainab (AS) and Kulthoom (AS) with his son Sajjad (AS), who would save Islam. When their cousin tried to stop them, Bibi Zainab (AS) said "Ibn Abbas, do you suggest Husain leaves us here and goes alone? No by Allah we either live with him or die with him. We have nothing left except him."

Bibi Zainab (AS) hurried to ask her husband Hadhrat Abdullah's permission to go on the journey with her brother. He agreed to her request with a sad heart. Hadhrat Abbas (AS) was in charge of all the arrangements. As the time came for the ladies to mount the camels, streets were cleared. Finally the daughters of Bibi Fatima (AS) came out. Hadhrat Abbas (AS) came forward to help Bibi Kulthoom (AS). Imam Husain (AS) himself helped Bibi Zainab (AS). They arrived in Makka which

echoed with sounds of “Allaho Akbar.” The Imam and the Bibis visited the graves of Hadhrat Khadija (AS) and Hadhrat Abu Talib (AS).

While in Makka, Imam Husain (AS) received 18,000 letters from Koofa inviting him to Iraq. The Imam sent his cousin Muslim ibn Aqeel there. As the time for Hajj came near, Yazeed sent spies dressed in ehram to kill the Imam. The Imam did not want blood shed in the Holy city. He also did not want his killers to remain hidden, so he left for Iraq. The journey was long and hard.

# Chapter 8

## In Karbala

Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) arrived in Karbala with Imam Husain (AS) on the 2nd of Muharram, 61 A.H. As they got off the camel, a wind rose in the desert, covering their faces with sand. Tears welled up in their eyes. "This is the sandsland of Karbala" said the Imam. The days ahead were to be full of sadness. From the 7th day of Muharram, the army of Umar ibn Saad did not allow the Imam's family any water. The days were hot. Children got more and more thirsty and cried "al atash al atash."

Every time there were sounds of armies galloping into Karbala and the clashing of weapons, Bibi Zainab (AS) would ask Imam Husain (AS), "Has someone come to help us?" only to be told "No, my dear sister, these are more men sent to fight against me." They looked at each other, then towards the heavens.

On the evening of the 9th Muharram the forces of Yazeed marched towards the tents of the Prophet's family. "Bayat or fight" said Umar ibn Saad, the commander of Yazeed's forces. Imam Husain (AS) asked for a night's delay so he could spend it in prayer.

It was Shab e Ashoor. The men, women and children, young and old spent the night in dua and namaz. After the night prayers the Imam went round the tents. He saw that each lady was talking to her son, Umm Laila, Umm Farwa, even Umm Rabaab, with her baby, Ali Asghar: "Tomorrow is the day of Ashoor. Be ready to sacrifice your life for Husain (AS)."

Bibi Zainab sat with her sons, Aun and Muhammad, telling them they must show the valour of their grandfathers, Ali (AS) and Jafar e Tayyar (AS). Bibi Kulthoom (AS) cried as if her

heart would break. "I have no children" she sobbed. Hadhrat Abbas (AS) came up to her and said "My dear sister, you have looked after me like a son, from when I was born. Let me represent you tomorrow"

Bibi Zainab (AS) then went to see how Sajjad, the sick son of Husain (AS) was feeling. As she sat by him she heard her brother Husain (AS) recite some verses repeatedly. The words spoke of his approaching death. She burst into tears and cried, "My mother Fatima is dead, my father Ali is dead, my brother Hasan is no more! I have no one but you. Wish I were no more". Imam Husain (AS) hearing her cry came to her and said "O Zainab my dear sister. Death is for everyone. Remember when I'm gone, do not tear your clothes or hurt yourself. Sabr. Be patient." She then fainted.

# Chapter 9

## Ashoor

The day of Ashoor, the 10th of Muharram started with the sound of Hadhrat AliAkbar (AS) calling out the azaan in Karbala. Soon after, the battle started with arrows shot at the Husaini camp.

### **How did Bibi Zainab and Bibi Kulsoom help Imam Husain on Ashoor?**

First the friends, companions, then the family of Imam Husain (AS), one by one, went to the battle field and were martyred. Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) comforted the weeping mothers and children.

It was the turn of the sons of Bibi Zainab(AS) to show their valour. Hadhrat Aun and Mohammed had learnt fencing from their uncle, Hadhrat Abbas (AS). When Aun ibn Abdullah came in the battle field, he said 'I am the grandson of Jafar-e-Tayyar, who was granted special wings by Allah to fly in heaven.' Then he attacked the army of Yazeed. Despite his young age and unbearable thirst, he fought bravely.

Hadhrat Muhammad ibn Abdullah was his younger brother. Though he too was very young and thirsty, he showed wonderful courage. Finally, when surrounded by enemies, Aun and Muhammad called, "Our last salams on you o Imam". On hearing their call, both Imam Husain AS and Hadhrat Abbas AS rushed to the battlefield. By the time they were brought back to the tent, the youths had both died.

Bibi Zainab AS on seeing her martyred sons, bent her head down in sajda eshukr. Echoing Bibi Zainab's feelings Hadhrat Abdullah thanked Allah, when he heard of his sons' martyrdom

in Madina. He said "Praise be to Allah who allowed my sons to attain martyrdom with Husain."

### **What were the Imam's last words off are well?**

By the time for Asr prayers, there was noone left except Ali Sajjad (AS) among the men. All the others had been killed. Then they heard Imam Husain (AS) callout the final words of farewell:

O Zainab,

O Kulthoom

O Fatima o Ruqaiyya

O Rabaab o Umme Laila

O my Sakina O Fizza, my last salams on you all!"

The ladies started to weep to see the Imam go. Imam Husain (AS) turned to his sisters Zainab (AS) and Kulthoom (AS) and said "Be patient, o daughters of Murtuza, for the time of crying will be lengthy. Get ready for hardships and know that Allah protects you. I am leaving the widows and orphans in your care, Zainab. My dear sister, remember me in your namaz e shab. Look after my Sakina especially; she has never been separated from me even for a day."

Bibi Zainab (AS) watched her brother's brave fight from the door of the tent. She saw how they surrounded him attacking him from every direction. As he fell from his horse she could see him no more. She came out of the tent crying, "O my brother where are you? O Muhammad, O father Ali, O Jafar. If only the heavens would fall on the earth, if only the mountains would crumble!" Bibi Zainab (AS) called out to Umar ibn Saad "Is there no Muslim among you? My brother is being killed and you just watch?" Her cries filled the air. She fell, then stood up, then fell again. She climbed on a hillock (known as Tilla Zainabia) to see if she could find her brother.

### **How did they learn that the Imam had been killed?**

It was time for Asr. The Imam started his namaz. Umar ibn Saad sent Shimr to kill the Imam. When the Imam fell off the horse to the ground, his horse began to circle around him. Bibi Zainab AS heard the neighing of the horse and said to her sister, "This is the steed of our brother Husain coming to the tents." Bibi Kulthoom (AS) ran out of the tent and saw the horse

without its rider. She beat her hands on her head and cried "By Allah, Husain has been killed."

Bibi Zainab (AS) looking at the horse, cried out "Your face is covered in my brother's blood." Let us join our living Imam Mahdi (AS) to say salams to the ladies "who looked at the broken saddle and wept for Imam Husain (AS)."

Bibi Zainab (AS) ran towards the body of her beloved brother Husain (AS). She stood, lifted her hands and said, Allahumma taqabbal minna hazal qurban "O Allah, accept from us this sacrifice."

# Chapter 10

## Shaam e Ghareebaan

The day of Ashoora ended, the skies wept blood and went red. The army of Yazeed set fire to the tents. The ladies of the Ahlebait ran from one tent to the next. Children ran seeking their mothers; mothers ran looking for their children. Veils were snatched away; earrings were pulled out of ears. Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) showed extreme patience and courage.

### **What did Bib Zainab ask her nephew?**

When the tents were burnt down, Bibi Zainab (AS) asked her nephew Imam Zainul abideen (AS) what his orders were for them. "Should we go out of the tent?" They had no covering on their heads. Taking the advice of the fourth Imam, they guided the ladies and children to safety. They also showed us that we must always obey the Imam.

### **Why did she enter the burning tent?**

A soldier from Yazeed's army narrates, 'When the tents were burning, I saw a tall lady near the camp, who would go in and then come out, look left and right, then look towards the sky and beat her hand upon her head. I warned her, "The tent is burning, move away from it." At this the lady replied, "O Sheikh! One of our dear ones is inside, who is so ill he cannot move. How can I leave him in the rising flames?" Bibi Zainab (AS) then rescued her nephew, Imam Sajjad (AS) from the blazing tent.

### **Where was Bibi Sakina?**

Bibi Zainab (AS) could not find the four year old Sakina (AS) anywhere. She called, "Where are you my dear Sakina?" At last, she found her crying near her father; "O my father, my father, why didn't you come back? Our tents have been burnt. My earrings were snatched!"

As the night passed, Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) were protecting and safeguarding the orphans and widows, a duty that used to be done by Imam Husain (AS) and Hadhrat Abbas (AS). After their tahajud namaz, both stayed awake to guard the Ahle-bait. They gathered all the children and ladies together, and sat at each end of the tent.

On the 11th of Muharram, the day after Ashoor, the ladies were made captives and made to mount saddle-less camels. Imam Sajjad's (AS) hands and feet were put in iron chains. They were then taken past the very place, where the bodies of their martyrs lay. They could see their headless bodies on the sand of Karbala. Bibi Zainab (AS) asked "a antal aqui?" Are you my brother? Then she turned towards Madina and cried, "O Muhammad, this is your Husain." She called out to her mother saying "O Fatima Zahra, this is your beloved son on the sand of Karbala."

Imam Sajjad (AS) turned a pale yellow and would have died of grief. When he saw the bodies of the martyrs, he could not control his feelings and wept loudly. Bibi Zainab (AS) consoled him and reminded him that her grandfather Muhammad SAW had said: "Allah has promised that the mark of Husain's tomb will never be blotted out." Thousands of angels will circle round it. These words reminded Imam Sajjad that the tomb of Imam Husain (AS) will become a source of strength against any tyrant.

# Chapter 11

## Taken to Koofa

The heads of the martyrs were severed and carried on spears. The 4th Imam was in chains and the ladies of the Ahle-bait, without their veils, were taken as captives on the backs of unsaddled camels from Karbala to Koofa. Their arms were tied with ropes behind their necks.

### **Why was going to Koofa so hard?**

Koofa was the city where Imam Ali (AS) had once ruled. When the Ahle-bait saw the walls of the city, they were reminded of the time when they had once lived there as the family of the ruler. But today, they did not even have veils over their heads, and they were seated on the bare back of camels. The children, hungry and thirsty, were crying. The heads of the loved ones were on the point of spears. Imam Sajjad (AS), ill and frail, was in chains. The people of Koofa, instead of feeling remorse on the killing of the son of Holy Prophet (SAW), were celebrating with joy. Those who used to greet them with respect were now taunting at them.

### **Why did Bibi Kulsoom (AS) throw back the dates?**

As they arrived in the bazaar of Koofa, the people started throwing bread and dates at the hungry children. Bibi Kulthoom (AS) gave the food back saying "O people of Koofa! don't you know that we the family of the Prophet are not allowed to accept sadaqah.". Women started to cry. Bibi Kulthoom (AS) continued, "O people of Koofa! Your men kill us and your women cry for us! Allah is the judge". As they neared the palace of Ibn Ziyad, the Yazeedi army started to beat the drums. The noise was loud.

### **Why was everyone amazed?**

Bibi Zainab (AS) decided to speak. After her command, there was a sudden hush. Everything in sight froze. Not only men and women, even animals were quiet. Their breathing slowed down and even bells which were dangling in the necks of animals stopped ringing. She started to speak in the manner of her father. After praising Allah and calling blessings on the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW and his offspring, she said: "O people of Koofa! you have spoiled your here after and Allah is displeased with you... You have killed the leader of the Youth of Paradise, one who was your shelter in wartime, a centre of peace, your hope in difficulties.... How can you face the Holy Prophet on the day of Judgement?..... You have made his Ahle-bait captive and killed the male members. Is this the reward of his preaching that you have treated his children in the cruelest manner?"

Listening to the speech, people started to bite their fingers nervously. An old man cried, 'Has Ali come to life again?' Her style, her words, her manner of speaking, was like her father Imam Ali (AS). The men and women started to weep when they heard her words. As the sound of weeping grew louder, Umar ibn Saad got frightened and quickly led the captives to the palace.

### **What happened in the court of Ibn Ziyad?**

They were brought with their hands tied behind their necks, before Ibn Ziyad, the evil governor of Koofa. Bibi Zainab (AS) sat down in a corner surrounded by women. Ibn Ziyad barked "Who is that woman?" He was told, "This is Zainab the daughter of Fatima." Ibn Ziyad turned to her and said "Thanks be to Allah who has brought disgrace to you. "Bibi Zainab (AS) immediately said "Thanks be to Allah, who has honoured us by Prophethood, and purified us. "She addressed him as Ibn Marjana, reminding him of his low beginnings, the son of a woman with low morals. Ibn Ziyad was angry at her boldness.

### **How did Bibi Zainab save the life of our fourth Imam?**

Ibn Ziyad then looked at Imam Sajjad and asked, "Who is this?" "He is Ali, the son of Husain" "Kill him" ordered the

tyrant. Bibi Zainab (AS) stepped forward and put her arms round her nephew and said "I won't leave him. You will have to kill me before you kill him!" Ibn Ziyad got up and walked away. Within hours, Ibn Ziyad, fearing that people would rise against him quickly sent them to Damascus.

# Chapter 12

## **Koofa to Shaam**

The journey across the desert from Koofa to Damascus was long and difficult. It took more than twenty days. Many young lives were lost on the way and the sufferings and pain of the Ahlebait left deep marks of sorrow.

The Yazeedi army wanted to avoid places where the Ahlebait might be known. People would be told that these were the people who were killed. Bibi Zainab (AS), Bibi Kulthoom (AS) would tell them who they really were: the children of the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Some of the places that the captives of Karbala were taken through on the way to Damascus were as follows: Al Malhuf. They moved north from Koofa, carrying the heads. The soldiers of Yazeed were making merry and drinking wine. Suddenly a hand appeared and marked in blood, a verse that asked Atarju ummatan qatalat Hussaina shafata jaddi yaumal hisab "Does the ummat who killed Husain hope his grandfather's intercession on the day of Judgement?"

Tikrit The governor sent people with flags. The Yazeedi forces were afraid of the people turning against them so did not tell the people who they had killed. They merely said he was a "foreigner."

However a Christian, who heard this, said "What they say is not true. This is Husain ibn Ali's head, son of Fatima. When he was martyred I was in Koofa

"Mashad Al Nuqte The Holy head of Imam Husain (AS) was placed on a stone. A drop of blood fell and from then on every year on the day of Ashoor blood appears on the stone. People mourn for Imam Husain (AS).

**Wadi Nukhla** There is a place near Mosul called Nukhla, near Khazir. The sound of crying and weeping for the Imam was heard, though no one could see who was weeping. People were frightened.

**Mosul** Mosul was an ancient city. The ruler of Mosul ordered the city to be decorated. When the people realised that this was the head of Imam Husain (AS), the grandson of the Prophet, they were so angry that they were ready to take up arms to kill the ruler. So the route was changed.

**Nasiibi** When they reached there, they ordered city decoration, using mirrors for the purpose. The man who carried the head of the Imam wanted to enter, but his horse disobeyed. Several horses were changed without success. When the people looked carefully at the head and realised who it was, they killed the ruler.

**Aynal Warda** The Imam's head was placed in the centre of the city square on a spear. Some celebrated while others cried. **Raqqa** This is by the banks of the river Euphrates near the battle field of Siffeen. The caravan passed through Raqqa on their way to Damascus.

**Halab** Now known as Aleppo, Halab is an ancient city where Prophet Zakariya is buried. The stone on which Imam Husain's head was placed is now housed in a masjid in Halab. On the west side of Halab is a mountain called Jabl Jaushan where copper is extracted. One of Imam's wives aborted her baby on the mountain. Some have written she asked for water but they refused. The aborted child is called "Mohsin e Hussain". People visit this mountain to pay their respects.

**Qinnasriin** This was a city between Halab and Hams. A monk lived here and as Ibn Ziyad's agents approached the monastery, he saw a light coming from Imam Husain's head and going towards the sky. So he paid them ten thousand drachmas to keep the Holy head for the night. During the night he accepted Islam and prayed that the Imam helps him on the day of Qiamat.

**Sibur** In this city, an old man who recognised Imam Husain (AS) told the youth and elders of his city: "These people have killed Husain ibn Ali and this is his head." The people then refused to let the Yazeedi forces enter their city. There was a fight near the bridge, where many were killed, fighting for the

Imam. Bibi Kulthoom (AS) prayed for the city that had come to defend the Imam: "O Allah, make their water sweet, resolve their problems and protect them from tyranny."

Hama and Hims The gates of Hama remained closed so they could not go in. At Hims, people opposed the Yazeedi forces saying "We will never allow you to bring the Imam's Holy head to this city." Some of the Yazeedi soldiers were killed.

Balbeik This was an ancient city with fine buildings and palaces. The Ahlebait wept as the inhabitants rejoiced, carrying flags in a festive mood. They came out to look at the prisoners.

# Chapter 13

## **In Shaam**

Damascus The fourth Imam was asked to name the place where he had suffered the most. He replied "Ash Shaam ! Ash Shaam !Ash Shaam!"

### **Why was Shaam the place of the worst suffering for our fourth Imam?**

In Damascus, the Ahlebait passing through crowded lanes and bazaars, were jeered and jostled. They were made to wait for several hours at the gate of Yazeed's palace as the decorations were completed. The heads of the martyrs were taken before the tyrant and presented as trophies in a silver salver.

The Imam was brought in chains and all the ladies tied up by one rope dragged into the court. The Darbar e Sham was the worst hour of trial for the Ahlebait. The Ahlebait were then sent to the Zindan e Sham, a dark and damp dungeon where Bibi Sakina, the four year old daughter of Imam Hussain AS died.

Yazeed rejoiced when he heard that Imam Husain (AS) was killed in Karbala. He had written to his governor, Ibne Ziyad that the captives should be sent to Shaam (Damascus) immediately. When the captive caravan came near the walls of the city of Damascus, Bibi Kulthoom (AS) said to Shimr, 'When you take us into the city, please take us past the gate that has few spectators.' However, Shimr did exactly the opposite. He made the ladies pass through the most crowded gates of Damascus.

### **What happened in the Bazaar e Shaam?**

Thousands of people gathered there, playing tambourines and drums. They had been told to celebrate. Shop keepers were asked to decorate their shops and markets. Together with the

son of Imam Husain in chains, Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kult-hoom (AS) were brought through the crowded bazaar to Yaz-eed's court as captive prisoners.

Their hands were tied behind their necks and they covered their faces with their hair. The children were crying with hunger and thirst. The heads of the martyrs were carried along on top of spears. The people threw hot water and fire on the caravan of the Ahlebait.

When the caravan reached the steps of the darbar (Masjid e Umayya), the Ahlebait were made to wait there for hours and hours. Yazeed was busy playing chess and drinking wine. This gate became known as "Baab al-Sa'ah" (the gate of hours).

Yazeed sat on the throne with a cup of wine in his hand. More than 700 men sat on chairs. The heads of Imam Husain (AS) and the martyrs of Karbala were presented to him, by those who had killed them. The ladies were all tied up with one rope and dragged, whipped if they fell.

They arrived in the crowded court. Umar ibn Saad then presented the ladies saying "This is Zainab This is Kulthoom, the old woman in front of her is Fizza, this is Laila, this is Rabaab, this is Sakina, the four year old daughter of Husain."

Yazeed recited verses of joy, "Had my forefathers been alive today they would have become happy and blessed me that I avenged them. The Bani Hashim had played a game, neither any news came nor did any Revelation." His words clearly show he did not believe in Allah or the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

The head of Imam Husain (AS) was placed in a tray by Yaz-eed's feet. He began hitting the head with a cane. Bibi Zainab (AS) cried "O Husain, the son of Fatima, O the son of Rasool Allah, O the beloved son of Ali" The people hearing her words were shocked. Was this the head of Husain ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad? Her cry made the people aware that this was no "rebel" but the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Yazeed, drunk as he was, then started to recite verses from the Holy Quran: "Allah grants honour to whom He pleases and brings disgrace to whom He pleases."

Bibi Zainab (AS) could stand it no more. How dare this wicked evil man twist the words of Allah and mock the Holy Prophet!

In a clear and loud voice the daughter of Ali (AS) and Fatima (AS) started to speak: All praise be to the Lord of the Worlds. My salam on the Holy Prophet SAW and his progeny. Allah has truly said, "Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the communications of Allah and mocked at them." O Yazeed! Do you think that you have blocked the skies and the earth on us and dragged us from place to place? Do you think this degrades us and elevates you? But wait.

She read a verse from the Qura'an, then continued boldly, "O son of a freed slave! Is it just that your women should remain veiled while the daughters of Holy Prophet should be taken from door to door?"

How can we expect mercy from those whose ancestors chewed the flesh of Holy men and whose flesh has grown from the blood of martyrs of Islam. (She referred here to Yazeed's grandmother Hinda who had chewed the liver of Hadhrat Hamza in Uhud.)

You belong to the family that always fought the Holy Prophet.

You disrespect the lips of Imam Husain (AS) by hitting them with your stick. Don't you know that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) used to kiss them.

You are addressing your fore fathers and talking to them in your imagination. Soon you will join them. How will you face Holy Prophet (SAW) while you had spilled the blood of his Ahlebait.

Do you know what the Holy Quran says about the martyrs? "Don't think them as dead, those who were martyred in the way of Allah. They are alive and receiving sustenance from their Lord.

O Yazeed! Your hands are stained with our blood. Your mouth is full of the flesh of Ahlebait. O Yazeed! Use all your effort and strength. But by Allah you can never wipe out our names. Neither can you drive away shame and disgrace from yourself.

Your days are numbered. I pray to Allah for the most perfect reward for the martyrs. Surely He is Merciful and Beneficent. Allah alone is sufficient for us and He is the Best Protector."

### **What was the effect of Bibi Zainab's speech?**

There was pin drop silence as she finished her speech. Yazeed turned pale and was speechless. The court was full of people from every part of his empire, from every walk of life. Now they all knew who these prisoners were, the family of the Prophet Muhammad!! They had learned what had really happened in Karbala. The apparent victory of the tyrant was converted to his shame and loss. The sisters of Imam Husain (AS) had shown that the Imam had been wrongfully killed.

### **What was the prison cell like?**

Yazeed hurriedly gave orders that the Ahle-bait be sent to prison the Zindaan e Shaam. It was a ruin, a dreary place near the palace which was so dark that you could not see each other's faces. It was extremely hot by day and biting cold at night. Such little food and water was sent, that it would not be enough. One day, Imam Sajjad (AS) saw his aunt Bibi Zainab AS reciting prayers while sitting.

When he asked the reason, she explained, "The food and water are so little that I distribute it among the children. As a result, I have become so weak that I have to offer the prayers while sitting.

### **"What happened to Bibi Sakina (AS)?"**

The four year old daughter of Imam Husain (AS) could not bear the harsh life of the prison and died in prison. Her dress was glued to her body with the dried blood, caused by the merciless whipping she suffered at the hands of Shimr. The captives remained in the prison for about one year. People started asking about the family of Husain.

Finally when Yazeed found people turning against him, he ordered their release. He tried to offer blood money for killing Husain. Bibi Zainab refused, saying "You are shameless! You kill my brother and family, then you want me to accept money!"

### **When was the first Majlis e Husain ?**

When they were set free, the first thing that Bibi Zainab (AS) asked for was for a place where they could mourn for Imam Husain (AS) . This was the first Majlis, which took place in

Damascus. The Syrian women came wearing black dresses. The women of Shaam heard about Karbala.

They found out about how every male member of the Prophet's family (except Imam Sajjad) was killed on the day of Ashoor. They learnt how the family of Ali AS and Fatima was taken from city to city as captives. The message of Islam spread. Bibi Zainab(AS) and Bibi Kulthoom(AS) made known the truth, both for the people of Shaam and for evermore, in history.

Umme Rabaab the mother of Sakina wailed, 'O Sakina you always used to ask when are we going back to Madina, Won'tyou come home with us now?'. As they left Damascus, she told the ladies who had come to bid farewell, 'I am leaving my dearest daughter in your midst. There is none from our family in this city to visit her grave. Ibeseech you not to forget to visit my child.'

# Chapter 14

## Return to Madina

Yazeed was nervous and wanted the Ahlebait to leave for Madina as soon as possible. Camels were brought to take the ladies. Bibi Zainab (AS) wanted not the brocade but black coverings to show that they were in mourning. Each place they stopped, they would have a majlis to remember Imam Husain AS. The message of Islam spread. On their way back to Madina, the caravan of the captives went via Karbala. They spent three days there. It is said they arrived in Karbala on the day of Arbeyeen.

**What is Arbeyeen?** The day of Arbeyeen is the 20th of the month of Safar. It marks 40 days after the martyrdom of Imam Husain on Ashoor, the 10th day of Muharram. It is the day when our grief for Imam Husain (AS) and the martyrs of Karbala is renewed. This was the day when the Ahlebaith arrived in Karbala. Our fourth Imam Zainulabideen (AS) and the ladies were very very sad. The Holy family met Jabir ibn Abdullah, a companion of the Holy Prophet who became the first zaer of Imam Husain (AS) in Karbala. On the day of Arbeyeen we remember each of the martyrs who were killed in Karbala. It was the Arbeyeen of Hadhrat Imam Husain (AS).

It was the Arbeyeen of the King of the Martyrs, who was killed hungry and thirsty on the burning sands of Karbala. Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulsoom (AS) cried as if their hearts would break. All the ladies gathered round his grave and kept weeping. It was the Arbeyeen of the sons of Imam Husain (AS). It was the Arbeyeen of Hadhrat Ali Akbar, 18 years old, the image of the Holy Prophet, renowned as the Shabeehay Payamabar. His mother Umme Laila was shedding tears. It was the Arbeyeen of Hadhrat Ali Asghar, the six-month-old

baby. His mother Umme Rabaab wanted to spend the rest of her life in Karbala. She cried 'Leave me in Karbala. My waali and Maula Hussain is here, so is my baby Asghar. I have left my Sakina in Damascus. What do I have in Madina to go back to?

**'It was the Arbayeen of the Family of Imam Husain (AS).**

It was the Arbayeen of his brother, Hadhrat Abbas, buried by the river bank. His widow Lubaba cried and told him that this favourite niece Sakina had died in the prison. It was the Arbayeen of his nephew Hadhrat Qasim, barely 13 years old, the gem of Imam Hasan's family. He was mourned by his mother Umme Farwa.

It was the Arbayeen of Hadhrat Aun and Mohamad, the lion-hearted sons of Bibi Zainab. They had lived up to the name of their brave grandfathers, Imam Ali (AS) on one side and Jafar Tayyar (AS) on the other.

It was the Arbayeen of the Companions of Imam Husain (AS).

It was the Arbayeen of Habeeb ibn Mazahir, the Imam's childhood friend. It was the Arbayeen of Muslim ibn Ausaja, an able companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It was the Arbayeen of Nafi ibn Hilal who had been with Imam Ali in the battles of Jamal, Siffeen and Nahrawan. It was the Arbayeen of Hurr who joined the Imam on the morning of Ashoor. It was the Arbayeen of Wahab, Zohair, Aabis and Jaun.

In fact it was the Arbayeen of all the young and old men who had fought for Truth with the Imam of the time and were killed on the day of Ashoor.

It is difficult to imagine the grief of the mothers and sisters and our fourth Imam Ali ibn al Hussain. How did he bury all the martyrs of Karbala? How did the Bibis bear the pain of leaving Karbala for Madina ?

**What happened when the Ahlebait returned to Madina?**

The home coming for Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom (AS) was very different from that of their departure. When they had left Madina, they had been surrounded by brothers, nephews and sons. When they saw Madina from a distance, their eyes filled up with tears.

Bibi Kulthoom AS began to cry "O the city of my grandfather!" she sobbed, "do not accept us. When we had left, our children were with us, our arms were full. Now we return empty handed.....We, the daughters of Taha and Yaseen were taken as captives on rough camels...we have mourned for our brother, our leader,Imam Husain!"

The family and residents of Madina came out to meet the survivors of Karbala.Young and old, rich and poor, men and women all came to offer their condolences. Bibi Zainab (AS) carried the blood stained shirt of Imam Husain (AS)to her grandfather's grave. "Ya Rasoolallah, Ibring you news of your dear son Husain's martyrdom. Husain was killed hungry and thirsty on the sands of Karbala."

Hadhrat Ummul Baneen , the widow of Imam Ali (AS), mother of Hadhrat Abbas(AS) came to share the grief. Hadhrat Fatima Sughra, the daughter of Imam Husain (AS) wept constantly when she was told what had happened in Karbala and Shaam.

It is hard to imagine the growing grief of Bibi Zainab (AS). She saw her nephew Imam Sajjad (AS) shed tears day and night. She saw her sister-in-law Bibi Rabaab refuse to be indoors, whether it was hot, cold or raining as she recalled her infant Asghar killed in a rain of arrows. She saw Ummul Baneen holding majalis not for her own four brave sons but for Imam Husain, the son of her lady Fatima Zahra.

Bibi Zainab (AS) and Bibi Kulthoom together with the other ladies of the family of the Imam could never stop crying over the tragedy of Karbala. They remembered each of the loved ones they had lost.

Sometimes they would weep at Baitul Huzn (Bibi Fatima's mourning place) in the grave yard of Jannatul Baqi in a heartrending manner. It was here that the peopleof Madinamet together to join in the wailings.Our fourth Imam used to go there often to mourn for Imam Husain (AS). For the sisters of Husain life now was worth nothing.Why couldn't her husband recognise Bibi Zainab? Hadhrat Abdullah, her husband, came to Imam Sajjad (AS) and requested that he ask Bibi Zainab (AS) to visit her house. She had not gone home since her return to Madina. When Bibi Zainab (AS) arrived at her house,Hadhrat Abdullah was not at home. Asshe waited for him, her eyes fell

on the empty rooms of her sons Aun o Muhammad. She started to weep as she called their faces, their words of farewell on the day of Ashoor. Just then, as she wept, Hadhrat Abdullah came in. He saw an old lady, thin and frail. Her back was bent and her hair was white. Abdullah said to her "Old lady, my Bibi Zainab is not at home; come back another day."

When Bibi Zainab (AS) heard these words, she started to weep louder and cried, "O Abdullah! Don't you recognise me!!" Hadhrat Abdullah was shocked! How could she tell him what she had been through in Karbala? She had seen the growing fear and worry of the ladies of the Ahle-bait (AS) on the day of Ashoor. She had seen the children crying of thirst. She had witnessed the youths of her family getting killed one by one.

She had seen her dear brother Husain (AS), surrounded by enemies. She had seen the Imam's head being raised on a lance. She had seen the army of Yazeed setting fire to the tents. She had to gather the children scattered in the desert.

How could she show him her bruised arms that had been tied with ropes! She had been made a captive, after her veil was snatched away. She had to cover her face with her hair as she was taken through the streets of cities of Iraq and Shaam. She had to endure the hardships in the Darbar and Zindaan of Shaam.

# Chapter 15

## Last Days

When did Bibi Kulthoom die? It is said that Bibi Kulthoom (AS) did not live for more than eighty days after her return to Madina. She was buried in Jannatul Baqee. According to another version, Bibi Kulthoom died in Damascus and was buried in the grave yard of Baab e Sagheer. Many people visit her mazaar to pay their respects to this brave daughter of Ali and Fatima.

Feelings against the Umayyad rulers grew strong when people found out about Karbala and what had happened to the family of the Holy Prophet. When the rulers saw this, they took Imam Zainulabideen (AS) prisoner a second time to send him to Damascus. Bibi Zainab (AS) refused to let her nephew go alone. She accompanied him to Syria. Her maid Fizza, now very old, went with her too.

### **What happened as she wept by the tree?**

Throughout the journey, Bibi Zainab (AS) recalled the last time they had been taken to Damascus. As they neared the city they camped in a garden. She told Fizza, "Nearby is the tree where the head of my brother Husain (AS) had been placed on our way to Damascus. See if you can find it." Fizza took Bibi Zainab (AS) there. When she smelt the fragrance of her brother, she started to weep. In the garden there was an evil man called Ibn Tameem, who bore hatred towards Imam Ali (AS).

When he heard that this was the daughter of Ali, he came behind her and hit her with the rake he had in his hand. Bibi Zainab (AS) reeled to the ground, bleeding from the wound. Fizza rushed to call the fourth Imam, who came quickly. Bibi Zainab (AS) looked at him and said "Sajjad, I have only one

wound. My brother Husain had more than 1900 wounds." She died with the name of Husain on her lips. The fourth Imam buried her with the help of Fizza.

Today Damascus resounds with the name of Bibi Zainab (AS). Thousands of pilgrims visit her mazaar to pay their respects. The sick are healed at her door and prayers are answered through her name.

May Allah give us all the opportunity to see the mazar of Bibi Zainab (AS) the sister of Imam Hussain AS and convey our salaams personally.

# Chapter 16

## **Salaams**

Salam on you, O daughter of Muhammad Mustafa, the messenger of Allah,

Salam on you, O daughter of Ali Murtuza,

Salam on you, O daughter of Fatima Zahra

Salam on you, O daughter of Khadija Kubra

Salam on you the sister of Hasan and Husain,

Salam on you, who is learned, without being taught

Salam on you who was patient

Salam on you the Truthful

Salam on you, O Zainab e Kubra, Ummul Masaeb.

Peace and Allah's Mercy and Blessings be on you.

# Chapter 17

## What we learned

We can learn many lessons from the lives of Bibi Zainab AS and Bibi Kulthoom (AS):

They loved the Panjatan, with every breath of their life. We should love them too.

They spread knowledge by teaching the Quran and Hadeeth to women in Koofa and Madina. We should learn about Islam and share our knowledge with others.

They never missed their namaz, not even namaz e shab. We must pray regularly.

They showed courage and patience when they had to face difficulties in Karbala, Koofa and Shaam. We must bear any difficulties we may have to face without complaining.

They never accepted oppression; we should stand up for the oppressed. They were always ready to protect the orphans and those in distress. We must follow their example.

They were ready to defend the Imam and gave sermons to let people know the Truth. We must be ready to uphold the teachings of Islam.

Through their speeches we have the true record of Karbala. Otherwise after Ashoor, it would have been from the view point of Imam Husain's enemies only. The pure blood of the Imam and the martyrs of Karbala would have been lost in the desert.

They established majlis e Husain to show people real Islam and kept his message alive. We should organise majalis to spread the true message of the Imam of our time and support his cause.

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let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

*Imam Ali (as)*