

YOUNG READERS 10

12 DAYS OF MUHARRAM

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حکرو

Chapter **1**

MUHARRAM

Muharram is the first month in the Islamic year. In many places all around the world, people are getting busy. Some are putting alam in their house; others are buying tabaruk to give it in the majlis. Children are learning noha and doing matam.

What is an alam?

An alam is like a flag to remind us of the banner that used to be carried in a battle. When the Prophet Muhammad(SAW) had to fight against his enemies,Imam Ali (AS) carried it in the battle of Khaibar. Hazrat Abbas (AS) was given the alam in Karbala.

Why do we have majlis?

A majlis is a meeting to learn about our religion, Islam and Karbala. Bibi Zainab(AS) held the first majlis in the city of Damascus to tell everybody about ImamHussain (AS).

A noha is a sad poem to tell the story of Karbala and matam is done to show that you wish you were there to help the Imam. At the end of the majlis, we give tabaruk in the name of the Imam to everyone who comes to remember him.

Chapter 2

Chandraat

Today is the eve of Muharram. A newmoon is seen in the sky to tell us that anew month and a new year startstomorrow.

Why are we sad?

But we are sad because it is the special time when we remember Imam Hussain (AS). The Imam and all his family are on their way to Koofa. They are travelling in the hot desert and there are many hardships ahead.

They say their salat (Prayers) and stop for the night in the desert. When Bibi Zainab (AS) looks at the new moon, she reads a dua, then sends Fizza to call her brother Imam Hussain (AS).

Imam Hussain (AS) comes in the tent to greet his sister Zainab, but has tears in his eyes. "Why are you sad, my brother?" she asks.

He replies, "O my sister Zainab. This is the month of Muharram. On the 10th day, Ashoor, we will all be killed by Yazeed on the banks of the River Euphrates."

Chapter 3

1 st Muharram

Today is the first day of Muharram.

Why was Imam Hussain (AS) on his way to Koofa? A wicked man called Yezid tried to force Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of the Holy Prophet to do his bayat. Bayat means to agree with whatever Yezid wanted. The Imam knew that this was wrong so he refused. Listening to Yezid would mean the end of Islam. Yezid was a drunkard and did not obey any of the rules of Islam. But, he was claiming to be the leader and the ruler of all the Muslims. Imam Hussain (AS) had to save Islam!

If the Imam stayed in Medina, Yezid would have killed him there. So Imam Hussain (AS) decided to leave the city of the Prophet (SAW).

He went on the 28th Rajab 60 A.H. to the grave of his grandfather, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and with tears in his eyes, said, goodbye. He then went to Jannat-ul-Baqi, the graveyard in Medina, to say goodbye to his mother, Bibi Fatima (AS) and his brother, Imam Hasan (AS). Hazrat Abbas (AS) was in charge of getting the camels and water for the long journey through the desert. All of Imam Hussain's family were going with him, even the baby Ali Asghar, who was only two weeks old. Only his daughter, Fatima Sughra, who was too sick to travel, was left behind.

The people of Medina were very sad to see the Imam and his family leave. They all came to say goodbye. When the time came for the ladies of the Ahle Bayt, the Prophet's family, to

climb on the camels' backs, the streets were cleared. No one was allowed to go on the roofs of the houses. Hazrat Ali Akbar (AS) helped his mother Umme Laila.

Hazrat Qasim (AS) helped his mother, Umme Farwa. Hazrat Abbas (AS) helped his sister Umme Kulsoom (AS). When it was the turn of Bibi Zainab (AS), Imam Hussain (AS) himself stepped forward to help her climb on the camel's back.

Imam Hussain (AS) and his family left Medina on 28th Rajab 60 A.H. and went to Mecca. The journey took six days. While he stayed in Mecca, the people of Koofa wrote lots of letters asking him to come there to guide them. Imam Hussain (AS) sent his cousin, Muslim ibne Aqeel, to Koofa. How long was Imam Hussain (AS) in Mecca?

The Imam stayed in Mecca until the month of Zilhijj, the time for Hajj. But he could not complete the Hajj when he found out that Yezid had sent his soldiers to kill Imam Hussain (AS) at the Kaaba. The Imam did not want any blood shed in the holy House of Allah and so he left Mecca. As the people went towards the plain of Arafat to complete the Hajj, Imam Hussain (AS) had to give up his Hajj and go towards Koofa.

Chapter 4

2 nd Muharram

Today is the 2nd of Muharram. This is the day when Imam Hussain (AS) reached Karbala. The Imam had been on his way to Koofa when Hurr and his soldiers met the Imam. They were all very thirsty and had run out of water. Imam Hussain (AS) gave Hurr and all his army as much water as they wanted to drink. Hurr then told the Imam that he had been sent by Yezid to stop the Imam from going to Koofa. The Imam had to change direction.

Forty miles from Koofa, as he was riding his horse, it suddenly stopped and would not move.

The Imam asked, "What is this place called?" Someone said, "Nainawa!" Another said, "Ghazariya!" "Is there any other name?" asked the Imam. An old man said, "This place is called Karbala"

What does Karbala mean? Karbala is made up of two words: "Karb" and "Bala". Karb means suffering and Bala means troubles. As the ladies got down from the camels, a yellow dust rose in the air. Bibi Zainab (AS) cried, "I'm terrified!" Imam Hussain said, "Sabr, be patient, my sister Zainab."

Chapter 5

3 rd Muharram

Today is the 3rd of Muharram. Let us find out what happened today in Karbala.

Who were the Bani asad?

Today Imam Hussain (AS) called the tribe of Bani asad who lived near Karbala and bought the land of Karbala from them for 60,000 dirhams. He gave the land back to them and said to the men, "I will soon be killed here. All the members of my family will be killed too. No one will bury us. When we are dead, please come and put some soil over us". Next he called the women of Bani Asad and said,

"If your men are too scared to come, then you do it." Finally he called the children and said to them, "If your parents cannot come, then you come as if you are playing and cover us

with soil". He asked them to point out his grave to those who come for ziyarat. Soon there was a lot of noise as Umar ibne Saad arrived with 4000 soldiers. They had come to fight against Imam Hussain (AS).

Today we remember Hazrat Muslim (AS). He was the cousin of Imam Hussain (AS). When the people of Koofa had written to the Imam, he had sent Hazrat Muslim (AS) ahead to Koofa. At first the people of Koofa welcomed Muslim and promised to support Imam Hussain (AS). Muslim stayed in the house of Hani ibne Urwa who was a true friend of the Imam. But the new ruler of Koofa, Ibn Ziyad, was a very wicked man. He told the people that if they helped Muslim (AS), he would kill them.

Many of them became scared and left Muslim. Hani stayed loyal to Muslim and was taken prisoner by Ibn Ziyad and killed.

How was Hazrat Muslim (AS) killed?

It was the 8th Zilhij 60 A.H. When Hazrat Muslim (AS) saw that the people of Koofahad turned against him, he left Hani's house. He wanted to get a message to Imam Hussain (AS) to tell him not to come to Koofa anymore. He walked through the streets all alone. He had no food or water and no where to stay. No one would help him. He sat down on the doorstep of a house.

A lady called Tuah opened the door and said, "It is late, why don't you go home to your family?" Muslim (AS) said, "I am alone in this city." She said, "Who are you?" He told her, "I am Muslim. I was sent by Imam Hussain (AS) to guide the people of Koofa but they have all left time."

When Tuah found out who Muslim was, she asked him to come inside her house. But Tuah's son was a soldier of Ibn Ziyad. He had been looking for Hazrat Muslim (AS) all day and when he found Muslim (AS) in his house, he rushed out to tell Ibn Ziyad. Soon Ibn Ziyad sent seventy soldiers to Tuah's house.

Hazrat Muslim (AS) did not want them to come inside, so he left the house and went out into the street again. They attacked him but he fought bravely and they had to keep moving back. They could not fight with Muslim even when they were so many and Hazrat Muslim was alone.

They went on the roof and threw stones at him. As he came forward they dug a pit, so that Muslim would fall in. When he fell in, he was taken as a prisoner to Ibn Ziyad's palace.

Hazrat Muslim was worried not for himself but for Imam Hussain (AS), who was on his way to Koofa, where the people had changed their attitude.

Ibn Ziyad said "Kill Muslim." Just as he was about to be killed, Hazrat Muslim (AS) turned towards the Qibla. Pointing towards it with his finger he said, "As Salamu alaika ya Ababdullah. Accept my salams, O my Imam Hussain." His head was cut and sent to Yazeed and his body dragged along in the streets of Koofa.

Shrine of Hazrat Muslim, Koofa

We copy Hazrat Muslim (AS) when we point our finger towards the Qibla, as we say our salam to Imam Hussain (AS). His orphans, Muhammad (AS) and Ibrahim (AS), were killed without mercy and their bodies were thrown in the river.

Chapter 6

4 th Muharram

Today is the 4th of Muharram. We think of the Ansar, the friends and helpers of Imam Hussain (AS), who were killed in Karbala.

They gave up everything they had, so that they could be with the Imam till the end. Even when the Imam told them again and again that they are free to go, they did not leave him.

Imam Hussain (AS) himself said "No one has friends and helpers like mine. Neither my grandfather nor my father had such sincere and faithful friends and helpers."

Who were the Ansaar e Hussain?

They were the faithful friends, helpers and companions of Imam Hussain (AS). Some were old like Habeeb ibn Mazaahir, others like Wahab e Kalbi were young. Some were noble men like Zohair al Qayn, others like Jawn were slaves. Some like Salim and Amir came from towns like Koofa and Basra; others had lived in the desert.

There were men like Ammar and Muslim ibn Ausaja, who had been with the Prophet SAW and Nafi and Jundab, who were friends of Imam Ali (AS). They were all killed fighting bravely against the army of Umar ibne Saad, defending Islam on the day of Ashoor and the Imam wept for each of them.

Why did Hurr join the Imam?

Hurr had been the captain of the army of Yazeed and had been sent to stop Imam Hussain (AS) going towards Koofa. The Imam had given water to Hurr and his soldiers, when they were very, very thirsty and had run out of water.

During the night of Ashoor, Hurr was restless thinking about Imam Hussain (AS). Now, he felt sorry for blocking the way and decided to come to the Imam's side. He went and begged the Imam to forgive him. Imam Hussain (AS) welcomed Hurr and hugged him because he knew that Hurr was really sorry for his sins.

Hurr then fought bravely against the army of Umar ibne Saad. When he fell, the Imam himself took Hurr in his arms and tied a special scarf around his head. When Hurr died, the Imam felt very sad at losing his new friend. He took Hurr's body back to the tent (qaima), where all the ladies mourned for him.

Chapter 7

5 th Muharram

Today is the fifth of Muharram. More and more troops from Koofa arrived in Karbala. They were sent by Ibn Ziyad to fight against the Imam.

After all the friends of the Imam were killed, it was the turn of the young men of Imam Hussain's family. We will look at the two brave sons of his sister, Bibi Zainab (AS). Their names are Aun and Muhammad.

When the young men from the family of Hazrat Aqueel (AS) had been killed, it was the turn of Hazrat Aun and Muhammad (AS). Their father, Hazrat Abdullah ibn Jafar Tayyar, had sent them with Imam Hussain (AS) to help him, when the time comes to save Islam.

They went to their uncle Imam and asked if they could go to the battle field. Bibi Zainab (AS) herself went with them to make sure that the Imam said "Yes" to their request.

The two youths rode out to the battlefield. They told the army of Yazeed "We are Aun and Muhammad, the grandsons of Jafar e Tayyar and Hyder e Karrar!"

Imam Hussain (AS) and Hazrat Abbas (AS) watched how bravely they fought, though they were hungry and thirsty, as there had been no water for three days. The army of Umar ibne Saad was amazed to see how fiercely they were fighting and started to surround them and attack from all sides. At last,

they fell from their horses and called out to the Imam, "Accept our last salams".

Why did Bibi Zainab do sajda?

Imam Hussain (AS) and Hazrat Abbas(AS) rushed out and brought them back. Alas, they were so wounded that they died on the way. When their bodies reached the tent, all the ladies started to cry, but Bibi Zainab (AS) was in sajda! "O my Allah, I thank you for accepting my sacrifice!"

Chapter 8

6 th Muharram

Today is the sixth day of Muharram.

Some who had been with Umar ibne Saad realised that fighting against Imam Hussain (AS) means war with Allah and the Prophet so they ran away. Habeebibne Mazahir tried to get help from the tribe of Bani asad for the Imam.

But they were attacked by the soldiers of Umar ibne Saad and were forced to go back.

Why was Ali Akbar called the Prophet's image?

We remember the 18 year old son of Imam Hussain (AS) and Umme Laila today. His name was Ali Akbar (AS) and he was the most handsome youth in the family.

He looked just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He even had the same voice. He walked like him and talked like him.

He was so similar to the Prophet that everyone called him Ham-shabeeh e Paighambar, the Image of the Prophet.

When Ali Akbar (AS) came to his father and said "Can I go the battle field?" the Imam was very sad. "Go and say goodbye to your mother, aunt and your sisters".

Imam Hussain (AS) said, "Whenever we wanted to do the ziarat of the Prophet, we would look at Ali Akbar." It was very

hard for everyone to know that it was Akbar's turn now. There was loud crying as he left and many times he would try to leave but come back in, so that the Ahlebait could do his ziarat one more time.

As Akbar (AS) fought the enemy, Imam Hussain (AS) stood at the door, watching his son and Umme Laila watched the Imam's face. She saw that the Imam was getting sad. She asked "O my Imam, is my Akbar all right?" The Imam said, "Umme Laila, pray for Akbar."

She lifted her hands up and prayed, "O Allah the one who returned Yousuf to Yaqoub, Let me see my Akbar once more". Her dua was heard by the Almighty. There was a cry of "Allaho Akbar" and soon the Imam saw his son riding back to the camp. "If only I could have some water," said Akbar (AS). But there was no water. Akbar (AS) returned back to the field, thirsty. This time he was surrounded by the soldiers of Umar Saad and attacked with a spear. Akbar fell from his horse, saying "My last salams to you, my father". On hearing the call, Umme Laila fainted.

Imam Hussain (AS) rushed to find his son. He could hardly see the way and fell many times on the way. He kept calling "Where are you? Call me again" At last, he found Akbar (AS). He saw that there was a spear in Akbar's chest.

The Imam bent down and using all his strength pulled out the spear, but with the spear came Akbar's last breath. It was very hard to take Akbar's body back. Imam Hussain (AS) cried, "O the children of Bani Hashim, come and help me to get my Ali Akbar home"

Chapter 9

7th Muharram

Today is the seventh of Muharram.

The family of Imam Hussain (AS) has run out of water and the children were very thirsty in the hot desert of Karbala.

Under the orders of Ibn Ziyad, the riverbank was blocked so that not a drop could get to the Imam and anyone with him.

Who was Qasim?

We think of the sons of Imam Hasan (AS) today specially Hazrat Qasim (AS). At the time of his father's shahadat through poison, Qasim (AS) was only three years old. His uncle Imam Hussain (AS) had looked after him with great love. Now, Qasim (AS) was asking if he could go to the battle field! How could the Imam say "yes" to this child, barely thirteen years old and his brother's orphan? Qasim (AS) did not know what to do and went sadly to his mother, Umme Farwa. Suddenly, as they both prayed for their problem to be solved, she remembered that Imam Hasan (AS) had given a letter to be opened when in difficulty.

"What can be harder than this moment?" they thought. With the letter in hand, Qasim (AS) and his mother went to Imam Hussain (AS). The Imam read the letter from his brother, which said "O my brother Hussain, let my son Qasim fight in my place in Karbala".

The Imam could not stop Qasim (AS) any longer and with tears in his eyes, he said, "Qasim, you can go." Qasim kissed the Imam's hands and feet, and left. As he rode out to battle, he was wearing just a shirt, as no armour fitted his young body. His feet did not yet reach the stirrups.

Even so, he fought bravely and the army of Umar ibne Saad were surprised to see that such a young boy was so good a soldier. Many strong men came to fight against him but Qasim (AS) defeated each of them. He was attacked again and again, till at last he fell.

As he was falling from his horse, he called out "Help me o my uncle". Like a flash, Imam Hussain (AS) and Hazrat Abbas (AS) both rushed to Qasim's side, but alas, before they could reach him, he was trampled under the horses. The Imam cried, "How hard is it for your uncle that you called him for help, but he was not able to do anything.

"Qasim (AS) was taken home and there was loud weeping as the Ahle-bait saw his broken body.

Qasim's younger brother, Abdullah ibn Hasan (AS), rushed out to help Imam Hussain (AS), when the Imam fell from his horse at the time of Asr.

Abdullah hugged his uncle and when the army of Umar Saad was attacking the Imam, Abdullah put his arms across to shield his uncle. His hands were cut by swords and daggers. He was killed in the arms of his uncle Imam Hussain (AS) who wept for him.

Chapter 10

8 th Muharram

Today is the eighth of Muharram.

The family and friends of Imam Hussain(AS) are very thirsty. The children cry“Al Atash, Al Atash, we are thirsty, we are thirsty.” But there is no water.

Hazrat Abbas (AS) tried to dig for water but no water was found. Some men tried to ask the army of Umar ibne Saad to give water at least for the children, but they didn't.

They even tried to get water from the river, but were told there was no water for Hussain and his family.

On the eighth of Muharram we remember Hazrat Abbas (AS). He was 34 years old.He was very brave and on the day of Ashoor, Imam Hussain (AS) chose his brother Abbas (AS) to carry the alam and is called Alamdar e Hussain. Imam Ali(AS) had always carried the alam, the flag of Islam, in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

One by one, the men in the family of the Imam were going to the battle field and getting killed to save Islam. Hazrat Abbas (AS) wanted to go and defend the Imam, but every time he went to ask Imam Hussain (AS), he would be told “Not yet Abbas! You are the alamdar, the flag bearer of my army”.

At last Hazrat Abbas (AS) said sadly,“But my Imam, there is no army left.Every one has been killed. The family of Jafar e

Tayyar and Aqueel have been martyred, Akbar has gone, Aun o Muhammad are no more. Qasim's body has been trampled."

How did the Imam agree to let Abbas go?

Just then, Sakina, the four year old daughter of Imam Hus-sain (AS), came in with a dry mashk (water bag) saying "Al Atash, I'm so thirsty!" The Imam said "Go, Abbas, fetch some water for the children." Hazrat Abbas (AS) took his thirsty niece Sakina in his arms, and said to her, "Give me the mashk, let me go and get water for you." He tied the mashk to the alam and rode out to the battle field.

The army of Umar Saad had blocked the river bank. Hazrat Abbas bravely fought his way through to the river and filled the mashk with water. He didn't drink a drop of water himself.

He took the alam and mashk, filled with water and started to go back. When he came out from the river bank to take the water back to the children, he saw that the army were blocking his way. They attacked him from all sides and one evilman cut his right arm off. Hazrat Abbas(AS) was so brave that now he carried the alam and mashk with his left arm. Alas, the left arm was cut off too.

Now Hazrat Abbas (AS) held the alam between his chest and the horse. A narrow slit in the mashk and the water flowed out. Hazrat Abbas (AS) was so sad that he turned his horse around. Umar Saad's army now attacked him again and again, till he fell from his horse. "My last salams, ya Imam Hussain (AS)" he cried.

The Imam rushed out on hearing his brother's call. As he went to reach Abbas, he bent down and kissed something. A little later, he bent down again, and picked up the other arm that had been cut off. He reached Abbas (AS), at last, as he lay on the ground with the mashk and alam by him.

"Don't take me back to the qaima (tent), O my Imam. I had promised to get water for Sakina but I couldn't." Imam

Hussain(AS) bent down and said, "O my brother,Abbas, my back is broken now."

He saw that Abbas (AS) had blood in his eyes. He wiped the blood off and took his head in his lap. Abbas (AS) looked at the Imam and closed his eyes for ever. Imam Hussain (AS) wept. He took the alam and returned to the tent.

The thirsty children, specially Sakina,were waiting at the door. When they saw Imam Hussain (AS) coming back with the alam, without Abbas (AS), she cried,"Where is uncle Abbas? Why didn't he come back?"

There was loud wailing and matam, as all the children and the ladies gathered under the alam, which was now wet with blood.

Chapter 11

9 th Muharram

Today is the ninth of Muharram.

Last night, Imam Hussain (AS) had been talking to Umar ibn Saad, Asking him to fear Allah and not fight with the Imam. Umar ibn Saad did not listen and wrote to Ibn Ziyad, who wrote back saying "Either fight Hussain or give up your job to Shimr." When Shimr arrived in Karbala on the 9th Muharram Umar ibne Saad decided tha the would fight against Imam Hussain(AS).

They started to attack Imam Hussain(AS) the same night and started to march towards the tents, but the Imam asked for one night's time so that he could spend it in prayer.

This night is called Shab e Ashoor. Today, we also remember Ali Asghar (AS), the Imam's baby son, the youngest of those killed from the family of the Imam.

What happened during Shab e Ashoor?

When Umar ibn Saad's army started coming towards the camp of Imam Hussain (AS), the Imam sent his brother Abbas to talk to them. They said "Bayat or fight" Hazrat Abbas (AS) said "Don't move. I will ask Imam Hussain's reply and bring it back to you." Such was the valour of Hazrat Abbas(AS) that the whole army just stopped by the line, which he had drawn on the sand. The Imam said "Abbas, ask that we have one more night's time. I would like to spend it in prayer." Hazrat Abbas (AS) took the Imam's message to them and it was agreed.

Imam Hussain (AS) then called everyone in his camp and told them, "May Allah reward you for helping me. There will be war tomorrow. You can save your lives. You are all free to leave me." He then asked that the candle be put out, so that people who wanted to leave could go, while it was dark. Those who stayed with the Imam were ready to give up all they had. They promised the Imam they would never leave him: "If I had a thousand lives I would sacrifice them all for you." Qasim (AS) said "Death is sweeter than honey"

The night passed in dua and prayer. Hazrat Abbas (AS) kept guard round the tent, so that everyone was safe. The ladies talked to each of their brave sons, telling them, "

Be ready for tomorrow. Don't let me down when you face the enemy." Imam Hussain (AS), after prayers, went round the tents to see each of them. Zainab (AS) was talking to Aun o Muhammad. Laila looked at her handsome son, Ali Akbar (AS).

He could hear a cry in the desert air and knew it was just like the sound of his mother Fatima Zahra 's voice, weeping at the fate of her dear children.

The children were restless with the growing thirst. Sakina was waiting for her father so that she could sleep on his chest.

Ali Asghar (AS), barely six months old, was so thirsty that he could hardly move.

Why did they kill the baby of the Imam in Karbala?

Ali Asghar (AS) was only six months old in Karbala. He was the son of Imam Hussain (AS) and Umme Rabaab. On the day of Ashoor it was very hot and there was no water for the family of the Imam for three days. His mother could not feed him either, as there was no milk. When the Imam called out "Is there any one to help me?" there was loud crying from the ladies. The Imam came into the tent.

Bibi Zainab (AS) said "O my brother Hussain, since Asghar heard your call, he has not stopped crying." The Imam said, "Bring him to me. I will take him and see if he can get some water." Umme Rabaab brought the baby Ali Asghar (AS) from his crib and kissed him goodbye.

Imam Hussain (AS) took the baby in his arms and going to the army of Yazeed said, "See how thirsty my Asghar is. His lips are dry and he can hardly open his eyes. He has done no harm to anyone. Give him some water."

Hearing this, some of the soldiers started to cry, but Umar Saad said to Hurmula, "Stop Hussain's words" Hurmula aimed an arrow at the baby's neck. The arrow hit its mark and the baby was killed in the arms of his loving father, Imam Hussain (AS). The Imam, kissed the baby then took a step forward, and then went backwards. He did this again and again 7 times saying, Inna lillahe wa inna ilaihe rajaoon. "From Allah we come and to Allah we return." He buried the baby with his own hands in the hot sand.

Chapter 12

10th Muharram

Today is the 10th of Muharram. It is called Ashoor and it is the saddest

day of the year. For the third day, there has been no water for the Imam and his friends and family.

In 61 A.H. on this day, Imam Hussain (AS) and all his family, except our Fourth Imam, who had been very ill, was killed in Karbala. We have been reading about them during the last ten days, but they were all killed on the tenth of Muharram.

When it was the time for the dawn (fajr) prayers, the Imam said to his eighteen year old son, "Ali Akbar, you call out the azaan today." Ali Akbar (AS) was like the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his looks, manners and voice. Perhaps people listening to the azaan sounding like the Prophet's would realise their mistake and not fight against the Imam.

Umar ibne Saad, leader of Yazeed's army in Karbala, shot the first arrow towards Imam Hussain (AS) and this was quickly followed by thousands of arrows. The battle had begun.

Hurr decided to come to join the Imam and fight against Yazeed. He was killed and soon, one by one, all the friends of the Imam, like Zohair and Habeeb, gave up their lives. By the time of Zohr all the Ansar were killed.

Then it was the turn of the family members: nephews like Aun o Muhammad and Qasim, brothers like Abbas and Jafar

died fighting to save Islam. Ali Akbar and even the baby Ali Asghar, the sons of the Imam, were both killed.

The last Farewell

Now Imam Hussain (AS) was all alone. He came into the tent to say farewell: O Zainab, O Umme Kulsoom O Fatima o Ruqaiyya O Rabaab o Umme Laila O my daughter Sakina O Fizzamy last salams on you all!"It was very hard for them to see the Imam go. Everyone was crying. It was so sad. Bibi Zainab (AS) kissed Imam Hussain (AS) on his neck. She remembered that their mother Hazrat Fatima Zahra (AS) had told her to kiss his neck, when he came to see her for the last time. The Imam then kissed her arms, with tears in his eyes. "Look after my Sakina, she is hardly four years old. She will miss me."

He then went to see his sick son Ali Zainul abideen (AS). He gently woke him up and said "I'm going, my son". The fourth Imam opened his eyes and asked Where is my Uncle Abbas? Where are Aun o Muhammad? Where is Akbar?" Imam Hussain (AS) said: "All of them have been killed. Now there is no one among the men, except you and me." He then said "When you goback to Medina, tell my Shias that I missed them on the day of Ashoor. Tell them to think of me whenever they drink water."

The Imam went out of the tent and was ready to mount his horse. He looked to the right and the left "Where are you my friends? Is there no one to help memount?" Hazrat Zainab (AS) came forward and helped him. He mounted his horse. But Imam Hussain (AS) saw that the horse was not moving. "This is our last trip, my dear horse." he said kindly. The horse still would not move and looked down. The Imam looked down too and saw that his daughter Sakina was clinging to the horse. The Imam got down and picked her up. "O my Sakina! Why are you here? I had said goodbye to you."

She replied: "O my father, don't go! You know I cannot go to sleep without you. How will I live without you?" she cried.

You are the granddaughter of Fatima Zahra (AS). Be patient, sabr, my darling. If I don't go Islam cannot live." said Imam Hussain (AS), and left for the battle field.

Why the Imam is called the greatest martyr?

Imam Hussain (AS) has shown the world that he was ready to give up everything in order to save the religion of Allah. All the prophets from Hazrat Adam (AS) and Nooh (AS), from Ibrahim (AS) to Musa (AS) and Eesa (AS), to the Last Prophet, Muhammad (SAW) had been sent by Allah to show us the Right Path. After the Prophet, it was Imam Ali (AS), then Imam Hasan (AS) who showed the way of Islam.

Yazeed and those with him were trying to destroy Islam. Imam Hussain (AS) showed us in Karbala that Islam must be saved, even if that led to all his family and friends being killed.

Did I change the religion?" the Imam asked "No!" they said. "Then why are you fighting against me?" "Bughze abeek" came the reply "Hatred for your father. I am the grandson of the Prophet SAW. I am the son of Ali (AS) and Fatima (AS)". The army of Umar ibn Saad were not really Muslims, and started to attack the Imam. Even though Imam Hussain (AS) was tired, sad, hungry, and thirsty, he fought bravely. Then they started to attack him from all sides. Some hit him with spears, others sent arrows. Those who had no weapons threw stones. The Imam fell from his horse.

The riderless horse went back to the tent of the Imam. The ladies came to the horse, saw that the saddle was broken, the body of the horse had arrows still in it. Sakina (AS) cried, "O my father's horse, where is my father?" Bibi Zainab (AS) had been watching her brother from the door of the qaima (tent), but when she could not see him anymore, she went to a hillock, calling "Hussain, my brother, where are you?" "Go back Zainab." said the Imam. She turned back. The Imam saw that it was the time for Asr prayers so he started his namaz. Umar ibn Saad called Shimr, a very cruel and evil man and said, "Go and

cut off Hussain's head!" Shimr stepped forward with a sword in his hand. He did not even wait for the Imam to finish his namaz. He cut the Imam's head and put it on a spear and raised it up. The angels wept. It went dark, the earth shook. A voice was heard calling:

Hussain has been killed in Karbala! Qatalal Hussain bi Karbala! The fourth Imam said, "Lift up the curtain of the door." He pointed towards the head of his father, raised on the spear and said "Salam on you, ya Ababdullah Hussain"

Why is Shaam e Ghareebaan the saddest night?

The night after the day of Ashoor is called the Shaam e Ghareebaan. It was a very difficult time for all the family of Imam Hussain (AS) when he had been killed, the evil men of Umar ibne Saad's army started to loot the body of the Imam.

They took everything: his armour, his clothes, his shoes, his sword, even the ring from his finger. Then Umar ibne Saad ordered his troops on horse back to trample the Imam Hussain's body. Then they rode to the tents where the widows and the orphans were weeping. They set fire to the tents and started to take anything they could find. They snatched the earrings that Bibi Sakina (AS) was wearing and her ears started to bleed. They hit the ladies with their lances and took away their chadar, the hijab that the Bibis had on their heads. They went to the place where the fourth Imam Zainul abideen (AS) was lying ill with fever and took away his mat. They put heavy chains around his hands, feet and neck.

The Bibis and the children ran from one tent to another till there was one tent left. When the last tent was set on fire, Bibi Zainab (AS) asked her nephew, the Imam, "What shall we do? Do we come out or stay inside?" The Imam said "go out" so they all came out of the burning tent. Bibi Zainab and Umme Kulsoom, the sisters of Imam Hussain (AS) gathered all the children and the ladies together.

When they counted the children, some were missing, so Umme Kulsoom (AS) went to find them. She saw two little children on the floor. When she lifted them up, she saw that they were dead. They had been trampled by the horses of Yazeed's army. She burst out crying, "O my Allah! "

Bibi Zainab (AS) could not find her brother Imam Hussain's daughter Sakina (AS) anywhere. She went searching, to find Sakina, and called, "Where are you my dear Sakina?" At last, she found Sakina by a body, which had no head. Sakina was clinging to it crying; "O my father, my father, why didn't you come back? Look at us. Our tents have been burnt. My earrings were snatched! Please come back." Bibi Zainab (AS) took her little niece in her arms; "Come with me" she said; and they went back to the rest of the ladies.

The army of Umar ibn Saad were happy and started to eat their dinner. They beat their drums in happiness. Some food and water was sent for the family of Imam Hussain (AS). But how could any one in the Imam's family feel like eating, when all their loved ones had died hungry and thirsty! They kept crying.

As the night passed, they said their namaz and Imam Zainulabideen (AS) went into sajda. Bibi Zainab (AS) stayed awake to guard the Ahlebait. She thought of her brother Abbas, who used to do this every night. Suddenly she saw someone coming.

Stop!! We have nothing left now to loot. The children have just slept. Don't move.

"But the rider came closer." Stop, listen to me, I am Zainab, the daughter of Ali" The rider said "O Zainab, my daughter. This is your father Ali. I have come, so you can rest. "

Bibi Zainab (AS) cried:

O Baba, where were you when my Abbas lost his arms?

O Baba, where were you when my Akbar was killed?

O Baba, where were you when my Asghar was killed?

O Baba, where were you when my brother Hussain's head was cut?

O Baba, where were you when Sakina was shit on her face?

O Baba, where were you when Ali Zainulabideen was made a prisoner?

O Baba, where were you when my chadar was snatched?"

Zainab my dear, you have a lot more to suffer and a long journey ahead. Be patient, Sabr. Allah will help you." came the reply.

Chapter 13

11th Muharram

Today is the 11th of Muharram. When the long night came to an end and it was dawn, the fourth Imam and the Bibis said their namaz.

All around them on the battle field of Karbala lay the bodies of their loved ones. Their tents had been burnt down and they had nothing, not even a piece of cloth to cover their heads.

Yazeed's army started to bury their dead soldiers. But the fourth Imam was not allowed to bury Imam Hussain (AS) or any of his family. They were just left on the ground.

Umar ibn Saad then decided to send all the heads to Ibn Ziyad, the governor of Koofa. All the bodies of the Imam's family had their heads cut and put on lances. They counted the heads and then said "One head is missing"

It was Ali Asghar's, who had been buried by Imam Hussain (AS). Hurmula, who had killed Asghar with his arrow, now went to find the grave and cut the baby's head. Such cruelty has never been seen before or after Karbala.

Now it was time to leave Karbala. The Bibis covered their faces with their hair.

They were all tied in ropes and made to ride on bare backs of camels. The fourth Imam, who was so ill and could hardly stand, was forced to hold the rope that led the camels. They were taken along the place where the body of Imam Hussain

(AS) lay. Bibi Zainab (AS) was so sad. She cried out “O my grandfather Muhammad (SAW), look at your Hussain. See how he lies covered with blood, his body in pieces.”

The caravan started its journey towards Koofa. A man from the Bani Asad tribe says “After the caravan left, I came to the battle field. I saw a strange scene. There was a light going from the bodies to the sky. There was a lovely smell in the air. I heard the sound of weeping and crying.”

Chapter 14

12th Muharram

Today is the 12th of Muharram. It is called the suam of Imam Hussain (AS). The people of the Bani Asad tribe, came to Karbala on the 12th day of Muharram and buried the Imam and his family.

Suam is the third day after someone dies. This is the only Imam whose suam we do. Imam Hussain (AS) is the only Imam whose Arbayeen (40 days) we have.

When someone dies, their family has fatiha for him. Everyone comes to join and share the grief. But in Karbala, Imam Hussain's family could not have his suam. They could not have fatiha. No one came to share the grief. Instead, they were on the road to Koofa, being taken as prisoners.

It was the suam of not only our Imam Hussain (AS), the king of the martyrs, but of all his family and friends who had been killed in Karbala.

It was the suam of men like Habeeb, Zohair and Hurr, who had all helped the Imam to defend Islam.

It was the suam of Aun o Muhammad, the brave sons of Bibi Zainab (AS).

It was the suam of Qasim (AS) who had been trampled by the horses and his mother Umme Farwa could never forget the scene all her life.

It was Ali Akbar's suam and his mother Umme Laila was not even allowed to cry for her eighteen year old son. It was Ali Asghar's suam.

Yet his mother Umme Rabaab did not have water or milk for his fatiha.

It was the suam of brave Abbas (AS), whose arms had been cut, when he was trying to get water for his niece Sakina.

It is hard to think of the suffering of our Imam's family as they were being taken to Koofa.

All the Bibis had their hands tied behind their backs.

The fourth Imam kept falling and was whipped to make him get up and continue the journey. Salam on you, O Imam Hussain (AS) the son of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Salam on you, O Imam Hussain (AS) the son of Ali (AS).

Salam on you, O Imam Hussain (AS) the son of Fatima (AS).

Salam on you and your children, and your helpers and friends.

Let us say to the Imam of our time, Ya Imam e Zamana we give you pursa (condolences) on the shahadat of your grand father Imam Hussain (AS).

Wish we had been in Karbala to be his helpers.

May Allah curse and punish all those who were against you.

Chapter 15

Who's Who in Karbala

Saviours of Islam

Imam Hussain, the grand son of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), son of Imam Ali (AS) and Bibi Fatima (AS).

He is our third Imam. Hazrat Zainab, sister of Imam Hussain (AS), who became the leader after him to fight for Islam.

Hazrat Kulsoom, younger sister of Imam Hussain (AS) and Hazrat Zainab, who supported them all the way.

Hazrat Abbas, brother of Imam Hussain (AS), who held the alam, the flag of Islam.

He had 3 brothers who were all killed on Ashoor.

Hazrat Ali Akbar, Imam Hussain's 18 year old son who gave the azaan at fajr on Ashoor.

He resembled the Prophet a lot.

Hazrat Ali Zainulabideen, our 4th Imam.

This son of Imam Hussain (AS) was 22 years old.

He was very ill on Ashoor so could not fight in the battle.

Hazrat Ali Asghar: Imam Hussain's baby son, only 6 months old.

He was killed by an arrow.

Hazrat Qasim, son of Imam Hasan, our 2nd Imam. He was only 13 years old.

He was trampled by horses.

Hazrat Aun and Hazrat Muhammad were the sons of Bibi Zainab and Hazrat Abdullah ibne Jafar Tayyar.

They were young and brave.

Hazrat Muslim, Imam Hussain's cousin.

He was sent to Koofa as his messenger but was cruelly killed there by Ibn Ziyad on 9th Zilhij.

Hazrat Hani a sincere friend of Hazrat Muslim in Koofa who remained true to him till the last.

He too was killed by Ibn Ziyad.

Hazrat Hurr was in Yazid's army but changed his mind and joined Imam Hussain (AS) on the day of Ashoor.

Hazrat Habeeb an old friend of Imam Hussain (AS)

He came from Koofa when the Imam's letter reached him.

Hazrat Zuhair was old in years, but young in spirit.

He fought bravely in support of Imam Hussain (AS.)

Hazrat Wahab, newly married, he joined the Imam with his bride and his mother.

He gave his life to save Islam.

Hazrat Jawn, a black slave of Abuzar, whose body was made fragrant by the dua of Imam Hussain (AS). Hazrat Muslim ibne Ausaj was Imam's close friend.

He was killed on Ashoor with the Imam.

Hazrat Burair, had tried to get water for Imam's thirsty children on 9th Muharram.

He was killed in Karbala, fighting for the Imam.

Hazrat Nafi was always keen to protect the Imam, who showed him the exact place where he would be killed on Ashoor.

Hazrat Umme Laila, Imam Hussain's wife was the mother of Hazrat Ali Akbar Hazrat Umme Rabaab, Imam Hussain's wife was the mother of Hazrat Ali Asghar and Bibi Sakina Hazrat Umme Farwa Imam Hasan's widow was the mother of Hazrat Qasim Hazrat Sakina, four year old daughter of Imam Hussain (AS) who loved her very much.

She has sometimes been called Hazrat Ruqaiyya.

Hazrat Fatima Sughra, Imam Hussain's daughter who was ill so was left in Medina.

Hazrat Fizza the maid servant of Bibi Fatima, who loved the Ahlebait.

She looked after them from their childhood and was there to serve them through out her life.

Hazrat Umme Salma the widow of the holy prophet Muhammad SAW who had given her soil from Karbala which turned to blood on the day of Ashoor when the Imam was killed.

Hazrat Ummul Baneen, the widow of Imam Ali (AS) and mother of Hazrat Abbas (AS) and his brave brothers, who were all killed in the way of Islam.

Chapter 16

Enemies of Islam

Yazeed was the son of Moavia, who had fought Imam Ali (AS) in Siffeen. Yazeed was openly abusing the Prophet and Islam and gathered 100,000 people to fight against Imam Hussain (AS).

Umar ibne Saad was in charge of Yazeed's army in Karbala.

Ibn Ziyad was Yazeed's governor in Koofa Shimr was evil and cruel. He was chosen by Umar ibne Saad to be head the Imam.

Khooli was another cruel soldier of Yazeed who went with Shimr to kill the Imam. Khooli carried the Imam's head toKoofa.

Sanan ibne Anas had thrown spears and arrows at Imam Hussain (AS) he fell.

Hurmula ibne Kahil was stone hearted.He threw arrows in battle and killed the Imam's baby Ali Asghar when he was Asking for water

Chapter 17

Lessons from Karbala

Our sixth Imam Jafar Sadiq (AS) said,
Kullu yaumin Ashooraa Everyday is Ashoora.
Kullu ardhin Karbala a Every land is Karbala.

The day of Ashoora is the day when Imam Husain (AS) gave everything he had to save the message of Allah. He showed us we must be ready to sacrifice all we have for Islam.

The Imam left Madina to defend his religion Islam and to protect the sanctity of the Haram of Allah, showing the ummah the Right from the Wrong. In this effort, his family, men, women, children, young and old, were with him. As his true followers we too must work together to spread the Imam's message.

In Karbala Imam Husain (AS) called out "Is there anyone to help me?" This call is for us too, and is valid even today, to rise up against injustice and baatil (falsehood). Each time we obey Allah's commands, we are responding to our Imam's call.

When we say salams to our Imam, we bear witness that he established prayer. As his Shia, it is our duty to say our namaz regularly.

The Ahle-bait a.s. suffered every hardship in their lives to save Islam. We should keep their love in our heart and show our love towards them and the supporters of their mission today by following the example of Ahl ul-Bayt a.s. and their teachings.

Our Imam fought against evil, (taghoot, fisq, fujoor) and falsehood. We too must support the truth and fight against evil to seek nearness to Allah.

Imam Hussain (AS) asked us to remember him whenever we drink water. We should say salams to our Imam and the martyrs of Karbala when we drink water.

We learn from the example of Hadhrat Hurr that it is never too late to repent. We must be sincere in our efforts to change ourselves for the better.

We should keep the message of Imam Hussain (AS) alive through (ma'refat, taqwa,) obedience to Allah, baseerat, majlis, matam, azadari, all the good deeds by following and implementing his teachings in our daily life and getting rid of all cultural, ritualistic additives which harm the spread of the Islam of Ahl ul-Bayt a.s. in the world. As his Shia we should aim to be a mu'min in the real sense. Honesty, courage and fear of Allah should be part of our nature.

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IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION
IGNORANCE IS A CHOICE

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

Imam Ali (as)