



IMAM ZAYN AL ABIDIN

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE 4TH IMAM

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PREFACE

In the late 50's and early 60's, when I was a madressa student in School Faize in Zanzibar-Africa, there was no such a subject as Islamic History on the madressa curriculum. Naturally, therefore, when I joined the teaching staff of the Huseini Madressa in Dar-es-Salaam Tanzania in early 80's and when I was subsequently assigned to teach Islamic History, I was at a loss, not knowing exactly what to teach.

Not that there was no syllabus for this subject. Rather, my main concern was the scope of the syllabus. For at the core of Islamic History syllabus was the study of the life of the Prophet (may peace be upon him and his progeny) and those of the other thirteen MASOOMIN from his progeny.

In my view, besides Yusuf Laljee's excellent book, *KNOW YOUR ISLAM*, there was no other simple but informative text that could be used comfortably by both the teachers and the students alike. Even then, the section on the life-history of MASOOMIN was rather sketchy in *KNOW YOUR ISLAM*.

Since those days, I have felt the need to compile brief teaching notes on the lives of our Twelve Imams (may peace be upon them all) with two objectives in mind: First, to focus on all those areas of information, not exclusively historic, that would enable the learner to appreciate the complex situations in which our Imams lived and performed their duties as divinely appointed guides for the universe. Secondly, to present this information in a style which has at its core the interest as well as the aptitude of the teachers and students alike. I found this task easy to conceive in mind, but very difficult to implement. Needless to say, I could accomplish little in this field until when I migrated to the USA.

As luck would have it, at Huseini Madressa in New York, I was

once more assigned to teach Islamic History. For reasons I need not disclose them here, I found this task even more daunting than it was in Africa.

Fortunately, at this critical time when I was groping in darkness in search of suitable teaching text for my class, I was commissioned by Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the Chief Missionary of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, to write teaching units encompassing the lives of our Twelve Imams (may peace be upon them) for the Correspondence Course of the Mission. To me this was Allah – sent bounty in two ways.

Firstly, this commission gave me courage and confidence that I hitherto lacked. Now I had the support of one of the most renowned Shia scholars of our times – Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

Secondly, I would not have to worry about searching for sponsors to finance the printing, the publishing and the circulation of my writings; the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania would do that.

This unit and others to follow are therefore the result of the initiative and complete support of Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the administration of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania and its ex-chairman Al-haj Fidahusein Abdullah Hameer.

Both the substance as well as the style of this unit (and the ones to follow) have been overly simplified, to comply with Maulana Sayyid Saeed Akhtar's advice that "We have to keep in mind that these units are meant for youths and not for scholars."

All said and done, despite the maximum precautions that were taken to keep this unit free of factual or any other errors, if, however, some have remained uncorrected, the responsibility is mine.

May Allah forgive me for these unintentional errors and may He reward here and in the hereafter all those who have in one way or another, assisted me in the writing, the production and the circulation of this unit.

WASSALAMU ALAYKUM WA RAHMATULLAHI WA BARAKATUH.

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CHAPTER 1

IMAM ALI BIN HUSAYN (A.S.): CHILDHOOD

INTRODUCTION

Imam Ali bin Husayn (a.s.), more known by his title Zainul Abideen than his actual name, is the fourth Imam from the progeny of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.w.). Like his father Imam Husayn (a.s.), his uncle Imam Hasan (a.s.) and his grandfather Imam Ali (a.s.) and the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), he was a Masoom (He did not commit any mistake or sins).

HIS BIRTH

He was born on 5th Shaban (or on 15th Jamadi-ul-Awwal) 38 AH (658 AD) in Medina (some historians say he was born in Kufa).

His father was Hazrat Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his mother was Hazrat Sheherbanu. She was a princess from Iran. She was the daughter of Yazdigard III, the last king of Pre-Islamic Iran. Thus he was called “Ibn al-Khiyaratyn” or the “Son of the best Two” meaning: The Quraysh from the Arabs and the Persians from non-Arabs.

The Muslims, at the time of Umar Khattab, captured Iran in 21 AH. The ruler, however, was able to run away from Muslims; later he was killed. Several years later his two daughters, Sheherbanu and Gayhanbanu were brought as prisoners-of-war at the time when Imam Ali (a.s.) was the Caliph of the Muslims. They were sent to Imam Ali (a.s.) by his governor, Haris bin Jabir Joafi.

Imam Ali (a.s.) freed the two sisters. The elder one Sheherbanu (who was also known as Shahzanan, Sulafa, Ghazala and Sheherbanu) was given in marriage to Imam Husayn (a.s.). The younger sister was given in marriage to Muhammed bin Abu Bakr. Sheherbanu gave birth to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) whereas Gayhanbanu gave the birth to Qasim, whose daughter was later married to Imam Muhammed Baqir (a.s.).

After her marriage to Imam Husayn (a.s.), piety was exhibited. She was regularly praying and thanking Allah for having brought her to a house in which mercy of Allah was coming every second.

It is reported that once a maid in her house showed pity to Sheherbanu saying that it must have been very hard for her to live in the house of Imam Husayn (a.s.), having first lived the life of princess of Persia. Sheherbanu replied, "You should never talk like that; for you do not know where I was and where I am now. I was in the Hell fire and I came to Paradise. I left the house of fire-worshippers and came to the house of the worshippers of one Allah..."

Sheherbanu died a few days after giving birth to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.). She was not present in Karbala. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was taken care of, as a child, by a maid whom he came to love and respect like his own mother.

HIS CHILDHOOD

When he was born, Imam Ali (a.s.) was still alive and he remained in company of his grandfather for another two years. It is said that time and again Imam Ali (a.s.) would hug him and say, "My son you are Zainul Abideen."

One day when Imam Ali (a.s.) was praying, the young Zainul Abideen, who then was only one and half years old, started imitating his grandfather. He prayed them same way Imam Ali (a.s.) did. On completing his prayers, Imam Ali (a.s.) said. "How truthful was the Prophet when he said our young and our old are all the same, all being Muhammad." As a young boy till when he became 12 years of age, he spent a lot his time with his uncle Imam Hasan (a.s.).

Thereafter he stayed with Imam Husayn (a.s.) till 61 AH. At the time of Imam Husayn's martyrdom, Imam Zainul Abideen was a youth of 22 years.

His childhood was not free from trouble. His mother died when he was only an infant. He lost the care and love of his grandfather when he was only two. As a young boy; he saw the injustices that were done to his uncle Imam Hasan (a.s.). As a young boy of 12, he saw his Uncle's bier being hit with arrows. It must have pained him to see his Uncle's last wishes of wanting to be buried next to his grandfather, the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), remain unfulfilled. All these disturbed him and made him sad but, they never shook his faith in Allah. As a matter of fact, the incidents that we are about to describe show how peaceful he was in his mind and how strong his love was for Allah.

As a young boy, he showed great love and respect for the sick people. Once, someone in his neighbourhood fell sick. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) spent a lot of his time caring and comforting him. When the sick man became well, he was so pleased with the young Imam that he wanted to pay him back in any way that the Imam wanted.

The Imam (a.s.) refused to take any reward saying that what he had done was for the pleasure of Allah. However, when he found the man very persistent, then he advised him that if he really wanted to please the Imam (a.s.), he should follow the Imam's footsteps by taking care of a fellow human needing to be looked after.

A man by the name of Abdullah bin Mubarak reports that once, during the season of 'Hajj', he met a young boy who was going to Mecca on foot and with no food or any other provisions people normally take on a journey. The young boy was so calm and gentle that Abdullah could not but ask the child whether he was a human being or from the community of the 'Jinn'. The child replied that he was a human being on his way to Mecca to perform 'Hajj'.

Abdullah asked him why he did not travel on a beast of burden but walked for such a long distance. The child's reply was that he felt better that way.

What surprised Abdullah most was: why was the child travelling with no food or any other provision? The child replied, "Tell me, if you are invited to someone's house, do you take with you food and provisions?"

Abdullah replied, "No", he added, "Because this would be an insult to my host."

The child replied, "I am a guest of Allah. I cannot take food or provisions. He will make all such arrangements for me."

Abdullah says that he met the child again in Mecca. The child was busy performing "Tawaf" of the House of Allah (Kaaba). Abdullah asked people about the young boy. He was told that the child was no other person than Ali bin Husayn (a.s.), and that he came for Hajj in this manner every year.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) reports that for the time Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.) stayed with him, though still only a child, he showed great love for prayers. He would get up in the midst of the night and pray till dawn.

CHAPTER 2

IMAM ALI BIN HUSAYN (A.S.): ADULTHOOD

LIFE WITH HIS UNCLE IMAM HASAN (A.S.) AND HIS FATHER IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.)

All the Twelve Imams who were the true successors of the Prophet were born Imams; they did not become Imams. They did not attend any school or centre of learning. Their knowledge was directly from Allah. However, there was certain training and information that an Imam got from his father and grandfather who themselves were Imams. In this manner Imam Zainul Abideen's life was influenced by three Imams: Imam Ali (a.s.), Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.).

So far as his father was alive, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) spent significant part of his life in prayers and in service of human beings. He was the champion for the poor and the sick.

HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE IMAM OF HIS TIME

When his father, Imam Husayn (a.s.) left Medina for Iraq in 60 AH, Imam Zainul Abideen went together with him. Because the world cannot survive even for one fraction of a second without the presence a "Masoom", Imam Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) could not join his father and other male members of his caravan in becoming martyrs for Islam on the day of Ashura. Allah made a special provision for that. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was very sick on the day of Ashura and he could not take part in the Jihad.

Even then, when his father, Imam Husayn (a.s.) came to visit him, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) requested his father to allow him, too, to give his life fighting in the way of Allah. Imam Husayn (a.s.) told him that for Islam he had a more difficult "Jihad" to fight than the one he wished to fight at that time, namely taking responsibility of the womenfolk from the family of the Prophet and staying with them to Kufa, and then to Damascus and then return with them to Medina.

Truly speaking, for him, it would have been very easy to die on the battle-field as a martyr than to be taken as prisoner of war and see all the insult and humiliations thrown at him and at the womenfolk of the house of the Prophet. However, he did what Allah wished him to do.

After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.), the survival of Islam depended on Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.), and that also at a tender age of twenty two. He had a very hard job of letting the world know the mission of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and exposing the evil intentions of Yazid and the Bani Umayyah. He had to keep the message of Islam alive and save it from being adulterated by the evil Bani Umayyah.

THE IMAM AS PRISONER OF WAR

Although the army of Yazid did not kill him because he was sick, they treated him very badly by putting him in heavy chains. As a prisoner, he was made to travel on the bareback of a camel in burning sunshine from Karbala to Kufa and then from Kufa to Sham (Damascus) – a distance of about 750 kilometres. Sometimes, he would be made to walk on the burning sands of the desert.

This was not all. Women and children belonging to the family of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.), too, were hand-cuffed and treated like they were slaves. The daughters of Imam Ali (a.s.) and Hazrat Fatima (s.a.) were treated worse than criminals, their Hijab having been taken away from them. A caller would accompany them, introducing them to the passersby as “Those who disobeyed the Muslim ruler, Yazid.” They were then presented as prisoners, first to Ibne Ziyad in Kufa and then to Yazid in Damascus.

IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.) IN THE COURT OF IBNE ZIYAD IN KUF

Yazid's governor of Kufa, Ibne Ziyad, was known for his cruelty and his enmity towards Imam Ali (a.s.) and his family. In order to show

the people of Kufa how powerful he was, Ibne Ziyad asked how come Ali Bin Husayn was not killed by Allah.

Anyone else in the position in which Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was, would have kept quiet and bear the insult; but not Imam Zainul Abideen. As the Imam of the time he knew when it was proper for him to show the patience (Sabr) of his uncle Imam Hasan (a.s.) and when to show the bravery of his father, Imam Husayn (a.s.) and to face his enemies like a soldier. Without any fear, he replied saying “I had another brother by the name of Ali and he was martyred by being killed by your soldiers.”

His short but strong reply was enough to let people know what kind of liar and a beast Ibne Ziyad was. Ibne Ziyad became very angry by the young Imam’s bravery. He ordered his soldiers to kill the Imam. Hazrat Zainab (s.a.) challenged Ibne Ziyad saying his soldiers would first have to kill her before they could get hold of her nephew, Zainul Abideen. She then took the Imam (a.s.) in the fold of her arms.

There was such an uproar in the court, all blaming Ibne Ziyad, that Ibne Ziyad could not do any harm to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.).

But even then the Imam replied, saying, “Do you frighten me with death, O Ibne Ziyad? Don’t you know that to be killed is our tradition and martyrdom is an honour from Allah?”

IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN IN THE COURT OF YAZID IN SHAM (DAMASCUS)

Following the instructions of his master, Yazid, Ibne Ziyad sent the Imam and the ladies and children of the house of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) as prisoners to Damascus.

To show his power and to frighten others, Yazid treated these prisoners very badly. They were first taken from one bazaar to

another. The women and children were tied by one rope and treated very badly. The Imam was to remember this incident for the rest of his life. With tears in his eyes he used to say “In Sham (Damascus) we were insulted and treated like we were slaves whose master was not there (to protect them).” They were then put in prison.

Yazid would regularly call Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) to insult him in front of the public. On one such occasion, a preacher who was employed by Yazid went on the ‘Mimbar’ (pulpit) of the Mosque and abused Imam Ali (a.s.) and his family.

When the preacher finished his lecture, the Imam turned to him and said, “Be ashamed of yourself, you evil speaker. With your words you have displeased Allah so as to please people.” Then the Imam (a.s.) asked Yazid to let him talk to the people. Yazid refused to do so. The people of Syria, however, forced Yazid to allow the Imam to go on the Mimbar.

Once on the Mimbar, Imam Zainul Abideen first praised Allah and His Messenger. After that the Imam gave a long and very powerful speech letting the Syrians know the great position of Imam Husayn (a.s.) to Allah, and how evil Yazid and his family were. Part of the speech is summarized below:

“O listeners! Allah has given us (Ahle Bayt) six things which no one else has. He has given us special Wisdom, Patience, Dignity, Power of speech, Courage and Respect. He gave us special benefit of belonging to the family of his Prophet. To us belong Hamza and Jafar. To us belong Asadullah (The lion of Allah, Imam Ali (a.s.)). To us belong the leaders of the youth of paradise (Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.)).

“Those who know me know me. Those who do not, then know that I am the son of Mecca and Mina. I am the son of Zamzam and Safa. I am the son of he who gave Zakat to the poor. I am the son of the best of those who have ever put on Ihram and performed

ceremonies of Hajj. I am the son of he who was taken on the night journey from house of Allah to the Mosque of Aqsa and then to Miraj. I am the son of he who was taken around by Jibrael to the Lote-tree of the boundary (Sidratul Muntaha).

“I am the son of Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.w.). I am the son of Ali al-Murtaza who fought the polytheists in the battle till they submitted to Islam and fought in the presence of the Prophet until his sword was broken and to whom Zulfikar was given. I am the son of him who had the honour to migrate twice in Islam. I am the son of Fatima the best of the women of the world....”

The effect of the speech was so powerful that everybody in the Mosque began to weep and to blame Yazid. Yazid was afraid that if the Imam continued his speech, there would be a revolution. At the same time Yazid could no longer stop the Imam and get him down from the Mimbar. He therefore ordered a “Muazzin” to give Adhan, knowing that this would automatically cut the Imam’s speech. But he underestimated the Imam’s bravery and intelligence.

The Imam stopped his speech but did not get down from the Mimbar. When the Muazzin said, “Allahu Akber” the Imam testified Allah’s greatness. When the Muazzin said, “Ash hadu anna Muhammaddan Rasulullah”, the Imam stopped the Muazzin from going any further. He then turned to Yazid and asked him. “Tell me O Yazid, was Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) your grandfather or mine? If you say he was your grandfather it will be an open lie and if you say he was my grandfather then why have you killed his son and imprisoned his family? Why have you killed my father and brought his women and children to this city as prisoners?”

Yazid had no reply to give.

The effect of this was to turn Syrians against Yazid. Everyone of them now found out about Yazid’s crimes that he had committed

against the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and his family. They began to blame him and ask for the release of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) and the womenfolk of the house of the Prophet. Yazid was now afraid that if he did not act fast, his rulership would be lost from him. He therefore freed Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) and let him return to Medina with full honour and respect.

IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.) RETURNS TO MEDINA

Having spent not less than one year in the prison of Yazid in Damascus, Imam Zainul Abideen returned to Medina. On reaching Medina, he camped outside the town and let the people of Medina know that he was back. When people came to meet him, without fearing the governor of Medina, he let people know of all the injustices that were done to the family of the Prophet.

Dressed in mourning dress, he sat on a chair and addressing the people of Medina, he said, "Praise be to Allah at all times. He gave us strength to bear great hardships. A great loss has taken place in Islam. My father, Aba Abdillah, his dear ones and his friends have been killed. His women and children were taken as prisoners. My father's head was cut and put on the edge of a spear and paraded from one Islamic city to another.

"O people! We were treated like we were non- Muslims and Kafirs, although we had committed no crime or sin and had not in any way wronged Islam. By Allah! If the Prophet of Allah had ordered them to fight against us, they would still have done nothing more than what they did."

CHAPTER 3

IMAM ALI BIN HUSAYN (A.S.): LIFE IN MEDINA AFTER THE TRAGEDY OF KARBALA

THE PROBLEMS FACING THE IMAM IN CARRYING OUT THE PREACHING OF ISLAM

It will be recalled that Yazid had given the Imam his freedom to return to his home in Medina not out of love but out of fear. The Imam, therefore, was still not out of danger. The Imam, therefore, had to find a way to preach the true message of Allah without appearing to be working against the government.

This problem became even more difficult as Muslims throughout the empire began to rise against Yazid. For example, Abdullah Ibne Zubair declared himself the ruler of Mecca. In 63 AH the Muslims of Medina drove away Yazid's governor from Medina and appointed a man of their own choice in his place.

To save his crown, Yazid turned to using force. He decided to kill anyone who opposed him. The Imam had to place himself in such a position that no one could say that he was also amongst those plotting to overthrow Yazid. Otherwise, the Imam would not be able to complete the mission of saving Islam from its enemies. He would either be imprisoned again or even be killed. Who would then be there to serve Islam the way Allah wished it to be served?

HOW THE IMAM KEEPS THE MISSION OF ISLAM ALIVE WITHOUT ANGERING THE GOVERNMENT

When martyrdom was necessary to keep Islam alive, Imam Husayn (a.s.) publicly opposed Yazid and gave his life. When silence became necessary to keep Islam alive, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) retired in his house to serve Islam in the best way possible.

From 62 AH to 95 AH when he left this world, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) led a quiet life, preaching true Islam in two ways.

Firstly, he kept alive the message of Imam Husayn (a.s.) regarding Islam through mourning. There was not a day that passed without the Imam crying in memory of his father Imam Husayn (a.s.) and others who gave their lives in Karbala. He encouraged his followers also to regard it as their duty to remember the martyrs of Karbala as often as they could.

The first time he entered Medina when returning from Damascus, he laid down the tradition of mourning for Imam Husayn (a.s.). He pitched a tent outside Medina and wearing the mourning dress he let the Muslims of Medina know what was expected of them from then onwards.

A man by the name of Noaman went to Medina three years after the events of Karbala. He saw the Imam standing near the grave of the Prophet weeping and complaining to the Prophet about the ill-treatment that Imam (a.s.) and the other members of the Prophet's family had received from the Bani Umayyah. The Imam (a.s.) remained in this position until when he fainted and was then taken by his followers to his house.

Noaman went to Imam's house. Then asked the Imam what was the most difficult time he had to face in Karbala and during his imprisonment to Kufa and Damascus. The Imam said, "As-Sham, As-Sham, As-Sham" and then explained that in Sham the family of the Prophet was treated like animals and presented to the court of Yazid like slaves.

In this way people of Medina were to see him mourning for his father from then till his death some thirty five years later.

It is reported that when the Imam saw water he would weep, remembering the thirst of the martyrs of Karbala. When he saw a goat or sheep being slaughtered, he would ask the slaughterer if he had fed the animal and given it water. On being assured that

this had, indeed, been done, the Imam would weep, saying that his father and other martyrs of Karbala were slaughtered hungry and thirsty of three days.

He held regular mourning sessions in his house. Those who attended these sessions would then be served with food in the name of his father, Imam Husayn (a.s.)

One day somebody told him. “O son of Allah’s Messenger! Up to when would you weep like this?” The Imam replied “O servant of Allah. Prophet Yakub had twelve sons but only one of them (Yusuf) was taken away from him, he wept so much and for such long that his eyes turned white, his head turned gray and his back was bent although his son Yusuf was still alive, whereas I watched my father, my brother and seventeen members of my family being slaughtered all around me. How could my sorrow come to an end?”

Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) through such mourning sessions let the world know the reason why it was necessary for Imam Husayn (a.s.) to sacrifice his life but not accept Yazid as the rightful ruler of the Muslims.

The plot of Yazid and his family of Bani Umayyah to destroy Islam was brought out in the open through the Imam’s weeping for his father.

The second most important thing that the Imam did after returning from Damascus was to spend a lot of his time praying to Allah. His prayers were not only in the form of “Namaz” but also in the way of “Duas” or supplications. He would read these supplications and then teach them to his sons Hazrat Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Hazrat Zaid. These supplications were later compiled in a book called *SAHIFA KAMILA* (The complete book). This book is also known by other names such as *SAHIFA SAJJADIA* (the book of Sajjad; Sajjad being another name of Imam Zainul

Abideen (a.s.); Sajjad means one who spends a lot of his time in “Sajda”), or *ZABUR-E-ALE MUHAMMAD* (psalms of the household of Muhammad). The SAHIFA as we know it today, is made of 54 Duas, 14 additional ‘Duas’ and 15 ‘Munajat’. Over and above the SAHIFA, there are many other supplications of the Imam which appear under different covers.

With the help of these ‘Duas’, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) taught Muslims not only how to pray to Allah but also what the essence of Islam is. The major elements of religion are also contained in these Duas. Moreover, the Duas teach us who Allah is and who the Prophet is and what kind of life we should lead. For example, in the Dua called “MAKARIMUL AKHLAQ” (The excellence of character), the Imam looks at different types and qualities of behaviour which make a man’s character and personality, and tells his followers to have those qualities.

The Dua also teaches how Muslims should link themselves with the house of the Prophet, the Ahlul-Bayt. These ideas, if preached in any other form, would without any doubt, invite the government of Bani Umayyah to put the Imam in trouble. But who would complain if the Imam addressed his creator, Allah using “Duas”?

In this way through mourning for his father and praying to Allah, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) kept the true message of Allah alive from the evil-minded Bani Umayyah.

EFFECT OF THE IMAM’S APPROACH TO PREACH THROUGH PRAYERS

The greatest result of the Imam’s decision to lead a quiet life was: the government became sure that he was not going to be dangerous to them. They, therefore, left him alone. For example, when Muslim bin Aqaba attacked Medina in 63 AH, he did no harm to the Imam. Whereas Muslim showed complete disrespect for the Mosque of the Prophet, he did no harm to Imam Zainul Abideen’s house.

Those who sought shelter of the Imam's house also remained safe from the army's cruelties. In fact Muslim Bin Aqaba called Imam to his headquarters and treated him with courtesy and respect. All this was because the Imam (a.s.) had shown no sign of wanting to overthrow the government. What the government failed to understand was that Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was establishing the foundations of truth which would, in the future, provide strong basis of Islam which would live forever.

By being left on his own, not only did Imam (a.s.) widen the horizons of Islam, but he also found a place for himself to let the Muslims community see for themselves who truly was the representative of the Prophet. This was a very important job to be done by the Imam. This is because the rulers of his time Yazid, Marwan, Abdul Malik bin Marwan and Walid bin Abdul Malik, all lead very unIslamic lives yet they presented themselves as the representatives of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). The presence of the Imam was a continuous lesson for Muslims. The Muslims could compare the excellent life of the Imam with that of the rulers and decide for themselves who was the true successor of the Prophet and therefore the leader of the community.

The effect of the teaching and the pure life-style of the Imam were such that he came to be regarded as an excellent person and an authority of the religion of Islam. At his time, there were seven scholars in Medina who were called "The seven lawyers of Medina", and who were considered to be the best authorities on Islamic traditions and law. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was not only one among these seven scholars; he was the best of them all. One of these seven lawyers called Said bin al-Musayyab considered the Imam with highest respect: the respect that a lesser person shows to a higher person. Another very famous and knowledgeable lawyer, al-Zuhri, gave the title of Zainul al-Abideen to the Imam!

Sufyan Suri says that he once asked Zuhri as to why he always called

the Imam by the name of Zainul Abideen. Zuhri replied: “On the Day of Judgement a caller will say: Where is Zainul Abideen? Then Husayn’s son, Ali, will come forward.”

By the time the Bani Umayyah realised the wisdom of Imam Zainul Abideen’s approach to establish Islam through the memory of his father and prayers of Allah, it was too late. Without the knowledge of the government the Imam had raised his position in the Muslims community so high that none of the rulers could reach the same, even with all their wealth and power. The following incident illustrates this point very well.

Hisham, the Bani Umayyah prince, went to Mecca for pilgrimage. After completing his Hajj he wanted to kiss the “Hajare Aswad” but there was such a big crowd that he could not reach there. He was therefore waiting for the crowd to decrease so that he could then get near “Hajare Aswad.” With him were standing his royal attendants.

Then came a person dressed in simple clothes. He was approaching the Kaaba very slowly when the crowd saw him they all scattered, making way for him. The man slowly and with ease went round the “House of Allah” (Kaaba) seven times, kissed the “Hajare Aswad” and went away.

Hisham, the prince of the Muslims empire, could not believe what he saw; wasn’t he the prince? Why had he to wait and a stranger be shown such respect? Who was he after all? He asked his attendants who the stranger was that he should enjoy such a respect with people that even the prince could not.

The attendants said they did not know who the person was, though they knew very well that the person was Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) but were afraid that if they said the truth Hisham would be offended.

However, the famous poet Farazdaq, who was being paid by the king to write poems in praise of the royal family, could not keep quiet. He read long poem in praise of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) the most important part of which is as follows:

“...This is Ali (Bin Husayn) whose parent is the Prophet,
This is the son of Fatima, if you do not know who he is.

“Whoever recognizes his God knows also the greatness and importance of this man,

Because the religion has reached the nations through his house.”

Hisham burned with jealousy. He had Farazdaq imprisoned for praising the Imam (a.s.).

When the Bani Umayyah rulers realised their mistake they decided to kill the Imam. By the instructions of Walid Bin Marwan, the governor of Medina poisoned the Imam (a.s.). The Imam (a.s.) died from this poison on 25th Muharram 95 AH (713 AD).

CHAPTER 4

IMAM ALI BIN HUSAYN (A.S.): HIS CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY

GENERAL REMARKS

The belief that our Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.), his daughter, Hazrat Fatima (s.a.), Imam Ali (a.s.) and other eleven Imams (whose biographies we are going to study in this course) are all sinless and make no mistakes, is a very important part of our faith. To us these fourteen personalities were perfect.

However, as each of them had a special job to do and most of them lived in different periods of time, each of them had a chance to show only a few sides of his or her character. In the world in which Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) lived, the parts of his character which people could be seen very clearly are described in the following pages of this chapter.

HIS PIETY

He had great love and fear of Allah. These could be seen the way he carried out his daily 'Wajib' prayers and other recommended prayers. Three things can be said about his prayers to Allah:

1. Once he set up his mind to pray to Allah, he forgot about everything else. He gave himself totally to Allah. Nothing would disturb his prayers. Consider the following incidents.
 - Once while he was praying, his house caught fire. To put down the fire and more importantly to save their lives everybody in the house was running here and there. But not the Imam (a.s.). He continued his prayers as if nothing had happened. When he finished his prayers, the fire had already been put down. Somebody asked him. "O the son of the Prophet, why didn't you cut short your "Sajda" when you heard the people shouting that the house was on fire?"

The Imam replied, “When I heard ‘fire, fire’ I remembered the fire of Hell. I compared that with fire in my house. I found the fire of Hell more severe so I continued praying.”

- At another time his son, Hazrat Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) had fallen into a well. The child’s mother was deeply upset and cried for the Imam’s help. The Imam was in the middle of his prayers. He neither broke his prayers nor did he rush to complete his prayers fast. He continued his prayers, at his usual speed. On completing his prayers he went to the well and brought out the child. The child was safe and was not hurt at all.
- It is said that once Shaitan (Devil) decided to disturb the Imam’s prayers. The Devil then took the form of a snake and stung the Imam’s legs continuously. The Imam felt the pain but he continued praying as if nothing had happened. When he had finished he told the Shaitan to go away. Then came a voice from Heavens saying, “You are Zainul Abideen (a.s.) (the decoration of the pious)”; everybody who was present heard this and the Imam (a.s.) became famous by that name.
- It is common with human beings, to shorten their prayers or even to neglect them at the time of difficulties. This was not so with the Imam (a.s.). On the evening of Ashura in Karbala, Imam (a.s.) went through a very hardtime. He remembered these hard times throughout his life. But his prayers remained as pure as ever. He spent the whole night in “Sajda” praising Allah in these words:
“There is no other God but Allah and that is the truth.
There is no other God but Allah in terms of faith and truth.
There is no other God but Allah. I testify to this by praying to Him”.

Throughout his difficult journey from Karbala to Kufa and from Kufa to Damascus and all the time he was in prison, his prayers remained the same as they had been during the normal times.

2. He spent a lot of his time in prayers. Beside the daily obligatory prayers like his grandfather Imam Ali (a.s.), he prayed 1000 rakats of recommended prayers (Mustahab) daily in the day and at night. If there was any time left that, too, he would spend in “Duas” and “Sujud”.

- Taoos Yamani reports that once he went to the House of Allah and there he saw Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.) near “Hajare Aswad” (Black stone). He first prayed and then bowed down in ‘Sajda’. Taoos says that he went near the Imam to hear what he was saying and he heard the Imam say in presence of Allah:

“Your humble servant is at your courtyard”

“Your sad one is at your courtyard”

“Your poor one is at your courtyard”

“Your beggar is at your courtyard”

Taoos says since that time whenever I need help from Allah I address Him in this way and I get the help that I need.

- It is reported that the Imam would get out of his bed at midnight daily and go to his prayer carpet saying, “O my creator, the thought that I will have to face you on the Day of Judgement has got me out of my bed and made me sleepless.” Having said so, he would bow down in prayers and put his cheeks on the ground. He would then weep in fear of Allah and weep so much that the ground would become wet with his tears. His family would gather around him but he would not even notice them. He would continue addressing Allah saying, “O my creator, I don’t

wish for the restful life of this world. I ask for your mercy at that time when I shall be brought in your presence.”

- A man by the name of Zurara Bin Ayan once heard at midnight a caller saying, “Where are those people who give away this world for the next world?” another call came as a reply from the graveyard of Baqi saying, “Such a person is Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.).”
- If any member of his family asked him as to why he was praying like this even though he was sinless, he would reply, “Why shouldn’t I try to be nearer to Allah than I am now?”
- It is reported by Shaykh Mufid that once Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) saw that his father’s face had turned yellow through weeping all night. His forehead was hurt. His legs and feet were swollen from standing long hours in prayers. Imam Baqir started weeping. Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) asked his weeping son to bring to him the book containing the prayers of Imam Ali (a.s.). He then read from the book for a while and closing it, he said: “Who is strong enough to worship the way Ali Ibne Abi Talib used to do?” the message from Imam Zainul Abideen was: compared to my grandfather my prayers are too short and too little. So let me do as much as I can.

Fatima Binti Ali, the Imam’s aunt, called Jabir Bin Abdullah Ansari and requested that he talk to the Imam and persuade him not to pray so much that his health would suffer. When Jabir talked to the Imam, the Imam reminded Jabir about the Prophet’s long prayers which led to the revelation of those Quranic verses in which Allah tells the Prophet to reduce his night prayers. The Prophet’s reason for such long prayers was to thank Allah. In the same way the Imam’s long prayer were only to thank Allah.

Whenever he heard of good news, he would bow down in “Sajda” to praise and thank Allah. Whenever his desires were fulfilled he would go in sajda. Whenever his problems were solved he would go in sajda. So much time did he spend in sajda, praying or praising or thanking Allah, that he became known as “Sayyidus Sajidin” or the leader of those who do “Sajda”.

Because he bent so much in prayers the skin over his knees and on his forehead was as hard as that of the camel. From time to time, this skin had to be peeled off. His forehead, too, was wounded because of remaining in the position of “Sajda” for long hours.

3. Both before prayers and during prayers the Imam’s behaviour would change in fear of Allah. For example, when he did his “Wudhu” his face would become pale and his body would shake. When he was asked for a reason he would reply, “Don’t you know before whom I am preparing to stand?”

Throughout his prayers his face continued to remain pale. After completing his prayers, in his “Duas” and “Sajdas” he would weep so much that his beard would be wet with tears.

Once someone saw him praying on the mountains, on a bare rock that had become heated by the sun’s rays. The man asked for the reason. The Imam explained saying, “This heat from the rock reminds me of the heat of the Hell and gives me a better understanding when I pray for forgiveness from Hell fire.”

It was because of his prayers that he became known as “Zainul Abideen” or the decoration of the pious people.

His piety was not just in prayers. He used to spend almost all his days fasting. A maid who spent several years serving Imam reports that throughout her service she never cooked any food for him nor prepared his bedding at night.

By some accounts he fasted every day except on forbidden days such as on Eid days.

When he went for ‘Hajj’ he would do so most of the time walking. When he did use a beast of burden, he would never beat to make it move faster. It therefore took him twenty days to travel between Medina and Mecca.

Once he was on such a pilgrimage to Mecca. He put on his “Ithram” and was about to say “Labaik Allahumma Labaik” which is required from every person doing “Hajj”, his face turned yellow and he could not say “Labaik” loudly. When he was asked why he did not do so, he replied, “Suppose I said Labaik and Allah replied La Labaik (I don’t accept your Labaik) what would happen to me?” It is reported that his whole Hajj was spent in fear of Allah.

HIS PATIENCE (“SABR”) AND FORGIVING NATURE

Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was similar to his uncle Imam Hasan (a.s.) and his grandson Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.) (Our 7th Imam) by showing a lot of patience to his enemies.

You will remember that after the events of Karbala, he went through very bad times in the hands of his enemies, but at no occasion did he show sign of anger or impatience. Whenever necessary, he replied to his enemies bravely but without showing any anger or loss of patience. Consider the following incidents.

- When the Imam was a prisoner of Yazid in Damascus and was being taken to the court, a Syrian came forward and abused the Imam saying, “Tell me who has come out successful you or Yazid?” Without getting angry the Imam replied, “When you hear the Adhan today you make your own decision as to who is successful and who a failure.”

In the same way, another old man of Syria addressed the Imam saying, “Praise be to Allah who destroyed you, who killed your

men and brought peace in the country by giving victory to Yazid, the caliph of Muslims.”

The Imam first read the verse of Quran (Ch.42, v.23) meaning “O Prophet say to them “I do not ask to be paid back for my services except they you should love my family.”

Then he asked the Syrian, “Have you ever read these verses?”

The old man replied that, indeed, he had read those verses but he did not know how these verses had anything to do with the Imam.

The Imam then read two more verses from the Quran, meaning: “Know O you believers! Whatever of a thing you acquire, a fifth of it is for the Prophet and for the Prophet’s family.” (Ch.8, v.41).

And

“Allah wishes to keep you away from uncleanness, O you the people of the house, and to purify you with complete purification.” (Ch.33, v.33)

Then the Imam told the Syrian that he and the other prisoners were the family of the Prophet mentioned in these verses and they were the ones for whom the Prophet had asked for respect and love.

The old man then felt very sorry and apologized and the Imam forgave him.

- Hisham Bin Ismail, the governor of Medina used to give a lot of trouble to the Imam. As time went by, he was removed from his position by Walid, the king. As his punishment, he was made to stand at a public place. People were given permission to do whatever they wished to him. Imam (a.s.) had suffered the most

from his hands and now was the chance to take his revenge. Instead, the Imam (a.s.) went to him and greeted him with respect and kindness knowing that if he did so then others would follow him and save Hisham from insults and injury.

Together with his patience was his forgiving nature and his kindness. The following incidents from Imam's life show this very clearly.

- Once a slave girl, while serving him, dropped on him a heavy jug full of water and cut his face. She said to him, Allah, the most high says: "those who control their anger." Before she could complete this verse of the Quran, he said, "I have controlled my anger."

She continued, saying, "And those who forgive the people," He replied. "May Allah forgive you."

She went on, saying, "Allah loves those who do good." He replied, "Go, you are a free person in the presence of Allah, The High, The Mighty."

- Once the Imam called his slave but the slave did not reply him. The Imam called him two more times; only then he replied. The Imam asked him if he did not hear being called. The slave replied that he did hear but he ignored to answer because he knew that no harm would come to him from the Imam (a.s.).

When the Imam heard this he said, "Praise be to Allah who made my slave safe from me."

During the times of the Imam (a.s.) slavery was common. Slaves would come from wars. The Imam used to get them as "Khums" from those who took part in these wars. Also the Imam used to purchase some slaves and then set them free.

He treated his slaves very well and would never beat them for any mistakes. Instead, he would record all their mistakes. At the end of the month of Ramadhan, he would call them and let them know of all their mistakes. He would then tell them to pray to Allah to forgive the Imam the way the Imam forgave them (the slaves). He would then set free all slaves and give them generous gifts.

It is said that one of his slaves whom the Imam had set free progressed so much that on one occasion he loaned 10,000 dinars to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.). The Imam (a.s.) later repaid this loan.

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

After he had gone the Imam asked his followers to go with him to punish the person. They all went with the Imam (a.s.). On his way the Imam started reading the following verses of Quran: "...those who control their anger and forgive the people, Allah loves those who do good." (Ch.3, v.133).

His companions immediately knew that the Imam would forgive the person.

When they arrived at the person's house and when the person saw them all, he was sure the Imam had come to punish him. However, the Imam addressed him very gently saying, "Brother, you said things about me, if truly I have those faults, then I pray to Allah to forgive me. If, however, I do not have those faults, I pray to Allah to forgive you."

The man was put to shame. He said, "You are free from all those faults. May Allah forgive me for making those false claims against you."

- Once a man abused the Imam (a.s.) in his presence. The Imam acted like he did not hear it. Then the man shouted, “I mean you.” The Imam (a.s.) replied, “And from you I am turning away.” By this the Imam (a.s.) was acting according to the Quran, which says “Go to what is honourable and turn away from the ignorant” (Ch.7, v.199).

HIS GENEROSITY

His acts of piety did not end with only spending his time communicating with Allah. He spent a lot of his time serving human beings also. He regularly visited the poor and the sick and provided for their necessities of life without their knowledge. In the darkness of the night, he would carry on his back bags of bread and food, cover his face so that no one could recognize him and go from door to door of the needy and serve them food. None knew that this person was Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) until his death.

Zuhir says that once when it was raining heavily at night, he saw the Imam carrying a heavy load on his back. He offered to help. The Imam said he was on his way to a journey. The next day Zuhir still saw the Imam in Medina. Had the Imam postponed his journey? No. The Imam explained that he was preparing for the journey of the next world. He was on his way to feed the poor and did not want Zuhir to go with him as this could lead to the poor to recognize who their benefactor was.

Shaykh Mufid records that Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) paid a visit to Zaid Bin Uthama Bin Zaid who was very sick. Zaid was weeping because he had debt of fifteen thousand dinars. The Imam promised Zaid that he would pay the full debt immediately and he did so.

These acts of generosity were not meant for the poor and for the Imam's friends only. It was extended even to his enemies, as will be illustrated in the following incidents.

You will recall that in 64 AH the people of Medina removed Yazid's governor from his post of governorship in Medina. Fearing for their lives, the Bani Umayyah started running away from Medina. Marwan Bin Hakam had a large family of women and children and could not run away for his life unless he could find someone who would agree to house his women and children. Marwan approached several people including Abdullah Bin Omar Bin Khattab but all refused to help him.

Finally Marwan turned to Imam Zainul Abideen for help.

Marwan was enemy number one of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and his family. As a matter of fact, the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) had ordered Marwan and his father Hakam Bin Aas to leave Medina as unwanted persons. It is the same Marwan who had fought against Imam Ali (a.s.) in the Battle of Jamal. Marwan also was one of those who prevented Imam Hasan to be buried next to his grandfather's grave. Again, it was Marwan who had told Walid, the Governor of Medina in 60 AH to force 'Bayah' from Imam Husayn (a.s.) in the court or to cut off his head if he refused.

Despite this, the Imam (a.s.) agreed to help Marwan. Marwan's family stayed with the Imam in Imam's house for as long as they wished. The Imam then arranged for them to go to where Marwan was.

In fact, Imam's house was open for anyone who came seeking for protection at this time.

To put down the rebellion in Medina, Yazid sent a strong army under the one-eyed general called Muslim Bin Aqaba. Muslim brought back Medina under the control of Yazid but before he could do the same to Mecca he died.

Hasin Bin Namir took over from Muslim and went to Mecca, to

deal with Abdullah Ibne Zubair who had taken control of Mecca from Yazid. Before Hasin could win back Mecca, he got the news that Yazid had died.

Hasin hurried back to Damascus with whatever that was left of his army. On the way, he was left without food and water. He and his army were about to die in the desert out of thirst and hunger. Then he saw a man coming in his direction. The man had a camel loaded with food and water. Hasin begged the man to sell to him the food and water which he had with him for any price. The man replied that his provisions were not for sale. However, as Hasin needed them so badly he could have it all for free!

In his conversation with the stranger, Hasin recognized the stranger as being no other person than Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.). Thinking that the Imam had not recognised him, Hasin asked the Imam if he knew to whom the Imam was extending his generosity.

The Imam replied, "I know that you are the murderer of my brother and father and that you denied my father water and food till his martyrdom but that shows who you are and my generosity shows who I am".

Hasin offered to help the Imam take control of Damascus. The Imam refused saying, all that he did for him was because he was a human being needing help. The Imam needed no reward or thanks. Saying so he went away, leaving behind Hasin to bite his fingers in disbelief.

Such was the generosity of our fourth Imam, Ali Bin Husayn, Zainul Abideen (a.s.).

CHAPTER 5 : SOME MIRACLES OF IMAM ALI BIN HUSAYN (A.S.)

WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

Allah has made laws for all his creation. These laws can be divided into two types. First, there are those laws which no one can change. These are sometimes called the laws of nature. For example, the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. The character of water is to cool and that of fire is to burn. No one can bring the dead back from death; these are but a few examples of the laws of nature.

Then there are the laws of Allah which are in the hands of man and they can change them against the will of Allah. For example, the law of Allah forbids having a relationship with another man as if he was a woman. (This act was very common with the people who lived during the times of Nabi Loot). But man can change this law, though by doing so, he commits a sin.

A miracle is said to have taken place when a law of nature, which in normal conditions cannot be changed, is indeed changed. For example, the Quran tells us of the miracles of Nabi Isa (a.s.). He was born without his mother having any relationship with a man. Again, when he was born, he started talking, telling people that he was a Prophet with a book from Allah. Or that he made the dead return to life. These acts are not normal and they are called miracles or “Mojiza”.

Miracles take place only when Allah wishes and He does so for very special reasons. The main reason is that Allah wants to prove his existence. The Prophets and 12 Imams show miracles only when Allah wishes them to do so. For example, Nabi Musa could turn his stick into a snake to show that he had this power given to him by Allah.

Another good example of miracle is that: Our Prophet, Hazrat

Muhammad (s.a.w.w.), split the moon into two parts to prove to the “Kuffar” of Mecca that he was a true Messenger of Allah.

Besides the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), the other 13 Masoomin (That is Hazrat Fatima and our 12 Imams) also did show miracles when it was necessary to do so and when Allah wished them to do so.

Before I give examples of the miracles that Imam Zainul Abideen showed, I shall explain the difference between a miracle and magic.

Whereas a miracle is the work of the men of Allah, magic is the work of Shaitan or only a trick performed so cleverly that for some time we see a change in natural laws. For example, in the Quran we are told that, Firawn (Pharaoh) called magicians who could turn threads into snakes. The difference between magic and miracle is the same as the difference between the snakes of magicians and that of Nabi Musa. The magician's snakes were not real, the one of Nabi Musa was. As a result, the magician's snakes only appeared like snakes and therefore could do no harm or even fight with Nabi Musa's snake which swallowed the threads of the magicians. The threads disappeared for good.

THE MIRACLES OF IMAM ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A.S.)

Several miracles were shown by the Imam (a.s.) but we shall look at only two of them.

MIRACLE 1

After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.), the army of Yazid cut off the heads of all the martyrs of Karbala and removed them from their bodies. Then they left those bodies without burying them. They did not allow Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) to bury these martyrs. Instead, they took him a prisoner to Kufa.

After the army of Yazid had left for Kufa, the tribe of Bani Asad, who lived in the neighbourhood of Karbala, came to bury the

martyrs. Since there was no way by which they could know whose body belonged to whom, they were worried.

Suddenly, they saw a man on a horse coming in their direction. Fearing that this could be a spy of Yazid coming to check on them, the Bani Asad went into hiding. The man came where they were hiding and called them to come out. He told them that he was Ali Ibn Husayn (a.s.) and had come through miracle from Kufa to help them identify and bury the martyrs.

In this way Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) buried the martyrs and his father where they lie buried today.

His coming to Karbala was very important for two reasons. Firstly, an Imam from Allah has to be given the burial services, when he dies, by the Imam who takes over from him. No one could give the burial services to Imam Husayn (a.s.) except him. But he was miles away and in chains as a prisoner of Ibn Ziyad in Kufa. He therefore came to Karbala by miracle. Secondly only he knew who was who. Otherwise, we would never know who was buried where the way we know today.

MIRACLE 2

After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and after Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) had returned to Medina, some people began to consider Hazrat Muhammad Hanafiya as their Imam. Hazrat Muhammad Hanafiya was Imam Husayn's younger brother. He was very pious and had not himself said that he was Imam. Only some misguided people began to consider him as their Imam.

It became necessary to remove this misunderstanding. Therefore, Imam (a.s.) and his uncle, Muhammad Hanafiya decided to go together to where "Hajar Aswad" (The black stone near Ka'aba) was.

At first, Hazrat Muhammad Hanafiya addressed the Hajar asking it to confirm who the Imam was. But there was no reply.

Then Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) addressed the Hajar. A loud and clear voice came from “Hajar Aswad” saluting the Imam by his full name and confirming that he and he alone was the Imam of the time.

Let it be remembered that Hazrat Muhammad Hanafiya himself had never claimed to be Imam. He fully supported Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) but he addressed Hajar Aswad only to let the misguided people see for themselves that he was not an Imam.

CHAPTER 6 :

IMAM ALI BIN HUSAYN'S SERMONS, SUPPLICATIONS (DUAS) AND SAYINGS

INTRODUCTION

As we have seen before, the politics of his times were so bad that Imam (a.s.) could not openly preach Islam. If he did so, his enemies would get a chance of preventing him from doing so by putting him away in prison or even killing him. He could not therefore all the time preach as openly as his grandparents had done before him.

As an Imam appointed by Allah, he knew when to openly expose the enemies of Islam and when to preach Islam without openly naming the enemies. Whenever possible, he gave sermons in which he openly named the enemies of Islam and the wrongs that they did to the family of the Prophet, though such moments were rare. Otherwise, the Imam used the supplications (Duas) and sayings to teach proper Islam as opposed to Islam which was being preached by the oppressive government of Bani Umayyah.

SERMONS

The only chance that the Imam had to give an open sermon was in the court of Yazid. It was very important for him to do so because all along, the people of Syria were being told lies about the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and his family, especially about Imam Ali (a.s.), Hazrat Fatima (s.a.), Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.). In the eyes of the Syrians, Muawiya and Yazid were the true representatives of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and Imam Ali (a.s.) and his children were the enemies of Islam. As a matter of fact, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) and the family of the Prophet were presented in the court of Yazid as those who had fought against Islam. It was very important for the Imam to tell the Syrians the truth, that is to say that Muawiya and Yazid were the enemies of Islam and they had murdered the innocent members of the family of the Prophet

(s.a.w.w.) and the Imam gave a very powerful sermon which you have already seen in Chapter 2.

Notice that in this sermon, the Imam describes very openly high position of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), his family and other relatives of the Prophet. He also proves that Yazid, his parents and his grandparents were truly the enemy of Islam. Although he never got another chance to give a sermon like this, this one sermon was enough to awaken the Syrians from the sleep of ignorance. This sermon will always be a guide to those Muslims who need to know truly how evil the Bani Umayyah were and how virtuous the Ahlul-Bayt were.

The other sermon that the Imam gave was very short but very effective. We saw that in Chapter 2. This was given to the people of Medina on the day the Imam returned from the prison of Yazid. The people of Medina were not in darkness regarding the goodness of the family of the Prophet, the way the people of Syria were. It was not at this time necessary for the Imam to remind the people of Medina about the evils of Bani Umayyah; what the people of Medina needed to be told were two things.

First, they had to be made to know what Bani Umayyah did to Imam Husayn (a.s.). Secondly, they needed to be told of what was expected of them now that Imam Husayn (a.s.) had given his life. And the Imam did just that in this short address to them which you have already seen in Chapter 2.

SUPPLICATIONS (DUAS)

Supplications (“Duas”) are a kind of prayers to Allah. A person who reads a “Dua” is actually addressing Allah. In the Quran itself Allah tells us of the “Duas” of several Prophets such as Nabi Nuh, Nabi Ibrahim and Nabi Musa. The Prophet taught his companions several Duas. Imam Ali taught Kumayl Bin Ziyad the Dua of Nabi Khizr which came to be known as “Dua-e-Kumayl” and which

is read every Thursday evening. Imam Husayn's (a.s.) Dua of the day of Arafat was introduced to you when we were learning about the biography of Imam Husayn (a.s.). Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) therefore was not the first person to start this art of addressing Allah through a supplication.

What makes Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) so special is that he made "Duas" on almost every important occasion in a Muslim's life and filled these Duas with knowledge of every branch of Islam. No Imam before him or after him has taught us as Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) did through Duas.

Most of the supplications of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) today exist in a book called "*Sahifa Sajjadiya*" (The book of Sajjad) (also known as *Sahifa Kamila* (A complete book) or *Zabur-e-Ale Muhammad* (The psalms of the house of Muhammad)). The Imam used to teach these Duas to his sons Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Zayd, the martyr. These books remained in the family of Imam Zainul Abideen from generation to generation and have survived till today.

SAHIFA-E-KAMILA

The "Sahifa" as we know it today is a collection of 54 Supplications, 14 other supplications and 15 Munajat.

These "Duas" can be put into two groups: The Duas that can be read on any occasion (E.g. Supplication for ones Parents, Supplication in asking for Pardon) and those which are for special occasions (E.g. Supplications for day of Arafat, The day of Idd).

These "Duas" are full of knowledge on Islam. The subjects listed here are but a few examples of what is contained in these Duas:

- How to address Allah

- Merits of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and his family

- What are the main parts of Iman (Faith)

- What behaviour is expected from Muslims

Through these Duas, the Imam taught the standards and principles for Muslims who would then be able to save themselves from “Corrupted Islam” that was being taught by the Bani Umayyah.

SAYINGS

Whenever he got a chance, the Imam would advise his followers on how they were to lead their lives. This advice or sayings are in plenty.

Over and above that, the Imam gave a lengthy advice on human rights. These today appear in a book form and is called *RISALAT-UL-HUQUQ* (or a Treatise on Rights). In this book, the Imam (a.s.) gives examples of 51 different rights.

We shall reproduce here a few sayings of the Imam and few rights that the Imam (a.s.) describes fully in his *Risalat-ul-Huquq*.

A SMALL SELECTION OF HIS SAYINGS:

1. Once, one of his companions complained to him that out of jealousy some people whom he had served very well were treating him badly. The Imam gave him some advice which was:
 - Guard your tongue and do not speak about people whatever comes out of your mouth, otherwise you will turn your friends into your enemies.
 - Avoid saying things which the minds of people are not prepared to accept.
 - He who does not have wisdom will be ruined by the smallest thing (Mistake).
 - What harm will come to you if you take all Muslims to be your family and your relations? Consider your elders to be your parents, those younger than you as your children and those of your age as your brothers. If you do so who is going to harm or abuse you?
 - Whenever a thought comes in your mind that you are better than any other person, then think along these lines:

If the person is older than you then remind yourself that this person is better than you in matters of Islam because he has done more good deeds than you have. If the person is younger than you then remind yourself that this person is better than you because he has committed less sins than you have. If he is of your age then your argument should be: he is better than you in matters of Islam since you know of your own sins but not of his.

- If people show respect to you, think that this is because the people are very good not that you are good. If the people say bad things about you, think that something is really wrong with you. If you live in this way, life will become pleasant for you, you will make many friends and your enemies will be few.
2. The Imam said: Do not have relationship with, nor talk with nor give company to 5 types of people:
- The Liar: because they are like mirage: With their words they show things different from what they really are. What is near they make it look far and what is far they make it look near. In this way, they take you away from truth.
 - The Greedy and the Sinner: because you cannot rely on their friendship; for a small piece of food or even less than that, they will sell you.
 - The Miser: because they will let you down when you need them most.
 - The Fool: because even when they try to do you good, they will end you in difficulties.
 - Those who have severed relationship with their relatives, because Allah has cursed them in the Quran.
3. Try to earn a high position in Paradise (Jannah).
Remember: Highest positions will be given to those who have been most useful to their brothers in, faith and who have been most helpful to the needy.

Remember: There are times when a person says but one good sentence and that brings him very near to Allah and brings his freedom on the Day of Judgement.

Never think that what you do for your brother in faith is unimportant because these are the things that will be of much use to you on a day when nothing else will be of any use.

4. Drinking (Alcohol and other forbidden drinks) and Gambling are such sins that they destroy the power to stop committing other sins.
5. (Speaking) Good words increase a person's wealth and sustenance (Rizq), prolong his life, make him to be loved by his wife and children and take him to paradise.

SELECTIONS FROM RISALAT-UL-HUQUQ

- May Allah have mercy on you - know that Allah has rights against you. These rights surround you in all your movements, in your rest, in all your body parts and everything that you use. Some of these rights are big others are small.
- The greatest right which is on you is from Allah Himself and this is the root of all other rights ... The greatest right of Allah on you is to worship Him without associating anything with Him. If you do that with purity of heart, He promises to give you sufficiently what you need here and in the next world...
- The rights of your teacher on you are: You should look at him with honour, listen to him with full attention, sit facing him with respect and do not raise your voice in his presence. If someone asks him a question, you should not reply it but let the teacher do it. Do not speak to any one or talk bad things about others in front of him. You should hide his faults and speak of

his good qualities. Keep away from his enemies and do not make enemies with his friends. If you do all these, angels will be your witness that you did what you were required to do and that you obtained knowledge from him for the pleasure of Allah only.

- The rights of your mother are: she carried you where no one carries anyone else; she fed you the fruit of her heart which no one gives to anyone else; she protected you with all parts of her body. She did not care if she remained hungry as long as you were fed; if she was thirsty as long as you drank; if she was naked as long as you had clothes on, if she was in the sun so long as you were in shade. She lost her sleep for you, she protected you from cold and heat so that you should live. You will never be able to thank her unless if Allah helps you...
- The right of your neighbour is that you should guard him (His belongings) when he is absent, respect him when he is present and help him when he is wronged. Do not do any shameful act to him. If you know of any bad things about him keep that secret. If you know he will accept your advice then give it to him. Do not leave him alone when he is in trouble. Help him out of his troubles, forgive him if he has wronged you and treat him generously.

CHAPTER 7 : HIS FAMILY

HIS MARRIAGES

The Imam's first wife was his cousin, the daughter of Imam Hasan (a.s.). Her name was Fatima. She was a very pious person. She was the mother of our fifth Imam, Hazrat Muhammad Baqir (a.s.).

It is reported that once she was sitting leaning against the wall. All of a sudden, the wall began to fall on her. She called out saying: "O wall, by the honour of the Messenger of Allah you have no permission to fall down right now" and the wall stood still. She moved away; only then did the wall fall. She then gave a sum in charity.

Other than Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), he had from this marriage, three other sons whose names were Abd Allah, Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn.

According to Shaykh Mufid, besides Lady Fatima, he had as his wives, at different times, several slave-girls. The main reason behind these marriages was to raise the position of these helpless women who had become slaves because of wars. By giving them a place in his house, he gave them a way to live a life of independence and honour. For these ladies gave birth to children who became part of Imam's family. For example, Hazrat Zaid, who came to be known as Zaid the martyr, was born from a slave girl from Sindh (India) called Huriya.

HIS CHILDREN

Shaykh Mufid in his book *Al-Irshad* says that besides Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.), Imam Zainul Abideen had ten more sons and four daughters.

In the next unit we shall learn more about Imam Muhammad Baqir

(a.s.); for the rest of this chapter we shall learn about Zaid, Imam Muhammad Baqir's half brother.

ZAID THE MARTYR

It is reported that once Imam's companion, Abu Hamza Thimali was sitting with the Imam in the Imam's house. Suddenly a male child came in the house and ran towards the Imam. Unfortunately, while running, the child fell down and was hurt. The Imam (a.s.) went quickly to where the child was and took him in his hands with kindness and love. After that the Imam (a.s.) began to weep. He then told the companion that the child was none but his son Zaid and that those days were not far when, as an adult, he would rise against the cruel government. He would then be killed and his dead body be hanged. He also told Abu Hamza that he (Abu Hamza) would live to see this.

Years later what the Imam said would happen in fact did happen.

Hazrat Zaid was very pious and was a good reader of the Quran. The Bani Umayyah's government treated the family of the Prophet, especially the grandchildren of Imam Ali (a.s.) so badly that Hazrat Zaid could not sit quiet.

He went to complain to the king of that time, Hisham Bin Abdul Malik in Damascus. Hisham received him very badly in his court.

Hazrat Zaid said to him, "Fear Allah".

This was enough to make Hisham angry. He shouted at Hazrat Zaid saying, "A low person like you is advising me to fear Allah?"

Hazrat Zaid replied, "There is no question of being low or high amongst the servants of Allah when it comes to giving advice and calling each other towards fear of Allah."

Hisham said, "I have heard that you want to become the ruler but you are not fit to be one as you are the son of a slave girl."

Hazrat Zaid replied, "No one is better to Allah than his Messenger. Hazrat Ismail's mother (Hajra) was a slave girl yet Hazrat Ismail was a Prophet and Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) was from his progeny."

As Hisham had no reply to give, he started abusing Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) saying. "What does your brother Baqarah (The Cow) do?"

Hearing this, Hazrat Zaid was greatly hurt and replied without fear, saying, "O Hisham, the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) gave him the name of Baqir and you call him Baqarah. Your actions are opposite to that of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.). On the Day of Judgement you will be equally far from him. Baqir will go to paradise and you will go to hell."

By the orders of Hisham, Hazrat Zaid was thrown out of court. He went away to Kufa. From there he raised an army to fight against the Bani Umayyah. He had followers in Wasil, Mosel, Khurasan, Ray, and Jurjan. In Kufa alone he had about 15000 supporters. Among his followers were reader of Quran, religious scholars and lawyers.

Hisham sent a big army under the command of Yusuf Bin Umar Saqafi. Unfortunately, most of Hazrat Zaid's supporters left him. Only three hundred soldiers remained with him when he came to the battlefield. He fought very bravely until he was martyred, having been hit by an arrow on his forehead. This was in AH 121.

His son Yahya buried him secretly under a river bank but Hisham's men found it out and dug out the body. Hazrat Zaid's body was put on a scaffold in Egypt. It remained there for some time then it was burnt and the ashes thrown in the wind.

Thus ended the life of one of the noblest servants of Allah.

CHAPTER 8 :

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN WHICH THE IMAM (a.s.) LIVED AND HIS MARTYRDOM

It was stated earlier in this unit that Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) lived at a time when political position in the Islamic World was very bad for the Imam (a.s.) and for those who loved 'Ahlul-Bayt' of the Prophet. In this chapter we shall briefly see how bad the Government was.

THE RULERSHIP OF MUAWIYA BIN ABU SUFYAN

Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) did not have to deal directly with Muawiya although he lived under his rulership for over ten years. This was because Imam Hasan (a.s.) and later Imam Husayn (a.s.) dealt with Muawiya. However, the Imam had to go through all the difficulties that Muawiya created first for Imam Hasan (a.s.) and then for Imam Husayn (a.s.).

THE RULERSHIP OF YAZID BIN MUAWIYA

In the earlier part of Yazid's rulership Imam Husayn (a.s.) dealt with Yazid directly. After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) on 10th Muharram 61 AH, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) became the direct target of Yazid's cruelty and ill-treatment. He became a prisoner. He was chained and taken first to Kufa and then to Damascus.

The Imam's greatest enemies were Ibne Ziyad (The governor of Kufa) and Yazid. They were very unhappy to see Imam alive. They did not understand why he was not killed in Karbala. You will remember that Ibne Ziyad had given orders to kill the Imam in Kufa but Hazrat Zainab had stopped him from doing so. Such orders were also given in Damascus by Yazid. There the public stopped Yazid from carrying out his orders of killing the Imam (a.s.).

Yazid set the Imam (a.s.) free in 62 AH after a great pressure from

the public. He was looking for another small excuse to go after the Imam (a.s.). The Imam (a.s.) therefore had to keep away from politics and work to spread true Islam from the quietness of his home. This was a very wise step; for as we shall soon see, all those who raised their heads against the rulers at this time were brutally killed and their missions destroyed. For example, the Muslims of Medina rose against Yazid in 64 AH under the leadership of Abdulla Bin Hanzalah. They paid a heavy price for this Syed Ameer Ali describes this in his book *A Short History of the Saracens* in the following words:

“... The noblest companions of the Prophet, both Ansar and Muhajerin, perished in that disastrous fight. The Public Mosque was turned into a stable and the shrines were demolished ... Its best men were killed or fled for safety into distant countries. The few who were spared had to acknowledge themselves slaves of Yazid ...”

Indeed, amongst the thousands of people of Medina killed included 700 who had committed the whole Quran to memory. 12000 married women and 1000 virgin girls were raped. 1000 illegitimate children were born.

However, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) was saved from this because he took no part in this rising. Those who managed to go to him too were saved. In this way, he kept the Mission of Islam alive at a time when all others were made to bow down to Yazid.

What happened in Medina would have happened in Mecca too. For after punishing the People of Medina, Yazid's army went to Mecca to punish Abdullah Ibne Zubair who had made himself the ruler of Mecca. The people of Mecca closed the doors of the city. Before Yazid's force commanded by Hasin Bin Namir could break into Mecca, Yazid died in 64 AH. Hasin therefore returned to Damascus. Ibne Zubair was left to rule Mecca - for the time being for as we shall soon see, the Umayyads were to return at a later date in 73 AH and punish him too.

THE RULERSHIP OF MARWAN AND HIS FAMILY

When Yazid died, his son Muawiya became the next ruler. But he was a good person and he was not happy with what his father and, grandfather had done. He was not even ready to rule. He died within six months of his father's death. His younger brother Khalid was too young to rule. As a result, Marwan Bin Hakam succeeded in becoming the next ruler in 64 AH.

At this time the Muslims of Kufa rose against Marwan. These Muslims were called "TAWWABUN". They were under the leadership of a pious and sincerely repentant person called Sulaiman Surd Khizai. They fought against the government of Bani Umayyah to take revenge of Imam Husayn's Martyrdom. Unfortunately, they were defeated and most of them killed by Marwan's Army in 65 AH.

Soon after that, Marwan died at the hands of his wife who was Yazid's old wife and Khalid's mother. She had married Marwan on the promise that he would help Khalid be the ruler. She killed him when he did not fulfil his promise.

THE RULERSHIP OF ABDUL MALIK BIN MARWAN

Marwan was succeeded by his eldest son Abdul Malik in 65 AH. He ruled for about twenty two years. Before becoming the ruler he was a pious person. When people came to inform him that he had become the ruler, he was reading the Quran. He closed the Quran and addressing the Quran he said, "O Quran! From now onwards we are going to take separate ways - I will be on my own and you too be on your own. Our ways will never meet."

True to his words, he changed completely. He turned to all the pleasures of the world including drinking wine. His main interest in life was to rule. Anyone who came in his way was killed. For example, when he found out that his uncle, Arm Bin Said Bin Abul Aas, was becoming a threat to his kingdom, Abdul Malik killed him with his own hands!

Abdul Malik's announced his policy from the Mimbar saying, "I am not weak like Uthman or tricky like Muawiya or stupid like Yazid. I will bring down with my sword the head of anyone who raises it against me!" And he carried out this policy throughout his life as a king. We are giving only two examples below.

Mukhtar Bin Abu Ubayda rose in Iraq in 65 AH. He took Kufa and put to death all those who had taken part in the murder of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his followers in Karbala. Abdul Malik sent an army under the command of Ibne Ziyad (who had by then earned the title of "THE BUTCHER" for killing of Imam Husayn (a.s.)) to fight against Mukhtar. Mukhtar proved successful. But soon after that Mukhtar was killed in a separate battle with Musab Bin Zubair, who had come to kill Mukhtar on behalf of his brother Abdullah who also claimed to be the ruler of the Muslims in Mecca.

With Mukhtar out of his way, Abdul Malik sent an army that killed Musab and then went to kill Abdullah Bin Zubair in Mecca.

Abdullah Ibne Zubair in the meantime was busy fighting battles against the Khawarij in Iraq and in Persia. Earlier on, Ibne Zubair had imprisoned Imam Zainul Abideen's uncle, Muhammad Hanafiya, in Mecca on the suspicion that Muhammad Hanafiya was Mukhtar's agent. Only a last minute effort by Mukhtar's people saved Muhammad Hanafiya.

The Muslim world therefore was in such a confusion that in the year 71 AH during Hajj season there were four groups at Arafa, each claiming to be the RIGHTFUL LEADER OF THE MUSLIMS. First, there was the group of Abdullah Ibne Zubair. Then there was Abdul Malik's group. The third group was of the Khawarij and the last group claimed their leader to be Muhammad Hanafiya. These were in fact the groups that were fighting against each other. Notice that no group claimed to stand for Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.).

Whereas these groups were busy fighting and killing each other, Imam Zainul Abideen spent his time spreading the Message of true Islam through ways which were free from politics but which were very effective.

In 73 AH, Abdul Malik sent a huge army to Mecca under the command of Hajjaj Bin Yusuf. Ibne Zubair was killed without any mercy shown to him.

Hajjaj Bin Yusuf then was made the Governor of Hijaz, Iraq and Persia (Kannan, Khuramsha). He was enemy number one of the Prophet, Imam Ali (a.s.) and other members of their family. His cruelty is described by Syed Ameer Ali in his Book *A Short History of the Saracens* in these words: "Whilst Governor of Hijaz, Hajjaj had cruelly oppressed the inhabitants of Medina and ill-treated the surviving companions of the Prophet. At one time he thought of razing the city to the ground. In the course of his long government over Iraq, he put to death nearly 150,000 men, many for false charges, some of them the best of the Arab Race. At the time of his death 50,000 people of both sexes were found rotting in his Prisons and cursing the tyrant."

It goes without saying that Imam (a.s.) must have been closely watched by both Abdul Malik and Hujjaj for a small cause for which he too could be severely punished like others. Indeed by some accounts Imam (A S) too was imprisoned for a short time by Abdul Malik. But then the life style of the Imam was so much in prayers that Abdul Malik had to free him fearing that his own people would turn against him if he harmed the Imam (a.s.).

Having ruled with an iron-hand for about 22 years, Abdul Malik at last died in 86 AH at an age of 62 years. His last two acts of cruelty before his death were: first, to deny his brother Abdul Aziz of rulership, and second, to make sure Hajjaj continued to commit his crimes against Muslims.

THE RULERSHIP OF WALID BIN ABDUL MALIK

He ruled for over nine years. The Sunni Historians Masudi and Ibn Athir describe him as a cruel and bad king.

He openly drank wine.

He continued using the services of Hajjaj and let him continue with his killings. On the advice of Hajjaj he removed Omar Bin Abdul Aziz as Governor of Medina because Omar ruled with kindness and gave shelter to those running away from Hajjaj's cruelty.

He gave high Government posts to Christians who ruled by breaking laws of Islam. For example, his Governor in Kufa, Khalid, constructed a church for his mother just behind the Mihrab of a mosque and he used to tell people that, "A sensible person does not memorise the Quran."

Walid's worst crime was that he ordered the Governor of Medina to kill Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) by poisoning him. This order was carried out and the Imam (a.s.) was martyred on 25th Muharram 95 AH.

WHY WAS THE IMAM (A.S.) MARTYRED?

It should have become clear by now that all the rulers from the Bani Umayyah took over rulership by force. The first ruler of the Bani Umayyah was Muawiya. He became Caliph only by force. So did his son Yazid. The house of Marwan, too, became rulers by force. For the same reason that Abu Sufyan hated the Prophet (s.a.w.w.), and Muawiya and Yazid hated Imam Ali (a.s.) and his children, Marwan and his children hated our other Imams.

These rulers knew that the Rightful persons to lead the Muslim were the Imams from the house of the Prophet. They always feared that people might one day open their eyes and put these Imams to power. These rulers therefore killed the Imams one after the other

thinking that by so doing they would succeed in killing Islam and then rule in any way they liked.

Having looked at the way things were, we cannot but say that it was only through miracle that Imam Zainul Abideen could live 35 years after the events of Karbala. He was surrounded on all sides by his enemies. Yet he succeeded in teaching true Islam every moment of his life.

Several things enabled the Imam to escape the immediate death from the hands of his enemies these are:

1. The martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and the imprisonment of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) turned the whole public against Yazid. Any harm done to the Imam could cause trouble for Yazid. So Yazid not only set the Imam free from the prison but gave special instructions against giving any trouble to the Imam.
2. The Imam's method of preaching Islam was such that it did not upset the Government. Who could worry from a person who either wept for his killed relatives or prayed to his Creator? The Government did not realise how effective these methods were until when it was too late.
3. The Imam's pure character and his great knowledge earned him so much respect even to those important people in Government like Zuhri that to cause any harm to him would be to invite opposition from the public.
4. The Government was all the time busy dealing with those people like the Tawwabun, Mukhtar and other who wanted to overthrow them by force. There was no time left to turn to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.). When the Government of Walid had made itself strong from all threats, it now turned to the Imam. Walid now regarded Imam as a danger to his Kingdom for two reasons. First, the Imam's reputation as a man of pure manners was rising day by day. This made the corruption and

bad living of the ruler look worse. Secondly, the ruler began to fear that Imam's growing popularity could result in people turning to him and help him overthrow the corrupt ruler.

Walid's fears must have become stronger when he heard of how the Imam was given a better treatment than Hisham at the Kaaba. He therefore gave strict instructions to his Governor to end the life of Imam (a.s.).

THE IMAM IS MARTYRED

The Governor of Medina got the Imam poisoned. The Imam left this world on 25th Muharram 95 AH. At that time his age, he was 57 years. He was buried in the graveyard of Baqi in Medina next to his uncle Imam Hasan (a.s.).

It is reported from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) that at the time of his death Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) had left special instructions concerning his camel which the Imam (a.s.) used to take with him on his journey to Hajj. The Imam had told his family that his death would affect the camel very badly. After his death the camel should be left on its own to do what it pleased. The camel was therefore set free. It went straight to the grave of the Imam and started shedding tears. It remained in this condition till it died.

Such was the love of even animals to Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.).

With the passage of time a modest but beautiful Mausoleum was build to house the Imam's grave. Unfortunately, in 1926 AD, the Wahhabi King of Saudi Arabia, destroyed the Mausoleum.

Muslims who go to the graveyard of Baqi cannot help cry when they see the poor condition in which the grave of the Imam is today.

QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1

Each item in column (A) below has its equal in column (B) below. Match each of the items (i) to (viii) from column (A) with its equivalent in column (B)

ITEM	COLUMN (A)	ITEM	COLUMN (B)
1	Zainul Abideen	i	Mother of the Fourth Imam
2	Masoom	ii	Son of the best two
3	Sheherbanu	iii	The Decoration of the Pious
4	Gayhanbanu	iv	Last King of Pre-Islamic Iran
5	Ibn Al-Khiyaratyn	v	Fourth Imam was Born
6	Yazdigard III	vi	Fourth Imam's Father was Martyred
7	38 AH	vii	Mother of Qasim
8	61 AH	viii	He does not commit any mistakes or sin

CHAPTER 2

- How was Imam Ali Bin Husayn's life saved:
 - On the Day of Ashura
 - In the court of Ibn Ziyad
 - In the Court of Yazid.
- Imam Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.) was very brave:
 - List two examples of his Bravery
 - For anyone example you have listed under (a) above explain how the Imam showed his Bravery.

CHAPTER 3

For each of 1 to 10 below there are 4 answers suggested of which only one is the best. Choose this best answer.

1. Yazid freed the Imam because:
 - (a) He realized his mistake
 - (b) He felt Pity for the Imam
 - (c) Out of love
 - (d) Out of fear
2. The Imam's main work was to
 - (a) Plan to overthrow Yazid
 - (b) Rise against Yazid
 - (c) Not to do anything
 - (d) To preach Islam
3. The Imam cried
 - (a) For the Martyrs of Karbala
 - (b) For the difficulties which fell on him
 - (c) For only his family
 - (d) None of the above
4. The Imam (a.s.) mourned for about 35 years because
 - (a) He wanted to get "THAWAB" from Allah
 - (b) It was the custom of those days to weep like this
 - (c) This was the best way to remember the sacrifices of the Martyrs of Karbala
 - (d) By so doing he would save his life
5. The Imam's "DUAS" were meant to
 - (a) To teach what true Islam is and how Muslims must live
 - (b) To teach people how to pray so as to get all their wishes fulfilled
 - (c) To keep away Muslims from politics
 - (d) To save Muslims from the cruelties of Banu Umayyah
6. The Imam (a.s.) was able to teach Islam in worst times because
 - (a) He did not allow people to come to him
 - (b) He was only crying and praying

- (c) The way he preached made him look “harmless”
 - (d) The Bani Umayyah liked and supported him
7. One of the most important results of the Imam’s teachings was:
 - (a) He became famous
 - (b) He became an excellent person and an authority
 - (c) People came to know that no one else was better than him
 - (d) None of the above
 8. The Government first allowed him to live but then decided to kill the Imam (a.s.) because
 - (a) No reason is given
 - (b) The Imam changed his ways of living
 - (c) The Imam was first quiet, then he started preaching openly against the Government
 - (d) First they thought he was “HARMLESS” but then they became afraid of him
 9. The Imam (a.s.) died being
 - (a) Killed through poison
 - (b) Killed in a Battle field
 - (c) Sick from a natural disease
 - (d) The cause of his death is not certain
 10. The person who caused the Imam’s death was
 - (a) Yazid Bin Muawiya
 - (b) Walid Bin Marwan
 - (c) Marwan Bin Hakam
 - (d) We don’t know: Because it is not given in this unit.

CHAPTER 4

1. What is the most important part of our faith regarding the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) Hazrat Fatima (s.a.) and the twelve Imams from the Prophet’s House?
2. Name two ways by which the Imam (a.s.) obtained slaves.

Explain how the slaves lived in the house of the Imam. What lessons did the Imam teach to the society of his time on the matters of slavery.

3. Giving examples, explain how the Imam dealt with his enemies. Why do you think the Imam treated his enemies like this?

CHAPTER 5

1. Giving examples, explain the difference between Magic and Miracles.
2. Why is it sometimes important for a Prophet or an Imam appointed by Allah to show a Miracle?

CHAPTER 6

1. Why is it that there are few sermons but more supplications of Imam Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.)?
2. In what way are the “DUAS” taught by Imam Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.) “SPECIAL”?

CHAPTER 7 AND 8

1. Each item in column (A) below fits with another item in column (B) below. Match each of the items 1 to 10 from column (A) with its equivalent in column (B)

ITEM	COLUMN (A)	ITEM	COLUMN (B)
1	Zayd Bin Ali	i	Ruled for less than a year
2	Muawiya Bin Abu Sufyan	ii	Ruled for over twenty years
3	Khalid	iii	Suleiman Surd Khizai
4	Marwan Bin Hakam	iv	Son of Yazid Bin Muawiya
5	Abdul Malik Bin Marwan	v	The Martyr
6	The “Tawwabun”	vi	“The Butcher”
7	Ibne Ziyad	vii	The “father” of the Umayyads

8	Musab Bin Zubair	viii	Killed Mukhtar
9	Walid Bin Abdul Malik	ix	The “Tyrant”
10	Hajjaj Bin Yusuf	x	Martyred Imam Ali bin Husayn (a.s.)

2. In the last thirty years of Imam Ali Bin Husayn (a.s.) life (65 AH to 95 AH) there were several groups in the Muslim empire each claiming rulership.

(a) LIST the Names of any three of these group leaders.

(b) For any TWO leaders named under (a) above complete the following table:

	(1)	(2)
Name of the leader		
The countries ruled		
Number of years ruled		
Cause of his Death		
What kind of a person was he?		



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