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أَنَا الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ

I M A M
AL HUSSAIN
BIN ALI (AS)

FAWZI AL-SAIF

2024

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AL HUSSAIN
BIN ALI (AS)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Contents

preface.....	11
The Tragic March of the Husayni Caravan from Karbala to Karbala	13
Did the Hussaini Caravan Meet Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari?	23
The Caravan of Captives in Kufa After Karbala	31
The different stances upon receiving the news in Kufa.....	33
Individual Outspoken Protests	37
The Clash between Tribes	39
The Defense of Abdullah ibn Afif	39

The Final Moments of Abdullah ibn Afif.40

The General

Position in Kufa 43

 A Hypothetical Scenario of the Events.44

 The Divided Reactions of the Kufan People.45

The Captives in Ibn Ziyad's Court 47

 A Noble Stance by Zayd ibn Arqam49

How Did They Address the Kufa Society? 51

 1. Lady Zaynab's (peace be upon her) Sermon.52

 2. The Speech of Fatimah bint al-Husayn56

 3. "Speech of Umm Kulthum, Daughter of the
 Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him).62

 4. The Sermon of Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn (Zain al-
 Abidin)64

The Journey of the Captives from Kufa to Sham 69

 Proponents of the Forty-Day Tradition:76

The Captives in Damascus. 79

Discussions in Yazid's Court 83

 The First Assembly.85

**The Sermon of Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) in
Yazid's Court. 89**

 Features and Observations89

 Translation of Zaynab bint Ali's Speech95

The Sermon of Imam Al-Sajjad (Peace be upon him). . 99

Yazid’s Attempt to Disavow the Crime 107

The Return to the City of the Prophet
 (peace be upon him and his family). 111

On the Return Journey to Medina from Karbala 112

References for the translated text:121

Main Primary Soureces. 129

preface

- 1.** The book in your hands, dear reader, is an abridgement of the biography of one of the fourteen infallibles in Shia Islam. Its pages constitute about 25% of the original book, which also bears the same title. With Allah's Grace and Will, the original book will be translated at a later date.
- 2.** This book, and the other books in the same series, are aimed at the young generation of Shia Muslims who do not have a good command of the Arabic language, in which the original book was written. It therefore assumes a basic knowledge of the concepts related to the Infallible and their life, and seeks to analyze and expand on them.

We note that there are very few translated books in English

on the lives of the Imams, especially for young English speakers. This is despite the importance of the topic, and it is one of the reasons that prompted this translation project.

3. Since this book and the rest of the series have been translated by multiple individuals and in different ways, it is natural that they will not all be in a consistent style. We would therefore be grateful if the reader would help us by pointing out any errors or observations they may have, so that they can be corrected in future editions.

I ask Allah Almighty to reward the reader, the author of these pages, and the translators with His recompense and blessings, and the intercession of the Infallibles, may peace and blessing be upon them.

Fawzi Muhammad Taqi Al Saif

Tarut - Qatif

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The Tragic March of the Husayni Caravan from Karbala to Karbala

After the great tragedy that occurred on the tenth of Muharram in the year 61 AH, the second chapter of the Husayni uprising began. This chapter was written by the non-combatant captives of ladies and children (a.k.a. captives), with the ink of their sufferings and the substance of their sorrows. We briefly address an issue that has been and continues to be a matter of debate among researchers and writers, known as the issue of Arba'een. This issue refers to the belief that this caravan of captives was taken from Karbala on the eleventh day of Muharram to Kufa, and from there to Sham (the Syrian Levant), then returned from Sham

to Karbala to arrive on the twentieth of Safar in the same year, taking a total of forty days.

While some researchers argue that accepting this notion and saying it is possible falls under the category of "telling the rational person something that is impossible," others believe it is not only possible but also a reality supported by events and numbers they provided to substantiate their claims.

Moreover, those who denied the possibility of this event did not agree on a single conclusion. Some speculated that the journey took months without specifying the number of months, while others believed that the return to Karbala in the month of Safar might have been in another year, specifically in the year 62 AH, rather than in the same year.

It should be noted, however, that the journey of the captives was expected from the beginning, as Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him, had foretold, "God has decreed that they will be captives," as mentioned in the book of al-Luhuf⁽¹⁾.

It appears that the main issue preventing the acceptance of this journey being completed within forty days are the following points:

1. There is a claim that after Ibn Ziyad received the captives in Kufa and satisfied his arrogance by parading them before the people of Kufa, he sent a message to Yazid ibn Muawiya asking what he should do with them. Should

(1) Lohof (Sighs of Sorrows), On the Martyrs of Tufoof (Arabic: اللهوف على قتل الطفوف, Romanized: Al-Luhoof 'Ala Qatla Al-Tufoof) by Radhi ud-Deen Ali ibn Musa ibn Tawus (1193–1266 AD).

he send them to him in Sham or what? Assuming this distance, even if they used postal animals, it would take at least a week to go and another week to return, making this a fourteen days round trip, to the least.

2. The main route, known as the Sultani road, with the many stops they passed through and staying in some places for days, would take at least a month (if not two months, as some have said) to reach Sham. If we add two weeks to this, that makes forty-four days, and they still would not have reached Sham.
3. The caravan of captives remained in Sham for a period ranging from ten days to a month. Adding this to the previous duration complicates the issue further, especially considering the return journey from Damascus to Karbala, which also adds to the complexity.

Several responses have been proposed, including one by the scholarly commentator al-Karbasi in the Husayni Encyclopedia. He asserts that the travel and return journey did indeed take place within forty days and provides what resembles a detailed timeline of the journey according to the days and regions in the history of the holy shrines. We summarize it in the following points:

First: The caravan of captives did not stay long in Kufa but departed for Sham on the nineteenth of Muharram, about a week after their arrival in Kufa. We do not believe that Ibn Ziyad needed to consult Yazid ibn Muawiya at every step. Neither Ibn Ziyad's character was such that he would wait submissively for instructions, nor did Yazid demand such subservience from Ibn

Ziyad, as he had given him the freedom to act and was only concerned with the outcome—eliminating Husayn, peace be upon him, and making him a lesson for others. It is plausible to accept what some have mentioned: that Ibn Ziyad sent a messenger to Yazid in Sham to inform him of the victory. It is said that the messenger was Zajr ibn Qays, who conveyed the news, but this did not require him to go, return, and bring back a response.

Second: The route taken by the caravan of captives on their outward journey was different from their return route. On the way to Sham, they took the Sultani road, and the purpose of this was clear: to display their victory in the regions and cities along the way. The people in these areas could witness the fate of those who rebel against the Umayyad authority, especially when the rebellion was led by a figure of the stature of Al-Husayn, peace be upon him. Despite his high status, he and his supporters faced death, and his women were taken captive. So, what would be the fate of someone of a lesser status?

However, on their return journey, they did not need to take the same route, as the reason for doing so had disappeared. A new development had occurred: Yazid was now distancing himself from the killing of al-Husayn, peace be upon him, and blaming Ibn Ziyad for acting hastily without Yazid's orders. Consequently, Yazid wanted to get rid of the captives as quickly as possible to close this chapter. Therefore, they needed a shorter route with fewer onlookers and populated areas. They took the desert route from Sham to Iraq, which the late Sayyid al-Amin referred to as the Arab Aqil route. Al-Tabasi, quoting

from the author of al-A'yan⁽¹⁾ in his book, stated, "It is widely believed that they arrived in Karbala on the twentieth of Safar, which is the basis for the Arba'een visitation of al-Husayn, peace be upon him, as mentioned by the infallible Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt, peace be upon them."

"It might be argued that the distance between Iraq and Sham (Syria) takes about a month to traverse, and they must have stayed in Sham for a period. How then could the round trip, along with staying in Sham, and traveling to Kufa and staying there for forty days be accommodated? It could be countered by noting that there is a direct route between Sham and Iraq that can be covered in a week due to its straightness, a route which the Arabs of Aqil used in our time. Some reports indicate that postal services traveled from Sham to Iraq within a week, and Arab pilgrims traveled from Hauran to Najaf in about eight days, so perhaps they took this route, secured sufficient water supplies, and minimized their stay in Kufa and Sham. Allah knows best."⁽²⁾

"Thirdly, which is the key point of the fundamental issue, when we consider the methods of travel and caravan movements in those times, we find that they align perfectly with the narratives stating that they arrived in Damascus on the first of Safar and stayed there for about nine days, then left towards Karbala via the mentioned route and reached it within nine days.

(1) Deaths of Eminent Men and History of the Sons of the Epoch (Arabic: *وفيات الأعيان وأنباء أبناء الزمان*, romanized: *Wafayāt al-A'yān wa-Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*) by author ibn Khallikān (1211 – 1282 AD).

(2) Source: "Ma'a al-Rakb al-Husayni, p. 187.

The explanation is that the average speed of a camel per hour was twenty kilometers, according to the standards of that time, and the camel's daily pace, which typically spans about eight hours (starting from dawn, especially in hot weather), would amount to 160 kilometers per day.

It might have been confusing for some in estimating how far a person can travel in a day. There are narratives suggesting distances covered by postal services or expressions like 'covering the day's journey,' estimating a walk of about eight farsakhs, equivalent to 44 kilometers. However, this estimation is accurate for walking without riding camels, which, as mentioned, can cover around 160 kilometers per day on average."

"Consequently, if we assume that the Sultanate Road chosen by the Umayyads for the outbound journey is approximately 2100 kilometers, dividing it by the average distance a camel can cover per day, which is around 160 kilometers or slightly more, the result would be that this distance could be covered in 13 days. This aligns with historical data indicating they arrived in Damascus on the first of Safar. Adding 13 days to the 19th of Muharram when they left Kufa would yield a consistent result.

The same applies when we apply it to the return journey, assuming it was through the Badia of Sham (The Syrian Desert), as mentioned by Sayyid Al-Amin. Assuming this route was approximately 1000 kilometers or more, and considering the daily camel pace of 160 kilometers, it corresponds with the narrative that they departed on the 11th of Safar in the year 61 AH and arrived on the 20th of the same month, which coincides

with the passing of forty days after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, peace be upon him.”

“Fourthly, the outbound route, as reported by the researcher Al-Karbasi, passes through approximately 37 houses, villages, and locations. The reception of the people along this route varied greatly. Historians report that some cities and regions welcomed the Umayyad troops warmly, providing them with hospitality, water, and their needs. However, there were villages and towns where the opposite occurred. The inhabitants sympathized with the captives and prisoners, insulted the soldiers, threw stones at them, and made it uncomfortable for them to stay in their areas. Naturally, this would expedite their journey, especially if the negative stance in those villages and towns towards the Umayyad troops constituted a significant percentage, possibly up to forty percent of the total villages and towns.

Fifthly, there are historians and astronomers who recorded the arrival of the captives in Sham on the first of Safar in the year 61 AH. With this confirmed testimony, there is no reason to dismiss it as unfounded.”

“Among the individuals who mentioned this is Abu al-Rayhan al-Biruni⁽¹⁾, who passed away in the year 440 AH. His testimony is significant because he was a historian, astronomer, and geographer. In his book ‘Al-Athar al-Baqiyah’⁽²⁾, he said: ‘On the first day of Safar, the head of Imam Hussein (peace be

(1) Abu al-Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni, died in 440 AH.

(2) Al-Biruni, Abu Rayhan: Al-Athar al-Baqiyah ‘an al-Qurun al-Khaliyah, p. 422.

upon him) was brought into the city of Damascus.' Additionally, Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi relayed from Sheikh al-Kaf'ami⁽¹⁾ and Sheikh al-Baha'i⁽²⁾ in his book 'Tawdih al-Maqasid,' where he stated: 'On this day, the head of Abu Abdullah Al-Hussein (peace be upon him) was brought to Damascus, and the Umayyads celebrated it as a festival.' The historian al-Kashani⁽³⁾ also mentioned in 'Taqwim al-Muhsinin'⁽⁴⁾ that 'On the first of Safar, the head of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) was brought into Damascus, a day celebrated by the Umayyads, a day of renewed grief:

The mourning gatherings in Iraq are counted, While the Umayyads in Sham celebrate it as their festivals.⁽⁵⁾

"And it appears from Sayyid al-Amin in al-A'yan that he accepts this, as he said in his book: '... It is well-known that they arrived in Karbala on the twentieth of Safar, and from there is the "Ziyarat of Arba'een" narrated by the infallible Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (peace be upon them), a full-length Eulogy, invoked in remembrance of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him)."

After completing the arrangement of this article, I decided to add a description of the incident and some of its aspects that were not mentioned here. I had previously included them

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- (1) Musbah al-Kaf'ami: 510. Sheikh Ibrahim ibn Ali al-Amili al-Kaf'ami (died around 905 AH).
 - (2) Sheikh Muhammad ibn Hussein ibn Abd al-Samad al-Harthi (died 1030 AH).
 - (3) Al-Kashani, Fayd al-Kashani: 15.
 - (4) Al-Amili, Bahaa al-Din: Tawdih al-Maqasid 4 (published within a collection of his works).
 - (5) Maqatal al-Husayn by al-Muqarram: 348.

in my book "From the Issues of the Hussaini Renaissance," to provide comprehensive benefits and so that the reader of this article does not need to refer to the other book. Here is the text of what was written there.

Did the Hussaini Caravan Meet Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari?

After a tiring and exhausting journey to Kufa and then to Sham, which lasted about forty days, the Hussaini caravan returned laden with the burdens of pain, alongside the wreaths of victory and the achievement of the goals of the Hussaini renaissance (and can the birth of noble goals occur without pain?). They headed to Karbala, the home of memories. There, at the place of martyrdom, they met Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari. Sheikh Imad al-Din Muhammad ibn Abi al-Qasim Muhammad ibn Ali al-Tabari narrated the story of the incident in his book "Bashara al-Mustafa" as follows:

Sheikh Al-Amin Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Shahriyar Al-Khazin narrated to us, while I was reading to him in the Holy Mausoleum of our master, the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), in Shawwal of the year 512 AH. He said: Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Muhammad Al-Barsi dictated to us. He said: Abu Tahir Muhammad ibn Al-Husayn Al-Qurashi Al-Muaddil informed me. He said: Abu Abdullah Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Hamran Al-Asadi narrated to us. He said: Abu Ahmad Ismail ibn Muhammad ibn Ali Al-Muqri narrated to us. He said: Abdullah narrated to us. He said: Ubaydullah ibn Muhammad ibn Al-Ayyadi narrated to us. He said: Umar ibn Mudrak narrated to us. He said: Yahya ibn Ziyad Al-Maliki informed us. He said: Jarir ibn Abdul Hamid narrated to us from Al-A'mash from Atiyah Al-Awfi, who said:

I went out with Jabir ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari visiting the grave of Al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him). When we arrived in Karbala, Jabir approached the banks of the Euphrates, bathed, then wrapped himself with one garment and wore another.

Then he opened a bundle containing some musk and scattered it on his body. He did not take a step without mentioning Allah the Almighty until he neared the grave. He said, "Let me touch it," so I let him touch it. He fell on the grave, unconscious. I sprinkled some water on him, and when he regained consciousness, he said, "O Hussain," three times. Then he said, "A beloved one does not answer his beloved." Then he said, "And how can you answer when your veins have been severed on your neck and your head has been separated from your body? I bear witness that you are the son of the Seal

of the Prophets, the son of the Master of the Believers, the son of the Ally of Piety, the descendant of Guidance, the fifth of the People of the Cloak, the son of the Master of the Nobles, and the son of Fatimah, the Mistress of All Women. How can you not be like this when the hand of the Master of the Messengers fed you, you were raised in the lap of the righteous, nursed from the breast of faith, and weaned on Islam? You lived a pure life and died a pure death. However, the hearts of the believers are not pure because of your departure, and they are not doubtful about your excellence. So may the peace and satisfaction of Allah be upon you. I bear witness that you followed the same path as your brother Yahya ibn Zakariya (John the Baptist)."

Then he looked around the grave and said, "Peace be upon you, O souls who settled in the vicinity of Hussain and alighted in his camp. I bear witness that you established prayer, gave alms, enjoined good and forbade evil, struggled against the disbelievers, and worshiped Allah until certainty (death) came to you. By the One who sent Muhammad with the truth as a Prophet, we have shared with you in what you have entered into."

Atiyah said: I asked him, "O Jabir, how is that possible when we did not descend into a valley, ascend a mountain, or wield a sword, while their heads were separated from their bodies, their children were orphaned, and their wives were widowed?" Jabir replied, "O Atiyah, I heard my beloved, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), say: 'Whoever loves a people will be resurrected with them, and whoever loves the deeds of a people will share in their deeds.' By the One who sent Muhammad with the truth as a Prophet,

my intention and the intention of my companions are aligned with what Hussain (peace be upon him) and his companions adhered to. Take me towards the houses of Kufa." When we had traveled part of the way, he said, "O Atiyah, may I advise you, for I do not think I will meet you again after this journey. Love those who love the family of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) for what they love, and hate those who hate the family of Muhammad for what they hate, even if they are fasting and praying abundantly. Be kind to those who love Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, for if one of their feet slips due to their many sins, the other will remain firm due to their love for them. For indeed, those who love them will return to Paradise, and those who hate them will return to Hell."⁽¹⁾

The martyr Sheikh Murtadha Mutahhari, may Allah have mercy on him, expressed doubt about the Hussaini epic regarding the meeting of the Hussaini caravan with Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari. He mentioned it under the title of "Verbal Distortions: The Story of the Captives' Visit to Hussain's Grave in Karbala and the Meeting of al-Sajjad with Jabir." This occurred after the captives reached a crossroads between Medina and Iraq and sought the help of Nu'man ibn Bashir to find the way to Karbala. However, the well-known visit is that of Jabir and Atiyah al-Awfi to Hussain's grave, and no more. (This is assuming that everything mentioned in the translated Arabic edition is correctly attributed to the martyr Mutahhari, which the researcher Sayyid Ja'far al-'Amili did not accept in his new book "Karbala Beyond Doubts").

(1) "Bashara al-Mustafa", p. 75.

The martyr Sheikh Murtadha Mutahhari, may Allah have mercy on him—being a meticulous researcher—did not mention anything that would indicate the incident was not genuine or that it involved verbal distortions. His concern for accuracy and his enthusiasm against unacceptable exaggerations in the Hussaini narrative, as noted by readers of his work, may have influenced his stance.

Although there is no explicit historical account of the incident in ancient historical sources—such as what remains of the "Maqatal" of Abu Mikhnaf al-Azdi⁽¹⁾, from which al-Tabari quoted extensively but selectively, using only what was relevant to his historical account—the absence of this incident does not undermine its credibility. Al-Tabari also did not mention the original visit of Jabir al-Ansari. The lack of mention in ancient historical sources does not detract from the credibility of the incident. The first to mention this visit was the author of "Bashara al-Mustafa", who passed away after the year 553 AH. Sheikh al-Tabari adhered to the title "Basharat al-Mustafa li Shi'at al-Murtada" (The Good Tidings of the Chosen One to the Followers of al-Murtada).

"I only include in it ["Bashara al-Mustafa"] the authentic reports from the esteemed and trustworthy scholars. Sheikh al-Tabari, being a student of Ibn Sheikh al-Ta'ifah al-Tusi (may Allah exalt their status), in that era, can have his testimony on authentication accepted, as it is based on knowledge rather than conjecture or personal opinion. Even so, one can be assured of the reliability of those in the chain of this narration

(1) The Husaini Obituary by Abu Mikhnaf Al-Azdi

recorded in his book, as they are discussed in the field of hadith sciences under the general categories of authentication. "Bashara al-Mustafa" is considered one of the books that affirm the reliability of those mentioned in its narrations. Whether this applies to everyone in the chain of narrators, which seems more apparent given that the author, being well-versed in this field, aims to verify the authenticity of his narrations, or specifically to his teachers, is a matter of discussion within this field."

As mentioned by the esteemed Sheikh Ibn Nama al-Hili⁽¹⁾ in his book "Muthir al-Ahzan" (p. 76, printed by the Haidariyya Press in Najaf), albeit briefly, regarding the meeting between Jabir and the captives: "When the family of Hussain passed through Karbala, they found Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (may Allah have mercy on him) and a group of Banu Hashim who had come to visit him at the same time. They met with sadness, grief, and lamentation over this tragic event that wounded the hearts of the loved ones."

This text was also published in the margin of "Maqatal al-Hussain" by Abu Mikhnaf al-Azdi, p. 220.

The topic was also mentioned by Sayyid Ali ibn Tawus al-Hili, who passed away in 664 AH, in his book "al-Luhuf" on page 196. He wrote:

"When the women and children of Hussain returned from Sham and reached Iraq, they told the guide: 'Take us by the

(1) Sheikh Najm al-Din Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ja'far Abi al-Baqā' Hibatullah, who passed away in 645 AH, was one of the teachers of Ayatollah al-Allama al-Hili.

way of Karbala.' They arrived at the place of martyrdom and found Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (may Allah have mercy on him) and a group of Banu Hashim who had come to visit the grave of Hussain. They all arrived at the same time and met with weeping, grief, and lamentation."

We do not see any reason to reject the mentioned narration. Historically, the captives entered Sham on the first day of Safar, as noted by Abu al-Rayhan, al-Kaf'ami, al-Bahai, and al-Muhaddith al-Kashani. They stayed in Sham for five or seven days before returning to Karbala. Considering that their outward journey was longer due to stops in Kufa and the fact that they were being paraded, while their return was direct, a period of fifteen or thirteen days would be sufficient for reaching Karbala.

Additionally, I later found a statement from Sheikh al-Ta'ifah al-Tusi, may Allah have mercy on him, indicating that the fortieth day (Arba'een) was the day when the family of Hussain arrived in Karbala, which is also the day Jabir ibn Abdullah visited Hussain's grave. I thought it important to include this in these pages.

It might be mistakenly thought that the day in question refers to the date and occasion rather than the personal visit, but this is quite far from the context of the narration, as you will see. Sheikh al-Tusi mentions in Misbah al-Mutahajjid:

"On the twentieth of Muharram, the family of our master Abu Abdullah Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon them) returned from Sham to the City of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). This is the same day on which Jabir ibn Abdullah ibn Haram al-Ansari, companion

of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), came from Medina to Karbala to visit the grave of Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him). He was the first to visit it. It is recommended to visit him on this day, which is known as the visitation of Arba'een."⁽¹⁾

23/07/2024

(1) This was also cited in Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 14, p. 479. It is noted that al-Mufid also narrated it, though my reference to Masar al-Shi'a is not available for verification.

The Caravan of Captives in Kufa After Karbala

In the ziyarat attributed to the sacred sanctuary, it is stated: “Your family was taken captive like slaves, shackled in iron chains. The heat of the scorching sun seared their faces as they were paraded through deserts and wastelands.”

31

The impact of the battle on Kufa’s social scene occurred in two stages. The first stage took place on the evening of the tenth day when Khiwalla ibn Yazid al-Asbahi, accompanied by Humayd ibn Muslim al-Azdi, carried the head of al-Husayn, peace be upon him, by order of the commander of the Umayyad army, Umar ibn Sa’d, to deliver it to the governor’s palace as a sign of the end of the battle and the “victory” achieved by Ibn Ziyad. Despite the short distance between Kufa and Karbala, which is no more than eighty kilometers—a distance

that a hurried rider could cover in less than three hours—al-Asbahi, eager to receive his reward, did not manage to reach the governor’s palace at a convenient time and arrived after sunset. It was crucial for him to be the one carrying the head and presenting it to Ibn Ziyad. Therefore, he did not want to give the head, for example, to the guards to deliver it to Ibn Ziyad, as this would mean losing his reward.

Humayd ibn Muslim reported what happened on the afternoon of the tenth day. He then accompanied Khiwalla, although he mentioned that the palace was closed and recounted the events between Khiwalla and his two wives.⁽¹⁾ However, he did not elaborate on his specific role in the process, whether he accompanied Khiwalla the following day to meet Ibn Ziyad, or if he received any reward. This absence of detail requires a critical and thorough study of how Humayd ibn Muslim al-Azdi documented the events. Some of his words suggest he was sent by Umar ibn Sa’d with the sole mission to inform them of his well-being, as narrated by al-Tabari: “He dispatched me to his family to deliver the news of God’s victory and his safety, so I went to his family and informed them of this.”⁽²⁾

(1) Al-Tabari, Volume 4, Page 348: “That night, his wife asked him, ‘What news?’ He replied, ‘I bring you the wealth of ages; this is the head of al-Husayn with you in the house.’ She responded, ‘Woe to you! People bring gold and silver, and you bring the head of the Prophet’s grandson. By God, we will never share a house again!’”

(2) Al-Tabari, Volume 4, Page 349

The different stances upon receiving the news in Kufa

I find it appropriate to remind of two issues that might be clear to some but hidden to others. The first issue is the definition of the term “captives”, in Arabic: (سبایا), Romanized: Sabaya, and the second is how to reconcile Imam al-Husayn’s, peace be upon him, statement to them that God would protect and safeguard them, yet they were still taken captive.

Regarding the first issue, the term “captive” Arabic: (سبيية), Romanized: Sabiyya as used in the region of Sham, carries such a repugnant connotation that they refuse to use it for the women of the Ahl al-Bayt, referring to them as captives or using the term “caravan of captives.” It is as if the term “captive” implies sexual violation, a meaning that has come to be associated with the term. This interpretation was applied

by the modern-day Daesh (ISIS) to some of the women they captured from their opponents.

However, the expression of the Ahl al-Bayt captives as "sabaya" (سبایا) is present in the texts. It exclusively denotes being taken prisoner, subjected to beating, abuse, and forced relocation from one place to another against their will. This differs from the other connotation that sometimes aligns with servitude and humiliation, let alone sexual exploitation and assault on their dignity.

In the sermon of Lady Zaynab, peace be upon her—who was knowledgeable in eloquence and precise in her usage of words—she said: "Is it just, O son of the freed ones, to keep your women and slave girls in seclusion while you parade the daughters of the Messenger of God as captives, with their veils torn off and their faces exposed, making them vulnerable to the gaze of every passerby?"⁽¹⁾ We might notice that Lady Zaynab, when emphasizing this term, explained it in detail in the following sentences to clarify the extent of their captivity: "their veils torn off and their faces exposed, etc." However, in another instance, when a man from Sham wanted to take Fatimah, daughter of al-Husayn (or daughter of Ali), into servitude and humiliation, she strongly refused and said, "That is not for you." When Yazid responded that he could do so if he wished, she said, "No, unless you renounce our religion."⁽²⁾

(1) This phrase is mentioned in her sermon as reported by Sayyid Ibn Tawus in "al-Luhuf", page 106.

(2) Al-Tabari, Volume 4, Page 353.

These last lines clarify the answer to the second issue. When Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him, said that God would protect and safeguard them, he did not mean that the women would not face any harm at all, as this is not possible even for a person in their own home, let alone when they have come to a battlefield and will experience its fire and consequences. It is natural that when they are taken captive, they would be subjected to what Lady Zaynab mentioned and elaborated in her sermon, but not to the extent implied in her words to Yazid and the man from Sham.

This introduction serves to preempt objections to the use of terms like “caravan of captives” or similar expressions.

Now, let’s return to observing the different reactions within Kufa’s society. We may encounter some ambiguity in forming a general picture of it, but this does not prevent us from capturing various scattered images that may collectively form a suitable representation.

The first thing we notice is the presence of individual familial reactions. Women of the fighters in the Umayyad army denounced their husbands’ actions. This is the natural response that does not require a special environment, social arrangement, or anything else. When these women learned of the events, some of them objected and rejected their husbands’ actions, deciding to separate from them from that moment on, seeing life with them as intolerable. We previously referred to the reaction of al-Nawar al-Hadramiyya to her husband, Khiwalla ibn Yazid, who brought al-Husayn’s head to their home. Of course, this was not a general situation, as we could find women who were indifferent, as if the matter

did not concern them at all. There were even instances where two wives of the same man took different stances, such as the Asadi woman who sided with him.

Individual Outspoken Protests

The enormous shock inflicted by the Umayyads through the killing of Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him, and his companions in such a brutal manner, followed by the captivity of his women, left the people of Kufa in a state of bewilderment and stupor. They were neither fully believing nor fully disbelieving, unable to act or even comprehend. Despite this, some people with insight boldly objected and shattered the veil of silence and betrayal.

Abdullah ibn Afif al-Azdi, who was blind, exemplified this. His blindness could have provided him with sufficient personal excuses and justifications if he sought them, yet after hearing Ibn Ziyad's so-called "victory speech," Abdullah ibn Afif transformed it into a scandal before the people.

Ibn Ziyad ascended the pulpit and said: "Praise be to Allah, who has revealed the truth and its people, who has supported the Commander of the Faithful, Yazid ibn Muawiya, and his party, and killed the liar, the son of the liar, Husayn ibn Ali and his followers." Before Ibn Ziyad could finish his speech, Abdullah ibn Afif al-Azdi, then al-Ghamidi, and one of Banu Walibah, who was a Shiite of Ali, peace be upon him, interrupted him. He had lost his left eye during the Battle of Jamal with Ali, and in the Battle of Siffin, he received blows that caused him to lose his other eye. He rarely left the great Masjed, praying there until nightfall.

When he heard Ibn Ziyad's words, he exclaimed: "O son of Marjana, you and your father and the one who installed you and his father are the liars! How dare you kill the sons of the Prophets and speak with the words of the righteous!" Ibn Ziyad then ordered his guards to arrest him. Abdullah ibn Afif cried out with the slogan of the Azd tribe, and Abdul Rahman ibn Mukhnif al-Azdi, who was present, said: "Woe to you! You have destroyed yourself and your people." At that time, there were seven hundred fighters from the Azd tribe in Kufa. Young men from the Azd tribe quickly intervened, rescued Abdullah ibn Afif, and brought him to his family. Ibn Ziyad then sent for him, had him executed, and ordered his crucifixion in the swamp area, where he was left to hang. ⁽¹⁾

Historical sources suggest that the movement of the Azd tribe almost turned into a tribal conflict between the Mudar and the Yemeni tribes. Ibn Ziyad had deployed Yemeni forces

(1) Al-Tabari, Volume 4, Page 351

to arrest Abdullah ibn Afif, following the Umayyad practice of pitting one group against another to ensure their loyalty to the regime. Some leaders of the Yemeni tribe may have supported this strategy to confuse the situation. When the Azd tribe learned of the plan to arrest Abdullah ibn Afif, they rallied together and were joined by the Yemeni tribes to protect him. Ibn Ziyad responded by gathering the Mudar tribes and assigning them to Muhammad ibn al-Ash'ath, commanding him to fight the opposing forces.

The Clash between Tribes

The Mudar tribes advanced towards the Yemenis, and the two sides clashed fiercely. When Ibn Ziyad learned of this, he sent messages to his supporters to reprimand them. Amr ibn al-Hajjaj informed him of the Yemeni tribes' gathering against them. Shabath ibn al-Rub'i also sent a message: "O Prince, you have sent us to fight lions in the thickets; do not be hasty." The fighting intensified, resulting in the deaths of several Arab combatants.

The Defense of Abdullah ibn Afif

The supporters of Ibn Ziyad then broke into Abdullah ibn Afif's house, smashing the door and storming in. His daughter cried out, "O my father, the enemy has come from an unexpected direction!" He responded, "Do not worry, my daughter. Hand me the sword." She handed him the sword, and he took it up, defending himself, singing a metered rhymed poem:

"I am the son of the chaste and pure, the virtuous one,

A'feef, my master, and the son of Umm 'Amir.

How many warriors have gathered, armored and unarmored,

And heroes whose departure by my hands is certain"

The Final Moments of Abdullah ibn Afif

His daughter lamented, "I wish I were a man so I could fight these wicked ones, the killers of the pure family." Abdullah ibn Afif fought fiercely, defending himself with his sword against those attacking him from all sides. Despite his valor, they overwhelmed him and captured him. Jundub ibn Abdullah al-Azdi remarked, "To Allah we belong and to Him we return. They have indeed taken Abdullah ibn Afif; life is despicable without him."

He was then brought before Ibn Ziyad. Upon seeing him, Ibn Ziyad said, "Praise be to Allah who has disgraced you." Abdullah ibn Afif responded, "O enemy of Allah, is this how you disgrace me? By Allah, if God had restored my sight to me, you would have found my death to be much more difficult for you."

Ibn Ziyad asked, "O enemy of yourself, what do you say about Uthman ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him?" Abdullah replied, "O son of Abdul⁽¹⁾, son of Marjana and Sumayya, what do you and Uthman ibn Affan have in common? Whether Uthman did good or ill, Allah, Blessed and Exalted, is the Guardian of His creation and will judge between them and Uthman with

(1) Abdullah ibn Afif implied that Ibn Ziyad was questioned about his lineage and his mother's background, suggesting he was a slave and questioning his legitimacy.

justice and truth. But ask me about your father, and about Yazid and his father.”

Ibn Ziyad said, “By Allah, I will not ask you anything else or you will taste death.” Abdullah ibn Afif said, “Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. I had asked my Lord for martyrdom, and now I thank Him for granting it to me after losing hope and fulfilling my old prayers.”

Ibn Ziyad then ordered his execution. Abdullah ibn Afif’s neck was struck, and he was crucified—may Allah have mercy on him.⁽¹⁾

(1) Al-Futuh, Volume 5, Page 126.

The General Position in Kufa

It is evident that the community in Kufa was paralyzed from taking any immediate or collective action in response to the arrival of the captives. This situation warrants a detailed study and reflection on how such paralysis occurred and its underlying causes.⁽¹⁾

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(1) [Several factors could explain this paralysis:

1. Political Repression: The Umayyad regime, led by Ibn Ziyad, was known for its strict and oppressive measures to maintain control. This likely created an environment of fear and intimidation that stifled any public dissent or action.

2. Divided Loyalties: The Kufi society was fragmented, with different factions having varying loyalties and interests. This division could have contributed to a lack of unified action or support for the captives.

A Hypothetical Scenario of the Events

On the morning of the 12th of Muharram, following the entry of the captives' caravan, the markets in Kufa were likely closed, marking an official holiday. It would be natural for people to come out to observe and investigate the situation, as is common in any society where people are eager to witness significant events firsthand, provided there are no obstacles.

At that time, as with other periods, media (albeit rudimentary by today's standards) played a role in drawing attention to and reporting events. The caravan of captives would likely have been paraded through the main streets, culminating in the administrative center, which was the governor's palace, attached to a prison. Nearby, the Great Masjed of Kufa would have been another significant site.

It is also possible that Imam al-Husayn's head was displayed with the other heads to emphasize the Umayyad victory and conquest. Although it had already been delivered to Ibn Ziyad

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3. Psychological Impact: The shock and trauma of the events, including the brutal killing of Imam al-Husayn and the subsequent captivity of his family, may have left the community in a state of disbelief and inaction.

4. Social Hierarchy: Social and tribal hierarchies might have influenced the response, with some groups possibly feeling disempowered or unwilling to challenge the authority of the Umayyad rulers.

Understanding these factors can provide insights into why the Kufi society, despite its potential capacity for action, failed to effectively respond to the injustice and suffering inflicted upon the captives.]

by Khawla ibn Yazid on the morning of the 11th of Muharram, there may have been a strategic decision to include it with the other heads to maximize the impact of the Umayyad triumph.⁽¹⁾

The Divided Reactions of the Kufan People

As expected, the people of Kufa had varied reactions to the arrival of the captives, divided into several groups: those who were sympathetic and sorrowful, those who were gloating supporters of the Umayyads, and those who were indifferent, only concerned with how the situation affected their daily lives.

Among the sympathetic group, there were signs of emotional support and assistance. Some Kufan women, upon asking the captives about their identity and hearing from Sukayna that they were the captives of the family of Muhammad, were moved to tears and expressed their disapproval of the situation. They went to their homes and neighbors to gather scarves and coverings to help the captive women conceal themselves.

(1) It is reported that when Zaynab, peace be upon her, saw Imam al-Husayn's head among the other heads again, she recited famous lines attributed to her:

«O crescent when it had completed its perfection,
The eclipse came casting it down and away.
I never imagined, O twin of my heart,
That this was decreed and written.»

These lines are traditionally attributed to her response upon seeing the head of al-Husayn, though some sources, like Sheikh Muhammad al-Samawi in «Al-Tali>ah» and others, attribute them to Ibn Hamad al-Jaza>iri.

Additionally, it is reported that some Kufan women, seeing children and orphans among the captives, approached them with nuts, dates, and bread. However, the children were instructed not to accept these offerings because charity is forbidden for the family of Muhammad.⁽¹⁾

(1) [This explanation aligns with the respect and honor attributed to the Ahl al-Bayt and the protective measures taken to uphold their dignity even in captivity.

From a jurisprudential perspective, however, scholars do not generally prohibit voluntary charity (*sadaqah*) for the Hashemites; the prohibition applies specifically to obligatory alms (*zakat*). The refusal of the children and orphans to accept the food might have been to avoid the humiliation that did not align with the dignity of the Ahl al-Bayt. Another interpretation suggests that it might have been due to a vow made in the wake of al-Husayn's martyrdom, although clear sources for this possibility are not available.]

The Captives in Ibn Ziyad's Court

After the public display, the captives were brought to Ibn Ziyad's palace, where he had gathered his military commanders and political advisors. Fueled by a sense of triumph, he began to mock them. Noticing a woman who had withdrawn and was trying to remain inconspicuous, he inquired about her identity. When told that she was Zaynab bint Ali, he said, "Praise be to God who has killed you, disgraced you, and proven your claims to be lies."⁽¹⁾

(1) [This interaction highlights Ibn Ziyad's attempt to assert dominance and humiliation over the captives, using the occasion to publicly denounce and belittle them. However, Zaynab's composed and dignified response to his provocations would have served to underscore her resilience and the moral victory of the Ahl al-Bayt, even in the face of such adversities.]

It is important to recognize the Umayyad doctrine of predestination (jabr) that they continually propagated⁽¹⁾, which stood in stark contrast to the concept of divine justice upheld by the Ahl al-Bayt. The Umayyads exploited this erroneous doctrine to justify their actions and maintain its influence within the Muslim community. Ibn Ziyad's statement that "God has killed al-Husayn and disgraced you" reflects this belief, attributing the murder to divine will rather than acknowledging the culpability of Ibn Ziyad, Ibn Sa'd, and their soldiers.

Ibn A'tham recounts a detailed conversation in his book *al-Futuh*, which slightly differs from al-Tabari's version. According to Ibn A'tham:

When Ibn Ziyad was informed that the woman before him was Zaynab bint Ali, he said, "Praise be to God who has disgraced you and proven your claims to be lies." Zaynab replied, "Praise be to God who honored us with His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) and purified us thoroughly in His Book. The dissolute is disgraced, and the liar is proven false." Ibn Ziyad then asked, "How did you find what God did to your brother and your family?" Zaynab responded, "I saw nothing but beauty. These people were destined by God for martyrdom, and they went to their resting places. God will gather you and them, O Ibn Ziyad, and you will be judged and

(1) [This doctrine allowed the Umayyads to deflect responsibility for their crimes by claiming they were merely executing God's will. In doing so, they manipulated religious beliefs to consolidate their power and suppress opposition, perpetuating a narrative that served their interests while undermining the teachings of justice and accountability emphasized by the Ahl al-Bayt.]

disputed. Look who will be triumphant on that day, may your mother be bereft of you, O son of Marjanah!"

Ibn Ziyad became furious, but 'Amr ibn Harith al-Makhzumi interjected, "May God rectify the emir! She is a woman, and women are not held accountable for their words." Ibn Ziyad retorted, "God has indeed healed my soul from your tyrant and the rebellious individuals from your household." Zaynab responded, "You have killed my senior, cut my offspring, and uprooted my lineage. If this is your healing, you have indeed been healed." Ibn Ziyad remarked, "This is courage without doubt. Truly, your father was a poet and courageous."⁽¹⁾ Zaynab replied, "What does a woman have to do with courage?"^{(2) (3)}

A Noble Stance by Zayd ibn Arqam⁽⁴⁾

Among those present in that assembly was Zayd ibn Arqam, who took a noble stance despite his old age. When he saw the head of al-Husayn placed before Ibn Ziyad, who was poking at

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- (1) We can assume here that he meant to say that she is an eloquent poet, which was a point of weakness for Ibn Ziyad since his speech was not very fluent!
 - (2) al-Futuh, 5/122.
 - (3) [This dialogue illustrates Zaynab's strength and eloquence, which unsettled Ibn Ziyad. Her responses reflect her unwavering faith and resilience, contrasting sharply with Ibn Ziyad's attempts to belittle and humiliate her. Zaynab's words underscore the moral and spiritual victory of the Ahl al-Bayt, even in the face of physical defeat and suffering.]
 - (4) Zayd ibn Arqam al-Khazraji al-Ansari: He died after 61 AH, and some say in the year 68.

his teeth with a stick⁽¹⁾, Zayd could not remain silent. He said, "Remove that stick from these teeth, for by Allah, there is no god but Him, I saw the lips of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) on these lips, kissing them." Then the elderly man burst into tears. Ibn Ziyad replied, "May Allah make your eyes weep! By Allah, if you were not an old man who has lost his mind, I would have had your neck struck off." Zayd then stood up and left. The narrator says, "I heard people saying, 'By Allah, Zayd ibn Arqam said something that if Ibn Ziyad had heard it, he would have killed him.' I asked, 'What did he say?' They replied, 'He passed by us saying, 'A slave has taken possession of other slaves and made them his property. You, O Arabs, are slaves after today. You killed the son of Fatimah and appointed the son of Marjanah to rule over you. He kills your nobles and enslaves your wicked ones. You have accepted humiliation, so woe to those who accept humiliation.'"⁽²⁾

Ibn Ziyad ordered the women to be taken away and placed in a house close to the governor's palace, which might have been one of the prison rooms prepared for such cases. The person in charge of this task was Mari ibn Mu'adh al-Ahmari, who can be classified today as military police.

Then, he called for the congregational prayer as it was near noon. Following this, the strong confrontation with the martyr Abdullah ibn Afeef al-Azdi, previously discussed, took place

(1) "Lisan al-Arab", 12/202: The "thaniya" refers to the front teeth; a person's "thaniya" are the four front teeth, two from the upper jaw and two from the lower jaw.

(2) "al-Tabari", 4/348.

How Did They Address the Kufa Society?

Four main speeches have been recorded in historical texts: those of Imam Zain al-Abidin, Lady Zainab, Umm Kulthum, and Fatima bint al-Hussain (peace be upon them all). Through these speeches, we can observe the diversity in their manner of address while maintaining a unified focus on guidance and admonishment. Despite the lack of prior coordination in the content and wording among the speakers, we ultimately see a form of complementarity in their messages.

1. Lady Zaynab's (peace be upon her) Sermon⁽¹⁾

We can discern a set of core ideas emphasized by Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) in her speech in Kufa⁽²⁾. This was

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- (1) [Lady Zaynab, daughter of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), delivered a powerful and eloquent sermon in Kufa, addressing the people with both rebuke and sorrow. This sermon is remembered for its emotional intensity and rhetorical skill, as she condemned the people of Kufa for their betrayal and cowardice. Here is an excerpt from her sermon:

“Praise be to Allah and blessings upon my grandfather Muhammad and his pure and virtuous family. O people of Kufa! O people of deceit and betrayal! Do you weep now? May your tears never dry up and your lamentations never cease. You are like the woman who painstakingly spins her yarn and then breaks it into pieces. You have pledged loyalty, yet you turned against it. There is nothing in you but empty pride, discord, and mischief. Your allies are as worthless as dust, and your promises are untrustworthy. Beware of the everlasting torment prepared for the oppressors. Your treachery will turn against you and you shall be engulfed in a great fire.”

Lady Zaynab's words were a poignant reminder of the people's disloyalty and a testament to the resilience and strength of the Ahl al-Bayt (the family of the Prophet) despite their suffering. Her sermon served not only as a rebuke but also as a call to conscience for the people of Kufa.]

- (2) [Lady Zaynab's Key Themes in Her Sermon:

1. Condemnation of Betrayal:

Lady Zaynab strongly condemned the people of Kufa for their betrayal and lack of support for Imam Hussain and his family. She highlighted their hypocrisy and treachery, comparing their actions to the woman who breaks her own yarn after spinning it, symbolizing their disloyalty and unreliability.

2. Emphasis on the Injustice Faced by Ahl al-Bayt:

her first speech and the first speech in Kufa by the captives from the family of the Prophet (peace be upon them).

Significance of the Speech

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She vividly described the injustices and atrocities committed against the family of the Prophet. She portrayed the suffering of the women and children, emphasizing the brutality and inhumanity they endured.

3. Reminder of the Prophet's Teachings:

Lady Zaynab reminded the people of Kufa of the teachings and legacy of the Prophet Muhammad, highlighting the sanctity and purity of his family. She underscored the contradiction between their actions and the principles taught by the Prophet.

4. Call for Reflection and Repentance:

Her sermon served as a call to conscience, urging the people to reflect on their actions and repent. She pointed out the moral and spiritual decay in their society and called them to return to the righteous path.

5. Prediction of Divine Retribution:

Lady Zaynab warned the people of the inevitable divine retribution awaiting the oppressors. She emphasized that their actions would not go unpunished and that they would face consequences both in this world and the hereafter.

6. Expression of Steadfastness and Resilience:

Despite the immense suffering, Lady Zaynab's words conveyed a sense of resilience and steadfastness. She demonstrated the unyielding strength and dignity of the Ahl al-Bayt, even in the face of great adversity.

These themes not only served to condemn the actions of the people of Kufa but also to uphold the values and principles of the Ahl al-Bayt, reinforcing their unwavering commitment to justice and righteousness.]

Thus, it holds special significance for these two reasons. Among the key ideas she focused on in her address to the people were:

1. The disgrace of the disparity between emotions and actions, and that excessive mourning without assuming responsibility is ineffective.
2. The disgrace of pretending to have genuine faith and loyalty while, in reality, being like one who unraveled her own woven cloth after its strength, taking oaths in vain among yourselves. Are there any among you except for arrogance and ignorance, boastful pretenders, and enemies' conspirators, or like a pasture over a dung heap or like worthless silver? Woe to what your souls have sent forth, and in torment, you will abide forever.
3. Placing the crime of killing Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) in its grand scale, showing that it is not merely the killing of a man by the authority, but extends to the assault on the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) personally. It is the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) who was grieved, his head that was truly severed and mutilated, and his family and women who were taken captive. You have effectively made a captive of the Prophet through the captivity of his women and children.
4. Is a cold tear or a faint sigh sufficient for this? You have brought forth a terrible and disgraceful sight, as large and imposing as the earth (just as the sun rises over it).

5. Indeed, in this, she emphasizes, for the first time in historical records, that the sky rained blood, in reaction to this calamity and in reverence for what occurred as a result. By doing so, she achieves two objectives at once: she historically affirms the event to prevent its denial, and she establishes the cosmic reaction and significance of the tragedy.

Sources and Transmission

The text of the sermon was transmitted by Ibn A'tham from Khuzaymah al-Asadi, who said: "I looked at Zainab bint Ali (peace be upon him) that day and had never seen anyone more eloquent than her, as if she spoke with the tongue of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him). She signaled to the people to be silent, and they fell silent. Then she said: 'Praise be to Allah and blessings upon Abu Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, and his pure, chosen family. O people of Kufa, O people of deceit and betrayal, do you weep? Your tears are of no value. You are like the woman who unraveled her weaving after it was complete, making your oaths mere deceit among you (Qur'an 16:92)⁽¹⁾. Woe to what you have prepared for yourselves, for Allah is angry with you and you will abide in punishment. You weep and lament! Indeed, weep a lot and laugh a little, all because you have violated the sanctity of the son of the last prophet, the master of the youth of Paradise,

(1) Qur'an 16:92: "And do not be like that woman who unraveled her spinning thread after it was strong, for taking your oaths as a means of deceit among yourselves."(Al hujur)

tomorrow's refuge, and your sanctuary, your guide, and the support of your tradition. How evil is what you sow!"

"Banishment to you and destruction! For your efforts have failed, your hands are damned, your bargain has been lost, and you have turned away with the anger of Allah. Humiliation and poverty have been decreed upon you. Do you know, woe to you, O people of Kufa, what liver of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) you have torn, what blood of his you have shed, what family of his you have inherited, and what sanctity of his you have violated? {Indeed, you have brought forth something terrible * The heavens almost rupture therefrom, and the earth splits open, and the mountains collapse in devastation}⁽¹⁾. Indeed, you have brought it forth in an ugly, monstrous form, as vast as the earth. Are you astonished that the sky rained blood? And the punishment of the Hereafter is more disgraceful, and you will not be aided. So do not let the delay deceive you, nor the haste tempt you, nor the fear of losing revenge concern you. No! Your Lord is surely ever Watchful."⁽²⁾

2. The Speech of Fatimah bint al-Husayn

It appears from Sayyid Ibn Tawus in "al-Luhuf" that the speech was given by Fatimah bint al-Husayn (peace be upon her), referred to as the "younger" (in contrast to the "older," which is Zainab, daughter of Ali) following their arrival from

(1) Qur'an 16:92: "And do not be like that woman who unraveled her spinning thread after it was strong, for taking your oaths as a means of deceit among yourselves."(Al hujur)

(2) Al-Futuh 5/122.

Karbala to Kufa. He said: Zaid ibn Musa reported that his father told him, from his grandfather (peace be upon them), that Fatimah al-Sughra (the younger Fatimah) delivered a speech after coming from Karbala to Kufa. She said:

First, we will outline the main ideas she covered, followed by the text mentioned by Sayyid Ibn Tawus (may Allah have mercy on him). In this speech, she addressed the following key ideas:

1. Emphasis on the Concept of Praise to Allah

Fatimah bint al-Husayn (peace be upon her) emphasized the concept of praising Allah to an extensive degree (e.g., “as numerous as the sand and gravel and the weight of the throne to the earth...”) and asserted that what had happened was indeed something for which the Creator should be praised. She then recalled a doctrinal issue: that Allah had taken a covenant from people to believe in the testament of Ali ibn Abi Talib, and that those who oppose this are contradicting what Allah has revealed. She pointed out that this Kufa community, instead of defending their Imam against oppression in his lifetime, ultimately allowed him to be martyred in a house of Allah, despite having a group that professed Islam with their tongues and claimed faith but lacked in the practical application of that faith. She noted that the martyrdom of his descendants, including al-Husayn (peace be upon him) and his supporters, was a continuation of this unjust killing. Furthermore, we will see a similar note in the speech of Imam Zain al-Abidin, delivered about a month later in the court of Yazid ibn Muawiya, where he will detail the virtues of Ali ibn Abi Talib and reassert his role. Fatimah’s speech also delved into these aspects in some detail, relative to the size of her speech.

2. Accountability of the Kufa Community

Similar to her aunt Zainab, Fatimah bint al-Husayn shocked the Kufa community by holding them responsible for the killing of al-Husayn and his companions. She emphasized that they had failed the trial that Allah had subjected them to. While it was expected that they should follow the family of the Prophet, whom Allah had made the repository of His knowledge and wisdom and His argument against the people of the earth, they instead turned against them, deeming their killing lawful and their property as spoils. This, she said, was all a fabrication against Allah, but Allah is the best of those who plot.

Here, one should notice that the words of Fatimah, with their sequence and repetition, are akin to hammers striking those heads one after another. The variety in her rhetorical methods is notable; sometimes she makes statements, at other times she asks questions, and occasionally she expresses outrage. Observe how she speaks here: "Do you know which hand among you struck us? And which soul was inclined to fight us? Or with which foot did you walk towards us seeking to combat us? Your hearts have indeed become hard, your livers hardened, your hearts sealed, and your ears and eyes sealed."

"And the text she delivered was as follows:

'Praise be to Allah, praises as numerous as the sand and pebbles, and as weighty as the throne to the earth. I praise Him, believe in Him, and place my trust in Him. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah alone with no partner, and that Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) is His servant and messenger. His descendants were slaughtered by the

banks of the Euphrates without any right or justice! O Allah, I seek refuge with You from bearing false witness against You and from saying anything contrary to what You have revealed regarding the covenants taken for Your successor, Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), whose right was usurped, and who was killed without any guilt—just as his son was yesterday—in a house of Allah.

In it, there was a group who were Muslim in their speech –may their heads perch in misery– as they did not defend him from injustice in his lifetime or at his death, until You took him unto Yourself, praised in his lineage, with a pure nature, known for his virtues, and famous for his doctrines. Never was he undermined on your path, O Allah, by reproachers and blamers. You guided him – O Lord – to Islam as a youth and praised his virtues as a mature man. He was always sincere to You and Your Messenger (peace be upon him and his family) until You took him unto Yourself. He was ascetic in this world, not eager for it, longing for the Hereafter, and striving in Your way. You were pleased with him, chose him, and guided him to a straight path.”

“To proceed: O people of Kufa, O people of deceit, treachery, and arrogance, indeed we, the family of the Prophet, have been tested by Allah with you, and you have been tested by us. Allah made our trial good, and He placed His knowledge and understanding with us. We are the repository of His knowledge, the container of His understanding and wisdom, and His argument against the people on earth in His domain. Allah honored us with His grace and preferred us with His

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) over many of His creation with a clear distinction.

Yet you denied us, disbelieved in us, and considered fighting us lawful and our property plunderable, as if we were the children of a foreign tribe or outcasts. Just as you killed our grandfather yesterday, with your swords dripping with our blood, driven by ancient enmity that delighted your eyes and rejoiced your hearts, it was all a fabrication against Allah and treachery you plotted. Indeed, Allah is the best of the schemers.”

“Do not let yourselves take pleasure in the blood you have shed from us and the wealth you have seized. For the calamities and trials we have faced are great, as mentioned in the Qur’an: ‘No disaster strikes on earth or among yourselves but is inscribed in the Book before We bring it into being. Indeed, that, for Allah, is easy. So that you do not despair for what has escaped you and do not rejoice for what He has given you. And Allah does not like every arrogant boaster’ (Surah Al-Hadid: 22-23)⁽¹⁾. Woe to you, wait for the curse and punishment that will have surely descended upon you. Heavens will have sent down its frequent retribution, and He will punish you with torment, causing you to suffer the wrath of one another. Then you will dwell in painful punishment on the Day of Judgment for what you have wronged us with. May Allah curse the wrongdoers.

(1) “No disaster strikes on earth or among yourselves but is inscribed in the Book before We bring it into being. Indeed, that, for Allah, is easy. So that you do not despair for what has escaped you and do not rejoice for what He has given you. And Allah does not like every arrogant boaster;”, The Holy Quran, Surah Al-Hadid (57:22-23)

Woe to you! Do you know which hand among you has struck at us? And which soul was inclined to fight us? And with which foot you marched forth seeking to battle us? Your hearts, By Allah, have hardened, your livers have thickened, and your hearts have been stamped. Your ears and eyes have been sealed, and Satan has deluded you, dictated you astray, and rendered blur onto your sight, that you never find guidance.”

“Woe to you, O people of Kufa! What retribution have you brought upon the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) with your betrayal of his brother, Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), my grandfather, his sons, and the righteous descendants of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)? You boast about it, saying:

‘We killed Ali and the sons of Ali,

With Indian swords and lances,

And took their women as captives as if [captives of the] Turks,

And we rammed them; what a ramming!’

“With your own mouth, grubby and grimy, boast about killing those whom Allah has purified and cleansed! Sit silently [in the manner of the dog], like your father sat, as each person will have what they earn and what their hands have sent forth. Are you envious of us—woe to you—for the blessings Allah has given us?

‘What is our fault if time has stirred up our waves,

And your sea is calm, hiding its depths?

That is the favor of Allah, He gives it to whom He wills. Allah is the Possessor of Great Favor⁽¹⁾. And whoever Allah does not grant light, for them there is no light⁽²⁾! ⁽³⁾

3. “Speech of Umm Kulthum, Daughter of the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him)”

After recounting the speeches of Lady Zainab the noble and Fatima the younger, Sayyid Ibn Tawus mentioned that Umm Kulthum, the daughter of Ali (peace be upon him), also gave a speech on that day, raising her voice and crying behind her veil.

At this point, it is important to consider a historical issue: Did Imam Ali (peace be upon him) have two daughters, Zainab and Umm Kulthum? Or were they one and the same person known by different names, as suggested by the late Sayyid al-Muqarram in his book “Maqatal al-Husayn”⁽⁴⁾?

While this discussion might not be the focus here and could be explored in topics related to the Imam’s children or family life, the current context provides useful insight. The text indicates that there were indeed two separate individuals, as it would be unreasonable to suggest that one woman gave speeches in two different contexts and with completely different styles,

(1) The Holy Quran, Surah Al- Al-Jumu’a (62:4)

(2) The Holy Quran, Surah An-Nur (24:40)

(3) The book al-Mulhif by Seyyid Ibn Tawus page 197

(4) Al-Muqarram, Abdul Razzaq: “The Obituary of Al-Husayn” Romanized: “Maqatal al-Husayn,” pp. 325 and 332.

yet is referred to differently by the narrator. Therefore, it seems incorrect to claim that there was only one person who was referred to by both name and nickname.

“Upon examining the formulation of the report and then the speech itself in terms of the meanings addressed by Umm Kulthum and the styles of her discourse, there is a significant difference compared to the eloquence and forcefulness of the words found in the speech of Zainab the noble. Indeed, what was said about Lady Zainab—that she was the most articulate or that her speech flowed from her father’s tongue, or what Ibn Ziyad said about her words—does not apply to what was said by her sister Umm Kulthum.”

“This speech by Umm Kulthum, brief in words, is akin to an outburst of pain mixed with tears and lamentation. It draws inspiration from what her sister Zainab said and derives from it, but there is a significant difference between the two speeches, and the contrast is clear in their fabric. Let’s see what Umm Kulthum said, as also reported in "al-Malhoof": ‘O people of Kufa, blights upon you! What is wrong with you? You abandoned and killed Hussein, plundered his wealth, inherited him, and took his women captive. Woe upon you and damnation. Woe to you! Do you know what calamity has befallen you? What burdens you have borne? What blood you have spilled? What noble ones you have wronged? What young ones you have deprived? What wealth you have looted? You killed the best of men after the Prophet, and mercy has been removed from your hearts. Indeed, the party of Allah will be victorious, while the party of Satan will be the losers.’”

Then she wailed in a metered and rhymed piece:
“You killed my brother in cold blood, so woe to your mother.
You will be punished with a fire that blazes.
You shed the blood of those whom Allah forbade to shed,
which the Quran and then Muhammad made sacred.
So, rejoice in the fire, for tomorrow you will
be in the depths of a fire whose heat rises.
Indeed, I weep in my lifetime for my brother,
for the best after the Prophet will be born.”

4. The Sermon of Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn (Zain al-Abidin)

Then Zain al-Abidin (peace be upon him) motioned to the people to be silent, and they became quiet. He stood up, praised Allah, and extolled Him, mentioning the Prophet as befitting, and sent blessings upon him. He then said:

“O people, whoever knows me, knows me; and whoever does not know me, I will introduce myself: I am Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib. I am the son of the one who was slaughtered by the banks of the Euphrates without any lawful reason or justification. I am the son of the one whose honor was violated, whose comforts were taken away, whose wealth was plundered, and whose family was taken captive. I am the

son of the one who was killed in cold blood, and that alone is a source of pride.”

“O people, I implore you by Allah, do you not know that you wrote to my father, deceived him, and gave him your pledge, oath, and allegiance, only to fight him and abandon him? Woe to what you have done for yourselves and how ill is your judgment! With what face will you look at the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) when he says to you: ‘You have killed my family and violated my sanctity, so you are not of my nation’?”

The narrator said: The voices of the people rose from every side, and some said to others: “You are doomed, and you do not know.”

He said: “May Allah have mercy on the person who accepts my advice and keeps my trust in Allah, His Messenger, and His family, for we have a good example in the Messenger of Allah.”

They all said: “We are all, O son of the Messenger of Allah, listening, obedient, and holding to your trust, not disinterested in you or turning away from you. Command us as you wish, may Allah have mercy on you. We are at war with your enemies and at peace with your allies; we will confront Yazid and disassociate ourselves from those who have wronged you and us.”

He (peace be upon him) said: “Never, never, O treacherous and deceitful ones! The desires of your own selves have been kept away from you. Do you want to come to me as you came to my father before? No, by the Lord of the dancing ones (toward Mina)! The wound has not yet healed. My father (peace be

upon him) and his family were killed yesterday, and I have not forgotten the grief of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) and the grief of my father and my father's family. His anguish is between my jaws, and his bitterness is between my throat and my larynx, and his pangs flow through my heart's bed.

My plea is that you should neither be with us nor against us."

Then he said in a metered and rhymed piece:

"Not surprising that the killing of Hussein, for his master was better than Hussein and more honorable.

So do not rejoice, O people of Kufa, at what has befallen Hussein. What happened to Hussein was indeed a greater matter.

A slain one by the riverbank, my soul be sacrificed for him,
the recompense for his killer is: the Fire of Hell."

66

Then he (peace be upon him) said: "We are satisfied with you with a head for a head; we have no day either for us or against us."⁽¹⁾

Although this speech is not considered long in terms of wording, it addresses important matters:

1. He identifies himself as the son of the martyred Hussein, who was killed by the riverbank without retaliation (without

(1) al-Lahuf /93 and al-Ihtijaj and others.

any reason). This is significant because some of the people of Kufa might not necessarily know Imam al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) and his background, as it highlights that he is the son of one who had his blessings taken and his honor violated.

2. The second point, which he was awaiting a response for and which is not found in the other speeches in the same manner, is that he questioned them about whether they had written to Hussein and pledged to support him, only to later deceive him. He asked them what they would say to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) if he questioned them about this, and why they had forsaken his progeny. He stated that the Prophet would deny them from his ummah.

Since the question was direct and an answer was expected from them, they responded: "All of us, O son of the Messenger of Allah, are listening, obedient, and maintaining our loyalty to you, not desiring anything from you or turning away from you. Command us, may Allah have mercy on you. We are at war with your enemies and at peace with your allies. We will certainly take revenge on Yazid and disassociate ourselves from those who wronged you and us."

However, the Imam (peace be upon him) rejected this emotional response, which was not practical in reality. How quickly these people could move their tongues to express support and their eyes to shed tears without taking any actual action. What prevented them from acting, especially since they had been watching the captives of the Prophet's family since

morning without moving or speaking a word? Was the issue still waiting for Imam al-Sajjad to give them orders?

Thus, he (peace be upon him), exposing them, said: "Never! Never! O treacherous and deceitful ones."

He indicated that the matter was due to "being prevented from the desires of your souls," meaning that their love for life, desire for survival, and fear of sacrifice were all obstacles preventing them from taking the stance they had suggested.

He settled for a position from them that did not require any commitment or reliance on them, which was: "My request is that you be neither for us nor against us." In other words, he was not expecting their support or assistance but, at the very least, he did not want them to join in with the Umayyads and their supporters in mocking or aiding against the family of the Prophet.

The Journey of the Captives from Kufa to Sham

The period of the Husayni captives' stay in Kufa, including the length of their stay and the date of their departure towards Sham, forms the main challenge that has led researchers to struggle in mapping the route to Sham and then to Karbala. This has cast a significant shadow over the entire scene, making it very unclear. However, this period holds the key to the solution if it is properly addressed.

The skeptics of the possibility of the Husayni caravan reaching Damascus by the first of Safar of the same year have based their arguments on an unsupported and unclear report. Additionally, this report contradicts historical evidence and facts that will be shown to be inconsistent with it. If this report

were dismissed due to its mentioned weaknesses, the solution would become clear and the picture would be evident.

The researcher al-Karbasi mentioned—an assertion with which we agree—that the stay of the caravan did not exceed a week. They departed on the 19th of Muharram, 61 AH, towards Sham, following the route we will discuss later, and we concur with his view.

However, we pause here at the fundamental issue that led researchers like al-Nuri and those who followed him to insist on the impossibility of traveling to and returning from Karbala within forty days.

The news of the dispatch to Sham is neither credible in its chain of narration nor its content.

Let us first consider what Sayyid Ibn Tawus (d. 664 AH) reported, which is the primary source relied upon by Shiite authors. He said, "As for Yazid bin Muawiya, when he received the letter from Ubayd Allah bin Ziyad and understood its content, he sent a reply ordering him to send the head of al-Husayn, peace be upon him, along with the heads of those killed with him, and to send his belongings, women, and children"⁽¹⁾.

The author of the book⁽²⁾ "Return of the Caravan after the Calamity", page 116, commented on the mentioned report by Sayyid Ibn Tawus as follows: "Despite extensive searching and investigation, I did not find any book that details how

(1) Al-Luhuf, p. 95.

(2) Qadi Tabataba'i, Sayyid Muhammad Ali: "Return of the Caravan after the Calamity

this letter was delivered to Sham and its reply sent to Kufa, or in what manner it occurred." However, his conclusion was, in our estimation, unsatisfactory. He suggested that the communication was carried out via carrier pigeons, which led to complications since it was pointed out that the use of carrier pigeons was introduced much later, towards the end of the Umayyad period. The correct conclusion he should have reached is that there is no evidence supporting the existence of this letter or its reply, nor do the general historical indicators support it. Additionally, it is unlikely that Ibn Ziyad was waiting for orders from Yazid, as will be discussed shortly.

Regarding Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari (d. 630 AH), he mentioned: "It is said⁽¹⁾ that when the family of al-Husayn arrived in Kufa, Ibn Ziyad imprisoned them and sent news to Yazid. While they were in prison, a stone fell upon them with a book tied to it. In it was written: 'The courier has set out with your orders to Yazid and will return on such-and-such a day. If you hear the Takbir (proclamation of Allah's greatness), be certain of your execution; if you do not hear the Takbir, you are safe.' A day or two before the courier was due to return, another stone was thrown with a book tied to it, saying: 'Make your wills and prepare, for the courier is near.'⁽²⁾

(1) It appears that Ibn al-Athir took this from al-Tabari 4/354, where he said: (Hisham ibn al-Kalbi said) As for 'Awānā ibn al-Hakam al-Kalbi, he said that when al-Husayn was killed and the captives and spoils were brought to Kufa to 'Ubayd Allah, while the people were detained, a stone fell into the prison, etc.

(2) Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh 4/83.

And we do not rule out the possibility that Sayyid Ibn Tawus relied on the narration of Ibn al-Athir. Sayyid Ibn Tawus mentioned it without attributing it to anyone, and if he did rely on Ibn al-Athir, considering the close temporal proximity between them, it still depends on the phrase “it is said,” which weakens its reliability. Moreover, its wording is mystical and otherworldly, which cannot be verified in any way. Who could have reported such a completely mystical account? A stone fell on them with a book tied to it, detailing their fate, specifying the day the courier set out, the day he would arrive, and the day he would return, as if the speaker was the All-Knowing in such precise detail, which is known only to someone granted knowledge from God. Furthermore, they were told to make their wills and preparations, as if they were expecting relief, rest, and a safe return to their homes during this journey.

Such a report, with this kind of wording and style, is typically found in the stories of storytellers who have no reliable source, and there are many similar stories from them! They often use birds coming from here and there to stop or carry out an execution, or to imprison or release a person.

If we were to clearly examine the relationship between Ibn Ziyad and his ruler, Yazid (may they both be cursed), we would find that Ibn Ziyad did not rely on Yazid’s orders. Instead, he would take the lead and push it to the utmost extent without waiting for orders. This, of course, does not absolve Yazid bin Muawiya of full responsibility, which is another discussion.

Given the special importance of this issue, we address it to refute the claim that Ibn Ziyad needed to wait twenty days, as

some have said, for the courier to go to Damascus and return with Yazid's instructions on what to do with them.

Yazid's main objective was to suppress the uprising of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) by any means necessary, including murder, to maintain his rule. He found no one more suitable for this task than Ibn Ziyad, whether this was done upon the advice of Sarjun as suggested or not. He gave him this mission, and Ibn Ziyad began by killing Muslim ibn Aqil and taking control of Kufa. Then he started mobilizing massive armies against Imam Hussain (peace be upon him), reaching, according to some investigations, thirty thousand soldiers.

The various actions of Ibn Ziyad do not indicate at all that he was waiting for detailed orders from Yazid. A comparison can be made between any other Umayyad governor, such as al-Nu'man ibn Bashir or Amr ibn Hurayth, and Ibn Ziyad, to highlight the significant difference in Ibn Ziyad's initiative in matters versus others who would halt and consult or ask for advice in every matter.

Even in the general assembly in Kufa, Ibn Ziyad was determined to kill Imam Ali ibn Hussain (peace be upon him) merely because he had responded to him. He even stood up to strike Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) for simply discussing matters with him. Such a character does not hesitate or deliberate on what to do with the captives. Instead, he would fully exploit the "victory" by parading and publicizing it across regions. He knew that Yazid would not oppose such actions and would not wait for the mail to arrive before making decisions.

The decision to deprive Imam Hussain and his companions, including women and children, of water was solely Ibn Ziyad's decision, without waiting for orders from Yazid. Likewise, Ibn Ziyad's order to desecrate the body of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him)—a practice not customary in Muslim wars—shows that he was acting on his own initiative, knowing that it would not harm the dead but rather serve to insult and desecrate, as he stated in his message to Umar ibn Sa'ad.

The act of beheading and bringing the heads to Kufa, as well as bringing the women, required decisions that only Ibn Ziyad would make and not anyone else.⁽¹⁾

There is some truth in what Yazid ibn Muawiya said about Ibn Ziyad in that Ibn Ziyad's actions made Yazid disliked by the people. Yazid might have argued that if he had been in charge, he would not have done all that Ibn Ziyad did. The truth in this statement is that Ibn Ziyad acted with a bloody and cruel personality, finding killing as natural as a savage who is enticed by the sight of blood.

However, the criticism of Yazid is that he chose Ibn Ziyad for this mission knowing his character. When Ibn Ziyad carried out these actions, Yazid did not disapprove, restrain him, or punish him. On the contrary, Ibn Ziyad's status was elevated, and Yazid

(1) Dr. Sheikh Ja'far al-Muhajir, in his book "Mawkeeb al-Ahzan" (p. 20), expressed strong skepticism about the waiting for the letter and reply, pointing out that Ibn Ziyad acted from a position of power and was capable of making decisions on his own. He suggested that the captives only stayed a few days, just enough to arrange military escort.

continued to host and honor him even after the killing of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him).⁽¹⁾

From the above, it is clear that the report transmitted by Ibn al-Athir, and partially relied upon by Sayyid Ibn Tawus regarding the sending of a messenger (letter) from Ibn Ziyad to Yazid in Damascus and waiting for his reply before the movement or halt of the captives, cannot be accepted. This is due to the lack of evidence supporting it, as it relies on an unspecified source and the narrative itself is not credible.

Moreover, an analysis of the content reveals that the idea of Ibn Ziyad waiting for Yazid's decisions does not align with the nature, personality, and decisions of Ibn Ziyad during his period of governance over Iraq.

Accepting such a report as a confirmed fact is problematic, especially since it has been used by some skeptics of the forty-day journey to question its validity. Given the weaknesses in the report, it cannot be considered a reliable cornerstone for such skepticism.

With the dismissal of this report, several issues become evident. Those committed to the idea of the letter from Ibn Ziyad to Yazid being central to the narrative face numerous problems. They struggled with the notion that the return of the messenger

(1) According to Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Mas'udi in "Muruj al-Dhahab" (3/66), Yazid once drank with Ibn Ziyad after the killing of Imam Hussain and praised him in the presence of others. Ibn Ziyad was rewarded with a large sum of money and his status was elevated, as reported by Ibn A'tham in "Al-Futuh" (5/135).

would take a week, ten days, or twenty days, or even longer. Consequently, some began to hypothesize that the captives might have stayed in Kufa for a month, raising questions about what they were doing during that time.

After dismissing the previously discussed report, the more plausible explanation is that the captives remained in Kufa for several days. This period allowed for the completion of the "victory celebration" and for Ibn Ziyad to present himself as the triumphant defender of the Umayyad state. During this time, preparations were made for the journey to Syria, including organizing guards for the captives and selecting a suitable route.

The display of victory served to deter others from rebelling against the Umayyad regime. The message was clear: if someone of Hussein's stature could be killed and his family taken captive, it would discourage others from daring to rise against the Umayyad authority.

Proponents of the Forty-Day Tradition:

The proponents of the forty-day tradition have a clear path to support their claim. They can rely on historical records indicating that the captives arrived in Damascus at the beginning of Safar in the year 61 AH. Additionally, they can use credible reports that confirm the head of Hussein (peace be upon him) was reunited with his body, which implies that the events must have occurred within the forty-day period. They can further substantiate their claim by calculating the distances

between cities and considering the travel times of camels over long distances.

In contrast, those who question the forty-day tradition do not offer a coherent theory, let alone one that is acceptable to others or supported by evidence. They mainly present a series of objections, doubts, and exclusions, often lacking thorough geographical or historical analysis. They do not provide clear information on when the captives left Kufa—whether it was after a month or more—or how long the journey took, given that it was said to pass through forty stations, which could require a month or even two. They also lack clarity on when the captives arrived in Damascus, how long they stayed there, and when they returned to Karbala, with some even suggesting it could have been several months later or even into the following year.

The Captives in Damascus

On the first Friday of the month of Safar, 61 AH, around mid-morning, the caravan of captives arrived at the outskirts of Damascus. It is likely that, at this time, Yazid was reciting his famous verse:

“When those camels appeared and those suns

shone on the heights of Jiroun,⁽¹⁾

The raven croaked, and I said, ‘Caw or don’t caw,

I have fulfilled my debts from the Prophet.”

(1) Yazid was known to have had a palace on the heights of Jiroun, northeast of the Khadra Palace. (Labeeb Baydoun: Encyclopedia of Karbala, p. 413).

Since the event was to be marked by a celebratory and victorious display, and it was a Friday, the arrangements were made in advance to coincide with the gathering of people for the Friday prayer. This timing was the best opportunity for showcasing their victory. It is said that the caravan of captives was halted at the famous Damascus gate known as Bab Tuma until the people had assembled and completed their Friday prayers, so that the procession could be paraded before the spectators.

It is unclear whether the name "Bab al-Sa'at" [Gate of Hours] mentioned in some historical texts related to the events of Karbala refers to that time or if it pertains to the duration the captives were held at Bab Tuma while waiting for the spectators to leave the Friday prayer, or if it is not related at all.

It is evident that significant preparations were made by the Umayyad authority to exploit the "victory" over Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) to consolidate the Umayyad rule and display their power and authority.

While Ibn Ziyad in Kufa capitalized on the situation to enhance his personal reputation and demonstrate his firmness and capability, it is natural that Yazid and his regime would do the same or even more. Therefore, it is believed that the caravan of captives remained on display for the spectators exiting from the Friday prayers that day. After this, they were paraded through the main streets of the city (shown around the markets), and this process continued until they were brought to the gate of Yazid's palace, where a large gathering had been assembled to receive and exhibit the captives.

It is thought that this reception and display were not isolated incidents but were repeated on subsequent days and involved various events. However, the initial presentation is believed to have occurred in this manner.

In an exaggerated display of the guards' diligence, the women, children, and Imam Ali ibn Husayn (peace be upon him) were bound with ropes when they were brought before Yazid. When they were presented in this state, Imam Ali ibn Husayn asked Yazid, "What do you think the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) would say if he saw us in this condition?" This question was, understandably, shocking and startling to Yazid, leading him to order the removal of the ropes.

Discussions in Yazid's Court

Naturally, Yazid sought to present his perspective on the events and “rationalize” what had transpired. The incident was public and could be interpreted in various ways, so tyrants and rulers aim to frame events to serve their interests. Similarly, Ibn Ziyad in Kufa had engaged in discussions with Imam Ali ibn Husayn and Zainab, dismissing their responses because he knew it was crucial for him that people accept his narrative rather than that of his opponents.

Yazid intended to do the same, trying to impose his interpretation of events despite the flawed nature of his reasoning. He wanted others to accept his viewpoint as if saying, “I show you only what I see.”

A Single Assembly or Multiple Assemblies?

We believe that during the period the captives were in Damascus, at least three assemblies were held. Two of these were likely between Yazid ibn Muawiya and the captives of the Husayni caravan. The first was on Friday after the midday prayer, in Yazid's palace, which we will describe in detail. This was the primary meeting where the confrontation began with preliminary discussions, followed by the incident where Yazid struck the holy head with a cane staff, and the reactions from some attendees, especially from Sayyida Zainab al-Kubra (peace be upon her), and her speech.

We also believe that another meeting took place, most likely the following day, at the masjed known as the Umayyad Masjed. This session probably started in the morning and concluded by the noon prayer. It included a speech by Imam Ali ibn Husayn (peace be upon him), which was interrupted, as we will discuss. This meeting ended with the dispersal of the captives to some buildings adjacent to Yazid's palace, which was close to the masjed.

84

It is also possible that there was a third meeting, which we do not believe included the women. This meeting could have been a standard official reception, where the ruler would receive guests or visitors. We hypothesize that during this period, some scholars or Christian officials may have come to Damascus, and upon learning about the events, they might have objected or protested the practices.

While we lack definitive evidence for these scenarios, we can infer details based on the context of each event. For example, the first meeting, which took place after Friday prayers and the departure of people from the masjed, would likely differ from

the second meeting that occurred when the call to prayer was announced, followed by the congregational prayer, as historical sources indicate.

The First Assembly

Upon the arrival of the captives and the removal of their shackles, as mentioned, Yazid, like many tyrants and oppressors, did not merely take satisfaction in the event of killing and capturing. He also sought to present to the audience a justification for his actions and a condemnation of his opponents. Historical sources record the following:

When they were brought in and presented to Yazid, who was then in the presence of the prominent people of Syria, he looked at Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) and asked, "Who are you, young man?" He replied, "I am Ali ibn al-Husayn." Yazid said, "O Ali! Your father, al-Husayn, severed my kinship, ignored my rights, and challenged my authority⁽¹⁾. So Allah dealt with him as you have seen." Ali ibn al-Husayn replied:

"No disaster strikes on the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being. Indeed, that for Allah is easy." [Qur'an 57:22]⁽²⁾

(1) Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Muluk wa al-Umam*, Vol. 5, p. 343.

(2) Surah Al-Hadid (57:22): "No disaster strikes on the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being. Indeed, that for Allah is easy."

Yazid then said to his son Khalid, "Respond to him, my son." Khalid was at a loss for words, so Yazid continued:

"And whatever strikes you of disaster is due to what your own hands have earned. But He pardons much." [Qur'an 42:30]⁽¹⁾

Then again, after Khalid, his son, failed to respond, Yazid said:

"This (referring to al-Husayn) used to boast to me and say: 'My father is better than the father of Yazid, and my mother is better than his mother, and my grandfather is better than Yazid's grandfather, and I am better than Yazid!' So this is the one who was killed! As for his claim that 'my father is better than Yazid's father,' my father contested with his father and Allah judged in favor of my father over his. And as for his claim that 'my mother is better than Yazid's mother,' it is true that Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet (peace be upon him), is better than my mother. And as for his claim that 'my grandfather is better than Yazid's grandfather,' no one who believes in Allah and the Last Day would say that anyone is better than Muhammad (peace be upon him). And as for his claim that 'I am better than Yazid,' perhaps he has not read this verse:

"Say, 'O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You exalt whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is good. Indeed, You are over all things competent.'" [Qur'an 3:26] ⁽²⁾

.....
 (1) Surah Ash-Shura (42:30): "And whatever strikes you of disaster is due to what your own hands have earned. But He pardons much."

(2) Al-Futuh, p. 129; Tarikh al-Tabari, Vol. 4, p. 355 (abridged). A simple reflection shows the flawed reasoning of Yazid in claiming that Allah

Positions After the exalted Head was Struck .1

In a provocative move, Yazid took a cane staff and continued to strike the lips and teeth of the head of Abu Abdullah al-Husayn (peace be upon him). This act was shocking to all present, including those who were considered companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or their followers, as well as the noble family of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

He recited a poem, quoting Abdullah ibn al-Zubair, and added his own lines:

"I wish my forefathers at Badr had witnessed
 The dismay of the Khazraj at the clash of swords.
 They would have celebrated and rejoiced
 Then said, 'Yazid, may you not be paralyzed!
 I wouldn't be of Khandaf if don't take vengeance
 Against the descendants of Ahmad for what they did."

Naturally, this act, which was beyond all ethical and natural standards, elicited various reactions, some of which were expressions of disapproval, others of protest, and still others of loud opposition.

One of the reactions reported is that Abu Burza al-Aslami⁽¹⁾ was present at the assembly and, upon witnessing this act,

.....
 favored him over al-Husayn or that his father was preferred over Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (peace be upon him).

(1) Mentioned by Sayyid Ali Khan al-Madani in *Asfiyā' Ali* (peace be upon him), in *Al-Darajāt al-Rafi'ah*, p. 418.

objected by saying: "Remove your stick from the mouth that I have seen the Messenger of Allah kiss." He wept and left in protest, and this sentiment was also reported by others.

The most forceful reaction came from Zainab, the daughter of the Commander of the Faithful Ali (peace be upon him), who was ignited by this heinous assault to a fervent state of protest. She delivered a powerful and eloquent speech, notable for its profound meaning and sharp style, which merits a detailed explanation that we may discuss later due to its significant moral and literary depth.

We assume that the conclusion of Zainab's speech contained a challenge that Yazid could only respond to with vague words, such as his saying: "A cry that is praised among all cries, how insignificant is death against the mourning cries."

The speech ended with her saying: "So scheme your schemes, strive your hardest, and oppose with all your effort, for by Allah, the shame will not be removed from you. Isn't your opinion anything but futile? Aren't your days nothing but counted, and your gathering nothing but dispersed. Come the Day when the caller announces: 'The curse of Allah be upon the wrongdoers.'"

This was approximately how the first and principal assembly concluded, as imposed by Lady Zainab (peace be upon her).

The Sermon of Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) in Yazid's Court

Although our approach in the previous pages did not involve detailed explanations of sermons, including those of Lady Zainab (peace be upon her), we will focus more intently on this sermon. We need to observe the following:

89

Features and Observations

1. "The Miraculous Nature of the Speech and the Bitterness of the Surrounding Circumstances:" Lady Zainab's sermon reaches a level of miraculous eloquence compared to others, as it encapsulates profound meanings with superior rhetorical styles in a relatively brief text. "Despite the many

elements that could have naturally weakened the structure of the speech (in terms of content, style, or form), Lady Zainab's sermon remains remarkably potent. The sermon was delivered improvised, and improvised speeches are generally more prone to weakness compared to prepared and rehearsed ones. When Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) saw Yazid ibn Muawiya mocking the face of Abu Abdullah al-Husayn (peace be upon him) with his well-known verses, she stood up and delivered her speech. This improvisation was expected to be a negative factor that would weaken the speech, but we see no evidence of this."

2. "Additionally, the environment in which Lady Zainab delivered her speech could have had a negative impact on the content or style of the speech. Normally, a woman would be more expressive and able to speak freely among other women, compared to speaking in front of a hostile audience of men who are seen as enemies. However, we did not observe any direct negative impact on the speech from this aspect.
3. Moreover, Lady Zainab's psychological, spiritual, and physical condition could also have affected the speech. She had just endured a grueling journey that lasted over two weeks, plus about a week prior in Kufa, all of which would weaken a woman over the age of fifty-three. She had lost her brothers, sons, and nephews and was tasked with caring for a group of women and children. All these factors could have significantly impacted the speech negatively, causing it to falter. Yet, despite all these challenges, her

speech remained remarkably cohesive, powerful, and assertive."

4. We observe that, although the speech is not considered long, comprising about thirty lines, it contains a large number of religious, intellectual, and historical concepts, forecasting the future, as well as an analysis of the Husayni and Karbala events. Its words remain relevant today as if they were spoken in the moment.

5. Lady Zainab (peace be upon her) chose a specific Quranic verse at the beginning of her speech. This was not done merely for the sake of barakah (blessing) as some orators do, but rather she selected a verse that precisely fit the occasion. After beginning with the basmala, praising Allah the Almighty, and sending blessings upon Muhammad and his family, she recited the blessed verse: "The end of those who did evil was the worst, because they denied the signs of Allah and used to ridicule them" (Surah Ar-Rum:10).⁽¹⁾

This is the best description of the state of Yazid ibn Muawiya. A sinner who persists, is a sinner who gradually progresses from being merely corrupt and impious while maintaining his fundamental beliefs, to becoming a denier of the signs of Allah and an unbeliever in the Day of Resurrection. So, if he initially drinks alcohol and is known to be a sinner, like Yazid, he will eventually advance to the point of denying God's promises and signs, and will say:

(1) (Surah Ar-Rum: 10)

Your Lord said not: "Woe to those who have drunk,"
but rather, said: "Woe to those who pray."

And while he practiced fornication and various immoral acts, which are all corruptions of the limbs, he reached the point of emulating the words of a disbeliever from Quraysh, who said:

"Hashim's clan played with kingship,
and no news came, nor was there any revelation sent."

This diagnosis is, in fact, extremely accurate regarding Yazid's character.

6. After quoting the verse, she said: "Do you, Yazid, think that since you have taken control over the lands and the horizons, and we have become like prisoners being led as captives, that you have his [Allah] honor and favor over us and we're dishonored and lost all favor? " This completely refutes what Yazid had claimed in front of the audience, asserting that apparent victory indicates divine virtue, as he argued before Zain al-Abidin and the attendees when he said: "God judged between my father and his father and ruled in favor of my father"⁽¹⁾ and similarly regarding Hussein. In contrast, Zainab argues that the killing of a person or the captivity and enslavement of their family

(1) The strange thing is that this very Umayyad logic is adopted by some Muslims, such as the followers of Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah, who views that one of the merits of Muawiyah is that he became a king over the Muslims and that Ali ibn Abi Talib was defeated in his wars!

does not mean that Allah is pleased with it and that He is on the side of the killer against the killed.

No. The truth is as you will find in the Quran, where Allah says: "And let not those who disbelieve think that our respite to them is good for themselves; we only give them respite that they may increase in sin, and for them awaits a humiliating punishment"⁽¹⁾. This is merely a matter of gradual enticement and delay.

7. Early Zainabi Historical Documents: One of the signs of the keen intelligence and focus of Lady Zainab was her inclusion of a series of historical documents in her speech that would resist falsification and distortion. She said: "Are the daughters of the Messenger of Allah paraded as captives, their veils torn and their faces exposed?! They are led by enemies from country to country, and the people at the wells and water sources observe their faces, both the near and the far, the lowly and the noble! They have no male guardians or protectors among them." She also said: "Bent over the face of Abu Abdullah, the master of the youth of Paradise, and struck it with your Mikhsara⁽²⁾ (staff)." This is of significant importance, as we have found desperate attempts by followers of the Umayyad line to deny these events wholly or in part. Some have even

(1) Surah Al-Imran, Ayah 178:

"And let not those who disbelieve think that our respite to them is good for themselves; we only give them respite that they may increase in sin, and for them is a humiliating punishment."

(2) Mikhsara: A staff or stick that a person shortens with his hand, such as a rod, cane, or similar object. Lisan al-Arab, 4/241.

denied that the captives were taken to Damascus, or that Yazid struck the face of Hussein, or even that Hussein's head was brought to Syria!

8. Humiliation, Degradation, and Threats: "It is astonishing that, while Lady Zainab was expected to be in the lowest state of weakness and humiliation, and her enemy Yazid at the height of his victory, power, and tyranny, she managed to belittle him in a way that no one had ever done to another. She degraded him to the dust, finding him beneath any dialogue with her and deeming herself too elevated to descend to his level. Despite the circumstances and the harsh events, she minimized his worth, amplified his reprimand, and increased his scolding.

And it is inconceivable that this is the end of the matter! There is more to follow! What is imagined as a victory will ultimately turn into a liability and a grievance. One should not be blind to the future, for these are just a few days before this assembly will disperse and this power will disintegrate. Meanwhile, what remains is the path of God and His allies. Our existence endures through the remembrance of God and the revelation of the prophets, and the ultimate result will be on the Day of Judgment when the caller proclaims, 'May the curse of God be upon the oppressors.'"

Translation of Zaynab bint Ali's Speech

The narrator said: Zaynab bint Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) stood up and said:

"All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds. May Allah send His blessings on His Messenger Muhammad and his entire household. Allah has spoken the truth, as He says: {Then the end of those who committed evil was the worst, because they denied the signs of Allah and used to mock them}.

O Yazid, do you think that when you took control of the corners of the earth and the horizons of the sky, and we were driven as captives, it is because we are disgraced by Allah and you are honored by Him, and that this signifies your high status with Him?

So you became arrogant, looked around you gleeful, when you saw the world was under your control, and everything was going your way, and our kingdom and authority had become pure for you.

Hold on, did you forget the saying of Allah: {And do not think that those who disbelieve that We give them respite for their good. Indeed, We give them respite only so that they may increase in sin; and for them is a humiliating punishment}? Is it justice, O son of the freed ones, that you veil your women and slave girls, while you lead the daughters of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his household).

Captives, whom veils violated, faces exposed, driven from country to country, surrounded by enemies, and the people at the wells and water sources receive their arrival, and browsing

their faces every near and far, lowly and noble? No menfolk of theirs to defend them, nor any of their guardians and protectors.

How can one hope observance from someone whose mouth chewed the livers of the noble and whose flesh grew from the blood of martyrs? How can one expect to delay hatred towards us, the household, from one who looked at us with enmity, hatred, and rancor, then you say without feeling remorse or guilt:

'They would have celebrated and rejoiced

Then said, 'Yazid, may you not be paralyzed!'

Leaning on the teeth of Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him), the master of the youth of paradise, poking them with your stick. Why would you not say this when you have punctured the blister and eradicated the ulcer by shedding the blood of the descendants of Muhammad (peace be upon him and his household), the stars of the earth and the progeny of Abdul-Muttalib? You invoke your ancestors, claiming that you were calling them? Soon you will join them and will wish that you were paralyzed and mute before having said what you had said or done what you had done. O Allah, take our right and avenge those who wronged us, and unleash Your wrath on those who shed our blood and killed our protectors. By Allah, you have only skinned your own hide and sheered your own flesh. You will be brought before the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his household) with what you have borne from shedding his offspring's blood and violating his sanctity in his progeny and kin, where Allah will gather them and unite their scattered members and take their rights.

{Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allâh as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision.} (Surah Ali 'Imran, 169)

And enough is Allah as a judge, and Muhammad (peace be upon him and his household) as an adversary, and Gabriel as a supporter. Soon, those who misled you and enabled you to force the necks of Muslims will know that, for the wrongdoers, wretchedness is their outcome. You shall know which is worst of places and which is weakest of soldiers. If this address, despite all calamities, is directed to you, I indeed consider how low your status, how great your reproach, and how plentiful your blame. But the eyes are tearful, and the hearts are burning.

Wonders, upon wonders, how is it that the noble Party of Allah are killed at the hands of the unhinged Party of Satan. These hands drip with our blood, and the mouths salivate with our flesh, while the pure, noble corpses are mauled by wolves and wrenched by hyenas. If you take us as spoils, you will soon find us to be a burden, when you find in your hand nothing but what you've put forth in deeds. {And your Lord is not ever unjust to [His] servants.}. (Surah Fussilat, 46)

So to Allah we plead our complaint, and upon Him is our reliance. So hatch your schemes, strive your endeavors, and exert your efforts, for by Allah, you will never erase our remembrance nor will you kill our revelation, nor wash away its shame from yourself. Isn't your views all but falsehood? Aren't your days all but numbered? Isn't your crowd all but scattered? On the day when the caller calls: 'The curse of Allah has come upon the wrongdoers.' So all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, who concluded the affairs of our foremost with

happiness and forgiveness and concluded to our hindmost with martyrdom and mercy. We ask Allah to complete their reward, and award them more grants, and grace us with his inheritance. Indeed, He is Merciful and Loving. Sufficient for us is Allah, and the best disposer of affairs."

Yazid (may Allah curse him) said:

"A cry that is praised among all cries,

how insignificant is death against the mourning cries."

The Sermon of Imam Al-Sajjad (Peace be upon him)

It is assumed from historical contexts that another assembly was held in the well-known Umayyad Masjed, which is connected to Yazid's palace, perhaps the very next day, with detailed preparations and more public attendance, unlike the previous assembly in the palace where not everyone could attend.

From gathered stories and events, it appears that even some non-Muslims were present in Damascus at that time, either coincidentally or as visitors to the authorities. It also shows that some commoners could communicate with Yazid regarding matters such as requesting one of the captives for service.

After everyone had taken their places, Yazid did not speak directly as if he was silenced by what he heard the previous

day. He ordered a preacher to present the Umayyad authority's perspective by attacking the Commander of the Faithful, Ali bin Abi Taleb, and Imam Husayn (peace be upon them), and, of course, to praise Yazid ibn Muawiya and his father, mentioning them with every virtue.

Imam Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) stood up and said: "Woe to you, O speaker! You seek the pleasure of the creation with the wrath of the Creator? Settle yourself for a place in the hellfire." Then he said: "O Yazid! Allow me to ascend these logs and speak words that will please Allah and earn these sitting people the rewards and virtues [from Allah]." Yazid refused, but the people said: "O Commander of the Faithful, allow him to ascend. Perhaps we will hear something from him."

Yazid said: "If this one ascends the pulpit, he will not descend except with exposing me and the family of Abu Sufyan." They said: "What can this one do? What eloquence does he have?" Yazid said: "He is from a family that has been imbued with knowledge." They kept urging until Yazid permitted him to ascend.

He ascended the pulpit, praised Allah and gave tributes to him, and said:

"O people, we were given six qualities and favored with seven. We were given knowledge, forbearance, generosity, eloquence, courage, and love in the hearts of the believers. We were favored by having the Chosen Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his household) come from amongst us, from us is the truthful one (Ali ibn Abi Talib), from us is the one with wings (Ja'far ibn Abi Talib), from us is the Lion of

Allah and His Messenger (Hamza), from us is the Lady of the Women of the Worlds, Fatima the pure, and from us are the two grandsons of this nation, the masters of the youth of paradise.”

Then, Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) continued:

“So, whoever has come to know me, has known me. And whoever does not know me, I will tell them about my lineage and ancestry: I am the son of Mecca and Mina. I am the son of Zamzam and Safa. I am the son of the one who carried the alms in the edge of his cloak. I am the son of the best one who wore the loincloth and cloak. I am the son of the best one who put on sandals and walked barefoot. I am the son of the best one who performed Tawaf and Sa’i. I am the son of the best one who performed Hajj and said Labbaik. I am the son of the one who was carried on the Buraq in the air. I am the son of the one who was taken from the Sacred Masjed to the Farthest Masjed, so glory be to he who carried him. I am the son of the one who was taken up by Gabriel to the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary. I am the son of the one who drew near and came close, so he was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer to his Lord. I am the son of the one who prayed with the angels in the sky. I am the son of the one to whom the Sublime revealed what He revealed. I am the son of Muhammad, the chosen one. I am the son of Ali, the well-pleased. I am the son of the one who struck the noses of the creatures until they said: There is no god but Allah. I am the son of the one who struck before the Messenger of Allah with two swords and pierced with two spears, migrated the two migrations, pledged the two pledges, prayed towards the two Qiblas, fought in Badr and Hunayn, and never disbelieved in Allah even for the blink of an eye.”

"I am the son of the righteous among the believers, the inheritor of the prophets, the one who vanquished the atheists, the leader of the Muslims, the light of the Mujahideen, the adornment of the worshippers, the crown of those who weep, the most patient among the patient, the best of those who stand in prayer from the family of Yasin, and the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds.

I am the son of the one supported by Gabriel, the one aided by Michael. I am the son of the protector of the sanctities of the Muslims, the killer of the oath-breakers, the oppressors, and the deviators, the fighter against his enemies among the Nasibis, and the most honorable of all who walked from the Quraysh. I am the son of the first who responded and answered to Allah among the believers, the foremost of the forerunners, the crusher of the transgressors, the destroyer of the polytheists, and an arrow from Allah's quiver against the hypocrites."

"I am the son of the tongue of wisdom for the worshippers, the supporter of Allah's religion, the guardian of Allah's command, the garden of Allah's wisdom, the repository of Allah's knowledge. Generous and kind, pure and holy, content and satisfied, a leader and a hero, patient and fasting, upright and virtuous, brave and courageous, the cutter of origins, the disperser of groups, the sharpest in mind, the most resolute in action, the most articulate in speech, the strongest in determination, and the most steadfast in will.

He is a valiant lion and a pouring rain. He grinds them in battles when the spears draw near and the reins approach, grinding them like a millstone, scattering them like the wind scatters chaff. He is the lion of Hijaz, the master of miracles,

the hero of Iraq, the imam by divine appointment and merit. The Makkan⁽¹⁾, Medinan⁽²⁾, Abtahite⁽³⁾, Tihamite⁽⁴⁾, Khayfite⁽⁵⁾, Aqabite⁽⁶⁾, Badrite⁽⁷⁾, Uhudite⁽⁸⁾, Shajarite⁽⁹⁾, and Muhajirite⁽¹⁰⁾. Among the Arabs, he is their chief, and in battle, their lion. He is the inheritor of the two sanctuaries, the father of the two grandsons, Hasan and Husayn, the revealer of wonders, the disperser of armies, the shining star, the radiant light, the victorious lion of Allah, sought by every seeker, victorious over every victor. That is my grandfather Ali bin Abi Taleb.

Imam Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) continued:

“I am the son of Fatimah al-Zahra, the daughter of the Prophet. I am the son of the Lady of the Women of the Worlds. I am the son of the Pure and Chaste One. I am the son of the Progeny of the Prophet.”

He kept repeating “I am” until the people burst into tears and lamentations. Yazid feared it might cause a disturbance and ordered the muezzin to call the Adhan, interrupting his speech. When the muezzin said “Allahu Akbar,” Imam Al-Sajjad (peace

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- (1) From/of Makka
 - (2) From/of Medina
 - (3) Relating to The master of the Bat'ha Abu Taleb
 - (4) From/of Tehama
 - (5) Pertaining to Khayf, a place in Mina in Makka
 - (6) From/of Aqaba
 - (7) Fought at the Battle of Badr
 - (8) Fought at the Battle of Uhud
 - (9) Witnessed the Pledge of the Tree
 - (10) Went out for migration on the orders of the Prophet.

be upon him) responded, "Allah is greater than anything that can be measured or perceived by the senses. There is nothing greater than Allah." When the muezzin declared "Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah" (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah), Imam Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) said, "My hair and my flesh, my blood and my bones, my brain and my marrow, all bear witness to this." When the muezzin proclaimed "Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasul Allah" (I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah), Imam Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) turned to Yazid from the top of the pulpit and said, "O Yazid! Is Muhammad my grandfather or your grandfather? If you claim he is your grandfather, you have lied. If you say he is my grandfather, then why did you kill his progeny?"⁽¹⁾

The muezzin finished the call to prayer and the Iqamah, and Yazid led the midday prayer.

Upon reflection on what transpired, several points can be noted:

104

1. This gathering, and the events that unfolded, can be considered a decisive blow to the Umayyad propaganda and its objectives. The gathering revealed exactly what Yazid feared and anticipated: that Imam Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) would only leave the pulpit after exposing Yazid and the Banu Sufyan clan. Imam Al-Sajjad's criticism of the speaker, who had spoken out of greed and had traded the displeasure of Allah for material gain, created a significant pressure to hear the truth from Imam Al-Sajjad

(1) Al-Muwaffaq Al-Khawarizmi: His book, Maqalat Al-Husayn Vol. 2 Page 78.

(peace be upon him), despite Yazid and his supporters' opposition. It is noteworthy that the people, who had been brought together to hear the views of the ruling authority, insisted on hearing the words of the opposition, specifically Imam Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him).

2. When Imam Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) ascended the pulpit, the scene transformed into an unparalleled doctrinal assembly. Unlike the brief introduction he had given in his sermon in Kufa, this occasion became something entirely different. The Imam provided a detailed introduction to the noble Alawite family, emphasizing the unique qualities bestowed upon them by Allah. He highlighted seven distinguishing features that no other family among the Muslims shares, including the Prophet Muhammad, Fatimah (the pure), Hamza (the master of martyrs), Ali (the commander of the faithful), Ja'far (the flying standard-bearer), and the two grandsons, Hasan and Husayn.

3. Imam Al-Sajjad deeply elaborated on the identity of his grandfather, Ali (peace be upon him). His discourse was thorough and detailed, unlike any other texts where such extensive and detailed description is found. This location, which had long been a site of derogatory remarks about Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) from the time of Muawiya to that day, seemed to have been waiting for these words to cleanse the dust and falsehoods of Umayyad propaganda. The Imam's words flowed like a comprehensive doctrinal lesson, providing a profound explanation of his grandfather's virtues.

After attributing himself to his grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), with twelve qualities, Imam Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) then attributed himself to his father, Amir al-Mu'minin, with nearly ninety qualities. Thus, the detailed doctrinal lesson unfolded, with each quality pointing to a specific perfection of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him).

4. Of course, Yazid, recognizing the shift in the situation as the audience was now fully attentive to the Imam's words, felt compelled to interrupt. He took advantage of the prayer time to order the muezzin to call the adhan, intending to cut off the Imam's speech. While the Imam paused, utilizing the opportunity to affirm fundamental beliefs in monotheism and prophethood, he questioned Yazid: "Is Muhammad my grandfather or yours? If you claim he is your grandfather, you have disbelieved; and if you say he is mine, then why did you kill his descendants and family?"

That assembly ended for the Umayyads in an even worse manner than the previous day's meeting. While Lady Zainab had humbled Yazid the day before, and he did not return to speak after that, what happened in this assembly was far more severe than the previous one. Consequently, it is believed that Yazid did not engage in similar discussions in the following days and began to consider how to alleviate the distress and anxiety caused by the presence of the captives in Damascus.

Yazid's Attempt to Disavow the Crime

As previously mentioned, the situation had turned against the Umayyads. They were unable to justify their actions, especially given their severe nature, and they struggled to market their actions to the public. The situation in Damascus escalated beyond the Umayyads' expectations. Protests and opposition began to emerge from within the Umayyad circle itself, and this opposition only grew as it spread, becoming more sympathetic to the Ahl al-Bayt and increasingly hostile toward the Umayyads.

Historians have reported that some women of the Umayyad family sympathized with the women of the Ahl al-Bayt. This is not surprising, given that women often exhibit emotions that might surpass the political or other stances held by men.

Indeed, some members of the Umayyad family condemned and denounced the cruelty and brutality of the Umayyads' actions, whether in killing or captivity. It has been reported that some criticized these actions such as Yahya ibn al-Hakam, the brother of Marwan.

"A lamb near Karbala, closer in kinship
 than Ibn Ziyad, the vile and base
 Sumiya's lineage has become as numerous as pebbles
 And the lineage of the family of Allah is not recognized."

This, in addition to what we have mentioned regarding the impact of the two assemblies we discussed.

Yazid became aware of the change in the general mood of the people⁽¹⁾ and realized that further mistreatment of the captives from the family of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) was no longer tolerable. He took several measures, including easing the conditions for their presence and, in turn, assigning them a suitable place for their stay.⁽²⁾ We also believe that it became customary to hold the mourning ceremonies for Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) in such a place.

Moreover, ideas were leaked to the public that aimed to absolve Yazid of the actions taken against al-Husayn and his family. The blame was placed on Ibn Ziyad, suggesting that he was the direct perpetrator of the events, and that if it had been

(1) Al-Kamil, 4/87

(2) Assuming they were initially housed in an unsuitable place upon arrival, we believe this situation changed after the second day.

up to Yazid, the outcomes would have been different. These statements remained in historical sources as they represented Yazid's alleged true stance, and were used by followers of the Umayyad line to exonerate Yazid as they claimed. However, the reality is different; this was merely a political maneuver by Yazid to shift the blame and responsibility to a "remote" party, or as they say, to assign the issue to a "remote party."

(Were Ibn Ziyad's actions deliberate in causing this antagonism among the people?)

We also believe that a considerable number of news reporters were deceived into thinking that Yazid was genuinely regretful for what he had done or that he even cried. In fact, some were even misled in their words. For instance, some⁽¹⁾ reported that Sukayna, the daughter of al-Husayn, said: "I have never seen a disbeliever in God better than Yazid!" The truth is that she was referring to his severity and harshness, especially initially, and she actually said: "I have never seen a disbeliever worse than Yazid or one with a harder heart than his!" Of course, the events of the first day, in particular, align with this statement, considering that he had mutilated the body of al-Husayn and mistreated and mocked the women.

The important point is that the presence of the captives in Syria, especially with the possibility of some of them interacting with the public, and their not being confined or isolated in the following days, such as in the reported meeting between Imam al-Sajjad and al-Minhāl ibn 'Amr⁽²⁾, became a problem for the Umayyad rule. They represented a question

(1) Ibn al-Athir, 4/86.

(2) Al-Minhāl ibn 'Amr al-Asadī, died after 110 AH.

mark that needed to be answered: Why did what happened occur? And furthermore, what comes next? Even if what was done previously was attributed to Ibn Ziyad, what happens now? With Yazid distancing himself from the responsibility, he decided to resolve the issue by sending the captives back to their homeland to quell the questions and inquiries.

He then took the second step, which was to propose and consult with Imam al-Sajjad about their departure from Damascus to their homeland. This indeed happened. Naturally, there was no reason for Imam al-Sajjad, his aunts, and his family to remain in Syria. Therefore, arrangements were made for their return journey. They would most likely choose the route through the desert of Syria heading east toward Iraq, which, as previously mentioned, is approximately a thousand kilometers long.

According to historical sources, they left Damascus on the night of Sunday⁽¹⁾, the 11th of Safar, 61 AH. Since there was a recommendation to treat them gently during the journey, which is typical for this stage, it is assumed they traveled in a calm manner without significant disturbances, resting and halting whenever they wished. This is likely why the journey, which normally takes no more than seven days, took them about nine days, reaching Karbala on Tuesday, the 20th of Safar, 61 AH.

To complete the discussion, we should recall the previous chapter on the journey of the Hussaini caravan from Karbala to Karbala to address the question of whether the Hussaini caravan met Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari.

(1) "Tārīkh al-Marāqīd" 5/101.

The Return to the City of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)

After the caravan of the captives reached Karbala on Tuesday, the 20th of Safar in the year 61 AH, they stayed there for two nights and spent three days, departing on Friday evening⁽¹⁾, the 23rd of Safar in the year 61 AH. Naturally, during these days, the women and children held mourning ceremonies and lamented over the graves after a separation of forty days. Some of the heads (most certainly the head of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him) were reunited with their bodies. It is not precisely known whether the other heads were also brought from Damascus,

(1) They preferred traveling at night and during the early morning as it was gentler on the camels at that time.

but the narratives, some of which we have examined in the book "Qadāyā al-Nahḍah al-Ḥusaynīyah"⁽¹⁾, clearly indicate that the head of Imam Husayn was reunited with his noble body.

On the Return Journey to Medina from Karbala

During the return journey from Karbala to Medina, we will notice that the pace of travel slows significantly. Although the distance is about 1,200 kilometers, as detailed in "Tārīkh al-Marāqīd", and normally would not take more than a week to traverse, it extended here to approximately sixteen days. They left, as previously mentioned, on Friday evening, the 23rd of Safar, and arrived at the city gate on the 8th of Rabi' al-Awwal in the year 61 AH.

"According to what has been mentioned by the researcher Al-Karbasi" it appears that they were camping along the way in various areas, towns, or hostels, and their pace was slow. This continued until they reached the vicinity of the Harrah Waqim (Waqim Lava Field) near Madinah on Friday, the 7th of Rabi' al-Awwal in the year 61 AH.

Imam Al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) did not wish to enter Madinah unceremoniously. He intended for their arrival to renew the issue of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) and remind the people of the tragedy that had befallen him. It is reported that he ordered his tents to be set up on the outskirts of the city. When Bishr ibn Hadhlam, one of the supporters of

(1) Al-Sayf, Fawzi: "Qadāyā al-Nahḍah al-Ḥusaynīyah", p. 323.

the Ahl al-Bayt, saw him, he was asked if he was a poet and capable of mourning Husayn and reminding the people of his tragedy. Upon affirming this, he was appointed to do so. Bishr then immediately began raising his voice, informing the people of Madina of what he knew.

“O people of Yathrib (Madina), you have no place here,
 Husayn has been killed, and my tears flow abundantly.
 His body is blooded in Karbala,
 And his head is being carried on a spear.”

Despite the fact that news of Imam Husayn’s (peace be upon him) martyrdom had reached the people of Madina in various stages before, it was still necessary to mobilize and rally public sentiment against the Umayyad crime.

1. The news of Imam Husayn’s (peace be upon him) martyrdom reached the people on the same day of the tenth of Muharram, around the specified time in the afternoon. According to reports from Muslims, Umm Salama, the Prophet’s wife, was asleep when she had a vision. In her dream, she saw the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) disheveled, dust-covered, and weeping as if he were picking something up from the ground. When she asked him, he told her, “I am gathering the blood of my son Husayn, for he has just been killed.” She woke up crying and announced the news with a loud wail, “Oh Husayn, oh son of the Messenger of Allah!” This caused an uproar in the nearby houses of Banu Hashim.

It is also reported that Ibn Abbas, who was blind, heard the loud cries from Umm Salama's house. His guide led him to her, where she informed him of Husayn's martyrdom. She told him, "The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) gave me a piece of soil from Husayn's grave and said, 'When you see it turn to blood, know that he has been killed.'" She showed them how the soil in the jar had turned into fresh blood.

Imagine the significance of the matter for Umm Salama, the mother of the believers, to keep this jar for more than half a century. This report from Umm Salama was conveyed by several narrators from the scholars of the Sunni tradition, and references to these sources have been mentioned earlier.

2. The second announcement of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) came from the Umayyad authority itself. It is likely that it took approximately ten days or so after Husayn's martyrdom for the news to reach Madina. This is because Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad sent one of his agents, Abdul Malik al-Sulami, with the news to Madina and inform Amr ibn Said ibn al-Ashtaq (of the victory) as he put it. He instructed him to hurry in delivering the news. Indeed, Abdul Malik arrived in Medina and said that as soon as he entered the city, a man from the Quraysh asked him about the news. He replied, "The news is with the prince."

He immediately said: "Husayn has been killed!"

It seems that after the news reached the Banu Hashim households and there was a widespread outcry among the Hashimites and the general populace of Madina mourning the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), al-Ashdaq (Amr ibn Said) had his own statements, speeches, and discussions. It appears that some of the news narrators confused this situation with the later one when Imam al-Sajjad (peace be upon him) entered the city.

When the news spread and the mourners lamented the death of Husayn (peace be upon him), he remarked, "By God, it feels like the days of Uthman," and then he recited:

"The women of Banu Zubayd cried out loudly
like our women did the morning of the rabbit."⁽¹⁾

"By all standards, this was considered one of the most dispicable and morally reprehensible positions! For Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) and his brother Hassan had no involvement in the issue of Uthman; they even might have been sent to defend Uthman's family and kin! What could be the meaning of likening that day as if it were avenging a day for a day? Even worse was his reference to two lines that `Amr ibn Ma'ad yakrib had said about that battle of the Rabbit. If he had any sense of wisdom or even diplomacy, he would have spoken differently."

(1) [In this context, "the rabbit" refers to a historical conflict between Banu Zubaid and Banu Ziyad from Banu al-Harith ibn Ka'b, specifically related to the lineage of Abd al-Madan. This verse, attributed to `Amr ibn Madikarb, uses a past event to draw a comparison with the current situation.]

"It made matters worse when he went out to the pulpit, addressed the people, and then mentioned Hussein and what had happened to him. He said: 'By God, I wish his head were in his body and his spirit in his form, so that he could insult us while we praise him, and cut us off while we connect with him, as was his and our habit.' (If we wanted to exemplify audacity, vulgarity, and poor conduct in a situation, we could not find a better expression than this one.)

Then, Ibn Abi Hubeish, one of the Banu Asad ibn Abd al-Uzza ibn Qusayy, stood up and said: 'If Fatima were alive, she would be saddened by what you see; he is the son of Fatima, and Fatima is the daughter of Khadija, daughter of Khuwailid, son of Asad ibn Abd al-Uzza.'"

"Amr said: 'Be quiet or you will be silenced! Do you dispute with me over Fatima, while I am practically one of her wild game [same lineage]? By Allah, he is our son, and his mother is our daughter. Indeed, by Allah, if she were alive, she would be saddened by his killing, and she would not blame those who killed him.'⁽¹⁾

In another source, the phrases are slightly different. It is said that in his speech, he stated: 'It is a blow upon a blow, a shock upon a shock, and a sermon after a sermon. By God, I wish his head were in his body and his spirit in his form, so that he could insult us while we praise him, and cut us off while we connect with him, as was our and his

(1) "Al-Muqaffa al-Kabir by al-Maqrizi 3/342; also, the translation of Imam Husayn from Tabaqat Ibn Sa'ad /85."

custom. But how can we deal with one who unsheathed his sword to kill us, except to defend ourselves?"

In this, there is explicit falsehood and shameless wickedness over rivalry and disputes that is beyond measure. Could such a person like Al-Ashdaq claim that he used to be kind to Al-Husayn and Al-Husayn would cut him off as usual, when it was he who commanded thirty armed men to kill Husayn, "even if he were clinging to the curtains of the Kaaba", as mentioned in the account when Husayn headed to Makka was urged to leave the Hajj Season? And what is more false than his claim that Fatima was one of them! He is an Umayyad who inherited enmity towards her and her father and her children from his ancestors, and it is unthinkable that she would welcome those who killed her son and support their actions and not blame those who did it!

Have you seen, my dear reader, a more profound divine abandonment than this?

3. The third phase of receiving the news occurred with Imam al-Sajjad's arrival in Madina. As previously mentioned, Imam al-Sajjad instructed Bishr ibn Hadhlam to renew the mourning for Imam Husayn and remind people of his tragedy. He asked him to urge people to come out and welcome the caravan of captives, including Imam al-Sajjad, to offer condolences and heal their own wounds. This indeed happened; Imam al-Sajjad camped outside the city for some time, and people came to offer condolences for his father and express their sympathy, creating a social

occasion to rally support for Imam Husayn's cause and condemn the Umayyad line.

It is noteworthy that the Umayyad authority, represented by Amr ibn Sa'id al-Ashdaq, was notably passive and unable to take any significant action on this matter. Al-Ashdaq merely asked Imam al-Sajjad, as the time for prayer approached after entering the city, "Who is the dominant one?"

Imam al-Sajjad responded with pride, "When the muezzin calls to prayer, you will know who is dominant!"

It was certainly telling him: "Our struggle and uprising was for the establishment of the call to prayer and the practice of it. Your efforts to abolish this have failed as long as the call to prayer and the practice of it continue. This means we have achieved our goal and your plans and actions have been in vain."

It is noted that the Imam, peace be upon him, had delivered a brief sermon to those present in the city before entering it. In his sermon, he referred to the magnitude of the tragedy of Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, and what had happened to his family. He said:

"All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, the Creator of all beings, who is far [and exalted] in the highest heavens but close [and dear] enough to witness the whispers. We praise Him for the great trials, the calamities of the ages, the pain of tragedies, the harshness of sorrows, and the enormity of devastating losses. O people, Allah, praise be to Him, has tested us with immense tragedies

and a significant breach in Islam. Abu Abdullah al-Husayn was killed, and his women and children were taken captive. His head was paraded through cities on high lances. This is an unparalleled calamity. O people, which of you can be pleased after his death? Which heart does not grieve for him? Which eye can hold back its tears? Indeed, the seven mighty heavens, the seas with their waves, the heavens with their corners, the earth with its expanses, the trees with their branches, the fish in the depths of the seas, the angels close to Allah, and all the inhabitants of the heavens mourned for his death."

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Al-Luhuf

["Al-Luhuf" is a significant work by Sayyid Ibn Tawus (Radhiallahu Anhu) that provides a detailed account of the events surrounding the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (Alayhis-Salam) and the tragedy of Karbala. This book is highly regarded in Shiite literature for its historical narration and emotional depth. Here's a brief overview of its importance and content:

Overview of Al-Luhuf:

1. Authorship:

- "Author": Sayyid Radiy al-Din Ali Ibn Musa Ibn Tawus (d. 664 AH / 1266 AD).

- "Notability": Ibn Tawus was a renowned Shiite scholar, jurist, and historian known for his extensive knowledge and piety.

2. Content:

- "Historical Narration": The book chronicles the events leading up to, during, and after the Battle of Karbala.
- "Emotional and Spiritual Reflections": It provides insights into the emotional and spiritual dimensions of the tragedy, highlighting the sufferings of Imam al-Husayn (Alayhis-Salam), his family, and companions.
- "Poetry and Supplications": The book includes poetic verses and supplications that reflect the profound grief and spiritual lamentation of the Shiite community.

3. Structure

- "Divisions": The book is divided into chapters that systematically describe the journey of Imam al-Husayn (Alayhis-Salam) from Medina to Karbala, the battle itself, the martyrdom, and the aftermath, including the journey of the captives to Kufa and Sham.
- "Narrative Style": Ibn Tawus uses a narrative style that combines historical facts with emotional appeals, aiming to evoke a sense of mourning and reflection among readers.

4. Significance

- "Historical Importance": Al-Luhuf serves as a primary source for understanding the events of Karbala and the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (Alayhis-Salam).
- "Religious and Cultural Impact": The book has had a lasting impact on Shiite religious practices, particularly during the commemoration of Ashura and the Arbaeen pilgrimage.
- "Literary Influence": It has influenced subsequent works of literature and poetry that focus on the themes of martyrdom, sacrifice, and resistance against tyranny.

5. Critiques and Analyses

- "Academic Scrutiny": While highly revered, the book has been subject to academic scrutiny regarding the accuracy of certain accounts and the authenticity of some narrations.
- "Scholarly Discussions": Scholars have discussed its narrative techniques and its role in shaping Shiite historical consciousness and identity.

131

Overall, Al-Luhuf remains a cornerstone in Shiite historiography and religious literature, embodying the collective memory and emotional legacy of the tragedy of Karbala.]

Al-Futuh

- "Author:" Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri (d. 892 CE)

- "Content:" "Al-Futuh" is a historical work detailing the early Islamic conquests and the expansion of the Islamic state. It covers the conquests from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the Rashidun Caliphate and the Umayyad Caliphate.
- "Focus:" The book is notable for its comprehensive account of the military campaigns and political events during the early Islamic period, including significant battles and the administration of conquered territories.

Tarikh al-Tabari

"Author:" Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 923 CE)

- "Content:" "Tarikh al-Tabari" is one of the most important and comprehensive historical works in Islamic historiography. It covers the history of the world from the creation to the year 915 CE.
- "Structure:" The work is divided into several volumes, with the first volumes covering the period of the Prophets, including the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the subsequent volumes focusing on the early Islamic caliphates, including the Rashidun, Umayyad, and early Abbasid periods.
- "Significance:" Al-Tabari's history is renowned for its detailed narrative, extensive use of sources, and scholarly approach. It provides valuable insights into

the political, social, and cultural developments of the early Islamic period.

Both works are essential sources for understanding early Islamic history and the development of the Muslim state during the early centuries.

Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh

"Al-Kamil" refers to "Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh" (الكامل في التاريخ), a historical work by the renowned historian Ibn Athir. It is a comprehensive chronicle of Islamic history, covering events from the pre-Islamic period up to the author's time in the 13th century.]

Al-Muqaffa al-Kabir

Al-Muqaffa al-Kabir by al-Maqrizi:

Author: Al-Maqrizi (Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Maqrizi)

Title: Al-Muqaffa al-Kabir

Content: This work is a historical compilation by the Egyptian historian al-Maqrizi. It provides various accounts and analyses of events, including those related to early Islamic history and the Umayyad period.

Volume: Volume 3, page 342 contains relevant content regarding the discussion of events following the death of Imam Husayn.

Tabaqat Ibn Sa'ad

Tabaqat Ibn Sa'ad:

Author: Ibn Sa'ad (Ibn Sa'ad al-Qudai)

Title: Tabaqat Ibn Sa'ad

Content: This work is a biographical dictionary of early Islamic figures, including the Prophet Muhammad's family, companions, and notable individuals of the time. The specific reference on page 85 relates to the life and events surrounding Imam Husayn.