

THE 'ASHURA' CEREMONIES IN LEBANON

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by

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Volume One

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis, in two volumes, attempts to convey an eye-witness description of the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies in Lebanon, and an information about their recent development in the last half century.

Volume One

Chapter One deals with the general features of Shi'ite mourning in Muharram. It treats in detail: the abstinence, the signs of mourning on premises, in apparel and traditional foods, the special religious observances, and the common beliefs connected with 'Ashūrā'.

Chapter Two introduces the Ceremonies themselves and gives information about their origin, background, growth, and practice. The main items of the Ceremonies are:

- a. Street demonstrations with breast-beating and back scourging;
- b. Ta'zia Assemblies, both during and outside the 'Ashūrā' season;
- c. Shabīh in two divisions: the Miracle Play and head-wounding.

Chapter Three deals with the substance of the ceremonies, namely the Dirges, the Ta'zia address, and the shabīh Miracle Play, (i.e. volume II).

Chapter Four describes the Ceremonies as actually performed, this, in four typical scenes: the Tasū'ā' demonstrations, the 'Ashūrā' Evening ta'zia, the recital of the Masra', and the presentation of the shabīh Miracle Play.

Chapter Five reviews the development of the Ceremonies in the last half century, with regard to the Reform Campaign launched against them, and the Schools of thought arising as a result. Having assessed the present state of affairs as regards 'Ashūrā', the Chapter advances a few suggestions for the maintenance of the Ceremonies, then attempts a general forecast as to their future prospects.

Volume Two

Volume Two is the shabīh play proper. It embodies "The Tragedy of Karbalā" in five Acts, with an outline of the plot, a critique, and a report on the attitude of the main actors towards their parts. For comparison, it attempts a general criticism of a well-known English work on the subject, namely, Pelly: "The Miracle Play of Hassan and Husein."

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PREFACE

The present thesis attempts in the main to give an eye-witness description of the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies in Lebanon. By the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies is here meant the mourning of the Imami Shia over the death - in battle at Karbalā in 681 A.D. - of Husein, son of Ali Ibn Abi Tālib. The celebration, which is observed on the first third of Muharram, comprises street demonstrations, formal mourning parties - ta'zia -, and the dramatic representation of the battle - shabīh - including the violent mortifications of beating of the breast, scourging of the back with iron chains, and inflicting sword wounds to the head.

In construction, the thesis is designed to describe the Ceremonies with regard to nature, substance, and performance. The first and last chapters however, respectively deal with the general features of mourning, and the development of the Ceremonies in the last half century, concluding with a forecast of the future prospects. The description may gain both in interest and importance when it is remembered that the same Ceremonies are observed in most other Shi'ite countries besides Lebanon, and that some of the practices depicted here are by no means confined to 'Ashūrā'.

Originality in the Thesis resides, we believe, in five main aspects:

1. Accurate reportage: with the aid of copious illustrations, and two recorded reels, the Thesis is a first-hand picture of the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies;

11. The Dirges, compiled and sorted out with full commentary.

111. The work is thoroughly up-to-date, particularly in regard to Chapter Five which deals with the development of the Ceremonies and the corresponding Reform Campaign, the after-effects of which are actually occurring at the present time.

iv. The Tragedy of Karbalā - Volume 11 - compiled from oral tradition, translated into English, and divided into Acts and scenes, with stage-directions, explanatory notes, and a general critique, supported by a report on the attitude of the actors towards their parts. A panoramic view of the 'Ashūrā' festival at another site, i.e. Jibshīt, Lebanon, has been appended. For comparison and contrast, a general criticism has been made of a well-known English work on the subject, namely, Pelly: "The Miracle Play of Hassan and Husein." A special feature of Volume 11 is that the Tragedy - in Arabic - has never been put into print before and, on account of criticism from every side, perhaps never will be; the present compilation, therefore, while being the first, will most probably be also the last.

v. Unlike second-hand works conveyed through the medium of translation, the present thesis is the work of an Arab who is in constant touch with the milieu of the celebrators. Apart from that, a considerable bibliography has been supported by observational evidence, personal contacts in Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria, and a special comprehensive Questionnaire.

Three fresh discoveries in the Thesis are:

i. Unlike current assumptions to the contrary, the ta'zia and the street-demonstrations are not only paralleled by, but, in all likelihood, originate from, the Christian, Byzantine rituals.

ii. Almost as much as Husein himself, Ali, his father, either expressly or tacitly, is ever there in 'Ashūrā'. This fact goes far to indicate the apologetic motive underlying the celebration, and defeats the unfounded Shi'ite allegation that 'Husein's memory is a factor of unity between the Islamic sects.'

iii. To the Shia, Husein, rather than being a claimant to the Caliphate, is a redeemer of Islam. This so-called redemption has perhaps given rise to a curious theory of Shi'ite soteriology, which several western authorities seem to have accepted on behalf of the Shia without overmuch investigation. The alleged soteriology is argued away in detail in a separate work by the present writer; in this thesis however, within the scope of volume ii, the point is also raised and a refutation attempted.

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CHAPTER ONE
GENERAL FEATURES OF MOURNING

1.

As regards the celebration of 'Ashūrā' in this country as elsewhere two directly opposed hadīths stand in perpetual opposition between the Sunnis and the Shia. The one sect regard 'Ashūrā' as an occasion for merriment, the other one, for mourning - indeed, the Sunnite merriment does much to heighten the mourning on the part of the Shia.

To the Sunnis, the month of Muharram opens with the Hegira New Year's day, which is universally regarded as a day of festivity. The first ten days of the month "are eminently blessed and celebrated - in Egypt, for instance - by rejoicing".¹ In Morocco too, the same period is celebrated by fire, water, and carnival rites; people are anxious to make many purchases, for that is considered a good augury for the commerce of the city.² According to Amīn, Sunnis bode well of 'Ashūrā' day: they cook corn, purchase milk, and such other white stuffs as calico, and local (white) cheese; they don new clothes, adorn their houses, and spend in plenty over their families.³ Although less noticeable in Lebanon, such festive signs can still be seen in Syria: in

1. Lane : Manners and Customs of Modern Egyptians, p. 432

2. Westermarck: Ritual and Belief in Morocco, vol. 11.

pp. 58 - 86; 148 et seq.

3. Amīn : A'yān, vol. iv. p. 151

Aleppo,¹ Huran, and certain quarters of Damascus, people are liberal in giving food and clothes, though such donations are more in the nature of thanksgiving for a propitious occasion than an expression of grief. In Hums, it is reported that fanatic Sunnis bode well of heating up milk on 'Ashūrā' and making it boil over, which sign they spitefully take to represent the blood of Husein which flowed on the day ! For supporting such festivity as the above, the Sunnis rely upon one hadīth,² which conveys that, "Whoso giveth plenty to his household on 'Ashūrā' day, God will bestow plenty upon him throughout the remainder of the year,"³

The Shia however have their own views : to them, the new moon of Muharram stands for the sword-blade which slew Husein,⁴ and far from being a feast at all, the first of it is a day which they would "celebrate upon the graves."⁵ They recognize a New Year's day neither on the first of Muharram, nor at any other time. To certain authorities of theirs, Mohammed's migration took place on the fifteenth of Safar;⁶ to others, on the first, the second, or the tenth of Rabī' al-Awwal,⁷ while a third party have altogether

1. Amīn : Khutāt Jabal 'Āmil, p. 70

2. The Encycl. of Islam, (p. 486) conveys a further hadīth that "on 'Ashūrā' Noah had left his Ark in safety".

3. Amīn : Iqnā, p. 5

4. إذا نصل سيف ام هلال محرم إذا شفق للافق ام علق الدم ؟

5. cf. Dirge No. 99 below

6. Ar-Rāwī : As-Sā'a J. Sequel 'Ashūrā' year 1366 A.H.

7. Al-Ya'cūbi Ms. - Najaf, fol. 59

spurned the festival as an alien, western importation, maintaining that Moslems should observe no other festivals besides the Korban and the Lesser Bairams.¹ To disprove the merriment on 'Ashūrā' day, Amīn, relying on Ibn al-Jawzī's "al-Mawdū'āt", contends that, "On 'Ashūrā', nothing except the fast is authenticated."² In addition, he advances the opposite hadīth, after Imam Ali al-Ridā, that, "Whoso withdraws on 'Ashūrā' from worldly endeavour, God shall spare him the needs of life and eternity ... but, whoso calls 'Ashūrā' a day of blessing, and would thereon purchase new chattels for his household, he shall not be blessed in his purchases, and on the Day of Judgement he shall be counted in the company of Yazīd, Ibn Zīād, and Ibn Sa'd, i.e. doomed to the lowermost abyss of Hell."³ Naqawī contends that the hadīth ascribing good omen to 'Ashūrā' was fabricated as early as Yazīd in order to counteract the ^{mour}nings over Husein, which had been detrimental to Yazīd's own rule.⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, however, makes no secret of the fact that, "Following Umayyad vogues, Saladdīn in Egypt instituted merriment on 'Ashūrā' simply to spite the Shia of Ali b. Abī Tālib."⁵ So thorough-going must such Umayyad

1. Sheikh K. S. of Tyre, Lebanon: Answers to Questionnaire

2. Amīn : Iqnā, p. 5

3. Amīn : A'yān, p. 152; Iqnā, p. 98

4. Naqawī: Iqālat, p. 11

5. Maqrizi: Khutāt, p. 385

influence have been that, up to the present, merriment on 'Ashūrā' is adopted even by the Shi'ite 'Amāra tribes of the Basra district in Iraq !

Whether in counter defiance or otherwise, the Shia would like to mourn over Husein perpetually. To that effect some of their poets have referred in such lines as the following:

"In my sight, as though every place is Karbalā and every day the 'Ashūrā' day;"¹

"Life as a whole, even a feast day, is nothing but a funeral, since 'Ashūrā' has left men not one single feast;"²

"Hasten up, hasten up, O son of the Vir gin (i.e. Mahdī), Thy Shia are ever in mourning garb, at the lateness of the coming of thy rule."³

To most Shi'ite authorities, grieving for Husein is in accordance with the 'Kitāb' and the 'Sunna';⁴ this is because Mohammed himself is assumed to be in mourning.⁵ Grief and unhappy memories have perhaps led to the conclusion that the 'Ashūrā' season in particular, and both Muharram and Safar in general,⁶ are

1. Mughniyya: Mājālis, p. 11; Amīn: Iqnā', p. 162

2. Shakar: Al-Imam Al-Husein, p. 54

3. Ghadīriyya epic

4. Ibn Tawūs: Al-Luhūf, p. 2

5. Shakar, p. 55; cf. Dirge No. 8

6. Note: The last Wednesday of Safar is specially fraught with 'bitter sinisterness'

آخر اربعا من صفر نحن مستر

As a precaution, the Matawila are better advised to leave their homes for the countryside.

periods of ill omen during which the Shia are to withdraw from worldly affairs. Marriage is avoided, since by experience the Shia have learnt that marriage bonds concluded during Muharram and Safar invariably end in sad results. The initiation of any big project is likewise refrained from: "Well, friend," an advisor would say, "you might go ahead with your project, yet wait until Muharram and Safar are over." In the ten days of the 'Ashūrā' season hardly any festivity is permitted: no new clothes are tailored - on all accounts, no cloth may be cut before the fourteenth of Muharram; no cinema attended, no television shows either,¹ nor joyful wireless programmes listened to. Social family visits cease, and even the most innocent amusements, gum-chewing, or melon-seed-cracking, for instance, are given up. Ablutions are the only washings made of the unseen parts of the body since, for at least ten hot days,² bathrooms are not to be visited. Except for baby linen, no clothes may be washed, at all events not on a Monday, the day being most ominous, it being taken to be the day of Husein's death.³ Devout men do not shave for ten

1. For the first time in Lebanon, a 'Ashūrā' mourning Assembly was shown on the Television in 1961.

2. Extreme cases ^{are} reported about Shia unbathed for 40 days.

3. Note: Monday washings are to be avoided all the year round: by contravening the rule, a washerwoman risks losing not one, but two of her sons - "She who washes on 'ithnain', buries the 'ithnain', i.e. the two" - فَمَا لَ الْاِثْنَيْنِ تَبَارَةُ الْاِثْنَيْنِ

days or longer, and the women may do no make-up;¹ unheedful women who have entered a mourning party with a powdered face have often been expelled. In practising their Muharram privations, Shi'ite women have the classical example of the Hashimite ladies who "not before they had received the head of Ibn-Ziād, i.e. above five years, did they pencil their eyes, comb their hair, or dye their bodies with 'henna'."² In illustration of womanly privation, an actual anecdote may be of interest.

It was on a sultry 'Ashūrā' eve in a low coastal city that two Christian ladies paid a visit to a female mourning party. The hall was over-crowded and the heat unbearable. One of the attendants pressed on the button of an electric fan. But protests from all sides soon arose: "Not for the world, shall we enjoy coolness while they, i.e. Husein and men, are suffering heat and torture!"

11.

Apart from the public ceremonies in the season, the climate of grief is maintained by means of general signs of mourning: on premises, apparel, and in food. Thus black banners are flown upon

1. In India, devout Mussulman women even allow no water to pass their lips for ten days. - Mrs. Ali, pp. 43 & 100

2. Amīn: Iqnā', 98

the roofs of religious houses,¹ and signboards are put up at the entrances of the main streets, bearing aphorisms laudatory of Husein such as,

"O Husein",

"Husein: the symbol of sacrifice and crusade for ever",

"Husein: the life-boat, and the lantern to the true faith."

The interiors of mosques and mourning halls are also draped in black.² Loud-speakers are installed at the mourning halls, thus adding to the climate of grief, at the same time affording a better chance for the more devout to relish the 'ta'zia' while all alone in their houses. Street-lights are either dimmed down, or put out completely. In the street demonstrations, torches are less the fashion nowadays than strong kerosene lamps, but most interesting perhaps is the 'Ashūrā' candle-holder which the younger demonstrators carry about.

With respect to attire, men generally wear dark or black clothes; even the handkerchiefs with which some ascetics dry their tears are edged in black. Women's attire as well is either dark or jet black, and of course, scrupulously decorous. It is reported

-
1. It is characteristic of the deprecatory nature of the 'Ashūrā' demonstrations, to find that among the ancient Arabs black banners used to be a sign of the malcontents. (Lewis, p. 111)
 2. In Iraq to-day, it is still the custom of the more devout Shia to drape the inside of their houses for the whole of Muharram.

that certain devout ladies go about in mourning garb even indoors.¹ In a mourning hall, Sayyid ladies are distinguished by special signs of deep mourning: the face is smeared with soot or indigo, the head tied with a broad, black band which reaches down to the eye-brows, and in the hand a black kerchief is waved about in lamentation. Of course Husein to them is more than Imam: he is a near relation besides - a great-great grandfather. In certain towns, devout old women appear at a mourning party with a handful of dry cinders on the top of the head - signifying the burning of the heart. On the final evenings of the season, the mullā, i.e. the woman-reciter, often sprays the audience with a few handfuls of dry chaff. This is done in memory of the Hashimite women who, after Karbalā, cast dust upon their heads in lamentation (Cf. dirge No. 51 - Chapter 111/1). As a 'Ashūrā' souvenir, the women tie up the so-called Husein's cord round the upper arm, where the cord remains until it falls off.²

Men and women alike assume sullen and melancholy airs. To devout sheikhs smiling during Muharram is 'muharram' i.e. taboo.

1. It is noteworthy that in mourning Sunnite wives go in pure white. This seems to be a trace of the Andalusian vogue as conveyed by one contemporary poet:

"If in Andalusia, whiteness be the sign of mourning, that, indeed, is the true sign:

"For have I not put on a hoary dress (of white hairs) in mourning over my lost youth?"

2. Husein's cord is a one foot piece of silken thread cut out of a skein used as a book-mark in the recital of the full sīra of Karbalā.

Excessive indeed must the mourning of the old Shia have been to suggest the words of an ancient poet, al-Misrī, in the following couplet:

"So excessive is my mourning on Husein's death-day that even the whiteness of my eyes have I blackened - i.e. pencilled"!¹

Lastly, there are certain dishes which the Shia would partake of, and certain other dishes from which they would abstain. In either case, such dishes are largely symbolical,² and of no known origin. To begin with, there is the favourite 'Ashūrā' dish, the "harīsa". It is prepared by boiling together equal amounts of well-ground wheat, fatty meat - or chicken - ghee, onions, and water; all salted, the ingredients are cooked together to make a mixture like thick porridge.³ By etymology from the Arabic verb 'harasa' i.e. 'to crush', the dish obviously corresponds to

1. Amīn: Iqnā', p. 159

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| هریق فیہ دم الحسین | لم اکتحل فی صباح یوم |
| سودت حتی بیاض عینی | الا لحزنی وذاك انی |

2. Lebanese Christians have their own traditional dishes too: for example, eggs on Easter symbolise the Tomb out of which Christ broke, just as a chick breaks and bursts out of an egg. Zalābia, a fried cake submerged in liquid sugar, recalls the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan.
3. Having partaken of a full "harīsa" meal, the present writer found it to be quite delicious, though a little indigestible.

the crushing down of Husein's body under the horses' hoofs. Another traditional meal (less used in Lebanon than in Iraq) is chicken, which not all families can afford to cook, particularly as the number of chickens in the meal should not be less than the number of the family members, since to have any less would be considered omenous.¹ For dessert, there are biscuits, 'rāha' - Turkish delight - zwiebacks, قرشلي almond-cakes, and 'Zarda'. زردة. Among these, the last is perhaps the only one of interest. It is a mixture of one amount of sugar and a double amount of powdered rice, boiled together in a little water. Sprinkled with saffron, Zarda is served, hot or cold, in ordinary earthenware dishes. There is nothing particular about Zarda beyond the proverbial satisfaction, i.e. fullness, it is assumed to give to those who take it: "He is quite full up, as though he has eaten Zarda," is a common saying among the Shia. The pun in the Arabic verb 'zarada' زرر which suggests imprisonment, recalling the state of Husein and his men at Karbalā, obviously gives the basis for the usage. Another meaning of the said verb is 'to strangle', which can convey the same sense. It should be remarked however that no 'Ashūrā' dish, including the dessert, may be partaken of in enjoyment; rather, as a dish of mourning, it must be eaten in mourning and meditation.

1. The Fatimids used to set the 'Ashūrā' public repast for thousands on what was known as 'the grief carpet' سباط الحزن. Among the dishes there used to be lentils, pickles, cheese, curds, honey, and black bread. - (Maqrīzī: Khutāt, p. 289 Chronicles of the year 363)

On the other hand, there are certain dishes which the Shia would, during 'Ashūrā', specially avoid - indeed, they would strongly protest against Sunnite neighbours who cooked them. One such dish is the 'head' of sheep or oxen. In that abstinence, the Shia copy the example of Imam Ali b. Husein who, as a prisoner, had caught sight of his father's head being taken in to Yazīd; so he gave up eating 'heads' for ever.¹ Ghamma غمّة is likewise a forbidden dish since it reminds of Husein's body and entrails trampled down at Karbalā - the dish comprises mainly the limbs and entrails of a beast. The Lebanese 'kubba' as well is eschewed. The reason is that in the preparation of kubba, (a dish of raw, lean meat and 'burghul') the sound of pounding the meat into a paste suggests triumphant merriment rather than sad mourning.² As regards dessert, with the exception of the aforesaid kinds, no sweets are allowed. Chocolates, for instance, are forbidden though not the sweeter 'rāha', obviously because the Arabic word 'rāha' is a pun on 'rest', hence the suggestion of rest to Husein's soul.

iii.

With respect to religious observances during the 'Ashūrā' season, there is generally a more careful heeding of the daily prayers, alms giving, and the fulfilment of vows. In prayers, no

1. Amīn: A'yān, p. 267

2. Note - To most Lebanese, Shia and all, the 'kubba' dish is abstained from during mourning periods.

extras are required beyond the recitation of the daily 'ziārat' for which a great reward is in store. Thus many of those who do not observe prayer itself, often make a point of reciting their ziarat to Husein every day. (for the ziārat see Chapter Four/iii below). Fast during the season is supererogatory on the first, third, and the seventh days;¹ the ninth is a fast day of the Shia ascetics,² but on 'Ashūrā' day proper, the fast is to be only partial, and should be broken one hour after the noon-prayer, by first taking a drink of water.³ At the entrance of the mourning halls in certain cities there is a plate of dry salt out of which the men coming to attend, take a pinch. The salty taste stands for a more tangible participation in mourning and sympathy. A further Muharram observance is the visitation of graves, an act especially desirable for drawing a useful moral: "A decayed corpse is a sermon eloquent," said one ta'zia reciter. Qoranic recitation on the graves is likewise increased. The Sīra of Karbalā is punctually recalled every day; besides the recitation at the public evening Assemblies, brief ten-minutes passages are recited at houses by special wandering reciters, both men and, women.

1. Tabatabā'ī: Urwat, p. 532

2. Encycl. of Islam, p. 699

3. Hullī: Naqd, p. 115; Amīn: Iqnā', p. 97

Note - In pre-Islamic days 'Ashūrā' was a market-day called 'Sūq Hajr'. It used to be a fast day, too.

Al-Alūsī: Bulūgh, p. 270

Wherever in a Shi'ite area you may be during 'Ashūrā', you are sure to hear the reciter's moanings nearby. On each morning of the three days following 'Ashūrā', a 'Pātiha' is recited for the rest of the Banu Asad who had assisted in the burial of Husein and his men.¹

The 'Ashūrā' is also the season for Almsgiving. Not only do 'miskīns' flock the gates of mourning halls for small alms, but major parish schemes are also set up, and a practical result is commonly yielded in the form of building a mosque, a Huseiniyya, - a hall for mourning Husein - or a big seminary. Whatever is expended in this way is forwarded as 'zakāt' on behalf of Husein's soul من روح الحسين. Zakāt on behalf of the dead is, to the Shia, endorsed by Mohammed himself on two specific occasions:

- a. He approved of giving alms for the rest of the dead mother of a man of the Banu Sā'ida;
- b. He in person distributed alms for the rest of Khadīja, his first wife, long after her death.²

Lest, on account of their lavish expenditure,³ the Shia be branded as squanderers (Qoran: xvii, 27), they advance their own

1. In Iraq the thirteenth of Muharram is universally celebrated by a special visitation paid to Karbalā, made under the title of 'Husein's third day' ثالث الحسين .

In India, according to Mrs. Ali (Observations, p. 101), the occasion is one for donations of food, particularly the 'meeta' dish with unleavened bread.

2. Sharafeddīn: Majālis, p. 15

3. For lavish expenditure in Muharram, see under Ta'zia, Ch.2/ii below

exegesis of the verse under view as, 'squandery it is to spend money outside obedience to Allāh.' The celebration of Husein's memory is, to them, in full obedience to Allāh.¹ Furthermore, they produce a special hadīth which conveys that, "Whatever amount is expended over Husein's memory will be repaid seventyfold in life and rewarded liberally in Paradise hereafter."² Minor donations of food are made in 'harīsa',³ and 'mjaddara' (a dish of lentils, onions, burghul and oil which is eaten by the poorer classes in Lebanon). In female mourning halls on the seventh of Muharram, a distribution is made of fresh, sugared loaves of Arabic bread prepared with sesame. 'Abbās' bread', as such distribution is called, obviously stands as a mere 'baraka', i.e. blessing, since 'Abbās is the 'quencher of the thirsty' (see dirge No. 26) rather than the feeder of the hungry. Larger food donations take the form of a public repast normally served after the break of the ceremonies on 'Ashūrā' day.⁴ For the last thirty years, the

1. Sheikh al-Irāqain: Anwār, p. 36 (vol. ii)

2. Ṣādiq: Sīmā', p. 63, ed. Al-Turaihī: "Maqtal".

3. In Syria, the Alawites too donate 'harīsa' on 'Ashūrā' day. In Iraq, a special donation is made in sandwiches either of molasses or green vegetables.

In India, (see: Mrs. Ali, p. 93) the rich dispense benefits among the poor: money, food, and especially clothes which must not be retained till the next 'Ashūrā'.

4. Without being necessarily confined to the Shia, the public 'funeral dinner' - partaken after the burial of a dead person - is a Lebanese, indeed, a universal Arab, tradition.

Nabatiyya repast has been donated by a local butcher, Badawī Kuhail by name, to two thousand men. Besides foreigners, his guests are mainly from Nabatiyya (Upper). For the repast he kills no less than ten head of sheep and provides a sufficient amount of rice, ghee, vegetables, and other such ingredients as go to prepare a good Arab meal. Tables are set in the man's garden in the open air, at which the present writer has, on two different 'Ashūrā's sat. In addition to the repast, Kuhail, as often as not, sends down a number of 'sfiha', i.e. meat-pie, cakes - no less than one thousand - for a snack to the visitors who come to see the shabīh play. Minor 'Ashūrā' dinners are, of course, donated, but of the major repasts in Lebanon two others are of note: the Ghbairi, and the Tayyba towns' dinners.¹ Donations of water-sabils,² furniture, or small sums of money are also made. Donations of furniture to a Huseiniyya could come in the form of a roof chandelier, a set of

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1. The holiness to the Shia of the 'Ashūrā' repast might be suggested by the prodigious tales which Qazwīnī (in Ghurar, p. 81) tells: "meals miraculously cooked and set out, money for a meal providentially come by, a meal prepared for fifty men miraculously satisfied two hundred etc."
 2. "Whoso distributes drinking water on 'Ashūrā'," says Kalidār (Tarīkh, p. 135) is reckoned as having done as much good as giving water to Husein's men and having fought at their side." In India (See Mrs. Ali, p. 23) sherbet and milk in abundance are distributed from sabils by the road-side.

bamboo chairs, or a fine, big carpet. Small money collections are made as a tip to the sextons of the Huseiniyya, or the actors of the shabīh Play. At female Assemblies, one old woman makes a collection of small money in her lap for beggars at the door.

Along with donations goes the taking of vows. Although the twelve Imams are religiously equal, Husein is perhaps the one among them to whom the Matawila most often make vows. Connected with Husein is Zainab, his sister, who too was present at Karbalā. All vows are paid up in 'Ashūrā' season and men are often seen coming modestly to pay their sheikh in fulfilment. The wording of a vow usually takes the form of:

"I owe it to Allāh **طلي لله**"; or, "I commit myself with a vow to Allāh **نذراً لله**" that, if I shall achieve my request through Husein, I shall fulfil in such and such a manner."

Women more often make wishes and requests on Thursday evenings, in the name of Qasim, Husein's nephew, and bride-groom of his daughter. Their vow takes this form:

"By the eve of this 'khamīs' - i.e. Thursday - and Qasīm, the 'arīs' - i.e. the bride-groom - I wish that my request be granted."

بجاء ليلة الخميس وتاسم العريس

Petitions cannot be specified. In the main, vows are made for fertility, but many other sorts besides could be cited: the recovery from a serious illness, the finding of a lost thing, safety on a long journey etc.¹ Particularly peculiar is the vow

1. A vow was taken by a Khiamite peasant, to break his filly into thrashing hay, and his wish was granted.

made in the form of a threat to debtors who would deliberately default on payment. The creditor need but proclaim that he has vowed the amount of debt, whole or in part, to Husein or any one of his family, and he is sure to receive a rapid and full settlement. The fulfilment of a vow might be made in devotional prayers or 'ziārats'. If babies are vowed, they are either incised on the head, or mounted on the processional horses of 'Ashūrā'. Votaries pay up in the form of food provisions, such as one or more head of sheep, but people of less means pay for fuel, tea, sugar, tobacco, water-jars or the like, for use at mourning parties. Other votaries provide candles,¹ flowers, sweetmeats, lemonade for the demonstrators, or white calico for the special shirts which the swordsmen put on. One special vow is paid up in a queer way: having drunk a cup of tea at a ta'zia assembly, a votaress simply steals the empty cup, and takes it away home where in secret she makes her vow upon the cup, and hides it away unwashed. If her petition is granted, the cup is washed and returned on the next 'Ashūrā' together with another twelve new cups; if the petition is not granted, the unwashed cup is finally thrown away or broken to pieces. Of particular interest are the (rare) vows for fertility made by Sunnis or Christians! One Sunnite

1. In India, according to Mrs. Ali - pp. 48, and 91 -, even the poorest are extravagant in oil and tallow-candles. Red candles, standing for Husein's blood, and green candles, standing for the poison whereby Hasan was killed, are placed on the seventh day before the ta'zia (model) by women who have a petition to make.

wife was, through such a vow, blessed with twin sons. Her husband, who would not pay in settlement, was soon terrified by finding both the sons falling seriously ill. He, therefore, quickly sacrificed two rams in Zainab's name. Another report was made about a Christian village-woman who was in the same manner granted a son. She named it Husein and, coming up to the next 'Ashūrā' party, she confessed her secret vow, and paid up in fulfilment. As though to baptize the babe in the donor's name, the sheikh carried it to the tents pitched for the shabīh Play, where together with other Shi'ite mates, the little Christian Husein played happily for the rest of the show.

Finally, we should not omit mention of a number of common folk prescriptions relating to 'Ashūrā', both in Lebanon and abroad. In Iraq, to begin with, it is reported that the 'Ashūrā' mournings have proved to be an efficacious prophylactic against disease and injury. In times of epidemics, mourning parties held in the main streets and public squares proved a good safeguard. By Husein's blessing, "one reciter who had become hoarse miraculously recovered his full voice immediately before the 'Ashūrā' season. Labourers engaged in the preparation of mourning halls or the stage of the shabīh Play, often fell down yet, were uninjured. Barren wives in great number have been granted children. Wives who are susceptible to miscarriage, or bearing

stillborn babes have, by vows to Husein, been spared that loss."¹ In Persia, "the mourners' tears, collected during the Passion Play, are considered to be a sovereign remedy for all diseases. The clean handkerchief in which the tears are gathered, is dried and placed in the shroud of the dead one."² In India "- at Kam Bait - people lay bottles of perfume in the way of the 'Ashūrā' demonstrators. Those bottles, which they call 'the home-doctor' are preserved as a sovereign remedy, too."³ In Lebanon, the Nabatiyya folk boast among themselves that, despite the overcrowded days in the 'Ashūrā' season, there has been, thanks to Husein's blessing, not a single serious accident. One incident in particular is retold about the seventy-year old Persian at Nabatiyya who, in a 'Ashūrā' procession, fell off his horse. He was dragged by the stirrup a sufficient distance for all the bones in his body to be broken, yet he was absolutely unhurt and survived the accident by several years. Local 'Ashūrā' prescriptions are given with the flowers and candles borne in the processions, the ashes of the tents in the shabīh Play, and the blood from the head wounds inflicted on 'Ashūrā' day, though it is assumed that the blood remedy would be inauspicious to the donor.

1. Qazwīnī: Ghurar, pp. 79 et seq.

2. Sykes: Glory of the Shi'ite World, p. 109

3. Sheikh al-Iraqi: Anwar, vol. ii, p. 98

CHAPTER TWO
 THE CEREMONIES INTRODUCED
 I
The Muharram Demonstrations

Wherever in Jabal 'Āmil the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies are celebrated in full, these of necessity must consist of street demonstrations. Night after night demonstrators are seen touring the streets solemnly chanting 'Ashūrā' dirges as they beat their breasts and flog their bare backs with iron chains. The demonstrations grow both in size and fervour as Muharram wears on, to reach a climax in the great Tasū'ā processions on the ninth day. At certain towns where the shabīh play of Karbalā is enacted, a further big procession forms the final Act of the Drama. So keen have the conservative Shia been on holding their demonstrations that, whatever the circumstances, they would never miss a procession.¹

These demonstrations, which could be traced back to the Buwaihid era in Iraq,² are largely representational and symbolical. "Beating the breasts," observed Āl-Yāsīn, "is a reminder of those breasts - i.e. the Hashimites' - trampled under the horses' hoofs."³ The chains with which backs are flogged, recall the chains wherein

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1. In an article in As-Sā'a J. (No. 97 year 1947) al-Māzinī describes precisely the same 'Ashūrā' demonstrations as having been hold in the last century by the Persian community in Egypt, in what was known as "zaffat al-Husein"
 2. Ibn al-Athīr: Kāmil, vol. vii, p. 7
 3. Al-Yāsīn: Nazrat, p. 7

those who survived Karbalā had been led into captivity.¹ Parallels to these processions might still be met with in this country in:

a. The Sunnite Ramadan Processions: as a sort of a farewell to the Ramadan fast, Sunnite youths walk in similar evening processions - without any mortifications though - on the final nights of the month, chanting special hymns.²

b. The funerary processions of mountain villages: in these, women-mourners follow the coffin clapping their hands solemnly as they chant their colloquial threnodies in solo and chorus, while near relatives (of women) of the dead one walk weeping copious tears and with dishevelled hair. In bigger funerals of this sort, one lad proceeding before the coffin silently flourishes a naked sword. The theme of their threnodies is generally trite, and inapt, an ordinary peasant, for instance, being mourned by the title of "Arabian Amīr".

c. Christian rituals: among the mortifications of the early Christian saints, chain-scourging was used, and up to this day, the Byzantine rituals of Good Friday bear a striking resemblance to the 'Ashūrā' demonstrations, particularly in the 'sarīr' circulation. (See under section ii below.)

1. Grunebaum, p. 87 describes demonstrators in Persia who dragged chains tied to their feet.

2. The most current Ramadan refrain is:

"Never for too long, may we miss thee, O month of the fast"

لا أوحش الله لا أوحش الله منك يا شهر الصيام

Initially, the demonstration raises flags and signboards. The flags are either green or black, and ^{the} signboards bear the current Shi'ite aphorisms about Ali, Husein, and Ahl al-Bait. Among their number, the most eloquent is perhaps the black - or red - cardboard hands representing the hands of the martyrs chopped off at Karbalā. With effect from the sixth evening, the equipment of a demonstration is noticeably increased: several more banners are flown, and the pageantry comprises a caparisoned horse, and a Bier. The horse, which represents Husein's steed, is to be a pedigree one. No one may ride on Husein's horse: such baby riders as the one in the opposite figure, are tolerated to fulfil a vow to Husein made on their behalf. The Bier is a simple wooden stretcher. On it a young man with a green turban is borne along to represent Qāsim, Husein's nephew, who, according to tradition, was wedded to Sikna, Husein's daughter, immediately before his death in battle. The lad taking the part must be of a sayyid family, and as he lies on the Bier, nothing of him appears except the face; the body is covered all over by a sheet of white calico spattered with red tincture to look like blood. To celebrate Qāsim's wedding in accordance with the local, Mutwālī rites, lighted candles of different colours, together with gay, red flowers, are borne on a wide cooper plate immediately after the Bier. For confetti, votaries strew the Bier with sweetmeats and dry sugar-plums. The unhappy wedding is celebrated by special dirges, particularly No. 33:

"Alas for Qāsim ! the bridegroom who has never enjoyed his wedding."¹

قاسم يا عريس ما تنهتاً

The 'lattāma' (by etymology from the Arabic verb 'latama' لطم), as the breast-beaters are locally known, may be divided according to age into three main teams: the grown-ups, the teen-agers, and the Juniors. The age limits range between six and sixty, and the size of a team is no less than two hundred men. They belong to the working class of society: tradesmen, chauffeurs, and casual labourers. They are all of the male sex; women-mourners appear only on the final two days and not in all towns.² As the 'lattāma' appear in procession, they are usually bare to the waist, and in certain towns they tarnish their faces with soot or indigo.³ The chain-scourgers are distinguished by their black shirts, and of course, by the chain-scourge, colloquially known as 'janzīr'. The shirts are cut from the shoulders to half-way down the back; but the front piece covers the chest up to the neck, and bears terms laudatory of Ali and his family, embroidered in white thread. The commonest of these terms are:

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1. It is noteworthy that in the funeral processions of a dead youth in Lebanese villages, women-mourners, often sing 'festive' songs of wedding.
 2. In Iraq, there seem to have been special demonstrations staged by women (See: Muzaffarī: Shiār, p. 14)
 3. In Persia, according to Grunebaum, p. 87, the lattāma tarnish their half-bare bodies with black or red.

Husein: wronged

حسين مظلوم

There is no other sword sharper than Dhu'l-Fiqr,
no champion worthier than Ali.

لا سيف الا ذو الفقار ولا فتى الا علي

The scourges, which are uniform in shape, are made of an iron handle, to the end of which is attached a bunch of chain strands ten inches long, and of an average thickness of ten millimetres.¹ The normal scourge weighs 3.3 lbs, the heaviest, 5.5.

Each team of demonstrators is led by a rhapsodist known as 'radūd', i.e. a refrain-repeater, who chants the dirges to which the team responds in chorus. On certain occasions, the town 'mu'azzin' takes the lead and acts as a 'radūd'. Like the demonstrators themselves, 'radūds' are commonly of the lay section of the population. Only at a few border towns, Mais for instance, does the town sheikh himself do the job of leading the 'Ashūrā' processions.

In the processional march, no special order is observed. The flags, of course, go before the team, the horse follows, then comes the Bier, the bearers of the flowers and candles, followed by the lattāma and the rest of the procession. Nor is there a strictly fixed attendance observed: the processions start to form about eight in the evening, although Juniors, who take 'Ashūrā' more in the nature of a game, usually flock the streets much earlier.

1. According to Donaldson, p. 88, "Devoted shrine attendants at Karbalā beat their shoulders with iron chains, to which nails and small knives were fastened."

The senior demonstrators first meet at the town mosque, or a side courtyard where they bare their breasts and make ready their equipment. Thence they emerge in a body to the town bazaar or other public square, to open the evening with a brief but vigorous bout of breast-beating before they start their perambulations about the streets, ultimately converging upon the mourning hall. As the procession passes by, men on both sides stand up in reverence, and the women on roofs and balconies assist the dirges with keening and interjectional shouts of grief. In past days, as a sign of special honour, the procession used to pass by the houses of certain notables in the respective towns. But the custom could not survive too long. Thus the teams nowadays halt nowhere on their route 'from temple to temple', as they regard it, i.e. from the mosque to the mourning hall. At Nabatiyya however, the teams do retire for a few minutes to the house of the head sheikh, just adjacent to their destination. In the march, men in the front row, including the rhapsodists, often join hands forming a sort of a barrier beyond which the demonstrators should not advance. This barrier is broken only when two teams cross on opposite sides and mix together trying to out-chant one another, until they eventually merge on either side again.¹ Once a team gets into the mourning hall, the 'lattāma' occupy the middle space where, for a good ten minutes,

1. Sharafeddīn (Ziārat, p. 41) speaks of similar clashes between demonstrating teams in Iraq, which have led to serious fights.

they carry on with their breast-beating with renewed zeal. Having next moved to a side apartment, they are offered a cool sherbet, before they get dressed and take their seats. The party over, the senior 'lattāma' bare their breasts again, stepping forward to conclude the Assembly with strenuous breast-beating and dirgeful chants.

With respect to the technique of breast-beating, there is little to be said beyond the degree of severity of the experience. As a rule, it is not proper to do 'latm' with the left hand. One exception is allowed in women's circles, or in over-excited moments when the men employ both hands together, effecting what is known as 'ladm' ^{لدم}.¹ Within a mourning hall, two different postures for latm' are: the kneeling, and the squatting. Both are assumed at the end of a mourning party. The team kneeling down perform their 'latm' as usual, but the squatting position affords quite a dramatic scene: the Bier, with the lad thereon, is placed in the middle with the team squatting all round, their eyes upon the Bier, their heads drooped low, and their arms folded. No dirges are chanted; the 'lattāma' merely beat the forearms softly. The dirges are left until the end, when they stand up to conclude with the usual severe 'latm' in chanting.

The attitude of the demonstrators is a combination of sorrow and deprecation: sorrow to have missed the great chance of dying

1. It was authoritatively reported that, in Persia, the 'lattāma' in 'Ashūrā' used to beat their breasts with two wooden staves tied to the hands.

by the side of Husein, and deprecation for the legitimism of Ali. To Grunebaum, the 'Ashūrā' demonstrations in Persia suggested that the Shia were still a suppressed sect.¹ That, in fact, is the case with most 'Ashūrā' demonstrations, for they constitute a reaction against long suppression for Ali's sake. "These demonstrations," remarked a local sheikh, "constitute a tangible warning to aggressors." His words surely ring a bell, for it is virtually against the aggressors upon Ali's legitimism that the 'Ashūrā' demonstrations are being staged.

Let us, for a better understanding, take a look at one team in procession: along the initial march, the 'lattāma', although in earnest, are yet moderate in both chanting and beating. The procession is moving smoothly along when, all of a sudden, their attitude is changed: the team stops, the leader turns to them, and calls out loudly: "Jibrīl nādā bis-samā, mā fī wilī:" The team in chorus responds, "illā Ali, illā Ali"² As they give the answer, they simultaneously raise a hand with the fore-finger put out to emphasize oneness to Ali. The second half of the call, is repeated and responded to several times over with slight variations to proclaim that Ali was "the only imam, the only intercessor, and the only hero. (cf. dirge No. 1) Their proclamations thus made, the team embarks upon 'latm' of the severest sort: aloft go the hands,

1. Grunebaum, p. 87

2. "Gabriel announced in heaven that there was no other vice-regent but Ali."

then, in a strenuous joint blow, come down on the bare breasts. Nothing is heard beyond the thud of 'latm', and the eh! eh! of the 'lattāma's' breath. To urge the men on, a member of the group simply mutters a long "A l i" or "A b u 'l - H a s a n" whereupon the 'lattāma' look as though they would kill themselves with ecstasy: some of them beat with both hands together, some, to gain momentum, jump as high as possible with every beat,¹ while several others combine the 'latm' with revolving round and round on the spot.² Their bodies sweat abundantly, and their breasts develop a wide, rosy spot and become remarkably swollen. Along with the 'lattāma', the chain-flagellants start to flog their bare shoulders scourging alternately right and left in time with the 'lattāma's' beats. Three hard minutes pass by. Now a mu'azzin raises his voice with the 'azān'. In excellent discretion, he makes his tunes less elongated, and his 'kalima' cut in the middle, i.e. "I testify that there is no other god but Allāh." To emphasize the finish, he takes the lead, resuming the former ordinary dirge, and the team is relieved. The exhausted 'lattāma' soon catch the refrain and carry on with their moderate, 'latm' and chanting as they move along in procession.

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1. Speaking of the Iraqi demonstrations, Sharafeddīn (Ziārat, p. 41) describes a different form of 'latm' wherein relief is gained every other beat: the first beat being light, while the second, comes down on the breast like a sledge hammer.
 2. It is perhaps to such movements as the above that Grunebaum (p. 87) refers as 'wild dances'.

II

The Ta'zia Assemblies¹

No longer nowadays would the Shi'ite reformist school give the name 'ta'zia' to a party held in the memory of Husein. They would rather name that a 'dhikrā' ذکری, i.e. a memorial. An extreme reformist wing would go even further and call the 'dhikrā' a 'īd' عید, i.e. a joyful feast. The editor of a prominent Shi'ite magazine affirmed once that, "Far from being in any way mournful, Husein's stand in the face of injustice could inspire no other feelings than pride and joy." On the other hand, the more conservative quarters are in favour of calling a ta'zia, a 'ma'tam' ماتم, i.e. a funerary meeting, the word being more indicative of mourning than ta'zia which involves a semblance of consolation. At any rate, 'ta'zia' is still the name in more general use. It denotes a meeting of a group of men or women to listen to the recital of the sīra, or a section thereof, of Husein's rising against the Caliph Yazīd, and his subsequent death in battle at Karbalā. Each of such meetings is known as 'majlis' - plural: 'majālis' - مجلس : مجالس, i.e. a sitting, or a session. Although not the most appropriate appellation, the specific name has been adopted, because the Imams themselves had used it: "Those majālis I love them,"

1. The first eight pages of this section deal with the 'ta'zia' parties in general, as held all the year round, as a preliminary to the 'Ashūrā' ta'zias proper, p. 37 et. seq.

said Imam Ja'far.¹

Of the numerous mourning parties in early Islam, two prominent examples may be quoted:

- a. The female party held by the Anṣār wives to mourn Ḥamza, Mohammed's uncle;²
- b. the congregational 'ta'zia held in the Damascus mosque by Mu'awiya I for mourning his uncle Uthmān, the assassinated caliph.³

For parallels to the ta'zia, the nearest are:

- a. The 'Qasīd' evenings: At most mountain villages in this country, and in Syria, a special minstrel, colloquially known as 'hakawātī', until lately used to recite the sīra of such pre-Islamic Arabian heroes as Abu Zaid and 'Antara, before men assembled in cafés, or women meeting in private houses (to twist dough into a local macaroni called 'sha'iriyya'). The 'Qasīd' recitation, comprising prose narration and poetical song, had been a favourite entertainment on Ramadan nights. So popular with the listeners were such evenings that the women would shed bitter tears for the sake of a favourite character in the sīra, and some men, however late at night, would never go to sleep before Abu Zaid were released from his story prison!

1. Anīn: Lawā'ij, p. 6 et al. - Note: In India, the name 'mujlas' is obviously a corruption of the Arabic 'majlis'; yet we can see no reason why the name 'ta'zia' should be given to a replica of Husein's mausoleum, or, as in Hastings, to the Shabīh Play itself.
2. Sharafeddīn: Majalīs, p. 13
3. Zain M.: Ash-Shīa fi't - Tarīkh, p. 29; Mu'tazilī: Sharh, vol. 1. p. 286.

b. The Christian Holy Week evenings: On each day of that week, there is in the ritual of the Byzantine church, an evening assembly held for recalling the agonies of Christ. The service embodies a chapter from the Gospels, several set hymns, and a sermon. On Good Friday, funerary hymns to four different tunes are chanted alternately between two choruses, and the evening culminates in a procession with the 'sarīr'. The 'sarīr' is a cradle-like, wooden frame in which a crucifix is laid covered with flowers. Like a bier, it is carried about by four men who go in front of the procession, while the hymns are being sung in solo and chorus behind. More than a mere parallel, the aforesaid Byzantine ritual might just as well be taken as the origin of the Shi'ite one, having regard both to the striking similarity between the two, and the little change which either ritual has undergone. We would venture in this connection to disagree on this point with Grunebaum and with the Encyclopaedia of Islam. The former authority believes the ceremonies to incorporate an earlier cult, the festival of Adonis, Tammuz, while the latter takes the Ceremonies to be "in all likelihood an engraftment upon the Moroccan magico-religious rituals."¹ Being in favour of the Byzantine origin as above, we would advance the following arguments:

1. The Tammuz cult is much too ancient to have survived Christianity into Shi'ism, whereas, to the Shia, the Christian

1. Grunebaum, p. 88; Gibb & Kramers: Encycl. p. 705

rituals were just within reach. On the other hand, the Moroccan rites are too late to have influenced the Karbalan mourning, considering the fact that they were originally derived from Umayyad Andalusia. The Umayyad 'Ashūrā' merriment had been instituted to defy the Karbalan mournings.

ii. During his researches the present writer has come to discover how rife with genuine Christian influences Shi'ism has been. This is no place to enlarge upon the subject, yet, on three main points at least, we have historical evidence:

a. The eschatological doctrine of the Mahdī, who is to re-appear side by side with Christ, smacks of the Christian beliefs imported into Shi'ism probably by converted Christians;

b. As early as Mu'awiya I, Moslems used to mix so freely with the Syrian Christians that they even shared their own religious rituals with them;¹

c. Narjis, the mother of Imam al-Mahdī, was herself a Christian slave-girl from Byzantium.²

The basic reasons for the celebration are, of course, religious. Yet, it is strange to see Shi'ite polemics, even the more balanced of them, often lose sight of the end in favour of the means, with respect to the subject. They maintain that a ta'zia is held to provide moral teaching,³ to procure a living for reciters,⁴ nay,

1. Brockelmann, (Arabic Version,) vol. 1, p. 148

2. Ibn Sabbāgh: Fusūl, p. 274

3. Amīn: Iqnā', p. 174

4. Sharafeddīn: Majalis, p. 40

for filling in spare time!¹ We have it on authority that, during the royal regime in Iraq, ta'zia Assemblies used to be exploited for political purposes. In Lebanon too, in the last movement to unite with Syria, the Assemblies at certain Shi'ite quarters served as suitable centres to rouse men to revolt. In both these cases and the like, the basic, religious aim of a ta'zia is lost. With such political purposes in view, an Assembly would rather be named a 'ta'bi'a' **تعزية** than a ta'zia, i.e. a call to armament, rather than to mourning.

Let us however return to the question of its origin. According to Shi'ite traditions, Mohammed personally wept over Husein's fate before Husein himself was born.² When the baby was seven days old, Mohammed held a formal mourning assembly over the forthcoming murder of his grandson, the Companions participating with him.³ He all alone held one private mourning session over Husein, on Karbalā proper immediately before he was raised in 'isrā' (Qoran, xvii).⁴ Asked by Fātima as to who would mourn over her son, he answered, "The men of my nation, O daughter, shall weep over the men of my

1. Amīn: Ibid, p. 177; Sharafeddīn: Ibid,

2. Kāshif al-Ghitā: Al-Ard, p. 52; Sharafeddīn: Majālīs, p. 18

3. Sharafeddīn: Majālīs, p. 14; Kutubī: Tarīkh, p. 7 - Note - In his prophecies, however, Mohammed gives no reasons for the would-be murder of his grandson.

4. Tustarī: Khaṣā'is, p. 113; Shakar: al-Imām, p. 39

household, and the women over the women, and they all shall renew the mournful memory generation upon generation."¹ Among a multitude, two further hadīths go to perpetuate grieving over Husein:

- a. "Husein's murder is a calamity which time can never wear out;"²
- b. "In the hearts of all believers, the murder of Husein is a heat that will never cool down."³

Then again there is the example and injunctions of the Imams. On, and outside, 'Ashūrā', the Imams were wont to entertain in their homes poets and reciters who recalled Husein's memory in formal ta'zia parties.⁴ For his T-qasīda in eulogy of Husein, Di'ibīl received the award of 10,000 dirhams from Imam al-Ridā, who fainted twice upon hearing that panegyric recited.⁵ Imam Ja'far, indeed all the Imams, expressly enjoined thus: "Revive (you all) our cause;

الذوا امرنا whoso remembers us, or before whom we be mentioned, and thereupon sheds a tear, even though as little as a fly's wing, the same shall receive from Allāh complete forgiveness of his sins, be those sins as thick as the sea foam ... and whoso excites others to tears, shall get washed from his sins as clean as on the day he was born, and he shall enter paradise as a free reward."⁶

1. Shakar: al-Imām, p. 39; Sādiq: Sīmā', p. 57

2. Kunjī: Kashf, p. 11

3. Hullī: Naqd, p. 2 ed. Ja'far al-Qummī: Mustadrak, vol. 11, p. 7

4. Amīn: Iqnā, p. 72

5. Sharafeddīn: Majālis, p. 20; Hāshimī: Husein fi tarīkīhi, p. 131

6. Amīn: Ibid, p. 105; Itānī: Safīnat, p. 17; et al.

افاطم لو نظرة الى الحيا
ولو ابصرت زين العابدين
فلودامت حياتك لم تنزالي
الي يوم القيمة تشديدا
فتحن الضايقات بلاد كفيل
وتحن الباكيات على ابينا
وتحن السائرات على المطايا
نشال على حال الطبقيتنا
وتحن بنات يمين وطاه
وتحن الثائحات على ابينا
وتحن الصابرات على السلايا
وتحن الصادقون الصابرون
الا يا جده نأقتلوا حسينا
ولم يولدوا جناب الله فينا
لقد

والحمد لله وحده والصلوة
على من لا نبي بعده
قد وقع الفراغ من
من تسويد هذا
المصرع في اليوم
المشروع
من شهر
الشريف
وهو
شهر
رفا
في شهر رمضان سنة ١٢٤٨
على يد حسين سرحان ابن علي سرحان
ابن حسين سرحان غفر الله له

This is to say nothing of the ultra-Shi'ite traditions according to which the celebration of Hussein's ta'zia ranges throughout eternity; to them there had been ta'zias held before the creation of Adam, as there will be on the Day of Resurrection.¹

As to the date the ta'zia in this country began to be held, evidence is only conjectural. From Amīn's Sīrat, we learn that with a view to improving the 'majālis' in his home town - Bint Jbail -, Sheikh Mūsā Sharāra compiled a special 'safīna' text. That improvement took place by the opening of the present Hegira century, i.e. eighty years ago.² The date suggests, however, that prior to Sharāra, the ta'zia had been there. But, as judged by the date of its transcript, the Sīrhān Ms., a sīra text, belongs to a far earlier period, i.e. 1138 A.H. Now, considering the early history of Shi'ism in Mount 'Āmil, and the essentiality of ta'zia to the creed, it would not be too risky to suppose the Matawila to have known Hussein's ta'zia in one form or another as early as any other Shia in the world. In later times, we have it on reliable authority that, the then ruling Ottoman Turks had strictly forbidden the ta'zia, so the Matawila used to assemble for the purpose in secluded premises, with a special watch kept at the door.³

1. Tustarī: Khasāis, p. 112;

2. Amīn: Sīrat, p. 55

3. It is reported that in Iraq such ta'zia 'look-out' men used to grind corn in order to drown the lamentation.

The frequency of holding the Assemblies nowadays cannot be restricted. A Shi'ite man who, over a period of time, misses to hold his ta'zia, regards himself as having failed in his duty of offering homage to Ahl al-Bait. Shi'ite families make a point of holding an assembly on a set day once a week, or once a fortnight, for example, on Friday eve, Sunday morning, or Wednesday afternoon. Hence the name 'āda, عادة i.e. custom, or usbū'iyya, أسبوعية i.e. a weekly appointment.¹ Normally, 'ādas cease to be observed on Muharram and Safar, at which period they would be drowned in the over abundance of the 'majālis'. Outside these two months, it is commendable to hold ta'zias on both the Jamādas, the first and the last, the two periods being known as the Fāṭimiyya tide.² All the year round, the ta'zia is held on a hundred and one occasions, both sad and happy: in general, a ta'zia is recited upon death, where the purpose is twofold, a blessing and a consolation. There is always material for consolation in the Karbalan memory. In appostrophe to Husein and his men, one poet says,

"Your own disasters have paled our previous, and
alleviated our forthcoming, ones."³

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1. At Bint Jbail, Lebanon, for instance, there are no less than fifty 'majālis' every week of the year apart from Muharram and Safar. At Najaf, Iraq, certain ascetics have been holding a ta'zia literally every day of their life.
 2. Questionnaire: Answers by M.K. Qazwīnī of Karbalā.
 3. Amīn: Iqnā, p. 178:

سبقته وهونت الرزايا الاتية

أنت رزاياكم رزايانا التي

However serious the loss, it could not be graver than the massacre of the Hashimites. If a young man dies, the loss is certainly more painful, still it cannot be worse than the loss of the young Ali al-Akbar. If even a newly-wed passes away, well, can he be dearer than al-Qāsim who was killed on his very wedding day? After death, a ta'zia is recited upon the grave on both the seventh and the fortieth days. It might however be continued, once a week, or once every ten days, in proportion to the love of the survivors, and their ability to afford the fees.

Stranger enough, a mourning party is sometimes held on happy occasions, such as the success of a student at a school examination, the initiation of a new house, the circumcision of a child, and even on weddings!¹ On such happy occasions as these, the ta'zia is preceded by a special recitation from the Azriyya poem, an epic laudatory of Mohammed and his family.

.....

At last we come to the 'Ashūrā' season. Apart from home recitations every day, the 'Ashūrā' ta'zia is celebrated by congregational Assemblies held usually in the evening. In bigger towns, day assemblies are also the rule, although the audience in them is much thinner than in the evening parties. For auditoria, special buildings are assigned to the ta'zia. So essential in the Shi'ite church is the memory of Husein that there is scarcely a

1. Donaldson makes mention of almost the same happy ta'zia observances being held in Persia (p. 93). Amīn speaks of ta'zias on happy occasions in Iraq (Sirat, p. 69)

Shi'ite community without a Huseiniyya, as such a building is named. A Huseiniyya is second only to a mosque; during 'Ashūrā' tide, Huseiniyyas are indeed more thronged than mosques. Only at smaller villages, or in towns where the Shia are a small minority, would the public ta'zia party be held in the mosque or a private house. In bigger cities with more than one Assembly, Tyre for instance, other roomy halls than the Huseiniyya are also utilised. In Beirut, the 'Ashūrā' ta'zia is assembled in the hall of the Amiliyya Secondary School or, more comfortably, on the vast roof. At Nabatiyya, assemblies meet in the spacious courtyard of the Huseiniyya house, but the tenth (day) Assembly is held in the mourning hall within the building. For furniture, the auditoria of a ta'zia are provided with benches, bamboo chairs, a few armchairs, and of course, a pulpit.

As regards expense, the minimum fee for ten ten-minute majālis recited in the home is two Lebanese liras, equivalent to four English shillings. There is, however, no top limit to such honorary payment: one fee has reached as high as 150 liras, i.e. £ 17. In general, ta'zia reciters are poor people, although a number of them have made their fortune from their recitation, thus becoming as well off here as they will be in the hereafter, since, by dint of their profession, they are included among those who excite tears over Husein and are thus promised paradise as a free reward. For the public Assemblies, no fees are received. The expense, namely the reciters' fees, the cost of loud-speaker installations, and the

entertainment provisions, is met by the local authorities, either from the revenue of the parish, or the liberal donations of prominent persons.¹ As a sign of gratitude, the merit of one or more ta'zias is usually presented to such donors.

The door of a ta'zia hall is open to all men. The audience, however, are generally Shia. In towns of mixed population, such as Tyre, Jibā', and Khīām, Christians, men and women, occasionally pay a visit to the ta'zia, and the women participate in the weeping. Sunnis scarcely ever attend at a ta'zia. If they did and any one of them betrayed the slightest disrespect, he would be liable to receive a severe mauling or worse. To bigger town assemblies, the authorities usually formally ask prominent non-Shi'ite literati to ~~an assembly~~ either as visitors or as speakers.

The audience have nothing to do but to listen, or occasionally to bless Mohammed and his family. Moved to tears, they weep and curse the oppressors of Husein. For entertainment, water, tea, cigarettes, or special sweetmeats are served. Water is served round by water-carriers in the same muzzled clay jars 'ibrīq' ابريق in local use. Tea, black and heavily sweetened, is served after the Iraqi custom in the small, thin, glass-cups called 'istikāns'.²

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1. In certain parts of Iraq, the money expended on ta'zia reaches fabulous figures. In Ma'qal town, for example, the expense of one assembly in six weeks was 1000 dinars! Donations are collected from foreign embassies: the Iranian, the Indian, and also the British. There are contributions from oil companies, and individual men including Christians. (See:- Kutubī, p. 26)
 2. Probably as a result of the Iraqi influence, the Matawila are more fond of tea than of the traditional Arab coffee. "Our wine," remarked one host, as he poured himself a third 'istikān'.

Cigarettes, and sometimes water-pipes, are served, except during the Qoran recitation, when smoking is stopped. No compliments need be exchanged. It is however, mannerly to say, "May Allāh rest the Martyr," **رحم الله الشهيد** to which the waiter's answer would be, "May Allāh damn the oppressors of Husein." **لعن الله ظالي الحسين**

A proper salutation upon entering a ta'zia hall would be, "May Allāh reward you well," **عظم الله اجركم** the answer thereto being, "Great be your own reward." **أجركم عظيم** A main item in the etiquette of a ta'zia assembly is to bless Mohammed and his Household. It is so frequently repeated that it amounts to a peculiar mannerism. Often during a speech or at random a man may raise a hand to call out for a blessing in some such manner as:

- a. "May Allāh have mercy on the parents of him who so raises his voice with a blessing upon Mohammed;"

رحم الله والدين من رفع صوته بالصلاة على محمد 1

- b. "Bless (you all) Mohammed"; **صلوا على محمد**

or, c. "A blessing upon Mohammed". **صلاة على محمد**

The call is at once replied to by the audience who repeat softly three times: "Bless, O Allāh, Mohammed and Mohammed's Household." **اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد**

To be more specific, there are seven main junctures in an assembly on which such blessing is invoked, viz:

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1. For the sake of accurate reportage, the mistake in Arabic grammar is left uncorrected; the genitive noun should have been: **والدى من**

- i. The entrance of the chairman into the ta'zia hall; the blessing here stands as a sort of a religious welcome;
- ii. to quieten down a random noise, or to draw attention to a special announcement;
- iii. to bridge the interval between two speakers;
- iv. to open, and often to conclude, a ta'zia speech;
- v. as a sign of religious zeal;
- vi. as a special compliment to a speaker, there being no other sort of applause allowed;
- vii. as a sign of glorification: for example, having retold a miracle of healing wrought by the power of Husein's sister, one reciter at once addressed the audience with the words, "Therefore, bless (you all) Mohammed."

Curses and damnations are heard wherever in a speech the names of the Umayyad adversaries are mentioned, namely: Yazīd, Mu'āwiya I., Shimr, Harmala, and Ibn Sa'd. Yazīd in particular is the target for curses; as he dried his tears, one old man nearby whispered, "May Allāh damn Yazīd 'wayazīd', i.e. and increase damnation"

الله يلعن يزيد ويزيد

In admiration of Husein's stand, interjections of applause take the form of a single assonated "A L L Ā H" from different sides of the hall. So too is the applause in the case of commentary on the Qoranic recitation. When feeling runs high, one may hear such shouts of sympathy as "Allāh akbar"! combined with tears and sobbing; and the more sensitive men smite their faces and heads in abject grief.

The programme of a public assembly comprises apart from the ta'zia proper special Qoranic recitation in the beginning, and short bouts of 'latm' at the beginning and the end of the party. At certain town assemblies, Raml Seminary at Tyre for instance, an initial religious talk is usually held while the assembly is forming. The topic of such talk belongs generally to the Imams' transcendency. Roughly speaking, a public 'majlis' extends well over two hours. It is however much longer on the final days, at which time the mourners would go home only around midnight.¹ On the final days of the season, where speakers and audience alike are increased, a special announcer is assigned at an assembly to introduce the various items of the programme. Those announcers are lavish in their praise, conferring upon the speakers such high-sounding titles as, 'the highly learned-man', or the 'such and such authority of Islam' etc. The opening of an assembly is made by a Qoranic recitation of less than fifteen minutes length, either from a record or by special reciters. No Qoranic passages are set for specific 'Ashūrā' days, and it is almost impossible to find a clear connection between the subject of the majlis and the Qoranic

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1. In bigger Shi'ite towns, young men keep demonstrating all during the ninth night, going home only when the 'Ashūrā' day dawns.

passage recited thereon.¹ As to the subject of the majlis on each evening, it is roughly as follows:

- i. General motives of Husein's rising: Husein, a redeemer of religion, an upholder of right;
- ii. Removal of Husein from Medina to Mecca, Kūfan letters, Muslim sent as emissary to Kūfa;
- iii. Husein on the way to Kufa across Arabia; Muslim executed, the news reaches Husein; his colloquy with Muslim's family, and forward march;
- iv. Hurr meets and escorts Husein to Karbalā;
- v. Negotiations and initial parley; battle is joined; Hurr goes over to Husein, fights and falls;
- vi. Husein's followers fall in action;
- vii. Husein's son and nephew make battle and fall;
- viii. The fall of 'Abbās'.
- ix. Slaughter of a suckling babe of Husein's; Husein in person fights and falls;
- x. The whole sīra of Karbalā reviewed in one sitting.

1. As a specimen of the Qoranic passages, the following opening verses have been noted:

- i. "By the morning hours and the night when it stilleth..."
- ii. "Allāh preferred Adam and Noah ... above all his creatures..."
- iii. "The Beneficent hath made known the Qoran..."
- iv. The Cave.
- v. "Say we believe in Allāh ... Abraham and Ismail ... we make no distinction between any of them..."
- vi. Birth of Yahia, son of Zacharia.
- vii. "Calamity! What is calamity!"
- viii. "Unto Allāh belongs the sovereignty of heaven and earth..."
- ix. "Think not of those who are slain in the way of Allāh as dead, nay they are alive..."
- x. "Allāh's wish is but to remove contamination far from thee, O folk of the Household..."

The Speakers at a ta'zia assembly may be roughly divided with respect to the substance of their address into three categories:

a. The Reciter: - he recites from memory, or from a sīra text, the detailed account of Husein's rising and eventual death. He is variously known as 'qārī' قارى ; i.e. reader, 'dhākir' ذاکر i.e. reviewer of the 'dhikrā', 'mu'azziⁿ ممیز i.e. reciter of ta'zia, or by the Persian name, 'Rowza-khwan' روضه خوان by etymology from "Rawdatu'l Shuhadā'", 'روضه الشهداء' a standard sīra text edited by Wā'iz al-Kāshifī.¹ Apart from an exceptionally retentive memory, reciters are commonly sweet-voiced.

b. The Preacher: - A preacher is usually a religious personage, normally the chairman of an assembly, or the head sheikh of the community. His sermon or allocution is based upon the precepts of Islam, with side remarks about Husein's career.

c. The Khatīb, or Khatīb dhākir: - A khatīb is a speaker who gives an improvised address, concentrated more on the moral of the Sīra than the Sīra itself. Better class khatībs are nowadays graduates from Najaf and are given the rudiments of theology. Not a few khatībs in Lebanon are gifted with a poetic talent.² Under this category, come the contributing speakers who either appear at an assembly in person, or deliver their speeches over the radio. Among

1. Browne, vol. iv. p. 181

2. The two distinguished ta'zia speakers in Lebanon nowadays are Zahruddīn of Beirut and Hakīm of Bint Jbail.

their number there have been several notable Christian literati, and two Sunni sheikhs.

It should be again pointed out that the three categories above are by no means water-tight. A speaker from category (a) may well include some moral and a short piece of preaching in his recitation, whereas the address of both (b) and (c), as often as not embody large slices of narration from the Sīra.

.....

If women wish to attend at a men's assembly, they, as a rule, sit behind a curtain, or in the background, unseen by the men. Women, however, have their own assemblies independent of, and out of bounds to, men.¹ Sitting at a men's party during the 'Ashūrā' season, one would often hear the sound of womanly lamentation from nearby houses. As regards ceremonies, womanly assemblies differ only slightly from men's. According to the ḥadīth on page 33 above, the women are to mourn only the women of the Household. The Mutwālī ladies however mourn the individuals of both sexes who were present at Karbalā. Parallels to womanly ta'zia may still be seen to-day in the local village funerary assemblies. The women sit down on mats around the corpse of the dead one and share in the colloquial dirges. Only near relatives dishevel their hair and beat their breasts; the rest of the participants merely keep time by clapping their hands solemnly.

1. In Tyre, certain female assemblies are held in the presence of the chief mujtahid who delivers the sermon.

A woman reciter is known as a 'mullā'. These 'mullās' are elderly half-educated women. In their case, the Sīra and dirges alike are recited out of set texts.¹ Certain mullās are most adept in their delivery, combining their recitation with declamatory gestures and varied pitch of voice. To quieten down a noisy assembly, one such mullā often starts the majlis with a 'latmiyya' dirge, to which the audience will have to respond in chorus and 'latm' in unison. Once they have been thus chanted into discipline, the mullā opens her Sīra or begins a solitary na'ī, i.e. wailing, tune at leisure. By the side of the mullā a group of half a dozen girls are seated. These girls are actually apprentice mullās, and their job is to act as a special chorus for the dirges.

The audience are all Shia. Non-Shi'ite visitors are welcome - though less warmly, if Sunnis. The auditorium is the mosque, but in bigger towns women assemble in private houses.

The audience sit down on straw mats or on couchins. As a special distinction of mourning, Sayyid ladies would remain standing all during the 'majlis'. The same refreshments as at men's assemblies, sweetmeats and the like, are served, but to avoid undue distraction, the refreshments are brought round only at the end of the meeting. For 'latm', a woman's breast need not be bared, but the experience differs from men's in that a woman can employ both hands

1. In Iraq, previously, mullā Whaida, (according to Amīn: Sīrat, p. 69) was noted for reciting original extemporary 'Ashūrā' dirges.

simultaneously: the right beating the breast, and the left, beating the left thigh. As the 'majlis' wears on, random shouts of sympathy and exclamations of grief interrupt the recitation. Some women tear their hair, and ruthlessly smite their heads and cheeks as they call out, "Oh, dear me, their hands cut off!" "The tents burnt down!" "Oh for the women taken captive!" "Oh the woeful day!" In their impassioned attitude, the less reserved mourners bring down damnation upon the Sunnis - to them known colloquially as 'Aslām' - whom they openly curse and spit upon! Tears flow down abundantly, and once a 'latmiyya' dirge is started, the women work themselves into a pitiable frenzy. Many of the participants are actually taken out unconscious, and restoratives administered to them.¹

As at men's assemblies, a special day is assigned to the memory of a special martyr. On the evening assigned to Qāsim, flowers and lighted candles adorn the ta'zia hall and remain there all during the first part of his sīra. When he falls in battle, the candles are put out and the flowers removed. On the ninth evening, when Husein is left on his own, 'latm' is ceased in favour of a soft solitary 'na'ī' نعي lamentation by the mullā and abundant tears are shed by the audience. The situation is too sad for vocal expressions of grief other than the occasional random exclamation. Late at night, just before the party breaks up, the lights in the assembly hall are put out and, in complete darkness, the women

1. However swollen by 'latm' the women's breasts might become, they are known to 'miraculously' subside the next morning.

present stand up facing the 'qibla' and join in a litanic supplication to Fāṭima, Zuhra (see dirge No. 76). Early the next morning, the 'Ashūrā' day proper, the women meet in one big assembly to attend the recitation of the masra', the full sīra of Karbalā. Next to that comes the 'rahīl' رحيل, i.e. the departure. The women in a body leave the ta'zia hall to pay a visit to the grave-yard. This accomplished, they either retire home in grief, or proceed to see the shabīh play, if one is being presented in their particular town.¹

III

The Shabīh of Karbalā

By the name 'shabīh' شبیه, i.e. likeness, is meant the representation of Husein and his men on their last hours at Karbalā, together with the subsequent captivity of the Hashimites who survived the battle. Aside from dramatic representation, Shi'ite devotees annually recall the tragic incident more tangibly by inflicting actual sword wounds upon their heads. In the following pages, therefore, we shall attempt to deal with the shabīh ritual under its two component parts: the Passion Play and the head-wounding.

A. The Shabīh Passion Play

Since the main purpose of the shabīh of Karbalā is to inculcate religious belief, it can be paralleled only by the Miracle, or

1. Whereas the tenth day constitutes a culmination of the ceremonies for men, women carry on with their lamentations until well after the thirteenth, lamenting the 'burning of the Tents' and the 'Captivity of the Hashimite women'.

Mystery, Play of Mediaeval England. What is perhaps the earliest English Miracle Play, "The Harrowing of Hell", is of the late thirteenth or fourteenth century.¹ Incidentally, extant traces of the Miracle Play can still be found in Lebanon in a few religious theatricals enacted in the Christian Byzantine Church on three different feasts:²

i. The Last Supper. - On the eve of Good Friday a bishop representing Jesus, carries round a basin of water and washes the feet of twelve of his priests who are seated at a table and represent the Disciples. When the washing is over, the Bishop administers to them the Eucharist, and the ceremony is concluded with special liturgic prayers and hymns sung in chorus.

ii. The Raising of Lazarus. - Having regard to the manner in which it is performed, this short dramatic sketch is better called a Miracle Operette than a Miracle Play, the speeches being sung rather than delivered. The actors are merely Lazarus, who lies down

1. Harvey: Companion to Eng. Literature, p. 525

2. At schools and clubs, the Nativity is also enacted. But of two other Christian festivals, the ritual can hardly be called dramatic. It is confined to buffoonery and carnival rites on the eve of St. Barbara, the fourth of December, and to silent ritual on Corpus Christi day. On this latter day, the public processions, as observed by the Maronite church, embody a few 'actors' who represent Jesus, the Disciples, Joseph and Mary. Jesus carries a little white lamb on his shoulders; Joseph appears in the garb of a carpenter, while the Disciples are portrayed in wigs, sandals, and long, loose garments. The 'actors' do not join in the hymns chanted by the procession: they merely continue on their way in modest, silent reverence.

under a white cover, with Mary and Martha his sisters, both in mourning clothes, kneeling down on either side of him. When acting starts, two chanters begin to sing their verses in alternation, simultaneously rolling up a scroll spread between them as they stand, one at the head, and the other at the feet of the 'dead' Lazarus. Near the end, they reach the verse wherein the miracle is wrought. Jesus exclaims, "To thee, Lazarus, I say, 'Rise up from the dead...'", Upon the word, Lazarus jumps up 'alive' and, together with his two sister, joins the group in a final hymn of glorification.

111. The Easter 'Hajma'. - Early at Easter dawn, a youth who plays Satan gets inside the church in advance and makes sure to unlock all the entrances merely keeping them closed. A group of actors headed by the parish priest, and accompanied by a section of the congregation, meet together at the church-yard. A prayer is said and soon after, 'acting' begins. The priest knocks at the church door with the words, "Open, ye eternal gates, that the King of Glory may enter." No answer comes, so knocking is repeated with the same order. After the third time, Satan inside responds with equivocation and quibblings, but the group, chanting their Easter hymns in chorus, rushes through the (un-locked) church doors in triumph, and an early Easter mass is said. Their triumphant rush, 'hajma' هجمة , gives the Play its name.

As regards the date at which the shabīh began, literary historians are at variance. Most of them, following certain

orientalists, refer it to the Safavid dynasty in Persia; a few believe it to have been practised by the earlier Buwaihids in Iraq. In Persia, drama in general is a recent development dating from as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹ The Shabīh in that country, therefore, must have preceded general drama by many years. In his report on the Muharram ceremonies at Ardabil, Adam Olearius gives an eye-witness description of the celebrations, though he makes mention of no dramatic performance. His report is based on the 'Ashūrā' of the year 1637.² Depending, obviously, upon Olearius' report, Browne takes the shabīh to belong definitely to a date later than 1637/1047 A.H.³ The French historian, Joséph, believes the shabīh to have originated from India and to have been adopted by the Safavids who owed much of their supremacy to the Shi'ite creed.⁴ Sheikh al-'Irāqain, as well as other Shi'ite authorities, agrees in essence with the above; affirming that it was al-Majlisī (d. 1111 A.H.) who among the leading ulama' was the first to legalize the public shabīh on 'Ashūrā'.⁵

Historians holding the other view include both al-Yāsīn and Muzaffar.⁶ They accept the tradition that the shabīh had been current among the Shia of Iraq ever since the Buwaihids, and that

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1. Hastings: Encycl. of Religion and Ethics, p. 897
 2. Gibb and Kramers: Shorter Encycl. of Islam. p. 590
 3. Browne: Lit. Hist. of Persia, vol. iv. p. 28
 4. Joseph: Islam and Moslems, Tr. Amīn: Iqnā', p. 206
 5. Sheikh al-'Irāqain: Anwār, vol. ii. p. 77
 6. Al-Yāsīn: Nazrat, p. 27; Muzaffar: Mustat, p. 11

in later years it continued to be practised in hiding for reasons of dissimulation. Muzaffar affirms that it was the Buwaihids rather than the Safavids who took the essentials of drama from the Indians and applied them in their 'Ashūrā' rituals.¹ In this connection it may be of interest to give the verbal opinion on the subject of a Baghdad 'mujtahid', Sayyid M.H.:

"At one ta'zia assembly of old", he said, "Imam Ja'far and the audience had been in great tears as they listened to the pathetic section of the sīra recalling the slaughter of 'Abdullāh, Husein's suckling Babe. Whether intentional or otherwise, a slave-girl carrying a baby of Ja'far's, stepped into the assembly hall and laid the baby in its father's lap. Upon this, the weeping was greatly increased, and from that little incident was born the idea of dramatic the presentation in the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies."

Now, if the authenticity of the aforesaid anecdote can be substantiated, and since Ja'far died in the year 148 A.H./765, the Arabic drama, as represented by the shabīh as its forerunner would have by far outstripped the Christian Miracle Plays of Mediaeval England and Europe. Without going to such lengths, however, we feel more inclined to accept the Buwaihīd origins of the shabīh, despite their being supported by fewer authorities. Our reasons for so doing are:

a. In the Safavid period, the shabīh could not have been a Minerva, born complete and fully grown. Al-Majlisī cannot be

1. In the light of the above data, it would be surprising indeed if the shabīh was first witnessed by a European only as late as the year 1811 - (Grunebaum, p. 89)

assumed to have legalized an incomplete ritual;

b. there is historical evidence that the street processions on 'Ashūrā' had been sufficiently developed during the Buwaihid era. The processions themselves embody several representational elements, which fact testifies to the presence of the drama at that time. It is significant to note in passing that the 'Ashūrā' processions are, to this day, called "the processions of the shabīh" مواكب الشبه ;

c. the present writer is of the firm opinion that Karbalā and Shi'ism are both directly and conversely interrelated. To revive Karbalā is, we believe, tantamount to reviving Shi'ism itself. Conversely, the stronger Shi'ism was in a country, as during the Buwaihid rule, the more pronounced, the more incarnate the memory of Karbalā must have been, hence the great likelihood of the prevalence of the shabīh as early as that age.

In Beirut, Lebanon, in 1847 was erected the first theatre wherein the Arabic version of Moliere's "L'Avaricieuse", translated by Naqqāsh, was enacted. Over seventy years had to elapse before the first Arabic tragedy, the shabīh, came to be presented in the first Arab theatre, i.e. in Lebanon. Into Lebanon the idea was introduced from Persia by the end of the Ottoman rule.¹ Despite its early development in Persia, as shown above, the shabīh reached us only in a crude and undeveloped form. At

1. Amīn: Tanzīh, p. 24

first, it was adopted by the little village of Jibshīt in Mount 'Āmil where the drama was presented on the 'Ashūrā' of 1916/17.¹ In the following year, the idea was conveyed to the larger neighbouring town of Nabatiyya, which has, ever since, been the centre of both the developed shabīh and the full 'Ashūrā' ceremonies. We have it on reliable authority that, in its early stages, the Tragedy used to be only in part produced and largely without dialogue. Such speech as there was, used to be neither dramatic, nor necessarily in classical Arabic. Principally, the shabīh embodied scenes of simulated battles, the burning of Husein' Camp, Processions of Captivity, and actual head-wounding. Much similar to this was the kind of shabīh enacted at several other towns in Mount 'Āmil during the first decade of its arrival into this country. Around the year 1926, the presentation had been slightly modified, and a set text for the purpose prepared by the late Sheikh Sādiq of Nabatiyya. With regard to both substance and form, the said text very closely resembled the one used for the purpose of the present thesis (see vol. ii). Neither text has, however, seen print. In 1929, a fresh shabīh play was produced by Hijāzī, alias Ibn al-Bādia, of Tyre. His work, which was enacted at Kfār-Hatta on six consecutive 'Ashūrā's, has not been printed either.

1. The present material concerning the development of the shabīh in Lebanon, depends largely upon personal information collected either verbally or in written answers to the special Questionnaire prepared for the thesis.

Consulted in Ms. form, Hijāzī's work has been found to be more comprehensive and a little more dramatic than the present Tragedy. It opens at a date much earlier than Husein's arrival at Tha'labiyya. Starting with the accession of Yazīd, it thus affords a better opportunity for dramatic conflict in Husein's situation before he finally decides to embark upon his rising. Furthermore, it comprises two pageantry scenes, namely the scene of Jinn and that of Angels with their respective colourful costumes.¹

In the 1930's the developed shabīh play reached both Khīām and Jibā'. At the former town the producer, a certain sheikh Husein Ali Ibrahīm, used to have drums beaten and trumpets sounded in the final procession. In 1945 the shabīh at Khīām was finally given up; yet the Khiamites still talk to-day of the Burning of the Tents, and recall with laughter the funny headdress of the odd-looking lad who used to play Shimr. At Jibā' the shabīh seems to have reached a higher degree of development than elsewhere in the country. The costumes of the Umayyads used to be specially tailored out of red silk, while those of the Hashimites were green, and black and, of course, of a more decorous cut. The 'battle' used to be fought out on horse-back; the devout spectators, thoroughly impressed by the acting of the warriors, still express admiration for the way they fell off their horses, fluttered for a while,

1. Of the Arabic publications (in poetic form) dealing with Karbalā we have heard of none to have been enacted. Perhaps the most note-worthy of those are the following three:
 Mardam A.: "Al Husein" ed. at Irfān Magazine, vol. 26 Year 1935
 Sharafeddin M.R.: "Al-Husein", Baghdad (1933)
 Salama B.: 'Id al-Ghadir (Canto the last) Beirut (1949)

then lay completely motionless, to all appearances dead. When in 1958 the country as a whole suffered from general civil strife, the Jibā' drama was missed out for the year and, unfortunately, never resumed. Only at Nabatiyya and the immediate neighbourhood does the shabīh live on.

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For the presentation of the shabīh in Lebanon, there has not actually been such a thing as a theatre. The stage is either the town's threshing-field, or simply the open countryside. At Nabatiyya, the annual performance takes place on a special one-acre piece of land which the inhabitants call al-Qit'a, i.e. strip of land, or variously Husein's arena *ساحة الحسين*. It is wide enough both for a stage in the central area and a standing-place all around for the audience. On 'Ashūrā' day, a special loud-speaker apparatus is installed at the Qit'a for the convenience of the actors. There are neither curtains, green room, nor any scenery there. The only semblance of scenery is the 'Euphrates', represented by a number of green plam-tree branches stuck in the ground along the eastern border. On the north-east, a large wooden bench and a few chairs represent the Kūfa Court. Four white calico tents, 8 ft. high and 3 ft. in radius, are pitched a short way apart on the south-west, ostensibly blockaded from the Euphrates by the Umayyad force stationed there. The Camp is filled with young children, mostly girls who represent the Hashimite harem. Horses and camels are employed in the first and final

scenes of the play. The horses of the Hashimite group are more distinctly caparisoned than the others. So too are their camels which, in addition, are adorned with little copper bells hanging down from their necks.

The actors are all of Nabatiyya. The main parts are by tradition played by certain families. No fees are received for acting; the actors regard their performance more as a service to religion, hence their keenness to keep their parts to themselves, and the desire of other young men to participate in the shabīh. These actors are mainly tradesmen; their education is elementary, and their dramatic education is almost nil. Still, they do feel the necessity for a better stage and improved production. (cf. report in Appendix II, vol. II). Their costumes are provided by themselves - except for the two special uniforms for Shimr, which are preserved by the local authority. There is not much difficulty about procuring such Arab clothing as the thick, brown 'abā, turbans, kafiyyas and 'Iqāls which are quite sufficient for the actor in the shabīh. Nor are the weapons any more difficult to procure. There is a stock of second-hand swords, sabres, and spears kept specially for 'Ashūrā'.

The programme comprises Quranic recitations, an opening address, two brief interludes of tatbīr, i.e. head-wounding, and copious commentary. Roughly speaking, the presentation extends over the three morning hours from half-past nine. As a rule, acting may not begin until the final 'ziārat' invocation at the Huseiniyya

has been completed. The commentator of the play is the one who gives the opening address. During the performance, his job is only a little less arduous than that of a sports commentator. He introduces the main actors, gives a resumé of their respective parts, and a goodly slice of the rhetorical passages therein, etc. Such copious commentary could be justifiable only on the ground of explaining the progress of the play to the numerous non-Shi'ite visitors among the audience. As regards the Shia themselves, there is hardly any explanation needed since, on their part, the drama pre-supposes an understanding of the minutest details. The commentary does, as well, fill up several long gaps where, for one reason or another, the action becomes slack or unduly suspended. The commentator, however, is no prompter - nor is prompting in this Play required: most of the actors have played their roles again and again, so they have retained their own parts, and most others, well enough by heart. A number of them seem to have indeed committed even the mistakes of orthography as well!

The audience at the shabīh has always been thronged. So popular has the Tragedy of Karbalā been that visitors, Shi'ite or non-Shi'ite, come from distant parts of the country to see it performed. Previously, due to the lack of speedy means of conveyance, visitors from distant regions used to reach Nabatiyya a few days in advance. The material benefit which accrues to the town should not be overlooked. No fees are paid for attendance; had there been any, the proceeds would have come

out quite lucrative, the audience being estimated at no less than fifty thousand - no small gathering in a country the size of Lebanon. Roofs and balconies overlooking the stage are the most coveted seats for women and children. There are certain sightseers who get on top of the buses and water-tanks parked by the place; others find themselves precarious seats on the branches of the trees on the northern border. Over-eager youths once even climbed a neighbouring telegraph pole in order to gain a better view, and were brought down by the police. The general audience, however, have no more than a standing-place in the sun. There must be, beyond satisfying the dramatic instinct, something else which, under such unfavourable conditions as these, can draw all that audience thither.¹ The attitude of the sightseers is unmistakably morose. Yet, despite the pervading grief, hawkers mingle among the crowd calling their refreshments, and not a few spectators buy themselves a cool drink or an ice-cream stick.

To keep order on 'Ashūrā' Day, the local police is reinforced by a considerable auxiliary. The Lebanese army, as often as not, lends a hand with a detachment. Boy-scouts are also employed in clearing the 'halaqa', i.e. the central space reserved for acting. Previously, a special wire fence used to be erected round the 'halaqa'. Despite the great size of the multitude, there have been no troubles worth mentioning.

1. It was reported that in Baghdad the shabīh was once enacted in Persian before an Arabic-speaking audience who, despite their complete ignorance of the language, enjoyed the show to the full.

B. - Tatbīr or Head-wounding

Alluding to their excessive love for Husein, the Persian community in Lebanon, were wont to call 'Ashūrā' 'the day of the mad'. This appellation was supported of late by a voice from Najaf where, on Husein's birthday, one speaker - A.W. - expressly declared that, "the Love for Husein has sent us mad!" Browne has truly guessed that, "the love for that fair-faced moon, the martyr at Karbalā and ^{the} Karbalan legend are a potent factor in producing in the more devout Shia the psychological attitude which makes them not only endure with fortitude, but also glory in their sufferings."¹ It is only with such love for Husein in the background that the violent shabīh mortifications can be studied with understanding.

With tatbīr, i.e. deliberate head-wounding, the yearly 'Ashūrā' celebrations culminate. With a view to better recalling how Husein and his men looked in their last hour, hundreds of devout Shia tour the main streets, or the stage of the Miracle Play, inflicting sword-wounds upon their heads. The ritual forms a turning point in the development of the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies, since on it has the long controversy between the differing schools of thought been essentially centred. (See chapter Five below).

The Arabic verbal noun 'tatbīr' ^{تطير} is derived from the foreign noun 'ṭabar' ^{طبر}, i.e. a battle-axe.² Tatbīr is nowadays less

1. Browne, vol. iv, p. 197

2. Colloquially, the swordsmen are known as 'ḍarrība', i.e. sword-smiters. ^{ضربة}

observed in Lebanon than for instance in Iraq, Persia, or elsewhere in places predominantly Shi'ite.¹ According to one authority, not only in Caucasus has the experience been observed, but that, prior to 1917, it used to be practised even in Moscow!²

In support of the performance, the Shia rely upon the current wish come down to them from their Imams, i.e. "Would that we had died there by the side of Husein!" In comparison to death, to shed a little of one's blood would therefore be an act too insignificant to be mentioned. More than a mere representation, head-wounding is also regarded as a 'nusra', i.e. succour in battle, which should involve some bleeding. Their preparadness to die in that 'nusra', is signified by the white shirts, known as shrouds or winding sheets, which the swordsmen wear. Their example for tatbīr is either that of the Repenters, who laid down their lives fighting for Husein's cause,³ or Zainab herself who, catching sight of her brother's head hoisted on a spear, bumped her own head against the camel-litter so hard that blood was seen flowing down from under her veil.⁴ More credulous devotees, however, undergo the mortification in memory not of Husein, but of Ali who, was mortally wounded in the head at the battle of the Ditch in early Islam! In that belief of theirs, they are supported by the fact that, while

1. For tatbīr in Persia, see: Sykes; Glory, p. 197
and: Donaldson, pp. 277, and 341

2. Questionnaire: M.K. Qazwīnī of Karbalā

3. Shakar: al-Imām, p. 56

4. Hullī: Naqd, p. 26; Ziārat Mufji'a Zainab, p. 9; et al.

going about the sanguinary experience, the swordsmen often ejaculate Ali's name, or at least, his pseudonym, 'Haidar'. Besides that, colloquially, the whole ritual has come to be metonomized as 'Haidar'. So, to tell you that he undergoes the tatbīr, a devotee would simply say, "I smite Haidar"! ل'ضرب حيدر

The history of tatbīr in Lebanon is closely connected with the history of shabīh. As early as the year 1319/1901, the 'Ashūrā' mortifications, i.e. 'tatbīr' and 'janzīr', had been a common practice at the shrine of Sit Zainab near Damascus. Some fifteen years later, i.e. in 1916, they were brought to this country.¹ During Turkish rule, tatbīr, like other Shi'ite devotions, used to be performed either in face of open opposition to the government, or in secret. By the beginning of the French mandate, the Shia, breathing deep, went to such extremes as to lead the French too to prohibit tatbīr - initially; to forestall contravention, the police confiscated the swords. So the 'Ashūrā' zealots went about their experience in secret; the Nabatiyyans, for instance, retired to Harūf, a neighbouring little village, where, to their hearts' content, they wounded their heads with rocks and stones!² As part and parcel of the shabīh, tatbīr was sponsored by the late sheikh Sādiq of Nabatiyya. He it was who patronised the

1. Amīn: Sīrat, pp. 73 and 77; Tanzīh, p. 24; Khutāt, p. 119

2. We have it on reliable authority that in Persia, ever since the government banned tatbīr, in 1928 devout Shia rise up at dawn to inflict a few cuts on their heads in secret.

Conservative Ceremonies against attempts at reform by the Amīn School - Cf. Chapter Five below. After his death, the task of patrimony has devolved upon sheikh Mohammed Taqī, his younger son, the present head sheikh of Nabatiyya and district.

The technique of head-wounding has in fact nothing special about it. By way of preparation, a small patch on the top of the head is closely shaven a couple of days before 'Ashūrā'. With effect from the eighth of Muharram, few are the heads at Nabatiyya and district that are seen without a shaven patch. Even elderly men, who no longer undergo the easier 'latm', would never miss to perform their yearly tatbīr. Once the patch is shaven, different methods are adopted to swell up or bruise the skin. Certain devotees beat the spot lightly with the breadth of the sword-blade, others rub dry salt in, etc. After the skin has become bruised enough, the normal method is to cut into the head with the sword in one hand, and to pat the wounds lightly with the other. At certain towns, Khīām for instance, the more cautious devotees get the head incised by a razor-blade before hand, and only draw the sword across representationally. On the other hand, there are sturdy devotees who would not care even to bruise the skin, but slash at their heads straightaway with the sword, and beat with the open palm next to it. As to the number of cuts, this differs from man to man. Among the more zealous, there are men who have inflicted as many as seven or eight deep gashes. This however, is regarded

as an extreme number;¹ the average is four cuts, and these too would differ in depth and seriousness.

At the start, the devotees in their white 'shrouds', line up in the shape of a connected chain, the left hand of the one grasping at the belt of the other, while with the right, the sword is drawn, the line moving sideways. By such posture, they symbolize the united ranks of Husein's followers who made battle for his sake. Apart from its symbolical aspect, the posture serves as a useful support against accidental weaknesses or fainting. As a further precaution, each devotee, particularly the unexperienced, will have an assistant who walks behind him. The assistant is provided with a wooden rod which he places horizontally on the head of his man. Lest in his enthusiasm, the man should attempt to slash himself too deeply, the rod would take the brunt of the blow. It is an assistant's job as well to wipe the blood off his man's eyes and, once the round comes to an end, to help in wrapping up the wounded head with the man's shroud, in the form of a loose turban, as a preliminary dressing against sun and dust. (Cf. juniors with wrapped heads near Husein's Camp in the figure in vol. ii).

The outfit required for tatbīr is a sword, a shroud, and a brave heart. A first-aid kit, containing tinctures, cotton wool, and

1. Speaking of the tatbīr in Iraq, Stevens (p. 161) states that the number of cuts was restricted by the police to three.

Note - It is reported that at Najaf, beginners in tatbīr undergo a period of apprenticeship of at least ten days before 'Ashūra'.

restoratives, is provided within easy reach. So, too, are large basins of lemonade as offered by votaries as a refreshing sherbet. The sword is commonly known by its Persian name 'gāmeḥ' or less often as 'tatarīyya' تبریه in the belief that such short, straight bayonets had been used by the Tartar soldiers. Commoner however is the name 'gāmeḥ' or more precisely the Arabicised corruption 'qāma' - pluralised as 'qamāt' قامات . Few would use the name 'saif' سيف although several long scimitars might also be seen drawn. Inscriptions in either Arabic or Persian are etched into the blade of the 'gāmeḥ' with the usual Shi'ite, aphorisms about Ali and his family, particularly about Dhul-Fiḡār, Ali's famous sword. The shroud, i.e. the swordsmen's shirt, is a white calico length cut out in the middle for the head, and extending on both sides over the shoulders halfway down the arms. It is tied round the waist with a belt of leather or rope. Since more blood is normally shed from in front, the front piece of the shroud is much longer than the rear one and reaches as far down as the knees.

At Nabatiyya alone, there are nowadays no less than a thousand heads which bleed at the season. The number includes men and boys, but of course no women, and the tatbīr is confined to the lay population.¹ No age limit is set: men as old as sixty, and babies as young as five, equally bleed on 'Ashūrā'. It is said

1. In Iraq, a good number of the religious class are known to undergo tatbīr.

that the babies are by no means displeased about their wounds. The appointment for inflicting the wounds is usually the early 'Ashūrā', unless a shabīh play is presented, when the tatbīr coincides with the dramatic performance. One big group however, usually postpone tatbīr until the final Act of the shabīh.

The attitude of the sword-beaters is one of high emotion. They brook no criticism whatsoever - and their ghames are sharp enough!¹ Gruesome as their sight might appear, it nevertheless commands special respect from their co-religionists. In general, the men glory in wounding themselves on 'Ashūrā' regarding tatbīr as an act of special manliness and a form of crusade. No sooner would you question one of them, but he would lower his scarred head so as to illustrate to you how many 'Ashūrā's he had undergone. Among the Shi'ite men of Nabatiyya and district, unscarred heads are difficult to find.

As regards the after-effects of tatbīr, the quick healing of the wounds is regarded as significant. Far from being by any means injurious, the experience is held to be salutary. Blood-letting was an ancient custom in Jabal 'Āmil;² similarly, in addition to the religious benefit, tatbīr came to be a physiological

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1. Photography is not permitted; someone attempting to take photographs can hope for little better than a sound thrashing and the breaking of his camera.
 2. In his "Khutat", p. 123 Amīn prescribes cupping the head for curing a lunatic. Aren't the 'Ashūrā' devotees lunatic in their love for Husein?

necessity to many.¹ They would suffer from ill health and lassitude were they not to indulge in this form of blood-letting. Moreover, the quick sealing of the tatbīr wounds has done much to encourage the belief in the sanctity of the experience. Of the numerous cases on the subject, the following are perhaps the most striking:

i. Ali Ridā of Nabatiyya (Upper), age 19:

His deep wound on 'Ashūrā' 1959 extended as far back as the occiput of the head. Blood drenched the lad's shroud seeping through to his under-clothes. On the third day, his wound was finally sealed.

ii. 'Abdullāh Isā of Jibā', age 45:

Seriously wounded on the 'Ashūrā' of 1950, the man retired to a nearby pool to wash. Men standing by saw the water turn red with blood. But 'Isā himself felt no discomfiture about it, and on the very next morning, he was on his way to the field where he spent the day ploughing in the sun. There were no after-effects.

iii. 'Abdullāh Nahli of Nabatiyya, age 52:

By mistake, on the festival of 1940, Nahli inflicted on his head a wound so serious that it left a large slice of the skin hanging over the right ear. The wound had to be sewn clinically - and in two days the skin sealed up normally.

1. Sykes: "Glory", p. 132 conveys that, unless they be cupped every Spring, the Iranis shall not retain good health during the Summer.

iv. Ahmad Amin of Nabatiyya (Upper), age 48:

With excessive zeal on the 'Ashūrā' of 1954, the man gashed his head so deep that he fell on the spot in a faint. He was carried into the Huseiniyya, where he lay unconscious with no one to treat him other than the town sheikh. Unable to check the abundant haemorrhage, the good sheikh simply took off his own 'abā and covered the patient, reciting a short prayer over his head. A doctor was sent for, but before he arrived, the patient came round and began to bathe his wound himself. His fellow villagers testify that the very next morning, he resumed his normal work in the fields. He survived the accident by eight years, and regularly indulged in his yearly tatbīr - though more carefully than previously.

In support of the above, we would add the clinical evidence obtained from a special interview with a prominent Nabatiyya physician, Dr. Sharafeddīn. "First of all," he began, "we should take into account that the skin of the head is naturally thin, and, under similar conditions, capable of healing much earlier than that of other parts. There are, nevertheless, several cases which should be considered extraordinary. Devotees, Juniors in particular, often called at my clinic only several days after 'Ashūrā'. On account of heat and uncleanness, their wounds were practically festering. Cleaned and dressed up in no special manner, such wounds took no longer than six days to heal completely." Asked about the most serious 'Ashūrā' case he had met with, Dr. Sharafeddīn answered, "It was a sword-wound inflicted on the 'Ashūrā' 1959. The patient,

a teenager, had a cut sixcentimetres long, one centimetre wide, and so deep that it reached down to the skull-bone. Having, in the ordinary manner dressed the wound, I estimated that it would take, at the shortest, one week to heal. To my astonishment, the patient was quite well again on the third evening." "What is the curative efficacy of the blood shed on 'Ashūrā'?" was the second question. "To that," answered the doctor, "I have very little to say; the only good thing about blood-letting is that it might, certain other conditions provided, be healthy to the wounded man himself. For example, it has a special curative efficacy upon sore eyes. Several swordsmen who had suffered from opthalmia, became quite clear-sighted soon after 'Ashūrā'."

.....

Let us, for comparison take a look at a number of the violent 'Ashūrā' mortifications in India and Persia:

Along with the great processions on 'Ashūrā' day, Indian noblemen used to walk bare-headed for five miles under the seering sun rays. Some of them even walked the same distance back home. "Never do these noblemen," says Mrs. Ali, walk in their life except in this season." The writer tells also of sturdy 'Ashūrā' men who beat their breasts so violently for ten minutes or longer until the blood actually bursts therefrom. And with effect from the first of Muharram, a wide ditch is excavated by the road-side, and a great fire is made in the ditch. Indian devotees stop to take vows over

the fire, and leap through it.¹ Another eye-witness, Sheikh al-'Irāqain, describes how the Indians literally waded in such trenches beating their bare breasts.² Only a little less violent was the whipping, which the Aghā-khānī Indian ladies inflicted on themselves. Ever since the year 1885 however, 'Ashūrā' is no longer celebrated by the Agha-khānī sect. To them Husein is alive for ever in the person of the Āghā-Khan.³

Of Persia, Sykes tells how, "to honour the Imam by self-inflicted pain, a band of men hung horse-shoes, locks, and heavy chains to their bare bodies."⁴ The locks, we are told, used to be inserted into the skin of the men's breasts, in memory of Ali b. Husein "who was led into captivity by a collar of iron locked round his neck."⁵ With the help of two rather poor illustrations, Kisrawī describes a special 'locking' mortification in which swords, spears, and numerous darts are actually transfixed into the skin of the devotees who keep standing up, i.e. "locked up", for the whole morning of the 'Ashūrā' day.⁶

1. Mrs. Ali: Observations, pp. 18, 39, and 92

2. Sheikh al-'Irāqain: Anwār, vol. ii. p. 97

3. Ms. 'Ābid, at Salamīyya, Syria

4. Sykes: Glory, pp. 195 and 197

5. Hullī: Naqd, p. 26; Amīn: Sīrat, p. 121

6. Kisrawī: Tashayyu', pp. 32 and 64

Note: In Lebanon, quite unconnected with 'Ashūrā', 'locking' stands for a special charm against miscarriage, which Shi'ite wives put on. A little ordinary lock, previously prayed upon by a pious sheikh, is tied either to the end of a woman's hair-plaits, or the lower back-bone where it locks together the two ends of a piece of rope worn round the waist next to the skin.

There is a great temptation to include in this chapter an eye-witness description of the Trampling Thursday mortifications خميس الدمة which the Sunni Rifā'ī sect at the Biqā' district in Lebanon annually celebrate on the Thursday preceding the Julian Easter.

Among a big congregation on that Thursday morning, a group of thirty youths called 'assistants' are given to drink a sip each out of a bowl of cold milk previously blessed by the presiding sheikh as a 'ahd مهد, i.e. a warrant against harm. Soon after that, the said sheikh gives the sign, and the festival starts. The celebration is in three different phases:

i. The Skewering - To the accompaniment of a high concert of drums and bugles, the assistants begin a wild dance ejaculating "Allāh Hay", i.e. Allāh eternal. Having danced themselves into a frenzy, they proceed one by one to the Sheikh who transfixes the cheeks of each of them with a sharp skewer. Once skewered, they resume their dance with renewed vehemence until they begin to foam at the mouth. After ten minutes or so, the Sheikh calls a halt - the first round is ended. The spits are pulled out and the wounds annointed with the sheikh's saliva. Two further rounds of similar length are performed, one with the skewer in the skin of the throat, the last with it in the skin of the belly. An entracte of half an hour concludes the first scene.

ii. The Sword-slashing - Having once again danced themselves to a frenzy, the assistants are handed long, sharp swords wherewith, in brisk, random flourishes, they slash at their breasts, stomachs, and left arms - yet no bleeding ensues; the swords cut into the skin only as deep as the scratch of a cat's paw. The hazardous experience is, however, much shorter than the former scene, and is soon ended.

iii. The Trampling - Upon a flat lawn lie fifty youths, assistants included, close to one another and face down. The sheikh superintends them, and having satisfied himself as to their correct posture, he mounts a pedigree mare and calls out three times: "Yā Jaddī", يا جدي i.e. O Grandfather. Then he asks permission of the Christian attendants in the audience, and rides upon the bare backs with the mare. His special servant goes before him holding the reins of the mare which carefully treads the fleshy bridge. Eventually, the mare crosses to the other side without hurting any one. If however one is injured, then it is taken to be due to lack of faith on his part; if he dies, as has actually taken place more than once, he is deemed a sinner who would thus lose life and eternity.

The Festival over, the congregation embarks upon casual folk dancing to the accompaniment of musical instruments, and special hymns such as:

"Hadad, madad, ya Rifā'ī / You subduer of 'afā'ī', i.e.
subduer of serpents.

مدر مدر يا رفاي يا مطيع الافاعي

CHAPTER THREE

THE CEREMONIES IN SUBSTANCE

I.

The 'Ashūrā' Dirges

The 'Ashūrā' dirges in the present thesis have been compiled partly from the actual street-demonstrations, partly from the two Mss., Baidūn and Hasan. The demonstrations provided men's dirges, the Mss. the women's. The men's dirges have no written source available, and the Mss. bear the names of the proprietors or the transcribers, rather than those of the actual authors. Likewise, the dating of them is merely conjectural: Ms. Hasan is actually a modern collection dated 1930, but Baidūn seems to be as old as Sirhān, i.e. 1138 A.H., with which it is at present preserved, and which in shape and transcript it resembles.

For the dirges compiled, serial numbers have been given, and two indices made: the one in English, comprising the substance, the other in Arabic embodying the refrains and key-lines - see Appendix - The total number is one hundred and three. Out of these fifty typical dirges have been selected in a special compendium in the Appendix: twenty-three of the men's and twenty-seven of the women's. In the General Index of substance, the numbers of the selected dirges are included in parenthesis. With the exception of the three solitary chants - (Nos. 41 - 43) -, the men's dirges belong to the 'latmiyya' sort, i.e. a dirge chanted

to the accompaniment of 'latm', or breast-beating. So, too, are the women's, except for special wailing dirges known as 'nawhiyya' نوحية or variously, 'na'1' نعي . In the colloquial Arabic, a dirge is more known as 'raddadiyya' رددية i.e. a refrain. To specific days of the season there are special set dirges, yet that rule is but slightly adhered to, and on almost every day there is mention made of such favourite figures as Ali, Husein, Qāsim, Abbās, and Husein's suckling baby.

The Dirges Sorted Out

With the exception of five non-'Ashūrā' chants, the remaining ninety-eight dirges are here studied under two main headings:

- A. Climate of Grief - comprising 75 dirges,
- B. Creedal Apology - comprising 23.

Each one of these main headings is divided into two sub-headings, viz.

A. Climate of Grief

- 1. Mourning and ill omen: 26 dirges
 - a. Everlasting lamentation,
 - b. Sinisterness of Muharram
- 11. Agonizing Fate of Husein and his men: 49 dirges
 - a. General: thirst, mutilation, etc.
 - b. Individual martyrs

B. Creedal Apology

- 1. Husein's ancestry 13 dirges

11. Ali: personal prowess,
intercession, and legitimism 10 dirges.
.....

Preliminary Exclusion

Five different chants which only remotely correspond to 'Ashūrā', are:

No. (115) - A happy wedding song in memory of the nuptials of Ali and Fāṭima. So profound has the Shi'ite influence been that this song may still be heard chanted at 'Christian' wedding parties in mountain villages of the south. (Cf. the tune of this song in musical nota^{tion} in the Appendix, and in the tape recording Reel: 1/Back.)

No. (41) - The 'hidā' song by at-Tirimmāh, laudatory of Husein and family, "the exemplary bright-faced sayyids". Though incorporated in the shabīh tragedy, the song suggests peace and quiet rather than mourning. Sung on the verge of doom, i.e. on the way to Karbalā, the 'hidā' incidentally constitutes an exquisite stroke of dramatic irony.

No. (112) - Is a dirge on the death of Ali. As a parallel to 'Ashūrā' mournings, the dirge indicates the influence of supernaturalism. Indeed, it reflects unfavourably upon the so-called 'moderate' doctrine of the Imami Matawila. In it, Ali, who is actually dead, confined, and borne to his grave, appears in person to greet and embrace his two sons, Hasan and Husein. To

emphasize the apparition, he expressly tells his distraught sons, "If the dead I am able to restore to life how not my own body?"! (See also No. 107).

No. (81) - Reveals the Hashimite women on the fortieth day after 'Ashūrā', appealing directly to Mohammed against the woes of captivity: "O Grandsire, here are we returned to Medina via Karbalā ..."

No. (114) - Whereas it repeats the same theme as in No. 81 above, this dirge gains over it in form: for in it Zainab in apostrophe invokes the dead Husein to come back to her succour because, "I am completely worn out with imprisonment".

General Commentary upon the 'Ashūrā' Dirges

A/i - "Never shall the memory of Karbalā be effaced," No. (10). Of his Shia, Husein is tacitly made to wish, "O that you would every 'Ashūrā' season mourn over me!" No. 11. As though in response to the Imam's desires, the Shia, in No. 12, affirm their current wish, "O that we were there with thee, O Husein!"; for, indeed, we are for ever restless on account of thy departure." No. 15. Mourning over Husein is emphasized by anguish: in characteristic hyperbole, the Shi'ite spokesman declares that, "Were my tears a Nile in abundance, that would never assuage my grief for the misfortune of al-Mustafā's family, "No. 14". I shall therefore "weep pure blood over Husein", No. 13 - "Firiāt, wā

Huseināh!", and "Dust be on our heads!" Nos. 36, 37, and 51. In such anguish, their brightest example is the hapless Zainab who, having mourned in vain, is now made to recriminate with the dead Husein: "Why not answer me?" Nos. (19,) 21, and (22.) Thus the Shi'a, the women in particular, ought to offer "sympathies to Zainab, the mother of woes," No. 97. Finally anguish is revived by such exclamations as "O calamitous Karbalā" No. 9, and "Treacherous Karbalā!" No. 100.

The above theme of mourning is exacerbated by a belief in the sinisterness of Muharram, in which "the bones of Husein's babies were crushed down under the horses' hooves,"¹ No. 85. Muharram is omenous, because it had "scattered our group," No. 101; the sinister bird in Muharram "shrieked the announcement of their departure, i.e. the Hashimites." No. 102, so, "the sky is grey before our sight," No. 103, and we shall feast no longer, rather, shall we celebrate our feast upon the graves," No. 99. In the same vein, is the reiteration of the prodigious omens and portents: Upon the death of Husein, "the sun was eclipsed," No. 40; so too did darkness set in when "Husein's women were led into captivity, and the camp set on fire, for then the earth itself did quake," No. 38. In Heaven Gabriel "announced the news of the death of Husein,"² No. 39.

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1. The exaggeration in using the plural noun is intentional; it was one baby of Husein's that was slain at Karbalā - not many, Cf. No. 34; "They have slain a suckling babe."
 2. Little wonder, since even the death of Muslim, a casual emissary of Husein, is announced by the same Archangel, Cf. No. 30.

Together with Gabriel, "the angels participate in the mourning," No. 63 - indeed, Gabriel grows restive and, when "Zuhrā' anxiously descends to Karbalā, he too comes down in her company," No. 106. In No. 107, Fāṭima is with her husband, both risen from the dead and in an apparition Ali comforts his daughters expressly saying, "I am come to protect thee."

A/11.

The agonising fate of the Martyrs of Karablā is emphasized,

a. Generally: we are told how "Husein was invited, yet betrayed by the Kufans," No. 55, how with thirst "his babies were parched," No. 95. Husein takes his last leave of Zainab, to whose "maternal care he recommends his orphan babes," Nos. (53), and 59. Soon after that he takes the field, and we are told how "his mere appearance terrifies the foe into trembling fear," No. 61. Yet Husein who is greatly outnumbered, gets "stabbed high up in the chest," and "is no more," Nos. 54 and 84. Much grief is experienced because his head is cut off "from the nape of the neck," Nos. 17 and 71, and because his corpse is given no proper burial rites, but is left out "on the ground, unshrouded, and unbathed," No. 16 - why, "it was bathed - in blood!" No. 17.

Independent dirges are devoted to the Captivity episode: "The Sufianids storm Husein's Camp, leading the women away, particularly Zainab whose task now is to soothe the Babies' grief," Nos. 23 and 20. Husein's head "is hoisted on a spear, and his surviving son, Zain, is taken in bonds into captivity," No. 74. The situation is

seriously aggravated by the fact that the Hashimite dames, "with their hairs unloosed, had to appear under the public gaze of foreign men," Nos. 94 and 98. On the way to captivity, "even a Shmr dares to beat the Hashimite ladies!" Nos. 67 and 88. Therefore, "woe to Yazīd who caused all that," No. 87. Yet Yazīd seems to have rejoiced at the victory, for he defiantly ordered, "drums of merriment to be beaten upon the occasion," No. 104. Moreover, when the head of Husein reaches him, "he starts to poke at the mouth with his stick," Nos. 66 and 92.

b. Individual martyrs - Besides Husein, six other Hashimite martyrs are made mention of, in proportion not so much to their significance, as at first sight might appear, but to the degree to which those characters lend themselves to tragic description.

'Abbās - who falls dead in an attempt ~~to~~ "to draw water for Husein's babes," No. 80, is accordingly remembered as "the quencher of the thirsty," No. 26. In patient detail, one dirge narrates how first his left, then next his right arm was cut off in the attempt, thus he fought with the sword in his teeth putting the foe into fright, how at last they knocked him down from behind by an iron mace, No. 64. "Tears and mourning attire," No. 91, are therefore due to 'Abbās who, "still lies there by the banks of the Euphrates," No. 24. As common honorifics in the dirges 'Abbās is called "Uncle Abu'l Fadl," No. 27, "Master 'Abbās," No. 25, and even "a protector and support," No. 43.

Qāsim¹ - "the bridegroom of Karbalā is slain," No. 6, or better expressed, "wears new wedding apparel - dyed red!" No. (35). He is "a groom who has never enjoyed his wedding," No. 33. "Asked for his wedding party," No. 32, he simply tells Sikna, his bride, "Our nuptials are put off until Doomsday," No. (57). Alas for Qāsim, the lost "prince"! No. 93.

Muslim - Husein's emissary to Kufa, is often remembered with Hānī b. 'Urwa, the Kufan chieftain, in company with whom he was executed, Nos. 65 and 82. Muslim's pseudonym is "Abūl Yatāma, أبو اليتامى" i.e. father of orphans," and his courage in the last hour is described in great detail, No. 70. So grave does Muslim's murder seem to be that "it baffled even Gabriel who conveyed the sad news to Allāh," No. 30.

Ali al-Akbar - is eulogised as a "replica of Mohammed," No. 29. To Husein his loss is tantamount to the loss of "the pupil of his eyes," No. 42.

Husein's Suckling Babe - is shot dead, in other words, "weaned with arrows," Nos. (31 and 74. What a grave crime that was, "particularly when committed in Muharram!" No. 85.

Habib Ibn Muzāhir² - is apostrophized in only one dirge, "to rise up and bear Husein's standard," No. (28).

1. Qāsim is, of course, a nephew, not a cousin of Husein's as Stevens, (p. 164) mistakes him to be.

2. It is interesting to note how Stevens (p. 172) calls Habīb "the beloved one" whereas the name 'Habīb' is a well-known proper noun in Arabic, and should not have been translated; not even Husein is called "Beloved"!

Creedal Apology - It is in a way true to regard all the dirges as basically polemical. The climate of grief as in (A) above serves well as coaching for the mourners to air the grievances of Ali's house as regards Legitimism. Those grievances are referred to by recalling Husein's ancestry:

1. "Despite their full knowledge that Husein was so nobly descended, they slew him," No. 4. He is not merely the son of Ali, but "son of Tāha, the good Herald, i.e. Mohammed himself," No. 56. The heinousness of leading the Hashimite women into captivity is aggravated by the fact that those women were also "daughters of the Prophet," No. (52). In dirges Nos. 5, and 6, complaint by the women is made directly to Mohammed, "O Grandsire, we have tasted bitter tribulation in the land of Karbalā". Tears over Husein are desirable mainly as "sympathy for the Apostle," No. 8. Likewise, sympathy is asked for Zuhra, not so much for being Husein's mother, Nos. 77, 78, and 89, as being Mohammed's daughter. The link with Mohammed is affirmed more clearly in dirge No. 90 where the name of Zuhra is associated not merely with Husein, but with Zain al-Abidin, the Imam apparent. Accordingly, "sympathies are urged to assist Zuhra, the beloved lady," No. 77. The purely religious aspect is touched: upon in the apostrophic recrimination with the Umayyads: "How are you going to look Mohammed in the face, having so much hurt Mohammed's family ?" No. (68), and in No. 18 the charge is directly laid against them that, "they slew Husein despite their full

knowledge that he was the fifth personage of the Garment."¹ Thence come such express declarations as "the murder of Husein is tantamount to the murder of Islam itself," No. 58. The pre-Islamic dynastic jealousies are betrayed in such dirges as No. 86 where, "not only al-Mustafā is invoked, but Hāshim too."

ii. Ali's personal prowess, as the "hero of Khaibar" is remembered in wishing him to have been present at the Taff battle," Nos. 2, 62, and 75 - at least "to come up to the succour of Husein's babes." No. (72) Ali's intercessional function is evinced in the title given him as "The Divisor between Heaven and Hell," No. (3). Zuhra, his wife, is invoked not merely "as mother of the Martyr," No. 96, but as a special mediatrix for salvation No. 76; indeed, she is made to expressly avow, "We can save men from the tortures of Hellfire," No. 105.

All the above tallies with Legitimism to Ali: Husein is not only an imam, but son of the Imam," No. 7. Gabriel himself announces "Ali's Legitimism in heaven," No. 1. The women's dirges indeed devote but little space to Legitimism, yet Ali is ever there; he is referred to as "Commander of the Faithful", No. 62 - indeed, as the Commander, 'al-Amir'.

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1. Dirge No. 18 in Arabic version:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| يا صريعا نهبت منه الظبا | يتلوى عطشا فوق الثرى |
| قتلوه رغم علم منهم | انه خاص اصحاب العبا |
| مهجة ذابت من الوجد التيا | |

F o r m

The form of the 'Ashūrā' dirges is here studied under four main divisions, namely, style, imagery, diction, versification, (and tune).

In the men's dirges the style in the apologetic section (B) is mainly deprecatory, but in the mourning section (A), the dirges are so thoroughly touched with passion that the style verges too closely on the 'Grand'. The women's dirges are almost the same as the men's in this respect, but they betray a special tendency to narration and embody several situations of dialogue. Narration, for example, is met with, in No. (55) where, in as many as forty-three lines, the whole sīra is retold in retrospect. The same almost applies to No. (64), the fall of 'Abbās, in thirty-two lines. Dialogue is employed, for instance, between Husein and his family as he bids them a last farewell, No. (53), and No. (57) in the colloquy between Qāsīm and his bride, where the conflict arising in Qāsīm's heart - torn between love for his bride and duty to his uncle - constitutes the nucleus of a real drama.¹ As a special variety, the women's dirges comprise three litanies: to Husein No. (69), to Zuhra, No. (96), and to Zainab, No. (97).

Imagery: In general the following figures of speech may be observed:

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1. In Iraq there is an actual shabīh show devoted to the above situation, under the title: "Qāsīm's Bride" - عروس القاسم

a. **Similes and metaphors** - Striking similes are indeed rare; such a one as that in No. (55) where Husein is likened to a full moon, is already hackneyed in Arabic poetry. A little sounder is the simile in No. 72 where Husein's thirsty babes are likened to the chicks of a partridge. The metaphors, however, are on the whole more original: The suckling Babe is "weaned by arrows," No. (31); Q̄asim's wedding-gown "dyed red," No. (35) and his nuptials are "put off to the day of Doom", No. (57).

b. **Contrast and Hyperbole** - Contrast is aptly made use of in No. 79, where not only are Husein's babes parched with thirst, but at a time when "the Sufianids are enjoying leisurly comfort!" Casual hyperbole is obvious in such dirges as No. 61 where the "mere appearance of Husein on the battle-field sets the whole enemy force trembling."

c. **Rhetorical questions and Apostrophe** - The rhetorical question is particularly suited to the deprecatory nature of the demonstrations. For example, "Where is he, the leader of raids, Haidar?" No. 2, or, "Do tell us, O settlers at Karbalā, Husein's corpse, where is it buried? - i.e. not buried for three days", No. 6, and to Q̄asim, the slaughtered bridegroom is addressed the query, "O bridegroom, Q̄asim, where is thy wedding party?" No. (32). Lastly come such recriminations addressed to the Umayyads as: "How are you going to look Mohammed in the face, having so hurt Mohammed's family?" No. (68).

Of the copious apostrophes in the dirges, the most striking are

perhaps: No. (22) where Zainab, addressing the dead Husein, exclaims, "Why won't you answer me ? Rise up, O light of mine eyes, and get us some water to drink;" and No. 5 where, in an imaginary appeal to Mohammed, the Hashimite women are made to complain, "What tribulation, O Grandsire, have we tasted at Karbalā!"

Diction: With respect to size, the men's dirges are shorter than the women's; besides which they have no prose interpolations as the women's have. The language is on the whole colloquial. Of the lot, only nine dirges are classical, namely Nos. 11, 18, 41, and 42 of the men's, and 55, 68, 69, 97, and 103 of the women's. In the women's dirges, the classical language is not devoid of elementary mistakes in orthography and spelling. For example, the noun 'Zainab' in the litany No. (97), used in the accusative, is written with two 'dammas' "Zainab-un" as though it were in the nominative: قوموا نعزى زينب The noun 'Husein' in No. (69) being in the nominative, should have been "Husein-un" not "Husein-an". In No. 78, an example of poor spelling may be seen in the noun صوت transcribed as : واعظت بالصوت يا ابن اخي

Although actually written in the Lebanese dialect, the colloquial dirges are never wholly free from Iraqi'isms.¹ Thus one frequently comes across such distinctly Iraqi terms as:

وينا No. (23), هالساغ No. (28), مادريت No. (43),
يما No. (53), أربعينا No. (114)

1. The same Iraqi tendency is heard from most reciters at a ta'zia, in such pronunciations as:

ظريا ، حظنا

اى : ضربه ، حضنه

On the other hand, Persian is only little borrowed from; so we find no more than the corrupted 'Fariād' wrongly pronounced as 'Firiāt', No. (36). Most interesting in this respect is finding the Arabic - h ح - pronounced after the Persian manner as - h -, so that one hears: هسيناء in Nos. (36, and 37); to an Arab, the dialect sounds distinctly alien.

Metre: The metre of the classical dirges is either the Basīṭ, as in No. (68) ماذا تقولون ان قال النبي لكم ماذا فعلتم وانتم آخر الامم ؟
 the Kāmil as in No. (58) ويكبرون وقد قتلت وانما قتلوا بك التكبير والتهللا
 or the incomplete Rajaz, as in No. (42) كت السواد لناظري فعليك يبي الناظر

Most common however, and well suited to the demonstration march, is the Raml, as in:

No. 18 (complete): قتلوه رغم علم منهم انه خاص اصحاب العبا
 No. 11 (incomplete): ليتكم في كل طام يوم طائر تندبوني
 and No. 103 (Do.): لا تدع صمني تراها وقعة مسم بالاما

In general the metre is correct enough, except in (55) where the poetical rhythm is hopelessly marred in favour of a more passionate expression. In No. 18 also, the meaning itself is largely sacrificed for the rhyme. Similarly - in colloquial dirge No. (24) - the evident redundancy in the last half verse, ودلوني طي من الطامعة , obviously does little beyond serve purposes of rhyme.

The metre of the colloquial dirges roughly belongs to the category OF 'zajal' suited alike to protestations as in No. 4:

اي شريعة حلت ذبح الحسين بن علي ؟

and the funerary rhymes of the mountain villages as in No. 38:

عندما سيقوا السبايا الشمس ابدت انكسارا

But the solitary 'na'i', with its assonating vowelised syllables, belongs rather to the 'atāba' versification, as in No. 66:

Tune: يا حسين راسك وين ودوه ؟

Although the women's tunes are generally more elongated than the men's, there are nevertheless certain notes common to both men and women, for example, Nos. 38, and 70. Of both men's and women's dirges, fifteen key tunes are given in musical notation in the Appendix. (please listen also to the recorded-tunes in four different divisions - Real No. 1/Back.)¹

II.

The Ta'zia Address

The main sources upon which the ta'zia speakers in Lebanon generally draw are either ancient, such as:

Abu-Mukhnaf: "Maqtal al-Husein",

Ibn-Tawūs : "Al-Luhūr",

or recent, such as,

'Itanī : "Safīnat An-Najāt",²

Sharafeddīn: "Al-Majālis al-Fākhira",

Amīn : "Lawā'ij al-Ashjān" and "Al-Majālis as-Saniyya".

1. Before being finally incorporated in the thesis, the tunes - as well as the words, were verified by the rhapsodist Mr. A. Nahli of Nabatiyya and by Mulla Umm Husein Farran of Tyre.
2. So widely known has 'Itanī's work become that the name 'safīna', amounting to a common synecdoche, is nowadays colloquially applied to any other work on the Sīra of Karbalā. The allusion in the title is originally made to the Household of Mohammed, likened in one hadīth to a life-boat; 'safīnat an-Najāt'.

The women often recite from 'Itanī's "Safīnat", but they also use such Mss. as Sirhān and Baidūn, as referred to on pages 23 and 49 above.

The substance of a ta'zia address is perhaps best studied under three main topics:

- i. the Sīra - contemplation of Husein's fate and person;
- ii. the allocution: - preaching the faith with Husein's rising for a background;
- iii. the moral - the example of Husein.

.....

1.

Under this heading, the main theme is Husein's fore knowledge of his fate, his determination to embark upon the rising despite such knowledge, and the realisation of the prophecies etc. connected with his fate. With that goes the agonising nature of the death he and his followers suffer. All that is supported by the transcendency of Husein's person, and that of his family, in sharp contrast to his Umayyad enemies.

"Husein," say the ta'zia speakers, "had been fully aware of what his fate would be, having received a clear revelation to that effect from his grandfather, Mohammed. So, taking his family with him, he deliberately set his heart upon death in order to expose the viciousness of the Umayyad rulers."

The details of the massacre are minutely retold. The description deals with the fall of the individual martyrs, together with the preliminaries to, and the aftermath of, the Battle. Thus one would hear how parched Ali al-Akbar had been, how Al-Qāsim, the newly wedded young man, was killed because one of his shoe laces was broken, how Husein's suckling babe was slain by Harmala, how Husein declined a reinforcement of two mighty troops of angels and Moslem Jinns, how Shimir cut off his head from the nape of the neck, how the Camp was burnt and the harem led away into captivity, how the sky darkened, how the earth quaked etc.

By way of aggravating the tragedy of Husein's death, reciters usually compare it with the death of other Imams and great men, thereby demonstrating that whereas those men died comfortably in their soft beds, the body of Husein was badly mutilated and trampled under the horses' hoofs, then left out for three days without proper burial.

Inter dependent with Husein's fate is the exaltation of Husein's person. The reciters point out that Husein had been Mohammed's favourite, and that for much of his infancy, he used to suck at Mohammed's thumb - or tongue - thus deriving both physical and spiritual nourishment. That the loss of Husein, he being the fifth and last of the persons of the Garment *امل الكساء*, was tantamount to the loss of them all. His noble traits are also recalled:¹

1. "Among the wonderful phenomena about Husein," said one Beirut reciter, "is the fact that, after these thirteen centuries, a Christian researcher - i.e. the writer - should care to study Husein and pay a visit to Husein's shrine."

liberality, piety, and most of all his valiance in battle. In verse, the theme of valiance is often cast in such lines as the following, recited on behalf of Husein:

"If in the hottest of the death-fray I would not stand fast,
Then never may my feet bear me along the paths of glory."

"In spears, therefore, must I seek my remedy since,
For so long have I been patient that now my heart is wholly
of a pain."¹

(Certain staunch) stands immortalise a man raising him to the heights of glory, moments that are life itself.

May my own soul be Husein's ransom, that disdainful hero,
Whose high rank neither the moon nor the sun can attain."²

Boastfulness as the aforesaid is supported by the fact that to the Shia Husein's campaign to Karbalā was a manifest victory ! To that effect is often cited such lines as the following:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | فلا مشيت بي في طرق العلى قدم صبرت حتى فوآدى كله ألم | ان لم اتف حيث موج الموت يلتطم لا بد ان اتداوى بالقنا فلقد |
| 2. | الى ذرى المجد ساطت هي العمر لا الشمس تبلغ طياء ولا القمر | تخلد المرء وقفات وترفعه اندى الحسين ابي الضيم من بطل |

Note - Even at the expense of relevance, is the tone of the Hamasa continually maintained. One speaker, for instance, inaptly cited a line of poetry composed by a modern Christian Arab, altogether outside the theme of Karbalā viz. "For peace as for war are we, let it be known since from among us appeared not only Christ but 'Antara too."

"Verily it was that Hashimite one slaughtered by at-Taff
Who has so humbeld the necks of Moslems, and the necks all
have willingly bowed low."

In the same vein was a key-line in a recent 'qasīda' by al-Wā'ilī
of Najaf, viz.

"What, do they believe that that Yazīd of theirs has slain
Husein ?

Never, for it was in fact Husein who slew Yazid!"¹

Not merely Husein, but his family, relations and followers are all
highly praised. For example, speaking of 'Abbās, one ta'zia
preacher, said, "Man's duties are summed up in: knowing Allāh,
obeying Allāh, and proving one's fortitude in the commandments of
Allāh. These cardinal virtues have met together in one person, in
'Abbās, the very fabric of learning and virtue, as derived from
Ali - his father - the very perfection of the word of Allāh."

In sharp contrast, the enemies of the Hashimites are subjected to
the severest opprobrium. "Yazīd, the reprobate Yazīd," said one
speaker, had never been eligible to rule as caliph, for he was such
a wine-quaffer who sported all his life with monkeys and leopards,
to the neglect even of prayer itself ... his rule endured for three
years: in the first of these he killed Husein, in the second he
stormed Medina, and in the third he bombarded the Ka'ba with the

1. وان قتل الطف من آل هاشم أذل رقاب المسلمين فذلت

ظنوا بان قتل الحسين يزيدهم كلاً ، فقد قتل الحسين يزيدا

catapult." Another speaker bluntly declared that, "If treachery and deceit were incarnate, they would form none but Umayya and the followers of Umayya." Saying that, he enlarged upon the so-called "Sufianid polytheism and the Yazidite atheism", relying upon a particular anecdote to the effect that, "While poking at the head of Husein with his stick, Yazīd was known to have been reciting irreligious lines of poetry, such as:

"Hāshim have indeed tampered with sovereignty,
Since never was there a religious tiding or a
revelation whatever."¹

II.

The Allocution preaches the precepts of Islam as seen, of course, from a Shi'ite point of view. It assumes the form of an apology either for the faith or for the ta'zia itself. Not rarely too does it deal critically with social and even political issues.

"Here in 'Ashūrā'," began one speaker, "you are all come to sympathize with the Prophet for the death of his favourite grandson, are you not? Well then, sympathize with Mohammed by practising the faith of Mohammed, that same faith for the sake of which Husein laid down his life."

Touching upon the social advantages of the faith, one reciter

1.

خير جاء ولا وحي نزل

لعبت هاشم بالملك فلا

remarked that "Islam is the ladder of nations, the glory of the Arabs." In an unfavourable contrast, he brought out the advancement of the West with the backwardness of the East, "the West rapidly shooting up to the heights, while we, over here, are ignorant, quarelling, and have little to boast of beyond our own Arabism. Good to us has become evil, and evil good; for is not godliness today regarded as reactionary? Yet, with what results? Are we not mastered after we had been mastering? Where is our 'Adnān, where our Jābir? Behold, do we not merely chew up Husein's 'dhikrā' in a futile manner? Have we drawn from the Karbala episode a moral and a light to guide us forward? I wonder."

Another sheikh began by a warning "to the sons of Adam to be wary lest they overstepped the limits of faith, drawing attention to the fact that everyone ought to prepare himself against the final day." He admonished the audience against 'munkar' ^{منكر} i.e. sin, and set out to criticise the indecorous fashions of women's dress, "neither clad nor bare." "Moslems," he resumed, "have disowned their own principles in favour of blindly aping the West. To them today rightly apply the words of Ali, 'You semblances of men, but not men!'"

Another speaker, giving Ali al-Akbar as the brightest example of virtue, warned his audience against the contagion of corrupt conduct. He cited Christ as teaching, "As soon as you see your neighbour's house on fire, hurry you up to extinguish it, lest the fire should catch your own house next." Of particular interest was the long

sermon delivered by a contributing Shi'ite physician, Dr. B. by name, viz.

"The Karbalan dhikrā," he began, "is the best of morals, and the best of lessons to every man in every age ... with true godliness, we can have among us angel-men and men-angels. Incurable are the ever-increasing woes which menace the survival of mankind; incurable save by administering spiritual values to man, starting with the reforming of our own selves ... Better for us to be ridden by so-called ignorance than led by modern Satanic science to restlessness, fear, and dire destruction. Verily, man is more in need of virtue than rockets ... Man nowadays attempts all in order to reach the end; yet, the end is not here: for how could life be an end while death has made man equal to the meanest of animals ? What greatness is man's, while he sees a microbe more powerful than he, the bird more beautiful, the bee more skilful, the ant more patient, and the very beast more faithful and enduring ? There is in fact no dignity except in the spirit, no perpetuity except in the One Eternal, and it was for the sake of such dignity and such perpetuity that Husein laid down his life."

Then comes the apology for a ta'zia in the ta'zia. The celebration is attributed to strict injunctions by Mohammed and the Imams. One speaker remarked, "'Keep alive our cause,' said Imam Ja'far, 'whoso sheds a tear over our misfortune, the same shall receive a complete remission of his sins ... If but one little drop of those tears fell down in Hell, it would extinguish Hellfire

itself!'" He referred to the tradition which makes Mohammed say, "Men of my nation shall weep over the men of my household etc. and observed that the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies are consistent with the Qoranic verse which decrees the magnification of the Ceremonies consecrated to Allāh."

Another speaker drew attention to the social benefits the ta'zia Assemblies might yield, regarding them as schools of learning which teach history, language, poetry, declamation, and fiqh. They afford a chance to listen to the Qoran, the 'hadīth', and to receive due guidance from both. "Al-majālis madāris, المجاليس مدارس i.e. "Assemblies are schools", said one speaker. Moreover, he added that "the celebration of the Karbala memory stands as a potent factor for unity between the various Islamic sects. In brief, these Ceremonies are our undying glory, our everlasting revolution against evil and injustice."

Although not always avowedly proclaimed in a ta'zia address, Creedal apology is nevertheless there under the surface. "Imam Ja'far said," observed one speaker, "'Our dispute with the Umayyads is in Allāh: we said, 'Allāh is truthful', they said, 'Allāh is not.'" The speaker continued, "Imam Ja'far also said that, 'Heaven and earth have been weeping ever since the death of Ali Ibn Abi Tālib.'" ¹

For a topic, one ta'zia sermon took "Admonition against Falsehood". That, admittedly, is a general religious subject, but the screen of

1. Cf. also: Amīn: Iqnā', p. 96. NB. Here the allusion is to the divine right to Ali's House which the Umayyads denied.

generality was too transparent to hide the apologetic theme behind it. The speaker began with the Creation: "Satan," he said, "told the lie to Adam making him lose paradise and thus bequeathed falsehood to man." In a sweeping short-cut, the speaker came down to the day of the Prophet's death, remarking that, "One man - i.e. 'Umar - said, 'The Prophet is delirious', which was a serious untruth.¹ Later on, Abu Bakr unjustly deprived Fātima of her rightful inheritance in the Fadak oasis. The Umayyads falsely accused Ali of complicity in the assassination of Uthman, and soon 'Ayisha rose in revolt. Even with a perjured oath the troops in her command testified that the Spring of water they passed by was not al-Haw'ab.² At Siffīn, the lie came in the form of hoisting the books on the points of spears. Eventually came the Kufans who told the lie to Husein through affirming a promise of support, and, of course, they failed the Imam ..."

The polemical nature of a ta'zia speech was more evident when a visiting Sunni speaker - Sheikh J. - delivered an address centred on the hadīth which makes Mohammed say, "Verily this son of mine, Hasan, is an imam, and perchance the Lord will unite through his means two contending parties of Moslems," thereby alluding to the unity between the Sunnis and the Shia. At first very few people detected any catch in the speech of the well-intentioned sheikh

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1. Mohammed in agonies asked for a paper and ink, which 'Umar denied him. The Shia believe that he intended to write a last-minute will to Ali investing him with the caliphate.
 2. Mohammed is said to have prophesied that 'Ayisha would rise up in revolt, and pass by al-Haw'ab water spring. 'Ayisha indeed revolted against Ali at the battle of the Camel.

until on the next 'majlis', reacting against him, the chairman in person devoted an address specially designed to refute the said hadīth as basically unauthentic. "Hasan was only forced," said he, "for if he had voluntarily effected the reconciliation with Mu'āwīya, he would have been in opposition to both his grandfather and his brother Husein, since the former said that 'the caliphate was taboo to the Family of Abu-Sufiān,' while the latter had risen up in arms against the Sufianid regime."

Lastly, the ta'zia sermon may touch upon politics. One speaker maintained that, "Religion should never be excluded from superintending politics, lest politics should become irretrievably corrupt." Another speaker proclaimed, "Imperialism is a 'munkar', whether it be imperialism of the West or of the East ... we strongly condemn atomic weapons because thereby man can but harm himself."

III.

Much less material can be provided on the Moral - in essence, at least, because the subject is the one most enlarged upon by the ta'zia speakers, and the theme most repeated. In dealing with this address, we should, first of all, exclude the historical fact that Husein rose as a claimant. Never has any ta'zia speaker expressly declared that Husein rose to claim the caliphate. Indeed, many of them have steadily affirmed that his motives were the other way round, stating that he never meant to achieve rule, but that, as a crusading redeemer, he rose for the express purpose of reforming

Islam, and in maintaining right against wrong, he sacrificed his life.

"Just as Abraham presented his son to God," remarked one speaker, did Husein, our exemplar of sacrifice, offer his Ali al-Akbar.

Again, when her own son, Qāsim, the newly-wedded youth, was slain in battle, Laila, his mother, rejoicing at the event, cried out, 'Congratulations, O Qāsim, now indeed have you been annointed with 'henna'.' When Husein himself fell, Zainab, with outstretched arms, cried out, "Accept, O Lord, from us this immolation." التران

So much for sacrifice in a general sense. As regards Husein's sacrifice specifically for the sake of Islam, reciters say, "But for Husein, Islam, in less than a century, would have been wiped out ... Husein it was who watered the tree of Islam with his own blood." To that effect, ^{on behalf of Husein,} one locus classicus in the Assemblies is:

"If Mohammed's religion would not be set right save through slaying me,

Come then, ye swords, take me away."

ان کان دین محمد لم یستقم الا بقتلی ، یا سیف خذینی

F O R M

The form of a ta'zia address might be studied under: style, diction, and delivery. As regards length, this depends upon the number ^{of} speakers at an Assembly. Whereas on the first five days of

the season a ta'zia speech extends over half an hour, on the last five, with the number of speakers considerably increased, it takes little more than fifteen minutes.

Style - In the pure narration from the Sīra, very little can be said about style - unless, of course, where the story is linked up with the moral, at which time an oratorical tendency becomes unmistakable. For example, "And what do you think of Muslim?" began one reciter, "surrounded by enemy soldiers on all sides: did he give in? Never, for he defended himself so valiantly that the enemy had to resort to a base trick etc."

A further device is the dialogue. Narration gains much in dramatic effect through the use of direct speech. Consequently, no proficient reciter would scamp dialogue, and the Sīra lends itself well to this. For example, there is the colloquy between Husein and his son, between him and Qasim, his nephew, or 'Abbās, his half-brother etc. Particularly dramatic is the dialogue held between Husein and his followers when he grants them permission to leave, and they decline. The 'sermon' and the 'moral' speeches are however didactic in form. As we have noticed above, didacticism in either address often takes the form of invective, for instance, "Are we not mastered after we had been mastering?" or, "Take a look at our modern woman, neither-clad, nor bare," or else, "You semblances of men, but not men!" In the Sermon the style is generally straightforward; wherever a preacher sets himself to criticise, he does so indirectly or by innuendo, as in the sermon on 'Falsehood' above.

Diction - The Arabic is, of course, classical. In his "Sīmā'", Sādiq maintains that to a half-educated audience, a speaker should be allowed to address his ta'zia in the colloquial.¹ Sādiq, however, defends previous usage in the country, since the colloquial is no longer admitted in the ta'zia anywhere. In speeches of the second degree, poor grammar is indeed met with, though blunt colloquialism is eschewed. Improvised addresses are often wordy, and grammatical errors only too often encountered. Far better in this respect is the sermon, being both pithy and linguistically correct. Though generally in prose, a ta'zia address includes poetical interpolations in plenty. Poetry, which naturally speaks more to the heart than prose, is indispensable in a mourning assembly. Sermons excluded, it is more usual to begin and conclude a ta'zia address with poetical passages of varying length. More often than not, the poetical interpolations are quoted, not composed. The reciters have at hand many anthologies to draw upon, containing the work of both ancient and modern poets.² In Sharafeddīn's "Majālis", for example, a brief poetical passage marks

1. Sādiq: Sīmā', p. 47

2. Of the Christian Lebanese poets who have composed poems on Husein, Salāma is the best known. Mahfūd, a poet of less note, reviews Karbalā in an 87-line qasīda which was duly printed and published by the local Shi'ite authorities, as "the first tear in history shed by a Christian poet on the misfortune of Ahlu'l Bait." The qasīda touches the same Shi'ite note: "Husein, never daunted by the two armies - the foe and thirst - was more concerned for the parched babes; etc." It is of interest to note in passing that of the men's dirges, Nos. 14, 15, and 38 were composed by Christian 'raduds'!

the end of each 'majlis', i.e. a speech for the 'majlis'. The following passage, in the Kāmil metre, is perhaps typical:

"There, to their various and horrible adversities,
have they left them all:"

"The one transfixed by a dart, of the poisonous taste of
which his thirsting heart did quaff,"

"The other, all besmeared with sword-wounds, is he
who preferred dignity to submission,"

"Yet another one, led in bonds, is the one resigned
in all his suffering to Allāh,"

"And she, that imprisoned one at whose very heart
the serpent of care was eating."¹

Colloquial poetry is only rarely employed in a ta'zia speech. One twenty-line 'qasīda', not of the best 'zajal', was of late recited at an Assembly and distributed in printed form. No other zajal poetry was heard of. More frequent use is made of the 'hsichī', the Iraqi colloquial poetry. Of the theme of the 'hsichī' the Lebanese audience can grasp only little, but the copious tears that punctuate it testify to the fact that it is the dirgeful tune rather than the words themselves which touches the hearts of the audience so nearly.

Commonly, a ta'zia address incorporates special set pieces: the opening is invariably a praise to Allāh and a blessing upon Mohammed

1. Sharafeddīn: Majālis, p. 60

and his family. The blessing is of course responded to, by a triple blessing from the audience. Following immediately after the opening, comes the usual Shi'ite wish, "O that we were there with thee, O Ahlu'l-Bait, that we might gain the great gain."¹ Wherever, in the body of a speech, the name of Husein is mentioned, it is invariably followed by a blessing or glorification; for example, "Husein, may my father and my mother be his ransom;" بأبي هو وامي or, "Husein, may the blessings of Allāh be upon him."² صلوات الله عليه Honorifics to Husein are numerous, the most common in a ta'zia being, "the Lord of Martyrs" سيد الشهداء and, "the lord of the youths of Paradise." سيد شباب اهل الجنة A further term of formality is "May Allāh reward thee all well" آجرکم الله

It is heard at three main junctures:

- i. Upon the death of any one of Husein's followers, e.g.
"May Allāh reward thee all well, Qāsim fell down
breathing his last;"
- ii. At the change of the trend of the meaning, where the words serve as a fitting copula;
- iii. To denote the nearness of the end of a speech.

The conclusion of a ta'zia is given in the form of a fresh blessing upon Mohammed and his family, to be followed by the presentation to the chairman or other. The presentation commonly takes the following form:

-
1. يا ليتنا كنا معكم - اهل البيت - ننفوز فوزا عظيما
 2. Although not among the Imams, 'Abbās is so popular that he is accorded as much blessing as they - indeed even as much as Mohammed himself, i.e. "May blessing and peace be upon 'Abbās."

"Keep O Allāh, and sustain our revered chairman, Sheikh(x.), give quick recovery to his sick (relative) have mercy upon his (deceased) father, for the rest of whose soul we herewith present the merit of this majlis together with the merit of sūrat al-Fātiha."¹

Delivery - The delivery of a ta'zia address is wholly in keeping with the general climate of mourning and the melancholy air assumed by the reciters. Only in the case of a sermon, would the pitch be moderate; in the two other sorts of speeches, particularly in the boasting and deprecation, the voice of the reciter is monotonously high and sharp. However, whenever an especially sensitive point in the sīra is touched upon, the reciter, with admirable operatic skill, abruptly softens his voice into a distinctly mournful tune.² Although they may come at various other junctures, such sensitive points more generally belong to the final hours of the 'battle' and its aftermath:

- a. The slaughter of Husein's suckling babe,
- b. Husein's last farewell to his family,
- c. Husein all alone calling for help,
- d. Husein fallen and mutilated; his camp stormed and his harem taken into captivity;

1. "اللهم احفظ مولانا الشيخ (فلان) وأيده ، ومنّ بالشفاء على قريبه (فلان) وارحم والده (فلان) الذي نهدي لروحه ثواب ما قرأنا مع ثواب سورة الفاتحة ."

2. Cf. typical ta'zia speech in the recorded-tape, Reel No. 1/Face.

- e. Yazīd, at Damascus, receiving Husein's head, pokes at it with his stick.

The general note in the delivery is a monotonous, high-pitched moaning.¹ The nearest parallel to a ta'zia recitation is perhaps the tune of the colloquial ballad (about the loss of Joseph in Egypt, and the grief of Jacob over him) which, until lately in Lebanon, used to be chanted by blind beggars. It is likely that Iraqi singing, more melancholy in character than that of any other Arab country, has been influenced by the moaning chanting of the ta'zia.

1. According to the Encycl. of Islam (p. 711), ta'zia reciters abroad employ with them a group of boy-chanters known as 'pash-akhwan' whose job it is to moan in chorus at the end of every pause in the reciter's speech. In Lebanon, however, the device, as we have seen already, is used only in women's circles.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Ceremonies Described

I.

The Tasū'ā' Procession¹

It was around three in the afternoon of a hot June day when the banners of the traditional procession of the Tasū'ā' made their appearance coming out from the Nabatiyya mosque. It comprised several thousands, but was rapidly gaining in size by fresh additions either of 'lattama' or casual followers. By the Huseiniyya gate, the procession halted for a short while to form up finally before it set out due east towards Nabatiyya (upper). As it moved along, the procession flooded a road five yards wide for over a mile. It was estimated at no less than thirty thousand. A 'Ashūrā' benefactor had arranged that the asphalt all along the route was watered in advance. Despite that, the merciless sun caused many men to put up their umbrellas.

At short distances within the procession, three big 'latm' teams marched along. One hundred women-mourners, all below twenty, took part as well. The order of the procession was roughly thus:

In the front marched a police escort; just behind them came two 'mu'azzins', then the flags and six horses. Then came one team of 'laṭṭāma', followed by the women-mourners and a large section of the procession. A second team of 'laṭṭāma' and a second section of the

1. Tasū'ā' ^{تاسوعا} rhyming with 'Ashūrā', is the Arabic name given to the 9th of Muharram.

procession, a third team, and the last section, followed by another police escort in the rear.

Of the seven different flags in the procession, the largest, of pure, blue silk, bore imaginary scenes from the battle of Karbalā with several religious Shi'ite sayings in Arabic, viz.

Allāh, Mohammed, Ali, Hasan, Husein

There is no sharper sword than Dhu'l-Fiqār, no worthier champion than Ali

O Abu'l Fadl Al-'Abbās! O Abu 'Abdullāh al-Husein!

Unlike the other six, this flag was borne horizontally by four men like a carpet. Smaller in size, though more presentable, was a two-poled standard carried upright by two bearers. The top of the poles ended in a metal crest in the shape of a spread-out hand, known to be a favourite sign of the Shia.¹ On the banner appeared a picture of two lions each with a drawn sword,² between borders laced with the same Shi'ite terms laudatory of Ali and his family. Another small flag, triangular in shape, with little golden tassels all round is esteemed by the townsmen as the most sacred of all, having been passed across the holy Tomb of Husein. The six horses

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1. Stevens - p. 168 - associates the said Crest with the Carthaginian hand of Tanith. Without going to such lengths, we contend that the Crest symbolizes the five persons of the Garment and is purely Shi'ite in origin.
 2. Speaking of the Indian processions, Mrs. Ali - p. 67 - describes a high pole from which two unsheathed swords were suspended. In Iraq Stevens - p. 172 - speaks of a special standard called 'Shimr's tongue' with numerous strings: whose pulls one of these strings and makes a wish is certain to have his wish granted.

in the procession were covered, both head and body, by silken sheets of various gay colours: yellow, orange, red, and scarlet. One horse, shrouded with a white sheet bespattered with a red tincture, bore an ordinary green turban affixed to its back. A further horse bore a pair of white doves with their feathers daubed in red. On the remaining four horses were set little children, of three or four, whose parents had committed themselves with vows to Husein on their behalf. Every child was supported by a man walking alongside the horse. As a sign of mourning, the little riders were dressed in black, with black handkerchiefs wrapped round their heads, and tiny black banners held in their hands. Their infant cheeks also were besmeared with soot. The dirges the Lattāma sang appeared chiefly to be Nos. 4, 11, 12, and 17, interspersed as usual with the commonest refrain, No. 1, in proclamation of Ali's legitimism.¹ The women-mourners merely kept keening in a continuous monotone, "wā Husein, wā Husein," waving their black handkerchiefs. Only for a brief interval did they change to another refrain, speaking on behalf of Husein's babes: "Help, help, O Aunt Zainab / We are dying with thirst, we are."

1. In the above order, the Arabic refrains of the dirges were:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|
| اي شريعة حلت | ذبح الحسين بن علي ؟ | (4) |
| اهل بيتي ودعوني | يوم طاشريقتلوني | (11) |
| يا حسين ليتنا كما معك | | (12) |
| العزا فزال يا حسين | | (17) |

Every now and then, the two mu'azzins raised their voices in the 'kalima' together.

In the shade of the leafy quinine trees, half-way between the two Nabatiyyas, hawkers stood shouting their goods to a big section of the procession who preferred to wait there for a rest. On sale were ice-creams, cool drinks, sweetmeats, salted lupine, and boiled horse-beans. There were also haberdashery articles, a portable weighing-machine, and big coloured portraits of Ali, his sons, and the Shrines of Najaf and Karbalā. The larger part of the procession, however, continued their march uphill and were now taking a right turn in the direction of the village, which by this time was deserted, all the people having left their houses to join the ceremonies. Far from the opposite hillside, a dirge was heard chanted over the loud-speaker: "Whatever Sharia has legalized the slaughter of Husein, son of Ali?!"

The voice was coming from the village Huseiniyya, as a sort of a religious prelude to the procession. Along the narrow, tortuous village lanes the procession now literally had to force its way, inhaling a good deal of dust before they gained the other side at the Huseiniyya courtyard. Having paid a short 'latm' visit to the Huseiniyya, and the town mosque near it, the fatigued lattāma, all of a sweat, were now enjoying a short rest during a Qoranic recitation. Retiring to the village graveyard soon after that, they worked themselves into a fresh bout of frenzied breast-beating because, "... There was no other vice-regent but Ali."

A cool drink was served to the 'lattāma', and the procession reformed. Swelled by fresh participants, horses, and banners, the group was now meandering down hill on the return route. Three more horses were being led. Their silk covers were red, yellow, and jet-black. The first two horses each carrying a mourning child, were of less interest than the third, on which rode a teenager lad in mourning attire. He was lean-looking and ostensibly bound up with iron chains. His black turban was transfixed front-to-back by a long, naked sword, and as he rode along, his eyes were all the while kept cast on a Qoranic text open in his hands. Though he said nothing to identify himself, the townsmen take him to represent Ali al-Akbar, Husein's elder son, who was known for his fondness of the Qoran. Yet, the chains about his body obviously associate him with the Captive, Ali al-Asghar, who survived Karbalā and was thus taken away in bonds. By no means lessened, the heat of the day led many of the thirsty demonstrators to leave the procession for a water-sabīl temporarily set up by the roadside. It was well after five when the traditional procession arrived back again at their starting place. In the shady courtyard of the Huseiniyya house, the 'lattāma' indulged in a final bout of strenuous breast-beating, chanting: "Would O Husein that we were there with thee, / Would that our very souls were thy ransom".

In less than ten minutes the large procession dispersed:¹ the Lattāma to prepare themselves for further street demonstrations, the rest of the procession to get rested against the lengthy Ceremonies of 'Ashūrā' eve still ahead. A public 'Ashūrā' repast was set out in the open air. The teams from Nabatiyya (upper) accepted the invitation, and so did the writer.

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1. It may be of interest to quote Sykes - pp. 197, 198, and 201 - in a description of the 'Ashūrā' processions in Persia. Large in size as they are, the Lebanese processions as described above, must pale in comparison with the following:

"... then came camels laden with tents, and innumerable mules carrying baggage, followed by three hundred horses with shawls draped on their necks. Behind them there were thirty-five camels, ridden by members of the Imam's family, representations of the 72 bodies of the martyrs, 17 heads on lances, and a band of Arab horsemen. Two singers of war songs represented the two parties and engaged in a heated dialogue, mingled with curses. Then came Hazrat Abbas, accompanied by 80 water-carriers. Among the conspicuous features was a wooden house draped in black to represent the bridal chamber of Fatima (i.e. Sikna) daughter of the Imam who was married to her cousin Kasim just before the fatal day. A 100 darvishes with their axes, horns, and lion or leopard skins also formed part of the procession. The next scene was Yazid on his throne surrounded by his court while 80 men beat two stones together and recited mournful verses. Finally there was a model of the tomb of the Imam, surrounded by brave officers and soldiers. In the different parts of the procession, groups of 200 men beat their breasts in rhythm, and as they advanced they recited:

"O our Imam Ja'far/ Husein our Lord/ Has been murdered on the plain of Karbalā/ Dust be on our heads".

An enormous structure, representing the bier of the Imam, decorated with innumerable flags, mirrors, and swords, was carried slowly round the square by 500 men. The procession proceeded to the Palace, where the governor loaded the organisers with gifts and released two prisoners convicted of murder."

II.

The 'Ashūrā' Eve

On the north end of the Huseiniyya courtyard at Nabatiyya stood the pulpit all draped in black. The top front of it shone with the Arabic words "YĀ HUSEIN" studded in little electric bulbs. All around, the evening was cool and calm. Attracted by the comparative coolness and the lighted auditorium, various insects crept in from the neighbouring fields. They passed unmolested by the devout mourners; insects too are assumed to be in mourning over Husein.¹

Tired out with walking in the procession, men were now hurrying up to ensure having a seat lest they remained standing up for the rest of the long evening. Both from Nabatiyya and the neighbouring villages, weary cultivators and casual labourers were flocking in to attend the 'holy night'. Effendis, in European dress and neat, red fezes, were taking their seats. In the front rows, sheikhs and elderly men were quietly exchanging greetings as they drank black tea and smoked cigarettes. Women crowded the adjacent roofs and staircases, unseen by men, while a bolder group had stolen into the courtyard and spread their reed mats in a dark corner. Outside the gate, hawkers were shouting their cool drinks and sweetmeats, while up town the lanes were again reverberating with the hue and cry of the demonstrators. Suddenly a voice was heard requesting a 'salāt 'alā Mohammed'. This was notice of the arrival of the head sheikh.

1. Kutubī: Tārīkh, p. 87

While the audience were muttering their blessing in response, they rose up in reverence to receive him. The sheikh took his seat and exchanged salutations with the elderly men in the neighbouring seats. It was eight O'clock. He gave the sign, and the Assembly started.

The announcer proclaimed the start over the loud-speaker:

"Whenever the Qoran is being recited, hark ye thereto, and listen well that perchance ye might gain." Upon the word, men threw away their cigarettes and sat attentively. A recorded Qoranic recitation was played: "Count not those departed in the way of Allāh as dead; nay they are alive etc." After ten minutes, the recitation was ended, and the demonstrators, group by group, were now arriving with their flags. Each group in turn passed into the centre where they beat their breasts for a few minutes before they moved into the main hall to dress up. A further call for "Blessing Mohammed" - responded to by the audience in the usual manner - was followed by the ta'zia proper. The first reciter was the blind, old man, Sheikh Q. He opened his recitation with a poetical passage, recriminating the Umayyads and the Marwanids who, "through slaying Husein had adequately pleased their friend, Satan." In a high-pitched monotone, his voice was almost that of someone in tears. Soon tears began to glisten in many an eye. Resuming in prose, Sheikh Q. added,

"Have you observed, him the man, rising in the name of Allāh, and in the name of Allāh he is setting out ? Verily, Husein is our

first exemplar. To him heroism is the key-word: it is the heroism of prophecy as derived from Mohammed, the heroism of valiance, from Ali, and the heroism of chastity, from Fāṭima ... Husein, may both my parents be his ransom, ultimately lost his men all and, feeling that martyrdom was at hand, he bade his last farewells to Zainab, his sister, recommending to her maternal care his dear little orphans. Zainab, that destitute woman, in abundant tears, cried out, 'Why, gone are you from us for ever ? Woe is me for a miserable creature. Draw near, dearest one, and let me fulfil the will of our dear Fāṭima; for she did enjoin upon me that, once you are come to this situation at Karbalā, I should implant my last kiss upon your breast.' So it was then that upon his breast did Zainab kiss Husein. in farewell, after which he took the field ..."

Having ensured a fresh congregational blessing upon Mohammed, the Announcer now introduced a local lay poet, Sayyid Sh. by name. After a brief prose introduction, the speaker began a long 'qasīda' in the 'Kāmil' metre, which betrayed glaring mistakes in orthography and versification. In no less than thirty lines, his theme was centred on Ali and Husein, viz:

"O Haidar's falcon, (i.e. Husein) if on the Day of Doom I
should thirst,

It is Haidar alone who shall assuage me with a drink."

Husein says, "If Mohammed's religion will not be set right save
through slaying me, Come then, ye swords, take
me away."

"For a life-time shall I grieve over Husein, and even though for a life-time, my grief shall but fall short."

Now came the Allocution. The preacher was introduced thus: 'Our master, the highest of 'mujtahids', the authority of Islam, Sheikh S. etc. The Sheikh arose. He was making his way among the thronged audience when, seizing the opportunity of an interval of silence, the hawkers outside the gate started to shout their goods, and the women on the neighbouring staircase were chattering quite audibly. From the pulpit the preacher now ordered both groups to be quiet. That done, he began with the praise of Allāh, and the blessing of Mohammed and his Household.

"The precepts of Islam," he began, "are sharply contrasted with hypocritical conceptions, I mean the conceptions of the present day. Islam is the constitution of high virtue: it urges a believer to adopt what is good and cast away what is evil. Islam, for instance, warns us against laziness, since in laziness lies the cause of poverty and humiliation ... it teaches that all believers are brethren; and that to seek learning is a virtuous imposition - religious learning, though. It requires of a man to be clean, because cleanliness is next to godliness ... it exalts believers to be above falsehood, treachery, and fraud ... it forces none to embrace it, but leaves everyone to his own belief. Fate in Islam is a matter predestined, and from predestined fate no man can ever escape. Such backward conditions as our Arab countries are nowadays in, what are they, but the result of a grievous divergence

from the laws of Islam and the 'qibla' of Islam ? Just take a look at modern conceptions: do not men count falsehood as political astuteness, and vile contrivance as prudence ? Husein laid down his 'life' for the sake of religion, yet where is that religion nowadays ? Where is worship, where prayers ? Verily we have come to discredit men who pray: conceptions are in fact reversed etc..."

As a sort of religious applause to the Sheikh's speech, a group 'salāt' was now uttered. The next speaker was Sheikh H., an eloquent reciter, graduate of Najaf. As he walked towards the pulpit, the children, huddled on the carpet in the middle, pressed back to make way for him. The auditorium was already over crowded, while fresh arrivals, with wooden stools in their hands, were still filtering in. Without the formal introductory invocation, the speaker abruptly began by chanting a long passage in the Iraqi 'hsichī'. Many men were moved to tears, but several others, men and children alike, were lulled asleep in their seats. The speaker then addressed the audience in prose:

"Husein, may both my parents be his ransom, never tasted of despair despite his loneliness and burning thirst. His greatest concern was having to forsake the honourable ladies and the little dear ones to the mercy of a spiteful enemy. 'When I am departed,' said he to the tearful Zainab, 'scratch not thy face, nor rend thy collar asunder.' Saying that, Husein took up his suckling babe, 'Abdullāh, and came to the front. Hoisting the babe up on his hand, he entreated the Umayyad force to give a drop of water at least to this innocent, thirsty creature. At this point, there was

disagreement among the enemy: certain men said the baby should be given water, others that it should not. Serious conflict was imminent, when Ibn Sa'd called out for Harmala. (Here the audience mutter their angry damnations upon both these men.) 'Fie upon thee, O Harmala;' exclaimed Ibn Sa'd, 'what are your arrows for? Won't you cut short this quarrel at once?' And such a good shot Harmala was! with but a single dart, he slew the young 'Abdullah from jugular vein to jugular vein. Thereupon, entwining its tiny arms around its father's neck, the little parched bird fluttered for a while and gave up the ghost. May Allāh reward thee all well, Husein laddled the blood of the baby up in his hand and tossed it high up towards heaven calling down dire damnation upon the slayers. Sadly, back at camp, he was received by Sikna who enquired whether her favourite 'Abdullah has been given water, and she herself spared a drop. To that, Husein merely replied, 'Behold, here is thy brother slain!'"

A short interval was allowed for general mourning. Curses on Harmala and the Umayyads in general were greatly increased and interspersed with loud shouts of 'Allāh Akbar', and interjections of sympathy, to say nothing of tears and sobs on every side. The mourning interval lasted well over five minutes, and was only cut short by the same speaker. Drying his own tears, he urged his listeners to prepare against their last hour:

"Duty," he said, "is to be observed in four different essentials: duty to Allāh, duty to one's country, duty to one's

family, and towards one's personal self ... Whoso keeps a shroud at his home, this shall be credited to him as a virtue. Have you never heard it said, 'Pay visits to a cemetery as often as you can, since a dead corpse is a sermon eloquent?' And beware the petrification of the hearts, because, according to one hadīth, 'petrified hearts are dead hearts.'¹ And beware of ill manners, particularly in bringing up your children, ever keeping in mind the fact that, 'If in its manners a nation be stricken,

Over that nation, give vent to loud lamentation
and hold a mourning party.'²

Soon after these words, the speech was concluded and a fresh speaker introduced.

Having opened his address with the usual invocations, he began to review Husein's phenomenal bravery saying, "Single-handed Husein took the field against the enormous enemy force. Before his sword the troops fled away in terror as goats before a wolf. He slew a great number of them, but the fatal hour could not long be deterred. Husein, may both my parents be his ransom, was soon overwhelmed by the enemy who attacked him on all four sides, with swords, spears, darts, stones, and kicks till, growing faint with many wounds the Imam fell, and what a fall that was, my friends! High up in heaven Gabriel cried out 'Lo! Between Heaven and earth Husein is

1. The above allusion to the softness of hearts amounts to a tacit apology for mourning over Husein in face of Sunni strictures against the validity of mourning the dead in general.

2.

واذا اصاب القوم في اخلاقهم
فانقم عليهم ماتما ومويلا

slain.' Even then, the foe were too frightened to draw near; it was Shimr alone who dared to approach; he stabbed Husein as many as twelve times and eventually cut off his head from the nape of the neck. (The Audience passionately curse Shimr.¹) May Allāh reward thee all well, the troops fell to looting the Camp. The hapless women therein they whipped and stripped of their head-veils and mantles. Then, together with the crying children, they led them into captivity to Ibn Ziad and thence to Yazīd." (Curses and damnation on both these men are heard from every corner).

The speaker was now chanting a melancholy lamentation in the 'hsichī'. As he came to the end of his lines, he began to slow down and lower his voice, muttering his invocation on behalf of the chairman of the Assembly, for the rest of whose deceased father he gave the reward of the 'majlis', crowned by the merit of sūrat al-Fātiha. As the audience were muttering their fātiha in response, the senior 'lattāma', in one big team, stepped into the centre to undertake a final strenuous bout of breast-beating and back-scourging, as they shouted aloud:

يا صريحا نهيت منه الظبا

"Alas for the slaughtered one of whom the sharp swords have plundered their full!" (No. 18)

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1. Before the shabīh was known in the country, a strange dramatic performance used to be enacted on 'Ashura' eve. The audience's pent-up feelings against Shimr used to be wreaked upon a young, black kid set down in the middle of an Assembly. In angry grief, they ruthlessly tortured the hapless beast, pricking its body and tearing out its hair. Eventually, to the relief of the poor dumb animal, it used to be killed for a 'Ashūrā' meal.

The sound of their 'latm' broke forth like a thousand whip lashes. Blood burst from the livid backs, and their chests were deep red with beating. As the melancholy Assembly were dispersing in the cool of midnight, their nervous attitude clearly suggested that they had 'enjoyed' their evening devotion to the full. In the courtyard, late that night, only the actors of the Shabīh Play remained for a dress rehearsal.

III.

Recital of the Maṣra'¹

It was early in the morning when the blare of the loud-speaker at the Huseiniyya House waked the Nabatiyyans to an announcement for a Qoranic recitation to open the 'Ashūrā' day.² Thus early are the ceremonies begun in order to make allowance for both the maṣra' and the Shabīh Play to be performed in the time available. So the devout Shia were seen hurrying down in groups towards the Huseiniyya where, in the Mourning Hall, the maṣra was to be recited.

On the draped pulpit in the Mourning Hall, sat the head Sheikh, all in black and with a copy of the Maṣra' open in his hands. An assistant reciter, sat at the foot of the pulpit. The audience was rapidly increasing as the morning wore on. The seats being unreserved, many of the late-comers had to mourn Husein standing up

1. The Arabic word 'maṣra' صرع or variously 'maqtal' مقتل stands for the full sīra of Karbalā - or the text of that.

2. In the colloquial, the 'Ashūrā' day is known as the 'falla' الفلة i.e. dismiss obviously on account of the dispersal of the crowds at the end of the ceremonies.

all the while. In the roof, three electric fans barely alleviated the heat of the over-crowded Hall. At last the Qoran recitation was ended. This was the sign to start. Turning over a leaf of his Masra', the head Sheikh opened the recital by an abundantⁿ blessing upon Mohammed and his Household, to which the audience responded in the usual manner. The text of the masra' was Abu Mukhnaf's, a prose text with a few poetical interpolations. The Sheikh laid special stress on the poetry, also on those prose passages where the situation was particularly pathetic, by no means scamping the large slice of the supernatural in the work, dreams, revelations, prodigious omens and the like.

The climate was one of mourning. Occasionally, the Sheikh broke off the recitation and, changing to colloquial speech, gave an interpretation to an intricate passage or expatiated on some specially sensitive theme. Himself drenched in tears, he thus set an example to the audience. To maintain the atmosphere of grief, he allowed for occasional pauses when fits of sobbing pervaded the Assembly. The first of such pauses was the death of Muslim, followed by Husein's quandry on receiving the news. A further pause was allowed when Karbalā was reached, and Husein gave the command, "Dismount, for here is our burial-place, here our tombs etc." Similar interludes were allowed for recalling the preliminary parley, particularly when the Umayyads hem Husein in, cutting him off from the Euphrates. At this juncture, the Sheikh was overcome by grief himself, so his assistant took over.

Having cursorily dealt with the death of Husein's followers, the reciter moved to the fall of the Hashimites themselves in more detail: Husein's two sons, particularly the suckling babe 'Abdullāh, next al-Qasim, Husein's nephew and eventually 'Abbās. Husein's own turn came next. "Is there no one there to succour us for the sake of Allāh?" cried out the reciter quoting Husein, "Is there no one there to shield the harem of the Apostle of Allah?"

Upon the words, the sorrowful congregation sobbed aloud, many of the men smote their heads and faces in abject grief.¹ Outside the hall, a fresh Qoranic recitation from the Qit'a stage interrupted the progress of the Masra' but the reciter carried on nevertheless: "Know you not whom you fight against?" he resumed, speaking for Ibn Sa'd, "this is the son of the bare-templed and corpulent one, son of the slayer of the Arabs." Eventually, Husein is slain; Shimr cuts off his head and burns the Camp. The sorrowful congregation muttered words of damnation upon Shimr and the Umayyads in general. A number of the more zealous youths stood up in seeming vehemence, leaving the place for a side room. They soon returned with their white 'shrouds' on, and ghamés in their hands. To them, tears were inadequate; they would weep over Husein in blood!

1. Describing a ta'zia assembly in India Mrs. Ali (Observations, p. 18) writes, "When moved, the audience are seen swaying to and fro with a solemn motion that becomes more and more marked until it is a violent agitation leading to smiting the breasts, crying and wailing, "Ya Ali, al Hasan, al Husein, Husein Shah."

It was well after nine when the Masra' was shut, and the congregation, weeping copiously, poured out into the courtyard shouting, "Ya Husein! Ya Husein!" Soon after they were seen facing east, i.e. Karbalā as they paused to recite the 'Ashūrā' 'ziārat' invocation. In the 'ziarat' they heap damnation on Husein's enemies and exalt Husein and his family, expressing the wish to fight at the side of the Mahdi when he would come to effect vengeance for Husein. (Cf. excerpts from the ziārat in Appendix.) The ziārat recited, the congregation now turned to face the Qibla. A two-prostrations prayer was said as a special presentation on behalf of the souls of the Imams interred at the Baqī' cementary, at Hijaz. With that, the Masra' assembly broke up. The audience then went off to the Qit'a field to see the shabīh of Karbalā.

IV.

The Shabīh in Performance

Meanwhile the Masra' in the mourning hall was recited, preparations on the Qit'a stage had been under way, and the spectators had noticeably increased. More than once were special announcements made about children lost due to the largeness of the crowd. Fortunately for us then, we managed to secure a standing room right in front of the stage. On the stage, the actors had already donned their costumes. A group of them swarmed about the commentator's desk, while several others had mounted their horses. One team of elderly devotees in their white 'shrouds' were now

making the tour of the stage. They ejaculated, "Firiāt wā Huseināh!" sorrowfully beating their breasts. Then the women-mourners, all in black, made the same round, waving black handkerchiefs, and wailing monotonously, "Ya Husein, ya Husein!" Once their tour was done, the start of the performance was announced. A Qoranic recitation on gramophone records was played. One verse in it, specially indicative of the polemical objective of the shabīh, was: "Allāh's wish is but to remove contamination far from thee, O folk of the Household, and with a cleansing to cleanse thee."¹ Next to the Qoran came the opening address delivered by the commentator. His theme, by no means original, revolved round the sacrificial significance of Husein's rising.

Soon the 'halaqa' was cleared for the performance. The first group of actors made their appearance. It was the group of Hurr, commander of the expeditionary Umayyad force drawn up to intercept Husein. Hurr's entrance was announced and the actor taking the part named. His troop was composed of three horsemen and eight foot soldiers. Their costumes consisted of a thick, brown 'abā, a white cotton 'kaffiyya', and a black head-band. As a special distinction, Hurr's 'kaffiyya' was of fine, white silk, and his head-band was embellished with brocade. As his troop marched by the tents on the west end, the women-mourners met them with high shouts of 'wail',

1. Qoran, xxxiii, 33 - This verse is often cited by the Shia as a reason for favouring Ali's house.

i.e. woe! waving their black handkerchiefs. The troop, however, heeded them not, but continued on their march until they halted at the north end of the field waiting for Husein.

The next troop to arrive was that of the Umayyads headed by Ibn Sa'd with Shimr as his aide-de-camp. Together with them arrived Ibn Ziad, the deputy-governor of Kufa. Their appearance evoked an unfavourable acclamation: unintelligible shouts of grief, involving curses, were heard. The Umayyad troop was comparatively large, comprising fifty men, mostly foot soldiers. Their costumes were similar to those of Hurr's men. Ibn Ziad and Ibn Sa'd were distinguished by white, silken 'abās, while Shimr was clad in military uniform, an iron helmet, and a pair of black Wellington boots.¹ For flags, the Umayyads hoisted ten little, plain red banners on thin, long rods. Having made the round of the stage, they divided into two parties: the larger, under the leadership of Ibn Sa'd, took their stand at the east end along the banks of the Euphrates, - as represented by the palm tree branches stuck in the ground - while the smaller party, comprising the rest, marched forward to the Kufa court, - represented by a long bench and several chairs.

Now Husein is expected. Several times all eyes turned in suspense to the north-eastern border whence his troop was supposed to appear. But he was late, and the audience began to look restless. It was well after ten before his belated troop made its appearance. Among

1. Distinctive as it is, Shimr's costume belongs rather to the modern 'European' age, than the early Islamic era, hence the anachronism.

acclamations of applause and blessing, Husein's cavalcade entered the stage, and made the same round of it as the others. In all, they were eighteen men: six on horseback, comprising Husein and his bodyguard, three on camelback riding after them, and the rest on foot. Husein, on a white, shaggy steed, rode between 'Abbās on the right and Ali al-Akbar on the left. On camelback about the middle of the cavalcade, rode Ḥabīb Ibn-Muẓāhir, bearing Husein's standard.¹ The Standard was a square foot of plain, green silk, matching the green turbans of the Hashimites and the covers of their horses and camels. For costume, they wore black, silken 'abās, noticeably of a better stuff than the ordinary thick gowns of the men in their company. For a headdress, Husein's followers wore plain, white turbans; indeed many of them had simply wrapped up their heads in their own 'kaffiyyas' in the form of a turban, leaving a part hanging loosely down the back. Having made their tour all round, the cavalcade was met by the two Asadite men. After greeting, the Asadites conveyed to Husein the news of the death of Muslim and Ḥanī, respectively, his private emissary, and a chieftain of his partisans. At this point the acting was under way.

As though little concerned, Husein sounds the views of Muslim's relatives in his company. They are one in their determination 'to avenge their man or die in the attempt'. Accordingly, Husein makes

1. In the text of the shabīh Tragedy - Act IV, scene 111. line 60 - it is 'Abbās rather than Ḥabīb who is the standard-bearer.

up his mind: he resignedly orders his men to ride forward. Soon Hurr and his troop intercept their advance, and the first short colloquy occurs between the two men, and Husein becomes a virtual prisoner in the hands of the Umayyads. The two troops now ride slowly forward to the accompaniment of a solitary 'hidā' song in eulogy of the Banu Hāshim, Chanted by at-Tirimāh, a desert-scout in Husein's company: Act I. scene iii. The combined group now circles the stage arriving at Karbalā, i.e. the west end where the Camp of Husein is pitched. Directly on the opposite side of the stage, the Umayyad force is already stationed in battle array. From Kūfa, Ibn-Ziad sends Husein a written ultimatum. Husein, however, declines the humiliating conditions proposed by the Umayyads and asks for permission to withdraw in peace. But he is denied this, and his troop is effectively cut off from the Euphrates. The Drama now lags in deliberations and the despatching of messengers. Lengthy negotiations are held around the point of leadership of the detachment drawn against Husein. Eventually, battle is joined.

Except for Hurr, who rides over to Husein, the simulated fighting is all done on foot. The battle is but poorly represented: the single Huseinite warrior charges and defeats a whole troop of the Umayyads who simply fall before his sword like green grass mowed down by a sickle - curiously enough, to rise up as soon, standing in their former ranks again! To the casualties of the Umayyads, little attention is paid. The case, however, differs with respect

to Husein's men. Every now and then, a high, half-shahāda is heard, as notification of the fall of one of them. That announcement, Husein himself invariably appends with the Qoranic verses, "Lo! We are Allah's, and lo! unto Him do we return. - Some of them have paid their vow by death (in battle) and some of them still are waiting, and they have not altered in the least." Upon the words, the fallen martyr is carried out on a stretcher and laid in the Camp among the shouts and wailings of the mourners.

The first one to do battle is the prodigal Hurr. Having received forgiveness of his sin, he rides forward, reciting his challenge, fights, and falls a repentant martyr. Husein eulogises him as, "Hurr here, 'hurr' - i.e. free - hereafter." Next to Hurr, comes the chieftain of the Banu-Aqīl, next Burair and several other unnamed devotees whose part is to fight in silence and die, the last one among them being Ḥabīb Ibn-Muzāhir. After him, there remain with Husein only his immediate family, and a personal negro slave, who plunge into the fray, one by one, challenging, fighting, and ultimately falling as martyrs. Among them, the first is his own eldest son, Ali al-Akbar who, though victorious at first, is so overcome by burning thirst that he is compelled to retire to his father for a drink. Husein lays his dry tongue on his son's by way of proving how much thirstier he himself was. So the son returns thirsty to the fray - to die. Upon his death, Husein chants a genuinely touching couplet beginning:

"Thou hast been the very pupil of mine eyes."

At this juncture, acting is suspended in favour of an interlude of 'tatbīr', i.e. head-wounding. A team of the devotees, in their white shrouds with 'gamehs' in their hands appears upon the stage, striking at their heads with the gamehs as they ejaculate: "Haidar, Zainab, Husein". They then start to smite their bleeding heads with their open hands, as they gravely chant, "Such is the calamity of Karbalā" (dirge No. 9). Covered in blood, they make the complete tour of the stage before they disappear into the Huseiniyya house.

When acting is resumed, it is Qasim, Husein's nephew, who takes the field, fights, and falls. Finally comes 'Abbās, Husein's half-brother. Once he succeeds in penetrating the enemy's siege on the Euphrates, but his right arm is cut off. Resuming the fight, he loses his left arm too, so he grasps the sword in his teeth and charges his last. Husein flies to the side of his dying brother, tenderly wiping the dust off his head. But the sympathetic 'Abbās, though in agonies, declines the kind gesture, on the plea that Husein will have no one to do him the same kindness when shortly his turn comes to die. In eulogy to 'Abbās, Husein, in tears, utters a brief, rhetorical panegyric after which a solitary dirgeful tune is heard chanted in the Iraqi 'hsichī': "O 'Abbās, our Master, whose heart is ever compassionate for us etc." (dirge 43.)

Simultaneously with the aforesaid tune, a second interlude is allowed. A fresh troop of sword-beaters parade the stage. As they inflict their wounds, they chant in low-voiced chorus:

"There is no other sword sharper than Dhu'l Fiqār, no champion worthier than Ali."

The smell of hot blood was unmistakable as the devotees, beating their gory heads with their hands, passed closely by us; indeed, men in the front row were seen stepping back to avoid being bespattered. Several casualties among the devotees now fell down in a faint and were borne away for first-aid. Soon the parade was done, and the stage cleared again for the performance.

The end is drawing near. Feeling isolated, the lonely Husein is heard calling out for help. None comes up to his aid, but Jawn, his negro slave. Husein, however, declines the generous offer, and grants emancipation to Jawn. But the honest slave accepts nothing less than "mixing his own blood with his honourable masters'".

When thus he fights and falls, Husein duly invokes a heavenly blessing upon the faithful bondman. Soon after, Husein in person takes the field. He challenges the enemy with "their pre-Islamic gallantry" to emerge to him singly, in two's or three's, and they grant him this - at first. Yet all those who come out against that "son of the slayer of the Arabs" are immediately defeated.

Thereupon, Ibn Sa'd resorts to group attack, surrounding Husein by four whole troops together, and only thus is he enabled to get the better of the proud Imam. Shmr advances and cuts off Husein's head.

Upon Shmr's orders, the soldiers storm the camp. The children therein begin to fly from tent to tent, but they are hunted down and the camp set on fire. Many people in the audience now rush

forward to get a handful of ashes as a sovereign remedy. Shimr lays hands upon Husein's surviving son, Ali al-Asghar, alias Zain al-'Abidīn. Zain, all in black and seemingly bound up with ropes, is set on a caparisoned camel, while at his side Shimr in person, with his sword drawn, rides as a special guard. At this juncture, real stage-acting is virtually ended. What remains is the presentation of the Captivity, which constitutes the final Act of the Play, and is performed in the main streets. Now audience, demonstrators, and actors alike mix together in one great procession behind the Captive. The Umayyad actors who only shortly before were fighting against Husein, are now recognized in the procession of the 'lattāma' beating their breasts in grief for Husein.¹ As they flood the main street, the people in the procession follow no special order. Actually, they comprise all the participants in the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies namely, breast-beaters, chain-flagellants, women-mourners, swords-men, and actors in the shabīh. The procession makes a brief stop at four different places. At each one of the four stops, the Captive, Zain, delivers an address from camel-back, vindicating his father's cause. At the first stop, there is indeed a semblance of drama, where the thirsty Zain, seeing water, asks for a drink. Feigning sympathy, Shimr offers him a clay jar; but no sooner does Zain hold it up to drink, than Shimr, with

1. Of Azerbaijan, Robson states that, "In the end of the drama, the actors who represented the Umayyad troops had to beat a hasty retreat under a shower of stones from the spectators."

See article by Robson J. in Hilbert Journal
Vol. 54, p. 269

a well-aimed stroke of his sword, smashes the jar to pieces, laughing loud. The gesture has a profound effect upon the female sections of the procession, who react to it with high-shouted sympathies. When Stop No. 2 is reached, Zain's speech is almost drowned by the noise of the thronged procession and the roar of moving buses. At Stop No. 3, the congregation has become considerably thinned; apart from the functionary demonstrators, only a few hundreds follow the procession to Stop No. 4 back again at the Huseiniyya gate. It was around two in the afternoon when Zain's last speech was delivered, the crowd finally dispersed, and the city returned to its normal daily life.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE 'ASHŪRĀ' CEREMONIES

I.

The Reform Campaign

In Lebanon, as in the Shi'ite world at large, the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies have, in the last half century, undergone a radical development. A sweeping reform campaign was launched against them. The spark of reform, though ignited in Lebanon, the ensuing conflagration flared up most hotly outside Lebanon; in Iraq and to a lesser extent in both Persia and Shi'ite India. The extensive and fervent polemical disputation which followed amounted to a pen-crusade that grew more and more violent until it caused a crack in the very edifice of the Shi'ite church. Indiscriminately, the reformer's knife struck deeper down than the Ceremonies themselves into such vital doctrines as the authenticity of the Karbalan traditions and the infallibility and transcendency of the Imams.

The inaugurator was Sayyid Muhsin al-Amīn, of Shaqrā village, Mount 'Āmil, in Lebanon. This man had spent the greater part of his life at Damascus as a notable Shi'ite 'mujtahid', and was famous for his copious output of religious, ethical, and biographical works. His reforms, religious and social alike, had been as numerous as they were weighty, but his Campaign of reform on the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies has certainly been the most momentous and the most lasting of them all. This is how it began:

At reforming 'Ashūrā', Amīn first tried his hand in the year 1319 A.H. at Rāwiya village in the environs of Damascus. With assiduous efforts, he succeeded in banning from the Ceremonies such markedly violent practices as 'tatbīr', 'janzīr', and the severe breast-beating. The scope of his measure was, however, too narrow to exert any influence outside Syria. In the year 1343, however, appeared his five-volume work on the ta'zia, "Al-Majālis As-Saniyya". In the preface to Volume One, Amīn ruthlessly condemns the violent shabīh rituals, admonishing the Shia against the practice of same, as against a veritable sin. To confirm his views, he published an article to that effect in the Beirut papers.

Naturally, Amīn's Campaign touched most closely the Conservative School, headed by Sheikh Abdul-Husein Sādiq of Nabatiyya, Lebanon, although actual friction did not as yet take place. Amīn's call was to meet the first actual reaction to it from outside Lebanon, at Basra in Iraq. There, on the following Muharram, Qazwīnī, the then religious authority in the area, forbade the performance of the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies, violent and non-violent, with the exception of the ta'zia parties. The Basra incident reverberated in the Shi'ite world, particularly since it coincided with an anti-Shi'ite movement, whereby the (Wahhabī) rulers of Saudi Arabia defiantly demolished the graves of the Shi'ite Imams at Baqī' al-Gharqad. It was at this juncture that Sheikh Sādiq came upon the field.

In apology for the 'Ashura' rituals as practised in full, Sādiq,

in 1346 A.H., published his "Sīma' as-Sulahā'", in direct retort to Amīn and Qazwīnī, both of whom he accused of attempting "to efface the Imams' memory, just as the Wahhabis had effaced the Imams' graves." The revocation of the violent 'Ashūrā' rituals he regards as among the "breakers of the backs" من قاصات الظهر, being a mischief to the Faith.¹ Immediately on the appearance of the Sīma', Amīn got stung into publishing an answer in his "Tanzīh ... ash-Shabīh" polemic, in which, reacting against Sādiq, he continued his Campaign with a/nine-article protest, comprising the ta'zia, the shabīh, and the rest of the ceremonies of 'Ashūrā'.

To Amīn's Tanzīh, the response had been nothing less than outrageous: a crop of conservative polemics, press articles, theological dispensation, special ta'zia speeches, and government intervention were the most prominent. It was actually the Tanzīh that delineated the boundaries between the two schools of thought: the Reformists, and the Conservatives, splitting even the members of a family into two hostile groups. So instantaneous was the effect of it that the enlightened Shia everywhere at once renounced the violent 'Ashūrā' rituals and began to betray serious doubts as to the lawfulness of the Muharram observances as a whole. In Lebanon, the Shia divided on the question into two camps: with Amīn, the leading supporters had been Dāhir and Rida of Nabatiyya, and Zain of Sidon. With Sādiq, stood Sharafeddīn of Tyre,

1. Sādiq: Sīma', pp. 2 and 42; Saqat al-Matā', p. 24

Mughniyya of Tair-dibba, and Subaitī of Kafra. The detailed Reform Campaign is treated in full in a separate work by the present writer,¹ but the text of the Reform protest, as given at the end of these lines, will give some idea of it. As will be observed from the Protest, Amīn's Campaign was launched on a two fold front: the illegality of the Ceremonies, and the Shame of performing them before the outside world. The controversy, however, defeated Amīn's plea; the legality of the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies was proved and the criticism of the outside world spurned. Despite its defeat, Amīn's Campaign, up to the present, exerts an increasing influence in Lebanon as elsewhere.

Text of the REFORM PROTEST as in
Amīn's "Tanzih" pp. 2-6 (incl)

"It is as though Iblīs and his helpers are leading astray the men of religion by way of religion itself; such, in fact, is the most harmful of all forms of misleading. ... they have sought to deceive men into introducing innovations and illegalities into the Karbalan ceremonies, as well as items which would discredit the ceremonies before outsiders, all with a view to spoiling the benefits and forfeiting the rewards thereof. Moslems have unanimously agreed that most of them are veritable sins - indeed, in the case of most of them, are grave sins, the committer of which Allah, in His glorious Book, has threatened and condemned. They would displease Husein, who died specially to expurgate religion from illegalities; how then, would he ever approve of them, particularly if they be practised in the name of devotion and religion? Among these practises are:²

-
1. "The Karbalan Rituals in the Balance".
 2. The items of the Tanzih above are bound to come in the same order the author himself adopts; for the sake of better clarity, however, the material has been more fittingly recast under the six main headings appearing at the end of the Protest.

... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...

1 - ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...

2 - ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...

3 - ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...

4 - ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...

... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...
... ለሰላም ስላለች ስለሆነች ስለሆነች ...

FALSEHOOD - Through the narration of tales which are both false and known to be false; (tales) that exist neither in a tradition, nor in any other work whatever. Morning and evening, alike from the pulpits and at the Assemblies are such tales being retold, without anyone there to exhort or admonish. There is general unanimity that falsehood is of the grave sins, particularly when it be lying to Allah, His Apostle, or one of the Imams.

MODULATION WITH SONG - The same is unanimously anathematized as sinful, whether it be for exciting joy or grief. Without shunning it at all, a good number of reciters are wont to deliver their ta'zia addresses in that very manner.

HURTING OF THE BODY AND INFLICTING INJURY THEREON - and that, in two ways:

i. Through beating and wounding the head with knives and swords until blood gushes out. On account of the excessive hemorrhage which follows, the aforesaid experience has frequently resulted in fainting, illness, late healing of the wound, and even death;

ii. Through scourging the back with iron-chains and the like.

In both these divisions, the sinfulness of injury is evident, both intellectually and by tradition. This is apart from their being in contradiction to that reputed ease and tolerance of the Sharia, whereon Allah's Apostle had often prided himself saying, 'I have brought you an easy, tolerant Sharia'; and in opposition to the removal of hardship and irksomeness from religion, as is decreed by the Qoranic words, 'There is not laid on thee in religion any hardship.'

PLAYING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, such as the drum, the fife, 'damnam' the brass-cymbals etc. The prohibition on such instruments is evident in law, faqih having made exception only in the case of the war drum ...

MEN IMITATING WOMEN, such as takes place in dramatic performance, is clearly prohibited in law.

THE MOUNTING IN CAMEL-LITTERS OF UNVEILED WOMEN, to represent the daughters of Allah's Apostle is clearly illegal, on account of the disgrace (and the mutilation) involved, to say nothing of possible further abomination and repugnance, such as which did actually take place at Basra last year (i.e. 1346) where an unveiled sinful woman, representing Zainab, was made to ride in one of the litters, under the gaze of a large crowd.

THE SHOUTING OF WOMEN WITHIN THE HEARING OF (MEN) STRANGERS - A woman's voice is a disgrace. Even if it were not sinful, it is

ignominious, and opposed alike to good manners and manliness ... a ta'zia party should, therefore, be purged therefrom.

SHOUTING AND SCREAMING IN HARSH, UNPLEASANT VOICES.

ALL THAT MIGHT ENTAIL INFAMY AND REPULSIVENESS - Countless are such items and they vary with the various countries and conditions.

Such practices as all the aforesaid would open wide the gates of stricture upon Creed and Church alike. They would estrange men from the Creed, branding it with ignominy, and its followers with ignorance, madness, and remoteness from the refinements of the Islamic Sharia ... so much so that their photographs are being exhibited at theatres and in newspapers. Verily, our Imams have strictly enjoined upon us saying, 'Be a credit, rather than a disgrace to us'. After all, those ceremonies are not among such duties of the faith as it would be harmful to give up; hence, even if one grants that they are valid, the fact is unaltered that, they are disgraceful and repellent to both Creed and Church."

REFORM PROTEST IN RESUME

- I. ASSEMBLIES: Falsehood; Modulation; Women's shouts.
- II. DEMONSTRATIONS: Shouting and Screaming; Musical Instruments.
- III. SHABĪH: Drama in general; Women in drama; Men Imitating Women.
- IV. VIOLENT MORTIFICATIONS.
- V. EXHORTATION OF THE 'ULAMĀ'.
- VI. THE CEREMONIES BEFORE THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

.....

II.

General Prospective Features

The prospects of the 'Ashūrā' ceremonies in Lebanon can be estimated only by gauging the influence upon them of the opposed Schools of thought. As already mentioned above, the Reformist School is nowadays in the ascendant, over seventy per cent of the Shia of the country being in favour of reform. This is only natural: everybody prefers to have one religious duty less. Besides

several other factors, reform, we believe, has been effectively upheld by the very nature of the celebration, i.e. the dissimulatory allegations whereby the basic 'political' cause has been deliberately muffled up. The reformer's martyrdom ascribed to Husein, particularly the victory to Islam through that martyrdom, need hardly be mourned. The current conception about the Karbala Cause will have therefore to be modified, if it is to live on^{at} all.

By way of lending support to the Ceremonies in Lebanon, a few positive suggestions would not be out of place. In the last resort, the celebration depends on the lavish reward of a tear of grief shed over Husein's fate, i.e. the complete and unconditional absolution of sins. The details of the sīra of Karbalā, so perennially retold, have actually become too trite to excite tears for the Cause. Fresh means would have, therefore, to be introduced by way of rejuvenating the same thirteen-century-old story. To do that, the only lawful means is the shabīh. There are certain Reformist authorities nowadays who declare that, 'If the sīra itself should cease to be green enough, the ta'zia, for a variety of topic, might just as well incorporate general Islamics. To this, we contend that, general Islamics are by no means ta'zia, by no means the Cause. If one is to revive the Cause, in honest compliance with the Imams' injunction, the rest of the Ceremonies are, in the circumstances, indispensable.

In shabīh, more senses than at a ta'zia are brought into play: the eye sees, the ear hears, and the blood shed is both seen and smelt;

the pain of the wound is, of course, felt by the sufferers, whose attitude can also react most effectively on the audience. Even the taste sometimes has been made to have its share, witness the lick of salt taken before entering a mourning hall. Cf. Chapter I above. As a good indication of sympathy, tatbīr, so long in common use, might just as well be maintained. To forestall injury, the wounding of the head could be clinically supervised, but to substitute red tincture, for instance, for human blood, would be more of a farce than a 'nusra', bearing in mind that tatbīr is actually more than a mere representation.

The Dirges must be standardized, modified to advantage, and as early as possible put to print, lest before long they be lost. The Play itself, unless it would be cinematically represented - which is now being contemplated - stands in real need of careful, thorough-going amendment. It is, we think, an interesting tragedy worth the effort spent on promoting it. The present text - in vol. II of this thesis - yields itself to improvement in more than one Act. Most of all, the glaring gaps of time and place would have to be adequately filled in. In presentation as well, the scope for improvement is wide: the actors should be sufficiently rehearsed, their costumes chosen with a little more scrutiny, and the stage equipment better chosen. In the main, there must be a proper stage roofed in, and supplied with a green room, adequate scenery and, of course, seats. Alongside such modification, one good scene must inevitably be missed out, i.e. the live spectacle of horses

and camels. That loss, however, could be set off, by specific, vivid, description within the dialogue; at the same time, if desirable, the final Act might still be presented in the streets, though preferably with shorter addresses and more dramatic dialogue.

By such means as the aforesaid, it should be possible, we suggest, to prop up the rapidly waning 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies. Otherwise, the prospects, are frankly not of the brightest. There is in the whole of Lebanon, for example, no more than a small score of chain-flagellants and, popular though it might appear, the shabīh Play can hardly outlive the present Hegira century; the ta'zia will certainly drag on a little longer, but with an ever increasing deterioration. After the death of the patron of the Conservative School, the knell of the shabīh will sooner or later be tolled. His son and heir, being less influential, and of far less learning, cannot be expected to maintain the ceremonies in face of the two-fold incursion: from the Sunnis, and from the Shi'ite Reformists. In conservative quarters, fresh generations are for sooth being schooled into the habit of violent 'Ashūrā' practices, but such a small leaven can hardly be expected to produce much effect in the all-pervading coolness created by Reform. So profound has the influence of Reform been that even Sheikh H., a son of the former patron and a brother of the present one, has himself expressed disapproval of tatbīr, and, in his own area, has actually forbidden the practice.

In Lebanon, as perhaps in the whole of the Middle East, the stress on godliness is being gradually loosened, witness the little attention paid to religious subjects in the curricula of national education. The general tendency nowadays is towards scientific methods; there is a constant, and increasing, withdrawal from Romanticism, from passion, which withdrawal must, in the long run, constitute a hindrance to whole-hearted mourning in the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies. The more exuberant spirit of the West is rapidly over shadowing the traditional sullenness of the Orient. To Shi'ism, the true sign of whose followers is "eyes red with constant weeping,"¹ such exuberance must necessarily be detrimental, and particularly so, since, with the elimination of the 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies and the perennial ta'zia with it, the likelihood of the Shia drifting into Sunnism would be considerable, however firm the Shi'ite Church may at present appear to be.

1. Naqawī: Iqālat, p. 46

Excerpts from the Azriyya Qasīda

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Excerpts from the Azriyya Qasida

الازريية

وهي عبارة عن قصيدة طويلة نظمها الشيخ كاظم الازري
 في مدح النبي والوصي (علي) وتخميسها للشيخ جابر الكاظمي .
 وتسمى ايضا الألفية ، او درر اللالي . وعدد ابائها ٣١٢
 منها ١٨٠ في مدح النبي والباقي في مدح علي .

مطلعها = لمن الشمس في قباب قباها
 شف جسم الدجى بروح ضياها ؟

• • • • •

كل يوم للحادثات عواد
 ليس يقوى ضوى على ملتقاها
 كيف يرجو الخلاص منهن الا
 بدمام من سيد الرسل طه .

• • • • •

لا تخف من اسى القيامة هولا
 كشف الله بالنبي اساهها
 ملك شد ازره بأخيه
 فاستقامت من الامور قناها .

• • • • •

وهي منتهية بهذا البيت المختص :

بحر فيض افاضه ذو الجلال صدف الدهر في لياليه حالي
 وهو كنز الحلوى وغر الفحال قائم في زكاة كل المعالي
 دائم دأبه على ايتاها

— — — — —

Index to: Tape-recordings
forwarded with Thesis

1. THE SIRHAN MS.

Reel No. 1/Front

A typical Ta'zia speech from a male Assembly.

Speaker: Haj 'Abdul-Karīm al-Humūd of Nabatiyya.

/Back

Tunes of the 'Ashūrā' dirges from men's processions.

(Please listen to two additional tunes after the end.

Thank you.)

Reel No. 2/Front

A typical Ta'zia 'majlis' of women's circles.

The two women-reciters are: Sit Um-Husein Farrān, and

Hajjī Um-Ali Bītār, both of Tyre.

Remarks on the Mss. in Thesis

1. THE SIRHĀN MS.

It is a 250-page volume of the size given in accompanying photostat. There is no known author, but the Ms. bears the name of the copyist, Husein b. Ali b. Husein Sirhān. The date the transcript was accomplished is the 20th Ramadan in the year (1)138/1725. The dating is supported by a Turkish seal in relief printing, on the lower left-hand corner of folio 241. The volume is in comparatively good condition: the cover is of stiff cardboard clothed in thick brown leather. There are, however, several loose pages. In the absence of original folio numbers, the only guide is the last word of each page being carried forward to the top of the next one. The paper is polished and the script is in a fine hand with clear, large letters. The ink is jet black except for the opening words of poems, and new paragraphs both of which are inserted in red ink.

عليهم منك اللعنة ابد الابدين اللهم اني اتعرب
 اليك في هذا اليوم وفي موقفي هذا واياهم جميعا
 بالبراهنهم واللعنة عليهم وبالموت الذي انت لنسلك
 والانسك عليه وعليهم السلام ثم تقول يا رب

السلام عليهم يا ابا عبد الله وعلى الارواح التي
 حلت بمناياك واناخت برحمتك عليهم من جميع السلام
 الله ابدنا ببيت وبي الدليل والبراهن ولا جعله الله
 اخرا لعهد مني لبرياريك السلام على من في ربي
 وعلى اولاد محمد وعلى من في ربي من ربي وحسن
 الامم ارحمهم ان ارحمهم باللعنة وبذلك بها المرح
 الشفي والانسك ام الرشح اللهم العن من ربي من ربي ومن
 عبيد المشركين من ربي ومن ربي ومن ربي ومن ربي
 ومن ربي ومن ربي ومن ربي ومن ربي ومن ربي ومن ربي

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وان اعطيني من ربي ما اريد من ربي
 بمصيبة مصيبة ما اعظمها واعظم ربيتها
 في الاسلام وفي جميع اهل السموات والارض اللهم
 اجعلني في مقابرهم من ثنائهم منك صلوات
 ورحمة ومعيرة اللهم جعل لي محي المحمدي وال
 محمد ومما في مما مات محمد وال محمد اللهم ارحمهم واسو
 بهم ببركتك يا بوا امية وان آكله الا كباد
 اللعين برب اللعين في كل موضع وموقف وقفيته
 نبيك اللهم العن ابا سفيان ومعوية بن ابي
 سفيان ويزيد بن معاوية عليهم منك اللعنة
 ابد الابدين وهذا اليوم ورحمتك يا رب يا رب
 من ان يقتلهم الله يا رب عليك السلام اللهم ضاعف

عليه

واليا على حمصر وذكر فيه
 اما بعد يا بني فقد قرب مني
 ما بعد والموت مفروق بين الامة
 فاذا قرأت كتابي هذا فسر لي
 عما جلا فالي ميت لا محالة وطوي
 الكتاب وارسله مع سباع النفا
 هذا الساعي الكتاب وسار الى
 ان قدم مدينة حمصر ودفع
 الكتاب الى يزيد فلما حفظه وقرأه
 رحل من ساعته وحد السيرة
 ليلا ونهارا الى ان دخل دمشق
 واقل الى قصر ابير واذ بصيحه
 وجلبه فقال لمن حوله ما خبر
 فقالوا

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فقالوا لمن اياك يعالج سكرك
 الموت فبكي وانشد يقول
 بجاء البريد فخر طائفتك به
 فالواجس القلب من حيفته
 قلنا لك الويل ماذا في صحيفتك
 قالوا الخليفة اذ في ههنا
 فادت الارض وكادة تميد بنا
 لعظم طوي من الاطواد لتقلعا
 ثم ان ابن بل دخل
 الذكر فقيل لعا وبه هذا ولذلك
 يزيد قد قدم خفت عينية ونظر
 اليه ثم امر باخراج من كات

11. THE BAIDŪN MS.

BAIDŪN MS. - Specimen from Writing

The Volume is incomplete, part of it having been torn out; the extant pages number 234. The size is the one of the photostat. It contains neither date nor author's name; the name Baidūn simply refers to the last owner. The paper is thick and dog-eared, with traces of water having leaked through on the left-hand side. The cover is of tough, black leather, unevenly stitched through with thick hemp strand. The script is clear enough, but there are no punctuation marks except in the poetry.

عن سهل بن سعيد الشهرستاني قال خرجت من شمر
خروجي الأم قبل الحيرة عرفت
مغلقه وكحل سرجه
فالتاسا فأتانا ففضلت
في أحسن زينة بفروان وبنحون
لا نغومه وأولاها نكاح
فقالوا غريب أنت أمة محمد
فخرج لا مير الفاسق ناس
فقلت ومن ههنا نأرجي قالوا الحمد
فقلت الحمد الحسين ابن فاطمة بنت موسى
فأنا إليه رجوا بغير

حدي عن سهل ابن سعيد الشهرستاني قال خرجت من شمرق
 إلى بيت مدني فنادى خويجي إمام قتل الحسين عوف خلت
 السماء في بيت الرئوب مفتحة فالد كالكين مغلقة وأتحمل مسرجه
 ولا علام مسود والريارات مشهوره والناس باقوا جائفاً فاضلت
 مني لسكرك ولا سواف ولم في احسن زينه بفروجون ويخفون
 فقلت لبعضهم اضع حدث لكم عيلاً لا تعرفونه قالوا لا ههنا فقلت
 ١١١١ فوجين مسرورين فقالوا غريب انت احمل عهده
 لذي ليل فقلت نعم فلو فماد قالوا ففتح لا مير الفاسقيان فتح
 عظم فلت وما ههنا الفتح قالوا خرج عليه خارجي فقتل
 فمات الله ولم الحمد فلت ومن ههنا الحاربي قالوا الحمد
 ابن علي بن ابي طالب المله الحسين ابن فاطمة بنت رسول
 الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقلت انما الله والي الله لا جهورا ولا باهر

- (19) Zainab laments death of the martyr. The very grief of mine
 20 Zainab to assuage the Babes' grief.

21 Zainab THE 'ASHURĀ' DIRGES - GENERAL INDEX

(22) In apostrophe, Zainab: to assuage the Babes' grief. (Substance)

BAIDŪN MS. - Specimen of Poetry

يهليل وبي اهدبي وصيلة نصير لدى الرقوع لذن ذاب وكسر
 ابي ان حلال الظيم منبر بيرج وهيهات ريب الخريف
 يجرد عن طالع حبله عسل هضاب شمام ساع وسر
 وابص صفول الفزدي كاته مصباح خال عن سناه ضلك
 واستهم مثل القمل يلو بكفة ونقشه في الزا عبيد سار
 يصول كليل اغاب جيني بده على سغب بي الثعاب نغار
 سايك دم سغبى ليل التمر ومرضى نفسا لا تكاد تست
 اهل لك في وصل المنية فطلب وهل لك في قطع الحيات من
 وردت الردي صادي الفواد لان الردي شررب حلا وصم
 وامته من المني من بعد ما جرب بكفك صا الكا زوام
 صخره فراك الخيل من بعد ما لو الخيل صرعى منك فخر
 فانا لك لا اي الى حدود المواضي فاعثر اه كهم
 وليك تغشاه المنوي ربابه صفاء فيها للدماء وشام
 كهم كبرك لا تلهي نطفه من و بل يفرح جناو لك حرام

- (19) Zainab laments Husein, the martyr. "the very pupil of mine"
- 20 Zainab: to assuage the Babes' grief.

21 Zainab THE 'ASHURĀ' DIRGES - GENERAL INDEX

(22) In apostrophe, Zainab laments dead Hussein for water.
(Substance)

23 The Sufianids are upon thee, O Hussein!

- (1) Ali's legitimism and transcendence announced in heaven.
- 2 Would that Ali were present at Taff!
- (3) Ali: divisor between heaven and hell¹.
- 4 Hussein, the noble descendant, wrongfully slain.
- 5 In complaint of Karbalā, Hussein's family appeal to Mohammed.
- 6 Qāsim, the bridegroom slain: O that Tāha had been there!
- 7 Hussein: an Imam son of the Imam.
- 8 With my tears I comfort the Apostle for Hussein's loss.
- 9 O calamitous Karbalā!
- (10) Never shall the Karbalan memory be effaced.
- 11 "O that you would every year mourn over me!" says Hussein.
- 12 "O that we were there with thee, O Hussein!" exclaim the Shia.
- (13) Over Hussein shall I weep pure blood.
- 15 Hussein's Shia: ever restless.
- (14) A Nile of tears is insufficient!
- 16 Hussein's corpse: unburied!
- 17 Hussein: slain and mutilated; bathed in blood.
- 18 Hussein's ancestry deliberately overlooked.
- (19) Zainab laments Hussein, the martyr.
- 20 Zainab: to assuage the Babes' grief.

1. قاسم الجنة والنار

- 21 Zainab laments Husein in shouts.
- (22) In apostrophe, Zainab asks the dead Husein for water.
- 23 The Sufianids are upon thee, O Husein!
- (24) There by the Euphrates 'Abbās lies still.
- (25) O my master, O 'Abbās!
- (26) O quencher of the thirsty, O Abu'l-Fadl.
- 27 What a loss, Uncle Abu'l-Fadl!
- (28) Rise up, O Ibn Muzāhir, to bear the standard.
- 29 Ali al-Akbar, a replica of Mohammed.
- (30) Muslim's death baffles even Gabriel in Heaven.
- (31) Husein's babe: weaned with arrows!
- 32 O Bridegroom Qāsīm, where is it thy wedding party?
- 33 Alas for Qāsīm! a groom, who has never enjoyed his wedding.
- 34 Husein's Babe: slain - even in Muharram!
- (35) Qāsīm: in a new wedding-gown, dyed red!
- (36) What a loss is Husein!
- (37) In anguish I call out: Huseināh!
- (38) When leading away the Captives, the sun was eclipsed.
- (39) Gabriel in heaven announces Husein's death.
- (40) The sun is eclipsed for Husein.
- (41) Husein eulogised as a noble descendant of Mohammed.
- (42) Husein lamenting his Ali al-Akbar: "the very pupil of mine eyes!"
- (43) 'Abbās solitarily lamented.

From Baiḍūn Ms.

- (51) Husein is martyred: dust be on our heads!
- (52) The prophet's daughters: plundered!
- (53) Husein takes his last leave.
- 54 Husein: stabbed dead.
- (55) Husein invited but betrayed.
- (56) Husein: son of Mohammed.
- (57) "Our nuptials," says Qāsīm, "we put off until Doomsday."
- (58) Murdering Husein: tantamount to murdering Islam.
- 59 Husein recommends his babes to Zainab's care.
- 60 Ali, hero of Khaibar, invoked for succour.
- 61 Husein's appearance on the field terrifies the foe.
- (62) Husein invokes Ali to his succour.
- 63 Gabriel and the angels in mourning.
- (64) 'Abbās' arms chopped off etc.
- 65 Muslim: executed.
- 66 Husein's head despatched to Yazīd.
- (67) Even Shimr beats the captives!
- (68) Having so hurt Mohammed's family, how are you going to look
Mohammed in the face?
- (69) Husein's corpse: unburied.
- (70) Muslim's fate recalled.
- (71) Husein beheaded from the nape.

From Hassan Ms.

- (72) Ali invoked to come to the succour of the thirsting babes.
 73 'Abbās: giver of water to Husein's babes.
 74 The sick lad: in bonds.
 75 Ali: invoked.
- (76) Zuhra's intercession: invoked.
 77 Sympathies to Zuhra.
 78 Zuhra: in tears.
 79 Thirst of babes contrasted with leisurly comfort of Sufianids.
 80 O for 'Abbās: martyred in attempt to assuage the babes' thirst.
- (81) "O grandsire, we are returned alone to Karbalā." - Fortieth
 day after 'Ashūrā'.
 82 Muslim and Hānī: executed.
- (83) Burial rites denied Husein.
 84 Husein: no more.
 85 Muharram: ill omen, for Husein's babes were crushed therein.
 86 O for Hāshim to support Husein.
 87 Woe to Yazīd, for the sad captives!
- (88) Zainab beaten by Shimr.
 89 The sad Zuhra is invoked to rise up from her grave.
 90 Both Zain and Zuhra: in mourning.
 91 Mourning and tears for 'Abbās.
 92 With his stick Yazīd pokes at Husein's head.
 93 Fie for Qāsim; the prince: lost.
 94 Women's hair: unloosed, and all before men!

- 95 Husein's Babes: parched with thirst.
- (96) Zuhrā, the Martyr's mother: invoked by a litany.
- (97) Sympathies to Zainab, Husein's sister.
- (98) Zainab in lamentation, and all under the public gaze of enemies.
- (99) Our feast we celebrate on the graves!
- 100 O treacherous Karbalā!
- 101 Muharram omenous: it scattered our group.
- 102 The shriek of the sinister bird announced the departure.
- 103 The Karbalan memory renders the sky grey in my sight.
- 104 The captives received with defiant drums of merriment.
- 105 "Weep for us," says Zuhrā, "for we can save men from the tortures of Hellfire."
- (106) Gabriel and Zuhrā descend to earth, to Husein the dead one.
- 107 Ali after Karbalā, appears to protect his daughters.

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- (112) Ali dead and borne in coffin: but soon risen again!
- (114) Fortieth Day: Zainab back from captivity.
- (115) A wedding song recalling the marriage of Ali and Fātima.

THE 'ASHURA' DIRGES - The Refrains

فهرس الاسجـاع العـام

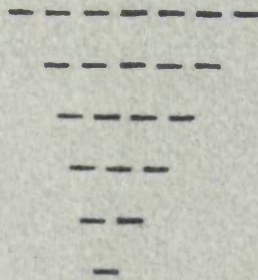
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ما في ولي الا علي | ١- جبريل نادى بالسـ |
| اين ابو الحملات حيدر؟ | ٢- حسرة يوم الطفـوف |
| قاسم الحنة والنار | ٣- علي حيدر الكـرار |
| ذبح الحسين بن علي ؟ | ٤- اى شريعة حلـت |
| يا جدنا ذقنا البلا | ٥- هذى مصيبة كـرـلا |
| وين طه المصطفى ؟ | ٦- قتل العريس قاسـم |
| اعزى الرسول بقتل الحسين | ٧- يا امام يا ابن الامـام |
| | ٨- اسيل الدموع كما الناظرين |
| | ٩- هاى مصيبة كـرـلا |
| الا مصيبة كـرـلا | ١٠- كل المصايب تندجـلـي |
| يوم عاشـر يقتلونني | ١١- اهل بيتي ودعوتـي |
| كل عام تندبونـي | ليتكم في يوم عاشـر |
| | ١٢- يا حسين! ليتنا كنا معـك |
| بددم بعد الحسين | ١٣- تسكب الادمع عينـي |
| عا مصيبة صابت اهل المصطفى | ١٤- وان كان بحر النيل دمعي ما قـس |
| شيعتك يحرم عليها هجوعها | ١٥- شيعتك يا حسين هذى دموعها |
| جسم الحسين وين اندفن ؟ | ١٦- يا نازلين بكرـلا |
| يا غسيلـا بالدمـا | ١٧- العزا عزاك يا حسيـن |
| | ١٨- يا صريعا نهبت منه الظبـا |
| يا ابن ابي يا شهيد | ١٩- زينب بالطف تدعـو |
| | ٢٠- يا ام المصايب سكي الاطفال |
| | ٢١- صارخة بنت امير المؤمنين |

- ٢٢- زينب صارخة يا حسين
 ٢٣- هجموا على الحرم يا حسين
 ٢٤- بعدد والعباس نائم على الشريعة
 ٢٥- ياسيتدي : يا عباس
 ٢٦- ساقى العطاشي : ابو الفضل
 ٢٧- يا حين عني بو الفضل
 ٢٨- قوم شيل العلم وانهبض
 ٢٩- يا شببيه المصطفى
 ٣٠- ناجي ريو جبرائيل
 ٣١- طفل مولانا حسين
 ٣٢- عريس يا قاسم
 ٣٣- قاسم يا عريس ما تهنأ
 ٣٤- فيك يا شهر محترم
 ٣٥- قاسم العريس ناييم
 ٣٦- فريعات وآهسيناه !
 ٣٧- هسيناه ! هسيناه !
 ٣٨- عندما سيقوا السبايا
 ٣٩- جبريل نادى بالسما
 ٤٠- كمفت شمس السما
 ٤١- يانا قتيبي لا تذعري من زجري
 ٤٢- كمت السواد لناظري
 ٤٣- عباس يا واليناه
 علامك ما تلبيني ؟
 هجمت خيل ابن سفيان
 ودلوني على عين الطليعة
 يا حبيب يا ابن مظاهر
 بعدك على الدنيا العفا
 عامصاب ابن عقيـل
 بسهم قطموه
 فان العرس ويناه ؟
 قتلوا طفلا رضيعا
 عارمل وجهه ومعفر
 بالدا مصبوغ احمر
 الشمس ابدت انكافا
 قتل ابن حامي الحمى
 عاسيد الشهداء
 فعليك يبي الناظر
 وحنين قلبا علينا

- ٥١- في كربلاء حلّ البلا يا أي قومي وانظري
- ٥٢- زينب تنادىكم يا قوم راعونا نحنا حضرات النبي وبوالحسن ابونا
- ٥٣- اجت زينب وباقي الحريم يمتنه
- ٥٤- يا حسين من هوال - نحر نحر ك ؟
- ٥٥- هل المحرم واودعني قلقا
- ٥٦- يا حسين يا ابن عمه البشير
- ٥٧- يا قاسم يا ابن عمي يا والينسا
- ٥٨- جاؤا برأسك يا ابن بنت محمد نزلوا بك التكبير والتهللا
- ٥٩- اوصيك يا زينب يا اختي
- ٦٠- وينك يا داحي باب خيبر ؟
- ٦١- اجت زينب تنادى بصوت يا حسين منه ترا جفت كل الملايين
- ٦٢- وقال حسين يا هلي جونسي تعال لي يا امير المؤمنين
- ٦٣- حن جبريل واملاك السما دم
- ٦٤- وكان سهم الصدر صايب ذراعه
- ٦٥- تخيت حسين يشوف مسلم تقنطر
- ٦٦- يا حسين رأسك وين ودوه ؟
- ٦٧- ما كان يخطر لي ذهني وفي بالي والشمر يضربها
- ٦٨- ماذا تقولون ان قال النبي لكم ماذا فعلتم ٠٠٠ بأهل بيتي وأولادي ؟
- ٦٩- طريح بكربلاء عاري : مظلوم حسينا
- ٧٠- قال مسلم بواليتامسي للسهط ودوا علامة
- ٧١- وآ حسينا وآ ذبيحا من قفا
- ٧٢- وين جدي وين حيدر ويننا ؟ والطفال تصيح كسروخ الحجل
- ٧٣- شهدوا للعباس عالىسونه راح يجيب النبي يا بعدد عيوني
- ٧٤- غفل مولانا حسين بسهام فطموه اخرجوني من بلادى ومريضا قيدوه
- ٧٥- قم من القبر حزينا يا امير المؤمنين
- ٧٦- انا دخيلا انا دخيلا عا لزهرا ام الفتيل
- ٧٧- عاونوا الزهرا يا لبي تريدونها

- ٧٨- ناحت الزهرا بنت المصطفى
 ٧٩- حسين واطفاله يموتون العطش
 ٨٠- على العباس نوحى يارقية
 ٨١- يا جدى لكربلا رجعنا وجينا
 ٨٢- ساعدوني في حزانى
 ٨٣- تصيح يا اهلى من يفصل اقانكم ؟
 ٨٤- وين شايلى يا نعيش والينسا ؟
 ٨٥- هل المحرم لا هل بهلاله
 ٨٦- فاطمة الصغرى تنادى . . .
 ٨٧- يا سايره للشام يا حزينه
 ٨٨- يا سايرين بالروس نحو الشام
 ٨٩- يا زهرا قومي من القبر حزنا
 ٩٠- آه يا زين العباد . . .
 ٩١- نوحوا عالمباس والبسوا السواد
 ٩٢- يا زهرا لا قينا جينا للشام . . .
 ٩٣- يا حين عالشان ترون خسارة
 ٩٤- يا شايلىن الروس امشوا عالمهدا . . .
 ٩٥- سكه تصيح يا عتند
 ٩٦- ام الشهيد : يا زهرا
 ٩٧- قوموا نعزى : زينب
 ٩٨- زينب بالطف ما بين الطفوف . . .
 ٩٩- يوم العيد منعبد عالقبور
 ١٠٠- يا كربلا الخوانسه :
 واعلنت بالصوت يا بنت اخي
 وآل سفيان فوق الفراش ؟
 فيه الحسين تذبحت اطفاله
 وين هاشم وين جدى المصطفى ؟
 تلبس الزهرا السواد
 بالخيزران يزد كسراسي
 ويروح قاسم من بين الامارة
 وناشرات الشعور ما بين الرجال
 متنا من العطش متنا
 بين خلق الله والاعداء تشوف
 فيك انقتل مولانا

- ١٠١- هل شهر الشم شت شظفا
 ١٠٢- صاح طيرالبين ينمي بالفراق
 ١٠٣- لا تدع عيني تراها
 والسط سودا
 ١٠٤- زينب ساكبة عاخذ دمعها ...
 ١٠٥- ابكوا علينا وساعدونا بالبكا
 ١٠٦- بالافلاك جبريل ينمسا
 ١٠٧- زينب صارخة وتقول عزونتي
 ١١٢- يا شيعه زيدوا النوح والأنين
 ١١٤- سبط المصطفى الهادي
 ١١٥- أول ما تبدا نصلي على النبي
- وقعة عم بلاها
 من غم وقد عافت بهاها
 دقت الطبول ونصبوا الأعلام
 نزل جبريل والزهر يمه
 قال ابوها " جاى احرسكم "
 صار اليوم اربعين
 فطومة الزهرا جلوها على علي ...



Selection from Men's dirges

مراسيم عاشورا في لبنان
الترانيم الحزائية في المواكب الحسينية للرجال

| <u>رقم الترنيمة</u> - <u>رقم اللحن</u> | <u>الترنيمة</u> |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| ١ | جبريل نادى بالسما " ما في ولي - الا علي " |
| | ما في شفيع - الا علي |
| | ما في امام - الا علي |
| | ما في بطل - الا علي |

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| ٢ | علي حيدر الكرار (لازمة) |
| | قاسم الجنة والنار |
| | شفيعا لشيخته |
| | يوم العطش الاكبر |
| | يوم الماء واللوا |
| | يوم تهتك الاعداء |
| | هو صاحب ذو الفقار |
| | هو ابو الحملات حيدر |
| | هو كسر الاصنام |
| | هو الداهي باب خبير |
| | عن بيت الله الحرام |

| | | |
|-----|---------------|---------------------|
| * ٤ | اي شريعة حللت | ذبح الحسين بن علي ؟ |
| | (لازمة) | |
| | اي شريعة حللت | قتل الولي ابن الولي |
| | " | تبقى السبايا مكتفة |
| | " | باي كتاب منزلة ؟ |

(*) ان النجمة بجوار رقم الترنيمة تشير الى ان احدها قد سجل بالنوتة الموسيقية في الصفحة الخاصة ادناه

| الترنية | رقم الترنية - رقم اللحن |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| كل المصائب تنجلي الا مصيبة كربلي (كربلا) | ١٠ |
| تسكب الادمع عيني بدم بعد الحسين (تسكب) | * ١٣ |
| وان كان بحر النيل دمعي ما كفى عامصية صابت أهل المصطفى (لازمة) | ١٤ |
| لوتشوف زينب شايحة بردانها تبكي دما وتصيح عا اخوانها | |
| زينب بالطف تدعو يا ابن امي يا شهيد | * ١٩ |
| زينب صارخة يا حسين علامك ما تلبيني ؟ (لازمة) | ٢٢ |
| قوم انهض يا نور العين يا خويا انت يا غالي وجيب الماء واسقيني وانت سورنا العالي وغيرك ما لنا والي وغيرك مين يحميني ؟ | |
| بعد والعباس نايم على الشريحة (لازمة) | * ٢٤ |
| يا خوى حسين شوها الموة الفجيعة ودلونني على عين الطليعة | |
| (طلبة للعباس) | ٢٥ |
| يا سيدى يا عباس يا مولاي يا عباس يا ابا الفضل يا عباس يا عطشان يا عباس يا مظلوم يا عباس | |

ساقى العطاشى ابا الفضل
ساقى اليتامى ابا الفضل
ساقى الطفالى ابا الفضل

٢٦

قم شيل العلم وانهض يا حبيب يا ابن مظاهر
(لازمة)
مش وقت النوم هالساعة ما بقى لحسين ناصر

٢٨

ناجى روجبرائيل عا ما صاب ابن عقيل
(لازمة)
يا قتيلا قد نعاه في السماء جبرائيل

٣٠

طفل مولانا حسين بسهام فطموه
(لازمة)
فطموه بسهام وهو في حضن ابوه

٣١

قاسم الحريس نايم عالرمل وجهو محفر
(لازمة)
مرتد ثوبا جديدا بالدا مصبوغ احمر

٣٥

فريات . . . وآهسنا
فريات . . . وآما
فريات . . . وآمظلوم
فريات . . . وآشهيداه
فريات . . . وآمقتولاه

٣٦

رقم التريمة - رقم اللحن

التزنية

۷۳ *

كنت السواد لناظري فعليك يبكي الناظر
من جاء بعدك فليمت فعليك كنت احاذر

३५

عباس يا واليتا
الماء جابه لنا
وحنين قلبه علينا
عمي انقتل عزوني

عباس لو بتشوفه
مقطعات كفوفه

صولات له معروفه
تبكي عليه عيوني

سكنة تنادی القاسم لوین راحل عنا
انت وابوی ترتحل ویکریلا تخلونی

سكنة تنادى القاسم
ما دريت هذا يومك

لوين راحل عنا
والله ما كنت اتبنا

.....

Selections from Women's Dirges

مراسيم عاشورا في لبنان
الترانيم الحزائية في مجالس النساء

| الترنيمه | رقم | نوعها | صفحة | عدد سطورها | الترنيمه |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| يا امي قومي وانظري هذا حسينا بالمرأ قومي فقد حل المصاب قومي فقد راح الشهيد قومي فقد مات الامام | ٥١ * | لطمية | ٢١٠ | ١٣ | يا امي قومي وانظري قومي فقد حل المصاب قومي فقد راح الشهيد قومي فقد مات الامام |
| يا قوم راعونا نحنا حضرات النبي جدنا اوصاكم يا حسين اقمدا وشوف | ٥٢ * | لطمية | ٢١٢ | ١٤ | يا قوم راعونا نحنا حضرات النبي جدنا اوصاكم يا حسين اقمدا وشوف |
| أجت زينب وياجي الحريم وصارت للوداع عليه لعنه يشم سكة وهي قامت تشقه يجيبها والد مع لولب وينثر | ٥٣ * | نوحية | ٢٠٣ | ١٢ | أجت زينب وياجي الحريم وصارت للوداع عليه لعنه يشم سكة وهي قامت تشقه يجيبها والد مع لولب وينثر |
| يا سكة لا تشوفيني بعينيك أخاف ينخطف لوك ويصفـر أجت زينب يوصيها بالعيال يوصيها يحليلو وكل الطفال | | | | | يا سكة لا تشوفيني بعينيك أخاف ينخطف لوك ويصفـر أجت زينب يوصيها بالعيال يوصيها يحليلو وكل الطفال |

| الترنيمه | نوعها | صفحة | عدد سطورها | رقم |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|---------------|-----|
| الترنيمه | نوحية | ١١ | ٤٣ | ٥٥ |
| هل المحرم واودعني قلعا شغل الفؤاد واودعني قريحا كتبوا له (للحسين) في التفاف ضعونهم كتب لهم ومقالهم تصليحا الى ان تاه سهم من كف مارق رماه غشوم في الحشا واتيحا فهوى كبدر خر من افق السما - - - - - | | | | |
| يا حسين يا ابن طه البشر يا وحيد ما له قط نصير لكن الله امر قضي كل ان السبط المجيد .. في ثرى الطف يقضي شهيد (ثم وصف اسر زين العابدين والنساء وصفا محزنا) - - - - - | لطمية | ١٥ | ٢٨ | ٥٦ |
| (مصرع القاسم الحريس * تنحيه زوجته سكينه وامه) يا جاسم يا ابن عمي يا والينس ما ظننتي تجي وتحود لينس بعد هاليوم خفتنا بايد ينس وعن الحسرب يا جاسم تهدي قلها " بنت عمي يا سكين هذا المكتوب ومقد ر علينا عرسنا للقيامه مؤخريننا وعمرى يا سكين وصل حبيده وامه لحقتو ولزمت لنس تقول له هذا اليوم ادخرتك فرد جمع يزيد عن عس - - - - - | نوحية | ١٧ | ١٩ | ٥٧ |

| الترنيمه | نوعها | صفحة | عدد سطورها | رقم |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|------------|-----|
| جاوا برأسك يا ابن بنت محمد متزلا بد مائه تزميلا وكانما بك يا ابن بنت محمد قتلوا جهارا عامدين رسولا ويكبرون بأن قتلنا وانما قتلوا بك التكبير والتمهـليلا | شعر فصيح نوحية | ٢٤ | ٤ | ٥٨ |
| ----- | | | | |
| صاح حسين يا هلي جوني تعال لي يا امير المؤمنين جوعت ماي يا كفرة اسقوني انا ابن الليث والطعن فنوني | نوحية | ٣٠/٢٩ | ١٣ | ٦٢ |
| ----- | | | | |
| وكان سهم القدر صايب ذراعه شال السيف باليسرى الحرمم شال السيف باليسرى وهزه وقال اليوم يومي الله اكبر انا العباس بالسطوى مكشر يحاجيهم وكان زنده مخدم شال السيف بسنونه الشفيه صاح بصوت يرعب للفضيلة | نوحية (للعباس) | ٣٤ | ٣٢ | ٦٤ |
| ----- | | | | |
| ما كان يخطر في ذهني وفي بالسي تسبى بنات علي فوق الجـمال والشمس تحرقها والشعر يخرمـها ولا صديق يراعيها ولا والسي | نوحية | ٨٥ | ١٣ | ٦٧ |
| ----- | | | | |

| رقم الترتيمة | نوعها | صفحة | عدد سطورها | الترتيمة |
|--------------|------------------|------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ٦٨ | نوحية (فصيحة) | ٩٨ | ٣ | ماذا تقولون ان قال النبي لكم ماذا فعلتم وانتم آخر الامم ؟ باهل بيتي واولادى ومكرستى منهم اسارى ومنهم خرجوا بدى ؟ |
| ----- | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------|------|-----|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ٦٩ | طلبة | ١٣٤ | ٢٠ | طريح بكرىلا عارى اخى انظر لحالى يدى بالحبال وسكنة حاسرة فوق الجمال بحبل الذل هاهم يسحبونى ترى زين العباد اسيرا فى القياد ينادى الفوت يا رب العباد قم يا معترقم يا مجزر ثلاث ايام لم يقبر |
| ----- | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-----|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ٧٠ | لطمية | ١٣٥ | ١٠ | قال مسلم بو اليتامى يا محبين الموالى عالم غريب بخير والى للسبط ود و علامة ساعد ونى بصوت عالى مات ظامى بلا محامى |
| ----- | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-----|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| * ٧١ | لطمية | ١٣٦ | ١٢ | وأحسنا وأذبيحنا من قفا وأحسنا وأغسلا بالدا كرىلا لا زلت كرىلا ولا ما لقي عندك آل المصطفى |
| ----- | | | | |

(الى هنا تنتهى التراثيم النسائية المنقولة من مخطوط بيضون)

| رقم | عدد | الترنية - نوعها - صفحة - سطورها | الترنية |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|---------|
| ٧٢ | ٣/١ | لطمية | ٢٥ |
| (جميع هذه الترنيات من ٧٢ وما بعدها منقولة من مخطوط الحجة مريم حسن) | | | |
| وين جدى وين حيد وينا وين سيف الله بو الحسنينا وين بوى وين جدى المصطفى ينظرون حسين مذ بوح القفا والطفال تصيح كفروخ الحجل قوم يا عباس قوم اسقيننا ركبوا زينب عاظهر البحر وبيتوا الروس في دير كبير صاحت الرهبان ودموها غزير وتقول "هول الروس وجسمها وينا ؟" | | | |
| ٧٦ | ١٤ | لطمية خاصة بليلة عاشورا | ٣١ |
| انا د خيل انا د خيل عا الزهرا ام القليل انا د خيل عا الزهرا واهلها وراجية شفاة بعلها د خيل يا زهرا تحبيني عا الشهادة تلقيني بجاه جبريل الامين بجاهك يا ام القليل وقت ينادى العنادى اشفعوا لي يا سيادى د خيلكم تساعدوني على الصراط تمرروني بجاه الحسن واصحابه بجاه الحسين ومصابه | | | |
| ٨١ | ٥٤ | نوحية | ١٢ |
| يا جدى لكربلا رجعنا وجينا وبعد منها نساقر للمدينة يا جدى مبارك الرجعة علينا رجعنا والحسين باقى دينا قوم انظرونا يا جدى انسبينا رجعنا بلا رجال - الله واكبر | | | |

| الترنية - نوعها - صفحة - سطورها | عدد | رقم |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|
| الترنية | | |
| يوم العيد منحيد عالقبور وحبيب القلب تحت الارض مقبور وسني الضحك منوعاد مكسور عالي احزنونا بشهر عاشور (وكانوا اغصانا فقطعوا كـ وسرجا فاطفئوا الخ .) | ٢٨ ٢٣٧ | ٩٩ نوحية |
| ----- | | |
| بالافلاك جبريل الامين بنعاه يبكي بالغريب ويخبر الزهرا للافلاك جبريل الامين نادى يخبر الزهرا بفجعة اولادها نزل جبريل والزهرة يمة لقوا نايم عالثرى محنا بد مو جنه بلا راس ويلاه يا عمه السهم الكبيرة والنبل بحشاه | ٢٣ ٢٧٢ | ١٠٦ نوحية |
| ----- | | |
| سبط المصطفى الهادى واليوم ارحمين حسين تصيح من اليسر جاينين تنادى والد مع فعال شوف خواتك باى حال يا عباس انهض ليننا قوموا يا بني هاشم ما تقعد يا بوالسجاد | ١٦ ١٢٤ | ١١٤ لطمية لذكرى ارحين عاشورا |
| صار اليوم ارحينه وزينب تهمل د مع العين ما تقعد يا والينا شوف خواتك باى حال يا عباس انهض ليننا وزيلوا الحزن العالينا من اليسر حيلي باد | | |
| ----- | | |

(انتهت الترنيات الخاصة بعاشورا منقولة من مخطوط الحجة مريم حسن)

ترنيمتان لمعلي

- لطمية -

* رقم ١١٢

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| يا شيعة زيد والنوح والأنين | وساعدوا بنات امير المؤمنين |
| وساعدوا زينب واهلها بالمصاب | وزيد والنوح واليوم عزا داحي الباب |
| والحسنين ييكو وينادوا يا يا ب | واهل السما تبكي وجبريل الامين |

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| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| بكاه العرش والزهراء والرسول | والولدان ييكو مع الحور العين |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|

.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| حسن وحسين وجبرائيل يرعاه | وبينهم يمشون او يلاقو خيالو |
| ناداهم هل انتم حسن وحسين ؟ | قالوا له نعم جدنا رسول الله |
| قال - النعش هيا سلموني اياه | وسيروا انتويا روعي بأمان الله |

.

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| قالوا له - وصي فيه للامين | جبرائيل او للخضر وصانا |
|---------------------------|------------------------|

نحطى النعش نعمل بقول ابانا

.

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| كشف عن لسانوا وقال " يا عيوني | شوقوني انا امين المؤمنين |
| والاموات احضرهم واولادى | ولوماتوا بحداد بخير بلادى |
| فكيف اليوم لا احضر جسدى ؟ | بعون الله واحتضن الحسن والحسين |

(عدد سطورها ثلاثون في صفحة ٢١٩ من مخطوط الحجة)

(مريم حسن المذكور سابقا)

- - - - -

* رقم ١١٥

ترنيمه مفرحة

تغنى للعروس عندما تجلى

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| اول ما نبدي نصلي على النبي | فطومة الزهراء جلوها على علي |
| لما جلوها على الشريف ابن هاشم | قال الشريف ردا عليها لثامها |
| خايف عليها من عيون الحواسد | حاسد ولا تحسد ترى المطعم الله .. |

- - - - -

THE 'ASHŪRĀ' DIRGES - The Tunes in tape-recording
(men's processions)

الحن الترانيم للرجال

(مدرجة بحسب ترتيب اللحن كما هو مسجل بشرط الصوت المرفق بالأطروحة)

| رقم التسلسل | Part (A) | القسم (أ) - | |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----|
| ١٩ | يا ابن امي يا شهيد | زينب بالطف تدعو | 1 |
| ٢٨ | يا حبيب يا ابن مظاهر | قوم شيل الحلم وانهبض | 2 |
| ٢٩ | بعدك على الدنيا الحفا | يا شبيه المصطفى | 3 |
| ٤٠ | عاسيد الشهدا | كسفت شمس السما | 4 |
| ٢ | | "حسرة يوم الطفوف" - لازمة - | 5 |
| ١٢ | روحي فداك يا حسين | العزا عزاك يا حسين | 6 |
| ٧ | | يا امام يا ابن الامام | 7 |
| ١٨ | | يا صريحا نهبت منه الظبعا | 8 |
| ١٢ | | يا حسيننا ليتنا كنا معك | 9 |
| ٢١ | | صارخة بنت امير المؤمنين | 10 |

| | Part (B) | القسم (ب) - | |
|----|------------------------|---------------------|---|
| ٤ | ذبح الحسين بن علي ؟ | اي شريعة حللت | 1 |
| ٣٩ | ما في ولي الا علي | جبريل نادى بالسما | 2 |
| ١٦ | جسم الحسين وين اندفن ؟ | يا نازلين بكرلا | 3 |
| ٥ | ام المعاييب والبسلا | هذه مصيبة كرىلا | 4 |
| ١٠ | الا مصيبة كرىلى | كل المعاييب تنجلي | 5 |
| ٢٧ | بين الاعادى ينقتل | يا حين عمى بو الفضل | 6 |

| رقم التسلسل | Part (C) | القسم (ج) | |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------|---|
| ١٣ | بدم بعد الحسين .. تسكب | تسكب الادمع عيني | 1 |
| ٣٤ | قتل المولى المعظم | فيك يا شهر محرم | 2 |
| ١١ | يوم عاشر يقتلونني | اهل بيتي ودعوني | 3 |

| | Part (D) | القسم (د) | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| | Miscellaneous Tunes | الحان متفرقة | |
| ٢٤ | بعد والعباس نايم على الشريعة | | 1 |
| ١ | ما في ولي الا علي ما في بطل الا علي ما في امام الا علي علي .. | جبريل نادى بالسماء | 2 |
| ٢٥ | يا سيدى يا مولاى يا ابا الفضل | — يا عباس — | 3 |
| ٢٠ | في يوم عاشر في الخيام لا تنامي | يا ام المصايب سكتي الاطفال | 4 |
| ١٤ | عامصية صابت اهل المصطفى | وان كان بحر النيل دمعى ما كفى | 5 |
| | | رحم الله والدين من رفع صوته بالصلاة على محمد = اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد (ثلاثا بصوت منخفض) | 6 |
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| ٣١ | بسهام فطموه | طفل مولانا حسين | 8 |
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(انتهت الاغان المدرجة بشرائط الصوت)

من الحان الرجال في المواقف

19

4

13

24

38

42

(ضمین المشرحیه)

41

42

115

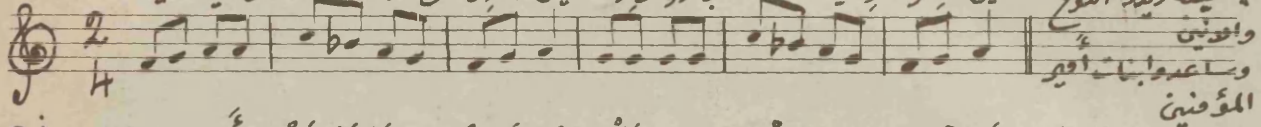
ترجمة للعروس
من الطان الساء
المفرحة

مد الحان النساء

يا شيعه

(٦)

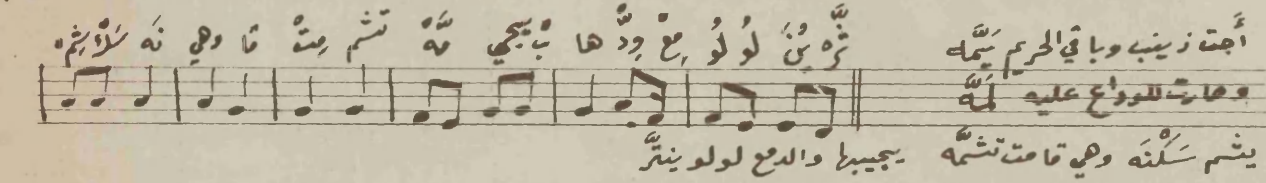
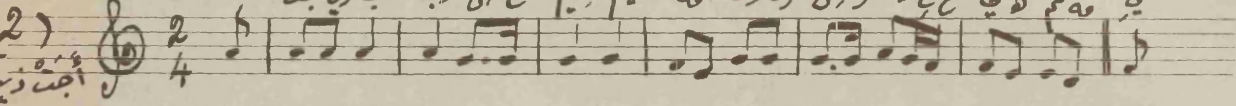
112



نوحيه

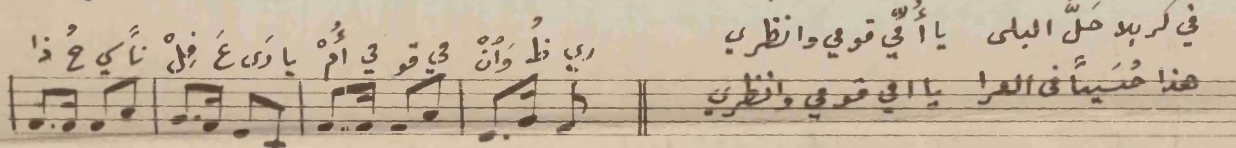
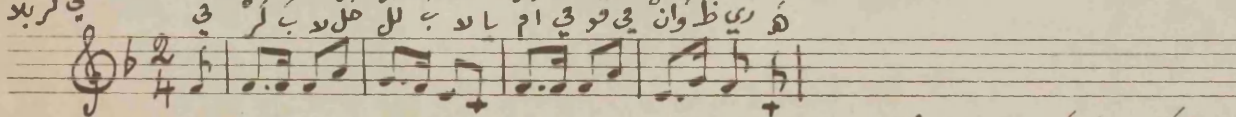
(٢)

53

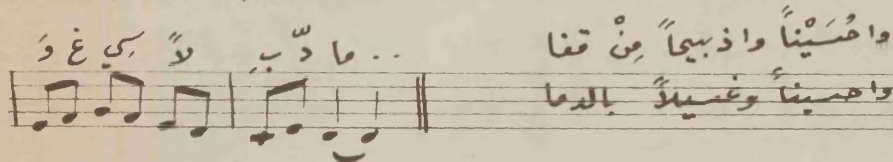
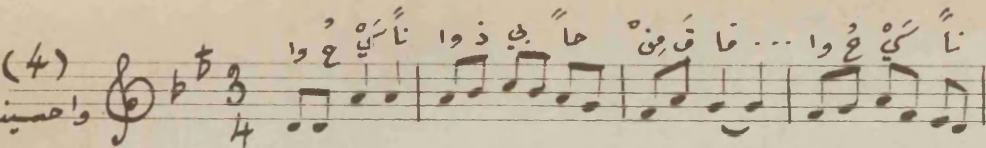


في كربد

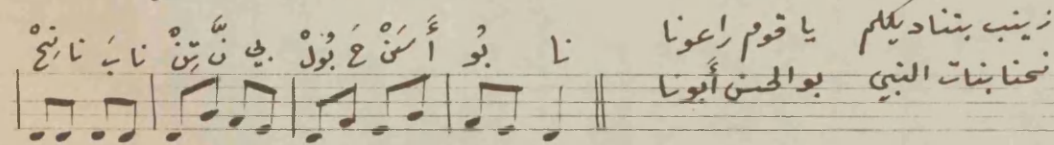
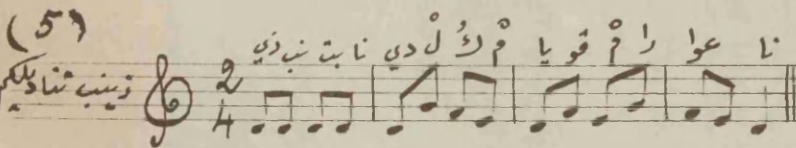
51



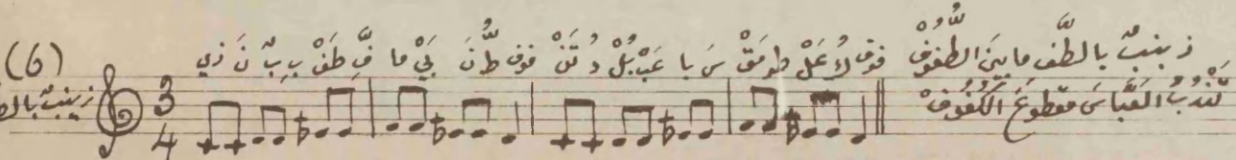
71



52



98



(من)

* زيارة عاشوراء *

السلام عليك يا ابا عبد الله السلام عليك يا بن رسول الله السلام عليك
يا ابن امير المؤمنين ٠٠٠ يا ثار الله وابن ثاره والوتر الموتور السلام عليك وعلى الارواح
التي حلت بفنائك ٠٠٠ عظمت مصيبتك في السموات على جميع اهل السموات فلحن الله
امة اسست اساس الظلم والجور عليكم اهل البيت ولحن الله امة رفعتكم عن مقامكم واذ التكم
عن مراتبكم التي رتبكم الله فيها ٠٠٠ ولحن الله بني امية قاطبة ولحن الله امة اسرجت
والجمت وتنقبت لقتالك بابي انت وامي لقد عظم مصابي بك فاسئل الله الذي اكرم مقامك
واكرمني بك ان يرزقني طلب تارك مع امام منصور من اهلبيت محمد ٠٠٠ اتقرب الى الله
بمواالاتك وبالبراءة ممن اسر اساس ذلك وبني عليه بنيانه وجرى في ظلمه وجوره عليكم وعلى
اشياعكم برئت الى الله واليكم منهم ٠٠٠ واسئله ان يرزقني طلب تاري مع امام هدى ظاهر
ناطق بالحق منكم ٠٠٠ مصيبة ما اعظمها واعظم رزيتها في الاسلام وفي جميع السموات والارض
٠٠٠ اللهم ان هذا يوم تبركت به بنو امية وابن اكلة الاكباد اللعين ابن اللعين ٠٠٠
اللهم العن ابا سفيان ومعوية ويزيد بن معاوية عليهم منك اللعنة ابد الابدين ٠٠٠
(وقل مئة مرة) اللهم العن اول ظالم ظلم حق محمد وآل محمد واخر تابع له على ذلك
اللهم العن الحصابة التي جاهدت الحسين وشايعت وبايعت وتابعت على قتله اللهم العنهم
جميعا ٠ (ثم قل) اللهم خص انت اول ظالم باللعن مني وابدأ به اولا ثم الثاني والثالث
والرابع اللهم العن يزيد خامسا والعن عبيد الله بن زياد وابن مرجانة وعمر بن سعد وشعرا
وآل ابي سفيان وآل زياد وآل مروان الى يوم القيامة (ثم اسجد وقل) اللهم لك الحمد
حمد الشاكرين لك على مصابهم الحمد الله على عظيم رزقي اللهم ارزقني شفاعته الحسين
يوم الورود وثبت لي قدم صدق عندك مع الحسين واصحاب الحسين الذين بذلوا مهجهم
دون الحسين عليه السلام ٠

(ثم صل ركعتين بعد السجدة واحدة بعدهما بدعاء علقمة وهذا هو)

دعاء علقمة بعد زيارة عاشوراء

يا الله يا الله يا الله يا مجيب دعوة المضطرين يا كاشف كرب المكروبين يا
غياث المستغيثين ٠٠٠ بحق محمد خاتم النبيين وعلى امير المؤمنين وبحق فاطمة بنت
نبيك وبحق الحسن والحسين اسئلك ان تصلي على محمد وآل محمد وان تكشف عني غمي
وهمي وكربي وتكفيني المصم من اموري وتقضي عني ديني وتجبرني من الفقر وتجبرني من الفاقة
وتخينني عن المسئلة الى المخلوقين وتكفيني هم من اخاف هم ٠٠٠٠ وشر من اخاف شره
٠٠٠ اللهم من ارادني فاردته ومن كادني فكده واصرف عني كيده ومكره وبأسه وامانيه
وامنحه عني كيف شئت وانى شئت اللهم اشغله عني بفقر لا تجبره وبلاء لا تستره وبفاقة لا
تسد لها ويسقم لا تعافيه وذل لا تحزه ٠٠٠

(تابع)

(*) نقلا عن كتاب جامع الزيارات للشيخ عباس قمي صفحة ٨٠ الى ٩٦ — بما فيه

دعاء علقمة ٠

(تابع زيارة عاشوراء - دعاة علقمة)

تعزّه ٠٠٠ وادخل عليه الفقر في منزله والحلة والسقم في بدنه حتى تشغله عني
بشغل شاغل لا فراغ له منه وانسه ذكرى كما انسيته ذكرك وخذ عني بسمعه
وبصره ولسانه ويده ورجله وقلبه وجميع جوارحه وادخل عليه في جميع ذلك السقم
ولا تشفه ٠٠٠ ومحمد وال محمد اتوجه اليك واتوسل واتشفع فاستلك يا الله
يا الله يا الله ان تكشف عني غمي وهمي وكربي في مقامى هذا ٠٠٠٠٠ يا امير
المؤمنين يا ابا عبد الله عليك مني سلام الله ابدًا ما بقيت وبقي الليل
والنهار ولا جعله الله اخر العهد من زيارتك ولا فرق الله بيني وبينكما ٠٠٠
يا امير المؤمنين يا ابا عبد الله اتيتكما زائرا ٠٠٠٠٠ بكما مستشفعا الى الله
في حاجتي هذه فاشفعا لي ٠٠٠ استودعكما الله ولا جعله الله اخر العهد
مني اليكما ٠ انصرف يا سيدى يا امير المؤمنين ومولاى وانت يا ابا عبد الله
يا سيدى ٠٠٠ انقلبت يا سيدى عنكما تائبًا حامدًا لله شاكرا راجيا للجأفة غير
ايس ولا قانط آتيا عائدا راجعا لزيارتكما غير راغب عنكما ولا من زيارتك ٠٠٠ بعد
ان زهد فيكما وفي زيارتكما اهل الدنيا فلا خيبي الله ما رجوت وما املت
في زيارتكما انه قريب مجيب ٠

(اما في زيارة قبر الحسين بكرىلا فنقول) :

السلام عليك يا ابا عبد الله السلام عليك يا ابن رسول الله السلام
عليك يا ابن امير المؤمنين عبدك وابن عبدك وابن امك المقر بالرق والتارك للخلاف
عليكم والموالي لوليكم والمعادى لحدوكم قصد حركم واستجار به شهدك وتقرب اليك
بقصدك ٠٠٠ ادخل يا رسول الله ؟ ادخل يا نبي الله ؟ ادخل يا امير المؤمنين ؟
٠٠٠ ادخل يا سيد الوصيين ؟ ادخل يا فاطمة سيدة نساء العالمين ؟ ادخل
يا مولاى ابا عبد الله ؟ ادخل يا مولاى يا ابن رسول الله ؟

(فان خشع قلبك ودمعت عينك فهو علامة الاذن فادخل وقل)

الحمد لله الواحد الاحد الفرد الصمد الذى هداني لولايتك وخصني بزيارتك
وسهل لي قصدك ٠ (ثم قف من حيث يلي الرأس الشريف وقل) السلام عليك يا
وارث ادم صفوة الله السلام عليك يا وارث نوح نبي الله السلام عليك يا وارث ابراهيم
خليل الله السلام عليك يا وارث موسى كلیم الله السلام عليك يا وارث عيسى روح الله
السلام عليك يا وارث محمد حبيب الله السلام عليك يا وارث امير المؤمنين ولي الله
٠٠٠ (ثم انكب على القبر وقبله) وقل : لحن الله امة ٠٠٠٠ (ثم صل ركعتين واخرج)

Ziarat 'Ashūrā' - Women's Circles:

An after-Ziārat supplication

زيارة عاشوراء - في مجالس النساء

(بعد تلاوة الزيارة العادية يقرأ الدعاء التالي)

منقولاً من مخطوط " بيضون " صفحة ٤٥

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد واسئلك
بحق الحسين وبحق جده وأبيه وأمه وأخيه وذريته وبنيه أن تنجنا
من الهم الذي نحن فيه وأن تعيننا على ولاية علي عليه السلام
وابنائهم والبراة من أعدائهم اجمعين • وارخص اللهم اسعار
بلادنا وأمننا في اوطاننا واجعل من الرزق الحلال مالنا ولا تسلط
علينا من لا يرحمنا وبحقك يا عزيز يا غفور والى جماعتنا الحاضرين
المديون اللهم اوف دينه والطالب حاجة اللهم اقضي حاجته والذي
عنده مريض اللهم اشفيه وعافيه * والذي هو مريض اللهم اجعل
الصحة والسلام في بدنه والذي عنده ولد اللهم احرسه بحينك التي
لا تنام والما * عنده ولد اللهم ارزقه ولدا صالحا بحق محمد وآله
الطاهرين ولا سيما صاحب المحل والمجلس اللهم اجعله لا يزال مقيما
لا بن بنت نبيك ووقفه لما تحب وترضى وارحم امواته واموات الحاضرين
واموات القرآء والردادين وجميع محبين الأئمة الطاهرين وكفنا شر
شيطاننا وعجل اللهم فرج ولي زماننا • السلام عليك يا ابا عبد الله ...
وعلى ولدك الشميد بن عليمين وعلى اخيك ابي الفضل العباس وعلى
الانصار المستشهدين بين يديك ... ورحمة الله وبركاته •

(*) لاحظ اللغة العامية في الدعاء •

ARBA'ĪN 'ASHŪRĀ'

The fortieth day after 'Ashūrā', coinciding with the twentieth of Ṣafar, is variously known as 'maradd ar-Ra's' مرد الرأس in Iraq, and as 'Rozi Arba'īn' in Persia. In Lebanon, it is merely called Arba'īn 'Ashūrā'. On the occasion, a few well-to-do Lebanese Shia set out to visit Husein's Shrine at Karbalā; but many others, driving in buses, pay a visit instead to the Shrine of Sit Zainab, Husein's sister, at Rawiya village, in the environs of Damascus. There, with the exception of shabīh in both its parts, the same 'Ashūrā' Ceremonies are performed in full and are concluded by the special 'ziārats' to the Sit Zainab.¹

-
1. In Iraq, the Arba'īn is a great day. A fresh 'Ashūrā' celebration is embarked upon by multitudes of visitors. "Neither poverty nor sickness can deter devout believers from visiting Karbalā; pilgrims pour down from Persia, India, Bahrain, Masqat, and Lebanon, forming a crowd no less than half a million."

Sharafeddīn: Ziārat. p. 41

According to another estimate (al-Akhbār J. No. 1546 year 1946) the visitors on that year reached three-quarters of a million; "pilgrims at Mecca," believes the estimator, "have never reached a third as much in any year."

زيارة اربعين عاشورا*

السلام على ولي الله وحبيبه السلام على خليل الله وتاجيه
السلام على صفى الله وابن صفيه السلام على الحسين المظلوم
الشهيد السلام على اسير الكربات وقتيل العبرات اللهم اني
اشهد انه وليك وابن وليك وصفيك وابن صفيك الفائز بكرامتك
... وقد توازر عليه من غرته الدنيا وباع حظه بالارذل الادنى
وشرى اخرته بالثمن الاوكس ... واطاع من عبادك اهل الشقاق
والنفاق وحملة الاوزار المستوجبين النار فجاهد هم فيك صابرا
محتسبا حتى سفك في طاعتك دمه واسبيح حريمه اللهم فالعنهم
لعنا وسبلا وعذبهم عذابا اليما السلام عليك يا ابن رسول الله
السلام عليك يا ابن سيد الاوصياء اشهد انك امين الله وابن امينه
عشت سعيدا ومضيت حميدا وميت فقيدا مظلوما شهيدا ...
واشهد انك وفيت بعهد الله وجاعدت في سبيله حتى آتاك
اليقين فلعن الله من قتلك ولعن الله من ظلمك ولعن الله امة
سمعت بذلك فرضيت به ... واشهد انك الامام البر التقي
الرضي الزكي الهادي الامين المهدي واشهد ان الأئمة
من ولدك كلمة التقوى واعلام الهدى والعروة الوثقى والحجة
على اهل الدنيا واشهد اني بكم مؤمن وبايا بكم موقن
بشرايع ديني وخواتيم عملي وقلبي لقلبيكم سلم وامرى
لامركم متبع ونصرتي لكم معدة حتى يأذن الله لكم فمعكم
معكم لا مع عدوكم صلوات الله عليكم وعلى ارواحكم واجسادكم
وشاهدكم وغائبكم وظاهركم وباطنكم امين رب العالمين .

(ثم صل صلاة الزيارة ركعتين وادع من الله تعالى ما شئت)
(نقلا عن كتاب جامع الزيارات ص ٩٦ الى ١٠٠)

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الدعاء المأثور لزيارة السيدة زينب (ع)

السلام عليك يا بنت سلطان الانبياء ، السلام عليك يا بنت
صاحب الحوض واللواء ، السلام عليك يا بنت من عرج الى السماء ووصل
الى مقام قاب قوسين او ادنى ، السلام عليك يا بنت الهدى وسيد
الورى ومنقذ العباد من الردى ، السلام عليك يا بنت صاحب الخلق
العظيم والشرف العميم والآيات والذكر الحكيم . . . السلام عليك يا
بنت سيد الاوصياء ، السلام عليك يا بنت امام الاتقياء ، السلام عليك
يا بنت ركن الاولياء ، السلام عليك يا بنت عماد الاصفياء ، السلام
عليك يا بنت يحسوب الدين ، السلام عليك يا بنت امير المؤمنين . . .
السلام عليك يا بنت وارث النبيين وخليفة سيد المرسلين . . . يا بنت من
حساب الناس عليه والكوثر في يديه والنص يوم الخدير عليه ، يا بنت من قاد
زمام ناقتها جبرائيل وشاركها في مصابها اسرافيل وغضب بسببها الرب
الجليل وكفى لمصابها ابراهيم الخليل ونوح وموسى الكليم في كربلا ورحمة
الله وبركاته . . . السلام عليك وعلى السادات الاطهار الاخيار وهم حجج الله
على الاقطار سادات الارض والسماء من ولد أخيك الحسين الشهيد العطشان
الظمان وهو ابو التسعة الاطهار وهم حجج الله من طرق الشرق والغرب
من الليل والنهار الذين حبهم فرض على اعناق كل الخلائق ايتها
الكاملة الحاملة للعالم . . . يا من حفظت الامام في يوم عاشوراء في قتلى
وبذلت نفسها في نجاة زين العابدين من مجلس اشقى الاشقياء ونطقت
كنطق علي في سكك الكوفة وحولها كثير من الاعداء ، السلام عليك يا
من نطحت جبينها بمقدم المحمل ان رأيت رأس سيد الشهداء ويخرج
الدم من تحت قناعها ومن محملها بحيث يرى من حولها الاعداء
السلام عليك ايتها المتخيرة في خربة الشام . . . يا من هيجت قلبها
للحسين المظلوم الحريان المطروح على الثرى ، وقالت بصوت حزين " بابي
من نفسي له الفداء ، بابي المهموم حتى قضى ، بابي العطشان حتى
مضى ، بابي من شيبته تقطر بالدماء " ، السلام على من بكى على جسد
اخيها بين القتل حتى ابكت لبكائها كل عدو وصدیق ورأى الناس
دموع الخيل تنحدر على حوافرهم على التحقيق ، يا من جمعت في عصر
عاشوراء بنات رسول الله واطفال الحسين . . . يا ام المصائب زينب التي قالت
ليزيد " والله لا تمحوا ذكرنا ولا تميت وحيانا . . . يا يزيد اما سمعت قول الله
ولا تحسبن الذين قتلوا في سبيل الله امواتا بل احياء عند ربهم يرزقون "
ثم قالت الحمد لله . . . وهو حسبنا ونعم الوكيل برحمتك يا ارحم الراحمين .

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Compiled from oral tradition

George Sarpopheme Gedeon

Volume Two

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the prowess of his little troop.

P L O T

Ibn Ziad, the newly-installed governor of Kūfa, writes upon insistent invitation from the chieftains of Kūfa, offering him amnesty against fealty to the established caliph, Husein, the Hashimite claimant to the caliphate after Yazid. Husein rejects the offer, whereupon Ibn Ziad draws up against him a detachment of four thousand strong under the command of Ibn Sa'd, and the assistance of Shahr. Just before arrival. Soon after, accompanied by his own household and a small troop of his devoted men, ⁽¹⁾ he sets out from Mecca to safety; they decide the proposal and ever their resolution across Arabia.

At Tha'labiyya, a post about half-way on his route, he receives word that Muslim has been executed at Kūfa, and that the Umayyads there are again in complete control of the situation. Upon this first and greatest check to his aspirations, Husein turns to sound out the Banu Aqīl men in his troop, and they express a decided resolution to avenge the death of their man, Muslim. Accordingly, Husein resumes his march upon Kūfa. An expeditionary force of a thousand horsemen under the command of Hurr encounters his caravan at Mount Dhu Husum, and accompanies them in semi-arrest to Karbalā by the Euphrates. There Husein orders his camp to be pitched and awaits the turn of events, relying for success more on the religious influence of his person, as a grandson of Mohammed's, than on

1 - Initially Husein set out with a thousand men; only seventy one of them remain with him.

the prowess of his little troop.

Ibn Zīād, the newly-installed governor of Kūfa, writes offering him amnesty against fealty to the established caliph, Yazīd. Husein rejects the offer, whereupon Ibn Zīād draws up against him a detachment of four thousand strong under the command of Ibn Sa'd, and the assistance of Shimr. Just before the battle, Husein proposes to his men that they steal away to safety; they decline the proposal and aver their resolution to die with him.

Battle is joined. Husein and his men defend themselves valiantly but are, of course, greatly outnumbered, and are soon cut down. Husein himself ultimately falls. Shimr cuts off his head, sets fire to his camp, and leads the surviving members of his family into captivity to Damascus. Of these, the boy Zain Al-Abidīn, a son of Husein's delivers public addresses to the multitude, vindicating his father's rank and grievance.

SAFUR, JAHUL

TWO ASADITE MEN

QURRA, MINEAL, &

RASHID

A PRISONER

SCOLDERS, ATTENDANTS AND WOMEN-MOURNERS

A contemporary Arab poet

Secretaries at the Kūfa court

Couriers

} -----
Messengers

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| HUSEIN | Hero of Karbalā |
| 'ABBĀS | A favourite half-brother of Husein's |
| ALI AL-AKBAR | Husein's eldest son |
| ALI AL-ASGHAR (alias Zain Al-Abidīn) | Husein's youngest son who survives Karbalā |
| AL-QĀSIM | Husein's nephew, son of Hasan |
| 'UBAIDULLĀH IBN ZIĀD | Umayyad governor of Kūfa |
| 'UMAR IBN SA'D | Commander-in-chief of Umayyad force against Husein |
| CHIEFTAIN OF THE BANU AQIL CLAN | |
| HABĪB IBN MUZAHĪR | } Companions of Husein |
| HILĀL IBN NĀFI' | |
| BURAIR IBN KHUDĀIR | |
| JAWN | A negro slave of Husein's |
| AT-TIRIMMĀH | A desert-scout |
| AL-FARAZDAQ | A contemporary Arab poet |
| KAFŪR , JAHŪL | Secretaries at the Kūfa court |
| TWO ASADITE MEN | Couriers |
| QURRA, MINHAL, & BASHĪR | } Messengers |
| A BEDOUIN | |
| SOLDIERS, ATTENDANTS AND WOMEN-MOURNERS | |

A C T IScene i

to be, just Arabia, Tha'labiyya ul.

Husein's Cavalcade; the two Asadite men; Al-Farazdaq

(Husein's Cavalcade enters the stage. They are met by the two Asadite men).

ASADITES - Peace be upon thee, O grandson of God's Apostle.

HUSEIN - And upon both of thee Peace.

FIRST ASADITE - Sire : we are bearers to thee of a weighty intelligence which we would disclose either

overtly, or , if thou shouldst so desire, then in secret.

HUSEIN (Pointing to his family and Companions) Nothing of mine is kept dark from these fellows.

FIRST ASADITE - Didst thou, sire, take note of the rider who only yesterday passed by thee ?

HUSEIN - Ay, indeed; and I desired to make enquiries of him.

FIRST ASADITE - We have, by Allāh , spared thee that enquiry, the man being one of our tribe - discrete, truthful and wise. He informed us that , just before he left Kufa, Muslim and Hānī had both been executed. He, in person, did see their corpses dragged by the legs along the streets.

(Exit the two Asadites. Husein's cavalcade resumes its march)

AL-FARAZDAQ - Peace be upon thee, O grandson of God's Apostle.

HUSEIN - And upon thee peace.

HUSEIN - Lo ! We are Allāh's and Lo ! unto Him do we return. With Allāh I reckon them both to be, just as I deem mine own soul. 20

SECOND ASADITE - Let us implore thee by Allāh, O son of God's Apostle, as much for thine own safety as for that of thine Household, that thou return hence, since at Kūfa thou canst have neither devotees nor partisans - indeed it is much to be feared that the people there have already turned against thee. 25

HUSEIN - (Turning to the Banu Aqīl) Sons of Aqīl, what are your views about this? Muslim is martyred: let then the eyes of believers shed tears for him. 30

CHIEFTAIN OF THE BANU AQIL - What heart-rending news ! What a great disaster! What a weighty loss that melts the very souls into sighs of grief, and makes the very eyes flow in tear-drops! (weeps) May we all be made ransom for thee. Nay, by Allāh, we will never depart from thee until we have avenged ourselves against that rabble, or else have tasted of the same chalice Muslim has quaffed. 35 40

HUSEIN (Pauses, then turns to the Asadites) - After these gallants here, life would mean no more to me.

ASADITES - May Allāh be propitious to thee.

HUSEIN - May He have mercy upon both of thee. 45

(Exit the two Asadites. Husein's cavalcade resumes its march)

AL-FARAZDAQ - Peace be upon thee, O grandson of God's Apostle.

HUSEIN And upon thee peace.

AL-FARAZDAQ - Oh Sire ! How couldst thou trust the Kufans

any more, they who, only shortly before,

turned the tables upon both thine own father

50

and brother, and who have now slain thine cousin,

Muslim, together with all his partisans ?

HUSEIN - May Allāh cause Muslim to rest in peace, already he inhales

the Lord's sweet breeze, and smells His aromatic

gardens. He enjoys the Lord's refreshments and

55

pleasures. Now that he hath paid what he

owed, it is our own turn to make payment.

10

(Reciting poetry)

"While life is dear, verily the Lord's

requital is dearer and nobler.

"Knowing that wealth is merely amassed to be

60

left behind, one day, why are men, then,

over-stingy in things destined to be abandoned?

"And these bodies, since they are created for

death, therefore the slaying of a man in

the Creator's cause would be much the

65

preferable."

(Exit Al-Farazdaq. Husein's train marches on.)

Scene ii

Arabia , Mount Dhū - Husum.

Husein's cavalcade - Hurr's expeditionary force.

HURR - (Meeting Husein) Peace be upon thee, O grandson of God's Apostle.

HUSEIN - And upon thee, peace.

HURR - May we know, sire, the purpose of your coming to this land and leaving your Grandfather's abode? 5

HUSEIN - Well, I have received both your letters and personal emissaries inviting me to come, in

HUSEIN such words as "Come to us, for we have no Imam 30

HURR over us." And behold ! here I am; so, to begin

HUSEIN with, I must require of you enough covenants and 10

HURR assurances to rely upon -- otherwise, if you will

HUSEIN not give them, and are averse to my coming (under these conditions), then would I readily return whence I have come.

HURR - I have, by Allāh, never heard of such letters or emissaries as you make mention of. My express 15

orders, however, are : if I should come upon your Company, never to release you until I have brought you up before the Amir Ibn Ziad.

HUSEIN (Sternly) Than that Death itself is more imminent to you.

(Turning to his men) get up all of you and ride back. 20

(Husein's cavalcade begins to move backwards, when Hurr and his men obstruct their way.)

What is it you want, may your mother sit in mourning (Pause). No never; though I should obtain a worldful of gold. over you ?

(Returns to Husein) Sir, I have no orders to fight with you, yet no instructions to release you either. If, therefore, you refuse to accompany me, then take another route that leads neither to Kufa nor back to Medina. This arrangement would be

HURR - (Thoughtfully) Oh ! Any one else in the whole of Arabia,
to be it whom he may, especially in your present cir- and that
of cunstance, had that one but uttered such words as if you 25
fight these I would have never exempted his mother's

HUSEIN name from the invocation of bereavement - or worse- ; 15
who but... "your" mother, we are to mention only with
tyre the best that we can. arden ? (reciting poetry) :

HUSEIN - What , then, do you seek ? disgrace a man, 30

HURR - I mean to take you away to the Amīr Ibn-Ziād .

HUSEIN - Then, by Allāh, I will not come with you . 20

HURR - Then, by Allāh, I will not release you. spent;

HUSEIN - Then, by Allāh , I will not come with you.

It (Hurr relenting, moves to a lonely corner of the stage)

coercion".

(turning to Hurr) Well, friends, if thou wouldst but 25

abey God, and resign the right to its rightful owners,

that would surely win of God's pleasure

upon thee. The same place and characters

HURR (Aside in soliloquy) Here, the grandson of God's

Apostle swears never to come along with me. Here, the 30

Prophet's aromatic flower, the whelp of the lion Ali, the

Lord of the youths of Paradise ! May mourners mourn over thee, 5

O Hurr; is it against such a one as Husein that you would fight

(Pause). No never; though I should obtain a worldful of gold.

(Returns to Husein) Sir, I have no orders to fight with you, yet

leave thee alone to thyself. 35

no instructions to release you either. If, therefore, you

(turning to his companions) who of you knows of a route

refuse to accompany me, then take another route that leads

outside the blessed avenue ? 10

neither to Kūfa nor back to Medina. This arrangement would be a

fair middle course for both of us. I must, however, remind you to glorify Allāh taking care of your personal safety and that of your own Household, because, I bear witness that, if you should fight, you are, for sure, a dead man. *Umayya have much*

HUSEIN - What ! Is it with death that you would scare me, I 15

who never regard death but as bliss and life among tyrants but as a dreary burden ? (reciting poetry) :

"On will I march, for death can never disgrace a man,

If he aims at a rightful object, and, as becomes a

Moslem, he for it fights, 20

"If, therefore, I should live, I will never repent;

if I die, I will never be blamed,

It is humiliation enough for one to live under

coercion". *Jahul, Soldiers*

(turning to Hurr's men) Well, friends, if thou wouldst but 25

obey God, and recognise Right to its rightful owners,

that would surely bring down more of God's pleasure

upon thee. We, the Family of the Prophet, Mohammed

(Blessings), are more entitled to rule over thee than

those pretenders, and those leading you along the paths 30

of tyranny and aggression. If, however, thou bearest nothing but

abhorrence for us, and would ignore our due rights, *settled at*

if thine opinion hath now turned different from what *a party of*

both thy letters and emissaries had conveyed, then we would

leave thee alone to thyself. *what are thy orders, please."* 35

(turning to his companions) who of you knows of a route outside the blazed avenue ?

MESSANGER - Here I am.

(Looks up to heaven with arms uplifted) We are, O Lord, the progeny of thy Prophet, Mohammed (Blessings); we have been sorely disturbed and chased out of our Grandfather's home. Verily the Banu Umayya have much encroached upon us. Restore to us, therefore, O Lord, our own Rights, and make us victorious over the aggressors.

65

MESSANGER - Peace be upon thee, O Amīr.

IBN ZIAD - And upon thee. What news?

MESSANGER - A letter from Commander Hurr Ibn Yazīd (Hands him the

ACT II

Scene 1

Karbalā - Hurr, Jahūl, Soldiers
and Messengers

HURR - Where is Jahūl?

JAHŪL - At your service.

HURR - Write at once to the Amīr 'Ubaidullāh

JAHŪL - (Sitting down to write) To hear is to obey.

HURR - To the Amīr 'Ubaidullāh Ibn Ziād, from Commander Hurr

Ibn Yazīd:

After greetings, here Husein, son of Fātima, hath settled at Karbalā together with a group of his household and a party of his companions. He absolutely refuses to submit. His father's spirit is in him. Hence, what are thy orders, please."

Where is the dispatch rider?

10

... لا اسمع من الخير ولا أتبعه أو الحقك بالظلم الخير

MESSENGER - Here I am.

HURR - Take this intelligence soon to Ibn Ziād.

(Exit Messenger).

(Enter Qurra)

Scene ii

Court of Kūfa - Ibn Ziād, Kafūr, Qurra

(Enter Messenger) Peace. Wherefore have you come?

MESSENGER - Peace be upon thee, O Amīr. Ubaidullah.

IBN ZIĀD - And upon thee. What news?

MESSENGER - A letter from Commander Hurr Ibn Yazīd (Hands him the letter).

IBN ZIĀD - (Reads the letter through, then calls out) Kafūr.

KAFŪR - Here I am.

IBN ZIĀD - Take down a letter to Husein. (Kafūr begins)

"After greetings, O Husein: I have been apprised of thy settling at Karbalā, and I have express orders from the Commander of the Faithful, Yazīd, that I should never take my fill of food, nor lie in a cozy bed, before I have joined thee to the Compassionate, the Omniscient One⁽¹⁾, or else thou submit both to my orders and his."

Where is Qurra Ibn Qais?

QURRA - Here I am

IBN ZIĀD - Take this letter to Husein, and bring me back his reply.

QURRA - To hear is to obey. (Exit Qurra).

1 - Note the Arabic rhymed prose in:

"... الا اشبع من الخير ولا اتوسد الوتر او الحفك باللطيف الخير"

Scene 111

Karbalā : Husein's Camp

Husein, Habib Ibn Muzāhir, Jawn.

(Enter Qurra)

QURRA - Peace be upon thee, grandson of God's Apostle.

HUSEIN - And upon thee, peace. Wherefore have you come ?

QURRA - Here is a letter from the Amīr 'Ubaidullāh.

(Jawn, the slave, takes the letter and passes it to Husein.)

HUSEIN - (Scans the letter silently, then throws it to the ground in disdain). May they never be successful those who would purchase the pleasure of a created one for the displeasure of the Creator.

QURRA - The reply, Abu 'Abdullāh ?

HUSEIN - Your Amīr can have no reply from me. He has duly deserved the commandment of torture. - Lit. the word of torture. (Qurra returning)

HABIB - (aside to Qurra) Where to are you returning, O

Qurra ? To the aggressive party ? Why, come back, support Husein; support the grandson of God's Apostle, through whom and through whose parents God has backed you up with honour.

QURRA - Well, I would first take back this reply to my man; afterwards, I will look into my own mind.

Scene iv

Scene vi

Kūfa, the court
Ibn Zīād, Kafūr and Courtiers

(Enter Qurra)

QURRA - Husein says, "Your Amīr can have no reply
with me; he has duly deserved the commandment of torture."

IBN ZIĀD - (excitedly) Kafūr. (Exit Qurra)

KAFŪR - Here I am; here I am.

IBN ZIĀD - Send someone to call Ibn Sa'd to me immediately. 5

KAFŪR - To hear is to obey. (Calls out) Qurra 5

QURRA - Here I am.

KAFŪR - Go at once to Ibn Sa'd, and call him hither to
the Amīr Ubaidullāh.

QURRA - To hear is to obey. (Exit Qurra).

IBN ZIĀD - So? Then give us back our warrant of acquisition

Scene v

Kūfa - Ibn Sa'd, Qurra

IBN SA'D - (Pause) Will you give me the respite of this

QURRA - Peace be upon thee O Ibn Sa'd.

IBN SA'D - And upon thee. Well? (Exit Ibn Sa'd) 15

QURRA - The Amīr Ubaidullāh summons thee to attend soon at his
court. (Exit both)

Scene vii

Kūfa - Ibn Sa'd, A Bedouin

IBN SA'D - (Reciting poetry in soliloquy)

1 - "Ray, the Greek Rhages, was the site of the present Teheran"
Donaldson: The Shi'ite Religion, p.166.

Scene vi

Kūfa - the Court

Ibn Sa'd , Ibn Zīād

(Enter Ibn Sa'd) I know very well, damn me to inevitable
Peace be upon thee, O Amīr.

IBN ZIĀD - And upon thee, peace. Know that Husein, son of
Fāṭima, has come up to Karbalā together with a group
of his household and a party of his companions. Now,
you are to go out to him and propose that he
submit to my rule and the rule of the Commander of the
Faithful, Yazid; and should he refuse,
you are to fight him this very day.

IBN SA'D - Could you, O Amīr, please exempt me from
fighting the grandson of God's Apostle?

IBN ZIĀD - So ? Then give us back our warrant of acquisition
of the Ray District.⁽¹⁾

IBN SA'D - (Pause) Will you give me the respite of this
night to think the matter over ?

IBN ZIĀD - That you may have ^{advi} (Exit Ibn Sa'd) 15

Scene vii

Kūfa - Ibn Sa'd , A Bedouin

IBN SA'D - (Reciting poetry in soliloquy)

1 - "Ray, the Greek Rhages, was the site of the present Teheran"
Donaldson: The Shi'ite Religion, p.106.

IBN SA'D "By Allāh, I wonder, and am at a loss what to do,

Ruminating over my case between two courses of equal weight:

"Should I lose Ray, which is the object of my desires,

Or, should I return guilty with slaying Husein ?

"Slaying him, I know very well, damns me to inevitable
flames, when I am not a whit more courageous?

IBN SA'D Yet sweet is the acquisition of Ray - lit. as dear; hence, if
you would to me as the very pupils of mine eyes.

(Pause)

IBN SA'D "Verily, life here can go only with rapid results,

And not one wise man has ever exchanged cash for a debt".

(Enter Bedwin)

BEDWIN - I have O Ibn Sa'd, overheard in passing what you have
decided upon. But I adjure thee by Allāh never to go

out against Husein, lest you should commit a sin and

violate the bonds of sanguinity. For, indeed, if

you should have to renounce property, power, and life

itself, all that would still be much better for you

than meeting your God with the blood of Husein upon you.

IBN SA'D - Thank you for your advice. (Exit both)

Scene i

Karbala - Hussein, Ibn Sa'd,

Scene viii

Court of Kūfa

IBN SA'D - (Calls out, Jahul, where is Jahul ?

Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ziad

JAHUL - Here I am.

(Enter Ibn Sa'd)

IBN SA'D - Peace O Amīr; I am come to you with a special proposal: you know that you have granted to me the Ray, and that the country already knows about this through hearsay. Why not, therefore, if you please, leave Ray with me and send against Husein someone else from amongst the nobility of Kūfa, than whom I am not a whit more courageous?

IBN ZIĀD - I have never consulted you as to whom to send; hence, if you would march along with our men, well and good; if not, then give us back our warrant, here and now.

IBN SA'D - (deep in thought) Therefore, I will carry out your orders both willingly and respectfully. You will find that I shall do even more than will delight you.

IBN ZIĀD - Agreed. Ride you forth at the head of four thousand horsemen as Commander-in-chief. any one of the

(Exit Ibn Sa'd. He rides to the eastern line of the stage, where his force is standing in battle array.)

IBN SA'D - How fervently do I wish that God might spare me from fighting against Husein. Jahūl, write at once to

Ibn Zīād. (Jahūl sits down to write).

A C T III

Scene 1

Enter Ibn Sa'd. Karbalā - Husein, Ibn Sa'd,

after greetings, Jahūl, soldiers

IBN SA'D - (Calls out) Jahūl : where is Jahūl ?

JAHŪL - Here I am.

He has come, or to move away to any of the border towns, to live as an ordinary member of the Moslem community

both as regards rights and duties. (turning to Jahūl) Dispatch
IBN SA'D - Go, Jahūl, meet Husein, and enquire of him why he
this letter to the Amīr 'Ubaidullah.
has come, and what his purpose is.

JAHUL - (to one of the soldiers) Take you this letter to
JAHUL - Willingly and respectfully. (Exit Jahul. He 5
the Amīr 'Ubaidullah Ibn Ziad. (Exit soldier with the letter).
walks over to Husein's camp just on the opposite side).

Peace be upon thee, grandson of God's Apostle.

HUSEIN - And upon thee peace: what is it that you want?

JAHUL - 'Umar Ibn Sa'd desires to know of you why you
have come and what your purpose is.

HUSEIN - Well, then : know that the people of this your 10
district have repeatedly written to invite me to come
and behold, here I am. If, however, you are

SOLDIER - Peace be upon thee, O Amīr.
now averse to my presence, I shall readily return

IBN ZIAD - And upon thee, peace. What news?
whence I have come, or shall march on to any one of the

SOLDIER - A letter from the Commander 'Umar Ibn Sa'd (hands him
border-towns. 15

(Exit Jahul. He returns to Ibn Sa'd and informs him

IBN ZIAD - (Seems the letter, and expresses his reflections in poetry
accordingly).

IBN SA'D - How fervently do I wish that God might spare me from
fighting against Husein. Jahul, write at once to
Ibn Ziad. (Jahul sits down to write).

To the Amīr 'Ubaidullah Ibn Ziad from the Commander-in-chief
'Umar Ibn Sa'd: 20

SHIR - Oh ! Would you, O Amīr, would you ever grant
"After greetings, O Amīr, God hath extinguished the flame of
him so much, he having settled on your land and come
war, and fostered peace between the combatting men of the
down to your own site ? By Allah, if ever he should
nation. Here Husein has expressed his readiness to return
depart from your district without placing his hand in
whence he has come, or to move away to any of the border
yours. (i.e. as a sign of recognition) then he will
towns, to live as an ordinary member of the Moslem community 25

both as regards rights and duties. (turning to Jahūl) Dispatch this letter to the Amīr 'Ubaidullāh.

JAHŪL - (to one of the soldiers) Take you this letter to the Amīr 'Ubaidullāh Ibn Zīād. (Exit soldier with the letter).

punishment upon them, you would be fully entitled to do so; if to forgive, that would be entirely up to you.

IBN ZIAD - What an excellent son you're a, son of Dhī'l

Scene 11

Jawshan ! (turning Kūfa - The Court write out an intelligence to Ibn Ibn Zīād, Shimr, Kafūr write).

"After greetings, O Ibn Sa'd : we have sent thee over to

SOLDIER - Peace be upon thee, O Amīr.

IBN ZIAD - And upon thee, peace. What news ?

SOLDIER - A letter from the Commander 'Umar Ibn Sa'd (Hands him the letter. Exit soldier.)

IBN ZIAD - (Scans the letter, and expresses his reflections in poetry

"Is it now, when our own claws have been transfixed in him,

That he hopes to escape ? How impossible !"

Such is the writing of a sincere advisor, over-sympathetic with his own people. (He hands the letter to Shimr who reads it through).

SHIMR - Oh ! Would you, O Amīr, would you ever grant

him so much, he having settled on your land and come

down to your own site ? By Allāh, if ever he should

depart from your district without placing his hand in yours, (i.e. as a sign of recognition) then he will

most likely wax the stronger, while you become the weaker. Never, therefore, allow him such a concession; rather first require him with all his following to submit to your rule. If they do, and you choose to inflict punishment upon them, you would be fully entitled to do so; if to forgive, that would be entirely up to you.

IBN ZI'AD - What an excellent opinion yours is, son of Dhi'l

Jawshan ! (turning to Kafur) Kafur, write out an intelligence to Ibn Sa'd : (Kafur begins to write).

IBN SA'D - (opens the letter and reads it through) May God "After greetings, O Ibn Sa'd : we have sent thee over to Husein neither to procrastinate with him, nor to desist from him, nor to apologize for him, nor at all to grant him the choice of quarter and survival. Here and now, some hope to placate matters for the nation. Husein will therefore, propose to him to submit, immediately, to mine own rule, and to the rule of the Commander of the Faithful, Yazid. If, and as soon as, he refuses to do so, march

SHIMR - Now, do tell me at once, Ibn Sa'd, what you intend : directly against him until thou hast slain and mutilated him and all his men, which, indeed, would be no less than their fight his foe, or else, will you hand over the command of desserts. Once you have done away with Husein, order that his body, chest and back, be crushed under your horses' hoofs.

These are our orders, which, if thou wilt carry them out perfectly, we shall recompense thee, as we do someone who is

SHIMR - Well, but tell me, how are you going to go about obedient and heedful; - if not, then you are stripped of our

commission at

IBN once, and must hand over the charge of the troops to Shimr whom we have fully supplied with our instructions".

(turning to Shimr) Take this letter to Ibn Sa'd.

SHIMR (Exit Shimr with the letter). of thee, for being such an igno- 20

ramus. Among their little troop they have got one warrior who, were he to fight ~~us~~ with his left rather than his right hand, could exterminate Scene iii tire force. Among their number is 'Abbās, who Karabalā - Ibn Sa'd's Headquarters

IBN SA'D - What, then, do you think ? 25

SHIMR - Here is an intelligence from your Amīr 'Ubaidullāh.

SHIMR - I am of the opinion that we should go over in person, and

IBN SA'D - (opens the letter and reads it through) May God offer him quarter, together with his brothers, perchance they make your safe return an unlikely event, O Shimr, and will accept to desert Husein, and spare us their ferocious confound this evil news that you have brought us. You have, fighting.

in fact, marred for us a means whereby we had cherished 5
IBN SA'D - Well, try that. (EXIT SHIMR) 30

some hope to placate matters for the nation. Husein will never under any circumstances submit to Ibn Zīād: for, is not his father's spirit in Husein ?

SHIMR - Now, do tell me at once, Ibn Sa'd, what you intend : will you carry out the express orders of your Amīr and 10 fight his foe, or else, will you hand over the command of the whole army to me ?

(Shimr standing before Husein's camp)

IBN SA'D - Never, and no esteem to thee. I can take charge of all.

SHIMR - Hail, nephews ! Hail, 'Abbās and brothers.

You shall merely look after the infantry.

(Pause)

SHIMR - Well, but tell me, how are you going to go about 15 the battle ?

HUSEIN - Is it that call ?

I - 'Abbās and his other brothers - though not Husein - were related on their mother's side to the Family of Dhī'l Jawshan.

IBN SA'D - Woe to thee. It should need no more than one single charge with our bare swords to eradicate them down to the last man.

SHIMR - Bereaved be your mother of thee, for being such an igno- 20
ramus. Among their little troop they have got one warrior who, were he to fight us with his left rather than his right hand, could exterminate our entire force. Among their number is 'Abbās, whelp of (the lion)'Ali. 10

IBN SA'D - What, then, do you think ? 25

SHIMR - I am of the opinion that we should go over in person, and offer him quarter, together with his brothers, perchance they will accept to desert Husein, and spare us their ferocious fighting.

IBN SA'D - Well, try that. (EXIT SHIMR) 30

IBN SA'D - (Gives the Command) 15

Scene iv

Karbala - Both Camps.

Husein, 'Abbās and Companions

Ibn Sa'd, Shimr and Soldiers

(Shimr standing before Husein's camp)

SHIMR - Hail, nephews ! Hail, 'Abbās and brothers. (1) 20

(No reply)

(Shimr twice repeats the above call, but without receiving a reply)

HUSEIN - Who is it that calls ?

1 - 'Abbās and his other brothers - though not Husein - were related on their mother's side to the Family of Dhi'l Jawshan.

COMPANIONS - A kāfir.

HUSEIN - Well, answer him, though he be kāfir. 5

'ABBĀS- (Goes out to Shimr) What is it that you want, son of Dhi'l Jawshan ?

SHIMR - You, sons of our sister, are granted quarter.

Kill not, therefore, yourselves, together with your brother Husein, but adhere to allegiance to the commander 10 of the Faithful Yazīd.

'ABBĀS - Confound you and your quarter; what, would you grant us safety while the grandson of God's Apostle has none ? May your hands be destroyed, and the amnesty you bring us of no avail, you enemy of God. 35

(Exit Shimr. He returns to his camp and informs Ibn Sa'd of the failure of his plan). we would have granted that;

IBN SA'D - (Gives the Command) You, horsemen of God, 15 forward ride.

(The Umayyad forces ride forwards drawing close to Husein's camp).

'ABBĀS - Brother, Sir, the foe is upon thee.

HUSEIN - Ride up to them, 'Abbas, and ask what their present intention is. (Exit 'Abbās)

'ABBĀS - Well, men of Kūfa, what is your desire now ? 20

FIRST SOLDIER - We would fight with you this very night, unless you give in. He hears

'ABBĀS - Halt there, that I may represent to Abu 'Abdullāh (i.e. Husein) what you say. (Exit 'Abbās. He returns to the camp).

HILAL - Brother, the enemy intend to wage war with us this very night, if we don't give in. 25

HUSEIN - Go back to them brother, and try to defer them until tomorrow, so that meanwhile we can say our prayers to God and recite His Book; He knows how greatly attached I am to praying to Him and to the reciting of His Book. 30

(Exit 'Abbās. He returns to the Umayyads)

'ABBĀS - Will you, partisans of the Sufianids, withdraw from us just till tomorrow morning, that we may say our prayers to God and recite His Book ? 10

FIRST SOLDIER - No, we must wage war with you this very night. 35

SECOND SOLDIER - Why, by Allāh, if they were Turks or Daylamites, and had asked such a request, we would have granted that; how then, with them, the family of Mohammed (Blessings) ?

IBN SA'D - Son of 'Ali, your request is granted you.

(Exit 'Abbās. Ibn Sa'd orders a withdrawal)

HUSEIN - May God requite thee well on my behalf. 20

(Exit both. Hilāl goes to Husein's tent).

Scene v

Kerbalā - Husein's Camp

Time : 'Ashūrā', dead of night.

Husein , Hilāl

(Husein, all alone walking about the field. He hears footsteps)

HUSEIN - Who is it ? Hilāl ?

HILĀL - Yes, indeed, may Hilāl and his father be a ransom for thee. *Habīb! I have just been out after Hussein as he*

HUSEIN - What is it that has brought you out, O Hilāl, on such a dark part of the night? *as met by his fair, black-eyed,* 5

HILĀL - Truly, Sire, I have been disquieted about thine own coming out in the vicinity of the tyrant's camp, and I am ten-most apprehensive, lest thou be taken by surprise. *indeed,*

HUSEIN - I have come out, O Hilāl, to inspect these reefs and hillocks, for I am afraid that they might serve as places of 10 ambush for horsemen when tomorrow you will charge. (Pause) Well, Hilāl, why don't you slink away between these two *her's* hillocks and save your life?

HILĀL - I?! May the wild beasts devour me alive rather than *re,* that I should desert thee! My sword is equal to a thousand; 15 my horse the same. I would never forsake thee until they had both become worn out - lit. blunted - through stabbing and galloping. Nay, were I to have no sword, I would fight *HILĀL - Would you, O Habīb, gather together your men that we* them with mere stones.

HUSEIN - May God requite thee well on my behalf. 20 *and relieve the anxiety of the women and children?* (Exit both. Hilāl goes to Habīb's tent).

HABĪB - With all love and regard, I do so. *(calls out) Hail* 20 *heroes, staunch as ro-----s of raging war.*

COMPANIONS - Here we are, O *the* *Murāhir.* (They all come out)

HABĪB - Come along, *follow me, follow me* (to the Hashimites) The same place and night

(1) The allusion to Hilāl, Habīb, 'Abbās, Burair, Companions *way in* which a suckling animal tosses the breast of its mother as

HILĀL - Peace be upon thee, Habīb.

HABIB - And upon thee, peace. What is the matter ?

HILAL - Oh Habib! I have just been out after Husein as he inspected the site for fear of possible ambushcadars. Upon his return to Camp, he was met by his fair, black-eyed, sister (Zainab) whom I overheard enquire eagerly of him whispering, "Have you, O son of my father, sounded the intentions of those men ?" He, in answer said, "I have, indeed, already bumped my head against them,⁽¹⁾ and have sufficiently put them to the test : among their number I have found only proud men, with breasts puffed out like pigeons , who are as desirous of destroying me as is a babe of its mother's milk".

HABIB - Ay, by Allāh , but for my implicit obedience to his orders, I should have, right to-night , started to deal deadly blows upon the foe with this my sword, for so long as the hilt thereof remained in my hand.

HILAL - Would you, O Habib , gather together your men that we may go in body to soothe the mind of the black-eyed lady, and relieve the anxiety of the women and children ?

HABIB - With all love and regard, I do so. (calls out) Hail heroes, staunch as rocks, knights of raging war.

COMPANIONS - Here we are, O Ibn Muzāhir. (They all come out)

HABIB - Come along, follow up, follow up. (to the Hashimites)

(1) The allusion here - in verb 'lahaza' is to the way in which a suckling animal tosses the breast of its mother as though to test it for milk.

But you, O Banu Hāshim, please go back to your pavilions,
May your eyes never be sleepless. (They all reach Husein's 25
private tents).

Peace be upon thee, O kinsfolk of ours; peace be upon thee,
O our pride, peace be upon thee, O our masters. Here are the
sharp swords of your young men which they have sworn never to
sheathe except in the necks of your enemy; and here their
spearheads, which they have sworn never to transfix and resur- 30
save in the hearts of them who intend thee evil. a thousand times

HUSEIN - May God recompense you all on behalf of your Prophet's
Household. I give to Allāh the best of praise, and render
Him equal thanks both in success and in vicissitude. I thank
thee, O Lord, for having honoured us with Prophecy, and en- 35
lightened us with religion. With ears, eyes, and hearts
Thou hast created us; so render us ever grateful to Thee.
(To his Companions) After greetings, I have known no friends
more loyal nor a Household more devoted than my own friends
and Household. May God requite you all well on my behalf, 40
know that you all have my full permission to quit; I no
longer have any claim over you. Here darkness has set in
upon you, so ride it as you would ride your camel; the enemy seek
me alone, and if they hunt me down, they will certainly be
diverted from seeking any one else. 45

'ABBĀS- We forsake thee, brother ? And why do that ? To sur-
vive thee ? May we never see such a survival.

HUSEIN - And thou, O Banu Aqīl, let Muslim's death suffice you
of the permission and leave our little band of men alone
go in peace, for I do willingly release you.

CHIEF. OF BANU AQIL - We leave thee, O grandson of God's Apostle? 50

What excuse shall we advance before Allāh, if we should

fail to observe the duties we owe you ? Nay, by God, we

would rather be slain to the last man than desert thee, may

our own souls be a ransom for thee.

BURAIR - By Allāh I swear that were I to be killed and resur- 55

rected, then suffer death and resurrection a thousand times

over, I would never desert thee! How then, when it

is but one sole death, followed by eternal honour ?!

(Exit all).

Scene vii

Karbalā, the same night

Habīb , Ali Al-Akbar

(Enter Ali)

ALI - Peace be upon thee, O uncle Habīb.

HABIB - And upon thee, peace, mercy, and abundant blessings from
God, O son of our master.

ALI - Uncle Habīb, I have just been with my fair, black-eyed
aunt Zainab who conveyed to me that father has gathered 5

together his companions and has publicly given them general

permission to leave. Now, considering how bitter and unpleasant

(1) to the taste death is, she feared they would take advantage

was impossible

ولو تركت القتل لفضاونا

IBN SA'D - Why, yes; and such a fight as would, even at its easiest
of the permission and leave our little band of men alone
chop down heads and scatter arms about.
against these aliens. She, therefore, would have 10

HURR - Haven't you found any merit in the proposal I put to you?
me investigate for her the truth about the matter from

IBN SA'D - Ah! Were matters up to me personally, I would have, 5
thee, Uncle Habib.

HABIB - For thy father's sake, we have, by God, divorced
accepted your proposal, but your Amir 'Ubadillah has flatly
rejected every scheme.

HURR - (aside) Qurra.
of life. How eager am I personally to be the first 15

QURRA - Here I am.
martyr and die before him!

HURR - Have you watered your horse this morning? 10

'ALI - Would you, O Uncle Habib, counsel my father to return
with us to Medina?

HURR - Why, no, not yet.

HURR - Won't you water it now, then?

HABIB - Oh how impossible, O son of our master! God
'QURRA - (aside) I guess that he intends to withdraw from battle.
indeed hast foreknown what thou now fearest; yet, 20
but dislikes my seeing him do so. (To Ibn Sa'd) Here I am
"Had the grouse been left alone, they would have surely
just going to water my horse." (1) (Exit Qurra) 15
dozed and gone to sleep!" (1)

(Exit both) (to a solitary place)

SOLDIER - What do you intend to do, O Ibn-Yasid?

HURR - -----

SOLDIER - Mean you to charge?

HURR - -----

ACT IV

SOLDIER - By Allah, your Scene 1 is exceedingly surprising.

If I be asked who the bravest are among all Arab Knights,
K a r b a l a

I would never leave thee out; wherefore, then, 20
Ibn Sa'd, Hurr, Qurra, soldiers

such hesitation as I behold on thy part?

HURR - Are you finally decided upon fighting this man, O Ibn Sa'd?

HURR - (Hurr gives no reply, but rides swiftly over to

Husein and stands submissively before him.)

(1) This half verse in Arabic alludes to the fact that escape
was impossible
ولو ترك القط لفغانا

IBN SA'D - Why, yes; and such a fight as would, even at its easiest chop down heads and scatter arms about.

HURR - Haven't you found any merit in the proposal I put to you?

IBN SA'D - Ah ! Were matters up to me personally, I would have accepted your proposal, but your Amīr 'Ubaidullāh has flatly rejected every scheme.

HURR - (aside) Qurra.

QURRA - Here I am.

HURR - Have you watered your horse this morning ? 10

QURRA - Why, no, not yet.

HURR - Won't you water it now, then ?

QURRA-(aside) I guess that he intends to withdraw from battle, but dislikes my seeing him do so. (To Ibn Sa'd) Here I am just going to water my horse. (Exit Qurra) 15

(Hurr moves to a solitary place)

SOLDIER - What do you intend to do, O Ibn-Yazīd ?

HURR - ----

SOLDIER - Mean you to charge ?

HURR - - - - -

SOLDIER - By Allāh, your attitude is exceedingly surprising.

If I be asked who the bravest are among all Arab Knights,

I would never leave thee out; wherefore, then, 20

such hesitation as I behold on thy part ?

HURR - ----- (Hurr gives no reply, but rides swiftly over to Husein and stands submissively before him.) 45

(praying) To Thee, O Allāh, I resort in penitence; so pray accept my repentance. I have, I confess, terrified the hearts of Thy friends and the grandsons of Thy Prophet.

(to Husein) Peace be upon thee, O grandson of God's Apostle. I am he, thy man, who detained thee from returning and made escape difficult for thee. I never thought the other people - the Umayyads - would refuse my proposals, or else I would never have committed the error I did. Here, I am come in repentence; thinkest thou my repentence can be accepted ?

HUSEIN - If thou repentest, God will forgive thee.

Dismount.

HURR - I am of more service to thee as a mounted soldier than on foot.

HUSEIN - Well, do whatever thou likest, may God have mercy upon thee.

(Hurr rides off to the front)

HURR - Ah, you men of Kūfa! Bereaved and disgraced be your mothers through you. You have invited this virtuous bondman (i.e. bondman of God's) promising to support him. You had pretended that you would sacrifice your own lives in his support. Yet, when he did trust you and came to you, behold ! you delivered him over, and barred him, together with all his followers and children, from the flowing Euphrates wherein even the worst swine and dogs of the

1 - Sawad is the name of the arable district of Basra & Kūfa.

2 - Quran :XXXiii,23.

Sawad⁽¹⁾ disport in full freedom ! How ill, indeed, have you dealt with Mohammed's progeny!

(reciting poetry, he challenges the foe) :

"Know well that I am he Hurr the hospitable one,

Who, upon your very heads - lit.(top of heads) deals
deadly blows with his sword,

50

"Defending the best of men beseiged among the prejudiced party,

You all do I stab without any remorse".

Emerge and do battle, unworthy infidels.

(The battle rages. Hurr fights fiercely and is killed)

HUSEIN - (standing by the dead Hurr) Never was thy mother
mistaken in naming thee Hurr.(i.e. free one); because,
just as thou hast been free here, thou shalt be free
in the hereafter.

55

You are, in truth, more numerous in count,

But we are far more loyal and of greater fortitude".

Scene ii

Karbalā : Battle-field

Husein, Chieftain of the Aqīl , Burair, Habīb Ibn Muẓāhir.

CHIEFTAIN OF BANU AQIL - Grant me permission to fight, O grandson
of God's Apostle.

HUSEIN - "Lo ! we are Allāh's, and lo ! unto Him do we
return". Come out, friend. "Some of them have paid for
their vow with death (in battle), and some of them still
are waiting, and they have not altered in the least".²

1 - Sawad is the name of the arable district of Basra & Kūfa.

2 - Qoran :XXXiii,23.

(The Aqīlīte chieftain advances, fights, and falls).

BURAIR - Peace be upon thee, O Abu 'Abdullāh.

HUSEIN - And upon thee peace, what is thy wish ?

BURAIR - Wilt thou give me permission to fight these infidels ?

HUSEIN - Yes, friend; you may have that. 10

BURAIR-(Reciting poetry) :

"I am Burair, my father Khudair,
There is no use in one who has got no good (heart)".

(Burair fights and falls). 10

(The rest of Husein's companions, unnamed in the play,
follow, and die, the last among them being Habīb Ibn Muzāhir).

HABĪB - Wilt thou grant me permission to fight, Sir ?

HUSEIN - Yes, Habīb; go forth, friend.

HABĪB - (Recites his challenge in poetry) :

"I am Habīb, my father Muzhir, 15

A Knight of battle, and of blazing war am I;

"You are, in truth, more numerous in count,

But we are the more loyal and of greater fortitude".

(Habīb fights and falls).

(Habīb retreats to his father, being overcome by thirst)

The thirst, the thirst ----- And the tiring

mail presses heavily ----- Scene iii ! Is there never a 20

chance of one drop ----- Karbala : the battle-field this

tongue of mine ----- Ali Al-Akbar, Husein, Al-Qāsim and 'Abbās

ALI - Peace be upon thee, O father. son of Abu Sufiān's. Caliph

HUSEIN - And upon thee, peace, dear son. What is it with thee?

'ALI - I am disgusted with life.

HUSEIN - Put out my tongue, O my son and place it over mine ;
HUSEIN - -----

'ALI - May I advance to battle, father?

HUSEIN - (Pause) Yes, do, son. (looking to heaven) Bear witness, 5

O Lord, that here goes out to them a lad, of all the people the
nearest likeness - in manners, countenance, and
eloquence - to Thine own Apostle. Whensoever we felt
eager for the sight of Thine Apostle, we used merely to gaze
into the face of this young lad. 10

'ALI - (reciting his challenge) :

"I am 'Ali, son of Husein, son of 'Ali

One of a party - family - the grandfather of whose

father is the Prophet !

"With this sword, in defence of my father, do I stab

you all, 15

The stabs of a Hashimite, Alid youth.

"Oh ! never shall the son of a spurious father (1)

rule over us".

('Ali fights courageously for a short while. He, however,

retreats to his father, being overcome by thirst)

The thirst, the thirst kills me ! And the tiring

mail presses heavily upon my body ! Is there never a 20

chance of one drop of water whereby to moisten this

tongue of mine and revive myself against the foe ?

1 - This refers to Ziad, a natural son of Abu Sufian's. Caliph Mu'awiya I. had claimed Ziad a brother by adoption.

HUSEIN - Put out thy tongue, O my son and place it over mine ;
for my tongue is drier and drier than yours !

(Ali touches his father's tongue with his), causing actual

Go, go, my boy; I pray that thou be offered by thy grandfather a drink, after which thou shalt thirst

no more. (Ali returns to battle).

ALI - (reciting poetry again):

"Verily has the war revealed (solid) facts

And uncovered particular truths."

(Exit swordsmen)

"By Allāh, Lord of the Throne, I swear that we shall never leave

your troops, until the gleaming swords have been sheathed

(in thee)

(Ali fights on and falls; Husein hastens to his side).

HUSEIN - (weeping copiously) Cut be your blood-ties, Ibn Sa'd,

as you have cut off mine ! How audacious you (all) are

against the Apostle, and the desecration of the very honour

of the Apostle! Slain be all those who slew thee,

darling son ! May the whole world be wiped out after thee!

(Husein chanting a dirgeful elegy) :

"Thou hast been the very pupil of mine eyes,

same eyes now shed tears abundantly over thee.

"After thee, let whoever would die, die,

Since, over thee (alone) have I taken great care".

(Husein, clearly broken-hearted, returns to Camp).

INTERLUDE NO. I

55

The acting is suspended. A group of 'Ashūrā' devotees, swords in hand, are now seen circling the stage, causing actual wounds to their heads, as they utter their melancholic ejaculations. They begin by uttering the names : "Haidar", "Zainab", "Husein". The gashes being made, the devotees resume their perambulations as they pass their hands across their heads. As they do so, they sing out in unison : -

"Such is the calamity of Karbalā " (Exit swordsmen)

60

Scene iii (Cont.)

Acting is resumed

AL-QĀSIM - Peace be upon thee, O Uncle.

HUSEIN - And upon thee peace; what is thy desire, nephew ?

AL-QĀSIM - I am disgusted with life, O Uncle.

HUSEIN - Oh ! No, dear nephew; you are my brother Hasan's trust in my protection.

AL-QĀSIM - I am out of patience (with the foe), Uncle.

HUSEIN - Go forth then, my son.

AL-QĀSIM - (reciting his challenge) :

"If ever you should ignore me, (know that) I am

50

The son of Hasan, Ho !

Grandson of the chosen, and entrusted Prophet;

"Here, Husein is a captivated hostage

from rain-clouds' is a metaphoric expression of well-wishing in classical Arabic imagery.

Among men, who, - I wish- may never drink
from the rain-clouds"⁽¹⁾

55

(Al-Qāsim fights and falls. Husein hastened up to defend
him --- but too late).

'ABBĀS - Peace be upon thee, brother.

HUSEIN - And upon thee, peace, O dear Abu'l Fadl. What is thy want?

'ABBĀS - To fight, O Abu 'Abdullāh!

HUSEIN - But you are the leader of my soldiers, and the bearer
of my standard, O brother Abu'l Fadl !

60

'ABBĀS- Yet I am already overcome with disgust at life.

HUSEIN - (pause) Could you, before that, try to fetch a
drink of water for these, our parched little ones ?

'ABBĀS- I will try. (Exit 'Abbās reciting poetry)

"It is I, 'Abbās, who can go forth with the water-skins,
fearing not death on the day of battle".

65

(The army of the Umayyads bar Abbas from reaching the
Euphrates. He fights with them until his right arm is cut
off. He resumes the fight with his left, reciting:)

"Even though you cut off my right arm,
still I defend my religion as best I can, (By Allāh I swear)

"I defend Husein, the firm one in faith,

(Son of the pure, entrusted Prophet".

70

('Abbās' left arm is hacked off. He recites) :

1 - The allusion here is to rain-clouds of grace. 'Drinking
from rain-clouds' is a metaphoric expression of well-wishing
in classical Arabic imagery.

" Have no fear, O my soul, of infidels,
Rather rejoice evermore in the mercy of the most
Powerful One.

"My left arm have they in their iniquity cut off;
So burn them, O Lord, in the hottest of Hell's fires". 75

('Abbās picks up the sword in his teeth; he continues to
fight desperately until he is knocked down to the ground.

Husein hastens up to him crying): -

HUSEIN - Now is my back broken; now are my forces dispersed;
now has my enemy rejoiced at my own disaster !

(Husein wipes the dust off his brother's head. 'Abbās,
however, raises his head from Husein's lap and lets it drop
again in the dust).

HUSEIN - But, why do so, O brother Abu'l Fadl?

'ABBĀS- (in agonies) One short hour later you, too, O 80
brother, shall be hurled down upon the dust, and who would
then wipe your head ? (Dies)

HUSEIN - "O Abu'l Fadl, thou it is who hast established
both 'fadl' (virtue) and 'iba'a' (disdain) ;
Never did 'fadl' (virtue) accept anyone else but thee 85
for a father".⁽¹⁾

(A solitary elegiac tune is heard being chanted in colloquial
Iraqi dialect :)

1 - For the pun made on the words 'fadl' and 'iba'a', see General
Critique in Appendix one.

HUSEIN "O 'Abbas, our master, rather go you in peace; be emancipated 10

Whose heart is ever compassionate for us;

JAWN "Water, did he bring us : he who, in times of ease, take food

He, my uncle, is killed : Come ye all to comfort me". (1) 90

May : by Allah, never will I withdraw until the blood of this

black one has I N T E R L U D E NO. II. 15

(The acting is suspended. A second group of swordsmen, all covered in blood, make the tour of the stage, chanting in chorus):

JAWN "There is no other sword (sharper) than Dhu'l-Fiqār,

No other champion but Ali".

black one? (Exit swordsmen) 20

In defence of Mohammed's progeny? Both with hand and sword I defend them,

"Both with hand and sword I defend them, thereby hoping for paradise on the Day of Judgement."

Karbalā : The battle-field

Husein ; Jawn, the slave

HUSEIN - Is there no one here to support us for the sake of God?

HUSEIN Is there here no helper to help us for the sake of God? and

Scatter them about, O Lord, and never let their rulers be pleased with them. For, instead of supporting us - as they had in their invitations promised to - behold! they have 5 all behaved wrongfully and slain us !

JAWN - Peace be upon thee, O grandson of God's Apostle.

HUSEIN - And upon thee, what is it that you want, Jawn?

JAWN - Wouldst thou, Sire, grant me permission to fight ?

1 - It is assumed here that the chanter is Sikna, Husein's younger daughter; the second part of Dirge No. 43 confirms the assumption. In God's Apostle, at least, go you back to

HUSEIN - Oh, no, Jawn ! Rather go you in peace; be emancipated 10
for the sake of God.

JAWN - O Sire, does it behoove me who, in times of ease, take food
from thine pots, to desert thee in the hour of vicissitude ?
Nay , by Allāh, never will I withdraw until the blood of this
black one has been mixed with thine own. 15

HUSEIN - Lo ! we are Allāh's, and lo ! unto Him do we return.
Do whatever thou wilt, may Allāh have mercy upon thee.

JAWN - (Goes to the front, reciting) :-
"How do (you) infidels see the sword-blows of this
black one ?
In defence of Mohammed's progeny ? 10 20

"Both with hand and tongue do I defend them,
Thereby hoping for Paradise on the Day of Judgement -
- lit. day of the watering-trough.-

(Jawn fights and dies. Husein eulogises him)

HUSEIN - Whiten, O Lord, his face, make fragrant his smell, and
on Doomsday assemble him together with the virtuous.

boldly steps forward and decapitates the wounded Imam.

Shortly afterwards, the troops storm the Camp. The children

Scene v

Karbala : the battlefield

Husein , Ibn Sa'd, Shimr, Soldiers

(looted) camp on fire.

HUSEIN - (takes the field)

Hear me, people of Kūfa : since you would not observe
my blood-link with God's Apostle, at least, go you back to

your Pre-Islamic era, and have due regard to Pre-Islamic gallantry : accordingly, come forth against me by ones, twos, or threes.

5

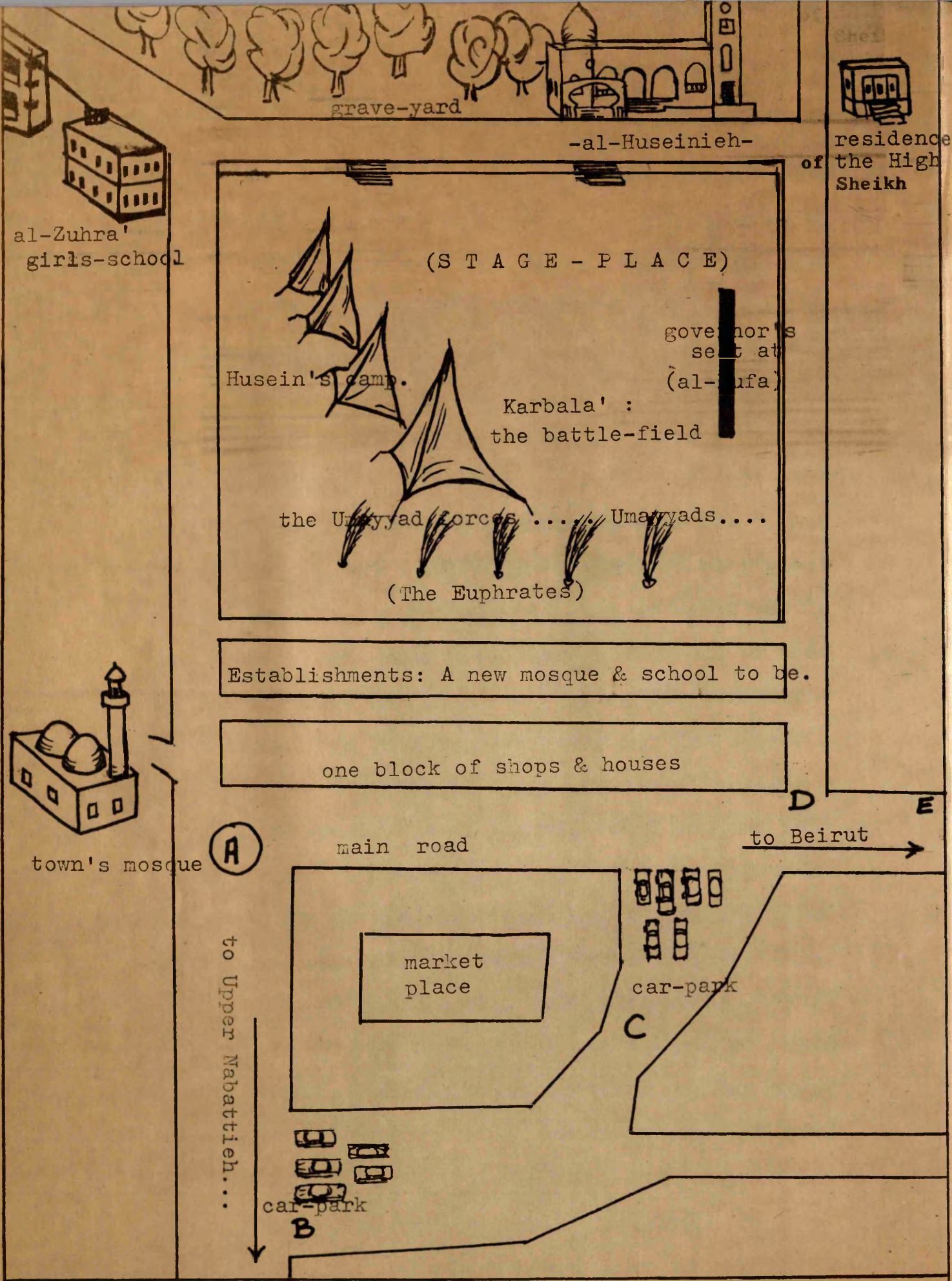
(A warrior comes out against Husein and is slain. Another one follows; several others emerge; all meet their death at the hands of the undaunted Imam).

IBN SA'D - (Shouting out a command) Woe to thee, Kufāns !

Know you whom you fight against ? Verily this is the son of the bare-templed, the corpulent one; son of the slayer of Arabs ! By Allāh I swear, were the whole of our force to come out against him singly, he would be able to vanquish you all to a man. Dash upon him, therefore, altogether, as though it were the charge of a single man : a troop with spears, another with swords, a third with arrows, and a fourth with rocks and stones.

10

(The Umayyad force divides in accordance with the Commander's strategem. They hem Husein in with their different weapons until they bring him down seriously wounded. Here Shimr boldly steps forward and decapitates the wounded Imam. Shortly afterwards, the troops storm the Camp. The children begin to fly for refuge from one tent to another, but Shimr and the soldiers hunt them down, and set the whole (looted) camp on fire.



THE 'ASHURĀ' CEREMONIES IN LEBANON

A rough sketch of the stage-place of the Passion Play

A C T V

THE FINAL PROCESSIONS : THE CAPTIVES

The present Act is performed in the streets. The Processions in which the two main actors are Zain Al-Abidin, and his special guard Shimr, embody the four groups of 'Ashūrā' mourners ⁽¹⁾ and the whole of the audience. In their tour they make a brief halt at each of the four stops, indicated on the accompanying sketch by the capital letters A, B, C & D. At each of these four stops, and at the final one, Zain delivers an address to the public.

I am Ali, son of Hussain, son of Ali Ibn Abi-Talib.

Scene 1

Stop "A" : Damascus

Zain Al- Abidin, Shimr, Soldiers

ZAIN - "Those who do wrong will come to know by what a great reverse they will be overturned. ⁽²⁾ Lo ! The sequel is for those who ward off evil. ⁽³⁾ There is neither might nor power but in Allāh. Lo ! We are Allāh's and Lo! unto Him, do we return. Here is what Allāh promised His Apostle; and Allāh is truthful, and so is His Apostle. Oh, how dire, how horrible this calamity ! To Allāh alone do we appeal in complaint of all that has befallen us. Lo ! Allāh is mighty and revengeful.

- 1 - The four groups of mourners are : sword-beaters, chain-flagellants, breast-beaters, and the women mourners.
- 2 - Qoran : XXVi, 44.
- 3 - Qoran : Xi, 49.

Hear me, O People : We have been endowed with six 10
(gifts), and favoured by seven (personages) : We have been
endowed with learning, forbearance, magnanimity, courage,
eloquence, and love in the hearts of all believers. And
favoured we have been since out of us (of our family) has
come the elected Prophet Mohammed (Blessings), the Siddīq, 15
the Tayyār, the lion of God, the lion of His Apostle, the
two grandsons of this nation, and the Mistress of the women
of the world. He who knows me has known me well; but he
who knows me not, to him shall I make known my noble genealogy:
I am Ali, son of Husein, son of Ali Ibn Abi-Tālib. 20
I am the son of him whose honour has been violated, whose
high rank extorted, whose property looted, and whose family
led into captivity. I am the son of him who was killed
while besieged and that is honour enough; the son of him
who was slain from the nape of the neck on the bank of the 25
Euphrates, without either vindictiveness or retaliation;
the son of him who prayed in front of the very angels of
heaven; the son of ... (Shimr interrupts him).
SHIMR - Thanks be to Allāh! My heart has been over-filled
with joy, and my mind set at ease. Thus have I glutted
my thirst for revenge from Husein, son of Ali. 30
It is to-day that we will drink the "wines"; to-day
that we will vent our long concealed rancour. Good tidings
to you, O people, of the Tribute. Soon we will receive
the largest prize from the Commander of the Faithful, Yazīd, 35

SHIMR son of Muāwiya. By Allāh I swear, had 'Umar Ibn Sa'd 35
(but permitted I would have done away with this lad too
(pointing to Zain) whom they call Zain Al-Abidīn.

Let us have some water.

(here Shimr takes up a little clay jar, looks sideways at
Zain, then starts to drink in a specially tantalizing
manner. To add to his torment he, having drunk his fill,
empties some water on the ground, saying to Zain) :

ZAIN See how very like a bar of silver water looks !

ZAIN - May I , please, be allowed a drink ? 40

SHIMR - That you may, (Handing him the jar).

ZAIN - In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

(He raises the jar to his lips, but, before he tastes a
drop, Shimr, with a well-aimed stroke of his sword, breaks
it to pieces, laughing spitefully).

SHIMR - By Allāh, never will you taste water !

(Here the women in the procession instantly react to the
incident with expressions of sympathy, immediately followed
by loud cries of disgust at the enemies of Banu Hāshim).

ZAIN - To Allāh alone is my appeal. To Mohammed, 45
the elected one is my complaint. Oh that Fātima,
and Fātima's father had but cast eyes upon the
grandsons of God's Apostle who are either fugitives
or slain; parched of thirst or suffering from wounds!
Verily, to-day has died my grandfather, God's Apostle !
To-day....(Shimr interrupts). 50

SHIMR -- Ride on with the captives. (The processions move forwards to Stop "B".)
his faith in God. I am a son of the Mistress of women;
a son of him whom ~~God hath~~ inspired most radiantly;

a son of Fātima, Scene ii a son of Khadija
the greatest. Therefore, I adjure you all by Allāh, do you
Damascus : Stop "B"
know who I am ?

The same persons

SHIMR AND SOLDIERS -- 125, 126, 127. 20

SHIMR -- Do (Begins with poetry); father was ?

SHIMR "In abject humiliation about Damascus am I led,

ZAIN -- As though I were a negro slave without support

"Would that I had never seen Damascus, nor had Yazīd

SHIMR Seen me in this land as one of his captives".

ZAIN Hear me, O people : I am son of Mecca and Minā 5

a son of Zamzam and Safā; a son of the best man among all

those who have circumambulated and run (around the Ka'ba);

SHIMR a son of the best one who has performed the pilgrimage and

ZAIN answered to pilgrimage call, ('talbiya'); 10

a son of him who was "carried by night from the inviolable 10
place of worship to the far distant place of worship" (1) a son

SHIMR of Mohammed, the elected one, a son of 'Ali, the approved one;

a son of him, who to please the Apostle - struck with two

swords, stabbed with two spears, undertook the two migrations,

1 - Qoran : XVII, 1. 35

son of 'Ali. (Reciting poetry in apostrophes to Yazīd) :

1 - Note the rhymed prose (saj') in Arabic:

أنا ابن من فوق يسلمين يا حسين يا حسين يا حسين يا حسين يا حسين يا حسين

swore the two allegiances, (bi'a) fought at the two battles of Badr and Hunain, and never for a single instant disowned 15 his faith in God.⁽¹⁾ I am a son of the Mistress of women; a son of him whom God hath inspired most radiantly; a son of Fāṭima, the bright-faced lady; a son of Khadīja the greatest. Therefore, I adjure you all by Allāh, do you know who I am ?

SHIMR AND SOLDIERS - Yes, we do. 20

ZAIN - Do you know who my grandfather was ?

SHIMR - (laughing) Oh, yes, indeed !

ZAIN - Did you know who my grandmother, Khadīja daughter of Khuwailid, the first lady-Moslem was ?

SHIMR - Oh, yes, indeed !

ZAIN - Do you know that this turban which I am wearing is my 25 grandfather, Mohammed's, and this is his very 'abā(garment) in which I am garbed ?

SHIMR - Yes, indeed !

ZAIN - Wherefore, then, do you quarrel with me ? Is it about a compact I have infringed, a Shari'a I have altered, or 30 a Sunna I have tampered with ?

SHIMR - By Allāh, we fight you only out of hatred for your father, Husein, and your grandfather, 'Ali Ibn Abi-Tālib. (to the people) :

Hasten, friends, convey the good tidings to the Commander of the Faithful; say that I have slain Husein 35 son of 'Ali.(Reciting poetry in apostrophe to Yazīd) :

1 - Note the rhymed prose (saj') in Arabic:

انا ابن من ضرب بسيفين وطعن برمحين، هاجر المهجرين وباع البيعتين، قاتل بيد
حنين، ولم يكف بالله طرفه عين.

"Load up my saddle-bag with silver and gold,

For it is I who have slain the venerable lord;

" I, who have slain the best-fathered and best-mothered
one,

Truly the best of all men when genealogy is

considered". *Time : Forty days after*

(The processions march on to Stop "C").

The same persons, and Bashir Ibn Jadhlan

(Bashir, in advance of the procession, reaches Medina. He

recites an obituary Scene iii :

Damascus : Stop "C". Time: the next day

BASHIR : "O men of Damascus, how can you stay my leader

herein ? The same persons and Minhal

MINHAL - How farest thou this morning, O grandson of God's
Apostle ?

ZAIN - And how should fare one who has become a captive of

Yazid's ? Oh : Minhal, we members of the Prophet's

Household have been either tricked and slain, or else 5

sent away as vagabonds. Lo ! we are Allāh's and lo! unto

Him do we return.

(At this juncture the processions split into two parties, the
one party makes its way back home across point "E" on the
sketch. The other party halts at stop "D", where Zain repeats
his first speech, the one beginning: "Those who do wrong...")

(Soon after the speech, the processions head for the Huseiniyya, here representing Medina, whence the Hashimites who survived Karbalā returned.)

Scene iv

Medina ; Time : Forty days after
Karbalā

The same persons, and Bashīr Ibn Jadhlam
(Bashīr , in advance of the procession, reaches Medina. He recites an obituary in poetry) :

BASHĪR : "O men of Yathrib, how can you stay any longer
herein ?

Know that Husein is slain : my tears are abundant;

His body at Karbalā is all blood-bespattered,

While his head is paraded round fixed upon a spear.

THE END

APPENDIX I

A GENERAL CRITIQUE ON "THE TRAGEDY OF KARBALĀ"

Analysis by Act and Scene

ACT I

Scene 1 : Right at the beginning of scene (1) the key-note of the drama is sounded. Husein, having received the news of the death of both Muslim and Hānī, and warned off Kūfa by the religious duty, for he says: "the slaying of a man for the Creator's cause would be much the preferable",

"Sons of Aqīl, what are your views about this ?

Scene 2 Upon the answer of the Banu Aqīl depends the rest of the drama. For, had they answered that they would return to Medina, Husein, could have refrained from further bloodshed. With their determination on revenge, he is placed, morally, in a delicate position which impels him to avenge their man. It would be more accurate, therefore, to regard the battle as having been lost at Tha'labā rather than Karbalā, for here at Tha'labā - i.e. Tha'labiyya - the fates of those at Karbalā have almost been sealed by the decided answer of the Banu Aqīl's chieftain : "By Allāh, we will never depart from thee until we have avenged ourselves against that rabble, or else have tasted of the same chalice Muslim has quaffed".

If the present writer were to produce this drama in the form of a cinema film, he would at this juncture, allow for a good long pause, and would after Husein's question, introduce a loud uprush of music to indicate the due significance of the situation.

ACT II

Furthermore, at Tha'labiyya the main purpose of Husein's rising has been defeated. It is obviously revenge for a murdered emissary, Muslim, that seems to drive him forwards. The lines of poetry recited before Al-Parazdaq, if at all, authentic, seem to be irrelevant to the context of retaliation unless, of course, Husein takes that same retaliation to be a religious duty, for he says: "The slaying of a man in the Creator's cause would be much the preferable".

Scenes ii & iii

In this scene (ii) however, Husein betrays his true aim from the rising, apart from retaliation. To Hurr, the general of the Umayyad expeditionary force, he states that he has been invited in writing to take over the Caliphate, or more precisely, the Imamate. He proposes to return in case the men inviting him change their minds. Hurr, a strict military man, will accept nothing but to accompany Husein under arrest to Kufa, by a deviation from the main route, though, Hurr knows the danger, and warns Husein against this. How much better it would have been if at this juncture, rather than later in the Play -(Act IV - i)- he had deserted the Umayyad army and gone over to Husein, or had at least allowed Husein to return home in peace !

ACT II

Scenes i - vi (inclusive) are devoted to designating Ibn Sa'd to the generalship of the Umayyad force drawn up against Husein. In Scene ii, Ibn Ziad sends a written ultimatum, demanding fealty : Husein witholds his fealty. In Scene iii - the brief colloquy between Habib and Qurra to win his alliance hardly advances the development, and it is already too late to recruit helpers. Scene v- is unnecessary except of course, for stage requirements, since the messenger Qurra could not have easily disappeared on the bare stage. In Scene vi - the award of the Ray District seems to have been previously agreed upon, for till then, we had heard nothing about it.

Scene vii - includes a genuine dramatic conflict in the four lines of poetry :-

"By Allāh , I wonder ... not one wise man has ever exchanged cash for a debt". Thus Ibn Sa'd decides to fight Husein in exchange of receiving the fertile Ray District, although he knows full well that the crime of slaying Husein will certainly be punished by Hellfire. The next brief colloquy between Ibn Sa'd and the Bedouin is dramatically irrelevant, unless the latter represents the Huseinite proclivities of the common man.

Scene viii - Here Ibn Ziad forces Ibn Sa'd to a decision and makes him take up hostilities against Husein, by his being put in command of the Ummayad force drawn up to fight Husein and his men.

ACT III

Scene 1 - Ibn Sa'd's final attempt to save Husein's life is rejected by Ibn Ziad, and in Scene 11 - Shimr has a part to play. In a specific intelligence amounting to a threat to hand over the generalship of the army to Shimr, Ibn Sa'd's mediation is thus frustrated, particularly when Shimr in person carries the letter to Ibn Sa'd.

Scenes 111 and 1v - partly because of blood-relationship, partly in an attempt to isolate Husein, Shimr offers quarter to 'Abbas and his brothers. However, the offer is rejected, and Ibn Sa'd gives the command to attack. Husein asks for the respite of a night for prayers, and is granted his request. The scene of prayers is only understood, not represented.

Scene v - vii (inclusive) - bridge the interval of time for the overnight truce. It is dramatically remarkable that Husein gives his men permission to slink away in the dark night, which permission they all decline. Yet, the slight dramatic conflict thus created is by far outweighed by the lack of verisimilitude; for here, one must doubt the possibility of escape through the impenetrable Umayyad siege. The fact is confirmed in Scene vii in Habib's line: "Had the grouse been left alone, they would have surely dozed and gone to sleep".

Scene 1v - Upon hearing his master's cry for help, Jawn, the negro slave, comes forward and wins the coveted honour of martyrdom, mixing his blood with that of the Hashimites.

ACT IV - Husein is in the fray. Single-handed he slays any

Scene i - Hurr is in a quandry which affords some dramatic effect. Any way, he at last makes up his mind, and goes over to Husein where he dies in action.

Scene ii - In this scene Husein's devotees individually come forward, ask for permission to fight and are given it : they dash into battle where they fight and die. At first, we have the Aqīlite chieftain. Next comes Burair, and finally the elderly sheikh, Ḥabīb Ibn Muzahīr. The rest of the unnamed devotees fight and die silently.

Scene iii - represents the fighting of the Hashimites themselves. Ali Al-Akbar, Husein's eldest son, affords quite a dramatic touch in his return from the heat of the fray to ask for a drop of water, but finds none. Husein places his own tongue on his son's, but in vain, for Husein's tongue "is drier and drier" than his. Thus parched does Ali go back to a desperate battle and is soon martyred. The short poetic elegy sung by his

father, Husein, is genuinely touching. Next falls Al-Qāsim, Husein's young nephew, and intended son-in-law. Finally comes 'Abbās. Both of his arms are chopped off in battle. He clutches his sword in his teeth and charges his last. His death elicits from Husein the deeply felt lamentation : "Now is my back broken etc..." The brief gesture of wiping the dust off 'Abbās' head, though simple in itself, is, nevertheless, dramatic.

Scene iv - Upon hearing his master's cry for help, Jawn, the negro slave, comes forward and wins the coveted honour of martyrdom, mixing his blood with that of the Hashimites.

Scene v - Husein is in the fray. Single-handed he slays any of the enemy who comes out to fight him. Ibn Sa'd has therefore, to resort to a group attack : he surrounds him with four whole troops, until, overwhelmed, Husein falls. Shmr cuts Husein's head off, burns his Camp, and leads his women and children into captivity. Muslim, virtually tantamount to the fall of Husein's own cause, ought to have aroused more enquiry and astonishment

ACT V

This act is divided into four scenes, all of which are devoted to public addresses delivered from camel-back by Ali, Zain Al-Abidin, Husein's captured son. There are hardly any dramatic situations worth noting, except, of course, for the brief action in Scene i, where Shmr breaks the jar in Zain's hand, and in Scene ii, where, in answer to Zain's rhetorical questions, he repeats his sarcastic : "Oh, yes, indeed ! "

CHARACTERS

Characterisation is by no means the best characteristic of this Play. For, shackled as he is with the literal wording of the sira, and with an eye on the censures of the outer world, the writer could hardly draw a character of any originality, if in fact he had intended. Lacking life therefore, his characters look more like automatons, and puppets - indeed, it is the playwright who is a puppet to the sira.

Husein blocks of Karbalā for strategic purposes. His offer, on

The Husein of the drama is certainly less discreet, less brave, and less religious than the Imam Husein of the sīra. When, at Tha'labiyya, he receives the news of the death of Muslim and Hanī, his reaction is, dramatically, a poor one. The fall of Muslim, virtually tantamount to the fall of Husein's own cause, ought to have aroused more enquiry and astonishment on his part than the cool, brief, verse, "We are Allāh's, and unto Allāh do we return". Act I. i.20.

At Tha'labiyya, he becomes morally bound to avenge Muslim; at Dhū Husum, in the next scene, he becomes a prisoner in the hands of Hurr. At the former post the lion had already entered the cage, but the door was still open. It merely took a Hurr to lock the door upon it.

At Karbalā Husein rejects with contumely an offer of submissive amnesty: "Your Amīr, can have no reply with me etc.." (Act II. iii. 8-10). It is quite in character for Husein to say this, but it is contradictory to his request to be released, (Act III.i.12) - and, as a prisoner, he would no longer be able to choose.

His parley with the lenient Ibn Sa'd - (Act III.i.) via Jahūl, could, for a while, prolong our suspense, but it cannot defer the inevitable. When next we see Husein, it is on the eve of 'Ashūrā' (Act III.v.) at which time he is prowling round to Medina? (Act III.vii.17-18).

the hillocks of Karbalā for strategic purposes. His offer, on the occasion, to Hilal and his other followers to slink away "riding darkness as you would ride your camel", (Act III.vi.43) though intended by the dramatist to suggest Husein's sympathy for his men, obviously reflects unfavourably against the Imam's judgement. The offer of escape, if at all feasible, must, in a sense, bear with it the accusation of cowardice directed to his devoted adherents. His speech to the Banu Aqīl, "And thou, O Banu Aqīl, let Muslim's death suffice you," (Act III. vi. 48-49) is incompatible with his attitude in (I.i.) where he endorses their decided intention to avenge Muslim's murder.

One by one Husein's men ask permission to fight and are sent to the fray. The turn of his own family comes soon, and here, deep in affection, we find the man, the real Husein. Ali Al-Akbar's loss is equal to the loss of "the very pupils of his eyes", and 'Abbās' death did completely "break Husein's back". (Act IV. iiii). The inevitable end is near at hand. Husein takes the field : he fights so fiercely that it takes four whole troops to get the better of this single-handed Imam.

Ali Al-Akbar

A brave, young lad who at once excites both our sympathy and admiration. He betrays an initial fear of death : he says, "Would you, O Uncle Ḥabīb, counsel my father to return with us to Medina ? (Act III.vii.17-18). This is only natural from

dust off his head, 'Abbās, in agonies, declines the kind gesture, from a lad of nineteen, but it is incompatible with his courageous attitude later in the play. In battle Ali is at first victorious, but he is so overcome by thirst that he runs back for a drop of water. His father, Alas ! is more parched than he. To prove it, he places his own tongue over his son's; but it is of no use, for Husein's tongue is "drier and drier" (Act IV. iii. 22). The son returns, therefore, thirsty to do battle and die. There is as much genuine acting in Ali's fighting as in his sad death. Husein must have felt to the quick the loss of such a favourite son. His last elegy sung over Ali's death is not merely hyperbolic :

"After thee, let whoever would die, die".

'Abbās

A brave, sympathetic soldier. He rejects a grant of quarter for himself and his brothers only because Husein is not included therein. "Would you grant us safety, while the grandson of God's Apostle has none ? " (Act III.iv. 11-14) says 'Abbās to Shimr. In the same scene, upon instructions from Husein he petitions and receives an overnight truce for prayers. When next we meet 'Abbās it is in the midst of the fray, with both his arms chopped off. He grasps his sword in his teeth and charges his last. Until the very end his sympathies for Husein are sustained. When Husein tries to wipe the

dust off his head, 'Abbās, in agonies, declines the kind gesture, simply because Husein will have no one by his side to do him the same kindness when his turn to die comes. Hence comes the current title given to 'Abbās : "The sympathetic brother". That is apart from his magnanimity and military talent. Husein's brief, but genuine, elegy over 'Abbās is evoked as much by brotherly love as by true desserts : "Now is my back broken; now are my forces dispersed etc." (Act IV.iii.77).

Jawn the Slave

Of all the minor characters of the Play due credit must be given to Husein's negro slave, Jawn, whom Husein "emancipates for the sake of God" - (Act IV.iv.10-11). The good slave could have been free from blame had he preferred to survive Karbalā. Yet, imbued with a sense of deep gratitude, he proves himself no less honourable than his Hashimite masters themselves. Husein must have duly appreciated the genuine emotion of his good slave to have uttered upon his death the prayers of mercy : "Whiten , O Lord, his face, make fragrant his smell, and on Doomsday assemble him together with the virtuous." (ACT IV.iv.23-24).

Hurr

Whereas the character of Hurr , on the one hand, affords a streak of dramatic conflict between stern military discipline and religious proclivities, it is found, on the other, to be

lacking in the clear presentation of either. The character-sketch is so poorly drawn that dramatic inconsistency must surely result.

When he meets Husein, the destiny of the latter is finally sealed. In spite of the tender note heard from Hurr, Husein is virtually a prisoner in his hands. He would never veer

from his military orders; his proposal to Husein to take a bisecting line between the routes to Medina and Kūfa is less dishonest to military duty than it is destructive to Husein's cause.

It should have been at Mount Dhū-Husum, if at all, that Hurr deserted to support Husein. His army of a thousand strong, fully equipped, could have constituted a tangible menace, besides providing moral support. He denies having known of the invitation sent to Husein, yet he belies himself soon after his desertion, when he says, "O you men of Kūfa ... you have invited this virtuous bondman etc." (Act IV.i.38-40). Yet Hurr would take no more than half-measures. He accompanies Husein's cavalcade to Karbalā whence he despatches a special intelligence to Ibn Zīād reporting the arrest. And, of what avail, we wonder, is Hurr's warning to Husein against fighting? (Act I.iii.11-14). Does he not know that Husein was rising as a claimant to the Caliphate? Had not both Muslim and Hānī been executed for the sake of Husein's cause? Or are we to take

1 - It is noteworthy that among all the 'Ashūrā' dirges there is not one for the memory of Hurr.

Hurr's plausible pretext that he thought he would be able to placate matters and so insure Husein's safety? And how could he think that when he had seen the whole of Kūfa terrified with violence? Or, else, could such a big military figure as he, have been wholly ignorant of the state of affairs? The entire situation is hopelessly inconsistent.

Ibn Sa'd

In Act IV. Scene 1, Hurr deserts to Husein. But his desertion has come too late to benefit the Imam. Husein forgives him, the Shia bless his repentence⁽¹⁾ but, to our thinking, after the Banu Aqīl, Hurr is the one most answerable for the Karbalān calamity. He is not a whit better than Ibn Sa'd or Ibn Zīād - indeed, we would venture to rate him on a level with Shimr, nay lower, since the latter could never have practised his atrocities had the former not hunted down the "prey". We wonder whether the blessing of the Shia offered Hurr is, in a sense, a word of thanks for Hurr's instrumentality in the alleged vicarious redemption through Husein's death. Upon that analogy, they should have to bless also Shimr and Yazīd as well, and the Christians, in like manner, should have to bless Iscariot, who, too, helped in bringing about the salvatory crucifixion of Christ!

Husein's proposal of "either returning to Medina or moving away to the border towns", (Act III.1.73-74) and to this effect

Ibn Zīād

A man of decisive nature, fit for governorship. Had he not acted as quickly as he did, the fates of the battle might well have turned. He assigns Ibn Sa'd to lead a force of four

1 - It is noteworthy that among all the 'Ashūrā' dirges there is not one for the memory of Hurr.

thousand against Husein. When this commander begins to waver, Ibn Zīād is firm. "Is it now, when our own claws have been transfixed in him, that he hopes to escape? How impossible!" says he. He follows that with the threat to replace Ibn Sa'd whereupon the latter yields and gives command to charge.

Ibn Sa'd

This character deserves admiration rather than damnation from the Shia. It is natural in him, as in any one else, to yield to the temptation of rank and gold, yet, to do him justice, we have to admit that, until the end, he had good intentions towards Husein, and tried to smooth over matters without, if possible, dipping his hand in Hashimite blood. Above all, it is thanks to him that Zain Al-Abidin survived Karbalā, preserving through his progeny the line of the Shi'ite Imams, since Shimr would not have spared even the young, sick Zain. (Act V.i.35-38). There is no inconsistency about his personality. The conflict working in his mind endows him with more 'life', and, in consequence, contributes to the Drama as a whole. "Should I lose Ray ... or...return guilty with slaying Husein? (Act II.vii.3-4), he asks in soliloquy. On Karbalā too, he is willing to consider Husein's proposal of "either returning to Medina or moving away to any of the border towns", (Act III.i.13-14) and to this effect he writes to Ibn Zīād. But, faced with resolute decisions, particularly with Shimr threatening to take over the command, Ibn Sa'd has no alternative but to command an attack: "You, horsemen of God, forward ride". (Act III.iv.15).

the Had Ibn Sa'd abdicated the generalship of the Umayyad force, he would have lost not only the coveted award of Ray, but with it, his whole military prestige with the Umayyad rulers; above all, he wouldn't have saved Husein, Shimr being available to command in his stead.

He makes no secret of his hearty gloating over the misfortunes of the Hashimites: he meets the questions of Zain with a sarcastic

Shimr

Shimr is perhaps the most vividly sketched character in the Play. Right at his first appearance he betrays his true talents: "Oh ! would you, O Amīr ? Would you ever grant him so much ? ..." (Act III.ii.8-19). Thus at the crucial moment he counsels Ibn Zīād against Husein's possible escape. Having secured for himself the tentative position of generalship, he sets out for Karbalā where, with characteristic firmness, he compels Ibn Sa'd to a final decision: "Now, do tell me at once, Ibn Sa'd, what you intend : will you carry out the express orders... or ... hand over charge of the whole army to me ?" In face of that, Ibn Sa'd gives way. (Act III.iii.9-12). He interferes with the tactics of Karbalā , and, in Act III. scene iv, we see him go in person to isolate Husein. Having thus ignited the spark, he recedes into the background, and is seen only in the final moment where his cruelty finds full scope, since out of all the affrighted soldiers, it is he who advances towards the dying Husein and cuts off his head in cold blood. He then orders the camp to be stormed and looted and then set on fire. It is again he who leads the

the young Zain and the other survivors into captivity. On the route, his cruelty is once more expressed when he tentatizes the sick Zain by pouring fresh water on the ground before him without giving him a drink. And when the poor, thirsty lad asks for a drink, and takes up the jar, Shimr smashes it to pieces (Act V.i.). He makes no secret of his hearty gloating over the misfortunes of the Hashimites: he meets the questions of Zain with a sarcastic "Yes, indeed!", that is, "Yes, you are indeed the sons of the family of Mohammed; so what ?" and, in the end, he puts it to him flatly, "We fight you only out of hatred for your father Husein, and your grandfather, Ali Ibn Abi-Tālib." Like Ibn Sa'd, Shimr seems to expect a particularly generous reward for slaying Husein; for in his last apostrophe to Yazīd, he says:

"Load up my saddle-bag with silver and gold,
For it is I who have slain the venerable lord".

(Act V.ii.37-38).

It is thanks to such characters as Shimr, Ibn Sa'd, and Hurr, that the present Tragedy of Karbalā deserves the name "drama".

Construction and General Characteristics

Tragic Theme

The tragic theme of the Play is the death of Husein in battle against great odds. But there is hardly any special structural device in the drama to denote that theme. The general features of grimness and apparent inevitability, commonly associated with the space of time that should have elapsed.

classical tragedy are more a matter of historical coincidence than the result of deliberate design. Husein finds himself in a fatal situation against which he struggles in vain, until he eventually falls - a martyr. The devout audience expect this destiny for Husein, which fact contributes largely to confirm for the Tragedy the title of "Miracle" play.

Dramatic Divisions

The Play does not lend itself to clear-cut dramatic divisions. Both the Exposition and the Complication are assumed in advance. The initial silent tour of the stage, which both the antagonistic parties make, could possibly serve as a semi-exposition but no exposition in the dramatic sense of the word. As it is, the Tragedy opens with the Climax, i.e. the death of Muslim, a virtual death to Husein's Cause itself. The Resolution is not far to come: for, in the same scene, Husein decides to resume his march upon Kūfa. He is met by Hurr who leads him and his men to Karbalā. The preliminary negotiations and parleys merely prolong the Resolution. The Catastrophe is embodied in the actual battle, whereas the whole of the Captivity scene - Act V.- forms a sort of Denouement.

Unities of Time and Place

The unities of time and place are almost lost sight of. For example, a messenger takes but a few seconds to go from Karbalā to Kūfa and vice-versa, an actual distance of no less than seventy miles. There are no speeches to fill up, or point out, the space of time that should have elapsed.

Several scenes are included to no obvious dramatic purpose. One such scene is in Act III.ii. where Ḥabīb Ibn Muẓāhir endeavours to win over Qurra to Husein's side. In the same Act, the whole of scene v. has been devoted to despatching one verbal message to summon Ibn Sa'd to the presence of the Governor. On the other hand, some particularly dramatic situations - in the sīra - have been unaccountably excluded : for example, the slaughter of 'Abdullāh, Husein's suckling babe; and the wedding ceremony of Al-Qāsim and Sikna.

Focus is the dilemma of Ibn Sa'd just before his acceptance of the commission of Commander-in-Focus. His poetic soliloquy (Act II.vii.) ends in him being

In this Drama the question of Focus deserves due consideration. Before the Battle starts, we have several scenes devoted to preliminary negotiations at the Umayyad head-quarters. But, apart from these, the Drama, as a whole, is deliberately biassed in favour of Husein. Consequently, what we are shown for the most part is only one side of the picture. From the beginning of Act III.Scene iv. down to the last scene of the Catastrophe, we are all the time in Husein's camp. And, when Act V. opens, we hear scarcely nothing except the speeches of Husein's younger son, Zain Al-'Abidīn.

Dramatic Significance

It is possible to consider the present Drama only in part dramatic. The conflict between good and evil, the very essence and pith of drama, is here met with only at rare points:

(a) Husein's hearing of the death of Muslim and Hānī, in the opening scene of the Play, seems to arouse such conflict within his soul as makes him turn to the Banu Aqīl with his question : "Sons of Aqīl, What are your views about this ?"

(b) Less genuine is the conflict arising in Hurr's mind in his long soliloquy at Dhū-Husum. Less genuine it is because less honest than, for instance, his quandry immediately before his desertion to Husein in Act IV. scene 1.

(c) A true dramatic conflict is the dilemma of Ibn Sa'd just before his acceptance of the commission of Commander-in-chief. His poetic soliloquy (Act II.vii.) ends in his being swept along with the temptation of gold to the neglect of heavenly reward. Yet his hesitation till the last moment before the Battle indicates that the conflict has been working deep within his soul.

Husein at Dhū Husum.

There are undeniably short flashes of original dramatic suspense, as in :

(a) Act II. scene iii, where Husein receives Ibn Zīād's ultimatum. But here our suspense is sustained no longer than the short while of his reading the letter; for, soon after, we see him reject the offer with contumely.

(b) Shimr's attempt at isolating Husein (Act III.iii-iv). Here again the suspense is short-lived, since 'Abbās, to whom quarter is offered in return for deserting Husein, at once rejects all proposals of amnesty in which the grandson of the Apostle of God is not included.

(c) Shimr's feigned show of kindness in offering water to the thirsty captive, Zain, (V.i.) affords a good short suspense which ends with the abrupt breaking of the water-jar in Zain's hands. An almost equally dramatic situation is in Shimr's sarcastic answers to Zain's earnest address, ending with his rhetorical question, "Do you know who I am ? nascent Islam,

The pathetic deaths of Ali Al-Akbar, then of 'Abbās, are dramatic, rather because they excite compassion than provide suspense. of camels and horses, but that is almost all. The

Arabian concept of retaliation underlying the development of
Verisimilitude

With regard to verisimilitude, we feel we are standing on the more solid ground of the historical sīra. Still, we can find a few situations that are totally lacking in this respect: would not observe my blood-link with God's Apostle, at least

(a) The pretended loyalty of Hurr upon meeting and arresting Husein at Dhū Husum.

(b) Husein's offer to his men to steal away in the dark on Ashūrā' night (Act III.v-vi). The only possible means of escape, if escape ought to be contemplated at all, is to break through the strong Umayyad siege, an act only second to impossible.

(c) In Act III scene iv. it is hardly believable that a mere private soldier should speak for his Commander-in-chief, especially with regard to such a weighty affair as granting a respite to the enemy. is still on desert land with neither oasis nor hope of success in sight. The Euphrates is ahead; but when Kufa is reached,

Husein(d) The final attack upon Husein entails four whole troops to be engaged. This is obviously extravagant, but it is safely covered with a historical background in the sīra. Then the surviving women and children are led into captivity to Damascus.

The Age a route all arid desert as well.

(Vib) Apart from copious topical allusions to nascent Islam, very little information about the age of Husein can be gathered from this Play. We do hear of Divine rights, of desert-encampments, of camels and horses, but that is almost all. The Arabian concept of retaliation underlying the development of the Drama, belongs as much to Husein's days as to the (55-58). Pre-Islamic era. One classical allusion, particularly pre-Islamic, is referred to in Husein's challenge: "... since you would not observe my blood-link with God's Apostle, at least go you back to your Pre-Islamic gallantry etc.." (Act IV.v.1-4).

Atmosphere to sink away in the dark; but one and all, they are

An all-pervading atmosphere of tragedy envelops the Play. This is better studied under four different headings, namely: Setting, Plethora of Violence, Tone, and Lack of Comic Relief.

(Setting) - It is Arabia, dry and waterless. Hurr meets Husein's train and escorts them along an intermediary deviation known only to At-Tirimmāh. The Hidā' sung by the latter does, in fact, alleviate the dryness - of the souls - yet, the group is still on desert land with neither an oasis nor hope of success in sight. The Euphrates is ahead; but when Karbalā is reached, during which head-wounds are inflicted, must afford, to the audience, a living representation of the Karbalian heroes; a scene more eloquent than the mere words of the Drama.

Husein and men are cut off from its water. They suffer from a long, burning thirst - until they die. No sooner has the massacre be committed, and the camp sacked and burnt, than the surviving women and children are led into captivity to Damascus via Kūfa, a route all arid desert as well.

(Violence) - Almost from beginning to end, the word "Blood", pronounced or understood, runs through the Play like a scarlet thread. First, it is the blood of Muslim and Hānī, which draws Husein, morally, to his fate. Then at Karbalā Husein orders his men thus: "Dismount all... here is the slaughtering-place of our men, the shedding-place of our blood etc..(Act I.iii.56-58). In his written instructions to Ibn Sa'd, the Governor, Ibn Zīād, says, "...if he refuses to do so, march directly against him until thou hast slain and mutilated him and all his men etc..." (Act III.ii.29-31). On the eve of 'Ashūrā', Husein grants his men permission to slink away in the dark; but one and all, they are determined to shed their blood to the last drop. The next morning is 'Ashūrā' proper: blood flows in abundance. First it is the blood of Hurr; next comes the Banu Aqīl chieftain, then Burair, then others, and lastly Habīb Ibn Muṣāhir. The rest, of the Hashimite men follow suit, not forgetting the gracious blood of the negro slave, Jawn. ⁽¹⁾ Eventually, Husein's valuable blood is shed at Karbalā, and his head severed by Shimr. Of the mutilations in the massacre the sīra books supply more details than

1 - The two short interludes coming withing Act IV. Scene iii., during which head-wounds are inflicted, must afford, to the audience, a living representation of the Karbalān heroes; a scene more eloquent than the mere words of the Drama.

the Drama which makes mention only of the chopping off of 'Abbās' arms, before he is completely vanquished.(Act IV.iii).

There is in Act V, in fact, no scene of slaughter or blood; yet we are all the time reminded of the massacre in the public addresses of Zain Al-Abidin, until in the very last lines, Bashīr conveys to the Medinites that:

"...Husein is slain...his body at Karbalā is all blood bespattered; While his head is paraded round fixed upon a spear".
(Act V.v.3-5).

(Tone) - Both in and outside the scenes of death, the tone of the Play is one of elegy, vengeance, or courageous resignation to fate. There is as much courage as resignation in Husein's lines :

"Since bodies are created for death..."(Act I.i.63-65).

The followers of Husein are all of them disgusted with life, and they die courageously in the hope of life hereafter.

Vengeance is denoted by the line recited by Ibn Ziad :

"Is it now, when our own claws have been transfixed in him,

That he hopes to escape ? How impossible !"(Act III.ii.4-5).

And in (Act V.i.30 -32) Shimr rejoices at the chance of "venting our long-concealed rancour". Equally revengeful is Husein's invocation: "Scatter them about, O Lord, and never let their rulers be pleased with them.(Act IV.iv.3-4). The tone is also elegiac : almost everywhere in the Drama, particularly in Husein's eulogies over the martyrs from his own family, such as 'Abbās

and Ali Al-Akbar. To say nothing of the assumed lamentation of the Hashimite women and children in Husein's camp. Figures of speech are sparse : we have only a few of such original (Lack of Comic Relief) - Apart from Shimr's irony in breaking the jar in Zain's hands, there is his brief sarcastic retort of "Yes, indeed" (Act V.1.); but nothing else by way of relief. The final act is perhaps, ironical from beginning to end. This is observed in the unfavourable contrast tacitly made between the two Huseinite trains: the would-have-been triumphant majesty as opposed to the present ignoble Captivity. Generally speaking, grimness broods over this tragedy; the entire atmosphere is oppressive with something malignant and revengeful in the forces of the world. In a sense, the Play of Karbalā is a tragic irony on the ultimate scheme of things.

A General Literary Appreciation

On the literary side the Drama is possessed of but few merits. It is a prose Drama - in Arabic - with several interpolations of poetic passages. The language is of course, classical. Indeed, the diction in places is so classical as to verge on the archaic. The modern reader comes across a considerable number of words which are unfamiliar to him. For example we have :

الطغام ، خار الله لك (Act I.i.40,44)

الاشوس والاقعوس (Act III.vi.11)

جمع ، حلا (Act IV. i.26,43)

Unlike the current Arabic tendency, the style, rather than being decorative, is almost plain and straightforward. Figures of speech are sparse : we have only a few of such original metaphors as :

"The Prophet's aromatic flower, the whelp of the lion, Ali"

(Act I.iii.3); and, "Ride (darkness) as you would ride

your camel" (Act III.vi.42); or such exquisite similes as

in Shimr's words : "See, how very like a bar of silver water looks!" (Act V.1.39-40).

The poetic passages in the Play are mostly derived from other sources. They are used roughly in four different situations:

i - To express moral or religious aphorisms; as in :

"It is humiliation enough for one to live under coercion". (Act I.iii.23-24);

"There is no use in one who has got no good (heart)

(Act IV.ii.12).

ii - To confirm a decision, as in :

"Verily, life here can go only with rapid results, etc.

(Act II.vii.9-10) which in the context amounts to a

decision on the part of Ibn Sa'd who prefers "rapid

results", and decides against Husein. This also applies

to Husein's aphorismic decisions as in (i) above.

iii- To challenge the enemy; wherein a warrior recites poetry

to declare his genealogy, courage, or readiness to die

for Husein.

iv - For singing; either *hidā'*, as in the singing of *At-Tirimmāh*, (Act I.iii.40-51); or elegy, as in the couplet sung by *Husein* over his dead son (Act IV.iii.39-43); and the elegiac tune sung in eulogy of 'Abbās in the same Act and Scene, lines (83-86).

Both in the prose as in the poetry there is a dearth of pictorial charm; the only flashes of poetic imagery worth noting are : "Is it now, when our own claws have been transfixed in him etc..." (Act III.ii.4-5);

and : *Husein's* elegy over his son, *Ali* : "Thou hast been the very pupil of mine eyes etc.." (as in No. iv above).

The Arabic tendency to rhythmical prose *"saj'"* is noticed in the letter of ultimatum to *Husein*, where the letter (r ,) alliterates at the end of the words (Act II.ii.7-12); and, in *Zain's* speeches, particularly the one alliterating in the letter (n ن)(Act V.ii.12-15).

There is a poetic pun made on the words : "*fadl*" and "*Ibā'*" in *Husein's* line :

"O Abu'l *Fadl*, thou it is who hast established both "*fadl*" (virtue) and "*Ibā'*" (disdain) etc. (Act IV.iii.83.) ⁽¹⁾

And in prose too, there is such playing upon words, as in *Husein's* ill augury of the word *Karbalā*, which, if split, could mean "torment and tribulation" (see foot-note Act I.iii.55).

The metre of the poems differs with different situations in the Play; it is generally the "ṭawīl" which is more suited to elegiac recitation. At-Ṭirimmāh, the desert-scout, recites his ḥidā' in the "rajaz" metre, while the challenges are uttered in the "Kāmil" either full or incomplete, though in these, i.e. the challenges, such other metrical varieties as "rajaz" or "sarī'" may, as well, be met with. The metre is of course, correct, but there are a few enjambments, where the meaning is run on, as in the example below :-

"By Allāh, Lord of the Throne I swear, that we shall never leave your troops, until the gleaming swords have been sheathed" - in thee. (Act IV.iii.31).

والله ربّ العرش لا تفارق م جميعكم او تغمد البوارق

APPENDIX II

ACTORS AND THEIR PARTS

As a result of personal interview with a number of the main actors in the Drama, the present writer has produced the following brief report on their respective attitudes towards the parts they play. The general features of this report are:

- (a) - The actors are all from Nabatiyya, though they have not necessarily always lived there. The main parts are by tradition played by certain families.
- (b) - No fees are received for acting. The actors regard their performance more as a service to religion, hence their keenness to keep their parts to themselves, and and the desire of other youngmen to participate in the shabih.
- (c) - The actors are mainly tradesmen; their general education is elementary and their dramatic education almost nil. Still, they do feel the necessity for a better stage and a more improved production.

Here below are the names of the actors whose views have in particular added to the Report:

| Part | Actor | Age years | How long acting the part years | Profession |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Husein | Fu'ad Kuhail | 35 | 6 | Secretary Publication office |
| 'Abbas | Hassan Kuhail | 32 | 6 | Sports master |
| Ali Al-Asghar | Habib Jābir | 60 | 20 | Barber |
| Shimr No. 1 | Hasan Sallūm | 25 | 6 | File-caster |
| Shimr No. 2 | Yūsuf Nahli | 65 | 25 | Butcher |
| Habib B. Muzāhir | Mohammed Qāsim Kuhail | 28 | 2 | Postman |
| Hilāl | Qāsim Qudaih | 28 | 9 | Stuffer of mattresses |
| Qurra | Habib Farrān | 24 | 6 | File-layer |

Husein - Fu'ad Kuhail

"It has devolved on me of late," he began, "not only to act the part of Husein, but to undertake in addition the production of the Drama as a whole. To three brothers of mine I have assigned

main parts, in accordance with the will of our late father.

While he lived, father was always zealous about keeping alive Husein's memory and used to play Husein himself. We, his sons, have inherited both the Part and the Wish to keep up 'shabīh' which we carry on with, under the auspices of our town sheikh, the Reverend Mohammed Taqi Sādiq".

"Are there in production any special features in which you are particularly interested ? " I asked.

"I am interested in the improvement of the production as a whole, but I have been able to add little beyond putting down the tunes for the few chants in the Drama, i.e. the hidā' of At-Tirimmāh, and the short elegies for both Ali Al-Akbar and 'Abbās."

"What is your personal attitude towards your own part, and your opinion about the other actors?" I asked again.

"I do not deny that the business is a religious service for which I reserve due respect, as well for my own benefit, as for the sake of my co-religionists. I wish the actors would perform their parts better so that the presentation could be more polished than it is at present. It is clear that, with a little more attention and practice, they will be able to do so, since they all take the performance very much to heart.

'Abbās - Hassān Kuhail

Having known of my meeting with Fu'ād, his brother, he said that he had very little to add to what Fu'ād had said. "In general", he continued, "I believe the 'Ashūrā' drama must be accorded much more attention, since we see that, for no material benefit, the Nabatiyya lads vie with one another in order to take a part, any part, in the Play. During acting, many of the actors, go about their parts as though absorbed in some high sacrament or rite, and not in a mere dramatic entertainment".

"Please, tell me how you personally feel about your part. How about the cutting off of both of your arms in the Play ? " I asked.

" I have as much respect for my part as does my brother for his; and, as for the performance, I have acted the same part enough times to be able to manage the movements all right. In the simulated battle, I hide first my right, then my left arm under my 'abā; after that, I take my sword in my teeth for a while, and that is it."

"So there is something interesting about it ? " I asked.

Ali Al-Asghar - Habīb Jābir⁽¹⁾

It was difficult for me to get an appointment from this busy barber who is also a "Mukhtār" of the town, until one day he found

1 - Despite his old age, this actor, being of small stature, can more truly represent Ali Al-Asghar, who, according to the sira, had been a young boy of ten or less.

Although irrelevant, is repeated four times over.

me in his barber's chair asking questions about his part in the Drama.

"What is your part like, please ?" said I.

He immediately began to recite from memory the whole of his speeches. I therefore had to interrupt : " I meant to ask about your attitude towards the performance of the said part."

So he answered : "My part, as Zain Al-Abidin, comprises little (more) beyond the delivery of speeches to the public. The scene

of the "breaking of the jar" is however an indispensable addition; for the illiterate sections of the audience look forward each year to see the jar in my hands broken".⁽¹⁾ "As

for my feeling, " he continued, it is my wish to be able to continue to act this part for the rest of my days. To me, a God fearer, acting in the shabih is actual work rather than mere acting; in riding on camel-back, I feel I assume the personality of the very revered Imam Zain Al-Abidin himself. In this belief of mine I have been confirmed by a special incident of a supernatural kind".

"So there is something interesting about it ? I asked.

" I can hardly recollect the incident without having my hair stand on end," said he. "I have always known that the scenes of the processional captivity could never be enacted without me. It was one of those days around Muharram, ten years ago,

1 - Indeed, several jars; since to cater for the taste of the more impassioned sections of the audience, the same scene, although irrelevant, is repeated four times over.

1 - In the Nabatiyya shabih there are two shabih, i.e. two actors taking the part of Shihar, one of whom, namely Shabih, appears only in act V.

when a slight misunderstanding with the late Sheikh, drove me to take an oath never more to act in the "shabīh" under his auspices. He knew and absolved me of my oath, yet I would not withdraw. In a dream, my wife, (who never before had heard of the tiff with the Sheikh,) saw a green-turbaned old man, who shook his scimitar in her face saying, "You, tell him, tell him never to fail in his duty!" I augured ill of the dream, yet did not change my mind. When 'Ashūrā' day came round, a group of infuriated devotees, who learned of my pertinacity, chased me so hotly about the town that I escaped only narrowly. The danger was real, since many of them had their swords with them. In hiding I felt deep remorse, and, having made up my mind, ran back to the Qit'a where I arrived in time for my part. I hope no such slackness in 'duty' will ever enter my head again".

"Have you anything to say in connection with the Production?"

Shimr No. 1 - Hasan Sallūm (1)

"The stage, I believe," said he, "should be much modified. I appreciate," he began, "that my part, though not very long, constitutes a turning point in the Drama. I have been acting Shimr for the last six years; before me, both my brothers Ali and Ahmad did respectively take the same part. Now it is my legacy which I hope to be able to preserve. When first I appeared on the stage of shabīh, I remember how possessed with awe and reverence I was. Up till now I still have the same, or almost the same, attitude towards my part".

1 - In the Nabatiyya shabīh there are two Shimrs, i.e. two actors taking the part of Shimr, one of whom, namely Nahli, appears only in act V.

"What is your personal attitude about the severing of Husein's head ?" I put in.

"Since there is no actual decapitation represented," he answered, "this section of my part is often scamped. More usually the scene is drowned by the final rush of the audience onto the stage-circle".

"I have heard it said that the audience never like Shimr.⁽¹⁾

Have you yourself ever encountered any such feelings on their part ?" said I.

"Oh ! Of course, nobody loves Shimr - nor do I either," he answered. "I remember how several devout oldmen, with tears in their eyes, had fervently wished I were the real Shimr, that they might wreak their vengeance on me. Other young men and young women do sometimes threaten, but all in fun."

"Have you anything to say in connection with the Production?" I finally asked.

"The stage, I believe," said he, "should be much modified, though there is no necessity to change the locale, since the present Qit'a in the neighbourhood of the Huseiniyya house is endowed with a special blessing from Husein. Apart from that, we can, when acting there, more easily receive instruction from the Sheikh".

Shimr No. 2 - Yūsuf Nahli

"Ten years ago," he answered, "I used to undertake the performance of the part of Shimr in full, when it was less

1 - According to Stevens p.170, Shimr's part has resulted more than once in the death of the actor at the hands of the infuriated audience.

classical, and I younger. At present I am able to prepare the captives for the processions and to recite from memory (N.B. the man is illiterate) the short speeches connected therewith."

"I would quit the whole business, if I were your age," said I.

"Oh! Not I, so long as I am able to. I would never give up a service so light and yet so greatly rewarded in the hereafter; indeed, here in this world too, through the bounty of Husein, we derive much good fortune. Besides which we take special pride in shabīh acting. Do take a look at these snaps (presenting photographs) of myself during the performance; look at this costume and observe the grandeur of the ceremony; don't you find it altogether admirable?"

Taking me to his butcher's shop, he pointed to several other photographs on the wall, which represented previous 'Ashūrā' processions of the shabīh in which he took part.

Gurra - Habib Farzān

Habīb Ibn Muẓāhir - Mohammed Qāsim Kuhail

"Before these two 'Ashūrā's," he began, "I used to volunteer for minor parts in the Play, eg. a soldier or messenger. You see, we receive no pay for our acting, except with God. Hence in acting the present part of mine, I go about it with all due reverence and zeal. This is my personal attitude; as for my wish, it is that the shabīh in this town be improved and for ever commemorated."

Hilāl - Qāsim Qodaih

"In my late teens," said Qāsim , " I used to take the minor part of an Umayyad soldier escorting Shimr. I had little notion of what acting was, and when first I appeared on the stage, I was under the impression that I was to be killed de facto! As it happened, I only fell into a fainting fit, In the acting of my present role, I so concentrate upon the performance that I become almost unmindful of the whole audience about me. With me, reverence for Husein's memory is too all-embracing for me to be distracted by anything else."

"What is your personal opinion of the Drama as at present produced ?" I asked. (1)

" I suggest," said he, that the prevailing disorder about the actors and their parts - i.e. their entrance, exit, and delivery - should be reduced to a minimum. As for the stage, I wish there was a wire fence round the 'halaqa', seats for all the visitors, and several more microphones for the actors."

Qurra - Habīb Farrān - "Before my present part," he said, "I used to take part as a soldier. I became more interested in the Drama and began to look for better parts. Whatever my part, I strive to pay due attention to it, and cooperate with my fellow actors in trying to keep alive the 'Ashūrā' cause. My personal feeling towards my part is therefore one of deep veneration."

1 - The present writer takes Hilāl to be one of the best three actors in the Play, the others being Shimr No.1, and Husein.

APPENDIX III

THE
'ASHURĀ' FESTIVAL AT JIBSHĪT, LEBANON

(A PANORAMIC VIEW)

Figures 1 - 6

- 1 - Chanting and beating their breasts. Unlike the Nabatiyya demonstrations, the "lattama" parade with all their clothes on.
- 2 - Husein on the way to Karbalā. 'Abbās, the standard-bearer, is riding on Husein's right, and Ali Al-Akbar on Husein's left. The rest of the devotees follow behind on foot.
- 3 - To Karbalā. The Umayyad force heading for the field under the leadership of Ibn Sa'd (front). Shimr, with his plumed helmet, draws his sword in advance. In the rear rides Ibn Ziad, the governor of Kufa.
- 4 - The Stage. The few palm-tree branches mark the banks of the Euphrates. The little white tent representing Husein's Camp, constitutes a sharp anachronism: we remember that Husein's pavilions had been set up a good distance from the Euphrates and were cut off from the river.
- 5 - Another view of the Stage. The spectators begin to gather.
- 6 - The audience encircle the stage. In the midst, (lower left) stands the Commentator.

APPENDIX III

THE
'ASHURĀ' FESTIVAL AT JIBSHĪT, LEBANON
(A Panoramic View)

Figures 7 - 12

- 7 - The "Umayyad" leaders stand parleying with the "Banu Hashim". Shimr's sword is never sheathed.
- 8 - The fray at its hottest. 'Abbās, raising the Hashimite banner, challenges the foe.
- 9 - The end is at hand. Shimr proceeds against Husein. His companions seem to be much less earnest, though.
- 10- The aftermath of Karbalā. All wrapped up in a black woman's dress, is a male actor representing Zainab, a captive sister of Husein's.
- 11- Zainab delivers a speech. Although a good dramatic addition, the part seriously lacks verisimilitude : a captured woman drawing a sword.
- 12- Zain Al-Abidīn delivers an address before Caliph Yazīd. Like Zainab he, a captive, cannot be supposed to have retained his own sword either.

APPENDIX IV

A GENERAL CRITICISM OF

SIR LOUIS PELLY'S

"THE MIRACLE PLAY OF HASSAN & HUSEIN"

Among the several European works that deal with the 'Ashūrā' shabīh, there is, perhaps, no one more often referred to than the one under the title above. For criticisms of the said work, the present writer has come across Grunebaum : "Mohammedan Festivals"; and an article in Hastings: "Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics". The first writer, while devoting sufficient space to the doctrine of soteriology as expounded in Pelly, is almost neutral both with regard to that same theory and to the intrinsic value of the whole work as a Miracle play. The second authority, namely Hastings, although deeply impressed by Pelly, holds the work to be "doubtless, a product of the people."⁽¹⁾

Since we can hardly agree with either of these authorities, we believe it is valid to introduce the present personal criticism of the work. In this, we have tried to prove that the alleged doctrine of soteriology, if not altogether baseless is too inconsistent to stand up as an established theory. On the other hand, we venture to believe that, in view of its doctrinal material, at once copious and intricate, Pelly must be editing learned doctors of the Shi'ite creed rather than merely the "common people".

1 - Hastings : Encycl. of Religion and Ethics, p.897.

Then again, judging from the poor dramatic construction of the Play, as compared for instance, with the improved form of our "Lebanese" tragedy as in the present text, one can readily see how very unsafe it is to consider Pelly's "Miracle Play" as one of the most remarkable dramaturgic creations".⁽¹⁾

explained the purport of Scene II., in which Mohammed himself

A. Substance

In actual fact, the substance of Pelly's "Miracle Play" is much more apologetic than might at first sight appear. A further classical example of mourning for Hussein is Most of the scenes, if not all, have within them an underlying element of defence either of the creed itself or of the ritual observances based thereon. Didacticism, supposedly the rule in the work, allows ample ground for apologetic material expressly set to meet current non-Shi'ite Moslem stigmatizations. Almost equal space is devoted to expounding the hazy, unestablished doctrine of Soteriology.

To begin with, the loss of Joseph, Jacob's son, - in Scene I - apparently introduced for the sake of comparison with the more grievous loss at Karbalā of Ali Al-Akbar, does embody a special tacit apology for mourning Hussein. Since, through his excessive weeping, Jacob is said to have been struck blind,⁽²⁾ the excessive weeping of the Shia over

1 - Hastings, p. 897.

2 - Hullī : Naqd, p. 107.

1 - Sadīq : Sīma, p. 23

2 - "Fatīma, having been created through heavenly mediation, had never had any menstrual blood". Anis : Majālis, vol. V, p. 49.

Husein should, in analogy, be considered neither strange, nor in any form, illegal. Indeed, it becomes commendable in the face of the "Sunnite" tradition after Caliph 'Umar, to the effect that "a dead one will be tortured by the weeping over him of his own family or others".⁽¹⁾ In like manner must be explained the purport of Scene II., in which Mohammed himself sheds bitter tears over the death of his own son Ibrahim, indignant Zainab.

A further classical example of mourning for Husein is set for the Shiā' - the women in particular - in Scene XXII., where the Hashimite women "dye their garments black, smite their heads, or rend their collars in twain; while the bride of Qāsim bewails in a loud voice." In the next Scene XXIII., Zainab tacitly enjoins upon the Shia' to beat their breasts as hard as they would do a drum.

Equally apologetic is the remote allusion made to Ali's bravery in fighting for nascent Islam, in the expeditions of Uhud, Khaibar, and Badr, (Scene III). Ali's favourite wife Fātima, is, in Scene IV., called the Virgin.⁽²⁾ The death of Mohammed, Scene V., is introduced merely to confirm the patrimony of the Caliphate to Ali - alone. So too, is Scene VI. "The Khilaphat to Abu Bakr", which is included obviously to be tacitly disproved as unjust. In it Ali is only compelled

1 - Sādiq : Sīmā', p. 25

2 - "Fātima, having been created through heavenly mediation, had never had any menstrual blood". Amin : Majālis, vol.v.p.49.

to recognize the status quo. To coerce Ali into recognition, 'Umar, the second Caliph to be, had gone to the lengths of forcing his way into Ali's house where he even caused injuries to the most venerable Fāṭima. So, by way of showing how unsuitable they were to become Caliphs i.e. both Abu-Bakr and 'Umar -, the grave, unforgettable, mischief is here again divulged : " My mother was hurt by a poor wretch," says the indignant Zainab.

The death of Hasan, Scene IX., is made mention of in order to fan up the brands of hatred for 'Ayisha. For, it was she who unaccountably had opposed the burial of Hasan's corpse by Mohammed's side.

Lastly, though not leastly, we find the doctrine of Soteriology as pushed in within the body of the Drama under discussion. We use the phrase "Pushed in" because there is too much contradiction involved to allow for a clear, balanced argument. At one time we find Husein taking the role of a voluntary redeemer and forgiving in full the trespasses of his enemies; at another we find the same Husein invoking damnation upon the enemy and valiantly dashing forward to destroy them. The result is, of course inconsistent.

To begin with, we find that, in Scene XX., Gabriel brings word to Mohammed that "the salvation of Husein's fellow-creatures will be effected through his martyrdom." On the day of judgement Husein's intercession is superior even to

Mohammed's, since, "Of all prophets and mediators, Husein can raise the feet of sinners from the mud of destruction", (Scene XXXVII). In Scene XXIII Husein, quite voluntarily, offers his life "as a sacrifice for the sins of my people that they may be saved from the wrath to come". The same note is heard in Scene XII., where Husein declares, "I am going to offer myself most readily for my people," and, "I promise to offer my neck to Shmr", Scene V. Um-Laila, one of Husein's wives, is presented in Scene XVIII, as exalted high above maternal tenderness, for she assents to the sacrifice of Ali Al-Akbar, her own son, "in order to perplex and distract the wise of the world".⁽¹⁾ In support of the above, Husein expresses such compassionate emotions of clemency and indulgence as in the following short speeches :-

- (i) - I Scene XIII., he prays that "clouds of mercy may pour down rain on sinners".
- (ii) - He instructs Zainab, his sister, that, "when I am dead, curse not any infidel". Scene XVIII.
- (iii) - In Scene XXIII., he prays : "...for the merit of me, I pray thee, on the day of judgement, forgive, O merciful Lord, the sins of my grandfather's people."

Now, it is almost impossible to reconcile all the afore-said voluntary, sacrifice and forgiveness by Husein, with his revengeful attitude and tone in the same play and on the same occasion.

1 - One wonders whether in fact there was any voluntary sacrifice involved when this lady's son would by all accounts have been killed by the besieging enemy.

In Scene XIX., for instance, Husein vehemently instructs his men thus : "Arise, and fetch me my horse, I shall fight the battle of faith against the malicious unbelievers". In the same Scene he also says, "... the God of the two worlds shall avenge me on them". Most contradictory of all is the actual historical origin of Karbalā, where Husein fights so fiercely in order to send to their death the same people of his grandfather whom he both forgives and for whom, it is alleged, he is tasting death.

B. Dramatic Value

Dramatically speaking, Pelly's work scarcely deserves serious critical attention. It is much too long for dramatic performance, and suffers too gravely from broad realism, anachronisms, and lack of verisimilitude, to deserve to be called "drama". To begin with, we believe the work to be misnamed, and that for three different reasons :

(i) - It comprises many more plays than one to be called merely "a play".

(ii) - Although Husein figures conspicuously enough in the drama, his brother Hassan occupies too little space to justify the inclusion of his name in the title. In fact, most of the other figures are treated at equal, or greater, length than Hassan.

Nearly every one of these scenes is long enough, and independent enough, to stand as a drama in its own right. To

(iii) We wonder, what should become of those numerous other characters who, on the whole, are remotely connected with either Hassan or Husein, the theme being mainly apologetic. We therefore, think that Pelly's work should have been more aptly entitled: "The Shi'ite Creed in Miracle Plays". The editor could never have missed such a fact about the theme unless, of course, he takes the usurpation of the Caliphate first from Hassan, then next from Husein, to be itself the Shi'ite Creed in epitome.

So much for the Title, let us come now to the production. In its basic construction the Play of "Hassan and Husein" is so highly undramatic that one wonders whether it has ever been actually performed, or was even meant to be. The Supernatural element in the Play verges too closely on the incredible to be relished by a non-Shi'ite. The broad realism is also too repulsive for modern taste. For example, on his way to Karbala, Husein could have been "spirited away" for a brief while, during which he pays a fleeting visit to his father's grave at distant Najaf, and as soon returns to his caravan (Scene XIV). By virtue of the same superhuman power, he could have flown to India where his timely arrival saves from the dead and guides the family who find the damsel sound asleep among the corpses!

In the play there are as many as thirty seven scenes. Nearly every one of these scenes is long enough, and independent enough, to stand as a drama in its own right. To

perform them all in full on 'Ashūrā' day would be impossible - in fact the entire ten days of the 'Ashūrā' season would hardly suffice. Apart from that, there are a number of female characters whose parts could not have been "lawfully" enacted : no Shi'ite women are allowed to act, and the putting on of a woman's dress by a man is frowned upon by the doctors of the Creed. There are particular scenes which suffer from weak basic construction. For example, in Scene XI., Muslim speaks with his two sons, who are far away in their distant hiding-place. And they, without any separation or division whatever, both hear and respond to his conversation in the very next line.

The Supernatural element in the Play verges too closely on the incredible to be relished by a non-Shi'ite. The broad realism is also too repulsive for modern taste. For example, on his way to Karbalā, Husein could have been 'spirited away' for a brief while, during which he pays a fleeting visit to his father's grave at distant Najaf, and as soon returns to his caravan (Scene XIV). By virtue of the same superhuman power, he could have flown to India where his timely arrival saves the Shi'ite Sultan Ghiyath from a ferocious lion, then, in a few winks, have returned to Karbalā. (Scene XXII).⁽¹⁾

1 - Such tales as the above are virtually contradictory to Shi'ite traditions, from which we learn that Husein did twice ask for a license to depart, and was denied same. Cf. II.ii.13 and III.i.13 in the text of the present Tragedy above.

(c) - In Scene XII, both Husein and Zainab, centuries in advance of the woes of Karbalā. Yet, as soon as Husein visits ago dead, may, in this Play, have appeared at Karbalā in Mohammed's grave, he is overjoyed at the good tidings of a person leading the troops of Jinn (Scene XXIII). But it is setting out for Karbalā! by no means possible for human credulity to accept that

(d) - Even Husein is endowed with a prophetic talent! Husein, decapitated as he was - his head was sent away to Damascus - and trampled under the horses' hoofs, could, on the same day, have risen up whole and made possible the escape of a Persian wife of his (Scene XXVI)! Equally incredible is

(e) - Unhistorical Scenes: the account that the aforesaid headless corpse, Husein, not only was able to move both its hands, but in a clear articulate voice, to have rebuked his saucy camel-driver upon attempting to filch a studded belt from around his dead master's waist! (Scene XXVII).

Not only is the Supernatural so full of incredibilities; the Play as a whole, suffers as gravely from a total lack of verisimilitude. For illustration, a few conspicuous instances should suffice:

(a) - In his death agonies, Ibrahim, Mohammed's son, although but sixteen months old, holds a long, eloquent, farewell colloquy with his sorrowful father (Scene II)! (N.B. - We wonder what prodigious babe could have been found to act this part.)

(b) - Ali, so renowned for personal discretion, lays down his life for the cheap purpose of enabling a young lad to obtain a wife (Scene IV).

(c) - In Scene XII. both Husein and Zainab complain in advance of the woes of Karbalā. Yet, as soon as Husein visits Mohammed's grave, he is overjoyed at the good tidings of setting out for Karbalā !

(d) - Even Muslim is endowed with a prophetic talent ! Going out in the dead of night, (Scene XI), he readily finds his two sons in a hiding-place, of which they had never told him .

(e) - Unhistorical Scenes:

- i - The ruthless slaughter of these two sons of Muslim - as in (d) above - although a possible dramatic moment, has, however, no historical origin in reliable sīra books.⁽¹⁾
- ii- In Scene XXVIII, the timely intervention made by the Persian forces (who release young Fātima from captivity) also lacks any historical basis. Fātima had never been released before Damascus, and the Persian forces had never, during this period, mutinied against the Umayyad rule.⁽²⁾
- iii- In Scene XXIX, Ibn Zīād orders the women to be conducted to Damascus "in entire nakedness"; and, Zainab, in apostrophe to the dead Husein, complains thus, "O Husein, they

1 - 'Abdullāh, son of Muslim, was a grown-up lad who fell in action at Karbalā. (See Amīn:Lawa'ij, p.173). Furthermore, Muslim as an emisary, on urgent political affairs, could not be expected to carry his young children with him at all.

2 - Both in this, and in Husein's rising from the dead to rescue a 'Persian' wife of his, - see under supernatural above - the creedal screen is much too transparent to hide racial proclivities.

are carrying Zainab, thy sister, 'naked' on a she-camel". In a circumstance such as Karbalā, it is not impossible that 'entire' nakedness could have taken place. Yet, it is not precisely so in the sīra. The present Scene simply sacrifices historical fact for a possible dramatic hyperbole. It is of the removal of the women's head-dresses, or back-mantles, that history relates; and that even is bad enough -- to a Moslem. "We have however already mentioned that no presentation of women, though properly veiled and dressed, can be lawfully tolerated.

men and jinn". (Scene VIII). And, in Scene XXIII, the parched C. A Literary Appreciation to vaunt that, "I can make the moon or any Pelly's work cannot be considered as of any great literary distinction. Its sole characteristic is that it abounds in extravagant hyperbole. A reader comes across but a few faint glimpses of original figures of speech, as in the following :- "Ali's decrees are the same as those of the glorious (a) Ali, in asking a favour from an infidel, likens himself to "a mirror that may, at times, be in want of ashes." (Scene VIII). (Scene XXVII).

(b) Upon her seeing Husein's head raised on a spear, Zainab, his sister, asking her companions to beat their breasts, says, "Uncover your breasts a minute, for it is time to beat the drum, seeing the King is going to ride." (Scene XXIII).

1 - By a declaration such as this, the writer is unconsciously accusing Husein of having ruthlessly brought about the death of his own children and companions by thirst !

With regard to Hyperbole, we would, here below, make mention of but a few significant illustrations:

(i) Simply because Muslim goes to lodge for the night at the house of a certain Kūfan, the owner declares that, "Now, my house may vie with Paradise in splendour." (Scene X.)

(ii) Husein's mother, Fāṭima, threatens to "destroy the whole world and heaven". (Scene XI). This is emphasized in (Scene VII) where she is addressed as, "Thou queen of the throne and palace of heaven".

(iii) 'Abbās addresses Husein as, "the high priest of men and jinn". (Scene VIII). And, in Scene XXIII, the parched Husein at Karbalā is made to vaunt that, "I can make the moon or any celestial orb fall down on earth; how much more can I get water for my children?"⁽¹⁾

(iv) Ali, not only is "the highly exalted king of religion", but also, "the sovereign lord of the empire of existence !" (Scene XXIII). "Ali's decrees are the same as those of the glorious Lord Himself; he who gives up the ghost and is a worshipper of Ali, shall find his head in the lap of a nymph of paradise". (Scene XXXVII).

It is probably this sort of shabīh, as in Pelly's work above, which the Reformist School have, in the last half century, interdicted both as illegal and scandalous.

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