

Karbala: an Introduction for Children

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Recommended for students 7 to 10 years old

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a

Note to Teachers & Parents

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The following is a combined effort of the teachers of ALI School to compile material for teaching young children about Karbala. The intended age Groups are C (7-8 yrs) and D (9-10 yrs).

To design this booklet for this range of ages, some material is for both Groups, while other material may be just for the higher group. For example, a variety of questions and activities have been added for critical thinking which may be at a higher level than Group C. However, the discretion is left to the teachers of each Group to use whatever material they feel appropriate.

This is not a final product, but a work in progress. The integrity of this material relies on the constructive feedback of teachers and parents. Not only will your contributions affect these students at this time, but also will affect these students, and many others, for years to come.

1

Majlis

Main Idea

Attending majlis is an important part of learning about Islam and Imam Husain (AS).

It was the third day of *Sha'baan*, the eighth month of the Islamic calendar. On this day, a baby was born in the house of Imam Ali (AS) and Bibi Fatima (SA). The baby was **Imam Husain (AS)**, our third Imam. The Holy Prophet Mohammad (SAW) looked at his baby grandson, Husain, and began to cry. Bibi Fatima (SA)

asked her father why he was crying at such a happy moment. He said the angel Jibraeel had just told him that Imam Husain (AS) would be **shaheed** (die for the sake of Allah [SAW]) in Karbala. Bibi Fatima (SA) also cried and asked him when this would happen. Prophet Mohammad (SAW) replied it would happen after he, Bibi Fatima (SA), Imam Ali (AS), and even Imam Hasan (AS) had left this world. Bibi Fatima (SA) asked, "Who will mourn [cry for] my Husain?"

Prophet Mohammad (SAW) said,

"Allah (SWT) will create a nation who will mourn for Husain. A nation whose men and youth will mourn the young and old shaheed of Husain's family, whose women will remember the sacrifices of the ladies, and whose children will remember the children of Karbala."

Bibi Fatima (SA) recited du'a (prayer) for those people who mourn Imam Husain (AS) and his family.

Terms & Names

Sha'baan
shaheed
majlis
azadaari
Moharram
marsiyah
nauha
Ahlul Bayth (AS)
matam
alam
mashk
taaboot
jhoola
juloos
Zuljanah

Imam Husain (AS)
Bibi Zainab (SA)
Hazrat Abbas (AS)
Bibi Sakina (SA)
Hazrat Ali Asghar (AS)

Making Connections

Who was Prophet Mohammad (SAW) talking about?

A *majlis* is a gathering of people to do *azadaari* (mourn Imam Husain [AS]). The first majlis was organized by **Bibi Zainab (SA)**, the sister of Imam Husain (AS). After the battle in Karbala, the family members of Imam Husain (AS) were taken to Kufa and Damascus. In Damascus, Bibi Zainab (SA) held the first majlis of Imam Husain (AS).

In Practice

Attend majlis with your family regularly during the month of Moharram. Keep a journal of what you learned. Have at least one entry for each majlis you attend.

In *Moharram*, the first month of the Islamic calendar, people all over the world gather in majlis. In a majlis, people recite *marsiyah* and *nauha*, poetry telling about the events of Karbala and terrible suffering of the **Ahlul-Bayth (AS)**, the family of Prophet Mohammad (SAW).

Matam, hitting the chest in sadness, is another form of azadaari. People do matam while they recite nauha.

There are also many symbols to remember the Tragedy of Karbala. The *alam* is a symbol of the banner, or flag, of Prophet Mohammad (SAW). In Karbala, this banner was held by **Hazrat Abbas (AS)**, the brother of Imam Husain (AS). This is why the name of Hazrat Abbas (AS) is usually engraved on the alam. With the alam is a small *mashk*, or water bag. This is to remember the mashk of **Bibi Sakina (SA)**, the daughter of Imam Husain (AS). Hazrat Abbas (AS) had tied her mashk to the alam when he went to get water for the thirsty children. Sadly, the mashk was pierced by an arrow and Hazrat Abbas (AS) was shaheed before he could get back to the camp.

In a majlis, sometimes there is also a *taaboot*. A taaboot is a kind of coffin for carrying a person to their grave. The taaboot carried in the majlis is a symbol of the taaboot of Imam Husain (AS) and the other shuhadaa. There is also a *jhoola*, a symbol of a cradle. It is to remember **Hazrat Ali Asghar (AS)**,

Making Connections

An alam of Hazrat Abbas (AS) with a mashk of Bibi Sakina (SA)



the baby son of Imam Husain (AS). He was also shaheed, even though he was only six months old.

In Practice

Find out if there is a juloos in the city where you live. What symbols of a majlis are carried at the juloos? What activities take place? About how many people attend every year?

Some places also organize a **juloos** in Moharram. In a juloos, people march in the city and recite nauha to remember Imam Husain (AS). During a juloos, there may be a horse as a symbol of **Zuljanah**. Zuljanah was the faithful horse of Imam Husain (AS).

Attending majlis is an important part of learning about Islam and Imam Husain (AS). Bibi Fatima (SA) does du'a for the people who attend majlis.

Making Connections

A Moharram juloos in a big city



Questions:

1. Why did Prophet Mohammad (SAW) cry when Imam Husain (AS) was born?
2. What is a majlis?
3. What does the mashk remind us of?

Activities:

- Ask students to start a list of “Heroes of Islam” and “Bad Guys”. Have them write each of the names from the chapter under the appropriate category. Briefly discuss why each name belongs in that category. Students should save this list and add to it names from the later chapters as they go.
- Ask students to learn a few lines of a nauha. Have them take turns reciting in class. Extra: Explain to students simple meanings of some lines from the nauha.

2

Journey 1: Leaving Madina

Main Idea

Imam Husain (AS) had to leave Madina to save Islam.

The city of **Madina** is known as the city of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (SAW). This is where he is buried. Bibi Fatima (SA) and **Imam Hasan (AS)** (the second Imam) are also buried in Madina in a place called **Jannat-ul-Baqee**. Madina was where Imam Husain (AS) and the Ahlul-Bayt (AS) lived. Imam Husain (AS) loved to visit the **rauza** (burial place) of his grandfather, mother, and brother. He loved being close to them.

Think Big...

Locate Madina and Damascus on a map. Measure the distance between them. How long do you think it would take to travel that distance by car?

Extra: Save your map and keep track of other places you read about in later chapters.

The city of **Damascus**, also called **Shaam**, is far away from Madina in the country of Syria. This was where the evil ruler **Muawiya** lived. Muawiya was an enemy of Islam and the Ahlul-Bayt (AS). Muawiya died on the 22nd of **Rajab**, the seventh month of the Islamic calendar. He appointed his son, **Yazeed**, as the new ruler.

Yazeed was also a great enemy of Islam and the Ahlul-Bayt (AS). He wanted to destroy them both.

Yazeed sent a message to **Waleed**, the governor of Madina. He told Waleed to demand **bay'at** from Imam Husain (AS).

Bay'at means to pledge allegiance to someone. When a person pledges their allegiance to another person, it means they agree to obey that person from now on.

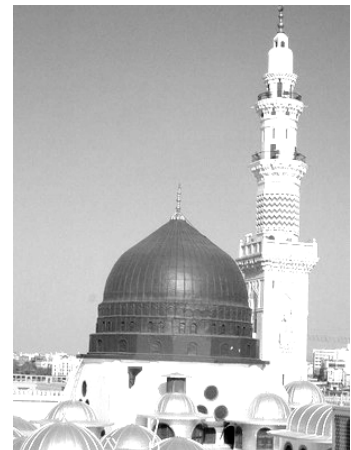
Terms & Names

Madina
Jannat-ul-Baqee
rauza
Damascus / Shaam
Rajab
bay'at

Imam Hasan (AS)
Muawiya
Yazeed
Waleed
Hazrat Abdullah
Hazrat Aun
Hazrat Mohammad
Bibi Umm-e-Laila
Hazrat Ali Akbar (AS)
Hazrat Qasim (AS)
Bibi Umm-e-Farwa
Bibi Rabab
Bibi Umm-ul-Baneen

Making Connections

Masjid-e-Nabawi
(Masjid of the Prophet)
in Madina



If Imam Husain (AS) agreed to do bay'at of Yazeed, he would have to promise to obey Yazeed's commands. Imam Husain (AS) knew he could not do that. He said,

“A man like me can never give allegiance to a man like him.”

All of Yazeed's commands would be against Islam. Imam Husain (AS) had to protect Islam by not doing bay'at of Yazeed.

Of course, Yazeed was not happy with this answer. He sent his men to Madina to kill Imam Husain (AS). Imam Husain (AS) knew it was time to leave Madina forever.

Bibi Zainab (SA) found out that her brother had decided to leave Madina. She asked **Hazrat Abdullah**, her husband, for permission to go with her brother. He agreed and told her to take their two sons, **Hazrat Aun** and **Hazrat Mohammad** with her too. They were very young boys, but Hazrat Abdullah wanted them to help Imam Husain (AS) in his mission as much as possible.

The caravan of Imam Husain (AS) made preparations to leave Madina. Much of the Imam's family and some of his friends were going on the journey as well.

Hazrat Abbas (AS) was in charge of organizing the caravan. There was a row of camels with covered saddles for the ladies of the Ahlul-Bayt (AS). One by one, they were seated on the camels. **Bibi Umm-e-Laila** was helped by her son, **Hazrat Ali Akbar (AS)**. He was the son of Imam Husain (AS).

Making Connections

What kind of a person was Yazeed?



The son of Imam Hasan (AS), **Hazrat Qasim (AS)**, helped his mother, **Bibi Umm-e-Farwa**, get ready for the journey. **Bibi Rabab** had her young children with her. Bibi Sakina (SA) was less than four years old and Ali Asghar (AS) was only a tiny baby.

Bibi Umm-ul-Baneen had four sons, including Hazrat Abbas (AS). That is why she was called ‘Umm-ul-Baneen’ or ‘Mother of Sons’. All of her sons were going with Imam Husain (AS) to help save Islam. They went to meet their mother for the last time. She would not be going with them on the journey. Bibi Umm-ul-Baneen told her sons that they had a great responsibility. They had to protect Imam Husain (AS) and his children from harm.

She looked at Hazrat Abbas (AS) and told him that his father, Imam Ali (AS), had prayed for a son who was brave and strong. He wanted a son who could help Imam Husain (AS) on his mission. She told him that he, Abbas, was the answer to his father’s prayers. He must fulfill the wish of Imam Ali (AS). Even if he had to give his own life, Hazrat Abbas (AS) should make sure that Imam Husain (AS) was not harmed. Bibi Umm-ul-Baneen’s sons said farewell to their mother. They promised her that no harm would come to their Master Husain (AS), or his children, while they were still alive.

At last, the caravan was ready. Imam Husain (AS) cried as he said farewell to the rauza of Prophet Mohammad (SAW), Bibi Fatima (SA), and Imam Hasan (AS). He was sad to leave them, but he had to give that sacrifice to protect Islam.

On the 28th of Rajab, Imam Husain (AS), his family, and his friends started out on their journey towards Makkah.



Questions:

1. What did Imam Husain (AS) say when he was asked to do bay'at of Yazeed?
2. Who was Bibi Umm-ul-Baneen?
3. Why did Imam Husain (AS) leave Madina, even though it made him feel sad?

Activities:

- Discussion: Who should we pledge our allegiance (bay'at) to? Why?

3

Makkah and Hazrat Muslim (AS)

Main Idea

Hazrat Muslim (AS) finds out Kufa is not safe..

Makkah is the city that has the **Holy Ka'bah**. When Muslims perform namaaz, they face the Ka'bah.

In Practice

Do you know where the qiblah is at home?
Ask your parents to help you find qiblah and perform namaaz with them every day.

That is why it is called the **qiblah**. Imam Husain (AS) and his family arrived in Makkah on the third of Sha'baan. It had been four or five days since they left Madina.

The people of Makkah were happy the Imam had come to their city. Imam Husain (AS) could tell them the teachings of Prophet Mohammad (SAW). He could also explain the **Holy Qur-aan**. The Qur-aan was sent by Allah (SWT) to teach people the laws of Islam.

Many miles away, the people of **Kufa** were writing letters to Imam Husain (AS). They wanted him to come to their city to be their guide. Imam Husain (AS) received many of these letters while he was in Makkah, but he could not go to Kufa right away.

Before going to Kufa, Imam Husain (AS) needed to find out the real feelings of the people in Kufa. Yazeed was angry that Imam Husain (AS) did not do bay'at to him. He did not like the followers of Imam Husain (AS) either. Many people were afraid of being killed for supporting Imam Husain (AS). So, Imam Husain (AS) needed know: Were the people of Kufa ready to support him? Would they be too afraid of Yazeed killing them?

Terms & Names

Makkah
Holy Ka'bah
qiblah
Holy Qur-aan
Kufa
representative

Hazrat Muslim ibne Aqeel (AS)
Hazrat Aqeel (AS)
Mohammad Ibraheem
Noman ibne Basheer
ibne Ziyaad
Hazrat Haneer

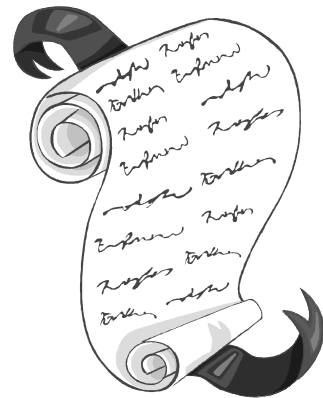
Making Connections

The Holy Qur-aan has many surah. We memorize some of the small ones to recite in namaaz. Which surah do you know?



He decided to send a *representative*, a person who could go to Kufa for him and find out the situation. This could not be just anyone. This representative of Imam Husain (AS) had to be very brave and very knowledgeable. The Imam carefully looked at all the people around him and selected his cousin, **Hazrat Muslim ibne Aqeel (AS)**. **Hazrat Aqeel (AS)**, Hazrat Muslim's father, was the brother of Imam Ali (AS).

Imam Husain (AS) wrote a letter to the Muslims of Kufa, "In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent and Merciful. This letter is written by Husain ibne Ali to the believers and Muslims of Kufa. I am sending my cousin and one of the most trusted ones from my family, Muslim bin Aqeel, to report to me about your matters. If his report agrees with what you have written, I will soon be with you. You must be clear of the fact that the Imam is only one who follows the book of Allah, and serves Allah in all matters with justice, honesty and truth."



Think Big...

Locate Makkah and Kufa on a map. Measure the distance between them. How long do you think it would take to travel that distance by car?

Extra: Add Makkah and Kufa to your tracking map.

Hazrat Muslim (AS) began his journey to Kufa. He took his two sons, **Mohammad** and **Ibraheem**, with him. When he arrived in Kufa, many people came to meet him. 18,000 people pledged allegiance to Imam Husain (AS) on the hand of Hazrat Muslim (AS). He wrote a letter telling Imam

Husain (AS) telling him that he could come to Kufa. Many people here were ready to support him.

Yazeed had many spies in Kufa. They reported back to him about the supporters of Imam Husain (AS). Yazeed was very angry and planned to put a stop to it.

One night Hazrat Muslim (AS) was leading namaaz in the masjid. Many people had gathered to perform namaaz with him. Then, they heard a voice outside.

The voice announced that the governor of Kufa, **Noman ibne Basheer**, had been replaced by order of Yazeed. The new governor of Kufa was **ibne Ziyaad**. By the orders of the new governor, whoever tried to help Hazrat Muslim (AS) in any way would be killed.

Ibne Ziyaad knew how to scare the people of Kufa. Yazeed had sent ibne Ziyaad as the new governor of Kufa to make sure that no one would support Imam Husain (AS) and Hazrat Muslim (AS).

Hazrat Muslim (AS) continued the namaaz. After finishing namaaz, Hazrat Muslim (AS) turned around. All the people that were behind him during namaaz were gone. Only one person stayed, **Hazrat Hanee**. He was a supporter of Imam Husain (AS) who had kept Hazrat Muslim (AS) as his guest in his home.

Hazrat Muslim (AS) had one goal: to get a message to Imam Husain (AS). The people of Kufa had not kept their promise of support. Coming to Kufa was not safe for the Imam (AS) and his family.

Questions:

1. What did Imam Husain (AS) not go to Kufa right away?
2. Who was Hazrat Muslim (AS)?
3. Who helped Hazrat Muslim (AS) in Kufa?

Activities:

- Ask students to imagine they are inviting Imam Husain (AS) to come to their city and write him a letter.

4

Journey 2: Leaving Makkah

Main Idea

Imam Husain (AS) is in danger in Makkah and completes his journey to Karbala.

The time for *Haj*, pilgrimage to Makkah, was coming near. More and more people were arriving in Makkah every day to visit the Holy Ka'bah. Imam Husain (AS) told all of them about his mission to save Islam.

Yazeed had ordered some of his men to go to Makkah and hide among the *haaji* (people who perform Haj). They planned to kill Imam Husain (AS) while he was performing Haj. Imam Husain (AS) found out about their plan. He shortened his Haj into Umra and decided to leave Makkah.

Think Big...

Locate Zabaalah and Kufa on a map. Measure the distance between them. How long do you think it would take to travel that distance by car?

Extra: Add Zabaalah to your tracking map.

On the ninth of *Zilhijjah*, the last month of the Islamic calendar, Imam Husain (AS) left Makkah. The people of Kufa had invited him to their city. Hazrat Muslim (AS) had sent a message confirming their support. So, Imam Husain (AS) and his caravan started out towards Kufa.

The caravan of the Imam stopped at several villages on the way to Kufa. While resting in a town called *Zabaalah*, Imam Husain (AS) received sad news. Hazrat Muslim (AS) had been shaheed.

The whole city of Kufa had turned against him. Ibne Ziyaad, the governor of Kufa, had ordered a search. The soldier who found Hazrat Muslim (AS) and brought him to the governor would get a reward.

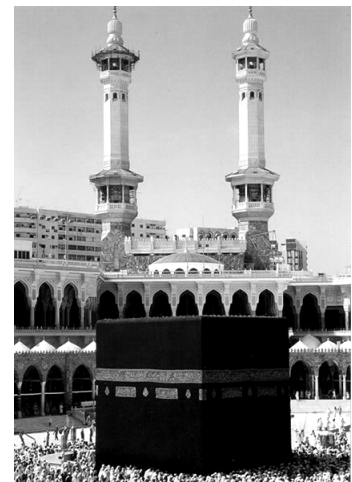
Terms & Names

Haj
haaji
Zilhijjah
Zabaalah
orphans
khutba
River Euphrates
River Furaat
Karbala

Hur

Making Connections

The Holy Ka'bah in Makkah.



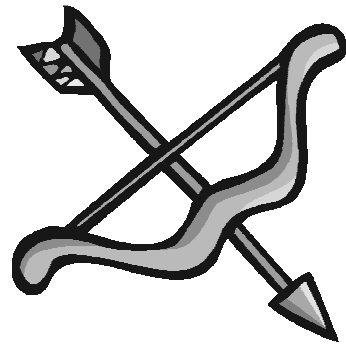
Hazrat Muslim (AS) knew that ibne Ziyaad was looking for him. His supporter and host, Hazrat Hanee, had been arrested and thrown in prison. Hazrat Muslim (AS) was still worried about sending the message to Imam Husain (AS) about the danger in Kufa. He left his children with another friend and walked through the quiet city to find a way out.

Tired, he sat down on some steps to rest. An old lady saw him sitting in front of her house and said, “These are dangerous times and everyone is taking shelter in their homes. I would advise you to do the same.”

Hazrat Muslim (AS) replied, “I have no home to go to. I am a visitor in this town.” Hearing this, the old lady offered him some water. Hazrat Muslim (AS) drank the water and thanked her. The old lady asked who he was and where he was from. She was a follower of Ahlul Bayth (AS), so when she found out he was from the family of Imam Husain (AS), she offered him food and a place to hide. Hazrat Muslim (AS) accepted the offer and thanked her again.

That evening, the lady’s son came home. He had been looking for Hazrat Muslim (AS) all day, so he could turn him in and get the reward. When he found out Hazrat Muslim (AS) was hiding in his own home, he told the soldiers of ibne Ziyaad. They surrounded the house to capture Hazrat Muslim (AS). He came out and fought bravely against the enemy soldiers. Even though there were so many against one, they could not defeat him. They asked ibne Ziyaad to send more soldiers. Still, they could not defeat the courageous cousin of Imam Husain (AS). The enemy soldiers finally captured him by cheating and trapping him.

Ibne Ziyaad’s soldiers arrested Hazrat Muslim (AS) and took him to the cruel governor. They asked him to salute to ibne Ziyaad. Hazrat Muslim (AS) refused. “My leader is Imam Husain (AS)”, he said.



Ibne Ziyaad ordered them to cut off his head and drag his body through the streets of Kufa. Hazrat Haneer, who was helping Hazrat Muslim (AS), was also killed.

Making Connections

The rauza of Hazrat Muslim ibne Aqeel (as) in the city of Kufa, Iraq

His young sons, Mohammad and Ibraheem, had also been taken prisoner. They tried to escape so that they could tell Imam Husain (AS) that Kufa was not safe. Before they could get far, they were recaptured. Ibne Ziyaad had no mercy. The young boys were shaheed.



Imam Husain (AS) cried when he heard the sad news. He called the young daughters of Hazrat Muslim (AS) and gently put his hand on their head. They had lost their father and were now **orphans**. Imam Husain (AS) said that he would be their guardian from now on.

That night Imam Husain (AS) gave a **khutba** (speech) to his followers. “My death is certain,” he said to them, “I hereby remove the burden of bay’at from all of you. You may go wherever you please.” The worldly people in his caravan left to go back home. The faithful and true friends of Imam Husain (AS) remained by his side.

The caravan’s journey towards Kufa continued. As they moved on they saw a cloud of dust in the distance. As it came closer, they saw that it was a large group of soldiers on horses. Imam Husain (AS) noticed that these soldiers were very thirsty. Even the horses were exhausted with thirst. He ordered Hazrat Abbas (AS) to give the soldiers water. All the extra storage of water was given to this army.

This army was a division of Yazeed’s army. Their commander was a brave man named **Hur**. Even though Imam Husain (AS) knew this was Yazeed’s army, he gave them water. Yazeed had sent this army

to stop Imam Husain (AS) from going to Kufa and take him towards the hot, dry desert instead.

With Hur and his army behind them, the caravan of Imam Husain (AS) continued to travel into the desert. A few days later, they stopped at a place near the ***River Euphrates*** (also called ***River Furaat***). Imam Husain (AS) told Hazrat Abbas (AS) to set up camp near the river.

The Imam had reached his destination.
This was the land called ***Karbala***.

Questions:

4. Why did Imam Husain (AS) leave Makkah before performing Hajj?
5. Who found Hazrat Muslim (AS) for the governor of Kufa?
6. What land was the destination of Imam Husain (AS)?

Activities:

- Discussion: Why did the old lady's son tell ibne Ziyaad's army where Hazrat Muslim (AS) was?
- Discussion: Why did Imam Husain (AS) share his water with the soldiers of Yazeed's army?