Chapter-IV

Husain’s March to Karbala
Map showing the stages of Hazrat Husain’s journey from Makkah to Karbala where he either stayed or met people or gave sermons:
Makkah to Kufah

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Husain bin Ali migrated from Madinah to Makkah soon after he was asked by the Governor of Madinah to take oath of allegiance to Yazid’s Khilafat just to avoid it. At Makkah he received a large number of letters from the people of Kufah requesting him to come over to Iraq assuring him that there was no legitimate Imam and the people of Iraq in general and those of Kufah in particular were willing to acknowledge and install him as Khalifah. The Kufi notables had exhorted Husain to make haste so that he may take their oath of allegiance and release them from the rule of Yazid. Husain responded by deputing his cousin Muslim bin Aquil bin Abi Talib to let him know of the actual position prevailing in Kufah. He also wrote a number of letters to the leaders of the Iraqi city.

Chirag Hasan Hasrat, a well-known scholar, claims that Husain himself knew the fact that the people of Kufah were not reliable and could change their minds at any time. Despite it he decided to send to Kufah Muslim bin Aquil as his representative, to make on the spot study of the affairs of Kufah and send a report. Husain was to base his decision on that report. Wahiduddin Khan adds that Muslim bin Aquil who was ordered to proceed to Kufah did not know the actual plan of Husain.
However, Muslim bin Aquil arrived in Kufah where he was warmly received by the notables and a large number of people, who not only swore allegiance to Husain but also stated on oath that they would help him with all their might.

Moinuddin Ahmad Nadvi, Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi, Abdul Razzaq Malihabadi and several other Urdu writers quote famous historian Ibn Jarir Tabari and report that more than eighteen thousand Kufans took oath of allegiance to Husain. Same has been reported by scholars like Hamiduddin, Wahiduddin Khan and Mir Mahmud Ali Qaisar. According to them, Muslim intimated Husain that he may now reach Kufah personally where people were enthusiastic to follow and take the oath of allegiance to him personally. Assured by his reports, Husain decided to start for Iraq.

Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi and several other scholars on the authority of Ibn Kathir assert that with the soft policy of the governor of Kufah, Numan bin Bashir, who did not tackle the movement of Muslim bin Aquil tactfully, the government of the Umavi Khalifah was not satisfied, so he appointed Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad as the governor of Basrah and Kufah.

The scholars such as Qazi Zainul Abidin, Moinuddin Ahmad Nadvi, Hamiduddin, Rafi Ahmad Fidai and Fazl Ahmad hold that Numan bin Bashir, the governor of Kufah, who was a pious
Sahabi, virtuous personality and a man of peaceful nature, was fully aware of all the activities of Muslim bin Aquil and his supporters but he did not take any strong action; he took a very lenient view of all the developments and simply called some people to his presence and asked them to remain peaceful. However, he warned people not to flout the Khalifah’s authority so openly that he might be compelled to take stern action against them. Hence Numan b. Bashir was replaced and Ibn Ziyad, who had already won fame by wiping out the Kharijites was appointed as governor of Kufah.

Soon after his arrival at Kufah Ibn Ziyad came to know about Muslim’s activities as well as his taking shelter in the house of Hani bin Urwah, so he arrested Hani and put him in jail, but rumours spread in Kufah that Hani was put to death. Hearing this, Muslim came out of his hiding with eighteen thousand supporters and surrounded the governor in his House. This open revolt provoked Ibn Ziyad to take strong action against the revolutionaries. He was also exhorted by certain officials to go round the city and warn the people of dire consequences in case they continued to support Muslim bin Aquil. His admonitions had the desired effect and the relatives of Aquil’s followers, men and women, decided to go back to their houses before the Syrian army arrived. Muslim’s supporters dispersed so swiftly that within no
time their numbers fell to five hundred and soon after it was reduced to three hundred only. According to the sources when Muslim bin Aquil took the field he had with him only thirty persons who got reduced to ten and finally zero at the last moment. Since he had no shelter or support so he wandered through the streets of the city in the dark, not knowing what to do.  

The story of Iraqi’s betrayal of Muslim bin Aquil is both lengthy and heart-rending. It also shows that man is prone to be impressed more by power and pelf and rank and status than by the noble values, ideals and principles. At last Muslim bin Aquil had to seek refuge in a house, which was surrounded by the hostile people. At first those who had given protection to Muslim bin Aquil tried to defend him against the attackers but later they tried thrice to turn him out of the house. Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi holds that the mob besieging the house started pelting stones and then set fire to a pile of bamboos which caused suffocation to Muslim bin Aquil. There are however, different reports and the opinions of the different scholars which stand divided regarding the subsequent happenings. One says that Muslim bin Aquil came out with sword in his hand and fought the attackers. According to another version, Abdur Rahman who had given refuge to Muslim bin Aquil, handed him over to the Umayyad forces. According to
Ibn Kathīr, Muslim bin Aquil was brought to Ibn Ziyad. After a brief altercation with him Ibn Ziyad took him to the top of his palace. When he had reached the top of the palace, Mukhtar bin Imran cut off his head and threw it down. Thereafter he hurled down his body also. Ibn Ziyad also punished supporters of Muslim, especially his protector Hani bin Urwah who was eventually put to death.

Meanwhile, towards the close of the year A.H. 60/680, on the first day of Dhul-Hijjah, Husain, heedless of the remonstrance of faithful friends, started from Makkah with his family and a small band of followers. There are however, different opinions of scholars regarding Husain's departure from Makkah to Kufah. Allama Tabatabai, a Shia writer, on the authority of Ibn Mufid opines that the stay of Husain in Makkah continued until the season for pilgrimage when Muslims from all over the world poured in groups into Makkah in order to perform the rites of the Hajj. Husain discovered that some of the followers of Yazid had entered Makkah as pilgrims (Hajis) with the mission to kill him during the rites of Hajj with the arms they carried under their special pilgrimage dress (ihram). That is why Husain abandoned the pilgrimage and decided to leave for Kufah. The same author on the authority of Shahrishub holds that amidst the vast crowd of people he stood up, in a short speech announced that he was
setting out for Iraq. In addition to this, Sayyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, also a Shiite scholar, on the authority of Tabari claims that Husain’s visit to Makkah and growing support in Kufah alarmed Yazid, therefore, he commissioned some assassins to kill Husain during the pilgrimage ceremonies. That is why on 8th Dhul-Hijjah 60/9th September 680, Husain left Makkah without performing the annual Hajj. It is also said that Muslim was beheaded on the same day Husain left Makkah.

But Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi holds that Husain had already left Makkah for Kufah on the day Muslim had been arrested or a day earlier to that. Muslim had requested Muhammad bin Ashath to inform Husain, if possible, of what had happened to him and tell him to go back with his household. Qazi Zainul Abidin, Chirag Hasan Hasrat and Moinuddin Ahmad Nadvi maintain that Muslim bin Aquil had asked him to convey his message to Husain that the people of Kufah should not be trusted since they were the people who wanted to get rid of his father through his Martyrdom. These people were liars who had duped both of them, and no liar is ever steadfast on his promises. Muhammad bin Ashath conveyed this message to Husain.

Husain’s journey and the opinion of his well-wishers

Before Husain set off from Makkah, several of his well-wishers had advised him not to go to Kufah. The Urdu writers like
Hamiduddin, Abul Kalam Azad and Moinuddin Ahmad Nadvi hold that Abdullah bin Abbas had told him that the people of Kufah were deceitful whose promises should never be trusted. He had also asked Husain to remain at Makkah and go to Iraq only after the Iraqis were able to dispel the opponents from their country. Husain admitted him to be his well-wisher, but could not stop himself as he had already made up his mind. Abdullah ibn Abbas further entreated that if he was bent upon going to Iraq he should not take the women and children with him, for he feared that he might also be slain like Hazrat Uthman before the members of his family.17

According to Atiqur Rahman Sambhali, Abdullah bin Umar also tried to dissuade Husain in the like manner, but when Husain refused to change his decision he embraced Husain and breaking into tears, said, “I entrust a martyr to the care of Allah”.18 Qazi Zainul Abidin on the authority of Ibn Athir and Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi on the authority of Ibn Kathir hold that Abdullah bin Zubair also tried to persuade Husain not to leave for Kufah but Husain replied, “I have been informed that forty thousand people have taken the oath that they would support me or else their wives would be divorced and their slaves deemed as liberated.”19

According to Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi some distinguished Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) like Abu Sa‘eed al-
Khudri, Jabir bin Abdullah and Tabiun like Sa'eed bin al-Musayyib urged Husain not to go to Kufah but he remained inflexible in his resolve.\(^\text{20}\) The scholars like Atiqur Rahman Sambhali, Hamiduddin and Qazi Zainul Abidin hold that several other well-wishers of Husain like Abdul Rahman bin Haris, Abu Bakr bin Abdur Rahman, Abdullah bin Muthi requested Husain not to go to Kufah but he paid no head to them.\(^\text{21}\)

According to the scholars like Sambhali, Abbasi, Abul Kalam Azad and Taha Husain, Husain's own family members like his brother Muhammad bin al-Hanafiya and another member of the Hashimite family, Abdullah bin Jafar, one of his cousins, also requested him not to leave for Iraq. Moreover, Abdullah bin Jafar wrote to him a letter from Madinah. The letter has been reproduced by Abul Kalam Azad and Taha Husain:

"I beseech you in the name of Allah to desist from the implementation of your plan for it entails your death and destruction of your family and companions. Your death will extinguish the light of earth; at the present you are the beacon light of faith and the centre of the believers hopes. Don't make haste in undertaking the journey."\(^\text{22}\)

M.Y.M. Siddiqui on the authority of Tabari and Ibn Athir and Abul Kalam Azad maintains that Abdullah ibn Jafar even approached Umar bin Said bin al-As, the governor of Madinah, and requested him to apprise Husain of the actual position through
a letter. Umar directed him to draft a letter on which he will affix his signature and official seal. Abdullah drafted the letter on behalf of the governor, which read:

"I pray to Allah to keep you away from the path where there is a danger to your life and might guide you to the way of salvation. I have come to know that you are leaving for Iraq; I beseech you not to undertake such a mission for I am afraid that a disastrous calamity is awaiting you there. I am sending Abdullah bin Jafar bin Sa'eed to you and request you please return with him; there is peace and tranquility for you over here. May Allah protect you for He is the best protector and sustainer."\textsuperscript{23}

Athar Abbas Rizvi on the authority of Tabari writes that Awn and Muhammad, two sons of Husain's brother-in-law Abdullah ibn Jafar, presented a letter from their father also requesting him to desist from visiting Kufah.\textsuperscript{24} According to two more Scholars, Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi and Atiquur Rahman Sambhali, there were some others like Jabir bin Abdullah, Abu Waqid Al-Laithi, and Miswar bin Makhrama who requested Husain and warned him against the dangers of a revolt.\textsuperscript{25}

Inspite of all these sincere advices, Husain did not abandon his project. He left Makkah for Kufah along with his family members and followers on 8\textsuperscript{th} Dh ul-Hijjah 60/10 September 680.\textsuperscript{26}
Stages of Husain's Journey

The names of places where Husain stopped on the way from Makkah to Kufah are all recorded by historians and various Urdu writers. Julius Wellhausen has also noted them. There are differences amongst scholars about the stages on the journey where Husain had stayed. So far as the places and stages mentioned by a set of scholars is concerned the chronological arrangement may be as follows:

Safah

Al-Safah is mountainous place near Makkah; it is ten kilometers away from Makkah. The scholars like Atiqur Rahman Sambhali, Bashirur Rahman Siddiqui, Abul Kalam Azad, Akbar Shah Khan Najibabadi, Qazi Zainul Abidin and Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqvi hold that it is first place through which Husain is said to have passed after leaving Makkah for Kufah. He did not stay here but met a well-known poet Farazdaq coming from Kufah. Husain enquired him about the situation prevailing in Kufah. Farazdaq giving an account of the situation at Kufah replied and made his assessment of the political conditions of Kufah in the following words, “Their hearts are with you, but their swords are on the side of the Ummayyads.”\(^{28}\)
Tan‘im

It is the station outside Makkah where the Makkans went in order to enter into a state of consecration for the Umrah. This place according to Atiqur Rahman Sambhali is situated four kilometers to the north west of Makkah. The pilgrims of Umrah use to wear their Ihrams at this place.\(^{29}\)

According to the scholars Rashid Akhtar Nadvi; Akbar Shah Khan Najibabadi and Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqvi at this place Husain hired some camels from a caravan coming from Yemen. These scholars further write that it was at this stage that Abdullah bin Jafar sent Husain a letter through his sons Aun and Muhammad, asking him, for the sake of God, to go back to Madinah as soon as possible, but he denied and continued his Journey onwards. Moreover, Abdullah bin Jafar also came to persuade him but all in vain.\(^{30}\)

Dhat-i-‘Irq

It is the road from Makkah to Iraq in a pass through the mountain of ‘Irq. It overlooks the northeast valley of Batn al-Rummah. According to Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi, this place is twenty two miles ahead from Makkah. From this place one side goes to Basrah via Autas and another to Kufah.\(^{31}\) Sayyid Aulad Hyder on the authority of Ibn Mufid writes that at this stage after
the departure of Abdullah bin Jafar Husain speeded along this route to Iraq and stayed there.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{Batn al-Rummah and Hajir}

Batn al-Rummah is the name of a valley and Hajir is a place in it. It is the valley overlooked by the high grounds of Rummah in Najd. Hajir is a watering place also. According to Abbasi this place is one hundred thirty eight miles away from Makkah.\textsuperscript{33} According to Atiqur Rahman Sambhali at this stage Husain dispatched a letter to the Kufans by his foster brother Abdullah bin Yaqtur regarding his journey to Kufah.\textsuperscript{34} Some scholars like Akbar Shah Khan Najibabadi, Rashid Akhtar Nadvi and Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqvi hold that from this stage Husain dispatched a letter to the Kufans through Qais bin Mushir, who was one of his messengers. Husain wrote in it that, “I have left Makkah and when you receive my letter, finalize your arrangements quickly and put your organisation in order, since I would be arriving in your midst very soon.” According to these scholars, Qais set out with this letter to Kufah, but was arrested at Qadisiyyah by a commander of the army and sent by Ibn Ziyad. By the orders of Ibn Ziyad he was flung to the ground from the roof of the palace. His body was broken into pieces.\textsuperscript{35} Abbasi on the authority of Ibn Kathîr states that at this stage Husain dispatched a letter through Qais bin Mushir.\textsuperscript{36} Abbasi, however, did not give the details of his death.
On the other side Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi on the authority of Ibn Kathīr writes that on reaching the place called Hajir, Husain said to those accompanying him: “My supporters have deserted me. Now who amongst you wants to return can go back. I will have no objection or claim against you.” Many persons around him started pulling out. But these were the Bedouins who had joined his party on the way. He was left only with the people with whom he started the journey.37

Zarud

Zarud is a place with very sandy ground on the way from Makkah to Kufah. According to Abbasi and Bashirur Rahman Siddiqui, Zarud, also called as al-Khazimia, is eight hundred fifty miles away from Makkah.38 The scholars like Abul Kalam Azad, Bashirur Rahman Siddiqui and Atiqur Rahman Sambhali hold that at this stage Husain received the news of martyrdom of Muslim bin Aquil and Hani bin Urwah. This was the first stage where Husain was confronted with the news of distressing developments.39

Thalabia

Thalabia is one of the halting places on the way from Makkah to Kufah. The scholars like Aslam Jairajpuri, Qazi Zainul Abidīn, Akbar Shah Khan Najibabadi, Moinuddīn Ahmad Nadvi, Abdul Qayoom Nadvi and Hamiduddīn unanimously claim that at
this stage Husain received the news of Muslim’s martyrdom. Getting this tragic news Husain’s intention was shaken and he wanted to go back. But now the brothers of Muslim bin 'Aquil refused to do so. They said that either they would take vengeance of Muslim’s blood or they would die. Seeing their insistence, Husain also dropped the idea of going back and his journey towards Kufah continued. According to these scholars, after covering some distance, the messengers of Muhammad bin Ashath and Amr bin Sa‘d came and gave him the message of Muslim and suggested him to go back. But now Husain was not in a position to go back. He, however, let his companions know all about what had happened in Kufah, and said that his supporters in Kufah had deserted him, that Muslim and Hani had been assassinated, and in spite of that he was in no mood to go back; yet he would not compel anybody to remain with him. So those who wanted to go back could do so. Hearing this the crowd of people that had accompanied him on the way went back. Now only those people remained with him who were his faithful devotees and had accompanied him with no hope of any worldly gain.⁴⁰

**Zubala**

Zubala is situated on the road to Kufah two stages ahead from it. This place is at a distance of four nights journey from Kufah. According to some scholars like Atiqur Rahman Sambhali
and Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi at this stage Husain received a letter from Muslim through Muhammad bin Ashath. In this letter Muslim mentioned that he had been arrested and informed him, if possible, go back with his household. He also informed Husain that the people of Kufah should not be trusted since they were the liars who had duped him. Ashath conveyed the message of Muslim to Husain, but he refused to accept the advice, saying "whatever has been destined by Allah will anyhow come to happen."*

Two scholars, Qazi Zainul Abidin and Shah Moinuddin Nadvi, hold that at this stage, Husain learnt that his messenger Abdullah bin Baktar (according to some scholars his name was Yaqtur), his foster brother, sent from Makkah to Kufah to announce there his imminent arrival, had been discovered and killed. Husain then read to his supporters proclamation in which after informing them of the painful news he had received and of the treachery of the leaders of Kufah.42

Batn al- Aqabah

Batn al-Aqabah is a halting place on the way from Makkah to Kufah beneath the high mountain of Aqabah before coming to Waqisah. Some scholars like Atiqur Rahman Sambhali, Rashid Akhtar Nadvi and Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqvi state that at this stage came a man who gave Husain the news that Ibn Ziyad had posted guards throughout Qadisiyyah and Azib. He requested Husain to
go back as nothing besides swords would greet him and warned him against reposing his trust in those who had written letters to him, since they would be the first to turn out to oppose him. Husain gave him his blessings for his good wishes but resumed his journey.\textsuperscript{43}

**Sharaf**

Sharaf is a watering place in the Najd. It is also called as “Chashma Sharaf”. The scholars, Aslam Jairajpuri, Hamiduddin, Abdur Razzaq Malihabadi and Rashid Akhtar Nadvi, state that at this stage Husain met Hur bin Yazid Tamimi who was accompanied by one thousand soldiers. Hur told him that we had been ordered to take you to Ibn Ziyad, the Governor of Kufah.\textsuperscript{44} According to Sayyid Ali Naqi after the negotiations Husain decided to continue his journey. At this stage Husain ordered all water skins and leather bottles to be filled with water and then left the place.\textsuperscript{45}

**Dhu Husum**

Dhu Husum is a naturally well-fortified place near Karbala. According to the scholars like Abdul Qayoom Nadvi, Qazi Zainul Abidin, and Moinuddin Ahmad Nadvi, when Husain’s caravan reached the place called Dhu Husum, Hur bin Yazid Tamimi met him with one thousand troops. He was sent by Ibn Ziyad to encompass Husain’s caravan and bring it to Kufah. Addressing
Hur and his companions, Husain said that he had not come of his own accord but it was the Kufans who had invited him to come by sending hundreds of letters. Saying this he showed a bundle of letters sent to him by the Kufans. Hur, however, said that he was in no mood to discuss such things, and that he had come only to take him to Kufah by the order of Ibn Ziyad. Now, Husain wanted to return towards Hijaz but Hur objected, yet he did not do any thing degrading to Husain. He rather showed best regards for him and respectfully proposed that if he (Husain) did not like to go with him he should adopt a way other than that of Hijaz or Iraq. In the meantime he would write to Ibn Ziyad and to Yazid; in this way a peaceful outcome of the issue could appear and Husain agreed to this proposal.46

Baiza

Baiza is a place on the way from Makkah to Kufah and near Karbala. After reaching to this stage Husain delivered a speech to the people of that place. According to the scholars like Abdul Qayoom Nadvi, Moinuddin Ahmad and Abul Kalam Azad, Husain made a speech to all those who were present there. In the speech he said:

"O people! The Holy Prophet (SAW) has said that he, who saw such a king made illegitimate as legitimate, broke the canons of Allah, ruled over the slaves of Allah with vices and tyranny against the
will of Allah and His Prophet (SAW) and in spite of that remained inactive and calm; then such a person must go to hell with the king. Now, O people! You should know that they (the rulers) have chosen themselves to be the obedient of Satan and have given up the obedience to Allah. They have created disturbances in the country and have set aside the penal laws of the *Shariah*. They take lion’s share in war booty and have made legitimate what Allah has declared illegitimate. In the same way they have made illegitimate what Allah has declared to be legitimate. So I feel all these acts more indignantly than others.”

‘Adhayb al-Hijanat

There were two other watering places within the area of al-‘Adhayb, one of them to the east of ‘Adhayb was called ‘Adhayb al-Hijanat. The area was particularly good for grazing animals, especially horses and camels.

Two scholars, Abul Kalam Azad and Qazi Zainul Abidin, hold that at the place ‘Adhayb al-Hijanat four horsemen were seen coming from Kufah led by Tarmah bin ‘Adi. At this juncture, Tarmah bin ‘Adi said:

"By God! I am making a keen observation, but I see nobody who may stand by your side. Death seems to be inevitable for you, if the people who are following rush upon you. I never saw such a big crowd anywhere as I witnessed behind — in Kufah. They all have assembled to fight against one
individual — Husain. I advise you not to move any further. If you want to go to a place where you would be quite safe from enemies, you may follow me. I shall take you to my mountain ‘Aaja’. Within a period of less than ten days, you will find twenty thousand armed strong men belonging to a tribe “Tai” arrayed before you. As long as they are vigilant, no body will have the courage to look at you with an evil intent.”^48

According to these scholars, Husain denied this offer and invoked Allah’s blessing on him for his offer and said that he had a commitment with the men following him and in view of this, he could not go a step forward. In addition some scholars like Abdul Qayoom Nadvi and Moinuddin Ahmad Nadvi hold that at this stage, Husain came to know of the war preparations in Kufah and the assassination of Qais bin Ashar whom he had sent to collect information in advance.^49

Qasr-i-Bani Maqatil

Qasr-i-Bani Maqatil was a palace of a Christian tribe in pre-Islamic times; it was close to al-Qutqutanhah. Al-Qutqutanah is a place near Kufah on the edge of the desert.

Some scholars like Abul Kalam Azad and Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqvi hold that at this stage Husain felt that he was heading towards death. At the time of leaving this place Husain had a nap. Suddenly, he awakened and said to his son Ali that he saw a horse
rider who was moving ahead and expressing words, “people move onward and the death too moves with them.” Husain further said that he was sure this was the prediction of their death, which was being conveyed to them.\textsuperscript{50} According to Bashirur Rahman Siddiqui, when Husain turned towards Qasr-i-Maqatil, the army of Hur stopped him there. Hur said to Husain that, “I have been ordered to take you to Kufah.\textsuperscript{51}

**Al-Qadisiyyah**

Al-Qadisiyyah is a town nineteen miles away from Kufah and ten miles away from Karbala. This is the place where the Muslims defeated Persians in 16A.H/637A.D. during the Khilafah of Hazrat Umar (RA).

Some Urdu scholars like Abul Kalam Azad and Bashirur Rahman Siddiqui hold that Husain’s party had advanced only a little distance beyond Qadisiyyah when Hur bin Yazid appeared with a force of one thousand armed men and followed him and his men intending to keep a close watch on them till they came face to face with Ibn Ziyad.\textsuperscript{52}

**Husain’s Address**

According to these scholars at a stop where the members of the entourage offered Zuhar prayer, Husain addressed them before the prayer:
“O people! Before you, and before Allah I have a reason for my arrival to this place, that I did not come over here at my own accord, but I have been invited by your people; and your letters are with me which stand a testimony to this effect. If you have gone back on the promises contained in your communications addressed to me and conveyed through messengers, I am willingly prepared to go back. You invited me to lead you as an Imam. So I have arrived here.”

According to these scholars, when the address was over; there prevailed a complete silence. Then the Asr prayer was offered together. After the prayer Husain delivered the second sermon in which he spoke:

“You will please Allah if you adhere to righteousness and support the claim of the right person. We the members of the Prophet’s family have a stronger claim to Khilafah than others. They rule over you tyrannically. If you dislike us and concede our right; if you have gone back on the promises contained in your communications addressed to me and conveyed through messengers, I am willingly prepared to go back.”

Hur asked Husain about the letters which he had mentioned in his discourse expressing his ignorance about such letters. Husain asked ‘Aqba bin Saman to bring the two bags which were full of letters sent by the people of Kufah. Hur told Husain, “We are not those people who wrote these letters to you”. He further
explained, “I have been ordered by Ibn Ziyad to take you before him”. Husain told him that his appearance before Ibn Ziyad was not possible before his death.\(^5^3\)

Besides, some scholars like Atiqur Rahman Sambhali on the authority of Tabari and Asrar Ahmad hold that it was the stage where Husain met Hur accompanied with one thousand Soldiers. Husain also came to know about Muslim’s death and decided to go back. But Muslim’s Brothers insisted on continuing journey to avenge their brother. After Husain advanced a bit he saw the army of Ibn Ziyad. Then he turned towards Karbala.\(^5^4\) According to Akbar Shah Khan Najibabadi, at this stage Husain on seeing Ibn S‘ad accompanied by his army turned towards Karbala.\(^5^5\)

Theory of Abbasi on Husain’s decision to travel to Damascus instead of Karbala

Besides this, Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi asserts that while approaching Kufah Husain got the actual picture of the prevailing conditions. In order to meet Yazid he used the route that led to Syria. Abbasi further writes that on receiving the news of Muslim’s death, Husain decided to return but the sons of Muslim opposed the idea. After advancing towards Kufah, a battle took place between Husain and Hur bin Yazid Riyahi who was accompanied by one thousand soldiers. Hur tried to take Husain to Kufah but Husain refused and took the route which lead to Syria.
According to Abbasi at this place after Husain was conveyed the treachery of Kufans he decided to go back and take the route which goes to Syria towards the left side of Qadisiyyah via Qasr-i-Maqatil and Qaryat ‘Ardh al-Taf. Husain advanced towards this route but he was stopped there and was not allowed to advance further. He was asked to accept the orders of Ibn Ziyad but he refused and desired to attend Yazid in Syria. In this respect Mir Mahmud Ali Qaisar also claims that Husain desired to take the route of Syria to meet Yazid. But Hur bin Yazid Riyahi accompanied by one thousand soldiers stopped him and wanted to take him to Kufah.

Nanewah

Nanewah is a small village near Karbala. Several scholars like Abdul Qayoom Nadvi, Qazi Zainul Abidin, Moinuddin Ahmad Nadvi and Rafi Ahmad Fidai are unanimous that Husain reached Nanewah where an armed rider was seen coming from the direction of Kufah, and everybody halted and awaited his arrival. The man had brought Hur a letter from ibn Ziyad saying, “You should prevent Husain from advancing further wherever this letter may reach you. You should make him encamp where water and camel may not be available”. Hur acquainted Husain and his companions of the full contents of the letter received from Ibn Ziyad. Husain wanted to advance to some distance and while he was reaching
Karbala, Hur stopped him and declined to grant these requests anymore.\textsuperscript{59} According to Aslam Jairajpuri, at this stage Husain met an army under the command of Ibn S'ad. Jairajpuri claims that it was at Nanewah where Husain offered three proposals.\textsuperscript{59} The details about these proposals are discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis.

\textbf{Advent at Karbala}

Karbala is situated on the south bank of the \textit{Furat} (Euphrates) towards north of Kufah. This is where the battle against Husain took place. It is still a shrine for the Shiah. All the Urdu scholars are unanimous that after leaving Nanewah Husain's Caravan encamped in the field of Karbala. The scholars like Atiqur Rahman Sambhali; Abul Kalam Azad, Akbar Shah Khan Najibabadi; Abdul Qayoom Nadvi, Sayyid Amîr Ali and several others hold that on advancing a bit turning to the left Hur's contingent stopped Husain from moving further and asked him to alight, and asses that the Euphrates was not far from there. Upon enquiring the name of the place was given out as Karbala. Ultimately Husain along with his supporters made his camp at Karbala on 2\textsuperscript{nd} Muharram 61 A.H. / 2 October. 680AD.\textsuperscript{60}

A short analysis can be made over here regarding the above discussion. After Husain left Makkah for Kufah the respected and eminent Companions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) tried their
level best to persuade Husain to give up his idea. But Husain paid no heed and was reluctant and turned down their suggestions and requests. He was of the opinion that the people of Kufah had undergone a transformation, which was evident from their communications and letters. A renowned Arab researcher Muhammad Shakir states that time bears testimony that the people who suggested that Husain must not go to Kufah were right and the decision to visit Kufah was an interpretative blunder because:

1. The people of Kufah were not trustworthy. Moreover, there was a political instability.

2. He revolted against the present ruler who was unanimously accepted by the whole *Ummah*.
Notes and References


9. The people of Iraq with whom Muslim and Husain had to deal with consisted, by and large of emancipated slaves, newly converted Muslims and the tribal of Eastern Arabia who had still not imbibed the spirit of Islam. Having being subjects of the absolute and hedonic Sassanid Empire for a
long time, the people of Iraq had become sycophants and self-seekers, individually and collectively. This Iraqi character manifested itself in struggle in which one had to choose between material benefits and the morals and principles.


18. Atiqur Rahman Sambhali; *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150.


The author further writes that after Abdullah ibn Jafar wrote the letter, The Governor affixed it seal and send it through his own brother Yahya bin Sa‘eed Umari to Husain.


For further details see Atiqur Rahman Sambhali, op cit., pp. 177-178; Urdu Daira Marif Islamia, vol. VIII, *op. cit.*, p. 328.


