Chapter-VIII

Resume
Tradition of martyrdom in the history of Islam is very old as well as quite established, and if it is seen in historical and religious perspective, it will be proved a world-phenomenon. Right from the beginning of human presence on this planet it’s first example was set-up by the two sons of Adam, and in the history of the prophets it assumes the position of religio-prophetic phenomenon, for many prophets were assassinated in various periods of human civilization.

In the early period of *Khilafat-i-Rashidah* (Orthodox Khilafah), which is considered an ideal state and proverbial society as many as three Khulafa were martyred either by their coreligionists or by antagonists. Except the first Khalifah, all the three illustrious successors were killed: Hazrat Umar b. al-Khattab, the second Khalifah, by Persio-Syrain conspirator group, his martyrdom was declared by the Sahabah as the greatest tragedy of Islam; Hazrat Uthman b. Affan, the third Khalifah by the Muslim cessionist of three towns, Kufah, Basrah and Egypt, and his assassination divided the Muslim *Ummah* for ever, as was predicted by the martyred Khalifah himself in his warning to the assassins; Hazrat Ali b. Abi Talib, the fourth Khalifah, was annihilated by his opponents who were once his supporters; and his assassination brought the end of the ideal Islamic Khilafah.
Seen in the historical and Islamic perspective the tragedy of Karbala becomes only a historical tradition which was carried on in the later period. Of course, it was a great tragedy, which consumed a very noble soul who and his supporters bore the brunt of the ferocious attack by a huge army. Merciless killing of the helpless grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his civilians left a deep impact on the contemporary and later people who were thoroughly moved religiously as well as politically and perpetuated the memory of the great tragedy for all and for ever, although some earlier assassinations of the Khulafa particularly Uthman b. Affan was greater and more tragic in various respects.

It is an accepted fact that man is deeply impressed by the environment he lives in, and it does also shape the way of his thinking and his approach toward the events around him. The Arab writers, the Western writers and the Urdu writers of 19th and 20th century are no exception to this universal rule. We find some of them belong to the Arab countries, while others hailed from Western countries and Indian sub-continent especially from India and Pakistan. All these places are the important centers of intellectual and cultural activities. Differences of geographical divisions or political affinities had deep impact on their minds and on their attitude towards transmission of historical knowledge. Thus it has been found that some writers were deeply impressed by
the Islamic ideology, while many others were influenced by local political leanings or prejudices, sentiments, even poetic fancy, legend, exaggeration and imaginations. Similarly, Urdu writings during the 19th and 20th century of the Indian sub-continent have also framed different judgments and approaches on the event of Karbala.

Although the tragedy of Karbala has been mentioned differently by different Urdu writers, there is no doubt that it is one of the most pathetic tragedies of Islamic history. Many Urdu writers and scholars have devoted much of their energy and time in discussing this event.

Tragedy of Karbala has been a provoking issue throughout the Islamic history. From Ibn Jarir Tabari to Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi different approaches have been adopted by scholars throughout the Islamic period in expressing this tragedy. The tragedy has also generated an intensive debate since it's happening for various reasons. It was a major historical event in the Islamic world in which close relatives of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were martyred and this happening left a deep impression on the Muslim society so much so that it can be felt even today. Although there were slight differences over the issue of Khilafah before, but the nomination of Yazid by Muawiyah as his successor and subsequent moves of Husain on the request of Kufans developed
such an alarming situation that besides high regard for the grandson of the Prophet (SAW) history makes a reference to the past record and the writer has a big say in shaping it. This reflects from the writings of the historians of Islamic history especially with reference to the episode of Karbala. The opinions of the scholars seem divided in depicting the facts and realities concerning the Karbala incident.

There are however three categories of Urdu writers who obviously are influenced by a particular school of thought and have brought forward a different picture of the whole scenario, which resulted in a varied spectrum of socio-religious consequences in the post war era.

Most of the Urdu writers went to extremes while dealing the rule of Yazid. In the same way others have dealt with the move of Husain with imbalance, while another set of Urdu writers is fair towards both the disputants and had adopted a moderate thought about the whole issue.

The approaches of these different Urdu writers regarding the tragedy of Karbala may be classified in the following three categories:

1. Pro - Ahl- i -Bait
2. Pro- Khilafah
3. Moderate
**Pro-Ahl-i-Bait**

Majority of the Urdu scholars and historians have accepted the tragedy in all its ugly features depicted in the early traditions and have maintained almost a common opinion. The scholars who justify Husain’s attempts and deem him fit for the Khilafah taking consideration of his organizational skill, administrative capability and political maturity, besides his moral character and ancestral superiority, declare Yazid unfit for the Khilafah, saying that he indulged in immoral acts involving moral turpitude. Moreover they regard the nomination of Yazid by Muawiyah as an act of sheer nepotism and tribal prejudice leading to hierarchy in the precedence of selection of Khilafah. The viewpoint of the pro-Ahl-i-Bait scholars is generally accepted by Muslim community.

*Abul Ala Maududi* opposing the entire acts of Muawiyah and his son has levelled many allegations against them. He writes that the strategy of Muawiyah of preferring politics to the religion and to use *Shariah* for political motives took its worst shape in the reign of Yazid. In his tenure three such incidents; assassination of Husain, battle of Harrah and stoning of the Kabah occurred, which hurt the sentiments of entire Muslim world. These incidents prove that the Umayyad rulers used all means, fair or foul for safeguarding their rule.
Abdul Razzaq Malihabadi declares Husain's uprising well planned and timely, as Yazid was not having the public mandate by that time. Husain's revolt against Yazid was quite genuine because at that time Muslims had not accepted his Khilafah. Makkah, Madinah and Kufah were the three major Muslim areas where the notable Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were living. The eminent among them were Abdullah bin Zubair, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Umar and Abdur Rahman bin Abu Bakr, who had not accepted Yazid as Khalifah. Neither these notables nor the people of Kufah took oath of allegiance to Yazid. Therefore it is derogatory to say that the nomination of Yazid was a settled issue at the time when Husain revolted against him. But the fact is that Yazid was not accepted as Khalifah so Husain's revolt was not only Jaiz (justified) but Mustahsan (commendable) as well. At the same time Husain was invited by Kufans as he was the most prominent personality among the Muslims. He was bound to challenge the corrupt Yazid to provide to the Muslims a justified leadership.

Anisul Hasan Hashmi and Muhammad Abdul Rahman Sayyid Siddiqui strongly defend the case of Husain for Khilafah in comparison to Yazid on the basis of their personal profile and hold that selfishness, betrayal and cunningness were the main features of Yazid. He talked absurd and indulged in the nudity and
wild entertainment, while Husain was full of abilities and character which he inherited from Hazrat Ali so he was legitimate candidate for the Khilafah from the ancestral background also. Yazid destroyed the Arabs by his cruel and destructive leadership.

*Abdullah Quraishi, Shauk Amritsari and Sultan Ahmad Khan* have gone to the extremes, describing Yazid as a drunkard, rapist, and master of ill deeds. They also called him as *Maloon* (cursed) and *paleed* (polluted).

*Abdul Haq Dehlvi* an eminent traditionalist writes that Yazid is one of the most cursed man in our view. The crimes committed by this tyrant would not have been perpetrated by any other Muslim.

*Chirag Hasan Hasrat* charges Yazid for engineering every incident of battle of Karbala. As per his assessment, Yazid was notorious by dint of his cruelty. Husain got martyred by his order. The sacred cities of Madinah and Makkah were raided and most revered elders were martyred by Yazid’s order. It is the reason that people hate him till date.

*Sayyid AmTr Ali* favouring Husain has devoted more space to him in his writings and has held Yazid solely responsible for revolts and disturbances that led to sanguinary wars, which sapped the foundation of Islam. He writes that Yazid was both cruel and treacherous; his depraved nature knew no pity or justice. His
pleasures were as degrading as his companions were low and vicious. The butchery at Karbala caused a wave of horror throughout Islamic world, and gave birth in Persia to a national sentiment which afterwards helped the descendants of Abbas to destroy the Umayyads.

*Muhammad Abdul Hakim* has strongly turned down the claim of Yazid on the basis that he was a man of hatred, bad character, and a drunkard having anti-religious sentiments, cruel and selfish.

*Hamiduddin* narrates that Yazid felt guilty of the massacre of Karbala by means of nefarious designs of Ibn Ziyad. And says Yazid can not be spared from the accusation of murder of Husain, though the reality is that the large responsibility of this incident goes to Ibn Ziyad.

*Sayyid Aulad Hyder* levelling several allegations against Yazid declares him unfit for the Khilafah. As per his view, Yazid personally wanted that Husain be martyred and this wish compelled him to depute Ibn Ziyad to Karbala. His Khilafah was full of troubles and misfortunes.

*Ghulam Rasul Mohr* says that Yazid’s rule can not be justified still there had been a number of rulers who were worse than him. He says that Yazid was in no way legitimate to be Khalifah of Muslim world. More to it Yazid witnessed two terrible
incidents during his Khilafah like the tragedy of Karbala and the massacre in Madinah. This gave a wrong signal about his Khilafah and defamed his name.

_Muhammad Abdul Hai_ writes that Husain did not acknowledge Yazid’s Khilafah and Yazid adopted the way to eliminate Husain, this defamed him to the extent that he is hated even in present times.

_Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqvi_ says that it was Yazid who engineered the assassination of Husain. Though the people of Iraq invited Husain but they were not Shias as has been narrated by many scholars. So it is far from the reality to blame Shias for the assassination of Husain.

_Munshi Muhammad Khalilur Rahman_ also adopts anti-Yazid stand and says that Yazid was extremely disobedient who employed eunuchs at his harem. He was known by his four major sins; Martyrdom of Husain, violation of sanctity of Madinah, desecrating Kabah and tradition of introducing eunuchs.

_Sayyid Nawab Ali_ has charged Yazid with many allegations and compared the martyrdom of Husain with the incident of Jesus Christ whose teachings were misunderstood by Jews; likewise Umayyads declared Husain a rebel and martyred him.

_Rashid Akhtar Nadvi_ leveling a number of allegations against Muawiyah writes that as Muawiyah was willing to confer
Khilafah to his son Yazid so he as per the fatherly affection made him his successor.

*Sarwat Saulat* says that Muawiyah ignored many qualified and notable personalities and nominated his son Yazid as his successor. It is still debatable whether the responsibility of assassination of Husain lies on Ibn Ziyad or Yazid. Urdu writers, like their Arabic and Persian predecessors are divided on the issue. Some hold Ibn Ziyad responsible for the tragedy while others directly blame the Umawi Khalifah.

*Taha Husain* blames Muawiyah for transfer of Khilafah to his son Yazid, a step favouring dynastical rule, which resulted in the most heinous crime of Husain’s brutal end. Taha Husain also holds that no doubt Yazid showed his anger on the murder of Husain and declared Ibn Ziyad responsible for it, still he left Ibn Zayid without any punishment.

*Sayyid Abu Bakar Ghaznavi* holds that the appointment of Yazid destroyed the Islamic setup that had got developed after life long struggle of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Khulafa-i-Rashidin. The curse of kingship that was long buried was reborn due to the appointment of Yazid. The writer tries to convey that there was no consensus on the appointment of Yazid as Khalifah and Husain’s revolt against him was natural.
Sayyidna Tahir Saifuddin raises serious objections against the personality of Yazid and declares him unfit for the Khilafah. According to him Yazid did not bear good moral character. He cannot be defended in this matter. His behaviour was same as that of his ancestors who were mostly indulging in Kufr (infidelity).

Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi advocates for a regime change in his writings, stating that the end of Khilafat-i-Rashidah and the establishment of Umayyad Khilafah laid stress on the renovation of the Muslim state. The pre-Islamic aspects which succumbed the model governance of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Khulafai-i-Rashidin had started regenerating and the government which was run as per the rulings of Quran and Sunnah now indulged in political aspects of the governance.

Murtaza Ahmad Khan lays the responsibility of bifurcating the Ummah into different groups on Umayyads. According to him the indomitable rule of Umayyads was already being imposed on the entire empire, therefore, just after the tragedy of Karbala there was no immediate response from anywhere. Those who were concerned with the ill fate of Ahl-i-Bait developed their faith and loyalty for them. The sentiments took the shape of religious faith and a new sect of Shias was born. They declare the passion plays to mourn the tragedy of Karbala as a prayer. They consider the
cursing of Muawiyah, Yazid and Banu Umayyah as their religious duty.

*Abul Kalam Azad* also maintains a pro-Husain approach and writes that when conflict broke out at Karbala, Husain did not claim for the Khilafah neither he fought with such intentions. He was a sacred and innocent man who was surrounded by the enemy to capture him alive. But he never liked to compromise on his courage and freedom. So he preferred fighting to laying down the arms and made a comemorable history for the coming generations teaching a lesson that truth always triumphs and provides a firm stand against the evil.

*Muhammad Sulaiman Qasmi* favouring Husain’s endeavour says that Husain could have averted the tragedy of Karbala by taking pledge to Yazid. But it would have diluted the mission i.e., concept of Khulafa-i-Rashidin and respect for the Khilafah.

*Mohsin Usman Nadvi* writes that the martyrdom of Husain has a bearing with the heavenly intentions which has a message for the entire Muslim world, to wage jihad against the *fasiq* and *fajir* with all their might on the pattern of supreme sacrifice which Husain made in fighting Yazid’s forces.

*Muhammaduddin Fauq* believes that Husain repudiated reign of Yazid and preferred death instead of taking oath of
allegiance before a cruel and nondescript ruler who tried to settle his Khilafah on the basis of sword and force.

_Akbar Shah Khan Najibabadi_ is of the opinion that the motivating force that made Husain to visit Karbala was his curiosity to get rid of Yazid and he fought against the cruel and nondescript reign of Yazid and lighted the candle of reality by his bravery and sincerity which will enlighten the world for ever and will guide those who will fight for the cause of justice. Husain has addressed these concerns in the sermons of Karbala and during his travel.

_Sayyid Muhammad Hashim Patialvi_ contends that Husain intentionally did not accept Yazid as Khalifah and revolted against him. According to him Husain faced his martyrdom only because of his refusal to take oath of allegiance to Yazid. As such Husain was in no mood to take oath of allegiance to a _fasiq_ and _fajir_ like Yazid. He preferred to lay down his life but could not tolerate to see the reign of sacred _Dīn_ (religion) in the hands of Yazid, which was nourished by his grandfather Prophet Mohammad (SAW).²

_Murtaza Husain Fazil_ says that Husain condemned the Khilafah of Yazid and declared it illegal. In this way Husain obtained an international fame by scarifying himself in the field of Karbala.³
Muhammad Tayyab while referring to Yazid says that he was not accepted by the collective opinion, neither Husain revolted against him. It was just a step for redressing the differences.

Sayyid Iqbal Ahmad Jaunpuri asserts that the revolt of Husain was not to revive the Yazid's occupation but to put an end to it.

Mufti Muhammad Shafi says that Karbala on the one hand witnessed the extremes of cruelty and hatred which a human being can not imagine, and on the other the sincerity and determination of Husain and his caravan against the false ruler.4

Maulana Sayyid Safi Murtaza declares the Karbala incident a move that exposed the people behind the curtains and brought forward the reality. Maulana relates Karbala with the episode of Hazrat Noah (AS) and says that as Noah differentiated between Mūminīn (believers) and opponents by boarding Mūmin in the boat and the opponents drowned in the water, in the same way Husain demarcated the right and wrong forces at Karbala.5

Abdul Wahid Sindhi writes that Husain refrained from accepting Yazid as Khalifah not because he wanted to acquire the throne but because he thought that Yazid was not worth a Khalifah for Muslim Ummah. The issue turned into conflict and Husain was martyred.
Abdul Majid Qadri Badayuni is of the opinion that Husain's endeavour refreshed and repeated the endurance of his grandfather Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and became eternal by attaining martyrdom. Yazid and his supporters will be cursed till the last day.6

Abdul Wahid Khan writes that there was a hidden resentment against Yazid's Khilafah within the masses and Husain took bold initiative to register it. He says that Yazid was known for his wickedness. Though there was not any planned uprising against him but Muslims individually expressed their grief and sorrow on his apathy and injustice. He quotes a statement of Shah Waliullah Dehlavi:

“I say that it was the period of Hazrat Abu Bakr when sword managed to settle affairs of Khilafah. The people got disgusted and divided in the period of Hazrat Uthman and Hazrat Ali. The period of Hazrat Muawiyah and Hazrat Hasan witnessed the interior conflicts in the Ummah. It was Yazid's tenure when the people deviated from the right path of Islam and the trend worsened and continued till the period of Abdul Malik bin Marwan.”7

Khan further discusses the stand of Husain and narrates:

Husain did not surrender before the self established rule and illegitimate power of Yazid, instead he preferred martyrdom in order to keep the Khilafah alive and safeguard its interests. He
put forward his martyrdom which provided a unique example of its nature that human history has and will never equate. It will be a beacon light for the coming Muslim generations to resist the unwanted forces.

Qazi Zainul Abidin declares Yazid as fasiq and fajir. He further asserts that there is no denying the fact that in comparison to the revered personalities like Hazrat Husain, Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Zubair, Abdur Rahman bin Abu Bakr, Yazid was insignificant. So his Khilafah was in no way suitable for pleading the great manifesto of Islam. The attempt of Husain to stand against Yazid was in accordance with the opinion of the people. If he did so to acquire the Khilafah his desire was justified.

Umar Abu-al Nasr considers Husain as the only option for Khilafah and says it is a fact that if Husain would not have revolted against Yazid even then the whole Muslim Ummah would not have accepted Yazid as Khalifah whole heartedly but if Husain would have been given a chance there would have been definitely a full mandate for him and people would have witnessed once again a Muslim state run on the pattern of Abu Bakr and Umar. Husain went to Kufah to accomplish the same where he fell in the hands of enemy and was martyred.
Sayyid Hasan has viewed that Husain’s interest in Khilafah was justified. When the Islamic state witnessed a setback during Yazid’s Khilafah, Husain tried to redress the problems but in the due course of time he faced the cruel forces of Yazid and was forced to fight and was martyred.

Ali Shariati, the ideologue of Iranian revolution of 1979, justifies Husain’s initiatives and maintains that to take the control of the government and to establish peace and justice is the duty of Khalifah. He needs to mobilize masses and start political agitation against the cruel ruler to bring forth revolution. Dethrone him to take the empire in his hands, put an end to his rule and to give truth a chance to prevail. Shariati sums up that Husain’s rising against Yazid was a revolutionary step and like other revolutions it too has two visages, blood and message.9

Pro-Khilafah

Several Urdu scholars who belong to this category support the candidature of Yazid for the Khilafah, describing him as an able administrator and a generous person having firm public mandate to be nominated as the Khalifah. Consequent upon the fact, Muawiyah has been declared optimistic in his decision of nomination of his son Yazid, as it was in the larger interests of the Muslim Ummah. They strongly resist the moves of Husain and equate it as a rebellion against the established Khilafah of Yazid.
They also condemn Husain’s uprising either as a sinful disruption of the prevailing consensus, or as an ill-considered move which was bound to end in fiasco. Such criticism of Husain’s actions reproduced by the writers who fall in the pro-Khilafah category are discussed below:

_Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi_ holds that the nomination of Yazid as Khalifah was having consent of whole _Ummah_. This appointment was not based on any conspiracy, jealousy and greed or fear, nor was it any accidental approach. It was done in the peaceful primetime with the support of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his _Ahl-i-Bait_. People from all the corners of Muslim world came in the form of delegations to take oath of allegiance (_Bay'ah_) to Yazid. It is said that the nomination of Yazid and ceremony of his nomination was unique of its kind, having no parallels in the past. People expressed their loyalty and took oath of allegiance to Yazid, whom they considered able guided and generous. He was beloved of all. A large number of Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and _Tabiun_ were present at the time of the nomination of Yazid. There was no doubt about the character of Yazid otherwise it would have prevented people to accept Yazid as Khalifah. On the one hand Hussain’s refusal to take oath of allegiance to Yazid and on the other his
revolt on the invitation by Sabā'īs of Kufah was his independent judgment and personal act.

Muhammad Ishaq Siddiqui Nadvi is of the opinion that the tragedies that happened in the Khilafah of Yazid were not the result or causes of his nomination as Khalifah but were the result of the conspiracy of the Sabā'īs who were always in search of a chance to inflict pain and instability on Muslims to destabilize the whole Ummah. The appointment of Yazid by Muawiyah as Khalifah had not generated the dissent in Muslim society but it were the ill desires of Sabā'īs, who developed the differences by their highly spying attitude. The same would have happened if there would have been any other person in place of Yazid as they were not against Yazid or Muawiyah but against the whole Muslim community. They were deeply rooted in the whole establishment and played a prominent role in creating fuss within Muslims. Therefore the happening of these unwanted and tragic episodes could not be laid on the shoulders of Muawiyah or Yazid.

Bashirur Rahman Siddiqui also supports the same statement and states that the tragedy of Karbala was the outcome of the conspiracy of the archrivals of Islam, the Sabā'īs who were full of anger and were biased against Muslims. They tried their level best to seize every chance of meeting between Husain and Yazid as it would have rendered their plans ineffective. Sabā'īs played the
dual role like that of battle of camel in which they made both the parties to fight in order to fulfill their own interests.

**Dr. Asrar Ahmad** describing martyrdom of Husain as the last happening in the series of turmoil that *Ummah* has witnessed since the martyrdom of Hazrat Hamzah. Moreover, Hazrat Hamzah was highly revered martyr of Islam and was referred to as *Sayyid al-Shuhada* by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The second terrible incident in the history of *Ummah* was that of Hazrat Umar’s martyrdom and the same was the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali. There is no denying the fact that the most terrible tragedy in the history of Islam is the martyrdom of Hazrat Uthman who met the fate for no fault of his own. The people responsible for the martyrdom of Husain were actually those whose conspiracy engineered the martyrdom of Hazrat Uthman (RA) on 18 Dhul-Hijjah 36 AH. The people who mourn over Husain’s martyrdom are mostly those who are responsible for the murder of Uthman, Ali and Husain.

**Arshad Amanullah** shielding Yazid from the entire tragedy advocates that the tragedy of Karbala was the result of Sabā’i conspiracy and Husain’s mistake of independent judgment and Yazid has no responsibility for the incident. The root cause of the incident of Harrah were the people of Madinah but the armyed invasion on Madinah was Yazid’s blunder in the exercise of judgment. He is the only *Tabi* who has been guaranteed *Jannah* by
Prophet (SAW). He further goes on to say that Banu Hashim and Banu Umayyah had relationships since long back. They used to arrange intermarriages even after the incident of Siffin and Karbala.

_Shab Muhammad Abdul Shakur Farooqui_ blaming the Shiah sect for the Karbala tragedy says that it is enough as an evidence that the murderers of Husain were the Shias and that they lived in Kufah. To be Kufan is itself a Shiah identity. Kufans bear all the conditions necessary to be a Shiah, like mourning over the martyrdom of Husain, vociferating, beating of breasts etc. As for as the murder of Husain is concerned they attempted it in the condition of helplessness and later on begged for pardon.\(^{10}\)

_Zafar Ahmad Sialkoti_ strongly resents blaming Yazid saying that Yazid had so firm faith in God that he always considered Almighty the supreme power having command on everything. So it is quite injustice and the matter of shame for those who declare him as a drunkard and level other such allegations against him.

_Rashid Ahmad Gangohi_ is of the opinion that Amīr Muawiyyah had not any pre-decided plans to make Yazid his successor. Further, Yazid was a pious and generous man before the assignment of Khilafah and it was afterwards that he got infamy.

While discussing the mourning, Gangohi writes that the time Husain was martyred was definitely period of a shock and grief.
But it is no way justified or permitted to mourn whole life on this issue.\footnote{11}

\textit{M.Y.M. Siddiqui} taking into consideration whole scenario of the tragedy of Karbala concludes that the differences between Husain (Hashmi) and the Umavi Yazid bin Muawiyah often put forward as long pending earlier tribal jealousy and bias between Banu Hashim and Banu Umayyah, is absolutely wrong because it was a political conflict based on Husain’s independent judgment and personal perception. Except few sons and family members of Husain all other eminent people of Banu Hashim did not agree with him in this matter. It is because of this reason that Hazrat Abdullah bin Jafar, Abdullah bin Abbas, Muhammad bin al-Hanafiya and all elders and youth of Banu Hashim took oath of allegiance to Yazid and considered his Khilafah genuine. Therefore, there was not any family—based reason behind the tragedy of Karbala. It was only Husain’s curiosity for the Khilafah, which created the whole tension.

\textit{Hafiz Salahuddin Yousuf} is of the opinion that Yazid did not order murder of Husain nor was it in his consideration. He respected him as per the advice of his father, Muawiyah. Husain’s martyrdom was one of the great sins. Those who favoured it or participated in it or were pleased by it, were supposed to get punishment as per the Shariah. But Husain’s martyrdom is not as

**Mir Mahmud Ali Qaisar** writes that the awareness about the tragedy of Karbala makes it evident that Husain’s murder was not due to direct fight with the government forces and if it would have happened, then Husain would have been called a rebel and that would have been a blame on him. Although he had rolled back his mission but the dual nature of Kufans played crucial role in cancellation of rolling back.

**Ali Ahmad Banarsi** declares Husain’s revolt illegitimate and holds that none of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) favoured Husain. Though there were a large number of Sahabah in Hijaz, Basrah, Kufah and Egypt present at that time but no one among them stood against Yazid. Even among the fifteen children of Hazrat Ali only four supported Husain and remaining eleven refused to revolt against Yazid. Even Muhammad bin Hanafiya was compelled to participate but he refused this offer vehemently.

**Muhammad Taqi Usmani** came to the conclusion that the nomination of Yazid by Muawiyah was done in quite conformity with the Islamic law as well as political sagacity; it was in fact in the best interests of the Islamic *Ummah* and no ulterior motive can be ascribed to Hazrat Muawiyah. The best proof of the legitimacy
of the nomination of Yazid is found in the consensus of the Sahabah and other notables of the *Ummah*.

**Moderate**

The scholars of this category maintain a moderate view holding the claim of Yazid for Khilafah on the one hand and on the other declare Husain innocently trapped in the net due to the betrayal of Kufans who gave a serious setback to the Muslim community by their nefarious designs, conspiracy, bias and favoritism. Moderate scholars and historians have put forward the reservations from both the sides at the specific junctions, where one seems to exceed the powers and impose his own will ignoring the consultations and the time specific needs that would have avoided the conflict and the evil impacts thereafter.

*Atiqur Rahman Sambhali* neutralizing this most sensitive issue, describes it as the outcome of heavenly settlements which was pre-decided. The destiny of Husain guided his way to Karbala and hard luck of Ibn Ziyad made him harsh to take advantage of this mischievous act. This all happened according to the will of Allah.

*Wahiduddin Khan* drawing the parallels between the two brothers says that Hasan and Husain had two different tastes and that one chose the way of peace and the other the way of war. Therefore Hasan and Husain are two role models for Muslim
Ummah with two different perspectives. Husain apparently gave no benefit to the nation and created an atmosphere of internal conflicts causing bloodshed, while Hasan served Islam with his highly responsive and sensible generosity giving a lot of benefit to the Ummah.\(^{12}\)

Sa‘eedur Rahman Alvi justifies the act of Yazid of not condemning Ibn Ziyad for this heinous act considering punishment of Ibn Ziyad impossible. Ibn Ziyad was accompanied by Shias of Kufah and they were equally responsible and deserved punishment. But giving punishment to Ibn Ziyad and Shias of Kufah would have given birth to a rebellion against Yazid.

Abdur Rahman Khan absolving Yazid of the crime says he alone was not responsible for the assassination of Husain but Iraqis (Shian -i- Ali) are to be blamed as well.

Aslam Jairajpuri highlights the misjudgment of Husain by saying that the people of Iraq were not trustworthy. Even Hazrat Ali was fed up by their disobedience and prayed to Allah for saving every one from their Fitna. They took oath of allegiance to Hasan but deserted him on the battle field when Syrian army attacked. Husain trusted them, left Makkah for Kufah but on approaching them he realized that they deceived him too and decided to return back but Ibn Ziyad insisted him to take oath of allegiance to Yazid, which Husain strongly resented and made him
to fight at the cost of his life. The eminent personalities of Quraish such as Abdullah bin Abbas were aware about the Kufi character so they tried their level best to prevent Husain from visiting Kufah.

Shah Abdul Aziz blaming the Shiahs of Iraq writes that the responsibility of Husain's murder is on the shoulders of the Shias of Kufah who strongly insisted Husain by making repeated requests and addressing letters requesting him to visit Kufah, but betrayed him at the time of war. They left Husain, who was accompanied by his family members comprising women and children alone against the strong army of the enemy and gave them an easy access to attempt the murder of Husain. Some of them even merged with the enemy and martyred the nears and dears of Husain. The infants of the caravan succumbed to thirst crying for the water that no one offered. Therefore the whole tragedy was the handwork of the betrayal of Kufans. The author further writes that Husain had no desire for the Khilafah, but he went to Kufah to prevent the people from the oppression of the emperor and considered it a religious obligation (wajib). 

Moinuddin Ahmad Nadvi lays the responsibility of the destruction of Madinah on the people of Madinah as they were aware of the fact that their refusal to oath of allegiance to Yazid would be a cause for their destruction. Had they taken the oath of
allegiance, it would not have happened. However, he enlisted the assassination of Husain, destruction of Madinah and violation of sanctity of Kabah as evil achievements of Yazid’s Khilafah. Still in defense of Yazid, Nadvi says that he did achieve certain things which were of national interest. He put an end to internal rebellions and won many conquests.

Abdul Qayoom Nadvi says that the tragedy of Karbala tarnished Yazid’s image, otherwise he was a master of some novel qualities like bravery, sincerity, patience and equality, which enabled him to expand the Islamic empire.

Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi clearly maintains that the hereditary succession always followed in the political succession of all the posts of the Quraish, the senate of the Quraish of Makkah in the pre-Islamic period and in other political and tribal institutions.

Urdu translations of Arabic works

The Arab writers with different approaches have also given different views regarding the tragedy of Karbala. They have formed judgments by observing character of Yazid and Husain. Like the Urdu writers, the Arab writers can be divided into three categories. Some writers favour and praise Husain, while some condemn his uprising as a sinful disruption of the prevailing consensus. There is a third group who is fair towards both the disputants and has maintained a balance in its writings.
The views of prominent Arab writers and historians regarding the tragedy of Karbala are examined in this thesis. They have been made part of the present study because of their immense role in shaping the views of Urdu writers. Views of some prominent Arab writers regarding the tragedy of Karbala are discussed below.

**Pro-Ahl-i-Bait**

*Lūṭ ibn Yaḥya bin Saʿīd b. Mikhnaf* (d. 157/774), One of the earliest Arabic traditionalists and historians has pro-Alid and Iraqi sympathies. He is a Kufi historian and belongs to the tribe of *Azd*. He is credited in the *fiḥrist* of Ibn al-Nadim with more than thirty monographs of Syria and Iraq and on subjects such as civil wars, the battle of Harrah and on deaths of persons such as Ali, Muawiyah, Husain etc. In his reports he leans heavily towards his tribe, *Azd* and his own family members who were active supporters of the Alid cause. His treatment of events such as Siffin, Karbala and al-Harrah is hostile towards the Umayyads for many reasons. His authorities for Siffin, the episode of Muslim bin Aquil and Karbala are by and large Kufi but they are occasionally supplemented by Syrian and Madinese reports. However largely he presents Iraqi or Kufi point of view in his historical narrations. Abu Mikhnaf is strongly inclined and tilted towards Iraq and Alids. His treatment of Ibn Zubair is however balanced.
**Jalal al-Din Abdul Rahman al-Suyuti** (d. 911/505), has set up in his book History of the Caliphs (*Tarikh al-Khulafa*) two separate chapters one of which is concerning the traditions cautioning against the Umayyad Khilafah and the other is concerning the traditions announcing glad tidings of the Abbasid Khilafah. Traditions describing the Umayyad Khilafah as kingship and the Umayyad Khulafa as Kings from among the worst Kings (*Muluk min Sharr al Muluk*). He like Masudi excludes the Umayyad rule from the definition of the Khilafah.\(^{15}\)

**Abul Hasan Ali ibn al-Husain al-Masudi** (d. 345/956), a renowned historian and a scholar of the fourth century in his *Muruj al- Dhahab* expresses a strong pro-Alid sympathy. Masudi’s information on the Alids is reported on the authority of the men with Shiite inclinations. One can also find in Masudi’s *Muruj* clear anti-Umayyad feelings. Masudi counts Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali and Hasan and the Abbasid rulers as genuine Khalifahs and uses for them the title of Khalifah, the term Khilafah and dazzling empire. While as he did not use the title of Khalifah or the term Khilafah for the Umayyad rulers except in case of Umar bin Abdul Aziz (d.102/720).\(^{16}\)

**Muhammad bin Ali bin Tabataba bin Tiqtiqa** (d.709/1309), salutes the courage of Husain and his followers and says that Husain put forward the unique example of patience, bravery, piety
etc. that has no parallel in the history of world. In the same way his companions proved their worth by fighting against the enemy at the cost of their lives.

*Izzuddin Ali bin Muhammad Ibn Athir* (630/1233), in his *Al-Kamil* has given detail of the tragedy of Karbala and the incident of Harrah. There is a reference to Yazid taking liquor and also presenting liquor to Husain with his utmost insistence. It seems that he had not given up drinking even in Madinah. Once when Abdullah ibn Abbas and Husain went to meet Yazid in a party, the liquor was concealed to prevent Ibn Abbas from smelling it. Later Husain was called and the drinks were offered which he denied. Then Yazid recited verses related to maids etc. In this way Yazid won notoriety for addiction to liquor and because of this Abdullah bin Zubair named him *Sukran* (dead drunk).

*Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari* (d. 310/923), another renowned historian has depicted the ill-treatment of Yazid and his followers, their humiliating response with Husain’s teeth and its condemnation by Abu Barzah, a Companion of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Moreover the report of that delegation of Madinites who returned from Yazid was as follows:

“We have returned from that man who is unaware of the religion, drunkard, playing with musical instruments, plays with
dogs, wastes time in leisure works. We will suspend him on reaching Madinah."  

**Pro-Khilafah**

*Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi* (d.543/1148), tries to bring discredit to Husain's uprising by arguing that Yazid was an honest and pious man, and Husain revolted against him contrary to the will of distinguished Companions of the Prophet (SAW) as Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar and his own brother Ibn Hanafiyyah; he wonders how Husain could have preferred the wishes of riff-raff (*awbash*) of Kufah to the counsel of these dignitaries. Ibn al-Arabi concludes that Yazid's reaction against Husain was merely an application of the law laid down by Husain's own grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which prescribes the severe punishment of all those subverting the unity and peace of the Muslim community.  

*Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali* (450-505/1058-1111), certifies Yazid as a true Muslim and does not accept the charge that Yazid was implicated in the killing of Husain. Ghazali further writes:

"One who thinks that Yazid has ordered the murder of Husain is a stupid. It is such an incident the details of which can not be ascertained as the reality remains hidden behind the curtains of bias. In such a situation Muslims need to permit themselves to be highly optimistic."
**Abul Abbas Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri** (d. 279/892), is one of the prominent Arabic historians whose book *Ansab al Ashraf* is a rich and valuable source for the history of Umayyad period. Over a third of the manuscript is devoted to the Umayyad history. Baladhuri is one of the few to deal objectively with the Umayyads. While dealing the topic of Yazid Baladhuri writes:

"Muawiyah was not at par with his predecessors but none of his successors was as good as Muawiyah. May God bless him. Muawiyah's son Yazid was really a pious and good fellow in his family."^20

**Moderate**

**Ahmad al-Yaqub (Yaqubi)** (d. 284/897), an Arab historian and geographer adopts a moderate pro-Alid sympathy, which sometimes turns anti-Umayyad.^21

**Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad ibn Khaldun** (d.804/1406), shares moderate ideology. His approach is of a different kind as he asserts that rebellion against Yazid was justified because of his wickedness. Husain was, therefore, right in registering a revolt against Yazid as a duty incumbent on those who had the power to execute it. But he thinks that Husain was wrong in confusing his qualifications with his power. His qualifications were as good as he thought, and better, but he was mistaken as to his strength. Yazid on the other hand, was wrong in trying to justify his actions
against Husain by arguing that he was fighting evildoers because any such action should be undertaken only by a just ruler, which he was not.22

Muhammad Ibn Umar al-Waqidi (d. 208/822), deals with Islamic history as a whole, yet he pays special attention to Maghazi, riddah, battles of Jamal, Siffin and the conquests of Syria and Iraq. He is widely known for his book on the Maghazi of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Al-Baladhuri and Tabari quote him extensively for the early Khilafah and the Umayyad period. Al-Waqidi has mild Alid leaning, still he is far from prejudices. If Waqidi on the one hand, composed monographs on the birth of Hasan and Husain and the killing of Husain, then on the other hand he did not suppress reports hostile to Husain. His treatment of Ibn Zubair is generally fair and sometimes brings up some reports which favour Ibn Zubair and run against Yazid. Waqidi on the authority of Abu Jafar al-Bakir holds that the first person who covered the Kabah with silk brocade was Yazid bin Muawiyah.23

Ismail bin Umar Ibn Kathir (d.774/1373), has referred to Umavi period and his book Tarikh al-Rasul wa al-Muluk is having frequent praise for Banu Umayyah. But at the same time his book is full of their troubles and tragedies as well. He has described Yazid as a capable and gentle ruler besides clearly reporting him
as an entertainer, drunkard etc. Regarding Husain’s assassination he has said that neither Yazid ordered it nor regretted.

Ahmad bin Abdul Halim Ibn Taimiya (d.652/1254), is also impartial towards both the disputants. He writes:

"To make any objection against Yazid to be an authoritative ruler is same as to challenge the Khilafah of Abu Bakr (RA), Umar (RA) and Uthman (RA) and the kingship of Qaisar and Kisra. So Yazid was one among the Muslim rulers". Regarding Husain he writes:

"Husain’s act was not a right step, but since he was killed innocently he died a martyr’s death. So throughout the Muslim world there was sympathy and a high regard for Husain. Husain was martyred in the same way as other Salihin (eminent) of high profile were martyred. The murder of Husain is just disobedience to Allah and His Prophet (SAW); whoever did it or participated in the dealing is sinful. But Husain’s murder is in no way more sinful or trouble giving than those Prophets (AS) who got martyred by Bani Israil. In the same way the murder of Uthman (RA) and Ali (RA) is more sinful and a great loss for Ummah than that of Husain. Therefore whatever may be the intensity of these incidents it is better to tolerate them and to recite ‘inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji‘oon’ (To Allah do we belong and to Him shall we return) because it is desirable to Allah."24
Ahmad bin Muhammad Ibn Khallikan (d681/1281), adopts the mid way when he says that if the Umayyads impiously murdered the son of the Prophet’s daughter and have regretted to have borne no share in his murder but whether it be true or not is known to Allah alone.25

Anyone who studies closely the history of life of Hazrat Husain and Yazid and the conditions that prevailed at that time and analyzes this event of Islamic history objectively will have no doubt that in those circumstances there was no choice before Husain but to get killed. Had Ibn Ziyad accepted the proposal of return of Husain, the terrible incident of Karbala would not have occurred and the circumstances would have been altogether different. Secondly, it centers on the misleading invitation made to Husain and his subsequent betrayal by the people of Kufah. Thus, it is felt that betrayal of Kufans is a repetition of their treatment with Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Hasan.

To cite historical parallel, when the people of Jerusalem agreed to surrender in front of the Muslim army, provided the document of treaty was signed by the Khalifah Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) himself, who had to go to Jerusalem from Jabiyah for this purpose alone. Very properly, had Husain insisted on Yazid’s coming to Kufah to sign any treaty but, on the contrary, he had expressed his willingness to be taken to Yazid to Damascus. Even
Ibn Ziyad might possibly have accepted the proposal of Husain, had not Shimr volunteered at the psychological moment to perform this nefarious deed.

The tragedy of Karbala would not have taken place if Hadrat Uthman (RA) had not been assassinated. If Hazrat Uthman had not been assassinated and had died a natural death, he was likely to be succeeded by Hadrat Ali. In that case there would have been no Ali-Muawiyah conflict, as the conflict merely arose because of the demand for the vengeance for the killers of Hazrat Uthman. Hazrat Ali also would not have been assassinated and the Umayyads would not have come into power. As such there would have been no historical setting and background for the tragedy of Karbala. But in history ifs and buts have no place. However, it is a historical fact that the tragedy of Karbala was a dreadful culmination of the ugly political developments that first caused the assassination of the third Khalifah of Islam and later divided the Ummah into a number of factions whose real motives and designs were not in the best interests of Islam and Muslims.
Notes and References

Note:

The views of scholars mentioned in this chapter i.e. Resume regarding the tragedy of Karbala have been largely discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis.


