

54. The Master of great and small had finished putting on his arms. The standard of the Sayyid of the time was standing ready. Their hair dishevelled, the Sayyid women were standing around it. The sister of the Imam, clutching the pole was weeping. With swords bound to their waists and their turban flaps fluttering on their shoulders, the darling boys of Zainab⁹⁹ came and stood under the standard.
55. The rosy-cheeked boys tucked in the flap of their cloaks and rolled their sleeves up to their elbows in a glorious manner. The might of Ja'far, the courage of the Lion of God; they were small in stature, but they were distinguished and renowned. They rubbed their eyes on and kissed the flag of the standard, and swaying in ecstasy walked around the pole.
56. Now they looked towards their mother, now towards the standard; now they called that they were sacrificed to the King of the faithful (Husain). Now the two brothers took counsel together, and now these glorious ones quietly asked their mother: 'For whom is (lit. 'what is the purpose of) the insignia of Lord Ali destined? Mother, who will have the standard of our grandfather?
57. 'When the King of great qualities decides the question, let him remember that we are also entitled. For reasons of politeness, we dare not mention it; we also feel that he may be upset (if we ask him). We are the servants of the Master (Husain); we lay down our lives for him, but we seek honour and hope for reputation.
58. 'All the heroes of the army of the Prophet were peerless, but the Prophet honoured our grandfather, (Ja'far). At Khaibar,¹⁰⁰ the formidable army was waiting impatiently, but at the time of testing, Ali got the standard. Even though we are hungry and thirsty, we lack nothing in strength. We are the grandsons of Ali and Ja'far.'

99. Aun and Muhammad. Their maternal grandfather was Ali; their paternal grandfather was Ja'far, who was killed when fighting on Muhammad's side at the battle of Khaibar (cf. verse 64).

100. A fortified territory to the north east of Medina where the Muslims defeated the Jews (629 A.D.).

59. Zainab answered: 'What has that got to do with you? How can I interfere? The Imam is master and leader. Look, do not say anything disrespectful. I'll be angry if you even mention the standard again. Now go, just stand aside, put your hands together. Why have you left Ali Akbar and come here?
60. 'Move aside, do not step forward, stand there by the standard. Make sure that the celestial Lord (Husain) does not see you. You come here and drive me mad. All I can say is that what you ask is not proper. Then whatever I say, good or bad, you'll cry. As far as I am concerned this obstinacy is nothing more than childishness.
61. 'You are babies and you desire such a high station. Well, you'll have to find some way of increasing your height! But I must admit it is a sign of courage. Indeed there is no one to equal you among your fellows. But (a man) must think and weigh up all sides of the question. Why should a mortal crave for something which is not possible?
62. Will such tiny hands be able to lift this standard? You are the smallest of all in height and the youngest in age. Devote yourselves to the feet of the grandson of the Prophet (Husain). This is your only duty, this is your station and your glory. If you desire to go out and fight, then this is my job. Your mother is devoted to you; today honour is acquired by dying.
63. 'What is it to you if your ancestors were the glory of their day? Basking in the reputation of others is not becoming. Real qualities are those which the sword itself will uncover. Today demonstrate the courage of Haidar and Ja'far. Why should you say that you are the children of the saint of God (Ali). Let the armies themselves call out that they are the grandsons of Ali.
64. Why, did the winged Ja'far¹⁰¹ gain his reputation only from the standard? That was also a gift bestowed on him by the heavenly Prophet. He was the one who saved battles from being lost (lit. 'in

101. Ja'far was killed at Khaibar and his arms were cut off. In their place he was given wings of jewels.

broken battles works were effected by him). When he drew his sword, Turkey and Syria shook. When he lost his life, the tree of conflict bore fruit. Instead of arms, God gave him wings of jewels.

65. 'When the army (of the Prophet) had faced defeat for three days, then the Prophet of God gave the standard to Ali. When the Lion of God killed Marhab¹⁰² and advanced, the enemy army shut the door of the fort and fled. The door which was heavier than a great rock was broken down, in the way that a leaf might be broken from a tree.
66. 'The son of the Solver of difficulties (i.e. Ali) has been in an ambush for three days. The garden of our mother is trampled in the desert. You have not even asked why my hair is dishevelled. I am being robbed and all you think about is your own honour and rank. You neither sympathise with me nor do you love the Imam. Now I realize that you only seeking reputation for yourselves.'
67. Putting their hands together those rosy faced ones spoke: 'Oh sister of the Imam, control your anger! Ah God, how could we possibly mention the standard again? All will be clear, when we, these faithful servants, go into battle. We shall put the armies to rout and then go to sleep in the grave of the martyrs. Then you will appreciate our worth when we are no longer alive.'
68. Saying this the dutiful sons moved aside. As tears welled up in their mother's breast, she said, suppressing her feelings: 'My darlings, you give me the tidings of your death. Wait let this grief stricken (mother) bless you at least. Ah what can I do (lit. 'may I be sacrificed') you disapprove of your mother's advice. My children, what have you said that I have this dagger thrust in my heart?'
69. Coming to Zainab, the King of the world (Husain) spoke: 'My sister, did you hear what your two sons said? They are the fiercest of lions, wise, impetuous breakers of ranks. Zainab, these two beautiful boys are peerless. When you see all (the boys together), they all possess

102. One of the most formidable soldiers on the opposing side. A detailed account of the battle of Khaibar may be found in Amir Ali 'Spirit of Islam', Chap.VII (pp.86 ff.).

the qualities of their ancestors, but their frown is different, their determination is something more.

70. 'At the age of only nine or ten years, what courage, what determination! Has anyone ever seen such stout headed boys? Why should not good fortune itself rub its eyes on their feet? In whose bosom did they grow up? On whose milk were they nurtured. In truth they are the heirs of the noble Prophet. But what can I do when they are both so young?
71. 'Now I shall give the standard of the army to whomsoever you say.' She replied: 'Just as the King of heavenly glory advises'. He said: 'Since the time when the gracious Fatima was taken from us, I have always regarded you in the place of our mother. You are the one to decide, whether it be one of the older men or one of the youths. Whoever you say will have the task allotted to him.'
72. His sister said: 'You also mention someone's name. In which direction is the attention of the Leader of great and small (inclined)? For after the Quran, your word has the greatest authority.¹⁰³ But if you ask me, oh celestial King, in honour, stature and glory there is no-one to equal the renowned Abbas. No-one could be better than him.'
73. '(Abbas) loves you, he is your servant and slave, ever willing to lay down his life for you. A younger brother, the glory of your bosom, faithful. Comforter, obedient, famed and renowned; a brave warrior, a worthy son of his father, the glory of the time; he is a great general, lion-hearted, valliant and good; he is without an equal among hundreds; one in a thousand.'
74. As tears came flooding into his eyes, the incomparable King spoke: 'Indeed, this was also the last wish of Ali, oh my sister! Good, call him, where is that breaker of ranks?' Akbar, hearing these words went off to his uncle (Abbas) and said: 'The high-minded King awaits you. Come, my aunt (Zainab) has remembered you, sir.'

103. After the word of God (kalam-e xwda), the word of the Imām has the most authority.