

## (10) The Loot

Eerie silence hung over the battleground  
Broken occasionally by drum beating sounds  
The carnage, the massacre, of saintly souls  
Caused a shudder, in Islam's true believers' fold.  
The massacre being over, they raided they tents  
To loot and destroy, they were all fiendishly bent  
Helpless ladies and children, they mercilessly pashed  
Young innocent babes, to the ground they dashed.  
Daughters of the Prophet, simple lives had led  
Coarse and patched clothes, were all they had  
Woven by Fatima, they were immensely treasured  
In terms of money, none could be measured.  
They were shamelessly looted of even their veils  
The Yazidi hordes outclassed, themselves, the devils  
Earrings were snatched of the child of Husayn  
She was slapped mercilessly, for crying in pain.  
In stupor, lay the only surviving adult male  
Ali Zainal Abedeen was flogged as in horror tales  
After the looting, the tents were set on fire enmasse  
Hell was let loose, with a vengeance, quick and fast.  
Zaynab was perplexed, she was lost  
Perish in flames or face still worst  
This hour of trial, whom to consult  
Her nephew was unconscious, lying in dust.  
"Ali Zainal Abedeen, I appeal to you  
As our Imam, tell us what are we to do?"  
He opened his eyes, burning with fever  
With utmost effort, advise he delivered.  
"To save our lives is a religious duty

Go in the open and seek security."  
Ladies and children, they left the tent  
Salvaging what they could, as they went.  
The loot, the pandemonium, was soon over  
Burning embers of fire only hovered  
A partially burnt tent was all that remained  
A solitary witness of torture and blood stain.  
The Ahl Bait cuddled together therein  
Shattered in mind and body, beyond dream  
The time had come almost to a standstill  
The night was in sorrow; one could feel.  
The mourning widows of Husayn's friends  
Their anguished hearts, who could mend?  
Zaynab and Kulthum consulted each other  
The orphaned children, they had to mother.  
Zaynab counted the children; one was missing  
To her dismay, it was Sakina, her darling  
"Tell me Sakina, where are you my child?"  
In wilderness, the echo was the only reply.  
Frustrated, she ran towards the battlefield  
"Sakina is lost, your darling child  
Husayn, where shall I look for her?"  
She imploringly sobbed, in utter despair.  
The silvery moon, behind the clouds was hid  
The clouds dispersed, the ground was lit  
Lying with her head on Husayn's chest  
Little Sakina was sleeping in her usual nest.  
"Sakina, my child, I have come here  
After searching the desert, my dear  
Your father's beheaded body, how could you find  
In this dark night, with your frightened mind?"  
"An irresistible urge seized me, though dampened  
To tell my father all that had happened  
How they snatched my earrings, after his death  
The slaps I received, the treatment we met."  
"Running aimlessly in the desert I cried  
Tell me dearest father, where do you lie  
Sakina, my darling Sakina, come here, come here!  
I heard him calling and found my father dear."

"I narrated to him, all I had endured  
It lightened my heart: I was re-assured  
An urge to sleep on his chest, for the last time  
I placed my head in the nest of mine."  
With Sakina, Zaynab hurried to the camp  
Again it was dark; there was no lamp  
All were anxiously waiting in the ghostly night  
Praying silently to God, the Eternal Light.  
She placed Sakina in her mother's arms  
She had several other duties to perform  
No, not to protect any worldly treasure  
The children had suffered, beyond measure.  
Advancing towards them, she saw a group  
"There is nothing left, which you can loot  
Pray, do not disturb the children in sorrow  
If you want something, come in the morrow!"  
"We do not want anything from you  
We know, what you have said is true  
We have brought some water and food  
We know, you are in a sorrowful mood."  
Zaynab was surprised; so polite was the speaker  
It was the widow of Hur, the truth seeker  
"Soldiers of Omar Saad have deputed me  
To carry food and water for thee."  
"Lest you perish, due to hunger and thirst,  
Before Yazid, they want to take you first  
That is why they have sent water and food  
Not because they have suddenly turned good."  
"O, sister, we are indebted to your husband  
For his precious life, in defending Husayn  
He was our guest, but at a time, alas!  
We had not even water; no, not a glass!"  
"My lady, I am grieved, you lost not one  
But eighteen members to death, were done."  
They offered condolences to each other  
Zaynab was large hearted like her mother.  
"At last there is water for you  
Wake up, Sakina, see it is true  
Wet your throat, sobbing will stop."

For days, she had not even a drop.  
"Let Ali Asghar drink first, he is the youngest  
My dear brother died of sheer maddening thirst  
Now that water is available, give him first  
Before I can taste it and quench my thirst."  
Guarding her folks, with a half burnt pole  
Alone, all alone, with no waking soul  
Due to exhaustion, Zaynab fell in a swoon  
O' Merciful God, it was, indeed, a boon!  
One person came galloping in her dream  
"O' Shaikh, please go back" she screamed  
"I am daughter of Hazrat Ali and Fatima  
We are guardians of the holy 'Kalima '!  
The person lifted the veil from his face  
It was her father Ali himself, by Divine Grace  
She poured out her mutilated and bleeding heart to him  
The outpourings caused convulsions, ending the dream.  
Lying on the desert sand, clothes wet with tears  
The dawn was breaking, time of prayer was near  
Events of previous day, she recalled with pain  
Ali Akbar had given Azan; prayers led by Husayn.  
Finishing her prayer, she laid her head  
Prostrate before God of the living and dead  
To give her courage, to carry on the mission  
Which, to the world, would be an everlasting lesson.

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