

## Chapter 23: The Martyrs

The number of martyrs slightly varies from one author to another. Some include those who were martyred as a prelude to Karbala, such as Muslim ibn Aqeel, Hani ibn Urwa... etc., and those who were martyred after Ashura. Other stick to only those martyrs who were slain at Karbala. Depending on such classification, the number of martyrs varies from 72 to the double of this number.

In the volley of arrows showered by Ibn Sa'd's army on Imam Husayn's camp, the following persons were martyred and their horses also were killed even before fighting in the battle:<sup>1</sup>

1. Na'eem bin Ajlan al-Ansari
2. Umar bin Ka'b al-Ansari
3. Handhala bin Umar ash-Shaibani
4. Qasit bin Zuhair
5. Karsh bin Zuhair
6. Kinana bin Ateeq
7. Umar ad-Dhabbi
8. Dhirghama bin Malik
9. Saif bin Malik an-Nimyari
10. Abdurrahman bin Abdullah
11. Majma' bin Abdullah al-Aa'ithi
12. Hannan bin Harith as-Salmani
13. Amr al-Jundi

14. Hallas bin Amr ar-Rasibi
15. An-No'man bin Amr Rasibi
16. Siwar bin Abi Humair al-Fahmi
17. Zahir bin Amr; bondsman of ibn al-Hamq al- Khuza'iy
18. Jabala bin Ali ash-Shaibani
19. Ammar bin abi Salama
20. Mas'ood bin al-Hajjaj
21. Hajjaj
22. Zohair bin Basheer
23. Ammar bin Hassaan
24. Abdullah bin Umair
25. Aslam bin Katheer al-Azdi
26. Zohair bin Muslim al-Azdi
27. Abdullah bin Yazid al-Qeisi
28. Abdullah bin Urwa al-Ghfari

The names of the valiant nobles who fought and were martyred at Karbala are as the following, though not in order of precedence in their martyrdom:

1. Al-Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi
2. Al-Hurr's son
3. Al-Hurr's brother Mus'ab
4. Al-Hurr's slave Urwa
5. Abdullah bin Umar
6. Burair al-Hamadani
7. Wahab al-Kalbi

8. The wife of Wahab
9. The mother of Wahab
10. Umar bin Khalid al-Azdi
11. Khalid bin Umar
12. Sa'd bin Handhala at-Tameemi
13. Umair bin Abdullah al-Muthhaji
14. Muslim ibn Awsaja
15. The son of Muslim ibn Awsaja
16. Hilal bin Nafi' al-Bajali
17. The son of Hilal bin Nafi'
18. Habib ibn Mudhahir
19. Sa'eed bin Abdullah<sup>2</sup>
20. Zohair ibn al-Qain
21. Abu Thumama as-Saidawi
22. al-Hajjaj bin Masrooq
23. Mubarak
24. Yahya bin Katheer
25. Yahya bin Muslim
26. Handhala bin Sa'd
27. Abdurrahman bin Abdullah
28. Umar bin al-Khattab al-Ansari
29. John; Abu Dharr's slave
30. Umair bin Khalid as-Saidawi
31. Sa'eed bin Umar

32. Qurra bin Qurra al-Ansari
33. Malik bin Anas al-Maliki
34. Umar al-Ju'fi
35. Aabis bin Shabeeb
36. Showthab bin Aabis
37. Abdullah al-Ghfari
38. Abdurrahman al-Ghfari
39. A Turkish bondsman of Imam Zainul Aabidin (a.s.)
40. Yazid bin Ziyad
41. Yazid bin Mohajir
42. Saif bin Abil Harith
43. Mu'allah bin Mu'allah
44. Thur-Rimma bin Adi
45. Muhammad bin Mu'allah
46. Jabir bin Urwa al-Ghfari
47. Abdurrahman bin Kadri
48. Abdurrahman's brother
49. Malik bin Ows
50. Anees bin Minhal
51. Abul Sh'atha' al-Kindi
52. Umar bin Khalid as-Saydawi
53. Khalid bin Amr
54. Sa'd the retainer of Umar bin Khalid
55. Jabir bin al-Harith as-Sulaymani

56. Majma' bin Abdullah al-Aa'ithi

57. Suwayd bin Amr bin Abi Mutaa'

58. Sa'd bin Handhala at-Tamimi

59. Umair bin Abdullah al-Mathhaji

60. Abdurrahman al-Yaznee

61. Yahya bin Salim al-Muzani

62. Malik bin Anas al-Kahili

63. Anees bin Ma'qal al-Asbahi

64. Abul Sh'atha' al-Kindi

65. Junadah bin Harith al-Ansari

66. Amr bin Junadah

67. Malik bin Dawdan

68. Ibrahim bin Hussayn al-Azdi

69. Amr bin Qaradahah

70. Ahmed bin Muhammad al-Hashimi

Sheik as-Saduq gives the following as the martyrs from the tribe of the Banu Hashim:<sup>3</sup>

1. Al-Abbas bin Ali bin Abi Talib whose mother was Ummul Banin

2. Abdullah bin Ali bin Abi Talib whose mother was Ummul Banin

3. Ja'far bin Ali ibn Abi Talib whose mother was Ummul Banin

4. Uthman bin Ali bin Abi Talib whose mother was Ummul Banin

5. Abdullah bin Ali bin Abi Talib whose mother was Layla bint Mas'ud

6. Abu Bakr bin Ali bin Abi Talib whose mother was Layla bint Mas'ud

7. Muhammad bin Ja'far

8. Own bin Ja'far

9. Ja'far bin Ali bin Abi Talib
10. Abdurrahman bin Ali bin Abi Talib
11. Abdullah bin Ail bin Abu Talib
12. Muhammad bin Ail bin Abu Talib
13. Al-Qasim bin al-Hasan (a.s.)
14. Abu Bakr bin al-Hasan (a.s.)
15. Abdullah bin al Hasan (a.s.)
16. Ali ibn al-Husayn (Ali al-Akbar)
17. Abdullah ibn al-Husayn (the infant Ali al-Asghar)
18. Imam Husayn (a.s.)

The popular belief is that the total number of martyrs is twenty-seven. However, some historians consider them to be above one hundred and twenty. S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali is an erudite writer from Madras, now called Chennai in South India. His translation and commentary of the Qur'an in English with an excellent introduction running to over three hundred pages is well-known and has been printed several times by the Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, New York. In his book 'Husayn; The Saviour of Islam', S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali Vafaqani gives a brief note on each of the one hundred and five martyrs by name and a list of one hundred and thirty-eight martyrs classified as follows:[4](#)

[a] The Hashimites; the progeny of Abu Talib

Those who are mentioned in the

Ziyarate Nahiya.. 18

Those who are not mentioned in the

Ziyarate Nahiya.. 13

Three Young children 3

Total: 34

[b] the Number distributed according to the immediate parentage of martyrs:

1. The Holy Imam 1

The sons of the Holy Imam

[Two in Karbala; Abdullah martyred later and buried in Asqalan] 3

The sons of Amirul Mo'min... 9

The sons of Imam Hasan 4

The sons of Aqeel 12

The sons of Ja'far 4

[c] The comrades of the Holy Imam those who are mentioned in the Ziyarate Nahiya... 70

Those who are not mentioned in the

Ziyarate Nahiya... 27

The number of martyrs in Kufa 8

Total: 105

Total martyrs:  $105 + 34 = 139$

S.V Mir Ahmed Ali Vafaqani has taken into account the eight companions who were martyred at Kufa, such as Hani ibn Urwa...etc., to arrive at the figure of 139 martyrs.

In addition to giving details of martyrs, Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi gives a list of persons who were present in Imam Husayn's camp at Karbala on the Tenth of Muharram who did not fight but they escaped alive. The reason for this is manifold. Firstly, the number, names and details of martyrdom at Karbala were already revealed to the Prophet (S) who in turn had informed Imam Ali, Fatima Imam Husayn, Umm Salama and other members of the Prophet's family (*the Ahlul Bayt*) peace be on them. Sheik Muhammad Saffaар al-Qummi, who died in 290 AH, relates in his book '*Basayerud Darajat*' that Huthaifa narrated that he was present with Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) when he was returning to Medina after concluding a treaty with Mu'awiya. The load on one of the camels was being zealously guarded all the time. Huthaifa inquired the reason for such security given to that particular load, and Imam Hasan (a.s.) informed him that the load consisted of musters of the names of the *Shia*. Huthaifa wanted to see if his name was in any of those registers. The Imam (a.s.) asked him to come the next day. Huthaifa, who was illiterate, took with him his nephew who could read and write. The Imam (a.s.) took out a register. On perusing, the nephew found his name in the register and shouted joyfully that his name was there along with that of Huthaifa. This young man was later martyred in Karbala along with Imam Husayn (a.s.).[5](#)

Apart from this, those who escaped alive were nonetheless *Shia* of Imam Husayn (a.s.) though of a lower caliber. They provided a vital link in the narration of events, though at times the trauma and the

stress they suffered on seeing their beloved Imam (a.s.) and his companions being killed and their bodies trampled clouded their perception. As a result, some of their narrations are not in conformity with the narrations of the *Ahlul Bayt* (a.s.).

Abdullah ibn Abbas, Abdullah ibn Ja'far and Muhammad bin al-Hanfiyya consoled themselves by saying that though they did not participate in the battle their representatives' names were in the List of Martyrs.<sup>6</sup>

At-Tabari and Ibnul Athir relate that al-Muraqqa' bin Thumamah had spread the quiver of arrows on the ground and kneeling down, he fought the enemy. Suddenly, a group of people appeared, took him under their protection, and took him away from the battlefield. Umar bin Sa'd took him to Ubeidullah ibn Ziyad and related the incident. Ibn Ziyad banished bin Thumamah to az-Zarah.<sup>7</sup>

At-Tabari and ibnul Athir relate that Ad-Dhahhaak bin Abdullah al-Mashriqi and Malik bin an-Nadhr al-Arhabi met Imam Husayn (a.s.) before the battle and informed him that the people of Kufa were determined to fight and kill him. When they were about to depart, the Imam asked, '*Why don't you join and assist me?*' Malik bin an-Nadhr replied that he had a family to look after and that he was in debts. Ad-Dhahhaak said, "*I too am in debts, though I have no children. However, I will stay with you if you promise to excuse me, if my being with you is of no more help to you.*" The Imam (a.s.) agreed. Ad-Dhahhaak had hidden his horse in a tent. When none except Imam Husayn (a.s.) was left, ad-Dhahhaak reminded the Imam about the promise. The Imam said, "*Yes, you are free to do what you want.*" Ad-Dhahhaak took out his horse and rode through the enemy, taking them by surprise. His tribesmen and some sympathizers saved him from the pursuing enemy.

<sup>1.</sup> At-Tabari, quoted in 'Life of Husayn' by Mirza Ghulam Abbas Ali, p. 167.

<sup>2.</sup> Sa'eed bin Abdullah; he and Zohair stood in front as a shield to protect Imam Husayn (a.s.) from the volley of arrows during his Noon Prayer. Sa'eed was mortally wounded by an arrow and was martyred.

<sup>3.</sup> As-Saduq's al-Irshad, Tr. IKA Howard, p. 372-373.

<sup>4.</sup> S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali's 'Husayn; The Savior of Islam', p. 196 – 213.

<sup>5.</sup> Nafasul Mahmoor, p. 358.

<sup>6.</sup> At-Tabari's Tarikh, vol. 6 p.218.

<sup>7.</sup> Nafasul Mahmoor, p. 355.

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