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Most Reverred Zainab (‘a) Returns to Karbala Chehlum

("Chehlum jo Karbala mein bahattar ka ho chuka")
The Chehlum[1] for seventy two martyrs was done
And the bodies and the heads had finally become one
And Husain's slain army was remembered by all
And the children of Muhammad lamented His son
For three days and nights in the desert they mourned
Embracing His tomb as though never to be torn
Hearts lit like candles, their love for Him bloomed
Their sons, like flowers, scattered around His tomb
Remembering those killed, they cried out in grief
And clutched at their hearts and in pain swooned
" Where are those who would protect us?" they cried
"Now we wander, heads bare in broad daylight"
The air fraught with sobs as the widows wept
And the Noble Sister's face on His tomb did rest
And cried "Oh my beloved brother dear Husain
For three days and nights I've been Your guest"
"Heartbroken and forlorn is this Prophet's grandchild
For my services You didn't accept, what a plight"
"The will of the imam, I will gladly accept
But the bruises on my arms I haven't shown You yet
I am alone today, no friend in sight
Without You I am nothing, how can You forget?"
"I've lost sons and brothers and You in this war
my back is bruised with the tip of the spear"
"I cared for the orphans, the fathers lay dead
Their frail ages and captivity, the pain and the dread

To divert them from their misery, I narrated your tale
I was their mother, their aunt, or their father instead"
"And I will live on to see them suffer and die
For it is not my destiny to see beloveds thrive"
" I had imagined pilgrims surrounding Your tomb
And the throng of the angels had lifted the gloom
And in Your memorial, we would all gather here
Yet I see not a soul, I am here alone"
" By your graveside I sit my Brother, and weep
And console my heart though my pain is deep"
Saying this, Zainab inconsolable, sobbed
And the tomb of the Prince shuddered and rocked
And Basheer approached the Prince's son and said
"Oh Imam shall we leaves Your aunt is distraught"
And Abid toward His Aunt did turn
And asked "Dear Aunt shall we return."
And Zainab replied, "As you wish dear Imam"
The preparations to leave for Medina began
The tents were untied and the camels lined up
And around the graves gathered Ali's clan
Bidding farewell to those who slept in their graves
The old and the young stood around in a daze
At the thought of leaving her Brother's tomb
Distraught, Zainab cried " How can I leave You along
In this forsaken desert away from us all
This empty, desolate city now Your home"
"where nothing grows and nothing lives
Such a place You've chosen to gather and rest"
"Oh Noble Lord of Karbala, farewell
Oh the sands that cradle His shroud, farewell
Dear grave of the noble, lofty Prince, farewell
My Brother Your sister departs now, farewell"
"This Prophet's grandchild is unfortunate indeed
For You're not pleased with her deeds"
"How do I face Medina having left You herd
What if the Prophet questions, how can I bear?
If I go to Najaf, the same question I will face
`Where is Husain?' That is all I will hear"
"You've asked me to leave, so how can I stay?

But where must I go, where must I stay?"
"won't You come, hold my hand as I alight?
Won't You shelter me from strangers' sights?
Won't Abbas or Alder come to bid me farewell?
Won't You bring Asghar for whom Banu cries?"
"You're our leader come lead us ahead
we're ready, yet You sleep, the grave Your bed"
"Although I weep and call out Your name
You do not answer Oh Prince, I'm amazed
if only You would embrace me now
I will leave for Medina, though never the same"
The Prince then answered "My dear Zainab farewell
Give my love to Soghra, my daughter who is ill"

1. The word "Chehlum" or “Arba’in” in Arabic, denotes the traditional memorial held on the 40th day after death.

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