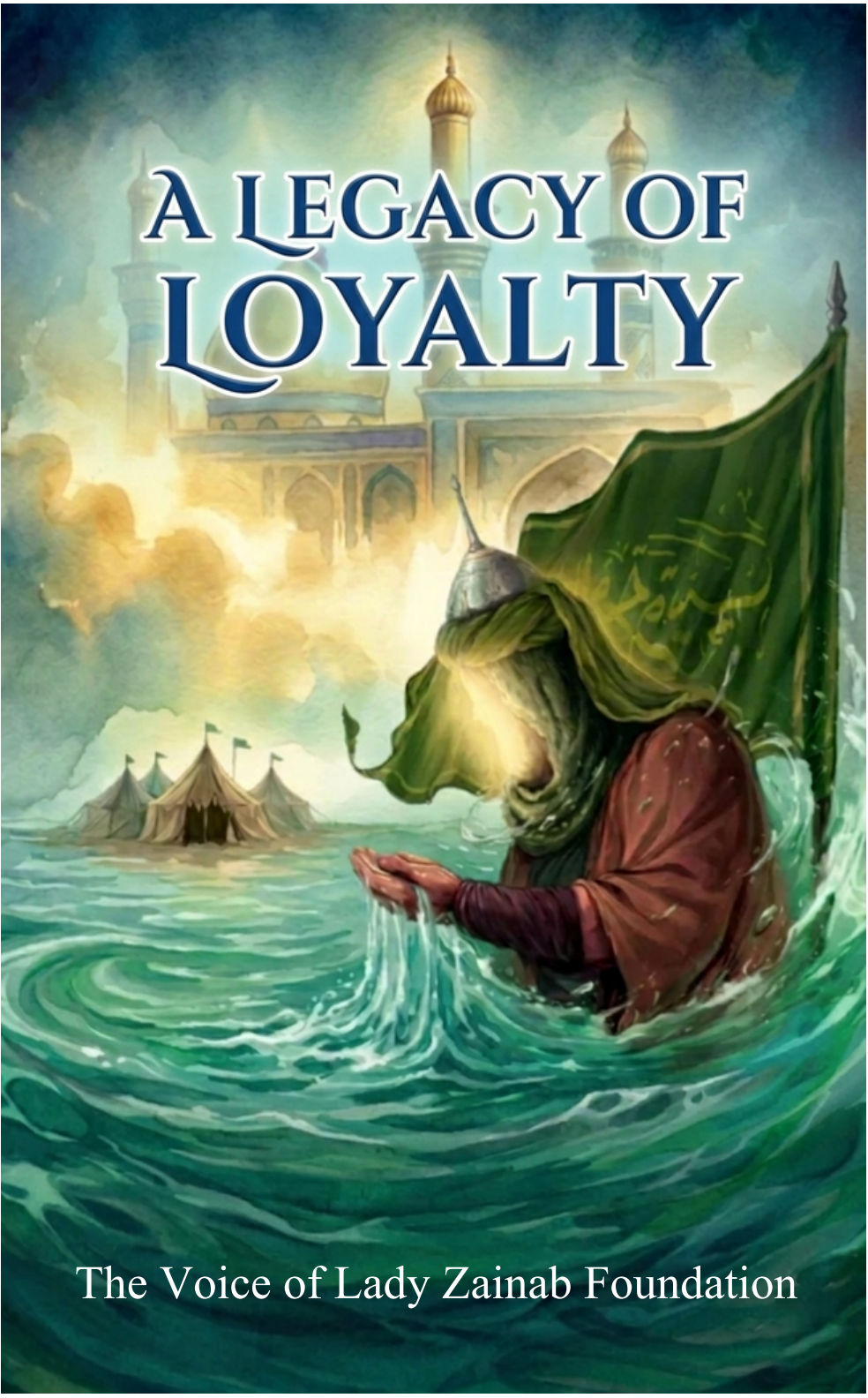
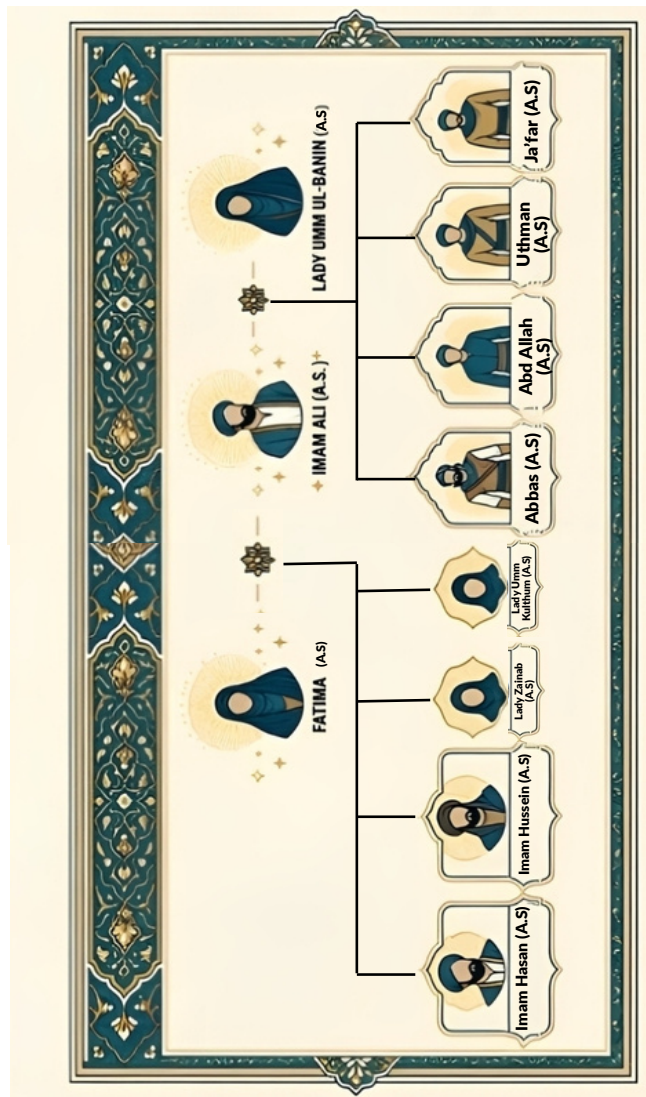


A LEGACY OF LOYALTY

The illustration depicts a man with a long white beard, wearing a red robe and a green cloak, standing waist-deep in turbulent green water. He holds a green banner with Arabic calligraphy. In the background, a large mosque with minarets is visible under a cloudy sky, and a small boat with tents is on the water.

The Voice of Lady Zainab Foundation



A note on this family tree: Lady Fatima (a.s.) was Imam Ali's (a.s.) first wife. During her lifetime, he married no one else. It was only after her martyrdom that he married Lady

Umm al-Banin (a.s.)



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Introduction

In the long history of humanity, there are lives so extraordinary that they transcend the boundaries of time, religion, and culture. These are lives that speak not only to the faithful but to every soul that has ever longed for truth, dignity, and justice. The life of Imam Abbas (A.S, peace be upon him) is one such life.

Imam Abbas was born in the city of Madinah in the year 26 AH, the son of Imam Ali (A.S), who was the gateway to the knowledge of the Prophet (SAW, may God's blessings be upon him and his family), and Lady Umm Al-Banīn (Peace be upon her), who was a wise and noble woman. From his very first breath, he was surrounded by light. He walked a path of courage and sacrifice since his childhood.

Yet this book is not simply a record of battles and martyrdom. It is the story of a man who chose to love something greater than himself and gave everything he had to protect it.

The events of Karbala are among the most consequential in Islamic history. In the year 60 AH, a ruler named Yazid claimed leadership over the Muslim community and demanded that Imam Hussein (A.S) pledge allegiance to him. Imam Hussein refused,

for he saw Yazid's rule as unjust, and to pledge to him would mean giving that injustice his blessing. When Imam Hussein would not yield, Yazid's governor, Ibn Ziyad, sent an army that surrounded him and his family on the plain of Karbala. On the tenth of Muharram, also known as Ashura, a small group of seventy-two stood against an army of thousands. They knew they would not survive, and yet they stood. At the heart of that stand, carrying the banner of truth until his arms were severed and his soul ascended, was Imam Abbas (A.S).

This book draws upon the classical sources of Shi'a scholarship to tell the story of this remarkable life with honesty and reverence. It does not seek to romanticize or exaggerate, for the truth of Imam Abbas (A.S) needs no embellishment. His story, as preserved in the words of scholars and the tears of generations, speaks powerfully enough on its own.

The values that Imam Abbas (A.S) embodied, loyalty, courage, compassion, humility, and the willingness to sacrifice his life in devotion to truth and faith, resonate far beyond any single tradition.

Whether you come to these pages as a believer seeking to deepen your understanding or as a reader encountering Karbala for the first time, it is hoped that by the final page, you will have encountered not only a figure of history but a mirror, one that reflects the best of what humanity can be.



Chapter 1: Lineage & Birth

The Noble Lineage of Imam Abbas (A.S)

Imam Abbas (A.S) inherited the noblest lineage: from his father, the purity of the Ahlulbayt (Ahlulbayt refers to the family of the Prophet); and from his mother, the valor of the tribe of Banu Kilab, famed for courage in battle and loyalty to kin.

His grandfather, Abd-ul-Muttalib, was a man whose wisdom preceded Islam itself. He set aside one-fifth of any treasure he found for the poor and established seven rounds of walking around the Kaaba, laws that Allah would later enshrine in Islam. His great-grandfather Hashim, in a year of devastating famine, traveled to Syria, gathered provisions, and returned to feed his people, earning a legacy of generosity that would define the Hashemite name for generations. Further back, Qussay, the chief of the Koreish and custodian of the Holy House, gathered the scattered tribes of Mecca under one roof and gave the city the unity it had never known. These were the men whose blood ran in the veins of Imam Abbas (A.S), and whose qualities of wisdom, generosity, and guardianship of the sacred found their fullest expression in him.

Lady Umm Al-Banīn (Peace be upon her)

After the martyrdom of Lady Fatima (Peace be upon her), Imam Ali (A.S) sought a wife of noble lineage and strength of character. He turned to his brother 'Aqil, a celebrated genealogist who had deep knowledge of the Arab tribes and their histories, and asked him to find a woman descended from heroes. Without hesitation, 'Aqil pointed to Fatima, daughter of Hizam, from the tribe of Kelab, a family whose ancestors were renowned across Arabia for their horsemanship, heroism, and courage. When 'Aqil approached her father, he welcomed the proposal with pride.

When she entered the household of Imam Ali (A.S), Lady Umm Al-Banīn dedicated herself entirely to serving the children of Lady Fatima (Peace be upon her). Out of her deep compassion for Imam Hasan, Imam Hussein, and Lady Zainab, who were still grieving the loss of their mother, she made one request: that no one in the household call her by her birth name, Fatima, so that the children would never hear that name spoken and be reminded of the mother they had lost. From that day, she was known only as Umm Al-Banīn, a title that reflected not only her role, but the selflessness with which she embraced it.

Birth and Early Life

When Imam Abbas (A.S) was born, Imam Ali (A.S) took the infant into his blessed arms and kissed him repeatedly. Following the teaching of the Messenger of Allah, he recited the adhan in his right ear and the iqamah in his left. The first words to ever reach the ears of this newborn were the words of God's greatness and oneness. On the seventh day, Imam Ali (A.S) shaved the newborn's hair and gave gold and silver in charity equal to its weight.

He then gazed upon the radiant face of his newborn son and named him Abbas. In Arabic, the name carries the meaning of

the lion that other lions fear: the courageous, the fearless, the one who strikes with force. It is also said to mean sternness and fierceness in the face of falsehood. Shia scholars narrate that in choosing this name, Imam Ali foretold the destiny of his son. He saw that he would stand firm against oppression and strike fear into the hearts of wrongdoers. He also gave him the nickname Abu'l-Fadhl, meaning the father of virtue, for he perceived that this child would grow to be not only a warrior but a source of goodness and generosity for all who sought him.

Imam Abbas grew up under the care of his father, first in Medina and then in Kufa, never leaving his side. His father fed him the essence of faith from his earliest years, raising him to ponder deeply over the purpose of creation and to fear no one but God. Shia sources narrate that Imam Abbas was often seen accompanying his father in gatherings of knowledge, listening intently and absorbing every word, inheriting both his sharp intellect and his fearless courage. Imam Ali also trained him in combat, the same swordsmanship that had made Imam Ali the greatest warrior of Islam was passed down to his son. Yet above all, Imam Ali taught Imam Abbas that true courage was not in striking first, but in defending truth and standing for justice.

Formation Under the Ahlulbayt

When Imam Ali (A.S) passed away, Imam Abbas turned to his brothers, Imam Hasan and Imam Hussein (Peace be upon them both), returning with them to Medina and learning from them the foundations of religion and the nobilities of character. Even as a boy, he never addressed them with casual familiarity, but called them "my Imam," the expression of a deeply held belief nurtured by his mother, Lady Umm Al-Banin, who taught her sons that Imam Hussein (A.S) was the divinely appointed leader of the ummah. In Shia belief, such a leader is not chosen by people but appointed by God to guide the community after the Prophet. To follow the Imam of one's time is a sacred duty. This,

was the conviction Abbas carried, and it shaped his devotion from his earliest years. From Imam Hasan (A.S), he learned patience, diplomacy, and forgiveness. From Imam Hussein (A.S), he learned sacrifice and steadfastness, developing an unwavering loyalty that grew deeper with every passing year.

It was his sister, Lady Zainab (Peace be upon her), who refined his spirit. From her, Imam Abbas learned that true strength is not only found on the battlefield, but also in the quiet endurance of trials with faith and dignity. The bond between them ran deeper than family, narrations tell us that Imam Abbas would stand at Lady Zainab's door whenever she left her home, not as an overprotective brother, but as a devoted guardian who understood exactly who she was: the granddaughter of the Prophet, whose sanctity he would protect with his life.

Knowledge, Character and Physical Formation

Imam Abbas (A.S) was deeply knowledgeable in the Qur'an, able to recite it with mastery and explain its meanings with depth, having memorised large portions which he would often draw upon in conversation. He also preserved narrations from his father and brothers, carrying forward the knowledge of the Prophet's household with dedication. Alongside his Qur'anic studies, he spent long nights in prayer and supplication, approaching Allah with a humility and sincerity that those around him deeply admired. Although history remembers him most for his courage at Karbala, his intellectual and spiritual legacy is equally profound, a reminder that Imam Abbas was not only a warrior but a man of deep understanding and faith.

In physical form, he was equally remarkable, striking those who saw him with his towering height and powerful build, so closely resembling Imam Ali (A.S) in both stature and strength. Yet he never took pride in this. He saw his strength only as a means to serve his Imam, strong enough to strike fear into the

hearts of enemies, yet gentle enough to carry a water-skin for thirsty children in the heat of Karbala, embodying a balance of power and tenderness that few in history have ever achieved.



Chapter 2: Imam Abbas in Karbala

The Journey to Karbala

When Imam Hussein (A.S) left Madinah and later Makkah, he was accompanied by his family, companions, and a handful of loyal followers. Among them, none shone brighter in loyalty and protection than his brother Imam Abbas (A.S). From the very beginning of the journey, his role was clear; he was the guardian of the travelling party. He rode alongside the camp, watching over the women and children and shielding them from danger. Whenever the group stopped, Imam Abbas would be the first to pitch the tents and the last to rest, making sure the honor and safety of the Ahlulbayt (Peace be upon them) were preserved at every step of the journey.

His guardianship had, in fact, begun even before the caravan set out. When the ruler of Madinah summoned Imam Hussein at dusk to demand allegiance to Yazid, the Imam took Abbas and the other men of his household with him for protection, asking them to wait outside the hall and rush in at the sound of his raised voice. From that night onward, Imam Abbas became his brother's shield. It is narrated that from the moment the Imam left Madinah, Abbas did not part from him for even a single moment, attending to every stage of the march until he gave his

life for it.

As the caravan moved out of Makkah toward Iraq, Imam Abbas carried the standard of Imam Hussein. He held it high with dignity and courage. At the same time, he took charge of all the affairs of the women and children in the camp. The epitome of resolve and devotion, he rode at the head of the young men of the Prophet's household. The banner fluttering over the caravan filled the hearts of the family with peace. Whenever riders approached to confront Imam Hussein (A.S), it was Imam Abbas who stepped forward first. His towering stature and commanding presence caused hesitation among those who came against them. Those who had known Imam Ali (A.S) saw in that moment the father living again in the son. When the caravan was forced to halt on the plain of Karbala, it was again Imam Abbas who hurried to raise the tents for the women. The same protective instinct that had defined him on every mile of the road now planted itself into the very ground where the family would make its stand. In the devotional tradition, he is remembered by a fitting title: Imam Hussein's beloved brother and the standard-bearer of his army.

The Standard-Bearer of Imam Hussein

When the camp of Imam Hussein (A.S) reached Karbala, Imam Abbas was given the greatest honor: he became the standard-bearer (Hāmil al-Liwā') of Imam Hussein's army. In Islamic tradition, the one who carried the banner was the most trusted warrior, the one who would never flee, for to drop the standard was to signal defeat. Imam Hussein (A.S) entrusted this sacred responsibility to no one but Imam Abbas (A.S), for he knew that in his brother he had found the one man whose loyalty would never waver, whose feet would never falter, and whose arms would hold the banner high until his last breath.

It is narrated that on the morning of Ashura, after leading his companions in the dawn prayer, Imam Hussein arranged his

small band into three divisions, a right wing, a left wing, and a center, and placed into his brother's hands the Holy Standard of Truth. From that day, Imam Abbas came to be known by the title forever tied to his name: al-Alamdar, "the Standard-Bearer."

His carrying of the banner was not merely a military duty; it was a spiritual symbol. Imam Abbas was the standard of loyalty, the flag of sacrifice, and the emblem of truth. As long as that banner remained raised above the plains of Karbala, it told the world that the camp of truth still stood firm. For the companions who fought alongside him, the sight of Imam Abbas holding the standard high was itself a source of strength, a visible declaration that no matter what came, they would not surrender what they believed in. In the accounts of Karbala, he was second only to the Imam himself in charge of the camp, its commander beneath its commander.

That authority was felt by the enemy as keenly as by his own people. When Yazid's forces tried to drive the Imam's tents back from the river and advance upon the camp, it was Imam Abbas who drew his sword and stood in their path, warning that any man who stepped forward would fall headless where he stood. Knowing the valor of the son of Ali, not one of them dared move. And he bore the standard not as a man guarding his own glory, but as one who placed every other life before his own. When the fighting at last reached his own household, and he saw the noblest of his family fall, he turned to his three full brothers, Abdullah, Ja'far, and Uthman, and sent them into the field ahead of him, asking them to lay down their lives for their Imam before he laid down his. Only when they had gone forward did the Standard-Bearer take his own place in the battle.

Protector of the Tents

In Karbala, Imam Abbas (A.S) took his place as the protector of the Prophet's family (peace be upon him and his family). The women and children were sheltered in the tents behind him,

while the enemy forces gathered before him. Between these two worlds, innocence and danger, stood Imam Abbas, ensuring that no harm would reach those in his care. Narrations describe how he would patrol the camp with his sword drawn, guarding the tents from every side, his watchful presence a wall between the vulnerable and the violence closing in around them. This was not the task of a single night but of every night of the encampment; as on every other, so on the eve of Ashura, it was Imam Abbas who kept the watch.

On that final night, fearing a sudden raid, a trench was dug around the camp, and a fire was kept burning until dawn, and Imam Abbas circled the tents with his sword in hand, his eyes never leaving the ranks of the enemy.

When the children cried out in fear during the night, it was Imam Abbas whose calm presence brought them comfort. Lady Zainab (Peace be upon her) would often call upon him whenever fear struck the camp, knowing that as long as he stood, no harm would reach them. His courage did not only belong to the battlefield, but it also lived in the quiet hours of the night, in the reassurance of his footsteps outside the tents, and in the peace his presence alone was enough to give. None felt the safety of those footsteps more than the children of the camp, and none more than little Sakina, the beloved daughter of Imam Hussein, who cherished her uncle dearly. The eve of Ashura would be the last night she would spend beside the uncle who had been her shelter, for the dawn would call Imam Abbas to the banks of the Euphrates and to his martyrdom.

Offers from the Enemy

During the days leading to Ashura, the enemy commanders recognized the strength of Imam Abbas and sought to exploit his noble lineage. Messages were sent to Imam Abbas offering him safety and wealth if he abandoned Imam Hussein and joined the side of Ibn Ziyad (the enemy). The earliest historical accounts

preserve how that offer came about. A kinsman from the clan of his mother, Umm al-Banin, went to Ibn Ziyad and asked that a guarantee of safety (an amān) be granted to her four sons, Abbas, Abdullah, Ja'far, and Uthman. Ibn Ziyad consented, had a written pledge of security drawn up, and sent it to the field. It was carried there by Shemr (Shamir ibn Dhi al-Jawshan), who was himself bound to the brothers through their mother's people. Reaching the camp, Shemr called out, "Where are the sons of our sister?" When Imam Abbas and his brothers came forward and asked what he wanted, he told them they had been granted protection and were free to leave.

Imam Abbas (A.S) rejected these offers with fury. He declared:

"May your hands be amputated! What an evil security you have brought for us. O enemy of Allah! Do you desire that we should betray our brother and leader Imam Husayn (A.S) and obey the accursed sons of accursed fathers?"

(Nafas al-Mahmum, Shaykh Abbas al-Qummi)

In Abu Mikhnaf's narration, the brothers answered in the very same spirit. Though Shemr was their kinsman, they cursed him and cursed his pledge of safety, refusing to accept protection for themselves while the grandson of the Prophet was left with none. They sent word back that they had no need of his security, the protection of Allah, they said, was far better than the protection of the son of Sumayyah.

These refusals were not merely personal loyalty but expressions of Imam Abbas's recognition of Imam Hussein as the divinely appointed Imam. His devotion was rooted not only in family bonds but in faith.

The Eve of Ashura

On the eve of Ashura, Imam Hussein (A.S) gathered his companions and gave them permission to leave. He told them that the enemy sought only his blood and that they were free to depart under the cover of night. He praised them first, telling them that he had never known companions more faithful or a household more devoted than his own, and he lifted from them the pledge of allegiance they had sworn at his hands, urging each of them to take the hand of one of his family members and slip away into the darkness, for the enemy wanted no one but him. It was Imam Abbas (A.S) who stood first to reject this offer. He rose with firmness and said:

"Why should we do that? To remain alive after you?
May God not show us such a day ever."

(Al-Luhūf, Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs)

These refusals were not merely personal loyalty, but expressions of Imam Abbas's recognition of Imam Hussein as the divinely appointed Imam. His devotion was rooted not only in family bonds but in faith.

His words brought tears to Imam Hussein's eyes, for he saw in Imam Abbas the perfect embodiment of loyalty. Imam Abbas's declaration set the tone for the companions; none would leave, and all would embrace martyrdom with honor.

After the Hashimites, the loyal companions spoke in the same spirit, Muslim bin Awsaja vowing to fight until his spear shattered in the enemy's chests, and Zuhayr bin al-Qain wishing he could be killed and brought back a thousand times if it would shield the Imam and his household. That night, after extinguishing the lamp so that any who wished to leave could do so unseen, not one of them departed; instead, the camp passed

the hours in prayer, the sound of their supplication humming through the tents like the murmur of bees.

The Dawn of Ashura

As the morning of the tenth of Muharram rose, Imam Abbas prepared for battle. He was seen riding across the camp, strengthening the resolve of the companions, arranging the defenses, and giving courage to the children. At first light, Imam Hussein led his small band in the dawn prayer and afterward addressed them, telling them that God had now permitted them to fight and that they must meet the day with courage. He then drew up his army, barely seventy-two souls, on horse and on foot, into three divisions: Zuhayr ibn al-Qain over the right flank, Habib ibn Muzahir over the left, and the Imam and his family at the center. To Imam Abbas, he gave the place of greatest trust, and Abbas took up the flag.

He raised the banner high, and the army of Yazid trembled at its sight. They knew that as long as Imam Abbas carried the standard, Imam Hussein's camp would never surrender. Against the thirty thousand who now closed in around that handful, the raised banner in Abbas's hands was the camp's one unbroken sign of defiance.

Sayyid Ibn Tāwūs narrates that Imam Abbas approached Imam Hussein on that morning and said:

“My leader, grant me permission to fight these hypocrites.”

But Imam Hussein, knowing the destiny of Imam Abbas, replied:

"O brother Abbas, you are the standard-bearer of my army."

He asked him to hold his position and remain the pillar of the camp, for as long as Abbas stood, the banner of truth would not fall.



Chapter 3: The Day of Ashura

The Morning of Ashura

On the tenth of Muharram, the day of Ashura, the sun rose upon Karbala in a sky heavy with grief. Imam Hussein (A.S) and his companions prepared for their final stand against the army of Yazid. The night before had been filled with prayer, Qur'an recitation, and whispered tears of devotion. As dawn broke, Imam Abbas (A.S) rode through the camp, his face resolute and his banner raised high. His presence among the companions was itself a source of strength. As long as the banner of Imam Abbas remained lifted, the camp of Imam Hussein (A.S) stood firm, and despair found no place within it.

At dawn, Imam Hussein (A.S) gathered his small group of seventy-two loyal followers around him for the last time. At the center stood Imam Abbas (A.S), the standard-bearer of Hussein's army, carrying the great banner of truth above the plains of Karbala, a banner that declared to all who faced them that this small group of believers would not bow, would not surrender, and would not be broken.

The Battle Begins

As the battle began, the companions of Imam Hussein (A.S) stepped forward one by one, each choosing martyrdom with full

conviction. Arrows filled the sky, and the sounds of battle grew ever closer, yet through it all, Imam Abbas remained at his post, guarding the camp, protecting those within it, and ensuring that the banner of Imam Hussein never wavered. Narrations describe him as a lion on the battlefield, resembling his father, Imam Ali (A.S), in both bravery and strength. The enemy soldiers hesitated to approach him, struck by a fear they could not name. Yet despite his unmatched courage, Imam Abbas did not fight for glory; he fought for the sake of his Imam, for the truth they stood upon, and for every soul sheltered by the tents behind him.

The Thirst of the Children

As the day wore on, the cries of the children in the tents grew louder. They were tormented by thirst, their lips cracked and dry under the burning sun of Karbala. Among them was Sakina (Peace be upon her), the beloved daughter of Imam Hussein (A.S), who pleaded for water.

She came to her uncle Imam Abbas and said:

“O Uncle Abbas, the children are thirsty. Please bring us some water.”

These words pierced Imam Abbas’s heart like an arrow. His eyes filled with tears as he looked upon the innocent children. He could not bear their suffering. He turned to Imam Hussein (A.S) and requested permission:

“My Imam, allow me to bring water for the children.”

Imam Hussein (A.S), though knowing Imam Abbas’s fate, granted him permission, for he could not deny the plea of the children.

Imam Abbas Rides to the Euphrates

With the water-skin upon his shoulder, Imam Abbas mounted his horse and rode toward the Euphrates River. The enemy forces tried to block his path, but Imam Abbas fought with unmatched fury. Narrations describe him cutting through the ranks, scattering soldiers as he advanced toward the riverbank.

Finally, Imam Abbas reached the Euphrates. The water shimmered before him. He dismounted, knelt, and dipped his hands into the cool water. His thirst was overwhelming after days without a drop. But as he raised the water to his

lips, he paused. He spoke to himself:

"O soul! You should humble yourself entirely for al-Hussein and never live after him. Al-Husayn has come face to face with death, and yet you want to drink cool, refreshing water? I swear upon Allah that this is not in accordance with the dictates of my religion!"

(Uprising of Ashura and Responses to Doubts, Ali Asghar Ridwani)

With this vow, Abbas poured the water back into the river and filled the water-skin for the children.

The Final Stand

Carrying the water-skin, Imam Abbas mounted his horse once more. His mission was to deliver it to the tents. But as he turned, the enemy army closed in on him. They knew that if Imam Abbas succeeded, their morale would break.

They attacked him from every side. A soldier struck and severed his right arm. Imam Abbas cried out:

“By Allah, even if you cut off my right arm, I will never cease defending my religion, and protecting the son of Fatima!”

Then another strike severed his left arm. Imam Abbas cried out again, still determined:

“O Allah, You know that I am only fighting to defend Your religion and to protect the children of Your Messenger.”

Now without arms, Imam Abbas gripped the water-skin with his teeth; his only thought was the thirsty children waiting in the tents. Then an arrow pierced the water-skin, spilling its precious contents to the ground. Another struck him in the chest. A heavy blow fell upon his head. As he fell from his horse, his body broken and the water spilled, his heart did not turn to himself. It turned to the children he could not reach, and to the Imam he had served with every breath of his life.

The Martyrdom of Imam Abbas

As Imam Abbas fell from his horse, for the first and only time in his life, he called his leader by a word he had never used before:

"O my brother, O Aba Abdillah, peace be upon you... come to me..."

Imam Hussein (A.S) rushed to his side. He lifted Imam Abbas's head into his lap, his tears falling upon the face of the one who had given everything for him. In his final moments, Imam Abbas could not speak of his wounds or his pain. His sorrow was only that he had not been able to bring water to the children, a promise he had carried to his last breath.

Imam Hussein (A.S) said:

"Now my back is broken, and my options are few."

At that moment, Imam Abbas surrendered his soul to Allah. With him fell the hearts of Imam Hussien's camp, the women, the children, and all who remained, sinking into a grief that words cannot contain.

The Grief of Imam Hussein (A.S)

The martyrdom of Imam Abbas (A.S) was the heaviest blow upon Imam Hussein (A.S). He returned to the camp, his heart shattered and his hands empty. The children ran to him, crying:

“Where is our uncle, Abbas? Did he bring us water?”

Imam Hussein (A.S) wept and said:

"Your uncle has been martyred... and the water-skin has been spilled."

The cries of the children filled the camp. Lady Zainab (Peace be upon her) could only weep, for she knew that as long as Imam Abbas had lived, the camp was safe. Now the protector of the tents was gone, and with him, the shield that had stood between the innocent and the darkness closing in around them.



Chapter 4: Loss, Captivity, and Legacy

The Moment of Loss

For Imam Hussein (A.S), the loss of Imam Abbas was unlike any other. He was not only his brother, but he was also his shield, his companion, his banner-bearer, and the guardian of his family. When he returned to the camp, the children ran toward him asking for their uncle and for water, their innocent cries perhaps the heaviest burden Imam Hussein had ever carried. With Imam Abbas gone, the camp was left vulnerable, and the absence of its protector was felt by all, none more so than Lady Sakina (Peace be upon her), who had sent Abbas on his mission and now fell silent, her heart shattered by a grief too deep for words.

The Grief of Lady Zainab (Peace be upon her)

For Lady Zainab (Peace be upon her), the loss of Imam Abbas was devastating. He had been her brother, her supporter, and her protector after the loss of her father and mother. More than that, he had been her shield in Karbala, the steady presence she relied on through every night of danger. Now that the shield was gone."

Her grief was beyond words, she had lost not only a brother, but the last wall standing between the innocent and what was coming. Yet even in her sorrow, Lady Zainab did not break, for

she knew the journey was far from over, and that now she would have to find within herself the strength that Abbas had always provided.

The Final Hours of Imam Hussein (A.S)

After Imam Abbas's martyrdom, Imam Hussein (A.S) stood almost alone. One by one, the companions and family members had fallen, and with each loss, the circle around him had grown smaller. The camp that Imam Abbas had guarded with such devotion was now exposed, and the weight of every sacrifice made that day rested upon the shoulders of the one who remained.

In his final moments, Imam Hussein (A.S) rode into battle knowing his time had come. The grief of Imam Abbas's loss weighed upon him deeply, it is narrated that his eyes turned toward the Euphrates, searching one last time for the brother who would no longer return.

The Captivity of the Ahlulbayt

The night that followed the battle of Ashura left nothing standing. The tents had been set ablaze, and the women and children of the Prophet's household now found themselves in the open with nothing above them but smoke and sky. Imam Zain al-Abidin (A.S), the only surviving son of Imam Hussein, had been gravely ill throughout the day, and Lady Zainab (Peace be upon her) stayed by his side through that long night, keeping watch over him while the tents outside burned. By morning, the time for grief had not yet passed, but the journey had already begun. The Ahlulbayt were bound, placed on unsaddled camels, and marched toward Kufa, not quietly, but with drums and flags, a deliberate spectacle meant to frame them as the defeated remnants of a rebellion. The people of Kufa lined the streets, confused and curious, having been told only that insurgents against the Caliph had been put down and their families were being brought in for judgment. Many had no idea who they were

looking at.

Though Imam Abbas (A.S) was martyred, his memory was preserved by the words of Lady Zainab (Peace be upon her) and Imam Sajjad (A.S). In the courts of Kufa and Damascus, when Lady Zainab stood and spoke against Ibn Ziyad and Yazid, her courage echoed the very spirit of Imam Abbas, the same refusal to bow, the same unwavering devotion to truth. Imam Sajjad (A.S), in his sermons, reminded the people of the sacrifices of Karbala and the unmatched loyalty of Imam Abbas to Imam Hussein (A.S) on the day that changed history. It was through their voices that Imam Abbas was not forgotten, but enshrined forever in the hearts of the faithful.

The Grave of Imam Abbas

After the battle, the martyrs of Karbala were buried. Imam Abbas (A.S) was laid to rest near the place where he fell, at the bank of the Euphrates, his grave oriented to face that of his brother Imam Hussein (A.S), as though, even in death, he remained at his post. He had spent his life guarding his brother, and his burial placed him in that same posture for eternity. Pilgrims began visiting almost immediately, drawn there even through the hostility of successive Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs who demolished the shrines and forbade visitation. None of it stopped them. When construction was prohibited, people came anyway and marked the graves with what they had. When the structures were torn down, they were rebuilt.

Over the centuries, the shrine grew into one of the most visited sanctuaries in the Muslim world, and the title by which Imam Abbas (A.S) is most widely invoked, Bab al-Hawa'ij, the Door of Needs, came to reflect what his life had already proven, that a man who refused his own safety to stay beside his Imam, and who poured out the water before drinking a drop of it himself, had earned a nearness to Allah that transcends time.

Today, more than twenty million pilgrims visit Karbala every year, coming from across the world to stand at both shrines. His legacy is not preserved in stone alone. It lives in the courage of Lady Zainab, who carried his spirit into the courts of his enemies, and in the sermons of Imam Sajjad (A.S), who refused to let the world forget what names had been written on that plain. What Imam Abbas (A.S) embodied, loyalty that does not calculate, sacrifice that does not waver, devotion that persists even when the water spills and the hands are gone, became the standard by which all of that remembrance was measured. It still is.



Chapter 5: Lessons from His Life

Loyalty to the Imam

Perhaps the greatest lesson from the life of Imam Abbas (A.S) is his unwavering loyalty to Imam Hussein (A.S). He did not see himself as the brother of Hussein. He saw himself as his devoted protector. His mother, Lady Umm Al-Banīn (Peace be upon her), instilled this in him from childhood. He carried it faithfully until his last breath. He also declared this loyalty openly. During the month of Dhul Hajj, Imam Hussein (A.S) was preparing to leave Mecca for Karbala. Imam Abbas (A.S) stood near the Kaaba and addressed the pilgrims gathered there. He warned them that anyone who sought to reach Imam Hussein would first have to pass through him. To strike his brother, they would first have to strike him down. This sermon survives as a manuscript preserved in Lucknow, India. It is remembered as one of the clearest records of his devotion.

For Muslims, this loyalty carries a clear lesson. Our duty is to recognise and follow the rightful leader of our faith, the Imam of our time, with the same wholehearted devotion that Imam Abbas embodied. Classical accounts describe this as a binding duty in Islam. They hold that no figure in history fulfilled it more

completely than Imam Abbas (A.S). For all people, his example is a reminder. True greatness is never found in seeking power or personal gain. It is found in placing oneself entirely in the service of a cause greater than oneself.

Imam Abbas (A.S) stood against an army of thousands, knowing he would be martyred. Yet he never hesitated, never sought safety, never bargained with the enemy. His courage was not reckless, but rooted in faith and principle. This courage was not new to him. He was raised by his father, Imam Ali (A.S), and among his mother's family, who were known across Arabia for their valor. From his youth, fear never entered his heart in battle. On the day of Ashura, he faced the enemy without fear. The sources record that their own warriors drew back from meeting him in combat. This teaches us that real courage is not measured by numbers or weapons, but by the truth of the cause for which one stands. For humanity, Imam Abbas's example is a call to resist injustice even when it seems impossible to win.

Obedience and Humility

Imam Abbas (A.S) was unmatched in strength and skill. He could have acted on his own at any moment. Instead, he chose to act only alongside Imam Hussein (A.S), because he believed in the cause his brother led. Even when his heart burned to fight, he held back and waited. This restraint was a choice, not a weakness. He trusted that the cause was greater than his own will, and he placed his strength in its service.

This discipline came from something deeper. Imam Abbas (A.S) was devoted to the worship of God. He prayed so often that the mark of prostration was worn into his forehead, a sign of how constantly he turned to his Creator. He is remembered as a true and devoted servant of God. His restraint before his brother grew from that same humility before God.

For all people, his example is a reminder. Discipline can be greater than raw power. The strongest among us are not those

who act on impulse, but those who know when to hold back, and why.

Strength and Mercy

Imam Abbas (A.S) was known for his unmatched strength. Yet he was also known for his tenderness toward the children and his deep respect for Lady Zainab (Peace be upon her). His strength was always turned toward protecting the weak. His final act showed this most clearly. He fought his way to the Euphrates for water, refused to drink while the children were still thirsty, and gave his life trying to carry it back to them. For Muslims, his life is an eternal example of putting the needs of others above our own. For all people, he is the ideal of the warrior who is also gentle, the protector who gives comfort to the weak, even at the cost of his own life.

Honor in Defeat

Though the battle of Karbala ended in apparent defeat, the legacy of Imam Abbas (A.S) shows us that honor is not in victory but in standing for truth. He was martyred, yet his name lives on forever. History helps explain why. Countless tragedies have been forgotten over the centuries. The events of Karbala have not. After more than thirteen hundred years, they are still remembered each year as if they had just happened. A sacrifice made for a passing, worldly aim fades with time. A sacrifice made for something eternal endures. Imam Abbas (A.S) gave his life for a cause greater than the world, and so his memory was never lost. Yazid's army won the battlefield, but lost history. They took the field, yet they never gained what they truly sought. The truth that Imam Abbas (A.S) died defending outlived the power that killed him. This lesson speaks powerfully to Muslims and non-Muslims alike: that oppression may triumph temporarily, but truth and sacrifice will always be remembered.



Chapter 6: Pilgrimage and Miracles

Pilgrimage to His Shrine

For centuries, believers have come to the resting place of Imam Abbas to offer ziyara, the practice of visiting a sacred grave and greeting the one buried there. Ziyara is not the same as Hajj. Hajj is an obligation for every able Muslim, while ziyara is a voluntary act of devotion, one strongly encouraged in the traditions of the Prophet and the Imams.

The visit carries a special order. Pilgrims often go to Imam Abbas before Imam Hussein, a custom that early scholars themselves recommended, describing Imam Abbas as the door to his brother. One cannot approach Hussein without first passing through the gate of loyalty.

Pilgrims recite the ziyarat preserved in Shi'a tradition. One of the best known is Ziyarat Al-Abbas, narrated by Ibn Qulawayh in al-Kamil al-Ziyarat from Abu Hamza al-Thumali, who related it to Imam as-Sadiq. In it, believers salute Imam Abbas for his loyalty, his sacrifice, and his obedience to the Imam of his time:

“Peace be upon you, O righteous servant, obedient to Allah, His Messenger, the Commander of the Faithful

(Imam Ali), Hasan, and Hussein. May Allah curse those who killed you, betrayed you, and denied your right.”

These words show that the position of Imam Abbas is unique. He is remembered as the perfect servant of God and the loyal supporter of the Imams.

Miracles at His Shrine

Throughout history, pilgrims have recounted miracles at the shrine of Imam Abbas (A.S). The sick have been healed, the troubled have found relief, and the desperate have seen prayers answered that they had long given up on. This is why he is invoked as the one who opens the door to every need.

Many of these accounts were preserved by scholars with names, places, and dates. In one, a paralyzed boy was brought to the shrine while his father stood at the tomb and pleaded for his recovery. Moments later, the boy rose to his feet and cried out that Imam Abbas (A.S) had cured him.

Even today, believers continue to tell stories of the help they received through Imam Abbas (A.S). For them, he is not a distant figure of history but a present intercessor, as near now as he was on the plains of Karbala.



Chapter 7: Titles & Virtues

The Power of a Title

In Islamic tradition, names and titles carry weight far beyond their literal meanings; they are reflections of a person's character, their role, and their legacy. For Imam Abbas (A.S), his titles were not labels assigned at birth, but crowns earned through a lifetime of faith, courage, and sacrifice, and through a single day at Karbala that the world has never forgotten. Across centuries, pilgrims visiting his shrine have called upon these titles in prayer, finding in each one a window into a different dimension of his greatness. Among his many names, four shine the brightest: Abul Fadl (Father of Virtue), Qamar Bani Hashim (Moon of the Hashemites), Bab al-Hawa'ij (The Door of Needs), and Al-Saqqā (The Water Bearer).

Abul Fadl (Father of Virtue)

The title Abul Fadl was bestowed upon Imam Abbas (A.S) for his embodiment of noble qualities. In Islamic tradition, a person was sometimes given the title "father of" a particular trait or virtue as recognition that they possessed it in the highest degree. Imam Abbas was the living fountain of generosity, humility, loyalty, and courage, his selflessness so complete that he lived not for himself, but entirely for Imam Hussein (A.S) and the Ahlulbayt.

Qamar Bani Hashim (The Moon of the Hashemites)

Perhaps the most famous title of Imam Abbas (A.S) is Qamar Bani Hashim. It was a title earned not through proclamation but through presence. Shia sources describe his face as luminous, shining among his clan like the full moon in the night sky, a light so striking that those who saw him were stopped in their tracks.

Yet this title was always more than physical appearance. Just as the moon does not generate its own light but reflects the brilliance of the sun, Imam Abbas (A.S) reflected the light of Imam Hussein (A.S). His beauty was not separate from his devotion; it was an expression of it. The radiance others saw in his face was the outward sign of an inner purity that had been shaped since childhood by the greatest household in Islamic history.

He was the pride of his family, admired by young and old alike. His presence inspired confidence in those around him, while his humility made him beloved by all who knew him. He was majestic without arrogance, strong without cruelty, and beautiful without vanity, a combination so rare that those who witnessed it never forgot it.

Bab al-Hawa'ij (The Door of Needs)

One of the most enduring titles of Imam Abbas (A.S) is Bab al-Hawa'ij, the Door of Needs. Unlike his other titles, which speak of his character and his role at Karbala, this title speaks of what he became in the centuries that followed. Shia scholars narrate that his loyalty and sacrifice earned him a spiritual station unlike any other among the companions of Karbala. His martyrdom was so pure and selfless, driven not by personal glory but by love for his Imam and compassion for thirsty children, that through his devotion to Imam Hussein (A.S), he became a doorway through which the faithful ask for their wishes and needs.

Countless pilgrims across centuries have testified that when they turn to him in prayer at his shrine, they find comfort, relief, and answered supplication. For Muslims, this title is a testimony to the spiritual heights that loyalty and sacrifice can reach, a reminder that those who give everything for truth are never forgotten by Allah. For all people, it illustrates something universally understood: that one who gave everything for others in life continues to give long after death, and that true sacrifice never truly ends.

Al-Saqqā (The Water Bearer)

Among all his titles, Al-Saqqā carries the most poignant meaning. The word names him the water bearer, the one who set out to bring water to the thirsty children of the camp on the day of Ashura. He reached the Euphrates, refused to drink while they remained thirsty, and was martyred before he could carry the water back.

His title, Al-Saqqā, immortalises him not simply as one who carried water, but as one who carried love, love so complete that he gave his arms, his mission, and his life in the hope that a child's thirst might be quenched. The water-skin was pierced, but the sacrifice it represented has never been forgotten.



Conclusion

Imam Abbas (A.S) lived a life that was short in years but vast in meaning. From his birth in the house of Imam Ali (A.S) and Lady Umm Al-Banīn (Peace be upon her), to his final stand at the Euphrates in Karbala, every moment of his existence was a lesson in loyalty, humility, and sacrifice. He did not seek power, nor did he live for wealth or fame. His entire life was devoted to serving the Imam of his time, and in this devotion, he became something far greater than a warrior or a brother. He became a mirror in which every human being, regardless of faith or background, can see the best of what they could be.

For Muslims, the loyalty of Imam Abbas to Imam Hussein (A.S) is the highest example of devotion to the divinely appointed Imam of the time. It was not blind obedience, it was a deeply conscious recognition of truth, expressed through every choice he made from the journey to Karbala to his final breath at the Euphrates. For those of other faiths and backgrounds, his loyalty speaks a different but equally powerful language, the language of principle. His story asks every reader a question that transcends religion: Is there a cause in your life worth giving everything for? Imam Abbas answered that question not with words, but with his arms, his water-skin, and his life.

By the day of Ashura, his courage had already been proven long before that morning. He was feared by his enemies and beloved by the innocent. What remains is not the size of the army he faced, but what he chose to protect, and at what cost. His strength was never an end in itself. It was always in service of something greater, power held with humility and tempered by compassion. That is what makes him not only a figure of Islamic history but a model of human excellence.

Christian writers in Lebanon, poets in India, and voices from across the world beyond the Muslim community have all been moved by the story of Karbala. They recognised in Imam Abbas something that belongs to no single tradition, a man who stood for the weak when it cost him everything, who chose conscience over comfort, and who never once compromised the truth he carried in his heart. Karbala is not a sectarian tragedy. It is a human one.

The banner he carried on the day of Ashura still flies high, not in cloth or color, but in the hearts of those who uphold truth against falsehood. His arms may have been severed, but his spirit embraces millions. His water-skin may have been pierced, but his sacrifice quenches the thirst of generations for justice and dignity. Greatness, as his life showed us, lies not in ruling but in serving; not in taking but in giving; not in surviving but in sacrificing for something greater than oneself.

As long as there are people who resist oppression, as long as there are voices that rise for truth, as long as there are hearts that beat with compassion, the name of Imam Abbas (A.S) will never die. He remains, until the end of time, the Banner of Loyalty, the Moon of the Hashemites, and the eternal devoted guardian of Imam Hussein (A.S).



Glossary

AH (Al-Hijri): The Islamic calendar, counted from the year of the Prophet Muhammad's migration (hijra) from Makkah to Madinah in 622 CE. When dates in this book are given in AH, they refer to this lunar calendar. To convert approximately to the Common Era, add 622 to the AH year.

Adhān: The call to prayer in Islam, recited aloud to announce the time of each of the five daily prayers. It is also a Prophetic tradition to recite the adhān into the right ear of a newborn child.

Ahlulbayt: The household of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), including Imam Ali, Lady Fatima, and their descendants through the line of Imams. In Shia tradition they are regarded as the purified family of the Prophet and the rightful guides of the community.

A.S (Alayhi Salām): An Arabic phrase meaning "Peace be upon him," used as a mark of respect when referring to an Imam or other revered figure in Islamic tradition.

Hashemites: A reference to the Banū Hāshim, the clan of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) within the tribe of Quraysh in Arabia. Imam Abbas, as the son of Imam Ali, belonged to this lineage, and his title Qamar Banī Hāshim, Moon of the Hashemites, honours his place as the brightest among them.

Imam: In Shia Islam, a divinely appointed leader and guide of the Muslim community after the Prophet. The Imams are believed to be chosen by God, beginning with Imam Ali (A.S). The word is also used as a title of respect for revered figures such as Imam Abbas, though he is not one of these appointed Imams.

Imamate: The Shia belief that leadership after the Prophet belongs to the divinely appointed Imams. Recognising and following the Imam of one's time is held to be a binding duty.

Iqāmah: A second, shorter call recited immediately before the beginning of the prayer itself, signalling that worship is about to commence. Like the adhān, it is traditionally recited into the ear of a newborn.

Karbala: A site in present-day Iraq where Imam Hussein (A.S), his family, and his companions were killed on the tenth of Muharram in 61 AH. The events there are central to Shia history and are commemorated every year.

Muharram: The first month of the Islamic calendar. It is one of the four sacred months in Islam and holds particular significance in Shia tradition, as it marks the anniversary of the events of Karbala.

S.A.W (Sallallāhu Alayhi wa Ālihi wa Sallam): An Arabic phrase meaning "May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family," used exclusively when referring to the Prophet Muhammad.

Shia: One of the two main branches of Islam. Shia Muslims hold that leadership after the Prophet belonged to Imam Ali (A.S) and the divinely appointed Imams of his line.

Sunnah: The recorded words and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), which serve alongside the Qur'an as a primary guide for Muslim life and practice.

Ummah: The global community of Muslims, bound not by nationality or ethnicity but by shared faith. The word carries a sense of collective belonging and mutual responsibility that transcends borders.

Ziyara: The practice of visiting the grave or shrine of a holy figure to offer greetings and prayers. It is a voluntary act of devotion, separate from the obligatory pilgrimage of Hajj.



Appendices

Appendix I: Ziyārat Al-Abbas

This ziyārah is narrated in al-Kāmil al-Ziyārāt (by Ibn Qūlawayh al-Qummī), one of the earliest Shi'a collections. It is recited by pilgrims when visiting the shrine of Imam Abbas (A.S) in Karbala.

Ziyārat Al-Abbas in Arabic

السلام عليك أيها العبدُ الصالح، المطيع لله ولرسوله ولأُمير المؤمنين والحسن والحسين (عليهم السلام).

السلام عليك ورحمة الله وبركاته.

أشهد أنك مضيتَ على ما مضى به البديرون والمجاهدون في سبيل الله، الذين جاهدوا أعداءهم ونصحوا لله ولرسوله ولأُمير المؤمنين، فجزاك الله أفضل الجزاء وأكثر الجزاء.

فلعن الله أمةً قتلتك، ولعن الله أمةً ظلمتك، ولعن الله أمةً استحلَّت منك المحارم وانتهكت حرمة الإسلام.

فأشهد أنك ابن أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام)، وأنت مضيتَ على بصيرة من أمرك، مقتدياً بالصالحين، ومتَّبِعاً للنبيين.

Ziyārat Al-Abbas in English

Peace be upon you, O righteous servant, obedient to Allah, His Messenger, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Hasan, and

Imam Hussein (peace be upon them).

Peace be upon you, and the mercy and blessings of Allah.

I bear witness that you followed the same path as the martyrs of Badr and those who strove in the way of Allah, who fought His enemies and gave sincere counsel to Allah, His Messenger, and the Commander of the Faithful. So may Allah reward you with the best and most abundant reward.

May Allah curse the nation that killed you, and may Allah curse the nation that wronged you, and may Allah curse the nation that violated your sanctity and desecrated the sanctity of Islam.

I bear witness that you are the son of the Commander of the Faithful (A.S), and that you departed this world with full insight into your mission, following the example of the righteous, and adhering to the way of the Prophets.

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Appendix III: Timeline of the Life of Imam Abbas (A.S)

26 AH / 647 CE	Birth of Imam Abbas (A.S) in Madinah.
30s AH / 650s CE	Imam Abbas (A.S) grew up under the care of Imam Ali (A.S), alongside Imam Hasan, Imam Hussein, and Lady Zainab (Peace be upon them all). He studied the Qur'an, the teachings of the Prophet's household, and was trained in the art of combat.
35-38 AH / 656-659 CE	Imam Abbas (A.S) came of age during the caliphate of his father, Imam Ali (A.S). As a young boy, he witnessed the turbulent events of this period, including the battles of Jamal, Siffin, and Nahrawan, which shaped his early understanding of faith, justice, and sacrifice.
40 AH / 661 CE	Imam Ali (A.S) was martyred in Kufa. Following his father's martyrdom, Imam Abbas (A.S) devoted himself to serving Imam Hasan (A.S), recognising him as the rightful Imam of his time.
41 AH / 661–62 CE	Imam Abbas (A.S) continued to serve under Imam Hasan (A.S) during his Imamate. When Imam Hasan chose to sign a peace treaty with Mu'awiya rather than engage in further conflict, Imam Abbas witnessed firsthand that protecting the faith sometimes requires restraint over the sword.

50 AH / 670 CE	Martyrdom of Imam Hasan (A.S). Imam Abbas dedicates his life to Imam Hussein (A.S).
60 AH / 680 CE (Rajab)	Death of Mu‘awiya. Yazid demands allegiance from Imam Hussein (A.S). Imam Abbas joins Imam Hussein in refusing.
60 AH / 680 CE (Sha‘bān– Dhul-Hijjah)	Imam Abbas accompanies Imam Hussein’s caravan from Madinah to Makkah, then from Makkah toward Iraq. Imam Abbas guards the family along the way.
61 AH / 680 CE (2 Muharram)	Arrival at Karbala. Imam Abbas is appointed standard-bearer of Imam Hussein’s army. He guards the tents of Ahlulbayt (A.S).
61 AH / 680 CE (9 Muharram)	Imam Abbas rejects enemy offers of safety if he abandons Imam Hussein. At night, he pledges loyalty with the companions, refusing to leave Imam Hussein.
61 AH / 680 CE (10 Muharram / Ashura)	Imam Abbas makes an attempt to bring water for the children. He reaches the Euphrates. His arms are severed, the water-skin is pierced, and he is martyred.
Later Years	Imam Abbas’s shrine becomes a site of pilgrimage, growing into one of the most visited sanctuaries in the Shi’a world. He is remembered as Bab al-Hawā’ij (Door of Needs) and honored in Ziyārah texts.

On the day of Ashura, a man rode through an army of thousands to reach a river. He was not riding to save himself. He was carrying water for thirsty children.

His name was Abbas, son of Ali. He was offered safety if he would abandon his brother, Imam Hussein. He refused. He reached the river and would not drink a drop while the children still waited. He never made it back. But what he carried that day has never been lost.

Drawing on classical sources, A Legacy of Loyalty tells his story with honesty and reverence, for believers and newcomers alike. It is the story of a man who gave everything for what he believed, and was never forgotten

