

The Ancestors and Family Tree of Imam Husein (as) and Yazeed

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The ancestors of Imam Husein (as) and Yazeed, and look in some detail at the family tree of Imam Husein (as).

1.1 Ibraheem and Ismaeel

We are looking at a time about four thousand years ago, when Prophet Ibraheem (as) is living in what is now Palestine; he has two wives - Sarah and Hajar; at that time, it was accepted to have more than one wife at a time.

His first wife is Sarah and from this marriage, he has his second son called Ishaq. His second wife is Hajar and from this marriage, he has his first son called Ismaeel. Both his sons were also Prophets.

Soon after the birth of Ismaeel, Allah commands Prophet Ibraheem (as) to take Hajar and baby Ismaeel to an area much further south; they take as much provisions of food and water as they can carry and set out southwards.

Allah tells them to stop at an area where there are no other people around, and where there is no water supply and no vegetation.

It is worth noting the absolute faith of Prophet Ibraheem (as) in Allah, by not questioning the command of Allah in this apparent motiveless emigration (from an area with comfortable amenities to an area with no amenities at all).

Allah then commands Prophet Ibraheem (as) to leave Hajar and Ismaeel at this area, and for him to go back to his home.

Hajar soon runs out of water from the provisions they carried; she leaves baby Ismaeel on the ground, and she runs between two nearby hills (Saffa and Marwa) in search of water, calling out for help.

It was after her seventh run between the hills, that she sees a fountain of water miraculously springing up by the feet of the baby Ismaeel; this is the well of Zamzam which is springing water until today.

When the birds in the sky see this oasis, they fly to this spot for water; travellers notice the flight of the birds, and they in turn also now come to the oasis as one of their stopping points; in time, the area is habitable and a settlement develops.

Ismaeel grows up; Prophet Ibraheem (as), in one of his visits to this area, is now

commanded by Allah to raise the foundations of the Kabah, which is very close to the well of
Zamzam.

The raising of the Kabah attracts pilgrims, and further develops the area; subsequent developments have now made this area into the international city of Makkah, where at the very least, two million pilgrims come for Hajj annually, at the same spot where Hajar and Ismaeel first came at the command of Allah.

1.2 Qussay

After a gap of some generations - the time zone is now fifth century AD (400-500 AD) - Qussay, from the forefather of Prophet Ibraheem (as), is living in Makkah.

Let us look at the status of Makkah and the culture of the Arabs in the region of Hejaz (which was predominantly the current Makkah and Madinah areas, and their immediate surrounding areas, in Saudi Arabia).

Makkah is the centre of the region at the time, visited by two main groups of people from outside of Makkah.

The first group are the pilgrims, who come for circumambulation of the Kabah; after Prophet Ismaeel (as), the true Islamic practices are slowly forgotten in time and replaced with new practices; people take to idol worshipping and put idols in the Kabah.

The second group are the traders, as Makkah is the financial centre of the trade in the region, and between the trading routes from the south (Yemen) to the north (Syria).

There is no particular organised system of administration; things are conducted mainly on a family or tribal basis.

The lifestyle is nomadic in nature, with family or tribes moving from one area to another periodically, mainly for grazing their animals.

The people also move around as a result of skirmishes and incursions in areas belonging to different families and tribes.

There are no systematic arrangements for the provisions of the pilgrims and the traders who come outside of Makkah.

Qussay is a talented man who has excellent administrative and leadership skills; he uses his talents to initiate a system of administration in Makkah to benefit the local people and the outsiders - the pilgrims and the traders.

He sets up the following systems, until now not practiced in the region:

- 1- a hall of chambers - a committee or a council of leaders to make collective decisions;
- 2- a code of conduct - a set of rules and regulations (constitution) by which the committee

will govern;

3- a central meeting place - a building in the vicinity of the Kabah where people would gather for meetings, discussions and decision making;

4- a tax system - this was collected from the local people of Makkah, to raise revenue for the provision of services for the communal benefit, and for the pilgrims and traders coming into Makkah;

5- a system for providing food, water and shelter to the pilgrims.

Qussay is so successful in gathering the various local tribes and clans into some sort of a cohesive community that he is given the title of Quresh - the gatherer.

Qussay is the Chief of the Quresh and also takes on the role as the Custodian of the Kabah, the Head of the Army and the Chairman of the Chambers (committee of tribal/family leaders).

Quassay leaves his mark in Arabia for his achievements in centralisation, administration and facilitation for the communal good of the locals and the visitors.

1.3 Hashim

After the death of Qussay, his duties now pass to his eldest son, Abd Dar, but he is not an able administrator or an effective leader; so he passes all his inherited duties to his younger brother, Abd Manaf, who has the qualities of leadership and administrative skills.

When Abd Dar dies, his eldest son Abd Shams wants to take on all the duties that his father had passed on to Abd Manaf; a tribunal is now set up to divide the duties between Abd Manaf and his nephew, Abd Shams, and the allocation of duties is agreed by all.

Abd Manaf takes on the duties of providing food and water to the pilgrims and visitors, and he is the Head of the Army. Abd Shams (the son of Abd Dar) takes on the duties of being the Custodian of Kabah, and the flag-bearer of the army in times of war. The Chairman of the Chambers role is shared by the two.

After the death of Abd Manaf, his duties now pass to his younger son Hashim, rather than to his eldest son Abd Shams who is not an able administrator or an effective leader.

Hashim is as good as his grand-father Qussay in terms of his leadership and administrative skills.

Once, a great famine hits Makkah, and Hashim uses his own money to buy bread from outside and provide to the people of Makkah; it is this act of breaking the bread and feeding the people that gives him the title of Hashim (the one who breaks bread); his actual name is Amr.

Hashim initiates the trade caravans of Quresh from Yemen in the south to Syria and beyond

to the north; he personally negotiates its safe passage with various parties along the route at a time when looting and plundering of the caravans is common.

He manages to ensure safe passage by offering guarantees to these nomadic tribes of the special status and hospitality when they are in Makkah; he also guarantees them reduced prices of the goods delivered to them during the trade journeys.

Due to his good character and sincere acts for the benefit of the community, Hashim enjoys great popularity and rises to prominence to become the Chief of the Quresh.

Upon the death of Abd Shams (the elder brother of Hashim), his son Umayya now makes a claim that the duties performed by his uncle Hashim should really all belong to him, as it rightfully should have belonged to his father (Abd Shams) as the eldest son in the family.

Umayya is envious and jealous of the status enjoyed by Hashim amongst the Quresh; he therefore starts a sustained campaign against Hashim.

Umayya challenges Hashim to relieve himself of the duties and pass them all to him; it is common knowledge amongst the people of the differences in attitudes and intentions between Umayya and Hashim; Umayya is not suitable for such a position and he wants it for the glory, whereas Hashim uses it to benefit the community.

A tribunal is now setup to decide who takes over all the duties and the role of Chief of Quresh; a pre-condition is that the loser will be exiled to northern Syria for ten years; the tribunal decides in favour of Hashim, and Umayya is exiled for ten years.

Therefore, Hashim remains as the Chief of Quresh and continues with his allocated duties. When Hashim dies, his role and duties are taken over by one of his sons, Abdul Muttalib, who also rises to great fame amongst the Quresh for his services.

1.4 Ancestors of Imam Husein (as) and Yazeed

Amongst the children of Abdul Muttalib are Abdullah and Abu Talib; one of the sons of Abdullah is Muhammad - Prophet Muhammad (saww). One of the sons of Abu Talib is Ali - Imam Ali (as).

From the first marriage of Imam Ali (as) to Lady Fatemah (as), the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (saww), they have a son called Husein - Imam Husein (as). It is this Imam Husein (as) that is associated with the tragedy of Karbala.

One of the sons of Umayya is Harb, and one of the sons of Harb is Abu Sufyan; amongst the children of Abu Sufyan are Yazeed and Muawiya; one of the sons of Muawiya is Yazeed; it is this Yazeed (the son of Muawiya) that is associated with the tragedy of Karbala.

The whole family originating from Hashim is generally referred to as Banu Hashim, an Arabic

term meaning the Children of Hashim; so Imam Husein (as) is a Hashimi. The whole family originating from Umayya is generally known as Banu Umayya, an Arabic term meaning the Children of Umayya; so Yazeed is an Umayyad.

1.5 Family tree of Imam Husein (as)

The chart shows the family members of Imam Husein (as); we are looking at his family members who have direct relevance to the tragedy of Karbala; those who do have direct relevance but are not shown on the chart will be discussed at the appropriate point in the text.

The numbers before the names cross-reference to the text below.

Note that at the time, it was common for men to have more than one wife at a time, up to a maximum of four, as allowed under Islamic rules.

Family members who died before the tragedy of Karbala:

People shown in *black colour* and by the symbol (refer to Chart 3) are not alive when the tragedy of Karbala occurs:

1-Abdul Muttalib

Imam Husein's (as) great grandfather on the father side; he is the grandfather of Imam Ali (as).

2- Abdullah

Imam Husein's (as) great grandfather on the mother side; he is the grandfather of Lady Fatemah (as).

3- Abu Talib

Imam Husein's (as) grandfather on the father side; he is the father of Imam Ali (as) and the uncle of Prophet Muhammad (saww).

4- Prophet Muhammad (saww)

Imam Husein's (as) grandfather on the mother side; he is the father of Lady Fatemah (as).

5-Imam Ali (as)

Imam Husein's (as) father; he is the cousin of Prophet Muhammad (saww).

6- Lady Fatemah (as)

Imam Husein's (as) mother; she is the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (saww).

7- Imam Hasan (as)

Imam Husein's (as) elder brother; he is the eldest son of Imam Ali (as) and Lady Fatemah (as).

8-Jaffer

Imam Husein's (as) uncle; he is Imam Ali's (as) brother and the son of Abu Talib.

9- Aqil

Imam Husein's (as) uncle; he is Imam Ali's (as) brother and the son of Abu Talib.

10- Muhammad

Imam Husein's (as) brother in-law; he is married to Imam Husein's (as) younger sister - Lady Umme Kulthum; he is the son of Jaffer, the uncle of Imam Husein (as).

11- Shahr Banoo

Imam Husein's (as) first wife; mother of Imam Zainul Abideen (as); she is from the royal family of Iran, the daughter of an Iranian King, and came to Madinah when Iran came under the influence of the Muslims; she died soon after the birth of their eldest son, Imam Zainul Abideen (as).

12- Umme Ishaq

Imam Husein's (as) wife; mother of Fatemah Kubra; there is no mention of her being present in Karbala or with the survivors in Kufa and Damascus in the literature; the inference is that she died before the tragedy of Karbala occurs.

13- Laila

Imam Husein's (as) wife; mother of Ali Akbar; there is no mention of her being present in Kufa and Damascus with the survivors in the literature of; there is mention though that Ali Akbar, her son, was brought up by Lady Zainab; the inference is that Laila died before the tragedy of Karbala occurs; some literature mention of her presence in Karbala, mainly when narrating the martyrdom of her son, Ali Akbar.

14-of Qudaiyah tribe

Imam Husein's (as) wife; her name is not recorded and is untraceable, but she was from the Qudaiyah tribe; again, there is no mention of her being present in Karbala or with the survivors in Kufa and Damascus in the literature; so the inference is she died before the tragedy of Karbala occurs.

15- Jaffer

Imam Husein's (as) son; his mother is the lady of Qudaiyah tribe (mentioned above in person number 14).

16- Laila

Imam Husein's step mother; she is one of the wives of Imam Ali (as), whom she married after the death of his first wife, Lady Fatemah (as); her name is also not mentioned as being present in Karbala or with the survivors in Kufa and Damascus in the literature; so the inference is that she died before the tragedy of Karbala occurs.

Imam Husein's (as) cousin; he is the son of Aqil, the uncle of Imam Husein (as).

Family members who did not accompany Imam Husein (as)

People shown in *pink colour* (refer to Chart 3) are alive when the Karbala tragedy occurs; however, they did not accompany Imam Husein (as) when he left Madinah to end up in Karbala:

1- Ummul Baneen

Imam Husein's (as) step mother; she is one of the wives of Imam Ali (as), whom she married after the death of his first wife Lady Fatemah (as); her actual name is Fatemah Kalbiyya; Imam Ali (as) marries her as her tribe is known to produce children known for their bravery, and Imam Ali (as) wishes for a brave son to represent him in his absence at the time of tragedy in Karbala.

2- Abdullah

Imam Husein's (as) brother in-law; he is married to Imam Husein's (as) sister - Lady Zainab; he is the son of Jaffer, the uncle of Imam Husein (as) (note here that the two brothers - Muhammad and Abdullah - marry the two sisters - Lady Umme Kulthum and Lady Zainab); he is too ill for the journey.

3- Fatemah Sughra

Imam Husein's (as) daughter; her mother is Umme Ishaq; she is too ill for the journey.

Family members who survived the tragedy of Karbala

People shown in *blue colour* (refer to Chart 3) and by the symbol accompany Imam Husein (as) when he leaves Madinah, and they are in Karbala when the tragedy occurs; they survive the tragedy of Karbala and finally return home to Madinah:

1- Zainab

Imam Husein's (as) younger sister; she is the third child of Imam Ali (as) and Lady Fatemah (as); she is fifty five years old when the tragedy of Karbala occurs.

2- Umme Kulthum

Imam Husein's (as) younger sister; she is the fourth child of Imam Ali (as) and Lady Fatemah (as); she is fifty four years old when the tragedy of Karbala occurs.

3- Ali Zainul Abideen (as)

Imam Husein's (as) eldest son; his mother is Shahr Banoo; he is twenty two years old when the tragedy of Karbala occurs.

3- Muhammad Baqir (as)

Imam Husein's (as) grandson; his father is Imam Zainul Abideen (as), the fourth Imam; he is three years old when the tragedy of Karbala occurs; he is the fifth Imam.

4- Rubab

Imam Husein's (as) wife; she is the mother of three children - Fatemah Sughra, Sukaina, and Ali Asghar.

5- Fatemah Kubra

Imam Husein's (as) eldest daughter; her mother is Umme Ishaq; after the tragedy of Karbala, she gets married to Hasan, the son of Imam Hasan (as).

6- Hasan

Imam Husein's (as) nephew; he is the son of Imam Hasan (as), the second Imam; he is also known as Hasan Muthanna - Hasan the Second, to distinguish him from his father by the same name; he participates in the battle at Karbala, and he is mistakenly taken for dead and survives the tragedy.

Family members who are martyred in Kufa

People shown in *green colour* (refer to Chart 3) and by the symbol accompany Imam Husein (as) when he leaves Madinah; they did not get to Karbala but are martyred in Kufa:

1- Muslim

Imam Husein's (as) cousin; he is the son of Aqil; he gets martyred in Kufa, just before the tragedy of Karbala occurs.

2- Ibraheem

Imam Husein's (as) cousin's son; he is the son of Muslim; Muslim takes two of his youngest sons to Kufa with him; he gets martyred in Kufa with his brother Muhammad, about one year after the tragedy of Karbala; he is no more than twelve years old.

3- Muhammad

Imam Husein's (as) cousin's son; he is the youngest son of Muslim; he is the other son that Muslim takes with him to Kufa; he gets martyred in Kufa with his brother Ibraheem, about one year after the tragedy of Karbala; he is no more than twelve years old.

Family member who dies in Damascus

Person shown in *lavender colour* (refer to Chart 3) and by the symbol accompanies Imam Husein (as) when he leaves Madinah, and she is in Karbala when the tragedy occurs; she survives the tragedy of Karbala but dies in Damascus:

1- Sukaina

Imam Husein's (as) daughter; her mother is Rubab; she is about five years old; she is also known by the other names of Sakina or Ruqaiyya.

Family members who are martyred in Karbala

People shown in *red colour* (refer to Chart 3) and by the symbol accompany Imam Husein (as) when he leaves Madinah and are with him in Karbala; they are martyred with him in Karbala on the day of Ashura:

1- Qasim

Imam Husein's (as) nephew; he is the son of Imam Hasan (as), the brother of Imam Husein (as); he is about thirteen years old.

2- Ahmed

Imam Husein's (as) nephew; he is the son of Imam Hasan (as), the brother of Imam Husein (as); he is also known as Abu Bakr; he is about twelve years old.

3- Abdullah

Imam Husein's (as) nephew; he is the son of Imam Hasan (as), the brother of Imam Husein (as); he is about eleven years old.

4- Aun

Imam Husein's (as) nephew; he is about nine years old; he is the son of Abdullah and Lady Zainab, the sister of Imam Husein (as); Aun joins Imam Husein (as) at a place called Tanim.

5- Muhammad

Imam Husein's (as) nephew; he is the second son of Abdullah and Lady Zainab, the sister of Imam Husein (as); he is about eight years old and the younger brother to Aun; Muhammad joins Imam Husein (as) at a place called Tanim.

6-Abdullah

Imam Husein's (as) cousin's son; he is the son of Muslim, the cousin of Imam Husein (as).

7- Muhammad

Imam Husein's (as) cousin's son; he is the son of Muslim, the cousin of Imam Husein (as).

8- Muhammad

Imam Husein's (as) cousin's son; he is the son of Saeed, the cousin of Imam Husein (as).

9- Abdullah

Imam Husein's (as) cousin; he is the son of Aqil, the uncle of Imam Husein (as).

10-Jaffer

Imam Husein's (as) cousin; he is the son of Aqil, the uncle of Imam Husein (as).

11- Abd Rahman

Imam Husein's (as) cousin; he is the son of Aqil, the uncle of Imam Husein (as).

12- Muhammad

Imam Husein's (as) brother; he is the son of Imam Ali (as) and Laila; he is also known as Muhammad Al-Asghar, the Junior Muhammad, to distinguish from another elder son of Imam Ali (as) also called Muhammad (Muhammad Hanafiyya); he is also known as Abu Bakr.

13- Abbas

Imam Husein's (as) brother; he is the son of Imam Ali (as) and Ummul Baneen.

14- Jaffer

Imam Husein's (as) brother; he is the son of Imam Ali (as) and Ummul Baneen.

15- Othman

Imam Husein's (as) brother; he is the son of Imam Ali (as) and Ummul Baneen.

16- Abdullah

Imam Husein's (as) brother; he is the son of Imam Ali (as) and Ummul Baneen.

17- Ali Akbar

Imam Husein's (as) second son; his mother is Laila.

18- Ali Asghar

Imam Husein's (as) third son; his mother is Rubab; he is also known as Abdullah.

19- Imam Husein (as)

Himself; he is the grand-son of Prophet Muhammad (saww), and the son of Imam Ali (as) .(and Lady Fatemah (as