

When was Hazrat Husayn Martyred?

A Scientific Approach

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين ، والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد خاتم
النبیین وإمام المرسلین و على آله وصحبه أجمعين

I begin in the name of Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful. May Allah (swt) give just deserts to those who deserted and betrayed our master (ra) and led him to a trap, and may we join in splendor with the prince of the youth of Paradise in our deaths. May his martyrdom evoke all that is right and good and may the names of his real killers evoke shame and disgust. And may God bestow His peace and blessings on him, his father and the father of his father. And may God bestow blessings on that noble family, the followers of the Prophet (saw) and the companions of the Prophet (saw), all of them together. And may Allah (swt) forgive the mistakes of the repentant for God's Mercy precedes his Wrath. Amen.

Disclaimer: Copyright © 2008 by Mohammad Mufti. No part of this document may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever for commercial gain without written permission of the author. **For non-commercial purposes, this document may be freely distributed pending that no changes are made to the present text except by the explicit written permission of the author.** Any material used in the text by the author was properly cited as far as the author is aware and any texts and or excerpts used in the present research were taken from works that neither prohibited nor prevented their use for such purposes, as far as the author is aware.

Seyyid Mohammad Hamza Mufti al Hanbali

Original 27th Shawwal, 1429

Present Revision 4th Rabi al Awwal, 1430

Introduction

This is a short study concerning the time of the year during which Hazrat Husayn (ra) - the leader of the youth of Paradise, our master and our beloved, the grandson of the seal of Prophets (saw), the misappropriated gem of this Ummah, the hope of this Ummah, the beacon of righteousness of this Ummah, the peaceful and just one, the one who threw away this life and achieved victory in the hereafter - was martyred by the army of Ubaidallah ibn Ziyad. The narrations that will be employed in this study, concerning the date itself, are generally Shi'ite in nature even though many of them will be quoted from texts which are by Sunni scholars. This is because the narrations employed are often those with Shi'as (not Ithna Asharis necessarily – but from those groups that preceded modern Twelverism) in their chains of narration. As such, by the principle of Sunni sciences of rijaal [biographies of men] and takhreej [critical analysis of asanid, chains of narrators], they can't generally be considered authentic seeing as how a Shi'i narrator would be more likely to fabricate or exaggerate in a tradition supporting his bid'a (and the principle is essentially “do not acknowledge traditions narrated by a bidati if it supports his bid'a” - although this is pending per circumstance). In addition, works by Ithna Ashari scholarship will also be consulted and another reason for this use of Shi'i sources is because the texts available in English (and even those in other languages) are generally Twelver (prominent modern version of Shi'ism) polemical works and Sunni scholars have for the most part, ignored the extreme traditions or recorded them without comments. Few of these narrations in connection with the martyrdom of Husayn (ra), if any, are actually saheeh. In any case, our goal will be to take all the narrations for their word (regardless of chain), strip them for the essential and relevant information and compare that with scientific material to determine which of the two dates that have been traditionally mentioned concerning the death of Husayn (ra) are more reliable. The two dates we have received from the histories are:

- 10th of Muharram, of 61 Hijra [popular date]
- Safar, of 61 Hijra

The question though is: which date is the most reliable? And it is in the pursuit of answering this question that the present document was composed, since this question appears to have not been tackled in an in-depth fashion by most others before me. One thing that was lacking in early historical works was that scholars would transmit the narrations but wouldn't criticize the narrations in-depth themselves.

Our scholars of tareekh (history) used to record narrations, but they did not go to great lengths to authenticate them. In the present example, the narration of Muharram gained popularity, not only because of it's timeliness and the associations made with it – but also because the scholars did not thoroughly criticize it nor did those who recorded it have the means or inclination to go forth and plow into the minute details of each tradition. Instead, they saw that one was being narrated

significantly more often and as such, ascribed greater reliability to it on account of this alone. An unrelated example of this is the case of the narratives concerning the age of our Mother, Bibi Khadija (ra). One of the contemporary scholars, Abdul Bary Yahya comments on this matter in his work *The Chain of Command* (page 169):

There are two hadith regarding the age of Khadija when she married the Prophet; one saying 40, the other saying 29. Both hadith are equal in terms of authenticity. So which one is it? The latter is actually stronger when you look into the seerah. She had six children with Prophet Muhammad, so it is more plausible that she was married at age 29.

So what was the reason that the scholars would narrate the age being forty so often? Some scholars wanted to demonstrate that was acceptable to be married late. Others simply wanted to show the wide range of acceptable marriages in Islaam. Eithers yet may not have been well-acquainted with the other tradition or the acceptability thereof. In any case though, the former tradition (of her age being forty) gained greater popularity and today kids in Sunday school will still only know this narration of the event – even though it's the less realistic one. The point is that for whatever reason, a narration that has the same credibility on account of it's sanad, gained preeminence over another narration even though the later was stronger (on account of rationality and it's matn).

In matters of history, this isn't the least bit rare. The student is left to wonder, why would scholars who so stress the importance of sanad, who so stress the importance of legitimate tradition and legitimate action be so lax when it comes to sanad in other cases? The students need only consult the works of our scholars in greater depth. The scholars certainly did stress good solid chains, but this was stressed more so in important matters such as fiqh, or aqeedah. When it came to comparatively less important things, where weak narrations aren't going to be the defining line between heaven and hell, there was laxity. This applies not only to tareekh but also to ahadith, as stated in *al kifaya fee 'ilm ar riwayah* (in *tasdeed fee ahadeeth ul ahkaam*) by al Khatib al Baghdadi who says that when the scholars narrate:

about what is allowed and what is prohibited, about the legally binding actions and laws than we are strict on the chains; but when we narrate traditions from the Prophet about the goodness of deeds and those things that don't have to do with the binding laws than we are lax on the chains.

Similar statements have been made by a host of eminent scholars who were justifying their use of weak narrations in declaring the mustahabat or narrating about history. It can therefore be gathered that those people who argue history by the basis of “well, Tabari recorded it therefore it must be true” are ignorants who haven't bothered to learn the methodology of the people who did the recording. It wasn't until later on that the breed of scholars who made it their task to authenticate historical incidents gained any degree of popularity, and this being done on their part was quite often only a response to the claims of various ignorants from the People of Bid'ah

(Ahlul bid'ah) who became vociferous in using these very same weak traditions to try and establish their equally weak point of views.

This increase in the number of Ahlul Bid'ah, and their ability to misguide a populace who was itself ignorant about the methodologies of the different scholars gave rise to what I would consider a new group of scholars. Scholars whose prime focus was history and that of it which was authentic, the promoters and defenders of sunnah and tareekh. Scholars, the like of which the world is yearning for even today. One such scholar is Ibn Khaldun (rah), the pioneer of modern sociology and one of re-examiners of history, and he comments on the old methodology in his *Al-Muqadimah*, in far harsher terms than I could dare:

The later historians were all tradition-bound and dull of nature and intelligence, or did not try to avoid being dull. They merely copied their predecessors and followed their example. They disregarded the changes in conditions and in the customs of nations and races that the passing of time had brought about. Thus they presented historical information about dynasties and stories of events from the earliest times as mere forms without substance, blades without scabbards; as knowledge that must be considered ignorance because it is not known what of it is extraneous and what is genuine. It concerns happenings, the origins of which are not known. It concerns species, the genera of which are not taken into consideration, and whose specific differences are not verified. They neglected the importance of change over the generations in their treatment of (historical material), because they had no one who could interpret it for them. Their works, therefore, give no explanation for it. When they turn to the description of a particular dynasty, they report the historical information parrot-like and take care to preserve it as it had been passed down to them, whether imaginary or true. They do not turn to the beginning of the dynasty. Nor do they tell why it unfurled its banner and was able to give prominence to its emblem, or what caused it to come to a stop when it had reached its term. [pages 6-7 of "The Muqadimah: An Introduction to History" of Ibn Khaldun as translated by Franz Rosenthal and abridged/edited by N. J. Dawood]

Although we can not agree completely with Ibn Khaldun, that the hard work of the historians who devoted themselves to recording narrations without taking much effort to criticize them was "parrot-like", the premise of his statement is accurate. The scholars recorded the narrations but did not go to lengths to distinguish truth from falsehood. They would report from Shi'a, Sunna, Jews, Christians and put everything side by side and often only comment on those things that reached them and were totally absurd in their entirety. A person with a background in this science would be able to access these works and sort the rotten from the reliable information. Today, this banner is being picked up again and the students of history are growing and excelling in areas and with methods not seen before. Students of the sciences are reaching new ground and planting their flags every which way they go. May God accept us amongst them than, as the humblest on account of ourselves, and the proudest, on account of the banner which we've raised and what it represents.

Narrative Irregularity

Of these two traditions mentioned before, the tradition used for the most part in the self-mutilation rituals is the former and in our times it is the mashoor (common) opinion. Both of the dates are actually quite early in origin, and since the time of Tabari and Waqidi, both dates have been present. The dates are mentioned as follows by Tabari under the Events of the Year 60 (near the end):

According to al-Harith (b. Muhammad) – Ibn Sa'd – 'Ali b. Muhammad (al-Mada'ini) – Ja'far b. Sulayman al-Dabu'i. Al Husayn said, “They will not leave me until they have taken out this heart from within me. When they do that, God will dominate and humiliate them so that they will be more humiliated than a rag used by a slave girl for her menstrual blood.” Then he went to Iraq and was killed at Ninawa on the Day of Ashura 61 (October 10, 680).

According to al-Harith (b. Muhammad) – Ibn Sa'd – Muhammad b. 'Umar (al-Waqidi): Al-Husayn b. 'Ali was killed in the month of Safar in the year A.H. 61 [November, 680]. At that time he was fifty-five.

According to al-Harith (b. Muhammad) – Aflah b. Sa'id – Ibn Ka'b al Qurazi.

According to al-Harith (b. Muhammad) – Ibn' Sa'd – Muhammad b. Umar (al-Waqidi) – Abu Mashar: Al-Husayn was killed on 10 al-Muharram [October 10, 680].

Al-Waqidi said this was the best confirmed report.

[From page 82 of The History of al-Tabari, Volume XIX, The Caliphate of Yazid b. Mu'awiyah as translated by I.K.A. Howard (1990, State University of New York Press)]

[Beginning of The Events of the Year 61:] Among these events was the murder (maqtal) of al-Husayn. He was killed on 10 al-Muharram (October 10) according to Ahmad b. Thabit – someone who transmitted reports – Ishaq b. 'Isa – Abu Ma'shar. This is also reported by al-Waqidi [above] and Hisham b. [Muhammad] al-Kalbi.

[From page 91 of the same text]

Though Tabari himself does not record here the date “26th of Safar” (as he only recorded the month of Safar), this is still the date we will use as it was arrived upon by the research which will be brought up in the following pages, even though more leeway is offered us if we simply say “Safar” and not “26th of Safar”. To further substantiate the fact that Safar is mentioned narration as to the occurrence of this event (although it has been long overshadowed by the other narration) we have several other authorities that have relayed this fact. One other such example is Ibn Katheer (rah) in al-Bidayah wal-nihaya:

ثم دخلت سنة إحدى وستين

استهلت هذه السنة والحسين بن علي سائر إلى الكوفة فيما بين مكة والعراق ومعه أصحابه وقراباته، فقتل في يوم عاشوراء من شهر المحرم من هذه السنة على المشهور الذي صححه الواقدي وغير واحد، وزعم بعضهم أنه قتل في صفر منها والأول أصح (8/186ج/ص:)

Than Enter Year 61: This year, Husayn ibn 'Ali (ra) went to Kufa from Mecca with his companions and he was killed on the Day of Ashura in the month of Muharram this year according to the well-known and accepted narration from Waqidi, who also narrated from someone that Husayn (ra) was killed in the month of Safar. (paraphrased by the present author, not an actual translation)

Conclusion: Both narrations figured early on amongst Islamic historians but the one stating that the correct date was actually on Ashura [10th Muharram] and not in Safar became more commonly accepted amongst the traditionalists. This was because the narration for Safar came through a single chain from Waqidi while the others did not, so the traditionalists used the method of collating the narrations that were available on the same topic and they used this to determine which was the correct date. At that time, techniques of using events to derive numerical dates (in order to dismiss or corroborate narrations) was also present (as will be used here) but they had no way of using the available narrations to employ this technique in this case as the narrations which allude to a particular time require analysis which can only be made easily with modern technology.

The Dates According to Georgian Calendar System

One thing that is lacking in the Hijra calendar system is an indication of seasons, as it is a lunar calendar system and according to the Qur'aan, the use of leap months by the 'Arabs and Jews to account for seasons became forbidden. With this rigid new calendar system, seasons cycle over the course of 33 or 34 years. To account for the lack of seasonal indicators, we will employ the Georgian calendar system and according to it, the dates are as follows:

- Tuesday 9 October 680 CE for 10th of Muharram, of 61 Hijra [error margin: + 1 day]
- Saturday 24 November 680 CE for 26th of Safar, of 61 Hijra [error margin: + 1 day]

26th of Safar was not selected arbitrarily but arrived upon during the research process and was found to be the closest date which completely fit the traditions and scientific evidence. Initially a different date was employed for the research, a trial date of 22nd Safar. The reason for choosing the date ultimately relied upon will be made clear in the following sections, inshaAllah.

Seasonal Irregularity

The region of Iraq falls in the Northern Hemisphere, in the north temperate zone. More particularly, it can be considered from the Subtropic zone. Under Köppen-Geiger climate, the appropriate region falls under the categorization BWh. As the months move closer to the Northern Hemisphere winter season, the chances of rain increase, while the chances of rain further away from it are comparatively minimal. Astronomically, winter begins at the Winter solstice (beginning December). Additionally, it should also be noted that by the calendar systems of the Iranians which marks Naw rooz as the beginning of the year, Winter usually begins from 5th to 10th of November in our Georgian system.

According to 12er tradition, the rain was very hard and long lasting around the time of Husayn's (ra) martyrdom. The following tradition is from the Twelver text *Azadari – 40 Ahadith* by Agha Jawad Muhaddathi and Shahnawaz Mahdavi (it is hadith 23):

قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع):
يَا زُرَّارَةُ إِنَّ السَّمَاءَ بَكَتْ عَلَى الْحُسَيْنِ (ع) أَرْبَعِينَ صَبَاحًا

[1] Said, Abu Abdullah: O' Zurarah! Verily, the sky cried for forty days over Husayn. (Mustadrakal-Wasail, vol 1 pg. 391)

The following traditions are also recorded from mostly Islaamic (Sunni) works on this topic, although the references are from certain Twelver apologists that I have known for cases of dishonesty, I have not personally corroborated any of these unless otherwise stated:

[2] "The grief of Imam Husayn (as) is the grief on which not only Humans, but even jinnat, Angels, animals, birds, the sky and trees, all lament. Thus it is written that the sky wept for forty days on (the martyrdom of) Imam Husayn (as)". "Yanabi ul Mawwaddat", by Allamah Sheikh Salman Hanafi Qundoozi, Printed in Constantinople, page 392 [Note that this is not a Sunni title but a late Twelver fabrication often attributed to Sunnis in modern Twelver polemicist writings]

[3] "The day when Hadhrath Yahya bin Zakarya (a.s) was martyred the sky had got red and blood was dripping from it and the sky had also got red the day Imam Husayn (a.s) was martyred." ...Tafseer Durre Manthur Volume 6, page 31

[4] Allamah Ibn Jareer Tabari writes that Saddi said: "When Imam Husayn (r) was martyred, the sky started weeping for him, the weeping of the sky was proven by its turning red." Tafseer Jame'a al-Bayan, volume 25, page 68

[5] In Arjyah ul-Matalib, page 347-348 Deobandi scholar Maulana Ubaid-ullah Amritsari states:

"The occurrence of these natural calamities was for the admonition for the masses after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (r). Basra Adhwiya says that when Imam Husayn (r) was martyred it started to drizzle and by the morning all of their pots and water-drums were filled with blood. Zuhri (r.a) says that on the day of Imam Husayn's martyrdom no stone was picked in Jerusalem that did not have fresh blood under it. Sufyan Thuri (r.a) narrates that his grand-mother was a young slave-girl at the time of Imam Husayn's martyrdom; she had said that the sky kept weeping for him for many days. Hadhrath Ammar e Yasir (r) has narrated that the Holy Prophet (s) had said that the heaven had once cried for Yahya bin Zakariya and it will also cry upon the Holy Prophet's (s) son (Husayn). " [see 9 – next section]

The following traditions were recorded in the Twelver book *Nafasul Mahmoom* by Abbas Qummi under the section of forty ahadith concerning Azadari:

[6] ... "O son of Shabeeb! My father (Imam Moosa al Kazim) has related from his father (Imam Ja'far as Sadiq), who has related from his grandfather (Imam Ali Zainul Abedeen), that when my grandfather Imam Husayn (a.s) was martyred, the sky rained blood and red sand." (tradition 1)

[7] "The murderers of both, Prophet Yahya (a.s) as well as Imam Husayn (a.s) were illegitimate. The heavens have not wept, except on account of the martyrdom of both of them." (tradition 18)

Although any rational person would testify that much of these traditions are obviously pious fabrications, in the present research, we will accept that there may be some truth to them. The basis for this is the principle that even the lies of liars are based on the truths of the truthful. The nature of such lies is either that they are opposing statements of the truthful, plagiarizing statements of the trustful, or that they are themselves telling part of the truth – and all of these fall under this principle and the one relevant at the moment is the idea that there is some truth to these narrations. The truth we will accept in them is that which can be confirmed and rationalized within the framework of accepted human experience. In the present traditions, we have evidence for extensive rain and this is something naturally more apt to occur closer to the winter in the particular region and this lends greater validity to the date mentioned by Tabari (of Safar).

Conclusion: Although the traditions should clearly be seen as an over-exaggeration by rational readers, their existence points to the fact that around his (ra) martyrdom, there was extensive rain. From the sixth tradition, “red sand”, we even see a possibility of their being hale. Which period is more likely to see such *tears from the sky*, the early days of October or the late days of November?

Lunar Irregularity

Another claim concerning the matter is that there was a solar eclipse (whereby) the sky was lit red and the eclipse was such that even the stars could be seen mid-day. Unfortunately, there is no chroniclers from that time period from any of the neighboring societies that recorded such an eclipse. Even so, we will give some credibility to the claim arbitrarily, on account of it's presence in our history books, and test it. Before doing so, perhaps it would be apt to introduce the statement of a contemporary Western historian, John Lewis Gaddis, author of *The Landscape of History: how historians map the past* :

[The question of whether or not history is a qualified science is an important one.] For science has one quality that privileges it above all other modes of inquiry: it has shown itself more capable than any of the others at eliciting agreement on the validity of results across cultures, in different languages, and among highly dissimilar observers. The structure of the DNA molecule looks much the same to researchers in Switzerland, Singapore, and Sri Lanka. Aircraft wings bear stress similarly whether the airlines that rely on them operate as subsidized state monopolies or adventurous entrepreneurial enterprises. Astronomers of Christian, Muslim and Buddhist persuasions have little difficulty reaching a consensus on what causes eclipses, or how galaxies move.

There are of course other ways to resolve issues like these. You could, for example, probe the entrails of animals, read tea leaves, consult a horoscope, seek divine guidance, or make inquiries in an International chat room. You'd certainly get results, but you'd not get very many other people to agree on the accuracy of the results. The advantage of science, John Ziman has pointed out, is that it provides “a consensus of rational opinion over the widest possible field.”⁷

7 [footnote omitted]

[From page 37 (2004, Oxford University Press, New York)]

Science, then, is a universal language – one which stresses across cultures, religion and local languages. On this basis, the Western academic has adduced that the Muslim scientist will agree as to what causes an eclipse. And so too, we can only hope, that the Muslim populace will agree that the cause of an eclipse is not the cries of the dying grandson of our Prophet (saw) but of the positions taken by the moon, Earth and sun with relation to one another – and ultimately, are caused by God.

Firstly, we must understand the nature of eclipses. Our Prophet (saw) explains them to us thus (Saheeh al Bukharee – under the Book of Eclipses, translation from the popular translation of Muhsin Khan):

حدثنا عبد الله بن محمد قال: حدثنا هاشم بن القاسم قال: حدثنا شيبان، أبو معاوية، عن زياد بن علاقة، عن المغيرة بن شعبة قال كسفت الشمس على عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم مات إبراهيم، فقال الناس: كسفت الشمس لموت إبراهيم فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن الشمس والقمر لا ينكسفان لموت أحد ولا لحياته، فإذا رأيتم فصلوا وادعوا الله

Narrated Al-Mughira bin Shu'ba: "The sun eclipsed in the life-time of Allah's Apostle on the day when (his son) Ibrahim died. So the people said that the sun had eclipsed because of the death of Ibrahim. Allah's Apostle said, "The sun and the moon do not eclipse because of the death or life (i.e. birth) of some-one. When you see the eclipse pray and invoke Allah."

حدثنا أبو معمر قال حدثنا عبد الوارث قال حدثنا يونس عن الحسن عن أبي بكره قال خسفت الشمس على عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فخرج يجر رداءه حتى انتهى إلى المسجد وثاب الناس إليه فصلى بهم ركعتين فانجلت الشمس فقال إن الشمس والقمر آيتان من آيات الله وإنهما لا يخسفان لموت أحد وإذا كان ذلك فصلوا وادعوا حتى يكشف ما بكم وذلك أن ابنا للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم مات يقال له إبراهيم فقال الناس في ذلك

Narrated Abu Bakra: "In the life-time of the Allah's Apostle (p.b.u.h) the sun eclipsed and he went out dragging his clothes till he reached the Mosque. The people gathered around him and he led them and offered two Rakat. When the sun (eclipse) cleared, he said, "The sun and the moon are two signs amongst the signs of Allah; they do not eclipse because of the death of someone, and so when an eclipse occurs, pray and invoke Allah till the eclipse is over." It happened that a son of the Prophet called Ibrahim died on that day and the people were talking about that (saying that the eclipse was caused by his death)."

This statement of the Prophet has several sublime qualities. For one thing, it removes him from the general mass of people of his time and their superstitions. Rather than saying that eclipses are due to something, be it something beneficial or a calamity, he (saw) simply tells his following that these are signs of Allah (swt). He (saw) recognized it as one of the signs which would precede the hour and cause fear in the hearts of Muslims, but that the cause itself was not the calamity. This insight has proven to be quite true by modern (and even historical) science in that solar eclipses are entirely dependent on the sun and the moon – not on some unrelated event on the Earth.

Similar traditions have also reached the Muslims where the Prophet (saw) condemns another aspect of superstition, at-Tanjeem (astrology). Just as people would attribute the events of this Earth to calamities in space, so too do people (to this day) attribute what takes place on Earth to what has taken place in the Heavens. To this matter, Sheikh Ibn Abdul Wahhab (rah) has devoted a section of his book Kitaab at Tawheed (ch 27, 28 or 29 depending on version) which I've excerpted in full:

What Has Been Said About *At-Tanjeem*

Bukhari narrates in his *Saheeh*, that Qatadah said:

"Allah created these stars for three reasons [i.e. They are useful for humans by three reasons]: (i) To adorn the heaven, (ii) as missiles against the devils [meteorites/shooting stars which is the same word in 'Arabic] and (iii) as signs by which (the traveler) may be guided; and so whoever claims more than this for them has erred and has lost his reward (on the Day of Resurrection) and taken upon himself that of which he has no knowledge."

Harb informs us that while Qatadah disliked the studying of the lunar phases, Ibn `Uyainah forbade it, and Ahmad and Ishaq permitted it. [Sheykh Salih ibn Abdul Aziz in his commentary, *Ghayatul Mureed*, mentions that this includes the studying of the phases of the stars and he has said it is the preferred position because studying their phase is not ascribing superstitions to them but using them as a reference for time and place which is within the realm of reason]

It is [also] reported on the authority of Abu Moosa (ra), that he said: "Allah's Messenger (saw) said:

"There are three who will not enter Paradise: (i) The habitual wine drinker, (ii) the one who cuts family ties and (iii) the one who believes in sorcery."

Important Issues of the Chapter

1. The wisdom of creating the stars.
2. The falseness of the claims of those who say otherwise.
3. The mentioning of the ikhtilaaf regarding learning their positions.
4. The threat against those who believe in any magic (superstitions).

The essential point in those traditions and even this one is that these planetary bodies do not effect our immediate lives and do not shape our personalities, and that conversely, we also don't effect them. In fact, even from the stand point of physics, the effect that a far off planet such as Jupiter has on us (on account of it's gravity) is less than the gravitational pull of the slimmest of women on this Earth!

Another aspect of the narration is that it also weighs heavily on the Prophet's (saw) character in that he (saw) didn't exploit the event. A non-Muslim, who considers the Prophet (saw) to be but an ordinary man, can see from these authentic traditions that even when his (saw) own son dies and when the social climate is perfect to employ this to impress on them a sense of nobility of himself (saw) and his family (ra) – he chooses to simply tell them the truth. That his family is ultimately just as ordinary and bound to nature as they all are and that the fact that his son's (ra) death coincided with the eclipse was entirely coincidental.

From the traditions though, it would appear that the death of his (saw) grandson, al Husayn (ra), also witnessed such a phenomena. One wherein it is said that the skies turned red and cried blood. This of course was the effect of the eclipse, which caused a red tinge in the sky and the subsequent rain's alluded color may just be exaggeration or it may have actually appeared red due to the extensiveness of the red sky. In any case, the following relevant traditions are narrated on this matter from certain Twelver apologists:

[1] "When Imam Husayn (as) was martyred, the sun was eclipsed (so long) so that the stars appeared." Waqiyat-e-Karbala (The Events of Karbala), page 75

[2] Allamah Jalaludin Syuti writes that Hadhrath Atta (ra) said: "The sky cries in a manner that all of its corners get red." He quotes Hadhrath Hasan Basri to have said: "When the sky gets red it weeps." Tafseer Durre Manthur Volume 6, page 30

[3] Allamah Mohammad ibn e Jareer Tabari states: "The crying of the heaven is such that all of its corners get red." Tafseer e Jame'a al-Bayan, Allama Tabari, volume 25, page 68, published in Egypt

[4] Allamah Nizam-ud-din Neshapoori states: "Many Mufasssireen are of the view that the sky can cry, so they believe that the solar and the lunar eclipses, the corners of the sky getting red and the blowing of wild and pinching wind are forms of the sky weeping." Tafseer e Neshapoori, volume 25, page 73, published in Egypt

[5] Allamah Jalaludin Syuti writes that Hadhrath Ibrahim said: "Since the creation of the world, the heaven and the earth have cried for none else other than two pious men.

The People asked him: "Do not the heaven and the earth cry for the Momineen?"

He replied: "When they are virtuous his privilege is linked to his status and deeds."

He (s) then asked them if they knew how the heaven and the earth cries.

The people replied in the negative, therefore he (s) said: "It becomes fiery and red, just as the red boiling oil.

Suyuti adds: The day when Hadhrath Yahya bin Zakarya (a.s) was martyred the sky had got red and blood was dripping from it and the sky had also got red the day Imam Husayn (a.s) was martyred."...Tafseer Durre Manthur Volume 6, page 31

[6] Nawab Molvi Siddiq Hasan Khan Bhopali quotes Saddi in Tafseer Fatah ul-Bayan, volume 8, page 326: "When Husayn (as) was martyred the heaven kept crying evidenced by the fact it turned red."

[7] Ibn e Katheer writes: "When Hadrath Yahya bin Zakariya (a.s) was assassinated the sky turned red, it also turned red when Imam Husayn (r) was martyred...After the martyrdom of Husayn (r) fresh blood started to gush from wherever stones were picked up. There was a solar eclipse, the corners of the sky had turned red."
Tafseer Ibn Katheer, volume 9, page 163, published in Egypt

[8] Allamah Ibn Jareer Tabari writes that Saddi said: "When Imam Husayn (r) was martyred, the sky started weeping for him, the weeping of the sky was proven by its turning red."
Tafseer Jame'a al-Bayan, volume 25, page 68

[9] In Arjyah ul-Matalib, page 347-348 Deobandi scholar Maulana Ubaid-ullah Amritsari states: ...[see 5 above]...

Allama Ibn e Hajr Makki writes: "After Imam Husayn's (a.s) martyrdom the sky kept crying continuously for seven days, the walls seem to be wearing coloured sheets and it is a proven fact that darkness prevailed over the world for three days and then a reddish light was apparent on the sky."

He further quotes Abu Sa'eed: "The day Imam Husayn (a.s) was martyred, no stone was picked in the world that did not have blood under it, blood kept oozing from the sky and the affects remained on the clothing for a long time, until the clothes became worn out.

[10] Sa'lbi has said that the sky kept crying for Imam Husayn's (a.s) martyrdom and the sky's crying was its turning red. Besides Sa'lbi a few others have said that the corners of the sky remain red for six months after Imam Husayn's (a.s) martyrdom and then it started to emerge every now and then."

Ibn e Seerain has said that they have come to know that this reddish light that emerges with the evening twilight did not exist before Imam Husayn's (a.s) martyrdom."

Ibn e Sa'ad has written in his Tabaqaat that that redness was not seen on the skies before Imam Husayn's (a.s) martyrdom." Sawaiqh al Muhaqira, page 623-624

[11] "After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (as), the sides of the sky remained red for six months, and then its redness became permanent which is visible every evening."Sawaiq Muhriqa, Pp.114

The following narration pertains to the same subject and is an independent corroboration on my part that the gist of what was presented above from the Twelver apologists can not be falsity on their own part:

ويعث أهل العراق إلى الحسين الرسل والكتب يدعونه إليهم فخرج من مكة إلى العراق في عشر ذي الحجة ومعه طائفة من آل بيته رجالاً ونساءً وصبياناً فكتب يزيد إلى واليه بالعراق عبيد الله بن زياد بقتله فوجه إليه جيشاً أربعة آلاف عليهم عمر بن سعد بن أبي وقاص فخذله أهل الكوفة كما هو شأنهم مع أبيه من قبله فلما رفق السلاح عرض عليهم الاستسلام والرجوع والمضي إلى يزيد فيضع يده في يده فأبوا إلا قتله فقتل وجيء برأسه في طست حتى وضع بين يدي ابن زياد لعن الله قاتله وابن زياد معه ويزيد أيضاً
وكان قتله بكر بلاء وفي قتله قصة فيها طول لا يحتمل القلب ذكرها فإننا لله وإنا إليه راجعون وقتل معه ستة عشر رجلاً من أهل بيته
ولما قتل الحسين مكثت الدنيا سبعة أيام والشمس على الحيطان كالملاحف المعصفرة والكواكب يضرب بعضها بعضاً وكان قتله يوم عاشوراء وكسفت الشمس ذلك اليوم واحمرت آفاق السماء ستة أشهر بعد قتله ثم لا زالت الحمرة ترى فيها بعد ذلك ولم تكن ترى فيها قبله
(1/84-85)

[12] And the people of I'rak, sent messengers and letters to al Husayn, inviting him among them, whereupon he set forth from Mecca to I'rak on the 10th of Du'l Hijjah and with him a party of his household, men, women and children. Then Yazid wrote to U'baydau'llah-b-Ziyad, his prefect in I'rak to oppose him, and he sent against him an army of four thousand men, commanded by Omar-b-Saa'd-b-Abi Wakkas. And the people of Kufah deserted al Husayn, as had been their way with his father before him, and when the troops came up with him he proffered submission to them and to return and go to Yazid to place his hand in the hand of Yazid, but they refused everything but his death, and he was slain and his head was carried in a platter until it was placed before Ibn Ziyad-may God curse his slayer, and Ibn Ziyad with him and Yazid likewise.

He was slain at Karbala and the narrative of his death is long the mention of which the heart cannot endure, "verily we belong to God, and verily unto Him shall we return." There were slain together with him sixteen men of his family. And when al Husayn was murdered, the world stood still for seven days, and the sun upon the walls appeared as saffron-coloured sheets, and the stars struck one upon the other. His murder took place on the 10th of Muharram, and the sun was eclipsed on that day and the horizon of the sky became red for six months after his death. The redness did not cease to be seen after that, but it had never been beheld before.

The translation is from page 211 of History of the Caliphs by H. S. Jarrett from the 1970 (Biblioteca Indica 87) reprint by the Amsterdam Oriental Press of the 1881 Calcutta Edition.

The scientific explanation for this particular event is that a solar eclipse would've occurred such that the moon completely eclipsed the sun (making other stars easily visible and creating a blood-like red taint). In reality, a solar eclipse only occurs for a maximum of a few minutes and as such we have to disregard the part of the narrations which say that such an eclipse was long lasting – a clear exaggeration.

Taking into account that a solar eclipse can only take place during a new moon, let us re-examine the dates. For this purpose, the tool employed will be the lunar phase calculator as coded by

Stephen R. Schmitt who adapted it from “*Astronomical Computing* column of [Sky & Telescope](#), April 1994.” For our two dates we receive the following results:

| | 9 October 680 CE for 10 th of Muharram | 24 November 680 CE for 26 th of Safar, of 61 Hijra | 25 November 680 CE for 27 th of Safar, of 61 Hijra |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| Age | 10.52 days | 26.99 | 27.99 |
| Age (name) | Waxing gibbous | Morning crescent | NEW |
| Distance | 59.7 Earth radii | 63.76 Earth radii | 63.79 Earth radii |
| Ecliptic Latitude | -4.75 degrees | 3.46 degrees | 2.51 degrees |
| Ecliptic Longitude | 321.31 degrees | 216.74 | 228.5 degrees |
| Moon is in... | Aquarius | Virgo | Libra |

Conclusion: Clearly, neither date conforms with the calculations to substantiate a solar eclipse. Taking into account a margin of error though and giving the traditions the benefit of the doubt, we find that the more reliable date is the later one based on what was recorded by Tabari (i.e. in Safar) as the difference in computation is not even a matter of hours and so the full moon actually can occur. Further, since eclipse is said to have occurred after Husayn was killed, this date complies perfectly since the next day (Safar 27th) the moon was most definitely full (see above). Whereas the popular date (in Muharram) is a more significantly erroneous 8 or so days away (considering more than just the birth of the new moon).

Narrative Irregularity

According to several narrations, the date of this terrible avoidable incident was 10th Muharram – but there is another detail that the traditionalists add. They say that it occurred on 10th Muharram, 61 AH on a Friday! The fact is though that 10th Muharram actually occurred on a Tuesday (or Wednesday). The narration concerning this is:

[1] After 'Umar b. Sa'd had performed the morning prayer on Saturday – it is also reported that it was Friday³⁹⁷ – the Day of 'Ashura', he came out with the people who were with him.

[From the endnotes:] 397. Actually a Wednesday.

[From page 82 of The History of al-Tabari, Volume XIX, The Caliphate of Yazid b. Mu'awiyah as translated by I.K.A. Howard (1990, State University of New York Press)]

Another similar case can be observed from a recent scholarly Twelver translation and adaption of certain reports. One of the early political Shi'i historians was Abu Miqnaf, and he was said to have compiled a book on the martyrdom of al Husayn (ra). A new work was compiled, on the basis of reports transmitted from Abu Miqnaf's student since his original is said to be lost by the author of the new one. From *Kitab Maqatal al-Husayn* – Account of the Martyrdom of al-Husayn (A) by Abu Miknaf (A), the version translated and edited by Hamid Mavani (p 103):

[2] Husayn asked for the name of this village and was told that it was 'Aqr⁴⁰. He said, “O God, I seek refuge in You from 'Aqr,” and stopped there. It was on Thursday,⁴¹ 2 Muharram 61 A.H.

...

41 It is in the locality of Kerbala – translator.

42 Actually, this date corresponds to Tuesday, not Thursday – Translator.

A date of Tuesday for Muharram 2nd gives us a date of Wednesday for Muharram 10th.

Conclusion: Professor I.K.A Howard and Hamid Mavani have actually apparently carried out the calculations as well and found that the actual date that 10th of Muharram falls on is Wednesday , not Friday. This correction is something, which like our study, relies on information and ability not within the grasp of previous historians who's societies had not reached the same level in matters of astronomy and calculation of dates. We find that amongst the modern historians, be they Sunni, Shi'i or Western, the traditionalist date of Friday and Saturday is completely dismissed (as are all other days of the week employed by the classical historians). Unfortunately, prior to the present study, the author is unaware of any such attempt at critically analyzing the other tradition (i.e. 10th Muharram) as opposed to this one (i.e. Friday/Saturday) – which actually yields better results in conformity with science and sound mind.

Travel Irregularity

In modern times, a drive from Massachusetts to Oregon will not take over three days if the driver manages to keep himself amused, alive and in good proximity to caffeine. In modern times, a person can even go from one place to another (all over the globe) within a day depending on how much money he has available to him. Such was not the case for Husayn (ra) though. Let us consider the situation. How fast does a person walk on average? In the book *Dynatomy: Dynamic Human Anatomy* by William C. Whiting and Stuart Rugg, that speed is described as follows:

"The average adult walks at a speed of about 3 mph (1.34 [K]m/s), with women self-selecting a slightly slower speed than men (Neumann, 2002)" (page 156 of the 2006 print as published by Human Kinetics)

This is actually surprisingly relevant because we know that the party traveled to Kerbala on foot with a few steeds. It is said that the party included men, women, and children of various builds and abilities - and they marched through considerably arid land. In consideration of the women and children who were traveling as part of the party and also the fact that the party travels at the speed of the slowest member if nobody is abandoned, we will give the party a lenient average speed of 2.5 mph. Accounting for the sleep of the weakest members of the party, the children, as well as other necessities such as the use of toilet, eating and drinking, as well as certain other difficulties that arise from travel - this doesn't give them that much time to travel. In fact, my estimate would be that they would be traveling (at most) an average of eight hours a day and (a lower) average of six hours a day. The lenient time (8 hr/day) is actually not even reflective of the difficulties such a journey would pose to travelers 1300 years ago - nor the several encounters related by the traditionalists that took place along the way and before the actual fighting (such as the discussions with Hurr ibn Yazeed days before the main army of the Kufans arrived).

Now the distance from Mecca (from whence he traveled) to Kerbala is over 1100 miles depending on the route. When we calculate this using the minimum distance, we arrive at the following results:

- Traveling at 2.5 mph, for 8 hours a day, over 1100 miles - they must have taken a total of 55 days.
- Traveling at 2.5 mph, for 6 hours a day, over 1100 miles - they must have taken a total of 73 days.

Both amounts should be given a leniency amount of (extra days) amounting to approximately 4 or so days to account for other problems, such as the path that Husayn's (ra) party actually took (to get to Kufa) which was not the usual one and that 1100 is by no means the exact distance between the two cities. In addition, a person can individually tinker with the values (2.5 mph and

reduce it to something more reasonable and increase the time spent in travel to something which seems more reasonable) – each individual should ultimately arrive at similar numbers.

There are several narrations as to when Husayn (ra) actually left Mecca and began to head towards Kerbala. All of the authorities are agreed that his departure took place sometime in the month of Dhul Hijja. The following material is related from the Twelver text, *Story of the Holy Kaba' and Its People: Life and Times of Fourteen Masoomeen Alaihimussalam* by S.M.R. Shabbar :

It was in the month of Zilhijja 60 Hijri when he noticed that there were Yazid's soldiers in Makka in the garb of Ahram to kill the Imam inside the Masjidul Haram. Imam changed the rituals of Hajj into Umra and decided to leave Makka. The date was 8th of Zilhijja 60 Hijri...The journey which began from Makka on the 8th of Zilhijja 60 Hijri ended in Kerbala on 2nd of Muharram 61 Hijri and took about 22 days in all. Imam stopped at 14 places on his way to Kerbala. He met various people and delivered various sermons. What the Imam talked about to these people he met and said in his sermons at various places reflects the true motives he had in his mind...Imam wrote another letter to his childhood friend Habib Ibn Mazahir al -Asadi in Kufa inviting to join him in his journey of destiny. Habib was an old companion of the Prophet, was much older than the Imam. Some historians mention Habib's age at 82...The 5th stage of Imam's journey was a small town called Zabala...By this 5th stage only about 50 people were left with the Imam and many of them were women and children....

Conclusion: From this we can see some additional features that aren't even necessarily reflected in the average times of which I made mention. Namely, that amongst Husayn's (ra) rag-tag army there would be men as old as eighty-two if not older, and that at times, his army was made up of more women and children than men. And yet the above Twelver Historian still maintains the stance of the majority of the narrations, that this event took place on the 10th of Muharram. According to him, the time spent traveling was a mere twenty-two days. That would mean that either these women and children and old men were marching at a rate of numerous hours a day, or that they were moving at double the average speed (at a continuous rate)! Neither of these are explicable to the rational mind upon consideration. A far more plausible date, and one in accord with our earlier estimations would be one sometime late in the month of Safar.

Considering additional relevant information though, the present section is divided into sub-categories to analyze further evidences.

The difficulty of travel in ancient times

During the caliphate of Abu Bakr (ra), one of the primary concerns had been to stomp out the ridda (Apostasy) of the various 'Arab tribes and their turning themselves to false prophets and other leaders. As such, he (ra) was not able to do everything that he had wished to during his Caliphate. For example, he was not able to deal with the Christians of Najran and this duty was

also passed to his successor, Hazrat 'Umar (ra) who acquired a place for them in his expansions into modern Iraq and Iran. Similarly, Hazrat 'Umar (ra) put much of his energy into expanding the domain of the Muslims. During his reign, the territorial achievements made by the him for the length of his leadership are incomparable to those of later Muslim rulers or even Abu Bakr (ra). He (ra) also placed great stress in reestablishing shariah. For every bit of effort that Abu Bakr (ra) had placed in abolishing the ridda and solidifying the empire, 'Umar (ra) than placed the same into strengthening it's influence through the strong-willed establishment of shariah and expanding it. It wasn't until his reign that nikah al mutah (temporary marriage) was firmly wiped out or that the ban on alcohol was known and recognized everywhere in the Muslim lands. He (ra) also was not able to focus on other such relatively minor concerns as making travel easier. So it was, that the baton was handed to Hazrat Uthman (ra).

During the reign of Hazrat Uthman (ra), a new and bright focus was placed on innovation, and not in the negative shari sense. For one such example, during the Caliphates of the predecessors (ra), there was little emphasis placed on naval warfare or travel by sea in general. But, during the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar (ra), the exemplary governor of Sham, Hazrat Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (ra), conquered various Syrian ports such as 'Akka' and Yafa. The Byzantines than ran (or we should say, navigated) to Cyprus in fear of the gallantry and bravery of Mu'awiyah (ra) and his men (ra-rah). Mu'awiyah (ra) immediately realized the potential of naval warfare and also saw impending danger from vengeful Byzantines. He knew that if they were given the chance, they would attack ash-Sham by sea so Mu'awiyah (ra) petitioned 'Umar Farooq (ra) that he might be allowed to lay seige to the island of Cyprus by sea. Hazrat 'Umar (ra) consulted Hazrat 'Amr ibn Aas (ra) on the matter, who thought (as was rightfully the case during those times) that such an adventure would be extremely dangerous. Hazrat 'Umar (ra) therefore sent the following response to Hazrat Mu'awiyah (ra):

Let it be known to you that Almighty Allah has entrusted me the responsibility to look after the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and so seek his help and guidance to discharge the same. I do not consider feasible in any way to allow them [the Muslims] to undergo the perils of a dangerous voyage and lay seige upon Cyprus by embarking upon seaboats. In spite of it, I considered the matter myself and also consulted those experience in nautical activities who are also of the view that the dangerous expedition should be avoided, so you should leave the idea of this venture and never correspond with me on this topic of undertaking Jihad by sea and Peace be upon you. (no.76 from The Letters of Hadrat Umar Farooq by Dr. M. Adil from Ibn-e-A'sim p.62 and another version of the letter exists albeit with more dubious authenticity)

Hazrat Umar (ra) felt that the prophecy concerning sea-voyage was something more likely to occur well after his (ra) death, just as our predecessors were shocked when the first men traveled by air and than by space travel. When the Caliphate of Hazrat Uthman (ra) began, Mu'awiyah (ra) posed the same question to him (ra) and he (ra) replied that

You know the reply given to you by the Caliph Umar (R.A.A.) when you sought his permission for Naval warfare. (no.7 from The Letters of Hadrat Usman Ghani by Dr. M. Adil).

Mu'awiyah (ra) was not going to drop this issue though, since the potential in such a strike by the Muslims was enormous. Eventually, Caliph Uthman (ra) finally gave in with the following response:

Neither carry out conscription (for the attack of Cyprus) nor apply ballot system for the recruitment of the army, but whoso willingly becomes ready for the jihad, help him in the preparation of the same. (no. 9, ibid)

One can only imagine the joy that must have been on Mu'awiyah's (ra) face. Uthman (ra) was still very concerned that this was a foolhardy and dangerous expedition and so he forbade drafting soldiers. Instead, only those that were willing went on this expedition for the sake of God, knowing that (in their minds as 'Arabs of the time) such a thing was near to suicide. So only the warriors with the strongest resolve and firmest faith went on this mission, and it is therefore no wonder that the Prophet (saw) prophesied them in his (saw) saying:

حدثنا عبد الله بن يوسف قال حدثني الليث حدثنا يحيى عن محمد بن يحيى بن حبان عن أنس بن مالك عن خالته أم حرام بنت ملحان قالت نام النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يوما قريبا مني ثم استيقظ يتبسّم فقلت ما أضحكك قال أناس من أمتي عرضوا علي يركبون هذا البحر الأخضر كالمملوك على الأسيرة قالت فادع الله أن يجعلني منهم فدعا لها ثم نام الثانية ففعل مثلها فقالت مثل قولها فأجابها مثلها فقالت ادع الله أن يجعلني منهم فقال أنت من الأولين فخرجت مع زوجها عبادة بن الصامت غازيا أول ما ركب المسلمون البحر مع معاوية فلما انصرفوا من غزوهم قافلين فنزلوا الشام فقربت إليها دابة لتركبها فصرعتها فماتت

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

[The Prophet (saw) went to visit Um Haram, the aunt of Anas ibn Malik, who used to make food for him sometimes and he would try to help her and take her of her needs as her brothers had been martyred at Bir Maoonah and her first husband and son were martyrs in Uhud. Abu Bakr (ra) is known to have also practiced the sunnah of helping old widows as Umar (ra) once said about him to the effect of "how difficult he will make it for his successors" because of his insistence of even such communal good deeds.] Um Haram said, "Once the Prophet slept in my house near to me and got up smiling. I said, 'What makes you smile?' He replied, 'Some of my followers who (i.e. in a dream) were presented to me sailing on this green sea like kings on thrones.' I said, 'O Allah's Apostle! Invoke Allah to make me one of them.'" So the Prophet invoked Allah for her and went to sleep again. He did the same (i.e. got up and told his dream) and Um Haran repeated her question and he gave the same reply. She said, "Invoke Allah to make me one of them." He said, "You are among the first batch." Later on it happened that she went out in the company of her husband 'Ubada bin As-Samit who went for Jihad and it was the first time the Muslims undertook a naval expedition led by Mu awiya. When the expedition

came to an end and they were returning to Sham, a riding animal was presented to her to ride, but the animal let her fall and thus she died. (4/52/56)

Mu'awiyah (ra) later also received the permission to continue on to siege Rhodes. It is thus known that the nature of the Caliphate of Uthman (ra) was that it was the beginning of not only new forms of war, but for the 'Arabs there, even new forms of travel. Uthman (ra) carried on this sort of innovation into the lives of civilians even, for it was his reign that gave birth to the first guest houses in the Muslim empire. He (ra) sent the following letter to Hazrat 'Abdullah ibn 'Aamir:

Do build a guest house in Basra for the way-farers of Madina and our mawaale (those who travel in connection with commerce) to enable them to stay here. (no. 20, ibid)

Conclusion: This trust of the Muslims played a significant role in bettering the economy and generating ease in the lives of the Muslims and the Dhimmis inhabitants of the Muslim empire. But what is critical here is that it wasn't until the reign of Uthman (ra) that such new systems began to be devised which would benefit travelers. Prior to this, travel even on land was dangerous, not only because of the roaming bandits, but also several other factors such as an inhospitable climate. A sort of climate that getting lost in meant the death for two guides of Muslim ibn Aqeel (see sub-section "Length of travel of Muslim ibn Aqeel"). This simply substantiates beyond a doubt that traveling was lengthy and difficult during those times and is simply incomparable to travel in our own times when I can make it from the state of Washington to Washington D.C. on the other side of the country in a matter of hours by flight, and under two days if I push myself, by car.

That Husayn's (ra) party traveled on foot

Although several members of Husayn's (ra) party were riding horses, and some camels, we also know that many must've been on foot. From the Twelver work, The Tale of Husain's Martyrdom as translated by Najim al-Khafaji, we are told in part 1 that:

Thereupon, he mobilised his band for war. They were, as later related through Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (A), 45 horsemen and 100 foot soldiers.

The vast majority of Husayn's (ra) entourage had been traveling on foot. That's why we find for example, on page 25 of Lamentations (part II), in the story concerning Ubaydallah ibn Hurr, that he even offered his steed (in place of his person) to the army of Husayn (ra) that they might fight with it.

'Ubayd Allah ibn Hurr al-Ju'fi

As the Imam and his followers reached the resting-place of Qasr Banu Muqatil, they found there that a tent had been erected. There was a horse tied outside it and a spear

stuck in the ground. The Imam enquired about the owner of the tent and was informed that it belonged to 'Ubayd Allah ibn Hurr al-Ju'fi.

...

"Until now I have not seen such beauty and radiance as I see in al-Husayn and my heart has not burnt with such sorrow for anyone as it has for al-Husayn, who has embarked on this journey with women and children."

...

After the gathering had settled, the Imam said 'Ubayd Allah, "O 'Ubayd Allah ibn Hurr! The people of your town (i.e. Kufah) have written to me informing me of their unanimous support. They have asked me to lead them. By fleeing you have committed a great sin. Do you wish to repent and relieve yourself of the burden of this sin?" 'Ubayd Allah asked him, "And how is that?" The Imam said, "Your repentance will be brought about by helping the son of the daughter of your Prophet and fighting with him against his enemies." On hearing this 'Ubayd Allah said, "By Allah! I know the one who dies defending you will receive Eternal Bliss in the Hereafter. However, I do not have such resolve and courage. The people of Kufah have abandoned you and have sided with your enemy. I am willing to give you my horse who has never failed in overtaking a fleeing enemy or in escaping from a pursuing enemy."

The Imam expressed his disappointment at 'Ubayd Allah's reply and said, "If you are in fear of sacrificing your life for me, then, I have no need of your horse nor you." And he recited, "I will not take the people who turn away as helpers." Then the Imam said, "I wish to warn you that it is by your choice you do not pay heed to my plea. However, remember that the one who turns away from me after hearing my call for help will be thrown into the pits of Hell face downwards."

Due to weakness of resolve 'Ubayd Allah was unable detach him self from the love of the world at such a crucial moment. He spent the rest of his life regretting his ill fated weakness.

(Maqtal al-Husayn al-Muqarram)

According to the (publ. Chicago, Illinois by WorldBook, inc.) 2001 *WorldBook Encyclopedia*, page 78, camels "travel about 25 miles (40 kilometers) a day, at a speed of 3 miles (5 kilometers) an hour" and since Husayn (ra) had to look after his entire party of women and children, the entire caravan was forced to travel slower than a typical war caravan of mainly fit men and women would've traveled. In fact, the camels that were part of Husayn's (ra) party were actually intended to be used to carry the luggage and provided a great ability for example to carry water and keep Husayn (ra) and his party alive, unlike two guides who accompanied Muslim ibn Aqeel

and died of thirst. We read for example of an early case of Husayn's (ra) recruitment efforts according to the Twelver Sheikh Abbas Qummi in *Nafasul Mahmoom* (translated by Aejaz Ali Bhujwala) – page 165 :

It is written in *Al-Makhzoon fi Tasleeyatil Mahzoon*, that Imam Husain (a.s) gathered his fellow travellers, who had resolved to go with him to Iraq, and gave each of them ten gold Dinars and a Camel for carrying their luggage. Then he left Makkah on Tuesday, the eight of Dhu'l-Hijjah, the day of Tarwiyah, accompanied by eighty-two men among his Shi'ah, friends, retainers and his family.

The obvious implication is that the purpose of their receiving camels was so that they could carry more valuables (and the valuable of a man on his way to meet death through a desert is nothing but water). The purpose here was not so that they might travel more swiftly, and they could just as well have traveled on foot as many of their comrades would be doing.

Lastly, we must keep in mind the sunnah (practice) of Hazrat Husayn (ra). Although people often go out of their norm, it is not an absurdity to assume that if they have a practice that they have stuck with for a long while, than chances are that they will continue to remain on it. We can derive this point from what is said about Hazrat Husayn (ra) in the traditions. We read on page 122, under the section Worship and Piety of Imam Husain ('a) and section C – Hajj of Imam Husain ('a) from the book *The life of Imam Husain* by the Twelver Baqir Sharif al Qarashi as translated by Sayyid Athar Husain S.H. Rizvi:

The Holy Imam ('a) had performed many Hajj pilgrimages. He traveled to Hajj 25 times on the foot⁷ even though his mount was present alongside him.⁸

7 Ibne Asakir, *Biography of Imam Husain (a.s.)*, Pg. 215, *Seer A'laamun Nubla*, 3/287. *Majmauz Zawaid* 9/201. *Tahzibul Asma* 1/163. *Ibne Maghazali, Manaqib*, Tradition no 64. *Mukhtasar Safwatul Safwa* 1/763, *Tibrani, Tarikh* 3/123

8 *Sifwatul Safwa* 1/763. *Sherani, Tabaqat* 1/26. *Ibne Asakir, Biography of Imam Husain (a.s.)*, Pg. 217

Conclusion: Though there were many animals that took part in the travel undertaken by Husayn (ra), from horses and camels to mules, these animals did not play a role in speeding up the army since there would still be individuals who would've been on foot during the process of traveling and even if the lowliest member had a camel, that would not increase the speed of the party. Lastly, we must take the piety of Husayn to account and his practice of traveling the more difficult way (on foot) when there is an objective he views as a great deed for God.

Length of travel of Muslim ibn Aqeel

Concerning the travel undertaken by Muslim ibn Aqeel when the people of Kufah were calling on Husayn to hastily send forth his assistance, it has been recorded in Kitab Maqatal al-Husayn (p 25):

This letter [calling on Husayn's help] was sent with 'Abdallah b. Sabu' Hamdani and 'Abdallah b. Wali Tamimi. They hurried forth till they reached Husayn in Mecca on 10 Ramadan. Two days later Qays b. Mushir Saydawai, 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abdallah b. Kadam Arhabi and 'Umarah b. 'Ubayd Saluli were sent to husayn carrying about 150 letters. Each letter was written by one person or a group of two or four persons. After two more days another letter was dispatched through Hani b. Hani Sabi'i and Sa'id b. 'Abdallah Hanafi with the following contents:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. To Husayn b. 'Ali, from his Shi'ah among the believers and Muslims. Please make haste for the people are waiting for you. They are prepared to accept no one else but you. Come to us with speed. Peace be with you.

Shabath b. Rib'i and others wrote another letter: "The dates have grown green and the fruit has ripened and the waters have overflowed. Thus, come to an army that is ready and well-prepared. Peace be with you."

The messengers met Husayn, who read all the letters and probed them about the situation of the people they had left behind. Thereafter, he replied back through the messengers Hani b. Hani Sabi'i and Sa'id b. 'Abdallah Hanafi, who were the last in the series of messengers:..[narration of the contents of the letter]...Husayn called for Muslim b. 'Aqil and dispatched him with Qays b. Mushir Saydawi, 'Umarah b. 'Ubayd and 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abdallah to the people of Kufah...Muslim went forth until he reached Medina, where he prayed at the mosque of the Prophet and bid farewell to loved ones from his family. Then he hired two guides who belonged to the tribe of Qays. The two guides made an error on the way and went astray. On the verge of dying from thirst, the two guides told Muslim: "Take this path until you reach water." This was at Madiq in the valley of Khubayt.

If this information is accepted for what it mentions, than we would understand that Muslim ibn Aqeel left for Kufah on the 14th of Ramadan. The report indicates that he attempted to travel towards Kufah in a speedy and direct manner but faced one hardship which led him (and his guides) of the correct path. This was the only thing to slow him down, yet we read concerning the date of his arrival at Kufah in Lamentations (Part II) on page 10:

Muslim ibn 'Aqil together with his companions set off for Kufah and arrived there on the 5th Shawwal, 60 A.H.

Conclusion: This shows us that the man, not burdened by any children or women, and not slowing down to give khutbas [sermons] to a vast following every now and then and not encountering new members joining his troupe, reached Kufa in twenty days total. One must ask if it is truly rational to believe that three swift and powerful men who's only hindrance was to get lost once could be outdone by a party of women, children and old men that were regularly making pit stops.

Length of travel by RasulAllah (saw)

Another example we can analyze concerning travel is from the travel of the Prophet (saw). We will look specifically at the travel that the Prophet (saw) embarked on from Medina to Mecca for the purposes of Hajj and Umrah. Unlike much of this paper, where the narrations we've had to deal with come from opposing camps and are otherwise unreliable, these narrations are known and accepted unanimously to be authentic. For this section, we will rely entirely on traditions from Sahiheen.

The distance between Mecca and Medina is about 250 miles and this is approximately one fourth of the value we are using to approximate the distance from Mecca to Kerbala. Now, the Prophet (saw) embarked once on Hajj from Medina with several companions (ra) and we have the following narrations from saheeh Bukhari concerning this matter, amongst many others:

حدثنا محمد بن أبي بكر المقدمي حدثنا فضيل بن سليمان قال حدثني موسى بن عقبة قال أخبرني كريب عن عبد الله بن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال انطلق النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من المدينة بعد ما ترجل وادهن وليس إزاره ورداءه هو وأصحابه فلم يمه عن شيء من الأردية والأزر تلبس إلا المزعفرة التي تردع على الجلد فأصبح بذئ الحليفة ركب راحلته حتى استوى على البيداء أهل هو وأصحابه وقلد بدنته وذلك لخمسة بقين من ذي القعدة فقدم مكة لأربع ليال خلون من ذي الحجة فطاف بالبيت وسعى بين الصفا والمروة ولم يحل من أجل بدنه لأنه قلدها ثم نزل بأعلى مكة عند الحجون وهو مهل بالحج ولم يقرب الكعبة بعد طوافه بها حتى رجع من عرفة وأمر أصحابه أن يطوفوا بالبيت وبين الصفا والمروة ثم يقصروا من رؤوسهم ثم يحلوا وذلك لمن لم يكن معه بدنة قلدها ومن كانت معه امرأته فهي له حلال والطيب والثياب

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Abbas:

The Prophet with his companions started from Medina after combing and oiling his hair and putting on two sheets of Ihram (upper body cover and waist cover). He did not forbid anyone to wear any kind of sheets except the ones colored with saffron because they may leave the scent on the skin. And so in the early morning, the Prophet mounted his Mount while in Dhul-Hulaifa and set out till they reached Baida', where he and his companions recited Talbiya, and then they did the ceremony of Taqlid (which means to put the colored garlands around the necks of the Budn (camels for sacrifice). And all that happened on the 25th of Dhul-Qa'da. And when he reached Mecca on the 4th of Dhul-Hijja he performed the Tawaf round the Ka'ba and performed the Tawaf between Safa and Marwa. And as he had a Badana and had garlanded it, he did not finish his Ihram. He

proceeded towards the highest places of Mecca near Al-Hujun and he was assuming the Ihram for Hajj and did not go near the Ka'ba after he performed Tawaf (round it) till he returned from 'Arafat. Then he ordered his companions to perform the Tawaf round the Ka'ba and then the Tawaf of Safa and Marwa, and to cut short the hair of their heads and to finish their Ihram. And that was only for those people who had not garlanded Budn. Those who had their wives with them were permitted to contact them (have sexual intercourse), and similarly perfume and (ordinary) clothes were permissible for them. (2/26/617) [Bibi 'Aisha (ra) also adds from 'Amra (ra) says “Five days before the end of Dhul-Qa'ada we set out from Medina in the company of Allah's Apostle with the intention of performing Hajj only.” (2/26/767) These dates additionally also come through Ata (ra) from Jabir ibn Abdullah (ra) in (9/92/464). Al Aswad (ra) also adds from Abdullah (ra), slave of 'Asma bint Abi Bakr (ra), that they “traveling with light luggage” (3/27/22)]

Conclusion: Essentially, they were an extremely small party of people, traveling a very short distance with very little luggage and only one intention: perform Hajj. Yet they covered this journey in a matter of nine days. This means that it took them approximately nine days to cover 250 miles while traveling with light luggage and a far better equipped party traveling on comparatively high morale. On the other hand, we have an army moving slowly that is being joined by others now and then, which is constantly stopping and traveling irregularly. When the normal calculated rate of travel (which doesn't account for the actual travel route) from Mecca to Kerbala is thus thirty six days, how much more days should be added for a party that we know to be traveling slowly for a number of reasons? This minimal time itself would rule out an arrival date of Muharram 2nd by several days. And really, Husayn (ra) was moving his household - no - his house!

That Husayn's party traveled slowly as explicitly found in the narratives

Though Mr. Shabbar, a Twelver author of a book about the Kaaba and its people who was cited earlier, has estimated that the number of places Husayn (ra) stopped at to be fourteen, different sources attribute a greater number. One such source is the book *Karbala & Ashura*, by the Twelver author Ali Hussain Jalali who actually notes two additional stops made by Husayn (ra) before reaching his final destination in Kerbala. The following list is reformed from the index under the section Before Kerbala:

Tan'im, Safah, Dhat al-'Irrq, Hajir, Khuzaymiyyah, Zarud, Tha'labiyyah, Shuqq, Zubalah, Batn al-Aqabah, Shiraf, Baydhah, Rhuaymah, Adhib al-Hajanat, Qasr Bani MaqatilNaynawa.

What is to be ultimately gained from these various sources is that the journey of Husayn (ra) was long and arduous; that he made as many as sixteen stops. At present, we can observe that the slow pace of Husayn's party is attested to in the historical reports as well. One such incident that

demonstrates this fact has to do with a man by the name of Zuhayr ibn Qayn al-Bajali and his story was taken from the Twelver work Lamentations (Part II):

2- Zuhayr ibn Qayn al-Bajali

Zuhayr ibn Qayn with his companions was returning to Kufah from Mecca after performing the pilgrimage. Zuhayr and his companions had learned of the Imam's purpose and his movement towards Iraq. However, they were not prepared to join the Imam and endeavoured to avoid meeting the caravan of the Imam on their journey. However, it was the decree of Allah that Zuhayr had to stop in the place where the Imam already was.

(Kitab al-Irshad) [page 27]

'Abd Allah ibn Sulaym and Madhri ibn Musha'il, who both belonged to the tribe of Asad, had joined Imam al-Husayn after they had finished the pilgrimage narrate the following account: 'As we arrived the resting place of Zarud with the Imam, we saw travellers approaching from Kufah. No sooner had these people seen the Imam than they changed to avoid the Imam. We rode after the men and asked whom they were. They replied that they were from the tribe of Asad. We said that we belonged to the same tribe and asked of the situation in Kufah. They replied, "We only left Kufah because we saw the bodies of Muslim ibn 'Aqil and Hani' ibn 'Urwah tied and dragged through the streets of Kufah."
[page 28]

Conclusion: The two men, Abdullah ibn Sulaym and Madhri ibn Musha'il had completed the Hajj which Husayn (ra) left in preference of leaving Mecca early and yet Husayn's caravan was so painfully slow that even they caught up! Another notable fact is that this occurs right as the caravan of Husayn is purportedly reaching Zarud which is one of the first few places at which Hazrat Husayn (ra) stopped.

A Motivation for Fabrication

The question now arises: Why? Why would anybody create a narration so greatly in disagreement with the actuality of the matter? Why would anybody even want to change the actual date of this occurrence – what purpose would that serve? And why would subsequent authors cling to this opinion, to our present time where this clinging and condemnation of research has reached dogmatic and unprecedented heights. Although finding a motivation for fabrication doesn't require one to look very far, the issue can be understood with brief analysis of the nature of the two months, and the specific date of the 10th Muharram, better known as Ashura.

Muharram, for the Muslims, is the first month of our calendar. In fact, the very name of Muharram is derived from the word “haraam” which means prohibited in ‘Arabic. It is the month about which we find numerous mythological and absurd narrations, as well as numerous other narrations marking its fadail (virtues) and the virtues of those who make good use of the rewards possible in this month.

It is also one of the four months in which fighting has been prohibited in Islaam. Concerning this, Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur’aan:

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ...

In 5/97, the translation is from Pickthall, "Allah made the Ka'ba, the Sacred House, an asylum of security for men, as also the Sacred Months..."

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصِرُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

In 9/5, the translation of the words of Allah (swt) are "Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor due, then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ * إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ يُضَلُّ بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُحْلُونَهُ عَامًا وَيُحَرِّمُونَهُ عَامًا لِيُؤْاطُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَيَحْلُوا مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ زَيْنَ لَهُمْ سُوءَ أَعْمَالِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

In 9/36-37, Allah (swt) means " Lo! the number of the months with Allah is twelve months by Allah's ordinance in the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred: that is the right religion. So wrong not yourselves in them. And wage war on all the idolaters as they are waging war on all of you. And know that Allah is with those who keep their duty (unto Him). Postponement (of a sacred month) is only an excess of disbelief whereby those who disbelieve are misled, they allow it one year and forbid it (another) year, that they may make up

the number of the months which Allah hath hallowed, so that they allow that which Allah hath forbidden. The evil of their deeds is made fair-seeming unto them. Allah guideth not the disbelieving folk.”

As to which of the months are the four sacred months in which fighting is forbidden, than we refer to the ahadith and Imaam Bukhari reports concerning this (4/54/419 or 2958):

حدثنا محمد بن المثنى حدثنا عبد الوهاب حدثنا أيوب عن محمد بن سيرين عن ابن أبي بكرة عن أبي بكرة رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال الزمان قد استدار كهيئته يوم خلق الله السموات والأرض السنة اثنا عشر شهرا منها أربعة حرم ثلاثة متواليات ذو القعدة وذو الحجة والمحرم ورجب مضر الذي بين جمادى وشعبان

Narrated Abu Bakra: The Prophet said, "(The division of time has turned to its original form which was current when Allah created the Heavens and the Earths. The year is of twelve months, out of which four months are sacred: Three are in succession Dhul-Qa' da, Dhul-Hijja and Muharram, and (the fourth is) Rajab of (the tribe of) Mudar which comes between Jumadi-ath-Thaniyah and Sha ban."

One day of Muharram is particularly significant, namely, the day of Ashura (10th Muharram). This day, even before the martyrdom of Husayn (ra) was considered as a special day. This day was a day of celebration or of fasting for various peoples. The Prophet (saw) used to practice it early on and even when he went to Medina, he (saw) encouraged others to partake of this fast. Under the book of fasting, Imaam Bukhari narrates:

حدثنا عبد الله بن مسلمة عن مالك عن هشام بن عروة عن أبيه أن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت كان يوم عاشوراء تصومه قريش في الجاهلية وكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يصومه فلما قدم المدينة صامه وأمر بصيامه فلما فرض رمضان ترك يوم عاشوراء فمن شاء صامه ومن شاء تركه

Narrated Aisha: Quraish used to fast on the day of 'Ashura' in the Pre-Islamic period, and Allah's Apostle too, used to fast on that day. When he came to Medina, he fasted on that day and ordered others to fast, too. Later when the fasting of the month of Ramadan was prescribed, he gave up fasting on the day of 'Ashura' and it became optional for one to fast on it or not. 3/31/220 or 1863

حدثنا أبو معمر حدثنا عبد الوارث حدثنا أيوب حدثنا عبد الله بن سعيد بن جبير عن أبيه عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال قدم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم المدينة فرأى اليهود تصوم يوم عاشوراء فقال ما هذا قالوا هذا يوم صالح هذا يوم نجى الله بني إسرائيل من عدوهم فصامه موسى قال فأنا أحق بموسى منكم فصامه وأمر بصيامه

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: The Prophet came to Medina and saw the Jews fasting on the day of Ashura. He asked them about that. They replied, "This is a good day, the day on which Allah rescued Bani Israel from their enemy. So, Moses fasted this day." The Prophet said, "We have more claim over Moses than you." So, the Prophet fasted on that day and ordered (the Muslims) to fast (on that day). 3/31/222 or 1865

Mu'awiyah (ra) in fact once found the people stubbornly sticking to the fast and so he clarified for them that they can eat if they wish (as recorded by Imaam Muslim):

حدثني حرملة بن يحيى أخبرنا ابن وهب أخبرني يونس عن ابن شهاب أخبرني حميد بن عبد الرحمن أنه سمع معاوية بن أبي سفيان خطيباً بالمدينة يعني في قدمة قدمها خطبهم يوم عاشوراء فقال أين علماءكم يا أهل المدينة سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول لهذا اليوم هذا يوم عاشوراء ولم يكتب الله عليكم صيامه وأنا صائم فمن أحب منكم أن يصوم فليصم ومن أحب أن يفطر فليفطر
حدثني أبو الطاهر حدثنا عبد الله بن وهب أخبرني مالك بن أنس عن ابن شهاب في هذا الإسناد بمثله وحدثنا ابن أبي عمير حدثنا سفيان بن عيينة عن الزهري بهذا الإسناد سمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول في مثل هذا اليوم إني صائم فمن شاء أن يصوم فليصم ولم يذكر باقي حديث مالك ويونس

Abd al-Rahman reported that he heard Mu'awiya b. Abu Sufyan delivering a sermon in Medina. i. e. when he came there (for Hajj). He delivered a sermon on the day of 'Ashura and said: People of Medina, where are your scholars? I heard the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) say on this very day: It is the day of 'Ashura. Allah has not made fasting on This day obligatory for you but I am fasting. He who likes to observe fast among you should do so, and he who likes not to observe it may not observe it.
6/2515 or 1909

These are the numerous things related to the month of Muharram, and in particular, the day of Ashura. Than what about the month of Safar? Or any particular day in the month of Safar?

The month of Safar is actually unimportant in and of itself, with no authentic reports about any extreme travesties or virtues therein although it is sometimes considered the month of trials and tribulations. This belief though can actually be traced to pre-Islaamic ideas of tribulations during this month. The superstitions of the 'Arabs were that during this month, diseases were spread, amongst their camels in particular, and that the cause of this was the month. Rasulallah (saw) strongly rebuked these assertions, and as with eclipses, he clarified that diseases are not caused by the changes in the phases of the moon. Concerning this matter, a question was raised and answered by a doctor Abdullah al-Faqeeh:

We supplicate Allah to bless us to follow the right Sunnah. Know that a Muslim must safeguard his faith and keep it away from myths and superstitions. Allah says (interpretation of meaning):

{Say: "Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allâh has ordained for us. He is our Maulâ (Lord, Helper and Protector)." And in Allâh let the believers put their trust.}[9: 51]

He also says (interpretation of meaning):

{... And whosoever puts his trust in Allâh, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allâh will accomplish his purpose. ...}[65: 3]

The month of Safar is like all other months. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam) condemned what is said about this month. Abu Hurairah (Radiya Allahu Anhu) reported from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam) that he said:

"No 'Adwa (i.e. no contagious disease is conveyed to others without Allah's permission); nor (any evil omen in the month of) Safar; nor Hama." A bedouin said, "O Allah's Apostle! What about the camels which, when on the sand (desert) look like deers, but when a mangy camel mixes with them they all get infected with mange?" On that Allah's Apostle said, "Then who conveyed the (mange) disease to the first (mangy) camel?"

It is narrated from Ibn Masoud that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam) said:

"No 'Adwa nor Safar, Allah created every soul and wrote its life, livelihood and trials." [At-Tirmithi]

The above Ahadith clearly prove that the month of Safar does not have any special characteristics. Know that performing special prayers in this month to safeguard oneself from evil or abstaining from marrying or from any other happy occasion is nothing but myths. A Muslim should give up such fairy tales and should follow the Qur'an, sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam) and the way of the Sahabah (Prophet's companions) and their followers. Allah knows best. [September 4, 2007 at <http://www.islamhouse.com/p/52995>]

Now that we have a background as to the months during which this incident is said to have occurred, we must also examine the parties involved and the parties which subsequently adopted and narrated the traditions we've mentioned above. This will give a better understanding as to the prevailing motives behind the spread of these narrations.

During the time of Husayn (ra), there were no Shi'a as we know them today – with the particular doctrines that Twelvers take as a part of their faith today. During his (ra) time, the Shi'a movement was a political one. One which included in its ranks, various heresies and orthodoxies. Various delinquent blasphemers and various people of considerable knowledge as well. When Husayn (ra) traveled to Kufa, the world was divided into four groups concerning the matter. There was the mass of people around the world, who were completely ignorant as to his (ra) very name, from the Americas, to Europe and even amongst the 'Arabs. Then there were the people who loved him (ra) for whom he was the dearest living creation, but who held no obsession to his purported right of leadership on account of his lineage. And these warned him against his misadventure and trusting the Shi'a who betrayed his father and brother (ra). Additionally, there was the Shi'a themselves – namely, those who claimed to be allied with Husayn (ra) and 'Ali (ra) before him and wished to see them in power. Finally, there was the people, who for one reason or another, came to oppose the potential reign of Husayn (ra) and the actual reign of 'Ali (ra).

These Shi'as of past decades though did not hold the later doctrines that were developed. Concepts such as 'isma, or saying that eleven (or any specific number) of 'Ali's descendants would be Imaam, were not present at this time. It is attributed to Hazrat Husayn (ra) by the Twelver scholar, Sheykh al Mufeed, in his book *al-Amali* (the eighth narration under the sixth assembly) that he (ra) said:

I heard al-Husain b. Ali (AS) say: "Surely, Abu Bakr and Umar grabbed away this affair (Caliphate), while the whole of it belonged to us. So they took it away inspite of us, and apportioned to us the share of a grandmother (from an estate). [A grandmother's share is 1/6th of the whole that is left behind after somebody is deceased (i.e. 2/12th). This narration is a clear reference to the fact that 'Ali and Hassan (ra) only constituted 2 of the 12 actual rulers for whom the narration of "Twelve Caliphs from Quraysh" was meant – and that Abu Bakr and Umar also fall under this prophecy of 12 rulers although illegitimately. This narration, if it is accepted as an early Imami narration, shows the undeveloped state of the idea of Twelve Imaams which would later become established doctrine amongst one of the sole surviving Imami sects who would than be forced to reinterpret the usage of terms like "Calipha" and "Amr" in the traditions about 12 Calipha.]

So this, and several other doctrines such as ghayba, tahreef al Qur'aan, etc. were not the hallmark of being Shi'i. Rather, Shi'i was simply a linguistic term that was even applied to those who followed Uthman (ra) and others and it was said of them "Shi'an Uthmaan". As such, we have to distinguish between the original Shi'as being mentioned in history and their modern spiritual claimants. We will therefore refer to these older Shi'a (of Kufa and elsewhere) as proto-Shi'a. Those who opposed Husayn (ra) by physically opposing him, we will refer to them as proto-Nawasib for the same reason. The early opponents to 'Ali (ra) and than Husayn (ra) were people who opposed them out of purely political interest - or in some cases, jealousy. But they hadn't yet established a reactionary doctrine (to the Imamis) which mandated the hate of this noble family (ra) as a part of religion. This bid'a (innovation) was forth-coming and would see it's rise in the next several hundred years in direct response to the various strains of Shi'ism in different areas. The other parties involved in narrating this incident would have a bias in favor of the proto-Shi'a, and these would be the very people who were insisting on Husayn (ra) to preserve his (ra) life and that of his (ra) family. Unfortunately though, this Ummah suffered a tragedy, not by some miscalculation on the part of Husayn (ra), but his sense of justice and persona that demanded from him to go to Kufa to the people who were calling him even though they were known to be wretched traitors in how they dealt with 'Ali and Hassan (ra). The People of Kufa were abandoning salaah at the Masajid on account of their takfiri attitude towards the administration, so Husayn (ra) was forced on account of his conviction, his desire to save even the most wretched people from Hellfire, to make this journey. And besides that, who else would avenge Muslim b. Aqeel (ra)? What kind of man would sit idly by at the death of his cousin, whom he himself sent for his purposes? With these justifications, our hero (ra) and our martyr (ra) would

march on right into the trap that historians now narrate soberly and on account of which, certain people mutilate themselves and their children.

From this, we can easily distinguish where the Muharram dating of the event originated. The proto-Nawasib would have a motive to invent such a narration as the very same would disparage the martyrdom of Husayn (ra), and at least for his contemporaries, it would dismiss the several occurrences that took place around the time of his death since all those present would've known that these events (eclipses, rain) were not taking place (as we've shown) and would not be moved by them in later generations. It would undermine his (ra) status also in that he (ra) caused bloodshed, of Muslims, in the forbidden month when even fighting Pagans is discouraged. Of course, later books of tradition state that Yazeed sent soldiers to Mecca to assassinate Husayn (ra) and that's why he (ra) overlooked the matter of Hajj. Though this could and should very well be understood as a reactionary tradition built on the acceptance of the Muharram date which had gained currency amongst the Shi'a by that time, in order to justify an early departure.

Alternatively, the tradition could also have come from the proto-Shi'a ranks. The fact that he (ra) left Hajj for this matter would help to vilify his enemies as easily as it could be used against him (as we've seen from the concoction of later traditions about assassins in Mecca). The proto-Shi'a, and the various later Shi'a sects and even Orthodox (Islaamic-Sunni) scholars, would stand to benefit by comparing him (ra) to Musa (as) and his leading of the Jews to what was better. It would show the other-worldly nature of the mission and his (ra) Islaamic goals and great principles. Additionally, the month of Muharram being the first month, has led later Twelvers to philosophize on it's importance and as some of the poets said "Islaam was born after Badr", they say "Islaam was born after Kerbala" in spite of the fact that the sacrifices at Kerbala brought no positive changes. Instead, they stripped the Muslims of a righteous man (ra) who could very well have graced the populace with his knowledge and time.

Finally, the month of Safar should not be spared scrutiny simply because it is found to be more reliable by science. It also has underlying implications - being the month of trials and tribulations amongst the pre-Islaamic 'Arabs, this symbolism may have had an effect on Shi'as narrating this tradition. On the other hand though, the proto-Nawasib and the actual Nawasib of later times would have no reason to narrate this particular narration as they would not consider the martyrdom of our beloved (ra) as a trial or a tribulation. That being the case, even if Safar was the actual month of this unfortunate and avoidable occurrence, it never stood a chance to the dual benefit to both proto-Nawasib and proto-Shi'a that the Ashura narration had.

Besides the proto-Shi'a and the proto-Nawasib, we must also consider the tendencies of the later historians and later narrators, be they Sunnis, Shi'as (of any of the numerous sects) or Nawasib. We find that the Sunni scholars gave the date of Ashura credence in light of it's multiplicity of sources, and their research was not as plagued with bias, even with their immense love for Husayn (ra), because they would shed tears for him regardless of which month he (ra) was martyred in. In fact, it was against their bias that they selected Ashura because the date of Ashura

actually portrays Husayn (ra) in an a more negative light than a positive one, one which they (ra) were forced to find their way around by means of limiting the responsibility of Husayn (ra) in the incident and studiously narrating traditions which actually placed blame on Yazeed. They were in essence forced, in need of finding someone to blame other than Husayn (ra) and with several narrations against Yazeed handily concocted by local proto-Shi'a, to blame Yazeed by picking yawm al Ashura and giving prominence to it. Interestingly enough though, the narrations that strip Yazeed of guilt come through Husayn's (ra) own descendants like the Imaam Baqir (rah).

The Shi'i scholarship was affected by it's biases in the benefits of employing the Ashura narration, as has been mentioned above. In fact, the majority of Twelver narrators (to whom a place of origin and locality is ascribed in the Twelver books of rijaal) are Kufan and so they were not even aware of the pre-Islaamic Arabian legends concerning Safar. This meant that they had no bias towards the narration of Safar, and as pious claimants to Husayn (ra), they had to find some sort of relevance in the day of his (ra) death. With this relevance more forth-coming from the date of Ashura than a date of Safar to which they could not relate, that was the date which was chosen. And subsequently, on the date till this day, innovated acts displaying loyalty to Husayn (ra) – as adopted from the Jews – are practiced:

Question:

Could you please tell me if this is a true and accurate hadith, and if so, how should it be interpreted?

"Umar, let them weep. What comes from the heart and from the eye, that is from God and His mercy, but what comes from the hand and from the tongue, that is from Satan."

Answer:

The hadith has been recorded and when Umar reported this hadith, Aisha, the daughter of Abu Bakr and wife of the Holy Prophet (SAW) said, 'The Prophet (SAW) was referring to Jews grieving their dead'

Mourning for dead friends and relatives is allowed, but expression of grief cannot include : hitting oneself to extent of harm, pulling one's hairs in expression of deep grief, and tearing one's clothes. These are acts that go beyond the limits of expressing grief permitted in Islam.

[Mustafa Jaffer of 'aalim Network (a Twelver resource for question and answers on scholarly topics, <http://www.al-islam.org/organizations/aalimnetwork/msg00712.html>)]

The Nawasib were therefore no better than the Shi'as in respect to the origin of their bid'a. It was narrated by Imaam Bukhari (rah) (3/31/223 or 1866) through Abu Musa (ra), "The day of 'Ashura' was considered as 'Id day by the Jews. So the Prophet ordered, "I recommend you

[كان يوم عاشوراء تعده اليهود عيداً قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فصوموه أنتم] (Muslims) to fast on this day." In their immense hatred for 'Ali (ra) and his family (ra), and as reactionaries to the appearance of several new Shi'i cults (which popped up at the occasion of death of each imaam), the Nawasib (i.e. not the proto-Nawasib who are not actually Nawasib per say) also adopted innovations from the Jews whole-heartedly such as this 'Eid. They selected the date of Ashura, not merely because of symbolic benefits derived from the date in favor of their argument – but more so because the Shi'as had selected this date. And since it was the Shi'as, in reaction to whom their sect popped up, it is not a surprising selection at all. Concerning their bid'a, Sheikh ul Islaam Ibn Taymiyah (rah) says on pages 52-53 of *The Right Way: A Summarized Translation (of Mukhtasar Iqtidaa' al-Siraat al-Mustaqeem)*:

On the one hand, the above practices have been invented by some [i.e. the Twelvers] and on the other, their opponents [the Nawasib] have introduced some further new practices. For example, they [the Nawasib] take bath, shake hands and spend more money on their household on this particular day. And they cite certain Ahadith in order to indicate their stance. However, such Ahadith are false and fabricated ones.

The differences among Nawasib and Rawafid [Twelvers] are well-known. When Nawasib observed that the Rawafid mourn on tenth Muharram, they declared it as a day of celebration out of their spite for Rawafid. Both the groups are equally misguided and false in the innovations. Both of them are in error. Relatively speaking, Shi'ites are more guilty of [fabricating the actual] lies. It does not, however, allow anyone to change Shariah out of one's enmity against evil. The practices of both Nawasib and Rawafid are equally undesirable. Satan intends that we be distracted from the right way. Once he succeeds in his plan, it is immaterial for him which group is joined by the people as both ones are misguided.

Conclusion: Any date given suffers from biases, even an authentic date in that it can gain prominence or be discarded altogether depending on the social factors of the societies narrating the particular traditions. A date is also more than just a number, it has value in its symbolism, and this is why today we don't even know the actual dates on which prophets like Muhammad (saw) and 'Isa (as) were born. People with certain objectives would narrate traditions concerning such dates, often influenced by a specific political agenda. A problem of similar nature makes it hard to distinguish the correct date from the false one on account of analyzing biases alone. Even so, an analysis of the biases would show a greater likelihood of fabricators coming from the camp that originated the narration attributing the event to Ashura and the more correct date must be the one placing the event in Safar 61.

A Motivation for Fabrication II – The Shi'ite Factor

The previous section covers the proto-Shi'a, the proto-Nawasib and also the actual Nawasib far more extensively than the later Shi'ites (from one or two centuries after the death of Husayn (ra) or so onwards). What about these actual Shi'ite sects that came into existence? Not all Shi'ite sects reacted to this matter in the same manner, one can find sub-sects which fast on Ashurah and those which forbid fasting on Ashura for example. The range of different sects and sub-sects that arose from the original proto-Shi'a are too numerous to be explained in detail here, but sufficient to say, there was a tendency towards dishonesty.

Dishonesty, but not on the part of the average layman of course, rather, on the part of those who stood to reap financial benefits from this event, may God deal with those who exploit tragedies. It would be a dishonesty on our part to say that Sunnis and non-Shi'ite sects are alone in finding such opportunism as repulsive and for that reason, we will examine the later motives for lying from a scholar within the very ranks of the modern Twelver Shi'ites themselves, a scholar who says in the very first sermon of the work that will be examined: "It is an event that prompts our people, without anyone compelling them, to devote millions of man-hours to listening to the related episodes and to spend millions of tumans for this purpose. [Because so much money is spent on it] this event must be retold exactly as it occurred and without the least amount of interpolation." It is best if this touchy subject is dealt with by the scholar of that respective sect as he has gone out of his way to detail the matter better than even a devout researcher so detached from the centers of Shi'ism could. The following is therefore excerpted from various sections of the phenomenal work *'Ashura - Misrepresentations and Distortions* by the Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari as translated from the Farsi by 'Ali Quli Qara'i:

Now my point is that we have introduced thousands of distortions in retelling the narrative of Ashura, both in its outward form, that is, in respect of the very episodes and issues relating to the major events and the minor details, as well as in respect of their interpretation and meaning.

...

there are times when distortion is so thorough that the corrupted version has not the least resemblance to the original: the matter is not only distorted, but it is inverted and turned into its antithesis.

...

In this regard both the orators and scholars of the ummah as well as the people have been guilty, and, God willing, we will elucidate all these matters. The topic is so vast as to be beyond expression. It is so vast that should we attempt to collect all the unfounded narratives it will perhaps take several volumes of 500 pages each.

...

[The following passage is from later in the text:] Marhum Hajji Mirza Husayn Nuri, may God elevate his station, was the teacher of such figures as marhum Hajj Shaykh 'Abbas Qummi, marhum Haji Shaykh 'Ali Akbar Nehawandi and marhum Hajj Shaykh Muhammad Baqir Birjandi. He was a very extraordinary man and a muhaddith (scholar of hadith) with an unparalleled command of his field and a prodigious memory. He was a man of fine spirituality with a highly fervent and passionate faith.

...

An eminent scholar from India had written him [i.e. The Twelver scholar Haji Nouri] a letter complaining about the false narratives that are recited in India, and asking him to do something or to write a book to stop the fictitious narratives that were current there. Then he remarks: "This Indian scholar has imagined that the rawdakhwans [professional storyteller/orator about the Kerbala event popular in Shi'i areas] tell false stories when they go to India. He does not know that the stream is polluted from its very source. The centre of false rawdahs are Karbala', Najaf and Iran, that is, the very centres of Shi'ism."

...

They say that in one of the towns there was an eminent scholar [he is not named perhaps so as not to dishonor him] who had some concern for the faith and who protested against these falsehoods which are uttered from the minbar. He would say, "What are these abominable things that they say on the minbar?" One wa'iz said to him, "If we don't say these things we will have to shut down our shops right away!" That gentleman replied, "These are mendacities and one must not utter them." By chance, some days later this gentleman himself happened to host a majlis in his mosque and he invited the same waiz; to make the rawdah. But before his taking his seat on the minbar the host said to the wa'iz, "I want to hold a model majlis in which nothing is said except the true narrative. Make it a point not to recount any episode except out of the reliable books. You shouldn't touch any of that abominable stuff!" The wa'iz replied, "The majlis is hosted by you. Your will, will be done." On the first night, the gentleman himself sat there facing the qiblah in the prayer niche, close to the minbar. The wa'iz; began his sermon, and when the time came to recite the tragic narrative, as he had committed himself to recite nothing but the true accounts, the majlis remained unmoved and frozen as he spoke on. The gentleman was now upset. He was the host of the majlis and he thought about what the people would say behind his back. The women would certainly say, "To be sure, the Aqa's intent was not sincere, and so the majlis was a fiasco. Had his intentions been good and were his motives sincere the majlis would have been rocked with the howls and-groans of mourners crying their eyes out. He saw that it would all end up in a loss of face. What should he do? Quietly, he signaled to the wa'iz, "Get a bit of that abominable stuff!"

...

Another case relating to the same story, which is also very amazing, is the one that I heard in Tehran. It was in the house of one of the eminent scholars of this city where one of the speakers narrated the story of Layla. It was something which I had never heard in my life. According to his narrative, after Layla went into the tent, she opened the locks of her hair and vowed that if God were to bring 'Ali Akbar back safely to her and should he not be killed in Karbala' she would sow basil (rayhan) all along the way from Karbala' to Madinah, a distance of 300 parasangs. Having said this, he began to sing out this couplet:

I have made a vow, were they to return
I will sow basil all the way to Taft!

This Arabic couplet caused me greater surprise as to where it came from. On investigating I found that the Taft mentioned in it is not Karbala' but a place related to the famous love legend of Layla and Majnun. Taft was the place where the legendary Layla live. This couplet was composed by Majnun al-'Amiri and sung for the love of Layla, and here this man was reciting it while attributing it to Layla, the mother of 'Ali Akbar, conjuring a fictitious connection with Karbala'. Just imagine, were a Christian or a Jew, or for that matter some person with no religious affiliation, were to be there and hear these things, will he not say what a nonsensical hagiography these people have? He would not know that this tale has been fabricated by that man, but he would say, na'udubillah, how senseless were the women saints of this people to vow sowing basil from Karbala' to Madinah!

...

Were the Sayyid al-Shuhada' to come and observe these things (and, of course, he does from the world of the spirit, but were he come into the world of appearance) he will find that we have carved out for him companions that he never had. For instance, in the book Muhriq al-qulub - whose author was, incidentally, an eminent scholar and jurist, but who had no knowledge of these matters - that one of the companions to appear out of nowhere on the day of 'Ashura' was Hashim Mirqal, who came bearing an eighteen cubits long spear in his hand. (After all someone had claimed that Sinan ibn Anas - who according to some reports severed the head of Imam Husayn - had a spear sixty cubits long. He was told that a spear could not be sixty cubits. He replied that God had sent it for him from the heaven!) Muhriq al-qulub writes that Hashim ibn 'Utbah Mirqal appeared with a spear sixteen cubits long, whereas this Hashim ibn 'Utbah was a companion of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali and had been killed twenty years earlier. We have attributed several companions to Husayn ibn 'Ali that he did not have, such as the Za'far the Jinn. Similarly, there are some names among the enemies that did not exist.

...

It is mentioned in the book *Asrar al-shahadah* that 'Umar ibn Sa'd's army in Karbala' consisted of one million and sixty thousand men. One may ask, where did they come from? Were they all Kufans? Is such a thing possible?

It is also written in that book that Imam Husayn himself personally killed three hundred thousand men in combat. The bomb that destroyed Hiroshima killed sixty thousand people. I calculated that if we assume that a swordsman kills one man every second, it would take eighty-three hours and twenty minutes to massacre a force of three hundred thousand. Later, when they saw that this number of those felled by the Imam did not fit with a day's duration, they said that the day of 'Ashura was also seventy-two hours long!

Conclusion: Today, the vast majority of works covering this matter suffer from fabrications concocted in order to put a bit more money in somebody else's pocket, a bit more love and admiration for a speaker in the populace's heart, and a bit more political leverage in the hands of leaders. Sadly enough, the damage done by this one sect's fabrications was not limited to its own material on the subject – but rather, it has tarnished the history books of everyone who has ever written on the subject. No book on this topic is free from the faults of the exploitative men (and women) responsible for these fabrications, not the history books of Sunnis, not the history books of Zaydi Shi'as, not the history books of Ibadis, and not even the history books of the Western academics. In any case, what can be established from the above with a certainty is that we are working with extremely dubious material. So asking questions than about even the foundations of the event, such as the date of its occurrence as we've asked, is not the least bit ridiculous. Rather, it ought to be expected, and if it isn't expected, it ought to be called for.

Final Conclusion

One of the Twelvers, Haji Nouri, said, as cited by Murtada Mutahiri in a previously discussed work: “There are tragedies which have befallen Husayn in our era which did not occur in the past, and they are all these falsehoods that are said regarding the event of Karbala' and which no one opposes! One must shed tears for the sufferings of Husayn ibn 'Ali, not for the sake of the swords and spears that struck his noble body on that day, but on account of these falsehoods.” We seek only to oppose these new killers of Husayn (ra), who want to take the corpse of our beloved and ravage it with arrows once again. These Shimr's who come in Muslim garb with Muslim tears.

So we must ask than if Christ Jesus (as) raised the dead without a corpse? Did Moses (as) part a sea without a sea? Did Muhammad (saw) split the moon without a moon? I don't deny miracles, but even miracles don't pop out of nowhere. Instead, I believe firmly that all “miracles” occur by the will of God and that in order to bring them about, God ensures that the environment of such a “miracle” meets the necessary conditions – has the necessary ingredients – for such a miracle to take place. That alone is within reason. So, with that in mind, we observed the apparent miracles of God during this event and necessitated for them a proper time. **And that proper time, that accurate narration, is the one which places his (ra) martyrdom in the month of Safar. And the actual date of his (ra) martyrdom should be 26th of Safar, 61 AH.**

If there are critics of that which has been established by this research, that Husayn (ra) was martyred in Safar, than let them bring their proofs and refute ours by their reason and not by their emotions – and they will find that our ears are the most acute to reason. But it is a sad truth that people will deny us simply on account of their pre-established notions which they inherit from their parents and the narrations that have remained unquestioned because nobody saw in them a gem to be researched: that Husayn (ra) had to have died on Muharram 10th - and that's an injustice, not to me nor to them – but to Hazrat Husayn (ra) who's memory is being abused for political purposes, for the right to dogmatically stick to a point of view on a historical event because it's been regurgitated more times than any real critical analysis has.

As for those who follow months and days,

Pay no heed to what they say.

For our beloved is Husayn (ra)

Muharram or Safar – we feel Your pain.