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ALBERT DE JONG (2005)

ZĀWIYAH SEE KHĀNAGĀH

ZAYNAB BINT ʿALĪ (c. AH 5–62; 626/7–682 CE), daughter of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Fāṭimah al-Zahrāʾ, was the first granddaughter of the prophet Muḥammad. She is best known for her courageous and eloquent role supporting her brother, the second Shīʿah Imām Ḥusayn, at the time of his martyrdom in the Battle of Karbala, and for protecting his family in the following months of Umayyad imprisonment.

LIFE. Zaynab was born in Medina a few years after Muḥammad's immigration thereto in the early days of Shaʿbān of the year AH 5 (626 or 627 CE). She was the third child born to ʿAlī and Fāṭimah—after Ḥasan (the first Shīʿah *imām*) and Ḥusayn—with about a year's interval between each child. Her birth was followed by that of a sister, Umm Kulthūm. Tradition states that Zaynab was named by Muḥammad, who attributed her name to divine inspiration.

Little is known of her early life. Muḥammad died when she was about five, followed by Fāṭimah a few months later. She married her paternal cousin ʿAbd Allāh (whose father was ʿAlī's brother Jaʿfar al-Ṭayyār ibn Abī Ṭālib, and whose mother was then ʿAlī's wife and hence Zaynab's own stepmother, Asmāʾ bint ʿUmays). Zaynab is reported to have had five children with ʿAbd Allāh: ʿAlī (known as ʿAlī al-Zaynabī, whose numerous descendants took pride in tracing their lineage to Zaynab), ʿAwn al-Akbar (killed at Karbala), ʿAbbās (no information about him), Muḥammad (possibly killed at Karbala), and one daughter named Umm Kulthūm (married to her paternal cousin Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib, after rejecting the suit of the Umayyad Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiya).

When Zaynab's father ʿAlī became caliph in 656 and moved his capital from Medina to Kūfah, Zaynab and ʿAbd Allāh accompanied him there. She lived in Kūfah through four years of military confrontations with the insurgent governor of Syria, Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān, and with the Iraqi Kharijite rebels, until ʿAlī was killed in 661 by one of the latter. She was then thirty-five years old.

Zaynab is mentioned a few times in the accounts of ʿAlī's caliphate as a devoted and beloved daughter. Moreover, it is reported that ʿAlī taught her a devotional poem that she often recited, and that she herself taught Qurʾān interpretation to women in her house in Kūfah. It is thus likely that she was trained by her father (who is considered the most learned of sages), and that she herself played a teaching role among the women of the early Muslim community.

After ʿAlī's death, his son Ḥasan stepped down from the caliphate and Muʿāwiya became the first Umayyad caliph. Ḥasan returned to Medina with the family, and was subsequently poisoned by Muʿāwiya in 669. There are reports of Zaynab's caring attendance on Ḥasan during his last few days.

Ḥasan was followed as head of the Prophet's family by his brother Ḥusayn. In 680, Muʿāwiya died, having appointed his son Yazīd to the caliphate. At that time—according to some sources, after consulting with Zaynab—Ḥusayn refused to pledge allegiance to Yazīd, and set off with his family and supporters for Mecca and then Kūfah to meet up with his Kūfan supporters and overthrow Yazīd. Some of Ḥusayn's well-wishers tried to dissuade him from going, and these included Zaynab's husband ʿAbd Allāh (who had by then lost his sight, according to some sources), but when Ḥusayn remained adamant, ʿAbd Allāh sent Zaynab and his

two sons ʿAwn and Muḥammad with him (there is conflicting evidence regarding whether this Muḥammad was ʿAbd Allāh's son from Zaynab or another wife).

En route to Kūfah, Ḥusayn's entourage was stopped at Karbala and surrounded by a military unit sent by the Umayyad governor of Kūfah, ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ziyād. On 10 Muḥarram 61 (680), after three days without food or water in the scorching desert, Ḥusayn, his supporters, all but one of the men from his family, and many of the male children were slaughtered. They were reported to be seventy-two in number, including the family members, who numbered eighteen. ʿAwn and Muḥammad were among those killed, according to some reports, encouraged by their mother to fight in defense of their uncle. Zaynab was then fifty-four years old. Her grief-filled speeches are recorded by many historians.

After the massacre, the Umayyad army looted Ḥusayn's camp and set off with his women and children for the court of Ibn Ziyād. Upon reaching Kūfah, Zaynab, with the other women, was paraded unveiled and shackled through the very town where her father had ruled, with the heads of Ḥusayn and his companions raised on spears beside them. Ibn Ziyād then ordered the execution of Ḥusayn's only remaining son, the 23-year-old ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (the third Shīʿah *imām*); Zaynab protected his life saying Ibn Ziyād would have to kill her before he killed ʿAlī, which shamed him into withdrawing the execution order. A moving oration delivered by Zaynab in Kūfah is recorded in some sources. The prisoners were next sent to the court of the Umayyad caliph Yazīd in Damascus, where one of his Syrian followers asked for Ḥusayn's daughter Fāṭimah al-Kubrā, and once again it was Zaynab who came to the rescue and protected her honor. The family remained in Yazīd's prison for a time; the sources do not specify the number of days or months. The first assembly (*majlis*) of mourning for Ḥusayn is said to have been held by Zaynab in prison. In Damascus, too, she is reported to have delivered a poignant oration.

Zaynab and her family were eventually released and escorted back to Medina. After her return to Medina, little is known of her in the year and a half before her death, except through much later, conflicting reports. According to one report, she stayed and died there. Another report states that due to persecution from the governor of Medina, she traveled to Fustat (later Cairo) in Egypt with several other women from the family of the Prophet; she lived in Fustat for over a year, narrating the Karbala tragedy and preaching the love of the family of the Prophet, and died there. A third report states that she went with her husband to his Syrian estates in a year of drought and died there. Sources also differ as to the year of her death. According to most of them, she died on 15 Rajab AH 62 (682 CE), when she was fifty-six years old.

Role in Muslim Piety. Zaynab is best remembered for her role in Karbala. Through the centuries, she has continued to hold a prominent place in Muḥarram orations, as well as in lamentation poetry composed in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and other languages commemorating the Karbala tragedy. She is portrayed in these variously as an object of pity, a compassionate saint, and a powerful intercessor. On a somewhat more militant note, she was used in pre-revolution Iran as a model for inspiring political opposition among women—in the Iranian revolution of 1979, female commandos came to be known as "the commandos of her holiness Zaynab" (*Komāndo-hāye Hazrat-e Zaynab*).

Every day, hundreds of Muslim men and women, but especially women, visit the mausoleums dedicated to Zaynab in Damascus and Cairo. In fact, some scholars call Zaynab the patron saint of Muslim women. At the shrine, visitors ask for her help *(madad)*, and they beseech her intercession (*shafaʿa*) with God on their behalf for a myriad of petitions, such as curing illness, passing school examinations, or finding a good husband or wife for themselves or their children. Many miracles are attributed to her, such as the curing of chronic illness. Mostly Shīʿah visit the Damascus shrine, and Egyptian Sunnīs of a Ṣūfī bent visit the Cairo shrine, where tens of thousands celebrate Zaynab's birthday *(mawlid)* for seven days annually.

Zaynab is known by several titles. She is called Zaynab al-Kubrā (the senior Zaynab) to distinguish her from Zaynab al-Ṣughrā (the junior Zaynab, the name of her full sister, Umm Kulthūm, and also perhaps of another half-sister). Zaynab is called al-ʿAqīla (literally, "secluded one," or "pearl," perhaps connected to a suggested etymology of her name: *zayn* + *ab*, "adornment of father"), as well as Thānī-ye Zahrāʾ (the second Fāṭimah Zahrāʾ). In Egypt she is known as al-Ṭāhirah (the pure one) and by a number of "mother" epithets (Umm Hāshim, mother of the Prophet's family; Umm al-ʿawājiz, mother of the weak; Umm al-masākīn, mother of the poor; Umm al-yatāmā, mother of the orphans; and Umm Miṣr, mother of Egypt). She is also known simply as al-Sayyida (the Lady), a fitting title for a woman who came to be considered a role model for Muslim women, typifying courage, fortitude, leadership, eloquence, devotion, and faith.

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B. Tahera Qutbuddin (2005)

ZEALOTS. The Zealots were Jewish revolutionaries in first-century Israel whose religious zeal led them to fight to the death against Roman domination and to attack or kill other Jews who collaborated with the Romans. Scholars disagree as to whether the name *Zealots* designated all revolutionary groups of the first century or only one of the factions active during the Roman-Jewish War of 66–70 CE. Josephus Flavius (37–c. 100 CE.), the Jewish general who surrendered to the Romans and whose official Roman history of the war furnishes the major source, is ambiguous in his use of terminology. References in the New Testament, the Pseudepigrapha, and the rabbinic literature add to the confusion.

In 6 CE, Judah (Yehudah) the Galilean showed zeal for God's law and land when he led a revolt against the Roman census in Judaea. He and his followers fought to cleanse the land by taking vengeance against Jews who cooperated with the Romans. Judah considered such cooperation to be idolatrous recognition of a lord (Caesar) other than God. By such vengeance, he and his followers sought to appease God, who would thereby honor their cause against the Romans. The revolt failed, but Judah had originated the so-called Fourth Philosophy ("No Lord but God") based on the first commandment. Judah's descendents emerged again after all of Judaea became a Roman province in 44 CE. Their subsequent revolutionary actions against the corrupt and incompetent Roman authorities contributed to the outbreak of war in 66 CE. Josephus usually refers to Judah's group as Sicarii, after the *sikkah* ("dagger") used in assassinations.

Although Josephus refers to Judah's faction as a Jewish sect, it is not clear that his group is to be identified with a revolutionary faction called the Zealots or indeed that there was such an organized group early in the first century. Many Jews venerated "zealous action" as a model of piety, using the biblical figure Phineas as a prototype (*Num* 25:1–15). Such persons endured persecution for the Law or sought to destroy those who violated the Law as a means to cleanse the land of defilement and thereby turn back God's wrath. Individuals, such as Simon the "zealot" (a disciple of Jesus: *Luke* 6:15; *Acts* 1:13), were zealous for God over a variety of legal issues. Sometimes, as was the case with the Maccabean revolt in 167–142 BCE, zeal was a dominant motivation for revolution. However, not all zealots were revolutionaries, and not all revolutionaries were motivated by zeal. It is not until his account of the war period that Josephus refers to one of the wartime revolutionary groups formally as "the Zealots."

Amid the growing unrest in the decades leading up to the war, there was broad resistance to Roman occupation, including protests against provocative actions by the procurator Pilate (ruled 26–36 CE), a threatened strike against raising crops for the Romans when the emperor Gaius Caligula sought to put a statue of Zeus in the Temple (41 CE), riots at feast time in Jerusalem in reaction to offenses by Roman soldiers, official delegations to Rome protesting inept procurators, prophetic actions and oracular pronouncements by apocalyptic figures, banditry, kidnappings, and assassinations. Resistance to Roman rule was widespread and cut across all sectors of society. The war broke out in 66 CE when the procurator Florus tried to seize money from the Temple treasury, after which the populace drove Florus out of Jerusalem and successfully held off Cestius Gallus, the Legate of Syria, when he arrived to restore Roman order. The Jewish declaration of war came when the lower priests ceased the sacrifices to God on behalf of the emperor. Subsequently, the traditional high priests assumed control of the wartime government and prepared for the Romans to return.