CHARACTERS OF THE MARSYA

The following list contains (in more or less chronological order) the names of all the characters mentioned in this marsiya.

a. Husain's side

Hashim
Great grandfather of MUHAMMAD. The family of the Prophet is often referred to as hashimī (Hashimite).

Ḥamza
Paternal uncle of MUHAMMAD.

Muḥammad
The Prophet of Islam.

Ja'far
A cousin of MUHAMMAD. He was killed at the battle of Khaibar (629 A.D.). He bore the standard of the Prophet's army. When he lost his arms in battle, God replaced them with jewelled wings. Hence he is referred to as Ja'far ṭayyār 'the winged Ja'far'.

'Alī
MUHAMMAD'S cousin and, later, son-in-law. Father of ḤASAN and HUSAIN. According to Shi'as, the first Imām.

Fāṭima
Daughter of MUHAMMAD; wife of 'Alī; mother of ḤASAN and HUSAIN. Frequently referred to as Zahra 'pure'.

'Aqīl
Paternal uncle of HUSAIN.

Muslim
Son of 'Aqīl; Husain's cousin; killed at Kufa by Ibn Ziyād.

Ḥasan
Elder son of 'Alī and Fāṭima.

Husain
Younger son of 'Alī and Fāṭima.

Bāno (Shahr Bāno)
Daughter of a Persian king; wife of Husain.

Zainab
Elder sister of Husain.

Umm ul Banīn
Mother of 'Abbās.

'Abbās
Younger half-brother of Husain; elected standard bearer of Husain's army; went to the Euphrates to fill the water skins.

'Alī Akbar
18 year old son of Ḥusain.
'Alī Asghar

Qāsim

'Abdullāh

'Aun and Muḥammad

Kulşum

Fāṭima Kubrā

Fāṭima Sughrā

Sakīna

6 year old son of Ḥusain.

Eldest son of Ḥasan (13 years old).
Traditionally said to have been married at Karbala to Fāṭima Kubrā (see below).

Young son of Ḥasan.

Young son's of Zainab; grandsons of Ja'far and 'Alī. Both killed in battle.

Young sister of Ḥusain

Young daughters of Ḥusain

4 year old daughter of Ḥusain.

b. Yazīd's side

Ḥur

Yazīd

'Ubaidullāh Ibn Ziyād

'Umar ibn Sa'd

Ḥurmila ibn Kāhil

A'var Salamī

Azraq

Sinān ibn Ins

Hind

A brave soldier of Yazīd's army who crossed the lines and joined Ḥusain.

Son of Muʾāviya (governor of Syria), belonging to the Ummayad tribe. Succeeded his father, 'tyrannized' Iraq and challenged Hussain at Karbala.

Governor of Kūfa (Irāq); struck the decapitated head of Husain with a cane.

A general of Yazīd's army.

An archer of Yazīd's army.

A soldier of Yazīd's army.

A famous Syrian wrestler.

A soldier of Yazīd's army.

Yazīd's wife.
The main characters of the mawsīya are given a number of epithets (special adjectives or descriptive phrases) which identify them. The most common are:

**Muḥammad**

nabi (Prophet), nasyr (messenger), rasūl-e xwda, rasūlwllah (the Prophet of God), rysalat-panah (the refuge of the prophethood), xayr wa bēšar (the best of men), xayr wa vare (the best of creation), mwstēfa (the chosen one).

**'Alī**

assd wllah (the lion of God), haydor (lion), smir, janab-e smir (the lord), abū twrab (the dusty one), shah-e morden (the king of men), mwstīka (savior of difficulties), mwrtasa (the chosen one).

**Fāṭima**

zahra (pure), betul (handmaiden), bnt-e rasul (daughter of the Prophet), xayr wa nyse (the best of women).

**Ḥusain**

ṣah, šah, šahbāb (King), šah-e din, šah-e zamen, šah-e hydaj (king of the faith, the world, Hejaz), sērvar-e do alem, sērvar-e kownya (leader of the two worlds), šahid-e karbala, mwsefy-ē karbala, masjum-e karbala (the martyr, traveller, afflicted one of Karbala), sgyt-e rasul (the grandson of the Prophet), ynb-e ali, ybn-e farma (son of Ali, Fatima), sērvar, jānab, hezret (leader, master), ymam (the Imam), šebbīr (a pet name given to Ḥusain by Muḥammad), seyyed (Sayyid - descendent of the Prophet), and many variations on these titles.

**'Alī Akbar**

hamsūli-e nabi, šahbīr-e rasul (the image of the Prophet, whom he resembled in looks), mwseyn (the caller to prayer).

**Zainab**

bnt-e ali (the daughter of 'Alī), nwhedr-e ymam (the sister of the Imam), hamsfr-ē šah (the king's true sister).
There are many other particular epithets as well as a number of general ones such as ə禺ə-yə-analysis (of fine temperament), ə硅谷-ozər (rosy cheeked), ə硅谷-ru (red-faced, honourable), etc. to describe Hussain's men; Yazid's party on the other hand is usually żəlymn (tyrannical), ə硅谷-ru (black hearted), ə硅谷-dynthesis (stony hearted), etc. Hussain's horse (rahvar) has epithets denoting speed and swiftness and his sword (Zulfikar) denoting sharpness, brightness and flashing. An extremely common comparison which occurs over and over again is that of Hussain to a bridegroom about to be united with his mystical beloved in heaven. His clothes are perfumed like that of a bridegroom; he wears a wedding garland made from the flowers of death; he leaps into the battle like a bridegroom leaping unto his bride, unsheathing his sword, which is as loath to leave its scabbard as a bride her newly wedded husband. Such references are so common and so blatant that it has been suggested that Anis (perhaps subconsciously) connected the bridegroom's sexual prowess with Hussain's daring exploits in battle. Mystical comparisons of the lover or hero being united with his beloved to the union of the soul with God are very frequent in all Urdu poetry, but the directness of some of Anis' remarks in a highly religious context are a little surprising and often found amusing by all but the most fervent devotees.

A useful and fairly traditional account of the events leading up to Karbala and the aftermath of the battle can be found in Ameer Ali: Spirit of Islam, Chapter VIII, 'The Political Divisions and Schisms of Islam'. The facts highlighted by Ameer Ali are largely those given prominence by the marziya writers.