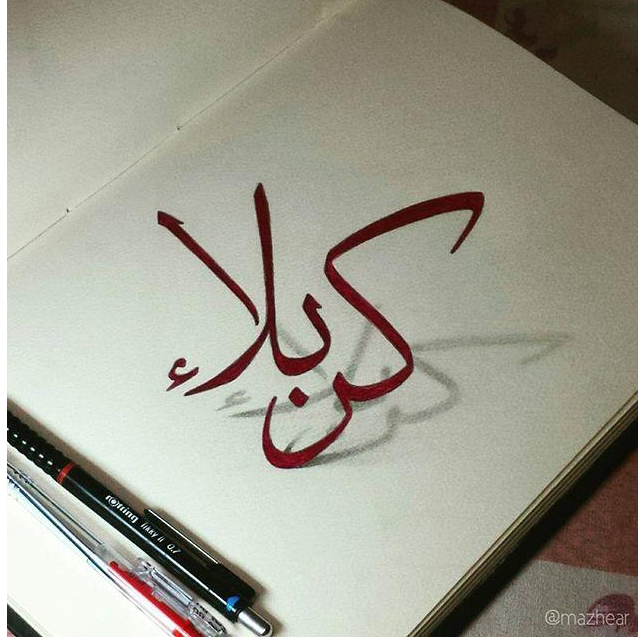


# The Martyr of Karbala



و الحمد لله رب العالمين , والصلاة و السلام على اشرف المرسلين  
و على اله و اصحابه اجمعين , و بعد

The gruesome killing of Imam Husain (R.A) on the bloody plains of Karbala was indeed one of the most horrific and tragic events that a Muslim can never forget.

The most beloved grandson who climb up and down on the blessed shoulders of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.S) as a baby, met this great disaster at the hands of his own people, but gained the honourable position and rank as being the shaheed (martyr) of Karbala.

What possible harm could this great soul cause to anyone to deserve the treatment he got from those who professed to be Muslims. He was not only a companion (sahabi), but was indeed the most beloved grandson of the Prophet (S.A.S). In his body, ran the blood and flesh of the noble Messenger of Allah. He was certainly the great Imam, Husain (R.A), the son of Ali (R.A) and Fatimah (R.A). He was the great soul about whom the Prophet (S.A.S) himself said,

حُسَيْنٌ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنْ حُسَيْنٍ

‘Husain is from me and I am from Husain.’ (Trimidhi, Hadith No.3775, Pg.566, Vol.2, Altaf and Sons / Musnad of Ahmad, Hadith No.17572, Pg.177, Vol.6,Darul Fikr)

The Prophet (S.A.S) loved his grandson, Husain very much, and this is why he said Husain is from me and I am from Husain.

It is also recorded by Tirmidhi and Ibn Hibban that the Messenger of Allah will say about his grandson Hasan and Husain,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أُحِبُّهُمَا فَأَحِبَّهُمَا

‘O Allah! I love them, grant them your love.’ (Tirmidhi, Hadith No.3782, Pg.567, Vol.2, Altaf and Sons / Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No.9766, Pg.455, Vol.3, Darul Fikr / Ibn Hibban, Hadith No.6967, Pg.422, Vol.15, Al Resala Al Alamiah)

The Prophet (S.A.S) also spoke about the greatness of Hasan and Husain and said,

الْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ سَيِّدَا شَبَابِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ

‘Hasan and Husain are the leaders of the youths of the people of Paradise.’ (Tirmidhi, Hadith No.3781, Pg.567, Vol.2, Altaf and Sons / Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No.10999, Pg.8, Vol.4, Darul Fikr)

Husain was born from the blessed womb of Fatimah (R.A) about whom the Messenger of Allah (S.A.S) himself said,

فَاطِمَةَ سَيِّدَةَ نِسَاءِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ

‘Fatimah was the leader of the ladies of Paradise.’ (Tirmidhi, Hadith No.3781, Pg.567, Vol.2, Altaf and Sons)

He was nourished and nurtured in a home that was filled with piety and righteousness. He was trained by none other than the Messenger of Allah (S.A.S) himself. He grew up to be a very handsome youth and was blessed with the power of speech. He was extremely versed in the knowledge of Islam, and like his father, was generous and righteous.

He had a noble rank among the companions and had a close resemblance to the Messenger of Allah (S.A.S)

The beloved grandson of the Prophet (S.A.S), Husain (R.A) was a devout worshipper, filled with piety, and remained detached from worldly matters. He was frequently engaged in performance of Salaah, fasted a lot and extremely charitable to the poor and needy. It is narrated that he performed Hajj on foot 25 times.

He was indeed one who truly possessed the characteristics of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.S). He was very beloved to the Prophet (S.A.S) and occupied a very high status in the sight of Allah.

However, notwithstanding these great merits and virtues, Husain (R.A) had to go through severe trials and tribulations. He came up against fierce opposition and persecution, and had to face the anger and wrath of the wicked and cruel rulers. In all these situations, he stood firm like a mountain in the ground, and gave his life to defend and propagate the truth which he learnt directly from his beloved grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.S).

Cruelty and oppression, persecution and torture, and threats of being murdered could not stop him from holding firm to the truth, and so, on the blessed day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Muharram, he laid down his life on the bloody plains of Karbala (Iraq), as a dignified supporter of the truth.

This was the unparalleled sacrifice of Husain (R.A) which was foretold by the Prophet (S.A.S) while Husain was still a baby.

According to a narration recorded by Adh Dhahabi, it is narrated that Anas (R.A) said, ‘The Angel of rain Mika’el (A.S) once sought permission from the Prophet (S.A.S) to be with him alone. The Prophet (S.A.S) then said, ‘O Umm Salmah, keep the door close on us.’ At that time, Husain (who was a baby) came through the door and started to jump on the Prophet (S.A.S), and the Messenger of Allah (S.A.S) was kissing him. The angel said (to the Prophet), ‘Do you love him?’ The Messenger of Allah (S.A.S) said, ‘Yes.’ The Angel then said, ‘Your nation will kill him, and if you want, I will show you the spot where he will be killed. Upon this, the Prophet (S.A.S) said, ‘Yes.’ The Angel then brought some red soil. Thabit (The narrator from Anas [R.A]) said, ‘We used to say that it is Karbala.’ (Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No.13539, Pg.482, Vol.4, Darul Fikr)

Thus, what happened at Karbala, was a matter which was already decreed by Allah, and the beloved grandson of the Prophet (S.A.S) was required to offer his life to Allah in defence of the truth.

The eventual martyrdom of Husain (R.A) came about after Husain was invited by the Muslims of Koofa to leave his city of Hijaz and travel to Koofa so that they would pledge allegiance to him, and he will become their leader.

During the rule of Ali (R.A), he declared Koofa as the capital of the Caliphate. On account of this, many of the supporters of the family of the Prophet (S.A.S) settled there. When Muawiyah (R.A) died, his son Yazid declared himself as the Khalifa, but many Muslims in different territories, were opposed to this and were unwilling to pledge allegiance to Yazid. Koofa was not exception to this, and in order to choose the right leader, they wrote many letters to Husain who (at that time was living in Hijaz) to come to Koofa so that they would swear allegiance to him to be their leader. Based upon the repeated request from many Muslims in Koofa, Husain (R.A) decided to accept the invitation, and thus, prepared for his journey to Koofa. Hearing this news, some of the Sahabahs who were alive at that time and other great Tabieen Muslims pleaded to Husain (R.A), and encouraged him to desist from undertaking this journey to Koofa. They reminded him of the proverbial infidelity and fickle mindedness of the people of Koofa. They explained to him how they betrayed their leaders in the past and did not keep their promises. The great companion, Abdullah bin Abass (R.A) spoke to him and said, ‘My dear cousin, I can’t remain a silent spectator of your doom, the people of Koofa are hypocrites and cheaters, never trust them. It’s better you stay here in Hijaz, no one excels you in this land. Another cousin of Husain, Abdullah bin Jafar wrote to him from Madina, saying, ‘I beseech you in the name of Allah to desist from the implementation of your plan, for it entails your death and destruction for your family and companions. Your death will extinguish the light of the land. At present, you are the beacon light of faith and the centre of the believers, hopes. Don’t make haste in undertaking the journey.’ (Ibn Jareer)

Notwithstanding the pleas made to him by family members, friends and notable Muslim leaders, Husain made the firm intention to undertake his journey to Koofa (Iraq), as planned.

While leaving Makka for Iraq along with the members of his family, including all men, women, and children, the beloved grandson of the Prophet (S.A.S) made it clear to the people and said, 'The matter now rest with Allah. His will be done. His commandments are issued every moment. If His will is favourable to us, we will praise Him and if His will is contrary to our expectations, we will earn the reward of our patience and resignation.' (Ibn Jareer)

With this firmness of mind and heart, Husain (R.A) set out on his journey, not being deterred by anyone. However, it was not long after that, he heard that his emissary Muslim bin Aqil (A.R) was publicly executed by Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, the governor of Koofa.

This brought great sorrow and grief to Husain (R.A) and his family members, but it did not deter the beloved grandson of the Prophet (S.A.S) from his mission. Instead, he proceeded on his journey to Koofa, but having advanced to a little distance beyond Qaadisiya, he was confronted and stopped by Hur bin Yazeed who was sent by Ubaidullah bin Ziyad with an army of 1000 men to keep a close watch on Husain and his family until he was brought to him.

At this time, Hur bin Yazeed started to put a tremendous amount of pressure on Husain and stopped him from moving onwards on his journey. He blocked him from returning to Makkah, Madina and Koofa. He was bent on taking him to the cruel ruler and oppressor Ubaidullah bin Ziyad. Husain (R.A) however, was not willing to meet Ubaidullah, and made it very clear to Hur bin Yazeed that his appearance before Ubaidullah bin Ziyaad was not possible before his death.

Husain (R.A) tried his best to explain to Hur bin Yazeed of the purpose of his journey to Koofa and that the Muslims had invited him to Koofah. He even showed him two bags filled with letters written by the people of Koofa. But Hur was not ready to accept any statement from Husain. Instead, he was bent upon his evil intention of taking him before the oppressor Ubaidullah bin Ziyaad. The situation grew intense, and Husain (R.A) saw that danger lay in wait. He delivered a sermon to his people and said, 'You witness the existing state of affairs. The world has changed its colours. It is completely devoid of virtue. Only the sediment is left. Don't you see that truth has been relegated to background. Falsehood is deliberately being acted upon. There is none who could prevent the wrongdoing. It is high time a believer should try to defend the truth for the sake of Allah. I wish to die a martyr's death. It is an offence in itself, to live with oppressors.'

As days passed by, Husain remained surrounded by Hur bin Yazeed was followed wherever he went.

Husain had sent another envoy to Koofa by the name of Qais bin Mashar, but he was also killed by Ubaidullah bin Ziyaad.

When Husain sort the allowance to enter Koofa, he was stopped by Ubaidullah who had given the following order to Hur bin Yazeed, 'Do not allow Husain to stay at any place. He should not be permitted to get down any where except in an open space. See that he does not take refuge in a fort or a fertile piece of land.'

With no place to go, Husain and the few members of his family eventually settled and camped at an open place known as 'Karbala' which was situated at a long distance from the river Euphrates with a hill between the two.

Ubaidullah bin Ziyaad then sent another 4000 soldiers to surround Husain (R.A) and his family members, and restrict their movements and activities. Along with this, he issued another order to the commander of his army saying, 'See that water is not supplied to Husain and his companions. They should not have even a drop of water just as Uthman bin Affan was deprived of it.'

This was the inhumane nature of Ubaidullah bin Ziyad. His enmity towards Husain (R.A) knew no bounds, and water which is Allah's free gift to man was stopped from him, when every single creature of Allah had open access to it. As the moments passed by and Husain sensed danger from all directions, he started to hold talks with the commander of the Army, Umar bin Sa'ad, in the hope that war does not prevail, and innocent lives are not lost. Umar bin Sa'ad was inclined towards the proposal of Husain by either allowing him to go back to his home town, to allow Yazeed to decide his case or to go to another place. In this regard, he wrote a letter to Ubaidullah, the governor of Koofa for his decision. Ubaidullah was pleased with the proposal put forward, and saw that it was a great effort on Umar bin Sa'ad's part to work for peace. However, Shimr bin Zul Jaushan intervened and opposed the entire peaceful negotiation, and opted to either force Husain to swear allegiance to Ubaidullah bin Ziyad or be prepared for war.

Ubaidullah bin Ziyad was a cruel, wicked and an evil minded person. He was made the governor of Koofah by Yazeed and saw himself fit for the position. The people of Koofah however, disliked him, and saw that he was unfit to be a leader. They knew that he was an unjust, wicked and a cruel man. It was for this reason, they repeatedly begged Husain (R.A) to come to Koofa, so that they could swear allegiance to him and make him their leader. This however, did not go well with Ubaidullah bin Ziyad who vehemently opposed this action (of the people of Koofa). He was bent upon using every force and every measure to stop Husain from fulfilling his mission, and was ready to put an end to his life. Shimr who interrupted the peace negotiation, then wrote to Ubaidullah bin Ziyad saying.

'Husain is now in our grip, if he escapes without taking the oath of allegiance, he might gain respect and power and you may be rendered weak and helpless. It is advisable that he is kept under watch until he surrenders himself.'

The letter containing the above was received by Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, and although he was inclined to the former proposals made by Husain, he was pleased with the opinion of Shimr. He thus, wrote to Shimr giving the orders that if Husain surrendered himself with his companions, then there should be no war and Husain should be sent to him. If he does not surrender, then war must be waged against him.

In the letter, Ubaidullah made his orders very clear and stated, 'My orders are clear. If he surrenders himself, he should be sent to me alive. In case he refuses, he should be attacked. Shed his blood and disfigure his body as he deserves it. After killing, get his body trampled by horses'.

At another place, Ubaidullah wrote, 'Husain should be murdered and his head be sent to me'. (Ibn Jareer).

Look at the evil intention of this oppressor whose faith could not give him the consciousness to know that before him was the Day of Judgement, and the one he has made his enemy is none other than the beloved grandson of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.S).

Such is the like of these wicked rulers, who brought nothing but disgrace to the Ummah (nation) of Muhammad (S.A.S).

Numerous efforts were made to avoid a tragic outcome. Negotiations continued between Husain (R.A) and the leaders of the forces around him. A peaceful solution seemed far-fetched, and Husain (R.A) realised that the inevitable was before him. Detecting the dangers that surrounded him in all directions, he pleaded with his family members to go back to their hometown in Makka in safety, and let him face the trial which was before him. He made it clear to them that the enemies wanted him alone, not others.

The family members were extremely grieved by the words of Husain, and in response Abass (R.A) said, 'Why is it so? Do you want that we should survive after your death. May Allah not keep us alive to see that day.'

Emotions grew high. Anxiety filled the hearts of the followers, and tears were tumbling down their eyes. Husain consoled his family members and reminded them that the life of the Prophet (S.A.S) was an ideal model, and that they needed to have forbearance and perseverance. Total reliance upon Allah and entrusting oneself to His will, was a teaching they could not deviate from.

The night preceding the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharram dawned upon them. In their tents, Husain (R.A) and his companions passed the entire night in offering Salaah, invoking forgiveness from Allah, and weeping and crying to Allah. While this took place, (inside the tents), a group of the enemy's army got busied in patrolling around the camps, keeping a watchful eye over Husain (R.A).

Then came the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram, it was the blessed day of Friday, and the enemies, thousands in numbers, surrounded Husain (R.A) and his companions from all directions. Husain (R.A) tried to put up a defence. He only had a small number of 72 men which he posted at different strategic points.

At this time, as a last effort for peace, Husain (R.A) addressed the leaders of the army on several occasions. He reminded them that he came only upon their invitation, and not on his own. If they did not want him, then they should allow him and his companions to return safely.

He also recalled to them that he was none other than the grandson of their Prophet (S.A.S), the son of Ali and Fatima. He further narrated the traditions in which the Prophet (S.A.S) spoke about him and his brother Hasan (R.A)

These powerful words fell on deaf ears. The commanders and the soldiers could not respond. They were ashamed of themselves to take up arms against the grandson of their Prophet (S.A.S), but being loyal followers of Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, they were bent upon fulfilling the mission they had set out for.

Talks came to an end, and the enemies advanced to Husain (R.A) and his companions. A full-fledge battle then ensued with the chivalrous men from either side challenging and fighting each other. This however, was not fruitful to the enemies, they lost their fighters one after the other. Upon seeing this, the enemies decided to launch a general attack upon Husain and his

followers. The fight continued fiercely with casualties on both sides. At times, the fight was halted and then resumed after a while.

The bravery, courage, strength and skills of Husain (R.A) and his followers were unmatched. Although they suffered a few casualties, the enemies could not penetrate them. The resistance of Husain's army was very strong. Wherever the enemies struck, they suffered a great loss.

The enemies soon realized that they could not achieve their goals, hence, a re-enforcement of five hundred archers were brought. As soon as the archers arrived, they began to shoot arrows at Husain's horsemen, crippling the horses and forcing the soldiers to dismount. The fight continued in full swing with the enemies unable to gain the upper hand though they were in thousands, and Husain's army was only 72. With this situation, when Umar bin Sa'ad saw that he was not able to penetrate Husain's army, he deputed some of his men to uproot and burn the tents of Husain (R.A) and his companions. Notwithstanding this, Husain and his companions carried on (in the fight), displaying great strength and bravery. However, with a small number of 72 facing the large and well equipped army of Ubaudullah bin Ziyad, casualties on the side of Husain started to increase. The open and severe attack of the enemies brought about the martyrdom of the pious soldiers, one after the other.

It was a difficult time. The enemies attacked with full force, and all the companions of Husain (R.A), although they battled with the enemies with bravery and enthusiasm, were slain one by one.

Eventually, when all the companions were martyred, the family of the Prophet (S.A.S) (Ahle Bait), came out into the battlefield and attacked the enemies like hungry falcons and ferocious lions.

They came to the forefront, and fighting courageously, sacrificed their lives one by one. The first of them to be killed was the great grandson of the Prophet (S.A.S), Ali the son of Husain. He came out to the battle field with great courage saying to the opponents, 'I am Ali the son of Husain. By the lord of the Kaaba, we are more deserving, being nearest to the Holy Prophet (S.A.S). By Allah, the son of the man whose father is unknown cannot rule over us.' In this manner, he fought heroically, but was killed by the army of Umar bin Sa'ad.

After this, other members of Husain's family came to the forefront and battled with the enemies. Qasim the son of Hasan (R.A), another great grandson of the Prophet (S.A.S), was put to death, and the family members were being martyred one by one. At that time, while looking after the two bodies, Husain (R.A) was informed of the birth of his son. He took the baby in his arms and was calling the Adhan in the ears of the child, when suddenly, an arrow shot by the enemies pierced the throat of the baby and killed him instantly. The enemies continued to attack the family of Husain until all the fighters from his force were killed. Only the women folk and young children remained. Husain stood on the battle field alone, while the enemies surrounded him. No one dared to attack him.

Notwithstanding the fact that all the fighters from his companions and family members were killed before his eyes, Husain (R.A) remained bold, resolute and steadfast.

When Shimr saw that his soldiers were hesitant to move towards Husain, he started to provoke them and pushed them to attack him. They encircled Husain (R.A) from every side and moved closer to him. At this, Husain began to wield his sword right and left, and forced

the enemies to retract. One fighter then attacked Husain with his spear, but was not able to put an end to his life. Upon seeing this, the enemies pounced upon him from all sides, but he made them retreat. The position was that the attackers were running right and left like sheep before a lion.

During the course of fighting, Husain (R.A) became very thirsty and, went to the river Euphrates to quench his thirst, but here also, the enemies did not allow him to drink water. Instead, someone shot an arrow towards him which pieced his throat. He pulled out the arrow, and while throwing the blood which oozed out his throat to the sky, said, 'O Allah! I complain only to You. See how the people are treating the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.S).

Husain then tried to return to his camp but was stopped by Shimr. The army looked on, and no one was ready to commit the heinous crime of killing Husain (R.A). Seeing this state, Shimr rebuked them severely and incited them to attack Husain (R.A). The enemies surrounded him again, and Zur'a bin Shareek attacked Husein (R.A) and struck a blow on his shoulder. With this, Husain became weak. Sinan bin Najaf then advanced and attacked Husain with a spear and put him to the ground. Upon the order of Shimr, Sinan then dismounted from his horse and cut off Husain's head from his body.

The great Imam was now martyred. His body lay on the ground with the head severed from the body. The most despicable crime and heinous murder someone can commit. After this gruesome murder, the enemies took off the clothes of his dead body and rushed to the tents. Shimr was bent upon killing the young innocent children and insulting the women, but was stopped by Umar Bin Saa'd .

Husain's body which lay on the plain of Karbala was then tramped upon by the horses' hoofs and the severed head was handed to Kholi Bin Yazeed Asbhi.

The 10th of Muharram and the night that came after it passed and the body of the great hero of Islam and the beloved grandson of the Prophet (S.A.S) laid on the sand of Karbala, martyred and mutilated. When the next day arrived, Umar Bin Saa'd took hold of the women and children and carried them as prisoners to Koofa. When the ladies passed by the plains of Karbala, and caught sight of the mutilated bodies of Husain (R.A) and his family members and companions, they immediately burst into tears and could not restrain their grief and lamentations. Zainab, the daughter of Faatima (R.A) (and sister of Husain) could not withhold herself. She cried out saying, 'Oh Muhammad! May the blessing and salutations of the angels in heaven be upon you. Behold! Your Husain is lying in blood and sand in the desert. His body has been cut to pieces. Your daughters have been made prisoners. Your progeny has been killed and is lying in dust.'

With this outburst, no eye remained dry except it shed tears on hearing this lamentation.

The head of Husain (R.A) was then taken to Ubaidullah Bin Ziyad in Koofa. When the head was placed before him, he took his stick and repeatedly struck it on the lips of Husain out of hatred and dislike. He later struck the head on a pole and sent it to Yazeed.

Upon the sight of Husain's head, Yazeed's eyes became filled with tears. He became extremely angry with Ubaidullah Bin Ziyad and regretted what had happen. He said, 'By



Allah, Had I been present there, I would Certainly have forgiven Husain. May Allah shower His blessings upon Husain.’

Yazeed was shocked at the incidents that took place. He absolved himself from all wrongs done to Husain and incurred the wrath and curse of Allah upon Ubaidullah Bin Ziyad. The family of Yazeed and Muawiyah wept bitterly over the tragic incidents and they could not come to terms with what was done to the family of the Prophet (S.A.S).

In order to make amends, Yazeed hosted the women and children of Husain’s family in his palace. He entertained them for a few days and showed great hospitality to them. He then despatched them to Madina under reliable escort.

Thus, came the end of one of the most heinous crimes committed against the family of the Prophet (S.A.S). No one in the Ummah will ever forget the cruelty and injustice that was done to Husain (R.A), his family members and his companions. While Umar Bin Saa’d and Ubaidullah Bin Ziyad rejoiced upon their wicked actions, Husain (R.A) was on the burning sands of Karbala with his body mutilated and the head severed. What account would these wretched souls give to Allah on the Day of Judgement? What answers would they give to the Prophet (S.A.S) in the Hereafter when he questions them about their devilish deeds?

Allah honoured Husain to be the beloved grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.S), he raised him to the rank of martyrdom and in the Hereafter, made him a leader of the youths in Paradise. The enemies and perpetrators of the horrific crime against Husain (RA) and his family shall burn in the fire of Hell, and will be made to taste of the horrifying and painful punishment in the Hereafter.

They sold their souls for a small price of wealth and riches, and will thus, face the consequences of their actions.

Husain (R.A) went through the difficulties, trials and hardships with patience and forbearance. He accepted Allah’s decree with a ‘pleasing heart’ and resigned himself to the care of Allah. In this way, he taught the Ummah to remain firm upon the truth; to defend it with one’s life and to stand against injustice and wrongdoing. In this path, one must resign himself to the care of Allah and entrust all affairs in the hands of Allah for He is Certainly Sufficient for all the believers and the best disposer of all affairs.