

THE BATTLE OF KARBALA No.1335

October, 680 - October, 2015

THE SADDEST DAYS OF ISLAMIC HISTORY: DAYS OF MUHARRAM

On day of Ashura people from Halep gather at night on Antioha door. Men and women, a huge crowd, and they spend night in constant weeping after (Holy) Family (of Propfet Muhammad s.a.w.a.). During Ashura shi'ias weep for Karbala. They recount the oppressions and tribulations which the (Holy) Family suffered at the hands of Yazid and Shimr. They utter shrieks mingled with cries of woe and grief: the whole plain and desert is filled (with their cries). A stranger (who was) a poet, arrived from the road on the Day of Ashura and heard that lamentation. He left the city and resolved (to go) in that direction: he set out to investigate (the cause of) those shrill cries.

A stranger (who was) a poet, arrived from the road on the Day of Ashura and heard that lamentation. He left the city and resolved (to go) in that direction: he set out to investigate (the cause of) those shrill cries. He went along asking many questions in his search- "What is this sorrow? Whose death has occasioned this mourning. It must be a great personage who has died: such a concourse is no small affair. Inform me of his name and titles, for I am a stranger and ye belong to this town. What is his name and profession and character? (Tell me) in order that I may compose an elegy on his gracious qualities. I will make an elegy- for I am a poet- that I may carry away from here some provision and morsels of food."

"Eh," said one (of them), "are you mad? You are not a Shi'ite, you are an enemy of the (Holy) Family. Don't you know that the Day of Ashura is (a day of) mourning for a single soul that is more excellent than a (whole) generation? How should this anguish (tragedy) be lightly esteemed by the true believer? Love for the ear-ring is in proportion to love for the ear. In the true believer's view the mourning for that pure spirit is more celebrated than a hundred floods of Noah."

"Yes" said he; "but where (in relation to our time) is the epoch of Yazid? When did this grievous tragedy occur? How late has (the news of) it arrived here! The eyes of the blind have seen that loss, the ears of the deaf have heard that story. Have you been asleep till now, that (only) now you have rent your garments in mourning?"

Then, O sleepers, mourn for yourselves, for this heavy slumber is an evil death. A royal spirit escaped from a prison: why should we rend our garments and how should we gnaw our hands?

Since they were monarchs of the (true) religion, 'twas the hour of joy (for them) when they broke their bonds. They sped towards the pavilion of empire, they cast off their fetters and chains. 'Tis the day of (their) kingship and pride and sovereignty , if thou hast (even) an atom of knowledge of them.

And if thou has not (this) knowledge, go, weep for thyself, for thou art disbelieving in the removal (from this world to the next) and in the assembly of the Last Judgment. Mourn for thy corrupt heart and religion, for it (thy heart) sees naught but this old earth. Or if it is seeing (the spiritual world), why is it not brave and supporting (others) and self-sacrificing and fully contented?

In thy countenance where is the happiness (which is the effect) of the wine of (true) religion? If thou hast beheld the Ocean (of Bounty), where is the bounteous hand? He that has beheld the River does not grudge water (to the thirsty), especially he that has beheld the Sea and (those) Clouds."

Remembering the Battle of Karbala
From the Mathnawi of Jalaluddin Rumi
Book 6 (777-805)
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