

The spectacle of Imam Husain's (a.s.) martyrdom in the words of Imam Mahdi (A.T.F.S.)

The monumental incident of Karbala has been illustrated in historical books vividly, and at great length. However, some historians have recorded this incident without adequate research on this topic. This has robbed their works of credibility. On the contrary, their account of the incident of Karbala has become the subject of intense debates and controversies among the common Muslims.

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has depicted the incident of Karbala in 'Ziarate Naahiyah', in graphic detail, highlighting the enormity of this incident. This can only be expected from Imam (a.t.f.s.), as he alone is the inheritor and successor of Imam Husain (a.s.), and knows best what atrocities were heaped on the latter in Karbala. We have mentioned below extracts from this heart wrenching account of the incident of Karabala, that underlines the grief of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), for his grandfather, Imam Husain (a.s.). Imam (a.t.f.s.) being the Imam of his time has power over everything after Allah. When he narrates this incident, it is as if the incident actually unfolds before his very eyes. He from his '**Ilme Ghaib**' (knowledge of the unseen) is aware of certain facets of Karbala, that even the most astute historian could never discern. That is why in many ways this is the most reliable account of Karbala. On reading this narrative, what strikes us as particularly noteworthy is that, common Shias cannot restrain their grief and anguish regarding Imam Husain (a.s.), while they were not actually present in Karbala, but Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) actually witnesses the entire incident, and nothing about Karbala is concealed from his knowledge. Therefore, his distress and anguish is manifold when compared to ours. Unlike us. Imam (a.t.f.s.) has a first hand account - narrative of all the brutalities that were perpetrated on Imam Husain (a.s.) in Karbala, the intense thirst, the scorching heat, the humiliation of the ladies, Shimr's malicious disposition and the children's pleas for help.

It is hoped that this Ziarat will also leave our readers aggrieved, with tears welling up in their eyes, as it leaves our Imam (a.t.f.s.) sorrowful, with tears of blood. It is also hoped that readers will get some insight into Imam's (a.t.f.s.) frame of mind and sense of bereavement, every time he recites this Ziarat.

Imam Husain's (a.s.) exalted station and unrivaled virtues

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) deliberates on Imam Husain's (a.s.) excellent traits in Ziarate Nahiyya thus, **"O master! You were most careful about your duties and responsibilities, possessed outstanding virtues, were matchless in generosity and nobility, always performed 'Namaze Shab'" in the darkness of nights. The ways you adopted were firm and resolute, while you were the most exalted of Allah's creatures in virtues and magnificence, and were without parallel in genealogy. You possessed an august station, boundless merits, were a model for others to emulate, dignified, magnanimous, most knowledgeable and discerning. You possessed brilliance and radiance, recognised Allah, were a beacon of guidance, fearful (of Allah), sympathetic and compassionate towards His creatures, loved Allah and submitted to His decrees quickly, without protest.'** **'You, are the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) son, protector of Quran, helper and aide of Islam, most eager in obeying Allah's commands and upholder of**

covenants and pledges. You remained aloof from transgressors, readily endeavoured in Allah's ways, with your heart and soul, so as to realise His aim, and remained engrossed in 'Ruku' and prostration for long duration.' 'Master, you renounced this world, and looked at it with the indifference of one who was all set to leave it, and as one fearful of it. Your hopes and aspirations were affixed beyond the world. Your endeavours and zeal remained unaffected by the distractions of the world. You never cast even a fleeting glance, at its pomp and splendour, and were always attached only with the Hereafter."

Servitude of Imam Husain (a.s.)

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) presents himself in Imam Husain's (a.s.) service, and sends his salutations upon him as if he is the attendant, while the latter is his master. Imam (a.t.f.s.) exclaims, **"O master, accept my salutations. I present my salutations to you with expectations of success and prosperity. O master, accept salutations of the one who has approached you after having recognised your honour and distinction, has acknowledged your guardianship (wilayat) with sincerity, aspires to gain proximity with Allah through your love, and dissociates himself from your enemies. Accept salutations of your distressed devotee, whose heart is wrenched due to the grief and tribulations that you were made to undergo, and who sheds tears of blood in sympathy for you."**

O master, accept salutations of the one who is distressed and restless, from your grief and suffering. Master, acknowledge salutations of the one, who, if he was present in Karbala, would have confronted swords and lances, and laid down his life so as to safeguard yours. He would have struggled in your path with intense fervour, and would have wrestled with death to help your cause. He would have displayed his courage, gallantry and grit in combat. He would have aided you in confronting the rebels, willingly, and in the process would have sacrificed his heart and soul, wealth, family and children, everything, in your way."

Imam Husain's (a.s.) departure from Medina

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) recollects how Imam Husain (a.s.) was forced to forsake the cherished city of Medina, his place of birth, and the burial place of his esteemed grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) reflects,

'The time finally arrived when tyranny reared its ugly head and despotism casts its dark shadow.'

'Oppression summoned its cronies, and marched forth to wage battle against you. At that time, you had taken asylum in your grandfather's shrine, remained aloof from the tyrants and despots, confined yourself to the niche of the mosque and had forsaken all inordinate desires and craving. You forcefully renounced the evils in society with all your faculties, and prohibited the people from adopting corrupt and depraved ways. Then through your discerning knowledge, you declined from paying the allegiance that was sought from you, and instead resolved to confront the forces of transgression and corruption.'

'Then you set forth with your family, children, Shias, lovers and adherents and clearly distinguished the truth from falsehood with explicit arguments and proofs. You invited the people with wisdom and excellent exhortations. You exhorted the people towards obedience of Allah's commands, and restrained the people from giving into their corrupt and debase tendencies. But the people resolved to confront you with tyranny and oppression. But you continued to warn them about Allah's wrath, and exhausted all arguments, and (when everything failed) you finally decided

to wage 'jihad' against them. The people abandoned the allegiance that they had paid to you, violated the covenant that they had made with you, and insisted in waging battle with you, and in the process displeased your Lord and your respected grandfather."

Imam Husain's (a.s.) rank and distinction

Imam Mahdi (a.s.) enumerates the unlimited merits of Imam Husain (a.s.) in Ziarate Nahiyah thus:

Salutations upon Husain, who sacrificed his life in Allah's way with intense sincerity and earnestness.
Salutations upon the one, who submitted to Allah's commands secretly and openly.
Salutations upon the one, whose soil is blessed with healing powers.
Salutations upon the one, within whose shrine Allah accepts all prayers.
Salutations upon the one, within whose progeny continues the chain of Imamate.
Salutations upon the son of Allah's final Apostle (s.a.w.a.).
Salutations upon the son of the chief of successors (a.s.).
Salutations upon the beloved son of Fatima Zahra (s.a.).
Salutations upon the grandson of Khadijatul Kubra (s.a.).
Salutations upon the inheritor of 'Sidratul Muntaha'
Salutations upon the son of 'Jannatul Mawa'.
Salutations upon the son of 'Zamzam' and 'Safa'.
Salutations upon the one, who was purified by Allah, the High.
Salutations upon the one, who was a source of immense pride for Jibraeel
Salutations upon the one, who was put to sleep in the cradle by 'Mikaeel'.
Salutations upon the fifth individual from the 'People of the Cloak'.
Salutations upon the one, who is a pride of all martyrs.
Salutations upon the one, on whom the angels have wept bitterly.
Salutations upon the one, whose progeny is pure and immaculate.
Salutations upon the chief of religion.
Salutations upon the chief of all chiefs.

The Oppressions on I. Husain (a.s.)

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) reflects upon the astonishing tribulations that Imam Husain (a.s.) was subjected to, thus:

Salutations upon the one, who was smeared with blood and dust.
Salutations upon the one, whose government was looted.
Salutations upon the torn shirts.
Salutations upon the parched lips.
Salutations upon the ones, who were victims of untold grief and anguish.
Salutations upon those souls, whose bodies were put to the sword through deception.
Salutations upon the unshrouded and unattended corpses.
Salutations upon the corpses whose colours were transformed by the scorching heat.
Salutations upon the pools of blood that were absorbed by the earth of Karbala.
Salutations upon the scattered, dismembered limbs.
Salutations upon the (severed) heads that were raised on lances.
Salutations upon the pure ladies, that were paraded without their veils.
Salutations upon the one, whose bloodthirsty enemies violated their covenants regarding his honour and the honour of his family.
Salutations upon the one, with the shedding of his blood, the sanctity of Islam was desecrated.
Salutations upon the one, who was inflicted with fatal wounds all over his body.
Salutations upon the one, whose acute thirst was quenched with the stabbing of

prickly spears and lances.

Salutations upon the one, who was targeted for oppression and tyranny, and whose tents and clothes were plundered.

Salutations upon the one, who was, abandoned alone in the universe.

Salutations upon the one, who was left unclothed the likeness of which is not found.

Salutations upon the one, whose jugular vein was severed.

Salutations upon the supporter of religion, who waged a holy war without any assistance and support.

Salutations upon the holy beard that was dyed in blood.

Salutations upon the cheeks that was smeared with dust.

Salutations upon the plundered corpse.

Salutations upon the blessed teeth, that were jabbed at disrespectfully, with a cane.

Salutations upon the pure head, that was hoisted on a lance.

Salutations upon the purebred corpses, whose limbs were scattered across the desert.

'Alas! If only I had been with you..

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) rues the fact that he was not present in Karbala, thus:

"O my master, I was born after 'the incident of Karbala, and by the decree of Allah was deprived of the honour of assisting you. I could not participate along with the others in the battle, and could not repel your enemies. That is why I shall always feel agitated and disturbed at your tribulations and sufferings, and out of my distress and anguish, I shall lament ceaselessly for you, morning and evening, and in place of tears, I shall shed blood for you."

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in his restlessness and anxiety narrates further:

'Then finally you plunged into the battlefield. You wielded your (sword) 'Zulfiqar', and trampled upon the army of transgressors with lightening speed. You hurtled into the clouds of dust (raised by the horses), and displayed valour, that reminded the onlookers about the valour of your father, Ali (a.s.). Your enemies when they witnessed your resolve, steadfastness and gallantry, were demoralised, and resorted to trickery and deceit, and laid traps to overcome you. With this objective, Umar b. Sa'ad, the accursed, ordered that your camp should be deprived of water, and all means of access to the river were blocked.

'Then the enemies commenced the battle, and assaulted you with lances and spears from all directions. As a result of this ceaseless assault of swords and arrows, you were fatally wounded. Seeing your helplessness, you were then made the target of loot and' plunder.'

'You were foremost in the battlefield, and embraced the difficulties and afflictions with amazing courage, which perplexed even the angels of the celestial world.'

'Then the raiders surrounded you from all sides. They continued to inflict wounds upon your already wounded body, not giving you time even to breathe. And very soon you were all alone, without any aide and ally. You in your solitude witnessed everything, with steadfastness and fortitude. You remained preoccupied in shielding your women and children from the attacks of the raiders. Till the time, the enemies brought you down from your mount, onto the earth.'

'You fell upon the earth while your body was disfigured with wounds. Then the enemies charged you from all sides, and trampled you with the hooves of their horses.'

'Then the perspiration of death appeared on your forehead, and your hands and feet folded and unfolded to the right and left. You glanced helplessly for the last time at your tents, children and women. And your loyal mount galloped towards your camp, weeping and lamenting.'

'When the ladies of your house saw your horse, without its rider, with its saddle hanging, they became restless and came out of the tents. Their hair was tousled, while they slapped their faces, and wailed and lamented. They were calling out the names of their ancestors out of sheer helplessness, and rushed to the spot of (Imam Husain's (a.s.)) martyrdom.'

Martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.)

'Then Shimr, the accursed, straddled your chest and began running his sword across your neck. He clasped your pure hair, with his (impure) hands and was slaughtering you with his sharp Indian sword. To the extent that you became motionless and stopped breathing, and your head was triumphantly raised on the lance.'

Arrest of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.)

Regarding the detention of the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) relates:
'And your women were apprehended like slaves, chained in heavy, iron fetters, and were made to mount camels without saddles. The sultry heat of the desert had transformed the colour of their faces, while they were taken around in the desert and jungles. Their hands were bound to their necks, and in this condition, they were paraded through markets and streets.'

Damnation upon the killers of Imam Husain (a.s.)

"Woe be upon the disobedient transgressors, who in fact killed Islam by killing you."

The oppressed progeny of Imam Husain (a.s.)

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) recites:

Salutations upon you, and upon your martyred sons.
Salutations upon you, and upon your progeny, who aided you under most difficult circumstances.
Salutations upon you, and upon the angels in the vicinity of your shrine.
Salutations upon your brother (Imam Hasan), who was poisoned.
Salutations upon Ali Akbar.
Salutations upon the infant (Ali Asgar).
Salutations upon the delicate bodies, that were left without clothes.
Salutations upon your family, who were paraded from one place to another.
Salutations upon those corpses, that were scattered over the plains of the desert.
Salutations upon the ones who were forcefully evicted from their native place.
Salutations upon those who were buried without shrouds.
Salutations upon those heads that were severed from the bodies.'

O Allah! Make us share these moments of sorrow and anguish of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). And when Imam (a.t.f.s.) reappears, include us among his companions, so that we can avenge the atrocities that were heaped on Imam Husain (a.s.), alongside Imam (a.t.f.s.).

Imam's (a.t.f.s.) salutations upon those who visit Imam Husain's (a.s.) mausoleum

Imam (a.t.f.s.) narrates:

"Salutations upon those who stand below your dome, upon those who faithfully hover over your earth, upon those who circumambulate (tawaaf) your pure tomb, and upon the angels who frequent your-shrine."

References

These were extracts from Ziarate Naahiyya. Illustrious Shia scholars have recorded this Ziarat in their books, viz.,

1. Tohfatus Zaa'ir by Allama Majlisi (r.a.)
2. Kitabul Mazaar by Shaykh Mufeed (r.a.)
3. Iqbal by Sayyed Ibne Taoos (r.a.)
4. Biharul Anwaar, vol. 98, pages 317-328 by Allama Majlisi (r.a.)