

Fikr-e-Raza

A Voice of Ah-lu-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah

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“My faith is that the progress of Islam does not depend on the use of sword by its believers, but the result of the supreme sacrifice of Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him) the great saint”.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

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The Historical Significance of 'Ashura

Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan (Radiyahallahu 'anh) relates: I heard the Messenger of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) say: **"It is the day of 'Ashura. Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has not made fasting obligatory for you. But I am fasting. He who likes to observe fast among you should do so, and he who likes not to observe it (does not have to) observe it."** [Sahih Muslim]

Abu Qatada (Radiyahallahu 'anh) relates that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said: **"that the fast on the 10th of Muharram atones for the sins of the preceding year"**. [Sahih Muslim]

Abu Huraira (Radiyahallahu 'anh) reports that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said: **"that after Ramadan, the fasts of Muharram have the greatest excellence"**. [Sahih Muslim]

Alhamdulillah, Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has blessed us to see another year. The first month of this year is Muharram. In this month is an excellent day—the day of 'Ashura—which falls on the 10th of Muharram. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) recommended: **"that we fast on this day, by his Sunnah. He also indicated how we should observe the fast of 'Ashura"**.

Hakam ibn Al-Arat (Radiyahallahu 'anh) relates: I went to Ibn Abbas (Radiyahallahu 'anh)... I said to him: Tell me about fasting on 'Ashura. He said, "When you seen the new moon of Muharram count the (days) and (begin to) observe fast on the 9th." I said to him: "Is it how the Holy Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) observed the fast?" He said, "Yes." [Sahih Muslim]

Hazrat Ibn Abbas (Radiyahallahu 'anh) relates that when the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) said: **"If I survive till next year, I will definitely observe fast on the 9th of Muharram (as well)." [Sahih Muslim]**

(Note: What the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) meant was that he would also fast on the 9th as well as the 10th to which he was accustomed. We also should try fasting on the 9th and the 10th of Muharram.)

Hazrat Ibn Abbas (Radiyahallahu 'anh) reports that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) arrived in Madinah and found the Jews observing fast on the day of 'Ashura... They said: "It is the day of great (significance) when Allah delivered Hazrat Musa ('Alaihis-Salaam) and his people and drowned Pharoah and his people, and Sayyidina Musa ('Alaihis-Salaam) observed fast out of gratitude. And we also observe it." The Holy Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) responded: **"We have more right, and we have closer connection with Sayyidina Musa ('Alaihis-Salaam) than you have"**; so Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Sallam) observed fast (on the day of 'Ashura) and gave us orders to observe it. [Sahih Bukhari and Muslim]

'Ashura is a day of great historical significance. On this day: Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) accepted the repentance of Sayyidina Adam ('Alaihis-Salaam) after his exile from Paradise; Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) saved Sayyidina Nuh ('Alaihis-Salaam) and his companions in the ark; Allah extinguished the fire in which Sayyidina Ibrahim ('Alaihis-Salaam) was thrown by Nimrod; And Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) spoke directly to Sayyidina Musa ('Alaihis-Salaam) and gave him the Commandments. On this same 10th of Muharram, Sayyidina Ayyub ('Alaihis-Salaam) was restored to health (from leprosy); Sayyidina Yusuf ('Alaihis-Salaam) was reunited with his father Ya'qub ('Alaihis-Salaam); Sayyidina Yunus ('Alaihis-Salaam) was taken out from the belly of the fish; and the sea was divided



as the nation of Israel was delivered from captivity and Pharaoh's army was destroyed. 'Ashura is also the day when Sayyidina Dawud ('Alaihis-Salaam) was forgiven; the kingdom of Sulaiman ('Alaihis-Salaam) was restored; Sayyidina Isa ('Alaihis-Salaam) was raised to Jannah and Sayyidina al-Husayn (Radiyallahu 'anh) (the Holy Prophet's, Sallallahu 'alayhi wa Salam, grandson) achieved the honor of Martyrdom.

Worship Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) as much as you can on 'Ashura. Whoever fasts on this day is like one who fasts all his life. Whoever clothes a naked person Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) will release him from a painful punishment. He who visits a sick person, Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) will grant him a reward that will not be decreased. Whoever places his hand on an orphan's head, or feeds a hungry person or gives water to a thirsty man, Allah will feed him a feast from Paradise and will quench his thirst with Salsabil (a wine that does not intoxicate). And who ever takes a Ghusl on this day will enjoy excellent health and freedom from sickness and indolence. Whoever provides generously for his family on this day, Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) will be generous to him throughout this year. And whoever applies Kuhl to his eyes will never suffer from eye-sore again, inSha'Allah al-Aziz.

O' Allah! Bless us to perform good deeds and gain their reward on 'Ashura. Make the new year one of unity, cooperation and success for Muslims in this city and around the world. Ameen.

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The Head of Imam Hussain (RadiAllahu anhu)

Imam Hussein (Radi Allahu anhu)'s body is buried in Karbala, Iraq but his head is buried in his Mosque in Cairo, Egypt.

Cairo is only one of the seven different possible locations for the burial of the head. This version assumes that the head was buried in 'Asqalān, a town on the coast of southern Palestine. Here is a brief account of how the head reached Cairo.

In the year 491/1098, the Fatimid *wazīr* al-Afdāl conducted an expedition to Jerusalem to bring its Artuqid rulers under Fatimid suzerainty. On his way back to Cairo from Jerusalem he passed by 'Asqalān and found the burial place of the head dismantled, so he removed the head to a more suitable place there and had a mausoleum built for it in 'Asqalān.



In the following year the Franks attacked Jerusalem and the Fatimids lost control over it. 'Asqalān itself being at the front line was repeatedly attacked by the Franks.

Then, about 55 years later, in the year 548/1153, during the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Fā'iz, the Franks launched a major attack on 'Asqalān. The then Fatimid *wazīr* al-Şāliḥ Ṭalā'i' b. Ruzzīk, fearing the desecration of the head, had it brought to Cairo for burial in the same year.

This account is preserved in *Akḥbār Miṣr* (*sub anno* 491) of the Egyptian historian Ibn Muyassar (d. 677/1278) whose work has partially survived in a unique manuscript derived from a copy made by the famous historian of Egypt al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) and which is quoted by subsequent historians with some additional details.

Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Yūsuf b. Jalab Rāghib Ibn Muyassar, *Akḥbār Miṣr*, ed. Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, Cairo, 1981, pp. 65-66.

Quotations about Imam Hussain

(May Allah be pleased with him)

by Non-Muslims

Mahatma Gandhi

"My faith is that the progress of Islam does not depend on the use of sword by its believers, but the result of the supreme sacrifice of Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him) the great saint."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

"Imam Hussain's (May Allah be pleased with him) sacrifice is for all groups and communities, an example of the path of righteousness."

Reynold Alleyne Nicholson

"Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him) fell, pierced by an arrow, and his brave followers were cut down beside him to the last man. Muhammadan tradition, which with rare exceptions is uniformly hostile to the Umayyad dynasty, regards Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him) as a martyr and Yazid as his murderer."

[A Literary History of the Arabs, Cambridge, 1930, p. 197]

Edward Gibbon

"In a distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him) will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader."

[The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, London, 1911, volume 5, pp. 391-2]

Rabindranath Tagore

"In order to keep alive justice and truth, instead of an army or weapons, success can

be achieved by sacrificing lives, exactly what Imam Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him) did."

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

"The sacrifice of Imam Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him) is not limited to one country, or nation, but it is the hereditary state of the brotherhood of all mankind."

Dr. Radha Krishnan

"Though Imam Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him) gave his life almost 1300 years ago, but his indestructible soul rules the hearts of people even today."

Swami Shankaracharya

"It is Hussain's (May Allah be pleased with him) sacrifice that has kept Islam alive or else in this world there would be no one left to take Islam's name."

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu

"I congratulate Muslims that from among them, Hussain (May Allah be pleased with him), a great human being was born, who is reverted and honored totally by all communities."

Charles Dickens

"If Husain (May Allah be pleased with him) fought to quench his worldly desires, then I do not understand why his sisters, wives and children accompanied him. It stands to reason therefore that he sacrificed purely for Islam."

Thomas Carlyle

"The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of karbala is that Husain(a.s.) and his companions were the rigid believers of God. They illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to truth and falsehood. The victory of Husain(a.s.) despite his minority marvels me!"

Dr. K. Sheldrake

"Husain (May Allah be pleased with him) marched with little company not to glory, not to power or wealth, but to a supreme sacrifice and every member of that gallant band, male and female, knew that the foes were implacable, were not only ready to fight but to kill. Denied even water for the children, they remained parched under a burning sun, amid scorching sands yet no one faltered for a moment and bravely faced the greatest odds without flinching."

Brown (A Literary History of Persia) writes:

"As a reminder, the blood-stained field of karbala where the grandson of the Aspostle of God (SWM) fell at length, tortured by thirst and surrounded by the bodies of his murdered kinsmen, has been at any time since then sufficient to evoke, even in the most lukewarm and heedless, the deepest emotion, the most frantic grief and the exaltation of spirit before which pain, danger, and death shrink to unconsidered trifles. yearly, on the tenth day of Muaharram, the tragedy is rehearsed in Persia, in India, in Turkey, in Egypt, wherever a Shiite community or colony exists:...As I write it all comes back; the wailing chant, the sobbing multitudes, the white reaiment red with blood from self-inflicted wounds, the intoxication of grief and sympathy."

Reynold Alleyne Nicholson(1868-1945), Sir Thomas Adams Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge, writes:

"Husayn fell, pierced by an arrow, and his brave followers were cut down beside him to the last

man. Muhammadan tradition, which with rare exceptions is uniformly hostile to the Umayyad dynasty, regards Husayn as a martyr and Yazid as his murderer."

[A Literary History of the Arabs, Cambridge, 1930, p. 197]

Robert Durey Osborn (1835-1889), the Major of the Bengal Staff Corps, writes:

"Hosain had a child named Abdallah, only a year old. He had accompanied his father in this terrible march. Touched by its cries, he took the infant in his arms and wept. At that instant, a shaft from the hostile ranks pierced the child's ear, and it expired in his father's arms. Hosain placed the little corpse upon the ground. 'We come from God, and we return to Him!' he cried; 'O Lord, give me strength to bear these misfortunes!' ... Faint with thirst, and exhausted with wounds, he fought with desperate courage, slaying several of his antagonists. At last he was cut down from behind; at the same instance a lance was thrust through his back and bore him to the ground; as the dealer of this last blow withdrew his weapon, the ill-fated son of Ali rolled over a corpse. The head was severed from the trunk; the trunk was trampled under the hoofs of the victors' horses; and the next morning the women and a surviving infant son were carried away to Koufa. The bodies of Hosain and his followers were left unburied on the spot where they fell. For three days they remained exposed to the sun and the night dews, the vultures and the prowling animals of the waste; but then the inhabitants of a neighboring village, struck with horror that the body of a grandson of the Prophet should be thus shamefully abandoned to the unclean beasts of the field, dared the anger of Obaidallah, and interred the body of the martyr and those of his heroic friends."

[Islam Under the Arabs, Delaware, 1976, pp. 126-7]