

Mourning from the Viewpoint of Reason

One of the objections put forward by certain skeptics, such as the Wahhabis, is why the Shi'ahs and lovers of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) mourn or wail for the distresses which befell Allah's *awliya'* [*awliya'*] and why they cry for their sufferings and hold mourning ceremonies for them.

They ask: why do the Shi'ahs hit their chests in lamentation? Why do they dwell on past events? Do *awliya'* of Allah need us to mourn them or is it we who are in need of mourning for them?

The Wahhabis consider mourning for the *awliya'* of Allah to be an act of innovation and heresy and say that there is no evidence in Islam to prove that it is permitted to hold mourning ceremonies. Therefore, they contend that mourning ceremonies are not a part of the *shari'ah* and must be abandoned.

We will now examine this topic on different levels.

1. Mourning and the revival of the culture of 'Ashura

With recourse to sound reasoning, we come to know that holding mourning ceremonies for Allah's *awliya'*, especially the master and leader of all the martyrs Imam al-Husayn (as), is in accordance with logic because honoring Allah's *awliya'* through various ceremonies amounts to revering their great personalities and reviving their messages.

Without doubt, any nation or community which does not honor the great personalities of its history is condemned to failure and doomed to destruction. It is often a few great people who build history.

Some of Imam al-Husayn's (as) messages

1. "In circumstances like these, I do not see death to be anything save prosperity and life with the oppressors is nothing but shame and distress."¹

«إِنِّي لَا أَرَى الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا سَعَادَةً، وَالْحَيَاةَ مَعَ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا بَرْمًا»

2. “Death with honor is nothing but eternal life while life with abjectness is nothing but death.”

« .ليس الموتُ في سبيلِ العزِّ إلا حياة خالدة، وليست الحياةُ معَ الذلِّ إلا الموت الذي لاحياة معه»

3. “Beware that the illegitimate son of an illegitimately born man (Ibn Ziyad) has given me two options: either to draw my sword and fight, or to wear the dress of abjectness by swearing allegiance to Yazid. However, acceptance of abjectness is very far from us.”

«...ألا وإنَّ الدعي ابن الدعي قد ركز بين اثنتين، بين السلَّة والذلة وهيهات منا الذلة»

4. “We are from Allah and to whom is our return. When the Islamic community is afflicted by the governance of the like of Yazid, we have to bid farewell to Islam.”²

« .إنَّا لله وإنا إليه راجعون وعلى الاسلام السلام إذ قد بليت الأمة براع مثل يزيد»

5. “I have risen not to create disunion and inequity nor oppression and corruption among the Muslims, but to rectify and reform the *ummah* of my ancestor the Holy Prophet (S). I want to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. I desire to revive the way of my grandfather, the Holy Prophet (S), and my father ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib.”³

« .إنِّي لم أخرج أشراً ولا بطراً ولا مفسداً ولا ظالماً، وإنما خرجت لطلب الإصلاح في أمةِ جدِّي صلَّى اللهُ عليه...»
« .وآله، أريد أن أمر بالمعروفِ وأنهاى عن المنكرِ وأسير بسيرةِ جدِّي وأبي علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام»

2. The affectionate relationship between the Islamic community and Allah’s *awliya*’ (as)

One of the most effective ways to prove people’s beliefs is inciting their sentiments. Stirring up people’s feelings is an important way of explaining or justifying their political and social beliefs. Man is more liable to be influenced when he looks at issues from the emotional point of view than from logical or other viewpoints. In other words, when it comes to proving man’s beliefs, the emotional or psychological perspective is more effective than other methods.

Now, when we pay attention to the issue of the martyrdom of Allah’s *awliya*’ (as), especially the Doyen of Martyrs, Imam al–Husayn (as), we come to the conclusion that reminding people about the sad event of ‘Ashura and refreshing their memories about what transpired in the history of Islam will result in incitement of their feelings.

In this way, we can take those great people to be our role models in life. We can thus communicate their messages to the people, because the messages and orders we receive from Allah's *awliya'* (as) are in actual fact messages and commands of Allah.

It is for this reason that after the event of 'Ashura, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (as) used to weep and mourn for the martyrs of Karbala, especially for his father Imam al-Husayn (as).

The issue of mourning the *awliya'* of Allah becomes clearer when we bear in mind the tribute paid by the Holy Prophet (S) to Imam al-Husayn (as).

The Holy Prophet (S) said,

« .حسين مَنِّي وأنا من حسين، أحبَّ الله من أحبَّ حسيناً»

“Al-Husayn is from me and I am from al-Husayn, Allah loves the one who loves al-Husayn.”⁴

Similarly, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

« .الحسنُ والحسينُ سيِّدا شبابِ أهلِ الجنَّةِ»

“Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the two masters of the youths of Paradise.”⁵

3. Spiritual benefits derived from the atmosphere at gatherings where mourning for Allah's *awliya'* takes place

Whenever mourning ceremonies are held for Imam al-Husayn (as), his heavenly spirit and divine soul is always present at the gatherings. This is also true of the other *awliya'* of Allah (as); wherever mourning ceremonies are held for them, their divine souls are present in those gatherings.

Therefore, people from all walks of life can benefit spiritually by attending such mourning ceremonies. Elderly people and children alike can derive vast spiritual benefits from the graces and favors present in these ceremonies.

It has been narrated that one of the great people had said, “For the first few months after birth, take the cradles of your newborns to academic gatherings and assemblies where invocation of Allah takes place.

Take them to *Husayniyyahs*⁶. Carry them with you when you go to places of mourning where the name of the Doyen of Martyrs, Imam al-Husayn (as), is mentioned because the souls of the newborns are like magnets; they easily absorb knowledge and the invocations which are recited. They easily absorb the sacred soul of Imam al-Husayn (as).

Even though the newborn cannot speak, it still perceives and absorbs what occurs around it. And if it is taken to a place or places where sin is committed during the period of its childhood, the sins which are committed there corrupt the baby. If it is, on the contrary, taken to places of worship and knowledge, the newborn perceives the purity and serenity of those places.”

That same great man also said, “You should place the cradles of your newborns next to the rooms of commemoration of the martyrs of Karbala and the rooms where invoking Allah takes place. This was the custom of the scholars of past times. The effects which the newborn absorbs during this period remain firm and stable in its soul up to the end of its life.

They become a part of its instincts and natural attributes, because the newborn has absolute ability to perceive during the period of its infancy, even though simple or ordinary people do not comprehend this important secret.”

4. Reform and guidance of the community

In addition to the fact that people gathering in mourning ceremonies where the name of the Doyen of Martyrs is mentioned express and feel love for Imam al-Husayn (as), they also attain to great graces from these gatherings because eulogy of Imam al-Husayn (as) is presented along with discussion of Islamic sciences including beliefs, laws and morals.

By participating in such gatherings, people can achieve spiritual prosperity and stimulate perfection of their faith, and that is exactly what Imam al-Husayn (as) sacrificed his life for.

- [1.](#) Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 14, p. 218.
- [2.](#) Khwarazmi, Maqatal al-Imam al-Husayn (as), vol. 1, p. 184.
- [3.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 44, p. 328.
- [4.](#) Ibn Majah, Sunan, vol. 1, p. 51, Fada'il Ashab Rasul Allah (s).
- [5.](#) Al-Tirmidhi, Al-Sahih, vol. 5, p. 617; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 3, p. 369.
- [6.](#) Places of assembly specially built for mourning Imam al-Husayn. [trans.]

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