

Prostrating on the Turba

One of the methods adopted by the Imams from among the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, in order to acquaint people with the oppression to which al-Husayn ('a) was subjected, and to distance them from those who robbed him of what rightfully belonged to him, that his uprising perfected the Prophet's call and paved its path, is their requirement to prostrate on the *turba*.^{[1](#)}

One of the reasons behind such a requirement is that five times a day, the person performing the prayers recalls, whenever he prostrates, the sacrifice of the soul of the Prophet (S) and that of his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), as well as that of his companions, for the sake of firming the foundations of the right principle.

He will also recall the calamities the Master of Martyrs endured and from which even solid rocks would split, meeting them with perseverance that drew the admiration of the angels in the heavens, as the wording in his *ziyarat* indicates.

Then he recalls the fact that this soil was drenched with the blood of the oppressed one and that of the pure ones from among his Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and companions, those who were described by the Commander of the Faithful ('a) as the masters of martyrs, none before them reached their status, nor those who follow them ever will, as stated on p. 270, chapter 88, of *Kamil al-Ziyarat* of Ibn Qawlawayh al-Qummi.

The heart of the one who is faithful to them would be filled with emotion; tears would trickle down his eyes, and he distances himself from anyone who antagonized them and all those who did likewise as well as those who shed their blood or facilitated such a most foul deed.

It would become quite clear for him that this great revolution smashed the altars of oppression. Succeeding generations came to know how a most precious person found death easy in defense of the creed. So is their order to make rosary beads of the said soil and to use them to praise the Almighty in order to achieve the same precious objective.

All these objectives are explained by Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) although the nation did not comprehend their minute mysteries.

Others, due to their ignorance, charged us with starting a *bid’a* by doing so. The misguidance of such critics is the outcome of their ignorance of these wise mysteries and their own inability to comprehend the *hadith* stated by the one who conveyed the *wahy* of the heavens: “The earth has been made a mosque for me and a means of purification.”

This small piece of earth, prepared for the purpose of prostrating, is made of dust mixed with water, so it is a testimony to the authenticity of this agreed upon *hadith*.

¹. A turba is a small piece of dry clay preferably from the place where Imam Husayn (‘a) was martyred. N. Tr.

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