

The Eleventh Night in the Company of al-Husayn (‘a)

Anyone who follows the path of the Infallible Imams, peace be upon them, will surely feel very grieved if he had the opportunity to spend the eleventh night at the grave of the oppressed Imam (‘a).

Signs of disappointment and depression as well as grief will have painted their marks on his face upon witnessing such a tremendous calamity. He would have heard the moaning and groaning, the sighs and cries of those whom al-Husayn (‘a) had left behind.

He would have closely witnessed the corpses of the Progeny of Muhammad (‘a), who had sacrificed themselves for Islam, lying on the ground drenched in their blood as the wind blew upon them in that wilderness: parts cut off by the spears, from whose blood swords drank, and whatever was left was crushed under the horses' hooves...

Whoever had the chance to come close to the ladies, who grew up in the home of revelation, would find them shedding their tears on those sacred corpses. The women were crying, sobbing, beating their chests, their hair protruding on their faces [1](#).

He would then console them with his own incessant tears, with his loud cries and generous grief.

It goes without saying that such a grief is related to the truthful one, Fatima al-Zahra’ (‘a), to consoling her, and to fulfilling the wish of the Imams of Guidance, peace be upon them, according to many traditions reported in all such circumstances.

There are traditions from which one may derive such a conclusion if he only contemplates upon them. For example, there is a tradition reported by Malik al-Juhni who quotes Imam [al-Baqir] Abu Ja’far [as-Sadiq] (‘a) saying,

“Whoever visits al-Husayn's grave on ‘Ashura and remains there mourning will meet Allah on the Day of

Judgment receiving the rewards due to two million performances of the *Hajj* and two million performances of the *'umra* and two million campaigns in the company of the Messenger of Allah and the Guided Imams.”[2](#)

Scholars of Arabic who examined the original text of this statement conclude that all such rewards are due to one who remains there all day long till the night even if he does not spend the night there. But Jabir al-Ju'fi's tradition, wherein he quotes Abu 'Abdullah [Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq] ('a), sheds a light that may help understand it better.

He has said, “One who visits al-Husayn's grave [shrine] and spends a night there will be as though he had been martyred in his company.”[3](#) This statement apparently implies staying there for one night prior to spending the day at his gravesite.

Discerning this tradition will let one conclude that one who stays at the grave of the one who sacrificed himself for Islam, and who did so suffering from thirst, for a full day, ought not depart from there during the [eleventh] night the like of which had never been witnessed by the daughters of the Messenger of Allah (S) and the trust of the caliphate.

They were left behind in the desert by shining moons and by the elite from among the men of honour. Beside them lay the parts that the swords of oppression and misguidance had cut off. They were frightened, not knowing what to expect from the enemies of Allah and of His Messenger.

One who pays homage to them and who spends that night at al-Husayn's grave will demonstrate through his grief and mourning his sadness for being too late to come to his aid and to earn the greatest salvation. He would keep repeating the statement saying: *Ya laytana kunna ma'akum fa nafooza fawzan azeema*,

“How we wish we were with you so we would earn a great achievement.”[4](#)

He would console the Lady of all Women ('a) who mourned her son who was forbidden from drinking water. Tharra, the mourner, saw her once in a vision standing at al-Husayn's grave weeping, and she ordered Tharra to eulogize her son ('a) with these lines:

O eyes! Overflow and do not dry
And do over the one killed at *Taff* cry.
They left his body in every place hit,
But I could not, alas, tend to it.
No, nor was he sick at all...[5](#)

Abu 'Ali, al-Muhsin Ibn 'Ali al-Tanukhi, the judge, quotes his father saying,

“Abul-Hasan, the scribe, inquired once about who the son of the mourner was. Nobody in the meeting

place at Karkh⁶ knew the answer besides myself. I asked him, 'What is the context of the question?'

He said, 'I have a bondmaid who fasts and who recites *tahajjud* quite often, yet she cannot [besides] correctly pronounce even one Arabic word! Moreover, she even quotes poetry, and her accent is heavily Nabatean. Last night, she woke up terrified, trembling.

Her bed was close to mine. She cried out to me, 'O father of al-Hasan! Come help me!' I asked her what was wrong with her.

She said, 'I performed my prayers and supplications then went to bed. I saw myself walking in one of the Karkh alleys. Soon I saw a clean room, white and beautiful, decorated with teak wood, and its door was open.

There were women standing in it whom I asked about who had died and about what the matter was. They pointed to the interior of the house, so I entered and found a clean and most beautiful room. In its courtyard stood a young woman who was the best, the most radiating, the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

She was wrapped in white clothes, and in her lap there was a head bleeding. I asked her, 'Who are you?' She said, 'Never mind..., I am Fatima daughter of the Messenger of Allah (S), and this is the head of my son al-Husayn ('a). Tell Ibn Asda' on my behalf to eulogize him with this verse:

I did not dress his wound,
No, nor was he sick at all.'

I, therefore, woke up frightened.'" She was calmed down by the old lady in the house [apparently the mother of the narrator] till she was able to sleep.

Abul-Hasa, the scribe, said to 'Ali al-Tanukhi, "O father of al-Qasim! Since you yourself know Ibn Asda', you are now morally obligated to convey the message to him." Al-Tanukhi agreed saying, "I hear and I obey the order of the Lady of all the Women of the World, peace be upon her."

All this happened during the month of Sha'ban when people were suffering a great deal from the persecution of the Hanbalis who resisted their going to al-Ha'ir. I kept pleading to them till I was permitted to go. I reached al-Ha'ir in the eve of the middle of Sha'ban.

I kept inquiring about the whereabouts of Ibn Asda' till I was able to see him. I said to him, "Fatima, peace be upon her, orders you to mourn the martyrdom of her son with the poem starting with:

I did not dress his wound,

No, nor was he sick at all.

... and I was at that time unfamiliar with that poem. He felt very vexed, so I narrated to him and to those in his company the incident above. They all burst in tears, and everyone who mourned al-Husayn ('a) that night used this poem as a eulogy. It starts with

O eyes! Overflow and do not dry
And do over the one killed at *Taff* cry.

It is written by a poet from Kufa. I went back to Abul-Hasan and told him.”⁷

^{1.} On p. 282, Vol. 2, of his book *Tahthib al-Tahthib*, at the end of a chapter dealing with nathrs, Shaikh al-Tusi quotes Imam as-Sadiq ('a) saying, “The ladies who descended from Fatima ('a) tore their pockets as they grieved and beat their cheeks. It is for al-Husayn ('a) that the cheeks should be beaten and the pockets torn.”

^{2.} Ibn Qawlawayh, *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, p. 174.

^{3.} Ibn Qawlawayh, *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, p. 137, Chapter 71.

^{4.} On p. 66 of Shaikh as-Saduq's book 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ri'āa, a tradition is narrated about Imam al-Ri'āa ('a) wherein he says to Ibn Shabib, “If you wish to make your abodes the chambers of Paradise in the company of the Prophet (S), you should curse those who killed al-Husayn ('a), and whenever you mention his name, you should say, ‘How I wish I had been with them so that I would achieve a great achievement!’”

^{5.} Excerpted from verses recorded on p. 189, Vol. 2, of Ibn Shahr Ashub's book *Manaqib* (Iranian edition) as quoted from the *Amali* by the Naishapuri shaikh al-Mufid.

^{6.} Baghdad's part on the east of the Tigris. It is the same part where the holy city of Ka'imiyya is located.

^{7.} al-Tanukhi, the judge, *Nashwar al-Muhadara*, Vol. 8, p. 218.

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