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Majlis 3: Janabe John

Surah al-Fatiha
Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Today is the 3rd night of Muharram.

Majaalis al-Husayn continues. As the nights of Muharram go by, our hearts are weighed down with more and more grief. We continue to hear the majaalis about the tragedy of Karbala'.

'Ashura' day is not far away We will recite more marshias and nawhas. Our matam will increase. Our eyes will continue to shed tears for the Martyrs of Karbala'.

"Husayn! Muharram! Karbala'! 'Ashura'! Marshias! Nawhas! Taboot! Alam! Mashk! Matam!"

When Bibi Fatimah hears these words, she joins us. She cries with us. She cries for 'Aun and Muhammad, Qasim, 'Abbas, 'Ali Akbar, 'Ali Asgar and Husayn, who are her family. She also cries for, and is thankful to those martyrs of Karbala' who were not related to Husayn. She especially cries for them because they died in Karbala' helping her son Husayn save Islam.

Among those not related to Husayn were sixteen slaves. Most of them were from Ethiopia. Some belonged to Imam Husayn's family and others to the companions of the Imam.

On the night before 'Ashura', Imam and his companions had freed these slaves and urged them to go away to seek their safety. But none of the sixteen slaves left Imam Husayn. They understood Imam's mission and preferred to die in Karbala' with Husayn. They knew they would be rewarded with a place in Heaven.

Amongst them was a slave called John.

Today let us remember Janabe John and cry with Bibi Fatimah for his sacrifice in Karbala'.

Janabe John was sent as a gift from Abu Dharr Ghiffari, to the household of Hazrat 'Ali and Bib Fatimah. In the company of Hazrat 'Ali he learnt the tafseer of the Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet. He

also knew the Holy Qur'an by heart. When Hazrat 'Ali was martyred, John stayed with Imam Hassan and after Imam Hassan's death he stayed on with Imam Husayn.

Janabe John was blessed to be with the three Imams. What a lucky man!

When Imam Husayn left Medina John insisted on joining him.

On the night before 'Ashura', John spent the whole night sharpening his sword whilst reciting the Holy Qur'an.

The next day was the tragic day of 'Ashura'. At dawn 'Ali Akbar gave the Adhan.

"Allahu Akber! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akberl"

This was the last Adhan by 'Ali Akbar. It was recited with great emotion. Tears flowed from 'Ali Akbar's eyes.

The sun rose from the east. By 10 am, the desert was like a furnace. The friends and family of Husayn were suffering great hardship. They have been without water for three days now.

Yazid's soldiers blew the trumpets to start the battle.

The battle of Karbala' started.

One-by-one, Imam's friends took permission to go for Jihad.

One-by-one Husayn's companions were martyred. All of them fought bravely and died a hero's death.

Husayn, with his brother 'Abbas and son 'Ali Akbar, went to the battlefield and carried their bodies to the tent.

At midday, after Dhuhr prayers, Janabe John came to Imam Husayn. He stood silently with arms folded.

Imam Husayn looked at John and said:

"John! My friend John! What is the matter?"

"My master! Enough is enough I cannot bear to see any more suffering. I cannot bear to see the children of Bibi Fatimah killed in front of me. Please Master! Allow me to go to the battlefield."

"John, you are an old man! Jihad is not wajib for an old man like you. No, John, no! I cannot allow you to die."

John was determined to get permission.

"Master, I know why you are not letting me go to the battlefield. Is it because I am a black slave and you

do not want the blood of a black slave to mix with the blood of the Holy family?”

Husayn was deeply shocked to hear this.

“John! My friend John! Do not say that! You know we do not keep such differences.”

“Go, John, go! Allah be with you!”

Husayn himself then helped dress John for the baffle. He mounted John on the horse and said:

“Fi aman Allah, John!”

John was very pleased with himself as he headed for the battlefield.

On his way to the battlefield he remembered his time with the Holy Prophet. He remembered how dearly the Prophet loved his grandson, Husayn.

John remembered how the Prophet himself used to nurse Husayn's injuries, sustained whilst playing.

John remembered the day when Husayn climbed on the Prophet’s back while he was praying Salat (Prayer). The Holy Prophet stayed in sajda till Husayn came off his back. The Holy Prophet did not want to hurt his beloved grandson.

John's eyes were full of tears as he reached the battlefield.

He spoke to the soldiers on the other side:

“Look at me! You have seen me with the Holy Prophet. Remember the Holy Prophet by looking at me. You say the Holy Prophet is the messenger of Allah. You call yourselves Muslims. Do you think the Holy Prophet will be pleased with you for killing his beloved grandson?”

He continued:

“What has Husayn done to you? He is innocent. Leave him alone. Save yourselves from the Fire of Hell.”

Yazid's soldiers were evil. They were not Muslims. They were not prepared to listen to the truth.

Janabe John was attacked. Arrows were fired from all directions. John fought the Jihad bravely. He sent many to the Fire of Hell.

Alas, how much can an eighty year old man take, thirsty and hungry for three days?

As he fell from his horse, he cried out:

“My Master! Come to see me! Let me see you for the last time.”

Imam Husayn heard John calling him and he rushed to the battlefield. ‘Abbas and ‘Ali Akbar accompanied him.

Husayn, ‘Abbas and ‘Ali Akbar reached the battlefield where John was lying wounded and taking his last breaths.

Imam Husayn placed John's head on his lap. Tears poured from Husayn's eyes.

“John! I am very sorry! You are leaving my home without food or water for three days. John! Please forgive me!”

“Master! Why are you sorry? You have done me a big favour by letting me fight and sacrifice my life for Islam.”

Janabe John continued:

“Look, Master, look! Who has come to receive me? The Holy Prophet himself is here. Bibi Fatimah is here. Master ‘Ali and Master Hassan are here!”

Janabe John's soul was taken away to Heaven.

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja’oon!
We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam al-Husayn!

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