

Majlis 5: Habib Ibn Mazaahir

Surah al-Fatiha

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

Today is the 5th night of Muharram.

Our majalis continue. We will recite more nawhas to mourn the great loss in Karbala'. Our eyes will shed more tears and our matam will increase.

Day-by-day, the scene in Karbala' is changing. More and more soldiers join the enemy's camp. Thousands have gathered to kill Husayn – the grandson of the Holy Prophet.

Bibi Zainab said to her brother:

“Brother Husayn! Thousands of soldiers are gathering to fight you. We have hardly 72 men with us. Do you not have anyone to come to your help?”

“My sister Zainab, many wanted to join me during the journey from Medina to Karbala'. I politely discouraged them because their intention was not truthful. Many joined and have run away during the journey because they were scared of dying.”

He continued:

“Zainab! My sister! Falsehood can buy many supporters, but truth has only a few friends. The soldiers on the other side have been bought. They prefer happiness in this world than in the world hereafter. My 72 truthful men prefer happiness in the world hereafter and that is why they are with me.”

That night, Imam Husayn wrote a letter to his childhood friend, Habib Ibn Mazaahir, who was in Kufa.

Kufa was blocked off and nobody was allowed to leave.

Habib Ibn Mazaahir did not know the whereabouts of Imam Husayn until the letter from Husayn arrived at his house. At the time he was having breakfast with his wife and a young son.

Habib read the letter from Husayn. He kissed it and tears began to flow from his eyes.

His wife asked him what was wrong. Habib said:

“I have received a letter from my master, Husayn. He has asked me to join him in Karbala’. Yazid's soldiers have surrounded him and are after his life.”

Habib's wife said:

“Habib! Your childhood friend has called you. Your master needs your help. What are you waiting for? Go Habib, before it is too late!”

Habib's worry was how to escape from Kufa without being seen.

He instructed his slave to take his horse to a farm outside the city and to wait for him there. The slave did as he was told.

The slave took Habib's horse to a farm outside the city. He waited for his master. His master was delayed.

The slave started talking to the horse:

“O horse! Master Husayn is in trouble. He needs help. He has asked my master Habib to join him. Master Habib is late. Horse If he does not manage to escape from Kufa, I will ride on you and go to Husayn's help.”

At Asr time, most of the men were in mosque. Habib managed to reach the farm where his horse was waiting.

He quickly mounted his horse and said to his slave:

“Go, my friend, Go! I am freeing you from my services”

“Master! You are not being fair. I have served you faithfully for years. Now, I have a chance to serve the son of Bibi Fatimah, and you are asking me to go. Why are you denying me a place in Heaven'?”

Habib was taken aback by the words of his slave. He was pleased to hear that he had recognised the difference between the truth and the wrongful. He wanted to sacrifice his life for truth.

Habib asked his slave to mount his horse. Together they galloped towards Karbala’.

Habib reached Karbala’ late in the evening. Imam Husayn greeted him with great affection.

Bibi Zainab heard that Habib had come. She asked her maid, Fizza, to convey her greetings to Habib.

When Habib heard that Bibi Zainab had sent greetings to him, he screamed out in grief and anger. He threw his turban down on to the ground. He slapped his face. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he spoke:

“What a sad day! What has happened to the household of Bibi Fatimah? The princess! Grand–daughter of the Holy prophet, the daughter of ‘Ali and Fatimah is sending her greetings to an ordinary person like me! Yazid! You beast, you tyrant! What have you done to the household of Bibi Fatimah?”

Days and nights of Muharram passed by, and ‘Ashura’ came.

At dawn, ‘Ali Akbar gave Adhan for the last time.

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

One–by–one, Husayn's companions went to the battlefield and gave their lives for Islam.

Husayn, ‘Abbas and ‘Ali Akbar were busy from dawn to mid–day, collecting bodies from the battlefield,

Between Dhuhr and Asr time, Habib Ibn Mazaahir came to Husayn. He said:

“My Master, Husayn, allow me to go to the battlefield. Let me sacrifice my life for Islam.”

“Habib, my childhood friend. Stay with me. You give comfort to me, my friend.”

Habib persisted with his request. Eventually Husayn gave his permission.

Husayn mounted his friend, Habib, on the horse. Habib Ibn Mazaahir rode into the battlefield.

He fought bravely but was finally over–powered. He fell to the ground.

As Habib Ibn Mazaahir fell to the ground, an enemy soldier came over and cut off his head.

All the martyrs of Karbala’ had their heads cut off, but Habib's was the first to be cut off by the enemy.

Habib's head was not hung on the spearhead like that of the other martyr's. Habib's head was tied to a horse and pulled along the land of Karbala’.

Later on, in Shaam, Habib's head was tied to a horse's neck. A young boy, called Qasim, followed the horse wherever it went.

One day, the man riding the horse asked the young boy Qasim:

“Why are you following me around? What do you want?”

Qasim just looked at the head hanging from the horse's neck. The man asked again:

“Why are you staring at the head”.

“This head is the head of my father, Habib Ibn Mazaahir. please give it to me so that I can bury my father's head.

Habib's head seemed to look at his son and say:

“My son Qasim, you are thinking of burying my head. What about the head of Husayn on that spearhead?”

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaih Raja'oon!

We are from Allah and to Him we will return!

Matam al-Husayn!

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