

The Epic of Karbala'

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said, “*The killing of al-Husayn (‘a) has left in the heart of the faithful a fire that will never die down.*”

This tradition is recorded on p. 217, Vol. 2, of *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*. Numerous poems have been and will be composed eulogizing the greatest epic of heroism in the history of mankind; here are some of them.

Muharram has Come

Muharram has come, so welcome it with *takbir*,
And scatter your tears on the earth
See in it the crescent as it manifests itself,
See how it is forlorn, contemplating, mourning.
Take off the mantle of patience and place it:
A yellow robe on one who with grief clothed you,
For with the robes of grief do I meet it,
Taking off what cheerful red robes decorated me.
It is a month destiny in it decreed
That the vilest of black dogs would deal
With the Lion of the valiant ones.
Allah! What a calamity he had to behold!
The heavens for it wept crimson blood.
A great misfortune, indeed, afflicted the creed,
For it did the Mother Town drape in black:
Can't you see how the sacred Haram sighs?
How his sighs would light the timber?

From its depths does Abu Qubays yearn
A yearning that reaches Hira'.
Al-Hatim knew of it, so it is grief-crushed,
Al-Safa knew of it, so it is serene no more,
And its *mash'ars* sensed the calamity,
And passion struck its Muhassir, so it sighed,
For Husayn is killed: what a tragedy!
On its account Islam became defenseless. 1

The Month of Muharram

Muharram is when joy is taboo,
When grief is a must, weeping is unavoidable.
A month wherein the seat of faith is in ruin.
Its crescent is a bow
That shot the heart of guidance, the creed,
With the arrow of death and destiny.
Infidels and Muslims considered
Fighting in it a great sin.
Yet Harb's family in it fought the Lord of the heavens,
Permitting the spilling of the inviolable blood.
They violated the sanctity of the Haram's masters,
Committing that which caused the sky to rain blood.
O family of Harb! May you never see peace,
May none spare you from his censuring tongue!
On earth and in the heavens are you cursed,
By the mass of the living.
Be forewarned with woes and destruction,
And with torture on the Day the trumpet is blown.
How many free women of the Chosen Prophet
Did you rip apart?
How much blood of his offspring did you spill?
O nation of betrayal and disbelief!
O gang of misguidance, O fiends!
How will you look his grandfather in the eye
Having done what you did after him?
Like butchers you slaughtered his progeny,
Like slaves you herded his family.

You forgot the kindness bestowed upon you
On Mecca's Victory Day, when you were forgiven.
Had it not been for the moon-faced sons of Hashim,
A secret lost in the chest you would have been.
Through them did you ascend the pulpit,
And rose to the heights of eminence.²

1. Excerpted from a poem in Shihab al-Musawi's diwan (Egypt: 1330 A.H./1912 A.D.).

2. Excerpted from a poem by Ayatullah Shaikh Hadi Kashif al-Ghīṣā' published on p. 9 of Al-Maqbala al-Husayniyya.

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