

“qul lā as alukum ‘alayhi ajran illā l-maweddete fī l-qur`bā. wamey yaqterif ḥaseneten nezid lehu fihā ḥus`na inna l-laha ghafūrun shakūr (Surah ash-Shurah 42:33)

“Say: No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin. For, if anyone gains [the merit of] a good deed, We shall grant him through it an increase of good: Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate service.”

In Surah Ash-Shura, Allah-u Ta'ala confirms that Rasulallah (saws) does not seek any reward from us for delivering the truth other than loving those who are near and dear to him. Many scholars agree that the expression of “maweddete fil qurba,” the near of kin, refers to the kin of Rasulallah (saws) and also those who gave up their identity and attached themselves to him like kin. In the continuation of the verse, Allah-u Ta'ala promises an increase in goodness and blessings for those who show love and respect to the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family). Therefore, it is considered an obligation for believers to love Ahl al-Bayt. The dictionary meaning of Ahli Bayt is the family of Rasulallah (saws), his wives, his children, grandchildren and his relatives. The love of Ahli bayt is not merely because they are the relatives of Rasulallah (saws) but because the Ahli bayt-i Mustafa became perfect guides for Muslims with their knowledge, beautiful morals, and their spirituality. They reflected the meaning and the truth of Rasulallah (saws) to generations of Muslims who came after them. Becoming a mirror to the truth of Rasulallah (saws) nourished the love that we all had and have toward his family. Rasuallah (saws) said: ‘Whoever loves Allah, loves the Qur’an. Whoever loves the Qur’an, loves me. Whoever loves me loves my companions and my kin’.

Rasulallah (saws) loved his grandsons. In one tradition it is reported that he prayed for Hd. Hasan and Hd. Husayn (ra) and said: “Oh Allah, I love these children. You love them too.” He also said: “If any one loves Hasan and Husayn, he loves me too. If anyone turns against them, they turn against me too.” For centuries, Muslims honored and showed their love to Rasulallah’s grandchildren, Hd. Hasan and Hd. Husayn (ra) and their progeny.

Rasulallah (saws) also extended his love and closeness to those who did not have the opportunity to see him and be with him but attached themselves to him with love. Anas ibn Malik (as) reported: “The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, ‘I wish I could meet my brothers.’ The companions of the Prophet said, ‘Are we not your brothers?’ The Prophet (saws) said, ‘You are my companions, but my brothers are those who have faith in me yet they never saw me.’” The Prophet Muhammad also extended his love and affection to those who did not have the opportunity to see him or be with him, yet were devoted to him with love.

We are in the month of Muharram, which is the beginning of the new Islamic year 1447. It is also one of the four sacred months. Muharram literally means that which should be respected, and honored. We must also respect Muharram by ceasing all the wrongdoings

and suppressing the evil qualities of arrogance, hypocrisy, vengeance, hatred, and lying to ourselves and others.

It is believed that many important historical and religious events have happened during the month of Muharram, since the time of Prophet Adam (ra), and in particular on the 10th of Muharram, which is called the day of Ashura. However, one of the most tragic and sad events that ever occurred in Islamic history, the martyrdom of Hd. Husayn (ra) and his family, also happened on this day. He and seventy-two members of his family were massacred in Karbala, and their bodies were dismembered. This wicked, heinous, ugly crime was committed by people who called themselves “Muslims,” but who were blinded with the ambition of position, intoxicated with power, and the wish to become the leader of Muslims. Eleven years before the incident of Karbala, Hd. Hasan (ra) was poisoned by the same people who saw him as a threat to their vicious ambitions. Neither Hd. Hasan nor Hd. Husayn (ra) sought any position of power. They both resided peacefully in Madina, where they were much loved and respected by the community. We must look back and try to understand the meaning of this colossal sacrifice. Hd. Husayn (ra) sacrificed his life along with the lives of his family to show us that we must be prepared to sacrifice everything, even our lives, in our struggles against tyranny and corruption. He did not submit, pledge allegiance, or concede to the demands of Yezit ibn Muawiya, the accursed tyrant.

The beloved grandson of Rasulallah (saws) taught us by example the teachings of his grandfather: “Whenever you encounter tyranny, undo it with your hands; if you are not able to do so, try to undo it with your tongue; if you not able to do that, at least feel deep compassion in your heart for the tyrannized, and pray to Allah to save them.”

Resulallah (saws) even before his prophethood, participated in a pact called ‘Hilf-ul Fudl,’ established in Mecca around 590 CE. The pact was created by those who were deeply concerned about escalating injustices and abuses. The core principle of this alliance was to actively intervene and support anyone who was being oppressed or unjustly treated, regardless of their social status, tribe, or origin. This is highly significant because it demonstrates Rasulallah’s (saws) early commitment to justice and ethical conduct. Hd. Husayn (ra) followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, and he also invoked the oath of ‘Hilf-ul Fudl’ and consistently upheld its principles throughout his life.

This connection is vital for understanding Hd. Husayn's (ra) character and his later stand against injustice and the accursed tyrant Yazid ibn Muawiya. The message of Hd. Husayn (ra) was clear: “Just because you belong to the ruling party, or that your tribe is in power, does not mean that you may get away with abuse and injustice.” This underscores Hd. Husayn's belief that no one, regardless of their position or influence, is above the law or immune to accountability for their actions. He was willing to challenge authority when he perceived an abuse of power and the principle of justice being violated. In essence, Hd.. Husayn's (ra) unwavering commitment to fighting injustice was not an isolated incident, but a consistent theme throughout his life, deeply influenced by the principles of ‘Hilf al-Fudul,’ a pact endorsed by the Prophet Muhammad (saws) himself. It presents him as a tireless

advocate for the oppressed, who believed that justice should be upheld “no matter what.” His life and the lives of his family were sacrificed for this principle.

Hd. Musa (ra) was saved from the tyranny of Pharaoh on the day of Ashura. We tend to focus on the dramatic ending: Pharaoh and his army drowning in the sea. And certainly, that was a huge moment of divine intervention. But Hd. Musa's (ra) real victory was in his absolute sincerity and courage when he stood face-to-face with a tyrant like the Pharaoh. It was his unwavering trust in Allah wa Ta'ala. The drowning was just the natural outcome of divine intervention, but the true victory was standing against the tyrant. It is the same with Hz. Husayn (ra) . When he stood against a tyrant, even though he was betrayed by many who should have supported him, and his body was tragically dismembered, his soul and heart remained intact. His victory wasn't about winning a physical battle in our conventional understanding. Victory is about standing against tyranny, against tyrants who are intoxicated by their power, who cannot take being challenged, and treat any opposition with absolute cruelty, without any mercy.

Today is also the day of independence, which coincides with the day when Hd. Husayn (ra) was martyred. The martyrdom of Imam Husayn (ra) at the Battle of Karbala is deeply intertwined with the concept of freedom. He demonstrated freedom from oppression and tyranny by refusing to pledge allegiance to Yazid. His actions have inspired awakening, reminding believers that there is a cost of adhering to one's principles. His martyrdom revived fundamental principles of Islam, including freedom, justice and the fight against corruption. In essence, the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (ra) represents a struggle for various aspects of freedom: freedom from oppressive rule, freedom to adhere to one's religious beliefs, and a broader fight for justice and the betterment of humanity. Hd. Husayn (ra) is the champion of freedom who chose martyrdom, rather than compromising his principles by pledging allegiance to a narcissistic and cowardly tyrant in order to gain worldly power or personal safety. The same principles are continuously giving strength to all believers fighting oppression against tyranny and injustice all around the world, as we have been continuously observing and experiencing.

Yurdaer Al Latif Al Jerrahi