

‘Ashara Mubāraka AH 1440  
Majlis 9/10  
English Reflections

During majlis 9 of this year’s ‘Ashara Mubāraka, ‘Āshūra’ morning, al-Dai al-Ajal Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin TUS revisited the mountaintop site of Masār, the second highest in the Haraaz at 2760m above sea level. It was originally conquered by Syedna Ali b. Mohammed Al-Sulayhi RA and from here he eventually came to rule most of Yemen as the dai of the Fatimi imam in Misr.

Masaar is the plural of the word *masarrat* which means happiness and Maulana al-Min‘ām<sup>TUS</sup> spent much of the morning explaining the idea of happiness. Worldly happiness is fleeting and temporary. For instance, one is extremely happy after passing an exam, yet the happiness vanishes instantly when one fails the next exam. Doing good for others and bringing them happiness is a type of happiness that is eternal. It will take the form of a beautiful spirit in the grave and declare to all, ‘I am the happiness you brought to others and today I am here to watch over and safeguard you.’

In the era of Imam Mu‘izz<sup>AS</sup> one of his Aamil’s arrived with a huge quantity of valuables. At the same time it was brought to the imam’s notice that the people he was governing had many grievances against him. The Imam stated that even if the Aamil had brought wealth and material gifts that spanned the distance between Imam’s palace and the Aamil’s town, that would not justify the grievances against him.

A narrative in this vein of pleasing others was given wherein a young man stood after the *‘ishā* prayer and stated that he had nothing and was hungry. Rasul Allah<sup>SAW</sup> turned to those around him and asked who would take him to give him something to eat. No one answered except Maulana Ali<sup>AS</sup>. Maulana Ali<sup>AS</sup> took him home where the only foodstuff in the house was a mere 400g of flour. He instructed

Maulatona Fatema <sup>AS</sup> to make *roti* from it and, knowing that the amount of flour was insufficient to feed them all, said not bring the candle even if he called for it. This way the guest would not see how little there was. Fizza, a housemaid in the service of the Ahle Bayt AS, brought the single roti that was made and presented to Amiurl Mumineen AS and the guest. So as to encourage his guest to eat, Amirul Mumineen AS moved his hand back and forth from the plate to his face, not actually partaking from the roti. After the meal, when the man had eaten his fill, a candle was brought forth and the single roti was completely intact as if not a single bite had been taken. It was in praise of Ali's abovementioned virtue that the following *āyat sharīfah* was sent down:

وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

*They give them (others) preference over themselves, even if they too are poor.*

Maulana <sup>TUS</sup> spoke in a completely new light of the seven children Husain Imam <sup>AS</sup> bestowed to the man who was destined to have none. Maula <sup>TUS</sup> revealed, that despite what might *seem* the contrary, Husain's <sup>AS</sup> actions were exactly in keeping with the will of Allah Ta'ala. This act by Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup> was one of giving joy to another and the reasons he did so were set out. First Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup> was pleased by the fact that this man, for whom some transgression had meant he was bereft of children, had come to Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> in order to have this sin forgiven and his wish granted. This was in keeping with Allah's Ta'ala's instruction in the Quran for those that commit a sin to come to the prophet and seek forgiveness. By pleasing Husain in this way and giving joy to him the man had thus secured his forgiveness at Imam Husain's <sup>AS</sup> hand.

Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup> had noted the Nabi's <sup>SAW</sup> own despair, that Jibra'eel <sup>AS</sup> had brought instruction not to pray for the man due to the fact that

he was not destined to have children. But since the man had come in accordance with Allah's wish to the prophet the way was open for Imam Husain<sup>AS</sup> to intervene and pray for the man since this act would please the prophet. Rasul Allah<sup>SAW</sup> saw Husain's insistence of giving one and then two and then three and more children inappropriate, but Husain knew full well that Allah's anger could never fall upon him. In the end he pleased the man, he pleased Rasul Allah<sup>SAW</sup> and by virtue of the prayer being answered it is a given that he pleased Allah Ta'ala as well.

When we talk of pleasing others this does not entail allowing them to do what they want. Imam Moiz<sup>AS</sup> explained that it would be all too easy to please people by allowing them to do as they wanted, taking up any vices they chose and indulging themselves however they wished. It has been and still is the way that kings and political leaders of the world seek popularity. Imam's AS wish for his subjects and especially Mumineen is to bring them to higher plateau of existence, one that guarantees eternal happiness, and that often entails deeds and directives that are not always received happily or openly.

The final location of these 'Ashara *mawā'iz*, declared during the *maqatal bayan* after 'asr prayers, was Zabīd – the resting place of the final dai of Yemen, Syedna Mohammed Ezzuddin<sup>RA</sup>. Zabid is a historic city. It was conquered by Syedna Ali b. al-Maula Mohammed al-Sulayhi. It was in this city where his severed head was placed in front of his consort, Asma binte Shihab, where she and other women from his household had been imprisoned. Syedna Idris described this tragedy with great angst, one that is similar to the difficulties our *mawālī* faced in Kerbala. The word *zabīd* comes from the same root as the word *zubdat*, which means essence. Imam Husain's<sup>AS</sup> *maatam* and *buka*, as Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal<sup>TUS</sup> explained, is the essence of all knowledge and deeds.

It seemed barely yesterday, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Muharram, when Imam Husain's <sup>AS</sup> horse reached Karbala and then stopped, refusing to go further. Husain Imam <sup>AS</sup>, we are told, mounted another horse – but that one didn't move either. He tried another and then another until he had tried seven times but none of them moved; of course, Husain knew they would not.

And then, in what seems merely a blink of an eye, in just a drop of a tear; the companions and Ahle Bayt <sup>AS</sup> were gone. Hurr <sup>AS</sup> had taken redemption, alone among the opposing army to answer Husain Imam's <sup>AS</sup> call. Habib b. Mazahir had told Muslim, both companions of Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup>, that were it not for the fact that he was to follow shortly after Muslim into battle, Habib would have asked Muslim his last will and testament. With a single gesture Muslim expressed his last will. "Stay true to him", he said, pointing to Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup>.

Qasim <sup>AS</sup>, the radiant, moon-like Shahzada had given the last of his eleven years. Abdullah, married, now awaited his beloved at the entrance of paradise. The water skin lay pierced and drained near the parched lips of Maulana Abbas <sup>AS</sup>, Ali Akber had told us how Khamsat At-haar <sup>AS</sup> would greet each Mumin at his or her death. Most tragically, even the 6 month old Maulana Ali Asghar <sup>AS</sup> had given his final smile in his father's arms when no-one would give him a sip of water.

Finally we had seen the *sajda* of Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup> in Karbala and Ashara had ended. And the preparation for the next one has begun. May Allah Ta'ala grant our beloved Maula a life of health and happiness. May we find ourselves in his radiant presence, our hands at our chests, tears in our eyes, enlightened by his words and counsel and transformed by his divine gaze during next year's 'Ashara and for every 'Ashara to come.