

## NO. X.

A FUNERAL EULOGIUM\* ON IMAM KASIM,† THE SON OF IMAM HUSSAN, ON WHOM MAY GOD BE MERCIFUL!

O friends! listen to this new tyranny of old fate,  
 For it has fixed the marriage of the son of Hussan in a strange  
 way;  
 It has united the bride and bridegroom in such a manner,  
 That their bracelet string was the thread of his coffin.‡  
 Do not you at all believe, that the lucky moment of this marriage  
 was ever fixed,  
 Had I not understood the conduct of the heavens, then I might  
 have believed it.§  
 Standing around him, they are beating their heads and knees,  
 For it has placed a basin of blood, and called it a lagan.||  
 In place of (sending) the mendhi leaves,¶ sorrow has overshadowed  
 the hearts of the people;

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\* This elegy is not in any native edition of Sauda's work that I have seen, and, from the style, I do not think it is his composition, besides, in the last couplet but one, the composer addresses himself as "O Miskeen!" a title by which Sauda was never called. It is, however, a very clever poem, and by far the most difficult to understand of the Selections.

† Imam Kasim was the son of Imam Hussan, and nephew of Imam Hussein; Hussan and Hussein being sons of Ali, cousin and fourth Caliph of Muhammad. After Ali's death, the Caliphate descended to Imam Hussan, his eldest son, who held it for about 30 years. He happened to come across a tradition of Muhammad, which stated that the Caliphate would be no Caliphate, thirty years after the death of the Prophet; he therefore gave it up, and made it over to Muawayyah, one of Muhammad's companions, who, when dying, gave it to his son Yazeed. Yazeed, for sometime, behaved well, and treated the descendants and family of the prophet respectfully, but after a short space, his conduct became indifferent, and he allowed many illegal and irreligious customs in Arabia. He asked Hussein and his relations and followers to take a solemn oath, by joining hands, to uphold his caliphate, and on Hussein refusing to do so, as he did not approve of his conduct, Yazeed turned against him, and the enmity reached such a pitch that Hussein was obliged to leave his native place and took up his abode in Kafa and its adjoining territory. Yazeed sent his forces in pursuit, and tried by all sorts of stratagems to capture and kill him; this, at last, ended in a regular fight on the field of Karbala, which lasted for ten days, during which all the relations and followers of Hussein were killed. His cousin Ubbas, and his nephew Imam Kassim fell as victims on the 6th day, and he himself was mercilessly murdered by the enemy on the 10th. Imam Kasim's wedding was taking place at the time, but owing to this quarrel he was obliged to go and fight, instead of stopping at home with his wife; after the massacre, all the families and houses were plundered. It is in honor and memory of this massacre, that the taziyas are carried about during the Muharram, the first month of the Muhammadan year.

‡ Asiatics, at a wedding, generally tie a common bracelet round the arm of the bride for a good omen, and this is fastened by a string, which, the poet says, was used in this instance as a thread to sew the shroud of the bridegroom.

§ Meaning, he himself might have believed that the moment had been fixed for his marriage, and not for his death, had he not understood the crooked ways of fickle fortune. He gives a warning to the inexperienced not to trust fate, for he himself well knew its behaviour.

|| There is a play on the word "lagan," which means "a basin," and also "a lucky moment." It is an Oriental custom at weddings to place a large basin filled with water between the bride and bridegroom, but, on the present occasion, it was filled with blood.

¶ This is another of the wedding ceremonies of the East; the bride elect, a day before the wedding, sends some mendhi leaves to the bridegroom, for him to dye the palms of his hands. This custom is still kept up on the sixth night of the Muharram, and at Muhammadan marriages.

In place of sending the bel,\* it has put the king's head on a spear.  
The bride it has caused to change her marriage apparel, and put on  
the weeds of a widow ;

In place of thinking of the khillat† of the bridegroom, it is thinking  
of his coffin.

What more shall I tell ? the only music, which it allowed to be  
played at this marriage,

Was, that it caused men and women to beat their breasts, (instead  
of drums).

In place of illuminating the house, it has set it on fire (by the ene-  
my) ;

Taking away everything including the yarn, it has left nothing to  
sew up his shroud.

Why should not heaven amuse itself with such a spectacle,

For sighs were the shooting stars, and tears, the sataras.‡

Sparks of fire come flying forth from every groan ;

The mouths of the hearts of the mourners have become the envy of  
the mouth of the pomegranate fireworks.§

What shall I tell you of the ornaments of this wedding,

And what it appeared like in the eyes of the world ;

The bed of every wounded one there was a bed of roses,

And on every corpse there was a sheet, the envy of the flower beds ;||

In the procession, men and women beat their breasts.

A crowd of spectators, came and fell to plundering them ;

And, in place of adorning the wedding, robbed the house to such a  
degree,

That they did not even leave, to either mother-in-law, any clothes  
to cover her body.

I beheld the wonderful nature of the colour¶ of the marriage sports,  
And saw there was nothing, but the spots of the drops of blood on  
their clothes.

When I looked at the marriage procession, then I perceived,

That in place of playing at throwing coloured (waters) at each other,  
they played at the colour of a field of battle ;

The cut off head was a warning of the (arrival of the) Sachak,\*\*

And (in place of) the thread on the jar filled with sweetmeats,†† was  
the line of the wound on the neck ;

\* " Bel charhāna or bhejna" is another wedding ceremony, consisting in the bride-  
groom sending a shell of the bel to the bride, filled with tooth powder or missi, with which  
to ornament herself.

† A khillat is a robe of honor.

‡ A kind of firework which shoots up into the air and then bursts.

§ This comparison means, that the sparks of the anār firework looked on with jea-  
lously at the sparks of grief issuing from the hearts of the mourners.

|| That is to say, from the body covered with blood, which lay on it.

¶ It is a custom at native weddings after the rite has taken place, to sprinkle each  
other with a red or yellow water (the same as used at the Holee) to express their joy  
and happiness. This custom is called " rang khelna."

\*\* The Sachak is sent by the bridegroom to the bride a little before the procession  
arrives ; it consists of jewels, clothes, flowers, &c.

†† The jar filled with sweetmeats is sent at the same time as the Sachak.

For the bride, the sleeve of the bridegroom was sent as an offering.\*  
Tell me, in what country, is it the custom to send a Sachak of such  
a nature ?

The tray of the mendhi, which came for the bridegroom from the  
bride,

Was the clotted blood of her father-in-law and brother-in-law ;  
The bride stained her fingers with the blood of the bridegroom ;  
What ! is this the manner of a wedding in the customs of the  
world ?

When, on the wedding night, they assembled and adorned the  
bride,

Then widowhood cried out, † “ There is no help against God.

He, for whom all this ceremony has taken place, has fallen a vic-  
tim in battle,

Now, what is the use of this adorning and colour for you ?

Take off this ring from your nose, and give it to me,

And tell him to throw dust on his head ;

His death has come ; but where are the mourners ?

Now there is no time for other words or speeches.”

Who can write the story of the procession of the bridegroom ?

Four people are bringing him on their shoulders with his head cut  
off,

And have put the garland at the head of the bed (instead of on his  
head).

Thus proceeded the Prince of Arabia to be married ;

Around him, those in the marriage procession were rubbing their  
heads and hearts with dirt,

And all were tearing the collars of their robes, with tearful eyes.

As their lamentations and weepings reached the dome of heaven,

On beholding it, the tears of no woman or man were appeased.

Every one, on seeing this union of the bridegroom, said,

“ Perhaps the betrothal of this young man was settled with the  
grave,

But where is the wisdom of the father and mother of the girl gone,  
That her betrothal will not leave any trace of his body ?”

When they reached the bride's house, they all rubbed their faces  
with dust,

And men and women, joining together, beat their heads and breasts,  
And every one of them, weeping and heaving cold sighs, were thus  
saying,

“ Call this not a wedding knot, but a whirlwind ‡ (of misfortune).”

And, in place of drums and tambourines, they were beating their  
heads and breasts ;

A carpet of mourning was spread under the marriage pavilion ;

In place of the censers of aloes, their breasts were full of the flames  
(of sorrow),

\* The usual offering “ charhāwa” consists of clothes, ornaments and jewels, but in  
this instance, of only a piece of the sleeve of the bridegroom's coat.

† Widowhood is here supposed to be addressing the bride, saying, “ Be patient, you  
cannot fight against God.”

‡ Lit, “ a knot of wind.”

And, in (the breasts of) each of them, their hearts were the embers of fire.

On the neck of the bride, a necklace of tears was fastened in place of a string of pearls,

And, on the head of the bridegroom, each stream of blood was the garland.

Wherever, on his breast, the notch of the arrow appeared, It made people believe, that it was a mouth that had eaten pān.\* What mention was there, at that time, of the custom of distribution of sherbet amongst the marriage attendants,

For the life of the whole family was leaving them for (want of) water.†

In place of plates of charba,‡ the guests ate the blood of their hearts.

Was it a wedding, or a deluge of grief and sorrow ?

When the bridegroom came to his mother-in-law's house, to pay his compliments.§

Where was the horse for him to mount? instead of it, a takhta-i-tābūt || was sent for him ;

And such a colour, has fate dyed his wedding garment, That his wearing apparel has been plunged in blood on the day of his wedding.

What shall I relate of the taking away of the bride (by the bridegroom to his house),

For the bridegroom's head went before, separated from his body ;

Behind was the bride on a camel, without her veil or sheet ;

The string was in the hand of him, who was the brother of the bride.¶

The bride's mother, weeping, was thus saying every moment, " From this my daughter's widowhood, I am much distressed ; Now the members of his family will be saying to each other,

\* The meaning of this line is, that the arrow had transfixed him so, that only the notch at the other end was visible, covered with blood, so that it looked quite red, like the mouth of a person who has just been chewing pān.

† When Hussein was besieged by the Troops of Yazeed, the water of the Euphrates, which flowed just before them, was cut off from them, and the whole family were kept without any for about six days. When Ubbas Ali, the standard bearer, tried to get a massuck of water, his bag was pierced by the arrows of the enemy, and he himself killed. A representation of this, consisting of a water bag with arrows fixed in it, is made at the Mu-hurram.

‡ "Charba or choba" is a dainty dish, expressly made for the bridegroom and his nearest relations, and placed before them at the time of the marriage. It is prepared from rice, sugar, butter, cocoanuts, almonds, &c., and covered with silver leaves.

§ This ceremony is performed after the marriage, when the bridegroom is about to leave the bride's house ; her relations then present him with various marriage gifts according to their rank and means.

|| Takhta-i-tābūt is the plank or table upon which dead bodies are stretched and washed before interment.

¶ His name was Imam Zain-ool-abideen, or Sajād, and he was the second son of Imam Hussein ; being laid up with fever, at the time of the massacre of Karbala, he was not murdered with the rest, and was the only male descendant of Ali that survived. The name of his sister, the bride, was "Bebi Kubra," the Elder Lady, so called as she was the eldest sister.

O Miskeen ! do not tremble like a willow from your ill-actions,  
 But have hope in your heart from writing this elegy,\*  
 And, in that day when the sun of the day of judgment shall be  
     very hot,†  
 Then may the shadow of the feet of the martyrs fall on thy head!

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Here finish the selections of the Kasaid, Mukhammases,‡ Masnavis,  
 and elegies, of Mirza Muhammad Rafi-oos-Sauda.

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\* It is believed that, from writing an elegy regarding one's spiritual guide, one may have hope of obtaining forgiveness through him.

† The Muhammadan belief is, that, at the judgment day, the sun will come quite close to men's heads, and it will become very hot.

‡ A mukhammas is a kind of verse of five lines. No Kasaid or Mukhammas is, however, given in the Selections.