



THE ROLE OF THE CITY OF KARBALA IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

Tokhtiev Shukhrat Rustamovich

PhD., Associate Professor, “IRCICA Chair for Islamic History and Source Studies” International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

shuhrat55567@mail.ru

Abstract

Although the holy places in Islam are considered to be Mecca and Medina, in addition to these two cities, Shias also consider Najaf, Karbala, Mashhad, Qom and other cities where Shia imams are buried as holy. Karbala, the holy city associated with the name of the second Shiite imam Husayn, is considered the main pilgrimage site of the Shiites, and the history of the city, the description of Husayn's mausoleum, has been extensively covered in the works of many historians and geographers. Due to many narratives related to Hussein's death and the deification of his personality, holy places and shrines have been created in various regions of Central Asia.

Keywords: Karbala, Husayn, Iraq, Kufa, Ninawa, Ibn Battuta, Mashadmozor, Sunbulmozor, Imam ata, Shahmozor, Shahidon.

Introduction

Karbala or Mashhad al-Hussain is one of the famous cities of Iraq, located in the valley of the river Froat, 102 km from Baghdad. It is considered to be a holy city of the Shiites located in the southwest. In this city, there is the tomb of Husayn ibn Ali Abu Abdullah al-Shahid (626-680), the third Shia imam, the youngest son of Ali ibn Abu Talib from Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad (pbuh). He was born in Medina. After the death of his brother Hasan in 669, Husayn Ali became the leader of the descendants and returned from Kufa to Madinah. However, for a long time he did not take an important place in political life and lived in Medina, Mecca [6, p. 285].

After the death of caliph Mu'awiya in 680, the resistance to the Ummavis in Iraq became active. Since the Shiites of Kufa consider Husayn to be their third imam, they ask him to lead a rebellion against Yazid in Kufa. Husayn leaves Makkah for



Kufa. The caliph's army of four thousand under the leadership of Umar ibn Sa'd resisted him with seventy warriors in a place called Ninawa near Kufa, and a battle took place on October 10, 680. The caliph's army is ready to fight against the Prophet's grandson. However, according to the narrations, one of the kindis, Malik ibn al-Nusair, struck Husayn on the head with his sword, and the Caliph's forces massacred Husayn's warriors [8, p. 514-515].

The city of Karbala was later built in place of Ninawa. The bodies of Hussein and his brother Abbas, who died in this battle, were buried in this city. The reasons why the city was called Karbala have not yet been fully explored by scientists. Some of the scholars say that this word is derived from the combination of words "karb al-loh", which means "side by side with Allah", while another group of scholars believe that it is derived from the word "kur Babil", which means "the region of Babylon". The Shiites themselves believe that the etymology of this word is derived from the words "al-kurb wal-bala", that is, "mourning and sorrow", and they associate this word with the tragic deaths of the brothers Husayn and Abbas [4, p. 41: 2, p. 52]. After the events surrounding their murder, Husayn's personality was elevated to the status of a saint, and his burial place, Karbala, was considered a holy city for Shias and became one of the main pilgrimage sites.

First, the pilgrims used to visit the tomb of Ali in Najaf, then visit the tombs of Husayn and Abbas in Karbala. They would travel four days to reach Karbala from Najaf, because the distance between these two cities is 80 km. that's why pilgrims used to stay in special caravanserais. Today, some of the fortress walls remain from these caravanserais. Currently, no one uses them to hide from sunlight and wind. After all, these caravanserais welcomed thousands of pilgrims. Today, it takes an hour to travel from Najaf to Karbala, and today's pilgrims do not even notice the ruins of the wall that stand out along the road.

The mausoleum at Karbala was damaged during a flood in 850 during the reign of Caliph Mutawakkil. In 979, a huge mausoleum was built here during the reign of the Buwayhiyids (932-1055). In 1016, during the struggle for the throne of the Buwayhis, the dome of the mausoleum was burned down and soon after it was restored, and a madrasa was built in front of it. Among those who visited this mausoleum were the famous Muslim governors of their time, namely the Seljuk King Malikshah, Sultan Suleiman, the kings of the Safavid dynasty, Nadirshah, Kajori rulers, etc., and they donated large donations for the mausoleum. The wealth



of Karbala was looted in 1801 by the Wahhabis (supporters of a religious and political movement that arose in the Arabian Peninsula in the 18th century), but over time it regained its majestic appearance[6, p. 133: 5, p. 288].

Medieval Arab historians and geographers Istakhri, Ibn Havqal, Ibn Battuta saw the mausoleum at different times and described it in their works. For example, Ibn Battuta writes about Karbala in the book "Travel": "From Khala we went to Karbala - Mashhad Husain ibn Ali. Karbala is a small town. It is surrounded by palm trees and these trees are watered by the river Frot. The holy tomb of Imam Husain is located inside the city, and within the large madrasah are cells where foreigners spend the night. They distribute food to guests. Servants and staff always stand in front of the Imam's tomb. It is very difficult to enter the Haram without their permission. The Holy Sepulcher is made of silver, and those who enter it must kiss it. The room where the holy tomb of the imam is located is decorated with gold and silver chandeliers and silk curtains are hung on the doors of the room. The people of Karbala are divided into two categories: the Rahiq and the Foiz clans. They are always in conflict and war with each other. Although they are of the same sect and of the same father, they are at odds, and because of their quarrel the city was destroyed [14, p. 24: 10, p. 906-909].

The current mausoleum in Karbala is 48x42 m. It has a size of 108x42 m. located in a large courtyard covering the square and surrounded by a domed corridor. The building is decorated with rich patterns. Hussein's tomb is located in the center of the building. There are two minarets at the entrance to the mausoleum, and there is a large madrasa with a mosque in the courtyard[6, p. 133: 2, p. 88].

In 1967, the Russian physicist R.G. Landa, who was in Karbala, describes the mausoleum of Husayn and the city of Karbala in general as follows: "Every foreigner who comes to Karbala cannot enter the mausoleum of Husayn, especially if he is not a Muslim, he is not allowed into this mausoleum at all... Muslims who do not belong to the Shia sect also enter this mausoleum with difficulty ... We stepped through the huge gate with heavy hearts. Because it was the first time we entered the Iraqi mosque. In addition, we entered the world-famous holy place of Shiites ... Its domes are covered with golden water and the mosque is decorated with precious mosaics (colored glass). The interior of the mosque was more crowded than the courtyard, and people gathered in front of Husain's tomb, which was surrounded by a silver fence ... its ceiling was glazed, decorated with patterns,



decorated with gold and silver, and decorated with elaborate decorations. Hussein's mausoleum is located in the center of Karbala (on the other side of the city is the mosque of Abbas, which is much simpler than the mosque of Hussein). It is surrounded by a high wall. Outside the wall are stalls ... where there are pictures of Husayn, done in the style of the old Iraqi artists ..."[7, p. 102-103: 11, p. 75].

Jalal Ibrohimov describes the condition of Husayn's mausoleum in Karbala in the 1980s as follows: "Husayn's mosque in Karbala is no different from Ali's mosque in Najaf. That high wall, with four gates, was made with ornaments of different colors. In the middle of the Great Palace is the mausoleum of Husain, surrounded by a fence made of silver and white gold. The dome and two minarets of the mosque are covered with golden water." J. Ibrahimov describes Abbas's mosque as follows: "Abbas's mosque is similar to Husayn's mosque, the only difference is that its mausoleum is made of gold, and its domes and minarets are made of ceramic, and the furnishings and luxuries are much simpler"[4, p. 43].

In Uzbekistan and the neighboring republics, there are holy stones, mountains, hills, mosques, and battlefields that have been associated with the names of Hasan and Husain on the basis of narrations. For example, Mashadmozor, Sunbulmozor, Imam ata, Shahmozor, Shahidon in Namangan region can be an example of this[1, p. 24: 12, p. 25: 13, p. 83].

The tragedy of Husayn in Karbala had a strong impact on his contemporaries, and therefore he is known as the "King of Martyrs". One famous slogan of the Shiites even says: "The whole world is Karbala, the whole year is Ashura." There is a great deal of Shia literature about the sufferings of Husain. Husayn's death had a great impact on the religious and political unification of the followers of Ali's generation. Hussain became a symbol of the Shia movement (many of the Shia movements were held under the slogan "Avenging the blood of Hussain") and became a respected figure throughout the Muslim world. The Shiites give him a legendary image and consider him to have extraordinary talent and the ability to create miracles. Various narrations are dedicated to the events from his birth to his death. For example, in one of them, it is said that the Prophet prayed with Husayn on his knee or shoulder and called him the "said of the youth". There are several other narrations similar to this, in which the Shias describe the generation of Ali as having special privileges according to these narrations, which they describe as the chosen generation. Shias interpret a number of Qur'anic expressions, Husayn, verses 14,



15 of Surah "Akhkar", verse 1 of Surah "Maryam" and others as referring to Husayn[6, p. 285: 14, p. 22].

Karbala, where Husayn's mausoleum is located, is not only the main holy city of Shiites, but it is also the center of learning and religious studies of Shiite theologians, and the city of Shiite publications.

Karbala has always flourished due to pilgrimage. In addition, this city is located on the trade route to Mecca. Today, the main population of Karbala is Shia, and more than half of them are Persians and Arabs. Due to the fact that Karbala is considered a holy city and has great honor, its population is growing rapidly[6, p. 285: 15, p. 64].

Thus, the history of Shiite holy cities and holy places associated with the names of Shiite imams dates back to the early Islamic era, and over the centuries, these cities and places, as well as the Shiite imams buried in these places, were deified and further sanctified. Until the present time, such holy cities have not lost their essence. On the contrary, with the passage of years and centuries, the mausoleums and mosques built in these places became more beautiful and became majestic and architecturally rich monuments. Since the narrations about the Imams were widespread and influential throughout the world, even in areas where there were no Imams at all, holy places associated with their names arose, and people visit these places even today.

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