

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21 - APRIL 20)

Don't try to do too much. Deal with in-laws this week. Don't spend too much in order to impress others. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21 - MAY 21)

Enjoy yourself within a crowd. Your generous nature could be taken advantage of. Self-improvement could bring amazing results. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Your love will not listen to criticism. It may be difficult to discuss personal matters. Short trips will be educational. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CANCER
(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

Your mate is going to want some attention. Your attitude will fluctuate. Have a break with your loved one. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



LEO
(JULY 23 - AUG 22)

Don't let personal dilemmas interfere with your goals. Be wary of people who wish to take advantage. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23 - SEPT. 23)

Don't hesitate to sign up for lectures. Sort out your true feelings when it comes to your relationship. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LIBRA
(SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)

Take your time with things. The experience will be good. Look into intellectual and physical games. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24 - NOV. 21)

This may not be the time to lend or borrow. Do some chores at home. One sided attractions are likely. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22 - DEC. 21)

Someone is trying to undermine you. Pleasure trips will be favourable. Your passionate mood will be well received by your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22 - JAN. 20)

You may be too sensitive. Your charm will mesmerise. You must not give too much to your children. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)

Problems with loved ones could surface. You'll find engagement with large groups gratifying. Question your path in life. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20 - MARCH. 20)

Legal matters may be alleviated. Negativity has been the main problems. You will get along well in social situations. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

SPOTLIGHT

MARSIYA

The poetry of sorrow

It will be a rare person who can claim immunity to the pains and pleasures that poetry can bring, be that in the form of lyrics or poems, sung or orated. Words are what we as people can use to express ourselves, in sadness, in love, and in mourning.

One of these soul stirring traditions is that of the *Marsiya*—elegiac poems written and recited by mourners of Hussain Bin Ali (R), son of Fatima (R) and Ali (R), and grandson of the Prophet (PBUH). The tradition also includes similar poems with slightly varying intentions, like honouring the martyrs, praising their integrity, or lamenting the tragedy, called *Soz* and *Noha*.

Possibly the one thing that sets apart humanity is the capacity to wring, rouse and sometimes subdue very strong emotions with just words. Words have quelled fears, and raised rebellions against tyrants. They have deceived, and they have bolstered wavering loyalties, time and time again. Years ago, it was the words of the Kufa dwellers that made Hussain (R) leave his home, to serve the ideologies of his grandfather.

It was Hussain's (R) own words, strength of character, and lineage which made him a threat to Yezid's rule and questioned his legitimacy as a ruler. It is with words, that Muslims today mourn the tragedy that was wreaked on the family of the prophet, not yet 50 years after his demise.

The word *Marsiya* has its base in the Arabic word for tragedy, and was commonly used to describe the lamentation for any sorrow. However, since the brutal tragedy was caused to the holy Prophet's (PBUH) younger grandson on the 10th of Muharram, it has come to exclusively mean the songs and poems written in his remembrance.

A wider pool of poems will also include all the tributes that have been written for him and his retinue of 71, but *Marsiyas* are special in their nature, for being suitable for lilting oratory.

The *Marsiya* sung at the *imambaras* in Old Dhaka are generally in Persian or Urdu, particularly the Lakhnavi tradition of the latter, which was carried to the eastern part of Bengal by their Persian and Mughal ancestors in the 16th and 17th century.

The language and mood of *Marsiyas* can range from the very straight forward to those with layers of meaning. Some renowned *Marsiya* poets are Mir Anis, Mir Moonis, Mirza Dabeer, and Mir Zamir, to just name a few classics.

"Hussain ki dukh bhari kahani tamam duniya suna kareygi, Jo ro parey ga usey jahan mein Ali ki beti dua karey gi" -

(Hussain's sad story will be heard by the whole world eternally, those who mourn him will have the blessings of Ali's (R) daughter (family))



Men and women, particularly those who love the *Ahle-Bayt* (the family of the prophet), the Shi'ites, more so those of the 'twelver' (the *Asna Ash'ari*) tradition, spend the days of Muharram in mourning. There are *majlises* (gatherings) held every day, until the day that would be Hussain's *chehlum*, on the tenth of Safar, the second month of the Islamic calendar. In these daily *majlises*, Hussain (R) and his family are remembered by the people as their own family members, the wounds of their loss kept fresh in the memories, and taught to all.

There are various types of poems recited, some by an individual orator, and others as a group and on a beat, to feel the frenzied or simmering pain of survivors of a family that went through the immense trauma.

The *Soz* when read in the haunting cadence of the orators, uses the words of poets to take a listener back to the fateful time, and builds a picture of the situation—what it might have looked or felt like, especially to the sufferers and those who loved them then and today. It sets the mood for the mourning *majlis*, reminding everyone the true purpose of the gathering.

Mir Anis says in the first couplet of a *Soz*, in Hussain's (R) honour.

"Shabeeh-e-Imam-e-Zamaa khenchte hain, Tassavur mein tasveer-e-jaa'n khenchte hain"—

(I paint the image and visage of the Imam of the era, the beloved.)

In another writing, he goes on to say, *"Ghalib kiya Khuda ne tujhe kinaat par, Bas khatima jihaad ka hai teri zaat par"* -

(God has given you victory over the world, and you are Jihad personified.)

Poet Mir Moonis aims to describe the sombre solitude of the scene at Karbala,

where the holy Prophet's (PBUH) grandson lay dead, without a shroud or shelter to shield him, not yet 50 years since he had left a united Ummah, with this couplet,

"Beykafan din mein para tha Fatima ka aftab, Din ki chadar dhoop thi, raat ki chadar chandni" -

(Un-shrouded lay the sun of Fatima the whole day, the rays of the sun loved him in the day, the moonlight showered mercy at night.)

Or when Faiz writes, *"Tanhai ki, ghurbaat ki, pareshani ki shab hai, Yeh Khana-e-Shabbir ki wirani ki shab hai"* -

(The night resonated with loneliness, distress, and grief, Shabbir's hearth becomes desolate tonight.)

Or as another poet sends his salam on him,

"Assalam e tishna-lub, shehenshahey karb o bala, Ya Hussain ibne Ali..." -

(Salam on you, the one with parched lips, the conqueror of pain and adversity.)

Here the words 'karb-o-bala' are a play on the name of the place of incidence - Karbala - and mean pain and calamity respectively.

An easier version of the *Marsiya* is the *Noha*, which is based on the Persian word for lament. A couplet for *Noha* would be, *"Jo mauj hae dariya ki, is ranj se muzter hae, Pyasa hae wo do din se, jo malik e kausar hae,"*—

(The waves of the river strike the shore in anguish, for the plight of him that has right to even the Kauser in heaven, denied of a drink for two days.)