

## Attitude Towards Confusion

Al-Hasan devoted himself to thinking., He remained calm in the confusion of the misfortunes that threatened his attitude. He was indifferent to those calamities though some of them were tragedy; some of them were humiliation; some of them were death unlike the death of the great ones.

Confusion was not important for al-Hasan. However, it filled his heart with an intense sorrow. It moved his feelings and pricked him as the burning thorns did. Thus it urged him to find a solution without humiliation, tragedy, and usurped death which his holy memories refused.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, faced a situation full of exhausted importunity, false rumors, and rushing in the terrible trend of chaos.

In spite of these convulsions, al-Hasan, was like the mountain which violent gales cannot shake. He was a pious Imam. So the ignorance of the ignorant did not enrage him, nor did the wrath of those who were indignant with him angered him. He was indifferent to those hardships. In the meantime he studied the plans and ideas to decide his plan and idea.

Now, we are unable to discuss in detail all the ideas al-Hasan faced at that time. Generally speaking, those ideas were: "what Allah likes, what has been mentioned on the authority of the Apostle of Allah, and what is obligatory to protect the doctrine."

As for what the people said, it did not concern al-Hasan very much.

We must always remember that al-Hasan was a spiritual Imam. Thus he did not cling to life as the people did. He regarded life as a sacrifice in the way of Allah, means for public interest, and a field for achieving righteousness and spreading kindness. So the words of the people were worthless towards this divine morale. The Imam had spiritual qualities. He led the people to good through them. Thus he always thought about Allah, the practice of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and his family), the correct doctrine, and good deeds.

For this reason confusion, as we have said, had no effect on al Hasan. For the way of Allah is everlasting, and the Sunna of the Apostle of Allah is clear. However, he faced bitter confusion.

It is annoying that man is driven from his conditions, from where he has no power, to the situation which no nature accepts, on which the crises agree. Then man goes on resisting such continuous conditions of his own accord. That is the irregular condition which is not known but during confusion, that does not become constant with its desires but during restlessness.

During such a condition the self is between intrepidity and recoiling, and between despair and hope. The self, in spite of such a situation, is in need of a maximum degree of thinking and contemplation, and of memorization and verification. The conscience, in spite of this situation, has an accurate attitude over which the origins of people differ.

How great that self was! How great that conscience was! It was the calm self that resorted to its lord during every terror that befell it. It was the satisfied and pleased self that regarded anyone other than Him as insufficient. It was the self that did not seek guidance of anyone but that of Him. Al-Hasan had a good pure conscience. He did not become weak in spite of the heavy obligation. Rather he was soldier than the disaster.

Many people were with al-Hasan during the misfortunes that befell him. They did not say that he was sad or broken hearted. They saw neither sadness nor defeat on his face. Rather, all his aspects were steadfastness, determination, and tranquility. Even during his secret prayers to Allah, he was an example for patience, resorting to Allah, and relying on no one but Him.

Among the supplications of al-Hasan, peace be on him, is: "O Allah! O You Who have might and sovereignty! O You Who have supreme position! How do I fear (of people) and You are my hope? How do I fear (of them) and my reliance is on You? Pour on me some of Your patience. Grant me victory over Your enemies through Your authority. Support me with Your triumph. I resort to You and seek refuge with You. So make for me relief and solution (to save) me from my affair. O You Who were sufficient to protect the people of the haram (the Kaaba) from the Companions of the Elephant! O You Who sent to them birds in flocks to cast them against stones of baked clay! Punish my enemy severely!"

A glimpse of hope flashed in the desperate sides of al-Hasan's intellect and in the frowning corners of his contemplation. The glimpse of hope was an answer to his prayers to Allah, the Great and Almighty. So it spread as fragrance did. Then bright aspects appeared through it. They were like good news.

It (i.e., the glimpse of hope) was a strange surprise. It was able to put an end to all of al-Hasan's troubles at those moments. So he was in a flood of memories. The memories did not belong to his conditions, nor did they belong to the misfortunes of his moment. Those memories pleased al-Hasan. Thus his soul was full of enjoyment and amusement.

The pain sometimes extremely hurts the self. Intense thinking and silence sometimes exhaust it. So the self revolts to move from narrowness to vastness, from despair to hope, and from confusion to the indication full of hopes.

Al-Hasan thought about the disturbances of his time. He thought about the future of his religion that was liable to the dangers of this enemy who paid no attention to the holy things. He thought "that if he had put his hand in the hand of his enemy, the enemy would have not allowed him to follow the religion of his grandfather, the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family."<sup>1</sup>

As for this new surprise, it reminded al-Hasan of one third of a century. Suddenly, he remembered the houses of the Prophethood, for

they competed with each other to attract him. He remembered the places of the descents of revelation, for they vied with each other to embrace him warmly. He remembered the Ansar (helpers) who celebrated him.

Those memories were visions. They possessed his feelings. They were sweet dreams that nursed his injuries.

This is his (al-Hasan's) grandfather. This is the authority of his Prophethood among his community. These are the holy verses. They are like the stars. They were revealed from time to time. They were like the postmen who traveled between the sky and the earth. They were revealed at his house. This is his (al-Hasan's) father, the helper of the Prophet and the greatest fighter (mujahid), who made the Arab brave men yield to the Words of Allah, and who conquered the Fort of Khaybar. This is his mother, who was pure and chaste. With her the Prophet challenged the Christians of Najran to a contest of prayers. So she was meritorious to be the mistress of the women of the world.

Al-Hasan remembered all these memories. If these were not external realities, then they were psychological ones. For his divine spirit made them appear before his eyes. He inherited this spirit from his parents ('Ali and Fatima), namely his self was not separated from them. In the meantime his body was with them on the day when Allah formed His delegation to challenge the Christians of Najran to a contest of prayer.

So the delegation was composed of al-Hasan, his grandfather, his father, his mother, and his brother. Al-Hasan was with his parents on the day when the Apostle of Allah ordered the cloak to be brought to cover those chosen five persons, who were al Hasan, al-Husayn, their parents and their grandfather. He was with them on the day when the verse of purification was revealed. Noteworthy, the Prophet (may Allah bless him and his family) explained that this verse concerned the five blessed persons, peace be on them.

These are great qualities of which no Muslim has.

Then al-Hasan looked at that sad horizon. He remembered those interesting memories. Thus they reminded him of his blessed childhood, and his early holy youth. Through these memories, he considered his white days full of light in Medina. That was on the day when he toddled at his excellent place in it (Medina), and his notable pampered situation among his friends. That was on the day when

he played happily in it. He played there between the great hands of his father and on the chest of his grandfather or on his holy back or on the stick of his scared pulpit.

That was on the day when he embraced revelation from its first moments and learned the Words of Allah through the tongue of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. Thus he graduated from the Prophet's school of knowledge. In this way he completed his education to assume his obligatory Imamate over the Muslims. Moreover, al-Hasan listened to his grandfather when the latter declared his succession to the Imamate on many occasions.

Those memories reminded al-Hasan of great times. Thus he was full of happiness, strength, and activity.

It was the fascinating memory that controlled al-Hasan's soul. So it deprived him of his enjoyable smile. However, we do not think that he smiled during his condition. Al-Hasan remembered his grandfather. For he took him from the shoulder of his mother. He took him by the hand, made him stand on his blessed feet, and began talking gently to him with his holy song: "huzzaqa! huzzaqa! tarqqa `ayna baqqa!(i.e., little! little! ascend the eye of a bug.)"

So al-Hasan ascended gradually with his small feet till he put them on the chest of his grandfather. He opened his mouth when his grandfather said to him: "Open your mouth." Then the Prophet kissed him on the mouth and said: "O Allah! I love him, so love him and love him who loves him."<sup>2</sup>

Then this memory was the key of the memories that amused al Hasan. For it made him forget the annoying things of his last moment. The best period in the life of every human being is his innocent childhood. For it reminds him of the laps where he sits and the society where he lives. Besides the memories of this period remain immortal in his mind, in his heart, and in his spirit. Namely, he never forgets such a period.

One day al-Hasan remembered his grandfather, the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, when he put him on his right shoulder and put his brother al-Husayn on his left shoulder. So Abu Bakr received Allah's Apostle and said to al-Hasan and al Husayn: "The best riding place you have ridden, two boys." "They are the best two riders. Indeed, these two boys are my two plants of sweet basil (to sweeten) the world,"<sup>3</sup> said the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family.

Al-Hasan remembered the day when his grandfather sat down and made him ride on his back and made his brother al-Husayn ride with him, and said to them: "The best camel is your camel, and you are the best two just ones."<sup>4</sup>

He (al-Hasan) remembered the day when he came and his grandfather was bowing down, so he (al-Hasan) rode on his neck while he (his grandfather) was praying.<sup>5</sup> He remembered the day when he (al-Hasan) came and his grandfather was kneeling down, so he (his grandfather) opened his legs to let him pass to the other side.<sup>6</sup> He remembered the day when it was said to his grandfather: "You treat this (i.e.,

al-Hasan) in a manner with which you do not treat anyone else." So he (the Prophet) said: "Indeed, this (i.e., al-Hasan) is my plant of sweet basil. Indeed, this (grand) son of mine is a lord. Through him Allah will make peace between two groups of the Muslims."[7](#)

He (al-Hasan) remembered his riding on the neck of his grandfather, may Allah bless him and his family, while the latter was delivering a speech at his mosque so that the shine of his (al-Hasan's) anklets was seen from the farthest (place) of the mosque. They (al Hasan's) anklets were shining on the chest of his grandfather. Then he (al-Hasan) went on sitting on his grandfather's neck till the Prophet ended his speech.[8](#)

He (al-Hasan) remembered the day when his grandfather got down from his pulpit frightened when he (al-Hasan) stumbled at the door of the mosque. So he (his grandfather) carried him and took him with him to his pulpit. Then he (the Prophet) said: "The child is nothing but a tribulation."[9](#)

He (al-Hasan) remembered his grandfather when he said more than one time to him: "You are similar to me in form and manners."[10](#)

He remembered the day when he woke, suddenly. His grandfather and his mother were talking. So he came forward his grandfather and said: "Grandfather, water me." So his grandfather took him and went to his she-camel with a lot of milk. He milked the she- camel. Then he brought a foaming bowl of milk. He passed it to al-Hasan. Meanwhile, al-Husayn woke and said: "(Grand) father water me." He (his grandfather) said to him: "(Grand) son, your brother is older than you, and he had asked me to water him before you."[11](#)

He remembered the day when he was a child between the two hands of his mother Fatima, peace be on her. Then her father the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, came to her. He saw him (al-Hasan) playing. So he (her father) said to her: "Indeed, Allah, the Exalted, will make peace between two great groups of the Muslims through this son of yours."[12](#)

He remembered some signs of his succession to authority. That was on the day when he came to Abu Bakr when the latter was on the pulpit of his grandfather, the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. He said to him: "Get down from the pulpit of my (grand) father."[13](#)

Moreover, he remembered his grandfather when he took him with him to his pulpit. Thus he (his grandfather) was looking at the people. In the mean time he was looking at him. Then he said: "Indeed, this (grand) son of mine is a lord. Through him Allah will make peace between two groups of the Muslims."[14](#)

These sentimental memories had an effect on al-Hasan. Besides they were historical and enjoyable. For they abated his sufferings during those painful moments. Meanwhile they abated that the violent disaster. Moreover, each memory led to many memories, and each vision moved other visions.

Al-Hasan was sure of the words of his grandfather, may Allah bless him and his family, as he was sure of the clear revelation (i.e., the Qur'an). His grandfather said the following words on several occasions: "Indeed, this (grand) son of mine is a lord. Through him Allah will make peace between two groups of the Muslims."

Al-Hasan remembered these words of his grandfather. Thus he asked himself "Is this the day on which the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, wanted me to make peace with the Syrians? The Syrians are aggressors, so does this tradition concern them? Is this the discord for which the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, wanted me to settle? Do I not have enough fighters to suppress it by force?"

All these questions sounded in al-Hasan's mind. They stirred him up. So he was about to create a historical change. Apart from this, al-Hasan had to find appropriate solutions for these questions to get ready to face his critical situation.

Al-Hasan was successful in finding solutions for these questions. That is because he followed the same ways his grandfather followed during his most critical hours.

Indeed the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, said the foregoing tradition.

Besides, it is this discord which the Prophet meant in his holy traditions. For there was no discord greater than it. In other words it divided the Muslims and diverted them from their enemies who lay in wait for them.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, it prevented them from achieving their religious obligations such as development, organization, and jihad (holy war).

As for the Islamic judgment of the aggressors, the attitude of the Commander of the faithful (Imam 'Ali), peace be on him, towards them indicates that. He prevented the Muslims from capturing their women and their children. Furthermore, his practices towards them are good enough examples in the religion.

The Shi'a in Kufa was very eager to wage jihad (holy war), against Mu'awiya. However, why did al-Hasan ask himself about the ability to suppress the discord by force? To answer this question. We must study al-Hasan's fighters and their morale in the armies. For they are the only means that help to win battles. Thus they are more important than the large number of an army without high military spirit.

Now, we are able to answer the above-mentioned question as follows:

At Maskan, the morale of al-Hasan's army was low. Hence this army was in need of a miracle to raise its morale. That is because of the disaster that hit it when its commander and eight thousand fighters deserted it.

In al-Mada'in, al-Hasan had some fighters who were like ghosts. He was able to know their intentions through their hostile confusing fabrications. Moreover, they created a good deal of exciting discords. They were afraid of the critical situations. They had no hope of victory at the battle. As for the number of

the army of al-Hasan, peace be on him, it was twenty thousand fighters or little more when al-Hasan advanced against Mu'awiya. However, Mu'awiya's army that camped on the Iraqi borders was sixty thousand fighters.

So al-Hasan, at that time, had third of the number of the army of Mu'awiya.

There were many desertions from the Camp of Maskan. For example, the cousin (i.e., al-Hasan's cousin, `Ubayd Allah) deserted that camp. Thus he embodied the Arabic proverb: "A cousin maybe not a cousin." Eight thousand fighters deserted that camp, too. So it decreased in an awful manner.

Accordingly, the number of al-Hasan's army was one fifth of the army of Mu'awiya in both camps.

If we, here, depend on the modern military rule that owes morale to the numerical abundance, that is one to three, then we will come to a very sorrowful result that is fifteen to one in proportion.

If we think about the army of al-Hasan, that remained fighting against Mu'awiya at Maskan (according to this rule), we will find that it was fighting against an enemy who was exactly forty-five times more than it.

Therefore, I wonder: Was al-Hasan's army strong enough to suppress the discord the Syrians created?

War regulations throughout history do not permit one person to fight against fifteen or forty-five persons. If such a war occurred some day, then it would be irregular. Rather, it is among death-defying attacks that lead to suicide with will and intention.

So al-Hasan was not supposed to take such a measure. For he was the (grand) son of the Apostle of Allah. He was the creature whom Allah kept for reform not for war, for peace not for enmity. He was the plant Allah grew for Muslims not for himself, for the religion not for authority. Moreover, he wanted a reward from Allah in the hereafter, not from the people in this world.

In this way the peaceful message of Allah prevented the two parties from waging war against each other. This event is very famous in history. Still some historians tried to hint to a battle. They claimed that the battle took place between the army of Qays, who was the commander of the vanguard of the army of al-Hasan, and the Syrians at Maskan. In his book, 'al-Darrajat al-Rafi'a', Sayyid 'Ali Khan (died 1120 A.H.) has mentioned some stages of this claimed battle.

I have not found a reference book older than this book of the great Sayyid to affirm this story, nor have I found what supports this idea when I studied the situation at Maskan at that time, nor have I found what urges me to accept this report when I have studied the plan al-Hasan drew to prevent bloodshed during all his lifetime, nor have I understood that when I have read this tradition of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family: "Indeed, Allah will make peace between two great groups of the Muslims through al-Hasan." Rather, this tradition indicates that he was the messenger of peace in Islam.

So was it possible for al-Hasan's army to wage war against Mu'awiya or to attack him?

From al-Hasan's testamentary bequest, we have known that he ordered al-Husayn not to pour even blood into a cupping- glass in carrying out his command. That happened as he wanted.

Moreover, many eyewitnesses underlined that al-Hasan was the successor to authority, and that he did not shed even blood into a cupping- glass during his succession to authority. Some of them said that. They affirmed their words through swearing (by Allah) twice. [16](#)

[1.](#) Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 10, p. 107.

[2.](#) See al-Zamakhshari. Ibn al-Bay`. Al-Tabarani. Yanabi` al-Mawadda. Al-Isaba, vol. 2, p. 12.

[3.](#) See the book of Sulaym b. Qays. Al-Bayhaqi, al-Mahasin wa al-Masawi', p. 49. The latter has reported the words of al-Himyari, who poetized the Prophetic tradition as follows: Al-Hasan and al-Husayn came to the Apostle; They had gone out in the morning to play. So he (the Apostle) embraced and welcomed them, They were with him at that place. They passed riding on his two shoulders (i.e., al-Hasan and al-Husayn). So (his shoulders) were the best riding place, and they were the best riders.

[4.](#) Ibn Batta, al-Ibana.

[5.](#) Abu Nu'aym, Hilyat al-Awliya'

[6.](#) Ahmad Shahab al-Din al-`Asqalani al-Isaba fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba, vol. 2, p. 11.

[7.](#) Abu Nu'aym, Hilyat al-Awliya'.

[8.](#) Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 58.

[9.](#) Al-Manaqib. Al-Tirmidhi. Al-Sam'ani. Ahmad, al-Fada'il.

[10.](#) Al-Ghazali, Ihya' `Ulum al-Din. Al-Makki, al-Ihya' and Qut al Qulub.

[11.](#) Sulaym b. Qays al-Saqifa, p. 98.

[12.](#) Ibn `Abd Rabbih, al-`Iqd al-Farid, vol. 1, p. 194. Al-Bayhaqi, vol. 1, p. 40. Al-Bukhari. Al-Sam'ani. Al-Harkushi. Al-Janabadhi. Abu Nu'aym, Hilyat al-Awliya'. Yanabi` al-Mawadda. Muruj al-Dhahab.

[13.](#) Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani, al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, p. 105. Also Al-Darqutni has mentioned it.

[14.](#) Al-Bukhari. Muslim. Al-Isaba, vol. 2, p. 12.

[15.](#) This is a hint to the attempts of the Byzantine on the Syrian borders in the year 40 A. H

[16.](#) Ahmad Shahab al-Din al-`Asqalani, al-Isaba fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba, vol. 2, p. 12. Ibn Kathir, Ta'rikh, vol. 8, pp. 8-14.

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