

Chapter 3: Al-Shahid's Features

Al-Shahid Al-Awwal had a pure soul and sublime spirit, inside a thin body and vulnerable figure, but he owned a resolute will challenging the mountains in solidness and strength. This being the nature of the upright pious people, who were described by their leader Ali Ibn Abi Talib when he said: "Their speech is to the point, their dress is moderate, and their gait is humble... The greatness of the Creator is seated in their hearts, and, so, everything else appears small in their eyes... During the day they are enduring, learned, virtuous and God-fearing. Fear (of Allah) has made them thin like arrows. If any one looks at them he believes they are sick..."¹

His Association with Allah

The merit distinguishing Allah's friends among the upright pious people, lies in their firm link and connection with Allah, whether being in the midst of people or at the bottom of dark prisons. They all the time persevere on remembering Allah, hymning with His praise the end of night and beginning of day.

For this reason, Al-Shahid Al-Awwal was viewing the prison as a place for seclusion and worship, following the guide of his predecessors, of the prophets like Yusuf (a.s), and the Imams like Musa Al-Kazim (a.s), devoting himself to his Lord, communing with and invoking Him out of fear and avarice.

Al-Shahid's sublimity and dignity near Allah reached an extent, that once upon a night he wrote on a piece of paper: "O my Lord, I am conquered, help me (to be victorious)," putting it under his pillow and slept. On getting up, he found the following phrase written at the bottom of the paper: "If you are my bondman, be patient." Al-Shahid responded to the call, being an example in patience, forbearance, and resistance.

His Comprehensiveness

Al-Shahid Al-Awwal's most noteworthy trait being his objectivity in thought and (religious) sciences, as he was not only aware of his time culture, but also so profound in most of their aspects. He had strong

association with most of his era Ulama, with no difference between Ahl Al-Sunnah and the Shi'ah.

He was further trying his best to make rapprochement to the Sunni Ulama, seeking to attain some objectives like:

1. Demolishing the artificial barriers between the Sunni and Shi'i fiqh, eliminating all the boundaries with working for bringing together the masses of the two parties into the crucible of unity, fraternity and agreement.

Having knowledge of the Sunnah's fiqhi opinions, beside benefiting from their experiences and theological innovations, making them in exchange acquainted with the experiences and opinions of the Shi'a school in this respect.

Al-Shahid Al-'Awwal is truly regarded the pioneer of the sincere idea, in melting the frost, mending the fences and reconciling between the brothers. The Sunnah Ulama used to venerate him highly, and common people were exalting his philanthropic spirit wanting good, and desiring for clemency and brotherhood.

Burnishing the Shi'a Fiqh, through being acquainted with the legal opinions of the other schools regarding it. Al-Shahid was the first in making comparison in between the schools of Fuqaha , paving the way before the Imami Fiqh to attain progress and success.

His Literary Adroitness

Al-Shahid was fully aware of his time culture, knowledgeable of the whole aspects of thought. He used to express his notions through a fascinating style, breaking the inanimation of the earlier and contemporary scholars in expressing their opinions regarding various fields of knowledge.

Beside his elevated literature and effusing pen, he was distinguished with poeticalness, being a delicate poet, whose poetry was known of its accurate portrayal, expressiveness and eloquence. In this field, Al-Shahid is counted among the poet Ulama, like Al-Sharif Al-Radi, Al-Sharif Al-Murtada, Al-Shahid Al-Thani, Al-Allamah Balrul-Ulum and Al-Mirza Muhammad Taqi Al-Shirazi, beside others.

Al-Shahid has employed his literature and poetry for serving religion and defending Islam.

Following is an excerpt of his poetry:

*We have been needless of whoever not wanting us,
Though his merits and traits being abundant,
And whoever turned his back to us out of repulsion,
Enough be for that who outstrips us we overstep him.*

Keeping pace with Ibn Al-Jawzi's saying:

*I swear by Allah and His favours,
With it, for him, I meet my Lord,
That Ali Ibn Abi Talib is the,
Leader of people of East and West,*

Al-Shahid says:

*Since he is the brother of the Prophet of guidance,
And his sharp sword in war,
He protected him against all evils,
By himself during abundance and dearth,
And the text in remembrance and in "your Guardian"
is sufficient for that who has mind.*

He also said:

*By love and adroitness they acquired noble dignity
Not by toddling, conceil and egotism,
Their doctrine being pure morals,
Which are followed by bodies inside semens,
Forbearance, gratitude, sacrifice and hunger,
And souls, holding breaths through panting,
With abstinence of every unsurviving mortal,
As the benevolent's conduct passed in predecessors,
People strove for cleansing the souls,
Surrendering, in peace of ghosts, for damage,
You can never know them through affectation,
Nor through pretension of any sort.
Alas! A precedent nation has perished,
Till it survived through many successors.*

*Halt over(Mount of) 'Arafat dejectedly,
And circumambulate around Ka'bah of Safa Gnosticism,
Enter into the sweet notions with invention,
And return to the hymns inn with scriptures,
If the wine waiter gives you by hand,
The transfiguration cup, take it and imbibe.*

Under Allah's Protection

Al-Shahid has devoted himself for Allah, endowing his life at the service of His religion. For this reason we could explicitly notice Allah's grace imparted upon him in numerous situations, especially when taking into consideration that only declaring one's Tashayyu (following Ahl Al-Bayt) was in itself a guilt entailing severe punishment, at that time.

Hence we can realize how much Al-Shahid has suffered, and the depth of his calamity at that juncture in history.

Compiling Aal-Lum'ah during those suppressing circumstances can be regarded a favour from Allah, as Al Shahid was under house arrest, with severe surveillance imposed on his house, beside his house meeting being attended by Sunnah Ulama and statesmen whose reports were alarming of danger. Nevertheless, as he commenced compiling Al Lum'ah, he was never visited by anyone throughout seven days, the whole period he spent for compiling the book.

His Call for Unity

Throughout history, the great Ulama occupy the foremost rank among callers toward unity ... the unity of the Islamic Ummah, and its solidarity within one front against the powers of atheism and wickedness.

By unity, we do not mean abolishing the creeds and dissolving the schools of thought into one school and limited thought, as this indicates the blind fanaticism driving toward cancelling and eliminating the other party.

But the true meaning of the Islamic unity lies in solidarity and reaching agreement in respect of common points, constituting the infrastructure of the Islamic edifice. Because all (Muslims) read one book, believe in one Prophet, and pray toward the same direction (Qiblah), with the only disagreement being about minor issues that have no effect upon the very essence of the issue, whatsoever.

Here is the Book of Allah inviting Muslims, by saying:

"O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the Messenger if ye are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end." (4:59)

Al-Shahid kept on being an ensign exemplifying the believing Muslim. Despite his Shi'ism and leadership of the Imami thought, he was never provoking any other rival party, abiding by dissimulation (Taqjyyah) when speaking, writing and compiling (books), with the sublime convenience of Islam being his most important concern.

Whereas the other party used to practise against him various forms of persecution and repression,

beside confiscating freedom of expressing opinion, charging him with baseless accusations, and finally exterminating him in a tragic way.

Others' Viewpoints

No knowledge-seeker has ever attained the sublime position that Al-Shahid Al-Awwal occupied, despite his being so young. He has drawn the attention of all people through his extraordinary wittiness, abundant philology, persevered toiling on the way of supporting religion and truth (Haqq).

The words uttered by his teacher Fakhr Al-Muhaqqiqin in his regard, are still deserving admiration of generations, when he extolled him saying: "The greatest Imam, the best of world Ulama, the doyen of the children of Adam, our master the sun of truth and religion Muhammad Ibn Makki Ibn Hamid may Allah perpetuate his life."[2](#)

Of course, he was not addressing a forty or fifty-year old man, but it was a disciple whose age was not more than seventeen years. Fakhr Al-Muhaqqiqin was never satisfied with this attestation, but he manifested another fact while emphasizing that the benefit he got from his disciple was more than that he rendered to him.

Al-Shaykh Mubammad Ibn Yusuf Al-Kermani Al-Qurashi AlShafi'i, on granting him the license (Ijazah), said in his regard: "The grand more knowledgeable master (Mawla), chief of leaders, owner of the two favours, possessor of all virtuous excellences and perfections, holder of the sciences of religion and Hereafter."

Further, Al-Shahid Al-Thani said about him: "Our Shaykh and Imam, the proficient peerless investigator, the scrutineer having both traits of Ilm (knowledge) and felicity (Sa'adah), and the degree of labour and shahadah, the meritorious Imam. Abu Abd Allah Al-Shahid Muhammad Ibn Makki, may Allah elevate his status as He has honoured his end."[3](#)

Al-Muhaqqiq Al-Karaki, on granting the license to Al-Shaykh Ali Ibn Abd Al-Ali, has also referred to him by these words: "Al-Imam Shaykh Al-Islam, Ahi Al-Bayt's Faqih (Jurisprudent) during his time, the king of Ulama, the erudite of Filqaha, the example for investigators and scrutineers, the best of the earlier and contemporaneous scholars."

Al-Hurr Al-Amili, in his book Amal Al-Amil, has extolled him by saying: "He was an expert scholar, a jurisprudent narrator, a profoundly learned investigator, perfect, possessor of all rational (Aqli) and traditional (Naqli) professions, an ascetic worshipper, a creative poet and literateur, the single of era, with no rival at his time."

In Mustadrak Al-Wasa'il, Al-Allamah Al-Nuri said in his regard: "The crown of Shari'ah, pride of the Shi'ah, sun of the cult (Millah) and religion, Abu Abd Allah Mulammad Ibn Al Shaykh Jamal Al-Din Makki, Afqah Al-fuqaha (more knowledgeable of jurisprudents), holder of all sorts of virtues, possessor

of various kinds of excellences, and the owner of the vigorous pure soul."

Thus, the status, greatness and sublimity attained by AlShahid Al-Awwal made him occupy the lofty apex throughout his era. His foes desired annihilation for him, whereas Allah has endowed him with an everlasting immortality.

[1.](#) Nahj Al-Balaghah, Khutbah (sermon) No. 193.

[2.](#) Rawdat Al-Jannat, vol. VII, p. 4.

[3.](#) Muqaddimat Al-Rawah Al-Bahiyah,

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