

Part 4: Passing Away

The Passing Away of Shaykh Rajab Ali Khayyat

Finally on twenty second of Shahrivar of 1340 Solar Hijra / September 13, 1961, the blessed life of the reverend Shaykh came to an end and the bird of his soul departed this life after a life long spiritual self-building and enriching others. The story of his radiant soul's departure from the world to the sublime abode is interesting and instructive to hear. In this section, the story of the Shaykh's passing away will be related followed by an account of the death of two other friends of God, very similar to that of the Shaykh, given in chapters two and three.

[The Day before his Heavenly Departure](#)

The Shaykh's son describes the day before his passing away as follows: 'The day before his death, my father was well and healthy, my mother was out, and I was alone. In the afternoon, my father returned home, made *wuzu* (minor ablution) and called me, saying:

"I feel a little ill, if that servant of God (a certain customer) comes to pick up his clothing, the scraps¹ are in the pocket, and he has to pay thirty *tomans* as a wage."

My father had never told me before that if someone came to pick up his clothes how much the wage would be. But that day I did not grasp what would happen.

[A Dream by One of his Disciples](#)

One of the Shaykh's devotees who had foreseen his heavenly departure the night before his death through a "true dream", told the story as follows:

'The night before the Shaykh left this world, I dreamed they were shutting down the shops on the west

side of Masjid-i Qazvin. I asked: What has happened? They said Agha Shaykh Rajab Ali Khayyat has expired. I woke up perplexed and worried. It was three hours past midnight. I regarded my dream as a true one. After morning *adhan*, I said prayer and left for Agha Radmanish's house right away. He enquired surprisingly of my untimely visit and I told him about my dream.

It was five in the morning, at twilight, that we set out for the Shaykh's house. The Shaykh opened the door, we went in and sat down. The Shaykh sat, too, and said:

"What have you been up to at such an early morning?"

I did not tell him my dream. We talked for a while and then the Shaykh lay down on his side and placed his hand under his head, saying:

"Tell something, recite a poem!"

Someone sang:

'There is no time more joyful than the love days.

There is no night to the day of the lovers.

The delightful hours were the time spent with the Friend,

The rest was all fruitlessness and ignorance.'

[The Shaykh on his Deathbed](#)

In less than an hour I noticed that the Shaykh's condition got worse. I asked him whether to call a doctor for him – I was sure that he would pass away that day. The Shaykh replied:

"It's up to you."

The doctor wrote a prescription and I went out to have it filled. When I returned I saw the Shaykh was taken to another room. He was sitting facing the *qiblah* with a white sheet covering his legs; he was touching the white sheet with his thumb and forefinger.

I was very attentive to see how a man of God departs from the world. All of a sudden there was a change of state in him as if someone was whispering something in his ears. He said:

"Insha Allah (God willing)."

Then he said:

"What day is today? Bring today's supplication!"

I recited that day's supplication. Then he said:

"Have it read by Agha Sayyid Ahmad too." He recited it, too. Then the Shaykh said:

"Raise your hands to the sky and say:

Ya Karim al-'afw, Ya 'Azim al-'afw (O Noble! Forgive me, O Great! Forgive me), may God forgive me."

I looked at my friend and said: 'Let me go to bring Agha Suhayli, as it seems my dream is coming true and he is meeting his end, and I left.'

Welcome my Dear Master!

The Shaykh's son related the rest of this story as follows: 'I saw my father's room was crowded. They said the reverend Shaykh's condition was serious. I entered the room right away and saw my father—who had made ablution few moments before and came into the room—was leaning in his bed facing the *qibla*; but all of a sudden he sat up and said while smiling:

"Welcome my dear master!"²

He seemed to shake hands with someone, lay down, and passed away while having the same smile on his lips!

The First Night after the Burial

Another of his friends said: 'In a dream, I saw the Shaykh on the first night after his burial. I saw that a grand station was bestowed upon him by Mawla Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a). I approached that station; as soon as he saw me, he took a very tender and fine glance at me like a father who admonishes his son and the son is paying no attention. His glance reminded me that he always would say:

"Do not want other than God."

But we were still encumbered by our vain desires. I got further closer to him. He said two sentences:

The first sentence:

"The joy of life is intimacy with God and the friends of God."³

And the second sentence:

"He (Imam Ali (a)) lived (such a true life) that his wife (Hazrat Fatima (a)) gave away his shirt (in self-sacrifice) on the night of consummation in the way of God."

والسلام عليه يوم ولد ويوم مات ويوم يبعث حياً

So peace on him the day he was born, the day that he dies, and the day that he will be raised up to life (again).

- [1.](#) Extra pieces of cloth left over after tailoring.
- [2.](#) Mizan al-Hikmah, IV, 1572:5223, quoted from Bihar al-Anwar, IXX, 392: 60.
- [3.](#) Supplication of Kumail.

The Passing Away of Ayatollah Hujjat

As mentioned at the outset of this part, I deemed it worthwhile to narrate the passing away accounts of two other friends of God because of their similarity to that of the Shaykh and their instructiveness. One of these two noblemen was Ayatollah Hujjat (ra) who was the Shaykh's *marja'* and the Shaykh adored him for his sincerity and viewed him as detached from worldly ambitions.¹ Now we would hear the story of this great men's heavenly departure from his noble son-in-law, Ayatollah Haj Shaykh Murtaza Hairi (ra) whom I had the honor to humbly learn from as a student:

House Repair

First of all I should say that although the late Ayatollah Hujjat was my teacher and father-in-law, I would not go to his house very often and did not involve in the affairs relating to his chairmanship. He was, however, at the time of Ayatollah Burujirdi (ra), the absolute *marja'* or the *marja'* to the majority of the people in Azerbaijan. In Tehran also the Azerbaijanis as well as non-Azerbaijanis referred to him (to solve their religious problems). He paid monthly salary (to the *talabas*) too, and was to some extent sufficiently authorized in (personal) expenditure. Early the winter of that year, it was not too cold yet, and he was having the house repaired, with a comer of the courtyard excavated for constructing a new building, and some workers were doing other repair work in the house, including digging a well required for the extension of the building. The construction was supported financially not by himself but by one of his devotees residing in Tehran whose name – if I remember correctly – was Chaichi.

"I am About to Die!"

One morning [I2](#) went to visit him in the interior of the house. He was sitting on the bed feeling not sick. Due to some chronic bronchitis, he normally suffered from asthma when it would get cold. At that time, in spite of the beginning of the cold season, he did not seem to suffer very much (from asthma). I was told that he had dismissed the construction workers. I asked him why he dismissed the workers. He

answered firmly and explicitly:

"I am about to die, so what the construction for"? I did not say anything, and do not remember that I was very surprised by his response. Then he said to me: "My dear! Come over for the next few days." He meant not to keep a distance like before.

"O God! I did what I was Obligated to Do!"

As I remember I would go over (to his place) every morning after teaching Makasib, which I taught in the exterior room (of his house) and sometimes I would go early evenings. One day, most probably a Wednesday, he sent me a special message to see him for some task. I went to see him that day. There was a big iron chest before him, and Agha Haj Sayyid Ahmad Zanjani³ was sitting in front of him. He gave the documents and title deeds to Agha Zanjani and all the cash in the chest to me to spend in certain ways, allotting some of it as my portion. He had already written his will in several copies and sent one to me which I still have. He had some money in Najaf, in Tabriz, and in Qum with the late Haj Muhammad Husayn Yazdi, who was one of the executors to my late father (ra). He (Ayatollah Hujjat) had stated in his will that all the money which had been trusted to his representatives was *sahm-i Imam* (portion belonging to the Imam al-'Asr (aj)), and the piece of land – it later on formed a big part of the Masjid of Agha Burujirdi – which he had bought for *madrassa* and was in his own name.

He had stated in his will that the piece of land also belonged to the Holy Imam (aj) and could not be bequeathed, but – apparently – if Agha Burujirdi wanted for the masjid it could be given to him.

His cash simply included the money in the chest and he had been refusing to receive the religious taxes and legal alms (*wujuhat-i shari*) for the past few days. However, Agha Zanjani seemed to be receiving the *wujuhat* who began to pay the monthly salary (*shahriyeh* to *talabas*) since the first month after the demise of Ayatollah Hujjat. There was only a few coins under his pillow which upon his falling sick, his daughter–i.e., my wife–took from his pocket to be kept under his pillow until he got better and then to be given as alms–as was a popular custom with the women of the past and I was familiar with this custom too. It seemed that the money was kept as a kind of pawn to be given as alms after the patient would recover. That was the only money left which Agha (Ayatollah Hujjat) did not know about. When he gave the money in the chest to me to spend in the due way, he said while raising his hands to the sky:

"O God! I did what I was obligated to do, you take my life, now!"⁴

"My Death will be at Noon"

Having been more intimate with him, I said: 'Agha you are afraid so much for no reason! Every year at winter you happen to come down with the same problem, but recover later on. He (apparently) said:

"No, my case or my death will be at noon."

I did not say anything else and went out to do his errands. I took a *dorshky* (a carriage) to do the errands as quickly as possible lest his demise should happen at noon and the assignment would not be carried out as to whether spend the money as he advised or to give it to the inheritors. The task was done with by noon, and he did not pass away that day.

Resorting to the Holy Qur'an

One of nights around that time he told me to give him the Holy Qur'an. Apparently with some deliberation and *dhikr*, he opened the Holy Qur'an (at random), which opened at the beginning of the page with the holy verse, (له دعوة الحق) (for Him (alone) is prayer in truth.) (al-Ra'd, 14)

He seemed to cry and whispered something to God that I do not remember right now. He broke his *muhr*; I do not remember either it was the same night or another night.

"Agha Ali, Please Come in!"

One day near his demise he was gazing at the door, obviously watching a certain thing, when he said:

"Agha Ali, please come in!"

I did not last long before he came to himself. In the last few days he was usually engaged in *dhikr* and whispering prayers. Once the supplication of Adilah was also recited. I do not remember it was by me or by someone else. On the day of his demise I taught my lecture of *al-Makasib* at home with much certainty, since I knew his condition was not too serious. After that I went to the same room that he was in bed. At that time only his daughter (my wife) was with him. He was lying in bed facing the wall and reciting *dhikr* and supplication. She said that he was a bit disturbed that day, and it seemed to be due to much prayer and *dhikr*. When I said salam, he asked:

"What day is today?" I said it was Saturday. Then he asked: "Has Agha Burujirdi gone for the lecture?"

I said, yes. And he said very sincerely and whole-heartedly for several times:

"*Alhamdu lillah* (praise be to Allah).

He said other things, too, that I avoid mentioning for brevity.

Water Mixed with Turba (Soil from Imam Husayn (a)'s Place of Martyrdom)

His daughter said: Agha is somewhat disturbed today, let's give him a little *turba*. I said it was fine. She prepared the turba (mixed with water) and I offered it to him to take. He sat up and I held the glass to him. Thinking it was food or medicine, he said with a frown:

"What is it?"

I said it was *turba*. His face lit up immediately and took the glass and drank up the *turba* liquid. Then I heard him utter these words:

"آخر زادي من الدنيا تربة الحسين"

"My last provision from the world (is) the *turba* of (Imam) Husayn (a)."

He said the *turba* very clearly. He lay down two times and then sat up and began reciting supplications and *dhikr*. I was around either in the interior or the exterior (of the house).

The supplication of Adilah was recited for the second time for him and apparently by his demand. Agha Sayyid Hasan, his second son, was sitting facing the *qibla*, and Ayatollah Hujjat himself was leaning over a cushion and was sitting in a bending position, expressing his beliefs before God Almighty in Persian and Azeri with extreme sincerity and devoutness.

"Without an Intermediary?!"

I remember him saying about Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a) while confessing his caliphate in Azeri:

"*Bila fasl, ihch fasili yukhdi, lap bila fasli lap bila fasli kimin fasli war*

(without intermediary, there was no intermediary, of course there was no intermediary! Who has an intermediary)?!"

And he recited the following verse from the Holy Qur'an regarding the Ahl al-Bayt of the--Holy Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (a):

(مثلا كلمة طيبة كشجرة طيبة أصلها ثابت وفرعها في السماء)

(A parable of goodly Word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens.) (Ibrahim, 24)

I was also standing in a corner and watching this amazing spiritual scene, totally wondering. It crossed my mind to tell him: 'Agha! Pray for me!' but I felt shy; first of all, he was self-occupied and was unaware of his surrounding, seeing only himself and his spiritual duties before death in the presence of God. And secondly, such request would mean that we were witnessing his dying and aware of his surrendering to death.

I was standing silently behind this scene and the crowd that was present--one of whom was Agha Sayyid

Hasan and the other was his daughter and other members of his family. I also heard him say:

"O God! All my beliefs are present; I trust them to you (now), return them to me (in the Hereafter).

I was standing there and he was busy with his whispering prayers when all of a sudden, while he was leaning on the cushion facing the *qibla*, his breath failed. Those who were present thought that he had a heart attack, so they dripped some Coramin drops in his mouth. But I saw the liquid flowed back down the corner of his lips; he had passed away right at the moment his breath failed and after the *turba* mixture not even a drop of Coramin went down his throat. I was quite aware that he had passed away. I left the room and heard the call of *adhan* from *Madrassa Hujjatiyya*. His death took place at noon, as he had said himself on Wednesday:

"My death (or my case) will be at noon."

In the end, Ayatollah Hairi added: 'Besides suggesting a clear form of a firm belief, this narrative includes some signs from the Unseen world:

1. He predicted his death to be at noon and it happened at noon.
2. He observed Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a) in an intuition.
3. He predicted that his last provision from the world was *turba*. And it happened so, without himself asking for the *turba* or knowing that the glass contained *turba* mixed with water, since he was unwilling to drink it, not knowing what it was.⁵

¹. See Chapter Four, Part I.

². The narrator, Ayatollah Ha'iri.

³. The father of Ayatollah Haj Agha Musa Zanjani, a contemporary marja'.

⁴. Or a similar statement like this.

⁵. *Sirr-i Dilbaran*, 206–214.

The Passing Away of Haj Akhund Turbati

Another of the friends of God whose story of death is interesting and instructive to read is the late Haj Akhund Turbati, the father of the famous preacher, the late Husayn Ali Rashed (ra). The latter, has described the event of his father's death in his book, *The Forgotten Virtues* which is a biography of his father, as follows:

One Week before his Heavenly Departure

Among the things we (the family members) remember of him and still is ambiguous to us is that my father died on Sunday October 16, 1943 CE., (Shawwal, 17, 1362 AH.) at around two hours after the sunrise, having said his morning prayer while lying in his deathbed. His legs being stretched toward the *qibla*, he was conscious to the last moment of his life and was whispering some words as if he was aware of his dying. The last thing he uttered before his soul left his body was the phrase, "*la ilaha illallah*" (there is no god but Allah).

"Salutation to you O Rasulallah (s)"

It was exactly on Sunday the week before his death after the morning prayer when he lay toward the *qibla* and covered his face with his robe that all of a sudden his whole body became illuminated as brightly as the sun rays projecting through an opening on a surface, making his face radiant and shining whereas it had been pale and yellowish due to illness; it was so brightly shining that it was seen from under the robe that he had covered on his body. He made a movement and said:

"Salam Alaikum ya Rasulallah (s)! You have come to visit this unworthy servant?!"

After that, as though he was really visited by some people, he saluted Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a) and all Imams (a) up to the twelfth Imam (aj) one after another and thanked them for their visit. Then he saluted Hazrat Fatima Zahra (a). Finally he saluted Hazrat Zaynab (a) and at this moment cried a lot, saying:

"Bibi! I cried for you too much."

"Rest in Peace, Mother!"

Then he saluted his own mother, saying:

"I am grateful of you mother, you gave me pure (sublime) milk."

This state lasted until two hours after sunrise. After that, the light that had illumined his body disappeared and his face turned pale again like before. It was just one week later on another Sunday at the same period of two hours that he spent in the agony of death and then gently gave up his body.

"Do not Tease me Husayn Ali!"

On one of the weekdays-between the two Sundays-I told him: 'We hear things narrated to us from the Prophets and noblemen and wish we had been at their time and heard them directly; now, you who are my closest kin have had this experience. I wish I knew what it was (that happened to you). He kept silent and said nothing. I repeated my request two or three more times in different wordings and he still kept

silent. It was the fourth or the fifth time (of my repeating the request) that he responded:

"Do not tease me Husayn Ali"

I said: 'I meant to understand something.' He said:

"I cannot make you understand; you go and try to understand it yourself."

This state has remained as a puzzle to me and my mother, brother, sister and aunt, and up to the present that I am writing this account, i.e., 9:30 a.m, Tuesday, July 15, 1975 (fifth of Rajab, 1395 AH.), I know nothing of (the details of) this issue, but just say that such state really happened. [1](#)

[1.](#) "The Forgotten Virtues", p. 149.

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