

Piety Of His Eminence, Ali

Muhammad bin Qays narrates from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that Ali (a.s.) used to partake simple food like the slaves. His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) used to buy two shirts and ask his slave to choose one he liked and only after that, did His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) put on the shirt. He fed the poor, mutton and leavened bread and himself he subsisted on barely bread, olive oil and vinegar.

He never chose prosperity and comforts for himself and was always diligent in the way of Allah. He emancipated several slaves that he had obtained through the strength of his arms and had brought them up for the sake of Allah. No deed of any human could supercede his actions. He used to pray 1000 units of prayers everyday.

Allamah Qaushiji writes in Sharh Tajrid¹ that he was the most pious after the Prophet. Despite having the means, he used to lead a life of recluse and he used to say: "O world! You try to lure me and want to cheat me. I don't need any of your pleasures. I have divorced you thrice. Your pleasure is short-lived and danger is great and your dominion is ungrateful. By Allah, the world in my sight is like perspiration in the hand of leprous man." He used to wear coarse garments and ate very simple food.

Ibn Rafe says: "One day I came to His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) and saw a bag containing dry pieces of bread. I asked, 'O Amirul Mo-mineen! Why have you kept the mouth of the bag sealed?' His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) said: 'So that my children do not mix butter or olive oil in it.'" These clothes and food were especially for His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) and none should share them. He used to mend his clothes and shoes from the rind of dates. He ate meat in very small quantity and used to say: "O people! Do not make your stomach, a graveyard of animals."

He was such a worshipper that due to prostration, he had a mark (callus) on his forehead like the knee of camels. He used to recite many supererogatory prayers. People pulled out arrows from his body at the time of prayer and he did not feel the pain due to his concentration and the same thing happened during his supplications. He was so tolerant that he knew about Ibn Muljim but did not deprive him from his stipend and other acts of generosity. In spite of severe enmity, he did not take revenge from Marwan in the Battle of Jamal and left him alive. In the same way, he did not take revenge from Saad bin Aas who was his deadly enemy.

In the Battle of Siffeen, Muawiyah's forces cut off the water supply from the army of His Eminence, Ali (a.s.). The people were thirsty. Ali (a.s.) launched a severe attack and regained control on the river. The army of His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) wanted to stop water supply in retaliation, but His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) prevented them. Such was the generosity of His Eminence, Ali (a.s.).

It is learnt from Izalatul Khifa² that Muawiyah asked Zarar to say something about the qualities of Ali (a.s.). Zarar said: "By Allah, His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) was brave, just, learned, clever and wise. He was horrified of the world, was friendly to the loneliness of the night and looked at divine working to obtain lessons from it. He dressed like paupers, but despite that commanded terrific awe. He respected the people of religion, loved the poor and did not like unlawful matters. He did not disappoint the weak and helpless. He used to cry in a sad voice in darkness. He gave up worldly pleasures and said that provisions of journey are scarce and journey is very long.

Muawiyah cried hearing this and said: "May Allah have mercy on Abul Hasan, he was doubtlessly, a venerable and a holy man." The writer feels highly regretful on Muawiyah that knowing all this, he still made war against him? O, world! How you have destroyed people! And as long as it is all right, it will do the same.

Abu Huzail says that he saw His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) wearing an old coarse shirt and when he pulled the sleeves down, they reached to his fingertips, but when he left them, they covered only half of his arms. He did not leave anything pending in distribution of booty and public treasury and when he started distributing the booty the whole day passed. He did not keep anything in the house. He gave authority to the honest and when he found any official guilty of breach of trust, he guided him through verses of Quran and beseeched to the Almighty that he has not commanded him injustice.

Abu Umar narrates from Majmaul Samin that: "I saw that when His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) had distributed war booty, Zakat or Khums, he swept the ground so that not single grain can stand up to testify against him on Judgment Day." It means that he maintained account of each and everything. Abu Umar narrates that during his Caliphate, His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) asked: "Is there anyone who would buy this sword of mine? If I had anything cash in my hand, I would not have sold it." A man stood up and said: "I can give you an equivalent loan."

Ahmad reports that when the Holy Prophet (S) gave his daughter in marriage to His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) he gave a veil, a carpet, a pillow of date barks, a grinding stone, a water skin and a pair of socks in her dowry. Those who spend excessively in marriages must take lesson from the Prophet's practice. The Holy Prophet (S) and his family members had not the slightest concern with worldly pleasures. His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) drew water from the well and Lady Fatima (s.a.) grinded the corn everyday.

Ahmad narrates another report from Mujahid that Imam Ali (a.s.) stated: "One day, when all of us were struck with hunger in Medina, I came out of the house to look for work. I saw that a woman had collected soil clods and was searching for water to wet the clods. So we settled on labor of sixteen dates and drew

water from the well for her, but I got blisters on my hands due to this. After that, I presented the dates to the Prophet and told him everything. The Holy Prophet (S) partook the dates with me.”

Lastly, is narrated the report of Muhammad bin Kaab Qarati in which it is mentioned that Ali (a.s.) said: “I was the standard bearer of the Prophet and due to hunger my heart was sinking. In such a condition, I caught hold of my stomach and began to fight. The fact is that if I get 40000 days of such good fortune, I would remain as steadfast.”

Now the people of justice may compare Imam Ali (a.s.) to the fugitives of Uhud, Khaybar and Hunayn and see the difference between the brave one and others. Our Master has not earned the titles of ‘the Sword of Allah’, ‘the Lion of Allah’ and ‘the King of Men’ for nothing. Without any doubt, there is no warrior like Ali (a.s.) and no sword like Zulfiqar.

[1.](#) Pg. 388

[2.](#) Pg. 266

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