

## Sacrifice

Al-Hasan broke the record when he yielded to this nobility. For no one of great figures have done that. Al-Hasan was able to yield to that noble attitude through the Divine qualities such as strength, patience, renouncing worldly pleasures, and the like.

The sacrifice in the way of Allah takes place when the person is righteous, namely when he is far away from doubts, flatters, tricks, hypocrisy, and the like. Besides the person should carry out the greater struggle (al-jihad al-akbar) to destroy his personal inclinations and to oppose his human nature. That happens when he suppresses his material selfish disobedience.

Such was the Divine Imamate, and such was the Divine Imam.

Al-Hasan's situation was inappropriate for achieving a victory over falsehood. Thus it was incumbent on him to wait for a better situation to establish the truth.

Al-Hasan's situation became obvious when he knew the intentions of the people. For they declared their readiness to fight alongside him while they wanted to achieve their ambitions.

Taking the reins of government was the only way to prevent Mu'awiya from showing enmity towards the true Islam. . So it was necessary for the choice from the family of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, and the loyal rest from the party of Allah to abdicate authority to protect Islam from Mu'awiya, and the Syrians. That is because Mu'awiya spread his fifth column in the core of Kufa and at the Camp of Imam al-Hasan. So the evil band seized the opportunity to achieve its aims in the life in this world through its desires, its ambitions, its harm, and its defects. In this way al-Hasan was able to hand over the authority to preserve his spiritual doctrines with glory, strength, wideness, greatness, and immortality.

The (grand) son of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, had no shortcoming when he was far above the material desires, and left the life in this world for those who wanted it. He had no defect when he stood alone in the authority of spirit. Thus his great position was steadfast. The standards of his Imamate were raised. His ideal doctrines were known. His traits in struggle (jihad), patience, and sacrifice were laudable.

The Muslim who takes care of his Islam and his true faith should not make mistakes in his affair. He should not neglect his right. He should not forget the relation between him and the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. Moreover, he should not ignore his Imamate. That was the Divine Imamate that did not accept any change nor did it imply any weakness and desertion.

Rather it was the victorious Imamate in spite of the hostile traitorous attempts. It was the Imamate that became strong through the might of Allah. It became steadfast through the steadfastness of the truth. Moreover, it has become outspread among generations as Prophethood has become outspread among nations. This Imamate has glory and strong respect in the full sense of the word. Meanwhile it urges the people to scorn the conceit of the enemies.

That stage was critical in the history of Islam. For it led to the separation between the true caliphate and supreme authority (i.e., between the religious Imamate and supreme authority), and between the temporal power and spiritual authority.

Apparently, the early Muslims did not know this separation during the lifetime of the Prophet. Rather the Muslims after the death of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, knew that gradually. Then the religious rulers yielded to this separation and regarded it as a reformatory obligatory way when they feared for the entity of Islam (baydat al-Islam).

To be quite frank with you about this matter, I (i.e., the author) say: Indeed, Imam al-Hasan took an attitude towards Mu'awiya as his father, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, did towards Abu Bakr and his two companions (i.e., `Umar and `Uthman). This was the meaning of the words of al-Hasan when his brother al Husayn, peace be on him, asked him: "What made you hand over the authority?" "The thing that had made your father hand it over before me," replied al-Hasan.

Each of the two Imams (i.e., al-Hasan and al-Husayn), during his special condition, had his own sacrifice through which he preserved Islam.

According to this rule, al-Hasan erased the map of his material kingdom from the earth to draw instead the map of his spiritual greatness in both the earth and the sky. Then al-Hasan turned to the borders of his kingdom in the new immortal authority. Suddenly, they were the borders between the kingdom of the truth and the kingdom of falsehood, between ideal humanity and tyrannical selfishness. Such were the spiritual qualities of the Imam. He lived and died, while the words of Allah were on his tongue.

He used to say: "Perform the prayers." "Give alms (zakat)" "Fasting has been written on you as it had been written on those who were before you." "Pilgrimage to the House is incumbent on men for the sake of Allah, (upon) everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it." Now, the following are the material qualities of the tyrant (i.e., Mu'awiya), who said to the people openly: "By Allah, I have not fought against you to make you pray, nor to fast, nor to make the pilgrimage, nor to pay alms (zakat). I fought against you so that I might have power over you and Allah has given that to me when you were reluctant to (obey) Him."

The people grew accustomed to receive such an event as they received the great shock from the events of the time. That is because they depended on the worldly narrow meaning of the events so that they found nothing in them save loss.

As for the person with good calm self, he regarded the events as means for achieving the aims that were dearer than authority and the entire world. Nevertheless, these aims have been written in history to be glorified for all people.

In this way al-Hasan was victorious through his jihad, his patience, and his sacrifice. These three qualities are the mother of all virtues.

Also al-Hasan had other traits that were proofs for his greatness and his outstanding merits.

Al-Hasan overcame the people with his Imamate, his obligatory love, and his sonship to the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family.

The people who distressed al-Hasan were his supporters, his enemies, and his wife.

As we have already said, he was singled out with an excellent kind of jihad, a great kind of patience, and a unique kind of sacrifice.

Now, we must understand these three talents in particular. For they were Hasanid qualities that had unquestionable aspects. So I (i.e., the author) say:

1. As for his jihad (holy war), it was the most wonderful of all kinds of jihad, most painful of them to the self, the greatest of them in the battlefield, and the longest of them in troubles.

Al-Hasan waged jihad in the way of Allah in many fields, not in one field. He waged jihad against his enemy when he advanced against him. He made every effort to settle the discords and to reform his companions and his soldiers. However, all his efforts went in vain. He struggled against himself to control its emotions, to suppress its ambitions, and to repulse its power.

No leader of the people was able to control himself, his nerves, and his emotions as al-Hasan did during the attitudes from which he suffered. He tried hard to convince his loyal followers (Shi'a) when he endured their intense censure because of the Peace Treaty he made with Mu'awiya. Towards them, he took an attitude. The attitude indicated his angelic excellent qualities. In the mean time it indicated that he was an infallible Imam. That was when he controlled his anger, and possessed himself. That was when he treated them with calmness, soft words, and patience.

Al-Hasan gave each of his followers a clear correct answer. He discovered their aims concerning what they had blamed him for. Thus he was able to uproot their blame. So al-Hasan affected his followers with his skillful proof, splendid purpose, and his genuine idea. Through the attitudes of their Imam al-Hasan, they remembered the attitudes of Prophets. Moreover, they collected his sayings as they

collected the traditions of the Prophet, for they regarded them as the traditions of the Prophet.

The following is an example of al-Hasan's answers to one of his followers when he asked him: "(Grand) son of the Apostle of Allah, why have you concluded a truce with Mu'awiya and made peace with him? Don't you know that the right to (authority) is for you, not for him? Don't you know that Mu'awiya is straying and oppressive?"

"Abu Said, am I not the proof of Allah, the Exalted, over His creatures and Imam (leader) over them after my father?" asked al Hasan. "Yes," replied Abu Said. "Isn't (the following) what the Apostle of Allah said to me and my brother: "Al-Hasan and al Husayn are two Imams whether they rise or sit?" asked al Hasan. "Yes," answered Abu Said. Al-Hasan said: "Therefore, I am an Imam when I rise, and I am an Imam when I sit."

Then al-Hasan, peace be on him, added: "Abu Said, the reason for my making peace with Mu'awiya is that the Apostle of Allah had made peace with the banu (sons of) Damrah, the banu of Ashja`, and the Meccans when he left al-Hudaybiya. Those were unbelievers according to the Holy Qur'an. However, Mu'awiya and his companions are unbelievers according to the interpretation (of the Qur'an).

"Abu Said, if I am an Imam (appointed) by Allah, may His name be Exalted, then why do you stultify my idea concerning what I have done? Do you not know that you should obey me when I conclude a truce or wage war even if the meaning of wisdom is vague for you? Do you not know that when al-Khidr (Elijah) tore the ship, killed the boy, and built the wall, Musa (Moses) became indignant with his acts, for the meaning of wisdom was ambiguous for him till al-Khidr told him (about that), so Musa became satisfied? Such is I. You have become indignant with me because you have no knowledge of the meaning of wisdom. Were it not for what I have done, all my followers (Shi'a) on the surface of the earth would be killed."<sup>1</sup>

I (i.e., the author) say: Al-Hasan waged another Kind of jihad against another group of people, they were the Umayyads themselves. We will refer to this kind of jihad soon.

These kinds of jihad were in five fields. Al-Hasan, peace be on him, ended his holy life in them, endured their troubles with steadfastness strength and excellent patience.

Al-Hasan's jihad included all fields.

When al-Hasan handed over his right to authority, he wanted to wage another kind of jihad in the way of Allah, namely he wanted to preserve Islam, to facilitate the life of Muslims, and to protect them from killing. In all these efforts, he overlooked his right to authority to wage jihad in the way of Allah. In other words he sold his life to Allah to buy His Heaven.

2. As for his patience, it was the echo of his jihad, and the stronghold to which he resorted in his various fields.

The people persecuted al-Hasan with deprivation of his right to authority, treason, desertion, plots, hypocrisy, assassination, breaking the covenants, slanders, insults, deviation from the truth, and censure for making peace with Mu'awiya. No leader in history suffered these black tribulations and painful disasters except al-Hasan, for they attacked him from all directions.

Still, al-Hasan, peace be on him, bore them with peerless patience.

Also he treated all his critical situations with his excellent wisdom and cleverness. In other words he treated them gradually from beginning to end. He did not yield to anger, nor was affected by emotions, nor did he surrender to the events, nor was restless because of the disturbances. Nothing shook him. Rather he was eager to support the religion, the words of the Qur'an, and the message of Islam.

Such was al-Hasan as Allah created him. No one denies these qualities of al-Hasan but the obstinate ignorant person or the discriminating enemy. His qualities during his time were ideal. He showed exemplary generosity in dealing with the people. His enemies and his companions were witnesses of his sweet words, his strong proof, his respect, his clemency, and his intellect.

Mu'awiya praised al-Hasan when he debated with him about the succession to authority. Also he flattered him on occasions other than these debates.

One day Mu'awiya flattered al-Hasan's sweet words as follows: "The most lovable person in talking to me is al-Hasan b. 'Ali."[2](#)

Al-Hasan was sometimes mentioned in the presence of Mu'awiya. Thus the latter said concerning the former: "They are the people whom Allah has inspired words."[3](#)

Concerning al-Hasan's prestige and good presence, Mu'awiya said: "By Allah, when I see him (al-Hasan), I hate his going away, and I am frightened by his blame."[4](#)

Also Mu'awiya said: "By Allah, when I see him (al-Hasan) sitting with me, I fear his prestige and his finding fault with me."[5](#)

Also Mu'awiya said praising al-Hasan:

As for al-Hasan, he was the son of him who was before him.

When he walks, death walks wherever he walks.

Does the lion not produce but the like of it

This is al-Hasan (who is) the like and peer of him.

However, if clemency and intellect is compared with a thing,

They would say (that) the thing was withered and perishable.<sup>6</sup>

Yes, such was Mu'awiya while he was the mortal enemy of al-Hasan. As for Marwan b. al-Hakam, he said concerning al-Hasan, peace be on him: "Indeed, his (i.e., al-Hasan's) clemency is as great as the mountains."<sup>7</sup>

These two enemies of al-Hasan affected praise towards him. This is a proof for his high social position among the people. Meanwhile this praise indicates that these two enemies yielded to the accomplished fact or they used such praise as a curtain to destroy their opponent.

The important encyclopedias are full of debates which we have previously mentioned. Mu'awiya became active through these debates during his disagreement with al-Hasan when the latter went to Sham (Syria), after the Treaty of Peace, or when the former went to Medina.

Mu'awiya gathered his strong loyal companions or his close relatives to debate with the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, about various matters. Through these debates he tried to prevent the hearts of the people from inclining towards them. Among those whom Mu'awiya gathered were `Amr b. al-`As, `Utba b. Abu sufyan, `Amr b. `Uthman b. `Affan, al-Mughira b. Shu'ba, al-Walid b. `Aqaba b. Abu Mi'yat, Marwan b. al-Hakam, `Abd Allah b. alZubayr, and Ziyad b. Abih. Mu'awiya sometimes added other persons to them. Then he summoned al-Hasan, peace be on him, to debate with the men of this party one by one. Thus he used every means possible to challenge al-Hasan to satisfy his desires. Therefore he plotted against al-Hasan through these debates.

Concerning al-Hasan, `Abd Allah b. Ja'far said: "He was like the hard rock which floods cannot shake, ibexes cannot reach, and arrows cannot reach."<sup>8</sup> Al-Hasan had an innocent heart, high spirit, and pure rites. These qualities of his did not match the qualities of Mu'awiya and his companions. So he said to them: "By Allah, if the banu (sons of) Umayya ascribed to feebleness in speaking, I would refrain from (debating with them), I make little of (them)."

Also al-Hasan gave them a proof of their increasingly obstinacy. Thus he forced them to declare their submission, their defeat, and their bewilderment.

Al-Hasan answered the Umayyads' questions through reviewing the traditions of the Prophet concerning his right to authority. So he gradually made them recognize his right and his father's.

Al-Hasan went on debating with the Umayyads till he exposed their abominable obscenity. He used neither lies nor obscenity as they did. Rather he refuted them one by one, namely he refuted their most prominent fundamentals such as their known lineage and their described ancestry. That is because the strongest challenge you use against your opponent is that you refute his conceit and his traits he regards as the base of his glory and his character.

In all these debates, al-Hasan was the strong victorious side, while the Umayyads were the defeated

side.

The weakest of all the Umayyads in these debates was their leader (i.e., Mu'awiya) though he had material forces that obeyed his orders. He was displeased to see his brothers and cousins defeated at the end of every debate.

So Mu'awiya said to the Umayyads at that time: "I have already informed you (of the knowledge of al-Hasan). However, you refused (that) till you heard what made your house dark and spoiled your meeting."

Also he said to them: "I have previously told you that he (i.e., al Hasan) is among those whose opposition is unbearable."

Also he said to Marwan b. al-Hakam: "I had prevented you from (debating with) this man (i.e., al-Hasan), but you refused that. Stop debating with him, for your father was unlike his father, nor are you like him. You are the son of the expelled homeless one, while he is the (grand) son of the holy Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. However, you are looking for a knife to kill yourself"

Mu'awiya Scolded and provoked `Amr b. al-`As. "His (i.e., al Hasan's) father stabbed you (with his sword), so you protected yourself with your testicles. For this reason, you are cautious of him (al-Hasan)."

At another meeting, Mu'awiya said to `Amr b. al-`As: "Do not match with the seas, for they flood you. Do not match with the mountains, for they bewilder you. So take a rest from the excuse."

Ibn al-Zubayr, who was among Mu'awiya's companions at that time, repented of his debate with al-Hasan, peace be on him. He apologized to him for that and said: "Abu Muhammad (i.e., al-Hasan), excuse me. No one forced me to debate with you but this (i.e., Mu'awiya). He wanted to excite enmity between us. So why haven't you refrained from me when I have no knowledge? That is because you are the members of the house whose nature is clemency and forgiveness."

It was difficult for Mu'awiya to hear `Amr b. al-`As apologizing to al-Hasan and declaring his defeat. So he said to him: "Indeed, he (i.e., al-Hasan) has given vent to the anxieties of my heart upon you when he has caused your killing. So you have become like the partridge in the claws of the falcon. He plays with you however he wishes. So I do not think that you will pride yourself on anybody after that."

B. al-`As, Marwan, and b. Sumayya debated with al-Hasan b. 'Ali, peace be on him. At the end of the debate Mu'awiya said: "Amru spoke but he recoiled." Then Mu'awiya turned to Ziyad and said: "What made you debate with him (i.e., al-Hasan)? You were nothing but like the partridge in the claws of the falcon." So `Amr said (to Mu 'awiya): "Have you intended to (obtain anything) through us?" Mu'awiya said: "Therefore, I would be your partner in ignorance. Do I vie in glory with the man whose grandfather was the Apostle of Allah, who is the Lord of those who died and those who are still alive, and whose mother

was Fatima, the chaste, and the mistress of the women of the worlds?" Then Mu'awiya said to `Amru: "By Allah, if the Syrians heard about him (al Hasan), then evil shame would hit me." So `Amr said: "He (i.e., al-Hasan) has retained you, but he ground Marwan and Ziyad as the quern grinds corn. He has trodden on them with his own foot as the expert monkey dealer does."

Then Ziyad said: "By Allah, he (i.e., al-Hasan) has done that. However, Mu'awiya refused (everything) but exciting enmity between them and us."

In this way b. al-Zubayr and Ziyad bore witness against Mu'awiya. They showed that the latter urged them to debate with al Hasan. Also (many people) bore witness to the answers of al-Hasan, peace be on him, to them. They said: "Abd Allah b. `Abbas was alone with al-Hasan. So he kissed him between his two eyes and said: `Cousin, may I be your ransom, your sea (i.e., knowledge) was still abundant when you were attacking or debating with (them) till you vented my worries upon the sons (of Umayyad)."<sup>9</sup>

The texts of these debates have rhetorical forms and literary values. They are worthy of reviewing as an original Arabic heritage. They themselves indicate the correctness of their attribution to their owners. Moreover, their styles and forms give us a clear idea about the literature of debates during that time. However, we will not mention them here, for they are full of abuses through which the fabrication makers from the Umayyads obtained their purposes. However, they insulted themselves more than they insulted their enemy. Thus they were evildoers.

As we have already said that we will not mention these debates here. However, we will not neglect them concerning the matter of the patience of al-Hasan peace be on him. That is because many abuses resulted from them towards him. Still he resisted them patiently. Meanwhile he resisted the methods which Mu'awiya used against him and his followers (Shi'a). Namely, Mu'awiya substituted them for the battlefields as war of nerves.

Note that we will discuss aspects of Mu'awiya's cold war in the chapters that follow.

3. His sacrifice: al-Hasan made a unique sacrifice to show his doctrine. That was when he abdicated his right to authority.

To sacrifice the throne indicates that the owner of the throne denies himself more than he sacrifices himself. So self-denial for the doctrine was the clearest trait of al-Hasan b. 'Ali, peace be on him, and the most wonderful means of his during his continuous jihad.

Thus self-denial is more painful than self-sacrifice.

In the past, cleaving to the throne had more effect on those who were eager for authority than cleaving to the self and the doctrine. So many people sacrificed their lives for their throne, while very few people sacrificed their throne for their lives.

In history there are many ugly pictures of those kings who sacrificed their lives for their thrones, while they were not ready to sacrifice their thrones for their lives. From here we can conclude the difference between spiritual values and material ones. In other words, no king throughout history was read to abdicate the throne, but al Hasan b. 'Ali, peace be on him.

Therefore, al-Hasan abdicated the throne, and sacrificed all his worldly pleasures for his doctrine. So there is no doubt about the intention of al-Hasan, his loyalty, his purpose for the interest of Muslims, and his great sacrifice for Allah. Besides his year was called the Year of Unity. This denotes that all the people in that year were in agreement on putting his ideas into effect.

This is the sign of his high prestige in the hearts of the Muslims and of his spiritual authority though he abdicated the throne.

Because of this sacrifice, some great figures from al-Hasan's followers (Shi'a) blamed him for refraining from waging armed war (against Mu'awiya). However, no one of those who blamed him had doubt about the correctness of what the Imam did. For they knew that he carried out his religious obligations such as reforming the community, preventing their blood from shedding, and achieving their purposes.

In the chapter that follows, you will know that those who blamed al-Hasan for his attitude did not treat him with justice, and that the solution al-Hasan concluded to solve his last problems was the only solution that suited his critical condition.

Of the two sacrifices al-Hasan b. 'Ali, peace be on them, chose the more painful one in the self, the more effective one in the religion, the rarer one in history, and the more valuable one in the custom of the people. Thus he was not liable to doubts, criticism, and accusation. Of course, al-Hasan was far above doubts, criticism, and accusation, for he chose the severest attitude of all attitudes for himself, and the most useful one of them for other than him to please his Lord. Moreover, he was the divine person whom the people recognized. He was, according to the verses of the Book, free from all doubts, errors, and accusations.

Al-Hasan, peace be on him, did not take the life in this world into consideration. So he did not wish for it. Rather he waited for the reward from his Lord. He was eager to meet Him, and to obtain his laudable position near his parents and his grandfather, and his dignity through which they will ask Allah, the Great and Almighty, to make him nearer to Him.

Moreover, al-Hasan was not cowardly to fear death. Namely, he was not afraid of death when he abdicated his right to authority. I (i.e., the author) wonder: How did cowardice come to al-Hasan? Was his father not the lion of Allah and of His Apostle? Was his grandfather not the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family? Was Shaykh al-Battaha' not his grandfather? Were Hamza and Ja'far, who are the two lords of martyrs, not his two great paternal uncles? Was his brother not the father of martyrs? Did he not have famous attitudes in various fields such as the day of the House (al-Dar), the day of Basrah, and the day of Mazlam Sabat? Was he not the one about whom Mu'awiya said: "If he

walked, death walked wherever he walked?" Doesn't this witness of his enemies indicate his bravery?

Indeed al-Hasan sacrificed his right to authority when he abdicated the throne. This sacrifice is among the most wonderful signs of bravery if the people know.

Therefore al-Hasan was not desirous of death nor was he afraid?

There was nothing in the criteria of al-Hasan but his doctrines. He thought that there was nothing like them. So he sacrificed his right to authority to protect them (his doctrines) from the hostile people who were afraid of neither sooner shame nor later fire. He followed this plan to be far above the life in this world. He refused any kind of change, deviation, and inclination. He was the victorious person in the core of desertion, the conqueror in the core of defeat, and the winner in the core of the collapse.

Al-Hasan was pleased to lead a painful life. Also he was pleased to do good for others in all circumstances without any exploitation, preference, and monopoly. This is what only the notable reformers can achieve in history, and what Muslim educators look for to reform people and make them adopt authentic principles.

Many people served their doctrines through enduring disasters. However, no one of them was like al-Hasan, for disasters accompanied him till the last moment of his life.

Accordingly, al-Hasan, peace be on him, was the ideal Imam who occupied an important position through his idealism, and great reformer who sacrificed his right to authority to protect the doctrine.

Besides, he led the following steps through refraining from world pleasures during his life in this world, his patience throughout his life, and sacrificing his right to authority. These outstanding merits themselves were jihad in the way of Allah. For he has immortalized his doctrines through them.

1. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 10, p. 101.

2. Al-Ya'qubi, Ta'rikh, vol. 2, p. 202. Ibn Kathir, vol. 8, p. 39

3. Ibn `Abd Rabbih, al-`Iqd al-Farid, vol. 2, p. 323.

4. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 10, p. 116.

5. Ibn Abu al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Baligha, vol. 2, p. 101.

6. Ibid. vol. 4, p. 73.

7. Ibid. vol. 4, pp. 5 and 18.

8. Al-Bayhaqi, al-Mahasin wa al-Masawi', vol. 1, p. 62.

9. Al-Bayhaqi, al-Mahasin wa al-Masawi', vol. 1, pp. 59- 64.

Ibn `Abd Rabbih, al-`Iqd al-Farid, vol. 2, p. 323. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al Anwar, vol. 10, p. 116.

Concerning these debates, see the book `Nahj al-Baligha' by the author.