

Introduction

The mechanical life has taken the blessings away from many things, especially from time and life. In our days, there is no one who lives a natural life, and does not leave this world by natural death and does not make the most of the opportunities available during his short secular life.

There are very few people who make the most of those opportunities and use every minute of their time collecting intellectual benefits. Most of our time is devoted to worldly matters, and opportunities are wasted for the sake of the material objectives. Most of our thoughts rotate around the axis of economy. Our general goal is to attain worldly pleasure. Human feelings have become the captive of desire and personal passion and everything is at the disposal of human lust!

Really, how the years of life are spent so uselessly and rapidly; opportunities flee without benefit so swiftly! In the past, when human beings travelled on horses and camels, Amirul Mu'mineen Ali (a) used to comment on the importance of time and the lapse of opportunities as follows: "Make the most of your opportunities as they pass away swiftly like the pieces of a cloud."

Today human beings are really puzzled when they examine the developments and speeds of the modern means of transportation. They do not know to which things in the past to compare these modern developments with. For this reason the elite and learned men are of the opinion that today, people do not have sufficient time to read long stories and voluminous books.

Therefore, the storywriters and biographers try to summarize their attempts and write as concisely as they can. According to them, the characteristic of a good story is that it should be short and brief. People are tired. They have no patience and time, especially for the study of the accounts of a human life.

The study of the biographies of great heroes and distinguished men and the study of their time periods and the acknowledgement of the truth and reality of their features is very necessary for everyone in the present circumstances.

This is especially true when haste and impatience are epidemic. On the other hand, it is the cherished wish of every seeker of the real path and code of life to know about the blazing and glorious heroes of

knowledge and faith. Therefore, it is very necessary to provide short accounts of the lives of the champions of Islam to our young generation as models.

The First University of Shi'a

Undoubtedly, the second half of the second century of Hijra has been a critical chapter in the history of Islam. At a time when Abbasids and Umayyads were tearing each other apart like wild beasts to take the reins of the Islamic dynasty into their own hands and like vultures, they were attacking each other on the corpse of khilafat, the so-called Islamic one, the true leaders grasped the suitable opportunity to expand the realities of Islam and propagate the Qur'anic teachings. Two of our exalted Imams took the most advantage of these opportunities.

The fifth Imam Hazrat Baqerul Ulum (the analyzer of science) (a) laid the foundation of a university and prepared the way in such a manner that all interested people were attracted there and all seekers of knowledge gathered around to acquire different sciences from all over the world.

Similarly, our 6th Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad (a) could teach thousands of capable persons in the different fields of arts and sciences and introduced the Shi'a Ja'fary sect to the world. Actually he presented the real outlook of Islam to the people of the world because the realities of Islam were changed completely during the caliphate of Umayyads and Marwans. This was due to the improper acts of the caliphs and the people were bewildered and puzzled.

Numbers of Students

Shaikh at-Tusi has mentioned the total number of the followers of Imam al-Baqer (a) as 484 persons and the total number of the students of Imam al-Sadiq (a) as 3197 men and 12 women, in his book Rijal (the biographies of the transmitters of the prophetic traditions). It is obvious that these numbers refer only to those persons whose names are individually mentioned in different books or are famous.

Otherwise, there were many others who were not famous or their names were not mentioned and have been forgotten. The learned men have written about the numbers of the students and those who flourished under Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) as two thousand persons, just in the great Mosque of Kufa alone who used to come and listen to his lectures. Therefore, the number of students should be more than this in all other centres and towns.

In fact, each of these liberal men is a burning candle and a shining star. So to have the knowledge and information about the life of each of them is a must for every Muslim because their lives are marked by bravery and chivalry. Undoubtedly, every one can change his mode of life and can rediscover the real path of life by reading the stories of their lives.

So our aim is to manifest the biography of the youngest man of this group of great personalities along with some of his adventurous acts – the perfect man, the pupil of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) namely Hisham ibn Hakam. We want to present one of the greatest champions of Islam to the young generation. Maybe we can learn a lesson from the story of his continuous efforts in the path to reach the target and his unparalleled devotion to defending the cause of Wilayah (trusteeship).

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