

Home > Nafasul Mahmum, Relating to the heart rending tragedy of Karbala' > On some of the virtues of Imam Husayn (a.s.) > His eloquence, abstinence, humility, and worship

On some of the virtues of Imam Husayn (a.s.)

The virtues of our Master Imam Husayn (a.s.) are quite apparent and the tower of his honor and eminence is luminous and indisputable. In all matters he holds an exalted status and honorable rank. There is none among the Shia'h and others who have not praised his grace, excellence and superiority.

The intelligent among them have recognized the truth, while the ignorant are furbishing them. And why would not this be, for his esteemed self is surrounded from all sides by nobility, and the great appearance has taken hold of him all over, while beauty has sunk deep into him from all directions and this cannot be denied by any Muslim.

His Grandfather is Muhammad al Mustafa (the chosen one) (S), his Father Imam Ali al Murtaqa (the approved one) (a.s.), Grandmother Hazrat Khadija (a.s.), Mother Hazrat Fatima az Zahra (the splendid one) (a.s.), brother Imam Hasan (a.s.) the honorable, his uncle Ja'far at Tayyar, and his Progeny pure Imams from the chosen ones among the family of Hashim. It is said in one of the couplets: "Your splendor is evident for everyone, except the blind who cannot see the moon."

In Ziyarat-e-Nahiyah our Master Imam al Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) praises his excellent personality in the following words:

"And you fulfilled your duties and responsibilities with utmost readiness.

Renowned for your charity, you performed the mid-night Prayer in darkness.

Your path was firm, (you were) benevolent among the creatures, greatest among the precedents, noble with regard to the lineage and eminent with regard to ancestry, and you had an exalted position and several (other) excellences.

You were of a commendable character, amply generous.

You were forbearing, sober, penitent, benevolent, knowledgeable, rigorous.

A martyred Imam, penitent, beloved (by the believers), dreadful (for the disbelievers).

You are the son of the Prophet of Allah (S) and the deliverer of the Holy Qur'an.

And the arms of the nation (ummah).

And the one who endeavored in the way of (Allah's) obedience.

Protector of the oath and covenant.

You hated the path of the transgressors.

A Bestower upon those in trouble.

One who prolonged the Bowing and Prostration.

(You remained) Abstinent from the world,

You always viewed it with the sight of the one who has to leave it soon."

The he continues to say:

"I wonder at myself that I am about to glorify the one whose praise has exhausted the paper. The water of the seas is insufficient to fill the book of your excellence, so that I may dip my finger in it to turn the pages thereof (to read it)."

His Valor

The reporters and reliable authorities specify that when Imam Husayn (a.s.) intended to go to Iraq, Ubaydullah bin Ziyad dispatched troops one after the other towards him and also gathered the Police force to kill him. He prepared an army of thirty thousand soldiers (foot and horse-men) to follow him in groups one after the other and to surround him fully equipped from all sides. They gave him the following notice:

"Either submit to the orders of the son of Ziyad and swear the oath of allegiance to Yazid, or be ready for combat, which would split open the liver and cut the life vein, dispatch the souls above, and would throw the bodies head-long unto the ground."

But the Imam, following the footsteps of his respected Grandfather and Father, refused to surrender to indignity. He set an example of self-respect and honor for the people, and accepted (noble) death below the sword. Then he himself, along with his brother and family members arose to defend (Islam) and accepted death instead of submitting to the tyranny of Yazid.

The wicked and vile army desisted them and the immoral infidels started shooting arrows at him. But

Imam Husayn (a.s.) stood firm like a mountain and nothing could weaken his determination. His feet were more resolute upon the earth of Martyrdom than a mountain, while his heart was not disturbed because of the fear of battle or death.

Similarly his supporters likewise faced the forces of Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad and killed and wounded many of them. And they themselves did not die until they had killed many of them, and made them taste death by the ardor of the Hashimites. And none among the Hashimites fell a martyr until they had thrown their opponents unto the ground and killed them and sunk the hilts of their swords into their bodies. Imam Husayn (a.s.) himself attacked the enemies like a ferocious lion and with his mighty sword threw them upon the ground.

The narrator quotes a man as saying that,

“By Allah! I have seen none like him, who having lost his sons, relatives and dear friends, and in spite of this, his heart being powerful and serene, and feet firm upon the ground. By Allah! I have seen none like him before or after him”

It has been related that there arose a dispute for a farm between Imam Husayn (a.s.) and Waleed bin Uqba. And although Waleed was the governor of Madina (but was on the wrong), Imam was infuriated and removed his turban from his head and put it in his neck.

In the book Ehtijaj it is related from Muhammad bin Saeb, that one day Marwan bin Hakam told Imam Husayn (a.s.) that, “If it were not for your esteem and honor through Hazrat Fatima (a.s.), how could you have gained excellence over us”? Imam Husayn (a.s.) was infuriated and caught hold of his neck with an iron fist, then he removed the turban from his head and tied it in Marwan’s neck, and he fell down unconscious, then he left him.

The author says that Imam Husayn’s valor became a by-word while his forbearance in the battlefield had exhausted and frustrated others. His combat is similar to that of the Holy Prophet (S) in the battle of Badr. While his forbearance, even after facing numerous enemies and possessing supporters less in quantity, is similar to his Father Imam Ali (a.s.) in the battle of Siffin and Jamal.

Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in Ziyarat-e-Nahiyah says:

“And (they) initiated the attack upon you.

So you too stood up (equipped with) spear and sword.

And you routed the army of transgressors.

And you were surrounded in the dust of the battle and (were) fighting with Zulfiqar with such ferocity as if you were Ali, the empowered one.

So when the enemies saw you to be composed and calm without fear or anxiety, they began to plot and lay traps for you, and began to fight with you with cunningness and mischief.

And the accursed (Umar bin Sa'ad) ordered his army to cut off the water supply (from you).

And all of them unleashed their atrocities to kill you and they hastened to line up against you.

They struck at you with arrows and (they) extended their futile hands towards you.

They did not consider your rights, nor did they deem their putting to swords your friends as a sin, (and) they looted your belongings.

You bore the tribulations (of the battle) with firmness and forbore their troubles, such that the Angels of the Heavens were astounded at your patience.

Then the enemies surrounded you from all sides and inflicted you with wounds.

And they partitioned themselves between you and your family, there remained no helper for you.

You deflected them with persistence and patience away from your women and children.

Until they forced you down from your horseback, and you descended to the earth, wounded.

The horses were trampling you with their hooves.

The atrocious army fell upon you with their swords.

The perspiration of death appeared on your forehead and your hands and feet folded and unfolded to the right and the left (with uneasiness).

You were beholding with fear your belongings and your Household.

When in such a situation you might not have thought of your children and family due to personal pain."

His Knowledge

It should be borne in the mind that the knowledge of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) was inspired by Allah and they were in no need to gain knowledge (from others). And their present day knowledge was similar to that in the past (without any change).

They were in no need of analogy, ponderence or conjecture, while apprehending their intellect is far beyond the capacity of human beings. The one who tries to conceal their excellences is similar to the one attempting to veil the face of the sun. It should be noted that they examined the concealed in the present state. They grasped the verity of intellect in the solitude of worship and they were far more better than as perceived by their companions and friends. They would not pause (to think) in front of the

common profiteer and those trying to test them, nor become upset or show slackness.

They were prudent in their conditions and discourses and were unparalleled in their age. In distinction and honor, from the beginning until the end, they were in conformity with one another. When they opened their mouth to speak, others would remain silent. When they spoke others would listen to them (with awe). Thus every strider could not reach them (their lofty position) nor their aims were fulfilled (to surpass them) and did not succeed in their policies.

They possessed such qualities, which had been bestowed upon them by the Creator, and the Truthful (Lord) announced that He had removed doubts regarding them. He explicitly praised their grace and superiority until He made them independent of evidences and analogy. Thus they said, “We are the sons of Abdul Muttalib, the Master of men.”

His munificence and generosity

It is related that one day Hazrat Fatima az Zahra (a.s.) took her sons Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.) to the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) who was seriously ill (and he later died because of it). She requested the Holy Prophet (S) to present to her sons something as inheritance (from his attributes). To which the Prophet (S) replied,

“As for Hasan, he shall inherit my awe and supremacy, and as for Husayn, he will inherit my generosity and valor.”

It is renowned that Imam Husayn (a.s.) liked to serve guests and fulfill the desires of people and was friendly towards the relatives. He gifted the indigent and poor, gave to the needy, clothed the naked ones, fed the hungry, relieved the debts of the indebted, caressed fondly the orphans, and aided the needy ones. Whenever he received any wealth, he distributed it to others.

It is related that once when Mu’awiyah went to Makkah, he presented numerous wealth and clothes to Imam (a.s.), but he refused to accept them. This being the attribute of generous and liberal men, and characteristic of the munificent. His personality bore witness to his kindness, while his speech confirmed his excellent trait, and his actions manifested his noble qualities.

It should be noted that generosity combined with munificence and mercy is confined in (the personality of) Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) while in others it is just superficial. Therefore stinginess was never attributed to anyone among the Bani Hashim, while their generosity was compared to the clouds (of rain) and their valor to the Lions.

Imam Ali Zainul Abedeen (a.s.), in one of his sermons in Syria said,

“We are presented with wisdom, forbearance, generosity, eloquence, valor, and love in the hearts of believers.”

Verily they are inspiring oceans and clouds filled with rains.

The good deeds performed by them were inherited by them from their forefathers. They had made good character as the Divine Law and a means of perseverance and recognition of extreme honor, for they were the noble sons of noble fathers.

They were the masters of the nation, chosen ones from among the people, chiefs of the Arabs, the epitome of the children of Adam, the sovereigns of this world, guides of the hereafter, Allah's proof among His servants, and His trustees in the towns. While all the eminence is evident and visible in them.

Others have learnt (the lesson of) generosity from them and gained guidance from their methods. How would he not part with his wealth, who has set his foot (in the battlefield to sacrifice his life), and how would he not deem the things of this world to be lowly who has collected courage (provisions) for the Hereafter. There is no doubt regarding the one who is ready to sacrifice his life in the battlefield, that he will ever be prepared to part with his wealth. Then how will the one, who has abandoned the pleasures of this world, have worth for the things of this transient world?

The poet says:

"He is generous with regard to his self, where even the munificent are stingy, while the generosity of self (sacrifice) is the pinnacle of generosity."

Hence it is said that generosity and valor have consumed milk from the same breast (go hand in hand with one another) and are attached to one another. Thus every generous person is brave and every brave generous, and this being a common system.

Abu Tamam says regarding this: "When you see Abu Yazid in a gathering or in a battlefield, or ransacking, then you shall agree that generosity is nearing valor and munificence to valor."

Abut Tayyib says: "They say that munificence is not enough, until he built a house on the way fare, I say that the valor of a generous man warns him against stinginess, O generosity, you may turn similar to a whirlpool, his sword has rendered him protection from being drowned."

Once Mu'awiyah praised the Bani Hashim for their munificence, the children of Zubayr with valor, the Bani Makhzoom with arrogance, and the Bani Umayyah with forbearance. When Imam Hasan (a.s.) heard his words, he said,

"May Allah kill him! He desires that the Bani Hashim (reacting to his praise) may give away their wealth and thus become dependent on him, and the children of Zubayr (being influenced by his praise) may get killed while fighting, and the Bani Makhzoom would pride upon themselves so that people may dislike them, and that the Bani Umayyah may (cautiously) become lenient so that the people may start liking them."

Mu'awiyah said the truth, although truthfulness is far away from him, but it so happens that quite often a liar (unwillingly) utters the truth. In the case of Bani Hashim, where Mu'awiyah said that generosity was present in them and valor and temperateness were particularly found in them, while people just imitated them. The best qualities which were distributed among all men were unified together in them. This being the truth while everything else false.¹

His eloquence, abstinence, humility, and worship

As regards his eloquence, virtue, humility and worship, if we go on to relate about it, we will cross the limits of the capacity of this book. Instead we quote the traditions about the love and affection of the Holy Prophet (S) towards him.

Shaikh Muhammad ibn Shahr Ashob in his Manaqib quotes from Ibn Umar, that one day the Prophet (S) was seated on the pulpit delivering a sermon. Suddenly Imam Husayn (a.s.) came and his legs got entangled in the end of his shirt and he fell down and started weeping. The Holy Prophet (S) alighted from the pulpit and lifted him up and said,

“May Allah kill the Shaitan! Verily he is a charming child. By Him in whose hands is my life! I do not know as to how I alighted from the pulpit.”

In Manaqib, Abus Sa'adat, while praising the Prophet's Household (Ahlul Bayt) relates from Yazid bin Ziyad, that one day the Holy Prophet (S) came out of the house of Ayesha and passed from near the house of Hazrat Fatima (a.s) when he heard Imam Husayn weeping. He said,

“O Fatima! Do you not know that the weeping of Husayn causes me great pain”?

It is quoted in Manaqib from Sunan of Ibn Majah and Faeq of Zamakhshari, that one day the Holy Prophet (S) passed through a lane and saw Imam Husayn (a.s.) playing with some children. The Prophet stretched his hands and tried to catch him, but Imam Husayn (s.a.s.) started running from here to there so that he could escape. The Prophet was amused and at last got hold of him. Then he placed one of his hand under the chin and the other on his head, then he lifted him up and kissing him said,

“Husayn is from me, and I am from Husayn. Allah befriends the one who holds Husayn dear. Verily Husayn is one of the tribes (of the twelve tribes of Bani Israel).”²

In the book Manaqib it is quoted through Abdul Rahman bin Abi Layla, that he says, that one day we were sitting in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) when Imam Husayn (a.s.) came and started jumping and playing on the back of the Prophet. The Prophet said, “Leave him alone.”

In the same book it is quoted from Lays bin Sa'ad, that one day the Holy Prophet (S) was leading the congregational Prayers (*Namaz-e-Jama'ah*), when Imam Husayn (a.s.), who was an infant, was sitting besides him. When the Prophet went into prostration (*sajdah*), Husayn sat on his back and striking his

legs said, “Hil Hil” (a noise by which mounts are galloped). The Prophet brought him down with his hands and made him sit besides him and then stood up. Then again when the Prophet went for the other prostration this happened, until he ended his Prayers.

It is related from Amali of Hakim that Abu Rafe' says, that one day I was playing a game called “Midhah”³ with Imam Husayn (a.s.) who was a small child at that time. When I won, I told him to let me mount upon his back (as was the rule of the game), but he said that would I like to mount upon the back of the one who had mounted the back of the Holy Prophet (S)? Hence I yielded to it. Then when he won, I said that I too would not allow him to sit on my back as he had done. But then he said that would I not like to lift up the person who was lifted by the Holy Prophet (S) himself? And here too I yielded.

In the same book it is related through Hafs bin Ghiyas from Imam Ja'far as Sadiq (a.s.), that one day the Holy Prophet (S) prepared to recite the Prayers and Imam Husayn (a.s.) was standing besides him. The Prophet recited the Takbeer (Allaho Akbar) and Imam could not pronounce it. The Prophet repeated it again but Imam could not do so. The Prophet repeated his Takbeer seven times and on the seventh time Husayn recited it correctly. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says that thus reciting Takbeer seven times before starting the Prayers (*Salat*) is recommended (*Sunnat*).

In the same book it is quoted from Tafseer of Naqqash from Ibn Abbas that he said, one day I was sitting in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) when his son Ibrahim was sitting on his left thigh and Imam Husayn (a.s.) on his right one. The Prophet kissed each of them subsequently. Suddenly Jibra'eel descended with the Revelation (Wahy). When the Revelation ended, the Holy Prophet (S) said,

“Jibra'eel came to me from my Lord and informed me that the Almighty Allah sent greetings to me and said that He would not let these two children remain together, let one become a ransom over the other.”

The Prophet looked at Ibrahim and started weeping and said,

“His mother is a slave-girl, if he dies no one accept myself will feel pain. But Husayn is Fatima's and my cousin Ali's son and my flesh and blood, if he dies not only Ali and Fatima but myself too shall feel immense pain. Hence I prefer my personal grief over the grief of Ali and Fatima. Hence O Jibra'eel! Let Ibrahim die, for I ransom him over Husayn.”

Ibn Abbas says that after three days Ibrahim died. After this whenever the Holy Prophet (S) saw Husayn, he would kiss him and pull him towards himself and lick his lips. Then he would say,

“May my life be sacrificed on him upon whom I ransomed my son Ibrahim. May my parents be your ransom O Aba Abdillah”!

1. It is related that once a nomad came and saluted Imam Husayn (a.s.) and asked from him saying, “I have heard from your Grandfather that if you have a desire, ask from any one of these men: A noble Arab, a generous master, one who

understands the Qur'an, or the one gifted with a beautiful face. The nobility of the Arabs is due to your Grandfather (the Prophet), while generosity is your custom, the Qur'an has descended in your own house, and particular beauty is apparent in you, and I have heard your grandfather say: Whoever desires to see me, should look at my Hasan and Husayn." Imam said, "Tell me what do you desire"?

The nomad wrote down his desire onto the ground. Imam said, "I have heard my father Imam Ali (a.s.) say, that the worth of every man is through his good actions, and I have heard my grandfather the Prophet of Allah say, that favor is measured through one's wisdom. Thus I shall ask you three questions, if you answer one of them, I shall fulfill one third of your desire, while if you answer two of them, two thirds of your desires shall be fulfilled, and if you answer all three of them, your entire wish shall be fulfilled." Then he brought a bag full of coins and said, "If you answer, you shall get from this." The nomad said, "Do ask me, and there is no Might and no Power except with Allah, the Most High, the most Great."

Imam said, "What delivers a slave (of Allah) from destruction"? He replied, "Reliance upon Allah." He (a.s.) then asked, "What is the adornment of man"? He replied, "Knowledge accompanied by forbearance." Imam asked, "But what if he does not possess it"? He said, "Wealth with generosity and munificence." Imam again asked, "And what if he does not possess it"? He replied, "Poverty accompanied by patience." Imam said, "And if he does not possess it"? He replied, "Thunderbolt (damnation) which would burn him." The Imam smiled and forwarded the bag (full of coins) towards him. In another tradition it is related that the bag contained a thousand Ashrafis (a gold coin) and two of his personal rings whose gems were worth two hundred Dirhams each.

2. Reg. the twelve tribes of Bani Israel, it is quoted in the Qur'an: "And of Moosa's people is a party, who guide (people) with truth and thereby do justice. And We divided then into twelve tribes (or) nations" (Sura al A'araf: 159-160).

3. Midhah – This particular game is played with pebbles which have to be aimed into a pit.

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