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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 I[2] 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 Zanjani[3] 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 *madrasa* 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 fall 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 *Madrasa 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.

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