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Who Is Imam Husayn?

Imam Husayn's life and status in the Islamic history is formidable. Indeed, it is not of obscurity but because of the vitality and the significance of his contributions. The following account is only a very brief record of his qualities.

He was one of two sons of Imam Ali (as) and Fatimah (sa), the daughter of the Prophet (S). His father, Imam Ali, who needs no introduction, is acknowledged by those; far and near as well as friend and foe, as being openly declared by the Prophet, as Commander of the faithful. Needless to mention his knowledge, bravery, steadfastness, brotherhood to the Prophet, justice
and piety.

Fatimah (sa) was the dearest daughter to her father (S). Al-Tirmidhi narrated through Usamah ibn Zaid that the Prophet (S) said 'The dearest member of my family to me is Fatimah". She was declared by the Prophet as the master of all women in the whole world. She and her husband were members of the family who were signified for their qualities and roles.

They are examples of interest to Muslim men and women. Their role was an extension of the Prophet's role, in the sense of leading the great cultural transformation from the darkness of non-Muslim culture to the brightness of heavenly light.

Historians recorded the birth of Imam Husayn as an exciting event for the Muslims in Madina and especially to the Prophet of God. The Prophet (S) was even concerned with the name given to his grandson, 'Husayn'. As the news flared up in the sky, the Muslims congratulated each other for the new child whom the Prophet considered as his own son.

The Prophet once declared, "Husayn is of myself and I am of Husayn, O, God be pleased with those who please Husayn". This statement was not accidental nor the result of emotional strain as it is wrongly claimed sometimes. This declaration came from a responsible wise leader, the Prophet of God who would never commit a mistake during the performance of his Prophetic task. He was delivering the Islamic Message and informing people of those who will act as springs and guardians for this Message in the future.

Emotions and sentiments are not loose in a Muslim's life, but are controlled by Islamic concepts and ideals. There has always been a criterion for liking and disliking within Islam, which evolves from the deeply rooted Islamic concept. For example; although Abu Lahab was the Uncle of the Prophet, his extreme anti-Islamic behaviour made him cursed till the Day of Judgment.

Another such statement which leaves no doubt of Imam Hasan's and Husayn's role is, the Prophet of God (S) said "Hasan and Husayn are the masters of youth in Paradise". This was presented as a credential to the Muslim nation in order to hold firm to their leadership.

At a certain time the Muslims in Madina felt the Islamic Message's glory and good results, so they intended to reward the Prophet for his effort in guiding them. The gift they presented to the Prophet (S) was some gold which they had collected. The Prophet's answer came in the following verses which were revealed during this incident.

"Say: 'No reward do I ask of you for this except being kind to those of kin" (***23:42***).

Al-Kashaaf narrated that when this verse was revealed, people asked the Prophet "O Prophet of God, who are these of kin which this verse makes their respect obligatory upon us?" The Prophet answered, "They are Ali, Fatimah, and their two sons". However, this did not imply disrespect for other Muslims, companions or the rest of kin to him.

Looking objectively at the message of the verse it will indicate first of all reluctance to accept material reward, if a reward was not suitable then it cannot be restricted to the material only. Hence, the verse was indicating respect to some specific people, not because they are his relatives as such, but the real reason behind this respect was to safeguard the Islamic Message. The role they had to play in the Islamic history required such respect in order to enable them to perform their task.

Al-Hakim narrated through Abu Saaid Al-Khidri that the Prophet said, "He who dislikes us, we the family, God will place him in Hell", this implies those who dislike Islamic conduct and life. Jabir narrated that the Prophet in his speech after performing the last pilgrimage, said, "O people I am leaving the book of God and my family (Itrah) for guidance. If you hold fast to them, surely you will never go astray". This Hadith was narrated through some twenty different sources of trusted chains of narrators, Muslim in his Sahih quoted some of them.

Another striking Hadith obtained through Abu Dharr where he quoted the Prophet saying, "O people, let my family act as a head of a body of you, and as eyes of a head among you."

These last few Hadiths are impressive in many respects; firstly they were narrated by different sources of different inclinations which add to them extra value, secondly the same content throughout all indicates the consistency of the event.

Imam Husayn, as already stated, was one member of the family of the Prophet. He was brought up

within the Prophetic guidance where he received the direct concern of the Prophet. The ideal atmosphere where he had grown up with his grandfather, father, mother and elder brother was the highest level ever attained.

Thus Imam Husayn acquired wisdom, generosity, bravery, piety and letters; occupying outstanding posts during his father's reign in the Islamic State.

During the terror and corruption which swept the Muslim World at the hands of the Umayads, he was the sole hope of the Muslims to restore the establishment of the Islamic laws which would bring the Muslims prosperity, peace and happiness within the two worlds. He never failed the Muslims, but acted as expected of a great ideological leader and performed his duty to the best.

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