

New Dimensions of a Standard-Bearer

Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and standard (or flag) are two key words in the bloody battle of Karbala that provide food for thought to every believer and knowledgeable person. When the thought of this brave warrior, on whose shoulder the emblem fluttered, comes to mind, numerous conspiracies lay exposed; conspiracies, plots and designs that were planned much prior to the incident of Karbala in the early days of Islam; conspiracies hatched by Muslims (read hypocrites) as well as non-Muslims; a thousand political games played clandestinely and furtively to upstage and overthrow the massive but genuine and divine Islamic rule. Of these plots and conspiracies was the hectic frequency of travel by the Jews between Mecca and Medina, notwithstanding the eighty odd battles that took place in a short span of eleven years. Between this world and the hereafter, there appeared a number of question marks on every passing milestone. For instance,

"In the past Islamic battles, were the Muslims always in a minority against their powerful and exceedingly abundant number of opponents? Was Karbala the last image of this series?

In the battles of Islam, especially in the early stages, were the secret machinations, mischief-mongering and evil designs of the Jews, reaching to fruition with all their might? And if this was the case, what was the role played by the defenders of Islam, real and pretenders, to ward off this threat?

As the demise of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) approached nearer, was a fresh conspiracy hatched under a new banner that was unfurled in the furtive and surreptitious precincts of Saqifah?

Did Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) expose these powerful conspiracies and mischievous designs, hatched in the recent past?

Are all the above questions concerned with the standard-bearer of Imam Husain (a.s.) or not?"

While evaluating the first query, the fact that comes to the fore is that if we analyze the Battle of Badr, on the one hand, the infidels had a one thousand strong army comprising of cavalry, archers, infantry, etc. which faced a measly three hundred and thirteen, who had come out in defense of Islam.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was the hero of this battle. Renowned Arab warriors like Atbah, Sheebah and Waleed were put to death by Ali's (a.s.) sword. When Islam commenced with a battle of defense and endurance, the small number of Muslims were attacked by an exceedingly large number of polytheists. That is, when the infidels threw their entire force against the brave warriors of Islam, the ratio was almost 5:1 (i.e. five infidels against one Muslim). Yet, the Muslims gained victory in the Battle of Badr. The polytheists fled, defeated and disgraced.

Now take a glance at the Battle of Karbala. On the one hand, there is Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) while on the other is a ruthless military of thirty thousand. In the earlier battle, there were three hundred enemies of Islam pitted against one brave warrior of Islam, Ali (a.s.). And now, when the standard-bearer of Husain's (a.s.) little army went to the shore of the Euphrates to fetch water for his thirsty nephews and nieces, thirty thousand shameless hypocrites, the so-called Muslims, obstructed his path. Although, a few thousand were dispatched to hell in the skirmishes earlier, still there were thousands in the waiting between the river and Abbas (a.s.). That he (a.s.) could not bring water was yet another battle. But in the first battle, the river was won. The need

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The Philosophy of Quenching the Thirst

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said,

أَفْضَلُ الْأَعْمَالِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِبْرَادُ الْكَبِدِ
الْحَرَى مِنْ بَهِيمَةٍ وَغَيْرِهَا.

(Darrusslam vol. 3, pg. 162)

"The most superior deed before Allah is to satiate the thirst of the thirsty, even if it be an animal."

The relation between water and life is extremely close and one that cannot be denied on any account. Water is not only the source of life in this universe, but is also fundamental to the continuation and survival of our existence. It enjoys the status of being no less than the elixir of life, the essence of life and its cradle - a bounty that is bestowed from the heavens, which Allah has accredited to Himself.

Allah says in the Holy Quran,

"And We sent water from the heavens so that We may enliven the dead earth and satiate its inhabitants (animals and men)"

(Al-Furqaan, Ayat: 48-49)

Quenching the thirst of any person, and as the tradition above indicates, even that of animals is an extremely noble deed. In fact this action is no less than giving life to a dead person.

The words Saqqaaee or Saqaayat, which essentially mean quenching or satiating the thirst, have a special significance from the

aspects of place and time. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) narrates,

مَنْ سَقَى الْمَاءَ فِي مَوْضِعٍ تُوجَدُ فِيهِ
الْمَاءُ كَانَ كَمَنْ اعْتَقَ رَقَبَةً وَ مَنْ سَقَى
الْمَاءَ فِي مَوْضِعٍ لَا يُوجَدُ فِيهِ الْمَاءُ كَانَ
كَمَنْ أَحْيَى نَفْسًا وَ مَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّهَا
أَحْيَى النَّاسَ أَجْمَعِينَ.

"One who satisfies the thirst of a person at a place where water is available, it is as if he has freed a slave. And one who does the same at a place where water is not available; it is as if he has enlivened a soul. And one who gives life to one soul; it is as if he has enlivened humanity."

(Makaremul Akhlaq, pg. 85, Chap. 7, part. I)

All men, by virtue of being the creations of Allah enjoy equal rank and status before Him. Nevertheless some due to their characteristics and exceptional qualities enjoy preference over others. And even in this august group of the virtuous and the brilliant, there are some who outshine others on account of their excellence, which is unmatched and finds no parallel. When the act of satiating a person is akin to giving life, the more exalted, lofty and illustrious the thirsty, that much more admirable is the position of the one who quenches his thirst. Indeed, it is the undeniable truth of this

statement through which we can estimate the elevated position of the saqaayat of Hazrat Abbas Ibne Ali (a.s.).

Amongst the celebrated titles of Qamar-e-Bani Hashim Abul Fazl Abbas (a.s.) was the title of Saqqa (one who quenches the thirst) and in this aspect, he crossed the highest pinnacle of the peak of saqqayat. To gauge the extent of this attribute, one must go back in time and pay attention to the historical significance of saqqayat, to see that prior to him how far back in history did this concept exist, and amongst the Arabs to which family was this noble act attributed. However before we do that, we must take a glimpse of the landscape of Arab culture.

Quenching the thirst is no mean task. More so in the land of Hejaz, shouldering the mantle of a Saqee is neither a task which can be fulfilled by all nor can any ordinary person bear the immense responsibility that comes along with it. This is because on one hand the vast expanse of Arabia, despite its size, is devoid of the priceless treasure of water. On the other hand, the extreme heat and oppressive climatic conditions have reduced it to sandy desert. It is for these reasons that Arab villages and civilisations developed around water sources - for as soon as an Arab came across an oasis or a source of water, he would gather his tribe around it and it would become their home. Needless to say, if a tribe or family lived away from a water source, it would have to confront immense difficulties and challenges. Its people would require traveling long distances to fill their water skins. At that point in time, by undertaking this praiseworthy task, the youth would serve the elders of the community and satiate the thirst of the

people. Over a period of time, those who performed this act commanded tremendous respect in the eyes of the people and community at large. The individual who achieved more success in this duty was more often than not elevated to the status of the leader of the tribe and it's principal.

The family of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was always at the forefront to support and encourage efforts of social benefit. Even in this, we find that the names of the tribe of Quraysh and amongst them the name of Janab Qusayy from the Bani Hashim at the helm of the list of those who quenched the thirst of the people. His efforts in this regard were legendary and unmatched amongst the Quraysh and Bani Hashim. In those days, he was known to source water from the outskirts of Mecca and serve sweet refreshing drinks to the pilgrims (Hajis) of Mecca. Even on other days, the residents of Mecca would experience an acute shortage of water. The thought that the residents of Mecca had to travel outside the city to fetch water was intolerable for him and pushed him to organise the digging of a well at a place called Majhool - this place later became the house of Janab Umme Hani (the respected sister of Ameerul Mo'meneen Ali (a.s.)). This was the first well for drinking water in Mecca and it became a place, which benefited all from wide and far. This was followed by another well called Sijlah for the exclusive benefit of the pilgrims of the Kaaba and to alleviate any difficulties that they may face.

After him, Janabe Hashim took on this important responsibility. In the Hajj season, he constructed a leather pool near the spring of Zamzam so that the Hajis could partake of it with ease. He also commissioned a well,

which he called Bazzar, and announced that it would be open for all people and none would have the right to debar another from taking water from it.

He was followed by Janabe Abdul Muttalib (a.s.), who not only continued the good work established by his forefathers but also took it to a new level by establishing a place for Zamzam. This prospered and led to more tribes partaking of its benefit. A new standard was set in saqqayat for, now, not only were the pilgrims satiated with sweet refreshments, but were also served a drink of milk and honey in leather tumblers.

Janabe Abu Talib (a.s.) was the next in line to take on this honourable responsibility. He fulfilled his duty in such a brilliant fashion that he came to be remembered as Saaqiyyul Hujaj (Seeratul Zaini vol. 11 pg.26). He lined all roads to Mecca with kiosks, which served water to the pilgrims. History informs us that Abu Talib (a.s.) was generally not known to be a wealthy individual. However he continued the rich tradition of his forefathers even at the cost of incurring a personal debt. The stigma of debt, the scarcity of food at his home was acceptable to him - but the thought of failing in his duty of providing water to the pilgrims who came from far and wide in the punishing Arabian summers and those who were guests at the House of Allah was unacceptable to him. He had no objective, no purpose save that of enlivening and rejuvenating the pilgrims with his efforts.

After him, the mantle of saqqayat passed on to the shoulders of the master of this universe, Ameerul Mo'meneen Hazrat Ali (a.s.). The pages of history are resplendent with those incidents in which he not only exhibited, but also set new standards for

saqqayat. These incidents are not far and few. Rather on innumerable occasions, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) personified the very concept of saqqayat. Turning back in time to the battle of Badr, we read how Ali (a.s.) displayed tremendous courage to lower himself in the well in the darkness of night to present water to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Or during the events leading of the siege at the house of the caliph, when the caliph was begging for water, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was the one who made arrangements for water to be sent to the caliph. Unlike others, he (a.s.) did not deem it fit to deny water even to the one who had usurped his position. He recognised that the role of the saaqee is to give life and not seize it. We also recollect the number of times in the battle of Siffeen when he re-captured the river from the hands of the army of Muawiyah and yet granted them access to as much water as they wanted. While on one hand, he had to take the enemy to task for his excesses, on the other hand he very well knew and appreciated the responsibility of Saaqee i.e. to offer water to anyone who wished to have it. As a veteran and seasoned Saaqee, he could hardly turn his back on this important duty of the Saaqee.

The types of Saqqayat

Our scholars have reported two levels of saqqayat. Generally, saqqayat is divided into two types - at times of peace and during war

At times of peace, two levels of saqqayat are possible - one is from the aspect of business (commercial benefit) and the other is to satiate the thirst of a thirsty person for the

sake of obtaining the pleasure and satisfaction of Allah.

The conditions of war also bring up two levels of saqqayat - one which is recommended and the other which is obligatory. The recommended saqqayat is at that moment in the heat of war, when water is available and your opponent does not really require water to continue his battle. The obligatory saqqayat is when thirst overpowers your opponent and if he reaches this condition that if he is not given water at that time, he would die of thirst.

In the family of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), examples of all types of saqqayat are found save the one, which is done for commercial benefit. The tradition initiated by Janab Qusayy continued through the ages in various stages till it reached the personality of Hazrat Abul Fazl Abbas (a.s.). And he fulfilled the responsibility in such a glorious fashion that till today the word "Saqqat" is synonymous with his persona. At this juncture, we present the words of Allamah Zeeshan Haider Jawadi who in his inimitable style brings forth the influence of the saqqayat of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) till Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) He writes,

"It is astonishing that Hazrat Ameerul Mo'meneen Ali (a.s.) is titled Saaqee which is not the superlative degree in Arabic language. However the word Saqqat is, and that is the title by which Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) is remembered."

He continues,

"Perhaps this aspect draws our attention to the fact that the significance of any action lies in the level of difficulty encountered in its performance. The namaz offered in peaceful environs is

under no circumstances comparable to the namaz offered when a barrage of arrows are directed towards the offerer and when the overall environment is fraught with danger.

There is no doubt that Hazrat Ali (a.s.) scaled the highest levels of saqqayat, but more often than not we see that ownership of the ultimate title is subject to the circumstances under which the deed is performed. The infallible Imams (a.s.), despite the embodiment of all glory and magnificence became famous by titles with singular characteristics. Some were known for their courage, others for their patience, their worship and their generosity. This is true for saqqayat also. No doubt, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) is the saqee in this world and in the hereafter, but history guides us to the point that in scaling the heights of saqqayat, he (a.s.) did not encounter the difficulties and insurmountable challenges which confronted the "Saqqat". In the battle of Badr, he did fetch water from the well, but he did not have to initiate the digging of the well. In the incident concerning Usman, he organised the water, but did not have to reach it himself. The battle of Siffeen did witness the magnanimity of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) - he granted access to the water to his enemies after capturing it, but did not go to the river himself.

But for Abul Fazl Abbas (a.s.), all these challenges presented themselves in a single event. He not only had to dig numerous well at Karbala, but also had to protect the water from the malevolence of his enemies. Establishing his control over the river too was no mean feat on that day - especially

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Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and the Infallible Imams (a.s.)

There can be little debate that the catastrophe that engulfed the Islamic nation on the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was of a staggering magnitude. For the beloved progeny - Ahle Bait (a.s.) of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) the sorrow was two-fold. On one hand, they were permanently separated from the beloved Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and on the other hand, this proved to be the trigger for the deluge of tragedies and oppressions that befell them. Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) right to caliphate and successorship to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was usurped in a most scheming manner. Few could have imagined that there would come a day when Ali (a.s.) - the victor of Khayber and Khandaq would be dragged from his house for allegiance. Janabe Fatima Zahra (s.a.), the beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), had to appeal to the caliph of the nation, in the mosque of her own father, to demand her inheritance and financial dues. Her appeals fell on deaf ears and instead she was recompensed with oppression that first took the life of her unborn son and ultimately her own.

The demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his dearest daughter in a span of a few months left an indelible mark on Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) persona. His grief was uncontrollable and his sorrow was beyond description. Allah, the Almighty, alleviated his mourning and distress through a newborn son. This son had the desired effect on all the

grieving members of Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) household. Imam Hasan (a.s.) rejoiced because his arms were strengthened through the infant. Imam Husain (a.s.) saw in him his most trusted aide and standard-bearer. Janabe Zainab (a.s.) got a younger brother who would protect her. Hazrat Ali (a.s.) held the newborn close to himself and saw in him the nobility of martyrdom and christened him - Abbas, which means a lion.

Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) personality

Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) is one individual whose advent was awaited with great fervour and anticipation. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prophesied his unparalleled bravery. Hazrat Ali (a.s.), a man of few wants and needs, nonetheless desired him. Janabe Zahra (s.a.) referred to him as her own son. Imam Hasan (a.s.) introduced him as his helper and supporter. Imam Husain (a.s.) proclaimed about him, 'may my life be sacrificed upon you'. And once Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was born the Ahle Bait (a.s.) took great pride in him and his unique traits.

Apart from the five infallibles (a.s.) from the 'Incident of the Cloak', even the Imams (a.s.) spoke of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) in a most venerating manner. Imam Zainul Aabedeen (a.s.) gave testimony to his elevated status. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) acquainted him as عبد الصالح and one with vision and foresight and Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) has sent his salutations upon him.

Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) desire

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was well-aware that there would come a distressing time upon his younger son - Imam Husain (a.s.) when the trials and tribulations would engulf him and he would be all alone without a helper and supporter. What was particularly painful for Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was his own absence at that delicate moment in history when his son would need him the most. Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was seized with a desire to raise a son who would represent him at that moment of Imam Husain's (a.s.) anguish. It was with this objective that Hazrat Ali (a.s.) requested his brother - Aqeel:

أَنْظُرْ إِلَى امْرَأَةٍ قَدْ وَلَدَتْهَا الْفَخُولَةُ مِنْ
الْعَرَبِ لَا تَزُوجُهَا فَتَلِدَ لِي غُلَامًا فَارَسًا
يَكُونُ عَوْنًا لَوْلَدِي الْحُسَيْنِ فِي
كَرْبَلَاءَ.

'Search for a lady from the Arab tribes with a pedigree of brave warriors so that I may marry her. She will beget a brave son who will be a helper for my son - Husain in Karbala.'

(Tanqeehul Maqaal Chapter of Abbas pg. 28, Asraarush Shahaadat, pg 319, Umdatul Mataalib, pg. 352)

Janabe Aqeel's quest led him to the personality of Janabe Fatima Kelabiyya (r.a.) who Hazrat Ali (a.s.) finally married. This union resulted in the birth of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), who gained the titled.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was blessed with two sons who had no equal in the heavens and the earth. For him to desire another son like Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) tells us something about the latter's glorious personality. For not only was Hazrat Abbas

(a.s.) just his son, but he was his emissary in the battle of Karbala, one of Islam's greatest struggle against falsehood and tyranny. Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was to be the defendant of Imam Husain's (a.s.) right, which is why Hazrat Ali (a.s.) put everyone under the care of his eldest son and successor - Imam Hasan (a.s.); but when it came to Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) he directed him under the supervision of Imam Husain (a.s.).

Imam Husain (a.s.) and Hazrat Abbas (a.s.)

Imam Husain (a.s.) tended the gift of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) entrusted to him by his father with great care. He always kept Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) with himself and did not like being separated from him. When on 9th Muharram 61 AH at Karbala, Umar-e-Saad's army ventured towards Imam Husain's (a.s.) tent, he requested Hazrat Abbas (a.s.):

إِرْكَبْ بِنَفْسِي أَنْتَ يَا أَخِي، حَتَّى
تَسْأَلَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ.

'May my life be sacrificed for you, O my brother, go and ask them the purpose of their visit.'

(Tarikh-e-Tabari vol. 6, pg. 237)

Indeed, this statement highlights the affection that Imam (a.s.) had for Hazrat Abbas (a.s.). An Imam of the time uttering a statement of such gravity - 'may my life be sacrificed upon you' for someone highlights the latter's position and status. It is not merely one brother's sentiment for his sibling. In any case, the Imam does not make a proclamation out of mere sentiment; his love and hatred are purely for the sake of Allah, not for his own self. This statement underlines the importance of Hazrat Abbas

(a.s.) in the eyes of Allah and Imam Husain (a.s.).

On the Day of Ashoora, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was given Imam's (a.s.) consent to fight the enemies after much deliberation. And when after some time, Imam (a.s.) heard Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) plea for help, he clutched his back and cried - 'O my brother, with this (tragedy) my back is now broken.' It is for this reason we find Imam Husain (a.s.) calling out to Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) for help whenever his body was struck by the enemy.

(Maqatal-e-Abi Mikhnaf pg. 377)

Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) in Ziarat-e-Nahiyah

We find Imam Zamana (a.t.f.s.) reminiscing about Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) indomitable bravery in Ziarat-e-Nahiyah,

السلام على ابى الفضل العباس بن
امير المؤمنين المواسى اخاه الاخذ
لغده من امسه الغادى له الواقى
الساعى اليه همائه المقطوعة يدها لعن
الله قاتليه يزيد بن رقاد الحيبى
وحكيم ابن طفيل المطائى-

'Peace be upon Abul Fazlil Abbas, the son of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), who sacrificed his life for his brother. He protected him through his soul and in his struggle to fetch water, lost his arms. May Allah curse his killers - Yazid b. Riqaad Al-Haibi and Hakeem b. Tufail Al-Mataaiee.'

Imam Ja'far al-Sadeq (a.s.) on his

uncle Abbas (a.s.)

In Umdatul Mataalib, the great scholar - Abu Nasr Bukhaari records Imam Jafar Sadiq's (a.s.) narration:

كَانَ عَمَّنَا الْعَبَّاسُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ نَافِذَ
الْبَصِيرَةِ، صُلْبَ الْإِيمَانِ، جَاهِدَ مَعَ
أَبِي بَمَدِّ اللَّهِ وَأُبْلَى بَلَاءً حَسَنًا وَمَضَى
شَهِيدًا-

'Our uncle Abbas b. Ameeril Momineen (a.s.) had sharp foresight and firm faith. He fought alongside Husain (a.s.) and gave ample evidence of his bravery and courage until he was martyred.'

(Umdatul Mataalib pg. 323, Maqatilul Taalibeen)

Allamah Kinturi writes that بصيرت means in-depth understanding of and reflection on religious beliefs. نافذ means to distinguish clearly between truth and falsehood. نافذ البصيرة means Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) had amazing vision and foresight about religious beliefs and could clearly discern between truth and falsehood. He had scaled all the levels of faith and this is what Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is referring to in the above tradition.

(Miatain fi Maqatalil Husain, Pg. 444)

Then Allamah elaborates that Imam's (a.s.) at tribute نافذ البصيرة underscores the reality that Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was at an elevated stage of recognition and action.

(Miatain fi Maqatalil Husain, Pg. 463).

It was this recognition with which Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was stationed at a lofty level of faith and certainty and achieved such proximity with Imam Husain (a.s.), so much so that ultimately he submitted his life in the obedience of his master culminating in his martyrdom.

العبد الصالح The Virtuous

In the special Ziarat of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) narrated on the authority of Abi Hamza-e-Somali from Imam Sadiq (a.s.), the latter declares,

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْعَبْدُ الصَّالِحُ
الْمُطِيعُ لِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلَا مِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْحَسَنِ وَالْحُسَيْنِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ
سَلَّمَ

'Salutations upon you O virtuous worshipper who was obedient to Allah, His Messenger, Ameerul Momineen, Hasan and Husain (peace be upon all of them)'

In Arabic literature, عابد means a worshipper or a sincere worshipper.

لَزَمَهُ وَلَمْ يُفَارِقْهُ

'The worshipper who has devoted his entire life for the service of his master and has never separated from him.'

(Al-Munjid, pg. 316)

Over here عبد means Allah's worshipper. At one level we are all Allah's worshippers because Allah has created man to worship Him.

(Surah Zaariyaat: Verse 56)

However, there are some worshippers who have excelled in worship so much so that Allah is proud of their worship and considers them as His worshippers. Allah has mentioned many Prophets by name in the Quran. However, not all of them are referred to as عبد. There are only a few Prophets referred to as عبد in the Quran by Allah - Hazrat Nuh (a.s.) in Surah Israa: Verse: 3, Hazrat Dawood (a.s.) in Surah

Swaad: Verse: 17, Hazrat Zakariyya (a.s.) in Surah Maryam: Verse: 2, Hazrat Isa (a.s.) in Surah Nisa: Verse: 20, Hazrat Ayyub (a.s.) in Surah Swaad: Verse: 41 and our beloved Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) in Surah Israa: Verse: 1 for whom in particular, this word has been used on more than one occasion.

The position of servitude (being a slave or worshipper of Allah) is a status that is much sought after and only a handful of Allah's most beloved creatures can attain it. One day Hazrat Jibraeel (a.s.) descended on the earth to convey the divine message to the Prophet, he informed, 'Allah has conveyed His greetings and salutations to you. He has given you a choice, either you can choose to be His slave or you can be the king of the world.' Expectedly the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) selected the position of servitude and relinquished the right to rule over the world. That is why in every obligatory and recommended prayers, we first give testimony to the Prophet being Allah's slave and then testify to his prophethood.

On many an occasion Ameerul Momeneen (a.s.) has expressed his satisfaction and pleasure at being Allah's slave.

Indeed Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was granted the good fortune of serving Allah and His Messenger (s.a.w.a.). According to Imam Sadiq's (a.s.) tradition Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was granted the opportunity (taufeeq) of serving the five immaculate ones of 'The Cloak' in addition to serving Allah. This shows the status of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) in the eyes of Allah, His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the infallibles (a.s.).

Salutations recited just before the conclusion of namaz is an important pillar of

namaz. The worshipper recites three salutations at the end. Of these salutations, the second and the third are imperative and omitting either or both will make the prayers void.

In the first salutation we recite:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَ عَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ
الصَّالِحِينَ.

'Salutations upon us and Allah's virtuous slaves.'

Over here we recite عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ which is the plural of العبد صالح. Now if we take the aforementioned words of the Ziarat and weigh it alongside the salutations in namaz, we can appreciate that Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) is among those included within the ambit of عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ in prayers. If one does not recite this salutation and declines from paying tributes to the عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ, his prayers will not be worthy of acceptance in the divine court.

The Guardian of Islam

In the salutation for the entry in the shrine of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), Imam Sadiq (a.s.) recites

أَشْهَدُ وَأُشْهِدُ اللَّهَ أَنَّكَ مَضَيْتَ عَلَى مَا
مَضَى بِهِ الْبَدْرِيُّونَ.

'I bear witness and take Allah as a witness that you tread on the path of warriors of the Battle of Badr.'

As is well known, the Battle of Badr was the premier battle of Islam fought under the direct leadership of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Then, Islam was only finding its feet and was slowly coming into its own. A defeat at that stage with the martyrdom of the Holy

Prophet (s.a.w.a.) would have obliterated Islam and the divine message along with it. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and Islam would have been nothing but obscure specks in the pages of history.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was not prepared for the battle. However, the infidels of Mecca had intensified their efforts against the Muslims and matters reached a head when battle was the only way out. Divine decree commanded as much and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) began mobilising men and weapons for Islam's first battle. The infidels, numbering over a thousand, also prepared themselves for battle and came out armed with the best of weapons and mounts. They had all the means necessary for a resounding victory. The Muslim army on the other hand were puny in size - a little over 300, which was less than 1/3rd the size of the infidels. They had a mere two horses, one was with Murtadd b. Abi Murtadd and the other with Miqdad, and only seven camels. Despite their poor numbers and lack of resources, their enthusiasm and spirit of faith was at a high. They entered the battlefield with a clear objective to protect Islam with their lives. Quran says that on that day, Allah helped them with 3,000 angels.

A fierce battle waged between the unequal parties. The Muslims with their small numbers but fierce loyalty and strong faith overcame the more powerful infidels. Islam got a new lease of life and Muslims got strengthened with this victory.

The situation in 60 AH was similar to the pre-Badr days. In fact, if anything, it was even more dismal. Islamic laws were given mere lip service; they did not exist in the hearts of the Muslims. Slow by but steadily, the soul of Islam was being strangled. The

line between truth and falsehood had vanished and Muslims were no longer discerning between the two. Conditions conspired to propel the successor and grandson of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), to rise against the polytheistic and hypocritical forces of society. The groundwork for battle was laid down and both parties were prepared for it. Imam Husain (a.s.) arrived at Karbala with a small band of family members, companions and loyalists. The situation resembled closely that of Badr. On one side, there was a large army of rabid warriors armed to the teeth and on the other side, there was a small group of devout Muslims, interested only in protecting the grandson of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and through it, Islam. Like Badr, this was a battle between the pure tree شجر طيبه and the accursed tree شجر ملعونه. Like the Muslim army in Badr, Imam Husain's (a.s.) army was small in number, but there was no dearth of certainty and self-sacrifice to protect Islam. Only difference was unlike in Badr, Imam Husain's (a.s.) army did not accept the help of angels to fight the enemy. In Badr, the enemy was vanquished to save Islam; in Karbala, the Muslims offered their souls in a supreme sacrifice. This resulted in Islam getting lease of life till the Day of Judgment.

The credit of marshalling this small army to an unqualified, moral victory over the enemies goes to the standard bearer of the army. Maybe that is why Imam Sadiq (a.s.) reminisces about Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) supreme sacrifice in his salutation at the threshold of his shrine at Karbala

انك مضيت على ما مضى به
البدر يون-

Obedience of the Imam of the era

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) continues further in this Ziarat,

فَجَزَاكَ اللَّهُ أَفْضَلَ الْجَزَاءِ وَأَكْثَرَ الْجَزَاءِ
وَأَوْفَرَ الْجَزَاءِ وَأَوْفَى جَزَاءِ أَحَدٍ مِمَّنْ
وَفَى فِي بَيْعَتِهِ وَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ دَعْوَتُهُ وَ
أَطَاعَ وُلاَةَ أَمْرِهِ:

'Then may Allah reward you with the most elect reward, the most numerous reward, the most abundant reward, the most faithful reward, that He has given to one who was loyal in his allegiance, responded to his call and obeyed the master of his affair.'

Undoubtedly, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) till the end of his life served and submitted to the wishes of his Master - Sayyedush Shohada (a.s.). He endeavoured to fulfill the smallest desire of Imam Husain (a.s.) with all eagerness and promptness. For instance, one day in the mosque, Imam Husain (a.s.) expressed his desire for water. Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) rushed to get the water because he did not like his Master's wish to remain unfulfilled even for a moment. (Chehl Majlis pg. 282) Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) promptness in fulfilling Imam's (a.s.) wish to the extent of a glass of water underlines that he did not like anyone to supersede him in answering to Imam's (a.s.) call. It is famous that Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) used to trace Imam's (a.s.) footsteps and apply the dust of his feet to his eyes as a measure of his love and submission to the Imam.

(Zikrul Abbas pg. 24).

This is the level of obedience, compliance and recognition that Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) had for Imam Husain (a.s.) and carried with him

to Karbala. Over there he attended to Imam (a.s.) as a slave. And more importantly, experienced great satisfaction and pride in fulfilling his role as a slave and helper of Imam (a.s.). At a time in Karbala when his own children were grappling with intense thirst, hunger and searing heat, he submitted to the wishes of his master - Imam Husain (a.s.) without sparing a thought for his own condition and that of his family.

Normally, a brave man does not easily accept circumstances that are incompatible with his nature and mental makeup. But Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) reconciled himself to the difficulties of Karbala. Despite his courage and valour, to witness the painful and miserable condition of Imam Husain (a.s.) and his family, was in itself an achievement for him. Else in Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) presence, it was not possible for anyone to get even a mile within Imam Husain (a.s.) and his family, let alone harass them and ultimately martyr Imam Husain (a.s.). For Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) to witness this as a mute spectator was in many ways more difficult than sacrificing both his arms and his life in the way of Islam. This was because he was capable of warding off the difficulties and tribulations from Imam Husain (a.s.) and his family, but circumstances compelled him to adopt a stance incompatible to his natural disposition.

In line with the divine command and the explicit instructions of his Master - Imam Husain (a.s.), Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) chose to embrace martyrdom rather than take the enemy to task in a fitting manner, which was what he wished to do. To act against his own temperament was the most striking trait of Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) personality in Karbala

and earned him the reputation of being the most fierce and self-sacrificing warrior in Karbala, reserving for himself a special niche among the companions of Imam Husain (a.s.). That is why Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) informs,

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ عَمِّي العباس بن علي، فلقد
آخر وانلى وفدى اخاه بنفسه حتى
قُطِعَت يَدَاهُ، فائد له الله بجنا حين
يَظِيرُ بهما مع الملائكة في الجنة كما
جعل لجعفر بن ابي طالب - وان
العباس عند الله تبارك وتعالى منزلة
يغبطه عليها جميع الشهداء يوم
القيامة -

'May Allah have mercy on my uncle - Abbas b. Ali (a.s.). He fought valiantly and ransomed himself upon his brother until both his arms were severed. Then Allah granted him wings in place of his arms due to his love for us (Ahle Bait). He now soars with his wings along with the angels in Paradise just like Jafar b. Abi Talib (his own uncle). Surely Abbas (a.s.) is placed at such an elevated rank and position in front of Allah, the Almighty, that all the martyrs shall envy him on the Day of Judgment.

(Khesaal, vol. 1, pg. 36)

Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) sacrifice is an intercession for the nation

Aga Darbandi writes, 'When the Day of Judgement shall dawn, the people shall be gathered in a state of intense anxiety and apprehension. Under these circumstances,

the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) will request Hazrat Ali (a.s.) to ask Janabe Zahra (s.a.) what she had in store to rescue the nation from chastisement. Janabe Zahra (s.a.) will say,

كفانا لاجل هذا المقام اليدين
المقطوعتان من ابن العباس -

'The severed hands of Abbas are sufficient for salvaging the nation.'

(Asraarush Shahadat pg. 325, Jawaherul Ayqaan pg. 194,
Qamare Bani Hashim pg. 51)

In this brief statement Janabe Zahra highlights the eminent rank of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) near Allah, which shall result in the intercession of the Islamic nation as a result of his supreme sacrifice, the proof of which are his severed hands.

.....continued from page 5

under circumstances when he was helplessly unarmed.

We must turn our attention to another delicate aspect - whenever Hazrat Ali (a.s.) initiated his efforts in this direction, he was able to take it to its logical conclusion. At Badr, the army was satiated as also in Siffeen. He was also, through various channels, able to reach water to the house of Usman. In the presence of his sons and closest companions, he offered milk to his own killer.

But alas, the intense desire of Hazrat Abul Fazl Abbas (a.s.) to accomplish his duty could not be fulfilled; his heart was forever immersed in regret for wells were dug, but were devoid of water; he went to the Furaat, but was prevented by his enemies to return; the water bag was filled with water, but ultimately it did not reach the children of

Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) served the successor of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) till the last breath of his life under the most trying circumstances. Near his Lord he was a virtuous slave and near the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) he was a submissive and obedient Muslim. He submitted completely to the wishes of the Imam of his era and eventually sacrificed his life to safeguard the Imam and thus, earned the latter's satisfaction and approval. Therefore we find the infallibles (a.s.) speaking of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) with such high regard and respect. As devotees of this personality and his ardent lovers, we must strive to emulate the actions of our Master - Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) by supporting the Imam of our era till the dying moments of our lives.

Imam Husain (a.s.) who were desirous of its contents.

Under these circumstances, it would be a great injustice to his personality if history did not remember him as Saqqa. Perhaps it is for this reason that Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) accepted the responsibility-laden mantle of saqqayat and went about his task in such a splendid fashion that till today, he is remembered as Saqqa. And what a lofty standard he set when not only was every member of the army of Hur satiated completely, but even the animals in that battalion were relieved of their thirst. None remained thirsty on that day - friend or foe, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), ensured that their thirst was quenched. By this action, he enlivened the glorious tradition of his forefathers, enhanced what he inherited from them and perfected Saqqayat forever.

(Excerpts from Qamar-e- Bani Hashim, The Life of Abul Fazl Abbas, The Leader of Karbala).

The Honour of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.)

The sacred religion of Islam has defined the terms of honour and support in separate connotations. But in this context, intense defense of modesty, wealth, government, religion and law is termed as honour. Especially if a certain thing was earmarked for one particular group, family or individual and others want to partake in it, seize it or destroy it. And at this critical moment, the possessor of the thing rises in its defense.

The Almighty has threatened three types of people in this verse, hypocrites, sick at heart and slaves of desires.

لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي
قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ
لَنُغْرِيَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا ﴿٦٠﴾ مَلْعُونِينَ ۖ أَيَنَّمَا تُقْفُوا أَخَذُوا
وَقَتِلُوا قَتِيلًا ﴿٦١﴾ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ
خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ
تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٦٢﴾

'If the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease and the agitators in the city do not desist, We shall most certainly set you over them, then they shall not be your neighbors in it but for a little while; Cursed: wherever they are found they shall be seized and murdered, a (horrible) murdering.'

(Surah Ahzaab: Verses 60-62)

Similarly, Allah mentions the honour of

Hazrat Yusuf (a.s.) in the following manner:

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا
يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ

'He said: My Lord! The prison house is dearer to me than that to which they invite me.'

(Surah Yusuf: Verses 33)

In both verses, the implication of honour is made with the same concept as defined earlier. Besides, traditions have explained that honour is among the divine traits.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَيْرُ يُحِبُّ كُلَّ غَيُورٍ وَمِنْ
غَيْرَتِهِ حَرَّمَ الْفَوَاحِشَ ظَاهِرَهَا وَ
بَاطِنَهَا

Surely Allah is Honourable, He loves all those who are honourable. And it is due to His Honour that He prohibited all the evils, in its apparent and hidden form.

(Mizanul Hikmah, pg. 357, tradition 15,263)

In another tradition it is said:

لَا أَحَدٌ أَغْيَرُ مِنَ اللَّهِ

"There is none more honourable than Allah."

(Mizanul Hikmah, 357, hadith no 15265)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَبِي غُيُورًا وَأَنَا أَغْيَرُ مِنْهُ

"My ancestor Ibrahim was honourable, while I am more honourable than him"

Imam Baqir (a.s.) narrated an incident during the time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) when some prisoners were brought to him. Since the captives were dangerous and treacherous, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) ordered all, except one of them, to be executed. When the freed man inquired from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about the reason for his pardon and subsequent freedom, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said that Jibraeel (a.s.) informed me that you have five characteristics, which are liked by Allah and His Prophet. They are extreme honour for the family, generosity, cordial disposition, truthfulness of tongue and bravery. When the man heard this, he embraced Islam and gained prominence among the companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Later he got martyred in the battle of Yaak.

(Wasaelush-Shiah, vol. 14, pg 109, chap 77, tradition 10, Akhlaq in Quran)

Honour has become a rarity in the contemporary world. Arabs and non-Arabs alike have become alien to honour. However, there was an era when the Arab honour was at the lips of everybody. The following incident should serve as an example of the Arab's famed honour.

Behram Gaur lived under the tutelage of Noman b. Maqdar. Behram was learning etiquette and social propriety from Noman. One day he went on hunting and began chasing a deer. The deer got tired of constant running and entered a tent to seek refuge. Behram reached the tent and wanted to pounce on the deer. The owner of the tent, whose name was Qabiza, intervened. He told Behram that since the deer had taken refuge in his tent, he cannot allow Behram to lay his hands on the deer. If at all he intended to do

any such thing, he will have to kill Qabiza first, only then he can proceed further. If Behram wanted anything else, he could take Qabiza's horse, he suggested. Behram was stunned at Qabiza's defiance for a mere deer.

(Zindagani-e-Qamar-e-Bani Hashim, pg. 94, compiled by Emaduddeen Husain Isfahani)

The readers would have understood the extent of the Arab's honour from this incident. If an ordinary Arab could be so honourable, then imagine the extent of Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) honour, the like of which cannot be found in history. Abbas was an Arab stalwart from a noble family; his legacy of honour was inherited from both sides of his family. Although history provides only a few glimpses of his honour, he was unsurpassed even in that.

The author of Zindagani-e-Qamar-e-Bani Hashim, Emaduddeen Husain Isfahani writes that Abbas' honour was so exalted that he never tolerated any inappropriate behaviour or speech. It was due to this reason that Imam Husain (a.s.) had entrusted the task of the women folk's embarkation atop camel's back or alighting from it to Hazrat Abbas (a.s.). No mortal dare be around when Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) executed his responsibility. Also Hazrat Abbas' (a.s.) presence ensured that there remained quite a distance between the women folks' transports and the rest of the caravan.

(Zindagani-e-Qamar-e-Bani Hashim, pg. 96)

The author of Maqatil writes that the caravan of Imam Husain (a.s.) had reached Karbala on the second of Muharram. Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) had erected the tents on the banks of Euphrates river. But the enemy did not allow Ahle Bait (a.s.) to camp on Euphrates and asked them to shift farther

from the river. When Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) heard this, he was enraged and dared the enemy to come forward with the proposal.

Even as the heated exchange was on, Hazrat Zainab (s.a.) summoned Hazrat Abbas (a.s.). Before leaving, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) drew a line in front of the tents and announced aloud,

'Whoever dares to step beyond this line will find his head separated from his body.'

During the conversation, Hazrat Zainab (s.a.) requested Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) to shift the tents farther. Much as Abbas (a.s.) did not want to budge from the spot, he did not say a single word. Quietly he returned to his earlier position and with his own hands removed the pegs of the tents and began shifting the camp away.

Abbas' (a.s.) honour did not allow him to protest against the command of Imam and let his own intention dominate his intellect. His reverence of Imam was much more than his own uncompromising principles. Abbas' (a.s.) honour came out much more dazzling in obedience to Imam than his unrelenting attitude against the enemies.

In yet another example of Abbas' (a.s.) honour, historians quote the following incident. Since the morning of Ashoora until noon, Abbas (a.s.) had actively assisted Imam Husain (a.s.) in carrying the wounded/martyred supporters of Imam from the battlefield to the camp. Despite this, Abbas (a.s.) never moved a step without the consent of Imam Husain (a.s.). At the same time, Abbas (a.s.) exhorted his brothers towards the glory of martyrdom and ensured that they all met death in front

of his eyes.

When all the companions and relatives of Imam (a.s.) had departed, Abbas (a.s.), the proverbial last man standing, folded his hands and with extreme politeness sought Imam's (a.s.) consent to leave for battlefield. Reluctance was writ large on the countenance of Imam (a.s.). He asked Abbas (a.s.) to make provision for thirsty children first and then leave for battle.

Abbas (a.s.) did as commanded and left to fetch water. Cutting through the hostile ranks and files of the enemy army, Abbas (a.s.) managed to reach the Euphrates. He filled the water bag with the river water. He cupped a little water in his own palm and said,

'How can I taste you while my master and his children are thirsty?'

He threw the water back. History can never reproduce a more shining example of honour. His honour does not end here, but transcends even beyond this selfless act of sacrifice. As he headed towards the camp, enemies regrouped and launched a desperate onslaught. Abbas (a.s.) lost his right hand first and subsequently the emboldened enemies even severed his left hand. But Abbas' (a.s.) fortitude and valour was such that he proclaimed - *"Even if I am cut to pieces, I will not desist from my support and assistance to my Imam."*

The words uttered actually epitomize his innate sentiments for the defense of his Imam. These are worth pondering over. Indeed this is honour. Certainly the honour of Abbas shall remain unparalleled forever.

Abul Fazl al Abbas: Eminence and Status

Allah the Almighty sent Prophet Moosa (a.s.) for the guidance of the rebellious Firaon. To implement this gigantic task, he (a.s.) beseeched the Almighty,

وَأَجْعَلْ لِّي وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي- هَرُونَ
أَخِي- اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي- وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي
أُمْرِي-

"Appoint a minister from my progeny; my brother Haroon; strengthen my back with him; and make him a partner in my affairs."

(Surah Taha, Verses 29-31)

Prophet Moosa (a.s.) was amongst the Prophets of Allah with unflinching determination (Ulul Azm). The Holy Quran has explained determination thus,

وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ
الْأُمُور-

(Surah Ale Imran, Verse, 186)

"And if you exercise patience and adopt piety, then surely these are from the affairs that require determination."

Hazrat Luqman (a.s.) advised his son,

يُنْسَى أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ ط
إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُور-

"O my son! Establish prayers, enjoin good, restrain from evil and be patient

over whatever (calamity) befalls you. Surely, these are from the affairs that require determination."

The above verse clearly shows that establishment of prayers, enjoinder of good, restraining from evil and exercising patience on all calamities and difficulties that afflict us require a great deal of courage and resolute determination.

On the order of Allah the Almighty, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) announced his Prophethood and went public with his mission. The occasion was Dawat Zul Asheerah. After making the necessary announcements, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) sought a helper and minister for himself. Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) promised to help and assist him (s.a.w.a.) in his mission.

From the aforementioned incidents, it becomes amply clear that for monumental tasks such as these, even the greatest Prophets and Messengers of Allah require the help and assistance of somebody. Also, this supporter, helper and minister should be from the family of the Prophet. Prophet Haroon (a.s.) was the brother of Prophet Moosa (a.s.) while Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) was the brother of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.).

Imam Husain (a.s.) and Determination

In Ziyaarat-e-Waaresah, we find the following sentences,

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ قَدْ أَقَمْتَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرْتَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَيْتَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَطَعْتَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ حَتَّى
أَتَيْكَ الْيَقِينُ-

"I bear witness that verily you established prayers, paid the poor-rate, enjoined good and refrained from evil and obeyed Allah and His Messenger till certainty (death) came to you."

The patience exercised by Imam Husain (a.s.) in fulfilling the abovementioned obligations is known to all. So, did this determination and decisiveness not require a brother, a minister and a companion, who would support the Imam (a.s.) and strengthen his back? In proportion to the responsibility and duty imposed by Him on Imam Husain (a.s.), Allah the Almighty had granted him (a.s.) an equally great and magnificent brother in Hazrat Abul Fazl al-Abbas (a.s.). Like Prophet Haroon (a.s.) and Imam Ali (a.s.), Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) too remained with the divine proof and Allah's representative (a.s.) through thick and thin. Following in their footsteps, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was on a lofty pedestal vis-à-vis ethics and morality. Had infallibility not been restricted to the fourteen infallibles (a.s.) on account of divine prudence, it would not be surprising if Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) too would have been included amongst one of the immaculate ones protected by Allah! Although, officially Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) is not enlisted among the infallible guides, nevertheless, he is protected and preserved from all kinds of sins and errors. Moreover, he enjoys discretionary powers over the functioning of the universe.

Imam Husain's (a.s.) Sacrifice

The sayings of the infallible guides (a.s.) are neither emotional outbursts nor exaggerations. Each and every alphabet uttered by them is based on reality and is an interpretation of divine will. In the teachings of the Ahle Bait (a.s.), the Imam of the time is axis of the universe and the heart of the contingent world. Imam is the medium through which bounties are being conferred on this universe by divinity. How expressive are the following sentences of Imam Husain's (a.s.) ziyaarat,

إِرَادَةُ الرَّبِّ فِي مَقَادِيرِ أُمُورِهِ تَهْبِطُ
إِلَيْكُمْ وَتَصْدُرُ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ-

"Divine intention in the destinies of His affairs descends to you and emanates from your houses. "

(Mafatihul Jinan (Farsi), P. 423)

It becomes amply manifest that divine intention is routed through the Imam of the time. It is he who is the medium of the conferment of divine grace.

Imam Husain (a.s.) was the Imam of the time and Allah's proof upon His creatures. All of Allah's affairs emanate through him. He is the heart of the contingent world. This universe exists and receives subsistence only because of him. Now, kindly pay attention to the statement of Imam Husain (a.s.), which he has said to Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and take a call if there is anybody in the mortal world who can determine and quantify the status and position of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.)!

On the 9th of Muharram, Ibn Sa'd ordered his army to attack Imam Husain's (a.s.) camp. At that moment, Imam (a.s.) was sitting in front of his tent with his head resting on his sword. He

went into light slumber when he heard the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) say, "Soon, you will meet me." In this very state, the enemy's rampaging forces approached. When Janab Zainab (s.a.) heard the sounds of the soldiers, she said to her brother, 'The enemies are coming!' Imam Husain (a.s.) requested his brother Abbas (a.s.), 'اركب بنفسى انت' "May I be sacrificed for you! Please ride atop the horse and ask them the purpose of their arrival. "

(Maqatal-e-Husain Moqirram, p. 252)

Reflect on the statement of Imam Husain (a.s.), 'May I be sacrificed for you!' Imagine the greatness and prominence of Abbas (a.s.) on whom the Imam of the universe and the fifth of 'the People of the Cloak' (Ahle Kisaa) is willing to be sacrificed! Think about the elevated position of Abbas' morality and ethics that the infallible Imam (a.s.) is willing to hold his life as ransom for him and this will is naught but Divine Intention!

Perhaps, in some minds there may arise a question that such statements are also found in the ziyaarat of the martyrs of Karbala, 'May my father and mother be held your ransom!' while this ziyaarat too is taught by the Imams (a.s.). As a reply to this objection, it will suffice to state that in this ziyaarat, Imam Sadeq (a.s.) is teaching his companion Safwaan the method of ziyaarat. At the plane of teaching and training, the altitude and rank of the students has to be taken into consideration. But, Imam Husain (a.s.) is not teaching and training anyone; rather, he is expressing his real emotions and innate feelings for Hazrat Abbas (a.s.).

Seeing this great position of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), one is inevitably reminded of the saying of his honorable father, 'The ocean

of knowledge flows from me and no bird's flight can reach to the heights of my perfection. ' Verily, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) is called as "Abu al-Fazl" which means 'the father of excellence'. In other words, all excellences and perfections have assimilated in him.

Complete Faith

In Islam, the value and significance of a person is not in relation to the worldly bounties possessed by him. Rather, his worth and importance is gauged by the parameters of correct beliefs, good deeds, ethics and morality. The thing that lends credence to good actions and raises the stock of a person is his belief. Therefore, it is said that

'the sleep of a scholar is better than the awakening of an ignorant'.

Belief is related to the heart. Only he who is aware of the depth of the heart and the waves that lash its shores can judge a person's belief. Allah the Almighty has given the power to the holy Imams (a.s.) to be aware of each individual's intention and condition of the heart. Hence, Imam is the best person to judge a person's heart and true intention.

Regarding Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), Imam Sadeq (a.s.) informs,

كان عمنا العباس عليه السلام نافذ
البصيره صلب الايمان جاهد مع ابي
عبدالله عليه السلام.

(Nafasul Mahmoom p. 332)

"Our uncle, Abbas (a.s.), had complete insight. His belief was very firm and unflinching. He fought with my (great-grand) father, Imam Husain (a.s.)."

If an Imam (a.s.) extols someone's insight and belief and expresses his attachment towards him (our uncle Abbas), one can realize the greatness of the belief of such a person. In the above tradition, Imam (a.s.) prides over the belief of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and his relation with him through the term 'our uncle Abbas'.

It was his insight and belief that had brought Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) to Karbala. He had not come to fulfill familial and tribal relations and obligations but to oblige the demands of his creed. He did not consider Imam Husain (a.s.) as his brother only but regarded him as Allah's proof, whose defense he regarded as a religious obligation and in concordance with divine satisfaction. Therefore, when the accursed oppressors' attack severed the right hand of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), he recited the following poem,

"By Allah! Even if you sever my hand, I will continue to support my religion forever I will perennially protect the ever-truthful Imam and the grandson of the pure and trustworthy Prophet. "

Each and every word of the above couplet is a testimony of the great faith possessed by Hazrat Abbas (a.s.). In the face of this colossal calamity, the only thought that comes to his mind is that of the ever-truthful Imam of Islam. The point is about the support of religion and the protection of the Imam of the time. This couplet of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) is a thought-provoking reminder for the people of all times towards their responsibilities. The duty of protecting the Imam does not end even with the severance of the hand.

Highest of Levels

In paradise, the grade and position that a

person will enjoy will be directly proportionate to the level of his belief. In other words, the criteria for superiority and excellence in heaven will be nothing except belief and good deeds, not material bounties and worldly virtues. About Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), Imam Zainul Aabideen (a.s.) says,

"May Allah shower His mercy on Abbas! Certainly, he has sacrificed a lot and bore massive atrocities. He kept defending his brother (Imam Husain (a.s.)) with all his life till he lost both his hands. Instead of his lost hands, Allah the Almighty has granted him two wings in paradise by which he flies in the heavens along with the angels, just as He had granted Janab Ja'far Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.). Surely, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) enjoys such eminence and position in front of Allah that all the martyrs will be envious of him on the Day of Judgment. "

The term 'all the martyrs' carries immense significance and depicts the belief and sincerity of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.).

A Few Special Qualities

We have mentioned earlier that Hazrat Abul Fazl al-Abbas (a.s.) was for Imam Husain (a.s.) what Prophet Haroon (a.s.) was for Prophet Moosa (a.s.) and Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) for the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.). But Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) had some special qualities in which he was unique and unequalled.

"Amongst those who have sacrificed their lives for the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), Janab-e-Hamzah (a.s.) enjoys an exceptional status. He is remembered with the title of 'Chief of the Martyrs' (sayyed al-shohadaa). He attained martyrdom in order to protect the life of

the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). He was killed when he was attacked with a spear by the Abyssinian slave of Hind, Abu Sufyan's wife. His liver was removed from his corpse and eaten by Hind, who became notorious in history as the 'liver-eater'. His martyrdom had a deep impact on the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.).

But Janab-e-Hamzah's (a.s.) head was not severed from his body. His hands were not chopped off. He was not deprived of water for three days. He was the commander but providing water for thirsty children was not his responsibility.

"Janab-e-Ja'far Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) was among those great martyrs, whose loss left the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) greatly aggrieved and sorrowful. Both his hands were sliced, for which Allah the Almighty had rewarded him with two wings in paradise. Hence, he became famous as Ja'far al-Tayyar (the flier).

Surely, Janab-e-Ja'far's hands were sliced but his head was not severed from his body nor was it raised on a spear.

"The way Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) defended the holy religion of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) is, and shall remain, unmatched and unparalleled. He played a critical role in every battle and led on all fronts. In the Battle of Ohod, when the so-called Muslims forsook the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and left him all alone among the enemy ranks, and Janab-e-Hamzah (a.s.) had attained martyrdom, it was Ali (a.s.) alone who stood in the ruins and single-handedly defended the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) from the onslaught of the polytheists. During this heated clash, his

sword broke into two. Immediately, the archangel Jibraeel (a.s.) brought the "Zulfiqaar" from the heavens. In that particular battle, seventy wounds were inflicted on the holy body of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). In the Battle of Khandaq, a severe wound was inflicted on his head. Finally, in the Grand Mosque at Kufa, Ibn Muljim, the accursed, struck on his head on that very wound, which he had received in the Battle of Khandaq. As a result, his head split into two and a mountain of tragedy was wreaked on the Muslim nation.

Keeping these incidents, and all other similar ones, in mind, analyze one special quality of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.). The bravery and courage of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) is known to all and sundry. When Zuhair (a.r.) reminded him of his father's desire, Abbas (a.s.) loosened his body on the horse, due to which, the saddle's traction broke. Despite mounting a huge horse, his feet touched the ground.

Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was unique in the tribulations and sufferings forced on him. Yet, he (a.s.) endured all these for Allah's pleasure and obedience of the Imam of the time with complete recognition and absolute faith. We shall mention some of them hereunder:

1. All the great warriors and combatants of history had an opportunity to display their courage and valor in the battlefield. But when Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) requested Imam Husain (a.s.) to fight, Imam (a.s.) asked him instead to get water for the thirsty children. Obviously, there is a vast difference in mindsets between going out to secure water for thirsty children and to venture out for a fight. At that

moment, the emotion of obedience and compliance displayed by Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) is the greatest show of courage. Thus, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), the fearless combatant, did not get an opportunity to display his fighting skills in the battlefield.

Ah! The power of Imam, the
zeal of valor subdued

Alas! The storm unleashed for
permission refused

2. Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was unique even in his position as provider of water, notwithstanding the fact, that offering water had been a family status for him. His grandfather, Hazrat Abu Taalib (a.s.) always supplied drinking water for the pilgrims who visited the Holy Ka'bah at Mecca. But there is a huge disparity in giving water to the pilgrims during Haj, when there is abundant water available, and to fetch water for the thirsty children of Imam Husain (a.s.). Perhaps, this is the reason that Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was given the title of "Provider of water for the children and womenfolk". Greatness lied in the attempt to obtain water for the scorched throats while not allowing one's own burnt tongue and gullet to get a feel of the water's coolness.
3. When the Abyssinian slave attacked Janab-e-Hamzah (a.s.), there was no water-skin on his chest and there was no anxiety of thirsty children on his mind. But when the wretched opponent attacked the chest of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) with an arrow, the water-skin that he was protecting with all his life after the severing of his hands was ruptured and all the water spilled.
4. Ibn Muljim, the accursed, attacked the holy head of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) with a poisonous sword. Yet, at that moment, Ali (a.s.) was in the mosque's prayer-niche, not on the back of his horse. His hands were intact due to which he could hold his injured head together. But when Hazrat Abbas's (a.s.) head was attacked, he was without his arms, his chest was riddled with arrows and he was on the back of his horse. To fall on the ground in this condition, badly injured and wounded, is specific only to the son of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.), a peculiarity in which he is unique.
5. To go to the river Euphrates, fill the water in the water-bag and yet deprive one's own thirsty self of water!
6. Every martyr, who went to the battlefield on the day of Aashoora, was dear and beloved to Imam Husain (a.s.). But for nobody's death did Imam Husain (a.s.) claim, 'Now, my back is broken!'
7. Imam Husain (a.s.) brought the corpse of every martyr from the battlefield. But he did not bring the dead body of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and allowed it to remain on the shores of Euphrates. He only brought the severed arms to his camp. The reason for this was the uniqueness of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.). Like his position and status, Allah the Almighty desired to keep his calamities unique as well. If you deliberate a little, you will realize that in front of the shrine of an infallible, no shrine of a non-infallible stands. In Medina, opposite the grave of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) are the destroyed graves of the Imams (a.s.) of Jannat al-Baqee' and Janab-e-Fatimah Zahra (s.a.). Of course, this is the country of

the Wahhabis and its all their doing. But in Najaf, Iraq, only the memorial of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) stands. In Kazmain, Iraq, are the shrines of Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) and Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (a.s.). In Mashhad, Iran, only the sacred grave of Imam Reza (a.s.) exists. In Saamarra, Iraq, the shrines of Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) co-exist. All are infallible (a.s.) and there is no non-infallible. But in the case of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), Allah the Almighty has granted him the honor of allowing his shrine to exist with that of Imam Husain (a.s.) in the sacrosanct city of Karbala. The huge inflow of pilgrims and visitors to his holy grave and the countless miracles that occur in it are evidences enough that Allah the Almighty wants to raise the position and status of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) even higher. For, Allah's satisfaction cannot be expressed without the power of miracles and extraordinary feats. Also, Allah does not raise anyone's eminence in vain. Such great eminence and stature, as granted to Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), is enough proof that no martyr enjoys as high a position as him and on the Day of Judgment, everybody will be envious of his eminence and significance.

8. A martyr's sacrifice can never be fully compensated in this world. It will be in the Hereafter that Allah will reward and punish each one in exact accordance with his acts in this world. Thus, one can only imagine the greatness and rewards of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) on the Day of Judgment and in the Hereafter.

The author of Asraar al-Shahaadah has narrated this incident from a few reliable

persons:

On the Day of Judgment, when the people gathered will encounter the harsh difficulties of the Hereafter, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) will send Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) to Janab-e-Zahra (s.a.) and invite her to the position of intercession (shafaa'h). Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) will ask her, "What do you have for intercession? What have you stored for this great and frightful day?" She (a.s.) will reply,

يا امير المؤمنين كفانا لاجل هذا
المقام اليدان المقطوعتان من ابني
العباس-

"O Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)! On this great day, I have the two chopped hands of my son Abbas! "

Hazrat Fatimah Zahra (s.a.) is the lady of the Day of Judgment and its intercessor. She (s.a.) is the daughter of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the wife of Ali (a.s.), who is the distributor of heaven and hell. Also, she (s.a.) is the mother of the chiefs of the youth of paradise, Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husain (a.s.). When she (s.a.), despite all these greatnesses and positions, is using the severed arms of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) for intercession, one cannot just imagine his greatness!

O Allah! For the sake of the atrocities inflicted on Hazrat Zahra (s.a.), please grant us the intercession of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) on the Day of Judgment. Please confer on us the grace of defending, praying for, protecting and protecting the message of the Imam of our time, Hazrat Hujjat Ibn al-Hasan al-Askari (a.s.)! Aameen!

Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and the Imam of the Time

On reflecting over the time of Prophet Adam's (a.s.) creation and the times that followed, a fact that comes to light very evidently is that Allah the Almighty has formulated a system in which one is obeyed while the others obey; one is followed, the other followed one and one the intended, the other the intender. In other words, there are a few outstanding individuals, who should be obeyed and followed by the others. Anybody who defies this system devised by the Almighty is driven away from His court and is labeled as a rebel, dissenter and deviated. He deserves condemnation and censure. On the Day of Judgment, he will be thrown on his face in the hellfire. On the other hand, whoever submits to this regulation and obeys the commands of the Almighty will attain success in this world as well as the hereafter.

This system is as prevalent today as it was yesterday and will continue to exist till the canopy of this globe is folded. There were people who scaled such heights of obedience and submission to their leaders that till the Day of Judgment, their names will top the list.

Limit of Obedience:

For success and triumph in this world and the hereafter, to believe in Allah, His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) and the successors (Imams) of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) is a prerequisite, while the prerequisite of belief is obedience.

Obedience of Allah's Prophets (s.a.) and

their successors implies giving preference to them over one's own self. It is quite easy for the Shias of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) to comprehend this concept because on the day of Ghadeer, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) presented this very test before the people when he (s.a.w.a.) asked them,

أَلَسْتُ أَوْلَىٰ بِكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ؟ قَالُوا:
اللَّهُمَّ بَلَىٰ

"Am I not having more authority upon you than you yourselves?"

(Al-Ghadeer, Allama Amini, 1/8)

They all replied in one voice,

"By Allah! Yes."

History is replete with testimonials that for the sake of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), people have not cared for their lives. They regarded his existence as more superior and important than their own and laid down their lives to safeguard his.

In this regard, Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) preceded all and sundry. None obeyed the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) more than him. He (a.s.) loved the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) more than his own self. In the Battle of Ohad, he (a.s.) was moving around the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) like a moth around a lamp. Everything that the enemy could hurl at the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) - lances or spears, arrows or stones, was taken by him to safeguard the life and limb of his beloved (s.a.w.a.). For three years in the

Sheb-e-Abi Taalib (a.s.), he (a.s.) was responsible for the protection of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.). In the night of migration, without caring for his life, he (a.s.) slept in the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) bed and bought the swords of the enemies in exchange for shielding the life of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.).

Such example of obedience and submission cannot be presented by anybody in the annals of mankind, neither in the past nor in the future. But of course! Only, and only, from the house of Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) can one witness another such person, who became the embodiment of selfless devotion and obedience.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) trained his children Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and Zaid Ibn Ali (whom he called as his son) on the same plane of safeguarding the Divine Proof which he (a.s.) had attained. Thus, we see him (a.s.) loving the children of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (a.s.), more than his own children- the aforementioned three illustrious personas. He (a.s.) was always willing to sacrifice his sons for the sons of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (a.s.).

In this article, we intend to discuss those great feats of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) in which he gave preference to the life and desires of Imam Husain (a.s.) over his own. He did not like his soul for itself but for the soul of the Imam of the time, Husain Ibn Ali (a.s.). Here, we are presenting a few incidents that will indicate as to how high an esteem he held the position of the Imam of the time.

Rejection of the Amnesty Offer

Ibn Ziyaad, the accursed governor of

Kufa, sent a message to Umar Ibn Sa'd- his commander in chief- giving him two options: kill Husain (a.s.) or hand over the charge of the chief commander to the ruthless Shimr Ibn Zil Jaushan. Cunningly, this memo was communicated to Umar Ibn Sa'd through Shimr himself. When Shimr was being dictated this communiqué, the nephew (brother's son) of Umm al-Baneen (Hazrat Abbas' mother), Abdullah Ibn Abi al-Mahall Ibn al-Harraam was present. On hearing the dictation of Ibn Ziyaad, Abdullah stood up and pleaded, 'O Ameer! My cousins Abbas, Abdullah, Ja'far and Usman are also accompanying Husain (a.s.). If you so desire, please write an amnesty offer for them.' Ibn Ziyaad accepted the suggestion.

Strange! Abdullah, the cousin of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) thought that by seeking amnesty from Ibn Ziyaad, he is doing a great service to them. But will they accept the offer and forsake their brother, their master and Imam, Husain (a.s.) just to save their skins?

When Abdullah's slave reached Karbala with the amnesty offer, he must have thought that they would heave a sigh of relief. But these were sons of Ameerul Mo'meneen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.). They all replied to him in one voice,

"Give our salutations to our cousin. Inform him that we are not in need of Ibn Ziyaad's amnesty offer. The amnesty of Allah is far better than that of the son of Sumayyah."

This is obedience. That is, to give preference to the life and limb of Imam (a.s.) over one's own. This is the highest level of belief and faith.

Candid Riposte to Shimr the accursed:

When Shimr reached Karbala and handed

over the letter of Ibn Ziyaad to Umar Ibn Sa'd, the latter succumbed to the ultimatum of the governor. Shimr, who was related to Umm al-Baneen, {he belonged to the same tribe as hers. It is customary amongst the Arabs that the farthest of relatives of one's tribe as called as nephews (sister's son). Umm al-Baneen was not the real sister of Shimr. Rather, she belonged to the same tribe}, came to the tent of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and his brothers and called out,

"Where are the sons of my sister? Where are Abdullah, Ja'far, Abbas and Usman?"

Imam Husain (a.s.) advised Hazrat Abbas (a.s.),

"Although Shimr is a transgressor, nevertheless, you answer him."

Obeying the command of their master, Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and his brothers asked Shimr,

"What do you want?"

Shimr, the accursed, retorted,

"My nephews! You are safe. So, don't kill yourself along with your brother Husain and obey the command of the chief of the faithful Yazeed."

This was the moment of intense examination. Please read the reply of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) and ponder!

"May your hands be paralyzed! How bad an amnesty you have offered, O enemy of Allah! Are you ordering us to forsake our brother and our master, Husain, the son of Fatemah, and enter into the obedience of the accursed and the children of the accursed?"

On hearing this reply, Shimr returned to his army, fuming and fretting.

Shimr exhorted them not to destroy their lives for the sake of their brother. Abbas

(a.s.) immediately pointed out that Husain (a.s.) was not only his brother but also his master and Imam. I am willing to sacrifice my life for the sake of his obedience. I am living only for him and will attain martyrdom in his obedience.

Support to the Imam of the Time:

When the right arm of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was severed, he recited a poem expressing his support and help to the Imam of his time, which went as follows:

By Allah! Even if you have
cut off my right arm

I will eternally support my religion
And the Certainly True Imam

The son of the Prophet,
the Pure, the Trustworthy

And when his left hand
was severed, he said,

O my soul! Don't fear
from the disbelievers

Receive glad tidings of
A l l a h ' s m e r c y

With the Prophet, the
Chief, the Chosen One,

Along with all the Chiefs,
t h e P u r e O n e s

Due to their rebellion,
these (sinners) have sliced
m y l e f t a r m

Then O my Lord! Sent
them to the heat of the
h e l l f i r e

Kindly pay attention to the other example. When Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) reached to the shores of the Euphrates and captured it, he took some water in his palms, with the intention of quenching his parched throat. But on remembering the thirst of the

womenfolk and the children back in the tents, he threw the water back and said,

O my soul! After Husain, there is naught for
y o u b u t d i s g r a c e
After him, you should not continue to exist
There is Husain, near the river, yet thirsty,
While you are drinking cold and sweet water
By Allah! This is not my religion

Deliberating on these incidents will help
us realize the position and greatness of
Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), his obedience and
submission before the Imam of his time, his

.....continued from (Last Editorial page)

slave of Huzaifah, Abdur Rehman Ibn Auf, Usman, Abu Bakr and Umar, had all agreed that the Bani Hashim should be deprived of the divine caliphate by all means. The rebellious banner of this conspiracy, which was hatched in the prime of Islam, albeit secretly and clandestinely, unfolded in the unholy precincts of Saqifah-e-Bani Saaedah. The numerous angles and tilts of this Abu Sufyan-like power-grabbing and political deceit thrived in the name of Islam, with destruction of this divine religion being their primary aim. Consequently, the Muslim minds were trained in this conspiracy to the extent that they completely digressed from the true aims and objectives of Islam and started subscribing to a completely different religion. The entire Arabia began addressing the tyrant kings of Bani Umayya with epithets like 'Caliph of Allah's Messenger', 'Divine Shadow', etc. Things reached to such a state that that Mughairah brought 40 Kufans to Moaviyah, who agreed to pay allegiance at the hands of Yazeed for a paltry amount of 440 dirhams. This callous attitude shocked even the shameless Moaviyah, who remarked, 'How cheap are these folks! How inexpensive is this transaction!' The shamelessness of these so-called Muslims, comprising of Syrians and Kufans,

laying down his life for the Imam and giving preference to the Imam over his own self.

Therefore, one can see the manner in which the following infallible Imams (a.s.) have send salutations on Hazrat Abbas (a.s.).

"Peace be on you, O the righteous slave!
The one who is obedient to Allah, His
Messenger (s.a.w.a.) and Ameerul
Momineen (a.s.)....."

O Allah! For the sake of Hazrat Abbas,
grant us such faith and belief that will give us
the strength and power to support, help and
assist the Imam of our time. Aameen!

reached to such pits that now they had congregated to kill the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.). An intense fight was inevitable, which ultimately ensued. The land of Karbala became the setting for this historical encounter, in which Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) was the standard-bearer of Imam Husain's (a.s.) small band of faithfuls. When compared to Ohod, the afflictions on the Islamic army in Karbala were manifold. The conspiracy too was far deeper than in the early days of Islam. The standard and the standard-bearer of the Islamic army was the manifestation of the power of divine help and victory, shown to the self-proclaimed pseudo-followers of the Islamic faith by none other than Allah the Almighty.

The war is not yet over. Still, one individual from the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) progeny is in occultation. Today, we are uttering, 'Peace be upon you, O the raised standard!' The heir of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) is awaiting in the veils of occultation for his reappearance. When this flag is unfurled at the appointed hour, the whole world will come to know that it was because of the sacrifices made by Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) in Karbala that the real standard of Islam remained untainted from the blemishes of infidelity, polytheism and hypocrisy.

Ziyarat of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.)

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا الْفَضْلِ الْعَبَّاسَ ابْنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ

Peace be on you, O Abul Fazl, Al-Abbas, son of the commander of the faithful. Peace be on you, O the son of the

يَابْنَ سَيِّدِ الْوَصِيِّينَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ أَوَّلِ الْقَوْمِ إِسْلَامًا وَ أَقْدَمَهُمْ

leader of the vicegerent. Peace be on you, O the son of the first to believe in Islam and foremost in faith, and the

إِيمَانًا وَ أَقْوَمَهُمْ بِدِينِ اللَّهِ وَ أَحْوَطَهُمْ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ أَشْهَدُ لَقَدْ نَصَحْتَ

most firm in the religion of Allah an the greatest protector of Islam. I bear witness that certainly you advised

لِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِأَخِيكَ فَنِعْمَ الْأَخُ الْمُوَاسِيُ فَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً قَتَلَتْكَ وَلَعَنَ

sincerely in the way of Allah and His Apostle and your brother. You were the best brother in beneficence. Then may

اللَّهُ أُمَّةً ظَلَمَتْكَ وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً اسْتَحَلَّتْ مِنْكَ الْمَحَارِمَ وَانْتَهَكَتْ

Allah curse the people who killed you and may Allah curse the people who oppressed you. And may Allah curse

حُرْمَةَ الْإِسْلَامِ فَنِعْمَ الصَّابِرُ الْمُجَاهِدُ الْمُحَامِي النَّاصِرُ وَالْأَخُ الدَّافِعُ

the people who considered the prohibited concerning you as lawful thus violating the sanctity of Islam. Then you

عَنْ أَخِيهِ الْمُجِيبُ إِلَى طَاعَةِ رَبِّهِ الرَّاغِبُ فِيمَا زَهَدَ فِيهِ غَيْرُهُ مِنْ

even the best patient, fighter, aid, helper and the defending brother for his brother and the responder to the

الثَّوَابِ الْجَزِيلِ وَالشَّيْءِ الْجَمِيلِ وَالْحَقِّ اللَّهُ بِدَرَجَةِ آبَائِكَ فِي

obedience of his Lord and desirous towards what others abstain from the abundant rewards and desirous towards

جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي تَعَرَّضْتُ لَزِيَارَةِ أَوْلِيَائِكَ رَغْبَةً فِي ثَوَابِكَ وَ

what others abstain from the abundant rewards and beautiful praises and may Allah enjoin you with the grade of

رَجَاءٍ لِمَغْفِرَتِكَ وَ جَزِيلٍ إِحْسَانِكَ فَاسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ

your forefathers in the Gardens of bliss. O Allah! I have presented myself for the visitation of Your representative,

إِلَى الطَّاهِرِينَ وَأَنْ تَجْعَلَ رِزْقِي بِهِمْ دَارًا وَ عَيْشِي بِهِمْ قَارًا وَ زِيَارَتِي

yearning for Your reward and hoping for Your forgiveness and the abundance of Your favours. Then I beseech You

بِهِمْ مَقْبُولَةً وَ حَيَاتِي بِهِمْ طَيِّبَةً وَ أَدْرَجْنِي إِدْرَاجَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ

that You bless Mohammad and his infallible progeny and for their sake augment my sustenance and settle my life

وَاجْعَلْنِي مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ مِنْ زِيَارَةِ مَشَاهِدِ أَحِبَّائِكَ مُفْلِحًا مُنْجِحًا قَدْ

and accept my visitation and enrich my life and enlist me among the honoured ones and include me among those

اسْتَوْجَبَ غُفْرَانَ الذُّنُوبِ وَ سَتَرَ الْعُيُوبِ وَ كَشَفَ الْكُرُوبِ إِنَّكَ أَهْلُ

who turn back from the visitation of the graves your beloved ones, successful, salvaged, deserving of forgiveness

التَّقْوَى وَ أَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ.

and secrecy of defects and removed of difficulties. Surely You are the possessor of piety and forgiveness.

of the hour is a thorough investigation of the powerful fighting abilities of Ali's (a.s.) beloved son. The need is to evaluate and analyze, compare and judge between the battles of Badr and Karbala; to ponder and deliberate over the desire of Ali (a.s.) as to how Allah the Almighty has fulfilled Ali's (a.s.) wish; as to the color that the religion of Islam had gained then.

On a fair analysis, one observes that prior to the battle of Badr, Islam was a force to reckon with; but in 61 A.H. (the year of the battle of Karbala) it had been rendered very, very weak and fragile. When the battle of Badr began, there were 313 selfless soldiers willing to give their lives for the Islamic cause. But now, in Karbala, there were only 72 remaining. During the battle of Badr, the infidels and polytheists were 1500 in number but in Karbala, there was a huge multitude of hypocrites and swindlers in the garb of Muslims, whose emulators, imitators and supporters survive till date. From the battle of Badr to Karbala till date, Allah the Almighty has granted the honor of Islam's defense to Ali (a.s.) and his immaculate progeny (a.s.). As the conspiracy deepened, the standard-bearer of the Islamic forces withstood the intensified atrocities and tortures inflicted on it and succeeded in protecting the Islamic emblem from being blotted with the evil and unclean marks of infidelity and hypocrisy.

On pondering over the second query, some other facts come to light. That is, in the Battle of Ohod, the massive conspiracy and evil design of the Jews was exposed. A few days earlier, the Mosque of Zeraar was pulled down. It was a mosque constructed by the chief of the hypocrites in Medina, Abdullah Ibn Ubayy, to provide for a congregational center for his followers. Abdullah Ibn Ubayy and Raaheb Aamer were good friends. On the very next morning of Aamer's son Hanzalah's marriage with Abdullah's daughter Jameelah, the Islamic army was preparing for its expedition to Ohod. Both Hanzalah and Jameelah had accepted Islam but their fathers had participated in the same battle on the side of Abu Sufyan. Hanzalah was fighting for the Islamic cause. History chronicles that Hanzalah leapt with his spear towards Abu Sufyan, who hid behind Aamer and screamed, 'Your son intends to kill me!' Hanzalah Ibn Aamer, who was given the appellation 'Ghaseelul Malaaekah' (the one given the ritual bath by the angels), was martyred in this battle. This role and character is surely the dividing line between a hypocrite and a Muslim. On this side is Hanzalah and in the enemy camp are his father Aamer and Abu Sufyan. Again, history testifies that during this battle, a time came when Ali (a.s.) confronted the entire enemy military might all alone, a military that was led by none other than Khalid Ibn Waleed!! Unfortunately, today some Muslims claim that Khalid never fled from a battlefield (and some even have the audacity to confer on him the sobriquets like 'the sword of Allah'). We ask such ignoramus or biased deceivers, 'Are you aware as to what happened in the battles of Ohod and Mootah?'

Anyhow, Ali (a.s.) led the Muslims to victory in the battle of Khaibar as well and both these skirmishes were the results of Jewish conspiracies. The plots of Abu Sufyan were intertwined with the conspiracies and designs of the Jews like the two fibers of a rope, which was cut into pieces by Ali's (a.s.) sword. This same conspiracy reared its ugly head in Karbala, in the form of a very strong and seemingly unbreakable cord. The grandson of Abu Sufyan, Yazid Ibn Moaviah, sent his brutal and cruel army of more than thirty thousand hypocrites to fight against the Muslims led by none other than Imam Husain (a.s.), the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and the son of Ali (a.s.).

Again, the time had come for the brave combatant of Islam to crush the history of conspiracy and hoist the banner of Islam. Here was the son of Ali (a.s.), Abbas (a.s.) face to face with a thousand Khalid Ibn Walids. The challenge is to capture the river Euphrates. Yazid is seized with hypocrisy and Machiavellianism. It is to be seen whether the attack of the courageous Abbas (a.s.) permits the lion to reach the river or not. Like the battles of Hunain, Khandaq and Khaibar, Abbas (a.s.) single-handedly won the river and protected the honor of Islam. Thus, the evil designs of the Jews were blown to smithereens by the flashing sword of Abbas (a.s.).

A conspiracy hatched in the form of
Arbaab-e-Hall-o-Aqd, in which Abdullah Ibn Jarrah, the

continued on page 27.....

AL-MUNTAZAR

Correspondence Course

Respected Reader, Salaamun Alaikum!

We hope that the infinite grace of Allah (s.w.t) and the bounties of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s) find you in the best of health. May Allah hasten the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s) and include us amongst his servants. Aameen!

It gives us tremendous pleasure to inform you that the first lesson of the Al Muntazar correspondence course, the name of which is associated with that of our beloved 12th Imam (a.t.f.s.), was sent (and is still being sent) to almost all members of the Al Muntazar magazine. Apart from the studying material, the issue also contained a simple question paper, the answers for which were available in the course material itself.

We have already despatched the second lesson of the course to those members who sent us their completed question papers. However, we have been unable to send the second lesson to those members who have not yet sent in their answers from the first issue. If you are genuinely interested of benefitting from this correspondence course, all you need to do is drop us a postcard with your details. We will be happy to send you the second lesson of the course.

If we do not receive the completed answer sheet from you, it will be assumed that you are not interested in continuing the course and further issues will be discontinued.

The entire correspondence course extends through 18 lessons, and at present, is available in English and Urdu. In addition, special issues of Al Muntazar for the holy months of Muharram and Shabaan are also available.

We often receive addresses from our members, which are incomplete, due to which we are unable to despatch issues/lessons to them. We request you to include your "Reference Number" in every correspondence with us so that we can identify the source of the letter easily. It would also help if the addresses were written in English. The correspondence course is absolutely free of charge to our members. However, if you would like to partake of this reward through donations, however large or small, you are most welcome to do so. Kindly send your donations through draft or money order only. If you are making a donation by money order, please do include your name, address and Reference Number on the slip of the money order. You can also contribute to this effort by way of the amount set away as Khums.

Let us all work towards creating the ground for the reappearance of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s) and help each other in seeking his (a.t.f.s) pleasure so that by these efforts, Allah grants us the taufeeq to be amongst the servants of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s).

Association of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)

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