

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Imam Husain and the Event of Karbala:
Manifestation of Divine Love
Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre
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I. Correspondence of the Outward with the Inward

1. The Outward as the Manifestation of the Inward:

Even though in the beginning of the development of the soul, deeds together with intensions fashion and give rise to the soul, once the soul achieves mastery over traits, one's outward and deeds become manifestations and signs of one's soul. Here are some verses from the Holy Quran on this subject. Regarding the faithful:

سِيَمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ (48:29 الفتح)

(Their marks are on their faces from the trace of prostration. That is their likeness in the Torah.)

Regarding the guilty:

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيَمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ (55:41 الرحمن)

(The guilty shall be recognized by their marks, so they shall be seized by the forelocks and the feet.)

Regarding the hypocrites:

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ أَن لَّنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْعَانَهُمْ (47:29 محمد)

(Or, do those who have a disease in their hearts think that Allah will not reveal their hatred?)

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيَمَاهُمْ وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ (47:30 محمد)

(Had we so wanted, we could have shown them up to you and you would have known them by their marks, but surely you will know them by the tone of their speech! And Allah knows your deeds.)

Thus, the words and actions of both camps in Karbala were outward manifestations of their inward states of being. It is in this context that we seek to explain the meaning of some incidents related to this event.

II. Thirst and Water

1. Water as the Source of Life:

Allah (swt) says that water is the source of life:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (21:30 الأنبياء)

(And we have made of water everything living, will they not then believe?)

Every form of life has its own appropriate form of water; even for the throne:

وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ (11:7 هود)

(His throne was upon the water)

Thus, the outward thirsts of martyrs of Karbala can be interpreted as the representation of their inward thirst for a higher and purer form of life. In other words, it is a thirst for knowing Allah (swt) through His various forms of manifestation.

2. The Non-acquired vs. Acquired Bounties :

Some of God's bounties are mere grace, for which deeds of the servant are not a precondition; these are *Hiba* (هبة) from God. However, there are some other bounties which are rewards for something(s) which the servant does.

Regarding this second category, the Holy Quran says:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَأَكْلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُقْتَصِدَةٌ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ (5:66 المائدة)

(If they had established the torah and the gospel and what was sent down to them from their lord they would be eating from above them and from beneath their feet. Some of them are a righteous nation; but many of them evil is what they do.)

Seyyed Haydar Amoli says that establishing the torah is observing the law (*shariah*), by marinating its pillars outwardly; establishing the gospel is maintaining its pillars inwardly (*tariqah*: path); and establishing what has been sent down to them is maintaining the Quran with regards to reality (*haqiqa*). Those who do the above are rewarded two types of sustenance, one from their above, and one from beneath their feet.

Hiba (هبة) is an unconditional giving just for eternal love, such as what Allah (swt) bestowed on Prophets (as). However, a rewarded bounty is to put the servant to a trial and test. Consider how Allah (swt) serves some people who have remain steadfast on the path water of life just to test them:

وَأَلَوْ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا (72: الجن)

(If they had (only) remained on the way, we should certainly have served them with water in abundance to try them by it. And anyone who turns away from the remembrance of his lord, he will cause him to undergo a severe penalty.)

3. Extreme Thirst as Absolute Poverty:

God's blessing and *hiba* (هبة) comes to those who need it. His grace is proportionate to the need. Thus, the more needy the servant, the more abundant the bounty. God's *hiba* (هبة) does not have any positive (existential) precondition; however, lack and poverty is a necessary non-existential precondition for it, for Allah's bounties are best bestowed and manifested where there is nothing beside Allah (swt). Thus, it is said that he who is absolutely poor among human beings, is the absolute and the perfect. This is how Musa (as) described his conditions to his Lord:

فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى إِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ (28:24 القصص)

(So he served water (to their flock) for them and then retired to the shade, saying: 'O my lord, surely I was in need of whatever good you sent me.)

And deprivation of water is the most extreme form of deprivation and destitute.

III. Captivity as Obedience to Allah

1. Hz (Hazrat; i.e. her holiness) Zaynab (sa) among Slave Women:

It has been reported by Tabari that when the household of Imam Husain (as) were brought to ibn Ziyad's assembly, she had put on old dresses and sat among slave women. Ibn Ziyad asked, "Who was that woman who went among the slave women?" One of the slave women said, "She is Zaynab daughter of Ali." ...According to Seyed ibn Tawus, inb Ziyad directed his people to take the captives in a house beside the grand Mosque. Hz. Zaynab (sa) said, "No

women of the Arab descent will be allowed to visit us except slave women, who have experienced captivity like us.”

2. **True Servitude to Allah:**

It seems that the experience of captivity on the part the household of Imam Husain (as) was to represent their complete submission to Allah (swt), and trusting Him and welcoming everything which comes from Him. This view is supported by the statement of Hz. Zaynab (sa) in response to Ibn Ziyad who asked her, “How did you find what God do to your brother?” to which she replied, “I did not see but beauty!”

3. **Hz. Zaynab (sa) and Obedience to Allah:**

It is reported that when the captives of the Household the Prophet (sa) were to be taken to Kufeh, they asked to be passed by the corpses of the Martyrs. Hz. Zaynab (sa) cried and, while lifting up the body of Imam Husain (as) a little toward the sky, said ...

الهي تقبل منا هذا القربان

And in another report,

اللهم تقبل منا هذا القليل من القربان

(O Allah accept from us this little of the sacrifice)

This shows how she considered those sacrifices in the presence of Allah (swt). She expressed her absolute obedience and poverty. However, once Allah (swt) accepted her sacrifice, He perfected them.

IV. The Event of Karbala as the Universality of Allah’s

1. **Persons of Different Backgrounds Gathered around Imam Husain (as):**

Companions of Imam Husain (as) who were slain in Karbala or went to captivity came from various backgrounds. Some were members of his own family, some used to be slaves, some were very old, and some very young...They all had one thing in common, a deep love for Imam Husain (as). He (as) uplifted every single one of them to a life higher. As such, commemoration ceremonies of Ashora bring God’s grace to every participant.

2. **The Etiquette of the Azadary (mourning) and Ziyarat of Imam Husain:**

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