

# The Excellences of Imam Husayn in Sunni Hadith Tradition



**Dr. Mahmoud Ayoub**

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**Authors(s):**

Dr. Mahmoud Ayoub [3]

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The life of Imam Husayn has acquired special significance in Muslim piety and has a universal significance in all of Muslim tradition.

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Human history may be seen as a record of the eternal struggle between right and wrong, virtue and vice, good and evil, and righteousness and wickedness. This struggle was decreed by God when Adam, an earthly creature, was sent to earth to engage in this eternal battle. It is through this struggle that human beings can earn their eternal bliss in the Gardens of Paradise, or their eternal punishment in the Fire.

In the history of nations this struggle often attains universal significance as that moment of the struggle can speak to all subsequent times and situations. Thus the Qur'an urges us over and over again to ponder the end of those who were before us, and how God dealt with them. In every case, moreover, a prophet or messenger of God was rejected by his people and killed or driven out. In this sense, therefore, the struggle is in the end between God and humankind, between truth and falsehood, and between right guidance and manifest error.

Nowhere is this struggle placed in sharper relief than in the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and the lives of the people of his House. The life and witness of the Imam Husayn in particular, has acquired special significance in Muslim piety. This is because he has provided a model for all martyrs in the way of God, for all time.

The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the universal significance of the Imam in Muslim tradition. It is

important to observe that all the traditions cited in this essay are found in both Shi'i and Sunni *hadith* literature. But while in the Sunni community such traditions remain purely pietistic, Shi'i tradition has made them the basis of a complex theological system.

However, to appreciate the place of Husayn, 'the prince of martyrs', in Muslim history, a word must be said about the place of the Prophet's family (the *Ahlul Bayt*) in Muslim piety. At the same time the people of the House of the Prophet Muhammad are not unique in the prophetic history of human societies. A word is, therefore, necessary concerning the families of other prophets, if we are to appreciate fully the devotion which Muslims throughout their long history have accorded the people of the House of Muhammad, the seal of the prophets.

Prophetic history begins, according to the Qur'an, with Adam, called *safwat Allah* (the elect of God). He was followed by Noah, the first of the prophets of power or resolve (*ulu al-'azm*). Noah was sent as a messenger by God to his people who rebelled against God's message, and were thus destroyed by the flood. Then came Abraham, the father of prophets.

With his son Ishmael he built the Ka'ba, the first house for the worship of God.<sup>1</sup> Ishmael was also a prophet, and the ancestor of the prophets Shu'ayb, Salih, Hud, and finally Muhammad, the last messenger of God to humankind.

Isaac, Abraham's second son, was also a prophet and the father of prophets. Among his descendants were the family of 'Imran, the father of Moses, and Jesus, as well as other earlier prophets who were sent by God to the Children of Israel. The Qur'an declares that

***God has elected Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imran. (3:33)***

It further states

***that they were a single progeny, one from the other'. (3:34)***

All the prophets and their families are therefore of one physical and spiritual lineage. They and their households are the elect of God, purified and honoured over the rest of humankind.

The people of the House of the Prophet Muhammad were likewise chosen by God and purified from all evil and sin. The Muslim community did not, however, infer the status of the family of Muhammad from that of earlier prophets and their families.

Rather they too were chosen by God and purified from all evil and sin. Yet because Muhammad was the last prophet sent to guide humanity to God and the good, his descendants could not assume his prophetic role. Their mission was to be the Imams, or guides, of the Muslim community. Their task is to safeguard the message vouchsafed to Muhammad by God for humankind.

Like many prophets, the Imams had to endure rejection by their people and much suffering at their

hands; martyrdom in the cause of God was often their lot. Yet the greater the suffering, the greater is the reward and honour which God promises His prophets, friends (*awliya*<sup>1</sup>), and righteous servants. Thus the Prophet was asked: 'Who among men are those afflicted with the greatest calamity?' He replied:

The prophets, then the pious, everyone according to the degree of his piety. A man is afflicted according to his faith (*din*); if his faith is durable, his affliction is accordingly increased, and if his faith is weak, his affliction is made lighter. Afflictions continue to oppress the worshipful servant until they leave him walking on the face of the earth without any sin cleaving to him. 2

## Excellences of the Ahl Al Bayt

In both Sunni and Shi'i Muslim tradition, one important event symbolizes the status of the *Ahlul Bayt* and the human as well as spiritual dimensions of their relation to the Prophet.

This is the tradition or episode of *al-kisa'* (the mantle, or cloak) which the Prophet spread over himself and Fatima his daughter, 'Ali, and their two sons Hasan and Husayn. This tradition has come down to us in a number of versions, each stressing one or another aspect of the excellences of the family of the Prophet and his love for them. Ahmad b. Hanbal relates on the authority of Umm Salama, the Prophet's wife, that he said to Fatima one day:

'Bring me your husband and two sons.' When they had all come together he spread over them a mantle, and laying his hand over them, he said: 'O God, these are the people of the House of Muhammad! Let therefore your prayers and blessings descend upon Muhammad and the people of the House of Muhammad; for you are worthy of all praise and glory.' Umm Salama continued: 'I then lifted the mantle to enter in with them, but he pulled it away from my hand saying, "You too shall come to a good end". 3

The point which this version of the *kisa'* tradition emphasizes is that the *Ahlul Bayt* are only the five: Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, and their two sons Hasan and Husayn. Umm Salama, one of the most highly venerated of the Prophet's wives, was denied this special status. We shall have more to say about this point, as it is emphasized in almost every version of this tradition.

In another highly interesting version of the *kisa'* tradition, related on the authority of 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far b. Abi Talib, we read:

As the Apostle of God saw mercy descending, he demanded: 'Call them for me, call them for me!' Safiyya asked: 'Who should we call, O Messenger of God?' He answered: 'Call the people of my household: 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn.' When they were brought, he spread a mantle over them; then lifting his hands to heaven said: 'O God, these are the people of my House; bless, O God, Muhammad and the people of the House of Muhammad!' God then sent down the verse:

***Surely God wishes to remove all abomination from you, O People of the House, and purify you with a thorough purification. ( 33:33). 4***

This version of the tradition provides the meaning of the *kisa'* and the basis of its significance. The mantle is a symbol of divine mercy and blessing covering the Prophet and his holy family. It is, moreover, a source or haven of consolation and serenity in the face of the great sufferings and martyrdom which the Prophet's family had to endure after him.

In this infinite source of divine mercy, the pious also share in times of sufferings and afflictions. The *kisa'* finally sets apart the 'holy five' from the rest of the faithful, and distinguishes them from the rest of the Prophet's family.

The event of the *kisa'* provides the occasion for the revelation of the verse of purification just cited. Before the sectarian conflicts which split the Muslim community set in, classical tradition was almost unanimous in interpreting this verse as referring to the Prophet, his daughter Fatima al-Zahra' (the Radiant), her husband and cousin, 'Ali, and their two sons Hasan and Husayn. 5

In still another version of the *kisa'* tradition, the continuity of the Prophet's family with those of earlier prophets is clearly indicated. Wathila b. al-Asqa', on whose authority this tradition in most of its variants is related, reports the following prayer uttered by the Prophet:

O God, as you have bestowed your blessings, mercy, forgiveness, and pleasure upon Abraham and the family of Abraham, so they ['Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn] are of me and I am of them! Bestow, therefore, your blessings, mercy, forgiveness and pleasure upon me and them.'<sup>6</sup>

This prayer echoes a prayer which Muslims repeat daily:

O God, bless Muhammad and the people of the House of Muhammad, as you have blessed Abraham and the people of the House of Abraham among all beings.

The House of Muhammad is, therefore, for all Muslims, 'the household of prophethood and the frequenting place of angels'. The famous Qur'an commentator al-Suyuti quotes a tradition attributed to Umm Salama in interpretation of the verse of purification:

This verse was sent down in my house ... There were in the house then, seven: Gabriel and Michael, and 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn, and I stood at the door of the house. I asked: 'O Messenger of God, am I not of the People of the House?' He said: 'You shall indeed come to a good end! You are, however, one of the wives of the Prophet.'<sup>7</sup>

The close friendship between the Prophet and the holy family, a relationship which went far beyond the bond of blood relation, may be seen in the incident of the *mubahala*, or prayer ordeal, with which the Prophet challenged the Christians of Najran.<sup>8</sup> In the *mubahala* verse of the Qur'an, God orders the Prophet and his opponents to

***'Call together our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves.'* (3:61)**

In the view of most Qur'an commentators and traditionists, the Prophet's sons are Hasan and Husayn, 'his women' refers to Fatima, and 'his self' refers, apart from himself, to 'Ali. When the people of Najran saw them, they recognized their high status with God, and with great trepidation they declined the *mubahala* and opted instead for peace.

Tradition asserts that the Prophet sensed the hostility which his community was to show to the People of his House after him. He is said to have often declared, 'I am at war against him who fights against you, and will show peace toward him who shows peace to you.' This invective is strongly put in a tradition related on the authority of Abu Bakr, the Prophet's famous Companion and the first caliph. He said:

I saw the Messenger of God pitch a tent in which he placed 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn. He then declared: 'O Muslims, I am at war against anyone who wars against the people of this tent, and am at peace with those who show peace toward them. I am a friend to those who befriend them. He who shows love toward them shall be one of a happy ancestry and good birth. Nor would anyone hate them except that he be of miserable ancestry and evil birth. 9

Love for the Prophet's family is enjoined by God in the Qur'an, where He says:

***Say, 'I ask no other reward of you save love of my next of kin' (42:23).***

Qur'an commentators have generally agreed that 'the next of kin' here intended are the *Ahlul Bayt*.<sup>10</sup>

The People of the House of the Prophet Muhammad have been for the pious an example of generosity, steadfastness in the face of hardship, and a source of solace in time of trials and afflictions. After days of fasting and prayers for the health of the two sick children Hasan and Husayn, the family fed the few morsels of dry bread and dates for which 'Ali had laboured so hard to the needy. On the first evening, we are told, a beggar came.

On the second, it was an orphan, and on the third, a captive. To each in turn, they gave the loaf of barley bread and few dates which Fatima had prepared for the family to break their fast. Thus God sent down the verse:

***They give food to eat, even though they cherish it, to the needy, the orphan and the captive. (76:8)***

Yet, in the end, God sent down a celestial table to feed His friends.

Early tradition shows a tension in the relationship of the Prophet to the community and in the relationship of the latter to the holy family. Much of the literature reflecting this tension was most likely the product of a later age, but projected back to the time of the Prophet and his Companions.

Here love for the Prophet's family is not simply recommended as a pious act, but is presented as a challenge, and in a harsh reproaching tone. Furthermore, it is on this love to the *Ahlul Bayt* that rewards

and punishments on the Last Day are predicated.<sup>11</sup> Thus we are told that the Prophet said:

He who desires the pleasure to live my life, die my death and dwell in a garden of Eden which my Lord has planted, let him be a friend to 'Ali after me. Let him also be a friend to his friends. Let him finally be guided by the Imams after me, for they are my progeny. They were created of my clay, and have been vouchsafed knowledge and understanding. Woe to those of my community who deny their superiority, and those who violate the demands of kindness to my next of kin. May God not grant them my intercession.<sup>12</sup>

In another tradition, the Prophet promises his intercession to those who honour his descendants, provide them with whatever needs they may have, and those who love them with their heart and profess this love with their tongues.<sup>13</sup>

It has already been stressed that the *Ahlul Bayt* share with the prophets of old and their descendants a high status and divine favour, but not the office of prophethood. They share, moreover, with the Prophet Muhammad the prerogative of intercession. This is expressed in hagiographical language, a language common to both Sunni and Shi'i tradition. One such common example may suffice to demonstrate the devotion in the piety of both traditions to the Prophet and the people of his household.

The Qur'an tells us that Adam received certain words of God which earned him God's forgiveness and mercy:

***Adam received words from his Lord, and He turned towards him; for He is relenting, compassionate (2:37).***

Suyuti reports that Ibn 'Abbas, the famous traditionist and authority on the Qur'an, asked the Prophet about the words which Adam received.

The Prophet answered: 'He prayed saying, "O God, for the sake of Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn, do turn toward me", and He turned toward him.'<sup>14</sup> In another highly dramatic version of this tradition, Adam is taught the words as the only means by which God would accept his repentance and forgive him. 'Ali, we are told, enquired of the Prophet concerning the verse under discussion.

The Prophet told him that when Adam and his wife were expelled from Paradise, Adam wept bitterly over his sin for a hundred years. Finally, Gabriel came to him and spoke thus on God's behalf:

O Adam, did I not create you with my own hand? Did I not breathe into you of my spirit? Did I not command my angels to bow down before you? Did I not provide you with Eve my servant?' 'Yes', Adam answered. Gabriel asked: 'What then is the cause of this weeping?' Adam replied, 'Why should I not weep when I have been expelled from the proximity of the All-Merciful?' The angel then said: 'You must pray fervently with these words, and God will accept your repentance and forgive your sin. Say: "O God, I beseech you for the sake of Muhammad and the people of the household of Muhammad; nor is there

any god but you. I have done evil, and have wronged my soul. Turn towards me for you are relenting, compassionate.” 15

## Hasan and Husayn

Islamic tradition has preserved numerous anecdotes depicting the tender care and love which the Prophet showed Hasan and Husayn. They were both born in Medina, and thus knew the Prophet only as children. It is therefore with the intimacy and love of a grandfather that the early life of the two Imams is coloured. Once more, these family anecdotes also reflect clearly the theological and political tension within the community, a tension which largely centered around Hasan and Husayn. One such anecdote is the following.

One day, we are told, Hasan and Husayn were lost, and their mother Fatima came to the Prophet greatly alarmed. The angel Gabriel, however, came down and told the Prophet that the two youths were asleep in an animal fold some distance away. God, the angel reassured the anxious family, had charged an angel to keep watch over them. The Prophet went to the spot and found the angel had spread his two wings: one under them and the other over them as cover.

The Prophet stooped over the two children and began to kiss them until they awoke. He then carried them on his shoulders back to the city. A large crowd of Muslims followed the Prophet and his two grandsons to the mosque. The Prophet then addressed the assembled people and said: 'O Muslims, shall I inform you of those who have the best grandfather and grandmother of humankind?' 1

Yes, O Apostle of God', they all replied. 'They are Hasan and Husayn', he said. 'Their grandfather is the Apostle of God, the seal of the Messengers, and their grandmother is Khadija, daughter of Khuwaylid, mistress of the women of Paradise.' The Prophet then declared Hasan and Husayn to have the best maternal uncle and aunt: Ja'far and Umm Hani', son and daughter of Abu Talib.

Their maternal uncle and aunt were likewise the best of all uncles and aunts: they were al-Qasim, son of the Messenger of God, and Zaynab, daughter of the Apostle of God. The Prophet concluded: 'O God, you know that Hasan and Husayn shall be in Paradise, their uncles and aunt shall be in Paradise, and those who love them shall be in Paradise, while those who hate them shall be in the Fire.' 16

Abu Hurayra, the famous *hadith* transmitter, related that often when they prayed behind the Messenger of God Hasan and Husayn would jump on his back while he was prostrate in prayer. When he lifted his head, he would move them gently and place them beside him.

One evening, after prayers, Abu Hurayra offered to take the two youths home, but the Prophet wished them to stay. Soon, however, a flash of lightning illuminated the sky, and they thus walked in its light until they entered their home. 17

The friends (*awliya'*) of God, like the prophets, are favoured with miracles. These are not miracles proper

(*mu'jizat*), but rather *karamat* (divine favours). The lightning incident was one such divine favour by means of which the Prophet wished to inform the community of the special status with which God had favoured the two Imams.

There is a unity between the Prophet and the *Ahlul Bayt*, a unity not simply of blood, but also of the spirit. It is a unity symbolized by the *kisa'* event. It is, therefore, a unity of love, as the following statement of the Prophet clearly indicates. He said, as related on the authority of Salman the Persian: 'Whoever loves Hasan and Husayn, I love him, and whomsoever I love, God also loves, and whomsoever God loves, He shall cause him to enter into the gardens of bliss.' Likewise he who hates Hasan and Husayn shall be consigned to the Fire, because both God and his Messenger will hate him, 'and a terrible punishment awaits him'.<sup>18</sup>

Muslim hagiographical piety extended this unity and intimacy between the Prophet and his two grandchildren to include the angels of heaven. Thus Hudhayfa, a well known companion and traditionist, reported that the Prophet said: 'An angel is here who never came down to earth before this night. He sought permission from his Lord to come down and greet me, and to bring me the glad tidings that Fatima is the mistress of the women of Paradise, and that Hasan and Husayn are the masters of the youths of Paradise.'<sup>19</sup>

There is no doubt that the special status of the Imam Husayn in Muslim piety and devotion has in large measure been due to the Imam's great sacrifice of family, wealth, and life itself in the way of God. Husayn's martyrdom – his courage, steadfastness, dignity, and true devotion in times of great crisis – have inspired Muslims of all walks of life. Husayn has inspired the best poetry in all Islamic languages; even non-Muslim poets celebrated his great virtue and valour.

Above all, however, the Imam Husayn's martyrdom became a source of strength and endurance for Muslims in times of suffering, persecution and oppression. He has stood with every wronged man or woman before oppressive rulers, reproaching wrongdoers and encouraging the oppressed to persist in their struggle for freedom and dignity. The following encounter between Zayd b. Arqam, a venerable companion of the Prophet, and 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad is a living testimony to the struggle between illegitimate authority and the power of right. When the head of the Imam Husayn was brought before him, Ibn Ziyad began to poke its teeth and lips with a stick.

Zayd protested: 'Take away your stick! For, by God, I saw the Apostle of God often kiss these lips.' Saying this, Zayd began to weep. Ibn Ziyad reprimanded him, saying: 'May God cause your eyes to weep! Had it not been that you are an old and senile man, I would have cut off your head.' Zayd then walked away, exclaiming: 'O men, you are slaves after this day. For you have slain the son of Fatima and set as *amir* over you the son of Marjana [i.e., Ibn Ziyad].

By God, he shall kill the best of you and enslave the most wicked among you. Perish those who accept humiliation and shame.' Zayd then said, 'O Ibn Ziyad, I shall tell you something that will enrage you even

more. I saw the Apostle of God seating Hasan on his left leg and Husayn on his right, and say, "O God, I commend them and the most righteous of the people of faith to your trust." How have you dealt with the trust of the Prophet, O Ibn Ziyad?' 20

Divine wisdom in creation can be best discerned, according to the Qur'an, in the order of nature, and in the human individual and his society. Muslim hagiography has recorded the dramatic effect the death of Husayn had on nature. Thus the famous traditionist al-Bayhaqi reported that when al-Husayn b. 'Ali was killed, the sun was so deeply eclipsed that stars were seen at midday. People feared that it was the Day of Resurrection.<sup>21</sup>

Nadra al-Azdiya, a woman who was contemporary with the Imam Husayn, is said to have reported: 'When al-Husayn b. 'Ali was killed, the sky rained down blood, so that next morning we found our wells and water jugs filled with it.'<sup>22</sup>

The memory of the martyred Imam has been kept alive and nourished by the tears of the faithful who vicariously share in the tragedy of the Imam Husayn and his loved ones and friends. Here again, tradition has extended the grief displayed by the pious for the tragedy of Karbala' to the cosmic order.

Thus al-Suyuti reports in his commentary on the verse describing God's compassion towards the ancient martyr John son of Zachariah that 'The heavens did not weep for the death of anyone except John son of Zachariah and al-Husayn b. 'Ali. Its redness [at sunset] is the sign of its weeping.'<sup>23</sup>

## Conclusion

It has already been argued that there is an existential and all-inclusive unity between the Prophet and his daughter Fatima, her husband, 'Ali, and their two sons. This unity makes it impossible to discuss one without discussing all the others. We have, therefore, been concerned throughout this study with the Imam Husayn in the context of this essential unity. It must be added, however, that the Imam Husayn was especially close to the heart of his grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad.

It is of Husayn alone that he declared: 'Husayn is of me and I am of Husayn. May God love those who love Husayn.'<sup>24</sup> When *sura* 108 (*al-Kawthar*) was revealed, the Prophet announced this great favour to his close companion Anas b. Malik, on whose authority this tradition is reported. Anas asked: 'What is *al-Kawthar*?' He answered: 'It is a river in Paradise, but neither those who violate my covenant (*dhimma*), nor those who shall kill the people of my House will be allowed to drink of it.'<sup>25</sup>

Finally, Shi'i tradition has always insisted on the great merit the faithful earn in making pilgrimage (*ziyara*) to the tomb of the Imam Husayn and the tombs of the men who were martyred with him.

Yet Sunni tradition has likewise seen great merit in this pious act.<sup>26</sup> The *ziyara* to the tomb of the martyred Imam has acquired this great significance in all Muslim tradition because the Imam and his fellow martyrs are seen as models of jihad in the way of God. It is related that the father of the Imams,

'Ali ibn Abi Talib, passed by Karbala' after the battle of Siffin. He took a handful of its soil and exclaimed: 'Ah, ah, on this spot some men will be slain, and will enter Paradise without reckoning!' 27

The spiritual unity of the *Ahlul Bayt*, symbolized by the *kisa'*, is in turn a symbol of the unity of all Muslims. It is for the sake of this unity in faith and commitment (*islam*) to God and the truth that the Imam Husayn sacrificed his life. He refused a partisan Islam when he refused to legitimize Umayyad rule.

Because he refused humiliation, wrongdoing and deviation from the ideals of Islamic leadership as exemplified by the Prophet and his own father 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, the Imam Husayn drew once and for all the distinction between a true *khalifa* (representative) of the Apostle of God and the kings of this world. But above all, the Imam Husayn and his fellow martyrs accepted God's bargain with the people of faith to exchange their lives and wealth for the eternal bliss of Paradise.<sup>28</sup>

This divine challenge is no less relevant to the Muslim community today than it was fourteen hundred years ago. It invites us still to 'a garden whose breadth is greater than the heavens and earth, prepared for those who fear God'.

1. See 2:127, 3:96.
2. Musnad Ibn Hanbal, quoted in M. Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam* (The Hague, 1978), p. 25, and see also pp. 25–6
3. Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad* (Cairo, 1313), IV, 323.
4. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Abd Allah al-Nisaburi, *Mustadrak al-sahihayn* (Haydarabad [Deccan], 1324), III, 147.
5. See, for example, the commentary on this verse in al-Zamakhshari and al-Tabari.
6. Ala al-Din Ali al-Muttaqi b. Husam al-Din al-Hindi, *Kanz al-'ummal* (Haydarabad [Deccan], 1312), p. 217.
7. See the commentary on 33: 33 in al-Suyuti, *Al-Durr al-manthur*.
8. See Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Tirmidhi, *Sahih al-Tirmidhi* (Cairo, 1920), II, 300, and Ibn Hanbal, I, 185.
9. Abu Ja'far Ahmad al-Muhibb al-Tabari, *Al-Riyad al-nadira* (Cairo, n.d.), II, 199 For other versions of this tradition, see Murtada al-Husayni al-Fayruzabadi, *Fada'il al-khamsa fi sihah al-sitta* (Najaf, 1384), p. 252.
10. See the commentaries on this verse in al-Zamakhshari, al-Tabari, and al-Suyuti.
11. For a detailed discussion of this tradition, see M Ayoub, pp 43–5.
12. Abu Nu'aym, Ahmad b. Abd Allah al-Isbahani, *Hilyat al-awliya'* (Cairo, 1351). I, 86.
13. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, VIII, 151, and IV 217. See also Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. Hajar al-Haytami al-Asqalani, *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa* (Cairo, 1312), p. 150.
14. See the commentary on 2:37 in al-Suyuti.
15. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, I, 234.
16. Al-Fayruzabadi, III, 187.
17. Ibn Hanbal, II, 513; al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, VII, 109.
18. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, p. 221
19. Al-Tirmidhi, II, 307
20. Ibn Hajar, p. 118.
21. Abu Bakr Ahmad b Husayn b. al-Bayhaqi, *Al-Sunan al-Kubra* (Haydarabad, 1344), III, 337.
22. Ibn Hajar, p. 291.
23. See the commentary on 19:13 in al-Suyuti.
24. Al-Tirmidhi, II, 306.
25. See the commentary on sura 108 in al-Suyuti.
26. Muhibb al-Din Ahmad b. Abd Allah al-Tabari, *Dhakha'ir al-'uqba* (n.p., 1356), p. 151. Note also the popularity of the

Mosque of the Head of the Imam Husayn in Cairo as a place of pilgrimage.

27. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. Hajar al-Haytami al-Asqalani, Tahdhib al-tahdhib (Haydarabad [Deccan], 1325), II, 348.

28. See 9:111.

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