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The Holy Imams' affection for fellow creatures

The fact is that the affection the Holy Imams (a.s) showed towards the people is such that its equal is not found anywhere. This affection was only for the sake of Allah and neither any show-off nor any personal gain is present in it. Seeing the hardship of every Muslim they felt greatly hurt and tried their best to remove it. Most of the time they themselves had to suffer hardships in this regard but they bore it willingly.

Affection Of Imam Ali (a.s)

Ibn Hanbal writes in his *Musnad* that when the verse:

O you who believe! When you consult the Apostle, then offer something in charity before your consultation; (Surah Mujadilah 58: 12)

was revealed, the Prophet told Ali (a.s), "Go and command those people to pay alms (Sadaqah)." "How much should I ask them to pay?" asked Ali (a.s). "One Dinar", replied the Prophet (S). Ali (a.s) said, "They are unable to pay this much." "Half a Dinar", said the Prophet. "They cannot even pay this much" said Ali (a.s). The Prophet said, "A grain of gold." Ali (a.s) said, "Maybe they cannot even afford this." The Prophet said, "O Ali! You are very kind to the people. All right! Tell them to give only one dirham." Amir'ul-Mu'minin (a.s) used to say, "The reduction in this command was due to me."

It is narrated from Abu Saeed Khudri that when the Messenger of Allah (S) attended a funeral he never asked about any deed of the deceased but inquired about his debt position. If that person remained indebted after death the Prophet did not recite his funeral prayer. One day he attended a funeral and as was his custom, he asked if the departed one had any debts. People told him that the person had died indebted by two dinars. The Prophet moved away from the bier, and told the companions to recite his funeral prayer. Amir'ul-Mu'minin (a.s) said, "O Messenger of Allah, those two dinars are my responsibility. The deceased one is free from the debt." The Prophet was pleased to hear this, and he recited the funeral prayer. Then he prayed for the well being of Amir'ul-Mu'minin (a.s).

During the course of his caliphate, Amir'ul-Mu'minin (a.s) saw an old and weak woman carrying a load of food grain on her back. She was out of breath due to her weakness. He moved forward at once and took the load on his shoulders and carried it to her house.

When Amir'ul-Mu'minin (a.s) took the control of Islamic government he ordered his sons to prepare a list of all the deprived people, the poor, the destitutes, widow and orphans of Kufa. He also told them to be accurate and not leave out anyone. Thus he dispatched one son to the east another to the west and so on. When the lists were prepared, during the whole tenure of his Caliphate, it was the habit of the Imam that he used to carry loaves of bread and dates on his shoulder during the night and distribute them to the needy people. Once the Imam was down with high temperature. Hasan and Husayn (a.s) offered to fulfill his duty. The Imam said, "No, the Almighty Allah has entrusted me with the responsibility of this government. Let me perform my duty." Thus he went out in the feverish condition also.

Affection Of Imam Hasan (a.s)

During the tenure of his caliphate it was the ritual of Imam Hasan (a.s) that till the time people did not assure him that all of the deprived, orphans and widows in the neighborhood had their meals, the Imam did not eat himself. Often it so happened that he began to eat and a beggar appeared at his door. He used to remove the food placed in front of him and remain hungry.

One day Imam Hasan (a.s) learnt that the son of a widow in the neighborhood was ill. He went to visit the child. The widow lamented that there no one who could help her in the illness of her child. The Imam said, "Do not worry, I am there to render all help." Thus he visited them in the morning and the evening and fulfilled all their needs. He used to sit near the sick boy, massage him and speak to him words of comfort and assurance. The Imam also provided him with whatever he desired to eat.

Affection Of Imam Husayn (a.s)

After the battle of Naharwan the troops of Amir'ul-Mu'minin (a.s) took Shimr as captive. One day Imam Husayn (a.s) passed by the prison and Shimr said, "O son of Allah's Messenger! Take pity on me and request your father to release me. I cannot bear the hardships of this captivity anymore." The Imam at once came to Amir'ul-Mu'minin (a.s) and began to petition him for the release of Shimr. Ali (a.s) became very angry and said, "Son, you don't know who that fellow is. He is you killer. One day, he would slaughter you in a condition of three days' hunger and thirst." Imam Husayn (a.s) said, "All this is correct, but I have promised him. Do not let me be embarrassed before him." Amir'ul-Mu'minin (a.s) ordered his release.

When people laid siege to the house of caliph Uthman and prevented rations from him, Imam Ali (a.s) ordered Imams Hasan and Husayn (a.s) to carry water skins and some loaves of bread and deliver them to the besieged people. Thus when the young men reached there the people stopped them but with great valour they moved ahead. Someone said, "These people are not deserving of mercy." The Imams (a.s) replied, "May be not in your opinion. But the affection for creatures that Allah has created in our

hearts demands that we help them in their difficulty.”

The fact is that except for the Ahl ul-Bayt it is not possible for anyone to show affection for people in such circumstances. It was only their kind-heartedness that they dealt with affection with their most staunch enemies.

Affection Of Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s)

In spite of the financial hardships that Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s) always had, he regularly, helped the poor people of Medina and loading leavened bread on his shoulders, he used to distribute it to their houses. Ibn Ishaq says that many poor people of Medina used to receive food daily. But they did not know who had brought it. When the Imam passed away the people realized that the one who used to supply them food keeping his face covered was Ali Ibnul Hasan (a.s). It is said that when the funeral bath was being administered to the Imam a dark bruise was seen on his back. Someone asked what it was and a person from Ahl ul-Bayt replied that it was due to carrying sacks of flour at night to the needy people's houses.

During the plunder of Medina, when the Yazidite forces unleashed general massacre in Medina, Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s) was taken at a safe place under orders from Yazid but he used to bitterly lament the destruction of the people of Medina. Those who escaped the carnage and came to him seeking refuge were accorded protection by him, and were treated affectionately by the Imam. Thus many lives were saved by the Imam's affection.

Affection Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)

The affection of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) was such that those who visited him were inquired about the condition of their neighbors. If someone mentioned the problems of a particular person, the Imam used to visit him and render whatever help he could. One day while walking through a by-lane of Medina he saw a man groaning in pain. The Imam came to him. This fellow belonged to the Bani Umayyah clan and just a few days ago had bad-mouthed the Imam. The Imam said to him, “O man! If you have any need, mention it.” He was ashamed and he said, “O son of the Messenger of Allah (S). I am sick and even a drop of water is prohibited for me. The physician has prescribed pomegranate juice for me. I was going to purchase a pomegranate when due to extreme weakness I fell down here.” The Imam said, “I will get a pomegranate for you.”

Thus he went to the market immediately and brought it to him and fed him the seeds with his own hands. When the fellow regained his senses the Imam said, “Come I'll take you to your house.” Then supporting his shoulders the Imam took him to his house. The fellow was so mesmerized by this affection that he fell down at the Imam's feet and begged forgiveness for his past audacity.

Affection Of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (a.s)

One day Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s) was going somewhere astride his horse. On the way he saw a

person sitting. The person greeted the Imam and looked at him expectantly. The Imam alighted from the horse and inquired about his condition. He said, "Son of Allah's Messenger! I am a traveler. I am exhausted to walk any more. Please allow me to ride on your mount and convey me to such and such tribe. There are some relatives of mine there, and I will borrow their steed and go home on it." The Imam said, "This steed is at your service, mount it and go wherever you like." The person thanked the Imam and said, "I will soon return it to you." The Imam said, "No need, I have given it to you."

Affection Of Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s)

During the period Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s) resided in Medina many trouble-afflicted people visited him and mentioned their woes. The Imam listened to each of their problems in an affectionate way and rendered them whatever help he could. One day a person told him that the Governor of Medina was inimical to him and was finding excuses to harass him. "Please petition him on my behalf." In spite of the fact that the governor was inwardly inimical to the Imam, the Imam went to him and petitioned him on behalf of that person saying, "I have never approached you for my personal matters, but when I heard the woes of that person I became restless, and I have come to you to consider about him." The governor was so much affected by the Imam's words that from that day he became very kind to that person."

Affection Of Imam Ridha' (a.s)

During the time Imam Ridha' (a.s) was the heir-apparent of Mamun, it was his practice to roam the town on foot every day in search of people in need and then try to solve their difficulties. When Mamun learnt about it, he told the Imam one day, "I have heard that you go out sight-seeing on foot while conveyance is available for you. Why do you take this trouble?" The Imam replied, "I do not go for sight-seeing, I go to study the condition of poor Muslims." Mamun said, "You can go for this also on a horse back." Imam (a.s) said, "In that case the downtrodden people would not meet me freely. Seeing my affluent manner they would be repelled and would not dare to approach me." Mamun was shocked on getting this reply and after some time he said, "It is a fact that affection towards creatures is truly the job of you Ahl ul-Bayt only."

Affection Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)

During the eight years of his stay in Baghdad, Imam Muhammad Taqi (a.s) regularly imparted religious education to the people. On most of the days people remained in his presence from morning till night. He was neither fed up with them nor worried. One day he was having high temperature, when he was informed of some people waiting for him outside to narrate their problems. The family members of the Imam said that it was not the time to meet Imam (a.s) and they would tell the people to come sometime later. The Imam said, "No, maybe someone is having an urgent need to meet me." So he came out with the support of a slave and in that same high fever listened to the people. One of them said, "My father is on the death bed. He wanted to make some bequest regarding his property in your presence and also to see you for the last time. But how can I request you to come while you are in such a severe fever?" The Imam said, "I will come." His family protested how he could go out in such a condition but the Imam said

that he would walk slowly. Thus he went keeping his hands on the shoulders of two slaves, one on each side. Allaho Akbar! (God is Greatest)! Except for the Ahl ul-Bayt who else can display such affection?

Affection Of Imam Ali Naqi (a.s)

In spite of leading an impoverished life in Samarra he was not neglectful of the poor creatures of God. He himself visited the widows and orphans and carried food for them while remaining hungry himself mostly. When an orphan came before him, he used to caress his head affectionately and if he desired something it was provided to him.

Affection Of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s)

A major part of the life of Imam Hasan Askari (a.s) either passed in prison or under house arrest. The spies of the caliph Motamid always kept the Imam under strict surveillance. One day some Shia person sent him a gift of some pomegranates. The fruits were kept before the Imam and the caliph's guard was eyeing them in a greedy manner. The Imam gave him one pomegranate. The fellow took it but did not eat it. When the Imam asked him the reason he said that he was the father of five children and he never ate anything without giving it to them also. And that he was thinking how to distribute one pomegranate between them all. The Imam gave him all the pomegranates. He said, "Son of Allah's Messenger! I don't need all of them. Keep some for yourself." The Imam said, "It is better for the children to eat them, than me." Witnessing such affection of the Holy Imam the royal guard became such an ardent devotee of his that he always used to remain in the Imam's service. When Motamid heard about it, he summoned the guard and punished him severely. He said, "Even if you put me to death, his love cannot leave my heart." This reply infuriated Motamid further and he sentenced the man to life imprisonment.

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