

Bazrat Abbas A.S.

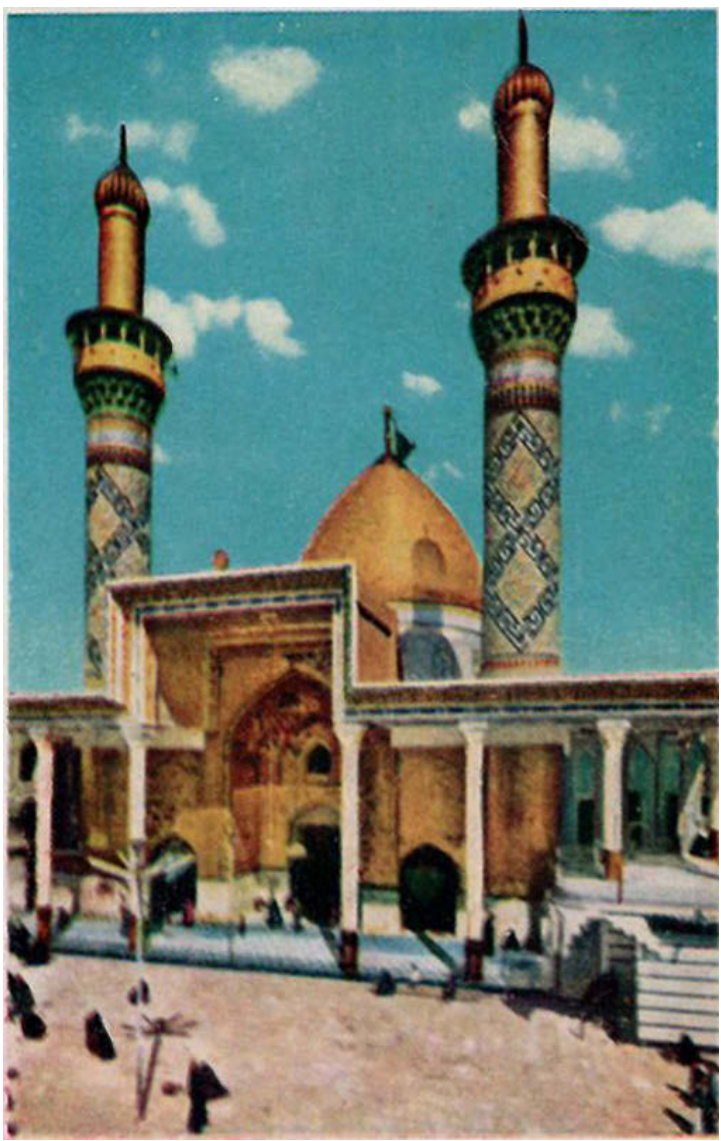
هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي

This is by the Grace of God



HAZRAT ABBAS (A.S.)

Compiled by:
YOUSUF N. LALLJEE



The Mausoleum at Kerbala (in Iraq)

WEBMASTER'S NOTE: This was the picture in the book when it was published. The Shrine has now undergone changes and we have included a picture of the shrine when the book was digitized (year 2018)



WEBMASTER'S NOTE: Photo Credit for this colour photograph Ali Al-Sa'di.
<https://alkafeel.net/photos/index.php?v=photo&id=NDgxNg==&lang=en>.
The shrine of Aba al-Fadl al-Abbas (a.s.) before launching the expansion project of the shrine.



WEBMASTER'S NOTE: Photo Credit for this colour photograph Samer Al-'Adhari.
<https://alkafeel.net/photos/index.php?v=photo&id=NDk0Ng==&lang=en>.
The gate of Qibla of Aba Al-Fadl Al-Abbas (a.s.), which was inaugurated after the completion of its construction works within the expansion project of the holy shrine.

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السَّلَامُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ، السَّلَامُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ،
السَّلَامُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، السَّلَامُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ
وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

As-Salaamo ala Muhammadin wa aaley hee fil awwaleen
As-Salaamo ala Muhammadin wa aaley hee fil aakheyreen
As-Salaamo ala Muhammadewn wa aaley hee fid dunya
wal aakherah
As-Salaamo ala Muhammadewn wa aaley hee wa
rahmatoollahey wa barakatuh

Salutations be upon thee, O Muhammad and thy progeny,
from the start of the world,
Salutations be upon thee, O Muhammad and thy progeny,
till the end of the world.
Salutations be upon thee, O Muhammad and thy progeny,
in this world and the hereafter,
Salutations be upon thee, O Muhammad and thy progeny,
and may the peace and blessings of God be upon all of
you.

SALUTATIONS

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَنَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْعَبْدُ الصَّالِحُ الْمُطِيعُ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ قَدْ جَاهَدْتَ وَنَصَحْتَ وَصَبَرْتَ حَتَّى آتَاكَ الْيَقِينُ
لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ وَالْحَقَّهُمْ بِدَرْكِ الْجَحِيمِ

*As Salaamo alaika yub-ne Amir-il-Momeneen
As Salaamo alaika aiyyo-hul Abdus-Saleh
Al-mootee-oo lillahey wa ley Rasooley-hee
Ash hadau anneka qad jaa-hadta wa ne-sah-ta
Wa sabarta hatta a-taa kal yaqeen
La a-nulla hooz zaaleymeena lakoom minal
Awwaleena wal aakheyreen
Wal haqahoom bey dar kil jaheem.*

Salutations be unto thee, O son of the Commander of
the Faithful

Salutations be unto thee, O virtuous servant obedient
to God and His Messenger

I bear witness that thou didst truly fight the Holy War And
thou didst help the cause of Faith

And thou didst patiently endure

Until the certainty (of death) came upon thee,

May God deprive those who wronged thee of His Mercy.

Whether they may have been of the first or the last (i.e.
all of them),

And may He consign them to the nethermost regions of
Hell.

Salutations and the Mercy and Blessings of God be upon
thee.

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HAZRAT ABBAS (A.S.)

INTRODUCTION

Hazrat Abbas was the son of Hazrat Ali ibne Abi Talib. His mother's name was Fatima Binte Hazam bin Khalid. She was also known as 'Ummul Baneen'. She belonged to the clan of Banu Kilah. Among the Hashimites, hers was the noblest family after that of the Holy Prophet, and was famous for the bravery and valour of its warriors.

Fatima Binte Hazam was an accomplished and cultured lady, and bore Hazrat Ali's four sons, Abbas, Abdulla, Ja'far and Usman. The meaning of 'Ummul Baneen' is 'Mother of Sons'. All of her sons were martyred along with Imam Husain. After their martyrdom, she requested people not to call her 'Ummul Baneen' ever again.

The day she entered the household of Hazrat Ali, she made it very plain to Imam Hasan and Imam Husain that she considered herself their slave, and she hoped and prayed that they would accept her as one. Her respect and affection for them was soon reciprocated by the two brothers, and even after her children were born, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain occupied a foremost place in her heart.

One of the bravest of the Holy Prophet's followers was

Ja'far Tayyar, the brother of Hazrat Ali. In the battle of Muta, Ja'far Tayyar carried the Banner of Islam and in that battle he was out-numbered by the enemies and killed. When the news reached the Holy Prophet he cried and prayed for Ja'far's soul and the angel Gabriel came down and consoled (the Prophet), saying "Ja'far was a brave and loyal soldier. God has given him everlasting life, and in place of his two arms which were cut off in the battle, the Lord has given him a pair of wings".

Hazrat Ali, who was sitting near the Holy Prophet at that time, said, "Please pray to God that I should die fighting for the cause of Islam and become a martyr." But the Holy Prophet said, "O Ali, your death has already been decreed. You shall die in the mosque during your prayers, but the Almighty will give you a son who will die in the battle on Ashoora day". From that time Ali eagerly awaited the birth of that son.

(This prophecy was made in the year 8 A.H. when Imam Hasan was 5 years old and Imam Husain was 4.)

HIS BIRTH

Hazrat Abbas was born at Medina on 7th Rajab 26 A.H.¹

1 WEBMASTER'S NOTE: There is no difference of view among Hazrat Abbas's biographers that he was born in the year 26 A.H.; but with regard to the exact date and month of his birth in that year there are several views. However the most authentic view is that he was born on the 4th of Sha'baan; and it is this date on which his birth anniversary is generally celebrated

(647 A.D.). When the news of his birth reached Hazrat Ali, he prostrated himself on the ground as a token of his humble thanks to God. Imam Husain took the baby in his arms and recited the Azan and Eqamat (Calls for Prayers) in his right and left ears respectively. Then the new born baby opened his eyes to see the beloved face of Imam Husain. On the seventh day of his birth the ceremony of Aqeeqa (which is one of the emphasised Sunnats) was performed and Hazrat Ali named the child 'Abbas'.

A similar incident took place at the time of the birth of Hazrat Ali. He only opened his eyes when the Holy Prophet took him in his arms.

HIS UP-BRINGING

It was the desire of Hazrat Ali that this son whom he named 'Abbas' (Meaning a Dauntless Lion) would accomplish the same deeds of valour and who would follow his teachings without fear of life and death. It was also his wish that Abbas would be a constant companion of Imam Husain and be his Standard Bearer at Kerbala.

Hazrat Ali, who himself was known as 'The Lion of God' and the 'Gateway of Knowledge' brought up Hazrat Abbas and ably guided him till he was fourteen years old. The next ten years were spent under the careful eye of Imam Hasan, and the last ten years with

Imam Husain. Thus it was not surprising that Hazrat Abbas acquired near perfection in so many spheres of life. His gallantry, boldness, courageous outlook, and the art of combat and soldiery were inherited from Hazrat Ali, and this he proved very well in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrwan. Imam Hasan taught him patience and tolerance. His Lion-hearted loyalty and self-sacrificing nature were the result of his association with Imam Husain and Janab-e-Zainab. Physically, mentally, morally and spiritually he was fully developed, besides, being an accomplished scholar.

He helped the poor and needy, and discharged his duties towards his fellow-beings according to the precepts of Islam. He was pure in his thoughts, words and deeds, lest any of these should displease God. He lived strictly in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Quran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet.

Just as Hazrat Ali grew up under the care of the Holy Prophet, Hazrat Abbas was brought up by Hazrat Ali, who fully knew the mysteries of life and death, and Abbas had assimilated the true spirit of Islam. A man who was brought up, educated and trained by Hazrat Ali could on no account be attached to this worldly life nor fear death, and Abbas fully justified this by his actions.

Hazrat Abbas married Lubaba, daughter of Obaidullah Ibne Abbas Ibne Abdul Muttalib, and had

two sons, Fazl and Muhammad. Some sources say that Lubaba was present at Kerbala and their son Muhammad was martyred there.

AT THE DEATH-BED OF HAZRAT ALI

When Hazrat Ali was mortally wounded and lying on his deathbed, he sent for his entire family. Save Hazrat Abbas, he entrusted all to the care of his eldest son Imam Hasan. Then he heard Hazrat Abbas, hardly 12 years old, sobbing. Hazrat Ali asked him to come near and gave his hand to his second son, Imam Husain, saying: “Husain, this child I am entrusting to you. He will represent me on the Day of your supreme sacrifice and will lay down his life in defending you and your dear ones.”

And turning to Hazrat Abbas, he had said: “Abbas, my child, I know your unbounded love for Husain. Though you are too young to be told about it, when that day dawns, consider no sacrifice too great for Husain and his children.”

This was in 657 A.D. The occasion for the supreme sacrifice came on the battlefield of Kerbala in 680 A.D. when Husain was poised against Yezid’s forces. It was a battle of good against evil and right against wrong. And in the history of Islam, the battle of Kerbala has become an important landmark of supreme sacrifice, great courage and dedication to a just cause.

In the battle of Kerbala, Hazrat Abbas was Imam Husain's commander-in-chief. He fought the evil forces of Yezid gallantly, remembering his father's last words. The story of the sacrifice of his life in trying to procure water for Imam Husain's children on the battlefield is the most touching and significant in Islamic history.

The Life of Hazrat Abbas is an example of unflinching loyalty and love for a brother. It is also the story of a warrior who sacrificed his life for the cause of Islam, which according to Hazrat Abbas, was a just cause.

A TOWERING PERSONALITY

Hazrat Abbas was a towering and handsome personality. His dauntless courage, supreme confidence and unflinching loyalty earned him many titles. He was called, "Qamar-e-Bani Hashim" (Moon of the Hashimites), because of his imposing appearance. His remarkable horsemanship made him "Syed-ul-Forosan" (the chief of horsemen). His ability to lead people resulted in his being called "Rais-ul- Shujan" (the leader of the valiant), and the manner in which he sacrificed his life earned him the title of "Afzal-ul-Shohada" (the choicest of the martyrs) and "Saqqa" (water carrier), because he sacrificed his life in an effort to procure water for Imam Husain's children in the tragic battle at Kerbala. He fully lived up to his name Abbas, which in Arabic stands for Lion.

THE WARRIOR AT SIFFIN

Hazrat Ali's desire was to ensure that Hazrat Abbas preached the religion of Islam and served the Prophet's family. Hazrat Abbas saw his first battle when only eleven. This was the battle of Siffin. One day he appeared fully disguised, masked and armoured, on the battlefield. When Ibn-e-Shasa, a brave and famous Syrian fighter saw this masked person, he asked one of his seven sons to slay him. Instead, the son was quickly put down. Similarly, the other six sons tried to fight this masked warrior, but they all met the same fate. Finally, Ibn-e-Shasa himself came forward and the manner in which he was also beaten, made all the other people stare in disbelief. They then thought this masked fighter to be Hazrat Ali, and no one dared to come forward to fight. But, when Hazrat Abbas removed the mask, people were surprised to note that he was not Hazrat Ali, but instead, Abbas, the inheritor of Hazrat Ali's gallantry.

Hazrat Abbas' devotion, respect and affection for Imam Husain was so deep, that he used to worship the very ground he walked on. In fact, it is said that he used to apply to his eyes, the dust from Imam Husain's feet. He resented anyone taking precedence in serving Imam Husain. It is said that once Imam Husain, while present with his Holy father Hazrat Ali in the mosque of Kufa, felt thirsty and asked for water from his servant Qumber. The child Abbas leapt to his feet, and brushing

aside the faithful servant, rushed to bring the water for his master himself. In the hurry to carry the water as quickly as possible, he spilt it on his own clothes. His illustrious father stopped in his speech and tears rolled down his cheeks.

When asked by his faithful followers the reason for his tears, Hazrat Ali uttered those prophetic words which came true some twenty years later: “Abbas who has today wetted his clothes with water in his zeal to quench the thirst of his brother Husain, will one day soak his very body in his own blood in attempting to quench the thirst of Imam Husain’s children”.

HIS DEVOTION TO IMAM HUSAIN AT KERBALA

He stayed beside Imam Husain ever since they left Medina and was loved by all the members of the Imam’s family. He was so devoted to Imam Husain, that when Shimr Ibne Ziljoshan, the second-in-command of Yezid’s army came towards Imam Husain’s camp and called out: “Where are my nephews, Abbas, Abdullah, Jafar and Usman?” Hazrat Abbas refused to reply. It was only after Imam Husain told him: “Answer him, because, despite the fact that he is corrupt he is also one of your relatives” that Hazrat Abbas asked Shimr what he wanted. Shimr replied: “O my nephews, I have specially asked Obaidullah Ibne Ziad for the safety of you all. So why do you wish to kill yourselves with

Husain? Why do you not join the forces of the mighty Yezid?"

Hazrat Abbas looked at him with contempt and retorted, "May God's wrath fall upon you and upon your proposition, O enemy of God! How dare you counsel us to desert our master, Imam Husain and tie ourselves up with the corrupt and misguided Yezid?" Shimr turned round and went away angrily.

Another attempt was also made to get Hazrat Abbas away to the camp of Yezid, for in their heart of hearts, they were mortally afraid of his valour and bravery.

Jareer bin Abdullah was a courtier of Ibne-Ziad, the Governor of Kufa, and had much influence on him. Ummul Baneen, the mother of Abbas, was a cousin of Jareer, who was fully convinced that Husain and his companions would be slaughtered in cold blood. He also did not like the idea of his four nephews (Abbas, Abdulla, Ja'far and Usman) being massacred along with Husain. He appealed to Ibne- Ziad, to spare the lives of his nephews. Ibne-Ziad granted this request and Jareer immediately wrote to Abbas asking him and his brothers to give up the company of Husain and come over to Ibne-Ziad and to save their lives as the time was very critical. He sent this letter through a person named Irfan. The messenger handed over this confidential letter to Abbas, who having read it was hardly able to control his fury. He tore the letter to

shreds, and informed Irfan, “Go away at once and tell my uncle, Jareer bin Abdullah, that we will never desert Husain and we will never seek protection from Ibne-Ziad. We seek help from God Almighty, and we are ready to sacrifice our lives for our beloved Husain and Islam.”

When Irfan gave this message to Jareer, he was very much disappointed and sad. He had been over-confident that Abbas would accept his invitation; apparently he had forgotten that Abbas was the son of the ‘Lion of God’ who cared more for Islam and Husain than his own life.

On the eve of Ashoora as Hazrat Abbas sat sharpening his sword in his tent, his sister, Umme Kulsum came to him and with tears in her eyes said to him: “I cannot make any sacrifice for my dear brother Imam Husain, who is surrounded by enemies. Zainab has two sons whom she will sacrifice for Husain; Qasim will represent his father Imam Hasan; Umme Lailah will send her son Ali Akber into the battle-field; even Rabab is going to sacrifice her infant son, Ali Ashgar; but I have no children, and being a woman I am not permitted to fight. People will remember all these brave ladies, and sing their praises, but I have no one whom I can offer on my behalf.” At this Hazrat Abbas consoled her and said, “Do not worry, dear sister. You have brought me up since childhood and you have loved me as a mother. I will sacrifice myself on your

behalf.” In the morning Umme Kulsum took her brother Abbas to Imam Husain and said, “Let my brother Abbas fight for you on my behalf and he is my sacrifice for you and Islam.”

When at last after great persuasion, Imam Husain gave him permission to fetch water for the thirsty children, Hazrat Abbas set out with a leather bag and the Standard.

THE FIGHT TO REACH THE RIVER

The towering form of Abbas and his fame as a warrior throughout Arabia, had created much terror amongst the enemy. When this ‘Dauntless Lion’ made his appearance on the field, the enemy tried its best to prevent him from reaching the river. He stood in front of them boldly and bravely and addressed them as follows :

“We are ourselves the swords of the Hashimite tribe and are sharper than the sharpest edges to shed your blood. O sons of the opposers of right! Alas, if our grandfather, the Holy Prophet had survived and seen the calamities that, his progeny has been made to suffer, he would truly be ashamed of you. Death under swords is glorifying when Paradise is the fruit. Cursed be this world and its transitory pleasures. You will all roast in the fires of Hell.”

Hearing these words, the enemy attacked him from all

sides. Abbas, the dauntless lion, fell upon them with a loud roar. He slaughtered every person that came within his reach. In the forces of Omar bin Saad, there was one person named Marid bin Sudaif. When he saw that Abbas was playing havoc and killing the best soldiers of Yezid, he got very wild, and angrily said, "It is an occasion of great shame and regret that one Hashimite has been causing so much destruction. He is alone. We are numberless. Look at our numerical strength. If each one of you takes up a handful of dust and throws it on his face, he shall die of suffocation. All of you are cowards. Retreat. Let me alone fight with Abbas. I shall kill him in no time." So saying, he ran towards Abbas with a big lance in his hand. Abbas also moved from his place to try his strength and skill with Marid bin Sudaif who boasted of his chivalry, courage and manliness and who was over-confident of his victory. He said to Abbas contemptuously, "Abbas return and do not fight. If you fight with me, you shall perish. I take pity on you because you are so young and tender. Go away at once and live a peaceful and happy life. Remember that those persons who have fought with you till now and whom you have killed so easily did not possess the necessary dash. Know that you are no match for me. A word is enough for the wise. Retreat if you want to save your life."

Abbas, the dauntless lion and the Moon of the Bani Hashim, listened to Marid bin Sudaif patiently from the beginning to the end. When he had finished his

oration Abbas said boldly, "O enemy of God! It is quite impossible for me to agree to your terms. You cannot ruin me but you shall yourself be ruined. Those who die for God live forever; those who fight against God perish forever. Blessed are those who sacrifice their lives for the pleasure of God. Rest assured that you can never succeed in misleading and misguiding me. You are aware of my connection with the Prophet. A son of Ali, the Lion of God, can neither tremble nor retreat. He can never submit to evil forces He can never be afraid of any enemy however strong and powerful he may be. Remember that the secret of a man's greatness lies in his unshakable faith in God. He should always be grateful to the Almighty God in whatever circumstances he may be; God's ways are inscrutable. Whatever He does is always the best. I am not in the least displeased with my fate. I am fully conscious of whatever lies in store for me. I can never weep over the loss of this world and try to escape death when it comes to me. I will rather welcome Death if it comes to me in the way of God. I shall submit to Death cheerfully, joyfully and happily, for Paradise is a much happier abode than this world. This world is not a place worth living. Fortunate is he who dies for Islam."

Marid bin Sudaif lost his balance of mind at this cutting reply. He never expected such a bold reply from a person who was surrounded by the mighty and strong forces of Yezid. He regretted that his appeal did not produce the desired effect. It fell on deaf ears. He

was thunderstruck at the audacity and exceptional chivalry of Abbas at this moment of mortal danger, Abbas who was so cool, calm, unperturbed and dignified. He fully realised the gravity of the situation and within the twinkling of an eye, he charged Abbas and attacked him with his lance. Abbas did not lose his presence of mind. He stood his ground. He caught hold of the lance and pulled it so hard that Marid bin Sudaif who had boasted of his valour and over-confidence lost not only his grip on the lance but also his balance on the saddle. Abbas succeeded in snatching his lance. Marid fell to the ground. Without losing a single moment, Abbas wounded the horse of Marid so severely that it was unfit for further action. Shimr had minutely and carefully observed the awkward position in which Marid had been placed. If he did not get immediate assistance, his condition would be perilous. So Shimr acted quickly, and cried out to Sariqa (a faithful and obedient servant of Marid) to take another horse to his master. Sariqa obeyed the order of Shimr implicitly. No sooner did Marid see his slave with a horse than he asked him to come quickly lest death should overtake pain.

Abbas acted very wisely. He rode to the slave very swiftly and threw him down with a stroke of the lance which he had taken from Marid. He then went to meet Marid once more. When Marid saw this strange sight, he was very much frightened. He cried in despair, "Alas, Abbas will kill me with my own lance." Shimr

observed this peculiar situation. He advanced on his own horse, Sinan bin Anas Nakai, Khooli bin Yezidi Asbahi and Jamal bin Maliki-Hajazi accompanied him. Then Yezid's full cavalry with drawn swords followed him. But Abbas wounded the hand of Marid with a blow of his lance before these persons could give him any help. Marid appealed to Abbas to spare his life and he promised to become his slave. But Abbas turned down his appeal and struck his lance so forcibly in one of his ears that it came out of the other. Marid died in that wretched condition. It was indeed a very miserable death. Abbas then fell upon the soldiers who had been posted to guard the banks of the Euphrates. He killed many of them. The rest fled for their lives, confounded and perplexed. Abbas reached the bank of the river and began to fill the leather bag. In spite of his thirst, he refused to drink water, and even his horse did likewise. He then lifted the leather bag and hung it on his shoulder.

In the meantime, the archers and other soldiers who had fled away in utter confusion came back again and tried to check Abbas from taking water to Husain's camp. It was a bloody battle, but Abbas was not a man either to lose courage or accept defeat. His one thought was to reach this water to the thirsty children waiting anxiously for his return.

Although he was outnumbered and surrounded by the enemy, he decided not to submit. He fought bravely, but

the odds were very much against him, and ultimately he was martyred.

BLOOD ON THE SAND

The shifting sand-dunes of Kerbala were smeared with blood. Near one of those dunes, on the bank of the Euphrates, lay the prostrate figure of a youth with blood gushing out from innumerable wounds. The crimson life-tide was ebbing fast. Even so, it seemed as if he was anxiously expecting somebody to come to him, to be near him before he breathed his last. Through his parched throat he was feebly calling somebody. Yes, Abbas was anxiously expecting his master to come to him before he parted with his life, as he had come to the side of all his devoted friends who had laid down their dear lives for him in this noble cause.

It is said that before a man dies all the past events of his life pass before his mind's eye in a flashback. In his last moments, Abbas saw the events of his life. He saw himself as a child in Medina following Husain with a devotion which was considered unique even for a brother. He saw the events of that hot and sultry day in Kufa when his illustrious father Ali was addressing a congregation in the mosque and he as a child with his characteristic devotion, was looking at the face of his beloved brother, watching him intently, so that he could attend to his wishes as if they were an instant command. Seeing from the parched lips of Husain that

he was feeling extremely thirsty, how he had darted out from the mosque and returned with a tumbler full of cool, refreshing water and in the hurry to carry the water as quickly as possible, how he had spilt it on his own clothes. He recalled now the prophetic words of his father and understood how true they were at this moment of his end.

He was vividly recalling the scene on the 21st Ramazan, way back in 40 A.H., when his father, mortally wounded, was lying on his death-bed and entrusting his children and dependents to the care of his eldest brother, Hasan, all except him. Seeing that his father had commended all but him to the care of Hasan — how he, a child of twelve had burst out into uncontrollable tears. His father on hearing him sobbing had called him to his side and given his hand in Husain's hand with the words, "Husain, this child I am entrusting to you. He will represent me on the day of your supreme sacrifice and lay down his life in defending you and your dear ones." How his father had turned to him and affectionately told him: "Abbas, my child, I know your unbounded love for Husain. Though you are too young to be told about it, when that day dawns, consider no sacrifice too great for Husain and his children." He saw before his mind's eye the parting with his aged mother Fatima in Medina; how she had affectionately embraced him and reminded him of the dying desire of his father to lay down his life in the defence of Husain and his dear ones.

A faint smile of satisfaction flickered for a brief moment on his parched lips — a smile of satisfaction that he had fulfilled his father’s wish; that he had performed his duty for which he was brought up. It just flitted for a moment and vanished as other scenes came before his mind’s eye. He was re-living the events of the night before. He was seeing Shimr stealthily coming to him and talking to him about his ties of relationship; about the protection he had been promised for Abbas by the Commander of Yezid’s forces only if he would leave Husain and go over to Yezid’s camp; about the promises of riches and rewards that he would get; how he had spurned the suggestion of Shimr with the utmost disdain to the chagrin of that servile minion who had sold his soul for a mess of pottage. How he had scared away that coward by his scathing rage, saying: “You worshipper of Mammon, do not think that Abbas will be lured by your tempting offers of power and pelf. If I die in defending my Master, Husain, I shall consider myself the luckiest person. Oh coward, remember that valiants die but once. Nobody is born to live eternally. By betraying my master, you have betrayed the Prophet, whose religion you profess to follow. On the Day of Judgment you will be doomed to eternal perdition. (I am ashamed to own any relationship with you). Had it not been for the fact that you have come here unarmed, I would have given you the chastisement you deserve for your impudence in asking me to become a turncoat.” How that wretch had scampered away seeing him roaring like an enlarged

lion! The thought of that unpleasant interlude wrinkled his brows. Or was it the excruciating pain he was suffering on account of the deep gashes he had all over body?

Yet another scene passed before Abbas's eyes. The children were shouting as if in chorus — "thirst, consuming thirst, is killing us." Sakina coming to him and putting her dry water-bag at his feet and saying to him: "O uncle, I know you will do something to get water for us. Even if you can bring one bag full, we can wet our parched throats." He could see that thirst, aggravated by the scorching heat of the desert, was squeezing their young lives out of them. The sight of these young children had moved him more than any other soul-stirring event of that fateful day. How he had picked up the water-bag with assurances to Sakina that he would go and bring water — God Willing. How he had taken Husain's permission and marched out of the camp with a sword in one hand, the flag in the other and the water-bag on his shoulder, with the children following him in a group unto the outer-perimeter of the camp! How Husain had repeatedly requested him to avoid fighting as much as possible and confine himself to the task of bringing water!

His thoughts switched over to the events that had preceded his fall from the horse. With the thought of procuring water for his dear little Sakina, he had slain Marid bin Sudaif, a champion from Yezid's army, and

how he had charged on the enemy who held the river banks. He had run through the enemy ranks like a knife through butter. Against his surging onslaught the enemy could not stand and had run helter-skelter shouting for protection. For a moment it seemed as if Ali, the Lion of God, had descended from Heaven. In no time Abbas was near the water. (He had jumped down from the horse and bent to fill the water-bag). When it was filled to the brim, he had taken some water in his cupped hands to drink to satisfy his killing thirst. But on second thought, he had thrown the water away. How could he drink water when Sakina and the children were still withering without water? He had turned to his horse which had been let loose so that it could satiate its thirst. The animal had been intently looking at its master as if to say: "I too am aware that so long as our Master and his children remain without water, our thirst cannot be quenched."

FOUGHT VALIANTLY

With the water-bag filled, he jumped on horseback with one thought uppermost in his mind – to get the water for the anxiously waiting children as quickly as possible. Seeing him galloping towards the camp of Husain, the enemy turned. Somebody shouted from the enemy ranks that if Husain and his people got water, it would be difficult to fight them on the battlefield. Though it was an unequal fight, he fought them with valour which was a characteristic of his father.

Seeing that a frontal assault on a man so brave was not possible, they resorted to a barrage of arrows. Abbas had only one thought in his mind – how best to protect the water-bag? To him it seemed more important to protect the water-bag than to protect his life. Seeing Abbas thus preoccupied, one treacherous foe, hiding behind a sand-dune rushed out and dealt a blow on his right hand and cut it off. In a flash Abbas transferred his sword to his left hand and the standard he was bearing, he hugged to his chest. Now that the lion of Ali was crippled, the foes found courage to surround him. A blow from an enemy's sword severed his left arm. The odds were now mounting against him. He held the bag with his teeth and protected the flag with his chest bent on the horse.

Now the paramount thought in his mind was to reach the camp somehow or the other. A silent prayer escaped his lips: “Merciful Allah, spare me long enough to fulfil my mission.” But that was not to be. An arrow pierced the water-bag and water started gushing out of it. All his efforts had been in vain. The enemies who had made bold to surround him, now gathered thickly round him. One of them came near him and struck a mortal blow with an iron club. He reeled over and fell from the horse.

MASTER COME TO ME

He tossed on the burning sand with excruciating pain.

He could feel life was fast ebbing but his wish to see his Master had remained unfulfilled. With one last effort, he shouted: "O my Master, do come to me before I die." As if in answer to his prayers, he felt footsteps near him. Yes, his instinct told him that it was his Master.

He felt his Master kneeling down besides him, lifting his head and taking it into his lap. Not a word was said for a few seconds, because both were shaken with emotion. At last he heard Husain's voice, a half-sob, half-muffled cry: "Abbas my brother, what have they done to you?"

Abbas now felt the loving touch of his Master's hand. With great effort he muttered: "You have come at last, my Master. I thought I was not destined to have a last look at you but, thank God, you are here."

Husain burst into a flood of tears. The sight of his brother, whose name was to become a byword for devotion and unflinching faithfulness, laying down his precious life in his arms, was heart-rending.

Abbas was heard to whisper softly: "My Master, I have some last wishes to express. When I was born, I had first looked at your face and it is my last desire that when I die, my gaze may be on your face. My one eye is pierced by an arrow and the other is filled with blood. If you will clear the eye I will be able to see you and fulfil my last dying desire. My second wish is that when

I die, you should not carry my body to the camp. I had promised to bring water to Sakina and since I have failed in my attempts to bring her water; I cannot face her even in death. Besides, I know that the blows that you have received since morning have all but crushed you and carrying my body to the camp will be back-breaking work for you. And my third wish is that Sakina may not be brought here to see my plight. I know with what love and affection she is devoted to me. The sight of my dead body lying here will kill her.”

MY BROTHER ! MY BROTHER !

Husain sobbingly promised him that he would carry out his last wishes and added: “Abbas, I too have a wish to be fulfilled. Since childhood you have always called me Master. For once at least call me brother with your dying breath.” The blood was cleared from the eye, one brother looked at the other with a long lingering look. Abbas was heard to whisper: “My brother, my brother!” and with these words he surrendered his soul to his Maker: Husain fell unconscious on the dead body of Abbas with a cry.

The flow of the Euphrates became dark as winter and a murmur arose from the flowing waters as if to protest against the killing of a thirsty water-bearer on its banks, the beloved “Moon of the Hashimites.”

Alas the beloved Hazrat Abbas was martyred in

the prime of his youth at the age of 35, on the 10th Moharram, in the year 61 A.H. (680 A.D.).

As Salaamo ala ya Abul Fazlil Abbas ibn Amiril Momeneen wa Rahmatoollahey wa Barakatoh.

“Peace be unto thee O Abul Fazlil Abbas, son of Hazrat Ali, Commander of the Faithful and may Allah shower His blessings upon thee.”

EXTRACTS FROM MIR ANIS

When spears were hurled at Abbas from all the four corners, Mir Anis describes the incident thus: —
‘He was so surrounded by defiant spears as if rays were radiating out of the sun.’

Again when Abbas lost his arms, and caught hold of the water-bag in his teeth, the description is equally in keeping with the martial grandeur:
“The water-bag was like the prey in the jaws of a lion.”

“There is no compeer of this youth in this universe
His powerful shoulders alone can uphold the glory of
this flag.

He is the stalwart lieutenant of our noble master and
the soul of Ali.

He is the patron of the aged and an admirer of youths,
The saint of God had the virtues of the Prophets
He has all those attributes which distinguish Ali.
He is endowed with the same modesty, affection,
clemency and fidelity

He is actuated by the same sense of duty, dignity and
piety,
He is benevolent, generous and highly kind
He has the same lofty courage, martial zeal and
awe-inspiring personality
Who is on earth is his equal in valour,
Ali himself testified that Abbas was a lion.
Though all the royal princes are matchless,
Yet God has given him a unique dignity,
Just as the Lion of God was a remarkable figure in the
Prophet's armies,
So he is peerless amongst the devotees of our Lord,
He is above the whole rank and file
After the Lion of God this high rank comes to him in
succession.”

“When the forces waited outside for the flag
The royal master was putting on his war dress
All the near relations stood ready fully armed
Abbas the exalted one was in the front with the flag.
He was there in full glory of his rank
And it seemed as if Ali stood well-prepared to start
for a holy war.
The helmet of the Lion of God adorned his head
In which the plume looked like the feathers of the
Phoenix
The forehead was like a moon emerging out of cloud.
The eye brows were like the sword of the arm of God.
The red veins in the eyes seemed As if blood stained
swords were flashing.

His delight in getting the flag of the Prophet
Made his cheeks rosy like two red flowers
His stature added to the beauty of his form, it was
neither short nor improperly high.
His lips gave a freshness to the souls of those who
beheld them
They were so well-known for their sweet beauty in
the world
That the houries of the Paradise became eager to
kiss them.
When his brave kinsmen offered their felicitations
to him
Abbas bowed smiling
Due to extreme happiness his face shone like
the moon
The splendour of his face vied with that of the flag
That flag rose to heavens in lofty glory like its chief
It was said lo! there are two suns at a time.
Zainab after fond caresses said
Congratulations on your elevation to you the heir of
the Lord of the valiants.
Abbas with hands folded said
Take me to be just a servant of Aun and Mohammad
(the sons of Zainab)
I hold charge of the command on their behalf
The two princes are the master and I am the steward
The daughter of the lady of the universe said
Why this humility, you are their patron
It would be bliss if this crisis is avoided
I will think that the miserable ones received a fresh
lease of life

They have besieged the Lord of creation who is
innocent,
All of you must combine to save him.”

PILGRIMAGE TO HIS MAUSOLEUM

It is almost fourteen hundred years since this tragedy occurred at Kerbala, and still tens of thousands of pilgrims keep coming there year after year from all parts of the world to pay their respects to the gallant “Moon of the Hashimites” at his magnificent Mausoleum.

They offer salutations and pray to God for their needs seeking his intercession, for this is a place where so many vows have been fulfilled and where so many miracles have taken place.

Many a devotee has willed that he be buried in this holy place and so often one sees the sight of a coffin being carried a few times round the tomb of Hazrat Abbas and then taken to the allotted place of burial.

Says the Holy Quran:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

Think not of those slain in God's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the Presence of their Lord.

(3:169)

THE ALAM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE



During the time of the Moharram Majlises, usually on the 8th, it has become a sort of custom to recite the events leading to the martyrdom of Hazrat Abbas. And when the Alams (replica of the Banner or Standard of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Imams) are taken out accompanied to the beating of breasts and heads by the mourners, one will notice a Mashk (a leather water-bag) usually made of metal in remembrance of Hazrat Abbas who sacrificed his life trying to get water for the children of Imam Husain who were dying of thirst.

When Hazrat Abbas rolled down from his horse after a mortal blow on his head, the Alam and the Mashk stayed linked together and never got separated. Hence one sees an Alam with a Mashk attached to it, and sometimes one also sees an arrow alongside it.

