

(A Glance on the Life of Hazrat Abbas (A.S

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Abbas ibn Ali was the son of Ali ibn Abu Talib and Fatima binte Hizam, commonly known as Ummul Baneen. Abbas is particularly revered by Shi'a Muslims for his loyalty to his half-brother and third Shi'a Imam, Hussain ibn Ali, his respect for the Ahl al-Bayt, and his role in the battle of Karbala. Abbas was married to Lubaba binte Obaidullah ibn Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib. He had three sons, and their names are Fazal ibn Abbas, Qasim ibn Abbas, and Obaidullah ibn Abbas. Two of them were killed during the Battle of Karbala. The family lineage of Abbas ibn Ali was succeeded by Obaidullah ibn Abbas. Obaidullah then had five sons. The names of Abbas ibn Ali's grandsons were Abdullah ibn Obaidullah, Abbas ibn Obaidullah, Hamza ibn Obaidullah, Ibrahim ibn Obaidullah, and Fazal ibn Obaidullah.

It has been recorded that that the Angel Gabriel informed Muhammad what would happen to his grandson Husayn ibn Ali at Karbala.[1] Muhammad, Fatima Zahra, and Ali were saddened by this, so Ali wished for a son to help Husayn ibn Ali at Karbala. He asked his brother, Aqeel ibn Abu Talib, to search for a wife from courageous descent. Aqeel pointed out Fatimah Kelabiya better known know as Ummal Baneen, who was descended from the honored lineage of Hezam ibn Khalid ibn Rabi'e ibn Amer Kalbi. [2] Ali ibn Abu Talib did not marry Ummal Baneen (or any other woman) during the lifetime of Fatima Zahra. [3]

Birth & Early Life

Abbas ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib was born on Shaban 4, 26 after Hijra (AH). He was the son of Ali ibn Abu Talib, and Fatimah bint Hizam. Abbas had three brothers, Abdullah ibn Ali, Jafar ibn Ali, and Usman ibn Ali. Abbas lived 34 years. It is said that he did not open his eyes after he was born until his half-brother Husayn ibn Ali took him in his arms. Abbas learned the art of war from his father Ali who was the most dangerous warrior of all times. [4]

Abbas never considered himself equal in rank or stature to his half-brother Husayn. On the contrary, Abbas considered his half-brother Husayn to be his master. Abbas did not like anyone working for Husayn except himself. This devotion can be gauged by the following event: At the Mosque of Kufa, Ali ibn Abu Talib, Husayn, Qanbar (a companion of Ali), and Abbas were sitting. Husayn asked Qanbar to bring water because he was thirsty. Abbas stopped him and said, "I will bring the water for my master myself". Abbas was young at that time. [4] [5]

Battle of Siffin

Abbas's debut as a soldier was in the battle of Siffin. In 657 CE, Abbas's father Ali - defender of Islam (the Caliph of the time) and Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, governor of Syria & enemy of Islam, were locked in a struggle for Islam. One of the main battles of this conflict was at Siffin - a place near the Euphrates river. [6] During the course of the battle, Abbas entered the battlefield wearing the clothes of his father, who was known to be a deadly skilled warrior. Abbas killed many soldiers on the other side with his lightning swordship. For this reason, Muawiyah's soldiers mistook him for Ali because of his similar deadly art of war. However, Ali himself soon appeared on the battlefield. Muawiyah's soldiers were astonished to see him, and were confused about who the other person was. Ali then introduced Abbas by saying, "He is Abbas, (The Moon of the Hashimi family)"]. [4][5]

Battle of Karbala

Abbas showed his loyalty to Husayn at the Battle of Karbala. After succeeding his father Muawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan as Caliph, Yazid ibn Muawiyah required Husayn to pledge allegiance to him. Husayn refused to do so. In 60 AH (680 CE), Husayn left Medina, with a small group of his companions and family, to travel to Kufa. The people of Kufa said that they would support Husayn if he claimed the Caliphate. On the way, Husayn and his group were intercepted. They were forced into a detour and arrived in Karbala on the 2nd of Muharram, 61 AH. Husayn's camp was surrounded and cut off from the Euphrates river. The camp ran out of water on the 7th of Muharram. [7]

Abbas promoted as Commander

On the 10th of Muharram, Abbas was ordered by Husayn to bring water from the Euphrates river for the small thirsty children. [8] . Some of the Yazid's soldiers came against Abbas on his way to river but were killed because of Abbas's skill in dangerous swordship. But one of the enemy injured Abbas by hiding in the trees. Abbas lost both his arms in the war. He could not succeed bringing water for small thirsty children and died on his way to river. On the death of Abbas, Husayn was in tears forever. The small children never asked for water after the death of Abbas and remained thirsty and silent till they were killed or enslaved by the enemies of Islam. (Yazid and his cruel force). Husayn declared him "Saqqah" (One who fetches water). [9] [10] [10]

Abbas and digging of well

On the 8th & 9th of Muharram, Husayn refused to send Abbas to fight for water. Abbas was extremely eager to fight. Husayn asked Abbas to dig a well. Abbas and some of the Banu Hashim men began digging. But there was no success. [11][12][13] [11]

Abbas, Qasim ibn Hassan, and Ali Akbar ibn Husayn

On the eve of tenth Muharram Hussain was passing through a camp in which his nephew Qasim ibn Hassan, his son Ali Akbar ibn Husayn and brother Abbas were sitting and were discussing a matter. He stood beside the camp and heard their conversation. Ali Akbar was saying that tomorrow he will be the first person to sacrifice his life on Husayn. Abbas interrogated him and said "You are the son of my Master. How can you fight before me"? Ali Akbar replied "Uncle, you are the strength of my father. If you go first and die my father will be destroyed. And also you are the commander and the commander should not go first". Abbas replied to Ali Akbar, "nephew! A son is the light of his father eyes. If you die first, my brother will be visionless. Most of all, I cannot bear to see you dying". Qasim was listening to the conversation, and replied, "My dear Uncle! And my dear brother! I will proceed first so that the strength & vision of my uncle Hussain remains, and I am also an orphan". Husayn then entered the camp and held Qasim in his arms and replied "Oh, my nephew don't ever consider yourself as orphan.

I am like your father." Abbas was not ready for anyone entering battlefield before him. Then, Husayn explained to Abbas, "We have not entered Karbala for war". He said "We could win because we have Banu Hashim men like you. However, our mission here is to serve Islam and now Islam requires our sacrifice. We are here to sacrifice our lives for this pure & noble religion." [14]

Fight and Death

The Euphrates river was occupied by Yazid's Army to prevent the camp of Husayn from getting water. Shias believe that Abbas, because of his skill and bravery, could have; attacked Yazid's army, occupied the river, and retrieved water for the camp alone. However, Abbas was not allowed to fight. He was only allowed to get water. Thus, he went to the river to get water for Husayn's 4 year old daughter Sakina bint Hussain.[12] Sakina was very attached to Abbas, who was her uncle. To her, Abbas was the only hope for getting water.

Abbas could not see her thirsty and crying "Al-Atash" (the thirst). [4]. When Abbas entered the battlefield, he only had a dagger and a bag for water in his hands. Once he had made it to the river, he started filling the bag with water. Abbas's loyalty to Husayn was so great, that Abbas did not drink any water because he could not bear the thought that Sakina was thirsty. After gathering the water, Abbas rode back towards the camp.

On his way back, he was struck from behind and one of his arms was amputated. Then, he was stuck from behind again, amputating his other arm. Abbas was now carrying the water-bag in his mouth. The army of Yazid ibn Muawiyah started shooting arrows at him. One arrow hit the water-skin and water poured out of it. At that moment, Abbas lost all hope. One of Yazid's men

hit his head with a mace and Abbas fell off his horse without the support of his arms. As he was falling, he called, "Ya Akkha" (Oh Master).[12]

He tossed on the burning sand with excruciating pain. He called for his master. Husayn immediately came to him lifting his head and taking it into his lap. He said "My brother what have they done to you?" Abbas replied, "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." Then he said, "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 fulfill 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. My third wish is that Sakina may not be brought here to see my plight. I know the love and affection she has for me. The sight of my dead body lying here will kill her." Husayn fulfilled his wishes. Husayn asked him for one last thing. Husayn said, "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." Abbas closed his eyes while repeating, "Husayn my brother, my Imam".

[4]

Shia historians say that this was the first time in his life that he called Husayn his brother.[15] He was killed on Friday, 10th Muharram 61 Hijri on the banks of the river Euphrates). Hence, he is called Hero of Al-Qamah (another name for the river Euphrates). His death is generally mourned on the 7th night of Muharram. Shia Muslims mourn the death of all martyrs of Islam associated with Husayn in the month of Muharram, the first of the Islamic calendar, mainly in the first ten days. See Remembrance of Muharram. Also, it has been recorded that Abbas killed 2415 warriors on the day of Ashura. [16]

Harsh Attitude with his Body

After the battle of Karbala ended, the dead bodies of the slain warriors were lying about without heads. The enemy forces decided to run their horses over the bodies. They did this in order to give maximum possible damages to the households of Muhammad and Ali. [citation needed]

Grave

Abbas was buried at that ground where he fell from his horse in Karbala, Iraq. Millions of

pilgrims visit the shrine and pay homage to it every year. The real grave of Abbas is beneath the masoulem, and is present in the shrine. Environmental effects have caused the Euphrates river's direction to change. Nearly 1400 years after the battle of Karbala, the river is flowing across the grave of Abbas, making a circle around it. It is said that the Euphrates has come to Abbas now. [17]

Honorific Titles

A summary of titles given various people are as follows:

Abu al-Fadl Abbas (Lang. Farsi, Translation "Father of virtue")

Abul Qasim (Lang. Arabic, Translation "Father of Qasim")

Abu Qurba (Lang. Arabic, Translation "The owner of the skin of water")

Shahen Shah-e-Wafa (Lang. Urdu, Translation "Sultan of Loyalty". Given by Shia's belonging to the Indian Subcontinent)

Qamar Bani Hashim (Lang. Arabic, Translation "Moon of the Hashemites". His father, Ali ibn Abu Talib announced this title during battle of Siffin)

Strength of Husayn

Alamdar (Lang. Farsi, Translation "Flag bearer". Husayn announced this title during battle of Karbala)

Saqqa (Lang. Arabic, Translation "Who Fetches Water". Sakina bint Hussain called him through this title during the battle of Karbala.)

Afza sh-Shuada (Lang. Arabic, Translation "Most Superior Martyr")

Babul Hawa'ij (Lang. Arabic, Translation "The door to fulfilling needs". In accordance with Shi'as, three persons are awarded with this title (Abbas ibn Ali, Ali Asghar ibn Hussain, and seventh Shia Imam Musa al Kazim). [18][2]

Shrine of Abbas

Shrine of Abbas is a soul-searching sight for the world. Emperors and kings of various dynasties have offered valuable gifts and gems to the shrine. It was designed by Persian and Central Asian architects. The brilliant splash of colors on the exterior and interior of the shrine are impressive. The central pear shaped dome is an ornately decorated structure. On its sides stand two tall minarets. The tomb is covered with pure gold and surrounded by a trellis of silver. Iranian carpets are rolled out on the floors. [19]

Horse of Abbas

Abbas was given a horse named "Auqab" (Eagle) .[20] This horse was used by Muhammad and Ali. This horse was presented to Muhammad by the King of Yemen, Saif ibn Zee Yazni, through Abdul Muttalib. The king considered the horse to be very important and its superiority over

other horses was evident by the fact that its genealogical tree was also maintained. It was initially named as "Murtajis". The name "Murtajis" comes from Arabic name "Rijis" which means thunder (lightning). Muhammad renamed it to "Auqab". Muhammad gave that horse to Ali and later on Ali gave it to Abbas. [20] [21]

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