Virtue of Hasan (a.s.)
Imam Hasan in the Mirror of Benevolence

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Abstract: *We select some sayings of imam Hasan from "Tuhaf al-'Uqul an Ale al-Rasul" by ibn Shube' Harrani and explain them. These wisdom words are taken from one of the Shia resources (i.e. Tuhaf al-'Uqul an Ale al-Rasul) which is of the most organized and beautiful works written during Shia history and is regarded of great research-based innovation.*

Introduction:

The author of the book "*Tuhaf al-'Uqul an Ale al-Rasul"* is "Abu-Muhammad Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Husayn ibn Shube' Harrani" lived in the fourth century. In his book first he mentioned an important sermon from one of the infallibles and then collected short sayings of them. Another feature which is very interesting is the point that author did not mention the chain of narrators and just sufficed to say "from the holy

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Prophet”عن رسول الله , “God said”قال الله … . The content of traditions are mostly ethical, religious and preaching. The name of the book is “ تحف العقول عن آل الرسول” (*Tuḥaf al-‘Uqul an Ale al-Rasul*): which means “ the gifts of wisdom from the family of Prophet”. This book is famous among religious scholars, although the documents of traditions are not mentioned, they pointed out to them. Now we bring a summary of the first tradition from imam Hasan Mujtaba cited in the chapter related to him here.

قيل له: ما الزهد؟ قال: " الرغبة فى التقوى و الزهادة فى الدنيا."

Imam Hasan was asked, “What is acetic?” he answered, “interest in piety and inattention to the world.”

Inattention to the world is a matter felt in heart. A pious person in his heart is reluctant to the world.

قيل: فما الحلم؟ قال: " كظم الغليظ و ملک النفس."

He was asked, “What is forbearance حلم?” he said, “suppressing anger and be owner of your soul.”

Forbearance has two parts: first كظم الغيظ which means a person should suppress his anger. When he gets angry and wants to shout, hesitates and does not do anything. Second “ ملک النفس” when his animal soul starts outbursting and eruption and is excited, he can control it. Sometimes those who are angry would say, if I get angry, I would not know even my father! I can’t understand anything, nothing can stop me, I even do not know myself!... they think that this is good. While it is the definite weakness! The meaning of these sentences is when I get angry I lose my logic. I become crazy. Between people who argue especially spouses it happens that one of them said: I got angry, then I did this. We say, we you got angry, could you came out of home while you were naked? He said, no, I never do this. We say, so you are not a crazy person! Still you have your mind. Losing mind while you are crazy is not what is proper in religious ethics. We have not heard from a person who could succeed suppressing his anger that he regrets and say, I am regretful why in that day I do not got angry; vice versa, those who got angry will regret. How frequent are the cases when we feel regretful but regret can not solve anything.

قيل: فما الشرف؟ قال: " اصطناع العشيرة و حمل الجريرة."

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It was asked, “What is nobility?” imam said, “kindness to relatives and compensating their mistakes.”

Our traditions include exact ethical points but unfortunately it seems necessary to cover these important points in colorful academic terms, otherwise we do not show interest in them. In the religion of Islam and Shia, a lot of points regarding social issues has been mentioned that we are not informed of them. One of these extensive advice is in this tradition. Human should be nice and help his immediate relatives, tribe, family members, … financially, spiritually and tries to compensate their mistakes. If they made a mistake and got into trouble, for example had an accident with someone and got hurt and was in hospital, others should take care of them. And do not say, it is his fault. It’s not my business. Nobility is when human is nice to his tribe and family, tries to compensate for his mistake to some extent, and whenever needed gives warning to them.

قيل: فما النجدة؟ قال: " الذب عن الجار و الصبر فی المواطن."

Imam Hasan was told, “What is brevity?” he answered, “Defending neighbors and patience at different situations.”

نجدة means helping out and brevity both.

I came up with a tradition about right of neighbor in which imam said, “The right of family is you do not annoy him; tolerate his annoyance and do not react.”

Defending a neighbor means if a neighbor is gossiping another neighbor, you defend the ansent neighbor and save his face. Another part of brevity is to be patient in the special sensitive situations.

قيل: فما المروة؟ قال: " حفظ الدين و إعزاز النفس و لين الكنف."

Again he asked, “What is magnanimity?” he said, “Keeping religion, honoring ….. and be good-tempered with people.”

Therefore first, human should save his religion and then do not humiliate himself, it means by controlling, guarding and paying attention to himself respect himself.” كنفmeans to support and guard. Is a person is wealthier, the impact of this magnanimity which is being kind is more. (It means magnanimity is a kind of wealth.)

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Wealth is not just money; money is one type of the wealth. If a person is more Knowledgeable, if his social credit is more, his words influence more, his actions have more impact, this person should be more humble; he should have a kind of personality that if anyone has a pain can tell him or if has a problem can talk about it or when in need can ask him and people can keep in touch with him easily. This is the meaning of لين الكنف.

قيل: فما الكرم؟ قال: " الابتداء بالعطية قبل المسالة و إطعام الطعام فى المحل."

They asked, "What is munificence? "Imam answered, "Donating before request and feeding at the time of hardship (famine)."

There was a knowledgeable person who passed away some years ago. About 30 years ago, one day, he called me and said, if you have financial need, tell me first. I said, ok. During this 30 years after his words I did not have any problem that I had to tell him; but his words were always like a strong mountain behind me. It is very valuable if human according to the sayings of imam before someone's request can answer his need. Those who act to solve people's problems, God will give them bounty and will solve people's problem by them. God will give them honor and will solve their problems fast. Therefore, before anyone's request, you start donation and listen to the problems of your friends and relatives.

Some people even are stingy for their own family. For example, their family wanted to go to a party and do not have proper clothes; they should say again and again to get money for new clothes! And some people also get used to nagging non-stop. Their usual habit is to hide their wealth and hoard. A stingy person will wake up when he is said,

اسمع افهم يا عبدالله و ابن عبدالله .... إذا أتاک الملکان المقربان...!

The munificent is answering someone's need before their request. Some get used to behaving the needy ones even their family in a way that they shoulbeg for everything. Therefore, we need to train ourselves that if we are going to do a good deed, for example help a mosque or religious ceremony, help before we are asked for.

It is very important that a person shows his magnanimity by helping before any request.

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The second part is to feed people who have problems and shortages. We all know some who have financial problems. We should think of them. If they are relatives, we should help them by different excuses and respectfully. Young people should practice this. They should show these magnanimity to see the blessings after that. Against a magnanimous person we have لئیم and بخیل mean and parsimonious. In traditions, friendship with these people and trading with them are forbidden.

قیل: فما اللوم؟ قال: " قلة الندی و أن ینطق بالخناء"

He was asked, what is menial? He answered, “Donate a little and have impolite vituperative tongue.”

ندی in word means palm of a hand. A menial person has a small palm. It means does not donate. His fists are closed. In this tradition, "ندی" referred to donation; it means no one could benefit from a menial person as a menial person is so tight-fisted.

As much as we close our hands, God will close His Hands as well. The amount of wealth is not important what is important is how this wealth is used.

A menial person is the one besides stinginess is a bad-mouthed and no one is safe from the razor of his tongue.

Teaching points from ethical codes of imam Hasan

When a religious school of thought or training program or a political idea is introduced, wise people at first hesitate accepting it; first they want to see how the trained ones by this school of thought, or program or idea behave. This point is very important. Regarding the training school of the holy Prophet, this question can be raised that: whom are they trained? Who are the role models prepared by them? Because one of the aspects of human instinct is to train human beings, he needs a role model. He desires to see first the model of what is presented to him first. Shia believe that – and could prove by Quran, logical reasoning, and traditions - the holy Prophet has trained thirteen individuals, from them four are directly trained by him: ‘Ali, Zahra, imam Hasan and Imam Husayn. Besides imam Hasan and Imam Husayn we see Omme-Kulthum and Zeinab. We are to introduce role models known as infallibles. The holy Prophet has trained four perfect role models in

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his life time. One of them is imam Hasan.

From the brief and useful books concerning the life of imams we could refer to a two volume book named "أذمتنا". Useful information from Shia source books are gathered in these books. Its author is 'Ali Muhammad 'Ali Dukhayil, who is Shia and lives in Lebanon. Whatever we mention about Imam Hasan is from his books:

1. قال الامام الصادق: حدثنى أبى عن أبيه: أن الحسن بن على بن أبى طالب كان أعبد الناس فى زمانه و أزهدهم و أفضلهم و كان إذا حج، حج ماشيا و ربما مشى حافيا و كان أذا ذكر الموت بكى و أذا ذكر القبر بكى و أذا ذكر البعث و النشور بكى و أذا ذكر الممر على الصراط بكى و أذا ذكر العرض على الله تعالى ذكره شهق شهقة يغشى عليه منها و كان إذا قام فى صلاته ترتعد فرائصه بين يدى ربه عزوجل و كان إذا ذكر الجنة و النار اضطرب اضطراب السليم و يسال الله الجنة و يعوذ به من النار و كان لا يقرا من كتاب الله عزوجل " يا ايها الذين آمنوا" إلا قال: لبيک اللهم لبيک و لم ير فى شيءٍ من أحواله إلا ذاكر الله سبحانه و كان أصدق الناس لهجةً و أفصحهم منطقاً.

Imam Sadiq said, "*My father narrated from his father that imam Hasan was the most God worshipper of his time, the most pious one, the most virtuous one. He walked to Hajj and sometimes he walked the path barefoot. Whenever he remembered death he cried and when he remembered grave he cried. When he remembered resurrection, drops of tears fell out of his eyes and when he remembered passing through the Sirat Bridge, he cried, when he remembered being present at the court of God, he cried until he fainted and when he stood up for pray- feeling standing in front of God- his back started shaking. When he remembered heaven and hell he twisted like a snake. He asked God for heaven and took shelter with Him from the Fire of hell. He did not recite any verse of Quran which started by "Oh, you believers!" unless he said, "Oh God! I am at your service" he was remembering God in all time. He was the most honest, the most eloquent person of his time.*"

2. حج خمسا و عشرين حجة ماشيا و إن النجايب لتقاد معه

"*He walked to Hajj from Medina 25 times and camels and horses were walking besides him.*" (But no one got on them.)

كان إذا توضا ارتعدت مفاصله، و اصفر لونه فقيل له فى ذلک فقال: " حق على كل من وقف بين يدى رب العرش أن يصفر لونه و ترتعد مفاصله و كان

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إذا بلغ باب المسجد يرفع رأسه و يقول: إلهی ضيفک ببابک يا محسن قد أتاک المسیء فتجاوز عن قبيح ما عندی بجميل ما عندک يا كريم.

When he took ablution for pray, his body shivered and turned pale. Someone asked him about this. He said, it is on each one who stands in front of his God to turn pale and his body shook. “

When he got to the entrance of a mosque, he looked up at skies and said, “*oh my Lord! Your guest is standing by your door, oh my benefactor! This bad servant of you is coming to your home. Forgive my ugliness by your beauties. Oh the Great Merciful Generous God*!”

In this tradition, it is imam Sajjad who is introducing imam Hasan. The topic of discussion is life style and moral code of imam Hasan which its result will be our revolution. Imam Hasan was the most pious and knowledgeable ones of his time. He walked from Medina to Mecca which was about 460 k.m in that hot weather of that time. He did this to show his obedience to God. He walked a long distance barefoot. When he remembered death, he could not stop crying. When he remembered graves cried.

But we have no fear. Why? Because we do not have that knowledge, faith and belief that he had.

Imam Hasan cried so hard that he fainted. When he stood up for pray – by feeling standing in front of God- his back started to shake.

A meaning of سليم is someone who is stung by snake. In the holy verses of Quran when he read about heaven and hell, he twisted himself and said, “oh God! Hell or heaven? Heaven or Fire?” Imam Hasan was informed about Shafa‘at (meddling) and he himself is one of the meddlers. He knew about Shifa’ah of holy Prophet of him. But out of fear of God, heaven and hell, noticing details of behavior caused him to react like that. It may come to one’s mind that these words are exaggeration but see from whom I am quoting: imam Sadiq. His words are words of God. He is not a journalist or newsman to say something to catch eyes.

Whenever that grandchild of Prophet recited Quran and reached this part: ***oh who you believe! Answered, I am at your service.***

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He was told you are the son of the holy Prophet. You have a special position in front of God. Why are you like that?

He said, "*There is no wonder if a person who is standing in front of the Lord of all universe becomes pale and starts shaking*."

I should say something here. There are some characteristics that make us apart from God. They are common between men and women, open-minded or not open-minded, literate and illiterate, old and young, poor and rich. One of them is this: we all forget we are servant of God.

From the life style of holy Prophet and imam Hasan and other infallibles we can conclude that they put signs on the way of their life like a traveler. This is to remind them they are servants of God. Now, if we all always remember that we are servants of God and do not forget this, our behavior would be different from now. تذکر changes people's manner. Generally people do not remember God. Our way of thinking is different from imam Hasan's thinking. For this reason, the practical method of muslims is different from infallibles'. The foundation of imam Hasan's behavior is this: I am the servant of God.

In this tradition, the word mosque is mentioned, mosque is the place of prostrating and prostrating means put your forehead on the soil which is the symbol of humbleness. In our face, forehead is the top part. It means we should put our most important member of our body on the less valuable things in the world which is soil. It means we should be humble. This religious practice is the highest point in servitude. Mosque for imam Hasan is a place where he could go up to 'Arsh by putting his foot in the stairs of servitude.

The stairs going up to the 'Arsh are through falling on the soil and breaking the sense of pride inside ourself.

The spirit of being pride in young people is dominant. The perfect role model of young of heaven (Imam Hasan) put his step in the stairways of servitude and said,

ضیفک بباک. یا محسن قد أتاک المسیء فتجاوز عن قبیح ما عندی بجمیل ما عندک یا کریم.

If we consider this tradition as a logical principle, the result would be the gist of following hadith:

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إن شاميا رآه راكبا فجعل يلعنه و الحسن لا يرد، فلما فرغ، أقبل الحسن عليه و ضحک و قال: " أيها الشيخ أظنک غريبا و لعلک شبهت، فلو استعتبتنا أعتبناک و لو سألتنا أعطيناک و لو استرشدتنا أرشدناک و لو استحملتنا حملناک و إن كنت محتاجا أغنيناک و إن كنت طريدا آويناک و إن كانت لک حاجة قضيناها لک ، فلو حركت رحلک إلينا و كنت ضيفنا إلى وقت ارتحالک، كان أعود عليک، لأن لنا موضعا رحبا، و جاها عريضا و مالا كبيرا.

فلما سمع الرجل كلامه بكى. ثم قال: أشهد أنک خليفة الله فى أرضه، الله أعلم حيث يجعل رسالته و كنت أنت و أبوک أبغض خلق الله إلى و الان أنت أحب خلق الله إلى و حول رحله إليه و كان ضيفه إلى أن ارتحل و صار معتقدا لمحبتهم.

A man from Shaam saw imam Hasan while imam Hasan was riding on a camel. He started cursing, but imam did not answer him. When he became quite, imam turned to him and said kindly, I guess you are stranger and you have mistaken me with another one. If you ask me anything, I will give you and if you are looking for a guide, I will show you the way, if you need to get on a camel, I let you; if you are in need of something, I meet your need. If you don't have a shelter, I give you. If you come to my house and stay there before you leave this city, it is better for you. We have a big guest room and we can afford taking care of you. When this man heard him, cried and said, I testify that you are the caliph of God on earth. God knows better where to put His mission. You and your father were the most hated ones in my eyes, but now you are the most beloved ones. Then he went to imam's home and was there until his departure from that city. The citizens of Shaam took grudge against 'Ali and imam Hasan. Because Shaam was the home of Mu'awiyah and he as much as he could propagated against them. The rumors of Mu'awiyah's agents against him were spread there first, then they reached other cities. Therefore, shaam was against him. In our daily life, we say to those who have problems with others, forgive him/her. But they say, no, I can't. This person bothers me and harms me a lot. If he did not harm, you want to forgive what? After all, chivalry finds its meaning when some one's right is oppressed. Some people could not forgive. What is the root of enmity? arrogance and forgetting God. All financial, personal, emotional disputes start from this. Imam Hasan smiled at that old man. Imam Hasan is a clear example of some one who is trained in the school of someone about whom God has sent:

انک لعلى خلق عظيم

The man from Shaam cursed imam Hasan and his father. But he heard good

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things in return. This is the true morality of a person who is the leader of Shia. This is the manner and the life style of a person raised by holy Prophet.

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