

Stories From The Chosen Ones

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This text is a brief collection of anecdotes highlighting moral and ethical lessons from the lives of Prophet Muhammad (S), Imam ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (‘a), Imam Hasan (‘a) and Imam Husayn (‘a).

These stories emphasize justice, generosity, compassion, and truthfulness, showcasing how these individuals upheld these principles in various situations, leaving lasting impacts on those around them and clear behaviour to follow for whomever strived to be a true Shi’a.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Equality Before Law

One day 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) was passing through the market of Kufa. He heard a voice and went towards it. A man who appeared to be either a Christian or Jewish was holding a mail of armour and announcing its sale. The mail of armour being a good one attracted the attention of 'Ali ('a) who had lost his own. 'Ali ('a) being a warrior and campaigner against the enemies of God was in need of such.

He went closer and took the mail of armour in his hands and carefully examined it. It seemed familiar to him. Finally he was sure that it was his own. He told the Christian to give it back to him as it belonged to him and it had been lost for some time. The Christian got angry; snatched it away from 'Ali's ('a) hands and said that it belonged to none but to him.

Because of their arguing people gathered around them. They recognized 'Ali ('a), as he was their leader and the Caliph of God. They knew that Ali was telling the truth. Hence, they wanted to help him in getting his right from a Christian. But 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) refrained them from doing so.

Again, 'Ali ('a) approached the man more politely and requested him to return the mail of armour back to him since it brought back memories of past battles and Holy wars he had fought against the pagans and the hypocrites.

As the Christian insisted upon his refusal, 'Ali ('a) proposed to him to refer the dispute to a "Qadhi" (Judge). The Christian agreed to the proposal, both proceeded towards the court of law and the people too followed them.

The Qadhi upon seeing 'Ali ('a), the leader of the Muslims and the Caliph of God, got up from his seat and gave his respects to him. 'Ali ('a) told the Qadhi: "We have come here for judgment. The duty of a judge is to hear both parties equally. I want you to judge between us impartially."

The judge was an educated one in the school of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) and he was honest. After a formal talk the judge took his seat and the two, 'Ali ('a) and the Christian, took their seats facing the judge.

The judge asked: "What is the dispute?"

'Ali ('a) said: "The mail of armour, which is now with this man, is actually mine. It has been some time now that I have lost it, and now it is with this man. However he claims it as his property."

The judge asked the Christian: "What do you have to say in return to 'Ali's ('a) claim?"

The Christian said: "The mail of armour is mine. I will not part with it."

This time the judge turned to 'Ali ('a) and said: "You are claiming that it is yours. One who claims so should produce two witnesses. The witnesses should be of a reputation and standing so that their testimony could be creditable to the court. If you have such witnesses please bring them to the court to

give evidence.”

‘Ali (‘a) replied: “No, I don’t have any witnesses.”

Then the judge said: “So, the mail of armour then goes to this man.”

At this the proceedings of the court ended. The Christian was pleased with the judgement. Each went his way out of court. The Christian while on his way to the bazaar gave a second thought of the whole affair; he knew ‘Ali (‘a) and his position.

His courage and bravery was also known to him. ‘Ali (‘a) could have easily taken his mail of armour from him. But he did not do so. He preferred the proceedings of the court and ignored his own right, astonished at such conduct the Christian hurried back to the court.

The judge and the people were still there. The Christian shouted: “O Muslims! I am amazed at this judgement. I can’t believe that a court of Muslims, administered by a Muslim judge, should pass its sentence in my favour and against their own Caliph. Such a justice could only survive in the schools of the apostles on which such courts are founded. I, a Christian, enjoy an equal treatment with the Caliph of Muslims. Only a divine law could give such a treatment. This court and this law represent the truth of your religion. Hence, I embrace such a faith which was yours and now is mine too.”

The Reward Of Good

Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn, peace be upon them, were travelling for pilgrimage– “Hajj”. Their cousin, Abdullah Ibn Ja’far, too was with them. On the way it so happened that they lagged and were left behind. In the barren desert they were alone and continued on the way till they were overcome by thirst and hunger. Tired, hungry and thirsty they had no alternative but to go on.

Suddenly they saw a tent in the burning furnace of the desert’s sands. A gleam of hope glimmered as they saw the tent. All three thanked God as they stumbled in the direction of the tent. When they reached it, they stood at the entrance and saluted the insiders loudly. Upon hearing their salutation an old woman came out. She too saluted them and invited them to enter.

The three entered the tent. The old woman inquired into their identity and their destiny. They introduced themselves to her and informed her about their plight. They also told her about their thirst and hunger.

The old lady went Out of the tent and returned after some time with a sheep. She asked them to milk the sheep and drink the milk. The guests did accordingly. As they drank the milk their thirst squelched. Then the old woman joined them to butcher the sheep and in the meanwhile she would gather some dry wood for the fuel for cooking.

The three guests butchered the sheep. The old woman prepared the fire, and the meat was cooked. A

good tasty meal was thus cooked. The hungry guests ate the meal, which relaxed them greatly. They thanked the old woman and told her to visit them whenever she happened to come to Medina. The three guests said goodbye to the old woman and left going on their way.

As the night hailed, the old woman's husband returned home from the desert. The old woman told him of the day's event. The story incensed him. He got angry with his wife because she had sacrificed their only sheep for the guests. The wife justified her action because the guests were from the Quraish tribe and from the family of the Prophet (S).

A year passed and a dry season took over the desert. All the meadows turned dry and sheep died. The cruel drought dispersed his tent dwellers of the desert. They migrated to towns. The old woman, along with her husband went to Medina. Finding no resource the old couple took to collecting camel dung from the streets.

One day, Imam Hasan ('a) was passing through the street. He saw the old woman and recognized her. He thought it obligatory to compensate her for the good deed, which she had done for them. But he did not approach the old woman, thinking that it might shame her.

He went to his house and sent his servant to bring her to him as she was brought to him. He asked whether she remembered him. She answered in the negative. Then he reminded her that he was one of those guests whom she had welcomed in her tent.

Imam Hasan ('a) ordered his servant to buy a thousand sheep for her and give her a thousand Dinars and then guide her to his Brother Imam Husayn's ('a) house. Imam Husayn ('a) too gave her a thousand for her and sent her to his cousin Abdullah's house. Abdullah too gave her a thousand Dinars and a thousand sheep.

The old woman was astonished at such generosity, for now had heaped a fortune. She returned to her husband with the money and the herd of sheep. The old woman was therefore rid of his hardships of poverty and became rich. The generosity of these three personalities bewildered the people who heard of it and envied the old woman.

Co-Traveller

The sixth Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq ('a) has narrated this story.

One day my grandfather, Lord of the Faithful, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a), was travelling. A pagan (who was under the guardianship of Islam) was also travelling along with him. He did not know 'Ali ('a). The pagan asked 'Ali ('a) about his destination. 'Ali ('a) informed him that he was going to Kufa.

The pagan said: "Then we shall be companions for a long time, as I too am bound up to the crossing road where we shall have to part each other."

They proceeded on their journey until they finally reached the point where each was to go his own way. But the pagan noticed that his companion was still following him.

The pagan said: "You wanted to go to Kufa; didn't you?" 'Ali ('a) replied: "Yes. I am on my way to Kufa".

The pagan then said: "Well, therefore you are on the wrong path, for this road will not lead you to Kufa."

Hazrat 'Ali ('a) replied: "I know that this is not the way to Kufa, and that it will never lead me there."

The pagan then asked: "If you know that this road will not lead you to Kufa, then why are you following it?"

Hazrat 'Ali ('a) answered: "Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) has taught us that it is not proper for a man to abruptly separate from his companion, but to gradually separate."

This tradition said: "These high morals of your Prophet (S) have led and attracted many followers."

He then continued: "From this moment, I too am a follower of your Prophet (S) and religion."

The pagan after becoming a Muslim, continued on with Hazrat 'Ali ('a) to Kufa.

The Blessed Money

The Prophet (S) lived a very simple life. His life did not differ with that of the majority of the people. He was poor among the poor and humble among the humble ones. His life was so ordinary that it was difficult to recognize him among the people when he was not engaged in speaking among his companions. One was obliged to ask: "From among you who is the Prophet?"

The greatness of the Prophet (S) was in his conduct. Beyond this he was quite at parity with others whether it be the aspect of food, clothing and dress or else. During times of hardship or any havoc his patience and endurance surpassed others. Whatever the Prophet (S) had was spent in the interests of the needy ones. Present, which were given to the person of the Prophet (S) was spent for the good of others.

The Prophet (S) had been wearing a shirt for quite a long time, it was old and almost worn out, one of his friends had contributed a sum of twelve Dirhams and insisted that the money was meant for the personal use of the Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) gave the money to 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a) and asked him to buy a shirt.

'Ali ('a) went to the market and purchased a shirt for the Prophet (S). When the Prophet (S) saw the shirt, he said; "Yes, it is a good one, but a cheaper one would make me happier." The shirt was a little better than what his companions had worn; The Prophet (S) asked 'Ali ('a) whether the seller would take back the shirt in return for a cheaper one. 'Ali ('a) replied that he would go and ask the seller.

‘Ali (‘a) returned to the market. The seller did not have a cheaper shirt. So, he took the shirt back and returned the money of twelve Dirhams. This time the Prophet (S) accompanied ‘Ali (‘a) to the market. On the way a girl was weeping.

The Prophet (S) asked the girl the reason for her grief. The girl informed the Prophet that she had lost four Dirhams given to her at home by the lady to purchase some goods for her. The Prophet (S) consoled her and gave her four Dirhams and asked her to purchase what she had been sent for. The girl, relieved, continued on happily.

‘Ali (‘a) narrates that the Prophet proceeded to the market. He purchased a very ordinary shirt for four Dirhams. He thanked God for His providing a shirt to him; and prayed:

“O, God, Bless this shirt and bless my body wearing it with health and safety.”

‘Ali (‘a) says that we were now on our way back home. We saw a man in a torn shirt asking the people to provide him a shirt, so that god may provide them with a heavenly dress. The Prophet (S) approached him and took his newly bought shirt off of his body and put back on his old one, he then gave his new shirt to the man.

The man thanked the prophet and went away. The Prophet (S) said: “If any Muslim for the sake of God covers the body of another Muslim, he will be in the safety of God for as long as the dress exists on the Muslim’s body.”

‘Ali (‘a) says that we returned to the market once more. The Prophet (S) purchased a shirt for four Dirhams and thanked God just as before. Then we started back home. On the way we saw the girl whom the Prophet (S) had helped before, still sitting by the side of the road.

The Prophet (S) asked the girl as to why she did not return back home and whether she had made the purchase for which she was sent. The girl replied that she had made the purchase, but the delay that entailed her prevented her from returning back home fearing punishment.

The Prophet (S) told her not to worry and that he would accompany her home and explain the matter to her lady. The girl was happy. We followed her home. The Prophet (S) loudly saluted the owners of the home, but no answer came. He repeated it again however one answered him. The Prophet (S) saluted for a third time. This time someone answered the Prophet (S).

The door was opened. The Prophet (S) entered the house. The Prophet (S) told the landlady as to whether his voice was not heard the first two times. She replied that she loved the voice so much that she did not answer back so as to hear it again and again.

The lady inquired into the reason for the visit. The Prophet (S) said that it was not the girls’ fault in being late and that he had come to personally explain what had happened. The lady then said that, for the honour of his visit she would free the slave girl.

The Prophet (S) was glad of this and thanked the lady and thanked God. On his way back he told ‘Ali (‘a): “How blessed were those twelve Dirhams! Two men were glad and a slave girl got her freedom.”

Toil For The Sake Of God But For The People

‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (‘a) had taken to farming and gardening for his livelihood and to help the orphans and needy ones.

Once in the skirts of Medina, ‘Ali (‘a) bought some land, which was dry and barren. ‘Ali (‘a) decided to dig a well there and to irrigate the land. So he chose a suitable location and started digging. Days passed and ‘Ali (‘a) was busy with the task. From morning till evening he toiled. He dug deeper and deeper but did not reach water.

One day, ‘Ali (‘a) picked up his tool and went into the well, which he had dug so far. ‘Ali (‘a) remained long inside at work. Then wearied and fatigued he came out, brushed the sweat from his forehead, and rested. Soon, he again entered the well. ‘Ali (‘a) worked so hard that his heavy breathing could be heard from above the well. After some time of digging hard, water burst up from inside the bed and gushed out with force and pressure.

‘Ali (‘a) quickly came out of the well. The force of the water was strong. People gathered around in wonder to see the flow. Some were pleased and congratulated ‘Ali (‘a) while others felt jealous. Some said: “‘Ali (‘a) is a good man, and God too has favoured him.”

Some said: “‘Ali (‘a) is a hardworking man and did not leave the job till got the result.”

Some said: “Now ‘Ali (‘a) and his children have become rich.”

‘Ali (‘a) asked his gardener to bring a pen and paper to him. When the gardener brought the pen and paper to him, he retired to a corner and wrote this:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I have devoted this well and the lands surrounding it to the people provided that its income should be spent in the following ways:

1. For the help of the needy and poor ones.

2. For the help of those who happen to be penniless on their way to their destinations.
3. For the marriage of orphan boys and orphan girls.
4. For the treatment of the sick ones.
5. For the good deeds of common interests to all.

His will ended thus:

This well and the lands I have devoted for the sake of God, so as to serve good to me in the next world and protect me from the fire of hell.

Signed: 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib ('a).

Paragon Of Truth

The Prophet of Islam (S) had a son named Ibrahim and he was very dear to him. It was God's will that he should die during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S). By chance, it so happened that when Ibrahim died there was an eclipse of the sun.

Some of the Muslims and non-Muslims attributed this phenomenon to the fact that Ibrahim's father was indeed the messenger of God. And that, this occurrence was a warning to those who were non-believers to stop their non-believing ways and to become followers and believers in the Holy Prophet (S). Because of this, they gathered around the Prophet's (S) house requesting him to convert them to Islam.

The Prophet (S) realised that the people had misunderstood the phenomenon, he then left his house and invited them to gather at the Mosque, and the Holy Prophet (S) ascended the pulpit. Then quickly but clearly he said: "The eclipse of the moon or the sun is a natural occurrence and should not be attributed to my son's death. The eclipse of the moon or sun has nothing to do with the birth or death of any person."

Ibrahim was the Prophet's (S) only son and he loved him dearly. When Ibrahim died, the Holy Prophet (S) cried and mourned his death, so that the Prophet's (S) companions and friends were surprised at his weeping and mourning.

The Holy Prophet (S) realised their shock at his crying and said: "Do not be so surprised by the fact that

my heart is broken, nor of my tears.” He then addressed his young dead son and said: “Oh! Ibrahim, your departure hunts and fills me with grief, however, I am resigned to the will of God.”

The Prophet’s (S) companions could still not comprehend the situation, until finally one of his companions approached the Prophet (S) and asked: “Oh, Prophet of Allah! Is it correct for the messenger of God to be upset and hurt over the death of his child?”

The Prophet (S) answered: “By nature man loves his offspring, and I too, like you, am human. To love and care is a Divine Blessing given to us by God? Each and every person should care and love for his offspring, and if his child departs this world, he should grieve and mourn for him.”

He added: “Everyone has the right to mourn for the loss of his dear ones, but not to the extent of encouraging God’s wrath.”

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