

The Status of Martyrdom in Islam

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All the nations of the world view the word 'martyrdom' as sacred and holy. Martyrdom refers to lay down one's life while defending one's religion or nation or while protecting life or wealth. The people look up a martyr with great reverence. However, the importance given to a martyr and martyrdom by the holy Islamic Shariat cannot be found in any nation or religion. Especially the concept of martyrdom elucidated by the Infallible Imams (a.s.) cannot be matched. As per the traditions of holy Imams (a.s.), apart from being martyred while defending the nation and the self, a person who dies on the love of progeny of Mohammad (s.a.w.a.) dies the death of a martyr. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

"One who dies on the love of the progeny of Mohammad, dies a death of a martyr

Causes of Martyrdom

To lay down ones life while fighting in the way of Allah, to get killed while protecting life and wealth, getting slain while protecting the life of holy personalities, laying down life while fighting against the enemies of Imam (a.s.), dying as captive, getting killed while defending the Muslims and dying on the love of the progeny of Mohammad (s.a.w.a.) are the different causes through which one attains martyrdom

Struggle in the way of Allah

This struggle in the way of Allah is waged for strengthening Islam or to implement its laws. Both are clear instances of struggle in the way of Allah. Regarding this Allah, the High says in the Holy Qura'n "And strive hard in (the way of) Allah, (such) a striving as is due to Him; He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion; the faith of your father Ibrahim; He named you Muslims before and in this, that the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be bearers of witness to the people; therefore keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast by Allah; He is your Guardian; how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper! (Surah Hajj (22) : 78)

There are numerous verses in the Holy Qur'an which encourages struggle in the way of Allah. A number of traditions have also emphasized struggle in the way of Allah. Abu Hamza says I heard Abu Jaffar (a.s.) saying: "Surely I heard Ali ibne Husain (a.s.) narrating that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: "The most beloved drop of blood in front of Allah is the drop of blood in the way of Allah."

(Wasaaelush Shiah, vol. 6, pg. 10, tradition 20)

In another tradition, while explaining the virtues of struggle in the way of Allah, Sakooni narrates from Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) who narrates from his forefathers that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said

"For every good deed there is another good deed superior to it till getting killed in the way of Allah. There is no bigger good deed than getting killed in the way of Allah." (Wasaaelush Shiah, vol. 6, pg. 10, tradition 21)

It is related in another tradition, "One who gets killed in the way of Allah, Allah will not account anything from his sins (i.e. Allah will forgive all his sins.) (Wasaaelush Shiah, vol. 6, pg. 9, tradition 19)

Struggle Against the Self

A great emphasis has been laid on struggle against the self. It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) sent the army of Islam for war. When they returned victoriously, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while congratulating them said: "Congratulation to the people who performed struggle in the way of Allah. Now bigger struggle is remaining for them. People enquired from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about bigger struggle. He (s.a.w.a.) replied: To struggle against the self." (Wasaaelush Shiah, vol. 6, Chapter of Jehaad against the self, pg.122, tradition. 1)

In another tradition, it has been narrated that man should be alert against his enemy i.e. his own-self or else his own-self will destroy him. Mufazzal ibne Umar naarates from Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

"If the heart of a person does not advise him nor warms him about his self nor is a guiding friend then his enemy will overpower him." (Wasaaelush Shiah, vol. 6, Chapter of Jehaad against the self, pg.123, tradition 5) For further details on struggle in the way of Allah against the self, readers may refer to Wasaaelush Shiah, vol. 6

Laws pertaining to a Martyr in the Battlefield

A person by the permission of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) or Imam (a.s.) is killed in the battlefield, then as per the traditions, he should be buried in the same clothes without the ceremonial bath (Ghusl), after reciting Namaaz-e-Mayyit. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"One who is killed in the way of Allah, he should be buried in the same clothes without giving him the ceremonial bath! (Wasaaelush Shiah, vol. 9, pg.112, Chapter of Ghusl of Dead) Ayatullah Seestaani (may Allah grant him a long life) says, "A person who is injured while fighting in the way of Allah dies before the army of Islam reaches him then none from the three baths will be given to him."

(Minhaajul Saleheen, vol. 1, pg. 100 Mas'alah No. 282) It is narrated concerning the shroud of the martyr that he should be buried in the same clothes except leather coat or a thing like it. Khaf (one type of shoes) should be removed. In another tradition, it is mentioned that if blood is present on it then the same should not be removed.

Namaaz-e-Mayyit is to be recited on the corpse of the martyr.

Ali ibne Ibrahim in his Tafseer writes under the context of battle of Ohad that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) ordered that the corpses of the martyrs to be collected. Then he (s.a.w.a.) recited Namaaz-e-Mayyit and buried them. (Mustadarkul Wasaael, vol.2, pg. 265, tradition. 15) Shaheed in his book Sharh Luma'h Al-Demishqiya writes, "A martyr need not be given the ceremonial bath and shrouded and he should be buried after reciting namaaz-e-mayyit."

((Sharh Luma'h, vol. 1, Kitaabut Taharah, Baabo Ahkami Ghusl-e-Mayyit, pg. 126-127

Laws pertaining to martyr after the battle

'One who dies in a strange land, dies a death of a martyr, one who dies while acquiring knowledge, dies the death of a martyr; one who dies on Friday, dies the death of a martyr, one who dies on the love of the progeny of Mohammad (s.a.w.a.), dies a death of a martyr.' And the others who die due to plague, or diseases, Mabtoon or one who dies due to falling of wall on him or the woman who dies in the condition of Nefas or the person who dies while protecting life and wealth. In all these conditions, Ghusl and shroud is obligatory and namaaz-e-mayyit will also be recited.

(Sharh Luma'h, Kitaabut Taharah, Ahkam Ghusl-e-Ammwaat, pg. 126) In Daimul Islam, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that he (as.) said: "A martyred dies in the battlefield then he should be buried in the same clothes without the ceremonial baths (Ghusl). And if he is alive before his death in the battlefield then he should be given ceremonial bath (Ghusl) and Kafan."

((Mustadarkul Wasaael, vol.2, pg. 278, tradition. 1

Status of a Martyr

To talk about the status of a martyr is like lighting a lamp before the sun. But taking in to account its importance, we feel it necessary to discuss this issue. Allah, the High says in the Holy Qura'n "And if you are slain in the way of Allah or you die, certainly forgiveness from Allah and mercy is better than what they amass." (Aale Imran (3): 157)

"And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive (and) are provided sustenance from their Lord; Rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His grace and they rejoice for the sake of those who, (being left) behind them, have not yet joined them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. They rejoice on account of favor from Allah

and (His) grace, and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers." (Aale Imran (3) :
169 - 171)

"..and (as for) those who are slain in the way of Allah, He will by no means allow their deeds to perish. He will guide them and improve their condition. And cause them to enter the garden which He has made known to them." (Mohammad (47) : 4-6)

"Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have the garden; they fight in Allah's way, so they slay and are slain; a promise which is binding on Him in the Taurat and the Injeel and the Quran; and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Rejoice therefore in the pledge which you have made; and that is the mighty achievement." (Taubah (9) : 111)

"and whoever fights in the way of Allah, then be he slain or be he victorious, We shall grant him a mighty reward." (Nisa (4) :74)

The first verse points towards the forgiveness and mercy of Allah to the martyr. While the second verse talks about the gathering of martyr towards Allah. And the third verse deals with the spiritual life of the martyr, his enjoying Allah's sustenance and the satisfaction of martyr with Allah while there will be no fear or sorrow. The fourth verse discusses that their actions are not nullified, improvement in their affairs and entering in paradise on the Day of Judgment is promised. In the fifth verse, Allah has shown Himself as purchaser of people's souls and has given glad-tidings about it and regarded it a superior success.

The status of a martyr is made more explicit in the traditions. Numerous traditions have been quoted in this regard. We will quote a few of them. 1. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) narrates a tradition from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he (s.a.w.a.) said: "The best death is martyrdom." (Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 10, pg. 8, tradition. 4) 2. 'The foremost person to enter paradise is the martyr.' 3. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has narrated a tradition from his ancestors that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: "Three groups will seek intercession from Allah on the Day of Judgment, then He will accept their intercession. They are Prophets then the Scholars then martyrs." (Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 10, pg. 2 tradition. 24) 4. Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) narrates a tradition from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he (s.a.w.a.) said "Seven characteristics will be given to a martyr by Allah. The seventh characteristic is that the martyr will turn towards Allah, which will be a source of satisfaction for all the prophets and the martyrs." (Wasaaelush Shiah, vol. 11, (pg. 9, tradition. 20

Position of Martyr

"They rejoice on account of favor from Allah and (His) grace, and that Allah will not waste the reward of the believers." (Aale Imran (3) : 171)

The above verse is a proof that martyrs are alive along with their bodies and soul. And Allah has bestowed them this perfect characteristic. Abdullah ibne Abbas has narrated a tradition from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he (s.a.w.a.) said: Allah has placed the soul of the martyrs in the stomach of a green hen. So that they can drink water from the sea of paradise. They eat the fruits of the trees of the paradise and they move around in the paradise wherever they

desire. Their aim and their refuge is Allah. Then Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: When the martyrs see their position they ask Allah, O our Lord! We wish that our near ones and relatives see these positions. A reply will come to them from the side of Allah. We will inform them about it so that they may become happy. At that time the above verse was revealed. It has been narrated in the traditions that the dead bodies of Prophets, scholars, martyrs and carrier of the Holy Qura'n do not disintegrate but remain unblemished.

It is narrated from Imam Ali ibne Moosa Reza (a.s) that once Ameerul Momeneen (a.s.) was explaining the virtues of struggle and was motivating the people to take part in it. At that time a person stood up and asked, 'What will a person who goes for struggle in the way of Allah will get? Ameerul Momeneen (a.s.) replied!

"The same question I had posed before the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while he was sitting on his camel and Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied to me thus, 'When a warrior intends for struggle, Allah makes him far from the hell. When he gets ready for the fight, Allah prides Himself among His angels. When he bids farewell to his family, the house and the walls cry over him. He comes out from his sins like a snake comes out from its hole. Allah appoints 40,000 angels to guard him from all sides. Allah multiplies the rewards of his good deeds. Everyday, the reward of worship of 1000 men, who have worshipped for 100 years, is written in his account. When he faces the enemy, nobody in the world can encompass his reward. When he fights with his spear and sword, angels come near him and pray for his help and steadfastness. An announcer announces that paradise is under the shadow of the sword. Due to the rewards, when a Muslim is inflicted with injury, he endures it and its feeling is like drinking cold water in summer. When he falls from his horse, before he reaches the ground, heavenly fairies come to him and give him glad tidings of rewards which Allah has stored for him. When he falls on the ground, these fairies congratulate him and say that peace be on the pure soul which has emerged from a pure body. They congratulate him and say Allah has kept such reward from him which neither any ear has heard nor any eyes have seen it nor any heart has comprehended.

Then Allah says, I am his Guardian and Guardian of his family. Whoever pleases them has pleased Me. And whoever angers them has angered Me. Allah will bestow each martyr 70

rooms in paradise. The distance between each room will be equal to the distance between Sanaa (Yemen) and Syria. The light in each room will be such, which will illuminate the East and the West. Every room will be having 70 doors and each door will have 70 brocades. Every door will have a veil. Every room will have 70 tents. And each tent will have 70 platforms. Its legs will be of sapphire and chrysolite. On each platform, there will be 40 beds. On each bed, there will be two fairies with all their embellishments.

The man requested Ameerul Momeneen (a.s.) to describe the fairies. Ameerul Momeneen (a.s.) said:

They are gorgeous and attractive. They will be having 1000 maids and 1000 slaves. Their face will be like a moon. Their crown will be of pearls and corals. They will have their veils on their shoulders. They will be carrying cups as if it is the Day of judgment and they are in there places. By Allah in whose hand is the life of Mohammad, if prophets come in their way, they will come down from their mount. The martyrs will come and stand at the place of Intercession. Each martyr will intercede on behalf of 70,000 sinners. He will intercede for his family, neighbors and friends. Two neighbors will argue that they are more entitled for his intercession as he was closer to him. They will sit with us and Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) on the food table in paradise. Allah will look upon them with mercy. They will enjoy the rewards of Allah, (morning and evening. (Tafseer-e-Jilaul Azhaan, Gaazor, vol 2, pg. 151-153

Effects of the Martyr

It is a fact that we cannot encompass the effects of martyrdom. As there are worldly effects of a martyr, there are many spiritual effects also. For instance, martyrdom leads to the emotion of sacrifice in the way of religion, similar feeling is instilled for protection of religion. Martyrdom teaches us to sacrifice our most beloved things in the way of religion. Also, it becomes a light for the guidance of people. It instills the feeling of struggle among our children. On the other hand, it becomes the cause of freedom from poverty. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says:

"All goodness is found in sword, beneath the sword and under the shadow of the sword. Men cannot be steadfast except with sword. And sword is key of paradise and hell."

(Wasaaelush Shiah, vol. 11, Chapter of struggle, pg. 5, tradition 1) It has been narrated in another tradition that to drive poverty away from you, perform struggle. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

"There is a door in paradise which is called as 'Door of Mujahedeen.' The Mujahedeen will go to that door and will find it opened for them. They will come to the door with their sword. They will be gathering there and angels will be welcoming them. Whoever leaves struggle, Allah will disgrace and humiliate him. He will be involved in poverty; his name will be written among the

destroyers of religion. Then Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: Allah has made my nation self sufficient through the hooves of the horses and the spears.": (Wasaaelus Shiah, vol. 11, Chapter of struggle, pg. 5, tradition 2)

It has been narrated in another tradition that whoever desires to make his children tough difficulties then do struggle. Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) says that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: "Do struggle and find your children in inheritance diligent." (Wasaaelus Shiah, vol. 11, Chapter of (Jehaad, pg. 9, tradition 16