

## Valour of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.)

Like his respected father, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) was also fond of worship. Most of his nights passed in wakefulness and in remembrance of Allah. The better part of the day was also spent in worship. Similar was the case of his fasts. Most of the time he used to observe fasts. When he stood up in the prayer niche his body shook with the fear of the Almighty. As long as he sat in a gathering, the glorification of God was on his lips. Once someone asked him why he worshipped so much? He began to weep and said, "Ugh! You call it excessive worship? While I consider it nothing with regard to the glory and the magnificence of the Lord."

Once, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s) delivered a sermon in the Holy Mecca and said, "We are the favorite and chosen servants of God, and His vicegerents on the face of the earth. One who obeys us is successful and one who opposes would be evil and wretched."

Someone conveyed these statements to Hisham, the ruler of Syria. He summoned Imam Ja'far as Sadiq (a.s) and Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) to Damascus. When the two Holy Imams (a.s) reached the court of Syria, Hisham was practicing archery with his officials. He said to Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s): You also try shooting the target. Imam (a.s) said, "I have become aged and cannot perform archery." Hisham said in a taunting manner, "You are the selected servant of God. You claim that you possess special expertise in every field. Archery is easy for you." Saying this he gestured his men to hand over to the Imam the bow and arrows. Imam (a.s) took hold of the bow, fixed an arrow and shot it at the eye of the target. It hit the target right at the center. The Imam fixed another arrow and shot it. It penetrated into the tail of the first arrow. He continued till he had shot altogether nine arrows one after the other. Seeing this unimaginable feat Hisham was embarrassed.

He did not utter a word for a long time. The two Holy Imams (a.s) also remained silent for sometime. Then Imam Baqir (a.s) became infuriated. Hisham gauged his moods and he seated each of them beside himself and said, "It seems you have a lot of practice in archery. From where did you receive coaching in this skill?" Imam (a.s), "We are the Ahl ul-Bayt of the Prophet. Do not compare our knowledge and perfection to others. We received these perfections in inheritance. The earth can never remain devoid of us. We are perfect in every matter and other people are deficient in reaching our level." Upon hearing this reply, Hisham was filled with anger and he said, "Do you claim that the people of the time are obliged to obey you?" Imam (a.s) replied without any fear or hesitation, "Indeed! We are those vested with authority (Ulil Amr)." Hisham said, "But your command is effective nowhere." Imam said, "Those who do not consider us Ulil Amr, are sinners." The anger of Hisham intensified. He said, "Am I also not Ulil Amr?" Imam (a.s) replied, "You are a king, made by the people and we are Ulil Amr, appointed by Allah." Hisham decided that further debate in front of the courtiers was not advisable and thus he ordered that the father and son may be taken at such and such place and kept under detention. When the Imams (a.s) were leaving, someone remarked, "You were audacious to speak in such a manner before the ruler. Thank God he did not order your execution immediately." Imam (a.s) said, "We Ahl ul-Bayt (a.s) are the announcers of Allah's word and exposers of the truth. We never hesitate in it and we are never afraid of death."

### Piety Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)

He also spent a simple and ascetic life and he never had regard for material wealth. He always wore patched clothes and sitting on a jute sack delivered admonitions to the people. Many a times he remained hungry and gave his share of food to the poor. Saeed bin Abdullah says, "One day I came to the Imam and saw him wearing a very worn-out dress. He said, 'O Saeed, I want to buy a shirt.' I said, 'Master, why do you take that trouble, I'll buy one for you.' He said, 'No, I will buy it according to my requirements.' Thus Imam (a.s) walked to the market and I accompanied him. He purchased a dress from a shop costing four dirhams. It was of a very coarse material. I said, 'O son of the Messenger, this does not befit you. I am having the money, you may buy a good shirt, and I will pay for it.' The Imam said, 'Wonderful, O Saeed! You want to bear my burden! Are you prepared to bear my burden on the Day of Judgment also?' I became silent. The Imam moved ahead with the shirt. On the way he saw an unclothed Muslim. He moved towards him quickly and said, 'O man, why are you not wearing a shirt?' The man replied, 'O son of the Messenger of Allah, I have a family and whatever I earn is spent on it. I could not save enough money to buy a shirt.' The Imam gave him that shirt at once. I saw that the Imam was much happier than before. When he moved ahead, I said, 'O Son of the Messenger of Allah! Why did you give the shirt away when you were more in need of it?' He said, 'He was more deserving of it than me. Even though worn

out, at least I have a dress on my body, but that person was naked.'

#### **Generosity Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)**

Like his forefathers Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) was also very generous. He never sent away a petitioner empty-handed. Once he was himself in a precarious financial condition and did not even have anything to eat. Just then he received 2000 dinars as Khums money, but he distributed it all among the poor and the needy. Someone told him, "You did not consider your family." The Imam replied, "We Ahl ul-Bayt are used to poverty and hunger and we are not much troubled by it; like other people who become restless and start complaining to Allah. We do not like that any poor or deprived person should complain about the Lord. We are always thankful to the bounties of God."

#### **Patience Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)**

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) was also very patient and thankful. Many circumstances arose for him that anyone else would not have been able to bear, but he observed absolute patience and self-control. What can be said about others, some wretched relatives of the Imam himself caused trouble to him. They also made many efforts to cause disrespect to the Imam, but he observed patience. Hisham the ruler of Syria had restricted his movements and made life very difficult for him but he never forsook patience. He continued to act on the behavior of his holy ancestors.

#### **Humility Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)**

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) was of an unusually simple and humble nature, especially with the poor people. When the poverty-stricken people of Medina visited him, he seated them beside himself. Rather he used to spread out the skirt of his cloak and make them sit on it. He spoke with them in an affectionate way. If one of them fell ill he visited him. If on the way a needy person met him and desired to tell him his woes he used to halt at once and listen attentively to his problems.

#### **Forbearance Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)**

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) was a very forbearing person. Students of Abu Hanifah often came to him and talked in an insulting manner but he always remained forbearing. The Imam always replied to their objections in a civilized way. Thus one student went back to his teacher and said, "I think there is no one more forbearing than Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) in the world."

#### **Forgiveness Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)**

Zaid Ibne Ali Ibne Husain was the half brother of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s). One day when he came to the Imam, he found that the Imam was having some letters of Kufans before him saying that they have raised a powerful army and they invited the Imam to rise against Bani Umayyah. The letter writers pledged their loyalty and support. After reading the letters, the Imam said, "The letters only prove that those people have tried to have our rights restored and that they are having great concern for our hardships. Yet, it is not advisable for you to rise up in revolt. Just as the obedience of the Imam is incumbent on others, it is also incumbent on you. Eligible for obedience can be only the Prophet or his legatee and not every person. During the period of the rule of oppressors it is the command of Allah to His saints that they observe patience and dissimulation. O brother! I am worried that these people may not befool you and put you into some trouble. Their outward and inward is not the same. Do not be fooled by them."

Hearing these words Zaid became very angry. He said, "That person from us Ahl ul-Bayt cannot be the Imam who keeps sitting at his home in complacency. Who neither performs Jihad himself nor permits others to do it. Rather, Imam is the one who fulfills the needs of the nation and wages Jihad in the way of Allah. Actually the letter writers mean to say that you are not the Imam, I am." This diatribe of Zaid was so caustic that the Imam should have broken off relationship with him, but he did not. He forgave him, and when Zaid started for Kufa, the Imam came out to bid him adieu and said farewell to him with tearful eyes.

#### **Affection Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)**

The affection of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) was such that those who visited him were inquired about the condition of their neighbors. If someone mentioned the problems of a particular person, the Imam used to visit him and render whatever help he could. One day while walking through a by-lane of Medina he saw a man groaning in pain. The Imam came to him. This fellow belonged to the Bani Umayyah clan and just a few days ago had bad-mouthed the Imam. The Imam said to him, "O man! If you have any need, mention it." He

was ashamed and he said, "O son of the Messenger of Allah (S). I am sick and even a drop of water is prohibited for me. The physician has prescribed pomegranate juice for me. I was going to purchase a pomegranate when due to extreme weakness I fell down here." The Imam said, "I will get a pomegranate for you."

Thus he went to the market immediately and brought it to him and fed him the seeds with his own hands. When the fellow regained his senses the Imam said, "Come I'll take you to your house." Then supporting his shoulders the Imam took him to his house. The fellow was so mesmerized by this affection that he fell down at the Imam's feet and begged forgiveness for his past audacity.

#### **Hospitality Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)**

**Faiz Ibne Mazhar narrates:** One day I went to Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) to find him aggrieved. I asked the reason and he said, "Last evening a traveler from Syria arrived and went away after saying that he would soon return after meeting a relative. I remained awake the whole night waiting for him from the morning till afternoon but he did not arrive. In his wait I have not eaten a single morsel. O Faiz! Go and search for him." So I came out to search for him in the lanes and by-lanes but he was not found. I was returning dejected when he saw him walking on the road. I caught his hand and said, "O man, you are very careless. Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) has not eaten since two meal times in you anticipation." Being greatly ashamed he said, "A relative of mine told me to stay the night. I didn't know that the Imam was so hospitable. Now I would go and beg forgiveness of my mistake." The Syrian came with me to Imam (a.s). As soon as the Imam saw him, he became very happy. Embraced him and asked about his well being. The man told him about his condition and begged forgiveness for his mistake. The Imam said, "If you want my pleasure, dine with me now." The person accepted and Imam ate with him after having missed two meals.

#### **Imam Muhammad Baqir's (a.s) Kindness To Relatives**

Zaid Ibne Ali Ibne Husain and Zaid Ibne Hasan Muthanna were mostly unhappy with the family of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) because he often expressed opposition to their evil plans. Secondly, they also wanted to take over the public trusts controlled by the Imam, so that people may accept their spiritual powers like they acknowledged the position of the Imam. In spite of all this, Imam (a.s) never cut off relations with them. He continued to act in the best manners of kindness to relatives. One day Zaid came to the Imam and told him about his intention of insurgency against the enemies of Ahl ul-Bayt. The Imam opposed it severely. Zaid became very angry; he got up from there at once and also uttered some unbecoming things. Imam (a.s) remained quiet. After some days it was known that Zaid was sick. Imam went to visit him immediately. Zaid was thinking that the Imam would never come to his place. When he saw that Imam (a.s) had arrived he was very pleased and begged the Imam to forgive his past mistakes.

#### **Imam Muhammad Baqir's (a.s) Kind Behavior To Slaves**

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) was extremely affectionate towards his bondsmen. The slaves were always yearning that Imam should take their services, but the Imam mostly used to do his own work. He first fed the male and female slaves than ate himself. He gave them better food and himself ate ordinary things. A slightest excuse was sufficient for him to free the slaves. He was never harsh with any of his slaves and never beat anyone of them.

#### **Contentment Of Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s)**

Hisham was deeply inimical to Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s). He was always in the dread that the Imam would gather the followers of Ali and rise up in revolt against him and he was always thinking up of a way to distance the Imam from Medina and keep him at Damascus under his surveillance. Once he sent the message to the Imam that since he was spending life under such difficult financial circumstance he should come over to Damascus. Hisham told him that he would provide the Imam with a magnificent house and fix for him sufficient pension so that his life passes in peace and comfort. He also said that for the time being he was sending one thousand gold coins to the Imam. When the messengers of Hisham conveyed Hisham's message and placed the bag of gold coins before Imam (a.s) his face became red with anger and he said, "When have I expressed my financial problems to Hisham or his agents? By Allah! This tattered mat and old worn-out cloak of mine is much better than the kingdom of Hisham. We have no need for material wealth. We have no desire for comfort and luxuries. Take these gold coins back and tell him that wherever and in whichever condition I am, it is better for me."