

Did Imam Hussain(a.s) sacrificed everything so that the sins of the Ummah be forgiven?

Answer : Martyr Ayatullah Murtadha Muttaheri ,

Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi , Dr Ibrahim Ayati

Answer By Martyr Ayatullah Murtadha Muttaheri

we have made skillful manipulations(to the purpose of Karbala) which are very amazing (I don't know whether I should say skillful or ignorant). In one of these cases, we said that Husayn ibn 'Ali rose in order to be killed for the sake of the atonement of the sins of the ummah. Now if someone were to ask us as to the source of this notion, whether it was Imam Husayn ('a) himself who said such a thing or if it was the Prophet or some Imam, we cannot cite any authority. But still we keep on insisting that Imam Husayn got killed so that our sins are atoned. I don't know whether we have borrowed this notion from Christianity . Muslims have unwittingly adopted many ideas from Christendom which are contrary to Islam.

One of the doctrines of Christianity is the notion of the crucifixion of Christ as a sacrifice made for the sake of the atonement of man's sins. Jesus is called 'the Sacrifice,' and it is an essential part of the Christian doctrine that Jesus went upon the cross for atoning the sins of his people. They have made Jesus carry the burden of their sins! However, we did not suspect that this notion belongs to Christianity and that it is consistent neither with the spirit of Islam nor with the statements of Husayn ('a) himself. By God, it is a calumny if we ascribe such a thing to Aba 'Abd Allah ('a)! By God, should one attribute such a notion to Husayn ibn 'Ali while he is keeping a fast in the month of Ramadan and claim that Husayn's martyrdom was for the sake of such a purpose and should he ascribe such a statement to him, his fast would be void for ascribing a falsehood to the Imam. Abu 'Abd Allah rose to struggle against sin, whereas we said that he rose in order to be a refuge for sinners!

We claim that Imam Husayn founded an insurance company to guarantee security to sinners! He has insured us against the consequences of sin in return for our tears. All that we have to do is to shed tears for him and in return he guarantees immunity to the sinners. Now one could be whatever one liked to be, one could be an Ibn Ziyad or 'Umar ibn Sa'd, as if one 'Umar ibn Sa'd, one Sinan ibn Anas, and one Khuli were not enough! Imam Husayn wanted that the likes of Khuli and 'Umar ibn Sa'd should proliferate in the world and so he came and announced: 'O people, be as evil as you can be, for I am your security!'

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Answer By Dr. Ibrahim Ayati (Reliable Authentic Historian)

Did the martyrs, as many persons imagine, met martyrdom so that they might become a haven for the sinners of the ummah? In other words if the Muslims or Shi'ah before the martyrdom of Imam Husayn committed sins with anxiety and concern they may feel relieved, commit sins with impunity, deceive the people in any manner they like and may not feel any fear of accountability before Allah and of Divine punishment, because Imam Husayn was martyred to intercede for the sinners. The Imam met martyrdom so that the sins of the ummah might be forgiven. The people committed sins in the past and will continue to commit sins in future and the Imam made atonement for their sins. Jesus was crucified and the Christian sinners were relieved. Imam Husayn was also killed and guaranteed the salvation of the sinners of the ummah!

We seek refuge in Allah! This explanation and this way of thinking which may perhaps be preferred by most of the common people is exactly opposed to the real object of the Imam in this movement . He rose so that the people might fear Allah more, be on their guard more from the consequences of sin, which they have to endure in this world and in the Hereafter and pay more attention to the performance of their religious duties . He rose to eliminate sin, to restrain the people from doing unlawful things and to revive the spirit of piety in their hearts.

He rose to enjoin the people to do good and to restrain them from evil, to forestall corruption and sins, to strengthen the fear of Allah in their hearts and to draw their attention to Him so that the teachings provided by the Holy Qur'an might be put into practice in the Muslim ummah. Consequently it should be a nation which does not tell lies, does not commit treachery, is honest in whatever it does, is brave and courageous, does not worship anyone except Allah, does not submit to anything except truth, and does not tolerate anything except law and reasonable words .

The Imam was not killed so that he might tell the people: After my martyrdom there is no need to tell the truth, to be honest, to worship, to acquire lawful property, to refrain from unlawful acts and to have regard for the rights of the people' .

The Imam did not say: 'I have been killed so that my supporters may remain immune from inconveniences and commit sins throughout their lives with perfect peace of mind'. This way of thinking is shameful for the Muslims and pains the sacred souls of the martyrs, who laid down their lives struggling in the path of Allah against sin and impiety. It is not at all possible that a man should be distant from Allah and close to the Imam, and may displease Allah and please the Imam; and may set aside a part of his sins for the Imam so that Allah may not call him to account.

Those people who think on these lines not only betray Islam and the spirit of the movement of Imam Husayn but it may be said that with the capital of the martyrdom of the Imam they have set up an organization of their own against the things declared lawful and unlawful by Allah and the reward and punishment prescribed by Him.

How unlucky is the Muslim, who does not offer prayers or observe fast or respect the rights of the people or does unlawful things or earns his livelihood by means of usury or other unlawful occupations, and then imagines happily that he is a disciple of Imam Husayn. Such a Muslim should be asked: "Why do you claim to be a disciple of Imam Husayn when neither you like his deeds nor he liked yours? He spoke the truth and you tell lies. He was honest and you commit treachery .He asked for extension of time during the night of Ashura so that he might spend that night in offering prayers, supplications, asking Divine forgiveness and reciting the Qur'an, whereas your nights are spent mostly in committing sins and doing undesirable things. He sacrificed in the path of Allah everything which he possessed whereas you cannot dispense with even a small coin for the sake of Allah.

Many persons claim to be the disciples of Imam Husayn and this is due to the fact that they have not recognized him properly and think that they can win his favor by means of usual homages, greetings and compliments . They are exactly like most of the persons who await the appearance of the Imam of the time and do not know that the appearance of the Imam is not profitable for them and the Imam of their imagination will not appear at all, as the Imam who will appear will not distribute money and posts among his disciples.

A person who has a true concept of Prophethood and Imamate does not get involved in such errors and does not attribute anything to the Prophet and Imam opposed to the Divine organization. He knows that the greatness of the Prophet and the Imam is based on obedience to Allah and one cannot benefit from the Prophet and the Imam except through obedience to the Almighty . In spite of all the hardships on the day of Ashura and the fact that the enemies did not agree to postpone fighting for a few moments for the performance of prayers, Imam Husayn offered noon prayers in congregation while fighting was still in progress and made two of his companions namely Zuhayr bin Qayn Bajali and Sa'id bin Abdullah Hanafi stand before him so that they might counteract the attacks of the enemies and enable the Imam to offer his prayers. *How can such an Imam be willing that instead of offering prayers one may simply mourn his martyrdom and abandon necessary duties relying on his intercession and favor and commit unlawful acts?*

Mourning for the Imam should make the people understand religion. It should bring them nearer to Allah and keep them away from sin. It should make them love religion all the more and revive the spirit of monotheism in them. They should realize that the gatherings held to mourn the martyrdom of Imam Husayn can please Allah and become the means of reward in the Hereafter only when they take place within the limits of obedience to the Almighty Allah and do not consist of falsehood and unlawful acts, because Allah cannot be worshipped by means of sin, and unlawful things cannot be made the basis of worship.

It is so, because Allah accepts only that act which is performed within the limits of piety. It reforms human soul and takes him to a higher spiritual stage. It is not possible that a good deed is done and it has no effect on the soul of man. It is the effect of a good deed which appears in the shape of spiritual reward in the Hereafter and unless a deed has a good effect on human soul it is meaningless to say that it carries spiritual reward. Similarly unless a deed has bad effect on human soul it is meaningless to say that it carries punishment in the Hereafter. Those persons who apparently do good deeds, but do not have the least effect on their souls and do not reform them are sadly mistaken. They remain at the same spiritual stage and still think that they have acquired abundant spiritual reward. Good deeds ! should provide food for spiritual faculties to man and should I improve and reform his inner self. They should eradicate base, motives from their mind and should develop good morals in their place and strengthen them. In case good deeds do not produce good effects it should be concluded that the deeds in question were not really good and were not performed properly. For it so happens very often that, contrary to what is imagined, such deeds have bad effects on human soul.

Allah says: Whoever desires to meet his Lord should strive to do good deeds. (Surah al-Kahf, 18: 110).

Answer by Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi (Chief Justice of Iran)

It is said that Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) was killed for the sins of the Ummah(people) of his grandfather the Prophet (sw); that he subjected himself to martyrdom and his family to captivity for the followers of his grandfather to attain salvation near God and that he was killed for the Ummah of his grandfather to enter Paradise! They say that Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) uttered these words during his last moments "O God! I have fulfilled my Covenant and you too now fulfill Yours. I had promised to sacrifice myself, my companions, my brothers, my sons and my family , and You too had promised to forgive the Ummah of my grandfather its sins!". It is said that Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) was killed so that his followers may shed tears, and having received the ticket to salvation go straight to Paradise. It is said that if somebody wets his eyes to the extent of a fly's wing for Hussain (a.s), then God shall forgive all his sins even if they may be as numerous as the grains of the sands in all the deserts of the world and as numerous as the leaves of the tress throughout the world!"

Fortunately the answer to these groundless pretensions is obvious and as such no explanation is required.

If Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) gave his life for sinners to the extent that all sins however numerous were to be forgiven for an eye lash wet to the extent of a fly's wing, then we must say – God be our refuge – that he thus became an effective means for the prevalence of sin throughout the Muslim society and thus contributed to the propagation of sinfulness as a result; for a sin however great is easily committed it is known to be forgiven for the mere shedding of a single tear drop.

I think this is a matter which has been fabricated by the hands of political cunning for its own devious aims so as to make people lose sight of the real objective of Hussain ibn Ali(a.s), so that they may be estranged from the Hussainic way of thought and avoid being a hindrance in the way of oppressors and tyrants.

Who except Shimr might have heard the above mentioned 'last words' of Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) that have been related to us? Was it Shimr who related for us these words or were they fabricated by the hand which seats the likes of Shimr on thrones and appoints them to rule over the people?

The creation of the world is totally based on measure and reckoning (accountability of deeds), and that too this accounting calculations are so meticulous and sensitive that not even a particle of a moment of life is left without being reckoned. How is it possible to forgive a mountains weight of sin in return for the tiniest tear, and for the people to be allowed to enter Paradise without any reckoning?

A life spent in oppressing others, depriving them of their rights, plundering other's property and possessions and later settlement of a lengthy account of a life of crime and sin by shedding of a few tear-that does not agree with any method or mode of just reckoning!

Has Islam become Christianity, that a life of crime and corruption be forgiven through a single baptism and a series of baseless and meaningless rituals? Are the sacred laws of Islam something like Christianity that would forgive the greatest of sins and crimes through performance of certain nonsensical rituals? And dispatch criminals to Paradise in return for a small sum of money?

In Islam attainment of Paradise and everlasting felicity depends on firm, calculated and clear principles. It is not possible to reach paradise through weeping, crying and shedding of tears!

In Islam repentance is not just uttering the words *Astaghfirullah!* (*I seek God's forgiveness*). Money matters are not settled by 'astaghfirullah'; plundering of people's property and swallowing the property

of Waqf (Public Trust) and fabrication of untrue cases against innocent people is not compensated through the words '*Astagfiruallah*'.

Even matters of worship are not set right by *Astagfirullah* ! Salaat (Prayers) that has been omitted must be performed, obligatory fasts that been left must be kept, the hajj pilgrimage must be performed; God's appointed duties must be fulfilled. All of these must be done before shedding tears over the tragedy of karbala is to be of any use.

The Divine rewards for mourning of Hussain's (a.s) death that have been mentioned in the traditions, is neither repentance nor some kind of baptismal purification; rather it is for encouraging people to hold mourning gatherings so that this event of great tragedy may not be forgotten and so that through them the people may become aware of the sublime objectives of Hussain(a.s) *Qiyam* so that these assemblies may server as platforms for propogation and dissemination of the spirit of true Islam.

However, those traditions which do not agree with the principal beliefs of Islam or any rational principles, like other similar traditions regarding other issues- if they have been narrated through a chain of reliable narrators – must be explained and interpreted.

In short, the answer that Hussain(a.s) was killed for peoples shedding tears and going to Paradise- is insufficient and unacceptable.

It is true that Hussain ibne Ali(a.s) chose martyrdom for the sake of the Ummah of the Messenger(s.w); it is true that Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) *Qiyam* had the objective of preventing Muslims from losing the way to Paradise – but not through them crying and shedding tears.

It is true that Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) will be an intercessor for his friends on the Day of Judgement, but not of those who have done nothing else and have only cried and shed tears.

It is true that Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) is a ship of salvation- not only he but all of the household of the Prophet (sw) are the ship of human salvation – but not for those who have spent a whole lifetime in sinfulness like a the sone of Noah(a) and for the sake of being called a Shia of Hussain(a) and are awaiting salvation.

Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) and his companions chose martyrdom in order to point out the way of Paradise to the people. They gave their lives to teach the way of attainment of felicity for mankind.

Hussain ibn Ali(a.s) struggled and fought Yazid and his lot, the inhabitants of Hell. He was against the deeds of Yazid and those like him. He chose matyrdom in order to abolish drunkenness, gambling, sexual deviations, the plundering of people's possessions, opression, tyranny, endless misappropriations of the public treasury and so on.